

Chukwu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, he observed that with the crowd around

the security, and I had to hold tight to my gown to get

morning before I came out two hours later in the rain,

our institutions and to the system.

Suicide bombers kill 50 at eid prayer ground

TWO explosions struck an open air praying area in Damaturu, Yobe State capital killing no less than 50 people as Muslim worshippers gathered to mark Eid el-Fitr on Friday morning, witnesses said.

Eye witnesses put the number of the dead at 50 while the army and the police respectively said nine and 15 people died.

"I was sitting down when I heard two bomb blasts. I saw the bodies of five people and many were injured," said Muhammad Adamu, a businessman who was at the prayer area, beside the main road leading to the centre of the predominantly Muslim city of Damaturu, Yobe State on Friday, when the blasts happened at around 8 a.m.

"The first blast went off around 07:15 while security

volunteers who had come earlier than worshippers were waiting for the worshippers so they could assist in crowd control," added eye witness Ahmad Adamu, a security volunteer.

"While we were attending to the victims we heard another blast about 500 metres away," he added.

Some 300 people have been killed this month.

Because of the threat of a Boko Haram attack, worshippers were being searched before they reached the eid grounds - this is where the explosions happened.

Another witness, Muslim preacher Ustaz Abdullahi, also said he saw five people killed.

Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, Acting Director, Army Public Relations, in a statement confirmed the

explosions, stating that: "Four persons died in the first explosion and seven people were injured. While in the second explosion, five people lost their lives and eleven people were wounded. Troops and security agencies responded immediately to the incidents."

He explained that there were two suicide bomb explosions at about 7.40am, adding that: "Two female suicide bombers; an elderly woman and a 10-year-old girl detonated devices at screening areas mounted by the security for intending Muslim worshippers at Layin Gwange, Damaturu and at "Phase One", in front of former State Secretariat Complex, Damaturu.

"The situation is currently under control. Yobe State governor, Ibrahim Geidam

and the Chief of Army Staff, Major-General Tukur Yusuf Buratai have sympathised with the victims and the people of the state and urged residents to stay calm and be security conscious at all times," he said.

States to borrow

By SAHEED SALAWU

THE special intervention fund from which states are to borrow to pay backlog of workers' salary is actually a large chunk of the a little over \$2.1billion Excess Crude Account.

The Federal Government, two weeks ago, had announced a number of measures to bail out cash-strapped states, one of which was described as a Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)-packaged special intervention fund of between N250 billion and N350 billion from which states are to borrow.

250 passengers escape death as 2