

Five feared dead as Alao-Akala kicks off campaign

Olalekan Adetayo, Ibadan

FIVE persons suspected to be Peoples Democratic Party faithful were feared dead in a ghastly auto crash on Thursday in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

About 15 other injured persons were rushed to an undisclosed hospital for medical attention. The party faithful were returning to the state capital from Oyo town where the state governor, Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala, commenced his re-election campaign.

The accident, which involved a commercial bus marked XU 479 KSF, reportedly occurred at a spot in Moniya on the Ibadan-Oyo

Expressway. The occupants of the bus were flung out as it somersaulted twice.

The Moniya Unit Commander, Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Adebayo Francis, confirmed the accident to our correspondent, blaming it on overspeeding and overloading.

Earlier at the rally, former President Olusegun Obasanjo admitted publicly for the first time that the people of the South-West did not contribute to his emergence as president in 1999 and 2003. Obasanjo, who is the chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party Board of Trustees, however, said his candidacy was supported by the North,

which did not consider his ethnic group or religion.

Amid singing and dancing by the crowd, he said, "Those in the opposition who are trying to pull down the good work we have achieved, those who have nothing to offer our people other than negativity, please do not join them. Let us convince our people that the PDP is the only party that we can join in this part of the country."

"When we started in 1999, we opted for the PDP because we believed that the Yoruba people could no longer continue to remain outside the mainstream. This was because we had been too long outside the mainstream. *Abi se won se pe fun wa ni?*

(Or are we accursed as a people?)"

While asking the people to judge politicians by their performance, Obasanjo said he would not have attended the rally if Alao-Akala had not performed well in office.

"There has been steady progress in Oyo State since Akala came on board. He has also told me that we have not seen anything yet and that more is coming. You must support him because I know he is a man of his words," he added.

Also speaking, Alao-Akala boasted that he was more experienced than other contenders for the governorship seat.

He said, "I challenge any

of my opponents who has the kind of experience I have to come out. You can't read the kind of experience I have in any textbook, you acquire it.

"I was a local government chairman, I was a deputy governor and now I am a governor. I've got enough experience to rule this state. No past governor has done what I have done in office.

"Everywhere we go from today, there are projects to commission. From Ibadan to Oyo, Ibarapa, Oke-Ogun and Ogbomosho, people are feeling our impact."

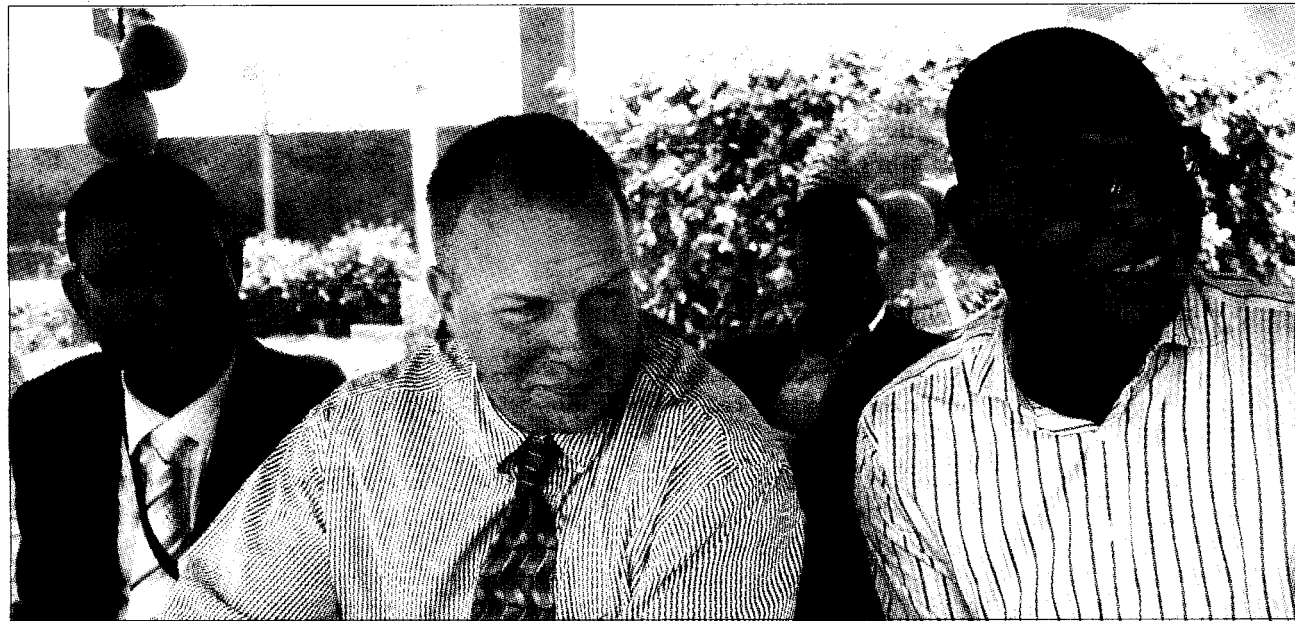
He described the governors of some non-PDP states in the South-West as 'judiciary governors', noting, "Oyo is the heart of the South West, they cannot take it from us."

Making a veiled reference to the Action Congress of Nigeria that has the broom as its symbol, the governor said it was a sign of poverty. He declared that the PDP's symbol, the umbrella, was for the use of nobles in rain and sunshine.

He denied an allegation that he was feeding school pupils with fetish food, adding, "If I was fed with such fetish food when I was young, would I have become a governor?"

The rally was preceded by the inauguration of Atiba Hall in Oyo town, which was recently renovated at the cost of N265m by the state government and the four local governments in the area. Apparently because of the frosty relationship between the governor and the traditional ruler of the town, the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III, the monarch was absent from the commissioning.

Oba Adeyemi had a few months ago alleged that the governor was plotting to kill him. Asked why the Alaafin was not at the inauguration, which took place near his palace, Alao-Akala's media aide, Alhaji Azeez Fehintola, replied, "Kabiyesi travelled. That is why he was not at the occasion."



•L-R: Head, Technical Training Centre, Nigerian Bottling Company Plc, Mr. Tope Dada; Managing Director, NBC, Mr. Jim Lafferty; and Human Resources Director, Mr. Femi Oke, during the Set 19 graduation programme of the Technical Training Centre of NBC, in Lagos...on Thursday. Photo: Segun Bakare

Trovan vaccines: Appeal court dismisses suit against Pfizer

Friday Olorok, Abuja

THE Court of Appeal in Abuja on Thursday dismissed two applications by Trovan Victims Forum and Health Care Meningitis Trust Fund challenging the judgment of a Federal High Court which ordered the transfer of the Trovan vaccine suit to Kano State.

Dismissing the two motions, the appellate court held that under Order 11 Rule 5 of the Court of Appeal Rules 2007 "once an appeal is withdrawn, it is liable to be dismissed."

FHC, Abuja.

The order by Justice Kolawole made on June 29, 2010 remains "extant" and live, saying it does not mean that the Kano State High Court must be bound by the order.

The order halted the settlement of the victims of the Trovan vaccines.

Settlement process were said to have commenced with about 334 persons filing out for DNA test when suddenly the number went up to 517.

The development prompted the HealthCare Meningitis

Trust Fund prescribing the said DNA test to ascertain the actual number of persons qualified for settlement.

About 200 persons were said to have been involved in the Trovan clinical trial in Kano but 11 persons died in the process.

Armed with the court order, the Registry of the court had prepared to transfer the records of the proceedings to the registry of Kano State High Court within the 72 hours of delivering the ruling to ensure that the suit commences properly before the Chief

Judge of the Kano State High Court who, according to Justice Kolawole, would make an order as to the hearing of the suit in Kano State.

But Dodo stated that the matter was being settled and that there was remote possibility of having a new case against Pfizer over settlements claims.

Pfizer Incorporated; Pfizer; David Odiwo (Secretary of the Trust Fund); Attorney-General of the Federation and Corporate Affairs Commission were named as defendants to the suit.

Adagbrite laments Abekuta's poor state