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## Two feared dead as fire razes 20 tankers

By Sesan Olufowobi

Wednesday, 26 May 2010

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Two persons, including a pregnant woman, were feared dead as a fire burnt 20 tankers on Tuesday at Bola Tinubu International Tanker Park, White Sand, Orile in the outskirts of Lagos State.

PUNCH METRO gathered that the park had about 300 tankers when the fire reportedly started around 1. 45 pm. The fire was still raging as at 3. 30 pm, when our correspondent left the area.

Residents of the area were seen outside the park watching helplessly as the fire was raging. It was learnt that some residents were already packing their belongings in anticipation that the fire could spread to nearby houses.

Eyewitnesses said that the fire was caused by two youngsters they referred to as "motor boys" who were trying to mix petrol with kerosene.

It was gathered that the boys usually sold the concoction to unsuspecting members of the public as engine oil.

"We did not actually know what happened there, but we know that in the course of distilling their diesel, a fire started in that area, which got to a tanker that was close to where the boys were mixing kerosene with petrol. The fire later spread to other tankers," one of the witnesses, who craved anonymity, explained.

Our correspondent learnt that the first tanker, which caught fire later, exploded before spreading to others.

It was, however, gathered that the "motor boys," who allegedly caused the fire, escaped the inferno, and only sustained minor burns.

But another "motor boy" suspected to have been trapped in one of the burning tankers was declared missing after firefighters had doused part of the inferno.

About 10 firefighting trucks from Lagos State Fire Service were sighted when our correspondent visited the area.

Meanwhile, there was tension in the area as some drivers from the North alleged that the incident was sabotage. They said 19 of the burnt trucks were from Maiduguri, Borno State, and were in Lagos to load petrol, adding that their loss was about N80m.

But the Seriki Hausawa of Ijora, Mustapha Muhammed, who arrived on time, disabused their minds and doused the tension.

The tanker park was built to house about 1,000 tankers. None of the tankers in the park had fuel in them at the time the fire started.

Lagos State police spokesman, Frank Mba, said the police had been sent to the area to maintain security and prevent vandals from looting unaffected tankers. He, however, put the number of the burnt truck at 12, adding that "and I don't have a report that anybody died for now. But we are still investigating both the cause of the fire and the likely casualties."

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- D police spokes person said there was no casualty as at the time of report & it was announced on d radio that 2 people died, anyway may God continue to protect us & Nigeria ( amen)

Posted by: Bakinson Azeez , on Wednesday, May 26, 2010

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