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Death toll rises to nine in Lagos boat mishap

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09 November 2018 | 3:47 am



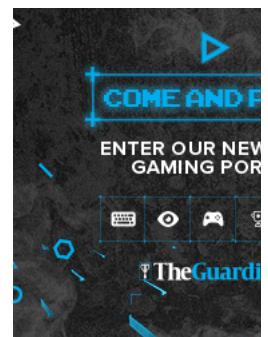
Man drowns inside swimming pool in Ondo hotel

About 24 hours after a passenger boat heading to Ojo from Coconut jetty was involved in a mishap, the five bodies missing following the conclusion of the initial rescue operation have not been found. On Wednesday night, a boat conveying 20 passengers capsized mid-sea in Lagos State.

With the five bodies not yet found, unconfirmed reports say the death toll from the mishap has increased to nine, after one of the 12 persons rescued died in the process of stabilizing him yesterday. According to a source, they are yet to make it official because the family members of the missing persons in the boat mishap have not been informed.

Findings from both the Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA) and Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) confirmed that though rescue operations have not ended, the fate of the five missing persons is doubtful as hopes of rescuing them seem dashed. Following the initial rescue operation by the emergency agencies, 12 persons were rescued and three confirmed dead. General Manager of the LASWA, Mr. Damilola Emmanuel, who confirmed the incident, said the agency at about 7:30p.m. on Tuesday, received a distress call that a 20-capacity passenger boat with 18 passengers and two crew members had capsized mid-sea enroute Ojo from Coconut jetty, a suburb in Lagos.

He said an on-the-spot investigation carried out revealed that the incident was caused by a collision between the passenger boat operated by “God Bless” and a wooden water supply service boat. “Unfortunately three persons were confirmed dead and their bodies have been deposited in the morgue, while 12 persons were rescued with five persons missing.”



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of flouting the order by the agency to desist from operating at night due to the dangers inherent. He also urged passengers to always ensure that they wear life jackets before embarking on any trip on the waterways and ensure they are worn properly to prevent loss of lives.

He said the state government in conjunction with the Marine Police will conduct a thorough investigation into the incident, adding that the operator of the boat would be held accountable. Meanwhile, a middle-aged man has reportedly died in a swimming pool in Akure, the Ondo State capital. According to a source who preferred anonymity, the deceased whose identity is yet to be known was a lodger at Helena hotel, Ijapo, the state capital. The source, who is one of the workers at the hotel stated that efforts to resuscitate the deceased who took time out to use the hotel's swimming pool proved abortive.

Confirming the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ondo command, Femi Joseph, disclosed that the deceased who had lodged in the hotel was not a good swimmer. According to Joseph, the deceased was not a good swimmer, hence the ugly incident and that autopsy and other investigation had commenced on the case. Reacting to the allegations that there had been recurrence of such incidents in Helena hotel, the PPRO said the police had not suspected any complicity in the case.

Meanwhile, it has been alleged by residents within the hotel's neighbourhood that death is usually recorded almost every year in the hotel's swimming pool. One of the residents, who simply gave her name as Fumbi, said, "Only God knows what is happening to the hotel. About a year ago, a young man who had come to have fun also died in the same tragic scenario. You can ask other people around, they will tell you the same thing," she stated.



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