

Tanker Fire Kills 10

• *Obafemi Martins loses mum in incident*

It was yet another tragedy early yesterday morning in Lagos as a petrol tanker ran into another at Orile-Iganmu area of the city, killing 10 persons in the process.

Among the 10 killed was Alhaja Monsurat Iyabode Martins, the mother of Super Eagles and Newcastle striker, Obafemi Martins.

Eyewitnesses said the driver of the tanker lost control and hit a kerb after which it ran into another tanker and a bus.

The accident which occurred around 4 am sparked off a huge fire, which engulfed

By Femi Atoyebi and Eugene Agha

the entire place and consumed some commuters who were said to be waiting for buses at the bus-stop.

THISDAY learnt that the fire later extended to some other vehicles that were parked by the side of the road.

Several other persons, including women and children, who were doing bricks businesses, sustained various degrees of burns.

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Tsi THSDAY STOCK INDEX

Top Gainers

BERGER	+5.73k (N120.33)+5%
ETI	+1.82k (N38.22)+5%
MOBIL	+10.73k (N226.27)+4.9%
OANDO	+9.40k (N197.51)+4.9%
AFRIBANK	+1.15k (N24.33)+4.9%

Top Losers

CHEVRON	-14.38k (N273.48)-4.9%
FLOURMILL	-3.28k (N62.37)-4.9%
FIRSTBANK	-1.49k (N40.02)-4.6%
WAPCO	-1.54k (N43.97)-3.3%
NESTLE	-6.01k (N219.99)-2.6%

Lagos

Volume :	1.1 billion
Value :	N13.1 billion
Deals :	16,822

• Weekend round up 24/07/08
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TANKERS *Cont'd from P1*

An eyewitness said the injured were quickly rushed to nearby hospitals in the area, while the charred remains of some of the dead were taken to the mortuary.

"A good number of those who died were passengers who were apparently on their way to work or market. They were trapped inside the buses or at the bus-stop when the fire started," the witness said.

Officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), policemen and members of the Red Cross later came around to offer assistance to the injured and the dead.

An FRSC official, who spoke to THISDAY at the scene of the fire, but refused to disclose his identity put the death toll at eight, but added that he could not rule out the possibility of more deaths.

"We arrived the scene at about 5.15 am, when we got the news about the fire. By the time we arrived, some of the victims were already burnt beyond recognition while others were still alive. Those who had minor burns were offered first aid treatment by members of Red Cross before they were taken to the hospital," he said.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Frank Mba, said the police could only confirm the death of eight persons in the inferno.

Mba, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), also added that eight other persons sustained various degrees of burns, while eight other vehicles including two petrol tankers were completely burnt by the fire.

He could, however, not con-

NIGERIA'S FIRE DISASTERS		
Lagos	15 May 2008	at least 20 killed
Lagos	26 Dec. 2007	at least 40
Lagos	26 Dec. 2006	at least 260
Lagos	12 May 2006	at least 150
Lagos	December 2004	at least 20
Lagos	September 2004	at least 60
Abia	June 2003	at least 105
Warri	July 2000	at least 300
Abia	March 2000	at least 50
Jesse	October 1998	at least 1000

firm the death of the mother of the Super Eagles' striker as a result of the incident

But Martins' mother, according to the deceased's sisters, Risikat and Mutiat Sonibare, was consumed by the fire while in her car.

She was said to be on her way to visit a sister after observing the early morning Islamic prayers.

Another account of her death blamed it on the fumes that ensued from the burning tanker.

The account was corroborated by Alhaji Bola Ahmed of Nadwat-ul-ahli Society of Nigeria, a prayer group where Alhaja Martins belonged, who told THISDAY that Martins' mother died early in the morning on her way to the hospital.

"She was rushed to the hospital after inhaling much of the smoke from the burning tanker but she gave up on the way. The smoke from the burning tanker contributed to her death," he said.

Alhaja Martins had a house in Victoria Garden City in Ajah built by her son, the Super Eagles star, but she stuck to her husband's house in Orile where she had lived for so many years. Her hus-

band died five years ago.

Reacting to the death of Martins' mother, former Super Eagles Coach, Chief Adegboye Onigbinde, said it was unfortunate that Obafemi and the entire Martins family lost a dear mother who always stood by her son.

He prayed for the repose of the soul of the deceased and called on Nigerians to stand by the football star and the family.

"Obafemi Martins needs Nigerians beside him now. We must all play the role of comforter and rally round him. He is still young but with Nigerians beside him, he will get over the unfortunate situation and the shock of losing a dear mother."

Super Eagles Assistant Coach, Fatai Amao, was initially speechless when THISDAY contacted him to respond to the development.

"We will all take our turn one day irrespective of status or age. We still have to thank God for her life and the gifts of life like Obafemi and other children. It is painful for Obafemi to lose his mother now and I pray that God will give the family the fortitude to bear the loss," he said.

A prominent member of Nigeria Football League (NFL), Chief Mike Idoko, also expressed shock at the loss, recalling that Alhaja Martins was a pillar behind Obafemi.

"She was always with him, in Italy and England. She was like the power behind him and I pray that her death will not bring him down especially now that he is contemplating on his future. May God be with the family," he said.

Yesterday's incidence initially created pandemonium as most residents of the area fled from their homes for fear of being trapped in the raging inferno.

The fire was the latest in a series of incidents involving tankers in Lagos.

Only two days ago, Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola got the Federal Government's nod to sack tankers from Lagos highways because of the menace they have constituted on the roads.

EFCC *Cont'd from P1*

there were no records on such cases. One particular governor was actually charged to court while his statement was not obtained. He was never invited to the EFCC office in Lagos or Abuja to make statement," she added.

She stated further that by the time the committee finishes its work, those indicted would be made to face the music as there would not be any sacred cow.

Waziri further stated that the EFCC had been furnished with records of revenue allocations to both states and councils, and that the Commission was waiting and watching with very keen interest.

"My resolve when I came into office is to fight corruption to a standstill. I feel gladdened when I see NGOs and other well-meaning members of the public offering to assist me in the war. I have received reports

of the Federal Government allocations to all the states and local government. They should use the money to affect the lives of the people.

"A lot of people have died in accidents because of the pot holes on our highways. In the villages, the average Nigerian finds it difficult to eat, no drugs in our hospitals, some still drink water from ponds, while council chairmen cruise around in jeeps. This is why we have to take the battle to the people, because I have a feeling that if the people know that it is their money that the LG bosses use to by jeeps, they will join me in the war," she said.

She also promised to help reduce corruption to "bare minimum", conceding that crime could not be eradicated from the society completely, adding that a few people could continue to hold the entire nation to ransom.

YAR'ADUA *Cont'd from P1*