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13 killed, 2 injured in Zamfara, Bauchi auto crash, fuel tanker explosion

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Paul Orude, Bauchi and **John Adams**, Minna

Fourteen persons have been confirmed dead in a multiple road accident which involved a trailer and three cars along Gusau-Funtua road, Zamfara on Wednesday. The accident took place shortly after Governor Bello Matawalle passed the spot.

He returned to the scene to assist the victims when he heard about the accident and ordered for the quick conveyance of the corpses to Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital in Gusau.

“The governor directed immediate contact with the families of the victims and ordered all his staff to gather at the Hospital the following day for a befitting burial to the deceased,” a source said the deceased persons were well wishers who had gone to receive the governor from a trip outside the state.

According to the source, the governor was returning from Abuja where he met with President Muhammadu Buhari, some ministers and heads of agencies and parastatals to discuss various issues on the peace and progress of the state.

Following the incident, Governor Matawalle has declared three-day mourning in honour of victims. A statement signed by the governor’s media aide, Zailani Bappa in Gusau, yesterday, stated that the national flag would be flown at half mast during the mourning period.

Meanwhile, two persons were injured in an accident involving a 33-thousand-litres fuel tanker in front of the Federal Polytechnic gate, Gwallamaji, Bauchi on Wednesday night. According to witnesses, in the accident which occurred at about 8pm, the tanker spilled its content and caught fire. Police Public Relations Officer, Bauchi Command, Ahmad Wakil said the injured persons were receiving treatment at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH).

However, Niger government, yesterday, said it would ban articulated vehicles plying Minna-Bida road in order to speed up the ongoing construction work on the road. Alhaji Balarabe Ibrahim, chairman of the state Infrastructure Monitoring Committee and Chief of Staff to the Gov. Sani Bello, made this known during inspection of the ongoing construction work on the road.

The government had in February inaugurated the construction of 84 kilometre Minna-Bida road at the cost of N23.9 billion.

Ibrahim said that the governor had directed that all articulated vehicles should be banned from using Minna-Bida road, to fast track the construction work.

He, however, called on the Federal Government to urgently address the Bida-Lambata road, Mokwa-Tegina-Birnin Gwari-Kaduna road.