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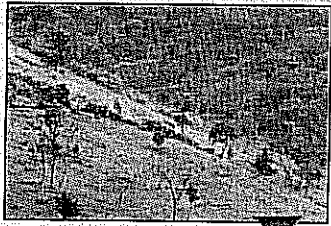
QuickRead

**BUNGOMA: Manual tax system to be phased out**

The Bungoma County government is planning to phase out the manual revenue collection system and introduce a fully automated system collection system, a move that strives to seal leaks that have in the past resulted to massive revenue losses. Speaking in Chwele over the weekend, during the launch of the new county government receipts for tax collection, Governor Kenneth Lusaka said plans are in top gear to introduce an electronic revenue collection system in the next six months, as one of the ways the county will use to seal loopholes.

**SIAYA: Police arrest suspects in AP's death**

Police in Migori have arrested 10 suspects in connection with the killing of a police officer and a female friend he was with in Awendo. Corporal Nicholas Lesodo was escorting the woman to her house after attending a burial arrangements meeting when they met their death. Migori OCPD Alfred Makoma said the suspects are being held at Migori police station and they are helping with more information that may lead to recovery of an AK-47 rifle that the slain officer was robbed of on Friday night.



**NAROK: More Mau forestland rehabilitated**

Over 40,000 hectares of forestland that had been destroyed in the Mau area has been rehabilitated. According to the Kenya Water Tower Agency Director Francis ole Nkako, the Government is at an advance stage of profiling a list of individuals who had genuine title deeds so as to be compensated. "It is worth noting that there has been an increase in the water levels in the Ma'a River because of concerted efforts by different stakeholders in restoring the Mau ecosystem," said Nkako.

**TRANS-NZOIA: Leaders want a joint vet team**

Pastoralist leaders from Kenya and Uganda have urged for a common cross-border veterinary team to help eradicate livestock diseases. The leaders said a joint effort would help wipe out livestock diseases among the pastoralists in the region. Led by West Pokot deputy Governor Titus Lotee, they asked the two States to allow the formation of a cross-border team to deal with the contagious *Bovine pleuropneumonia*. "The war against livestock diseases will be won if the governments establish a common team mandated to tame diseases," Lotee said.

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**County will not renew lease for Criticos land**

Governor Mruttu has also directed those with expired leases to stop harassing squatters over trespass

BY RENSON MNYAMWEZI  
Taita Taveta County

Several land leases held by prominent people on thousands of acres in Taita Taveta have expired and they will not be renewed.

Governor John Mruttu is categorical that the 99-year lease held by former Taveta MP Basil Criticos on about 3,000 acres has expired and will not be renewed.

"We have not received application from the former MP over the extension of his land lease and has no right over the land as he is currently a squatter in his former expansive farm," he added.

But Mr Criticos, who has faced several invasions of his properties, said he will apply for a renewal of the lease and accused local leaders of inciting residents to grab his properties.

About 5,000 squatters have lived on this property as illegal settlers, according to reports. Late last week, the National Land Commission (NLC) Chairman Dr Mohamed Swazuri said consideration for renewal will be based on what the land owner has done with it for the past 99 years adding that title holders may apply to the commission for renewal of leases.

Early this month, the commission also asked foreign landowners to submit their land documents for inspection. These decrees have sparked a



**CRITICOS' REACTION**

Claims the governor has no powers to extend land leases and should keep off the matter.

Says he has applied for the lease extension to NLC as required by law and not to the county government as claimed by the governor.

Advises the governor to stop usurping the land commission's role.

Says he is in possession of a letter from NLC confirming that they are in the process of processing his land lease extension.

debate in parts of Coast province regarding who is a foreigner when the constitution allows dual citizenship, and what constitutes idle land.

Yesterday Mr Mruttu told *The Standard* that the lease for 2,970 acres of land at Machungwani Farm expired in January this year and the land is now State property.

"The former MP cannot justify

Over 5,000 squatters have lived on the land belonging to Mr Criticos who owns thousands of acres in Taita Taveta. [PHOTO: FILE/STANDARD]

renewal of the land lease because the land has been lying idle for years. Renewal of land leases will depend on what the landowner has done with the land. The NLC has warned that idle land will not be renewed," said Mr Mruttu.

While supporting NLC's move to suspend eviction of illegal occupiers of land in the country yesterday, Mr Mruttu asked over 5,000 squatters occupying Machungwani farm to be patient as effort is being made to settle them on the disputed land.

In a notice issued last Friday, NLC notified landowners, whether genuine or otherwise, to suspend the on-going

and planned evictions of squatters and/or occupiers until the proposed legislation on "Evictions and Settlement" is enacted.

Addressing thousands of squatters at Machungwani Farm yesterday in the company of local leaders, the governor said the land in dispute now belongs to the government and the former MP has no authority to harass the local squatters over trespass.

Mr Mruttu was accompanied by among others Taveta acting OCPD Eshiphan Gichohi, two wards representative Chrispus Tondoo (Bomani) and Johnes Maskuji (Mboghoni) and a parliamentary loser Mike Bantone.

**Investors eye Kisumu with multi-million-shilling hotel**

BY RUSHDIE OUDIA  
Kisumu County

A group of real estate investors are putting up a Sh300 million apartment hotel in Kisumu County to boost the area's bed capacity.

The groundbreaking ceremony that took place last weekend gave way to the construction of Mvuli Suites Apartment Hotel in Milimani, less than three kilometres from the Central Business District.

Designed by architectural firm

Adventis Inhouse Africa, Mvuli suites will have 70 rooms, over 100 square metres of multi-purpose meeting space, ample secure parking and a restaurant that opens onto a landscaped garden terrace alongside other luxuries.

The project is being put up by Ogwedhi Investment Limited, a partnership between Kisumu Park Bureau Resort and Oltepesi Properties. On completion, investors seeking high market rental yields from ownership of managed studio apartments are to part with Sh4.8 million

per unfurnished unit.

Consistent with most apartment developments in Kenya, those purchasing studio apartments will receive a sublease title for the apartment and, one share in the management company.

The management company will contract Mvuli Hotels to run the property as furnished.

Oltepesi chairman Imtiaz Khan said it shall be the operator's responsibility to maximise occupancy of the apartments in order to deliver returns to the owners.

Mvuli Suites in Kisumu are Oltepesi's second project after the 74 rooms Mvuli Suites Museum Hill in Nairobi, which was completed in October 2012.

It is also Kisumu Park View's second apartment project in the region after their first development of 24 apartments on Tom Mboya Drive completed in 2008.

"Kisumu will be developed by local middleclass entrepreneurs, not only foreign investors and they need modern facilities to lure them into the area," said Mr Khan.