

# Seven mourners perish in Bayelsa boat mishap

BY SAMUEL OYADONGHA, YENAGOA

**T**ragedy struck week end in the riverside border town of Sagbama, headquarters of Sagbama local government area of Bayelsa State, as seven persons reportedly lost their lives in a boat mishap.

The incident, which threw the serene riverside community into mourning, occurred at about 6.00 p.m. when a wooden boat ferrying passengers across the Forcados River to neighbouring Agoloma in Delta State sank mid river.

Our correspondent, who visited the riverside town, the scene of the

mishap, learnt from eyewitnesses that the passengers of the ill-fated eighteen-seater boat were going for a wake keep at Agoloma in the Patani local government area of Delta State directly opposite Sagbama in Bayelsa when they met their untimely death.

The death toll, it was

learnt, could have been more but for the quick intervention of nearby boat drivers who helped to rescue some of the victims of the capsized boat.

The victims were said to have travelled down from Asaba, the Delta State capital to Sagbama on the invitation of their friend, a native of Agoloma, to attend the wake keep of his relation.

It was gathered that the ill-fated boat was overloaded not only with passengers but also with foodstuff and drinks, causing it to sink mid river.

Eyewitnesses quoted survivors as saying they told the driver his overloaded boat was leaking and pleaded with him to stop and find solution to the problem when disaster struck.

"It happened so fast that before anything could be done, the boat sank leaving the passengers at the mercy of turbulent waves," one of the survivors was quoted as saying.

As the time of filing this report, rescuers were still searching for the bodies of missing passengers, some of which are expected to float to the surface later in the day.

Contacted, Bayelsa State police public relations officer, Mr. Egua-voen Emokpae, said he was yet to get news of the incident but a police officer at the Sagbama police station, who spoke under anonymity, confirmed the incident which he blamed on carelessness on the part of the boat operator.

## Chime confident PDP will sweep Enugu council polls

**G**overnor of Enugu State, Mr. Sullivan Chime, is confident the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will sweep this month's local government elections in the state, saying the large turnout of the electorate at various local government councils he had so far visited bore this out.

Addressing a rally of party supporters during his campaign tours of Aninri, Awgu Igboeze North and Igboeze South local government areas to flag-off the campaign, Chime described PDP as the only party that has the answer to the people's needs and expectations.

He told the people that the PDP has very credible candidates who will complement the efforts of government at the state level

to transform the state and make very positive impact on the lives of the people.

The State Chief Executive used the occasion to thank the outgoing

council chairmen in some council areas of the state and pointed out that their achievements had made election campaigns much easier for the party.

## Peace returns to Ogun PDP

BY WURAOLA OLORUNETO

**P**ace has returned to Ogun State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), following several meetings and consultations held with stakeholders and aggrieved party members by the leader of the party in the state, Chief Adetunji Olurin.

Olurin, who was the party's gubernatorial candidate in the April 2011 governorship election in Ogun State, was elected the party leader

shortly after the April elections.

By the agreement reached after the meetings and consultations, all party members, who either decamped or abandoned the party in the past but who now wish to return to the party, are expected to go to their various wards to re-register in accordance with the directive given by the national headquarters of the PDP and in conformity with the provisions of the constitution of the party.

## Graduate empowerment scheme takes off

**F**orty graduates in Ondo State are being trained by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) under its Learning Initiative For Enterprises (LIFE) scheme on

Information and Communication Technology (ICT). "Head of Strategic Planning of the agency, Mr. Wale Fasanya, said the training was the first to be organized in the six geopolitical zones of the country.

Fasanya, who represented SMEDAN Director General, at the occasion, noted that the training is packaged for the people to be able to use ICT to engage in profitable business.