

News

Gunmen kill police officers in Rivers

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

YET to be identified gunmen yesterday attacked police officers stationed under Eliozy flyover in Obi/Akpor Council of Rivers State and shot two of them.

The officers, a police Inspector and Constable whose names were not disclosed, however died while being rushed to the hospital.

One of the officers who sustained serious gun injuries in the abdomen is still receiving treatment in an undisclosed hospital. The motive behind the attack is yet to be unraveled.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, (PPRO), Mr. Ben Ugwuegbulem who confirmed the incident, said the gunmen drove straight to the junction where the officers were working and shot directly at the two officers and fled.

The police spokesman added that investigations over the killing of the police officers was in progress, assuring that the command would certainly uncover the culprits and recover their weapons.

Police declare Oyo NURTW's factional leaders wanted

From Iyabo Lawal and Ngozi Nnorom, Ibadan

THE Police authorities in Oyo State have declared wanted the two factional leaders of the proscribed National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in the state, Alhaji Abdul Lateef Akinsola (a.k.a. Tokyo) and Mukaila Lamidi (a.k.a. Auxiliary).

The State Commissioner of Police, Baba Adisa Bolanta who disclosed this at a media briefing said the Command decided to declare them wanted after the expiration of the deadline given the two warring union leaders to report at the command headquarters.

Bolanta listed the allegations against the two embattled union leaders as alleged conspiracy, arson, armed robbery and unlawful possession of prohibited firearms.

He called on the people of the state to volunteer useful information that could lead to the arrest and prosecution of the NURTW chiefs while assuring that the identity of such volunteers would be kept secret.

On the claim that the warring NURTW chiefs sent their lawyers to represent them, Bolanta said the police invitation was extended to individuals, adding that the presence of their counsel was not enough to exonerate them, more so, when human lives are involved.

NIIA holds parley on media, security

THE Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) holds a second brainstorming session on Nigerian Media and Protection of National Security Interest today at its conference chamber at 13/15 Kofo Abayomi Road, Victoria Island, Lagos from 9a.m.

NIIA's Assistant Director, Public Affairs, Alex Ekeanyanwu, who disclosed this in a statement, explained that the parley is in continuation of the institute's new policy of engaging in strategic, problem-solving and more constructive and beneficial research.

Ogun now on financial life support, says Amosun

From Mathias Okwe, Abuja

GOVERNOR Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun State yesterday painted a gloomy picture of the financial status of the State and said "Ogun State Government is broke."

Amosun who was in Abuja for the seventh National Assembly inauguration in company of former Governor of the State, Chief Segun Osoba added: "In fact, the State could not fund the last May wage bill on its own and had to resort to borrowing from the banks because the State's financial situation is precarious."

What I met on ground, I

can't explain it. The situation is very bad. In fact, we were not able to pay last month's salaries. We had to resort to bank loans to pay staff salaries. We are going to engage the services of competent independent financial experts to audit the State's finances, because we want to know what went wrong. We would not interfere with their investigations. They will also assist us to totally re-design and re-engineer the finances of the state."

He continued: "Virtually all sectors of the economy in Ogun State needs to return to its past glory: education, health, agriculture, infra-

structure, commerce, just everything is in comatose condition in the state.

"We are embarking on an intervention programme in these five cardinal areas. In the education sector, we are going to make education free- primary and secondary school. And not only that, we intend to provide qualitative education for the people.

Amosun said his government would transform all public hospitals from being mere consulting clinics to standard and efficient health care system.

"We will promote the development of the agricultural sector in such a way that it

would nose-dive into major industrial revolution in the state and an avenue for wealth creation in the state."

He also said his administration would generate about 10,000 new jobs within the first 100 days in office to address the crisis of unemployment bedeviling the state.

Meanwhile, Osoba, has advised President Goodluck Jonathan to be guided by merit and fairness in the composition of his new cabinet.

Osoba hailed the emergence of Aminu Tambuwal as the new Speaker of the House of Representatives against the

People's Democratic Party's (PDP) South-West candidate, pointing out that the development was a reflection of true democratic tenets.

"We stand for merit, PDP zoning is their headache and if they like, they can go on mourning their defeat, but we in ACN are interested in promoting the tenets of democracy in the country.

"Jonathan is a beneficiary of the principle of merit and democratic norms, so he should stand by his own words and actions and ensure that what he stood for should be allowed to spread to other arms of government," he said.



A cross section of members of International Federation of Women lawyers (FIDA) at their National Executive Council meeting in Enugu...yesterday

21 feared killed in Akure auto crash

From Niyi Bello Akure

ABOUT 21 persons, comprising six male adults, eight women and seven children, were confirmed dead yesterday in an early morning automobile crash, three kilometers from the main gate of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA).

The accident occurred as the authorities of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) were organizing a workshop at the university for road users on the need to

avoid road carnage.

Apart from the dead, who had been moved to the morgue of the State Specialist Hospital, Akure, 10 others were taken to the emergency unit of the same hospital with many of them in critical conditions.

The FRSC said the accident, which occurred around 6.30am at Ilara-Mokin, located on the Ilesa-Benin road, involved a DAF truck with Registration Number LAGOS XU 606 JJJ which was travelling to Lagos and a Mazda commercial bus with Registration

Number XV 315 FST belonging to Obadigbo Local Government heading towards Benue State.

The accident was said to have occurred when the truck driver, in an attempt to avoid running into a gaping pothole at his own side of the highway, lost control of the vehicle and ran headlong into the on-coming commercial bus.

Sector Commander FRSC, Ondo State, John Bekinbo Meheux said going by the number of the victims, the bus was overloaded as it showed

that it was carrying 28 passengers instead of 15, although the women were said to be carrying their children on their laps.

According to Meheux, who organized the FUTA workshop for commercial drivers where he highlighted some of the causes of road carnage as mainly over-speeding and impatience on the part of road users, the accident could have been avoided if the drivers of the two vehicles had exercised restraints.

As at yesterday afternoon, the scene of the accident was

besieged by residents of the nearby community particularly women who wailed uncontrollably at the site of pools of blood, scattered personal effects of the victims and the twisted metals of the vehicles.

At the State Specialist Hospital, Akure, the accident and emergencies unit was equally besieged by people who were curious about the identities of the victims who were suspected to be mainly of Benue State origin on a trip home from either Lagos or Ibadan.

Midwives reject posting to violence-prone states, patients groan over strike

From: Saxe Akhalne, Kaduna

AVARIOUS rural communities across the country, under the Midwives Service Scheme (MSS), yesterday, protested their postings in the light of the April post-election violence in some part of the North which claimed the lives of some Youth corps members.

But, officials of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) assured them of their safety at the various communities of their postings during the duration of their service.

Meanwhile, patients of the Federal Medical Centre (FMC)

Gusau of Zamfara State are groaning following their sudden discharge from the hospital as a result of the indefinite strike embarked by workers of the Centre.

The workers are protesting the re-appointment of the Centre's Medical Director, Dr. Tajuddin Aiyedun.

In his speech, the Executive Director of NPHCDA, Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate said, "today is another landmark development in our nation's efforts to improve coverage of skilled birth attendance in the country."

He pointed out that "another 441 basic midwives who recent-

ly graduated from 25 Schools of Midwifery were being enlisted into the Midwifery Service Scheme to further boost the existing number of midwives under the scheme."

Pate who was represented by the Director of Primary Health Care Systems Development, Dr. Mohammed Jubril Abdullahi, argued that "under the scheme, the Agency had reinvigorated the Ward/Community Development Committees and would continue to build capacity within diverse community stakeholders."

He added, "The scheme will enable us to deliver essential

The problem of the post election violence is still fresh in our memories where some youth corps members were killed. Unless the authorities assure us of our security, some of us are scared to do our service in the North

basic equipment, drugs and supplies through a logical management system."

He urged all the midwives to take their posting as pure national service and accept the communities where they are posted to in good faith.

But hardly had the NPHCDA boss concluded his address than the shouts of "we don't want postings, we don't want posting" by the Midwives, rent

the air.

Some of the midwives who rejected the postings but who did not want their names in print told *The Guardian* that "ordinarily some of our parents reluctantly allowed us to even travel down to Kaduna for the orientation exercise not to talk about being posted to other Northern states where we are expected to spend almost one year for our service".