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Nine players, two coaches die in auto crash

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Published: Tuesday, 23 Dec 2008

Tragedy struck on Sunday in Plateau State when nine female footballers and their two coaches died in a motoring accident along Mangu - Pankshin road.

An eyewitness account said that the footballers, 15 in number, were returning after a football match against a local team in Pankshin Local Government Area of the state.

It was learnt that somewhere along the road, the Peugeot J5 they were travelling in had a head on coalition with a commercial Volkswagen Golf car.

The vehicle conveying the footballers was said to have somersaulted several times and effectually caught fire with the occupants trapped inside.

But before help could come, 11 of them had been consumed by the raging inferno.

Our correspondent learnt that six of them, who sustained fatal injuries, were initially rushed to the nearby hospital before they were eventually taken to Jos University Teaching Hospital for further treatment.

The state's Commissioner for Youth and Sport, Mr. Joel Gwatau, confirmed the development.

He said that team, from Jos North Local Government Area of the state had finished from a local derby which they lost to another team and was on its way back to Jos when the incident occurred.

Gwatau said those who lost their lives in the incident were burnt beyond recognition, adding that those that sustained injuries were responding to treatment at the hospital.

He said that the casualty was high because there was no immediate help when the accident occurred.

The commissioner added the government was in the process of reaching out to the parents of the deceased and the wounded.

When our correspondent visited the Rwang Pam, Stadium, it was a sorrowful mood as most of the colleagues of the dead and wounded stood in bewilderment.

At the Ministry of Youth and Sports where most of the footballers worked, the staff were in a pensive mood and could not answer questions from reporters.

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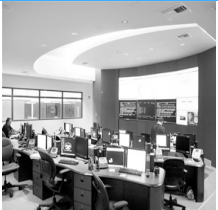
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