

TheMetroSection

A woman, taxi driver die as flood devastates Calabar following four-hour rain

In Saturday's Calabar flood, two die



The collapsed wall near where the lady's body was found

From Anietie Akpan, Calabar



The taxi in which the driver died



A car trapped in a drainage channel

PHOTOS: ANIETIE AKPAN

He warned against the dumping of refuse into drainages and construction of houses and other structures on waterways.

The huge toll flood takes on Calabar and its residents has been linked to the fact that the city has only one major drainage channel that runs from Parliamentary Village in Calabar Municipality down to the Cross River University of Technology

(CRUTECH) in Calabar South. When it rains, this major channel is always overwhelmed, leading to serious flooding in the metropolis.

However, a long-lasting respite may be on the way as the state government is constructing a second drainage that will reduce the volume of water emptying into Calabar.

flood through the channel and deposited in the bushes.

The stomach was swollen and blood was dripping out of the mouth, eyes and ears. A Volkswagen Golf taxi with a Registration Number XA 333 - EIN, Akwa Ibom was also discovered along the Murtala Mohammed Highway near a fast-food outlet.

A man believed to be the driver was found dead inside, his head resting on the steering wheel.

A traffic warden told *The Guardian* that the car was awkwardly parked, partially blocking the major highway for over five hours during the rain and that effort to find out the reason revealed a dead man behind the wheels.

Officials of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) led by the Director-General, Mr. Vincent Aquah quickly mobilised the Police, Road Safety Corps, Civil Defense and other relevant agencies to evacuate the bodies of the woman and the driver to the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital mortuary while the car was taken to the State Housing Police Station for further investigation.

The SEMA boss advised members of the public whose relatives were missing to check at the University Teaching Hospital mortuary for identification of the corpses.

The rains, which came at a time residents of Calabar were heaving a sigh of relief, having experienced a few days' respite, wreaked havoc on over 60 houses pulling down walls, houses and washing away property including cars.

The SEMA Director General advised people of the state to take the predictions of heavy rains and its effects throughout the year very seriously and guard against the effects of flooding associated with heavy rains.

It might not have been the longest rainfall in a single day in Calabar, the Cross River State capital, as there have been others in the past with much longer duration. But what made Saturday's rain unique was the intensity with which it fell throughout the four hours it lasted. "It started heavily with huge rain drops and poured and poured till the end, without once slackening.

Little wonder then that it did so much damage," one resident, Brown Eyo, said.

Indeed, the rain or more correctly, the flood, caused by the rain did a lot of damage the total cost of which is yet to be ascertained.

At least, two deaths have been blamed on the flood: that of a young woman whose body was recovered later in the day and a taxi driver, who was found dead behind his steering wheel.

For the past few months, rainfall in Calabar has been more severe than in any other year, leading to huge losses. Houses have been washed away, household property estimated in hundreds of millions destroyed, farmlands inundated and lives lost.

Saturday's rain was no different as homes in various parts of Calabar metropolis and its environs were flooded, walls were pulled down as residents experienced yet another round of misery. The body of the young woman was discovered at an undeveloped plot of land, the fence around which had been pulled down by the flood, in Ediba area of Calabar metropolis. The plot of land was close to a major drainage channel. It was being speculated that the woman might have been carried away by the rushing