

Local News 7th October 2010

Kenyan govt accused of abandoning farmers

Members of Parliament have accused the government of abandoning maize farmers to market forces by allowing poor prices for maize. The MPs expressed outrage over the current prices per bag accusing the government of abandoning farmers. The legislators demanded to know why the price of a bag of maize was going for shs1500 and not shs2300 as offered previously. But assistant minister Gideon Ndambuki said the government could not offer more than 1500 shillings a bag owing to the prevailing market forces.

He added that the government had established warehouse receipt system where farmers could choose to store their maize to await better prices or choose to sell on the spot. MPs demanded that the government provides better prices in view of impending hunger owing to the Lanina phenomenon.

Ex officers recruited in the army

Two ex-army officers, a male and a female were Thursday recruited into the armed forces in an exercise that was conducted at Chepkorio. The woman, Janet Tanui who had earlier served in the army from 1989 to 1993 said that she left the forces to get married but had passion to serve. According to the senior recruiting officer Stephen Radina, the exercise attracted over 3,000 participants out of which only 9 were taken, the 2 ex officers included. Radina said that most of them qualified but they only needed to recruit nine adding that the exercise was done in a transparent manner. The admission letters for the qualified participants were issued during the day unlike in the past when it was done at night. The recruits had to meet the set requirements that included good health and CV

Ends...Caro Koech

Constitution a credible guideline, says Kibaki

Kenya's new Constitution champions and offers a credible guideline to enable the country deal with modern day realities, President Mwai Kibaki has said. The Head of State reiterated that the enactment of the new Constitution heralded a new beginning for the country while implementation of wide ranging reforms outlined in the Agenda Four of the National Accord enabled Kenya to overcome challenges that threatened nationhood. The President made the remarks Thursday during the official opening of the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU)/Panaf International Tripartite Conference on Conflict Management and Resolution at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

Noting that the conference was an important forum to exchange ideas on how to build stable nations and strong economies, President Kibaki asserted that only modern ideas could help people move to the next level. He noted that Africa was changing its situation and urged trade unions to partner with governments and other stakeholders in addressing modern day challenges.

Do-nou technology to improve access to rural roads

The community for road empowerment (CORE) will be employing do-nou technology to maintain roads in rural areas. Do-nou technology is a technology that involves the use of gunny bags or sacks filled with farm soil, gravel or sand wrapped, laid on the ground and 5cm covered with murrum. Speaking Thursday in Eldoret at a workshop, Chief Executive Officer Community Road Development, Kyoshi Kita urged various stakeholders to support the technology to construct inaccessible roads nationwide.

At the same time, the manager Kenya Rural Roads Authority Uasin Gishu region, Laban Shichile said the technology will create job opportunities as well as decreasing poverty since it aims to use human labour in road construction. Shichile revealed that the technology will hasten transportation in the rural areas as the process targets to open up the region.

End...Mary Gombe

The government denied the American government access to its physical

and research data records of all commercial banks in the country from 2004 to date as had been requested. Finance assistant minister Dr Oburu Odinga says the American government had requested for the access through USAID. The matter arose from a question from Yatta MP Charles Kilonzo who had wanted to know why the Central Bank granted the US govt unfettered access to all physical and research data records of all commercial banks.

MPs expressed worry that the US government could attempt to use an NGO to access data of monetary value. But Dr Oburu reassured that that was not the case insisting access had been denied.

Justice minister dismisses complaints over new law

The Minister for Justice, National Cohesion and constitutional affairs Mutula Kilonzo has called on professional societies to play a role in the implementation of the new constitution to promote optimal management of public resources. Kilonzo underscored the role for members of the professional societies in spearheading reforms saying their contribution is critical in ensuring relevant policies, legislation and institution are in place.

Speaking Thursday during a consultative breakfast meeting with the professional society in East Africa, Kilonzo said that professional societies have suffered from the effects of bad governance, in spite of the significant roles which they play towards this nation's development. He said that the constitution represents the promise to restore integrity in governance institutions which will fundamentally renew faith in the rule of law and establish value based national institutions and an occasion for healing and national reconstruction. The minister also urged the professional societies to continue enormous contributions towards Kenyas economic growth and politics for national development.

Parliament will be investigating the circumstances that led to the

sacking of former post general master Fred Odhiambo. Temporary speaker Ekwe Ethuro directed the parliamentary committee on information and communication to probe into the dismissal following concerns from MPs that the former post master was sacked unfairly. They claimed the former post masters sack was motivated by ethnic profiling and not abuse of offices charges as claimed by government.

Nominated MP Millie Odhiambo demanded to know why the ministry of information sacked the former post master on abuse of office claims when the attorney general had cleared the officer of such wrongdoing. Assistant minister Dhadho Godana however tried to defend the ministry's action claiming that an internal audit had implicated Odhiambo in fraud related activities. But angry MPs demanded proof of the claims which they claimed were criminal and yet the officer had been declared clean by a probe by the attorney general.

Kenya to host drugs meet

Kenya is set to host a major international conference on drugs and diagnostics next week. Public Health and Sanitation Minister Beth Mugo says African Ministers in charge of health, Science and Technology and representatives from United Nations agencies would meet at the African Conference on Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) to discuss medical research. The Minister said lack of knowledge about research done in other African countries and absence of financing incentives was the greatest barrier to research in Africa.

She said the ANDI meeting would also provide Kenya an opportunity to lobby to host its headquarters, which were temporarily based in Ethiopia. She argued that Kenya had strong health research institutions and was among the leading African countries in pharmaceutical production. Statistics indicate that 80 percent of Africa's pharmaceutical production was based in Kenya, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa of which Kenya was the only country that exported more than 45 percent of her production to neighboring countries. The first such meeting was held in Nigeria in 2008, followed by South Africa in 2009

Kenyan lawyer terms ODM -PNU standoff unreasonable

Constitutional Lawyer Kamotho Waiganjo has dismissed as unreasonable the stand-off between Orange Democratic Movement and Party of National Unity over the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee. Waiganjo says Mohammed Abdikadir is better placed to head the committee having successfully chaired the parliamentary select committee on the constitution that resolved the contentious issues that had derailed the review process for close to 20 years. Waiganjo says that ODM members should not cry foul since they have more members on the committee.

On Wednesday, ODM MPs and their PNU counterparts clashed over the election of Abdikadir as the chairman of the 27-member crucial committee. The talks had earlier ended in a deadlock forcing the Speaker of the National Assembly to intervene. However, the Wednesday evening meeting that picked nominated MP Millie Odhiambo as vice chair was boycotted by ODM MPs.

Constitutional experts are reading mischief in statements by a section

of ODM MPs over the trial of post election violence suspects at the international Criminal Court - ICC. Senior counsel Paul Muite says the MPs intend to shield master minds of the post poll chaos. Muite challenged the legislators to hand over evidence to ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo instead of politicking. The former Kikuyu MP told the press that the masterminds of the 2007/2008 violence never expected ICC to move with speed. He called on Kenyans to support both the ICC and local process in a move to end impunity.

On Wednesday, Chepalungu MP Isaac Ruto and Belgut MP Charles Keter asked ODM to hand

over to ICC minutes of meetings held before and after elections. They claim that the top party leadership is to blame for the violence for deciding to reject 2007 election results and calling for mass action

Chinese navy hospital ship to visit Kenya

The Chinese navy hospital ship Peace Ark will make a port call in Mombasa and provide free medical services to Kenyan civilians and servicemen next week. It is the first time for a Chinese navy hospital ship to visit foreign countries and offer medical services to local citizens and servicemen. With full-load displacement of 14,300 tons, Peace Ark is the first hospital ship in the world with over a 10,000-ton capacity. The ship is equipped with a rescue helicopter, 300 hospital beds, 428 medical doctors, nurses and supporting staff and 32 medical departments. The medical doctors aboard the ship are scheduled to diagnose and treat local citizens and students at Kenya Red Cross-Mombasa Branch.

When necessary, patients will be transferred in batches to the main platform of the ship for further treatment and operations. Kenyan medical personnel will also receive training and take part in the diagnosis and treatment. Kenya is the second leg of the trip of Peace Ark. The ship visited Djibouti late last month

Regional News

Guinea electoral chief taken to court ahead of run-off

The party of one of Guinea's presidential candidates is taking the new electoral chief to court, accusing him of rigging in the first round. But Lonceni Camara, who was appointed last month, denies the allegations by Cellou Dalein Diallo's party, saying he did nothing wrong in June's vote. The case could further delay a run-off election, now scheduled for 24 October. A former prime minister, Diallo is seen as the favourite in the run-off after gaining 44% of the vote in the first round.

His rival, veteran opposition leader Alpha Conde, won 18%, but says he was defrauded of some 600,000 votes. The second round has been delayed twice, once in July because of investigations into electoral fraud and again in September because of clashes between rival supporters. Nigeria Boko Haram sect 'shoots two in Maiduguri' Two people have been shot dead in the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri in the latest attacks blamed on the Boko Haram sect. A senior opposition politician and a policeman were both killed by gunmen on motorcycles, police say. Fifteen people, including 10 police officers, have now been killed in recent weeks.

Clashes between Boko Haram and the police in July 2009 left hundreds dead. The army has been deployed to the city and motorbikes banned at night in a bid to stop the attacks. But last month, hundreds of people suspected of being Boko Haram members escaped after gunmen attacked the prison where they were being held in the city.

Williams 'not optimistic' for Sudan

The Archbishop of Canterbury has added his voice to those warning that Sudan is sliding back towards civil war. World leaders, from President Obama to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, have raised concerns in recent weeks. Now Dr Rowan Williams has said he is "not optimistic" that war can be averted in Africa's largest country. Twenty years of fighting between the mainly Muslim north and largely Christian and Animist south, which ended in 2005, left 1.5 million

dead.

Friction has grown as a referendum on independence for the oil rich south, which was agreed under the peace agreement which ended the civil war, gets nearer. It, and another referendum in the oil region of Abyei, is due to be held on 9 January 2011. However, delays in arranging the registration of voters, agreeing border demarcations and the distribution of oil resources, mean the vote could be delayed.

Michelle tops Forbes list

US First Lady Michelle Obama shot up 40 places on this year's Forbes magazine list of powerful women to claim the top spot, replacing German leader Angela Merkel. Obama's new ranking ends Merkel's four-year reign at the top of the magazine's listing of the most influential women in the world. Her quick track up the list was mirrored by that of her husband's former rival and now secretary of state Hillary Clinton, who moved up from 36th place last year to crack the top 10, taking fifth place.

Merkel, who is struggling with a rocky second term in office, was relegated to fourth place behind Kraft Foods CEO Irene Rosenfeld and talkshow host and media mogul Oprah Winfrey. In compiling this year's list, the magazine said it opted to "look up and out into the broader culture." Despite holding no official position, Forbes said Michelle Obama had proved "a true change-maker since taking lodge in the White House in 2008," citing her "Let's Move!" campaign aimed at reducing childhood obesity.

Week's wait for mayoral result in Peruvian capital

Two women competing to be mayor of the Peruvian capital, Lima, will have to wait another week for the result. Initial results gave a narrow victory the left-wing candidate, Susana Villaran over her conservative opponent, Lourdes Flores. But more than a quarter of the ballots - more than a million votes - have been challenged and will have to be reviewed. Whichever candidate wins, Lima will have its first female elected mayor since it was founded in 1535.

In initial results, the national electoral office gave Villaran 38.4%, against 37.58% for Lourdes Flores, a victory margin of less than 1%. If her victory is confirmed, Villaran, a 61-year-old human rights advocate, will be the first left-wing mayor since the early 1980s.

Sports News

Kenyan coach Mulee drops six players

Harambee stars head coach Jacob Ghost Mulee has dropped six players ahead of this Saturday's 2012 Africa cup of Nations qualifier against Uganda Cranes at the Nyayo National Stadium. The squad which will be mainly a blend of both local and foreign based players will peg its hopes on captain Dennis Oliech, Inter Milan's midfielder Macdonald Mariga, Sweden based Patrick Osiako, Johanna Omollo and Victor Mugabe. Harambee Stars lost the first qualifier by a solitary goal away in Guinea Bissau.

The team is in group J alongside leaders Uganda, Guinea Bissau and Angola. Uganda currently lead the Group with maximum points following their 3-0 crushing of Angola in the opening match on September 4 in Kampala, while Kenya -- now coached by Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee -- lost 1-0 away to lowly Guinea Bissau to lie in third position. The first two teams in each pool will

qualify for the 2012 African final's to be co hosted by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea

Langat, Muttai storm through heats

Six Kenyan athletes successfully negotiated their way through the heats early today as day four of the Commonwealth Games got underway in India. Olympic 1500 metres champion Nancy Jebet Langat, Viola Kibiwott and Irene Jelagat all qualified for Friday's final. Kibiwott was first up in heat one staying just behind the leaders for the opening two laps. She moved into the lead in the final lap steadily pulling away to win in 4:08.76. Helen Clitheroe of England was second in 4:09.34 with former world junior champion Stephanie Twell in third 4:10.35.

In the men's 400 metres heats, Mark Muttai was the stand out performer winning heat four in 45.90 seconds. The army man took the lead with 100 metres to go and despite easing off in the last 50 metres he still won with a two metre gap. Vincent Mumo Kiilu was the first Kenyan to step on the track finishing third in heat three in 46.89 seconds. The heat was won by Andretti Bain of Bahamas in 46.19 with England's Robert Tobin finishing in second place in a time of 46.26 secs.

The third Kenyan to go through was Geoffrey Ngeno who made it to the semis as one of the fastest losers. The lanky athlete could only manage fourth place in heat six but his time of 47.40 was enough for him to sneak through

Kenya in with a ghost of a chance

Uganda heads into this weekend's Africa Nations Cup group J qualifying match against Kenya hoping to cement their top position while a defeat for the hosts will deal a blow to their campaign hopes. The game, scheduled for Nairobi's Nyayo National Stadium, is building up to be one of the most hugely-anticipated regional derbies in recent years and the atmosphere is already intense on either side of the border.

Uganda currently lead the Group with maximum points following their 3-0 crushing of Angola in the opening match on September 4 in Kampala, while Kenya -- now coached by Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee -- lost 1-0 away to lowly Guinea Bissau to lie in third position. The Ugandans beat Kenya twice to win back-to-back Cecafta Senior Challenge Cup trophies at home and in Nairobi in 2008 and 2009, and also edged out the hosts to qualify for the 2011 African Nations Championships finals in Sudan, on better goal aggregate earlier this year. However, expectations are high in both countries as players and coaches taunt each other over tactics and individual playing skills.

Elephants set for Burundi clash

Ivory Coast wound up their training at City Stadium on Thursday in preparation for their Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Burundi. The Elephants who have been in Kenya since Tuesday evening were taken through their paces by new coach Francois Zahoui. Manchester City stalwart Kolo Toure and Arsenal defender Emmanuel Eboué are amongst the notable players in the squad alongside Lille ace Gervinho and Sevilla defender Didier Zokora. The most notable absentee is Chelsea striker Didier Drogba who is his country's top goal scorer of all time with 45 goals. Drogba has quashed reports by sections in the Ivorian media claiming that he is contemplating quitting international football because of his absence.

Last year's English Premiership Golden boot winner said that he needs time off to recover from two operations in order to recover his form that has made him such a lethal weapon in seasons past.

Injured Pedrosa to miss Malaysia

Honda's Dani Pedrosa will miss Sunday's Malaysian MotoGP after breaking his left collarbone last week. That means championship leader Jorge Lorenzo only needs to finish in the top 10 to be crowned world champion with three races of the season to spare. A Repsol Honda statement said there had been "a very slim chance" Pedrosa could have made the trip from Spain. But "after careful consideration he has made the understandable decision to stay at home to continue his recovery".

Pedrosa, 25, returned to Spain for surgery to insert a plate in his collarbone after the crash in practice for last weekend's Japanese Grand Prix at Motegi. He was the only rider who could possibly have caught Fiat Yamaha rider Lorenzo and prevented him winning the title, but even then it would have taken a remarkable loss of form by his compatriot.

Business News

Kenya Power to conclude capital changes this year

Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) will complete the restructuring of its balance sheet through the conversion of preference shares and a cash call this year. Kenya Power, which is the sole electricity transmitter and distributor in east Africa's largest economy, is 90.7 percent owned by the government and the restructuring is expected to cut that stake to just over 50 percent. It said in a newspaper statement it would redeem the government's preference shares through the issuance of new ordinary shares and would carry out an eight-for-one share split before offering 488.63 million shares through a rights issue in which the government will not take part.

The plans are subject to regulatory and shareholder approval, it said, adding implementation was expected at the end of this year.

The process will create equitable shareholdings through the elimination of preference shares, enhance market liquidity for the shares as well as raise funds for investment, the company said. Like other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya faces massive challenges in its energy sector, including ageing transmission networks and power deficits.

Facebook unveils 'groups' feature

Facebook has introduced features aimed at giving users more control over their information and who can see it. The biggest change will allow users to map their offline life to the online world through small groups. Users will also be able to download all the data they have uploaded onto the site. They will also find it easier to see how individual applications are using personal information, Facebook's chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said. The new groups feature will let users form online havens around a discreet circle of people just as they do in the real world from family to work friends and from school friends to friends with a specific interest.