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25-hour rain: 7 feared killed, 30 houses submerged in benin, ibadan

Written by Oluw atoyin Malik, Tunde Ogunesan, Oluw ole Ige, Banji Aluko and Joan Omionaw ele | Tuesday, 24

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A 25-hour heavy rain across three states left seven people dead in Ibadan, Oyo State capital and 30 houses submerged in Benin, Edo State, while paralysing business activities in the states.

The rain, which started in the evening of Sunday and continued for most part of Monday, resulted in traffic snarls in all the

affected cities and towns, leaving many commuters stranded.

In Ibadan, although the Oyo State police command confirmed only two people dead in Orita Challenge area of the city, residents of some communities in Oluyole Local Government Area of the state claimed five other people were swept away while attempting to cross a bridge, which they did not know had collapsed.

One of the victims, said to be an unidentified elderly man, was said to have disembarked from a commercial motorcycle and had attempted to cross the flooded bridge at LAD Hospital area at about 8.00 a.m on Monday.

He reportedly died when he slipped and hit his head on the slab of the bridge.

The second incident, which occurred at about 11.30 a.m, involved a commercial motorcyclist who also attempted to cross the flooded bridge, as the water swept him and his female passenger off.

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Though the passenger was rescued, the okada rider was not fortunate, as he and his motorcycle were swept away.

His body was, however, found around 2.30 p.m about 200 metres away from the spot where he was swept off by the flood.

Nigerian Tribune learnt that the remains of the two victims had been deposited at the State Hospital mortuary at Ring Road, while the female passenger was taken to a private hospital for treatment.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Indabawa, who confirmed the story, said he had instructed his men to cordon off the place so as to prevent further disaster.

It was gathered that the policemen, led by the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Orita Challenge division, Daniel Alao, were still securing the bridge as of the time of filing this report.

In Benin, the Edo State capital, the rain, that started at about 7.00 a.m, left no fewer than 15 houses submerged at Azinge Crescent, Ihama Road, GRA, while, at least, three houses were nearly submerged at Slaughter Street in Aduwawa.

At Aigubasinmwin, the Customary Court of Appeal and the secretariat of the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) were affected, while some houses and vehicles were submerged in the area.

It was the same story at Oza Street, off Sokponba Road in the Edo State capital, as many vehicles were trapped and damaged inside the flood at Ihama, Adesuwa and adjoining streets of Sapele Road. Businesses were paralysed in notable commercial areas such as Ring Road, Forestry, Third Junction and New Benin, as retail outlets and stores were locked as a result of the high intensity of the rain.

Other affected areas were Ugbiyokho, GRA, Ikpoba Hill, College Road, Ekenwan Road, Textile Mills and Aduwawa.

Residents also stayed indoors, as many roads were impassable, while people in flooded houses were seen trying to rescue their belongings from the flood.

A woman, Cordelia Igbe, said her belongings and that of her neighbours, including their houses, were submerged in the flood.

"I was in the office when I received a phone call from my neighbour to come home quickly, as flood had entered my apartment.

"I had to take excuse from my boss and rushed home. What I saw was not what I bargained for at all. I am really confused, I don't know what to do," she lamented.

As of the time of filing this report, the rain had not stopped and the effect could not be fully quantified.

When contacted on Monday afternoon, the state Commissioner for Environment, Clem Agba, said he was in the state executive council meeting and could not say anything because he had not been properly briefed on the situation.

In Osogbo, the Osun State capital, the rain, which spanned over 20 hours, disrupted socio-economic activities in the state capital, causing gridlock in some areas.

Though there was no recorded casualty, the rain prevented pupils of private schools, who had already resumed for the new academic session, from going to school.

Similarly, some civil servants found it difficult to resume at their duty posts in time, owing to the incessant rain, as commercial motorcyclists, popularly known as okada could not operate.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the prolonged rain would have wreaked havoc if not for the dredging of streams and other water channels within the city by the state government.

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