

Ruto calls on West to lift travel advisories



Acting President William Ruto receives a tourism guide book from Tourism Cabinet Secretary Phyllis Kandie after he officially opened the Magic Kenya Travel Expo taking place at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, yesterday. Ruto was the chief guest at the event. [PHOTO: DPPS]

NAIROBI COUNTY

By NICHOLAS WAITATHU

Acting President William Ruto has asked countries that issued travel advisories against Kenya to lift them, saying the Government had put measures in place to address insecurity.

"The recent unfortunate insecurity incidents reported in select areas across the country that led to the drop in tourist numbers as a result of negative travel advisories have been considerably dealt with," Ruto said.

Mr Ruto made the remarks during the opening of the fourth edition of the three-day Magical Kenya Travel Expo at Nairobi's Kenyatta International Convention Centre.

He also confirmed yesterday that the Government was undertaking comprehensive programmes aimed at protecting wildlife, which is the heartbeat of the country's tourism industry.

He observed that wildlife is a key component of tourism and hence re-

quires a lot of attention from all players with a view to maintaining its vibrancy.

"Poaching, a vicious crime conducted through international syndicates, is being contained through greater investment and the use of modern technology and strategies. We will never tire in our plea to the international community to escalate efforts against the illegal trade in wildlife, which leads to decimation and even extinction of rare species," said Ruto.

ECONOMIC PILLAR

In the 2014/15 financial year, the State allocated Sh1.8 billion to step up the anti-poaching war.

The event has attracted about 170 hosted buyers from 36 countries around the world. Tourism boards from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, India, Indonesia and South Africa have also attended the function.

"Tourism is critical to our economy, generating 11 per cent of the gross

domestic product and accounting for nine per cent of employment. It is an economic pillar of our Vision 2030. We are confident that tourism will contribute more to our economic development as it expands and diversifies. For this reason, the Government is investing intensively in projects and initiatives to expand, stabilise and maximise tourism," he added.

Tourism Cabinet Secretary Phyllis Kandie said the industry was on a recovery path following sustained efforts both locally and internationally.

"Attendance of the travel expo by international players is a clear testimony that local tourism products are still intact. Equally, in the recent past we have received a lot of support from various countries and organisations. This adds more confidence to the industry," she said.

Kenya Tourism Board Managing Director Ndegwa Mureithi said Kenya has in the recent past attracted major endorsements from both local and international guests.

County asked to compensate woman for land

EMBU COUNTY

By BRIGID CHEMWENO

A woman from Meru whose land was encroached on by the county government should be compensated, the Office of the Ombudsman has said.

The county government of Embu and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development have been asked to compensate Margery Marigu, 34, for encroaching on her land, causing destruction and rendering it unusable.

The Chairperson of the Commission on Administrative Justice (the Ombudsman), Otiende Amollo, in a statement said the authorities avoided a rock outcrop at the designated area where the official road passes.

"This has not only caused her agony as she moved from one office to another in search of justice but has also affected her livelihood. Therefore the commission has directed the county government of Embu and Ministry of Lands to assess the loss she has

incurred and compensate her," said Amollo.

He said Marigu has been in pursuit of justice since 1980 after the local authorities in Embu encroached on her piece of land, registered in her husband's name, where a public (murram) road and a bridge were constructed.

ROCK OUTCROP

"The county government also encroached on the same piece of land in 2013," he added.

Amollo said the complainant sought the help of the commission in October 2013 out of frustration, after several attempts from different public offices.

"At the core of the matter, filed against the Embu county government, are rendering of a portion of the complainant's land unusable, destruction of food crops and trees, construction of public access road and erecting a bridge on a private land," he added.

He said a major destruction occurred in August 2013, when a con-



Chairman of Commission on Administrative Justice Otiende Amollo.

tractor, commissioned by the county government destroyed crops valued at Sh1,411,970, to pave way for a new road and bridge.

He said investigations showed Marigu's claims were well founded.

EMBU COUNTY

MCA's accuse police of laxity in curbing insecurity

Eight Embu county assembly members (MCAs) have accused the police of laxity in apprehending and charging members of gangs that have been terrorising Mbeere South residents.

They warned that unless police counter the wave of insecurity witnessed in the area where several people have lost their lives, the residents will have no alternative but to protect themselves.

The MCAs, who included Majority Leader Andrew Musakwa, Mwaniki Nyaga (Mavuria), Shunem Ngira (nominated), Pauline Mutua (Makima), John Mwangi (Kiambere), and Muria Nyaki (Mbeti South), among others, claimed some police officers could be conspiring with criminals to rob residents.

They said they had no trust in the police and called for an overhaul of the security administration, including the transfer of some officers.

Musakwa said the idea of forming vigilante groups had come as a result of police laxity in combating the attacks.

LAIKIPIA COUNTY

County partners with NGO to end cattle rustling

The county government of Laikipia has partnered with an NGO to educate youths from pastoral communities to shun cattle rustling and other criminal activities.

The government has joined hands with George Gitonga Foundation to see to it that the youth are involved in small businesses.

The foundation will offer training while the county government will source for funds.

The first group of over 100 youths has been trained in the last one month and are ready to take up small enterprises. George Gitonga, the founder of the organisation, said it is aimed at providing the local young people with alternative means of earning a living hence minimising the temptations of engaging in cattle rustling. "This is a joint venture between us and the county government so that we can see the cases of cattle rustling come to an end," he said at a Nyahururu hotel yesterday.

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