

1 dies, many injured in Zaria bomb scare

From Isa Liman, Zaria

A grinding machine operator died while several people were injured at the weekend in Zaria, Kaduna State when a high tension electricity cable fell on the house of a retired Customs officer at the Babban Dodo area of the city.

The fallen cable was said to have caused a stampede as it was misinterpreted as a bomb explosion targeted at a nearby stadium where the state deputy governor was watching a football match.

Witnesses said yesterday that

the bomb speculation was heightened by Deputy Governor Kamilan Yero's presence at the Babban Dodo stadium.

Many spectators and those outside the stadium including shop owners scampered for safety, resulting in many injuries and the lone death.

Malam Muhammadu Bello, a shop owner at the stadium area said, "I was at my shop when we heard the blast. Immediately after that, everywhere, including my shop, was gutted by fire. Most of us thought at the beginning that

it was a bomb explosion targeted at the stadium. Because of that, we took to our heels to save our lives. It was when the dust that was raised by the mild drama settled that we realised that it was an electric cable which fell down that made the heavy sound and not a bomb explosion."

According to Bello, among those who were heavily affected by the stampede was a daughter in-law of Mustapha Bello, the retired customs officer on whose house the electric cable fell.

"The woman had recently

given birth. In trying to run for her life, she had serious bleeding and was rushed to hospital. It was said that she was in her room with some relatives who came to see her new baby when the bang came," Bello said.

It was learnt that the person who died was an operator of grinding machine who came out from his grinding shop after hearing the heavy sound. While outside, another high tension cable fell down and Musa, the machine operator, was electrocuted.

The Zaria District Business Manager of the PHCN could not be reached for comment up till last night as guards at the PHCN District office in Sokoto Road Sabon Gari, Zaria told this reporter that the Business Manager was not in office yesterday. Efforts to get him at his house yielded no results. But a source at the PHCN office who doesn't want to be named told *Daily Trust* last night that the company was aware of the incident and had launched an investigation to establish the cause.