

11 die as Kogi protesters barricade

Deji Lambo and
Gbenga Odogun

NO fewer than 11 residents lost their lives on Thursday in an explosion around Ejule-Ochadamu Junction, Olofin Bridge, in the Ochadamu area of Kogi State.

PUNCH Metro gathered eight other victims were injured as 14 vehicles and six motorcycles were burnt.

Our correspondents learnt that the explosion happened when a coal truck rammed into a petrol-laden tanker which drivers used in barricading the highway during a protest.

The tanker drivers were said to be protesting an attack on their colleagues by armed soldiers.

During a visit to the scene, one of our correspondents gathered that some soldiers allegedly shot two tanker drivers.

The situation led to an argument, which degenerated, as the drivers, who were angered by the action, used a petrol-laden tanker to block the highway.



• Scene of the incident

An eyewitness, who declined to mention his name for security reasons, said pleas for the drivers to remove the tanker were ignored.

The eyewitness explained that a driver conveying coal to a destination, while plying the

route, suddenly rammed into the tanker, causing the explosion that claimed many lives.

He said, "I learnt that the accident was caused by a disagreement between soldiers and tanker drivers. Soldiers shot two tanker drivers and their

colleagues in anger used a tanker loaded with fuel to barricade the highway leading to the ancient town of Idah.

"People gathered and pleaded with the drivers to remove the tanker, but they refused. Suddenly, the driver of the coal

road with tanker

truck, while driving at top speed, rammed into the petrol-laden truck, causing the explosion. An inferno engulfed the scene, killing many people and injuring others."

Sources in the area claimed that no fewer than 20 bodies, some of whom were burnt beyond recognition, were recovered at the scene.

However, the Public Education Officer, Federal Road Safety Corps, Bisi Kazeem, in a statement, said 11 persons were burnt to death.

He noted that preliminary investigation revealed brake failure and road obstruction as the causes of the incident.

He said "The crash, which occurred around 2.45pm, involved 20 vehicles, including one truck, one tanker, 12 cars and six bikes.

"The crash, which was fatal, followed a collision between the truck and the tanker with other vehicles, thereby causing an inferno.

"FRSC personnel were

deployed in the scene of the crash immediately they were contacted by public-spirited individuals.

Sweet-waving kid victim for recognition

Armstrong Bakam,
Bauchi

A 25-year-old man has been arrested by the police in Bauchi State for allegedly killing a five-year-old child.

The suspect, Anas Aiwai, reportedly lured the minor with sweets and took him to his room.

He later contacted the boy's father and demanded N5m ransom, which the latter could not raise.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Wakil, a Superintendent of Police, in a statement on Thursday, said the suspect hacked the boy to death after he realised that he recognised him.

He said the Commissioner of