

## National Mirror Honours Daniel, Aliyu, Ibru

Ogun State Governor, Gbenga Daniel and his Niger State counterpart, Muazu Babangida Aliyu, have received Governor of the Year 2007 awards from the management of *National Mirror* newspapers.

The ceremony was held at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, according to a statement by the Press Officer to Ogun State Governor, Kehinde Onasanya.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Oceanic Bank, Cecilia Ibru, was given the Person of the Year Award.

The publisher of *National Mirror*, Emeka Obasi, said at the event that the award was conferred on the trio for impacting on society.

"Last December, our Editorial Board met and selected three individuals who affected the news better in 2007. We took special recognition and joy in these awardees because they have added value to their different offices which affected the society positively," he said.

Obasi, who said he was proud of Daniel's giant strides in Ogun, added that "he has succeeded in waking up the sleeping giant and made the state very competitive for business endeavours to the extent that many of us in Lagos are now looking for land in Ogun and the future of mega-city lies in the axis".

## INRI Launches Inter-religious Centre Thursday

By Musbau Rasak  
ASSISTANT REGIONAL EDITOR, Lagos

INRI Widows Foundation (IWF), a non-governmental organisation established to promote the interest of widows, orphans and the less privileged, would on Thursday launch an inter-religious tourism centre for Islam and Christianity at the Airport Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The launch is part of the activities marking the birthday celebration of the founder of the organisation, Primate Babatunde Elijah Ayodele.

According to Ayodele, the need to foster unity and love among adherents of both religions informed the establishment of the centre, which would promote the teachings and laws of Islam and Christianity.

"We want to put in place an inter-faith religious centre which is totally dedicated to working with other religious communities on inter-faith issues. The centre will be composed of representatives from the Islamic and Christian communities, particularly, leading lights in the two religions," Ayodele said.

## Jibunoh Sets For Third Expedition

By Barnidele Ogunwusi  
CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

Newton Jibunoh, 70, is embarking on another trip across the Sahara Desert, 42 years after his first expedition from London to Nigeria by road upon completing his education in England.

This was disclosed on Monday at a press briefing on the man's third expedition, which is expected to take him and his team to about 12 countries in Africa and Europe. His team comprises of six men and one woman. The trip will take Jibunoh to countries like Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, across the Sahara, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, Germany, France, Belgium and England.

The expedition, which will last two months, will start on February 27. The team, according to Jibunoh, is expected to end the expedition by the end of April in London. Speaking on the focus of the expedition, Jibunoh said it is meant to create awareness on desert encroachment.

# Robbers Raid Bank, Kill 10 In Ilesa

By Gbenga Faturoti  
CORRESPONDENT, Osogbo

Armed robbers on Monday unleashed terror on the commercial centre of Ilesa in Osun State. The robbers, who raided a bank, killed 10 people. Several others were severely injured.

The robbers, numbering about 15, stormed the premises of the Ilesa branch of an old generation bank about 10.30 a.m. in three vehicles - a bus and two cars. They were armed with sophisticated weapons and shot indiscriminately into the air to scare people and the security men attached to the bank.

It was learnt that the robbers were led to the bank by a man who dressed in police officer's uniform. They shot at anybody on sight, including the policemen attached to the bank.

During the operation which lasted about 40 minutes, the

bandits ransacked the bank and robbed its customers. They stole a substantial amount of money.

One of the policemen attached to the bank, a sergeant, was killed while others received gunshot wounds.

The robbers also attempted to raid another bank within the vicinity but were unsuccessful before they left the area.

Efforts by the residents to alert the police for reinforcement failed.

Robbers had unleashed terror on banks in Ikirun, Ilesa, Ejigbo, Iwo, Okuku, Gbongan, Ikire, Ede, Ile-Ife, and Osogbo

late last year.

Monday's raid was the 11th in the last four months.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Olayemi, said the robbers went away with about N2 million cash.

He, however, blamed the robbery incident on the bank's laxity.

The PPRO added that banks have refused to comply with police directive to link their branches to the police control room which would have alerted the police of danger in the bank.

Olayemi said only three banks in the state have so far complied with the directive.

## PDP Lawmakers Plan Secret Screening Of EKSIEC Members - AC

By Gbenga Sodeinde  
REPORTER, Ado-Ekiti

Action Congress (AC) has accused the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) members in the Ekiti State House of Assembly of planning to screen and endorse members of the Ekiti State Independent Electoral Commission (EKSIEC) secretly.

A statement signed by Yemi Adaramodu of Kayode Fayemi Campaign Organisation said the PDP had boasted that its members in the Assembly would retire into the closet, screen and endorse members of EKSIEC. Adaramodu said this chicanery is not unfamiliar with PDP in Ekiti State.

"Their latest onslaught against the fragile peace of the state is informed by their usual failure at establishing legitimacy and clothing it as genuine actions.

"Since they have doled out portions of filthy lucre to their April electoral pogrom hand tools, these evil messengers are now desirous of proving that they are really worth the mesh of porridge they sold their souls for.

"A particular ludicrous character and a political deserter who had once ruined the hallowed honour of the state Assembly had boasted that the PDP should allocate only nine members to him for the gutter job.

"This petulant legislative aide wishes to employ his old trade of brigandage to push this agenda with his chosen evil disciples. We wish to inform Nigerians that a regime which daily accuses AC as being responsible for its failures and errors of commission, could on its own decide to run the state into avoidable turmoil."

## Man Kills Younger Brother In Lagos

By Femi Ogbornikan  
REPORTER, Lagos

Police in Lagos State have arrested a man for allegedly murdering his younger brother.

The incident occurred at Ketu in Kosofe Council at the weekend.

It was learnt that the suspect, John Ekaira, stabbed his younger brother, Victor, on the neck with a knife on Sunday during a hot argument over a yet-to-be-determined issue.

The siblings were staying together in a one-bedroom apartment at No. 26, Igbonla Street, Ketu, Lagos until the incident.

The victim, it was learnt, was rushed to an hospital but he passed on shortly after he was admitted.

The state Deputy Public Relations Officer, ASP Olumide Jimoh, confirmed the report. He said the corpse had been removed and deposited at a public mortuary in Lagos for post mortem examination.

The spokesman also confirmed the arrest of the suspect. He said police are already investigating the incident.



President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Adebayo Babington-Ashaye (right), and Vice President, Richard Uche, at the inauguration of the Board of Faculties of the Institute in Lagos... on Monday. Photo: Felix Elijah

## Danger Looms As Ojota Footbridge May Collapse Soon

By Akinwunmi King  
TRAINEE REPORTER, Lagos

There are indications that the pedestrian bridge at Ojota may soon give way due to old age and lack of maintenance.

Lagosians using the footbridge may have no option than to cross the expressway, as the bridge is at the verge of collapse.

Investigation showed that the plate on which pedestrians walk is damaged and there is a particular portion on the bridge, which undulates while

walking on it.

But there are task force men at Ojota who arrest pedestrians who cross the expressway.

Some of the pedestrians, who spoke with our reporter, decried the present situation of the bridge.

"I do not like crossing the expressway, not because I fear the task force men, but because I don't want to endanger my life. But the way this bridge is now, it is very dangerous, it can give way anytime and when that happens, we all know what it would result to - lives

would be lost," Oluwaseun Taiwo said.

Another pedestrian called on the state government to withdraw the task force men from Ojota.

"This bridge is no longer safe for use. But if you cross the road, the task force men would apprehend you. I am sure that the bridge cannot carry up to 50 people at a time; it would definitely come down. So, we cannot continue to risk using it.

"The government should reconstruct the bridge and tell the task force officials to leave the place and stop arresting people pending when the bridge would be reconstructed," he said.

## Lagos Receives Arms, Ammunition Worth N200m From IG

By Wisdom Patrick  
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro, has ordered the release of arms and ammunition worth over N200 million to the Lagos State Police Command. This is to boost crime-fighting capability of the state command.

It was learnt that the equipment arrived the state on Wednesday last week from Abuja.

A top police officer in the state said the items are not from the controversial Police Equipment Fund (PEF) under the leadership of Kenny Matins. He

added that the items include teargas canisters, AK47 rifles, ammunition, bullet-proof vests, and walkie-talkies as well as patrol vehicles.

The source also said other states of the federation, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), would get out of the imported equipment.

He added that the arms and ammunition were purchased by the leadership of the police.

Police in Lagos on Monday practised the use of the new equipment. The policemen were in high spirit when *Daily Independent* visited the State Command Headquarters on

Monday morning.

The state Police Commissioner, Muhammed Abubakar, said in a telephone interview that his men were on the road to display the new patrol vehicles and "to tell criminals in the state that the time has come for them to either give up crime or relocate."

The truth is that one person must leave this state for the other and certainly it cannot be policemen. But I can tell you that we have what it takes now to confront criminals in the state."

The commissioner, however, refused to comment on the issue of arms and ammunition released by the police high command in Abuja to his command. But a senior police officer confirmed the development.

## Safety Master Plan For Aviation Coming - Minister

By Funmi Falobi  
REPORTER, Lagos

Federal Government said it would soon come out with a safety master plan for the country's aviation sector to boost public confidence in air travel.

Minister of Transport, Diezani Allison-Madueke, disclosed this in Lagos on Monday. She said the master plan, to be tailored towards solving industry safety problems, would be implemented between 12 and 18 months. According to the General Manager (Public Affairs), Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Supo Atobatele, Allison-Madueke spoke during a brief visit to the agency.

The minister said after the implementation the master plan would take the industry to greater height. She reaffirmed her commitment to safety and expressed appreciation to the management for promoting excellence in air traffic services.

## NDLEA Arrests Two For Drug Trafficking

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) said it arrested a pregnant woman, Nana Ama Atiku 34 years, and 55-year-old Liadi Shittu Taiwo at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport (MMA) Lagos for trafficking in hard drugs.

Atiku, a mother of three who is eight months pregnant, was arrested last Thursday for being in possession of 1.624kg of cannabis.

The arrest, according to a statement by the Public Affairs Officer, NDLEA, Ofoyeju Mitchell, took place at the baggage hall during screening of passengers on Ethiopian Airline flight from Lagos to Addis-Ababa.

The block of cannabis was wrapped in a black polythene bag inside another bag containing damp bitter leaf vegetable. The suspect said she was taking the bag of vegetable to her friend simply identified as Ify who lives in Dubai.

"My friend in Dubai called me that I should help her collect a bag of bitter leaf vegetable from her brother to take to her. I did not know that there is drug inside," she was quoted as saying.

"However, ignorance is no defence in drug cases. Passengers should be careful and suspicious of any parcel or bag given to them by friends or relatives as drugs could be concealed in them," Mitchell said. Atiku is a native of Ubakala town in Umuahia South Council, Abia State.

## Lagos Mob Lynches Man For Child Kidnapping

By Anthony Okoro  
REPORTER, Lagos

A middle-aged man was lynched in Lagos on Monday for allegedly kidnapping a child.

The incident occurred at Charity Bus Stop, along Oshodi-Apapa Expressway, Lagos. He only gave his name as Bayo with no fixed address before he was killed.

It was learnt that the man allegedly kidnapped a five-year old boy after luring him with a N5 biscuit. According to an eyewitness account, the teenager, Gbenga Alani, was playing with other children near his mother's shop in the area when he eventually disappeared.

The victim was said to have gone to a nearby provision shop where he bought the biscuit which he used to entice the boy.

Reports said the boy followed him up to Charity bus stop before the mother raised alarm over his disappearance. The man, it was learnt, was caught while trying to board a vehicle after he suspected that people were pursuing him.