

OUTLOOK

# Tourism players upbeat new rail line will revive crucial sector

## ATTRACTION Wildlife lovers excited to choose SGR for adventure affordable travel between cities

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Tourism players are expressing optimism ahead of the launch of the standard gauge railway passenger train services, saying it would motivate both local and international visitors to travel between Mombasa and Nairobi for holidays.

President Uhuru Kenyatta is expected to flag off the passenger train in Mombasa today.

Kenya Coast Tourism Association chairman Mohamed Hersi said the passenger train services would be a game-changer

to the tourism sector. He added it would stimulate travel for beach and safari.

He added that tourists will be travelling by rail from Nairobi to Mombasa and other seaside resort towns of Diani, Malindi, Watamu and Kilifi for holiday and revive tourism in the region.

Mr Hersi, who is also the Heritage Hotels chief executive officer, said some international tourists will enjoy travelling by train as they will have the opportunity to enjoy wildlife and the scenery. "Travelling by air from



**TRAVEL** Mr. Mohamed Hersi, the chairman of KCTA. FILE

Nairobi to Mombasa has been expensive especially during peak season, a factor which made it difficult for local tourists to visit the Coast for holidays," he said.

Diani Reef Beach Resort managing director Bobby Kamani said the standard gauge railway would increase tourist numbers in the South Coast and help revive the industry.

He, however, called on the government to fast track the Dongo Kundu bypass so that tourists could travel to Diani without crossing through the Likoni channel.

"We expect the number of tourists visiting Diani to increase, but they can only take shorter time to reach the South Coast if the Dongo Kundu project is speeded up," he said.

Hotelkeepers and Carere Coast branch executive officer Sam Ilkwaye said people from the two cities will travel for weekend adventures and boost the visitor numbers.

Wildlife enthusiasts would travel by train and access Tsavo West National Park through the Mitto And station, he said.

Wildlife lovers heading Tsavo East National Park he added, will travel from Mombasa or Nairobi up Voi and access the park for game drives.

Tourism is showing signs of revival where the earrrir last year hit Sh99 billion.