



Agro-Ecologically Grown Vegetables Post Higher Yields In Survey

A research done by a non-governmental organization has revealed that agro-ecologically grown vegetables have more yields compared to those grown through conventional practices. The research done by World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) in support of other organizations indicated that production of agro-ecologically grown vegetables is more by about 22 per cent.

Page 18

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The MT. KENYA TIMES

Creative Rewards

Daily ePAPER

Friday, March 8, 2024

No. 00996 www.mountkenyatimes.co.ke

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Ruto To Pick A Female Deputy In 2027

News>>Kiambu Raises More Revenue In The First Quarter Of 2023/24

P. 8. Kiambu County has managed to raise Sh517 million in own-source revenue during the first quarter for the financial year 2023-2024.



News>>Some Gatanga Residents Want Government To Expedite Water Projects

P. 12. The residents of Ithanga/ Kakuzi Sub County in the lower Gatanga region, Murang'a County have petitioned the government to fast-track completion of all the ongoing water projects in order to cushion them from perennial food shortage.



President William Ruto has commissioned UDA party chairperson Cecily Mbarire to devise regulations that would necessitate a male presidential candidate to run with a female vice presidential candidate, and vice versa.

“I made a commitment to the women in Kenya Kwanza that we would finally do something about the two-third gender rule. It has been a back and forth for over ten years. I want to commit that this time round, we will make sure that it is attained.”

Pledged the President.



President William Ruto

STORY ON PAGE 9

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Empowering Women and Girls: A Celebration of Inclusion International Woman’s Day Event Focuses on Investing in Women and Girls

By: Cynthia Masibo and Wendy Keziah
@themtkenyatimes



Member of the county assembly of the south b ward, Mrs. Waithera Chege..

Worth Noting:

One of the key highlights of the event was the spotlight on grassroots initiatives and community-led projects aimed at empowering women and girls at the local level. From microfinance programs to vocational training workshops, these initiatives serve as catalysts for change, enabling women to break barriers and pursue their aspirations.

In her remarks, Chege commended the efforts of grassroots organizations and community leaders for their tireless dedication to advancing gender equality and championing the rights of women and girls. She emphasized the need for collaborative action and solidarity to address systemic inequalities and create a more just and inclusive society for all.

On the eve of International Women’s Day, the spirit of empowerment echoed through the halls of women power as community members, leaders, and advocates gathered to celebrate the achievements and resilience of women and girls worldwide. The event, titled “Inspiring Inclusion by Investing in Women and Girls,” not only marked a commemoration but also served as a rallying cry for continued support and advancement of gender equality.

The chief guest, Waithera Chege, MCA of South B Ward, graced the occasion with her presence, emphasizing the pivotal role of women in building resilient communities and fostering inclusive societies. In her address, Chege underscored the importance of investing in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women and girls to unlock their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

The event kicked off with a series of panel discussions and keynote speeches, featuring prominent figures from diverse backgrounds, including grassroots activists, entrepreneurs, and policymakers. Participants engaged in thought-provoking conversations on pressing issues such as gender-based violence, access to education, and economic empowerment.

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In her remarks, Chege commended the efforts of grassroots organizations and community leaders for their tireless dedication to advancing gender equality and championing the rights of women

and girls. She emphasized the need for collaborative action and solidarity to address systemic inequalities and create a more just and inclusive society for all.

The event also celebrated the achievements of women trailblazers who have shattered glass ceilings and defied stereotypes in various fields, from politics and business to science and the arts. Through their stories of resilience and determination, these women serve as beacons of inspiration, paving the way for future generations of leaders and changemakers.

As the event drew to a close, participants were encouraged to pledge their commitment to advancing gender equality and supporting initiatives that promote the rights and well-being of women and girls. From advocating for policy reforms to supporting women-owned businesses, each individual has a role to play in building a more equitable and inclusive world.

In her closing remarks, Chege reiterated the importance of collective action and solidarity in the fight for gender equality. She urged community members to harness the power of unity and diversity to drive positive change and build a future where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive and fulfill her potential.

As the echoes of the event lingered in the air, participants left inspired and invigorated, ready to embark on the journey towards a more inclusive and equitable society. International Women’s Day may be just one day on the calendar, but its spirit of empowerment and celebration resonates year-round, reminding us of the collective strength and resilience of women and girls everywhere.

Editor’s Desk

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The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative. It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The County Government of Trans Nzoia has launched a free maize seed distribution exercise in a bid to boost production.

Speaking during the launch of the exercise dubbed 'Fukuza Njaa Initiative, Governor George Natembeya said the move is among the many strategies his Government has put in place to enhance food security.

Under the 'Fukuza Njaa Initiative', Natembeya said more than 103,000 small-scale farmers are expected to benefit.

Noting that the initiative will play a critical role in the revival of the agricultural sector, the Governor revealed that Sh100 million has been set aside for the exercise.



Bomet Governor Hillary Barchok has proposed a comprehensive strategy to address revenue gaps in the County, aiming to boost the collection of Own Source Revenue.

The initiative was highlighted during the Inaugural Bomet County Monthly Revenue Roundtable meeting. During the meeting, Governor Barchok emphasized the importance of boosting own source revenue as a means to meet the developmental needs of the people residing in Bomet County.

He stressed the need for all Department leaders to set revenue targets, cascade these targets to the Ward level, and work together to identify and seal revenue loopholes.



Turkana County has called upon residents of the area to take part in curbing the escalating incidents of vandalism targeting street lights, cautioning that stern action will be taken against perpetrators.

While issuing a statement to the media, County executive committee member for Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Areas Management Peter Akono said that the surge in vandalism incidents was a cause of alarm to both the public and the County administration.



A non-governmental organisation, German Foundation for World Population (DSW) has extended a helping hand to Migori youth and teenage mothers living with HIV/Aids to access better healthcare services.

DSW Project Officer Lee Oluoch, who was addressing stakeholders in reproductive health sector in Rongo Sub County said the move aims to ensure every youth, teenage mother, and discordant couple in the remote villages access their daily ARV medication.

One of the DSW main goals in East Africa is to address the youth-to-youth initiative that attempts to empower youth to play an active role in improving their sexual and reproductive health in their communities, through peer education, advocacy, and income-generating activities.

Oluoch said that the non-governmental organisation has already helped the teenagers and youths through support groups to set up table banking to fund activities that generate income to sustain their young families.

The organisation has also been helping the formal groups set up kitchen gardens to provide nutritional aspects to improve the immune system of HIV-positive individuals through a better-balanced diet.



Busia Governor Paul Otuoma has pledged that his administration will maintain openness to the media to enhance press freedom and dissemination of information to the public.

Addressing the press during the official launch of a media hub and press club at a hotel in Busia town yesterday, Dr Otuoma affirmed that the media plays a critical role in the country's governance.

"Without press freedom, without quality information sharing, it is not easy for the society to understand itself," he said, adding that through the work of journalists, the community is able to communicate with the outside world.

He decreed the establishment of a media liaison unit at the Department of Public Service, Governance and Communication so that issues concerning the press can also be presented at the executive.

The governor lamented that the County was food

deficient but regretted there was no proper communication from the leadership through the media so that residents could understand the county government policies and interventions.

"I have just realised that we have a partner (media) whom we have not been utilising well," he said. Dr Otuoma hailed the establishment of the media hub adding that it will help the County leadership and the media operate in a mutually beneficial way. "We have embraced technology, but it has a lot of challenges," he said, adding that people should use the media for knowledge and information sharing. Media Council of Kenya CEO David Omwoyo said that the media hub will not only provide a safe working place for the journalists but will usher in a reasonable and fair working environment for the journalists.

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Ministry of Health Request Sh4.9 Billion To Post Interns

By:Chris Mahandara
@themkenyaintimes



Health Cabinet Secretary Susan Nakhumicha addressing the media.

Worth Noting:

- “In 2017 KMPDU signed a Common Bargaining Agreement (CBA) requiring interns to be paid Sh206,000 per month as salary and allowances. As a Ministry we don’t have the resources to post them and the law does not allow us to post when we don’t have a budget for it,” she said.
- Nakhumicha asked the union which has issued a strike notice to push for the posting of the interns to be patient as the Ministry looks for ways of resolving the issue.

The Ministry of Health has requested Sh4.9 billion from the National Treasury to absorb Medical interns.

Health Cabinet Secretary Susan Nakhumicha said currently the Ministry has no resources to absorb the interns adding that action shall be taken once the funds are available.

The CS said the demand by the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Union (KMPDU) to post and pay the interns at Sh206,000 per month was untenable since the Ministry lacked the resources to foot the bill.

“In 2017 KMPDU signed a Common Bargaining Agreement (CBA) requiring interns to be paid Sh206,000 per month as salary and allowances. As a Ministry we don’t have the resources

to post them and the law does not allow us to post when we don’t have a budget for it,” she said.

Nakhumicha asked the union which has issued a strike notice to push for the posting of the interns to be patient as the Ministry looks for ways of resolving the issue.

“The problem of posting interns is not new. It is not unique to this government, it is something that has been there and this calls for us to have a bigger discussion about health financing,” she said.

Proper health financing, she said, was critical in addressing all the pillars of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) among them the Human Resource pillar where the medical interns fall.

“I agree with the union that this is not just like any other internship because the interns work, they are on the front line and must be compensated but in a sustainable manner,” she said.

The Ministry, she added, was working on a policy to guide the deployment of the interns once they complete their training.

This, she said, was a long-term measure to ensure that the doctors don’t stay out for long before being absorbed after completing their training. Speaking in Kisumu, the CS asked the doctors to reconsider the call to down their tools and pave the way for negotiations to resolve the impasse.

National Assembly Health Committee Chairman Dr Robert Pukose called

for a holistic approach to addressing the interns’ issue.

The MP said training of doctors needs to be regulated to ensure that they don’t flood the market and add to the number of those looking for employment.

Medical training, he said, has turned out to be a huge business with universities churning out large numbers of trained doctors.

“We need to regulate this training and ensure that what we produce is in tandem with the needs of the market,” he said.

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Kiambu Raises More Revenue In The First Quarter Of 2023/24

By: Sylvia Wanjohi
 @themtkenyatimes

Kiambu County has managed to raise Sh517 million in own-source revenue during the first quarter for the financial year 2023-2024.

This is Sh261 million more compared to the previous fiscal year of 2022-2023 in which the devolved unit raised Sh301 million.

According to the County Government Budget Implementation Review Report from the Controller of Budget, Kiambu County has so far generated in this financial year a total of Sh830.53 million from its Own Source Revenue (OSR) which includes Facility Improvement Fund (FIF) and Appropriations in Aid (AIA).

The CoB report shows that revenue streams which contributed the OSR came from liquor licenses, Sh62.23 million, Public Health Services, Sh30.43 million, Public Health Operations, Sh313.12 million, Technical Service Fee Sh170.12 million, Vehicle Parking Fee Sh79.31 million and

other sources at Sh175.32 million.

“The highest revenue stream was Sh313.12 million the public health facilities, contributing to 38 percent of the total OSR receipts during the reporting period,” Dr Nyakang’o said in the report.

The total funds available for budget implementation for Kiambu County during the period thus amount to Sh4.43 billion.

At the same time, the report further says at the beginning of FY 2023-2024, the County reported a stock of pending bills amounting to Sh5.79 billion, comprising Sh3.48 billion for recurrent expenditure and Sh2.31 billion for development activities.

The pending bills in the first quarter amounting to Sh168.74 million were settled, consisting of Sh94.64 million for recurrent expenditure and Sh74.10 million for development programmes. As of 30 September 2023, the outstanding amount was Sh5.62 billion.

Additionally, the Controller of Budget in the report mentioned some of the challenges that hampered the implementation of the Budget namely underperformance, high level of



Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakang’o.

pending bills, use of manual payroll and failure to budget cash balance brought forward.

“The county has some challenges like the underperformance of own-source revenue at Sh830.53 million against an annual projection of Sh7.98 billion, representing 10.4 percent of the annual target,” she said in the report.

The Controller of Budget further stated that the County failed to budget for the cash balance brought forward from FY 2022/23 of Sh2.55 billion in the approved estimates for FY 2023/2024.

As for the manual payroll, Dr Nyakang’o explained that this is prone to abuse and may lead to the loss of public funds where there is a lack of

proper controls.

She urged Kiambu County to address its own source revenue performance to ensure the approved budget is fully financed.

“Let the county leadership address the pending bills situation to ensure genuine bills are paid promptly in the remaining financial year,” she said.

Leaders’ Initiative Increase Schooling Rates In Kilifi Schools

By: Kenya News Agency

An initiative by Kilifi North Member of Parliament Owen Baya to improve education standards in Kilifi has enabled the enrolment of over 500 students from poor families to secondary schools in Kilifi County.¹

The initiative involved the opening of two new secondary schools where students who missed scholarships and could not access secondary school education due to lack of school fees got the chance to proceed with their education.

The Gede Mixed Secondary school, one of the schools opened in January this year accommodated 400 students who had given up on education, marking a significant achievement in his efforts to enhance access to education for young people in Kilifi.

Speaking during the issuance of a 2 Million bursary cheque at the school

on Wednesday, the MP said the initiative aimed to address the challenge of low secondary school enrolment rates in the constituency adding that many students in Kilifi County are facing barriers to accessing secondary education due to financial constraints faced by parents.

“Gede mixed school has been in our dreams as a rescue center for students whose parents are needy. So we decided that all students in this area to come and join this school and we will raise funds for them and pay their school fees”, he said

“If we do not give a hand to these children and help fund their education, they will not access education. We have a very bright student here who got 385 marks and he was stuck at home because of lacking school fees but today he got a chance to join school”, he added.

Baya emphasized the importance of education in empowering youth and driving socio-economic development in the region saying he will mobilize resources including lobby-

ing for funds from the government to remove obstacles hindering students’ access to secondary education.

He disclosed that he will facilitate the construction of more classrooms to accommodate more students who have dropped out of school due to a lack of school fees.

Parents and guardians led by Zainab Mohamed expressed their gratitude for the opportunity provided to their children saying they have struggled to afford secondary education in vain but they have hope for a better future as their children will complete school.

Mohamed disclosed that since her husband was diagnosed with diabetes, they have not been able to raise school fees for their 3 secondary school children. He thanked the leader’s efforts saying her children have finally joined school which is a dream come true

A similar school, the Children of Rising Sun Secondary located in Kilifi North Sub County has accommodated over 100 needy students, pro-



Kilifi North Member of Parliament Owen Baya issuing cheques to some of the beneficiaries..

viding access to education without fee demands.

The MP’s initiative has come in hand with efforts by the County government of Kilifi led by Governor Gideon Mung’aro which provided 2000 secondary school education

full scholarships to bright students from poor families while bringing on board partners to provide more support.

Ruto To Pick A Female Deputy In 2027

By: Nicholas Kigundu

President William Ruto has commissioned UDA party chairperson Cecily Mbarire to devise regulations that would necessitate a male presidential candidate to run with a female vice presidential candidate, and vice versa.

The president additionally offered behind the scenes insights into his efforts to have women vying under the United Democratic Alliance Party clinch gubernatorial positions.

Speaking in Nairobi during the launch of the strategy for women governors' caucus, the president would reveal the extent to which he went to ensure their political strategies resonate with the voter.

"I know sometimes, in the process of mentorship, you have to tell them some hard facts," the president would divulge.

Recalling his pre-election engagement with Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika, Ruto said he at one time questioned her political rhetoric, choosing to take her through lessons

on best practices in political communication.

"I remember one time I called Susan and told her, listen Susan. I am listening to you and you are not persuasive. I want you to rehearse your text; don't leave home before you know what you are going to say in a political rally, even if you have to cram three things. I had to take her through lessons, because I really wanted her to succeed." The president told the gathering.

The president says he advised the Nakuru Governor to leave the city and camp in her home County to ensure that she consolidates her support.

"Another time I called her and told her, I don't want to see you in Nairobi. You must go and sit at the village. I told her she must put on rubber shoes. Sometimes I know women want to look beautiful, they want to put on skirts. These ones I told them look; this is not the time to look beautiful. Put on a long dress because this place is chaotic. And it was all because we wanted them to succeed." Said the president.

According to Ruto, majority of political leaders who made the decision



President William Ruto

to support his presidential bid were women.

He said women are the drivers of change and agents of democratic governance, yet their active participation in politics is limited, restrict-

ed and always dotted with obstacles pledging his commitment to change the status quo.

"I made a commitment to the women in Kenya Kwanza that we would finally do something about the two-

third gender rule. It has been a back and forth for over ten years. I want to commit that this time round, we will make sure that it is attained." Pledged the President.

President Ruto Urges Men To Stand Up Against FGM

"FGM destroys everything good in a woman" - President Ruto.

By: Prudence Wanza

President William Ruto has called on men to step up and protect women from the scourge of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Speaking during the launch of G7 strategy to expand women's leadership in devolved units, Ruto underscored the importance of men serving as champions against FGM citing its detrimental effects on women's well-being.

"Men should be champions against FGM because you know what it is. FGM destroys everything that would be good in a woman," said Ruto.

"I know we have set targets on the subject of FGM. I want to tell men to come forward and protect our women from FGM even if it is for selfish reasons. FGM destroys women, makes

them less confident, less effective and creates many challenges," he added.

The President further raised concern over the alarming statistics on early pregnancies saying there is need to address the underlying issues contributing to the challenge.

He extended his plea to both men and women leader, urging them to work collaboratively to safeguard children, particularly girls from the adverse impacts of FGM, early marriages and early pregnancies.

"I am asking women leaders as I do men leaders to work in concert all of us to protect our children, especially from FGM, early marriages, and early pregnancies because it is destroying the future of many of our children," he implored.

According to the Kenyan Demographic & Health Survey (KDHS) data for 2022, the prevalence of FGM is 15pc in the country, meaning that 15pc of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have been circumcised.



President William Ruto.

Dealing With Ungodly Patterns Pt 1



By: Eric Musa
EMEA.ericmusa@gmail.com

It is said, "Mother nature is very unforgiving!" The Spiritual realm is also unforgiving! Whatever is done there has results in the physical!

Each one of us belongs to a family tree in the Spiritual realm, and there are patterns that develop therein! It needs a spiritual eye to determine there is a certain pattern in a family. For example premature death, illnesses; financial constraints etc. You find, at most, it happens to those who have seeds of greatness!

Consider Zechariah 1:21: "I asked, "What are these coming to do?" He answered, "These are horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise his head, but the craftsmen have

come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people." Horns represent authority and power.

When patterns are unchecked, it results into distorted destinies, lawful captivity (e.g an enemy can say, you have been given to me by your God, because of transgression). There is need to deal with these patterns, starting with identification repentance. Then following other procedures or directives as ordained by God.

There are principles or patterns, God has put in place as to how things will operate, for example(Genesis 1:16), Deut 30:19). It is written, "Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life, You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah (Psalm 39:4-5). Also in Psalm 89:34-38 "I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by MY holiness,



and I will not lie to David,..I will establish his throne forever." Selah!

Evangelist Eric Musa:

(My message continuously: The best decision in this earthly life is to receive Christ Jesus as your personal Saviour: Believe and confess Christ

Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and be filled with the Holy Spirit:AMEN). As it is written; "NOW is the acceptable time, TODAY is the day of SALVATION.- 2 Cor 6:2". For prayers, devotion; to support Evangelism contact Ev. Eric Musa on +254722157300 (Email: EMEA.

ericmusa@gmail.com). Remember, God Loves you unconditionally, perfectly and forever.

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The Passage Of NADCO Thrusts Ruto As a True Democrat and Statesman



By: Joseph Mutua Ndonga
mutuandong@yaho.com

.....

Recently, members of parliament (MPs) concluded the debate on National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) report and overwhelmingly adopted it. This development once again showed that President William Ruto was a true democrat and statesman. He respected and would not interfere with the legislative role of Parliament.

As required by the law enacted to spearhead the process, the report was submitted to the Senate for concurrence.

This means a new bill capturing the proposals presented during the public hearings held at the Bomas of Kenya has been prepared.

The law requires the Speakers of the two houses to submit the Bill to the President for assent.

When the committee released the final NADCO report, the President immediately welcomed the move. Parliament has done a good job tailored to deepen our resolve to build a united and peaceful country.

After Kalonzo Musyoka and Kimani Ichungwah led committee released the final report and the President endorsed the report, I wrote an article in this column. The President had stated that the ball now moves to parliament and expect members of parliament to expedite this process.

As your president, my wish is to see MPs adopting his report. This has now come to pass.

Speaking during a Sunday service at Priesthood church in Kahawa West, Nairobi, President William Ruto expressed gratitude to the National Dialogue Committee completing their job and presenting the final report.

I have read the report I want to say this. I totally agree with the recommendations.

As you know, the 10-member committee was set up to address the issues raised by other side. We are now reading from the same page.

So, this report is a key milestone in fostering peace and unity of our country.

The recommendations will now be tabled on the floor of Parliament and senate for debate and adoption. This is in line with one of the clauses con-



President William Ruto .

.....

tained in an agreement unanimously passed by MPs in both sides of political divide in the two houses. It is worth noting the motion for establishing the bipartisan talks team had received massive support.

Thereafter, the two Captains-President William Ruto and Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Coalition Raila Odinga-did not raise any objections. The duo immediately endorsed it.

Therefore, President Ruto's decision to support the final report did not come as a surprise.

He had all along supported this process.

But as it turns out, the opinion is divided. I have been following with keen interest mixed reactions that the final report continues to elicit. This is good and healthy for our democracy. It shows that our democracy is maturing.

I would not expect Parliament to let down the President whose vision and mission is clear.

His main focus is to build a united and peace full Kenya and rid the country burden of foreign debts.

At Priesthood Church in Kahawa West, he was therefore happy to note that one of the recommendations in NADCO final report stated. The monies allocated for the local and foreign travels of the government officials should be cut by 50 percent and 30 percent respectively. For 50 pc cut, i have already done that.

For 30pc, I have no problem. I wish they could have pegged it at 50%.

Notably, the recommendations had been informed by the views and memoranda submitted by the people of Kenya during the public hearings.

One of the issues agreed upon is the creation of the Office of Leader of

Opposition. This is another key recommendation.

The bipartisan talks were being held at Bomas of Kenya. The opinion of the polls conducted by Trends and Insights for Africa (Tifa) had shown that majority of Kenyans supported the proposal by President William Ruto on creation of this Office.

This would leave no doubt that they rightly viewed President Ruto as a true democrat and statesman.

Dr Ruto, who had a week earlier addressed a church congregation in Meru, stated he had no doubt this would become one of the key recommendations. Reason? The proposal resonates well with the wishes of the majority of Kenyans who were rooting for a vibrant and robust opposition.

Constitutionally speaking, parliament is a law making body.

During the demonstrations, Azimio leader Raila Odinga wanted Kenyans to believe that the MPs cannot be trusted to lead the talks. He would allege that this was because they were fighting for thier own stomach.

He would mainly target those who belonged to his Azimio Coalition who changed the tune by opting to work closely with President William Ruto.

But the position of these MPs would be clear. We are doing this for the sake of the people who elected us. They have been telling us the time of politics is over. They want us to roll out the development projects we promised them during the campaigns.

In our context, the government of the day plays a leading role when it comes to sharing of the public resources.

The President is the CEO of this great Nation. So you can only ignore him at your own peril.

Raila had played a key role in clearing these people to run for thier respective parliamentary seats and other elective positions on Azimio tickets. Does it mean he gave his supporters the wrong choices? If yes, then it means he is an enemy of the people. You never believed in the course that you wanted them to believe in.

I'm sure if Raila won the elections, he could have done the same thing. This is by reaching out and rallying members of Dr Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) to support his development agenda inside and outside parliament.

It is worth noting Dr Ruto started rooting for a system of governance anchored on tenets of democracy and constitutionalism long before he become the President.

This is the first time in Kenya's history that the sitting head of state is rooting for the creation of the Office of Opposition Leader.

The previous administrations feared and were opposed to formation of a strong and vibrant opposition.

At a time, the government resorted to using crude and cruel means to counter and weaken the outfits.

President Ruto is rooting for the opposition that engages the government in a structured constructive and honest dialogue.

I remember a powerful speech he made at Chatham House in the United Kingdom (UK) in the countdown to the 2022 General Election.

He told his attentive audience who comprised political leaders, diplomats, scholars and professionals drawn from all parts of the world that he totally detested the system that was being embraced back home in Kenya.

As you are aware, the 'handshake' government of President Uhuru Kenyatta and his partner Raila Odinga was at the helm of power.

He described it as a mongrel kind of thing. This system lacked consistent, direction and focus. It is an animal that one cannot understand.

This system has caused a lot confusion and stagnated the progress and wellbeing of our people.

In a functioning democracy, the government and opposition are supposed to operate as distinct entities.

If I win the elections and become the President, I want to assure Kenyans that I will strive to provide leadership on this matter.

Initially Raila and his brigade had resorted to throwing the spanners in the work by holding bloody and

destructive demonstrations. He never wanted Ruto to succeed. He had previously used the same card to intimidate and blackmail presidents Daniel Arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta.

He hoped this card will work even this time. The strategy flopped because Dr Ruto stood his ground.

Besides, majority of Kenyans also realized that Raila was taking them for a ride. He did not believe in thier course. He was just using them in pursuit of his selfish and personal gains.

Raila's endgame was to force President Ruto to share the rulling Kenya Kwanza government with him.

Dr Ruto remained firm telling Raila. I defeated you at the ballot. Accept the bitter truth that you lost and move on.

For now, your role is very clear. As an opposition leader, you job is to criticize my government.

Many Kenyans believe Raila was yet to accept the outcome of 2022 presidential election results because of one main reason.

He never thought he can lose because for the first time the outgoing President, the deep state and system was fully backing his candidature.

He however forgot this. Dr Ruto, his main competitor was on the other hand enjoying God's favor and support of the majority of Kenyans.

We know that Kenyatta's victories in both 2013 and 2017 were attributed to the popular support he had received from his strongholds of the Mount Kenya and Rift Valley regions.

He had already lost the two blocs and the voters were now rallying behind Ruto.

Dr Ruto had also raided and penetrated Raila Odinga's strongholds and he had managed to sway a huge chunk of votes to his side.

With this, where did Raila expect to get votes?

For Raila, there is always another day and chance. Try your luck in 2027. Put God first in all this.

The Good Lord is the one who blesses and anoints leaders.

Seek comfort in the Verses that saw David being anointed as a King of Israel.

This happened before his mother carried him in her womb.

David had been abandoned and despised by his siblings and his father.

Dr Ruto suffered the same fate. He had been abandoned by the outgoing President and his top state officials.

Joseph Mutua Ndonga is a writer and political analyst based in Nairobi

Some Gatanga Residents Want Government To Expedite Water Projects

By: Florence Kinyua

@themkenyatimes



Resident fetching water with donkey..

Worth Noting:

- Speaking at Ngelelya town, during an economic empowerment forum organized by the area Woman representative Betty Maina, the residents noted that they rely on donkey cart water vendors to supply them with the basic commodity at Sh20 per twenty-litre jerrican.
- “We are a hard-working people and if we can get water for consumption and irrigation it will support irrigation and animal husbandry that will go a long way in helping us put food on the table,” said Joyce Muthini, one of the residents.
- “We will also be able to meet the education needs of our children from the sale of our farm produce, but now we have to rely on handouts for survival because this area is dry,” she added.

The residents of Ithanga/ Kakuzi Sub County in the lower Gatanga region, Murang’a County have petitioned the government to fast-track completion of all the ongoing water projects in order to cushion them from perennial food shortage.

The inhabitants of Ithanga and Kakuzi-Mitubiri wards said if they are supplied with water for irrigation, they will be able to fend for themselves without solely relying on food rations from the government.

Lower Gatanga region is arid and is often faced by acute drought that leads to famine due to lack of rain and without the provision of piped water residents trek many kilometres in search of water from dry riverbeds.

Speaking at Ngelelya town, during an economic empowerment forum organized by the area Woman representative Betty Maina, the residents noted that they rely on donkey cart water vendors to supply them with the basic commodity at Sh20 per twenty-litre jerrican.

“We are a hardworking people and if we can get water for consumption and irrigation it will support irrigation and animal husbandry that will go a long way in helping us put food on the table,” said Joyce Muthini, one

of the residents.

“We will also be able to meet the education needs of our children from the sale of our farm produce, but now we have to rely on handouts for survival because this area is dry,” she added.

Muthini revealed that the water they use in homes is delivered by donkey carts and motorbikes at Sh20 per twenty-litre jerrican, which does not even suffice for domestic consumption.

A water vendor, Kennedy Waweru echoed similar sentiments saying provision of water will boost the economy of the region through agriculture.

“I use my donkey cart to get water from a borehole several kilometres from here, I purchase the commodity at Sh 10 per twenty litre jerrican which I resell at Sh20 making a profit of sh10 per jerrican,” he says.

“However, as much as it is a business for me, having water in this region would really improve the economy as the residents will be able to grow fruits, vegetables and even maize that would do very well here,” he added.

On his part, Joseph Kimani wonders why Masinga dam is within their proximity, yet they do not have a sin-

gle drop of water.

“All we want is water to nurture our plants, especially mangoes, and oranges, which we will be able to sell and earn a livelihood instead of relying on handouts every dry season,” notes Kimani.

“We will grow even vegetables and sell the surplus; I urge the government to ensure we get connected with water,” he said.

On her part, the women representative who also supplied 20 learning institutions with water storage tanks urged the institutions to harvest water when the March-April rains set in.

“Harvest the water so that our learners can put their jerricans down and spend more time studying because education is the world’s game changer,” stated Maina, while further urging the government to expedite the completion of the Sh3.6 billion Ithanga water project that was commissioned by President William Ruto last month.

The event was also attended by the Athi Water Works Board Chair Charles Karondo who assured the residents that the government will complete all the water projects in the region and make food security a reality for the people.

Karondo underscored that the government was keen on correcting the historical injustices that have plagued the region for a long time.

“Ndakaini Dam is the largest water reservoir that supplies water to Nairobi, yet the locals do not have enough, we will make sure that the county basin has enough for irrigation and consumption before disbursing to other areas,” he said.

Mwala Member of Parliament, Vincent Kawayo who is also the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Energy and Petroleum was also in attendance.

Kawayo disclosed that with consultation with the leaders from Murang’a they will liaise with the National Irrigation Authority to oversee the desilting of dams in the region so as to harvest more water for irrigation during the dry season.

During the event that was well-attended event, women groups were issued with cheques from the National Government Affirmative Action Funds (NGAAF), 1000 elders above 67 years of age received blankets, while all the attendees present received food essentials.

Meet 84-Year-Old Pauline Parkei, Gifted Traditional Birth Attendant Skilled In Safe Child Delivery

By: Ann Salaton
@themkenyatimes



Mama Pauline Parkei being congratulated by elder.

Worth Noting:

- She reveals that she has been a midwife for over 30 years; where she moved from house to house helping mothers give birth.
- So talented is Mama Pauline that she can detect the sex of the unborn child and confirm how old the fetus is, by placing her finger on the mother's tummy.
- "I can easily tell whether the unborn baby is a boy or girl. I have done this for many years and I have never been wrong," she says.
- However, she confesses that there are numerous challenges she faces in her course of duty, among them lack of gloves for protection while carrying out a delivery, lack of enough water and over bleeding that compromised the health of the mothers.

As the world marks the International Day for Women the story of Mama Pauline Parkei, 84, a re-known Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) in Olasiti, Ntulele and Suswa areas of Narok East Sub County cannot go untold.

We met her at Olasiti Health Centre attending to a young woman who had just given birth to a bouncing baby girl, after she had rushed her to the hospital in the wee hours of the night.

We sat at the hospital's waiting bay as she attended to the young mother who had just given birth. The medics at the health centre seemed to be comfortable with the old mama attending to the patient in the delivery room.

When she finished attending to her patient, she came walking majestically towards our direction with a gentle smile on face. At first glance, you would guess she is in her mid-50s, until she shows her Identification card that proves she was born back in 1940.

As she prepared for our interview, she received numerous phone calls from women in labour who wanted her help. Others who were calling were women with pregnancy complications.

She reveals that she has been a midwife for over 30 years; where she moved from house to house helping mothers give birth.

So talented is Mama Pauline that she can detect the sex of the unborn child and confirm how old the fetus is, by placing her finger on the mother's

tummy.

"I can easily tell whether the unborn baby is a boy or girl. I have done this for many years and I have never been wrong," she says.

However, she confesses that there are numerous challenges she faces in her course of duty, among them lack of gloves for protection while carrying out a delivery, lack of enough water and over bleeding that compromised the health of the mothers.

Other times, she is forced to walk for several kilometers to get to her client's home, if the client cannot afford to pay for a motorbike.

"I do not mind whether someone pays for my transport or not, because I believe God has given me this talent to help my fellow women. Everyone who calls for help, I make sure I give my best," she notes.

But it was a relief for her when a non-governmental organisation dubbed Anglican Development Services (ADS) introduced programmes to train TBAs on how to conduct safe delivery and sensitised them on the need to rush the women to nearby hospitals when they were in labour.

"We have been enlightened on the need to refer the women to the hospitals so that in case they have major complications, they can get help. This has made our work easier as women get specialised treatment," she adds.

However, for those women who don't make it to the hospital, owing to the long distances to the hospital, the old mid-wife has been trained how to

handle such a case with the protection of gloves, unlike before where they would use bare hands.

Mama Pauline, who has already become a brand in her community, travels from village-to-village sensitising women to visit the anti-natal and post-natal clinics to improve their health and that of their children.

She is well known to medics in the local hospitals and most time when she arrives with a patient in the hospital, she is allowed in the delivery room to assist the medics.

The mother of 14 children discloses that her husband, who passed on in 2022 at the age of 102 years was her strong pillar as he encouraged her to continue with her talent and passion.

When asked if she has trained anyone to continue with her legacy, Mama Pauline says she is mentoring her daughters in law.

Her last-born son Milton Parkei says her mother is always busy attending to pregnant women who come to consult her on matters of their pregnancy. In case of complications, she has the knowledge of which herbs to use, on specific condition, so that one can be healed.

"I believe that my mother has a special talent. Many people call her for help and she ensures that she attends to everyone who calls for help. Despite the mobility challenges, my mother never ignores anyone," he reiterates.

Evalyne Segendo says she was helped deliver four children safely by

Mama Pauline.

"She is a renowned mid-wife in this area, every time we call her for help, she responds promptly. Sometimes we don't even pay a shilling," she says.

Mama Margaret Koilel, a midwife too, says she has learnt a lot of skills from Mama Pauline.

The reformed Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cutter says she abandoned cutting girls after a training by the USAID funded New Partnership Initiative (NPI) expand programme.

"Girls who have undergone FGM tend to bleed more and take time to heal compared to those who have not undergone the cut. Though the practice was rampant in the Maa community before, it is slowly dying because of its negative effects and strict government policies," she adds.

Olasit AIC health centre Clinical Officer Pion Julius explains how ADS project has helped improve hospital deliveries.

Before, he says, there were zero hospital births recorded. However, the trend has changed since the programme was introduced as the hospital records over 20 births per month.

The officer recognises the great role that Mama Pauline is playing in society to advise the mothers to visit the hospital for both antenatal and post-natal clinics, as well as assisting the women get to the hospital when they are in labour.

"The program was key in sensitising TBAs on hospital deliveries. Currently, we have a rising number of hospital deliveries as the community perception is changing," he says.

The medic called for more programmes in the area that will continue sensitising the residents on the need to have children undergo all immunisation.

The International Women's Day, national celebrations will be held in Embu County tomorrow Friday March 8 with the theme, "Invest in women: Accelerate Progress".



By: Nigina Niyoz

Everyone loses mobile phone at least one time. Especially, if it is valuable, it will lose surely. At that time, I also lost my mobile phone brought from Japan

Do you know where? In the cemetery... Continuing part is more horrible. Really horrible... At that time, the sky was cloudy and dark. The weather is damp. "It must rain" I thought. For several days now, my mother has been saying, "go to plaster your father's grave." She was tired from telling about this. On Sunday usually I sleep more. But at that Sunday I had to wake up early from my mum's noise as if I was chewing a pepper. I left my car at the car shop to repair it, so I had to take a taxi to go there, carrying the shovels. It was noon until I get flower plants from bazar. Moreover, my friends kept calling me, we had a talk meeting (* uzb= friends talk party "gap"). It was almost dark until I finish plaster the grave. My friend Utkir came over on his car, and helped me to finish planting flowers. When it started rain I tried to dust off from my trousers and sit down to recite from Koran. (* Part of traditions in the cemetery, like praying) Both of us sat down to the car after putting shovels and buckets into the baggage. It started raining heavily. We can hear rain drops' shattering car's roof and windows. - We were able to finish on time, - I said my friend while trying to use my handkerchief to dry my hairs. I should call to home. I have to talk to my mum! - But I checked one of my pocket, then the other, there was no phone. May be in the plastic bag? - Could you call me? It would be easier to find from the Song of Ozodbek. Utkir dialed my number, listen and said

"It is ringing" But it was silence, I didn't heard usual words of Ozodbek: "Yana-yana".

"If so, I left it in the cemetery." I said don't want to go out of the car when it was so rainy.

- Take my phone, it will be easy to find! - said my friend. I went towards cemetery taking his phone, covering my head with my raincoat, everywhere was already dark, in the street light trees looked more darker and bigger. Sometimes the pictures on the marble stone seemed to shine in the dim light, and their eyes were coldly twinkling. Especially, the bending and shaking of the trees in the wind, and the breaking of the branches could freeze the heart. I felt like "I am the only alive man among these dead men". They don't need to earn, don't have to go anywhere to find money. They are just in their own place in the peace. Each of us have to come this place. I had just come newly plastered my dad's grave. But now, it seemed meaningless losing expensive phone.

The rain slowed down. I touched around the cemetery. There was no phone. There wasn't. I just sat down on a wet bench, not knowing what to do. I just looked my watch after deep breathing. It was 7:30pm.

I can remember clearly, it was seven thirty. I had to go, but I was sitting down looking my watch without moving. Suddenly, in my behind branch broke. I immediately turned around. Branches moved right to left as if seemed somebody walking over there. I slowly stood up and walked that side. I was hardly breathing from fear, I just opened the bushes, and saw grave with big marble gravestone in front of me. In the dim light, I couldn't read what is written on it. I don't know why, but I dialed my number from Utkir's phone. Surprisingly, I could heard Ozodbek's familiar song "Yana yana" from underground. I stayed still as if I was frozen. I wanted to run away immediately. But... there is such kind of powers, you can't run away from them. So, I changed my mind. As if trying to find out a secret, I went to nearer to the grave, it was written on it: - "Mansurjon Omonjon ugli. 1950-2010". But it wasn't surprised me, my phone's music was coming from this grave that was surprising part! I couldn't understand, what was going on. Waving away, Leaving

everything behind, I ran away not looking my behind...

Seeing me in pale, my friend was afraid, too. My hand, even my clothes were dirty, I couldn't talk.

- What happened? Have you found your phone? - he asked worrying from my look and mood.

- No, I waved away. - There is no phone now, never mind, I will buy tomorrow a new one...

So, we both went to "talk meeting". I don't know what we ate, what we drank, or when we left. I was still thinking about Ozodbek's song "Yana, yana" which coming out from the grave. Besides, song heard weirdly in the cemetery as if laughing at from me...

* * *

I called phone company UCELL, to renew my phone number after I lost my phone card with my phone. Then bought a new phone, as it was important for my job.

Finally, on Tuesday my car had been repaired. I drove to work. I had a lot of work to do in my office. I should not have to be late. So, in the smooth road, I speeded up to 120 km/h. At the same time, somebody called me! I was shocked after looking on my phone screen, because... because it was my own phone number.

- bo! - talked a grunting male voice, - Listen to me carefully. Lower the speed, and stop on the side way! - it was so eccentric to me strange man calling me "Abo". But, as if hypnotized, I did what he said.

- Now... - he continued, - Wait there, until I call you back! I was confused by what was happening. I was drenched in sweat from horror, and I could not even wipe the beads of sweat flowing from my forehead. Because, he called from my own number! Therefore, I completely forgot that there was a room full of people waiting for me, and that I could not be late for work. After about thirty minutes my phone rang.

- Abo! - the same voice again called caressingly. - Now you can go to your work... You really relieved from disaster, my son.

- Who is this? Who are you? - I asked hardly breathing with horror, but it lost connection. And I dialed my own number, again and again. But each time, instead of an answer, short beeps were heard. In fact, it should be so.

Five seconds later, seeing the accident on the road, everything seemed to clear up. I was in total agony because... brand new NEXIA got stuck under a huge truck. Only NEXIA's patched beak was visible.

Obviously, his driver was dead. I could not work that day. I went home asking my frowning boss for a break. On the way, I went to the phone company and checked my number.

- No one can use this number except you! - they said, shrugging their shoulders and looking at me strangely, as if "Did he lose his mind?"

To be honest, I was surprised by what was happening. I got sick. I sat my bed taking unfinished bottle from the shelf. I don't know when I slept. Suddenly I woke up. When I looked the clock, it was 3 a.m. I didn't know what to do, and drank again. Turned on Tv, and just changed from channel to channel. At that time, suddenly.

Suddenly, Ozodbek's song was heard again... [*My phone rang] ... I froze staring at my phone. Because, I turned it off before going to bed! - b! the same grunting voice was coming out from the receiver - Why did you turn off your phone? You saw today how speeding up is dangerous?

Actually, you should be instead of the poor driver! Now... Do me a favor, My son, - he talked uncomfortably. I want you tomorrow to go to the Uchtepa, and meet with Bashorat aunty [*my wife]. Next year we should engage our youngest daughter. But one guy named Farhod bothering her. He is not good boy. He stole the ring which I had given to your aunty and hid it in the garage. I will tell you where is hidden the ring, they can find it, - saying that stranger explained the address. Also, They should check my sister Mukhtabar to the oncologist, then added, - They should engaged Gulnora to the Odiljon, the electric's son. Say hello to all of them.

I went to find the people mentioned by Uncle Mansur at the given address. But they didn't believe me. - Astafirullah! - said Bashorat aunty crying. - It has been a year since your uncle Mansur died. How does he talk to you?

Already grass grown up on his grave! Did you want to tell us a joke like this! - she started crying.

A girl in a white dress came out. She tried to calm the woman and looked at me strange.

I thought to myself, this must be Gulnora, the youngest daughter of uncle Mansur.

- Believe it or not! - I said a little angry. - Otherwise, how did I know about these troubles that are happening in your family. First check what I said...

The next day Gulnora called me crying. The ring was found, Mukhtabar aunt has breast cancer, they were going to have a surgeon... - Brother Abror, if my father calls again please tell him forgiving my aunt. He himself knows why. I loved my father very much, - Gulnora cried, she was in silence, couldn't talk for a while.

- Why did my father call you and not us? He could have told us all of this...

I miss him so much... As usual, uncle Mansur called in the midnight.

He said: "b! My son, I know everything! - he started talking. - I really wanted to be in my daughter's dream, but all channels blocked. She shouldn't go to the fortune teller! Tell your aunty, she should do as I said, my daughter Gulnor should be engaged to Odiljon... You, should put your candidate to the vacancy in the bank, you will work in that bank in honorable positions."

This was the last talk with him, then Uncle Mansur didn't call me back. I also changed ringtone of my phone.

* * *

This story was told me by my acquaintance named Abror. One day, we went by "Kukcha" cemetery.

There was a grave with the gravestone near his dad's grave. It was written on the stone: "Mansurjon Omonjon ugli, 1950-2010". Abror put his candidate to the bank vacancy. Soon, he became head of the credit department. His salary... he even didn't dream about this much money. But Abror didn't surprise at all. He heard the director's talking to colleagues as following

- "What are you saying! - said bank director, - What kind of trial period?! He was sent by brother Mansur!"

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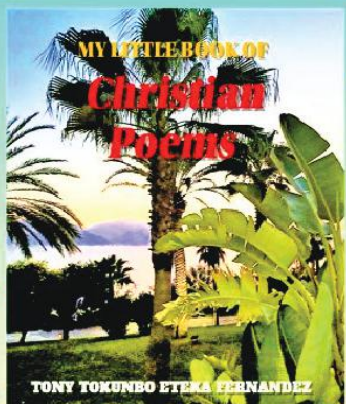
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Parliamentary Transport Committee Undertakes Inspection Tour Of Kenya Railways Nairobi Central Workshops

By: PSCU

The National Assembly Departmental Committee on Transport yesterday apprised on Kenya Railways' operations and the projects that the rail company has scheduled to undertake.

Led by their Chairperson Kariuki George Macharia, the committee embarked on a comprehensive inspection of the Kenya Railways Nairobi Central Workshops to gain insights into the railway's operational capacity and ongoing projects by the corporation.

Among the transformative endeavors the Committee noted, is the ongoing renovations at the heart of Nairobi's central workshops and the refurbishment of 10 mainline locomotives. The corporation is also remanufacturing 3, 92-class locomotives and has also embarked on assembling locomotives locally, marking a stride towards self-sufficiency.

The Committee also took note of the ongoing transition of the Standard Gauge Railways (SGR) operations from a Chinese company to



Nyaribari Chache MP Jhanda Zaheer and his Limuru counterpart John Kiragu posing for a photo before the Pioneer Nyayo car during the visit.

Kenya Railways.

The members pointed out that this move is a crucial milestone towards technology transfer adding that is need to upscale the operations of the Kenya Railways Institute which offers railway-related courses.

Committee Members however sought answers on a number of issues including plans by Kenya Railways to revive the old rail line and if the corporation was profitable. The

lawmakers also questioned the status of the compensation of residents affected by the development of SGR.

They also sought information over any Public Private Partnership agreement on commuter trains and with regards to the Kenya Railways' expansion plans, particularly along the Northern corridor.

In response, the Managing Director Mr. Philip Mainga unveiled a strategic master plan, envisioning col-



The committee members during the sitting before the visit.

laborations with Ethiopia through LAPSSSET. He also informed Committee of the corporation's ambitious projects such as the Naivasha-Kisumu-Malaba and Sagana-Kerugoya routes.

Addressing concerns about losses incurred, Mr. Mainga shed light on the regulatory nature of tariffs and the non-commercialization of commuter services, which caters for the lower-income demographic.

He also noted that Kenya Railways had sought government subsidies to support commuter services.

Responding to the Members' concerns, the MD stated that the compensation for those affected by SGR

projects, such as the Miritini residents, was successfully concluded.

The area MP who is also a Member of the Committee, Badi Twalib confirmed the status and appreciated Mr. Philip Mainga for his efforts. On a positive note, the MD reported that for the first time in a long time, the corporation had broken even.

Committee Members pledged support towards the request made by the Corporation for government subsidies, but encouraged the Corporation to explore tourism and leisure components within the SGR framework to enhance the railway's revenue base.

American, Finnish And Canadian Governments Fund An Oxygen Plant At Tatu City SEZ Kenya

By: John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

On Wednesday Tatu City in conjunction with the government of United States, Finland and Canada introduced an initiative aimed to fund a sustainable, accessible and affordable medicinal oxygen manufacturing facility at Tatu City.

Hewatele, a medical oxygen producer in Kenya, has secured a USD 20 million funding package from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Finnfund, Soros Economic Development Fund (SEDF), UBS Optimus Foundation and Grand Challenges Canada.

Hewatele will use the debt and equity funds raised to finance the building of a cutting-edge Cryogenic Medical Liquid Oxygen Air Separation Unit plant at Tatu Industrial Park. Set to commence operations in late Q1 2025, the facility will be the first modern liquid oxygen manufacturing plant located in East Africa in the last 60 years and help fill the escalating demand for medical-grade liquid oxygen in healthcare facilities across Kenya, Uganda and Northern Tanzania.

"Hewatele's investment, backed by



American, Finnish and Canadian governments fund an oxygen plant at Tatu City SEZ Kenya.

the world's preeminent development finance institutions and foundations, represents a transformation of healthcare in Kenya and across East Africa," said David Karimi, Deputy Country Head, Kenya, at Rendevour, the owner and developer of Tatu City.

Dr Bernard Olayo, Founder of Hewatele, said: "This medical oxygen plant represents a significant leap in ensuring sustainable and affordable access to medicinal oxygen. The increased production capacity here at Tatu City will improve oxygen af-

fordability, particularly for maternal and child healthcare, and enhance primary healthcare support."

According to Kenya's Ministry of Health, demand for medical oxygen has increased significantly since the COVID pandemic, from 410 tons per month to 880 tons per month. As a result, Kenyan hospitals frequently experience unpredictable deliveries, higher prices, and expensive transportation costs for medical oxygen. Due to the high production costs, fragmented delivery and storage options, medicinal oxygen is typically

eight to ten times more expensive in sub-Saharan Africa than it is in Europe and North America. Hewatele's facility will boost production of medical oxygen by least 20 tons per day, reducing the cost to its rural and urban healthcare customers by up to 30%. Improving access to oxygen and administering oxygen can reduce child mortality from pneumonia by 35% and lessen foetal distress and save lives when given to women during pregnancy.

"The rise of the COVID pandemic made everyone around the world aware of the importance of oxygen supply," said Johanna Raehalme, Finnfund's Head of Origination in Africa. "We are happy to add yet another important investment in our healthcare portfolio and see that the increased awareness of oxygen will ensure market demand for Hewatele going forward."

Georgia Levenson Keohane, CEO of SEDF, said: "As a catalytic social impact investor focused on direct impacts and longer-term, systemic change, SEDF sees the investment in Hewatele as an important commitment to strengthening Africa's rapidly expanding healthcare sector."

Maya Ziswiler, CEO Optimus Foundation, said: "UBS Optimus Foundation invests in organizations

that demonstrate clear impact and innovative and scalable business models. That's why we were early supporters of Hewatele, as we see the impact and value of their business model and are now pleased to make a longer-term commitment for them to reach even more undersupplied rural and urban communities in East Africa with affordable and life-saving medical oxygen."

"With our first base in Western Kenya, our expansion to Tatu City will create 50 new direct full-time jobs and over 100 indirect jobs, stimulating the local economy. We are honoured to be part of the healthcare ecosystem in Kiambu County," added Dr Zulfiqar Wali, CEO of Hewatele.

More than 75 local, regional and global businesses are operational or under development in Tatu City's business-friendly location, including CCI Global, Heineken, Dormans, Copia, Cooper K-Brands, Grit Real Estate Income Group, Twiga Foods, Freight Forwarders Solutions, AdvTECH, Friendship Group and Davis & Shirliff. More than 3,000 homes and apartments are occupied or under construction, and 4,500 students study at Tatu City's schools.

Victims Of Sexual Violence In Kajiado To Receive Free Treatment

By: Rop Janet
 @themtkenyatimes

Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) will now be able to access free medical services at Kajiado County Referral Hospital Gender-Based Violence and Recovery Centre.

The GBVRC Centre, which was established by the County Government with support from the Collaborative Centre and Gender Development (CCGD) and MasterCard Foundation, provides clinical and psycho-social services to SGBV survivors as well as boost the referral chain by supporting the collection and preservation of forensic evidence for prosecution of cases.

County Executive Member for Health, Alex Kilowua noted that cases of SGBV were on the rise and urged residents to make use of the facility.

He said the centre offers a safe space where survivors can get support ser-

vices including medical attention and psychosocial support.

The CECM revealed that it was not only women and girls who suffer from SGBV but also men.

“SGBV affects all genders, it is not girls and women only, even men are affected but very few are coming out to seek treatment due to fear and stigma,” he said.

Victims of SGBV are encouraged to utilise the free GBV helplines 1195 and 1198 to access free tele-counseling.

According to Kajiado’s status report on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) between December 2021 and December 2023, 436 survivors of SGBV were treated at the Referral Hospital.

In 2023 alone, 145 sexual and gender-based violence cases were reported. Out of the number were 13 men.

The report further reveals that 92 teenage girls were impregnated through sexual violence in 2023. During the same period, 10 young girls were rescued from forced early



marriages.

According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022, 36 per cent of women aged 15–49 years in Kajiado County have experienced physical violence since age

15, which is higher than the national average of 34 per cent.

The survey further shows that 37 per cent of women of a similar age who have ever been married or had an intimate partner have experienced

physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence committed by their most recent husbands or partners.

THE EL-TABLAZ ANNUAL READING CONTEST 2024

Attention, High School Students!

The El-Tablaz Books, in partnership with Read-Us Africa and Literature & English Forum – Uganda, invite you to enter their 1st annual reading contest.

What is The El-Tablaz Annual Reading Contest?

Starting this year, 2024, a reading and writing contest known as The El-Tablaz Annual Reading Contest shall be held nation-wide for high school students in Forms 1-6. Students are asked to READ and REVIEW a given book, clearly explaining how the text affected them personally. Reviews shall be judged on national level.

How to enter the contest:

- * Buy and read the novel, *The Spirit Whisperer* by Nassur Tab'an El-Tablaz.
- * Write a review of the given novel (at least 2 pages, typed; Times New Roman, font 12, 1.15 line spacing)
- * Take a photo clearly showing you in your school uniform reading the given novel
- * Clearly indicate your full name and school

ENTRY LEVELS

Submissions are accepted starting 1st March, 2024. Prizes will be awarded in April, 2024, in each of the three competition levels:

- Level 1: Form 1 – 2 (Submission deadline: Mar. 15, 2024)
- Level 2: Form 3 – 4 (Submission deadline: Mar. 15, 2024)
- Level 3: Form 5 – 6 (Submission deadline: Mar. 15, 2024)

Judges :

Judges will include teachers and teacher-consultants of the Literature & English Forum – Uganda from across the nation.

Winners
Ugx.200,000, + Gift hamper

1st Runner-up
Ugx.150,000, + Gift hamper

2nd Runner-up
Ugx.100,000, + Gift hamper

All participants
Certificates of participation at each level.

How to submit:
Send your typed review and photo to theelblazannualreadingcontest@gmail.com or WhatsApp +256 772 674 093.

OLDONYO SABUK NATIONAL PARK

Ultimate Panoramic Experience

Agro-Ecologically Grown Vegetables Post Higher Yields In Survey

By: Anita Omwenga
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- For kale, the gross margin was Sh. 943 (US\$ 6.47) compared to Sh. -36 (US\$ 0.25). However African nightshade and pumpkin leaves were not profitable in either system, due to lower yields and limited market demand in the area.
- Murang'a County Executive Member (CEM) for agriculture Dr Kiringai Kamau speaking during a two-day engagement workshop in a Murang'a hotel expressed deep appreciation for the Greener Greens initiative in advancing sustainable agricultural practices within the county.
- Kamau stressed the importance of integrating agro-ecology in the county's agricultural agenda and acknowledged WorldVeg and SNV for their crucial role in promoting regenerative and agro-ecological practices for vegetable production.

A research done by a non-governmental organization has revealed that agro-ecologically grown vegetables have more yields compared to those grown through conventional practices.

The research done by World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) in support of other organizations indicated that production of agro-ecologically grown vegetables is more by about 22 per cent.

The WorldVeg in the research dubbed Greener Greens also reveals that post-harvest losses of the agro-ecological produce is much less as compared to yields produced through conventional practices.

The Greener Greens research project was carried out between 2021 and 2023 and other partners that support the project include Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), with financial support from the Biovision Foundation, and In-kind contributions from the Veggies 4 Planet & People project.

The three-year research collected data from 137 smallholder farmers mostly women and youth in traditional settings within Murang'a County who participated in the trials where they grew amaranth, African nightshade (managu), kale, and pumpkin leaves.

Results showed that amaranth grown in agroecological plots had a positive gross margin of Sh.259 (US\$ 1.18), with a negative gross margin of Sh. -53 (US\$ -0.36) in conventional plots.

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profitable in either system, due to lower yields and limited market demand in the area.

Murang'a County Executive Member (CEM) for agriculture Dr Kiringai Kamau speaking during a two-day engagement workshop in a Murang'a hotel expressed deep appreciation for the Greener Greens initiative in advancing sustainable agricultural practices within the county.

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WorldVeg Kenya Country Director Ralph Roothaert on his part noted the research revealed that higher profitability under agro-ecological farming approaches can be attributed to the cost of savings on inputs.

"This research has contributed to debunking the myth that agroecology is not feasible and not profitable which was a concern by a lot of the scientific community," he said.

Roothaert who is also the Principal Investigator for Veggies 4 Planet & People initiative said the results confirmed that average yields in agro-ecological plots were higher than conventional plots where chemical approaches were used for all the crops.

"During the trial, more than 90 per cent of farmers were using plant extracts, sticky traps, or companion or repellent crops to control crop pests," he said, adding that biopesticides proved to be effective in pest control.

He stated that demand for organic in-

puts such as compost manure, natural soil amendments, and botanical pesticides also increased notably, indicating reduced reliance on conventional fertilizers.

Murang'a County Director of Agriculture, Daniel Gitahi highlighted the significant impact of the Greener Greens research in the County in advancing the adoption of agroecological practices.

"The success of the research is providing evidence supporting agro-ecological farming for safe and healthy vegetable production," he noted stating that this has led to improved agricultural productivity and food security in the county.

Gitahi lauded the County government for launching the Agro-Ecology Development Act and Agro-Ecology Development Policy 2022-2032, recognizing the benefits of integrating agro-ecology into the agricultural agenda.

He emphasized the need for research to strengthen local innovation capacity and facilitate knowledge sharing to promote the production of safe, locally sourced, and nutritious food.

The World Health Organization recommended daily intake of vegetables per person for a healthy diet is three portions, or about 240 grams per day. In most sub-Saharan African countries, actual intake is only around 70 grams which is 30 percent of the recommended amount.

Peninah Gakanga, one of the farmers from Ithiki village, Mukangu sub-location who participated in the research trials said the project has helped her to grow her traditional vegetables in an agroecological way

which are nutritious and profitable.

She observed that due to the better-perceived taste of the agro-ecological produced vegetables, not chemically treated, producer households consumed more of these vegetables (38 percent compared to 21 percent).

Gakanga who is the chairperson of Jijenge tuinuke self-help group that comprises women who farm vegetables as their means of livelihood said that the group saw a difference in terms of quantity and quality as compared to the conventional ways of farming.

"The vegetables that were grown based on agroecological practices produced better yields than the ones that were planted using conventional ways of applying chemicals and pesticides," she said.

On his part, David Gachoka, a youth, aged 24 years from the Jawabu Youth group, who participated in the research said that he saw an increase in the yields from his quarter-hectare piece of land once he embraced agro-ecological vegetable farming.

Edgar Omondi, another youth from Kangema said they saw an opportunity in seedling propagation and applying agroecological practices in his nursery.

Omondi noted that one of the challenges most farmers faced during the research period was the lack of water as a result of inconsistent rainfall. He urged farmers to practice water harvesting techniques to store water for use during dry seasons.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Empower Young Advocates And Activists, To Help To Fight Against Drug Abuse

Cases of drug abuse in Kenya continue to increase, despite government's efforts. Causes of many cases being ignorance, corruption by some police officers and lack of new strategies to deal with it.

In most cases, with the current economic status, youth choose to use drugs, to reduce stress, because many are unemployed.

Due to lack of self-responsibility and rogue police officers, cases of people consuming illicit drugs especially in villages, have escalated.

This lead to death of more than 16 people.

However, the survey carried out by National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA),

the most used drugs are alcohol at 13 per cent, cigarettes at 11 per cent, and khat at six per cent. The most prevalent drugs of choice among those aged between 15 and 24 are alcohol, tobacco, khat and cannabis.

By empowering young people to lead campaigns against drug abuse in villages, campuses and estates,

creating good role models in society, are key ways to end drug abuse. Teachers and counsellors should also be considered for training so that they can effectively handle students and teenagers who abuse drugs and substances.

State should also support young advocates and activists to create awareness to educate people to know the effects of illicit drugs and encourage them to be self-responsible in dealing with drug abuse.

State should collaborate with the

county governments, chiefs and village elders to control the production, distribution, sale, and consumption of cheap, illicit brew. They can also work in partnership with licensing agencies so that only substances that are tested and found to be safe for human consumption are sold.

(Faith Chelangat and Constantine Sifuna, media students Rongo university)

Corruption The Demon Terrorizing Kenya

By Jackline Ngugi And Michael Okech

Despite promises by the government to fight corruption, it continues to be a major issue in Kenya. The mounting evidence of corruption in various government institutions and agencies is alarming, proving that this problem is deeply rooted and widespread.

One of the most recent examples of corruption within the Kenyan government is the scandal involving the National Youth Service (NYS). Over the past few years, billions

of shillings have been misappropriated at NYS through fraudulent tenders, ghost projects, and inflated prices for goods and services. Several high-ranking officials, including Cabinet Secretaries, have been implicated in this scandal, yet very few have been held accountable.

Another glaring example of corruption is the ongoing case involving the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). In this instance, top management officials are accused of awarding tenders to companies linked to them, resulting in inflated

costs and substandard work being done. This has led to the overbilling of customers, who have been forced to pay higher electricity bills as a result.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health has also been embroiled in corruption scandals, with reports indicating that millions of shillings meant for the procurement of drugs and medical supplies have been embezzled. This has had a devastating impact on the healthcare system in Kenya, with patients suffering due to the lack of essential medicines and equipment.

The prevalence of corruption in the Kenyan government not only undermines the rule of law and erodes public trust but also hinders development and economic growth. It is essential for the government to take decisive action to root out corruption and hold those responsible accountable. Without transparency and accountability, the future of Kenya's governance and democracy remains bleak.

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The Devalued Homemaker

By Glory Muthoni Njiru

The role of "housewife" has become devalued but the role of a "mother" has not.

At the heart of why women choose to stay home is their belief that children need their mother's, not substitute caregivers, for optimum growth and development. They feel that staying home is a "luxury". However they feel that society does not recognize or value their contributions. The society is too quick to place the value on the economic world and how much money you can make. They should see that there are things that are of value that do not involve getting paid.

There of course full-time housewives of every age, social class and ethnic backgrounds. Who have a full range of academic and work histories prior to becoming housewives? And also there are others who have no academic qualifications or work histories prior to becoming housewives, this are the set of mothers who know nothing more than being wives and mothers, taking care of family and household chores are all they live for and they find it so noble.

There are a variety of reasons and circumstances that push one to becoming a housewife or a full-time stay at home mom. The society expect too much from a woman to the

extent that they get to judge every choice and decision one makes .Is it how we are cultured to just think nothing is good enough? As a society and more so the twenty first century we should know better and judge less .All choices cannot be justified according to everyone's perception.

The dilemma between family or career has been a very bulky burden on most women especially when they are young and they have already gotten married. Some choose to take a break from work and take care of their infants and get back when the children are older, others trying juggling the two while there are those that totally give up their jobs and

be full-time housewives. Whatever choice these women make it is a result of what they think is best for their children.

What happens when the children are all grown and they get to be in school most of the time? What gets to be of this mothers yet looking after their children is all they have known? Do these women get to have something for themselves or it's just the household chores and being wives? The society is not so welcoming for these women especially those that put a pause on their careers or those who immediately they graduated they went into family .They view them as inexperienced and too old to be looking for a job as

first timers. They tend to be rejected and they end up frustrated and even depressed.

It's the high time the society appreciated the housewives for what they are and the sacrifices they have made. They are the soul homemaker and the backbone of the society. Having given up the best years of their lives to be the homemakers it's something of no monetary value. A present mother and a wife is a treasure. The best the society can do it support them when they are ready to do something for themselves.

Glory Muthoni Njiru is A second year journalism student at Chuka university

Garissa County Get Tips On Human Rights

By: KNA

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The National Legal Aid Service (NLAC) yesterday conducted a legal awareness training to the people of Garissa in an effort to educate the public on their mandate to assist the indigent, vulnerable and marginalized people in the society.

Giving effect to Article 48 of the Constitution on access to justice, state officials from the Office of the Attorney General through the Department of National Legal Aid Service alongside area OCPD, Haki na Sheria Initiative program officers among other relevant authorities held a meeting informing the public on their directive to offer free legal services to the vulnerable and marginalized people in the society.

Among the services offered by the state agency include free legal advice, legal representation by offering pro bono advocates, drafting of court documents, training on self-representation, use of alternative justice systems like mediation and other



Mercy Gikunda addressing the media..

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legal services.

Speaking in an interview with journalists, Mercy Gikunda, a state council, mentioned the need to sensitize

the people on the limits of maslaha and other alternative dispute resolutions used in the region.

“There is need to sensitize the

people especially those from the north eastern region on the limits of Maslaha as it should not be used in cases of defilement, they should also

not be inconsistent with the Constitution and not be repugnant to justice and morality,” said Mercy.

Kisuya Caleb, an advocate noted that land disputes are the major problem affecting the residence citing that many landowners don't have title deeds.

“We have found that land matters are the major problem affecting the residence as many don't have title deeds and we are thinking of addressing it through involving the National Lands Commission and other relevant offices,” Caleb noted.

Abdimalik Ismail, Haki na Sheria Initiative Program Officer present in the meeting emphasized the importance for the communities to be conversant with their rights and privileges in the Constitution noting that majority of enforced disappearance in the region occurs as a result of lack of knowledge of the Constitution.

He further noted that security officers have been taking advantage of the illiteracy of communities to harass people adding that the majority are not aware of the independent policing oversight authority.

Notorious Robbery With Violence Suspect Arrested In Nyeri

By: Muraya Kamunde

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Police in Nyeri have arrested a notorious robbery with violence suspect.

Peter Ndiritu Ndirangu alias Kimaiitho, aged 35, was arrested after concerned citizens tipped off the police of his presence in the area, leading to a manhunt that flushed him from his hideout at Weitemere area.

Kimaiitho is a wanted suspect for violent robberies, peddling, mugging and phone snatching.

Upon search, the suspect who has spent several years in various lock up facilities was found with 12 sachets of heroin, nine rolls of bhang, a machete and two kitchen knives tucked in his waist.

Since his release from prison in December 2023, the known but slippery suspect has been implicated in

various attacks reported at Weitemere, Majengo, Kiawara and Blue Valley areas of Nyeri.

The ex-convict has been remanded at King'ong'o prison without the option of a bail following his criminal record.

Three suspects were arrested and taken to Mwea Police Station for grilling.

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Conservationists Call For Collaboration In The Restoration Of The Kakamega Landscape And Forest Ecosystem

By: Michael Omondi
@themtkenyatimes



Wildlife Principal Secretary Silvia Museiya

Worth Noting:

“We don’t speak enough about tree species unless they are listed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other sites. Most of our budgets and funds go to take care of human-wildlife conflict, rhino sanctuaries or the big five but we need to look into fauna. I also urge you to place more conservation efforts in other regions with less attention like Baringo and West Pokot,” said Museiya.

At the same time, CAK Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Steve Itela stressed the importance of bringing players and the formulation of a master plan that will coordinate the conservation and preservation of the forest.

The Conservation Alliance of Kenya (CAK), in partnership with the State Departments for Forestry, Environment and Climate Change, and Wildlife has organised a forum to discuss the state of conservation of the Kakamega forest and its landscape.

The forum, themed ‘The Sustainable Conservation of the Kakamega Forest Landscapes and Its Fragile Ecosystems’, is aimed to establish the current state of conservation practices and actors around it in order to bring them together and find a unified way of conserving the forest.

The forum brought together stakeholders involved in conservation initiatives in the Kakamega forest Landscape, comprising governments, communities, and non-state actors.

Speaking at the event, Wildlife Principal Secretary Silvia Museiya lauded the efforts of the various conservation groups in the forest and urged them to place more attention on the plant species and other regions that have received less focus when it comes to conservation.

“We don’t speak enough about tree

species unless they are listed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other sites. Most of our budgets and funds go to take care of human-wildlife conflict, rhino sanctuaries or the big five but we need to look into fauna. I also urge you to place more conservation efforts in other regions with less attention like Baringo and West Pokot,” said Museiya.

At the same time, CAK Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Steve Itela stressed the importance of bringing players and the formulation of a master plan that will coordinate the conservation and preservation of the forest.

“Once upon a time, the Kakamega forest was larger than the one we are seeing now and it joined together with Nandi County but has been greatly reduced over time due to human activities. As organisations working towards its restoration, we are moving from a silo mentality to collectively working together to prevent the duplication of projects and conserve the forest,” he observed.

Echoing Itela’s sentiments, Kakamega Forest Heritage Foundation

Chairman Dr. Johnson Murila also added his voice on the call to collaborate and partner when it comes to the restoration projects in the forest.

For the past five years, Murila revealed that the Foundation has rehabilitated 140 acres of the forest with 112,000 indigenous trees.

“There are many of us working in the forest as little individual teams. It would be great if we all came together with a conservation plan for the whole ecosystem so that we work towards one goal, consolidating our resources and synergies in one direction because this will give us much better results. With this, we can make the forest great again and hopefully reverse some of the results of climate change,” he urged.

Meanwhile, Beatrice Khayota the National Museum of Kenya Principle Research Scientist noted that the forest has attracted a lot of research but unfortunately, its donor driven and sectoral and the issue is how to bring the projects together.

“We have a lot of experts who know what is useful for the forest and it is important that the scientists come up with reports and have findings that

can monitor the population trends and bring the community on board to ensure that they learn how they can utilize the forest resources to their advantage,” she illustrated.

The conservationists also called for collaboration when it comes to research findings on the forest to ensure that proper information on the forest is communicated to the community surrounding the forest and the organisations conserving the forest.

As Kenya’s only tropical rainforest, the Kakamega forest is a critical heritage and natural resource for the people of Kenya and plays a vital role as a critical watershed and a carbon capture system, contributing to climate change mitigation.

For decades, the Kakamega forest has been shrinking largely due to poverty-driven logging, harvesting of medicinal resources, and agricultural expansion. Currently, the forest, including reserves, encloses about 238 square kilometers, a little less than half of which currently remains as indigenous forest.

Mudavadi Chairs Inter-Ministerial Meeting On Korea-Africa Summit

By: Muraya Kamunde

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi chaired the inaugural inter-ministerial meeting on Wednesday focusing on the upcoming Korea-Africa Summit, which will be held in Seoul in June of this year.

As part of the preparations for the summit, the meeting agreed to review previous Memoranda of Understanding between Kenya and South Korea and meticulously craft new draft agreements in crucial areas such as technology and innovation, trade, and investments.

These agreements will be formally executed during the summit.

The Korea-Africa Summit is scheduled to take place on the 4th and 5th of June, 2024, under the theme: "The Future We Make Together, Shared Growth, Sustainability and Solidarity."



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi

CS Duale Delivers Ruto's Message To Egyptian President

By: Muraya Kamunde

Defence Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale on Wednesday delivered President William Ruto's message to his Egyptian counterpart President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

In his message, President Ruto emphasized on Kenya's commitment to further strengthening the outstanding relations between the two countries in all fields.

President El-Sisi expressed Egypt's pride in its historical relations with Kenya, as a model of cooperation between brothers on the continent.

The meeting tackled issues of joint cooperation, in light of the two countries' keenness on bolstering the partnership and cooperation in military and security areas.

The discussions also touched on regional and international develop-

ments, notably the situations in the Gaza Strip, the Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa, as well as their implications for peace and security in the African continent.

The Kenyan Defense Minister commended Egypt's wise role in consolidating security and stability in the continent, affirming his country's commitment to coordinating and cooperating with Egypt for their common benefit and to promote joint African action across the continent.

CS Duale was received by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during his three-day visit to Egypt. The meeting was also attended by Minister of Defense and Military Production, General Mohamed Zaki.



Defence Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

Food Nutrition: Counties Asked To Enforce Fortification Standards

By: Kenya News Agency



Some cereals on display in a market.



Worth Noting:

- The Food Fortification Strategy also captures a raft of interventions necessary to address the challenge of micronutrient deficiency amongst the Kenyan population.
- She spoke on the need to focus on decentralization and accelerate actions to extend food fortification commitments to the County level.
- “It is essential to address the low consumption patterns of fortified foods and reap the subsequent health benefits. There is a need to support the Public Health Officers (PHOs) and the industry players to routinely enter data into the food fortification database. This will enhance data visualization and inform decision making,” she said.

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is working with five selected counties to build the capacity of their public health officers in enforcing fortification standards.

Ruth Okowa, GAIN Kenya Country Director says the public health officers in Kiambu, Mombasa, Nyanjira, Nakuru and Nairobi Counties were expected to play a pivotal role in the allocation of resources to forestall compliance standards on food safety and fortification.

Okowa who made the remarks recently during the 3rd Kenya National Food Fortification Summit noted that enforcing fortification standards will address the challenge of micronutrient deficiency amongst the Kenyan population.

“We are working closely with the National and County governments to heighten fortification surveillance in line with the mandatory food fortification requirement”, she said.

The Food Fortification Strategy also captures a raft of interventions necessary to address the challenge of micronutrient deficiency amongst the Kenyan population.

She spoke on the need to focus on decentralization and accelerate actions to extend food fortification commitments to the County level.

“It is essential to address the low consumption patterns of fortified foods and reap the subsequent health benefits. There is a need to support the Public Health Officers (PHOs) and the industry players to routinely enter data into the food fortification database. This will enhance data visualization and inform decision making,” she said.

Last year, Kiambu County led with about 30 percent of samples found to be contaminated while the overall compliance with Food Fortification

standards was at just 28 percent thus painting a grim picture.

Apart from working with Counties, GAIN is also supporting the 5 County governments to put in place food safety and fortification policies and Bills for purposes of enhancing surveillance and ring-fencing resources for fortification.

Okowa said industrial food fortification is a critical pathway to address hidden hunger. Micronutrient deficiency constitutes a significant form of malnutrition, which not only impacts the health of individuals but also hampers a country’s economic growth.

“Micronutrient deficiency is especially prevalent among Kenya’s women and children, manifested in deficiencies of crucial nutrients such as iron, folate, zinc, iodine, and vitamin A,” Okowa said.

“It is incumbent upon each of us to take urgent action to fortify pathways and address the high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies among women of reproductive age, pregnant women, and children under five in Kenya”, she added.

The Country Director however noted that this will necessitate sustainable multisectoral approaches, encompassing public health surveillance and community awareness on food safety and fortification.

The summit was being held under the theme, ‘Celebrating a Decade of Food Fortification in Kenya: Shaping the Future through Innovation and Partnerships’.

During the meeting, Deputy Head of Division of Nutrition and Dietetics at the Ministry of Health, Leila Odhiambo said that food fortification can be carried out by food manufacturers, or by governments as a public health policy which aims to reduce the number of people with

dietary deficiencies within a population level.

“Food fortification is the process of adding micronutrients to food. We have chosen four food vehicles for fortification and this includes salt where iodine is added, wheat and maize flour which has seven vitamins and nine minerals, and vitamin A in fats and oils,” Odhiambo said.

She emphasized that food fortification is mandatory and that there is a regulation under Cap 254 of the Constitution of Kenya, this is an Act of Parliament under food fortification.

The Government, she added is also working with industries to ensure that the staple food is fortified to help the population in the medium term, access micro nutrients.

“We are scaling interventions that will enable the population to eat healthier food and contribute to reducing the disease burden and its implication to the economy of the country,” Odhiambo said.

The Kenya National Micronutrient Survey of 2011 depicted the country as burdened by high micronutrient deficiencies with the most prevalent being zinc, vitamin A, iron, and iodine deficiencies.

Zinc deficiency prevalence rates stood at 70 percent, with preschool children being most affected at 81.6 percent, school-age children at 79.0 percent, pregnant women at 67.9 percent, and non-pregnant women at 79.9 percent.

Kiambu, Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru have developed draft policies on not just food fortification

but also linking it up with the food systems issues. The first-generation fortification strategy came to an end in 2022.

Charles Opiyo, Head of policy and Advocacy at GAIN while speaking to KNA called upon all industry players including County and National governments involved in the food nutrition space to work together through the national food fortification alliance or even the County alliances by looking at the progress made in terms of surveillance levels to be able to move in the right direction

“We are calling for everyone, all the way from non-stakeholders to governments to everybody else, including the consumers who must be empowered to be able to ask and demand that they are able to access fortified foods so that at least we can also see improvement in our health outcomes”, Opiyo said.

The Kenya constitution recognizes food and good nutrition as a basic right in article 53 (1)(c) and article 43 (1) (d) recognizes the importance of addressing hunger and malnutrition.

Last year in November, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology launched a national food fortification reference laboratory, equipped with modern tools for analysis to aid government’s efforts to reduce malnutrition among vulnerable groups through addition of essential micronutrients in widely consumed staple foods such as maize and wheat flour, edible oils and salt.



A lady selling different varieties of vegetables.

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HON RIGATHI GACHAGUA,
 Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya

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Sports >> *Manchester City enjoyed the perfect warm-up for Sunday's crucial Premier League trip to Liverpool as they cruised 3-1 past Copenhagen to reach the Champions League quarter-finals for a seventh successive season.

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STATISTICS
SCHEDULES
BREAKING NEWS



Haaland Goes Joint Top Of UCL Scoring Charts As Man City Cruise Into Quarters



Erling Haaland celebrates his milestone. PHOTO/Premier League

Manchester City enjoyed the perfect warm-up for Sunday's crucial Premier League trip to Liverpool as they cruised 3-1 past Copenhagen to reach the Champions League quarter-finals for a seventh successive season.

Ahead by two goals from the first leg in Copenhagen three weeks ago, any lingering hopes of a shock were ended within nine minutes as Manuel Akanji and Julian Alvarez found the net.

Erling Haaland went joint top of the tournament scoring charts alongside Harry Kane and Kylian Mbappe as he netted his sixth of the campaign – and 29th in all competitions – as City scored a third before half-time after the visitors had pulled one back.

The Norwegian, who Ole Gunnar Solskjaer reminded everyone Manchester United could have signed for £17m in 2019 on the Stick to Football podcast,

has scored in three successive games for the first time since

October.

It is good news for City boss Pep Guardiola before the Anfield encounter.

Guardiola had said in the build-up he would not be spending any time thinking about Liverpool until the Copenhagen match was out of the way.

That statement was exposed by the fact he made seven changes to the side that beat Manchester United at the weekend and then replaced key man Rodri at the break.

The changes did not hinder City, who are on the longest current run of successive Champions League quarter-final appearances. The only English club to ever have done better in the competition is Manchester United, who reached the last eight in seven consecutive seasons from 1996-97 to 2002-03.

-Instant replay-

The last thing you would want after gifting the opposition a goal

is to have the embarrassment replayed so everyone in the stadium could see all the gory details.

Sadly for former Liverpool and Huddersfield goalkeeper Kamil Grabara, that was his fate.

The Poland international already knew he had let Alvarez's shot from the side of the penalty area slip through his fingers after Rodri's header was only half cleared when it came back off the bar.

A capacity crowd was unaware of the scale of the mess-up and the gasp that echoed round the stadium as the replay was shown on the big screen in the corner will not have made Grabara feel any better.

It was Alvarez's 16th goal of an another excellent season and must have been a concern for Copenhagen's on-loan Scotland defender Scott McKenna, who was part of a Nottingham Forest side that lost by six in this stadium last term.

As it turned out, Copenhagen

rallied and former Southampton man Mohamed Elyounoussi halved the deficit with a precise 12-yard finish into the corner after 29 minutes.

The goal stung City, who had been ahead early after Akanji had held off Peter Ankersen to sweep home a first-time shot from Alvarez's corner.

Haaland restored the home side's advantage when he drove home in first-half stoppage time.

-Liverpool lie ahead-

When 18-year-old local lad Jacob Wright replaced Haaland three minutes from time, all three outfield players who retained their place from the Manchester United game had been subbed. Rodri's evening came to an end at half-time.

Of the players omitted, only John Stones came on, taking the captaincy from Ruben Dias.

That in itself says everything about the importance Guardiola is placing on the Liverpool game.

With a home encounter with the other Premier League title challenger Arsenal to come on 31 March, this month is likely to be pivotal in City's quest to become the first club to win the English league title four seasons in a row.

Clearly, Guardiola will need more than 11 players for the task, so he will hope Portugal midfielder Matheus Nunes' badly dislocated finger does not force him to spend any time on the sidelines.

He will also be keenly awaiting next Friday's draw, when City will discover the route they must take if they are to reach the final at Wembley.

But now, all eyes are on Anfield. It promises to be a cracker.

BBC

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *In the heart of Naro Moru, Nyeri County, a remarkable initiative is unfolding, led by none other than Isaac Macharia, a celebrated three-time Nagano Marathon Champion.

Star Athlete Isaac Macharia Revolutionizing Education, Empowering Dreams



In the heart of Naro Moru, Nyeri County, a remarkable initiative is unfolding, led by none other than Isaac Macharia, a celebrated three-time Nagano Marathon Champion. Together with his friends, he has spearheaded an endeavour that promises to transform the lives of young people in the area.

Their brainchild, Kenswed School Secondary School, is not just another educational institution. It's a beacon of hope, offering free virtual vocational M-Learning training to vulnerable yet deserving students. Picture this: 115 eager learners delving into various technical courses, from pastry making to app-based taxi management like Uber. But what sets this apart is the technology driving the education - solar-powered tablets infused with the magic of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

These tablets, crafted by the ingenious Dr. Per-Olof Hansson from Linköping University, Sweden, are more than just gadgets. They're gateways to knowledge, loaded with over 50 technical

courses simplified through AI lecturing. It's a revolution in education, bringing learning to the palm of your hand.

But the journey doesn't end with the distribution of tablets. Each student receives not just a tool for learning, but also a beacon of light. Solar power panels illuminate the homes of those off the national grid, a symbol of empowerment and progress.

At the heart of Kenswed's mission lies entrepreneurship. It's not just about acquiring skills; it's about cultivating the spirit of enterprise. Students are equipped with start-up grants and guided through the intricacies of business management. Because here, success isn't just about grades; it's about building futures.

"We provide students with Sh4000 start-up grants to purchase essential learning tools. Additionally, we guide them through tutorials on how to navigate the tablets seamlessly in an M-Learning process, facilitated by local instructors," Dr Hansson, partner and friend to Isaac Macharia, said.

Take Hosea Warutere, for example. Born and raised in an area where job opportunities are scarce, he's seizing the chance to learn computer programming alongside business management. It's a path to a brighter future, away from the confines of casual construction work and hawking.

Or Peninah Wanjiku, whose journey from the Solio Ranch village to becoming the local hairdresser and beautician is inspiring. With each strand she styles, she's weaving a tale of empowerment and self-reliance.

And then there's Ziporrah Wandia, whose dreams soar as high as the skies. With ambitions in agriculture, computer science, and entrepreneurship, she's a testament to the limitless possibilities unlocked by education.

"I aspire to delve into agriculture, computer science, and entrepreneurship. Eventually, I envision travelling abroad to pursue advanced studies in medicine, viewing it as a stepping stone to even greater accomplishments," Ziporrah said.

"Our research endeavours and interactions with fellow students have been instrumental in expanding the scope of our courses. Notably, hairdressing has emerged as a particularly popular choice.

Additionally, subjects such as tourism management, motorcycle mechanics, agriculture, and computer programming have garnered significant interest," she added.

But as with any journey, challenges abound. The lack of teachers is a hurdle that the Kenswed team is determined to overcome. Through unwavering dedication and innovative solutions, they're paving the way for a brighter tomorrow.

In the heart of Naro Moru, amidst the towering peaks of Nyeri County, a revolution is underway. Led by Isaac Macharia and his friends, Kenswed School is not just educating minds; it's nurturing dreams, one solar-powered tablet at a time.

By Citizen Sports

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



A Woman Who Matured With Work

By: Turdikhan Boydadayeva
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- At this time, Turdikhan Boydadayeva was working on collective farms, her agility, responsibility for work, and patience brought her to maturity. In the 1950s, he joined the ranks of thousands of weightlifters of those times and quickly began to spread the word with his work.
- At first, as the head of the farm, he and his team are among the top producers of high yields. In 1956, the unit headed by him produced twenty-nine centners of cotton from fourteen hectares of land.
- At the same time, Turdikhan is also a hand-picker of flowers, and in 1955 he picked eighteen tons with his own hands, and in 1956 he raised this indicator to twenty-four tons.



Turdikhan Boydadayeva, the village's mother and advisor.

On the eleventh day of January 1957, based on the decision of the party and government leadership of that time to reward a group of advanced workers of agriculture with state awards, orders and medals, our republic many workers are rewarded. Among them was Turdikhan Boydadayeva from Logan.

This woman, who grew up with hard work, is known for her demanding, hardworking and initiative, was born in 1933 in the village of Logan in a simple peasant family. At first, he entered the secondary school in the village and graduated in 1948.

Young and energetic Turdikhan began her work career in 1945 as a simple worker in the "Schors" collective farm in the village - picking.

"Schors" was created in 1940

from the merger of collective farms such as "October XIV Anniversary" and "Yangiabad". However, in the early fifties, as a result of the decision to transform collective farms into twenty collective farms, existing collective farms in the village were united and given the name of Hamza Hakimzoda. However, due to some reasons, the collective farm named after H. Hakimzoda will be divided into two. One of them will be named "Hakimzoda" and the other "Schors". In September 1956, based on the decisions of the Plenum, collective farms began to expand. According to the decision, the farms of the two communities will be united under the name of N. Khrushchev.

At this time, Turdikhan Boyd-

adayeva was working on collective farms, her agility, responsibility for work, and patience brought her to maturity. In the 1950s, he joined the ranks of thousands of weightlifters of those times and quickly began to spread the word with his work. At first, as the head of the farm, he and his team are among the top producers of high yields. In 1956, the unit headed by him produced twenty-nine centners of cotton from fourteen hectares of land. At the same time, Turdikhan is also a handpicker of flowers, and in 1955 he picked eighteen tons with his own hands, and in 1956 he raised this indicator to twenty-four tons. At this time, his name spread throughout the republic, and he began to rise to fame. The high results of cotton cultivation and picking reached Moscow, which was the center at that time.

As a result, as we mentioned above, on January 11, 1957, Turdikhan Boydadayeva, a picker of Khrushchev collective farm, was awarded the title of "Hero of Labor" and the medal of "Golden Star" for her heroic work in the field of agriculture. together with the Order of Lenin. The news of happiness spread quickly, and congratulations and congratulatory letters began to arrive from different places. This event was really a source of pride and pride for the family members, close people, and the entire village.

Turdikhan's labor activity was not limited to this. In the same year, he and his unit grew more than thirty centners of cotton. This is certainly a good result in the conditions of the Logan village, which is located at the foot of the Aloy mountain range, where spring starts late and autumn starts early. There were days when Aya picked up to three hundred kilograms of cotton a day this year.

Even in the 1960s, this humble woman was able to be an example and example to everyone with her hard work. Aya is now promoted from the head of the unit to the rank of brigadier. And this required to be more active. He was able to feel the responsibility, and he always performed the tasks assigned to him dil-

igently and to the best of his abilities. For this reason, in 1965, Turdikhan Aya was again sent to the center to participate in the "Exhibition of Achievements of the All-Union National Economy" in Moscow. There, the silver medal of "USSR HXYK" will be awarded for achievements in the national economy.

In the next five years, he picked seventy tons of cotton, including sixteen tons in 1970. With this, he was recognized as worthy of another award and was awarded with the Jubilee Medal "For Passionate Work". It should be said that the honest work of aya and her devotion to her duty play an important role in this.

Turdikhan Boydadayeva, the chevar picker of the village, achieved high results not only in growing and picking cotton, but also in growing cocoons. For example, it can be said that he delivered 256 kilograms of cocoons to the state, which was supposed to produce 195 kilograms in three years.

Mother Turdikhan was a woman who had her own place and voice in society as well as in the collective economy. He also worked as a deputy in village and district councils in different years.

During her career, Aya was awarded with high titles and awards, several other badges and two cars. He was always respected by his fellow villagers for his honesty and hard work, and raised four children together with his partner Sharif aka Ibragimov. He saw their maturity.

Turdikhan Boydadayeva, the village's mother and advisor, a simple and modest person, left this bright world in 2021. Mother Turdikhan devoted herself to all her work, she did not spend her life in vain, and after her work, she gained honor in the country. The name of this blessed mother always lives in the hearts of her fellow villagers and relatives, and is remembered with respect.