

Tanker explosion claims two lives in Port-Harcourt

TWO persons were sent to their early graves yesterday when a truck carrying some petroleum products skidded off the highway at Garrison area along the ever-busy Aba/Port Harcourt road express road, Port Harcourt.

Eyewitnesses who identified the two dead persons as the driver and conductor of the tanker said the incident occurred at about 5am. The two occupants were also burnt beyond recognition.

It was not possible to establish what actually made the tanker to go up in flames but eyewitnesses said "we are suspecting that the driver might have slept off which was why he skidded off the main road. On hitting the bar of the pedestrian bridge, it resulted to explosion due to

■ Clarice **AZUATALAM,**
Port Harcourt

the flammable nature of petroleum product it was carrying"

Sadly too, the conflagration resulting from the petroleum products affected a nearby motor-shop burning up about five cars there. Hoodlums who seized the opportunity of the pandemonium caused by the accident also stole a *Toyota corona* car from the shop.

It was further said that the car dealer was saved from losing more cars from the raging inferno by the quick response of fire fighters from the State Fire Service.

However, while the charred remains of the two dead men have been deposited at Braithwaite Memorial

Hospital, Port Harcourt, the wreckage resulting from the incident have been cleared by men of the State Sanitation Authority. The clearing of the wreckage lasted up to 12noon with traffic being directed to use only one lane thereby causing a chaotic traffic jam along the Aba express road during the period. The men of the state Fire Service also lent helping hand in clearing the place.

Speaking at the scene of the accident, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Sanitation Matters, Mr Ipalibo Harry attributed the accident to "carelessness and over-speeding" hence the tanker ran into a pedestrian bridge.

Commenting on the accident, the car dealer, Evangelist Vitalis Iyiakaimo, who lost many cars there, explained that "I was alerted of the incident at about 5am by some friends. Thereafter, I called Shell Fire Fighters for rescue.

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