

Accidents: Community seeks speedy completion of Ibadan-Oyo-Ogbomoso-Ilorin Expressway

By Amarachi Nnamani

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Chairman, Oyo Metropolitan Development Association (Oyo Metro), Archbishop Emeritus Ayo Ladigbolu (4th left); Project Supervisor, Federal Ministry of Works, Chuks Akwali (3rd from right); Baale Akeetan, Chief Jimoh Oyeleye (5th right); and members of the delegation, and officials of Reynolds Construction Company, during the visit on Wednesday

Oyo community has appealed to the Federal Ministry of Works, and the contractor handling the Ibadan-Oyo-Ogbomoso-Ilorin Expressway, Reynolds Construction Company (RRS), to complete the road speedily.

Chairman, Oyo Metropolitan Development Association, Archbishop Emeritus Ayo Ladigbolu, made the appeal, when he led a delegation to meet with officials of the Federal Ministry of Works and representatives of RRS, at the project office along the Oyo-Ogbomoso expressway.

The appeal followed an auto crash that claimed the lives of 15 passengers in a commuter bus on October 14.

The accident involved an Abuja-bound 16-seater Mazda passenger bus from Oyo, shortly after it left the Owode motor park in Oyo.

It was learnt that the bus rammed into an articulated truck, which suddenly swerved while the bus driver attempted to overtake it.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Ladigbolu said the visit, which was sequel to an earlier one made nearly five years ago, alongside the late Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III, was prompted by the October 14 tragedy.

According to Ladigbolu, the Oyo-Ogbomoso expressway, was too strategic to social and economic development of the state to be left in such a condition that endangers the lives of the people it is meant to serve.

He also appealed to both the ministry and the contractor to revisit some of the unfulfilled commitments made to the late Oba Adeyemi III during the visit five years ago.

He said: “When we came here five years ago with a delegation headed by the late Alaafin Lamidi Adeyemi III, we came primarily to commend RCC for fixing our road, especially the Oyo-Ogbomoso section. And on this visit, we will like to appreciate the efforts of the Federal Government through the federal ministry of works in ensuring that this vital road is completed.

“As I said while welcoming former President Olusegun Obasanjo and the governor of Oyo State for the commissioning of the Oyo-Iseyin road, only about four weeks ago, the road is very important. The most important infrastructure for human development is roads. And if anyone wants to argue that with me, I am available for a debate. So, any government that pays attention to making good roads for its people is considered a good government.

“But then, of course, our coming has also been prompted by the recent event on this road. Nobody can easily forget the event of October 14, where so many precious lives were lost. But then, who do we blame for road accidents? Except for accident investigators, it is difficult to determine who to blame.

“We are not laying any blame, but are expressing our concern that the Oyo-Ogbomoso-Ilorin road has become so popular that we don’t want accidents and unnecessary loss of lives. So, whatever the ministry and the contractor can do to prevent future occurrences of the October 14 event, we pray that you do it and do it with speed.”

Ladigbolu added: “We have come not only with appreciation but with a number of appeals. The Ecobank-Ajayi Crowther University section of the old road is also bad. We no longer refer to it as a road but a ditch.

“Also, when Kabiyesi (late Oba Adeyemi III) was sitting here five years ago, and I was in his company having led the team, he made a specific request for a u-turn at the Oba Adeyemi International Farmers’ Market. And essentially, we have stated the reason such was necessary.

“If people come to that market from all over the country, there should be a way for them to access that market safely. We thought it was appropriate to use this visit to lay down a reminder of the u-turn that was promised late Alaafin Lamidi Adeyemi III during his lifetime.”

Ladigbolu also called attention to the bridge (interchange), popularly called ‘better life bridge,’ at the Sabo end of the expressway, which appears to have been abandoned by the contractor.

Responding on behalf of the ministry and the contractor, an engineer with the Federal Ministry of Works and the project supervisor, Mr. Chuks Akwali, assured the delegation that actions were already

being taken on some of the requests, while others are in the pipeline.

He said: “On the issue of the U-turn, it is already in our design. But as you know, we have a sequence of how this work will be done. So, when we get to the time to provide it at that location, you will surely see it there.

“The accident that happened on October 14 was unfortunate. We moved into action on the 16th and did an assessment of the critical sections of the old road. We have captured the bad sections and our recommendations have been sent to our boss. I know they are already acting concerning that.

“As you can see at kilometre 65 at Elete, we have already started repairs of that section. By the grace of God, we will continue that way as soon as we get approval for the other sections that have been submitted. On the issue of the bridge, that also is already in our design and it is in our schedule to complete it.”

The 10-man delegation included its secretary, Mr. Rasheed Atanda and the Baale Akeetan, Chief Jimoh Oyeleye, who represented the traditional institution, among others.