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## Upsurge in auto crashes worries FRSC

By MIKE ODIEGWU

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NO fewer than 19 persons lost their lives and 29 others injured in 13 auto crashes in Delta State, in the last two weeks, SUNDAY PUNCH investigation has revealed.

The state also recorded 95 accidents resulting in 42 deaths.

It was discovered that the upsurge of auto crashes within the yuletide season has made the Federal Road Safety Commission adopt some novel approaches to forestall future occurrences especially as some of the incidents were adjudged fatal.

Findings indicated that apart from an incident in Ughelli, the location that witnessed most fatal accidents was the busy Asaba-Benin Expressway.

On December 18, nine persons lost their lives in a multiple crash along the Asaba-Benin Expressway at Alifekede, near Agbor at 7.15pm.

This was followed by the death of five persons, including four male lecturers from the Niger Delta University Bayelsa on Saturday, December 20 at Ohoro village in Ughelli North Local Council.

Also in Agbor, along Benin-Asaba Expressway, an accident occasioned by fuel explosion on Tuesday, December 23, claimed five lives.

The inability of the FRSC to confirm real casualty figures on time led to conflicting reports on the number of the accident victims in the media with some claiming that over 100 lives were lost.

Besides, four persons were confirmed dead and one injured in another mishap that occurred last Thursday at Obulu-Ekiti, along Benin-Asaba Expressway near Isele-Uku.

The state's FRSC boss, Mr. Oluwasusi Familoni, said the accidents were avoidable because they were caused by human factors bordering on dangerous driving, over-speeding, impatience, fatigue, overloading and indiscipline.

Citing examples, he said the accident that claimed four lives on Christmas day occurred when a driver lost control and rammed into a stationary truck, while the Agbor incident was caused when a tanker driver impatiently wanted to take a U-turn.

Familoni said the commission had launched a campaign against overloading, over-speeding and dangerous driving to sensitise motorists on dangers posed by such practices.

Similarly, the Zonal Commander of the FRSC in Benin, Edo State, Mr. Nda Zakari, had appealed to motorists to abstain from over-speeding.

He said, "Drivers should not succumb to pressures from passengers and over-speed their vehicles. Over-speeding makes it difficult for vehicles to be controlled in time of danger. It is regrettable that most accident these days are caused by excess speed."

While calling on passengers to prevail on drivers to use normal speed limit, Zakari, advised drivers to start their journeys on time to avoid the temptation to over-speed.

Familoni said the commission had started motorised patrol, a special kind of patrol to

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regulate over-speeding, just as he disclosed that the commission recently acquired seven new patrol vans, two motorbikes and two towing trucks to enable it to intensify its highway campaigns.

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