Sports

Harambee Stars dare football dynasty at Kasarani Stadium

CHAN Page 34-35

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weekend STAR

Commission says current stock of Kiems kits, procured for 2017 polls, is obsolete

IEBC UNDER FIRE OVER COSTLY SH7BN TECHNOLOGY SWAP

Story Page 4-5

Amref aicraft crashes into building in Mwihoko, kills 6

SAD AFTERNOON: Rescue operations following the plane crash in Mwihoko, Kiambu county, on Thursday **/LEAH MUKANGAI**

Jilted lover after my job, policeman tells court

A police officer on Thursday made a passionate plea to a magistrate to save his job, telling the court that a jilted lover was after his life and wanted him sacked. Fred Mwela was due to be charged with threatening to kill Grace Wanjiku at Githogoro in Westlands, Nairobi.

STORY ON PAGE 3

Healing: Salima Njoki tends to change-makers' unseen wounds

In a world that demands unbreakable heroes, Salima Njoki is on a mission to remind Kenya's change-makers that the most powerful resistance begins within. And that sometimes, healing is the revolution.

STORY ON PAGE 10

PHOTO STORY

Naivasha MP Jayne Kihara leaves court with her lawyers after she obtained conservatory orders from the High Court barring her from taking a plea over incitement on Thursday **/EZEKIEL AMING'A**

LANDMARK LAUNCH

Ritz-Carlton Masai lodge secures regulatory backing

It aims to position Kenya as a top destination in the high-end travel segment

STAR REPORTER
@TheStarKenya

THE much-anticipated Ritz-Carlton Masai Mara Safari Camp has received full regulatory clearance from both the National Environment Management Authority and the Narok county government, clearing the path for its official launch on August 15.

The luxury development — led in partnership with Lazizi Group — marks the Ritz-Carlton brand's debut in Kenya and has already attracted significant interest from global tourism markets.

Located in the world-renowned Maasai Mara ecosystem, the safari lodge aims to position Kenya as a top destination in the high-end travel segment.

While some conservation groups have raised concerns about the lodge's location potentially affecting traditional wildlife migration routes, regulatory agencies insist the project has met all legal and environmental standards.

"The Environmental Impact Assessment was thoroughly conducted in line with Kenya's Environmental Management and Coordination Act. Public participation forums were held in April and May 2024, and all stakeholder views — including those from local conservation groups — were incorporated," said David Ongare, Director of Compliance at Nema.

Narok county, which oversees the Mara's land-use planning, also defended the development, saying it aligns with the Mara Management Plan 2023–2032."The site in question lies outside the sensitive migratory routes and complies fully with zoning regulations. Every approval granted was backed by technical reviews, community participation and alignment with our sustainable tourism goals," said Mayiani Ole Tuya, Narok county secretary.

The project has drawn sharp criticism from conservationist Meitamei Ole Dapash, Director of the Maasai Education, Research, and Conservation (MERC) Institute.

In a letter to Marriott International and various global conservation bodies, Dr Dapash accused the developer and authorities of "violating environmental laws" and "disregarding Presidential directives on wildlife corridors."

"It is my firm and irretractable position that no projected economic benefits or marketing narratives can justify the long-term ecological damage being inflicted upon one of the world's most iconic ecosystems," he wrote.

In response, Lazizi Group, the project's infrastructure partner, dismissed the allegations as "misleading" and "strategically timed to disrupt" the high-profile launch. "We see this not just as a hotel, but as a milestone for Kenya's tourism industry. It's about putting the Mara on the global luxury map while ensuring that communities and conservation efforts are front and centre," said the group's managing director Shivan Patel.

The Ritz-Carlton Masai Mara is expected to significantly enhance Kenya's appeal in the luxury tourism space. The development has already attracted substantial bookings from international travel operators, according to Lazizi Group.

Tourism remains a pillar of Kenya's economy, contributing 10.4 per cent to national GDP, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

The introduction of a globally recognised brand like Ritz-Carlton is seen as a strong signal of confidence in Kenya's post-pandemic recovery.

Both Nema and Narok county maintain that the project has been designed to coexist with conservation priorities. Measures in place include buffer zones, wildlife monitoring and annual environmental audits.

"We are focused on low-impact, high-value tourism. Ritz-Carlton's entry is part of our shift to fewer but more sustainable tourism investments that benefit local communities while protecting natural resources," added Tuya.

In addition to tourism, the lodge will support community development initiatives, such as education bursaries, local artisan sourcing and water access projects.

Several local elders and women's groups voiced support during public consultations, emphasising the need for tourism to deliver more direct community benefits.

STAR SURVEY

TODAY'S QUESTION

Should Raila accept to be Uhuru's candidate for second time?

YESTERDAY'S QUESTION

Is Kenya at fault for pursuing trade ties with China?

YES 35%

NO 65%

BOOSTING YIELDS

Over 100,000 farmers benefit from disease-free potato seed plan

KNA

MORE than 100,000 potato farmers and stakeholders in Nakuru and Nyandarua counties are benefiting from a new initiative promoting Rooted Apical Cutting (RAC) technology, aimed at boosting potato yields and incomes.

The project, spearheaded by the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) in partnership with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization and Egerton University, is distributing high-quality, disease-free seed potatoes to improve productivity in Kenya's leading potato-growing regions.

Targeting cooperative societies, agro-input dealers, agricultural officers, seed multipliers and village-based agents, the initiative focuses on farmers in Molo's Marishioni ward and Nyandarua's Murungaru area.

So far, 26,000 farmers have received preferred potato varieties including Shangi, Unica and Wanjiku. They have also benefited from 200 bags of fertiliser and assorted pesticides distributed in May 2025.

ASARECA's programme officer for agricultural technology and innovation Dr Joshua Sikhu-Okonya said RACs offer a more reliable source of seed due to their resistance to disease and genetic consistency. "Genetically, these cuttings produce high-quality crops with high survival rates," he said.

RAC technology involves taking plant tissue cuttings from disease-free potatoes grown in greenhouses, then rooting them in labs before transplanting them into the field. Each cutting can produce seven to 15 tubers, which are further multiplied and later distributed to farmers.

Compared to traditional seed tubers, RACs result in significantly higher yields and are better suited to climate-smart farming practices.

The initiative also supports the establishment of demonstration plots to showcase RAC's benefits and build capacity among farmers. A field day scheduled for August 12 at Marishioni Trading Centre will further promote the technology and provide farmers with practical training.

Biometrician Scientist at Kalro Elias Kamau said limited access to quality seed is a major challenge for Kenyan farmers. "Quality seed can increase yields by up to 50 per cent. We are providing certified planting material to improve farmer incomes," he said.

In addition to distributing RACs, the programme promotes climate-resilient practices, including drought and heat-tolerant potato varieties, biological pest control, post-harvest handling and crop insurance education.

Julian Barungi, ASARECA's policy programme officer, said the initiative is aligned with national and global agricultural goals. "By working with researchers and development partners, we are helping farmers adopt innovative technologies that contribute to food security and economic growth," she said.

Farmers from Nakuru and Nyandarua counties receive potato apical cuttings, a source of disease-free seed with no degeneration of genes **/KNA**

REJECTED PROPOSAL

Jilted lover is after my job, officer tells court

He was to be charged with threatening to kill woman but says claims are false

PETER OBUYA
@PObuya

A police officer on Thursday made a passionate plea to a magistrate to save his job, telling the court that a jilted lover was after his life and wanted him sacked.

Fred Mwela was due to be charged with threatening to kill Grace Wanjiku at Githogoro within Westlands in Nairobi.

His lawyer Danstan Omari however asked the court to defer the plea-taking, saying pleading to the charges would mean automatic interdiction of the officer.

The state also wants Mwela charged with being in possession of a gun without lawful authority.

However, Omari asked Milimani senior principal magistrate Ben Mark Ekhubi to defer the plea-taking so his client could seek a review of the decision to charge with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In laying out his case, Mwela through Omari told the court that he has been cohabiting with the complainant and that the woman was keen on ensuring he loses his job after he rejected her proposal for marriage.

Omari said Mwela was married with two children but his wife died.

"That was earlier when he was still attached to Runda police station. He was then transferred to Sololo in Marsabit county where he works," Omari said.

He told the court that Mwela took his two children to his mother in Bomet county before he reported for work at his new station.

Police officer Fred Mwela in a Milimani court on Thursday **/HANDOUT**

Occasionally, when he's off duty he travels to Nairobi and stays in Wanjiku's house.

"A problem however arose after the suspect rejected the complainant's proposal to replace his wife who died. That problem escalated when the suspect found a roll of bhang in the house and shared the same information with the complainant's parents. She swore to revenge," Omari said.

Omari said the woman set up the officer for the charges and that he was not aware of the gun claim.

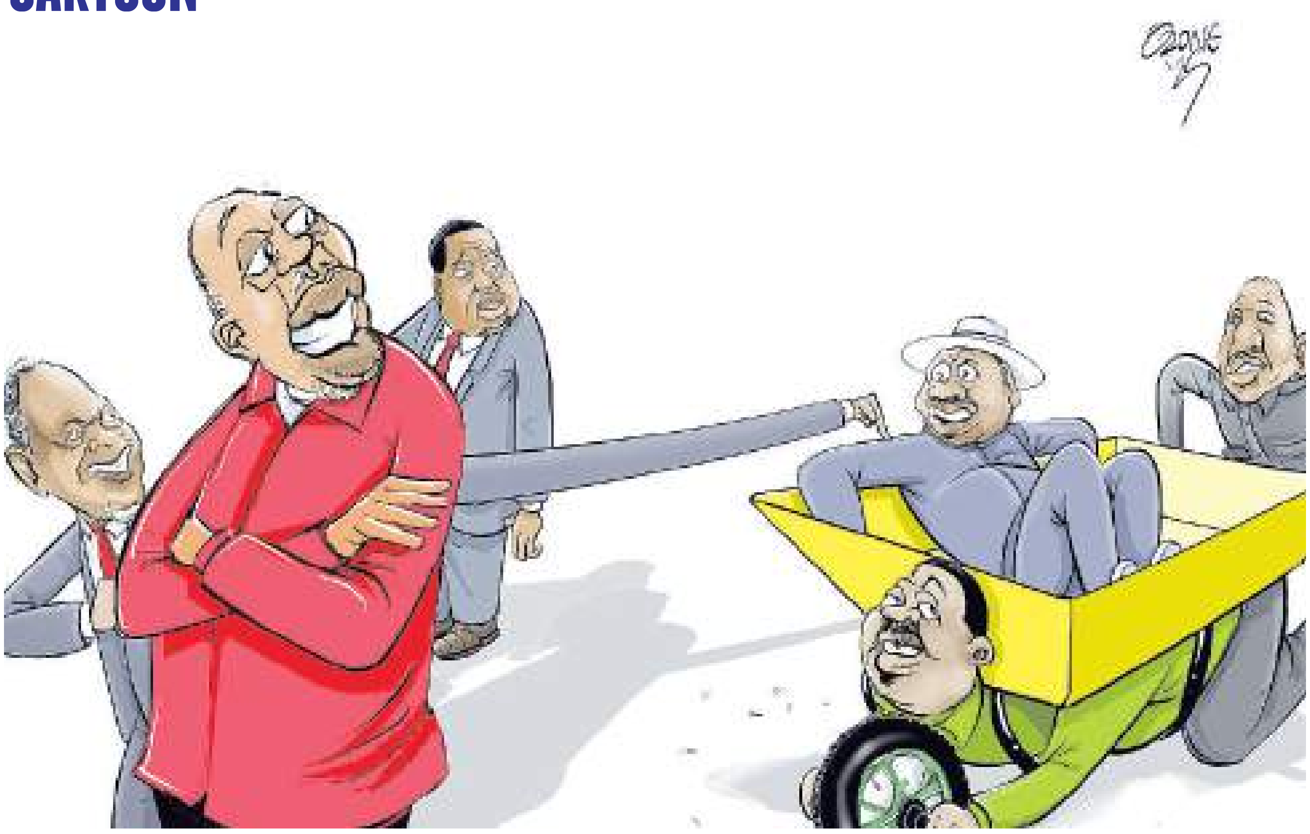
"One day after coming from Sololo, he received a call from detectives who wanted to meet him at a petrol station. He went and was arrested before being released on Sh10,000 police bail.

Omari told the court the DPP may not have been aware of the suspect's side of the story and that it was important that plea-taking was deferred as they sought a review of the decision to charge.

"Your honour, taking plea will cause an immediate interdiction of the suspect, being a police officer. It is very difficult to get reinstated to the payroll once interdicted and it is for this reason that we plead with the court to save the suspect's job," Omari submitted.

The suspect sought 14 days but the court granted only three. "I therefore order that the suspect be remanded at Capitol Hill police station until Monday, August 11 when the matter will be mentioned," the court ruled.

CARTOON



CORRIDORS OF POWER

POLITICAL GOSSIP

Who is doing what and where in the world of politics

★ **A SENIOR OFFICER** who had become the face of a parastatal has finally been demoted, and unceremoniously shipped off to a remote county outpost. The man, known for his insatiable appetite for the limelight, had reportedly unofficially crowned himself the agency's de facto spokesperson, often sidelining his superiors, and dominating the airwaves during times of crisis. Why the transfer? We are told his relentless media appearances and obsession with being the voice of the agency allegedly rubbed his bosses the wrong way, especially when he began issuing statements on sensitive matters without clearance.

★ **DID A TOP** power figure bulldoze the management of a key public infrastructure to channel proceeds from its coffers to his personal account? Well, a fly on the wall tells this column that the man has successfully combined threats, blackmail and weaponisation of coercive institutions into a portent mix that has yielded him the sizeable daily sum. The section that was allocated to him was reportedly freshly constructed immediately he took office, in what is a continuing web of alleged abuse of office and state capture. Investigative officers with spine need to act in the public interest and stop the mess.

★ **JUST WHAT IS** preventing an investigative agency from summoning this county boss for questioning over misuse of public funds? Despite recommendations from a parliamentary watchdog committee that the county boss be charged, nothing has happened several months down the line, raising concerns among the members. Could it be that some officers were supposedly bribed to delay the case? This was the talk among some members of a committee when they met to review their reports last week. Meanwhile, the county boss continues to operate unperturbed, with more cases of funds misuse allegedly emanating from the office.

★ **A GROUP OF** politicians from a Mt Kenya county are reportedly being accused of hypocrisy over their recent remarks about getting special treatment in county allocations, share of high-ranking positions and other government goodies. They claimed the county has the second biggest vote basket and population, thus justifying special treatment different from other counties in the region. But also, the politicians, who are opposed to a top opposition leader from the region, are said to be seemingly taking the residents for blockheads, as their remarks are not different from the politico's, whom they accuse of causing division and tribalism.

If you have any tips send them to Tips@the-star.co.ke

NEWS

POOR PLANNING COMMISSION SAYS CURRENT STOCK OF KIEMS KITS—PROCURED FOR 2017 P

IEBC faces scrutiny over Sh7bn new kits

VICTOR AMADALA
@ItsAmadala

THE IEBC is once again at the centre of a growing political and public storm after announcing plans to procure a fresh set of election management system at a staggering cost of Sh7 billion for the 2027 polls.

In a move critics say reeks of waste and poor planning, the commission says the current stock of Kiems kits—originally procured for the 2017 polls—is obsolete, citing technological redundancy, failed batteries and expired manufacturer support.

The decision, made public through recent newsletters and Senate submissions, has ignited a fierce debate on public spending, transparency and the increasing cost of elections in Kenya.

According to the IEBC's August 4 newsletter, the commission plans to gazette 55,393 polling stations—an increase of 9,164 from 2022—necessitating the acquisition of additional kits.

This proposed procurement forms part of the Sh61.7 billion budget the electoral agency is pushing for ahead of the next general election.

However, the plan is facing significant backlash from legislators, civil society groups, and budget oversight bodies, many of whom question the rationale behind continually replacing expensive election technology every cycle.

The IEBC insists the kits have been used for 10 years, hence outdated and cannot help it register new voters and manage the 2027 elections.

Concerns have followed that the IEBC has other urgent monetary needs for by-elections, pending bills, and that elections in the country have become an expensive affair.

While some poll experts agree that part of the existing election technology is obsolete, they raise questions about the cost of the procurement.

> *We recommend replacing outdated BVR and Kiems kits with upgraded systems for the 2027 general election to improve security and efficiency while maintaining high standards set in 2022*

Elections Observation Group national coordinator Mule Musau said, "My issue is always with the cost and transparency of the process."

He said it was concerning that the processes are usually marred with opaqueness, leaving Kenyans with substandard poll technologies.

"We can get good, long-lasting and scalable equipment and technology when there is openness in the process. Where opacity is the order of the day, there will always be interests," Mule said.

"What we should mind now is ensuring a cost-effective procurement process," he said, pointing out that "elections are the most logistics-heavy event after war."

In 2022, the IEBC spent Sh4.2 billion on poll technology, barely five years after splurging Sh6.2 billion in 2017 for the same Kiems kits now deemed "obsolete".

For more news on our website. Scan this quick response code using your smartphone.

POLLS—IS OBSOLETE AND ITS TECHNOLOGY REDUNDANT

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission chairperson Erastus Ethekon, flanked by other commissioners, briefs the media in Shanzu, Mombasa /JOHN CHESOLI

Critics argue the cycle enriches foreign vendors while straining public coffers. The commission engaged France's IDEMIA technology, formerly OT Morpho, for the 2017 poll.

Part of the 2022 elections technology was supplied by a US-based firm, Smartmatic, which supplied 14,100 Kiems kits, moving the total count to 55,100.

At the time, barely three years ago, the IEBC said 41,000 kits were in good working condition, which together with the new ones, were deployed to 46,229 polling stations.

The poll agency now says that up to 45,352 kits need to be replaced, saying they are outdated, following technological advancements. Each would cost about Sh65,000.

"We recommend replacing outdated BVR and Kiems kits with upgraded systems for the 2027 general election to improve security and efficiency while maintaining high standards set in 2022.

"At this point, 45,000 Kiems kits will be 10 years old by 2027 and may not be guaranteed to perform to the same standards of the 2022 General Election," IEBC recently told MPs.

The Justice and Legal Affairs Committee has assured Kenyans that it would not accommodate IEBC's request without scrutiny.

JLAC chairman Gitonga Murugara (Tharaka MP), while acknowledging that the gadgets are expensive, said the proposal would be vetted rigorously.

"Once we get the full information, we will interrogate the request, and we know what to do. We have to oversight the process. We can't take public money and just approve without checks," the MP said.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Technology was introduced in Kenya's electoral processes to enhance trust. It followed the recommendation of a task force headed by South African judge Johan Kriegler. The team proposed the use of tech to weed out ghost voters, who were cited in the chaotic 2007 election. It has, however, turned out to be a costly affair.

ELOG national coordinator Mulle Musau /HANDOUT

The committee had ordered IEBC to provide an expert assessment on the usability of the devices set for disposal.

The Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly has equally raised concerns about the kits purchase mess, citing unresolved cases of equipment disappearing in thin air.

The committee has asked the office of the Auditor General to keep an eye on the status of the kits in the subsequent reviews after it emerged that some were missing and others vandalised at the stores.

On Wednesday, the commission bosses, during a breakfast meeting with media stakeholders, said they would call a sitting to discuss the cost of elections.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi is among notable government officials who have expressed discomfort with the expensive purchases.

He recently lamented that the "cost of elections is too high", asking IEBC to be efficient and consider using the existing materials, including ballot boxes.

As IEBC clamours for a new set of devices, questions abound on how the previously acquired kits have been handled.

Various reports have revealed that some of the equipment is wasting away for want of storage and maintenance.

In a 2024 report, Auditor General Nancy Gathungu observed that 3,433 Kiems kits were faulty, and that 200 were not returned after the 2017 and 2022 general elections.

Two were reported as lost, and 30 were burnt in Wajir county. Further, 159 kits dispatched for by-elections and petitions were yet to be returned to the IEBC headquarters.

At the Karachuonyo IEBC constituency office, the premises and storage areas were in poor condition, and 31 BVR laptops and 45 chargers were reported missing. The loss was reported to have occurred on August 26, 2021.

"Further, there was inadequate accounting of the store's records and no reconciliation had been done," Gathungu reported.

Similarly, a field visit to the IEBC offices in Kisii revealed variances between store records provided and a physical count. At least 26 were not accounted for.

Further, physical verification carried out in September 2024 revealed that a total of 79 kits had no hard disks, while 215 were empty.

The IEBC had also indicated that SIM cards that were used in the last election cannot be redeployed in any subsequent election.

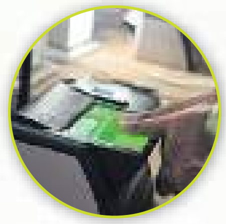
It argued that some of the supplies were to expire within months from the date of acquisition, with the likes of SIM cards already deactivated.

The commission said the devices would not be disposed of entirely and can be used by other state agencies, but not to manage elections.

Memories of the last election still linger. Kiems kits had reportedly "failed" in opposition strongholds during past elections, fueling claims of sabotage.

For members of the opposition, the IEBC has its work cut out in assuring that the devices don't fail, the cost notwithstanding.

IEBC Technology Spending (2013–2022)



2013 general election

Biometric Voter Registration, including Electronic Voter Identification Devices

SH8.3 BILLION

Results Transmission System: Cost not explicitly stated

2017 general election

Kenya Integrated Election Management System

SH3.96 BILLION

for 45,000 Kiems kits from Safran (now IDEMIA)

Transmission failures: Servers allegedly hacked, leading to Supreme Court nullification

2022 general election

Hybrid System: Combined paper ballots with digital transparency

Kiems upgrades: 14,000 new kits acquired from Smartmatic at

SH3.2 BILLION

STAR ILLUSTRATED

NEWS GENERAL

PHOTO STORY

President William Ruto (holding flag) launches the Equipment Service Project, which is expected to revolutionise healthcare infrastructure and services, at State House on Thursday /PCS

FIVE-MEMBER TEAM

Ruto in spirited bid to retain Raila in his fold

President has lost ground in Mt Kenya after falling out with Rigathi

LUKE AWICH
@AchiaAwich

PRESIDENT William Ruto has moved to establish a five-member team to steer his political deal with ODM boss Raila Odinga, signalling his firm resolve to keep the veteran politician within his fold.

The President, who has lost ground in Mt Kenya following the falling out with his former deputy Rigathi Gachagua, is banking on Raila's backing to secure his re-election in 2027.

The move to set up a five-member panel to oversee the implementation of the MoU and the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) report reinforces further the resolve to retain the ODM boss.

Ruto's senior adviser on constitutional affairs Makau Mutua, termed the constitution of the panel a huge step by the two political titans.

"This is a huge step by William Ruto and Raila Odinga to answer to the urgent call for nationhood. A giant leap into a great future," he said on Thursday.

Observers say the move is aimed at cementing the working relationship with Raila at a time when the President is grappling with growing dissent in Mt Kenya—once a critical base of his political machinery.

Analysts view the panel as a key signal that the President is prepared to make concessions to keep Raila close, even if it means unsettling elements within his own coalition.

Political analyst Martin Andati, while admitting the move is meant to retain Raila, also argued that it is more to assist Raila manage discontent in his Orange Party.

Raila allies have recently expressed strong opposition to the deal with ODM secretary general Edwin Sifuna terming the MoU 'dead'.

"The President is trying to help Raila manage restlessness in the ODM party," Andati told the Star on the phone.

The panel, composed of close allies from both camps, is tasked with ensuring the smooth execution of the contentious bipartisan MoU.

President Ruto and the ODM boss on Wednesday formed a five-member committee to oversee the implementation of a 10-Point Agenda and the NADCO Report.

The move though is part of the two leaders March 7 Memorandum of Understanding, is seen as a concession by the President to the demands of his broad-based partner.

The MoU between UDA and ODM seeks to, among others, foster national cohesion and drive inclusive prosperity through what the two leaders described as "a broad framework for cooperation and collaboration across all political formations and other key stakeholders".

According to a joint statement issued on August 6, the MoU's commitments include "full implementation of the NADCO Report", inclusivity in public life, protection and strengthening of devolution, safeguarding youth livelihoods and promoting leadership and integrity. It will also seek to ensure the right to peaceful assembly, addressing the national debt, fighting corruption, preventing wastage of public resources, and "protecting and promoting sovereignty of the people, rule of law, and Constitutionalism".

The committee will be chaired by Agnes Zani, with Fatuma Ibrahim, Kevin Kiarie, Gabriel Oguda, and Javas Bigambo serving as members.

The committee, which started work immediately, will be submitting progress reports to the two principals every two months.

The report will also be submitted quarterly to a joint Kenya Kwanza–ODM Parliamentary Group.

The Parliamentary Group will hold its first sitting on August 18.

"A final comprehensive report detailing the status of the MoU's implementation will be released to the public on March 7, 2026, marking the one-year anniversary of its signing," the statement signed by Ruto and Raila stated.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

To help the five-member team deliver on its mandate, a Joint Secretariat, co-led by Executive Secretaries from UDA and ODM, has also been established "to support the committee's operations."

GOVERNMENT SERVICES PORTAL

No shilling lost in eCitizen, says PS

LUKE AWICH

THE National Treasury has dismissed claims of financial loss in the eCitizen platform.

The response follows a report by Auditor General Nancy Gathungu that raised questions over the handling of billions of shillings transacted through the portal.

Treasury PS Chris Kiptoo on Thursday told MPs no shillings has been lost, maintaining eCitizen remains one of the government's most transparent and traceable systems for collecting revenue.

"I want to assure from 2017 to now, according to my knowledge there is no money that has been lost," he told MPs sitting at the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

PAC chaired by Butere MP Tindi Mwale has been investigating the operations of the digital platform following reports that payments to the system could not be accounted for.

This came a day after the Auditor General's report flagged unexplained variances and lack of traceability of payments, risking close to Sh10 billion transacted on the platform.

The special audit further revealed some payments were diverted to private accounts, sparking concerns of possible loopholes that could allow theft or mismanagement.

But Kiptoo downplayed the concerns, saying the system has enhanced transparency and visibility of transactions.

"We have interest like everybody else to resolve this matter so that Kenyans can know the truth," he said.

Since 2014, Kiptoo told the oversight team Sh360.1 billion worth of transactions were made through the digital platform.

According to the ministry's submission to PAC, Sh425 million was transacted in 2014-15, Sh3 billion in the following financial year and Sh8 billion in 2016-17.

In 2017-18 the platform recorded Sh12.2 billion worth of transactions, Sh17 billion in 2018-19 and Sh14.4 billion in 2019-20.

According to Treasury documents, Sh16 billion was transacted in 2020-21 and 2021-22, Sh20.1 billion in 2022-23 and Sh88.7 billion in 2023-24.

The system recorded the highest in the last financial year at Sh163.8 billion, when more government services were onboarded on the platform.

"The total number of identified services is 25,604 out of which 21,685 have been onboarded," Kiptoo explained.

The PS was accompanied by his Immigration counterpart Belio Kipsang and ICT's John Tanui.

Kiptoo blamed the Office of the Auditor General for the alarming report, saying the ministry was not given the opportunity to react to the findings before it was tabled.

"The Auditor General did not share the final audit report before tabling it in Parliament as required by law, this omission limited our ability to rectify the audit findings," he said.

Meanwhile, officers from the Auditor General's office present at the committee stood by its findings, insisting the PS himself was present during the exit meeting.

"Before we finalised the audit report, we had an exit meeting where PS Kiptoo attended. We have the management letter, responses and I can even go on record here to say that some responses that have been submitted that were not submitted to us," the residence auditor responded.

"There are some responses that he [Kiptoo] has provided here that are contradicting the submission he made to us."

Kiptoo also clarified the government fully owns the eCitizen platform, citing the handover agreement signed between the vendor and the government.

"As per the agreement, the vendor agreed to completely and unconditionally handover the eCitizen platform to the Government of Kenya," he said.

However, members of the committee demanded full disclosure even as they requested for more time to go through the bulky response.

Treasury PS Chris Kiptoo appears before the Public Debt and Privatisation Committee over the 2025-26 budget estimate on June 4 /LEAH MUKANGAI

NEWS GENERAL

LOOMING CRISIS

Treasury, Senate plot to freeze funds of ‘rogue’ devolved units

Committee wants funds of counties with huge pending bills, bloated wage bill frozen

JULIUS OTIENO
@JuliusOtieno04

THE National Treasury and the Senate are plotting a drastic move to withhold funds from counties flagged for persistent financial mismanagement—an action that could trigger a major crisis in the devolved units.

On Thursday, Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi and the Senate’s County Public Accounts Committee agreed to sanction counties that continue to flout financial regulations.

“I agree—a lot of what is happening in counties needs to be punished. At times, a reprimand is necessary. Some of it is outright misbehavior on the part of county governments,” he said.

The revelations emerged during a meeting of the committee and the CS in Parliament.

CPAC, chaired by Homa Bay Senator Moses Kajwang’, is compiling a list of counties with glaring financial irregularities to present to the CS, recommending a freeze on their funding.

The focus is on counties burdened with huge pending bills, bloated wage bills, rampant corruption, and repeated adverse or disclaimer audit opinions.

“You’ll find a county where the wage bill is over 50 per cent. It has an adverse audit opinion or disclaimer and faces serious issues in procurement and financial management,” Kajwang’ said.

Article 225 of the constitution empowers CS for Finance to stop transfer of funds to a state organ or public entity under certain circumstances, such as serious or persistent breaches of financial regulations.

However, the constitution limits this power—such a suspension cannot exceed 50 per cent of the county’s allocated funds and must not last more than 60 days.

Kajwang said the law requires counties whose funds have been withheld to develop a financial recovery plan. “Sometimes, that is what these counties need because the primary oversight has completely died,” he said.

“In the Senate, we are morticians and yet the public will tell me I’m not correcting the county government, yet that is the primary responsibility of the county assembly.”

County Public Accounts Committee chairman Moses Kajwang at Bunge Towers on Thursday /ENOS TECHE

Senator Kajwang’ cited Nairobi and Mombasa as examples of counties drowning in debt, with pending bills surpassing Sh100 billion and Sh28 billion, respectively. “Perhaps the public’s frustration with government stems from incompetence and inefficiency at the county level,” he said. “What’s your position? Because we in the Senate would wish to halt funding to some counties, but the constitution gives that mandate to you.”

Mbadi agreed that the state of county financial management is dire and warrants punitive measures to enforce discipline.

“You find counties requisitioning funds to pay for one item and redirecting the money elsewhere without explanation—leaving some bills unpaid for too long. This needs to be addressed,” he said.

The CS, however, called for caution, warning of unintended consequences of halting county funding.

“My understanding of Article 225 is that it should be exercised as a last resort—and with extreme care.”

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

In 2020, the then Treasury CS, Ukur Yatani sought to stop the release of funds to several counties flouting the President's pending bills directive, a move likely to plunge counties into more financial crises. Treasury had indicated it will withhold disbursement of cash to another 20 counties bringing the number of devolved units unable to get cash over unpaid pending bills to 35.

NEW RULES

Treasury tightens control over counties statutory deductions

JULIUS OTIENO

THE National Treasury is set to implement an integrated financial system that will deduct statutory payments for county government employees at source to curb irregular payments.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi told the Senate County Public Accounts Committee on Thursday that the dual-function system—combining approvals and payments—will be operational by the end of this month.

The move comes amid mounting concerns over illegal and irregular payments in counties, as well as failure to remit deductions to statutory bodies like the Kenya Revenue Authority, Saccos and a number of pension schemes.

“We will start deducting all these statutory payments at source,” Mbadi said. “If you give me my salary, it should be paid in full. What counties have been doing is paying only part of the salary and failing to remit statutory deductions. That must stop.”

The CS was responding to concerns from senators over widespread financial mismanagement at the county level, including cases where counties requisition funds to pay a specific individual or supplier but divert the money elsewhere.

Committee chair Moses Kajwang’ decried the practice as unacceptable, likening it to fraudulent practices in the insurance sector.

“In insurance, if a claim is approved, you cannot pay another claimant. But that is what is happening in county governments. It is completely unacceptable,” he said.

National Treasury CS John Mbadi before County Public Accounts Committtee on Thursday /ENOS TECHE

RELATIONSHIP INTACT

Mudavadi: No cause for alarm over US relations

MOSES OGADA

KENYA remains a steadfast ally of the United States, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has said, in a bid to reassure the nation and international partners.

Musalia's affirmation comes as a proposed bill in the US Senate threatens to revoke the country's major non-NATO ally (MNNA) status over its trade relations with Iran and Russia.

Speaking to lawmakers on Thursday, Mudavadi dismissed claims that Kenya's diplomatic ties with Tehran and Moscow warranted alarm.

He maintained that the nation was merely exercising its sovereign right to pursue economic opportunities for its farmers and traders.

"There is a misrepresentation around some of these issues. Kenya is a sovereign state and must be free to engage with any nation in the interest of its people," he told the Regional Integration Committee chaired by Nominated MP Irene Mayaka.

The controversy stems from a bill introduced by US Senator Jim Risch, which seeks to reassess Kenya's designation as a MNNA. The bill, among others, cited Kenya's trade engagements with China, Iran and Russia and alleged links to rebel groups in Africa. But Musalia was quick to clarify that the concerns were not raised by the US executive branch but by a single senator.

He emphasised that neither President William Ruto nor himself had made official visits to Russia or Iran, countering insinuations of shifting geopolitical allegiances.

"On what basis is this review being conducted?" he asked, dismissing politicians exploiting the country's diplomatic challenges for political gain.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has been vocal about the US bill question. Musalia downplayed fears that Kenya was "under siege" diplomatically, framing the MNNA review as part of routine legislative scrutiny rather than a punitive measure.

During his recent visit to Washington, he held discussions with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other officials to clarify Kenya's position.

"This is not the time to politicise partnerships. The US has even extended support for Kenya's peacekeeping mission in Haiti, which shows the strength of our relationship," he said. "Let's be measured when talking about these issues. There is an effort to create the impression that Kenya is under siege or attack. We are not under siege but just doing our job."

Musalia also reminded MPs of the country's pivotal role in East Africa and stood firm against calls for Kenya to retaliate against its neighbours over trade restrictions hurting small businesses. Instead, he emphasised diplomacy as the government's preferred approach in resolving disputes, even with Tanzania, which has recently imposed stringent measures on Kenyan traders.

PHOTO STORY

Margaret Jow lays a floral tribute in remembrance of her daughter Dorine Alouch during the 27th anniversary celebrations to remember the victims of the 1998 US embassy bombing at the August 7th Memorial Park on Thursday /LEAH MUKANGAI

LAX OVERSIGHT

Queries over 'lost' Sh200 million cane farmers payouts

Duplicate payments, undocumented transactions flagged

MOSES OGADA
@AliwaMoses

THE Agriculture and Food Authority is under scrutiny over questionable salary arrears and payments to farmers amounting to Sh200 million.

In a new report, Auditor General Nancy Gathungu has cast doubt on the transactions, stating that millions could be lost to duplicate payments amid lax oversight.

She says in the report, which covers the period up to June 30, 2024, that her review established incidents of duplicate payments and undocumented transactions.

There was no proof that monies meant for Chemelil, Muhoroni and Nzoia sugarcane farmers were ever paid out or reached the beneficiaries.

At Chemelil Sugar Company, Sh140 million was paid out to a number of saccos and other institutions, but there was no record or proof of the money reaching farmers.

Chemelil did not provide any documents to show that the money was eventually received by farmers as directed by the Treasury.

Instead, the sugar company reported that it had no means of following up to confirm that each farmer got their dues as disbursed.

The company also couldn't identify the beneficiaries of farmers who may have died between the time of preparing the list and the disbursement date.

Another transaction of Sh13.5 million is also in doubt—albeit the audit is not clear whether it is in respect of Mumias or Muhoroni Sugar.

Gathungu asserts it was not possible to confirm receipt of the amount as the entity did not provide remittance documents from the saccos to confirm the farmers received the money.

At Nzoia Sugar, Sh63 million, which the entity reported to have disbursed to farmers for offsetting their arrears, couldn't be confirmed.

The report says the money was sent to various saccos, farmer cooperatives and banks, but the company did not provide any remittance documents from the Nzoia Sacco Society to indicate that farmers had received the money.

Another transaction of Sh150 million for offsetting salary arrears for February, March and April 2023 at Nzoia Sugar has also been red-flagged. The auditor says the schedule prepared by the company and used by AFA for payment indicated that different staff members had duplicate account numbers.

As a result, some retirees got an irregular double payment to the tune of Sh5 million, Sh20 million in the case of casuals and Sh17 million to permanent staff.

"The accuracy and regularity of the salary arrears could not be confirmed," the report tabled in Parliament recently reads. Also flagged is a provision of Sh1.3 billion in respect to salaries that were harmonised.

Gathungu raised concerns that the amount was not supported by the relevant documentation, including an approved structure that was used to come up with the amounts.

"Further, the management could not explain why they had to provide for such a huge amount without finalising the consultation with SRC," the report reads.

Gathungu said the completeness and regularity of the provision of the Sh1.3 billion salary adjustment couldn't be confirmed in the ensuing circumstances.

There was no interim management committee report on the remuneration, minutes of the committee, or the current employment status of the affected employees.

Auditors also could not establish whether some of the employees were still in the organisation or if some had left due to natural attrition factors.

Over Sh11.2 billion in assets, including 17 parcels of land (Sh6.6 billion), were also without ownership documents. Some lands were illegally allocated to private developers.

Auditors further flagged idle cane testing units, which were built at Sh1.4 billion to help in ascertaining sucrose content as the basis of paying farmers.

The Sh1.39 billion project remains non-operational due to poor integration with sugar mills, despite being installed in 11 companies.

AFA has also been called out over an irregular investment of Sh221 million in a fixed deposit account without Treasury approval.

At least 28 dormant bank accounts (Sh13.1 million) raised red flags over financial oversight, reflecting a culture of impunity in public funds usage.

MONEY SENT TO SACCOS, COOPERATIVES AND BANKS, BUT NO DOCUMENTS PROVIDED

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The audit underscores the country's struggle to enforce accountability in agricultural funds, with recurring issues like ghost payments and stalled projects. Taxpayers could demand action as AFA's failures directly impact farmers and sugar sector reforms.

NEWS GENERAL

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Six sue election agency over MPs recall dispute

Petitioners argue IEBC's inaction amounts to violation of their constitutional rights

JAMES GICHIGI
@TheStarKenya

IEBC chairperson Erastus Ethekon at Edge Convention Centre in Nairobi /LEAH MUKANGAI

SIX petitioners have moved to the High Court in Nairobi to challenge the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission over its refusal to process petitions seeking the recall of Members of Parliament.

The petitioners — Newton Boore, Dennis Chabari, Morris Mawira, Agnes Mwende, Seth Kinoti and Christine Kithinji — argue that the IEBC's inaction amounts to a violation of their constitutional rights and undermines public accountability.

At the centre of the dispute is Article 104 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which gives voters the right to recall their MPs before the end of their term.

However, the IEBC has maintained that it cannot process such petitions due to the absence of a clear legal framework following a 2017 High Court decision.

In a detailed statement on July 30, the commission confirmed that while it fully supports the right of voters to recall underperforming elected leaders, there is no enabling legislation in place to facilitate the recall of MPs.

The commission explained that the MPs, in this context, means both National Assembly and Senate members cannot be legally removed by the public at this time.

According to IEBC chair Erastus Ethekon, a valid legal framework exists only for the recall of Members of County Assemblies.

In a previous ruling, the court invalidated sections of the Elections Act that had provided procedures for recalling MPs, citing them as unconstitutional and overly restrictive.

Since then, the petitioners argue that no new law has been enacted to fill the legal gap.

The petitioners contend that Parliament, particularly the National Assembly, has failed in its constitutional duty to operationalise Article 104(2), which mandates legislation to guide the recall process.

They allege this omission protects legislators from being held accountable and violates fundamental rights under Articles 1, 27, 38, and 47 of the Constitution.

"Following the 2017 Katiba judgment, Parliament amended the County Governments Act, 2012, in 2020 to provide a workable recall mechanism for Members of County Assemblies but failed to enact corresponding legislation for MPs, creating a legal vacuum for the recall of MPs," the petition states.

In their petition, the six argue that the right to recall is self-executing and does not require legislation to be enforced.

They urge the court to compel IEBC to accept and process recall petitions using surviving provisions in the Elections Act and models used in the County Governments Act for recalling Members of County Assemblies.

"The Petitioner contends that the 1st Respondent's (IEBC) position violates the Constitution by failing to facilitate the electorate's sovereign right to recall MPs," reads part of the petition.

They are also asking the court to issue an order of mandamus directing Parliament to enact the necessary recall legislation within 90 days.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Government opposes grilling of officer in TikToker Mosquito case

A screengrab of a video of Shedrack Omondi Okindo, aka Hon Mosquito

JAMES GICHIGI

THE state has opposed an application by lawyers representing TikToker Shadrack Omondi Okindo, aka Mosquito, to cross-examine the investigating officer in a case where police are seeking custodial orders to detain him.

Appearing before magistrate Richard Koech at the Kahawa law courts on Thursday, defence counsel Andrew Muge told the court that the accused has a right to challenge the basis of the application seeking to limit his liberty.

He argued that the state's request to remand the accused was based on allegations drawn from social media content, including TikTok videos, claims of mobilisation and material retrieved from electronic gadgets. "We made an application seeking to cross-examine the deponent regarding information said to be obtained from TikTok, claims of mobilisation and electronic gadget evidence, all cited as reasons for the remand request," Muge said.

He added that such evidence, if used to justify detention, must be subjected to scrutiny, and the officer who swore the affidavit should be made available for cross-examination. "We pray the court calls the investigating officer to the dock for half an hour," he told court, adding that what the state terms as 'compelling reasons' must be interrogated in interest of justice.

The prosecution, however, opposed the request, arguing that the matter was still at a pre-trial stage and that the application before the court concerned custodial orders meant to aid investigations.

The prosecution team said cross-examining the officer at this point could risk exposing the direction of the probe and potentially compromise evidence.

"This is not a trial. Some of the contested issues, particularly those related to mobilisation, are still under investigation and could prematurely reveal ongoing lines of inquiry," the court heard.

NOT GRABBED

KFS: Karura Forest is intact and protected

GILBERT KOECH

THE Kenya Forest Service has assured the public that no part of Karura Forest has been lost to land grabbers, following recent claims by a private developer.

Speaking during a patrol and familiarisation tour of the forest on Thursday, Chief Conservator of Forests Alex Lemarkoko dismissed the allegations, affirming that the forest remains intact and under legal protection.

"Karura Forest is intact. No one has grabbed it, and no one will, because we have strong instruments governing the management and protection of its boundaries," Lemarkoko said.

He was accompanied by senior KFS officials, including commandant Mohammed Mohammed, head of survey Evans Kegode, head of legal (Survey) Laura Yego, Nairobi County forest conservator Margaret Wanjiru and members of the Friends of Karura Community Forest Association.

The officials toured parts of the forest, including a river forming the natural boundary on the southern edge. Lemarkoko reiterated that the forest has been gazetted and legally protected for nearly a century. Karura was first proclaimed a forest reserve under Proclamation No. 44 of 1932, and later declared a central forest through Legal Notice No. 174 on May 20, 1964.

OUTSTANDING BILL

Thika butchers decry losses amid power cut

KNA

THIKA butchers who supply meat to the town and its environs have threatened to down their tools, citing a prolonged power cut at the main slaughterhouse that has affected their operations.

They said they have been operating in darkness for over two months after the Kenya Power Company disconnected electricity at the slaughter house over Sh36,000 debt from the Kiambu county government.

This, they said has made their operations risky, with fears that their animals might get stolen at the slaughterhouse at night.

Led by their chairman Stephen Mwangi, they said they no longer start slaughtering animals at 3 am as has been the case over the years, leading to delays in supplying to their customers.

"We receive animals for slaughter at around 2 am, and with this darkness, we fear they might be packed into lorries and taken away because security has been paralysed," Mwangi said.

NEWS GENERAL

VULNERABLE IS OKAY

Njoki tends invisible emotional wounds of suffering activists

Justice will not win if its defenders are emotionally broken

JOYCE KIMANI
@TheStarKenya

IN a world that demands unbreakable heroes, Salima Njoki is on a mission to remind Kenya's change-makers that the most powerful resistance begins within. And that sometimes, healing is the revolution.

Drawing from her experience growing up in the Kariobangi informal settlements during the '90s, Njoki witnessed the emotional wreckage afflicting civic rights actors. And that experience pushed her to offer them a place to lay down their grief and talk about it when the time is right.

A counsellor by profession, Njoki leads the Inuka Kenya ni Sisi Wellness Resource Hub, a programme caring for civic actors, activists and community workers who often find themselves confronting the establishment, the powers that be, crooked politicians and sometimes brutal police.

The hub offers mental health support and reassures human rights defenders that they are not alone in their fight.

She focuses on some civic actors across the region, because they challenge the system and try to shift and overhaul narratives. Their efforts, she says, has helped to limit many atrocities, impunity and violence in Kenya and East Africa, where the project is focused.

Salima Njoki /HANDOUT

"Being aware of all this helps people to prevent burnout and validates our efforts," Njoki told the Star.

As a person who grew up in the '90s, she witnessed a lot of human rights violations. They included discrimination, marginalisation and inequalities but at that time, there was no mechanism to help Kenyans acknowledge they were experiencing burnout, pain and anxiety.

There wasn't the realisation that it was okay to be vulnerable as civic actors. Sometimes this vulnerability led to loss of life through physical attacks on themselves, and through their own negative coping behaviours such as alcoholism and sex addiction. They didn't know how to handle stress, realise it was normal, and it was okay to admit fear and pain, especially for men.

"I came from a place of 'enough is enough," Njoki said.

"We had to think of how to take care of ourselves individually and collectively, to enable effective agitation through maintaining actors' mental, physical and emotional well-being."

She realised it was imperative to embed care and healing into the daily lives of those who chose a difficult path to demand a better Kenya.

"I have helped and assisted victims of suicide and those with suicidal ideation, and through psychological support, they are hopeful of living again. I have rekindled hope in them," Njoki said.

She also witnessed the emotional toll on some of the civic actors in the Release Political Prisoners Movement in the early 1990s.

Njoki still carries in her heart the stories of comrades from who, after enduring torture and systemic harassment, slipped into addiction, especially since they lacked psychosocial support.

A cross section of them plunged into unhealthy coping strategies that eventually led to alcoholism and subsequent deaths.

"The RPP members were very brilliant. They would challenge the government, raise their voices, write about injustice and atrocities and would question a system when something was not right. Those stories stuck with me and impacted me, and I kept saying we cannot keep losing people through this. It was sad they lacked proper mechanisms of decompressing and talking about their burnout and pain," Njoki said.

For them, the easy way was to get consolation and comfort from the things that also harmed them and ultimately claimed their lives.

"These stories hurt me. They live in me and through me and that is one reasons why I am so passionate about issues of well-being for civic actors," she added.

That pain became her calling. Njoki has taken a very different approach to well-being of civic actors, starting with demystifying myths about mental health.

"We live in a society that makes you feel that if you have a mental health condition you are crazy and mad," she says.

"One of the best approaches is to work towards letting people know that distress it is very normal, and everyone is predisposed to it," she added.

Njoki takes a non-medical approach, saying categorising people because of mental health conditions removes their humanity and dignity.

She advocates holistically looking at all factors pushing people into their emotional state.

It's important to remove the fear of seeing a psychologist, and the stigma attached to counselling by those who don't understand.

Njoki calls for an approach that taps into people's strengths and "speaks to us as a people, in our context and acknowledges our internal and external resources as a people, individual and community".

She has worked in capacity building institutions in mental wellness and care, such as the Wangu Kanja Foundation to embed care into programming, which she considers key in our time.

A traditional drums drummer herself, Njoki advocates tapping into ancestral knowledge in dealing with mental health, including storytelling, music, dance and communal care.

She is slowly dismantling the stigma surrounding mental health in activist spaces. But it's not easy. Many still come only when they've collapsed -- physically, emotionally, spiritually.

"Self-care is not selfish; it is very instrumental. How we keep showing up for ourselves really matters," she added.

NJOKI WATCHED ACTIVISTS SUFFER IN THE 1990S BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T COPE WITH STRESS, HARASSMENT AND PAIN. THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW, AND TRIED TO BE STRONG

NEWS GENERAL

POLICY STRATEGIES

Young Scientists Kenya board chairperson Ben Roberts and Young Scientists and Technology Exhibition Ireland board member and former Irish Ambassador to Kenya Vincent O'Neill at the eighth edition of the National Science and Technology Exhibition at Moi Education Centre in Nairobi /HANDOUT

Stem needs government support, urge the youth

Say lasting transformation requires partnerships at the policy level

AGATHA NGOTHO
@AgathaNgotho

YOUNG scientists have called for enhanced collaboration between educators, policymakers and the government to create a more supportive environment for science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

Young Scientists and Technology Exhibition Ireland board member and former Irish Ambassador to Kenya Vincent O'Neill praised the progress made by Young Scientists Kenya since 2015.

He spoke during the opening ceremony of the 8th National Science and Technology Exhibition in Nairobi

"From a simple idea to a nationwide movement that has now reached over 250,000 students across all 47 counties, YSK shows that when knowledge is shared, societies are transformed," O'Neill said.

He urged YSK and its private sector partners to deepen engagement with government policymakers to strengthen Stem learning in schools, emphasising the need to embed its promotion into national education strategies.

"Lasting transformation requires strong partnerships at the policy level. It's vital for the government to help train and equip teachers with skills and confidence needed to inspire the next generation," O'Neil said.

He highlighted YSK's latest initiative—a pioneering Artificial Intelligence education programme seeking to train 300 secondary school teachers in foundational AI skills.

Delivered through Raspberry Pi technology, the programme is designed to integrate AI tools into classrooms and better prepare students for Kenya's digital economy.

"In recent years, we've seen more students embracing Stem, thanks to teachers who have been empowered through targeted training. This marks a shift from the limited exposure many educators had in the past," O'Neil said.

"It proves that when policy, teacher development and student engagement align, the results are transformative."

Since its official launch in 2018, YSK has trained more than 850 teachers, supported more than 1,700 student-led projects and impacted more than 250,000 students.

The programme has also led to 15 university scholarships, several patented innovations and multiple student-led start-ups.

"Seven years on, we're seeing former participants winning innovation awards, launching tech startups and driving change across industries. This proves that investing in young minds today creates the leaders of tomorrow," said YSK Board chairperson Ben Roberts.

The week-long exhibition includes project judging, industry showcases, mentorship sessions and public exhibitions.

It will conclude with an awards ceremony on Saturday, August 9. Top student projects will receive university scholarships, international exposure and business development support through the Winners' Bootcamp.

"Great change happens when vision meets collaboration. Our work with YSK proves that by combining resources, expertise and passion, we can unlock the potential of an entire generation," said Peter Wairagu, country director of the Raspberry Pi Foundation.

The exhibition continues to serve as a powerful platform for nurturing Kenya's next generation of scientists, innovators and problem-solvers, while fostering stronger collaboration among youth, academia, industry and government.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Kenya's youth-driven Stem revolution is gaining traction, but stronger government involvement is vital to sustain momentum. The Young Scientists Kenya initiative, now in its 8th year, demonstrates how targeted training, policy alignment and private-sector support can transform education. The introduction of AI training for teachers marks a forward-looking step, preparing students for a digital future. However, without deeper integration into national education policies and consistent government support, such efforts risk stagnation.

ORGANISED SYNDICATE

Konza residents decry upsurge in theft of livestock

KNA

RESIDENTS of Kalama in Konza, Machakos county are living in fear following theft of more than 2,000 livestock in the past two months.

They said the thieves, who are armed with firearms, are well oriented with the area and operate in a well-coordinated manner.

Chairman Thomas Mutuku said they have suffered losses after their homes were raided in the middle of the night and cows, goats and sheep stolen.

He said they tried to go after the thieves in vain.

Mutuku said they have reported the matter at the Konza police station, who in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service, have launched investigations.

Jay Matelo, a caretaker and security guard in one of the targeted homes, said he was ambushed by two armed thieves in the middle of the night who locked him inside the house. And after cutting through the fence, they stole goats and slaughtered the young ones.

Matelo said the thieves extracted intestines of the slaughtered goats, mixed them with blood and drank the mixture before fleeing.

The locals believe the move is a ritual to render the thieves untouchable.

Leonard Chege said he has been forced to sleep outside after some of his livestock were stolen and some slaughtered.

"It seems they are offering sacrifices by slaughtering the young goats, drinking their blood and eating the intestines. They believe this will make them invisible and confuse assailants," he said.

Chege said after a joint operation between the KWS, police and community members some cattle were recovered.

The Police have so far arrested one suspect and the four mobile phones recovered are undergoing forensic analysis.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Experts unite to save sharks, rays from extinction

GILBERT KOECH

FOR decades, the Western Indian Ocean has been a global hotspot for sharks and rays, thanks to its rich and diverse marine ecosystems.

From mangroves and coral reefs to estuaries, salt marshes and the deep sea, this region supports a wide range of marine life, including chondrichthyans—sharks, rays, skates and chimaeras.

However, mounting threats such as overfishing, habitat degradation, pollution, unregulated trade and climate change are now pushing many of these species towards extinction.

Nearly 40 per cent of shark and ray species are currently listed as threatened under the IUCN Red List.

In response, regional experts, government officials and conservationists are meeting in Mombasa to reverse the decline.

The Western Indian Ocean Region Pre-CITES CoP20 Workshop on Sharks and Rays at Sarova Whitesands Hotel, was officially opened on Wednesday by Patrick Omondi, director of the Wildlife Research and Training Institute, on behalf of Principal Secretary for Wildlife, Silvia Museiya.

"This regional engagement is crucial in shaping strong, unified positions ahead of the Cites Conference of the Parties (CoP20) scheduled for November in Samarkand, Uzbekistan," he said. Technical experts and government representatives from the Western Indian Ocean will discuss conservation and sustainable use strategies for sharks and rays.

Omondi praised the Wildlife Conservation Society and the State Departments for Wildlife and Blue Economy and Fisheries for supporting and organising the workshop.

Kenya, a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites) since 1979, has submitted two working documents for CoP20—one on the disposal of confiscated specimens and another on ivory stockpiles. Of the 51 proposals submitted globally for the upcoming CoP, seven focus on sharks and rays, underlining the urgent need for action.

The workshop provided a vital platform for sharing scientific data, showcasing species identification tools and building regional technical capacity. It highlighted the role of accurate data collection and non-detriment findings in guiding Cites decisions, as well as the importance of aligning national positions to support effective international policies.

A 2022 status report prepared by the Wildlife Conservation Society for the Nairobi Convention revealed that of the 224 chondrichthyan species found in the Western Indian Ocean, 89—nearly 40 per cent—are now threatened. These include 13 critically endangered, 32 endangered and 44 vulnerable species. The report also notes that 56 of these species inhabit areas beyond national jurisdiction, emphasising the importance of regional collaboration.

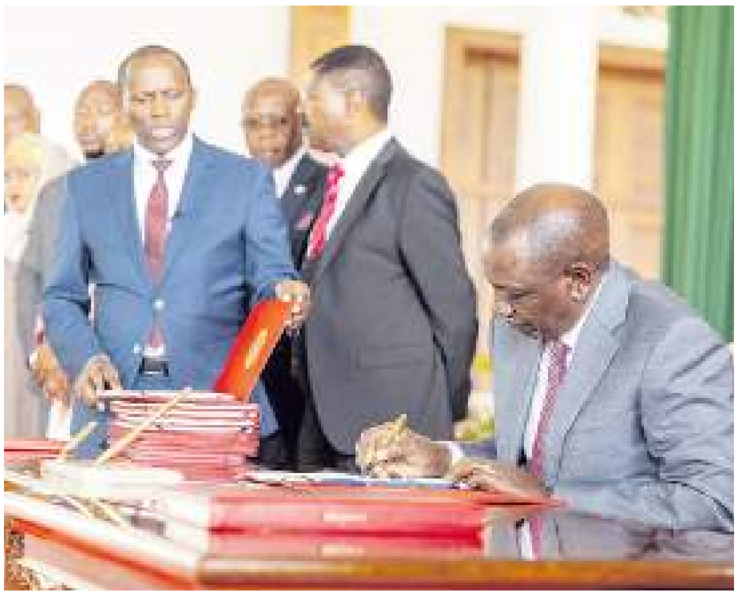
Omondi called for partnerships through frameworks like the Nairobi Convention and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association.

Wildlife Research and Training Institute director Patrick Omondi /HANDOUT

LEGISLATION

Ruto signs gambling bill into law, new authority to regulate the sector

The law repeals the Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act that has been operational for decades



President William Ruto assents to the Gambling Control Bill and the Kenya Roads (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2025, at the State House /PCS

JACKTONE LAWI
@jacktonelawi

GAMBLING operations in Kenya will be henceforth be under the Gambling Regulatory Authority, that replaces the Betting Control and Licensing Board, after President William Ruto signed a new law.

The new legislation come into force after parliament concluded deliberations on the long-awaited 2023 Gambling Control Bill, now Act.

The Act will now overhaul the country's gambling framework with new safeguards and regulatory structures aimed at balancing economic gains with public protection.

Over the past few years the government has been pushing for regulations with the main aim of raising revenues from gambling activities.

However lawmakers have now been raising alarm over the growing gambling addiction among Kenyan youth.

The legislation, sponsored by National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah, was first introduced in October 2023.

After a back-and-forth process between the National Assembly and Senate—including mediation to resolve differences, both Houses approved a reconciled version in July 2025.

"The National Assembly considered and rejected the Senate's amendments on 16th January, 2025, which essentially committed the Bill to a Mediation Committee," the brief reads in part.

"The National Assembly and the Senate, respectively, considered and approved the version of the Bill proposed by the Mediation Committee on 31st July, 2025, and 23rd July, 2025, respectively, thereby concluding the bicameral consideration of the Bill."

The revised Gambling Control Bill aims to introduce a comprehensive legal framework for regulating betting, casinos, lotteries, prize competitions, and media promotions in Kenya.

Recognizing gambling as a shared function between the national and county governments, the Bill outlines distinct but concurrent responsibilities for each level of government.

If approved by the president, the Bill will repeal the existing Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act, which has governed the sector for decades.

However, provisions relating to gambling taxes—such as betting tax, lottery tax, gaming tax, and prize competition tax—will remain in force until replaced by future legislation, ensuring no revenue gaps arise.

With gambling taxed at 15 per cent of gross revenue, the Bill identifies the sector as a source of critical government funding.

These funds are directed to the Sports, Arts and Social Development Fund, which supports cultural initiatives, sports, and social development.

The betting industry has become a surprise economic powerhouse, beating tax targets and boosting government revenues amid broader economic headwinds.

New data from the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) shows excise duty from betting hit Sh13.2 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, surpassing the Sh11.3 billion target. This marks a sharp rise from Ksh10.6 billion the previous year.

Separately, betting tax revenue totaled Sh5.7 billion, also exceeding projections with a 103.7 per cent achievement rate, driven by 22 per cent year-on-year growth.

KRA attributed the gains to enhanced digital integration of betting firms' systems with its own infrastructure—allowing real-time monitoring of transactions.

"This has enhanced compliance, transparency, and effective collection," said Rispah Simiyu, Commissioner for Large and Medium Taxpayers.

In July 2025, excise duty on betting was reduced from 15per cent to 5 per cent, with taxation shifting from wagers to deposits.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

A section of the lawmakers have also been pushing for the revision of legal betting age. Dagoretti North MP Beatrice Elachi had in July 31 called for the introduction of an age limit for gambling, similar to that applied to alcohol consumption. She further suggested increasing the minimum amount required to place a bet as a deterrent. Currently, one can bet with any amount, exposing low income earners to gambling addiction.

STRATEGY

Kenya to conduct SME census to boost sector planning

JACKTONE LAWI

KENYA will carry out a nationwide census of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to better understand and support the critical sector, Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives and MSME Development Wycliffe Oparanya has announced.

Speaking at the unveiling of a national coordinating committee for the upcoming MSME International Trade Fair, Oparanya said the exercise—last carried out in 2016—is urgently needed to provide fresh data to guide policy, funding, and other government interventions.

"We need to carry out a survey to know where these MSMEs are concentrated. Once we know this, we can effectively channel resources and support through our key focus areas," said Oparanya.

The CS said the lack of up-to-date data is hindering targeted support, especially in areas like financing, market access, digital transformation, and climate resilience—four areas the government has identified as critical to the sector's growth.

He pointed out that MSMEs are one of the five pillars of the government's economic transformation agenda and warned that ignoring the sector's needs could fuel more economic discontent.

"We can build roads and infrastructure, but if we do not focus on creating jobs and economic activity through MSMEs, we will still have demonstrations on those same roads," he said.

To support MSMEs financially, Oparanya highlighted the rollout of a government-backed credit guarantee fund to help de-risk lending to small businesses, which have traditionally been underserved by commercial banks due to perceived high risks.

He also underscored the importance of breaking trade barriers

Cabinet secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives and MSMEs Development, Wycliffe Oparanya speaking during the launch of the National Organizing Committee for the 25TH (EAC) MSME Trade Fair on August 7, in Nairobi /HANDOUT

within the East African Community and leveraging Kenya's strong mobile phone penetration to drive digital adoption across the sector.He shared insights from a recent global MSME ministerial conference in South Africa attended by over 40 ministers, saying there is a growing consensus that MSMEs are essential to global economic recovery and stability. He added that the ministry will also expand MSME Connect, a platform bringing together key players from government, academia, private sector, and regulators such as the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), which has faced criticism for its treatment of small traders.

THE DATA

129.23

Indicative value of shilling to the dollar

The shilling was stable during the week with month-end foreign exchange inflows from aid agencies and remittances offsetting importer demand

FINANCIAL MARKET

FOREX EXCHANGE RATES

Currency	Mean
US DOLLAR	129.2374
EURO	150.8847
STG POUND	172.7969
SA RAND	7.2812
KES / USHS	27.6236
KES / TSHS	19.1315
AE DIRHAM	35.1853
JPY (100)	87.7644
CHINESE YUAN	18.0024
IND RUPEE	1.4736

NSE BIGGEST WINNERS

	Price	Change (%)
OLYMPIA CAPITAL	4.98	8.50
SAMEER	11.80	8.26
CROWN PAINTS	43.70	6.59
EAAGADS	13.45	3.46
BK GROUP	35.45	2.75

NSE BIGGEST LOSERS

	Price	Change (%)
STANDARD GROUP	5.96	8.31
CAR&GEN	23.75	4.23
SANLAM	8.12	3.10
SCANGROUP	2.61	2.97
LONGHORN	2.61	2.61

Harvard Business Review

TIP OF THE DAY

5 PRACTICAL WAYS TO IMPROVE HAPPINESS

Want to live a happier life? Research points to 10 effective, practical strategies that can make all the difference, even for busy professionals. Here are the first five strategies—tune in tomorrow for the rest.

Invest in family and friends. The research is clear that though our natural impulse may be to buy stuff, we should invest instead in improving our closest relationships by sharing experiences and freeing up time to spend together.

Join a club. The "social capital" you get from voluntarily and regularly associating with other people, whether or not you do so through a formal club, has long been known to foster a sense of belonging and protect against loneliness and isolation.

Be active both mentally and physically. You can make this advice as complicated and expensive as you want. But if you like to keep things simple, just try to walk for an hour and read for an hour (not for work!) each day.

Look beyond the day-to-day. This might sound impractical if you don't practice religion in the traditional sense, but for the purpose of happiness, religion can be understood more broadly as a spiritual or philosophical path. Search for transcendent truths beyond your individual daily life.

Get physical exercise. This is a slightly souped-up version of the third strategy above: Your daily walk should be supplemented with a deliberate exercise plan. This is consistent with the research showing that regular exercise of all different types enhances mood and social functioning.

NEWS BUSINESS

RISK

Banks exposed to data breaches by weak tech contracts - CBK

JACKTONE LAWI

KENYAN banks are exposing themselves to financial risks by not enforcing robust contractual safeguards with third-party technology partners, a new report by the Central Bank of Kenya warns.

The banking sector regulator says that while most financial institutions now depend heavily on third-party vendors for digital banking operations support, some lack clear legal provisions.

This, CBK says leaves them vulnerable to data breaches, service failures and compliance violations.

The July 2025 Survey on Third-Party Technology Service Providers in the Banking Sector shows that 21 percent of microfinance banks (MFBs) do not include any risk management requirements in their contracts with third-party technology service providers (TSPs).

CBK says this is a critical gap in an era of rising cyberattacks and systemic digital exposure.

Among those that do, many fail to rigorously enforce key provisions such as service level agreements (SLAs), audit rights or termination clauses.

“Some institutions still enter these partnerships without fully articulating accountability frameworks. The absence of enforceable terms increases exposure to operational disruptions, legal disputes, and regulatory sanctions.” the CBK report notes.

The report surveyed 52 institutions, including 38 commercial banks and 14 MFBs. It found that every commercial bank includes risk clauses in its TSP contracts, but compliance among MFBs remains uneven. Only 79 percent of MFBs said they include risk clauses, raising questions about the sector’s preparedness to handle third-party failures.

Banks use third-party technology providers for a wide range of critical services, including mobile and internet banking, cloud storage, payment

Central Bank of Kenya headquarters in Nairobi /FILE

processing, cybersecurity tools, and core banking applications.

These vendors are now embedded deeply into the core operations of nearly every bank in the country.

Yet, despite this reliance, many institutions still lack the contractual teeth to manage their partners effectively.

“While most contracts contain basic clauses such as data protection and confidentiality, fewer institutions secure the right to conduct regular audits of their vendors. Only 50 percent of MFBs and 87 percent of commercial banks reported including audit rights in their TSP agreements,” the report says

Even fewer go beyond that to ensure enforceability of disaster recovery obligations, subcontractor disclosures or breach notification timelines.

Some banks are also neglecting exit strategies, a risk that could result in “vendor lock-in”—where switching providers becomes technically or financially unfeasible.

TRADE

Tanzania’s new taxes and ban threat to EAC industries – KAM

The action by Dar es Salaam will also lead to little movement of labour

KAM chief executive Tobias Alando /HANDOUT

MARTIN MWITA
@MwitaMartin

HIGHER excise duty, levies and Tanzania’s recent move barring foreigners from operating small businesses threaten East Africa’s industrial growth, manufacturers in Kenya now say.

The move, they say will also lead to loss of intra-East African Community trade opportunities where partner states have already lost about 30 per cent of intra-regional trade through non-tariff barriers (NTBs) and distortions to the common market.

This, as other markets among them China, India and Turkey continue to enjoy a large share of the region’s market that should have benefited EAC partner states. The Tanzania Finance Act 2025 and the amended Tanzania Excise (Management and Tariff) Act 2019, has introduced excise duties and an industrial development levy, at 10 and 15 per cent, respectively.

Some of the upward excise duty rate adjustments by Tanzania touch on potatoes, ice cream, whether or not containing cocoa, beer made from malt, wine, cider, opaque beer, vodka, whiskies, rum, fireworks, soap, cufflinks and studs and imported seats, with a higher duty on imports of up to 25 per cent.

Some of the taxes, manufacturers say, are targeting Kenyan exports.

Also, of concern is the recently gazetted Business Licensing (Prohibition of Business Activities for Non-Citizens) Order, 2025 that prohibits non-Tanzanian citizens from trading in 15 services, including the operation and ownership of Micro and Small Industries. The order includes significant penalties for violations.

According to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), a significant number of Kenyans are engaged in economic activities, driven by advancements in EAC regional integration over the years, with free movement within the community.

“Kenyans have been taking up these opportunities across the trading bloc: in business, trade, investment, employment and even intermarriage. Therefore, the recent developments are quite disheartening,” KAM chief executive Tobias Alando said.

From the manufacturing sector’s perspective, some of the goods affected by the non-trade barriers include dairy, meat, sausages, steel, matchboxes, furniture, confectionery among others.

Alando said manufacturers are concerned over de-industrialisation within EAC, including Tanzania and Kenya, as companies may need to shut down their production lines as partner states opt to import from third parties.

The impact of Tanzania’s action will also lead to little or no movement of labour, capital and people, thus eroding EAC integration, he said.

“The EAC is the largest external market for Kenyan goods led by Uganda, followed by Tanzania and Rwanda. However, this is currently being threatened by measures by partner states which inhibit the free movement of goods, for instance the recent Tanzania Finance Act 2025 and Tanzania Excise (Management and Tariff) Act 2019, which have introduced discriminatory tax measures that have targeted Kenya’s major exports,” Alando noted.

Kenya acknowledges and respects Tanzania’s sovereign rights–but regional integration is an important factor of socio-economic development, KAM notes.

“We call for consultations and coordination with the government of Tanzania to resolve the stalemate, to bring back regional integration and allow the free movement of people, goods and services as envisioned during the establishment of the East African Community,” Alando said.

Tanzania ranks as Kenya’s second-largest EAC trading partner after Uganda, with intra-community transfers of Sh63 billion in 2024. Kenya and Tanzania have had long-running trade disputes including bans on certain exports.

THE DATA

SH63BN

The value of trade betwween Kenya and Tanzania

NO BALANCE

Women-owned businesses get just 18.1% of public contracts

MARTIN MWITA

WOMEN-owned businesses are tapping just 18.1 per cent of public contracts in Kenya despite the 30 per cent reservation by government, UN Women has noted, amid calls to take up these opportunities.

The Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) platform mandates that a minimum of 30 per cent of government tenders be allocated to businesses owned by women, youth and persons with disabilities.

This initiative, launched in 2013, aims to economically empower these groups by providing them with more opportunities to do business with all government entities including learning institutions.

The low uptake has been blamed on barriers to women’s participation in supply chain which include limited access to capital and resources for women-owned businesses, lack of access to collateral, institutional bias and socio-cultural norms.

Complex technical requirements and bidding, registration processes, limited access to human capital where most women lag behind men in terms of business and managerial experience, have also been cited as barriers.

There is also lack of awareness about procurement opportunities, especially in rural areas, limited access to social capital-limited or no business networks, unpaid care and domestic work (women spend about 300-minutes per day on unpaid care burden), gender biases in decision-making and supply chain processes, resistance to change, lack of gender expertise, and rigid supplier selection processes.

Youths and persons living with disabilities are also missing out on the supply chain opportunities due to similar challenges.

“Women should take up these opportunities. We are working with Treasury and capacity building to increase adoption,” said Millicent Okello, Women’s Economic Empowerment Specialist-Gender Responsive Procurement, UN Women.

She spoke in Nairobi yesterday during a media sensitisation forum on Gender Responsive Procurement, where she called on women, youths and persons living with disability to take up opportunities set aside by government.

According to a policy brief from Strathmore University, the challenges, often categorised as capacity, complexity, cost, communication and corruption (5Cs), prevent women from fully leveraging public procurement opportunities.

VOICES

COMMENT

FARAH KALMEY
Lecturer and consultant with OXUS Management Consultants

People who are culturally intelligent fulfil several criteria. They possess the ability to learn and be mindful of the culture of their host country. Another component of CQ is behavioural skills

WHY CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IS CRITICAL FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Moving abroad can come with many hurdles and rewards for migrant workers, families and dependents. To successfully get the reward of working abroad, expatriates must not only get used to the new country's culture but also the inner culture of their places of work. This can be challenging for most people.

However, some individuals take cultural adjustment in their stride. They acculturate to their new setting faster than others. For these people, working and living with individuals from other cultures is like a walk in the park. The question is, what do these people have in abundance that others do not have?

Recently, Kenya has become a significant exporter of migrant labour to Gulf countries. Thousands of Kenyan workers are employed in various employment sectors, including domestic, healthcare, construction and hospitality. While these workers contribute significantly to their home country's economy, they face many challenges working and living abroad, and this can have an impact on their personal well-being, professional success and overall experience abroad.

Cultural intelligence, which is defined as the ability to interact successfully in multiple cultures, has become a crucial tool for some Kenyan migrants navigating life and work in the Gulf. People who are culturally intelligent fulfil several criteria. Among others, they possess the ability to learn and be mindful of the culture of their host country. Another component of CQ is behavioural skills. This means the foreign worker must be able to behave accordingly depending on the specific situation in the host country.

Besides this personal level intelligence, there are other skills that drive CQ. For example, language, interpersonal relationships and the ability to be tolerant. Language is necessary for communication because, naturally, for a person to pass a message, they need some ability to converse in the host country's language. Moreover, working and interacting with people make interpersonal skills and tolerance cornerstones of a successful work abroad.

The Gulf is a region with a unique blend of Islamic practices, social norms and workplace expectations that requires a deep understanding of local customs. Moreover, it has also become a hub for people from different cultures and traditions, which can be an overwhelming environment for those coming from Kenya.

For Kenyan workers, most of whom hail from diverse cultural backgrounds, getting used to these cultural differences can present a big challenge. This is where cultural intelligence becomes not just beneficial but essential.

On a personal level, one of the benefits of cultural intelligence is its positive effect on the mental and emotional well-being of the individual migrant worker. Expatriates may often experience loneliness and develop stress due to cultural misunderstandings or feelings of alienation. However, workers who possess CQ tend to be better equipped to navigate the complex social dynamics of the Gulf, which can help reduce the likelihood of culture shock.

By understanding and respecting local traditions, whether it's appreciating observance of religious practices, ie, Ramadhan and the punctuated nature of daily lives (daily prayer times), understanding gender roles and segregations, or navigating workplace hierarchies, these workers can feel more connected to their new environment. This, in turn, enhances their overall happiness and emotional resilience.

When it comes to the professional front, CQ plays a pivotal role in ensuring success and career advancement. The Gulf is a region where work can be hierarchical and where formal and family relationships are not only rooted but also deeply valued. Thus, workers who demonstrate awareness of these internal cultural dynamics are more likely to build positive relationships with managers, supervisors and colleagues. In contrast, those who fail to adjust to these cultural realities may face challenges in securing promotions, maintaining good work relationships or even keeping their jobs.

Furthermore, CQ is crucial to social integration. Some Kenyan migrant workers may choose to relocate their partners and children with them abroad. The cultural adjustment of these families is very important for the success of the working spouse. Understanding local customs and social norms is essential for families to feel included in the community, fostering a more fulfilling life abroad. Workers who possess CQ are more likely to help their families adjust to local schools, social circles and community activities, ensuring that everyone can adapt and grow in the new environment.

In summary, CQ is an important must-have personal level skill and no longer a "nice-to-possess" skill for migrant workers in the Gulf; it is a crucial necessity. CQ improves individual well-being, boosts professional prospects, fosters stronger social integration and helps build more harmonious relationships with both host and expatriate communities.

The Kenyan government, especially policymakers in the Department of Diaspora Affairs, should recognise the value of CQ. They should invest in providing training and resources for Kenyan workers before they get mobilised to commence their assignment in the Gulf.

By doing so, they will not only enhance the lives of the workers but also contribute to a more cohesive, productive and respectful society.

CQ IS AN IMPORTANT MUST-HAVE PERSONAL LEVEL SKILL AND NO LONGER A "NICE-TO-POSSESS" SKILL FOR MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE GULF; IT IS A NECESSITY. CQ IMPROVES INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING, BOOSTS PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS, FOSTERS STRONGER SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND HELPS BUILD MORE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOST AND EXPATRIATE COMMUNITIES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COUNTIES

COUNTIES NAIROBI

FATAL

Tragedy in Kayole as teenager dies in balcony fall

CYRUS OMBATI

A 16-year-old boy died after falling from the balcony of the fifth floor of a residential building in Obama, Kayole in Nairobi.

Police and witnesses said the victim was collecting laundry from a drying line on Monday evening when he accidentally slid.

He fell headfirst and was rushed to Mama Lucy Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Police have launched investigations.

Elsewhere, a university student who had been lying sick at their home in Marimanti, Tharaka Nithi county, was rescued on Tuesday. The victim, aged 20, is a second-year student at Tharaka Nithi University.

Police said they had been informed there was a sick man being detained at his parents home. They had reportedly refused to take the student to hospital and resorted to prayers.

Multi-agency teams visited the home and found the victim, who appeared unconscious, lying in the house.

About eight people, including his parents, prayed for him. It is suspected the victim suffers from epilepsy, as he convulsed vigorously. The student was rescued and taken to Marimanti Level Four Hospital, where he was admitted, while his parents and three other people were arrested. The five are members of a Protestant church.

Police said they suspect the church is running a cult-like affair and they are under probe.

The incident comes at a time when there is a debate on the need to regulate religious institutions hiding behind freedom of worship claims.

The Cabinet last week approved recommendations from the Presidential Taskforce on Religious Organisations, to safeguard the integrity of religious practice while curbing exploitation. The proposed reforms, developed in response to the Shakahola tragedy, place religious leaders at the centre of accountability efforts, emphasising self-regulation over state control. President William Ruto chaired the meeting at State House in Nairobi.

Key proposals include enacting a legal framework to govern religious organisations, establishing a Religious Affairs Commission and strengthening umbrella faith organisations for coordination.

The model blends institutional autonomy with supportive oversight and calls for leadership standards, reforms to religious broadcasting and civic education to promote tolerance and prevent

PHOTO STORY

Tourists watch the wildebeest migration at the Masai Mara National Reserve. The migration occurs during the country's peak tourism season from June to October /XINHUA/HAN XU

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

New motion seeks to compel City Hall to invest in tourism

MCA says Sakaja administration should craft a comprehensive county policy

POLICY TO HARNESS CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, MUSEUMS AND PARKS TO GENERATE REVENUE, CREATE EMPLOY-MENT FOR RESIDENTS

GORDON OSEN
@gordon_osen

ENDOWED with rich cultural diversity, historical landmarks and natural beauty—qualities that have the potential to make it a magnet for tourists—Nairobi still does not have a tourism development and promotion policy.

But this could change if a new motion before the city assembly is passed and implemented by Governor Johnson Sakaja's City Hall.

Nominated MCA Perpetua Mponjiwa's motion complains that despite its status as a key travel, diplomatic and cultural capital in Eastern and Central Africa, Nairobi's tourism sector remains underdeveloped and under-utilised. The city boasts nearly 200 established tourist attractions ranging from social, academic, to spiritual sites.

It is home to a wealth of cultural heritage that could set it apart, the motion says, yet this treasure trove remains largely untapped.

Part of this collection are the recreation parks like Uhuru Park and City Park, which are still not available to the public. Vendors, artisans and cultural performers who could benefit from a thriving tourism economy continue to face uncertainty and limited opportunities.

The motion wants the county compelled to prioritise tourism development as a major source of own-source revenue. It says Nairobi has "not established well-founded cultural activities that can distinguish the uniqueness of the county".

It wants the Sakaja administration "to take tourism seriously and craft a comprehensive county local tourism policy to provide for establishment of strategies and programmes to boost local tourism within the county".

This policy would aim to harness Nairobi's diverse cultural activities, museums, county parks and other public entertainment venues to generate revenue and create employment opportunities for residents.

The constitution vests functions related to cultural activities, public entertainment and local tourism in county governments. Well-developed tourism can attract visitors from all over the world, bringing foreign exchange, boosting local businesses and generating jobs in hospitality, transport, crafts and entertainment industries.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

As Nairobi continues to grow, the push for a tourism development and promotion policy comes at a critical time. With increasing competition from other regional cities, Nairobi must leverage its unique cultural and environmental assets to remain relevant and prosperous.

NEWS COUNTIES

RAVAGING FARMS

Help us fight golden apple snails, say Mwea farmers

They first appeared in March 2020 and have affected nearly 90% of scheme

ALICE WAITHERA
@Alicewangechi

RICE farmers at the Mwea Irrigation Scheme in Kirinyaga county have appealed to the government for urgent help to manage an infestation of golden apple snails ravaging their farms.

Since the invasive snails first appeared in March 2020, the pests have spread rapidly, affecting nearly 90 per cent of the scheme's 30,000 acres by 2021.

Crop damage has ranged between 50 and 80 per cent, causing heavy losses for farmers who depend on rice for their livelihoods.

Joseph Kamau, a farmer in the area, said they have resorted to using strong chemicals sourced from neighbouring countries after other control measures failed to work.

"These snails have been destroying our crops. Rice is what we depend on to support ourselves and our families," he said.

The Mwea Irrigation Scheme is vital to Kenya's food security, producing 80 per cent of the country's 230,000 tonnes of rice annually, against a national consumption of one million tonnes. Farmers say they are still waiting for the government to deliver on promises to provide long-term solutions to this growing problem.

A 2023 study by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, the county government and Mwea Irrigation and Agricultural Development, revealed that over 70 per cent of daily pest complaints were due to golden apple snails.

Farms with moderate infestations saw a 14 per cent decline in yields and a 60 per cent drop in returns compared to unaffected farms.

Early advice to farmers included mass collection of snails and eggs, draining farms during vulnerable stages of rice growth to kill eggs, erecting barriers in water channels to limit spread and using ducks to feed on snails in drained fields.

In 2023, a multi-institutional technical team coordinated research and extension efforts, including spraying with a biodegradable chemical, which was largely ineffective.

Peter Njogu, another affected farmer, warned that rice farming in the area could become impossible without urgent action.

"We have tried all means—spraying, hand-picking snails, destroying eggs—but they keep multiplying at an alarming rate," he said. With local chemicals proving ineffective, farmers increasingly rely on pesticides imported from Uganda and Tanzania.

However, Deputy Speaker Jinaro Njamumo cautioned against using harmful chemicals due to their adverse effects on the environment and potential health risks to consumers.

The county is already among the regions with a high prevalence of cancer."My advice is for farmers to stop using those harmful chemicals because they will contaminate water canals and spread widely," Njamumo said.

He urged the government to invest in research to develop effective and environmentally safe pest control methods to protect farmers and safeguard Kenya's food security.

Golden apple snails that are wreaking havoc in rice farms in Mwea, Kirinyaga /ALICE WAITHERA

Farmers in rice paddies in Mwea, Kirinyaga county /ALICE WAITHERA

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Rice farmers at Mwea Irrigation Scheme in Kirinyaga county are facing severe losses due to an invasive golden apple snail infestation that has devastated up to 90 per cent of their farms since 2020. Despite attempts using barriers, manual removal and chemicals— including imported pesticides from neighbouring countries— the snails continue to spread.

FACELIFT

Smart City initiative transforms rural centres in Murang'a

ALICE WAITHERA

THE Smart City Programme started by Murang'a county in 2023 has transformed rural shopping centres by giving them a much-needed facelift.

Under the programme, streetlights are installed and streets paved to enable residents engage in business round the clock.

Most shopping centres in rural areas were previously characterised by muddy streets. Poor lighting prompted residents to retire to their homes early due to poor security, with only bars and restaurants operated at night.

So far, the programme has been implemented in Maragua, Kenol, Kabati, Kangari, Murang'a town, Kangema, Kiria-ini, Kahatia, Kaguku, Gacharage, Kanyenya-ini, Zabka and Kamune towns.

"These Smart City projects feature extensive Cabro works that open up the towns and ease access to all businesses while creating a favourable environment during the rainy seasons," Governor Irungu Kangata said while launching Mukarara smart city project on Wednesday.

He said his administration started the programme after realising the poor condition of shopping centres was hampering business in the grassroots.

Businesses in the back streets of the centres were disadvantaged as residents avoided them due to the dilapidated streets.

This, he said, forced traders to scramble for space on the main streets, causing congestion and hindering expansion in the shopping centres.

"We felt that it was wrong that in our centres, women could not even display their wares by the road sides because of mud."

He said the programme's main objective is to improve urban infrastructure with the aim of easing business activities and boosting the economy.

"We will continue expanding this programme to cover as many areas as possible so that the local economy can thrive."

"Previously, cabros could only be seen in big towns but now they have become part of our shopping centres. It's important for people to have conducive spaces to conduct business," the governor added.

The projects also improve drainage and other facilities that facilitate the growth of the centres while keeping them clean.

Kihumbu-ini MCA Moses Gachui, also the deputy speaker, hailed the county government for implementing the project and ensuring residents conduct their businesses in a dignified environment.

Gachui said the aim of devolution was to cascade development to the grassroots, saying the Smart City projects have impacted residents by uplifting the quality of their lives.

INVESTORS ATTENDANCE

Kenya set to hold international tea expo in October

ALICE WAITHERA

PLAYERS in the tea value-chain have been urged to participate in the international Tea Expo slated for October this year.

The expo to be held at KICC from October 28 to 31, will have the attendance of investors from China and other tea consuming countries.

Agriculture ministry's Directorate of research and innovation David Ojigo said the expo is a result of a bilateral agreement signed between Kenya and China in April this year.

The trade agreement was signed when President William Ruto made a five-day visit to the Asian country during which he held talks with multiple leaders and signed multiple co-operation agreements.

The visit yielded investment deals worth about $1 million (Sh130 million), including infrastructural commitments that included extension of the Standard Gauge Railway, construction of dual highways and by-passes, hospital upgrades and expansion of vocational training. "The bilateral agreement sought to enhance trade between the two countries and China committed to import more premium Kenyan products including tea, avocados, macadamia and coffee among others," Ojigo said.

Ojigo who spoke while leading a team of officials from China and local companies, the Tea Board of Kenya and the Kenyan National Chamber of Commerce in a field visit to tea factories in Murang'a, noted that in preparation for the expo, a team will be going round the counties identifying products that can be marketed in China to enhance returns for farmers.

He said the government's objective is to move the country away from traditional markets.

Elizabeth Njeri, the manager of Gatanga Industries, explains how purple tea is processed in Gatanga /ALICE WAITHERA

NEWS COUNTIES

Mama Kenya Movement chairperson Amina Ridhwani during a press briefing in Mombasa /CHARLES MGENHYI

ABUSED ABROAD

Shut down rogue job agencies, state told

Emma Dzame, 21, recently returned home from Lebanon traumatised

CHARLES MGHENYI
@CharlesMghenyi

A women-led advocacy group has called on the ministries of Labour and Foreign Affairs to immediately shut down unlicensed job recruitment agencies linked to the abuse and exploitation of Kenyans working abroad.

The Mama Kenya Movement issued the urgent appeal following the harrowing case of 21-year-old Emma Dzame from Kilifi county, who recently returned from Lebanon in a traumatised state.

Dzame left Kenya in February 2024 in search of work but was reportedly subjected to extreme psychological abuse, including being forced to care for snakes by her employer. When she returned to Kenya in July 2025, she was found wandering in the streets of Shimanzi in Mombasa, mimicking snake movements and clearly in a state of mental distress. With the help of national government administrative officers, Mama Kenya Movement traced her family in Matano Mane village and facilitated reunion. She is currently receiving counselling and care at a safe house in Mombasa.

Dzame's ordeal adds to a growing list of Kenyan women reporting abuse in foreign countries. In May, Amnesty International released a report titled "Locked in, Left Out: The Hidden Lives of Kenyan Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia", which revealed widespread abuse and systemic exploitation. More than 70 women interviewed recounted stories of deception, forced confinement, denial of rest days, and discriminatory treatment.

Mama Kenya Movement chairperson Amina Ridhwani said her organisation had received numerous similar complaints and stressed the urgent need for stricter regulation of recruitment agencies.

"Some of our girls leave believing they're going to work as receptionists or housekeepers, only to be subjected to inhumane treatment," she said. "Why recruit them for jobs that aren't in their contracts?"

Ridhwani recounted how Dzame escaped from her abusive situation after being secretly assisted by an elderly woman in the household. She fled with nothing.

The group is pushing for the creation of a national database to track Kenyans working overseas and hold recruiting agencies accountable. "We must know where our children are being taken. Some are being treated like animals—herded into camps, awaiting to be 'auctioned,'" Ridhwani said.

LOBBY WANTS NATIONAL DATABASE CREATED TO TRACK KENYANS WORKING OVERSEAS

NEW BOSS

CDA calls for support to unlock Coast's huge blue economy potential

CHARLES MGHENYI

THE Coast Development Authority has called on leaders from the coastal region to actively support efforts to unlock the region's vast blue economy potential, a sector seen as key to transforming livelihoods and creating jobs.

CDA board chairman Mzee Mwinyi said the authority has already laid out a robust blueprint to harness marine and ocean resources spanning the 600km coastline and the expansive Exclusive Economic Zone.

"We have developed a clear framework to guide our efforts. But to implement it, we need resources, and that will only happen if we work together with our leaders to mobilise support," he said. "Our main focus is aquaculture, mariculture, and other sustainable ventures that can uplift communities."

He spoke during the official unveiling of CDA acting managing director Mwanasiti Bendera.

Mwinyi urged coastal communities to embrace alternative livelihoods such as seaweed farming and cage fishing, noting that traditional fishing practices were no longer sufficient to meet economic demands.

He lamented the inadequate infrastructure along beaches from Kwale to Lamu, which continues to limit large-scale investment in marine activities.

"Many of our fisherfolk are still operating on a subsistence level. We must go beyond the basics and build systems that support commercial activity. We have already piloted seaweed and cage fishing models—what remains is the support to scale up," he said.

Incoming acting MD Bendera pledged to reposition the authority as a leader in regional development.

"For years, CDA has struggled with underfunding. But we're now seeing renewed government interest and a collective push by the board and management to turn the tide," she said.

Bendera said with over 70 per cent of the region classified as arid and semi-arid land, there is an urgent need for targeted, sustainable development that also addresses climate challenges.

Chairman of Coast Development Authority Mzee Mwinyi and new acting managing director Mwanasiti Bendera at the CDA headquarters in Mombasa /CHARLES MGHENYI

MARITIME SAFETY

Senators laud KMA's oil spill preparedness, urge vigilance

CHARLES MGHENYI

THE Senate Standing Committee on Energy has praised the Kenya Maritime Authority for its proactive measures in tackling maritime oil pollution and protecting the country's marine ecosystems.

The commendation came during a fact-finding mission by the committee to KMA offices in Mombasa, where senators reviewed Kenya's preparedness to respond to oil spills along maritime transport corridors, especially around the busy port of Mombasa.

Committee chairperson and Siaya Senator Oburu Odinga said the visit was critical in assessing the agency's capacity to manage oil spill risks. "We came to understand KMA's approach to oil spills, which pose a serious danger to our marine environment. The team demonstrated their response systems and shared details of ongoing operations, including efforts in Lake Victoria," he said.

Oburu revealed that KMA plans to set up a central rescue centre in Kisumu, supported by satellite stations in other strategic locations.

The delegation included Elgeyo Marakwet Senator and committee vice chairperson William Kisang and nominated Senator Beatrice Ogolla. They were hosted by KMA director general Omae Nyarandi, director of maritime safety Julius Koech, and assistant director for marine environment protection Michael Mbaru.

Nyarandi detailed the authority's oil spill contingency framework that involves a coordinated, multi-agency response aligned with international protocols. "We demonstrated how various agencies collaborate, from containment to clean-up—to effectively manage oil spill emergencies," he said.

Kenya Maritime Authority director general Justus Nyarandi and chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Energy Oburu Odinga at KMA headquarters in Mombasa /CHARLES MGHENYI

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Sh40m library project stalls as funding halted

It has since become the subject of a legal battle filed in Kapsabet court

Lawyer Chepkirui Koech, who has filed a court case over the stalled project /MATHEWS NDANYI

MATHEWS NDANYI
@TheStarKenya

A Sh40 million community library project in Nandi county has stalled after an NGO that was funding the initiative withheld further financing and sued contractors for breach of contract.

The dispute involves former KenGen chairman Joshua Choge and members of his family, who are now embroiled in a court battle with Kanken Connect INC—a Kenya-registered NGO that was financing the stalled project. The NGO is led by Tifanny Ninemire, who is an in-law to the Choge family.

According to court documents, Kanken Connect Inc had received a donation intended for the construction of a library to benefit the community in Saniak village, Nandi county. However, the project has since become the subject of a legal battle filed in the Kapsabet court.

Lawyer Chepkirui Koech, representing Kanken Connect INC, has sued Jordan Choge—son of the former KenGen boss—along with Leah and Moss Company Limited. Another local entity, Kenken Connect Literacy Foundation, is listed as an interested party.

Koech claims that when Kenken Connect Literacy Foundation was registered, her clients were excluded from becoming directors on the basis they were foreigners. Despite this, the NGO allegedly trusted the foundation's leadership due to the familial ties between Tifanny and the Choge family.

Court documents reveal that Joshua Choge and his son Caleb Choge convinced the NGO to award the library construction contract to Jordan, arguing he was best suited to oversee the project. The NGO purchased a parcel of land worth more than Sh10 million at Saniak village, and Caleb was tasked with appointing an architect.

Tifanny was introduced to architect Nicholus Koech, who visited the site and committed to drawing architectural plans. However, Jordan allegedly bypassed Tifanny and directly signed a contract with the architect—naming Kanken Connect Inc as the client—despite her being unaware of the arrangement at the time.

THE DISPUTE INVOLVES FORMER KENGEN CHAIRMAN CHOGE AND MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY, WHO ARE NOW EMBROILED IN A COURT BATTLE WITH KANKEN CONNECT INC THAT WAS FINANCING THE PROJECT

While still in the US, Tifanny was advised by Caleb to pay the architect $21,000 (Sh2,706,582) in two instalments and to declare the money as a donation or investment to avoid scrutiny under US financial regulations.

The architect later prepared a Bill of Quantities totalling Sh26.7 million, which formed the basis of a binding contract signed on September 11, 2023. Kanken Connect Inc disbursed Sh13.3 million to cover excavation, foundation and structural work.

However, midway through construction, Tifanny noticed changes in the architectural design and learned from Caleb that an additional 400 square feet had been added without consent.

"Despite my client's objections, the defendants demanded an extra Sh4.8 million without a valid contractual addendum, in violation of standard construction agreements," lawyer Koech said.

Tifanny refused the additional payment and commissioned an independent structural engineer, who found the structure at the site to be unsound. A separate quantity survey revealed that only Sh7.4 million worth of work had been done—significantly less than the Sh13.3 million already paid.

As a result, Kanken Connect Inc moved to court seeking a refund of Sh6 million, general damages for breach of contract, and an injunction to stop any further construction work at the site.

Jordan, and Leah and Moss Company Limited have filed responses through Aniya and Company Advocates, denying all allegations. Jordan maintains there was no contract between him and Tifanny and he was not responsible for engaging the architect. He further argues the additional work was done at Tifanny's instruction, justifying the demand for extra payments. "The plaintiff's statements are baseless, misleading and dishonest. They intend to shift blame," Jordan states in his affidavit.

Leah and Moss Company Limited also defended its role, insisting it complied fully with the terms of the contract. The company maintains the extra payments were necessitated by additional instructions from Tifanny and were properly documented in project adjustments.

The court is expected to set a hearing date for the matter.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The stalling of the Sh40 million community library project in Nandi county highlights the complexities and risks of donor-funded developments when governance, transparency and accountability break down. What started as a goodwill initiative to uplift a rural community has now spiralled into a legal battle involving family ties. The case underscores the importance of clear contracts, oversight and professional independence in managing charitable funds. It also serves as a cautionary tale for NGOs partnering with local actors—trust alone is not enough. Proper checks, legal safeguards and open communication are essential to project success

The stalled community library project in Nandi county /MATHEWS NDANYI

PROTECT DEMOCRACY

Lobbies push for stronger institutions, national dialogue

MATHEWS NDANYI

CIVIL society groups in Rift Valley are pushing for stronger and independent state institutions to protect the country's democratic and human rights gains.

They have also backed calls for national dialogue to resolve issues affecting youth and other challenges facing the country.

The groups have petitioned former Prime Minister Raila Odinga and other key leaders, asking them to initiate national dialogue to strengthen state institutions.

The move follows a recent meeting by the groups, led by the Kenya National Civil Society Centre, who met in Eldoret and declared full support for an inter-generational dialogue process as suggested by Raila to deal with the youth crisis and other problems.

Centre CEO Suba Churchill said the country cannot develop in an environment of protests and violence, which scares away investors.

Workers at Nandi Textile Unit /MATHEWS NDANYI

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Nandi textile opens as Sang works to complete projects

MATHEWS NDANYI

THE Nandi Textile Unit in Mosoriot is now fully operational as the county accelerates completion of key legacy projects.

Governor Stephen Sang has described the facility as a beacon of local excellence and a vital pillar of economic empowerment for the people of Nandi.

He said the project aligns with his administration's broader transformative vision and is a world-class facility producing high-quality products.

"This is a key project in our plan to transform the economy of Nandi county and create jobs for our youth, while also equipping them with skills for self-employment," Sang said.

The unit was conceptualised four years ago as part of the governor's commitment to industrialise Nandi and open up sustainable economic opportunities for residents.

Now establishing itself as the region's leading manufacturer of premium garments, the facility has modern machinery, overseen by highly trained technicians and skilled local artisans. From the selection of superior, durable fabrics to the final finishing, each garment undergoes a strict quality control process.

The textile unit's product line includes school and corporate uniform, vibrant cultural attire, ready-to-wear fashion and custom-made garments.

"The Nandi Textile Unit has the capacity, expertise and flexibility to deliver high-quality garments tailored to various needs," Sang said.

James Too, a worker at the unit said the facility blends efficient production with a deep understanding of customer preferences and fashion trends. "Reliability and excellence are our hallmarks," he added.

The unit has already attracted clients ranging from retailers and institutions to government agencies and individual customers who are drawn to its superior standards.

Kakamega Governor Fernandes Barasa, Kenya Red Cross Emergency Plus Medical Services Society chairman Abbas Gullet and managing director Susan Ng'ong'a flag off 12 ambulances at the Kakamega General Teaching and Referral Hospital on August 5 last year /FILE

LIVES AT STAKE

Red Cross withdraws ambulances over non-payment

HILTON OTENYO

THE Kenya Red Cross Society has withdrawn emergency ambulance services in Kakamega county over non-payment.

The fleet of 12 ambulances – two with advanced life support (Mini ICUs) – have been offering services across 12 subcounties.

Medics manning outpost health facilities said the services have been on and off, but have finally been withdrawn.

"You can't exactly tell what's happening because they have been on and off. We are forced to rely on faith based ambulances in times of emergencies," said a in charge of a Levek Tree hospital.

The St John's ambulance services had to step in during the Kenya National Secretary Schools Sports Association tern two games hosted by the county a week ago.

County secretary Lawrence Omuhaka blamed the delay in payment to erratic disbursements by the exchequer.

He said the county had not paid the Kenya Red Cross Society for services provided in the last quarter of last year.

Omuhaka said the county government is negotiating with the service provider for restoration of the services.

"We are negotiating but Red Cross is not heeding. I think the management changed and the new team does not want to understand how we used to operate. They insist that we must pay," he said.

"You are all aware that the money for April, May and June was released on June 27 and Ifmis was shut down two days later. What is happening here is that we have the money and can see it but we cannot access it. We're hoping to pay by August 20 when the system reopens." In 2015, the county government contracted Kenya Red Cross Emergency Plus to provide free ambulance services for patients needing urgent medical care

The services were withdrawn by the society in 2023 for accrued payments, forcing Governor Fernandes Barasa to renegotiate a fresh and enhanced deal in August last year that saw the fleet increased from nine to 12.

The deal will cost the taxpayer Sh100 million in five years. During the falling-off of the new d fleet, Barasa assured Kakamega residents they would benefit from uninterrupted and quality services.

HIGH MARKET POTENTIAL

MP introduces avocado farming to spur growth

He says crop will replace tobacco, which has negative environmental effects

Teso North MP Kaunya during the launch of the avocado farming initiative /KNA

HILTON OTENYO
@TheStarKenya

TESO North MP Oku Kaunya has introduced avocado farming in the constituency to increase household incomes and spur economic growth.

The MP launched the initiative during a farmers' training session at the Osasame National Youth Service ground in Malaba.

He also unveiled a new avocado variety with high market potential at the event.

Kaunya said avocados are in high demand globally, with each fruit fetching up to Sh20.

A single tree can produce between 500 and 1,000 fruits, making it a viable alternative cash crop for farmers in the region.

He said more than 40,000 avocado seedlings are currently available, with 10,000 already distributed—free of charge—to farmers who have prepared their farms. "This avocado project is meant to replace cotton, which no longer benefits our farmers due to the collapse of local ginneries," Kaunya said.

"There is currently no effective cash crop in Teso North. Despite efforts to revive Malakisi Ginnery, which is yet to gain traction."

The MP attributed the collapse of the cotton industry to the government's failure to provide critical support such as access to quality farm inputs.

He said avocado farming will fill the gap left by cotton and tobacco, crops that had previously served as a cash crop but posed serious environmental challenges.

Kaunya said tobacco growing has contributed to deforestation and soil degradation due to use of harmful chemicals and the destruction of indigenous trees used for curing. "We have discouraged farmers from growing tobacco because of its negative environmental impact," he said.

"Fruits such as avocados provide a more sustainable and eco-friendly alternative."

Kaunya said the seedlings, from NYS Yatta, are given to farmers free of charge, with only a token fee of Sh50 required to cover transport costs.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The initiative marks a strategic shift from environmentally harmful and economically unsustainable crops like tobacco and cotton. With the global demand for avocados rising, this move offers a viable, long-term income source for farmers in the region.

DOUBLE TRAGEDY

Father, son die in fight over sukuma wiki in Kakamega

CYRUS OMBATI

A 70-year-old man has been killed by his son in a confrontation over sukuma wiki in Emalindi, Kakamega county.

The son was also confronted by an angry mob that lynched him in the Tuesday incident.

Police said Milton Abednego, 70, had a confrontation with his 39-year-old son over a bunch of sukuma wiki the son had plucked without permission.

This angered him and when he confronted the son, he retaliated by hitting him with a panga in the head. He bled to death, police said.

The son escaped the scene but was caught by an angry mob.

The mob stoned him to death and the panga used in the attack recovered, police said.

The bodies were moved to the mortuary pending postmortem.

Police discourage mob lynching and want suspects surrendered to authorities for processing.

Elsewhere, a 13-year-old boy was murdered and his body dumped on the roadside in Tumoyot village, Narok county.

Police said the body was discovered on Tuesday, long after the boy had been killed. The police suspect the boy was killed elsewhere and the body dumped at the scene. It had strangling marks on the neck. The motive is yet to be established, police said on Wednesday.

Police said a suspect, who was last seen with the victim, was arrested for grilling.

The body was moved to the mortuary pending a postmortem.

In Dede, Awendo, Migori county, Kevin Okinyi was killed by his uncle in a family dispute.

The assailant said he was defending himself after the deceased attacked him and his family with a panga.

They sustained serious wounds on their heads.

The assailant and his wife overpowered Okinyi and stabbed him in the abdomen, killing him.

The couple was rushed to the hospital where they are nursing serious wounds, police said.

Police said the parties fought over a piece of land. The body was moved to the mortuary pending postmortem and investigations.

Meanwhile, an 80-year old woman collapsed and died while carrying firewood she had collected from a thicket in Kithini village, Mukaa, Makueni county. The body of Mwelu Kyele was found lying on the river bed of Yobuni dry river on Tuesday.

NEWS COUNTIES

Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o flags off a new garbage truck /KNA

BUILT FOR EFFICIENCY

Cleanliness boosted as high-tech waste truck is launched in Kisumu

Residents urged to support the city's green agenda

FAITH MATETE
@faymatete

KISUMU has taken a major leap forward in its quest for a cleaner, greener environment with the launch of a new high-capacity, state-of-the-art waste collection truck.

Flagging off the vehicle on Wednesday, the county government described it as a game-changer in the city's ongoing efforts to improve waste management and sanitation.

The truck can carry up to 15 tonnes of waste, equivalent to the load of four standard garbage trucks.

"This isn't just any truck, it's a 290-horsepower beast built for efficiency," Governor Anyang' Nyong'o said during the commissioning of the truck.

The governor added they are not only cutting down on operational costs but also increasing the speed and effectiveness of waste collection across Kisumu.

The vehicle is equipped with modern features, including a safety cabin designed to minimise human contact with waste and an onboard compressor to prevent spillage and suppress unpleasant odours.

These features ensure cleaner streets and better public health outcomes as waste is transported through residential and commercial areas.

The move is part of a broader environmental strategy by the Kisumu County Government aimed at promoting cleanliness, sustainability and responsible waste handling.

Already, 14 waste separation and recovery centres have been established and waste bins installed in key areas across the city.

The governor noted their commitment to a greener Kisumu is unwavering.

"This truck is one of the tools we're using to transform how waste is managed in our city. But keeping Kisumu clean is a shared responsibility. We urge residents to do their part."

The flag-off event was attended by Environment CEC Judith Oluoch, city manager Abala Wanga and other county officials.

Oluoch said the truck will focus exclusively on transporting organic waste, which makes up the majority of waste generated in the county.

"Sixty-five per cent of the waste we produce is organic. For this system to work, separation must begin at the household level. That's why we're urging residents to sort their waste at the source."

She added that six material recovery facilities have been established across the county to collect and sort plastic and other recyclable waste.

The Department of environment will collaborate with the city management, the Department of trade and informal waste collectors, particularly in market areas, to ensure smooth implementation of the new system.

With the new truck now operational, the county government is calling on residents to embrace waste separation practices and support the city's green agenda.

> **JUDITH OLUOCH**
>
> *For this system to work, separation must begin at the household level. That's why we're urging residents to sort their waste at the source*

DISABILITY RIGHTS

State urged to promote sign language in school, boost inclusion of deaf

KNA

AS the fifth World Federation of the Deaf Conference approaches, Kenya is taking steps to ensure the inclusion hearing-impaired learners.

The conference will be held in Nairobi from August 12 to 14.

Ahead of the conference, the Chikombero Special School for the Hearing Impaired was officially handed over on Wednesday, following extensive renovations.

The project has garnered international attention, highlighting Kenya's dedication to promoting sign language and ensuring no child is left behind in the pursuit of education and a brighter future.

Tessy Musalia, the chairperson of Ushiriki Wema Foundation and wife of Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, used the occasion to urge the government to incorporate basic sign language into the national school curriculum, underscoring its growing importance in both education and public life.

"Integration is a part of the new Act aligning Kenya's disability rights to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," Tessy noted, adding that the recently enacted law is a clear indicator of the space sign language is taking up universally.

Kenya's deaf population is estimated at 2.7 million, representing about 5.5 per cent of the total population, making it a significant linguistic and cultural group.

The 2010 constitution recognised Kenyan Sign Language as the country's third official language.

However, advocates continue to stress the importance of further efforts to fully integrate the language into mainstream education and public services.

M-Pesa Foundation, a part of Safaricom PLC, spearheaded the initiative, investing Sh50 million to modernise the school's facilities.

The refurbishment marks the culmination of a journey that began in 2021 and was executed between November 2024 and June 2025.

The upgrades included the construction of new administration and ECD blocks, fully equipped washroom facilities and a 20-seater ICT lab specifically designed to teach digital skills to deaf learners.

Patricia Ithau, a trustee of the Foundation, highlighted the comprehensive nature of the support, stating that it went beyond just construction.

"We ensured that learners have beds, blankets, and a conducive learning environment."

Additionally, 10,000- and 5,000-litre water tanks were installed to improve hygiene, aligning with the Foundation's mission to foster citizens of the future, which includes digital readiness.

The Foundation has invested more than Sh330 million across 84 projects in Vihiga county, demonstrating a long-term commitment to regional development and inclusive education.

Dr Florence Otieno, a teacher at the school, praised the dramatic transformation.

She described the school's previous condition as "horrible, dilapidated and that the general infrastructure was not conducive for learners".

"The buildings were not fit for use at all. Today, the environment has changed completely. We now have flush toilets, showers and new uniforms for our learners. They are happy and highly motivated," Otieno said.

She believes the new facilities will draw more students from the local community and beyond.

"This one will impact not only the community here, but also Kenya and even internationally."

As Kenya prepares to welcome international delegates for the upcoming Deaf Conference, the Chikombero School community stands as a powerful symbol of progress and inclusion.

Tessie Musalia (3rd L), Ushiriki Wema Foundation chairperson, and M-Pesa Foundation trustee Patricia Ithau with learners during the handover of Chekombero Special School for the Hearing Impaired in Vihiga county /KNA

TURNING POINT

Modogashe residents get piped water after 61 years

Lack of reliable supply forced locals to depend on unsafe sources or pay high prices

JULIUS OTIENO
@JuliusOtieno04

Garissa Governor Nathif Jama during the launch of the water project /KNA

Fatma Bonaya's face lights up with joy as she queues with her three children to fetch water from a newly installed kiosk in Modogashe, Isiolo county.

For decades, Bonaya had no choice but to trek several kilometres in search of water—often returning home empty-handed.

"We walk more than 10 kilometres to look for water. It's the biggest problem we face here," says the 37-year-old mother of five.

Modogashe and the surrounding villages have long suffered from a chronic lack of reliable water supply, forcing residents to depend on unsafe water sources or pay exorbitant prices to vendors. A 20-litre jerry can of water would cost as much as Sh50—an unbearable burden for many.

That struggle has finally come to an end. The launch of the water project by the Isiolo County Government has seen the drilling of new boreholes and the distribution of piped water to Modogashe Town and neighbouring villages—bringing clean water to the area for the first time in 61 years.

"After 61 years of independence and decades of neglect, clean piped water has finally reached Modogashe and its surrounding villages," Governor Abdi Guyo announced.

Two schools, a mosque and some manyattas have already been connected to the new system, marking a turning point for a community that had long felt forgotten.

"What was once a distant dream is now a reality," Guyo said.

"This is not just a development milestone. It is a moment of dignity, justice and inclusion."

He described the project as part of his administration's commitment to equitable development—ensuring no community, no matter how remote, is left behind.

The new water system follows the recent drilling of a borehole and the rehabilitation of another in Modogashe—an effort that has already brought visible relief. It's part of a broader county strategy to tackle water scarcity across Isiolo. In March 2024, the governor commissioned three additional boreholes in Akadeli, Daaba Juu and Kakili in Ngaremara ward to further boost domestic water supply.

He has also pledged to invest in modern technologies to improve water sourcing, including tools that assess water depth, quality and quantity before drilling begins. "We want to avoid wasting public funds on unusable or saline water sources," Guyo said.

"This modern approach ensures both safety and efficiency."

The governor emphasised that access to clean water is essential for both social and economic development, particularly in arid regions vulnerable to climate shocks such as drought.

His remarks come in the wake of a prolonged drought that devastated much of the region. During the crisis, residents were warned against using water from River Isiolo for irrigation due to dangerously low levels.

The shortages led to widespread rationing and heightened risks of waterborne diseases, particularly in Isiolo Town and nearby areas.

According to data from the National Drought Management Authority, more than 80 per cent of water sources in the region dried up during the drought, deepening the crisis.

The new water infrastructure now stands as a symbol of resilience—and a promise of a better future for communities like Modogashe that have endured years of hardship in silence.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The launch of clean piped water in Modogashe marks a transformative moment for a region long plagued by water scarcity. The new infrastructure—part of Governor Abdi Guyo's broader water strategy—delivers long-overdue dignity, justice and inclusion. With modern drilling technologies and a focus on sustainability, the initiative improves daily life and strengthens community resilience against climate shocks like drought.

STRATEGIC MOVE

Malombe nominates two officials to county secretary, attorney posts

MUSEMBI NZENGU

KITUI Governor Julius Malombe has nominated former South Eastern Kenya University Swahili lecturer Agnes Mulewa to the position of county secretary.

He submitted Mulewa's name to the county assembly on Tuesday for vetting and possible confirmation.

Mulewa, who is currently serving as the chief officer in the office of the governor, was appointed to the position in 2018 by former Governor Charity Ngilu. She has also been acting as the county secretary

In what appears to be a strategic move to promote internal talent and leverage existing institutional knowledge, Malombe also nominated county solicitor Timothy Muange to serve as the county attorney.

The governor also nominated Christopher Ombunya to the position of secretary of the public service board.

All three nominees will require approval from the county assembly following a vetting process before officially assuming office.

Mulewa was the top candidate among five individuals interviewed for the county secretary position by a selection committee appointed by the governor.

Alex Musembi, a scholar from Mwingi, ranked second. Other candidates were lawyer Muneeni Kimwele, chief officer in the office of the Deputy Governor Francisca Chui and Geoffrey Stella Mutanu.

Mulewa, Okumu and Muange received the highest scores in their respective categories.

Malombe said the nominations were based on merit. He said his decisions were guided by the rankings provided by the interviewing panel, noting that a total of 63 applications had been received across the three positions.

He further affirmed that the nominations adhered to constitutional values, highlighting meritocracy, inclusivity and equitable representation.

Last month, Malombe praised performance contracting as the magic wand that has catalysed the implementation of 1,921 infrastructural projects by his administration in under three years.

He said the success of the projects is pegged on the adherence to performance contract terms.

Malombe said performance contracting is a tool that nudges officers to undertake their work efficiently.

"Performance contracting has enabled my government implement 1,921 infrastructure development projects and programmes in all the 40 wards and 247 villages since August 2022 when my administration assumed office," he said.

When he assumed office, the governor made a bold and deliberate step to embrace performance contracting as a key pillar of governance and service delivery in Kitui county.

"This decision was driven by our shared desire to build a result-oriented culture where accountability, transparency and citizen-focused service delivery determine how we govern," he said.

The governor said performance contracting has played a great role in transforming input to output and ensuring proper utilisation of public resources.

"Our commitment to this approach has yielded measurable results across all the 16 priority sectors that include agriculture, water, health, education, urban development, roads and construction," Malombe said.

Kitui county secretary nominee Agnes Mulewa /MUSEMBI NZENGU

MALOMBE SAID HIS DECISIONS WERE GUIDED BY RANKINGS PROVIDED BY THE INTERVIEWING PANEL, NOTING THAT A TOTAL OF 63 APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED ACROSS THE THREE POSITIONS

NEWS COUNTIES

RISING CASES

Protect youths from human trafficking, parents warned

Security officials say traffickers promise education, jobs and better opportunities

STEPHEN ASTARIKO
@astarikostephen

PARENTS in Garissa county have been urged to remain vigilant amid a sharp rise in human trafficking across Northeastern region that has sparked growing concern among local leaders and communities.

Speaking in Garissa town, county commissioner Mohamed Mwabudzo warned parents, guardians and community members not to fall into the trap of traffickers who prey on vulnerable youths with false promises of education, jobs or better opportunities outside the region.

Mwabudzo, who was accompanied by the county security team, revealed that security agencies had recently arrested several individuals linked to a trafficking syndicate and warned that more arrests were imminent.

His comments followed a recent incident in Masalani, Ijara subcounty, where police arrested six men suspected to be part of a trafficking network. The suspects were found hiding in a house in Gumarey, two kilometres from Masalani town.

Among those arrested were five young men aged between 18 and 24, four of them refugees from the Hagadera refugee camp, and one Kenyan from Saretho in Dadaab subcounty. The sixth suspect, believed to be the trafficker, was arraigned and released on bond.

"In the past few weeks, we have seen a trafficking network actively operating in our region, targeting innocent children with deceitful promises," Mwabudzo said.

"What follows are disturbing videos posted online showing our sons being beaten and subjected to inhumane treatment. We must not let this continue."

He urged parents to closely monitor their children's whereabouts and report any suspicious individuals or offers related to education or employment to the nearest chief, police station or his office. "To those behind these criminal networks, your days are numbered," he warned.

"The government will deploy all available resources to track you down and ensure you face the full force of the law."

Garissa county police commander Amos Ambasa addresses wananchi in Garissa town /STEPHEN ASTARIKO

Garissa county police commander Amos Ambasa urged parents not to neglect their responsibilities.

"Children are a blessing from God. But parenting doesn't end at birth—you must walk with them through every step of their lives," Ambasa said.

"Let us unite to fight this threat. Protecting our children is not only a moral duty; it is a sacred responsibility."

ODM nominated MP Umulkheir Harun, speaking at a recent public forum, described the growing human trafficking crisis as a national emergency—particularly in pastoralist and marginalised communities.

"Many of our students who should be pursuing college and tertiary education are instead being lured into trafficking routes overseas," she said.

The International Organization for Migration has also raised the alarm over Kenya's growing role as a source, transit point and destination for human trafficking.

According to IOM, many children are trafficked domestically for forced labour, begging, and sexual exploitation.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The rise in human trafficking cases in Garissa and the broader Northeastern region signals a growing humanitarian and security crisis. Government crackdowns are critical to curb the vice, but long-term solutions are required.

JUST 18.5%

Muslim leaders blamed for poor SHA listing in Garissa

STEPHEN ASTARIKO
@astrikostephen

SOME religious leaders in Garissa have been cited as the weakest link in the government's efforts to boost enrolment in the Social Health Authority programme.

On Wednesday, Garissa county commissioner Mohamed Mwabudzo criticised a section of the clergy, accusing them of spreading misinformation about the Social Health Insurance Fund and discouraging residents from registering.

Despite a nationwide rollout of the programme, uptake in Garissa remains alarmingly low. According to data from the county SHA office, only 167,900 residents—just 18.5 per cent of the county's population—have enrolled in the scheme.

Mwabudzo said the government had made significant strides in setting up the infrastructure for universal health coverage, only for some religious leaders to undermine the initiative with unfounded claims.

"This is a government health insurance programme, where you contribute a small amount so that you can access free treatment in hospitals. I don't understand where the issue of interest comes in," Mwabudzo said.

"There are sheikhs opposing the fund. I am a Muslim, and I see no form of interest [riba] in SHA. Let's stop invoking religion where it doesn't apply and allow people to benefit from health services through this cover."

He expressed frustration that some residents were still forced to rely on community fundraisers to cover hospital bills, despite the existence of a functioning government insurance programme designed to cover all Kenyans.

Mwabudzo urged residents to ignore misleading religious rhetoric and register for the scheme, insisting that access to affordable healthcare should not be politicised or misrepresented.

Other factors contributing to the low enrollment include the nomadic lifestyle of many residents, limited access to information, lack of identification documents, and poor network coverage in remote areas.

SHA county manager Ahmed Mohamed, speaking separately, attributed the slow registration to insufficient sensitisation. He called for a coordinated efforts between the county government, which oversees community health promoters, and the National Government Administrative Officers to intensify awareness campaigns and drive enrolment.

Garissa county commissioner Mohamed Mwabudzo /STEPHEN ASTARIKO

Dairyland launches drinking chocolate

Social media Influencer Chantelle Petit /DENNIS MILIMO

Event brought together Kenya's top celebrities, content creators

DENNIS MILIMO
@TheStarKenya

A few days ago, I had the pleasure of attending the official launch of Dairyland Drinking Chocolate at the stylish Trademark Hotel in Village Market.

The event, which was all about fun, flavour and flair, introduced Kenyans to Dairyland's latest indulgence—a rich, velvety chocolate drink that is about to become your next favourite sip. After months of crafting, tasting and perfecting the product, Dairyland finally unveiled their Drinking Chocolate to a crowd filled with excitement, creativity and good vibes.

The launch brought together a curated guest list of some of Kenya's top celebrities and content creators, who came dressed to impress in their best retro-inspired outfits, fully embracing the themed dress code of the day.

A blend of chocolate, creativity and celebrity charm

The guest list read like a who's who of Kenya's entertainment and content creation scenes. From award-winning actress Jacky Vike–who took home the title of "Best Dressed" on the mini-runway—to comedian Nasra Yusuff, podcaster Lydia KM, content creators Carrie Wahu, Victor Peace, Tamina, Sharon K Mwangi and Esther Kazungu—the event was undeniably star-studded. Celebrated singer Wahu Kagwi also attended accompanied by her daughter Tumiso.

Also spotted at the event was Milan Kabata, the marketing manager at Dairyland, who was on hand to welcome guests and introduce the brand's newest product to the market.

Guests were not only treated to the launch of a new beverage but also to an immersive experience. The exquisite décor, curated by YDX, set the perfect mood for what turned out to be a glamorous and interactive afternoon.

One of the highlights of the event was the Java House activation, where professional baristas helped guests make the perfect cup of hot chocolate. Featuring flavoured syrups, cookies and other gourmet touches from Java Love Pantry, the experience allowed attendees to experiment with different combinations and witness firsthand the versatility of the Dairyland Drinking Chocolate.

"Proud to have our very own baristas running the show at the Dairyland Hot Chocolate Launch!" Java House shared on social media.

"They took guests through the art of making indulgent hot chocolate using Java love pantry products, featuring our signature flavoured syrups, cookies and more."

Staying true to the retro theme, the event featured a mini-runway where guests flaunted their outfits and personalities.

A fun competition ended with Jacky Vike being crowned best dressed. Attendees were also treated to interactive games, photo booths, and the opportunity to make their own cup of Drinking Chocolate, complete with the Dairyland logo artistically crafted on top.

The atmosphere was vibrant and light-hearted, perfectly reflecting Dairyland's brand identity—innovative, fun-loving and rooted in quality.

What makes Dairyland Drinking Chocolate special?

"After months of crafting, tasting and perfecting, we're proud to introduce our Drinking Chocolate. Packed with flavour and good vibes. Welcome to your next favourite sip," Dairyland shared during the launch.

The product adds to the already diverse Dairyland portfolio, which includes ice creams, chocolates, yoghurt, spreads, sauces and various catering products. It aligns with the brand's focus on innovation and premium quality—a combination that has made Dairyland a trusted name not only in Kenya but also across Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Sudan.

Founded in 1979, Dairyland began as a local ice cream brand and has since grown into one of East Africa's leading names in dairy-based innovation. With the largest cold chain infrastructure and distribution network in the region, Dairyland ensures that its quality products are enjoyed everywhere.

Backed by a passionate and creative team, Dairyland continues to live up to its mission of delivering great-tasting products that bring joy to everyday life.

Whether you are a fan of cozy hot drinks or looking for a new indulgence, the Dairyland Drinking Chocolate promises to be more than just a beverage—it is an experience.

ART EXHIBITION


1


3


4


2


5

1. Artist and curator Adam Yawe
2. Jepkorir Rose tries an improvised nyatiti
3. Sahunyala
4. Kanju (City council) wheel clamp, found on museum grounds
5. Yawe's Lost Wax casting process and journey
/MOSES MWANGI

Debe: A Container for Material Culture explores life in Nairobi

Rather than appeal to consumer desire, the displays serve as vessels for cultural memory, discourse


Pararira musical instrument, similar to those found in matatus **/MOSES MWANGI**


Crossbody bags display **/MOSES MWANGI**

MOSES MWANGI
@TheStarKenya

Artist and curator Adam Yawe gets his inspiration from the material culture of Kenya.

His practice traverses the mediums of street photography, 2D graphics, 3D modelling, publications and exhibition making.

Yawe's exhibition is a meditation on this shift. Rather than appealing to consumer desire, the objects on display serve as vessels for cultural memory and discourse—much like museum artefacts.

Yawe's works engage with Nairobi's rich urban material culture, from matatu sound systems to the objects that fill its street corners and homes.

In his work, he acknowledges the role they play in the present, connects them to the past and re-imagines them for the future.

"The container (debe) for the practice of a designer is more often than not a profit seeking entity. What might occur if we changed it into one where we place the designer," Yawe says.

This radical gesture of openness aligns with Yawe's broader mission to democratise design and reconnect it to communal knowledge and cultural context.

Through Debe, Yawe offers a compelling blueprint for a new kind of design practice—one grounded not in consumption, but in connection.

He has previously exhibited works that explore the intersections of technology, African heritage and the everyday.

In Debe, he invites visitors not only to observe but to participate: all exhibited works are open-source (CC0 – No Rights Reserved), and visitors are encouraged to photograph, share and replicate the objects.

"My demos come in the form of akalas (shoes made from tyre), city council (kanju) vehicle clamps, matatus blaring horns (pararira) in Nairobi street slang, just to mention a few," Yawe says.

Yawe is a recipient of the Prince Claus Funds 2023 Seed Award.

The exhibition ran for a month at the National Museums of Kenya from June 8 to July 8. Many of his art pieces were on display for public viewing.

RATHER THAN APPEALING TO CONSUMER DESIRE, THE OBJECTS ON DISPLAY SERVE

★ SASA ART

ART CHECK JUSTUS MAKOKHA

Ugandan poet Oculi dies in exile

His life was a luminous blend of artistic insight, scholarly rigour and continental activism

One of East Africa's foremost literary and intellectual pioneers, Okello Oculi, born on January 1, 1942, in Lira District, northern Uganda, passed away on July 27, in Abuja, Nigeria, aged 83. His life was a luminous blend of artistic insight, scholarly rigour and continental activism. A poet, novelist, political scientist and Pan African educator, he bridged traditional African wisdom and modern intellectual thought with remarkable depth.

Oculi's educational journey began at Soroti College, then St Peter's College Tororo, and St Mary's College Kisubi. He later enrolled at Makerere University, graduating in 1967 with a BA in Political Science. During his studies, he also spent time as an exchange student at Stanford University (1964–65). His graduate studies led him to an MA at the University of Essex (1968) and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1972.

Even from his earliest writings, Oculi's work echoed with the rhythms of rural Uganda: the proverbs, folk idioms and lyricism of the land. His debut poetic novels, *Prostitute* and *Orphan* (both 1968), tackled the alienation of rural migrants caught in the swirl of urban life, identity fragmentation and moral uncertainty. These works, emerging at the cusp of post-independence hope and disenchantment, helped define a literary voice that was proudly rooted in African tradition yet unafraid to confront modern dislocation.

Poet, novelist, political scientist and Pan African educator Okello Oculi /HANDOUT

In the 1970s, he deepened his engagement with African themes, producing poetic novels like *Kanti Riti* (c.1973–74), *Malak: An African Political Poem* (1976), and *Kookolem* (1978). These works celebrated rural culture while examining existential questions and political frustrations, all couched in the orality and cadence of indigenous languages and idioms. His work paralleled that of Okot p'Bitek in resisting Western literary forms and affirming African worldviews.

Following his doctorate, Oculi went into exile under Idi Amin's dictatorship. As a politically active student leader at Makerere, he deemed Uganda unsafe and sought academic refuge in Nigeria. In 1977, he joined Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Kaduna State, as professor of Social and Economic Research. He would spend decades there, shaping generations of students in political science and African studies.

ABU, one of Nigeria's largest public research universities, became Oculi's intellectual base. There, he taught political science and public administration, supervised research and engaged deeply in student mentoring. It was at ABU in the 1980s that he pioneered the famed OAU Mock Summits: simulations where students enacted African heads of state, drafted briefs and debated pressing continental issues. The programme, later extended to Abuja's secondary schools like Anglican Girls Grammar School, reached the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and became a celebrated model of Pan African civic education.

These role-plays expressed Oculi's conviction that leadership is not inherited but rehearsed. They were part of his broader educational vision: that African youths must practice continental solidarity and responsibility early on. His Pan Africanism was deeply pedagogical, aiming to raise critical consciousness in classrooms and through performance.

Beyond fiction, Oculi's nonfiction output was formidable. His publications include *Health Problems in Rural and Urban Africa* (1981), *Political Economy of Malnutrition* (1987) and *Nigerian Alternatives* (1987). These are analytical works blending political economy, development theory and social critique. His magnum opus, *Discourses on African Affairs: Directions and Destinies for the 21st Century* (1999-2000), offered a sweeping prognosis for Africa's future, emphasising moral leadership, cultural confidence and structural transformation.

In Abuja, Oculi remained a voice of moral clarity. He founded the Africa Vision 525 Initiative, a Pan African NGO focused on nurturing youth leadership and ethical governance. In 2024, he called on Ecowas leaders to uphold public morality, resist rigged elections and reject sit-tight autocracies. His political writings, often published in Daily Trust and Intervention, promoted dialogue across borders, from Dakar to Mogadishu, Luanda to Nairobi, envisioning our continent as a connected civilisation of voices, stories, and mutual respect.

On July 27, 2025, after decades of writing, teaching, consulting and mentoring, Oculi passed away in Abuja. He is survived by his widow, Debrah, his son Sembene and a vast web of mentees and collaborators across two continents. He had lived nearly half his life in Nigeria, turning exile into a platform for building African futures. Oculi's death is not the closure of his legacy. The OAU simulations he developed, the African unity debates he sparked and the leadership ideals he instilled live on. So too does his call to defend African sovereignty with intellect, ethics and imagination.

In the quiet of his passing, we lose not just a writer or scholar, but a torchbearer of African possibility. He would want us to remember his life not as a lament but as a call - to teach, to write, to lead, to speak Africa's truths boldly. His memory is now a flame, illuminating classrooms, conferences, assemblies and poems wherever the continent's future is being imagined.

JIJI NDOGO POLICE POST

It's end of the world in sleepy Jiji Ndogo

News of alcohol ban causes uproar

DAVID MUCHAI
@Davemuchai

THERE'S a movie whose title I can't recall, in which the main character wakes up to find the entire city of New York deserted. That ended up being a surreal dream or something like that, but a similar situation is playing this afternoon in Jiji Ndogo.

After lunch, Sergeant Sophia and I step out of the police post to find not a single soul in the town square. Our village boasts a small population but on a regular day, you're sure to find a few people moving about. But not today.

"Maybe it's the rapture," Sophia suggests. "What's rapture?" I ask.

She gives me one of her I-can't-believe-you-can-be-this-stupid looks.

"Seriously, Makini? Did you even attend one Sunday school class?"

"Not just attended, Jesus talked to me."

"Jesus talked to you at Sunday school?" "Yep! I played the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda in a play. Jesus said, 'Simama, chukua godoro lako, uende.'"

She smiles. "I don't know if to laugh or slap you."

"Maybe slap me with what you meant by capture?"

"Rapture, Makini. It's when believers in Christ will be suddenly taken up to meet Jesus in the air, and then head to heaven."

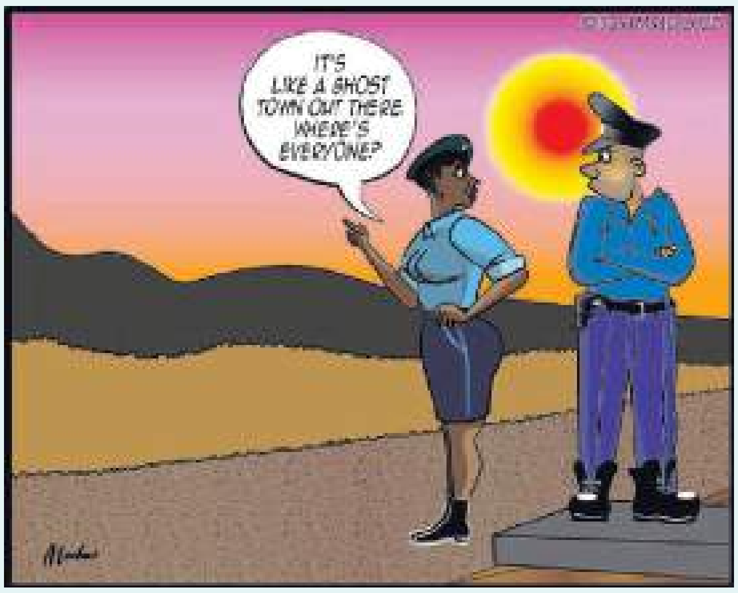
It is quite a befitting explanation for the scenes playing right before our eyes.

"Wait!" I say. "If Jesus has taken everyone to heaven, that means He's left us. Do you think we're the sinners in Jiji Ndogo?"

She shrugs. "I don't know about you, but me? I know I'll go on the second bus. Hold on. There comes someone."

We stroll towards a lone figure seated by the side of the road. It's Mama Mboga.

"Ah, it's you, Mama Mboga," Sophia greets her. "Where's everyone else?"



"Niulize lingine," says our most popular vegetable vendor. "Hata sijauza kitu leo."

"Nobody has said anything to you?" I ask.

"Oh. Sasa nimekumbuka. Customer wangu wa mwisho alikuwa Kevo. Alisema dunia inaisha, halafu akakimbia huko chini."

Sophia plants her arms akimbo. "Are you freaking kidding me right now?"

"Maybe you were right," I tell her. "Maybe the world is coming to an end." "Bull crap. The sun won't burn itself out for like another five billion years."

Lost, I say, "Is that when Jesus comes back?"

"You're such a doofus," Sophia says as she walks towards the town proper.

We find Dr Selitol, our resident Indian merchant, outside his Mla Chake shop. He wears a smile as wide as the equator.

"Afande," he says, "leo mungu natembelea mimi kweli."

"Not you, too!" Sophia's frustration is now evident. "What's with everybody and religion today?"

"Kuja ona mwenyewe." He leads us inside his shop and gestures towards one empty wall of shelves. "Naona hiyo? Ilikuwa mejaa pombe yote. Watu nanunua pombe ni kama dunia naisha."

"People came, bought all your alcohol and left?"

"Ni kama iko wazimu fulani Jiji Ndogo. Hata saa hii kila mtu iko Shimo."

"You mean everyone is at Shimo la Pewa, the bar?"

Before the words are fully out of her mouth, we're sprinting towards the bar. Sure enough, the place is so packed some patrons have spilt outside.

"Jesus Christ!" I scream. "What the hell's going on?"

A drunk Kevo staggers towards us.

"Kwani hamna habari?" he slurs. "Gava ime-ban tei. Tunaikunywa kumalo."

Sophia slaps her forehead. "Dear Lord! The government has proposed raising the drinking age, not outlawing alcohol completely."

Kevo shrugs, teeters and almost falls on his bum.

"So? Kwa hivo nikigonga eighteen naweza vote ama nikadushiwe kwa jeshi lakini siwezi tei? Hiyo ina-make sense aje?"

Sophia snatches the bottle from him.

"Exactly. Let's worry about that ukigonga eighteen."

SOCIETY TALK

GBV caught in high definition

Men are attacking women in public without fear or possible repercussions

NABILA HATIMY
@realobserver

There is a new pandemic. One rooted in a disease that has existed since the time of the Neanderthals—gender-based violence. Just when we think we have made it to an era where equality rules, glass ceilings are shattered everywhere and women are having it all, we slip right back into anarchy. Only this time around, it's in 4K.

All of last week, my social media was filled with viral videos of men hitting women in public. A man in an airport in Bogota, Colombia, hit a woman twice over a seat at the waiting area. Not only were there hundreds of people around, the man's wife was seated right next to the victim. Did the wife intervene when her husband was having an altercation with an unknown female at the airport? No. Did she intervene after the first slap? No. Did she move to save her husband from the angry mob that rushed to the poor victim's defence? Yes, she did.

This action in itself said a lot. Even after the man was escorted out of the airport in cuffs, the wife, who had a lot to lose businesswise, made a social media post explaining the situation like the world did not see it with its very own eyes.

The sheer audacity that ran through that man's veins, to do in public what he probably does a lot of in private, means that he had been getting away with this sort of behaviour for a very long time. It also means that men no longer give a flying rat's behind over consequences of their actions despite knowing we live in the big brother world, where someone is always watching.

Meanwhile, in Brazil, a woman had a disagreement with her boyfriend in the elevator. From the muted video, we could see she was just speaking and did not make any unnecessary movements or provocation. But that did not stop the man from going in on her. In that short clip, the man (a former professional athlete) rammed over 60 punches in the woman's face. He did not stop even after she collapsed in the corner of the elevator.

In the same week, in Lagos, a Nigerian man beat his wife, who had just given birth four days earlier, until she was unconscious. The video of his arrest was shared widely on social media but the incident occurred in front of the newborn and the victim's mother.

All these incidents occurred in a span of one week. In one week, men around the world lost all sense and gained all the audacity their privileges afforded them. To beat a woman half your size in broad daylight in front of surveillance or hundreds of people requires a boldness only a certain type of weak man can have. Even though we live in the surveillance and cancel culture era, people still think they can get away with murder.

After seeing all these videos I wondered what gave these men this audacity. Even though the repercussions of such actions are higher in today's society than it was 50 years ago, how are men so emboldened in their actions ready to risk it all? Perhaps it is led by the fact that a man can easily get away with murder. The law is a strange thing, all criminal lawyers need to do is find reasonable doubt. Implant that doubt in the court's mind and they get away with the crime.

What else could explain this better than the Diddy case? Most of us followed the case for months. The US government charged the music mogul with five counts of racketeering trying to get him behind bars for all the crimes he had committed.

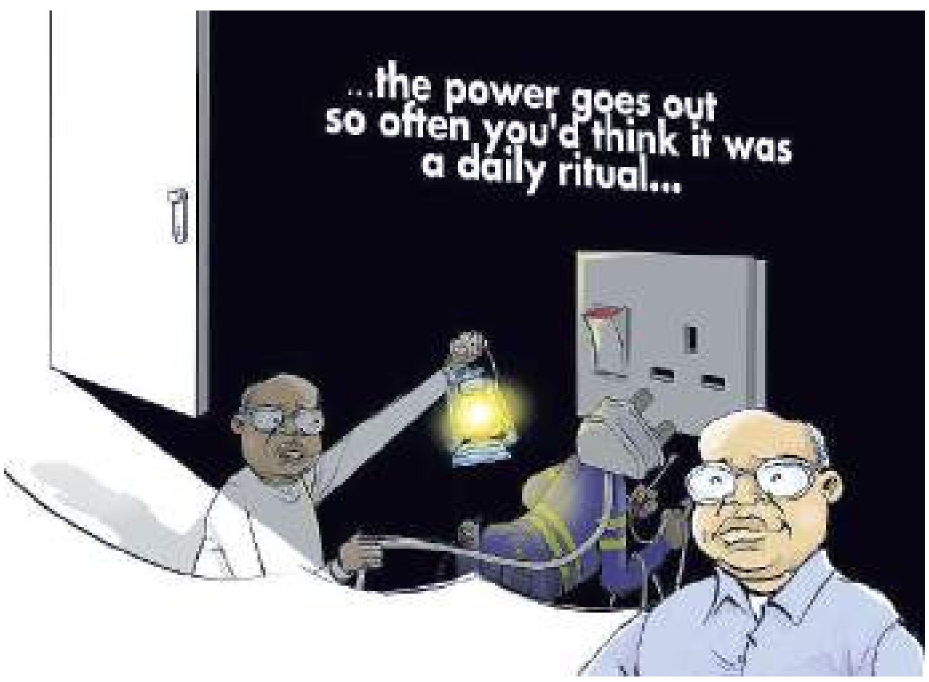
After months of depositions, testimonies, witness questioning and evidence being presented in court, Diddy was only found guilty of two out of the five charges. This was by a jury of his peers. A jury that was shown videos of Diddy doing criminal acts that were too violent to be seen by the public; yet they still found him innocent.

★ SASALIVING

G-SPOT BY MWANGI G
@MwangiGithahu

Malindi's power woes and how not to run utility firm

Power outages the norm rather than the exception



Depending on who you speak to, in Malindi, one of the great modern luxuries is electricity, when you can get it. Kenya Power, in what might be described as an ongoing experiment in how not to run a utility company, seems to have made power outages the norm rather than the exception.

While I don't want to jinx it, I must say the little corner of the town that I dwell in seems to have escaped the worst of it. However, if anecdotal reports and posts in the three different WhatsApp groups I am a member of, in some areas, the power goes out so often you'd think it was a daily ritual.

Business owners complain they are left in the lurch at night; residents fumble about in the dark. What's left of the tourism industry, once Malindi's crown jewel, is now quite literally operating courtesy of noisy, expensive diesel-powered generators. If nothing gets done soon, and fuel prices keep rising, they will soon only have candlelight.

In fact, the only people who don't appear to suffer too much are those evangelical churches that dot certain residential estates and the peri-urban fringe of the town. They seem to have the wherewithal to purchase diesel generators, probably at the same place they get their super-powerful loudspeakers.

Nothing seems able to stop them from blasting their kesha services, also known as overnight prayer meetings and loud music throughout the night.

Adding insult to blackout, the billing system is said by some of the residents I have spoken to and others who belong to the aforementioned WhatsApp groups to be a masterclass in creative fiction.

Some customers claim to have regularly received estimated bills so wildly off the mark that one wonders if KPLC has mistaken them for iron smelters.

Enter the "smart" meters, introduced with great fanfare and the promise of solving all problems. These clever little devices were meant to usher in an era of real-time monitoring, accurate billing and blissful customer satisfaction.

What they actually delivered was a new chapter in the saga of frustration. To make matters worse, some unfortunate souls are being billed as if their smart meters are powering a small factory, despite suffering from near-daily blackouts.

The irony is not lost on anyone. As one local wit put it on Facebook, "If I'm going to be charged this much, I'd at least like to enjoy the electricity I'm not getting."

Then there's the curious case of online accounts that seem to live in a parallel universe, showing usage and balances that bear no resemblance to reality. One customer joked that perhaps their smart meter was moonlighting for someone else.

Naturally, the lack of clear communication from KPLC has only fuelled the fire. Few timely alerts, and even less frequent proper explanations, and hardly any apologies. Just darkness, both literal and informational.

All this has left many calling for KPLC to, at the very least, acknowledge that something, somewhere, might not be working. There have been whispers of legal action, though the prohibitively high cost of engaging lawyers for such a matter, will likely put off all but the very deep-pocketed.

This reminds me of reporting on Cape Town's #ElectricityPricesMustFall protests in 2023. In that year, Cape Town residents rallied against a 17.6 per cent electricity tariff hike imposed by the city. This hike exceeded the 15.1 per cent ceiling set by South Africa's National Energy Regulator of South Africa.

During those protests too, consumer rights advocates threatened legal action, and political leaders pledged class action if the city did not drop the excess increase and reimburse overcharges.

Back in Kenya, I suppose in fairness the idea of smart meters was a good one. Accurate billing. Less theft. Efficient service. Fewer excuses. Unfortunately, like many good ideas, its execution appears to have been subcontracted to Murphy's Law.

So for now, Malindi residents carry on, juggling torch batteries and exaggerated electricity bills, while waiting for the day KPLC lives up to the "Power" in its name. Until then, expect more dark nights and even darker humour.

Follow me on X @MwangiGithahu

TONY MBALLA FITFINITY
@TonyMballa

Kimani's transformation: Lyrical tale of shame, sweat, swimwear

From fear of water to confidence in the swimming pool, deck chair

Man in a gym /AI ILLUSTRATION

There are men who fear heights, and there are those who tremble before crowds. But Kimani—Kimani feared swimwear.

By day, he was a code-slinger at Mzito Company, a quiet warrior tucked behind twin monitors in a Nairobi tech office, where blinking cursors replaced conversation and logic reigned over emotion.

By night, his world softened, if only briefly. He would gather with his friends – Munene, Otieno and Wafula – by the glowing blue pool at Royal Court Apartments. That water, warm and welcoming, seemed to pull everyone in but him.

Kimani would sit on the sidelines, his body wrapped in layers of excuses: a T-shirt here, cargo shorts there, a laugh to distract, a shrug to deflect.

"I'm just not comfortable getting into swimwear," he'd murmur. But what he really meant was: I do not know how to be seen.

They teased him gently, as brothers often do. Otieno – who looked carved from mahogany and gym sweat – would flip into the water like an Olympic champion. Wafula would do a messy cannonball. Munene, always the clown, would fake a belly flop and scream for imaginary lifeguards.

And then there was Betty.

She laughed like warm rain. Her voice? Smooth like an old soul track on vinyl. She was a colleague, yes, but in Kimani's heart, she lived in a suite far grander than the office desk next to his. And she watched the pool parties. Cheered the boys. Laughed with Otieno.

> I'm just not comfortable getting into swimwear... what he really meant was: I do not know how to be seen

She never saw him. Not really.

THE DARE AND THE DEFLECTION

It was a lazy Saturday when Betty wandered over to where Kimani sat, his drink sweating in hand, his nerves already simmering.

"Kimani," she said, tilting her head with mischief. "Why don't you ever swim?"

He fumbled. The truth—shame—clawed at his throat, but he swallowed it. "I don't know how," he offered.

"Really? Then I'll teach you," she said, her eyes gleaming with challenge. Before he could object, she leaned in and whispered, "I dare you to swim with me."

And that was it. The gauntlet thrown. A battlefield drawn not in sand but in self-perception.

He couldn't say no.

JEALOUSY IN GYM MIRRORS

Kimani began to frequent a gym tucked between a carwash and a betting shop. Here, sweat was currency and pain the prophet.

He grunted through bench presses, danced awkwardly through burpees, and faced the mirror daily, confronting the body he'd learned to loathe.

But just as his triceps began to tease definition, so did his insecurities bloom anew.

Betty was spending more time with Otieno. Of course she was. The man looked like an Instagram ad for fitness. His abs had abs.

Kimani watched them laughing after office meetings, the way her eyes lingered a little too long on Otieno's shoulders.

"She's into him," he told Munene, who was doing push-ups beside him one evening.

Munene wiped sweat from his brow. "Maybe. But maybe you're seeing what you fear, not what is."

Kimani stared at his reflection. He didn't see courage or charm. He saw stretch marks, the ghosts of fast food, and a man still terrified of shallow water.

BECOMING THE VERSION OF HIMSELF HE NEEDED

But beneath the doubt was a flame. Small, flickering—but alive.

Kimani returned to the gym daily. His workouts grew sharper. His sleep cleaner. He learned how the body listens when treated kindly, how the muscles respond not just to effort but to patience.

The fat softened into form. His chest no longer caved but curved. He stood taller, not just in spine, but in spirit. It wasn't about vanity anymore. It was about claiming space in his own life.

Science affirmed it, too—Kimani had read it somewhere: women are drawn to strong, balanced builds. Arms, chest, shoulders, abs—the holy quartet.

But more importantly, Kimani had started to like what he saw in the mirror. That had never happened before.

THE RETURN TO THE POOL

Months passed. The day came.

He stepped into the pool area wearing nothing but courage and a pair of modest swim trunks. His body gleamed—not like Otieno's, not sculpted for magazine covers—but strong, present, earned.

Wafula dropped his soda. Munene let out a slow whistle.

"Damn, Kimani!" Otieno chuckled. "You've been holding out on us!"

But it was Betty's gaze that mattered. She stood from her seat slowly, lips parted in admiration. "I knew you could do it," she whispered, more to herself than to anyone else.

Kimani smiled, stepping into the water for the first time—not just into chlorine and sunlight, but into the life he'd always skirted around.

A HEART LAID BARE

That evening, as dusk painted the sky in pastels and the pool lights flickered on like city stars, Kimani sat beside Betty on the deck chairs.

She turned to him, her voice soft but steady. "You know, your transformation…it's not just your body. It's everything. You walk differently. You speak differently."

"I guess I started believing I was worth the effort," Kimani said, his voice thick with emotion.

Betty took his hand.

"I'm glad," she said. "Because I think I'm falling for you—not because of your abs, Kimani. But because of your heart."

He looked into her eyes, those twin galaxies that had once seemed unreachable. And just like that, he kissed her. No fireworks. No swelling music. Just lips meeting in truth.

And for the first time in a long time, Kimani wasn't afraid to be seen.

He was, finally, enough.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PUBLIC AUCTION

Under instructions by our principles and the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 2020, we shall sell the under-mentioned attached Motor Vehicles by Public Auction on **15TH August 2025.Time 11:00am at H.M Auto Garage Yard.**

	REG	MAKE
1	KDK 001R	RANGE ROVER
2	KDB 303T	JEEP
3	KBS 206E	BMW
4	KBZ 444U	VOLKSWAGEN
5	KCW 650M	BMW

CONDITIONS FOR SALE
1. Viewing can be done through arrangement with us.
2. Sale is subject to reserve price.
3. Cash at the fall of hammer.

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Eldoret
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Email: Eshikhoniauctioneers@yahoo.com

PUBLIC AUCTION

Duly instructed by the Chief Magistrate's court at Kitale,we shall sale the under listed motor vehicle by public auction on **Saturday 16th day of August 2025 at 10.00am** at **GLORY HOUSE KAKAMEGA OFFICE ALONG KAKAMEGA-MUMIAS ROAD**

KITALE CMC NO 190 of 2023;ANDREW SINE NAIBEI VS GADANO GENERAL TRADING CO.LTD AND ANOR

M/V reg no KBZ 623W (ACTROS PRIME MOVER) with crumbled body and Trailer reg no ZD 6993

TERMS OF SALE
Cash at the fall of the hammer.
viewing during working hours.
ALL ARE WELCOME

SANNEX AUCTIONEERS

AUCTIONEERS, BAILIFFS AND COMMISSION AGENTS

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PUBLIC AUCTION

Duly instructed by our Principals the landlords under the Auctioneer's Act Laws of Kenya and under uncollected goods act, we shall sell by Public Auction the under mentioned goods.

ON SATURDAY 16TH AUGUST,2025 STARTING AT 10.30 AM AT PANGANI AUCTION CENTRE, OPPOSITE GURU NANAK HOSPITAL MURANG'A ROAD, NAIROBI.

THE LANDLORD V/S

SELLYNE A. ODONGO - Dining table+ 8 chairs, Seven seater sofaset, 2 Carpets, Samsung Fridge, Beko Freezer, Beko six burner cooker + 2 cylinders, 2 Coffee tables + 4 stools, Executive round table, Hexagonal marble table, Sony Bravia TV set, Rest room seats, Ironing board, Fan, Samsung Microwave, Bread cabinet, TV cabinet, 6 Wall portraits.
MARGARET WAMBUI - Sofaset, TV stand, Shoe rack, Fridge, Colour TV set, Table, Plastic chairs, Woofer system, Gas cooker + cylinder, Carpet, Mirror.
SAMUEL OMONDI - Sofaset, Dinning table + chairs, Woofer system, Wall clock, Coffee table, Computer monitor, Fridge, Bed frame, Gas cooker + cylinder, Water dispenser, Microwave, Coffee maker, Chest of drawers, Office desk, Shelf, Office chair, Baby coat, Double decker bed.
JOHNSON MUNYAO NZIVO - Itel colour TV set, Coffee table, Wooden seat, Synix colour TV set, Woofer system, Two seater seat, Nunix fridge.
KELVIN KAMAU - Bed frame + Mattress, One seater seat, 2 tables.

CONDITIONS OF SALE.
All interested bidders must pay a refundable deposit of Ksh 10,000 before the auction so as to obtain a bidding number.
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Email:elimonyacoauctioneers@gmail.com

KISII OFFICE
Kebirigo General Stores Bld,
4th Flr RM.7,
Ogembo Street,Kisii.

PUBLIC AUCTION

In the Matter of unclaimed properties; **LANDLORD -VS- SIMON TINGORANG** we shall sell the under mentioned Items at a public auction to be held on **TUESDAY 12TH AUGUST, 2025** at **11.00am venue AUTO GALLEY (MOMBASA) LTD** along Waiyaki way

Wooden table, dining table + 4 chairs, 210ltr water drum, double decker bed + 2 mattresses, von microwave, von electric fan heater, 4 burner cooker, 2 door fridge, 2 floor carpets, water dispenser, 2 drawer cabinets, 2 coffee tables, vacuum cleaner, 5 seater sofa set, 4 vehicle springs, 13kg gas cylinder, 3 baby bicycles.

CONDITION FOR SALE
1. Cash at the fall of hammer
2. Sale is subject to reserve price.

The auctioneer has the right to reject and bid without giving any reason

MUNGAMI AUCTIONEERS

PUBLIC AUCTION

Under instruction received from **Chief Magistrates Court at Mombasa, Civil Suit No. 2139 of 2014.** We shall sell the following Prime-Mover Mercedes Benz Reg. No. KDC 533B, Trailer RegNo. ZE2791, 40FT container Hmtu242944/8 at **Matrix Moves Kenya Ltd.** on **Saturday, 16th August, 2025 at 10:00am.**

CLAUDINE MUGABEKAZI -VS- YALFA CARGO LTD AND 4 OTHERS.
Under instruction received from our principle, we shall sell by Public Auction the undermentioned M/V on **Saturday, 16th August, 2025 at 10:00am at CANON MOTORS YARD, MOMBASA.**

Financier vs Kenneth Njoroge Maina
Motor Vehicle Reg. KDS 826E, Toyota Porte.

Financier vs Moses Kioko Mutiso
Motor Vehicle Reg. KDS 416F, Nissan Vanette.

Condition of Sale
1. All interested purchasers are required to view by themselves and verify its condition as this not warranted by the auctioneer.
2. The highest bidder shall be declared the purchaser
3. Cash at the fall of the hammer.
4. Sale subject to reserve price.

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THE ENERGY ACT, 2019
GridX Africa Development Limited

APPLICATION FOR ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION LICENCE

NOTICE is hereby given that **GridX Africa Development Limited**, a limited liability Company having its registered office at **ICEA Building, Riverside Park, Waiyaki Way, Westlands, P.O Box, 67802-00200** in the Republic of Kenya, ("the Applicant"), pursuant to the provisions Energy Act, 2019, will on **22nd August 2025** make an application to the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority for the Electric Power **Generation Licence**.

GridX Africa Development Limited is developing, designing, financing, and installing a 1200kWp grid-tied, roof-mounted solar PV system at Tarmal Steel, Mombasa ("Tarmal"), Mombasa County with GPS Location; -4.046479998830182, 39.65765177301477. The power generated will be used for their own consumption only. The system will reduce Tarmal's energy costs and carbon emissions. The grant of the license will not have an adverse effect on any Public or Local Authorities, Companies, persons, or bodies of persons within the areas of the undertaking.

A copy of the application (subject to confidentiality considerations) will be available (once lodged) for inspection by the public at the registered office of the applicant.

Any public or local authority, company, person or body of persons desirous of making any representation on or objection to the application must do so by a letter addressed to the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority and marked on the outside of the cover enclosing it "Energy Act", on or before the expiration of Thirty (30) days from the date of application and a copy of such representation or objection must be forwarded to the
the registered office of the applicant.

Dated: **8th August 2025.**

GridX Africa Development Limited,
Project Execution,

Patricia Nyadhi

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nema

National Environment Management Authority

Popo Road, Off Mombasa Road, P O BOX 67839-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 0724253398, 0735013046, Email: info@nema.go.ke Website: www.nema.go.ke

RE: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED COMMERCIAL (CONFERENCE AND HOTEL APARTMENTS) ON PLOT NO. 1551/1/MN, MILELE AREA, MALINDI ROAD, MOMBASA COUNTY.

Pursuant to Section 59 of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act 1999, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has received an Environmental Impact Assessment Study Report for the above proposed project.

The proponent, **Lido Beach Conference Inn Limited**, proposes to construct a fifteen storey (Basement, ground plus 15 floors) conference and serviced hotel apartments consisting of (multipurpose halls and 5 meeting rooms on the 1st floor, 8 office rooms on the 2nd floor, typical 3rd-12th floor with 18 hotel room rooms on the 13th floor and two and three-bedroom duplex units on the 14th and 15th floor)parking, 3 bio-digesters, 2 septic tanks, swimming pool, restuarants, electrical infrastructure, associated amenities and facilities on plot No. 1551/1/MN, Milele Area, Malindi Road, Mombasa County.

The following are the anticipated impacts and proposed mitigation measures:

Impacts	Mitigation measures
Emergencies	• Design suitable documented emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures to be used during any emergency • Such procedures must be tested at regular intervals • Ensure that adequate provisions are in place to immediately stop any operations where there in an imminent and serious danger to health and safety and to evacuate workers • Ensure that the most current emergency telephone numbers posters are prominently and strategically displayed within the construction site. • Provide measures to deal with emergencies and accidents including adequate first aid arrangements.
Destruction of Flora and Fauna	• Protect as possible indigenous trees and other surrounding vegetation. • Minimize site clearance to only areas needed for excavations. • Plant trees and landscape appropriately.
Soil Degradation	• Adherence to existing laws and regulations including L.N 121: Environment Management and Coordination (Waste Management) Regulations, 2006 • Drainage system to be maintained • Areas dedicated for hazardous material storage shall provide spill containment and facilitate clean up through measures such as dedicated spill response equipment. • In case of soil pollution, subsurface investigations should be conducted which should involve the collection of subsurface soil and groundwater samples for laboratory analysis.
Safety & Health Incidents and accidents)	• Comply with Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2007 • Adherence to Fire Safety and Reduction Rules L.N.59 • Implement emergency, preparedness and response plan. • Periodic fire drills shall be undertaken. • Provision of firefighting equipment in strategic and well labelled areas • Train workers on safe work practices, and provide appropriate and adequate PPE • Implement access control to high-risk areas to authorized personnel only. • Provide a high-performance fire resistance wall • The facility to be secured and signs to be posted which include hazard warning, access restrictions and under whose authority the access is restricted will be posted. • Engage contractors with a well-developed EHS management system • Adhere to Permit to Work System.
Waste Generation	• Minimize waste generation, segregate general and hazardous waste. • Proper management of storm water. • To use sewer system or septic tank system to manage the sanitary waste. • Install Oil Water Separator • Implementing a system for the proper metering and measurement of water usage. • The provision of adequate access to toilet and bathroom facilities that meet both numerical standards (to prevent workers from using the neighbours') and treatment standards. • The separation of sewage and grey water streams to reduce sewage effluent volumes. • The employment of on-site treatment of wastewater.
Traffic and Pedestrian Safety	• Creating and implementing awareness programs, use visible safety advice, barriers, traffic diversions and warnings signages. • Developing and implementing traffic management plan • Abnormal loads will be timed to avoid times when traffic volumes are likely to be high. • The Site Engineer and Contractor should choose traffic routes to reduce the impact to other road users. • Introduce segregated pedestrian walkways, speed limits, minimize reversing vehicles. • Clearly designate loading/off-loading areas.
Increase Energy demand	• Ensure that all lighting system are switched off when not in use • Design the office infrastructure to maximize the use of natural light. • Install metering system for monitoring for electricity consumption. • Carry out facility energy audit.
Air Quality	• Adherence to existing laws and regulations including L.N 34: Environment Management and Coordination (Air Quality) Regulations, 2014 • Construction site and transportation routes to be water sprayed on dry and windy days, • Haulage trucks to be covered. • Use of well-maintained equipment to minimize the emissions during construction • Quarterly Monitoring of air/ambient emission's for conformity • Dust generation on-site should be controlled through the following activities: • The imposition of speed limits for vehicular movement on dust sources. • The enclosing of raw material dumping and stockpiling areas to contain generated dust • The controlling of wind movement of exposed materials through the use of frequent wetting or the use of dust stabilization products. • Preventing fugitive dust from exiting the construction site through the use of containment barriers at the site's periphery. This mitigation would work in tandem with noise mitigation measures to prevent sound releases into the external environment. • Controlling fugitive dust generation from sources external to the construction site, such as at Concrete Batching plants and from trucks transporting raw materials to the site using the containment methods.
Noise Pollution	• Comply with the provision of the Environmental Management and Coordination (Noise and Excessive Vibration Pollution Control) Regulations, 2009. • Provide contacts (telephone number, email, etc.) to handle complaints. • The use of hearing protection gear by workers when exposed to noise levels above 85 dB (A) and use of signages in high noise areas. • Use of well-maintained machineries with minimal noise emissions • The use of the lowest noise-emitting equipment appropriate for the given task should be opted for, since this will result in less noise generated on-site. • Time limits should be imposed to limit the periods during which construction noises can be generated. The following times are proposed: - Mondays to Fridays 0800hrs to 17hrs. Saturdays 0800hrs to 1300hrs. Sundays and Holidays no noisy activities are to be permitted. • Physical noise barriers should be considered for the property.
Impact on Water Quality	• Adherence to existing laws and regulations including L.N 121: Environment Management and Coordination (Waste Management) Regulations, 2006. • Provide adequate sanitary waste disposal facilities. • Controlling and reducing at source the production of wastes and hazardous waste
Spillages and Leakages	• The source of the spill/leak should be isolated and contained appropriately. • The Contractor should notify the relevant authorities of any spills or leakages. • Avail leak and spill containment equipment and material.
Social Impact	• Constant review of the Grievance Redress Mechanism to address complaints and issues from community and other stakeholders.

A full report of the proposed project is available for inspection during working hours at:

1. Principal Secretary
State Department for Environment and Climate Change,
Ministry of Environment Climate Change and Forestry,
NHIF Building, 12th Floor Ragati Road, Upper Hill
P. O. Box 30126-00100,
NAIROBI.

2. Director General
National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA),
Popo Road, off Mombasa Road
P. O. Box 67839-00200,
NAIROBI.

3. County Director of Environment,
MOMBASA COUNTY.

A copy of the EIA report can be downloaded at *www.nema.go.ke*

NEMA invites members of the public to submit oral or written comments within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice to the Director General, NEMA to assist the Authority in the decision making process for this project. Kindly quote ref. No. **NEMA/EIA/5/2/2360**
Comments can also be e-mailed to ***info@nema.go.ke***

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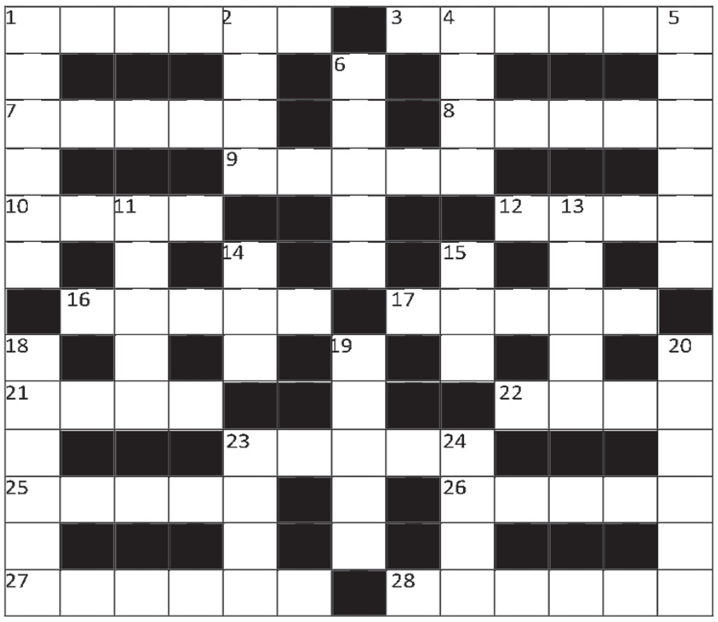
COFFEE BREAK

CROSSWORD / PUZZLE



DOWN

1. Capital city of Iran (6)
2. Islamic chieftain (4)
4. The physical unit for measuring power(4)
5. Demented (6)
6. Capital city of Afghanistan (5)
11. Creator deity in the traditional religion of the Banyarwanda and Barundi people, found in Rwanda and Burundi. (5)
13. Former Member of Parliament for Tongaren constituency (5)
14. Chemical element with symbol (3)
15. Former Member of Parliament for Kinango (3)
18. Chemical element with symbol (6) 19 What is the positive electrode of an electron tube called (6)
20. Capital city of Guinea-Bissau (6)
23. Capital city of Fiji (4)
24. Capital city of Peru (4)

ACROSS

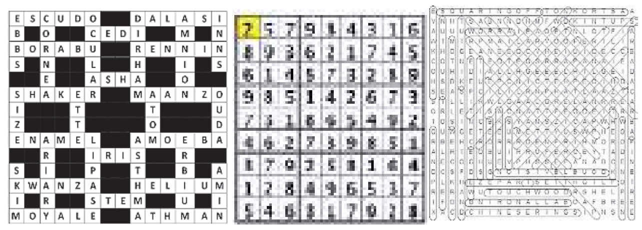
1. Capital city of Taiwan (6)
3. Equity Group Managing Director and CEO (6)
7. Capital city of Vietnam (5)
8. Capital city of Tunisia (5)
9. Capital city of Morocco (5)
10. Capital city of Samoa (4)
12. Inert gas known for its reddish-orange glow when an electric current is passed through it (4)
16. Capital city of France (5)
17. Capital city of Nauru (5)
21. Form of radiation discovered by Roentgen (4)
22. Capital city of East Timor (4)
23. Capital city of South Korea (5)
25. Former Chief Administrative secretary, State Law Office (5)
26. The Arabic form of the biblical name Elijah (5)
27. Capital city of Bahamas (6)
28. Capital city of Lesotho (6)

SUDOKU / SIMPLE

	1	9						
5	8					6		
3	2						4	9
		1	6		2			5
			3		7			
9			5		8	4		
1	5						3	7
		6					9	4
						8	1	

Fill the grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the sub-grids that compose the grid all contain all of the numbers from 1 to 9 one time.

Thursday solutions



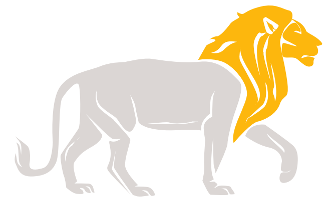
WORD SEARCH

Find and mark all the words hidden inside the box. The words may be placed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

U P L A N E T S K R O W E R I F N
G N I D J E T E X H A U S T E N N
P O M T Y R U C R E M K I T E O I
C O M E T C H I M N E Y S M O K E
R M T S T G R B T S H F P L G I S
E S E E A E L E A H D A L M N S D
V F E L E U O T T R E A Z S I O R
I L A N E R E R E I B S T E T L I
D X I S I L T P S R P R U E I A B
Y R K G L L A E I H E U N N R R I
K Y A I H R R A S E O A J N W E G
S S T I C T T E T R L W R L Y C D
R E D S N O N L W P E U E D K L I
A Y Y U H B I I R O T V I R S I P
T K N G O G O I N A P O I O B P P
S R A M H L A W S G J V E N U S E
E R E T P O C I L E H C T E U E R

AIRPLANE
BIG DIPPER
BIRDS
BLIMP
BLUE SKY
CHIMNEY SMOKE
CLOUDS
COMET
DRONE
FIREWORKS
GALAXY
HAZE
HELICOPTER
HOT AIR BALLOON
JET EXHAUST
JUPITER
KITE
LIGHTNING
MARS
MERCURY
METEOR
SHOWER
MOON
PLANETS
POWER LINES
RAINBOW
SATELLITE
SATURN
SKYDIVER
SKYSCRAPER
SKYWRITING
SMOG
SOLAR ECLIPSE
STARS
STREET LIGHT
THE SUN
TREETOP
UNIVERSE
VENUS

ALL IN THE STARS



LEO
July 23 - August 22

It's time to follow through. Ideas are great, but implementation is the key to making them work.

VIRGO
August 23 - September 23

People aren't likely to fall for things too easily. It will take a great deal to change someone's mind about something.

LIBRA
September 24 - October 23

Your ego should experience an extra boost and your relationships should go extremely well.

SCORPIO
October 24 - November 22

Make sure your home is a sanctuary where you feel comfortable being exactly who you are.

SAGITTARIUS
November 23 - December 21

You may not wish to admit defeat today until you have tried every way to make your romantic dreams come true.

CAPRICORN
December 22 - January 20

Other people may be stubborn and not easily moved. You will have to fight to get your viewpoint across.

AQUARIUS
January 21 - February 19

Make amends with the people you live with and clear the air so that relations will be calm in the future.

PISCES
February 20 - March 20

One person's trash is another's treasure. See how creative you can be with making old items into treasures.

ARIES
March 21 - April 20

There's a great deal of opposition now making itself known in your life. Try not to lose yourself in the situation.

TAURUS
April 21- May 21

It may be difficult to get moving today, Taurus. You may want to just stay in bed. Don't feel guilty about it.

GEMINI
May 22 - June 21

Do some serious long-term planning to make sure your home and family are secure.

CANCER
June 22 - July 22

There may be something or someone trying to slow you down. Maybe this is a sign that it's what you need to do.

ODDLY ENOUGH

MP becomes first in UK to create himself as an AI bot

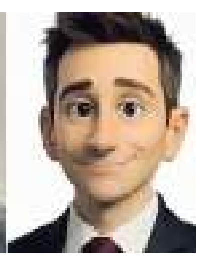
BBC/ With chatbot encounters becoming increasingly commonplace in our daily lives, one MP has become the first UK politician to create an AI version of himself to interact with constituents.

Labour's Mark Sewards has worked alongside a startup AI firm to create a virtual representation of himself, using his voice and allowing people to ask for help with local issues or policy queries.

The West Yorkshire representative says it will "help strengthen the connection between an MP's office and the constituents we serve", but some are questioning whether the step creates further disconnect between politicians and the public.

"When it comes to the general public and how they speak about politicians, the trust in them gets worse and worse," says Dr Susan Oman, a senior lecturer in data, AI and society. "There is the risk here that as an MP you are trying to be more efficient and more present for your constituents, but the knock-on effect is they feel less listened to."

Chatbots – computer programmes simulating a two-way conversation with a human user – have seen a recent rise in popularity as businesses look for new methods of communication. While the software can bring a range of benefits, there are concerns around privacy and data security, a lack of human interaction and the bot's ability to resolve issues.



TELEVISION LINEUP – FRIDAY

tv47

5:00AM	MORNING DECREE	4:30PM	DEBATE CIRCLE - RPT
5:30AM	TV47 FITNESS	5:00PM	BEATPLUG
6:00AM	MORNING CAFÉ	7:00PM	TV47 WIKENDI
10:00AM	BEAT BREAK	7:30PM	THE 77 PERCENT
11:00AM	TV47 MATUKIO	8:00PM	ECO AFRICA
2:00PM	BAZE 47	8:30PM	NEW LIFE BEGINS
3:00PM	KIDS ON THE BLOCK	9:00PM	THIS FRIDAY WITH BETTY KYALLO
4:00PM	TV47 NEWS NOW	10:10PM	TRIBE 47
4:15PM	SPORTS LIFE	12:00AM	BEATPLUG MIX

GOLF

Over 200 golfers to feature in 17th leg of KCB Tour

BY ANGWENYI GICHANA

THE 17th leg of the KCB East Africa Golf Tour heads to the 18-hole Sigona Golf Course on Saturday with over 200 players battling for slots to the tour's grand finale on December 5.

The top two teams from the weekend's action will qualify for the grand finale.

Sigona Golf Club Captain Sammy Mwiti said: "This competition has played an integral role in advancing the growth of the sport. We welcome all golfers to our course, which is in pristine condition. We look forward to a fantastic outing on Saturday."

The regional series has been to 10 counties in Kenya, including Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Laikipia, Nandi, Mombasa, Kisii, Kiambu, Machakos, and Kericho. Regionally, there have been tournaments in Uganda and Burundi.

The four-ball team of Dismas Mokua, Peter Mogendi, Zachary Bichage, and Andrew Nyanusi won the 16th leg held at the Kisii Golf Course two weeks ago.

"The KCB East Africa Golf Tour is more than just a sporting event; it is a platform for regional integration, talent development, and economic empowerment. As we head to Sigona, we are excited to witness great competition and camaraderie, and to further entrench golf as a key sport for social impact across the region," noted KCB Group Director Marketing and Communications Rosalind Gichuru.

The 2025 edition has featured over 2,000 players across the East African region and engaged more than 1,000 juniors in clinics, which run concurrently with the tournament.

The club that produces the winning team during the tour's grand finale on December 5 will receive a Sh1m cash reward to support a sustainability initiative at their club. In addition, the winning team will be sponsored to participate in a prestigious international tournament.

Peter Mwaura during the KCB East Africa Golf Tour Ruiru leg on June 7 /HANDOUT

SCHOOL GAMES

St Joseph's Girls' Kitale pray before their match against Kinale Girls' at the Bull Ring in Kakamega /ANGWENYI GICHANA

ALUMADA BULLISH

St Joseph's Girls' Kitale vows to retain Feasssa 7s title

BY ANGWENYI GICHANA

FEDERATION of East African Secondary Schools Sports Association (FEASSSA) girls' rugby Sevens champions will seek to redeem themselves when the regional showpiece gets underway in Kakamega next week.

St Joseph's Girls' Kitale, popularly known as JOGA, surrendered the national 7s title to archrivals Kinale Girls' at the Bull Ring in Kakamega after going down 17-5 last weekend.

The 10-day extravaganza, which will feature teams from Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and Kenya, will run from August 13 to 24.

JOGA coach Godwin Alumada is confident about retaining the regional title.

"We are currently trying to rectify the mistakes we made during the final against Kinale. We are set to retain our title," said Alumada.

JOGA, Kinale, St Theresa's Kithimu, and Paul Harris will represent Kenya in rugby 7s, which is being held for the second year.

Kinale Girls' coach Allan Bush says they are eager to continue with their winning streak.

"We are favourites to lift the title, but we shall not underrate any team. All teams are equal opponents, and we shall take a game at a time. However, our target is to win the regional trophy," said Bush.

Paul Harris coach Diane Sifuna expects a good outing for the girls at FEASSSA.

"The girls have improved tremendously. We expect a semifinal slot at FEASSSA games," said Sifuna, who guided the team to a fourth-place finish during the national championships.

In the boys' category, Kenya will be represented by newly crowned champions St Peter's Mumias, runners-up Koyonzo High School, third-placed Bungoma, and former national champions Friends School Bwake.

St Peter's Mumias coach Nelson Jaika expects tough competition, but said they are ready. Vihiga Boys' won the title in Mbale, Uganda, last year.

"We want the 7s trophy to remain in Kenya. That's our target," said Jaika.

The 2023 regional champions, Koyonzo, coached by Eliud Okwemba, declared themselves favourites to win the tournament.

"We are among the favourites, having played in the national finals and lost narrowly. The players have recovered from the loss and have set their sights on the regional games," said Okwemba.

Bungoma's coach Titus Wangila is praying for the timely recovery of two key players who were injured during the national championships last weekend.

"We are looking forward to a better performance during the East African games. We had issues with our defence, but we shall work on that during the training camp," added Wangila.

RUGBY

Safari Sevens returns to Nyayo Stadium for first time in four years

BY WILLIAM NJUGUNA

THE 2025 edition of the Safari Sevens will be held at Nyayo Stadium from October 10-12, the Kenya Rugby Union has announced.

The tournament is set to return to Nyayo for the first time since 2021, when Shujaa beat Germany in the final to lift the trophy. The 2023 edition was held at the RFUEA grounds, while the 2024 edition took place at Machakos Stadium.

The statement read: "The Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) has confirmed that the 2025 edition of the Safari 7s tournament will be held at the Nyayo Stadium. This will be the first time the tournament shall be held here since 2021, when Shujaa emerged victorious."

This will be the fourth time the Safari 7s will be hosted at the 35,000-seater stadium. The venue had previously hosted the tournament in 2011 and 2012, following a surge in attendance that the RFUEA grounds could no longer accommodate.

Shujaa and Costa Blanca are the current defending champions, having claimed the men's and women's titles respectively during the 2024 tournament in Machakos.

Kenya is expected to field two teams, Shujaa and Morans, in the men's category and two Lionesses and Cubs in the women's category. The winner of the National Sevens Series, currently underway, is expected to compete in the tournament.

Teams expected to come for the two-day tournament include Uganda Cranes, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Shogun Rugby and a provincial side from South Africa. In the women's category, holders Costa Blanca, Zimbabwe and Tunisia Tropics are expected to participate.

Shujaa and Lionesses are using the tournament as preparation for the start of the second-tier World Sevens Series, expected to start in January 2026.

KRU vice chairman Moses Ndale said that the event has been identifying sponsors and logistics for the tournament.

"Now that the venue is known and the dates are out, we have the opportunity to look for sponsors and logistics, security and at the same time work with the Ministry of Sports to ensure a seamless tournament," observed Ndale.

William Mwanji during last year's Safari 7s /HANDOUT

CAF AFRICAN NATION

HARAMBEE STARS DARE FOOT

From the dust of doubt to the altar of belief, Kenya seek to upstage continental behemoths Morocco

BY TONY MBALLA
@TonyMballa

THERE are nights when the world leans in to listen, and football becomes not a game but a sermon. August 10 promises such a night.

Beneath Nairobi's watchful sky, under the cathedral lights of Kasarani, the soil shall tremble not from thunder, but from 48,000 pounding hearts.

Two nations, two philosophies—one bold with history, the other burning with hope—meet not for points, but for permanence. This is where the fire of Harambee Stars meets the faith of the Atlas Lions. And only one will leave the pitch closer to the divine.

The Atlas and the Ascent

Morocco does not travel with uncertainty. They arrive wrapped in memory and conviction, cloaked in the pride of two CHAN crowns, marching like a dynasty reborn.

Their 2–0 opening victory over Angola did not scream—it hummed like machinery. Clean. Precise. Elegant. Imad Riahi's opener was not just a goal; it was geometry in motion. The second, a gift by Angola's faltering backline, was simply inevitable.

But amidst the quiet dominance, Rabie Hrimat was the axis around which Morocco spun their spell. With the poise of a general and the calm of a monk, he stitched Morocco's tempo like an old tailor threading legacy into cloth.

"It's a great way to start CHAN, and we're determined to keep this rhythm going," he said after the game, his tone not jubilant, but resolute. "This squad is built from the best of our domestic league. We've prepared well, in Morocco and here in Kenya. We are ready."

His words were not declarations. They were quiet declarations of intent, soaked in the steel of a nation that plays not with fear, but with familiarity. For Morocco, this tournament is not about discovery—it is about coronation.

The Stars that refuse to fade

Yet from Nairobi's beating heart rises something ancient and unshackled. Kenya has danced in the peripheries of African football for decades, always knocking, often ignored. But not this time. This time, they have kicked down the door.

Their 1–0 conquest of DR Congo was no mere upset—it was a spark in a dry forest. Austin Odhiambo's goal was not scored. It was sculpted. A left-footed brushstroke on the canvas of CHAN. And as the net rippled, Kasarani roared—not in cheer, but in recognition. Kenya had arrived not as visitors, but as the storm.

"We were nervous at the start," admitted head coach Benni McCarthy, with the weary grin of a man who knows too well the price of belief.

"But once the boys settled, they showed real bravery. Odhiambo's goal came at the perfect moment—right before the break. It changed everything."

He wasn't just reflecting. He was unveiling. "We've trained for adversity. These boys have been doubted all their lives. That's where their strength comes from—from being overlooked."

Captain Abud Omar stood beside him, gaze unblinking, voice grounded. "This is the most united I've seen this team. There's a deep brotherhood forming here—something unshakable. That win? That came from our guts, not just our tactics."

Sold-out sermons and the altar of Kasarani

Kasarani has become something else. No longer a stadium—it is a spiritual arena. A sold-out cathedral, where hope is sung in 10 languages and danced through narrow alleyways of Mathare and the rustling maize fields of Eldoret.

"When I step out of the tunnel," said Omar, "I don't hear fans. I hear the voices of generations. I hear every boy who played barefoot in a muddy field and dreamed of this stage."

On August 10, the Harambee Stars won't just step onto grass. They'll tread upon every heartbreak that shaped them, every whisper that said they wouldn't make it. And the stadium will carry them like a tide.

A table taut with tension

The math is simple but cruel. Kenya and Morocco—each three points, each with a clean sheet. The winner edges toward the summit. A draw opens the gates to chaos. A loss for either could undo the miracle of their beginnings. But this is not about arithmetic. This is about breathless defiance.

Sketioui's Sword of Strategy

Tarik Sektioui walks like a man who has mapped out the moon. Morocco's head coach carries the air of patience, but his words cut with precision. "The second game against Kenya will not be easy," he said, lips tight, eyes sharp. "They have good players—brave, aggressive. We must prepare like we did for Angola. With focus. With discipline."

He added, voice low like a tide beneath a calm sea, "We must play with the same mentality, the same hunger, and discipline. We are not here for second chances—we are here to win."

Morocco may speak softly. But make no mistake—they come with sharpened intentions.

Benni's Fire and the Birth of Belief

If Sektioui sculpts strategy with silence, McCarthy breathes fire into shadows. He does not coach. He composes.

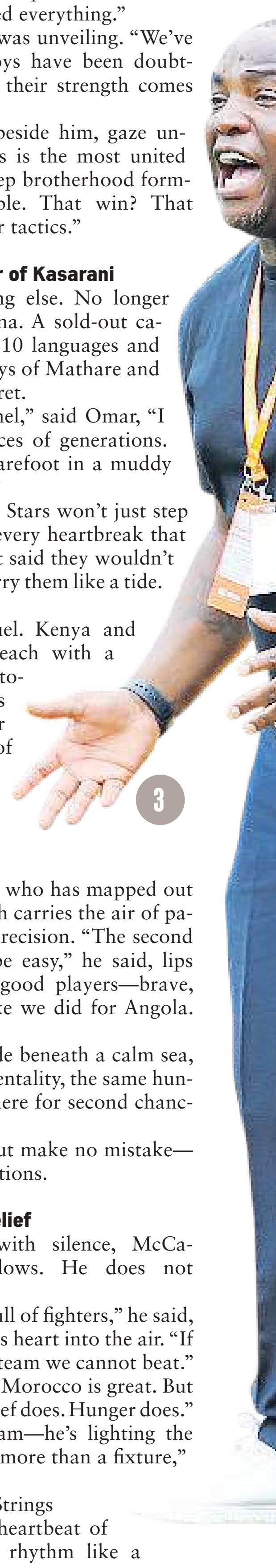
"This team is young, but it's full of fighters," he said, leaning forward, as if offering his heart into the air. "If we play without fear, there's no team we cannot beat."

He paused, then said slowly, "Morocco is great. But greatness doesn't win games. Belief does. Hunger does."

He's not just rallying his team—he's lighting the fuse of a nation. "This match is more than a fixture," he said. "It's an awakening."

Midfield Duels and Invisible Strings

Hrimat will try to slow the heartbeat of the game, weaving Morocco's rhythm like a



1. Harambee Stars' forward Austin Odhiambo **/HANDOUT**

2. Morocco players celebrate after scoring against Angola **/HANDOUT**

3. Harambee Stars' coach Benni McCarthy **/HANDOUT**

4. Harambee Stars' David Sakwa in action against DR Congo's Osee Ndombele **/HANDOUT**

5. Morocco's Imad Riahi and Ayoub Mouloua **/HANDOUT**

6. Morocco's Imad Riahi **/HANDOUT**

S CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

TBALL DYNASTY AT KASARANI

conductor. But Odhiambo—fleet-footed and flame-hearted—will seek to unthread that pattern, to pull chaos into elegance. Their duel will be the silent war beneath the noise.

Defensive Vigil

Bryne Omondi stands at the gate, tall and unyielding. Against Morocco's poetic precision, he must become stone and spirit. "Pressure is a privilege," he said. "Let it come. I will not blink."

Behind every save is not just reflex, but memory. Omond knows what this means. He carries the prayers of villages.

Attack unleashed

Kenya cannot ride Odhiambo's magic alone. Boniface Muchiri's lightning. Masika's intuition. Onyango's cunning. It will take a chorus of courage, not a solo.

And sometimes, the hero is the one not spoken of. A late substitute. A forgotten name. Because in games like this, fate loves surprise.

Set pieces and unseen threads

Set pieces are moments where the world slows. A corner can become a revolution. A free kick can slice time. This match will be defined not just by open play, but by the margins where angels whisper.

Stars to watch

Austine Odhiambo – Kenya's flame. Every touch is a poem. Morocco will look to douse his fire, but creativity cannot be caged.

Rabie Hrimat – The metronome. Calm in chaos. Morocco's strategist with feet that speak silence.

The Stakes Beyond Scoreboards

This is no longer about advancing. For Morocco, victory seals their myth, pushing them toward a third CHAN crown. For Kenya, it breaks the curse. It tells the continent: we are not a story of almosts—we are Africa's new chorus. Abud Omar said it best: "A win here would mean more than three points. It would mean we are real."

Benni nodded in agreement. "This is no longer about who we were. It's about who we're becoming."

"Let them bring their crowns," whispered McCarthy. "We've brought our hearts."

And in the stands, under twilight's hush and thunder's edge, 48,000 voices will believe. There will be sweat. There will be scars. There may be heartbreak.

But there will be poetry. Because in a place like Kasarani, where belief meets brilliance, and fire meets faith, football becomes more than sport. It becomes a nation's hymn.

4. Harambee Stars' coach Benni McCarthy and his assistant Vasili Manousakis /HANDOUT

CYCLING

11 cyclists to grace next week's KCA University Vice Chancellor Tour

KCA University Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Isaiah Wakindiki/**HANDOUT**

BY TEDDY MULEI

ELEVEN cyclists will hit the road for a worthy cause as the KCA University VC (Vice Chancellor) & CEO Cycling Tour rolls out across regional borders for the first time.

The bold move at the third edition of the tour aims at raising Sh15m to fund scholarship programmes targeting underprivileged students.

Dubbed the "Arusha Circuit," the 698-kilometre tour will span three days (August 13 to 15), weaving through Nairobi, Kitengela, Namanga, Arusha, Moshi, Tarakea, Oloitoktok, Emali, Salama, Machakos and back to Nairobi.

The peloton of 11 cyclists will include one KCA University student, symbolising the future the initiative seeks to empower.

The group is led by veteran rider David Kinja and has Daniel Juma, Samson Kamau, Alice Mirungu, Daniel Agoro, Kelvin Kariuki, Daniel Amun, Farrah Ibrahim, Isaack Mwendwa, Titus Mwangi and Joseph Nyaga.

Speaking during the tour's launch at the university's Ruaraka main campus, Vice Chancellor Prof. Isaiah I.C. Wakindiki was impressed by the initiative's expanding footprint.

"For the first time, this tour will cross borders because just like education knows no bounds, neither should the effort to make it accessible," he said.

"This isn't just a ride, it's a statement about equity in education and awareness in road safety."

Wakindiki noted that despite the rising number of qualified high school graduates, less than 30 per cent secure government-sponsored slots in public universities, leaving thousands of bright, low-income students behind.

"This cycling tour directly addresses that imbalance. It's about unlocking doors that would otherwise remain closed due to financial constraints," he added.

Since its inception in 2023, the VC & CEO Cycling Tour has sponsored 36 students.

Beyond scholarships, the university has also stepped up efforts to tackle Kenya's road safety crisis. During the launch, KCA unveiled a Centre for Road Safety and Accidents Surveillance Research, aimed at collecting and analysing crash data to drive policy reforms.

According to the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), 4,748 lives were lost on Kenyan roads in 2024. Wakindiki emphasised the centre's role in shaping safer roads.

ATHLETICS

THRILLING ENCOUNTER

Wanyonyi, Arop to renew rivalry at next weekend's Lausanne Diamond League

BY TEDDY MULEI

OLYMPIC 800m champion Emmanuel Wanyonyi is set for a thrilling rematch with reigning world champion Marco Arop at the Lausanne Diamond League on August 20.

The two titans of the two-lap race have been trading blows throughout a fiercely competitive 2025 campaign.

Their first meeting of the 2025 season was the Kingston Grand Slam in Jamaica, where Arop edged Wanyonyi in 1:45.13, with the Kenyan settling for second in 1:46.44.

But Wanyonyi, 21, responded dominantly with a string of statement wins in the Diamond League circuit.

He avenged the loss in Monaco on July 11, storming to a world-leading 1:41.44 ahead of American Josh Hoey (1:42.01) and Algeria's Djamel Sedjati (1:42.20).

Arop finished in a distant fifth place, clocking 1:42.73. Eight days later, he returned to outkick Arop once more in London, clocking a new meeting record of 1:42.00 with the Canadian finishing second in 1:42.22.

The Kenyan prodigy has been in blistering form throughout the Diamond League circuit, picking four straight victories and asserting his authority over two laps.

He opened his campaign in Rabat on May 25, where he clocked 1:43.37 to place third behind Botswana's Tshepiso Masalela (1:42.70) and Britain's Max Burgin (1:43.34).

Wanyonyi, however, went on to clinch victories in Oslo (1:42.78), Stockholm (1:41.95), Monaco and London. He remains the only man to dip under 1:42 this season.

The Lausanne meeting holds fond memories for Wanyonyi, who lit up the track at last year's edition with a 1:41.11 victory, making him the joint second-fastest man in 800m history alongside Kenyan-born Dane Wilson Kipketer.

In that race, he led Arop (1:41.72) and France's Gabriel Tual (1:42.30).

This year's meet will serve as a crucial dress rehearsal ahead of the Diamond League final in Zurich (August 27–28) and the World Championships in Tokyo next month.

In Tokyo, Wanyonyi will lead Kenya's charge in the men's 800m alongside Nicholas Kebenei and Kelvin Kimtai, as the East African powerhouse looks to reclaim its global dominance in the event.

"The world stage is very competitive at the moment. According to the times they clocked at the trials (Kebenei and Kimtai), we will have to improve as a team."

"I want all three of us in the finals, and that will be a golden chance," Wanyonyi told the star during the World Championships trials on July 22.

Since the inaugural World Championships in Helsinki in 1983, Kenya has dominated the 800m event, collecting seven gold, three silver, and four bronze medals for a record 14 overall.

Denmark, a distant second, has only three medals to its name over the 800m. His ambitions will be to unseat Arop.

"Marco Arop will be coming to defend his title. He will come prepared for the medal, and I am also prepared to earn a medal."

Emmanuel Wanyonyi and Marco Arop / **FILE**

FOOTBALL

Barnaba Korir (L) with Team Kenya upon arrival from Algeria / **HANDOUT**

Kenya set sights on Angola after medal haul in Algiers

BY TEDDY MULEI

FRESH from a promising campaign at the inaugural African School Games in Algiers, Algeria, Team Kenya is already shifting focus to glory at the 4th African Youth Games scheduled for December in Angola.

In Algiers, the young Kenyan squad bagged a total of 11 medals (five gold, one silver, and five bronze), finishing 11th overall on the medal table. Hosts Algeria dominated the Games with a staggering 244 medals, followed by Egypt (59) and Tunisia (34), who completed the podium. Nigeria finished fourth with 23 medals. Kenya's gold medallists in Algeria included: David Kabaiko (boys' 1,500m), Lorna Cherono (girls' 3,000m), Clare Chepng'etich (girls' 2,000m), Koech Manase Kiprotich (boys' 800m) and Kelvin Kipngeno (triple jump).

Lukeman Shaffi Bakari clinched silver in boxing. The bronze medallists were Clinton Omari (wrestling, Greco-Roman), Clinton Omari (wrestling freestyle 45kg), Vivian Adhiambo (girls' wrestling 53kg), Mercy Eragae (cycling) and Bramwel Mathenge (110m hurdles).

Team captain Mathenge, who led from the front with a bronze in the hurdles, said the outing in Algeria was a key learning curve ahead of Angola. "After completing the team has gauged itself and we now know where we need to improve," Mathenge said.

"We have agreed as a team that we will work on our weaknesses and be stronger as we approach the Africa Youth Games in Angola this December," he added.

The promising hurdler admitted he's already eyeing an upgrade to his medal. "Personally, as a hurdler, I need to polish my skills. Some things did not go right in my hurdling. The School games have given us a chance to realise what we need to do to take our game to the next level."

The team returned home Thursday morning to a warm reception from Barnaba Korir, the National Olympic Committee of Kenya (NOCK) first vice president.

Korir said: "Our athletes did so well in Algeria, yet they are still very young. Their hard work helped Kenya finish fifth in the medal standings," Korir said. "It was the first time for some of them to compete outside the country, and we are proud of their efforts as the National Olympic Committee."

Aston Villa manager Emery believes Chelsea's unwanted striker can do better at Villa Park

JACKSON V WATKINS: WHO'S THE BEST?

Chelsea striker Nicolas Jackson and Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins /HANDOUT

DO you think Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson is an upgrade over Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins? Villa coach Unai Emery does, and has told his club that Jackson is a better bet for the coming season based on his knowledge of the player. He helped build the Senegal international's career at the Spanish club Villarreal.

Emery believes Jackson can do better than his performances for Chelsea and there is motivation for the striker to move clubs following the arrival of Liam Delap and Joao Pedro at Stamford Bridge.

This has demoted Jackson to third choice. It is also possible that Xavi Simons will join from RB Leipzig, which would exacerbate Jackson's situation. He will struggle for minutes at Stamford Bridge, whereas Emery would likely spend one-on-one time with him and promote him into the Villa forward line quickly.

Chelsea would want £80m for Jackson, who is on an eight-year contract but that is likely too high for Villa and the other interested club, Newcastle. Watkins has been unsettled this summer amid all the possible transfer talk and both he and Villa think a move could be beneficial to both.

AMORIM POINTS THE WAY FORWARD IN TROPHY WIN?

Bruno Fernandes rejected a transfer to Saudi Pro League club Al-Nassr and stepped onto the field as Manchester United captain in a pre-season match against Everton, which ended 2-2.

This is interesting because Bruno scored and was man-of-the-match despite being critical of his teammates for not trying hard enough and demanding that the club bring in more top-quality recruits.

It doesn't make him a favourite in the dressing room at present but he does have a point. He knows that if Ruben Amorim doesn't get off to a flying start in the new season, he could be shown the exit door.

Fernandes does not want that for his fellow Portuguese. It's a tough challenge when Arsenal are your opponents next weekend. New signing Bryan Mbeumo was on the pitch for 45 minutes and helped the Red Devils secure the Premier League Summer Series, beating West Ham, Bournemouth and Everton to the trophy.

United's starting team, which points the way that Amorim is thinking for the opening Premier League game against Arsenal on August 17, was Bayindir, Amad Diallo, Leny Yoro, Matthijs De Ligt, Luke Shaw, Diogo Dalot, Manuel Ugarte, Kobbie Mainoo, Fernandes, Mathues Cunha and Mbeumo.

BY DAVID BILLINGTON

FOOTBALL GOSSIP

CHELSEA'S NEW LOOK

Chelsea will be interesting to watch this season with Enzo Maresca's Blues much strengthened from last year. Maresca made 419 changes to his starting line-ups last season, which is more than any other elite European club.

After the current transfer period, he has seven centre-backs in his squad. He wanted to give Levi Colwell cover plus competition and also team regular Marc Cucurella and has signed Jorrel Hato, who played mainly at Ajax last season and although only 18, he can play on both the left and right.

The young Dutchman has joined for £37m and signed a seven-year deal. Amazingly, he captained Ajax when he was only 17 and made 111 appearances. He has six international caps.

Chelsea will take some of their new squad signings into their first home game against Crystal Palace, which includes Hato, Joao Pedro (£60m), Jamie Gittens (£51.1m), Liam Delap (£30m), Estevao Willian (£29.1m) and Dario Essugo (£18.5m). Mamadou Sarr (£12m) and Kendry Paez (£17.3m) are going out on loan at Strasbourg.

Chelsea have spent £250m during the transfer window, second to Liverpool's £295.5m. Chelsea and Everton have signed a £28m deal to take Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall from Stamford Bridge and to the Hill-Dickinson Stadium on a five-year contract.

PALHINHA DELIGHTED ABOUT PREMIER LEAGUE RETURN

Tottenham coach Thomas Frank is delighted to welcome ex-Fulham Portuguese international Joao Palhinha on loan from Bayern Munich. The deal, concluded last Sunday, includes the opportunity to sign the defensive midfielder permanently.

Palhinha never settled at Bayern under coach Vincent Kompany. If he joins at the end of the season, the fee will be £27m. In the meantime, Spurs will pay his full salary. In good news for Tottenham fans, after Palhinha had in-depth conversations with Frank, he said: "It is amazing to return to the Premier League and to return to London, which is what my family and I wanted. We love London and as I have always said, the Premier League is the best in the world."

Frank identified that the team needed a number six even before he arrived at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. He commented that although Rodri Bentacur can cover this position, the team would be stronger if they played together. Frank admires Palhinha because he commands the centre of the pitch, has disciplined distribution and makes short, sharp forward passes after breaking up play. His value in stopping counterattacks will feature this season and he is a valuable player in set-pieces at both ends of the field.

NEWCASTLE EYE PORTO STRIKER

Newcastle United have admitted they might not land Benjamin Sesko and FC Porto striker Samu Aghehowa is being tracked as an option. The Spaniard is valued at £70m, which Newcastle can afford. Manchester United are determined to land Sesko. They are his preferred club. I am told he has agreed on personal terms. Newcastle are going to be weaker up front if no further deals are done.

Players they wanted to sign have chosen to go elsewhere instead of St James' Park. Liam Delap and Joao Pedro chose Chelsea and they wanted to sign both Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumbo but both have gone to Man United. Liverpool beat Newcastle to Hugo Ekitike, all of which has left coach Eddie Howe frustrated and looking at his recruitment team. They do have Champions League football next season but besides Anthony Elanga and Aaron Ramsdale, they are short of new quality and there is, of course, the ongoing situation with Alexander Isak.

WHY SON CHOSE THE MLS

For nearly 10 years, the partnership of Harry Kane and Son Heung-min excited Tottenham supporters. Kane moved on to Bayern Munich and 'Sonny' took over as club captain.

He, too, has decided to move on. Offers came in from the Saudi Pro League but he has chosen to play at Los Angeles FC in the American MLS, linking up with his friend and ex-Spurs goalkeeper, Hugo Lloris. It is not surprising to me that he favours America. In all my years interviewing players, I can tell you that he is one of the most charming, friendly and helpful people I have encountered.

Sonny is a nice young man and when he speaks of his homeland in South Korea, it is obvious to tell of the American influence in that country, which houses thousands of United States army and navy personnel. This made an impression on him during his younger years. Los Angeles has the largest Korean population outside of their homeland.

As club captain, Sonny united the dressing room in a way not seen since the days of Mauricio Pochettino. He put a friendly, supportive arm around players, experienced and young alike and talked and talked, which many people do not realise is part of his character. And when he talks, players listen.

Sonny was at Spurs for 10 years, scored 173 goals and made 101 assists – a record any player would be proud of. His best friend at Tottenham is Ben Davies. He is godfather to the Welshman's son, Ralph. The two discussed Son's best move before any decisions were made. Sonny could not go to Inter Miami because there are strict salary budgets in the MLS and the club has used all their allocation, paying high wages to Lionel Messi, Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets.

One thing is for sure. There will always be a VIP seat for Son at Tottenham and he will be remembered as one of the club's best players.

ISAK CHOOSES TO TRAIN IN SPAIN

The Alexander Isak saga goes on… Eddie Howe was subdued when asked what was happening with his Newcastle striker. The Swedish international linked up with his teammates after missing the club's Far East tour.

Interestingly, and what was keeping Howe quiet, was Isak's decision to travel to Spain recently and train at Real Sociedad's ground instead of working with his Newcastle's fitness team at home in Benton. Backroom staff who did not travel east are perfectly qualified to take training sessions. Isak took along his fitness team to Spain. The amazing thing is that Howe said he knew where Isak was after reading it in the media. Liverpool tabled a bid of over £100m for the striker, which Newcastle rejected.

A statement sent out from Anfield said they would not be going back with a higher bid. However, I doubt this is over yet. Isak has made no secret of wanting to leave the north east of England for the north west. He could put in a transfer request but that is always a last resort since it tends to alienate players from their teammates and club officials.

Liverpool are yet to throw in the towel. I am putting two and two together after talking to several informed Liverpool sources and the club is waiting to see how the Isak v Newcastle situation works itself out. If the forward insists on leaving, they will be ready with an open chequebook. Only one player has ever been sold for more money than Liverpool is offering for Isak: PSG's Kylian Mbappe.

Isak has now been told to train alone, away from other players, so he doesn't distract them. He and his family were not invited to a club get-together with entertainment and a barbecue.

SAINTS SAY NO TO EVERTON'S BID FOR DIBLING

Despite having to raise funds to drive their promotion bid this coming season, relegated Southampton have rejected Everton's £27million offer for England Under-21 winger Tyler Dibling. He is also being tracked by Tottenham, RB Leipzig, Manchester United and Chelsea. Dibling made a big impression last season and several clubs regularly sent scouts to watch him.

The Saints have said they will not sell for anything less than their valuation of £40m. During this transfer window, the Saints have sold Ghanaian left winger and forward Kamaldeen Sulemana to Serie 'A' club Atalanta, Nigerian Paul Onuachu to Turkish Super Lig club Trabzonspor and Pole Jan Bednarek to Portugese Primeira Liga club Porto.

South Africa defender Jooste backs camaraderie ahead of Chan opener against Algeria

CAF

BAFANA Bafana defender Wayde Jooste believes the camaraderie and familiarity within the national squad will be a major asset as South Africa prepare to face Algeria in their opening CAF African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024 fixture on Friday evening at the Mandela National Stadium.

The North Africans already have three points on the board following their win against co-hosts Uganda, while Bafana will be making their first appearance as they return to the tournament having last participated as hosts in 2014. But Jooste is unfazed by the pressure of starting on the back foot, choosing instead to highlight the team's unity and underdog status as their biggest weapons.

"Honestly, I don't think it's been that tough because the majority of us have played against each other in our respective leagues," Jooste said.

"Some of us have even been teammates at different clubs. So from a chemistry perspective, it's been easy to come together and form a little family."

The squad assembled locally before jetting off to Uganda and, according to the former AmaZulu full-back, that time together has strengthened the team's cohesion and spirit. Jooste also believes that being relatively unknown on the international stage is an advantage for the South Africans.

"It's a very good thing that we are an unknown quantity because they won't know what to expect from us," he explained.

"It will count in our favour and give us an edge in the group stages."

With Algeria already having played their first match, Jooste said the Bafana technical team used the opportunity to do a thorough analysis of their opponents, describing them as a "very direct" and deserving team.

"They deserve to be here. They're a very good team, but we've done our analysis and most of the guys have seen them in action," he stated.

Looking ahead to Friday, Jooste stressed the importance of a positive start, especially in a group where momentum and early points can shape a team's chances of advancing.

"In any tournament format, you want to start well. You don't want to be playing catch-up and relying on other results. If we pick up three points in the first game, it takes a load off our shoulders and gives us the best chance of progressing."

South Africa are grouped with Algeria, Uganda, Niger and Guinea in what promises to be a fiercely contested Group C.

Bafana Bafana defender Wayde Jooste /CAF

NGATO GRACIOUS IN DEFEAT

CAR coach proud with his charges despite loss to Burkina Faso

CAF

CENTRAL African Republic head coach Sébastien Ngato expressed pride in his players despite their heavy 4-2 loss to Burkina Faso in what was their historic debut at the TotalEnergies African Nations Championship (CHAN).

Ngato urged his team to keep working and insisted their hopes in the tournament were far from over.

On the other side, Burkina Faso coach Issa Balbon said his team had mentally found their rhythm following the victory and expressed confidence that the Stallions were on their way to reaching their full potential.

Issa Balbon's charges put in a dominant display at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on Wednesday, 6 August, overcoming the Central African Republic 4-2.

It was a convincing response from the Stallions after their opening defeat to hosts Tanzania.

For the Central African Republic, the match marked a milestone – their very first appearance at the CHAN finals.

Despite the loss, Central African Republic coach Sébastien Ngato refused to point fingers at his players. Instead, he praised their efforts and took a positive tone during his post-match press conference.

"I'm proud of our players. As I said before, this is our first time reaching this level, and we came here to see how things work at this stage," said Ngatou.

He did, however, admit that individual mistakes played a part in the defeat.

"The goals we conceded came from our own mistakes. This is football. We'll continue working ahead of the upcoming matches."

Ngato was adamant that the opening defeat had not ended their campaign and stressed that his team still had a fighting chance of progressing.

"There are five teams in our group, and this was our first game. Take Burkina Faso, for instance — they lost their first match but won the second. In this group, anything is possible," he said.

"Each team has four games, and this was just our first. It doesn't mean we're out of the tournament. We can bounce back and advance. After all, a team once lost 4-0 and still went on to win the tournament — it can happen again."

Ngato preferred to close the chapter quickly on the defeat to Burkina Faso, attributing the result to pressure and nerves. He reiterated his faith in his players.

"We made mistakes due to pressure and tension — maybe because it was our first match. We could've done better, but that's okay. We'll keep working for the upcoming games and see how it goes. The goals we conceded were due to small mistakes, and even though we also scored, what happened was down to some unexpected errors."

"This is not the end of the world, and we can't blame the players. It was just one match, our debut in the tournament. We need to support our players and take lessons from this game."

Burkina Faso coach Issa Balbone, visibly pleased in the post-match press conference, praised his players for their big win, which helped them recover from their opening defeat to Tanzania.

Burkina Faso player celebrate /CAF

"We saw in this match a group of players with determination and drive. They bounced back in both performance and result. We needed to win this match, and we did."

He acknowledged the pressure on his young team going into the encounter.

"There was a lot of pressure on these young players before the game."

Balbone stated that the victory, especially how it was achieved, had helped his team find their mental edge.

"I believe we are now mentally ready, and we will soon reach our true level. The playing style will follow. In this match, we simply needed to win."

He added: "As I mentioned before, we were suffering from fatigue. The players needed to recover from exhaustion."

Despite the emphatic victory, Balbone did not shy away from concerns about his team's defensive performance after conceding two goals.

"I believe we need to work a lot, especially on the defensive aspect. Our backline wasn't solid against the Central African Republic, and that worries us. We will work on that area."

Despite the contrasting results, both coaches maintained a spirit of optimism. Ngato, though on the losing side, held firm in his belief that his team still had plenty to offer in the tournament, applauding their fighting spirit in their CHAN debut.

He insisted that the journey was not over yet and hoped the loss would serve as a motivational tool for the rest of their campaign.

Balbone, on the other hand, was relieved to see his players recover mentally and hailed the win as a launching pad toward stronger performances in the next matches. Ultimately, the defining theme was the shared optimism from both camps — a trait that underscored the emotional and competitive richness of CHAN 2024.

S CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

TZ COACH SULEIMAN HAILS TACTICAL WIN

Taifa Stars made it two wins in two matches after hard fought victory against Mauritania to remain on course

CAF

TANZANIA head coach Hemed Suleiman has hailed his side's tactical discipline after a hard-fought 1-0 win over Mauritania in a match he described as a "battle of strategy".

Despite the late heartbreak, Mauritania boss Aritz López Garai said he was proud of his players and insisted they did not deserve to lose.

The match between hosts Tanzania and Mauritania remained goalless until the 89th minute, when the deadlock was finally broken at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday night.

The goal handed the Taifa Stars a second consecutive win in Group B of the TotalEnergies African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024.

In his post-match press conference, Tanzania boss Hemed Suleiman began by expressing his gratitude to the home fans for their unwavering support throughout the tightly contested game.

"First of all, I want to thank the Tanzanian fans who created such an electric atmosphere during the match. It was a tough encounter. We started the game with difficulty, and we knew Mauritania would sit deep, stay compact, and look to launch long balls forward."

He continued: "It was a good match. Mauritania played defensively and used long passes, which made things hard for us. But our substitutions were successful. I think it was a tactical game, and we managed to win it."

Suleiman acknowledged that his team made several errors during the match and emphasised the need for improvement ahead of the next fixture.

"We'll return to training and work on correcting our mistakes. We'll also look at how to improve our attacking efficiency. Scoring is not easy when your opponent plays with six or seven players in defence. We managed the first half well, and in the second half, we brought in some substitutes. Those changes allowed us to shift the tempo of the game."

Tanzania's Ahmed Pipino in action against Mauritania's Ahmed El Moctar /CAF

The Tanzanian coach stressed that securing three points was the most crucial outcome of the match as the team continues to chase their ultimate goal in the tournament.

"The important thing is getting three points. We'll fix our mistakes during training. Our main goal remains qualification to the next round, and hopefully, our next game will be even better."

He added: "We must attack as much as we can when facing defensive teams. This match was a tactical battle. Our players followed instructions and played exactly how I told them. I had warned them it would be a difficult match."

Suleiman insisted that his players must continue to adhere to the tactical principles being worked on in training.

"Our players always try to adapt to my tactical plans, and they must respect them. We even prepared a backup plan in case the first one didn't work. We controlled the midfield and managed the match well against Mauritania. Maybe we'll have some surprises for the other teams."

On the other side, Mauritania head coach Aritz López Garai expressed disappointment at the result but praised his players for their performance, arguing that the better-playing team does not always come away with the win.

"This is football as we know it. You can play well, dominate, and still lose at the very end. We controlled the match and played well. I think we just needed more concentration throughout. Unfortunately, we lost, and that's hard to take."

He added: "Yes, I believe we played a serious game. There was pressure, and we handled it well.

Congo coach Ngatsono praises CHAN's growing competitiveness after stalemate against Sudan

CAF

FOLLOWING Congo's opening draw against Sudan at the CAF African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024, head coach Barthélémy Ngatsono has hailed the tournament's growing level of competitiveness and professionalism.

Ngatsono watched his side rally to secure a hard-fought point in a tightly contested encounter, which he believes showcased the elevated standard of the continental showpiece.

"It was a good game. It was quite balanced between two sides that wanted maximum points," the coach said post-match.

"The Sudanese had a good first half, but my players showed character today and fought hard to earn this point."

While content with the result, Ngatsono was especially complimentary of the tournament's organisation and the technical level of competition being displayed so far in East Africa.

"I must say congratulations to the organisers and organising nations. The tournament is growing and matches are becoming more technical. The facilities and everything make the matches very competitive," he noted.

"In football, there are three results, winning, losing and a draw, and I'm very happy to get that one point. As everyone saw today, the teams are very prepared."

Ngatsono added that Congo will take key lessons from the game and immediately turn their focus to their next challenge, a crucial Group C clash against defending champions Senegal in August.

"We now focus all our attention on the game against Senegal. I must say kudos to Sudan as well, but we will learn from this game and come back better."

Congo coach Barthélémy Ngatsono /CAF

CHAN STANDINGS (AS AT AUG.6)

GROUP A

Pos.		P	PTS	Form
1	Morocco	1	3	W
2	Kenya	1	3	W
3	Zambia	0	0	
4	Congo DR	1	0	L
5	Angola	1	0	L

GROUP B

Pos.		P	PTS	Form
1	Tanzania	2	6	WW
2	Burkina Faso	2	3	LW
3	Madagascar	1	1	D
4	Mauritania	2	1	DL
5	CAR	1	0	L

GROUP C

Pos.		P	PTS	Form
1	Algeria	1	3	W
2	Guinea	1	3	W
3	South Africa	0	0	
4	Niger	1	0	L
5	Uganda	1	0	L

GROUP D

Pos.		P	PTS	Form
1	Senegal	1	3	W
2	Congo	1	1	
3	Sudan	1	1	D
4	Nigeria	1	0	L

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 8-10, 2025

starSPORT

Fans at the Kasarani Stadium/ **HANDOUT**

PS Omollo urges fan discipline after CAF fine on Kenya

BY TEDDY MULEI

PRINCIPAL Secretary in the Ministry of Interior Raymond Omollo has called on fans to conduct themselves accordingly after CAF slapped the country with a Sh2.5 million fine over Chan security breaches.

The fine follows a damning report from CAF's security officer, which flagged multiple lapses in crowd management during Kenya's opening game against DR Congo last Sunday at Kasarani. The security lapses highlighted include a stampede at Gate 11, unauthorised access to restricted Public Security Areas, and a motorcycle alarmingly weaving through packed terraces.

Reacting to the development, Omollo issued a stern call for fan discipline, warning that such incidents risk sabotaging Kenya's continental football ambitions. "Hosting the CHAN 2024 tournament is a national honour for Kenya and a responsibility on all of us. It is a proud moment for Kenya as a world-renowned sporting nation."

He added, "As we are aware, CAF has set strict standards we must continuously meet regarding such tournaments. The federation provides clear conditions on fan safety, security protocols and rowdy conduct."

"Any breaches – even outside the stadium – can result in consequences, including formal warnings, penalties or disqualification from future bids," Omollo said. He called on the fans to conduct themselves accordingly during the CHAN tournament.

★VOLLEYBALL

Tarus sets new goals after being voted best coach

BY CHARLENE MALWA

GENERAL Service Unit men's volleyball team Gideon Tarus says his recognition as the Betika/SJAK Coach of the Month for July has inspired him to rebuild, win championships and make a lasting impact.

"This is a big moment. Recognition is good," he said after receiving the award on Thursday at the KCB Sports Club in Ruaraka, Nairobi.

Tarus, who has guided GSU to an unbeaten run in the national league, said the award serves as fuel for his next phase, both as a tactician and a mentor. "Coaches being acknowledged the same way as players gives morale. It means a lot to me."

He added that back in 2022, he was recognised in Tanzania during the Nyerere Cup that ran for six months. "Now to come back, rebuild my team, win titles and make a change is what matters," Tarus added.

GSU have been in fine form since suffering a painful loss to Kenya Prisons in the Kenya Cup final earlier this year. The defeat prompted a tactical rethink, with Tarus reorganising his backline and reception systems adjustments that have since seen the team rise to the top of the standings while dropping only two sets in July.

Gideon Tarus **/FILE**

FOOTBALL

WHY ZAMBIA FELL

DR Congo coach says he instructed his boys not to allow Leopards to breathe

BY TONY MBALLA

DR Congo registered their first-ever continental victory over Zambia with a 2-0 win in a high-stakes CHAN 2024 Group A clash at Nyayo Stadium on Thursday night, thanks to second-half goals from Matobo Mubalu and Mwaku Mwakabinga.

The result lifted Otis N'goma's men into contention for a quarterfinal spot and left Zambia, led by coach Avram Grant, ruing missed chances in a match that swung on tactical discipline and clinical finishing.

Matobo opened the scoring for the Leopards in the 51st minute, before Mwaku Mwakabinga sealed the result with a sharp finish in the 71st minute, as coach Otis N'goma's side outpaced and outthought their southern rivals.

DR Congo, draped in cobalt and history, arrived with something to prove. Not just to Zambia, who had tormented them in past contests, but to themselves. For too long, they had been guests at Africa's grand feast, respected but rarely feared.

Matobo struck first—a bullet of a finish in the 51st minute that sang past the keeper like a promise fulfilled. The stadium gasped. The Leopard roared. And from the touchline, Otis N'goma clenched his fists skyward.

"This is what we talked about," he said after the game, voice thick with satisfaction. "A game of courage and pride. The boys were warriors tonight."

Warriors, indeed. Ten minutes before the curtain fell, it was Mwaku Mwakabinga who wrote the second stanza. A run carved through green shirts, a shimmy, a strike—and the ball nestled where only dreams sleep for a 2-0 lead and history rewritten. This prompted silence in Zambia's corner and jubilation in Kinshasa's soul.

Avram Grant, seasoned and stoic, was gracious in defeat. "We lacked that final punch," he admitted. "We had moments, but football is about taking those chances. They were sharper, and deserved it."

For DR Congo, this was a shedding of skin, a rebirth beneath Nairobi's stars. For Zambia, it was a reckoning of form, of focus, and perhaps of direction. The opening 45 minutes were tense and scrappy, as both teams battled for control without breaking through.

But after the break, DR Congo's intentions became unmistakable. Just six minutes into the second half, a brilliant passing move cut through the Zambian midfield like a hymn in motion. Matobo, just 21 but forged in fire, slipped past the back line and guided the ball into the net with the calm of a veteran.

"Matobo is only 21," said N'goma with quiet pride, "but he plays with the heart of a lion. That goal lifted us."

In the 71st minute, it was Mwaku Mwakabinga who put the match beyond Zambia's reach. A miscue in midfield led to a loose ball, and the Congolese forward pounced—one touch, one shot, one exclamation point.

"When Mwaku made it 2-0," N'goma recalled, "I knew we had the game in our hands."

He credited the entire squad: "This was a team performance. From the defenders to our keeper to the last substitute—every Congolese soul on that pitch gave their all."

Zambia had entered the match with confidence, history, and form. But they left with none of those.

"It's painful," admitted Avram Grant, his voice firm but heavy. "We created enough chances in the first half to be two or three goals up, but we were wasteful. Football punishes that."

Emmanuel Mayuka had a clear header go over in the 12th minute. Chisala Tembo went one-on-one on the 28th but failed to convert. "Their first goal came from a lapse in marking," said Grant. "The second was even more disappointing—we gave away possession cheaply and didn't recover fast enough."

N'goma. "You could feel it—every heartbeat in that stadium was connected to this match."

"Our plan was simple—don't let Zambia breathe," said N'goma. "We know they love to build from the back and use their wide players. We denied them space. We forced them to rush their decisions."

DR Congo's Matobo Mubalu tries to stop Zambia's Kelvin Kampamba during their CHAN match at Nyayo Stadium/**CHAN TEAM**

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FRIDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 8-10, 2025

KATIBA CORNER NEW PWDS ACT PROMOTES SOCIAL INCLUSION

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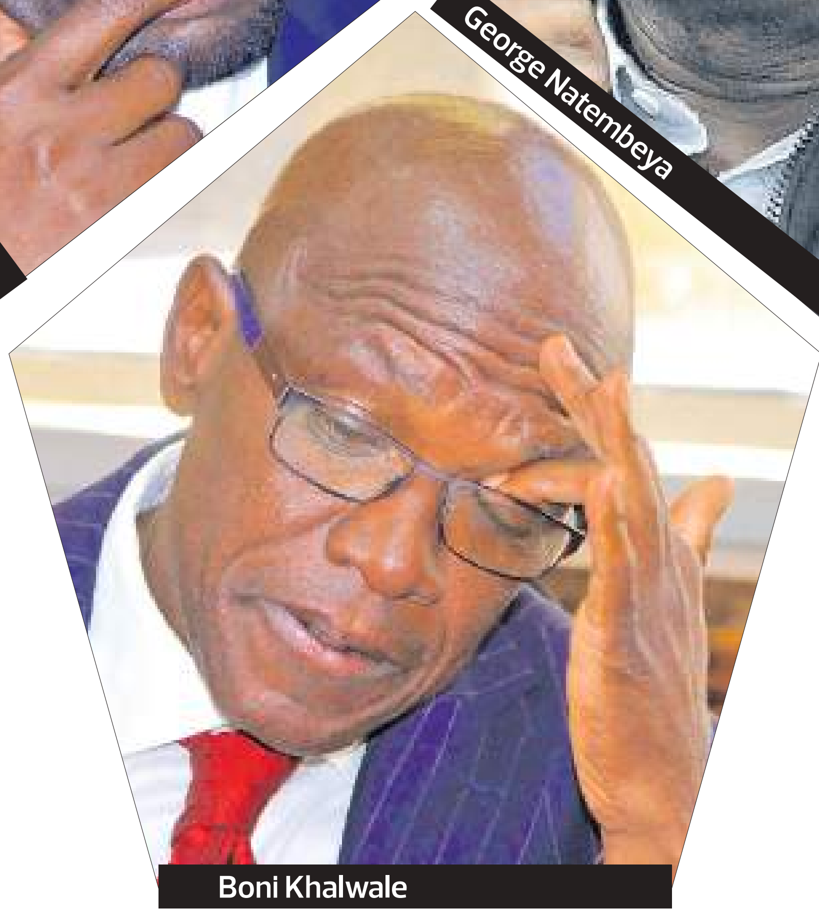
Siasa


Edwin Sifuna


George Natembeya


Boni Khalwale

Are these the rebels within?

With just under two years to next general election, the political chessboard is in flux. ODM must reconcile generational tensions or risk splintering, even UDA and DAK-K faces internal divisions

COVER STORY **CONFUSION REIGNS**

Kilifi Governor Gideon Mung'aro, President William Ruto and ODM leader Raila Odinga at a past meeting /FILE

Party squabbles and personality politics muddy political outlook

Loyalty to Raila, Ruto, Kalonzo, or Uhuru still trumps any policy consistency and new parties emerge from personal falling-out

OTEMBO KARINGA
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Political writer

In Kenya's political landscape, party politics often resemble a rickety matatu swerving wildly without a steering wheel – plagued by infighting, fragile alliances and a near-total absence of ideological consistency.

As the country inches closer to the 2027 general election, political formations across the board are embroiled in internal power struggles, raising a fundamental question: Do Kenyan political parties thrive on ideals, or are they merely vehicles for personal ambition?

The Orange Democratic Movement, once a disciplined, mass-based party forged in the crucible of opposition politics, is currently battling waves of internal turmoil. Secretary-general Edwin Sifuna, emboldened by his rising influence in Nairobi and Western, increasingly is seen as rocking the boat within the Raila Odinga-led outfit.

Sifuna's assertiveness is unsettling for some party veterans, particularly those within Raila's inner circle. While Raila remains the towering figure in ODM, questions are surfacing around succession and ideological direction.

Positioning himself as a moderniser, Sifuna has advocated for structural reforms and youth inclusion. But critics accuse him of double-dealing – one foot in activism, the other in raw political manoeuvring.

Tensions escalated in May when Sifuna rejected the concept of a "broad-based government", declaring that all government positions remain under the Kenya Kwanza administration led by President William Ruto.

"This thing called broad-based government, I don't know where it exists. Personally, I don't recognise any entity called broad-based. There is a government of Kenya Kwanza under the leadership of President Ruto."

Senator Richard Onyonka defended Sifuna, saying his critique echoed public sentiment within ODM and beyond.

"What Sifuna is talking about resonates with ODM members and Kenyans. If the broad-based government can pick up from what Sifuna has been saying..."

However, ODM's central committee, chaired by Raila, adopted a conciliatory position two weeks ago.

The party pledged support for the MoU with Kenya Kwanza and announced a technical committee to advance its implementation – ironically, Sifuna was the one who read the official resolution.

"The party supports the position of the party leader to work with the Kenya Kwanza administration...

ODM will constitute a technical team to work with UDA counterparts," Sifuna announced.

Despite toeing the party line, the Nairobi senator later reignited tensions. Speaking in Sabaoti, Trans Nzoia county, he threatened to ditch ODM if it backed President Ruto's 2027 re-election bid.

"Raila himself has said this is a democratic party and any member is free to speak their mind. Yet some thugs are saying I cannot hold views independent of the party just because I'm secretary general," he said.

"I'll read any party statement – even if it insults me – but the day the party decides to support Ruto in 2027, that one I won't read."

Insiders speculate that Sifuna may be positioning himself for a larger national role, possibly aligning with the emerging Kenya Moja Alliance – a loose coalition including Wiper's Kalonzo Musyoka and impeached former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

DAP-K: NATEMBEYA WATERS THE TENT FROM WITHIN

Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya, once a provincial administrator, has become both the face and the disruptor of the Democratic Action Party of Kenya. What began as a vehicle for disaffected Western politicians is now struggling to contain his growing ambitions.

Insiders say Natembeya is "peeing inside the tent" – challenging party leadership while remaining within its ranks. His open criticism of DAP-K's leadership has ruffled feathers. And now, the party finds itself at a crossroads: either forge a new independent path or risk being politically absorbed.

On August 1, DAP-K was rocked by formal removal petitions filed against both party leader Eugene Wamalwa and Natembeya.

The governor is accused of using party resources to prop up a rival outfit – County Development-Kenya – while Eugene is accused of resisting reforms aimed at expanding DAP-K's appeal beyond its Luhya stronghold.

DAP-K secretary-general Eseli Simiyu announced that the petitions had been referred to the party's internal disputes resolution committee.

"The petitions have been forwarded for urgent consideration," he said. 'No one is above party processes."

Meanwhile, Eugene urged calm. "Chama si ya mtu binafsi (The party does not belong to one person). Let's follow due process and be guided by reason, not ambition."

Natembeya, who skipped the meeting, countered in a statement, "DAP-K must evolve beyond tribal politics. That's not betrayal; it's leadership."

He further accused Eugene of treating the party as a personal vehicle. In response, Eugene subtly warned Natembeya and Mumias East MP Peter Salasya against orchestrating a hostile takeover.

The party's central committee plans a special National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting later this month to chart its future.

As Raila is now working with Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi having folded ANC into UDA, Wamalwa's DAP-K is trying to fill the leadership vacuum in Western. Whether it survives its internal tremours is another matter.

UDA: CRACKS IN THE HUSTLER MANSION

In the ruling United Democratic Alliance, the post-2022 unity that propelled President Ruto to power is fraying. Prominent figures such as Kakamega Senator Bonny Khalwale, Nyali MP Mohamed Ali and Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro have launched low-key rebellions, questioning Ruto's policies and party favouritism.

Khalwale, a founding member and Senate Majority Whip, has clashed with UDA leadership, accusing them of meddling in Western politics and favouring insiders. He recently criticised Farouk Kibet, Ruto's powerful aide, for supposedly interfering in the by-election in Malava, Kakamega, slated for September 9.

"Farouk Kibet has no business interfering in Malava's affairs. His sudden interest is not about our welfare; it's about managing discontent over unfulfilled promises," Khalwale said.

He also slammed Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, who is UDA's deputy party leader.

"If you've failed to control former DP Rigathi Gachagua in your region, don't think you'll come to Kakamega and decide who gets elected. I am your senior."

He declared his bid for Kakamega governor in 2027, challenging UDA's status quo. Meanwhile, Gachagua is said to be quietly consolidating power in Mt Kenya ahead of UDA's grassroots elections, signalling potential realignments within the party.

JUBILEE: GHOST OF UHURU'S PAST

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta's grip on Jubilee remains tenuous. Years of factional wars and legal battles have reduced the party to a shadow of its former self.

After regaining leadership in July, Uhuru chaired a NEC meeting this week, signalling a possible attempt at revival. Deputy organising secretary Pauline Njoroge said the NEC meeting marked "a significant step in reaffirming the party's ideals and internal unity".

Uhuru also announced a special national delegates conference scheduled for late August at Nairobi's Jockey Club, aimed at reviewing party policies and strategic direction. Whether Jubilee can regain relevance remains uncertain.

> *Despite more than a decade of constitutional reforms, Kenyan politics remains largely personality-driven*

His hold on the party remains tenuous at best. Since his retirement, it has become a battleground for legitimacy, with rival factions pulling in different directions.

The party's relevance in national politics is also increasingly being questioned, and recent court battles over its leadership have further damaged its public image.

While Uhuru has attempted to maintain a statesmanlike presence, his limited political engagement has left a vacuum – one that new players are scrambling to fill, often driven more by a desire to reclaim regional clout than by ideology or national policy.

KANU AND WIPER: LOST AND REBRANDED

Kanu, the once-dominant independence party, has become largely symbolic under Gideon Moi. Observers say that barring a political miracle, it will likely fade into oblivion. Gideon has remained obscured since Ruto rode to power in 2022, with the Baringo Senate by-election posing a litmus test for him on August 17.

"If he recaptures the seat, then Moi will be a key political player ahead of the 2027 general election," Alexander Nyamboga says.

"The former senator has a fighting chance, not by aligning with UDA, but by going flat out with Kanu and attempting to ride on the national wave against the ruling alliance."

Meanwhile, Kalonzo Musyoka's Wiper Democratic Movement has rebranded itself as the Wiper Democratic Front, seeking to align itself with Gen Z's appetite for change.

Critics dismiss the move as yet another round of cosmetic rebranding in a circus of personality politics, not policy.

But Machakos Deputy Governor Francis Mwangangi disagrees, affirming the significance of Wiper's radical rebranding ahead of the 2027 polls.

"WDF is a game changer. We're positioning the party at the frontline in the fight against impunity, corruption, bad governance, and entrenched tribalism," Mwangangi says.

"The best way to counter the regime is by modernising our political warfare and revolutionising our armoury to match the test of time and that is what the new WDF offers."

Despite more than a decade of constitutional reforms, Kenyan politics remains largely personality-driven.

Parties rarely publish policy platforms or hold internal ideological debates. Manifestos are election season brochures, quickly forgotten. Internal democracy is chaotic, staged, or nonexistent.

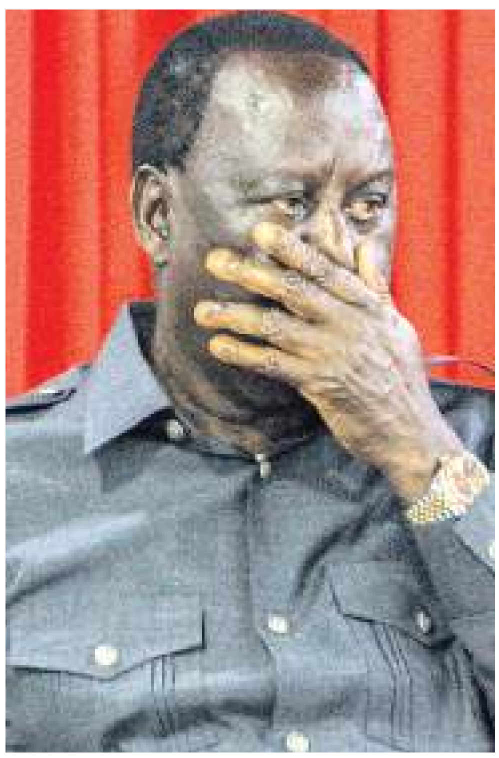
Loyalty to Raila, Ruto, Kalonzo, or Uhuru still trumps any policy consistency. New parties emerge from personal falling-out and coalitions are shaped more by arithmetic than shared vision.

With just under two years to the next general election, the political chessboard is in flux. ODM must reconcile generational tensions or risk splintering. UDA faces internal divisions as the Gachagua factor looms large.

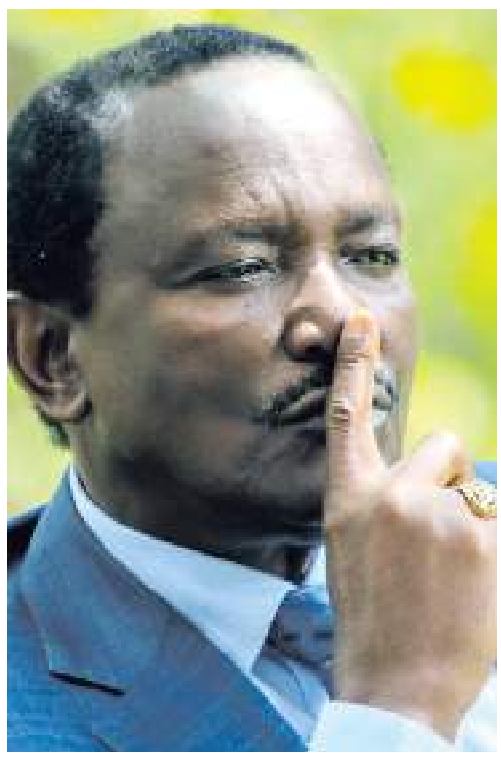
Jubilee seeks revival, Wiper is rebranding, and DAP-K teeters on fragmentation.

"If current trends persist, 2027 could see a realignment driven more by personal brands than party manifestos," political analyst Prof Gitile Naituli says.

Jubilee leader Uhuru Kenyatta



ODM leader Raila Odinga



Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka

COMMENTARY COMEBACK

Jubilee leader Uhuru Kenyatta chairs a National Executive Committee meeting at the party headquarters in Nairobi on August 5 /HANDOUT

Jubilee eyes revival in Mt Kenya, seeks coalitions ahead of 2027

AMOS NJAU
@Njaumburuh
Political writer

The Jubilee Party is engineering a political resurgence in the Mt Kenya region, positioning itself for a three-way battle with the ruling United Democratic Alliance and ex-DP Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party in the 2027 general election.

Once a dominant political force that swept nearly all elective seats in 2017, Jubilee was reduced to a shadow of its former self in the 2022 polls. Analysts say a recent combination of legal wins, strategic restructuring and renewed grassroots mobilisation suggests the party is not ready to fade into irrelevance.

They argue a major turning point came via a Gazette notice dated June 30 this year when the Registrar of Political Parties officially reaffirmed former President Uhuru Kenyatta as the party leader.

This followed a High Court ruling upholding the 2023 National Delegates Convention (NDC) resolutions, reversing a decision by the internal dispute resolution committee that had nullified leadership changes.

Already former Uhuru has announced a special NDC set for the end of August, issuing a 21-day notice as required by the party's constitution. Uhuru said the meeting will take place at the Jockey Club, Nairobi. The agenda includes a status report from the National Executive Committee, policy reviews and other key party matters.

Speculation is rife that the Jubilee is exploring a potential coalition with several Mt Kenya-based outfits, including the Party of National Unity, Chama Cha Kazi, the Party of Democratic Unity and the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP), among others.

The PNU has already intensified grassroots activities while opening local offices and mobilising members, signalling readiness for broader political collaboration.

Chama Cha Kazi leader Moses Kuria has publicly expressed interest in joining Jubilee, even eyeing the position of party secretary general.

However, DP national chairman Essau Kioni told the Star on Wednesday that his party has not been formally approached by Jubilee officials.

"We would be glad to work with Jubilee again, as we have done before," Kioni said. "But folding our party is not an option. Ours is the second-oldest party after Kanu, and preserving its identity remains a priority."

Kioni emphasised that DP has a long history of partnering with other parties across the country and described Jubilee as a "cousin party", saying any collaboration between the two would not be unprecedented.

While Kioni has denied ongoing talks with the Jubilee, inside sources reveal that DP leader Justin Muturi has held multiple talks with senior Jubilee officials since his exit from the Kenya Kwanza administration.

Muturi, in an interview with Inooro FM, recently admitted that leaders within Kenya Kwanza were forced into vilifying Uhuru during the 2022 election.

"I will always respect former President Uhuru Kenyatta. He was firm but fair – a leader who listened, embraced differing views and never ruled through intimidation," Muturi said. "We're still friends to this day, and I value that bond."

Isaiah Gichu, the national chairman of the PDU party, has neither confirmed nor denied the possibility a coalition with Jubilee.

Gichu emphasised there have always been efforts to unite Kenyans by bringing together leaders from different political parties as a way of strengthening democracy. He said PDU is open to working with like-minded parties that champion development, peace, and transparency in leadership.

"We have been collaborating with other political parties before, and Jubilee would be no exception. What we stand for is growth, peace, and unity – and we will continue forming coalitions that reflect those values," Gichu said.

The Star has learnt that Jubilee's revival plan will borrow heavily from the 2013 TNA strategy, whereby multiple affiliated parties contested grassroots seats while uniting behind a single presidential candidate.

As part of the strategy, the party will intensify grassroots mobilisation in its traditional strongholds, particularly in Mt Kenya region, by courting its former supporters and leaders.

Those said to be aiming for a comeback to Jubilee include former Kipipiri MP Amos Kimunya, former Kirinyaga Senator Charles Kibiru and former Kiambu Governor James Nyoro, among others.

The comeback campaigns will involve outreach to church leaders, community influencers and even former allies who claimed the UDA rigged them out in the 2022 election.

"Very soon, you'll begin to see former President Uhuru Kenyatta making public appearances, while secretary-general Jeremiah Kioni and vice-chairman David Murathe will be more visible in the media through TV interviews and press briefings to give updates on the party's activities," a source said.

Murathe recently hinted at plans to revive and strengthen the party, though he offered few details.

Speaking during the burial of the son of veteran musician Peter Kigia a month ago, he delivered a speech on behalf of Uhuru, briefly mentioning the party's future.

Without elaborating, Murathe assured mourners that efforts were underway to "make things better."

He joked about his long-standing relationship with Chama Cha Kazi, saying they may differ politically but remain friends.

"I don't like speaking before Moses Kuria – you never know how he'll respond afterward," Murathe said, adding, "But I believe things will be okay for those who believe." He was echoing Jubilee's slogan 'We Believe' in a subtle and coded message. Kuria, who also addressed the gathering, acknowledged the unpredictable nature of politics, especially as the country heads toward the 2027 polls.

"Politics is dynamic. No one can tell which party will win in 2027," Kuria said. He resigned in July President Ruto's economic adviser.

Former Menengai East MCA aspirant John Wahinya said the Jubilee has retained residual goodwill in the region, especially among leaders uncomfortable with the increasingly personalised rivalry between Gachagua and DP Kithure Kindiki.

"Jubilee has the backing of Uhuru's legacy and public trust. If it presents a fresh agenda and welcomes leaders sidelined by Gachagua or Ruto, it can become a serious player in 2027," Wahinya said.

Political analyst Albert Kasembeli agreed but cautioned that Jubilee's rebirth must be more than nostalgic symbolism.

"To be taken seriously, Jubilee needs ideological clarity. Mt Kenya voters are politically alert. A party that promises unity, economic empowerment, and a generational shift in leadership could thrive," he said.

COMMENTARY IMPACT NOT OPTICS

President William Ruto interacts with Harambee Stars' players at Kasarani in Nairobi on August 3 /PCS

Tokenism in Kenyan politics gives illusion of progress

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The writer is a sub-editor with The Star

The week started on a high note, with Kenya's 1-0 win over the Democratic Republic of Congo in the CHAN tournament on Sunday.

As fate would have it, President William Ruto promised a hefty payout to the team. Come Sunday, the excitement was palpable. And they didn't disappoint. From field to bench, Harambee Stars were elated, fans celebrated, the mood electric.

Ruto swiftly honoured his promise to reward the team, reportedly disbursing Sh42 million to the players and technical staff. While this generous gesture in appreciation of our national pride is not in itself a bad thing, it brings a troubling pattern to the surface.

Beneath the fanfare lies a troubling pattern in Kenyan politics: the reliance on tokenism over tangible, systemic change.

Tokenism in politics is the practice of offering symbolic rewards or superficial concessions while avoiding substantive reforms.

It creates the illusion of progress without addressing the root causes of problems. In Kenya, this often takes the form of high-profile cash rewards, ceremonial appointments and short-term empowerment programmes – all designed to generate positive optics rather than lasting impact.

The President's payout is just the latest example. While the players deserve recognition, the gesture raises critical questions. Why does the government find millions for a one-time reward while the football infrastructure remains in shambles? Why do athletes still struggle with poor training facilities, unpaid allowances and lack of post-career support? The same pattern repeats across different sectors, where publicity stunts replace policy.

Kenyan leaders have long used tokenism as a political tool. Former President Mwai Kibaki was celebrated for rewarding athletes like Olympic champion Ezekiel Kemboi with cash and land. Yet, despite these high-profile gestures, the sports industry continued to suffer from chronic underfunding and mismanagement. Stadiums remained dilapidated and many retired athletes faded into obscurity without pensions or healthcare. Under Uhuru Kenyatta, the trend continued with initiatives like Kazi Mtaani and the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities programme. These were marketed as empowerment schemes for youth and women, but in reality, offered temporary, low-value opportunities rather than sustainable economic solutions. The infamous wheelbarrow and car-washing machine donations became symbols of a government more interested in photo ops than real job creation.

Now, under Ruto, we see a similar approach. The Hustler Fund, while providing much-needed microloans, does little to address the structural issues of unemployment and exploitative lending. It is heartbreaking that a hustler would recently get Sh500 for a loan.

Under the current economic conditions, it is hard to imagine what substantive business the hustler will initiate with that amount of money, make profit and pay back the loan within 14 days.

Another disturbing theme is the call to rally behind the government in order to benefit from developmental projects. Talk of a region or community risking "being left behind" for not toeing the line has no place. The era of sidelining certain parts of the country as punishment for calling out the ruling regime ended with Daniel Moi's reign.

Besides, devolution and the Equalisation Fund were introduced to, among other things, ensure equitable distribution of resources across the country.

When politicians stage "empowerment programmes" in the full glare of cameras as opposed to channelling funds to support necessary infrastructure in their areas of representation, it points to a lack of political goodwill and a low level of development consciousness. Worse, few of these programmes make it beyond a political term, disappearing after elections and leaving beneficiaries stranded.

Senate must reject Bill that will deter smokers' safety

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The writer is the chairman, Campaign for Safer Alternatives

As the new tobacco bill undergoes its second reading in the Senate, our lawmakers face a distinct choice. They can either embrace science-based harm reduction strategies that saves lives, or they can effectively condemn 2.6 million Kenyan smokers to an early grave with regressive policies that ignore evidence and punish safer alternatives.

Sadly, the bill under consideration appears to propose the latter path.

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence and real-world success stories from around the globe, the proposed legislation willfully ignores the lifeline that modern nicotine alternatives offer to smokers desperate to quit.

Instead of protecting public health, these misguided proposals would force smokers to continue using deadly combustible cigarettes while making safer options like vapes and oral pouches harder to access.

The Senate Health Committee's report on the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has yet to be tabled. Yet its reported support for caps on nicotine levels and restrictions on flavours fly in the face of international evidence.

Research consistently shows that reasonable nicotine levels are essential to the effectiveness of alternatives, giving smokers the satisfaction they need to switch from cigarettes. Strip away the nicotine or the adult appealing flavours, and smokers simply won't make the switch. They'll keep smoking. And they'll keep dying.

Meanwhile, countries that have embraced harm reduction are seeing remarkable results.

Sweden has nearly wiped-out smoking by making safer alternatives widely available; achieving the lowest smoking rates in Europe and dramatically lower rates of tobacco-related cancer and deaths. The UK's pragmatic approach has helped millions quit smoking through vaping.

But Kenya seems determined to learn nothing from these success stories.

For years, our approach to tobacco control has been stuck in a failed cycle of prohibition, heavy taxation and restrictions on safer alternatives to combustible cigarettes. And what has that achieved?

KILLS 12,000 KENYANS

Smoking still kills 12,000 Kenyans annually. Two-thirds of our 2.6 million smokers want to quit but only a tiny fraction succeed.

The truth is that alternative nicotine products are far less harmful than cigarettes because they eliminate the burning of tobacco – the primary cause of smoking-related illness.

An independent review by the Cochrane network – one of the most respected global health research agencies – found that smokers who use vapes are more than twice as likely to quit than those relying solely on willpower or outdated methods.

Yet the new tobacco Bill treats lifesaving alternatives as harshly as lethal cigarettes, effectively handing a gift to the tobacco industry while punishing adults who are trying to choose safer options.

For years, I tried and failed to quit using conventional methods. Only when I discovered safer nicotine alternatives was I able to finally break free.

If these alternatives had been restricted or made unaffordable, I might still be smoking today. Or worse, I might not be here at all.

Yet the very products that saved my life, and could save millions of others, are under threat because of outdated thinking and virtue-signalling policies that treat adults like criminals for choosing safer options.

If the Senate truly cares about public health, it must reject this counterproductive legislation. Instead of condemning smokers to continued use of lethal cigarettes, Kenya needs to pursue a science-led, harm reduction approach that supports smokers in their efforts to quit.

KATIBA CORNER **NEW DAWN**

New PWDs Act promotes social inclusion

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The signing into law of the Persons with Disabilities Act on May 8 by President William Ruto represents a new dawn for all Kenyans with disabilities. It marks a significant stride towards greater inclusion through establishing systems for protecting, promoting and monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities. The new Act completely aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Part III of this transformative legislation comprehensively sets out the rights of persons with disability. It elaborates on the Bill of Rights of the Constitution and particularly makes operational Article 54. Unlike the constitution, which does not expressly provide the right to legal capacity of persons with disability, the new Act recognises this important right in line with the CRPD.

Other rights provided for in the new Act include: equality and freedom from discrimination, the right to marry and form a family, the right to privacy, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to human dignity and the right to education, among others.

The new Act is far more detailed on rights than the 2003 Act, repealed by the 2025 Act. It is interesting to look at the main highlights of the Act, emphasising its differences from the earlier Act.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Persons with disabilities in Kenya have faced, and continue to face, both systemic and direct discrimination. This often leads to limited access to opportunities, which in turn results in a low quality of life due to socioeconomic poverty.

The new Act is a breath of fresh air as it expressly guarantees every person with disability equal protection in law, equal benefit of the law and adequate legal protection against discrimination on all grounds. It recognises the equality of every person with disability before the law in the political, economic, social, cultural and all fields of life.

RIGHT TO LEGAL CAPACITY

Historically it was common for persons with disabilities to be denied rights to make independent decisions and to freely participate in legal processes, based on some assumption that a person with some disability had no abilities.

Some financial institutions have even turned away customers with visual disability and asked them to use a representative to access banking services.

The new Act addresses this problem by entitling every person with disability to recognition as a person before the law. It guarantees every person with disability the right to own and inherit property, a right that is constantly violated due to disregard for the personal autonomy of persons with disability.

It guarantees every person with disability the right to control their own financial affairs, and to have access to savings and loan facilities, mortgages and other forms of financial credit on an equal basis with members of the society without disability.

This provision opens a pathway for persons with mental disabilities to control and make decisions on their finances, as this right to legal capacity is not clearly recognised by the Mental Health Act.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITY

The new Act gives special protection to women with disability by safeguarding their rights that previously have been subject to gross violation. As a woman with visual disability, I have experienced stigma while seeking sexual and reproductive health services. Healthcare providers often question the need for a woman with disability to access sexual and reproductive health services.

There are reports of pregnant women with disability being abused by health providers and receiving sympathy for simply being pregnant. The new Act elaborates the right to sexual and reproductive health services protected in the constitution in relation to women with disability. It affirms the right of women with disability to access sexual and reproductive health services and the right of every woman with disability to retain and control their fertility.

The new law strictly prohibits the discriminatory practice of depriving a woman with disability of their child on the grounds of disability.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

As a person with disability, both my primary and secondary school education was acquired through special schools. This was where, as learners with disabilities, we were separated from those without disability. This practice promotes stereotyping and discrimination.

Separation of learners results in reduced capacity of persons with disabilities to effectively participate in community life. The new Act breathes life into Article 54(1)(b) of the Constitution (about integrated education) through setting out measures needed to achieve the right to inclusive education.

It calls upon all learning institutions to offer individualised support measures, assistive devices, appropriate equipment, adoptive technology and other support services in environments that maximise academic and social development to enhance full inclusion.

The Act requires the ministry in charge of education to develop strategies to implement inclusive education through recruitment of special education teachers in all schools, introduction of sign language in all learning and training institutions, establishment of research centres to undertake research in education for students with disabilities, etc.

RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT

Lack of reasonable adjustments, coupled with discrimination and stigma associated with disability, are among the barriers limiting access to employment by persons with disabilities.

The new Act strictly prohibits employers from discriminating against a person with disability in any respect. It requires employers with at least 20 employees to reserve five per cent direct employment opportunities for persons with disability.

The new Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustment for employees with disability including through making existing facilities usable and accessible, job restructuring, modified work schedules, payment of assistive allowances to employees with disability.

Private employers who engage persons with disability, and those who modify their physical facilities or incur other expenditure to provide reasonable accommodation for such employees are entitled to apply for partial reductions from their net taxable income as compensation.

However, despite these tax benefits having been in the repealed Act, they have not motivated private employers sufficiently to hire persons with disabilities.

This stems from the extent of the additional costs involved in modifying the work environment, from inadequate enforcement and lack of awareness. Will this change?

OTHER TAX RELIEF

As in the repealed Act, persons with disabilities may, on application, be partially or wholly exempted from paying income tax or other levies (presumably including housing and health levies) on employment income.

If granted to persons with permanent disability, the new Act provides that the exemption is permanent, a new provision that will be a huge relief for those benefiting. Articles, materials and equipment, including motor vehicles, for use by persons with disabilities continue to enjoy exemption from import duty and value added tax.

Unlike the old Act, the new Act provides for exemption for income tax for parents and guardians of persons with disabilities.

However, this benefit is only available to a parent or guardian of a person certified with severe disability and incapable of catering for their basic needs.

A poor parent or guardian who assumes custody and care of a person certified with severe disability may apply for a long-term monthly cash transfer from the government in accordance with the Social Assistance Act.

CONCLUSION

The National Council for Persons with Disabilities, having reviewed the Act, said it "is anticipated to usher in a new paradigm shift for persons with disabilities nationwide".

The Act addresses the needs of persons with disabilities and establishes measures to eliminate systemic barriers that in the past have resulted in social exclusion and discrimination.

The new law sets out enforcement mechanisms to ensure accountability. If fully implemented, this Act will enhance inclusion and totally improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Kenya.

Time will tell whether the government will be able, and willing, to put in the necessary finance and effort.

President William Ruto and nominated Senator Crystal Asige after signing Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2025, into law, during a ceremony at State House in Nairobi /PCS

HISTORICALLY IT WAS COMMON FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY TO BE DENIED RIGHTS TO MAKE INDEPENDENT DECISIONS AND TO FREELY PARTICIPATE IN LEGAL PROCESSES, BASED ON SOME ASSUMPTION THAT SUCH A PERSON HAD NO ABILITIES

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the week

SHOT OF THE WEEK

The wreckage of a vehicle used by the Border Patrol Unit. Eight police officers drawn from the unit were injured after the vehicle was targeted with explosives in Yumbis , Garissa county /COURTESY

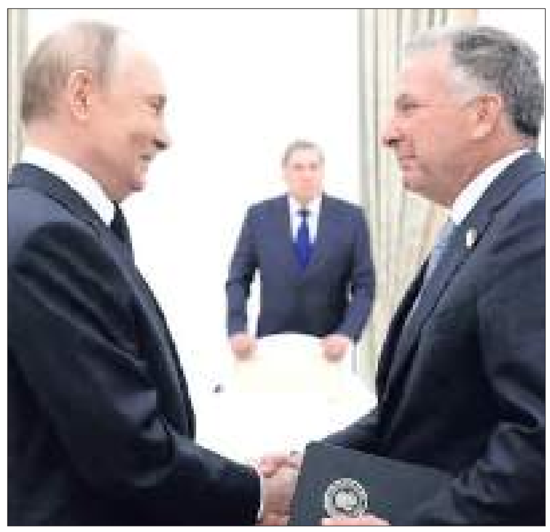
BRIEFS / FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Secret system Hamas uses to pay government salaries

BBC – After nearly two years of war, Hamas's military capability is severely weakened and its political leadership under intense pressure. Yet, throughout the war Hamas has managed to continue to use a secret cash-based payment system to pay 30,000 civil servants' salaries totalling $7m. The BBC has spoken to three civil servants who have confirmed they have received nearly $300 each within the last week. It's believed they are among tens of thousands of employees who have continued to receive a maximum of just over 20% of their pre-war salary every 10 weeks. Amid soaring inflation, the token salary – a fraction of the full amount – is causing rising resentment among the party faithful. Severe food shortages and rising cases of acute malnutrition continue in Gaza, where a kilogramme of flour in recent weeks has cost as much as $80 – an all-time high.

Besieged Sudan city residents face starvation, UN now warns

BBC – The UN's food agency has warned that families trapped within the besieged Sudanese city of el-Fasher face starvation. The World Food Programme (WFP) said it had not been able to deliver food to the city in the western Darfur region by road for more than a year. El-Fasher has been surrounded by paramilitary fighters from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for nearly 16 months – determined to seize it from Sudan's army. The WFP warning comes as local activists have already begun reporting deaths by starvation in the city, which is still home to about 300,000 people. Sudan was plunged into a civil war in April 2023 after a vicious power struggle erupted between the army and its former ally, the RSF – creating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The UN's children's agency (Unicef) has



Trump and Putin to meet in the coming days, Kremlin aide says

BBC – US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin have agreed to meet in the "coming days", a Kremlin aide has said. It follows Trump saying there was a "good chance" he could meet his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts together in person "very soon" to discuss ending the war in Ukraine. Trump's deadline for Russia to agree a ceasefire in Ukraine or face more sweeping sanctions is due to expire on Friday. A possible meeting between Trump and Putin would follow US envoy Steve Witkoff holding talks with the Russian president on Wednesday. Witkoff has travelled to Moscow four times previously, visits followed by optimism from Trump but ultimately no major breakthrough in peace talks. Last month, Trump admitted to the BBC that after all four of Witkoff's previous visits, Putin had disappointed him after talks had initially led to optimism.

COMMENTARY **DIGITAL PRISON**

Young educated and jobless youth /**AI ILLUSTRATION**

Politricks of communication: How the world has turned upside down

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Government spokesperson

So today is Friday right? We used to call it members day, a time when the weekend would officially begin. These two days of the week are to be looked forward to especially as you grow older. The challenge is always the fact that it comes to an end abruptly, then the Monday blues, back to work again. I bet if we all stayed out of work, there would be a big riot isn't it? But wait a minute. Did I see you watching TV last night at exactly 9 pm prime time news? Or did you just see it as part of the background noise?

Did you actually switch it at all, or is it left permanently for the little kids watching cartoons? And if you did watch news, was it not to confirm what you already knew? By the way, when is the last time you read a newspaper cover to cover? Are you actually reading this from the confines of that little gadget called smartphone (are there 'dumb' phones really?), on an online platform?

How many real friends do you have nowadays as compared to your 'face-book' friends? At times you haven't seen them in years, yet you are constantly updated of their latest developments? When you hear someone saying that... didn't you see it trending, is it in the circles that you don't belong to?

What about the illusion of fame and 'celebrity' status that came with presence in the mainstream media, versus the new social media influencer who your fellow millennials, nay baby boomers haven't heard about.

What about being in a social gathering and people preferring to 'talk' and give all the attention to their phones, in search of the familiar, instead of making live connections through the conversations that may emanate from those around them?

The future is interesting to imagine, looking at how we used to communicate the before and now. In fact, we used to get fascinated about meeting someone in person as compared to how they appeared or sounded on TV!

ONLINE VS OFFLINE IDENTITY

Now, what is more contrasting is the personality between what people project online versus their true selves. You find a very bold and controversial person online, only to find that in real life, they are very humble and even shy!

At times, social media apps give room to someone to be direct to the point without the usual honorifics or mannerisms that are dictates in the society. However, real life is now copying online, and with catastrophic effects especially to the younger generation.

We now have a large group of young, educated, unemployed people 'armed' with a smartphone and bundles. They have watched superman and they too would like to do exploits within the cyber space. In a world where the thin line between virtual and reality has been blurred, and that literary everything can be framed as 'content creation' digitally. Very confusing times indeed, whereby borders and boundaries are more imaginary, since within the cyberspace, it doesn't matter ones location. A vocal, rabblerousing lawyer based in Canada, can be influencing conversations in the streets of Nairobi through X or is it Twitter account. Isn't not account literary to 'store' personal information hence data? Communication is now borderless; it's very possible therefore to shape public opinion from afar. This privilege what heretofore only available to the international media.

Before, people would read newspapers from cover to cover, but today, they are only interested in the headlines that circulate far and wide especially through WhatsApp. It's therefore very important to understand that people used to like reading, then came the audio, and with the advent of the video, the focus has shifted. This is because with a video, you don't have to read.

You see here and the imagination is more vivid. This has had a very serious effect. The fact that with the help of phone camera, anyone can record anything, it has led to the generation of so much content that its estimated that in the next two years, the data gotten out of this is more than the one available since the world began. No wonder machine learning has leapfrogged into the development of artificial intelligence, which benefits from our collective data sourcing out of our own daily activities.

This therefore has led to information overload thus the concentration span has really reduced, as our minds are now adapted to constant scrolling through the phone without looking for anything in particular. We all want to watch the next short video, or see what features the photos of a given individual have.

A husband and wife will be in bed, not talking, each addicted to the content online, and therefore talking to their phones and not each other. Young mothers are feeding their toddler's brain with the smartphone, so that they too can be on another gadget.

While at first it looks like we are all interconnected, the real situation is that algorithms and the multiplicity of new sources and preferences of content thereof, have fragmented us all the more.

This is a debate that we need to have if we are to preserve the values and principles of a truly prosperous society. It's a crisis.

WHILE AT FIRST IT LOOKS LIKE WE ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED, THE REAL SITUATION IS THAT ALGORITHMS AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF NEW SOURCES AND PREFERENCES OF CONTENT THEREOF, HAVE FRAGMENTED US ALL THE MORE

THE WEEK/ WHO RESURFACED, WHO LEFT: WHAT KENYAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN UP TO

1. Busia Woman Representative Catherine Omanyo hands over a cheque to one of the women groups at Emukhuyu Primary School in Nambale subcounty on Monday **/KNA**

2. Former acting Nairobi Governor Anne Kananu and President William Ruto at State House in Nairobi on August 4 **/PCS**

3. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki Sunday during a worship and thanksgiving service at the African Inland Church in Kabartonjo, Baringo county **/PHOEBE OKALL/DPCS**

4. Public Health and Professional Standards Principal Secretary Mary Muthoni (2nd L), Migori Governor Ochilo Ayacko and Rongo University vice chancellor Prof Samuel Gudu (2nd R) during the World Breastfeeding week at the university **/KNA**

5. Mwala MP Vincent Kawaya Musyoka during the boda boda empowerment drive in Kathiani sub county **/HANDOUT**

6. Eldas MP Adan Keynan when he hosted dinner for Eldas Girls Secondary School at Serena Hotel for emerging the regional volleyball champions **/STEPHEN ASTARIKO**

7. Former Lands Commissioner and Baringo Central MP Sammy Mwaita at the Milimani law courts on August 4 **/EZEKIEL AMING'A**

8. Juja MP George Koimburi (right) appears in court alongside other suspects on Tuesday **/EZEKIEL AMING'A**

9. Kenya Shipyards Limited managing director Said Mohamed Farah and Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o during the launch of Nanga beach landing sites in Seme subcounty **/FAITH MATETE**

TOP 4 STORIES

MONDAY, AUGUST 4

Puzzle of Sh36bn in unclaimed assets held in past 10 years

When Janet's husband died in 2018, his family, just like thousands of others in the country, had no idea that he held shares in several listed companies, money market funds, mobile money wallets and several banks. Although most of the respective financial institutions notified the widow of pending unclaimed assets by 2023, she has yet to receive a single coin from her late husband's estate, several trips to Nairobi from Nyeri notwithstanding. Last week, Janet told the Star that she was tired of stiff-neck bureaucracy around claiming the assets.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5

Auditor unearths payslip crisis in the public institutions

A nationwide salary crisis is unfolding in the public service, with tens of thousands of government workers taking home less than a third of their gross pay—in blatant breach of the law. The crisis has been triggered by President Ruto's revenue-raising measures, including the PAYE, housing levy and deductions to the newly established Social Health Authority. The result has been a massive raid on workers' payslips, leaving many with depleted earnings.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6

Two PSs summoned after audit exposes scandal at e-Citizen

Parliament has summoned Treasury Principal Secretary Chris Kiptoo and his ICT and Digital Economy counterpart John Tanui over an explosive audit report exposing alarming irregularities in the operations of eCitizen platform that risks close to Sh9 billion of taxpayers' money. The special audit on the government digital payment platform has raised red flags over billions of shillings in questionable transactions at the heart of Kenya's digital governance.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7

GMO journey and ongoing dilemma over GMO adoption

Kenya stands at a pivotal moment in its agricultural development as the debate over genetically modified organisms enters its second decade. While scientists present compelling evidence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) potential to address chronic food insecurity, deep public skepticism persists amid ongoing legal battles and health concerns.

COMMENTARY **FIGHTER'S OBIT**

Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation chairperson Rahab Muiu and her predecessor Zipporah Kittony during a memorial service for former Karachuonyo MP Phoebe Asiyo at St Maxwell SDA on Wednesday /**DOUGLAS OKIDDY**

Phoebe Asiyo: Icon, ideologue of women's empowerment

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The writer is a Political and Policy Analyst

Today, August 8, we lay to rest one of the pioneers of women empowerment in Kenya and arguably the movement's poster girl. Mama Phoebe Asiyo straddled the women's movement like a colossus. She encapsulated the objectives of the movement and represented women with amazing grace and ease, not only in Kenya but also in Africa and the globe.

Born in September 1932, Phoebe Nyagoro Asiyo went to Gendia Primary School before joining what was then the only, and the prestigious Seventh-day Adventist intermediate school, Kamagambo. She proceeded to Kangaru Teachers College and was raised in devote Christian family set up. She always defied the odds and so left the teaching profession to join the Prisons Department where she rose to become the first woman superintendent and senior superintendent. Her footprints in the correctional service are still celebrated, especially her successful push to separate male and women inmates. On the sidelines of her official responsibilities, she devoted time and personal resources to champion the education of girls at a time when this was not considered especially necessary.

Asiyo shared in one of her many public lectures that the Prisons Department restricted her efforts to promote women's empowerment, and therefore she teamed up with other women to found the giant Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation in 1953. Though Europeans first headed it, Asiyo became its first African woman president in 1958. The organisation has been credited with supporting women's enterprise by providing grants for start-ups and training for entrepreneurial skills. The organisation is also renowned for encouraging women to join political leadership through training and mentorship.

ENCOURAGED WOMEN

This experience would later be instrumental in her establishing and chairing the Caucus for Women's Leadership in 1997. The lobby actively sought financial support for women seeking political leadership. It was the first women's organisation to openly agitate for and encourage women's active participation in politics.

It confronted discrimination against women and campaigned against retrogressive cultural practices that limited women in social spheres. Women, therefore, found in Mama Asiyo a matriarch on whose shoulders they would lean and climb to greater heights of leadership.

In dealing with authorities, she was diplomatic but very firm. This was a stark difference from the approach and strategies taken by her counterparts at the helm of the National Council of Women of Kenya, which was formed 10 years later in 1964. This streak of assertiveness would eventually elevate her to become the ambassador to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, Unifem.

MOBILISED SUPPORT

As the foremost women leaders in the country members of Unifem were critical in mobilising popular support for the release of political prisoners held at Kapenguria. They visited them in 1960 and began in earnest to lobby for the guarantee of political representation and protection of women in leadership. When Jaramogi Oginga Odinga parted ways with his erstwhile friend Jomo Kenyatta, Mama Asiyo maintained a close relationship with the doyen of opposition politics. In the 1979 general election soon after the demise of Kenyatta, Asiyo dived into mainstream competitive politics, vying for the Karachuonyo parliamentary seat. The support from Jaramogi and Luo Council of Elders led by Paul Mbuya propelled her to victory. But these were supplementary to her exceptional organisational and mobilisation skills and abilities.

Coincidentally, Mbuya was closely related to her. She staved off a fierce challenge from the oratorically gifted David Okiki Amayo. It should be remembered that Okiki was originally in Kadu with then-President Daniel Moi. She repeated the feat in 1983 but opted out during the infamous mlolongo elections of 1988. At the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1992, Asiyo clinched the seat once again with great ease. Dr Adhi Awiti will always be remembered as her most trusted confidant and would later succeed her in 1997 when she voluntarily exited politics.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In her illustrious parliamentary career, Asiyo was instrumental in initiating and pushing for affirmative motion that was the key milestone in the gender reform movement. It also addressed electoral violence against women, child marriage and widow inheritance and disinheritance, female genital mutilation and inadequate access to quality healthcare for women and girls. Most importantly, it provided the framework for the two-thirds gender rule that was anchored in the 2010 Constitution.

Due to her advocacy and soft power, Asiyo was unanimously endorsed as a commissioner in the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, chaired by the venerable Prof Yash Pal Ghai. Together they delivered the Bomas Draft of the Constitution, which was later promulgated in 2010. The commission undertook its mandate during the immediate post Narc victory.

The political environment was toxic and poisoned by the incessant tussles among the ministers of the Mwai Kibaki Cabinet. The divisions arose from both the sense of betrayal by the coalition partners and the incompatibility of ideological orientation of key political players. Mama Asiyo's experience and vast diplomatic skills always came in handy.

RECOGNISED ELDER

She was the natural arbiter and the calming hands during stormy debates. In a rare show of appreciation of her unique leadership talents and skills, the Luo Council of Elders recognised her as an elder. The ceremony presided over by Ker Riaga Ogallo was a first for the patriarchal community and so far, the only one.

In her career, women and leaders of all walks can learn that collaboration and persuasion are the most effective tools of transformation and progress. They enable a leader to carry along every stakeholder, and the beneficiaries enjoy the benefits fulfilling their most felt needs. This was as opposed to confrontation and antagonism, which are usually exclusivist and divisive. They create results that are not mutually beneficial to stakeholders and often lead to rejection by groups of society.

Asiyo also demonstrated that one could successfully aspire to and achieve political leadership goals while successfully building a distinguished family. The offspring with her cherished husband, Richard Asiyo, are trailblazers in their own right. Mama understood so well that the woman was the pillar of society and sought to demonstrate that the family was the best focal point for community peace and social development. She is associated with numerous projects in Karachuonyo constituency in South Nyanza and the world at large.

Phoebe Asiyo has shown that women's empowerment promotes their independence but not exclusivity. She has shown that the success on this front is better assured through the partnership of both genders and the collaboration of all stakeholders. May Mama continue to shine our paths.

COMMENTARY US UNEASY

Africans move from pawn to player by giving priority to own interests

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Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcome ceremony for President William Ruto in Beijing, China, on April 24 /XINHUA

For the better part of modern history, Africa has been treated as an afterthought in global diplomacy, a supplier of raw materials and a passive consumer of foreign ideas, policy frameworks and capital. Its vast natural wealth, youthful population and strategic geographic position have rarely translated into tangible power at negotiating tables. Instead, the continent has too often been manipulated, divided and used to further the ambitions of others. That era must end.

Recent developments in Kenya offer a powerful lens through which to examine the emerging tensions between longstanding Western influence and a new assertiveness by African nations in pursuit of their own national interests. President William Ruto's announcement this week that Kenya had successfully negotiated with China to remove tariffs on key agricultural exports such as tea, coffee and avocados marked more than a trade breakthrough. It is a declaration that Kenya, and by extension Africa, is willing to break with historical dependency and pursue relationships that are mutually beneficial, regardless of who is discomforted. Ruto visited Beijing in April when he restated their close ties and a new world order.

The West, especially the United States, has not taken this realignment lightly. Senator James Risch, chairman of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, recently introduced an amendment to the National Defence Authorisation Act seeking a review of Kenya's designation as a major non-NATO ally. Among his stated concerns were the deepening diplomatic ties between Nairobi and Beijing, as well as allegations of abductions of Kenyan activists and links to controversial security outfits in the region. However, the timing and framing of the amendment reveal a deeper unease in Washington, not simply about human rights, but about Africa stepping outside the fold of traditional Western patronage.

For decades, African states were nudged, cajoled or coerced into aligning with external power blocs, often with devastating consequences. The Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, pushed by the IMF and World Bank, gutted public services, dismantled local industries and left economies more vulnerable than before. These policies were rarely designed with Africa's long-term resilience in mind. Instead, they served the financial and ideological interests of Western capitals.

Today, a new world order is taking shape. China has emerged not merely as an alternative source of capital but as a trading partner, investor and infrastructure developer. Its non-interference policy, while controversial, has given African governments greater room to manoeuvre. But that room must be used wisely. Alignment with China, or any other power for that matter, must not be romanticised. Africa's strategic interests must guide it.

What this means is that African nations must negotiate from a position of clarity and confidence.

Trade agreements must go beyond access to foreign markets, they must protect local industries, ensure technology transfer and guarantee African producers do not remain at the bottom of global value chains. Infrastructure projects must be assessed not only on their size and cost, but also on their long-term viability, the transparency of contracts and the economic value they unlock for citizens.

Equally important is the diversification of partnerships. No country, no matter how friendly or generous, should monopolise influence in African capitals. Strategic diversification is not just good economics, but it is good politics. It protects sovereignty and creates competition among partners, driving up the quality of offers and reducing dependency.

Kenya's pivot to China, therefore, should not be misread as a wholesale shift in allegiance. Rather, it is a recalibration, one that recognises Western markets have grown increasingly protectionist and aid conditionalities ever more complex. Kenyan exporters need access to reliable markets. Kenyan farmers deserve better prices. Kenyan youth require jobs that can only be sustained through productive investment and industrialisation.

If anything, President Ruto's comments this week reflect a broader continental awakening. Africa cannot continue to trade its strategic value for vague promises, symbolic gestures or partnerships that yield little. The continent is no longer an appendage of Western charity or a playing field for geopolitical rivalry. It is an actor with its own agenda, and it must articulate that agenda forcefully.

THE CONTINENT IS NO LONGER AN APPENDAGE OF WESTERN CHARITY OR PLAYING FIELD FOR GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY BUT AN ACTOR FORCEFULLY ARTICULATING ITS OWN AGENDA

But for this to happen sustainably, strong institutions are required. Transparent governance, professional negotiation capacity and accountability mechanisms are essential. Governments must ensure that deals signed abroad are scrutinised at home.

Parliament, civil society and the media must all play their role in safeguarding the public interest. The pain of past exploitations should serve as a permanent reminder that the world does not give Africa what it deserves, but it gives what Africa demands.

The African Continental Free Trade Area, if implemented effectively, could give the continent the scale it needs to negotiate better terms on everything from climate finance to intellectual property. But even this requires unity of purpose, political will and an ethos of collective self-respect.

Africa must stop apologising for pursuing what every other region does without hesitation, its own interests. The era of blind loyalty, of externally imposed models and of partnerships that exploit rather than uplift, must give way to a new doctrine. One where Africa walks into every room with its head held high speaks clearly about what it wants and walks away from any deal that undermines its dignity.

From Nairobi to Accra, from Addis Ababa to Dakar, this is the moment for Africa to move from pawn to player. The world is watching. But more importantly, Africa's future generations are depending on it. Several African nations have already begun making this shift. In Ghana, the government is actively reviewing mining contracts to ensure greater national benefit. President Akufo-Addo has also spoken firmly against the global financial system's structural biases and called for reforms that reflect Africa's true contributions and challenges.

Ethiopia has placed industrialisation at the centre of its national strategy. Through the development of industrial parks and a focus on value-added production, it is reducing dependency on traditional exports and pursuing diverse international partnerships guided by its own priorities. Senegal has taken steps to reclaim control over its natural resources by renegotiating oil and gas contracts to secure more value for its people. In Rwanda, the government is asserting control over its digital future by investing in local innovation and regulating external tech influence, demonstrating how even smaller nations can lead with purpose.

COMMENTARY REMAIN INDEPENDENT

Lady Justice Wendy Micheni /JUDICIARY

Lessons for DPP from Justice Micheni report

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The Office Director of Public Prosecution should study the 122-page dossier by Justice Wendy Micheni of May 29 to acknowledge how his office and the investigators he relies on can throw away a straightforward case through orchestrated adventure or careless incompetence.

The judgment demonstrates how the state can cook up a case and foist it on the DPP.

"...There was the hand of big brother...[guiding this investigation]," according to Justice Micheni who declares in her acquittal judgment that "...someone out there was calling all the shots...[that]...is the only explanation as to why all our rules of procedure were thrown out of the window."

Lessons for the ODPP: make an independent decision to prosecute after weighing the evidence and the public interest without Executive pressure. Henceforth the ODPP should exert his constitutional authority over police investigations, to avoid being blindsided, fooled and embarrassed. This investigation was an elaborate state feint.

In this acquittal, ODPP is clearly ill equipped to prosecute complex crimes. Although highly trained detectives conducted the Sh2.5billion drug "find", it was sloppy and doomed to collapse.

" I have noted it [collapse of the case] was not due to want of experience as we had some of our best [detectives] handling the matter..." Justice Micheni says and adds that the entire case brought the entire criminal justice system into disrepute.

Yousuf Yaqoob, Yaqoob Ibrahim, Saleem Muhammad, Bhatti Abdulghafur, Bakshi Moula, Prabhakara Nair Praveen and Pal Abdolghafar were arrested on July 1, 2014, purportedly from Kenya's territorial waters, steered to the Mtongwe naval base in Mombasa where they were interrogated nonstop for two weeks and more than 400kg of narcotics in granular and liquid form retrieved from their vessel, interchangeably identified as Al Noor and MV Amin Darya.

The comedy that followed the retrieval and storage of evidence leads one to hypothesise that either the entire investigation was cooked up or the investigation was conducted so badly to throw away the investigation.

THE COMEDY FOLLOWED RETRIEVAL AND STORAGE OF EVIDENCE LEADS ONE TO HYPOTHESISE THAT EITHER THE ENTIRE PROBE WAS COOKED SO BADLY

Three Kenyan co-accused were acquitted. The sudden death of a ninth foreigner and crew member, Usman Ghani, was never investigated despite its material relevance to the probe and subsequent trial. Around August 2014 it was reported police tried to smuggle the corpse into a Mombasa hospital to conceal death aboard the vessel.

The foreigners were sentenced to life imprisonment last year. Citing factual and legal errors they appealed to the High Court saying they were tried in an alien language and convicted from contaminated, tainted and illegally retrieved evidence on top of being denied consular support, legal counsel and Farsi translators and searched without warrants.

They argued that they were denied a fair trial when then-President Uhuru Kenyan ordered the destruction of the vessel on August 29, 2014, before they could challenge prosecution claims about it. The appeals court agreed with them.

Justice Micheni held that the entire case was doomed from the start for violating interrogation and evidence gathering procedures in the Evidence Act, Criminal Procedure Rules, the Constitution of Kenya and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In her assessment there was no logical reason for the police not to obtain search warrants on a vessel that was already sequestered, that the alleged confessions to drug trafficking was obtained under duress under withering interrogation from sick, quartered and dying suspects and in a language they did not understand. Subsequently, they were tried in an alien language, she ruled.

She held the ship was not properly identified or proved to have been arrested in Kenyan waters, that state witness uttered conflicting evidence on when the illegal cargo was found, by whom, when and in what quantities.

And the amount of narcotics was, grossly, inflated yet some of the drug was retrieved in the suspects' absence. She challenged its dubious chain of custody and ruled the evidence should never have been admitted at trial. The judge ruled it was logically implausible to assert the appellants trafficked in narcotics between July 2 and 18 in 2024 when they were in the Kenyan custody. These are the vital lessons for the ODPP.

AWAITING JUSTICE

A Matiang'i presidency will get payout for the victims of US Embassy

SAM OMWENGA

On August 7, we mark 27 years since the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi, a devastating terrorist attack that killed 213 Kenyans and injured about 5,000 more. A lawsuit in the US for compensation was filed by 351 victims. Many victims within 1,000 feet of the blast were permanently blinded by shattered glass and debris. This was a horrendous, evil act that a US magistrate described as "...one of the most grotesque and depraved acts imaginable".

The embassy shared a parking lot with several other buildings, including the Cooperative Bank and Ufundi House. Additionally, the US Embassy had an underground garage that included a delivery dock. The parking situation was a constant worry to all as it was a huge vulnerability. The garage entrance was protected by a manual drop arm, secured with a padlock and local guards controlled the security feature. Due to worries about vulnerability, the city authorised the bank to instal a second drop arm at the entrance gate of the shared parking lot. On the morning of August 7, workers were there preparing to instal the new drop arm.

This was the scene when the suicide attackers drove their pickup truck into the parking lot. The driver and passengers insisted that they had a special delivery for the embassy loading dock. Indeed, they did: hundreds of pounds of explosives. When the guards refused to allow them in, as they were trained to do since the truck was not authorised to enter, the attackers began shooting and threw a grenade. The drop arm remained locked with its padlock as the guards dove and ran for cover. The frustrated terrorists then triggered the bomb in the rear parking lot instead of beneath the embassy as planned.

KENYA'S VICTIMS OF '98 BLAST NOT PART OF US COMPENSATION FUND BUT FORMER INTERIOR CS MET VICTIMS' LAWYERS AND DEMANDED KENYAN GOVERNMENT HELP

Had the terrorists managed to get past the locked gate, the devastation would have been even worse. The terrorists' intention was to level the entire building but, thank God, the gate guards who refused to let them in prevented them. What is hard to believe is more than 27 years later, the victims of the bomb blast have yet to be compensated. These victims have waited all these decades but for one reason or another, including the alleged involvement of government cartels to frustrate victim's efforts by demanding part of the billions meant for victims.

Meanwhile, on July 21 this year, in keeping with his determination to provide fresh, new and effective leadership in all facets of governance, Fred Matiang'i met the legal team in Washington, D.C. It had secured $60 billion in judgments against al Qaeda to 351 Kenyan victims. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and find ways to ensure that all victims of the terrorist attack are finally compensated.

Although there have been efforts to include the Kenyan victims in the US Victims of State-Sponsored Terrorism Fund through budget-neutral legislation, progress has been dismal. An ad hoc Kenyan Senate committee was established to advance this cause, but it has so far made limited progress in effectively engaging with US counterparts.

By engaging the victims' lawyers in the US, Matiang'i has shown just one example of the many things the government of President William Ruto has paid no attention to, or simply has failed to do the necessary to address the issues.

This caring for the victims of the terrorist attack and demanding action from the government also gives us a peek into what the administration of the former Interior CS would be like were Kenyans to elect him as president in 2027.

From both his private discussions and public speeches, one can tell Matiang'i has a clear vision of what he wants to do, not just pandering to the voters, as do most politicians, starting from the top down. Rather, he means what he says and does what he means.

This is one of many qualities that set him apart from everyone else seeking the presidency and it will help propel him to high office. Others are his no-nonsense-let's-get-things-done management style. We know what ails the country, Matiang'i is the solution.

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COMMENTARY **SHOULD BE PASSED**

Strict boda boda regulation Bill timely, would save many lives

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Why would National Assembly Majority leader Kimani Ichung'wah dismiss the Bill brought forth by Kakamega Senator Bonny Khalwale imposing strict rules on boda boda riders? Ichung'wah has dismissed the Public Transport Motorcycle Regulation Bill, 2025, on grounds the actual stakeholders, who are the motorbike operators, have not been adequately engaged.

If there is one sector that is a double-edged sword in Kenya, it is the boda boda business. Those using their motorbikes to make a living are mostly low-income operators. Over the years, it has been attractive due to the low taxes on the imported or locally assembled bikes, and the quick learning model of operation. It has delivered serious convenience, ease of political engagement especially during campaigns and created employment for many youths and even older adults countrywide. It has eased the transportation of goods and services for smallholder businesses, and, in a way, also reduced the cost of hiring transport, from hiring a taxi to hiring a motorbike for short errands.

In retrospect, this business model adapted from Uganda and western Kenya quickly spread to other parts of the country and also has had negative consequences. Boda boda riders have caused major accidents, death, disability, rape and easy escape for criminals. The business has caused school dropouts due to the ease of starting ventures, truancy, physical inactivity and horizontal disrespect of the rule of law through riders' abuse of traffic rules. We do not have designated lanes for motorbikes, and this is where the government fails the motorbike businesspeople.

I am guilty of taking a motorbike for errands, but I stopped recently, for many reasons, including almost being knocked down by one in the CBD. There are other reasons: many friends and relatives have been involved in accidents when riding as passengers. Some own motorbikes and have been involved in accidents. I have also read about both petty and serious crime by people purporting to be in motorbike business, disguising themselves and being involved in muggings, rapes and home thuggery, just to mention a few.

I feel for the parents, who have to entrust their small schoolgoing children to the hands of motorbike riders. This is also a double-edged sword. Hiring a boda boda is cheaper than paying for a school bus, but as mentioned, the child is exposed to danger at the hands of the parent being the rider, or a stranger boda rider.

In countries that really care about their citizens, especially children, and those that strictly follow the UN Convention Rights of the Child, this Bill would be a no-brainer. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 is an international treaty outlining the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all children under age 18. It emphasises that children have the right to survival, development, protection and participation.

Concerning children's safety, this convention emphasises the best interests of the child, that is, all decisions affecting children should prioritise their well-being. Children exposed to cold, speed and blaring cars while on motorbikes, contradict this treaty. Kenya ratified the UNCRC on July 30, 1990, becoming one of the first African countries to do so. Kenya's Children's Act of 2021, also covers the protection of children.

These principles should also be applied to ordinary Kenyan adults, not infrequently victims of unruly motorbike riders. Article 26 of the Constitution, particularly Chapter Four on the Bill of Rights, emphasises the right to life, saying, "Every person has the right to life." This article implies the state must take measures to protect lives, including through safe infrastructure and transport systems. The Traffic Act emphasizes this responsibility.

While Ichung'wah's argument on the need for stakeholder engagement is valid, it should not be used to indefinitely delay legislation that could save lives. Vox Populii says the motorbike sector is politically important, but unpopular as it may sound, it is not crucial at this point to Kenya's transport economy.

China's war sacrifice 80 years ago helped establish new world order

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Eighty years have passed since the end of the World Anti-Fascist War, yet much of its history remains filtered through a narrow, Western-centric lens. This dominant narrative often overlooks the decisive role played by China and other nations of the Global South in resisting fascism and imperialism. As the international community commemorates this pivotal anniversary, it is time to reexamine the war through a more balanced and inclusive perspective – one that rightly honours China's heroic resistance and its enduring contributions to global peace.

The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was not a peripheral conflict but a central front of the global anti-fascist struggle. While many Western histories mark 1939 as the beginning of World War II, for the Chinese people, the war began much earlier. In 1931, Japanese militarists staged the September 18 Incident, launching an invasion of Northeast China and triggering a prolonged period of resistance that lasted until Japan's defeat in 1945. During this 14-year period, China stood as the primary Eastern theatre in the global confrontation with fascism.

The courage and determination of the Chinese people were instrumental in defeating Japanese militarism. More than 1.5 million Japanese troops were eliminated in China – more than 70 per cent of Japan's total wartime casualties. China endured immense sacrifice, suffering more than 35 million military and civilian casualties. These facts reflect not only the scale of China's struggle, but also its decisive contribution to the ultimate victory over fascism. Far from being a passive recipient of Allied assistance, China was a key pillar in the global anti-fascist front.

China's resistance was rooted in a broader commitment to international solidarity. When Italy, under the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the Chinese people led by the Communist Party of China voiced strong opposition and expressed support for the African resistance. This was not mere rhetoric – it was an early sign of the shared anti-colonial consciousness that would later unite countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America in their pursuit of sovereignty and justice.

Kenya, along with other Global South countries, shares a similar historical trajectory with China. Both experienced the oppression of foreign occupation and the struggles for national liberation. One of the underlying causes of World War II was the competition among Western colonial powers for control over the resources and markets of the Global South. During the war, these same regions were exploited for manpower and resources, often without their consent. Yet in resisting this exploitation and contributing to the war effort, the Global South emerged with a renewed sense of national identity and political agency.

The post-war period marked a turning point in global history. Inspired by the sacrifices and unity forged during the World Anti-Fascist War, a powerful wave of national independence swept through Asia, Africa and Latin America. The colonial order imposed by Western empires began to collapse, making way for a new international landscape in which formerly colonised nations asserted their place on the world stage. China's own experience of national rejuvenation during this time serves as a model of resilience and determination.

This photo taken on July 7, 2023 shows a view of the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing, China **/XINHUA**

Commemorating the World Anti-Fascist War requires us to reject historical revisionism and reaffirm the truth. Attempts by some to minimise or distort China's role, or to portray aggressors as victims, are a disservice to the memory of those who fought and fell. Some narratives focus solely on the tragedies experienced by the Axis powers in the final days of the war, such as the atomic bombings, while ignoring the responsibility they bear for initiating aggression and committing war crimes. This skewed framing obscures the suffering endured by the Chinese people and the moral clarity of their resistance. The return of Taiwan to China following World War II was a direct outcome of the Allied agreements laid out in the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations. These documents, endorsed by the major Allied powers, confirmed that Taiwan, which had been unlawfully seized by Japan, would be restored to China. This historical and legal foundation underscores China's firm position against separatist movements and reaffirms its sovereignty in accordance with international law and the principles of the UN Charter.

Indeed, the creation of the UN stands as one of the greatest achievements of the post-war world. The UN-centric international order is a lasting legacy of the World Anti-Fascist War and a cornerstone of global peace and stability. China, as a founding member and permanent Security Council member, has consistently upheld these principles and advanced peaceful development.

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Trump's tariffs could hurt America, Kenya

US President Donald Trump's revived tariff war might look like a show of strength, but it risks isolating the US and punishing friendly countries like Kenya that rely on stable and fair trade terms.

Trump's new executive order has raised tariffs on many US trading partners to between 10 per cent and 50 per cent. These are deliberate moves to reward allies and punish those who won't toe Washington's line. India, for instance, is now facing a 50 per cent tariff for buying Russian oil. Kenya, which enjoys a favourable 10 per cent base tariff with the US, could be next. Our growing trade with China might be seen as disloyalty in Trump's eyes.

That would be unfair. Countries must be free to choose their friends and trading partners without fear of retaliation. Trade should be guided by economic need, not geopolitical threats. Ironically, these tariffs hurt American consumers and businesses more than anyone else. Higher import taxes mean higher prices for goods like copper, electronics and food. Already, US companies like General Motors are feeling the pinch, reporting more than $1 billion in losses this year alone from tariffs.

HISTORICAL QUOTE

"People who equate all the different kinds of human activity to money are taking too primitive a view of things."

Paul Dirac
The English theoretical physicist and mathematician was born on August 8, 1902

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COLUMN LEGALITY VS SUPPORT

Healing, renewal needed after Uasu's divisive vote

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Uasu secretary-general Constantine Wesonga during a press briefing **/KNA**

On August 5, delegates of the University Academic Staff Union gathered at the Nakuru Athletics Club for an expected constitutional referendum. The union, which represents academic staff across Kenya's public universities, sought to adopt a new governing charter to replace the 2014 constitution – a document many felt was outdated, legally ambiguous and no longer fit for purpose.

The referendum results were swift but initially inconclusive: 270 votes in favour, 178 against and one spoiled ballot. According to widespread interpretation at the time, the proposal had failed – lacking the two-thirds supermajority presumed necessary for adoption. But in the days that followed, that verdict unravelled.

Legal scrutiny, guided by the Labour Relations Act, Uasu's registered constitution, and precedents in trade union jurisprudence revealed a critical misreading: only a simple majority was required. With that clarification, the vote stood – and the 2025 Uasu constitution was deemed lawfully adopted and duly registered by the Registrar of Trade Unions. What started, as a perceived failure of reform had, in legal terms, quietly become a resounding success.

Yet this outcome, legally sound as it may be, has left the union at a crossroads. For while Uasu now has a new constitution, it must contend with a deeper crisis: the erosion of trust, the fragility of institutional legitimacy, and the dangers of misinformation in constitution making.

There was broad consensus, at least among reformists, that the 2014 constitution had significant shortcomings. It lacked robust provisions on internal accountability, contained vague terms of office and did not adequately address chapter representation or procedural clarity in leadership transitions.

The proposed 2025 constitution sought to cure these institutional weaknesses by aligning union governance with evolving labour law, introducing clear term limits, decentralising authority and embedding financial transparency. The "Yes" campaign, fronted by national secretary-general Dr Constantine Wasonga and national chairperson Grace Nyongesa, argued that reform was both timely and necessary. The "No" camp, headlined partly by former national officials eyeing the 2026 elections and the union's "young Turks", cited concerns over potential power entrenchment, diminished chapter autonomy and procedural opacity.

The legal clarification that only a simple majority was needed, redefined the referendum outcome. The Labour Relations Act (Section 18) stipulates that amendments to union constitutions must comply with the union's internal rules and be ratified through a properly convened vote. In Uasu's case, the registered constitution did not expressly require a two-thirds majority for constitutional overhaul, only for specific amendments. In the absence of such a threshold, the simple majority prevailed.

But the larger question is not only what the law allows – it is also what democracy demands. Many delegates cast their votes under the impression that a two-thirds threshold applied.

The manner in which the draft was disseminated and the absence of structured civic education left room for misinformation, fear and factionalism. Legality, in this case, has not guaranteed legitimacy, and therein lies the deeper concern.

The referendum exposed the twin frailties that haunt both our unions and our politics: the weaponisation of process and the personalisation of power. Instead of being a sober constitutional moment, the vote became a proxy war between incumbents and hopefuls, each accusing the other of hidden motives. WhatsApp groups became theatres of speculation. Misleading claims, from supposed term extensions to fiscal centralisation, spread faster than clarifications could be issued.

And when the referendum "failed", only to be later declared legally successful, the credibility of the entire exercise came into question. What was missing was a shared understanding of the rules of engagement, a foundational requirement for any democratic exercise.

Uasu's new constitution is now the law of the union. Its implementation is both necessary and urgent. But the leadership must not confuse legality with endorsement. The deeper challenge lies in healing the rift, restoring trust and rebuilding democratic culture within the union. That requires humility, not triumphalism.

The national leadership must now lead an inclusive process to make operational the new charter, taking into account the concerns raised by dissenting chapters, including fears of exclusion, procedural manipulation, and elite dominance. Failure to do so risks litigation, boycotts, or long-term institutional paralysis.

This moment offers lessons not just for Uasu, but also for Kenya's broader democratic journey. Constitution making, whether at national or institutional levels, cannot be reduced to a numbers game. The law is only as strong as the consent that underpins it. Misinformation, if left unchecked, corrodes the public's ability to deliberate in good faith. When constitutional reform becomes a vehicle for personal ambition – rather than collective renewal – it loses both its soul and its staying power.

Uasu now stands at a pivotal juncture. The legal battle may be over, but the democratic reckoning has just begun. The union has an opportunity, and a responsibility, to lead by example, to show that reform is not just about changing documents but about changing cultures. This is a chance to transform unionism from a battlefield of ambition into a forum of collective purpose.

Let the 2025 constitution be more than a legal artefact. Let it be the beginning of a renewed democratic ethic – one rooted not only in law, but also in trust, transparency, and truth.

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COMMENTARY **DIVERSIFY TRADE**

US President Donald Trump shows an executive order on 'reciprocal tariffs' at the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC, on April 2 /XINHUA/HU YOUSONG

How Africa can navigate punitive Trump's tariffs

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United States President Donald Trump's sweeping new tariffs have come into force, affecting more than 90 countries across all regions of the world. The US leader argues that the new taxes on imports are aimed at correcting historical trade injustices against the world's number one economy. However, historical evidence, economic theory and empirical data all suggest that such protectionist policies lead to reduced trade, slower growth, higher consumer prices and geopolitical instability.

Tariffs increase the cost of imported goods, forcing countries and companies to reconfigure supply chains. The punitive taxes on US partner countries could also choke off critical trade routes, especially for commodities, electronics and textiles.

The IMF, for instance, estimates a 0.5 per cent reduction in global growth in 2025 and 0.3 per cent in 2026, largely due to US tariff policies. This translates to $800 billion loss in global GDP over the two years. In the US, higher prices for imported goods from Brics countries like Chinese electronics or Indian pharmaceuticals are already squeezing middle-class incomes.

The reality of a renewed US trade war, pitting it against major trading partners threatens to unravel decades of global economic integration.

The European Union and Brics nations, unified in their criticism of US tariffs as "indiscriminate" and "illegal," are likely to respond with tariffs or non-tariff barriers, further escalating trade tensions.

Given Africa's reliance on exports, foreign investment and multilateral trade systems, punitive tariffs would exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, stifle growth and deepen poverty in the continent.

Africa is already grappling with debt crises, climate shocks and post-pandemic recovery, and the least of its expectation is an impending trade war. Unlike advanced economies, like China, the European Union and Canada, African nations lack fiscal buffers to absorb trade shocks.

The IMF already projects that one per cent drop in China's GDP growth, could lower sub-Saharan Africa's growth by 0.5 per cent. Africa imports 40 per cent of manufactured goods including machinery, electronics and textiles from China. If US tariffs raise China's costs, Africa pays more.

Additionally, countries reliant on the US markets – which constitute up to 40 per cent of the global consumer demand – face reduced export revenues, weakening their economies. Take Kenya, for example. With no deal in sight following the 90-day pause in the 10 per cent tariff by Trump on Kenyan imports, Nairobi is staring at staggering trade and financial implications. Kenya could lose up to 600,000 jobs and revenue in excess of Sh13 billion.

At the moment, Africa is actively implementing the Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). However, if the global trade fracture as a result of the Trump tariffs, intra-Africa trade, accounting for just 18 per cent of total, would not compensate.

A global trade war would therefore push Africa's fragile economies to the brink. Africa's policymakers in the continent must act now to prevent a downward spiral.

African countries should consider diversifying trade away from the US while strengthening intra-continental trade under AfCFTA. The continent should also actively strengthen trade ties with more responsive partners within BRICS and beyond. At the 2025 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation ministerial meeting in Changsha, China announced duty free entry of goods from all countries in Africa with diplomatic ties. This is a window to push more African products to Chinese market.

Finally, African countries should forge a joint front and lobby for the extension of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. The US trade programme designed to promote economic growth and development in eligible sub-Saharan African countries through duty-free access to the US market is set to expire in September 2025. Agoa's renewal could significantly blunt the impacts of the punitive Trump tariffs on beneficiary African countries.

Recognition of rights activists important to boosting morale

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Human Rights Defenders (HRD) play a significant role in championing the rights and freedoms within our society. Most often, HRDs champion for these rights and freedoms, not for the accolades, but the desire for change, a more just and equitable society where all can thrive. For some, pain and trauma birth the desire for transformation, while others, the need for a better tomorrow solidifies their work for defending rights and freedoms. It can be stated that being a HRD is often viewed as a thankless job, to others, they are viewed as troublemakers and busy bodies, to others, they are time wasters, granted that what they embark on is belittled and not seen as an agent for change.

The UN Declaration of Human Defenders provides human rights defenders as individuals or groups who act to promote, protect or strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means. The declaration further recognises the key role of human rights defenders in the realisation of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and legally binding treaties and in the international human rights system. It can be added, that the rights and freedoms are equally those provided under the constitution and regional instruments Kenya has ratified. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights equally recognise the critical importance of HRDs.

In the recent past, and especially during the protests, HRDs have come under significant threats, harassment and intimidation owing to their human rights work. We witnessed many being victims of arbitrary arrests, trumped up charges to include charges of terrorism, abduction, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. The aim being to muzzle the voices of those critical to abuse, violations and abuse of power.

It needs to be appreciated that to thrive in a just society, equality and non-discrimination, access to justice, good governance, rule of law and constitutionalism are key ingredients. It is for this reason that HRDs championing the rights and freedoms within their communities.

The HRD Working Group cochaired by Defenders Coalition and the Embassy of Denmark, has for the last nine years taken up the initiative to recognise and award HRDs for their commitment to advancing rights and freedoms in their communities, through the HRD Awards. Throughout this journey, HRDs who have worked in diverse areas to include mental health rights, climate change, environmental rights, women's and girl's rights, queer and gender minority rights and socioeconomic changes, among others, have been recognised.

This year, the HRD Working Group marks the 10th year of the HRD Awards. The awards come at a time when HRDs have suffered significant harm, while advancing rights and freedoms. The awards, as highlighted, seeks to recognise the invaluable work HRDs undertake, work that is tangible and which advances change within their communities. This year, it is no different, we strive to recognise and celebrate the HRDs in all their diversities, those who have made significant change in their communities. It is important that even through a nomination, a human rights defender appreciates that someone is taking notice of the amazing work that they are doing.

The recognition of HRDs in all their diversities serves to boost morale, to remain the fuel that keeps on burning as they strive to make changes in their communities. Recognition, through the HRD Awards, remains significant and a constant reminder that there is need champion rights and freedoms of the voiceless. It is very important that we recognise the work by HRDs, respect it and applaud them for the risks they take, and the changes they seek to achieve every day. Recognition of HRDs is indeed is significant in boosting their morale.

WOMEN'S CHAMPION

Family and relatives during memorial service of former Karachuonyo MP Phoebe Asiyo at St Maxwell SDA church on Wednesday /**DOUGLAS OKIDDY**

LETTER OF THE WEEK

All electoral players must get it right in upcoming by-elections, 2027 elections

Smooth seas do not make skilful sailors, so goes a sagacious old African axiom.

With at least one senatorial, six MP and 16 MCA seats vacant and up for grabs, the recently constituted Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission panel has its work cut out.

With the country already being served a litany of political formations to choose from and with the tectonic political shifts and realignments, the IEBC requires strategic support from all stakeholders to not only deliver the upcoming by-elections but be equipped for the 2027 general election.

The first factor is the indefatigable Gen Z. Since the June 2024 protests, Kenya will never be the same again in terms of political organising. The emboldened zeal to ask tough governance questions from a non-biased, non-tribal and fearless front ushered in a new chapter of political activism.

The desire to have streamlined political and governance systems and institutional accountability must inform the IEBC that this time round, ill-preparedness, voter manipulation and meddling with vote count, tallying, transmission and announcement of results will not be tolerated by this fearless group.

RUMOURS OF LAYING FOR GROUNDWORK FOR VIOLENCE AND ETHNIC CLEANSING DURING THE ELECTION NEED UTMOST ATTENTION . SUCH RUMOURS MUST NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY

Political parties, too, must use the upcoming by-elections to put their houses in order. A quick glance at the political parties' activities indicates that a lull ensued after the 2022 election. Most of their offices remain closed and dormant, with their regional offices permanently shut.

The Office of Registrar of Political Parties must flex its muscles and ensure that all political parties toe the electoral policy and law line.

With a worrying human rights violations atmosphere since the June 2024 Gen Z protests, going for heightened political processes like by-elections and subsequently the general election must worry all.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority have released grim and highly traumatising figures of gross human rights violations, some bordering on international crimes. These must end. The DCI, the ODPP and the Judiciary must henceforth disembark from enabling this tirade of illegal arrests, inane prosecutions laden with illogical detentions and sky-high bail and bond terms.

The ethnic card being pulled by some political and ruling elites to whip ethnic sympathy and support is self-defeating. While they think they are pulling their community conclaves together and solidifying their parochial bases, it only weakens the nation's bond. We must learn from states like Somalia and Southern Sudan.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission must gather its strength and, without prejudice, ensure that those who spew ethnic slurs are dealt with. We need to see heads rolling literally, so that others can be saved during the electoral phase.

Rumours of laying for groundwork for violence and ethnic cleansing need utmost attention. Such rumours must not be taken lightly, and the highest offices in this land must assure Kenyans of their preparedness and willingness to arrest and deal with such a situation. We cannot afford a repeat of 2007-08.

While it's expected that political ideological realignment is healthy, this must not push the country to the verge of hatred and political philosophy animosity. The calls for 'Wantam' or 'Tutam' should not provide a platform for warring but rather should crystallise the resolve and competition towards the best political offer based on the best interest of the welfare of the common Kenyan.

Finally, respect for the rule of law and fidelity to the constitution should be the hallmark of the by-elections and the subsequent political processes. Parliament must oversee policy and legal reforms that will provide a formidable ground for the by-elections and general election.

This should not be rushed but rather done within the stipulated constitutional timelines. These reforms should include supporting and allocating required resources to the IEBC, KNCHR and other important institutions that have a stake in elections.

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WHAT THEY SAID ...

Money lying idle

This is like a lost and found box in a school compound. If a pupil misplaces an item, it is put in the box under the school's authority

CAROLINE CHIRCHIR
Unclaimed Assets Authority CEO

We cannot increase the land available, so the only way forward is to enhance crop productivity through science. GMOs have been rigorously tested for decades, and the evidence shows they are safe

PROF ANNE MUIGAI
Genetics expert, NDU

COMMENT

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Devolution fete to ensure growth is felt in Kenya

This year's devolution conference themed: For the People; For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice ignites a dynamic space to examine devolution as a governance tool in tackling inequalities and consequently enhancing social justice.

The advent of devolution sought to promote social and economic development and to provide proximate services to communities.

Indeed, despite the tremendous progress made by county governments since advent of devolution, counties still face a myriad of challenges. One such challenge is inadequate allocation of resources to address inequalities, marginalisation and poverty in all their manifestations. The question that lingers therefore is; how can we ensure economic growth is felt by everyone, especially the marginalised? A viable solution lies in pro-poor financing. Pro-poor financing refers to deliberate financial policies, programmes and investments specifically designed to benefit the vulnerable and poor populations and reduce poverty.

This approach recognises that economic growth alone may not be sufficient to alleviate poverty and that targeted interventions are required to ensure the poor partake in the benefits of development. The approach entails channelling more funds to initiatives that address inequality and advance access to development and economic opportunities to citizens regardless of their background, gender or social standing. Importantly, it is about dismantling systemic barriers to socio-economic inclusion. Amartya Sen reminds us that development is a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy and extinguishing the 'unfreedoms' such as poverty, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation. Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are the principal means.

The devolved functions can be deemed as freedoms. For instance, social opportunities in the form of access to road infrastructure, health services, among others advance economic freedoms.

To further sustain these freedoms and eradicate poverty and fulfil social justice outcomes, governments on both levels will be required to allocate the maximum available resources for the progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. By prioritising such commitments, governments advance redistributive justice ensuring the benefits of devolution reach the vulnerable.