

when Akala and Adegidi lost the control of the state upon Ladoja's return.

## Ogun To Train 1,000 Youths For OK-LNG Project

The Ogun State Government is to embark on vocational training programmes for the youths of Ogun Waterside Local Government Area to enable them benefit from the employment opportunities, which the Olokola Liquefied Natural Gas Project would offer.

Governor Gbenga Daniel who made this known at his Community Development Assessment tour of Ode-Omi in the council area said the programme would be coordinated by the State Employment Generation Programme (OGEPEP) in conjunction with technical and vocational institutions in the state.

A statement by Press Secretary to the governor, Dare Folarin, said the first 50 students to register for the programme would be given scholarships and urged Obas and community leaders to sensitise their children on benefits of the project.

He said the OK-LNG, which is a joint project between Ogun, Ondo and some oil companies like Chevron, Shell, British Gas and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) would turn around the fortunes of the area and the entire country.

## Police Kill Three Armed Robbers In Asaba

Asaba, the Delta State capital, was virtually turned into a theater of war at the weekend when a daredevil armed robbery gang that had terrorised residents engaged policemen in a gun duel, which left three of the bandits dead with the policemen sustaining serious injuries.

The gang was said to have attacked a filling station along the Okpanam Road at 5.50 p.m. on Saturday and made away with about N220,000 before they engaged the policemen who were on their trail around the Ibusa Junction.

The robbers shot two policemen who tried engaging them during the operation resulting to serious injuries on the officers.

Eye witnesses told *Daily Independent* that after the operation at the filling station, the robbers abandoned the Audi 80 car with registration number CM 396 they drove to the scene and hijacked another Toyota Land Cruiser Jeep with registration number BN 250 ABC.

would be in a better position to submit to his office all issues and aspirations of women in the state.

Bugaje, who was flanked at the venue of the news conference by his wife, Mairo Mandara, said: "Although I do not believe in or promote women celebrities, they have been neglected for too long and their issues must be addressed."

He however, said if he is elected the next governor of the state, "I will not recognise the office of wife of governor and so my wife will remain at her NGO and will only contribute to the development of the state through her advice."

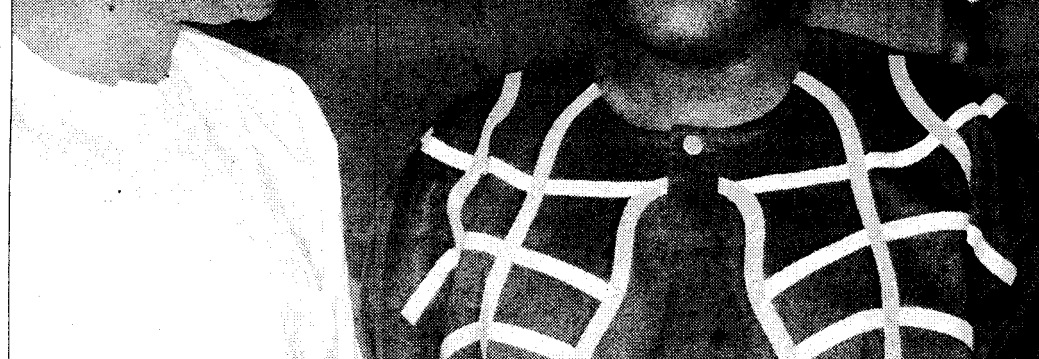
Bugaje, who is Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, said he would use his international contacts to partner with China toward the development of cottage industries in the state if elected governor.

On her part, Mandara said she would use her medical experience to advise her husband, particularly on issues that border on child and maternal mortality as well as ensure cleaner environment to prevent spread of diseases.

## Tension In Port Harcourt Over Cult Leader's Arrest

By Ubokikwan Gabriel  
REPORTER, Port Harcourt

Hell was let loose on Sunday around the Township area of Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, from the Lagos Bus Stop to the Abuja Estate, towards Borikiri as cult members loyal to Soboma George, a renowned cult leader, went on rampage.



Delta State Governor, James Ibori (right), with President, Zenon Oil, Femi Otedola, at a dinner, organised for PDP Presidential candidate, Umar Musa Yar'Adua and his running mate, Goodluck Jonathan in Lagos... at the weekend.  
Photo: Kunle Ajayi

## Five Persons Slump At Lagos PDP Rally

By Wisdom Patrick  
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

No fewer than five persons, including two policemen on Saturday in Lagos slumped at the Presidential campaign rally of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidates for the April general elections, Umar Musa Yar'Adua and Jonathan Goodluck.

But Lagos Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Bode Ojajuri, said in a telephone interview that

such incident is common in the kind of crowd that gathered at the Tafawa Balewa Square on Saturday. He, however, said no life was lost at the rally.

A competent police source said the two policemen slumped as a result of exhaustion, adding: "There was no water, no food for people that left home the previous day and were on stand-by till around 12 noon on Saturday when the rally actually kicked off."

He said apart from the few inci-

dences of phone theft and vandalised cars, every other thing was under control by the over 300 policemen detailed to ensure security in and around the venue of the event. The source added that at least 36 cases of GSM handsets theft was reported and recorded by the Police at the rally.

"Apart from the policemen, three other persons also collapsed during the rally and were resuscitated by members of the Red Cross Society at the venue," he said.

They were said to have shot sporadically into the air, scaring residents stiff with their gunshots and war songs.

By the time the dust settled, they had burnt down several cars around the Central Police Station in protest over George's arrest earlier in the day.

Eye witnesses said the boys suddenly emerged from nowhere and

started firing bullets and dynamites into the air. The incident caught those returning from Church unawares, as they had to scurry for safety, while shops that opened for business and the NNPC Mega Station in the area had to hurriedly close down.

Sources said the current development was as a result of news, which got to the boys that George,

who led the historic jail break at the Port Harcourt prisons was arrested by the Police.

This, according to sources has attracted the anger of the boys said to be his (George's) ardent followers. It was gathered that the boys have vowed to vent their anger through killer weapons, until George is unconditionally released with immediate effect.

## Confusion As Anambra Commissioner Regains Freedom

By Okey Maduforo  
CORRESPONDENT, Awka

Anambra State Commissioner for Women Affairs, Ego Cordelia Uzozie, and her son, Kelechi, were released by their kidnappers about 7.30 a.m. on Sunday. They were kidnapped last week Wednesday.

But confusion best describe the manner in which they were left off the hook by the kidnappers as neither Governor Virgy Etiaba, the Commissioner's husband Raphael Uzozie, their son nor the State Police Command can give a clear picture of how and why they were released.

The kidnappers had

demand a N50 million ransom from the state government before they were abducted at Nsugbe in Oyi Local Government Area of the state.

It was gathered that a compromise was reached between the kidnappers and some private security consultants on the mode of their release but Etiaba was silent about it.

Speaking at Government Lodge Amawbia, Etiaba thanked the Police, the military and the State Security Service who worked with the state

government round the clock to "achieve this wonderful result."

But when the state Commissioner of Police, John Harunna, who commented on their release said, "the credit goes to God and the Commissioner's husband who did every thing humanly possible to contact the abductors."

"It was later we learnt that it was her son who drove her that day. The driver earlier mentioned was mis-information. The Police rescued her without blood shed, there was no commando

operation and everything happened within the state."

Although the Police confirmed that the abductors demanded N50 million ransom, Etiaba denied knowledge of the request, saying she was not aware of any of such demands by the kidnappers.

Narrating her ordeal, Cordelia Uzozie said it was between 12.00 and 12.30 p.m. last Wednesday after she had finished her business at the College of Education Nsugbe that the hoodlums took them hostage.

She said she could not say at what point they found their way home but failed to state if the Police escorted them out of the kidnappers' den or not.

## Two Die In Zaria Auto Crash

By Augustine Madu-West  
and Madu-Jerry Nmeibeh, Kano

Two persons, including the driver of a *Young Shall Grow* luxury bus that crashed at Maikafi, about 10 kilometres from Zaria, on Sunday, have been confirmed dead.

Unspecified number of passengers on board the ill-fated bus who sustained severe injuries in the crash have been admitted at the Malam Aminu Kano and Dala Orthopedic Hospital in Kano for treatment.

The luxury bus with registration number SD 951 NEN was travelling from Lagos to Kano when the accident occurred.

There is apprehension that more victims may loose their lives as many were seriously injured, with severe fractures.

*Daily Independent* gathered that the luxury bus ran into an abandoned vehicle when the driver swerved off from the road.

Management of the Kano branch of the *Young Shall Grow* Motors dispatched some of its staff to the accident scene to help move victims out of the scene.

## Strike Grounds British Airways

By Rotimi Durojaiye  
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

After talks with its largest union collapsed, British Airways has cancelled about 1,300 flights to different destinations this week.

The flight cancellations would affect no fewer than 140,000 passengers and involve most flights to and from London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports, with further disruption before and afterwards.

The Transport and General Workers' Union (T&G) had threatened two additional 72-hour strikes in February unless there was agreement on issues which include sick-leave policy and pay.

About 96 per cent of the cabin crew represented by the union is in favour of strikes.

At the Nigerian end, British Airways has apologised to its customers for the inconveniences caused by the strike. In newspaper advertisements on Sunday, the airline confirmed that its operations would be reduced in all its networks due to industrial action.

"As a result of this action, British Airways will be operating very limited schedule between January 30 and February 16," the advertisement read.