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NOTHING STAYS HIDDEN

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SEX SECRETS: Pawa IT Solutions boss guilty of sexual harassment over WhatsApp messages...

One night stand sms costs randy CEO Sh1m

OFFICE AFFAIR: A recent ruling by the Employment and Labour Relations Court has laid bare the toxic underbelly of Kenya's start-up culture, after Justice Stella Rutto delivered a landmark judgment against embattled CEO Oscar Limoke. The case, built on lewd WhatsApp messages and explicit content he sent to junior staff, became the smoking gun in a harrowing harassment saga that exposed the darkest corners of corporate power and abuse. **PAGE 4-5**



DALMAS OTIENO:
**I HAVE LIVED
WITH
DOROTHY
UNDER ONE
ROOF EVER
SINCE SHE
MARRIED MY
HUSBAND-
PATRICIA**

PAGE 7

COURT:
**Two women
charged with
drugging
patrons in
Ruai estate,**

PAGE 8



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TRENDING TOPICS

THE NAIROBIAN

From saints to detectives: Kenyan women you'll meet on a first date

SILAS NYAMWEYA

Kenyan women can be fascinating, especially on a first date. Some may come across as overly ambitious, expecting instant commitment, while others seem angelic—only for you to later discover they're the neighbourhood's seasoned mischief-makers. Here are ten amusing types of Kenyan ladies you might encounter on a first date—and the valuable lessons they offer.

1. The over-ambitious dreamer

She's waited long enough for the right man and now wants the relationship sealed from day one. She might take charge, pay the bill, shower you with compliments, and bring up marriage before dessert. Occasionally, she'll plead for reassurance: "Please don't leave me, even if you discover my flaws." What she truly seeks is stability—though her pace can feel alarmingly fast.

2. The pretender

Intent on appearing saintly, she'll dress modestly, perhaps in flowing, church-like attire—and begin the meal with a lengthy 30-minute prayer. Her intercession may include patients at KNH and distant relatives before blessing your "union" and the 10 children she imagines. In truth, she could be the estate's most notorious flirt, with a past that would shock even the most liberal minds.

3. The extravagant spender

For her, a first date must be at the most luxurious venue she can identify, even if she has nev-



One dinner could cost your heart, or your whole month's salary. Choose carefully. [Courtesy]

er been there before. She orders as if tomorrow will never come, indifferent to the bill spiralling out of control. By the time the date is over, you may have exhausted your M-Pesa balance and even *fulizad*, and borrowed from every lending app in sight. She believes in living lavishly, even if it comes at your expense.

4. The authentic soul

A breath of fresh air, this woman is unapologetically herself. If she prefers eating with her hands, she will. If she enjoys alcohol, she'll drink without hesitation. There's no pretence—you know who you're dealing with.

Her honesty is her charm. With her, what you see is what you get.

5. The economical partner

She's thoughtful and practical, preferring not to strain your finances. Suggest dinner at Villa Rosa Kempinski, and she'll gently recommend a humble *kibandaski* instead. Offer her an Uber, and she may choose a *matatu*, saving the fare for something more meaningful. She shows you that affection doesn't have to come at a cost.

6. The opportunist

Here, romance is secondary. Her main interest is financial gain. She may weave stories of unpaid rent, looming school fees, or days without food. To you, she casts the role of rescuer, pressing you to part with money in the name of compassion. If you are careless, she may drain your finances dry, even persuading you to disclose your mobile banking PIN.

7. The hyper-cautious analyst

This one approaches dating as though it were a covert operation. Before approaching the meeting point, she pretends to make phone calls while scrutinising you from a distance to see the kind of man she is meeting. She prefers public places and declines food or drink in case of poisoning or love potions. Her vigilance may seem excessive, but it is rooted in caution, a reminder of the risks women weigh daily.

8. The overly loose companion

She agrees to everything far too readily, sometimes to her own detriment. A casual invite to a stranger's flat is accepted without question, with little concern for safety. Her flaw isn't immorality, but a dangerous lack of discernment.

9. The mshamba (unsophisticated girl)

City sophistication isn't her strong suit. Ask her to meet at the Hilton Hotel, and she's clueless. She'll prefer the Kangundo Road *matatu* stage. At a fine dining restaurant, appetisers vanish in seconds, and the menu confuses her. She bombards you with questions, clearly out of her comfort zone. With patience, she might flourish. Without it, the date may be doomed.

10. The inquisitive investigator

She is as thorough as a detective. Within minutes, she will ask about your family background, your finances, past relationships, and why previous partners left you. Her probing leaves you drained, though perhaps also impressed by her determination to understand who you really are.

LAKE FURY



A resident of Mwariki Estate salvages belongings after rising waters from Lake Nakuru submerged homes. The surge has displaced hundreds of families, with similar incidents in Lakes Baringo, Naivasha and Turkana, as climate-driven displacements intensify. [Kipsang Joseph, Standard]

CRIME Watch



01/10 - KILIFIA Grade Eight pupil at Gongoni Primary School in Kilifi South has died of a brain haemorrhage six days after allegedly being caned by her teacher. Postmortem results revealed that 15-year-old Anestine Tunje sustained blunt force trauma leading to cerebral oedema and internal bleeding. She initially complained of headaches but delayed hospital treatment while preparing for exams. Her condition deteriorated rapidly, and she was admitted to the ICU before succumbing on September 25. Family members, activists, and educators have condemned the incident. Kilifi North Deputy County Commissioner Samuel Mutisya confirmed investigations are underway.

📷 Elvis Ogina

CITY BEAUTY
THE NAIROBIAN

Miss Kasarani

Under the dazzling Nairobi lights, finalists of Miss Kasarani 2025 transformed the runway into a canvas of culture and couture. From intricately woven cultural gowns adorned with shimmering head crowns to finely detailed embellishments, each look told a story of heritage and modern flair.



A million-shilling one night stand: WhatsApp message sinks randy boss

Pawa IT Solutions CEO Oscar Limoke is found guilty of sexual harassment against female subordinate

NANCY GITONGA

A lewd WhatsApp “one-night stand” message and sexually explicit ohangla video from a city chief executive to his junior became the smoking gun in a harrowing workplace harassment case that has exposed the darkest corners of the corporate world.

The woman, who says she was raped by her boss and relentlessly harassed after a company party at a city hotel, resigned amid trauma, intimidation, and pay cuts, but ultimately triumphed in court with a Sh1.3 million award.

A recent decision from the Employment and Labour Relations Court has laid bare the murky underbelly of a tech start-up culture, when Justice Stella Rutto delivered a landmark judgment against Pawa IT Solutions and its embattled CEO Oscar Limoke.

A former female employee, whose identity we withhold due to legal concerns, walked out of the Milimani Law Courts on September 19, 2025, clutching victory after a two-year battle that had pitted her testimony against that of her boss.

“This court cannot ignore the clear evidence before it. The WhatsApp messages, the explicit video, and the testimony of the claimant show beyond doubt that the CEO created a hostile, unsafe, and degrading work environment,” Justice Rutto ruled.

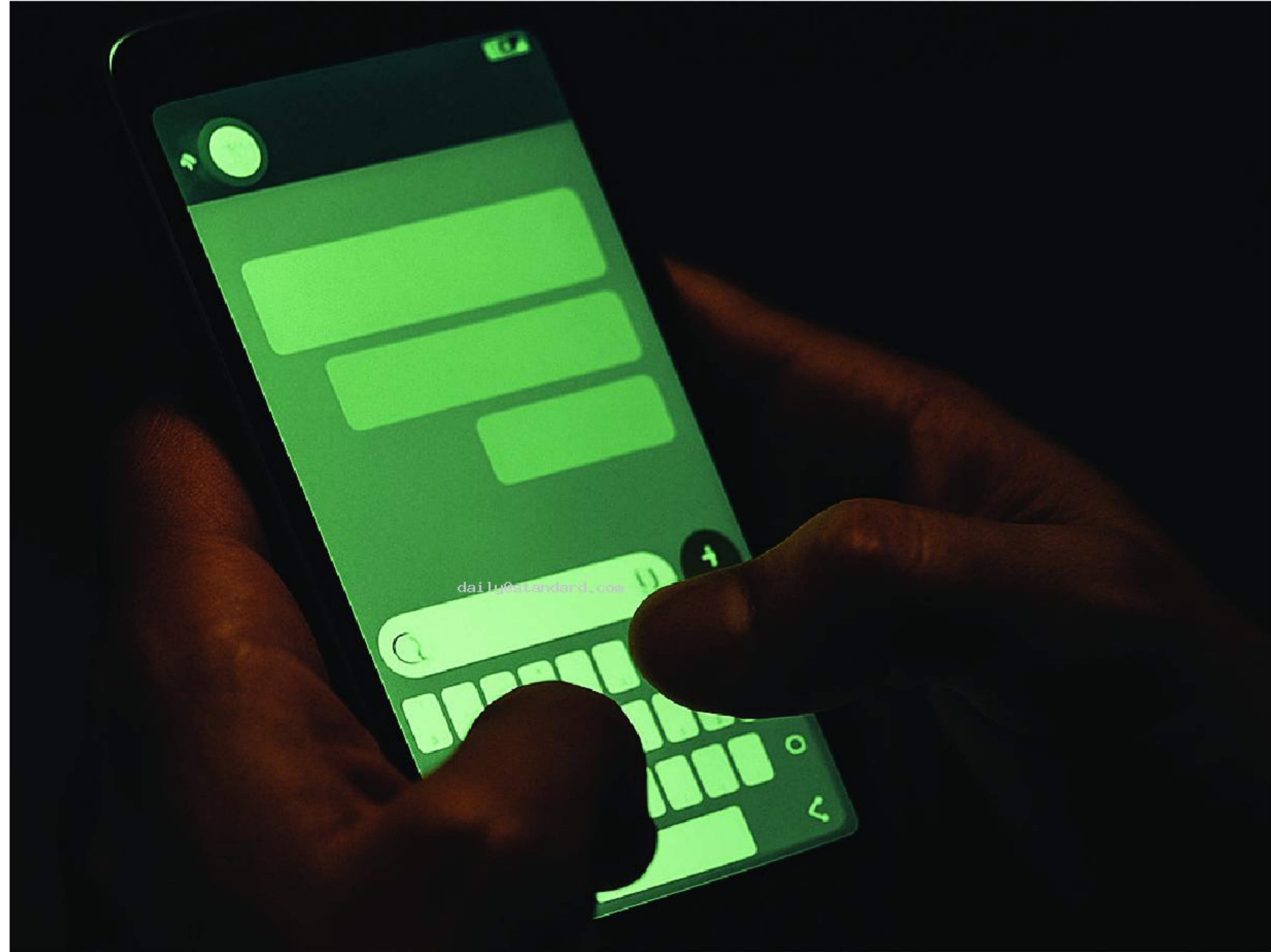
Although the CEO denied raping her while she was tipsy, Justice Rutto concluded that the woman’s decision to seek medical attention the same night, coupled with the incriminating messages, proved her account.

The judge further ruled that the sexually explicit WhatsApp video, even when claimed to be “humour” and allegedly shared with the CEO’s wife and others, crossed professional boundaries.

“The text messages sent by the first respondent (Limoke) to the claimant, when considered alongside the definition of sexual harassment, lead me to conclude that they constitute sexual harassment,” Rutto observed.

The court ordered the tech company to pay the woman Sh1.3 million in compensation for sexual harassment and workplace abuse.

The woman joined the tech company as a Finance and Administra-



tion associate on September 6, 2021, reporting directly to the CEO.

According to the court papers, by all accounts, she discharged her responsibilities with diligence and professionalism.

But tensions began subtly. On September 17, 2022, Limoke sent her a link to an article titled “What happens when you stop having sex” via WhatsApp.

The woman found the message “highly disconcerting,” given the power dynamics between herself and the boss.

Upon receiving the message, she testified that she confided in a colleague, who advised her to proceed with caution, adding that a former colleague who had also been a recipient of such texts and who had reacted harshly was frustrated to quitting just about a month later.

The second incident of unwelcome sexual conduct occurred on January 10, 2023 when on a ride back to the office from a meeting with a client.

“

The CEO escorted me and, as I was picking up my bag from his vehicle, he came up behind me, groped my breasts and forcefully removed my pants and raped me

Former Finance and Admin boss, Pawa IT Solutions

After a client meeting, the CEO pressed the woman on why she had been so quiet during the meeting, remarking that her limited participation could lead clients to infer that she was his “side chick,” rather than a professional colleague.

The court heard that Limoke also offered to drop her off as he headed home. She accepted his offer. On the ride home, he pressed further on why she was making “many avoidable mistakes” at work.

The CEO insisted that there was more to it than just anxiety and stated, quite uncharacteristically, that she was free to tell him whatever the matter was without fear or worry of it coming between her work.

The woman said: “He asked to demonstrate how free I was to discuss any matter with him and suddenly grabbed me by the back of my head and kissed me without my consent. He then stated, ‘There, now tell me what’s on your mind, without fear.’”

According to the lady, that same

night, he disclosed that the company had refrained from hiring a Finance Manager because he considered her a high-potential employee.

Distressed, she confided in a colleague and disclosed to her the events of the night, worried that the CEO’s unprovoked advances might impact her work.

The following day, she went to work and, at around 8:28pm, her boss sent her a TikTok video of a vulgar ohangla dance that was covert with sexual innuendo.

The harassment escalated on January 14, 2023, after a client meeting at the office. Plans were made for a night out for drinks with the client at the Orchid Club at the RFUEA grounds on Ngong Road.

The woman joined the CEO with the client in his car, and they set off for the club’s grounds. They were later joined by other colleagues with whom they reveled the night away.

At around 2:30am, she sought to leave and share a cab with a col-



Pawa IT Solutions CEO Oscar Limoke. [Courtesy]

league. She requested her boss to let her pick up her bag from his vehicle.

"The CEO escorted me and, as I was picking up my bag from his vehicle, he came up behind me, groped my breasts and forcefully removed my pants and raped me," she testified.

A colleague escorted her to St. Peter's Hospital, but she was not attended to immediately as she was first required to report the matter to the police station and have a P3 form.

Overcome with distress, she hesitated to record a police statement. She later sought medical treatment at Coptic Hospital.

See you on Friday

The woman testified that she was the sole provider for her siblings and parents, adding immense pressure to endure the trauma while balancing fears of losing her job in a tough economy.

She added that after the night incident, the CEO had left several unanswered messages on her WhatsApp, and after they went unresponded to for awhile, he called her.

In the phone conversation, he asked whether anything was going on and stated that he was worried about her.

She asserted that she informed Limoke that she was still recovering from the previous night's events.

He sought to go over the events of the previous night and she cut him

short and told him that they would proceed as if nothing had happened.

According to the lady, she gave this response since she was not in a mentally or emotionally stable position to unpack all that had happened.

"He then asked why my mind had been willing, yet my body was sending a different message," the court heard. She resumed work, albeit with much difficulty, as her mental, emotional, and psychological well-being were greatly affected.

Her work relationship with the CEO was tense and uncomfortable. She decided to seek help from counsellors at Usikimye to help her cope, gaining the courage to confront her abuser formally.

After the assault, the CEO continued his harassment through WhatsApp messages. On January 19, 2023, he sent her yet another set of work-unrelated memes.

Further, on February 3, 2023, he sent a text claiming she had left her lipstick in his vehicle, taunting her over what he called a "one-night stand" and questioning his sexual performance and why she had ghosted him.

She informed him that she had not lost any lipstick in his vehicle and that they had agreed to move on with life as if nothing had happened.

Again, on February 22, he commented unprofessionally when she reported late from hospital visits:

"kama umenimiss sema tu," sending cab fare with instructions to rest.

The woman described these interactions as beyond standard professional conduct, reflecting an environment dictated by the CEO's "sexual and arbitrary instincts."

On March 28, 2023, the woman emailed a formal complaint to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Human Resource Director (HR Director) identified in court documents as Ms Samba, who is also Limoke's wife.

Moments after sending the email, the HR Director and CEO were observed conversing outside the office before she was summoned.

She testified that the HR Director appeared anxious and infuriated, and she feared physical violence.

She was removed from the company's communication channels, WhatsApp groups, email, and Slack, and placed on compulsory paid leave for 28 days while investigations were promised.

In subsequent correspondence, she sought assurances about conflict of interest, noting the HR Director's marital relationship with the CEO.

Despite sending her documentary evidence and witness list, she later received a notification that legal representation from Munyao-Kayugira & Co. Advocates would not be allowed during the investigation, contradicting prior assurances.

On March 31 and April 12, she received a letter and emails instructing her to return to work abruptly on April 14, 2023, causing further distress.

"The letter did not give a reasonable allowance for her to reorganize and go back to work. It just plainly stated that 'we expect to see you on Friday, of April 14, at 9am,' she stated.

It further placed worry in her, given the manner in which the investigation had been conducted.

AT A GLANCE

Sept 6, 2021

■ Woman joins Pawa IT Solutions as Finance Associate.

Sept 17, 2022

■ CEO sends first inappropriate WhatsApp text ("What happens when you stop having sex").

Jan 10, 2023

■ CEO allegedly kisses claimant without consent after client meeting.

Jan 14, 2023

■ Assault at Orchid Club car park; claimant seeks medical treatment.

Feb 3, 2023

■ CEO taunts claimant with "one-night stand" WhatsApp text.

Mar 28, 2023

■ Formal complaint filed; claimant later locked out of work systems.

May 5, 2023

■ Claimant resigns, citing hostile work environment.

Sept 19, 2025

■ Justice Stella Rutto rules in claimant's favour, awarding Sh1.3m compensation

She further averred that despite the change in supervision shared in the recall to work letter, this was not assuring, given the relationship between Samba and the CEO, who were spouses.

She also discovered a LinkedIn advertisement for a replacement Finance and Operations Manager, reinforcing her belief of a deliberate plan to force her out.

Unable to withstand the company's treatment, she resigned on May 5, 2023. The tech company filed a counterclaim, alleging that she had resigned without proper notice, causing economic loss, and demanding Sh6 million in damages.

"The respondents pray for judgment against the claimant with costs, seeking Sh120,000 for resigning without notice, Sh6 million for loss and disruption of business, and Sh500,000 for legal and administrative expenses incurred during the investigations," their pleadings read.

Limoke claimed she had leveled false allegations causing "immeasurable anguish and pain," tarnishing his and the company's reputation.

The woman countered, insisting her claims were based on factual events and evidence, not falsehoods.

She argued that the recall and investigation process offered no assurance of a safe work environment, necessitating her resignation.

Gender based violence

Three colleagues testified in support of her case. One, CW2, confirmed that the CEO had inappropriately touched her thigh after a meeting, commenting on her appearance.

CW2 further testified to escorting her to St Peter's Hospital after the assault at Orchid Club and recounted the claimant's fear of reporting the incident to police for fear of losing her job.

The tech company called witnesses, including the CEO, the lead investigator, and HR Director Samba, but the court found their accounts insufficient to refute the claimant's evidence.

Justice Rutto ruled that the WhatsApp messages, explicit video, and testimony clearly demonstrated sexual harassment and workplace abuse.

The judge also noted the timing of the woman's medical visit, the CEO's incriminating messages, and the persistent harassment post-incident.

"The text messages sent by the first respondent to the claimant... constitute sexual harassment," Rutto affirmed.

In his testimony, the CEO defended his conduct by saying that, as a line manager and "a human being," he preferred to keep communications informal, fun, and laced with jokes, innuendos, and current slang.

But the judge observed that regardless of his personality or communication style, he was bound to uphold professional boundaries.

The court dismissed the CEO's claim that his "one-night stand" text was merely a joke meant to break the ice.

Justice Rutto posed: "Why would the CEO use that kind of language just to humour the claimant and break the ice if indeed there was no sexual encounter between them? Indeed, there are many words and phrases in the English language that CEO could have used if his intention was just for humour and breaking the ice, as he puts it. Certainly, using the term 'one night stand' followed by 'was it that bad' is not the appropriate language to employ in humouring and breaking the ice with a junior colleague."

According to the judge, Limoke's defence did not hold, arguing humour and banter should never extend to sharing sexually explicit material or texts with a junior colleague, stressing that such behaviour was wholly unacceptable in the workplace.

"It thus follows that the CEO was required by law to ensure that the workplace was free of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. In the same breath, the claimant was protected under the law from any form of sexual harassment and gender-based violence," Rutto stated.

The judge cited that under the Employment Act and the ILO Convention No.190, an employer is legally bound to take deliberate steps to prevent sexual harassment and to respond effectively whenever such a complaint is raised in the workplace.

She stressed that failure to act not only undermines the rights of employees but also entrenches a culture of silence and impunity.

In her judgment, Justice Rutto questioned the CEO's defence of consent, pointing to the claimant's immediate actions after the night at Orchid Club.

"In light of the actions taken by the claimant following the events of the morning of January 14, 2023, it is highly probable that the sexual encounter was not consensual. If at all the sexual encounter was consensual, why would the claimant proceed to the hospital immediately thereafter, have a post-rape care form filled out, and then undergo counseling sessions?" the judge observed.

She added: "No doubt, the actions of the CEO against the claimant depict the worst form of gender-based violence at the workplace."

The judge found that the claimant had proved her case, noting: "The court is satisfied that in this case, the claimant has proved on a balance of probabilities that the first respondent sexually assaulted her, contrary to the provisions of Section 6(1) of the Employment Act and ILO Convention No.190."

The court awarded the claimant a total compensation of Sh1.3 million, rejecting the company's counterclaims and noting that the claimant's resignation was a reasonable response to a hostile work environment.

"The claimant is awarded the sum of Sh120,000.00 being one month's salary in lieu of notice. The claimant is further awarded the sum of Sh1,200,000.00 being compensatory damages," the judge ordered.

Mombasa Raha: How Coast women keep up-country men in captivity

Men from Luo, Kisii and Luhya communities have been mentioned as the main victims of the Coastal charm.

JOACKIM BWANA

In Mombasa stories are told of men from up-country who for decades have never stepped foot back in their ancestral home after falling in love with Coastal women.

The men sold their ancestral land and settled in Mombasa with their Digo wives who they pamper with money.

Amidst all the lure for love is deeply entrenched vuuduu culture that keeps the men trapped, according to one Digo woman on social media.

Men from Luo, Kisii and Luhya communities have been mentioned as the main victims of the phrase 'Mombasa Raha, kuingia harus kutoka matanga'.

Most of the men have married women from the Mijikenda community and the only time they go back to their ancestral home is in a coffin.

According to Japhet Omwoyo, a resident of Likoni who is married to a Taita woman, most up-country men find themselves entrapped by Coastal women and end up investing all their earnings and savings on them and their in-laws only to be abandoned in old age.

Omwoyo says most of the up-country men prefer to marry Digo and Taita women for their beauty.

"It is said the Digo women are taught how to treat their husbands with humility, know how to cook and are good in bed," says Omwoyo.

He says some men have stayed at the Coast for over 20 years without going back to up-country where they abandoned their wives and children.



Women at a coastal home. [Courtesy]

"We have brother who says that every time he plans a trip home, it aborts when he reaches Mariakani. He has never gone past Mariakani," says Omwoyo.

In a recent TikTok video, a Digo woman warns Luo men against investing heavily in their in-laws while disregarding their own families back home.

The woman says that most men who were once swimming in money and working in lucrative firms like at the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) and Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) are now living a pauper's life after they were thrown out by their wives and in-laws when the money fizzled out.

She says despite Digo women being regarded as polite, patient, submissive and caring wives, it is the money that speaks.

She says some men have gone to the

“

When you come to Mombasa and cross the ferry and then we see you have money, we will do anything to please and pleasure you,”

Digo Woman

extent of selling their ancestral land just to pamper their coastal women and in-laws.

Witchcraft

"Up-country men, especially Luos, when you arrive in Mombasa, you want to experience all the pleasures you heard that Digo women can provide. I want to talk to you Luo men. When you come to Mombasa and cross the ferry and go searching for a Digo woman, when we see you have money, we will do anything to please and pleasure you," she says.

"If we see you have cash, we will remove your shoes, welcome you in, cook and wash you and even carry you on our backs," she continues.

She admits that witchcraft plays a role in keeping the men trapped.

"We collaborate with our fathers

and mothers to put paraphernalia on the men. Whenever you try to act tough, we sit with our mothers and we discuss what to do. You lose your job, become insane and go back up-country without money," says.

She also faults the men who build matrimonial homes at the fathers-in-law land and build rentals for their wives.

"Now there are these confused fellas, I wonder where they were brought up. You marry a Coastal woman and then you proceed to build her a maisonette on a land she was given by her father."

She says most of men love the way they are pampered and treated like kings by the wives and in-laws.

"Women from up-country, learn to pamper, serve and treat your husbands politely and with respect. They come over here and get stuck here forever and only return in coffins just because they love the way we treat them," she says.

According to her, the up-country women do not know how to apologise to their husbands when they wrong them.

The Digo men are also trained to treat their women like princess.

According to Binti Munyeze, an elderly Digo woman, there are many Luo men who have been abandoned by their Coastal wives after retirement.

Munyeze says that even those who invested heavily in real estate in Likoni are also mistreated in old age as the wives, children and in-laws enjoy the proceeds of the property.

"In the end, even your own children look down on you because you abandoned your ancestral land and accepted land from the father-in-law and built there and after the money depleted or you retired from KPA or KRA, you are forced to go back to Kisumu and live under the deplorable conditions or you are taken back in a coffin to Kisii, Kisumu or Luhya land," says Munyeze.

Police probe nurse over alleged rape of a student at a Bungoma hospital

Police in Bungoma have launched investigations after a nurse at Elgon View Hospital allegedly raped a teenage patient.

The patient had been admitted for treatment for malaria and leg injuries.

The victim, a student in Kabuchai Constituency, had been admitted to the facility on Friday after experiencing headache and joint pains.

Her father accused the hospital of attempting to cover up the incident.

Speaking at Bungoma Police Station on Tuesday, her father said the management interfered with crucial evidence by allowing his daughter

to shower before proper medical examination was conducted.

"My daughter was admitted at the hospital on Friday for treatment, but I was shocked that a health provider was preying on her," he said.

Her mother added that the matter was formally reported to police after being flagged by a doctor at the same facility.

Bungoma South Police Commander William Letting confirmed the case, saying the victim had reported being sexually assaulted inside the hospital ward by the nurse on duty.

"The suspect is currently being detained at

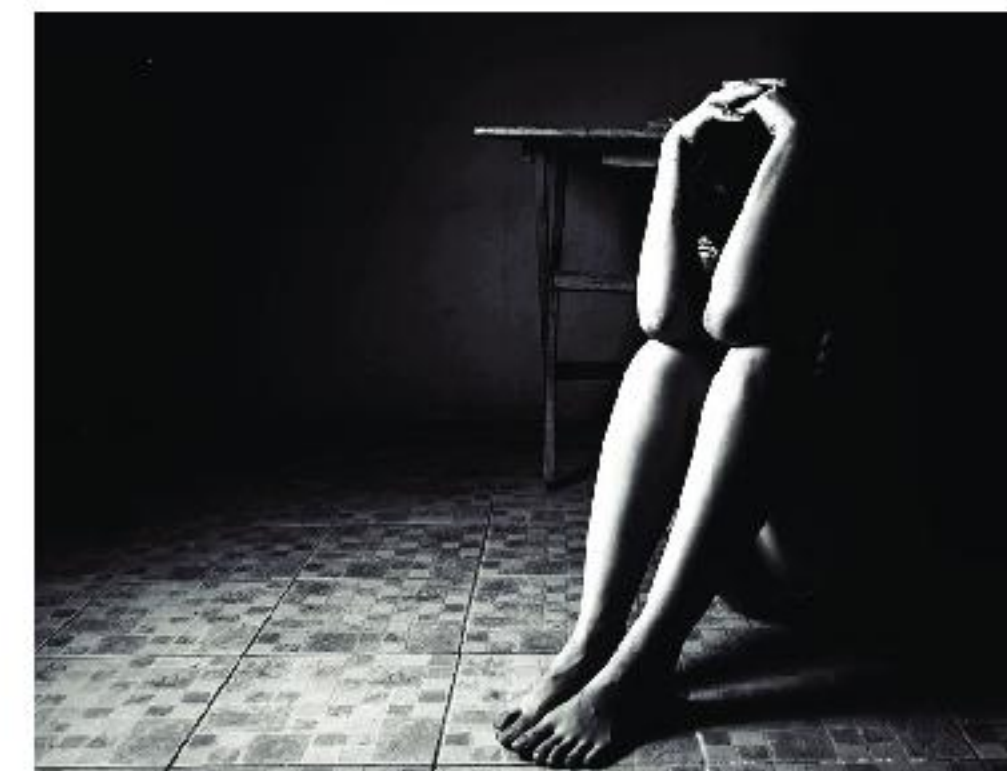
Bungoma Police Station and will be arraigned in court once investigations are complete," he said.

He expressed concern over rising cases of rape and defilement in the region, urging health providers to prioritize patient safety.

Elgon View Hospital management acknowledged the incident and said the nurse had since been dismissed and reported to his professional body. The facility also confirmed notifying police when the matter came to light.

Police said investigations were ongoing and the suspect will face charges in court.

[Juliet Omelo]



Police are investigating a nurse over claims of raping a teenage patient at Elgon View Hospital.

Dalmas Otieno: Political giant celebrated by his two wives

Dalmas leaves behind two wives, 14 children, and a legacy woven through both the corridors of power and the intimate spaces of home.

JAMES WANZALA

It was a funeral service like no other. At the requiem mass of former Cabinet minister Dalmas Otieno, grief and laughter mingled in equal measure, sorrow softened into sweet nostalgia, and truth was spoken with candour.

Standing side by side, the two women who loved him most: his wives, Patricia Atieno and Dorothy, held mourners spellbound as they painted a portrait of a man remembered as much for his irresistible charm as for his towering presence in public life.

Patricia, who had walked beside Dalmas for nearly six decades, was the first to speak. She did not stand stiffly behind the lectern. Instead, she commanded the moment, her voice steady but playful, disarming mourners with her candid recollections of what it meant to live with a man admired by many and desired by even more.

Piercing words

"I married Dalmas, a very handsome man. He gave me problems with women. No woman could pass without turning her head to look at him. But I played it cool because I am a born-again Christian. I do not have jealousy," Patricia told the congregation, sparking ripples of laughter across the packed church.

Her words, light yet piercing, made it clear that she had no intention of editing her story. She went on to recount a marriage that unfolded in ways few could imagine, revealing how she shared not just her husband but her home with his second wife, Dorothy.

"I lived with Dorothy ever since she got married to my husband, for 14 years under one roof. I gave them a room until she got her twins. And she did not move out. She still lives with me," Patricia revealed, greeted by murmurs of surprise that quickly gave way to applause.

She explained that the decision had been hers, born of love and a refusal to allow secrecy to fracture her marriage.

"So many people challenged me about it. I said, I love my husband and I respect him. I refused. I didn't want him to park his car in Rongo where Dorothy had a rented house. I told my husband, bring that woman home, we have a big house and I am going to give her a room."

In that moment, mourners glimpsed a woman who had chosen to embrace, rather than fight, her husband's choices.

Dorothy, when her turn came, matched Patricia's honesty with warmth and humour. She spoke with the frankness of a woman still captivated by the man she had met as a teenager.

"I was working with Jaramogi Foundation. I was only 19 years old when I started working. In 2007, during the coalition government's peace talks, I was talking to Kofi Annan, my friend at the time, when mzee saw me. We used to share a cup of tea with Kofi Annan. One day he asked me, 'Where do you want to go with this man?'" she recalled, her mischievous smile igniting laughter from mourners.

Best friend

The image of a youthful Dorothy sipping tea with the former UN Secretary-General, only to have her destiny redirected by Dalmas's commanding presence, delighted the congregation.

Dorothy described how he asked about her background, mentioned that he knew her father, a driver, and eventually persuaded her not to travel to Ghana, where she had planned to relocate. "That was the end of my story with the Ghanaians," she said, "and the beginning of my life with Dalmas."

She ad-



The wives of former Rongo MP Dalmas Otieno, Dorothy Otieno (standing) and Patricia Otieno (seated left) during his memorial service at Don Bosco Catholic Church on September 30, 2025 [PHOTO: Benard Orwongo]

“

That time I was very beautiful. You know, with Luos, a woman with a gap between her teeth is considered the most beautiful woman. I would wonder, who is this tall, handsome guy?



Former Rongo MP Dalmas Otieno's first wife Patricia Otieno [PHOTO: Benard Orwongo]

mitted to often wondering why Dalmas chose her, confessing that she considered her friend Lavender more suitable. "In all standards, this is the girl my husband should have married. She was very diplomatic, very refined. She was my best friend, actually. But Dalmas chose me," she said, pointing to her friend Lavender.

Naïve though she had been at the start, Dorothy said Dalmas turned her into "a dynamite." She spoke with gratitude, calling him both mentor and husband. "Thanking my late husband for the opportunity he showed me and everything he taught me," she said, her voice breaking into quiet reflection.

Duality

The church fell silent for a while as her words sank in. This was not the bitterness of the other woman who had lived in someone's shadow. This was a woman who had found her own voice through the man she loved, a woman who could look back and smile.

Patricia, too, shared tender memories, transporting mourners back

to August 1965, the year she married Dalmas. Their love story, she said, began at Rapogi secondary, where fate cast them as head prefects: he for the boys, she for the girls.

"That time I was very beautiful. You know, with Luos, a woman with a gap between her teeth is considered the most beautiful woman. When we were leading the students to church, he would allow me to go first and I would wonder, who is this tall, handsome guy?" she reminisced.

Their young love carried the trademark stubbornness of teenage romance. Dalmas, she said, was protective to the point of instructing her friends not to let her talk with other boys. "Whatever I was doing, they were to report to him. But we loved each other so well," Patricia smiled.

Such anecdotes stripped away Dalmas's titles and stature, revealing a man in love: possessive, charming, and deeply human.

Yet the requiem mass was also a reminder of the public figure he had been. Born in Kangeso village, Rongo, in 1945, Dalmas was educated at Strathmore School and Makerere University before rising to prominence in politics and business. He chaired Kenya Commercial Bank, entered Parliament in 1988 on a KANU ticket, and went on to serve in key ministries including Industrialisation, Labour and Human Resource Development, and Transport.

He made a comeback in 2007 under the Orange Democratic Movement, joining the Grand Coalition government as Minister of State for Public Service. In that role, he raised the retirement age for civil servants and pushed for efficiency and accountability, often standing for principle even when it cost him politically.

But as Patricia and Dorothy spoke, the man who emerged was not just the politician in suits. He was the husband who inspired fierce loyalty.

Dalmas leaves behind two wives, 14 children, and a legacy woven through both the corridors of power and the intimate spaces of home.



Two teenagers rescued from suspected trafficking

A businessman and two drivers arrested in an operation in Nairobi and Busia

LILIAN CHEPKOECH

Detectives from the Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit (AHTCPU) have launched investigations into a suspected human trafficking syndicate after two 14-year-old teenagers were rescued while allegedly being smuggled out of Kenya to the United States under the false promise of a better life.

In a sworn affidavit presented to the court, investigating officer Julia Busienei stated that the case falls under human trafficking offences contrary to Section 3(3) as read with Section 3(5) of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2010.

On the evening of September 20, 2025, at approximately 9pm in the Pangani area of Nairobi, members of the public raised concerns about two minors suspected to be victims of trafficking. Acting on intelligence, detectives intercepted a taxi driven by Noah Nyongesa Wandera, who was found transporting the two teenagers.

Preliminary investigations re-



vealed that the minors were allegedly en route to the United States, described by investigators as a land they believed to be "flowing with milk and honey."

According to police, the two teenagers were to be handed over to Ernest Lagat at the Shell Petrol Station in Westlands, where he was waiting to transport them to Busia. Lagat, reportedly a matatu driver, is believed to be associated with the alleged mastermind Linus Omieno Omieno, also known as Tabulei.

Detectives swiftly moved in and arrested Lagat, who was found waiting at the designated meeting point. He was detained at Pangani Police Station, while Wandera was booked at Ruaraka

Police Station. Both vehicles involved were impounded for further examination.

The rescued teenagers were placed in safe custody. Their mobile phones, along with those of the suspects, were seized and submitted for forensic analysis.

On September 22, both suspects were arraigned at Makadara Law Courts, where Officer Busienei, attached to the AHTCPU, successfully applied for ten days to continue investigations.

During interrogation, Lagat reportedly confessed to being a driver for Rift Shuttle, a vehicle owned by Tabulei. He admitted that his employer instructed him to pick up two individuals from Wandera, whose contact details

had been shared with him. He was to transport the teenagers to Nambale, in Busia County.

Four days later, detectives arrested Tabulei in Busia. His mobile phone, which contained three SIM cards registered under different names, was confiscated for further forensic analysis, particularly focusing on M-Pesa transactions conducted between July 1 and September 20, 2025.

Investigators now believe Tabulei could be part of a wider trafficking syndicate responsible for ferrying victims from Nairobi to Busia. Officer Busienei told the court that several aspects of the investigation remain incomplete. The court granted investigators 14 days to complete the inquiry.

Ugandan woman held over toddler's death in Eastleigh, accuses child's father of responsibility

A Ugandan woman suspected of killing her 18-month-old daughter before dumping the body at a garage in Nairobi has denied involvement, instead accusing the child's father of responsibility.

The suspect, Aneti Nabalago, was on Tuesday ordered by Magistrate Jane Mbatia to remain in custody for 14 days, until October 13, 2025, to allow police to complete investigations.

According to an affidavit filed by DCI officer Abdinasir Bulle of Starehe, members of the public reported the death at Eastleigh North Police Station under OB number 26/25/09/25. The report alleged that Nabalago was behind the killing of her daughter, Angel Margaret Wanjiku, whose body was discovered abandoned at a garage near the Ola petrol station along Juja Road.

The affidavit further stated that Nabalago was arrested by members of the public in Kampala Ndogo, Mathare, before being handed over to Pangani Police Station.

However, in her defence before the court, Nabalago claimed that her daughter fell ill on Monday, September 22.

She said she informed the child's father, who visited two days later.

"He took the minor to hospital and later to his mother's house at around 10:30pm. I requested to accompany him, but he refused. The next day, while at work, my neighbour called and told me that my child had been found dead near a blue house," she told the court.

Investigating officer Bulle opposed her release, arguing that she was at risk of mob justice and, being Ugandan, posed a flight risk.

"I need time to interrogate and record statements from both the suspect and witnesses, conduct a post-mortem on the deceased, and arrange a mental assessment of the suspect before forwarding the file to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions," Bulle stated.

[Lilian Chepkoech]

Man charged with assaulting wife after late night row over call from another woman

A 37-year-old man has been charged with assaulting his wife following a late-night argument triggered by a phone call from another woman.

Leonard Lubinga is accused of attacking his wife, Malweki Arlette Mbambu, on July 5 this year at their rented home in Saika Estate, Njiru Sub-County.

According to court records, Lubinga returned home at around 11pm. Shortly after, his phone rang and his wife allegedly overheard a woman on the line asking if he had arrived safely.

The complainant confronted her husband, cautioning him against entertaining suggestive calls in her presence and urging him to show respect to her and their children.

An argument broke out, during which Lubinga allegedly strangled his wife and punched her in the left eye until she lost consciousness.

The mother of five collapsed on the floor as her children cried and attempted to revive her. Lubinga, however, is said to have sat on the couch without intervening. When she regained consciousness, she reportedly asked her son to seek help from a neighbour.

Neighbours then compelled Lubinga to drive her to Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital. Doctors recommended an X-ray, but the complainant was unable to access the service as she had not registered under the Social Health Authority (SHA). She was asked to pay Sh8,000 for the procedure, but Lubinga allegedly refused.

With a swollen eye and severe headache, Mbambu was taken back home without treatment.

Lubinga was released on a cash bail of Sh20,000 pending the hearing, scheduled for March next year.

[Lilian Chepkoech]

Two women charged with drugging and robbing club patron in Nairobi's Ruai estate

Two women accused of luring a reveller at a nightclub in Ruai with the promise of a "good business deal" before drugging and robbing him were on Monday arraigned at the Makadara Law Courts.

Ann Nyambura Macharia and Joyce Nduta Gichuri were charged with robbing Edward Gikunju Wanjohi of cash and valuables worth Sh329,900 on September 10, 2025. Among the stolen items were two mobile phones, including an iPhone 16.

The prosecution told the court that the accused, with intent to steal, allegedly stupefied Wanjohi on the same day and at the same location.

According to the charge sheet, Wanjohi had been drinking with male friends at the

club until around 3am, when the two women joined their table. Introducing themselves as businesswomen, they persuaded him to discuss potential opportunities. While his friend declined to take part and left, Wanjohi remained with the women. Moments later, he reportedly lost consciousness and only woke up the following day in a lodging.

Wanjohi said he awoke feeling weak, dizzy and disoriented, with no clothes on. His phones were missing, and he later discovered Sh192,200 had been transferred from his M-Pesa account. The two women denied the charges and were released on a bond of Sh200,000 each. The case will be heard on March 17, 2026. [Lilian Chepkoech]





Winnie Bii, mother of Emmanuel Kimtai, who died following a beating by his father. Courtesy]

How bread and milk caused a child's death

The decision by Emmanuel Kimtai, a Grade Six pupil, to have a cup of milk and a few slices of bread at his uncle's home culminated in a fatal attack.

LILIAN CHEPKOECH

Even though the dust has settled, the loud silence of grief is suffocating the mother of five, now left with just memories of her son, 13, who wailed in despair, begging his father to spare his life. The decision by Emmanuel Kimtai, a Grade Six pupil, to have a cup of milk and a few slices of bread at his uncle's home ended in a fatal attack. September 12, 2025, will forever

be ingrained not just in the mind of Kimtai's mother, Winnie Bii, but also in the minds of many who were horrified by the cruel attack by his father, Hillary Bii. The Grade Six candidate, was preparing to attend prayer's day at Chebugon Primary school in Chepalungu, Bomet County, but never got a chance to. The school postponed the event in his honour. That evening, Kimtai's uncle came home with bread and since Emmanuel was hungry, he took a few slices and a cup of milk. But his uncle's wife was not amused and she reported the boy to his father. The enraged father caught up with him as he tried to flee and cruelly beat him up. Winnie helplessly watched as her husband beat the boy, who was begging her to save him. During Kimtai's funeral, the emotional mother told mourners how milk and bread cost the life of her son. "Emmanuel was beaten by his

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This family has been having disputes. He once armed himself with a knife in an threatened to stab the boy. He should be grateful we handed him to the police in good shape,”

Vincent Bore, Neighbour

father. Although I wanted to rescue him, I was scared his father would turn against me and attack me too,” she recalled. Winnie's brother, who spoke to *The Nairobiian*, said the suspect is known for frequent acts of terror at his home. Those who know the family say Winnie has endured many years of violence from her husband. **Picked a panga** With the violent picture in her mind, she stood at a distance as she helplessly watched her son being attacked by his father who could hear none of his boy's pleas to forgive him. “Daddy, you have hit my head and it is bleeding. Instead of killing me let me take my belongings and go,” the boy wailed. When his father finally let him go, the boy ran to his grandmother's home. Later that evening, the man picked a panga and left. This worried Winnie and she grabbed her two children who were sleeping and went to her mother-in-law's home where she found Kimtai sleeping on a chair. She too decided to spend the night there because she was worried that the man might turn against her at night like he had previously done. In the morning, the man went to his mother's home and asked Kimtai if he was finally at the place he longed to be. “So then what are you doing here?” he roared while looking for a cane, ready to beat the visibly ill boy. Although the boy was very ill, his grandmother did not want neighbours to know what happened. But the area senior chief had been informed that the boy had been seriously beaten and was bedridden and he sent a boda boda rider to take the boy to Ndanai Hospital. The grandmother coached the boy to say that he had been injured by a broken bottle and not reveal the truth to anyone, including the doctor. While on the way the boy complained of stomach and chest pains. The rider revealed that the grandmother constantly reminded the boy what to tell the doctor. At the hospital, the grandmother played tricks. She did not want the boy to be interrogated by the doctor. At some point she lied to the rider that the doctor had examined the boy

and instructed the boda boda man to take them back home but when the chief arrived they had to go back to the doctor. Uncertain of what the grandmother would do, the boy simply said that he had sustained injury on his left leg. What followed was a wrong diagnosis and medications. Suffering in silence, the boy was discharged. Two days later, Kimtai developed breathing complications and had difficulties eating. Foam started to come out of his mouth and he was rushed back to Ndanai Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. At the Kapkatet Hospital in Kericho, an autopsy report indicated that Emmanuel died due to lack of oxygen owing to lung congestion consistent with severe injury. Intense examinations revealed he suffered severe damages to his internal organs including liver and spleen and ruptured blood vessels causing bleeding in the brain. The head injuries, respiratory failure and damaged internal organs led to system shut down. **Stab threat** Angry neighbours demanded justice. They accused the boy's grandmother of covering up for her son. Villagers later frog-matched the man to a police station where he was booked. He was later presented before Sotik Law courts on a miscellaneous application pending completion of investigations. “The man once armed himself with a knife and threatened to stab the boy. He should be grateful we handed him to the police in good shape,” said Vincent Bore, a neighbour. According to Bore, neighbours have always intervened to make sure the children go to school. Apprehensive of what the future holds for their daughter, Winnie's family decided to take her back. The boy was buried at his mother's home in Chebunyo on September 23. The send-off ceremony was attended by hundreds of residents and leaders who condemned the killing and called on the authorities to expedite the probe and ensure justice for the boy.

Man accused of killing friend during a fight over a phone to remain in custody

Kevin Owen Otere was arrested on September 27 and booked at Pangani Police Station for the suspicion of causing the death of Ian Maina Wambui contrary to section 203 as read with section 204 of the penal code. According to investigating officer Paul Nyoro, Otere is suspected to have stolen the mobile phone of his friend Maina. “Maina had approached Otere and pleaded with him to return his mobile phone which he is suspected to have stolen from him the previous day,” the officer said. As a result, a misunderstanding ensued leading to a fight between them. Members of the public intervened and rescued Maina who had been severely beaten.

“When the suspect saw members of the public coming to rescue Maina, he ran away leaving him fighting for his life,” reads the affidavit in part. Shortly after, Maina became unconscious and was rushed to MSF Hospital for treatment but his condition deteriorated, prompting medics to refer him to Kenyatta National Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. A day after the incident, the suspect was spotted at Mlango Kubwa. Residents who knew that Maina had succumbed to his injuries attacked Otere, before he was rescued by the police who took him to MSF hospital where he was treated and discharged. When he was presented before Makadara Sen-

ior Resident Magistrate Jane Mbat, Otere had stitches on the forehead and his eyes were swollen. When he was asked by the court to explain the circumstances leading to Maina's death and his arrest, he explained that he was attacked by a mob. “Ian attacked me with two of his friends at night. When I asked him why he had set me up, he started a fight. I fought him back until we were separated by the son of the owner of the bar and others.” The suspect told the court that he left the scene of the fight when Maina was alive and he had no idea what killed him. The police were granted orders to detain the suspect for 14 days. [Lilian Chepkoech]



Unseen father: A man's silent struggle with unspoken, repeated miscarriages



OYUNGA PALA

Stories that capture the raw emotions that eulogies often hide.

The picture was strange. I couldn't make sense of it. "Are you a geographer or surveyor?" I asked. Why do you ask that? "This looks like a satellite picture of some kind of mountain range"

He stared at the picture as if seeing it for the first time. There was a pregnant pause. Something had shifted in the air. "It's an ultrasound image"

I was so off, I felt embarrassed. "It's an ultrasound image of my son, Myles"

I should have made the connection because there were no other pictures with children. Just a framed picture of the couple. "How old is Myles now?"

That silent pause returned and his look became forlorn. "Let's just say, Myles would have been six this year?"

"I am so sorry," I said.

"It's okay. You would not have known"

As a coach, I knew to hold my tongue. Don't minimise the loss. Don't offer a motivational word of encouragement. Don't change the topic. Don't fall back on platitudes about "God's will" or "God's plan."

Just sit in discomfort with them. Don't move. Stay still, we just sat there, on his dining table in the small apartment staring at the pictures.

He was silent for a long time and I resisted all temptation to fill that silence with words of comfort.

Finally he spoke, his eyes a bit glassy and he was smacking his lips, suppressing the rising emotion.

"You're the first who didn't feel a need to say anything," he said.

"It's the least I could do," I replied.

"I wish more people understood this," he said, staring at the ceiling as he tried to regain his composure.

"Understood what?"



Behind every miscarriage is a father too, grieving silently, and carrying pain society rarely acknowledges. [Courtesy]

He shook his head slowly and we returned to silence. Tears emerged. He wiped them away, then looked up at me, allowing me to see them. I saw a deep shame and surrender written in that gaze. "Just listening. It is easier to talk about it now. It hasn't for a long time," he shared.

He was a 32-year-old man and he had buried three children. Somehow the first three were bearable because he had held them, seen them, named them. Myles died at four months old. The twins came two years after. They were named Myles, (the 2nd) and Michael. Myles died in the first month and Michael two months later. He thought he had gotten stronger, but the unborn and unnamed one nearly broke him.

Indescribable pain

He had no name and he started growing out of the womb at five months. They called it an ectopic pregnancy. His partner's life was in danger and she had to go into surgery. He was facing that horror again.

The pain. Indescribable. He felt helpless and powerless as he watched his partner go through this recurring experience of loss. He could do nothing to relieve the pain. This wasn't a problem that could be fixed. It rendered him silent for a year. Not more than five people knew what he had gone through. Not even his own siblings.

The other children were buried in a muslim cemetery in Nairobi. He knew where they rested. He had a place to remind him that he was still a father. I once had children too.

But this unborn one. Still difficult to talk about. "Six years man, I have

been trying to be a father for six years and nothing to show," he chuckled at the thought and I chuckled alongside when he voiced the irony.

"I see jamaas playing around, with baby mamas. They have children that they don't want. Can't even pay school fees. I don't play those games"

They were not officially married — a 'come-we-stay' arrangement that had grown complicated. A Christian man and his Muslim girlfriend, keeping their relationship secret from their families. When Aleena got pregnant, the scandal erupted. Barely a month after conception, tragedy struck.

Sabotaged relationship

Her family scorned him, called him a failure, and tried to send her abroad, away from his influence. She came from wealth; he had known hardship since his parents' death. His family, scattered and grieving, wouldn't understand. When the twins died, the second from a chest infection, he was helpless. He let Aleena's family bury them the Muslim way.

He was willing to convert, for love, for dignity. But neither pushed reli-

gion; it wasn't a dealbreaker. He didn't tell his family much, fearing judgement. After the third pregnancy loss, the pain returned. Her family paid the hospital bills again. He remained the tolerated outsider, not respected, just present because Aleena wouldn't give up on him.

They had prayed. Hoped. Believed. Third time's the charm, they thought. They would break the curse. "We too could be parents." Then it happened again. It crushed him completely.

"Do you stop being a parent when your children die?" I posed.

He didn't answer and instead started talking about his stages.

Crying. Blaming. Conspiracy. Anger. Lost Helplessness. Surrender. Now he was talking. It was a good sign.

"We talked about it with Aleena. Talking helps us heal in some way because who is there to blame, but yourself? You have to accept it. There is nothing like getting used to it. It is easiest to stay there. But the best way is to walk through it. Think of it like walking through a dark tunnel. You just have to keep walking until you see the light. I am at that stage where I see it, still far, but at least I know I am walking in the right direction"

"Wueh, you have passed through a lot," I said.

He just nodded and continued "Imagine, you want to share or at least confide in someone else, but they can't really feel it. They may feel sorry, but they can't relate. In fact they become very uncomfortable. Most people ran quickly from these topics. You get a quick "pole sana". We are here to support you. They ask for the M-Pesa account for their contribution and tell you to be strong, God is in control.

Then they are gone. Quiet"

He had a lot to get off his chest.

"You know people talk. Your woman is always pregnant, but we never see any children. Maybe the man was the problem. There is a question mark after your name. The family insinuates. We are tired of our daughter shedding blood. Imagine that. Even cheap drug addicts, who sleep in tunnels, can have children. What is wrong with me?"

I wondered how many unseen fathers were struggling to find anyone who could validate their specific loss. Losing a pregnancy, or a miscarriage, is a common and difficult experience. While the physical toll is on the carrying parent, the emotional and psychological impact is also profoundly significant for men.

We emerge from broken societies and shattered in many parts. Grief was a collective experience that was recognised as a complex and non-linear journey supported by the extended family and the wider community. No one was left to navigate alone. Where there were once sacred rituals and ceremonies, now there exist only superficial condolences and pomp. Once upon a time, a baby was conceived and instantly became a living being that we could count them among our dead and integrate them into the ancestral lineage facilitating their spiritual transition. That spiritual connection to the unborn child from conception was lost. Now we just talk in whispers about discarded fetuses with no names.

This is just an illustration of the experiences of men after a pregnancy loss. They are unseen in healthcare and societal narratives. There are many resources for women's physical and mental health after a miscarriage, but fewer for men. This can make men feel unrecognised and alone in their grief.

"There has to be a lesson in it?" I prodded.

"Yes, as we count the years, talk about them more, imagine what scenarios would have been. Keep them in our memory. We talk about them with a smile on our faces."

"These tragedies have brought us closer. Only the two of us can truly understand. There's no one else. The strength between us pushes us forward. I feel very safe expressing my vulnerability with my wife."

It was the first time he called Aleena, his wife during the entire conversation. "We haven't given up"

P.S. This reflection on grief and unseen fathers is part of a series of insights drawn from my book, Strength and Sorrow, where I delve deeper into these universal experiences and the pathways to finding healing amidst loss



There are many resources for women's physical and mental health after a miscarriage, but fewer for men.

Arthur Obel: The scientist who loved women as fiercely as he did his ideas

Professor Obel lived as he died, shrouded in contradiction. A brilliant mind who pursued bold ideas.

MIKE KIHAKI

Kenya has lost one of its most polarising scientists, Professor Arthur Obel. At 76, the man who once commanded headlines as a national hero for allegedly finding a cure for HIV/AIDS, died after a prolonged illness, leaving behind a legacy riddled with controversy, scientific disputes, flamboyance, and court battles.

To many, he was a daring researcher who sought to localize solutions during a desperate health crisis. To others, he was an opportunist who capitalized on the desperation of patients to build fame, wealth, and influence.

In the 1980s, as the HIV/AIDS pandemic ravaged Kenya, Obel joined the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) as Chief Research Officer.

It was at Kemri that Obel first rose to prominence. Alongside Dr Davy Koech, then Kemri Director, Obel introduced Kemron, a supposed wonder drug derived from interferon. The drug was marketed in 1990 as the breakthrough cure for AIDS.

Kemron was sold at Sh74 a tablet, meant to be taken daily for six months. Demand skyrocketed. Patients reported short-term improvements such as weight gain and reduced symptoms, further fueling the frenzy.

Trials in Uganda, the United States, and Europe revealed that Kemron had no proven effect on the HIV virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) dismissed it as an experimental drug. By 1991, Obel resigned from Kemri under heavy criticism, accused of misleading patients.



Prof Arthur Obel. [Photo: File]

"The truth got lost in between; it became lies, it became fake," Dr Koech later lamented. Obel, however, remained unrepentant, insisting Kemron alleviated suffering even if it wasn't a full cure.

Undeterred by the Kemron fiasco, Obel announced a new drug in the early 1990s: Pearl Omega. He described it as a protease inhibitor capable of reversing HIV-positive status.

The Kenyan government, desperate for solutions, initially supported him. Assistant Health Minister Basil Criticos even tabled Pearl Omega in Parliament in April 1993.

Pearl Omega was sold for Sh30,000 a bottle at the time. Obel claimed seven AIDS patients had regained health after using it. Patients thronged his clinic, desperate for the miracle.

But again, trials revealed no scientific evidence. WHO declared Pearl Omega "herbal" and below interna-

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Which man does not love women? Tell me, which man can say he does not love women"

Arthur Obel, scientist

tional standards. Health Minister Joshua Angatia dismissed it as an illegitimate concoction.

The Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council eventually deregistered him, barring him from practice. He was also sued by patients and the Kenya AIDS Society in 1998 for distributing the drug without approval. Though he won in court, his reputation as a scientist became irreparably tainted.

"Obel was a dreamer who wanted to be Africa's Louis Pasteur. Unfortunately, he cut corners," said Prof James Kariuki, a virologist at Kemri.

Beyond the lab, Obel lived a flamboyant lifestyle that drew public attention. He owned 21 high-end cars, including Mercedes Benzes, BMWs, and Peugeots.

A notorious lover of women, he brushed off accusations of womanis-

ing with bravado: "Which man does not love women? Tell me, which man can say he does not love women?" he once retorted in an interview.

His lifestyle sometimes landed him in trouble. In 2004, he was accused of shooting at a matatu driver on Tom Mboya Street after being blocked in traffic.

Police found a pistol and 19 bullets in his home. Obel escaped jail after paying a fine of Sh400,000 and damages of Sh100,000.

Critics pointed to his proximity to power. As Chief Scientist in the Office of the President between 1995 and 1999, he had access to State funds and was a close ally of Philip Mbithi, the then Chief Secretary. Observers claimed these connections shielded him from full accountability.

Obel's controversies extended beyond HIV drugs. He often self-published books with bold titles such as "Curbing the HIV/AIDS Menace Effectively", "Power and Intrigue", and "Kenya's Industrialization Strategy".

In 2011, long after being disgraced, he published a paper linking WHO clinical staging with CD4 counts in HIV-positive patients at Kenyatta National Hospital. Critics dismissed it as an attempt to regain credibility.

Still, he never lost his knack for dramatic claims. In 2019, he was said to be selling a new drug called Iconaire, which he claimed boosted CD4 counts in HIV patients. At Sh30,000 per dose, Iconaire stirred fears of another Pearl Omega-like saga. Obel insisted it was not a cure but merely a supportive therapy.

Public opinion on Obel remained split. Many patients who had briefly regained strength after taking his drugs defended him. Others accused him of preying on desperation.

Professor Arthur Obel lived as he died, shrouded in contradiction. A brilliant mind who pursued bold ideas, but one whose methods, lifestyle, and defiance cast long shadows on his achievements.

Rape victim recounts ordeal in the hands of carpenter who attacked her on her way from hospital

In the unforgiving rough terrain of life, a 19 year old girl endured it all that fateful night of June 19, 2024. She became a victim of rape and robbery moments after leaving hospital.

Before the incident, Y. W. had taken one of her friends to the hospital within Nairobi CBD. Unfortunately, the queue was long and they had to brave the chilling night while keeping an eye on her sick friend.

At around 4am, the friend was seen and checked by the doctor, treated and discharged. They boarded a vehicle headed to Makongeni

area on Jogoo road.

After alighting, the three girls proceeded to their residential area in Ojimbo. But a few metres after Makongeni Police Station, a hooded and face masked man, now identified as Gregory Wasike Simiyu, a carpenter and a father of two, emerged.

He quickly walked towards the girls and the victim urged her friends to walk faster since an unknown man was after them. The accused person caught up with her from behind. One of the girls advised her to give him the phone so that

she can be set free but the accused, whose mission seemed different, did not relent.

The trial court heard that the suspect ordered the victim to tell her friends, who were then screaming for help to stop, or else he does the unthinkable. This time, placing a knife against her neck as he directed her to move.

In her emotional testimony, the victim informed the court that the accused dragged her in the night to a bush within Makongeni estate where he forced her to kneel down and undress her skirt before forcing his way with her.

The teen revealed that she had to lie to him that she had HIV/AIDS so that she can be spared but the accused instead chose to use protection.

Following her release, she was stranded not knowing where to head. She spotted a man in a reflector jacket and ran to him with a request to help him get to the police station. On their way, they met her friends who were looking for her.

The victim's testimony was well corroborated by her friends evidential circumstances. The case continues with the doctor's testimony pending. [Lillian Chepkoech]

DEFENDER

THE NAIROBIAN
By James Mwangi

Vacanzah Ltd refuses to deliver after taking Sh95K



Samuel Mbai, a Nairobi-based entrepreneur in the meat industry, is seeking justice after Vacanzah Limited failed to deliver services despite receiving full payment.

In May this year, Mbai entered into a contract with Vacanzah Ltd.

The company is run by one Steve Omollo who claims to offer marketing services and secure business orders for clients.

The agreed fee was Sh95,000.

Mbai paid an initial Sh20,000 on May 2 and cleared the balance of Sh75,000 on May 17. However, things quickly took a turn.

"The contract clearly outlined the services to be provided, but once I paid in full,

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Omollo began giving excuses and failed to deliver. He breached the agreement. "He is using such contracts to defraud people..."

Samuel Mbai, complainant

Omollo began giving excuses and failed to deliver. He breached the agreement," Mbai told the Defender Desk.

"He is using such contracts to defraud people under the guise of business marketing. I want my money back," Mbai added.

After reporting the matter to Kasarani Police Station, Mbai says Omollo blocked his calls. He also claims there are other victims in similar situations.

We raised the matter with Omollo and also sought directions from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The case file on the matter is now open as we wait for action.

CASE TRACK

Father demands answers after child is taken by State

The Defender Desk has been following a case involving a seven-year-old girl who was taken from her parents at Pumwani Hospital on February 17 and placed under the care of the Children Services Department in Kamukunji.

The child's father, Simon Chege, was arrested and detained but no formal charges were ever brought against him.

Both Chege and his wife, Judy Wanjiru, say they were never given a clear explanation by hospital staff or Children Services officers on why their daughter was removed from their care.

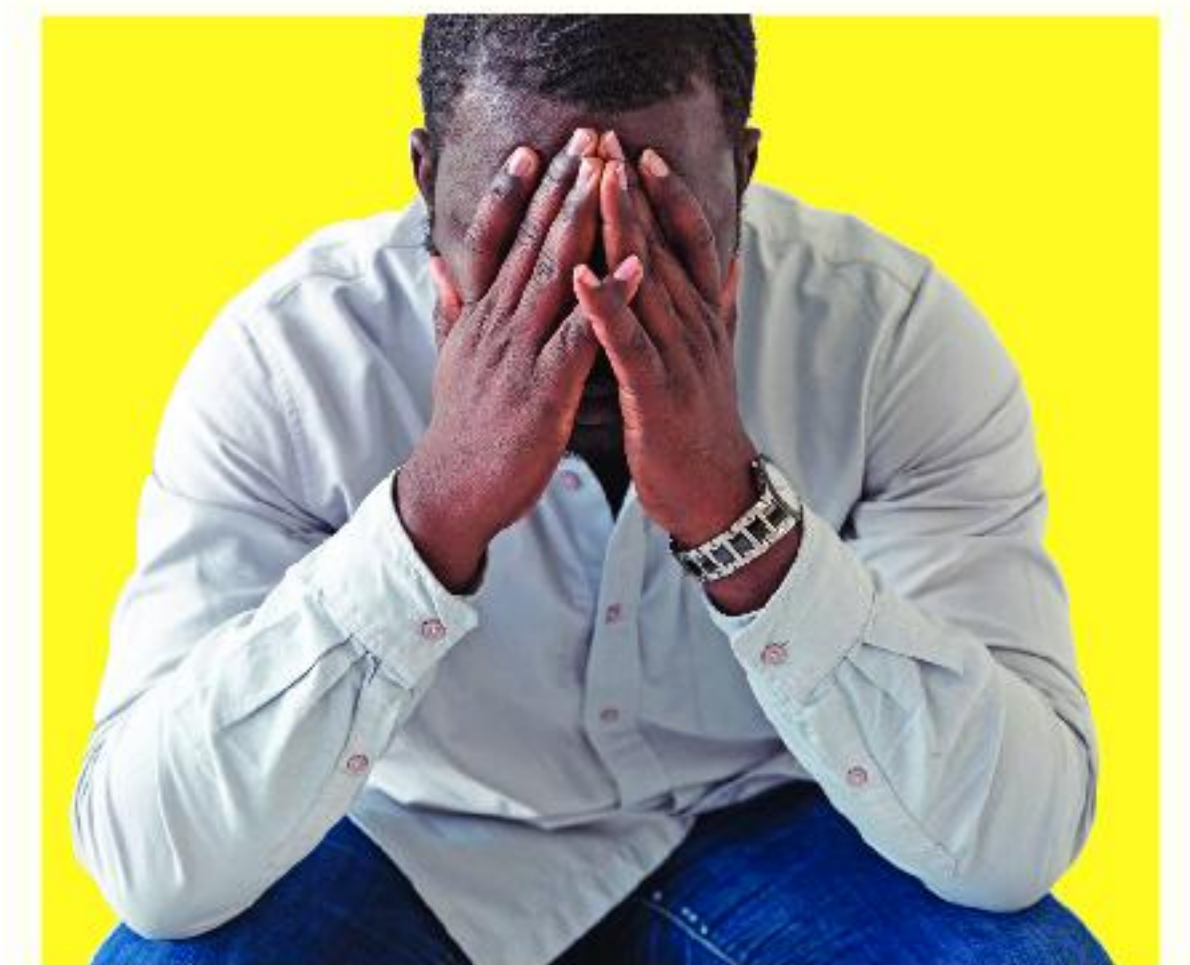
After Defender Desk highlighted the case and made follow-ups, the child was eventually released but to her aunts in Nakuru.

"We found out later that our daughter had been handed over to my sisters-in-law without our knowledge or consent. The Children Services had promised to reunite us. I have been asking questions, but no one is giving us answers. My wife is now unwell," Chege told Defender.

He is now demanding an official explanation, supported by documentation.

Defender sought the intervention of the Office of ombudsman.

As we wait for feedback the case file remains active.



CASE CLOSED

Rosky Credit Ltd refunds deduction from Oyugi's salary

Andrew Oyugi, a government employee, turned to the Defender Desk after noticing an unexpected deduction of Sh605 from his September 2025 salary by Rosky Credit Limited, a deduction he claims he never authorised.

"It goes against Kenyan labour laws that prohibit unauthorised deductions from an employee's pay."

The Defender Desk escalated the matter to Rosky Credit management.

In response, the microfinance institution maintained that Oyugi was a client and had applied for a loan, giving them consent to initiate payroll deductions.



However, they acknowledged that Oyugi later requested to cancel the loan via email.

"Unfortunately, by the time we processed the cancellation, the deduction had already gone through. We have since stopped any further deductions and issued a full refund," an officer of Rosky Credit management told The Defender.

Oyugi confirmed he received the refund. With the issue resolved, the case file on the matter is now closed.

CASE CLOSED

Kenya Power restores services at Ngong Market after outcry

Traders at Ngong Market in Kajiado County are finally breathing a sigh of relief after Kenya Power restored electricity on September 26, following yet another disconnection due to unpaid bills.

This marks the second time this year that the market was plunged into darkness after the Kajiado County government failed to clear electricity debts running into millions.

Earlier in January, The Defender Desk highlighted the issue when power was cut over a Sh3.5 million debt, despite traders dutifully paying daily cess fees.

In response to the outcry, The Defender esca-



lated the matter, prompting intervention from county leaders.

However, the problem resurfaced late last month, and once again, The Defender highlighted the traders' plight.

This renewed pressure resulted in the reconnection of electricity on September 26.

"At least now traders and customers at the market can smile again after power was restored," said Henry Kinuthia, speaking on behalf of the traders. The case file is now closed.

Briefly tell us about your career journey and passion

I am a geoscientist whose professional journey has been deeply tied to the pursuit of sustainable energy. I began with a Bachelor of Science in Geology from the University of Nairobi in 2009. A few years later, in 2012, I attended the Geothermal Training Programme (GTP), an experience that ignited my interest in geothermal energy. Throughout my academic stages, my passion has remained constant—advancing clean energy, building climate resilience, and contributing to sustainable development both in Africa and globally. I strongly believe that energy transitions, when designed inclusively, hold the power not only to protect the planet but also to uplift communities.

Why should ordinary citizens, beyond policymakers and scientists, take climate change as a personal issue rather than a distant global debate?

Climate change drives the extreme weather conditions we are witnessing worldwide. These directly affect livelihoods, food scarcity, rising costs, prolonged droughts, floods that destroy homes, and deaths from heat waves. The poorest are hardest hit, but no one is spared.

At the Addis Ababa Climate Summit, African leaders emphasised investment over aid. From your perspective, how realistic is this shift in ensuring the continent meets its climate goals?

The shift is not only realistic but necessary. With financing, transparency, and political commitment, Africa can leverage its vast renewable energy resources, critical minerals, and youthful labour force to drive industrialisation. Programmes such as the Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative (AGII) and Africa Climate Innovation Compact (ACIC) provide a solid starting point, if backed by executable plans.

Many people view climate change as abstract compared to pressing daily struggles like food, jobs, or housing. How do you explain its direct connection to these everyday concerns?

Climate change directly worsens these struggles. Floods wipe out homes, displace

Dr Musonye Xavier: Why Africa must take lead in climate action

Among the voices shaping Africa's sustainable future is Dr Musonye Xavier, a geoscientist and expert in energy systems. In this interview with Juliel Omelo, Dr. Musonye highlights the opportunities for green industrialisation and the vital role of young people in steering the continent toward global leadership.

families, and spread diseases. Droughts ruin harvests, triggering food shortages, famine, and conflict over scarce resources. Wildfires destroy farmland and infrastructure, costing jobs. Heat waves threaten health and lives. These impacts are immediate, not theoretical.

The Paris Agreement and Nairobi Declaration set ambitious targets. Why is it critical for African countries not only to sign these agreements but to actually keep them?

Because credibility and survival depend on it. Africa contributes just five per cent of historical emissions yet bears severe consequences. Developed nations must provide resources, but African countries must also show commitment through concrete adaptation measures, transparent progress reporting, and allocating resources. Signing alone is meaningless without follow-through.

Sustainable energy is seen as the backbone of climate action. What practical steps

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Self-reliance is key, through African-led initiatives like carbon markets, regional green bonds, and mobilising domestic resources.

Dr Musonye Xavier, Geoscientist

should African governments and communities prioritise?

Governments must expand energy access beyond household connections, create investor-friendly policies, modernise grids, and encourage cross-border energy development. Communities should embrace energy-saving habits, support local solar and cooperative projects, and adopt affordable clean technologies like efficient stoves and electric mobility, backed by innovative financing.

President Ruto has accused Western nations of breaking a 'climate blood pact' by failing to deliver financing. How can Africa balance holding the West accountable while driving its own solutions?

Africa must keep pressing historical polluters to honour their pledges, using its mineral and resource

wealth as leverage. At the same time, self-reliance is key, through African-led initiatives like carbon markets, regional green bonds, and mobilising domestic resources. Accountability and independence must move in tandem.

Industrialisation is vital for Africa's growth. How can the continent industrialise without repeating the environmental mistakes of the developed world?

By leapfrogging straight into renewable-powered industries, adopting circular economy practices, and embedding environmental standards early. Africa can harness hydropower, geothermal, solar, and wind to fuel its growth sustainably. Unlike past models, Africa has the chance to industrialise cleanly, but this requires significant global support.

With scepticism and misinformation rife, how can people better understand the urgency and benefits of climate action?

Through relatable storytelling, not technical jargon. Show how climate action cuts electricity bills, creates jobs, and improves health. Trusted community leaders, schools, and media must be empowered to spread accurate information and dismantle myths.

The Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative sounds promising. What markers of success should citizens watch for?

Look for real outcomes - green industries creating jobs, value-added processing of Africa's resources, affordable clean energy reaching homes, local innovation in climate technologies, and visibly reduced pollution in cities. Progress must be tangible in people's lives.

Finally, what role do you see for young Africans in ensuring the continent leads on climate and clean energy?

They are the innovators, advocates, and storytellers of this transition. Young Africans can hold leaders accountable, launch clean energy startups, and shift the global narrative of Africa from victimhood to leadership. With supportive policies, their creativity and digital fluency can steer Africa into a sustainable and globally influential future.



Highways of death: Why Kenya's roads

Kenya's roads are soaked in blood, not just from crashes, but from corruption.

Poor design, fake licences, and bribery are fuelling a preventable crisis. It's time for accountability, not condolences.

PKEMOI NG'ENOI.

On September 28, what should have been a simple family visit to a sick relative in Solai, Nakuru County, turned into a national tragedy.

Fourteen members of one family died instantly when their matatu collided head-on with a lorry along the Nairobi-Nakuru highway. Two more later succumbed to injuries in hospital, raising the death toll to 16.

The images that circulated online were harrowing. A video clip showed the ill-fated 14-seater matatu attempting a reckless overtaking manoeuvre before crashing into the oncoming lorry at Kariandusi. Twisted metal, anguished cries, and lifeless bodies told a story that has become all too familiar in Kenya.

This tragedy follows a series of similarly horrific accidents: an ambulance crash on the same highway that killed six; a Kisumu school bus overturning that claimed more than 20 lives; and multiple collisions in Kisii, Kitengela, and Busia.

In August alone, 139 people lost their lives on Kenyan roads. This is no longer a matter of misfortune—it is a full-blown crisis.

Systemic failures

The ongoing carnage, particularly along the Nairobi-Nakuru highway, has alarmed stakeholders who continue to cite poor road designs, lack of signage, inadequately trained drivers, and widespread corruption as the root causes.

The Road Safety Association of Kenya has called on the government to suspend licences issued in recent years, claiming many were obtained without proper driver training.

The association believes this would be the first step in restoring order to the roads, where numerous drivers are believed to hold licences acquired through corrupt means.

"We want those licences cancelled and the drivers taken back to driving school, because 80 per cent of the licences issued over the past six years are bogus," said the association's national chairman, David Kiarie.

He added that road accident fatali-



ties have become too frequent, yet no meaningful action is being taken to reverse the worrying trend.

"It is time the government stopped paying lip service to road safety. We want those responsible to treat this issue seriously," Kiarie added.

To address the crisis, the association is proposing the creation of a special unit dedicated to reviewing road designs across the country. They argue that poorly designed roads are a major contributor to accidents.

Among their proposals is the appointment of an overall engineer within the Ministry of Transport to supervise all road constructions, designs, and signage installations.

According to Kiarie, although some roads are constructed by county governments, final approval should come from the Ministry's engineering department. This would ensure accountability whenever issues arise.

"It's always easy to blame motorists—and often, that's valid—but in a court of law, responsibility is shared across agencies," he stated.

Danger zones

Over the years, road safety authorities and stakeholders, including AA Kenya, have identified notorious blackspots across the country. Among the deadliest are the Nithi Bridge and the Narok-Mai Mahiu Road.

Other high-risk areas, include Ki-nungi, Salgaa, Timborao-Burnt For-



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We want those licences cancelled and the drivers taken back to driving school, because 80 per cent of the licences issued over the past six years are bogus.

David Kiarie, Road Safety Association of Kenya

est, Chepsir-Kipkelion junction, Nanyuki-Isiolo junction, Kamatira in West Pokot, Kericho-Litein and Kericho-Kaitui sections, and the Wiyumiririe area along the Nyeri-Nyahururu road.

In August 2025, National Traffic Commandant Fredrick Ochieng attributed the high number of accidents to poor road design, lack of signage in key areas, and human error.

"The increase in traffic has con-

tributed, but most cases arise from speeding, which results in driver error," said Ochieng.

He added: "In some areas, road contractors fail to install proper signage, such as speed limit signs, which are crucial for safe driving."

Despite the challenges, Ochieng said the traffic department has mapped out known hotspots and stationed officers at these locations. Speed guns are used to curb speed-

are breeding grounds for grief



The mangled wreckage of a KPC bus that was hit by a train near Morendat Farm in Naivasha on August 7, 2025, leaving nine people dead and several others injured. The driver allegedly crossed the railway line without checking for an oncoming train, leading to the tragic accident. [Photo: Antony Gitonga]

ing, and alcohol units are deployed to deal with intoxicated drivers for prosecution.

The inspection of unroadworthy vehicles, he noted, falls under the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA). Other initiatives include regular road safety sensitisation sessions for public transport operators and boda boda riders.

Corruption crisis

In addition to poor road design, corruption has long been cited as a key factor in Kenya's road carnage.

Matatu Welfare Association

(MWA) chairman Dickson Mbugua recently criticised the extent of corruption and called on Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja to take firm action against errant officers. "Whether you're driving or a passenger, you hold your breath until you arrive safely. There are too many checkpoints focused on collecting bribes, not saving lives," said Mbugua.

A veteran of the matatu industry since 1972, Mbugua said there is a deep lack of ethics on the roads, where many drivers lack basic skills, knowledge, and courtesy.

"Everyone—from road users to law enforcement—must execute their duties diligently and responsibly," he urged.

Neglected signage

Poor or missing road signage is another major concern. Mbugua questioned why there is little urgency to replace damaged or vandalised signs, which are vital for road user awareness and safety.

"When it comes to enforcement, that's where the big problem lies—corruption. It has become endemic. Everyone wants to make money,

even if it costs lives," he said.

He added that some drivers operate without valid licences or with unroadworthy vehicles after bribing their way past authorities.

"That's the elephant in the room. From my experience, that's the biggest reason we keep having these tragedies on our roads," Mbugua noted.

He also warned drivers against speeding on unfamiliar roads.

"Don't speed because you're late or just for the thrill. You must be cautious—especially when you don't know the terrain."

Authorities silent as road accidents continue unabated

As deadly road accidents continue to be linked to reckless driving and poor enforcement, Kenyans are increasingly accusing the Ministry of Transport of silence and inaction.

The Motorists Association of Kenya has raised concern over the exclusion of key stakeholders from a recent road safety conference held in Mombasa, where Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir was present. According to the association, it is unacceptable that critical voices in road safety were left out of such an important national discussion.

Simultaneously, mass mobility operators have criticised both the Transport and Interior ministries for their silence amid violent incidents involving *bodaboda* riders, including the torching of vehicles.

Speaking on behalf of the operators, Wilfred Bosire, chairman of the association, condemned the authorities for failing to publicly address the lawlessness. "We have not heard from the CSs, or National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), condemning such barbaric acts. Even the Inspector General (IG) of police, who's in charge of law enforcement, has not said what action will be taken against criminals torching vehicles," said Bosire. He added that the silence from leadership is sending the wrong message, emboldening rogue elements within the *bodaboda* sector.

"We are urging the Interior CS, the IG, and county governments to strictly regulate *bodaboda* operators to root out criminal elements hiding in the sector," he asserted. Bosire and other stakeholders insist that without strong, visible leadership and enforcement, the culture of impunity on Kenyan roads will only worsen. [Pkemai Ngenoh]

'Protection fees' or extortion? Inside the Sh41 million yearly matatu bribe racket in the capital city

Various matatu Saccos operating within Nairobi have attributed the worsening disorder on Kenyan roads to widespread corruption, allegedly facilitated by traffic police officers and county traffic marshals.

Saccos also report being compelled to pay daily and monthly fees to ensure smooth operation, amounts they say are extorted under the guise of "protection."

County traffic marshals, commonly referred to as *kanjos*, have also joined in the racket and are strategically positioned in the city demanding pay from operators.

Interviews with officials from several Saccos reveal the enormous sums of money collected from them, allegedly lining the pockets of both police officers and county marshals deployed to control traffic in the city.

A manager from one of the leading Saccos operating between the city centre and Ngong Road disclosed that the extortion scheme is deeply entrenched. The route is served by approximately 10 Saccos.

The official claimed that traffic officers along the route demand bribes ranging between Sh200 to Sh1,000. "Every matatu is expected to pay a protection fee of Sh1,000 per week. Non-compliance leads to harassment," he said.

With approximately 200 vehicles operating along the route, the weekly amount extorted totals around Sh200,000, translating to about Sh800,000 per month. When factoring in additional, often arbitrary charges, the figure rises significantly. "In total, matatus plying the Ngong Road route lose an estimated Sh41 million annu-

ally to daily bribes," he said.

The net effect, Saccos say, is a breakdown in discipline on city roads. Police officers, having received their cut, relax enforcement of traffic regulations, allowing unroadworthy vehicles and rogue drivers to operate unchecked. "That's why you'll find vehicles without valid documents or crews mistreating passengers. There's no incentive to follow the rules when enforcement is corrupt," noted another official.

"A small offence can drag on for six months, with multiple court appearances, loss of work and income. So many opt to pay a bribe and avoid the hassle. It's not the right thing to do, but in a broken system, it feels like the only viable option," explained Wilfred Bosire, a transport sector stakeholder. [Pkemai Ngenoh]



Traffic officer spotted on Ronald Ngala street in Nairobi CBD negotiating a bribe with a *bodaboda* rider found dropping off a passenger at an undesigned drop-off point. [Photo: Pkemoi Ngenoh]

Road carnage fueled by lawless impunity

Kenya is bleeding on its highways. Each dawn brings fresh statistics of mangled vehicles and shattered families. In just four days, 80 lives have been lost, numbers so chilling they should trigger a national emergency.

Yet the official response remains muted—timid statements and hollow condolences. How many more coffins must be lowered before those responsible for road safety act with urgency?

The weekend tragedy at Kikopey, where 13 lives were lost in a *matatu*-trailer crash, was only one of several recent horrors. Just hours earlier, an ambulance crash on the same Naivasha-Nakuru stretch killed six. Days before that, a Kisumu school bus overturned, claiming over 20 lives. Add the Kitengela *matatu*-lorry collision, the Kisii lorry crash, and the Kisumu-Busia bus carnage, and a grim pattern emerges: this is not a string of isolated accidents. It is a national disaster.

The usual excuses, reckless driving, speeding, fatigue, unroadworthy vehicles, no longer suffice. These are not unknowns needing audits; they are daily realities. *Matatus* overtake at blind corners as traffic officers, having pocketed bribes, look away. Trucks with bald tyres crawl past weighbridges unchecked. Passengers, voiceless and powerless, are trapped in this deadly system.

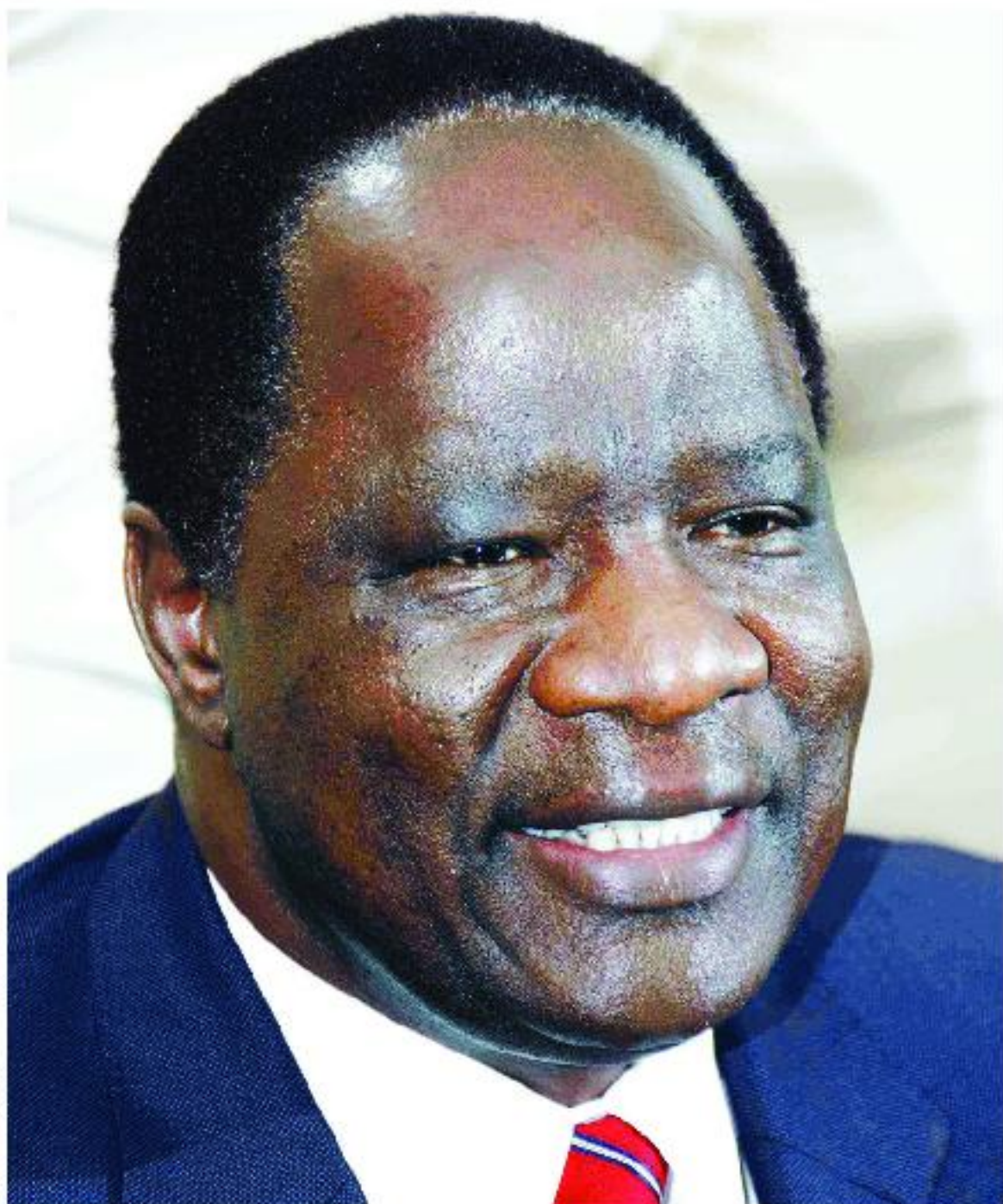
The National Police Service admits most crashes are preventable. But admissions do not save lives—enforcement does. Impunity on our roads is fuelled by corruption and indifference. Traffic laws are meaningless when violations can be settled with a bribe. Speed governors are routinely tampered with, often with the knowledge of those tasked with enforcing them.

This bloodshed is not inevitable. It can be stopped, but only through ruthless enforcement of traffic laws. Rogue drivers must lose licences. Unroadworthy vehicles must be grounded. Repeat offenders should face jail, not token fines. Complicit officers must be exposed and punished.

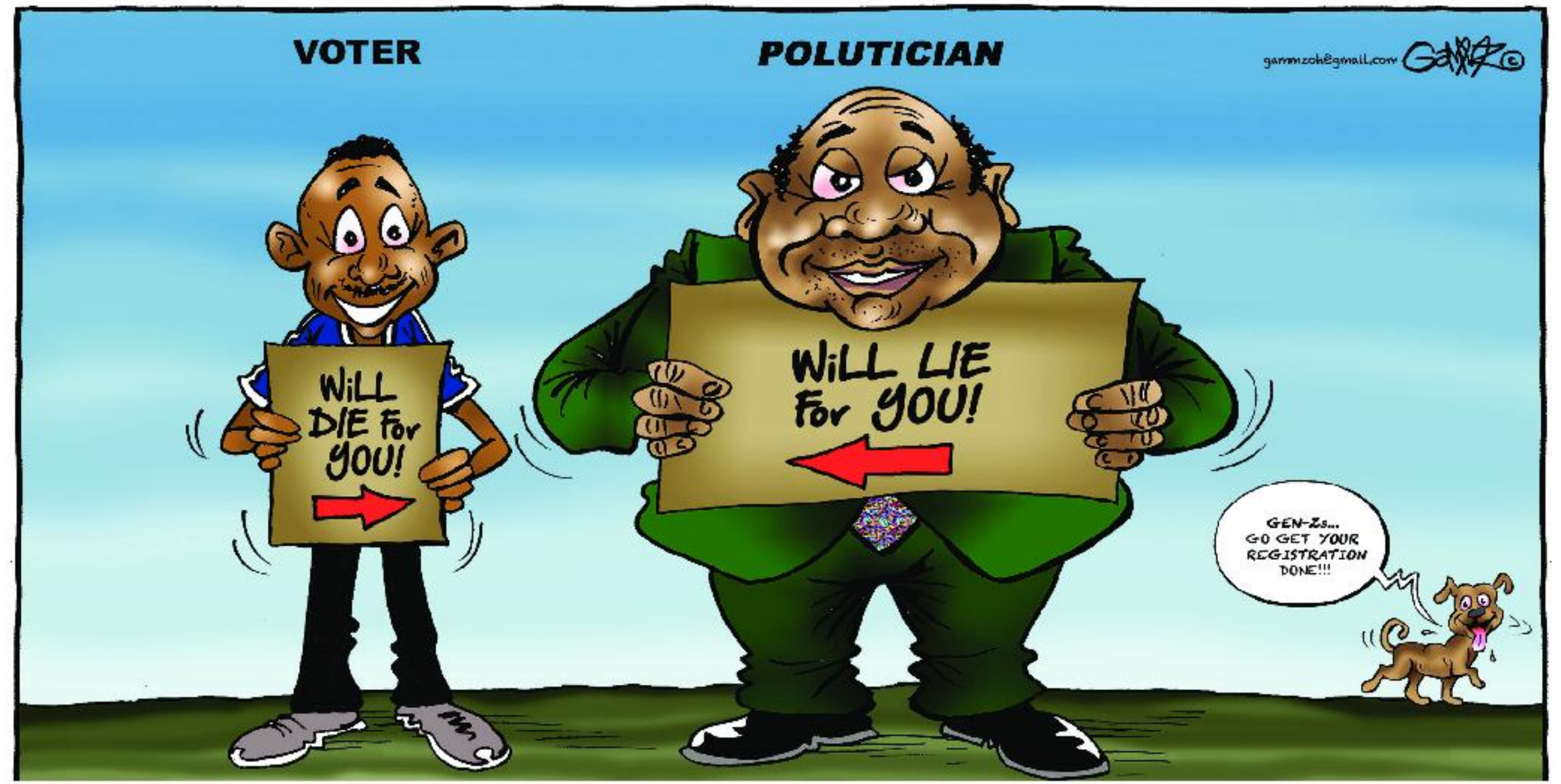
Technology can help—speed cameras, automated fines, and surveillance that removes discretion from corrupt hands.

Each avoidable death stains the national conscience. The question is: will the government act, or will we keep counting the dead while the police watch?

Picture of the Week



Former minister Dalmas Otieno. [File]



Punchline
Ojwang Collince

The village square is online now, the soul must remain

In every African village, there was a square. Not drawn on maps or fenced by walls, but etched into memory. It was where truth stood tall like the Nandi flame tree, where disputes were untangled like fishing nets, and where the heartbeat of a people found rhythm in drums, laughter, and stories.

These squares stood beneath trees older than the oldest elder. Men sat on three-legged stools, women wove baskets, children darted about, and above the hum of daily life rose the voices of elders, telling stories with the solemnity of wisdom. When night deepened and the moon hung like a silver shield, stories flowed. Proverbs floated through the air: A man who forgets his people is like a stream that forgets its source.

In that square, we learned identity, accountability, and belonging. It was where wisdom was tested and passed down. Achebe captured it well in *Things Fall Apart*: the *egwugu* met in such places, and the fate of men and clans was decided. The square was never just a location—it was the conscience of a community.

Today, that square no longer stands beneath a tree. It glows in our palms, in the blue light of screens. Now, we gather in WhatsApp groups, TikTok lives, Instagram reels, X threads. The drum that summoned us at dusk is now a notification buzz. The griot's chant has become the influencer's monologue. We scroll endlessly—alone, but connected. The square hasn't died; it has only changed its costume.

And therein lies both promise and peril. The digital square is larger than anything

our ancestors could have imagined. A girl in Turkana can share her poetry with the world, bypassing traditional gatekeepers. A boy in Kibera can build a solar gadget, post it online, and gain global support. Families scattered across continents can now laugh together in real time. The griot now has a global stage.

But if Achebe warned that "when the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk," then under this digital moon, everyone is walking—and talking. And when everyone is talking, who is listening? The old square valued silence—not as absence, but as reverence. As one proverb says: The ear that listens to elders is never pierced by misfortune. In today's square, we retweet, repost, and react before a thought fully forms. We cancel before we understand. The wisdom of silence has been swallowed by the hunger for immediacy.

And what of truth? In the old square, a liar could not hide for long—his neighbours knew his goats, his debts, his character. Today, lies travel faster than harmattan winds.

Let me tell you of an elderly friend. In his village, the square was the chief's compound. When someone stole a goat, the community gathered. The young man stood before elders, head bowed, not just to face punishment—but to be restored. The focus was not shame, but healing. Today, caught in an online scandal, a boy is dragged into the digital square—not for restoration, but for demolition. His name trends. Strangers hurl stones. Long after the scandal fades, the scars remain.

Yet, not all is lost. During the pandemic, digital squares kept communities alive. Families prayed over Zoom. Teachers taught on Google Meet. Farmers exchanged tips in

WhatsApp groups. Youth movements mobilised online, echoing

The real question is not whether the square is old or new. It's: What spirit do we carry into it? In the old square, you did not arrive empty-handed. You came with a calabash of brew, a tale, a bow. Words were measured. Stories were sacred. Today, we enter the digital square with anger, with hunger for validation, and the vanity of selfies. We forget: every post is a drumbeat. Every comment, a proverb. Every story, a thread in the communal fabric.

So we must ask: are we weaving a cloth that can warm future generations—or one that will tear at the first storm?

The elders warned: When the roots of a tree begin to decay, it spreads death to the branches. If our roots of patience, respect, and reflection do not accompany us into the digital square, then no amount of connectivity will save us from disconnection.

Perhaps, then, the task of our generation is not to choose between the old and the new—but to marry them. To let ancestral wisdom temper modern speed. To carry into cyberspace the reverence our grandmothers brought to the gathering tree.

The square has moved—from earth to ether, from fig tree to fibre optic. But the responsibility remains: to guard truth, honour community, and pass on wisdom. So, as the elders might have asked as the fire died down and children fought sleep: In this new village square, are we planting roots of wisdom—or merely scattering dry leaves to the wind?

Ojwang is an English Literature teacher at St Georges Girls, Nairobi.

Fireworks

with *Thee Anyango*

While other women in the world rest swollen feet and fight cravings at midnight, Nairobi's mothers-to-be are catching smoke, basslines, and maybe even new baby daddies

Clubbing pregnant women

Nairobi is the city where even your own shadow can be stolen. The soundtrack isn't birdsong or laughter; it is matatus honking like they are competing with pentecostal preachers on megaphones and hawkers screaming discounts that never existed. Dust sticks to your skin, exhaust fumes choke your lungs, and sewage occasionally bursts onto the streets as though to remind you of your place.

This city is not for the fainthearted. It is a daily wrestling match with chaos. Sometimes, I look at people outside Nairobi and envy them the same way you'd envy a girl with two boyfriends and a mubaba, when even a Kababa doesn't look your direction.

To all of you living beyond this madness, congratulations. I recently spent two weeks in Ukwala. Fresh air. Green trees. Monkeys for neighbours. Not a single busted sewage line spilling its guts onto the road. I came back to Nairobi already dreading it.

Walking from Railways to Ronald Ngala Street one evening, I regretted every step. Tout whistles piercing the air, boda bodas flying past like they're being chased by demons, preachers warning us about hell while we were already living in it, and hawkers adding to the choir of noise. The smell was a chemical equation, sweat plus smoke plus stress.

Nairobi was alive at 9pm, but alive in the wrong way. The only thing green around me was the envy I felt for those not here.

In Nairobi CBD, everyone is a suspect.

You cannot afford to be polite. The moment you step into town, tighten your bag, square your shoulders, and walk straight. If someone greets you, they're scouting on how to apply human faeces on you. If someone brushes your shoulder, they are fishing for your phone. Even the guy smiling at you in the matatu queue is probably planning how to make your bag disappear. Don't get too comfortable with two people behind you. They probably planning their exit strategy after robbing you. Nairobi doesn't just drain your pocket, it drains your mental health.

That is why I avoid the CBD like a plague. When I am outside Nairobi, even outside Kenya, I realise how peaceful life can be. Even my skin starts to glow. But Nairobi has its own brand of comedy. Its weather changes like a Luo man's heart, sunny at 10am, storming at 10:02am. One minute you're sweating, the next you're swimming. And when it rains, Nairobi doesn't just get puddles, it manufactures rivers. We call them "River Sakaja." Blink, and there's a new one outside Archives.

Then there's the county government. A special case of clowns who mistake leadership for a stand-up comedy routine. Only in Nairobi can a government repay its debts by dumping garbage in front of your offices. "We can't pay KPLC, but here, take rubbish." If absurdity were currency, Nairobi would be Dubai.

But if you think that's the peak of madness, step into the nightlife. Nairobi clubs are stacked shoulder-to-shoulder, each de-

termined to out-scream the other. Music blaring so loud you'd think they're trying to make contact with Mars. Inside, it's a cocktail of tired millennials, lost Gen Zs, and confused young men clutching women painted so heavily in makeup they look like they're on loan from a beauty counter.

Recently, I made the mistake of walking into Alcapone on Thika Road at 2am. And what did I see? Pregnant women. Not one. Not two. Pregnant women everywhere. Bel-lies leading the way, hips following, and babies inside probably wondering whether this was a disco rehearsal for their first birthday.

One was puffing shisha like a dragon. Another was whining her waist near the DJ booth. And I stood there thinking: am I hallucinating, or is Nairobi officially an open-air psychiatric ward?

See, there's a saying Nairobi men like to throw around misogynistic as it is: "Mpee mimba atatulia." Get her pregnant and she'll calm down. But Nairobi women have rewritten the script. Pregnant here doesn't mean slowing down. It means carrying your baby bump to the club, hitting the dance floor, and letting the child inside start their nightlife career before birth. I couldn't tell if it was vodka, juice or sparkling water they were drinking, but the confidence suggested otherwise.

While other women in the world rest swollen feet and fight cravings at midnight, Nairobi's mothers-to-be are catching smoke, basslines, and maybe even new baby daddies 2.0. Welcome to Nairobi!



The Barbershop

with *Tedd Omondi*

Bossie meets his match

Richie calls me "Bossie" only when he needs a favour. Any other time, I am just another colleague, fair game for his constant stream of cheeky banter.

It has been only a month since I took him on as an apprentice, after his very first haircut trial impressed me. In that short time, we have built such an easy rapport that you'd think we had known each other for years.

Richie's charm lies in his energy and compassion, qualities rare for a teenager still balancing schoolwork and evening shifts. Despite his short time at the barbershop, he has quickly learnt nearly every task expected of an assistant. At times, however, he fancies himself my equal, eager to take on everything single-handedly. His confidence borders on audacity, but it is precisely this boldness that makes him stand out.

His consistency is remarkable. Every evening, without fail, he shows up after school, spending at least an hour honing his

skills. As a Competency-Based Curriculum learner, he thrives on practical application, and the barbershop has become his training ground. The younger clients adore him; many prefer his easygoing manner.

For now, he sticks to plain haircuts, but the day he attempted his first fade, his pride was uncontainable.

He even suggested that I take a day off. I laughed it off, doubting whether he could handle the relentless flow of clients. "Bring it on," he dared me. Yet one afternoon I decided to test his mettle. I slipped out briefly, only to return and find him confidently persuading a hesitant walk-in client.

The client looked relieved when I intervened: "I was about to give in," he confessed. But Richie wasn't about to retreat quietly. As I finished the cut, he quipped to the customer: "I would have done it better than that. I am the one who trained him." The barber-shop erupted in laughter.

Richie is slowly taking over, in his own

unique way. He insists that clients should request their favourite songs while being shaved. He has "his" clients, whom I'm not allowed to touch, whether he's present or not. He even has a set of clippers reserved exclusively for himself, and I am forbidden to use them without permission. His latest demand? A bell at the entrance, to announce new customers just like in cafés and restaurants. Hilarious, but you can't fault his imagination.

The only person Richie fears is his strict grandmother, whom he often talks about. Just the other day, he realised he was running late after one last errand. When I told him it was 7:40pm, he shrieked, "Kwisha mimi! (I am finished!)" before dashing out of the door.

Richie also knows how to fight for his space. Sometimes, he tells me to look at him straight in the eye and promise that I won't replace him.

So yes, there is a new sheriff in town.

The VIGIL

Put up reflectors at Nyayo Stadium roundabout

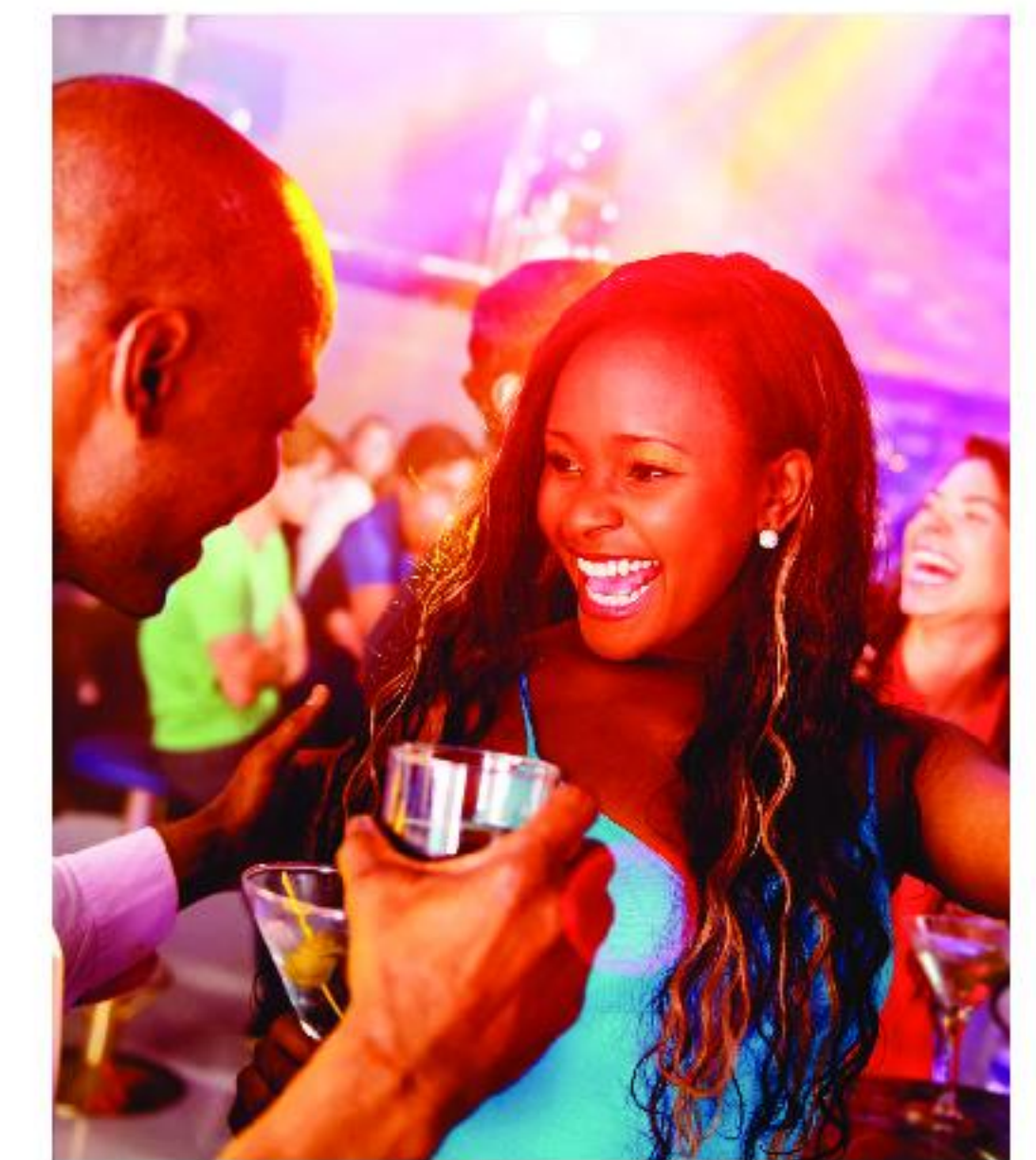
A concerned motorist in Nairobi wants Kenya National Highways Authority to put up reflectors at Nyayo stadium roundabout.

This, he says, will help reduce cases of minor road accidents where vehicles land on the trenches around the area, mostly during the evening hours.

"Nyayo House roundabout and Nyayo Stadium roundabout are death traps. Motorists unfamiliar with these sections are left counting losses and nursing injuries," the motorist shared.

Breakdowns are always present to cash on the accidents. Hardly a night passes without a number of vehicles landing in the trenches. Huge and visible reflectors must be put in place
Over to KeNHA!

This noisy club, Irish, on Ngong Road is nuisance



Alice Mutie, writing from Ngong Road, is reporting a club, within her neighbourhood has become a nuisance owing to the noisy music it plays on a daily basis.

She says this gets worse during the weekend where the club, labelled Irish, plays all day.

"Music is loud...It's so disappointing to think that this is right next to a residential building. They are so oblivious of the fact that they are disturbing the peace," Mutie shared.

She says efforts by the residents to reach NEMA and the county authorities have fallen on deaf ears as nothing has been done!

Nema, kazi kwenu.

Break-in cases on the rise in Parklands neighbourhood

A business lady in Parklands reports that cases of break-ins are on the rise in the once quiet neighbourhood.

She says the goons target high end buildings where some businesses are located and, in one of the cases, a suspect was captured on CCTV forcibly breaking into a shop before stealing some valuables.

"The youthful criminals are armed with knives and they break into premises in the wee hours. My immediate neighbour lost all the electronics when his stall was broken into by the goons. The thugs appear conversant with the area so they must be local," she wrote.

Compiled by *Pkemoi Ng'enhoh*

Write to the editor: vigil@standardmedia.co.ke
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CORPORATE IMAGE

THE NAIROBIAN

LG launches smart ARTCOOL Air Conditioner



From left: LG East Africa President Donghun Lee, LG EA Air Solutions Director Tony Yun, and Opalnet MD Rakesh Singh discuss features of the new LG ARTCOOL Air Conditioner during its launch, including energy savings, smart control, and quiet operation. [David Gichuru, Standard]

AdeleDEJAK unveils bold JASIRI



From left: Jacky Rutto, Rosemary Kimani (Miss Kimani), and the AdeleDEJAK Production Manager admire a choker from the bold JASIRI 2026 collection of chokers, earrings, and statement rings at the Kiambu Studio on September 26, 2025. [David Gichuru, Standard]

Italy honors Armani's fashion legacy



Italian Ambassador to Kenya, Roberto Natali (left), with Alykhan Fazal and his wife, Naziha Fazal, during a special commemorative event hosted by the Italian Institute of Nairobi in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy. The event, held at the Italian Residence in Muthaiga on September 24, 2025, honoured the life, legacy, and enduring global impact of the late Giorgio Armani. [David Gichuru, Standard]

Britam, Jumbo Charge partner to restore Mt. Elgon



From left: Jumbo Charge Director of Corporate Affairs Eng. Michael Malomba, Jumbo Charge Chair Charles Mulupi, Britam Foundation Director Catherine Karita and Britam Director Legal and Company Secretary Hilda Njeru after signing a partnership to restore Mt. Elgon Water Tower by planting 200,000 trees across 444 hectares. [Wilbrforce Okwiri, Standard]

SACCO performance report released



SASRA Acting CEO David Sandagi, State Department for Co-operatives Principal Secretary Patrick Kilemi and Ministry of Co-operatives and MSMEs Development CS Wycliffe Oparanya, during the release of the annual statutory report on the operations and performance of regulated SACCOs in Kenya. [Wilbrforce Okwiri, Standard]

Coding skills unlocked at CEMASTEIA



From left: Sandra Mukami, Chesire Osambo, Linet Githii, and Betty Mwende celebrate their graduation from the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) held at the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEIA). [Elvis Ogina, Standard]

Farmer's Choice shines at Concours

Farmer's Choice Executive Chef, Malachi Wanyoike (left), and his team pictured during this year's Concours d'Elegance event held at Ngong Racecourse, Nairobi. [Elvis Ogina, Standard]



Samsung unveils 100-inch AI TV



Sam Odhiambo Head of Consumer Electronics Business Kenya (left) and Rahul Kochhar, Business Head of Consumer Electronics Division at Samsung Electronics East Africa, review the newly launched 2025 Samsung NEO QLED 100-inch AI TV in Nairobi on Thursday. The cutting-edge TV sets a new benchmark in large-screen home entertainment. [Wilbrforce Okwiri, Standard]

From rot to riches: Man on a mission to reduce farm waste

Growing up in Taita Taveta, Didas Mzirai witnessed hard work but also the proceeds of that toil going to waste. After school, he went back to his roots with a vision to turn post-harvest losses into opportunities. He spoke to SILAS NYAMWEYA about his Mucho Mangoes

When Didas Mzirai looks back at his school holidays in Taita Taveta, his memories extend beyond the sunshine and rugged beauty of the hills. For him, those days were defined by the reality of working to make ends meet. He spent long hours picking mangoes under the scorching sun to raise money for school fees. What struck him most was not the labour itself, but the sight of farmers watching their fruits rot, because they failed to meet export standards.

"That experience stayed with me," recalls Mzirai, now the founder and chief executive of Mucho Mangoes. "I saw first-hand the losses farmers were making, and I knew there had to be a way to reduce waste, loss, and poverty in the mango and banana sector," he told the City Biz team.

It was a seed of an idea planted in those formative years. While many young people in rural areas dream of escaping agriculture, Mzirai leaned into it. After completing his education, he returned to his roots with a vision: to create an agribusiness that would transform post-harvest losses into opportunity.

That vision came to life through Mucho Mangoes, an enterprise that works directly with smallholder farmers. By using solar-powered drying and off-grid technology, the company helps preserve fruits that would otherwise go to waste.

Mzirai has collected accolades that reflect his determination and impact: the prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship under the Young African Leaders Initiative, SME of the Year Kenya in 2019, and recognition as a national youth leader.

One of Mucho Mangoes' most celebrated products is Makafi Flour, a gluten-free flour produced from green bananas. At first glance, the idea seems simple, but the product has become a game-changer.

"We produce Makafi from bananas sourced directly from smallholder farmers," Mzirai explains, adding "The flour is highly nutritious, rich in iron and vitamin A, and it's especially suitable for children, lactating mothers, and people with diabetes."

The process behind Makafi is as deliberate as it is careful. Only unripe bananas are selected, ensuring the starch content is preserved. These bananas are then cleaned, peeled, sliced, and dried in solar-powered dryers. Once dried, the slices are milled into



Makafi Flour made from bananas. BELOW: Mzirai purchasing raw bananas from a farmer. [Photos: Silas Nyamweya]

powder, sieved, and packaged.

Win-win

What sets Makafi apart, he adds, is not just its nutritional value but its community impact. The bananas used are often those that would never see the market: fruits rejected for export due to size, shape, or minor blemishes.

"By using these bananas, we're reducing waste and increasing farmer incomes," says Mzirai adding "It's a win-win. Farmers get value for what would have been rejected, and consumers get access to a healthier alternative to wheat or maize flour."

Makafi's reputation has spread beyond Kenya. The flour is now exported to markets in the UK, Netherlands, and Saudi Arabia, among others. Achieving this was no small feat. Mzirai credits the brand's commitment to meeting international standards—consistency, sanitation, and traceability were non-negotiables.

"Over time, we built those systems and created networks through trade shows and partnerships with importers, including diaspora markets," he explains.

Back home, the adoption has been slower but promising. Many Kenyans are still learning about banana flour.

"More Kenyans are embracing banana flour," Mzirai observes. "Our visibility in community training and the positive impact on farmers' incomes has helped build trust. Once people try it, they realize it's versatile and healthy."

“

By using these bananas, we're reducing waste and increasing farmer incomes,

Didas Mzirai, Founder Mucho Mangoes



Makafi can be used for baking, porridge, pancakes, and even as a thickener in soups and sauces.

Despite the progress, the journey is far from smooth. One of the toughest hurdles, Mzirai admits, is awareness.

"Banana flour is still a new product, so we have to invest heavily in marketing, product demonstrations, and educating consumers about its benefits." That education takes time and resources, both of which are stretched thin.

"Weather patterns affect banana yields significantly," Mzirai explains. "Expanding capacity, upgrading equipment, and securing certifications are expensive. And access to affordable financing for agribusinesses like ours is still limited."

Yet Mzirai remains undeterred. His vision extends beyond just selling flour. He wants Mucho Mangoes to contribute to building a more sustainable food system—one where waste is minimized, farmers are empowered, and consumers have access to healthier alternatives.

"For us it's about building a system that reduces waste, supports farmers, and provides nutritious food for families," he reflects.

Property Chamber with Harold Ayodo

Deadly runways: When buildings block flight paths

Scarcity of land and disregard for safety has forced 'thirsty' real estate investors in Nairobi to encroach and construct estates on airport land or flight paths. Consequently, several commercial and residential buildings on flight paths risk demolition for illegal construction.

Barbara, Nairobi

The Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) has on several occasions moved to court to stop illegal constructions around airports.

Recently, when it successfully stopped a construction of 24 houses in South C, the Authority argued the homes posed both security and safety risks at Wilson Airport.

At one time, individuals encroached on land belonging to Wilson Airport, placing it in danger of being closed by an international aviation watchdog.

As a starting point, it is important to seek consent from the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) before erecting buildings near airports. Moreover, construction approvals on the height and colour of buildings must also be sought from KCAA.

A drive around Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), Wilson Airport and Moi Airbase in Eastleigh depicts the effects of the construction boom in Nairobi.

Some of the buildings have encroached on airports even as experts and authorities warn that they are aviation hazards.

According to aviation experts, flight funnels must be visible to pilots for smooth take-off and landing.

For instance, the Moi Airbase – a gazetted protected area – is sandwiched between high-rise flats making the runway like a drive way to the residential houses.

There have also been instances over the past five years when airplanes crashed into buildings leading to deaths and destruction of property.

Flashback to August 2009 when a passenger died and three others were injured after a plane crashed in Nyayo Highrise Estate at about 3pm. The plane burst into flames moments after hitting an electric post, leaving many buildings damaged.

Five years ago, a flight instructor and a trainee pilot died after their plane crashed in Nairobi National Park moments after leaving Wilson Airport. There is also a recent incident in which four passengers died after a cargo plane headed for Mogadishu crashed into a building in Utawala, Embakasi after take-off from JKIA.

Private developers must ensure their lawyers exercise due diligence before transacting property near airports.

Conveyancers (property lawyers) should consult KCAA before transacting property that could be on controlled zones.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) may blacklist local airports over constructions on controlled zones.

According to the Civil Aviation Act, it is illegal to trespass on any airport, aerodrome or airstrip land.

Ayodo is an advocate of the High Court

LEATHER REDEFINED

Layered over a sleek black crop top, this striking black leather body harness takes center stage. Featuring bold silver hardware and a prominent heart-shaped ring that connects to delicate chains draping across the chest, it's a spicy blend of fierce and feminine.

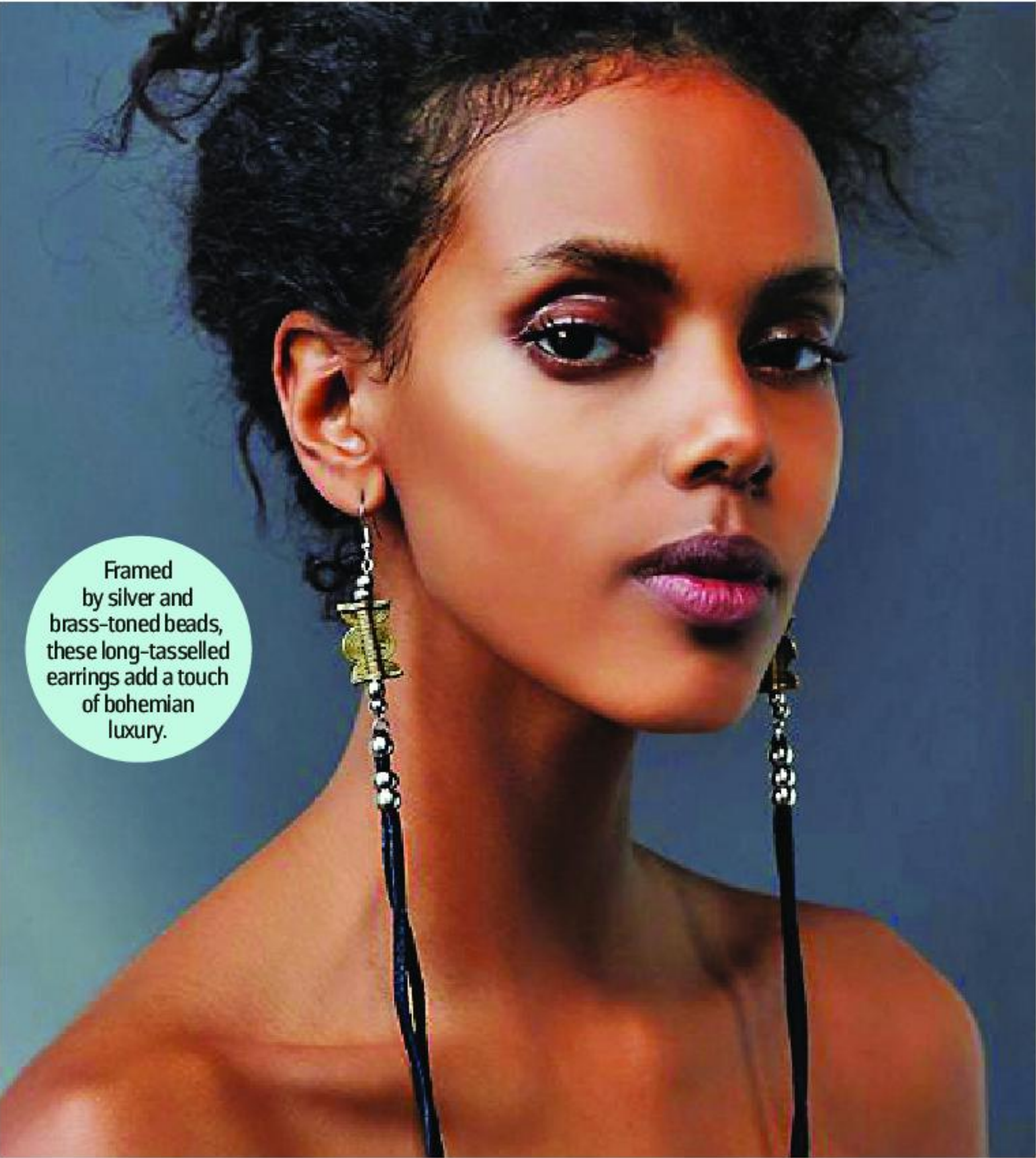
daily@standard.com

A sleek, long black skirt becomes the perfect backdrop for a complex, multi-strap leather harness belt. This just cinch the waist, it creates a layered, almost deconstructed corset effect over the hips.

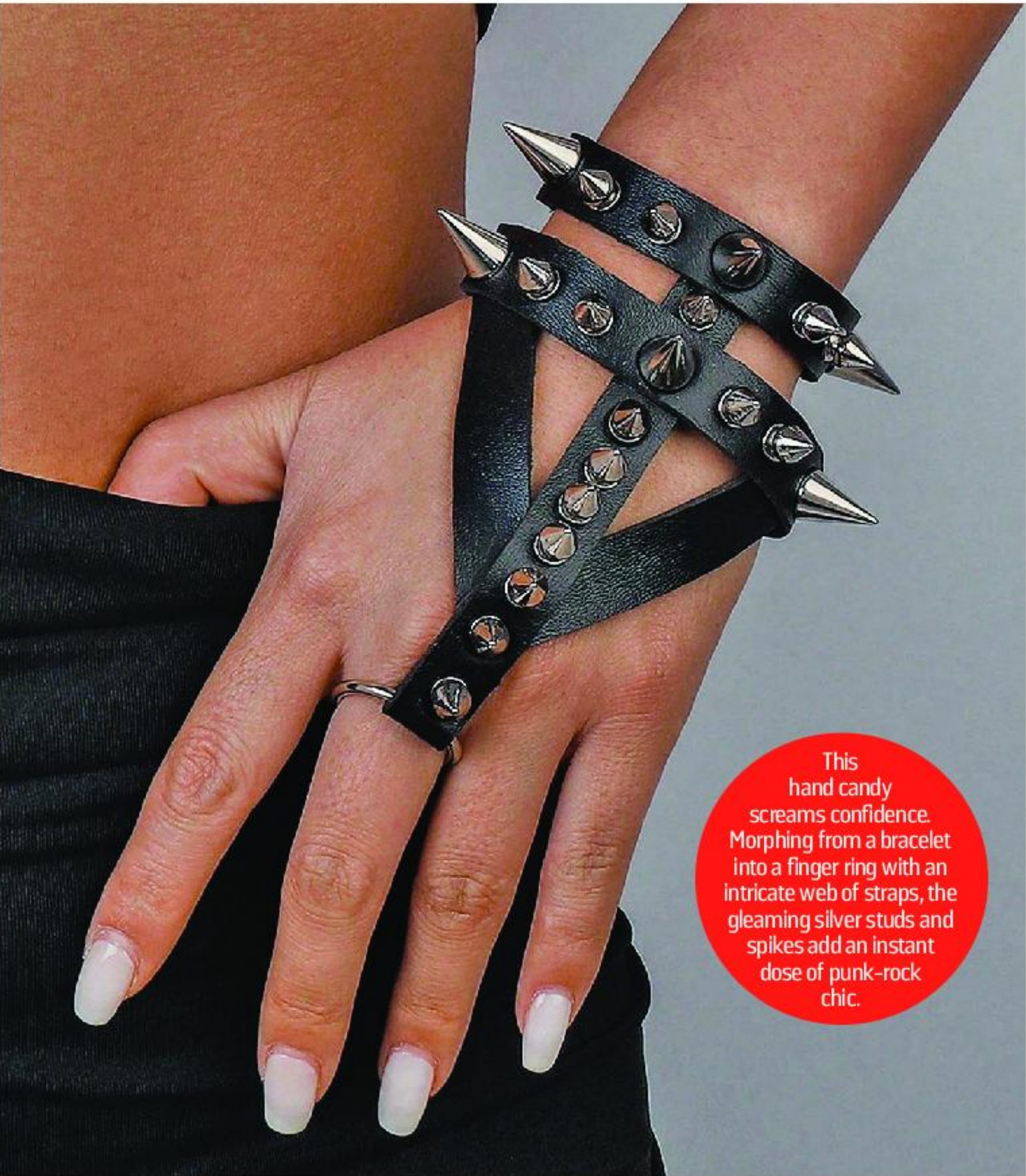
There's a certain thrill in materials that defy convention, textures that whisper rebellion and sophistication in the same breath. And one of those materials is the good old leather. Sure, your everyday leather jacket is a classic but how about moving away from the expected to the surprise element where it becomes a statement of intent and the backbone of a truly curated aesthetic?



Forget delicate footwear, these black leather thigh-high gladiator sandals are a force of nature. Strappy, buckled, and laced all the way up the leg, they create an incredibly strong and dramatic silhouette.



Framed by silver and brass-toned beads, these long-tasseled earrings add a touch of bohemian luxury.



This hand candy screams confidence. Morphing from a bracelet into a finger ring with an intricate web of straps, the gleaming silver studs and spikes add an instant dose of punk-rock chic.

Life Glam

daily@standard.com

LED WRAP

Let's be honest, we all know that frustrating feeling when diet and exercise work everywhere except for that one specific spot. You've done everything by the book but those stubborn pockets of fat just won't budge. And that meant costly, invasive procedures. That was then. Now, the game has completely changed. We're in the era of smarter contouring with devices such as the Lipo Wrap LED coming to save our day. It may sound too good to be true but this isn't a quick fix or a cosmetic gimmick but a genuine application of clinical light therapy that brings a highly targeted, non-invasive process right to the areas that need extra attention.

At the core of the Lipo Wrap LED is the use of red and near-infrared light. When these particular wavelengths penetrate the skin, they are absorbed by the mitochondria within fat cells known as adipocytes. This absorption creates a temporary, transient pore on the cell membrane, a process known as photobiomodulation. Once this pore is open, the stored triglycerides or the fatty acids and glycerol are safely released into the interstitial space. This process essentially mimics the body's natural metabolic response to intense exercise.

The success of the treatment, however, relies heavily on your body's ability to clear this released fat. The triglycerides are metabolized by the lymphatic system and subsequently utilized by the body as energy or naturally excreted. This makes lifestyle factors such as adequate hydration and immediate post-treatment physical activity, critical components of the protocol. It is essential to understand that this technology is not intended for weight loss. Rather, it is designed for circumferential reduction and the targeted contouring of specific areas such as the abdomen, thighs or arms which are often resistant to diet and exercise alone.



EDITOR'S PICK

With such drama on the lobe, this standout piece will be all you hear about. This sculptural gold ear cuff isn't a traditional earring but a piece of jewelry that wraps around the entire curve of the helix and conch. The nested hoop design graduating in sizes gives a chunky, layered look. Stunning!



BEAUTY TRICK

When your skin starts to get oily and shiny, your first instinct is to grab some powder. Don't! That will make your makeup look cakey. Instead, use blotting papers, perfect for a midday touch-up. Gently press them on the oily areas to absorb excess shine without disturbing the makeup underneath.



CAPITAL FEATURE

THE NAIROBIAN

Birth of TikTok Republic: No politicians, just phones, conviction and compassion

What began as short videos capturing Kaluma Boy's burden of caring for his ill father soon evolved into a nationwide movement.

MOLLY CHEBET

In an age when social media is often criticised for fuelling vanity, misinformation and fleeting trends, one teenager from rural Kenya has turned it into an instrument of compassion, solidarity, and hope.

Vincent Kaluma, known simply as Kaluma Boy on TikTok, never intended to become an internet sensation. At just 17 years old, he began documenting his daily struggle caring for his ill father who was left bedridden by a stroke.

With a mixture of unfiltered honesty and extraordinary resilience, Kaluma transformed his pain into a narrative that resonated far beyond his modest homestead.

What began as short, heartfelt videos capturing the burden of caregiving in a household ravaged by illness and poverty soon evolved into a nationwide movement. His posts, often accompanied by Busy Signal's reggae anthem *Alright*, did not glamorise hardship; they laid it bare.

Viewers watched as he carried his father out into the sunshine, as he recounted the soaring cost of medication, and as he clung to hope that one day, life might change. Within months, his story had spread across Kenya and beyond—culminating in an extraordinary moment when thousands of strangers descended on his small village to offer help, solidarity, and love.

This is not merely the story of a boy and his father. It is a story of a generation finding its voice through digital platforms, mobilising with breathtaking speed, and reminding a weary nation that human compassion can still eclipse politics and division.

A teenager's daily struggle

For Kaluma, life changed abruptly when his father fell critically ill. After suffering a stroke, the older man slipped into a coma that lasted three months. Though he eventually regained consciousness, he emerged a shell of his former self, heavily dependent on constant care.

"My father has been sick for a year. After falling sick, he went into a coma for three months. He is still unwell but improving. We decided to care for him at home—it's like he's in a ward, but at



home," Kaluma explained in one of his early videos.

The challenges were immense. His father needed a catheter, changed weekly. Expensive neurological medication strained the family's fragile finances. Therapy sessions were both necessary and unaffordable.

Every day, Kaluma navigated the difficult routine of feeding, cleaning, and comforting his father, while managing his own education and the family's farm duties.

Yet, instead of retreating into despair, the teenager chose to share his reality with the world. His phone became his tool, TikTok his platform, and his honesty his strongest weapon. Far from staged or embellished, his videos were simple slices of truth—his father's laboured attempts to speak, the loneliness in his gaze, and the toil of working the tea farm under a scorching sun. He smiled through the hardship, encouraging viewers with words of hope.

The reggae song he often used—*Alright*—was not accidental. Its lyrics promised a brighter tomorrow, mirroring his faith that better days would come.

It was this blend of openness and optimism that struck a chord with viewers. Within weeks, his following ballooned. Then, something remarkable happened: people began responding not just with comments and likes, but with tangible offers of support.

“

To my fellow Octogenarians. We have been preparing for an exam in Biology using a Literature Text Book. The solidarity young people are giving to Content Creator Kaluma Boy in Othaya today is symptomatic of the new Republic,

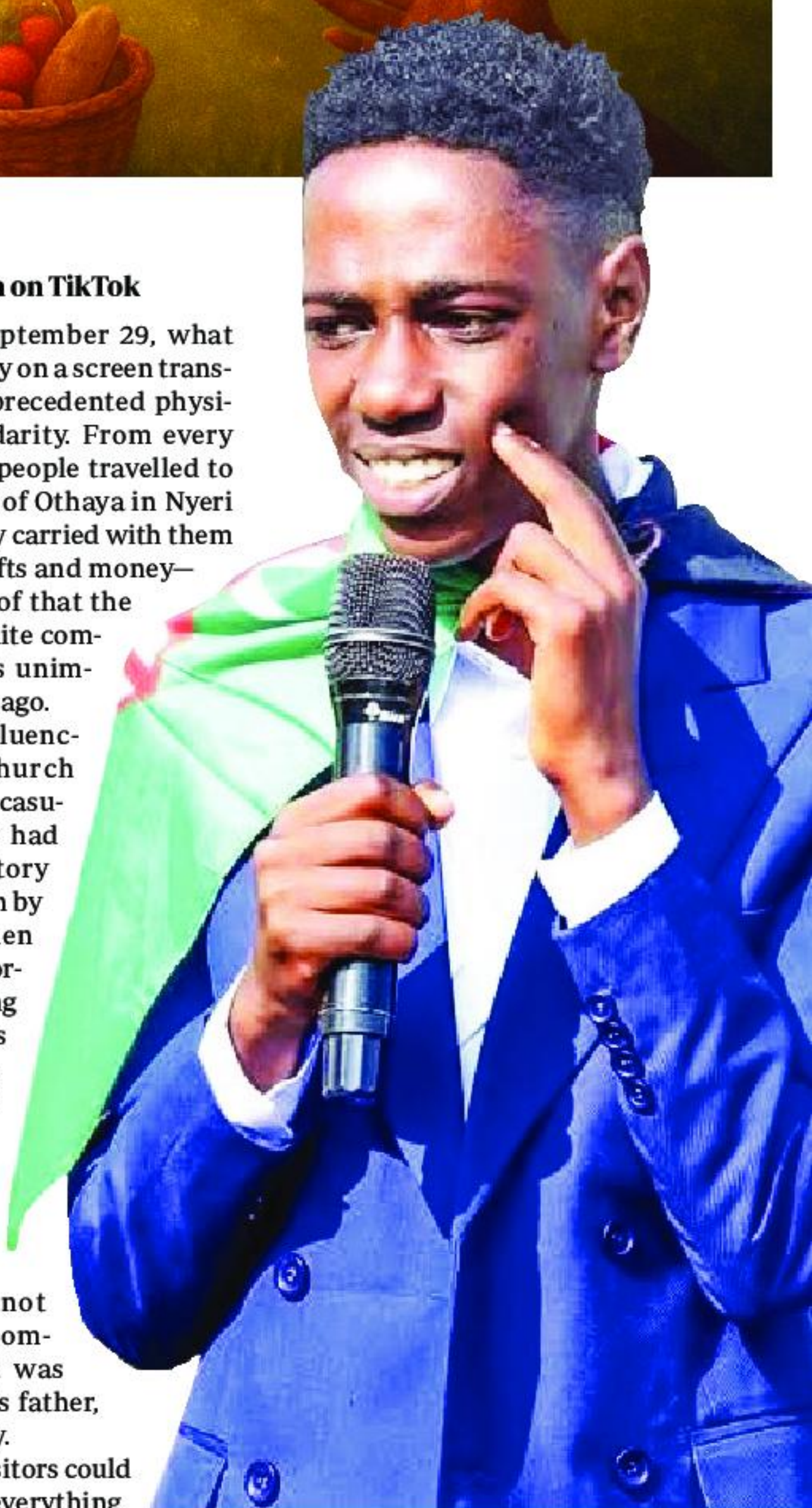
Moses Kuria, former Cabinet Secretary

A movement born on TikTok

On Sunday, September 29, what began as sympathy on a screen translated into an unprecedented physical show of solidarity. From every corner of Kenya, people travelled to the sleepy village of Othaya in Nyeri County. What they carried with them was more than gifts and money—they brought proof that the digital age can unite communities in ways unimaginable a decade ago.

TikTokers, influencers, families, church leaders and even casual observers who had seen Kaluma's story online streamed in by the hundreds, then thousands. Motorcycles roared along dirt tracks, buses ferried strangers, and private cars created convoys reminiscent of political rallies. Yet, unlike such rallies, this mobilisation was not about power, promises, or votes. It was about one boy, his father, and raw humanity.

In viral clips, visitors could be seen carrying everything





A convoy of cars heading to Kaluma Boy's home in Nyeri County. Below: Comedian Eric Omondi. [Courtesy]



from food and groceries to medicine, cash donations, and even a hospital bed. One man presented a cake emblazoned with pictures of Kaluma and his father, announcing, "Leo tunasema ni operation Othaya!"—a spirited declaration that this was a mission, not just a gathering.

The humanity went East African. Tanzanian artiste Chief Godlove weighed in on TikTok, "Tulikubaliana kwamba tunaenda kumwona Kaluma Boy. Nataka niende airport kwa hiyo shughuli. Ila sioni shamra shamra za kujiandaa kwenda kumwona. Au nije mimi mwenyewe niende nikamwone? Tunafanyaje? Utaratibu ukoje?" he asked, calling for coordination.

However, the Tanzanian star revealed that he couldn't attend the highly anticipated event because of a broken arm. He assured fans that he was planning to visit Kaluma and his family personally.

The event quickly became a phenomenon. Tents were erected as the crowds swelled, yet space remained scarce. People queued patiently to reach the family, to offer a word, a prayer, or a contribution. Clergy,

including Bishop Muthee Kieng'ei of Jesus Christ Compassion Ministries International, added their support. Kieng'ei gifted the family a special bed to ease the father's suffering and aid his recovery.

The total sum of money offered to Kaluma boy's family is unknown but for Kaluma's mother, the spectacle was overwhelming. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she declared: "Nimeona Mungu amejileta kwangu. Nawashukuru sana, watoto wangu. Mungu awabariki sana." ("I have seen God come to me directly. I thank you so much, my children. May God bless you abundantly.")

Rejecting politics, embracing unity

Perhaps the most striking feature of the mobilisation was its fierce independence from politics. Kenya, a country where community events are often hijacked by politicians seeking publicity, witnessed something rare in Othaya: a rejection of opportunism.

When a local politician attempted to address the crowd, he was swiftly interrupted. Young people in the audience jeered, insisting that he simply leave his contribution and

step down. This, they chanted, was "Kaluma's day". No speeches, no campaigning, no empty promises—only compassion.

This act of defiance spoke volumes. It highlighted the generational shift underway in Kenya, where youth increasingly resist manipulation and prefer direct action to political theatre. Their message was clear: solidarity belongs to the people, not to politicians.

The scale of the mobilisation stunned the nation. Social media was flooded with videos and photographs of the gathering, prompting admiration across the spectrum.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga wrote on X: "Congratulations to the youth and TikTok creators for the massive turnout to support Kaluma Boy in Othaya today. We wish Mzee a quick recovery. If Kenyans need confirmation that the future of this country lies in the hands of the youth, they should watch this video."

Former Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria was equally struck.

"To my fellow Octagenarians. We have been preparing for an exam in Biology using a Literature Text Book. The solidarity young people are giving to Content Creator Kaluma Boy in Othaya today is symptomatic of the new Republic. Young people of this country have moved on without us. We are like that spare wheel at the back of a Land Rover. Smell the coffee wazee wenzangu. We lost our deposit," Kuria said.

Busia Senator Okiya Omtatah hailed the "real community vibes" while condemning the government's failure to support families like Kaluma's. "Big up to Kenyans who pulled up for Kaluma in Nyeri. That's real community vibes and true Kenyans for Kenyans. But shame on the government and the Social Health Authority for abandoning families."

Kenyans online were equally effusive. "This is exactly what social media was meant to be," wrote one user. Another declared: "TikTok is no longer just a stage for dances and jokes—it is now a lifeline."

Digital mobilisation

The Kaluma Boy movement is not an isolated phenomenon. Kenya has in recent years witnessed a surge of grassroots mobilisation powered by social media, particularly TikTok and X (formerly Twitter).

In 2024, young Kenyans famously organised anti-government bill protests entirely online. Armed with mobile phones, placards, and hashtags, they filled the streets of Nairobi and other cities in numbers that stunned authorities.

Throughout, the rallies were mobilised on social media platforms such as X and TikTok, using hashtags and posts. Even after the demonstrations, young people continued to share videos online, showcasing the power of unity. They stormed Parliament, sending legislators fleeing, but this was only the beginning.

Despite facing brutal crackdowns, arrests, and even deaths, their persistence forced the government to withdraw the unpopular Finance Bill 2024.

That same spirit has extended into smaller, community-driven campaigns. Comedian and philanthropist Eric Omondi, for instance, has used his "Sisi Kwa Sisi" initiative to rally support for families in crisis.

When Joseph Mutua livestreamed the auction of his belongings in July, Omondi mobilised Kenyans to help. Mutua, who requested employment rather than handouts, became a symbol of dignity amid hardship.

On Sunday, July 13, Mutua had surprised everyone in Kenya with how calm and positive he was while agents took things from his house. Throughout the ordeal, he smiled and shared a strong message of not giving up.

"Good things are coming," he said calmly.

"Yaani ako rock bottom but tutamuinua. Jamaa hana hata food but God ni nani?" Omondi posted, capturing the gravity of Mutua's situation.

Among the seized goods was vital equipment from Mutua's swimming pool construction enterprise—a business that not only sustained him but also provided employment for several workers. When asked about the kind of assistance he required, Mutua politely declined charity, instead requesting work opportunities to rebuild his life and keep his staff gainfully employed.

The 43-year-old comedian has become a symbol of grassroots philanthropy in Kenya. In another case, Omondi raised funds to hospitalise Millicent Maina, a mother of two bedridden for years. Her story first came to light when actress Dorea Chege and her husband, DJ Dibul, visited her modest home in Githurai during a promotional event.

Millicent lay immobile. She told them that she suffered from multiple conditions, including a blood disorder, asthma, ulcers, a spinal problem and heart complications. For four long years she had been confined to her bed.

Chege and Dibul shared her story on social media, where it quickly

spread. Among those who saw it was Omondi, who moved swiftly to act. He launched an online appeal, setting up a pay bill number and calling on Kenyans to rally around the ailing woman.

The response was immediate. On July 25, Omondi personally arrived at Millicent's home with an ambulance, ensuring she was taken to hospital. Updating supporters via Facebook, he wrote: "Hey guys, thank you for your patience. We have managed to take mum to the hospital (a very big thank you to LaSante Ambulances for coming through, God bless). We have also opened a bank account for her and a Paybill as well."

Omondi also organised another harambee online, urging Kenyans to transform the family's life completely. He called for a trust fund for school fees, shamba for a home, and a biashara to secure their future.

These examples illustrate how digital platforms have moved beyond entertainment. They have become engines of mobilisation, capable of shifting narratives, funding recoveries, and even forcing political change.

A global wave

Kenya's experience is mirrored elsewhere. In Nepal, disillusioned Gen Z activists recently mobilised against corruption, unemployment, and a proposed social media ban. In September, thousands stormed Parliament, forcing the resignation of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Remarkably, following the violent demonstrations—which claimed many lives—the protesters turned to digital means to choose new leadership. They conducted a virtual poll on Discord, a US-based free messaging platform primarily used by online gamers that enables users to interact via text, voice, video, and shared media. The digital assembly was organised by Hami Nepal, a Gen Z movement that had masterminded the demonstrations and counts more than 160,000 members.

According to Al Jazeera, Hami Nepal ran an online forum called "Youth Against Corruption", where an intense debate over the nation's future leadership drew more than 10,000 participants, including members of the Nepali diaspora. When further participants were unable to access the platform due to capacity limits, an additional broadcast was set up on YouTube, allowing around 6,000 more people to follow the proceedings. In the end, Nepalis chose former Supreme Court Chief Justice Sushila Karki as Prime Minister, and the 73-year-old duly took office.

What unites these stories is the speed and scale of mobilisation enabled by digital tools. Where traditional movements once took months of planning, today a viral post can galvanise thousands overnight. And while governments remain wary of this phenomenon, its humanising potential is undeniable.

As one onlooker said simply: "If this is what the youth can do with TikTok, imagine what else they can achieve."



ASIAN Arena

with Pooja Kotedia Patel

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Cutting edge: Salima Rathod's bold approach to hairstyling and business

Salima Rathod, celebrated hairstylist and owner of Salon Balyage in Parklands, is famed for her precision, creativity, and devoted clientele. We delve into her inspirations, her approach to trends, and the dedication that fuels her craft and thriving salon business.

Tell us a little about yourself, Salima.

I'm a creative, detail-oriented hairstylist with over 15 years' experience specialising in colour services and precision cuts. I'm passionate about helping clients feel confident and beautiful, and I love building lasting relationships through excellent service. I constantly seek to improve my craft by attending workshops and learning from industry leaders, ensuring I bring the latest techniques to my clients. I believe my strong interpersonal skills, dedication to client care, and commitment to creativity make me an excellent stylist. (Smiles)

Salon Balyage has quickly gained popularity. How has the response been so far?

The response has been tremendous from day one. I owe it to my loyal clients, some of whom have been with me for years, and of course social media has been an incredible support. Thanks to them, I've doubled my clientele, and I'm deeply grateful for the faith my clients have in my work.

What challenges did you face while setting up, and how did you overcome them?

Every new venture comes with challenges—whether capital, balancing work with motherhood, or simply letting people know you exist. I man-

aged to handle any challenging situation life threw my way through a fantastic support system—specifically my husband who has been my rock.

You've emphasised the importance of continuous learning. Where do you draw inspiration from?

My biggest inspirations are Amela and Mounir, two globally acclaimed hairstylists. Watching them work sparks something within me, and I aspire to reach their level one day. A good artist never stops learning, and I make it a point to learn from both my peers and global stylists doing incredible work.

How did you choose hairstyling as a career?

Since I was a young girl, I've had a passion for fashion and beauty. I would lose myself in different styles and all the crazy hairdos. I always wanted funky hair for myself at the same time! I used to experiment on my sisters, one can say they were my first Guinea pigs and my forever models! (Smiles) That's what eventually lead me to this career as a hairstylist.

You are certified by Keune, and have trained with City & Guilds and Perri Patel. How do these qualifications benefit your clients?

Each of these individuals and institutions have shaped the kind of hairstylist I am today. I have been lucky

enough to learn and garner different skills from them, and I give these techniques my own unique twist, turning into my own little brand of hair. I am so grateful that each of these has taught me how to navigate different techniques, improve on my skills and learn new trends. Although, I

always say learning never stops, and I still continue to quest to improve on my skills and learn new things each day.

You also work

Asian brides, or people celebrating big occasions. How different is working on bridal looks and events as opposed to a regular client in your chair?

I'll be honest here; it's quite a task working under pressure and having to work on a time limit. Although these experiences and clients have helped me to learn to be patient. Doing this type of hair—it's a different experience all together. The main thing for me, as a stylist is to understand the importance of the day for whom ever lands up in my chair and make sure that I give them the very best.

Which Kenyan celebrity would you most like to style?

Pinky Ghelani. She supports and motivates a lot of women in Kenya, including me. There is so much I can learn from her whilst having the privilege to do her hair.

Being a mother, wife, and now a business owner, you have a lot on your plate. What is your mantra for balancing it all?

Great question! My biggest support is my husband in every way. He is the most amazing man, and my daughter is my joy and motivator, with the two, I am complete, and I can overcome all obstacles and challenges.

What does a day in your life look like?

To be honest it is quite hectic. But I always look forward to my day at work. I am always just raring to go and get things done. Although of course not all days are the same. I look forward to seeing my clients, chatting to them and making sure they leave Salon Balyage with a smile on their face, with not a hair out of place and feeling like they spent time with a good friend. As they say—hairdressers are part therapists! So, it lightens my days too.

Every single person in this line of work has to deal with 'fussy clients'. How do you deal with difficult clients?

The saying goes 'A client is always right.' Whether fussy or not. For me, it's very simple—my motive is to make

sure the client leaves happy and satisfied.

What are your top three hair tips for the busy woman on the go?

Your Hair is your image or your crown. I would like to emphasise on regular cuts... get your hair treatments done. Never compromise on yourself.

Most memorable work moment?

The best cherished moments are when I inspire younger generations... and when a young client finds her style through me. It touches me even more seeing my daughter enjoying the luxury of me doing her hair.

What would you pick, hair updo and style, or haircut and colour?

Haircut and colour! Hands down, it's more fun to play around with colours for me, it's such a creative process and I really enjoy watching that magic happen!

RAPID FIRE

Bollywood star who kills the hair game... Deepika Padukone

Your go-to song that always makes you feel good... Anything Arabic. I love Arabic music (Smiles)

Most underrated hair hack according to you... Regular treatments and trims (there is no replacement for this)

Most overrated fashion trend according to you... Indian outfits with trainers on brides!

You never leave home without... My tea flask

Your current set of wheels... A Nifty Toyota

Your idea of the perfect day... A bright sunny day

Your fitness regime... Daily walks

How would you describe your personal style... Simple yet elegant

Message to our readers... A good hairstyle completes any look, if you have doubts, come and find me. (Smiles)



Style icon Achieng Agutu debuts at Paris Fashion Week

Kenyan style icon and digital creator Achieng Agutu made her runway debut at the L’Oréal Paris show during Paris Fashion Week, sharing the global stage with Hollywood legends and international superstars. Agutu made the announcement sharing her moment from backstage, “My biggest prayer this year was for God to show me how good it can get. And let me tell you, he has shown me how good it can get, because I am in Paris with L’Oreal Paris backstage, getting ready to debut my walk at Paris Fashion Week.”

She walked in a show that featured an elite roster of global icons, including Hollywood legends Andie MacDowell and Viola Davis, who commanded the catwalk in bright red lipstick, and the iconic Jane Fonda in a striking golden bodysuit.



Sati Gatas-Aura’s 1947 MG TC wins Concours d’Elegance

This past weekend at Ngong Racecourse, spectator sports fans, car enthusiasts, and outdoor lovers converged for the 53rd edition of the Africa Concours d’Elegance, and it did not disappoint. Attendees witnessed the metallic green 1947 MG/TC owned by Sati Gata-Aura crowned the overall winner of the 2025 edition. The victory was especially sweet for Gata-Aura, who stood on the same podium last year after winning the 52nd edition with a 1977 Nissan 160J.

The event, which drew a record-breaking attendance of around 7,000 spectators, also featured competitors from outside Kenya, all eager to showcase their prized vehicles. As is tradition, the Uganda Bikers Association and Pearl Bikers Africa were among the star attractions. Each year, these bikers ride all the way from Kampala and back to participate in the Concours, as part of their broader campaign to promote road safety, HIV/AIDS awareness, and sports tourism.



Shiko Nguru a no-show in court as Ramzzy wins custody of two sons

In April this year, former YouTubers and influencers Ramadhan ‘Ramzzy’ Olouch and his ex-wife Faith Wanjiku, also known as Shiko Nguru, saw their custody case stall once again after the ex-wife failed to appear in court for the third time to testify. However, this time the case proceeded, with an elated Ramzzy later sharing that he had won joint custody of his two sons. Taking to his socials, he posted: “I could have been a provider with no care, presence, or emotional availability, but I chose to be a fighter for them. Today, I have been granted joint legal and physical custody by the Children’s Court.”

Teen drama series Prefects starring Azziad and Melvin Alusa bags Emmy nod

East African teen drama series *Prefects*, has been nominated for an International Emmy Award in the Kids: Live-Action category. *Prefects*, which boasts a mix of celebrated Kenyan and Ugandan talent, including influencer and actress Azziad Nasenya and acclaimed actor Melvin Alusa, is set in the fictional Mvule High School and follows a group of misfit students who unite to challenge an oppressive prefects’ union and restore fairness to their school. Since its premiere in late 2024, the series has been praised for its fresh narrative, dynamic characters, and authentic portrayal of teenage life.

“We are absolutely thrilled to share that *Prefects* has been nominated for an International Emmy Award,” said a statement from the production. “This recognition means the world to us. From our brilliant cast who brought these characters to life, to the tireless crew who poured their hearts into every scene, and to everyone behind the scenes who believed in this project from day one, this nomination is truly a testament to all your hard work and passion.”



No Kenyan film makes it to Oscars this year, Kenya Film Commission announces

This Monday, the Kenya Film Commission, through a presser, announced that there will be no Kenyan film, which will be submitted in the 98th Oscars’ International Feature Film category. The Kenya Oscar Selection Committee, under the oversight of the Kenya Film Commission, determined that none of this year’s entries met both eligibility standards.

Explaining the decision, the committee chairperson Eddah Kiruhi stated: “Our mandate is to select a film that meets the Academy’s eligibility rules while carrying the distinct voice of Kenyan cinema. No film was selected this year, but we remain committed to supporting submissions that can showcase Kenyan creativity and identity on the international stage.”

Five films were submitted for consideration and were assessed against the Academy’s eligibility criteria. The review was conducted on September 19 and 20.

ARTS LOUNGE

THE NAIROBIAN

Enock Matundura enjoyed reading the Moses series as a high school student. He decided to translate the books into Kiswahili as an academic.

MBUGUA NGUNJIRI

Anyone who was lucky enough to read the Moses adventure series, authored by the late Barbara Kimenye, still has fond memories of Moses, a boy in his early teens, dispatched to a boarding school, where he meets up and makes friends with King Kong (Sebastian Mlutu), marking a roller coaster adventure series packaged in 13 books.

Now, Enock Matundura enjoyed reading the books as a high school student at Starehe Boys Centre and vowed to himself that he would write something similar. When that dream failed to materialise, he decided to translate the Moses series into Kiswahili.

He submitted a proposal to the author, through Oxford University Press (OUP), who have published 11 of the books and she gave translation rights, just before she died in 2012.

We sat down with Matundura, who teaches Kiswahili at Chuka University, during the just concluded Nairobi International Book Fair, and he spoke about the ambitious translation project.

Below are the excerpts

Where did the idea of translating the Moses series come from and why?

The idea of translating Barbara Kimenye's Moses series into Kiswahili was actually an afterthought. I had enjoyed reading the series as a high school student. I was a post-graduate student at the University of Nairobi (UoN) between 2005 and 2007, when I bought all the 11 titles. The intention was to read the books and enjoy the hilarious episodes of Moses Kibaya and his friends.

At what stage of your life did you encounter the Moses series as a reader, and what impact did they have on you?

I discovered the Moses series as a primary school student in the late 1980s. A classmate had a copy of *Moses and The Kidnappers*. I borrowed the book and read it within a day. From the blurb, I realised there were other books in the series, which I read when I joined Starehe Boys Centre.

At Starehe, one of my teachers, the late Yusuf King'ala, was an accomplished writer. After Barbara Kimenye's Moses series, I also read King'ala's novels such as *Anasa* (EAEP), *Likizo*, *Majuto* and *Masikitiko* (OUP). The writing bug bit me in Form Three and I started harbouring writing ambitions. I wanted to write a series of books in Kiswahili imitating Barbara



Enock Matundura displays his Swahili translation of Barbara Kimenye's *Moses and The Kidnappers* series. [Mbugua Ngunjiri]

How Matundura gave Kimenye's Moses classics a Swahili voice

Kimenye's Moses series. My first book in my imagined series was *Jumamosi ya Mkosi* (Phoenix Publishers, 2005).

How did you convince Barbara Kimenye that you were best suited to translate her books into Kiswahili?

When I joined Nation Media Group and eventually the academia, and having failed to develop my Kiswahili series similar to that of Barbara Kimenye's works, I decided to translate Moses series into Kiswahili.

I called Hassan Said, then Kiswahili editor at Oxford University Press (OUP) with my idea and he asked me to develop a proposal on the viability of such a venture. In my proposal, I captured what I believed would convince OUP to embrace the idea of publishing the Kiswahili versions of Barbara Kimenye's Moses series, now dubbed *Visa na Vituko vya Musa*.

I stated that there was a gap in Kiswahili literary translations of books in a series. I also noted that Kimenye's Moses series, which has sold millions across Africa, was a unique type of literature with a long shelf life.

I believe Hassan was convinced beyond reasonable doubt that this project was viable. He traced Kimenye back in England and she gave me the

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The biggest challenge in translation is the pressure that comes with it. A translator has to strike a balance between quality translation vis a vis the time available to deliver the results.

- Enock Matundura, writer.

translation rights.

Some people think that translating a work of literature is simply flipping a word from language A to language B; what would you tell them?

Quality literary translation is not a walk in the park. It comes with its own challenges. The translator has to be competent in the languages involved. In my case, I am good in both English and Kiswahili, having practiced news translation at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and Nation Media Group. One also has to be well grounded in theories of translation. My lecturer and mentor at UoN, Prof Omboga Zaja established in me a very solid foundation in translation.

What specific challenges did you encounter in this particular project and how long did it take you to finish it?

The biggest challenge in translation is the pressure that comes with it. A translator has to strike a balance between quality translation vis a vis the time available to deliver the results. In my case, once OUP gave me a go ahead to translate the Moses series, the burden of producing quality work lay squarely on my shoulders.

Otherwise, the outcome would have been what the Waswahili call *vitimbi na vichekesho* (circus). I am glad I was assigned a team of very competent editors such as Hassan Said, Isaiah Mweri, Bernard Ogutu and Milka Righa. The translation of Moses series, I can say, was a collegial project. We translated 11 books, written in a span of 30 years, in a period of under three years.

Did you translate all the Moses books? And how are the translated books doing in the market?

Barbara Kimenye's Moses series comprised of 13 books. Eleven, which were published by OUP have since been translated into Kiswahili. The remaining two, were published by the East African Educational Publishers (EAEP). Kimenye's son, David, granted me translation rights for the remaining two books, but I haven't yet picked the gauntlet.

Is this your first translation project?

For literary translation, yes. But I have done other translation consultancy projects for institutions such as the National Cancer Institute –Kenya (NCIK), Microsoft Language (Kiswahili) Localisation Project, International Book Bank Inc. USA, Leigh Day Solicitors, London, among others.

I recently translated and edited Mackenzi KG's book - *Calamity of Kasigau* to Kiswahili under the title: *Janga la Wakasigau* (Storymoja, 2024) and *The Boy and The Lion* by Mike Saito and Turk Pipkin to *Mvulana na Simba* (Storymoja, 2025).

Kiswahili has more than 200 million speakers in the world. Why don't we have more book translations in this language?

There is a lot of work going on in translation, not only from other languages into Kiswahili, but also from Kiswahili into other languages. Prof Chege Githiora has recently translated Peter Kareithi's classical novel - *Kaburi Bila Msalaba* (Phoenix, 1969) to English as *Unmarked Grave*. Ida Hadjivayanis of SOAS, London is translating 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature winner Abdulrazak Gurnar's novels into Kiswahili.

Ken Walibora's English Translation of Abdilatif Abdalla's anthology of revolutionary poems - *Sauti ya Dhiki* was published recently by Michigan University Press, USA. Grisham's novels into Kiswahili too.

What other books are you hoping to translate?

Currently I am translating Clara Momanyi's novel, *Nakuruto* into English.

Take us through a brief journey of your writing.

To date, I have more than thirty titles under my belt - mostly Kiswahili children's literature books. All my titles have been recommended by KICD as readers in primary schools, and I thank God for that.

Ngunjiri is the curator of Maisha Yetu, an online media platform for books and the Arts

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Jazz Notes



From tizita to jazz: Meklit's reimagining of old Ethiopian music and modernising it

NAIROBIAN REPORTER

The way I see it, says Ethiopian singer Meklit, we don't have to forget the power of culture to be modern people. It is a statement that has become a guiding principle in her artistry, especially on her latest album, *A Piece of Infinity*.

The nine-track project, which includes six traditional songs, dives deep into Ethiopia's vast folk traditions, weaving them with lush arrangements and Meklit's own brand of jazz-infused creativity. The result is an album that is both reverent of the past and alive with innovation, a testament to her conviction that culture must not be embalmed but allowed to breathe, grow, and surprise.

The seeds of *A Piece of Infinity* were planted over a decade ago, shaped by pivotal encounters and intellectual sparks. In 2009, Meklit attended a lecture by the late Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. His words proved transformative: "Culture is not a museum, it is living," he declared, cautioning against treating African traditions as static relics.

Years later, Mulatu Astatke, the revered godfather of Ethio-jazz, offered equally direct counsel after one of her performances in Addis Ababa. "Meklit," he told her, "it's your jazz. You cannot play it like we played it 50 years ago. You must find your contribution and keep innovating."

That challenge struck home. Her debut album, *On A Day Like This...* (2010), leaned heavily on classic Ethio-jazz influences. But with Mulatu's urging, Meklit recognised that her role was not to replicate the past but to extend its possibilities.

This ethos crystallised in 2011 when she co-founded the Nile Project with Egyptian ethnomusicologist Mina Girgis. Bringing together musicians from eleven countries along the Nile, the ensemble toured widely across Africa, Europe and the United States.

"It was like being in a school of the Nile's music," Meklit recalls. "I lived with traditional musicians day in and day out, and I began to hear the universe of Ethiopian sound within a much wider African context. It was so, so deep."

It was during this time that she learnt to play the krar, Ethiopia's traditional harp, and immersed herself fully in folk traditions that had previously remained at the edges of her musical identity.

A Piece of Infinity opens with *Ambassel*, a traditional Amharic love song, where Meklit's luminous voice wrings fresh meaning from a melody sung for generations. On *Dale Shura*, an Oromo prayer song for rain, she channels nature's presence with airy reverence, her vocals suspended over bass and gentle percussion.

The project is as much a collaboration as a personal statement. Pianist Kibrom Birhane and drummer Teferi Assefa, both iconic figures in Ethiopian music, helped shape its sound. The album closes with *Lefefer Enegeza*, penned by celebrated poet Alemtsehay Wedajo.

Meklit's father, Ayele Hadero, also contributed, particularly to the buoyant *Geefata*, a celebration song from Kembata, his birthplace. Meklit unearthed it after sifting through more than 70 hours of recordings from a 2008 festival. With her father's help, she learnt its rhythms and meanings, grounding her interpretation in familial roots.

Her upbringing, shaped by exile and migration -her family fled Ethiopia during the turmoil of 1974- adds resonance to these choices. Raised in Iowa and Brooklyn, later living in twelve cities across three continents, Meklit was anchored by her parents' cultural practices. Her mother hummed traditional melodies around the house; her father carried stories and songs that now find voice in her work.

The album's centrepiece is *Tizita*, perhaps the most treasured form in Ethiopian folk music, often likened to the blues for its themes of longing and memory.

"*Tizita* is so deep I feel it in my bones," Meklit says. "My mother used to hum it, and it is about love and nostalgia, but also about the way people live inside you. One melody away, they return."

When she sings it live, she feels "the millions of voices that have sung *Tizita* before me, the love that has poured into these lyrics. That's why I called the album *A Piece of Infinity*: to honour this vast continuum of Ethiopian music, to be one small part of its unending flow."

In an age when Afrobeats dominate global perceptions of African music, Meklit's project is a reminder of the continent's astonishing musical breadth. Yet she insists there is no opposition between tradition and modernity.

"Culture is a continuum, not a binary," she says.

TURNING POINT

Kicking out despair: Teacher using football to save city youth

In Nairobi's bustling heart, where crime and joblessness burden youth, teacher and life coach Jane Mugo harnesses football and mentorship to inspire purpose, resilience and transformation among vulnerable young men, writes SILAS NYAMWEYA

In the heart of Nairobi, where unemployment, crime and drugs continue to weigh heavily on young people, one teacher is harnessing the power of education and sport to transform lives. Jane Mugo, a teacher by profession and a life coach by calling, has dedicated her energy to guiding vulnerable youth towards purpose through football and other constructive engagements.

Her initiative, run with the support of friends and well-wishers, organises tournaments across the city. But these are no ordinary competitions. They are safe spaces where young men can find counselling, mentorship and opportunities to build resilience in the face of hardship.

"We use sport as a channel for change," Mugo explains. "Our goal is to give opportunities to the vulnerable, to expose them to growth, inclusion and personal success. Football and other activities have the power to transform lives. As a teacher, I have seen how combining education, life skills and positive engagement empowers young men to overcome obstacles and reach their potential."

The programme's impact is already visible. Mugo recalls how withdrawn some boys were when they first arrived. Many carried unspoken burdens. In a culture where young men are discouraged from discussing their feelings, silence was the norm.

"Boys and young men rarely share their pains and challenges," she says. "Through this platform, they build confidence. They talk, we listen, and together we reason out the way forward."

Beyond building self-esteem, the initiative plays a crucial role in shaping character. Many participants come from vulnerable backgrounds where drugs, crime, and even violent extremism can appear to be the only options. By offering an alternative, Mugo shields them from destructive influences.

"An idle mind is the devil's workshop," she notes. "Through sport and other activities, we keep them positively engaged and grounded."

The programme also promotes environmental responsibility. Participants collect glass bottles, plastics

and bottle tops, creatively recycling them into home décor and other marketable products. The activity not only encourages environmental care but also offers a source of income.

"They make beautiful pieces which we help market," Mugo says proudly. "This gives them a sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency."

Yet running the initiative has its challenges, the greatest being resources. While demand from young men eager to join continues to grow, the means to support them remain limited.

"The number of young men who want to be part of the group is overwhelming," Mugo admits. "They are all eager to live better lives. But resources are limited, and this makes it difficult to implement some activities. We lack equipment, and sometimes even goodwill from authorities who should be supporting such work."

For now, the project survives on the generosity of well-wishers, many of them online supporters.

"Fans on Facebook and other platforms have come in handy," she explains. "Friends donate items and equipment. We are actively sourcing for partners and remain optimistic."

Support from stakeholders, she insists, is essential if the programme is to grow. "We need funding, volunteers such as coaches, mentors, trainers, and even support staff. Partnerships would help us scale and make a bigger impact."

Recognising that sport alone cannot address every challenge, the initiative also offers training in practical skills such as baking, mat-making and beadwork. These activities expose young men to alternative livelihoods while nurturing creativity. "It is about developing the whole person," Mugo says. "Not just through football, but also by equipping them with skills they can carry into the future."

Looking ahead, she is determined to expand the reach of her work. A promising step has been her collaboration with Olympia Beret Football Academy, where she serves as patron. The academy provides a stable base for planning and coordination.



FLASHBACK

THE NAIROBIAN

DID YOU KNOW?

The heart is innocent on love, it all comes from the brain

Love is a deep connection based on commitment.

It is based on acceptance, trust and mutual support.

KENYATA OTIENO

A good friend of mine recently reminded me how I was once heart-broken by a certain Kamba girl. We were passing by her house so he made a joke about it, but I didn't laugh. I let his joke dry on the road. He reminded me of Kimani Ichungwa's father who took in a lady who turned him down in his youthful age when he was sixty-five years old and she had eight children. I told him I am not a not-for-profit organization.

It got me thinking about love and my once obsession with Ukambani ladies. I don't know if it was their special complexion. There are many shades of light-skin tone in Kenya, but the Ukambani tone is unique. I believe genetic analysis of that skin pigmentation gene may reveal that the Khoikhoi passed on their way down South.

Is it mangoes? Mangoes grow in many regions in Kenya. For the longest, I believed mangoes from the Coast are the best, the *embe dodo*. Until I became an adult and tasted the mangoes from Ukambani. The streets of heaven must be paved with gold but lined with Ukambani mango trees.

Enough of excuses, my heart was not only broken but shattered. What does the heart got to do with it? Did religion and society lie to us that we feel with the heart? The heart is a mechanical organ that pumps blood to the whole body. More of logistics than the abstract matters of attraction that involves chemistry, which is about hormones.

One hormone associated with love is dopamine that is released by neurons in the brain responsible for reward pathway. It creates the feeling of euphoria and pleasure in the early stages of love and then makes you expect a reward for them. We never blame the brain; all we say is that the heart is foolish because the brain is a logical organ. "Foolish Heart" a 1984 hit song by Steve Perry asks; will my lonely heart play the part of the fool again?



Young couple spend happy moments together. [Courtesy]

Oxytocin, is known as the love hormone or "cuddle chemical". It is released during physical touch, hugging and sexual activity which leads to connection, buildup of trust and deeper bonding. It is produced in the hypothalamus part of the brain and released to the bloodstream by pituitary gland. It also lowers anxiety and increases testosterone production in men.

Its negative side is that it is also responsible for triggering envy and aggression. You can blame this hormone for the actions of people who harm for love. The brain and pituitary gland are responsible for this but the heart will get the slack.

Serotonin is another hormone. Luos and Luhyas will jump when they hear this word. Seduction in both languages is based on the word, *sero and khuserera*. This is the hormone that regulates moods, sleep, appetite and can cause obsession. Next time a lover tells you "I love you so much that I can't eat", blame this hormone.

The feeling of constriction during heartbreak is caused by this hormone, but we always blame the heart. It helps in slowing blood flow towards bleeding wounds. So when there is no wound but you are emotionally hurt, it lowers the flow of blood. It is synthesized in the brain and small intestines.

Now, love is a deep connection

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Infatuation, which is what we call "crush" is that overwhelming attraction we feel towards the opposite sex.

based on commitment. It is based on acceptance, trust and mutual support. Love is boring to some extent, commitment is made devoid of the excitement and euphoria of the above hormones. These hormones are meant to ignite the process, may be Oxytocin which is responsible for building trust is required for the process of growing love.

Infatuation, which is what we call "crush" is that overwhelming attraction we feel towards the opposite sex. It comes with an intense physical attraction and excitement in the imagination based on an imagined outcome. It is meant to be short lived

and end, or if it stays for long, then transitions to love.

Obsession is an unhealthy fixation. This comes with desire to possess and control the other person accompanied by lack of empathy. This is the love that comes with conditions and many rules regarding friends and family. I tend to believe obsession is born of a relationship between two people who are not at the same level. One can't believe that they have fallen in love with such a beautiful, handsome, rich or respected person.

The control comes in to manage outside influence so that they are not enlightened to change their mind. Such decisions can only be done by the brain, but we still blame the heart. The hormones should be blamed for infatuation and obsession. I don't know which hormone causes the imbalance when released in high quantities or the body doesn't mop it up when it is no longer needed.

The heart may facilitate the process but only after being prompted by the brain. The heart is innocent of all the accusations leveled against it in regards to love. The culprit is the brain; whose thinking pathway seems to be inhibited the moment it releases the hormones responsible for love. Have you heard that the biggest sexual organ is the brain? Give the heart a break.

The Immortals



The rise of James Kanyotu, Kenya's shadowy, longest serving spymaster

James Kanyotu was one of the most influential and secretive figures in Kenya's post-independence history, remembered chiefly as the country's longest-serving spy chief.

Born in 1936 in Kirinyaga, Central Kenya, Kanyotu grew up in the rural countryside and received his early education locally. He later attended Alliance High School, one of Kenya's most prestigious secondary schools, where he excelled academically. From there, he proceeded to Makerere University in Uganda, then a leading institution of higher learning in East Africa.

After completing his studies, Kanyotu joined the Kenya Special Branch, the intelligence arm of government tasked with espionage and gathering sensitive information. His role was to monitor threats both within and beyond Kenya's borders.

Kanyotu rose swiftly through the ranks. In 1965, at just 29 years of age, he was appointed head of the Special Branch. He initially served under President Jomo Kenyatta before later working closely with President Daniel arap Moi.

As spy chief, his primary duty was safeguarding the government. His work was pivotal in maintaining State control during periods of instability, including attempted coups and episodes of political unrest.

One of Kanyotu's key achievements was the creation of a robust intelligence network, which provided early warnings of potential threats.

However, his career was not without controversy. The Special Branch was widely accused of arbitrary arrests, torture, and silencing critics of the government. Under Kanyotu's leadership, freedom of expression was severely curtailed, and many opposition figures lived under constant fear.

His name was also linked to corruption, the most notable being the Goldenberg scandal of the 1990s. He retired in 1991 and thereafter led a markedly private life. Kanyotu died in February 2008 at the age of 72.

[Silas Nyamweya]



RealTalk with Bishop David Muriithi

Faith over fear during stressful times

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse and demanding circumstances. It can manifest as fear, crying spells, bursts of anger, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, worry, fatigue, inability to relax, physical symptoms like headaches, stomach pain, increased heart rate or difficulty in breathing. It also includes changes in sleep or eating patterns, difficulty concentrating, worsening of existing physical or mental conditions, avoiding family and friends, and increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances (WHO).

What are the sources of stress?

First, is compromising situations. Knowing the right thing to do and failing to do it, often due to peer pressure or taking shortcuts. Entrust your life to God and walk in integrity. Integrity brings security. Do not envy sinners; instead, be zealous for the fear of the Lord. "I beseech you therefore, brethren... present your bodies a living sacrifice... be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:1-2)

Second are conflicts. These arise from our differences that lead us to unnecessary fighting. Understand where the other person is coming from, do not be proud and be humble when dealing with people. Honour, love, be kind, affectionate and give preference to one another. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to

one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" Ephesians 4:31-32).

Third is competing with others. This ultimately causes comparison, pride, misery and stress. Accept the unconditional love of God whom you do not need to prove yourself to. Do not compare yourself with others; instead take your own actions. "Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding" (2nd Corinthians 10:12).

What to do in moments of stress

In stressful times, reflect on God's goodness. Avoid focusing only on the negative—it leads to anxiety and depression. Avoid the all-or-nothing mindset. "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20). The fall of man began with one deceptive question. The serpent asked Eve, "Has God indeed said...?" Instead, focus on blessings. Count them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Think of the greatness of God. You may be at a point where you think that you cannot take any more. Consider the works of God; that his hand is bigger and greater than your problems. He will hold and pick you up. Declare constantly that 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord'.

Think of the closeness of God. People



will leave and forsake you when you are having problems or stressed out. God will always be with you in good and bad times. The Israelites were facing many challenges and problems but God promised to lead them into victory. He implored them to be strong and of courage, not to fear or be afraid of their enemies; because He would go before them; he would not leave nor forsake them.

Think about the health of your body. Take care of yourself by exercising regularly, healthy eating habits, take time to rest and relax; meditate, spend time with friends or engage in

a hobby. Paul urged the Colossians to put to death their members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. To treat their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit whom they received from God.

To change anything in your life you and deal with problems and stress; you must have a clear and positive line of thoughts and perspective of life. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Remember that you may be hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken;

stuck down, but not destroyed. That your light afflictions, which is but for a moment, is working for you a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory (benefit or reward).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, will guard your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Bishop Muriithi is the Founder and Overseer House of Grace Ministries International



In-house Doc With Dr Alfred Murage

Sound therapy: Unlock emotional and cognitive health through daily music

Everyone, or nearly everyone, knows what music is. But for the sake of definitions, music is a combination of sound, harmony, melody and rhythm. The output becomes something enjoyable when listened to. Music is considered a universal culture, and is found in all human societies. Music genres, or simply styles, are mostly arbitrary and limitless. There are many combinations and overlapping styles, leaving everyone with a choice of music that they find enjoyable.

Increasingly, music has been recognised to have therapeutic benefits. Brain studies have shown the neurological impact of music, more so with emotions and cognition. Functional brain activity scans show that music lights up multiple parts of the brain, simultaneously impacting on both physical and emotional sense centres. This implies that if one part of the brain is damaged, other parts of the brain can still be accessed through music.

The main applications of music's therapeutic benefits are in dementia, palliative and end-of-life care. In such cases, music has been shown to reduce anxiety, psychological pain and trigger remote memories for people with dementia. For the unconscious and unresponsive, there is evidence to suggest hearing is the last sense to be lost, and music can still reach them in their comatose state.

So what does this all mean to your own health, and that of your loved ones? Listening to music that you enjoy is a habit that may play a role in your overall health, mostly with conditions linked to emotions and other cognitive functions. The strongest neurological associations with music are formed in the ages of 10 to 30. That's why you see people in different age groups defaulting to very disparate music choices. But an active brain is always making new neurological connections, so finding new enjoyable music genres in later years isn't for

naught.

If you have any family members with end-of-life conditions or dementia, play them some music every so often. It helps to have an idea of the kind of music they enjoyed in their healthier years. If you have no idea, search for the music that was trending in their formative years. Or play any music that may have a connection to important past life events, such as their wedding or holiday songs. Such a small act will have untold benefits with psychological well-being, memories, the feeling of connections and a sense of still being alive despite approaching mortality.

There is no shortage of where to get your favourite music tunes from. If you have a collection and playlist, go for it. If you don't, subscribe to one of the streaming services available. You'll find it good for your health.

Dr Murage is a Consultant Gynecologist and Fertility Specialist. amurage@mygyno.co.ke





CAMPUS Years

From Sh150 rent arrears, to radio fame: Mulama's journey

Radio Maisha presenter Victor Mulama shares his inspiring journey of resilience, passion, and Kiswahili advocacy in this candid campus-to-career interview. He spoke to Ronald Kipruto.

For many it's just the voice they listen to daily on radio. Tell us, who is Mulama?

I am a Kiswahili journalist, poet, and former teacher whose career journey has been shaped by both resilience and passion. I was born in Nandi Hills, raised in Eldoret, and I am Luhya from Kakamega. Initially, I trained as a teacher but financial challenges forced me to shift paths, and that detour led me into the world of media. Today, I am a presenter and newsreader at Radio Maisha. My story is one of perseverance and proof that with dedication, dreams come true.

Where and what did you study in university or college?

In 2013, I joined Mount Kenya University in Eldoret for a Bachelor of Education (Arts), studying History and Kiswahili. However, financial difficulties interrupted my studies, and I had to defer several sessions. That setback, though painful, proved transformative. It redirected me to Journalism and Mass Communication, where I pursued a diploma. Even though teaching was my first passion, I don't regret the shift because, every Saturday on *Nuru ya Lugha*, I still feel like I am in a classroom, only that my learners are millions of listeners across the country.

What was your favourite and worst unit while on campus?

My favourite unit was Media Law. I have always been fascinated by history and legal matters, and with a gifted lecturer like Millicent Makokha, the subject came alive in a way that was both practical and engaging. My worst unit was Computer Applications. Growing up in a religious background, I believed

that computers were tied to the number 666 and might lure me into satanic influence. I avoided them. Today, the irony makes me laugh because I now rely on computers daily — as indispensable as oxygen.

Best/worst lecturer?

The best lecturer for me was Millicent Makokha, who taught Media Law. She made the subject practical, engaging and enjoyable. My worst experience was with Sound Production, not because the unit itself was bad, but because I was once sent out for being five minutes late. That day I had struggled through the mud of Cherunya in Eldoret, only to be chased from class. Later on, I met the same lecturer, who was then working at KBC, while I was at Radio Maisha. We had a good laugh about the incident.

How was campus life generally?

Campus life was hard and tough. I had to defer sessions several times because my parents were jobless back home in Kakamega after being affected by the 2007 post-election clashes in Nandi Hills. To survive, I depended on reciting Kiswahili poems at events, doing plumbing and mjengo jobs to raise rent and food. Sometimes my parents would even sell trees at home

“

Start where you are, work hard, and never underestimate the power of persistence. Learn, practice, and stay true to your voice.”

Victor Mulama, Radio Maisha journalist

just to send me something small. That experience opened my eyes to the reality of lacking money, but it also shaped me into who I am today. Resilient.

How did you make money while on campus?

Campus life was generally tough. I remember my “nyumba ya matope” being locked because I couldn't raise Sh150 for rent, while many of my fellow comrades were living in hostels, paying up to Sh4,000 a month.

How was dating on campus?

Honestly, I never dated in campus. Life was tough and I had to focus on survival and my studies. I tried showing interest a few times, but the requests for money like paying for hair, lunch, or taking someone out made dating feel too expensive for me to afford at that time.

What do you think of campus relationships?

Campus relationships can be good if handled wisely, because they teach responsibility, partnership and sometimes even grow into lifelong unions.

Where did you hang out on weekends?

Most of my weekends were

spent in the college library or the Student Centre. While others went out to hang out or party, the library became my favourite place, quiet, resourceful and keeping me focused on my goals.

Classmates you will never forget?

Francisco Savior. One classmate I will never forget is Francisco Savior Kituyi. He stood out in so many ways, and the memories we shared on campus, both the struggles and the fun moments, will always stay with me.

How did you get into radio? how as your experience been?

I started reciting poems on *Nuru ya Lugha* in 2013 at Radio Maisha while I was still a student. In May 2017, Radio Maisha advertised for regional reporters. I applied and was employed as a correspondent on 17 November that same year.

Talk to us on your Show *Nuru ya Lugha*. How did it start and what do you aim at?

When I took over *Nuru ya Lugha*, some people doubted me because I was replacing the celebrated Hassan Mwana wa Ali. But I believed in myself. I had hosted a similar campus show, *Dimbwi la Elimu*. Thanks to Tom Japanni, Head of Radio then and Anthony Ndiema, Programmes Controller then for their encouragement. Deep down, I knew I couldn't do the same things Hassan was doing. I believed I could make a few mistakes, learn through feedback and research, and grow into the role.

We see you very big in celebrating Kiswahili.

Kiswahili is more than just a language. It is a tool for expression, culture, and connection. Through *Nuru ya Lugha*, *Tamasha ya Ulimbende wa Kiswahili*, *Nuru Shuleni* events, poetry, and storytelling, I aim to celebrate its richness and beauty of the language.

Any final words to the youth and many out there who would like to do radio?

To the youth and anyone who dreams of a career in radio, I would say believe in yourself and be patient. Start where you are, work hard, and never underestimate the power of persistence. Learn, practice, and stay true to your voice.



ENDLESS MELODY COCKTAIL

The Endless Melody cocktail was a signature creation by the talented mixologist Wangari Mwangi, who revealed to The Nairobiian that her inspiration came from the “One Night Only with Kenny G event. The Legendary smooth jazz saxophonist Kenny G performed at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi on September 27, 2025. This drink was part of a special trio, alongside the “Smooth Operator” and “Midnight Serenade,” designed to honour the jazz saxophonist.

The cocktail’s name and its flavour profile, described simply as “bright, flowing” were directly inspired by Kenny G’s music. The goal was to trans-

late his signature sound, characterised by long, unbroken, and intricate melodic lines, into a drinkable form. It was essentially a liquid celebration of his timeless jazz sound to perfectly match the mood and rhythm of the exclusive performance. This unique pairing of high-quality gin, mixology, and world-class music marked a special fusion of culture and flavour for the event.

INGREDIENTS

1. Tanqueray LDG Gin (40ml)
2. 2 Cucumber and basil cordial (40ml).
3. Sparkling wine top up (20ml)
4. Garnish: Fresh basil

METHODOLOGY

Start by adding Tanqueray LDG and cucumber and basil cordial over ice in mixing glass. Then stir the drink well using a bar spoon for around 20 seconds or so. Carefully strain the solution into a chilled coupe glass. Now, top up your cocktail with sparkling wine. Garnish your cocktail with fresh basil. This process is not mandatory but it is recommended. Serve your and enjoy the Endless Melody cocktail.

Refreshing and elegant, the Endless Melody is perfect for nights out with friends or stylish gatherings at home. As with all fine cocktails, it should be enjoyed responsibly, strictly by those of legal drinking age.

Enjoy!



MA3 Culture

(Photo & Story: Pkemoi Ng'enh)

Extrail trailing

Named after a Japanese motor vehicle model, the Kangundo Road-bound matatu Extrail is giving its rivals a serious run for their money.

With its striking gold-and-chocolate theme and stunning portraits, Extrail has elevated the profile of the route and become something of a sensation. Beyond its sleek exterior, the matatu offers clean, comfortable seating, top-tier entertainment systems, and dazzling interior lighting that have struck a chord with commuters.

According to its crew, Extrail was designed not only to attract passengers but also to send a clear message to competitors keen on muscling it off the route.

“We are among the few matatus on this route with a solid following, despite the stiff competition,” one crew member told Ma3 Culture.

Passengers also praise Extrail for its music selection, with the latest mixes playing throughout the day and adding to its reputation as one of the most stylish, and entertaining, nganyas on the road.



Hotspots/Events diary

Concerts, Festivals, Comedy, Plays, Films, and Out of Town

Caribbean Brunch First Anniversary

Expect a non-stop ride through dancehall, soca, reggae, ragga, bashment, and all-round island tunes courtesy of the Caribbean Brunch’s first anniversary. Spinmasters Kaneda, Kace, ZJ Heno, Andie, Mad Maxx, Tadge, KK, Spinstar, and MC Awicky among others are the headline acts bringing pure island heat with a touch of homegrown sound.

Venue: Ngong Racecourse.
Date: October 4.
Entry: From Sh2,500.
Tyler ICU Live

South African amapiano deejay and record producer Tyler ICU performs live in Kenya at various places in Nairobi and Eldoret this entertainment calendar. He kicks off his performances with his counterparts Cas Da DJ and Freddy tomorrow at Mass House in Nairobi, alongside Kenya’s Junior Petes, Kimani, Kaneda, Hanuman and Skylers. He shares the stage with Ian, Dusmale, Mike T, Sule, MGM, Brys, Aricko, Ms Bune, 7 Dunks, Plato, G400, Sir Me, Gudah Man, B-Boy, and MC Emma in Rupa Mall, Eldoret.

Venue: Nairobi and Eldoret.
Date: October 4-5.
Entry: From Sh2,000.

BYSS: Sina Maoni

Because You Said So! (BYSS) returns with ‘Sina Maoni’; a night of spontaneous, laugh-out-loud comedy.

Eight of Nairobi’s arguably sharpest improv performers; Mugambi Nthiga, Yafesi Musoke, June Gachui, Patricia Kihoro, Kevin “K1” Maina, Justin Karunguru, Elsaphan Njora and Jason Runo, take the stage with no script, creating unforgettable moments in the moment. Expect quick wit,

unexpected twists and plenty of reasons to laugh till it hurts.

Venue: Braeburn School.
Date: October 4.
Entry: Sh3,500.

Single Mother’s Party

Team Swag Empire and Wilko presents the Single Mother’s Party featuring live performances from Kellechi Africana, Colonel Mustafa, deejays Zeddy B, Crucial, Star, Said and, Ice.

Venue: Five One Lounge, Kilimani (former Blackyz Lounge)
Date: October 4.
Entry: Sh2,000 gate.

Twice on Sunday

After a sold-out first edition, Twice on Sunday, returns this time round, for an open-air day of all-you-can-eat brunch and BBQ, soulful sounds, and premium vibes.

Venue: Zerenity House, Tigoni.
Date: October 5.
Entry: Sh2,500.

Back and Forth - Garden Edition Old School Party

Enjoy another fun, nostalgic hang out featuring the best of old school jams and delicious food.

Venue: The Bull, Karen.
Date: October 4.
Entry: Sh3,000.

Mtakatifu Bonoko Play

The Nairobi Performing Arts Studio presents a bold Kenyan adaptation of Molière’s timeless classic Tartuffe. Mtakatifu Bonoko reimagines the satire of hypocrisy, greed, and blind devotion in today’s world. This production transposes the spirit of 17th-century French

theatre into a contemporary African context where questions of faith, morality, and power collide with wit and drama.

Venue: Alliance Française.
Date: October 4-5.

Juiced Film Festival

The third edition of Juiced Film Festival takes place this entertainment calendar! Experience East Africa’s indie filmmakers at their best as this year the festival will be a 9-day event that will include the screening of 11 incredible short films, curated panel sessions and workshops, and lots of networking. Grab a ticket for the day that best fits your schedule and see you there.

Venue: Unseen Nairobi.
Date: October 3.

Gospel Gig

Imani Concert

Gospel singer and songwriter Alice Kimanzi will host a one of a kind concert and live recording session of her latest single; ‘Imani’. This is an unforgettable afternoon of worship, song, and testimony.

Venue: Nairobi Chapel.
Date: October 4.
Entry: Sh1,500.

Nightlife

MoNgoma

The 20th edition of Friends of MoNgoma, a social progressive musical soiree, takes place tonight with performances from deejays Iborian, Mack Lean, Braines, and Fadhilee.

Venue: Mass House.
Date: October 3.
Entry: Free.

- Compiled by Geoffrey Korio

Concours D'Elegance 2025 at Ngong Racecourse



Cgroup CEO Dominique Antoine and SGA chairman Jules Delahaije at Concours D'Elegance at Ngong Racecourse. [PHOTO: Elvis Ogina]



Gathoni Kinene and Nyambura Chege during this year's Concours D'Elegance at Ngong Racecourse, Nairobi [PHOTO: Elvis Ogina]



Fans during this year's Concours D'Elegance at Ngong Racecourse, Nairobi [PHOTO: Elvis Ogina]



Celestine Awuor and Babil Kafi at this year's Concours D'Elegance at Ngong Racecourse, Nairobi [PHOTO: Elvis Ogina]

Supper ClubKe cooking class at Ginahs Bakes



Nancy Chege, June Kipinger and Doreen Njoroge during the Supper ClubKe cooking class at Ginahs Bakes in Lavington, Nairobi [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Naliaka Wafula, Christine Warigia and Paul Kahoro during the Supper ClubKe cooking class at Ginahs Bakes in Lavington, Nairobi [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Lead Chef Elvin Kabugi, Rachel Matayen and Jerom Mulinge during the Supper ClubKe cooking class at Ginahs Bakes in Lavington, Nairobi. [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Supper ClubKe members rolling pasta for the Alfredo Pasta menu during the Supper ClubKe cooking class at Ginahs Bakes in Lavington, Nairobi. [PHOTO: David Gichuru]

Pepsi and Skyward travel experience launch



Yasmin Wako and Claire Akinyi at the launch of Pepsi and Skyward travel experience at Wilson Airport. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Cynthia Wambui and Miriam Kariuki attending the launch of Pepsi and Skyward travel experience at Wilson Airport. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Bryan Obala and Liz Abak during the launch of Pepsi and Skyward travel experience at Wilson Airport. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Claire Akinyi and Joseph Ogembo at the launch of Pepsi and Skyward travel experience. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]

Whitecap Formula One watchparty at K1 Klubhouse



Formula One fans enjoy at the Whitecap Formula One watchparty at K1 Klubhouse [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Ace Richie and Tere William at the Whitecap Formula One watchparty at K1 Klubhouse. [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Stephanie Kafafa and Victor Maina at the Whitecap Formula One watchparty at K1 Klubhouse. [PHOTO: David Gichuru]



Untamed band saxophonist entertains guests at the Whitecap Formula One watchparty at K1 Klubhouse. [PHOTO: David Gichuru]

Sting energy drink launch at Radisson Blu, Arboretum.



Ivy Grace and Sheila Njeru during the launch of Sting energy drink at Radisson Blu, Arboretum. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Flirtycarios and Leila during launch of Sting energy drink at Radisson Blu, Arboretum. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Mandy performs during the launch of Sting energy drink at Radisson Blu, Arboretum. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Liz Jackson and Bonnke West pose during the launch of Sting energy drink at Radisson Blu, Arboretum. [PHOTO: Wilbrforce Okwiri]



Yesteryears With George Njung'e

Traffic rule: Don't carry all your eggs in one basket

Do not put all your eggs in one basket." The wisdom of this age-old adage has been passed down for generations, invoked in financial planning, risk management, and even relationships. Yet, curiously, it has been ignored in one of the most perilous aspects of Kenyan life: our roads. The cost of this neglect is now written in tears, grief, and fresh graves.

The metaphor is simple enough. If a farmer carries all his eggs in one basket and it slips, everything is lost in a single blow. Spread them out, and at least some survive. In life, the lesson extends to careers, finances, and relationships. But perhaps nowhere is it more painfully relevant than in travel—where the stakes are not money or pride, but human lives.

Our fathers and grandfathers understood this. When extended families travelled to weddings, funerals, or festivities, they would distribute relatives across different cars. Sometimes, they would even ensure significant gaps between vehicles to avoid one calamity wiping out an entire lineage. It was an unwritten rule of prudence, a silent form of risk management that protected families from being decimated in a single instant.

That wisdom appears to have been forgotten. Kenya is still reeling from the devastating crash at Kariandusi on the Nakuru-Nairobi highway, which claimed the lives of 16 members of the same family. A single vehicle, loaded with loved ones, collided with brutal force and left a village in Murang'a in mourning.

Social media platforms have been flooded with speculation about the cause of the accident—mechanical failure, human error, fatigue. But beyond the conjecture lies a chilling truth: one car carried the fate of an entire family, and in that instant, the "eggs in one basket" lesson became more than just a proverb. It became a tragedy.

This is not the first such calamity. Only months ago, along the Mai Mahiu-Naivasha road, another family was nearly wiped out. The Muturi family, travelling together in an off-road vehicle, lost three brothers and three children when their car rammed into a trailer. In an instant, an entire branch of a family tree was severed, leaving behind only devastation and sorrow.

Both tragedies underscore the high-risk practice of loading entire families or groups of friends into a single vehicle for long-distance travel. Understandably, the economics of transport and the desire to keep loved ones together push people towards this decision. But the dangers are now impossible to ignore.

Grave risk

As Africans, we often shy away from conversations about death, considering it taboo or a harbinger of misfortune. Yet the silence has cost us dearly. Perhaps it is time to break the cultural reluctance and speak frankly: travelling as one convoy in a single car places families at grave risk.

Would it not be wiser, however inconvenient or costly, to spread out across multiple vehicles? Can we rethink our traditions of travel during weddings, funerals, or family outings, so that no single crash has the power to erase entire lineages?

The Kariandusi and Mai Mahiu accidents are searing reminders that prudence must prevail over convenience. The adage about eggs and baskets is not just rural folklore; it is practical wisdom, forged by generations who understood risk in its rawest form.

As the nation buries its dead, perhaps we should also resurrect this old counsel. Families should make deliberate choices to travel in different vehicles where possible, even staggering departures to reduce the chances of collective loss. The expense of an extra car or two pales in comparison to the unpayable cost of burying entire families at once.

Every coffin lowered in Murang'a this week represents not just a life lost, but also a painful warning. The choice before us is clear: cling to convenience and tradition, or embrace prudence and safeguard our families.

The proverb is not a relic of the past. It is a guide for the present. If we are to learn anything from the ashes of Kariandusi, it is this: when it comes to life and death, never put all your eggs in one basket.

Snapshots With Uncle Gil

Kenya needs to rediscover the art of smart insults

Mugithi artistes are on the roll, jetting off to faraway lands, performing in sold-out shows in Western capitals. Last weekend, one Waithaka wa Jane stormed Berlin, pulling a crowd almost as big as the one he gets at Quiver Kenol. I didn't know the House of Mumbi had such air miles.

The show wasn't without sideshows, however. Thereafter, two Murima celebrities—the raucous radio host Baby Tops and one Wanja—had a major online verbal duel that had tongues in the Murima wagging. The online mud-wrestling match stretched well into the following week, with their fans taking sides and clapping their hands with glee.

The insults came thick and fast, each nastier than the previous one. Soon after came the "disclosures"—those carefully unzipped secrets that everyone pretends to be shocked by, while secretly hoping for juicier details. Their followers edged them on, savoring every risqué jab thrown across the digital battlefield.

We pretend to be posh these days, sipping lattes and nodding knowingly about "international gigs," but truthfully, under that thin ve-



neer of sophistication, we're still villagers. Our insults are still stuck in the gutter-scatological, sexualized, and generally fit for latrine walls. We've lost the fine art of the gentlemanly jibe, leaving us with caveman grunts disguised as banter. In short, we can't insult with class anymore.

gilg@standard.com

Kamotho's Zinger

A proper verbal jibe is an art—a lethal, velvet-draped weapon that can leave your enemy smiling politely while dying inside. As a nation, we have slid into cultural decline, and nothing proves it better than the shoddy qual-

ity of our insults.

There was a time when politicians insulted with style. Take one Kamau, the former Kigumo MP. About ten years ago, he accused then Murang'a Governor, Mwangi wa Iria, of misusing public funds to sponsor poor boys for the male cut. Mwangi wa Iria didn't mince words. He simply replied: "When the next group of boys go for the cut, Kamau should join them." That was sharp and surgical. I doubt Kamau has healed from that one.

My uncle, a verbal pugilist in his own right, is a master of verbal duels. Once, he was grazing by the roadside,

humming an old tune as if life was a song. A young chap who was hawking animal medicine breezed by, asking him why his cows were looking skinny. He added that he had a cure-all medicine that could smoothen the cows' skins. "Pass by tomorrow, we have a talk," Uncle told the young chap. The following day, the fellow came as agreed, bearing his magical antidotes in his hands. "Join the cows, I'll graze you together with them," Uncle told him. The young chap left without a word.

Back in the KANU days, Murang'a had one J.J. Kamotho, Moi's blue-eyed boy in the region. In the 1992 elections, voters showed him the door due to the prevailing anti-government wave. But Moi, ever generous with patronage, quickly appointed him a Cabinet Minister.

Kamotho wasted no time: he drove home in a gleaming Mercedes, a Kenyan flag fluttering proudly on the bonnet. Villagers swarmed around him in awe, admiring their faces in the polished Merc. One even veered towards the flag, trying to touch it.

"Move away!" J.J. barked. "You think that's my mother's petticoat tied there?" Beat that.

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First timers | Boniface Mithika

XLVI K: I was mad for buying a mud phone in city

Encountering a person with a masked identity bearing Roman numerals as a name on a daily basis is not something normal, but XLVI K (46 K) is an exception.

"One night while I was asleep, I had a vision in which God revealed to me that my name is 46."

"I shared this revelation with my wife and decided to change my name to 46. The name signifies where I was born, and my new life in salvation. '46' represents the code for Kawangware, the place of my birth, and 'K' signifies the Kingdom of God.

"Combining the two elements, I adopted the name 46 K," he says.

46 K recently released his debut album *Racing Thoughts* last week.

"After more than 50 singles and 4 EPs, I'm humbled to say that God has been faithful," he said.

Despite being raised in Kawangware, 46K says going to the CBD



feels like a whole new experience.

At some point, he needed a new phone, and he, along with a friend, believed they didn't have to go to an authorized dealer.

"We met a guy selling an amazing Samsung phone. We negotiated a price and even examined its features. However, as we were about to make the exchange, he suggested we move a little since he had spotted a city council cop. We complied. Suddenly, he handed us the phone, took the money, and swiftly crossed the road," he says.

46K and his friend walked home feeling content with their purchase.

"When we attempted to switch on the phone and insert my SIM card, we were shocked to discover that the guy had swiftly replaced the real phone with a casing filled with mud," he says.

Since then, he says, he has never bought a second-hand phone again.

Random Blues | with BBC

Science pushes boundaries: How human skin could soon help infertile couples have children

US scientists have, for the first time, made early-stage human embryos by manipulating DNA taken from people's skin cells and then fertilising it with sperm.

The technique could overcome infertility due to old age or disease, by using almost any cell in the body as the starting point for life.

It could even allow same-sex couples to have a genetically related child.

The method requires significant refinement - which could take a decade - before a fertility clinic could even consider using it.

Experts said it was an impressive breakthrough, but there needed to be an open discussion with the public.

Reproduction used to be a simple story of man's sperm meets woman's egg. They fuse to make an embryo, and nine months later a baby is born.

Now scientists are changing the rules. This latest experiment starts with human skin.

The Oregon Health and Science University research team's technique takes the nucleus - which houses a copy of the entire genetic code needed to build the body - out of a skin cell.

This is then placed inside a donor egg that has been stripped of its genetic instructions.

So far, the technique is like the one used to create Dolly the Sheep - the world's first cloned mammal - born back in 1996.

However, this egg is not ready to be fertilised by sperm as it already contains a full suite of chromosomes.

You inherit 23 of these bundles of DNA from each of your parents for a total of 46, which the egg already has.

So the next stage is to persuade the egg to discard half of its chromosomes in a process the researchers have termed "mitomeiosis" (the word is a fusion of mitosis and meiosis, the two ways cells divide).

The study, published in the journal "Nature Communications", showed 82 functional eggs were made. These were fertilised with sperm and some progressed onto the early stages of embryos development. None were developed beyond the six-day-stage.

"We achieved something that was thought to be impossible," said Prof Shoukhrat Mitalipov, the director of the Oregon Health and Science University's centre for embryonic cell and gene therapy.

The technique is far from polished as the egg randomly chooses which chromosomes to discard. It needs to end up with one of each of the 23 types to prevent disease, but ends up with

two of some and none of others.

There is also a poor success rate (around 9%) and the chromosomes miss an important process where they rearrange their DNA, called crossing over.

Prof Mitalipov, a world-renowned pioneer in the field, told me: "We have to perfect it. 'Eventually, I think that's where the future will go because there are more and more patients that cannot have children

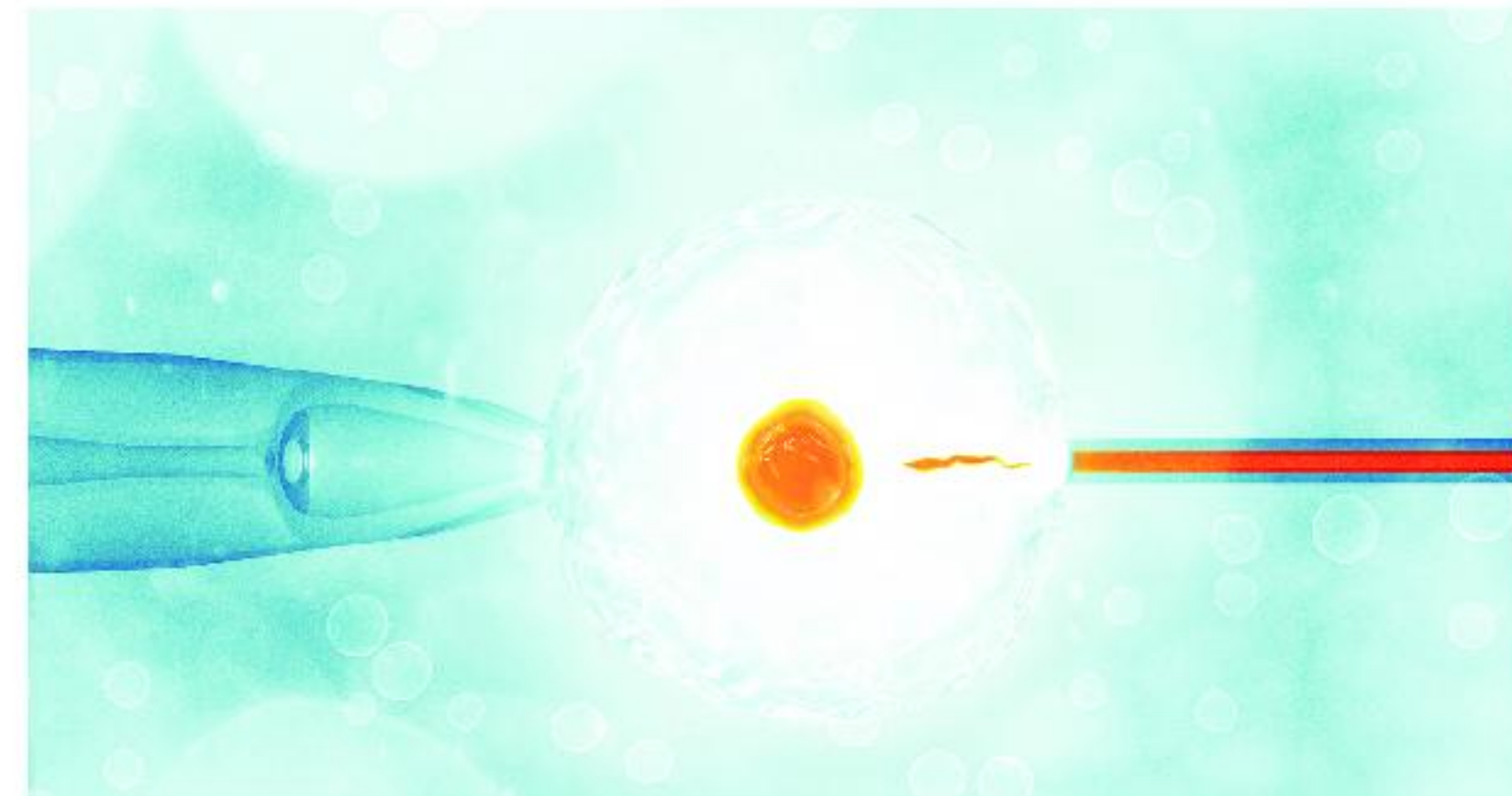
This technology is part of a growing field aiming to make sperm and eggs outside of the body, known as in vitro gametogenesis.

The approach is still at the level of scientific discovery rather than clinical use, but the vision is to help couples who cannot benefit from IVF (in vitro

“

We achieved something that was thought to be impossible,”

Prof Shoukhrat Mitalipov, Scientist



fertilisation) because they don't have the sperm or eggs to use.

It could help older women who no longer have viable eggs, men who don't produce enough sperm or people whose cancer treatment has left them infertile.

The field also re-writes the rules of parenthood. The technique described today does not have to use a woman's skin cells - it could also use a man's.

That opens the door to same-sex couples having children that are genetically related to both partners. For example, in a male same-sex couple, one man's skin could be used to make the egg and a male partner's sperm used to fertilise it.

"In addition to offering hope for millions of people with infertility due to lack of eggs or sperm, this method would allow for the possibility of same-sex couples to have a child genetically related to both partners,"

said Prof Paula Amato, from Oregon Health and Science University.

Roger Sturmey, a professor of reproductive medicine at the University of Hull, said the science was "important" and "impressive".

He added: "At the same time, such research reinforces the importance of continued open dialogue with the public about new advances in reproductive research.

"Breakthroughs such as this impress upon us the need for robust governance, to ensure accountability and build public trust."

Prof Richard Anderson, deputy director of MRC Centre for reproductive health at the University of Edinburgh, said the ability to generate new eggs "would be a major advance".

He said: "There will be very important safety concerns but this study is a step towards helping many women have their own genetic children."



The Villager | with Ciku Kimani-Mwaniki

Holy combos and culinary horrors: Time to heal from those childhood food traumas

I recently made a beautiful mistake of eating boiled, salted githeri and downing it with a hot cup of lemon tea, in front of my daughter. Eating that combo is something I do a lot, and also something I have never tried to do in hiding but that day I found out that either, neither of my children has ever paid attention to it, or I have never done it in front of them.

That combo is my natural snack. The way my children rummage the store to look for popcorn or cookies to appease the hunger gods is the same way I reach for that holy combo.

It was my daughter's laser-like gaze into my temples that made me stop chewing to look at her. "What?" I asked with a full mouth. "What kind of a food combo is that?" The disbelief in her voice should have offended me, but it did not. Instead, I offered her some, and she reluctantly accepted, chewing with a face that told the story

of someone being made to do something under duress.

It took the lemon tea to change that face to a surprised one before she, without asking, took my bowl of githeri and lemon tea and disappeared to the bedroom, like teenagers tend to do. When she resurfaced with an empty plate and cup, she was curious about what made me ever try that! "It is a tradition!" I told her.

I know githeri and tea are probably less than a hundred years old in this country, but when I was growing up less than a hundred years ago, that was every household's to-go-to snack. It is a tradition I have maintained, but clearly I forgot to pass it on.

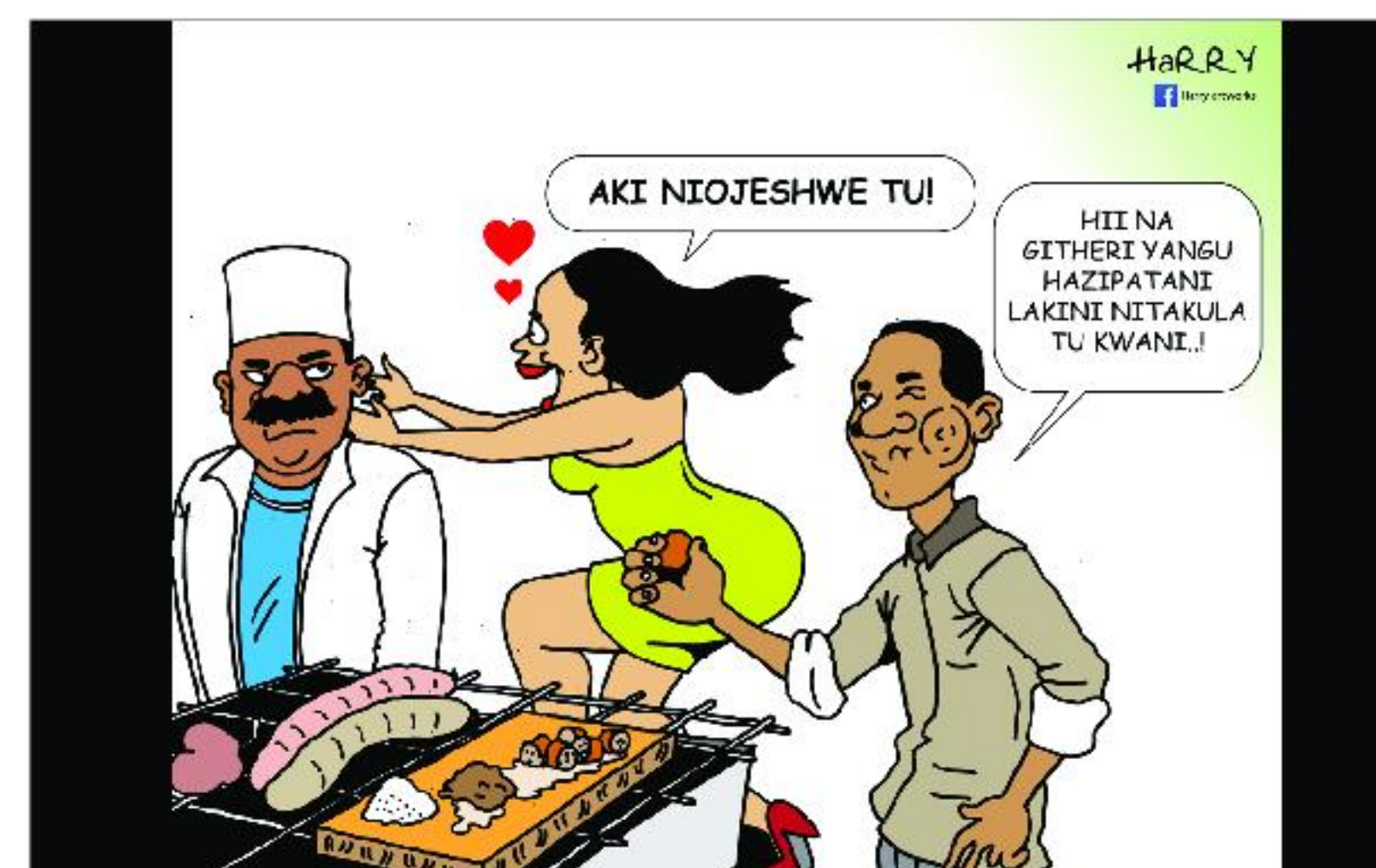
We hated it, because that was poverty-food as far as we were concerned. We did not eat it because it tasted good (although it did), we ate it because there were no other snacks, unless we were on a spree to raid fruit of the season from a hapless neighbor,

or we were willing to risk stealing sugar from the cupboard in the parents' bedroom. The legal choice was between githeri and ugali, and somehow, ugali did not taste as good with lemon tea. That one tasted better with milky tea.

To date, I know people who are still sworn off githeri and predictably, all these people were in secondary boarding schools. They fed us that tasteless gravel for four years straight. Luckily, that particular trauma no longer has a place in my brain. It healed when I lived abroad and I missed anything and everything Kenyan that was not easily accessible.

Cooked carrots

I was a poor feeder as a child and I put my sisters in regular trouble. My mother, whenever she left for work and left instructions for them to ensure I fed, did not know what trouble she was leaving behind. I cried at meal



times. I spit my food and fed it to the cat when my sisters were not looking. I hid cooked carrots under the seat for the cat to eat - but the cats were snitches because they would pull out the carrots in the open. I still dislike cooked carrots.

Our food traumas are not always because we were forced to eat when and what we did not want. I know someone who will not, cannot eat chapati. Not because he reacts to wheat, and not because he does not like the taste - he probably does not even know what it tastes like. He had what I would term as unfortunate parents who made chapati and meat for themselves and githeri for the rest

of the family. This man, in his middle-age, associates chapati with abuse, and who could blame him.

Ideally, we should all afford to buy whatever we want, and eat whenever we are hungry, to avoid traumas that follow us for life. But life is not ideal and food trauma will continue to haunt us. But, for goodness' sake, could we stop force-feeding children? There is no sane reason why a child should be crying because they are being made to (over)eat. Two to three spoonfuls of food are enough, and children WILL ask for food when they are hungry.

Heal.

thevillager254@gmail.com



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PUZZLING CITY



PathFinder

The path finder grid below contains a selection of county assembly wards in Kenya, starting with the highlighted 'Z'.

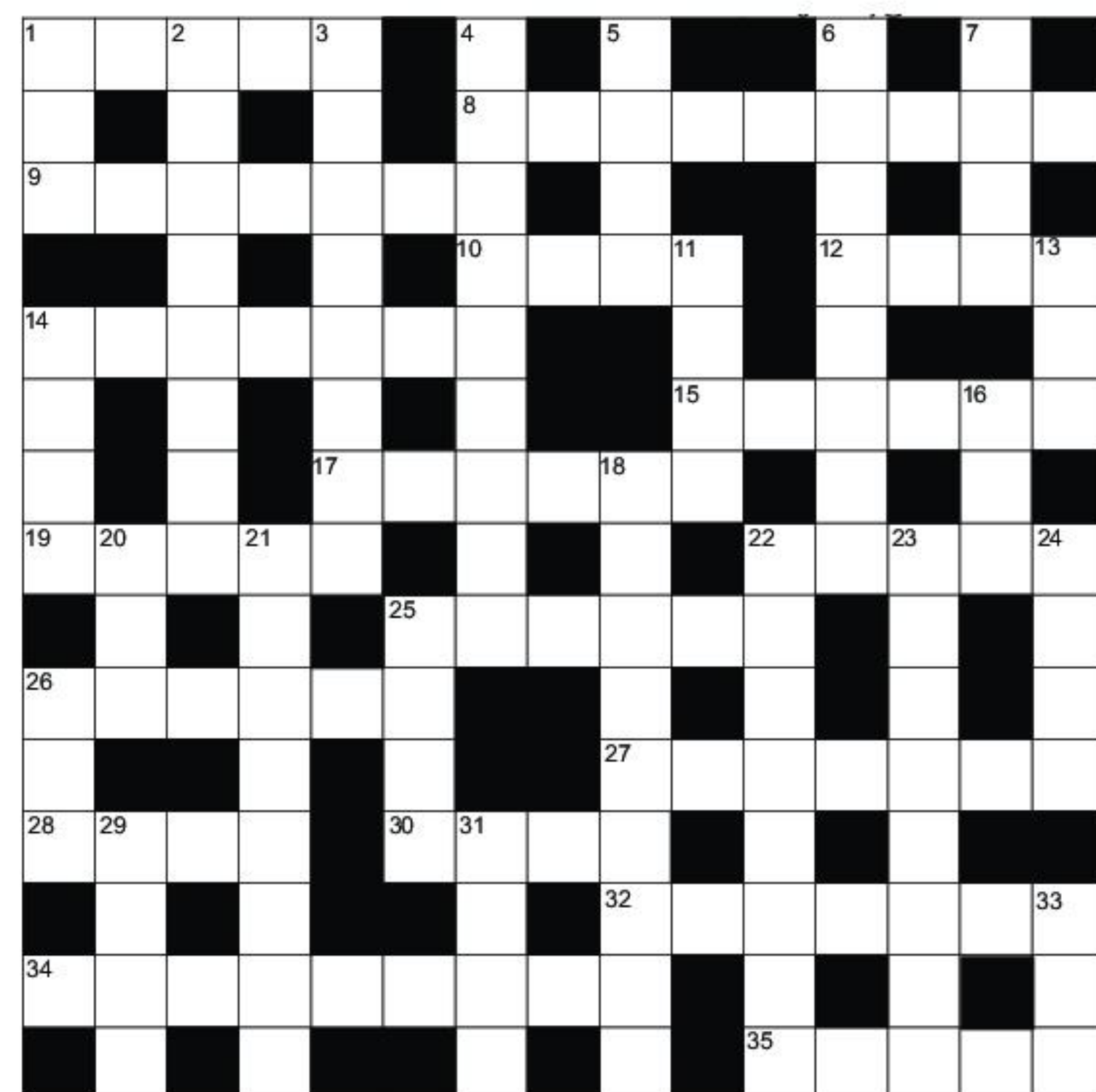
The words form a continuous path, passing through each letter on the grid once. The path always moves horizontally or vertically, and never diagonally.

There are 12 wards to find in total.

Solutions

Ziwa LaNg'ombe, Kadzandani, Mwakirunge, Mtopanga, Kongowea, Mkomani, Magogoni, Junda, Bamburi, Changanwe, Miritini, Mjambere

T	I	R	I	M	E	W	M	A	G
I	D	Z	N	I	A	K	H	A	N
N	A	A	A	M	W	I	C	I	R
I	K	N	D	W	O	R	U	B	U
M	E	B	A	E	G	N	N	M	A
J	A	M	M	K	K	O	G	A	B
B	M	O	M	O	A	G	E	D	N
E	N	G	A	N	A	N	M	J	U
R	A	L	A	I	P	O	T	I	N
E	Z	I	W	M	A	G	O	G	O



ACROSS

1. Actual fact (5)
8. Not ashamed (9)
9. By means of the ears (7)
10. Double-reed instrument (4)
12. Young salamanders (4)
14. Acidic condiment (7)
15. Alcoholic dairy drink (6)
17. Concert cry (6)
19. Drugged (5)
22. Test a metal's purity (5)
25. Charged particles (6)
26. Belittle; degrade (6)
27. Hiders' companions (7)
28. Unacceptable thing (4)

DOWN

1. ER notation (3)
2. Enmity (8)
3. Defamed (8)
4. Latino (9)
5. Guitar bridge (4)
6. Rosary (7)
7. Gardening mess (4)
11. Duelling sword (4)

13. Lose rigidity (3)

14. ... antique: ophite (4)
16. Edible wood sorrel (3)
18. Rewitness (9)
20. Female antelope (3)
21. Bolts with looped heads (8)
22. Declared positively (8)
23. Hit man's accessory (8)
24. Wild oxen (4)
25. Kirinyaga governor (4)
26. Black-belt grade (3)
29. Olive genus (4)
31. Giveaway bag (4)
33. Day preceding (3)

Last week's solution

ACROSS

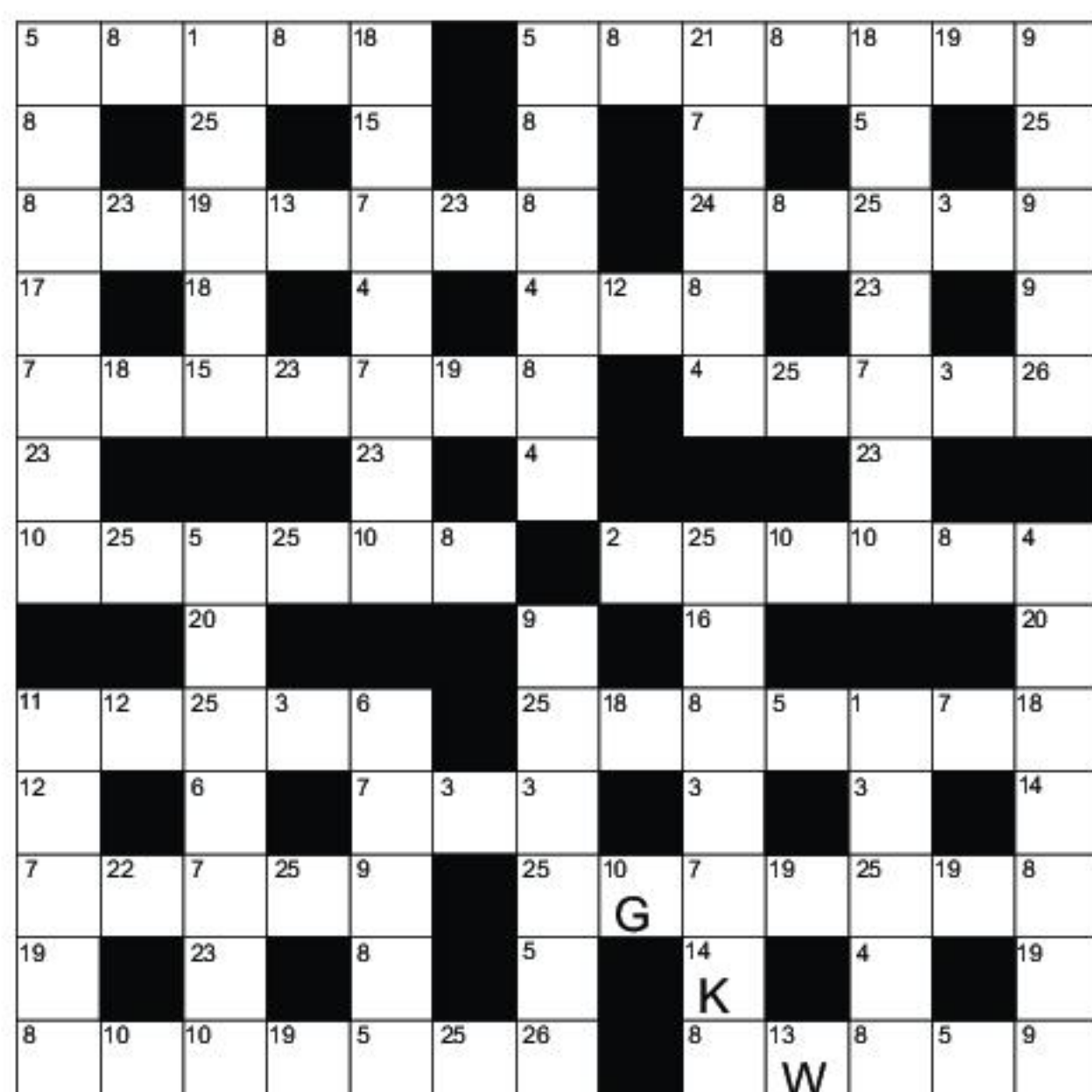
1. Aches 3. -tam 5. Pose 7. Tambourine 10. Cyma 11. Nee
12. Iris 14. Seam 16. Undid 17. End 18. Nyala 20. Dye 22.
- Rye 23. Spa 25. Gusto 26. Rub 27. Umbra 29. Fess 32. As
- to 33. Til 34. Undo 35. Agitations 37. Dire 38. Man 39.

Dells

DOWN

1. Antiqued 2. Smoulders 3. Thi- 4. Miens 5. Paces 6.
- Samoa 8 Mind 9. Raindrops 13. Innermost 15. Eras 19.
- Ambulated 21. Egis 24. Abacuses 28. Biro 30. Ennu 31.
- Stole 32. Alarm 36. Ion

CodeWord



Each letter in this puzzle is represented by a number 1-26. Crack the code and solve the crossword. Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Three letters are already in place to get you started.

Nairobiian today
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Last week's answers

B	Z	L	D	R	M	I	E	S	G	Q	U	W
K	H	P	F	C	T	O	J	X	N	V	A	Y



01/10





England players lift Women's Rugby World Cup trophy. [AFP]

Rugby chiefs open to R360 role in women's game

Global rugby chiefs indicated on September 29, 2025 the proposed breakaway R360 league could yet have a role to play in a women's game buoyed by a successful World Cup in England if it can be aligned with the current fixture schedule.

Four of the 12 franchises in the planned R360 competition, which has former England centre Mike Tindall, a 2003 men's World Cup-winner, acting as a frontman, will be women's teams.

But World Rugby chief executive Alan Gilpin, speaking on Monday after tournament hosts England beat Canada in last weekend's World Cup final in front of a record crowd, said: "After what we've seen in the last five weeks, does rugby need to tear up all of its existing structures and do it completely differently? I'd argue no."

"We know that a number of the nations playing in this World Cup have already said, and will continue to say, that players who play in other leagues that aren't fitting within the schedules they have won't be chosen for their international teams."

"With the WXV Global Series (World Rugby's women's international series designed to bridge the gap between World Cups), hopefully the certainty that we've provided now to national teams, federations and also to players is going to create a platform for investment to come into the sport."

"Hopefully R360 can be part of that."

Earlier this month, R360 withdrew its application for sanctioning by World Rugby and is looking to launch in October next year instead.

Gilpin, meanwhile, hailed the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup as the "generational sporting moment we believed we could deliver".

World Rugby said a total of 444,465 tickets were sold for the tournament, including the record 81,885 who attended England's 33-13 win over Canada in last Saturday's final at a sold-out Twickenham, with 50 percent of all spectators during the event never having previously been to a women's rugby match before.

Further successes came from the bold decision to stage the opening match in the northeast football hotbed of Sunderland and to have finals day at Twickenham, the home of English rugby union, where an impressive crowd of some 50,000 watched New Zealand beat France in the third-place play-off just hours before the final itself.

Asked what advice she had for organisers of the next Women's World Cup, in Australia in four years' time, Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 managing director Sarah Massey said: "Go bigger and bolder. We had that ambition right from the start and you have to back yourself." [AFP]

From pitch to jail: Footballers who spent time in prison

Collins Okoth, William Chege Ouma, Nicodemus Arudhi, Tedium Rodgers and Byron Robert Otieno have all spent part of their lives in prison.

KENYATTA OTIENO

On Wednesday September 17, 2025, the High Court in Nairobi released former Gor Mahia midfielder Collins Okoth, alias Gattuso, on a one-million-shilling bond pending the hearing and determination of his murder case. Gattuso is accused together with Silvia Aoko of killing a three-year-old girl in April 2024 in the Lucky Summer area.

Collins Okoth was a combative midfielder on the pitch and also combative off the pitch. That is how he got nicknamed after Genaro Gattuso, the combative Italian holding midfielder. He grew up playing football at the now famous Baba Dogo grounds where he began playing for Baba Dogo Babes FC. He was later recruited to Baba Dogo United where due to his age, as a fifteen-year-old, he was more of kit boy.

He later went to Tusker Youth side before going for trials at Tusker FC (senior team) but failed and then moved to KCB. He rejoined Tusker under Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee after a short stint at KCB before Zedekiah Zico Otieno signed him at Gor Mahia in 2010. It is at Gor Mahia where he made a name as a dependable midfielder. He even got his first cap for national team, Harambee Stars.

He was so good that after leaving Gor Mahia in 2012, he spent for months in Norway on trials but he didn't get a contract. He later rejoined Gor Mahia in 2014 to 2017 and then crossed over to rivals AFC Leopards. After his time in the den, he never played much football despite trying out with Mathare United and KCB but never signed. Despite his hard-tackling nature, Okoth only got a red card once in his playing career, and it was against Ulinzi Stars in a floodlit match. He won the league with Tusker and Gor Mahia.

Gattuso is not the first player or former player to find himself on the wrong side of the law. Former Mathare United player Tedium Rodgers who has since died served about eighteen years

in jail until 2019 for robbery. Former Karibangi Sharks player Byron Robert Otieno was arrested in 2015 and is serving time for robbery with violence.

Before the recent spat with the law, football players in the past also found themselves on the wrong side of the law. Football is a poor man's game so, the world over it attracts the underprivileged who live on the fringes of society.

The legion of Africans who play for France were either born or grew up in the low income neighbourhoods of Paris and Marseille. They are mostly children of immigrants who leave Africa for Europe in search of better life. Football is meant to instill discipline and decant the good off a harsh disadvantaged upbringing.

We all saw the burst of rage in French

TWO

NUMBER of Premier League titles Collins Okoth won in his career

daily@standard.com



Collins Okoth. [File]

football legend Zinadine Zidane in the final of 2006 World Cup when France played Italy and lost. The vagaries of the harsh streets of Marseille came alive as Zinadine head-butted Marco Materazzi for insulting his sister. He got sent off and with a man down, France could not wrestle the World Cup from Italy.

William Chege Ouma could be the first high profile player to serve time in jail after he was sent in for nine months for assault. He attacked his two colleagues with a meat cleaver over a girl in 1968. One of the players is believed to be his teammate at Luo Union and Gor Mahia, goalkeeper James Siang'a. They were out drinking when the incident happened.

Chege Ouma was known for his goal scoring prowess but also short tempered. He served his term and returned to play for Gor Mahia and the national team. He played for Gor Mahia until 1974 before moving to Luo Union and then wound up his career with Gor Mahia after winning the 1980 CECAFA championship in Malawi.

The legend of all is Nicodemus Arudhi, the man from Alego in Siaya County. He was a prolific football player by day and ruthless criminal by night. His real name was Daniel Odhiambo but he preferred to his father's name. Arudhi wore size twelve boots in teams where no one wore above size ten boots. He featured for Kenya in the 1972 Afcon where he scored a goal against Mali. Arudhi was a darling of Gor Mahia and national team fans.

Born in 1944, Arudhi got his first cap at the age of twenty. In 1965, it is reported that he was delivered to City Stadium to play for the national team against Ghana. He was escorted by a contingent of hawk eyed armed prison warders before being taken back to prison. He played alongside Joe Kadenge in the national team.

He served several stints in jail but when he was out, he was passionate about football. He only missed a training session when he was in the cells. His colleagues would later say he walked with a gun but it was something no one wanted to discuss.

They concentrated on his football prowess.

Arudhi was gunned down in June 1981 long after he had retired from football. James Orendo took up the case because apparently Arudhi had surrendered but the police shot him dead. The family was later compensated for his killing.

Hamilton pays tribute after his dog Roscoe dies

Roscoe died in Hamilton's arms on September 28 evening after being admitted to hospital with pneumonia last week.

BBC SPORT AND AFP

Lewis Hamilton says he made the "hardest decision of (his) life" to put Roscoe, his 12-year-old bulldog, to sleep.

Roscoe died in Hamilton's arms on September 28 evening after being admitted to hospital with pneumonia last week.

He had been on life support since Friday, when Ferrari driver Hamilton missed a Formula 1 tyre test in order to spend time with him.

When put under sedative to perform checks, Roscoe's heart stopped and he was placed in a coma.

Announcing the news to his 40.8m Instagram followers, Hamilton said: "After four days on life support, fighting with every bit of strength he had, I had to make the hardest decision of my life and say goodbye to Roscoe."

"He never stopped fighting, right until the very end."

"I feel so grateful and honoured to have shared my life with such a beautiful soul, an angel and true friend."

"Bringing Roscoe into my life was the best decision I ever made, and I will forever cherish the memories we created together."

Roscoe was adopted by Hamilton in 2013, alongside a second bulldog, Coco. Breeders told Hamilton that Coco's life would be limited by problems surrounding her birth,

and the dog died of a suspected heart attack in 2020.

Sharing pictures from Roscoe's life on Instagram, Hamilton reflected on the loss of his second dog: "Although I lost Coco, I have never been faced with putting a dog to sleep before, though I know my mum and many close friends have."

"It is one of the most painful experiences and I feel a deep connection to everyone who has gone through the loss of a beloved pet."

"Although it was so hard, having him was one of the most beautiful parts of life, to love so deeply and to be loved in return."

"Thank you all for the love and support you've shown Roscoe over the years. It has been so special to witness and feel."

Meanwhile, Max Verstappen's recent resurgence will be put to the test at the Singapore Grand Prix this week as the Red Bull driver tries to turn the Formula One world championship into a three-horse race.

Back-to-back wins in Monza and Baku have left third-placed Verstappen 69 points behind championship leader Oscar Piastri with seven grands prix and three

“

Bringing Roscoe into my life was the best decision I ever made, and I will forever cherish the memories we created together."

Lewis Hamilton, seven-time world champion

sprints remaining.

Lando Norris sits between the two, 25 points, or one race win, behind his McLaren teammate Piastri and 44 ahead of Verstappen.

Dutchman Verstappen is not getting carried away by the growing talk of a fifth consecutive world title, especially because Red Bull have a poor recent record under the lights in Singapore.

Verstappen has 67 GP wins but he has never taken the chequered flag at the bumpy Marina Bay Street Circuit, where extremes of heat, humidity and weather all play a part in a physically demanding examination.

Drivers can shed up to three kilos (more than six pounds) during the longest outing on the calendar, where completing the 62 laps often lasts the maximum two hours race time allowed.

"Basically everything needs to go perfect from my side and then a bit of luck from their side," said Verstappen when asked of his prospects

STAR OF THE WEEK

VICTOR OSIMHEN



Name: Victor Osimhen

Age: 26

Nationality: Nigerian

Club: Galatasaray

Position: Striker

Victor Osimhen was the hero for Galatasaray after scoring from the spot against Liverpool to inspire the Turkish giants to their first victory at home in the

Champions League for seven years.

The lanky Nigerian forward converted a penalty in the 16th minute to inflict consecutive defeats on the Reds for just the second time during Slot's tenure - Liverpool lost to PSG last season before Newcastle United won the League Cup final.

pects of further closing the gap to the two McLarens in Singapore on Sunday.

A floor upgrade brought in for Monza coupled with Verstappen finally working out how to get the best from the twitchy 2025 Red Bull led him to call the last two results "amazing".

Red Bull veteran adviser Helmut Marko said the "hope has been revived" after Baku, which proved "Monza was not a one-off".

Bloody hot

But Marko knows the team traditionally struggle with the high downforce set-up required for a Singapore circuit where qualifying is all-important and overtaking near-impossible.

Two years ago Singapore was the only race that Red Bull failed to win in a dominant season and the only weekend where Verstappen did not make the podium.

"It's not only high downforce, it's bloody hot always there, which our car also doesn't seem to like so much," Marko told Austrian TV.

"So it will be the real benchmark of where we are."

Piastri's crash in Baku and Norris's lacklustre seventh place means McLaren still need 13 points in Singapore to be assured of the constructors' championship for the second year running.

While that seems a formality, McLaren chief executive Zak Brown admitted Verstappen was becoming "a disrupter" in Norris and Piastri's fight for the drivers' title.

"I think you've got to pay attention to Max," Brown told Bloomberg.

"We've got to keep doing what we're doing. The constructors' (title) is looking very good, hopefully, we can get the job done in Singapore."

Brown said there would be no McLaren team orders for Piastri and Norris between now and the end of the season.

"What we want to do is we want our two drivers and Max -- but we'd like to kind of get him out of there -- to fight for the championship... and may the best man win."



Big names investing in powerboat racing

FROM BACK PAGE

ba and Lemaire are already looking to the future, hoping the upcoming race in Lagos might inspire African talent.

"This is the goal, to be able to have African people interested in the sport, interested in sustainability, in racing, in discovering new cultures," explained Drogba.

"I think this is the opportunity for young people who want to succeed, who want to become a part of the E1 team.

"We would love to have an African pilot. It would mean a lot to us."

Trash talk in the WhatsApp group

Despite a glittering career which saw Drogba win four Premier League titles and the Champions League with Chelsea, the two-time African Footballer of the Year has so far decided against a move into coaching.

But the 47-year-old says he is now channelling the leadership qualities of his former coaches and team-mates into his new position.

"I'm lucky to have had a diversity of managers, a diversity of knowledge, and I learned a lot.

"Even players who showed great leadership, like John Terry, Frank Lampard, Michael Ballack, Petr Cech - all these guys.

"I try to be like a sponge and take the best out of them, as a leader trying to reproduce it, but in my own way."

While competition in E1 is fierce on the water, it is just as intense away from it, according to a smiling Drogba.

"I decided not to bring too much of my competitiveness, otherwise I will destroy them like I destroyed all the strikers I was in competition with," he laughed when discussing his rivalry with the other owners.

"These guys are really nasty on this WhatsApp group.

"I thought Rafa [Nadal] was a nice guy, always gentle, polite. But I've read what he said a few times and I'm not happy about it so I will have



Ivorian and Chelsea legend Didier Drogba (left) and his partner Gabrielle Lemaire. [AFP]

to change gears."

With DJ Steve Aoki and Puerto Rican singer Marc Anthony, huge names in North America and beyond, also team owners, the rivalry between the stars is clearly one of E1's biggest draws.

It has led organisers to target a valuation of £500m (\$675m) for the competition in the next five years.

"It can only grow with the energy that all the owners are putting in," said Drogba.

"When we first started, I think it was me, Rafa, Marc and Steve.

“

When we decided to jump on the journey with E1, the main goal was always 'let's bring the race to Africa.'"

Didier Drogba, member of E1 Series

"Now the list is becoming bigger with Tom Brady, Will Smith, LeBron James. Hopefully we'll have a female owner too because this is really important."

Also on Drogba's list is a race in Ivory Coast, with Abidjan a likely venue because of its lagoon which mirrors Lagos' waterways.

"There's some technical specifications that you must require to organise the race, but I think we have everything here [Abidjan] to host," he added.

"We proved it with the Africa Cup of Nations. This is something that must happen."

E1 powerboat championship makes historic African debut in Lagos

The E1 World Championship, an all-electric powerboat racing series, goes to Africa for the first time this weekend with a race in the bustling Nigerian metropolis of Lagos.

The E1 Lagos Grand Prix -- the penultimate round of the season after Monaco -- will take place on Lagos's Five Cowrie Creek, featuring nine teams, ahead of the season finale in Miami later this year.

"This marks E1's first race on the African continent," organisers E1 said on September 30.

Competitions have been held globally in iconic cities such as Jeddah, Doha, Monaco and Miami.

Organisers and the Lagos state government said Tuesday that Ivory Coast football legend and a UEFA Champions League winner Didier

Drogba and his partner Gabrielle Lemaire were instrumental in bringing the race to the continent for the first time.

Drogba and Lemaire are among the several global celebrities who own E1 teams. Other notable owners include American basketball great LeBron James and Grand Slam tennis champion Rafael Nadal.

"Bringing E1 to Africa represents a pivotal moment in our mission to grow electric racing globally," said Rodi Basso, founder and CEO of E1.

Lagos, known for its vibrant entertainment scene, "brings incredible energy, creativity and ambition that matches E1's DNA perfectly," Basso said.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy for the Lagos govern-

ment, Gbenga Omotoso, told AFP that the decision to bring the race to the buzzing mega-city of more than 20 million people was taken in Monaco after the Lagos State governor watched the race there.

"Drogba's team came to us around March and proposed to us to have this championship," said Omotoso.

Drogba is expected to attend the race weekend, organisers said.

"It's the first time that the powerboat E1 series is coming to Africa and Lagos is very proud to be the very first host of the race," he told AFP, adding it's "history".

Blackouts are common in Nigeria, Africa's top oil producer, where dilapidated infrastructure often fails. Omotoso stressed: "There won't be any power failure, I can



E1 Series set to make African debut. [BBC Sport]

assure you".

In preparation for the race, the government has cleaned the coastal city's massive lagoon of plastic and other waste, and barricaded off 28

sites where waste would ordinarily seep through, Oluwadamilola Emmanuel, the general manager of Lagos State Waterways Authority, told AFP. [AFP]



Drogba, Kohli, LeBron and Nadal now partner in powerboat racing competition

Having taken to the waves last year, E1 is nearing the chequered flag on its second season and is about to pay its first visit to Africa.

BBC SPORT

Didier Drogba is a member of what might be the world's greatest sporting WhatsApp group.

Along with fellow global icons Tom Brady, LeBron James, Virat Kohli and Rafael Nadal - as well as actor Will Smith - the former Chelsea and Ivory Coast striker owns a team in E1 Series, the world's first all-electric international powerboat racing competition.

Having taken to the waves last year, E1 is nearing the chequered flag on its second season and is about to pay its first visit to Africa, with Lagos' lagoon set to host the nine teams over the weekend of 4-5 October.

"When we decided to jump on the journey with E1, the main goal was always 'let's bring the race to Africa,'" Drogba told BBC Sport Africa.

"We want people to discover our culture, to discover our history. That's why Lagos is for us a good choice, because it's a vibrant city."

Drogba's partner Gabrielle Lemaire, who is a co-investor in their team, also believes Nigeria's largest city fits the bill.

"The people are very young and it's an opportunity for us to advocate for sustainability," said the entrepreneur and vice president of the Didier Drogba Foundation.

Billing itself on its website as "pioneering a sustainable future in marine sports", E1 claims to "regenerate coastal waters through innovative clean technologies".

Venice, Monaco, Dubrovnik, Doha and Lake Como in Italy are among the venues so far visited by E1, with Miami scheduled to round off this season.

It also aims to promote gender equality, with every team consisting of one female and one male pilot.

"As a symbol it is really strong to show that men and women can do sports," said Lemaire.



Drogba met Prince Albert II of Monaco (centre) alongside fellow E1 Series investors Rafael Nadal (third left), Tom Brady (fourth right), Marc Anthony (third right) and LeBron James (right) in July. [BBC Sport]



Chelsea legend Didier Drogba is involved in electric powerboat racing with the E1 Series. [BBC]

"We would like to advocate for this, for the young people, for the young ladies to understand how important it is today.

"It's not only a sport that we're talking about here."

Hunting for African talent

Competitors come from a variety of motorsport backgrounds, exemplified by Team Drogba's line-up.

Teenage British powerboat champion Oban Duncan is partnered with Micah Wilkinson, who won sailing bronze for New Zealand at last year's Olympic Games.

Duncan is the youngest pilot in E1, but Drogba says he has built a strong relationship with the 19-year-old.

"Oban is full of talent but her confidence was a bit low," he revealed.

"I said 'We put our trust in you, we are behind you, and you're a superstar because you race with a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm'.

"I'm really happy with her because she applies the same principle that I used to apply during my career: give everything, do your best."

Despite Duncan's young age, Drog-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39