

crime



• Scene of the accident...yesterday

Three Naval officers, 42 others die in auto, boat accidents

• Two officers, one Youth Corps member missing

TRAGEDY struck over the weekend claiming 45 lives in multiple roads and boat accidents across the country.

The Zaria-Kano Highway in Kano recorded the highest number of deaths with 21 casualties.

The casualties figure was followed by a lone crash involving a Mitsubishi bus on Ijebu-Ode-Ibadan Expressway, Ogun State with 10 persons lost their lives.

In Lagos, eight persons were yesterday confirmed dead after a commercial bus collided with a truck in the Badagry area of Lagos.

Six persons - three personnel and three civilians attached to the Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Delta, who had embarked for a free medical rhapsody at Okerenkoko, Warri South West council area of Delta State were announce dead a gunboat mishap.

The Zaria-Kano high-way accident occurred at Kasuwar Dogo in Dakatsalle, around 8:20am yesterday. It involved a heavy-duty DAF truck and a commercial Toyota Hiace passenger bus.

Spokesman of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Assistant Corps Marshall Olusegun Ogungbemide, said preliminary investigations revealed that the crash was "caused by route violation on the part of the commercial Toyota Hiace Bus driver."

He said that the driver "contravened established traffic regulations and drove against traffic flow", resulting in a fatal head-on collision with the oncoming truck.

"Regrettably, out of the 24 people involved in the crash, a total of 21 persons - comprising 19 male adults and two female adults - were killed in the crash, while the remaining three were rescued with injuries,"

By Precious Igbonwelundu, Elo Edremoda, Warri, Musa Umar Bolog, Abuja and Udeh Onyebuchi, Lagos

Ogungbemide said.

He stated that the victims' remains had been deposited at Nasarawa Hospital in Kano.

Spokesman for the Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Corps (TRACE) in Ogun State, Babatunde Akinbiyi, said the accident occurred at about 8:30 p.m. on Friday at Ome Bridge, Awa, along Ijebu-Ode-Ibadan highway in Ijebu North Local Government Area.

He stated that the lone crash involved a Mitsubishi bus, marked EJ829-LSR, which was conveying 15 passengers at the time.

According to Akinbiyi, seven male and three female passengers died. Three others were injured, while a toddler and one adult escaped unhurt.

He said preliminary findings indicate that over-speeding and wrongful overtaking led to the accident.

"Eyewitnesses said the driver wrongly overtook another vehicle at high speed and could not regain control after noticing an oncoming vehicle. The driver veered off the road, hit an abandoned gravel pile beside the bridge, and plunged the vehicle into the river," Akinbiyi explained.

He said the deceased were taken to Ijebu-Ode General Hospital's morgue, while the injured were also being treated at the same facility.

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) Director of Public Affairs and Enlightenment, Taofiq Adebayo, said the Lagos accident occurred at Atura Bus Stop near Badagry before dawn.

Adebayo said the accident involved a 16-seater commercial

Mazda bus marked KJA811YF and a DAF truck, marked TI4636LA.

"The tragic accident instantly claimed the lives of eight passengers, including the driver of the bus and his conductor, casting a somber pall over the Badagry axis and leaving the community in profound mourning and collective grief," Adebayo said.

He said LASTMA operatives, officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), the Police at Morogbo Division and soldiers from 244 Battalion of the Nigerian Army, Ibereko Barracks, coordinated the rescue operation.

"Their timely intervention led to the successful extraction of eight surviving passengers, all of whom sustained varying degrees of trauma. These casualties were immediately evacuated to the General Hospital in Badagry in an FRSC vehicle for critical medical attention. Preliminary investigation revealed that the driver of the commercial bus lost control while navigating at a perilously high speed, leading to a collision with a DAF truck. The resultant impact was described as cataclysmic, leaving little chance for evasion or survival for several occupants of the bus," he added.

In Warri boat mishap, the boat identified as "EPENAL Gunboat DE 24, capsized on Thursday at about 7:45pm at position LAT 05° 36.408'N / LONG 005° 11.982'E," directly in front of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), claiming six lives.

Lieutenant D. K. Nehemiah, Sub-Lieutenant Kwala, and Miss Uche, a corps member, remained missing as of the time of filing the report with rescue efforts still ongoing.

The sad incident occurred just after the naval team wrapped up the first day of the two-day

humanitarian exercise in the riverine community.

The vessel was reportedly conveying 15 people - nine serving Navy personnel and six civilians, including National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members - from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Escravos, to their hotel accommodation in Arunton community, when it sank.

It was gathered that the Nigerian Navy's swift search and rescue team recovered 12 persons from the waters, six, out of whom three were serving naval personnel and the other three were civilians, were confirmed dead by CNL's clinic Chief Medical Officer on duty, when they were rushed there for first aid.

As of Friday morning, divers had recovered the bodies of Commander JO Eidangbe, Petty Officer Abolarinwa, Ordinary Seaman Tena, Miss Chinenye (NYSC member), Miss Dorcas (NYSC member) and Master Destiny (boat driver).

The naval medical team had earlier, on Thursday, been received warmly at Okerenkoko community hall, Gbaramatu Kingdom, where the Commander of NNS Delta, Commodore Abdulazeez Zubairu (represented by Navy Captain Ayi Archibong, Executive Officer NNS Delta), had reaffirmed the Navy's commitment to national security and community engagement.

The free medical outreach - held in collaboration with EMT Foundation - was part of the Navy's non-kinetic strategy under Operation Delta Sanity II, as directed by the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogalla.

Despite the unfortunate incident, the outreach was concluded on Friday, amidst a gloomy atmosphere.