

Boy, 10, drowns in R'Niger

A 10-year-old boy, identified as Emmanuel Kabuka, on Saturday drowned in Asaba axis of the River Niger.

The little Kabuka, in company with two of his peers, went the river at Cable Point area of Asaba, to swim in continuation of the Christmas and New Year festivities, before his tragic end.

Our correspondent gathered that the deceased, while at the bank of the river, hurriedly pulled his clothes and jumped into the river to the admiration of his friends.

However, fears gripped his peers when he did not swim back ashore after about three hours.

His panic-stricken friends later gathered his clothes and fled home to inform his guardians about the fate of the primary one pupil of Asagba Primary School, Asaba.

The development threw his guardians and residents of Odozi Obodo Street, Ezenei Quarters, Asaba, into mourning.

However, a search party, made up of local divers, was raised to fish out the remains of the boy from the river.

But a fisherman recovered his remains before the team could swing into action.

His remains were later buried at the bank of the river in compliance with the tradition.

The Marine Police, Asaba, confirmed the report.

Three youths killed in shoot-out

Sola Adebayo, Warri

THREE youths were on Saturday killed in a shoot-out between two groups in Ughelli, headquarters of Ughelli North Local Government area of Delta State.

Our correspondent learnt that the gun battle ensued between Ekiugbo and Oteri youths at the residence of a member of Delta State House of Assembly, (name withheld) in the town.

The lawmaker lost his third term bid in the just

concluded primaries of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party.

Findings by our correspondent revealed that some armed Ekiugbo youths stormed the residence of the embattled lawmaker on Isoko Road, in the early hours of Saturday to demand financial compensation for the assistance rendered to him during the primaries to pick the PDP's candidate for DTHA in the constituency.

It was further gathered that the lawmaker who

scheduled the appointment with the youths to offset the money, bluntly declined audience with his guests.

This development reportedly angered the youths who promptly embarked on violent protest, shooting sporadically into the air.

The situation resulted in tension in the area prompting the lawmaker to contact his Oteri kinsmen within the community.

Within a short period, Oteri youths, who brandished superior weapons,

stormed the scene and confronted their Ekiugbo counterparts.

Findings by our correspondent also revealed that Ekiugbo youths soon bowed to the superior firepower of the Oteri group as three of their combatants were felled in the gun duel.

The victorious Oteri youths departed the scene having freed the lawmaker, before the arrival of the police.

The police, who thereafter claimed responsibility for the killing of the youths, later

removed the corpses from the lawmaker's residence.

The Commissioner of Police, State Command, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, in a telephone interview on Saturday, said the deceased were bandits, adding that they were killed in a gun battle with the men of the anti-robbery squad of the command.

Ekpoudom, who was reminded by our correspondent about the circumstance of the death of the youths, insisted that he relied on the report of the Divisional Police Officer in the area.

NDDC bus operators are reckless
—FRSC boss

Ofonime Umanah, Calabar

SECTOR Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission in Cross River State, Mrs. Uzoamaka Chukwu, on Sunday in Calabar, said the operators of the Niger Delta Development Commission commercial buses were reckless on the highways.

She said notwithstanding this, it was gratifying that no case of accident was reported in the state throughout the Christmas celebrations.

The sector commander said in an interview with our correspondent that it was the first time in the history of the state that accidents did not occur during the yuletide.



•L-R: Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Dr. Timiebi Koripomo-Agary, the Minister, Dr. Hassan Lawal; and representative of the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mr. Jimoh Lawal, at the 2006 Ministerial Press Briefing in Abuja ...on Tuesday. Photo: Sam Adeko.

No automatic replacement for Jonathan

Bisi Olaniran, Yenagoa

running mate to the presiden-

tor at the Presidency, before

Bayelsa Youth Alliance, led by