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In Brief

FG to Spend N2.7bn on Free Seedlings

Minister of State for Agriculture, Dr. Bukar Tijjani, yesterday disclosed that the Federal Government would spend N2.7 billion in the procurement and distribution of free seedlings to about five million small scale farmers across the country. Tijjani who said that it was part of the government's strategy to improve agriculture and ultimately food security in the country, stated that the government would as well provide fertilizer to farmers at fifty percent subsidy in addition to the provision of other agricultural inputs, assuring that it will also buy off their surplus produce at a good price to prevent unwarranted loss.

Fashola Condoles with Olusola Family

Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (SAN), yesterday paid a condolence visit to the family of late Segun Olusola describing the culture icon and founder of the African Refugee Foundation (ARF) as one who has brought a unique quality into life. The former Nigerian Ambassador to Ethiopia, a veteran broadcaster and creator of the national television series, 'The Village Headmaster', died on June 21 at the Royal Specialist Hospital, Pako Aguda in Surulere Local Government Area of the state at the age of 78 years. In his remarks while condoling with members of his family at their Surulere residence, Fashola said the death of the former diplomat is not a loss to only the Nigerian family but also to the African Continent.

Group Tasks AGF over EFCC Decision

A non-profit organisation, Forum for Zero Tolerance to Financial Crimes, has called on the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister for Justice, Mohammed Adoke (SAN), to review the decision of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to withdraw charges against one of defunct Afribank Directors, Jilbrin Isah. In a letter to the AGF written by counsel to the organisation, Mr. Kayode Ajulo, the group said it had earlier written to the EFCC to re-instate charges against Isah which were withdrawn when Mrs Farida Waziri was the commission's chairman.

Clash Claims 3 in Lagos

No fewer than three persons were killed and several others injured in a factional clash that spanned a period of four days at the Bariga area of Lagos State. THISDAY checks revealed that the clash which was between two opposing factions, ibro and Shagi, was over the control of a canoe park in the area. According to eyewitness account, the somewhat serene environment was shattered last week when one of the factions stormed the canoe park to oust the incumbent toll collectors. However, their actions met stiff resistance from the incumbent who insisted that it was their right to collect toll from canoe operators. Attempts to restore peace proved abortive as the fight spilled to the next day and two persons were reportedly stabbed to death while several others sustained varying degrees of injuries. When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, a deputy superintendent of police, confirmed the incident.

'Nigeria is Tourism Destination in Africa'

Minister of Tourism, Chief Edem Duke has said that in spite of present insecurity in the country, Nigeria would be the next tourism destination in Africa. He regretted the neglect of the money spinning industry in the past and said that it is a key sector that would boost Nigeria's economy and help to actualise the country's plan to be rated one of top 20 economies in 2020. Duke stated this at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos weekend when he received the Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Mr. Taleb D. Rifai, for the 53rd African Ministers of Tourism conference which takes place today in Calabar, Cross River state.

JTF Kills 6 Pirates in Bayelsa

It was a bloody weekend along the creeks of the Niger Delta area as men of the Joint (Military) Task Force (JTF) in the area, Operation Pulo Shield, engaged a seven-man pirate gang in a gun battle killing six of the pirates while the seventh escaped. In a battle that took place along the creeks of Agge, a community on the fringe of the Atlantic Ocean bordering Delta State, the pirates encountered the security troops and opened fire on them. According to the Media Co-coordinator of the JTF, Lt. Col. Nwachukwu, "at about 5p.m. on June 23, troops of the JTF on patrol at Agge in Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State encountered a gang of seven suspected sea pirates killing six of them."

'Why NBA Moved Election to Abuja'

President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mr Joseph Daudu (SAN), at the weekend cited "serious security challenges" prevailing in Kaduna as the reason for shifting the 2012 NBA Delegates election from its base in Kaduna to Abuja. While inaugurating the new branch at Ikere-Ekiti in Ekiti State under the chairmanship of Bunmi Ogugbade, Daudu said, "NEC at this meeting reviewed the situation especially in the light of the assurances given by the authorities in Kaduna State and retained Kaduna as the venue of the delegates' conference." Kaduna has experienced devastating terrorist attacks since June 10 which has led to reprisal killings.