

Four die, 12 injured in road accidents

Emmanuel Obe, Benin

FOUR people died, while 12 others were critically injured in three accidents that occurred on Wednesday along the Ovia section of the Benin - Lagos expressway.

One of the accidents involved a trailer, a Hiace commercial bus and a luxury bus near the Ovia River, where many accidents had become frequent of recent.

In the accident, 10 occupants of the commercial bus belonging to a Benin-based transporter were critically injured and were taken to the Igbinedion University Teaching Hospital, Okada for treatment.

In the second accident, the driver of a tanker-carrying diesel veered off the

road to avoid running into oncoming vehicles.

It somersaulted and caused a serious traffic jam along the road.

The driver and conductor of the tanker were taken to the hospital at Okada too.

The third accident in which four lives were lost involved a luxury bus and a commercial Hiace bus which had a head-on collision along the same stretch of the road.

Officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission who spoke to our correspondent said all the accidents were caused by the violation of the one-way rule on the dualised road.

The accidents were coming three days after a 911 lorry plunged into a river along the road killing three of its occupants.

The driver of the lorry

who was trapped in the vehicle was only pulled out on Tuesday evening after the FRSC hired a crane to pull out the lorry.

Sadly, local youths in the area made the work difficult for the rescue team as they said that a relation of the deceased driver should pay a fee before the body of the deceased could be taken from the river.

Our correspondent gathered that the youths said the fee was to be used to buy materials to appease the gods of the land, which they said were desecrated by the death in the river.

The bridge had become dangerous as there were manifest signs under the bridge that it could give way at any time.

The FRSC had become disturbed by the recklessness of the drivers of most of the Benin-based transporters.

The Okada Unit Commander of the FRSC, Mr. Chukwuma Uzor, said the commission would soon begin to clamp down on motorists who violate the one-way rule on the road.

Uzor said that though one side of the Ovia stretch of the road was bad, avoiding that section by running against the traffic on the other side had become too costly for road users, which the commission would not condone.

He said that the bad side of the dualised road was not so bad that it could not be used, but motorists who were rather in a hurry would not take it, and would rather risk the lives of their passengers by driving against the traffic.

Militants urged to suspend reprisal

Olamilekan Lartey, Warri

A group, the Niger Delta Riverine Peace Campaign Movement, has appealed to the militants in the zone to suspend any reprisal for the killing of their colleagues in the creek three weeks ago.

The group condemned the military attack in which about nine militants on a rescue mission to free an abducted staff of an oil company that had been taken hostage in Letugbene, Bayelsa State were killed in error.

The group called on the Federal Government to withdraw the troops cur-

two wrongs would never make a right.

Specifically, the NDRPCM said the presence of the troops in the Niger Delta was capable of inciting further tension if the type of Letugbene incident happened again.

According to NDRPCM, "We are appealing to the Federal Government to withdraw the Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta code-named Operation Restore Hope, from the region.

"It is on record that the task force had attacked unarmed and defenceless people of the region several times."