

**GUBER/STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS REPORTS... GUBER/STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS REPORTS...**


• A polling station at Ikotun-Egbe, a suburb in Lagos, during the Governorship/House of Assembly elections.

# Polls: 44 Persons Feared Dead

•250 arrested for electoral malpractices •Election postponed in three local governments

The governorship and State House of Assembly elections were held across the country yesterday amid pockets of skirmishes which culminated in the death of no fewer than 41 persons. About 250 people were also arrested over alleged electoral malpractices in the elections that were generally considered fairly peaceful.

In many of the states, voting did not begin at 8.00am as scheduled by the electoral commission while the exercise lasted till dawn in other states to cover the period lost in the distribution of electoral materials.

Also, in several states, heavy security presences were reported while acts of thuggery and vandalism also occurred in many communities where there was lesser security presence.

There were also reports bordering on alleged shoddy handling of the ballot papers by the electoral commission as names and logos of some parties could not be found.

## LAGOS:

The photograph of the Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA) governorship candidate in Lagos State, Mr. Jimi Agbaje, was not displayed on the ballot. Reports from the state showed that in Lagos, no fewer than three persons were feared killed on the Lagos Island following the fracas which erupted between persons suspected to be political party thugs. Also, some urchins, numbering about 10 were alleged to have destroyed some properties belonging to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area of Lagos.

THISDAY gathered that the crisis which led to the killing of the three persons on the Island started from Freeman Street, Isale Eko. Many party supporters were severely injured in the fracas which almost marred the voting process in the area.

At Iyana Ipaja, a suburb of Lagos, hoodlums, who, attempted to hijack some INEC officials were later brought under control by a team of armed soldiers posted to monitor election in the area.

While security operatives were still battling to contain the Iyana Ipaja incident, a group of urchins

## By Our Reporters

who were alleged to have hijacked a Volkswagen bus also made away with some ballot boxes.

The urchins who rained heavy blows on the INEC officials on their way to the polling centres bolted away with the materials. One of them was later arrested and the ballot box recovered. The hijacked Volkswagen bus was also recovered and taken to the Makinde Police Station, Oshodi.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), in-charge of SCID, Mr. Olayinka Balogun, while confirming the arrest of the three persons also confirmed the arrest and detention of the Oshodi-Isolo Local Government chairman, Iyase Balogun. He, however, said the arrest of the council boss was in connection with the killing of a man in Oshodi by a gang of assailants.

Apart from the minor skirmishes which occurred across the state, the election was generally peaceful in all other parts of the metropolis. The turn out of voters began on a slow but gradual pace, with most INEC officials reporting at their polling booths late.

Lagos State gubernatorial candidate for the Action Congress (AC), Babatunde Fashola, voted at 10.50am along with his wife, Abimbola, at the State Senior Grammar School voting station, Surulere, Lagos.

Commenting on the polls, Fashola told newsmen that the large turn out of security personnel on the street was a bit worrying. He was however of the opinion that against the background of delays in the polls take-off time, he believed the allotted time was not enough.

Senator Musliu Obanikoro, the PDP candidate for the Lagos election, cast his vote at Gemade Estate at 12.03pm. Obanikoro, who arrived the polling centre in a quiet manner, said after casting his vote that, "this is the best thing to happen to our democracy".

He however accused the AC of trying to subvert the electoral process alleging further that the AC relocated ballot boxes from polling centres to the local government council secretariats in the Apapa and Surulere areas of Lagos adding that he got reports of an illegal polling station in an Alausa secretariat, a non-residential area.

That notwithstanding, the election went on smoothly. In some areas in Ikeja local government, the voting exercise started late with low turn out. The major problem faced by some electorates who were trying to vote in polling unit 024 in Anifowoshe was the non display of their names in the INEC registered sheet.

Virtually all the areas monitored in the area were peaceful and violence free. According to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) agent, Mrs. Akese Orindipe said the election was wonderful and it's first of its kind in the history of elections in Nigeria.

Also, Labour Party (LP) agent, Mr. Akese Kenneth said the election went smoothly and peacefully, adding that the only problem was that the INEC officials came in late.

Mr. Segun Ajayi who cast his vote shortly after the INEC officials arrived said the election has set standard in Nigeria, adding that "you can see how everyone cast their votes without harassment or intimidation from anybody, with this we pray for peaceful handing over by May 29".

There was a minor skirmish on Babashola Street in Lawanson area where some persons suspected to be thugs and miscreants, over powered both INEC officials and some security agents manning the area, seizing election materials and burning same in the process.

In other centres, voting was peaceful. However, given the lateness in the arrival of materials, INEC expectedly ordered an extension of voting beyond 3:00pm when voting would have ended. But the turn out was unimpressively low in most polling booths. There were also cases of voters being unable to find their names on the voters' register. Given the peaceful nature of the exercise, youths converted major roads into miniature football pitches. Voting also started late due to late arrival of INEC materials in Lagos Island, INEC officials reported at their polling booths well after 9.30am.

At 7.30am, voters had started moving to their respective polling booths to cast their votes, while random complaints of the non-availability of voting materials were predominant in some areas.

For instance, at about 11.25am, some voters in Ward F1 (006-Araromi/Baptist School centre) told THISDAY that they could not exercise their civic

rights due to the fact that they could not locate their names on the voters' register, which was on display at the centre.

Their grievances, according to one Engr. George Begusa, stemmed from the fact that almost 90 per cent of those who had turned up at the polling centre to vote could not locate their names on the voters' register, which meant they could not exercise their civic rights.

Taiwo Adeyemi confirmed this view, adding that, he also experienced the same situation in 001, 002 polling centres. The situation wasn't different from such polling booths as 007-Open Space by Salu Court, where an Accord Party (AP) agent, Mr. Shakiru Abdu expressed dismay that numbers 001-599, from INEC's voters' register were missing as a result of the fact that the names of the voters were not in the register for the centre. Badru Badmus, who registered at the centre could not vote because his name and voting number were different from what was in the INEC voters' register.

The INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Moses Ogbeh who visited the Lagos Island local government area at about 1.18pm, in continuation of his tour of local government areas noted that, "Nigerians have been voting and Lagosians have been voting. The situation has been so good and I have been to a number of local governments today. And all the local governments that I have visited everything was going on so well. People were on the queue waiting patiently to really vote and I think I really need to commend the resilience of Nigerians for that".

On the discrepancies experienced in the distribution of materials, Ogbeh said "as at 7pm, all our materials have gone to the 20 local government areas in the state and so this morning, when the movement of materials were going on, you will appreciate the security situation put in place in Lagos State especially and that one really hampered the movement of some of my supervisors to distribute materials.

On some of the voters, who had problems in exercising their franchise, as a result of the logistic problems faced by INEC ad-hoc officials, Ogbeh said "like

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## POLLS: 44 PERSONS FEARED DEAD *Cont'd from pg.7*

I said in my press briefing yesterday, and I have consistently told Lagosians, that for those who are there by 3pm, they would still be allowed to vote till any time. It is only those who decided not to be there before 3pm that the gate would be shut against.

But Nigerians would still be allowed to vote once they are there by 3pm. For those densely populated areas, they would be allowed to vote because we have all the materials on ground."

Going through Idimu, Egbeda, Orisunbare Ikotun and Ijegan axis in Alimosho Local Government Area, the situation was actually under control while the people voted without rancour or chaotic incidence.

Voting was generally slow as it took the officials the minimum of 10-15 minutes to confirm the name of each prospective voter, leading to many voters waiting endlessly before they could vote.

In Alimosho community, voting did not take place in Ademefun and Folarin streets, as voters who approached the polling stations to vote, discovered that none of the INEC staff turned up for the exercise, leaving the voters designated to vote in the area unable to perform their civic responsibilities.

The elections in Badagry Local government area witnessed massive turn out of voters even with the late arrival of election materials in most polling centres by the officials of INEC. Voting actually started at about 9.30am.

Voters conducted themselves orderly as soldiers in their large number mounted road blocks in strategic areas checking vehicles and human movements.

Although there were some complaints from voters whose names could not be found on the voters registers especially in the polling booths located in the palace of the Akran of Badagry and LA primary school in Badagry.

But in some cases INEC officials had to revert to the use of manual registers to enable some people to vote. The Nigeria/Benin Republic border was firmly locked as stern looking soldiers and other security agents kept vigil. The border area which used to be a centre of activities was deserted.

### KADUNA:

The governorship and state assembly election was generally peaceful although the exercise could not take off on time as scheduled.

The late take off of the polls was however attributed to the late arrival of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) staff and electoral materials. The presence of combined security agents who were stationed at strategic locations in the state ensured that voters went about the exercise peacefully.

However, in the Kachia and Kagarko Local Government Councils, elections into the House of Assembly was postponed because of the non inclusion of the logo of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) on the ballot papers. The gubernatorial election was however not affected by the postponement.

After a meeting with Chairmen of the political parties in the area and the electoral officers, they jointly agreed that the state House of Assembly election be postponed while stakeholders would meet on Monday to fix a new date for the election.

In Jama'a local government council, election could not take off until about 2pm because the INEC vehicle conveying election materials developed fault and broke down on the way.

In Birnin Gwari area, the Former Speaker of the Kaduna State House of Assembly, Alhaji Zubairu Bashir, was alleged to have come to the polling units with suspected thugs who attempted to cause confusion but were driven away by security men at the units.

### BORNO:

The poll witnessed a massive turn out of voters in spite of the late arrival of electoral materials to many of the polling centres in the state by INEC officials. In some parts of the state the election materials started arriving as early as 8.45 am, while in larger parts of the state the material did not arrive even as at 12noon.

Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, who is seeking re-election on the platform of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) cast his vote at about 11.30 at Gaboru Ngala ward in his village near the Nigeria/Cameroon border and told journalists that the exercise was fair except for late delivery of materials in some area in Maiduguri metropolis.

But his counterpart in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Kashim Imam, expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of the election especially the late delivery of election materials.

In Maiduguri and Jere the turn out was very impressive with most of the polling stations visited having a large crowd of voters, including women who queued orderly to perform their civic duties.

However, in some parts of the state there were complaints of late arrival of materials with sketches of violence in some areas.

In some parts of Maiduguri and Jere there were reported cases of thugs invading polling centres and pilling up the ballot boxes after scaring away security men on duty.

At the Mafoni ward, in Maiduguri at about 12.30 voters were seen complaining that they were driven

out of the polling centre by some armed youths wielding arms.

Two former Ministers and chieftains of the PDP Ambassador Babangana Kingibe and Alhaji Shettima Mustapha both expressed dissatisfaction at the conduct of the election. Mustapha alleged that the late arrival of the polling materials was a planned sabotage by the ANPP and officials of INEC as the areas affected were the stronghold of the PDP.

Kingibe in his own remark said that the election in the state showed nothing but the desperation of the ANPP to return to power in the state at all costs.

Also, in a related development, PDP leaders alleged that about 4 persons were killed in Dikwa and seven vehicles burnt at Abadan by suspected thugs.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alhaji Ally Maraca, assessed the conduct of the poll in the state and said it went on well and satisfactorily.

### AKWA IBOM:

About two people were feared dead while the electoral officer of Obot Akara local government was allegedly held hostage in the course of yesterday's governorship and state house of assembly election held nationwide.

In Uyo, the state capital, election was generally orderly and peaceful with many residents commending the conduct. At Uyo Urban 1, of Etuk by Eniong Street, the Presiding Officer, Mmenobong Sunday Edeko, and the

Polling Clerk, Ruth Ime Inyang said the election started in the unit at about 8.30 am adding that by 3pm over 80 persons had voted.

### ANAMBRA:

An official of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra was yesterday razed by hoodlums protesting alleged hoarding of original results sheets by INEC officials.

An eyewitness account said that the youths numbering over 500 at about 2pm overpowered the policemen and some other security agents to set the INEC building located at the former secretariat of Onitsha South Council Area ablaze.

The youths also burnt away materials sent to the council area which were used as election materials just as election could not hold in Onitsha North council area as voters waited endlessly for the arrival of election materials in their various polling centers.

A cross section of politicians alleged that the refusal of the electoral officer for Onitsha North to issue electoral materials in good time, especially the result sheets, fuelled the crisis in the area.

In Onitsha South Local Government Area, it was discovered that election was holding only in two out of 15 wards. But Hon. Bona-Orakwue, the Action Congress (AC) candidate for the House of Assembly election insisted that there was no election in Onitsha South because the electoral officer said she could not bring the result sheets and went back to Awka as at 3. pm.

There were heavy presence of soldiers, Police, and Road Safety Corps at strategic places in Onitsha and environs: Bridge head, Upper Iweka, Three -three-junction. while in Atani Central school, Ogbaru, it was a free for all fight where about 20 persons including DPP House of Assembly candidate for Ogburu constituency II in the state House of Assembly, Mr. Nzele Emmanuel were said to have been injured. In swift reaction, former chairman of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Mr. Obele Chuka, said "this is the most worst and most fraudulent election ever held in Nigeria".

According to him, "PDP government hijacked electoral materials to write result in private houses and Hotels and that is why you can't find the result sheets in the various INEC offices."

### BENUE:

The election was characterized by irregularities. Voting did not start at 8.00am as scheduled by INEC as electoral materials could not leave distribution centers in the local government areas of the state until after many hours with some wards getting their materials by 2.00 pm.

Areas monitored in Benue South Senatorial District revealed adequate security arrangement involving various uniform men and women and proper logistics by INEC to enhance peaceful and successful conduct of the elections.

Explaining what led to the late distribution of election materials, the INEC Electoral officer in charge of the area, Alhaji Abu attributed the failure to inability of owners of the vehicles hired to carry out the distribution of the election materials to arrive the distribution center on time.

Meanwhile, soldiers drafted for the operation arrested two men with firearms, two guns, in a car they were driving around within Adoka and its environs, and handed them over to the Police in the area for necessary actions.

The two suspects, who were alleged to be strong supporters of a FDP chieftain in the area have been detained in Adoka police station, and all efforts to reach the Divisional Police Office in charge of the area to comment on the issue proved abortive as two

attempts to his office revealed that he was out to monitor the election exercise.

### KOGI:

In a bid to dislodge armed youths who were scaring voters, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Mr. Michael Abimaje, was yesterday killed by hoodlums at Idah while the DPO of Idah Command, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Maurice A. Yusuf was equally wounded by the hoodlums.

Abimaje had received a distress call from the DPO that armed youths, who were loaded in four vehicles and suspected to be working for one of the gubernatorial candidates were moving round to prevent the people around Egah (Waterside) from voting.

On getting to the scene, the youths were rounded up and a search into their vehicles revealed that several arms and ammunitions were stuffed in the vehicles but before he and the other police officers could disarm the hoodlums, he was shot dead while the DPO managed to escape with injuries just as no fewer than four AK47 rifles of some of the other officers were carted away.

Confirming the incident to newsmen, the Area Commander, Mr. Theo IC Uzor said "Mr. Abimaje was killed while responding to a distress call. He received a distress call that some armed youths were going about in two Hiace buses and two cars harassing and preventing people from voting but on getting there, guns were discovered in the vehicles but before they could act, the hoodlums pounced on them and shot him".

Similarly, at Okene, though elections were conducted amidst tight security provided by military personnel drafted to maintain peace and security, there were sporadic shooting by political thugs who attempted to prevent voters from casting their votes.

In Lokoja, elections, which commenced as early as 8.00am in most of the polling centres were conducted very peacefully as there were no reports of violence in any of the polling centres in the town though there was a heavy presence of armed military and mobile police personnel who patrolled all the streets to contain any outbreak of violence.

The state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris voted at the Lokoja Club polling centre at about 11am and he expressed satisfaction with the peaceful conduct of the elections just as enjoined the people to conduct themselves peacefully throughout the election process and shun act that may disrupt the elections.

In some polling units in Lokoja particularly Yaraji in ward D, there were a reported case of multiple voting which caused a minor hitch but was swiftly brought under control by the DPO of 'A' Division in Lokoja who mobilized policemen to the unit to maintain peace.

### JIGAWA:

Though voting proceeded peacefully in many polling stations in the state, violence marred the process in Roni, Roni local government of the state as youths from rival political groups engaged in free for all fight.

The town was enveloped in smoke as the warring parties made burn-fires on the major streets of the town. In an effort to stop the violence, a policeman was viciously attacked and he had to be rushed to the hospital.

The violence continued unabated as the Police made a tactical withdrawal. In the process, two vehicles were burnt and several youths were injured. The Police was able to stop the violence when reinforcement from the Headquarters got to Roni.

### CROSS RIVER:

Elections in Cross river state has been trailed by accusations of hijacking of materials and corruption of electoral officers.

While the turnout was poor in the Southern and Northern Senatorial districts, it was quite impressive in the Central district, with some polling booths recording up to 90 per cent attendance. The poor turnout in the South could be attributed to the heavy down pour in Calabar and environs early Saturday

morning lasting till about midday. The situation was even worse in Bakassi area where the few people that turned out for the polls did not see election materials as the materials were said to have been hijacked by supporters of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and taken away by speed boat to the old Bakassi area.

The elections were however characterized by rigging and naked display of violence as in most places fierce looking youths openly wielded weapons, forcing those who had turned out to go back to their homes.

There were also reports of hijacking of materials and non-availability of original result sheets.

In Akugom Ward in Ugep, Yakurr Local Government, a member of the House Of Representatives, Chief Obeten okorn was forced to leave the polling centre for fear of his life.

A Human Rights Activist, Barrister Okoi Obon Oba also accused the PDP of bribing electoral officers who released the original result sheets to the Party's supporters. He also said that key PDP officials in the area recruited armed gangs from Rivers State and deployed to Ugep to cause mayhem and panic among the people.

### ONDO:

No fewer than nine persons were feared killed and several others injured in several parts of Ondo State during the yesterday's gubernatorial and House of Assembly election.

Equally, three vehicles including the official vehicle of a member of the Ondo State House of Assembly representing Owo Constituency were vandalised by youths because the vehicles were allegedly used to either snatch ballot boxes or ballot papers.

THISDAY checks revealed that four people were killed in Ugbe near Ikare Akoko allegedly by the police. One of the shot persons died instantly while others died later in hospital.

Also, two persons who resisted attempt by hoodlums to steal ballot boxes at the High School area of Akure were shot, two killed in Idanre and one at Akungba-Akoko.

Also a Nissan Space Wagon with Registration Number, ONDO AG 241 KAA, was vandalised by youths who prevented stealing of ballot boxes in the same Akungba town.

Apart from those that were killed, the exercise was characterised by massive irregularities ranging from snatching of ballot boxes, intimidation of politicians, late distribution of materials, inadequate materials and alleged overnight change in the list of INEC ad-hoc staff.

In Akure, voting was temporarily suspended in several areas especially at Gbogi/Isikan Ward where hoodlums snatched boxes and whisked away a presiding officer simply called Olorunfemi after match-eating for refusing to sign a fake result.

At Sacred Cathedral Church Primary School, the whole ground was littered with tumbprinted ballots which youths refused to be taken away.

### BAUCHI:

As early as 8.00 am INEC officials were at many polling units with a large turn out of voters who had lined up for voting. It was relatively peaceful except for Jahun where irate youths of PDP and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), had a fierce clash.

At 2.30 pm, ANPP governorship candidate, Mallam Isa Yuguda, voted at Baba Sidi Primary School polling unit and collation centre. He told THISDAY he was satisfied with the preparations by INEC, except for a reported case of insufficient ballot boxes in some units. Yuguda who was mobbed by the youth's vanguard pleaded for orderliness and good behaviour.

In Alkali Local Government Area (LGA) in the same Bauchi South Senatorial zone, 11 ballot boxes were reported snatched and INEC agents in charge were chased away by thugs.

The PDP gubernatorial candidate Alhaji Umar Nadada, early in the day drove to his hometown,

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\* Cross section of electorate waiting for the Governorship/House of Assembly election at Egbe-Idimu in Lagos...yesterday

PHOTO: James Agori



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Dambam to vote and monitor events. However, in the same zone, there were cases of under aged voters who allegedly lined up to vote with a false age declaration that placed them above 17 on the voter's card.

By 4.00 pm Governor Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu had returned to the Government House Bauchi, after casting his vote at his hometown Boto, in Tafawa Balewa LGA. Mu'azu in high spirits said he was very optimistic of Nadada's victory at the polls.

**KEBBI:**

The election was peaceful throughout Kebbi state as voting commenced at 8am with an impressive turnout in most of the centers visited by our correspondents. Among the areas visited were Birnin Kebbi; Argungu; Gwandu; Jega; Maiyama; Bunza and Kalgo.

Two of the presiding officers interviewed in Birnin Kebbi and Jega namely, Malam Mohammed Sani and Nasiru Hassan Jega said they received election materials before 7am yesterday.

According to them, over 50,000 people have voted in these centers before 10.30am. The state governor, Alhaji Adamu Aleru voted at Marna ward in Laeru while the other leading governorship candidates except Senator Faruk Bello-Bunza of the ANPP voted in their wards before 10. Alhaji Abubakar Mallam of the Democratic People Party (DPP) voted at (adariya in birnin kebbi while Alhaji Saidu Dakin Gari cast his vote at dakin gari in suru local government area.

**RIVERS:**

No fewer than seven policemen were reportedly killed in Port-Harcourt even as two police station were torched by militants who were protesting alleged connivance between INEC and the state government to impose a candidate.

However, Rivers State Governor, Dr Peter Odili and his wife, Justice Mary, arrived his hometown, Ndoroi at 10.30 am, but voting did not commence until about 12.30 pm at Ward 14, Unit 17, Umuonyema, where the governor and his wife registered, after the necessary formalities by the Presiding Officer, Mr. Samson Adonis.

**OYO:**

An unidentified person was killed in a clash between supporters of Action Congress (AC) and Labour Party (LP) in Igbeti area of Oyo State during the Governorship and House of Assembly election in the state. No fewer than 200 suspects were equally arrested across the state by security agencies during the exercise.

The election which was peacefully conducted however recorded some pockets of skirmishes in some isolated places.

Security was tight as combined efforts of the military, police, SSS and other para military agencies were on hand to ensure that there was no breach to peace in the state.

The leadership of the security agencies as early as 8 am were at various areas of the state capital to monitor the conduct of polls and made arrests in areas of threat to peace and security.

There were myriad of complaints which included the absence of the logo of the Action Congress (AC) on the ballot paper in Ibadan South-west, the snatching of ballot boxes in some areas while in others, especially in the state capital, some voters were allegedly barred from voting if they were not casting their votes for the PDP.

Security officials drafted to Igbeti, where the unidentified person was killed, had to scamper for safety in the office of the Divisional Police Officer as rival political thugs used guns and other lethal weapons on themselves.

The General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 2 Div. Major General Muhammad Sani Saleh confirmed the arrest of the factional Secretary of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) on whom was found a pump action gun when a search was conducted on him around 9 am. He also said that no fewer than four others were apprehended by his men.

An inspector of police was abducted at Ita-Maya area for allegedly accosting a Mazda car during the period of the election. His abductors in turn, ran into a police check in Mapo, forcing them to flee while the abducted police officer was rescued by his colleagues.

There were field reports of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials being abducted by desperate party thugs while in some areas, the INEC officials were allegedly forced to aid multiple voting by thugs.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Chief Stephen Bawa Many confirmed the omission of AC logo on the house of assembly ballot paper and indicated that elections into the House of Assembly for Ibadan South West constituency and assured that his commission would conducted a bye-election for the constituency after the presidential polls.

In Felele area of Ibadan, the vehicle of the former governor of the state, Alhaji Lam Adesina was allegedly smashed by rampaging political thugs. Alleged killing of two persons at the area was how-



• Voters casting their votes in Surulere, Lagos...yesterday

PHOTO: Elop Ukutt

ever denied by the police who insisted that there was no casualty.

At Irefin, in Ibadan North East local government, ballot boxes snatched by hoodlums were later recovered by a detachment of mobile policemen that was drafted to the area to restore normalcy. The recovered ballot boxes were taken to the palace of the monarch in the area for voting to commence.

**KANO:**

Thousands of supporters yesterday trooped out across the 44 council of Kano state to partake in yesterday's governorship and state legislative polls.

There were fears that the assassination of notable Kano cleric, Sheikh Jafar Adam, 24 hours to the start of the polls could lead to more killings and subsequently stop voters from performing the civic duties.

The presence of armed soldiers at strategic points of the metropolis was enough to avert violence and re-assure voters that all would be well in the day.

Voters within the rural areas started to cast their ballot as early as 9 am while their counterparts within the 8 councils in the metropolis had to wait for INEC officials till about noon.

At Bichi, one of the rural councils where the PDP gubernatorial candidate hails from, hundreds of voters were sighted at about 9 am on cue, taking turns to cast their votes.

But the situation was not the same at Dala, Kano municipal, Nasarawa and Ungogo local government areas where Thisday visited.

It was observed that polling officials curiously failed to show up with voting materials until about 12 noon. Kano state governor, Ibrahim Shekarau who is hopeful of winning the poll had to wait till about 2.43 pm to cast his vote at his native Giginyu quarters. Though, election took place under a peaceful atmosphere, it was learnt that there were pockets of scuffle between supporters of the all Nigerian peoples party (ANPP) and rival peoples democratic party (PDP) at Kunchi council of the state.

**OSUN:**

No fewer than six persons were yesterday feared dead during the Governorship and House of Assembly elections in Ila-Osangun, the headquarters of Ila local government area and Ifewara in Atakumosa -West local government area of Osun state.

Also, a nine year old girl identified as Maria Ojojede was hit by a stray bullet shot by some political hoodlums suspected to be sponsored by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) at Ode-Omu in Ayedaa local government area of the state during the conduct of the elections.

Similarly, no fewer than 20 ballot boxes were snatched away by some political hoodlums at various locations in the three senatorial district of the state while three police stations in Iragbiji, headquarters of Boripe local government area of the state were vandalised by political thugs.

The affected areas were Ile-Ife, Ikirun, Ijebu-jesha, Osu, Ifewara and Ode-omu where a nine year old girl was allegedly shot by those described as political thugs who stormed the area on the directive of some desperate politicians in the state.

Although the elections were peaceful at the commencement of the exercise, the conduct of the polls turned chaotic as political thouts allegedly sponsored by the ruling party in the state invaded some of the polling centres thereby turning the centres to theatres of violence.

When contacted the state commissioner of Police, Alhaji Suleiman Fakai said he was not aware of the political violence at the polling centres which led to the death of the six persons, saying that the election in the state was generally peaceful and orderly.

He said reports reaching his command from the 30 local government areas of the state indicated that peace reign at all the over 3,000 polling centres in the state.

**KATSINA:**

In most of the polling centers visited in Katsina

State, voting proper could not begin at stipulated time due to late coming of election materials, which deprived some of voting after the mandated 3pm stopping time. In Kaita Local Government Area (LGA) the materials arrived at 9.40am, but voting proper began by 11am. Katsina central which recorded a peaceful and orderly election, had many polling units already attending to voters as early as 8.15am. The centre at Kofar Gugga which has been reported to be a volatile area in previous elections was relatively peaceful thanks to the military and police men on the streets and polling centres respectively.

Kurfi like the capital had a peaceful election except for minor issues like a man who was forcefully ejected from his car for violating the limited-movement order and another who kept on complaining of his name not being in the register even though he had registered there. In Dutse-ma, the hometown of PDP's gubernatorial candidate and Commissioner for Agriculture in the state, Barrister Ibrahim Shehu Shema and Alhaji Hussaini Ali Dutse-ma respectively was probably the most peaceful after Katsina central. This may have to do with the strong presence of security personnel in the area. Dutse-ma said he had gone through the area to check voting activities and had been impressed with the turnout as well as the orderliness in which voters had conducted themselves.

**PLATEAU:**

In Plateau state, the state governor Chief Micheal Botmag, who had gone to vote at the Dadin Kowa polling very close to his private house where he registered could not do so, as at 11am, due to absence of electoral materials as well as officials who where no where to be sighted, as voter milled around confused and disappointed.

Beyond these problem, the absence of the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) and Labour Party on the ballot papers for the house of assembly election in 21 of the 24 constituency seats in the state, proved another knotty issue for INEC which may be forced to organize a by-election in the affected constituencies, although the Resident commissioner, Senator Ilya Audu has challenged those affected to go to Election Tribunal.

**IMO:**

The gubernatorial candidates of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) in Imo State have called for the cancellation of yesterday's elections in the state over the non-inclusion of their names by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the ballot papers.

In separate petitions written to INEC, Dr. Fabian Ihekwe of DPP and Chief George Opara of AD drew the attention of the Commission to the omission of their names and that of their parties as governorship candidates from the ballot papers distributed in the state for the election.

Specifically, the AD candidate requested INEC that it should not announce the results of the gubernatorial election in Imo State and conduction a fresh election which would include the name of AD and its candidate accordingly.

In the same vein, the DPP candidate along with his running mate, Dr. Anamelechi Aguwa, also demanded for the cancellation of the elections in the state on the grounds that they are inconclusive.

DPP in the petition requested for the inclusion of the party in subsequent ballot papers and that fresh polls are held. The party also demanded a public apology from INEC, which it said must be conveyed through print and electronic media.

The DPP candidates demanded why INEC left out their names from the ballot papers given that they had met all the conditions precedent to qualify for the elections.

When contacted on the issue, the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner in the state, Barrister Austin Eni Okojie said that he was aware of the omission, but insisted that this cannot lead to the cancellation of the elections in the state which were successful.

He advised aggrieved parties to forward their complaints to the Commission as their omission was not deliberate but a print error.

**OGUN:**

No fewer than 12 persons sustained machet cut injuries in a separate political violence in Abeokuta, Ogun State Capital yesterday during the Governorship election just as two ballot boxes were forcefully seized at a polling station in Adatan area and set ablaze, while several others were declared missing. In Abeokuta, when THISDAY went around the state capital, there were violence in Oke-Lantoro, Ijemo-Agbadu and Ake where offensive weapon were freely used.

When THISDAY visited Adatan area, the two ballot boxes with the votes cast were still burning, while voters were seen on the balconies of their houses scared stiff to move nearer to any polling booths. Other areas visited by THISDAY had no ballot boxes and those who spoke to THISDAY alleged that the ballot boxes were stolen at the polling booths by the supporters of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Also at Sagamu, voters were allegedly intimidated and driven away by PDP supporters, while ballot boxes were said to have been stuffed with ballot papers and moved to an unknown destination. In some polling stations around the state capital, gun-shot rent the air, leading to a situation whereby voters scampered to safety and refused to go back to vote.

On the presence of the military, Osoba said "I am shocked at that, because they will always say that military has no business whatsoever with elections. Why were they brought out, we are not in a state of war, I thought military were there to fight external force, military are not in charge of National or local security issue, they are supposed to fight enemies of Nigeria."

**TARABA:**

The Gubernatorial and State House of Assembly election in Taraba state was peaceful, with large numbers of voters turn-out en-mass to participate in the election process which was conducted under tight security as combine team of police and military men were seen paroling in most of the major street in the state capital.

In most of the centers visited by THISDAY, there were large numbers of voters, especially women on queue waiting to cast their votes. The process of voting in most of the centers started at about 8.00am to 8.30am, after all materials needed for the election was received. The state Governor, Reverend Jolly Nyame, caste his vote at about 11.50am in Ibrahim Sambo unit in Zing local government area. He also visit centers in Audokola, Jalingo, Yoro and Lau local government areas.

**ZAMFARA:**

Voting in the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections got underway more than three hours late in Gusau and other major cities in Zamfara state. The delay has been attributed to the late provision of electoral materials to polling units.

At most polling stations visited in Gusau and environs, large number of voters, who came out as early as 7.30am, sat under shade waiting for the arrival of election materials from INEC.

Most of the materials, earlier billed to be distributed as early as Friday night, could not reach their various destinations until around 8.00am Saturday. At one of such centres in Madawaki Collation Centre in Gusau, materials did not arrive until around 10.30am when a group of reporters visited the venue.

Speaking on the delay, INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner for Zamfara state Alhaji Hassan Yahaya attributed the delay to late arrival of some materials from Sokoto to Zamfara. He said some of the items arrived early but were not complete.

**DELTA:**

The gubernatorial and State House of Assembly elections in Delta State got off on a violent note with the burning of the residence of the state commissioner for Special Duties (project monitoring), Chief Evans Iwere by irate youths protesting the non-release of electoral materials by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The violent demonstration allegedly perpetrated by the supporters of the candidate of the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP), Chief Great Ogboru ripped through Obiaruku in Delta North Senatorial District the homestead of his running mate and Abraka in the Delta Central Senatorial District.

The over 1000 youths were said to have set bonfires on major roads leading in and out of the said towns smashing cars conveying journalists and other election observers to the various polling stations, some sustaining injuries in the process. The same scenario also played out in Warri as over 1000 youths were said to have staged a violent demonstration in Warri while sporadic shooting was witnessed in Ugheli North Local Government over alleged movement of electoral materials to a prominent politician's abode.