



# Siasa

Ruto's turf remains intact as opposition struggles to unite

Politics: Page 8

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*weekend* **STAR**

Beyond turmoil in Mt Kenya, grip on traditional political bases now doubtful

# LITMUS TEST FOR RUTO AND RAILA AS KEY ALLIES DEFECT

Page 4-5



ODM: Babu Owino



ODM: Richard Onyonka



UDA: Mohamed Ali



UDA: Boni Khalwale



UDA: Caleb Amisi



UDA: Seki ole Kanar

Trailblazer and women's rights champion Phoebe Asiyo dies at age of 93

PAGE 7



Textbook heist? Auditor flags Sh540m missing from schools' book programme

PAGE 8



ODM Nairobi  
county  
chairperson  
George Aladwa  
on Thursday  
/EZEKIEL AMING'A



PRESSURE MOUNTS

# Declare 2027 pact, Raila, Ruto urged

MPs and supporters say formal announcement of the alliance is long overdue

JULIUS OTIENO  
@JuliusOtieno01

PRESIDENT William Ruto and opposition chief Raila Odinga's allies now want the two leaders to publicly declare their political pact ahead of the 2027 general election.

In what could spark significant political realignments, the leaders' supporters, including MPs, say a formal announcement of the alliance is long overdue.

They said a clear direction is necessary for grassroots mobilisation and strategic campaign planning to beat rivals.

In March, President Ruto and Raila signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) under a 10-point agenda aimed at fostering national unity, inclusivity and political stability.

Since the agreement, the two have demonstrated a cordial working

relationship, attending joint events and issuing coordinated political messages—a development that has fueled speculation about a potential 2027 coalition.

However, neither leader has formally confirmed whether they intend to work jointly in the next elections.

Uncertainty still lingers, particularly amid whispers within political circles that Raila could be contemplating yet another stab at the presidency.

Their allies say the prolonged silence is complicating their preparations for the next election cycle.

They warn that without explicit guidance, political mobilisation efforts at the grassroots level risk stagnating—giving the opposition a head start in the race to 2027.

In Nairobi, several ODM leaders have publicly declared readiness for campaigns. Newly elected ODM

Nairobi branch officials, led by chairman George Aladwa, affirmed their commitment to the alliance and campaigns once instructed by their party leader and the President.

“What Raila says regarding who we should support for President, we shall follow,” the Makadara MP said. “He is our party leader and whoever he endorses, we will support.”

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

This renewed push for clarity comes days after Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot, a close confidant of President Ruto, echoed similar sentiments while addressing mourners at a funeral attended by Raila in Bomet

## VOICE FOR WOMEN

# Pioneer female MP from Gusii Catherine Nyamato dies at 72

GORDON OSEN

TRAILBLAZING politician and pioneer woman MP from Kisii and Nyamira counties Catherine Nyamato has died.

The MP served from 1997 to 2002 after being nominated by former President Daniel Moi's Kanu party.

Nyamato died on Tuesday at her rural home in Borabu subcounty, Nyamira county after collapsing while talking to youths who were building a boia boda shade near her farm. She was rushed to Summit Hospital where she was pronounced dead upon arrival. The body has since been moved to Lee funeral home.

While in and out of Parliament, Nyamato became an immutable voice for women and children's rights.

“Just learnt of the unfortunate demise of Catherine Nyamato who is a trailblazer on women's rights. I worked very closely with Nyamato in the past while I served as the chairperson of Coalition on Violence Against Women and she often hosted us in her rural home during our awareness creation on women's rights in Kisii and Nyamira counties,” said Suba North MP Millie Mabona mourned Nyamato.

“I also worked closely with her at the Kenya Women Political Caucus where we sought inclusion of women in the political space. I was with her late last year at a women leadership forum.”

Nyamira Governor Amos Nyaribo, described her as a great political pillar, a neighbor and a mentor.

He said Nyamato wore many caps. “She campaigned against early marriages, Female Genital Mutilation and low female literacy rates. Her dedication to women's empowerment was unmatched,” the governor said.

Nyamato was also celebrated for her eloquence, pragmatism and unwavering commitment to social justice.

West Mugirango MP, Stephen Mogaka said, “Nyamato was one of the most consequential women leaders of our time from the Gusii region.”



Pioneer woman  
MP from Kisii  
and Nyamira  
counties  
Catherine  
Nyamato  
/HANDOUT

## STAR SURVEY

### TODAY'S QUESTION

Has President Ruto's administration delivered its promises so far?

### YESTERDAY'S QUESTION

Should drinking age be raised from 18 to 21 years?

YES 40%



NO 60%



## ON THE LOOSE

# Help cops hunt down serial killer, MP urges residents

KNA

GEM MP, Elisha Odhiambo has urged residents to support local police in pursuing a suspected serial killer targeting young girls and women.

He said while the government and the security agencies are doing everything to arrest the suspect, the community can hasten the process.

Odhiambo, however, warned against politicisation of security matters.

“I am calling upon the public and the people of Gem to remain calm,” he said.

The MP spoke after meeting

grassroots women leaders at Mutumbu in North Gem,

Odhiambo urged police to ensure that decisive steps are taken to bring to book all perpetrators of crime in the constituency.

He lamented that suspects in several previous criminal incidents were let to go scot-free, sending a wrong signal to the public.

The MP gave examples of violence during a by-election in South

**ODHIAMBO URGED POLICE  
TO TAKE DECISIVE STEPS  
TO ADDRESS INSECURITY**

Gem ward and another incident in the same ward where MCA Otuom Polo was stabbed in the buttocks during a funeral.

“We cannot have a scenario where people believe that they can commit crime and go scot-free,” he said, urging the police to re-visit the crime files.

Meanwhile, professionals from Gem called for an urgent security meeting to address the rising insecurity.

Led by Kisumu City Manager, Abala Wanga, the professionals said killings have become a worrying trend.

“We cannot have a scenario where Gem Constituency, known widely as a citadel of academic elites and civilised people, is now turning into a human slaughter house,” he said. He challenged Siaya county commissioner Norbert Komora to urgently convene the meeting to address the issue.



## BLACK SPOT

# Two dead, 10 injured in Nakuru highway crash

*Witnesses say trailer driver ferrying logs lost control and hit 14-seater matatu*

JENNIFER KANARI  
@TheStarKenya

A seven-year-old boy and his mother were killed after a trailer hit a matatu along the Nakuru-Eldoret highway at the notorious Ngata black spot.

At least 10 other people sustained serious injuries.

The accident, according to eyewitnesses, involved a PSV vehicle and a trailer that was ferrying logs.

The driver of the trailer reportedly lost control and rammed into a 14-seater matatu.

Eyewitnesses said several passengers were trapped under the trailer. They said the mother and child had stopped the matatu in order to board when the trailer rammed into the matatu from behind.

"A woman and her child were standing when a trailer came from nowhere and knocked them," Hillary Chwea, a resident of Ngata, said.

Emergency responders rushed to the scene to assist those injured.

Bodies were taken to Nakuru City Mortuary as vehicles were redirected through the Njoro interchange.

Residents of Ngata have raised concerns about the road that has been under construction, saying it does not have a service lane and a stage.

Allan Odhiambo, a resident of Ngata, said that their main plea is for the road to have a service lane.

"Our major concern is very simple, and we have expressed it for a long time. Our plea is that this



road should have a service lane," Odhiambo noted.

Motorists have been urged to be careful while using the roads to avoid accidents and unnecessary loss of lives which have been witnessed in the recent past in various parts of the county.

In April, at least seven people were killed in an accident in the Limuru area along the Nakuru-Nairobi highway.

During the accident, seven people died after a 14-seater matatu lost control and veered off the road at the Kamandura junction on the Nairobi-Nakuru highway, police said.

Witnesses and police said the vehicle plunged into a steep slope and rolled several times, killing five on the spot.

In another accident, at least seven people were killed while 11 others were injured in a grisly road accident at Kijauri junction along the Kisii-Sotik highway on July 12.

Those injured include three critical cases at a local hospital.

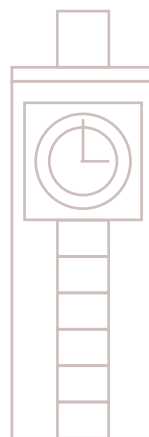
The accident increased to 14, the number of those killed in separate accidents on Friday alone, police said. More than 15 others were injured in the accidents, officials said.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Residents of Ngata have raised concerns over the road that is under construction, saying it does not have a service lane and a stage for travellers.

The scene of the accident in Ngata, Nakuru /SCREENGRAB

## CORRIDORS OF POWER



### POLITICAL GOSSIP

Who is doing what and where in the world of politics



★ **A ONCE-FIERY COUNTY** boss famous for his acerbic tongue has gone eerily silent. The governor, who previously dominated political rallies with scathing anti-government tirades and bravado, has not only skipped key opposition events but also significantly toned down his social media rhetoric. Insiders close to the governor whisper that he may be toying with the idea of switching allegiances, a move that would send shockwaves through his current political camp. He has reportedly been seen in discreet meetings with individuals linked to the ruling coalition, fuelling speculation that it's only a matter of time before the once thunderous voice re-emerges singing a different political tune.

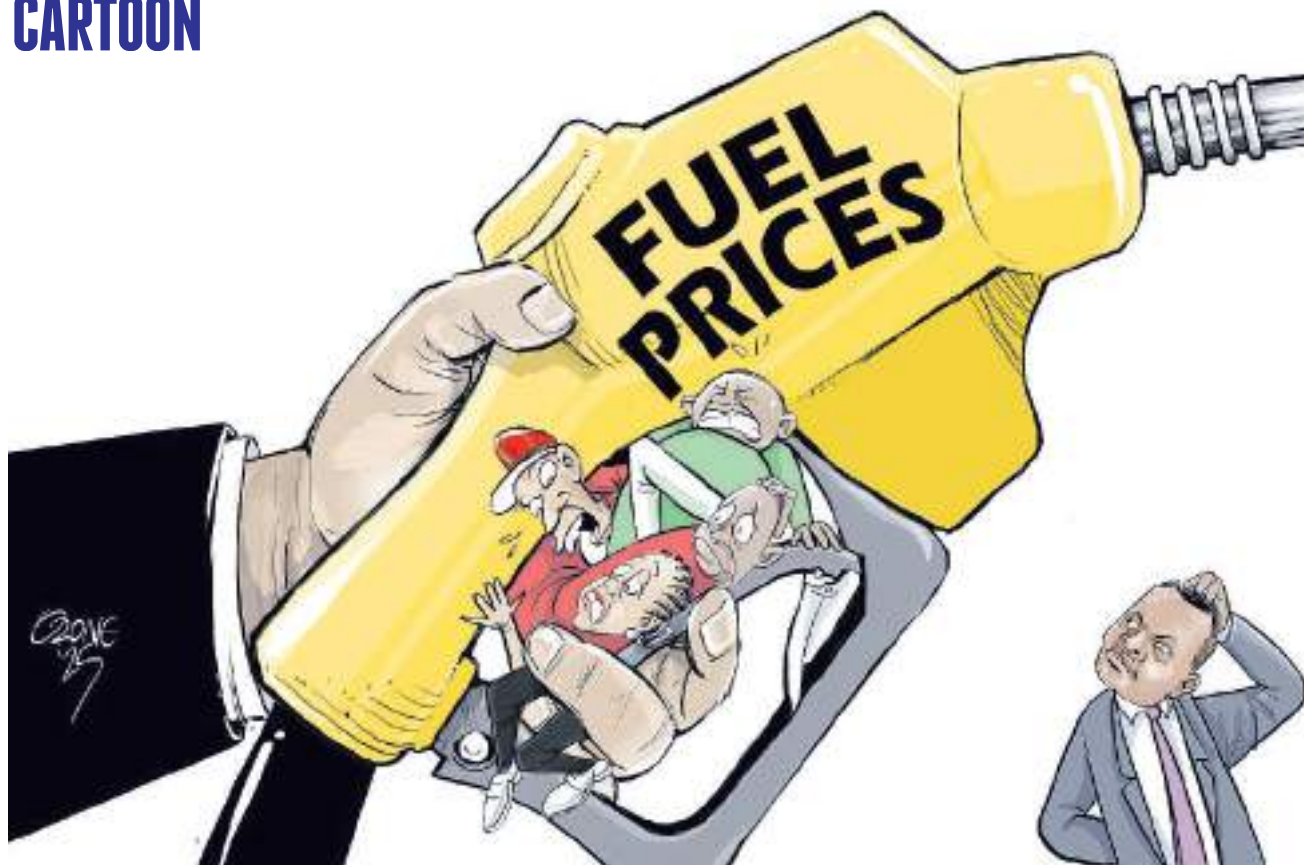
★ **A SENATOR FROM** a politically charged region is facing a backlash from his peers after he allegedly leaked a private contribution list meant to support a former colleague in need. The lawmaker reportedly took a screenshot of the list moments after making his donation and handed it over to his bloggers in a bid to score clout. The list is said to have surfaced online—with highlighted names and amounts—showcasing the senator as one of the top donors. This publicity stunt has not gone down well with several leaders, who now view his action as a tasteless attempt to politicise a solemn act of solidarity.

★ **THINGS APPEAR TO** have backfired for an MP known for drawing sympathy from constituents by reportedly showing up at village functions with heavily bandaged hands. Sharp-eyed residents were stunned after allegedly spotting him in Nairobi—barehanded, exchanging firm handshakes, and sharing hearty laughs at a posh uptown restaurant—just a day after his dramatic, bandage-clad appearance in the village. The curious turnaround is said to have sparked murmurs among constituents over the MP's well-rehearsed performance for sympathy.

★ **"HE'D BETTER STOP** coming here." These are the words of frustrated residents in a constituency within a city. They say they suffer massive losses due to rampant looting by unruly youths and goons who accompany their MP during visits. During his most recent appearance, the lawmaker's entourage reportedly invaded business premises, looting shops and snatching valuables from traders and passersby. The residents are now demanding that their MP stays away from the area altogether—unless he can rein in the criminal elements that trail him.

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

## CARTOON





## LITMUS TEST BEYOND THE TURMOIL IN MT KENYA, BOTH LEADERS' FIRM GRIP ON THEIR TRA



# Trouble looms for Ruto and Raila as allies plot defection

MOSES OGADA  
@AliwaMoses

TROUBLE is looming for President William Ruto and ODM leader Raila Odinga as key allies signal plans to break away, either to team up with rivals or to forge independent paths ahead of the 2027 general election.

Beyond the turmoil in Mt Kenya, both leaders' firm grip on their traditional political bases is now doubtful, with former loyalists defecting or distancing themselves from their once-influential principals.

The likely defections threaten to weaken the political dominance of the two most powerful figures in Kenya's current political landscape and may reflect deeper shifts in the country's political dynamics.

Several leaders within both Ken-

ya Kwanza and ODM now fear the burden of incumbency could come at a steep political cost in 2027.

The courage by some of the leaders to openly breakaway from Raila and Ruto, while still confident of a win, could also signify changing political fortunes for the duo, analyst say.

Interestingly, some of the realignments are happening in Nairobi, Western Kenya, Coast and in parts of Maasailand, regions where Raila and Ruto swept clean in the 2022 polls.

Ruto's administration is grappling with unprecedented public unrest fueled by high taxation, allegations of corruption, and growing accusations of impunity.

This pressure has prompted ambitious political leaders to quietly distance themselves from the broad-

“

GITILE NAITULI

*Raila has caused irreparable damage. No magic can make him get even a quarter of his former supporters. For the first time, people saw a Raila pattern, which is selfish*

based government. Multiple MPs who rode the UDA or ODM wave in 2022 are now crafting new political identities.

Some hint at contesting as independents or aligning with emerging formations—seeking to avoid being directly associated with the perceived failures of the government.

Others are drifting toward the opposition, with Raila's influence suffering particularly in the Gusii region.

In Central Kenya, many leaders, including some current governors and senior government officials, are said to be planning to quit as the clock ticks towards 2027.

Moses Kuria resigned last weeks as Ruto's adviser, but his political plans remain unclear.

Prominent figures once fiercely loyal to Ruto or Raila and now



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# DITIONAL POLITICAL BASES IS NOW DOUBTFUL



President William Ruto in Dandora on Thursday, when he inspected the progress of Nairobi rivers regeneration /PCS

seemingly changing course include Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale and MPs Mohamed Ali (Nyali), Babu Owino (Embakasi East), and Caleb Amisi (Saboti).

In Kisii, nearly all ODM MPs have signaled defection. They include Senator Richard Onyonka and Kitutu Chache South MP Anthony Kibagendi.

In Maasailand, Kajiado Senator Lenku Seki, who was elected on Ruto's UDA ticket, has shifted his allegiance to Gachagua.

It is a similar case in Narok, where Moitalel Ole Kenta, who ran for Narok governor on Raila's ODM party ticket in 2022, is leaning towards Gachagua.

In Western Kenya, Senator Khalwale—long regarded as a key Ruto ally and who doubles up as the Majority Whip—is gradually detaching himself from the ruling UDA party.

Sources close to the outspoken legislator reveal that he is quietly laying the groundwork for a new political outfit, the United Patriotic Movement, which is reportedly in the process of being registered through proxies. The party is expected to be headquartered in Nairobi.

"Yes, he has registered a party through proxies. He cannot declare himself party leader because he is still serving as a senator," said a close confidant who requested anonymity.

In a video clip that has since gone viral, Khalwale hinted at the formation of a political vehicle to rescue Luhyas from what he termed as the current political bondage.

"I have respected Wetang'ula. I have respected Mudavadi, but because they have let us down, I have decided. Let them go there (stay in government), but they will also find me here," he says.

"I have been relying on them so that we walk together, either in one vehicle or a vehicle that can give me leeway to reach up there. That is the problem they used in 2022 to stop me. I'm the first person who brought William Ruto to the Luhya nation."

When contacted by The Star, Khalwale neither confirmed nor denied the reports. Instead, he offered a cryptic analogy:

"Even Americans went to the moon, but they never said until they were there. Let's continue talking. We will talk."

Known for his fiery speeches and blunt commentary, Khalwale has recently emerged as a sharp critic of the Ruto administration—especially over alleged police killings, abductions, and what he calls a politically motivated anti-corruption drive.

His defiance is seen as a potential sign of shifting allegiances in the vote-rich Western region ahead of 2027.

His latest criticism followed the dramatic arrest of Trans Nzoia Governor George Ntembeya by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission.

Khalwale came to Ntembeya's defense, aligning himself with the embattled governor, who is increasingly leaning toward Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for Citizens Party. He decried the arrest as political persecution.

"That was political intimidation of the governor," Khalwale said, further fueling speculation of his split from the Ruto camp.

At the Coast, Nyali MP Mohamed Ali, popularly known as Jicho Pevu from his days as an investigative journalist, has also signaled intent to ditch UDA as he eyes the Mombasa gubernatorial seat in 2027.

In an interview with the Star, Ali lamented internal party wrangles and accused some UDA operatives of micromanagement and exclusion.

"There is a lot of micromanagement in the party, especially in Mombasa. It's stifling leadership and personal agency," he said.

His discontent has caught the attention of the opposition. Last month, Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka hinted that Ali could be headed their way. At a rally in Changamwe, Kalonzo praised Ali and suggested his defection was imminent.

"You have been greeted by a young man called Jicho Pevu. Do you know Jicho Pevu? He has said he is on his way. He will join us like the others," Kalonzo told the crowd.

Ali, the only MP elected on a UDA ticket in Mombasa, appeared

to confirm his frustrations days later in a scathing social media post directed at the Kenya Kwanza administration.

"As a leader in this country and a former investigative journalist who sought to bring truth and justice to my fellow Kenyans, nothing is clearer to me today than the depths of depravity we have sunk in as a country," he wrote. "The lies do not add up, and the story does not stick."

He accused the regime of abandoning its promises and adopting "uncouth and authoritarian" methods to suppress dissent.

Meanwhile, Raila's side of the political aisle is restless with internal rebellion. Some of his close allies are now distancing themselves from the opposition leader's broader alliances—some quietly, others publicly.

Both Babu Owino and Caleb Amisi have openly criticised the

Ruto-Raila cooperation and hinted they may walk away if the two join forces for 2027. Amisi, in a clear indication of exploring new political options, remarked: "We must not just accept to be bandwagoned into only two political formations. Alternative voices are also critical in solving problems."

"Kenya needs a renaissance. For Kenya to change, we must never be drawn into team Wamunyoro (Rigathi Gachagua) or team Ruto. We must preach change—change that Kenya desperately needs."

Babu, who has declared interest in the Nairobi gubernatorial race, has been especially vocal in opposing the Ruto-Raila rapprochement.

Despite both leaders hinting at supporting Governor Johnson Sakaja, Babu has insisted he will be on the ballot—triggering speculation that he may bolt out to pursue his ambition elsewhere.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

With defections looming, disillusionment simmering and new alliances forming under the radar, observers believe that both Ruto and Raila now face an uphill task to either consolidate their camps or risk being left behind in a fast-shifting political terrain



ODM: Anthony Kibagendi



ODM: Moitalel ole Kenta



ODM leader Raila Odinga during a press conference at the Nairobi Serena Hotel on July 7 /EMMANUEL WANSON



## NEWS GENERAL

## TROUBLING REGRESSION

# Transparency International, KNCHR raise alarm over corruption trends

KNA

KENYA is grappling with a worsening corruption crisis, with bribery deeply embedded in the delivery of public services, especially affecting the youth and the poor.

This is according to two new reports released by Transparency International Kenya and supported by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

Speaking during the launch of the 2025 Kenya Bribery Index and the County Governance Status Report in Nairobi, Transparency International Kenya executive

director Sheila Masinde warned of a troubling regression in the fight against corruption.

She said the country is witnessing a sharp decline across many institutions that had shown signs of progress in 2019.

“The police service, now ranked as the most bribery-prone institution, has soared from a score of 64 in 2019 to 84 in 2025. This is not just a statistic, it reflects real lives,” she said, stressing that Kenyans are being forced to pay bribes to access even the most basic public services.

Further, Masinde underscored that the average size of bribes has also

significantly increased across key public institutions.

“In the Judiciary, the average bribe is Sh8,800, followed by land services at Sh12,610, and police at Sh6,862. In an economy as strained as ours, this is a heavy burden for ordinary Kenyans,” she added.

The executive director decried the culture of impunity within the police service, linking the high levels of bribery to systemic lack of accountability.

“If officers are not held responsible for police brutality, including killings and serious injuries, why would they fear being caught taking a bribe? This



Transparency International executive director Sheila Masinde (C) and representatives from other organisations during the launch of the reports in Nairobi on Thursday /KNA

becomes a small matter compared to the crimes they already get away with,” she said.

Masinde said the brunt of graft is borne by young people, the self-employed, and the unemployed.

She said the age group most

affected is between 18 and 44, who are trying to access justice, start businesses, register land, or obtain licenses yet face relentless demands for bribes thereby frustrating economic potential and erodes public trust.

1.4 MILLION

# Ruto woos Gen Z with jobs, dismisses opposition team

*Says his administration has a comprehensive strategy to tackle youth unemployment*



President William Ruto in Dandora when he inspected the progress of the Nairobi Rivers Regeneration that has created 20,000 jobs for the youth in Nairobi, with an additional 20,000 set to begin working next Monday /PCS

JULIUS OTIENO  
@JuliusOtieno04

PRESIDENT William Ruto has dismissed the opposition as “clueless tribal anarchists” intent on exploiting the youth for selfish political gain, even as he announced an ambitious plan to create 1.4 million jobs targeting Gen Z.

Speaking during an inspection of the ongoing Nairobi River clean-up, Ruto launched a blistering attack on the camp led by impeached Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, accusing them of lacking any

meaningful strategy to address youth unemployment.

“I’m asking my competitors, what tangible plan do you have for the young people of Kenya?” the President posed, drawing cheers from the crowd.

“You cannot claim leadership when your only agenda is to organise youths to loot, destroy businesses and attack private property. That is not an alternative job plan.”

Ruto appeared to link the opposition to the recent violent and chaotic protests that saw property destroyed and businesses looted

across the country. “Let them tell us their plans. It cannot be that their work is to organise youths to attack, loot and destroy other people’s properties and businesses. That cannot be an alternative plan for creating jobs,” he stated.

Currently, dozens of youths—including some allied to Gachagua—are facing terrorism-related charges after authorities linked them to the looting and arson during the demonstrations.

Gachagua and the opposition, however, have denied involvement, instead accusing the state of

sponsoring the violence.

“We’ve seen the Interior CS pretentiously visiting shops looted by state-sponsored goons in a bid to conceal his complicity. Kenyans are not fools,” Gachagua said recently.

But an unapologetic Ruto insisted that his administration has a comprehensive strategy to tackle youth unemployment.

The President was accompanied by several UDA and ODM leaders, led by Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja and Ruaraka MP TJ Kajwang’.

In a bid to win back the support of Gen Z—who have been leading mass protests against his government—the President outlined several employment initiatives.

He said his government plans to create at least 1.4 million jobs across various sectors, specifically targeting young people.

Ruto said the government is scaling up the job opportunities in the affordable housing programme from the current 300,000 to 600,000 youths.

In addition, at least 200,000 youths are being employed in the Climate WorX programme.

The “Climate WorX” programme, formerly known as Kazi Mtaani, is an initiative that aims to provide employment opportunities for young people in informal settlements while also addressing climate-related issues.

It focuses on public works projects like road construction and environmental sanitation, to create sustainable jobs and improve community well-being.

The President said another 180,000 youths are already earning a living from online jobs, and his administration is keen to expand the online space for the youth.

“We already have 400,000 young people working in our export of

labour or labour mobility plan. What is your plan?” he asked his critics.

“You can’t be planning to pay young people to cause destruction and call that a job creation strategy. That is simply unacceptable.”

Unfulfilled promises for the creation of jobs have been at the centre of the youth-led protests that have taken the country by storm.

The President cautioned the youth not to fall for what he termed as deception by self-serving political figures who lack a clear agenda.

“Don’t be misled by leaders who have no plan for you. They are tribalists driven by hate. Their only interest is in destroying what others have built,” he warned.

Ruto emphasised that Kenya cannot afford to lose time to political violence and ethnic divisions while millions of youths remain jobless and in need of opportunity.

“We have no time for chaos, violence, or ethnic politics. We want to build our country,” he said.

He further challenged opposition leaders to stop inciting unrest and instead present practical solutions to the country’s pressing issues.

“Anyone with a genuine plan for Kenya should come forward and share it with the youth. I have mine—let them bring theirs,” Ruto stated.

He concluded by underscoring the importance of peace and stability for sustainable development.

“Young people cannot get jobs in an environment of chaos and conflict. National development only thrives in a peaceful and stable country,” Ruto said.

“Let us agree to protect our nation and create space for growth, progress and opportunity.”

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Recently, President Ruto reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to Kenya’s transformation, insisting that the country’s development agenda is firmly on course. He dismissed critics and urged unity among Kenyans in pushing the country forward. Ruto said the country cannot afford to waste time on violence and ethnic politics, especially when millions of young people are jobless and desperate for opportunity.

NEWS GENERAL

VETERAN POLITICIAN

Trailblazer, women’s rights champion Phoebe Asiyo dies

ELIUD KIBII

VETERAN politician Phoebe Asiyo has passed on at the age of 93 years.

Asiyo died on Wednesday in North Carolina in the US, her son,

Caesar Asiyo, said in a media statement on Thursday.

“With heavy hearts, the Asiyo family shares the profound loss of our cherished mother, Hon Dr Phoebe Muga Asiyo, who has peacefully passed away in North

Carolina, USA. Her presence and love will be deeply missed by all who knew her,” Caesar said.

He said details regarding the memorial services and funeral arrangements will be communicated soon.

Born on September 12, 1932, Asiyo was a trailblazer, becoming the first Senior Superintendent of Kenya Prisons in 1963, the first African chairperson of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake in 1958 and the first woman Elder among the Luo.

She was also the first Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations Development Fund for Women and a commissioner in the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission.

In the political space, she is credited with pushing for the expansion of the space of women in politics, gender equality and education.

Fondly known as Mama Asiyo, she was elected as Karachuonyo MP in 1980, a position she held until 1983, when the House was dissolved.

She made a comeback in 1992 after the multi-party system and served until 1997.

SECOND INCIDENT

Tragedy as patient killed in KNH ward

The man was found dead on his bed with his throat slit

CYRUS OMBATI

DETECTIVES are investigating an incident in which yet another patient was killed in a ward at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi.

The male patient was found dead on his bed with his throat slit, police and hospital officials said.

The incident happened in ward seven yesterday.

Other patients told police and KNH officials an intruder went to the ward and killed the patient. The motive of the latest killing is yet to be established.

Witnesses said the victim was a physically disabled man. The witness added the man had his throat slit.

Top police officers led by Kilimani police commander Patricia Yegon and her DCI counterpart Hussein Mahat spent the better part of Thursday afternoon at the scene as part of probe into the murder.

Mahat said no arrest had been made.

There was no immediate comment from the hospital. An official said the matter is under probe and they will issue a statement later.

The police were reviewing CCTV footages at the hospital to determine the killer.

This is the second such incident to happen at the hospital this year after that of February 7, 2025.

Gilbert Muthoni, 39, was last February found on a hospital bed with a slit throat.

Pathologists who conducted a postmortem at the hospital mortuary said the slit was about three centimeters deep and it caused the death.

Kinyua’s body also had blisters in the back indicating he had not moved from the same position for long.

“He was supposed to be moved or turned after every two hours but the blisters noted in the back shows he lay for long,” said one of the pathologists.

Homicide detectives handling the matter say they are still investigating murder.

So far, the hospital says that it does not have any proof that the killer was from outside.

The detectives interrogated a patient who was sharing a ward with Kinyua as they collected swabs for DNA analysis. He told them he could not recall what happened that night.

Nurses and security personnel at KNH were also grilled as police retrieved more CCTV footage from the facility for analysis.

The hospital said all CCTV footage from Ward 7B has been availed to detectives, revealing that no CCTV cameras are installed in patient rooms for privacy reasons but they have been installed in all alleys.

It came nine years after a similar killing happened at the same facility.

Cosmas Mutunga Kenyatta, 42, was found brutally murdered on his hospital bed in November 2015.

Mutunga was admitted to the hospital’s Ward 8C on November 8 and was found dead in the night with stab wounds and one of his eyes gouged out.

He was with an incapacitated and deaf cancer patient at the time he was killed.



KENYA PORTS AUTHORITY (KPA)



JOB VACANCY

Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) is a State Corporation mandated to maintain, operate, improve and regulate all sea and inland waterway ports in Kenya.

CHAIRMAN: JOINT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (JIC) - KENYA PORTS AUTHORITY

The KPA Joint Industrial Council which comprises representatives from Kenya Ports Authority and The Dock Workers Union invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill the position of ‘Joint Industrial Council Chairman’

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

- i. Applicants should be Kenyan Citizens.
- ii. Application letter should be accompanied by a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV), phone contact, email address, copies of academic and relevant professional certificates and a copy of the National Identity Card.
- iii. Applicants should meet requirements of Chapter 6 of the Constitution of Kenya. Only shortlisted candidates will be required to submit the following clearance certificates; Police Clearance Certificate from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Clearance Certificate from Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), Tax Compliance Certificate from Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), Clearance from the Ethics & Anti-corruption Authority (EACC), Report from an approved Credit Reference Bureau (CRB). The clearance certificates should be valid and current.
- iv. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.
- v. Canvassing in any form or failure to attach any of the stipulated documents shall lead to automatic disqualification.
- vi. Applications be submitted on or before 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025.
- vii. KPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**NOTE:** This is not a full-time engagement; the successful candidate will be called upon on a need basis.

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- ii. Be a holder of at least a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Social Sciences or any other related field from an accredited Institution.
- iii. Proven track record of successful CBA Negotiations with experience of not less than (10) years
- iv. Proven track record in Grievance and dispute resolution
- v. Knowledge and experience in Labour Relations Practices
- vi. Understanding of ILO Conventions and Practices
- vii. Excellent interpersonal communication and reporting skills
- viii. Understanding of terms and conditions of employment
- ix. Demonstrated professional competence, high integrity and leadership capability in work performance and results.

Duties and Responsibilities

- i. The JIC Chairman will Chair meetings of the KPA Joint Industrial Council for Industrial Harmony and business continuity
- ii. Interpret and guide on application of labour laws and other relevant legislations
- iii. Foster a cordial relationship between the Management and the Union
- iv. Advise and guide on disciplinary matters.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked ‘Application for Joint Industrial Council Chairman’ to the address below to reach us on or before **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 at 5:00 pm** East Africa Time.

Managing Director  
Kenya Ports Authority  
P.O. Box 95009-80104  
**MOMBASA**

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## NEWS GENERAL

HEIST

# Sh540m lost in textbooks initiative, says Gathungu

Report shows huge variance between books distributed and student enrolment record



**Auditor General Nancy Gathungu before the Senate Committee on County Public Investments and Special Funds on September 4 last year**  
/ENOS TECHE

LUKE AWICH  
@AchiaAwich

TOP Ministry of Education officials are on the spot for spending Sh540 million on excess and unnecessary textbooks and learning materials.

A report by Auditor General Nancy Gathungu says some of the materials

did not reach the learners. The report exposes widespread irregularities, mismanagement and possible fraud that could have denied thousands of learners critical learning materials.

It shows a huge variance between books distributed and student enrolment records, some for subjects they are not offering while others were not

delivered at all. Some schools also received learning materials years after they were expected.

The audit was conducted over a four-year period running from 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years.

During the period, Ministry of Education disbursed Sh27.8 billion

but Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development confirmed receiving Sh28.2 billion.

This leaves unexplained variance of Sh378 million.

"It was established that there was excess textbooks delivered to 394 secondary schools, 94 JSS and 162 primary schools in comparison to the

number of learners enrolled in the respective schools," the report reveals.

"The total value of shortfall of excess textbooks supplied to the schools amounted to Sh90.8 million."

In some instances, there was a glaring shortfall in textbooks reports that affected 415 secondary schools, 194 JSS and 245 primary schools.

The shortfall amounted to Sh295 million.

In the report, 118 secondary schools, 225 JSS and 26 primary schools received textbooks worth Sh30.3 million for subjects they were not offering.

Gathungu also disclosed that some significant number of schools either did not receive the books or received less costing the government Sh41.4 million.

"Comparison of textbooks delivered to schools as indicated in signed delivery notes with numbers indicated in the distribution lists provided by the KICD established that there were publishers, who delivered less textbooks to 183 secondary schools, 232 JSS and 253 primary schools," the Auditor General said.

According to the findings, the incessant delays affected 26 secondary schools, 29 JSS and 21 primary schools – they had to wait between three and 37 months.

Even in schools where the textbooks were received, the audit revealed that some 110 schools did not maintain records of the learning materials, teachers' guides and other instructions materials received.

The revelations are the latest in a string of financial improprieties plaguing government-funded education programmes.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The textbook disbursement programme to schools was meant to enable access of learning materials to all students in public schools. The program has however been rocked by mismanagement that has now become an audit query.

## INFORMAL CHANNELS

# Tax on remittances will promote illicit financial flows, says Diaspora PS

ELIUD KIBII

KENYA has warned that the US move to add taxes on remittances will result in illicit financial flows.

Diaspora Affairs Principal Secretary Roseline Njogu said the looming remittance taxes go against SDGs quest to reduce the cost of remittances as agreed globally.

"It could also hamper remittances or cause diaspora to use informal channels," she said.

Under the Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries, UN member states seek to reduce to less than three per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs

higher than five per cent by 2030.

However, the US Senate has approved a one per cent tax on remittances, specifically targeting cash, money orders and cashier's cheques sent by non-US citizens, including green card holders and temporary visa holders.

The tax is part of the "Big Beautiful Act" and is scheduled to take effect on January 1 next year.

This decision has sparked concerns about its potential impact on migrants and economies of countries that receive these remittances.

The move comes hot on the heels of the mass deportations and Trump's move to cut on foreign aid, heavily impacting on the developing countries.



State Department for Diaspora Affairs PS Roseline Njogu /EZEKIEL AMING'A

According to global tax affairs think tank Odi Global, the taxes are part of the budget package President Trump intends to use to fund his second-term agenda.

It includes an estimated \$170 billion (Sh21.9 trillion) dedicated for immigration enforcement and border-related operations.

The tax was originally set at five percent, as proposed in the first version of the Big Beautiful Bill, it was then reduced to 3.5 per cent and now stands at one one per cent in the Senate's version.

While previous versions of the tax only applied to non-US citizens, the passed tax applies to all remittance

senders. Odi Global says this will add to the roughly six per cent migrants already pay as fees to remittance service providers (such as Western Union or MoneyGram), banks and money transfer apps.

"That exceeds by more than double the goal of three per cent for remittance transfer costs set as part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This tax will apply to an estimated 23 million green-card holders, 14 million non-immigrant visa holders and 12 million unauthorised migrants and is likely to lead to a drop in remittances of approximately 1.6 per cent," it says.

It is also the first time the US federal government will implement a remittance tax on individual transfers. The US Congress narrowly passed the bill one day before the July 4 deadline. This approval means the remittance tax will apply to transfers made from January 1 next year.

The taxes are expected to have a hit on Kenya's diaspora remittances, which PS Njogu noted had an increase of 12.1 per cent to \$5.08 billion (Sh645 billion) in the year ended June 30.



## NEWS JUDICIARY

## PHOTO STORY



Ufungamano Joint Forum of Religious Organisations member Rev Eustace Kabui, assistant secretary Willy Mutiso and treasurer Zablon Isaac address journalists on the state of the nation during a press conference at Ufungamano House on Thursday /DOUGLAS OKIDDO

## INTENT TO KILL

# Court hands man 25 years for killing brother over land

*The judgment revises an earlier life sentence imposed on Kithumbi*

SHARON MWENDE  
@TheStarKenya

A family feud over land turned tragic when a dispute between two brothers in Meru county ended in bloodshed.

After years of legal battles, the Court of Appeal in Nyeri has finally sentenced Adriano Kithumbi to 25 years in prison for killing his brother, David Muthengi, during a heated confrontation in October 2014.

The judgment, delivered on July 4, revises an earlier life sentence imposed on Kithumbi by the High Court in 2018.

The court, while upholding the conviction for murder, reduced the sentence, citing the need for prisoners to know the length of their incarceration.

The case unfolded around a bitter and emotional family conflict.

On the fateful day, the brothers' centenarian mother, Marietta Nchoga, was seated outside her house with Muthengi when the incident occurred.

Testifying in court, Nchoga recounted the painful moment when the disagreement over land escalated. "My son said he had been robbed of land and asked his brother to leave. Then he hit him with a big stick. A struggle followed, and I ran screaming for help," she said.

Nchoga, who is over 100 years old and nearly blind, could not understand why one of her sons would

attack the other, especially since they had always had a good relationship. Fredrick Kibobori, the deceased's son, rushed to the scene after hearing his grandmother's screams.

He found his father on the ground, his neck nearly decapitated.

"The appellant was holding a panga over my father," he testified.

Kithumbi then chased Kibobori away while still wielding the panga.

Another witness, James Muthengi, also a son of the deceased, told the court that he saw Kithumbi arrive at the compound brandishing a panga and shouting about being denied family land.

From his home about 80 metres away, he watched in horror as his uncle attacked his father.

The postmortem report confirmed the brutal nature of the killing. Dr Wambugu testified that David died of massive haemorrhage due to a deep cut in the neck.

Despite Kithumbi's claims of acting in self-defense, the court found that his actions were deliberate and fuelled by malice.

The weapon, the body part targeted, and the severity of the injuries all pointed to intent to kill.

Kithumbi had argued that the attack was provoked.

He said his brother cut him first and that he was also assaulted by his nephews.

"I swung my panga while trying to flee, and it accidentally hit my brother on the neck. I didn't mean to kill him," he claimed.

He also said he lost the treatment notes that would have supported his claim of injury.

The appeal judges, justices Sankale ole Kantai, Jessie Lesiit, and Abida Ali-Aroni, however, dismissed his defense.

"Kithumbi armed himself with a panga and struck his brother in the neck," they ruled.

"The action and the part of the body targeted, the weapon used, and the severity of the injury were proof that the act was intended to kill."

Although the court upheld the conviction, it acknowledged evolving jurisprudence against indefinite sentences and the importance of clarity in sentencing.

"We think Kithumbi is entitled to know how long he will serve in prison," the judges said.

The 69-year-old Kithumbi, who has been in custody since 2014, will now serve a 25-year sentence starting from November 20, 2014.

"We set aside the life sentence awarded and substitute thereof a sentence of 25 years imprisonment from November 20, 2014, when the appellant (Kithumbi) appeared before the High Court of Kenya at Meru and took plea," the judgment reads.

## 'UNWARRANTED PERSONAL ATTACKS'

## JSC condemns attacks on judges over bond, bail rulings

JANEMOLLY ACHIENG

THE Judicial Service Commission has condemned what it describes as a growing trend of public attacks and vilification targeting judicial officers over their decisions on bail and bond matters.

In a statement issued Thursday, the commission reaffirmed its commitment to defending the independence of judges and magistrates, especially in light of recent criticism following decisions made by the Nanyuki and Kahawa law courts.

"The Judicial Service Commission reaffirms its unwavering commitment to defending the decisional independence of all judicial officers and judges," the statement read.

The JSC expressed concerns over what it termed as "unwarranted personal attacks" against judicial officers performing their constitutional duties.

According to the commission, such

actions misrepresent the role of the Judiciary and threaten both public confidence and the rule of law.

"Such conduct misrepresents the Judiciary's constitutional role, undermines judicial independence, and corrodes public trust in the administration of justice, a cornerstone of our democratic society," the commission stated.

While the JSC acknowledged public interest in court decisions, it emphasised that bail and bond rulings are not made arbitrarily.

The commission noted that judicial officers rely on the constitution, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Judiciary's Bail and Bond Policy Guidelines when making such determinations.

It warned that resorting to personal attacks not only undermines due process but also endangers the safety of judicial officers and the sanctity of court decisions.



Chief Justice Martha Koome  
/FILE

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## NEWS GENERAL

NOT ENOUGH

# Allocate more money to agriculture – ministers

*African leaders say there is need to scale up resources to tackle hunger*

GILBERT KOECH  
@KoechJunior\_1

AFRICAN ministers have reiterated the need for governments to allocate enough resources towards agriculture.

In draft resolutions at the ongoing 20th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, they said there is a need to scale up resources if hunger is to be tackled.

“Recalling the Maputo declaration on agriculture and food security in Africa (Assembly/AU/Decl.7 (II)), in which African heads of state and government committed to allocate at least 10 per cent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development within five years and adopt the comprehensive Africa agriculture development programme framework,” the draft resolutions state.

The Africa Agriculture Development Programme framework comprises four pillars, including sustainable land and water management.

The ministers attending the meeting are concerned that resources allocated to agriculture are not enough.

The Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods in 2014 also set an ambitious target, including ending hunger by 2025.

In the financial year 2025-26, Kenya’s National Treasury allocated Sh47.6 billion for programmes under the agriculture sector.

These include Sh8 billion for the Fertiliser Subsidy Programme; Sh10.2 billion for the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project; Sh800.0 million for the Small-Scale Irrigation and Value Addition Project; Sh1.2 billion for the Food Security and Crop Diversification Project and Sh5.8 billion for the Food Systems Resilience Project.



The total expenditure in the financial year 2025-26 budget is projected at Sh4,291.9 billion, equivalent to 22.3 per cent of GDP.

A recent UN report warns that millions of people in five global hunger hotspots are at risk of famine and death unless urgent humanitarian action is taken.

However, Kenya is among 10 countries that have been removed from the Hunger Hotspots list due to improved food security, offering a rare glimmer of hope amid worsening global hunger trends.

The joint report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme showed that Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali face the highest risk of extreme hunger and catastrophic food insecurity.

These communities, according to the report, are already grappling with famine or are on the brink due to a combination of conflict, economic shocks and climate-related disasters.

The Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP Early Warnings on Acute Food Insecurity report stated that Kenya, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Zambia and Zimbabwe have now been removed from the hotspot list.

The ministers also reiterated that there is a need to scale up efforts aimed at protecting soils.

In 2024, African Heads of State and Government concluded the Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health Summit on May 9, 2024, endorsing the Nairobi Declaration on Fertiliser and Soil Health.

**Delegates at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment /HANDOUT**

## LANDMARK INITIATIVE

## Kenya, China launch academy to boost technical education

KNA

KENYA and China have launched the China-Kenya Craftsman Academy at the Technical University of Kenya, a landmark initiative aimed at enhancing Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Speaking during the unveiling of the programme, Education CS Julius Ogamba hailed the academy as a critical step in strengthening Kenya-China education collaborations.

“This launch is a continuation of a fruitful partnership that has not only advanced capacity-building, but also provided our students with international exposure and access to modern technologies,” the CS said.

Additionally, Ogamba highlighted the success of the Africa Tech Challenge, which has trained over 700 participants from nine countries, and praised the academy as a symbol of Kenya’s growing commitment to industrial skills development.

Wang Lixia, the chairperson of the People’s Government of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, echoed the significance of the partnership, stating that the academy exemplifies China’s dedication to vocational cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

“This marks both a new beginning and a major milestone in our partnership. Inner Mongolia is ready to work closely with our Kenyan counterparts to share China’s vocational education successes and build a shared future through skills,” she said.

Tvet Principal Secretary Esther Muoria said the academy aligns with ongoing reforms aimed at modernising Kenya’s technical training.

“We have rolled-out 194 modular curricula across the country, adopted dual training models, and partnered with over 2,500 industries,” said Muoria, adding that this collaboration will further provide the Kenyan youth with globally competitive skills.

“Let this academy be a symbol of what can be achieved when nations unite in pursuit of skills, innovation and shared prosperity.”

Technical University of Kenya Vice Chancellor Prof Benedict Mutua, expressed pride in hosting the academy. “This facility is more than infrastructure, it is a beacon of innovation, partnership and practical learning,” said the VC, stressing that TUK is committed to producing graduates who are not only job-ready, but also capable of designing and exporting technology.

Wang Junwei, Party Secretary of Inner Mongolia Technical College of Mechanics and Electronics, underscored the depth of cooperation, revealing that the partnership has led to the establishment of several vocational training centers in Africa and the training of over 1,500 instructors. “Through 16 years of collaboration, we have built Africa’s largest eCNC Streaming Centre and developed over 400 bilingual teaching resources across five key technical areas,” he said.

## FIFTH TIME

## Duale donates iron sheets to Suq-Muqdi fire victims

KNA

HEALTH Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale on Thursday donated 1,000 iron sheets and 170 wheelbarrows to traders of Suq-Muqdi open air market in Garissa town, who lost their wares in a fire tragedy three weeks ago.

The donation valued at over Sh1.6 million will go to 550 traders, majority of who are women who eke a living by selling groceries on wheelbarrows and makeshift stands.

This was the fifth time in 10 years that the market had been affected by fire. The root cause is

yet to be established. Addressing the press at the Garissa town club after the distribution of the donation, Garissa county commissioner Mohamed Mwabudzo said most of the traders lost all their stock to the fire.

Mwabudzo said investigation into the fire is ongoing and that samples collected from the scene by DCI officers, were sent to Nairobi for further analysis.

“This is the fifth fire incident at this market. We sat down with the county government and agreed that we should get to the root cause of these fire incidences to prevent such calamities from happening in the

future,” Mwabudzo said. He said the design of a modern 750-capacity market that will cost over Sh500 million is complete and the tendering process is ongoing.

Mwabudzo said the contractor is expected on site in three months. He appealed to well-wishers to assist traders get back on their feet.

The market chairman Billow Adow, urged the county government to allow the victims to put up temporary shelters so that they can continue eking a living. Adow said some traders who have tried going back to their burned spaces are being harassed by county enforcement officers.



Garissa county commissioner Mohamed Mwabudzo addresses the press at Suq-Muqdi open air market in Garissa /KNA



## NEWS GENERAL



Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o, Health CS Aden Duale and JOOTRH chief executive Richard Lesiyampe during inspection of the cancer centre construction site at JOOTRH in Kisumu  
/FAITH MATETE

BRINGING SERVICES CLOSER

# State pledges funding for Kisumu cancer hub

*It will cover half of the Sh1bn cost to help patients access specialised care*

FAITH MATETE  
@faymatete

Cancer patients in the Lake Region have received a major lifeline after Health CS Aden Duale pledged Sh500 million towards the completion of a state-of-the-art cancer centre in Kisumu.

The Kisumu Comprehensive Cancer and Hematology Centre will be based at the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital (JOOTRH).

The centre, projected to cost Sh1 billion, is part of a larger national plan to decentralise specialised medical care from major urban centres to the counties.

"This investment represents our deep commitment to saving lives," Duale said during a tour of JOOTRH on Wednesday.

"We want to ensure cancer patients from Kisumu and surrounding counties no longer have to travel far for treatment."

Present were Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o, Medical Services PS Dr Ouma Olunga and JOOTRH CEO Dr Richard Lesiyampe.

The announcement rekindles hope for thousands of patients who have long struggled to access specialised cancer care, often travelling hundreds of kilometres for treatment.

In Kenya, cancer remains the third leading cause of death, accounting for an estimated 27,000 deaths annually.

Roughly 42,000 new cancer cases are reported each year, with breast and cervical cancer most common among women, and prostate and esophageal cancer leading among men.

During the tour, the CS also commissioned a 128-slice CT scan machine, a mammogram unit and a newly installed lift — all part of the National Equipment Support Programme.

Olunga hailed the planned cancer

centre as a game-changer not only for Kisumu but also for the entire western region and beyond.

"The elevation of JOOTRH to a fully-fledged Level 6 national referral hospital — on par with Kenyatta National Hospital — was done with this broader vision in mind," the PS said.

Currently, JOOTRH serves patients from 14 counties across the Lake Region, many of whom endure long waits and exhausting journeys to Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, which receives up to 150 cancer patients daily for radiotherapy alone.

"With this new cancer centre, we aim to decentralise cancer services, cut down waiting times and bring care closer to where people live," Olunga added.

Lesiyampe said the emotional and financial toll on families battling cancer is often devastating, especially for low-income households.

"We've seen patients abandon treatment midway because of travel, cost and fatigue. This centre will be a lifeline, particularly for the poor and vulnerable," he said.

The facility, already under construction, is envisioned as a regional centre of excellence in the treatment of cancer and blood disorders, with the capacity to serve not just Kenya but East and Central Africa.

"Early detection remains the cornerstone of successful cancer treatment," said Olunga said. "The availability of high-end imaging and radiotherapy services at JOOTRH will directly improve survival rates."

With half of the project funding now committed by the national government, officials are optimistic that construction will accelerate, allowing services to begin sooner.

"This isn't just another hospital project. It represents dignity, hope and a second chance for thousands of Kenyans battling cancer," Lesiyampe said.

**'WE'VE SEEN PATIENTS ABANDON TREATMENT MIDWAY BECAUSE OF TRAVEL, COST AND FATIGUE. THIS CENTRE WILL BE A LIFELINE'**

## CARCINOGENIC POLLUTANTS

## Hospitals fuelling cancer by burning waste – experts

PERPETUA ETYANG

Burning of hospital waste in Nairobi is emitting pollutants that are contributing to the unexplained rise in cancer cases, experts have said.

Speaking at the Clean-Air Forum on Thursday, World Resources Institute Kenya country representative George Mwaniki said 95 per cent of the waste is burnt in open fires.

"The city is producing around 1.5 million kilograms of hospital waste per month," he said.

"This has dangerous chemicals, including dioxins and furans, which are a huge source of cancer in the city."

The law requires all hospital waste to be managed through incineration, which Mwaniki said is more of old technology for managing that kind of waste.

He said most of the waste is burnt in either uncertified incinerators or in burning chambers, which just look like a normal chimney in a house.

Nairobi county head of medical waste management James Mwita said an effective incinerator requires two chambers, reaching 800 degrees and 1,200 degrees to prevent pollution.

The incinerators used do not meet these temperature standards, he said, so they emit dangerous pollutants.

He warned that inadequate incineration releases 13 cancer-causing pollutants.

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## NEWS BUSINESS

## WARNING

# Treasury calls out state agencies for digressing from core mandate

CS Mbadi says 18 agencies led by Unclaimed Assets Authority are set for restructuring

JACKTONE LAWI  
@jacktonelawi

NATIONAL Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi has accused several state agencies of straying from their core mandates by investing heavily in government securities instead of delivering on public service.

Appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations, Mbadi expressed concern, saying some parastatals are treating government funds as a source of profit rather than using them to execute public programs.

Mbadi said that agencies like Unclaimed Financial Assets Authority (UFAA) have been collecting funds from Kenyans and instead of re-uniting them with the owners, opt to channel them to state securities.

“It is disturbing to see state corporations that are supposed to deliver services opting to divert resources to treasury bonds. That is not their job. We must restore focus to their actual mandates,” Mbadi told the lawmakers.

Responding to Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka, on the state of parastatal reforms, Mbadi specifically called for urgent reforms in UFAA warning that the agency may have lost sight of its original mission.

“The purpose of UFAA is not to hoard wealth in the Treasury bonds but to reconnect unclaimed assets with rightful owners. There are people living in poverty while their parents’ savings sit idle in accounts they don’t know exist,” he said.

He revealed that the government is in the process of recruiting a new CEO to lead reform efforts within the institution.



Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka during the Senate Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental relations in Nairobi on July 17 /ENOS TECHE

“Once the new leadership is in place, we must restructure the agency to ensure it delivers on its mandate. This should not be another fund-accumulation body,” said the CS.

According to Mbadi, at least 18 agencies are on the chopping block as the government moves to streamline public service.

“Some of these institutions are liabilities. They duplicate roles, have bloated staff, and have deviated from their original purpose. We are restructuring them—some will be dissolved, others merged, and those with devolved functions transferred to county governments,” Mbadi told the committee chaired by Wajir Senator Mohamed Abbas.

The CS singled out parastatals in the water and irrigation sectors as particularly problematic, with overlapping roles leading to duplication

and wastage.

“You find one agency in charge of water harvesting and another for irrigation. Why are they not working together? Why not consolidate them?” asked the CS.

The committee also raised concerns about the legal confusion surrounding the fate of 18 parastatals whose functions were reportedly devolved to counties without accompanying resources.

“Where are we with the parastatal reforms, are we making any progress,” asked Marsabit Senator Mohamed Chute.

Mbadi acknowledged the issue, saying the government was awaiting a full cost assessment before allocating resources for the devolved functions starting in the 2026/27 financial year.

“The Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC) is han-

dling the transition. We have identified which functions to devolve, but the funding will only come after a proper costing exercise is complete,” the CS said.

“We feel they should not operate. But we still look at how best to, if there are some that are going to discharge their functions at the counties.”

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

A legal review to determine whether some of the assets and personnel of these parastatals should be transferred to counties or restructured under inter-county mechanisms. According to Treasury, Kenya’s parastatal ecosystem is bloated and inefficient, with many agencies created through politically motivated legislations.

## THE DATA

# 129.24

The indicative value of the shilling to the dollar

The shilling remained stable during the week buoyed by strong diaspora remittances and export earnings

## FINANCIAL MARKET

### FOREX EXCHANGE RATES

Currency	Mean
US DOLLAR	129.2399
EURO	150.2285
STG POUND	173.1104
SA RAND	7.2407
KES / USHS	27.7236
KES / TSHS	20.1563
JPY (100)	87.0801
CHINESE YUAN	18.0058
AE DIRHAM	35.1860
IND RUPEE	1.5051

### NSE BIGGEST WINNERS

	Price	Change (%)
EXPRESS KENYA	4.53	7.09
UNGA GROUP	19.90	4.19
NAIROBI BV	1.82	2.82
SANLAM	8.34	2.46
SAMEER AFRICA	5.50	2.23

### NSE BIGGEST LOSERS

	Price	Change (%)
LONGHORN	2.54	5.58
SCANGROUP	2.57	4.81
HOME AFRICA	0.65	4.41
EABL	199.50	4.20
KPLC	10.70	2.73



## TIP OF THE DAY

### COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEAM WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH

When business challenges mount, your team doesn’t need spin—they need clarity. Here’s how to be transparent, steady, and constructive, even when you don’t have all the answers.

**Acknowledge what’s working.** As you address uncertainty, point to areas of progress. Use a “yes, and” approach: Yes, things are messy—and we’re doing good work. Be honest about challenges without slipping into blame or false optimism.

**Make space for real questions.** Don’t redirect or minimize concerns. Ask your team what’s weighing on them and how it’s showing up in their day-to-day work lives. If no one speaks up, check in with trusted team members behind the scenes to get a fuller picture.

**Respond with care.** When you don’t have answers, explain what could influence the outcome. Share details only if they affect the team’s reality; disclosing what’s irrelevant or uncertain creates confusion.

**Stick to the facts.** Avoid speculation. Use data and observable progress to ground your message. Reinforce how the team’s work supports key business goals like revenue or efficiency.

**Model resilience.** Show up with calm and clarity. In tough moments, consistency builds trust—and helps your team focus on what they can control.

## PETROLEUM

## LPG consumption up 15% on state-led initiative, petrol down – PIEA



PIEA chairman Peter Murungi during the state of the oil industry quarterly briefing hosted by PIEA and KCB Bank Kenya in Nairobi /HANDOUT

MARTIN MWITA

COOKING gas use in the country rose by 15 per cent to 414,861 metric tonnes last year, driven by recent government-led initiatives, latest industry data by the Petroleum Institute of East Africa (PIEA) shows.

This was up from the 360,594 metric tonnes of Liquefied Petroleum Gas consumed in 2023, with households and public institutions being major

drivers. This is on the back of recent government’s intervention such as zero rating of the product in June 2023 and the promotion of clean cooking through the National LPG Growth Strategy, PIEA said.

The volume of LPG consumption in Q1 2025 rose by 11.8 per cent to 105,326 tonnes compared to 94,184 metric tonnes in a similar quarter in 2024.

“This increase is attributable to ini-

tatives such as the zero rating of the product in June 2023, the promotion of clean cooking and the government led National LPG Growth Strategy,” PIEA said in its quarterly report released on Wednesday.

The strategy seeks to eradicate domestic and industrial use of firewood, charcoal and other carbon emitting fuels that are derived from our forests as well as the elimination of domestic kerosene as primary sources of energy while switching to LPG.

Chairman Peter Murungi said: “We will all answer to the government master plan of not only doubling the LPG intake but more so alleviating the health impact and the destruction that we see with our forest.”

This was in the backdrop of a decrease in kerosene and petrol consumption as both households and motorists opted for cleaner LPG and autogas on account of high diesel, petrol and kerosene prices.

Overall petroleum products mar-

ket including aviation fuel (Jet A-1, heavy fuel oil- residual product that remains after refining crude oil used in heaters, boilers, furnaces, kilns and power generators, lubricants and kerosene), marked an increase of 7.1 per cent in Q1 2025–1.6 million cubic meters compared to 1.4 million same quarter in 2024. The main specific product driver of growth in the period under review was aviation fuel which is attributed to an increase in international and local air travel, a good indicator of improved performance in the tourism sector. However consumption of petrol, diesel and lubricants contracted by 0.81 per cent, 4.1 per cent and two per cent, respectively, according to PIEA data.

Petrol sales dropped from 489.9 million litres in Q1 2024 to 485.9 million litres same period this year, diesel consumption went down from 653.7 million litres to 626.7 million while lubricants dropped from 15.2 million litres to 14.9 million litres.



## NEWS BUSINESS

## AUSTERITY

## Mbadi proposes tough cost cutting measures at IEBC

JACKTONE LAWI

NATIONAL Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi has hinted at compelling the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to reuse ballot boxes and other materials procured for the 2022 General Elections as a cost-cutting measure in the upcoming by-elections and the 2027 polls.

He said ongoing budget constraints has forced the government to press all state agencies, including the IEBC, to cut costs and avoid unnecessary expenditures.

Kenya's elections is among the most expensive on the continent and globally.

The country spent approximately Sh36 billion on its August 9, 2022 general elections, with the IEBC accounting for Sh34.5 billion in direct

costs and the remainder in indirect expenditure

This means that for the IEBC, the 2022 election exercise that involved 22,120,258 registered voters, it spent about Ksh.2,000 per voter.

"There are things that you buy and you don't dispose immediately. Why do you buy them every election cycle? Every election cycle, you want new things. Even support boxes?" Mbadi posed, referencing reusable items such as ballot boxes and surveillance equipment.

"We're asking tough questions. The IEBC must be efficient. The cost of elections in this country is simply too high."

Mbadi cited a similar exercise undertaken with the Kenya National Examinations Council, where the ministry successfully slashed projected spending by nearly 50



National Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations in Parliament on July 17 /ENOS TECHE

per cent after rejecting an inflated procurement list.

Appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations, the CS said a similar approach, is now being taken with the IEBC.

Mbadi's proposal come at a time that a political showdown is looming as Kenya's top political players prepare to face off in upcoming by-elections for 22 electoral positions—seen by many as an early

test ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The mini polls will see contests for six National Assembly seats, one Senate seat, and 15 Member of County Assembly (MCA) positions.

Globally, India, with the world's largest number of voters (910.5 million), as of 2022 spent an average of Sh1,000 for every voter, while the UK spent an average of Sh480 per voter during the two countries' recent elections.

## PLEA

## Kenya joins world to ask the UN not to ban animal sourced foods

VICTOR AMADALA

KENYA is among 115 countries calling for animal-source foods to be excluded from a United Nations (UN) declaration aimed at eliminating trans-fatty acids.

The United Nations has a draft declaration to reduce non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart disease and diabetes, which proposes eliminating all trans-fatty acids from global diets.

Eliminating trans-fatty acids from global diets risks denying the world's poorest the nutritional benefits of milk and meat.

This is after researchers uncovered that, while industrially produced trans-fatty acids contribute to NCDs, those found naturally in animal-source foods at low levels are not harmful and may even offer health-protecting benefits, such as preventing type two diabetes.

Writing in an open letter to UN negotiators, more than 115 signatories from Africa, Europe and the Americas said that the risk of a blanket commitment to eliminate all trans-fatty acids is that it unnecessarily discourages the consumption of highly nutritious dairy, meat and other animal-source foods.

"Once again, the burden will fall heaviest on low- and middle-income countries, where nutrient-rich meat, milk and dairy are already under-consumed, 'they said in a joint statement.

The African Union Inter-African Bureau endorsed the letter, which was coordinated by the Nairobi-based International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). NCDs disproportionately impact developing countries, where obesity and diet-related disease in adulthood are closely linked to undernutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

In 2023, nearly every five Africans faced hunger and around a third of children under five were affected by stunting.

Animal-source foods like meat and milk are energy-dense and a rich source of high-quality proteins and micronutrients, including Vitamins A and B12, riboflavin, calcium, zinc and iodine.

Research has found that a child who drinks milk daily can grow up to three per more in a month than a child who does not, yet average annual milk consumption can be as low as just 1kg per person per year in some developing countries.

Research has found that a child who drinks milk daily can grow up to three per more in a month than a child who does not, yet average annual milk consumption can be as low as just 1kg per person per year in some developing countries.

In Kenya, the average per capita milk consumption is around 110 liters per year, making it the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to Dairy Tech Africa.

## IMPACT

## KRA's new cargo certificate order to hit small importers

Traders say it will hurt most those who consolidate cargoes from different countries

MARTIN MWITA  
@MwitaMartin

THE mandatory requirement for all consignments imported into Kenya to be accompanied by a Certificate of Origin will mainly hit small players who consolidate cargoes, traders now say.

Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) has directed that effective July 1, all imports must have the said certificate issued by a competent authority in the exporting country.

Importers, customs clearing agents and the general public have since been put on notice.

To support a smooth transition, a limited window until September 1, 2025 has been provided to facilitate compliance and allow importers time to secure the required documents.

"Note that at the lapse of this window, non-compliant consignments shall be liable to forfeiture as provided for in the Act," Commissioner for Customs and Border Control, Lilian Nyawanda, said in the notice.

This marks a radical shift from prior practice, where Certificates of origin were required only for goods under preferential trade arrangements to determine origin and confer tariff benefits. A competent authority refers to a government agency or officially designated body in the exporting country that is authorised to issue certificates of origin.

A Certificate of Origin shall be valid if it discloses name and address of both the exporter and importer, port of origin, accurate description



Commissioner for Customs and Border Control, Lilian Nyawanda /FILE

of the goods, quantity of the goods, country of origin; and country of destination. Non-compliance will see KRA impose penalties, which shall lead to seizure or forfeiture of goods to the Commissioner or an authorised officer.

"KRA remains committed to facilitating legitimate trade while ensuring full compliance with the law," Nyawanda said in the notice.

The Shippers Council of Eastern Africa (SCEA) which represents the interests of importers and exporters has however raise concerns, noting that the move will have an impact on small traders mainly those who consolidate cargo, even as it terms the move a to require an ordinary

certificate which does not prefer preferences, as "a big surprise."

According to SCEA, it is increasingly common for importers to procure goods from shippers who consolidate cargo from multiple countries of origin. For example, a

## THE DATA

SH879.3

The amount of money collected by KRA in customs in 2024. This is 11% growth





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## NEWS COUNTIES

500 PEOPLE AFFECTED

# Despair for Kamukunji locals left homeless by night inferno

*According to reports, the fire started with a strange glow near a metal container*

GORDON OSEN  
@gordon\_osen

IN the pre-dawn hours of Wednesday, while much of Nairobi still slept, a storm of fire ripped through Kasilili village in the heart of Airbase ward, Kamukunji constituency—leaving nothing but charred memories in its wake, and some 500 people homeless amid the biting cold in the city.

Within minutes, their homes turned to ash. Their lives, once modest but stable, were ripped apart by flames that devoured everything in sight.

By sunrise, many families, though lucky to have escaped with life, now face even grinding poverty as they have lost everything.

From makeshift hotels, Mama Mboga business stalls to stores of wares and shanty homes lapped by the unrelenting tongue of fire, the unforgiving urban poverty that residents had known how to keep up with will now only get harsher for them.

According to reports, the late night fire started with a strange glow near a metal container at the edge of the village.

The tragedy comes just days after fire tore down the handcraft section of Kamukunji market compounding the almost predictable fire incidents in the city marred by characteristic poor response.

Witnesses claim that someone had set tires alight beneath it—why or who, no one knows. Fueled by wind and flammable building materials, it tore through the village like a beast unleashed.

Area police say investigation is ongoing to determine whether the fire was an act of arson or an accident.

What remained was not just rubble and smoke, but a raw kind of silence—where grief hangs heavier than the heat still rising from the ground.

Among those now stranded is Naomi Wanjiru, a 34-year-old mother of three, who was awakened by frantic knocking. “I thought I was dreaming,” she said. “But when I opened the door, the sky was orange. Smoke was already in the house. I grabbed my baby and ran out barefoot. I didn’t even have time to take shoes.”

Her story echoes those of dozens of others. John Muli, a boda boda rider, stood quietly beside the melted remains of his motorbike.

“That was my whole business,” he murmured, eyes fixed on the twisted metal. “I bought it on loan. Now what do I do? How do I feed my family?”

What made the situation worse was the delay in emergency response. According to Peter Njoroge, a local elder, firefighters reached the scene but couldn’t access the heart of the fire in time.



The damage caused by fire in Kamukunji, Nairobi, on Wednesday /HANDOUT

“The main garage gate was locked. That was the quickest way in,” he said. “Instead, they had to squeeze in through a tiny side gate, and by then, the fire had already spread too far.”

The consequences were devastating. Homes built closely together in the densely packed village created a firetrap. People had minutes others seconds, to escape. Many didn’t even manage to grab their IDs or children’s school bags.

Miriam Atieno, a single mother of four, was among the hardest hit. “We have nothing. Their school books, uniforms, everything is gone,” she said, as her youngest daughter clung to her lap. “They didn’t go to school today. I don’t know when they will again.”

All around her, families sat on mattresses, clutching carrier bags with the little they managed to save. Infants cried from hunger and confusion. Elderly residents stared blankly at the blackened outlines of homes they had lived in for decades.

And yet, the worst wound was not just physical loss—but the unanswered questions. Who set the fire? Was it targeted? Was it negligence or malice? The community wants answers, and fast.

“This wasn’t just an accident,” insist-

ed James Kiptoo, a 61-year-old resident. “You don’t just find tires burning under a container for no reason. We need an investigation. We need justice.”

Local leaders have called for government intervention, urging officials to provide temporary shelter, food aid and rebuild plans. But for now, the people of Kasilili wait—huddled under tarps beside the roads, clinging to one another in the chill of an uncertain tomorrow.

“We may be alive,” Naomi says, “but what kind of life is this?”

As night falls again on Kasilili village, the flames are gone—but the pain is only beginning.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Beyond the blaze lies a deeper story of neglect, desperation and unanswered questions. Kasilili’s tragedy is a stark reminder of Nairobi’s growing urban vulnerability—and the high human cost when infrastructure and accountability fall short.



Residents of Kamukunji after their houses were burnt on Wednesday /HANDOUT

## ARRESTS EXPECTED

# We know who’s smuggling guns from Uganda – Murkomen

ALLAN KISIA

INTERIOR and National Administration Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has issued a stern warning to individuals involved in the smuggling in of firearms into Kenya from neighbouring Uganda.

Murkomen said security agencies have already identified and are closely monitoring the suspects.

Speaking during the Jukwaa la Usalama in Kapenguria, West Pokot county, Murkomen said the

government has concrete intelligence on the gun smugglers, including their identities and phone numbers, and that arrests are expected in the near future. “Many of them wear suits and drive vehicles. We know them, we have their numbers. They are being monitored and are due to be arrested,” Murkomen said.

The Jukwaa la Usalama forum brought together key stakeholders, including opinion leaders, National Government Administration Officers, elected leaders, and security personnel.

The platform is designed to foster open and candid discussions on issues affecting security, development and public service delivery in the region.

Murkomen emphasised that the illegal trade in firearms would no longer be tolerated, and that the government is prepared to conduct targeted operations based on intelligence gathered over time.

“We will pick people from their villages and the comfort of their shops and homes and take them through the justice system, and we

are not just warning the Pokots, the Marakwets as well,” he said.

The Cabinet Secretary cautioned those involved in the illicit arms trade not to assume immunity based on their social status or political connections. “Some of these individuals think they can get away with crime because they are leaders or opinion leaders,” Murkomen said.

“But I want to warn them — if they find themselves in a crossfire, we do not want them to come and say that the police should have done this or that.”





## NEWS COUNTIES

## INVESTORS CONFIDENCE HURT

## Kirinyaga residents urged to guard their properties

ALICE WAIHERA

KIRINYAGA Deputy Governor David Githanda has urged residents to guard their businesses to avert looting and destruction witnessed in the recent protests.

He said the destruction and looting of businesses at Wang'uru, Kagio and Kagumo, among other towns, dampens investors' confidence in the

county. This, Githanda said, is despite concerted efforts by the county to incentivise businesses to attract investors and create jobs for residents, while strengthening the economy.

"Such things hurt the economy and families that depend on the enterprises. Acts of hooliganism have no place in our county and will not be allowed," he said.

Githanda, who spoke during the

official opening of the first I&M Bank branch at Wang'uru town, Mwea, termed as criminal the looting and destruction of businesses.

He said the county administration has invested heavily in marketing the county as the next frontier for investment, improving of infrastructure like roads, and water supply. "We cannot and must not destroy the very investments that our people depend on for livelihoods, nor should we sabotage our collective progress through violence and vandalism," Githanda said.

"These are a direct setback to our efforts to attract investors like I&M Bank. Let's not be the architects of our own poverty."

Githanda said the opening of the

I&M Bank  
CEO Gul Khan  
and Kirinyaga  
Deputy  
Governor David  
Githanda during  
the opening  
of the bank's  
branch in Mwea  
/ALICE WAIHERA



I&M bank branch in Kirinyaga is a vote of confidence in the county as an investment destination.

"Our development depends on stability, security and unity. I therefore

call upon all residents of Kirinyaga to protect our investments, to uphold peace, and to resolve disagreements through dialogue and lawful means," he said.

## INCREASE PRODUCTION AND QUALITY

## Kirinyaga coffee farmers trained to boost income

*Baragwi cooperative society has dispatched extension officers across the 12 factories*

ALICE WAIHERA  
@Alicewangechi

A coffee cooperative society in Kirinyaga county has started training farmers on crop husbandry to increase production and quality for better earnings.

During a coffee field day organised by Baragwi Coffee Cooperative Society on Wednesday, farmers had a chance to interact with coffee experts, agronomists and various players in the cash crop value chain.

Baragwi is one of the largest coffee cooperatives in the country and last year it sold more than 11 million kilogrammes of coffee worth more than Sh1.6 billion.

Cooperative manager Cyrus Chomba said the field day was organised with the aim of raising the quantity and quality of coffee produced and they are targeting to ensure more than 80 per cent of the production is premium grade A.

"We're investing in training farmers because higher coffee grades fetch more money at the auction," he said.

The society has dispatched extension officers across the 12 coffee factories to reach as many farmers as possible.

Chomba said farmers received a high coffee cherry payout of Sh145



Farmers on a coffee farm in Murang'a county /ALICE WAIHERA

per kilogramme, and the co-operative is now targeting to sell over 20

million kilos this year.

James Githae, an official from Coffee Research Institute urged farmers

to plant new coffee bushes and up-

grade to varieties that are resistant to diseases such as the coffee berry disease.

"We are training farmers on planting, pruning and use of the best pesticides. As an institution, we continue to carry out research that will improve production of coffee in the country," he said.

County cooperatives executive Calbert Njeru raised the alarm over influx of fake pesticides sold to coffee farmers, compromising their harvests.

Njeru urged farmers to seek advice of extension officers on pesticides that have been approved by the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service and the Pest Control Products Board.

Kirinyaga East deputy county commissioner James Maina assured farmers that security will be beefed up in all factories to curb theft of coffee in the area.

The county is leading in coffee production in the country with about 46,000 acres under the crop and 120,000 smallholder farmers who contribute about 17 per cent of the national production.

In 2024, the county sold about 8.9 million kilogrammes of cherry, raking in Sh5 billion for farmers.

### (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Baragwi is one of the largest coffee co-operatives in the country and last year it sold more than 11 million kilos of coffee worth over Sh1.6 billion. The society has dispatched extension officers across the 12 coffee factories to reach as many farmers as possible. The county is leading in coffee production in the country with about 46,000 acres under the crop and 120,000 smallholder farmers who contribute about 17 per cent of the national production.



The Kiambu changemakers /KNA

## CREATING AWARENESS

## Kiambu changemakers trained in child nutrition

KNA

GRASSROOTS leaders in Kiambu county have been trained on the need for comprehensive education and advocacy on child nutrition, particularly through creative arts.

Participants included local leaders, the media, policymakers and theatre practitioners. The training was organised by the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy analysis network (FANRPAN).

FANRPAN director of policy advocacy and com-

munications Francis Hale said the training focused on policies that better cater to children's nutrition needs, particularly through methods of storytelling through a programme dubbed as "Theatre for Policy Advocacy".

"A mother to a newborn might have a clashing opinion with her mother-in-law on how to feed her child and that's where TPA comes in," he said.

"We are dismantling the 'them and us' position associated with having scientists and researchers dictating what should be done within a community. In order to do that, we understand that some conversations can be easily communicated through an artistic medium."

Hale said by training people from key sectors such media, local leaders, policy advocates, they would go back to their communities to raise awareness, spark dialogue and influence policies that would cater to child nutrition.



## NEWS COUNTIES



Kilifi Governor Gideon Mung'aro and Deputy Governor Flora Chibule during a crisis meeting with nurses' representatives at the official governor's residence /CHARLES MGHENYI

## RELIEF

# 700 nurses in Kilifi call off strike after talks with governor

*Mung'aro says concerns are acknowledged and will be addressed*

CHARLES MGHENYI  
@CharlesMghenyi

MORE than 700 nurses in Kilifi county have called off their strike after reaching a consensus with Governor Gideon Mung'aro.

The long-standing issues to be addressed include; delayed promotions, unpaid arrears and stalled recognition of nurses who pursued specialised training.

The decision to suspend the strike follows a high-level meeting convened by Mung'aro at the county headquarters.

The governor met with representatives of the Kenya National Union of Nurses, led by Kilifi county

chairman Suleiman Kahindi and other health partners to find a lasting solution to the dispute that had paralysed healthcare services across the county.

He said the nurses' key concerns were finally acknowledged and are on track for resolution.

"Among the issues we raised were delayed promotions, payment of arrears and the recognition of nurses, who went for specialised training. The governor said all deserving nurses will be promoted, arrears settled and specialised cadres placed in their rightful positions," Kahindi said.

The union boss urged all striking nurses to resume work immediately, saying they will closely monitor implementation of agreed-upon actions.

"We believe the county government has shown goodwill and commitment. The strike has officially come to an end," Kahindi said.

Mung'aro, who was accompanied by Deputy Governor Flora Chibule, health executive Peter Mwarogo and other top county officials, said a special committee has been formed to oversee implementation of the agreed changes.

"We held a very productive and honest discussion with the nurses' leadership. We now have a committee in place that will meet with me every two weeks to give progress reports on the issues raised," he said.

"We want to ensure these

grievances, some of which date back to 2014, are fully addressed within our administration's tenure."

The governor acknowledged the depth of problems that have plagued Kilifi's healthcare workforce and promised structured engagement going forward.

"I cannot promise that everything will be resolved in a day, but like we did with doctors earlier this year, we will keep talking and addressing each issue one step at a time. We are committed to creating a county with a healthy population and that starts by taking care of our health workers," Mung'aro said.

The newly formed committee will include representatives from the department of health, Knun and other partners.

Its mandate is to develop clear timelines and mechanisms to implement promotions, process outstanding payments.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The resolution of the nurses' strike in Kilifi is significant as it underscores the essential role of healthcare workers and the importance of responsive governance. Delayed promotions, unpaid arrears and unrecognised qualifications can severely affect morale and service delivery.

## SOLUTION SOUGHT

## Treks blamed for poor academic results in Kisauni

BRIAN OTIENO

MOMBASA businessman Mbarak Bashatir has attributed Kisauni subcounty's poor performance in academics to the long distances learners walk to school.

Bashatir, who is eyeing the Kisauni parliamentary seat, said many public schools lack buses for efficient transportation of learners.

"Kisauni is a vast area and most learners, many of them from humble backgrounds, are forced to walk long distances to get to school," he said. "By the time they arrive, they're already too tired to concentrate in class. And when they return home, they're exhausted, which makes it difficult for them to study."

Bashatir said the situation calls for urgent attention and pledged to prioritise education if elected MP. He said there is need for school buses in all public schools to reduce fatigue, boost attendance and improve academic performance.

He said if elected, education would be central to his leadership agenda.

Jubilee's Rashid Bedzimba, UDA's Shaffi Mwakazi and political activist Mbarak Hamid have also expressed interest in the seat.

Bashatir said many young people involved in crime in Kisauni are school dropouts, suggesting a direct link between low education levels and insecurity.

"There's a disconnect that needs to be fixed. Many of our youth turn to crime because they dropped out of school," he said. "We must ensure every child is in school. If it takes using my own resources, so be it."

The businessman pledged to expand the work of the Bashatir Foundation to help ensure access to education for every child in Kisauni — from Early Childhood Development to university level.

"No child will stay home because of lack of school fees, books or uniform. We'll find a way — whether through the Foundation or the National Government Constituency Development Fund — to lift that burden off the shoulders of parents," Bashatir said.

He also raised concern over government's recent move to withdraw funding of learning materials in public schools.

Bashatir said alternative interventions are now necessary to support learners.

"Now that the government has scrapped book funds, we must find other means to help. The Bashatir Foundation, in partnership with NG-CDF, will ensure no learner goes without books or uniforms," he said.

"Parents in Kisauni should not have to suffer when leaders are in office to support them."

Beyond school supplies and transport, he said there is need for school feeding programmes, saying proper nutrition is essential for learners' concentration and retention in school.

While acknowledging that some former leaders have made strides in improving school infrastructure, Bashatir said quality, not just quantity, matters.

"Infrastructure is important, yes. But what's the point of having excellent facilities if the education standards remain poor?" he asked.



Mombasa businessman Mbarak Bashatir (C) at Seif Halwa Kikowani cemetery on July 10 /BRIAN OTIENO

“  
SULEIMAN KAHINDI  
Among the issues we raised were delayed promotions, payment of arrears and recognition of nurses who went for specialised training



## NEWS COUNTIES

## FAMILY FEUD

# No burial for tycoon's son as succession fight rages

*Some siblings claim father's contested will leaves out eight children*



Margaret Kimoso and Carolyne Kimoso outside the High Court in Eldoret /MATHEWS NDANYI

MATHEWS NDANYI  
@TheStarKenya

THE body of the son of a deceased Eldoret tycoon is still lying at a morgue in Iten due to a family dispute over the father's estate valued at over Sh2 billion.

The family has not agreed where to bury Luka Korir, who died six months ago, as the land where he lived is the subject of a succession dispute.

The late Francis Cheptoo owned over 1,200 acres of prime land mostly in Uasin Gishu along with commercial plots and movable assets.

Some of his children, led by eldest daughter Margaret Kimoso, moved court to challenge the validity of a purported will detailing how his estate should be distributed.

Cheptoo, who died 13 years ago aged 67, had two wives, both deceased, and 18 children. His estate also includes shares in a number of companies and money in several

bank accounts in Iten and Eldoret.

Margaret has sued her siblings Maurice Kipchumba and Jane Jelagat who are administrators of their father's estate for disinheriting some of the deceased's children.

Appearing before Justice Reuben Nyakundi at the High Court in Eldoret, Margaret disowned the will.

She informed the court that the contested will had failed to include eight of the 18 children of the deceased as beneficiaries of the estate.

Margaret wants the court to direct that the contested will allegedly authored by their father be subjected to forensic document examination to determine its validity.

She says their father was not mentally and physically fit in 2012 when he is said to have written the will through his then lawyer Christopher arap Mitei.

"My dad was not in a position to write the said will as he was battling kidney related complications at an Eldoret hospital. In fact, he could not

even walk or recognise his children," stated Margaret.

She has faulted her brother Maurice and younger sister Janet for apportioning themselves the lion's shares of the estate of their father at the expense of other family members.

In their rejoinder, the two administrators defended their father's will, stating that although he was sick, he was mentally fit when writing the document which is now at the centre of the succession battle.

"The deceased was mentally sound when he gave instructions to his lawyer Christopher arap Mitei on how he wanted his estate distributed among his children," Maurice said.

In the contested will, the father bequeathed Maurice 150 acres of land in Karuna area along the border of Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet counties. He bequeathed his daughter Jane Jelagat prime 100 acres of agricultural land including 100 cows, sheep and goats in Irong area, Elgeyo Marakwet county.

In the will, the deceased is said to have gifted Jane a combine harvester, tractors, planting and ploughing machines. Lawyer Mitei, who also testified before Justice Nyakundi, said he drafted the will as per the instructions of the deceased, who was his long time client.

Justice Nyakundi directed that the matter be mentioned on Friday for further directions.



**FRANCIS CHEPTOO LEFT MORE THAN 1,200 ACRES MOSTLY IN UASIN GISHU, COMMERCIAL PLOTS, SHARES AND MONEY IN BANKS**

Francis Cheptoo /HANDOUT

## CLEAN WATER

## Over 23,000 households to benefit from Etio dam commissioned by Ruto

MATHEWS NDANYI

ETIO dam in Elgeyo Marakwet that was commissioned by President William Ruto last week will benefit more than 23,000 households.

The project developed by the Kerio Valley Development Authority is expected to have life-changing impacts on communities, which will now be able to farm high-value crops through irrigation.

KVDA targets to have over 2,500 acres put under high-value crops following completion of phase one of the project at a cost of about Sh90 million.

The project is already benefiting 8,000 households and upon completion of phase two, it will cover more areas including Kamariny and Tambach wards in Keiyo North constituency and Soy North ward in Keiyo South.

Ruto directed an additional Sh150 million support to KVDA to expand the project's second phase.

"We have ensured that our farmers have adequate fertiliser supplies, seeds and now water which will enhance production of high-value crops like avocado," Ruto said when he commissioned the project.

KVDA managing director Sammy Naporos says they are focusing on helping communities improve their livelihoods through such projects.

"We are determined to ensure there is a paradigm shift in North Rift. These projects, after addressing the biting water shortage which has been a source of conflict, will go a long way to encourage crop farming to build resilience among communities."

KVDA has been mandated to ensure all the programmes in the region are for sustainable development among communities.

"When there is water, conflict will reduce and the many hours wasted seeking the commodity will be diverted to other meaningful development activities. This region has a lot of resources that need to be harnessed for the benefit of the communities, and water availability is heralding the paradigm shift," Naporos said.



KVDA boss Sammy Naporos with staff at Etio dam in Elgeyo Marakwet county /MATHEWS NDANYI

## STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

## Moi University partners with Uasin Gishu county to boost healthcare



Uasin Gishu Deputy Governor Evans Kapkea /MATHEWS NDANYI

MATHEWS NDANYI

UASIN Gishu county has partnered with Moi University to strengthen primary healthcare through capacity building of health staff and improving medical systems in health facilities.

The partnership also involves Mastercard Foundation and will be implemented under the Africa Health Collaborative Project.

The initiative aims to transform primary healthcare, empower communities, and create economic opportunities for young people.

Speaking during a stakeholders

engagement forum, Deputy Governor Evans Kapkea outlined the county's commitment to collaborative approaches that prioritise the well-being of residents.

He noted that the partnership will support efforts to upgrade healthcare facilities, equip community health promoters and digitise health systems in line with Governor Jonathan Bii's Nguzo Kumi blueprint on universal healthcare and economic empowerment.

"This collaboration goes beyond healthcare; it's about improving livelihoods through health entrepreneurship, skills development,

and modernised service delivery."

Through the partnership, 138 health facilities including dispensaries and health centres will benefit from strengthened primary healthcare systems, training for community health promoters, and improved access to health technologies.

The initiative also focuses on skilling young people to tap into health-related business opportunities, particularly in underserved rural communities.

"We are grateful to Moi University and the Mastercard Foundation for bringing this opportunity closer

to our people," Kapkea said.

County health executive Joseph Lagat said the collaboration will help address gaps in healthcare delivery by empowering front-line workers and leveraging technology to enhance efficiency.

"This programme complements our county's broader agenda of providing accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare for all. By focusing on capacity building and partnerships, we are creating sustainable health systems for the future," he said.

Moi University was represented by project lead Prof Patrick Kere.



## NEWS COUNTIES

## INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

# Kaimosi varsity, Tiriki elders ink deal to preserve culture

*Initiative seeks to protect endangered customs, sacred sites threatened by modernity*

HILTON OTENYO  
@HiltonOtenyo

IN a groundbreaking move aimed at safeguarding indigenous heritage, Kaimosi Friends University has signed an MoU with the Tiriki Council of Elders for the establishment of a cultural centre.

The Tiriki Cultural Centre is dedicated to the preservation, research and promotion of Tiriki traditions.

The cultural centre will focus on the Tiriki subtribe of the Luhya community, the natives of Hamisi sub-county in Vihiga county where the university is located.

The initiative seeks to address the urgent need to protect endangered customs, knowledge systems and sacred sites increasingly threatened by modernity and cultural erosion.

According to the agreement, the centre will serve as a hub for language preservation, oral storytelling, traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous healing practices and intergenerational learning.

It will also support academic research and community-based conservation efforts within and around the university.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, Kaimosi Friends University Vice Chancellor Prof Peter Mwita underscored the value of culture in shaping identity, nurturing community resilience and promoting sustainable development.

"The centre will offer a space for both learning and research around Tiriki customs while also promoting environmental conservation," Prof Mwita said, adding that, "As a university, we are committed not only to academic excellence but to meaningful community engagement."

Mwita added that the university



Kaimosi Friends University VC Prof Peter Mwita, Tiriki Council of Elders chairperson Samson Imbukwa and cultural custodian Thomas Ingara address the press at Kaimosi Friends University /HILTON OTENYO

also plans to restore degraded areas of the Kaimosi Forest, a sacred ecological zone intimately tied to Tiriki spirituality and rites of passage.

"We will plant traditional trees, herbs and medicinal plants around the centre to support both sustainability and research into indigenous healing systems," he said.

Preserving sacred knowledge and ritual spaces

The deal has been hailed by Tiriki elders as a long-awaited lifeline for their endangered heritage.

Council chairperson Samson Imbukwa said the agreement signals hope for the future of their traditions.

"We have watched our culture

erode year after year. This partnership assures us that the ways of our forefathers will not vanish," Imbukwa said.

Cultural custodian Thomas Ingara described the initiative as "a beacon of hope," noting that the community's sacred sites within Kaimosi Forest face increasing threats, including neglect and encroachment.

"These shrines are not just cultural symbols they are sacred shelters used during the months-long traditional circumcision rites," Ingara said.

"Unfortunately, some community members, especially those living outside Hamisi, have abandoned our customs and opted for hospital circumcision under Western influence."

Ingara warned that the increasing adoption of foreign practices risks severing younger generations from their roots and undermining the values embedded in traditional ceremonies.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

The Tiriki subtribe stands out among the Luhya for its strict adherence to traditions — especially public, ritual circumcision ceremonies, which have for generations formed the backbone of their cultural identity.

## LIVE WIRE

## Nine-year-old electrocuted in Kakamega

CYRUS OMBATI

A nine-year-old boy died after being electrocuted as he walked to school in Ebwikhobero village, Mumias, Kakamega county.

The boy who is a Grade 2 pupil at Maraba Primary School, was electrocuted after stepping on a live wire that lay next to the road.

The wires lay on the road after electric poles fell following heavy rains, police and residents said of the Tuesday July 15 incident.

Police said the child and others were walking to school when the incident happened.

The police rushed to the scene and alerted Kenya Power officials who switched off power supply to enable the removal of the body.

The body was taken to the mortuary pending postmortem and other investigations.

Elsewhere, a three-year-old boy died in a house fire in Ahero, Kisumu county.

Police said the incident happened in Kogocho village and that the victim's twin sister survived the fire on Tuesday.

The two children had been left in the house by their parents as they went to work.

It was then that the mattress they were lying on caught fire. The fire spread fast killing one of the children while the second one was rescued.

The body was taken to the mortuary pending postmortem and investigations while the injured twin is in hospital, police said.

Meanwhile, police in Rabuor, Kisumu county are investigating after a 42-year-old man was found dead.

According to police, Samuel Ouma left his home to Okana Irrigation Scheme for work but failed to return home.

His body was found floating at the Obino Irrigation canal next to a farm he was working on.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

## Vihiga Chamber of Commerce woos investors, cite fair taxation



Governor Wilber Ottichilo (right) during the Business Expo in Mbale town, Vihiga county, on Saturday /HILTON OTENYO

HILTON OTENYO

THE Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), Vihiga chapter has urged investors to support the county's economic growth by seizing existing opportunities in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

KNCCI Vihiga Chapter chairperson Billy Nyoje said the county offers a favourable business environment in sectors such as finance, hospitality, industry and education.

Nyonje cited the county's fair taxation regime, enhanced security and a ready market as key factors that attract investment.

"As the business community is pushing for even better conditions to help enterprises grow into profitable ventures. As a chapter, we advocate for supportive policies, investor-friendly taxes and streamlined regulations to create a thriving business climate," Nyonje said.

He was speaking during the county's first-ever MSMEs Expo at the Mbale Municipal Grounds.

The event which was organised by the KNCCI, brought together investors, traders, start-ups and MSMEs to showcase innovative products and services, foster partnerships, and connect business stakeholders under the theme "Connect, Collaborate, and Grow"

KNCCI Vihiga CEO Wycliffe Chabaya described the expo as a gateway to new heights for MSMEs, noting that it would open up avenues for growth and market access for local entrepreneurs.

"As a chamber we must ensure more people see the positive impact of local policies and are motivated to invest in sectors such as agribusiness, education, and manufacturing," Chabaya said.

Vihiga Governor Wilber Ottichilo encouraged youth to come with up business start-ups promising to support innovative ones.

He said his government would consider exempting the start-ups from taxation.



## NEWS COUNTIES



Devolution executive Roselyne Omolo /HANDOUT



Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga flags off one of the two fire trucks donated to the county by Kootab Myoot, a UK-based charity group, working with other partners to facilitate fire disaster management /HANDOUT

Wanga, Deputy Governor Oyugi Magwanga, county firefighters and staff members during the ceremony /HANDOUT



Governance chief officer Isaac Ongiri /HANDOUT

## PROMOTIONS AND REMITTANCES CITED

# Homa Bay nurses issue seven-day strike notice

*They accuse county government of failing to honour a return-to-work agreement*

ROBERT OMOLLO  
@TheStarKenya

NURSES in Homa Bay have issued a seven-day strike notice to the county government over what they termed “unresolved issues”.

Through the Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives (KNUNM), the health workers said they will not be on duty from Wednesday next week if their grievances are not addressed.

Homa Bay KNUNM secretary Emmadick Okeyo and union deputy chairperson Brenda Peterson accused the county government of failing to honour a return-to-work agreement,

which they signed in February.

Some of the issues health workers wanted addressed included promotion and timely remittance of statutory deductions.

Okeyo said at least 386 nurses expected to be promoted by March this year.

However, after they signed the agreement, none has been promoted.

Okeyo said members of the union whose contracts with the county government have come to an end, should also get gratuity.

“Those affected had their August and September 2022 salaries not paid. The county government has not paid for the last three years now,” Okeyo



Homa Bay KNUNM secretary Emmadick Okeyo and union deputy chairperson Brenda Peterson speak to the media in Homa Bay town on Thursday /ROBERT OMOLLO

said. Speaking to journalists in Homa Bay town on Thursday, the nurses’

officials also decried the delayed remittance of statutory deductions.

The deductions include loans, insurance premiums, union dues and Social Health Authority contributions.

Okeyo said nurses have not paid for SHA for the past two months.

“National Treasury announced that it does not owe any funds to county governments. It is not practical for us to be told that the Homa Bay government can’t pay workers on grounds of shortage of funds,” he said.

Okeyo said delays in remitting statutory deductions lead to penalties at different institutions.

“We will down our tools next week Wednesday. Services will be affected in all public health facilities, including dispensaries,” he said.

Peterson said nurses have been patient for so long. She said nurses have always been working with no one recognising their efforts.

“We will do what we are known to do best when aggrieved. We will down our tools until our demands are met,” the unionist said.

Medical health chief officer Kevin Osuri said they have received the notice and are working on the matter.

“We’re holding a meeting with the union leadership to address the problem,” he said.

## MOTIVE UNKNOWN

## Migori man drowns daughter, 5, in family borehole, dies by suicide

CYRUS OMBATI

A man drowned his five-year-old daughter in a family borehole before he died by suicide on Wednesday in Mabera, Migori county.

According to police, Thomas Chacha grabbed his daughter and threw her into the borehole in Nyawaitanchira village.

They said family members who were present, tried to rescue her but by the time they reached the girl in the 40-feet deep borehole, she was already dead.

Police said as family members struggled to rescue the girl, the man

sneaked back into the house and hanged himself using a rope.

They are yet to establish the motive of the murder and suicide.

Both bodies were moved to a local mortuary pending postmortem and investigations.

In Mutitu, Kirinyaga county, police are investigating the murder of Rose Njeri, 45.

The police said the deceased woman and her husband have been having conflict that led to physical fighting.

They said the man on Wednesday allegedly called a neighbour to his house and showed her the body of Njeri, before escaping.

He told the neighbour they fought over some money he had sent her for business.

Police said they found the body on the sofa long after the murder.

The body was moved to the mortuary for postmortem to establish how she died. A hunt for the suspect is ongoing, police said.

Meanwhile, police in Nairobi are investigating the death of a man after he was hit by a train at Donholm Railway station on Tuesday.

The body of Silas Obanda, 26, was found lying at the railway line long after the incident had happened, police said.

## WAS WAITING FOR FUEL

## Cop hacked to death, body left by roadside in Siaya

CYRUS OMBATI

A police officer was murdered as he waited for help after his motorcycle ran out of fuel on Thursday in Rarieda, Siaya county.

Police said they are investigating the death of constable Christone Maundu of Aram police station, who was found dead near Rarieda Secondary School on Ndori-Luanda Kotieno road.

His body had deep cut wounds in the head when it was discovered moments after the murder.

The motorcycle was next to the body, police said.

Maundu had earlier on escorted two colleagues and was riding back to Aram shopping centre when he met his death.

The motorcycle ran out of fuel and he called his colleagues for help.

By the time the colleagues arrived, they found him motionless, police said. The assailants had escaped.

Senior police officers visited the scene and announced investigations had been launched.

No arrest has been made and the motive is yet to be established, police said on Thursday. The body was moved to the mortuary pending postmortem and investigations.



## NEWS COUNTIES



Construction of Ithookwe stadium in Kitui on Wednesday /MUSEMBI NZENGU

## DEVELOPMENT

# Kitui backs Ruto as Sh800m stadium nears completion

*Facility is expected to transform region's sporting and economic landscape*

MUSEMBI NZENGU  
@TheStarKenya

KITUI county leaders have expressed support for President William Ruto's administration, following a number of development projects he has initiated in the region.

Deputy Governor Augustine Kanani and speaker Kevin Katisya said the partnership is already bearing fruit as construction of the Sh800 million Ithookwe stadium nears completion.

The facility is expected to transform the region's sporting and economic landscape.

The two spoke on Wednesday during an inspection tour by Sports Cabinet Secretary Salim Mvurya.

The 100,000-seat capacity facility on the outskirts of Kitui town, is funded by the national government and is expected to host this year's Mashujaa Day celebrations.

"Today marks a milestone for Kitui county," said Kanani. "Our constitution defines both levels of government as distinct yet interdependent.

The development we're witnessing here is the product of the spirit of cooperation."

The county provided the land and other resources needed to make the project possible.

Preparations are already underway to ensure the stadium is ready by October 20.

Kanani said collaborations are important to maximise benefits from national government projects.

"County governments receive only 15 per cent of national revenue, while 85 per cent remains with the national government," he said. "We cannot afford to miss any opportunity that allows Kitui to tap into that 85 per cent."

Katisya praised the national government's support for Kitui, saying such projects are constitutionally backed and essential for counties with limited budgets.

"I'm impressed by the pace of work here. It's a clear sign of commitment. However, I urge the contractor to continue working round the clock to ensure the stadium is ready for han-



dover by October 6," Mvurya said. The stadium is expected to be a hub for sports, cultural events.

## (+) INSTANT ANALYSIS

Kenya Kwanza is actively involved in the construction and upgrade of sports stadiums. The Talanta Sports Stadium in Nairobi is one of the key project, with construction progressing well and aiming for completion before the end of next year.

Sports CS Salim Mvurya (2nd L), Kitui Deputy Governor Augustine Kanani and speaker Kevin Katisya at Ithookwe stadium on Wednesday /MUSEMBI NZENGU

## TRAGEDY

# Four nyumba kumi officials arrested for killing man in Meru

CYRUS OMBATI

FOUR members of nyumba kumi were arrested after a man they "disciplined" died in hospital in Mutuati, Meru county.

The four and others had assaulted the man on claims he had assaulted his wife, police said.

A move to instill "discipline" on him turned tragic as he later succumbed to injuries in hospital on July 15.

Police said they are investigating the murder.

There have been complaints from some local leaders that nyumba kumi members are running kangaroo courts.

Local leaders claim up to five people have died in the hands of the rogue officials amid calls on police to investigate the issue.

Police said they are investigating the claims. The reports are rampant in parts of Meru and Kisii counties amid calls for action to tame their activities.

The suspects run the courts and turn them to torture chambers in villages with the knowledge of the police.

Meanwhile, police in Mackinon, Kwale county are investigating the death of a woman whose body was found in a house.

The body of Agnes Nzangi, 24, was found on July 16, long after she had died.

Police are looking for her boyfriend as a person of interest.

The body was locked in the house and was strangled using a bed sheet, which was found on the neck.

A note believed to have been written and left by the suspect was found in the room.

The note indicated the said assailant was also ready to die and follow the woman.

Police are investigating its authenticity even as they look for the suspect for grilling. The body was moved to the mortuary pending postmortem.

THERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINTS FROM SOME LOCAL LEADERS THAT NYUMBA KUMI MEMBERS ARE RUNNING KANGAROO COURTS

## LOVE TRIANGLE

# Five family members among six killed in fire tragedy

CYRUS OMBATI

AT least six people, including a family of five have been killed in two related fires at Bulapesa in Isiolo town.

Police linked the incidents to a love triangle.

The first incident involved a 45-year-old woman and four children whose remains were found in the house.

A sixth person, a woman believed to be behind the killing of the five family members was trailed by a mob to her house and burnt

to death. The Tuesday midnight blaze, which razed the family house to the ground, left no survivors.

Three siblings and their cousin, all aged between seven and 15 years, perished alongside their mother, with property of unknown value destroyed, police said.

Preliminary investigations pointed to the woman suspected of having started the fire in a revenge attack fuelled by a love-related conflict.

Tension rose quickly in the area as news of the deaths spread.irate residents hunted down the suspect-

ed arsonist, lynched her and burnt her house just a few metres from the other incident.

At the Bulapesa cemetery, grave diggers prepared a single grave for the five victims, who were buried later that afternoon in accordance with Islamic tradition.

Family members and neighbours said they tried to put out the fire but were overwhelmed.

Firefighters did not arrive in time. Police said immediate steps were taken to protect the children of the suspect, who were reportedly in school at the time.



The fire at Bulapesa in Isiolo town /GRAB



## NEWS COUNTIES

## EMBRACING CHANGE

# From cattle to catfish, desert fishers of Marsabit defy taboo

*Fish was traditionally frowned upon by pastoralists, but it's now symbol of adaptation*

STEPHEN ASTARIKO  
@astarikosteph

ABUDHO Galgallo, a student of agriculture at North Horr Technical Training Institute in Marsabit, owns a fish pond as part of his studies.

"It's more than just a school project. It's a symbol of change and a real opportunity for employment in our community," he said.

Another student, Adho Game, said the project had opened her eyes to a new world. "I never ate fish growing up. Now I enjoy it and advocate for it in my community. Fish farming is not just about nutrition; it's about survival, dignity, and adapting to climate change."

NTTI deputy principal Sammy Malingu praised the fish project for offering practical, real-world skills. Head of Agriculture Department Kepahs Juma said students had embraced aquaculture with enthusiasm and were becoming its champions. Head of Nutrition

Anastacia Mutiti hailed the initiative as a "game changer" that can help combat malnutrition, improve food security, and enhance local climate resilience.

In the remote, sun-scorched landscapes of northern Kenya, Marsabit county is emerging as a striking example of a region successfully battling the harsh realities of climate change.

Once lush with green pastures and abundant livestock, Marsabit is now grappling with prolonged drought, unpredictable rainfall, and worsening food insecurity.

For decades, pastoralism was the heartbeat of communities like North Horr. Herding cattle, camels, and goats across vast distances in search of water and pasture was more than a livelihood: it was a way of life. But as climate shocks deepen, even this age-old tradition faces an uncertain future.

Amid this uncertainty, a quiet transformation is unfolding. From camels to catfish, local pastoralists are increas-



Members of Chalbi Environmental Development Initiative at one of their fish ponds in North Horr /STEPHEN ASTARIKO

ingly turning to fish farming, a practice once considered taboo.

"We used to believe that fish was not our food. But now, it's helping us feed

our children and survive the dry seasons," said Sora Guyo, an elder from North Horr.

In a region where eating fish was

once frowned upon due to long-held cultural beliefs, fish is now a symbol of adaptation and resilience.

Supported by the Marsabit County Fisheries Department and the World Food Programme, fish ponds are springing up across the region as viable alternatives to traditional livestock farming.

During a recent visit to North Horr, the Star witnessed firsthand the growing interest in aquaculture. Chalbi Environmental Development Initiative, a local community group, is among the pioneers.

Guided by their secretary general Hadija Guyo, the group has successfully established two thriving fish ponds nestled among doum palms, hatcheries. Despite feed shortages in the area, the fish have grown well and are now ready for harvest.

Hadija said the initiative was not just about food but also about economic empowerment. "Fish farming is giving our women and youth a sense of independence. We plan to channel the profits into table banking for savings and soft loans," she said.

## (+) Instant Analysis

Marsabit county fisheries officer Sostine Wanjala said aquaculture is fast becoming a cornerstone in the county's climate adaptation strategy. In 2023, 15 residents were selected for specialised training in Sagana.

## INDUCTION COURSE

# Serve with zeal, Mandera's new health workers urged

STEPHEN ASTARIKO

NEWLY hired healthcare workers in Mandera have been urged to serve with utmost dedication, compassion and integrity.

Mandera county secretary Billow Isaac reminded the health workers that the county faces unique challenges.

He spoke on Wednesday in Mandera town during the opening of a four-day induction course for the newly recruited healthcare workers.

"First, allow me to congratulate you on your successful recruitment. Your presence here today is not only a testament to your qualifications and commitment, but also a reflection of the trust this county has placed in you to serve its people with dedication, compassion, and integrity," Isaac said.

"Healthcare is not just a profession — it is a calling. A calling to serve humanity at its most vulnerable. As newly recruited healthcare workers, you are now at the forefront of one of the most noble and impactful fields in the world."

Isaac said the recruitment was part of ongoing efforts to reform and strengthen the county's healthcare system and improve service delivery to the residents.

"I want to express my gratitude to the new recruits for choosing to serve in Mandera. As the county administration, we remain committed to supporting you through continuous professional development and a conducive working environment.

Isaac said the county administration remained committed to strengthening health infrastructure, investing in staff welfare and expanding access to essential health services in alignment with Kenya's Universal Health Coverage goals."

The healthcare workers will be deployed across the county health facilities, including hard-to-reach areas, as part of the county's broader health agenda to enhance access to affordable, equitable, and high-quality healthcare for its residents.

The event was also attended by senior county officials.

Speaking in Mandera town last week, Governor Mohamed Khalif said his administration had made a deliberate effort to allocate a substantial amount in the sector in order to improve it. "In the last two years, we have made significant progress in improving health infrastructure across all levels of service provision. Even though we have not achieved everything that we set out to achieve, we are surely on the right track," he said.

Mandera county secretary Billow Isaac addresses new health workers /STEPHEN ASTARIKO



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# Fashion needs a rethink, women are reshaping it



Radio Africa Group events manager Somoina Kimojino with What Women Want founder Pinky Ghelani at the Hemingways Eden Residence  
/BRIAN SIMIYU

BY KAREN MURIUKI FOR RIVERWOOD COMMUNICATIONS

@TheStarKenya

Sitting under a quiet tree canopy in Nairobi's Karen suburb, I found myself part of a conversation that was deeply rooted, timely and necessary. It was not a panel. It was not a fashion event. It was something much more rare: an honest, cross-generational gathering of women asking how Africa's fashion story could be redefined for the better.

The panellists included Neha Parmar, Nathalie Botango, Nyokabi, Lisa Kibutu, Pinky Ghelani and Somoina Kimojino.

At the centre of this roundtable was Pat Mitchell, a global media icon and the first woman president of PBS. Her presence carried weight, but her words carried even more.

"You don't have to be fearless," she said, pausing with intent, "but you must be brave." That single statement set the tone for what became a transformative afternoon.

The roundtable, curated by Linda Murithi of The Core Fashion Kenya, brought together women who are shaping the future of African fashion and design through sustainability, culture and storytelling.

Held at Hemingways Eden Residence, the setting was fitting: beautiful, but quiet. Elegant, but real. It gave us space to listen, reflect and speak without the noise that so often surrounds the fashion world.

What struck me most was the clarity and alignment in the room. From fashion entrepreneurs and media strate-

gists to regenerative designers and textile recyclers, each woman brought her truth with humility and strength. Collectively, they offered a clear message: if African fashion is to thrive, it must be intentional, locally led and values-driven.

In one powerful segment, the panellists spoke about the need to preserve craftsmanship, invest in sustainability and protect creative labour from becoming another form of exploitation. Their words were different but the message was the same. Fashion is not just about clothing. It is about people. About systems. About care.

## WHAT BRAVERY LOOKS LIKE

I left the event asking myself what bravery looks like in the context of fashion in Africa. Is it about building new collections every season? Is it about gaining international recognition? Or is it something deeper: the courage to question fast fashion, to slow down production and to reframe fashion as a tool for storytelling, dignity and justice?

As someone who works in communications, I've often admired how fashion shapes culture. But I've also grown increasingly aware of how dangerous that power can be when used without responsibility.

When global fashion media chooses what and who to spotlight, African designers and artisans often get reduced to "inspiration" rather than being treated as industry leaders in their own right.

This experience taught me that changing the fashion industry is not just about better designs. It is about designing better values into the systems themselves. This

includes how fashion is funded, who gets access to markets and how the media documents and amplifies the work.

It also includes rethinking success. Too often, success in fashion is defined by speed, scale and profit. But what if success looked like cultural preservation, environmental healing and financial fairness for artisans and small businesses?

One of the most profound moments of the roundtable was the silence after Pat Mitchell reminded us that if we are not telling our own stories, someone else will, and their version may not serve us.

That silence stayed with me. It reminded me that storytelling is not just about being seen. It is about being understood. And it begins with taking ownership of our narratives, not waiting for global validation.

As I reflected on the conversations from that day, I saw more than an industry. I saw a movement. A slow, deliberate, deeply rooted shift.

Driven by women who are refusing to follow systems that have never worked for them. Women who are building new systems instead. Women who are using design, communication and collaboration to protect their work and their future.

This is what bravery looks like.

If African fashion is to have a future that serves our people, environment and culture, then it cannot simply chase visibility. It must define its own value. And that begins not with branding or trends, but with spaces like the one we shared that day. Spaces where truth can be spoken, vision can be aligned and action can begin.





Lydia Njeri 29, mills Pearl millet and finger millet porridge using a wet milling machine at Chaaria market in Meru county  
/MUNENE NYAGA

# How woman stirred up porridge empire in Meru

*Lydia Njeri started it after Covid job loss, now earns weekly profit of Sh100,000*

JOHN MUCHANGI  
@TheStarKenya

It is dusty in this part of the country this season. In the near-moderate heat, Lydia Njeri, 29, bends to mop her floor.

Tidying up after serving a client. Her back straightens and she looks at us, beaming, “Karibu, Karibu,” she calls joyfully.

In the quiet Chaaria market in Mwanganthia ward, Meru county, Njeri, an agripreneur, is making significant investments in her wet milling business.

It integrates porridge vending, cereals retailing and the sale of blended flours. The business earns her a weekly profit of Sh100,000.

Njeri, a proud mother of two, operates a hive of enterprises that deliver much-needed support in value addition to various agricultural value chains.

“My responsibility is to improve the standard of the cereals grown in Chaaria, which includes pearl millet, finger millet, green grams, cow peas and green grams by milling and giving them numerous usages,” Njeri said.

From her rented premises in Chaaria Market, which serves as both a milling hub and a porridge café, she operates a wet milling machine locally known as Kithii kia ucuru.

“In our milling business, we focus on value addition by wet milling pearl millet and finger millet using a machine known as ‘Kithii’,” she said.

“We blend the two grains to

produce porridge, which we serve on site and also deliver to customers who place external orders.”

Pearl millet and finger millet are highly nutritious and packed with proteins, vitamins, antioxidants and essential minerals like calcium, iron and zinc.

The porridge made from these grains is especially favoured by the elderly, people with diabetes, children and expectant or lactating mothers.

Rich in dietary fibre and complex carbohydrates, the porridge provides sustained energy, supports blood and bone health through its iron and calcium content, and offers plant-based protein for muscle maintenance.

## HOW SHE STARTED

The Bachelor of Science in Agriculture graduate began her entrepreneurial journey in 2021. She was previously in employment, but the company she worked for collapsed due to the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Setting up the business was a struggle because I didn’t have enough money to start it. I spent all the money I had to sustain my home expenses,” Njeri said.

“I secured a loan of Sh200,000 from a friend and bought the porridge milling machine and stock worth Sh5,000 that has supported me to date.”

Her innovation extended to formulating ‘Uji Power’, a fortified porridge made from a nutrient-rich blend of cassava, arrowroot, groundnuts and milk.

The porridge gained popu-

**‘IN 2021, WE MADE AROUND SH35,000 A WEEK. NOW, WE AVERAGE SH100,000 WEEKLY’**

larity for its health benefits and taste, significantly increasing her customer base. Despite a tough start with little to no customers, she found a way to break into the market.

“I began hawking porridge as a strategic marketing move to create awareness about my new wet milling business,” she said.

“The goal was to attract more customers by also promoting the health benefits of the nutritious porridge in the market.”

For Njeri, innovation flows like a well-tended stream. Using her unique milling machine, lined with a traditional clay interior that guarantees a smooth, porridge-perfect blend, similar to traditional stone milling, she not only produces nutrient-rich flour but also harvests a treasured by-product: pearl millet residue.

This coarse, raw delicacy is naturally rich in calcium and has found a special place among expectant mothers, who now cherish it as a wholesome alternative to the stones found on supermarket shelves and kiosks.

“It’s our very own traditional super snack,” Njeri remarked with pride.

“Our foremothers handed this down to us during their stone-milling days, rubbing millet between rocks to create the perfect porridge flour. I encourage expectant mothers to embrace it and share it with their children because it’s as

pure and natural as it gets.”

Njeri utilises the nutritious residue to feed her poultry and sells the surplus to other poultry farmers, thereby creating an additional source of income.

The business had a breakthrough in 2023 after she enrolled in the Drought Tolerant Crops for Youth Jobs Creation Programme.

The course is implemented by Africa Harvest Biotech Foundation International lead partner in collaboration with International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics and the Mastercard Foundation.

The training equipped her with vital business skills, resulting in improved operations and expanded services.

“In 2021, we made around Sh35,000 a week. Now, we are averaging Sh100,000 weekly, thanks to the training and restructuring of our services,” Njeri says.

Determined to apply her newly acquired knowledge, she leased half an acre and began growing sorghum, thereby reducing the cost of buying raw materials for wet milling.

Her first harvest yielded four 90kg bags, all of which were used in her milling business. She attributes part of her success to the programme, which provides quality, improved seed as an incentive.

Since joining it in March last year, Njeri has employed two staff members, 27-year-old Jane Wairimu and 24-year-old Elsy Murugi, further scaling her impact and creating employment for young people.

With improved earnings, she bought a plot worth Sh800,000, which she plans to use to grow some of the cereals she currently sources externally.

She says this will reduce operational costs and increase profit margins, as she won’t need to buy all the cereals she uses.

## CHALLENGES FACED

Njeri conceded to various challenges she has endured in the business. She called for both government and non-government interventions to empower more young people and women in business.

She urges the government to reduce the cost of business licences and calls for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to provide quality seeds and inputs for smallholder farmers.

Since her business launch, Njeri was paying the annual business permit at Sh3,000. But in the 2023-24 financial year, the cost shot up to Sh4,000, an amount she urges the Meru government to reconsider for the well-being of the unemployed youth willing to join in the business venture.

She accounts for Sh7,200 in medical certificates and Sh4,000 in business permit annually, a cost she terms unfair to small businesses striving for survival. “The government should consider consolidating the different levies into one fair amount to encourage more youth to venture into business,” she said.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report, in Kenya, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are vital to the economy, contributing about 40 per cent of the GDP and offering employment to about 14.9 million Kenyans.

The DTCs 4 Youth programme aims to create dignified and fulfilling work for 120,000 young people in rural Kenya, 70 per cent of whom are young women, by promoting drought-tolerant crop technologies.

“Empowering women ensures a stable family and society. When a woman is empowered, the whole community thrives,” Njeri says.

## ADVICE TO BEGINNERS

To the unemployed youth fresh from school, Njeri encourages them to take the bold step of starting low. She recalled starting her business with just a five-litre can to vend the porridge, and that didn’t stop her from getting to where she is today.

“Starting a porridge business requires little capital. Young people should try starting small if they can’t find a large amount to start a business,” she advised.

She believes educated youth should not be discouraged by the lack of white-collar jobs and instead focus their skills and knowledge on SMEs, which offer a brighter future for the youth.





# Beadwork of waists and ankles

*It is a symbolic form of writing that lives on the body*

In Kenya today, more and more young people are using beads worn on the waist and ankles to speak without saying a word.

These beads are not just fashion. They tell stories about who someone is, what they believe and how they feel about themselves. They are forms of artistic expression just like poetry and music.

In a world that often judges women by how they dress or look, some young women are using these beads to take back control. They want to feel free and proud of their bodies. And they want to feel connected to their history.

My Mpesa agent told me, “When I wear my waist beads? I feel rooted. It’s like wearing a story from my grandmother’s time, but also making it my own.”

Waist beads and ankle chains have long histories in African cultures. Among the Mijikenda, Luhya and Turkana communities, young girls wore beads to show they had become women.

The beads marked stages in life. These include fertility, readiness for marriage or a rite of passage. Back then, these items were worn in private and carried



A beaded woman  
/PIXABAY

deep meaning. But things have changed. Today’s youth wear beads for different reasons. Some wear them to feel sexy, others for fun and many as a quiet form of resistance.

These beads are no longer just private. They are now worn boldly, even shared on social media. Instagram, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter) are filled with photos and videos of girls dancing, walking or posing with beads showing at the waist or ankles.

A sophomore mentee told me, “After my breakup, I bought my first ankle chain. It made me feel like I was starting over. Like I was free again.” Her story is one of many where young people use these small items to express big

emotions. For many, beads are not just ornaments. They are symbols. They tell others that the person wearing them is confident, aware and proud. They also question the idea that the young female body must be hidden or silent. Through their navel area beads, young women are saying, “This is me. And I have nothing to hide.”

In the past, older generations saw ankle chains in particular as bad signs. An elderly church elder told me last Sunday, “When I see a woman with an anklet, I think she’s trying to send a sexual message.” These views were shaped by strict moral codes. But today, the youth see things differently. They are asking, “Why

should a woman be ashamed of her body?” or “Why can’t beauty and culture be visible?”

Gen Z, especially, has grown up in a digital world. They curate their lives online — how they dress, dance, speak and present themselves. Hashtags like #waistbeadsoftiktok and #anklechains help them connect with others around the world.

A girl in Nairobi may share her look and be liked or commented on by someone in Accra, Harlem or Johannesburg. This creates a kind of digital family. Think of a community where Black girls across the globe celebrate their heritage together virtually.

The story doesn’t stop with fashion or social media. Many youth today are also involved in important conversations around feminism, body rights and mental health. Some girls say wearing beads helps them love their bodies more. A niece told me, “My waist beads remind me I don’t have to look like the girls in magazines. I just have to feel good in my skin.”

Others wear them to heal. Some wear them to mark growth. Some use them as a sign of moving on. Each bead can hold a private meaning. But taken together, the act of wearing them becomes public. It becomes a performance. Like an artiste on stage, the wear-

er is saying something through what they wear, how they move and what they choose to show.

This idea matches what some scholars say about identity. Philosopher Judith Butler wrote that identity is something we perform. We don’t just “have” it: We show it in what we say, do or wear. A girl dancing on TikTok with her ankle chains showing is not just entertaining. She is writing a short story with her body.

Still, not everyone is happy with this change. Some older people feel that beads have lost their value. “They are no longer sacred,” an elder in my home area said. “Now they’re just for show.”

This difference in opinion shows the gap between generations. The elders may want to keep tradition the same. But the youth believe tradition grows with each new voice that joins it.

This change also raises other questions. Many vendors now sell beads online with names like “Afro-chic” or “spiritual beads”. They market them as items of fashion, not culture.

Does this make them less meaningful? Some say yes. They argue that turning beads into a trend kills their deeper purpose. But others disagree. “It’s not where I bought it that matters,” said one university girl.

## Jiji Ndogo Police Post

# Time to navigate marital landmine

*Makini is clueless as venting escalates*

DAVID MUCHAI  
@Davemuchai

My wife Sgt Sophia and I are walking through a rough patch in our marriage. There’s nothing huge to speak of. No one is cheating. At least I know I’m not. To achieve that, I’d have to convince another woman to like me. Given how hard it is to make my current relationship work, I doubt my capacity to add to the drama.

My conviction that my wife is faithful only stems from my trust that she is. Also, Jiji Ndogo is slim pickings for a woman of her taste. Trust me, I often wonder how come she settled on me.

Yeah, I know I’m airing my insecurities, but when you are a definite 5 married to a 13 on a scale of 1 to 10, you have cause for worry.

I’m no authority when it comes to knowledge of the opposite sex. In my almost 30 years on this blue space dot (Ahem, I just learned that from a space documentary), I have properly dated a total of three women. That is, if you don’t count all the times I’ve either been ghosted or given wrong phone numbers.

That said, I think women make it quite hard to keep good times flowing. Do you know how much men keep to themselves for the sake of peace in a relationship? Things that go unsaid just so the missiles stay in their bunkers? Men intentionally lose or back down to women to make them happy. Someone once wrote on social media, “If a woman admits she’s in the wrong, that’s a sign for you to find somewhere else to spend the night coz it’s about to go down.”

Things have only gotten worse in this “modern” age. Now we’re constantly accused of “mansplaining”. It used to mean a man explaining an issue to a woman in a patronising way. No w a d a y s, it’s just about anything, no matter the tone

or attitude. I get it. It’s wrong to claim that the pain of getting hit in the balls is worse than childbirth, but shouldn’t we just agree to disagree?

After all, either of us would have to experience both to pass fair judgment.

My wife also never seems to understand that I, too, can be moody. I might not sulk or throw tantrums at the slightest confrontation, but I’m not a sex machine ready to jump into action at the press of a button. She takes it as a personal affront if I’m not in the



mood to perform.

“What’s going on?” she asks. “Is it me? You aren’t attracted to me anymore, are you? Is it... Oh my God! I’ve gotten fat. Is that it? I’m now an ugly blob you can’t imagine making love to.”

“Honey, remember we confronted armed thugs at Mla Chake shop?” I say. “I just got shot at!”

“Yeah? Shouldn’t that make you feel even more alive?”

No, dear. It made my life flash before my eyes. I saw the gates of heaven open to admit me. That’s what I think but don’t say.

But it doesn’t stop her from jumping into a long spell of venting. Which is the other thing I never know how to handle. Women vent about anything and everything. It may be in their nature, but no one thought to provide us a menu to navigate that landmine. I’ve learned to be a better listener but like everything else, it gets harder with time.

It is, therefore, both surprising and worrying that Sophia has suggested that we go on holiday to work on our relationship. I wonder what awaits us in Mombasa.



## SOCIETY TALK

# Patriarchy is alive, it never really left

*A father murdered his own daughter*

**NABILA HATIMY**  
@realobserver

One are the days the girl child was aborted. The girl child was seen as worthless as she did not have as much value as a boy. I mean, those days are backwards and uncivilised, and they have no place in modern society. Right?

Then why was Radhika Yadav murdered in broad daylight? Why was she killed by the one man who was supposed to shield her from the ugliness of the world?

News out of India last week showed us that, while we live in towering cities, in a digitally fast-paced world, society is still as chauvinistic as it was during the Neanderthal era. We live in a world where a man's ego, nay, a father's ego, is as brittle as a sug-

ar thread. How does a man with a successful and talented daughter kill his daughter because of what other men think?

Radhika was a successful tennis player-turned-coach in India. The 25-year-old ran her own tennis academy in her home city of Gurgaon, but her life was cut short because her father, her own biological father, had his ego bruised when other men taunted him for living off his successful daughter.

There are not enough curse words and angry emojis that would represent the anger and emotions I feel. I am very sure my sentiments are echoed by women all over the world! There is no reason in the world for a father to murder his own daughter, but to kill your child because other men are chiding you for having a successful daughter? That has got to

Armed man  
/PIXABAY



be one for the books! To be blessed with a talented child, a disciplined child, one who is successful but grounded on the foundations of family and respect, all that is not good enough? What would weaken the resolve of a man, a father, to shoot his own daughter in the back out of pure jealousy and spite?

What if the daughter had been a boy? If the man had a child who had the same life trajectory and the same success as Radhika but was born a boy, would the outcome be the same? Would he not be proud and boastful of his son's accom-

plishments? In the same country where Indians value their sons, it has been proven over and over again that it is in fact the girls who take care of their parents when they are older. That the sons abandon their frail and aged parents after they have swindled them out of every fortune. That the sons' wives mistreat their parents when they are old. Yet these lessons still mean nothing.

Just three decades ago, the Chinese aborted and abandoned baby girls, only to learn the value of women in society a short while later.

Chinese society was overrun by an imbalance of men and women as parents preferred having boys over girls. It was only when the boys reached maturity that they discovered that these boys are nothing without girls. That their society also needed girls who were just as well raised and well educated as their precious sons.

Have we learnt nothing? It may be a man's world, but we all know by now that it would mean nothing without a woman. Radhika's father is about to learn that the hard way. He will live his life in isolation. Instead of being taunted for having a successful daughter, he will be taunted as the pariah who murdered his own daughter. He will be daughterless and hopefully wifeless.

It's 2025 yet the patriarchal society is alive and well. If we are being honest, it never really left. It was just operating silently in the background as we were romanced by the uprising of feminism and women empowerment. However far women have come in society, we are not nearly as close to where we should be.

But perception is what matters, right?

★ **SASALIVING**

**G-SPOT**

@MwangiGithahu



# Has Kenya had change of heart in sexuality debate?

*It raised eyebrows after backing UN vote on rights, protection*



In the grand diplomatic talking shop that is the United Nations, every so often, the Human Rights Council throws a slightly uncomfortable question onto the table and watches what happens.

By the time you read this, it will have been almost a couple of weeks since the historic vote in favour of renewing the mandate of the independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination.

The role is based on the ever-controversial Sexual Orientation and

Gender Identity (Sogi) resolution.

The real point of action around the vote is the question about whether LGBTQ+ people should be recognised as human beings deserving of rights and protection? You might think this was the sort of thing everyone would agree on, until you actually ask.

We all remember President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's rants about members of the Rainbow Community being "worse than dogs and pigs".

As the roll call began, seasoned

watchers of African diplomacy leaned back in their chairs, ready to tick off the usual suspects: South Africa with a firm yes, Nigeria with a resounding no, Uganda probably already drafting a rebuttal before the question is finished.

Then, something amazing and curious happened. Kenya voted in favour. Yes, our Kenya, where same-sex relationships are still criminalised. The same Kenya where so many people regularly invoke "African culture" as a kind of divine fire-

wall against anything rainbow-coloured. This very same Kenya where LGBTQ+ activists still face threats, arrests and the occasional sermon declaring them agents of Western confusion.

You could almost hear the diplomatic jaws dropping onto the floor across the continent.

Why did Kenya say yes? Theories abound. Some wild optimists suggest that the vote was influenced by a last-minute whisper from the Foreign Ministry's more progressive wing.

Frankly, if there even existed such a wing, I'd be shocked. Knowing my country as I do, it is more likely that someone simply pressed the wrong button.

Nevertheless, whatever the reason, Kenya's unexpected thumbs-up stirred the pot. Lest we forget, Sogi votes at the UN are often less about actual rights and more about symbolic alignment.

Voting for is usually interpreted as being pro-West, pro-human rights, or, depending on your audience, pro-moral decay. Voting against sends a message that you're defending national culture, spiritual sovereignty and, apparently, the entire fabric of society from collapse.

To be honest, most African nations tend to tiptoe around the issue. Abstinence is the safe zone, the political equivalent of awkwardly fiddling with your spectacles and hoping no

one asks your opinion during a staff meeting. But Kenya stepped off the fence and into the diplomatic spotlight. Cue mixed reactions.

Local and international rights groups were pleasantly stunned, raising cautious glasses of white wine in Nairobi's direction.

Meanwhile, on the ground, things have been rather more complicated. As would have been expected, religious leaders are fuming. And somewhere, one imagines, a government spokesperson, sighed deeply and began preparing an "explanation" that involved technical language and reassurances that nothing had really changed.

Meanwhile, social media was occupied with more important matters, so the expected meltdown seems to have been muted.

Yet the vote matters. UN resolutions, even the non-binding ones, have weight. They help set the tone for what is considered acceptable or reprehensible in global discourse. When Kenya, a regional powerhouse with a foot in both East Africa and the global economy, votes in favour of Sogi protections, it sends a ripple. Maybe even a wave.

For us LGBTQ+ Kenyans, the vote appears to have offered a glimmer of hope. For our detractors, it has sparked a new round of cultural outrage. Continentally, the vote signalled that the African narrative on LGBTQ+ rights is not as uniform, or as predictable, as many like to believe.

So, what does Kenya's vote tell us? That human rights, cultural identity, geopolitics and domestic image all mix together in one big pot, which occasionally, someone stirs the "wrong" way, only to find that the world is watching.



TONY MBALLA **FITFINITY**

@TonyMballa

**SASA**FITNESS ★

# Running toward love: How Korir won more than a race

*Finishing last in a 100m race left him determined to find fitness and win crush's heart*

A couple hug  
/AI GENERATED

Korir had silently admired his colleague Nyaboke for months. She was everything he found captivating. Confident, intelligent, full of laughter and consistently outstanding at work.

During meetings, he'd sneak glances her way, heart thumping, unsure how to initiate a real conversation.

One afternoon, he finally gathered the courage.

"Hey, Nyaboke. How's it going?" he asked, feigning casualness.

Nyaboke gave a warm smile. "I'm good, Korir. Just trying to meet these deadlines. You?"

Korir was thrilled. As they began chatting more often during lunch and coffee breaks, he wondered if she might feel the same way. But before he could explore that, an unexpected opportunity, and challenge, arose.

Kiamaku Merchandise, their workplace, was hosting a team building event. Among the activities was a 100m race. Korir decided to sign up, seeing it as a chance to impress Nyaboke.

Race day came with a buzz. As the starting gun fired, Korir surged forward with determination. But within seconds, his enthusiasm

fizzled. The other runners pulled ahead as he lagged behind, his body unprepared for the burst of athleticism.

The crowd cheered but Korir barely heard it. His lungs burned, legs screamed and by the time he reached the finish line, he was a distant last.

Nyaboke approached, trying to mask her reaction. "Hey, Korir, are you okay?" she asked, sympathy in her voice. "That was quite a... spirited effort."

Korir laughed awkwardly.

“

*I know we've built a great friendship, and I don't want to jeopardise that. But I can't help feeling there's more. I like you, Nyaboke. I have for a long time*

"Yeah, I was being strategic," he said, forcing a grin.

Nyaboke chuckled lightly. "Maybe next time, go with a different strategy."

As they walked away, Korir overheard her whisper to a colleague, "I don't know how he's going to redeem himself after that."

The comment stung. His heart sank. He had hoped to impress her, not become a punchline.

Determined to change the narrative, Korir sought out his long-time friend, Baba Kajojo, a gym enthusiast. Baba welcomed him with open arms.

"What's going on, man? You suddenly want to lift weights?" Baba Kajojo teased.

"It's Nyaboke," Korir confessed. "I like her. But after that disaster of a race, I feel like I need to prove I'm not a joke."

Baba clapped him on the back. "Alright, then. Let's do this right. Start slow, with some jogging and light weights, and then build up."

Korir dove into the challenge. Every morning, he ran, every evening, he hit the gym. Baba Kajojo guided and pushed him, reminding him to stay disciplined. It wasn't easy. Muscles ached and doubts crept in, but Korir pushed

through. He had a goal: be better for himself and maybe win Nyaboke's respect.

Weeks turned to months. His stamina increased. His posture improved. His confidence grew. He didn't just feel fitter, he felt transformed.

One day, after work, Nyaboke approached him as they exited the building.

"Your body structure has truly changed. You look fantastic," she said with a smile.

"Your dedication to the gym has been really strong lately. It's inspiring."

Korir's heart skipped. "Thanks, Nyaboke. You kind of inspired me."

Her smile faltered slightly, but then she laughed softly, and for the first time, Korir sensed something had shifted between them.

Their conversations grew deeper. They shared ideas, gave each other feedback and even worked on a few small projects together.

The bond between them strengthened naturally. No performance, just connection.

Soon, it was time for the next company team building event. Korir, now lean and confident, signed up for the 100m race again, not to

impress but to measure how far he'd come.

When the starting gun fired, he launched forward with power and rhythm. As the finish line neared, he surged ahead and crossed it — first.

Cheers erupted. His colleagues clapped him on the back, stunned by his turnaround. Nyaboke stood among them, clapping with a look of genuine admiration.

That evening, the team gathered for a celebratory dinner. Laughter and warmth filled the air. Korir found himself seated next to Nyaboke. The atmosphere was perfect, casual yet intimate.

"Korir," she said, her voice softer now, "I've really enjoyed watching your growth. You've changed a lot in such a short time."

Korir smiled. "Thank you. That really means a lot, especially coming from you."

They chatted about the race, their work, their goals. As the night wore on, Korir felt a growing urgency. This was his moment.

"Nyaboke," he began, clearing his throat. "I've been thinking about us lately."

She turned to him, curious.

"I know we've built a great friendship, and I don't want to jeopardise that," he continued, heart pounding. "But I can't help feeling there's more. I like you, Nyaboke. I have for a long time."

There was a pause. Korir held his breath.

Nyaboke looked surprised, but then her face softened. "I'm glad you said that," she replied. "I've felt the same way. I just wasn't sure how to bring it up."

Relief flooded through Korir, and a wide smile spread across his face. "Really? So... what do we do now?"

Nyaboke's eyes sparkled. "Let's take it one step at a time. I'd love to see where this leads."

Korir nodded. "Me, too."

They spent the rest of the evening side by side, sharing stories and laughter. It felt easy. Right.

As the night ended, Korir walked Nyaboke to her car. The stars above shimmered, and the air was crisp with promise.

"I'm really glad I spoke up," he said.

"Me, too," she replied. "I'm excited to see what's next."

As they said goodnight, Korir felt a surge of happiness unlike anything he'd known. Not because he'd won a race, but because he'd found the courage to become better, and to love without fear.

And maybe, just maybe, that had made all the difference.





# GUKENA RuCiini

Njoki  
NA KAJIM

6Am-10Am



92.2

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Saturday: 9 am to  
12pm

## CHARLTON AUCTIONEERS



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P.O. Box 22091-00100,  
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### PUBLIC AUCTION

Under instructions received from our principals the charges in the exercise of their statutory power we shall sell by Public Auction the under-mentioned prime property on **FRIDAY 25TH JULY 2025 AT OUR OFFICE LOCATED AT SUMMIT HOUSE, 4TH FLOOR ROOM 404 AT 10:30AM**

1. All the parcel of land known as **N.THARAKA/MARIMANTI/3603 registered in the name of DUNCAN KIMATHI MIRITI OF P.O BOX 2291-00100 NAIROBI**. The property is situated along an unnamed road within Kamatungu area of the larger Marimanti, Tharaka South Sub-County, Tharaka-Nithi County. It lies at approximately 1.9 kilometres past and to the South-East of Tharaka Technical and Vocational College, about 3.5kilometres past and to the South-East of Marimanti Town Centre and about 6.5 kilometres to the East of the Marimanti GK Prison.

2. All the parcel of land known as **DAGORETTI/KINOO/5912** registered in the name of **HENRY KAREITHI HINGA OF P.O BOX 2291-01000 NAIROBI** The property is in Gichecheni area, Kiambu County. It lies off and to the left of an unnamed road approximately 150 metres off Muhuri Road. The subject property lies about 180 metres South West of PCEA Gichecheni church. The subject property also lies approximately 280 metre West of St. Mary's Catholic Church Kagondo-Kinoo Parish.

#### TERMS OF SALE

1. All interested parties are requested to view the property during normal working hours by prior arrangement with ourselves to verify the details for themselves as these are not warranted by the auctioneer or the charges,
2. A deposit of 25% must be paid by banker cheque or cash at the fall of the hammer and the balance is to be paid at the period of 90 days from the date of the auction to the charges,
3. A refundable deposit of ksh 100,000.00 in the form of cash or banker cheque in the name of Charlton Auctioneers will be required for one to obtain a bidding number
4. Further details and conditions of sale may be obtained at our office.

**ALL ARE WELCOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Email: info@charltonauctioneers.com

## CHARLTON AUCTIONEERS



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Nairobi Kenya

### PUBLIC AUCTION

Under instructions received from our principals the financiers, we shall sell by Public Auction the under mentioned motor vehicles on **Friday 25th July 2025 at 10.30 AM AT RIVERLONG.**

REG NO	MAKE	YEAR	RATING	FUEL	YARD
KCT 319Z	TOYOTA PREMIO ZRT260	2012	1797cc	PETROL	RIVERLONG
KBW 827U	TOYOTA MARK-X GRX120	2007	2499cc	PETROL	RIVERLONG
KBK 762D	ISUZU D-MAX TFR54	2014	2500cc	DIESEL	RAJEMA

#### TERMS OF SALE

1. Cash at the fall of the hammer.
  2. The sale is subject to a reserve price.
  3. Vehicles are sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS".
- Offers should be submitted on <https://autobid.riverlong.com> not later than Friday 25th July 2025. For any assistant, please contact 0701689319 or 0701856557 alternatively send an email to [autobid@riverlong.com](mailto:autobid@riverlong.com)

**ALL ARE WELCOME!!**

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### PUBLIC AUCTION

Duly instructed by our principals, we shall sell the following goods by Public Auction on **SATURDAY 26TH JULY 2025 AT PANGANI AUCTION CENTRE AT 11:00 AM**

#### LANDLORD –VS- CHEGE KARIUKI & ASSOCIATES

LG microwave, Red berry water dispenser, 65" Samsung TV, Reception counter, 2pcs fabric office chairs, 3pcs complete computers, 3pcs all in one computers, 2pcs all in one computers, Konica Minolta ineo + 227 photocopier, 8pcs telephone heads, HIK Vision DVR, Huawei router, yeastar, Cisco, white rolling chair, 2pcs spring chairs, safe, 2pcs wooden-glassed filing cabinets, office desk with pedestal, Rexel paper shredder, HP LaserJet P110W printer, HP LaserJet pro –mfp M125nw printer.

#### CONDITIONS OF SALE

Strictly Cash at the fall of the Hammer.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Room 211  
Moi Avenue  
P.O. Box 22693-00100 NAIROBI

Tel: 0721 959886

Email: [velajael@gmail.com](mailto:velajael@gmail.com)

### PUBLIC AUCTION

Duly instructed by the Chief Magistrate's Court at Milimani & the Landlord herein, we shall sell the under mentioned goods by public auction:-

**ON FRIDAY 25TH JULY 2025 AT EXECUTIVE STORAGE & AUTO HUB LIMITED ALONG KIAMBU ROAD STARTING FROM 10.30 A.M.**

#### IN THE MATTER OF DISTRESS FOR RENT

##### LANDLORD- VERSUS -STEPHEN MUIGA (THE TENANT)

1SIMP PUMP, 2 PLASTIC ARMLESS CHAIRS,1 BURNER,1 PLASTIC SHELF, EXECUTIVE DOOR MAT,1 TRAINING GLOVES,1 PUFF, FUEL TANK FOOBROOK CHANDELIA, EXERCISE MACHINE NONDITRACK, HOBBY TROLLEY,PROFESSIONAL TWO WAY TROLLEY, GYM LIFTING BED, BLOCK BOARDS, 2BEDS, 1 TV STANDS, 3 MATRESSES, 1 BROWN PUFF, TEN SEATER LONG SOFA SET, 1 TENT, 1 SMALL LADDER,1 PIANO KEY BOARD STAND, 1 COMMERCIAL POWER SAW, 2 CLUTCHES, HEATER, WOODEN CABINET, 1 FUEL TANK, AUTOMATIC JUMP STARTER, 1 CONFERENCE TABLE , BUTTER POLISHER, BABY WALKER, CHANDELLIER,1 MAT CUUTER, 3 PUMPS , REVERSE OSMOSIS PUMP, EVERBIL PUMP, TRIPLE BEAM, 1 EPSON PRINTER, 2 POTABLE MATRESSES, 20 BIKE HELMETS, 2 LAT PULLS, WOODEN WHITE STOOL, 2 PIANO KEY BOARD, 1 SWINGING STOOL, 2 SIDE CABINET, 1 BLACK BOARD, 1 TWO DOOR FRIDGE, 2 WOODEN STOOLS, SAFARI BED, 2 BALCONY SOFA SET, 1 WOODEN DRESSING TABLE AUTHPEPIC STOOL,1 WHITE LEATHER SEATER, FOUR SEATER SOFASET, 3 ARM CHAIRS, 3 RECEPTION BLACK PUFFS, FOLDERBLE BABY COURT, 1 CAMBRIDGE RADIO, SMALL POER SAWS, 1 BLACK SPEAKER, 3 ARMLESS CHAIRS, 1 PIXMA PRINTER, 1 CANNON PRINTER, 1 ARMLESS BLACK CHAIR, 1 JERK, 1 GRILL, HONDA LAWN MOWER, WOODEN BAR STOOLS, PSC MOTRS, DRUM SET, 3 BALCON CHAIRS, BLOCK BOARDS, 1 WOODEN DRAWER, THREE SEATER GREY SOFASET 2 SHOCK ABSORBERS 1 MICRO WAVE WAVE, 1 TOASTER, 2 HP PRINTER, 2BURNER, 2 GOLF CARRIERS, LG PAPER SHREDDER, 3 CIRCULAR SAW, 5 DRILLS, 4 COFFEE MAKER, 1 RECIPROCATING SAW, TWO BLENDERS, 1 KID CAMPING CHAIR, 2 BABY CARRIERS, 1 WALL CLOCK, 2 VACCUUM CLEANER, 1 WEIGHT BENCH, 1 DIRT DEVIL SWEEPER, 5 ALLUMINIUM SKATORS, 5 CLUTCHES, 2 TOY METER BIKES, 1 HOMMEL FITNESS CROSS, 2 FOLDING STATIONERY BIKES, 1 CYCLONE MAGNETIC BIKE, WOSHECYDE BIKES, POOBOO EXECISE BIKE, 13 BICYCLES, 1 HAND MOWER, 2 WEIGHING MACHINE.

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### THE PHYSICAL AND LAND USE PLANNING ACT (NO 13 OF 2019)

#### NOTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED REGULARIZATION OF CHANGE OF USER

The registered owner of **Plot L.R Number Thika Municipality Block 10/201**, located in Thika Town along Uhuru Street, wishes to regularize change the user of the plot from **Commercial and Residential to Educational and Associated facilities (Offices and Staff quarter)** subject to approval by the County Government of Kiambu. Individual, institutions, members of the public etc. with comments and or objections to the proposal are requested to forward them in writing within **fourteen (14) days** of this notice to:

**The County Executive Committee Member, Land, Housing, Physical Planning, & Urban Development**  
**County Government of Kiambu**  
**P.O. Box 2344-00900**  
**Kiambu, Kenya**

**Pin. Marvin Mutwiri PP. NO. 0323**

Dated at Mombasa this **15th** day of **July** 2025.

**GEORGE EGUNZA & ASSOCIATES**  
**ADVOCATES FOR THE PETITIONERS**

**DRAWN AND FILED BY:**  
GEORGE EGUNZA & ASSOCIATES  
ADVOCATES  
LOTUS PLAZA, 1ST FLOOR  
CATHEDRAL LANE OFF NKRUMAH ROAD  
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THE ENERGY ACT, 2019  
GridX Africa Development Limited

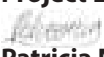
APPLICATION FOR ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION LICENCE

**NOTICE** is hereby given that **GridX Africa Development Limited**, a limited liability Company having its registered office at **ICEA Building, Riverside Park, Waiyaki Way, Westlands, P.O Box, 67802-00200** in the Republic of Kenya, ("the Applicant"), pursuant to the provisions Energy Act, 2019, will on **1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2025** make an application to the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority for the Electric Power **Generation Licence**. GridX Africa Development Limited is developing, designing, financing, and installing a 450kWp grid-tied, ground-mounted solar PV system at Momul Tea Factory, Kericho ("Momul"), Kericho County with GPS Location; -0.4163705217801575, 35.107167542328405. The power generated will be used for their own consumption only. The system will reduce Momul's energy costs and carbon emissions. The grant of the license will not have an adverse effect on any Public or Local Authorities, Companies, persons, or bodies of persons within the areas of the undertaking.

A copy of the application (subject to confidentiality considerations) will be available (once lodged) for inspection by the public at the registered office of the applicant.

Any public or local authority, company, person or body of persons desirous of making any representation on or objection to the application must do so by a letter addressed to the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority and marked on the outside of the cover enclosing it "Energy Act", on or before the expiration of Thirty (30) days from the date of application and a copy of such representation or objection must be forwarded to the registered office of the applicant.

**Dated: 18th July 2025.**

**GridX Africa Development Limited,**  
**Project Execution,**  
  
**Patricia Nyadhi**

**CLASSIFIEDS**

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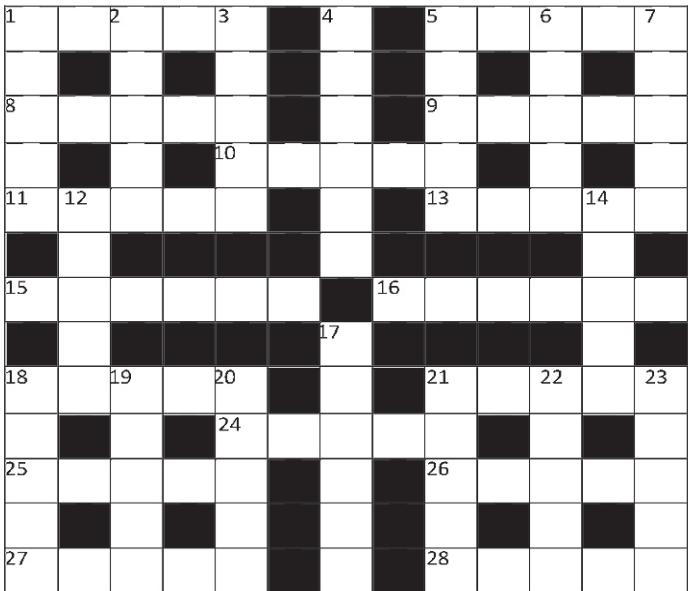
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## CROSSWORD / PUZZLE



**DOWN**

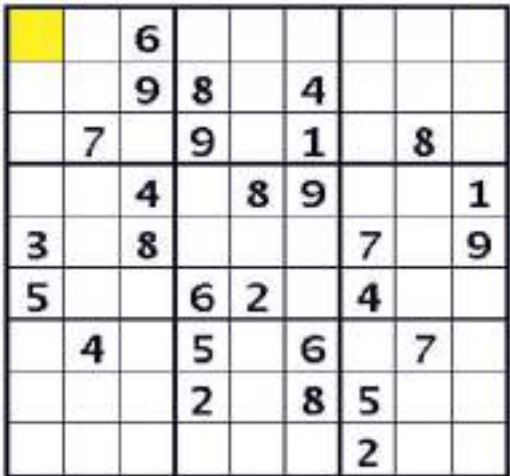
- 1. \_\_\_ of a mirror is the middle point of the mirror (4)
- 2. One of the largest First Nations in Canada (4)
- 3. A transparent medium that is bound by two non-parallel curved surfaces (4)
- 4. Swahili word for pumpkin (4)
- 5. A luxury vehicle, typically a long, spacious sedan (4)
- 6. Smart, show-off (4)
- 9. Equilibrium where two bodies are in contact with each other, yet there is no flow of heat from one body to another (7)
- 10. Force of Friction that comes into play when a body rolls over another body (7)
- 12. Former Member of Parliament for Mogo-tio Constituency (7)
- 13. Device that helps to overcome a greater resistance by applying a small effort (7)
- 14. Group of different types of tissues that together perform a specific function (5)
- 20. Past tense of say (4)
- 21. The American Speech–Language–Hear-ing Association (abbr.) (4)
- 22. Currency used in most European Coun-tries (4)
- 23. Governor for Nandi County (4)
- 24. Separate article (4)

25. Trigonometric function (4)

**ACROSS**

- 1. \_\_\_\_ of light consist of a diverging or converging group of light rays (6)
- 4. Currency used in Panama (6)
- 7. Negative (3)
- 8. They are also organic compounds contain-ing carbon, Hydrogen and oxygen (6)
- 11. \_\_\_\_ number is equal to the number of protons present in the nucleus of the atom(6)
- 15. Water \_\_\_\_ is a device that converts kinetic energy of flowing water into elec-tricity (5)
- 16. Characterized by itching (5)
- 17. Agency which produces in us a sensation of sight (5)
- 18. Former Member of Parliament for Taveta Constituency (5)
- 19. Member of parliament for Embakasi East Constituency (5)
- 20. Green fodder preserved in store (6)
- 23. Snow sports people (6)
- 26. United States of America (abbr.) (3)
- 27. Device used for generating electric current from mechanical force (6)
- 28. A haploid sexually reproducing cell (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.

**Thursday solutions**



## WORD SEARCH

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

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

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| APPLES     | LEMON       |
| APRICOT    | LIME        |
| AVOCADO    | LYCHEE      |
| BANANA     | MANGO       |
| BLACKBERRY | MULBERRY    |
| BLUEBERRY  | NECTARINE   |
| CANTALOUPE | ORANGE      |
| CHERRIES   | PAPAYA      |
| CHOCERRY   | PEACH       |
| COCONUT    | PEAR        |
| CRABAPPLE  | PERSIMMON   |
| CRANBERRY  | PINEAPPLE   |
| DATE       | PLUM        |
| FIG        | POMEGRANATE |
| GRAPEFRUIT | RASPBERRY   |
| GRAPES     | RHUBARB     |
| KIWIFRUIT  | STRAWBERRY  |
| KUMQUAT    | WATERMELON  |

## Largest Mars rock ever found on Earth sells for Sh555.5m

**BBC/** An “unbelievably rare” piece of Mars – the largest ever found on Earth – has sold for \$4.3 million (Sh555.5 million) at a New York auction on Wednesday.

The meteorite known as NWA 16788 weighs 54 lb (24.5 kg) and is nearly 15in (38.1 cm) long, according to Sotheby’s.

It was discovered in a remote region of Niger in Novem-ber 2023 and is 70 per cent larger than the next biggest piece of Mars that has been recovered, the auction house said. Meteorites are the remains of rock left after an asteroid or comet passes through Earth’s atmosphere.

Sotheby’s auction house described the meteorite, a reddish brown rock, as “unbelievably rare”. Only about 400 Martian meteorites have ever been found on Earth. “This is the largest piece of Mars on planet Earth. The odds of this getting from there to here are astronomically small,” Cassandra Hatton, vice chairman of science and natural history at Sotheby’s, said in a video posted online.

“Remember that approximately 70 per cent of Earth’s surface is covered in water. So we’re incredibly lucky that this landed on dry land, instead of the middle of the ocean, where we could actually find it.”



It remains unclear where the mete-orite will end up as information about the sale will remain private.

Additional taxes and fees brought the total price of the rock up to about \$5.3 million (Sh684.8), Sotheby’s said.

## TELEVISION LINEUP – FRIDAY



5:00AM	MORNING DECREE	4:30PM	DEBATE CIRCLE – RPT
5:30AM	TV47 FITNESS	5:00PM	BEATPLUG
6:00AM	MORNING CAFÉ	7:00PM	TV47 WIKENDI
10:00AM	BEAT BREAK	7:30PM	THE 77 PERCENT
11:00AM	TV47 MATUKIO	8:00PM	ECO AFRICA
2:00PM	BAZE 47	8:30PM	NEW LIFE BEGINS
3:00PM	KIDS ON THE BLOCK	9:00PM	THIS FRIDAY WITH BETTY KYALLO
4:00PM	TV47 NEWS NOW	10:10PM	TRIBE 47
4:15PM	SPORTS LIFE	12:00AM	BEATPLUG MIX

## ALL IN THE STARS



### CANCER

June 22–July 22

Say what’s on your mind, Cancer, but don’t take offense if no one seems to listen. Don’t bulldoze your point through.

### LEO

July 23 – August 22

Mundane tasks and routine chores won’t be painful after you set your mind on getting them done.

### VIRGO

August 23 – September 23

The more you slow down and adopt a caring, sensitive, receptive attitude, the more things will naturally flow your way.

### LIBRA

September 24 – October 23

If you feel the same about them, then you could help by taking the initiative and telling them so.

### SCORPIO

October 24 – November 22

The rest you need, the healthy diet, the affection you want to give and receive are all of vital importance now.

### SAGITTARIUS

November 23 – December 21

You are enjoying great sensitivity now, and you will be able to reach others in profound ways emotionally.

### CAPRICORN

December 22 – January 20

If it’s possible to go out on a date, you can expect it to be a very pleasant occasion.

### AQUARIUS

January 21 – February 19

Be sure that you get the credit you deserve for all you do. Be yourself and people will naturally follow your lead.

### PISCES

February 20 – March 20

Today is a day of contrasts, Pisces. Eat chocolate in the morning and go jogging in the afternoon.

### ARIES

March 21 – April 20

The day doesn’t begin until you clear your head and take stock of some pending personal issues.

### TAURUS

April 21– May 21

You have the capacity to spark acts of initiation in others, and this can in affect change the world.

### GEMINI

May 22 – June 21

Your compassion and willingness to be with others in the here and now will brighten the lives of those you touch.

ODDLY ENOUGH





## SPORTS LOCAL

## BASKETBALL

## Zetech coach Obilo wary ahead of KPA ahead of regular season final match



KPA women's team celebrate during a past match /HANDOUT

BY CHARLENE MALWA

ZETECH Sparks head coach Maurice Obilo has cited their final match against Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) as a test of their character and a chance to showcase their capability.

"The playoffs are within reach, and we hope to go further than we ever have," Obilo said.

The students (Zetech) are second on the table with 40 points from 21 games, having won 19 and lost two, just a point behind KPA, who sit top with 41 after 21 matches.

Obilo said they are eager to carry momentum into the post-season, where they are hoping to make history.

This comes after securing a 62-42 win over Safe Space in their last

match last weekend.

"The match against KPA will be tough, but it will give us a feel of what to expect in the playoffs. We want to go all the way," he added.

Obilo said they have grown under their mantra 'One game at a time' system, and are now fully focused on the final fixture. "We've been building this whole season, and our performance so far has shown we are capable of doing big things."

Obilo also spoke on the team's ambition, saying the target is not just to qualify but to contest for the title.

"The growth we've seen in this squad is tremendous. From the start of the season, we've been preparing for moments like these," the coach said.

KPA head into the clash with con-

fidence after clinching back-to-back victories over the weekend. They defeated Strathmore Swords 73-51 on Saturday before sweeping past ANU Panthers (Africa Nazarene) 83-39 on Sunday to complete a perfect double.

Assistant coach Samuel Ocholla praised the Dockers' form and preparation.

"We had a good weekend because we won both matches and not just narrowly, but with great margins. That comes from the work the team puts in every day. Our eyes are on the trophy and we're not taking anything for granted," Ocholla said.

"With one game remaining, we'll keep practising and stay grounded. Our goal is to maintain our current form in the playoffs. So far, so good, and we continue to fight till the end."

## FOOTBALL

## CLOSE SUPERVISION

*Bajaber under special watch as McCarthy plots Chan charge*

BY TEDDY MULEI

HARAMBEE Stars head coach Benni McCarthy has tailored a training/recovery programme for Kenya Police FC forward Mohammed Bajaber ahead of next month's African Nations Championship (CHAN).

The South African tactician revealed that the 22-year-old attacker picked up a knock in training before Kenya's international friendly double-header against Chad in Morocco last month.

The first round of the friendly encounter ended with a goalless draw before Stars clinched a morale-boosting 2-1 win in the return fixture, marking McCarthy's maiden victory at the helm.

Emmanuel Osoro and David Sakwa were on target during the match.

Since the squad set up camp at the Moi Stadium, Kasarani, last week, Bajaber has been under close supervision by the team physiotherapist.

The forward remains central to McCarthy's plans for the continental show.

"Bajaber got injured before we went to Morocco. He is strained, but my decision is that he is a good player, so we cannot drop him. He has already established himself," the tactician noted.

"He has a strict plan with the physio. During training, he starts with the team but when we get to the physical part of the training, we have him train alone."

"We want to safeguard him so that, when Chan comes, we have one of our best players available and ready to play," he said.

"It would be silly of me to have him train every day with the team; he may pick up a knock



Mohammed Bajaber trains at the Kasarani Annex /TEDDY MULEI

before Chan, which will be a big blow to us."

Bajaber has been a revelation since his mid-season switch from Nairobi City Stars to Police earlier this year.

He was the law enforcers' top scorer with nine goals and eighth in the league's Golden Boot race.

His contribution helped Police lift their maiden Premier League title, topping the standings with 65 points, six points clear of record champions Gor Mahia at second.

McCarthy believes Bajaber's talent won't go unnoticed, predicting that clubs beyond Kenyan borders could come knocking.

"He will not be playing in the Kenyan league for long because he

is a top player. Top clubs will soon come for him," observed McCarthy.

Bajaber is proud to be a part of the national team set-up.

"It's an honour being selected for the national team out of all the players in the country. I am so proud. As a team, we have to be ambitious and go into the championship (Chan) with a winning mindset," Bajaber said.

Stars will show no fear when the tournament kicks off.

"You can't go into the tournament while fearing your opponents; you have to respect them, but not fear them," he added.

Harambee Stars are in Group 'A' alongside DR Congo, Morocco, Zambia and Angola.

## RUGBY

## Menengai Oilers to field young squad in National Sevens series — Ominde

BY WILLIAM NJUGUNA

THE 2022 National Sevens Series champions, Menengai Oilers, will field a youthful squad for the series, which starts with Driftwood Sevens on July 26-27 in Mombasa.

Speaking on Thursday, Oilers Sevens' coach Geoffrey Ominde believes the youthful team are more competitive and have what it takes to finish in the top three in the series.

"We have opted to do things differently, and we want to expose some of our younger players to the rigours of Sevens rugby. We have been training for the last two months, and the boys are ready to play," added Ominde.

Among the youthful talent the Nakuru side will be introducing includes Kenya Under 20 stars Daniel Kipchirchir, Brian Achacha, Wilson Tonya, Justus Lunale, and Benedict Muiruri, who excelled for Chipu during the Barthes Cup in April in Zimbabwe. They will play alongside the likes of Kenya Sevens international Dennis Abukuse.

Ominde said, despite not playing any build-up tournament, he believes his side can challenge top teams, including champions, Quins, KCB and Kabras.

"We will stick to our strategy and structure, but we will add a few tweaks to the system and see where we land," he observed.

Ominde, who has played for Kenya Simbas and Morans before, said he will leverage his experience as a first-year coach.

"I have worked with Gibson Weru for the better part of this year, and I am mentally prepared for the challenge. It's an honour to coach this great club," he noted.

The former fly-half expects a competitive series.

"There are no teams to underestimate; all the teams have worked hard during the pre-season, and we are ready to handle whatever will be thrown at us."

Oilers finished fourth last year with 83 points and didn't win any tournament.

He said: "This time round, consistency will be key. Last year, we blew hot and cold, so I hope we can win the main cup quarters for the six legs."



Oilers Chrispine Shitundo in a past match against Blak Blad /FILE





## SPORTS PROFILE

## MATATA: HALF MARATHON ASSASSIN

*How the 27-year-old is quietly carving out his niche as a relentless warrior on the 21km circuit*

BY TEDDY MULEI

**1. Alex Matata on the Antrim Coast Half Marathon podium /HANDOUT**

**2. Alex Matata during the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon /HANDOUT**

**3. Alex Matata during the Yangzhou Jianzhen Half Marathon /HANDOUT**

**4. Alex Matata comes in the 5000m race during the national championships at Ulinzi Sports Complex /TEDDY MULEI**

**5. Alex Matata with his brother, Charles Matata, and coach Dennis Muthusi /HANDOUT**

IN a country where distance running legends are born by the dozen, it takes something extraordinary for an athlete to rise above the crowd.

However, 27-year-old Alex Matata is quietly carving out his niche, a relentless assassin on the half marathon circuit and a rising force in Kenya's distance running ranks.

Matata draws deep inspiration from one of Kenya's track warriors, 2015 World 5,000m silver medallist Caleb Mwangangi Ndiku, a man who once dared to stare down Mo Farah on the grandest stage.

At the 2015 World Championships in Beijing, Ndiku pushed Farah to the brink before the Briton unleashed his famous kick to snatch gold in 13:50.38, with Ndiku claiming a hard-fought silver in 13:51.72 at the Beijing National Stadium.

Ndiku, nicknamed 'The Buffalo', holds accolades spanning both continental and global championships.

His trophy cabinet further includes the 2014 Commonwealth Games 5,000m title from Glasgow (13:12.07), the 2011 All-African games 1,500m title from Maputo (3:39.12), two African Championship titles from Porto Novo 2012 (1,500m – 3:35.71) and Marrakech 2014 (5,000m – 13:34.27) as well as the 2014 African Continental Cup 3,000m title (7:52.64).

Matata is slowly scripting his own story, having been undefeated since lacing up his shoes for the 2025 season. Undefeated over the half marathon this season, he announced his intent in style on February 1 at the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon in the UAE, blasting to a personal best 59:20 after outkicking Ethiopia's Gemechu Dida (59:29) and Isaia Lasoi (59:26).

"This year has so far been a blessing to me since kicking off my campaign in February. My first race was in Ras Al Khaimah, and I was well prepared for it psychologically. My body was feeling good, and I was very much confident heading into the race," Matata recalls. "My target going into the race was to lower my personal best and win to get my season off to a flying start."

With the pack intact up to the 15km mark, Matata

felt the moment and struck for the win. "We were in a pack of seven athletes up to the 15km mark. I felt my body was in good shape, so I decided to break away and go for the win," he said.

Heading into that race, Matata had set for himself a bold 58:09 target. Despite not meeting the mark, he was pleased to have lowered his personal best. "My target was to run 58:09 in that race, but I could not. However, I was pleased with the time I finished with and also winning in my first race of the season."

"Before the race, the favourite to win was Laso, but I was able to outkick him and silence all the critics," he added.

China was next in line, where Matata reeled off back-to-back wins, first in Meishan (59:28), dusting off Tanzania's Alphonce Simbu (1:01:05) and compatriot Timothy Kiplagat (1:01:06).

He followed it up with another triumph in Yangzhou, winning in 59:31, ahead of Ethiopians Gerba Dibaba (1:00:08) and Abduljelil Abdulwokil (1:00:10). "The races in China were good and the weather was also good. The only challenge was the food; I was not used to that kind of food. They have a very different cuisine from what we are used to here in Africa."

His winning streak extended to Istanbul on April 27, clocking 59:40 against a competitive field with Ethiopia's Berehanu Tsegu (1:00:47) and compatriot Shadrack Kedaywo (1:01:28) in second and third place. "I knew the race won't be easy, but in every race I walk into, I am always psychologically prepared to tackle any challenge."

Coached by John Litei, Matata is now ranked 14th globally over the 21km this season. Yet he isn't content with road dominance alone.

On June 26, he tested his legs on the track at the National Championships, clocking 13:50.91 for fourth place in the 5,000m for Kenya Prisons Service. Gilbert Kiprotich (13:37.06), Amos Kiprotich (13:37.58) and George Manangoi (13:43.03) completed the podium places.

"The track is not bad, my body responded very well. I was targeting 13:40, but the time I got was also very good." After testing his mantle on the track, Matata sees a bright future for himself over the 10,000m, to follow in the footsteps of his role model Ndiku.

"I see a future in the 10,000m. I want to do more on the track this season and also next season with the hope of representing the country in international competitions one day and following in Ndiku's big footprint." But road running remains his hunting ground. With his management team, Posso Sports, Matata eyes the Copenhagen and Valencia Half Marathons later in the year.

"My management is working on getting me to the Copenhagen and Valencia Half Marathons later on in the year."

He believes the Valencia course offers the perfect platform for him to attack his personal best. "I have never run in Valencia, but I know it is a fast course. If I run there, I am very sure I can lower my personal best to 58 or probably 57 minutes," he said.

Born on July 27, 1997, in Katangi, Yatta, Machakos County, Matata, the second born in a family of five boys, recalls how his passion for running was sparked by stories of his late father, himself a running enthusiast, told by his mother, Rose Matata Kiamba, after his father's passing in 2007.

"My father died in 2007 while I was still very young. My mother would tell us stories of him and how he used to run, and that sparked a flame within me," he recalls. The tales of his late father not only inspire him, but his

brother Charles Matata too.

Charles is also a half-marathon runner, boasting victories from Beijing 2025 (1:00:25) and back-to-back triumphs in Venlo from 2024 (1:00:39) and 2025 (1:00:36). Ndiku's Beijing heroics further ignited young Matata's flame.

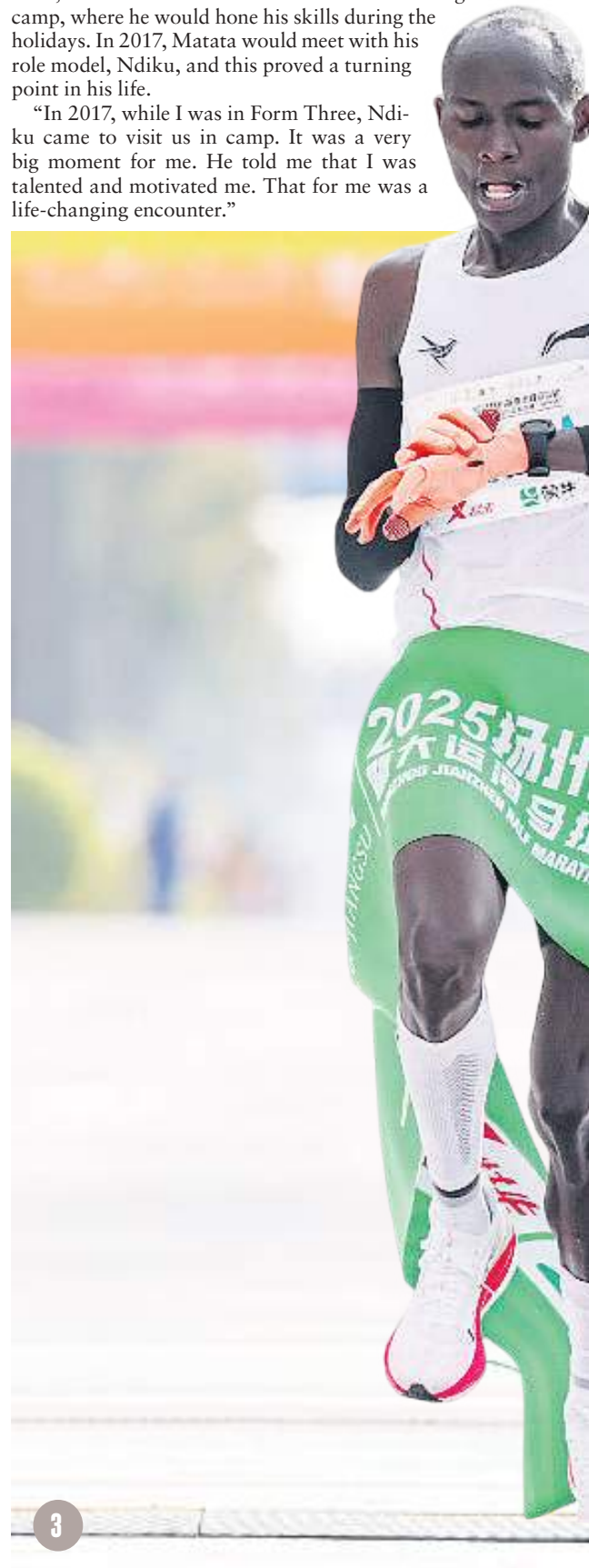
"I remember I was herding cows when I heard the news of Ndiku, that inspired me, and I wanted to be like him one day and achieve what he was able to in Beijing."

Matata joined Kakunike Primary in Katangi, after which he switched to Kisaani Primary due to school fee complications. In his school days, Matata had mastered the 3,000m and 10,000m distances.

It was, however, while at Mekilingi High School that his talent truly blossomed, representing his school in regional competitions.

His talent would catch the eye of coach Dennis Muthusi, who took him into his Machakos training camp, where he would hone his skills during the holidays. In 2017, Matata would meet with his role model, Ndiku, and this proved a turning point in his life.

"In 2017, while I was in Form Three, Ndiku came to visit us in camp. It was a very big moment for me. He told me that I was talented and motivated me. That for me was a life-changing encounter."





# SIN INSPIRED BY NDIKU'S LEGACY



COACHED BY JOHN LITEI, MATATA IS NOW RANKED 14TH GLOBALLY OVER THE 21KM THIS SEASON. YET HE ISN'T CONTENT WITH ROAD DOMINANCE ALONE.

However, Matata's schooling journey was not without its hurdles. Raised by a single mother, Matata recalls that school fees became a challenge.

"Being raised by a single mother was a big challenge, more so when it comes to paying school fees. My brother Charles and I used to sell firewood so we could assist our mother in getting money to cater for our school fees."

"Proper running shoes also proved a challenge for me. You have to have proper running shoes for long distances, hence you risk being injured."

In 2018, inspired and determined, Matata stormed to victory in the 3,000m at the National School Games and placed third in the 10,000m. Yet a family crisis robbed him of a chance to compete at the East African Games.

"Ndiiku's motivation struck a chord within me, and in 2018 I won the national 3,000m and finished third in the 10,000m. However, I could not represent my school at the East African Games because of some challenges back home."

Muthusi later linked him up with coach Litei in Eldoret, where he honed his craft. "Muthusi introduced me to Litei after the nationals, and because Machakos was not that favourable for

to washing clothes at camp to make ends meet.

"I got a stress fracture on my leg, which kept me out for a whole year. I pushed my body too much, so it could not hold hence the injury. It was a very big challenge because I had taken up running to support my family. I used to wash clothes at camp so I could get some money to send to my family back home."

Matata rebounded in 2024 with a stunning half-marathon debut win in Padova (59:37). Matata, however, bounced back in 2024, opening his season with an emphatic win in his maiden half marathon appearance in Padova (59:37).

"In that race, I was hungry for a win, and I wanted to make a statement and announce my arrival in the half marathon."

He extended that top form in his next appearanc-

es, winning in Bucharest (1:00:04) and Antrim Coast (59:46) before finishing second in New Delhi (59:53) behind two-time Olympic gold medallist Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda (59:46).

"When I was heading to that race, I was not feeling very well. I was to cancel, but my management pushed me to continue with the race."

"I hit 10K at 27:57, and at that time, Cheptegei was behind me. However, as we approached the finish, my body started failing me, and Cheptegei came past me and ended up winning. It was my very first time running against Cheptegei."

He, however, bounced back in his final race of the 2024 season in Al Khobar, winning in 1:00:17 ahead of Ethiopia's Adisu Negash (1:00:21) and Nicholas Kipkorir (1:00:23).



long-distance training, I switched to Eldoret."

But in 2022, a stress fracture sidelined him for a year, a dark chapter where he resorted



## SPORTS LOCAL

## GOLF

## Balala keen to defend Kabete Open title at Vet Lab Sports this weekend

BY ELVIS KOILEKEN

DEFENDING champion Adel Balala will be chasing a record fourth title at the NCBA Kabete Open set to tee off this weekend at Vet Lab Sports Club.

The tournament is the opening leg of the 2024 Kenya Swing Series, one of the most anticipated events on the Kenya Amateur Golf Championship (KAGC) calendar.

Balala, the three-time winner of the event (2021, 2022, and 2024), will face off against Kenya Amateur Golf Series (KAGC) Championship leader John Lejirima, Michael Karanga, and home player Ebill Omolo, who are also well-placed players.

The event has drawn 90 top players from around the world, who will be vying for critical World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) and Kenya Amateur Golf Championship (KAGC) points. The

participants include 80 from Kenya, two each from Rwanda, Mauritius, and Austria and one each from Zambia, South Africa and Burundi.

Other notable names include Teenage sensation Kanana Muthomi, Bianca Ngecu, Joyce Wanjiru, Mercy Nyanchama, and Kellie Gachaga in the ladies category. Niyonkuru Alain (Rwanda), Pranay Kapur (South Africa), and Gilbert Chalwe (Rwanda) lead the contingent of players coming in from other countries.

The NCBA Kabete Open is the first of the three-part Kenya Swing series that will usher in the Kenya Amateur Matchplay Championship next week at the Sigona and the final part of the series, the Kenya Amateur Strokeplay Championship, at the end of the month, at Vet Lab Sports Club.

The Kenya Swing's back-to-back format has been strategically developed to attract

international talent, offering continuous competitive play and showcasing Kenya's golfing excellence on a continental stage. Local players, sharing fairways with top regional golfers, gain valuable exposure and experience.

All players will play two rounds, after which the top 33 and ties advance to the final round. The tournament features a Sh500,000 prize purse, with the winner taking home Sh115,000.

"We are deeply grateful to the players for their commitment and continued support of the NCBA KAGC Series. Their dedication truly elevates the standards of amateur golf in the region. We also extend our sincere thanks to Vet Lab Sports Club for graciously availing the course for both the NCBA Kabete Open and the Strokeplay Championship," tournament director Brian Akun said.



Adel Balala/HANDOUT

## ATHLETICS

## RACE FOR AUSSIE GLORY

*Kipchoge to battle Ethiopian Legese at Sydney Marathon on August 31*



Two-time Olympic marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge and two-time Tokyo Marathon winner Birhanu Legese / FILE

BY TEDDY MULEI

TWO-time Olympic marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge is set for a heavyweight clash with two-time Tokyo Marathon winner Birhanu Legese after Sydney Marathon organisers on Thursday unveiled a star-studded men's field for the August 31 showdown.

Kipchoge, who had already been confirmed as the headline act, will now line up against his NN Running teammate in what is promising to be one of the most competitive marathons on Australian soil.

Race director Wayne Larden said: "When you look at the depth of this year's men's field, it's not just star-studded and fast, it's exceptionally deep."

"We have multiple athletes capable of running under the course record, rising stars on the brink of global breakthrough, and of course, Eliud Kipchoge, the great-marathoner of all time."

Brimini Kipkorir owns the course record of 2:06:18 from last year. After his confirmation in March, Kipchoge relayed his excitement about making his Oceania debut.

"I am so excited. This is not only my first time racing the Sydney Marathon, but also my first time running in Oceania. Competing in Australia is a huge opportunity for me."

"Sydney looks like a stunning city with so many iconic sights. It's going to be a new and special experience for me," said the former world record holder.

However, the 40-year-old enters Sydney seeking redemption after a turbulent start to the season.

He finished a distant sixth at the London Marathon in April, clocking 2:05:25. Sebastian Sawe stole the limelight, cruising to a 2:02:27 triumph ahead of Uganda's Jacob Kiplimo (2:03:37) and Alexander Munyao (2:04:20).

Kipchoge was targeting a record fifth London title after triumphs in 2015 (2:04:00), 2016 (2:03:05), 2018 (2:04:17) and 2019 (2:02:37).

Kipchoge's 2024 campaign was equally challenging, falling short in his quest for a hat-trick of Olympic titles after failing to finish the marathon in the Paris Games in August.

Ethiopia's Tamirat Tola won in 2:06:26

ahead of Belgium's Bashir Abdi (2:06:47) and Benson Kipruto (2:07:00).

The Paris disappointment came on the back of a 10th-place finish at the Tokyo Marathon in 2:06:50.

Now, the five-time Berlin Marathon champion heads to Sydney eager to prove he still has the credentials to compete at the top.

Legese, too, is chasing form after a shaky start to 2025, where he settled for 11th in Tokyo in 2:06:06.

Joining the Kenyan charge is 2023 Berlin Marathon runner-up Vincent Ng'etich, who is fresh from a third-place finish in Tokyo this year in 2:04:00.

Adding depth are Bernard Koech, Kenneth Kipkemoi, Cornelius Kiplagat, Laban Korir, Victor Kipchirchir and Edward Cheserek.

## TENNIS

## Okutoyi to use Fisv Games in Germany as build-up for Billie Jean King Cup tourney

BY WILLIAM NJUGUNA

AFRICAN Games champion Angela Okutoyi will use the FISU World University Games in Germany as a build-up for the Billie Jean King Cup scheduled for August 4-11 in Namibia.

Okutoyi believes the tournament will be ideal as Team Kenya seek promotion from Group III to Group II. The three-time Kenya Open champion has been playing in France and Germany for the better part of two months and says she is in good form and is looking ahead to the battle.

"I have played in Germany and France on several surfaces- both hard and murrum. I have adapted well, and I will be adequately tested accordingly," added Okutoyi.

The Auburn University student is seeded ninth and faces a tall order against the likes of Xinxin Yao from China, Alevtina Ibragimova (Russia) and Polina Latcenko, also from Russia.

Okutoyi says she is bullish about her chances in the week-long championship. "It's a quality tournament with the top university players from around the world and it's an honour to represent Kenya. So I am taking it one game at a time and I hope to go on a deep run in the championship," added Okutoyi.

Team Kenya coach Thuku Rogoi said he is satisfied with the buildup that Okutoyi and the rest of the provisional team have undergone.

"As the coach of the team, I am so far satisfied with the preparation they have undergone," he said.

The rest of the provisional team includes Cynthia Cheruto, Alicia Owegi, Stacy Yego, Melissa Mwakha, Selina Ahoya and Nancy Kawira.

The final squad will be whittled down to four players at the end of the month. Kenya will also be represented by Kael Shah, who has entered the boys' category.

Shah played for the Davis Cup team in Angola last month and is relishing the battle ahead.

"I played in the Davis Cup and several matches under my belt. I expect very

competitive,

and I look forward to the championship," observed Shah.

Shah is currently ranked second in the US college circuit, and observing him playing in the United States will give him an advantage in the event.



African Games champion Angela Okutoyi / HANDOUT



Chelsea's wantaway striker Madueke underwent a medical on Monday at the Emirates

# ARSENAL WANT MORE PLAYERS

**M**IKEL Arteta says he is pleased with Arsenal's recent signings Kepa Arrizabalaga, Martin Zubimendi and Christian Norgaard. Still, he pointed out on Monday that he expects another three players to join his squad.

Chelsea's Noni Madueke, who played no part in Chelsea's Club World Cup win, has an agreement with his club to leave and underwent a medical on Monday at the Emirates.

I have talked to many Arsenal fans this week and the majority are questioning why the club is buying Madueke. He is a good player but the Gunners have Bukayo Saka who is a definite starter every week but of course he frequently gets injured. Madueke has a reputation of not wanting to sit on the bench as a number two. Chelsea usually played Jadon Sancho in front of him which is one of the reasons he was so dissatisfied with his role at Stamford Bridge and Enzo Maresca didn't want Sancho either.

On the brighter side, Viktor Gyokeres' difficulties with Primera Liga club Sporting CP seem to have been resolved and he says there has been a valuable breakthrough in negotiations. Christian Mosquera arrived at the Emirates Stadium after he rejected two new contract offers from Valencia. He, too, underwent a medical on Tuesday.

Two more wingers are on Mikel Arteta's list, Crystal Palace international Eberechi Eze and Real Madrid's Brazilian star Rodrygo but there are problems with pursuing either of them due to the official financial rules and neither clubs want to lose their best players.

Arsenal might be forced to part ways with some of their big names to progress and Leandro Trossard, Gabriel Martinelli, Oleksandr Zinchenko and Gabriel Jesus are under threat.

## KUDUS CHOOSES SHIRT NUMBER

Watching Tottenham's new signing Mohammed Kudus meeting his new teammates and taking his first training session on Tuesday gave us an excellent opportunity to see how he is working with new coach Thomas Frank.

The ex-Brentford boss spent much of the session with Kudus in preparation for his first game in charge against Reading on Saturday. Playing in a rondo, Kudus did well with Djed Spence making crisp, short passes for other players to chase. Earlier in the gym Kudus worked with Tottenham's longest serving player Ben Davies who was giving the new man lots of information about how the clubs works.

We also got a chance to see the first team individual development coach Cameron Campbell who has been brought in from RB Leipzig where he was head of player development and this is very much a

BY DAVID BILLINGTON

## FOOTBALL GOSSIP



Thomas Frank appointment. Frank believes that improving players is vital to success and whereas many coaches have yet to exploit this form of progress, for Frank it is a priority.

It came as no surprise when Tottenham signing Mohammed Kudus chose the No 20 shirt. It is the number he wears for his native Ghana national team and previously wore at Ajax.

## NEWCASTLE IN FRANKFURT FOR EKITIKE

In a dramatic move officials from Newcastle, including Head of Recruitment Steve Nickson, flew out to Germany and met with Eintracht Frankfurt representatives to discuss a possible deal for 23-year-old Hugo Ekitike.

Newcastle's big problem is the current financial ruling and the striker has an £86million release clause. There is also the matter of personal terms and his agent is known to be challenging to deal with. Further terms were discussed during Newcastle's training camp in the Alps this week.

The Magpies are anxious to make another big signing after Forest's Anthony Elanga moved to the north east. They want to signal their intention of contesting the Premier League title next season with the strongest possible squad.

It might be possible for Newcastle to spread Ekitike's cost over some time, which would keep within the financial rules, but his agent has to be involved and that is a potential banana skin.

The other problem is persuading Ekitike to join whilst top striker Alexander Isak is at the club but the Magpies will fight to keep the Swedish international despite persistent noise coming from Liverpool who are said to be mounting an offer in the region of £120million.

The German club's CEO said of Ekitike this week, "He's one of the most interesting strikers in Europe but Hugo has to decide his future. I am glad we have him but we won't stand in his way if he wants to leave."

Ekitike had an outstanding season scoring 22 goals and he helped Frankfurt finish third in the Bundesliga table.

## GARNACHO ON CHELSEA RADAR

News from inside Chelsea headquarters are very much centred around the impact Joao Pedro can have this coming season after he scored when the Blues

defeated Paris Saint-Germain at the Club World Cup.

Chelsea had been skirting around the possibility of signing Manchester United forward Alejandro Garnacho. The Argentine international has been told to find another club and coach Ruben Amorim says he will play no part in his plans for next season.

Chelsea have already signed their main targets such as Pedro, Jamie Gittens, Liam Delap and earlier this year deals were completed for Estevao Willian, Dario Essugo and Mamadou Sarr.

Everything regarding Garnacho depends on what happens with Chelsea winger Noni Madueke if he makes a move to Arsenal. Rumours coming out of the Nou Camp in Barcelona report that officials have contacted Garnacho's representatives now the Spanish giants have failed to lure Nico Williams from Atletico Club where he has signed a new contract.

If Madueke leaves, I am hearing that Chelsea would more likely try to arrange a loan deal with United for Garnacho.

The writing is clearly on the wall for Nicolas Jackson. Following his sending off in the Club World Cup and consequent two-match ban, he had to sit in the stands and watch Liam Delap score his debut goal for Chelsea and Joao give Chelsea much-needed striking power upfront.

Enzo Maresca says 23-year-old Delap is far from the finished product and plans to allocate a lot of time working with the ex-Ipswich striker. Pedro struck a two goal introduction for the Chelsea fans at the Club World Cup and Maresca has already says that the ex-Brighton man will be his main striker.

That all leaves Jackson high and dry. There is a problem however because it is mainly Italian clubs who are interested in the Senegalese international and they can only realistically afford in the region of £35million and Chelsea won't even look at that figure.

Jackson also has a long contract which was extended a year ago and put him in the £60million category and therefore, at the moment, he looks like staying at Stamford Bridge as back-up to Pedro and Delap.

## BEES BUZZING AFTER SIGNING HENDERSON

Brentford are concerned that they have lost experience in their squad with the loss of coach Thomas Frank to Tottenham, club captain Christian Norgaard to Arsenal plus the possible sale of Bryan Mbeumo. Highly rated goalkeeper Mark Flekken and Ben Mee have also left. This coming season is likely to be

a tough challenge for rookie coach Keith Andrews who takes over from Thomas Frank after being promoted from set-piece coach.

Those are just some of the reasons why the Bees have signed ex-Liverpool and Ajax skipper Jordan Henderson who at 35 years-of-age is still performing at the top level, is incredibly fit and brings a wealth of experience. Henderson can replace Norgaard in the centre of midfield, giving the team a solid base from which to work.

He will join his old Liverpool teammate, goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher.

Relegated Ipswich Town have turned down several approaches by Brentford for forward Omari Hutchinson.

They are anxious to strengthen their strike force, especially as they might lose Bryan Mbeumo.

Chelsea product Omari showed last season that he can take on the best defenders in the Premier League but Ipswich are determined to hold onto him as they fight to get back into the elite league.

## CHELSEA VERY CONFIDENT GOING INTO NEW SEASON

Following their epic Club World Cup win over Paris Saint-Germain, Chelsea players have been given a three-week holiday before playing Bayer Leverkusen and AC Milan in a mini-tournament at Stamford Bridge on August 8. That is just nine days before the kick-off to their new season when they face Crystal Palace on the 17th.

The Blues won a total of £72.9million from the competition, which officials at Chelsea's headquarters said would be added to their transfer funds to strengthen the squad.

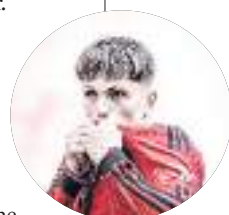
Enzo Maresca is a master tactician who studies every move his opponents are likely to make based on previous performances. It is a mirror of how Pep Guardiola works.

Against Paris Saint-Germain, Maresca said, "...we saw there was a lot of space on the left side of the field and that's where we tried to win the game. It went well, but I think we won in the first 10 minutes, when the team came out to demonstrate that we were here to try to win, respecting the rival, considering they are the best team in the world at this time. I think in the end, you can give the players a plan, but it's them who have to execute it and they did it very well."

"Just one year ago, when I joined the club, I said since the first press conference that I was in love with the squad, and it's true. But we said many times that talent is not enough. We need sacrifice, we need togetherness, we need a game plan where all the players think in the same way."

"And it's just because of them. I want to say again that I have a lot of respect for Paris Saint-Germain, I respect their coach but I planned the game to win it. Now, if it's Paris Saint-Germain or any other team, I think the team we have can compete against everyone in this world."

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta /XINHUA





## FOOTBALL

## Smith becomes most expensive women's player

BBC

CANADA forward Olivia Smith has become the most expensive signing in women's football history by completing a £1m move to Arsenal from Liverpool.

The 20-year-old, who made her international debut at 15, has signed a four-year deal with the Champions League holders.

Smith's move breaks the record set by Chelsea in January when they signed USA defender Naomi Girma for £900,000 from San Diego Wave.

"It's a privilege and an honour to sign for Arsenal," said Smith. "It's my dream to compete for the biggest titles here in England and in Europe and I'm excited to get started and contribute to doing that here with Arsenal."

Smith, who only turned professional in 2023, joined Liverpool from Portuguese side Sporting a year ago for a club record fee of just over £200,000. Arsenal head coach Renee Slegers said Smith is an "exciting young player" who can make a "big contribution".

She scored seven goals in 20 Women's Super League games in her debut season as Liverpool finished seventh.

Liverpool are without a manager since



Olivia Smith /HANDOUT

sacking Matt Beard in February, with former Manchester City boss Gareth Taylor the leading candidate to take over.

Arsenal did not want to sit still after winning the Women's Champions League and vowed to strengthen their squad.

This is an eye-catching recruit that does just that with Smith widely considered one of the WSL's most exciting youngsters, with a high ceiling of potential.

## Bellingham to miss start of season after surgery

BBC

ENGLAND and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham has undergone successful surgery for a long-standing shoulder issue.

The 22-year-old is expected to miss the whole of Real's pre-season and at least the first six weeks of the campaign, which would include England's World Cup qualifiers against Andorra and Serbia in September.

Bellingham has struggled with the problem since 2023, when he dislocated his shoulder in a game against Rayo Vallecano. Real said he will now undergo a period of rehabilitation before returning to training. The Spanish club, under new manager Xabi Alonso, start their La Liga season at home to Osasuna on 19 August.

Bellingham has worn strapping on his shoulder, but told reporters in June he was "tired of playing with the sling".

Real scheduled his surgery for after the Club World Cup in the United States, where they were beaten in the semi-finals by Paris St-Germain last week. Bellingham joined Real from Borussia Dortmund for £115m two years ago and won the La Liga title and Champions League in his first season, scoring 23 goals in 43 appearances.

He scored 15 goals in 58 games last season, with Real losing the league title to Barcelona and being knocked out of the Champions League in the quarter-finals by Arsenal.



Jude Bellingham /XINHUA

## INSIDE USYK'S BRAIN TRAINING

## How specialised camp created a heavyweight monster in Ukrainian

BBC

UNIFIED heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk leaves no stone unturned in his pursuit of greatness.

The route to the pinnacle of pugilism is treacherous and littered with obstacles. Many have tried and failed to reach the mountain top but Usyk, 38, has climbed to the peak, set up camp and isn't willing to vacate his spot any time soon.

Usyk's latest challenge comes in the shape of IBF title-holder Daniel Dubois at Wembley Stadium on Saturday.

For some, training camps focus on strength and conditioning. Others believe nutrition is key, while Team Usyk make the physiological and psychological side of the game a top priority.

WBA (Super), WBO and WBC champion Usyk has been combining cognitive and physical training to prepare for his rematch with Dubois.

"We create the optimal psychological environment for cognitive exercise," said Jakub Chycki, who is Usyk's physiologist. "We combine the air bike with a memory exercise. Sometimes we use lights for this task and sometimes we combine with hand-eye coordination or juggling."

BBC Sport travelled to Spain to watch Usyk's training regime and speak to his inner circle about what makes him tick. The reward for a second win over Briton Dubois is a place in a very elite club as a two-time undisputed heavyweight champion.

Only George Foreman, Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis and Muhammad Ali have achieved that feat, but Usyk will be the first to do it in the four-belt era if he is successful.

Usyk is no stranger to facing an opponent for a second time - he has twice beaten Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua - but his preparations never centre around the opponent. Instead, Usyk is put under immense physical fatigue before being tasked with mental tests to strengthen his ability to think on the spot when he's in the ring.

During tough physical workouts, Usyk is asked to solve a Schulte table, which is a grid filled with numbers or letters that need to be ordered into a specific sequence. Another task is juggling balls with the purpose of keeping his mind focused as he recovers from a period of cardio training.

"We know everything about Usyk's physiology and how his body works under different stresses," Chycki added. "We know how we should read his signals and symptoms. We didn't change anything.

"We have a round table every Saturday and look at what we've done and what needs to change. We don't change to the opponents' strategy."

One of the major health risks concerned with boxing is chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) - a brain condition linked to repeated blows to the head and concussion. CTE leads to dementia and can only be diagnosed post-mortem.

Chycki suggested one of the reasons they monitor Usyk and do cognitive training is to help with the "prevention of brain injury".

But Dr Thom Wilcockson, a senior lecturer of psychology at Loughborough University, says the scientific evidence is not strong enough to suggest cognitive training prevents CTE.

"It would add a robustness against fatigue induced cognitive decline but not necessarily the long-term effects that CTE could cause," he said. "It would give Usyk a larger cognitive reserve which might help mitigate other types of dementia like Alzheimer's disease."

Usyk is a trailblazer in many ways - he was the first man to become undisputed at heavyweight in the four-belt era - but his training methods aren't unique, resembling those of compatriot Vasiliy Lomachenko.

They employ alternative and unorthodox techniques in the gym. Lomachenko showed cat-like reflexes by catching four coins, one at a time in a single movement, after flicking them into the air off his forearm.

Usyk went one better in December 2024, performing the trick with both arms simultaneously. On the surface it may seem like a party trick, but there is something deeper to it.

"With boxing there is a very clear relationship between having a fast reaction time and performance," Wilcockson said. "Reaction-time training is really beneficial for boxing and training of reaction time would then refine the decision-based reactions, alongside the ability to adapt to strategies and changing situations."

Affording time to build a strong cognitive base and improve reactions has freed up

mental capacity for Usyk to reassign to what he does best - download data. Usyk is one of boxing's great problem-solvers. He often grows into a fight as his opponent begins to fatigue.

During both Fury fights, Usyk was behind on all three judges' scorecards after round seven but won via a decision.

"By training the brain to perform cognitive tasks under physical exertion, Usyk is building up this resilience against degradation and ensuring he is able to make smart decisions," Dr Wilcockson said.

But the boxing community is far from unified on the benefits of cognitive training.

"If you made a list of potential contributory factors to success in boxing, you'd probably be writing the list for about a week until you got to the cognitive benefits," said Alan Ruddock, associate Professor in the school of sport and physical activity at Sheffield Hallam University.

"It's impossible to say that it is the thing that sways the fight."

Ruddock co-founded Sheffield-based company Boxing Science in 2014 and has created training programmes for former world champions Kell Brook, Nicola Adams and more recently Joshua. Those one-to-one sessions focus on several areas, including nutrition and strength and condition, but rarely do fighters get in touch for cognitive training.

"We've always had resistance against psychology," Ruddock added. "It's probably because they create this steel armour around them. It's like they make that psychological element almost impenetrable and they don't want to break it down."

Usyk, though, has embraced the psychological side of the sport to complement the other areas of his game.

"The answer is simple," Chycki said when asked why he believes Usyk will beat Dubois.

"He is a better boxer, he has better technical skills and has a strong mind."



Daniel Dubois and Oleksandr usyk during their first fight /HANDOUT



## FOOTBALL

## BATTLE FOR 'GOAL MACHINES'

*Who's still available as race for striker heats up?*

ANDY CRYER/BBC SPORT

WITH a month to go until the start of the Premier League, the race for a striker is hotting up.

Chelsea have been quick off the mark in signing both Liam Delap from Ipswich and Joao Pedro from Brighton, but the likes of Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester United and Arsenal are still waiting to land their man.

With numerous clubs being linked to numerous players and some moving for the same target, it would be easy to lose track of who is moving where and when.

## ALMOST OFF THE MARKET

## VIKTOR GYOKERES: (SPORTING)

The Sporting striker has been linked with a number of clubs this summer but the 27-year-old former Coventry player may soon be off the market.

Arsenal are expecting to seal a £63.5m deal for the Sweden forward imminently after his 97 goals in 102 appearances in Portugal. The Gunners have been in the market for a while but, with Gyokeres set to join, they will soon be out of the striker market.

## VICTOR OSIMHEN: (NAPOLI)

Arsenal, Manchester United and Chelsea are among those that have been heavily linked with the Nigeria striker, but it appears his future could soon be sorted.

His parent club Napoli are in talks with Turkish side Galatasaray, who he spent last season on loan with, and the forward is reportedly keen on a return to Turkey. Failure to come to a financial agreement though could quickly alert other suitors, with the situation expected to come to a head in the next few days.

In 2022-23 the 26-year-old helped Napoli win their first Italian title since 1990. He missed them repeating the feat this season but had a prolific spell on loan at Galatasaray.

## WANTED MEN

## ALEXANDER ISAK: (NEWCASTLE UNITED)

Newcastle's message is that Isak is not for sale but you get the feeling this isn't the last we will hear about his future.

Liverpool are interested in the 25-year-old Sweden forward but know they would have to break the British transfer record to even stand a chance of prising him from the Magpies. A deal for Isak

would cost up to £130m.

## HUGO EKITIKE: (EINTRACHT FRANKFURT)

Newcastle and Liverpool have both made their interest known in the 23-year-old Frenchman over the past few days.

Chelsea were another club seriously interested in him but, having recently signed Delap and Joao Pedro, they are unlikely to move for another frontman, unless there is movement out.

Ekitike has enjoyed the best goalscoring season of his career, scoring 15 goals and adding eight assists for Frankfurt to help them finish third in the Bundesliga and earn a Champions League place.

Newcastle have had an initial £70m bid turned down by the Germans and don't see the striker as a replacement for Isak. He is also one of a number of strikers Liverpool are looking at.

## BRYAN MBEUMO: (BRENTFORD)

Manchester United's move for the Brentford forward has gone a bit quiet in recent weeks.

But those at Old Trafford hope Mbeumo's protracted move for more than £60m is completed before Ruben Amorim and his squad set off on their pre-season travels at the weekend.

Tottenham are also interested in the 25-year-old Cameroon international but are yet to make a bid, while there are several Champions League clubs on the continent watching his situation closely.

## YOANE WISSA: (BRENTFORD)

Tottenham are also exploring a move for another Brentford forward.

The Bees have been made aware of their London rivals' interest in the 28-year-old, in a deal that could reunite the forward with his former manager Thomas Frank, now in charge at Spurs.

Wissa, who scored 20 goals last season, courted major interest from Premier League clubs in recent months, Nottingham Forest failing to sign the

DR Congo international in January. Liverpool are another club monitoring Wissa's situation, but have other preferred targets to explore first.

## ONES TO WATCH

## BENJAMIN SESKO: (RB LEIPZIG)

The Slovenian 22-year-old looked as though he could have been heading to Arsenal this summer but, with Gyokeres now the Gunners' priority, that move is off the table.

He has also been linked with the likes of Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool. If they sign Mbeumo, Manchester United would need to sell to fund a potential move for a striker.

Sesko signed a five-year contract this time last season and it has been reported Leipzig up to £85m for him. Don't rule out a move from one of Europe's top clubs in the window.

## OLLIE WATKINS: (ASTON VILLA)

Arsenal made a late bid for England striker Ollie Watkins in the final few days of

the winter transfer window, with Aston Villa refusing the reported £40m offer.

A striker a number of clubs are understood to be keeping an eye on, with both Liverpool and Manchester United known to be admirers.

Villa would not be keen to sell the 29-year-old, but could a late substantial bid twist their arm?

## JEAN-PHILIPPE MATETA: (C. PALACE)

Another striker who has been linked with a move away this summer, but Crystal Palace are determined to keep hold of him.

Numerous clubs have shown an interest in the Frenchman but the Eagles are hoping he will sign a new long-term deal, with his current contract expiring in 2027.

The 28-year-old was a standout performer in Oliver Glasner's side last season, scoring 17 goals in all competitions as Palace won the FA Cup - their first major trophy.

## NICOLAS JACKSON: (CHELSEA)

Jackson was Chelsea's first-choice striker last season but the arrival of Joao Pedro and Delap does raise a few questions.

The 24-year-old Senegal international scored 10 Premier League goals in 2024-25 and would likely have significant interest from elsewhere if he was made available.

## DOMINIC CALVERT-LEWIN: (EVERTON)

A free agent after his Everton deal expired this summer. Newcastle and Manchester United have been linked with the 28-year-old England forward.



Victor Osimhen, Viktor Gyokeres and Alexander Isak /FILE

## FOOTBALL

## I want to play 90 minutes of every match, says Neymar

BBC

NEYMAR struck late as Santos edged to a 1-0 home win over leaders Flamengo in Brazil's Serie A championship on Wednesday.

The former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain forward broke the deadlock in the 84th minute, turning sublimely after receiving Guilherme's pass and firing into the far corner.

It was the 33-year-old's first goal of a Serie A campaign disrupted by injury, with only three starts so far.

"I want to play 90 minutes of every game," Neymar said after the match. "I want to be better physically but that takes time, both in terms of playing and training."

Neymar admitted he remains some way off recapturing his best form, having suffered a series of leg muscle injuries since returning from a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee last October.

"My body is still adapting, getting used to everything again," said Neymar, who spent more than a year on the sidelines after sustaining the injury while playing for Brazil in a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay.

"It's not easy to deal with the injury I had. I'm very happy to be able to contribute in every way, both attacking and defending. I'm not 100%, but I'm getting better all the time," he added.

Wednesday's result leaves Santos 13th in the 20-team standings with 14 points, 13

points behind Flamengo, which is ahead of second-placed Cruzeiro on goal difference.

"Flamengo, in my opinion, is the best team in the league," Neymar said. "Tactically they are very good, they defend and attack very well. They have very high-quality players."

"Today we showed that we can be better than our current league position suggests. It's a fresh start for us. We had time to work. We showed that we can compete with any team in the competition."

In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Wednesday, Palmeiras drew 1-1 at home to Mirassol, Corinthians won 1-0 at Ceara, Botafogo was held to a goalless home draw by Vitoria and Sao Paulo drew 2-2 at Bragantino.



Neymar Jr /HANDOUT



## FEATURE

Alex Matata: The relentless road warrior inspired by Ndiku's legacy

SEE PAGES 34-35



FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 18-20, 2025

# starSPORT

## City Park youth coach shifts focus to early childhood development



Kenya youth hockey development coaches at City Park /HANDOUT

BY TEDDY MULEI

CITY Park youth hockey coach Carolyne Mabwayi said the initiative is shifting Kenya's development model from school-based discovery to early childhood engagement.

Mabwayi is among several alumni now coaching within the program. "The most important thing here is to nurture talent from a young age so that hockey can grow from the grassroots up,

unlike in the past, where most of us only picked up the sport in high school," said Mabwayi.

The initiative, driven by the Kenya Hockey Federation (KHF) in partnership with the Government of Kenya and Dutch development partners, is currently based at City Park Stadium.

It targets children as young as three, with over 100 youngsters aged between 10 and 16 already receiving regular training. "Today, we even have kids as young as

three years old joining," Mabwayi said. "What's even more encouraging is that some of the coaches now training them are alumni of this very program, and they've come to give back," she added.

A total of 22 local coaches are engaged in various neighbourhoods under the program, playing a crucial role in laying the foundation.

## ★ FOOTBALL

### Mentorship programme a game-changer, says Cheche

BY CHARLENE MALWA

JUNIOR Starlets head coach Mildred Cheche believes her

selection to the Fifa Elite Performance Coach Mentorship Programme will spark long-term transformation in Kenya's women's football coaching landscape.

Cheche, who is currently in Zurich, Switzerland, for the mentorship initiative, said the programme will not only sharpen her skills but also influence how she develops young talent back home.

She said, "This opportunity enhances the skill sets of mentors and mentees and fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement."

The FIFA programme provides a structured platform for experienced coaches to share knowledge with rising professionals. In addition, it encourages the transfer of best practices, tactical insights and modern strategies critical for success at the highest level of the game.

The former Harambee Starlets and Mathare United professional made history in 2024 by guiding the Kenya U17 girls' team, the Junior Starlets, to their first-ever qualification for the Fifa U17 Women's World Cup.

Under her leadership, the team also earned national acclaim by being named 2024 Women's Sports Team of the Year at the SOYA Awards.



## FOOTBALL

# VAR PLANS AFOOT

## Kenya to introduce VAR technology at next month's CHAN tournament

BY TONY MBALLA

IN a historic announcement marking a new chapter in Kenyan football, the government has unveiled plans to introduce Video Assistant Referee (VAR) technology during the 2024 African Nations Championship (Chan) set for August.

This initiative, revealed by Sports Cabinet Secretary Salim Mvurya, represents a significant milestone in the country's sporting history, as it will be the first time Kenya adopts such advanced officiating technology.

Mvurya stated that the introduction of VAR, alongside goal-line technology, not only demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the integrity of the game but also reflects Kenya's ambitions to elevate its profile on the global football stage.

Speaking to the press at a Nairobi hotel, Mvurya said the equipment will be imported ahead of the tournament.

"Plans have been finalised to import the equipment into the country for the African Nations Championship. It will be the first time the country will be using this technology," he said.

Local Organising Committee (LOC) chairman Nicholas Musonye echoed the sentiment, stating that the VAR system will be used beyond Chan and will be a permanent fixture in local leagues and future tournaments, including the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), which Kenya will co-host.

"We are acquiring the technology permanently, and it will be used to officiate in local leagues thereafter," Musonye said. Mvurya also assured Kenyans that the government will provide all the necessary support to help Harambee Stars win the Chan 2024 title.

"We don't want to sit and watch other countries fight for the trophy

on our soil. Harambee Stars have assured us they will win the title for us. We have great confidence in our players, we have qualified coaches, and we trust we are going to win this competition," Mvurya said.

The government sees the 2024 Chan as a long-awaited opportunity, especially given Kenya's unsuccessful attempts to host the Africa Cup of Nations in 1996 and Chan in 2018. Mvurya referenced these past attempts with a tone of both nostalgia and urgency, suggesting that the current administration is determined to avoid past failures.

"Back in 1996, Kenya placed a bid to host Afcon, but in the last minute, the tournament was taken to South Africa because Kenya was not ready. That wasn't the last attempt. In 2018, Kenya again bid to host Chan but couldn't manage. Now in 2025, we are ready," he said.

Significant investments have been made to upgrade key stadiums, including Kasarani and Nyayo, to meet the Confederation of African Football (CAF) requirements.

"Kenya has now arrived at the destination. It has taken a lot of investment in infrastructure

to reach this point, and part of the upgrades were to comply with CAF standards," Mvurya added.

As Kenya prepares to host Chan 2024, Mvurya emphasised the importance of national unity and public support behind Harambee Stars.

Sports Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi underscored the government's commitment by highlighting infrastructural developments such as the construction of a new 5,000-seat stadium at the Kasarani Annexe training grounds.

"These developments are not only for Chan but are designed to prepare Kenya for future local and international sporting events," he said.

Mwangi also emphasised the importance of marketing and compliance with Caf hosting agreements, urging the media and private sector to support Kenya's sporting aspirations.

"The emphasis on compliance, including marketing strategies, reflects a professional approach that is essential for successful hosting," he noted.

Football Kenya Federation (FKF) president Hussein Mohamed called on Kenyans to rally behind the national team, assuring them they would not be disappointed.



Sports Cabinet Secretary, Salim Mvurya/HANDOUT





**Star**



# Raila tiptoes through Ruto with alliance

Betrayal or breakthrough? Gen Z and millennials now appear to upstage ODM stalwart in his traditional opposition space





**COVER STORY LOSING THE YOUTH VOTE**

# Raila's risky bet on Ruto as 2027 battle heats up

For the first time in decades, the ODM leader faces a legitimacy crisis within his own strongholds, with new opposition voices eclipsing him



OTEMBO KARINGA  
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Political analyst

**T**he potential alliance between ODM leader Raila Odinga and President William Ruto ahead of the 2027 general election is a political deal laden with complexities, contradictions and far-reaching consequences. On one hand, some observers may see it as a masterstroke of realpolitik. On the other, it carries serious risks – both for the individual political actors involved and for Kenya's broader democratic health. Some analysts argue that the possible political marriage is a double-edged sword, as the country hurtles toward its most consequential presidential duel.

"The marriage was a forced one because of circumstances but obviously it is fraught with suspicions and smacks of a grand attempt to override the masses in 2027 with Raila and Ruto ready to die for each other," argues diplomacy and international relations expert, Francis Mwangangi.

The Machakos deputy governor points out that Raila's traditional space in the opposition benches has been taken over by the Kalonzo Musyoka-Rigathi Gachagua axis backed by the country's Gen Z.

"For the first time in history, the 2027 elections will be determined by millions of young people resisting misrule and keen to reclaim their country through their power of their votes and that is when that will dawn on Raila and Ruto," he says.

Raila's decision to work with Ruto – especially after a hard-fought 2022 election and years of portraying himself as the moral compass of the opposition – is viewed by many of his traditional supporters and the youth as a betrayal. This sentiment is most visible among the Gen Z, who were at the forefront of the anti-government protests that forced Ruto to withdraw the Finance Bill, 2024 after the storming of Parliament.

With Gen Z and millennials now appearing to upstage Raila in his traditional opposition space, his perceived silence or complicity during the protests and his proximity to Ruto at the time, has tainted his brand among a generation that once revered him as a freedom fighter. For the first time in decades, Raila faces a legitimacy crisis within his own strongholds – Western Kenya, Nyanza and Coast – with a new generation of opposition voices eclipsing him. There are concerns that Raila risks losing the youth vote – not just in Luo Nyanza, but across the country – as his current brand of politics contrasts starkly with his

President William Ruto and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga during the launch of the Homa Bay pier that will boost trade, create jobs, promote tourism and advance the region's blue economy  
/EDWARD ALUSA  
/PCS



decades-old pro-reform agenda.

While he has for months walked a political tightrope – supporting Ruto while trying to maintain an oversight role – his 2027 options appear to be shrinking amid growing public backlash. His ODM party has called for a major National Delegates Convention in October, seen as a Waterloo moment to formalise a union with Ruto ahead of the polls. In what appeared to be a move to salvage his standing with the youth, Raila recently condemned the President's "shoot-the-leg" directive, which sparked national outcry.

"As a country, we must at all times opt for the rule of law and due process and reject the temptation to give police illegitimate and deadly powers over citizens, even when the citizens are perceived to have broken the law," Raila stated on July 11. "This preserves the dignity and respects the human rights of suspects while at the same time confers credibility to the actions of the State."

In a further effort to align with youth concerns, Raila warned against a militarised approach to governance. Raila's statement came in the wake of Ruto's call for police to shoot rioters in the leg.

"Anyone who burns down someone else's business and property, let them be shot in the leg and go to the hospital as they head to court... shoot and break the legs," Ruto said on July 9.

Besides condemning the directive, Raila also proposed fresh dialogue, branding it a "national conclave." Analysts believe the swift support Raila received from top Kenya Kwanza figures suggests the dialogue plan had already been discussed – and that he had been released to champion it. The ODM leader dismissed criticism of the conclave, saying it would be key to forging a new, inclusive national path.

"50 per cent must be youth, the remaining 50 per cent should be middle-aged people and only a few should be elderly. All Kenyans should come together in a national dialogue to talk about where the problem is. We don't want to go into the 2027 election full of anger."

The proposed conclave would have 40 representatives drawn from across the 47 counties. However, critics view the proposal and Raila's criticism of the President's shoot-to-disable policy as part of a calculated effort to regain youth support amid his controversial ties with Ruto.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga, who has already made public his 2027 presidential bid, says he wants dialogue; but not the inclusive Inter-Generational National Conclave proposed by Raila.

"If there's going to be any dialogue, it should be people-driven. People are expressing concerns and saying we should have dialogue. What can only help is a people-driven dialogue that will involve the youths who have suffered most and maybe a voice from that group," he said.

"There are groups already thinking about that. I have myself requested and talked to some people, we come together and think about what we should do in my capacity as a leader and former Chief Justice, not as a presidential candidate. We put our heads together and see what we

can do for the good of this country. That talk is going to be like a stopgap measure."

Coincidentally, after rejecting the Finance Bill, Ruto had also in 2024 proposed a national convention to bring together leaders across sectors to deliberate Kenya's future. In an address during the height of the Gen Z protests last year, Ruto announced a six-day multi-sectoral forum beginning July 15, bringing together political parties, civil society, faith groups, employers and youth.

"In the interest of making sure we live within our means, all participants will bear their own attendance costs," he said.

Raila joined Ruto in endorsing the dialogue, calling it "the best way out of the crisis". "We will give people an opportunity to be heard," he said, adding that the forum would allow Kenyans to express grievances and propose solutions.

Still, questions remain as to why similar proposals were shelved for a year, despite the earlier national dialogue at Bomas that birthed eight legislative proposals. Opposition leaders have dismissed the renewed push for a conclave, calling it a waste of time and a strategy to derail anti-Ruto momentum. Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua rejected Raila's call for dialogue, claiming he is opportunistic and always seeks a way into government after every election.

"Raila is totally irrelevant. Every election cycle he loses, then finds a way into government... if he were patriotic, he would disengage from Kasarani but he's talking with his mouth full," Gachagua said in Seattle. He insisted the ballot box in 2027 is the only legitimate dialogue. "We need transformative leadership, not endless dialogues. Let's persevere for two more years and sort this out once and for all," Gachagua added, accusing Raila of planning to support Ruto. While Gachagua welcomes a Raila-Ruto alliance to "deal with both of them at once," the partnership is already reshaping political alignments.

For the Luo community, the alliance offers long-denied access to state power. Ruto's appointments of Luos to top government roles – Cabinet, PSs and ambassadors – have

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RAILA ODINGA

*We must at all times opt for the rule of law and due process and reject the temptation to give police illegitimate and deadly powers over citizens, even when the citizens are perceived to have broken the law*

softened perceptions of exclusion. Many Luo youth, who had opposed Ruto in 2022, now view him positively as development projects arrive in the region. Raila's allies in Nyanza have endorsed his re-election in 2027 and mocked efforts to retire him.

For Ruto, partnering with Raila is both symbolic and strategic. It silences his fiercest critic and weakens the opposition, potentially paving a smoother re-election path. On July 12, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki declared that a Ruto-Raila-Kindiki team would be "unstoppable". "We are focused on service. When campaigns come, who can beat William Ruto, myself and Raila Odunga?" Kindiki posed in Migori.

By winning over part of the Luo base, Ruto positions himself as a national leader – a critical image as discontent over the economy grows. Kenya Kwanza has used this to paint Ruto as unifying, while accusing Gachagua of tribalism and exclusion. Yet, there's a political cost: Raila still carries historical baggage among Mt Kenya elites.

In 2022, even with Uhuru's support, he got less than a million votes from the region. Now, the

Ruto-Raila partnership has reignited Kikuyu-Luo rivalries, with Mt Kenya politicians accusing Ruto of sidelining the region for "the enemy." This narrative is splintering Kenya Kwanza in Mt Kenya, where leaders are shifting toward post-Ruto succession and aligning with Gachagua, Kalonzo Musyoka and Fred Matiang'i.

Historically, Kenya's politics has been ethnic. An alliance between the Kalenjin and Luo – communities at odds since the Moi-Odinga fallout in the 1980s – heals one rift but worsens the Luo-Kikuyu divide.

Analysts say Ruto risks alienating Mt Kenya voters who feel betrayed and excluded economically and politically.

Bomet Governor Hillary Barchok pushed back on tribalism claims:

"We have nothing against the Kikuyu community. These are people we've come a long way with and have stood together with. What we have rejected is an individual bringing hatred among Kenyans," he said.

Kericho Senator Aaron Cheruiyot rallied support for a new alliance.

"The way you and the President have started engaging Baba, continue. When the time comes, we'll lock you in a room and go with whatever you agree on," he said.

As the Raila-Ruto axis becomes the face of 2027, Mt Kenya appears to be drifting toward the opposition. One major consequence of the alliance is the hollowing out of the opposition. Raila, long the face of resistance, is now seen as co-opted.

This has created room for new voices, particularly Gen Z – though they lack the formal organisation or political experience to mount a structured opposition.

Analysts warn this is dangerous for democracy. Without a credible opposition, the government can push through controversial policies unchecked – as seen with the Finance Bill 2024 before Gen Z intervened.

If Raila fails to reclaim his voice, the opposition vacuum may be filled by disruptive forces rejecting institutions altogether – a recipe for instability. Perhaps the most seismic outcome of the Raila-Ruto alliance is the generational realignment it is triggering.

Raila Odinga with members of the Council of County chairpersons steering committee, which is led by Kakamega Governor Fernandes Barasa (seated, R) /HANDOUT





**COLUMN** **KEYBOARD COPS**

# Weed out tweeting 'political police' to safeguard service

COLLINS AJUOK

@TheStarKenya

The writer  
is a political  
commentator

**T**he uniform donned by a member of the disciplined forces is a gazetted symbol of authority, legitimacy, pride and commitment to serve the republic, carrying the possibility of personal risk. It is, therefore, an item that doesn't match the spectacle of a uniformed security personnel going live on TikTok or other social media, to defy his superiors or other commands, seeking to garner the usual celebrity clout among social media users. There is a thin line between that and anarchy.

The growth of social media as a tool of expression among young people, however, has also exposed the weak discipline and poor doctrine in sections of the security services, chiefly the police service.

It is not uncommon to find police officers, in full uniform, taking to those diverse media apps to express political opinions. Indeed, a celebrity athlete, known to be a police officer, used to be a common face at public rallies a few years ago, going the full hog to endorse an opposition candidate.

In more recent times, another celebrity musician, also a policeman, has been a regular performer at functions where political chants are generously made.

The highlight, however, remains the case of a police constable who, following the Saba Saba protests earlier this month, retreated to his social media account to announce to the public that he was rejecting a transfer to a remote part of the country. He alleged the said transfer was grounded on malice, supposedly arising out of his refusal to implement a shoot-to-kill order from his superiors.

Security officers take an oath to defend the nation from its enemies, after being trained on the taxpayers' tab. I'm not sure many of them realise it, but there are many more enemies of the country outside it, therefore, the borders are the best sentry points to encounter the nation's adversaries.

I say this to demystify the widely held view by many members of the security establishment that postings to remote borders of the country constitute a form of punishment, although they still hold that they serve to protect the country. Certainly, there can't be as many national enemies at the preferred postings to weighbridges and banks!

I often make comparisons between the level of professionalism



and discipline within the police service, and that of the military. As I have stated before, the military is swift and firm in its response to misconduct. Both servicemen and officers know what is coming as soon as they cross the line. Speaking of which, it is important to make a distinction that is usually muddled up by the media.

Whereas within the police service, everyone from constable to IG is referred to as "police officer", the only officers in the military are commissioned officers from the rank of 2nd Lieutenant to General. The others are service members.

Kenyan media loves to lump all soldiers together as "military officers". I remember watching a news item a few months back, when a local TV station reported that a "senior military officer" had been arrested for murder in Nakuru county.

And because senior military officers should generally be a reference to members of the General ranks (Brigadier to four-star General), I sat up straight to catch the news properly, wondering how such a senior officer would end up in such ignominy. You can imagine my shock when the person turned out to be a sergeant, who in the military, is neither an officer nor senior.

Be that as it may, the fact that the police service is so heavily politicised and has too much contact with the civilian population, makes it prone to gross indiscipline within its ranks. Indeed, officers facing disciplinary action within the service are not averse to seeking help from politi-

Interior PS  
Raymond  
Omollo and  
CS Kipchumba  
Murkomen with  
police officers on  
Saba Saba day  
on July 7  
/HANDOUT

cians and godfathers to quash any cases facing them.

These unseemly actions only perpetuate the culture of impunity that drives the outspoken nature of a few elements within the service. But there is no denying that the training and doctrine gaps among the police are too glaring to ignore.

Policemen and women in the public sphere, especially celebrity ones, have so much to learn from their military counterparts, among them Lieutenant Colonel Paul Tergat and Warrant Officer II Hellen Obiri. They conduct themselves with dignity outside the barracks and are almost always conscious of the heavy responsibility that comes with service.

When they speak, they confine themselves to the sports they take part in, knowing the disciplined institutions they serve have spokespersons already.

Obviously, there must also be the realisation that any misplaced words would seep into the ranks and plant seeds of discord.

Security officers know their roles require them to remain apolitical and to rise above the petty divisions within the civilian population.

They also know that the delicate tribal relations in the country call for the custodians of state instruments of violence to give a wide berth to political and tribal rhetoric driving these divisions.

Because the existential danger we face emanates from the possibility that security agents will resort to their ethnic lenses when dealing with the population. If that ever becomes the norm, we will have thrown the nation to the dogs.

Yet, even when a policeman may rightly claim he is fighting an unfair transfer, in the middle of a tribally charged protest season, such complaints can easily be fitted into existing political patterns and al-

located ethnic tones. I am clear in my mind that activism in the police ranks endangers public safety, because it opens the door to vociferous activists bearing lethal weapons. It should be clear to all that any police officer who goes on social media and disparages his superiors or the institution itself, has already lost the requisite discipline it requires to stay in service.

I stated here two weeks ago that all the years of police reforms have, not surprisingly, concentrated mostly on the top command of the service, a reality based on the belief that if the top was reformed, then reform would flow down within the ranks.

Besides, the political class, the main actors in constitutional reforms, has always assumed that the identity and vetting process of the top echelons of the force were the main gaps in need of sealing in the old format of police leadership. There is compelling evidence, however, that neglecting the lower ranks for so long now poses a long-term challenge.

It is already too much that police brutality has become a perennial cancer in the country. The behaviour of riot police amidst recent protests has also raised questions about the level of professionalism and training in the service. If we add to that mix "political police officers" who find the need to engage in public discourse over trending political issues, we have a time bomb.

We joke too much in this country, even with very serious matters. There was a reason that the founders of the nation didn't countenance the idea of security officers forming and joining unions, until a recent court ruling.

There is more reason it shouldn't be easy for cops to go on social media and liberally express political opinion. Security is not a nursery school game.

**POLICEMEN AND WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE, ESPECIALLY CELEBRITY ONES, HAVE SO MUCH TO LEARN FROM THEIR MILITARY COUNTERPARTS WHO CONDUCT THEMSELVES WITH DIGNITY OUTSIDE THE BARRACKS AND ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH SERVICE**



COMMENTARY **MUTUAL RESPECT**

The 'Inter-Civilization Exchanges and Mutual Learning: Building an Inclusive World' subforum held during the Global Civilisations Dialogue ministerial meeting in Beijing, capital of China. Six parallel subforums were held on Friday  
/XINHUA  
/CHEN YEHUDA



# China promotes civilisations' dialogue for global stability



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Last week, leaders from around the world gathered in Beijing, China, for a ministerial conference on Global Civilisations Dialogue. The meeting comes as the world is increasingly confronted by political and economic tensions and conflict. Today, more than ever, dialogues and cultural exchanges between nations are crucial to foster mutual understanding, reduce conflict and promote global stability. Recent efforts by China to strengthen global exchanges as pathways to global unity, understanding and peace consolidation are laudable. In 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping introduced the Global Civilisation

Initiative with the aim of promoting "people-to-people and cultural exchanges" and fostering mutual learning and respect for diverse national histories, cultures, and conditions.

A year later, the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a Chinese-proposed resolution to establish the International Day for Dialogue among Civilisations, signalling global recognition of the Global Civilisations Dialogue principles. This achievement underscores China's ability to rally international support for its vision of inclusive global governance. Political and economic disputes often arise from miscommunication or lack of trust.

Regular diplomatic dialogues allow countries to address grievances, clarify intentions and negotiate peacefully. During the Cold War, cultural exchanges between the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics helped humanise each side, easing hostilities. Today, open discussions can prevent disagreements from escalating.

Economic tensions, such as trade wars, harm global prosperity. Dialogue enables nations to negotiate fair trade policies and resolve disputes without resorting to sanctions or protectionism. Cultural exchanges, like business collaborations and student programmes, build long-term eco-

nomic relationships by fostering familiarity and trust between societies.

Furthermore, stereotypes and prejudices fuel international tensions. Cultural exchanges – through art, education and tourism – help people appreciate different perspectives. When citizens experience another country's traditions and values first-hand, they are less likely to support discriminatory policies. Global issues such as climate change, pandemics and migration require international cooperation. Dialogues create frameworks for joint action, while cultural exchanges encourage shared responsibility. Countries that engage in people-to-people exchanges are more likely to collaborate on solutions, as seen in global climate agreements, functional multilateralism and shared prosperity.

China's promotion of civilisational exchanges demonstrates its responsibility as a major country in the current era. Its government advocates for the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual learning among civilisations, fostering dialogue and exchanges between different cultures. This aligns with core socialist values and the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. Such efforts enhance mutual understanding and friendship among peoples of different countries and contribute to world peace and development, showcasing China's role as a responsible country in the new era.

China's emphasis on civilisational exchanges draws on its historical experience as a hub of cultural interaction. The Silk Road, for instance, facilitated exchanges between ancient China and the rest of the world, contributing to the development of human civilisation. Being a civilisation state with a history stretching 5,000 years, China has consolidated a formidable heritage of traditions, governance models and cultural values that the rest of humanity can learn and draw from; collectively weaving a more responsive, inclusive and progressive worldview that promotes peace, harmony and prosperity.

## Can Kenya embrace totally smoke-free environment?

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The allure of smoking remains challenging to stamp out despite the well-known health risks it poses and campaigns to deter it. Tobacco manufacturers are offering smoke-free alternatives for adult smokers as a possible way of mitigating the negative health effects of smoking. Digital penetration has made access to critical information on cessation available to smokers seeking to stop their addiction. But experts warn that smokers are a difficult cohort to deal with.

Dr Yvonne Olando, a smoking cessation specialist and Nacada director in charge of Public Education and Advocacy says, "We have tried social media campaigns in vain. Users drop out and use data breach excuses even when you allow them to engage anonymously." The rapid growth of smartphones and internet access has presented new opportu-

nities to reach smokers with cessation information and support using digital technologies, which can be integrated with traditional support modalities such as telephone quitlines and face-to-face clinical cessation counselling. However, uptake still remains minimal. "We have cessation clinics at the Dental School, University of Nairobi and at the Metropolitan Hospital, but users default, disengage and abandon medicine meant to help them quit smoking," Olando says.

Philip Morris International, the tobacco company with products sold in over 180 countries, advocates for a smoke-free future. "Our goal is to offer smoke-free alternatives that have the potential to reduce the risk of developing smoking-related diseases as compared to continued smoking," says Jacek Olczac, the CEO of PMI, in a new company journal. "The evidence is clear: smoke-free

alternatives can accelerate the end of smoking. The world has to move to help smokers transition to better alternatives."

The world has one billion smokers, while Kenya has an estimated 2.7 million adult smokers, according to Tobacco Atlas. It is estimated that in Kenya, the smoking prevalence is 7.6 per cent, while youth smoking prevalence stands at 3.5 per cent. But as manufacturers struggle with new non-smoking alternatives, experts insist that the best way to avoid the harm of smoking is to not start in the first place. Smoking-related diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease and lung cancer are caused primarily by inhaling harmful compounds largely formed when tobacco is burned.

Tobacco manufacturer BAT is also pushing for a smoke-free world as they market alternative products. "Locally, BAT's introduction of smokeless products such as oral nicotine pouches into the Kenyan market reflects our commitment to meet the preferences of today's adult smokers," said Crispin Achola, managing director, BAT Kenya during

the marking of World No Tobacco Day in May. He added that reducing the harm caused requires a dual approach: ongoing tobacco control efforts and the availability of less harmful alternatives for adults who would otherwise continue smoking.

Tobacco use is one of the most common risk factors for non-communicable diseases. The Ministry of Health says NCDs contribute to nearly 50% of all admissions in public hospitals countrywide. WHO estimates that 8 million people die from tobacco use every year. In Kenya, 69 per 100,000 deaths for individuals aged 30 and above result from tobacco use.

Public Health PS Mary Muthoni noted in a press statement on May 27, that despite a decline in tobacco use from 12% in 2014 to nine per cent in 2022, new challenges have emerged with the rapid proliferation of Novel Nicotine and Emerging Tobacco Products, such as nicotine pouches, vapes and electronic cigarettes. These are often marketed as less harmful alternatives to traditional cigarettes and target young people with appealing flavours and misleading health claims.



**KATIBA CORNER UNJUSTIFIED INEQUALITY**

# Tricky question of “illegitimate” offspring born to a Muslim man



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The author writes  
in her personal  
capacity

**A** recent decision of the Supreme Court (all seven judges) — about whether people born out of wedlock to Muslim parents can inherit from their fathers — has caused much resentment among the Muslim community. Let me emphasise that Islamic law has provisions that were intended to uphold moral relations, and to ensure that everyone is treated fairly. Furthermore, equality is clearly an important value in Islam.

**THE ISLAMIC LAW**

Basically, only a person born of two people married to each other can inherit from the father. Even if the parents actually married, but the child was conceived before the marriage, the child is still “illegitimate”. A child born to a wife in a marriage governed by Islamic law is assumed to be that of the husband. Details may vary between schools of Islamic law. Most remarkable is perhaps how many other systems have had similar rules. Roman, Jewish, and Hindu law, customary laws of Europe, church law, and the English common law have all excluded illegitimate offspring from inheritance, although they are not identical in detail.

**WHY?**

At the heart of the rules, I suggest, lay a common concern: men’s fear of having imposed on them offspring who were not their own. They thus feared the possibility of their wives being unfaithful to them. There is even a specific word for this in English. A cuckold is a “man whose spouse has committed adultery, often regarded as an object of scorn” (Collins Dictionary). The word is virtually never used of women. A practical problem was that of knowing whether the child was theirs. Falstaff in Shakespeare’s play *Henry IV* (Part I), pretending to be the King interrogating his irresponsible son, said: “That thou art my son I have partly thy mother’s word, partly my own opinion.” In the 1970s, I asked my students in Nigeria what adultery was. They said, ‘If a woman has sex with a man who is not her husband’. They did not connect the word with men’s behaviour. Men’s fear of women’s sexuality comes out in “female genital mutilation” — preventing women having pleasure in sex, to keep them “chaste”. However, men have a fear of their own sexuality, afraid they will be seduced by women. Such attitudes lay behind the law in England: until 1923 adultery alone was ground for divorce in England if committed by women, but not if committed by men — an additional ground, such as cruelty, was needed.

Think about the early social context. In many societies the expectation was that all women of child-bearing age were married —



especially where men could have several wives. A woman bearing a child not from her husband was probably committing adultery. But if everyone kept quiet, one way or the other the child would be taken care of. While the values and concerns underlying the law may not have changed, the context has. Firstly, it is usually possible to be sure who fathered a particular child (although the use of DNA evidence in Islamic law is not clear cut). Secondly, it is less likely, though not impossible, that the mother of a child in a non-married relationship is married to someone else. No-one in Kenya can legally marry before they are aged 18 (including Muslim girls — as a Kenyan court decided). Realistically, extramarital pregnancy is not just the outcome of a woman enticing a man. Women’s financial insecurity and the reluctance of too many to say “No” to a man, explain many such pregnancies. I believe most people would not say such pregnancies are the women’s “fault” only.

**THE CONSTITUTION**

The constitution specifically recognises African customary law and “Islamic and Hindu personal law”. It also laid the groundwork for the extension of Kadhis’ courts throughout the country — to the benefit particularly of Muslim women. Article 27 on equality specifically forbids discrimination on the basis of “birth” — which includes being “born out of wedlock”. However, the constitution also provides that equality rights are “qualified to the extent strictly necessary for the application of Muslim law before the Kadhis’ courts, to persons who profess the Muslim faith in relation to personal status, marriage, divorce and inheritance”

(Article 24(4)). So, the rule excluding “illegitimate” children from inheriting from their fathers, if clearly part of Islamic law, could not be attacked because it created inequality. However, this applies only in the Kadhis’ courts. The phrase “before the Kadhis’ courts” was introduced in the Committee of Experts’ second draft. This was deliberate: to allow for the possibility of some rules of Islamic law being challenged in court — possibly because the case was not brought in a Kadhi court. Think of a case in which a Muslim man sired a child by a non-Muslim woman. And Kadhi courts can only hear cases where both parties are Muslim and also accept the courts’ jurisdiction. Then there is the possibility of an appeal — which would go from a Kadhi court to the High Court.

**THE CASE**

The case involved three wives of a Muslim man who had died. One wife started a case to settle the property in a Kadhi court, the second started a case in the High Court. The cases were merged and were decided first in the High Court, then went to the Court of Appeal. The crucial facts were that the children of two wives were born before any marriage between their parents so, under Islamic law, could not inherit from their father. The Court of Appeal had decided that the constitution protected those children from exclusion. The Supreme Court had no choice about taking the case — because it was a constitutional matter. The court asked itself the right — the inevitable — question, this not being a case in a Kadhi’s court, or even an appeal from one. That question was the usual Article 24 one: balancing the importance of the right to equal-

Muslims in Mombasa demonstrate outside Sakin mosque in Majengo, Mvita constituency of Mombasa, after Friday prayers to condemn the ruling that children born outside wedlock have a right to inherit property, cases which they want the Kadhis courts to handle  
/JOHN CHESOLI

ity, and the purpose and the extent of the Islamic rule that limits that right, is the limitation justified? The inequality in this case was treating “illegitimate” offspring less favourably than legitimate ones and Muslim ones less favourably than those of other faiths. However, the Supreme Court said no attempt had been made to justify the rule except because of its Islamic law status.

But outside the Kadhis’ courts, the simple argument in justification, “This is valid Islamic law,” is not effective. What would be needed to answer the court’s question would be something showing that in practical terms the rule served a useful social purpose that justified the departure from equality. The court said in its ruling on June 30 that it could not imagine any convincing justification for the rule in practical, constitutional terms. I did read one comment suggesting that the new rule would be an incentive to women to have sex outside marriage — which places the “blame” on the women, including for the pregnancy. But the “official” Islamic rule is an incentive to men to do so without regard to the possibility of siring a child. And, as in this case, does not allow the man to rectify his error by marrying the mother, though he could, within limits, leave something in his will, if he realised the problem.

Formally the first wife, who was arguing for the Islamic rule, had the task of making the argument that the limitation was justified. That would be particularly hard for her, especially because she had no lawyer. I personally feel that some aspects of this case, so sensitive and difficult for the court and the community, could have benefited from a good lawyer. I might revisit this in future. Incidentally, the Constitutional Court of Indonesia — the largest Muslim country — in 2010 held that a law providing children born out of wedlock had no legal relationship with their biological father was unconstitutional.

**REALISTICALLY, EXTRAMARITAL PREGNANCY IS NOT JUST THE OUTCOME OF A WOMAN ENTICING A MAN. . WOMEN’S FINANCIAL INSECURITY AND THE RELUCTANCE OF TOO MANY TO SAY “NO” TO A MAN, EXPLAIN MANY SUCH PREGNANCIES**



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response code  
using your  
smartphone.



## the week

## SHOT OF THE WEEK



The burial service of Grade 7 pupil Bridgit Njoki, who was killed by a stray bullet at her home on Saba Saba day, at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic church in Ndumberi, Kiambu county /DENISH OCHIENG

## BRIEFS / FROM AROUND THE WORLD



## Cuban minister resigns after saying country has no beggars

**BBC** – Cuban minister for labour Marta Elena Feitó Cabrera has been forced to resign after she made comments denying the existence of beggars on the Communist-run island. Feitó Cabrera made the comments earlier this week at a session of the National Assembly. “There are no beggars in Cuba. There are people pretending to be beggars to make easy money,” she said. Furthermore, Feitó Cabrera accused people searching through the rubbish of being “illegal participants in the recycling service”. Her comments were widely criticised by Cubans at home and abroad and prompted a response from the island’s president, Miguel Díaz-Canel. She resigned soon after. Poverty levels and food shortages have worsened in Cuba as it continues to grapple with a severe economic crisis. Daily life is further disrupted by fuel shortages and frequent power cuts.



## US says it has deported five ‘barbaric’ migrants to Eswatini

**BBC** – The US says it has deported what it described as five “criminal illegal aliens” to the southern African kingdom of Eswatini. On board the flight were five deportees from Vietnam, Jamaica, Laos, Cuba and Yemen convicted of crimes ranging from child rape to murder, US Homeland Security Department assistant secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in an online post. “This flight took individuals so uniquely barbaric that their home countries refused to take them back,” McLaughlin wrote on X. Earlier this month, the US sent eight migrants from several countries to South Sudan after a court lifted restrictions on sending people to countries where they have no ties. In a series of posts, McLaughlin listed the crimes the five deported to Eswatini had been convicted of, describing them as “depraved monsters” who had been “terrorising American communities”.



## At least 20 killed in crush at aid distribution centre in Gaza

**BBC** – At least 20 people have been killed in a crush at an aid distribution centre in Gaza run by the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the organisation and a local hospital say. The GHF said 19 were trampled to death and one was stabbed “amid a chaotic and dangerous surge” at its site in Khan Younis. It added that it believed people “armed and affiliated with Hamas” fomented unrest. But Gaza’s Hamas-run Government Media Office denied the claim and accused the GHF of trying to “cover up” a crime. Nasser hospital in Khan Younis said it had received the bodies of 21 people who died from suffocation as a result of teargas inhalation and a crush at the site. In a graphic video, a witness standing on a cart with six bodies at the hospital said they had been crushed between fences while waiting for food handouts on Wednesday.





COMMENTARY **SO FAR SO GOOD?**

# Ruto's turf remains intact as opposition struggles to unite



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**F**ormer Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's trip to the United States was expected to ignite public excitement.

However, it turns out there was more hype than substance. The meetings he attended in a number of cities appear to have had good numbers of people from his entourage from Kenya.

Gachagua left Kenya on Wednesday night for the US, saying his two-month visit was aimed at engaging with Kenyans in the diaspora and other international stakeholders.

The trip marks Gachagua's first travel abroad since his removal from office in October 2024. He now leads the Democracy for Citizens Party (DCP) and will visit Dallas, California, Seattle, Boston and Baltimore to market the new political outfit.

The former DP announced he would hold town hall meetings and attend social gatherings to promote his agenda for the diaspora community.

The trip is conceived to respond to critics labelling him a local and sometimes, cynically, village politician. The trip was to provide the opportunity to spread his tentacles internationally by engaging the diaspora and bringing it into the opposition movement fold.

He is also expected to interact with selected American businesspeople and investors in a broader campaign to position the opposition as a viable alternative in the run-up to the 2027 general election. It is meant to initiate fundraising and networks necessary for a presidential election campaign.

The trip has remained largely uneventful and the anticipated ecstasy generally muted. The meetings, however, drew a diverse crowd, with many attendees eager to hear his vision for the country and the role he envisions for the diaspora in shaping Kenya's future.

Gachagua's tour has come just days after Matiang'i took his 2027 presidential bid to the international stage over the weekend with a series of diaspora engagements, starting with a town hall meeting in Irving, Texas. In a spirited event at DFW (Dallas Fort Worth) Celebrations, Matiang'i was warmly received by Kenyans living in the area.

Serious presidential candidates in Kenya have made it a tradition to get the support and goodwill of Kenyans living abroad.

Raila Odinga had the first elaborate international networks for his campaigns in 2007. The networks were headquartered in London and heavily influenced the progress of the campaign against President Mwai Kibaki who was seeking reelection after the 2005 referendum debacle.



He would repeat the engagements in 2013 whilst running against Uhuru Kenyatta and running mate William Ruto. Both were facing charges of crimes against humanity at The Hague.

In 2022, Ruto took his cue from Raila's overseas campaigning and was the first to address an intellectual congregation at Chatham House in London. It is an international affairs think tank with a royal charter.

Raila had to engage in catch up and later had a similar event at the venue but Ruto's persuasive rhetorical skills had tilted the scales there. It is this well-trodden path that Gachagua seeks to take in his US tour.

Gachagua's solo activities have lately rubbed his coalition's would-be partners the wrong way. Bandyng about the dominant Kikuyu vote numbers, the former deputy president has taken every step to position himself as the first among equals in the envisaged coalition.

He has thus become the key figure in the coalition, which includes Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka, People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua, DAP-K boss Eugene Wamalwa and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. This has unsettled his colleagues who apparently view him as a Johnny-come-lately.

Chief Justice emeritus David Maraga has chosen to run a one-man show, leaving no doubt that he will be on the presidential ballot in 2027. Karua was Raila's running mate in 2022. In the

Azimio Coalition team, Kalonzo and Wamalwa were co-principals, while Matiang'i brought in the system and 'deep state'.

Both the system and 'deep state' were hyped as the killer punch for Raila's fifth attempt, which failed spectacularly when they were most needed.

It is worth noting that Gachagua has chosen to include Karua in his US tour entourage.

He recently christened the others his "beloved cousins" but apparently they were of no value on his maiden trip to the land of opportunities. The clarion call for opposition unity is currently at best lip service to supporters.

In real terms, the opposition is at a crossroads. Kalonzo considers himself the most deserving presidential candidate, as the longest-serving leader in the opposition trenches, having started with Raila in 2013. Wamalwa seems comfortable with him.

Matiang'i is working on a strategy to consolidate the Kisii vote basket to himself. With this, he will seek to enter into a post-election coalition with the winning party or coalition, which may lack a commanding majority in Parliament.

The cracks and fissures in the opposition ranks have been a boon to Ruto and his Kenya Kwanza administration. Buoyed by the support and numbers from Raila's ODM strongholds, Ruto sits a little pretty as he approaches the general elections.

The post-Gachagua impeachment ruckus enabled him to establish a team of loyal and skillful political

DCP Party Leader Rigathi Gachagua when he inaugurated the North Pacific Chapter Satellite Office, marking a milestone in the journey to connect and serve Kenyans across the region /HANDOUT

operatives. He has added to his stable allies with a loyal support base. This, therefore, has been swelling his numbers and cancelling the loss occasioned by Gachagua's exit.

The President has maintained a grip on his backyard, Rift Valley. The region comprises the majority Kalenjin and Maa communities.

There is a sprinkling of other settler ethnic communities in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu counties. This region constitutes Kenya's second-largest vote bloc.

The small tribes of Nyanza, Kisii and Kuria have traditionally split their votes, half for Raila and the rest for Jubilee and later UDA. Under the current unity between Raila and Ruto, they are likely to vote as a bloc.

Then add the traditional support bases of Raila and it is game over. Western, Coast and Nyanza regions will swell the numbers for Ruto. They will join with the north eastern political swathe whose leaders have chosen to remain loyal to the President.

What Ruto will lose with certainty is Central Kenya and Lower Eastern comprising the Kamba land. It is unlikely the Kambas would join forces with the Kikuyus since Kalonzo and Gachagua have an uneasy relationship.

The Upper Eastern region of Meru and Tharaka has been struggling over the years to break away from the domination of the Kikuyu.

They will most likely take advantage of the existing confusion to chart their own path for the first time. Already their leaders have been openly gravitating towards the President and government against the overtures of Gachagua.

The Embu will be the only cousin to stand with the former Deputy President and his Kikuyu ilk. Therefore, as it stands now, if the votes are to be tallied, the President will romp home in his reelection bid.

**GACHAGUA'S SOLO ACTIVITIES HAVE LATELY RUBBED HIS COALITION'S WOULD-BE PARTNERS THE WRONG WAY. BANDYNG ABOUT THE DOMINANT KIKUYU VOTE NUMBERS, THE FORMER DEPUTY PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN EVERY STEP TO POSITION HIMSELF AS THE FIRST AMONG EQUALS IN THE ENVISAGED**



## THE WEEK/ **EMPOWERMENT AND RALLIES: LEADERS BRING SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE**



**1.** Deputy President Kithure Kindiki is joined by leaders including Kimani Ichung'wah (Kikuyu MP) for an Economic Empowerment Engagement at Ruiru Technical and Vocational College Grounds in Kiambu county /**PHOEBE OKALL/DPCS**

**2.** ODM leader Raila Odinga held a met with Japanese Ambassador to Kenya Matsuura Hiroshi, where they deliberated on relations between the two nations /**EMMANUEL WANSON**

**3.** Kalonzo Musyoka and opposition leaders hold a roadside gathering in Kiambu town after attending the requiem mass of twelve-year-old Birigit Njoki /**DENISH OCHIENG'**

**4.** Interior CS Kipchumba Murkomen with Turkana Governor Jeremiah Lomoruikai, security officials and leaders at the county boss' office on July 6 /**MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

**5.** Staff from the office of Kisii Woman Rep Doris Aburi distribute goats to widows in Taracha grounds in Birongo, Nyaribari Chache constituency on July 11 /**KNA**

**6.** Elgeyo Marakwet Deputy Governor Grace Cheserek hands over hairdressing equipment from the KCB Foundation to a graduate /**KNA**

**7.** Rosalind Gichuru, KCB Group director marketing and communication (R) presents a dummy cheque to Gender CS Hannah Cheptumo (second right), Eldama Ravine MP Musa Sirma and ICT and the Digital Economy PS John Tanui during the launch of the Uzalendo Half Marathon on July 16 at the Sarova Stanley Hotel in Nairobi /**KNA**

**8.** Nyeri Deputy Governor Warui Kinaniri addressing participants of a training session at the Mweiga empowerment centre in Kieni on July 8 /**KNA**

**9.** Chief Njoroge and MP Mburu Kahangara at the opening of the new Bath Town Chief's office to enable residents of Kijabe ward, Lari subcounty in Kiambu county have easier access to government services, marking a significant milestone in bringing administrative services closer to the people /**KNA**



## TOP 4 STORIES

MONDAY, JULY 14

### Here's what Gen Z want, reveals poll

Political dissatisfaction, the high cost of living and youth joblessness top the list of Gen Z concerns even as the government promises reforms and economic empowerment. This is a shift from June 2024 when the Finance Bill was the bone of contention. Kenyans protested heavy taxation and wastage of public cash on non-priority expenditure coupled with public display of opulence. A new study by GeoPoll shows the youth are still concerned by over-taxation and corruption, with the leadership on the spot for failing to address the issues raised.

TUESDAY, JULY 15

### Ruto's tough job with Gen Z crisis

President William Ruto's administration is navigating nationwide youth-led unrest, with the Gen Z protests emerging as the most potent challenge to his leadership. The convergence of economic grievances and politics has blurred the line between legitimate youth demands and opposition-driven agendas. The situation, worsened by economic stagnation and political fractures fueled by early 2027 campaigns, has left Ruto with no easy solutions.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

### Capitation funds to schools stolen, reveals audit

A special audit has lifted the lid on the rot in the government's schools capitation programme, unearthing a well-orchestrated high-level scheme to swindle taxpayers. The interim special report exposes a deeply compromised system riddled with ghost schools, inflated enrolments, and institutions sharing bank accounts. The report shows the government paid an extra Sh3.7 billion to students captured in the Nemis system but who do not exist in 270 primary schools.

THURSDAY, JULY 17

### ODM kicks off 2027 plan as Raila weighs options

Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga faces numerous hurdles in his re-branding strategy as his ODM party unveils a fresh roadmap for the 2027 elections. Raila's inner circle remains split, with some urging him to back President William Ruto's re-election while others push for a direct challenge, especially in light of mounting public discontent with the UDA administration.



## COMMENTARY **TEARING DOWN THE FABRIC**



Rioters torch Magunas Supermarket during the Saba Saba protest /HANDOUT

# We cry for jobs, but burn what we have to ashes

RAHAB ADHIAMBO  
@TheStarKenya

Writer at the Office  
of the Government  
Spokesperson

**U**nemployment among the youth in Kenya has become the song of the day. Youth cry for stability and opportunities that can earn them a living. The government, in response, has made commendable efforts to bridge this gap through programmes like 'Jitume' that offer digital jobs, support for MSMEs, improved access to loans for entrepreneurs and wooing investors to boost and grow our economy.

While we may not yet rank among the world's top economies in employment rates, we are undoubtedly moving in the right direction. As the old adage goes, Rome wasn't built in a day. It took years, centuries even, to shape and build the grandeur of that magnificent city. Kenya is our Rome.

It has taken relentless effort, dedication, sweat, prayers and countless sleepless nights to build the progress we now enjoy. Yet every time we face a national disagreement, we don't hesitate to burn this Rome to the ground – the Rome that we've worked so hard to build.

With no remorse or sense of loss for our beloved country, we set ablaze what took decades to create in just a single day because of political tension or civil unrest.

It's like a mother carrying a pregnancy to term, only to destroy the baby at birth. At this point, we must ask ourselves, what happened to our spirit of patriotism?

Every step we take forward is quickly erased by violent protests that send us 100 steps back. The economic and social losses we suf-

fer during these demonstrations are heartbreaking. How can we hope to compete with other nations in job creation, infrastructure and innovation if we keep destroying our own foundations? We are dragged back by violent protests.

Take the example of a typical protest. The cost is staggering. Businesses looted, roads are destroyed, vehicles torched and buildings reduced to rubble.

The revenue that could have funded new hospitals, roads and schools or could have been directed towards job creation is diverted to repair the damage.

This is a cycle that drags us down each moment we start to rise. We destroy with our own hands the very opportunities we cry out for.

The protests of June 25, were a clear example. In a single day, we undo years of progress. Businesses were looted, raided, and reduced to ashes.

These were not just structures. They were job opportunities, lifelines and dreams. They provided direct and indirect employment to thousands.

Behind every burnt or vandalised store was a family, an employee, or a hopeful youth who depended on that income to survive. Now their source of livelihoods has been shattered.

Imagine having a job today, only to be unemployed the next morning since your workplace is in ruins. If you've ever been jobless in a city like Nairobi, you understand it's a nightmare no one wishes for.

Rent must be paid, as bills don't wait for healing or rebuilding. Landlords don't want to hear "stories." The

agony is enough to send one into depression.

The aftermath of the June 25 protest left our country in a sorry state. Business owners woke up to ashes where their dreams once stood. Those who've built something from scratch understand that it takes months, years, sometimes decades of sacrifice, reinvestment, sleepless nights, marketing efforts and risk to build something sustainable. Yet, in a matter of hours, it can vanish in smoke.

Many of these businesses are built on borrowed capital that needs to be repaid whether the venture stands or not. Now, many entrepreneurs face a double tragedy: loss of livelihood and the burden of debt.

This is more than a financial loss. It's emotional, psychological and a generational burden.

Nairobi's CBD, once the heart of commerce, is fast becoming highly targeted during unrest. It is slowly losing its shine and is gaining popularity for chaos.

Destruction has become so normalised that many business owners have lost hope and are reluctant to

**AS WE CRY OUT TO THE GOVERNMENT AND CHANT SLOGANS AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT, LET US ALSO REMEMBER THAT THESE ARE THE VERY JOBS WE DESTROY WITH OUR OWN HANDS**

reopen or reinvest. If this trend continues, we risk facing an even greater unemployment crisis, as every time this happens, we inch closer to an economic collapse driven by our own hands.

Yes, political protests exist all over the world. But how they are conducted makes all the difference. Violence often repels opportunities. Violent protests have the capacity to scare away investors who might have created the very jobs we so desperately need and could be the answer to our joblessness.

Who would risk their money in a country where it could go up in flames at any moment? If our own local traders are scared of uncertainty, imagine the fears of foreign investors.

Rebuilding a business after destruction is never easy. Some never bounce back. Imagine going from a thriving enterprise to starting from scratch, or worse, giving up altogether. This is the painful reality for many Kenyans today.

So as we cry out to the government and chant slogans against unemployment, let us also remember that these are the very jobs we destroy with our own hands.

These are the very jobs we torch in the streets with no remorse. These are our sources of revenue. We blame the government, but we also carry the responsibility.

Yes, we need more jobs. But what sense does it make to burn what little we already have? What do we stand to gain by rendering fellow citizens jobless just to make a point?

Some have argued that it is unemployment that fuels Gen Z protests, with claims that idleness drives them to the streets. Indeed, as the saying goes, "an idle mind is the devil's workshop," a sentiment echoed in the Holy Book.

However, it defies reason to throw away the little food you have simply because you are starving. The wiser approach would be to make the most of what you have, while striving and hoping for a better meal tomorrow. Anything less is not only unwise but also self-sabotage.

Business owners in Nairobi and other cities no longer feel safe. It was heartbreaking to watch hard working entrepreneurs clear out their shops ahead of the Saba Saba commemoration just to protect their stock.

Imagine the burden of packing up your entire business every time unrest is expected, only to return the next day and start over. It's exhausting and demoralising. In simple terms, our business people have become refugees in their own country.

Unemployment is a perennial challenge that cannot be solved in a day or even in two years. It takes deliberate, consistent steps. But every time we destroy the small steps we've made, we set ourselves back.

This means unemployment will never be solved if we keep tearing down the economic fabric we're trying to build.

But we can change this. Perhaps it's time to rewrite this destructive nature through empathy, dialogue, exercising the spirit of patriotism and peaceful expression of grievances. Let us not be the generation that begged for jobs but destroyed the ones we had.

Crying for progress while holding matches in our hands is an irony.



COMMENTARY **DEFEND THE FUTURE**

# Kenya's youth must urgently tackle climate change crisis



CALEB MWAMISI

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**K**enya's youth have made themselves heard in recent months, voicing frustration at a political and economic system that they consider indifferent to their future. But whilst public attention has focused on power struggles, taxation debates and leadership failures, a far more devastating crisis continues to unfold quietly and dangerously.

Climate change is reshaping the fabric of life in Kenya: its farms, cities, forests and coastlines, and yet it remains largely absent from the country's youth-driven agenda.

As rivers choke with waste, drought deepens hunger, and floods displace families, a critical question must be asked: will this generation rise up not only to protest the present, but to defend the future?

Across Kenya, the evidence is plain. Drought has turned once-thriving pastoral economies into fragile relief zones.

Urban flooding has become routine in cities like Nairobi and Kisumu, with drainage systems collapsing under the weight of poor planning and indifference.

Water scarcity, food inflation, vector-borne diseases and climate-driven migration are no longer future possibilities, they are the new normal.

The question now is not whether youth can speak out, but whether they can organise around the issues that will shape the next 50 years. Can they transition from episodic protest to sustained environmental leadership?

To be clear, there are already examples of what youth-led climate action can look like. One notable effort is the government's Climate WorX Mtaani initiative, which has employed 21,000 young people to clean up rivers across Nairobi.

In Mathare, Mukuru and other informal settlements, these young Kenyans have unclogged more than 80 kilometres of waterways, repaired hundreds of broken sewer lines, planted thousands of trees and established nurseries now holding nearly half a million seedlings.

They are restoring dignity to riparian zones that had become death traps. They are earning a modest wage and reclaiming their environments.

The government plans to scale this model to all 47 counties, engaging more than 200,000 youth in river restoration, urban greening and climate adaptation.

This is an important beginning but it cannot be the end. Cleaning rivers is not the same as reclaiming the future.

For this effort to matter, it must spark something bigger: a generational climate movement that speaks with clarity, acts with consistency and demands accountability not only for pollution but for every failed promise made in the name of environmental protection.

Climate WorX Mtaani should not only be seen as a job creation programme. It should be the seedbed of environmental consciousness.

It should compel young people to go beyond the shovel and demand

a place at the table where climate policies are written, budgets are drafted and enforcement decisions are made.

There is so much ground to cover. Kenya still lacks a strong youth voice in the National Climate Change Council. County climate adaptation plans remain poorly funded or unknown to most residents.

Green spaces are routinely swallowed by concrete while wetlands are turned into real estate. Carbon credit markets are expanding without clear African youth participation or benefit.

Even where well-meaning tree-planting campaigns exist, they are often short-lived, poorly followed up or undermined by the very systems meant to protect them.

These are issues that require bold civic action, sustained public pressure and long-term organisation.

This is why Kenyan youth must go further. They must challenge county governments to disclose and allocate adequate resources to climate resilience.

They must demand climate liter-

A tree planting exercise in Nairobi /FILE

acy to be mainstreamed in schools and technical training institutes. They must harness their digital influence to name and shame polluters, expose greenwashing and track climate financing.

They must organise not only in moments of anger but with the patience of those planting trees whose shade they may never sit under.

The climate struggle demands this level of maturity.

It also demands ambition. In Uganda, Vanessa Nakate began with a placard and now speaks at global climate summits.

Across Africa, young people are suing governments for failing to act on emissions, organising court challenges against oil exploration and forcing multinational companies to account for ecological destruction.

There is no reason why Kenya's youth cannot do the same and better.

With our constitution recognising the right to a clean and healthy environment, and our courts increasingly responsive to public interest litigation, the tools are there. What is needed is focus and resolve.

If young people do not take ownership of the climate agenda, no one else will.

The burden of a warming planet will not be borne equally. It is the youth who will contend most acutely with the consequences of inaction: rising temperatures that threaten livelihoods, shrinking water reservoirs that endanger entire communities, and food systems on the brink of collapse.

It is their children who will be born into a world where dry riverbeds replace flowing streams, where cities become increasingly uninhabitable due to pollution and extreme weather, and where national economies teeter under the weight of climate-induced shocks. This is not a distant concern but an imminent reality.

And while governments can design policies and global institutions may debate frameworks, only the boldness, ingenuity and resolve of the younger generation can inject the urgency and innovation required to change course.

The question, then, is not whether the youth have a role to play, but whether they will rise with sufficient speed and conviction. The time for half-measures is over. The time to act is now.

Let Kenya's youth understand that the true measure of their activism will not be in how loudly they shouted in 2024 or 2025, but in how sustainably they defended the earth that sustains them.

Let them rise not just in opposition to broken systems but in defence of creation itself.

Because the real war has already begun and climate change is the battlefield they cannot afford to ignore.

**IF YOUTH DO NOT TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE CLIMATE AGENDA, NO ONE ELSE WILL. THE BURDEN OF A WARMING PLANET WILL NOT BE BORNE EQUALLY. YOUTH WILL SUFFER MOST ACUTELY**



**COMMENT MEN IN BLACK**

Raila Odinga holds a briefing as the country marked 35 years of Saba Saba day, where he called for dialogue  
/EMMANUEL WANSON

# Talk is cheap: Why dialogue is no longer worth the shot



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**R**ecent calls for dialogue in response to frequent Gen Z protests, while noble-sounding, have missed the mark, as talks have failed Kenyans before. But this has not stopped politicians, religious leaders and the business community from touting talks as the solution to quell the demos, hoping for the usual quick fix to the crisis. Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga's call for "inter-generational dialogue" has been met with scepticism, as critics describe it as a "repetitive and ineffective" approach that has consistently failed in the past. Nairobi traders, whose businesses have been disrupted by the protests and clergy have also joined the chorus, calling for structured talks to prevent further economic losses and worse, unwarranted deaths.

But with whom are the youth to dialogue? The same government that has issued a shooting order against them? If anything, the shoot-in-the-leg order, as good as a shoot-to-kill directive, is a prime example of instances where this administration has shot itself in the foot. Besides, dialogue is a familiar refrain that has oftentimes led to a dead end. For Gen Z – a movement founded on principles of integrity, accountability and the rule of law – another round of talking without a genuine commitment to action would be a betrayal of its core purpose.

Historical records are littered with examples of reports and recommendations that have been ignored. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission report is a powerful case in point. Established to address historical injustices, its findings warned that unresolved grievances and impunity would lead to future conflict. Yet, its recommendations have been largely shelved, allowing the same issues to fester and resurface. Likewise, the Building Bridges Initiative and the National Dialogue Committee reports have also demonstrated the futility of such processes. These illustrate a recurring pattern; the political class uses dialogue to buy time and deflect

pressure, only to continue with the status quo once public attention subsides. For dialogue to be successful in a political communication context, several basic tenets must be met. Participants must engage with honesty, transparency and a willingness to acknowledge different perspectives. Government and its spinmasters, with their disregard for truth, only help to erode trust, a commodity already in short supply between the political class and the citizenry. Inclusivity and representation must also be upheld. Genuine dialogue requires all stakeholders at the table for meaningful participation and with decision-making power. Gen Z – largely "leaderless" and "tribeless" – and driven by organic, digital mobilisation, make it difficult for the government to identify legitimate representatives (a select few) to speak on behalf of a diverse movement. Yet, their facelessness has proved necessary for their protection, as Gen Z are hunted for daring to raise their voices.

Constructive dialogue should focus on problem-solving, exploring common ground and seeking solutions. The consistent demonisation of protestors and their demands by those in power, coupled with the brutal use of force, signals an absence of respect for the dissenting public, lessening any chance for constructive engagement. Likewise, successful dialogue needs a clearly defined agenda and realistic, achievable goals. While the government appears oblivious of the demands being made, Gen Z have articulated the agenda; for integrity, accountability, prudence in managing resources and regard for the rule of law. The government, if genuine, should acknowledge these demands and respond by effecting meaningful change. But perhaps the most crucial principle is a genuine political will to implement the outcomes of the dialogue and to hold those responsible for past failures accountable. For Gen Z and the citizenry, this lack of follow-through is not just disappointing; it's a betrayal of the democratic process.

**FOR GEN Z – A MOVEMENT FOUNDED ON PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE RULE OF LAW – ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKING WITHOUT A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO ACTION WOULD BE A BETRAYAL OF ITS CORE PURPOSE**

**BREAKING THE BABEL**

# Nacada's stand and the language crisis dividing Kenya's generations

JAPHETH OTIENDE

**T**he recent bold action by the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse in curbing the reckless commercialisation of alcohol through celebrity endorsements deserves the nation's applause. For far too long, a breed of pseudo-celebrities and self-made influencers has thrived by exploiting the hopes, insecurities and gullibility of Kenyan youth. They have paraded vice as a lifestyle and addiction as a fashionable rebellion – all in pursuit of personal enrichment.

Nacada's decision to raise the legal drinking age and ban celebrity-driven alcohol advertisements sends a powerful message: Kenya's youth are not commodities to be traded on the altar of commercial greed. The argument that these measures stifle creativity is hollow when weighed against the damage substance abuse has wrought on young lives, families and communities. Alcohol is not an ordinary consumer product. Its abuse is a national crisis – tearing apart homes, disrupting education, fuelling crime and overburdening our healthcare system.

However, Nacada's resolve highlights a larger, more pressing national concern. Sections of Kenya's political class and segments of civil society have been just as complicit in exploiting the youth. These actors, hiding behind activism, politics, or development work, often manipulate young people for short-term gains – stoking unrest, chasing donor funding, or securing political mileage. They exploit youthful energy and idealism not to uplift or empower but to serve selfish, often destructive, ends. Kenya's youth need genuine mentorship and responsible leadership, not empty slogans or manipulative rhetoric.

Yet, beyond the obvious exploitation of youth lies a more silent, insidious threat: the widening language barrier between generations. The widespread adoption of sheng' among the youth, though often celebrated as a vibrant expression of urban culture, has inadvertently become a modern-day Tower of Babel. This trend is fostering a communication gap so vast that it threatens the transmission of wisdom, values and life lessons from older generations to the young.

The biblical account of the Tower of Babel stands as a cautionary tale of how the confusion of language can fragment communities and stall progress. "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them," Scripture tells us. But once their language was confounded, unity and collective purpose collapsed.

Today, Kenya faces a similar risk. The linguistic divide fostered by the dominance of sheng' among the youth is creating barriers that prevent meaningful intergenerational dialogue and learning. This communication breakdown means young people are growing up without access to the historical context their elders carry – the stories of Kenya's struggles, sacrifices and hard-won triumphs.

The lessons of the past, the wisdom that comes from enduring hardship and making mistakes, risk being lost. Without these, young people are left vulnerable to repeating the errors of the past, falling prey to the same political manipulation, social divisions, and moral pitfalls that previous generations fought hard to overcome. They miss out on the cultural values and practical life guidance that only genuine dialogue with elders can provide. This linguistic isolation is not a trivial matter; it chips away at the cohesion of families, communities and the nation itself.

To heal this rift, the Ministry of Education must embrace its role as the guardian of Kenya's collective memory and cultural heritage. Education should not be confined to academic instruction but should serve as the bridge connecting past and present, guiding young people to learn from history and appreciate the continuum of their national story. Kiswahili, in its pure and standardised form, must be elevated as the bridge that connects generations.

The writer is a teacher at Maru-a-pula School in Botswana

**LINGUISTIC ISOLATION IS NOT A TRIVIAL MATTER: IT CHIPS AWAY AT THE COHESION OF FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND THE NATION ITSELF**



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COMMENTARY **XINJIANG TO NAIROBI****Force for change: Why 2027 should belong to the youth**

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**K**enya has more than 16 million youth aged between 18 and 35. If half of us register and vote, we can alter the course of the country's history to form a people-centred republic in 2027. Only 8 million need to vote to elect a millennial President. Imagine a new Parliament with more youthful leaders who are in touch with reality. This can be replicated in county governments, assemblies and other levels of governance. The political matrix is configured to retain Kenya in a state

of conservative stagnation. Rigathi Gachagua, Kalonzo Musyoka, Fred Matiang'i, William Ruto and Martha Karua are all birds of a feather. They belong to an era that cannot offer new solutions to the old problems they created or helped create. Gachagua and Kalonzo deputised Ruto and Kibaki, respectively and Karua and Matiang'i held powerful ministerial portfolios. If you elect any of them, expect the same lies repackaged under different party symbols. Only former Chief Justice David Maraga has not tasted power

outside the Judiciary. It is time for fresh ideas.

Today, the youth are protesting and rightfully so, but without a concrete plan. The hope is that once Ruto is removed from power, all will fall into place. That is planning to fail. I propose the youth form a political party, completely unaffiliated with the existing political organisations. Without a political party, there is no plan. Without a plan, there is no takeover. Without a complete takeover, the fruits of any revolution will be stolen again by the same failed leaders who destroyed our country.

The first order of business is to reform the republic. We must hold a referendum to constitutionally establish a parliamentary system. This will enable us to hire and fire a Prime Minister and Cabinet whenever the

government fails. Through the same referendum, we must introduce mid-term elections to give shorter contracts to MPs and MCAs. This will end political impunity as we have seen in the current Parliament.

The third reform is to reduce MPs' salaries and benefits and make it illegal for MPs to vote on their own salaries. The fourth reform is to abolish commissions, bloated government agencies and institutions that exist to reward cronies. These cuts will make our budget leaner and save billions. In addition, we must prioritise police reforms through professionalising training and accountability systems. We must review legal provisions that police use to justify brutality. Finally, we must review the role of the military in internal security to avoid any future abuse of military forces.

**New diplomacy: Two-way Silk route of culture, connection and curiosity**

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**A**s global dynamics shift in 2025, the growing relationship between Kenya and China is increasingly shaped not only by trade and diplomacy but by tourism and cultural exchange. While bilateral ties have long been underscored by infrastructure projects and investment agreements, the quiet but steady flow of tourists between the two countries is forging deeper, people-centred connections. Tourism is becoming a powerful tool of engagement – fostering mutual understanding, reshaping perceptions and enriching local economies.

In recent years, Kenya has risen to become one of Africa's top destinations for Chinese travellers. Thanks to simplified visa processes and enhanced air connectivity, Chinese tourist arrivals have increased steadily. In 2024, Kenya recorded more than 2.39 million international arrivals, up from 2.09 million in 2023. Of these, nearly 80,000 were Chinese visitors – an increase driven by targeted marketing in major cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing. This uptick isn't just about numbers. It reflects a shift in the mindset of Chinese travellers.

No longer content with traditional sightseeing, more Chinese tourists now seek immersive, personalised experiences. Kenya offers exactly that – from the breathtaking spectacle of the Great Migration in the Maasai Mara to the cultural vibrancy of coastal towns such as Lamu and the white-sand beaches of Diani. Chinese tourists are increasingly venturing beyond typical routes, exploring hidden gems and interacting with local communities, signalling a move towards a more meaningful and sustainable kind of tourism.

This growing people-to-people exchange complements the broader strategic partnership between Nairobi and Beijing. China remains Kenya's leading trade partner and a key source of infrastructure funding. But tourism adds another dimension:



a human connection that brings ordinary people into the heart of diplomacy. Through daily interactions with tour operators, artisans, hoteliers and guides, Chinese visitors are creating real connections, strengthening cultural ties in ways that policy alone cannot achieve.

Meanwhile, China's own tourism landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation – especially in places such as Xinjiang. Once primarily viewed through geopolitical or security lenses, Xinjiang is now one of China's fastest-growing tourist regions. In 2025, it is expected to welcome more than 200 million visitors, drawn by its temperate summer climate, rich ethnic heritage, and stunning natural beauty. To support this boom, China has heavily invested in travel infrastructure. Specialised 'tourism trains' now link cities such as Turpan, Kashgar and Altay, offering better access to remote regions. Major upgrades have been made to facilities, including gas stations, parking lots and public restrooms – removing barriers that once discouraged travel. Urumqi, the regional capital, has been ranked among the top summer destinations in the country, thanks to popular attractions such as the Tianshan

Chinese tourists are welcomed at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi on February 11, 2023

/XINHUA/HAN XU

Grand Canyon and the Baiyun International Ski Resort. This expansion is not by chance. The Chinese government has prioritised tourism as a pillar of regional development. Improved safety, economic incentives, and community-based tourism have combined to stimulate local economies. Thousands of jobs have been created and many families in rural areas have escaped poverty through tourism-linked enterprises. Xinjiang today is not only welcoming more tourists – it is rewriting its own story, using tourism as a bridge to national unity and international engagement.

The parallels with Kenya are clear. Both regions are leveraging tourism not merely as an economic driver but also as a strategic tool for development and diplomacy. Kenya is positioning itself as a welcoming destination for a new generation of Chinese travellers, while Xinjiang is showcasing its culture, diversity and natural charm to the world. In both cases, tourism is being used to soften narratives, open dialogue and highlight the richness of human experience. In the modern world, tourism is more than leisure – it is a form of soft diplomacy. It builds trust, shapes perceptions and creates space for cultural understand-

ing. Unlike traditional diplomacy, which can be slow and formal, tourism moves through personal encounters. It allows people to see each other not as political headlines but as fellow travellers, curious and open to learning.

As Kenya seeks to deepen its ties with China, investing in tourism is both a practical and symbolic step. Expanding flight routes, enhancing multilingual services and developing niche travel products tailored to Chinese tastes – such as culinary tours, wildlife photography safaris, and heritage experiences – can all help Kenya position itself as a premier destination for Chinese holiday-makers. Conversely, more Kenyans should be encouraged to explore the vast and diverse regions of China – from its ancient cities to emerging destinations such as Xinjiang. Mutual tourism generates economic benefits and nurtures understanding across cultures, helping bridge the distance between two countries that continue to find common ground.

As tourism breathes new life into this evolving partnership, it offers a powerful reminder that the real heart of diplomacy lies in the people – meeting, learning and discovering the world together.



# THE STAR

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 18-20, 2025

## State must be transparent on fuel levy loan deal

**T**he National Treasury has come out to defend the use of part of the Road Maintenance Levy to secure a Sh175 billion credit from local banks.

He claims that the fund had become a corruption bubble for road constructors who are now hitting back after the government put the funds into better use.

What is interesting is that at no time has the government come out to tell Kenyans that it had use the fund as a collateral for loans.

This only emerged after the price of fuel went up by a high of Sh9 on Tuesday after which Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro made the revelation that the fund had been use as security.

The government is free to borrow to fund its recurrent and development budgets but when this is done secretly ten it raises concerns.

The National Treasury is supposed to publish all foreign and local loans annually to give Kenyans a picture of the country's indebtedness.

However what happens is that the government only gives the cumulative figure of the local and foreign debts without offering many details

Opaqueness in borrowing brings to mind the yet to be answered question of how Eurobond 1 was used.

Heavily taxed Kenyans end up repaying the loans so the details must be made public.

## HISTORICAL QUOTE

*"I think the currency of leadership is transparency. You've got to be truthful."*

**Howard Schultz**

The American businessman was born on July 19, 1953

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## COLUMN REBUILDING ELECTORAL LEGITIMACY

# Restoring trust: IEBC's democratic imperative

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Former IEBC commissioners Justus Nyang'aya, Francis Wandari, vice chair Juliana Cherera and Irene Masit address journalists at the Serena hotel on August 16, 2022  
/ENOS TECHE

**A**fter nearly three years of institutional paralysis, Kenya now has a fully reconstituted Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission. The swearing-in of new commissioners brings a measure of optimism in a country where electoral governance has long been characterised by contested legitimacy and recurring crisis. Yet, this symbolic reset raises fundamental questions: Why did it take so long to rebuild the commission? What structural and normative hurdles lie ahead? And can this commission regain public trust and midwife a credible 2027 general election?

The collapse of the previous IEBC, following the disputed 2022 presidential election, exposed a legitimacy crisis. Four commissioners disowned the final results, publicly challenging the integrity of the tallying process. What followed was a prolonged reconstitution process entangled in legal ambiguity, political wrangles over the Selection Panel, and slow implementation of key reforms. Gen Z-led protests amplified public discontent with institutional inertia and the hollow nature of piecemeal reforms.

The three-year vacuum was more than a lull; it was a period of institutional erosion. Key functions such as voter registration, civic education, boundary review and stakeholder engagement were either suspended or drastically scaled down. This not only weakened the commission operationally but also eroded its credibility in the public eye.

The new commissioners inherit a daunting task: steering Kenya's electoral process back onto a credible, inclusive and transparent path amid public skepticism and administrative fatigue. Years of mismanaged elections, political interference and violence have deeply damaged public confidence. To restore trust, the IEBC must prioritise transparency,

inclusivity and responsiveness. Civil society actors like Development Through Media, which promote accountability and open governance, have long called for this shift from opacity to openness. The commission must abandon insular habits, embrace dialogue and demonstrate consistency in its actions.

After years of inactivity, the IEBC faces significant operational gaps. With less than two years to the next general election, the commission must overhaul its systems – revamping voter registration, retraining personnel, modernising procurement and upgrading digital infrastructure. DTM and other civic actors continue to advocate for sustained institutional strengthening as the backbone of electoral credibility.

The constitutional requirement to review electoral boundaries every 8–12 years has been neglected and the timing of this exercise, so close to the 2027 elections, poses serious risks. Boundaries affect representation, resources and ethnic power balances, making them highly contentious. Without broad consultation and transparency, this process could fuel allegations of gerrymandering or trigger unrest. DTM calls for a participatory, fair and inclusive approach to delimitation to ensure stability and equity.

Kenya's elections now unfold in a volatile digital space rife with fake news, algorithmic bias and online hate speech. The commission must develop systems to counter disinformation, bolster cybersecurity and ensure factual public communication. As a media-focused civic organisation, DTM has consistently promoted responsible digital engagement and sees this domain as a critical area for collaboration with the commission.

The internal implosion of the previous commission – driven by dissent and suspected political interference, exposed the dangers of

politicised electoral bodies. The new commissioners must preserve unity and professionalism, resisting external influence and projecting impartiality. IEBC's institutional independence is not only a legal requirement but a democratic necessity.

Violence has marred past electoral cycles in Kenya. To break this pattern, the IEBC must proactively work with security agencies, peace actors and civil society to establish early warning systems and enforce safety measures. IEBC should adopt a zero-tolerance policy on electoral violence as a cornerstone of democratic resilience. The IEBC cannot single-handedly rebuild electoral legitimacy – it must be a collaborative, national effort. The commission must cultivate a culture of service, decentralise accountability and enhance professionalism throughout its structures. Parliament must ensure enabling legislation, adequate funding and independent oversight without undermining the commission's autonomy. The Executive must refrain from interference, uphold institutional independence and commit to democratic norms. Political actors must resist the temptation to delegitimise the commission for partisan gain.

Civil society, academia, faith-based institutions and media actors must remain vigilant and constructively engaged. In this spirit, DTM reaffirms its commitment to partnering with the commission to advance civic education, promote informed participation and support democratic institutions at all levels.

IEBC's reconstitution is more than an administrative reset – it is a moment of truth. It offers an opportunity to reclaim the promise of electoral justice or risk recycling the betrayals of the past. The new team must lead with integrity, courage and competence. While the task ahead is enormous, the moment is also historic.



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COMMENTARY **FRIEND IN MOSCOW**

# Russia: Africa's partner in struggle against neocolonialism, dominance

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a Training and  
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**A**cross the African continent, a silent storm is gathering strength. From the Sahel to the southernmost coasts, vibrant and youthful Africans are increasingly rising to reclaim their sovereignty and dignity in a world where the ominous clouds of neocolonialism and imperialism overshadow the bright and azure skies. As Pan-Africanist Dr Kwame Nkrumah once said, "A state in the grip of neocolonialism is not a master of its destiny. It is the factor which makes neocolonialism such a serious threat to world peace."

The singular mission of the new generation, spurred by the ideals of Africa Rising, is to break the chains of neocolonialism and create a new order that empowers Africa, the land of proud warriors who remained shackled by the ravages of slavery, colonialism, racism, exploitation and imperialism by the architects and masters of extraction. In Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, leaders such as Ibrahim Traoré are not only reclaim-

ing national pride but also becoming symbols of a broader pan-African movement aimed at completing the decolonisation efforts started by our forefathers and other patriots. These nations have challenged the global status quo and many across Africa are observing their actions with admiration. For the youth, these leaders are not rebels, but role models.

At the heart of this movement lies an understanding that true freedom is not merely the lowering of colonial flags – it is the ending of dependency, the reclaiming of our natural wealth and the right to be co-authors in the global decision-making process. Unsurprisingly, this terrifies the old powers of the West. While Russia has historically supported the struggle for self-determination across the continent, it is portrayed as hell-bent on 'destroying capitalism and imposing communism' on Africa and the world. This is a fallacious argument.

Fortunately, the emerging African leadership and the citizenry see it for what it is: a futile attempt to contin-

ue with its hegemonic exploitation aimed at stunting Africa's potential. The challenges of a new multipolar world will ultimately dismantle the unipolar vision and the global policing mentality led by the United States.

Africans are told that Russia is a global predator. That Moscow is the aggressor in Ukraine. That it is Russia's actions – not centuries of Western exploitation – that are behind Africa's economic hardships. These claims are not just cynical but insulting. What we are witnessing is not an honest critique of foreign

**UNLIKE WESTERN COLONIAL POWERS, RUSSIA DID NOT ENSLAVE OR SEGREGATE THE PEOPLES IT INTEGRATED. THERE WAS NO SLAVE TRADE. NO RACIAL HIERARCHY CODIFIED INTO LAW.**

Captain Ibrahim Traoré attends the inauguration ceremony in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on October 21, 2022  
**/BURKINA FASO PRESIDENCY/ DISTRIBUTION VIA XINHUA**

policy – it is a calculated attempt to delegitimise any power that dares to defy the West's unipolar worldview. The demonisation of Russia has taken many forms: from historical revisionism to outright myth-making. Western analysts now label Russia a 'colonial empire', to equate its legacy of standing with the oppressed with that of Britain, France, or Belgium. This is historical gaslighting at its finest.

Yes, the Russian Empire expanded in the 18th and 19th Centuries. But unlike the Western colonial powers, it did not enslave or racially segregate the peoples it integrated. There was no trans-Atlantic slave trade. No plantations feeding distant metropolises. No racial hierarchy codified into law.

Russian imperialism relied on co-optation and integration, absorbing local elites into the aristocracy while respecting cultural and religious diversity. Although wars occurred, they did not aim to erase indigenous identities. No, Russia has not been an angel. But if territorial expansion alone defines colonialism, then the US would be the largest colonial empire in modern history. From sea to sea, it expanded through war, annexation and displacement. Poland, too, gained territory after World War II. Ukraine inherited vast lands after the Soviet collapse.

During the Soviet era, the relationship between Moscow and the republics was one of disproportionate support. The centre often subsidised and supported the periphery, allowing minority cultures to flourish, local languages to be preserved and regional industries to be developed. This is why the attempt to equate Russian history with that of Western colonialism falls on its face.

It is Russia, not the West, that has consistently raised the issue of neocolonialism at global fora. It is Russia that has spoken openly about the need to reform international institutions. And it is Russia that is forging respectful partnerships with African states, without dictating terms or imposing ideological pre-conditions.

So what is neocolonialism today? It is a more sophisticated, more insidious form of control that uses debt, media, military bases and 'development aid' as tools to dominate. Luckily, the world is awakening and seeing through the thick fog of hypocrisy. Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia are learning to push back – to call out hypocrisy, to demand fairness.

And in this global realignment, Russia has emerged as an ally that treats others with respect, not condescension. In a multipolar world, Africa will unite with true friends such as the Brics states – Russia, Brazil, India, China and others. Only by speaking the truth clearly and collectively can we break free from neocolonialism and imperialism. And that time is now – not tomorrow!



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## CONNECTION



Cabinet Secretary for Energy and Petroleum, Opiyo Wandayi flags-off last mile electrification materials for Rerrec projects at Lamaiywet ECD, aimed at connecting Lower Bukwo, Kapkures and Cheplasgei villages in Turbo constituency, Uasin Gishu county /KNA

## LETTERS OF THE WEEK

### Saba Saba, Gen Z protests glaring crisis of moral fabric

The burglary, looting and vandalism of public and private property witnessed across Kenya during protests on June 25 and Saba Saba Day was unprecedented in scale and wantonness. Days that were ideally meant to be sombre and reflective, in honour of Kenyans who lost their lives in the struggle and fight for Multi-Party Democracy and good governance, ended up as days of anarchy.

The most distressing scene on Saba Saba Day was that of a schoolgirl pushing a trolley across a road, with goods looted from a supermarket in Kabati town Murang'a county. A number of adult citizens also continued to enter and leave the same supermarket, with stolen goods, through a narrow opening at the supermarket's main entrance. The daylight looting under the glare of media cameras is a textbook case of societal moral collapse. That neither the government, protesters nor religious institutions

look remorseful, dismayed and concerned about the apparent decay and collapse of our moral compass and fabric, spells a tragedy to both our present and future as a nation.

As a constitutional democracy, Kenyans have the power to vote out any incompetent government. On the other hand, societal moral decay and degeneracy spells trouble. To add salt to injury, the government, through the Ministry of Interior has made simplistic reaction, terming the anarchy, burglary, looting and vandalism, as, "Gen Z Madness". It has vowed to use the criminal justice system to bring back national order. Indeed, the shooting, maiming and killing of tens of protesters is testament to the government's monopoly of violence, as declared by the DCI boss. The continuing hired goons blame game between the government, the opposition and a majority of Kenyans is only making a bad situation worse, with no end or solution, in sight.

Ethnic profiling of these protests as alluded by the government is ignorant, reckless and dangerous.

The executive, in an apparent complicity with the legislature, is drumming up support for the controversial Assembly and Demonstration Bill and Public Order Amendment Bill, in a clampdown, on the right to assemble, picket and demonstrate as enshrined in the constitution.

We have also heard President William Ruto tie his fate to that of 57 million Kenyans saying, "If there is no country for William Ruto, there is no country for you".

Kenya is at crossroads. The aftermath of June 25 and Saba Saba Day protests and the lingering air of "unfinished business" within the youth or Gen Z Uprising, is a composite crisis that we must not waste, as a country and as a people, if we mean to have and keep this country, for ourselves and for future generations.

**Hezbon Mureithi, Development journalist at Afrika Tuungane**

### Kenya risks sinking further down human rights index

In 2024, the CIVICUS Monitor downgraded Kenya's civic space standing to "repressed" in its annual rating. The rating, detailed in the report, 'People Power Under Attack 2024', followed the government's brutal crackdown on nationwide Gen Z protests. The government's violent response led to the deaths of 60 unarmed protesters, over 1,200 arrests of demonstrators and over 130 persons missing since the onset of the protests. Those targeted for abductions by suspected security agents were primarily online mobilisers, government critics and human rights defenders.

Kenya risks sinking even further on the human rights/civic space index associated with failed states. This year's state of repression

climaxed in June, when the police turned the first-year anniversary comprising of peaceful vigils and commemoration marches for the victims of June 2024 into a despicable display of state-sanctioned police brutality.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Police Reform Working Group documented 19 fatalities, 531 injuries, 15 enforced disappearances, 179 arrests and five cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Many of the fatalities and injuries were inflicted by gunshots, sharp and blunt objects attributed to the police and armed goons.

At the UN Human Rights Council's fourth Universal Periodic Review of the state of human rights

in May, a list of recommendations to make Kenya a more human rights-respecting state were diplomatically provided by state parties. They called for respect for the right to life, accountability for police misconduct, respect for the freedom of assembly, association and information including the right of civil society, human rights defenders and media to operate unhindered to hold the government to account without reprisals. The state must not squander the hopes of Kenyans for a better country. To build a prosperous nation, we must tap the potential of our hardworking youth and divest from greed, bravado and raw power.

**Kamau Ngugi dkngugi Defenders Coalition**

## WHAT THEY SAID ...



### Accountability

*Government needs to know that the young people of today are not of the 1990s. Ruto's government needs a 360 degrees paradigm shift*

**ERIC OKEYO**

Ex-chair Private Security Regulatory Authority



*We are going to move very fast and ask the accounting officer [PS Education] to respond*

**TINDI MWALE**  
Butere MP

## COMMENT

**WALLACE M NDERU**

@TheStarkenya

### Laws should not be used to harass rights defenders

Human rights defenders play a significant role in championing rights and freedoms within their communities. Through monitoring, documentation and reporting, HRDs utilise these tools to seek justice for victims or their families, redress for violations and abuses and call for accountability. Despite the significant work HRDs do, there is a growing concern on the abuse of existing laws and institutions, by the state, aimed at harassing and intimidating them, as seen following the protests witnessed in the country in 2024 and 2025.

The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, 2018 has been the go-to legislation to charge HRDs especially in the context of freedom of expression, particularly in online spaces. It can be recalled that Rose Njeri was arrested and after a prolonged detention, charged under Section 16 of the Cybercrimes law on abuse of a computer system, only for the charge to be dismissed by the court.

The Penal Code Cap 63 and the Public Order Act are abused in the context of peaceful assembly and demonstrations. HRDs have been arbitrarily arrested. Of great concern has been the abuse of the prevention of terrorism laws in the country. They also face terrorism related charges, with a majority of them being arraigned at the Kahawa Law Courts — a court primarily set up to deal with terrorism related offences. The Prevention of Terrorism Act Cap 59 B, through the state, is being utilised to threaten critical voices and in particular HRDs.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has come under scrutiny for preferring and rubber stamping trumped-up charges and far-fetched offences. The Judiciary, on its part, is viewed as aiding the persecution of HRDs, through issuing of hefty bails and bonds and in some cases, granting detention of defenders for prolonged periods of time, guised as time for conducting investigations. The role of the National Police Service cannot be ignored, through arbitrary arrests, detentions, threats and intimidation.

We need to engrain a culture that speaks against the utilisation of such laws and institutions to harass HRDs as they work towards championing rights and freedoms. Institutions should resist being used and abused to advance injustices within our communities, and especially through the harassment of HRDs.

**Research and Advocacy Advisor, Defenders Coalition**