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18 die in immigration recruitment exercise

MARCH 16, 2014 BY OUR CORRESPONDENTS 232 COMMENTS

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Clockwise: Applicants at the National Stadium, Lagos; some of the injured applicants in Abuja; and exhausted applicants in Lagos, on Saturday

| credits: Stanley Ojidi and SaharaReporters

About 18 job seekers died and many were injured on Saturday during a nationwide recruitment test conducted by the Nigeria Immigration Service.

The applicants reportedly paid the sum of N1,000 as application fee.

Millions of job seekers had thronged venues of the exercise, mostly stadia, for the exercise.

Seven were confirmed dead after a stampede at the National Stadium, Abuja, venue of the exercise in the Federal Capital Territory.

The 60,000-seater stadium was filled up.

Each candidate was required to wear a white T-shirt, boxer shorts, socks and tennis shoe for the exercise.

The candidates, our correspondent gathered, were tested in logical reasoning, English language and mathematics.

The applicants, mostly youths, had certificates ranging from master's degree to bachelor's degree, Higher National Diploma, National Certificate in Education, National Diploma and Senior Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Three dead in Niger

Three job seekers, out of the 11,000 candidates who converged on the Women Day Secondary School Minna for the recruitment exercise died when security agencies fired tear-gas at anxious applicants.

Security sources told our correspondent that Immigration personnel were overwhelmed by the crowd that lined up to two kilometres from the venue of the examination.

When our correspondent visited the Minna General Hospital, where the victims were taken to, one of the victims, apart from the dead, was in critical condition.

When contacted, the Comptroller of Immigration Service, Niger State Command, Ezekiel Kaura confirmed, that 11,000 candidates sat for the recruitment examination in Minna centre and that five candidates collapsed as a result of the stampede.

Five die in Rivers

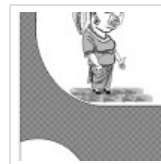
At least, five persons, including a pregnant woman, lost their lives during a stampede at the Port Harcourt Liberation Stadium venue of the recruitment exercise.



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Also, many of the applicants sustained injuries.

About 35,000 job seekers, clad in white T-shirts and shoes, had stormed the stadium at about 7am on Saturday for the physical and written NIS tests.

One of the applicants, who gave her name as Blessing, said a pregnant woman, who was injured, later died in the hospital.

She said, "Five persons died. One of them, a pregnant woman, jumped the fence and hit her stomach on the ground. She was taken to the hospital. When we started leaving, we learnt that the woman had died.

"The other gates were locked and everybody struggled through the only available gate. Not everybody took the examination because there was no space; there was no space for those with HND and O'level. There was space for those with B.Sc."

The Public Relations Officer, NIS, Rivers State Command, Mr. Abang Bisong, said the stampede was caused by the unexpected number of applicants that turned out for the exercise.

Bisong explained that while the NIS was expecting 20,000 applicants, about 35,000 job seekers, which was beyond the capacity of the stadium, showed up for the fitness and written tests.

Similarly, they were reports that three pregnant women died at the exam venue in Edo State.

22,000 applicants in Kwara

No fewer than 22,000 candidates sat for the test in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital.

The test took place at the Sports Centre of the University of Ilorin.

Mammoth crowd in Lagos

In Lagos, the exercise was conducted at the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos, where applicants expressed concern over the poor conduct of the exercise.

The *News Agency of Nigeria* reports that thousands of applicants had besieged the venue as early as 7am.

Some nursing mothers, pregnant women and persons with disabilities also came for the recruitment exercise.

An applicant, Miss Dolapo Akinkunmi, who said she had been unemployed for over five years, said, "I got the message on Wednesday that the examination would hold on Saturday. My doctor refused to discharge me, but I had to beg him because I need the job desperately.

"This is already noon and we have not started. I have to go back to the hospital now before I die here because I cannot stand the crowd and the heat of the sun," she said.

15,000 job seekers in Kano

No fewer than 15,000 jobseekers sat for the test in Kano.

The state Comptroller, NIS, Mr Zitas Nanpon, told the *News Agency of Nigeria* in Kano on Saturday.

NAN reports that the screening and examination took place at the Sani Abacha Stadium in the Kano metropolis.

Nanpon said, "Right now, not less than 15, 000 applicants are on ground and more are still coming into the venue. The standard is that everybody that has an acknowledgement slip is eligible for this exercise."

NIS overwhelmed in Benue

At the Aper Aku Stadium, Makurdi, the Benue State capital, no fewer than 17, 800 applicants took part in the exercise.

The state Public Relations Officer, NIS, Mr. Tersoo Ukeyima, told NAN in Makurdi that the service was overwhelmed by the number of applicants and did its best to accommodate them.

Stampede in Gombe

About 5,000 job seekers from Gombe and Borno took part in the exercise at the Abubakar Umar Memorial Stadium, Gombe.

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NAN reports that there was a stampede as a result of struggle at the entrance of the venue.

It was learnt that applicants from Borno were transferred to Gombe as a result of the security challenge in the state.

Police stops protesters in Enugu

Police officers in Enugu State on Saturday prevented protesting applicants from entering the premises of the NIS.

The applicants had gathered at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu, by 7am for the recruitment exercise but became worried when the exercise did not commence by 2pm.

SUNDAY PUNCH gathered that they had begun to mobilise for a protest, when news got to police officers who halted the action.

Cross River

In Calabar, the Rivers State capital, thousands of applicants converged on the Federal Government Girls' College for the exercise.

Fierce-looking security operatives barred non-applicants from gaining entrance into the premises.

Our correspondent, however, gathered from one of the applicants, who finished his screening around 4pm, that the number of job seekers who turned up for the exercise was up to 5,000.

As of 5pm, the exercise was still ongoing.

Woman slumps in Oyo

A major tragedy was averted at the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium centre of the aptitude test in Ibadan, Oyo State capital, when a woman slumped during a stampede, while two others required emergency treatment for exhaustion.

More than 22,500 registered applicants were present at the venue.

The woman who slumped during the stampede could not be identified while it took officials of the Oyo State Ambulance Service about 20 minutes to revive her.

Four slump in Osun

At least, four applicants who were among thousands of youths seeking employment with the NIS slumped at St. Charles' Grammar School, Osogbo-venue of the recruitment exercise.

The applicants slumped due to exhaustion.

Thousands of the applicants arrived at the venue as early as 6:30am to sit for the examination but the first batch did not sit for the test until around 3:30pm.

The state Comptroller, NIS, Stella Onwaduegbo's intervention prevented a protest by some applicants from degenerating. Some of them were angry that some applicants who came late were given preference over those who came early.

Applicants wait for nine hours in Bayelsa

About 6,000 applicants sat the recruitment examination of the Samson Siasia Stadium venue of the exams.

It was learnt that problems of logistics and accreditation were responsible for the delay.

A candidate, Alfred Jude, alleged that a pocket of malpractices took place. He claimed that some invigilators aided some candidates by dictating answers to them during the test.

Another candidate, Rita Preye, said the centre was congested such that candidates copied from one another.

10 faint in Plateau

About 10 people fainted on Saturday during the exercise in Jos, Plateau State capital.

More than 30,000 job seekers sat the examination at the Command Secondary School along Zaria Road.

Although no death was recorded, those who fainted were revived by the emergency medical team provided for

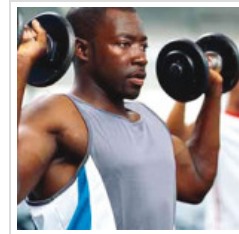





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