

TOP STORIES

YOU HAVE A STORY FOR US?
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THE rains are fully back and threatening, pouring down in thick sheets, in some areas with severe savagery.

The attendant flash floods that follow have been devastating. Many lives have been lost. Survivors across the states have been counting their losses which rank in the region of millions of naira.

Our correspondents who went to town were told several chilling tales of woes. They unearthed monumental disasters happening in many neighbourhoods in states which many are yet to know about:

Lagos: Floods claim lives, sweep away residents, vehicles

As the 2022 rainy season reaches its peak, the panic over the potential damage of flooding in Lagos State is beginning to heighten. Families of victims of recent flooding in the state are still counting their losses.

No fewer than seven lives have been lost in the state in separate incidents following downpours in the last few weeks.

① Penultimate Friday, a bus driver was reportedly swept away during a torrential rain in Idimu area of the state after the commercial bus he was working with broke down in the rain.

② On the same day, the body of a 15-year-old student of a secondary school in Surulere area was also discovered in a canal at Idi-Oro, Mushin.

The victim who was identified as Mary was reportedly swept away in the flood while returning from school. Residents of the area claimed that Mary's body was the third to be discovered in the canal in the last two months.

③ In Oko-Oba in Agege area of the state, four people narrowly escaped being swept away while two others were unlucky to survive when the vehicles they were travelling in were washed off the road into a canal on Saturday, July 9.

Eyewitnesses claimed that residents of the area succeeded in rescuing two of the occupants of the vehicles while one of them swam to safety. Another passenger was said to have jumped out of the car before being washed into the canal. But the remaining two occupants were said to be missing.

The Lagos State government had in March warned residents of the state against actions

capable of obstructing the water channels while releasing the prediction on this year's rainy season.

The Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Tunji Bello, and the Special Adviser to the State Governor on Drainages and Water Resources, Joe Igbokwe, had reeled out government's plans to mitigate the possible effect of flooding in the state.

The commissioner said the government had embarked on an all-year-round drainage maintenance for effective and efficient flood control.

"In the same vein, we are determined to maintain the long-established synergy and partnership with Ogun-Oshun River Basin Authority (OORBA) which has ensured control and monitoring of the steady and systemic release of water from Oyan Dam to prevent flooding of the downstream reaches

of Ogun River. This mutual relationship has been highly beneficial in the past and we intend to sustain it.

"All emergency agencies, responders and traffic management outfits are also on standby to assist in reducing the negative impacts associated with rainfall in the state," Bello said.

An environment expert, Mr Katib Ogundimu, urged the state government to up its game, especially in the area of waste management. His words: "Lagosians' penchant for blocking drainages and canals with waste in the state is a confirmation that the state government needs to do more to ensure efficient and effective waste collection."

"I am conversant with some areas where residents are still complaining of lack of presence of waste managers, which is largely because the areas are not accessible to garbage trucks. People in these areas will con-

tinue to frustrate government's effort at paving the way for free flow of water during rainy season until the government attends to them."

Nasarawa: Millions lost to downpour, flooding

In less than a fortnight, some areas in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital, had experienced flooding, leading to the loss of property worth millions of Naira.

When Sunday Sun visited some affected areas in Lafia, which include Bukan Sidi, Nawica Street and Layin Makabarta, it was discovered that some residents had abandoned their homes and lost their property to flooding.

Speaking with one of the affected residents at Nawica area, Abdullahi Ibrahim, said that every year they usually experience flooding, adding that this year's encounter was something

else as property worth millions of Naira were lost.

He disclosed that some of them who abandoned the area are now taking refuge in other areas.

Hear him: "This flood happened last night while we were sleeping. I woke up and discovered that my wife and I were right on top of water. It was like we were swimming; we had to begin to salvage what we could that night. Our electronics and other valuables were destroyed by the flood."

"We have already left our area because our home is still flooded; every other property within the area was affected by the flash flood that we experienced this year."

"We are appealing to the government to build drainages for the flood water to pass through." Another resident who stays in Layin Markabater, Muhammed Ilyasu, disclosed that the flood



RAINY SEASON

FLOOD SPREADS SORROW

...Many dead, property destroyed in Lagos, Rivers, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Edo, Nasarawa

Victims, survivors seek help from govt



came with high intensity and did not allow them any chance to salvage any of their property.

"As you can see, the economic activities in this place have failed as many have deserted their homes and shops to seek refuge elsewhere; it was such a bad experience.

"We are appealing to the state government to come to our aid; we want them to do the needful to ensure that this disaster is stopped. We are tired of this.

Right now, we are afraid because this is the peak of the rainy season. Those of us still around are sleeping with one eye closed," he said.

Also commenting, Ahmad Yakubu Muhammad, the executive chairman, Nasarawa State Revenue Board, who was affected by the recent flooding at Bukan Sidi of the city stressed the need for the residents to follow relevant laws on building construction so as to pave way for easy flow of flood.

He appreciated the state government for taking a bold step towards tackling the disaster in the state by making available both human and financial resources to ensure that drainages were constructed.

The Managing Director, Nasarawa State Urban Development Board (NUDB), Yahaya

Wada, an engineer, led the board's development control-enforcement team to the affected areas.

He said that the team was trying to ascertain the causes of the flood incident and inspecting the ongoing projects which were awarded by the state government. He stressed that in the course of their assignment, people around the affected areas would be invited to see how to address the disaster.

The NUDB boss noted that building on water channels, and dumping of refuse were the causes of the flooding, urging the people to change their attitude.

He explained that the board would continue to embark on demolition of illegal structures in the state, regretting that despite ongoing sensitisation campaign on the dangers of building on areas not approved by government, people had continued to do so.

Rivers: Heavy rains, flooding hit Ogoni

Recent heavy rains severely affected many communities in Rivers State especially those in Khana Local Government Area.

The rainfall a fortnight ago wreaked so much havoc.

According to some residents,

the rain began around 3:00a.m while people were still in bed, and lasted till about 6:00p.m.

It caused extensive damage to property across the state, but Khana Local Government Area was most hit.

At Bori, the council's headquarters, those interviewed described it as a "monster rain," which damaged buildings, and flooded the area.

Ledornu Kenneth, owner of Barineme Restaurant in Bori said she had never seen such surging flood in all her life.

A newspaper vendor identified as Lucky, said that his wife had her goods damaged.

Traders along Hospital Road such as owner of Ceekay Furnitures lamented the extensive damage, along Polytechnic Road and Kenule Street.

According to Miriam, a POS operator, some residents deployed water pumps to bail out water from their residents.

Abubakar Umar who resides at the popularly Yam Zone said that foodstuffs such as yams, pepper, beans and onions were either damaged or swept away by the flood, adding that a cow in the area was drowned in the flood.

An environmentalist, Mr Bekee David, lamented the action of the residents who flout sanitation

laws by dumping refuse into gutters and waterways.

An activist, social commentator and spokesman for the Ogoni Frontiers (TOF), Alloy Khenom, said that goods worth several millions of naira were lost to the rains.

He added: "Bori residents argued that the beautiful and modern culverts constructed by ECCEC at Poly/Hospital road are narrow and do not allow free flow of water from adjoining drainages, hence the severe flooding along that axis."

Some residents lamented that people flout sanitation rules by constantly dumping refuse into gutters and waterways.

Edo: Residents lament, call for govt action

In Edo State, many residents of Benin City have been at the receiving end of floods which often overrun their homes and damage property each time it rains.

The perennial problem has been made worse with the non-completion of the N30 billion Storm Water Project initiated by the former administration of Comrade Governor Adams Oshiomhole, the non-de-silting of constructed drainages and illegal building on waterways.

In an effort to address flooding and erosion problems in Benin City, the erstwhile administration of Governor Oshiomhole obtained a N30 billion loan facility from the capital market for the project which was to be executed in phases.

The plan entailed construction of huge primary and secondary drainage to channel the flood into Ikpoba and Ogba rivers in Benin.

The laudable plan has, however, been abandoned while many constructed drainages have been silted thus causing the roads, homes and other property to be flooded each time it rained.

Commenting on the menace, Dr Bright Oniovokukor, a resident of Eyvotubu community, lamented flooding incident in his area.

He said that the blocking of drainage channels had brought nightmare to the residents, urging the citizens and the state government to play their roles to ensure a flood-free Edo State.

"Once it rains, the major parts of Benin City are flooded because the flood hardly drains. Most of the canals in the city are blocked. Even vehicles can pass through them.

"Look at a place like Erhunmwunse, for example. There is a moat nearby where the flood water ought to be passing through. So, the area is blocked. If you go to places like Ewa Road, Upper Mission axis, you will see that often the areas are completely flooded.

"We blame the government because it has the responsibility of constructing drainage systems that carry the flood and de-silting them regularly," he said.

Also speaking, Leftist Owobu Usigbe, a resident of Ekosodin community, lamented that three communities, namely, Ekosodin, Ebhuomore and Efofa were about being taken over by the flood, while urging the Federal Government and the World Bank to come to their rescue.

"Right now, more than three communities namely Ekosodin, Ebhuomore and Efofa are submerged. We are appealing to the

government to help us because the challenge is beyond the state government," he pleaded.

A top official of the state Ministry of Environment and Sustainability said, "a lot is being done" to address the challenge.

He said that the commissioner, Jonathan Lawani, an engineer, was in the best position to address the issues.

Imo: Despite channelisation, flooding persists

Channelisation works to control flooding in Owerri is yet to be completed at the moment. So, flooding in the town is persisting.

Therefore, major streets like Tetlow, Wetheral and School roads are severely affected when it rains heavily.

Unfortunately, most of the underground tunnels have not been de-silted for some time, but the Otammiri River where much of the flood waters empty into had been de-silted.

Recently, flash floods swept through the city after a downpour. It almost claimed the life of a young girl at Imo State University Junction.

Ada Adiele who was identified with her ATM card, fell into a ditch completely covered by the flood.

Fortunately, she was rescued by officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

Residents of Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta local government areas are still experiencing perennial flooding. During heavy rains, many people are sacked from their homes.

The immediate past governor of the state, Rochas Okorocha, once said that flooding in Owerri began with the distortion of the original master plan of the city.

He also accused residents of the state of building on water ways and in areas marked for drainage construction.

The current state Commissioner for Works, Ralph Nwosu, said the government had spent huge resources on ameliorating flood.

He disclosed that the Balloon Technology on Dick Tiger and Chukwuma Nwoha streets is a major breakthrough for the state government. "This is a big canal dug to control flooding; rainwater gathers mostly in this channel and drain into Otammiri River.

"We looked at what people did in the past, and also commissioned our experts to study the flood situation in Owerri; that informed the first Balloon Technology that we did from Dick Tiger. In fact, in that particular area, some people had deserted their homes; but first we channeled all the flood water to Otammiri River. Now, the other one from MCC Road has not been connected because the area is under construction.

"What we did was to break it; one would go to the river, another one would go to Emekuku while the other one would come back and join the Balloon Technology to Otammiri, and from Okigwe Road where we have opened it. We de-silted it, allowing it to receive more flood coming from Okigwe Road. The other ones would enter the manholes that will discharge into the Otamiri.

"We are doing another underground tunnel; it will discharge

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