

Bomet Newswire

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REGIONAL

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A Community at a Crossroads

What began as sibling rivalry and a contest for the “kingpin” tag has evolved into a full-fledged political campaign, with both camps rallying influential backers within and beyond the region.

By Kiprono Arap Kalya

The growing political rift between Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot and

Emurua Dikirr MP Johana Ng’eno is reshaping the political landscape of the

vote-rich Kipsigis community. Analysts suggest it could also redefine the trajectory of

Kalenjin politics post-William Ruto presidency.

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NTSA Reports 4,748 Road Fatalities in 2024, Targets Stricter Safety Measures to Curb Rising Accidents



NTSA officials flag off a campaign track in a one week drive to sensitize locals on road safety. NTSA and NACADA are collaborating in the Drive. Photo/Newswire Correspondent

By Newswire Correspondent

Bomet Jan 9 - National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) has revealed that about 4,748 people lost their lives last year in road accidents. NTSA's corporate support services director Jacob Sisey, said accident fatalities was an increase from 2023. Addressing the press in Bomet when he lead a multi agency team in a road safety sensitization, Sisey said the statistics shows that it is unfortunate that motorbikes accounts for the largest fatalities. "Most of these accidents

occurred in December when people were travelling for festive seasons," he said. In Bomet County alone, 250 people died in road crash last year. The authority in collaborations with the National Police Service, NACADA and Kenya Red Cross have kicked off a joint enforcement as schools re-open for the first term in the South Rift region. He added that going forward, the authority will not negotiate on the road safety because it is responsibility of every Kenyan to observe the

traffic rules. "We will not negotiate with anyone flouting traffic rules by risking their lives or the lives of the passengers they are carrying in their vehicles," said Sisey. The director said most of the accidents which occur are avoidable, if the road users abide by the rules set on the Kenyan roads. "Most of the accidents are caused by drivers negligence by engaging in alcohol, invalid driving licences and un-road worthy vehicles. We are not going to negotiate on that and we will be firm on the road safety by enforcing

them," he said. Sisey also revealed that the authority is planning to install the speed cameras on major roads in a bid to save lives. He also noted that the NTSA has intensified efforts to sensitize the drivers and road users by educating them on the importance of responsible road usage. His sentiments comes at a time where speeding has been identified as the leading cause of accidents in the country which accounts for 70 percent of the accidents.

Families on the edge as banditry rages in West Pokot County

By Kimagata Marindany

At least 700 people have been displaced by apandits in West Pokot County with several schools being closed down due to the menace. Pokot Central Sub-County is the worst hit with normal lives being disrupted by increased activity by pundits in the area. Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) Development Cabinet Secretary Beatrice Askul (second left) Wednesday January 8 visited the bandit prone Pokot Central in the company of security team



to assess the situation. She came face to face with the reality of aftermath of banditry attacks after

visiting several schools that have remained deserted even after schools opened across the country.

Residents from the affected areas are appealing for government intervention saying their lives are in danger from bandits who are baying for their blood and livestock. "The government should swing into action and end this bandit attacks that has displaced us from our homes and locked our children out of school," said one resident. He said the situation was manageable only if the government could concentrate in solving the menace.

Editorial Team

Contributors

Kimagata Marindany
Kiprono Arap Kalya
Radio The Sheriff

Graphics

Kiplal Arap Oretor

Aaron Cheruiyot or Johana Ng'eno? A Community at a Crossroads

By Kiprono Arap Kalya



Aaron Cheruiyot

What began as sibling rivalry and a contest for the “kingpin” tag has evolved into a full-fledged political campaign, with both camps rallying influential backers within and beyond the region.

The Rise of Aaron Cheruiyot

The story of Senator Aaron Cheruiyot's rise began in 2016 when, as a relatively unknown figure, he shocked many by defeating political heavyweights to win the Jubilee Party ticket for the Kericho Senate seat. The seat had fallen vacant after Charles Keter's appointment as Cabinet Secretary.

With his campaign slogan “Kiptoiyot Komasi Kasit” (“It's time for a young man”), Cheruiyot leveraged his youthful energy to outmaneuver seasoned politicians like former Roads Minister Franklin Bett and ex-ODM Secretary General Magerer Langat. Cheruiyot would proceed to win the Senate seat, trouncing former Belgut MP Paul Sang, who was vying on a KANU ticket. The election was hotly contested and served as a litmus test for William Ruto's and the Jubilee Coalition's popularity against Ruto's then-archrival, former Bomet Governor Isaac Rutto and his Chama Cha Mashinani (CCM)

party. Governor Rutto, a rising political star with the audacity to challenge William Ruto in his backyard, posed a significant threat to the latter's ambitions for the presidency. Isaac Rutto backed the KANU candidate and mounted a well-funded campaign against the Jubilee Coalition. Cheruiyot's victory was a godsend for William Ruto, then the Deputy President, as it cemented his grip on the region and extinguished the political flame of Charles Keter, who had opposed Cheruiyot's candidacy. By 2022, Cheruiyot's political star had risen further, with President Ruto elevating him to Senate Majority Leader, underscoring his trust in Cheruiyot as a dependable ally.

The Johana Ng'eno Factor

Johana Ng'eno's political journey stands in contrast to Cheruiyot's. Known for his abrasiveness and grassroots mobilization, Ng'eno has often positioned himself as a renegade in Kalenjin politics. Unlike many of his peers, who owe their rise to figures like Daniel arap Moi or William Ruto, Ng'eno's political clout stems from the unwavering support of his constituents in Emurua Dikirr. Born and raised in Narok County,

Ng'eno has long been a champion for his Kipsigis community in the predominantly Maasai-dominated Kilgoris Constituency. His efforts culminated in the creation of Emurua Dikirr Constituency in 2013, marking a significant political victory for his community.

Despite being considered an “outsider” by some regional elites, Ng'eno has carved a niche for himself. His move to join Ruto's UDA party in 2022, after previously vying on KNC and KANU tickets, marked a strategic shift that improved his standing in national politics, albeit with limited rewards in parliamentary roles.

Kingpin Politics: A Battle for Supremacy

With President Ruto now focusing on national politics, the Kalenjin kingpin mantle has become a contested prize. As the senior-most politician in rank, Senator Cheruiyot appeared poised to assume the role. However, Ng'eno has leveraged Cheruiyot's perceived weaknesses to mount a formidable challenge.

Cheruiyot, known for his articulate debate and system-oriented politics, has struggled with a perceived disconnect from grassroots dynamics.

Critics often cite his less-than-fluent grasp of the Kipsigis language as a drawback in a community where linguistic eloquence is a prized leadership trait.

Eloquence in the Kalenjin language is a key asset for any leader in the region, and it is regarded as what gave President Ruto a competitive advantage over former Baringo Senator Gideon Moi.

Ng'eno, on the other hand, has embraced a populist approach, using his mastery of the Kalenjin language and culturally resonant proverbs to rally support. His speeches, punctuated with fiery rhetoric, cast him as a modern-day Robin Hood, emphasizing community-driven solutions over government promises.

While Cheruiyot champions UDA's policies as solutions to regional issues, Ng'eno appeals to grassroots frustrations, painting Cheruiyot as an elitist disconnected from local realities. Ng'eno's guerilla-style politics have allowed him to expand his influence beyond Emurua Dikirr, threatening to overshadow Cheruiyot's prominence.



Johana Ngeno, Mp

Parents fury over dilapidated classrooms at Kamotyo Primary in Chepalungu

By Radio The Sheriff

ACHebunyo, Bomet Jan 9 - Sorry state of learning facilities at Kamotyo Primary school in Chebunyo Ward has spark fury among Parents and residents. The school which is home to more than 300 learners is faced not only with shortage of classrooms but also dilapidated structures that parents say pose a danger to the safety of their pupils. Irked by the situation, parents took to the street accusing local leaders of neglecting the school.

tion of a classroom. "We have been neglected by the government, how could our school be locked out in the distribution of funds for construction of classrooms for Grade 9 learners, we even doubt if our learners joining Grade 9 will benefit from books," said another parents. Defending teachers, parents who stormed the school wielding twigs, they blamed the poor structures to persistent poor results. "Our pupils are not performing because of the nature of structures. They cannot concentrate in class because



Kamotyo Primary and Junior School in Chebunyo Ward, Chepalungu Sub-county

They accused Chepalungu MP Victor Koech of laxity saying he has turned a deaf ear to their request for renovation of classrooms. "Classrooms in our school is in a sorry state, floors are muddy, woods from the walls are falling apart one by one and we fear for the safety of our pupils," Said Mercy Chepkemoi, a parent. Threatening to withdraw their children from the school, the parents gave the government ultimatum to renovate the facilities. "We will not condone this anymore, we are going to withdraw our children and close down the school if the Government is not going to renovate classrooms so that pupils can get conducive environment for learning," she added. The parents at the same time questioned how Grade 9 learning are going to operate saying the school was not allocated funds for construc-

tion of a classroom. "The floor is wet and sometimes very dusty," added another parent. "Kamotyo Primary School is not just a school; it is the hope of our children's future. Without proper classrooms, where will they learn? We need urgent action from the government," said Mercy Chepkemoi, a parent who took part in the demonstration. They called on the government to provide immediate interventions, including construction of new classrooms and upgrading sanitation facilities promising to continue with the protests until their concerns is prioritized. "Our children deserve a safe and conducive learning environment. It is heartbreaking to see them struggle in such conditions," said Isaac Kiplangat, another parent. "If no action is taken, we will continue demonstrating until our voices are heard."

DP Kindiki holds meeting to review Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA)



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

By Kimagata Marindany

BOMET, Kenya - Deputy President Kithure Kindiki on Tuesday lead Cabinet Secretaries in a meeting to review procedural improvements of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system. Ministers Kipchumba Murkomen (Interior and National Administration), Rebecca Miano (Tourism and Wildlife), Davies Chirchir (Roads and Transport), and Alfred Mutua (Labour & Social Protection) attended the meeting. Kenya's Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system is a semi-automated process determining if visitors are eligible to travel to Kenya. Last year in January, the Kenyan government replaced traditional visas with an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system.

Principal Secretaries Prof. Julius Bitok (Immigration & Citizen Services), John Ololttua (Tourism), Sylvia Museiya (Wildlife), Mohamed Daghar (Transport), Dr. Idris Salim Dokota (Cabinet Affairs) and Teresia Mbaika (Devolution) were also in attendance. The Deputy President stated that the review is aimed at ensuring continuous improvement of this policy one year later, to ensure greater convenience to travellers into Kenya for business, tourism and social purposes. The new policy, which required travelers to pay \$30 and wait three days for processing, was criticized by many travelers, leading to concerns over the policy's impact on tourism. Evelyn Cheluget (Director

General, Immigration and Citizen Services), Amb. Isaac Ochieng (Director General, eCitizen), Dr. Erastus Kanga (Director General, Kenya Wildlife Service) and other senior government officials were present. This decision, approved during a Cabinet meeting led by President William Ruto on December 17 at State House, Nairobi, aims to address concerns from stakeholders and boost tourist numbers as it aligned with the government's ambitious goal of attracting 5 million tourists by 2027. The Cabinet's statement emphasizes that the review is integral to improving Kenya's competitiveness in the tourism sector while accommodating a rising influx of visitors.

MP Kilel wants reinstatement of Sports fund in NG-CDF



By Kimagata Marindany

Silibwet, Bomet – Bomet central MP Richard Kilel has called for the reinstatement of sports fund in the National Government -Constituency Development Fund(NG-CDF) which was removed in 2023. Kilel said that once the parliament resumes its sittings, he will mobilize his colleagues to restore the sports fund and continue funding sporting competitions in the constituencies. He made the remarks during the finals of the inaugural Richard Kilel football ournament, which he sponsored and

which was held at Silibwet Stadium. “We will fight for the restoration of the sports fund and also for the share to be increased because it was a small percentage which was hardly enough to fund different sporting activities,” said Kilel. Before it was removed, NG-CDF dedicated two percent of funds allocated to the constituency to sports activities. He added that they have agreed as Members of Parliament that there is

an urgent need to enhance the sports share to facilitate the growth of grassroots sports. “I was funding this tournament using my own money because the sports fund was removed from the CDF kitty which if unchecked will result in a decline in youth talent,” he said. While calling for funded tournaments that facilitate their talent development for posterity, Kilel said that the aim of the tournament, which will now be an annual event, is to nurture the talents of the youth through

talent promotion and exposure to opportunities. According to the lawmaker, such sporting activities would offer a platform to the local youths from various ethnic backgrounds to interact and share their diverse cultural beliefs so as to become tolerant of each other. Kilel decried that many talents are lost as a result of drugs and, scorching poverty, which pushes many youths into acts of indecency.

Sonokwek Red Bees lift first edition of Richard Kilel Football Tournament

By Kimagata Marindany

Silibwet, Bomet -Sonokwek Red Bees FC beat Barit FC 4-2 in penalties to lift the first edition of Richard Kilel tournament. The bees were held to a barren in regular time in a hotly contested match staged at Silibwet Sports ground. Sonokwek converted their penalties through Dominic Kiptoo, Felix Kipkemoi, Collins Kiprotich and Kipyegon Too while Barit scored via Evans Cheruiyot and Bernard Terer. Barit FC’s Davis Kiprono and Amos Bett wasted their penalties to allow the champions walk away with the trophy and cash prize.

In the semis, Sonokwek eliminated Kamogoso FC 2-0 while Barit defeated Kapkoros FC by a solitary goal. In the third play-off, Kapkoros were stretched before eliminating Kamogoso 4-3 in post-match penalties after a goalless draw. In the women's category, Tekwo Starlets clinched the title after beating Kitoben Starlets 3-2 in penalties after a barren draw. Mercy Chebet, Sharon Chelangat and Triza Chepkemoi netted goals for Tekwo as Lorna Chepkirui and Joyline Chelangat notched for Kitoben.

