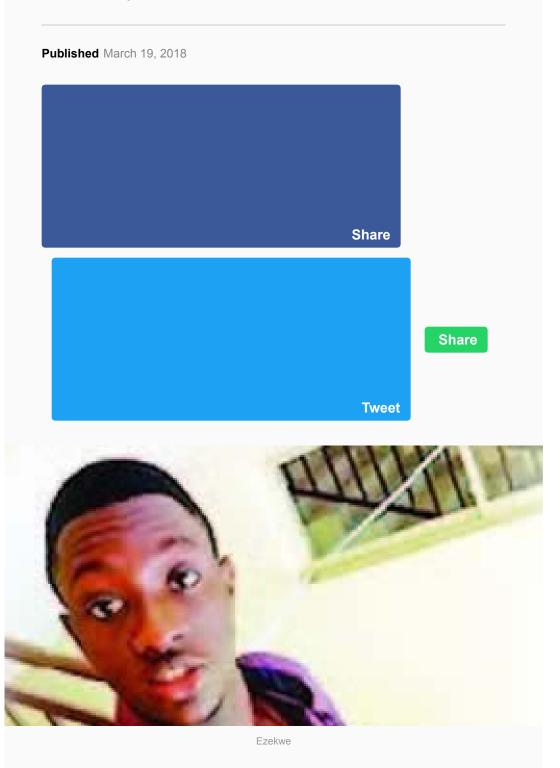
UTME candidate drowns at hotel during birthday celebration



• Cameraman drowns after shooting movie

Afeez Hanafi

The families of a candidate of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in Awka, Anambra State, John Ezekwe, and a cameraman in Lagos, Victor, have been thrown into mourning after they drowned on Saturday.

While Ezekwe drowned in the swimming pool of a hotel on Old INEC Road, Awka South, Victor was found dead in a river in the Badagry area of Lagos after shooting a movie.

PUNCH Metro learnt that Ezekwe had gone to the hotel for a friend's birthday when the incident happened.

He was said to be a Joint Universities Preliminary Examinations Board (JUPEB) student at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and reportedly scored 250 in the UTME which he wrote last Friday.

One of his friends, who identified himself as Etz Perfect, said his mother had tried to stop him from going to the party, but he refused.

Perfect described Ezekwe as a promising youth, lamenting that his loss was hard to bear.

"Why you? Why now? So your future is now shattered. What will happen to your JAMB (UTME) result? Such a meaningless world indeed. God knows the best for you. Rest in the bosom of the Almighty. He alone has the right over us. I believe He is aware of this. God why? Why him? Must it be our youths? You promised us long life and prosperity, but our youths are dying. Jay Jay (Ezekwe), you were such a nice person. I will miss you dear. I can't stop crying. Jayblaq is gone forever.

"Mr. and Mrs. Ezekwe, take heart; we are dust and to dust we shall return. Nobody is too young to die. Such is life. RIP Jay Jay, RIP Mathematician. Heaven will receive you," she wrote in a post on *Facebook*.

Perfect has yet to reply to a message sent to her by our correspondent requesting further details on the incident.

Efforts to get the comment of the hotel management proved abortive as calls made to the line of its contact person, one Mr. Oke, indicated that it was switched off.

He had also yet to reply to a text message sent to him.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Anambra, Nkeiruka Nwode, said she had not be briefed on the incident.

"I am going to find out and get back to you," she added.

In the Lagos incident, the 25-year-old cameraman was said to have followed 14 others to Ojota Village to shoot a movie around 2pm on Saturday.

They were said to be relaxing after the exercise when he reportedly left to swim in a river around the location.

He was rescued by local divers in the area and rushed to the Badagry General Hospital, where he was confirmed dead.

The spokesperson for the Lagos State Police Command, SP Chike Oti, confirmed the incident, adding that the address of the victim had yet to be located.

He said, "Around 4pm on Saturday, one Henry Ekenna came to the police that he and 14 others went to Ojota Village to shoot a movie and after they had finished, the cameraman left where others were resting to swim and later got drowned in the river.

"The victim was rushed to the general hospital where he was confirmed dead while detectives visited the scene."

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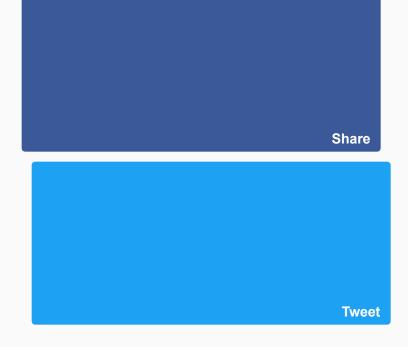
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