

Delta House elects new Speaker

From Hendrix Ollomogbe, Asaba

CHIEF Whip of the Delta State House of Assembly, Sam Obi was yesterday elected as the new Speaker in place of Mr. Martin Okonta who "stepped aside" on May 18 following an Abuja Appeal Court judgment, which declared Mr. Kingsley Nonye Phillips winner of the Ika South Constituency in the April 14, 2007 election.

The selection of Obi, from Ika North-East Constituency came on the heels of Wednesday's formal inauguration of Phillips as a legislator by Acting Speaker Basil Ganagana.

With the selection of the substantive Speaker, Ganagana, who had piloted the affairs of the House for two months, reverted back to his erstwhile position of Deputy-Speaker.

An Assembly source explained that all the stakeholders, including all legislators, the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan had before yesterday's sitting agreed on the choice of Obi.

At yesterday's sitting, the

Pirates attack fishing vessel, kill one

By Isaac Taiwo

NIGERIAN Merchant Navy Officers and Water Transport Senior Staff Association has called on the Federal Government to consider the continuing loss of lives on Nigeria's territorial waters as a result of attacks by pirates and provide adequate security for marine-based businesses.

Administrative Secretary of the association, Kingsley Enahoro, gave the charge on Wednesday while receiving the remains of a sailor, Etim Benjamin, who was killed when a vessel, *Olokun IV*, was attacked by sea pirates on Saturday.

Enahoro said: "On the 15th of July, 2010 at about 1100 hrs, they (pirates) attacked several fishing trawlers around Kwaibo areas. They came back on the 24th of July 2010, at about

1245 hours around the Debuja area of Cameroun, which resulted in the death of a sailor. Two other sailors were seriously wounded alongside several others who are now in critical condition in Camerounian hospital with bullet wounds.

"The attack is becoming a daily occurrence, especially between Calabar and Cameroun Channel as well as Adoni, Benin, Brass and Yenogwa waters.

"A joint security meeting between representatives of the Nigerian Merchant Navy headed by Captain Thomas Kmewerigha and the State Security Services (SSS) representatives of both Akwa Ibom and Cross River states has yielded no positive result."

The merchant navy chief pleaded: "We want to appeal to all relevant gov-

ernment agencies, the Nigerian Navy, NIMASA, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Defence, the State Security Services as well as International Transport Federation, International Maritime Organisation and Merchant Navy International to please wake up and ensure safe water for the sake of the living sailors and their families."

National Vice President, Fishing Zone, Nigerian

Navy, Captain Shehu Kosoko, also lamented the attack, which, according to him, proved that sailors on Nigerian waters lacked protection.

Kosoko, therefore called on the Federal Government to "do something about this urgently like other nations whose territorial waters cannot just be trespassed upon without the trespassers being apprehended by security and navy patrols always on ground."

Director, Administration and Personnel, Bernali Gvessel, which owns the vessel, Joseph Overo said: "We are touched by this incident and hope the government would rise up now and save the lives of our people.

"We have cried severally on this issue but the government has refused to come to our aid and that is the reason we are appealing that the Federal Government should come to our aid."

AC urges INEC to redeploy Ondo REC

THE Action Congress (AC) has advised, Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Attahiru Jega, to redeploy the Ondo State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo from the state

"to allay fears that her posting was a collusion between the commission and the PDP." In a statement yesterday by its National Publicity Secretary, Lai Mohammed, the party said while it believed that "Jega did the posting without malice, as

he had explained, the posting seems to reinforce the public boast by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, a stalwart of the PDP, that his party would re-claim Ondo State from the Labour Party in the next general elections."

The AC alleged that "going by the long-standing relationship between Obasanjo and Mrs. Adebayo, the arrogant assurance by the ex-President that his party will win Ondo and the posting of his acquaintance (Mrs. Adebayo) to the state is too much of a coincidence to be over-

