

•The suspects.. at the weekend

Navy arrests 'illegal loggers' in Cross River

THE Nigerian Navy in Calabar, Cross River State capital, has arrested nine suspected illegal loggers.

The suspects were arrested at the weekend in Parrot Island while heading to Oron in Akwa Ibom State from Macaulay Village in Cameroon.

Parading the suspects at the NNS Victory jetty, Commanding Officer Commodore Jeremiah Jatau said items recovered from the suspects include 400 logs (12 feet, four by nine, a 30-foot wooden boat; 240-hp outboard engine and one portable pumping machine.

He said: "When six of my men accosted them on the sea, they tried to run away.

"But after our men fired a warning shot into the air, they stopped and we arrested them."

From Kunle Johnson, Calabar

Commodore Jatau, represented by Navy Captain Adekunle Okeniyi, said the arrest would strengthen the government's effort at combating deforestation and preserve the environment.

Jatau said: "The Navy will continue to ensure that the water is safe. We will continue to be present at sea and make sure we apprehend those who intend to sabotage the economy of the state.

"This will discourage people felling trees illegally in the state" he said.

He said the suspects would be handed over to the police.

Some of the suspects told reporters in Calabar that they were not criminals.

They said they were recruited by Joseph Bob, an Oron indigene, in Cameroon.

One of them, Emmanuel Peter, 21, said "the man, Joseph Bob, called us to bring the boat filled with wood from Cameroon and said we will be paid for it.

"We are not criminals. We were only doing it because we needed money."

Another suspect, Ita Okon Effiong, 20, said: "Somebody told me about this business and I was to go to Cameroon to get wood.

We are not thieves. We don't have anything to do with illegal felling of trees. We even settled in the village, Macaulay Village, where the trees were cut."

The suspects hail from Akwa Ibom State.

•Senator Florence Ita-Giwa (left) and Cross River State Governor's wife, Mrs Obioma Liyel-Ikmoke at the presentation of 'A glimpse of desination Cross River', in Lagos ... yesterday

One dead as robbers, police clash in Delta

•Gunmen kill timber merchant

From Okungbowa Alwerle, Asaba

The spokesman urged the public to inform the police on suspected persons with bullet wounds.

He said the gang specialised in robbing banks.

According to him, "the gang had snatched a white Toyota Hiace with Reg. No. SG 454 ABC on August 12 at Asaba."

He said the robbers had attacked a white Ford Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) Reg. No. JP 154 EKY on August 11 on Anwai Road, Asaba."

Muka said the driver was killed and two others injured.

The police said the gang also snatched a Sorento KIA SUV with Reg. No. AV 187 SLK and a white Volkswagen

Jetta car Reg. No. ES 820 AAA.

Unknown gunmen at the weekend killed a timber merchant, Mr. Daniel Movin a.k.a "Okuedo" in Oghara, Ethiopia West Local Government Area.

The late Movin, 50, had five children.

Movin's death has sparked a violent protest in the community.

Irate youths attempted to torch the Oghara Police Station.

Muka said 35 suspects were being interrogated at the State Criminal Investigating Department (SCID).

He said Movin was attacked as he drove from his Edje-muojawe home.

Eyewitnesses said the gunmen drove in an ash-coloured Audi saloon car.

Floods render thousands homeless in Akwa Ibom

•Akpabio promises assistance

ONE thousand houses were at the weekend submerged in some communities in Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

It was learnt many may have drowned.

Several persons have been rendered homeless.

The floods ravaged the Isak Abasi and adjoining communities of Ibeno.

The injured were taken to hospitals and clinics in the area.

Worse hit are fishermen living around the ocean embankment.

Narrating his ordeal, Etim Okon Asuquo blamed the rise in the water level to per-

From Inlobong Ekponta, Uyo

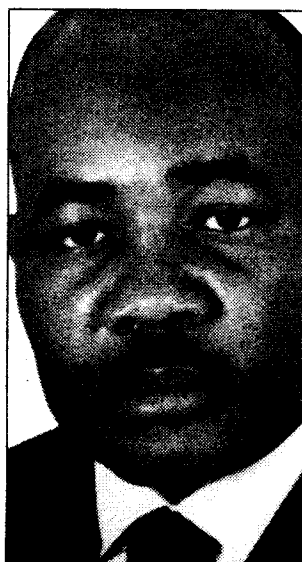
sistent rain.

He said: "All I have worked for is gone. I thank God that I was not drowned and all my family members have been rescued.

"We have to begin life afresh. We are calling on the government, the NGOs, the civil society and emergency aid agencies to come to our rescue".

Oniong Okon Anwana, a fisherman said: "All we need now are camps, medical services, food and other things to cushion the effect of the problem on us".

Governor Godswill Akpabio, who visited the area at



•Akpabio

the weekend, promised to assist the victims. He appealed for calm.

Four arrested in Delta council crisis

From Okungbowa Alwerle, Asaba

THE crisis in Patani Local Government Area, Delta State, took a new twist at the weekend.

Policemen in Ughelli apprehended four persons while allegedly attempting to alter some financial documents belonging to the council.

The legislative arm of the council and the chairman, Mrs Josephine Abeki, have been in a row over council finances.

It was learnt that since as-

suming office in May 2008, Mrs. Abeki had rendered her statements of account once.

The suspects were caught in a business centre in Ughelli by three councillors.

According to sources, the councillors contacted the Area Commander, Ughelli Police Command on seeing that some financial documents of the council were being tampered with.

An official of the council,

proprietor of the business centre, his wife and a worker at the centre were arrested by the police.

The councillors, Mr Amakapreye Ofu, Majority Leader, Mr Armour Endukeyi and Mr. Edmund Guanah, said they were at the business centre when they noticed some classified documents of the council being altered.

The Area Commander, Mr. Bassey Essien, said the police is handling the matter.

Woman freed after 41 days with abductors

•Police arrest herbalist, two others

AFTER 41 days, Mrs Fidelia Iroegbu yesterday was set free by her abductors.

Mrs Iroegbu was kidnapped in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on July 4, by four armed men in army camouflage.

Police spokesperson Mrs. Rita Inoma-Abbey confirmed the release of the middle-

From Bisi Olaniyi, Port Harcourt

aged woman.

She said a herbalist and two men have been arrested in connection with the crime.

The herbalist, Lucky Mbonye; Anele Anum and Paul Onyekachi, aka 'Holy', indigenes of Umukamba in Etche Local Government Area.

Mrs Inoma-Abbey said the

arrest of the three suspects led to the rescue of Mrs Iroegbu.

Items recovered from them include four single barrel guns, three cartridges, a short axe, three knives and rocket launcher.

She said the police are on the trail of the kingpin, Ndudiri Emuka, from Akwuobo in Etche Local Government Area.

Third batch of ex-militants arrives camp

ONE thousand ex-militants from Bayelsa State arrived at the Obubra, Cross River State, camp, at the weekend for their non-violence transformational training and counselling.

Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta Affairs Mr. Timi Alaibe said the third batch was in-

From Kunle Johnson, Calabar

creased to 1,000 from 670 because facilities at the camp have been upgraded.

Alaibe's spokesman Mr. Henry Ugbolue said the ex-militants would spend two weeks in camp before embarking on their acquisition training within and outside the country.

Alaibe said at the passing out ceremony of the second batch that government had engaged local and offshore training centres to provide training in vocational skills and formal education.

He said 1,140 from the first batch would begin their instruction at their assigned vocational centres on Friday.

Two die in road accident in Edo

TWO persons were yesterday confirmed dead in a road accident near Obadan town on the Benin-Auchi Road, Edo State.

Eyewitnesses said the accident involved two commercial buses with registration Nos. XP 548 JJJ and XA 522 HER.

From Osagie Otabor, Benin

They said one of the buses was in the process of overtaking a vehicle when it collided with the second bus.

Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps Mr. Henry Olatunji said the bodies have been deposited at

the mortuary of Our Clinic Hospital in Benin.

He said the injured were taken to other hospitals in Benin.

Olatunji said the accident could have been avoided if the drivers had followed defensive driving techniques.