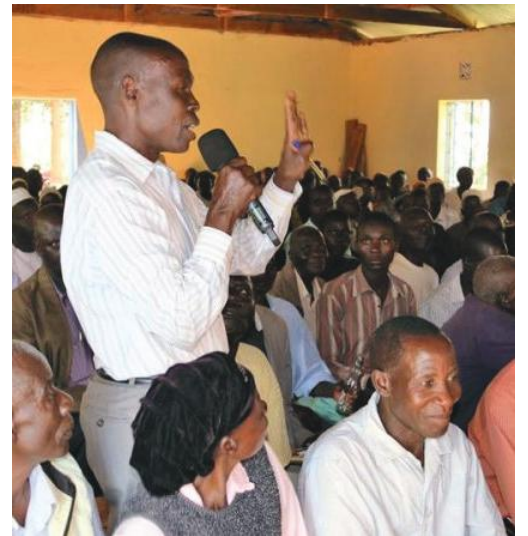


High Court Refers Gachagua's Ouster Case To Chief Justice



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Chief Justice Martha Koome



Political Opinion: Public Participation, What Is Sufficient? **P.11**



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A promotional image for Ketepa Pride tea. It features four boxes of tea: Cinnamon (red), Cardamom (orange), Masala Tea (light brown), and Ginger Tea (light green). Each box is labeled 'KETEPA PRIDE SPICED BLACK TEA' and '25 TEA BAGS'. The boxes are arranged on a colorful background with tea bags and spices scattered around. The text 'CHAI NI KETEPA' is written in large green letters at the bottom right.

Tharaka Nithi Residents Get Free Eye-Treatment As The World Marks World Sight Day

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- “We decided to mark the day here in Tharaka so that people from allover this region can benefit with free services and also inform you of specialists eye medical services which we offer in our county including surgeries,” said Mr Riungu.
- Ms Micheni stated that research has clearly shown that reducing screen time and spending time outside protects children from developing short-sightedness also known as myopia.

As the World marked the World Sight Day, hundreds of residents of Tharaka Nithi County received free specialists eye treatment at Marimanti Level Four Hospital in Tharaka constituency.

The devolved unit's Health Department in collaboration with Fred Hollows Foundation, Vision Spring Foundation and Village Hopecore also issued eyeglasses and conducted surgery.

This year's celebrations dubbed, 'Children, love your eyes' focused on demystifying myths regarding vision and encouraged a move towards a world where all children are free from social stigma associated with wearing spectacles or other corrective interventions for their eyes and vision.

Speaking during the exercise, Medical Health Chief Officer Mr Karani Riungu and his Public Health counterpart, Ms Rose Micheni said just like adults, children should get good eye medical care and where required wear spectacles.

They said in many cases, children suffer from eye complications without medical attention because people assume that eye problems are associated with old-age.

“We decided to mark the day here in Tharaka so that people from allover this region can benefit with free services and also inform you of specialists eye medical services which we offer in our county including surgeries,” said Mr Riungu.

Ms Micheni stated that research has clearly shown that reducing screen time and spending time outside protects children from developing short-sightedness also known as myopia.

She asked parents, caregivers and educators to guide children in taking care of their eyes by reducing scree-time.

Mr Riungu insisted on Governor Muthomi Njuki's zeal in improving health services by not only building hospitals and employing specialists but also acquiring modern medical equipment to handle critical illnesses.

He revealed that the county government in collaboration with partners is going on with equipping eye-unit at Marimanti Level Four Hospital and has acquired a state-of-the-art surgery machine which



From left: Medical Health Chief Officer Mr Karani Riungu and his Public Health counterpart, Ms Rose Micheni and Tharaka South Sub-county Administrator Fred Kiriri at Marimanti Level Four Hospital during World Sight Day on Friday. Photo/Mwenda Njeru.

will soon be installed.

According to a recent research, cases of blindness caused by cataracts among people aged 50 years and above in Tharaka Nithi County are on the rise with over 70 patients undergoing surgery every month.

Cataracts is the clouding of the eye's natural lens, which lies behind the iris and the pupil.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), out of one million people in developing countries like Kenya, 3000 suffer from eye cataracts and 2000 people out of one million in developed countries.

The medical officers led by Dr Grace Nduyo appealed to those with eye problems to seek treatment and not to fear operation noting that almost all who have undergone surgery for cataracts have improved sight.

Community Health Promoters and public health officers are helping identify those with eye problems in the villages and advise them to go for screening.



An eye specialist attending a patient at Marimanti Level Four Hospital during World Sight Day on Friday. Photo/Mwenda Njeru

There are also some children born with congenital cataracts, which is a condition where the lens of the eye is cloudy instead of clear at birth, making it hard to see.

Other causes of blindness include glaucoma, age-related degeneration, diabetes and trachoma.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Photo || Kariuki Muriithi

Gathunguru Girls Secondary School in Mukurwe-ini Constituency on Friday received rare visitors who held a motivation talk with Form Four students who are set to sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in a few days time. The visitors were led by the institution's Board of Management chairman Mr M M Kibicho. The team also handed over Success Cards to the candidates. Kibicho (3rd left) was accompanied by among others; left to right: His Grace Archbishop Frederick Wangombe, Mrs. Alice Murigi -BoM, Board Member, Pastor David Mwangi, Board Member, Rose Njogu, Principal Bishop Kariuki, School Chaplain.



The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has kicked off a vital training program for enumerators and supervisors in Kericho County, focusing on identifying vulnerable households through the Enhanced Single Registry (ESR) System. The initiative aims to gather crucial data that will support transformative social protection services for those in need. The National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) emphasises that the ESR will enhance food security, health access, education, and social justice while addressing the exclusion of vulnerable groups.



A mid-term review conducted in 13 counties, including West Pokot, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, and Kajiado, has revealed that over 11,000 classrooms for Junior Secondary Schools will be completed much earlier than expected. The Ministry of Education officials have stated that most schools identified in phase one of the project have made remarkable progress based on the plan and completion date. Basic Education Principal Secretary, Dr. Belio Kipsang, said a total of 16,000 classrooms will be constructed across the country, where 11,000 will be put up by the Ministry of Education while five thousand classrooms will be constructed through the National Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF).



Chief Justice Martha Koome presided over the swearing in of 31 Assistant Deputy Registrars at the Supreme Court in Nairobi. The CJ said the officers will work closely with Deputy Registrars in the seamless discharge of judicial and administrative duties. "In your judicial functions, you will undertake critical roles such as the taxation of Bill of Costs, facilitating the enforcement of court decisions, certifying and executing orders, and providing pre-trial directions in serious cases, among many other essential tasks. Your responsibilities will also encompass overseeing consent judgments, handling admiralty functions, resolving disputes through mediation, and verifying appeal records," the CJ said. She added: "On the administrative side, your roles will extend to implementing court operational plans, ensuring the proper management of court registries, monitoring performance of the courts, and supporting other administrative processes. In effect, you are the linchpin between judicial and administrative functions, ensuring that the wheels of justice turn smoothly and efficiently."



President William Ruto's economic advisor Moses Kuria has clarified his remarks about virtual electronic tax registers (ETRs) made during the recent KRA Summit. Initially, media reports suggested that his comments were directed solely at MPESA, Kenya's leading mobile money platform. Kuria, however, has refuted these claims, emphasizing that his remarks were aimed at all Payment Service Providers, including telcos and banks. "This is erroneous as I meant all Payment Service Providers including Telcos and Banks. It's an industry issue. Just like we will automatically block from activating on any network any mobile phone imported into the country with no record of having paid applicable taxes. Be guided accordingly," he said. The clarification comes amid the government's efforts to tighten controls on tax evasion. Kuria also pointed out that the same principle applies to mobile phones, with plans to block any device entering the country that has not paid applicable taxes from connecting to networks. Integrating Virtual ETRs across the board is meant to create a level playing field, ensuring that both small and large players in the financial ecosystem are held to the same tax standards. Kuria's comments came as part of the government's ongoing discussions to broaden the tax base, targeting revenue streams that have not been fully tapped into. With tax reforms in the spotlight, the focus is now on creating a more inclusive, transparent, and effective tax collection framework across sectors.



PROJECT CATALOG

Malindi Phase 7	MALINDI	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.139,000	Kithimani Springs	MACHAKOS	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.50M
Great Oasis Gardens	NANYUKI	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.399,000	Ocean View Ridge	VIPINGO	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.995M
Wema Gardens	NARO MORU	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.439,000	Vuyanzi Gardens	KITALE	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.995M
Love Gardens	KAJIADO	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.950,000	Achievers Paradise Phase 2	NGONG	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.995M
Ushindi Gardens	NAKURU	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.095M	Vipingo Prime	VIPINGO	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.2.795M
Shalom Gardens	MACHAKOS	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.1.450M	Achievers Business Park	NGONG	FROM AS LOW AS Kes.3.95M
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President Ruto Makes Urgent Cash Call For Haiti Mission

By: MKT Reporter
@themkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- On Friday, President Ruto said the remaining 600 are undergoing training and would join the mission next month.
- A handful of other countries have together pledged at least 1,900 more officers.
- Although the mission was approved by the UN security council, it is not a UN operation and relies on voluntary financial contributions.
- Only \$85m (£65m) of the mission's estimated \$600m required annually for its operation has been received so far through a trust fund set up by the UN, according to Human Rights Watch.

Kenya has appealed for urgent financial support from the international community to sustain a police deployment in Haiti, which has been extended by a year.

The multinational security mission, which began in June, is helping fight gangs controlling much of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and nearby areas.

More than 3,600 people have been killed in the country since January, including over 100 children, while more than 500,000 Haitians have been forced from their homes, the UN said.

"We are asking the international community to match their commitment and their pledges with the necessary action for us to be able to complete the task ahead of us," Kenya's President William Ruto said on Friday.

He was speaking after a meeting in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, with Haiti's Prime Minister Garry Conille.

Violence in Haiti is still rife and a UN human rights expert has warned that gangs are targeting new areas, causing further displacement.

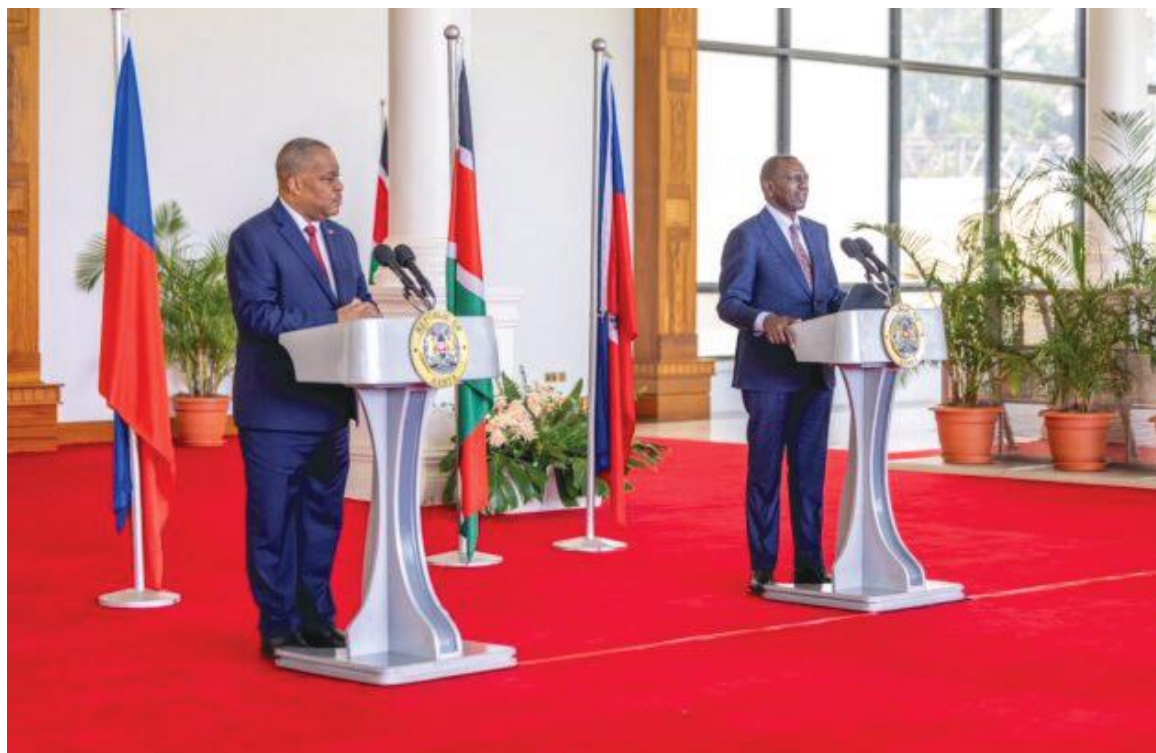
Kenya deployed 400 of its pledged 1,000 police officers in June and July this year.

On Friday, President Ruto said the remaining 600 are undergoing training and would join the mission next month.

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Haiti's Prime Minister Garry Conille and Kenya's President William Ruto

the UN, according to Human Rights Watch.

It is not clear how much money has been spent so far but Ruto says more financial support is needed to "sustain" the mission until October next year.

"When resources are made available, there will be demonstrable progress of the mission," President Ruto.

Ruto said that the available funds would run out by March next year.

"We have a window of success that is evident from the operations that have been carried out already," the president added.

He said the deployment was already showing positive results – "restoring hope and a glimpse of stability".

Conille asked international partners to send the officers they had pledged to ensure the "contingent from Kenya has the resources they need".

The Haitian prime minister denied reports that the Kenyan police officers were staying in camps like tourists while the gangs were tightening their grip on large swathes of Port-au-Prince, since the mission began.

"I have personally been on patrol with the Kenyan troops who have engaged in delicate operations in the city centre. They are involved in patrolling universities, hospitals and administrative areas," Conille said.

"They are also up north to help address the threat with the gangs."

Last month, the UN Security Council

unanimously adopted a resolution to extend the mandate of the mission for another year and rejected calls from Haiti on transforming it into a UN peacekeeping mission.

A UN human rights expert who has just been to the Caribbean nation said the mission was inadequately equipped and needed helicopters, as well as night vision goggles and drones.

"The Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS), authorised by the UN Security Council in October 2023, has so far deployed less than a quarter of its planned contingent," William O'Neil said last month.

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Journalist Key In Spreading Sensitization Message To Combat AMR

By: KNA

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), alongside partners, has called on journalists to help educate communities about the dangers of misusing over-the-counter antibiotics.

The initiative is vital in addressing the rising threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), which, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), was responsible for 1.27 million deaths globally in 2019.

During the training session for journalists in Uasin Gishu County, participants learnt strategies for promoting responsible antimicrobial use and developing actionable interventions to mitigate risks associated with AMR.

Oscar Okumu, the Head of Region for KRCS in North Rift, underscored the importance of media involvement in the AMR conversation.

“Partnership is key to sensitising communities. The media can high-



Journalists with resource persons during the training



Journalists being taken through the training

light innovative ideas to raise awareness and effectively combat AMR,” he noted.

Dr. Paul Olale, Project Officer for AMR, highlighted that misuse of antibiotics threatens the effectiveness of common treatments, warning that without action, we may face an era where routine infections become untreatable.

He described AMR as a silent pandemic and one of the greatest threats

to public health worldwide.

Dr. Olale urged journalists to creatively package information, including using vernacular languages, to ensure communities understand how to curb AMR effectively.

He stressed the importance of seeking prescriptions from certified healthcare providers to prevent medication misuse.

The need for a multisectoral approach was also underscored, as

AMR affects human, animal, and environmental health. Strengthening healthcare systems with effective diagnostic measures is essential for evidence-based treatment.

As the voice of the community, journalists are key to raising awareness about AMR, which begins at the local level. Long hospital stays and increased healthcare costs are just a few consequences of AMR, highlighting the urgency of the issue.

Mr. Silah Kosgei, Director of the Governor’s Press, echoed these sentiments, emphasising the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders, including farmers and healthcare providers.

Together, sustained cooperation is essential for effective antimicrobial stewardship, protecting both current and future generations from the impacts of AMR.

Nakuru County Unveils A Comprehensive Public Transport Code Of Conduct

By: MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Nakuru County has introduced a comprehensive public transport Code of Conduct to ensure the city’s public transport system is safe, efficient, and free from public harassment.

The code, developed through consultations with research institutions and stakeholders, aims to set behavioural standards for public service vehicle Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (Saccos), transport crew, and partners to achieve a socially safe public transport system.

The code will apply to all vehicle operators in the public transport industry, including matatu operators, tuk-tuks, bodaboda riders, and all forms of public transport.

“This code is comprehensive as its development involved extensive pub-

lic participation and consultations with various stakeholders, including the County government, National Police Service, and the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA),” County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Transport and Infrastructure Engineer Michael Kamau explained.

The code outlines harassment in various forms, including unwelcome touching, sexually explicit physical contact, staring or leering, suggestive comments or jokes, sexually explicit pictures or posters, unnecessarily familiarity, and insults or taunts based on gender.

It places certain obligations on players in the public transport sector, including NTSA, matatu owners, matatu Sacco officials, crew (drivers and conductors), and passengers.

Engineer Kamau elaborated that the Code was grounded in key principles such as promoting sustainable mobility, addressing climate change



Nakuru main stage

through environmental conservation, ensuring respect and non-discrimination for the users of public transport, guaranteeing professionalism

to provide a harassment-free travel experience, and committing to the well-being of vulnerable groups in the community.

Sensitisation meetings will be organised to promote awareness and understanding of the code.

CJ Koome Launches A New Court At Dagoretti

By: Contributor
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- In 2023 alone, 382,388 cases were filed in magistrates' courts across the country, with 91,085 (24%) of these filed in Nairobi City County.
- She added that Makadara Court recorded the highest number of filings, with 24,122 cases. Other courts in Nairobi, including Milimani Chief Magistrates Court, Milimani Commercial Court, Thika, Kiambu, and Ruiru, were also among the top 10 busiest courts, handling a third of all filed cases.
- "We have not had commensurate investment in court infrastructure in a manner that matches Nairobi's growing population, leading to an unsustainable mismatch between the demand for justice and the availability of court services," said the CJ.



Chief Justice Martha Koome

Chief Justice Martha Koome has called upon the National Government, Nairobi County Government, and development partners to cooperate and collaborate with the Judiciary towards addressing barriers that undermine access to justice in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

Speaking during the launch of a Magistrates Court at Dagoretti in Nairobi County, the Chief Justice said despite great efforts to enhance access to justice within Nairobi, access to judicial services still faces serious challenges because of the high population, socio-economic disparities, rapid development, inadequate number of courts, and other structural and systemic barriers.

The Dagoretti Court will house a Small Claims Court and a Gender Justice Court and decongest Kibera and Kikuyu Law Courts.

"The Judiciary has overwhelming case load concentrated within Nairobi and its neighbouring counties -Kiambu, Machakos, and Kajiado- that account for one-third of all cases filed in our courts," said Justice Koome.

She said that with an estimated population of 5.5 million people within Nairobi City County, representing nearly 10 per cent of Kenya's total

population the number of cases filed are overwhelming.

In 2023 alone, 382,388 cases were filed in magistrates' courts across the country, with 91,085 (24%) of these filed in Nairobi City County.

She added that Makadara Court recorded the highest number of filings, with 24,122 cases. Other courts in Nairobi, including Milimani Chief Magistrates Court, Milimani Commercial Court, Thika, Kiambu, and Ruiru, were also among the top 10 busiest courts, handling a third of all filed cases.

"We have not had commensurate investment in court infrastructure in a manner that matches Nairobi's growing population, leading to an unsustainable mismatch between the demand for justice and the availability of court services," said the CJ.

The Chief Justice said that in line with the Judiciary's goal of ensuring that every sub-county has access to a Magistrates Court, there is a significant gap in Nairobi.

Out of the 17 constituencies, only three have Magistrates Courts—Kibera, Makadara, and Milimani. This leaves 13 constituencies, without adequate access to justice.

She said the Judiciary initiated a partnership with the Nairobi Metro-

politan Services (NMS) to address the infrastructural gap.

The collaboration focused on the construction of Small Claims Courts in Mihang'o, Huruma, Kasarani, and Dagoretti.

"To actualize our vision to bring judicial services closer to the people, we have a goal to reduce proximity of courts to less than 100 kilometers. The launch of the Dagoretti Magistrates' Court increases the number of Magistrates' Courts to 140.

However, this means that we still have 150 constituencies that do not enjoy the presence of a Magistrates' Court," said the CJ.

She said the Judiciary is committed to working together with the national government, counties, and development partners to ensure that judicial services are accessible, affordable, and timely for all citizens across the 290 constituencies.

Speaking at the same event, PS State Department for Correctional Services, Dr Salome Beacco, pointed out the need for the Judiciary to work closely with the Department to undertake continuous decongestion of prisons and also to engage the Community Service Orders programme to promote non-custodial sentences and restorative justice.

Judicial Service Commission vice chairperson Isaac Rutto noted that the Judicial Service Commission, is steadfast in its mandate to promote the efficient and effective administration of justice in Kenya.

"We recognize that a justice system that serves the people must be accessible, transparent, and responsive to their needs. The opening of the Dagoretti Law Courts is a manifestation of our continued dedication to a judicial system that upholds the rule of law while prioritizing the needs of the people," said Commissioner Rutto.

Chief Registrar of the Judiciary Winfridah Mokaya said the Judiciary received Ksh.826 million for development against a running projects portfolio of Kshs. 21 billion and an annual resource requirement of 2.2 billion for infrastructure alone this financial year.

"This implies that, without initiating any new projects, the Judiciary will take an inordinately long period to complete all the ongoing projects. We, therefore, continue to engage Parliament for improved development funding," said the CRJ.

High Court Refers Gachagua Impeachment Case To Chief Justice

By: Prudence Wanza
@themtkenyetimes

High Court Judge Lawrence Mugambi has referred the case challenging impeachment of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua to Chief Justice Martha Koome for the formation of a 3-7 judge bench to hear the matter. In his ruling, Justice Mugambi acknowledged the need for thorough examination of the legal and constitutional implications of the impeachment process. "These petitions raise weighty constitutional questions hence I am persuaded to refer them to the Chief Justice for empanelment of a bench," Justice Mugambi ruled. The judge also noted the absence of a clear framework to authenticate public participation in the impeachment process, considering the public interest the matter has generated. Petitioners in the case have raised concerns about how public participa-

tion was conducted, citing a lack of substantive legislation on the procedure and questioning whether Parliament should play an active role. The responsibility now lies with the Chief Justice to determine the number of judges who will preside over the case.



High Court Judge Lawrence Mugambi



Public Participation, What Is Sufficient?



By: Joseph Mutua Ndonga
mutuandonga@yahoo.com



Worth Noting:

- Gachagua's lawyers aver that the exercise of public participation did not meet the requisite threshold.
- Reports indicated almost 200,000 Kenyans participated in this exercise and majority supported the impeachment of DP. The widely held view is that the turnout was the highest ever compared to other matters that had previously been subjected to public participation.
- Back to the Supreme Court decision on Finance Act 2023, the judges overturned the decision of the Court of Appeal ordering the Government to revert to 2022 Finance Act.
- The court allowed state to continue collecting taxes as prescribed by Finance Act of 2023 until the case it had filed is heard and determined.



Public Participation.

When the Court of Appeal reaffirmed the decision of the High Court that had invalidated Finance Act, 2023, the ruling Kenya Kwanza Government immediately filed a petition at the Supreme Court (SC) seeking to overturn that verdict.

Drama ensued during proceedings as the lawyers for the two parties worked hard to outdo each other.

The issue of public participation formed the basis of the arguments by those representing the parties opposed to the Act.

They argued the public participation conducted did not meet the requisite threshold.

But the lawyers for the government reasoned that the argument did not hold any water as it is not informed by the law.

The framers of the constitution 2010 failed to enact provisions outlining the criteria. This left a lacuna in law as the law is silent on what passes as a well conducted and satisfying public participation.

When the parties were making their final submissions, one of the judge of the apex court asked. Can those opposing the 2023 Act help us to understand what is sufficient when it comes to matter of public participation?

Despite struggling to respond, the lawyers finally failed to give a convincing and satisfactory answer.

I have revisited this matter because the

issue of public participation is one of the key highlights in the petitions filed by the lawyers representing Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

These efforts took a new turn after members of parliament voted to impeach Gachagua.

While noting that none of these petitions have been considered in his favor, Gachagua's fate now lies with the Senate.

Gachagua's lawyers aver that the exercise of public participation did not meet the requisite threshold.

Reports indicated almost 200,000 Kenyans participated in this exercise and majority supported the impeachment of DP. The widely held view is that the turnout was the highest ever compared to other matters that had previously been subjected to public participation.

Back to the Supreme Court decision on Finance Act 2023, the judges overturned the decision of the Court of Appeal ordering the Government to revert to 2022 Finance Act.

The court allowed state to continue collecting taxes as prescribed by Finance Act of 2023 until the case it had filed is heard and determined.

Reverting to 2022 Act enacted by the previous Uhuru Kenyatta regime could have been a big blow for President Ruto's administration.

The targeted revenue could have dropped drastically hindering the roll-out of the flagship development projects and programmes.



We recall that President William Ruto had lined up a raft of lofty promises during the campaigns and this is the reason why Kenyans overwhelmingly voted him in.

He has so far made key strides in terms of launching and commissioning projects in all parts of the country.

This is despite the fact he assumed office at a time when the country was facing four major challenges; a biting drought rated to be the worst in 40 years; dilapidated economy; Russian-Ukraine war and a time when the country was recovering from devastating effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

He also faced a political backlash triggered by his opponents in Azimio leaders. This is not the first time opposition leaders would allege 'election rigging'

and call on their supporters to come out to the streets to fight for their rights.

They had played a similar game during the era of President Mwai Kibaki and his successor President Uhuru Kenyans but they lost it out because their claims were not anchored on truth.

Just like his predecessors, President Ruto's mind was split as he strived to calm and steady the ship.

He has since unveiled a broad based government. This marked yet another key step in his journey of building a united and peaceful Kenya.

Joseph Mutua Ndonga Is A Writer And Social Commentator

Respecting The Office Of The Deputy President Is A Matter Of Principle, Not Preference Or Favour

By: Kamomonti Wa Kiambati
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, like any political figure, is subject to scrutiny. His leadership style, public statements, and policy positions have often sparked debate and controversy. However, it's vital to distinguish between criticism of his actions and the respect that his office deserves. One can disagree with his policies or political rhetoric, but targeting him in a personal and demeaning manner weakens the very office he holds. We must also acknowledge that Gachagua, like all leaders, operates within a complex political environment where his decisions are influenced by various factors. His detractors must recognize the pressures and constraints of leadership, especially when serving in such a high office.



Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

In any functional democracy, respect for institutions is paramount. Offices like that of the Deputy President hold an important place in the structure of governance. When we belittle or demean the holder of this office, we do more harm to the institution than to the individual. In the case of Kenya, it's critical that we understand the broader implications when we disrespect the current Deputy President, Rigathi Gachagua. The consequences of diminishing this office go beyond the man and strike at the heart of Kenya's democratic institutions.

To fully appreciate the gravity of demeaning the Deputy President's office, it's essential to first understand the role and significance of that position within the government. The Deputy President is more than just a political figure; they are a symbol of continuity in governance, a balancing force in the executive branch, and a potential national leader in waiting. Disrespecting the person who holds this position undermines the authority and integrity of the institution, eroding public trust in leadership as a whole.

In Kenya, the Deputy President plays a critical role in executing government functions and supporting the President in running the country. While political disagreements and divergent opinions are healthy in a democracy, the way we express our dissent matters. Criticism should focus on policies, actions, and strategies, not the individual's character or the office they hold.

By failing to separate personal views from the office, we risk weakening our institutional structures. This disrespect trickles down, creating a culture where leadership, in general, is disregarded, leading to a breakdown in the hierarchy of governance.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, like any political figure, is subject to scrutiny. His leadership style, public statements, and policy positions have often sparked debate and controversy. However, it's vital to distinguish between criticism of his actions and the respect that his office deserves. One can disagree with his policies or political rhetoric, but targeting him in a personal and demeaning manner weakens the very office he holds.

We must also acknowledge that Gachagua, like all leaders, operates within a complex political environment where his decisions are influenced by various factors. His detractors must recognize the pressures and constraints of leadership, especially when serving in such a high office.

When political discourse devolves into personal attacks and mockery, it serves to polarize the nation further. This can distract from meaningful debate on policy issues, governance, and national development. It's essential to engage with the ideas and actions of our leaders rather than attacking their character or personhood. When we cross that line, we disrespect not only Gachagua but the Deputy President's office as an institution that is meant to serve all Kenyans.

The tone of public discourse in Ken-

ya has, in recent times, been shaped by a growing culture of insult and cynicism. Social media platforms, talk shows, and public forums are increasingly becoming spaces where personal attacks and mockery have taken the place of constructive criticism. This trend is particularly harmful when directed at public figures such as the Deputy President, as it can lower the standards of national debate and erode public trust in leadership.

Kenya, like many other democracies, needs a healthy environment for political discourse. This means allowing room for criticism while maintaining respect for the offices that shape our nation. Civil discourse demands that we focus on actions, policies, and ideas rather than demeaning personalities. By doing so, we build a society that values dialogue over division, and solutions over slander.

For the sake of our national institutions, it is critical that Kenyans move away from personal insults and attacks against the Deputy President. Respecting the office does not equate to agreeing with everything the holder of the office says or does; rather, it's about preserving the dignity of leadership and ensuring that our governance structures remain intact.

The consequences of diminishing the deputy president's office are dire. There are long-term consequences when we allow personal disdain for a leader to translate into disrespect for their office. The first is a loss of credibility in the institution itself. If the

office of the Deputy President is constantly disrespected, it loses its authority in the eyes of the public. This diminishes the influence of future holders of the office and undermines its ability to function effectively as part of the executive branch.

Additionally, this kind of behavior sets a dangerous precedent. When citizens feel it's acceptable to undermine high offices, this attitude trickles down through all levels of governance, from the presidency to local leadership. Ultimately, it weakens the fabric of our democracy by eroding respect for the rule of law and governance.

Demeaning Rigathi Gachagua does not only harm him personally; it harms the institution he represents. While there will always be political differences and debates in any democracy, respect for the office of the Deputy President must remain paramount. This respect is vital to maintaining strong governance, fostering constructive discourse, and ensuring that our democratic institutions continue to function with dignity. Criticism should be directed at policies and actions, not at the person or office, as our ability to uphold respect for leadership positions is crucial for the future stability and growth of the nation.

Kamomonti teaches English and Literature in Gatundu North Sub County.

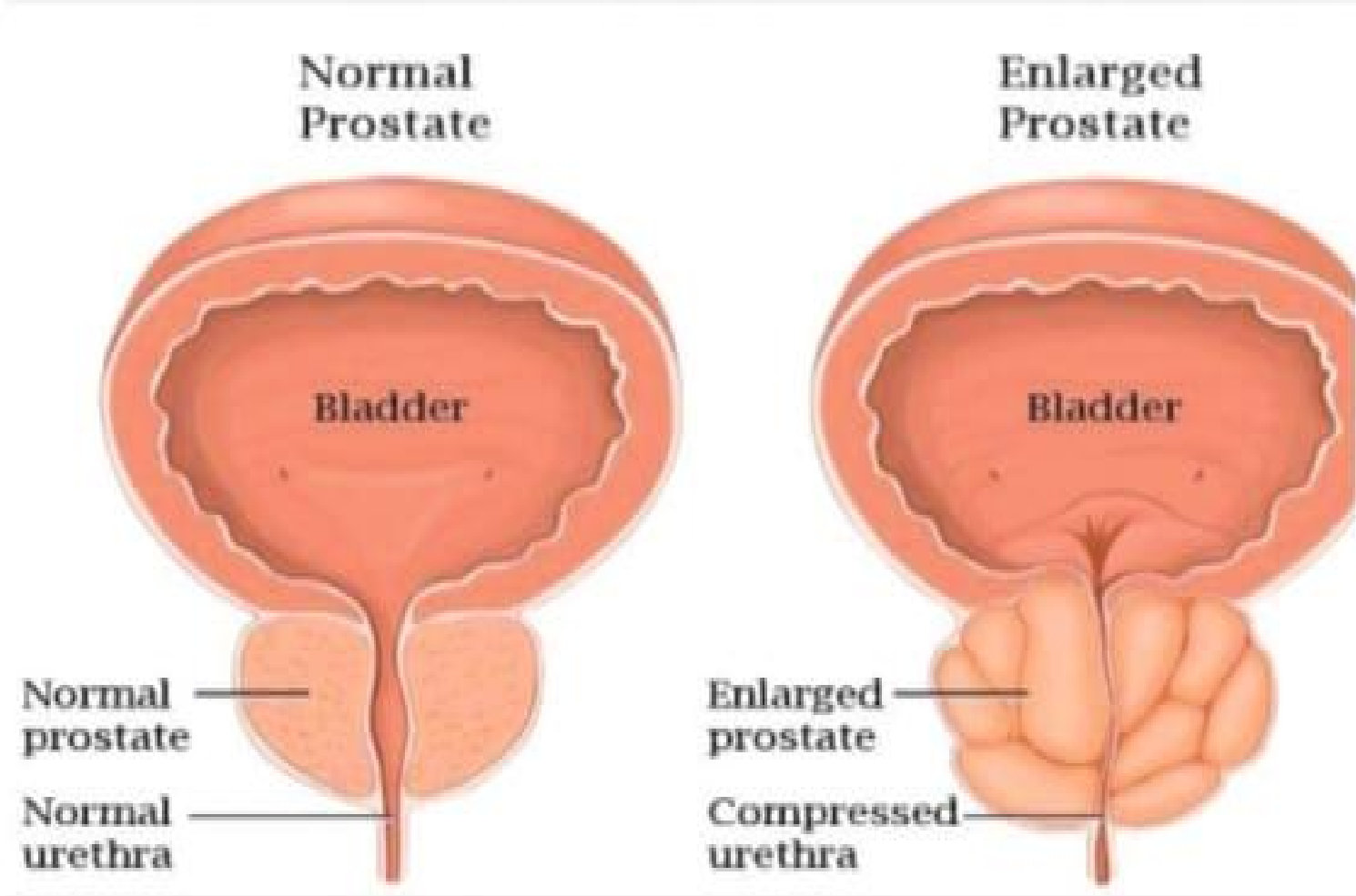
BPH: A Glimpse Into The Issue Of Enlarged Prostate Gland



By: David Ndirangu
@themtkenyetimes

Worth Noting:

- Research has shown that BPH is extremely common in middle aged and elderly men. It affects about 50% of men at the age of 60 and about 90% for those over 85 years but how to prevent it from occurring is still not known. The experts have however agreed that BPH is a normal physiological process of aging most likely caused by hormonal changes as one gets older.
- Some common symptoms of enlarged prostate include; dripping of urine at the end of urinating, inability to urinate – that is having a slowed or delayed start of the urinary stream, incomplete emptying of the bladder (urinary retention)



A drawing showing normal and enlarged prostate

When I was in Kiriti Primary School, somewhere around standard four to five, there was this very fascinating game us boys used to play. In the school that time, the urinal for all the boys was a section of ground next to a live fence (hedge) that was the boundary between the school compound and one Karweni’s farm. The urinal had three sides surrounded by mabati (iron sheets) but the fourth side was the hedge and just after the hedge was a paddock where Karweni’s cows used to graze. The floor was made of hard core stones packed a bit loose to allow the urine to seep through into the earth. So we used to compete to find who would shoot the susu (urine) furthest. Of course some of the boys were sharp shooters. After setting the correct angle and gathering enough velocity, they were able to get it over the fairly tall fence and right into Karweni’s paddock. These were the celebrated pace setters. A few years ago, my medic brother called Kamondoori was advising me that all men above 40 years should practise the above game once in a

while albeit with a bit of improvements, as a self-test for enlarged prostate. The prostate is a gland that surrounds the urethra i.e. the tube through which urine passes out of the body. Enlarged prostate also called Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) therefore means that the prostate gland has grown bigger. BPH is not cancerous and is not known to increase the risk of prostate cancer. Research has shown that BPH is extremely common in middle aged and elderly men. It affects about 50% of men at the age of 60 and about 90% for those over 85 years but how to prevent it from occurring is still not known. The experts have however agreed that BPH is a normal physiological process of aging most likely caused by hormonal changes as one gets older. Some common symptoms of enlarged prostate include; dripping of urine at the end of urinating, inability to urinate – that is having a slowed or delayed start of the urinary stream, incomplete emptying of the bladder (urinary retention), failure to hold urine or urine accidentally leaking (incontinence), feeling the need to

urinate two or more times per night, experiencing pain during urination or passing bloody urine (indicating an infection), getting a strong and sudden urge to urinate and attaining only a weak urine stream when you finally visit the ‘gents’. Most men mildly affected by enlarged prostate are able to go about their normal activities of daily living and may not need to seek medical attention unless the symptoms become overly uncomfortable or in case of infection. In order to prevent the BPH condition from escalating to those extreme levels one should; maintain a healthy weight, increase the amount and variety of vegetables in your diet, reduce eating of red meat, exercise regularly and is possible as guided by a trained professional, increase intake of water and other healthy fluids, manage stress and stop smoking. We can now revisit the self-test game. In place of Karweni’s hedge, these days we have proper urinals with tiled walls or some other bowl like receptacles. This time it is self-competition in the sense that the old boy need not compete with any other. So the idea is to aim at a par-

ticular point and release. If the urine stream hits below the target spot, there is possibility that BPH has commenced and is compressing the urethra. If upon subsequent self-tests the urine stream keeps hitting lower and lower below target, then there is need to be concerned. However, should the urine stream miss the target spot and instead drop on your shoes, it indicates a serious case and that it is time to seek medical attention without delay. David Ndirangu BSc. International Business Administration (USIU-A) CPA (K). Business Management Consultant and Author of the book; This is DAVE. Email: ndiranguda-vid2023@gmail.com

If Literature Lives, The Nation Lives



Literature is an inseparable part of human culture. It reflects the history, customs, and values of a nation, uniting its people. Through literature, a nation expresses itself and passes its historical experiences, social, and cultural life from one generation to the next. Therefore, a nation that has living literature is a nation that lives.

The power of literature lies in its role in shaping the spirit and consciousness of a people. Great figures of Uzbek literature, such as Alisher Navoi, have stated, "Literature is the sorrow of the nation." Navoi's works not only highlighted the problems of his time but also served as lessons for future generations. This illustrates the continuity and importance of

literature.

Dostoevsky emphasizes, "A nation deprived of literature is a nation deprived of spirituality." Literature also develops the social consciousness of a people. It is not merely a story or a poem but a force that shapes the spirituality, ethics, and worldview of its nation.

For literature to thrive, it must be read, studied, and appreciated. Furthermore, literature fulfills the task of illuminating historical events and conveying spiritual and cultural heritage to future generations. If interest in literature grows, so too does the spirit of the nation.

In conclusion, the statement "If literature lives, the nation lives" is a vital truth.

Literature not only expresses the thoughts of a nation but also fosters its development, reinforcing its spirituality and moral values. Thus, the relationship between literature and the nation remains crucial at all times.

Lazizbek Rakhimov
Bukhara State University

Frog And Stork



Have you ever heard that a frog and a stork are friends? No, you say? Then listen, this story is for you. At the foot of the Blue Mountains is a beautiful village, on the southern side of which is a small, shallow lake surrounded by reeds, and on the southern side of it is a hill with a mud-slide on its shoulder and a house with cinch logs visible. Storks lived on the roof of the ruin on that hill, and their nests could be seen from the other side of the village. Because the village is very small. Frogs lived in the reeds by the lake. Frogs come out of the water mostly at night, eat insects, fill their bellies, sing for a long time and dance in the moonlight.

They were intoxicated by their own songs, while the other creatures around them looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, hearing nothing but the squealing. In the morning, when the storks rose into the air, they swallowed their rest and threw themselves into the water. One of the frogs happened to lie down on the grass and watch the birds flying in the sky. His friends around him rolled their eyes at his decision, saying, "You are putting your life in danger." He did not back down from his decision. Out of the water, the barra jumped towards the grass.

It was surrounded by reeds, clouds were floating in the blue sky, and birds were chasing each other among the floating clouds. The sun was rising and making the day very hot. He closed his eyes tightly.

There was only light behind the frog's closed eyes, but that light disappeared and a shadow appeared instead. slowly opened it, as soon as the frog opened its eyes, it was ready to see dark clouds, but could the cloud be red, no, this redness was not a cloud, it was a long red beak.

After some time in the frog's imagination, he began to imagine himself in the stomach of the stork.

- Will my forehead be so salty? At that time, he closed his eyes tightly and said to himself, "It's your fault, now you're going to bask in the stomach of the stork." Light replaced the shadow around the eyes:

- Yes, he looked around to see if the

stork had left.

When he jumped up and looked, next to the frog, a stork spread its wings and looked at the sun.

he closed his eyes, stood on thin, long legs, pulled the second leg into him, and when one leg got tired, he replaced it with the other.

- Hello, Laylakjon said the frog

The stork slowly opened his eyes and smiled at the frog:

- Hello, Bagajan said.

- What are you doing here?

- Can't you see, I'm basking in the sun

- It's good that you found out, but why didn't you attack me?

- I don't eat frogs

- Can a stork never eat a frog? After all, this is a law of nature. There must be a serious reason for this, right? Isn't that so?

- It has a long history. If you are so interested, let me tell you!

Springtime. When I was returning from hot countries with my girlfriend, we stopped in this village for a while. The environment and the air were rich in freshness. Then we made the roof of the ruined house on the hill. , we used to fly to the neighboring villages and return with hunts. Thus, we didn't even notice that we had missed a single season. Hot summer came. while flying around the village, I saw a blue lake from among the reed fields.

- I haven't seen this place for such a long time, yes, not only I, but also the storks in my house have not seen this place, if they had seen it, I would have heard about it. ! Then I flew to the lake, where the sunlight was pleasant because it was near the water.

Just like now, I closed my eyes on one leg and looked directly at the sun. At one point, a frog started croaking and croaking non-stop, while I was enjoying myself. I opened my eyes and looked at the frog, which was far away from me. He was pointing at my legs.

I looked down at my feet, not understanding what the frog was saying, and next to my feet was a large rattlesnake preparing to attack me. I immediately climbed up, and the snake crawled into the reeds. I came back and thanked the frog. And in return, I decided not to eat another frog.

Did you hear that my life was saved by your friends, don't be afraid of me Bagajan, in this life, good is only returned with good. If you strive for good, you will never suffer!

Rustamova Mashhura Ne'mat girl is a student of the Faculty of History of Jizzakh State Pedagogical University

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

-Emily Dickinson



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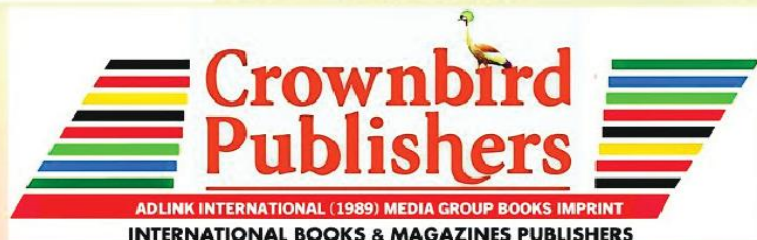
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Infotrak: 73pc Of Kenyans Believe Country Headed In The Wrong Direction

By: **Mitchelle Akala**
@themtkenyentimes

A recent survey has revealed that 73 percent of Kenyans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction.

According to the study by Infotrak research, this is due to the high cost of living, high taxation, unemployment, and poverty.

The organisation’s Research Manager, Johvine Wanyingo stated that those interviewed cited rampant corruption in the country, poor infrastructure, tribalism, extrajudicial killings, and state abductions as other reasons for their choice.

“Those between the age brackets of 46-55 years had the highest rating at 81% in terms of reporting that the country is headed in the wrong direction, followed by 27-35 years at 76% and those aged 36-45 years stood at 74%,” Wanyingo said.

However, he stated that 11 percent of those polled believe the country is headed in the right direction due to growth in the government, and the cost of living being affordable.

“In September, we had a High cost of living 77%, unemployment 46%, and Poverty 24%. The month of May, High cost of living at 45%, High taxes 27% and Poor governance 7%,” he pointed out.

He explained that access to quality and affordable healthcare were also major concerns cited by respondents.

“The top three key concerns reported by the respondents are the high cost of living (40%), unemployment (29%), and access to quality and affordable healthcare (27%),” he cited.

“Both in September and October 2024, the respondents consistently rated the high cost of living and unemployment at 40% and 29%, respectively, as the key issues of concern.”

The survey was carried out on October 9, 2024, and quantitative in-



Kenyans walking

terviews were carried out through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI).

The research firm noted that the survey was conducted across all the regions of the country, and the distribution of the sample size was proportionally allocated.

Schools Heads Decry Delayed Disbursement Of Capitation

By: **Florence Masha**
@themtkenyentimes

Secondary Schools across the country face early closure if the government fails to release part of the delayed capitation.

Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association National Chairman Willy Kuria says delayed disbursement of part of the Ksh 24 billion capitation to schools has paralyzed learning in secondary schools which threatens to jeopardize the smooth running of the forthcoming KCSE examinations.

Led by Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association National Chairman Willy Kuria, the principals expressed concern that most of the day secondary schools have not been able to handle the end-of-term sciences practicals due to lack of funds to purchase the required equipment and exam materials.

The situation has raised concerns in schools with heads of institutions noting this will affect preparedness

of learners especially on sciences-related subjects in the forth coming exams

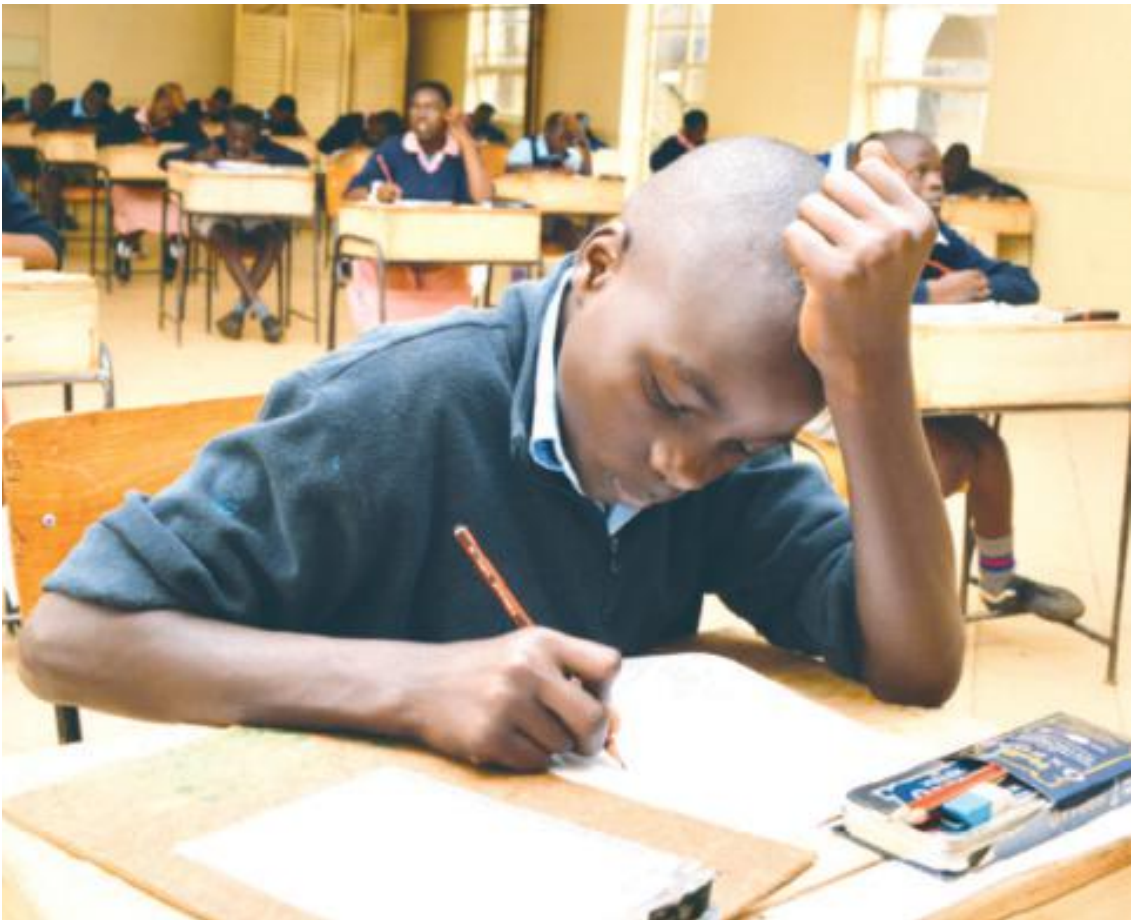
The situation has forced some institutions to temporarily seek facilitation from better-equipped schools.

In Murang’a County, form three students from Gikuu Day Secondary and Kambirwa Day Secondary School have sought assistance from Murang’a High School for their Science exams practical, which is straining resources.

However, in a separate event in Meru County, Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba noted the government had already released the funds, insisting the Ministry is committed to enhancing smooth learning across the country.

To ensure a seamless transition for CBC learners, Ogamba said the government has constructed more than 12000 classrooms in the country out of the targeted 16,000 rooms.

According to the school calendar, all Kenyan Secondary Schools are scheduled to break for holiday from 25th October 2024, to pave way for the national examinations.





Harnessing Public-Private Partnerships For Sustainable Development In Kenya



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
@themtkenyetimes



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Worth Noting:

- The legal framework supporting PPPs in Kenya has evolved significantly since the enactment of the Public Private Partnerships Act No. 15 of 2013. This legislation established a structured process for private sector involvement in public projects, creating the Public Private Partnership Unit (PPPU) within the National Treasury to oversee project approvals and implementation. The PPPU plays a crucial role in ensuring that proposed projects are bankable and align with national development goals, thus promoting sustainable partnerships.

- In addition to legal frameworks, risk mitigation strategies are essential for attracting private investment. The Kenyan government has implemented various mechanisms, such as viability gap funding (VGF) and contingent liability provisions, to address potential financial shortfalls and safeguard investors against unforeseen challenges.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a pivotal strategy in Kenya's quest for sustainable infrastructure development and economic growth. As the country aims to achieve its ambitious Vision 2030 goals, the integration of private sector expertise and financing into public projects is increasingly seen as essential. This article examines the various dimensions of PPPs in Kenya, exploring their benefits, challenges, and the mechanisms in place to facilitate these collaborations.

Kenya's Vision 2030 envisions a transformed nation with robust infrastructure that supports industrialization and enhances the quality of life for its citizens. To realize this vision, the government has earmarked approximately USD 60 billion for infrastructure development, with a significant portion expected to come from PPP arrangements. The rationale behind this approach is clear: leveraging private sector efficiency and innovation can help bridge the funding gap that public resources alone cannot fill. By engaging private partners, Kenya can undertake large-scale projects that might otherwise be financially unfeasible.

One of the primary advantages of PPPs is their ability to alleviate the financial burden on taxpayers. When private entities finance projects, the government can allocate its resources

more effectively, focusing on areas where public investment is most needed. Furthermore, sharing risks between the public and private sectors reduces the likelihood of project failures and enhances accountability. This collaborative approach fosters an environment where both parties are invested in the success of infrastructure projects.

The legal framework supporting PPPs in Kenya has evolved significantly since the enactment of the Public Private Partnerships Act No. 15 of 2013. This legislation established a structured process for private sector involvement in public projects, creating the Public Private Partnership Unit (PPPU) within the National Treasury to oversee project approvals and implementation. The PPPU plays a crucial role in ensuring that proposed projects are bankable and align with national development goals, thus promoting sustainable partnerships.

In addition to legal frameworks, risk mitigation strategies are essential for attracting private investment. The Kenyan government has implemented various mechanisms, such as viability gap funding (VGF) and contingent liability provisions, to address potential financial shortfalls and safeguard investors against unforeseen challenges. These measures not only enhance project attractiveness but also instill confidence among in-

vestors regarding the stability of their investments.

Infrastructure projects in Kenya have already benefited from successful PPP arrangements. Notable examples include the Port of Mombasa Grain Terminal and Jomo Kenyatta International Airport Cargo Terminal, which showcase how effective collaborations can lead to improved service delivery and economic growth. Ongoing initiatives like the construction of a second terminal at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport further illustrate Kenya's commitment to expanding its infrastructure through strategic partnerships.

Despite these successes, challenges remain in implementing PPPs effectively. Bureaucratic hurdles, lack of clarity in regulatory frameworks, and concerns over political stability can deter potential investors. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from both government and private sectors to create a more conducive environment for collaboration. Enhanced transparency and streamlined processes will be critical in building trust among stakeholders.

The educational sector also stands to gain from PPPs, as evidenced by initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education across Kenya. Collaborations between the government and private entities have led to significant advancements in educational in-

frastructure and curriculum enhancement. Programs like the Tusome Early Grade Reading Programme exemplify how targeted partnerships can yield positive outcomes for students and communities alike.

Looking ahead, it is crucial for Kenya to diversify its approach to PPPs by exploring various models such as Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) or Build-Own-Operate (BOO). By adopting flexible partnership structures tailored to specific project needs, Kenya can maximize the benefits derived from private sector involvement while minimizing risks associated with project execution.

In conclusion, public-private partnerships represent a transformative opportunity for Kenya as it strives towards sustainable development and economic resilience. By fostering collaboration between government entities and private investors, Kenya can enhance its infrastructure capabilities while addressing pressing social needs. As stakeholders work together to refine legal frameworks, mitigate risks, and streamline processes, the potential for successful PPPs will continue to grow, ultimately contributing to a more prosperous future for all Kenyans.

The writer is a legal researcher



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Empowering The Girl Child, A Path Towards A Brighter Future



As we celebrate International Day of the Girl Child on Friday, the importance of focusing on girls’ rights, education, and empowerment has never been more pressing. This year’s theme, “Invest in Girls’ Rights: Our Future, Our Responsibility,” reminds us that ensuring the progress of girls worldwide is not just a social or moral obligation; it’s an investment in the future of humanity.

While significant strides have been made over the past few decades to uplift girls, disparities remain deeply entrenched in many parts of the world. The barriers that girls face — from limited access to education and healthcare to child marriage and gender-based violence — are global issues that cut across cultures, economies, and political systems. In order to achieve gender

equality and unlock the full potential of half of the world’s population, we must address these challenges with urgency and action.

At the heart of empowering the girl child lies education. The United Nations reports that 129 million girls globally are out of school. In regions plagued by poverty and conflict, girls are often the first to be denied schooling, with many forced into early marriages or labor. This is not just a loss for the individual but for society at large. Education is the single most powerful tool we have to break the cycle of poverty, boost economic growth, and create more inclusive and equitable societies.

When girls are educated, they are more likely to participate in the workforce, earn higher incomes, and con-

tribute to their communities. Educated women tend to marry later and have fewer, healthier children. They are also more likely to send their own daughters to school, perpetuating a cycle of empowerment and economic stability. Investing in girls’ education, therefore, is not just about fairness; it’s about building sustainable futures for all.

No conversation about the girl child can ignore the pervasive issue of gender-based violence. From female genital mutilation (FGM) to trafficking and sexual exploitation, girls face disproportionate risks simply because of their gender. According to a report by UNICEF, an estimated 1 in 3 girls worldwide experiences violence in her lifetime.

As societies, we must do more than just condemn these acts — we must take concrete steps to prevent them. This includes stricter legal frameworks, more robust law enforcement, and greater support for survivors. But equally important is changing societal norms. Girls must be seen as equal members of society, deserving of the same rights, opportunities, and respect as their male counterparts. Changing attitudes towards girls, whether in rural communities or urban centers, is key to ending the violence that too many of them experience.

Child marriage remains one of the

most significant challenges to girls’ rights. It robs them of their childhood, interrupts their education, and exposes them to greater health risks, including early pregnancies that can be life-threatening. Despite efforts to reduce child marriages, an estimated 12 million girls under the age of 18 are married each year.

Ending this practice requires a multi-faceted approach. Legislative measures are essential, but so is community engagement. Education campaigns that raise awareness about the harmful consequences of child marriage, coupled with efforts to offer economic alternatives to families, can make a real difference. Empowering girls and ensuring they are seen as valuable individuals, not merely burdens to be married off, is fundamental to breaking this cycle.

In 2024, technology has become a powerful tool for transformation, especially for girls. Digital platforms offer unprecedented access to education, mentorship, and opportunities for economic advancement. But we must also recognize the digital divide that persists, with millions of girls in developing countries lacking access to the internet, smartphones, or even electricity.

Governments, private companies, and NGOs must work together to close this

gap. By making digital literacy and access a priority, we can ensure that girls are not left behind in the increasingly digital world. Access to technology also means access to information — empowering girls to make informed decisions about their lives, health, and futures.

Ultimately, the responsibility of empowering the girl child falls on all of us — governments, communities, families, and individuals. Policies that promote girls’ rights must be met with societal will to see them through. We must challenge stereotypes, push for equal opportunities, and encourage girls to dream without limits.

On this International Day of the Girl Child, let us not just celebrate girls — let us commit to supporting them. Their future is our future, and when we invest in them, we invest in a more just, prosperous, and sustainable world.

By championing the rights of girls today, we are building the leaders, innovators, and changemakers of tomorrow. The empowerment of the girl child is not just a cause; it is the cornerstone of global progress.

*Perpetual John
Rongo University*

The Polydactyl Experience

By Faith Kerubo Moriasi

In a world that often emphasizes conformity, the journey of those with polydactyly challenges societal norms and celebrates the beauty of diversity. Polydactyly is a condition characterized by having more than the typical number of fingers or toes. This offers a unique perspective on life and challenges preconceived notions of what is considered “normal.”

“Meet Gloria, a 15-year-old child who was being born with polydactyly. “Growing up, I realized that my hands were different, but my parents always encouraged me to embrace my uniqueness,” she shares, her eyes lighting up with a sense of self-acceptance. Polydactyly is not a disease but a congenital trait, and individuals like Gloria are keen on dispelling misconceptions surrounding their condition. Dr. Enock a geneticist

specializing in congenital anomalies, emphasizes, “Polydactyly is not a medical problem. It’s simply a variation in the way our bodies develop, and it does not impact one’s overall health.” To further understand the experiences of those living with polydactyly, I sat down with a diverse group of individuals who graciously shared their stories.

Brian, a 26 - year - old carpenter reflects on how technology has played a role in shaping his self-esteem. “Social media has allowed me to connect with others who have polydactyly worldwide. It’s empowering to see a community that celebrates our differences rather than focusing on what makes us ““abnormal.”” Conversations with parents also shed light on the emotional journey of raising a child with polydactyly.

Evalyne Kemunto, a mother of four, narrates, “Initially, there were

concerns about how society would perceive my daughter, but as she grew older, it became clear that her strength and resilience overshadowed any physical differences.” Polydactyly advocacy groups have emerged to provide the support and foster a sense of community. The groups aims to raise awareness and promote inclusivity. “We want people to see beyond the extra fingers and toes and recognize the incredible talents and abilities that individuals with polydactyly possess,” Felix(a leader of the advocacy group) emphasizes.

As we navigate a world that often values conformity, the stories of those with polydactyly serve as a reminder of the richness that diversity brings. By embracing and celebrating our differences, we can create a society that thrives on inclusivity and understands that true beauty lies in the uniqueness of each individual.



Land Grabbers Stealing Farmers' Future And Food Security

Examining the alarming intersection of land grabs and food security in Kenya, highlighting the socio-economic implications and the urgent need for reform



By: Midmark Onsongo
@themkenyetimes



Worth Noting:

- In this narrative, the socio-economic implications are as profound as they are alarming. The loss of land translates directly to food insecurity, a grim reality that grips millions. With the rising population projected to hit 60 million by 2030, the demand for food continues to surge, yet the land available for cultivation shrinks.
- The hyperbole of the situation is striking: we are witnessing a perfect storm brewing, with droughts and floods exacerbating the crisis, leading to what could be termed a "food emergency" in the making. The metaphor of a ticking time bomb resonates loudly; if action is not taken, we risk an explosion of hunger that will reverberate through every corner of society.

Welcome to the heart of Kenya, where the fertile soil once thrived under the loving care of farmers, a sinister trend emerges like a storm on the horizon. Imagine the clash of titans: the humble farmer, the backbone of the nation, grappling with a formidable adversary, the land grabber, whose insatiable appetite for profit knows no bounds.

This spectacle, a drama unfolding daily, reveals the paradox of a nation rich in resources yet threatened by the very forces that should nourish it. The irony is stark; while the farmers toil beneath the unforgiving sun, the shadow of greed looms large, casting doubt upon the very future of food security in Kenya. The soil of Kenya, vibrant and full of life, has been a witness to this tragedy.

As of 2021, an estimated 1.3 million hectares of arable land have been lost to land grabs, leaving countless families in dire straits. The metaphor of a thief in the night rings true as investors, often with deep pockets and even deeper connections, snatch away land from unsuspecting farmers.

The irony lies in the juxtaposition of ambition and betrayal, where those who cultivate the land are displaced by those who see it merely as a commodity. The question that echoes through the fields is a rhetorical one: how did we allow the heart of our nation to be stolen while we stood idly by?

In this narrative, the socio-economic implications are as profound as they are alarming. The loss of land translates directly to food insecurity, a grim reality that grips millions. With the rising population projected to hit 60 million by 2030, the demand for food continues to surge, yet the land available for cultivation shrinks.

The hyperbole of the situation is striking: we are witnessing a perfect storm brewing, with droughts and floods exacerbating the crisis, leading to what could be termed a "food emergency" in the making. The metaphor of a ticking time bomb resonates loudly; if action is not taken, we risk an explosion of hunger that will reverberate through every corner of society.

Furthermore, the land grabs are not just a rural phenomenon; they ripple through urban landscapes, where the urban poor face the brunt of food insecurity. The loss of agricultural land affects prices in the market, making food unaffordable for many. The bitter taste of irony is palpable



as those who once harvested from the land now find themselves scavenging for scraps in the city. The ethos of justice screams for recognition; is it fair for the rich to grow richer while the poor struggle to fill their plates?

As we delve deeper into the consequences of land grabs, we cannot overlook the environmental impact. The destruction of ecosystems in pursuit of profit leads to a paradoxical scenario: while the land grabbers sow the seeds of financial gain, they reap the whirlwind of climate degradation.

The allusion to the biblical tale of the Good Samaritan stands out; when we neglect our duty to care for the land, we abandon the very foundation of our sustenance. The imagery of barren lands, once vibrant with life, serves as a haunting reminder of what is at stake.

In a bid to address these challenges, the Kenyan government has introduced various policies and frameworks aimed at protecting land rights and promoting food security. However, the implementation has often been riddled with gaps, akin to a ship sailing with a hole in its hull. The Paradox of the Law stands stark; despite having the laws in place, the enforcement often falters, leaving the farmers vulnerable. An anecdote illustrates this well: in 2020, a farmer in Kisumu lost his land to an unscrupulous developer, despite having the legal title.

When justice eludes those who toil on the land, what hope remains? The pathos of this situation is undeniable. The struggles of the farmers, often invisible to the urban elite, deserve to be heard. The juxtapo-

sition of their hardships against the backdrop of urban prosperity paints a troubling picture of inequality.

The saying goes, "when the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." In Kenya, the grass is not just the land; it is the very fabric of society. The pain of displacement is a bitter pill to swallow, leading to desperation, conflict, and even violence. Rhetorical questions abound in this discourse: how can a nation so rich in natural resources find itself on the brink of hunger? The answer lies in a systemic failure that prioritizes profit over people.

The irony is suffocating; as the world shifts towards sustainability and environmental stewardship, Kenya finds itself ensnared in the throes of exploitation. The potential for growth through sustainable agriculture exists, yet the struggle against land grabs remains an uphill battle. To combat these challenges, we must embrace a multifaceted approach.

First, it is crucial to raise awareness about land rights and food security. Education serves as a powerful tool in empowering communities to stand against exploitation. The power of knowledge can be likened to a sword; when wielded wisely, it can cut through the chains of oppression.

Moreover, community engagement must take center stage, allowing farmers to reclaim their narrative and advocate for their rights. The voices of the marginalized should not merely be heard; they must resonate within the corridors of power.

Additionally, the role of technology in promoting sustainable farming practices cannot be overlooked. Innovations such as precision ag-

riculture and crop diversification offer hope amidst the turmoil. By harnessing technology, farmers can increase yields while minimizing environmental impact.

This represents a significant shift in mindset; the future of agriculture must be rooted in sustainability, rather than short-term profits. Policymakers, too, must be held accountable for their actions. The promise of reform is meaningless without action. The metaphor of the snake eating its tail illustrates a cycle of neglect that must be broken.

A call for transparency and accountability in land allocation processes is paramount. The citizens must hold their leaders accountable, demanding policies that prioritize food security and protect land rights. The battle against land grabs and the fight for food security is not merely a rural issue; it is a national crisis that demands collective action.

The symbiotic relationship between land and people must be recognized, where the welfare of one is intricately linked to the other. As the sun sets over the Kenyan landscape, casting long shadows on the struggles of the farmers, a glimmer of hope remains. If we unite, if we speak out, and if we act decisively, we can reclaim our land and secure our future.

The proverb rings true: "When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind." Let us nurture the roots of our land, for in doing so, we cultivate the promise of food security for generations to come.

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Global Media Information Literacy Week

By: Atieno Dorothy
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Worth Noting:

- UNESCO has been at the forefront of promoting media and information literacy worldwide. UNESCO provides guidelines, resources, and frameworks that support governments, educators, and civil society organizations in enacting appropriate MIL initiatives. Media literacy contributes directly to attaining the goals of sustainable development: quality education, gender equality, and peaceful societies. The 2024 theme is “Empowering Minds: Navigating the Digital Information Era”
- The theme chosen for the Global MIL Week 2024, “Empowering Minds: Navigating the Digital Information Age,” underlines with great urgency that it is obligatory that all people develop critical thinking skills or media literacy competencies. This theme addresses several key areas

The rapid evolution of the digital landscape has, therefore, dramatically changed how we access and consume information today. The observation of 2024 Global Media and Information Literacy Week is thus a timely initiative that has the sole objective of adequately preparing people to navigate the perils within the contemporary information environment. This is UNESCO’s annual event, organized with the objective of strengthening citizens through education, advocacy, and collaboration. However, core emphasis is placed on media and information literacy’s role in nurturing informed and engaged communities.

The important of the media global week include Media and Information Literacy, which is defined as the “spectrum of competencies that empowers people to effectively access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms.” To be media literate is to be able to skillfully analyze sources for credibility; understand the function that media play in the world; and participate appropriately within democratic life. As information continues to pile on itself in our daily lives, the ability to determine what sources are credible versus those that are not becomes even more crucial.

The Digital Era has provided an unmatched level of access to information. On the flip side, this has created several issues related to the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and digital propaganda. The consequences of consuming these can be disastrous: public opinion aligns with unverified or biased information, which itself influences political consequences and reduces further trust in institutions. Therefore, media and information literacy are a means to nurture resilience against those threats.

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The theme chosen for the Global MIL Week 2024, “Empowering Minds: Navigating the Digital Information Age,” underlines with great urgency that it is obligatory that all people develop critical thinking skills or media literacy competencies. This theme addresses several key areas:

Digital Literacy: The rapid development of digital technologies requires knowing how to work in such environments. The concept of digital literacy involves knowledge in not only technical aspects but also critical thinking while working with digital content.

Critical Thinking: The ability to question the credibility of information and to recognize bias is crucial. Critical thinking empowers users to navigate the complexities of today’s information landscape and supports them in making informed decisions.

Ethical Media Creation: The comfort of creating and publicly sharing content is accompanied by the responsibility to create that content in an ethical manner. By encouraging ethical media habits, society invites individuals to contemplate-and-bury consequences of their communications.

Community Engagement: This engages communities in active dialogue about media and information. Inclusive discussions about media literacy must include a wide range of diverse voices if they are to be relevant to all.

Workshops and Seminars on Education

One of the key activities undertaken within Global MIL Week was holding a set of education workshops and seminars on different premises. The content developed on this included necessary skills like fact-checking, identification of misinformation, and understanding of specific discourses on media representation.

Workshops for Educators: Specialized training will be provided to teachers on how to integrate MIL into school curricula in order to equip them with skills on how to teach students to critically engage with media. The key activities and share holders are:

Community Workshops: Workshop sessions will be held in local community centers, considering the needs and concerns among all grown-ups and seniors going through this digital world. **Online Campaigns and Social Media Engagement**

In 2024, the online campaign will be important to raise awareness about media and information literacy. Hashtag and challenge promotions have been made on social media to encourage sharing

Hashtag Campaigns: Creative hashtags intended to get users to share their experiences with misinformation and techniques they use to verify information.

Influencer partnerships: The deals with social network influencers will serve as amplifiers to spread the message to farther-reaching audi-



ences, including engaging younger demographics.

Projects In collaboration with the media global week

UNESCO will be supporting, on a continuous basis, collaborative projects in schools, universities and civil society to develop the resources for MIL. These projects will comprise the actual development of specific educational resources for schools directed at different age groups and cultural backgrounds.

This will involve curriculum development: through a collaborative approach, comprehensive MIL curricula will be developed to be implemented in various educational institutions worldwide.

Resource sharing: Web spaces will be created to share resources, best practices, and research findings in regards to media literacy initiatives.

Public Events and Advocacy

Global MIL Week will be complemented by a set of public events-lecture, panel discussions, and film screenings-to increase awareness of media literacy among larger audiences.

Expert Panels: Top tier speakers on how media shapes society-from the role of journalism in democracy to the reasons why media ethics matter.

Film Screenings: Documentary screenings corresponding to, or films on, media representation, misinformation, and digital divide issues will foster critical reflection via discussions.

Focus Areas, Africa

In Africa, Global MIL Week will have a special focus on how to bridge the digital gap and ensure access to accurate information. Programs could include partnerships with local NGOs for adapted MIL curriculum sensitive to many regional problems, including the spread of health crisis-related false information and po-

litical events through social media.

Local Answers: We are putting an emphasis on grassroots efforts with the design of programs aimed at empowering communities to create their own media, dabbling in local voices and narratives. **Asia-Pacific** This would particularly engage the youth in the Asia-Pacific region for media literacy. Forums, workshops, and online campaigns will be organized by several bodies led by the youths themselves. They want the youth to be equipped with becoming strong advocates in promoting responsible media consumption. **Youth Leadership:** The programs initiated will be aimed at building youth leadership in media literacy to help youths spread their full potential and defend against misinformation even within peer groups. **Europe** The European countries, therefore, will focus on policy advocacy for the inclusion of media literacy in national educational settings. This would be achieved through joint efforts by government agencies, educational institutions, and civil society for determining standards for MIL education. **Policy Frameworks:** Efforts will foster the creation of integrated national policies with media literacy positioned as a key flank in education. **Americas** As the network will oversee events all over the Americas, it will focus on fighting misinformation in political discourse, most specifically in the context of election cycles. Events will feature expert speakers discussing the implications of media on democracy and giving tools to citizens that will enable them to process political information more critically. **Civic Engagement:** The programs will promote an active interest in democratic processes and educate towards informed voting and critical media consumption.

Atieno Dorothy
RONGO UNIVERSITY

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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *Once-mighty Ghana plunged deeper into trouble in 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying on Thursday when held 0-0 at home by Sudan in Accra.

Fallen Giants Ghana In AFCON Trouble After Sudan Draw



Soccer Football - FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 - Group H - South Korea v Ghana - Education City Stadium, Al Rayyan, Qatar - November 28, 2022 Ghana fans celebrate after the match REUTERS/Molly Darlington

Once-mighty Ghana plunged deeper into trouble in 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying on Thursday when held 0-0 at home by Sudan in Accra.

The matchday 3 Group F stalemate left the Black Stars third in Group F, four points behind Angola and two adrift of Sudan, a team competing while their country is engulfed in a civil war. Angola host Niger in Luanda on Friday and a home victory would move them seven points clear of four-time African champions Ghana halfway through qualifying.

The nations finishing first and second secure places at the finals in Morocco, and if Sudan beat Ghana in Libyan city Benghazi on Tuesday the Black Stars will be all but doomed.

Since reaching the 2017 Cup of Nations semi-finals, Ghana have been on a downward trajectory, losing in the round of 16 two years later then twice being eliminated after the group stage.

Now, a squad packed with players from the top five European leagues, and 50 places above Sudan in the world rankings, may not even reach the finals, a humiliation last suffered 21 years ago.

Ghana failed to score at home for the second straight AFCON qualifier after a pre-match tongue lashing from football association president Kurt Okraku.

"Die for Ghana or never be selected again," he reportedly told a team captained by West Ham United midfielder Mohammed Kudus.

"It is not acceptable to see Ghanaian players laughing and smiling after draws. The minimum I expect is a team of footballers with passion," he added.

- Botswana upset Cape Verde - Sudan, who edged Niger before losing to a late goal in Angola, are coached by Ghana-born Kwesi Appiah, a 64-year-old who twice coached the Black

Stars and was in the 1982 AFCON-winning team.

Appiah was also on the Ghana Football Association executive committee -- a post he temporarily relinquished this week under orders from CAF, who feared a "potential conflict of interest".

Elsewhere, last-placed Botswana upset Cape Verde with a 1-0 Group C victory in windswept Praia, where the lone goal came from Tumisang Orebonye after just two minutes.

A superb long pass from midfield set up the Morocco-based forward to burst in front of a defender and slam the ball past goalkeeper Bruno Varela at his near post.

Massed defence then paid off for the visiting Zebras, with the increasingly frustrated hosts resorting to long-range shots that rarely troubled goalkeeper Goitseone Phoko.

Zimbabwe veteran Khama Billiat scored off a timidly struck 34th-minute penalty to take Zim-

babwe to the top of Group J with a 1-0 win over Namibia in Soweto near Johannesburg.

Former Mamelodi Sundowns and Kaizer Chiefs forward Billiat had retired from international football in 2021, but announced his availability again in August following his 34th birthday.

The match was played in South Africa because Namibia do not have an international-standard stadium, and staged behind closed doors to avoid the cost of hiring crowd-control staff.

Democratic Republic of Congo maintained a perfect Group H record with a 53rd-minute own goal by Clement Mzize delivering a 1-0 win over second-placed Tanzania in Kinshasa.

Said Benrahma doubled his international goals total to four by bagging a brace as leaders Algeria came from behind to defeat Togo 5-1 in a top-of-the-table Group E clash in Annaba.

AFP

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >>> *Former Tusker FC striker Albert Muema has partnered with an American-based company with an aim of helping young Kenyan athletes to achieve their dream of pursuing both academic and sports in the USA.

Ex-Tusker Striker Muema Partners With US Firm For Youth Programs In Kenya



Albert Muema, who plays in Austria in a past action. He is the Director of ASSK (America Sports Scholarships Kenya)

Former Tusker FC striker Albert Muema has partnered with an American-based company with an aim of helping young Kenyan athletes to achieve their dream of pursuing both academic and sports in the USA.

Muema, who is currently the Director of American Sports Scholarships Kenya confirmed the unique experience has already started to bring results as recently, they were able to sign eight athletes, with two already in America.

“We partnered with an American agency to provide opportunities for young students and athletes in Kenya who would want to go pursue both their academic and sports in America,” said Muema.

“This is a unique experience as a student athlete in America. They are referred to as special students

as they have a different timetable to regular students which makes them able to compete in the high level competitions across universities in America alongside making sure they excel in their studies,” elucidated Muema.

Muema continued: “Student athletes in Kenya have the chance to go professional as university sports is the feeder program for professional teams in America. We started the program this year in March and we have so far been able to sign up about 8 (eight) student athletes with 2 (two already in America and others scheduled to go in January 2025 and August 2025 (the two intakes for universities in America).”

The two players already in America include Alvin Udoto, who currently is based in Wyoming at Laramie County and playing

in the NJCAA Division One and Geoff Alenga, who is in Blinn University in Texas playing in the NJCAA Division One.

“They finished their high school in Kenya and were looking to play and study in America,” explained Muema on Udoto and Alenga move.

“We are happy to have worked with these athletes and their parents to make their dreams and aspirations come true,” he added.

Prominent Kenyan athletes like Eliud Kipchoge and Faith Kipyegon have voiced their support for these programs, recognising the importance of balancing education with athletic training.

This man Muema

The 31-year-old striker started his playing career in Kenya with Ligi Ndogo, where he was among

the triumphant youngsters who travelled for the Keele tournament staged in 2010.

He trained briefly with Tusker in 2014 under coach Francis Kimanzi for three months before he chose to study and play in Australia. He had great success, leading to winning a trophy with Broadbeach United in Australia’s Coast Premier League.

In 2015, he won the Brisbane Premier League title with Eastern Suburbs FC before plunging to the more lucrative National Premier League in Australia with Oakleigh Cannons FC.

Muema is still active and currently playing in Austria.

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Waziri Super Cup Kicks Off In Webuye With A Thrilling Sports Season



By: Peter Aowa
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Worth Noting:

Speaking after the tournament's launch on Thursday, Waziri shared his vision, saying, "I have always believed in the potential of young people in our region. Seeing how many talented athletes go unnoticed, I wanted to create a platform that would allow them to shine."

The tournament has seen remarkable growth over the past four years. "We started with 16 teams, and now we have 32," Waziri added. "The rapid expansion is a testament to the interest and support from local teams." Among the success stories to emerge from the tournament is AFC Leopards' Hassan Beja, who has risen through the ranks of the Waziri Super Cup.

The much-anticipated Waziri Super Cup has returned, igniting excitement in Webuye as local sports fans gear up for an exhilarating tournament.

Established in 2020, the annual event has grown into a beloved fixture in the community, and this year's edition promises even more action-packed games in football, basketball, and rugby.

Founder Salim Waziri, inspired by the vast yet overlooked talent in Webuye, created the tournament to give young athletes a platform to showcase their skills.

Speaking after the tournament's launch on Thursday, Waziri shared his vision, saying, "I have always believed in the potential of young people in our region. Seeing how many talented athletes go unnoticed, I wanted to create a platform that would allow them to shine."

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This year, the tournament will be held across three venues—Webuye Ilala Stadium, Sudi Stadium, and Webuye DEB Primary School grounds—offering fans multiple options to catch the action.

The event that kicked off yesterday will run until December 30, with National Super League side Nzoia Sugar FC joining 31 other teams in the tournament. Their participation has already sparked excitement, with fans eagerly anticipating high-quality football.

Betting firm 1XBET has come on board as the main sponsor. "The 1XBET company attaches great importance to supporting sports and social responsibility," said 1XBET representative Brian Kiengo Hillary. "The Waziri Super Cup is the perfect opportunity to combine sporting events and charity, and we are delighted to be part of this tournament."



Teams reaching the quarterfinals will be fully outfitted with kits, thanks to the sponsorship by 1XBET. Additionally, the tournament's charitable efforts will benefit the community, with organizers set to provide meals for 1,500 people, distribute hygiene kits to 3,000 girls, and offer 100 wheelchairs to those in need.

The event is not only a sports spectacle but also an economic boost

for Webuye. Local businesses, food vendors, and artisans stand to benefit from the influx of spectators, further cementing the tournament's significance to the community.

The opening matches saw thrilling encounters, with Webuye Doctors defeating Police FC 3-2 in penalties, Kingsland FC drawing 0-0 with Malaha FC, and Compel FC securing a 3-0 victory over Nzoia FC.

As excitement builds, fans are encouraged to subscribe to 1XBET to stay updated on the tournament's developments. With over 6,000 spectators expected at the final match, the Waziri Super Cup is poised to be the highlight of Webuye's sports season, uniting the community through competition and showcasing the region's immense talent.