

Mayhem in Katsina, 5 Feared Dead in Lagos

Indications that next Saturday's election may be marred by violence emerged yesterday in Lagos Island, following a bloody fracas which erupted between suspected members of the Action Congress (AC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). At the end of the crisis which lasted between 7 a.m. and 12 noon, no fewer than five persons were allegedly killed in the cross fire, with several others injured.

Similarly in Katsina there was confusion yesterday evening as a bloody free-for-all fight with the use of dangerous weapons, ensued between rival youths loyal to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

*From Eugene Agha in
Lagos and Danjuma
Michael in Katsina*

and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). Unconfirmed report has it that 2 people lost their lives, with several others injured. Katsina is the home base of the Presidential candidates of the PDP, Governor Umaru Yar'Adua and that of the ANPP, Maj Gen Muhammadu Buhari (rtd).

The Lagos incident, which grounded business and vehicular activities in the area was said to have started from Freeman Street, Lagos Island.

Though calm has been restored

in the area, residents have started moving out for fear that the election may be bloody on the Island as a result of the fact that both AC and PDP gubernatorial candidates in the state consider the area their strong hold. Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PDP), Mr Olubode Ojajumi who confirmed the crisis, however, said no life was lost. Ojajumi, a Superintendent of Police (SP), denied the involvement of party followers in the crisis. According to him, those involved in the fracas were urchins who wanted to use the situation to rob.

In the case of Katsina, it was gathered that the ANPP presidential candidate was expected in the state to flag off the party's campaign rally, but the road and entrance to the venue of the rally was sealed by security personnel.

ANPP supporters took to the streets to protest the development shouting anti PDP slogans, smashing any PDP posters and property they could lay their hands on. But the action irked youth loyal to the PDP, and what was supposed to be a protest became a bloody fight between the rival groups.

Properties belonging to the ruling PDP were either destroyed, damaged or burnt down. An office belonging to the PDP was razed down. Cars and motorcycles with PDP stickers were also not spared. In a reprisal attack, PDP loyalists razed the ground floor of the ANPP Secretariat, with several cars also torched or their windows smashed.

At the time of filing this report, several security personnel were seen patrolling the streets to arrest any possible outbreak of violence.

Others Pick Agbaso Consensus Candidate

From Amby Uneze in Owerri

norship candidate in the state.

Following the action of the party, the state leadership of the party led by Governor Achike Udenwa last night met with the stakeholders at closed door where the decision to vote for Agbaso, even though an APGA candidate by all PDP supporters was taken.

Prior to the decision of PDP, the AA had earlier on collapsed all its structures to APGA since it does not have a governorship candidate, while other parties like part of the Labour Party had also followed suit.

THISDAY checks could authoritatively observe that Agbaso, whose personality had risen tremendously in the state

since most religious groups, especially the Roman Catholic faithful had been seriously engaged in prayers for God to intervene in favour of Agbaso.

Reacting to the PDP position over APGA guber candidate, the National Vice Chairman of APGA, for the South East, Chief Simeon Udunka ascribed the action as a result of the massive prayers majority of the Imo people have been offering to God for a God-fearing man to rule the state in 2007.

He said, "what has come to happen today (sic) is that the prayers of the people has reached God. The problem of PDP may be as a result of the prayers or the order of the Igbo that no Igbo man should vote any other party".