

LOCAL NEWS 23 April 23, 2010

Children right observed by lawyers

ProBono lawyers committee from The Cradle, western province branch Friday held an open day forum in Eldoret aimed at providing free legal services for children.

Legal aid programme officer at the cradle Jude Nalyanya said lawyers have to network and co-ordinate in order to handle well issues that are affecting children in the country.

At the same time, Nalyanya urged parents to be keen on matters that affect their children and report any cases of child abuse to the relevant authorities for help.

Similar forums will be held in various towns across the country where children and the public will be informed about children's rights apart from offering free legal services to the affected children.

Equity Bank's pretax profit ups

Equity Bank Friday maintained its characteristic impressive performance when it announced a 43 percent growth in pretax profit for the first quarter of 2010 to 1.7 billion shillings versus a 29 percent jump during the same period last year.

Equally the period under review saw the after tax profit grow by 36 percent from Kshs 918 million to reach Kshs 1.2 Billion. The total assets of the bank grew by 33 per cent to Kshs 111 billion, up from Kshs 83 billion in March 2009.

Releasing the results during an investor briefing, the Bank's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. James Mwangi said the group's impressive first quarter results were attributable to management of risks across the board, improving macroeconomic environment and improved management efficiencies.

Kenya moves to curb child mortality

With the introduction of a combined new Child Health booklet, expectant mothers will now be able to simultaneously track their health and that of the babies to reduce mortality rates.

Speaking Friday during the launch of the new healthcare booklets, Medical Services Director Shahnaaz Sharif said they would replace the old generation medical cards that separately recorded maternal health statuses.

Dr Sharif added that the new booklets would be used to monitor the child's physical and mental well being up until their fifth birthday and would also be used to link the health of the mother to that of her child.

He explained that the booklets which were already in use in Nyanza and Coast provinces would be offered free of charge to women when they made their first antenatal visit.

Dr Sharif added that a new booklet would be issued for each subsequent pregnancy and also cautioned medical facilities against selling the booklets.

VP commends cooperative movement

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka Friday urged the management of the Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS) in the country to be prudent and transparent in their operations in order to safeguard and expand members' investments.

Kalonzo said the SACCOS played an important role in uplifting living standards of members through issuance of loans for housing, school fees, and medical care among other necessities.

Addressing the 36th Annual Delegates Meeting of the Magereza SACCO society at Nairobi West Prisons Officers Mess, Kalonzo said that the SACCO societies were complementing the government's efforts in the war against poverty especially in the rural areas.

The VP commended the Magereza SACCO management for maintaining a high return on shareholders investments, noting that the dividend pay out of 9.6 % for shareholders was among the highest in the country.

The society has a share capital of 1.8 billion shillings and a loan portfolio of 1.7 billion shillings which Musyoka said was a remarkable achievement.

Diplomatic missions back draft constitution

Diplomatic missions in the Nairobi have cautioned politicians against peddling false statements on the proposed constitution.

Addressing the press today in Nairobi, the six envoys led by the US ambassador Michael Rannerberger said they will engage the public in a civic education to ensure that Kenyans make informed decisions on their voting patterns.

The envoys also called on all Kenyans to register as voters and make use of their right to vote in the upcoming referendum and have an opportunity to decide on their future. Rannerberger encouraged those committed to register to also cheer on the unconvinced.

He said that Kenyans have witnessed various unsuccessful attempts to review the country's basic law adding that the new proposed constitution will represent a break from the past, which many Kenyans have been waiting for at least 20yrs.

At the same time, he said that civic education must have the widest possible outreach encouraging the government to provide adequate funding for voter registration and civic education campaigns.

Regional news

Cameroonian editor dies in prison

Cameroonian editor Germain Ngota has died in prison in the capital, Yaounde. He was the managing editor of the Cameroon Express and one of three reporters detained in March on charges of fraud and using false documents. An adviser to the Cameroonian journalists' union (SNJC) said Ngota was not given any medical treatment during his detention.

Ngota was reportedly suffering from high blood pressure. The authorities have not commented on his death. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) also said it held the authorities responsible for Ngota's death.

Greece calls on EU-IMF safety net

Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou has asked for activation of an EU-IMF debt rescue mechanism, to help pull the economy out of its current crisis.

It follows negotiations with eurozone nations and International Monetary Fund over the details of an emergency rescue package. It comes a day after data showed a worse-than-expected budget deficit of 13.6% of gross domestic product. Credit rating agency Moody's also cut its rating on Greek debt on Thursday

Sports news

Cash award programme to continue, assures Kibaki

President Mwai Kibaki has assured the country's sportsmen and women that the Government will continue to bestow honors and cash awards to excelling players as a motivation and reward for their selfless service to the nation.

President Kibaki made the remarks Friday when he received back the national flag and presented cash awards to the victorious Kenya's golf team which participated in and won Zone 6 Golf Championships in Botswana.

The golf team won the Africa Zone 6 Golf Championship for the first time in the 21 years. The President, who hosted the team at the State House Gardens, said that the sterling performances achieved by Kenyan teams in international competitions brought fame to the country.

Addressing the same forum, Youth and Sports Minister Prof. Helen Sambili declared that her ministry would continue working closely with stakeholders to ensure the game attains high standards nationally and regionally.

The Minister said that the ministry would also popularize the game among young players in various learning institutions throughout the country.

Prof Sambili further urged the Kenyan team to uphold the winning spirit and continue training hard so that they can successfully defend the title next year and even ensure that the trophy finds a permanent home in Kenya.

Business news

Kenyan firm extends policy after volcano

Chartis Kenya Insurance is set to extend travelers' policies for those affected by the six-day closure of European air space. According to the insurance firm, the extension is to cover extra travel time associated with flight delays caused when a volcanic eruption in Iceland led to cancellation of flights in and out of Europe.

Chartis Kenya Managing Director Japh Olende said that given the extraordinary inconvenience caused by the eruption, the firm felt it was suitable thing to allow for an extension of travel cover, which will help clients cope with the delays. Olende said the extension will be open to policyholders who purchased policies before April 13, this year and who have been affected by the disruption of flights due to the volcanic ash. Chartis will reimburse the insured, according to specific policy limits, expenses incurred in respect of hotel accommodation, restaurant meals or refreshment if not provided or compensated by the airline or accommodation provider.