

NEWS

Five feared killed in Lagos train accident

FIVE persons were feared killed and 50 others injured when a train ran into traders at Yaba, Lagos mainland yesterday.

The traders were selling on the rail line when the accident occurred.

Some of the injured were evacuated by sympathisers to undisclosed hospitals.

The scene of the accident was littered with clothes, pastries and damaged stalls.

One of the victims, Uzoamaka Omereibeole, lay in a semi-motionless state, naked, at the Casualty Ward of the Federal Medi-

By Dele Adeyanju and Emmanuel-Enyi Appolos

cal Centre, at the Railway Compound, Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland.

The victim whose name means: "What did I do to people?" only managed to move his right hand.

Surgeons at the Federal Medical Centre, Railway Compound, Ebute-Metta, are battling to repair his damaged perineum (reproductive organ region).

The unfortunate victim also has deep cuts on his head and right arm.

Dr Stephen Akinkunmi, one of the doctors treating

Ozoamaka, said his case 'is critical because of the laceration on his head and anal area'.

"We have given him emergency treatment but he still needs critical surgery to correct the damage done to his perineum," he said, as he ordered nurses to prepare the theatre.

The tragic incident occurred a few meters from the railway crossing at Yaba, at 11:20am, in the heat of trading activities.

A witness, Mr. Kevin Okeze, told *The Nation* that the driver of the train failed to blow his 'horn' properly 'and was moving at an unusually high speed' which

made it impossible for traders, to leave the rail line.

"We were attending to customers when I heard people shouting that we should leave the rail line, because the driver did not blow his horn enough, so many people were caught off guard," he explained, as he made to retrieve what was left of his ware.

"Ordinarily, everybody would have shifted from the rail line before an oncoming train passes but we did not hear any sound until the train was a few metres from us," he added.

He also stated that this would be third time that the

same driver would be hitting people.

Kevin said that in 2001, the same driver hit several people due to his failure to blow his horn properly before reaching where the traders were.

"Last year, the same driver hit several people again after making the same mistake. Nobody died but several people were injured," he said.

The Lagos Police Command Spokesperson, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, confirmed the accident.

He refused to give casualty figure. He said that he does not have such information.

Three varsity students, 11 others killed in accident

FOURTEEN person, including three students of the Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago Iwoye, Ogun State, were on Tuesday night killed in separate road accidents.

The students were killed when their 18-seater bus plunged into a river on Ilisan-Ago Iwoye road.

The 11 others died in another accident on the Akure-Owo road.

Those injured when the students' bus plunged into the river are on the danger list of the institution's health centre. Four others have been declared missing, while rescue operation continued yesterday.

The Nation gathered that the bus conveying the students left Lagos around 5pm on Tuesday evening for Ago-Iwoye.

A witness disclosed that the driver of the Isuzu Mazda bus with registration number XA 562 SRA

By Jude Isiguzo (Lagos), Ernest Nwokolo (Ijebu-Ode), and Damisi Ojo, (Akure)

was overspeeding and could not control the vehicle when they got to the third narrow bridge before the main campus.

The bus consequently plunged into the overflowing river after stumbling several times against the rocky surface of the water.

When *The Nation* visited the scene, local divers were making frantic efforts to rescue the victim.

The spokespersons of the institution and the Ogun State Police Command spokesmen, Mr. Niyi Oduwole and Mr. Femi Awoyale, a Deputy Superintendent of police confirmed the incident.

On hand to monitor the rescue operation were the Commissioners for Health Dr. Biodun Oduwole, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Mr.



• The 18-seater bus where three OOU students died

Segun Adekoya and Education Prof. Segun Awonusi.

At the university, the authorities advised parents and students to remain calm as the situation was under control.

In Akure, motorists faced hectic time passing through the Akure-Owo road as traffic was held up for several hours.

The driver of the luxury bus which ran into a passenger bus was accused of reckless driving.

It was gathered that the quick response of the men of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) saved some of the victims as they were quickly rushed to the hospital.

Confirming the accident,

the Ondo State FRSC Sector Commander, Mr. Ahmed Hassan expressed concern over incessant carnages on major roads in the state.

He warned motorists and other road users against reckless driving. He advised them to always obey traffic rules.

The police spokesman also confirmed the accident.