

convoy were reportedly in front of the governor's flag car and had passed the Peugeot J5 bus before it crashed into the flag car which had the governor, his ADC and driver inside.

Oshiomhole's car was said to have been damaged beyond repairs but no injuries were sustained in the accident. The governor, who spoke to *Sunday Vanguard* on telephone, thanked God for his life, saying: "The almighty God is always on the throne and will surely protect his people. I thank God; we are all fine. Glory be to Jesus and honour to Mary".

Meanwhile, a statement by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Publicity, Prince Kassim Afegbua, narrated the incident. Afegbua said: "The Peugeot J5 bus was following a truck that was descending the Ewu slope

PHOTO BY WUMI AKINOLA.

# Benue boat mishap: 17 bodies recovered

BY PETER DURU

**T**WO days after the Boxing Day boat mishap that claimed the lives of over 40 persons at River Buruku, in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State, the state Police Command says it has recovered 17 bodies from the river.

The State police public relations officer, PPRO, Deputy Superintendent, DSP, Daniel Ezeala, who spoke yesterday in a telephone interview in Makurdi, said search and rescue operation was still going on at the scene of the disaster. His words, "We have so



Lagos State governor, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, SAN (2nd right), winner, male category, Waheed Shogbamu (right), Commissioner for Youth, Sports & Social Development, Mr. Wahid Enitan Oshodi (2nd left), and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sports, Mrs. Abiola Awonuga (left), during the 5th Governor's Belt Edition and 48th Monthly Boxing Show organized by the Lagos Boxing Hall of Fame in conjunction with the Lagos State Amateur Boxing Association at the Mobolaji Johnson Sports Centre (Rowe Park), Yaba, Lagos.

## SOLUTION

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far recovered 17 bodies from the river but we are still continuing with the search and rescue operation until we are convinced that there are no survivors or bodies in the river.

"I can also assure you that we have commenced investigations into the matter with a view to finding the immediate and remote causes of the tragedy."

Meantime, Buruku has been in a somber mood since the tragedy occurred. Many families were yet to come to

terms with the Boxing Day disaster that claimed the lives of young men and women of the area.

*Sunday Vanguard* gathered that families of the deceased have been making frantic efforts to identify the remains of their loved ones who have so far been recovered from the scene of the accident.

However, those who had not seen their children since the tragedy have continually besieged the Buruku police station to make inquiries.

Speaking to *Sunday*

*Vanguard*, James Ajor, who said he lost two of his friends to the disaster, wept uncontrollably as he disclosed that the duo were part of the committee of friends who recently supported him to solemnize his wedding.

"This is a major tragedy in our state because most families in the area have been directly or indirectly touched by this disaster. It is even more painful when one realizes that people are daily ferried across the river without life jackets and the authorities did not

deem it fit to call the ferry operators to order", Ajor said.

"I lost two of my very close friends in this disaster. They were young promising men who were full of life and contributed immensely to the success of my wedding ceremony.

"That is the more reason we will continue to urge the federal government to construct a bridge across River Buruku in order to avert further loss of lives there."