

Auto crash: 80 killed in Anambra

ODOGWU EMEKA ODOGWU, Awka

TEARS flowed freely yesterday at Odumodo junction Umunya, Oyi local government area of Anambra state when about 80 persons were reportedly burnt to death as a tanker carrying petroleum product said to be diesel fell on the road.

Already 80 were confirmed dead at the scene of the incident as an eye witness said the road was barricaded after the Tanker fell and splashed its content on the roads.

But a convoy of vehicle politicians came and used the road leading to other vehicles to follow suit until one of the commuter buses ignition sparked off fire roasting about 80 people and 8 vehicles along the Enugu Onitsha express way. 11 people who were said to have survived the incident are now at Awka and Umunya hospitals receiving treatment.

A BMW, five commuter, and Hilux vehicles, were part of the vehicles that were burnt at the scene even as fire fighters battled to put off the fire, life less bodies were taken to the morgues.

Anambra Commissioner of Police, Mr Philemon Leha, confirmed the incident but expressed grief over the loss of lives, and denied allegations that policemen on duty close to the scene caused the accident.

He said, "I have not asked the boys on ground on what really transpired, but I only understand that they blocked the road when the accident occurred and asked vehicles to follow the other side so as to such an incident."

At the Umunya Comprehensive Health Community Hospital, an

affiliate of Nnamdi Azikiwe Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, the staff had gone before the patients were brought there, *Saturday Champion* learnt.

Yar'Adua parleys ex

AS a follow-up to the successful implementation of the first phase of the amnesty programme for militants in the Niger-Delta region, President Umaru Yar'Adua has resumed direct dialogues with ex-leaders of militant groups in order to determine the next line of action.

The governors of Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and deputy governor of Ondo led the ex-militants from their respective states to the talks, which began about 5pm yesterday at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Governor Chibuike Amaechi of River State was however, absent at the meeting.

Indications are that with the acceptance of the amnesty by militants and their subsequent disarmament, the federal government may have chosen to deal henceforth with the 16 ex-militant leaders invited to the meeting.

The 16 were led by High Chief Government Ekpemepolo a.k.a. Tompolo, (Delta); Chief Ateke Tom (River) and Mr. Ebikabowei Ben a.k.a. Boyloaf (Bayelsa).

Others at the meeting were Franklin Duduku (Cross River), Bonny Gawei (Delta), Africa Ukparafa (Bayelsa), Farah Dagogo (Rivers), Soboma George (Rivers), Erefimudei Olotu (Bayelsa), Ezekiel Akpabewei (Delta), Keneth Dan Opsingi (Rivers), Bibopre Ajube (Ondo), Henry Egbema (Edo), Omo Tonweerigha (Edo), Solomon Indigbana (Rivers) and Selky Kile Torugwedi (Bayelsa).