

## news

## Briefly

## A'Ibom SSG

THE Akwa Ibom State Government has appointed Mr. Nkereuwem Ekanem as the Secretary to the State Government.

Ekanem, an engineer, was the immediate past Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, Uyo.

He replaces the immediate past Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, who resigned in October to seek governorship ticket under the platform of the People's Democratic Party.

Ekanem, an indigene of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area, holds M.Sc in Engineering from the United Kingdom. He is also a fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers.

The state Governor, Mr. Godswill Akpabio, who announced this on Saturday at the St. John Chaplaincy at Government House, Uyo, during the Government House Prayer meeting, explained that the new SSG would be sworn-in in a week's time.

## Deeper Life

THE General Superintendent of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Pastor Williams Kumuyi, will storm Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, for a three-day crusade.

A statement on Sunday by Mr. Debo Taiwo, on behalf of the Kwara State Overseer of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Pastor David Adebisi, said the crusade with the theme, 'Supernatural encounter with the God of Power' would start on Tuesday (tomorrow) and end on Thursday, November 27.

Adebisi said, "God is the only solution to overcome the stronghold of sins, wickedness, demonic oppression, corruption and terrorism and other developmental challenges currently confronting Nigeria."

## Victoria Global University

THE Global University BWI (United Kingdom Overseas Territory) has nominated some notable Nigerians for the award of honorary Doctorate.

A statement by the university on Sunday stated that the nominees would be decorated during the institution's International Convocation, holding on December 17, at the University of Ghana, Legon Campus.

According to the statement, two state governors- Sule Lamido of Jigawa State and Gabriel Suswam of Benue State are among the Nigerians nominated for the honour.

Also listed were Dr. Chijioke Nwaozuzu, Archbishop Augustine Akubeze, the Chairman, Channel Television, Mr. John Momoh, Mr. F.M. Emeywa, Mrs. Nwadiuto Iheakanwa and Mr. Frank Nneji.

# 23 killed, houses torched in fresh Nasarawa attack

NO fewer than 23 people were feared killed on Sunday following a renewed crisis that broke out at Shabu, the headquarters of Shabu Development Council in Lafia Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

It was learnt that the crisis, which started at about 12am, was as a result of a rumoured attack on Eggon people at Alakyo village and environs by suspected Fulani insurgents.

Umar Muhammed, Lafia

Following the rumour, some angry Eggon youths went on the rampage, forcing passengers on transit to alight from their vehicles and attacking their perceived enemies with guns and dangerous weapons.

This caused panic among

commuters that were stranded during the fracas that lasted for hours before the arrival of security forces.

The state Head of Service, Dominic Bako, who ran into the crisis while returning from a condolence visit to Aridi, was among several others that escaped with gunshots. He is now receiving treatment at

the Dalhatu Araf Specialists Hospital in Lafia, the state capital.

A resident of Shabu, Amadu Abu, who escaped to Lafia, told our correspondent that he saw some Eggon youths that were running away from Alakyo area to Shabu. "They were shooting sporadically into the air. Their aim was

to kill any Fulani person they could see. But unfortunately a pregnant woman was killed by a stray bullet fired by Eggon youths," he said.

It was learnt that some unidentified corpses littered the bush where the crisis started and neither the police nor the military could go there to evacuate them.

Scores of houses, including shops, were also set ablaze at Shabu, compelling hundreds of people to flee to Lafia and its environs.

In addition, one person was reportedly killed at Tudun Kauri and two others in Lafia metropolis following reprisal attacks.

Also, three more people were burnt to death around 4pm near the Emir of Lafia's palace on Sunday. There was confusion as people were running helter-skelter.

The renewed crisis came barely 24 hours after Governor Tanko Al-Makura led top officials of his administration to a seven-kilometre Peace and Unity Walk to demonstrate peace as part of activities marking his 62 birthday.

In an interview with some journalists on the sick bed, the state's Head of Service said, "There was an accident at Aridi that involved two of my wife's cousins. So, I picked her and a brother and we went there to visit them. I didn't go to church service because of this."

He continued, "We are supposed to meet with His Excellency by 1pm because of this security situation, to discuss the way forward. I was when I was coming along the way, after Keffi Wamba that I met a lot of boys in muff with guns and cutlasses. It was just by the grace of God that I'm still alive. They wanted to shoot me on the head so I used my hand to block it but the vehicle I was travelling in was destroyed."

Bako, however, advised the people of the state to tolerate one another and live in peace, as demonstrated by the governor during peace and unity walk day (on Saturday).

However, four dead bodies recovered by the police in the crisis were deposited at the Dalhatu Araf Specialists Hospital Mortuary in Lafia, the state capital.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DS Ogwochukwu Theodore, who confirmed the incident to our correspondent in a telephone interview, said the situation was tense.

He, however, maintained that the command had already deployed its men to bring the situation under control.

Asked to disclose the number of lives lost in the crisis, the PPRO declined. He added that no arrest had been made.



• L-R: Head, West African Operations, Broll, Mr. Leonard Michau; a former Chief Executive Officer, Broll Nigeria, Mrs. Erejuwa Gbadebo; Pioneer Chief Executive Officer, Broll, Mrs. Ibukun Osifo; and CEO Broll Nigeria, Mr. Bolaji Edu, during the 10th anniversary of Broll Nigeria in Lagos...on Friday. Photo: Goke Famadewa

## Afenifere blasts Jega for querying RECs over polling units

Friday Olokor, Abuja

THE pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, has criticised the query given to the Resident Electoral Commissioners from the South by the Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Attahiru Jega, saying he should withdraw it or "step aside."

The organisation said the query reportedly issued to mostly southern RECs over INEC's botched attempt to create 30,000 new polling units showed that Jega "is becoming more dreadful to the health of the polity than the murderous Boko Haram."

A statement issued on Sunday in Abuja by the National Publicity Secretary of Afenifere, Mr. Yinka Odumakin, said, "The query dripping with venom was issued the very day Jega announced the suspension of the controversial exercise."

"If it is true that the said query was issued on sectional focus on a matter in which the INEC chairman betrayed unpardonable primordial insensitivity, we are bound to conclude that Prof. Jega is becoming more dreadful to the health of the polity than the murderous Boko Haram."

"Even without its lopsidedness in favour of Jega's region of the country, the whole idea of creating new polling units a few months to the general elections was a product of inferior scholarship on election for a man from the intellectual region hailed across the country in 2010 as a 'man of integrity' when he was nominated for the job in 2010."

"It is equally baffling that rather than addressing the

glaring incompetence of INEC which have seen it bungling the distribution of PVCs for data captured four years ago, Jega would now be occupied with fighting a war of attrition within the commission."

"We are less than 90 days to the general elections and we have yet to see concrete preparations from the electoral body to conduct a successful poll. Given the importance of 2015 elections and all the predictions of the

implications it holds for the corporate existence of Nigeria, we do not need a champion of fault lines at the head of the electoral commission."

"In the light of this, Afenifere advises Jega to withdraw the query immediately and concentrate on plans for the elections. However, if he is far too gone into his sectional agenda, he should step aside from INEC and move over to any of the fora promoting what he desires."

## Health minister raises fear over Ebola resurgence

Kamarudeen Ogundele, Ado-Ekiti

THE Health Minister, Dr. Haliru Alhassan, has raised the fear over resurgence of Ebola Virus Disease in Nigeria.

Expressing worry over the nationwide strike embarked upon by the Joint Health Staff Union, the minister said Nigeria was not free from Ebola as long as there were reported cases of the deadly virus in any part of the world.

Alhassan, who appealed to all concerned to support the leadership role of President Goodluck Jonathan in tackling the deadly disease, said the indefinite strike embarked upon by JOHESU, at a time when many Nigerians would

return home from abroad to celebrate Christmas and New Year, could threaten the success achieved.

He spoke at the occasion marking the upgrading of the Federal Medical Centre, Ido Ekiti, to a Federal Teaching Hospital and the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Government and Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti, on Saturday.

The MoU followed the building of a N2.5bn clinical complex by the proprietor of ABUAD, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), in the hospital as part of the requirements by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria and National Universities Commission for the running of Medicine and

Surgery in the institution.

Babalola and the Chief Medical Director of the tertiary health institution, Dr. Majekodunmi Ayodele, commended President Jonathan for embracing public-private-partnership in the health sector, saying the singular act would reposition the sector in the country.

The minister, who appealed to the striking workers to display patriotism, said, "If the health workers are on strike, we don't have people to man the hospital. This is a national duty. We can't do it when we are on strike. As far as Ebola is in any country, we are not safe. It is just one flight away from Nigeria. It was brought by one flight to Nigeria."