

7 die in Edo boat mishap



File

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENIN CITY—No fewer than seven persons have been feared dead in a boat mishap on Gelegele River, in the Ovia North East Local Government of Edo State, said to be among 28 passengers on their way from Ofunama.

The boat was said to have been pushed by waves, after it ran out of fuel, to hit oil barges that belong to a multi-national oil exploration company.

Being on Ekehuan market day, it was gathered that the boat was dropping passages along the riverine communities when it ran out of fuel.

The operator was said to have anchored the boat and went to source for fuel and on his return, he loosened the boat from the anchorage but the boat did not start. It was gathered that while trying to start the boat, high waves pushed the boat into the barges.” The Vice Chairman of Ovia South West local government area where many of the victims hailed from, Blessing Perewari, who visited the scene of the incident told journalists yesterday that the incident happened on Thursday.

According to him, some bodies were only recovered on Saturday while floating on

According to him, some bodies were only recovered on Saturday while floating on the river, saying, "From what I heard I was also at the scene where the boat capsized. About 28 adults, two pregnant women and three babies were involved. When they got to the Gelegele waterside there was this Dubri oil company barge that was parked in parallel.

"Because of the way the barges were parked caused obstruction on the waterway. So, this particular boat carrying 28 persons after dropping two passengers tried to restart the boat but the engine failed to respond.

"And because of the high current of the river it now pushed the boat into the Dubri oil barges and it torpedoed under the barges making it difficult for the victims to come out. Some of them that know how to swim managed to escape while others were trapped under the barges.

"With the help of the Marine Police and other community inhabitants, we were able to rescue 18 of the passengers and seven died. The remains of the dead have been deposited at Time Hospital and Stella Obasanjo Hospital."

One of the person who participated in the rescue operation and also a member of the community, Comrade Joseph Gbale, corroborated the position of the Vice chairman: "Even though there was carelessness on the part of the driver of the boat, the barges should not have been parked in a double manner thereby narrowing the water way.