

EDUCATION | Heavy rains reported in various parts of the country as Form Four candidates start papers

KCSE exam begins as security tightened

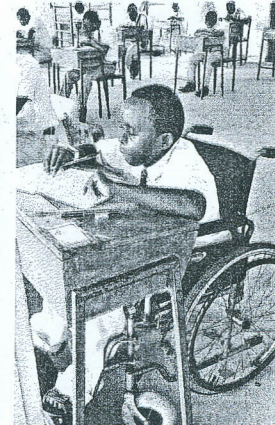
Knec airlifts papers to Turkana as candidates countrywide begin to tackle the final secondary school test

BY NATION TEAM
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The Form Four national examination has begun smoothly except in Turkana East.

The Kenya National Examination Council (Knec) airlifted a fresh batch of papers to Kapedo Mixed Secondary School following a bandit attack on a van ferrying question papers to the school on Monday.

Knec acting secretary Joseph Kivulu said 25 candidates in the school may have to be relocated, while security officers were increased in the region.



JARED NYATAYA & LABAN WALLOGA | NATION

Candidates tackle the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education English Paper 1 at Moi Girls' High School in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County. Left: A candidate at Mombasa Secondary School for the Physically Handicapped.

Without any attack

Mr Daniel Namunwa, the school's principal, led the candidates, examination officials and teachers in prayers ahead of their first paper yesterday.

"Our prayer is that our candidates complete their examination without any attack and that teachers counselling and leading them in revision be secure," he said.

In Nairobi, few incidents were reported, despite many areas around the city experiencing downpours. Police were posted to schools and minimal

transport hitches were reported.

However, 18 students at Faith Academy in Huruma were shocked to learn that they had not been listed as candidates. Although the headteacher said the students had not paid the exam fees, they insisted they had.

It is the second time the headteacher is involved in such a case.

In Ruiru, Kiambu County, a 30-year-old former matatu driver is among 132 candidates at Ruiru Boys Secondary

School. Mr Charles Karuga is sitting for the examination seven years after he was first admitted to Form One, according to the school principal, Mr Joseph Miano.

In Baringo County, the examination started with minimal hitches despite heavy rains.

Examination materials were delivered in time to Barpello, Chemaolingot, Tangulbei and Churo in Tiaty Sub-county, which is prone

to attacks. Sub-county Commissioner Daniel Kurui said plans had been put in place to ensure that the materials are stored near the centres to minimise transport problems due to the rains. He said his office was working with Turkana County officials to intensify patrols at the porous Kapedo border, where armed bandits attacked and set ablaze a vehicle ferrying examination materials on Monday.

Meanwhile, security was beefed up

in schools on the West Pokot-Turkana border.

In Bomet, no incidents were reported. Education officials told the *Nation* that the examination started smoothly in the county's 172 centres despite heavy rains.

Similar security was maintained in Mombasa County, where the examination started without irregularity or hitches.

The situation was similar in all the 19 centres in Lamu County. Lamu

485,547

The number of KCSE candidates this year

County Commissioner Njenga Miori said additional police officers were posted to all schools, especially in areas that were mostly affected by the June-July attacks in which more than 70 people were killed.

At the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison in Nakuru County, 18 inmates are candidates. They include one death row inmate, six life prisoners and 11 others serving long sentences.

Reported by Sammy Lutta, Ouma Wanzala, Oliver Musembi, Wycliff Kipsang, Flora Koech, Oscar Kakai, Geoffrey Rono, John Shilita Benson Amadala, Rebecca Okwanyi, Kalume Kazungu, Macharia Mwangi, Francis Mureithi, Martin Ndirangu, Wycliffe Muia and Maryanne Giacob

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Varsity council picks Mbithi for VC's post

BY NATION REPORTER

The University of Nairobi council has placed Prof Peter Mbithi top among candidates interviewed to succeed Prof George Magoha as vice-chancellor.

In a report the council presented to Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi (below) yesterday, Prof Agnes Mwang'ombe is ranked second while Prof Isaac Mbeche and Prof Lucy Irungu are third and fourth respectively.

Council chairman Idle Farah asked the university community to give the minister time to make the appointment. This followed concerns from both the students and the teaching staff that Prof Kaimenyi preferred a candidate who did not rank highest in the interviews.

The minister worked with all the top candidates at the university before his appointment to the Cabinet last year.

"It is premature to make such conclusions. I kindly ask the univer-

sity community to remain calm," he said.

Dr Farah's remarks followed press briefings by students and lecturers' unions when they accused the minister of interfering with the process.

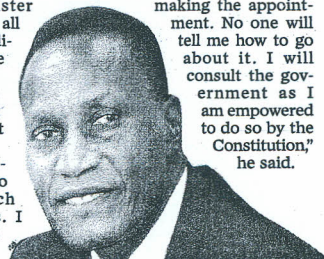
"The university needs a qualified vice-chancellor. We are warning against any attempts to politicise the appointment," Academic Staff Union chairman Samuel Nyandemo said.

Paralyse activities

"We dare the Cabinet Secretary to appoint an unqualified candidate. We will paralyse all activities at the university," he warned.

However, Prof Kaimenyi, who spoke at the university, denied the accusations.

"I received the information this morning and I have to study the report before making the appointment. No one will tell me how to go about it. I will consult the government as I am empowered to do so by the Constitution," he said.



Don laments poor quality of education

BY NATION REPORTER

Schools and colleges are producing graduates who can hardly communicate in any language even after spending many years in school.

Professor of history and former Moi University chancellor Bethwel Ogot therefore challenged the government to ensure high quality of education in learning institutions.

"We have to ensure that education meets the required standards. It is sad that some students still cannot communicate in any language," said Prof Ogot.

The former chancellor was speaking at the University of Nairobi during roundtable consultations to mark 50 years of Kenya-Unesco cooperation.

Pay them well

The theme was "Perspectives on sustainable development for the 21st Century" and was presided over by Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi.

Unesco was formed in 1945 with the mandate of promoting peace and sustainable development.

Prof Ogot urged the government to ensure those who do not transit from primary school to secondary schools have access to youth polytechnics and on to university.

He asked the government to hire more teachers and pay them well, citing the brain drain Kenya suffers when educated citizens migrate.