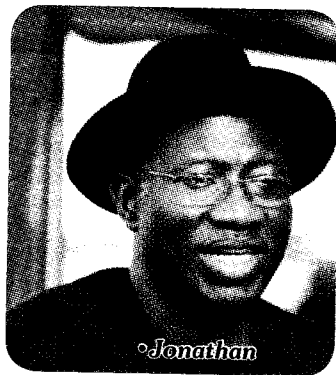


Nigeria loses N80bn to bad roads annually – Investigation

NIGERIA is currently losing about N80bn annually due to the deplorable condition of her roads. A document prepared by the Federal Government has revealed that the country will need N35bn as the annual operating cost of keeping the roads in a good shape. According to the document, a total of N300bn is required to be spent over the next 10 years to bring the roads to a "satisfactory condition."

Page 19



Jonathan assigns portfolios to new ministers

PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan is gradually moving close to forming his new government. On Monday, he assigned portfolios to the second batch of 17 ministers, who had been sworn in on Friday. Before the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator Anyim Pius Anyim, released the portfolios Monday evening, many of the ministers had started work at their ministries. Those who had resumed included Mr. Mike Onolememe (Works); Mr. Olusegun Aganga (Trade and Investment); Ambassador Olugbenga Ashiru (Foreign Affairs); Alhaji Bukar Tijani (Minister of State for Agriculture); and Dr. Yerima Ngama (Minister of State for Finance).

Page 9

THE MOST WIDELY READ NEWSPAPER

N150

THE PUNCH

Minimum wage:
FG, Labour
crisis meeting
deadlocked,
strike looms



• Omar

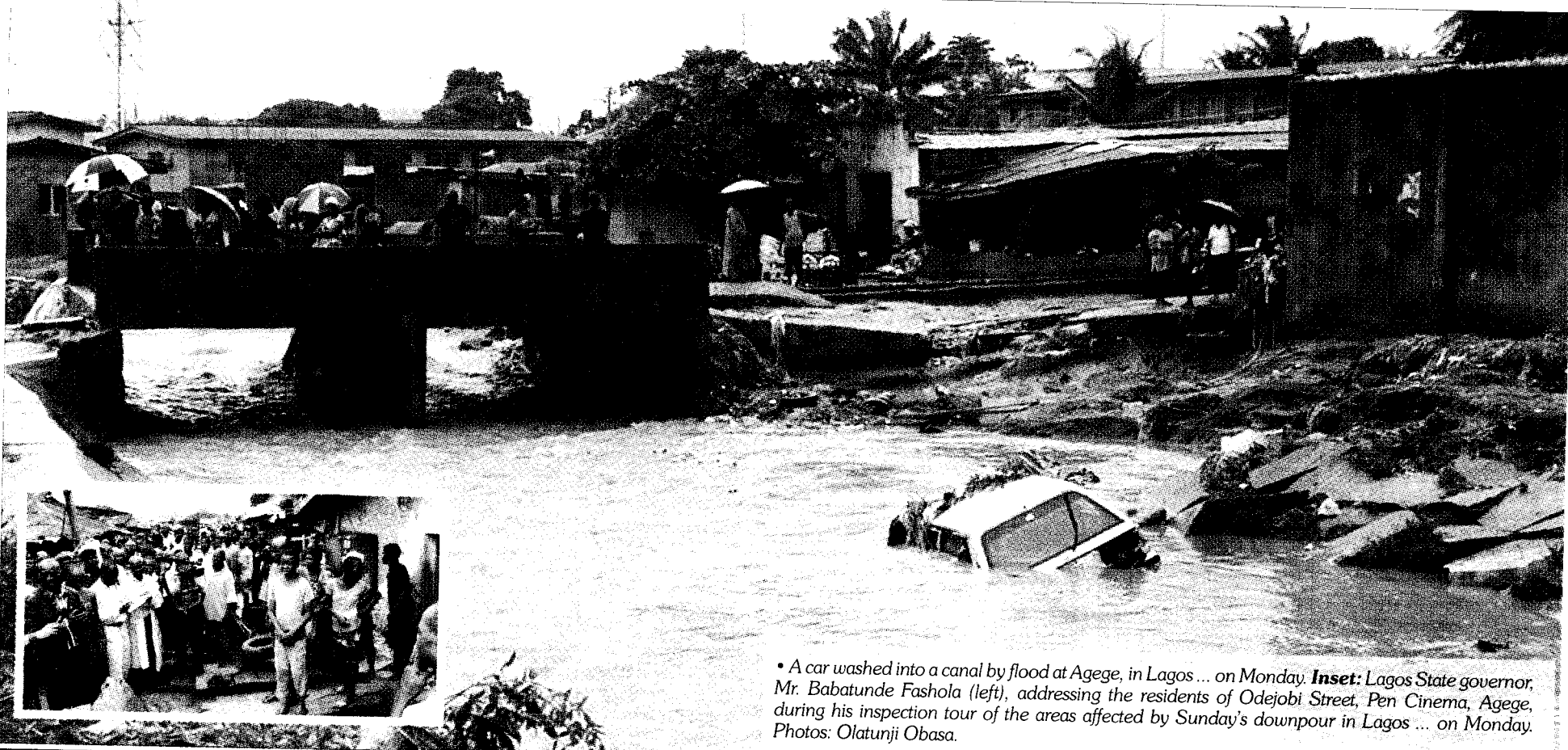
TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2011 VOL. 17 NO. 20,922 Website: www.punchontheweb.com

Page 2

Deaths, destruction trail Lagos savage floods

Page 2

- 11 children drown in canal, three adults die
- Thousands displaced, section of expressway collapses
- Fashola tours affected areas, promises to seek FG help



• A car washed into a canal by flood at Agege, in Lagos ... on Monday. **Inset:** Lagos State governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (left), addressing the residents of Odejobi Street, Pen Cinema, Agege, during his inspection tour of the areas affected by Sunday's downpour in Lagos ... on Monday. Photos: Olatunji Obasa.

Residents go fishing on flooded streets

AS some Lagos residents continue to count their losses following Sunday's downpour, which resulted in the flooding of different parts of the metropolis, some young men in the Iyana-Ipaja area of the state are making brisk business as fishermen. Although they are not fishermen in the real sense of the word, the floods have awakened

the ingenuity of these young men, who have seen some fish swimming around their flooded neighbourhood. As one of the 'fishermen' put it, "Flood or no flood, life must continue. That's why you see me here. Each time rain falls, it is easy to catch fish here."

Page 5



Have a story for us?

Contact

Politics: 08038747995
 politics@punchng.com
 General News: 08033238753
 generalnews@punchng.com
 Business: 08058104591
 business@punchng.com

ETHICAL COMPLAINTS?

- We, Punch Nigeria Limited, do not demand or accept gifts or gratification to publish articles or photographs, neither do our journalists. Therefore, we implore you not to offer any to our journalists. In the event that a PUNCH journalist demands such, please send your complaint(s) to ethics@punchng.com or 08168214977.

CODE OF ETHICS

- We are guided by the principles of factual, balanced and fair reporting and commentaries.
- We believe that these principles and ethical conduct are the basis of public trust and confidence.
- We believe that a system of self regulation, through a professional code of ethics under an independent, body would best serve the interest of the profession and society.
- We subscribe to the Ombudsman mechanism established by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, supported by other stakeholders, to mediate complaints against the press on ethical conduct and recommend redress.

For more information, please contact:
 Office of the Ombudsman,
 Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria
 8, Maryland Crescent,
 Maryland, Ikeja.
 Or e-mail:
 ngombudsman@yahoo.com

TODAY IN HISTORY

July 12, 1862

The Medal of Honor is authorized by the United States Congress.

July 12, 1912

The first foreign-made film to premiere in America, "Queen Elizabeth", was shown. The French film starred Sarah Bernhardt and Lon Telleger.

July 12, 1957

1st President to fly in helicopter-Dwight Eisenhower

July 12, 1975

Manuel Pinto da Costa becomes the first president of the newly independent Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

Deaths, destruction trail Lagos savage floods

**Waheed Bakare,
 Sesan Olufowobi, Simon
 Utebor, Kunle Falayi**

AMID fears of further heavy rain, Lagos residents on Monday took stock of their losses to Sunday's 15-hour downpour. And the figures are scary: several deaths, thousands of displaced persons, devastated homes and businesses, damaged vehicles, and blocked roads.

Four teenage girls and a baby girl were found dead in a poorly-ventilated restaurant at Allen Avenue, Ikeja, where they had taken refuge from the rain and flood. In Abor, Alimosho Local Government Area, two men and a woman were drowned. The Chairman of Oshodi Agege Local Council Development Area, Mr. Emmanuel Alagbe, said 11 children drowned in a canal in

the area.

In many parts of the metropolis, vehicles and houses were submerged by the floods, while hundreds of houses collapsed under the weight of the persistent rain.

Our correspondents report that a section of the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway has been rendered impassable after a stretch of the busy expressway caved in.

Governor Babatunde Fashola said on Monday that he would promptly write to President Goodluck Jonathan to take action on the road and to come to the aid of victims of the floods.

Fashola, who had on Sunday announced an emergency holiday for school pupils and workers in the state, bemoaned the level of destruction while touring the metropolis on Monday.

"My sympathy goes to people, who lost their children, whether we can reach them or not. I condole with them. We have gone round the state, Obawole, Agege, Shomolu, Apapa, Akoka, Alagbado and Jakande to mention a few. Many people in the state have lost properties. We will be making an appeal to the Federal Government to help with funding to relocate and resettle them," Fashola said.

The National Emergency Management Agency has described the Lagos floods as 'incredible phenomena' and 'the most devastating so far' this year.

The Director-General of NEMA, Muhammad Sani-Sidi, said this during the first day on-the-spot assessment of some of the areas worst affected, according to a statement by the agency's spokesman, Yushau

Shuaibu.

Sani-Sidi, who led a team of response agencies to Lagos, noted that a number of deaths had been recorded as well as the destruction of property. He said areas badly affected by the floods included Oshodi-Apapa Expressway, Ikorodu, Ojodu Berger/Isheri axis, Oworonsoki, Gbagada, Oniwaya/Agege, Iyana Ipaja and Lekki-Ajah.

Noting that the team would inspect the level of damage for necessary intervention by the Federal Government, he attributed the unprecedented flood to the length of rain, and heaviness blockage of water channels and drainages, indiscriminate dumping of refuse and the building of houses along channels.

Sani-Sidi called for inter-agency collaboration and coordination by the Federal Ministry of Environment,

SEMA, dam managers, fire service and construction engineers.

The team comprises security personnel, rescue officers, environmentalists and Red Cross.

One of our correspondents saw the corpse of a victim in Abor. A resident of the area who spoke to THE PUNCH on the condition of anonymity, said the deceased was a butcher at the Abattoir Market and Lairage, Oko-Oba.

"He was a butcher at Abattoir in Oko Oba. His wife was just delivered of a baby about three days ago. As the rain started and flood began to enter into their apartment, the wife called to alert him. As he was coming, he noticed that the whole place had been flooded. He waded through the flooded. Maybe it was in the course of that the unexpected happened," the resident said.

Some residents of Agbelele in Agbado-Oke Odo Local Council Development Area, recounted that they lost more than N10m worth of goods and property to the floods.

An advertising practitioner who is also a landlord in the area, Mr. Tope Awolaja, told our correspondent that he lost about N4m to the floods.

"Yesterday's downpour was a kind of tsunami in Agbelele. We need serious government's intervention. People could not leave their homes because everywhere was flooded. Those whose houses were submerged had to climb telecoms mast or rooftops to escape being swept away by the floods," Awolaja said.

Some residents of Sari-Iganmu in Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area have moved out of their homes en masse following the devastating effect of the floods on the area.

Some of the streets already deserted in the area include Adeolu, Okesanmi, Onakoya, Zion, Moshalasi and Afagbon.

It was also learnt that part of a storey building at 8, Moshalasi Lane collapsed on Sunday.

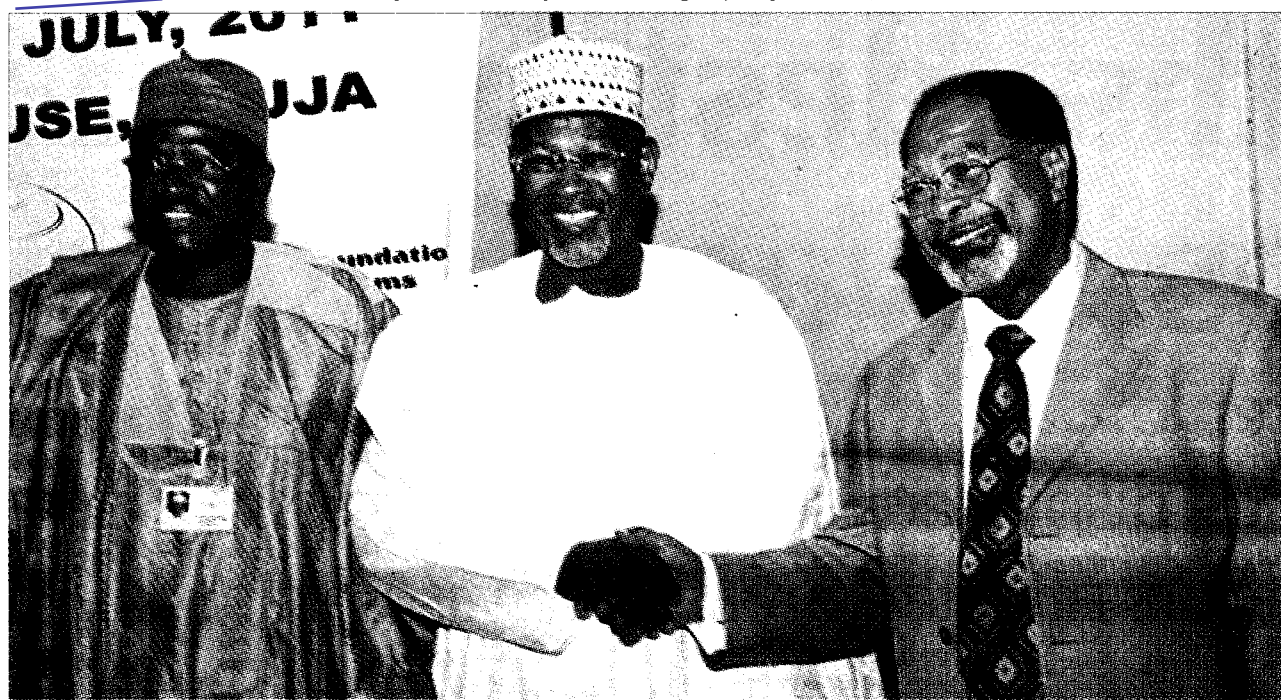
A resident of the area, Mr. Ayinde Bakare, said, "People have deserted the area. The movement started since Sunday. No house was spared in the area. We have never seen a thing like this. I took my family to Ajegunle and they are still there. Most families did not sleep in their houses, especially those who live in bungalows."

"Most residents became apprehensive when a part of the one-storey building collapsed. One of the room and parlour upstairs in the building just collapsed. Luckily, none of the occupants of the apartment was around when this happened."

"As I am talking to you now, you cannot see anybody on some streets. A lot of things were destroyed by the floods."

At Friesland Company, makers of Peak Milk, on Acme Road, Ikeja, the effect of the flood was devastating as the milk-producing firm has had to stop production.

Continued on page 10



• L-R: Independent National Electoral Commission, National Commissioner, Dr. Chris Iyimoga; Chairman, INEC, Prof. Attahiru Jega; and Country Director, International Foundation for Electoral Systems in Nigeria, Dr. Carl Dundas, during the INEC post-election Electoral Officers Retreat, in Abuja... on Monday. Photo: Sam Adeko.

Minimum wage: FG, Labour crisis meeting deadlocked, strike looms

Fidelis Soriwei, Abuja

THE Federal Government and organised labour, on Monday, failed to reach an agreement on the implementation of the new N18,000 minimum wage, raising fears of an imminent industrial action in the country.

The President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Abdulwaheed Omar, and the President of the Trade Union Congress, Mr. Peter Ebele, led labour leaders to the meeting where the Minister of Labour and Productivity, Chief Emeka Nwogu, and some top government officials represented the Federal Government.

After hours of inconclusive negotiations, the representatives of labour left the meeting with a vow to execute their threat to go on strike.

The NLC and TUC on June 23 had given the Federal Government a two-week ultimatum to ensure the implementation of the new minimum wage regime in the country. The ultimatum lapsed on July 8.

"We will go ahead with our arrangement for the strike since the Federal Government

has shown its reluctance to implement the minimum wage law," a union official at the meeting told journalists.

Another meeting between labour and the Federal Government has, however, been scheduled for Wednesday.

At the meeting, which was also attended by the representatives of the Nigerian Employers Consultative Alliance, the government team proposed to pay the minimum wage only to officers from level one to six. However, the labour leaders insisted that the minimum wage must apply to all the cadres.

Although the meeting started on a cordial note with the usual exchange of views between the government and labour officials, a sharp disagreement later ensued over the pattern of implementation of the new law.

At a point in the negotiation, journalists were asked to leave the meeting for the matter to be resolved behind closed door.

However, after about an hour of arguments between the government and labour, the labour representatives stormed out of the meeting.

Leaders of the NLC and the TUC became agitated when

the Chairman of the Salaries and Wages Commission, Mr. Richard Egbule, said that the new wage would not be accompanied by a salary review for all workers.

Egbule explained that the Federal Government would only apply the new wage to workers from level one to six as the FG had reviewed salaries of workers in 2010.

He was however opposed by the NLC President who insisted that previous increases in the minimum wage were accompanied by a relative review of the salaries of workers and same should apply to the present case.

Egbule said, "The increase in the minimum wage was not accompanied by any salary increase as was the case in the increases we have witnessed."

"Salaries were jerked up when the Federal Government increased the Minimum Wage to N5,500 and even went ahead to pay N7,000. So there has always been relativity. The Federal Government should preserve relativity and work through the marginal increase."

Esele however noted that there was no difference between the Federal Government and the states refusing to implement

the new law.

The TUC boss who wondered why the Federal Government had not backed its purported readiness to implement the law with practical steps, criticised the government for calling for dialogue only when labour had issued threats to go on strike.

But Nwogu assured the workers that a circular for the payment of the new wage had been issued by the Salaries and Wages Commission which would make it impossible for workers to earn below N18,000.

He appealed to organised labour and other stakeholders to drop the strike option as a measure to resolve the minimum wage issue and urged labour to consider the security challenge facing the country and the implications of an industrial action on the nation's economy.

He also appealed to state governors to fast-track negotiations with labour to commence the payment of the new wage.

Meanwhile, the NLC and the TUC said they would hold crucial meetings of their NECs on Tuesday (today) and Friday respectively to take a decision on the planned industrial action.