

NEWS

COVID-19: Many govt houses on lockdown

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The hustle and bustle which normally attends government houses across the country is absent. No thanks to the coronavirus which is affecting governors, their close family members, spouses and aides, to mention a few.

Sunday Telegraph investigations across the states where the governors had contracted the infection revealed that the Chief Executive Officers of the states now render skeletal services as visitors to the government houses were restricted. Even members of staff had been asked to work from home in the bid to curtail the pandemic.

Ortom restricts movement in Govt House

Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom had restricted movement of people especially visitors into the Government House as part of measures to tackle the pandemic.

Besides, the government had put in place other measures in an attempt to ward off the virus.

Ortom had ordered all government appointees and people of the state to go for testing, he also made compulsory the wearing of face masks, closed down schools, markets and worship centres, as well as ensured that other protocols established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) were being followed to the letter.

Sunday Telegraph observed that as a result of the growing cases of the virus in the state, the state government is now forced to run skeletal services more so as the governor himself has been in self-isolation as his wife, Eunice, son, cooks, other domestic staff have tested positive to COVID-19.

Governor Ortom had announced that other top government officials including the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Anthony Ijohor; the Chief of Staff, Mr. Terwase Orbunde; the State Head of Service, Mrs. Veronica Onyeke; the Vice Chancellor of Benue State University Makurdi, Prof. Msugh Kembe and the Vice Chairman of COVID-19 Committee, Prof. Godwin Achinge, who died of the infection, had tested positive.

Sunday Telegraph notes that the disease had been of great challenge to the state.

Delta reads riot act on additional protocol

Like his Benue State counterpart, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa had restricted move-



Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu speaking during the Virtual edition of the Lagos Leadership Conference

ment of visitors to the Government House and ordered staff in the Governor's Office to strictly observe the WHO safety protocols in order to prevent further spread of the virus.

Besides wearing of face-masks, use of sanitizers and ban on mass gatherings, the state had reeled out additional precautionary measures to combat the continuous spread and warned religious bodies over hypocritical preaching against the disease.

The state is now running skeletal services as a result of the pandemic at the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), as only Grade Level 12 officers and above go to work.

The Commissioner for Information and member, Delta COVID-19 Quick Response Team, Mr. Charles Aniagwu, said the extant rules for the control of the disease by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and World Health Organisation (WHO) would be enforced without fear or favour.

Containment superb in Agodi-Official

Special Adviser on Media to Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, Mr. Jide Ajani, said precautionary measures being taken are in top gear.

His words: "Presently there is nobody in the Oyo State government that is COVID-19 positive. Governor Seyi Makinde made it mandatory that every member of the State Exco be tested for coronavirus. About three weeks ago, three members of the state's Executive Committee tested positive and they were isolated and treated.

"Regarding holding of executive meetings, the governor conducts Microsoft Online meetings with the Executive members. Several other meetings are also done via Microsoft with some mem-

bers operating from their various offices or homes in order to comply with the COVID-19 Task Force regulations and protocols. In short, containment of the virus in Oyo State Government Secretariat and Government House is superb."

Staff work from home in Kwara-Ajakaiye

Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazak, Mr. Rafiu Ajakaiye said the state was among the first states in the country to direct civil servants to work from home when the pandemic broke out in March.

"Very few government workers go to work and that must be on needs-based re-

quest from their superiors. Also, we have reduced the number of visitors to the Government House," he said.

Also, the State Commissioner for Communication, Henrietta Adenike Afolabi-Oshatimehin said that Governor AbdulRazak ordered officials who had contact with his late Chief of Staff, Aminu Adisa Logun in the past two weeks to go on self-isolation while their samples were taken for COVID-19 testing.

Also, she said the government suspended physical meetings of any kind on official matters until further notice, directing increased use of virtual platforms for such engagements in order

to limit physical contacts and emulate Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq.

Abia Govt House no go area to visitors-Chief of Staff

Abia State Governor Okezie Ikpeazu had tested positive to COVID-19. Prior to the governor's case, the Commissioner for Environment, Dr Solomon Ogunji, had died of complications from the virus complications. Consequently, members of the state Executive Council were directed to undergo compulsory testing and isolation.

The Chief of Staff to the Governor, Dr Anthony Agbazuere, directed that only a handful of staff should be reporting for duty.

He also directed that only senior staff from level 12 and above should report for duty. He also banned visits to the government House.

"All cabinet meetings and most government engagements have been held virtually since April as part of the measures to reduce physical contact and curb the spread of coronavirus," he said.

Ebonyi running full services in govt house, strengthens fight

The fact that Ebonyi State Governor Dave Umahi and some of his aides tested positive to the virus, it has not affected work at the Government House as workers, including commissioners have continued to discharge their duties.

The governor, on July 4, had said: "I am working from home and all my meetings will be virtual. Soonest, we will all test negative and reunite," Umahi said.

Strict safety protocols at Govt House, Jos

There is strict adherence to the coronavirus guidelines at all the government offices in Plateau State including the Government House at Rayfield, Jos.

Only senior government officers were allowed to resume work while junior staff members still work from home.

Just recently the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Noel Donjur tested positive to COVID-19 following the directive of Governor Lalong for all members of the State Executive Council to mandatory go for test.

COVID-19: Why physical distancing isn't necessary in aircrafts –Minister

Wole Shadare

The Federal Government has explained why one of the safety protocols to curb the spread of COVID-19 may not be observed in the aircraft.

According to the government, the cabin is safer than any hospital theatre because of procedures air circulated in the cabin goes through.

Also, contrary to what passengers thought prior to resumption of domestic flights, the government also explained that the non-adherence to physical distancing was responsible for the 'affordable' ticket fare.

Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, stated these on Saturday when he embarked on a simulation return flight to the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport in Kano to assess the preparation of the airport for resumption of flights.

The Minister was accompanied by the National Coor-

dinator of Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Dr. Sani Aliyu, the Chairman Senate Committee on Aviation, Senator Smart Adeyemi, Senator Kabiru Gaya, Senator Ibrahim Shekarau and others.

Speaking after inspecting measures put in place at the airport, Sirika stated the airport was ready and safe to commence operation.

The Minister noted Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Owerri airports joined Lagos and Abuja airports to commence domestic flights on Saturday, adding that other airports yet to commence will join on July 15.

He, however, noted that the Federal Government will not rush any airport that is not ready as it was not in a hurry to risk lives.

Airports across the country were shut for nearly three months as part of measures to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Speaking on why physical distancing may not be

observed, Sirika said: "Because of the nature of the airplane, the airplane is hygienic enough once you have your mask, you are safe to remain seated on your seat and where possible, we will keep the distance.

"However, let me explain the mechanics and the goings on in an airplane that makes it safe in COVID-19 period. Airplanes are designed in such a way that the ambient air at altitudes is clean. It is not contaminated. The air is dropped in the aircrafts, pressurised and because of pressurization, the temperature of the air goes up to 200 degrees which is twice boiling water and there is no bacteria or virus that can survive it and it is suddenly cooled to about 2 degrees centigrade and then it is passed to a filter.

"Passing through the filtration system ensures that every single organism is screened and then it is passed to the cabin and once

it is passed through the cabin, it comes from the ceiling downwards.

"So, it is not coming from the cockpit to the rear, it is from the ceiling downwards and it drops on the floor and gets circulated.

"This circulation happens every two minutes. So, on a flight from Abuja to Lagos, the circulation will happen like 27 to 30 times. With this, it is ensured that it is more hygienic to be in an airplane than to be in an operating theatre in the hospital."

He continued: "With this mechanism in place, everything will be safe provided that we are decontaminating the airplane before we enter and decontaminating after we leave and also cleaning all the possible surfaces that one will touch."

On the connection of airfare with physical distancing, he said: "Airfares are normal. There is little or no increase because nothing changed within the cabin."