

4 feared dead in Kogi explosion as Buhari visits

From Emmanuel Adeyemi, Lokoja

FOUR persons were feared dead as an explosion rocked Kogi State yesterday, few minutes before President Muhammad Buhari was to commission projects in the North-central state.

Eyewitnesses said the explosion occurred at about 9a.m near the wall of the second gate of the palace of the Ohinoyi of Ibara on Kuroko road, Okene.

Despite the explosion, Buhari successfully commissioned the Reference Hospital, Okene, which is less than a kilometre away from the palace of the emir.

The emir, Ado Ibrahim, who was among dignitaries billed to receive the president, did not attend the commissioning event led by Governor Yahaya Bello. The emir was represented at the event by the Ohi of Okengwe, Ahmed Tijjani-Muhammed.

A witness said the explosion occurred in a vehicle and motorcycles, killing the two motorcyclists instantly. The charred bodies were sighted at the scene even as the security operatives sealed off the area.

"I was in the house when I heard a loud explosion, by the time I came out, I saw a vehicle burning, along with two motorcycles, close to the second gate of the Ohinoyi's palace. The explosion was so massive, with three bodies lying on the ground around the palace."

SP Williams Oye-Aya, Kogi Police Command's spokesman, who confirmed the development, described the incident as "very unfortunate" and "shocking".

He said the police was on top of the situation as investigation into the blast had begun.

•Applause for Gov. Bello

President Buhari has assured the people of Kogi State that the Ajaokuta Steel Company would soon come on stream to generate

employment to the people and revenue to the country.

He also said he was impressed by the performance of Governor Bello, noting that he had been impressive in the area of security and projects execution. He specifically said the Federal Government was proud of Governor Bello, who he said had shown proof of the All Progressives Congress (APC) over-all sterling performance in Nigeria.

"We are an administration that prides itself in the fulfilment of our electoral promises to the Nigerian people, at both national and sub-national levels. This is why I am glad that we have an impressive array of legacy projects through your own state government as proof of our stewardship in Kogi State.

"I am impressed by the performance of Governor Yahaya Bello. He has done very well in the area of security and projects execution in Kogi State. We are proud of him and we urge him to do more for the people. I am appealing to the people of Kogi State to support him so that he can achieve and deliver more dividends of democracy."

The president, who was happy to see the impressive projects during his visit, at the Reference Hospital, Okene, congratulated the governor again, saying, "if one wants to see everything here, he will get lost. I have been briefed by Yahaya and his team on the myriad of projects we would have loved to commission for you across the State, including the brand new Confluence University of Science and Technology (CUSTECH) at Osara, the Confluence Rice Mills at Ejiba, the various Township roads networks at Idah, Okene and Kabba and intra-state roads in the three senatorial zones, massive erosion works at Ankpa, Ogugu and other places, as well as other roads, hospitals, schools and sundry vital infrastructure."

He also noted that his administration was working to reposition

the state as an investment hub through the activation of solid minerals in the state, promising that the Ajaokuta Steel Company would be revitalised soon.

He commissioned the Ganaja flyover project, the Reference Hospital in Okene, the newly constructed Palace of the Ohinoyi of Eboraland, Ultra-modern GYB Model Science Secondary School, and Muhammadu Buhari Civic

Centre, among other projects.

Governor Yahaya Bello said: "When I was sworn in on the 27th of January, 2016, we were determined to serve our people and we quickly commissioned a multi-dimensional committee to form what we call new direction blueprint.

"From that period till date, this particular document has served as a guide for accelerated develop-

ment in Kogi State.

"Mr President, we hit the ground running and you told me to be courageous in Leadership and also taught me how to bring out my best, and today, the projects are an attestation of our best to the people of Kogi State. I followed your footsteps in ensuring projects and infrastructures that have direct impact on the people."

Governor Bello appreciated all the support to Kogi State, and appealed for the commissioning of Ajaokuta steel company, adding that no nation could achieve industrialisation without iron and steel.

"We are still confident that your effort toward revitalization of the steel company will still be achieved before the expiration of your tenure," he said.



Governor of Enugu State and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for Enugu North Senatorial District, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (2nd left), governorship candidate in the state, Dr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah (middle), his running mate, Ifeanyi Ossai (2nd right); lawmaker representing Enugu North/Enugu South federal constituency, Ofor Chukwuegbo (right) and Chairman, Enugu South LGA, Chimezie Nkwuo, when the people of Greater Ugwuaji Community celebrated Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi's Day in appreciation of his leadership role in liberating them from political exclusion in the council, at Community Primary School, Eke-Ugwuaji, Enugu, yesterday.

Ekiti Election Tribunal upholds Oyeibanji's victory

•APC, Fayemi, Adebayo, others hail verdict

IMMEDIATE past governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo have hailed the judgment of the state Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal, which yesterday, upheld the victory of the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Biodun Oyeibanji, in the June governorship election.

The three-man tribunal chaired by Justice Wilfred Kpochi ruled that the allegations of election rigging, vote trading and

procedural violations raised by the candidate of the Social Democratic Party, Segun Oni were vague and unspecific.

The panel held that the petition filed by Oni against the return of Oyeibanji and Afuye respectively "failed woefully head or tail."

The tribunal equally struck out the request for disqualification of the deputy governorship candidate for alleged certificate forgery, saying the issue was not brought up

within the expected 21-day period legally allowed, and that raising new facts and pleas midway would amount to breach of injunctions.

Oyeibanji, who described the ruling of the tribunal as a "landmark judgement" thanked the judiciary for living up to its reputation as the bastion of democracy.

Addressing a crowd of jubilant supporters at the foyer of the Governor's Office, Ado-Ekiti, shortly after the tribunal ruling, Oyeibanji said the judgement was a

to abandon further litigations and work together with the governor for the growth and development of the state.

"I had no doubt that the June gubernatorial election which gave birth to his government was free and fair and would pass any judicial scrutiny. With this ruling, I call on members of the opposition to join hands with the governor for the growth and development of the state.

"Our political affiliations may