

# 23 killed in Bauchi auto crash

A surviving spare driver of a cement truck which somersaulted killing 23 people riding on top said yesterday the driver lost control after a mechanical failure.

The truck crew member who identified himself as Mallam Hussaini, said he and colleagues loaded cement from Ashaka in Gombe State for delivery in Abuja en route Potiskum and Kano. They also picked 76 passengers who rode on top of the 30

**From Tashikalmah Hallah,  
Bauchi & Isa Umar Gusau,  
Damaturu**

tonnes of cement.

The vehicle lost its engine along Garin mallam, a border town between Yobe and Bauchi States.

Hussaini said: "We left Potiskum after loading passengers on Monday morning as we started moving towards Kano. While moving the trailer engine suddenly stopped working as we

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approached Garin Mallam. Instantly, every system of the vehicle stopped functioning. The driver tried to stop the vehicle but could not as nothing was functioning. Thereafter, the trailer went out of control as the vehicle swerved into the bush. People fell down from the trailer, some died and others sustained injuries”.

Our correspondent gathered that the 23 people who died may have been hit by the cement loaded in the trailer when the vehicle lost control. *Daily Trust* also learnt that most of the passengers died on the spot while 53 others were rushed to the General hospital, Potiskum, being the closest to the scene of the accident.

The Principal Medical Officer of the hospital, Dr. Ntuen, told journalists that the 53 injured included the driver of the trailer. Sources at the hospital told our correspondent that most of those hospitalised sustained head injuries. The source also said that the driver was unconscious.

Four children are among the 23 people killed when a truck carrying bags of cement

and nearly 80 people overturned outside Potiskum on Monday, police said.

Dr Mohammed Shehu, the zonal Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission [FRSC], while confirming the accident to our correspondent, said preliminary investigations has shown that the accident was as a result of “overloading”.

He said: “the trailer was carrying 30 tonnes of cement and on top of the cement were 76 passengers. The vehicle was not supposed to carry human beings, but maybe the socio-economic problem of the country caused the overloading”.

He said: “From what we could see, the vehicle went out of control and somersaulted. It was not as a result of tyre burst, because when I visited the scene of the accident, all the tyres of the vehicle are still intact.”

He said of the 23 people confirmed dead, 11 were men, eight were women and four were children. 56 sustained various degrees of injuries including 39 men, 10 women and four children.