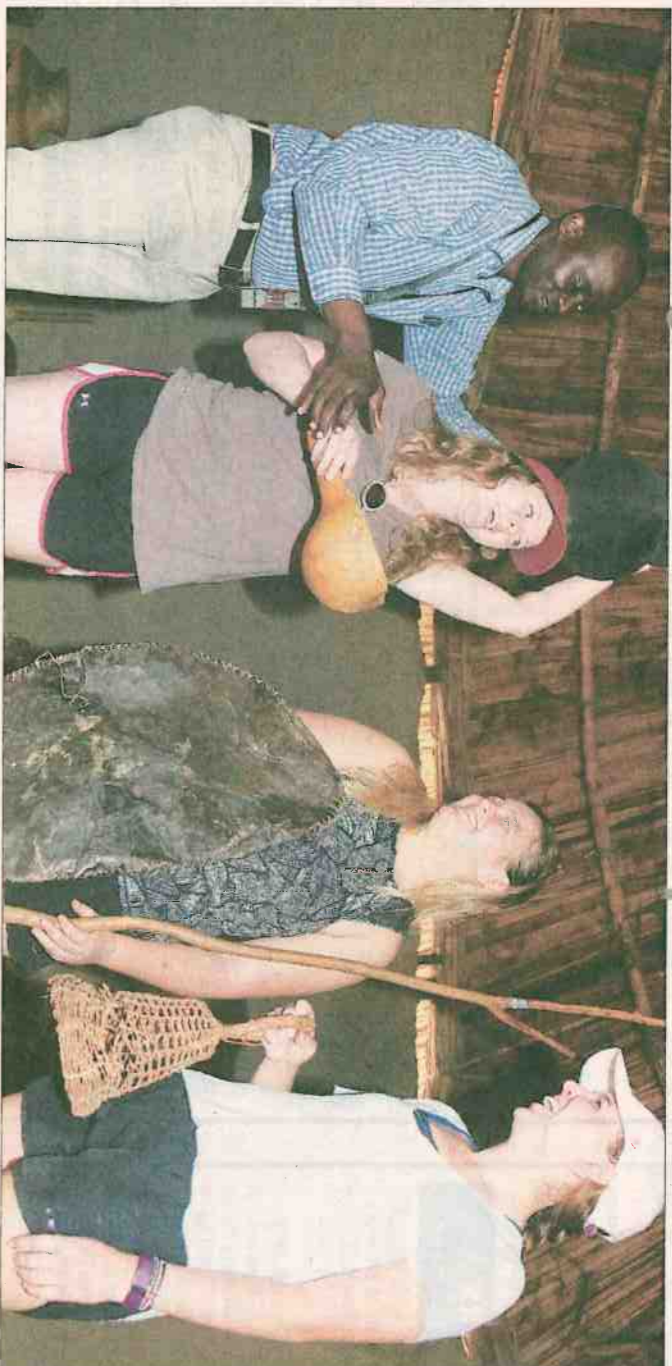


Visiting American students sample Luo culture

Students from St Lawrence University in the US inside a Luo traditional hut at Kisumu Museum. Thirty students from the university are in the country for one month to expand their knowledge on African culture and trace the ancestral roots of US President Barack Obama. (PHOTO: COLLINS ODIORI/STANDARD)



Sh800m boost for local tourism

KISUMU

By KEPHER OTIENO

The national government will give Sh800 million to investors interested in building eco-lodges in national parks in western Kenya.

This is the good news that awaits Kisumu hospitality investors as they meet Tourism Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala today to discuss possible ways of reviving tourism in the region.

Last week, tourism stakeholders drawn from 14 counties in the region said the State had done little to market the western circuit as a vibrant tourist destination.

Lake Victoria Tourism Association (LVTa) chairman Dedan Olawo said tourism resource distribution was

skewed in favour of coastal destinations.

He said this was despite Nyanza and Western regions hosting great features that could attract more tourists.

DISBURSE MONEY

Tourism Corporation Fund Managing Director Jonah Orumoi said they were working on modalities of disbursing the money to selected investors by end of the month.

"We are targeting national parks, which have been the centre of attraction for most international tourists but have few lodging facilities or none at all," said Mr Orumoi.

Regional Co-ordinator for Antiquities, Sites and Monuments Daniel arap Mitei said they were planning to upgrade a number of archeological

sites in the region.

"Our intention is to do a major facelift of some of the historical sites to attract more investors and pilgrims," Mr Mitei told The Standard.

He disclosed that there were about 100 national monuments set for upgrading and consultations with the county governments and donors were in advanced stages.

"We have asked each of the 47 counties to identify and forward the names of at least two archeological and legendary sites that are key attractions for tourists," Mitei said.

He said once the counties forwarded the names, they would decide on the mode of sharing the proposed Sh2 billion to upgrade the sites. "We have proposed a budget of Sh2 billion and investors are waiting

for the green light to come and help us build the sites," he explained.

PUMPED BACK

The revenues generated from the parks will then be pumped back into the community through supporting development projects of their choice.

Tourism has begun to grow as the sites continue to present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage to the world.

Anthony Ochieng, the LVTa boss, said the western tourist circuit had massive revenue potential that was yet to be tapped.

"We want the state to support the tourism sector if it is committed to promoting domestic tourism," he said.

County boss assures youths NYS projects will go on

KISUMU

By KEVINE OMOLLO

Residents have been assured that all projects the National Youth Service (NYS) began in the region will continue.

County Commissioner Maalim Mohammed said he had spoken to Ministry of Devolution officials who assured him that all stalled projects would be restarted.

This was after 4,000 youths hired by NYS threatened protests after the projects stalled. They also accused the ministry of failing to pay them.

The youths are part of the 5,000 that NYS had hired before 1,000 were recalled. They had worked for six months.

The youths also accused the ministry of failing to remit money to their Sacco.

In a letter, their representatives demanded immediate release of their wages. They also want access to Sacco accounts.



Maalim Mohammed

"I have spoken to the officer coordinating the projects in Kisumu and the matter is solved. The projects have positively impacted the lives of local youths and the government will sustain them," said Mr Mohammed.

"I thank the youth leaders for taking the initiative to present their issues to me. I hope they will give us time to address all these issues without ultimatums and timelines. I am assuring them that the project will proceed as planned and there is no cause for alarm," he added.

Lone trader disarms 3 gangsters in shop raid

BUSIA

By JOHN MONDOH

A trader in Busia town wrestled and disarmed three gangsters who had attacked his shop.

Joseph Ndung'u was closing Afrikarma Supermarket on Monday evening when three men armed with an AK-47 rifle ambushed him and demanded the day's earnings.

But the trader was not about to hand over his hard-earned cash without a fight.

"One of them approached my shop pointing a gun at me. I was tense but I composed myself and wrestled him to the floor," said Mr Ndung'u.

In the scuffle, the gun went off but the bullet hit the floor.

"When the other two saw what happened they took off. I managed to get the gun from the gangster and that's when he also ran away," he said.

He appealed to the police to intensify security patrols for traders in the area.

Confirming the incident, Busia County Police Commander Halima Abdi said the police recovered the rifle with 30 rounds of ammunition and one used cartridge.

She disclosed that the officers could not ascertain the origin of the gun because its registration number was covered in rust.

BALLISTIC EXAMINATION

"Looking at the gun, it's a bit old and rusty. It looks like it was buried in the ground. We are planning to take it to Nairobi for a ballistic examination to know whether it is from Uganda or Kenya," she said.

The police boss said investigations into the incident were ongoing and that the perpetrators would be brought to book soon.

Ms Abdi praised the trader's courage and appealed to local residents to volunteer any information that could lead to the arrest of criminals in the town.

Man strangles wife following domestic tiff

KISUMU



Neighbours watch as the body of a woman allegedly killed by her husband is removed from her house. (PHOTO: DENISH OCHIENG/STANDARD)

By KEVINE OMOLLO

Police are looking for a man said to have strangled his wife during a domestic fight.

The man is said to have quarrelled with his wife at their home in Kalejo in Nyalandu slums before a fight ensued, leading to her death.

Police officers who visited the scene yesterday said the suspect could have strangled the woman because there were no external injuries on the body.

Neighbours said the woman had been living with the man for the last three months, but the two had developed a sour relationship in the last few weeks.

"She shared her tribulations with me and said she was fed up with the man and wanted him out of her house," said Lilian Odhiambo, a neighbour.

The woman's body was discovered in bed by a customer who had gone to buy charcoal yesterday morning.

"The customer, who buys charcoal daily, went to the woman's business stall but did not find her. She decided to go to the house and ask why she had overslept," said Joseph Opiyo, the woman's landlord.

Area chief David Rajoro said the incident was the third of its kind in the area, and urged local residents to work with the authorities to curbing such crimes.

The body was taken to the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital mortuary.

End party office row, leaders told

MIGORI

ODM Chairman John Mbatia has directed Governor Okoth Obado and the party branch officials to resolve a dispute sparked by the governor's decision to build a parallel party office in Migori town.

The party branch officials had protested when Mr Obado's put up a new office dubbed "Orange House Team 044", allegedly without consulting them.

The officials, led by branch chairman Philip Makabongo, had disowned the new office, saying the party could not have two offices in the same town. Yesterday, Mr Mbatia told the two sides to settle the matter amicably in the interests of the party.