

Ogoni youth dies after burying expired fish

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TENSION heightened in Ogoni on Sunday, following the untimely death of a youth of Taabaa community in Khana local government area of Rivers State barely a few hours after he assisted in burying the expired fish dumped in the area.

Our correspondent gathered that Nule Biradee, 24, was among the over 15 persons engaged by a faction of the Taabaa Traditional Council to bury the toxic fish allegedly dumped in the community by a Port Harcourt-based fishing firm last week.

Apart from Biradee, others who took part in burying the fish, are said to have taken ill shortly after completing the exercise on Saturday.

Contrary to the directive that the samples of the expired fish be taken and analysed to determine what killed them and their impact on the environment, the natives went ahead to dig a shallow pit and bury the fish.

Each of the youths, who started digging the pit around 3pm on Saturday and completed the assignment late in the night, was given N1,000 by the faction that got N1million gift from the fishing firm that dumped the toxic materials in the area.

It was gathered that one of the factions of the Taabaa Traditional Rulers Council, decided to go ahead with burying the toxic fish after the fishing company had put down N1 million for the job on Saturday.

The N1m offer by the fishing firm, Stallion Nigeria Limited, it was learnt, was promptly rejected by the

Taabaa Youth Council, headed by Mr. Martins Amba-Teba, which had already engaged a firm of lawyers to prosecute the company for the wicked act.

Amongst other things, the TYC requested Stallion, which was given 24 hours last Thursday by the Rivers State Government to clean up the community, to pay the people N10 million and produce the staff concerned for prosecution.

Guild of Editors berates FG over media intolerance

Obinna Ezeobi

THE Nigerian Guild of Editors has condemned the recent spate of arrests and intimidation of journalists by government agencies.

Rising from its second standing meeting held between Wednesday and Friday in Sokoto, during which it reviewed the current state of the media and the nation, the Guild expressed displeasure that the nation was sliding into a police state.

It added that the development was characterised by the illegal invasion of media houses and indiscriminate arrests of journalists by security agents, saying that the development would stall the growth of democracy, and ridicules the nation in the comity of nations.

The guild also regretted that the Federal Government was yet to implement measures proposed by the Guild and Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, towards checking the distress in the media industry.

It also stated that this had

Meanwhile, airline operators have also continued to complain about the location of the giant cargo-screening machine at the GAT.

The airline said besides obstructing the movement of passengers, the handling of cargo and passengers at the same point made operation rowdy.

"You need to come to the airport very early in the morning and see how rowdy it is. The heaps of cartoons are scattered everywhere.

"The airline counters are too small and still all facilitation takes place at the same time," an official explained.

resulted in the high cost of newsprint and allied products, as well as broadcast equipment making it difficult for the media to effectively perform its statutory role.

The body equally expressed displeasure over harsh conditions, which stifle journalists independence, creativity and objectivity.

It urged media owners to make their working environment more conducive by paying prompt remunerations and providing the necessary working tools for their workers.

It similarly called on the Federal Government to accelerate the reconstitution of the Nigerian Press Council to provide a platform for Nigerians dissatisfied with the operations of the media to seek redress.

The Guild also advised journalists to observe high ethical standards in their reports in the count down to the 2007 general elections and give equal opportunity, airtime and space to the contending political, social and economic groups.