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Tricyclist falls into soakaway while starting generator

FEBRUARY 12, 2015 BY SAMSON FOLARIN ■ 3 COMMENTS

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Anipele Street (arrowed, the building)
| credits: Samson Folarin

Tragedy struck in the Mushin area of Lagos State after a 35-year-old tricycle rider, Olalekan Salisu, fell into a soakaway in his house and died.

He was said to be starting his small generator on the soakaway around 9pm on Sunday when the slab covering the soakaway gave way.

The generator and the Ogun State indigene were said to have fallen into the soakaway.

Residents said it took about five hours before the victim, who was married with two kids, could be brought out. He was brought out dead.

Tension was still high on Wednesday when PUNCH *Metro* visited the scene of the incident, a two-storey building on Anipele Street, Olorunshogo, Mushin.

Our correspondent observed that two fresh concrete slabs had been prepared to replace the damaged one which was at the back of the house.

Faeces, said to have been drained out of the soakaway with pumping machines in frantic bid to remove the victim, were still in the gutters in the area.

Some of the deceased's co-tenants, however, denied living in the house or knowing about the incident. They declined to talk to PUNCH *Metro*.

One particularly threatened to beat up our correspondent. One of the tenants, who did not identify himself, asked our correspondent to leave immediately.

He said, "Look, everybody is sad. The man that died here is young and his family has left the house for their home town after the incident. The landlord does not live here with us. If you want to get any information, come back when his family returns or when everybody is in a good mood."

However, some residents of the area claimed that the tenants were trying to cover up what had happened in the house.

A resident, John Ademola, who said he was among those that attempted to save the victim on the night of the incident, explained that the tenants usually put generators on the soakaway which must have weakened the slab and caused the tragedy.

He said, "On that night, the man, who lived on the second floor, came outside to turn on his generator after a power outage.

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"The generator, which was on the soakaway, started working and as the man was about leaving, the soakaway caved in and he and the generator fell inside.

"As he was going down, he shouted for help and that was what made people know that something bad had happened."

Our correspondent learnt that all attempts to remove him proved abortive, until someone called men of the Lagos State Fire Service.

The firemen were said to have inserted pipes into the soakaway to drain the wastes after which the victim was brought out dead.

The Director of the Lagos State Fire Service, Rasak Fadipe, while confirming the incident, said a fireman, Joshua Akindele, descended into the soakaway to evacuate the victim.

He said, "The fireman went in with a sealing hook and a ladder. With the aid of the hook, he found the location where the victim was buried in the faeces. He then went into the basement of the septic tank using the ladder.

"He used a side of the victim's shoulder to bring him up and tied a rescue rope over his body before drawing him up. It was a difficult situation."

Fadipe warned people in the state to avoid using septic tank as a passageway or a facility for storage of generators, which could weaken the slabs and lead to avoidable disaster.

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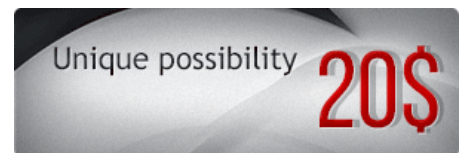
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