

2 Workers Die Inside Tunnel

AKABUDEUCHE-PETER

Two men trapped in an underground tunnel were brought out dead yesterday amidst wailing and tears by a combined team of men from the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Traffic Management Authority, Lagos State Ambulance Services, Nigeria Police from Denton Station and Messrs. Julius Berger Nigeria Plc.

The incident happened at Coates Street/Borno Way, Ebute Metta, Lagos.

P.M.News gathered that the deceased may have suffocated to death while in the tunnel. Eyewitnesses who spoke with P.M.News said the victims were contracted, along with two others, by the street traders in the area to clear the drainage and ease the flow of water that had flooded the area. The four-man group was the third to be given the job.

As soon as the two deceased entered the tunnel, they complained of excessive heat, but still went on with the job.

After some minutes, nothing was heard from them, which made the two others raise an alarm.

Shuaib Lawan, who was one of the labourers told P.M.News that he made an effort to enter the tunnel and to look for them, but

had to back out because the heat was unbearable.

Reacting to the incident, Executive Secretary, Lagos Mainland Local Government, Olukemi Banjo, said the council went into action as soon as the information about the incident reached them. They called Julius Berger for a private compressor.

While stating that the victims entered the tunnel without seeking and obtaining approval from the council, Banjo stated that it was not the duty of the local council to clear blocked tunnels as there is a state agency responsible for that.

He, however, blamed the traders who engage in street

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"It reminds me of the enormity and responsibility which I bear as the governor of Lagos State," he said.

The governor lauded the efforts of activists who fought the annulment of the June 12 election. "If people like Wole Soyinka, Femi Falana, Olisa Agbakoba and others too numerous to mention had not fought, I wouldn't have been the

trading in the area for the incident. According to him, "the people in the market are the cause. In a market like Oyingbo, street trading thrives. When they finish at night, they dump their refuse into the drains.

"That is the cause of this. The government provided private refuse collectors, but they don't patronise them."

On plans to clear the area of street trading, Banjo said the council "will try to clear the area of street traders," adding that "they will be taken back to the Oyingbo Market. Maybe they will comply with the PSP operator."

governor of Lagos State," he said.

Fashola also called on professionals to get into government. "This way, we can move into the land of our dreams," he stated. He also called for the abolition of poverty, adding that "there can't be peace if people live in hunger and squalor."

Other speakers at the event lampooned the policies of the immediate past president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and called for the entrenchment of true democracy in the country.

AC Applauds Security Panel

TUNJI ADEWUNMI

The Lagos State chapter of

adequate protection.

"Lagos AC would want the