

Local News 31st July 2010

New Kenyan poll puts No in the lead

Barely a day after two opinion polls put the Yes camp on a comfortable lead in the run-up to the August 4 referendum, a new opinion poll by a company calling itself East Africa Dataline has put the No team in the lead for the first time since the commencement of the referendum campaigns. According to a survey released by the company Saturday, 53% of those polled reject the proposed constitution while 47% would say Yes in the referendum.

The survey that sampled 5400 respondents across the country comes barely a day after Strategic Research and TNS Research International polled 66% and 68% respectively for the Yes camp with the No trailing by 20% and 25%. According to Konoin MP Julius Kones who is firmly in the No camp, the survey was based on the 2007 voting patterns across the 8 provinces. The poll indicates that Rift Valley province has the highest number of those opposed to the proposed constitution with 79% followed by Eastern province with 66%.

Nyanza province leads with 73% of those supporting the proposed law followed by Western province at 64%. However the poll seems to be markedly inconsistent with previous polls conducted by various research companies which have constantly shown the Yes team leading by a steady margin

NO camp paints Eldoret red

The No camp today painted Eldoret town red as they held their campaign rally at the 64 stadium where they urged Kenyans to vote against the draft constitution. The rally which was over by the No leader Higher Education Minister William Ruto at his back yard mobilized masses from the North Rift Region to vote against the draft stating contentious clauses on land, county governments' and abortion.

Higher Education minister William Rutoh disputed claims that chaos will erupt in the Rift Valley during the referendum saying that peace will prevail and called on all Kenyans to embrace peace. Those who spoke at the rally called on Kenyans to reject the draft come Tuesday until the contentious issues are addressed amicably. The rally saw Nambale Member of Parliament Kris Okemo declaring his stand as NO supporter.

Assets of ex Kenya ferries boss frozen

Former Kenya Ferry Services managing director John Ria's multi-million property and over 10 bank accounts have now been frozen by the courts following an application by the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission. The order issued on Friday by the High Court in Mombasa will remain in force for the next six months. The KACC wants to investigate whether the property was acquired illegally.

The property includes five vehicles, 12 plots at the Coast and 14 accounts with several banks. Under the order, Ria cannot sell, lease, charge, mortgage, develop, subdivide or engage in any dealing with the property or accounts. The order is copied to six banks, several associate

companies and listed business partners who are named as respondents. Ria was sent on compulsory leave over a year ago to pave way for investigations into alleged misuse of funds at the KFS.

Deadline for Kenya SIM card registration extended

Close to eight million SIM cards could have been rendered useless had the government not extended the registration deadline to August 30 this year. Information and communication permanent secretary Bitange Ndemo said that only 62 percent of the estimated 20 million subscribers had so far complied with the government directive with the initial deadline expected to expire on Friday.

And as is oftentimes the case with Kenyans when it comes to procrastination, despite having a whole month to register their SIM cards most of them jammed registration centers to beat the deadline. Market leader Safaricom registered the highest number of SIM cards at 71 percent of its 12 million customers while Zain was second with 54 percent of its 1.03 million subscribers registered according to Ndemo. The government is creating the register of SIM card owners with names and personal details to help authorities rein in the growing high-tech crime rate. Ndemo said it was now criminal for telecommunication operators to register new subscribers without identification documents. President Mwai Kibaki directed mobile phone operators to register their customers to boost national security and reduce phone related crimes.

Global News

Northern China mine explosion 'kills 15'

At least 15 people have died in an explosion at a coal mine in China. A mine safety official in the northern province of Shanxi said an explosives store blew up during the night shift at the Liugou mine in Linfen city. Rescue workers had been sent to the mine to find any survivors still trapped in the mine, officials said.

Explosions and accidents are common in China's mines, which are vital for its coal-intensive economy. More than 2,600 deaths were reported during 2009

Flood deaths pass 400 in Pakistan and Afghanistan

More than 400 people have been killed and 400,000 displaced by monsoon flooding in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most died in north-west Pakistan, while across the border in Afghanistan at least 60 were killed. Several rivers burst their banks, washing away villages, roads and bridges. Some power supplies have been cut to prevent more electrocutions. Officials say the floods are the worst the region has experienced in more than 80 years, and further rain is forecast. Rescue workers and troops are struggling to reach the hundreds of thousands of people in north-west Pakistan who have been left homeless or stranded by the flooding.

California building explosion kills two

Two people have died after a two-storey industrial building exploded in Los Angeles, California, officials say. One victim was electrocuted by a 34,500-volt power line that was brought down and another died when he was hurled into the street by the blast. The cause of the blast remains under investigation, but officials suspect a natural gas leak caused the disaster. A search-and-rescue team sent dogs into the debris to find a person they thought might be trapped.

Fire Captain Steve Ruda said the dogs did not detect anyone and that large equipment would soon be brought to the site to move the rubble and continue the search

Sports News

Sharapova reaches Stanford semi

Maria Sharapova defeated fellow Russian Elena Dementieva 6-4 2-6 6-3 at the Stanford Classic in California to reach her fourth semi-final of the year. Fifth seed Sharapova responded to losing the second set to the number two seed by going for her shots in the third and got her reward.

She faces Agnieszka Radwanska, who beat Maria Kirilenko, in the last four. The Polish number three seed eased to a 7-5 6-0 victory over Russian Kirilenko in a match of complete contrast to Sharapova's, which at two hours, 47 minutes, was the longest of the tournament.

Dementieva, who has recovered from a shoulder injury and was playing in her first tournament since the French Open, was satisfied with her performance despite losing. In the other quarter-finals, Victoria Azarenka of Belarus recorded her fourth successive victory over France's Marion Bartoli to knock out the defending champion.

England friendly angers Redknapp

Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp has lambasted the timing of England's forthcoming friendly against Hungary. The national side's first game after a disappointing World Cup campaign is on 11 August at Wembley, three days before the start of the Premier League season. Redknapp also criticised his own club for organising a pre-season schedule that he feels could be detrimental to their chances of qualifying for the Champions League group stages.

Tottenham played three games in eight days on a tour of the United States before returning to take on Villarreal at White Hart Lane on Thursday - a game they lost 4-1. A trip to Portugal to play Benfica and a home game against Fiorentina follow.