

1 Five die, 10 injured in Mushin gas explosion

• Shops, houses, 12 vehicles affected

FIVE persons died and 10 injured yesterday following a gas explosion in the densely packed Ladipo business district in Mushin, Lagos.

The incident happened about 8.30am at 21 Ojekunle Street.

The explosion occurred at a property used for mixed business activities including a pub, mechanic workshop and gas shop, among others.

A statement by Director, Lagos State Fire Service, Margaret Adeseye, said, "The gas incident which was reported at 08:42 hours Tuesday morning via the state emergency reporting platform was swiftly responded to by a combination of first and secondary responders.

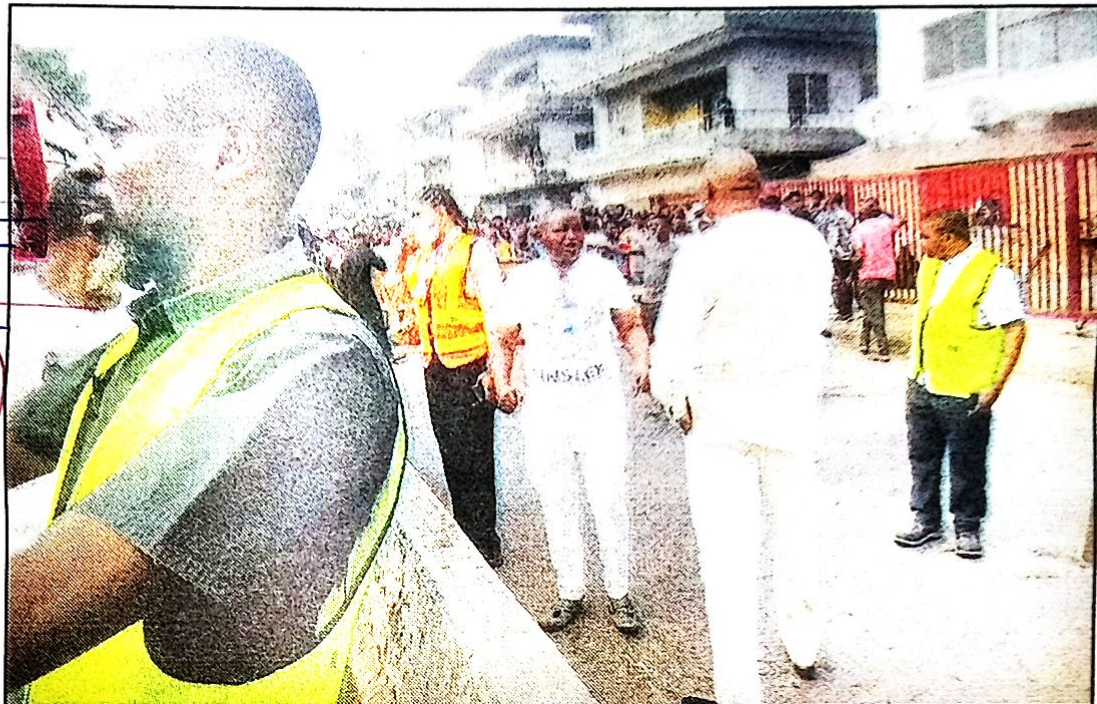
"On arrival at the scene, it was discovered that it is an open space used for several activities including a beer parlour, mechanic workshop, spare parts sale and gas shop, amongst others, while housing a makeshift structure."

Emergency responders confirmed that five persons comprising three men, a woman and a child died in the explosion.

Southwest Coordinator, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Ibrahim Farinloye, gave the update, explaining that the child aged 10 was rescued alive but died before arriving at the hospital. The deceased woman was identified as Mama Funmi.

"I need to appeal to the people of Lagos State to abide by the rules and regulations and always keep to the building codes...We are on top of it and all that we are doing is on the watch of Mr Gov. His Excellen-

Arsonists burn magistrate court in Imo



• Firemen at the scene...yesterday

PHOTO: ABIODUN WILLIAMS

By Precious Igbonwelundu, Evelyn Osagie, Oyebola Owolabi, Florence Ukonu, Faidat Ahmed and David Orji

cy Babajide Sanwo-Olu," Farinloye said.

He said investigation by NEMA showed that the shop was earlier sealed because the side of the street was designated as a mechanic village, which was not accessible to other users. Farinloye said after some time, the seal and lock were removed before the incident occurred.

According to the Deputy Head Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Olajide Ogabi, three shops and six shacks and about 12 vehicles were affected.

"Our advice is that people should be conscious of any-

thing that can lead to fire. This is a power line and it is for mechanic workshop activities, and is no place for a gas outlet. The information revealed that a special adviser on transportation mentioned that at a time this shop was locked, but here we are," Ogabi said.

Police Commissioner Hakeem Odunmosu blamed the disaster on human negligence and warned residents to desist from making calls close to fire-prone areas like gas and petrol stations.

"It is indeed a sad but a completely avoidable disaster. From what I've seen here and heard, the thing blew off when somebody was trying to diffuse a gas cylinder as well as making a call. Don't make calls in any gas-exposed environment," he said.

Lagos State Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources

Oil and Gas Department, Alexander Alabi, warned against the establishment of gas outlets under power lines, observing that it is hazardous to health.

Head of the Lagos State Safety Commission (LSSC) Lanre Mojola said 15 gas retail outlets have been sealed in the last two months for not complying with standard safety procedure.

According to him, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu mandated a safety audit and enumeration of all retail gas outlets in the state, which is to be done in three phases - enumeration, enforcement, training and introduction of minimum safety standards.

At the time of this report, the fire had been put out while rescue operations continued.

Rescuers said 121 gas cylinders were recovered.

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