

18 die in Ondo, Ogun road accidents

Sunday Aborisode and Ademola Oni

NO fewer than 15 people who were travelling from Lagos to Abuja and Kano in two separate buses died instantly on Sunday evening when their vehicle somersaulted on the Akure-Owo Road by-pass while trying to avoid a heavy truck on top speed.

Also, three passengers of two trucks died on the spot while two others sustained serious injuries when the vehicles in which they were travelling collided on Saturday on the Abeokuta-Ota Expressway.

In the first accident, our correspondent observed that nine people were burnt beyond recognition when one of the buses with registration number KANO XE 513 FGE went up in flames while six others died of injuries they sustained from the second bus marked LAGOS XR 290 EPE.

Miraculously, however, two twin brothers came out unhurt from the accident.

About 12 other survivors of the accident who sustained varying degrees of injury were rushed to the emergency unit of the Ondo State General Hospital for treatment.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at about 3pm on Sunday during a downpour.

They claimed that a truck on top speed caused a confusion for the drivers of the two commercial vehicles and that resulted in a head-on collision.

It was gathered that one of the buses was heading towards Owo town enroute Kano from Lagos while the second one was going to Lagos from Abuja.

The driver of the truck was said to have increased its speed to frustrate the attempt by the bus from Abuja to overtake it. The bus, which was also on top speed, had to face the other one in its opposite direction. The truck escaped but the two buses collided.

The Kano bound bus instantly went up in flames and roasted nine of its passengers while those who survived, writhed in pain as a result of the burns.

The mysterious escape of the twin brothers from the bus that was burnt beyond recognition surprised sympathisers who trooped out to catch a glimpse of them. Both men, however, refused to make any comment.

The Police Public Relations Officer in charge of the state command, Mr. Aremu Adeniran, confirmed the incident.

The state Governor, Dr.

Olusegun Mimiko, through his Chief of Staff, Mr. Kola Ademujimi, who visited the survivors on their hospital beds, promised to take care of their medical bills.

The second accident was said to have occurred in front of Industrial Mineral Product on the expressway at about 6.30am.

It was learnt that the trucks, a blue Isuzu pick-up van with registration number XQ 937 BDG, and a blue Mercedes Benz truck, XA 959 PHC, which were heading towards the Ota end of the expressway, ran into each other before crashing on the road.

While it was difficult to ascertain what actually led to the collision, officials of the Ota Unit of the Federal Road Safety Commission, who arrived on the scene of the accident less than 15 minutes after the crash, attributed it to road traffic violation.

"We got here a few minutes after the accident but the survivors were in critical condition to start answering questions on what happened. We can only say that it was due to road traffic violation; may be over speeding on the part of one of the vehicles," said an FRSC official, who craved anonymity.

It was gathered that two young men died in one of the trucks while a middle-aged lady died

in another vehicle.

Our correspondent further learnt that the dead had been deposited in a public hospital mortuary in the state capital while the injured were rushed to an undisclosed hospital for treatment.

The Acting Sector Commander, FRSC, Ogun State, Mr. Segun Akinyemi, confirmed the accident to our correspondent on Monday, saying it was just one of the several crashes in the state during the weekend.

"There are several of them but I can confirm this to you that it happened on Saturday morning. Some people thought it happened on Friday night but it happened very early on Saturday morning and three people died there. It is unclear what was actually responsible as our men got there for rescue mission about 6.45am," Akinyemi said.

NIPOST retire ground activists

Ademola Oni, Abeokuta

HUNDREDS of pensioners of the Nigerian Postal Service, Ogun Territory, grounded activities of the organisation in the state on Monday while protesting