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Housing allowance for varsity staff up

By Amisi Ogara

Public universities staff are set to benefit from a new housing scheme announced by the government last week.

The staff will receive housing allowances increase of between 21 and 60 per cent.

Professors and senior lecturers will be entitled to a housing allowance of Shs 60,000, up from a minimum of Shs 37,500. Personnel in job groups equivalent to the government's P, Q, and R, who currently earn between Shs 15,000, and Shs 17,000 will now draw a maximum of Shs 40,000. The highest paid don in job group 'V' will draw an allowance of Shs 100,000.

However, unlike other beneficiaries of the scheme, there is a catch in respect of the university award: the institution must not pay the new allowances beyond the current treasury allocation.

The award is silent on the long-awaited increases in salaries for university staff. Kenyan lecturers and professors are the most poorly paid in the Commonwealth, a tradition that has led to a constant brain-drain over the decades.

Intriguingly, both the university authorities and staff were unaware that they were among those to benefit from the new scheme. The *Anvil* found most of them agonising over their poor remuneration and expressing envy at primary and high school teachers who were thought to be the only beneficiaries.

There were mixed reactions on the award with a cross-section of senior university administrators saying they were unaware that the increment affected the university.

Others expressed fear that the scheme could force the university to raise house rents for university staff houses.

The fact that the university authorities had not received the circular from the secretary to the cabinet, Dr Sally Kosgei, announcing the improved housing allowances speaks volumes about the fate of the award on the universities: It may take months before it is implemented. Officially, however, the award takes effect on July 1, this year.

Our investigations showed the Vice-Chancellor's office had not received a



Human rights activists demonstrate along the streets of Nairobi. Last week they petitioned the Attorney General, Amos Wako, to urgently table a bill in Parliament to address police torture. See story page 3 (Picture courtesy Nation)

Electricity bills skyrocket as students opt to cook in halls

By Mugure Kihika and Noelina Nabwire

The University of Nairobi is spending more than Shs 6.0 million per month in electricity bills, due to massive cooking in the halls of residence.

The Director of the Students Welfare Authority (SWA), Dr. Maurice Awiti, says the University is struggling to meet the high bills. Awiti confirmed that the university has reached an understanding with the Kenya Power and Lighting Company to settle the bills in instalments.

The director warns that cooking in the halls of residence is a disaster in waiting, unless it is controlled or stopped altogether. He adds that as a deterrent, the university is taking disciplinary measures against students involved in the practice. Students whose cooking activities have caused fires are either denied accommodation or expelled.

The *Anvil* has established that more than 85 per cent of the students in the Main Campus, cook in their rooms. The

University is spending huge sums of money in electricity and water bills. Maintenance costs have gone up following escalated destruction of sockets and circuit breakers.

The power rating at the halls is inadequate for cooking. Mr. Oluoch says that the use of cooking gadgets has resulted in frequent power blackouts caused by overloading.

The situation is worsened by overcrowding at the halls of residence. A room meant for one person now accommodates two to three people, who all use the same power supply output.

Cooking is done under unhygienic conditions. The rooms are poorly ventilated. Fire outbreaks are likely and no safety measures have been put in place. There are no visible fire extinguishers in the halls while most halls have one entrance which also serves as the exit. Last year, six serious fire accidents were reported in various halls of residence. Two rooms in Hall Nine were completely burnt after a student left a heater on and went to class.

In February last year at Kikuyu Campus Pioneer Hall, cooking gadgets left unattended caused the destruction of two rooms. Property worth over Shs 100,000 was also destroyed.

More problems continue to bedevil the institution due to the introduction of the cost cutting measures.

A halls assistant who has been at the university for more than 35 years equates the halls with slums. He says that cooking in the halls is responsible for the deplorable conditions in the hostels. The situation is worsened by retrenchment. Some halls officers have to take charge of more than three halls.

The Customer Relations Officer at the Students Welfare Authority, Mr. Fred Oluoch, says that it is impossible to keep the hostels clean. The students dirty the bathrooms with potato peels, sukuma wiki stalks and other food remnants as soon as they are cleaned.

Mr. Oluoch maintains that every hall has fire extinguishers kept in the custodian's office. He adds that each hall has a

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Scientists battle over Aids vaccine

By Arthur Okwema

Scientists in the Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative are vaccinating volunteers with an Aids vaccine without a legally accepted memorandum of understanding (MoU) to guide the project.

The commencement of the vaccine trials contradict an earlier agreement that they will only do so after a new MoU was signed. There are fears are that the Kenyan team might have been duped to start the trials, before the signing of the new MoU.

The new MoU is extremely important, as source at KAVI puts it, it's on whose basis the vaccine project gravitates. In the MoU, pertinent issues on how the patent on vaccine ownership and related benefits will be distributed, are provided for.

Issues concerning the vaccine invention and the Majengo prostitutes who provided the knowledge that aided in the vaccine development are also integrated.

Similarly, the MoU is to fundamentally alter the procedure of funding, whereby International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) is supposed to fund the University of Nairobi (UoN) directly and not through Oxford University.

Under the new arrangement, each university will present its budget to IAVI, and the money will be sent directly to it.

A reliable source attached to the project who sought anonymity said, "Every time we attempt to sign the document, we realise some clauses have been

Allowance hike for staff

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copy of the circular and was therefore unable to comment.

The directive by the Head of Civil Service, abolished leased quarters and subsidised housing for teachers, civil servants and university staff. It also ordered that market rates be charged for public housing countrywide.

Ironically, the scheme is likely to drive university staff out of their quarters as house rent for institutional houses goes up 10 times more. Currently, staff living in university houses pay far below market rates in rent.

Already, many lecturers have to top up their current housing allowances to meet house rents at market rates. An officer at the University of Nairobi's Estates Department disclosed that apart from forfeiting their entire house allowances, staff housed by the University are required to add maintenance rent of Shs 3,500, 2,100 and 1,500 for three, two and one bed roomed quarters, respectively.

Public universities have been ordered to adopt the new rates "as long as they do not exceed the current treasury allocations." Leases are not to be renewed after July 1, 2001.

This means lecturers will from next month be pushed to low class, high risk residential areas like Kangemi and Dandora, a move that will further lower morale already eroded by poor remuneration despite hard work.

The University of Nairobi currently houses 452 of its 1,520 teaching staff. The rest are entitled to a monthly housing allowance which varies according to designation.

Academic staff interviewed by the Anvil said the new rates were still too low. Market rates for four-bedroom houses in Lavington, Kileleshwa and Muthaiga go for over Shs 30,000 in rent per month.

The big scratch card racket

By Tom Arocho

Mobile phone users and proprietors are losing millions of shillings through a scratch card scandal, investigations by the Anvil have established. Subscribers with the two mobile phone providers - Kencell and Safaricom, have been duped into buying either expired or pre-loaded cards, for the last three months.

Despite reports of the scandal to the two companies, it appears the fraud continues unabated. A Kencell employee, who gave her name only as Annie, said that the claim about the fake card is possible. "With this era of technology, anything is possible," she said. She declined to comment further. At the Safaricom offices, the Public Relations

manager was reportedly out of the office.

It is alleged that the fake scratch cards are made in River Road, from where they are distributed to brokers before finding their way to unsuspecting customers. Used cards are collected and resealed before being sold back.

Lawrence Kinyua of Cellular Communications which sells Safaricom scratch cards, says that he has heard of such claims, though he has not experienced it at his shop. "These complaints are from customers who purchase their cards from these unlicensed or dubious retailers," said Kinyua.

A subscriber receives a phone call from an alleged company repairing lines, and is instructed to press the asterisk, sash, 900. By so doing the unsuspecting

subscriber transfers his credit to another person.

With the introduction of the air time services, the country has witnessed the mushrooming of scratch card selling points, most of which are unlicensed. These cards can now be bought from chemists, hardware shops, cybercafes, restaurants, pubs and even exhibition shops in the back streets.

Mr. Said Ali, the Sales manager of Fone Express has cautioned subscribers to be wary of con men purporting to be agents of the cell phone firms.

Ali advises subscribers of the mobile phones to insist on reloading their credit at the credit card purchasing points.



Japanese Ambassador to Kenya, Morihisa Aoki, makes a point to Energy Minister, Raila Odinga during a consultative meeting to discuss the troubled Sondu Miriu project. (Picture courtesy Nation)

Battle over vaccine trials

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changed. But when we change the clauses with what we think is fair and acceptable, our counterparts reject it. It is just a vicious circle."

Another scientist attached to the project said that there are major hurdles to be overcome before the tripartite MoU between the University of Nairobi, Oxford University, and the project financier, International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), is signed.

Asked about the issues surrounding the unsigned MoU, the vaccine project manager, Dr. Omu Anzala, refused to comment instead referring us to the deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Crispin Kiamba.

Prof Kiamba was not available for comment. Nevertheless, the University's Public relations officer and personal assistant to the Vice-chancellor, Mr. Kimaita Kirimanja, admitted the MoU has not been signed. He could not, however, give reasons for the delay.

What I know is that the document has not been signed and the people at the microbiology department are working on it. And before they get back to us, there is nothing I can say."

Ironically, the three partners in the vaccine project had earlier agreed that only the office of the vice-chancellor would release any information on any future developments of the project.

Analysts say that the controversial MoU leaves the Kenyan team in a precarious position, as there is no legal document guiding the project.

The controversy surrounding the

MoU is cited as one of the reasons for the recent resignation of one of the scientists, Dr. Ephantus Njagi.

Sources close to Dr. Njagi say the project is being run in contravention of the provisions of the unsigned MoU. Such activities are said to have interfered with Dr Njagi's work, forcing him to resign.

The formulation of the new MoU followed revelations in the press that UoN scientists had lost on the patenting of an Aids vaccine they helped develop.

The Oxford team had patented the vaccine design in 1999 behind the backs of their Kenyan counterparts, who realised of the development months later.

According to Prof Andrew McMichael of Medical Research Centre at the Oxford University, they were the sole inventors of the vaccine, and were legally entitled to the vaccine patent.

It was later realised that the association between the Universities of Nairobi and Oxford was based on a weak MoU. It did not provide for the sharing of future benefits arising from any scientific breakthroughs. The Oxford team exploited this loop-hole.

After a tussle on the patent ownership, it was agreed that it could be owned by the three partners. The two universities were then directed to redraft a new MoU.

In December last year, the Minister for Public Health, Prof Sam Onger, while launching the Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative laboratories, insisted the vaccine trials would only start after all major issues had been ironed out.

Power bills skyrocket

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water hydrant to fight fires but accused the students of using the water for other purposes.

He said such fires have also occurred at Lower Kabete Campus and at Stella Awinja hostel with devastating effects. The entire wiring system of Hall Five had to be redone in 1998. This was due to the high power consumption of the cooking apparatus which they were not designed for.

Halls with emergency exits are few while those in existence are used as stores. The staircase of an emergency exit in Hall Four is strewn with dilapidated chairs, beds, unused mattresses and pillows making it impassable in case of a fire outbreak.

Mr. Oluoch adds that SWA has started a disaster preparedness unit that trains staff and students in disaster management. He says the university trained halls officers, custodians and four students per hall in 1998. He, however, regrets that most of them have left the university.

Students on their part have come up with cost cutting measures for survival. They use all kinds of gadgets for cooking which are cheaper but have high power consumption rates.

They view cooking as a necessary evil that has to be endured. Though they acknowledge that cooking is illegal, they hasten to add that it was their only option. Citing affordability, quality and convenience, students maintain that cooking is there to stay, unless the administration scraps the pay-as-you-eat cafeteria system.

Most students depend on the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) for sustenance. The loans given, however, do not reflect current economic hardships.

Susan, an Economics first year student, says that it is impossible to survive on the paltry Shs 20,000 she gets from HELB. From this she has to tuition and accommodation fees, among others, leaving her with about Shs 6,000 for subsistence for the whole academic year.

Students interviewed say hard economic times have interfered with their studies as one cannot learn on an empty stomach. Kimanthi, a Second Year Civil Engineering student says that his workload is too heavy to allow him to cook. He is lucky to have been awarded Shs 42,000. This is supplemented by his parents and a business he runs. He spends Shs 120 per day for meals, which is far above an average of Shs 50 for most students.

Mr. Oluoch said that although the disparity in the amounts given contributes to the problem, cooking is due to financial mismanagement by students.

He is dismayed that cooking in the halls of residence has caused a lot of damage. Apart from the added costs in plumbing, sockets and circuit breakers replacement.

Cooking has also had its toll on the cafeteria services at the university. Few students eat from the messes. This has led to the closure of the Students Centre cafeteria. Records at Mamlaka Catering Unit, for instance, indicate that only an average of 650 students take meals there in a day. This number is negligible considering the student population.

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We invite letters from our readers on topics of their interest. Letters should be short and concise.

SWA now turns to casual workers

By Otieno Otieno

Despite the massive lay-offs in the recent retrenchment exercise, the university of Nairobi has resorted to casual workers to run its operations.

In an interview, Dr Maurice Awiti, the acting director of the Students' Welfare Authority (SWA), confirmed the presence of many casual workers at the central catering unit.

A spot-check conducted by The Anvil, established that all but one person working at the Midway Grill cafeteria were contracted on casual terms. Asked about it, Dr Awiti said, "It is not a secret that we are using casual workers at SWA".

The director explained that SWA was forced to hire cheap labour from outside after two-thirds of its staff were sent packing. But he refuted claims that a greater proportion of personnel at the student kitchens was composed of casual workers.

"We strictly enlist their services in our income-generating projects. A number of them are manning our cafeterias, but even there, at least one of our employees is posted to supervise them."

The University of Nairobi has so far declared 1,838 workers redundant under the civil service retrenchment programme that began in September last year. The SWA was the hardest hit with the programme.

Pressure group wants AG to take over cases

By Nkatha Gikunda and Munyao Mutinda

The People Against Torture (PAT) pressure group has called on the Attorney-General to take over the prosecution of cases from the police.

The group's Secretary General, Mr Hezekiah Abuya, said that the police were not trained lawyers and therefore professionally equipped to prosecute.

Mr Abuya said that the use of the police in prosecuting cases undermined the criminal justice system in the country and was an abuse of the court process.

Speaking to the Anvil in his office, Mr Abuya said that the country had enough lawyers to take up the prosecution of cases.

"There are more than three thousand lawyers to take up the job," he said. He observed that the Police Act gives the police powers to investigate crime, arrest suspects and arraign them in court. He maintained that preservation of peace was their main duty."

Mr Abuya's call comes in the wake of celebration of the United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The group members held demonstrations in the city and presented a memorandum of petitions to the Attorney

General and the Commissioner of Police.

He questioned the rationale of using police prosecutors in cases involving other police officers. "How can the police prosecute one of their own?" he posed.

The human rights lawyer accused the police of being trigger-happy and perpetrating "extra-judicial killings", where a suspect is executed without being given a chance to defend himself. "Police shoot suspects with impunity, instead of shooting them to disable".

He noted that torture by the police inflicted both physical and psychological injury and pain. "The main aim of a torturer is to destroy your personality and inflict psychological trauma for the rest of your life." A part from prisons being used as torture chambers, the lawyer observed, they are in a horrific state.

The Government ratified the United Nations Convention Against Torture on February 11, 1997, yet there is no domestic legislation to provide for its implementation. Although Section 74 of the Constitution and Section 14 A (2) of the Police Act, prohibit torture, there is no provision for compensation to torture victims.

He said the pressure group appreciated the publication of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of April 26, 2000. But cited delays by the A-G in presenting the

Bill in parliament for debate.

Mr Abuya further censured the Attorney-General for failing to draft the requisite statutory Bill to activate or implement Section 84(5) of the Constitution which requires parliament to make provision for financial assistance to aggrieved Kenyans to prosecute violators of their fundamental rights.

The pressure group's mandate is to provide legal representation for torture victims or survivors. The group will soon establish a rehabilitation centre to offer counselling services to torture victims or survivors, Mr Abuya disclosed.

The lawyer called for the abolition of the death penalty saying it was not a deterrent measure, and every one has a right to life. He averred that the country has more than a thousand death row convicts but no one has been executed since 1985. This, he said, was a very cruel and the worst form of psychological torture.

The activist said that the state is required to provide legal representation to suspects in cases that carry the death penalty. He, however, lamented that this provision was not being implemented. Parliamentary Deputy Clerk Mr. Mumbura Werunga said parliament had delegated the function to the High Court.

Residents are consuming waste products

By Jacob Awuor

Unsuspecting residents of Eastland estates in Nairobi, are consuming industrial and hotel waste products, the Anvil has learnt.

A survey at Kariobangi North, Kariadudu, Korogocho, Gomongo and Dandora phase IV estates revealed that waste products from food processing industries and hotels are being sold to unsuspecting customers. They include parts of or whole chicken, fish and loaves of bread which are sold late in the evenings.

Rose Anyango, a chicken trader, revealed that she gets the products from employees who take them to her on their way to the Dandora dumping site. She believes that her products poses no health threat to consumers.

The estates border Nairobi's only dumping site. At a Ruaraka fish processing company, a watchman confided that all that the company is interested in is the fresh fish which it cans for export, the rest, skeletons, which are to be disposed of, are cheaply sold to "fish mongers" at the gate.

Loaves of bread referred to as "off cuts" are sold at as low as Kshs 10. Most residents interviewed could not tell where the products come from but showed concern on the health hazard they are being exposed to by unscrupulous traders.

Union in plea on terms of service

By Baraza Sylvabel and Otieno Amisi

Unionisable employees of the university of Nairobi want their terms of service improved. The University's Chief Shopsteward, Mr. Alfred Mulali, attributed low morale among the employees to "persistent fear of retrenchment and poor pay package."

Mr Mulali, was speaking during a farewell party for the University Registrar - Administration, Mr Jackson Wachira, who has retired.

Addressing the same function Vice Chancellor, Prof Francis Gichiga, urged members of staff to work as a team and shun intrigues against one another.

The VC paid tribute to Mr Wachira describing him as a hardworking and dedicated servant. Wachira, 60 joined the university in 1975.

Retrenchment Programme at UoN 'to continue'

By Judy Gachango

The University of Nairobi is set to begin the second phase of staff retrenchment, an official says.

The University's Public Relations Officer Mr. Kimaita Kirimania says the institution require 700 members at the academic staff next month. Those targeted are in the job groups A to F. Mr Kirimania says the lay offs will cut the University's annual wage bill by Sh 1 billion.

The first phase of retrenchment, implemented between September last year and January this year, saw about 1830 workers in grades 1 to 4 laid off. The university has a total workforce of about 6,000, out of which 2000 are academic staff.

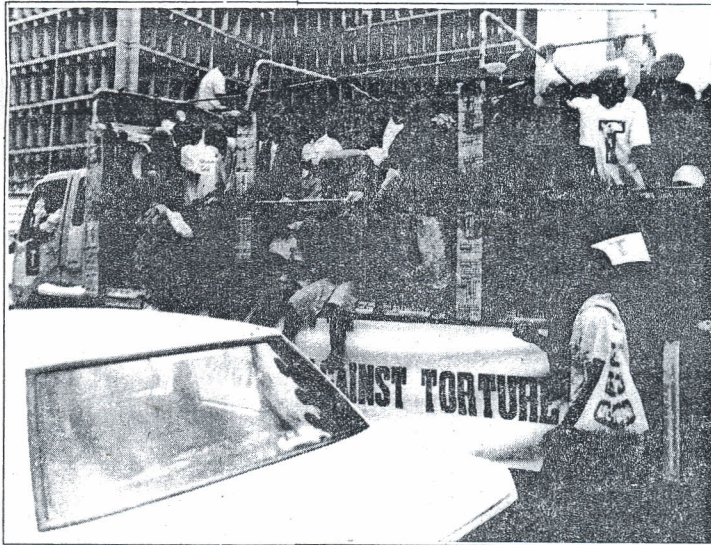
Mr Kirimania says it had been difficult to convince the previous retenees that they would promptly receive their dues. He, however, reaffirmed that the retenees will get their package.

The first phase has adversely affected operations at the university, with many sections temporarily closing down. Outside catering services and a cafeteria previously run by the university in the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation premises, have been halted.

"The remaining staff members can not effectively handle the amount of work left behind by the retenees" an employee at the catering department told journalists.

He said he had to work till late due to the shortage of labour. In the halls of residence, the situation is as grave. Halls six, seven and eight are under one caretaker while another one takes charge of the prefabricated halls after the other two were laid off. In the past, every hall has had its own caretaker.

Security in the Jomo kenyatta library has lapsed following the retrenchment of 54 workers. Students enter the library with their bags and the library risks losing reading material.



Members of the People Against Torture pressure group demonstrate outside police headquarters protesting against police torture (Picture by Munyao Mutinda)

Suspect assisted police to capture kidnappers

By Wahome Thuku

Police used a kidnap suspect to trace three American citizens held hostage by three Nigerian nationals in Nairobi in April.

A CID officer, Corp Paul Mumo told the court last week that upon being arrested, one of the Nigerians, Mr Augustine Azubuike Nwanga, made more than five telephone calls to help the police locate the captives.

Corp Mumo said the suspect then took the officers to a house in South B estate but they did not find the captives. He however, told the Nairobi Chief Magistrate, Boaz Olao, that when the suspect led the police to where the Americans

were being held, they did not find anyone.

"We only found bedding, clothes, a radio and other personal effects belonging to the Americans and five chains that had been used to tie them," Corp Mumo told Olao

The CID officer was testifying in a case in which Mr Nwanga, alias Michael Otieno, is charged with kidnapping and demanding five million dollars (Sh390 million) from Pastor William Marrow, James Harret and Juergen Ahlman. He is alleged to have committed the offence between January 27 and April 23 this year.

The accused is charged separately with two other Nigerians, Johnson Obasi

and Felix Anosike also facing similar charges. Mr Nwanga was arrested when he went to collect part of the money sent from the US by relatives of one of the captives.

The case is being prosecuted by Chief Inspector Moses Oduyo. The three Americans have already testified in the case and left the country.

During cross examination by defence lawyer, P. C Onduso, Corp Mumo said the accused was arrested with two Nigerian and South African passports.

He, however, said he did not call the two High Commissions in Nairobi to confirm if the documents were genuine but the matter was forwarded to the Immigration Department.

The witness said he had not indicated in his statement, the particular items recovered in the house where the three were held neither did he mention the actual name of the accused person.

"I also did not recover any form of communication from the accused person demanding the money," he told the Chief Magistrate.

He identified some shirts, bedding chains and padlocks produced in court, saying the three were tied on the hands and feet.

The case continues.

The Anvil

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
Thursday, July 5, 2001

Protect consumers from dangerous products

Revelation that hazardous and substandard products have flooded the market is worrying. It is unfortunate that the lives of millions of Kenyans are endangered.

In less than two months, the media has carried two reports implicating unscrupulous manufacturers and traders in deals grave to consumers.

The latest of such incidents was unearthed by the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), last Friday. Issuing a public alert, the KRA warned consumers against some bread, in the market, baked using engine oil instead of the recommended pharmaceutical oil.

According to the Authority, several bakeries purchase the oil from the Caltex Oil Company and then adulterate it with engine oil. Following a crackdown mounted on some city hotels, police officers attached to the KRA also recovered counterfeit products including wine and spirits.

Early last month, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) issued a public notice banning a range of cosmetic products. The widely publicised decision ordered concerned manufacturers and traders to stop selling products containing mercury, hydroquinone, hydrogen peroxide and hormonal concoctions.

The KEBS sounded the alarm on the dangers of using these products. For instance, users of mercury-laced cosmetics risk kidney damage, systematic poisoning of body organs including the brain, mouth and liver. Hydroquinone, damages the skin and increases the possibility of cancer. Worse still, these could lead to death.

We at the *Anvil* believe that these are not isolated cases. Many incidents, escape the eyes of the media, KRA and KEBS. The *Kumi Kumi* tragedy is still fresh in our minds.

The latest revelations serve to confirm widespread fears that this country is being used as a dumping ground for substandard products rejected elsewhere in the U.S.A, Europe and Asia. They further lend credence to the suspicion that Kenyans have been turned into guinea pigs.

It is no secret that what these devil's advocate engage in, are all by design. They are part of a known plot hatched to limit, if not exterminate, the population of the perceived racially inferior people.

We find it difficult to separate it from previous crimes against Africans like slavery and colonialism. It does not escape us, too, that the origin of Aids virus has been associated with an American laboratory. And considering the confusion that accompanied family planning and immunisation projects, we doubt if the lives of Kenyans could mean a thing to these harbingers of death.

But what is the position of our government in the face of all these? Conspiracy! It is not enough for KEBS or KRA to warn Kenyans against circulation of fake products without saying how they get into the country in the first place and what they are doing to stop the problem.

Whatever became of the Customs and the Immigration departments? What about the trade licensing and standardisation authorities?

As we call on the government to obey its duty of protecting Kenyans from harmful products, we appeal to consumers to resort to rejection of these products. Do not buy from shops and supermarkets that stock hazardous and substandard goods.



Local models in a recent beauty contest. There have been fears that some cosmetics contain harmful substances (Picture courtesy Nation)

COMMENTARY

New challenges face Minister Raila

By Jackson Wafua

The appointment of National Development Party (NDP) leader, Raila Odinga, into the government and the consequent celebrations that hit Luo Nyanza has placed dual pressure on him.

At the national level, the appointment gave rise to political realignments, which saw opposition leaders, Mwai Kibaki, Fijana Wamalwa, and Charity Ngilu, come together to devise strategies to counter the seemingly powerful NDP-Kanu partnership.

The son of Omugusii, Simon Nyachae, is still testing the waters. Men of age, it has been said, object too much, consult too long and venture too little. Nyachae is opposed to emerging alliances insisting that only a government of national unity can save this country from its decay only men of his age can tell how he intends to achieve this.

The youthful Mageuzi activists are promising a third front. And as it is usual with the youths, uncertainty and confusion is stalking them.

After his appointment the NDP leader made his maiden tour to his home town, Kisumu, to a colourful, ecstatic and tumultuous welcome.

The people of Nyanza Province came to Kisumu in large numbers to welcome their vanguard son. They now see him as their link to the National resources. Johnstone Omondi, a third year student at the University of Nairobi was assertive, "Raila is ours; we have extended the respect we had for his father to him. As our son, he knows our problems and we know that he will attend to them."

In most rural parts of Nyanza and Western provinces, the general citizenry have no money in their pockets. The Agricultural sector which used to put money into their pockets is virtually dead. Health and educational facilities are either collapsing or inadequate. Endemic and epidemic diseases, malnutrition and hunger are slowly eating into the population.

Thus when they all came to Kisumu to welcome Raila, they knew he was their only hope. They expect him to use the powers and privileges of his public office to alleviate their sufferings.

Access to state power is seen as a way of getting one's hands to unlimited resources on behalf of one's people. Oriare Nyarwath, a Philosophy lecturer at the University of Nairobi, when asked about



Raila: "Ascendancy to the top."

the expectation said, "Yes, Luos expect Raila to deliver to them resources which, hitherto, they had been denied."

For an ordinary Luo in the villages, Raila's appointment is seen as the beginning of his ascendancy to the top seat in the country. As Raila settles in his new job, he knows that there is pressure from his people.

At the national level, however, Kenyans expect him to uphold the norms of impartiality in exercising the powers and privileges of his position. As a minister, however, the son of Jaramogi is faced with dual pressure and how he handles it will determine his political career. Heroism to ones ethnic community and to the country do not mean the same thing.

Raila's appointment and the consequent celebrations which were, however, not received well by other quarters. Most of the opposition parties and certain powerful individuals within Kanu, do not understand why the appointment evoked so much euphoria and ecstasy among the Luo.

political analysts have warned that such euphoria only cements ethnic solidarity while isolating one community from others. Ludeki Chweya, a political science lecturer at the University of Nairobi, agrees,

"the euphoria that followed the appointment made it look like Raila the minister is a Luo affair and this is bound to tarnish his image at the National level, and force other communities into similar reactions."

Raila has a big task and in his new position, he must maintain a vigilant watch as it is utterly difficult even for the most vigorous mind to keep itself on the

Kanu path. He has survived in politics as an independent man but now his every act will be subjected to the will of another.

In politics, as they say, the longest distance between two points is a straight line. Raila, it appears, has chosen to follow the straight line to the presidency. Sometimes people make such choices and make history despite all odds. No man of Raila's calibre can take such a choice without "having seen far and wide". Unfortunately, a great part of human action have their origin not in reason and careful thought but in sentiment.

Though Raila has a strong political base in Luo Nyanza, the reality is that he is dealing with Moi, a man who in the past, has not been predictable in political deals.

Charity Ngilu, is a determined politician. The woman from Ukambani has a burning ambition to get to State House.

When she sensed that her Social Democratic Party colleagues were about to put obstacles in her way, she decamped and presided over the re-launch of the National Party of Kenya.

Now in her new party, she is exuding confidence, hoping that women voters in the country will not let her down this time round.

Hypothetically, if all women voter supported one of their own, it is likely that the next president would be a woman. But this remains just in books and in the wishful thinking of women politician. Nowhere in the history of politics, has women voted exclusively for their own.

Women votes will always be the for grabs by both men and women candidates. Men and Women have a special relationship that cannot allow for an exclusive vote for one gender.

Women are daughters, sisters, wives mothers and friends of men while men are sons, brothers, husbands, fathers and friends of women. Men and women are not simply competitors for resources as cannot be mobilised against each other. We cannot entirely separate their interests. This has not happened before and is unlikely to happen in future.

In Ngilu, there is courage, determination and ambition. In women, there power to take her places.

The Anvil Magazine

Sondu-Miriu Mystery: The untold story

By James Oranga

Unknown to many, Sondu falls, traditionally known as Odino falls - where the Sondu Miriu power project is being constructed, has a century old mystery. The untold wonder is one that provokes a lot of supernatural thinking about defiance of nature.

The mystery is akin to that of the Bermuda triangle in the Atlantic Ocean. Nobody has the answers to the occasional supernatural occurrences in these areas that defy human understanding.

According to 76-year-old Mzee Kings Omollo, the falls were used as a scare crow during their childhood. "Whenever one defied an elder's instructions or exhibited signs of tough headedness, he would be threatened with being taken to Odino falls as a sacrifice to a sacred snake which resided there."

Another resident, Mama Jeniffer Audi, says the falls are a sacred shrine for a holy Python whose name is not known. She claims that in the olden days, the python could emerge from the falls. And whenever it was seen by area residents, the weather would immediately change for better and the harvest would be enormous that season.

She also recalls that people usually gathered around the falls in the months of March and August to witness the python's emergence from the falls. If a season went by before the python was seen, there would be drought, insecurity and disease outbreaks. An appeasement ceremony had to be conducted to reverse this precarious trend.

Mzee Josiah Bolo, 73, also has a story to tell. He says that the falls was a highly restricted area for anything but the ceremonies associated with the python. Whenever one visited the place for any other purpose, he would be severely 'pursued' by the forces of nature.

Bolo still believes in the existence of these forces and warns that the River Sondu Falls is no ordinary place. He further suggests that the completion of the project is not practical. "The forces of nature will strike as soon as the construction nears the falls itself," he warns.

Locals tell of occurrences that defy scientific explanation



NDP leader Raila Odinga and the Japanese Ambassador to Kenya Morihisa Aoki in a past picture. The duo have been instrumental in ensuring that Sondu Miriu project does not stall (Picture courtesy Nation)

A recent fact finding mission by the Japanese government on the area revealed that this python tale was a factor in the recent opposition to the project by some residents.

The fact finders were quick to dismiss these stories of mystery as superstitious balderdash concocted by traditionalists at a wrong time - when modernity pays no credence to folk tales.

But even in the face of this dismissal, sceptics claim to have witnessed a practical punishment of those who have tried to interfere with the falls in the past.

A story is told of how attempts by the now defunct Lake Basin Development Authority (LABDA) were repelled by the wrath of the mystery forces on two occasions in the 1980's, when they tried to establish a water project there.

The snake is said to have bodyguards in the form of bees and lightning which attack at the slightest interference with the natural aes-

thetic value of the falls and it's immediate environs.

On one occasion, the LABDA hired a Chinese firm to do a feasibility study of the area. On their arrival at the site, a swarm of bees descended on the researchers. But having been warned of such an emergency, they were well equipped to deal with the eventuality. They sprayed an insecticide and calm was restored.

Hardly had they recovered from the shock than flashes of lightning sparked across the sky like fireworks, and a boom of thunder followed. In the course of the thunder, a generator that the researchers had carried went up in flames. They fled the scene never to return to Kenya.

Mr. Simon Agar, another resident opposed to the project says: "The first people to discover the mystery associated with the Bermuda Triangle were dismissed as superstitious. It was after several

catastrophic occurrences took place at that place when the world began to reconsider their belief about the area. It would be a mistake for us to wait until these generous constructors get harmed before we talk about the River Sondu mystery."

The Sondu Miriu project puts many things at stake: Political glory for its supporting politicians, more power to the national grid, economic uplifting of the area residents, and support for the government should the long awaited project be a success.

With all these stakes, nature and supernaturalism are obviously the least pleasant of enemies. Will the holy python which has not been seen for several years view the project as a good thing for the area residents and keep its cool. Or will it attack the engineers with flames and bees? Only time will tell.

Wonders that baffle many

The Sondu falls story is not unique. There are similar instances elsewhere both locally and internationally. The Kinungu region lying on the border of Rift Valley and Central provinces, is one that exhibits defiance of gravitational forces.

There are talks that a trip downhill in this region is harder to accomplish than an uphill one. Even when a liquid substance is poured on a hill there, the water will flow uphill.

In Western province, the crying stones of Maragoli are believed to be the ancient gods of the residents. Water-like liquid constantly oozes out of the stones. This liquid is believed to be tears, which flow when the gods are offended.

Most weird is the story of the Mawuta Island (a tiny land mass around the Mfang'ano Island in Suba district). It is an island where no one lives. Boats and ship that have sailed close to this deserted region have been repelled by powerful currents. Sometimes fishermen have sighted the island burning in the night, yet very fat sheep will be seen on the same island the following morning.

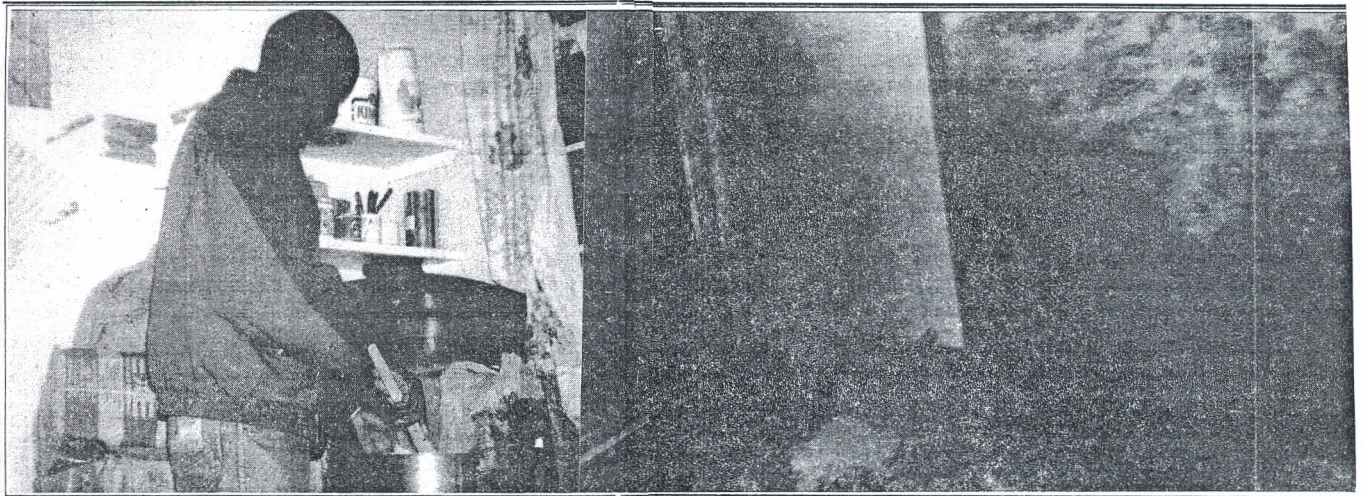
Tales have even been told of how the shores of that island have varieties of fish which when caught, will swim throughout the cooking process. One wonders how such fish are caught yet a trip to the shores of this island is believed to be impossible.

The International scene is also replete with such stories. The Taj Mahal monument in India is such a wonder. Being one of the seven wonders of the world, the monumental palace is a tourist attraction for many curious visitors from all over the world.

It was built by an ancient Indian Maharajah ruler in memory of a loved wife. It is believed to this date that a visit to the Taj Mahal by lovers is a stabilising charm to their relationship. Consequently, many lovers visit it every year for romantic reasons, hoping to acquire.

But all said and done, we still humble ourselves to such mystic happenings.

- By James Oranga



TOUGH TIMES: A student at the university preparing a meal in a congested room. Right - a burnt room. Consequences of such activities are fire outbreaks in halls of residence at universities (Pictures courtesy People Daily)

Hostels turned into business outlets

By Noelina Nabwire and Mugure Kihika

Computer bureaux. Tuckshops littered with foodstuffs. Barber shops and saloons. These are permanent features at the entrance of every hall of residence at the University of Nairobi's Main campus.

Upon entering the halls of residence, one is left wondering whether it is a business or a learning institution. So strategically placed are the businesses that one cannot miss their presence. Their services range from typing and printing to hair styling and shaving.

Businesses have changed the serenity of the institution. Its surprising that students can cope with both business management and studies at the same time.

Business enterprises began in 1999 following the demolition of slums and other kiosks by city council *askaris* and provincial administration. The kiosks were both a security risk and a health hazard. Alternatives had to be found to cater for what the kiosks had been providing - supplying students' basic items. This saw the introduction of tuckshops and other business ventures.

The Customer Relations Officer, Mr Fred Oluoch, says that business ventures were also seen as a way of helping needy students generate money for fees and upkeep. He added that every hall has a tuckshop and a pool table.

"One wonders whether a poor student who cannot afford Shs 3,000 accommodation fee per semester can afford 30,000 to start a shop?" poses Oluoch.

He prefers the work study programme, saying that it truly identifies needy students and has been applied successfully.

Rent charged for tuckshops, barber shops and pool tables range from Shs 2,500 - 3,000, while computer bureaux and saloons go for Kshs 7,000. There are more than 42 halls in the entire University. Some have more than two shops and pool tables depending on the student population. The Students Welfare Authority (SWA), which lets the businesses, earns more than Kshs 200,000 per month in rent.

Students, most of whom rely on the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), term business

enterprises as a saviour. They cite affordability as the main reason why they prefer services within campus. "My final year project is over 200 pages, you do not expect me to pay around ten thousand, the amount charged by computer operators in town," says Eunice Murambi, a final year sociologist student. She says that she pays a third of the amount at the university bureaux.

Concurring with Ms Murambi, Ms Kanyi says that she cannot afford the high costs charged by saloons in town and prefers the cheaper ones at the university. "Saloons at Anniversary Towers, the nearest to campus charge triple the amount charged at the university."

She adds: "in fact such saloons are outrageous and enemies of development! How can one expect a student to afford five hundred shillings for treatment?"

Saying that the services are within their reach and convenient, some students threaten that closure of such ventures are likely to lead to a riot. "I have a tight work schedule. I have classes from 9.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m, the only time I have for my thesis is at night," says a masters student at the university who preferred anonymity. He says that with these facilities at his disposal, he can work at any time of the night including weekends.

While students like Kanyi and Murambi benefit as customers, others are suppliers. Mr Mugo, an MSc student at Chiromo campus, says he has been in the business for two years now. He runs a computer bureau at the Main Campus, where he offers typing, printing, scanning, telephone, photocopy and e-mail services. "I saw the opportunity after I realised that students had to go all the way to town to print their work where the rates are very expensive."

The ventures not only benefit students but also non-students as they offer employment opportunities. Mugo, for instance, has employed five people who manage his business. Asked why he ventured into business rather than concentrating on studies, he said that he is a business minded person and was just looking for a viable opportunity. He had been in business before, running a quarry, an inheritance from his father.

Beauticians have not been left behind. Stu-

dents do not have to go outside the campus to get some of these services. "We only charge Kshs 180/= for treatment as compared to Kshs 250-500/= in town" says Brenda, a beautician at the *Eye on Style Beauty Parlour*, located in the women's hall.

Services offered in the saloon range from relaxing, treatment, facials, pedicure, manicure, and barbering. There are three employees at the saloon who are paid between Shs 5,000 and 8,000 per month.

Tailoring has also curved its niche. The services are indeed cheap if what they are charging is anything to go by. Charges for lady skirt and trouser suits range from Shs 400 to Shs 1,300.

Complaining that the business is not so good, Mr Obado, the proprietor of *Ujuzi Tailoring shop*, who has been in the business for one year, says that they sometimes do not realise any profits. Asked why he was still in an unprofitable business, Bado said that the business also served as his residential place.

Fearing publication, the proprietor of a barber

shop was reluctant to reveal any information. On assurance that the information was not for the mainstream media, he agreed on condition that his name would not be used. He has employed two people whom he pays on commission basis.

Most businesses operating within the university said they recorded between 20 and 50 per cent profit per month. Not everything is rosy for the business proprietors, as they too experience problems.

The main problem is experienced during university closures, since most of their customers are students. Mr Bado says that he normally closes down his business when the University is not in session, but he still pays rent during these times. Though not a big problem, frequent power black outs also disrupt the businesses.

The administration on their part has to contend with the problems that come with the ventures. Mr Oluoch expressed fears over the unhygienic conditions of the edibles sold in tuckshops. Although tuckshops were meant to sell manufactured goods, cooked food is sold.

Intrusion by outsiders is another problem. Needy students are used by members of the public to facilitate business opportunities for them. The intrusion also poses security risk.

While students find themselves at crossroads - whether to study or make money for subsistence - some people think their major responsibility is to study.

Emphasising the importance of concentrating fully on studies, Mr Oluoch, advises students that their concern should be books. The businesses, he says, should be a way of supplementing their income.

Genome sequencer

By Arthur Okwemba

case holds key to this success.

Scientists perceive this sequencing as a breakthrough, which will provide countries with a new arsenal to unlock the TB problem.

"The sequencing of the TB genome provides unprecedented hope of objectively developing new drugs with specific targets. This is because the information will help scientists determine the molecular basis of the bacterium as well as how it grows," says Prof Onesmo Ole-Moi Yoi, a genome expert and chairman of Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Africa.

Scientists are hopeful that the effective drugs will reduce the time and quantities taken to treat TB. At the moment, a person suffering from TB is required to take between 240 and 300 drugs for six months to eight months for complete treatment.

The present TB vaccine, BCG, is only effective in preventing some serious forms

Three years after Isabel was declared healed of tuberculosis (TB), the disease emerged again making her unable to walk or eat.

Isabel had been given a half of the recommended TB dosage, and she had felt absolutely better. Now, the disease sprung gain. After battling it for nine months, doctors said she was not responding to drugs. Days later, her TB was declared as resistant to drugs.

More than a half a million was needed for treatment of her drug resistant TB compared to free services offered by the government in the treatment of normal cases. Unable to raise the money, Isabel eventually died.

The Director of Medical Services, Dr. Richard Muga, says it can cost the government an estimated Shs 800,000 to treat a multi-drug resistant TB individual compared to Sh. 15,000 for normal TB case.

But now, the likes of Isabel might not die, as a recent scientific breakthrough may avail affordable drugs to treat resistant TB.

Traces of victory are emerging, after over 20 years of spirited war against the drug resistant tuberculosis. The recent sequencing of the genome of the bacterium that causes the dis

Hot sex surfed in cafes

The coming of Internet services, has revolutionised communication. On-line shopping, e-mail, virtual education, entertainment, chatrooms and cybersex are now all with us. Yes cybersex!

What makes access to pornography easier is the proliferation of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Nairobi. One can hardly walk a hundred metres within the city centre without encountering a cybercafe, as they are popularly known.

Cybercafes are doing booming business. At least, they are assured of customers. For sure, internet services are affordable. Surfing the web costs a paltry two shillings.

Getting information from any part of the world, be it Nairobi or New York, will cost the same. Making telephone calls via internet is also relatively cheaper.

The Internet also has programs like Napster which provide the latest music in the industry. One can also easily access movies on the Internet. But behind these gains, danger lurks.

Wambui, who works at a cybercafe in the city says that the internet is promoting moral decay.

Many parents complain that their teenage sons and daughters are being lured into pornographic materials.

Panicky parents are locking their computers with well concealed passwords, to keep away the teenagers from pornographic sites forgetting that cybercafes are accessible to all irrespective of age.

There are no laws restricting them from the cybers. Children have a way of doing what they want, and with a click of the mouse, they can access all the pornographic literature. Wambui says pornographic material and information on drugs are readily available to everyone.

Pornographic sites have pictures of nudity, as well as live scenes of sexual acts. The actions are both het-

It's free for all as adults, children access pornographic sites

By Catherine Wanyama

erosexual and homosexual, and even sodomy, involving animals.

Their preferred sites include www.pussy.com, www.sex.com and www.whitehouse.com.

Some people print the obscene pictures for filing. Others send them to their friends. In one case, a man who had gone to read his mails, was confronted with a picture of a spreadeagled nude woman, in the presence of his wife! The picture had been sent to him through the internet.

Peter, a cybercafe operator in the city alleged that the people responsible for putting up these sites are the same one who publish the *Playboy* and *Playgirl* magazines, which specialise in displaying nude women and men.

Asked if there was any legislation barring children from accessing such sites, he admitted there was none, but said he usually bars minors from browsing such sites.

But that is Peter. What about those cafe owners who are money-hungry? What would they do in such a situation. Peter advocates for legislation that would protect children and minors from some of these sites.

The licencing body for ISPs, the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), licences and regulates the operations in the telecommunication sector.

A source at the CCK who requested anonymity, admitted that the commission had no authority to control the contents in the internet. He said that legislation rested with parliament. "There is a talk of introducing a bill on Internet in parliament in the near future."

The source, who is also a parent, said that the law could do nothing about it, but suggested that it is the parents who ought

to instil good moral standards into their children. Adding that restrictions may be put in place, but they would be hard to implement as different people seek different information.

Although that may be the case, influence from children with poor upbringing make other children compromise their principles. In any case, the responsibility of good upbringing rests with the society as a whole including internet service providers and not just parents.

Recently a man wrote to one of the mainstream dailies, appealing for help. He is addicted to cybersex and he fears for both his marriage and his job. He said that his job requires him to work late hours at the office where he has access to the internet.

Whenever he works late, he accesses sites where there are scenes on sex. He says: "I cannot concentrate on my work, and when I go home, I always get into arguments with my wife."

The scenario is repeated many times over. Many organisations are connected to the internet and where there are no regulations, many employees access pornography any time in the course of their duties.

Others spend part of their working time exchanging internet jokes with sexual overtones between themselves, which is likely to affect productivity.

Mercy, who works as a secretary at Micato, a tour firm with an office in New York, provides a bright side to the sad picture.

Their organisation is connected to the internet but access is restricted to business transactions with their New York office and their clients only. This means that the productivity of the company is assured as there is nothing to distract the employees.

All said and done, something obviously needs to be done to protect the youth from some of the inappropriate information from the internet.

Our legislators should come up with a way of censoring some lurid contents to be accessible only to the right audiences, as is with films, stage plays, books and newspapers.



An instructor takes pupils through a computer lesson. Children are becoming computer literate at an early age, and can now surf the web on their own (Picture courtesy People Daily)

Humorous sessions in the august House

By Mwhiki Ruth

The place is magnificent. A red carpet welcome awaits members. I felt honoured to have been the speaker's guest on that Tuesday afternoon.

The honourable members started arriving at around 2.15 p.m. The attendance was dismal, with less than 100 in the House. Interestingly no female member was present - no wonder the issues affecting women take time to be addressed. Other members only made technical appearance. Apart from being late, others socialised in the lobby.

The discussion of issues was disappointing. Issues of national importance deserve more than a cursory glance that they receive.

What was saddening was seeing an Assistant Minister humbled by members even from government

backbench. Responding to a question touching on security, his answer left a lot to be desired and no wonder the Speaker ordered him to go and do his homework well before answering.

But my spirit was livened by the demeanour that coloured the august House. The impression I have is that the honourable members are a humbled lot. It was encouraging to see the speaker, Francis ole Kaparo apologise for a statement he just made and realised he had used unparliamentary language.

The speaker was responding to claims by the MP for Laikipia East, Mr. Mwangi Kiunjuri, that cabinet members were receiving preferential treatment in the parking bay.

Other interesting moments were when members defied the parliamentary language etiquette. Slang like 'those guys' by MP for Mwea, Alfred Nderitu, while referring to those in

the government side aroused emotions. Nderitu was forced to apologise and so was Anthony Kimetto who had accused a minister of cheating the House.

Being in the House also reminded me of days in primary school, when we scrambled for the teacher's attention. You have to be quick in standing up to catch the Speaker's eye.

Still engrossed in the proceedings, I was taken aback when the humorous sessions came to an abrupt end. This gave way for a motion on the budget to be moved.

As the motion on budget started, most MPs walked out and whoever was on the floor was left 'talking to himself'. Even the Speaker did not seem attentive.

Perhaps, much time should have been devoted to discussing the order paper, to reverse this laxity among MPs.

Personal agenda in Parliament

By Edwin Limo

Although Kenya's 8th Parliament is said to have the cream of Kenya as far as business and social status is concerned, a visitor to the House attending the proceedings is sure to be struck by the trivia that the honourable members engage in.

The Speaker, Francis Kausai Kaparo, believes the august House which he presides over, has the best of the land in its membership. Says he; "This honourable House has the cream of the land. We have the best of brains here and I will do everything within my powers to ensure your security."

Addressing the House, in parliamentary language called "communication from the chair", Kaparo says he does not want to imagine what would happen to the country were the whole House to be blown up by a terrorist bomb. "God forbid that such thing

could ever happen.

But turning to the standards of debates that come up in Parliament, in particular the questions, one wonders where Kenyans were looking when they gave these persons the onus to defend and represent their interest at the national level.

One such discussion that came up last week on Tuesday was the issue of replacement of power metres by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). The Member of Parliament of Kisumu East, Mr. Gor Sungu, made a passionate appeal for the minister to intervene and stop KPLC from arbitrary replacement of metres in the country.

Responding, the assistant minister, Abdi Sasura said it was true KPLC was replacing metres but was quick to add that only those which were faulty or tempered with were being replacement.

This response opened a barrage of points of orders from the floor led by Sungu. And in the melodrama it emerged that all those complaining had in a way been affected. "Mr.

Speaker Sir, I am a victim of the metre replacement and I can tell this House that the replacement is arbitrary," one member after another complained.

As a guest seated in the Speaker's Gallery, I was struck by the fact the complaints were from a selfish point of view and the passionate appeal was for the simple reason that they were directly affected.

The Member for Kanduyi, Mr. Lawrence Sifuna, who has been in the House for almost two decades, complained that rural electrification in his area had covered specific homesteads. He wondered why he and 400 others had been left out.

This too struck me as another selfish appeal because the MP seemed to complain because he had been left out.

The big question that haunted me as I left the House, that evening was, who defends the interests of ordinary Kenyans as it seems that the MPs are only after their welfare?

Working to help combat TB

of TB in children. Of particular interest is that the new technology is availing information to guide the development of new vaccines and cheaper drugs for preventing and curing of this type of TB.

Similarly, scientists say the sequencing of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis H37*, will provide information about the make-up of the TB resistant strains, help in faster diagnosis and development of drugs that are disease relevant, and with fewer side-effects.

"The genome contains all the information required to make the TB bacterium, which in the long term, will help scientists design a way of developing every possible targeted vaccines and drugs against TB," says Dr. Julian Parkhill one of the researchers involved in the genome projects at the Sanger

Centre in Britain.

In the past 20 years, since the emergence of drug resistant TB, the world has been grappling on how to combat it.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 1997 *Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance report*, out of the 445 cases sampled in Kenya, the prevalence of primary drug resistance to Isoniazid (INH) drug was 5.4 per cent, the highest among African countries covered in the report. INH is one of the most important drugs for TB treatment.

Based on the same report, Kenya has not recorded any multi-drug resistance case, the worst form of TB resistance.

However, it is not easy to tell the prevalence level at the moment as the last drug resistant survey which provided statistics appearing in the

WHO report were done in 1994.

A source at the Ministry of Health says they have not done another survey to establish drug resistance prevalence levels due to inadequate funds.

Chest experts concur that patients infected with strains resistant to TB drugs are not only less likely to get cured, but are exposed to toxic and expensive second or third line of treatment compared to patients with susceptible organs.

TB resistant is occasioned by improper routine treatment, where an individual fails to properly take all the five main TB drugs or prematurely stops treatment. TB drugs are required to be taken properly and regularly for a period of six to eight months for the disease to be treated.

If a person reneges on these requirements, the strongest TB bacterium surviving in the lungs reproduce and create equally strong offspring's that become resistant.

COMMENTARIES

Quack journalists: Who is to blame?

By Njoroge Wachai

Recent developments in the media, have led to series of outbursts against quack journalists, who, it is claimed give journalism a bad name.

Last week, the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ) set the tempo. In a press conference, the union officials led by the new Secretary General, Ezekiel Mutua expressed disgust at the proliferation of quacks in the media industry.

KUJ plans to issue bonafide journalists with identification badges. However, the million dollar question is, will this measure put to an end, the shame that journalism as a profession has found itself in?

The mainstream media has joined the fray. The *Daily Nation*, in an editorial, strongly condemned proliferation of quack journalism. It castigated individuals who masquerade as journalists at cocktail parties and other public functions.

It is in these forums, the quacks come out in their true colours. Some drink themselves silly and in their inebriated state, create mayhem and disorder. At times, they stuff their pockets with remains of champagne and cutlery.

In the wake of these embarrassments, genuine journalists have been forced to mobilise themselves to safeguard the integrity of their profession.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with waging war against contraband journalism, but some parties crying loud for professionalisation of journalism lack the moral authority to do so. Media houses in the country, have done virtually nothing to promote professionalism.

The commercial orientations of their operations make them to go for untrained "journalists" who are cheap to maintain and manipulate.

The ripple effects are discerned when it is too late. Circulation goes down, and in most cases bogged with libel cases, since the copy handlers do not recognise defamatory copies.

Media analysts argue that the problem is traceable to inept management. Most of the media managers are pouched from other fields and have no knowledge



The new Secretary General, Kenya Union of Journalists, Mr. Ezekiel Mutua, addressing a press conference shortly after the Union's election. He is flanked by Tervil Okoko (chairman) and Wainaina Kiganya

of media. It is common to encounter a lawyer or an engineer heading a media company.

KUJ is no better to champion professionalism. Looking at the current lineup, the top officials have received no formal training in mass communication. They claim to be professional journalists by virtue of their stint in media houses. But is this enough?

The role of the media in any society cannot be overemphasised. Modern democracies owe their existence to a well structured media industry where professionalism is the in thing.

A professional media is a great asset to the country. Such media watch over the excesses of the three arms of the government. Journalists are expected to stand up to champion justice and fairness in the society.

Trying to define who a journalist is, is perhaps the most difficult undertaking. This explains why KUJ and other media practitioners should brace for a prolonged duel with some of the indi-

viduals they want to dismiss as quacks.

The dilemma emanates from the provisions in Section 79 of the constitution that guarantees freedom of expression.

Therefore, denying anybody an opportunity to be published or broadcast infringes on this fundamental right.

Unlike other professions such as law, medicine, marketing and public relations, journalism has been without a code of ethics for long.

At least, there has been yielding efforts to put one in place. But will the men and women of the Fourth Estate adhere to it.

The absence of a code of ethics was deemed to be a contributory factor to the state of 'lawlessness' in the profession where journalists are not accountable to anybody.

A code of ethics is crucial as it clearly defines the salient requirements before entry into a profession. In Nigeria, journalism is a preserve for holders of a university degree.

Western countries lay much emphasis on training of journalists. The British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), for example, recruits persons with with masters in communication studies. No wonder, the station is a household name worldwide.

The Kenyan scenario is that training is not a prerequisite for one to practice journalism.

In the realm of journalism, editors are known to proclaim that at the end of the day a journalist's worth is measured by the quality of his story.

Does this make Robert Shaw or Yussuf Dawoud, or even Prof Anyang' Nyong'o, all regular contributors to Kenya's local dailies- journalists?

Like many eloquent writers, these have no formal training in journalism. Yet editors fall over themselves to publish every single line they write.

However, when all is said and done, training is the first and surest step to weed out quack journalism. All must be committed to this course.

This is looming disaster for Lari

By Margaret Mathore

Residents of Lari constituency are sitting on a time bomb.

Sewage water from Kimende trading centre is draining into the Bathi river, a major source of water for hundreds of the residents.

The area MP, Philip Gitonga, has sounded the alarm in parliament, twice this week. This forum could not have been more appropriate.

The public health officers dispatched to assess the situation had, trivialised the issue indicating that there was no cause for alarm and the minister informed the House as much.

About three months ago, more than 100 lives were lost in Embu, following a typhoid outbreak occasioned by sewage disposal into river Rupingazi.

Provision of clean piped water is one of the projects that Lari needs.

More orders by the Public Health Department for immediate construction of stockpits in the area may not help much if the council itself does not initiate and supervise the exercise, not to forge the general scarcity of land in the area that limits the number of pits that can be dug.

And is it not too much and unrealistic to ask these residents to close their businesses indefinitely?

Kimende is the fastest growing trading centre in Lari, God forbid should the Ministry of Public Health drag its feet, an arresting this life-threatening situation.

Lari residents are aware that their plight has been discussed in Parliament and the visit by the assistant minister, D Abdullahi Wako, must have sent positive signals to them.

We hope that the government has not abdicated its cardinal responsibility to protect the lives of its citizens.

Suspensions no solution

By Soyinka Lempaa

The suspension of students from universities aggravates the problems in these institutions. This has culminated into legal tussles between university administrations and the students. This for self efficacy mission.

These frequent conflicts are a sign that dialogue is lacking. Whilst students should refrain from anti-social behaviour which exposes them to public ridicule, the administrations should lend ear to the complaints by as well as accommodating positive criticism from the latter.

The directive by the Chancellor for the administration to exercise a no ngr sense attitude when dealing with errant students, has made student leaders jittery to air the students' grievances. This unfortunately, is tantamount to stifling student activism.

The current politicians of repute are in fact those who took part in student activism. Therefore, when 240 undergraduates are suspended from the university, it is a big wastage. Besides, the suspensions, are unreasonably, long periods. Any disciplinary action should be corrective and not devastating.

The problems affecting public universities can be solved if these institutions are depoliticised. Vice-chancellors should be chosen through merit and should have the autonomy to run the institutions professionally.

Aids Alliance in plea to United Nations

By Edwin Limo

The International HIV/Aids Alliance has appealed to the United Nations and its member countries to intervene and help check the rapid spread of the disease, especially, in developing countries.

The Alliance believes that the United Nations and its member states should make explicit calls for political leaders to allocate domestic resources to comprehensive HIV prevention strategies. It has also called on the UN to ensure that Aids is addressed in national education policy and practice, reform laws and regulations which exacerbate vulnerability to HIV, and promote social inclusion and involvement of infected people.

The Alliance says that the UN should reaffirm its commitment to greater involvement of people with Aids in its Declaration of Commitment.

Urgent steps needs to be taken to ensure that prevention strategies are

strongly linked to Aids care and impact alleviation. These should include efforts to prevent mother to child transmission, call for national prevention programmes that combine focused support to populations, key to epidemic dynamics, with broader efforts that built awareness.

Others include enhancing the status of women, reducing stigma, reaching new generations of sexually-active young people, identifying and directing vulnerable people to services.

The Alliance which works with communities in developing countries to prevent the spread of Aids, supports and cares for those infected, and seeks to ease impact of the disease on families and communities.

Leaders, the Alliance says, have a greater role in helping check the scourge. Political leadership is more than just speaking out about Aids. Leaders need to encourage acceptance and social inclusion of people with Aids and those who are most vulnerable, take steps to support people, to talk openly about

sexuality.

Laws and practices that are barriers to effective prevention, the Alliance says, must be reformed, in particular those that disinherit women and children, marginalised sex workers or prohibit the distribution of safe needles and syringes.

Cultural practices that reinforce discrimination or facilitate transmission must be changed, but it should be recognised that some cultural practices can also reinforce prevention messages. Most importantly, leaders must create hope for the future.

People need to know how to slow the spread of Aids and be encouraged to support, adopt or maintain safer behaviour, seek sexual health services, including treatments of STIs and to acquire and use male or female condoms.

Demands need to be complimented by affordable and accessible supply of services and commodities. This includes provision of clean needles and syringes and voluntary counselling and

testing. Special attention must be paid to ensure that these services and commodities are available and appropriate for the most vulnerable, including young people.

Since its establishment in 1993, the Alliance has provided both financial and technical support to over 1500 Aids projects and has worked with NGOs from over 40 countries.

The organisation says prevention of the scourge must be central to the global response. "While prevention, care and impact alleviation are all essential and interlinked, there can be no debate that prevention of new HIV infections is always preferable to managing the consequences of the Aids epidemic," Sue Lucas, the Co-ordinator, Policy Research and Good Practice at the organisation says.

He notes that broad social, economic and epidemiological factors are more important than anything else in determining the spread

City bakers in unscrupulous deals

By Wahome Thuku

KRA launches investigations

Some bakeries in Nairobi are using contaminated pharmaceutical oil, the Kenya Revenue Authority has warned.

Following the revelations made early this month, the Authority launched a crackdown on the traders suspected to be involved in the malpractice.

Sources at the KRA said two people were arrested last week in Kariobangi estate, Nairobi and charged with the offence.

On Friday, a dozen of police officers attached to the Authority raided four leading city hotels in efforts to impound the counterfeit products.

The officers raided the Simba Club and Premier Club and recovered bottles of duty free wines and spirits. They also visited Hilton Hotel, Nairobi Safari Club but did not recover any illegal goods.

The head of the KRA police unit, Mr Munyenyi Muteti said a number of bakers were purchasing the baking oil from the Caltex Oil company and contaminating it with crude engine oil to increase its volume.

This is a grave matter. We are not only losing on revenue but, these activities jeopardise the lives of city residents," he told reporters at the KRA offices in Times Towers.

He said bread baked with the contaminated oil was more sticky than that baked with the genuine baking oil.

Only the Caltex Oil firm is licensed to distribute the pharmaceutical oil product in Kenya.

Mr Muteti told journalists that concerns over the use of the polluted baking oil had been raised by the oil company and other consumers.

The officials who included the KRA operations manager, Mr Kennedy Onyonyi, displayed to reporters, two bottles of the contaminated oil impounded from some of the dealers.

Mr Onyonyi said the operation would be intensified and revealed that 39 hotels were suspected to be stocking such products in Nairobi.

The KRA officials said the operation would also entail impounding goods, particularly foods and drinks smuggled into the country through evasion of duty.

Mr Muteti told reporters that a firm based in Ruaraka, Nairobi had already been implicated in the manufacture of substandard dry cells.

"Such a firm is registered in accordance to the law and is operating legally but its products do not meet the stand-

ards set by the Kenya Bureau of Standards," he explained.

He said some of the substandard products were being manufactured in Kenya while others were being sneaked into the country, evading duty in the process.

Some of the bottles confiscated during the operation, were empty indicating the traders had been engaging in the unscrupulous business for a long time.

Two officials of the clubs were bonded to report at the police unit and assist in investigations. Mr. Muteti said the aim was not just to have them charged but also to get to the source of their products.

CJ order to magistrates

By Njoroge Wachai



Chief Justice: Bernard Chunga

The Chief Justice, Benard Chunga, has directed courts to dispose of cases of human rights violations as a matter of priority.

Chunga, who was presiding over the swearing in of new magistrates late last week, said Kenyan courts were duty bound to safeguard human rights, as is enshrined in the constitution.

"The constitution vests in the courts powers to safeguard human rights. Judicial officers must ensure that no other person usurps this responsibility," he stressed.

He urged the newly recruited officers to live to their oath of office that requires them, among other things, to safeguard the country's constitution.

The CJ reminded the magistrates that the public expected them to dispense justice without fear or favour.

To this end he asked them to uphold discipline and professionalism.

"You must guard jealously judicial integrity by avoiding temptations to abuse and misuse your responsibilities," Chunga encouraged.

He added that his office would take immediate disciplinary actions against errant judicial officers.

Judicial officers must uphold discipline in and outside the courts, he said noting that their conduct reflected the image of the entire judiciary.

Chunga warned judicial officers who report for duty late that their days were counted, adding, "Punctuality is a matter

of public interest."

"Judicial officers must report to their work stations promptly and leave at the appointed time, as is stipulated in the Judicature Act and Judicial regulations," said the CJ.

On recruitment of judicial officers, he said appointments will be based on merit and performance.

He told the 27 magistrates that their promotion will depend on their performance.

Chunga said that the judiciary was reforming its operations to make justice cheap and speedy to Kenyans adding, "Your appointment is the first step to the achievement of this goal."

Others who attended the function were the Registrar of the High Court, Jacob ole Kipyuri and the Principal of the Judicial Training School, Justice Philip Tunoi.

Pope's representative criticises government over insecurity

By Otieno Otieno and Tom Arocho

The Catholic Church has urged the Kenya government to address insecurity in the country.

The Pope's representative in Kenya, Bishop Giovanni Tonucci, said last week insecurity had affected internal commerce and scared away tourists.

"It has also caused tension among citizens," he added, accusing the government of laxity.

Bishop Tonucci was addressing journalists at the Holy Family Basilica, Nairobi, after leading a mass to celebrate the 23rd anniversary of John Paul's II, leadership of the church.

"I cannot accept the notion that the authorities are doing enough to protect the citizens. Kenyans expect nothing short of peace and justice from their government," he observed.

Citing Europe where, he said, governments were treating security as a priority, Bishop Tonucci called on the government to make cities and villages safe, especially for the children.

"There is uncontrolled circulation of weapons and many have fallen in the wrong hands. This is one reason why it has become unsafe to live in Nairobi," he added.

In April this year, the United Nations downgraded Nairobi to Grade C meaning that it is one of the most insecure cities in the world.

Media reports have also carried numerous cases of armed robbery in the city executed on a daily basis.

He further took a swipe at the government's position on the recurrent ethnic clashes in some parts of the country, terming it dishonest.

The authorities have repeatedly maintained that the tension over land is the cause of the ongoing clashes along the Gucha-Transmara border.

"It is not unlike Kenyans to kill each other," said Bishop Tonucci, adding, "although I was not here in 1992, when tribal clashes rocked the country, I did investigations and established that Kenyans are a most cordial people."

The Bishop warned the perpetrators of tribal clashes against "playing with fire" and demanded that the police act swiftly to apprehend the culprits.

"Those who incite Kenyans to murder each other should be treated as criminals and punished by law," said Tonucci. He reaffirmed the earlier stand taken



Nairobi Provincial Police officer, Mr. Geoffrey Mwathe, addresses reporters after a police operation in Nairobi. The insecurity situation has become a thorn in the flesh (Picture courtesy Nation)

by the catholic church that the clashes were politically instigated.

Some leaders, he said, were exploiting tribal differences for selfish interests.

"We should encourage tribal values that unite Kenyans, instead of whipping sentiments to divide them," he said.

And reacting to the findings of the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report on the death of Father John Kaiser, Tonucci dismissed them as illogical and incredible.

Father Kaiser, of the Lolgorian Parish, died in August last year. His body was recovered in Naivasha with a gun lying next to it.

The findings of a joint team of FBI and Kenya police investigators released recently, indicated that he committed suicide and ruled out foul play.

The late Father Kaiser fiercely defended victims of human rights violation. At one time he gave evidence that implicated the government to the Akiwumi Commission on tribal clashes.

The priest is believed to have influenced the prosecution of a rape case involving the Minister in the Office of the President, Julius Sunkuli. The case was later withdrawn.

Meanwhile, there are reservations about the Pope's mission to improve the strained relationships between Orthodox and the Catholic churches, Cable News Network (CNN) reported. This follows the decision by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church leader to boycott a

meeting called by the Pope on Sunday.

The Pope's spokesman, Joachim Navarro-Valls, said that the boycott might extinguish the Catholic patriarch's dream of improving the strained relations between the two groups. The spokesman, however, was optimistic that the visit would bear fruit.

"The Pope is living a dream. I've said this in Ukraine, in Greece, in Romania... this is something he has wanted for years, this man who has travelled all over the world, and now as Pope he's visiting them one by one," Navarro-Valls said.

The Pope hopes to break the cold relations between his church and Moscow, by cultivating a favourable climate with the Orthodox church in Ukraine. The Catholic church was ruthlessly suppressed during the Soviet era under the orders of Josef Stalin.

Formal recognition came only after Ukraine, a country of 49 million people, declared its independence. The country has six million Catholics against 10 million Orthodox faithful.

"The pontiff hopes to undertake a historic pilgrimage to Moscow later this year. As a pilgrim of peace and brotherhood, I am sure that I shall be welcomed with friendship also by those who, although they are not Catholics, have hearts open to dialogue and cooperation," the pontiff said in fluent Ukrainian, upon arrival at Kiev, Ukraine

Castro collapses in rally

By James Oranga and VoA

The world's longest serving head of state, Fidel Castro of Cuba, fell down during a rally, but a few minutes later he was back standing before the same crowd.

According to reports from *Voice of America*, the 74-year old leader was speaking in a live televised rally when he suddenly collapsed.

Castro's Foreign Affairs minister, Luiz Felipe Roque, explained that the president had over-worked himself during the week.

"He had made four lengthy speeches and opened a new ballet school within the week," Fellipe explained.

Less than 10 minutes after collapsing, Castro was back to the podium,

asking the crowd not to worry, as he was merely tired and would be back to finish his speech.

"Let me rest, sleep a few hours," he told the crowd. "Last night I did not sleep at all. I am fine. We will see you tonight."

Castro, reputed for making the longest speeches in the world has ruled Cuba since 1959, when he toppled the then government of Claudio Batista through a populist revolution.

He has always kept a busy work schedule making several speeches every week and reportedly sleeping only a few hours a day.

Recently, his critics have charged that since he is becoming weak, he should relinquish power to a younger ruler. This incident has given credence to such calls.



Joe Okong'o

Football

Agric beat Vet

By Joe Okong'o

Agric.3 demolished Vet 4, 3-2 on post match penalties in a football match to lift the University of Nairobi's Prof. Mukunya's Cup, at the Upper Kabete campus sports ground at the weekend.

The teams, were tying one all, at the end of normal time. Mureithi A. K put the Agric team ahead on the scorecard, but Idambira cancelled the deficit five minutes later for the veterinarians.

The match which was officiated by a FIFA referee, was strongly contested by both teams. Agric 3 had their penalties converted by the team's goalkeeper, Mureithi Kirui, and Ikocheria. Vet scored through Kayoko and Awiti.

The annual tournament, is organised by the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences.

The match was graced by the Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Prof. Magiko.

According to Agric 3 team manager Mr. Marjan Muhammad, the tournament is held, to promote sports, socialise, and 'feast on the bull'.

A prize bull and a trophy are awarded to the winners. The other two finalists are awarded with a trophy, and in addition each receives a crate of soda.

Last year, Agric 4 won the tournament but, unlike the previous year, the match was peaceful and there were no claims of bias.

"It was peaceful and we were patriotic", said Peter, one of the fans.

Last year, the event was marked with regularities, and the finals were not played. "Last years team actually rigged themselves into winning the trophy and therefore ate the bull unfairly", Patrick commented.

The bull eating date has, however, not been set. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the delay is as a result the principal's has refusal to release the bull, being unreluctant. The games tutor, Mr. Tabu Mureithi, could not confirm the reports.



British Army's Emosi Naisaramaki runs away with the ball in one of their matches. British Army beat Bristol University 45-26 in the finals to win the main cup (Picture courtesy Nation)

Kenya settles for plate prize

Rugby

The Kenyan National Rugby team, had to settle for a consolation Plate prize, at the just concluded Safari sevens tournament.

The Kenyan team overwhelmed London Irish 43-15 to lift the plate.

Antony Ongoro and Oscar Osir scored two tries each while Mitch Ochoilla, Charles Mbogo and Felix Ochieng touched down one a piece.

When the Safari Sevens tournament kicked off at the Rugby Football Union of East Africa grounds, (RFUEA), along Ngong road, all eyes were on the British Army. This is believed to have been a result of the strong Fiji influence in the team. The 12 man team, has nine Fijian players.

At the end of the games the expectations and fears that the British Army team was just too good, was confirmed. They beat Bristol University Select 45-26 to clinch the title. In this tough final the eventual winners were 26-7 up at

half time. Things, however, levelled at 26-26, only for the British Army to run away with the title, at the final whistle.

The presence of the Fiji players made all the difference. They were skillful in handling the ball. The tournament's top try scorer, Emosi Nasirramaki, crossed the line four times in the final match and Epeli Qolikibua scored two tries. Bul Mullakuma scored a try and Howard Graham kicked over four conversions to add to his try.

Bristol University Select made two tries through Scott Chatterton and one each by Sam Howard and Jim Brownrigg. They also benefited from three conversions by Howard.

Samurai beat South Africa in Action 40-10 to clinch the Bowl. Sammy Khakame of Quins was the second highest scorer with 56 points.

In the veteran category, Kobe RFC

beat Nondies 7-0 to win. Mwamba finished third after beating Uganda Legends 27-12.

The Kenya national team coach, Bill Githinji, was happy with the performance of the Kenyan teams, saying there is room for improvement. He however, said the team needs a lot more exposure.

The tournament, he observed, is getting more serious, given the level of preparedness among the teams. "They were all very prepared", observed a fan.

The eventual winners British Army beat Kenya 33-5 in the quarters and Kenya Shujaa 36-5 in the semis.

Meanwhile, the University of Nairobi is likely to benefit from a coaching clinic organised by Athletes in Action of South Africa next week.

The Safari Sevens an annual event, was first organised in 1996. The Kenyan team won the main cup in 1997, they beat Cumbria 47-7. Bristol won it in 1998.

Volleyball Schools tournament kicks off

By Joe Okong'o

The University of Nairobi sports ground was a beehive of activities as the annual East and Central Junior Volleyball championship kicked off on Monday.

The championship, draws teams from the East and Central African region. A total of 23 teams have so far arrived from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, but more are still expected. Teams from Rwanda and Burundi are expected to arrive as they have confirmed their participation, according to one of the organisers.

The tournament is in its second year since it was inaugurated last year in Tanzania. Participating teams are drawn from schools and colleges in the region.

Among the teams that have registered include, Boys- Kampala, Manor House, Endarasa, Kaaga, Onjiko, Kahiga, Paul Boit, Kirwarwa, Agathe and Karima. And in the girls category, St. Joseph Nzumbya, Wamagunga, Nsumbe, Nabingo, Lugulu, Gathungurwa, Iiigo, Nabisumbha, Mukumu, Kitni, Buruburu, and Moi Nairobi Girls.

At time of going to press, Lugulu girls were playing Stella Maris College, Nswbe, and in matches played earlier Mukumu beat Nabingo 3-0, with sets of 25-16, 25-18, 25-13 and Namanga beat Gathirimo by the same margin, with sets of 25-17, 25-14, 25-10.

The teams are divided into four pools, boys into two pools of five teams each and the girls into a pool of six teams and another of seven teams.

The tournament is set to last a week, from the 25th to 29th of this month. The quarter and semi finals are set for Thursday while the finals will be played on Friday.

Dons to play MPs

The University of Nairobi, Senior Common Room Football Club, is set to play Parliament's Bunge F.C, next month.

The match to be played, at the University's sports ground, will have its date confirmed later this month. According to sources at the University, plans are underway to draw a fixture which will include subsequent matches.

The dons (SCR F.C) take their fitness exercises at the sports ground every Sunday from 4.00 p.m to 6.00 p.m and a notice has been put at the campus inviting more members to join.

Youth teams: the only way out for Kenya's football

Kenya does not appear anywhere on the African football roll of honour, and after loosing to Tunisia 4-1 in Tunis, the wait for this country's entry into African soccer, will take even longer.

The Kenyan soccer team's win against Gabon and managing to hold Morocco, came as relief to most football faithfuls in this country. The said team has been struggling most of the time and for a long time has neither qualified for the Cup of Nations nor the prestigious World Cup finals.

What could be the problem with this team? Before the 1999 East and

Central Africa challenge cup games held in Rwanda, the regional diadem had eluded stars for 16 years, they last won it in 1983. The African cup of Nations on the other hand has been elusive since 1992.

The first thing a coach from Nigeria who has trained the team noticed that the preparation of players for major assignments in the East Africa region has been wanting. He attributed this to poor foundation in youth soccer compared to his native West Africa.

Lack of incentives has been cited as the reason for low standards of

Commentary

soccer in Kenya. Most players lack the drive to perform better. The Kenya Football Federation (KFF) has promised to improve standards of local soccer but, have never kept the promise.

Earlier in the year, Kenya had some form of consolation, when the under 17 team beat their Somali counterparts 2-0 at Nakuru's Afraha stadium. This, however, followed disappointments of the sad exit of Tusker, Shabana and Coast Stars from continental club championships and Harambee Stars

from the world cup qualifiers.

Apart from lack of incentives, there have been claims of lack of sponsorship although the new KFF chairman, Maina Kariuki, upon election gave a new lease of life to local coaches in a bid to steer local soccer from the abyss it finds itself in.

Stars have also been known to play defensive rather than attacking game which is blamed on lack of sharp strikers or confidence. This has proved destructive as was the case in the match against Tunisia. Stars were defending and scored two own goals as reward.

The recalling of the German, Reinhert Fabisch, as coach was really welcome. But, time was too short for any improvements to be realised.

The former Minister for Sports, Noah Katana Ngala, gave a prescription for Kenyan ailing soccer and recommended serious strategy on youth development. The youth constitute the reservoir from which clubs and national team select their units.

Mali 2002, has evaded us, this could be seen as good luck as stars can now go back to the drawing board and build a better team for future continental assignments.

The Anvil

University sacco faces bleak future

By Jackson Wafula

Academic staff and senior administrators of the University of Nairobi are seeking the registration of a new co-operative society.

The decision to form the new rival society, Varsity Academia Sacco (VASACCO), was reached at a Faculty of Arts board meeting where members mandated Dr. Mwenda Mbatia and Dr. Paul N. Mbatia to pursue the matter with relevant authorities.

The two have held consultations with the Registrar of Societies and the Nairobi Provincial Co-operative Officer, and have been asked to collect names and signatures of their target staff who are not members of CHUNA.

The stability of CHUNA sacco, a co-operative society that has served University of Nairobi employees for the last 25 years is now threatened.

Out of the 1,838 low cadre University employees who were retrenched in the first phase, 1,738 were CHUNA members. The second phase, which will target middle level and academic staff, will hit the society even harder.

According to the CHUNA chairman's annual report released on June 16, 2001, the on going retrenchment exercise is like a "stealth bomber" that has stalked the society's membership. According to the report, retrenchment is likely to reduce the current membership from 6404 to about 4000.

"So far we have only managed to collect 10 names and signatures. We are also aware that the cooperative Act is not in our favour but we have been advised

that if we have good reasons, the act cannot bar us," Dr. Mwenda Mbatia said.

A survey among lecturers and senior administrators revealed that most of them are not aware of the move to form a new sacco. They were, however, in agreement that their membership in CHUNA has been taken for granted by successive management committees since they are massively outnumbered by the low cadre employees.

The Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, is in favour of the new sacco. He says CHUNA has proved incapable of giving developmental loans when members want them.

Mr. Francis Owakah, a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, said that academic staff have no voice in CHUNA and a new sacco would be a welcome idea. "In CHUNA, it is the person who contributes two shillings who has a voice but not the one who contributes Shs 10,000. We cannot allow this to continue for ever" he said.

A senior administrator who sought anonymity agreed that they are heavily, and outnumbered especially during elections, and even when one of them is elected, he/she finds him self or herself surrounded by low cadre committee members.

When contacted, the Society's Manager, Mr. E.T. Nabangi, disputed the claims saying that lecturers and senior administrators are invaluable members of the society. He admitted that he has heard that there is an attempt by a section of their members to form another society but believes that such an attempt



The New Kenya National Union of Teachers Chairman, Mr. John Katumanga (left), and Secretary General, Francis Ng'ang'a at a press conference. KNUT is currently facing opposition from a new union, the Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (Kuppet) (Picture courtesy Nation)

cannot succeed and that is why they are not taking it seriously.

The treasurer, Mr. L. K. Kurgat decried the lecturers' and senior administrators' apathy towards the society's General and Educational meetings. "I am urging them to start attending these meetings through which members decide how their society is to be run. It is through these meetings that they can influence policies to accommodate their concerns," he said.

Most of the lecturers and senior administrators, have huge loans with CHUNA and it is unlikely that they will be able to quit in case a new sacco is registered.

Meanwhile, reports Anne Kanyi, parking bays at the University have been invaded by outsiders leading to a rise in insecurity.

The Vice Chancellor's personal assistant, Mr. Kimaita Kirimania confirmed that several vehicles have been burgled and property stolen.

A lecturer at the Department of Economics, DR. Samuel Nyandemo whose car was stolen from the Administration parking bay appealed to the university administration to consider privatising security services as retrenchment had not helped.

The University's Chief Security Of-

ficer, Mr. W. Wahome, admitted that the problem has been there for some time. However, there are strict regulations to be followed before one was issued with a parking sticker. Among other things, a member of staff or student has to produce the log book of the vehicle to prove ownership and a staff or students identity card.

He added that not all university staff and students who owned cars bought the stickers and no system was in place to ensure that all cars parked at the university belonged to university staff or students.

Okemo Budget Starts Biting as govt implements tax hikes

By Lempaa Soyinka

The recent budget pronouncement by the Minister for Finance, Mr Chrisanthus Okemo, that excise duty on second-hand clothes will be increased is already creating uneasiness among traders and consumers.

Traders at the famous Gikomba open air market said last year's budget increase of taxes on second handclothes has badly affected business and that the proposed increase in this year's budget will further worsen their situation.

A spot check by Anvil at Gikomba reveals consumers, too, have been seriously affected considering that the hard economic times have eroded their purchasing power.

In this year's budget speech, Mr. Okemo, slapped a 35% increase in excise duty to protect local textile industries.

Samuel Opiyo, who started selling

secondhand shoes in 1997 told this reporter that his business had been greatly affected. He said that a bale which sold at Ksh 15,000 is now going for 17,000.

He complains that customers are unable to adjust to new prices.

Juma John who has been in mitumba business for 18 years says that things are getting worse and wonders whether his customers will adjust to the new prices.

He sells secondhand coats and jackets, which fetch him good money.

Importers have increased their prices citing heavy taxation and the wholesalers have no option but to pass the burden to retailers," said Juma John.

He is appealing to the government to lower tax to save the business which is a source of livelihood for millions of Kenyans.

For Nancy Wambui who has operated her business for two years, the effect is yet to be felt though she says that the business is not the way it used to be

when she started.

Meanwhile, adds Otieno Amisi, Kenyans have been warned against being overly spiritual at the expense of development or personal achievement.

The Right Reverend Dr. George Wanjau of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) also decried the mushrooming of street preachers and the proliferation of churches, which he said have commercialised religion.

Rev. Wanjau, who was addressing reporters at Ufungamano House advised students to balance between religious zeal and academic work if they are to benefit from their life in college.

He said many 'born again' students did not do well at University because they spent too much time evangelising.

This is a very simplistic view of life," he said. "While we encourage students to be religious, it is foolhardy to spend all your life in college preaching from door to door. We must balance our spiritual zeal against our earthly needs."

Nursing course 'irregular'

By Linda Ochiel and Otieno Amisi

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Bsc-N) course offered at the University of Nairobi is irregular, the Anvil has established.

According to a senior Ministry of Health official who requested anonymity, the government is unable to absorb university graduates of nursing because the existing Nursing Act (Sect 257) does not provide for them.

The Act was formulated before the launch of the course and empowers the ministry to absorb only Enrolled Community Nurses and holders of Diploma in Advanced Nursing.

Graduates of the course, offered at the University's Medical School since 1992, are unable to find employment. There is no scheme of employment for them.

Unlike diploma holders, nurses with a bachelor's degree are not guaranteed direct employment in the Ministry of Health and absorption into the private sector is even more difficult.

Last week, Nairobi University

Nursing Students Association (NUNSA), through its chairman, Francis Otieno, presented a petition to parliament, seeking a redrafting of the Nursing Act.

They are demanding a scheme of service and payment of internship allowance, which was withdrawn in 1998.

Students in Pharmacy, Dental Surgery and Medicine, are paid internship allowances and are guaranteed internship places with government hospitals. The graduate nurses do not enjoy this privilege.

Without internship, graduates are not registered. They therefore cannot practice, and are forced to take up illegal low paying jobs to earn money for 'buying' attachment places.

Efforts to get comments from the Chief Nursing Officer, Mrs. Grace Kandie, yielded no fruits. The head of the nursing department, Mrs Margaret Mwiwa, however referred the Anvil to the Dean Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Omondi Maghoha, who could also not be reached.

The graduate nurses course, unlike that of their diploma counterparts, takes four years plus an additional one year internship like doctors.