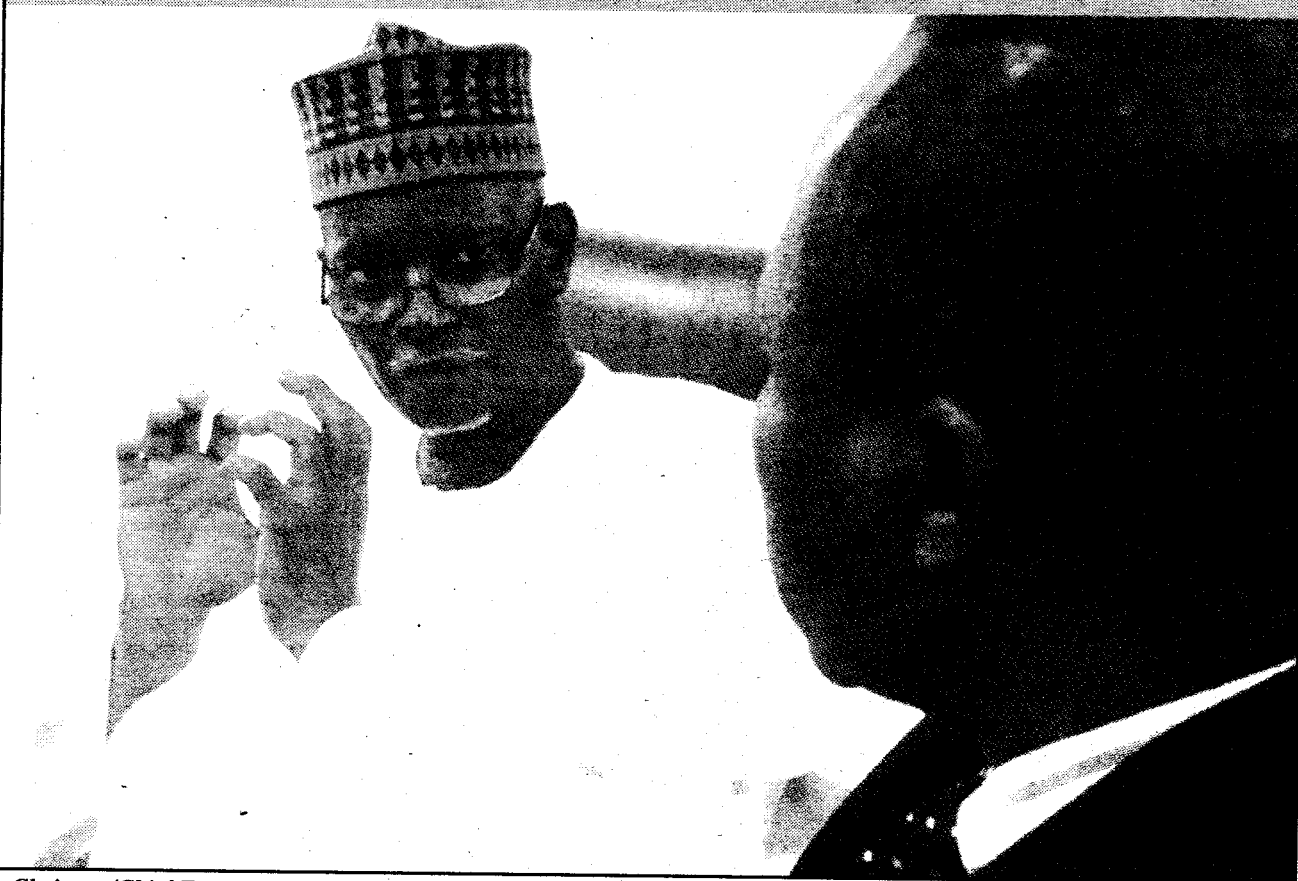


COURTESY VISIT...



• Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mr. Ahmadu Giade (left), and Director Administration & HR THISDAY, Mr. Gbayode Somuyiwa, during the NDLEA Chief's courtesy visit to THISDAY Corporate headquarters in Apapa, Lagos... yesterday

PHOTO: Mubo Peters

Voters' Registration: UK Backs INEC

British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Bob Dewar, has said that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) needs to overhaul the voters' register if its plans to organise credible elections and make every vote count. He however cautioned that overhauling the register should be undertaken after a good framework has been laid with adequate provisions of security and without fraud.

Dewar, who made his opinion known on his official blog, also noted that the success of the next general elections depends primarily on Nigerian politicians and their disposition towards enthronement of democracy from the party level.

"As always, a lot depends on

From Damilola Oyedele
in Abuja

behaviour of politicians at local, state and national level, i.e. walking the talk. Both the ruling party and opposition, parties, primaries should be democratic, transparent and credible. And everyone should commit themselves publicly to avoid violence, intimidation,

fraud and hate speech."

Writings on the blog which was made available to THISDAY by the British High Commission in Abuja yesterday, he said the general elections would avail the opportunity to the state to rebuild trust with its citizens.

"Nigeria can show the way in Africa and the Commonwealth by carrying out free, fair and credible elections. The opportuni-

ty must not be squandered. Voter apathy can be reversed if the process is serious and politicians really show they want credible elections.

If that's the case it can't be 'business as usual.' He noted that adequate security has to be provided so that voters can feel safe, and can be assured that their votes would not be stolen or hijacked.

FG, US to Sign Agreement on HIV/AIDS

From Onyebuchi Ezigbo
in Abuja

The disclosure on the collaborative arrangement was made by the Minister of Health, Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu, during a meeting with the delegation from

the US in Abuja yesterday.

In a statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary, Mrs. Bolade Akinola, the minister said both countries met yesterday to reiterate the commitment of the two governments towards combating the HIV/AIDS scourge in the country.

He said Nigeria is to provide leadership for HIV/AIDS response activities and coordination and also to increase government funding from 7 per cent to 50 per cent for the control of the disease.

The leader of the US delegation, Mr. James Patrick, said the framework agreement to be signed would provide technical support and drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS to reduce the incidence of the scourge.

Trans-Border Bandits Kill 10 in Adamawa

From Matthew Onah
in Yola

ple, we have recorded the loss of over 10 lives in the last one week, due to the criminal activities of these armed bandits, who we suspect sneak into the town from neighbouring Cameroun Republic.

"Security of lives and property

in this area is our major problem here because of the incessant raids on our people by these bandits.

A large portion of the resources of the council is expended on maintaining the operations of the internal security outfit of the state 'Operation Tsaro' to check the incursions of the bandits which is quite regular," he added.

A'ibom: Police Officer Killed, 3 Kidnappers Arrested

From Okon Bassey in Uyo

A Police Officer was yesterday killed in a gun battle where three kidnappers were arrested at Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Walter Rugbere, who disclosed this yesterday while field-

ing questions from newsmen in his office, also said 10 kidnappers had been arrested in the past one week.

The Police boss who said kidnappers are worst than armed robbers, vowed that he will not spare

any one in the trade because of his zero tolerance for them.

Describing Akwa Ibom State as the most challenging state in the course of his work over the past 34 years, Rugbere attributed the level of success recorded in crime prevention to the level of cooperation from the citizens.

The Commissioner regretted the recent speculations in the state that kidnappers escaped from

BRIEFLY

Flood Kills Six in Onitsha

Onitsha, the commercial city of Anambra State was on Monday evening thrown into wailing following the death of six people who lost their lives during a heavy down pour. According to an eyewitness, the deluge left in its trail heavy flooding around Obodo-Ukwu area of the commercial city and destroyed property worth millions of Naira. He said: "Dead bodies were seen littered along Obodo-Ukwu road shortly after the rain fall but I counted not less than six of such dead bodies. Vehicles, were damaged, traders' shops devastated, particularly around Ogaru, Ochanja and Ogbofere market end" THISDAY checks in revealed that debris littered the entire area but the corpses had been evacuated. Reacting to the development, Uchenna Madu, Media Director of the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) blamed the situation on what he called the insensitivity and callousness of various governments to the plight of the people. He asked: "What is the essence of the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) being compulsorily collected from traders with threat and terrorist tendency. Residents are negligently abandoned by virtually all the tiers of government."

LG Spends N100m on Construction of 13 Dispensaries

Kware Local Government Council of Sokoto State has spent over N100 million on the construction of 13 dispensaries in 11 villages in the area. Speaking to newsmen in Sokoto yesterday, its chairman, Alhaji Kabiru Muhammed, said the establishment of the dispensaries had brought healthcare services to the doorsteps of people at the grassroots. He noted that with the commencement of the programme, meningitis, gastro enteritis and other child killer diseases that used to ravage the communities in the past had reduced drastically. He said the villages that benefitted from the project included Sabon Birnin Kware, Sabon Gidan, Bankanu, Rijiran Kade, Gandi Modibbo, Limi, Tsaki, Durbawa, Tungar malamawa, Mori and Hama Ali.

Aspirant Promises Purposeful Leadership

A Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) aspirant in Sokoto East Senatorial District, Alhaji Ibrahim Gobir, has pledged to give purposeful representation and strive to reduce unemployment bedeviling youths in the zone if voted into power in the forthcoming 2011 election. Speaking to newsmen in Sokoto yesterday, Gobir lamented that poverty and high unemployment were critical issues plaguing the state. He explained that he had designed strategies to create change and devise programmes that would be highly beneficial to people of the area. He said he would make available sufficient funds for the take-off of a befitting scholarship programmes that would enable the youths of the zone to embark on educational pursuits in tertiary institutions in the country. Gobir lamented that the lawmaker representing the senatorial district had failed to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people in terms of developmental projects.

Ramadan: Muslims Urged to Seek Allah's Blessings

Muslims in the country have been called upon to make effective use of the month of Ramadan in order to obtain blessings that abound therein as well as move closer to Allah. The call was made by Dr. Salisu Shehu, Special Adviser to Governor Isa Yuguda on Education and Societal Re-Orienting popularly called Gyara Kayanka, while speaking to newsmen shortly after the first special Ramadan lecture held at NUT Teachers House, Bauchi. He said such blessings could be derived through extending generosity and paying visits to the sick among others.

Nigeria Records 1,000 New HIV Patients Daily

National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) has disclosed that an alarming 1000 new cases of Nigerians infected with the deadly Human Immune Virus (HIV) is being recorded daily in the country. NACA Director General, Dr. John Idoko made this disclosure stakeholders meeting with the National Steering Committee on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Abuja yesterday where he attributed the increased infection rate to a lack of proper education about the virus. Idoko called for an urgent national action against the spread of the virus saying Nigeria has to take more proactive steps to curtail the spread if it hopes to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Tribunal Orders Fresh Head Court

2010 Admissions Under Threat as Schools Fail to Recruit