

KAMPALA The Uganda National Teachers' Union (Untu) has condemned allegations of sexual harassment against girls and female teachers. Mr Zidock Tumuhimbise, the Untu chairperson, on Monday said they were guiding male teachers and providing life skills, including assertiveness to their female counterparts. [Felix Warom Okello]



Impounded. Residents load some of the impounded charcoal on a pick-up truck in Alwi Sub-county, Pakwach District, following an operation on illegal sale of charcoal by environmental police recently. PHOTO BY PATRICK OKABA

West Nile dealers hurt after charcoal ban, prices rise

Depletion. A report by the Environmental Police Protection Unit states that most forest reserves in the sub-region are depleted due to the commercialisation of charcoal and illegal exportation of timber.

BY PATRICK OKABA
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WEST NILE. Families in West Nile that depend on charcoal and wood fuel will have to dig deeper into their pockets or find alternative ways of preparing their meals after the price of the commodity nearly doubled.

The price of charcoal increased after authorities in the sub-region banned its sale in a bid to preserve trees. Currently, a sack of charcoal in Nebbi Town costs Shs38,000 up from Shs20,000.

Ms Roseline Angomoko, a char-

coal dealer, on Sunday said she has not been able to supply her customers with charcoal, since the ban last week.

"I used to supply five bags of charcoal on a daily basis to hotels, but now it is hard since there is routine operation [crackdown] on the illegal sale of charcoal in town. I planned for next year school's fees for my children by getting money through the charcoal business, but it is hard now because the business is becoming risky," Ms Angomoko said.

She said several homes and hotels depend heavily on charcoal because

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it is cheap.

The ban was imposed following an alarming demand for charcoal from West Nile sub-region during this festive season in Kampala.

According to the report filed by the Environmental Police Protection Unit, most forest reserves in the sub-region are depleted due to the commercialisation of charcoal and illegal exportation of timber to other

countries.

The deputy commandant of Environmental Police Protection Unit, Mr Simon Peter Okochi, singled out Nebbi, Arua and Yumbe districts as the leading in charcoal burning and felling of trees.

Mr Okochi said more than 50 tonnes of charcoal heading to Kampala have been impounded in the sub-region in a joint operation mounted with district forest officers.

He added that to protect the available trees, there will be regular operations and anybody found cutting them down on a large scale will be arrested and prosecuted.

Mr Okochi said in most cases, the by-law enforced by councillors is violated which calls for central government to intervene.

Ms Margaret Akumu, one of the

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Refugee influx reduces

LAMWO. The influx of South Sudanese refugees into Lamira District has dropped in the past weeks, according to the Office of the Prime Minister. The district hosts 39,400 South Sudanese refugees in Palabek Ogli, Palabek Kal and Palabek Gern settlement camps. The Palabek Kal settlement commandant, Mr David Wangwe, told *Daily Monitor* this week that about 300 refugees enter the district weekly down from 500. Mr Wangwe attributed the decrease to relative peace in some parts of South Sudan. [Julius Ocuong]

Pupils held over prostitution

PADER. Police in Pader District have arrested eight pupils in Pajule Town Council on allegations of practicing child prostitution. The children were arrested at the weekend on orders of Mr Brilliant Tito Okello, the LC3 chairperson, after receiving complaints from residents. Mr Okello said the suspects, who are between the ages of 14 and 16, are on holiday but decided to rent a grass-thatched hut in the town council. Mr Jimmy Patrick Okema, the Aswa regional police spokesperson, urged parents to monitor the movement of their children. The suspects were later freed after being caged. [James Owich]

Parents advised

ARUA. The director of St Jude Nursery and Primary School, Fr Jude Alitia, has advised parents to continue supporting the education of their children to preserve their future. Speaking during a graduation ceremony at the weekend, Fr Alitia said: "You (parents or guardians) should pay school fees, buy uniforms and scholastic material for your children. Do not abandon your responsibilities because they have a future." There has been a growing concern over the inadequate support by parents towards the education of their children in the district. Some parents claim they are too poor to pay fees or buy scholastic materials, especially in private schools. Fr Alitia advised parents to engage in other economic activities to generate income. [Felix Warom Okello]

Church in road safety drive

LIRA. Lifeline Ministries in Lira District have started constructing shades at taxi stages to improve road safety and reduce road accidents. The church's pastor, Julius Peter Oyet, said there are many churches that only look at spiritual building as a way of guiding their flocks yet they can use other ways to present God's love to their flock. At least 9,572 people have been killed in motor accidents in the last three years countrywide, according to Ministry of Works and Transport performance report of 2016/17 released in September. [Isaac

Charcoal prices increase in West Nile after ban

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charcoal dealers in Nebbi Town, says the business is lucrative, especially during the festive season.

Mr Richard Ujuku, a forest officer in Nebbi District, says due to illegal cutting of trees for charcoal, areas such as Alwi Sub-county are now bare, requiring everyone to plant trees to protect the environment.

"People have become so lazy to produce food because they still see charcoal as an endless business. We need to move swiftly in order to protect the remaining trees, otherwise, we shall experience the worst droughts in the coming years," Mr Ujuku said.

In August, the Alur king Philip Olarker Rauni III, condemned cutting of trees.

He said every homestead should plant trees to protect the environment as an avenue to control global warming.

"Our supply [of charcoal] from Okollo Sub-county has been cut with the ban in Arua District. This has been a main source of income for me and others. The ban has affected my income as I cannot now buy the necessities at home."

MARGARET AKUMU,
CHARCOAL DEALER

FOREST COVER

Depletion. Latest findings by Food and Agricultural Organisation indicate that Uganda loses over 200,000 hectares of forest cover annually and plants less than 7000 hectares annually.

Between 1990 and 2005, natural forest estate outside protected areas reduced by 35 per cent (from 3.46 million hectares in 1990 to 2.3 million hectares in 2005). People are converting hitherto forested land into agricultural land, timber and charcoal burning zones.

At risk. As the government dreams of recovering lost forest cover, however, much of last year was not good for the existing forests. Parts of Bugoma Central Forest Reserve in Hoima District, just like Zoka Forest Reserve in Adjumani District, were proposed to be degazetted for sugar cane growing.

Efforts. Towards the end of last year, it emerged that the President had ordered NFA, which he accuses of failing to protect forests, to transfer the challenge to the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which protects game parks and game reserves.

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Parents tak...