



News

Medics probed over SHA fraud as hospitals suspended from cover

Health: Page 2

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weekend STAR

Payment has been ODM leader's campaign call

RUTO, RAILA 2027 SCHEME WITH PROTEST DEATHS PAYOUT

Story Page 4-5



Treasury CS John Mbadi /ENOS TECHE

Governors blow in fight to block unified revenue collection system

GOVERNORS have suffered a setback after the Treasury reaffirmed its plan to roll out an integrated revenue collection system for counties. Treasury CS John Mbadi said new platform, which will replace the systems in use across counties, is ready for implementation. "We are rolling out an integrated county revenue management system. It is going to replace this fragmented revenue framework," Mbadi said.

STORY PAGE 8

Orengo returns after treatment abroad



GOOD TO SEE YOU: Siaya Governor James Orengo, President William Ruto and Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga at the funeral of Mama Phoebe Asiyo at Wikondiek in Homa Bay county/PCS

Engineer recycles plastics to tackle waste pollution and energy crisis

AT a small factory tucked in the bustling Kenol town, Murang'a county, a young man is quietly leading a green revolution driven by his passion for environmental conservation and energy sustainability. James Muritu who holds a master's degree in software and hardware engineering recycles plastic waste into fuel, effectively tackling the environmental pollution.

STORY PAGE 24

KENYAN Quiz!

PHOTO STORY



Yvonne Nafula, 13, who died after an aircraft crashed into their home in Mwhoko, Kiambu county, on Thursday. She was the daughter of Mercy Nafula /HANDOUT



Global Impact Alliance director Christine Wairimu and Remitek medical centre CEO Jane Kinyua console Mercy Nafula (seated) after she lost her daughter Yvonne in the accident /LEAH MUKANGAI

FRAUDULENT BILLING

SHA fraud: Medics and hospitals under probe

Duale says 40 facilities suspended as 12 doctor put under investigations

NANCY AGUTU
@TheStarKenya

TWELVE health officials, including eight doctors, are under investigation for allegedly defrauding the Social Health Authority, Health CS Aden Duale has said.

During a press briefing on Friday, he said the officials, drawn from Nairobi, Bungoma and Kilifi, were implicated in schemes involving fraudulent billing and false patient claims.

Their cases have been referred to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations.

"Any doctor or health official involved in defrauding SHA will be held personally responsible," Duale told reporters.

"We will hand over all the hospitals and the 12 health officials to the DCI for further investigations. Additionally, we have ordered the

relevant regulatory bodies to cancel their licences."

The investigations are part of a wider crackdown in which the Ministry of Health has suspended 40 hospitals from the SHA programme.

The hospitals are located in Homa Bay, Nairobi, Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia, Kajiado, Wajir, Kisumu, Kilifi, Mandera and Kirinyaga counties.

Duale said the suspensions, which take effect immediately, will remain in force during the probe.

He cited common fraudulent practices, including the conversion of outpatient cases into inpatient ones, particularly in Nairobi and Homa Bay and the submission of claims for "ghost patients".

"In Mandera county, four different facilities submitted claims for the same patient who was only admitted to one facility," he said.

Duale stressed that the govern-

ment will surcharge the suspended facilities for any funds lost through fraud.

"These facilities will not receive any benefits from SHA during the investigation period and we will recover the money lost," he said.

The ministry will publish the names of the suspended hospitals in a Gazette notice once investigations are complete.

The crackdown comes amid growing concern over abuse of the SHA programme, which was set up to streamline access to healthcare funding and improve services.

Duale warned that both private and public sector actors found culpable will face the full force of the law.

"This behaviour undermines the integrity of our health system and robs deserving Kenyans of essential services. We will not tolerate it," he said.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Mbadi pledges more state support for affordable housing

KNA

TREASURY CS John Mbadi has pledged to provide more financial and policy support to expedite the affordable housing initiative.

Speaking during the fourth Kenya Affordable Housing Conference in Kisumu, he said the National Treasury has allocated Sh120.2 billion to the housing and settlement sector in the 2025-26 financial year, a move aimed at bridging the widening gap in home ownership, particularly in urban areas.

"Kenya's urban households own only 26 per cent of homes, with 70 per cent renting, often in insecure or informal conditions. To address this, budgetary allocations are being increased and innovative financing mechanisms introduced," he said.

The CS said the housing sector is a crucial component of the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and the National Treasury is planning policy changes to enhance its performance. Among the new measures set to spur growth is an annual tax relief of up to Sh360,000 for incremental home construction loans, he said. Moreover, this incentive, introduced in the Finance Act, 2025, has been designed to ease the burden on Kenyans who build homes progressively.

Mbadi also highlighted the National Treasury's growing focus on alternative financing instruments, including mortgage-backed securities, housing bonds and blended finance models to unlock long-term capital and stimulate market-driven housing finance.

He praised the Kenya Mortgage Refinance Company (KMRC) for pioneering a Sh1.4 billion domestic bond in 2022, the first under its Sh10.5 billion Medium-Term Note programme, noting the Treasury was aligning fiscal policy to encourage deeper capital market participation.

He said the government has mobilised \$300 million (Sh38.8 billion) in concessional funding from the World Bank and African Development Bank to support KMRC operations.

The funds, blended with bond proceeds, he said, have enabled KMRC to refinance mortgages at single-digit interest rates. "KMRC has refinanced more than 4,600 affordable home loans across 39 counties at a cost of approximately Sh21.7 billion. Nearly half of the beneficiaries are women and these loans have directly benefited more than 18,000 people while creating at least 11,500 jobs," he said.

Mbadi reaffirmed Treasury's commitment to mobilise further concessional funds for KMRC from international development partners to scale up its refinancing capacity nationwide. "The journey towards sustainable and inclusive housing in Kenya demands bold vision and pragmatic financing. We must pair public investment with private innovation and deploy targeted guarantees to bridge lending gaps," he said.

The Treasury, he added, was working to operationalise the Kenya Mortgage Guarantee Trust (KMGT), with an initial capitalisation of €4 million (Sh6.04 billion).

STAR SURVEY

TODAY'S QUESTION

Will you rally behind Raila if he backs Ruto's re-election in 2027?

YESTERDAY'S QUESTION

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

YES 50%



NO 50%



GAS CYLINDER EXPLODED

Services in Kakamega village disrupted after dispensary razed

HILTON OTENYO

MEDICAL services in Vikunga village, Shinyalu constituency, in Kakamega county have been disrupted after fire razed a dispensary.

Witness Godfrey Mutabalia said the fire broke out on Wednesday at 1 pm after a gas cylinder exploded when a health worker was cooking ugali. The fire spread fast and engulfed the whole building.

"We heard a loud blast and rushed to the scene. Within minutes, the fire had spread and the dispensary was engulfed in flames," he said.

Mutabalia said despite the swift response by residents, who tried to salvage what they could, vital

medical supplies and equipment were either destroyed or rendered unusable by the heat.

Midwife Muhanji Alusa, who operates in the area, called for urgent support and help since the dispensary was serving a large community in Shinyalu.

"We need tents and medical supplies. Pregnant women, the elderly and children are the most affected," she said.

Those seeking treatment are being attended to under a tree adjacent to the burnt facility.

Residents are now calling on the county government and well-wishers to intervene and fast-track reconstruction of the facility and consider



Items salvaged from Vikunga dispensary on Wednesday /HILTON OTENYO

upgrading the dispensary to a fully equipped health centre.

"This tragedy could be a blessing in disguise. We now have a chance to build a better facility," resident Coletah Khamete said.

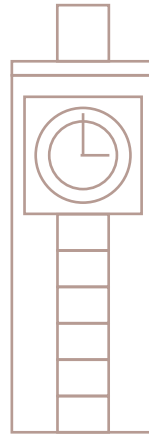
Kakamega county health executive Livingstone Imbayi, who visited the scene, promised that services would be restored soon.



PHOTO STORY

Joseph Kihanya before a Nairobi court on Friday charged with extorting a Co-operative Bank official of Sh500,000 /EZEKIEL AMING'A

CORRIDORS OF POWER



POLITICAL GOSSIP

Who is doing what and where in the world of politics



SERGEANT ARRESTED

Cop killed in fight with colleague over woman

Ithiru of Kitengela police station thrown from fourth floor on Thursday night

CYRUS OMBATI
@CyrusOmbati

A police officer was killed in a fight with a colleague over a woman at an apartment in Kitengela town, Kajiado county.

Constable Manaseh Ithiru, who was attached to Kitengela police station, was thrown from the fourth floor on Thursday night while he was with a woman believed to be his girlfriend.

Ithiru had taken a boda boda at around 7pm to the house of the woman, which is about 3km out of town.

He was ushered in and rested with the woman for about three hours before someone knocked on the door.

Upon opening, it turned out the guest was a fellow police officer, a sergeant attached to the Critical

Infrastructure Police Unit based at the Export Processing Zone in Athi River.

The guest is also a boyfriend of the same woman constable Ithiru was with. He arrived without notice, neighbours said.

Ithiru had asked his rider to be on standby as he would call him to pick him back to his residency. But that did not happen.

When the guest stormed the house, a fight broke out between the deceased officer and the assailant as the woman pleaded for peace.

The fight moved to the balcony, where Ithiru was pushed over and fell to the parking lot below.

His body was found in a pool of blood minutes after the fatal fall. This happened as the woman screamed for help from the neighbours.

Police were called to the scene

and announced the body had multiple injuries in the head and moved it to the mortuary pending a postmortem.

The sergeant and the woman were arrested, pending investigations, police said.

Elsewhere in Kenya, Kisii county, a man's body was found on the roadside after a suspected murder.

The police said the partially burnt remains were found in Mogambi village after it had been dumped there hours earlier on Thursday.

Police said the body had visible injuries on the limbs and back. His legs were tied at the time the body was discovered, police said.

A blood-stained panga and open shoes were found next to the body, which was moved to the mortuary pending identification and postmortem.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Rescuers at the site of a plane crash in Mwhoko on the outskirts of Nairobi on Thursday, where at least six people were confirmed dead and two others injured. The light aircraft belonged to Amref Flying Doctors /JOHN OKOYO /XINHUA

★ **WHO IS THIS** CS running away from live media interviews and what could he be hiding? Once accessible and media-friendly, the CS has now abandoned press conferences altogether, opting instead to issue carefully-worded press releases. Our small bird within the ministry informs us that the official has instructed his people to watch out for negative stories, so that they can issue swift response to avoid being caught off-guard. Insiders say the CS is deliberately dodging live engagements to escape tough, unscripted questions, especially those to which he may have no immediate answers.

★ **LAWMAKERS CAN BE** very desperate at times, especially when searching for high-profile jobs. A former MP is reportedly no longer able to sleep. He has developed a habit of frequenting Parliament and the office of a powerful CS to negotiate how they can meet the head of state to give him a job he was once promised. He has been overheard saying he is tired of waiting. The man has been so active on the ground defending the government and now wants the reward because he feels he's doing the heavy lifting.

★ **TROUBLE NEVER COMES** alone, they say. And if that adage holds any truth, it's playing out in real time for a certain governor from Western. Corridors is told that his political fortunes are sinking fast. Once riding high, he's now described by close allies as "a chicken caught in the rain", drenched and confused. He has reportedly been spotted making secret visits to a prominent law firm, fuelling speculations. To add to his troubles, his financial streams have reportedly dried up, casting a long shadow over his on-ice-flamboyant social life.

★ **WE RECENTLY TOLD** you about a simmering power struggle between two senior directors within a key parastatal. The two had been locked in a quiet but persistent turf war, with one accusing the other of overstepping the boundaries and meddling in his docket. The disgruntled official had reportedly complained that his colleague was increasingly encroaching on his responsibilities, even writing letters to the bosses. Word now has it that one of the directors has been quietly transferred to the parent ministry's headquarters. While no official explanation has been given, insiders suggest the move is meant to diffuse tensions.

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

VICTIMS COMPENSATION RUTO IS SWEETENING THE GROUND FOR ODM LEADER RAILA ODINGA



Kenyans commemorate protesters killed by police officers during anti-Finance Bill 2024 demos, at Uhuru Park in Nairobi on July 7, 2024
/ENOS TECHE

Protests payment: How Ruto, Raila are setting stage for grand alliance

MOSES OGADA
@AliwaMoses

PRESIDENT William Ruto is sweetening the ground for ODM leader Raila Odinga in his recent moves to accommodate the wishes of the opposition, the latest being the creation of a team to oversee compensation of victims of police brutality.

The team, to be headed by Ruto's constitutional affairs adviser, Makau Mutua, is expected to establish a framework for compensation of victims of protests and shall be under the Office of the President.

The reparations are to cover civilians and security personnel who lost their lives or suffered bodily harm during public protests and riots since 2017.

The Attorney General, Ministry of Interior and National Administration, as well as the National Treasury, have been assigned lead roles in

the team and are expected to work with other relevant agencies.

"The tenure of this special coordination framework shall be 120 days," Ruto said in the proclamation released on Friday.

Payment to victims of state excesses during protests and agitations for better governance has been the former Prime Minister's campaign call.

His supporters have borne the biggest brunt of police abuses.

Raila's bases, therefore, stand to benefit the most as the compensation would cover not just families who lost loved ones but also those who sustained injuries.

In 2017, at least 24 people died in the protests that ensued after the IEBC declared Uhuru Kenyatta re-elected.

Raila's lawyer Paul Mwangi is in court to pursue compensation for 75 people who were allegedly killed in

“

EDWARD MURIU

Do you need to be killed to be compensated? Will they compensate those who died in the hands of the police like Albert Ojwang'

high cost of living demos between January and April 2023.

"It is the largest claim for compensation I filed on behalf of 75 Azimio protestors who were fighting the Finance Bill, 2023," he said.

"I have been fighting it in the Constitutional Court for over two years now, and Raila Odinga has been fighting it politically against the government," Mwangi said. The petition is before Justice Mugambi at the High Court.

The 2024 anti-tax protests left at least 39 dead and more than 360 seriously injured in countrywide protests spread across two weeks.

Last month's confrontations between the police and protesters to mark Saba Saba day left 11 dead and scores nursing serious injuries. Human rights groups claimed 31 died in the face-off.

The compensation team was named a day after the President ap-



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IN HIS RECENT MOVES TO ACCOMMODATE THE WISHES OF THE OPPOSITION



step. Give the families their rights.” She lamented getting calls from the affected families and has had little to offer other than fundraising for their survival.

“Now, we demand justice as well. Arrest killer cops! And, now, we better make sure that they don’t steal this money,” Adan said in a tweet.

Mutua, the proposed chair, welcomed his appointment, terming the move as bold, unprecedented and historic.

“This is transformational for Kenya’s human rights culture. Visionary leaders seize historic opportunities, as President Ruto has done.”

He went on, “This action is unique in Africa and around the globe,” restating that it was a first for his 30 years of teaching, writing, fighting for, lecturing on and practising the law of transitional justice.

“I never thought such a pioneering action would occur in Kenya in my lifetime. I would be remiss if I didn’t thank the Hon Raila Odinga for walking this journey with the President,” the don said.

Ruto’s critics, however, maintained that compensation would not change the story of some of the families, especially for those who lost their loved ones.

They view it not as a humanitarian gesture but a calculated political manoeuvre aimed at reshaping his administration’s image, while laying ground for teaming up with Raila.

Observers hold that the move is part of the Kenya Kwanza strategy to soften the opposition’s stance.

Gatanga MP Edward Muriu alias Wakili termed the move a political

gimmick and part of Ruto’s 2027 cards. “Do you need to be killed to be compensated? How far will he go and how near will he come? Will they compensate those who died in the hands of the police like Albert Ojwang’?” the MP asked.

He argued that the President is yet to post a record of a successful project he or his government has spearheaded, dismissing the chances of the compensation plan succeeding.

“It is just politics to ensure things cool down. It is an easy way for ODM and UDA to prey on the next election. They shouldn’t take advantage of the plight of others to score political points.”

Skepticism remains over its sincerity and implementation, with some quarters pointing to budgetary headaches as potentially limiting the scope.

This is not the first time Kenyan leaders have used compensation and reconciliation as tools for political consolidation.

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, formed after the 2007-2008 post-election violence, was similarly intended to address historical injustices.

However, its recommendations were largely ignored and victims never received meaningful relief.

Critics worry that Ruto’s latest initiative could suffer the same fate and risk ending up poorly executed despite the fanfare around its launch.

Makueni Senator Dan Maanzo, a Kalonzo Musyoka ally, said the government would have better worked on a prevention strategy “instead of

channeling taxpayers’ money to correct its mistakes”.

“What he is proposing is tokenism. He should have prevented the events instead of spending money, which would have helped in funding development projects,” the senator said.

“It is a political gimmick. He has yet to visit the victims in hospitals or mourn with families of those who were killed in the protests,” Maanzo said, adding, “It is an act of dishonesty on the part of the government.”

The anti-government protests of 2023 and 2024 were largely driven by economic grievances and police brutality, with demonstrators demanding systemic reforms, not just monetary compensation.

If Raila chooses to fully embrace Ruto’s gestures, it could signal the beginning of a grand political realignment.

Speculation about a possible Ruto-Raila alliance in 2027 has been rife, especially given the country’s history of surprise political partnerships.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The timing of the compensation framework raises questions. With the 2027 elections looming, some see this as an attempt to rehabilitate Kenya Kwanza’s image among opposition strongholds. The President’s previous hardline stance against protests alienated many, particularly in Raila’s strongholds. By appearing conciliatory, Ruto may be attempting to mend fences and expand his support base beyond his traditional Rift Valley stronghold.

pointed another to spearhead the implementation of the Nadco report.

As such, the President could be seeking to shut down critics of his memorandum of understanding with Raila’s ODM party.

Former Taita Taveta Woman Rep Joyce Lay said, “This is the right direction, Mr President. Let’s also have a healing and reconciliation process, for the hearts of those affected to heal.”

She added that the move would “bring back the hearts of the young people to the fathers of the land, so that love, peace and unity will dwell in the nation.

“Religious groups should step in and lead the nation on this. Forgiveness will bring permanent healing.”

The Nadco implementation and the compensation framework teams are to be led by Raila allies, namely Agnes Zani and Mutua.

Other members of the Nadco implementation team are Fatuma Ibrahim, Kevin Kiarie, Gabriel Oguda and Javas Bigambo.

Ruto appears to be righting the wrongs he is accused of, with the aim of starting on a clean slate, especially in Raila’s bases.

The moves have triggered mixed reactions, drawing support from various quarters, including among the Gen Z who have suffered the most in the recent confrontations.

Activist Hanifa Adan said, “This won’t bring them back to life or restore their lives but it’s a very good



President William Ruto and former PM Raila Odinga at the funeral of Mama Phoebe Asiyo, at Wikondiek in Homa Bay county /PCS

NEWS COUNTIES

WORK TOGETHER

Ruto-Raila drop 2027 hint, tell naysayers to give them space

Say duo would explain to Kenyans the reasons for their deal when time comes



President William Ruto during the funeral of Mama Phoebe Asiyo at Wikondiek in Homa Bay county /PCS

JULIUS OTIENO
@JuliusOtieno04

PRESIDENT William Ruto and opposition leader Raila Odinga have given their clearest indication yet that they will work together ahead of the 2027 elections, telling off critics of their broad-based deal.

Speaking on Friday at the burial of former MP and Maendeleo ya Wanawake founder Phoebe Asiyo in Karachuonyo, Homa Bay county, the two leaders said they would not be distracted by opponents of their agreement.

“The naysayers, give us space. Give us room and judge us in 2027. We have said this is going to remain in place up to 2027,” Raila said.

The ODM leader, whose decision to partner with Ruto has caused disquiet within his party, likened critics to “frogs whose croaking cannot stop a cow from drinking water.”

“I’m not worried. Make noise. Just bark. Nobody should try to threaten

us. I’m confident we will move beyond 2027,” he added.

He said the duo would explain to Kenyans the reasons for their deal when the time comes and voters would have the final say.

Raila and Ruto said their partnership was driven by a shared commitment to save the country from collapse during last year’s Gen Z protests. “I am confident that when that time comes, we will face Kenyans squarely and tell them why we did ABCD. This is where we want to go. You will tell us yours, and we will see the one Kenyans will accept,” he said.

Raila and Ruto said their decision to team up was triggered by their passion for the country, which was facing an imminent collapse last year due to Gen Z protests.

“Because of your commitment to this country, today you have assisted me in putting together the broad-based government. A government that brings all communities, regions and tribes into one administration,”

Ruto said. Praising Raila, the President described him as a patriot whose sacrifices and leadership have shaped Kenya’s destiny.

“Your place in the history, progress, governance and destiny of our nation is firmly engraved. Your contribution, sacrifice and mentorship of many leaders is something of pride,” Ruto said amid cheers from the crowd.

The two leaders announced a joint parliamentary group meeting next week to rally their MPs behind the legislation needed to implement their 10-point MoU.

The meeting, they said, is to align the members to approve the necessary framework to implement the agenda.

“We are not doing trial and error. This is not an exercise of guesswork. We know where we have come from. We know the risks our country has gone through,” he said.

The move comes hours after Ruto announced a framework for the compensation of the victims of police brutality.

The two leaders have also formed a joint team to oversee the implementation of their agreement.

Speaking at the burial, Ruto said the move was part of the wider plan to heal the nation following the cases of police brutality.

“I have set up the infrastructure to pay and compensate those who were injured, maimed and killed as part of healing the wound and bringing the nation together,” he said.

Raila defended his decision to work with Ruto, saying he sacrificed to stabilise the government as the country was teetering on the brink.

“We are here as Kenyans today, and we know where we are coming from. We had a very serious situation, sometime last year. Everyone knows where we were,” he said.

“

RAILA ODINGA

I am confident that when that time comes, we will face Kenyans squarely and tell them why we did ABCD. This is where we want to go. You will tell us yours, and we will see the one Kenyans will accept

“There was a high possibility of Kenya degenerating into a failed state like Somalia and Sudan today. People who do not understand history talk very easily. But ask them, what happened in Libya? What happened in Egypt?” he asked.

He said their commitment to address the key issues affecting the country, including deteriorating human rights concerns, is being addressed.

The former prime minister said they are keen to restore human dignity, eradicate poverty and defend devolution.

“We have continued to say that we need to improve our governance structures. Issues of human rights must be respected,” he said.

The leaders eulogised the Asiyo as a trailblazer whose firm position on women’s leadership has shaped the destiny of the country.

The President promised to name

a monument in Nairobi after the former lawmaker and Maendeleo ya Wanawake founder.

Speaking at the event, Raila’s elder brother, Oburu Odinga, said they are in the broad-based government to stay.

He told those opposing the arrangement to learn from Raila and other experienced politicians like himself.

“Our people are normally very honest. If they don’t love you, they tell you they don’t love you. If they hate you, they also tell you so,” the ODM leader said.

“Sometime back, when you were campaigning here, you wouldn’t have gotten such a standing ovation like the one you are receiving. Raila has now told them that this is the way to go. The President is taking you to Canaan.”

Governors Gladys Wanga (Homa Bay) and Ochilo Ayacko (Migori) said the community and the ODM party would follow the political direction of the two leaders.

“The way I have heard people talk, maybe their problem is not Ruto. They are maybe angry because we have Mbadi, Oparanya and Wandayi in government,” Wanga said.

Ayacko said, “This language between you and Raila is very good, and I can see it is flourishing. If it continues like this, it will be good in 2027.”



Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga during the funeral of Mama Phoebe Asiyo at Wikondiek in Homa Bay county /PCS

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NEWS GENERAL

LOOPHOLES

Treasury snubs governors on cash collection system

Some counties contract financial technology firms to collect revenue on their behalf

JULIUS OTIENO
@JuliusOtieno04

GOVERNORS have suffered a setback after the National Treasury reaffirmed its plan to roll out an integrated revenue collection system for counties.

Treasury CS John Mbadi maintained that the new platform, which will replace the systems in use across counties, is ready for implementation. “We are rolling out an integrated county revenue management system. It is going to replace this fragmented county revenue management framework,” Mbadi said.

Through their umbrella body, the Council of Governors, county chiefs have opposed what they see as an attempt by the national government to dictate the systems they should use.

In 2023, they rejected a Bill requiring counties to develop revenue collection systems in collaboration with the Kenya Revenue Authority.

“A significant number of counties are already implementing revenue collection systems that ought to be recognised by law, as public resources have been used to develop them,” the CoG said at the time.

During a session with the Senate County Public Accounts Committee on Thursday, Mbadi argued that it was illogical for the country to operate so many separate systems.



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

“We cannot have 47 or 48 systems in a country dealing with revenue collection. We should have at most two or three,” he said.

The ministry had held extensive consultations with stakeholders, including governors, to pave the way for the rollout.

“We have discussed this at the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council. Though there has been push-

back from governors, as expected, I think we are getting to a point of clarity. There was just a misunderstanding,” Mbadi noted.

Counties operate disjointed systems, with some contracting financial technology firms to automate and collect revenue on their behalf.

These contracts often cost millions of shillings in procurement fees, plus commissions on every shilling col-

lected. Last year, KRA commissioner general Humphrey Wattanga told senators that the lack of standardised revenue administration and collection processes—due to the use of different vendors—was hurting county revenues.

He warned that procurement of these systems also presents challenges such as unclear technical requirements and vendor-driven contracting

processes. “Additionally, vendors usually charge a percentage of revenue collected, which in some cases is unreasonably high,” Wattanga said.

Some counties have yet to automate revenue collection and continue to rely on manual systems, many of them outdated and inherited from defunct local authorities, such as the Local Authority Integrated Financial Operations Management System.

Last year, senators pushed Auditor General Nancy Gathungu to audit all external revenue collection firms contracted by counties, amid concerns over the accuracy of declared figures. Lawmakers warned that lack of oversight had created loopholes through which companies could siphon billions from devolved units.

Gathungu said counties were losing significant amounts of revenue due to contracting of questionable firms, some of which existed only on paper.

She reminded senators that while the law empowers the National Treasury to prescribe revenue collection systems for counties, governors had often engaged vendors without due diligence—agreeing to widely varying commission rates.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The Kenya Revenue Authority is rooting for the deployment of an integrated county revenue management system to seal leakages costing the counties billions of shillings. KRA commissioner general Humphrey Wattanga told the Senate ICT committee how the devolved units are losing revenue. Currently, counties use disjointed systems, with some contracting financial technology firms to automate and collect revenue on their behalf.

ENSURING EFFICIENCY

Weatherman set for windfall in new air passenger charge plan

MOSES OGADA

THE government is proposing changes to how funds collected from air passengers are allocated, positioning the Kenya Meteorological Department for a windfall.

A new Bill seeks to include the department in the list of agencies that are entitled to a share of the air passenger service charge.

The Air Passenger Service Charge (Amendment) Bill, 2025, sponsored by majority leader Kimani Ichung’wah, seeks to expand this allocation to include two more beneficiaries.

“All proceeds of the charge (passenger service) shall be apportioned in a manner as the Cabinet Secretary (Transport) may by notice in the Kenya Gazette, specify,” the Bill reads. Currently, the amounts paid by travellers on both international and domestic flights are distributed among three entities: the Kenya Airports Authority, the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority and the Tourism Promotion Fund. If approved, the

Kenya Meteorological Service Authority would be allocated a portion to support weather-related aviation safety and services.

Individuals who purchase a ticket for a domestic or international flight pay a passenger service fee of Sh600 and \$50 (Sh6,400).

Presently, KAA gets 60 per cent of the proceeds from international flights, while 20 per cent goes to the KCAA and 20 per cent to the Tourism Promotion Fund.

Local flight proceeds are shared at 50 per cent, 30 per cent and 20 per cent as per an order issued effective December 31, 2022.

MPs have been calling for more transparency in the management of these funds and for the amounts to be disclosed to the public.

The existing law grants the Transport CS powers to vary the ratios of allocating the funds to the current three beneficiaries.

With increased funding, the KMD could invest in advanced weather monitoring systems, which would reduce flight delays and

improve safety standards. The met department has long struggled with underfunding, affecting its ability to deliver timely and accurate weather updates.

In interactions with members of parliament, the department has advocated for a dedicated revenue stream from passenger charges, arguing that it would significantly improve its operations.

The Bill also seeks to reallocate proceeds designated for the Tourism Promotion Fund to the Tourism Fund, to eliminate duplication of roles.

“This would limit duplication of roles, improve efficiency and enable the government to support the financing of tourism-related projects from a single source,” Ichung’wah said in the Bill’s memorandum. The funds would be useful for “projects that require strategic and sometimes blended funding approaches”.

“This would ensure efficiency in public resource utilisation,” the memo reads. Parliament has invit-



National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung’wah /FILE

ed members of the public to give their views on the proposed law by next Wednesday in line with public participation rules.

President William Ruto’s administration has been on a rallying call for the prudent allocation of

public resources to enhance service delivery in key sectors.

The changes, if enacted, could pave the way for more reliable meteorological services and a more streamlined approach to tourism development.

NEWS GENERAL



Former Boston marathon champion Sharon Cherop /MATHEWS NDANYI

MESSY DIVORCE

Marathoner, ex-husband battle over multi-million shilling property in court

Cherop and Bowen divorced in October last year over infidelity

MATHEWS NDANYI
@TheStarKenya

FORMER Boston marathon champion Sharon Cherop has been caught in a multi-million shilling property row with her former husband Mathew Bowen.

Cherop and Bowen – also a former international athlete – ended their marriage in October last year after Cherop filed for divorce before Principle Magistrate Peter Ireri in Eldoret.

She accused her estranged husband of infidelity, violence, absentism and cruelty.

Bowen is currently an athletics coach in the US.

Irerer found their marriage irretrievably broken and allowed the divorce. They have four children who are currently under the custody of Cherop.

The two are now fighting over their assets before Justice Reuben Nyakundi of the High Court.

The disputed assets include land registered as Kaptagat/Kaptagat Block 3 (Miso) 622, which consists of a matrimonial home estimated to cost Sh34 million in Kipkorgot along the Eldoret-Ravine highway.

Cherop is represented in court by Isiaho Sawe while her ex-husband is represented by Reece Mwani.

Another prime property the two are fighting over is Uasin Gishu/Kimumu Settlement Scheme /4994 whose value according to court documents is Sh40 million.

Also disputed is a rental property a few metres from University of Eldoret

along Eldoret-Ziwa road. The property brings rental income of Sh260,000 per month.

Cherop and Bowen are also tussling over ownership of Beauty Smile and Cosmetics business in Eldoret central business district valued at Sh5 million.

They are also embroiled in a bitter tussle over a Sh5 million property known as Uasin Gishu/Kimumu settlement Scheme 4994 along the Eldoret-Iten highway.

Bowen pleaded with the court to allow him keep the said properties, saying he single-handedly acquired and developed them.

The former elite runner turned coach accused his former wife of

fraudulently registering their former matrimonial home in her name. He says Cherop used a court order to evict him from the home in Kipkorgot.

“I purchased and developed the aforesaid properties before 2024 and also set up a business known as Beauty Smile and Cosmetics in Eldoret town, which is worth Sh15 million and is currently being run by my former wife,” Bowen said.

He faulted his former wife for not complying with a court order which stated that all rental income from the storey building be deposited in their joint bank account.

“Some time in October 2020, my former wife issued a notice to my tenants to start paying rent through her personal account, hence the genesis of our disagreement,” Bowen said.

He now wants the court to share the disputed properties in accordance with the contribution each person made towards acquisition.

“Your lordship, it is my proposal that my former wife should get 1/4 of the property and I be given 3/4 of the property,” Bowen said.

In her rejoinder, Cherop said she acquired the assets from the money she earned from local and international races.

“I was able to acquire and develop the properties, including the matrimonial home during my active life in athletics. I used my own finances on the acquisition”, she said.

The two solemnised their union in 2008 and were blessed with four children.

“

MATHEW BOWEN

My former wife issued a notice to my tenants to start paying rent through her personal account, hence the genesis of our disagreement

UNFIT TO HOLD OFFICE

Three petitioners want appointment of Kemsa boss Dulacha quashed

JAMES GICHIGI

THREE petitioners have moved to court seeking to nullify appointment of Waqo Dulacha as CEO of the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority, saying he is unfit to hold public office.

The petition filed before the Employment and Labour Relations Court wants the appointment revoked and a declaration issued that Waqo is unfit to hold office.

The three — Magare Gikenyi, Dishon Keroti Mogire and Philemon Abuga Nyakundi — argue that Waqo’s assumption of the CEO position was unconstitutional and in violation of leadership and integrity laws.

The petitioners allege that the CEO, while serving as a public officer at the Ministry of Health, contested for the position of Member of Parliament for Saku Constituency in Marsabit county in 2022 without first resigning from his government post.

He vied on a Jubilee Party ticket and lost.

According to the petition, he is alleged to have quietly returned to his role at the ministry without undergoing the proper reinstatement process.

“The first respondent, (Waqo Dulacha Ejersa), having been a public servant since 1996, failed to resign before contesting for the Saku constituency seat in Marsabit in the 2022 general elections.

After losing, he quietly resumed duties at the Ministry of Health and was promoted to senior deputy director of medical services on August 21 last year — contrary to the law.

Under Article 99(2) of the constitution and relevant sections of the Leadership and Integrity Act, any public officer who intends to vie for elective office is required to resign at least six months before the election.

The petitioners argue that Waqo’s failure to do so invalidated his eligibility to hold any public office thereafter. They said his return to public service and eventual appointment as Kemsas CEO was a breach of law, amounting

to abuse of office. The petitioners also question the legality of the appointment process.

According to their submissions, the Kemsas board initially forwarded three names, including Waqo’s, to the Cabinet Secretary for Health.

The CS selected Andrew Mutava Mulwa and sought concurrence from the Head of Public Service.

However, following dissolution of the Cabinet in July last year, Kemsas board allegedly ignored the cabinet secretary’s choice and proceeded to appoint the respondent directly — a move the petitioners say is beyond the board’s legal mandate. The case raises broader questions about enforcement of Chapter 6 of the constitution, which lays down ethical standards for public officials.

The petitioners argue that allowing Waqo’s appointment to stand would undermine constitutional values and set a dangerous precedent for public accountability.

In their petition, the trio are seeking to have Dulacha’s appointment as CEO quashed and declared unconstitutional.

They argue that his failure to resign from the Ministry of Health before contesting the 2022 general election renders him unfit to hold public office under Article 99(2) and Chapter 6 of the constitution.

The petitioners also seek a declaration that his return to public service and subsequent promotion were illegal. Additionally, they want the court to hold Kemsas, the Ministry of Health, PSC, EACC and IEBC accountable for facilitating or failing to prevent the unlawful appointment.

In response, Waqo and several other respondents — including Kemsas, the Ministry of Health, Public Service Commission and the Attorney General — have filed preliminary objections.

They claim the court lacks jurisdiction to hear the case and argue that the petition is time-barred, citing legal provisions that limit the window for filing certain challenges.



Kenya Medical Supplies Authority CEO Waqo Dulacha / FILE

NEWS GENERAL

SLOW UPTAKE

SHA listing: Supkem refutes claims it's against insurance

Garissa branch chairperson says none of their religious leaders has criticised state cover

STEPHEN ASTARIKO
@astarikostephen

THE Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims in Garissa has refuted claims that religious leaders are frustrating Social Health Authority registration.

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.

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.”

However, in a statement read to the press at their Garissa offices, Supkem branch chairperson Sheikh Hassan Abdi said none of their religious leaders have condemned SHA.

He said Islamic scholars have only emphasised that the public scheme prevent harm and serve societal needs fall under the concept of Maslaha.

“As Supkem, we have worked



Garissa residents during SHA enrolment /STEPHEN ASTARIKO

with different stakeholders to create awareness on the same,” Sheikh Hassan said.

“It is unfortunate to learn that some government officials are making wild accusations instead of providing a platform for engagement,” the sheikh added.

“For the record, as Supkem, we have no single religious leader who has condemned SHA. SHA is a health intervention, and Islam welcomes any intervention that helps the community. Islam promotes and protects human life,” the statement said.

Abdi said that SHA is permissible in Islam because it is managed by the state and not a profit-driven but aimed at protecting lives, which is a

core principle of their faith.

“Any stakeholder who is serious about promoting government policies should provide the correct platform that can offer wider consultation. Let us avoid street talk and provide misinformation on important national issues like SHA,” he said.

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 population—have enrolled in the scheme.

Other factors contributing to the low enrolment include the nomadic lifestyle of many residents, limited access to information, lack of identi-

fication 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 coordinated efforts

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

According to data from the county SHA office, only 167,900 residents—just 18.5 per cent of the population—have enrolled in the scheme. Other factors contributing to the low enrolment include the nomadic lifestyle of many residents and limited access to information.

UNRESOLVED GRIEVANCES

Moi referral hospital in talks with KMPDU to prevent doctors' strike



Moi hospital CEO Dr Philip Kirwa and KMPDU secretary general Dr Davji Atallah during a meeting in Eldoret /MATHEWS NDANYI

MATHEWS NDANYI

THE Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital is still negotiating with the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union to avert a strike by doctors at the facility.

The union and the hospital management have been engaging in daily negotiations for the whole of this week.

CEO of the hospital Dr Philip Kirwa and KMPDU branch secretary Dr Kamunzi Mulei confirmed that conciliation meetings were still ongoing.

“We will give details later but we are still going forward with the conciliation meetings,” Mulei said.

Kirwa did not also give details but confirmed that the negotiations were continuing.

The union issued a 14-day strike

notice on July 23, accusing the hospital management of breaching multiple agreements, including the failure to fully implement a return-to-work formula signed after a previous industrial action.

The strike notice expired on August 6, and the doctors have warned that they will down their tools if their grievances are not addressed.

“The matter is under conciliation and we are optimistic that a resolution will be reached,” Kirwa said.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, who was in Eldoret last week, said his office had not yet officially received the strike notice.

“The strike notice will be dealt with accordingly once it reaches us,” he said.

KMPDU secretary general Dr Davji Atallah accused the MTRH leadership of hostility and non-compliance with signed agreements, claiming that doctors’ working conditions had continued to deteriorate.

“We have been taken in circles, negotiating and signing agreements that are later ignored. Enough is enough,” Atallah said.

ACCURATE DATA

State to upgrade Nemis to Kemis in fight against theft of money

HILTON OTENYO

THE government is set to overhaul the National Education Management Information System to ensure accurate data and end fraud in management of funds meant for education.

Basic Education Principal Secretary Julius Bitok said the ministry is finalising a major upgrade of the system aimed at improving data accuracy on student enrolment across the country.

He said the ministry has started upgrading Nemis to Kenya Educational Management Information System that will end ghost students and schools and inaccurate funding allocations.

“This new system will capture accurate data on all learners and institutions from primary schools to universities, Tvets (technical vocational education and training) and parastatals,” Bitok added.

He said the new system would be rolled out in the next three months. The PS said the current system has failed to reflect real-time student movement and enrolment numbers, leading to inflated figures and resource wastage.

“Some learners shift from one school to another, some drop out and others are double-counted. Kemis will ensure every learner has a unique, traceable record.”

The PS said the new system would drastically change the way the government disburses capitation funds to schools.

“We are moving to a needs-based model driven by accurate data,” Bitok said.

SH8BN FUNDING

Kenya to begin manufacturing vaccines in 2027

KNA

Kenya will start trials of the first locally manufactured vaccines within the next two years, targeting the immunisation of more than three million children with affordable and critical vaccines.

The Kenya BioVax Institute, a state-backed pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, is spearheading the project with the backing of Sh8 billion in funding from the World Bank.

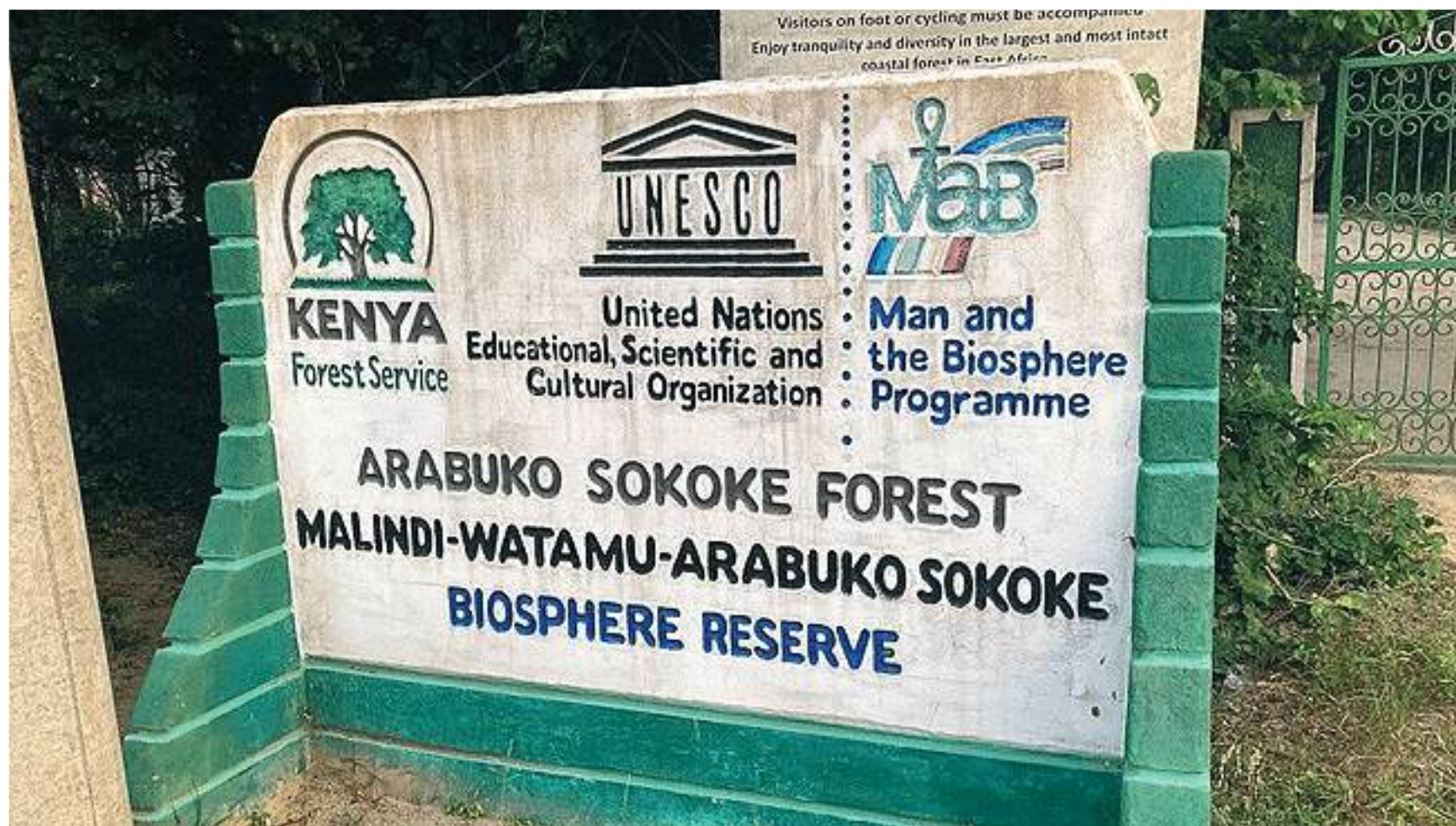
The institute committed itself to the ongoing preparations for equipping the Embakasi-based facility in line with global manufacturing standards that will guarantee the safety and efficacy of all vaccines produced.

The move is a strategic response to vaccine procurement challenges experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

VOICES

FENCING HOPE: ARABUKO SOKOKE FOREST'S QUEST FOR BALANCE

If it succeeds in balancing conservation with community participation, it could serve as a model, proving that the strongest fences are built not just with wire and posts, but with trust, respect, shared responsibility



Arabuko Sokoke National Park gate /HANDOUT

Arabuko-Sokoke Forest is renowned for its extraordinary mix of unique plants and wildlife. Deep within this sanctuary in Kilifi county, the rare golden-rumped sengi (elephant shrew) scurries through thick undergrowth while the elusive Sokoke Scops Owl hoots from tree canopies.

As East Africa's largest remaining coastal forest, this natural treasure serves as both a biodiversity sanctuary and a significant carbon sink that influences regional weather patterns.

Its fame attracted both admirers and exploiters. For years, illegal loggers worked along the forest's edge, their axes silencing bird songs and fragmenting habitats. Poachers set snares threatening rare wildlife as desperate communities turned to the forest for survival.

Most dramatically, elephants began venturing beyond forest boundaries in search of food and water, trampling crops and sparking conflicts with farmers who watched their livelihoods disappear under massive feet in the night.

By the late 1990s, this ecological sanctuary was hanging by the thread. Something had to be done—and it was, through an unprecedented partnership between conservationists and the very communities whose crops were being destroyed.

The story of protection began over two decades ago when conservationists and communities joined forces to build a 116-kilometre electric fence separating forest from farmland.

Since 2002, this barrier has stood as a symbol of cooperation, funded by international donors and supported by the government of

By Francis Kagema

Weather, wear and persistent wildlife gradually weakened the fence. What had once been a formidable barrier slowly became ineffective, frustrating conservationists and communities



Kenya, local NGOs and the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Adjacent Dwellers Association.

The fence represented the community's commitment to coexisting with nature. Residents became involved in forest patrols, tree planting and educating their children about conservation. For many years, it reduced elephant raids and restored peace between forest and farms.

But time tested even the best intentions. Weather, wear and persistent wildlife gradu-

SUCCESS AT ARABUKO-SOKOKE FOREST REQUIRES MORE THAN A STRONG FENCE. IT DEMANDS STRONG PARTNERSHIPS. THE FENCING PROJECT MUST ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY VOICES GUIDE DECISIONS, FROM GATE PLACEMENT TO ACCESS PROTOCOLS. RESIDENTS NEED CLEAR PATHWAYS TO CONTINUE TRADITIONAL FOREST USES WHILE SERVING AS CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

ally weakened the fence. What had once been a formidable barrier slowly became ineffective, frustrating both conservationists and communities.

A new electric fence is currently under construction. This upgraded barrier features 14 carefully spaced strands powered by solar energy, designed to deter wild animals, both large and small, while preventing unauthorised human entry, a significant improvement over the original four or five strands.

The project has created immediate employment opportunities and promises long-term maintenance jobs for local communities.

For surrounding communities, the new fence represents hope for peaceful coexistence with wildlife. Farmers envision nights without guarding crops against elephants. Tourism operators anticipate increased visitor confidence, potentially boosting local livelihoods through ecotourism revenue.

Beneath the excitement runs genuine concern, however. The forest has always been more than a conservation area. It's been a source of livelihood and cultural connection.

Butterfly farmers in the renowned Kipepeo project earn their living by raising butterfly larvae for international export. Traditional

healers gather medicinal plants and families collect fuelwood for cooking.

Without thoughtfully placed access points, the new fence could inadvertently cut off these sustainable forest users from their income sources. Community members worry about being transformed from conservation partners into obstacles to be managed.

Success at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest requires more than a strong fence. It demands strong partnerships. The fencing project must ensure that community voices guide decisions, from gate placement to access protocols. Residents need clear pathways to continue traditional forest uses while serving as conservation champions.

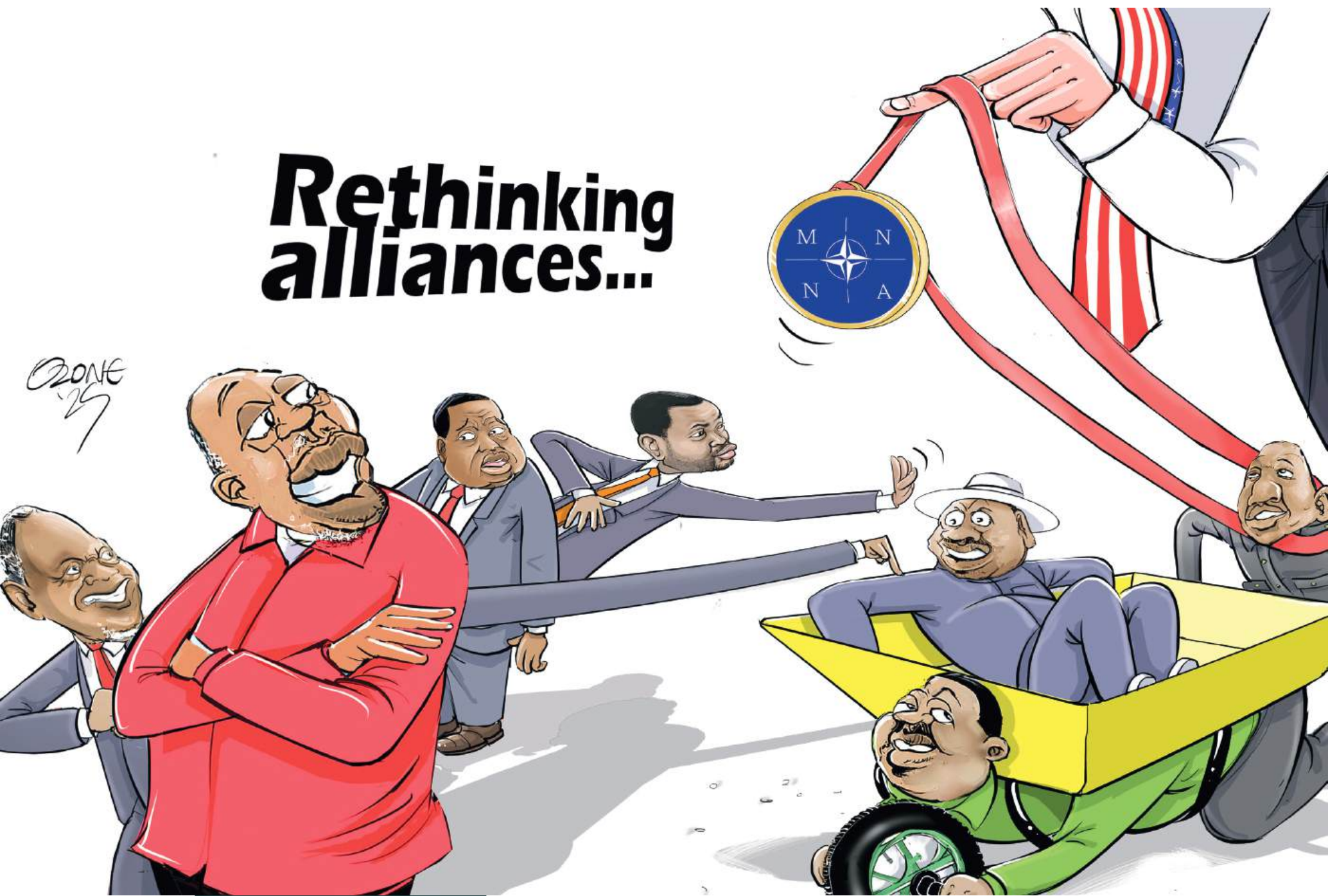
Most importantly, the project must address the underlying economic pressures driving forest degradation. If families cannot earn a living through legitimate forest activities, they may resort to illegal logging and poaching regardless of the fence's strength.

As the new barrier takes shape, it represents a test of whether conservation can serve both nature and community. The golden-rumped sengi and other wildlife will benefit from better protection, but true success will be measured by whether those living alongside the forest also prosper.

If Arabuko Sokoke Forest succeeds in balancing conservation with community participation, it could serve as a model for forest conservation across East Africa, proving that the strongest fences are built not just with wire and posts, but with trust, respect and shared responsibility.

Nature Kenya Conservation programmes coordinator for the Coast region. nkcoast@naturekenya.org.

Rethinking alliances...



Editorial

MPs MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF ECITIZEN ISSUES

The eCitizen platform was meant to modernise how Kenyans access government services. Today, it raises more questions than answers.

A recent audit has uncovered worrying governance gaps and irregular transactions. More than Sh10 billion collected through the platform cannot be properly accounted for. Some of this money was never deposited in government accounts. Some was collected without any supporting invoices. Some simply disappeared.

Even more troubling is the Sh50 convenience fee charged for every transaction. This small amount has added up to billions. Yet it was collected without a legal basis. No law or regulation was passed to approve it. That means it was collected illegally.

The platform itself has no legal framework. Nobody seems to know who is truly in charge. Some contracts were signed without proper oversight. Other agreements are unclear, raising concerns about data security and private gain.

This is why Parliament must act. The Public Accounts Committee must summon responsible officials and demand full accountability. The National Assembly must push for a legal framework that clearly spells out who manages the platform, how money is collected and where it goes. Public trust is at stake.

Kenyans deserve to know that their money is safe. They deserve transparency. The eCitizen platform processes millions of transactions every month. Without proper oversight, it could become the biggest loophole in government finance.

Parliament must not delay. It must investigate, legislate and restore accountability before the damage becomes permanent.

HISTORICAL QUOTE

"Ill habits gather unseen degrees, as brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

JOHN DRYDEN

The English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright was born on August 9, 1631

KENYAN Quiz!

**Just how knowledgeable are you
about Kenya and most things
Kenyan?**

Let's find out...

- » In which ministry is Hustler Fund domiciled?
- » Which team is Kenya playing in the Chan tournament on Sunday?
- » Name the headquarters of Elgeyo Marakwet county.
- » Who was the first IEBC chairman?
- » In which county are Flamingos predominantly found?
- » What is the new proposed age for legal consumption of alcohol?
- » What major event shook Kenya on August 7, 1998?
- » Which county is known as the Home of Champions?
- » What is the full meaning of the acronym Kanu?
- » Which body regulates banking in Kenya?

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“KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

KEEP IT UP”

NEWS BUSINESS

INDUSTRY

State-funded Sh5bn Kenanie leather park nears opening

MARTIN MWITA

PLANS to operationalise the Kenanie Leather Industrial Park in Machakos county have received a major boost, after a lease agreement was reached between two state entities.

The Kenya Leather Development Council (KLDC) and the Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) have signed a lease, paving way for the Sh5 billion government-funded project to become operational, ending a 10-year delay.

This milestone, overseen by the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry, marks a significant step

towards onboarding investors into the leather sector and is expected to generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Investments, Trade and Industry CS Lee Kinyanjui has since emphasised the urgency of making the park fully operational.

“Leather is a multi-billion-shilling industry which, if properly harnessed, can transform the livelihoods of livestock farmers and boost economic growth through local production and export,” he said.

The CS noted that due to limited local supply, many footwear and leather goods manufacturers are

currently forced to rely on imports.

He challenged KLDC to actively engage slaughterhouses and offer training on best practices to minimise damage to hides and skins at the source.

The park is equipped with modern infrastructure including tanneries, leather manufacturing warehouses, serviced plots, electricity, water, ICT infrastructure and a common effluent treatment plant.

The lease agreement was signed by KLDC board chair Mohammed Adan, CEO Issack Noor, EPZA chairperson, and EPZA CEO Richard Cheruiyot and CEO

Richard Omelu. Also present were Industry PS Juma Mukhwana and his Investment counterpart Abubakar Hassan.

The development could see the park come to life before the initial target date of December.

It is expected to not only reduce the country’s dependency on imported leather products, like shoes, but also enable Kenyan to tap into the estimated Sh175 billion market potential in the leather value chain.

The park is also expected to boost local manufacturing, cut import costs and create over 100,000 jobs, up from the current 17,000, once fully operational.

By Larry Cooke

EXPERT OPINION



Kenya’s chance to lead with smart crypto policy

Kenya has long imagined itself as Africa’s Silicon Savannah, a hub for innovation, digital transformation, and next-generation finance. And in many ways, it has earned that reputation: a thriving fintech ecosystem, high mobile penetration, and a youthful, tech-savvy population.

But that momentum is at risk. While the vision remains bold, recent policy decisions, particularly the approach to taxing digital assets, have sent mixed signals to the very talent that Kenya needs to realise its digital ambitions. The 1.5% Digital Asset Tax (DAT), as amended in the Finance Bill 2025, aimed to capture revenue from the country’s growing cryptocurrency sector. But by applying the tax indiscriminately to all transactions, regardless of type, value, or intent, the policy created confusion and pushed many innovators to reconsider their future in Kenya. To their credit, government leaders have listened. A proposed amendment to repeal the DAT, along with the inclusion of a 10% excise duty on fees, shows that Parliament is serious about co-creating a more workable tax framework.

That’s a meaningful step forward, and it should be acknowledged. But more must be done as Kenya still has three taxes that would apply to virtual asset service providers (VASP), which is more than some other legacy industries.

Right now, the country is witnessing the early stages of a brain drain. Developers, fintech entrepreneurs, and Web3 innovators, many under the age of 30, are considering choosing or have already chosen to incorporate or relocate to countries like Mauritius, South Africa, and the UAE, where policies are clearer and more enabling. Even global platforms like Binance, operating within Kenya, have had to engage cautiously with tax policy, often without enough regulatory guidance to ensure full compliance. What’s at stake isn’t just talent, it’s potential. Crypto is not a monolith. Stablecoins power remittances. NFTs protect intellectual property.

Tokens enable peer-to-peer lending or decentralized governance. Taxing every movement of every asset misses the nuance and punishes experimentation — the very engine of digital growth. That message is damaging not only to local startups but to investor confidence. Venture capital is already tightening globally, and when tax frameworks are unpredictable, many funders simply look elsewhere. For founders who rely on early-stage capital to build and scale, these conditions are stifling.

The Writer is the is the Africa head of Legal Counsel at Binance

TECHNOLOGY

Kenya’s digital rights index drops on state censorship

Bloggers’ lobby quips that these actions not only violate the right to freedom



Activist Ndiang’ui Kinyagia, a tech entrepreneur and blogger in court after going into hiding on June 21 /EZEKIEL AMING’A

VICTOR AMADALA
@ItsAmadala

WHILE Kenya has solidified its status as a regional tech leader, its digital progress is being undermined by serious challenges to digital rights.

This finding is contained in the State of Internet in Kenya: 2020-2024 report by the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) released on Thursday.

According to the report, despite the economic boom, a wave of legislative and state actions has systematically eroded the fundamental freedoms of citizens.

“Repressive laws like the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (CMCA) have been weaponised to criminalise online speech, leading to the harassment and arrest of bloggers, journalists and activists,” the report reads.

The report documents numerous instances of such violations, including the abduction and even death of bloggers who were critical of political figures.

“The government’s use of internet shutdowns and throttling during periods of public dissent, such as the

#RejectFinanceBill2024 protests, is a particularly alarming trend that marks a departure from Kenya’s history of relatively open internet access,” the report reads in part.

Bloggers’ lobby quips that these actions not only violate the right to freedom of expression but also cause significant economic losses.

This has seen the country’s ranking in the global digital rights index drop in the past four years to position 78 globally, 10 steps lower compared to 2019. Although Kenya was ranked among the top 10 African countries in a newly introduced Digital Rights Score Index as part of the 2024 Londa report released by the pan-African digital rights organisation Paradigm Initiative (PIN) in May, the report highlights Kenya’s regression in promoting open internet access.

Kenya was among several countries, alongside Comoros, Mauritius, and Mozambique, cited for implementing government-imposed Internet shutdowns in 2024.

The report, unveiled at the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF), evaluated the state of digital rights

and freedoms across 27 African nations.

South Africa, Ghana, Zambia, Namibia, and Rwanda lead the index, with Nigeria, Senegal, Malawi, Tunisia, and Kenya completing the top 10.

The ranking is based on countries’ compliance with key human rights principles outlined in the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. Even so, its digital landscape has experienced a period of remarkable transformation.

In the past five years, the report notes that the nation solidified its position as a regional ICT leader, boasting expanded connectivity, a thriving digital economy, and a blossoming ecosystem of start-ups and online content creators. However, this progress was not without its drawbacks.

The period was also marked by a worrying increase in government overreach, surveillance, and censorship, posing a direct threat to the digital rights and freedoms of Kenyans.

“Our report shows a clear paradox in Kenya’s digital landscape. While we’ve made incredible strides in connectivity and innovation, these gains are being overshadowed by a troubling trend of government overreach, surveillance, and repression,” says James Wamathai, director, Partnerships and Advocacy, Bloggers Association of Kenya.

He says that the should be a tool for empowerment and economic growth, not a weapon against citizens.

“We are at a crossroads, and urgent reforms are needed to protect digital rights and ensure our progress is both equitable and free.”

The digital economy’s growth has come at a cost to the tech workers who power it. The report highlights the precarious working conditions faced by content moderators, who are often exposed to highly disturbing content without adequate men-

tal health support. The landmark Motaung v Samasource & Meta lawsuit has brought this issue to the forefront, challenging the notion that global tech giants can abdicate responsibility for their outsourced labour.

Similarly, online content creators, a rapidly expanding segment of the digital economy, operate in a legal grey area.

“They are often misclassified as independent contractors, leaving them vulnerable to exploitative contracts, delayed payments, and a lack of fundamental labour protections. This legal vacuum has also allowed for rampant intellectual property theft and other forms of exploitation.”

The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation campaigns, often orchestrated by “bloggers for hire,” further complicates this landscape, as it erodes public trust and poses a direct threat to democratic processes. To ensure that Kenya’s digital future is one of freedom, inclusivity, and prosperity, urgent reforms are needed. This includes amending repressive laws, strengthening the independence of regulatory bodies, and enacting robust legal protections for bloggers, content creators, tech workers, journalists, and activists.

(+ INSTANT ANALYSIS

Africa’s creator economy is booming, fueled by a young population and wider access to digital tools. It was worth around \$3.08 billion in 2023 and is expected to reach \$17.84 billion by 2030, growing at an impressive 28.5% annually. More people using social media, better mobile Internet, and easier digital payments, allowing creators to earn money from their work in many different fields, drive this expansion.

SASA TRADITION

Culture: Boys become men in wrestling rituals in Togo

In July, thousands of spectators gathered in the mountains of Togo, West Africa, to honour a boyhood-to-manhood rite that the Kabyè people have preserved for generations



BIRD STORY AGENCY/ Every July, the town of Kara, nestled in the mountainous Kozah region of Togo in West Africa becomes the beating heart of a generations-old coming-of-age ritual known as évala.

For nearly a week, the indigenous Kabyè people celebrate the transition of boyhood to manhood which involves a series of traditional wrestling matches between teenage males.

In the most recent edition, which unfolded in the last weekend of July, spectators came from nearby and as far as the capital, Lomé, 400 km away, to witness the traditional festivities.

Seventeen-year-old Piyabalo Babana participated, going through the ritual that his father and forefathers performed before he was born. He lives in the village of Kassa, 15 km from Kara.

This will be his third and last time enduring the ritual, which demands teenagers to go through it several times. They must start before their eighteenth birthday.

“For the pride of my culture, I am proud to practice my culture...I feel very happy to fight my opponent,” Babana said.

For him, being a wrestler means honoring his identity, asserting his

place in society, and showing that he is ready to represent his community with dignity.

For Babana, every grab of his opponent’s limb and every fall has a meaning that goes far beyond a simple confrontation. Because here, the essential thing is not just to win.

Even in defeat, honour remains intact. Being évala means, above all, having the courage to stand before one’s own people, to enter the arena, and to face the challenge.

“

The coming-of-age ritual requires a set of rites to be carried out over the course of a week. Teenage males are separated from their families and subjected to an intense schedule

In this tradition, losing is not a disgrace, but a step on the path to maturity.

Tcharie Essowe, a former wrestler himself, coached Babana. They trained for several days to prepare not only physically, but mentally.

The coming-of-age ritual requires a set of rites to be carried out over the course of a week. Teenage males are separated from their families and subjected to an intense schedule: waking up at dawn to climb the mountains, marching, chanting, singing, dancing and even sitting in silence. The goal is to build physical endurance, but above all mental strength.

Other methods of preparation involve abstinence from sexual activity, fasting and body scarification.

Coaches like Essowe play a key role. They train, advise, and pass on much more than just techniques — they pass on values. They are the ones who give this struggle its true meaning as a cultural initiation.

“In the morning, we make them do sports. Then we go to the évala field,” Essowe said.

“That way, we don’t warm them up with songs and dances. We sing like that, then we shout, be-

cause you have to be motivated to perform the évala rituals. It’s a bit complicated. In the preliminary round, we wrestle. We rank the first ones, then there are four of them. First, second, third. And it’s after that that I rank them at the end of the wrestling.”

On the day of the battle, the town of Kara held its breath. Drums resounded, war chants rang out.

Prayers are prayed, in which ancestors are evoked through libation. The ancestors are represented by clay statues. These statues are immensely important to ensure a safe and successful évala.

Before entering the arena, the teenage males received final words from their clan elders: words of encouragement, instructions, a reminder of the honour they bear.

Elders sprinkled white powder on the bodies of the wrestlers.

The moment of confrontation finally arrived. Babana, proud to represent his people, stood in anticipation, facing his contender.

Two wrestlers, two clans, two histories intersect in the area. A fight can be brief or grueling. But no matter the outcome, the community will celebrate the display of courage.

Babana emerged victorious

from his duel. “I feel very proud. The fight was a bit tough. But in the end, I did my best. I knocked him down,” he said.

But the ceremonial transition to manhood is not over.

After the wrestling, he began the kondona, the symbolic walk to the sacred mountain of Saoudé. Up there, in the silence of the highlands, he performed the final rites, received blessings and recognition, and thanked the ancestors for their guidance and protection.

The kondona happens once every five years. It is shrouded in secrecy and closed to the public.

It is at the kondona that the boy truly becomes a man.

More than just a local ritual, the évalas are a celebration of memory, a precious tradition that leaders such as Tcharie Essowe strive to preserve.

The tradition also brings thousands of Kabyè from the diaspora back to Kara to reconnect with their roots. Whether they come from Paris, Lomé, Abidjan, or Montreal, they vibrate with their kinsfolk in a spirit of intergenerational solidarity.

Here, fighting means affirming one’s attachment to the land. It means saying, with pride, “I know where I come from.”

“I want everyone who has come to the country to [witness] in the ceremony. Whether you are Kabyè, or not, whether wrestling in Kabyè country is considered your roots,” Essowe said.

The elders want to ensure that the tradition is passed on, and does not become a legend. They also hope that the youth understand that the ritual is about more than wrestling. It is about cultural language and heritage.

For Jacques Do Kokou, photographer and specialist in the cultural history of Togo, it is essential to document the évalas. His aim is making the tradition understood by the youth to give them a sense of cultural ownership.

“For me, évala should not remain in this folkloric cocoon. This évala, through images, is not the images we see on the 8 o’clock news, but a documentary that documents,” Do Kokou said.

To keep the évalas alive is to honor a pact between generations.

The Kabyè are the second largest ethnic group in Togo, after the Ewe. While agriculture is the backbone of their community, the évala and its wrestling custom have become a pivotal element of Kabyè identity.

SASA FASHION

Status signalling: Is Sh1.2bn for a handbag absurd or justified?

Auction houses have traditionally viewed their fashion divisions as tangential, with brand-name recognition of some of the items drawing buyers in, and towards bigger-ticket items



BBC/ As a pop-up handbag auction opens in London, a fashion frenzy is gripping venerable auction houses – and sending prices sky high. Can fashion ever be on a par with a Picasso?

“I like my money where I can see it. Hanging in my closet,” says Carrie Bradshaw in the 2000s TV series *Sex and the City*, and it would appear that an increasing number of collectors do, too, with archival fashion auctions fetching record prices.

Just last month, Sotheby’s auction house in Paris sold a battered Hermès bag owned by its namesake, Jane Birkin, for £7 million (Sh1.2 billion). And now Sotheby’s in London has just opened a luxury pop-up salon, auctioning pieces by Hermès, Rolex and Cartier, running until August 22.

But it wasn’t always like this. Many auction houses have traditionally viewed their fashion divisions as tangential, with the brand-name recognition of some of the items drawing buyers in, and towards bigger-ticket items like paintings or sculptures.

Clothing belonging to celebri-

ties, like Princess Diana or Marilyn Monroe, have historically fetched more than garments without a celebrity provenance, though nothing quite like the £7m (Sh1.2 billion) Birkin bag. Monroe’s infamous

“Happy Birthday Mr President” dress, known as the world’s most expensive dress, sold in 1999 for \$1.3m (Sh167 million), and again in 2016 for \$4.8m (Sh619 million) to Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Museum.

It currently resides there when it’s not being taken for a spin by Kim Kardashian, who wore it to

CLOTHING BELONGING TO CELEBRITIES, LIKE PRINCESS DIANA OR MARILYN MONROE, HAVE HISTORICALLY FETCHED MORE THAN GARMENTS WITHOUT A CELEBRITY PROVENANCE, THOUGH NOTHING QUITE LIKE THE £7 MILLION (SH1.2BN) BIRKIN BAG

Works of Chinese fashion designer Guo Pei displayed at the M+ Museum of visual culture in Hong Kong, south China, on September 19 last year / XINHUA / WANG SHEN





Cardi B in vintage Mugler at the 2019 Grammys / VOGUE



the 2022 Met Gala. Cora Harrington, fashion historian and author, says the dress's association with Kardashian will likely increase the value the next time it comes up for auction, despite any wear and tear caused by the star.

"I think that would have been true regardless of whether Kim wore it because it's Marilyn Monroe, but there are enough fans of Kim Kardashian that would likely result in a higher price," she tells the BBC. "Usually when an object is damaged it would devalue it, but it's the opposite in this case."

Conversations around auction items online and in the media, whether positive or negative, influence the sale price. For example, the furor surrounding Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy's costumes in the upcoming Ryan Murphy TV series *American Love Story* will be likely to escalate the value of the ur-influencer's garments the next time they go up for auction.

THE REAL DEAL

Modern-day influencers are also swaying how we think of luxury fashion, including the online communities dedicated to finding the best dupes, which Harrington says has added more value to the real thing – and created more work for luxury authenticators.

Then there's the popularity of resale sites like Depop, Vinted, eBay, Vestiaire Collective and TheRealReal lowering the barrier of entry to the luxury market.

"Dupes have driven more people to buy authentic," says Michael Mack, president of Max Pawn Luxury, which has one of the largest collections of Hermès bags for sale in the US. "It's not just Gucci, Hermès or Chanel; we sell Coach, Michael Kors and Kate Spade. Those are \$300, \$400, \$500 bags and we do big business in that." And it's

not just big-ticket items like the \$180,000 and \$240,000 Himalayan albino crocodile diamond-encrusted 25cm Birkins he's sold to celebrity clients, Mack adds.

Could resale's democratisation of luxury be in turn driving up these auction prices? Usha Haley, W Frank Barton Distinguished Chair in International Business at Wichita State University, Kansas, thinks so.

"If investors begin flipping [buying then quickly re-selling for profit] items purely for short-term gain, it could destabilise the market and drive prices to be unsustainable," she tells the BBC.

"The rising value of archival pieces may further detach fashion from everyday people, turning symbols of culture and identity into ultra-exclusive status objects out of reach for most, even as fashion becomes more democratised in digital spaces."

Meanwhile, social media is exposing new audiences to style icons from the past and historical garments featured in the annual

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The rising value of archival pieces may further detach fashion from everyday people, turning symbols of culture and identity into ultra-exclusive status objects out of reach for most, even as fashion becomes more democratised in digital



Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute exhibition, kicked off by the Met Gala, which this year brought in record profits.

This brings up the argument that items of such delicacy and historical relevance should be in a museum – one with stronger collection, conservation and loan policies than Ripley's. It's a valid one, to be sure, but just because an item is acquired by a museum doesn't mean it will necessarily be accessible to the public, as the majority of pieces in most institutions are not on display."

There are services [that care] for private collections that are on the same level or even better than museums," Harrington says, pointing to companies such as Uovo.

But shouldn't clothing be worn? Jane Birkin certainly had no qualms about using her Hermès bag, its battered state causing as many headlines as – and comparative to – its sale price. The ex-

perts I spoke to agreed. "There's a collectable function, but the point of clothing is to wear it," Harrington says. "Wear it. Use it. Enjoy it," Mack concurs. "I think you see more people wearing these luxury items, and not so much of the collectability [aspect]."

The very nature of an auction is the thing is worth what someone is willing to pay for it – Cora Harrington

They are also in agreement about the notion that fashion is wearable art. According to Harrington, the argument that fashion is not art – and therefore shouldn't be fetching high prices on par with a Picasso – is rooted in "larger structural conversations around misogyny and women's work and the fact that when women are interested in things they must be inherently less valuable".

Viewing fashion and art as commodities concerns Haley. "The escalating prices become less about

fashion as creative or social expression and more about status signalling and speculative investment," she says. "Auctions then can sideline the deeper cultural conversations that fashion artefacts could inspire – about sustainability, labour, craftsmanship, or even the identity of the women who made them famous."

Arguably, decades of experience on the part of designers, centuries of establishment for houses like Hermès, which launched in 1837, and the many hours of craftsmanship that go into these pieces is what people are paying for. The Jean Paul Gaultier denim and ostrich feather gown from the 1999 spring couture collection – that sold for €71,500 (£61,900) last year – springs to mind. In the end, says Harrington, "the very nature of an auction is the thing is worth what someone is willing to pay for it. If a dress sells for \$300,000, then the dress is worth \$300,000."

SASA WINNING PORTRAIT

Finger painting by artist with nerve injury wins art award

The portrait won the People's Choice Award for the 2025 Archibald Prize



BBC/ Filipina-Australian artist Loribelle Spirovski has won the People's Choice Award for the Archibald Prize—Australia's most prestigious portrait art prize.

Her winning work is a portrait of Aboriginal Australian musician William Barton, which she painted with her fingers as a nerve injury made painting difficult for her.

Spirovski, who has been an Archibald Prize finalist several times, said she was "overjoyed" that the public selected her work for the People's Choice.

"It has been a difficult few years and this whole experience is the most beautiful reprieve and reward," she said, as quoted in a press release from the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

"I am infinitely grateful to

William for allowing me to paint him and so humbled by everyone's responses to the work."

When Spirovski first met Barton last October, she was recovering from a nerve injury that had impaired her painting ability.

She played Barton's music while working on his portrait.

"As the music began, my hand set the brush aside and I dipped my finger into the soft, pliant paint," she said.

"Without a brush, painting was almost painless. As the portrait painted itself, I felt alive in a way I hadn't for a very long time."

Born in Philippines in 1990 to a Filipino mother and a Serbian father, Spirovski resettled in Australia in 1999.

She graduated from the College

of Fine Arts in Sydney in 2012.

On her website, she describes her work as being "influenced by the contrasting images of both countries, as well as her parent's mixed European-Asian ethnicities".

The Archibald People's Choice Award is based on votes collected from members of the public who have viewed the finalists of the main Archibald Prize.

The A\$100,000 (Sh12.9 million) Archibald Prize this year went to Julie Fragar, the 13th woman to win the award in its 104-year-old history.

The Archibald Packing Room Prize, which is based on votes from the staff who receive the portraits and install them in the gallery, went to Abdul Abdullah for his portrait of fellow artist Jason Phu.

WHEN SPIROVSKI FIRST MET BARTON LAST OCTOBER, SHE WAS RECOVERING FROM A NERVE INJURY THAT HAD IMPAIRED HER PAINTING ABILITY



FACT-CHECK



HOAX: Website purportedly offering M-Pesa cash grants is fraudulent

This website, claiming to offer cash grants through Safaricom’s M-Pesa service, is a HOAX.

The site claims that M-Pesa is issuing Sh5,000 cash grants to all its users to celebrate its anniversary.

To qualify, users are asked to complete a three-question survey asking if they use M-Pesa, their gender, and their rating of the M-Pesa service.

Completing the questionnaire leads users to a section where they are required to pick a gift box from nine options, with three chances to select one containing the alleged reward.

After selecting the box with the alleged reward, users are prompted to share the link with five WhatsApp groups or 15 friends to claim the benefit. The site was also shared on Facebook.

But is the giveaway authentic?

The website displays several red flags, including tactics that pressure users to act fast. For instance, the site uses phrases such as “hurry now” and “only 289 prizes remaining”.

The site also requests users to share the link on WhatsApp to enter the gi-

veaway. This is consistent with PesaCheck’s research on red flags for online scams.

The site uses a suspicious URL, which is different from the authentic Safaricom website ‘https://www.safaricom.co.ke/’.

A Whois search established that the impostor website was registered in Reykjavik, Iceland, on May 5, 2025, while the authentic Safaricom website was registered on February 12, 2003. Legitimate sites tend to be much older than hoax sites.

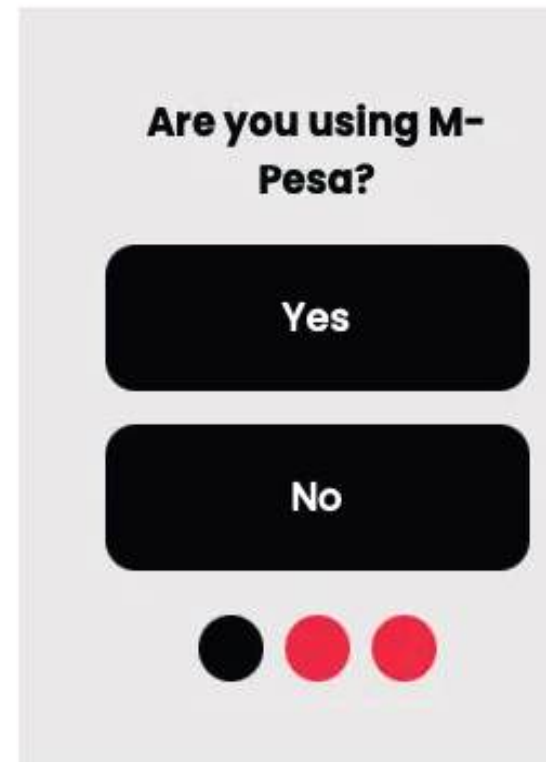
A review of Safaricom’s website, Facebook page, and X (formerly Twitter) account did not yield the reward in question.

On its website, Safaricom warns against sites impersonating its products and advises users not to share personal information.

PesaCheck contacted Safaricom on X and established that the giveaway is not authentic.

“We do not have such a reward,” Safaricom said.

PesaCheck examined a website claiming to offer cash grants through Safaricom’s M-Pesa service and found it to be a HOAX.



NEWS PICTORIAL



President William Ruto is shown how an MRI machine works by Medical Services PS Ouma Oluga during the launch of the National Equipment Service Project that will revolutionise healthcare infrastructure and service delivery on Thursday /HIRAM OMONDI/PCS



Kisumu Woman Representative Ruth Odinga issues cheques for business grants to 27 local groups drawn from Muhoroni and Kisumu Central subcounties under the 'pesa e mesa' economic empowerment programme /KNA



Nyamachaki Comprehensive School from Nyeri county celebrates after emerging position one in the Sepu original composition of choral music under category 364 for junior secondary schools /KNA



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki officiates the groundbreaking ceremony of the upgrade of Meru Level 5 Hospital to level six /KNA



Tourists explore the Masai Mara National Reserve. Tourists flock to the reserve during the country's peak tourism season from June to October to watch the wildebeest migration /XINHUA



Narok Governor Patrick Ntutu (centre) commissions a new livestock sale yard at Ntulele trading centre /KNA



Wreckage of a vehicle that was involved in an accident at Daraja Mbili market on Kisii-Migori road in Kisii county on Wednesday. Two people died and 16 others were injured /KNA



Ushiriki Wema Foundation chairperson Tessie Musalia (left) and M-Pesa Foundation Safaricom trustee Patricia Ithau during the handover ceremony of Chekombero Special School for the Hearing Impaired in Vihiga county /KNA



Nyandarua Governor Moses Kiarie Badilisha (third from right) observes how a cabro machine works during the official opening of Ol Kalou bulk cabro production plant. The plant is set to reduce paving costs for public utilities in the county by over 60 per cent /KNA

SASA DIARY OF A PERPETUAL BACHELOR

How the cookie crumbled

Endless chatter of bachelor's date's doesn't give him room to put in a word


DAVID MUCHAI / Diary,

Oh, hi there, Tom. I see you arrived before me. Urgh! You won't believe the traffic out there. I took the bus, you see, which I normally never do. Not now, at least. When I was younger, it was buses all the time. The louder the better, get it?

So, I got on a motorbike. You know about us girls and bikes, right? Something about a hot, vibrating machine between the thighs... Oh! Us girls can't get enough. Anyway, this boda guy goes and runs out of petrol. Can you believe that? I mean, how much petrol does a bike take? Is it too damn much for a customer to expect a guy to put a couple hundred shillings of petrol in his—

Hey, waiter.

Oops! Sorry about that. Didn't mean to make you drop your tray. Aren't you supposed to have a better grip on it? Anyway, water under the tunnel. Tell you what now, how about you go get us your most expensive bottle of wine and I'll forgive you for almost spilling spaghetti on my very expensive dress.

C'mon, Tom. Why you looking at me like that? You work in a cowshed, you expect to get a little cow dung on you, don't you?

Anyway, where was I? oh, yes. The stupid boda guy. He had the guts to ask me to help him push the bike. Can you believe that? Me! I'm in a frigging two-thousand-shilling dress. That's CBD shop money. None of that Gikomba trash touches my lilac skin, you hear me?

I know what you're thinking.

Why didn't I take an Uber in the first, right? Well, I did. Moment time came to come meet you, I got on my app and hailed me an Uber. Then guess what? The driver says he won't come to my door. Oh, no siree. The app, he says, tells him to stop at the corner. Now that's four plots over. Four! Count my fingers. One, two, three, four.

Tom, look at this. That's six-inch heels of fine leather. I already told you about the dress. Now how am I supposed to walk four

plots through dirt and mud and grime in these?

By the way, I need to get the hell out of K-South. I really do. There comes a time in every woman's life that she outgrows a joint, you know? Like, damn! I'm too fine for Eastlando. That's not such a bad thing to say, is it?

Where do you live, by the way? No, don't tell me. Let me guess. You're a doctor, right? Says that on the app. He-he. That must be a pretty good payday come end

of the month. Cha-ching! Right? And I'm thinking one of them fine Benzes out there in the parking lot is your ride. Looking at you, I'm guessing the silver G-Wagon. Yeah, I know my whips. A G-Wagon has no place in Buru Buru, or Nai West. So, I'm going to take a stab on Westlands. Or Muthaiga. Maybe even Runda.

Aah, Runda. Now that's a place I wouldn't mind hanging my heels, you know what I'm saying? I had this friend who also met a rich

dude online, right? Finance type kind of guy, worked with stocks or some shit. Girl got herself a crib in Runda. More bedrooms than she could shake a leg at, a kitchen the size of Kasarani stadium.

Now tell you what, Tom. You get me to Runda, there ain't nothing I won't do to fulfil your wildest dreams, baby.

"Hi, nice to meet you too, Linda."

And that sums up my date last Saturday.



NEWS COUNTIES

VALUE ADDITION

Nandi's Sh700m Kabiyet milk plant to revive dairy farming

It has not only breathed life into the sleepy market, but also awakened the subsector

KNA

@TheStarKenya

THE Nandi government has set up a Sh700 million milk processing plant in Kabiyet.

The processor has not only breathed life into the sleepy market, but also awakened the dormant dairy farming subsector in the region.

It took the Nandi government more than five years to complete the facility.

Farmer Paul Kerich said the plant is a great milestone to the value addition chain and it is expected to revitalise the dairy subsector, which has been plagued by production and market challenges for years.

“Dairy farming has been one of the neglected agricultural practices in the region and unscrupulous traders have been purchasing milk at poor prices as farmers lacked alternatives,” he said.

“The facility will bring a turnaround to the abandoned dairy farming. Residents want good prices and a conducive economic environment for milk production.”

Nandi is considered having progressive animal production in the North Rift, with a population of more than 21,000 smallholder dairy farmers.

Mosop, Chesumei, Emgwen, Nandi Hills and Aldai subcounties are among areas nestling excellent dairy livestock for quality milk, according to the county department of agriculture.

However, for over two decades, the cost of production and fluctuating milk prices have choked the sector and many farmers have turned their focus on subsistence dairy farming.

Hefty taxes initially imposed by the government on animal feeds was counterproductive to milk produc-



Nandi Governor Stephen Sang at Kabiyet Milk Processing Plant /HANDOUT

tion. The ripple effect sent the Kenya Creameries Company to the sick bed owing to shortage of milk, corruption and management issues.

This opened a leeway for exploitative private investors and traders that bought milk at low prices, thus making dairy farming unprofitable.

The milk processing plant is, however, faced by a myriad of challenges including insufficient extension services, shortage of milk and poor farming techniques.

Elvans Lelei, a dairy farmer in Mosop, said lack of capacity building on animal husbandry is a major setback to achieving quality cows.

“We have had artificial insemination services and end up with un-

desired livestock in our farms. The subsidised AI in most cases produce more bulls than heifers and this has slowed down the multiplication of the dairy livestock,” he said.

Lelei said they lacked know-how to enhance animal production due to insufficient extension services tailored for dairy farmers.

The milk factory is expected to process an estimated 200,000 litres per day, which is way above the total production of milk in the region.

According to the county department of livestock, the majority of smallholders produce below 10 litres of milk and a total of close to 100,000 litres of milk reach the market.

It is mostly supplied to eateries

and direct consumers. Lelei said Nandi will have to outsource milk from neighbouring counties to sustain the plant.

“We also need financial incentives as farmers to spur the dairy economy. This will include subsidies and revival of cooperative societies to consolidate milk production,” he said.

The milk factory is under management by a consortium of local cooperative societies in the community that co-opted private stakeholders for capacity building to run the facility.

Agriculture executive Kiplimo Lagat said 43 cooperative societies have been revitalised for consolidation and consistent supply of milk.

“We are encountering teething

problems but they will be resolved in the long run. We are looking forward to obtaining milk from our local farmers through their respective cooperative societies,” he said.

Lagat said more cooling plants would be provided for the farmers to prolong milk shelf-life in collection centres.

He said the county has also prioritised potential milk production through support from the National Agriculture Value Chain Development Project, which has strengthened funding of milk farmers under Saccos and cooperative movement.

Despite the challenges facing dairy farmers, Lagat said the county has made significant strides to address those setbacks by training agriculture extension officers to help the farmers on best milk production practices.

They are also acquiring high milk heifer breeds and constructing and renovating cattle dips for disease management.

While addressing farmers during Ushiraka Day in Kabiyet, Governor Stephen Sang termed the factory a milestone his administration has achieved as far as value addition is concerned.

“We are looking forward to exporting milk by-products to the international market. And this will boost earnings to our farmers,” he said.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Dairy farming, though delicate, is among the most profitable ventures one can engage in. Experts opine that getting it right from the onset is a big step towards smiling to the bank. The most important thing to consider is investment in dairy production knowledge. This will equip you with the necessary skills to handle the main activities in farming that include dairy products market, nutrition and feeding, cashflow management and its cycles, dairy cow acquisition, human resource management, infrastructure development and general farm management.

DESERVING CASES

Trans Nzoia streamlines bursary issuance to benefit needy learners

MATHEWS NDANYI

TRANS Nzoia county is enforcing measures to streamline allocation of bursaries to ensure fair distribution to needy and deserving beneficiaries.

Governor George Natembeya said the county is keen to ensure it supports needy students to access education as a way to secure their future.

Natembeya directed the county education department to clean up lists of beneficiaries and implement follow-up mechanisms for beneficiaries.

County officials and MCAs have joined forces to streamline the Ukombozi Elimu bursary

fund which is spearheaded by the governor.

The meeting came up with measures to clean up beneficiary records and improve coordination in disbursing the funds.

Speaking during the forum, Education and Vocational Training executive Janerose Mutama said a recent verification exercise had revealed irregularities in bursary allocations.

“We found names of students who had graduated, dropped out, or moved to other institutions but were still appearing on the bursary lists,” Mutama said.

She said such anomalies had to be rectified.

“This exercise helps not only in

cleaning the list but ensures we trace students who may still need support.”

Mutama assured the leaders that her department would follow up on students who had dropped out to assess their circumstances and explore ways to bring them back to school.

Chief officer for education, Kennedy Etiang, announced that each of the county's 25 wards would receive Sh1.45 million under the 2025 bursary allocation, underscoring the government's commitment to equitable education funding.

“We are determined to ensure no student is left behind due to lack of fees. This collaboration with



Trans Nzoia Governor George Natembeya at his office on Wednesday / MATHEWS NDANYI

MCAs is a step forward in closing the gaps that have hindered smooth implementation in the past,” Etiang said.

MCAs welcomed the partnership, promising active involvement in

the remaining stages of bursary disbursement. Kapomboi MCA and Education committee chair, Kefa Were, praised the joint approach, saying it would enhance accountability and fairness.

NEWS COUNTIES

POOR HANDLING

Rogue health workers blamed for derailing SGBV cases in Mombasa

Most survivors not referred to health facilities within critical period, scuttling outcomes



A victim of defilement in Nyali subcounty, Mombasa
/BRIAN OTIENO



The mother of a rape victim with a community health promoter in Nyali subcounty, Mombasa
/BRIAN OTIENO

BRIAN OTIENO
@Yobramos4

SOME community health promoters could be sabotaging sexual and gender-based violence cases within Mombasa, the county government has said.

This could be deliberately or involuntarily, as some work in cahoots with perpetrators, while others lack adequate information on referral pathways.

“Not every community member knows about SGBV adequately. And remember information goes with resources,” Celina Kithinji, the Mombasa county sexual and gender-based violence, mental and adolescent health programme coordinator, said.

Other CHPs are also working silently with some civil society organisations, in a bid to increase the number of SGBV cases for purposes of donor funding.

“Again, we also have key actors in the community who have their own interests. So, people would be having information but they want to divert the case.

“Instead of referring to the right place, they want to send to an organisation which is looking for data to build up their case for funding,” Kithinji told the Star on the phone.

There are also cases where community members are interested in protecting the perpetrator.

Some CHPs, she said, do not use the correct referral pathway, even though all subcounty hospitals can handle the cases faster and more conveniently.

“Most want to refer every case to Coast General whereas we have decentralised SGBV services. SGBV survivors can get services at the nearest health facilities,” Kithinji said.

In response to reports by some health promoters that Post Rape Care and P3 forms are only filled on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the CGTRH, making it difficult to collect evidence and help victims in time, the coordinator offered clarification.

The forms are available at all subcounty health facilities and can be filled by any licensed health practitioner, including doctors, nurses and clinical officers.

Information from the PRC form is used to fill out the P3 form, she explained.

Challenges arise when police officers—for whatever reason—opt to transport patients to Coast General, even where the victim was attended to and obtained the PRC form at a different health facility.

“What we are advocating for is that we provide services within the areas where you are. This is cost-effective for the patient and convenient for follow-up,” Kithinji said.

There is also an information gap, as only half of community members know about SGBV and how such

cases should be handled.

Kithinji stressed that the 72-hour window for SGBV victims to seek medical attention is crucial for both their health and for justice.

“The first point of contact should be the health facility. Why? Because the perpetrator might be HIV positive so once you reach the facility you are tested and given preventive measures so that you do not get infected. You will be followed up for five months,” she said.

PREGNANCY

Female victims are also given the Emergency Contraceptive Pill to prevent pregnancy.

Post-SGBV care is a comprehensive package: follow-up is done at the same facility and includes medication, surgical services if needed, psychosocial support like counselling and HIV testing.

But most survivors are not referred to health facilities within this critical period, which can scuttle positive outcomes.

“If this survivor does not reach a health facility within 72 hours, you lose most tangible evidence. So, even that court case may be weak, justice may not be found and you blame the judges, you will say police officers were bribed and the judiciary is corrupt.”

Evidence collected by the health department is crucial, as more than 80 per cent of positive outcomes in SGBV cases result from survivors getting timely health services.

She reiterated that apart from the referral hospital—which serves the entire Coast region—other facilities can offer services for SGBV cases, often faster.

Additionally, being a large referral hospital makes it impossible to have a doctor dedicated solely to the SGBV clinic.

This is why form filling at the CGTRH is scheduled, even though doctors can be called upon when needed.

“A doctor is a person who will also be required to operate in theatre or see other special cases and will not sit just to wait for an SGBV survivor whose visit is not known,” she said.

“There are some facilities where the P3 form will be filled the same day that you are seen, especially these other lower facilities.”

Kithinji noted the need for more sensitisation among community members and CHPs, adding that the county is working to ensure these groups are better informed.

“We intend to train more CHPs so that they can have the correct information to provide and so that they can know it is not only Coast General that is providing Post-Rape Care services.”

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The 72-hour period after rape or defilement is often called a golden window because it is during this time that crucial evidence can be collected against the perpetrator. It is also when certain interventions are most effective in preventing negative health outcomes. A forensic medical examination, which collects evidence for potential legal proceedings, is most useful within this specific timeframe.

MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN SGBV CASES RESULT FROM SURVIVORS GETTING TIMELY HEALTH SERVICES

NEWS COUNTIES

ALTERNATIVE FUEL

Engineer recycles plastics to tackle pollution, energy crisis

James Muritu says product can be used in generators, boilers and some vehicles



James Muritu displays some of the diesel fuel blend produced in his factory in Kenol town, Murang'a county /KNA



Plastics outside the plant/KNA

tory approvals and maintaining safe operations and clean energy required significant investment but the impact on the environment and our economy is worthwhile," Muritu says.

His vision is to expand his production from the current 4,000 litres of diesel per month to about 50,000 litres as he continues to plough back the profits to expand the company's operations.

Muritu, who initially studied and worked in Australia, the US and UK as an engineer, travelled back in the country in 2012.

He says while chemical engineering is self-taught, his exposure abroad helped shape his innovative mindset.

Recently, the company has also started producing a petrol blend that is still undergoing tests and approvals and will mainly target boda boda riders and machines.

He expressed optimism that the product will be fully certified by the end of August after which it will hit the market, pointing out that he's currently producing about 1,000 litres of the blend per month.

"We are currently piloting with boda boda operators at Kagundu-ini village in Kandara subcounty where we have about 80 operators and power saw users who use it and give us feed-back," he said. "So far we have received positive reviews."

Subsequently, he plans to expand briquettes production from the current one tonne per day that he uses in his plant to about 50 tonnes per week which will see him recycle about 70 per cent of the organic waste produced within Kenol town.

As a result, the company will be able to sell the briquettes to local processing plants that are using firewood in their furnace, to champion for clean energy and environmental conservation by reducing deforestation. Since the company started its operations, it has helped process more than 80 tonnes of plastic waste that would have been burned and produced more than 200 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

The engineer hopes that through partnerships he can be able to expand to larger facilities and acquire more advanced machinery.

(+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Plastic pollution is a global issue with severe environmental, social, economic, and health consequences. The accumulation of plastic waste, particularly in aquatic ecosystems, can alter habitats, disrupt natural processes, and impact livelihoods reliant on marine resources.

KNA

@TheStarKenya

AT a small factory tucked in the bustling Kenol town, Murang'a county, a young man is quietly leading a green revolution driven by his passion for environmental conservation and energy sustainability.

James Muritu who holds a master's degree in software and hardware engineering recycles plastic waste into fuel, effectively tackling the environmental pollution, while at the same time offering a cheaper alternative to conventional fuels.

Heaps of plastic materials characterise his compound, a vivid testament to his relentless efforts of turning trash into fuel cash.

The initiative has enabled him to employ people, while at the same time conserve the environment.

"I was disturbed by the amount of plastic waste choking our environment, not to mention the skyrocketing fuel prices. And so, I decided to find a solution that could address both problems at the same time," Muritu says.

The soft-spoken engineer would then bury himself in books and research before implementing what he learnt and by the time he settled on fuel blends, he had gone full cycle.

"After years of research, implementing several ideas, I finally settled on fuel blends from discarded plastic waste which I heat in a specially designed reactor under controlled temperatures breaking it down to usable fuel components," he explains.

The technique, he says, is known as pyrolysis and its end product is a blend of fuel that can be used in gener-

ators, boilers and even some vehicles depending on the level of refinement.

In 2023, the founder and proprietor of Progreen Innovations Limited company set up his custom-made processing plant within Kenol town.

Each day he collects kilos of plastic waste and converts them into litres of diesel fuel blend. This has created employment for hundreds of youths who scout through the entire neighbourhood of Kenol in search of plastic wastes.

"I have employed seven full time employees who help process the plastics and 15 full time waste collectors who earn a daily income," he says

Muritu also asked a local manufacturing plant that previously struggled to dispose of the plastic waste to allow him to pick it for recycling.

This has helped ensure a constant

flow of raw materials for his innovation. Through a series of rigorous tests, his product passed the effectiveness mark and was finally certified by government agencies.

"Infact, last year I won an award from Kenya Bureau of Standards for the most innovative idea," he says, displaying an array of awards he has won over the years.

With more trials, he was able to incorporate light plastics that include cement bags and nylons which were dumped by locals and factories.

"Once the plastics are delivered to the plant, we sort out to separate PVC and non-recyclables because only clean high-yield plastics go into the reactor," he says.

The sorted plastic is then shredded into smaller pieces before being fed into the pyrolysis reactor and heated in the absence of oxygen, breaking it down into usable fuel products.

Notably, there are minimal emissions into the atmosphere as he has installed a system that filters out harmful gases before release during the pyrolysis process.

Further, to cut the cost of production, Muritu is using organic waste collected from local fruit processing plants to produce briquettes. The briquettes are supplying the factory with energy.

"We bind organic avocado waste into briquettes using one of the by-products of the fuel production process to generate heat," he says.

The venture which Muritu admits is quite capital intensive is already paying off as he currently has entered into a deal with a leading manufacturing company that consumes the 4,000 litres of his diesel.

"Setting up the machinery, regula-

“

JAMES MURITU

We are currently piloting with boda boda operators at Kagundu-ini village in Kandara subcounty where we have about 80 operators and power saw users



Some of the briquettes made using organic avocado waste /KNA



A worker feeds briquette into a furnace /KNA

NEWS REGIONAL

MALAWI AND ZAMBIA

US demands Sh2m deposit for visa applicants from two African countries

BBC

The US will require citizens from Malawi and Zambia to pay a \$15,000 (Sh2 million) deposit for a tourist or business visa, according to the US state department.

The 12-month pilot programme aims to curb visa overstays “or where screening and vetting information is considered deficient”, according to a notice published by the state department.

Officials say that citizens of countries other than Malawi and Zambia may soon also need to pay a similar deposit, which will be returned at the end of their visit to the US.

The US administration has taken several steps to further President Donald Trump’s agenda of stemming illegal immigration.

Trump signed an executive order on the first day of his second term to this effect.

The state department notice,

published on Tuesday, says: “Aliens applying for visas as temporary visitors for business or pleasure (B-1/B-2) and who are nationals of countries identified by the Department as having high visa overstay rates, where screening and vetting information is deemed deficient, or offering Citizenship by Investment, if the alien obtained citizenship with no residency requirement, may be subject to the pilot program.

“Consular officers may require covered non-immigrant visa applicants to post a bond of up to \$15,000 as a condition of visa issuance, as determined by the consular officers.”

Figures published in 2023 by the US Department of Homeland Security show that about 14 per cent of visitors from Malawi overstay their visas, compared to 11 per cent of Zambian visitors.

Other countries with high overstay rates include Haiti (31 per

cent), Myanmar (27 per cent) and Yemen (20 per cent).

Zambia Foreign Minister Mulambo Haimbe told the BBC that

the government was “engaging our counterparts to get a full understanding of the implications and what can be done, if anything, to address the underlying issues”.

Since coming to office in January, Trump has signed orders to roll back humanitarian programmes for migrants from certain countries who are already in the US.

The Republican president has also banned foreign nationals from

12 countries from travelling to the US, and imposed partial restrictions on another seven.

His administration has revoked visas for hundreds of international students and detained several others on college campuses across the US, often without any warning or recourse for appeals.

The state department has said it is targeting those who were involved in activities that “run counter” to US national interests.

Many of those targeted have participated in some form of pro-Palestinian activity.

But there have been other cases where cancellations appear to be connected to those with some sort of criminal record, or legal infractions like driving over the speed limit, immigration lawyers have said.



Countries hit by Trump’s travel restrictions /BBC



...the deposit will be returned at the end of their visit to the US

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Gorillas seek out old female friends even after years apart

When an ape moves into a new group, she’ll seek out and join another female she knows



Female gorillas appear to maintain their social relationships for many years /BBC

BBC

THE relationships built up between female mountain gorillas are more important than previously understood, new research from Rwanda suggests.

It shows that when one of these social great apes moves into a new group, she will seek out and join another female she already knows.

Scientists based the research on 20 years of data covering multiple groups of gorillas in Volcanoes National Park, in Rwanda.

The scientists found that even when two females had been apart for many years, a newly arrived gorilla would still try to join a female she had formed a previous connection with.

The findings, published in the

Royal Society Journal Proceedings B, show how important the relationship between two individual females is in gorilla society.

“Scientifically, I don’t know if I can talk about ‘friendship,’” explained lead researcher Victoire Martignac, a PhD researcher from the University of Zurich. “But we’re showing here that these same sex relationships really matter.”

Moving into different groups is key in shaping the animals’ social structure. It’s something that both males and females do – females will sometimes move several times throughout their lives.

This dispersal, as it’s known, plays a role in avoiding inbreeding, spreading gene diversity and shaping social relationships.

“In the wild it is very important,” explained Martignac.

“But it’s extremely hard to study, because once individuals leave a group, it’s hard to keep track of them.”

Working in partnership with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, at a field site that has been monitored since 1967, Martignac and her colleagues were able to track those movements.

Poring through decades of information on the animals’ lives, the scientists followed the “dispersals” of 56 female mountain gorillas – examining which new group they chose to join and why.

The gorillas avoided groups that had males they were likely to be related to, but the presence of females they knew also “mattered a lot”, Martignac explained.

The females gravitated towards their “friends”, even if the animals had been apart for many years.

They would often gravitate to a group with females they had grown up with, even if that was many years ago.

They also sought out individuals with whom they had made a social connection – perhaps played and interacted with – recently.

Martignac explained that the gorillas would invest in these relationships because they deliver key social benefits.

“New arrivals usually start at the bottom of the social hierarchy,” she said. “Resident females can be pretty aggressive towards them, because they’re potentially a competitor.”

Moving around is something that is also crucial in shaping human society.

And the researchers say that studying its roots in other great apes can shed light on the evolutionary driving forces behind it.

“Movement is a huge part of the way we live,” said Ms Martignac. “But those decisions do not fossilise.”

“So we look at them in our closest evolutionary cousins.”

This new insight into gorillas’ social lives, she added, “reframes how we think of female-female social relationships”.

“They’re much more important to these animals than we used to think.”



VICTOIRE MARTIGNAC

Scientifically, I don’t know if I can talk about ‘friendship’. But we’re showing here that these same sex relationships really matter.

SASA GROWING INDUSTRY

E-sports booming in Africa

Leading the charge are African grassroots organisers, telecom giants and a generation of young gamers building careers that didn't exist five years ago



Cosplayer Julius Mokaya at the PUBG Mobile Africa Championship, Kenya Grand Finals /HANDOUT

BONFACE ORUCHO, BIRD STORY AGENCY/ Every night after work, Abigail Mbae Kadima props up her phone, dons her headset, and vanishes into the battlegrounds of PUBG Mobile.

The 24-year-old accountant, based in Nairobi's Umoja estate, doesn't just play for fun. She streams live to over 10,000 fans on TikTok, turning solo matches into shared spectacle.

With every headshot and narrow escape, she earns not just likes but loyalty and slowly a livelihood.

"It started as a way to unwind, but now it's something bigger. I have built a community, and sometimes I earn (a modest) income on the platform," she shared in a Zoom call.

What her viewers don't see, however, beyond the fight on-screen, is a deeper shift happening in Africa's gaming ecosystem.

Kadima, for instance, is just playing on a newly launched PUBG Mobile server hosted by MTN Nigeria.

This is part of a growing wave of infrastructure investments transforming mobile gaming into a serious e-sports arena across the continent.

For the continent's 350 million gamers as of 2024, most of them mobile-first, the e-gaming ecosystem is accelerating

on performance, platforms, and profit, according to a 2025 Stears Research study.

Africa's e-sports industry is evolving fast, six times faster than the global average, the study shows.

From localised server infrastructure to new funding models and global tournament opportunities, the e-gaming space is rapidly professionalising.

Leading the charge are grassroots organisers, telecom giants, and a generation of young gamers building careers that didn't exist five years ago.

According to Douglas Ogeto, co-founder of Deep Vine Entertainment, a Nairobi-based gaming promotion company, the continent's e-gaming ecosystem has significantly evolved.

"Gaming is no longer just a hobby; there are real opportunities here," he explained in an interview, referencing the growing number of players and stakeholders now turning competitive gaming into viable careers.

He is currently organising #RoadToFrance, a local qualifier for EVO France, the European edition of the world's largest one-on-one fighting game championship.

Slated for August 24 at Alliance Française in Nairobi, the tournament features two titles: Tek-

ken and Street Fighter. Notably, Tekken includes both male and female categories, a deliberate effort to attract more women to competitive play.

"We've already hit 30 sign-ups and are targeting at least 60," Ogeto said. "What's exciting is that this year, we're seeing much more interest from women. Last year, we had 12 female participants. Two years back, there were only one or two."

According to Ogeto, more than just gaming, the event is about recognition. It tells players and

their families that e-sports can lead somewhere meaningful.

"Iron sharpens iron," he added. "These international events show new gamers and their communities that this isn't just play. It's a viable path."

While prize pools remain an anchor of e-sports revenue, new monetization models are emerging, and they're largely user-led.

In developed e-gaming markets like South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, platforms like TikTok are integrated with local payment systems, enabling creators to monetize content and build large followings and brand partnerships.

"It's not just about attracting external investment," Ogeto explained. "Young people are finding ways to generate revenue through content, coaching, and community-building, even without institutional support."

This creator-driven model is proving especially powerful in Africa's mobile-first environment, where 95 per cent of gaming happens on smartphones.

Telecoms are also becoming key enablers of Africa's gaming boom.

According to Carry1st, telcos like Orange, MTN, and Airtel are bundling gaming into data plans and experimenting with zero-rated content, moves that are mak-

ing gameplay more affordable and accessible for millions of mobile users across the continent.

According to Techloy, PUBG Mobile's local server launch, in partnership with MTN Nigeria, slashed latency by up to 40 per cent, a game-changer for serious players.

This kind of infrastructure investment not only enhances user experience but also signals that Africa is being taken seriously as a gaming market.

Meanwhile, QTech Games, a regional distributor, notes a spike in demand for battle royale, casual, and hyper-casual titles.

According to Ekaterina Mayorova, QTech's EMEA head, localized games and revenue-share models are unlocking new commercial opportunities on the continent.

"Africa isn't just the next frontier for iGaming; it's the present. With a mobile-first population, a rising digital economy, and a generation of players hungry for entertainment, the future of gaming on the continent will be shaped by innovation, local insight, and scalable access," she noted in a LinkedIn post.

In Nigeria, stakeholders at the Enugu Gaming Conference, held from July 30 to 31, unveiled a five-year roadmap focused on talent development, funding mobilization, and regional integration.

"The conversations are no longer just about enforcement. They are now about jurisdiction, innovation, technology, cross-border collaborations and, most important, structure," noted Arinze Arum, Enugu State Gaming and Lotto Commission representative, during the launch.

While participation is growing, access remains uneven, especially between urban and rural communities.

"The infrastructure is still heavily urban," Ogeto said. "We need more deliberate decentralisation, through schools, community centers, even mobile platforms."

Progress is being made on other fronts.

In Tunisia, the country's first all-female game development studio, Sinister Scripts Studios, recently launched a pipeline-to-market program to mentor and fund new projects.

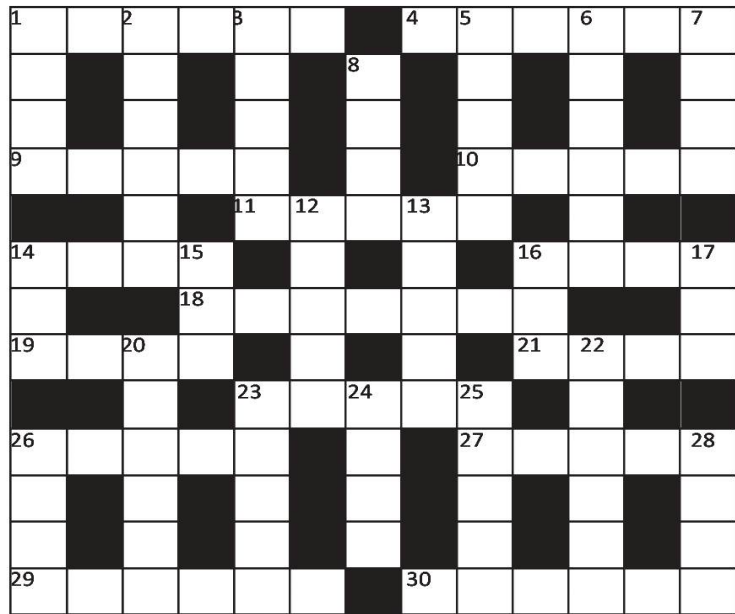
According to Ogeto, "E-sports needs patient capital, yes... but what it really needs is belief; belief in the talent, in the infrastructure, and in the potential of African gamers to compete at the highest level."

According to the Stears Research study, Africa's e-sports sector is now valued at US\$66 million and is growing six times faster than the global average.

“
These
international
events show
new gamers and
their communities
that this isn't
just play. It's a
viable path

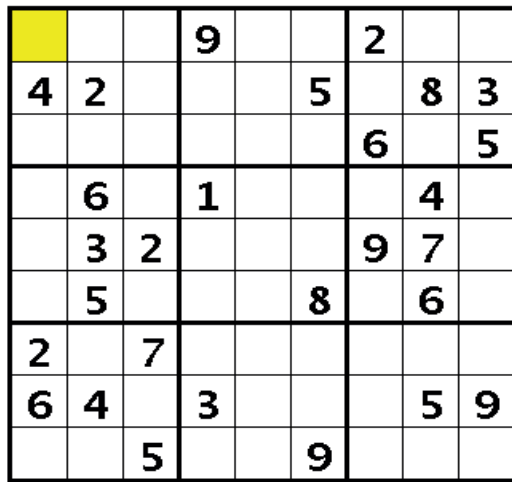
COFFEE BREAK

CROSSWORD / PUZZLE



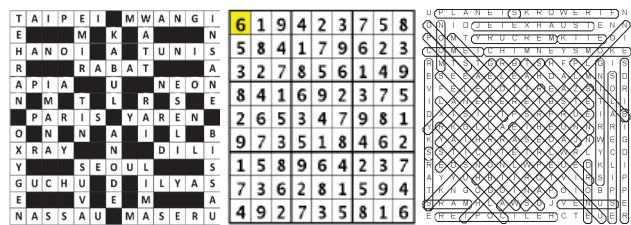
- DOWN**
- Principal Secretary for Crop development and Agriculture Research (4)
 - Junkie (6)
 - New Delhi (5)
 - Senator for Kajiado County (5)
 - Luanda (6)
 - Lubricate (4)
 - Havana (4)
 - Porto-Novo (5)
 - Principal Secretary for State Department for Regional and Northern Corridor Development (5)
 - Clumsy person (3)
 - Governor for Marsabit County (3)
 - Monad (3)
 - Sesame plant (3)
 - Amman (6)
 - Kuwait city (6)
 - Cabinet secretary for Sports (5)
 - Tehran (4)
 - Governor for Tharaka-Nithi County (5)
- ACROSS**
- Brasilia (6)
 - Jerusalem (6)
 - Governor for Homa Bay County (5)
 - It is the electrode towards which anions move during the process of electrolysis (5)
 - Chief Administrative secretary for Foreign Affairs (5)
 - Senator for Kisumu County (4)
 - Kiln for drying hops (4)
 - Wool fat (7)
 - Suva (4)
 - Senator for Turkana County (4)
 - It is a negatively charged ion (5)
 - Billiard shot (5)
 - Gem (5)
 - Governor for Narok County (6)
 - Governor for Baringo County (6)

SUDOKU / SIMPLE



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.

Friday solutions



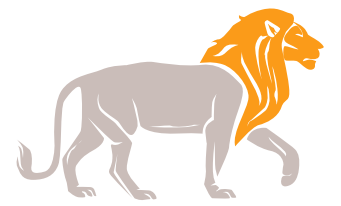
WORD SEARCH

S H S E A L S D M D T G H R E
T S P A L C P A O U I S D O C
I I T O R T R O B L I U W H S
N F R A L L R I R F P S Q P E
G Y B E I L L U N P T H E S A
R L O N T A A W T A O N I W L
A L C I H S O C R A G I H N I
Y E T D A L B F S U E A S Y O
R J O R C N I O I I L S T E N
E S P A E S U N L E N W A R P
T P U S H E E T A N A M M P M
S O S S B A R R A C U D A M I
Y N H S I F L L E H S H L A R
O G A R R E T T O A E S C L H
K E A N C H O V Y W A L R U S

Find and mark all the words hidden inside the box. The words may be placed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

- ANCHOVY
- BARRACUDA
- CLAM
- CLOWNFISH
- COD
- CRAB
- DOLPHIN
- HALIBUT
- JELLYFISH
- LAMPREY
- LOBSTER
- MANATEE
- MARLIN
- OCTOPUS
- OYSTER
- PENGUIN
- PORPOISE
- PRAWN
- SARDINE
- SCALLOP
- SEA LION
- SEA OTTER
- SEA TURTLE
- SEALS
- SHELLFISH
- SHRIMP
- SPONGE
- SQUID
- STARFISH
- STINGRAY
- TUNA
- WALRUS
- WHALE

ALL IN THE STARS



LEO
July 23 - August 22

An older member of your family may have left you with a pressing situation. Resist any idle chatter.

VRIGO
August 23 - September 23

Now is a good time to ask for favors. Social gatherings will be conducive to meeting new potential mates.

LIBRA
September 24 - October 23

You should put a little extra effort in at work. Visit friends or relatives you rarely see. Avoid friction with your mate.

SCORPIO
October 24 - November 22

Later in the week your boss will pat you on the back for a job well done. You can change your living arrangements.

SAGITTARIUS
November 23 - December 21

Focus on what's important rather than spreading yourself too thin and accomplishing little.

CAPRICORN
December 22 - January 20

Do not hesitate to help elders with legal documents that are too confusing for them.

AQUARIUS
January 21 - February 19

Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts. Favors will be offered readily.

PISCES
February 20 - March 20

Your creative talent may well be recognized by others today. Implement your ideas into your projects at work.

ARIES
March 21 - April 20

Avoid any petty ego confrontations; they could lead to estrangement if you aren't careful.

TAURUS
April 21 - May 21

Do something that will be stimulating and creative. Arguments with relatives may lead to a split in the family.

GEMINI
May 22 - June 21

Do not be surprised if your partner doesn't understand your needs. Sit tight.

CANCER
June 22 - July 22

You can make financial gains through investments and dealing with other people's money.

Body of man missing for 28 years found in melting glacier

BBC/The body of a man missing for 28 years has been found in a melting glacier in Pakistan's remote and mountainous Kohistan region.

A shepherd stumbled upon the body, which was remarkably well-preserved, with its clothing intact, in the so-called Lady Valley in the country's east. Along with the body was an ID card with the name Naseeruddin. Police were able to trace it to a man who disappeared in the area in June 1997 after falling into a glacier crack.

The region has seen decreased snowfall in recent years, exposing glaciers to direct sunlight, making them melt faster. Experts said the body's discovery shows how changing climate has accelerated glacial melt.

"What I saw was unbelievable," the shepherd who found the body, Omar Khan, told BBC Urdu. "The body was intact. The clothes were not even torn."

As soon as police confirmed that it was Naseeruddin, locals began offering more information, Khan added.

Naseeruddin had a wife and two children. He was travelling with his brother, Kathiruddin, on horseback on the day he went missing. Police said a family feud had forced the two men to leave their home.

Kathiruddin told BBC Urdu that they had arrived in the valley that morning, and sometime around afternoon, his brother stepped into a cave. When he did not return,



Kathiruddin says he looked for him inside the cave - and went and got help to search further. But they never found him.

TELEVISION LINEUP - SATURDAY & SUNDAY



SATURDAY

- 5:00 AM MORNING DECREE
- 5:30 AM MORNING DEVOTION
- 7:00 AM AKILI KIDS (SWAHILI)
- 7:30 AM BAHARI YA ELIMU
- 8:00 AM DEBATE CIRCLE
- 8:30 AM NUZO AND NAMIA (SWAHILI) RPT
- 9:00 AM KIDS ON THE BLOCK
- 10:00 AM BAHARI YA ELIMU
- 10:30 AM BEAT KIDS
- 11:00 AM BEAT PLUG EXTRA
- 1:00 PM TV47 NEWS NOW
- 1:30 PM AFRICA EXPRESS
- 4:00 PM SPORTS EXTRAVAGANZA
- 7:00 PM TV47 WIKENDI
- 7:30 PM FOODS OF KENYA
- 8:00 PM FOODS OF KENYA
- 8:30 PM NEW LIFE BEGINS
- 9:00 PM WEEKEND EDITION WITH BETTY KYALO
- 10:30 PM IRIE VIBES

SUNDAY

- 5:00 AM GOSPEL MUSIC
- 5:30 AM GOSPEL MUSIC
- 6:00 AM SIFA SUNDAY
- 9:00 AM LIVE CHURCH SERVICE
- 11:00 AM SIFA SUNDAY PLUS
- 1:00 PM TV47 NEWS NOW
- 1:30 PM OLD SCHOOL SUNDAY
- 3:00 PM COUNTRY RIDE MIX
- 4:30 PM DR. OFWENEKE TONIGHT - RPT
- 6:00 PM KILIMO 47
- 6:30 PM DW DOCUFILM - RPT
- 7:00 PM UPEO WA TV47
- 7:30 PM THE 77 PERCENT
- 8:00 PM LOVE BEYOND 40
- 8:30 PM NEW LIFE BEGINS
- 9:00 PM WEEKEND EDITION
- 11:00 PM COUNTRY RIDE MIX
- 12:00 AM BEATPLUG MIX

ODDLY ENOUGH



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LOST ITEMS

LOST TITLE
KJD/OLCHORO ONYORE / 5943

JOBS

TEACHERS, NURSES Lawyers and Accountants earn 60000 part time work4 only 2hrs aday twice a week From 5pm to 7pm. col0769150870.Manager.

WANTED: Salonist, hoteliers, housekeeper, maids, cleaners, train& employ Local inter, NBI, MSA, Gilo, NKR Reg fee is a MUST details sms only +254722703706

JOBS APPLY land sales agent's marketers, NKR, Gilgil area REG fee is a MUST SMS only for details 0722703706

TRAINED HOUSE KEEPER house help shamba boy nation wide available part time full time sms 0722115384

JOBS apply land sales agent's marketers, NKR, Gilgil area REG fee MUST SMS only for details 0722703706

SALONIST, hoteliers, housekeeper, maids, cleaners, train& employ Local inter, NBI, MSA, Gilo, NKR Reg fee MUST details sms only +25472270370

MISC

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SCHOOL GAMES

FOOTBALL

FEASSSA 15s rugby will be closely contested, says Vihiga coach

BY ANGWENYI GICHANA

VIHIGA Boys coach Abdallah Abubakar believes competition for the Federation of East African Secondary Schools Sports Association (FEASSSA) games rugby 15's title will be very tight.

Vihiga are currently the National Secondary Schools Games 15s rugby champions. Abubakar said the title will be won by very slim margins and tipped Vihiga to prevail. Vihiga Boys are in Pool 'A' alongside compatriots Upper Hill, Uganda's Namilyango College and Jinja Senior School. Pool B will feature FEASSSA defending champions All Saints Embu, national runners-up Kisii School, Kings College Buddo, and Busoga Col Mwiri, both from Uganda.

Kisii will renew their rivalry with All Saints Embu. In the national final, Vihiga Boys came from 6-0 down to beat Kisii School 12-6 in a tightly contested match. Vihiga had trounced Upper Hill in the

semis while Kisii beat All Saints Embu.

"Being debutants, I don't know much about Ugandan teams, but by being hosts, we want to do our best. The game against Upper Hill will be close because we beat Upper Hill narrowly in Mombasa," said Abubakar.

The rugby 15s competition will be held at the Bull Ring in Kakamega. The Kenyan teams are currently camping in Kakamega ahead of the games that will kick off next week.

Kisii School coach Edwin Morara is confident they will lift the title on their debut. "We can contest for the title. Since we finished second in Mombasa in the first term, we have sharpened our attack and strengthened our defence. The boys have also improved tactically in all areas," said a confident Morara.

Commenting on the pooling, Morara said: "It's a fairly good group because we have played All Saints Embu twice, won one and lost one. We are playing against

Ugandan teams for the first time, but I believe we shall overcome them," said Morara. He added: "The boys are in high spirits. They can't wait for the kick-off next week."

Friends School Bwake's director of rugby, Benson Amboko, said: "We are going all out for the trophy. The players who were injured in the semi-finals against Koyonzo have all recovered. We have also changed our model of play, which allows us to play without some players in case of injuries," added Amboko.



Mofa coach plays it cool ahead of new NSL season

BY ANGWENYI GICHANA

NEWLY appointed Michael Olunga Foundation Academy (MOFA) head coach Charles Warinda says he will not set unrealistic targets for his charges ahead of the 2025/26 National Super League (NSL) season.

"We have our objectives as a club, but we don't want to be over-ambitious. We want to be ready for the season and expect the best results," said Warinda.

He added, "However, we want to compete and see how far we can go at the end of the season. We will not just compete but fight every day. The management has put a lot of investment in the team, and they expect better from us."

Warinda, who joined the White Rhinos from the struggling Kisumu All Stars, said the second-tier league is tough.

"The NSL is difficult, but how we prepare is important. We started our pre-season two weeks ago, and so far, I'm happy with the progress," stated the tactician.

Warinda, who is the national senior women's football team assistant coach, added: "We are working on the team's fitness and hope to align the players with my playing style."

The team finished seventh in the league last season. "Finishing seventh on their debut season was fantastic," noted the coach.

Dick Orongo has joined the club as strength and conditioning coach. He serves in the same role in the national U17 and U20 national teams. The club has also employed former Rainbow team manager Nicholas Atulo in the same capacity.

The club has recruited eight players and dropped the same number. Warinda raided his former employers, Kisumu All Stars, for Laban Otieno, Japhet Onyango, and Nelson Amunga. Other new signings are Nelvin Chapani and Bromwel Okola from Samitsi.

The club has also enlisted attackers Clinton Okoth from Migori Youth and Noah Jagongo (Mara Sugar). Bakari Temo also joined the NSL side from Kilifi-based Masato FC.

The club has parted ways with Eric Ongiri, Tony Nyang'or, Kevin Owidi, Collins Otieno, Leon Bodo, Clinton Okite, and Syphas Otieno.

Speaking on the new signings, Warinda said: "We sat down as a team and agreed to strengthen the areas where we identified weaknesses."



St Joseph's, Kitale, pose for a group photo during the National Secondary Schools Games in Kakamega / HANDOUT

BATTLE LINES DRAWN

Kenyan teams handed tricky pools ahead of Feassa championships



BY ANGWENYI GICHANA

KENYAN teams have been drawn in tricky pools for the Federation of East African Secondary Schools Sports Association (FEASSSA) Games, starting on Wednesday in Kakamega.

Kenya will seek to wrestle the overall title from neighbours and arch-rivals Uganda at the 22nd edition of the regional championships, scheduled for August 13-24.

National boys' football runners-up Musingu, bronze medalists Highway Secondary and Butere Boys' are in Pool 'A' alongside Feassa champions Amus College and Buddo Buddo (Uganda), Rwanda's CGFK Kicukiro and Tanzania's Kizuka.

Uganda's multiple winners, St Mary's Kitende, headline Pool B, alongside Kenyan champions St Joseph's Kitale, debutants Agai Mixed, Burundi's E.P.M Mpanda, Benjamin Mkapa Secondary from Tanzania,

Bukedea Comprehensive School, and A.P.E Rugunga from Rwanda.

The five Kenyan teams hope to emulate St Anthony's Kitale, who won the inaugural title in 2002, and Barding High, who won it in 2016. St Joseph's coach Amos Wanda admitted that they are in a difficult pool.

"It's a tough pool and we will play many matches. Like St. Antony's, we are no pushovers. Our ultimate target is to play in the final and lift the title," said Wanda.

In the girls' category, Kenya's silver medalists, Madira, and bronze medalists, Nasokol, are in Pool A, where they face a huge task against defending champions St. Noa from Uganda. They will also face off with Rwanda's PSSB Huye, Tanzania's Alliance and Kawempe Muslim from Uganda.

Kenya's three-time champions, Butere Girls, are in a tough Pool B together with compatriots Archbishop Njenga and Kobala. The teams

will battle it out with Tanzania powerhouses Fountain Gate, Uganda's Amus College, and Boni Concilli Vocational Secondary.

Butere will bank on the experience of Kenya's U-17 internationals led by captain Halima Imbachi, Lorna Wasike, Lorna Faith, and Diana Anyango in their bid to lift the title. Coach Sakwa said he has 10 players who have featured in the Junior Starlets, and the experience will come in handy during the competition.

However, Joy Angela Valencia will miss the competition due to injury. She is out for nine months. "Last year, we lost 1-0 in the finals against St Noa. This year, the girls are more experienced. They have played together for the last four years, and I believe they can win the East Africa trophy," said Sakwa.

Scrabble, chess, tennis, table tennis, badminton, rugby 7s, hockey, beach football, beach volleyball, lacrosse, and cricket will be played in a round-robin format.

MOFA coach Charles Warinda /HANDOUT



ATHLETICS

AK launches nationwide registration drive to sanitise athletics ecosystem

BY TEDDY MULEI

ATHLETICS Kenya (AK) will on Tuesday kick off a nationwide registration exercise targeting athletics training camps, coaches, medical personnel and all Athlete Support Personnel (ASP), in a bold move to streamline the sport and safeguard athletes across the country.

The phased rollout begins in the South Rift region from Tuesday through to Saturday. The exercise will then shift focus to the uniformed forces (Kenya Defence Forces, Kenya Prisons and National Police Service) and AK Nairobi region from August 18 to 22.

Registration will then move to Central (August 25–29), North Eastern (September 1–5), Eastern (September 8–12), Southern (September 15–19), Coast (September 22–26) and Nyanza

South (October 6–10).

The process will have stops in Nyanza North (October 13–17), Western (October 20–24), North Rift (October 27–31) and Central Rift (November 3–7).

The exercise is part of a broader strategy to promote integrity, safety and professionalism.

“Athletics Kenya is pleased to announce the start of the national registration exercise for all Athletics Training Camps/Groups, as well as coaches, medical personnel and other Athlete Support Personnel (ASP) working with athletes,” AK said in a statement.

“The registration exercise is a crucial step in our strategy to standardise and regulate the operations of all athletics camps and groups all over the country to ensure a safe, professional and accountable environment for our

athletes.”

The exercise will require all applicants to present documents relevant to their roles.

“To register as Athlete support Personnel (ASP), including coaches, medical staff and other support roles applicants must provide specific documentation,” the statement added.

Coaches will be required to submit a valid coaching certificate and a police clearance certificate (good conduct). Medical personnel must provide their practising licence and a police clearance certificate.

For other ASPs, including physiotherapists, nutritionists and camp administrators, they must present proof of professional certification and clearance from law enforcement.

“Additionally, all foreign nationals, regardless of their roles, must provide a valid work permit,” AK added.



Athletes compete in a past AK meeting/ TEDDY MULEI

ATHLETICS



Female athletes compete in the senior 10km race in Machakos/ TEDDY MULEI

HEAVYWEIGHTS CLASH

BY TEDDY MULEI

A clash of heavyweights is on the cards in the senior women's 10km showdown as the Athletics Kenya Cross Country series gets underway at Machakos Teachers Training College today.

The 2017 African U-20 3,000m silver medallist Sandrafelis Chebet will go toe-to-toe with national 5,000m champion Rebecca Mwangi in what promises to be a sizzling season opener on the dusty Machakos course.

Mwangi, whose 2025 campaign has seen both highs and lows, will be out to stamp her authority early in the circuit.

She opened her campaign at the national cross country championships on February 8, placing 21st in the senior 10km race, clocking 37:16.

Brilliant Kipkoeh (34:30),

Chebet, Mwangi, Matata and Senchura among the favourites at today's Machakos x-country meeting

Maurine Chebor (34:33) and Stacey Ndiwa (34:55) completed the podium in that race. About 14 days later, Mwangi upgraded to eighth at the Sirikwa Cross Country, timing 35:22.

Her track campaign started on April 26, where she produced a decisive kick to win the women's 10,000m at the fifth AK weekend meeting at Ulinzi Sports Complex, clocking 32:28.17 before fading to 11 in the 1,500m at the Kip Keino Classic (4:30.97) on May 31.

She returned stronger to finish third in the 10,000m (32:22.85) and first in the 5,000m (15:39.78) at the national championships in June.

Mwangi will hope to make

Machakos count after falling short at the July 22 World Championships trials.

Meanwhile, Sandrafelis, a seasoned campaigner on the roads, will chase her first victory of the season.

She placed 12th at the Lanzhou Marathon (2:43:19) and eighth in the 5,000m at the June national championships (16:01:24).

Adding more depth to the field are Gladys Ngure (the national 100m hurdles champion), Tecla Cheserek, Nelly Chepkogei and Viola Chelang'a.

African U18 3,000m champion Cynthia Chepkurui will headline the U20 6km race, while Winfred Mbithe stars in the 2km

loop race.

Road warrior Alex Matata is set for a thrilling duel with upcoming track star Silas Senchura in the men's senior 10km race.

Matata has this season won the Ras Al Khaimah (59:20), Meishan (59:28), Yangzhou (59:31) and Istanbul (59:40) half marathons.

Meanwhile, Senchura has been in hot form in the distance races, winning 10,000m races at the fifth AK meeting (29:09.49), the Kip Keino Classic (28:18.46) and the national championships (28:26.17).

In the 2km loop race, 2023 African 800m champion Aaron Chemining'wa will take on Allan Kipyego.

KRU to pick final U16, U18 teams next month, says coordinator Okoth

BY WILLIAM NJUGUNA

THE Kenya Rugby Union will pick the final national Under-16 and Under-18 teams on September 6 at the RFUEA ground, KRU Development Coordinator Ronald Okoth has announced.

KRU selected 288 U16 players (boys and girls) during regional trials, featuring eight regions, in July. The regions are Central, Western, Rift Valley, Nyanza, Nairobi, Eastern, Coast and North Eastern.

From the 288, KRU will pick 42 players (21 boys and 21 girls) for the African school games in Angola in December and the Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal, in November next year. Okoth was bullish about Kenya's chances at the two tournaments.

“From the selection process and the talent we saw at the Term Two games in Kakamega, we have several talented players in both categories,” said Okoth.

“We are developing a database of all the top junior players in this category to ensure they progress to the U18s, the U20s and eventually, Shujaa, Kenya Simbas or Kenya Lionesses,” noted Okoth.

“Sevens rugby is an area I believe our teams are well adept at. I'm confident the team selected will do the country proud,” observed Okoth.

The federation has 280 U18 boys from whom to pick a final squad of 35, who will feature in an invitational tournament in either South Africa or Zimbabwe.

“The Kenya Rugby Union is working on a sourcing for resources for this particular group to give them game time and to test themselves against their peers in either Zimbabwe or South Africa in November or December,” added Okoth.

They plan to send the team to next year's Currie Cup in South Africa.

“We are working on a plan for that tournament to give the U18 capacity and to test them accordingly in one of the biggest age-grade tournaments in the world,” added Okoth.



A past action between Butula and Kitondo School / FILE



CAF AFRICAN NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP 2024



Gilberto vows Angola will 'work harder' after stalemate with Kenya

CAF

FOR Gilberto, Thursday night's Group 'A' clash at the African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024 in Nairobi was not just another group-stage fixture — it was a test of patience, control, and persistence.

In a match where Angola enjoyed the lion's share of possession but could not break down 10-man Kenya, the midfield general was at the heart of every move, dictating tempo and keeping his side on the front foot. Gilberto delivered a commanding performance in a high-intensity Group 'A' clash in front of a capacity crowd at the Moi International Sports Centre in Nairobi.

The match ended 1-1, with Kenya playing more than 70 minutes with 10 men after Marvin Nabwire was sent off in the 21st minute. Angola had the numerical advantage but they were unable to break down a resolute Kenyan defence, led by an inspired Byrne Omondi in goal.

Despite Angola's frustration at failing to convert dominance into victory in the 1-1 draw, Gilberto's composure and influence stood out. His commanding display earned him the Man of the Match award, recognition he insists belongs as much to his teammates as to himself.

"I am really happy to have won the trophy, but this is not my sole effort — it is a contribution from all my teammates that resulted in this. The credit is for them," he said after the match.

Playing in front of a packed Moi Stadium, Kasarani, Gilberto and his teammates had to contend not only with a stubborn Kenyan side but also with a wall of noise from the home fans.

"The atmosphere was very tough, as you know, Kenya was playing at home. Unfortunately, we didn't win the match, but we will keep working so that we can win the next one," he explained.



Angola's Gilberto in action against Kenya's Dan Sakari/HANDOUT

AUSTIN'S CHAN MOMENT

CAF

HARAMBEE Stars' newfound midfield sensation Austin Odhiambo moves like the breeze but strikes like thunder.

In Gor Mahia's green and white, he glides—a ghost in boots. In Harambee Stars' red, he becomes myth—a dancer scripting dreams with every touch. Now, beneath CHAN's celestial lights, the boy they once doubted has become the man a nation kneels to believe in.

On a sultry Sunday afternoon at Kasarani, as the vibrant rays draped the terraces in gold, Austin did more than score—he lit the torch of destiny.

In the 45th minute, with the calm of a monk and the poise of a poet, he carved his name into Kenya's sacred football scripture—the first-ever Harambee Stars goal at CHAN.

It wasn't just a strike. It was a detonation of hope. A shot that cracked open the gate between the ordinary and the miraculous.

The move was symphony, the finish—a sonnet. A sweeping exchange in midfield, a ghosting run, a heartbeat of stillness—and then, with a whisper of boot on ball, the net rippled and history bowed.

The goal was pure poetry. It was a script only he could have written, and Kenya needed him to. It was serenity under pressure—timed run, calm finish. The mark of a man in control of both ball and moment. It was a goal that didn't just win three points—it cracked open the gates of belief.

But he wasn't done. Against Angola, when the lights were dimming and the tide turned cruel on a nerve-wracking Thursday night, Austin stepped forward again—this time to the penalty spot.

Silence thundered. Pressure pulsed. He inhaled belief, exhaled fear, and kissed the net with an equaliser that steadied a sinking ship and kept Kenya's CHAN flame alive. He, as of August 8, was Chan's leading goalscorer with two. Nicknamed Rolls-Royce for his elegance on the ball, Austin's rise was anything but smooth.

Shunned by Engin Firat. Side-lined under Benni McCarthy's early reign. Many wondered if the nation would ever see what Gor Mahia fans screamed about every weekend.

But Austin never let go of the dream. This was his. And he took it like a man anointed. In a footballing culture that thrives on tribal lines, Austin Austin defies the divide. He's worn both blue and green—AFC Leopards

The boy from Baba Dogo lighting up Africa and Kenya's quest for glory on CHAN debut



Austin Odhiambo celebrates after scoring against Angola on Thursday evening /HANDOUT

and Gor Mahia—and earned love from both.

A rare jewel in a field of glass, he is chanted for in rival camps. A name that stitches enemies into believers. It's not just privilege. It's prophecy unfolding. Next comes Morocco.

"We respect Morocco, but our belief is strong. Morale is high, and we know a win puts us in a great position. We're ready to fight for it," he said.

And fight they must. For beneath the weight of history, the Harambee Stars are not just playing for today—they're playing for generations. He is no longer just a playmaker. He is the poster boy of belief. A conductor of Kenyan dreams.

Austin's goal was more than a number on the scoreboard. It was a tear in the curtain—a peek into the promised land. A signal to African football that Kenya has come not to spec-

tate, but to participate—and conquer.

"We're united as a team. We're at home, and the fans are behind us. That's the energy we need to push all the way to the final. One game at a time."

Austin may glide through midfield, but his words hit like declarations of war. He knows the weight on his shoulders. He embraces it.

Austin is no longer a hidden gem. CHAN has revealed him to Africa, and Kenya is proud.

From Raila's backyard to the roar of Kasarani, from club hardship to national acclaim—he stands tall.

And if football truly is the beautiful game, then Austin is its perfect sonnet.

Abasi: The beating heart leading Tanzania in the right direction

CAF

TANZANIA midfielder Yahya Abasi played a pivotal role in helping the Taifa Stars secure a crucial victory over Mauritania on Wednesday in Dar es Salaam, in their second group match at the African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024.

Abasi's standout performance in a tightly contested and thrilling encounter earned him the TotalEnergies Man of the Match award, a recognition of his significant influence throughout the match.

Often described as the "beating heart" of the Tanzanian midfield, Abasi is the fulcrum of coach Hemed Suleiman's tactical set-up — a

player the technical bench relies on heavily to dictate play and anchor the transitions from defence to attack.

Speaking at the post-match press conference after being named Man of the Match, Abasi reflected on the importance of remaining grounded and committed to the team's goals: "I thank God for being named Man of the Match.

"It's important when you win this award, but maybe next time another player will win it. What matters most is that we continue to work hard."

Abasi's words, delivered with pride and humility, reflect his level-headed approach and unwavering focus — a mindset often regarded

as key to a successful footballing career.

When asked about Tanzania's ambitions in the tournament, Abbas was clear about the team's immediate objectives: "We'll try to give our best to secure qualification to the knockout stages, and we'll take it one game at a time."

His statement underlines the team's commitment to preparation and their step-by-step approach in navigating the tournament's challenges.

At 29, Yahya Abasi is among the senior figures in the Taifa Stars squad.

He emphasised the importance of having experienced players in the team, particularly when competing at a

high level like CHAN.

"Perhaps the keyword is experience. Big teams in tough matches need experienced players. These players support the younger ones, and together, we aim to win games."

This highlights Abasi's leadership role, not just through his performances on the pitch, but also as a mentor to younger teammates during this crucial competition.

Abasi, who was instrumental in the hard-fought win over Mauritania, described the CHAN tournament as a valuable platform for home-based players to grow and showcase their abilities.



Yahya Abasi/HANDOUT

SCHOOLS

Battle lines drawn as Kenyan teams drawn in tough pools

SEE PAGE 29



SATURDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 9-10, 2025

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FOOTBALL

KASARANI ON EDGE

All to play for as Stars welcome Morocco in penultimate CHAN 2024 Group 'A' duel

BY TONY MBALLA

THE sky over Nairobi will not be still this Sunday as Kenya's Harambee Stars welcome Morocco in an African Nations Championships Group 'A' encounter at Moi Stadium, Kasarani.

The sky will shiver, and open like a psalm as 11 sons of Kenya step forward, not for glory, not for gold, but for something far older: the right to dream in full voice. This isn't a game. It is a covenant. When the whistle blows, it will not signal the start of a match—it will summon a nation's heartbeat to stand trial beneath the African sun.

And opposite them, clad in red and pedigree, the Atlas Lions of Morocco. Silent. Sharp. Unyielding. Proud. A nation's legacy in their chest, a continent's expectations in their shadow.

But Kenya does not bow to legacies. Kenya breaks them. For these Stars have come through fire. They've danced with Congo, stared down Angola, and now stand at the edge of eternity.

"This one is for the heart," said Benni McCarthy, shoulders tense



Harambee Stars' captain Aboud Omar in action with Angola's Antonio Hossi during a CHAN 2024 Group 'A' match at Moi Stadium, Kasarani, on Thursday/HANDOUT

like coiled thunder. "Morocco is polished, yes. Disciplined. But we've got fire. We've got our people. And we've got a belief that's been born through pain."

In the eye of this storm stands Rolls-Royce—Austin Odhiambo, Kenya's new rhythm. When he walks the midfield, he doesn't run—he writes.

His touch is a sonnet, his stride a story. Against DR Congo, it was his blade that struck first, his run lit the flame. Against Angola, it was his ice-cold penalty that stared down chaos.

"I don't play for points," said Odhiambo, fingers wrapped in

tape, voice low like a hymn. "I play for the kids who kick stones on dusty roads. For those who never made it. When I score, I bring them with me."

With every touch, he parts the pitch like a prophet in boots. Kenya's heart beats in its spine—Dan Sakari, Aboud Omar, Sylvester Owino, and Alphonse Omija: sentinels who don't just defend—they declare. Between them, Byrne Omondi waits—alert, feline, forged in reflex. He has not flinched once in this tournament. And he won't start now.

Upfield, Odhiambo will be joined

by Edward Omondi's chaos, Boniface Muchiri's thunder, and the returning ghost of David Sakwa, who plays like revenge reincarnate.

"We respect Morocco," said Omar, eyes blazing under the Kasarani lights. "But we don't fear them. We've bled for this shirt. Sunday is war—but it's our home. And we won't be silenced in our own house."

Morocco doesn't speak often—but when they do, the continent listens. Their 2-0 humbling of Angola was silent, brutal, and elegant. No drama. Just cold control. Under coach Tarik Sektioui, the Lions are machines wrapped in velvet. But they bleed. And they remember.

"We know what Kenya brings—energy, passion, heart," said Sektioui, eyes darting like ink strokes. "They're difficult to break. But we've prepared for this. My players are hungry. We didn't come all the way to Nairobi for photographs—we came for trophies."

Captain Mohamed Rabie Hrimat was colder.

"Kenya's crowd will be loud, but that's nothing new. We've played in Tunisia, Egypt, and Ghana. We thrive under pressure. Our football will do the talking. But we know we must fight—because Kenya will come like lions."

This is not just tactics. This is scripture. Kenya's blueprint is carved in chaos. High pressing, relentless surges and hearts on sleeves. Manzur Okwaro and Alpha Onyango will ignite the engine room, while Odhiambo slips into spaces not even shadow can find.

★ TENNIS

Make-or-break contest as Kenya face Morocco in BJJC in Namibia

BY WILLIAM NJUGUNA

IT'S a make-or-break for Team Kenya as they face Morocco in a pivotal Billie Jean King Cup clash on Saturday in Windhoek, Namibia.

At stake is a promotion slot to Group 2 in 2026, and after coming close in the last two years, the side believes they have to seize the moment and banish the demons of the past two years.

Team captain Francis Rogoi said the girls are relishing the battle of a tough test against the North Africans.

"We have had a good week, winning all our matches, but qualification now boils down to this match. Mentally and physically, the girls are more than ready for the battle ahead," observed Rogoi.

Morocco defeated Madagascar, Burundi and Namibia 3-0 to advance.

Team Kenya began their campaign with a 3-0 win over Tunisia on Monday, with Zimbabwe-based Melissa Mwakha winning the opening match 6-1, 6-0 against Lina Soussi.

African Games champion Angela Okutoyi showed her class with hard fought 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 win over Mouna Bouzgarrou.

In the doubles category, Okutoyi and



Cynthia Wanjala beat Ranim Rasill and Bouzgarrou 6-1, 6-3.

Angela Okutoyi /FILE

Japan donates badminton gear to boost growth, inclusivity in Kenya

BY CHARLENE MALWA

JAPAN ambassador to Kenya Hiroshi Matsuura believes their support for Kenyan badminton will serve as a bridge for sporting collaboration while accelerating inclusion, especially for para-athletes.

Speaking on Friday morning at the Embassy of Japan, when they donated training equipment and kit, the envoy said their support reflects Japan's continued commitment to supporting social transformation through sport.

"We are delighted to strengthen our friendship with Kenya through sports," said Matsuura. "These donations, sourced from communities and supporters across Japan, reflect our shared belief in the power of sports to

inspire hope, unity and achievement."

The handover event, hosted by the Embassy of Japan in partnership with the Badminton Association of Japan (BAJ), saw a consignment of equipment presented to two key associations — Badminton Kenya and the Kenya Para-Badminton Federation.

The donation included 70 rackets, 180 shuttlecocks, 10 uniforms and 10 racket covers.

"Beyond the rackets and uniforms, this event shows how sport can connect people, bring communities together and foster resilience," added Matsuura.

Badminton Kenya chairperson Peter Muchiri said while badminton remains a developing sport in Kenya, the event marked a significant boost in both material

support and international goodwill.

"This equipment will go a long way in strengthening our junior and community badminton programmes," said Muchiri. "We are especially encouraged by the inclusion of para-badminton athletes, which ensures nobody is left behind in the growth of this sport."

The Kenya Para Badminton Federation said the gesture is an affirmation of recognition and inclusion.

"This support not only uplifts our athletes but also validates our efforts to raise the profile of para-badminton in Kenya," said para badminton president Jennifer Kamande.



Kenya Badminton chairperson Peter Muchiri with Japanese Ambassador to Kenya Hiroshi Matsuura /CHARLENE MALWA

