

Ijeshatedo Lagos bus stop of accidents, deaths

• Road users groan, plead with relevant authorities to repair pedestrian bridge damaged over one year ago

By GILBERT EKEZIE

"THOSE black patches you are seeing at the foot of the bridge are the blood of an elderly man who was just crushed by a commercial bus a few hours ago while he was crossing the expressway. This kind of gory sight is a daily occurrence since the collapse of the pedestrian bridge."

That was how the current pathetic prevailing situation at Ijesha bus stop along Oshodi-Apapa Expressway as narrated by Iya Fatai, a



fruit seller at the bus stop, when this reporter visited the area.

Her lamentation was the same with sellers of different articles and pedestrians at the

bus stop. Recently, there has been an upsurge in the proportion

and absolute number of traffic fatalities at the bus stop as a result of the damaged pedestrian bridge. At the last count, the bus stop has witnessed an average of three accidents daily, which most of them were fatal.

It could be recalled that in the early hours of Wednesday, March 16, last year, a truck was coming from Apapa axis at top speed, probably with a faulty bucket and on getting to the bridge with its bucket raised, it hit the bridge and got stuck. In an attempt to pull the truck off the bridge, a section of

the bridge broke away, thus rendering the bridge impassable.

The bridge, which was damaged by a heavy duty moving truck over one year ago, was serving all pedestrians from the densely populated Amara FESTAC axis and Ijesha/Sunlere areas of Lagos.

Besides, other big churches like TREM, Bride Assembly, Mountain of Fire Ministries, Deeper Life Bible Church, among others with large worshippers, have their branches within the areas. It also has as its tenant a branch of Fidelity Bank, the expansive Akolade shopping complex and the headquarters and revival ground of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, which is one of the most mega ministries in Nigeria with tens of thousands of worshippers crossing the road for church activities on daily basis.

Given the importance of the bridge to the people, it was expected that the damage would have been repaired or reconstructed before now.

Thus the people are groaning over the inability of the authorities to fix it till date. Obviously, accidents don't just happen, they are caused. It, therefore, goes to say that every accident in relation to transport is not a mere occurrence, but has been instituted as a result of one factor or another. Often, members of one family are wiped out. That is more reason it is expected that shortly after the incident, the authorities concerned should have swung into action to fix the bridge due to the purpose it is serving, those in the area said.

It was learnt that four days after the incident, the Director, Federal Highways, South West Region, Mr Adedamola Kuti made an announcement that the bridge has been shut down for safety reasons.

In that briefing, Kuti expressed surprise over the accident, saying that the 30-year-old bridge was higher than the normal heights for bridges of its types and that was more reason it could enable all trucks vis-à-vis containerized vehicles and fuel tankers, among others to pass.

The director also stated that the truck driver who was responsible for the accident has been apprehended, and would soon be prosecuted for deliberate damage to public infrastructure.

Kuti regretted that it was not fair after the Federal Government had spent huge resources to construct and repair roads and other infrastructure, such facilities would get damaged or abused by the users. He, however, promised that the Ministry would invite their contractor to assess the level of damage in order to advise on what to do.

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