

Five killed, eight injured in Kogi accident

From John Akubo (Lokoja) and Charles Coffie Gyamfi (Abeokuta)

1. FIVE persons yesterday lost their lives when the driver of a cement-laden articulated truck belonging to Dangote Cement, lost control, ramming into a taxi cab and a commercial tricycle (Keke NAPEP), at the Nataco junction, on the Abuja-Lokoja highway.

Among those who lost their lives were two school-aged children, while eight others sustained varying degree of injuries in the accident, which occurred around 9:00a.m. in Lokoja, Kogi State capital.

The Sector Commander of Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC), Olusegun Martins, attributed the incident to brake failure. He explained that the trailer was coming from Obajana

when the driver lost control due to brake failure and rammed into the commercial tricycle and one Nissan taxi, at the Nataco junction.

He however confirmed that a female student of the Kogi State Polytechnic and two others were killed on the spot, while eight others who sustained injuries were evacuated to the state Specialist Hospital Lokoja for treatment.

While appealing to the Federal Government to construct a flyover bridge at the Nataco junction, to reduce the incidence of accidents around the area, he charged drivers to maintain and ensure the good condition of their vehicles, to prevent brake failure and other unforeseeable vehicular faults.

An eyewitness account said the driver of the truck

lost control around the polytechnic gate. Students of the school subsequently went on rampage on confirmation of the death of their colleague, barricading the highway and making bonfires, leading to a gridlock along the corridor.

An eyewitness, Mr. Emmanuel Adams, called on the state government to intensify effort in sending away people who sell by the roadside, saying the casualties could have been more if it was a market day.

Also speaking, head of the emergency unit of Specialist Hospital, Lokoja, Mr. Okpanachi Stephen, confirmed that eight persons were brought to the hospital from NATACO junction where the accident occurred. He noted that some of the victims

have head injuries while others were bleeding from the cut they sustained on their bodies.

Secretary to Kogi State Government, Mrs. Arike Ayoade Folashade, said the state would be compelled to make it compulsory for every truck driver, particularly Dangote Cement, to undergo psychiatric test.

"They have to go through psychiatric and drug test to ensure they are not under the influence of any hard drug as some of them may not even possess valid driver's license. We have to collaborate with the FRSC to get the machine for drug testing and alcohol. If it exceeds the normal level we have to prosecute them and possibly jail them," she said.

2. Meanwhile, one person was confirmed dead in an accident that occurred yes-

terday in Agbede Ogbere-Benin Expressway in Ogun

Spokesman of the Traffic Compliance Enforcement (TRACE), Mr. Babalola Akinbiyi, who confirmed the accident to journalists in Abeokuta, disclosed that it involved a truck marked, FKJ and a Toyota Sienna with registration number AGL 141

According to him, the accident was caused by the driver of the Toyota car who drove against traffic and had a collision with the

Akinbiyi said: "The enna bus that was against traffic was a commercial bus and loaded with turkeys. The driver of the bus died at the spot."