

Local News June 18th, 2010

Kenyan serial killer faces more charges

Police Friday preferred two more murder charges against self-confessed serial killer Phillip Onyancha. Onyancha who first appeared in court this week is also now accused of killing Catherine Chelangat on November 22, 2008 in Karen. It is also alleged that he killed Jacqueline Chepngetich Misoi on May 30 in the same year at Mount Kenya building in Nairobi. He was however not required to plead to the charge after High Court Judge Jessie Lessit directed the Deputy High Court Registrar to assign him a lawyer.

Justice Lessit wants the case mentioned on June 29. On Tuesday, Onyancha was charged alongside two other suspects over the murder of nine year-old Anthony Muiruri in Dagoretti. The three did not plead to that charge due to the absence of a defence lawyer. They are currently being held at Kilimani Police Station as police conclude investigations.

Kenyan leaders urged to foster peace

The Five commissions set up under Agenda Four have sent a passionate appeal to President Mwai Kibaki to take a lead in setting up an “infrastructure for a peaceful and a cohesive referendum by sending out messages that reinforce the cohesion agenda.” National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) Chairman Mzalendo Kibunjia who read a joint statement today urged the Head of State to ensure that the ongoing Constitution campaigns are peaceful and tolerant after their earlier plea for an ending following Sunday’s blasts at Uhuru Park was ignored.

On his part the chairman of the committee of experts Nzamba Kitonga has challenged political and religious leaders to observe and maintain peace as they proceed with their respective campaigns on the proposed constitution despite their differences. The NCIC, CoE, the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC), the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) and the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) expressed a desire to ensure a peaceful and unified referendum. All the five commissions were created to spearhead institutional and Constitutional reform after the deadly 2008 post-election violence.

VP: Kenya committed to prison reforms

Vice President Kalonzo has re-affirmed the government's commitment to reforms in the country's correctional services facilities to make them conform to international standards. The VP said since the launch of Integration Correctional Services Improvement Programme and reforms Secretariat in 2008, much progress has been realized particularly in the rehabilitation of inmates, housing, healthcare, transport and general welfare of both staff and prisoners. The Vice President made the remarks when he officially launched the Legal and Human Rights Unit in Prison Stations at a ceremony held at the Nairobi West Prison.

The unit is mandated to provide legal aid to staff, remandees, convicted prisoners as well as offenders on custodial sentences and victims of crime.

Prison waders face housing problems

Housing has been termed as one of the major challenge facing the prison department in the country. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dr. Ludeki Chweya revealed that currently the institution needs 15,000 housing units for its staff. Dr. Chweya noted that the Ministry has already set up a committee to handle the housing issue. Speaking during the officially launched the legal and human Rights Unit in prison stations in Nairobi, Chweya said that the Ministry recognizes the importance of the rights and dignity of prisoners and this is why the legal rights unit has been set up to look into the rights and violations of prisoners.

Reactions to Machage's suspension

Stern action against hate speech by president Kibaki, leading to the suspension of assistant minister Wilfred Machage received warm welcome by two ODM Members of Parliament. The MPs Edwin Yinda of Alego -Usonga and his Rarieda counterpart Eng. Nicholas Gumbo noted the president put the interest of Kenyans first by ordering for the arrest of those spreading hate speeches followed by the suspension of the roads assistant minister Machage. Speaking separately the duo noted that the move by the head of the nation was timely adding it would sound an alarm bell to the politicians anticipating of high jacking the constitution making process to trigger ethnic hatred.

Yinda added that the minister's calls for his sacking following the suspension were based on desperation citing that it was noble for him to step a side pending the determination of his hate speech in court. Gumbo expressed optimism on the fight against impunity saying it was clear that any public servant with pending case in court is to be suspended a thing he said never used to happen before.

ENDS... BY JOSEPH NJANE

Capital Acquisition Hard for Small Scale Traders

Difficulty in capital acquisition is the main hindrance towards expansion of small scale businesses in the country. This was revealed Friday as Fish FM set out to interact with small scale traders within Eldoret town where some of the traders complained that acquiring business loans from banks has for long been the stumbling bloc towards the success of the informal sector. The traders added that most banks issue loans to fully fledged businesses, locking them out though they need the capital injection more, noting that the informal sector is key to economic development.

In yet to be confirmed allegations, some of the banks were accused of issuance of loans along ethnic, racial and religious lines, which has consequently locked out thousands of enthusiastic Kenyans. The informal sector is a major employer in the country and a major platform towards realization of vision 2030.

Ends... David Macharia

Financial groups formed by juakali sector members

Following hard and sudden financial times the juakali sector members have come up with small groups that help them during emergencies. Such groups pull their resources together and collect equal amount of money from its members thus having enough money to be loaned out in times of crisis. According to Daniel Indusa, a juakali worker at Eldoret such groups offer a good financial center among those involved since most of them have meager income, which can not cater for emergencies. Indusa added that since the foundation of the groups most members have come to appreciate the easy way of getting finance assistance since it is carried out among themselves and borrowing money is not a tedious process as may be in other financial institutions.

He urged Kenyans to try the method of group fundings and assured that it can be achieved by people in all spheres of work if only unity and transparency is observed.

EndsGladys Kimaiyo

Kenya offers US help to clean up spill

More than 20 countries, from Canada to Japan, have offered assistance to the United States over the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster, very little of which has been accepted, the State Department said on Thursday. The 22 countries offering assistance are: Kenya, Belgium, Britain, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Qatar, Norway, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam. Many offered their help through the International Maritime Organization, which is also sending notifications about the spill to its 169 member states.

Initially the US turned down offers, but with workers locked in a race against time to stem the massive spill, the State Department is now playing an active role in the response effort and has appealed for certain boom and skimmers. Most offers are still "under consideration," some dating back to just weeks after the BP-run Deepwater Horizon rig sank on April 22, triggering the worst environmental disaster in American history.

Push for 'Great Green Wall of Africa' to halt Sahara

African leaders are meeting in Chad to push the idea of planting a tree belt across Africa from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east. The Great Green Wall project is backed by the African Union and is aimed at halting the advancing Sahara Desert. The belt would be 15km (nine miles) wide and 7,000km (4,350 miles) long. The initiative, conceived five years ago, has not started because of a lack of funding and some experts worry it would not be maintained properly.

The initiative has the full backing of Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, who is in Chad with 10 other heads of state to discuss desertification. His government has created the website

dedicated to the Great Green Wall. It is envisaged that the belt would go through 11 countries from east to west.

Regional News

Circumcisions kill 20 boys in South Africa

Twenty South African boys have died following a failed circumcision in Eastern Cape Province. Some 60 boys have been rescued from 11 initiation schools which have since been closed. Circumcision is seen as a rite of passage into manhood in some South African communities. The practice is common among the Xhosa and Ndebele communities. However, Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini wants it reintroduced among the Zulu people because of reports that medical circumcision can reduce the chances of getting HIV. The rescued boys have been taken to the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha. Illegal initiations schools have become common in the Eastern Cape, especially in rural areas.

Global News

IMF says Spain taking right steps towards stability

Spain is taking the right measures for economic stability, the head of the International Monetary Fund has said. Dominique Strauss-Kahn said he was "confident" Spain's economy would recover and called on all Spaniards to back the government's austerity work. He was speaking after a meeting in Madrid with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Zapatero had earlier denied his government was seeking an IMF bailout, but markets have been nervous. Zapatero said that Spain's economy was solid and solvent, and the visit by Dominique Strauss-Kahn was a scheduled one.

Sport News

Peace tournament set for this weekend

The peace tournament is on this weekend at Kamukunji grounds in Eldoret, running till Sunday. Some of the teams that will battle it out for the winner's include Kamukunji FC, Bondeni FC and Kidiwa FC. According to Rolex FC coach Daniel Induswe, the tournament targets to promote peace building efforts among different communities in the region under a healing and reconciliation programme dubbed "for a better neighborhood and forgiveness." Elsewhere, the I-step tournament continued with Rolex F.C humiliating Huruma FC. 3 goals to 2 while rangers FC humbled Muruti FC. 1 goal to nil. This weekend, Rolex FC will be meeting face to face with Puma FC in a match that will be played at pipeline grounds Eldoret this weekend.

Ends... Wesonga Job

Kenya rugby team arrives in SA

The Kenya national rugby 15 a side team is in South Africa to face off with the Mpumalanga Pumas. They flew there Thursday following a deal reached with Kenya Airways in which the airline will be flying the team for international matches as part of efforts to develop the Kenyan

rugby talent. As part of the support package, the airline is catering for the air tickets and the kits used by the players and officials on during their international matches.

Kenya Rugby Union Chairman Richard Omwela welcomed Kenya Airways' gesture noting that the union was now laying more emphasis on exposing and developing 15s rugby. He added that in intervening to fly the national 15s team, Kenya Airways had taken care of a huge challenge for the union.

29 Kenyans for UK Bisley Shoot

Twenty nine Kenyan full-bore target rifle shooters are expected to leave the country on the 1st of next month to compete at the annual United Kingdom Bisley Shoot. The team which has 12 shooters from Armed Forces and the same number from Kenya Police includes the newly crowned Kenya champion Satiender Sehmi from the Kenya Regiment Rifle Club. Sehmi, a local motor-businessman defied all odds to beat a large field of 74 shooters at the Stoni Athi Range returning 664-25. He dethroned seven time champion Peter Mathenge who scored 657-35. Evans Odeo of Kahawa Garrison finished a distant third on 354-22. Former champion Edward Legei from the Presidential Escort Unit has been retained as overall team captain for the UK Bisley.

Business News

NBK to open 20 branches

National bank of Kenya will be opening at least 20 branches this financial year. NBK Managing Director Reuben Marambii says the move is in line with the bank's expansion strategy that will see the institution reach more customers. The bank will also issue bonus shares to its shareholders as a way of utilizing funds from share premium account. The bank that is set for privatization currently has a surplus of 53.5 million after eliminating the 1.34 revenue deficit. The expansion programme will cost Sh700M. Marambii said the bank which has announced a 2.2 pretax profit will also be looking forward to cutting costs by not printing any more cheques and financial statements. Shareholders will however for the third year running after the banks returned to profitability not receive any dividends. The bank has however promised to pay dividends to shareholders next week.

As the week crawls to a close, here are the prices of various commodities as they were sold at the Eldoret Municipal market. A kilogram of maize traded at a steady 23 shillings for the fifth week now, with a kilo of beans stationed at a constant average of 65 shillings. A kilo of millet traded at 70 shillings up from 60 shillings a week ago, while sorghum and wheat traded at 40 shillings a kilo. Potatoes and carrots vended at a steady price of 20 shillings a kilo, while green peas traded at 50 shillings per kilo. Groundnuts and rice sold for 100 shillings per kilogram. A 60 kilo bag of kales maintained ground at 1,300 shillings, while a similar amount of spinach went for 800 shillings. Cabbages remained the most expensive vegetable, with one cabbage going for an average price of 35 shillings. A tray of eggs remained at 230 shillings, 30 shillings

ahead of a kilo of parsley.

Ends... David Macharia

Zain Kenya happy with move on 3G licenses

Zain Kenya has welcomed the decision by the government to review the licence fee for 3G services saying it will enable more Kenyans to experience the ongoing digital revolution.

Managing Director Rene Meza said the move to slash the charges from \$25 million to \$10 million is a step towards bridging the digital divide in the country and making Kenya the ICT hub in Africa. The move, which Meza argued levels the playing field for all operators, opens the door for the company to roll out the 3G network which allows subscribers to access mobile high speed data.

The plans, he added are at an advanced stage and will be done in partnership with global vendors, whom he did not name. Zain Kenya, Telkom Kenya and Essar Telecom Kenya have in the past petitioned CCK to lower the charges. Safaricom which three years ago paid the full Sh1.9 billion amount to acquire the 3G license has insisted that if the government bows to pressure from its competitors and reduces the fee, it should get a refund.