

One dead in NURTW clash

•Remains of properties destroyed at Oshodi...yesterday

PHOTOS: RAHMANSANUSI



•Police vehicles stationed at Oshodi...yesterday

•LASTMA: motorists robbed

THE police yesterday confirmed one person dead in a skirmish between factions of a road union in Lagos.

The clash stalled traffic on the Oshodi-Apapa Expressway.

But sources said no fewer than six persons died.

Twenty-seven vehicles, including commercial buses, and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed.

The factional National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) members' clash began on Tuesday night and continued yesterday at Oshodi.

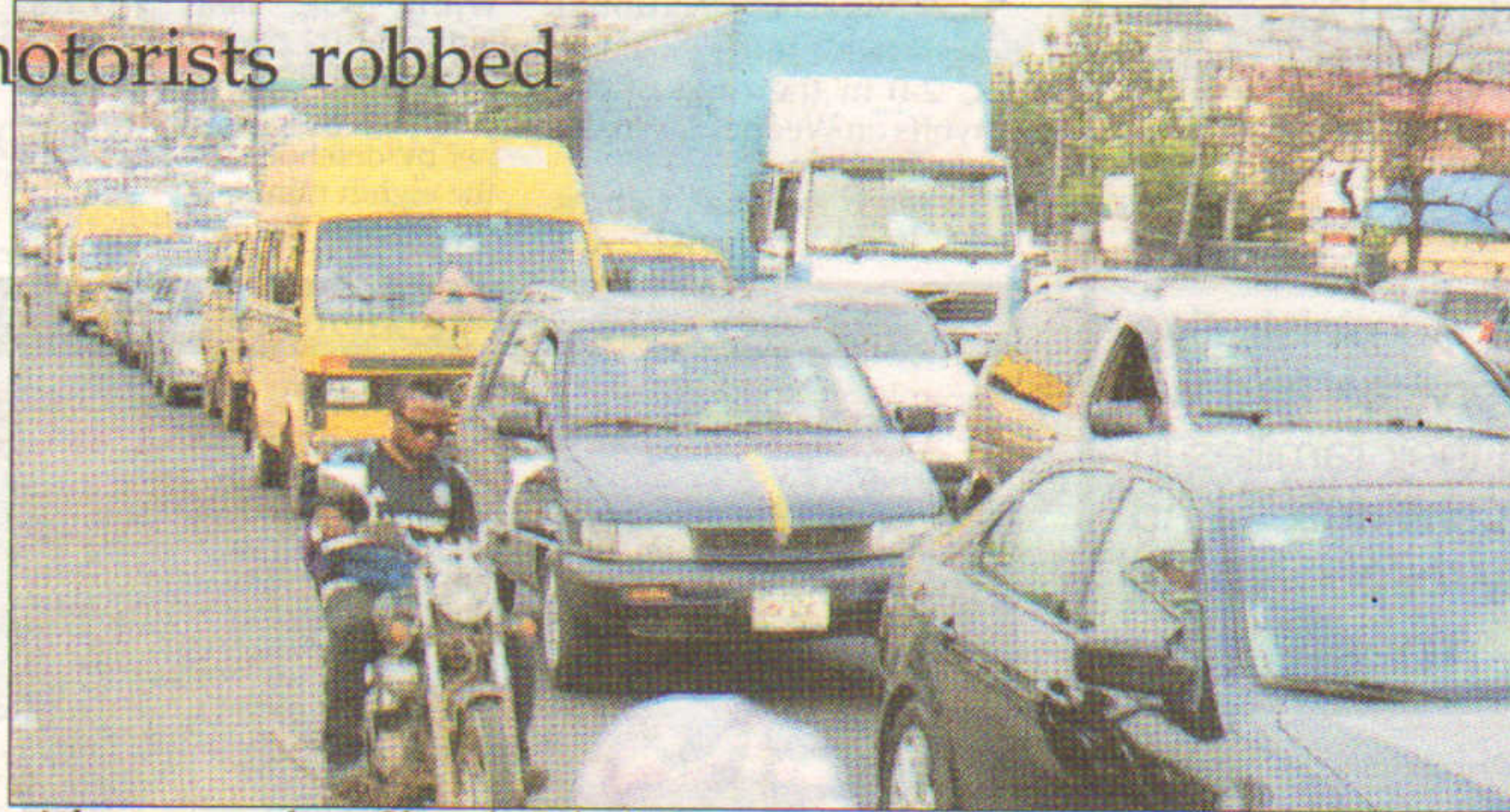
They fought with all sorts of weapons.

The police cordoned off the link road from Oshodi to Ilupeju, leading to heavy traffic on the Oshodi-Apapa Expressway.

Motorists coming from Lagos Island through Gbagada and Ikorodu via Anthony were caught in the traffic.

There were conflicting accounts of the clash. An account said it started after the police attached to the Mosafejo Police Station arrested one person for smoking Indian hemp.

Another said it was a supremacy battle between two NURTW factions for the control of parks.



•A long queue along Gbagada-Oshodi Expressway...yesterday



•Passengers waiting for buses at Oshodi...yesterday

Union probes mayhem

LAGOS State Council of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Chairman Alhaji Tajudeen Agbede has promised to unravel the cause of the clashes in Oshodi.

He spoke while inaugurating a five-man committee to find out the immediate and remote causes of yesterday's fracas between factional members of the union.

Agbede said the union would not fold its arms and allow some disgruntled elements to destroy the state.

"We have been witnessing peace in Lagos State council of our union since my administration came in. We have restored peace in all our parks, so we shall try and find out the cause of the present problem in Oshodi with a view to finding lasting solution to it. I enjoin all our members in the state, especially in Oshodi and its environs to give peace a chance," he said.

He praised the state government and the police for their efforts in restoring peace to Oshodi.

By Tajudeen Adebajo and Sulaiman Salawudeen

It was learnt that no fewer than 30 people had been arrested by the Special Anti-

Robbery Squad (SARS).

Police spokesman Kenneth Nwosu, a deputy superintendent (DSP), said it was a contest for power between NURTW factions.

He said: "The hoodlums, who are rival members of the NURTW, engaged in a fight of supremacy over control of parks. In the process, about eight vehicles

were burnt, 10 vandalised. One person was gunned down; five cutlasses and four expended cartridges were recovered.

"Normalcy has been restored as adequate security has been put in place to avert any further breach of the peace. Nine persons have been arrested and already undergoing interrogation while further operations to put a permanent stop to the activities of the hoodlums are ongoing."

A senior official of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) told *The Nation* that some LASTMA officials were victims of the clash.

"Some of our officials could not go through the under bridge near Mosafejo Market; they had to go and turn at Gbagada," she said.

LASTMA, she said, also positioned some of its men in strategic locations to ensure that traffic did not stand still.

"There were reports of theft including snatching of cameras from the people who stood by taking pictures of the fracas; the hoodlums also seized opportunity of the heavy traffic snarl to rob motorists of their bags, cash, jewellery and other valuable properties," she stated.

"As I was about leaving office, I saw a large number of men of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) moving towards our office. Information reaching us had it that some of the hoodlums loyal to an opposition party want to set fire to the newly acquired BRT buses by the state government," she said.

S EVEN suspected stowaways who

By Precious Igbonwelundu

Navy parades seven arrested stowaways