

Railway agency asks court to allow SGR construction to continue

MOMBASA

By WILLIS OKETCH

The Kenya Railway Corporation (KR) has gone to court to overturn orders issued against the construction of a standard gauge railway at Miritini. KR says the national government will lose Sh30 million per day if the orders remain in force.

Lawyer Cecil Miller told judge Anne Omolo that since the day the orders were issued, the construction company, China Road and Bridge Construction, has been losing Sh30 million per day maintaining the equipment and other activities on site.

Miritini Free Port had gone to court to stop the construction of the railway on its land after the Government through the National Land Commission failed to pay the Sh1.4 billion in

compensation fees it was awarded.

"It is in the public interest that this order granted by this court be vacated to allow the construction of the railway to proceed so as to stop taxpayers from losing Sh30 million per day," Mr Miller told the court.

He said KR had partnered with the construction firm to build the railway, and it had mobilised equipment on the plot and if the orders remained in force, some of the equipment would rust.

PUBLIC INTEREST

"This order is against public interest because the money being lost belongs to the taxpayers," he added.

China Road lawyer, Wamuti Ndegwa, denied claims that his client had disobeyed a court order and applied to have the company ordered to pay the losses the construction company was incurring every day.

LAWYERS' SUBMISSIONS

- That since there was a dispute over who owns the land, NLC should be given time to determine the true owners

- NLC be allowed time to finish its investigation before compensation is made

- That the stay orders be put aside to allow the construction to continue to avert more losses

And the National Land Commission lawyer, Simon Mbuthia, submitted that Miritini Free Port owners had not been compensated because there was a dispute over the land, which was raised by the county government, which questioned the rightful owner

of the land.

"Upon receipt of complaints from the County Government of Mombasa over the propriety, NLC conducted a review process to establish whether the petitioners are the legitimate owners of the suit land," said Mr Mbuthia.

Mbuthia accused Miritini Free Port directors of failing to disclose to the court the true status of matter when they sought ex parte orders.

He said since the court was now aware that there was a dispute over the rightful owner of the land, then the stay order the company was given should be vacated to allow NLC find out whether the company should be compensated.

Last week, Miritini Free Port lawyer Michael Oloo successfully applied for an injunction against the construction of the railway, complaining that his client rights had been violated by not compensating them.

MACHAKOS

Water body seeks Sh2.4b to clean Athi River with partners

By VICTOR NZUMA

The Government will rehabilitate the heavily polluted Athi River as soon as funds are available.

Water Resources Management Authority Chairman Peter Kiilu said at least Sh2.4 billion is needed to clean the river.

Thousands of residents in Machakos, Kitui, Makeni and parts of Taita Taveta counties depend on the river for domestic and agricultural use.

Mr Kiilu said this in a letter to a non-governmental organisation that wants to partner with the Government in cleaning up the river to make the water safe for human consumption.

"We are very much ready and willing to partner with any stakeholder; be it local or foreign, to clean the historical river, which drains into the Indian Ocean," said Kiilu.

The chairman said the authority has been, for a long time, concerned with the continued deterioration of the water quality flowing into the river, prompting it to prepare a proposal for the restoration of the river's clean and safe water.

PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP

World Cares Association, an organisation dealing with water resources management activities and environment conservancy, wants to partner with the Government in cleaning the river to make its waters safe for human consumption.

The association's chairman, Tonny Wambua, said the joint venture would ensure the concerned communities are saved from using polluted water.

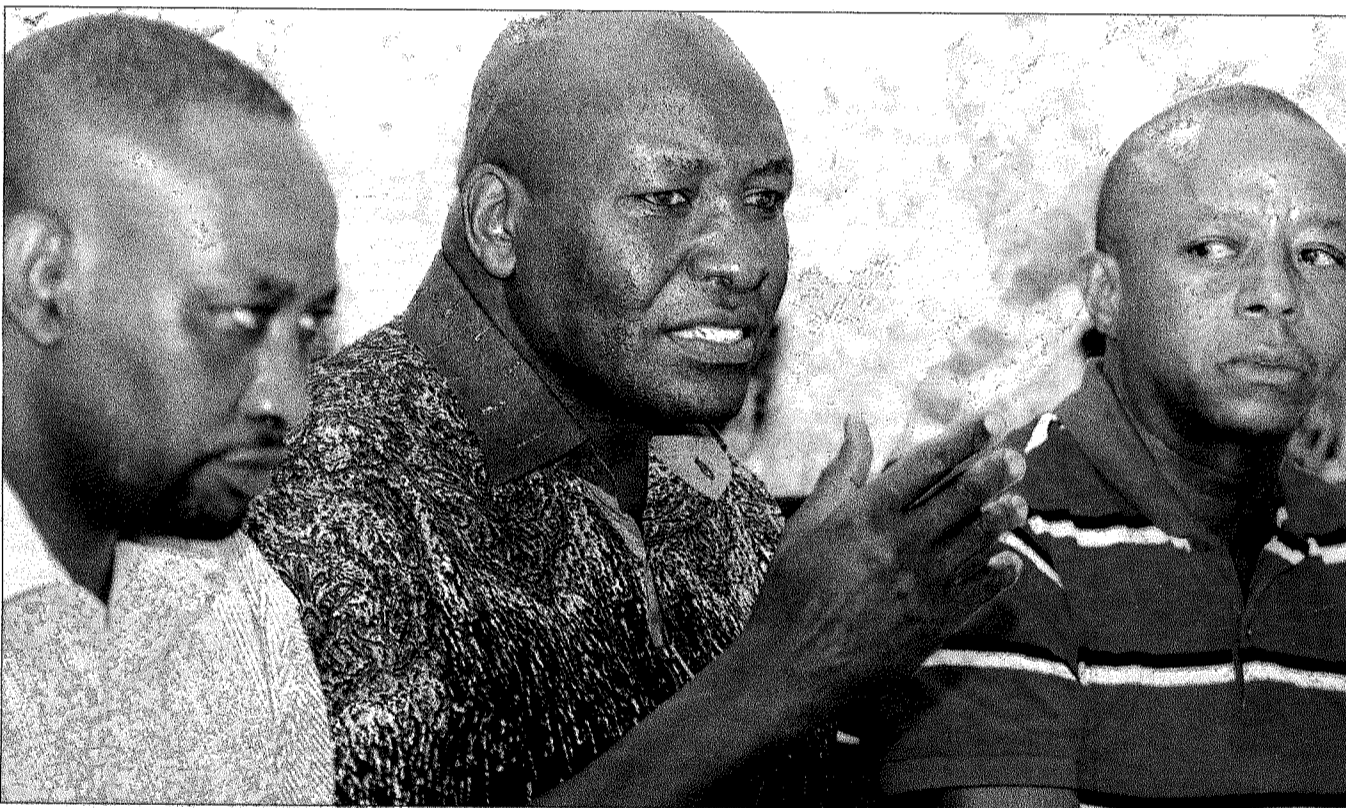
Mr Wambua said tests carried out on samples from users of the water showed many of them suffered from cholera, typhoid, and Hepatitis among many other diseases.

"The association, which is a member of WESCORD-WASH-Kenya, has been mobilising and engaging residents of Machakos County living along the river in cleaning it awaiting the major boost from the national government," he said.

Mwala Community Health Workers and Ndeini Water Users Association are involved in the cleaning.

Meat agency lays off 119

Fisheries PS Andrew Tuimur (centre) addresses an inter-ministerial committee at the Mombasa Beach Hotel, yesterday. He said Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) had sent home 119 workers in its staff rationalisation plan, which was implemented alongside the Sh1.8 billion modernisation plan. With him are KMC Managing Commissioner Joseph Learamo (left) and Chairman Taraiya ole Koros. (PHOTO: GIDEON MAUNDU/STANDARD)



State gives 74 motorcycles to chiefs

TAITA TAVETA

By RENSON MNYAMWEZI

The national government has distributed 74 motorcycles to chiefs and their assistants. This is meant to boost the fight against illicit brews and drugs abuse in the county.

Taita Taveta County Commissioner Josephine Onunga said there was widespread sale and consumption of illicit brews and drugs despite the Government's efforts to facilitate the administrators to stem the vices.

"We have to be in a county where the law is obeyed. The county needs to be free from alcoholism to attract investors both local and international," said Ms Onunga yesterday.

The commissioner warned administrators abetting the sale of illicit brews and drugs, saying their days were numbered.

"The administrators should not have any excuse in the fight against crime now. The Government has given them motorbikes and enough resources to enhance their performance," she said.

Onunga said illicit liquor and

drugs were responsible for the rising cases of defilement, rape, incest and breakdown in marriages.

The commissioner had convened a meeting with administrators so that they can air their grievances.

"I have called the meeting to understand exactly what is happening on the ground and the challenges the administrators are facing," Onunga told the press after the meeting.

She as accompanied by Mwatate Deputy County Commissioner Shufaa Mwijuma and her Taveta and Voi counterparts Henry Wafula and Joseph Lewa.

University researcher named new director of research institute

MOMBASA

By PHILIP MWAKIO

The Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRRI) has a new director.

Prof James Murithi Njiru was named as the new head of the Mombasa-based research organisation on July 1.

According to a statement from KMFRRI, Prof Njiru's last working sta-

tion was at the Kisii University.

He started his career as an assistant research officer at KMFRRI in 1989 where he rose to a senior research officer before he moved to Moi University in 2005 as a lecturer.

From 2012, he was an associate professor at University of Eldoret.

He moved to Kisii University in 2014 where he held various responsibilities.

He has published many journals and also has authored 35 children books.