

Flood wreaks havoc across Nigeria

Many people lost their lives and whole communities were destroyed in many parts of the country at the weekend following heavy

By Our Reporters

rains that choked drainage channels and swept away farmlands. Similarly, torrential rains in neighbouring Niger

Republic caused two bus crashes early yesterday, killing at least 20 people, according to a NAN report.

→ In Sokoto, two people lost their lives when a trailer

crushed them while they were taking shelter from the heavy downpour on Saturday. Witnesses told *Daily Trust* that the driver of the trailer lost

Cont. on Pg. 4

Start from Pg. 1 Flood wreaks havoc across Nigeria

control of the vehicle due to poor visibility and crushed two motorcyclists and three people who were in a shade to avoid the heavy rain.

The five people were rushed to the Usman Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital Sokoto, where two of them later died. Our correspondent in Sokoto, Aminu Mohammed, reports that one of the dead victims was identified as a female student of the Usman Danfodiyo University who had just finished writing her exams and was on her way home when the rain started. She was said to be taking shelter in a shade when the trailer crushed her and the other victims. The heavy rain started at about 11:00am and lasted for more than nine hours.

Meanwhile, the rains also affected the Shagari/Tureta new bypass road as some villages along the road were submerged while the road was completely cut off, causing motorists to be stranded. The Sokoto-Gusau highway was also cut off near the Bakura Junction on Saturday, due to the heavy down pour. A witness at the scene said hundreds of vehicles were stranded on both ends of the road, unable to continue with their journeys with the highway totally submerged. Earlier on Friday, floods destroyed 30 houses and various property worth millions of Naira at Giyawa village of Goronyo Local Government Area, in Sokoto State, according to a NAN report.

In Borno State, the Damboa bridge, which links Maiduguri with Biu, Numan in Adamawa State, Jalingo in Taraba State) as well as parts of Gombe State, collapsed at the weekend following a heavy down pour. Our correspondent in Maiduguri, Isa Umar Gusau, reports that the Damboa bridge had broken into two halves following the heavy down pour.

The bridge had prior to its final collapse been severely damaged by a heavy down-pour last week. After assessing the earlier damage, Governor Ali Modu Sheriff asked the state ministry of works to recommend lasting repair methods. But a few days after the governor's visit, the bridge collapsed following another heavy down pour.

In Lagos, six people were said to have drowned in the floods that swept the Ikorodu area sequel to the opening of

the Oyan Dam in neighbouring Ogun State. Our correspondent, Olumide Bajulaiye reports from Lagos that apart from the lives lost, at least 2,000 residents of Isheri, Agiliti, Maidan, Agboyi, Ajegunle, Owode-Onirin, and Alapere were sacked from their homes when the rampaging flood submerged their communities. Lagos state commissioner for environment Dr. Muiz Banire, who confirmed the incident, told our correspondent that residents of the affected communities had started fleeing their homes since Monday when the dam was opened. He said Governor Babatunde Fashola has appealed to authorities of the Ogun-Osun River Basin Development Authority to shut the dam allegedly opened by the Ogun State government.

Banire also said that Fashola had ordered his ministry to commence immediate deflooding of all the affected areas. He advised residents of the various communities in the state to always notify the state government on the condition of drainage channels in their area and report any contractor that fails to clear the drainage assigned to it.

The commissioner said his ministry in collaboration with that of the physical development will as from next week, commence the demolition of homes and other illegal structures obstructing drainage channels in the state.

Similarly, one person was said to have lost his life while 10 communities and 300 farmlands were destroyed at the weekend in Wase local government area of Plateau state following a heavy downpour. Rakiya Muhammed, our correspondent in Jos reports that the Information Officer of Wase Local Government, Ahmed Dan Anacha said several persons were displaced when the heavy down pour over flooded the banks of River Wase. Affected communities included Gyambar, Kukawa, Saluwa, Anguwan Gar, Wase Tofa, Zanko, Gandu, Gwaiwan Kogi and parts of Wase town.

Speaking on the incident, the Advisory Committee Chairman of the Local Government area, Alhaji Abubakar Mohammed, described it as devastating noting that the condition of the displaced persons was pathetic in view of the harsh weather. He called on the Plateau state government and

the National Emergency Relief Agency to come to the aid of the displaced persons.

Alhaji Mohammed, who disclosed that council has distributed over 100 bags of maize and other consumable items to the people whose lost their houses and farmlands to the incident, assured of the local authority's commitment towards mobilizing assistance from appropriate agencies towards alleviating their situations.

In Damaturu, our correspondent, Hamza Idris, reports that hundreds of families in Nayinawa settlement in Damaturu, the capital of Yobe State had to flee their homes during a torrential rainfall which lasted for several hours last Friday.

The ward head of Nayinawa, Abdullahi Wakilin Bulama Mustapha said over 100 houses were destroyed by the flood. He said the heavy downpour began around 11:40 am last Friday and continued unabated for several hours. "The flood was caused following the blockage of the waterway as a result of the ongoing bypass construction", the ward head said. "The construction company did not build any bridge or culvert which will allow the waters to flow freely", he added.

He said many families have fled their homes to live with relatives in the township, even as he called on the state government to come to the aid of his people. Daily Trust reports that the flood waters ruined many other areas in Damaturu Metropolis, including Simarami along Gashua Road and Sani Ahmad Daura Estate.

Yobe State Deputy Governor Alhaji Ibrahim Geidam was at the scene of the flood on Saturday where he sympathized with the victims and promised government attention. He said government was expending millions of naira in building drainages and waterways in Damaturu and other places that are prone to flood every year. He also promised to liaise with the federal government to assist the people.

Shuaibu Umaru, whose house was destroyed by the rain, called on the state government to redesign the bypass road under construction "and re-channel the river so that the people living around would not be swallowed by the flood".