

Expert Outlines Preventive Measures Against Lassa Fever

Following the outbreak of *Lassa Fever* in parts of the State, a Consultant Public Health expert at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), Dr Kingsley Douglas, has urged the University Community to join forces with stakeholders in the health sector to combat the epidemic *reports Humphrey Ogu*

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Side Bar Founders' Day

Founders' Day celebration
holds on Monday, 6th
February, 2012.
Watch out for details
-Editor

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Sports Institute

NOC Inspects Facilities In UNIPORT

By Ethel Wopara

The University of Port Harcourt has been described as a sports-friendly Institution which has contributed immensely to the development of sports in the Country. President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) and former Minister of Sports, Mr Sani Ndanusa, who led Mr

Jonathan Nnaji, First Vice-President and Mr Tunde Popoola, Secretary-general of the Committee on an inspection visit to the University last Thursday, further described the proposal to establish a Sports Institute in the University as a milestone achievement.

Lauding the potentials of sports for the restoration of peace in the

Niger Delta, transformation of youths, encouragement of education and improvement of the economy, he disclosed that the NOC was working in partnership with the private and public sectors to promote sports entertainment in the Country, Ndanusa added that the Committee would facilitate affiliations between the

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ASUU Strike: An Educational System Beheaded?

The ongoing strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) may have ended by the time you read this, but chances are that the protracted strike action that has totally paralysed academic activities in whatever remains of the Nigerian university system may still be on a high. Don't read this if the strike ends before we publish; but do read on if it does not. Faced with the "more urgent" issue of fuel



ASUU National President, Prof Awuzie

subsidy removal on New Year day, many Nigerians may be forgiven for forgetting the strike which has been on for as long as far back as our memory can go. I do not wish to bore my esteemed readers over the well-advertised reasons for the industrial logjam between the ASUU and Federal Government which is blamed on non-implementation of the 2009 Agreement that is already due for review this year. Apart from the more visible issues of retirement age and more funding for the universities, there are other such intangibles as FG's support for States universities, overseas conferences, journals, institutional capacity building, curriculum review, information technology, etc.

Unfortunately, the protracted strike may change nothing after all; especially against the allocation of a paltry N400.1 billion in the 2012 budget to education which is just nine per cent of the expected national revenue for this year. This sum has a difference of N43.7 billion from the N356.5 allocated to the critical sub-sector in 2011. Of this sum, N317.9 billion will be swallowed by personnel cost, while overhead cost will gulp N27.2 billion; leaving a miserable N55.1 billion to capital expenditure. How would the already comatose educational sector move forward with such allocation pattern at a time when the defence budget alone is taking little short of N1 billion?

Already the South-East Zone of ASUU and its South-South counterpart have vowed to continue the stifling strike until their National Executive Council decides to capitulate. Rising from a meeting at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt last week, the branches vowed that they would only call off the strike if all their demands are met by government—given a veiled hint that the national body may face rebellion from some of its branches if negotiations do not end as they expect. Now, don't ask me the collateral damages incurred by the grass in this ugly battle of elephants. Some of the students affected by this historic strike may find it difficult to return to school again for various reasons. Some have turned to menial labour to survive; some of the girls may have accepted marriage proposals, while others may have just melted into society as a coping mechanism.

In a system that has not known good news for so long, great expectations were raised last week when Minister of Education, Professor Ruqayyatu Rufa'i expressed a thinly-veiled confidence that the protracted dispute between the gladiators would come to an end. That was last week. One week on, the strike is still in full swing, thanks to an inexplicable lack of political will on the part of government and grandstanding by ASUU on a matter that threatens to steal the future of the youths of this country.

By Williams Wodi

The closest we came to a resolution of the strike was a casual stamen from ASUU President, Professor Ukachukwu Awuzie, who hinted that NEC would meet to evaluate government's offer. Just that! While we wait for the gladiators to agree to implement the 2009 Agreement, our students continue to idle away at home with no hope of a secure future. The three things that are very critical to their lives are: economy, education and employment, without which we all face a grim future in this country. After all, these neglected youths constitute more than 50 per cent of the national population and we can only toy with them at our own risk.

In a hastily convened meeting with Vice-Chancellors of Federal universities in Abuja last Thursday, the Minister revealed that ASUU met with President Goodluck Jonathan to consider ways and means of digging the educational sector out of the deep hole into which it has sunk on account of serial mismanagement over the years. Politicians call it impasse; the students who are stranded at home call it comprehensive disaster! What other name do you call a situation in which a nation has willfully decided to behead its educational system without foreign intervention? President Jonathan did not create the rot, but his transformation agenda will be widely applauded if he musters the needed political will to end this scandalous drift in our educational sector that has turned Nigeria into a laughing stock in the global community.

Despite claims by government that most of ASUU's demands have been met, a new round of meetings that ended in a deadlock last Monday, was ample proof that the Honourable Minister may have been over-optimistic in her expectation of an end to the strike. The much-advertised parley with ASUU apparently failed to bring hope to students who are now tired of occupying their parents, relations and friends' homes. We hope they would not march to the famous Gani Fawehinmi Park in Lagos before those playing Russian roulette with their future would harken unto their cry to be allowed to return to school to complete their studies. They are not asking for a slice of the moon. Even after graduation, they still have the dry job market to contend with.

The reason the strike did not end as announced by the Honourable Minister was, probably because, it was not initiated by ASUU or jointly by both contending parties in a "world press conference". If there are people benefitting from continuation of the strike, let us hire prayer contractors to bind and cast them out of our

educational system. Our children cannot continue to languish at home while the politicians look the other way. It is dangerous to mortgage the future of the youths on the malodorous altar of a dispute that they did not help to create.

The trouble with Nigeria is the inability of those in authority to move with the speed of light in tackling certain pressing issues of national importance. A country



Dr. Kinikanwo Anele, ASUU Chairman, UNIPORT

that is awash with so much petro-dollar does not need to convene a sovereign national conference to give her knowledge-hungry children world class education. The President should ignore those who are advising him not to blink on this sensitive matter by doing the right thing to end the strike. Let it not be said that Nigeria's knowledge factory shut down under his watch as a former university teacher! It would be a situational irony for which history would judge him harshly. If he listened to the political contractors, who wanted the fuel subsidy strike to continue, the country would still be on the boil today.

New UDSS Principal Promises To Consolidate On Academic Excellence

By Mercy Don-Baridam

In its determined effort to improve on the academic performance of students, the newly-appointed Principal of the University Demonstration Secondary School (UDSS), Mr Ogechi Anele, has promised to ensure that the students on graduation are found worthy both in character and learning.

Mr Anele while exchanging views with *Uniport Weekly* in his office last Monday, stated that to achieve his vision, staff and students would be motivated to rise up to the challenges ahead of them, promising to lead by example at all times.

"Our cardinal objective is academic excellence, not just making good grades, but ensuring that our students are able to defend their grades anywhere", he said, observing that to achieve these goals, the teachers are to inculcate in students

good morals to make them good role models in society.

According to Anele, who was once a tutor and a staff representative on the Board of Governors of the school, "I am a staff with double stake, having served in the system for some time, I am conversant with the problems of the school. The major problem this school has is gross indiscipline

among some teachers and students," he said, adding that the take-off point of his administration would be to tackle the issue of indiscipline among staff and students. The new Principal pointed out that when the administration is disciplined, it runs through the entire system.

The Principal noted that the school which was established for the purpose of training and impart knowledge to the students would leave no stone unturned to achieve his progressive vision for the school, explaining that the school would continue to encourage students to be focused and hardworking.

Anele, who also unveiled plans to improve on the infrastructure in the school, through complete renovation since the buildings are now dilapidated, promised to make the school computer-friendly, lamenting that the school is completely without access to internet facilities. He pledged to collaborate with the University to assist with funds, reiterating his resolve to ensure that staff enjoy welfare packages, as well as promotion as at when due to motivate them to greater productivity. Mr Anele assumed duty as the new Principal of the school on 16th January, 2012.



Mr. Anele

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In meeting part of the demands of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in an earlier agreement with the Federal Government in 2009 to extend the retirement age of staff of Nigerian universities, the National Assembly recently passed a bill giving its nod to raise the retirement age of staff of tertiary Institutions in the country.

The bill which is awaiting harmonization by the two Chambers of the National Assembly would soon get the President's assent raising the retirement age of Professors from 65 to 70 years, while others in the non-teaching cadre move from 60 to 65 years.

UNIPORT Weekly went round the Campus to find out staff reaction to the development last Wednesday. Some respondents preferred that the retirement age remains at 60, rather than 65; so they can go home and engage in other activities. They were of the view that to succeed in life, adequate plan should be made early enough. At the age of 60, an individual should go home and do something meaningful with his/her life and also create room for the younger ones since unemployment is a major problem in the country.

Professor Enuvie Akpokodje lauded the development, stating that it is a right step for productivity. "I think it is good and a way of keeping expertise and experience in the system. It will provide adequate opportunity for mentorship of younger ones," the Geologist said,

Staff Bare Minds On New Retirement Age

By Mercy Don-Baridam

observing that since experience counts with age, the increment would expectedly enhance productivity in the incubation and transfer of knowledge.

Other staff expressed divergent views on the topical issue. An Administrative Officer, Mrs Cecilia Agumagu, weighed it on both sides, explaining that the increase in the retirement age for both teaching and non-teaching staff is laudable and could as well be counter-productive. "I like the development because at the age of 65, a staff can still be relevant in the system by imparting more knowledge or skills to the younger minds on delivery of quality job schedules. On the other hand, a staff at 60 years is due to leave the scene for younger ones to step in," she said.

Faculty Officer, Management Sciences, Mr Job Borgbara, agreed that the current arrangement on retirement age for non-teaching staff is a welcome idea. "I believe that at the age of 65, members of staff are still very productive. What is good for the teaching staff is also good for the non-teaching staff", he explained, commending the Federal Government for respecting that aspect of the agreement.

In his contribution, Mr Ben Nador, and Administrative Officer, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Development) supported the move. "I give kudos to the National Assembly for passing the 65 years retirement age for non-teaching staff. It is a right decision at the right time," he said, explaining that the new arrangement would create room for more productivity.



Prof Akpokodje



Mrs. Agumagu



Mr. Borgbara



Mr. Nador

Ban On Use Of Classroom For Worship

V-C Praises Catholic Students

For complying fully with Management's decision banning use of classroom for religious activities, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, has praised Catholic students for restricting themselves to the Chapel of Annunciation, stating that such act of obedience is a display of respect to constituted authority which is part of the requirements for award of degrees and certificates in any higher institution of learning.

Professor Ajienka, who made the remark when the Chaplain of Chapel of Annunciation, Reverend Father Joseph Kabari led members of the Pastoral Council on a Courtesy Visit on him in his office last Thursday, observed that Churches and Fellowships on Campus are expected to provide spiritual direction, as well as mould the character of their brethren to become useful members of society.

The Vice-Chancellor commended the team for the visit, promising to co-operate with the Chapel to deliver services whenever the need arises. He charged the Chaplain, who resumed duty for the second time in the University to put in effort aimed at reorientating citizens towards productivity, observing that Churches play prominent roles in shaping their moral conduct.

Earlier in his speech, the Chaplain, Father Kabari, disclosed that the Pastoral Council came

By Otiakor Samuel

to formally congratulate Professor Ajienka on his appointment as the 7th Vice-Chancellor of the University, pledging the support of the Chaplaincy to his administration to enable him

carry out its policy effectively.

Immediate past and current Vice-President of the Council, Professor Joseph Okoh, Dr Anthony Mumuni and the Secretary, Mrs Bridget Nzimiro were other members of the Chaplaincy on the visit.



L-R: CSO, Reginald Isiguzor, Prof Okoh, Registrar, Mrs. Matilda Nnodim, V-C, Prof Ajienka, Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Kabari, DV-C (Admin), Prof Ethelbert Nduka, Mrs. Nzimiro and a guest.

Ahiajoku Lecture

Issues bordering on sustainable development of Igbo land in relation to global warming and climate change and possible erosion of assets that sustain livelihood



Prof Ehezue

Ndigo in Owerri, Imo State last December. Speaking at the Lecture which was aimed at

including natural, monetary resources, human and physical capital, took centre stage at the 2011 Ahiajoku Lecture Series with the theme: *Global Warming and Climate Change: A sustainable alert to*

Ehezue Outlines Measures Against Climate Change

By Ethel Wopara

drawing a clear distinction between world and regional responses to global warming and climate change in Igbo land, Guest Lecturer and Director, Federal Nomadic Centre, University of Port Harcourt, Professor Benjamin Ehezue, disclosed that a large percentage of people in developing countries have little knowledge of climate change and the magnitude of its impact.

Citing deforestation, flooding, drought, desertification, inland and coastal erosion, degradation of rangelands, salt-water intrusion and salinization as major problems associated with climate change in the country, Professor Ehezue blamed the problem on the inability of relevant statutory agencies to enforce laws and regulations relating to urban planning, mining activities, industrial standards and inappropriate agricultural practices.

Stressing the plight of Ndigo and Nigerians,

he advocated massive education and awareness programmes on the causes of global warming and climate change and strategies for mitigating their impact, including tree planting, introduction of new root crops and vegetables resilient to floods and increased temperature as part of measures to manage the phenomenon.

Highlighting global attempts to effect cooperation among nations towards the reduction of human-induced greenhouse gases which contribute more to global warming and climate change than natural factors, Professor Ehezue called for more action by the government at all levels and local communities to promoting sustainable development in the Country.

Meanwhile, Professor Ehezue has expressed gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka and other members of the University who supported him in making the Lecture a success.

Petroleum Roundtable

Emerald Institute Advocates National Petroleum Policy

Prior to the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) announced by the Federal Government on 2nd January, 2012, the issue raised a lot of concerns in the polity. Stakeholder and scholars had converged under the auspices of the Emerald Institute of Energy, Policy and Strategic Studies to weigh the issue and their consequences on the Nigerian economy. It was the second in the series of Roundtables organised by the Institute.

Speakers at the Roundtable bared their minds on the proposed, as it then was, removal of subsidy on Petrol. Dr Joe Ellah formally of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr. Bobo Brown, former National President of the Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and Dr. Eme Ekekwe, Assistant Director, Emerald Institute, spoke extensively on the contentious issue.

Declaring the Workshop open, Vice Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, said that the Roundtable was timely as the Federal Government was proposing total deregulation of the Petroleum Downstream Sector of the Economy, pointing out that the essence of the Discourse was to proffer solutions to improve the Sector to the benefit of all Nigerians.

At the end of the Roundtable, participants agreed that Nigeria should evolve a National Petroleum Policy aimed at local refining of all the fuel that is needed in the country to enable the country terminate all product importation contracts after this quarter and in the short term, allocate to the NNPC, all the crude it needs to produce the products.

The Communiqué also suggested that the NNPC should, within the next three months, conclude arrangements to restart the Offshore Processing Scheme (OPS), which has the huge advantage of eliminating FOREX expenditure, stressing that this would ensure that crude oil is taken from Nigeria and refined outside, while products are returned to Nigeria after payment of processing fee.

It also suggested that a state of emergency on

refinery construction, especially small-scale refineries via Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement should be declared while government should be compelled by legislation to ensure that all crude oil producing companies refine a percentage of their crude in Nigeria, with guaranteed margin under an MOU if they should sell locally. When all refineries are functional in two to three years allow sales to be driven by market forces while government should use taxation to control prices as well as smuggling across the borders. It should also go into agreement with neighbouring countries for official sale of products in such countries. The Communiqué also recommended the scrapping of the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) which is now involved in contract awards to marketers, leading to major distortions in the products market.

Stakeholders at the Roundtable also suggested that government should use the debate to gain the confidence of the people by creating an enabling environment for stakeholder participation in

governance and policy making process and that Nigeria should redefine its use of oil. They suggested that government should see oil as a strategic resource which must be used to grow other sectors of the economy and that the country must gain control of the oil sector, noting that the NNPC as presently constituted and administered only has nominal control over the multinational companies. The issue of corruption in the polity was not left out as they strongly recommended the need to fight corruption in both government and national life, as well as support universities to train manpower in petroleum refining.

No doubt, the Roundtable was timely and lived up to expectations with regards to the debate on fuel subsidy. It is expected that government and major players in the petroleum industry would seriously examine the views proffered at the Roundtable, if the country must move forward.

Editor's note: This Communiqué was issued before the removal of subsidy from Premium Motor Spirit by the Federal Government.



Prof Naanen, Director of the Institute



We Should Insert Strikes In Our Academic Calendar ~Respondents

Going by the frequency of strikes in Nigeria, one can say without fear of equivocations that embarking on strike has become a pastime for various labour unions in Nigeria. Just a fortnight ago, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) brought economic activities in the country to a halt over the removal of subsidy on petrol. Before then, the Academic Staff Union of Universities



Rev. Kelechi

(ASUU) had been on strike which is still on as at the time of this report.

Anyone who is conversant with the Nigerian educational system will agree to the fact that the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) their polytechnic, colleges of education counterparts have at various times stayed away from work, thereby keeping students at home. Unfortunately, there are people who now see strike as a normal feature of the school system.

One does not need to be an educational historian to know that every academic year in Nigeria, has in the last few years been punctuated by strikes; nor does one need to be an expert in educational measurement and evaluation to appreciate the negative impacts of these recurring strikes on the product of our educational system and national development.

Reacting to this negative development, a prospective PhD student who recently completed an MSc in the Department of Sociology, Nicholas Achoda, said that "the ASUU strike is affecting us adversely especially as postgraduate students in the sense that the admission process for the new intakes has been put on hold. By now, we should have been talking about commencement of lectures, the ongoing impasse between ASUU and Federal Government has made that impossible. Federal Government has tried by conceding to one of the demands of ASUU by extending the retirement age for professors from 65 to 70, but in the same vein, I appeal to the national executive body of ASUU to compromise and end the strike."

A Final Year Medical Student, Ezemonye Ndah, believes that "ASUU as a body is on track in its demand; the truth is that the issue of corruption as is common with other sectors is definitely going to be a barrier to meeting of ASUU's dreams. As students, we are the ones bearing the brunt of the strike, having to stay at home for three or six months when you add that up you will see that a student who is supposed to spend six years on a course ends up spending seven or eight years."

By Humphrey Ogu

President, Port Harcourt University Medical Students Association (PUMSA), Noble Mbooh, sees the strike as a sacrifice students need to make once and for all. "The ASUU strike has affected students negatively, but looking at it from the other side, we are also contributing to national development, bearing in mind that education is very cardinal to development. It can be seen as a price we need to pay for the betterment of tomorrow," he said, calling on Federal Government to resolve the issue."

In his contribution, the Editor-in-Chief of PUMSA magazine, Emeka Okpara, echoes the view of other respondents, stating that the strike prolongs the duration of students academic programme. "I am beginning to think that we should insert strike in the academic calendar. I think that government should be more sincere with ASUU," he said.

Reverend Francis Kelechi, Chaplain, Our Saviour's Chapel, said everybody has a right to make his life better. "If there is an agreement which Federal Government has entered into with ASUU, it behoves the government to implement the terms of the agreement. I also want to plead with ASUU to tamper justice with mercy, look at graduating students and help them to conclude their programme. If possible, they should come back for one or two months and allow them to graduate."



Mbooh



Okpara

Botswana, Saudi Arabia and Kenya, amongst others. Imagine the economic loss incurred by the country as students pay fees in hard currency to these foreign institutions. Imagine the level of economic gains recorded by those foreign economies our youths go to for university education.

Giving the stupendous losses occasioned by the strike, it behoves all stakeholders to fight and cripple the monster called ASUU strike. Nigeria should do away with palliatives and go for cures. Whatever organ or part of the country that harbours the cancer called ASUU strike should be excised to save the rest of the country. The time to do that is now. Let us, say no palliative and treat the ailment, not the symptoms.

The negative impact of incessant strikes on the future of Nigeria as a country is enormous. For instance, it weakens the quality of graduates produced by the system. Again, those who have the wherewithal now resort to Universities in Europe and America, including South Africa, Ghana,



Achoda

Cancer Screening Exercise Shifts To RSUST

By Williams Wodi

Organizers of the first National Cancer Prevention Programme (NCPP), previously scheduled for the University of Port Harcourt, have now shifted the venue of the exercise to the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt. This development, according to the Deputy Director of Health Service, University of Port Harcourt, Dr. Chinwe Ezirim, was on account of poor response from staff and students to the initial invitation to register for the screening here.

The Exercise which was originally scheduled for 27th September, 2011 at Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium, was put off because of poor attendance by the target audience, which fell short of the 250 participants originally expected to enlist in the programme as requested by the organizers.

The event will now hold on Saturday, 4th February, 2012 to coincide with this year's *World Cancer Day*, which would be marked with various activities as outlined by the organizers. The exercise is expected to commence at the new venue between 8.00am and 12.00 noon on the appointed day.

The NCPP has consequently advised interested members of the University Community to make themselves available at the new venue to participate in the important cancer screening exercise, stressing that most deaths arising from the deadly disease can be prevented through increased awareness, early detection and prompt treatment.

"The National Cancer Prevention Programme (NCPP), was initiated by mass medical mission, a public health programme with a major objective of preventing cancer-related diseases and deaths across Nigeria through the 'Attack Cancer Today' project". National Coordinator of the project, Dr. Kin J-Egwuonwu disclosed, adding that the exercise at RSUST would serve as another opportunity to hold a follow-up event.

RSUST is being preferred, Dr. J-Egwuonwu said, because of what he described as its central location, which would make it easier for participants from Port Harcourt City and other higher institutions to attend. According to the NCPP Coordinator, the event promises to be beneficial to all participants as it would also feature information, entertainment, presentations, distribution of awareness literature and souvenirs, interactive sessions and free cancer screening for only pre-registered participants.



Dr. Kin J-Egwuonwu

Dr. Chinwe Ezirim

NOC Inspects Facilities In UNIPORT

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University and other Sports Institutes around the world, promising the support of the Association of Private Olympics Committee of Africa in assisting the University achieve its goal.

Receiving the team, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, noted that establishment of the Sports Institute was part of the entrepreneurial vision of his Administration, adding that the move would consolidate on the track record already set by the University in the Nigerian Universities Games Association (NUGA) and West African Universities Games Association (WAGU), respectively, in addition to contributing to the development of sports science and medicine in the Country.

Also speaking, Director of Sports, Dr Ken Anugweje, said establishment of the Institute followed the need to groom young and undiscovered talents in the Niger Delta, train world-class champions and improve sports rating in the Country, using world-class facilities that abound in the University. He disclosed that the Institute would run foundation, intermediate, advanced and general

programmes in sports education.

Reiterating that the University could boast of world-class sporting facilities including a 20,000 seating capacity stadium, Olympic standard swimming pool, tennis

and basketball courts, Anugweje revealed plans by the emergent Sports Institute to house a golf course, water park, horse riding school, a hostel Olympia, amongst others.



V-C, Prof Ajienka (Centre) addressing the guests in his office

Need To Cushion Hike In Fare For Varsity Commuters

As I write, intra-campus commuters from Delta Park to University Park spend between N40 to N50 from the original charge of N20, while each passenger coughs up additional N40 by paying N70 from Abuja Park to Choba, up from an earlier fare of N30. An 18-seater bus operator, who hitherto charged N20 from Delta Park as fare and made N360 on each trip, now makes about N900, while a bus on each trip from Choba Park previously gaining N540 now pockets N1,260. The only excuse being the increment in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from N65 to 97, a N32 difference, whereas it is still the same distance and amount of litres of fuel that the vehicles cover and consume. The monstrous increment in transport fare is not only an unjustifiable extortion of about N500 weekly from each commuter that patronizes intra-campus shuttle buses, but a deliberate attempt to institutionalize extortion by the

By Otikor Samuel

service providers. The 100% increment now forces some staff and students to always gather at the entry point of the Main gates in anticipation of free ride from car owners. The result is late arrival at the office which affects productivity. Imagine what the situation would be when students resume studies.

When allegations of corruption are levelled against public office holders in the court of public opinion, the accused are easily dismissed as culpable and such allegations attract interest and generate public discourse, but instances such as this unwarranted hike and profiteering which force the common man to swallow the bitter pills seem to be tolerated which ought not to be. While the bus operators as independent business people, undoubtedly, have the right to make profit, pay rents and take care of other pressing

needs, it could be tantamount to racketeering if the operators do so without a human face.

The general yearning is that the fares should immediately either be reverted or knocked down to N30 (Delta to Abuja) and N40 (Choba to Abuja), respectively. After all, the increment in fuel price is just N32, it is therefore a misnomer for each passenger to pay for what could qualify as offsetting the additional increment on each litre on the few kilometres that would not take more than two litres to cover on a trip. It behoves the relevant authorities to prevail on buses/taxi owners to reduce the fares as appropriate, not waiting for students to resume and possibly riot before they listen.

To further cushion the effect of the hike and enhance productivity, punctuality and efficiency in the line of duty as canvassed by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, the University Management is advised to avail itself of the opportunity of Federal Government's palliative measures of partial fuel subsidy removal to request more buses for the Institution and restore the Mass-assisted transit buses that previously shuttled from Rumuokoro and Rumuokwuta junctions, respectively, to the University. Also, public transport should be stationed at Delta Park to convey staff to their various offices in the University Park to assuage the ugly situation and bring immediate succour to the University Community.

It is believed that a functional transport system in the Campus is key to realizing the dream of an efficient workforce. Urgent steps should be taken to address the problem, just as it is advisable to put in workable measures to assist staff access loans to own their personal cars as that would enhance mobility in the other Campuses.



Array of intra-campus buses at UNIPARK

GUIDEPOST

APPOINTMENT

Dr Cletus Akenbor, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer I, effective on assumption of duty.

Mr Johnson Nwaiwu, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer II, effective on assumption of duty.

Mr Gideon Uboegbulam, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer II, effective on assumption of duty.

Mrs Judipat Obiora, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer II, effective on assumption of duty.

Mr Joseph Etuk, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer II, effective on assumption of duty.

Patience Anwuri, Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, offered *Pensionable Appointment* as Lecturer II, effective on assumption of duty.

CONTRACT APPOINTMENT

Professor E.O.P. Agbakwuru, Department of Pharmaceutical & Medical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, offered two years *Contract Appointment*, effective on assumption of duty.

Professor Godwin Igwe, Department of Petroleum & Gas Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, converted from Visiting Appointment to *Contract Appointment*, effective on assumption of duty.

RENEWAL OF CONTRACT APPOINTMENT

Professor Martin Bestman, Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures, Faculty of Humanities, offered one year *Renewal of Contract Appointment*, effective 8th April, 2012.

Professor Nsirim Nduka, Department of Chemical Pathology, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, offered *Renewal of Contract Appointment*, effective 1st February, 2012.

RESUMPTION FROM SABBATICAL LEAVE

Professor Don Baridam, Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, resumed duty in the Department from *Sabbatical Leave* on 30th September, 2011.

SWITCHING OFF OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Members of staff, particularly those whose offices are located in the Senate Building are reminded to regularly put off all electrical appliances and lighting points at the close of work. Defaulters would henceforth be sanctioned by Management.

Contact: Mr Roland Wabali, Deputy Registrar, Council

SAFETY ALERT

- Ensure that all electrical appliances are switched off
- Ensure that all windows and doors are locked
- Ensure that all taps are turned off

Briefs From Other Varsities

UNN HOLDS 41st CONVOCATION, GRADUATES 11,500

Of the 11,500 graduates who passed out during the 41st Convocation of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) last Saturday, 94 of them graduated with First Class honours and 170 candidates obtained Doctorate degrees amongst other higher degrees. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bartho Okolo, who made the disclosure at a pre-convocation press briefing, said that the graduating class was 10 per cent higher than the previous year.

LECTURER EMPHASIZES NEED TO FUND RESEARCH

A Lecturer in the Department of Fisheries, Rivers State University of Science & Technology (RSUST), Port Harcourt, Dr Awotein George, has stressed the need for government to pay serious attention to the nation's research institutes to make them functional and productive. Dr George observed that effective application of research results would boost food production and improve farmers' income, as well as enhance the peoples' standard of living.

NANS SEEKS LASTING SOLUTION TO STRIKES

National President, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Adakole Ochai, has called on the Federal Government to find a lasting solution to the educational sector to avert recurring strike actions that disrupt academic activities. The Association also urged ASUU to consider the plight of the students and concede to the government where necessary.

DIPLOMACY LEADS TO RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH INDIA

by Ameen Khan

Providing hope of a new beginning for often-tense bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, top scientists from the two countries have agreed to initiate university-level cooperation through exchanges of researchers, students and academics.

The unprecedented scientists' 'summit' held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on 18 January included the Heads of Science academies from both countries who hammered out a plan for collaborative research projects, setting up a system for distance learning, student and academic staff exchange and joint seminars, workshops and conferences.

Alok Bhattacharya, Professor of Life Sciences at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, said the "trust deficit" between India and Pakistan could be reduced by linking universities and research institutions across borders. "If the political will is there our students will come to Pakistan and Pakistani students would be doing research in our universities," he said.

"Pakistan and India should shun their political differences and move on for higher education cooperation, which would be mutually beneficial and save resources on both ends," Lal said.

21 MANAGERS CHARGED FOR BOGUS COLLEGES IN KENYA

by Gilbert Nganga

Kenya has published new rules and put more than 200 institutions on notice in a crackdown that will see 21 managers facing criminal charges for operating illegal colleges, with 63 having been closed over the past year.

The action comes in the wake of government plans to bankroll institutions in this key education sector, to help them cope with the rising demand for skills. The mushrooming of unregistered colleges is eroding the quality of higher learning in the country. Most are technical, industrial, vocational and entrepreneurship training (TIVET) colleges, a sector that is key in Kenya's post-school system as it absorbs thousands of students who fail to secure places in universities. Currently, enrolment in such colleges stands at nearly 100,000 students, close to that of universities. The government's latest strategy is the strongest attempt

yet to stem a problem that has refused to go away despite repeated warnings by education officials over the past five years.

Statistics released by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology last week showed that there were 467 fully registered TIVET institutions while 283 were operating under provisional licenses, meaning they have yet to meet the criteria for being accredited.

As a result of threat of closure, 68 institutions have made formal applications.

Higher Education Permanent Secretary, Professor Crispus Kiamba said the 21 managers are facing charges related to abusing the Education Act, Kenya's core legislation on the education sector, by opening up colleges without prior approval and duping students and parents or guardians. The managers risk being jailed for six months or more if found guilty.

The government, under its long-term economic blueprint Vision 2030, hopes to use TIVETs to produce the technical skills required to promote industrialization.

The intention is to bankroll TIVETs countrywide to give them a much-needed infrastructure boost and allow them to hire tutors to help meet rising student demand.

Kenya is this year spending at least US\$56 million in donor funding on building new TIVET institutions countrywide, as well as expanding existing ones.

In the newly released operational rules, any college registered to offer specific courses and wishing to add programmes is required to seek registration afresh.

The government says it is planning a fresh crackdown on illegal colleges by the second week of February.

But while the move to close bogus colleges and charge their managers in court signals the government's intention to clean up the

post-school sector, it has caused uncertainty and panic among students in colleges that have been put on notice for closure.

When the government cracked the whip on bogus colleges early last year, the decision triggered massive transfer of students from 'unrecognized' colleges. This is expected to happen again in the coming weeks as news of the planned closures sinks in.

-Compiled by Otiakor Samuel

Stop Press
Power Supply
To Senate Building

As a result of what the Works and Services Department described as "a major power breakdown at the main power station involving the High Tensions line serving the Senate building" and other areas, all electricity consumers hooked on to the Senate building line will not be energized from the main power station until further.

A memorandum signed by the officer in charge of Electricals, Mr Franklin Nwaoma, on behalf of the Acting Director of Works, said that the outage would persist until the disused component arrives from Lagos and installed for normal power supply, adding that the Senate building will be temporarily powered by the 500KVA Perkins Power Generating Plant.

Consequently, the Works Department has advised that all air conditioners in the Senate building be switched off to forestall overload on the generator with the exception of Principal Officers' offices.

Lassa Fever Outbreak

Expert Outlines Preventive Measures

Cont'd from p1

Dr Douglas, who gave the advice while exchanging views with *UNIPORT Weekly* in his office last Wednesday, disclosed that



Dr. Douglas

"Lassa Fever is a viral ailment transmitted basically through the droppings and urine of a particular species of rat. This happens when humans come in contact with these waste matters via food," stressing the importance of hygiene as a way of preventing the ailment, which he noted, thrives in a dirty environment.

"It is a disease of Public Health importance, because it is preventable; and also because we know how this disease is transmitted, it is possible for us to break the chain of transmission," the Consultant said, confirming the occurrence of *Lassa Fever* in Rivers State, particularly the case affecting a serving member of the National Youth Service Corps in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area. He listed fever, respiratory disorder, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal complications, diarrhoea, and stomach pains, amongst others as symptoms of disease, stating that "Prevention could come from the primary point of view where we let people know about the disease by educating them on how it is transmitted. When you know how it is

transmitted, you will definitely know how to prevent it." He advocated good hygiene, which according to him, is necessary because a clean environment is not conducive for rats to breed and spread the deadly virus.

Dr Douglas, who recalled that *Lassa Fever* was first discovered in Nigeria by a Reverend Father in the northern part of the Country several years ago, stated that good sanitation, keeping the environment and home clean and fumigation to ward off rats are some of the measures to prevent the disease.

He charged medical practitioners to have high index of suspicion when they see cases of fever and inexplicable diarrhoea because *Lassa Fever* is not as clear cut as other public health issues.

Dr Douglas, who explained that owing to its nature of transmission, the disease will be more common among people of low economic status, emphasized the need to report cases early, advising people who notice any of the symptoms to promptly seek medical help from appropriate health expert.

Maduka Hails V-C On Appointment Of Writers-In-Residence

Distinguished Literary Critic, Professor Chidi Maduka, has lauded the appointment of the trio of Gabriel Okara, Elechi Amadi and Ifeanyi Aniebo as *Writers-In-Residence*, commending the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajenka, for what he described as "a noble gesture and decision by an Engineer, who is a lover of the arts."

Professor Maduka, who made the commendation in a chat with *UNIPORT Weekly* last Wednesday, noted that "we need *Writers-In-Residence* in a University of this status, because without them, we won't get the inspiration for younger writers to move on in this area that is very important to society."

"Writers are precious to any national cultural life, because they symbolise and embody that statement of order in society. Artists really cap the importance of order in society, without them society will collapse," he said, recalling that in a Lecture he previously presented at the School of Graduate Studies, he had noted that order is incarnated in the universe.

According to him, the order we have in various spheres of life, for instance, astrophysics, biological sciences, and so on are embodied in works of those gifted intellectuals, writers and artists, who harp on the necessity of order in life and society, adding that "those individuals use connotative language to point to the importance of order. So without artists we won't know the importance of order in society because they celebrate that order in their writings." The Professor of Comparative Literature, however, regretted that society often neglects the importance of writers. "That's why in Literature, where words

By Humphrey Ogu

are used as tools of that form of art, the naming of Amadi, Okara and Aniebo as *Writers-In-Residence* here is a very welcome development in the advancement of this institution," he said, disclosing that he finds echoes of the arts in the works of Professor Ajenka because knowledge is interdisciplinary in character.

He noted that the artists cut across various disciplines and touch the supernatural realms; they tell us about self-discipline and order in society, stating that Amadi as Novelist, Okara as Poet and Aniebo as Short Story Writer and Novelist achieved this in their works.

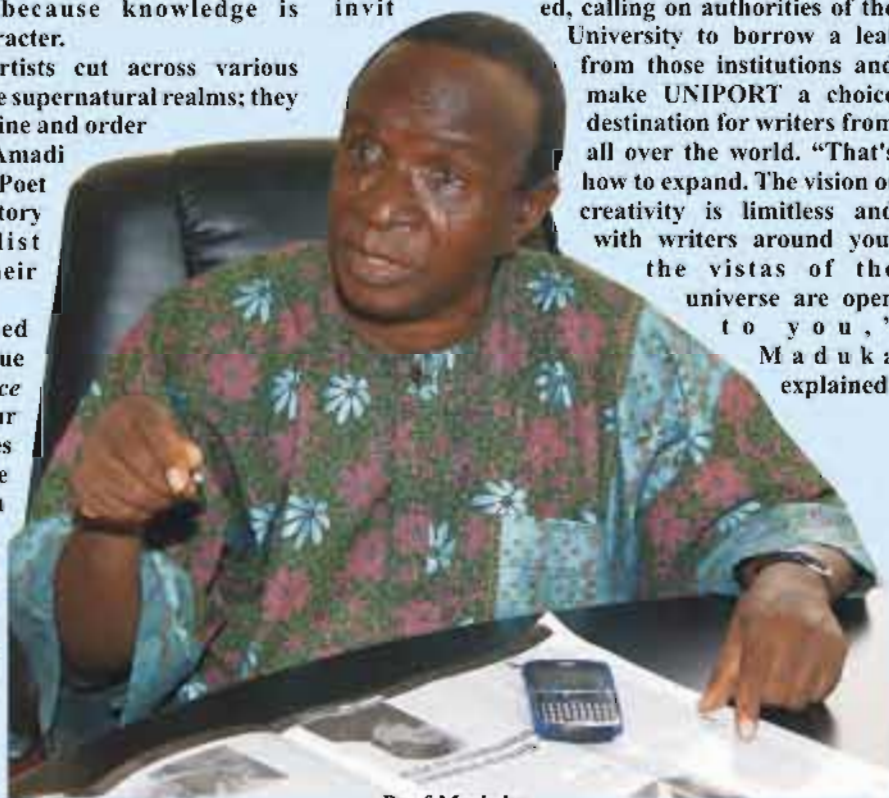
Maduka, who stressed that "we need to continue the *Writers-In-Residence* programme to tell our people how universities are run in terms of the arts", recalled that in the University of Iowa in the US, where he did his PhD, they had a very important Writers' Programme where writers are invited from all parts of the world to stay for six months or a year," pointing out that, a

former Registrar of the University of Port Harcourt, Okogbule Wonodi, was a *Writer-In-Residence* at Iowa.

He said that the University of Utah also in the US, where he earlier taught, had similar programme in which Ghanaian Novelist, Ayi Kwei Armah, was invited, calling on authorities of the

University to borrow a leaf from those institutions and make UNIPORT a choice destination for writers from all over the world. "That's how to expand. The vision of creativity is limitless and with writers around you, the vistas of the universe are open to you,"

Maduka explained.



Prof Maduka