

Militants Kill 3 Soldiers, 4 Civilians

Men of the Nigeria Army and militias operating along the Niger Delta yesterday were locked in a pitch battle that left at least three soldiers and four civilians dead and several others wounded.

Eyewitnesses said trouble

*From Segun James
in Yenagoa*

started when some youths suspected to be militants accosted a boat conveying the soldiers and civilians along the Obioku creek in Nembe Local Government area of Bayelsa

State and opened fire on them.

The action of the militias was said to have caught unaware the soldiers attached to the 73 Battalion of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), who were going on a routine visit to Yenagoa from Nembe

killing three of them along with the civilians in the attack.

Meanwhile, the remaining wounded soldiers battled the militants and were able to reach Yenagoa, where they were quickly taken to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) for treatment. Their fate was still unknown as at press time.

The soldiers were among the contingent protecting the Brass LNG projects in Brass.

Although he refused to confirm the killing, the Commander of the 73 Battalion of the JTF in Yenagoa, Lt. Col. Chris Musa said his men have embarked on a search mission to Obioko community, which is another euphemism for troop deployment.

FG Disburses N45bn to Petroleum Marketers

Outstanding claims by petroleum marketers and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, amounting to N45bn as subsidy for the import of petrol and kerosene for the months of January to May 2008 have been paid by the Federal Government.

This was contained in a

*From Patrick Ugeh
in Abuja*

Ministry of Finance. Government therefore hopes that the settlement of the marketers' claims will encourage products procurement into the system thereby ensuring availability of products to all Nigerians.

While commending marketers for their unrelenting support by continuing to procure products under the PSF, marketers are assured that the government is fully committed to paying their claims more frequently, as efforts are being made to ensure monthly release of funds into the PSF account with the Central Bank.