

Bayelsa taxi driver killed in tanker fire

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Simon Utebor, Yenagoa

A petrol tanker exploded along the Mbama end of the East-West Road on Wednesday, causing a fire that killed a taxi driver.

The East-West Road is a major highway linking the South-South with other regions of the country.

It was learnt that no fewer than five vehicles were burnt in the incident which occurred around 6pm.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the Bayelsa State Sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Ikechukwu Igwe, deployed officials in the area to ensure free traffic flow along the road.

The driver of the tanker was said to have lost control of the vehicle after discharging fuel in one of the filling stations in the area.

A source said the tanker fell shortly after coming out of the filling station, adding that it did not discharge all the products at the petrol station.

The source, who noted that the rest of the product spilled on the road, said, “The vehicles exploded and fire followed immediately.

“It caused panic in the area, but the presence of FRSC officials brought the situation under control. The officials were there till around 11pm to control traffic.”

Igwe, who visited the area on Thursday, said a taxi driver died in the incident.

He sympathised with persons whose vehicles were burnt.

Igwe said the unidentified taxi driver, instead of fleeing the scene after the tanker fell, opened the bonnet of his car and attempted to disconnect the car’s battery.

The FRSC boss explained that in the process of trying to remove his vehicle’s battery, a spark occurred which caused the explosion.

He said, “The driver had just discharged fuel at Lionman Filling Station. As he was driving out, the tanker fell.

“The taxi man that died in the accident came out and discovered that the road was blocked because other drivers abandoned their vehicles and fled the area.

“The man decided to disconnect his vehicle’s battery and there was a spark. Because the remaining fuel from the tanker had spilled on the road, the spark caused the fire that killed him and burnt five vehicles”.

Igwe added that firefighters later put out the fire.