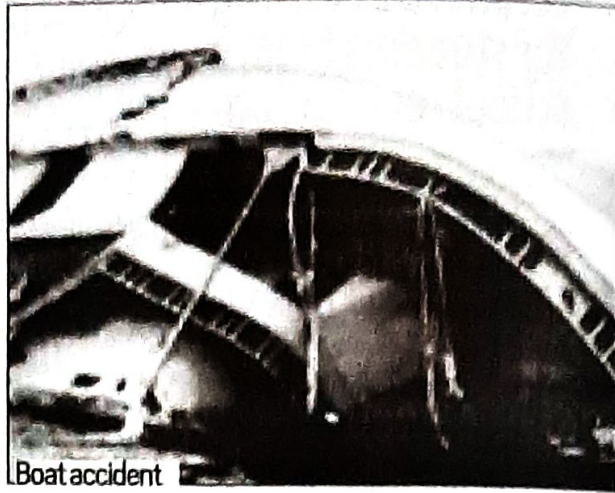


Nine die in Sokoto boat accident



Boat accident

At least nine people reportedly lost their lives when the boat in which they were travelling capsized at Birjingo village in Goronyo Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Muhammad Sadiq, confirmed the incident to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Sokoto yesterday.

According to Sadiq, the accident occurred on Wednesday.

He said: "The number of passengers travelling in the boat has yet to be ascertained, as a search team is still working to recover other victims' bodies.

"Immediately the accident occurred, many of the passengers were rescued and three bodies were later recovered.

"Today (yesterday), six other bodies were recovered and search is still on to recover others."

The Caretaker Chairman, Goronyo Local Government Area, Alhaji Zakari Shinaka, said that immediately the accident occurred, the council engaged over 50 local divers, who succeeded in rescuing some of the victims.

Shinaka, however, advised boat operators to avoid overloading their boats.

The chairman, while condoling with the bereaved families, directed traditional rulers in the coastal communities to impound any overloaded boat.

Earlier, a witness at the scene said the boat had more than 30 passengers on board when the accident occurred.

He said that the majority of the passengers were on their way to a farm across the river where they worked as labourers.