

# 52-yr-old winner of MTN's jeep dies on okada

FOR many years Tajudeen Opeyemi a.k.a Takulaya toiled to make ends meet. He traversed the distance between Lagos and Ilorin, Kwara State, working as security guard, among other menial jobs.

Luck, however, smiled on him recently when he took part in a promo organised by communication giant, MTN, and won a sports utility vehicle (SUV). The feat was said to have attracted a deluge of congratulatory messages from his friends and well wishers.

But just when it appeared as if his penurious life would witness a complete turnaround, tragedy struck. In one of the bizarre incidents of life, the proud owner of a brand new SUV died riding a commercial motorcycle popularly called okada.

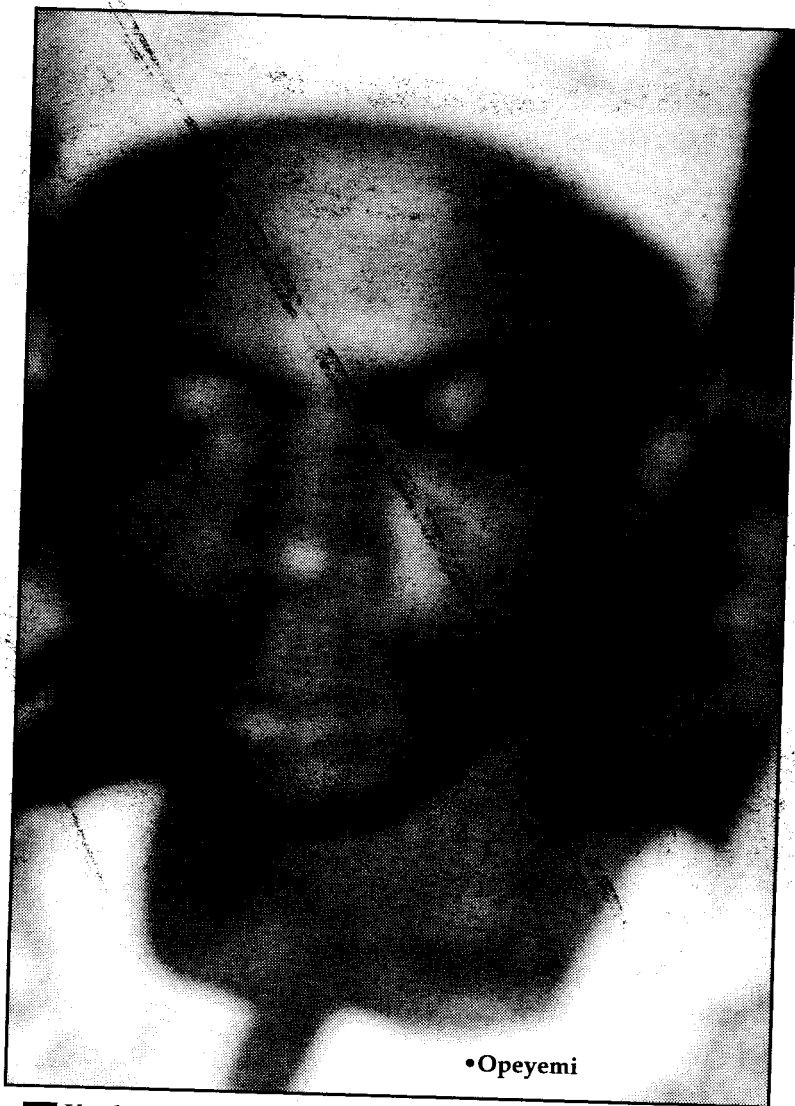
The 52-year-old indigene of Kwara State was said to have abandoned his car at home and opted for okada to beat traffic congestion because he was already running late for an appointment. The decision however cost him his life. The okada on which he rode fell on the road after it was hit by a car from behind and a truck ran over him. He died before he could be rushed to the hospital.

The deceased was buried in his village, Fanto in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State on July 7, amid tears by family members, friends and colleagues who described his death as a great loss.

Takulay was said to have been a member of the Oodua People's Congress until his death. A colleague of the deceased, Dr. Ibrahim Afonja, explained how met his untimely death. He said:

"He was one of our zonal coordinators in Apapa, Lagos State and a national officer. He recently won a jeep in one of the promos organised by MTN and

we were all happy for him. On the day of the unfortunate incident, he abandoned his jeep with some of his friends somewhere in Apapa so he could make it to the general state meeting of our faction in Agodo, Egbe, near Ikotun, a Lagos suburb. He feared



• Opeyemi

■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

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there might be traffic gridlock on the road and he wanted to avoid it.

“He was riding a motorcycle with one of his aides when a car hit them from behind and they both fell. Unfortunately, they were crushed to death by a sewage disposal truck.”

Takulaya's friends were said to be oblivious of the incident until several calls to his telephone lines yielded no response. News of his death only got to them later in the night.

An acquaintance of the

deceased, who pleaded anonymity, said: “His friends had no inkling that something terrible had happened to him until he did not show up to pick his jeep where he had parked it. It however dawned on them that all was not well with him when they did not get any response after making repeated calls to his telephone lines.”

“When the news of his death was broken, chieftains of OPC in Lagos State quickly arranged for his body to be conveyed to his home town in Kwara State. But there was a confrontation between OPC members conveying his remains to his home town and some soldiers who were also traveling on the road, and it took mature intervention of members of the OPC to calm the frayed nerves of the soldiers.

“Tajudeen was fearless and fiery when it comes to activism and that is why he was nicknamed ‘Takulaya’ (the one that dares death), such that none of us knew his surname. I believed that his death was natural because he was not someone who could be fallen or killed by juju.

“I wouldn't know why he abandoned his car and instead settled for okada, but I guess he was destined to end his life that way.

“He is survived by wives and children. He died when we needed him most because of his immense contributions to the operations and growth of our organisation in Lagos State and the federation.”

A family friend, who also asked not to be named, told our reporter that there was more to Takulaya's death than meets the eye.

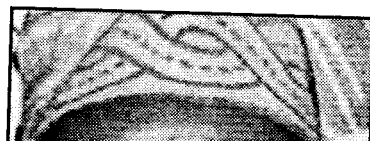
He said: “I feel a sense of personal loss because of Takulaya's closeness to my family. He was such a nice person who will be missed by those who knew him. As for me, I believe that his death was beyond the ordinary. But then, such is the fate of the valiant; they are usually killed by little things.”

## How Ogun PDP candidate died 24 hours to election

THE sleepy town of the Igbesa in Ado-Odo Local Government Area of Ogun State was thrown into mourning following the death of a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) councillor.

■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

friends numbering three arrived and he was even calling on members of his campaign organisation to thank one of the three men who had de-



gave his name as Elder Biliaminu recalled the protest that greeted Alabi's strange death and the partial disruption of the election.

“Following Alembe's death, ag-

youths was to honour the late politician.

“We had no option but to protest Alembe's mysterious death because we suspected foul play.”