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FRIDAY 26 OCTOBER

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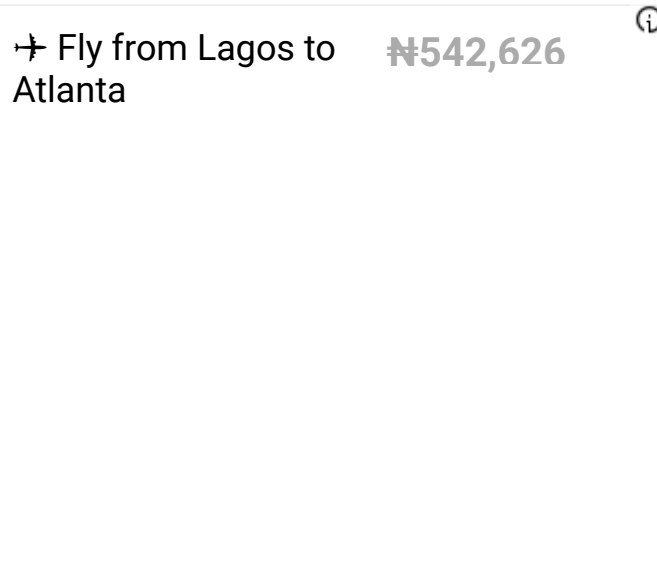


24 die in Benue, Lafia boat mishaps

ON OCTOBER 26, 2018 5:04 AM / IN [NEWS](#) / [2 COMMENTS](#)

By Peter Duru & David Odama





Makurdi—About 20 persons, Wednesday night, drowned in a boat mishap when a canoe conveying them across River Katsina capsized at the Buruku section of the river in Benue State.

Also, on Tuesday four people were died in another boat mishap in Ashangwa, Lafia East Development Area of Nasarawa State with three people declared missing.

An eyewitness told *Vanguard* that the ill-fated canoe that capsized in River Katsina was carrying more than 40 persons said to be travelling for a funeral.



According to the eyewitness, “the boat was overloaded with passengers and motorbikes when they set out. Though some people raised concern over the number of persons and cargo on board the canoe, their observation was dismissed.

“It was not quite long after the canoe sailed from the Logo end that we started hearing shouts from the middle of the River and since it was dark, there was little people could do to rescue the passengers.

“And you know that the water level of the river has risen so much in the last three months, making it very difficult for non-professionals to embark on any rescue mission.

“From the over 40 persons on board the canoe, some were able to swim out of the water, but about 20 are still unaccounted for.”

Mr. Felix Ikyaaajime, Chairman of Benue Motorcycle Association, Ugonduzua branch, which lost 17 members in the incident, said they were heading for a burial

in Buruku when the boat capsized.

At press time, three corpses and 18 motorcycles had been recovered by the rescue team, while the search for others missing in the mishap was still in progress.

Confirming the development, Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Moses Yamu, said the Police had confirmed 13 deaths in the incident.

Yamu said: "It happened at about 8:30p.m. 18 motorcycles, which were being conveyed alongside the victims, sunk. Rescue mission is still ongoing."

Reacting to the development, Governor Samuel Ortom sympathised with families of the victims.

Governor Ortom, who was represented by Secretary to the State Government, Professor Anthony Ijohor, visited the scene of the incident accompanied by Chairmen of Buruku and Logo Local Government areas, some commissioners and special advisers.

The governor called on the Federal Government to construct a bridge across the Buruku axis of River Katsina-Ala to prevent the loss of more lives.

Survivor speaks

One of the survivors of the Nasarawa boat mishap, Mrs Felina Agwale, attributed the incident to the old boat used that was paddled by an inexperienced boy.

2019 Polls: Osinbajo, Okowa call for credible media coverage



VICE President Yemi Osinbajo and the Governor of Delta State, Senator Dr Ifeanyi Okowa on Thursday urged the media to retain its credibility as an unbiased umpire.

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Also commenting on the incident, the District Head of Ashige, Joseph Mamman-Amagbo, who expressed worry over the unfortunate incident, blamed the issue on the negligence of some individual for allowing under-age children to paddle them across the river in the area.

Zakary Allumag of Nasarawa State Emergency Management Agency, who confirmed the incident to *Vanguard* in Lafia yesterday, said he was aware of the unfortunate incident, adding that he was yet to receive details of what happened.

He, however, affirmed that adequate measures had already been taken to rescue the missing persons.

His words: "I was informed of the unfortunate incident that happened at Aashangwa on Tuesday, but I am yet to receive details of what happened. Adequate measure has been taken already to ensure that those missing persons are rescued."

However, when contacted on phone, Police Public Relations Officer, AP Kennedy Idirisu, Nasarawa State Command, said the command is not aware of any boat mishap in the area, but promised to find out on what actually happened.