

metro

... City, Crime, Courts

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**NGO trains
105, laments
unemployment
rate**

**Etim Ekpimah,
Uyo**

An **o**n -
governmental
organisation,
Truth for Change
Initiative, has trained
105 persons under
its skills acquisition
programme in Akwa
Ibom State.

The group said the
initiative was part of
its measures to reduce
the high unemployment
rate in the state.

The one-week training,
tagged, "Poverty
Buster," covered areas
such as computer
training; soap, bleach,
disinfectant, hair
cream, liquid soap and
bead making.

Project Coordinator
and Managing Director,
Management Craft and
Solutions Limited, Mrs.
Susan Uko-Abasi, said
on Saturday at Ikot
Ekpene, that by training
the youth, widows and
orphans, the NGO was
preparing them to be
self-reliant.

Uko-Abasi said the
poverty level in the
state was frightening
and that the training
was the group's way of
assisting the people.

"Our advice is that
government should try
more on empowerment
creation. The state
governor has tried a big
deal on infrastructure
but more work is needed
on empowerment," she
said.

The programme
trainer, Mr. Enobong
Udoh, said the NGO
would extend the
training to 31 local
government areas of
the state with a view
to empowering more
people.

"We are committed
to helping graduates
of the scheme succeed,
especially the widows
and orphans. We are
here to correct them
when they go wrong,"
he said.

A 19-year-old orphan
and graduate of the
scheme, Atim Bassey,
thanked the NGO for
providing her with the
skill.

One killed, 60 arrested

**Sesan Olufowobi and
Eniola Akinkotu**

A yet-to-be-identified
man was feared
killed as the Nigeria
Security and Civil Defence
Corps on Monday raided
Majidun village in Ikorodu,
Lagos State.

The corps also arrested
60 residents, accusing them
of either vandalising the
Nigeria National Petroleum
Corporation pipeline in the
area or aiding and abetting
the vandals.

The Commandant,
NSCDC, Lagos Command,
Mr. Shem Obafaye, also
alleged that the villagers
attacked NSCDC officials,
who had gone to Majidun
to arrest the suspected
vandals.

Obafaye said the corps got
a tip-off on Sunday about
activities of the vandals
and raced to the area.

He said, "The vandals fled
on sighting our men and
we were not able to effect
any arrest. But a large
number of kegs that were
being used for the illegal
business were confiscated
by our men.

"This morning (Monday),
we got information that
the vandals had returned
and we went back there.
However, this time around,
our men were attacked
by the vandals and the
villagers.

"We fought back and at the



•The suspects

end of the day, we arrested
60 suspected pipeline
vandals and recovered
arms, ammunition, axes
and cutlasses among other
items. About seven officials
of NSCDC were badly
injured and are receiving
treatment.

"Some initial
investigations conducted
after the attack on our men
suggested that the vandals

have the backing a particular
leader of Majidun. We will
soon arrest him."

The commandant added
that the suspects would
be handed over to the
Economic and Financial
Crimes Commission for
prosecution.

The arrest of the suspected
vandals later sparked off
unrest as motorists were
attacked by irate youths
in the area while some Bus
Rapid Transit buses were
vandalised.

The suspects however
denied complicity, saying
the weapons recovered by
the NSCDC did not belong
to them.

One of the suspects, Soji
Ajiboye, said, "I am a tipper
driver and I was arrested at
a Majidun Bus Stop. I was
thoroughly beaten when I
resisted arrest. They did
not find any ammunition on
me."

Another suspect, Tajudeen
Adeniran, who claimed to
be a former vice-chairman
of the tipper drivers' union,
said the NSCDC officials
arrested mechanics and not
vandals or the villagers that
attacked them.

He, however, declined to
name any known vandal or
a villager that attacked the
corps officials.

A man, who identified
himself as the spokesman
for Majidun Tipper Garage,
Kehinde Omoyale, also
denied taking part in any
crime.

He said, "We were wrongly
arrested. The officials just
came into our park and

threatened to kill us if
we resisted arrest. They
initially arrested market
women as well but later
released them. They are
just being overzealous."

But the commandant
dismissed their claims,
saying a large number of
residents of the community

were into pipeline
vandalism, which was why
they attacked the NSCDC
officials.

He added that NSCDC
impounded about 20 jerry
cans of petroleum products
believed to have been stolen
by the suspects as well as a
pumping machine which

Teenager arraigned for car theft

Tunde Odesola, Osogbo

A 19-year-old boy, Saheed Oladunni, has been arraigned
before an Osogbo Magistrate's Court for allegedly attempting
to steal a car at an eatery in Osogbo, Osun State.

In the charge sheet read in court on Monday, Oladunni was
accused of attempting to steal the car on January 5, 2013 from
where it was parked in front of Ostrich bakery, Osogbo.

The value of the car, which was valued at N1.4m and bearing
number-plate Lagos FST 372 AW, belongs to Mr. Baruwa
Ademola.

Police prosecutor Isiaka Ajadi said the accused had assaulted a
police sergeant, Thompson Igbiazaka, when he was detained.

Ajadi told the court that the accused pretended as though he is
mentally unstable when he was brought to court, adding that his
action prevented the court from trying him.

Oladunni pleaded not guilty even as his defence counsel, Mr.
Bode Babalola, urged the court to allow him (Oladunni) go and get
treatment for his affliction.

The charge sheet read, "That you Oladunni Saheed, on the 5th
of January, 2013, at about 4:10pm, at Ostrich Bakery, Olonkoro,
Osogbo, did attempt to steal one Honda Accord valued at about
N1.4m

"That you, Oladunni Saheed, on January 6, 2013 at about
1:15pm, at Dugbe Police Station, Osogbo, did unlawfully assault
Sergeant Thompson Igbiazaka, when he was trying to arrest you,
thereby committing an offence contrary to Section 356 (2) of the
Criminal Code, Laws of Osun State of Nigeria, 2003."

In her ruling, the Magistrate, Mrs. H. O. Basiru, granted bail to
the accused in the sum of N50,000 and two sureties.

She adjourned the case till February 20, 2013, for mention.

NIPOST pensioner

**Mudiaga Affe and
Kunle Falayi**

A member of the
Nigerian Union of
Pensioners who
retired from the Nigerian
Postal Service, Silifatu
Adetola, slumped on
Monday as members
of the union picketed
the Lafiaji Post Office,
Obalende, Lagos.

All Adetola could
mutter as she was being
revived by the aggrieved
pensioners was that she
had not eaten anything
that day.

She went down as the
protesters chanted at
the front of the post
office. But her colleagues
quickly poured water on
her.

She was quickly rushed
to a hospital afterwards.

The pensioners were
protesting their unpaid 69
months pension arrears.
PUNCH Metro learnt
that similar protests took
place simultaneously in

other post office branches
in Apapa and the Lagos
Island and some other
states.

Chairman of the Lagos
chapter of the union,
Elijah Akindutire, said the
incident was an attestation
to the sufferings they were
subjected to as a result of
the unpaid pension.

Akindutire said, "The
government owes us
69 months of pension
arrears. Most of us came
here on empty stomach.
That woman could
have died because the
government did not see
us as important enough to
pay what they owe us after
serving meritoriously for
years.

"We will not leave the
place until we get an alert
that our pension arrears
have been paid. Some of
us retired as far back as
2005. Some were paid
while some were not. Even
those who were paid got a
fraction of what they were
owed.

A group, Metro Bi Foundation, has donated 10 wheelchairs, 20 canes to the blind and 11 crutches to indigent persons in Osun State.

Speaking during the donation at the *Osun State Broadcasting Corporation*, Osogbo, on Monday, Chief Executive Officer of the group,

Foundation donates wheelchairs to disabled persons

Tunde Odesola, Osogbo

Mr. Abiodun Kataye, said the foundation was out to alleviate the suffering of people with disabilities.

He said, "The foundation has designed objectives to provide

physical, emotional and psychological help by offering counselling, educational and rehabilitation programmes that will help the reintegration of disabled people.

"The sole objective is to instil self-confidence, courage and self-reliance

in them. People with disabilities should not be stigmatised."

Special Adviser to Governor Rauf Aregbesola on Youths, Sports and the Needy, Mr. Biyi Odunlade, commended the foundation and called on other NGOs to emulate

the initiative.

Odunlade said, "The gesture is in line with the advocacy of better-life-for-all being propagated by the Aregbesola administration. The state government will support developmental initiatives from the private sector."

in NSCDC raid



Items recovered from the suspects. Inset: Vandalised NSCDC's vehicle. Photos: Eniola Akinkuotu.

they used in siphoning the fuel.

It was learnt that after the NSCDC officials had left, violence broke out again as youths vandalized properties and attacked motorists.

It was learnt that policemen immediately rushed down to the scene and arrested four of the youths.

The spokesperson for the state police command, Ngozi Braide, confirmed

the arrest of four persons, adding that they had been transferred to the command's headquarters.

"There was pandemonium in the area as youths were protesting violently. Policemen rushed down

there and arrested four people," she said.

When questioned about the death of the unidentified person, the Public Relations Officer, NSCDC, Kehinde Bada, said she had heard of it but had no details.

Firm confirms food poisoning at end-of-year party

James Azania, Benin

The management of Integrated Data Services Limited, a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, on Monday, confirmed that members of staff suffered food poisoning at its end-of-the year party in Benin, Edo State.

The party was held on December 13, 2013 in honour of the company's retired members of staff.

PUNCH Metro investigation revealed that scores of members of IDSL staff that attended the event suffered food poisoning, with many ending up at the NNPC staff clinic in Benin.

However, unconfirmed sources had it that at least one of the affected persons died.

One of the affected workers, during a New Year church service, in one of the Pentecostal churches, gave a testimony of how she escaped death, after eating poisoned food at her company's end-of-the-year party.

According to a source, no fewer than 30 workers were affected by the food poisoning.

Confirming the incident to our correspondent, IDSL's Manager, Public Administration Department, Yemi Dare, said the medical unit was investigating the matter.

Dare, who confirmed that he was also a victim, however, said no employee died.

He said a private catering services company was contracted to supply food on the occasion.

He said, "On the occasion, which witnessed valedictory speeches, foods and drinks were contracted out to a renowned caterer in Benin.

"Staff who participated at the occasion and who ate the food, irrespective of the type eaten, reported some reactions, later that day. Some reportedly had issues of recurring stooling, while some experienced vomiting alongside the stooling.

"It was obvious from the number of people involved that food poisoning could not be ruled out, though this has not been officially stated to be the case."

Speaking on measures taken by the management, Dare said, "The situation was aptly brought under control through the assistance of NNPC Medical Services, Benin zone.

"Every staff that had adverse reactions as a result of the food in-take was promptly attended to by our medical services personnel. Our medical services are conducting investigation into the unfortunate incident."

slumps as union protests in Lagos

"I retired in 2006 and got just a little out of the pension the government owed me since then. The same thing is applicable to other members of the union."

He explained that the union had previously given the government an ultimatum which expired on December 11, 2012.

The union said this time around, there would be no compromise until government paid what it owed them.

The union's National Public Relations Officer, Mukaila Ogunboje, said the pensioners were tired of unfulfilled promises by the government.

He explained that the union had recorded 420 deaths among its members since they started agitating for the payment of the arrears.

A civil rights activist, Mr. Darlington Ajitemita, joined the protesters, even though he was not a

retiree of NIPOST.

He said the government was being deliberately wicked to the pensioners.

Meanwhile, a 78-year-old pensioner, Mrs. Enang Ekpenyong, and her other colleagues on Monday locked up the premises of NIPOST in Calabar, Cross River State.

They insisted that their pension which was last paid in October 2011 should be paid before the premises could become operational again.

Ekpenyong, who earns N26,000 monthly since she retired in the mid 90s, insisted that her pension should be paid or the NIPOST premises would remain closed indefinitely.

This came just as the Cross River State Chairman of the pensioners, Mrs. Ekanem Effiwatt, said no fewer than 15 retired NIPOST retirees in the state had died in the last one year.

"I retired since 1996 and I was short-changed when my gratuity was paid. We have made a series of complaints to that effect but no one would listen. I have children but they

too have their issues. I was last paid my monthly pension of N26, 000 in October 2011," she said.

Vice-chairman of the union, Mr. Christopher Andem, said the

pensioners had no intention of vacating the premises until their request was met.

"We have nowhere to go; we must remain here until the management and the Federal Government listen to us and answer us," he said.



The slumped pensioner being revived by her colleagues. Photos: Kunle Falayi