

Five teachers die in Benue auto crash

From Simeon Nwakaudu, Makurdi

FIVE teachers in Benue State have lost their lives in a road mishap while returning from a screening exercise.

Three of their colleagues are now lying critically ill at the Benue Leprosy Settlement Hospital as a result of injuries sustained in the ghastly accident.

The vehicle conveying the teachers, according to their spokesman, Mr. Denen Ihua, on Tuesday crashed on its way from Gboko Local Council Secretariat, Gboko where the exercise had taken place.

Ihua on Wednesday told *The Guardian* that primary school teachers in the state are being owed salaries from February 2008 and that they had been subjected to a series of screening exercise by the state government.

Also, teaching in all public primary schools in the state has been put on hold, as the teachers are insisting that they would only return to their classes, when the Benue State government settled the three months salary arrears.

At the Gboko Local Council Secretariat on Wednesday, where officials of the Benue State government embarked on yet another round of screening before the payment of belated February salary, the teachers mourned their late colleagues, insisting that the prolonged screening exercise was politically motivated.

He said that primary school teachers in Benue State are experiencing the worst period in their careers, as many of their children have dropped out of schools, while they have become full time debtors, with creditors breathing down their necks whenever the state government announces its readiness to pay any of the arrears.

Imo new police chief assumes duty

From Charles Ogugbuaja, Owerri

NEWLY appointed Imo State Police Commissioner, Mr. Innocent Ilozuoke, has assumed duty in the state.

According to a statement by the command's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Linus Nwaiwu, Ilozuoke replaces Mr. Donald Iroham.

The statement, which was made available to journalists, stated that the new commissioner who hails from Abia State was before his transfer to Imo State, in charge of Police Command in Cross River State.

It added that Imo people should give him maximum cooperation in his resolve to fight crimes and protect life and property.