
BRT severs schoolboy's head while crossing lane in Ikorodu

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Task force at the scene to ensure law and order yesterday

Tragedy struck in the early hours of yesterday when the driver of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the Idi-Iroko/Ogolonto area of Ikorodu, Lagos State, yesterday crushed a primary school pupil, Ezekiel Daniel, to death, severing the head off at Ogolonto bus-stop, on Ikorodu Road.

The incident resulted in a chaotic traffic gridlock as sympathisers and passersby trooped to the scene, amid wailing and curses.



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Assembly for voting against
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The pupil was said to have attempted to cross the road to enter the C&S School when the BRT, plying its lane, hit and ran over him. It was gathered that the incident almost led to a riot before the police and Lagos task force succeeded in dispersing the crowd and restored normalcy.

Before the crowd was dispersed, they angrily blamed the state government for not constructing a pedestrian bridge near the schools in that axis. According to them, the accident happened because the man that usually stands on the road to cross the school children was absent.

The development made irate passersby to block the expressway, forcing motorists to take alternative routes to their places of work. BRT buses were also forced to stop

working thereby making commuters, who were resuming for the week's duties, to be stranded on the road.

It was further gathered that irate youths burnt tyres in the middle of the expressway, worsening the gridlock and inflicting more pain on motorists. However, operatives of the state task force and other security agencies arrived at the scene, shooting into the air, apparently to prevent the miscreants from hijacking the situation.

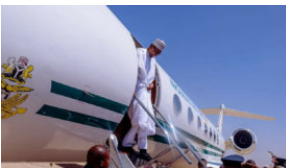
According to an eyewitness, Mr. Akin Adeolu, the incident happened at about 7:45a.m. when pupils were rushing to their various schools. The boy was trying to dash across the BRT corridor at the ever-busy Ogolonto bus-stop. Unfortunately, the speeding bus hit the boy and cut off his head from the rest of his body. The driver of the BRT bus was said to have taken to his heels immediately, for fear of a possible mob action.

Adeolu added that men of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) and other security agencies were immediately drafted to the scene to maintain law and order in the area while officials of the Lagos State Traffic Management Agency (LASTMA) were drafted to ensure free flow of traffic.

One Asoro Abubakri Olatunji, an eyewitness said: "A lasting solution should be provided to curb incessant BRT killings in the area. This can be done by erecting a bridge to save pupils who cross that road every morning in their quest for knowledge."

Flying the absence of pedestrian bridges on an expressway that has about six primary schools in the axis, residents charged the state government to do the needful as such cases are on the increase.

Ifeanyi Edmund said: "The pertinent question is why would you have schools without pedestrian crossing? A Zebra Crossing that won't cost us much would have saved the child's life."



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Meanwhile, an official of Primero Transport company, owner and operator of the BRT buses, who spoke on anonymity, confirmed the incident saying, "we have commenced initial investigation into the ugly incident to determine the cause for further action. However, we commiserate with the family and colleagues of the deceased."

In a related development, pandemonium broke out in Adeyemi College of Education (ACE) Ondo State, as a reckless driver (name withheld), allegedly rammed into three students of the institution, killing one on the spot while two others were in a coma.

The accident occurred yesterday afternoon at Biochem area on Ondo-Ore Ring Road, near the main gate of the college. The driver overtook two vehicles, facing an articulated vehicle, but lost control and rammed into a computer shop, allegedly killing one and injuring two persons believed to be apprentices in the shop.

The incident irked the student community, who rushed the three victims to the Trauma Centre, Ondo, where one of the victims was confirmed dead. This resulted into violence and wanton destruction of property.

According to eyewitnesses, the angry students barricaded the road at the front of the campus and pounced on the driver, who narrowly escaped mob action, but his BMW car was razed to ashes.

Some of the students blocked the main road with bonfire, which resulted in restriction of vehicular movement for hours in the city, while others marched to the headquarters of the Ondo West Local Government Area and the police station at Yaba to register their grievances.

One of the witnesses and ACE student simply identified as Rapheal, said the protest was to urge government to build speed-breakers on the busy road so as to drastically reduce recurring accidents on the road.

But the Student Union president, Abidemi Zubair, asserted that none of the students of the college was involved in the accident, adding that many students trooped to the scene of the crash to assist the victims of the accident in getting to the hospital.

Reacting to the incident, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the institution, Mrs. Seto Olatuyi, confirmed the incident but said no student of the institution was involved in the accident. Olatuyi noted that enraged passers-by set the reckless vehicle ablaze, following the fatal accident before students arrived at the scene, while the driver of the car joined in rushing the victims to the hospital.



FG's N24b monthly oil subsidy fictitious, PDP alleges

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But the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Femi Joseph, who also confirmed the incident, said the three victims are students of the institution. Joseph disclosed that one of the victims lost his life while the two others are on danger list, saying the body of the deceased had been deposited at the hospital morgue.

He said policemen from the command had been drafted to the scene of the incident to maintain peace and to ensure free flow of traffic in the area.