

Local News 16th Feb 2011

Committee has up to midday to submit report on nominees

The parliamentary committee on justice and legal affairs has up to 12.30 Wednesday afternoon to conclude its findings on the controversial nominations to the judiciary. National Assembly Speaker Kenneth Marende Tuesday declined to give the Ababu Namwamba led team more time as requested to reach a consensus instead directing to wind up and hand in their report today in whatever form.

Rising on a point of order, Hamisi MP George Khaniri said that the Legal Affairs Committee was not mandated to vet the nominees, while Committee member Isaac Ruto said it was not possible to complete the report in the stipulated time by the Speaker. Mr Namwamba's team has been examining the nomination of [Attorney General](#), Chief Justice and Director of Public Prosecution. The Finance and Trade committee however tabled its report over the nomination of William Kirwa as the Controller of Budget. Marende was expected to rule on the matter Tuesday.

Kenya steps up surveillance at border with Uganda

There is high level surveillance on the border between [Kenya](#) and [Uganda](#) ahead of the general elections set to be held in Uganda [this Friday](#). According to Sospeter Ojaamong, Kenya's labor assistant minister, who held a meeting with Teso North District Commissioner Joseph Rotich, senior military officers had met with the DC to brief him on arrangements.

The Amagoro MP called on Uganda to conduct its election peacefully as the vote outcome would have implications both on Kenya and Uganda. Ojaamong is also calling on the Uganda government to see to it that it does not use security officers to rig the vote. Kenyans and other foreigners have reportedly been seen leaving the country in fear of post election violence owing to the tense political atmosphere.

Ends...Pat

Food prices at dangerous levels, says [World Bank](#)

The World Bank says food prices are at "dangerous levels" and have pushed 44 million more people into poverty since last June. According to the latest edition of its Food Price Watch, prices rose by 15% in the four months between October 2010 and January this year. Food price inflation is felt disproportionately by the poor, who spend over half their income on food.

The Bank called on this week's G20 meeting to address the problem. The World Bank's president, Robert Zoellick, said in a statement: "Global food prices are rising to dangerous levels and threaten tens of millions of poor people around the world."

Regional Scene

Benghazi, Libya 'rocked by protests'

There are reports of protests in the Libyan city of [Benghazi](#). Eyewitnesses say that the unrest had been triggered by the arrest of a lawyer who is an outspoken critic of the government. The lawyer was later said to have been released, but the demonstrations reportedly continued.

Pro-democracy protests have swept through several Arab countries in recent weeks, forcing the leaders of [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) from power. There is no independent confirmation of the protests in Benghazi, but eyewitnesses say that at one stage some 2,000 people were involved. Later, state television showed pictures of several hundred people in Benghazi voicing their support for the government. The government has so far not commented on events in the city.

International News

CBS's Lara Logan attacked by Egyptian mob in Cairo

A senior CBS correspondent is recovering in hospital in the US after she was beaten and sexually assaulted by a mob while covering the Egyptian protests, the US network says. It says the attack occurred [on Friday](#) in Cairo's packed Tahrir Square after [President Hosni Mubarak](#) stepped down.

Ms Logan became separated from her crew and was rescued by women and soldiers. The [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) has said 52 journalists were assaulted and 76 detained during events in Egypt. In a statement, CBS said that Ms Logan and her team had become "surrounded by a dangerous element amidst the celebration" with a mob of more than 200 people "whipped into a frenzy".

It said Ms Logan was recovering following what it described as "a brutal and sustained sexual assault and beating". A group of women and an estimated 20 soldiers managed to save her after she became separated from her colleagues and security, it added.

Iran protests 'going nowhere', says Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

[President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) has said the opposition protests seen in Iranian cities [on Monday](#) are "going nowhere" and vowed to punish their organisers. Mr Ahmadinejad told state television that "enemies" were trying to "tarnish the Iranian nation's brilliance". Two people were killed and several wounded in clashes between protesters and security forces in central Tehran, officials said.

US President [Barack Obama](#) sharply criticised the authorities' response. Mr Obama said the US could not dictate what went on inside [Iran](#), but hoped people would have the "courage to be able to express their yearning for greater freedom and a more representative government". Not long afterwards, Iran's president dismissed the protests in [Tehran](#) and other major cities, saying they had wanted to undermine a rally held last Friday to mark the 32nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Teenage politician elected in Britain

An 18-year-old pupil believed to be the youngest elected politician in Britain was sworn in [on Tuesday](#) with a warning to watch what he says on social networking sites. Tom Bletsoe, who stood as an independent, was sworn onto the town council of St Ives in Cambridgeshire, eastern England.

A council clerk warned him that any inappropriate comments online might breach the local authority's conduct code. Bletsoe, who was 18 years and 52 days when he won a by-election earlier this month, says he wants to make a contribution to his town further saying that he thinks they know that he uses [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) a lot. The teenager, who is still at school, has ambitions to be an actor or a teacher.

With British politics still recovering from a scandal over lawmakers' expenses, Bletsoe said he had no intention to claim any.

Sport News

Mathare United medical and insurance worries ease

[KENYAN Premier League clubs](#) have been surveying the possibility of providing medical and insurance cover to all players and staff of their 16 clubs. But the huge financial challenge has yet to be overcome and, meanwhile, the clubs have to individually fend for themselves. [Mathare United](#) on Tuesday made headway; receiving sponsorship for medical and insurance cover, totalling Sh5 million, annually, for three years.

United are ready to roll as the kick-off of the 2011 season beckons with their opening match against Sofapaka [on February 27](#). REAL Insurance Company handed to Mathare, the first cheque of Sh5 million of the Sh15 million three-year deal at a function at the National Stadium. REAL Insurance chief executive officer Joseph Kiuna said his company, known for setting the pace in the insurance sector with innovative cutting edge products, and who have been in the market since 1910, were happy to associate with a progressive community football club like [Mathare United](#). He said REAL Insurance had Africa's best insurance solutions and operations extended by REAL Insurance Tanzania and REAL Insurance Malawi.

Business News

New Soybean Models Triple Smallholder Growers' Incomes

Agricultural organisations are flagging soybeans as a crop with huge growth potential, alongside projects now delivering higher soybean yields and drawing smallholders into soybean processing in a double drive that is upping earnings by up to 15-fold.

Concentrated around a soybean project in Mumias, Western Kenya, the new soybean models have already tripled the incomes of more than 3,000 farmers in the region, and could equally be applied to the more than 30,000 smallholders now growing the crop across Kenya, say agricultural experts.

According to a National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) report, in the last five years, soybean cultivation in Africa has grown at five per cent a year, while production has risen by seven per cent a year. But [Africa](#) still only accounts for 0.6 per cent of the world's total production, despite now growing the crop on a total 1.5 million hectares of land.