

# UTME: Five die in road mishap

• JAMB fails to use biometric machines in Abuja

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with agency reports

**F**IVE candidates who were travelling on Saturday to write the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination died in an accident, which occurred on Ahoada-Abuja road in Rivers State.

**SUNDAY PUNCH** gathered that the victims were travelling from Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital to their centres in Abua, Rivers State when the accident occurred.

The accident involved a Mazda car and a commercial motorcycle.

Apart from the JAMB candidates that died in the road mishap, two other persons were seriously injured.

Confirming the incident, the State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Osas Osadebanwen, blamed the accident on reckless driving.

Osadebanwen said the driver of the car was over-speeding before hitting a motorcycle carrying three persons.

According to him, the driver rammed into a tree after the car skidded off the road.

"The driver of the Mazda car was over-speeding before his vehicle veered off the road. The car hit an Okada and a tree.

"Five persons died in the accident, while about three persons were injured," Osadebanwen added.

He stated that while five persons died on the spot, two persons were injured.

Osadebanwen said the deceased were deposited in the mortuary at the Ahoada General Hospital, adding that those that were injured were also rushed to the same hospital.

The sector commander, however, said he was not sure if all the deceased were UTME candidates.

Meanwhile, hiccups still trailed the conduct of the examination, as the board did not use the biometric capturing machines in some of the centres, particularly in Abuja, as it had initially promised to do.

There were also candidates who did not find their names on the examination lists in some centres visited by NAN.

The JAMB Registrar, Prof. Dibu Ojerinde, said the board failed to use the machines because they arrived at the examination centres late.

The biometric machines, JAMB had earlier said, would help to check all manner of examination malpractice.

Interestingly, in some of the centres on Saturday, officials of the examination board conducted manual verification of the candidates for the examination.

Over 1.4 million candidates wrote the examination.

Ojerinde said the change in the earlier plan was to enable the candidates to commence the examination on time.

"I know the biometric machines were a little bit of a problem in places where they started usage late; definitely, they won't get immediate result.

"So we have to cancel usage of the biometric machines and they can use their e-slip as well as the attendance register to check-in the candidates as back-up," he added.

Ojerinde expressed regret over the development, saying the board would have to take another look at the biometric machine strategy.

In a related development, a candidate at Model Government School centre, Maitama, Mr. Paul Alfred, was caught for presenting a fake e-slip.

Some other students could not write the examination because of fake e-slips they got from some cyber cafes.

Eight candidates had a similar problem at Araman International School, Dikko road, Central Area, Abuja, but Ojerinde said there was nothing JAMB could do to assist those affected as they

were swindled by the cyber café operators.

However, candidates in Lagos expressed disappointment with JAMB for not providing them writing materials.

"The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board had assured candidates that it would provide writing materials, like pencils, rulers and even calculators at the centres but this was not done.

"Almost all the candidates left these materials at home believing that they would be provided but it is disappointing that JAMB has done this to us," said Olaoluwa, a candidate at Wahab Folawiyo Junior High School centre in Lagos.

She told NAN that a few minutes to the commencement of the examination, candidates were instructed to go out and buy the materials.

According to her, the announcement created some panic and destabilised candidates as they scamped around to source for writing materials.

Another candidate, Kumuyi Adepeju, said JAMB had instructed that all candidates come to the examination centres with just the photo card and that all other materials would be made available to them.

Adepeju said they all complied but were surprised to hear from the same JAMB officials who had earlier re-

iterated the need for strict compliance, coming back to announce that no materials were available for their use.

Messrs Diamond Irorogbare and Nicholas Ogbusuo, supervisors at the centre, said the complaint of the candidates was justified because supervisors had actually been instructed not to allow any writing materials into the examination hall.

They said the instruction was based on the premise that the materials would be provided at the commencement of the examination, alongside the question and answer scripts.

When contacted, a JAMB official at the Government Senior College, Ikoyi, Miss Nike Ogunjimi, said the development was strange because all the materials were made available for distribution to the various centres.

However, both candidates and examiners lauded JAMB for introducing the biometric verification in the examination.

Mrs. Patience Oni and Mr. Ademola Wale, both supervisors at Government Senior College, Maroko, and Government Junior College, Ikoyi, respectively said the exercise was hitch-free and reduced incident of impersonation.

However, in Enugu, a JAMB official, Mrs. Ivy Uchei, said the conduct of the examination was peaceful and without any hitch.

## Ewi laments humiliation of traditional rulers abroad

FEMI MAKINDE

**T**HE Ewi of Ado-Ekiti in Ekiti State, Oba Rufus Adejugbe, has lamented the

humiliation suffered by Nigerian traditional rulers in the hands of immigration officials and other security agents in foreign countries.

Oba Adejugbe said this in Ado-Ekiti on Friday when the founder of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Chief Afe Babalola, led the 21 army generals who were on a short course to the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Badagry on a courtesy visit to his palace.

The monarch, who frowned on the way traditional rulers were always frisked by narcotic officials at points of entry into some advanced countries, traced the situation to Nigeria's poor economic condition.

He faulted the past military interregnum as

a primary reason for the country's economic woes and stressed that successive leadership had failed to implement laudable policies that could liberate the people from the throes of poverty.

He said, "Now traditional rulers are asked to remove their caps by security agents at the point of entry while travelling abroad. This is happening because we failed to plan for the future.

"Before, the mere mention that you are a Nigerian used to command respect anywhere in the world. But now, many are ashamed to say that they are Nigerians."

The monarch stated that the rate of unemployment and poverty in the country was alarming. He advised the three tiers of government to invest on industrialisation.

The Ewi explained that industrialisation would curb the problem

of unemployment in the country as well as tackle the rising wave of crime.

Oba Adejugbe said both the government and the people should hold the future of the youths dearly by nurturing them and by planning for their future.

He said that failure to plan for the future of the youths was responsible for the current hardship and embarrassment.

The Ewi warned that if nothing was done to curb the spate of unemployment in the country, wealthy Nigerians would no longer be able to live comfortably in the midst of the teeming poor in the next 20 years.

He expressed worries that the only company in his domain, the Oodua Textile Mill, had folded up and said that his people were as a result left with nothing. He appealed to the government to embark on policies that could impact positively on the people.

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