

Heroin haul suspect loses freedom plea

By PAMELA CHEPKEMEI and NICHOLAS NGOLYO

A Kenya Airways hostess accused of trafficking in heroin worth Sh27.8 million has been denied bond.

High Court Judge Msagha Mboghola yesterday dismissed a bail application by Ms Priscilla Jemutai Kolongei.

She will now remain in custody until her trial on May 2.

The judge said Ms Kolongei was likely to abscond if freed.

The suspect had moved to the High Court after being denied bail by Kibera Senior Principal Magistrate Wanjiru Karanja last week.

The prosecution had opposed her bail application, saying Ms Kolongei faced a serious charge and was likely to escape.

He said the police had been tipped that Ms Kolongei would abscond if released.

The suspect, he added, had been arrested with the largest haul ever of heroin at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

The offence was bailable but the courts could deny a suspect bail depending on the seriousness of the offence.

The prosecution cited 17 cases involving a drug trafficker who absconded on being freed.

The trial could be concluded within two weeks because the witnesses, who were police officers and Customs officials, were readily available.

Lawyer Cliff Ombeta for Ms Kolongei assured the court that his client was willing to adhere to the bail terms.

Ms Kolongei, he added, was not planning to abscond and was ready to report to police every day if ordered to do so.

Congolese musician General Defao Matumona Lulendo, who is facing Sh594,400 fraud charges, was ordered by the court to pay the money before the hearing on May 9.

"Have you done anything to get the money yet? You told the court that you would perform in Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa and Nakuru," the magistrate reminded the musician.

Defao, through an interpreter, said he could not perform because he was unwell.

Lawyer Cecil Miller had earlier produced doctors' letters to confirm the musician is on treatment and special diet.

The prosecution asked for two weeks for the court to be updated about any plans to get the money. But Defao asked that the case be mentioned after a month to enable him to raise money from his concerts.

The plea was granted.

Helping hand



Photo/ William Oeri
Ms Nancy Wangari, a Prisons member of staff, holds one of the 66 children taken to a Nairobi juvenile court yesterday. Mr Tortein Dale, a volunteer from Norway, also speaks to three-year-old Kelvin Muriithi.

Kanu moves to avert rows

By NATION Reporter

Kanu yesterday sought to end fighting over the control of offices after the merger.

Kanu secretary-general Raila Odinga ordered party officials to start an "integration exercise" ahead of grassroots elections.

This must be completed within two weeks, he said.

In a circular to all branches, Mr Odinga directed Kanu MPs to

co-ordinate the integration in their constituencies.

"Where there are no Kanu MPs, the headquarters may facilitate the meetings so that the integration may be orderly and transparent," he said.

The resolution about the integration was reached on March 18 during the Kasarani joint delegates conference.

Kanu and former NDP officials have since then been locked in wrangles. Meanwhile, Kanu grassroots election in Kisumu will be held this month.

BRIEFS

Fishermen to mark Lake Victoria day

Fishermen in Busia, Bondo and Siaya districts will tomorrow celebrate the Lake Victoria Day, amid complaints of growing insecurity in the lake and falling fish prices. They have planned a two-day meeting at the Marenga beach in Port Victoria. The celebrations come at a time when the government has imposed stringent fishing regulations that have elicited protests. The fete is organised by the Uhai Lake Forum and hosted by the Bunyala Fisherfolk Community.

Hospital seeks kin of accident victim

Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret is seeking the relatives of a road accident victim who has been receiving treatment in the institution for more than a year. Hospital spokesman Khisa Mbotela said Ms Damaris Wamaitha was admitted to the hospital on March 20, 2001, after being hit by a car. He said the teenager has since been moved to the hospital's mental care unit. The hospital can be contacted on telephone number 0321-32119.

Expired drugs seized at mission hospital

Expired drugs valued at Sh1.5 million were yesterday confiscated from a mission hospital. Gucha District Health Management team raided Tabaka Mission Hospital following allegations that expired drugs were being prescribed to patients. The team was led by area health boss, Dr Dorothy Mutie. She said some drugs, which expired in 1998, were still in stores.