

Collapsed building:

37 confirmed dead

*•Developer
on the run*

OKEY ONWUCHEKWA, MANSUR
OLADUNJOYE and LUKKEY ABAWURU



COLLAPSED BUILDING: One of the survivors rescued yesterday from debris of the collapsed building being taken away by aid workers. See more pictures on page 7.

PHOTO: Kingston Daniel

NO fewer than 37 persons have been confirmed dead from a collapsed four-storey building in the Ebute Metta area of Lagos State, just as Governor Bola Tinubu has vowed to prosecute developer of the 36 flat property who is now on the run.

His commissioner for Physical and Urban Development, Mr Francis Abosedo, however disclosed that approval was given for only two-storey building on the site.

Leader of a Red Cross rescue team at the scene, Mr Ige Iseoluwa, confirmed that about 37 corpses have been recorded while several others are on danger list at various hospitals in the area.

When *Daily Champion* visited the scene on Bola Street excavators from construction firm of Julius Berger were seen busy digging up the debris in the effort to rescue more persons while other persons tore through the debris with bare hands helping in the search and rescue effort.

Also a team of policemen and members of the Civil Defence Corps were on hand to help

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**...Survivors
recount experience**

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out in the search even as the building was said to have caved in late Tuesday night as people retreated from a long day.

Governor Tinubu, who arrived the scene in the early morning hours, wearing a mournful look, vowed that developers of the property must be prosecuted for a shoddy job which caused the death of residents, warning that it was high time incidence of building collapse in the state stopped.

"We shall prosecute the developers. We know their other buildings and definitely, they will not go unpunished," he said just as residents have begun a manhunt for the developer identified only as Lakuns Investment Nigeria Limited.

The governor however, assured the residents who were becoming restive that the state would immediately commence the promulgation of a law that would check the excesses of developers in the state, "We shall promulgate laws over this, so as to forestall further loss of lives in future."

Governor Tinubu, pleaded with the rowdy crowd to make way for the combined rescue teams of police, Civil Defence, Red Cross and medical personnel.

He also thanked some residents who had joined the rescue team to excavate the victims.

Meanwhile, a resident of an adjoining street, Mr Adeshina Rufai, told *Daily Champion* that his close friend, Mr Rotimi

Folawiyo, along with his wife and three children, died in the incident.

Mr Rufai, who said he had spent the evening with late Folawiyo, said the deceased left him at about 7.30 pm only to meet his death in the incident.

Said he: "My friend was with me that day. We were together before he told me he was going home. I never knew that would be our last moment together.

"He died with his wife and three children. No doubt, all of us in this house are going to miss him because he was nice to everybody," he grieved.

However, panic has gripped residents of other buildings said to have been constructed by the same developer.

While at the scene, *Daily Champion* gathered that residents of other such building have started moving out there belonging.

When our correspondent visited one of such houses on the same street, some tenants were seen hurriedly moving out their belongings.

As at press time, however, rescue efforts were still on and attempts being made to reach trapped victims who had contacted their loved ones from the debris through telephone calls.

Meanwhile, Lagos State Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Mr Francisco Aboyede has disclosed that approval was given for a two-storey building only for the developer to raise it to four on his own accord.

He was, however, silent on the sanction that would be slammed on the runaway developer.

Indonesia: Tsunami death

FOUR days after the tsunami in Indonesia, thousands of residents of the region are still shock-stricken with death toll rising to 550 as at yesterday.

Whereas residents were yesterday seen scrambling for high grounds due to shock, rescue operations had been intensified.

Rescuers pulled bodies from the debris and aid trickled into worst-hit Pangandaran town

while a search continued for about 275 people still missing after the tsunami smashed into a 300-km (185 mile) stretch of coast along southern Java.

A light aftershock that shook Pangandaran beach sent some people running, while others headed inland on motorcycles and cars as rumors circulated of a fresh tsunami. Indonesian media questioned why there was no warning ahead of