

THE GOVERNOR *Weekly*

Bomet East | Bomet Central | Chepalungu | Konoin | Solik

Reprieve for farmers as Court suspends a section of Tea Act, 2020



Governor Dr Hillary Barchok (centre) addressing press at the county headquarters on Thursdays. Loking are Deputy Governor Governor David Shadrack Rotich (right) and Kembu MCA Joseph Kelong (left)

The County Government of Bomet can now resume its quest for direct market sales for its tea produce following a landmark ruling delivered in its favour by the High Court early this week.

The latest development now allows the County Government to conclude earlier negotiations for direct sales for its tea with Iran and other investors - a move that would see tea farmers improve their

livelihoods due to favourable prices and cutting off intermediaries that have for long curtailed the industry.

Continued Pg 3



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Construction of Sh 15 Million Mengichik bridge commences



Governor Dr Hillary Barchok, Thursday launched the construction of Mengichik bridge in Bomet East which connects Singorwet ward of Bomet Central and Merigi ward of Bomet East which is projected to be completed in three months time.

Speaking during the visit, Dr Barchok reaffirmed that his government is committed to delivering quality infrastructural projects. He noted that improving transport networks would facilitate easy movement of goods and people across the County which is key to socio-economic development in the society. He added that the County Government has embarked on the construction of various bridges across the county to enhance infrastructure in the county. The Governor and his team also inspected the ongoing construction of Chepkositonik and Sugutek bridges in Merigi ward.

Strengthening women groups to end Gender Based Violence

The National Government through the State Department of Gender and Social Services & Gender Department at the County Government of Bomet have collaborated to strengthen gender working groups in the County to curb gender-based violence in the County. Speaking during the County Gender Based Violence (GBV) Working Groups sensitization forum, CAS Gender Affairs Programmes, Hon. Linah Jebii Kilimo emphasized the need to establish rescue and counselling centers to assist GBV victims in their paths of recovery. On her part, Gender and Social Services CECM Alice Kirui urged members of the public who may have been victims of GBV to open up and report cases to authorities.

The State Department of Gender will coordinate and strengthen the county gender working groups.



During the workshop, it emerged that there is a need to outline inter-governmental framework between the

National and County governments on the implementation of gender programs.



“Become the kind of leader that people would follow voluntarily; even if you had no title or position.” — Brian Tracy



Agriculture:

Delivery of farm inputs to farmers registered as micro projects in Kiperes under the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Programme

Widows receive Sh 200,000 for empowerment initiatives



Ten women groups comprising of widows have received sh 200,000 to enable them to establish income generating activities in the County. Deputy Governor Shadrack Rotich revealed that the county government through the department of gender and social services has laid down various

programs to economically empower women from economic hardships especially during hard economic times. First Lady Saline Barchok lauded the creativity and innovations by women in the county as a move towards achieving sustainable development

goals (SDGs). The Department has partnered with the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) to create sustainable development initiatives in the County.

Calls for Environmental conservation as Bomet marks National tree planting campaign



Bomet marked the National Tree Planting exercise by planting 5,000 trees amid calls for more climate action initiatives to mitigate effects of global climate change. The event that took place in Kiprerres brought together various environmental stakeholders among them officials from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, County Government of Bomet, Kenya Forest

Service (KFS), Ecosystem Conservators (ECs) among other officials. In a speech read on his behalf by Peter Tonui, the Water and Environment CECM, Governor Dr Hillary Barchok reiterated the county government's commitment to conserve and manage environment. "We have initiated a multi sectoral approach towards the management

and conservation of fragile ecosystems that include Chepalungu Forest Complex that is also part of the Mau Ecosystem in the last two years." Dr Barchok said. The Governor however, noted that the restoration and protection of forests should also include children and the community at large as they were significant players in the conservation and sustainability efforts. The nationwide campaign whose theme is dubbed "forest restoration; a path to recovery and wellbeing" seeks to increase tree cover to 10 per cent. The Water and Environment Department has formulated policies and regulations that seek to address climate change, environmental management and coordination as well as conservation and rehabilitation of major Forest blocks and other degraded ecosystems in the county. Through partnership with stakeholders, The County has planted over 2 million trees in various parts of the county in the last three years. Recently the County Assembly of Bomet passed Climate Change Policy and Bill 2021.

Continued from pg 1

Reprieve for tea farmers as Bomet wins landmark ruling

Speaking during a press briefing, Governor Dr Hillary lauded the High Court ruling for hearkening to the plight of the local farmer and promoting their interests. "Today is a big win for tea farmers following the High Court's decision to suspend sections of the Tea Act that served as bottlenecks to tea farming in the County" Dr Barchok said.

He added that, the county government will now embark on earlier negotiation talks it had initiated with the Iran last year before the Tea Act, 2020 was gazetted to commence on 18th January 2021 as part of sweeping reforms in the tea sector. Bomet being among the counties representing the interests of the tea farmers and their respective factories, filed a petition challenging the implementation of restrictive sections of the Tea Act, 2020, that would bar direct sales of tea produce other than through auction. Dr Barchok thanked farmers for their patience, hard work and sacrifice during the period that the matter was before court and re-assured them that the county government will continue championing for their interests. Bomet produces over 350,000 metric tonnes of best quality tea generating over Ksh 9 Billion annually. Dr Barchok also implored upon the newly installed directors to prioritize the interests of the farmers.