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Ex-varsity dons tumble on the political platform

By Oduor Ouma and Simon Alubbe

The aspirations of nearly all Kenya's university dons turned politicians have been dashed as they are confronted by the reality that the stage belongs to the more politically sure-footed.

Attempts at political careers by eminent scholars including Professors Katama Mkangi, Ouma Muga, Wangari Maathai, Kivutha Kibwana and Maria Nzomo have not been very successful.

Whereas politics has been described as the art of the possible, the jolt to politicians with eminent academic credentials was further recently felt when Prof Saitoti's seemingly predestined route to the top was thwarted, at least for now.

The Vice-President of the Republic of Kenya never knew what hit him on March 18, at the Kasarani Gymna-



Prof. George Saitoti

sium. Otherwise he would not have campaigned until the wee hours of the morning for one of the four Vice Chairman's slots in the merged Kanu-NDP parties, New Kanu.

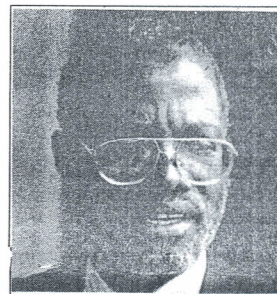
When the former mathematics lecturer realized that his name was not even featuring in the list of candidates released to the delegates of the two parties that morning, he com-



Prof. Wangari Maathai

mitted the indefensible: he reportedly argued with the President.

According to media reports, President Moi admonished his Vice-President telling him: "Professor shut up! If your name is not on the list, it is not on the list." (KANU leaders have since denied this version of the event.) Thereafter, a humbled V-P told delegates that he was not offering him-

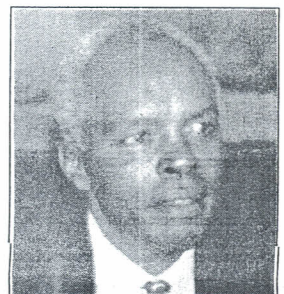


Prof. Anyang Nyong'o

self for any of the slots to be contested. But he did not stop there.

"I know there are many of you who wanted me to contest, is that not so?" he asked delegates. Then he waxed lyrical and pronounced, "There comes a time when the nation comes before the individual... but one day, I will be proved right."

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Prof. Kivutha Kibwana



An expressive Prof. Crispus Kiamba, the new Vice-Chancellor in his office last week.

New varsity fee structure coming

By Kakai Karani and Gloria Ndiritu

The University of Nairobi is set for a major review of the fees charged for all its programmes, says the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Professor Crispus Makau Kiamba.

The details of the new fees structure which have been approved by the government will be released soon.

In an exclusive interview with *The Anvil*, the Vice-Chancellor set out his agenda and vision for the UON. Speaking on a range of issues, Prof. Kiamba reiterated the central role played by parallel programmes also known as the module II programmes in the development of the University. Asked to comment on claims that module II programmes had lowered academic standards he was categorical in allaying such fears:

"Module II programmes are as important as module I. Module I programmes are as important as module II."

At the same time the VC noted that the parallel programmes had broadened the availability of higher education to Kenyans "who were not able to go through the very narrow gates of the regular programmes". He further noted that money generated from parallel programmes has helped in improving facilities for all students. "So long as they meet the minimum eligibility criteria", said he, "they qualify to study in this university".

The VC acknowledged that the parallel programmes posed problems of equity, but was quick to add that this was not unique to Kenya and was a universal problem. The Government therefore would continue to play a key role in ensuring that funding was available to meet part of the cost.

In a candid admission, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the poor facilities at the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library. He, however, said

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NEWS

Varsity dons tumble in politics

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An earlier indicator of Saitoti's political future came when the post of Vice-President remained vacant for 14 months. In dismissing the "power vacuum theory" that informed the subsequent clamour for the position of V-P to be filled, President Moi asserted: "I will soon name a Vice-President so that we can see if your grumbling and fear will cease." Then even more sarcastically, he added: "Even if I appoint a V-P, the number of *sufurias* of ugali you cook in your homes will not increase."

But the fate that befell Dr. Josephat Karanja and Prof. Philip Mbithi before him should have alarmed Prof. Saitoti about just how precarious his position could be made to look.

Indeed, few people can rival Dr. Karanja's record in public service. At the young age of 30, the man became Kenya's first High Commissioner to Britain. Two years later, he was accredited to the Vatican as well, until 1970. He then became the first indigent principal of the Nairobi University College, then a constituent college of the University of East Africa. He held the position for two years before rising to be the first Vice-Chancellor of an autonomous University of Nairobi.

When President Moi announced his cabinet after the 1988 General Election, Dr. Karanja, who had only been in Parliament for three years, replaced Mr. Mwai Kibaki as Vice-President. In retrospect, this relative inexperience did not prepare Dr. Karanja well for the intrigues of the office.

Events moved fast. Political meetings countrywide condemned an unnamed politician whom they claimed demanded people to kneel before him. Amid all these, President Moi told a rally in Siaya that he was the head of state at all times, even when out of the country. He added that he had never found it necessary to appoint an acting president.

This further fuelled calls for the unnamed politician to resign. And although it was evident that fingers pointed at Dr. Karanja, the V-P maintained a studious silence. He ignored the issue until he was named at a rally in Kiambu, and the matter brought to Parliament.

Exit Dr. Karanja, enter Prof. Philip Mbithi. He was catapulted from the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Nairobi to Harambee House to become the Head of the Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet. This was at a time when the country was going through the traumatic transition from single party politics to multi-partyism.

The civil service needed to evolve into an impartial institution serving Kenyans at large, whether in opposition or in government. But a few months into his appointment, Prof. Mbithi dismissed the concept of impartiality as misplaced.

"How can one be neutral in implementing government policies, when it is those policies that differentiate the ideologies of different parties?" he asked a seminar for civil servants in May 1992.

Such policies were later to shock him in March 1996. The news of his



Prof. Philip Mbithi

removal was, as usual, announced over the KBC Radio Bulletin at 1 p.m.

Another example of the precarious nature of politics for dons is Prof. Ouma Muga. At the peak of his political career Muga, a professor in Fluvial Geomorphology (the study of the impact of water and rain on shaping the surface of the earth and its resource base), was the MP for Rangwe and an Assistant Minister.

In 1989, Prof Muga was expelled from KANU within a week of accompanying President Moi to the Ozone Layer Conference in London. It was claimed that the scholar had boasted of writing the President's speech which was well received at the conference. Prof Muga lost his parliamentary and government positions. Although he became an MP in the multi-party era, Prof Muga is today a shadow of his former self.

This jinx for university dons in politics apparently has no gender bias. Prof Wangari Maathai, has not been spared either. A professor of Veterinary Anatomy, Maathai has scored a long list of credits in the environmental conservation arena. On the political front though her 1997 presidential bid was nipped in the bud even before she was taken as a serious contender. Worse still, Prof Maathai could not even win the Mathira parliamentary seat. Her campaign to unite opposition political parties in 1992 didn't bear much either.

And so the story goes on. Prof Katama Mwangi, a sociologist, is yet to realise his goal of winning a parliamentary seat. Prof Maria Nzomo found politics a hostile neighbourhood where she is yet to make an impact.

While Prof Kivutha Kibwana and fellow academic Dr. Willy Mutunga have succeeded, to a certain degree, in the area of political activism none of them can claim significant political trophies. Prof Kibwana's National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) has run out of the steam that catapulted it to great heights in 1997.

Prof Kibwana, once touted as a possible compromise opposition presidential candidate, today seems undecided on how to create an impact on the political scene. At one time, he supported the Ufungamano led constitution review initiative. When a majority of the forum voted to join the parliamentary committee on constitution review, Prof Kibwana cried foul and opted out of the process. Recently, media reports have linked Prof Kibwana to various opposition alliances only for the professor to deny the links.

Kiamba: Parallel courses make varsity education accessible

Anvil: There have been claims that Module II programmes have contributed to the lowering of academic standards as well as favouring the rich thus causing problems of equity. What would be your reaction to this?

VC: Module I and Module II programmes are equally important and I am stating that deliberately. As a national and public university, we have such a huge responsibility to provide education to Kenyans or indeed anybody else from the region or the world who can come and pay for that education.

As a result of this we also have a duty to broaden the availability of education. If we have succeeded in broadening the availability of education through module II then we are going towards the right direction. As you will recall, module I, also referred to as regular, was really [confined] to government supported students. Of course the regular students pay a little (less) but a major part of their tuition is supported by the government. Module II pay the entire cost of education. I don't think we are yet charging market rates. Recently, we formed a committee to review the total fees and other charges in the university; to look again the charges for all the services that we render to our students.

Module II opens doors to students who were not able to go through that very narrow gate of module I. It opens opportunities to Kenyans out there who either wanted a second degree, wanted a different degree, wanted to advance their education. And they must meet the minimum eligibility criteria. So long as they meet the criteria they qualify to study in this university. That is why I started by saying module II is as important as module I. These are all legitimate students of this university and we must give them equal quality education.

The coming of module II and all the related happenings in terms of fund-raising, in terms of income generation has obviously assisted this university to put up structures. From that point of view, module II has assisted to improve the facilities for higher education. You cannot argue that it has lowered standards. Also module II has brought some motivation on the part of the teacher - the



The University of Nairobi has seen phenomenal expansion in the last five years. Professor Crispus Kiamba, the newly appointed VC shared with *The Anvil's* Gloria Ndiritu (Pictured) and Kakai Karani some of the challenges and the way forward.



Prof. Crispus Kiamba, Vice-Chancellor

lecturer. Part of the compensation to the lecturer comes from the module II directly. And we are having lecturers who are coming back when perhaps they were busy involved in other things.

From the point of view of standards, I think we have started improving standards and we are on the way to better standards.

Anvil: What about the issue of equity?

VC: The question of equity is an issue of concern. And that is a universal problem. The problem of providing education equitably is nothing unique to Kenya. Equity is an issue of concern and this where the government must always assist. One must charge for a good education. Those who can afford have an advantage. It is therefore important for our government to endeavour to support those who cannot support themselves. The issue of equity is a legitimate matter of concern. What is important however is that module II has broadened opportunities for Kenyans.

Anvil: The College of Education and External studies (CEES) at Kikuyu Campus is perhaps one of the critical colleges of the university. Given its mandate and the technological possibilities that Information Technology provides, don't you think the CEES could do more?

VC: As a university we have a responsibility to use information technology to reach Kenyans. If we don't do that we fail. This is a matter for the entire university, not Kikuyu alone.

Anvil: Students and staff alike claim that the University Library is not purchasing new books and other material on a regular basis and that it could do better.

VC: We could do a lot better. I agree. You recall we have had a lot of financial problems largely because of the way our undergraduate students are funded. But with the new programmes we are beginning to do a lot of things. We are able to purchase new acquisitions. We are also starting to use new technology to access libraries on the web. A number of websites are now available to students and staff at the main library.

Anvil: Are there specific plans to fully computerize the library by a certain point in time?

VC: No specific time. The university in general does not have a strategic plan. We have a number of related strategies and statements and development plans that deal with different things and one of the current challenges of my office is to ensure there is a coordinated process of preparing a strategic plan for the university which will address all ar-

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University loses top scholar

By Gloria Ndiritu



Prof. Barrack Kola

The Department of Physics UoN has lost a renowned scholar, Professor Barrack Oliech Kola, who passed away after battling with a long illness.

Born 46 years ago, he joined the University in 1976 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Physics in 1979. He later obtained a Masters of Science in Physics from the same University in 1981.

Professor Kola obtained his Ph.D

from the University of York in Britain in 1986.

Between 1987 and 1996, he worked in the University as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the department of Physics. He later became the Chairman of the same department until his death on March 31, 2002.

He will be remembered for having initiated in the Department of Physics, the diploma in Physics and the Bachelor of Science in Instrumentation.

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Parallel courses accessible -VC

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areas of interest - not only in IT but with respect to all the programmes.

Anvil: Gender equity has been described as one of the challenges that the UON must address. What are the current ratios between male and female amongst the teaching/student community? What actions are planned to provide a sense of equity in the academic and administrative structure of the UON?

VC: On average about 30 per cent of the student population are female. Gender inequity is an issue of concern. One of the very interesting results of the module II programmes has been improved gender equity. You almost have 50 to 50. We have a moral obligation to support gender equity. It is indeed our duty and obligation to encourage and support women in all areas.

Anvil: What was your reaction on being appointed VC?

VC: To be appointed VC is a unique opportunity. It is an appointment that one must never take for granted, whatever the criteria used. It is a unique opportunity to serve the university and country. The appointment comes with incredible responsibility.

Anvil: What does your appointment mean for the UON?

VC: Difficult to tell. I am not a stranger in the management of this university.

Anvil: What keeps you going on a day-to-day basis?

VC: That is a difficult one. You want what you do on a daily basis to make a difference to somebody somewhere, to our staff and students. University decision-making is a corporate effort, but from the VC's point view to provide effective leadership that is categorical, to hold systems together, to jerk the system. The rest we leave to our Maker. Our Maker knows the best for all of us.

We deserve better pay, University lecturers say

By Lucy W. Kinyanjui

University of Nairobi dons are dissatisfied with their current salary structure, an Anvil investigation has revealed.

According to the Public Universities Salaries Review of 1997, the top earning point for an Assistant Lec-

turer is Ksh 19,055, a lecturer Ksh 25,580, a Senior Lecturer Ksh 28,820, an Associate Professor Ksh 33,380 while a Professor is entitled to a top point of Ksh 39,970.

Principals are no better off. A Campus Principal, for instance, has a top earning point of Ksh 46,430, while a Deputy Vice-Chancellor can only rise up to Ksh 48,170. The Vice-Chan-

cellor's top point is 52,280. There is no doubt that these salaries are matters of not just personal but national concern.

According to Mr Albert Manyora of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, the situation is untenable and, unless reviewed, will have far reaching consequences on the long-term national human resource capacity.

Mr Manyora calls for a broad-based review of salaries in the public sector to remove inequities and imbalances. He cautions against creating 'special breeds' within the civil service pay structure where some cadres are treated as special and others as ordinary.

A lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Mr Jackson Wafula, deplored the huge imbalance between a lecturer's pay and that of a Member of Parliament. In his view, it is difficult to justify the difference when all an MP requires as a minimum qualification is some proficiency in Kiswahili and English. Yet an MP, he pointed out, takes home a half a million shillings.

Mr Wafula further called for a review of the allocation formula for money generated from module II programmes. At the moment, 65 per cent of the income is retained by the university while 35 per cent is used to pay service providers including the academic staff. He proposed a fifty-fifty allocation formula.

The University administration is not blind to the issue however. A Centre for International Programmes and Linkages is to be set up shortly to enhance collaboration between university staff and external institutions, says Mr Kimaita Kirimania, the Personal Assistant to the VC.

The Centre will open up opportunities for university teaching staff to network and improve their income and academic credentials. The University Council has also made fresh proposals to Treasury regarding the house allowance issue, Mr Kirimania added.



The Chancellor, President Daniel arap Moi, confers power to read and do all that appertains ... to a Ph.D graduand at a past ceremony.

Varsity steps up security

By David Ndung'u

Rampant robberies have led to heightened security measures at the University of Nairobi's Chiromo Campus.

Over the last few years, Chiromo has been known for all types of theft, ranging from office equipment to motor vehicles. Partly to blame is the strategic positioning of the institution—a link between Westlands and the Town Centre.

"For many years, motorists have used the road via the campus to beat the slow traffic on Uhuru Highway," says Mr. George Wafula, a senior security officer at Chiromo.

Mr. Wafula says that the move appeared harmless at first, but was actually a breeding-ground for unscrupulous individuals who used "our gesture of goodwill to do all sorts of evil."

To stem the menace, thorough security checks are now in place to determine the authenticity and motives of all motorists driving into the campus. Three gates manned by security guards on a 24-hour basis have been put up for this purpose.

And the measures are bearing fruits: "I am happy that cases of robbery at Chiromo have become a thing of the past," observed Mr. Wafula.

Headed that prior to these steps, vehicles and computers had disappeared in very mysterious circumstances. "You'd park your car early to find it missing three hours later," he said.

The introduction of stickers and gate passes have made it easier to monitor movement. At the same time, contends Mr. Wafula, there has been a lull in student violence.

Students who spoke to *The Anvil* lauded the move, but wondered why it had taken the university so long to tackle insecurity. Cases of theft were prevalent in the media, greatly tarnishing the institution's image, they said.

Varsity loses top scientist

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tation and Microprocessor Technology for self-sponsored students. It is this initiative that the rest of the University emulated to come up with the now popular parallel programmes.

Professor Kola, was also an active member of a number of professional bodies, namely, Kenya Physical Science, Kenya National Council for Science and Technology; Physical Science specialists committee, and the International Center for Theoretical Physics.

He also coordinated a number of projects notably the UK-funded Microcomputer Project and the Industrial Electronics Unit at the University between 1988 and 2002.

He was an external examiner at Maseno University and at National University of Lesotho.

He is survived by a widow, Mrs Adhiambo Kola and four children Philip, Betty, Diana and Franklin.

KU launches novel pre-varsity programme

By Miringu Waweru

Kenyatta University has launched a pre-university programme. The first batch of students is set to begin their classes in April this year.

The programme is designed for students who may have attained the minimum university entry requirements but did not meet the desired cluster points for admission in the programmes of their choice. It is also designed to cater for the borderline KCSE cases to improve their chances of admission to the university.

The programme targets students with an overall minimum of C- in KCSE or its equivalent. In addition, the candidate must have a minimum of C [plain] or its equivalent in all the subjects required in one's area of interest.

Although initially conceived un-



Prof. George Eshiwani

der the auspices of the African Virtual University [AVU], Kenyatta University, the programme will essentially be administered by KU's School for Continuing Education.

Upon completion, successful stu-

dents will be eligible for admission into the university's regular and open learning programmes. This will be in competition with their KCSE counterparts.

The programme will be offered on a part-time and full-time basis for three and two semesters respectively. Students may also opt to study through the virtual mode at the KVVU Ltd. and its centres, or through the face-to-face mode at designated centres throughout the country.

Lauding the move as visionary a senior administrator at the varsity, who declined to be named, expressed fears that the move may be taken as another direct affront to the Joint university Admissions Board [JAB] by KU.

"The move may certainly not go down well with KU's counterparts at the Admissions' Board," noted the

administrator.

The Board comprises the vice-chancellors of all the six public universities and is currently headed by Dr. Frederick Onyango of Maseno University. JAB is charged with harmonising the admissions procedures of students entering public universities.

KU's move will no doubt bring back to mind last year's controversy when the university was alleged to have dumped JAB. Despite the criticism that the move may elicit in some quarters, KU has distinguished itself as the most innovative of all the public universities, having recently abolished all its faculties and replaced them with three schools in a move that was described by Prof. Eshiwani as aimed at devolving power from the senate to the schools.

EDITORIAL

Industrial unrest threatens our socio-economic fabric

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) gave the Government up to April 30 to settle the long pending teachers' pay dispute. Dreading a strike by the over 180,000 Knut members, the Government quickly formed a committee to re-negotiate the deal.

Predictably, Knut cried foul thereafter. The committee, which includes top Knut officials, was apparently formed without any reference to the Union. Knut Secretary-General, Francis Ngang'a, dismissed the Government's efforts as "unacceptable and illegal."

Indeed, five years ago, the Government awarded teachers a 200 percent pay increase. The package, to be implemented in five phases, saw the government renege after only the first phase. A wage bill of more than Ksh. 90 billion, the Government reckons, is simply unaffordable.

We can't fault the Government for being broke, but we smell deviousness in signing an agreement one has no intention to honour. Did the Government sign that agreement for mere political expediency? What will prevent it from taking teachers for another five-year ride?

The Government's case is clearly worsened by the fact that teachers are not the only lot threatening with industrial action. The air traffic controllers were dismissed when they went on strike early this month. And whereas the nurses and paramedics have called off their strike, this is only temporary. A solution to their grievances is yet to be realized.

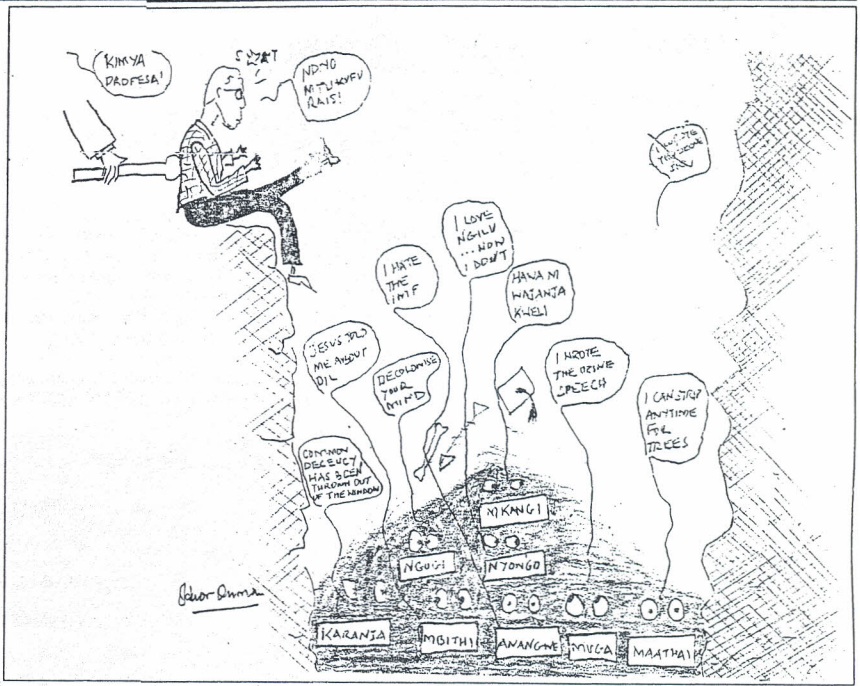
Similarly, the staff of public universities last September threatened to boycott duties unless discrepancies in their salary and allowance packages were sorted out. That threat still looms large as nothing was done to address the grievances.

Perhaps what we are witnessing is a culmination of the sense of inequity in government service, particularly over the last decade. The Government has progressively created numerous semi-autonomous entities within the civil service offering superior employment packages. There are all sorts of "Commissions", "Services" and "Units" to handle tendering, corruption, parliament, laws, communication - the list is long. Their much higher pay packages are bound to attract resentment from their less endowed counterparts.

Currently the government has sanctified inordinate perks for parliamentary staff, medics and permanent secretaries. Ironically, this is the same Government whose singsong has been that there is no money to increase salaries of the rank and file. This argument is contradicted by the colossal awards for the top echelons in the civil service.

Whenever disputes occur, which is often, the Government's intransigence in resolving the issues indicate that crucial national matters are guided by political convenience. This is dangerous. The Government risks a complete breakdown, not just of morale, but of the civil service itself.

Needless to say, the cadre of government workers agitating for better pay will grow by the day. Consequently, we cannot gloss over issues involving so many professions in the hope that the issues will go away. We believe that issues can only be solved through the comprehensive review of salaries for all public servants and the creation of a proper wage guidelines policy.



Fighting terrorism need not equal support for the West

By Oduor Ouma

British and German spy planes are in Mombasa. Five of them. The official line is that they are spying off the East African coast to track down remnants of al Qaeda. But the fearsome line is that they are seeking out terrorist cells in Somalia.

Meaning, that an attack on Kenya's north easterly neighbour is imminent. Result? A wave of refugees, some with guns, into Kenya. Plus the fact that this particular neighbour may never forgive Kenya for offering bases to their attackers.

When the US and British missiles started to reign in Afghanistan, Kenya's position was already clear. Indeed, after US President George Bush gave the people of the world an ultimatum - "You're either with us, or you're with the terrorists" - President Moi took to the streets.

For the first time in his presidency, the Kenyan President, who among other positions, is also the chancellor of all public universities, lead demonstrators in a protest march in support of the US-led fight against terrorism.

It is a good thing for Kenya to register wholehearted support for this fight. After all, Kenyans lost 246 lives in the 1998 terrorist bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi.

Some reservations about taking sides in the fight are, however, in order. As Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe once put it, "a toad does not jump about during the day for nothing." Similarly, terrorism is its causes.

The West's failure - nay, refusal - to accept that they share planet Earth with fellow human beings is historical. The West has often displayed a most naked greed for other people's natural resources. In a sense, they have preached water but drunk wine.

They have remained indifferent to the suffering in the Third World.

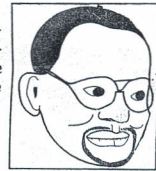
Quite unwittingly then, the West has systematically nurtured jealousy, bitterness, grief, anger and counter terrorism. Behaviour begets behaviour, and it is naive to imagine that the terrorists of September 11 were reacting to no action at all on the part of the US.

The breeding grounds for these terrorists may well have been laid out in Cambodia, Korea or Vietnam. These countries boast millions of ghosts who perished at the hands of American soldiers.

Alternatively, the terrorists could be the offspring of the 175,000 Lebanese killed in 1982 by the US backed Israelis; or the siblings of all those Lebanese still dying resisting the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Yet again, the terrorists are possible relatives and friends of the 200,000 Iraqis killed in Operation Desert Storm.

Perhaps, still, they were the children of the millions who died in Panama, Angola, the Dominican Republic, Somalia, Zaire (now DRC), Haiti, Chile, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, El Salvador, South Africa - you can't possibly exhaust the list of terrorists, dictators, and genocidists that America has armed and bankrolled.

It is perfectly conceivable, furthermore, that the terrorists America is busy hunting were actually bred in America itself. As the case of the unrepentant American Timothy McVeigh amply demonstrated, even an American can harbour a murderous grudge against the American system. Murderous enough to plant



a bomb in Oklahoma and kill 163 fellow Americans.

And it is also conceivable that the terrorists were bred in Britain. The Irish Republican Army is as terroristic as any.

Consequently, as Britain and America "smoke out" the elusive enemy, it behoves them to peer closer inward. Both President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair say the September 11 terrorists are "the enemies of freedom."

In his address to the US Congress, President Bush said: "Americans are asking, 'Why do they hate us?' They hate our freedoms - our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."

Yet it is difficult to believe that the terrorists simply hate Americans for hatred's sake. Could it be that it is the policies of successive American governments, packaged as "freedom", that they so passionately loath?

It is this climate of "freedom" that allows for capitalism, one by-product of which is an insatiable lust for other people's resources. And an arrogant disregard for other people's cultures. This is what has led to the rape of the Middle East for oil, while the US preserves its own.

This "freedom" allowed America to defend Kuwait against Iraqi invasion, yet looked the other way as 800,000 people die in Rwanda, simply because the tiny African country lacks oil resources.

Yes, this peculiar policy of "freedom" tends to perfect inequalities, even within America. It lets any one American amass billions of dollars while others sleep out in the cold, hungry and desolate and this is a sure recipe for terrorism.

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We invite letters from our readers on topics of their interest. Letters should be short and concise.

Before you disregard that condom, consider this . . .

By Stanely Oriaro

Over 170 heterosexual couples are issued with condoms by researchers in Rakai, Uganda. Unknown to themselves, some are HIV positive, some are not. Ten months later, typically having sex nine or ten times a month, 38 of the participants, who were not infected before, are infected.

At the University of Nairobi's Main Campus, Nicholas and Carole (not their real names) are admitted for Bachelor of Anthropology. They get together in a study group. A liking for each other ensues and within six months, romance hangs in the air.

However, only safe sex will do. Neither of them knows what the other has been through. At the beginning of the second academic year, it is just much more convenient and cheaper to share a room. What is the deterrent when they have only themselves and their love for each other to consult?

Three years down the line, Carole is three months pregnant and not happy. This is not the way things were meant to turn out. Nicholas, forever so committed to a relationship of a lifetime, does not think he is ready to be a father.

"I am ready to bear the responsibility alone", says Carole. "What scares me is that once I start attending the antenatal clinics I will be expected to take an HIV test. That is what I am not ready for. I don't know what Nicholas did when we were not together."

This is the nightmare of many a student. Forget the fear of turning positive at a pregnancy test, that remains the lot of many high school girls. That is not a problem here. It can easily be fixed. What is shattering is your counsellor telling you after a test that you are negative for Hepatitis B, your blood sugar level is normal and that long list of irrelevancies, but you are HIV....

What is happening to the condoms, Cds? Is the general population contracting HIV in spite of using them?



A woman with HIV/AIDS receives care in a hospital.

In a study carried out by Population Services International in Kenya (2001), only one in five men used a condom during their last sexual contact. In addition, the study revealed that while knowledge of condoms is high, less than one half of men and women reported that condoms protect against HIV.

So *The Anvil* set out to find if the results of these studies could be corroborated by a cross-section of the University of Nairobi students. "Condoms are too readily available; every kiosk around here sells them," said Diana. That hardly explains the rising AIDS figures. We don't dismiss her, not yet anyway. This would be tantamount to failing on our duty. Diana, a staunch Christian, has the

feeling that the condom publicity is misguided. "The more condoms you avail, the easier it becomes for people to engage in sex."

This student confirmed our fears that comrades could be using condoms only to stop later without knowing the sero status of their sexual partners. "People use protection at the beginning. Shortly they are cohabiting. Without realising it, they are engaging in unprotected sex."

"Do their partners become seronegative now if they were positive before?" posed Diana. That, simply put, was the cause of the problem. All approaches should take into consideration that condoms are used but never consistently enough to make a

Turn to page 8

Drugs: A menace that just won't go

By Joel Ng'etich

Each year, billions of shillings earned from the flourishing narcotics trade filters into the Kenyan economy.

Emboldened by the super profits, traffickers of Kenyan origin behind this lucrative industry, anti-narcotics police sources say, are evolving into a ruthless, unstoppable machine.

Recently, the anti-narcotics police based at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) arrested a Kenya Airways hostess suspected to have been trafficking 27.8 kilogrammes of heroin valued at Kshs. 50 million. It was described as one of the largest haul by Kenyan police.

It is alleged that the lucrative but illegal business is anchored by a well-knit syndicate of police and customs officers based at JKIA. Some West African nationals based in the country are said to be behind the syndicate. They then enlist local agents among them some airline employees.

The Deputy Commandant of Kenya Airports Police Unit, Mr. Jonathan Koskei revealed that the police have made several seizures of drugs. The last one was in April 2000 during which heroin was seized in the cargo area. Koskei said Kenya is one of several African countries which have become a haven for drug traffickers.

According to Mr. Koskei, drug trafficking is a complicated business. Traffickers use deceptive methods of concealment. "Obviously it's difficult to imagine what method of concealment they will use tomorrow. Nobody could imagine that an employee of such renowned organisation could engage in such an illegal activity while fully aware of the consequences," he said.

The government established the Anti-narcotics unit in 1983 to deal with drugs offences. The unit has a strength of about 100 specially trained officers deployed in 27 stations in the country. The unit is also engaged in creating public awareness on dangers of drug abuse. The unit liaises with the media in its campaigns.

Presently, drug abuse in schools is not well documented and therefore the exact extent of the problem cannot be determined. The lectures in schools have been conducted mostly in Central Province for head teachers, boarding and counselling masters. "The drug control masterplan recommends that drug abuse awareness should be incorporated in school curriculum to inform students and youth on the dangers of drugs," Mr. Kaguthi said.

The fight against drug abuse and trafficking is impeded by inadequate laws. City Lawyer, Chris Opande, says The Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act is contentious as it does not adequately make provisions on how to handle someone found in the possession of or trafficking drugs. Mr Opande says that some substances listed as drugs in certain communities are used as traditional medicine in others while some are used in the production of conventional medicine. He advises the network used in tracking down those involved in the drug



Mr. Kaguthi

business to extend to the navy in order to cut off high seas as a trafficking route.

Mr. Joseph Kaguthi, former Nairobi Provincial Commissioner and co-ordinator of the National Agency for the Campaign Against Drugs Abuse defines drugs as substances that destroy life, health or the productive life of a person. He says drugs are natural synthetic chemicals that can affect the body, mind and behaviour of a person.

Substance abuse and addiction can seriously affect one's life in school, at work and in relationships. 30 per cent of academic problems stem from alcohol misuse. Studies show that performance in school goes down as alcohol consumption increases. An average student who has one drink a day registers only average marks.

People with substance abuse problems miss more work days, are less productive, have more problems with their bosses and make more mistakes in their work. They are also likely to suffer job injuries.

Multi-million superstar Whitney Houston has fallen prey to the joint. She has severally been caught trafficking drugs. She recently appeared on stage looking frail and unwell.

Alcohol goes directly into the bloodstream physically affecting the whole body. Health problems caused by alcohol include hangovers, weight gain, high blood pressure, liver disease and respiratory failure. It may also lead to alcoholism.

Alcoholism is a condition to which some people seem predisposed. It puts one at risk of other health problems and it can shorten one's life by more than 10 years. Alcoholism cannot be cured but it can be treated. Since drug abuse is against the law, it is largely secret. This makes it difficult to assess its prevalence but some estimates put it at 48 million people world-wide who abuse drugs. Through research it has been established that 5 to 10 per cent of emergency cases at a general hospital are related to drug abuse.

There is a serious need to recognise that alcohol and drug abuse are major public health problems. This would create the necessary impetus towards prevention. Individuals must be made to exercise their duty in preventing illness and promoting good health. At the primary stage, prevention should be aimed at reduction of interest in alcohol and other drugs thereby limiting their demand.

Tips on safeguarding your mobile

By Simon Alubbe

The mobile phone is no doubt a popular utility that has eased the way we communicate and interact. But this popularity has been a boon for thieves.

We talked to victims of mobile phone theft, shop-dealers and mobile phone users in general. Here are some tips to safeguard your set.

• If you drive, always keep your mobile phone out of sight and reach. Street boys and other thieves are ever on the lookout for easy prey especially when the driver's attention is fixed on traffic. Also, ensure that the doors and windows to the car are securely locked.

• When you enter phone numbers into your address book, always prepare a backup copy of all your numbers. Albert Odera suffered when his mobile was stolen and he lost 100 contacts. "The most frustrating bit," he says, "was losing the numbers of

people very close to me and having to ask for contacts all over again."

• Be careful when you next take your car for a wash. Timothy Weso had his phone stolen from under the driver's seat by the man he had contracted to wash the car. Repeated visits to trace the man were fruitless as the fellow had shifted his operating base.

• Once you purchase your handset, change the Personal Identification Number (PIN) from the default '0000' to a number known only to you, and one you can easily recall. While this may not prevent your phone from being stolen, you can at least breathe easy if your phone is stolen, knowing the thief would not access your address book. He may also be unable to use your SIM card. (A number of mobile repair shops provide SIM card unlocking services.)

• David, an on-line writer, ad-

vises that phone numbers in the address book should be disguised to prevent misuse by thieves. "If the guy stole from you," poses David, "what is to prevent him from using your phone numbers to his advantage?" David says someone else trying to use his address book would find it difficult deciphering it. He tells of a friend of his who lost a phone. When this friend got home later in the day, he found out that the thief had called his wife. Fortunately, no loss resulted from the experience.

• For those who own costly handsets, Joshua, a sales person at Express Automation, Westlands, advises: "Make sure you insure your phone. It may cost only about 1,000 bob a year." He adds that the expense is more than justified once someone loses a costly handset

• Finally, never answer a call in a way that would expose your handset and make you vulnerable to an attack.

FEATURES

Piecing economy together after protracted hostilities

By Stanley Oriaro

Eritrea is not always in the news. But Friday, March 22, 2002, both *Daily Nation* and *The East African Standard* carried front page photographs of a contingent of Kenyan Peacekeepers to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), KENBAT 7 celebrating their arrival at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport from Eritrea.

Nothing really special about that. Turkana was in the news too. The World Food Programme had just announced its plans to scale down food aid to Turkana District.

Through its spokesperson, Ms Laura Melo, WFP broke the sad news that the number of recipients of food aid would be reduced from 281,350 at the beginning of January to 147,847 at the end of the month.

Like Turkana, Eritrea has received wide news coverage before. In May 1988, this tiny country of four million people clashed over a border dispute with Ethiopia, a country of 60 million people, and eight times its size. A kind of David versus Goliath.

Bone of contention? An economically meaningless swathe of land stretching to about 100 km. Predictably, Eritrea lost.

But not before some 50,000 Eritreans had been killed and half a million others displaced to the Sudan, itself not famous for peace.

Eritrea, initially a province of Ethiopia until 1991, when Mengistu Haile Mariam was overthrown, got independence in 1993. That was under its current leader, Isaias Aferworki.

Five years on, Eritrea astounded many. Its economy

grew by 7 per cent, compared to Kenya's 0.3 percent over the same period. Investment flooded in, and fishing, tourism and trade looked bright. Then the war started. Then Eritrea joined the long list of African troubled spots that have very little to show for their existence.

It took the intervention of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to restore hope in the horn. Under this operation, 4200 soldiers would be deployed to the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia to ensure that none of the two former combatants violated the peace deal.

Hunger, war, and UN peace keepers, including Kenyan ones. That is all you ever got to read about Eritrea. Yet Eritrea is not all war and hunger. It is the only African country where you find thriving fish farming right in the middle of a desert.

On the west coast of the Red Sea - on a vast stretch of otherwise barren desert - some US\$ 27m and 20 years of effort has established a farm that uses sea water to raise crops. Under Prof. Carl Hodges, the project has come to represent the second invention of agriculture.

Unlike fresh water agriculture which integrates the breeding of animals and crop cultivation, sea water farming integrates the raising of sea food with the cultivation of crops.

To construct the farms, a huge channel was cut from the Red Sea. Three salt lakes hold the bulk of the fish and nurture mangroves. Shrimps are raised on circular brick and concrete trenches.

The salt lakes also irrigate the fields, finally draining into a park forested by a variety of mangroves. The park shelters innumerable species of flora and fauna and provides controlled grazing for domestic animals.

When carefully examined, many projects aimed at arresting desertification merely end up benefiting the population in the short run; the damages only becoming apparent later. However, this is likely not to be the case for the Eritrea project.

According to Prof. Hodges, the project is now preparing 2,500 hectares for field crops to provide "green relief". The project workers have already planted thousands of mangrove trees.

The mangrove forests absorb atmospheric carbon, helping in a small way to lessen global warming. The moist fields make the area more habitable to locals and tourists.

Building materials cost little; still, nothing goes to waste. The bricks are made on the farm. So is the food. The farm has its own food mill that makes feed for chicken. Waste from the fish and shrimps is used to fertilize the fields.

Camels are a common sight in the desert area but not so for cattle sheep and goats. However, fish skins just do fine to fill in for the would be scarcity of leather. After the fish are filleted, their skins are tanned while their bones and intestines go into the shrimp food.

The principle crop, seaphire, provides vegetable for use at the farm and for sale. A mature seaphire plant produces seeds that provide a fine edible oil and a high protein meal.

There is also a large collection of biomass used for animal fodder, particle board and fire bricks, a sort of firewood. Combinations of seaphire straw with fish and shrimp meal makes healthy food for domestic animals.

Initially, this project was just a scientific experiment. Through the years, it has turned into a major supplier of fish and shrimps to European markets.

At the beginning of the project, the University of Arizona injected 27 million US dollars into the project. 20 years later, the project is self-sustaining, providing food, raw materials and employment to a population that really is deserving.

Eritrea's project is the kind of news that those in our universities should read about; perhaps our scholars can replicate the project here. News about Eritrea's woes, to paraphrase the Chancellor, "...will not put more *ugali* on our dinner tables."



Youthful faces still free of wrinkles.

When wrinkle

By Joy Higiro

As a person ages, the skin cells divide more slowly, and the inner skin, or dermis, starts to thin.

Fat cells beneath the dermis begin to waste away. The underlying network of elastin and collagen fibres, which provides scaffolding for the surface layers, loosens and unravels. Skin loses its elasticity and when pressed, it no longer springs back to its initial position but instead sags and forms furrows.

The skin's ability to retain moisture diminishes, the sweat-and oil-secreting glands atrophy, depriving the skin of their protective water-lipid emulsions. As a consequence, the skin becomes dry and scaly.

The ability of the skin to repair itself diminishes with age, so wounds are slower to heal. Frown lines (those between the eyebrows) and crow's feet (lines that radiate from the corners of the eyes) appear to develop because of permanent small muscle contractions.

Habitual facial expressions also form characteristic lines, and gravity exacerbates the situation, contributing to the formation of jowls and drooping eyelids. (Eyebrows, surprisingly, move up as a person ages, possibly because of forehead wrinkles).

The best way to prevent skin damage is to avoid episodes of excessive sun exposure, especially during the hours of 10 am to 4 pm when sunlight pours down 80% of its daily UV dose.

Reflective surfaces, such as water, sand, concrete, and white-painted areas should be avoided. Clouds and haze are not protective, and in some cases may intensify UVB rays.

Ultraviolet intensity depends on the angle of the sun, not heat or brightness.

Currently, the computation of the ultraviolet index does not include the effects of variable surface reflection (eg, sand, water, or snow), atmospheric pollutants, or haze. Higher altitudes appear to reduce the time it takes to burn.

One study says, for example, that an average complexion burns at six minutes at 11,000 feet at noon compared to 25 minutes at sea

level in a temperate climate. Tanning beds provide most, some experts believe that a tanning salon are as dangerous as the sun.

Sunscreens are classified as organic or inorganic.

The organic types are referred to as sunscreens (chemicals) and inorganic (which contain zinc or titanium) used generously, they help prevent many aging skin conditions such as squamous cell cancers.

However, studies conflict. Sunscreens provide protection against skin cancers; some have even been associated with skin cancer.

A number of studies in people who wear sunscreen into believing that they are because they don't burn; the sun is safe, in fact, for skin cancer.

Some experts argue that applying enough sunscreen. Evidence indicates most people use only one quarter of the amount of sunscreen. Others believe that heavy use only encourages people to longer.

The inorganic sunscreens, prevent nearly all UV rays from reaching the skin and contain titanium dioxide. They are not absorbed.

Standard sunscreens are unattractive, but a more recent microfine zinc oxide (Z-Cot) and nearly as protective as Zinc oxide, may be more titanium oxide.

The bottom line is not that avoid sunscreens or sunblocks should always use them in other sun-protective measures.

Any organic chemical sunscreen contains a wide spectrum of UV



A contingent of Kenyan Peacekeepers to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), KENBAT 7, pause for a photo on arrival at the JKI from Eritrea.



When the wrinkles finally have a field day.

Where beauty, brains meet

Compiled by
Joy Higirow

First impressions stay longer than one imagines. You are the first person your visitor meets so make sure the first impression they receive is a good one.

YOUR CARRIAGE

Your posture is of prime importance so you must practice moving gracefully until it becomes natural to you. If you carry yourself well, others will notice. If you walk as though you are successful, people will take your success for granted and this will improve your chances of becoming successful.

Considerable self-discipline is needed to change a slouching, careless posture into a self-confident image.

The ability to relax and eliminate superfluous movements indicates a controlled mind. A relaxed woman avoids giggling, pursing her lips, shrugging her shoulders, fiddling with her hair or adjusting her clothes or jewelry.

These habits attract attention but they never indicate that you are sure of yourself.

YOUR CLOTHES

No woman can afford to rely on her own good looks. You must develop and enhance yourself by your clothes, your hair-do and your make-up.

Your clothes should be attractive, stylish and as personal to you as your voice. But no matter how well your clothes suit you, they must also be clean, neat, fresh and well-pressed.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

Good manners and social know-how are high on the list. To be really poised in society, you need the assurance and confidence that comes from good



Miss Tourism Kenya 2001 Debra Sinaipei Ntimama.

manners and a knowledge of etiquette. You must develop an attractive speaking voice and learn to speak intelligently, by training your mind to be interested in people and topical events. You must practice gracious, tactful speech until it becomes natural to you.

PRACTICE MAKES POISE

Concentration on your outer poise also trains you in good habits.

You will discover that this is often a matter of discarding some old habits rather than acquiring new ones.

Take comfort in the knowledge that habit is formed by doing a thing repeatedly.

When it becomes second nature, you can concentrate on something else. Surprisingly you can acquire most of these habits at home or at work. Once you know the right way to do something, you have only to practice it. As

you become better at it, you gain confidence and assurance.

WHY YOU SHOULD IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE

Good posture is the most feminine trait you can have and with a little persistence the easiest to acquire.

The first thing other people notice about you is the way you hold yourself. Good posture expresses vitality and an alert, confident personality.

On the other hand, careless posture shows that you are less sure of yourself. Psychologists link slouching, rounded shoulders with various forms of inferiority complex. Poor posture can cause back-ache and often accompanies other negative traits, such as sloppy work and a complaining, critical attitude.

As the old adage goes: "A chip on your shoulder only weighs you down".

s finally come

ing ingredients. Sunscreen-containing shampoos, conditioners, and hair sprays are now available. Waterproof formulas last for about 40 minutes in the water, whereas water-resistant formulas last half as long. The higher the number, the stronger the protection.

Some experts recommend at least SPF 30 on the face and 15 on the body. SPF is the suns radiation required to turn sunscreen or sunblock-treated skin compared to non-treated skin.

Sunscreen or sunblock should be applied liberally 15-30 minutes before venturing outdoors and reapplied every two hours or so even on overcast days and especially after exercising or swimming. Sunscreens should not be used on babies younger than 6 months.

Wearing sun-protective clothing is extremely important and protects even

better than sunscreens. Everyone, including children, should wear hats with wide brims.

However, even wearing a hat may not be fully protective against skin cancers on the head and neck. Clothing is being designed for blocking UV rays. People should look for loosely-fitted, unbleached, tightly woven fabrics. The tighter the weave the more protective the garment.

Everyone should wear sunscreen to block all ultraviolet rays when in the sun.

Plastic surgeons make lots of money smoothing faces of the rich and the famous. Though this goes against the laws of nature, technology has been utilised to the full. This way, Liz Taylor and Joan Collins have tried to tackle the menace through facelifts. Talk about killing two birds with one stone.



Joan Collins



Liz Taylor

Get to know how the nose knows

Compiled By
Joy Higirow

The sense of smell is the most primitive of the five senses. A throwback to the primordial mists when the brain was scarcely developed.

It is also the least understood sense. The human nose can distinguish an extraordinary bouquet of odours, some 10,000 in all, and other animals can better that.

It has been recognized that moths are exquisitely sensitive to certain pheromone molecules. They can sniff out a potential mate a kilometer away.

In a discovery that promises to open up a whole new field of factory science, two researchers at New York City's Columbia University announced they have isolated what they believe are the first known odour receptors. Individual genes that are active in the nose and nowhere else in the body.

What is more, the molecules they found seem to be part of an extended family of smell genes.

Perhaps the largest single family in the long strand of mammalian DNA. "We have identified a few hundred genes," says Richard Axel, a professor at Columbia's Howard Hughes Medical Institute. "And there is reason to suspect there may be as many as a thousand.

The eye, in contrast, uses only three different types of receptors. One sensitive to red light, another to green light and another to blue to recognize a few thousand different colours.

The new findings, published in a past issue of the journal *Cell*, suggests that the sense of smell may work very differently. When odour molecules drift among the millions of tiny cilia located in the nasal cavity, they seem to slip into certain odour receptors like keys into locks.

The fact that there are such a large number of different kinds of odour receptors suggests that much of the work of discriminating among smells is being carried out at a chemical level within the nose itself.

Signals from these receptors

are then transmitted to the olfactory bulb, the small region of the brain that specializes in identifying fragrances.

But since that information has been filtered through the odour receptors before it is passed along the brain does not have to do very much of its own processing before concluding that what it is confronting is a garlic clove and not a rose.

This makes a certain amount of sense from an evolutionary point of view. Although humans tend to treasure sights above all other senses, primitive animals probably relied more heavily on smell than on vision for their survival.

They need the specialized cells to do the work of identifying, say, the smell of food. Associated with fertility and reproduction of the nose, therefore, may be a key to understanding how the brain works. "These molecules will serve as useful tools" for solving a variety of scientific problems, says Linda Buck, who co-authored the *Cell* article with Axel.

The Anvil Magazine

Who are they dating at campus?

In a beautifully written novel, *Maisha Kitendawili*, (Life is a riddle), University of Nairobi don depicts the average university girl as a 'material girl' involved in a fierce battle for survival.

Farida, a third year university student, gets herself a rich guy who provides her basic and leisure needs. Is Farida your typical university girl?

Yes, who are university girls dating? 'Working men of course'. That was the firm answer from a number of ladies we interviewed. According to Nelly (not her real name), a fourth year student at the Faculty of Arts, 'peers are immature, less serious'. Nelly would not entertain a relationship with a peer, except on academic or casual terms.

Most university girls do not date fellow students. And even if they did, says Mildred, a second year, they would have somebody else out there. A combination of factors make dating a peer a dim prospect.

According to Wambui Catherine, a former University of Nairobi graduate and now employed in the telecommunications industry in the city, 'Most university ladies date working men'. Reason: 'poverty and the issue of single motherhood'.

The ideal campus life of the student revolves around attending classes, doing assignments and passing exams. But its also said to be the best part of growing up. The formation of relationships is part of the growing process which is usually for identity, companionship and for a sense of belonging. "Dating is all about friendship," acknowledges Jackie. She has a boyfriend, John with whom she has spent a better part of campus life with. Amid a blush, she describes John as handsome, charming and, most of all, honest.

Dating at campus is a complex process. The search for financial security is not limited to female students. Amongst the male students there are those who prefer rich female colleagues or rich working class women. The objective is similar: survival.

The preference for working men by female students has obviously elicited a bitter though muted response from male colleagues. The 'lucky' working men, according to a B.Sc. male student are called 'fisi' ('hyenas'). They are, in the eyes of the male students, predators taking away what

male students cherish but find difficult to get or sustain.

Interestingly, cohabiting as a feature of many relationships in campus is not a new thing. It is consid-

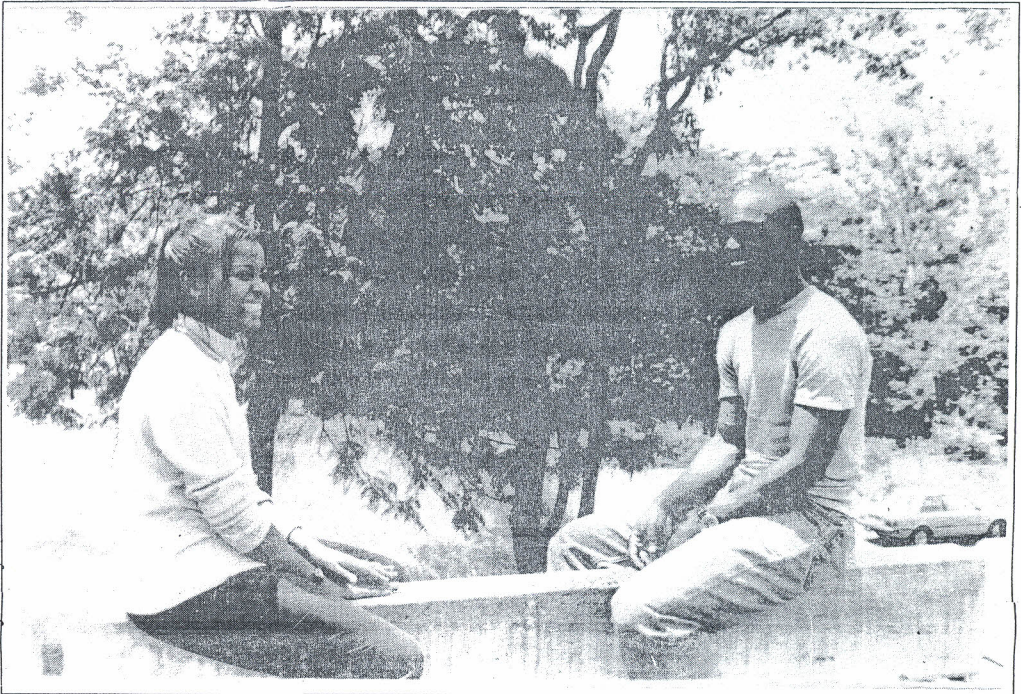
ered the norm. Eric feels that it is the one way in which you can save up the little money you have. "I mean if you have to save, we will need to pool all our resources together." He adds that as the days go by you become close as you working towards a common course, that is your relationship.

Cohabiting has its dark side too.

Some of the relationships end sadly. Mary points out break-ups are common and in some relationships unexpected pregnancies result. The sequence of events may see one or both of the parties, more so the girl leave college for sometime. It is estimated that 14 per cent of girls in campus get pregnant within their first year in college.

Nikki a medical student feels that cohabiting relationships are not something to admire in Campus.

All is not lost. As the saying goes men are from mars and women from venus. Little understanding of each other is what it takes concludes Alex. And as Kengen rightly feels, the milk and honey of Kenya can be found at the University of Nairobi.



Nikki and Kengen of the University of Nairobi who are best of friends. Kengen hopes Nikki will warm up to him.

By Kakai Karani and Gloria Ndiritu

Before you disregard that condom ...

From pg 5

Dr. Paul Achola and Dr. Wilson Otenga of Kenyatta University's Department of Sociology saw the move as an exercise in futility. It would only lead to an upsurge in the number of infections. Dr. Achola said that the use of condoms ranks least among the methods of checking AIDS infections.

"We should ask ourselves why the rate of infection has not gone down in Kisumu despite a tremendous rise in the use of condoms since 1998," said Dr. Achola. The don has conducted a study on the use of condoms among youths in Kisumu and Murang'a and found out that only sixty percent of them approved of condoms use. "They think the condom is unreliable and choose to abstain or be faithful to each other,"

This might be taken to be the moral standpoint, the ground on which Catholics have time and again burnt condoms in public. The Archbishop of Nairobi, Ndingi Mwana a

Nzeki has stood very prominently in the crowd, naturally.

Those who do not share this moral viewpoint have put it very clearly that morality or otherwise, people will still have sex. The more promiscuous, the sweeter." This argument is in tandem with the observation of Professor Spurge Montanna of the University of Illinois in the United States of America.

Studying the behaviour of teenagers who spend time alone between school break and the time their parents came home from work in 1999, the don concluded: "When the cat is away, the mice will have sex. The only way to keep the children out of danger was to be with them as much as a parent could." However, condoms should be availed to them just in case.

There is no telling where these parallel arguments are headed. In the meantime, Mkali (not real name) of the Faculty of Medicine at the Uni-

versity of Nairobi, thinks that in respect to condoms, the masses should be separated from the individual. Any campaign on AIDS should not necessarily advocate the use of condoms to the masses.

When it comes to the actual decision on whether or not to use a condom, individuals must make their own decisions. "Everyone of us should know that abstinence is the only thing that works. I abstain rather than use a condom. But that is a decision on a personal level. If I was to give an opinion on how the AIDS scourge should be tackled, I would say, let condoms be available," concludes Mkali.

All is not lost, however. The Rakai study concluded that the chance of catching the AIDS virus from a single sexual contact with an infected person is one in 588. We can only emphasize the moral obligation of each and every individual to protect themselves.



AIDS: A couple sampling condoms.

Affirmative action call deserve hearing

By Joel Ng'etich

On 26th November, 2001 President Moi while presiding over a graduation ceremony at the University of Nairobi once again declared that he does not support the call for affirmative action. His sentiments ignited fire especially among leaders of women organizations.

Affirmative action is an action taken to affirm an established policy; specifically positive action by employers to ensure that minority groups are not discriminated against during recruitment or employment.

The minority in this case refers to members of the society who are disadvantaged in one way or another.

The term is often interpreted to mean actions geared towards empowering women to positions and privileges enjoyed by men. The proponents of affirmative action believe that women can perform equally well as men and that the system should accord them opportunities to prove their case. It is true that in our society, men dominate in the job market and indeed in every aspect of life.

Pastor Joshua Ndirangu of Nairobi Miracle Centre insists men and women are equal in the eyes of God but differ greatly in the duties and responsibilities that they undertake. "The bible clearly outlines what is

expected of each both in the family and in the society", he said. He argues that the services rendered by each are important and complimentary. But he was quick to add that man is always the head and bread winner in the family. Mr. Omwenga who is an elder in the same church share the same sentiments with his pastor. According to him, men are meant to be playing the leading roles while women are supposed to be obedient and submissive to them.

One Government official in the Ministry of Labour insists that women are not discriminated in any way because they compete for the limited opportunities as men. He said that women just like any other citizens are treated in the order of merit and it is only unfortunate that only a minority can compete effectively with men. "The policy pursued by the Government in Education guarantees equal opportunities to both men and women. But there are social and economic factors that tend to influence the girl child in pursuing education to logical conclusions. In case of financial difficulties in a family, the boy is always given first priority to pursue education. This is one of the reasons why there are few female students in our institutions of higher learning as opposed to their male counterparts", he said.

Grace Mwamu, a staunch sup-



An overburdened woman: most communities the woman as the beast of burden.

porter of affirmative action blames the government for turning a blind eye on the reality. She says the politicians under the ruling party are only interested in keeping women in the dark so that they can easily be manipulated during elections.

According to Mr. Nyakeri, a specialist in cultural studies at the Kenya Institute of Mass communication, influences associated with culture contribute upto 40 per cent of school drop-outs as far as the girl child is concerned. "Some communities regard the girl child as a source of wealth and they care married off immediately they reach the age of marriage," he said.

Mr. Nyakeri says that the government should guard against such cultural practices through the application of the law and campaigns geared towards attitude change.

Mrs. Jane Wangari, an NGO official with the League of Women Voters, advocates strongly for affirmative action. She considers the president's comments as an abuse to women. She argues that women are the majority and must be always represented in matters of importance such as policy making. "After all, women have always voted for Moi and supported his leadership for the sake of peace and harmony, infact he should instead acknowledge such a

contribution by supporting any move towards women empowerment," he said.

Mrs. Zipporah Kitony, the chair lady of Maendeleo ya Wanawake, takes a soft stand on the issue as opposed to other women leaders. She criticizes women who support the affirmative action. Though she agrees that women are disadvantaged in many fronts, she believes that the situation is being exploited for political mileage given the fact that elections are around the corner. According to her the Government has been fair enough in appointing women to distinct positions in the civil service. We should appreciate the fact that women are the weaker sex and therefore they cannot be on equal footing with men, she said.

Mr. Wesonga who is a senior Economist in the Ministry of Finance looks at affirmative action from a different perspective. According to him the greater percentage of women folk in the country are dependants. This means they are consumers rather than producers of goods and services in the economy. "This state of affairs is not healthy for any developing nation and should be discouraged as much as possible". The government should support affirmative action by giving concessions to women especially in education and the job market. The government should also encourage women entrepreneurs by giving them incentives. A deliberate effort towards empowering the weaker sections of our society, will eventually lead to economic development", he said.

What it takes to make a mark in design

By Lucy Kinjanjui

Saturday the 23rd of March 2002 found me at the Faculty of Archi-

itecture, Design and Development, at the University of Nairobi. I met Mr Odoch Pido, the Chairman of the Department of Design, who gra-

ciously gave an interview on aspects of his Department.

"The Department of Design holds exhibitions at the end of every academic year", Mr Odoch said. One exhibition had just ended in mid March. The Chairman also explained that project work for exhibitions culminated in a professional exam at the end of an academic year.

Each exhibition consists of various subject components. For example, the 4th year exhibition consists, packaging, corporate identity and advertising. Other areas in which exhibitions are undertaken include interior design, illustration, textile and industrial design.

Apart from the end of academic year exhibitions, on going exhibitions are held throughout the year. The duration of these on going exhibitions range from at least one week to one month. Their purpose is to assist in assessing and critiquing students' work.

The critique process involves the exchange of opinions and ideas that enable students improve their work. The result of these critique sessions is enhanced thinking and professional presentation.

While the exhibitions contribute to the final project for the course, the enhanced thinking and professional presentation component prepares the student for the job market.

Mr. Odoch enumerated a number of challenges facing the

department. These include, human resource development, fast changing technology, and inadequate equipment and consumables. Mr Odoch however explained that they take these challenges for opportunities.

For instance, at one point, the Department learned that the Kodak company had some materials that were about to expire. Since the Department needed these consumables, it bought them at subsidised rates.

The Department has also benefitted from donations by individuals and companies. Some of these take the form of discounts on materials. Sometimes, students buy their own materials. Mr Odoch and his team have all ears on the ground to discover any form of resource for the department.

The students have also had their share of challenges. Graduates from the Department for instance have not been spared the problem of a depressed employment market. All the same, a few lucky ones end up in formal employment while others join the informal sector.

Unemployment, however, has forced the students to go an extra mile in their studies. Thus most students are good at their studies hence a success rate of almost 100 percent. Members of staff have also done their best to help out.

Nevertheless, some students do not pass at their first attempt and

have to sit for supplementary exams or repeat an academic year. But as Mr Odoch points out: "you can take a donkey to the river but you cannot force it to drink."

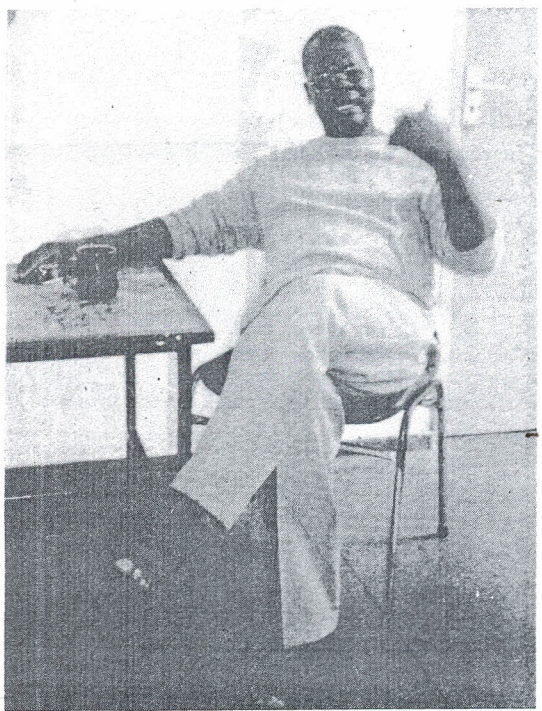
Currently the department has both regular and parallel (module II) programme. Plans to launch a Master of Arts in Design are underway and the programme could be in place before the end of the year.

The department is also seeking linkages with overseas universities to help create opportunities in the form of exchange programmes for their students and staff alike. This would add value to the department's achievements.

Towards the end of the interview, I asked Mr Odoch what he had achieved in his tenure as Chairman. He commented wryly: "For every design solution to a problem, you create another problem. I would only be better able to make a comprehensive assessment of my success at the end of my tenure."

He however is proud of establishing links with other institutions and resource persons. He also believes that he has made a significant academic input in his students. Especially in teaching them to marry their thinking with their work. This, says Mr Odoch, produces intellectual and leadership development.

Mr. Odoch is also happy that the department is one of a kind in the region.



Mr. Odoch Pido, the Chairman Department of Design stresses a point during the interview.

Picture by Gloria Ndiritu

THE ARTS

Breaking barriers in Oscars

Compiled By Joy Higirow

This year's Oscars were a landmark for African American artists. For the first time African Americans won major awards reversing a long history of relegation. Was it tokenism or was it a genuine recognition of hitherto unacknowledged talent?

Only six African Americans have won acting Oscars since the awards began in 1929. The only other time African Americans won some major awards was in 1972 when three African Americans were nominated for best actor or actress: Cicely Tyson and Paul Winfield for "Sounder" and Diana Ross for "Lady Sings Blues."

"When it happened in 1972, I bet you someone probably said this is a prelude of better things to come and we found it hasn't happened again for almost 30 years," said Frank Smith Jr., acting board president of the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

Still, many in Hollywood view this year's nominations as a hint that choicer roles are opening up for African Americans in an industry that once and still relegates minorities largely to comic or caricatured parts: maids, porters, drivers, singers, sports, stupid roles.

Old Hollywood is now waking up to the idea that diversity and multiplicity of people represented is what pulls people to the box office.

In the 1940's-1950's, amid Hollywood racism, Dandridge rose to fame, and was the first African American nominated for a lead acting Oscar in the 1954's "Carmen Jones."

Four years later, Sydney Poitier became the second for his role in the "The Defiant Ones."

This year's awards represent one of the best chances for an African American to earn a lead-acting trophy since Sidney Poitier became the



Denzel Washington, rewarded at last.

only black actor to do so, for his role in the 1963's "Lilies of the Field."

Oscar nominations for Berry ("Monster's Ball"), Smith ("Ali") and Washington ("Training Day") mark the first time in 29 years that three African Americans have competed in their lead acting categories.

Denzel Washington thinks that voters went for the actors they felt turned in the best performance, "... quality of performance alone resulted in this year's three nominations."

For Will Smith, he had already

made history being the first rapper to be nominated for an Oscar. "It's not about race," he said, "This might suggest that they are doing us a favour because we are black," adding that it "...might also suggest that there are better roles for African Americans."

Perhaps conscious of the racially marked reporting, Denzel Washington retorted to one reporter that he should report that 'an actor had won,' not that 'a Black actor had won.'

Information and quest for equity

India has finally allowed internet telephony starting this April. This is a significant policy shift that will radically transform the telecommunications landscape in India. Internet telephony has been illegal, a move that was designed to protect the interests of the state-owned Videsh Sanchar Nigam (VSNL) company. India is touted as a classic example of how a determined forward-looking approach in information technology can transform a country's capacity to compete in the information sector.

A new book by Arvind Singhal and Everett Rogers, describes and analyses India's journey on the information revolution path. The story of India's sojourn in the information field as presented in this book is a fascinating, if revealing 'picture of paradox, contradiction and uncertainty' - but one that Kenya - and Africa can learn a lot from.

India has made remarkable, if revolutionary progress through a state policy of informatization. The process of informatization encourages the use of information technology for furthering socio-economic development. Information,

India's Communication Revolution: From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts by Arvind Singhal & Everett Rogers; Sage Publications, New Delhi, India: 2001

Reviewed by Kakai Karani

argue the authors, can greatly increase business activity by creating viable business networks both at the local and global levels.

The authors in the book define information societies as those countries in which information workers are more numerous than such categories as farmers, industrial workers or service workers. The main job of information workers is to gather, process, or distribute information, or to produce information technologies. The story of India is an interesting case study, they argue.

Sixty per cent of all workers in India are farmers and 25 per cent are employed in the service industry. Of the 25 per cent work-force, tens of millions are information workers. The paradox of India is that it has more

information workers than Japan, and about the same number as the US.

The authors show a causal relationship between India's policy of 1991 in which India embraced a capitalist mode of production and the rapid expansion in information technology. Informatization, according to the authors, presents immense opportunities to use communication technology to improve the delivery of education, health and nutrition, especially in the rural areas. But informatization has not brought dividends for everybody in India.

While the new technologies of cable television, computers, the internet and satellites are making a significant impact, India is still regarded as a developing nation in which many citizens depend on the bullock cart for transportation and on human labour for making a living.

The book may not have adequately addressed issues of social equity and cultural interdependence, but it offers a radiant and extensive review of the main developments in India's attempts to become an information society.

Lets not forget those requisite etiquettes

Compiled By Joy Higirow

The best way to teach table manners to your children is by example. Remember, a stitch in time saves nine. Here is how:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or belch. If you realise that you might sneeze, excuse yourself from the table and walk out of the room.

- Avoid jokes or talk about dirt like waste, vomit, sewage or garbage. Some people have very vivid imaginations, and are actually able to visualise what is being talked about.

- Ask for the sugar, milk, jam, butter, water, etc to be passed to you by the person nearest to the item, rather than reaching out across the table.

- Chew with your mouth closed, and as noiselessly as possible. Noisy eating or chewing can be very offensive to some people.

- Do not serve more food on your plate than you can finish. Serve a little first and take another helping when you are through.

- To break wind from a rumbling stomach, go out of the room, preferably to the toilet.

- Toothpicks and dental floss ought to be used carefully to avoid shooting bits of food into other people's plates or faces.

- Too much talk at mealtime should be discouraged. While mealtimes provide the family with a good opportunity to catch up on each others' news, the conversation should be controlled by the parents so that the main purpose of the meal - eating - is not disrupted.

- Avoid noisy clinking of pieces of cutlery against each other, or against plates. Shaking legs can create the same distraction because the whole table is shaken.

- Discourage singing, dancing or any fidgety movement at mealtime, even if the child's favourite song is playing, because food can easily enter the windpipe and cause choking. Reading or doing homework at meal time should not be allowed.

Compiled by Joy Higirow

COMING PRODUCTIONS AT PHOENIX

Running upto

April 12-28th THE STRIPED LEOPARD by Oby Obyerodhiambo
The new Kenyan play.

May 3 -25th : RUMOURS by Niel Simon
Possibly Simon's funniest farse .

May 31 to June 15th ; UNEARTHING THE WORM by J.P. R. - Odera. A feast of boardroom intrigue, political jealousy and personal ambition gone haywire.

July 2-6. LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME by Constance Cox
Lord Arthur, engaged to be married, has his palm read by Rogers's a clairvoyantist who tells him he will commit a terrible crime!

CINEMA GUIDE-NAIROBI

KENYA CINEMA

Screen One

"Black Hawk" Starring: Josh Hartnett, Tom Sizemore, Ewan McGregor U/16 Shows at 2.00pm, 5.30pm & 8.30pm

Screen Two

"A Beautiful Mind" Starring: Russell Crowe, Ed Harris, Jennifer Connelly.
General Exhibition Shows at 2.10pm, 5.40pm & 8.40pm

20TH CENTURY

Screen One "Oceans Eleven" Starring: George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts.
General Exhibition Shows at 2.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.10pm

Screen 2

"Monsters" Starring: Billy Crystal, John Goodman, Mary Gibbs
U/16 Shows at 2.10pm, 5.40 pm

Evening show at 8.00pm

"Notanother Teen Movie" Starring: Chris Evans, Chyler Leigh, Mia Kirshner U/16

FOX DRIVE-IN

7.30pm
"AANKHEN"
Starring: Amitab Bachchan, Aksay Kumar, Bipasha Basu

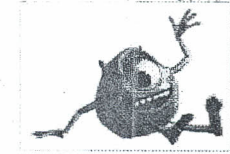
NAIROBI CINEMA

Screen 1

SPY GAMES
Starring: Robert Redford, Brad Pitt, Catherine McCormack
Shows at 2.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.30 pm U/16

Screen 2

"The One"
Starring: Jet Li, Detroly Lindo. Carla Gugino, Jason Statham
Shows at 2.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.30 pm U/16



The Pharaohs knock out Kenyan clubs yet again

By Gloria Ndiritu

Three Kenyan representatives to year's Africa Club Championships were bundled out in the first round in almost identical circumstances.

Oserian Fastac, Mathare United and AFC Leopards failed to utilise their homeground advantage losing Al Ahly, Al Masry and Al Mourada respectively. The local sides also led to score a single goal at home, the only Oserian finding the net once, away.

The flower men from Naivasha could only manage a barren draw against the Egyptians and defending champions, while all they needed

was to win by a clear goal to cancel the 1-2 loss suffered in Cairo. Strikers, Mike Mururi, Charles Odera and Boniface Ambani, however, kept the Egyptian keeper busy throughout the match.

Mathare United lost by an identical 2-0 score line in both legs to Egypt's Al Masry. Coach Gabriel Njoroge said of the match: "The Egyptians played well but we made mistakes in the defence which they capitalised on."

At the same time, AFC Leopards were knocked out of the Cup Winners Cup by Sudan's Al Mourada. Leopards lost 0-1 in Nairobi before forcing a barren draw in Khartoum. The three teams now turn their attention to the national premier league.



Oserian Striker Geoffrey Okoth moves to stop, an Al-Ahly player (left) during their return match at the Nyayo National Stadium.

Europe's top 4 on parade



Michael Owen

By David Ndung'u

Eight-time European Champions Real Madrid will face their bitter domestic rivals Barcelona in an all Spanish Champions' League semi-final. In the other semi-final, Manchester United will square it out with Germany's Bayer Leverkusen.

Enroute to the semis, Real overcame the defending champions Bayern Munich 3-2 on aggregate, overturning a 1-2 first leg defeat.

On the other hand, Barcelona came from behind before registering a similar 3-2 aggregate success against their Greek opponents, Panathinaikos.

The Bundesliga leaders, Bayer Leverkusen, perhaps produced the best quarter-final performance when they beat Liverpool 4-2 to sail through 4-3 on aggregate.

Only Manchester United went into the second leg matches with a clear win. They had humbled Spain's Deportivo de La Coruna 2-0 in Spain, courtesy of strikes by Ruud van Nistelrooy and David Beckham. Beckham suffered a broken bone in his foot that is likely to put him away for six weeks. The captains armband now goes to 22 year old Michael Owen

Real's influential midfielder, Luis Figo will also miss the semi-final first leg, not because of injury but the result of his one-match suspension for being booked in consequent matches.

Plummeting sports standards hit Kenya

By Joel Ng'etich

Kenya's once vibrant and celebrated sports like football and boxing are ailing almost terminally. Ardent sports fans are left wondering what next as they helplessly watch their favourite sports loose touch and vigour.

The need to identify the cause of this decline is significant. Top in the list are matters to do with finances, politics, interpersonal wrangles, corruption, lack of community support and unmotivated sportsmen and women.

Government funding has continued to decline despite increased sporting disciplines. To date there are 62 sports councils compared with 16

in the late 80's and early 90's. Consequently, funding of these new sports disciplines have become very difficult. Despite efforts to boost individual sporting by sponsors, funding remains elusive for the talented sportsmen and women in most disciplines. As a result young talents have been challenged to pull out prematurely due to frustrations.

Politicization of sports has been detrimental. Soccer and tennis for example, have been engaged in unprecedented wrangles and tugs of war resulting in poor management and negative influence on sponsors and sports fans.

The newly appointed chairman of Harambee Stars Mr. Mohammed Nyaoga is however optimistic about

the future of soccer in Kenya. He says plans are underway to repackage the national team to regain its former glory.

He says extra effort should be put in place to check on frustrations resulting from lack of incentives and motivation. "We encourage participants to do their games wholeheartedly for their own good and that of the nation", Mr. Charles Nyabere, Kenya National Sports Council treasurer said in an interview.

To avert declining standards, all the stakeholders should actively participate and show interest in ensuring that young talents and professionals get the support they desperately deserve.

African teams gearing for Japan/Korea



Taribo West

By David Ndung'u

African representatives to this year's World Cup in Japan and South Korea are gearing up for the big showdown, though in contrasting fashion.

Like the continental champions Cameroon, World Cup debutants Senegal are in up beat mood. They beat Bolivia 2-0. The West African team is fresh from their remarkable performance in the African Cup of Nations in Mali and is leaving nothing to chance. Senegals opening match in Japan will be against defending champions France.

Despite finishing third in Mali, Nigeria have bounced back and are raring to go. Among the players expected to stand for the Super Eagles will be defender Taribo West. In their warm up game, the new-look Eagles forced Paraguay to a one all draw. Lacking a bulk of the side that played in Mali, their coach Festus Onigbinde, was full of praise for the team, "I was happy with the result and the performance of the boys was encouraging."

South Africa's Bafana Bafana lost 0-1 to Saudi Arabia before succumbing to a 0-2 loss to Georgia in Tbilisi. In the latter match, South Africa was comprehensively outplayed by their hosts. But they lifted themselves up by advancing to the quarter finals of the Cosafa Castle Cup, beating Botswana 5-4 penalties.

The road to Japan and South Korea is tough and tenacious. Going by the recent performance by Africa's representatives, particularly Cameroon, there is every possibility that for the first time in the history of the World Cup, an African side will feature among the last four.



A Harambee stars outfit pose for a photograph. Their fortune continues to take a nose dive.