

Fire kills two in Oyo, guts Lagos market

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Scenes of the fire incident at the Ladipo Spare Parts Market in Lagos...on Wednesday. Photos: Goke Famadewa

Olufemi Atoyebi and Samson Folarin

Two persons were confirmed dead in Okaka, in the Itesiwaju Local Government Area of Oyo State on Wednesday after a petrol tanker fell, spilling its content on the road and causing fire.

The incident happened one week after an auto accident claimed 14 lives in the Ipapo area of the council.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent that the truck fell into a drainage channel, adding that when the fire started, people living in the surrounding community fled the area.

Men of the state fire service, who arrived at the scene from Iseyin, had a hard time trying

to put out the fire.

A car and several shops were completely burnt, while property was lost to the fire.

Many people, who were injured in the incident, were taken to a hospital.

One of the dead, Idowu Ganiyu, was said to be riding a commercial motorcycle and was trapped in the inferno.

He was said to have sustained burns and taken to a hospital, where the father of four was pronounced dead.

The other victim, Mrs. Adeola Adepoju, was said to have visited her daughter in the area when she was caught in the fire.

Meanwhile in Lagos, an early morning fire razed no fewer than 50 shops at the Ladipo spare parts market in the Mushin area of the state, consuming goods estimated at over a billion naira.

Although there are different accounts of what caused the fire, *PUNCH Metro* learnt that it started around 3am on Wednesday.

While some residents said the fire was caused by an electrical spark from high-tension wires near the shops, others said it began from a food seller's shop who was preparing food at the time.

However, our correspondent gathered that a jerrycan of fuel stored in one of the shops aggravated the inferno.

A trader, Innocent Ogunna, who attributed the fire to an electrical spark, said cash sums were also destroyed.

He said, “There was a big spark from the high-tension cables which ignited a fire in the shops. That was how the fire started spreading and it then came in contact with petrol.

“People living on the street were the first to see it and they started calling us. Some of us, who kept money in our shops, couldn’t get anything back.”

A dealer in shock absorbers and headlights, Mr. Sunday Ani, explained that he was asleep with his family when he was called.

The father of three said he had only stocked his store with new goods on Tuesday.

He said, “The whole thing happened suddenly. As of yesterday (Tuesday), I bought new goods and I didn’t even estimate the value because I planned to do that today (Wednesday).

“I got here to discover that everything had been burnt. This is a terrible situation for me.”

Emmanuel Obi, another trader, said he was called around 3am when the fire started.

Obi, who had been trading in the market for more than nine years, said although he got to the scene shortly after he was called, he could only watch helplessly as his goods were razed by the fire.

“I lost goods of over a million naira. I could not get anything out except scraps,” he added.

Another trader, IK Obinna, who claimed to have been working in Ladipo market for over six years, said he had informed his master about the damage, adding that they had surrendered to fate.

Some youths, who were picking irons from the smouldering shops, were attacked by angry traders.

The Chairman of the Ladipo-Osoro Traders Union, Felix Okoro, commended the Lagos State Fire Service for curtailing the fire.

Okoro said it might take some time for the market to get back to its feet as goods lost were valued at over a billion naira.

He said, “More than 50 shops were affected. And in these shops, we deal in brand new spare parts, many of which come in cartons. We lost goods valued at over a billion naira. We are devastated by this. If not for the fire service, who responded promptly, the damage could have been more.”

He appealed to the government to come to the aid of the affected traders to enable them get back to business.

The Director of the Lagos State Fire Service, Rasak Fadipe, in a text message, confirmed the incident, saying three fire trucks were deployed to the scene by the agency.

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