



5 Found Dead In Ikeja

•The bodies of five persons found dead in a restaurant at Ikeja after yesterday's flood. They were conveyed in a commuter bus to the Ikeja Police Station, this morning. PHOTO: EMMANUEL OSODI.



SIMON ATEBA

Five girls were found dead this morning in Ikeja, Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria, after yesterday's heavy rains forced them to sleep in a poorly ventilated room in their restaurant where they worked.

The corpses of the four teenage-girls and a baby-girl, aged between three months and 18 years, were discovered this morning inside the stuffy room on Allen Avenue in Ikeja.

Neighbours told P.M.NEWS that the girls may have died of suffocation overnight in the room where they sought refuge after rains wrecked havoc in Lagos yesterday.

Two other girls, who also slept in the same room, were still in critical condition at Bodet Hospital at Alausa in Ikeja, it was gathered. They were said to be responding to treatment.

The five corpses were brought to Area F Police Station in Ikeja early today in a commuter bus.

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•Adams Oshiomhole

Oshiomhole Signs Wage Bill Into Law

•YOMI OBADITAN/
Benin

Edo State Governor, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, this morning signed into law the new minimum wage bill.

The minimum wage of N18,000 has been causing ripples among workers and state governors across Nigeria.

Oshiomhole signed the law this morning in his of-

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Flood Kills 8 In Katsina

Eight persons were killed and 100 families rendered homeless following heavy rainfall in Katsina metropolis on Friday.

The rainfall, which started at about 4 p.m., and lasted for three hours, caused many houses to collapse.

A NAN correspondent who went round the metropolis on Saturday reports that the areas most affected by the flood include Kofar Marusa, Sabuwar Unguwa, Kofar Marusa, Kofar Durbi, Kofar Sauri, Rafukka and Tudun Yan'lifidda.

NAN learnt that seven persons, including children died in Ko-

far Marusa ward, while one child drowned at Rafukka area. Alhaji Hussaini Ahmed, the Director of the State De-

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AFTERMATH OF FLOODS

Many Die, Buildings Collapse, Highway Damaged • Commuters Stranded; Residents Recount Ordeal

BY OUR REPORTERS

Several people died while others sustained injuries as houses and fences collapsed after yesterday's torrential rain that lasted over 14 hours flooded Lagos and parts of Ogun State in Southwest Nigeria.

Commuters were stranded at various bus stops across Lagos as flood submerged roads and rendered mobility impossible. In many areas, the drainage channels, canals and the roads were swallowed up by flood.

Many cars and commuter mini-buses broke down, causing severe traffic jams on major roads. Many stranded residents who had to trek got to their homes about 2 a.m. today.

The rain had started very early in the morning and did not abate until midnight after it had wreaked havoc in the metropolis.

Areas such as Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Apapa, Ibeju-Lekki, Oshodi, Agege, Surulere, Mushin and many others were flooded as motorists spent hours before they could wade through.

At Aburu area, in Alimosho, flood sacked residents as they did not sleep in their houses which were submerged. Motorists who tried to wade through the area were stuck for several hours. Unconfirmed report had it that the flood swept away four persons at Aburu, one of them a child. It was gathered that as the flood sacked a house in the area, a woman was trying to rescue one of her children while the other strapped to her back fell inside the water and was swept away.

The woman was said to have wept uncontrollably as residents tried to console her.

Residents of 16, Adesokan Street, Dapenu Agege wailed uncontrollably this morning as fire and safety officials of the Lagos State government from Agege removed the corpse of a 22-year old Muri Olanrewaju who died inside a soak-away.

It was learnt that Olanrewaju returned from a journey and wanted to enter the house but slipped into the soak-away that was already submerged by flood.

Similarly, in Akara area of Alagbado, a yet to be identified young man, about 25 years old, was killed yesterday night when a wall fell on him. He was said to be returning home from an outing when the fence weakened by the flood collapsed on him.

He died instantly. The late man's fiancée is said to be pregnant and they were billed to be wedded next month. His remains were being buried this morning.

An unconfirmed report this morning indicated that an unidentified woman and her baby were among casualties the flood swept away in Aburu and Ile Eko areas near Iyana Ipaja, Lagos.

A source told P.M. NEWS this morning that two okada riders died last night while they were trying to manoeuvre their way through the flood. They ended up being swept away, according to the source.

A seven-year old boy, Musiliu Hassan was yesterday killed by the collapsed fence of Herbert Macaulay Primary School, Makoko, Yaba, Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria.

During the incident, his father, Musa Hassan, 40 sustained injuries and was rushed to the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos for treatment.

Also affected by the incident, Musiliu's sister, Rukayat Hassan was rushed to a nearby private hospital. She has since been in a coma.

Meanwhile, a neighbour who pleaded anonymity has appealed for assistance on behalf of Musa Hassan and his family.

He said: "Musa Hassan has no wife. His wife left him sometime ago. He has been catering for his children alone. We (neighbours) assisted him to bury his dead son, Musa at Atan cemetery. We paid where necessary to perform all the burial rites."

P.M. NEWS learnt that the school fence had been contracted to a contractor to renovate two years ago.

In Ifako-Ijaye area, a 13-year old boy called Yomi, said to be the son of a police officer, was buried alive this morning when the house where he lived with his parents collapsed.

P.M. NEWS learnt that the building located at Unity Street near the canal, off Aina Ajoba Street close to Ifako-Ijaye Local Government Secretariat, collapsed as a result of the heavy rain.

Another teenager is still said to be buried inside the debris of the collapsed building and local diggers were making efforts this morning to recover the body.

It was learnt that five other houses in the area collapsed yesterday while property worth millions of naira were lost to the flood.

A landlord in the area, Chief Bamidele Ojedina a.k.a. Oluwo described one of the collapsed houses as an old building which had been deserted because of its dilapidated state.

P.M. NEWS gathered from residents that more lives might be lost to future floods in the area except the Lagos State government takes necessary action to avert the looming disaster.

As at this morning, at least 10 houses had been swept away by the flood. Residents of Aina Ajoba, Irawo Ojo, Adebisi streets were busy trying to salvage some of their belongings from the flood. As at the time of filing this report, a house had collapsed at Adebisi Street.

At Alapere, Ketu, massive flood sacked houses in the area as residents, both rich and poor, used buckets to bail out water from their houses after the flood had destroyed their belongings. There were wailings everywhere as flood water swept through many homes. Women quickly took their children to safety to avert calamity.

Mr. Godwin Ikpehai, a resident at Alapere said he watched from his two-storey building as flood sacked several houses. He said the magnitude of the flood was unimaginable as residents wailed while cars were ostensibly swimming in the water.

Many residents slept in their cars while public schools were shut today to prevent pupils and students from any harm occasioned by flood.

No part of Lagos was spared by the flood as thousands of houses were sacked by the deluge. It was apparently the heaviest rain to have fallen this year. Several Lagosians have narrated the ordeal they went through yesterday, describing it as horrible and never wanted to experience such again.

A staff of Vanguard newspaper, described his experience in the rain as terrible, saying that he left Surulere area in his car about 4.30 p.m. to get to his home at Abule Egba and could not get home till 12 midnight.

According to him, everywhere he took was blocked as there was hardly traffic movement, saying that he had never experienced that type of rainfall and traffic gridlock before.

A staff of the Lagos State Government, who preferred to be called Adekunle, narrated his ugly experience, saying that he left Ojota about 4.00 p.m. in his car but could not get home in Alimosho until past 12 midnight. He said when he saw that Iyana Ipaja was blocked, he decided to take Aburu, a decision he later regretted, saying that he spent four hours to wade through the flood at Aburu.

A staff of P.M. NEWS, Deaconess Titilayo Kolawole, who lives at Ijoko area of Ogun State, could not get home till 2 a.m. today after leaving office at Acme Road, Ogba, at about 8:00 p.m. yesterday.

According to her, she trekked from Ogba to Agege and got trapped in the traffic between Agege and Abule Egba. When it was getting late, she dropped off the bus and trekked to Abule Egba where she got a cab that took her home. The harrowing experience made her fall sick as she had trekked several kilometres in the rain last night.

In Surulere, a resident in the area, Taiwo Olapade, said the flood wreaked havoc there as many areas were flooded and traffic was stalled.

A flood victim, Edna, appealed to the governors of Lagos and Ogun states to come to the aid of the flood victims in the area.

The only bridge that links Ipaja and Ayobo with Itele-Ayetoro was submerged by the flood while okada riders and motorists could not ply the roads any longer.

In the Surulere area of the metropolis, residents and stranded commuters paid N100 to canoe operators to move them from one point to the other.

A resident, Pastor Wale Dada, said most roads in Surulere have been rendered impassable.

"The whole place has become impassable; it is unbelievable. The Karounwi canal is flooded and the bridge is

submerged. Canoe operators collect N100 to carry people from one end of the place to the other.

"You know that the Akerele road is undergoing construction; that place is impassable. Adeniran Ogunsanya is a no-go area right now. The situation is terribly bad."

A resident in Alapere, Ketu, said, "most parts of the area are flooded; our own place is a bit better because it is located on high ground, but the whole estate is flooded. A car in our compound is almost completely submerged in flood. Most people are trying to salvage what they have in their houses in this place."

A motorist in Ijeshatedo in Iire Local Council Development Area, Mr. Abayomi Ogunremi, said the water level in the area had reached his car's bonnet.

"The whole area is covered with water. In most places, you cannot see where the road is and where the drains are. Everywhere is under water. Until the government takes decisive steps to address the flooding in the state, anybody who values his life should not leave his house when such rain falls," Ogunremi said.

At Agric Junction in Ikorodu, a motorist said he and other motorists spent about two hours before they could pass through the flooded area.

"It was a terrible situation. There was a severe traffic jam as no vehicle was moving. Confusion became the order of the day. Apart from the road, most houses near the road were submerged by the flood and residents were helpless," the motorist said.

At the Ketu end of Ikorodu Road, motorists were caught up in heavy traffic and hundreds of passengers were seen at bus stops waiting for buses that never came. A motorist, who identified himself simply as Kayode, told one of our correspondents that the flood was unprecedented.

He said that as a result of the heavy traffic, some commuter bus drivers veered into the dedicated lane for Bus Rapid Transit, thereby creating greater confusion on the road.

The residents of Akoka, Afolabi Brown, Adeyinka, Osijo, Funmilayo Onorinke, Bello and Obadiah streets, and

parts of Community Road, were the worst hit in Yaba.

One of the residents, who was at work during the rain, got a call from his wife, asking him to return home because their apartment had been taken over by flood.

At Jibowu, Herbert Macaulay and Murtala Mohammed roads, many motorists abandoned their vehicles in the floods as vehicles broke down, clogged the road and made movement impossible.

Two popular motor parks, Chisco Motors and Ileshinach, motor parks at Jibowu, were heavily flooded also.

At Shasha area, Orisumbare, Alebiosu, Jimoh streets were seriously flooded as the areas lacked drainage channels. Many worshippers in Orisumbare were unable to reach their churches.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Government said it recognised that yesterday's rain had been heavier than normal, saying that the flood was as a result of the rise in sea level and that it had earlier warned Lagosians to prepare for heavy rains as predicted by the Nigeria Institute of Meteorology, NIMET.

Commissioner for the Environment, Mr. Tunji Bell, appealed to Lagosians to remain calm, saying that the water level had risen incrementally so that the channels that were meant to discharge water from the roads and drainage were completely blocked because of the high tide.

The high tide was caused "because both the Atlantic Ocean and the Lagoon that receive water from our channels have risen adding more than usual. Our men are in the field working to manage this situation," Bello said.

Also, experts have said that yesterday's rainfall was measured at 233 mm, for instance, equivalent to about 28 million units number of 30,000 litre tankers that was unleashed on Lagos between 8.00 am and 10.00 p.m.

According to the Minister of the Environment, the Atlantic Ocean also refused to allow the water to discharge easily until this morning.

As a result of the heavy rain, Governor Babatund Fashola directed that all public schools in the state be shut as government assesses the impact of property damage by the flood, saying that the state would not allow a child to be affected by the incident.

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Ademokun, however, pointed out that there are two sectors not covered by the minimum wage; they are teachers and judicial workers who will have to negotiate with the governor in view of the peculiarities on their salary scales.

Neighbours and friends who besieged the police station this morning wept and expressed shock. The corpses were later taken to the Lagos State University Hospital, LASUTH.

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The woman, walling at the station, disclosed that she had asked the girls to cook outside their restaurant yesterday and stay in the restaurant until the rains stopped.

"My girls don't usually sleep in the restaurant," she said, "I did not know that they slept in the restaurant yesterday. I asked them to cook outside the restaurant when they phoned me and said that water had entered the restaurant."

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•Traffic diverted to one side of the Abeokuta Expressway as a result of the failed portion of the road caused by the heavy rain, yesterday. PHOTO: JOSEPH OLUWASANMI.



Katsina Flood

Continued from pg. 1

partment of Environment, confirmed the deaths when Alhaji Muntari Ibrahim, the representative of Gov. Ibrahim Shema, and Secretary to the State Government (SSG), visited Kofar Marusa.

He attributed the flood in the area to indiscriminate dumping of refuse, which he said blocked the drains.

One of the victims, Alhaji Badamasi Machika, called for the enforcement of environmental laws.

In his remark, Ibrahim, who condoled with the families of the deceased, and sympathised with other victims, urged the people to desist from blocking water ways through indiscriminate dumping of refuse.

He gave assurance that the government would look into the problem and address the

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Continued from pg. 1

P.M. NEWS learnt that a mother and her three-month-old girl were among the dead.

The victims, it was gathered, were brought sometime ago from neighbouring Benin Republic to work in a