

New water sport attracts tourists

KWALE

BY TOBIAS CHANJI

Local and international tourists are flocking to Diani Beach thanks to a new water sport known as fly-boarding.

Introduced in East Africa recently, the sport has turned the beach into the best destination for holidaymakers. A fly board is a type of jet pack or hover board that supplies propulsion to drive the fly board through air or water to perform a sport known as fly-boarding.

Fly board enthusiasts say the latest motorised water sport in the world creates excitement and magic.

James Thuku, one of those overseeing the introduction of fly-boarding in Kenya, said, "The pressure of the water coming through the hose to the boots shoves you up and you are basically gliding and flying on water."

However, fly-boarders are required to know how to swim even though there are marshals to help those who face difficulties.

"We provide safety equipment such as lifejackets. However, it is good for one to know how to swim. You should not have a phobia for water as we launch into the deep sea. However, there is always a guide to help in case there is a need," he added.

Apart from the fly board, there is also the jet ski, a 90 horsepower engine that enables riders to glide on water up to 40 miles per hour. It is easier to use a jet ski than a fly board because it is automatic.

IMPROVED BUSINESS

Rahab Wanjiru, another enthusiast, says fly-boarding has contributed immensely to tourism and improved business.

"We want to take the sport to other regions as it continues to gain popularity," she said yesterday.

Mr Thuku said the number of tourists thronging the beach on weekends and holidays to take part in the sport was increasing each day.

The fly board was invented in 2012 by a French watercraft rider, Franky

Zapata who was later granted a patent for his invention. The design allows the device to climb out of the water and be stable in the air.

According to Internet sources, the device was presented to the public for the first time at the Jet Ski World Championship 2012 in China.

A fly board is a bolt-on device that is attached to a Personal Water Craft (PWC). It is designed so that the PWC follows behind the rider's trail, allowing the rider multiple degrees of freedom, even allowing the rider to go underwater if they desire.

A fly boarder stands on a board connected by a long hose to a watercraft. Water is forced under pressure to a pair of boots with jet nozzles underneath, which provide thrust for the rider to fly up to 15 metres in the air, or to dive headlong through the water down to over two metres.

WATER JETS

The pilot on the fly board is secured by bindings similar to a wake board and the rider is propelled from water jets below the device.

The fly board is buoyant for safety, which also allows the rider to rest in the water between rides if they happen to tire.

The use of a personal flotation device and helmet is required for safety against serious head trauma in the event the rider collides with the PWC or stationary structures, and to protect the ears from damage and discomfort from impact with the water.

The device is controlled by a throttle on the PWC. The equipment may be used in two modes: the primary mode requires two people, one to control the PWC throttle that regulates the power and height of the rider. The secondary one relies on an accessory called an electronic management kit, which allows the rider to control the PWC throttle.

The first Flyboard World Championships were held in Doha, Qatar, in October 2012.

In the 2015 season of America's Got Talent, Damone Rippey, a fly board enthusiast, performed fly-boarding on the show.



An enthusiast takes part in fly-boarding. The water sport, invented by Frenchman Franky Zapata, has now been introduced in Diani Beach, Kwale County. [PHOTO: COURTESY]

Nyali residents to rebuild Sh26m police station

MOMBASA

BY PATRICK BEJA

Residents of the Nyali suburb have offered to help rebuild a local police station at a cost of Sh26 million.

Under their umbrella body, Nyali Business and Residents Association (NBRA), the residents said they would spend Sh19 million to build a new gender unit at the station and another Sh7 million on a perimeter wall. The remaining money will be used to rehabilitate facilities at the police station in a bid to improve service delivery.

The NBRA chairperson, Wangeri Ndegwa, said they had raised the money through various activities since July last year. The officials said

the had decided to help establish a gender unit at the station to help victims of sexual abuse, especially boys and girls.

"As a matter of fact, all police stations in the county require gender units. We decided to take up this project because we know we all need the station," Ms Ndegwa said.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

"So far, we have used Sh700,000 on the project. We are doing this as part of our corporate social responsibility," said Ndegwa who was accompanied by NBRA treasurer Michael Wangamani and members Anastacia Muthen, Per Ondiek and Daniella Langer.

Coast Regional Co-ordinator Nelson Marwa is scheduled to preside over the groundbreaking ceremony for the project on a yet-to-be dis-

closed date.

Ndegwa said the first phase of the perimeter wall would cost Sh1.5 million.

"This will begin as we continue to raise more funds. Several people and groups have promised to support the project and we are waiting for them to honour their pledges," she added.

She said the association had so far received Sh4.3 million in pledges from corporate organisations and individuals as she expressed optimism that they would achieve their goal.

Those who have pledged support will give Sh1.2 million and Nyali MP Hezron Awiti (Sh2.3 million).

Grain Bulk Handlers has given Sh200,000, Loto Motors Sh50,000, the Bohra community 50 bags of cement and BM Security 23 bags of cement.



Nyali Business and Residents Association chairperson Wangeri Ndegwa (seated right) in Nyali yesterday, flanked by other officials. [PHOTO: OMONDI ONYANGO/STANDARD]

Islands receive power through diesel plants

LAMU

BY PHILIP MWAKIO

Two diesel power plants have been installed on Pate and Faza islands. The plants were commissioned by the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) over the weekend.

The two islands are off the national grid and are home to over 30,000 people who rely on fishing as their main economic activity.

REA chairman Simon Gicharu, who led a team to the islands, said Sh132 million was used to put up the 450kva diesel power plants.

The islands, famed for their pristine beaches, have never had electricity and it is hoped that the generators will transform the fortunes of residents who have relied on kerosene for lighting until now.

Mr Gicharu said it was "historic" as the islands and surrounding fishing villages were finally lit.

"We have used Sh132 million to set up the twin diesel power plants, and a further Sh130 million to put up electricity systems on Pate and Faza islands, and a host of other fishing villages," he said.

He said his team was impressed to find that some primary schools in the county connected to power through the nationwide REA initiative had established boarding sections.

"Pupils are able to have more time in school as a result of power being connected and the e-learning process being actualised," he said.

The chairman was accompanied by his chief executive officer, Ng'ang'a Munyu.

KILIFI

Do not vote for Jubilee, Kingi tells residents

BY PATRICK BEJA

Governor Amason Kingi has urged Coast residents not to vote for Jubilee, accusing it of failing to address the problems facing the region.

He said the national government had failed to solve the region's historical land problems in the four years it had been in power.

In a swipe at President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto, the governor said the Government was trying to arm-twist Opposition leaders in the region in exchange for development projects.

"They want us to beg them. As the people of Coast region, we will not beg anymore. We will vote them out come 2017," said Kingi during a passing out parade for county traffic marshals at the weekend.

He said the Government was sitting on the Ndung'u Land Commission and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation reports, which were aimed at addressing historical land injustices.

Kingi claimed senior officials in the Jubilee administration were implicated in the reports.