

Six feared dead as butchers clash

By Evelyn Usman & Oluchi Obiasogu

SIX persons were feared dead and several others wounded in a bloody clash between factions of butchers yesterday, at Cele, along the Oshodi Apapa expressway.

The clash over leadership of the butchers' association, brought commercial activities including human and vehicular movement along the ever busy expressway to a total standstill.

There were different accounts as to how trouble erupted. While a version of the account said trouble broke out after a failed attempt by a faction to overthrow the incumbent chairman, another account said the clash was as a result of the incumbent chairman's imposition of a fine on aggrieved members.

Both sides freely engaged themselves with dangerous weapons such as knives,

broken bottles, charms and guns. The re-vibrating sounds of gun shots from the butchers sent traders and buyers scampering for safety.

While the fight lasted, a gang of robbers on motorcycles were shooting sporadically on the Okota side of Cele, following a frustrated attempt to attack a super market on Okota road.

The intra-faction fight which escalated to the expressway, forced road users to abandon the road for fear of being hit by stray bullets. Attempt by policemen from Cele post to initially stop the warring factions met stiff resistance. It only took the combined efforts of both conventional and mobile policemen from various divisions under area 'D', Mushin, Anti-Riot team from the state Anti-robbery Squad, Ikeja including military men to contain the situation.

Kidnapped HOSTCOM boss regains freedom for N5m

By Emma Arubi

AFTER seven gruesome days in the hands of his abductors, 62-year old Vice-Chairman of Host Community of Nigeria, HOSTCOM, Delta Central Chapter, Chief Moses Irimesose regained his freedom after family members parted with a whopping five million naira (N5m) in the evening of Thursday.

Chief Irimesose who told security operatives in Warri that he was abducted to an Ijaw village with about five to six houses only said he feeds only once daily but stressed that he was never tortured.

Narrating how he was whisked away from number 18

Jefia avenue, Effurun, by his abductors wielding AK47 assault rifles to a waiting speed boat at the river along the DSC expressway that fateful day around 2pm, Chief Irimesose said he knew they were Ijaws because that was the language they spoke all through. He said he was made to lie face down on the out board boat till they got to the said village he could not identify and that he was kept in a hut all through his ordeal.

The shabby looking chief who said he did not know the reason behind the kidnap incident express joy over his release and thanked all those that facilitated his freedom.

Man kills nephew for refusing to go to school

By Taye Obateru

JOS: A middle-aged carpenter in Plateau State has run into trouble for killing his nephew through electrocution while trying to punish him for refusing to go to school.

The man simply identified as Davou of Farin-Lamba village of Jos South Local Government who is now in police custody, allegedly tied the nephew's hands with an electric cable which he plugged into a socket.

The nephew, Ezekiel Ishaku was electrocuted in the process throwing the village into confusion.

Davou was said to have warned the deceased repeatedly over his refusal to attend school regularly and when he (Ezekiel) did not change, he decided to teach him a lesson.

However, the punishment he chose to administer turned awry as Ezekiel collapsed and

became unconscious while serving the punishment.

A panic-stricken Davou was said to have rushed the deceased to the Vom Christian Hospital where he was confirmed dead.

Mother of the deceased, Mrs. Hannatu Ishaku told journalists that she was away to the farm when the incident occurred and only came back to be greeted with the bad news.

Spokesman of Plateau Police Command Assistant Superintendent Bala Kassim who confirmed the incident and the arrest of the uncle said investigations were continuing into the matter.

He said the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Samson Wudah has directed that the case be transferred from Kaduna Vom Divisional Police station to the Criminal Investigations Department at the headquarters in Jos for proper investigation.



The BankPHB You Go Win Promo Draw Ogba branch took place at the branch premises in Ogba Ikeja Lagos yesterday. Px shows r-l Mr Olu Akanmu, IMD, Retail Banking Group, CSP Mary George, representing Area Commander, Area G, Mr Mutairu Akinfolabi, Ag, Regional Director Oba Akran all of BankPHB at the ceremony. Px Biodun Ogunleye.

Niger Delta: We are not ready for war — Naval boss

YOLA — The Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Adm. Ishaya Ibrahim, yesterday said that the Nigerian Navy was not ready to engage the militants of the Niger Delta in a full-scale war.

Ibrahim told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Yola that the navy personnel operating in the area had been attacked by the

militants.

He said that in spite of the attacks, the Navy had resisted the temptation to either retaliate or engage the militants in a full-scale war.

Ibrahim said that "the skirmishes being carried out by misguided criminals in the Niger Delta are not the nature of Navy callings."

"We want to save lives as

much as possible; we don't want them killed, in spite of the adverse effect of their behaviours to the socio-economic lives of the people," he said.

"We are trying to integrate them into the social strata of the society and encourage them to live peaceful and meaningful lives," he said.

Ex-Minister says cabinet reshuffle is political

ABUJA — The former Minister of State for Information and Communications, Mr Ibrahim Nakande, has described the recent dropping of 20 ministers by President Umaru Yar'Adua as "a political battle that was lost and won."

President Umaru Yar'Adua had on Wednesday relieved the 20 ministers of their appointment, including Nakande, a member of the ANPP.

Speaking on Thursday in Abuja at a send-forth dinner for the 2008 retirees of the Ministry of Information and Communications, the former minister said he was leaving public office a better person.

He thanked the ministry officials for their support during the 18 months he spent in the ministry as a minister.

"A lot of people have been coming to the office to tell me sorry and I tell them don't say so, you should be congratulating us because we are leaving peacefully."

"As a politician, I know that we are always in a state of war, maybe I lost one battle yesterday but the war is still on, we have not lost the war."

"We will continue the war and the fight, and by God's grace the victory will be ours by the end of the day," he said.

On the retirees, the former minister said he considered himself as one of them

because he had also paid his "dues" to the nation.

"Those of us in the communications sector know that I am not an engineer but I know a lot and I know all the fundamentals of ICT."

"I have learnt a lot and I have interacted very well with the people and I feel very proud that I can come back to this ministry to any of the parastatals in the ministry with my head held high."

Court rejects application against Edo PDP chairman

By Simon Ebegbulem

BENIN — A Benin High Court yesterday refused to vacate the interim injunction which restrained the factional chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Edo State, Chief Samson Ekhobafé from parading as state chairman of the party.

It would be recalled that following the appointment of Chief Ekhobafé as the state chairman of the party in the state by the National leadership of the party, the Barr. Edward Sado led Executive in the state headed to the High Court challenging the appointment of Ekhobafé as chairman when he did not participate as a candidate in the congresses held in the

state.

Following his plea, the court consequently granted an interim injunction restraining the National leadership of the party and Chief Ekhobafé from parading as chairman of the party until the substantive suit is heard.

But Chief Ekhobafé requested the court to vacate the injunction since he was duly anointed by the National leadership of the party as chairman of the party in the state because of the factional congresses held in the state.

Chief Ekhobafé is backed by the Chief Tony Anenih-led faction of the party while Barr. Sado is backed by the faction led by Governor Oserhiemen Osunbor and Dr Samuel Ogbemudia.

3 month-old baby burnt to death

By Albert Akpor

LAGOS — RESIDENTS of Banana Island, Lagos were thrown into mourning yesterday after a three month old baby girl was burnt to death in an early morning fire. Police sources said the inferno started at about 4.00am and had a shanty building completely razed. The baby whose identity could not be immediately ascertained was said to be fast asleep when the sad incident occurred. It was not clear whether the unidentified mother of the baby slept with her daughter but police sources said, the late baby was found roasted in her cot when sympathizers through the razed plot 21 building moments after.

The state police public relations officer, Mr. Frank Mba who confirmed the incident said the police was investigating the cause of the fire adding that the value of property destroyed were yet to be determined.

In a related development, an Indian national identified as Kazeem Ghandi has suffered a second degree burnt after cooking stove reportedly exploded causing a fire.

The said foreigner who lived in Alhaji Okebol Kazeem street, Oke-Ira Keker Ado in Aja is said to be receiving treatment in an undisclosed hospital.

USA gives Nigerian military N580m to fight HIV/AIDS

By Chris Ochayi & Chinyere Amalu

ABUJA — The United States of America (USA) government has provided over N580 million representing \$500,000 USD worth of equipment and training to the Nigerian Military to support its efforts to fight the dreaded HIV/AIDS.

The USA Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders who stated this during a visit to the 445 Air Force Hospital in Lagos, said access to quality health care, such as fighting HIV/AIDS, is a key component of what democracies are supposed to do for their people.

While reaffirming the United States of America (USA) government commitment to combat the HIV/AIDS, the Ambassador noted that the most critical component of capacity building is human development. The U.S. Mission in Nigeria, through its partnership with the Nigerian Military, is helping to build capacity to support, prevent, diagnose, and treat HIV. She told the audience of Nigerian military laboratory scientists and technicians participating in a U.S. Government-funded training program.