

Lagos bus crashes, victims flung into lagoon

ONE after another, they dropped into the Lagoon. And at the last count, two people, including a pregnant woman, were feared drowned.

0 But while the bus was on the Third Mainland Bridge, the driver lost control and the vehicle hit the aluminium railing of the bridge. The

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next minute, the bus was hanging loosely on the railing and emptying self of its human contents into the Lagoon.

Apart from the two persons feared dead, many others sustained injuries.

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According to a witness, the accident occurred at about 10 a.m. Two bodies, including that of the pregnant woman, have been recovered from the

lagoon.

The *Molue* marked XD 333 APP was coming from Oshodi and it was said to have lost control due to over-speeding. The gravity with which the bus hit the bridge caused a part of the vehicle to tear off completely from the main body, making it possible for

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more passengers to fall into the lagoon.

A witness explained how the accident occurred: "The *Molue* was going towards Obalende while I was on another bus going towards Iyana-Oworon-soki. I noticed that the bus was on top speed and some passengers were hanging at the entrance. It suddenly lost control and hit the bridge railing forcing some of the occupants to drop inside the water.

"So far, only two bodies have been retrieved. Nobody really knows the number of casualties since water could have swept some of them away."

A fisherman who was also at the scene of the incident said: "As at the time the accident occurred, there were

many bodies floating but the current of the water swept some of them away. There are still so many bodies inside the water."

Many passengers were said to have sustained various degrees of injuries. Some of them, including the conductor of the bus, said to have lost different parts of their bodies have been taken to the hospital.

The scene of the incident was smeared with blood and littered with human parts while sympathisers were searching the water for more victims.

Following the accident, the Third Mainland Bridge was overtaken by traffic jam, which stretched from Gbagada end of the expressway to Obalende, making

motorists to spend hours on the bridge.

The accident, another witness said, also involved a Honda Accord bus marked, CM 457JJJ, which collided with the *Molue*.

As at 2.00 p.m., marine policemen were seen combing the lagoon in anticipation of recovery of more bodies.

Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) officials led by the supervisor for Zone 1, Mr. Shade Ahmed, were also on ground to avert more accidents as well as ease traffic on the bridge.

Ahmed said the accident might have been caused by over-speeding by the driver of the *Molue* whom he said had been taken away by the police.

According to him, the driver, who on noticing the danger, swerved his hand, saved the day as the bus would have plunged into the lagoon.

Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu and some

members of his cabinet visited the scene at about 11.30 a.m.

The LASTMA chief said he received a distress call at about 10.30 a.m. about the accident and met the *Molue* bus while the

Honda Accord driver was lying unconscious.

"At about 10.30 a.m. this morning, I received a distress call about the incident, but when I got there with my men, there were many bodies

floating on top of the lagoon. The local fishermen were very helpful as they were able to recover two bodies, including that of a pregnant woman."

Ahmed warned other commercial drivers against over-speeding, particularly on bridges.

President explains restraint on Niger Delta crisis

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ued to fan the fire in the Niger Delta area to their advantage.

But in a joint presentation by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers of Nigeria (NUPENG), the two unions accused security agencies of conniving with oil pipeline vandals.

In the joint presentation

titled: "Issues of concern to Nigeria oil workers' unions", NUPENG and PENGASSAN noted that their "experience has shown that security agencies have abdicated their responsibility of providing security for the pipelines. We believe that there can hardly be a successful vandalisation (siv) without security connivance."

Therefore, the unions recommended the following:

- Federal Government and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

hostages and stem the tide of hostage-taking;

- Put in place an effective strategy for persuasion, sensitisation and awareness campaign to address the issues of insecurity;

- Persuade companies to give skilled and competent indigenes of the region adequate consideration in employment opportunities;

- Government, through the Ministry of Labour, should urgently address the abuse of out sourcing, casual and contract staffing which provides

submitted to the Presidency in July 2006.

Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media, Mrs. Oluremi Oyo, had while explaining Obasanjo's stand on the current situation in the Niger Delta, told journalists after the meeting that "the President is just as concerned about the situation in the Niger Delta as everyone. If the President is not rolling out all the tanks, it is because he believes in the sanctity of lives. He believes that it is possible that within the Niger Delta region, we can have people come to