

# Sapele hit by double tragedy

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ANOTHER tragedy struck Sapele town a week to Christmas celebration, with the death of 10 passengers in a Delta Line 14-seater bus that was Warri-bound from Sapele while an early morning fire at Hausa/Itsekiri road, Sapele claimed over N10 million worth of properties, involving block of stores, a printing press and residential buildings among others.

This was the second within two days.

The 10 passengers including a Navy personnel and a soldier lost their lives in a Delta Line 14-seater bus that left Sapele on its way to Warri but crashed into a stationary trailer van near Adeje on the Warri/Sapele express way.

The driver was on top speed and crashed into the side of the trailer allegedly due to poor visibility due to the harmattan fog about 6am that Monday morning.

The driver of the state-owned transport company was said to have escaped death while all the 14 passengers were initially confirmed dead but at the time of this report another four victims, said to have regained consciousness, were under intensive medical surveillance at the Central Hospital, Sapele.

Meanwhile, over N10 million worth of properties were destroyed morning when fire (whose source is yet to be ascertained) engulfed a block of stores, a printing press, a business centre and residential houses, wreaking untold havoc on the area.

The early morning fire also reduced to a rubble, provision stores, a carpenter workshop and a building materials shop as the team of the state fire service and that of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria, which arrived later only managed to contain the spread to

neighbouring buildings.

Lamenting over the huge loss suffered through the fire, the proprietor of Olumayowa Printing and Publishing Company, Mr Olumayowa who looked dazed and was surrounded by a crowd of sympathizers said he was shocked by the discovery of the site of his office in rubbles.

He said after closing his shop the previous day having been busy with jobs that were yet to be claimed, he least expected the shocking incident especially at a time of Christmas celebration. He

lamented that the burnt printing machines no longer have parts in the market, nor do they have duplicates presently, but thanked God that no life was lost.

The cause of the fire was still undetermined as at press time but reliable sources said it could have resulted from a spark from a planing machine from the carpenter's workshop which reportedly was switched on at the close of work the previous evening.

He said the fire spread by wood shavings and

saw dust from products of woods.

Transition committee chairman of Sapele local government council, Mr Julius Egbedi, said the incident was unfortunate, and said he just returned from an official journey at Asaba when he heard of the ugly development. He however condoled the victims and their families, even as he prayed that such incident would never happen again. According to him, his office would do everything in its power to assist bringing activities to normalcy.

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•Accident victims