

week 31



PORT HARCOURT AND ENVIRONS

Bakassi: Cameroun Deploys Troops, Arms

Barely three months left to end the final ceding of Bakassi, Cameroun has started deploying troops in the peninsular. But Bakassi youths in Nigeria have vowed to take back the peninsular. Nigeria has till October, 2012 to reject the Green Tree Agreement (GTA) or call for a review of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment or permanently forfeit Bakassi. The arms build-up is informed by recent agitations from Nigerians rejecting the ceding of the peninsular to Cameroun and the House of Representatives declining to ratify the October 10, 2002 ICJ judgment and the June, 2006 GTA. The people of Bakassi called on the UN and the FG to return them to their homeland which was given out without a referendum.

Protesters Shut Shell Facility in Bayelsa

Women from Koroama community in Gbarain clan, Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State, on Tuesday, barricaded a facility belonging to the Shell Petroleum Development Company in a protest that lasted for over four hours, disrupting the Gbarain/Ubie Project and the Independent Power Project in the area. The women, joined by youths and traditional heads from the Obunah, Okolobiri, Polaku and Okotiana clans, alleged that SPDC failed to honour the

agreements it reached with the community in its recent Global Memorandum of Understanding. The protesters also accused the company of environmental and social negligence.

Police Rescue Abducted Doctor, Kill Suspect

The Imo State Police Command has rescued an abducted Medical Doctor, Patrick Okoro, who was kidnapped from his private hospital at Onitsha, Anambra State. Police spokesman, Vitalis Onugu, said the victim was kidnapped on Monday and taken to Amakohia Ubi in Owerri alongside another victim they kidnapped at Ogbaku in Imo State. Onugu further disclosed that unknown to the kidnappers their activity had earlier been reported to the police by a good citizen when they abducted their first victim. According to him the police besieged their hide out in an uncompleted building and smoked them out in a bloody gun battle, killing one of them in the process and injuring others who escaped with bullet wounds. One AK 47 rifle with seven magazines loaded with live ammunition was recovered. The PPRO said efforts to apprehend the suspects are on.

JTF Returns Seized Tugboat

The Joint Military Task Force (JTF), on Wednesday, handed over a tugboat impounded for allegedly conveying illegal petroleum products to its owners – Brawal Shipping Nigeria Limited. The Assistant Media Coordinator of the JTF, Lieutenant Commander Bassey Ayi, said that the release of the tugboat was aimed at assuring the operators of the maritime sub-sector and others engaged in legitimate venture that the JTF would not disturb any legitimate business. Handing over the tugboat to the owners at

Ogoloma Jetty in Okrika, Ayi said the four crew members were hired by the barge owners to tow the barge. The tugboat was released after investigation had revealed out that the crew members were not culpable.

20 Houses Torched as Youth Protest Death of Comrade

About 20 houses, were, Wednesday, set ablaze in Omudioga community, Emohua LGA of Rivers State, when youths reportedly went berserk over the death of a youth, identified as Benjamin. The youths alleged that the death of Benjamin was caused by some members of the community. Community sources said security men had been deployed to quell the situation. Chairman of the council, Mr Allen Nma, confirmed the incident.

Man Shoots Wife Dead

A middle-aged man, Mathias Nweze, in Igboeze North LGA of Enugu State, shot his wife dead, penultimate Saturday night. Nweze alleged that while he was sleeping in his house that fateful night, his generator went off twice, and he suspected that some thieves may have invaded his compound. Thus he brought out his pump action gun and shot at the direction of the generator to scare the alleged invaders but unknown to him, his wife was around the place. According to him, he only realized that he had shot his wife when she screamed after a bullet hit her. Police spokesman, Ebere Amaraizu, confirmed the incident.

BENIN/WARRI/ESCRAVOS

Group Threatens to Attack Oil Installations

Niger Delta Indigenous Movement for Radical Change, last weekend, threatened to halt the operations of the Escravos-Warri-Lagos Gas Pipeline over alleged failure of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to meet the demands of the host communities. The group stated that its decision had become necessary to draw the attention of the NNPC to the neglect of the Gbaramatu and Ugborode people in Warri South-West, Delta State. The communities' demand for power supply, potable water and a functional hospital is yet to be met, according to the group.

Delta Police Nab Suspected Kidnappers

Detectives from Delta State Police Command have arrested a six-man kidnap gang, which allegedly kidnapped a septuagenarian cousin to the Delta State Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, Pa Sam Uduaghan, in June. The gang, according to Police spokesman, Charles Muka, was also responsible for the kidnap of a medical doctor from his hospital in Agbor on July 11. He said that the gang was arrested on July 11 in Asaba. He added that following confessions of four arrested members of the gang, two were "trailed to Akwukwu-Igbo, and were also arrested.

Sapele Power Station Shut as Pipeline Ruptures

Electricity generation at Sapele Power Station has been temporarily halted as the pipeline supplying gas to the plant has ruptured and cannot be repaired because a firm has built structures on its path. Consequently, several communities in Delta State have been thrown into darkness. It was learnt that until the structure on the path was dismantled, the

excavation and repair of the gas line may be impracticable. The firm, it was gathered, insisted that even if they had to move the structures on the pipeline path, the cost of the job would be borne by PHCN.

150 Arrested for Crime in Delta

Over 150 people have been arrested by the Delta State police for abduction, armed robbery and related criminal activities in the last three months, according to the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ikechukwu Aduba. Aduba, who said that the police were prepared to combat criminality in the state, called on parents and traditional rulers to watch closely over their wards and subjects in order to check criminal acts. Aduba stated that the high crime rate in the society, especially among the youths, was due to drug addiction and unemployment. He urged government at all levels to sustain efforts towards building industries that could employ them.

Four Killed in Edo Cult War

Four persons were feared killed between Wednesday and Thursday in different areas of Benin City, Edo State, following a renewed cult war. On Wednesday night, an unidentified middle-aged man was killed at a bar. Eyewitnesses said the assailants stormed the bar and on sighting their target, they shot him several times on the head. An undergraduate engineering student was also killed after he was invited to a bar. Others were killed in different parts of the city. The supremacy battle between the two cult groups has left scores of people dead and several others injured in last three years. Police spokesman, Anthony Airhuoyo confirmed the killings.

Court Sentences Farmer to Death for Murder

An Ogwashi-Uku High Court in Delta State, Tuesday, a farmer, Chukwutem Eke, to death by hanging for the 2008 murder of a 15 year old boy. Justice Theresa Diali, in her judgment said that Chukwutem was guilty of the charge of murder adding that the Prosecution successfully established the evidence of murder against him. During trials, neighbours had confirmed that the accused person beheaded the teenager for ritual purposes, but he denied the allegation. Chukwutem was said to have attacked the boy, Master Ossai, and his sister Onuwa, both of whom had gone to weed their father's farm, but the sister succeeded in escaping from their assailant.

LAGOS AND ENVIRONS

Policeman Arrested over Death of Community Leader

A police corporal, Pepple Boma, has been arrested for allegedly killing the Otun Baale of Egun Makoko Community, Timothy Hunpoyanwa, during a demolition exercise authorised by the Lagos State Government. Hunpoyanwa was killed, panultimate Saturday while trying to make peace between Task Force officials who were demolishing shanties and the protesting youths. Police Spokesperson, Ngozi Braide, said that the trigger happy policeman has been arrested. The state government had said the demolition of shanties on the waterfront, which began on July 16, would affect only structures within 100 metres from a power line installed on the lagoon.

NEMA Alerts on Imminent Fresh Floods in South West

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) says heavier rains are imminent in the South-West and this may result in flooding. The Zonal Coordinator of NEMA, Iyiola Akande, gave the warning on Thursday in Osogbo. Akande said states in the zone should put in place measures to combat flooding. He recalled that following the prediction of NIMET before the rains, NEMA had warned on the need for Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti states to prepare for the downpour. NEMA also called on town planning authorities and similar agencies to ensure strict compliance with laid down rules and regulations in order to keep the environment clean and safe.

Falling Container Crushes Woman in Ogun

A female pedestrian was crushed on Thursday morning at Kara Bus Stop, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway by a falling container from a moving trailer that lost one of its tyres, making the driver to lose control. Witnesses said that as he struggled to regain control of the truck, it tipped over to its right side. As the truck fell, it landed on the woman, who was walking beside the road, in search of a commercial bus to her destination. The unidentified woman was said to have died instantly, but five men, who were affected in the crash, escaped unhurt. Similarly, 3 men lost their lives while one sustained injuries when two tyres flew off a speeding articulated vehicle and hit them at the CMD end of Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. Lagos state police Spokesperson, Ngozi Braide, said that the driver of the articulated vehicle had been arrested.

Police Discover Human Parts in House Raid

The police in Lagos, in a raid of a suspected ritualist den in Festac town, discovered human parts. Police were alerted by neighbors who were suspicious of activities going-on in the building located at House No. 6, B Close, Third Avenue Festac, which prompted them to storm the building. They searched the entire place leading to the discovery of some fresh human parts inside a bathtub and a room used as a shrine. The police said that several human parts were discovered. Two brothers, Omotola and Toye Ajayi, who were occupants of the building, were arrested.

Lawyer Seeks Release of 106 Awaiting Inmates

Lagos-based lawyer, Mr. Ahmed Adetola-Kazeem, has asked a Lagos High Court in Igboosere to order an unconditional release of 106 inmates at the Kirikiri Maximum Prisons. The inmates, according to Adetola-Kazeem, have spent between four and 12 years in prison awaiting trial. He said the authorities had abandoned the inmates in prison, thereby demonstrating their lack of interest in prosecuting the inmates for the alleged offences.

Man Arraigned over Importation of Fake Drugs

A middle-aged man, Uzoma Madueke, has admitted importing fake Fulcin tablets into Nigeria in 2009. Madueke made the confession at his arraignment before Justice Okon Abang of a Federal High Court in Lagos by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). The judge fixed September 28 for judgment.

GENERAL

IGP Releases New E-Mail Address

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar, has approved the release of a new email address that will enable people communicate directly with his office. The new e-mail address is This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. . The use of this email address should be under the following circumstances: when providing information on the activities of criminal groups, reporting cases of breach of public peace or imminent breach of public peace and when providing information relating to ongoing criminal investigations. The deputy Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Frank Mba, urged potential users of the e-mail to ensure the integrity of their information. He, however, warned that established cases of deliberate falsehood or intentional misrepresentation of facts might attract reprimand and in extreme cases, outright prosecution in courts of law.

Army Unveils Locally Made Vehicle Stopper/Anti-Bomb Device

The Nigerian Army has unveiled the new anti-bombing device, which it locally manufactured as part of its efforts at tackling the internal security challenges and terrorist attacks. The device was, Thursday, presented to the members of the public and distributed through the representatives of Christian and Muslim faiths by the Chief of Civil-Military Relations, Maj-Gen. Bitrus Kwaji. Kwaji said that the innovation of the anti-bombing device called 'Vehicle Stopper' became necessary since the terrorists mainly used

vehicles loaded with explosive devices. Similarly, the Nigerian Air Force, on Monday, said it had commenced the process of developing a robot capable of defusing high calibre bomb. The Commandant of the Nigerian Air Force Institute of Technology, Kaduna, Air Vice Marshal John Oshoniyi, said the robot would help check the spate of bombings across the country, and is operated by remote control.

Five Policemen Killed in Bauchi, Borno

The Bauchi and Borno State Police Commands both lost five men respectively, in separate gun attacks. In the Bauchi incident, the gunmen killed three policemen at a check point and made away with three their police rifles. A fourth policeman, escaped into the bush with his rifle. Bauchi state Police spokesman, Mohammed Auyo said investigation had been launched with the aim of arresting the attackers. In Borno, a witness said a gang of gunmen came in three vehicles with Kalashnikov rifles chanting 'God is great', attacked the Gubio Divisional Police Station with explosives, before marching to the local council secretariat complex and set it ablaze. The Borno State Police Commissioner, Bala Hassan, said two police officers were killed while three others were wounded in an attempt to protect the station. No arrests have been made.

Bus Crushes 7 Passengers Held by Robbers on Taraba Road

↑ Seven persons were crushed to death by a luxury bus, which ran over them when bandits operating on the highway in Taraba state held them hostage. The driver of the Yola-bound bus, who was not initially aware that the

hoodlums had compelled the deceased to lie on the highway, attempted to escape and in the process, ran over the victims. It was learnt that the robbers who took over the section of the roads for hours stopped several vehicles and forced their passengers to disembark. The incident, which occurred in the wee hours of the day, allegedly lasted for over three hours without the intervention of security operatives.

Military Operations Ongoing in Plateau Villages

Special Task Force in Jos has said it has yet to conclude operations to flush out suspected terrorists from the hills of Jos, from where suspected Fulani herdsmen, weeks ago, attacked nine villages in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs, killing over 100 people, including two lawmakers, who were attending a funeral procession for the victims of the July 7 massacre. The task force had, embarked on an operation to flush out the terrorists from the hills of Mahanga, Kakuruk, Kuzen, Maseh, and Shong 2. STF claimed that it had concluded the operation in the four settlements. STF Media Officer, Capt. Salisu Mustapha, Thursday, said that the operations had yet to be concluded in Mahanga, said to be the den of the terrorists.

NDLEA Arrests Women Attempting to Smuggle Drugs

Three young women were arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for attempting to smuggle 4.5 kilogrammes of narcotics, carefully hidden in their brassieres and hair wigs. All three suspects were apprehended at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja. Their arrest was sequel to an alert from the management of the Federal Airports

Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). The NDLEA Commander at the Abuja Airport, Mr. Hamisu Lawan, commended FAAN for alerting the NDLEA of possible drug concealment following a body frisk on one of the suspects.

N4bn Worth of Nigeria-Bound Cocaine Seized in Argentina

Drug-sniffing dogs found a half-ton of cocaine hidden in machinery marked for shipment to Nigeria. The cocaine was tightly packed into 490 brightly colored bricks and stuffed into heavy dredging equipment being flown from Buenos Aires to an oil company in Lagos, said Maria Siomara Ayeran, the director-general of Argentina's customs agency. Ayeran said the company in Nigeria did not exist, and the exporter was under such suspicion that all its shipments are exhaustively searched. She said it was most likely intended for the streets of Europe, where it would be worth nearly \$25 million (about N4bn). Ayeran said it's the first time the Argentine government has confiscated such a large shipment of cocaine being smuggled by air from Buenos Aires to Nigeria.

Policeman Killed As Robbers Set Off Explosions in Kogi

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has confirmed multiple bomb explosions in the Iyara area of Kogi State. Spokesperson for the agency, Mr. Yushau Shuaib, linked the incident to robbery. He said a bank and police station were affected. In the process, a police officer was killed while another, who was immediately rushed to an undisclosed hospital, sustained injury. The state police command has vowed to track down and arrest the

perpetrators.

Weapons Factory Uncovered in Nasarawa State

The Nigerian Army has uncovered a local weapon manufacturing factory at Takpa in Nasarawa State. The Director, Army Public Relations (DAPR), Brig-Gen. Omobolaji Koleosho, on Tuesday, said that two suspects were arrested for being in possession of one locally made single barrel pump action gun. He said that further investigation conducted by the army unit revealed that the suspects bought the weapons from a local manufacturer in Takpa. Further investigations led to the discovery of the gun making factory and arrest of a suspected gun manufacturer named, Adogi Akolo. The items recovered from the factory include; 11 Dane guns, two locally made pistols, one welding machine, hand drilling machines and three bench devices, 36 quantity of 7.62 NATO ammunition, 39 quantities of 7.62mm special ammunition and charms. Koleosho also said that efforts are going on to locate other members of the syndicate.

47 Killed, Several Missing in Jos Floods

About 47 persons were killed after heavy rains in Jos North, penultimate Sunday, forced a dam to overflow, flooding Rikkos and Gangere areas. Over 3000 persons were displaced, while others were declared missing. The rain, which started at about 4.30pm, lasted for more than eight hours before it subsided. Meteorologists had predicted heavy rainfall in Jos in July. The Meteorological Department had predicted that Jos would experience heavy flooding in its forecast for Sunday. Acting Zonal Coordinator for North Central of the National Emergency Management Agency

(NEMA), Mohammed Abdulsalam, confirmed the death toll.

New Drug to Combat Tuberculosis Emerges

Scientists have recorded another milestone in the search for better treatment for tuberculosis (TB) with combination drug regimen. The drug killed more than 99 per cent of patients' TB bacteria within two weeks and could be more effective than existing treatment. The findings from researchers and the non-profit TB Alliance raise hope for a treatment breakthrough amid the growing epidemic of drug-resistant forms of TB. The results, presented on Tuesday, at the 2012 International AIDS Conference, also reveal progress in the pursuit of an anti-retroviral-compatible TB treatment.

Five Persons Killed in Maiduguri

Five persons, including three brothers were, Monday, shot dead by unknown gunmen in some parts of Maiduguri. The brothers were killed at the Ganaram area few minutes after they left their parents. In the other incident, there were shootings at the Gamboru area of the town, leading to the death of two persons around the Customs office. Further violence, on Tuesday, claimed the lives of two men as gunmen, separately trailed both and shot them dead in Gomari area. Police Spokesman, Gideon Jibrin, confirmed both incidents, but said no person had been apprehended.

Panel Indicts 21 Firms in Fuel Subsidy Scam

The findings of a presidential panel to look into fraud in the application of fuel subsidy funds have strengthened a case of corruption against bigwigs in the oil and gas sector as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

arraigns the first batch of those who are alleged to have unduly benefited from the subsidy. Those to be arraigned, according to the EFCC, include 12 companies and seven individuals. President Goodluck Jonathan received the report of the Presidential Committee on Verification & Reconciliation of Fuel Subsidy Payments. The panel recommended the indictment of 21 Oil Marketing and Trading (OM&T) companies. The panel also recommended that a total of N382 billion be recovered from the indicted firms.

Oil Spill: Presidency Approves \$5bn Fine against Shell

The Federal Government has approved the collection of a \$5billion worth administrative fine imposed on the Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo) for the December 20, 2011, oil spill from its deep-water facility, Bonga, despite threats by the company to resist it. The Director General of the National Oil Spill Detection and Remediation Agency (NOSDRA), Dr. Peter Idabor, said the fine was on account of the impact of the spill on the sea and aquatic life. But SNEPCo insists that there is no legal basis for the \$5billion fine. Amnesty International lauded the imposition of the fine, urged FG to cause Shell to take responsibility for the spills.

Mass Redeployment of Corps Members In Troubled States

There has been mass redeployment of members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), as a total of 4,456 Batch 'B' corps members serving in five states in the North

have been redeployed to other states, especially southern states of the country. Reports from Plateau, Jigawa, Kano, Bauchi and Gombe states, on Monday, had the highest rates of redeployment. The redeployment of the corps members, according to the state coordinators, was granted on marital and health grounds. Meanwhile, two corps members lost their lives on Tuesday, while four others sustained severe injuries following an accident involving a 14-seater bus, which crashed into a farmland on Makurdi-Aliade Road. The vehicle was conveying the corps members from the Benue State Orientation Camp in Wannune, to their places of primary assignment in Otukpo. An eyewitness said that the driver of the bus fell asleep while on top speed.

Gunmen Kill Islamic Scholar

Unknown gunmen, Monday, shot dead an Islamic scholar at Gwammaja quarters in Kano state. An eyewitness said that the incident occurred at about 9 pm when gunmen stormed the area in a car. The witness added that the deceased was shot dead by the assailants after waiting for him for over 30 minutes to come back from the mosque where he had gone to pray. The state PPRO, Rilwanu Dutse, confirmed the killing, saying that investigation was ongoing.

Ex-Militants' Trainers Warned against Sabotage

Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Chairman, Presidential Amnesty Programme, Kingsley Kuku, has warned the trainers of ex-Niger Delta militants outside the country not to sabotage the programme. Kuku said the Amnesty Office would deal with vendors whose acts were found to be in contradiction with the expectations of the FG. The Head of Media and Communications of the Amnesty

Office, Dan Alabrah, called on the vendors to collaborate with the government on the issue of the stigmatisation of the youths now in the phase of reintegration stressing that referring to them as militants was giving a bad image to them and the country.

Twins Slaughtered in Yobe State

Twin teenagers in Nasarawa ward of Damaturu, Yobe State, were, last weekend killed by yet to be identified persons. The state Commissioner of Police, Patrick Egbuniwe, who confirmed the incident, said the command was suspecting members of the Boko Haram Islamic sect. He also revealed that the oldest private school in the state, Yobe Children's Academy, was also torched. According to the Police boss, the cases of night killings and burning of schools are on the increase in Damaturu as the hoodlums no longer use gun or explosives but resort to slaughtering of their victims. The Commissioner of Police who wondered why the attackers will slaughter the twins.

SSS Accuses Communities of Shielding Boko Haram

The Director of the Department of State Security Service (SSS), Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command, John Okojie, has said that the menace of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, has proven intractable because communities shield members of the sect. Okojie explained that the job of the agency was principally to prevent crime, stating that the invisible mode of operation of members of the sect had made it difficult to hold dialogue with them. According to him, the sect was usually represented by intermediaries who will not disclose the identities of members of the sect, making

the situation more complicated. He decried the unwillingness of the people to provide useful information to security agencies on the identity of the sect members.

FG Sacks NPA Boss, Appoints New EDs for NIMASA

President Goodluck Jonathan, Wednesday, sacked the Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Omar Suleiman. A statement by the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Reuben Abati, stated that the President has approved the appointment of Mr. Habibu Abdullahi as a replacement. The new Managing Director hails from Kano State and was the Acting Executive Director (Finance and Administration) of the NPA. The President also approved the appointment of three new Executive Directors for the NPA. He further approved the appointment of three new Executive Directors for the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA). Abati said all the appointments are with immediate effect.

Gunmen Kill Indians, Injure Three In Maiduguri

Gunmen, on Wednesday, killed two Indians, and injured three others at a factory in Maiduguri. The gunmen are reported to have demanded some money from the Indian traders, before they fired several gun shots into the factory and fled. Spokesman for the Joint Task Force (JTF), Lt. Col. Musa Sagir, said that suspected members of Boko Haram attacked a Gum Arabic Factory during heavy rain. He confirmed the death of the Indians. He said the suspects went away with some money from the premises where they carried out the attack. According to him, investigation has commenced to apprehend the hoodlums.

Police Kill 2 Robbery Suspects, Recover 44 Cows

Two suspected armed robbers were killed while five others fled after a gun battle with policemen at Muazu quarters of Hadejia LGA of Jigawa state. The Police commissioner, Mr Theophilus Kayode disclosed this. According to him, during an exchange of fire between police and the bandits, two of the suspected armed robbers were gunned down while the others took to their heels. He added that some of the items recovered from the suspects included, one locally made pistol, bows and arrows, charms and two knives. The CP also disclosed that his men arrested two thieves and recovered over 44 cows suspected to be stolen from Kaduna state.

INTERNATIONAL

Ghanaian President, Atta Mills Dies, VP Sworn-In

The President of Ghana, John Evans Atta Mills, is dead. He died on Tuesday at a military hospital in Ghana, at the age of 68, the country's Minister of Information, Fritz Baffour, announced. Following his demise, the country's Vice-President, John Dramani Mahama, was sworn in as president and will complete Atta Mills' term that was due to end with elections in December. His death elicited a wave of condolences from President Goodluck Jonathan, and other world leaders. Atta Mills, who suffered throat cancer, was elected in a 2008 run-off vote and was to run for a second term in December. Jonathan, in a statement by his spokesman, Dr. Reuben Abati, assured the people of Ghana

of the sympathy and solidarity of Nigerians as they mourn Atta Mills.

US, Russia Warns Assad against Use of Chemical Weapons

Russia has warned Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, against using chemical weapons against his enemies. Analysts believe that the Assad government, struggling to contain rebel offensives across Syria, is capable of using chemical weapons if its survival is at stake. Russia, on Monday, warned Assad not to use chemical weapons, which it said was barred by Syria's 1968 ratification of an international protocol against using poison gas in war. The US had earlier warned Assad, against unleashing chemical weapons. Syrian foreign ministry spokesman, Jihad Makdissi, said his country has chemical weapons and will use them if attacked by outsiders, though not against its own civilians. Fighter jets have bombed eastern areas of Syria's second city Aleppo as rebels continued to launch offensives. The deteriorating security situation has prompted 10,000 Iraqi refugees to leave Syria in less than a week.

Syrian Forces Overrun Damascus Districts ...As Turkey Sends Missile Batteries to Syria Border

Syrian troops have driven rebel fighters out of two districts of Damascus a week after the insurgents launched a major assault on the capital, according to reports. Government troops retook control of the Damascus neighbourhood of Mezzeh on Sunday and executed at least 20 unarmed men who they suspected of aiding rebels, opposition activists

said. Fighting raged around the intelligence headquarters in Syria's biggest city, Aleppo, and in Deir al-Zor. As fighting raged, rebels were said to have taken control of three crossing points on the border with Turkey, which is sheltering thousands of Syrians, who have fled the conflict. Meanwhile, Turkey sent batteries of ground-to-air missiles to the border with Syria, boosting its firepower.

Bombs Kill NATO Troops in Afghanistan

Five NATO service members were killed in roadside bombings in Afghanistan, while four civilians died when hundreds of shells and rockets were fired from neighbouring Pakistan. The artillery shells hit homes along frontier areas from which insurgents have in the past staged cross-border attacks. But the Afghan government has not yet blamed the Pakistani military for the artillery barrage in the eastern provinces of Nuristan and Kunar. Both are considered insurgent hotbeds, and militants allied with both the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban regularly cross the mountainous border in both directions.

Shooting Suspect Planned Attack for Months

The suspect accused in a deadly shooting rampage inside a Colorado theatre, James Holmes, 24, planned the attack with "calculation and deliberation," police said. He allegedly received deliveries by mail that authorities believe armed him for battle and used to rig his apartment with dozens of bombs. Investigators spent hours, last weekend, removing explosive materials from inside Holmes' suburban Denver apartment a day after he allegedly opened fire and set off gas canisters in a theatre minutes into a premiere of the Batman film "The Dark Knight Rises." The attack left 12

people dead and 58 injured. His apartment was rigged with jars of liquids, explosives and chemicals that were booby trapped to kill "whoever entered it," Police said.

125 Killed in Iraqi Attacks

Bombings and shootings ripped across Iraq on Monday, killing at least 107 people in the deadliest day this year. The coordinated attacks in 13 cities sent a chilling warning that al-Qaida is slowly resurging in the security vacuum created by a weak government in Baghdad and the departure of the U.S. military seven months ago. A spate of bombings across Iraq, last weekend, killed 17 people and wounded nearly 100 persons, officials said. The deadliest attack took place in Mahmudiyah, south of Baghdad. Al-Qaida, claiming responsibility for the attacks, declared a new offensive aimed at sowing instability across the country.

Madagascar Army Quells Mutiny, Kills Rebel Leader

Madagascar's army stormed a military barracks near the country's main airport to quell a mutiny, killing the leader, Corporal Koto Mainty, and arresting a number of mutineers, the army said. The soldiers had seized the barracks near the capital Antananarivo last weekend. It was unclear what their grievances or demands were, but the drama escalated when they shot and killed an officer who had been sent in to negotiate with them. General Raphael Ramasy, chief-of-staff to the Defence Minister, said confirmed that the situation was under control. Mainty was the ex-bodyguard of a former defence minister. Madagascar has been plagued by political turmoil since 2009 when the then-opposition leader and now leader, Andry Rajoelina, ousted President Marc

Ravalomanana.

12 Pakistani Militants Killed in Missile Attacks

Suspected US drones, Monday, fired eight missiles, killing 12 suspected militants near the Afghan border, according to Pakistani officials. The officials say the compound that was targeted in the North Waziristan tribal area was owned by a commander allied with Hafiz Gul Bahadur, a prominent militant leader focused on fighting U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The suspected militants who were killed were believed to be Bahadur's fighters.

38 Killed, Thousands Flee Violence in India's Assam

Over 170,000 people have fled their homes in India's north-eastern Assam state after four days of fighting between indigenous tribes and Muslim settlers left at least 38 dead, and homes torched. Police were forced to fire warning shots to disperse armed groups that were moving between jungle hamlets, setting fire to bamboo houses. The latest wave of violence was sparked, penultimate Friday, when unidentified men killed four Bodo youths in the Kokrajhar district near the borders of Bangladesh and Bhutan, police and district officials said. In retaliation, armed Bodos attacked Muslims, suspecting them to be behind the killings. Military reinforcements were called in to try to quell the fighting.

Portugal: Fire Fighters Battle Wild Fire

A Portuguese fire fighter was killed and seven others were injured as more than 1,000 personnel battled to contain wild

fires that raged across the country. The female fire fighter died and one colleague was injured in a road accident as they travelled to tackle a forest fire. In a separate incident in the popular Algarve tourist region in southern Portugal, six firemen were injured. Fire fighters using helicopters and water bombing planes have been tackling fires across the country. The fire is fanned by hot and strong winds.

Togolese in Anti-Government Protest

Thousands of anti-government demonstrators, last weekend rallied in Lome, Togo to protest alleged “crackdown on the opposition movement”. Togo, ruled by one family for over 40 years, has since June, seen series of protests launched by a coalition of opposition parties. Dozens of people have been arrested. Security forces raided the home of an opposition leader, Jean Pierre Fabre, who heads the National Alliance for Change party (ANC). The officers fired teargas and injured some of the occupants. Four of the officers involved in the raid have been formally reprimanded, the security ministry said. An opposition leader and former Prime Minister, who led some of the protests, Agbeyome Kodjo, was also detained.

Deadly Deluge Kills 10 in China

The heaviest rainfall to hit China's capital Beijing in 60 years has left 10 people dead and stranded thousands at the main airport. The deluge struck, penultimate Saturday afternoon and continued into the night, flooding major roads. Roof collapses, lightning strikes and electrocution from downed power lines were among the causes of the deaths. More than 500 flights were cancelled at the main airport, according to reports. Flooding and landslides killed four people in

northern Shanxi province, and six in the Sichuan province. Over 14,000 people had to be evacuated. The death toll may rise with several people, including rescue workers, were missing.

Britain, France Decry UN's Inaction on Syrian Violence

Britain and France have faulted the move by Russia and China to veto a resolution to impose United Nations (UN) sanctions on President Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria. Britain and France have voiced concern over the raging conflict in the country, saying it was time for the Assad regime to go. British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said he was appalled by the action of Russia and China. French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, agreed that it was time for Syria's fractured opposition to prepare to take charge of the country. UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, has called on the UN Security Council to "redouble efforts to forge a united way forward and exercise its collective responsibility."

EU Affirms Support to African Stabilisation Force in Mali

The European Union (EU) has affirmed its readiness to back the deployment of an African stabilisation force under United Nations (UN) mandate in Mali, and threatened sanctions against those who pose a threat to democratic change. The bloc also promised to lift most of the decade old sanctions against Zimbabwe if the country holds a "credible" vote. The step, according to reports is part rewards for Zimbabwe's uneasy coalition government for progress made since a disputed 2008 vote, while keeping up pressure on veteran

leader, Robert Mugabe to carry out more political, economic and social reforms. The bloc will resume direct dealings with the Zimbabwe under a new EU aid agreement for developing countries due to start in 2014.

Monsignor Sentenced in Sex Abuse Cover-up

The first U.S. church official convicted of covering up sex-abuse claims against Roman Catholic priests was, on Tuesday, sentenced to three to six years in prison. Monsignor William Lynn, the former secretary for clergy at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, "helped many but also failed many" in his 36-year church career, Common Pleas Judge M. Teresa Sarmina said. Lynn, who handled priest assignments and child sexual assault complaints from 1992 to 2004, was convicted last month of felony child endangerment for his oversight of now-defrocked priest Edward Avery. Avery is serving a sentence for sexually assaulting an altar boy in church in 1999.

248 Human Foetuses Found in Russian Forest

Villagers in Russia's south Urals region have stumbled upon four barrels containing 248 human foetuses left in a forest. Police in the Sverdlovsk region said the foetuses, preserved in formaldehyde, were kept in barrels with tags marked with surnames and numbers. Police believe that they may have come from four local hospitals and have started an investigation. The foetuses have been placed in a local morgue. The Health Ministry said it had ordered a check of local hospitals to prevent such incidents occurring again.

Ghana Mourns, World Leaders Pay Tributes to

Atta-Mills

As Ghanaians mourn the death of President John Evans Atta Mills, leaders, organisations and other individuals have paid tributes to the leader. The country's main opposition party announced that it was suspending its campaign during a period of national mourning. Vice President John Mahama, 53, was sworn in hours after Mills passed on. No public announcement has been made yet on the cause of his death or funeral arrangements. Mahama pledged to maintain stability in remarks after his swearing-in on Tuesday. US President, Barack Obama, and other world leaders have continued to pour in their condolence as they paid tribute to the late president.

Thousands Flee Clashes in Congo

Congolese rebels and government forces have traded heavy weapons fire around two eastern villages, forcing thousands of civilians to flee towards the provincial capital. The clashes took place around Kibumba and Rugari. A rebellion launched in April has already forced some 260,000 people to flee their homes. UN experts have said neighbouring Rwanda is backing the rebels, prompting the United States, a key ally of Kigali's, to cut some military aid. Rwanda denies it is supporting the rebels. UN peacekeepers have previously fired on rebel positions in support of government troops. They have also reinforced positions around Goma in a bid to make sure the rebels, known as the M23, cannot threaten the town.

Sudan, Darfur Rebels Clash

The Sudan's army and rebels from Darfur have clashed near

the border with South Sudan, overshadowing talks aimed at allowing aid into rebel-held areas where aid groups have warned of impending famine. The army said Darfur rebels wounded in the latest fighting have gone to South Sudan for treatment as Khartoum pushes Juba to end alleged backing for rebels. The army and insurgents gave conflicting accounts of Monday's fighting. Sudanese army spokesman, Sawarmi Khaled Saad, said the government killed more than 50 fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and wounded a large number of others.

Syrian Envoys Defect

Two more senior Syrian diplomats have defected to join the opposition. Their defection is further evidence that President Bashar al Assad's days are "numbered", according to analysts. US White House spokesman, Jay Carney, disclosed that the Syrian ambassadors to both the UAE and Cyprus had defected. Carney said the move showed "senior officials around the Assad inner circle are fleeing the government because of the heinous actions taken by Assad against his own people. Two Syrian brigadier generals also entered Turkey on Tuesday, bringing to 27 the number of generals who have defected, a foreign ministry official disclosed.