

Three die as bus flings passengers into lagoon

Olalekan Adetayo

THREE persons, including a 15-year-old boy, were feared dead on Monday when a Volkswagen commercial bus somersaulted on the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos.

Although police authorities confirmed only the three casualties, the fate of the remaining persons in the 14-passenger bus was not clear as some eyewitnesses claimed that they were flung into the lagoon.

While the corpses of the other two victims, a man and a woman, were recovered inside the bus on the road, the remains of the teenager were reportedly recovered from the lagoon by a combined team of marine policemen and local fishermen.

Police source said the boy, a student of a private secondary school at Oworonshoki, was identified by some of his teachers shortly after the accident.

The corpses have since

been deposited at the mortuary of the General Hospital, Gbagada.

As at 1.05pm when the local divers left the scene, no other corpse was recovered from the water. The scene was besieged by anxious *Lagosians* plying the route.

Our correspondent learnt that the Oworonshoki-bound bus, marked XP 492 LND, was coming from Oyingbo and was approaching Iyana-Oworo bus stop on the bridge when the accident occurred.

Personal effects such as footwears and clothings as well as wares such as fishes and baskets still littered the road when our correspondent visited the scene. There were also splashes of blood at the spot.

Officials of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, led by Mr. Ige Oladimeji, were also at the scene to assist the local divers in the rescue mission.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Command, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, a deputy superintendent of police, told our correspondent that the vehicle had been towed to Oworonshoki police station.

He said it was too early to ascertain the cause of the accident. Ojajuni added, "The only report we have now is that the vehicle somersaulted, but the railings prevented it from plunging into the river."

...15 feared dead in boat accident in Port Harcourt

Femi Makinde,
Port Harcourt

FIFTEEN persons were feared dead in a boat accident on Sunday at the Abonnema Wharf, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Sources told our correspondent that the accident occurred while the driver of the boat was manoeuvring to the shore.

They added that the passengers were coming from a chieftaincy ceremony.

A source at the State Police Command said five corpses had been recovered.

There were conflicting accounts on the number of casualties. A rescue team, made up of local divers, had been set up to comb the sea for more bodies.

According to an eyewitness account, "The passengers were actually coming from a chieftaincy ceremony. They saw that the boat was overloaded and the driver tried to go back to the jetty to reduce the passengers when the accident occurred."

"We have not confirmed the numbers. But some are saying it is between eight and 12," the source said.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, could not be reached to confirmed the incident as her phone rang five times without a response.

The state government has been complaining about the dangers the wrecks abandoned along various waterways in the state posed. Many lives have been lost to various accidents caused by the wreckages.