

briefly

Gaulim overbooks

GAULIM Teachers College in East New Britain is facing a spacing problem with new enrolment of students for 2007.

Selection for the enrolment of students is far beyond the bed spacing of the college.

According to the caretaker principal Demus Duduwega more than 20 students will have to look for their own beds off-campus.

Those likely to be affected would probably be the special case group from the Southern Highlands.

Councillor charged

REPORTS say the president of Huila LLG in Tari, Southern Highlands Province was arrested and charged with false pretences.

Mathew Agobe from Tigibi village, was charged with misusing K90,000 belonging to the Southern Highlands Provincial Government between February and May 2005. The cheques were to pay for a meeting in Madang to discuss the gas project. Police investigators say Tigibi cashed the cheques and deposited them.

Tuna tagging

THE Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority (NFA) has embarked on a tuna tagging exercise in the Bismark Sea.

NFA research officer Brian Kumasi said the tagging exercise started last year and was being conducted in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Mr Kumasi, who was in Madang last week, said the project was being conducted for stock assessment purposes for yellow fin, big eye and skip jack tuna.

He said so far they had tagged and released 22,433 fish in the seas between the North Solomons and West Sepik Province but they were aiming to tag at least 50,000.

"The data that we collect from this exercise will enable us to determine whether our waters are being over-fished or not and based on that enable NFA as the governing body to make management decisions," he said.

Mr Kumasi said rewards would be given to fishermen who returned any of the tags found on their catch. There are three types of tags – yellow (dart), green (acoustic) and red (archival). The rewards range from K30 to K750.

Leader's house ravaged

CHIEF Ombudsman Ila Geno (left) helpless and watching the smouldering remains of his Konedobu home, turns to a fireman yesterday.

Mr Geno and his family were at

the Royal Papua Yacht Club when an explosion was heard before flames razed the house and two vehicles. The family believes it might have started from an electrical fault.

Blame for blanks bill to Defence

By ALEX RHEENEY and GAVIN KING

AN AUSTRALIAN company that the Papua New Guinea Defence Force paid K1 million for blank bullets reportedly does not have an ammunition export licence.

The Australian Department of Defence has revealed that it does not have any record of Cairns-based firm, Intex International Exports, being issued a licence or permit to export ammunition.

A spokesperson for the Department of Defence said the export of ammunition from Australia was prohibited unless the Minister for Defence or an authorised person in the department issued a permit or licence for its export.

When asked if Intex had a licence to export ammunition to other countries including PNG, the spokesperson said: "Defence has no record of a Defence issued licence or permit being issued to Intex International to export ammunition."

The transaction between the PNG Department of Defence and Intex took place in December 2003 after the army ran short of 5.56mm and 7.62mm blank ammunition. According to recent evidence tendered at the Defence Force board of inquiry, a cheque (No.9161084) valued at K1 million was signed by the Department of Defence Acting Secretary Billy Porykali and remitted to Intex for

500,000 5.56mm and 7.62mm blank bullets.

But the blank ammunition is yet to be delivered to Murray Barracks despite the payment having been made on December 12, 2003.

Mr Porykali has told the inquiry that the army could still get the ammunition. But the army commander Commodore Peter Ilau told the *Post-Courier* on Friday that the Australian Defence Force gave the PNGDF some ammunition at that time and the Intex deal was not necessary. He said he had told Intex's owner Roderick Reid that the army did not need his ammunition.

"When Roderick called me (in 2003), I told him he was 'persona non grata' in the PNGDF. I later wrote to him to advise that the PNGDF will not get any ammunition from his company...he was dealing directly with Porykali...but at that time we didn't need blank ammunition as the Australian Defence Force already provided some ammunition through the Defence Co-operation Program . . . I told Roderick we had no operational demand (for the ammunition) but Porykali went ahead and processed the cheque," Mr Ilau said.

When asked who should accept responsibility for the botched deal, the Commodore said it was the department and not the military that effected the payment.

Campaigning period extended to eight weeks

By TODAGIA KELOLA

THE period for campaigning in the national elections will be eight weeks and not four weeks as previously announced.

Electoral Commission lawyer Dr John Nongorr said on Friday the commission would use the old system and not the new law passed through a private member's bill sponsored by Gumine MP Nick

Kuman last year. The amended law had shortened the campaign and counting periods by half, which was a worry for the commission.

When asked if the commission would be in breach of the new law, Dr Nongorr said the amendments were yet to be effected, but even if they were in force, there were provisions in the electoral laws that enabled the commissioner to use

his discretion to use the old time frame. "In fact, the amended Act shortening the campaign and counting periods is insufficient. There are two main reasons, firstly the time frame given to the Electoral Commission to prepare and arrange for polling and counting is too short, secondly it would be unfair for voters, who will need more time to familiarise themselves with their choice of candi-

dates," Dr Nongorr said. The commission has allowed for seven days of nomination, eight weeks of campaign, 11 days polling and 21 days for counting.

According to the revised dates, writs for the 2007 national elections will be issued on May 4, and nominations will close on May 10. Polling will be from June 30 to June 10 with writs to be returned on July 30.



the bottom line ►
LIFE EXPECTANCY

In 1900, a person could expect to live to be 47. Today, the average life expectancy for men and women in developed countries is longer than 70 years