

COUNTY > ROUND-UP

COAST

Lamu >

Residents upbeat new road will boost economy

Building of 530km road is expected to open up region to trade and end marginalisation

BY KALUME KAZUNGU
@KalumeSamuel
skazungu@ke.nationmedia.com

Investors, leaders and Lamu residents are upbeat that construction of the Sh60 billion Lamu-Garissa-Isiolo road will boost the county's economy as well as that of the entire Northern Kenya Corridor.

Construction of the 530km road, which is part of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (Lapsset) Corridor Project components, is set to start in January.

The project is being undertaken by the Lamu-Isiolo-Road Consortium Limited.

The project is expected to be undertaken within two years.

The road will link the Lamu Port at Kililana through Garissa, Isiolo, Samburu County, and end at Lokichar in Turkana where it will join the Eldoret-Juba Highway.

At Isiolo, the stretch of the road will intersect with the new northbound road to Moyale.

Various investors and locals interviewed yesterday expressed confidence that a road of that magnitude will end the decades-long marginalisation that Lamu and the northern Kenya region have endured from successive regimes.

Lapsset CEO Silvester Kasuku says the Lamu-Garissa-Isiolo Road is expected to improve the economy of all the counties it will cut through.

Mr Kasuku termed the project a game changer not just for Lamu and Kenya, but also the East African region since it will be a direct outlet for shippers loading and offloading cargo at the new Lamu Port once it

begins operations.

He said the project will open up Lamu and Kenya to the world of trade, tourism and industrialisation.

"As you all know, the road project is crucial since it will fully serve the Lamu Port and that's why we need it urgently. It's important that the port and the highway be developed simultaneously since a port without a modern road to evacuate and feed it with goods will not be realistic," said Mr Kasuku.

Lamu Governor Fahim Twaha noted that the county's economy had been at its worst in the past few years due to infrastructural challenges and insecurity, but with such projects in place, the situation would change.

The county has few town centres and industries, which translates to little revenue being collected, but the governor expressed confidence that the upcoming industrial projects and road projects will give rise to more towns hence more revenue.

Ms Zipporah Cherunya, an investor who has been in Lamu for the past 12 years, said the road will stimulate the growth of all manner of enterprises as old towns along the corridor will grow and new ones spring up.

She said the road will also improve inter-county communication and generally usher in new economic perspectives and opportunities.

Mr Ali Shebwana, a local, said the road project will generally improve people's living standards as it will create jobs for the local youth.

The road is expected to boost the development of nine towns along the Lapsset corridor — Lamu, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale, Lodwar, Maralal, Wajir and Mandera.

Sh60 billion

Cost of constructing the 530km Lamu-Garissa-Isiolo road.

MOUNTAIN

Tharaka-Nithi >

Disabled call for cash transfer programme

Disabled people want to be included in the cash transfer programme. Speaking yesterday during celebrations to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Kairuni Stadium in Tharaka-Nithi County, the disabled said they faced more challenges than the elderly. "The disabled are the most challenged in the society," said Ms Asunta Mukwanjeru, County Assembly nominated representative for the disabled.

—Alex Njeru

Murang'a >

Del Monte seeks to be enjoined in land case

Del Monte has applied to be enjoined in a suit in which two petitioners want the Murang'a County government and NLC to invite bids from other companies to operate in the area the firm manages. The firm, through lawyer Grison Thuo, said it had an interest in the suit because it has huge investments in the leasehold. The hearing of the application by Ephantus Githae and James Mwangi did not take place following Del Monte's move.

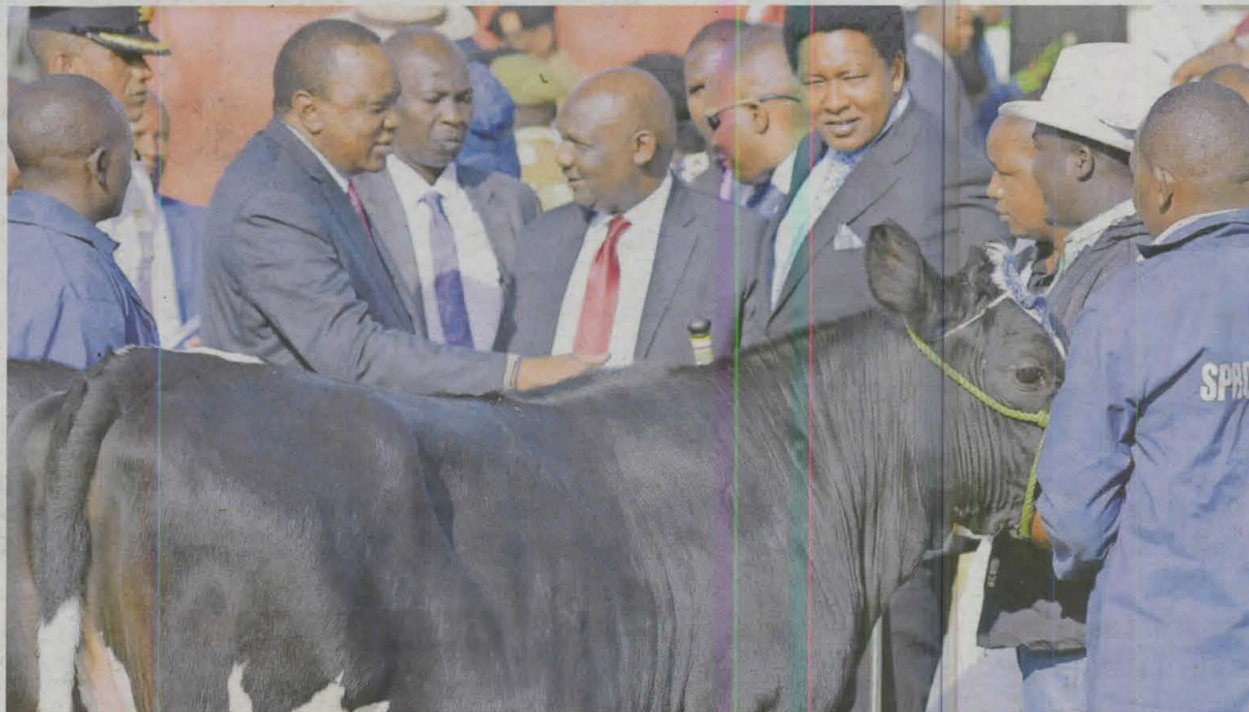
—Ndungu Gachane

Tharaka-Nithi >

Row brewing over bursary committees

A row is brewing between members of Tharaka-Nithi County Assembly and the executive over the composition of ward committees to manage the Sh45 million bursary fund. Speaking in Chogoria yesterday, Marimanti MCA and Deputy Speaker Susan Ngugi accused the executive of giving the jobs to their political supporters. She said the money is likely to end up in individuals' pockets or to benefit students from able families.

—Alex Njeru



GEORGE SAYAGIE | NATION

President buys champion bull

Narok > President Uhuru Kenyatta with Narok Governor Samuel Olé Tunai (centre) and Senator Ledama Ole Kina (fourth right) during a livestock exhibition and auction in Narok yesterday. President Kenyatta bought the three-year-old champion bull that weighs 1,460 kilograms.

WESTERN

Kakamega >

MP urges counterparts to support gender bill

Matungu MP Justus Murunga has appealed to his counterparts to relax their stance and endorse the amendments on the gender bill. Mr Murunga said lawmakers should stop bickering on the merits of the gender bill, but pass it. Speaking when he disbursed Sh4.45 million to women's groups in his constituency, he said that like-minded MPs had started a fresh mobilisation of their colleagues to back the bill.

—Shaban Makokha

Busia >

Enrolment for stipend 'biased against disabled'

Disabled people in Busia have complained of discrimination in enrolment for the government's cash transfer scheme for the elderly. Their chairperson, Mr Ronald Obiero, claimed the scheme's coordinator, Ms Rose Simiyu, sidelines them in issues that affect them. "She recently organised a meeting for PWDs in Mundika, Matayos Constituency, without involving our leaders, making us question her intentions," he said. Efforts to reach Ms Simiyu were unsuccessful.

—Gaitano Pessa

NYANZA

Nyamira >

County set to launch monthly cleanup drive

Nyamira County government is set to launch its monthly cleanup campaign. The devolved unit has dedicated every Tuesday of the first week of every month as the County Cleaning Day. Deputy county secretary Thomas Nyariki was nominated to head the campaign. Mr Nyariki will be assisted by Mr Kefah Masita. "For this week, the Environment executive Samuel Maiko will oversee the exercise and submit a report to the governor," read a circular from the county.

—Ruth Mbula

Homa Bay >

Board to review road categories to ease repairs

The Kenya Roads Board is reviewing the classification of roads across the country to ease maintenance. The board's executive director Jacob Ruwa said the project is expected to be completed by the end of the year before recommendations are sent to the Transport CS for approval. "We are going to recommend what can be done about some of the links that were either omitted or wrongly classified," he said during a road inspection in Nyanza region.

—Victor Raballa

Kisii >

Rider in hospital after being shot 'by police'

A boda-boda rider is recovering at Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital after he was shot in a bar at Kenya on Monday night. Mr Cyrus Obugi was shot in the thigh by a police officer responding to a fracas in the bar. Kenya police boss Isaac Thurania said they have opened investigations into the incident. He said they had also arrested the officer. According to Mr Thurania, the man attacked officers and other patrons in the bar.

—Magati Obebo