

Downpour: Gas man drowns, Lekki, Ikorodu residents, landlords flee

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Left: Ejike; Right: Flooded part of Oba Saheed Elegushi Road, Lekki, Lagos. Photos: Stanley Ogidi, Goke Famadewa and Olukayode Jaiyeola

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Incessant rain in Lagos and Ogun states in the past one week has not only wreaked havoc, but also exposed infrastructural deficit in the two neighbouring states, The PUNCH's investigations have revealed.

The PUNCH's correspondents, who monitored many parts of the two states on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, reported that the flood caused by incessant rain, claimed lives and destroyed homes and property.

Also, motorists and commuters were not spared of the harrowing experience as many of them spent hours on flooded roads.

It was also observed that the problem was compounded by the fact that major roads in the states were in a state of disrepair.

Flood sweeps cooking gas seller, seven others away in Ogun, Lagos

The downpour had on Saturday led to the death of a woman, Mrs Jumiah Utache and her three children in Magodo area of Lagos when a building collapsed on their house.

Also, the flood had claimed the lives of a 11-year-old boy, and a man, identified, as Wasiu, who wanted to rescue the boy.

Later on Saturday, a resident of Magboro, Kingsley Ejike, was swept away by the flood resulting from Saturday's downpour.

He got drowned in a flood around Sparklight Estate area of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in Ogun State.

Ejike, a cooking gas supplier operating in the Magboro area of Ogun State, was said to be the owner of Kingsfield Gas at Magboro.

He was said to have fallen victim to the flood while on a trip to supply cooking gas to some residents of Sparklight Estate, near the MFM at about 6.15pm.

A source in the area said Kingsley, who rode a motorcycle, was on his third gas supply trip to the estate when the tragedy happened.

“He was well known by residents of the estate because of his exceptional commitment to his cooking gas supply business.

“His body was recovered on Sunday morning in the neighbourhood river by some Ilaje fishermen, whose services were sought for the recovery,” the source told The PUNCH.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, who confirmed the incident, said Ejike was riding his motorcycle to a destination when flood occasioned by the downpour swept him into a tunnel, adding that his remains were recovered and deposited in a mortuary.

Oyeyemi said, “The person was riding a motorcycle and wanted to pass through Sparklight Estate, but didn’t know that the construction company, Julius Berger, while constructing the road, channelled water under the tunnel in the area. But because the area was flooded, he drove past the axis and the flood swept him and the motorcycle into the tunnel. But local divers and the police recovered his corpse this morning around 9.30am and deposited it in the mortuary.”

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I spent six hours from Iyana Ipaja to Yaba-Resident

However, a resident of Abule-Egba Lagos, Idowu Thomas, told one of our correspondents that a bus he boarded on Tuesday at Iyana Ipaja spent six hours before getting to Yaba.

“I am terribly sick now. The road from Iyana Ipaja to Ikeja Along was flooded. The bus spent two hours there. Awolowo Road in Ikeja was also flooded. Ikorodu Road was not spared. We were stuck there,” he stated.

I lost two cars to Saturday flooding – Lagos landlord

Also, a landlord, Aina Oke, in an interview with one of our correspondents, said his two cars were damaged inside his compound in Abule Egba, following hours of rain on Saturday.

Oke, a building contractor, said the continuous rainfall caused his street to flood; a situation, he said, led to the collapse of his fence on his two Sport Utility Vehicles.

He stated, “I had no inclination that the fence was defective. In fact, it came to me as a surprise. When I saw the damage, I didn’t know how to react but I later consoled myself by thinking of people whose houses were flooded and even those whose loved ones were swept away by the flood.”

Oke urged the Lagos State Government to address the problem of flooding in the state, adding that it had taken a dangerous dimension.

According to him, except something is done urgently, the entire state may be washed away one day.

The flood also caused gridlock and destroyed homes at Jakande, Lekki, Ebute-Meta, Ijegan, Idimu, Agege, Randle and Maryland areas of Lagos State.

Some residents of the areas took to Twitter to complain about their flooded homes. A resident of Arowojobe Estate, Maryland, Aroghene, in her Twitter handle posted a video of her flooded home.

The video showed water covering her belongings. It also showed her bed floating in the flood. She said the water was just not rain, but also water from a canal in the area. Aroghene said she was accommodated by a friend.

Residents flee as flood sweep through Ikorodu, Lekki

In Ikorodu, Lekki and Bariga, schools and homes were heavily flooded following Friday and Saturday's downpour in the state.

It was observed that at Igbe in Ikorodu, schools closed early on Friday because of the downpour.



At Lekki, particularly Bola Ahmed Tinubu Avenue and Bogije, flood covered a distance of at least 1.4 kilometres.

The adjoining streets were also flooded with many of the residents relocating to

Flooded part of Orisha Otun Araromi Street, Magodo Phase 1, Lagos other parts of the state.

At 3, Salami Street, off Bola Ahmed Tinubu Avenue, a landlord, Adebajji Olorundamilola, said none of his family members was able to go out because of the flood.

He stated, “We have been here for the past seven years. We only noticed this type of flood twice since we moved into this place. On those two occasions, we relocated to Ajah. I don’t have tenants. No one who has seen this type of flood water will like to rent a house here.”

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It was learnt that the flood in Lekki was caused by poor drainage system. Some of the flooded streets are Abiola Olowu Street; Ayo Awoloba Close and Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu Road.

Meanwhile, a resident told one of our correspondents that some landlords had abandoned their property at Lekki as a result of flood. According to him, some of them had put up their property up for rent, lease or sale.

At Bariga, in streets such as Odukoya, Ogunleye and Ifeanyi, residents fled their homes as the areas were flooded.

Abule Egba, Ile Epo residents complain of poor drainage system

Also, residents of Abule Egba, and Ile-Epo called on the Lagos State Government to reconstruct the drainage system in the areas as it had exposed them to hardship.

A motorist, Mr Muritala Azeez, said the potholes at Ile Epo spoiled his car when it rained on Thursday.

He stated, “This is the route I ply almost on a daily basis. This particular day, I was trying to manoeuvre my way. The rain made it difficult for me to know where the dangerous potholes were. Around Ile Epo, my vehicle ran into a pothole. The engine stopped working, I had to call my mechanic.”

A trader at the Oja Oba, Ms Lola Agunbiade, said the rain had reduced customers' patronage in the last couple of days.

She said, "Who are we to blame God for the rain? It is what we have been praying for, but then it has not been of help to our business. Only few people, who have no choice, have been coming to the market to buy goods."

Rain worsens woes on Apapa-Oshodi road gridlock

Also, commuters lamented their ordeal at the ongoing rehabilitation of the Apapa-Oshodi Road.

It was gathered that the problem on the road was worsened by the incessant rain and the construction, which had rendered the area impassable.

"The rehabilitation work is very slow. Containers continue to fall on the road often hindering traffic," an official of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria-Joint Council of Seaport Truck Operators, Mr Godwin Ikeji, told one of our correspondents on Sunday.

Ikeji said the worst part of the road was the stretch from Coconut leading towards Mile 2.

On Friday, one of our correspondents observed that the traffic spillover from the Oshodi-Apapa Road also caused gridlock along the rehabilitated two-kilometre Apapa Wharf road.

It was observed that the gridlock was caused by trucks going inwards Tin Can Island.

Vehicles trapped in Lagos flood

The PUNCH gathered that in the Agric area of Ikorodu, the downpour wreaked havoc on commuters and motorists who were plying the axis.

An eyewitness, Japheth Odesanya, said four vehicles including a government vehicle, were trapped in the flood along the Agric-Isawo Road. He urged the state government to urgently address the situation.

Odesanya said, “I was going to the Palace area of Oriokuta to check my daughter when I encountered the terrible traffic on Agric-Isawo Road. On my way, I saw four vehicles, including a government vehicle, trapped in the flood caused by the heavy rainfall. Commuters were stranded because motorists refused to ply that axis.

“The road is under construction, but whenever it rains, rainwater will fill the potholes and motorists that are not familiar with the road usually run into the potholes and get stuck. What worsened the road yesterday (Saturday) was that there is no drainage system to direct the flow of water resulting from heavy rainfall. The government should swing into action to avert further tragedy.”

Motorists hike fares, residents empty septic tanks into flood

Another resident, Abiodun Olanrewaju, lamented that motorists took advantage of the flood to increase transport fares in the area. He added that people usually strapped commuters to their back to cross flooded areas that were no longer accessible to vehicles in exchange for money.

She said, “The road is heavily flooded. Tricycles from Agric to Asolo Bus Stop used to charge N50 and at night N100, but it is now N250 in the morning and N500 at night. When you get to Asolo Bus Stop and want to link the Afar Road, you will get to a point that is no longer accessible to motorists. People pay some boys N100 to back (sic) them to cross the road because of the flood in that axis. This is too much for us to bear and we want the government to come to our aid.”

Similarly, in the Awoyaya area of Ibeju-Lekki Local Government, a resident, Tayo Anifowose, said residents had no other option but to walk in the flood to go to their destinations.



Flooded part Warewa, Ogun State...on Sunday

Anifowose added that some residents took advantage of the flood to empty their septic tank.

He said, “When I was going out this morning, there was flood everywhere in Awoyaya. The flood prevented people from going out. People who went out were those willing to enter the water. I entered the water this morning because I had an important meeting to attend and when I walked in the water my dress was soaked.

“But I changed into another cloth when I got to where I parked my car because I don’t drive my car home due to the situation in my area.”

But in the Trade Fair area of the state, the rainfall affected the ongoing construction work around the axis. This caused gridlock that prolonged commuters’ journey.

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An eyewitness, Kunle Adegboyega, said, “The rain that has been falling disrupted the construction work at Trade Fair. It caused a lot of traffic that affected a lot of motorists plying that axis. Yesterday (Saturday), a lot of cars developed fault on the road and as I speak to you, the flood is still in some portions of the area.”

We are addressing flooding – Lagos govt

When contacted, the Lagos State Commissioner for Information, Mr Gbenga Omotosho, said the state was addressing the flood problem by clearing blocked channels and educating members of the public on the danger of blocking drainage channels.

He said, “There are so many gangs now that are working simultaneously to free channels that have been blocked. These are channels that have been neglected for so long; so, they are now being freed so that the effect of the flood can be minimal.”

Ogun roads impassable

In Ogun State, the persistent rain has affected major roads. The worst hit among the roads are Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway and Sango-Ota -Idiroko Expressway.

The downpour widened potholes on the roads and caused gridlock and loss of man-hours and disruption of economic activities.

On Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, the failed portions are at the Sango-Ota tollgate (both inward and outward). The tollgate area has completely failed causing perpetual gridlock.

Other failed sections include Salolo, Ajegunle, Kollington, Alakuko, and Ahmadiya, Iyana Ilogbo, Papa-Lafarge Cement frontage(inward and outward), Itori(inward and outward), and Papa-Sagamu Road.

On the Sango-Ota -Idiroko Expressway, the failed portions start from about 50 metres from Sango Under Bridge.

Others are Oju Ore, the frontage of Iganmode Grammar School, Iju-Lusada junction, Owode town (in front of Zenith Bank) and the Idiroko border gate area.

Commenting on the condition of the roads, a former member of the Ogun State House of Assembly, Akinpelu Aina, lamented that almost all the roads in the state, especially those in Ado Odo-Ota Local Government Area were affected.

A resident of Sango-Ota, Mr Tunde Obadeyi, said each time it rained, a journey of 40 minutes from Sango-Ota to Oshodi turned to a trip of three or more hours due to the failed portions on the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway.

In Ibafo area of the state, residents seem to have resigned to fate as the condition of their already bad roads has worsened due to the rain. Most of them could no longer take their vehicles to their homes.

“We now pay petrol stations’ security guards in the town to allow us park our vehicles while we take okada home or take a walk during serious downpour. Ibafo is the most unfortunate town in the whole of the South-West. It has been abandoned for years by the Ogun State Government,” a

resident, Mr Bayo Ayeni, said.

We are aware of the challenges – Ogun govt

When contacted, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Dapo Abiodun, Mr Kunle Somorin, said the state government was not oblivious of the challenges caused by the downpour, stressing that all available options were being explored to mitigate the disasters.

Somorin said, “The state government is not oblivious of these realities, the truth of the matter is that within available resources, we make the welfare of our people our priority and that is why we are doing palliative works all over the state. And those that require federal attention will also be given attention.”