

Violence erupts as truck kills Kogi student, six others

September 28, 2017 Correspondents



Muhammad Bashir
Lokoja

An HND 2 student of Kogi State Polytechnic student was said to be among seven who were crushed to death by a truck yesterday in Lokoja.

The student, Mercy, was in the Department of Science Laboratory Technology.

The accident occurred when the truck conveying Dangote cement from Obajana rammed into vehicles and people. Several others were injured in the accident.

The unbranded truck was said to have been coming from a factory at Obajana in Lokoja Local Government Area and was heading to the northern part of the country.

It was learnt that the driver of the truck lost control of the vehicle because of brake failure and left his lane.

The truck crashed into vehicles coming from Abuja end of the road as well as people on the roadside.

There were conflicting figures of those who died and those injured. A witness said that seven people including Mercy died in the crash.

Three stationary commercial vehicles and two tricycles otherwise called Keke NAPEP with passengers were crushed.

However, officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) said that only three people died, while the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Ali Janga, told journalists that only one person died.

Also, the Head of Emergency Unit of Specialist Hospital, Lokoja, Mr. Okpanachi Stephen, said that about 10a.m. yesterday, eight people were brought to the hospital from NATACO Junction, where accident occurred.

Stephen noted that some of the victims had head injuries while others were bleeding from the cuts they sustained on their bodies.

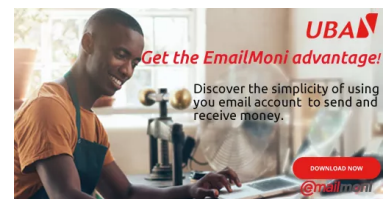
He added that doctors and nurses on duty had attended to them and they were responding to treatment while bodies of those who died were deposited in the morgue. Another witness, who spoke with our correspondent, blamed high casualty figure on the traffic light installed at the NATACO Junction.

He said: "The casualty would have been averted if there was free flow of vehicular movement. But the traffic light at the NATACO Junction contributed to the accident. Where have you seen government installing traffic light on the federal high way?" Furious youths, among them students, took over the high way to protest the accident.



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They started to set ablaze Dangote trucks on sight. Two Dangote branded trucks and the unbranded ones were torched while the drivers fled.

The irate youths, who blocked the road and were smashing other vehicles, were later dispersed by security personnel drafted to the area.

Meanwhile, the state government has called on the Dangote Group of Companies to embark on fitness test on its drivers and roadworthiness test on its trucks.

The Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Mrs. Folashade Arike, who was also at the scene of the accident along with other government officials including the Chief Administrator of Lokoja Local Government Area, Hon. Lawal Shiru, told journalists that government would meet with the Dangote Group of Companies to discuss safety.

She said: "The Dangote management must embark on drug test, certificate test of their divers and also check the road worthiness of the trucks before plying the road. It is very possible that most of these truck drivers are teenagers and are not licenced.

"We, as government, will have to engage the Dangote management to discuss terms and also fashion out ways to stop further occurrence."

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