Catalyzing African Integration: The Symbiosis Of Free Trade And Competition Law In The AfCFTA Era

The winds of change are sweeping across the African continent, ushering in a new era of economic integration and cooperation. At the heart of this transformation lies the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a bold initiative that promises to reshape the continent's economic landscape.

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The
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News>>No Pay, No Service: Faith-Based Hospitals Reject SHA Contracts Over Ksh.21B Debt

P. 9. Medical facilities under faith-based organisations and the Rural and Urban Private Hospitals Association of Kenya (RUPHA) have expressed concerns about the new Social Health Authority (SHA) contracts.

News>>Government Spokesperson Hails Progress Of Affordable Housing Project

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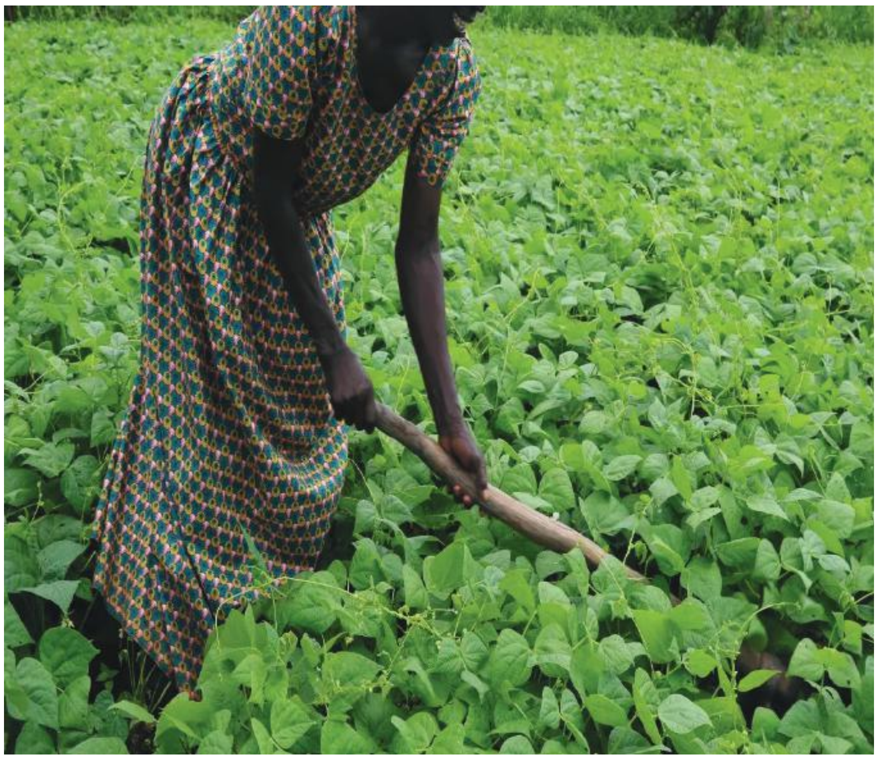
MPs Asked Not To Pass Punitive Agriculture Bills

Civil society members yesterday urged Members of Parliament not to pass agriculture bills that are currently before the National Assembly, terming them punitive.

They said that the nine Agricultural Bills tabled in parliament are purporting to regulate and streamline the Agriculture sector in Kenya, yet the State agencies are meant to do the same.

Mary Kathomi from the Kilimo cha Haki lobby group said the nine bills are also unconstitutional because they take away the rights of Kenya and threaten the country's food security and food sovereignty.



A bean farmer

STORY ON PAGE 8

Governor Mutula Calls For Viable Solutions To Lower Energy Costs

By: Patrick Nyakundi
@themtkenyatimes

Makueni county governor Mutula Kilonzo Jnr addressing the forum on Tuesday.

Worth Noting:

- **"We must say with one voice that the cost of power has affected farmers, also our work in offices, and impacted negatively on the development of the counties. There is post-harvest loss for farmers; hospitals and business people are not spared due to lack of affordable power," he added.**
- **The conference, organised by the COG in partnership with UK PACT, brought together select CECMs and Directors in charge of Energy under the CECMs Caucus for a three-day learning mission in Makueni.**

Makueni Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr. has called upon County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) for Energy to come up with viable resolutions to reduce the cost of energy in the country.

Consequently, Mutula lamented that the cost of energy has affected farmers, hospitals, and businesspeople and also impacted negatively on the development of projects in most of the counties.

In this regard, he emphasized the need for the CECMs to deliberate and come up with resolutions to ensure the cost of energy is reduced to hasten development in the country.

"This issue of power is troubling Kenyans because the cost of energy has increased tremendously. So, the ECMs must come up with resolutions to cut down the cost of energy that we will table before the Council of Governors (COG) before it is taken to the Summit," said Mutula during a Workshop on Climate Compatible Growth Conference, aimed at promoting peer-to-peer learning on the productive use of renewable energy and strengthening climate resilience at a hotel in Wote town.

"We must say with one voice that the cost of power has affected farmers, also our work in offices, and impacted negatively on the development of the counties. There is post-harvest loss for farmers; hospitals and business people are not spared due to lack of affordable power," he added.

The conference, organised by the COG in partnership with UK PACT, brought together select CECMs and Directors in charge of Energy under the CECMs Caucus for a three-day learning mission in Makueni.

The Governor who opened the conference also noted prices for equipment required to put up solar systems were expensive and challenged the national government to reduce the prices to allow the use of renewable energy to hasten development.

"The cost of solar equipment coming into the country is very high. So, we must come up with a resolution from here and ask the national government to reduce this cost of the equipment," Mutula observed.

The governor noted that it was paramount for all counties to have an energy plan that will enable them to drive the power agenda in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

Mutula revealed that his government has embarked on constructing markets across the county whereby they will each be equipped with a cold storage room to allow those doing business to preserve their goods there.

Speaking at the same workshop, the CECMs Chairperson for the Caucus Rosemary Rop said so far only 22 counties have developed energy plans and emphasized the need for those that have yet to produce one to do so.

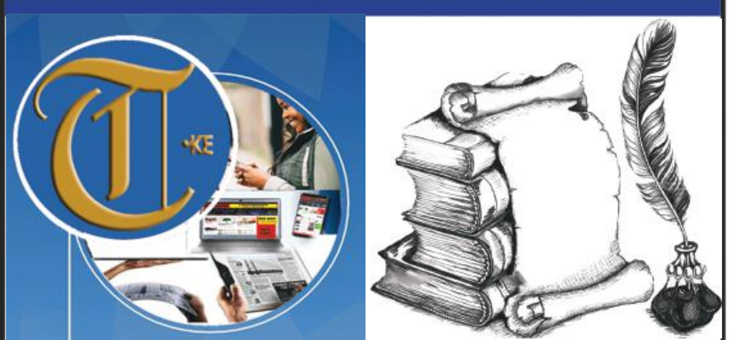
MS Rop, who is also CECM for Kericho County, disclosed that the plans will help in coming up with investments that will assist in identifying partners to invest in the energy sector in an effort to accelerate the development of the respective counties.

"The Energy plans in each county will help investors know where to invest. They will translate the plans into activities that can change the lives of our people," said Rop.

Some of the CECMs present were from Makueni, Kilifi, Meru, Nyandarua, Homa Bay, Tana River, and Kisumu, Kiambu, Lamu and Nakuru, Kericho, and Bungoma, to mention a few.

Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS PAPER
IN BUSINESS

NEWS IN BRIEF

The New Kimugu Treatment Works Technical Inspector of Production, Mr. Collins Koech, demonstrates the water pressure at Kimugu Water Treatment Works that supplies 13 million litres of water to over 200,000 residents per day in Kericho. Koech stated the intake of water is the River Kimugu, in which the raw water line is 7.7 kilometres long to the Kimugu Treatment Works, where three types of chemicals are used to treat the water before distribution. "We use Aluminium Sulphate, Soda ash, and Chlorine for treatment, and then the water is released by gravity to the tanks at the Tea Hotel," explained Koech. The Technical Inspector of Production further said that after the main works were completed, additional works with four components were undertaken, which cost Sh98 million.

The Public Health and Sanitation Principal Secretary, Mary Muthoni, said the Ministry of Health has developed a database of all health facilities across the country to ensure seamless rollout of the Social Health Authority (SHA). The exercise carried out by the Digital Health Agency, she said, will see a patient's history accessed at any health facility without necessarily carrying books or being asked to give the information again by health personnel. "If you are referred from Kisumu to Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), you will not have to repeat your history. Sometimes health matters make us shy, and it is unfair to keep narrating every time you visit a health facility," she said.

Over 400 households in the Kibokoni area of Old Town benefit from a Freshwater Plant funded by Oxfam in collaboration with the County government of Mombasa. Speaking during the launch of the Sh18 million Solar Power dissemination water plant in Mombasa County, the Country Director of Oxfam, Justin Morgan, noted that the initiative is aimed at reducing the cost of accessing fresh water for the people of Mombasa. "Through this Project, we anticipate to see better health conditions for people of this area as well as cutting down the time in which people have to travel to access fresh water, which will save money for the community since the cost of this water is cheaper compared to the price in other parts of Mombasa," said Morgan. He further commended the community for its effort and cooperation throughout the time of this project, noting that it began in 2020 and is projected to continue.

Dr George Wachiuri, the Chief Executive Officer of the leading real estate firm; Optiven Real Estate is in United Kingdom to woo Kenyans in diaspora to invest at home. On Tuesday, he was hosted by Jambo Radio of Scotland. "Your hospitality and love for Optiven Vision is just amazing," he said as he appreciated Kenyans in UK and Scotland. Yesterday, he was expected to meet potential investors at Calabash African Restaurant Glasgow, Scotland. Tomorrow, the CEO and his team will be in London, in Reading on Saturday, at Oxford on Sunday, in Coventry on Monday next week and at Northampton on Tuesday. To book a seat, click: https://forms.gle/sEtg2rn8unzf6Zz97

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CS Chirchir Launches Nairobi Commuter Rail Stations And Kenya Railways Premium Class Service

By:Aoma Keziah
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- In his speech during the commissioning, CS Chirchir emphasized the importance of the Nairobi Commuter Rail development as a vital component of the city's future transport infrastructure.
- "The rehabilitation of the NCR network is a key pillar in our efforts to decongest roads and ensure the people of Nairobi have access to world-class transport services," Chirchir noted.

Cabinet Secretary Ministry of roads and Transport Davis Chirchir,and Kenya Railways Corporation Managing Director Philip Mainga and other members of Kenya Railways during the commissioning of Nairobi Commuter Rail (NCR) stations and the Madaraka Express Premium Class Services

Cabinet Secretary Ministry of roads and Transport Davis Chirchir addressing the media during the commissioning of Nairobi Commuter Rail (NCR) stations and the Madaraka Express Premium Class Services.

The Ministry of Roads and Transport has taken a significant step towards enhancing urban mobility with the commissioning of the Nairobi Commuter Rail (NCR) stations and the introduction of Kenya Railways' (KR) Premium Class operations. Cabinet Secretary, Davis Chirchir, officially launched the revamped commuter rail service as part of the broader Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Master Plan, which aims to modernize the city's rail network, decongest roads, and provide safe, reliable, and affordable transportation for residents.

In his speech during the commissioning, CS Chirchir emphasized the importance of the Nairobi Commuter Rail development as a vital component of the city's future transport infrastructure.

"The rehabilitation of the NCR network is a key pillar in our efforts to decongest roads and ensure the people of Nairobi have access to world-class transport services," Chirchir noted.

Railway Line Rehabilitation and Expansion The NCR project involves the rehabilitation of 139 kilometers of railway track across four major corridors: Line 1: Nairobi Central Railway Station to Kikuyu (31 km), featuring intermediate stations in Kibera and Dagoretti, Line 2: Makadara to Ruiru (26 km), with stops at Dandora, Mwiki, Githurai, and Kahawa, Line 3: Nairobi Central Station to Konza (75 km), enhancing access to the Konza Technopolis City with seven intermediate stations, Line 4: Makadara to Embakasi Village (7.2 km), with stations at Donholm and Pipeline.

The rehabilitation aims to improve the riding comfort and safety of commuters, reduce travel time, and support faster, more efficient rail services. The World Bank has pledged Ksh 65 billion to further extend the network by an additional 58 kilometers. This expansion aims to elevate the daily passenger capacity from the current 20,000 to a projected 100,000 by the 2024/2025 financial year.

Newly Modernized NCR Stations As part of the ongoing efforts, Kenya Railways has modernized several key stations, including Nairobi Central, Ruiru, Githurai, and Mwiki, with new stations under construction in Kibera, Makongeni, and Mutuini, among others. The government's plan to complete 32 new stations will significantly boost commuter capacity within Nairobi's metropolitan area.

Rolling Stock Enhancements Kenya Railways has also rehabilitated between 300 and 500 meter-gauge railway coaches at the Nairobi Workshop, and the introduction of Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) is already providing reliable, modern services. Additionally, the construction of an Ultra-Modern Carriage and Wagon (CXR) Workshop is underway.

Introduction of Madaraka Express Premium Class Service In a move to upgrade the passenger experience, Kenya Railways has introduced an exclusive Premium Class service on the Madaraka Express, catering to discerning travelers. The new service features luxurious coaches with an optimized seating arrangement limited to 28 passengers per coach, offering ample legroom, personal space, and fully reclining seats. Passengers can enjoy complimentary meals, Wi-Fi, entertainment, and priority boarding, making their travel experience more comfortable and seamless.

The introduction of these premium services and modernized stations marks a new chapter in Nairobi's transport system, aimed at positioning the city as a hub for efficient and accessible urban rail transport. The project aligns with the government's vision of providing world-class rail services that cater to the growing demands of Nairobi's commuters.

MPs Asked Not To Pass Punitive Agriculture Bills

By: MKT Correspondents
@themtkenyatimes

Civil society members yesterday urged Members of Parliament not to pass agriculture bills that are currently before the National Assembly, terming them punitive.

They said that the nine Agricultural Bills tabled in parliament are purporting to regulate and streamline the Agriculture sector in Kenya, yet the State agencies are meant to do the same.

Mary Kathomi from the Kilimo cha Haki lobby group said the nine bills are also unconstitutional because they take away the rights of Kenya and threaten the country's food security and food sovereignty.

The Bills include the Agriculture and Food Authority Bill, the Livestock Bill 2024, tabled by Kikuyu Kimani Ichung'wah, and the Mung Bean Bill 2022, co-sponsored by Enoch Kiio Wambua and Paul Nzengu, and were passed in the Senate but dropped in the second reading at the National Assembly.

The Agriculture Professional Registration and Licensing Bill 2024 tabled by Kanyuithia Mutunga, the Nuts and Oil Crops Development Bill 2023 tabled by Senator Hamida Kibwana, and the Horticultural Crop Authority Bill 2024 tabled by Sabina Chege.

Others include the Land Amendment Bill, which was withdrawn by Kimani Ichung'wah, the Rice Bill 2024 tabled by James Kamau Murango, and the Water Amendment Bill 2023.

Kathomi pointed out that there are 15 State agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture that play different roles in the expansive agriculture sector.

"They work on regulation, oversight, policymaking, policy formulation, marketing, setting standards, and all aspects of food production and actually do what the bills are being purported to do, which includes other governing bodies like the County Governments," said Kathomi.

They added that Kenyan farmers and livestock keepers produce and farm to feed their families, and just the excess of it is what is taken to the markets for sale, and therefore Parliament cannot legislate on food crops and livestock keeping."

Maize farm

The Kilimo Cha Haki group pointed out that the agriculture sector, which contributes more than 80 percent of the country's GDP should be protected and farmers encouraged to do self-regulation, giving an example of Cooperative Societies, Saccos and local organizations working together with agriculture State agencies.

"Since the lifting of the ban on GMOs in Kenya, there seems to be an intent of taking over our food sovereignty that threatens our country's food security," she noted.

Kilimo Cha Haki intends to mobilise Kenyans of good will and Kenyan lawyers together to go to court to stop these unconstitutional bills being sponsored in Parliament," they said.

Church Leaders Condemn MPs Plan To Impeach DP

By: John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

A section of senior clergy under the umbrella of Association of Pentecostal and Evangelical Clergy have condemned the planners of the impeachment motion against Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua. According to the leaders led by Reverend Fredrick Ngugi who is the Association's National Chairman, the motion is likely to overturn the will of Kenyans. The religious leaders also raised their views on other issues like the Religious Organizations bill 2024. They noted:

"we categorically reject the Religious Organizations Bill 2024 currently before the Senate, and demand its immediate withdrawal. The Bill is not only retrogressive and punitive but also infringes on the Constitutional separation of Church and State, as outlined in Article 8 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It further violates freedom of worship, enshrined in Article 32, by introducing arbitrary changes to the way religion and belief are expressed through worship, practice, teaching and observance, contrary to both Biblical principles and the Constitution. We reject the Bill in its entirety."

They cited some dangerous provisions of the Bill noting that the bill seeks to regulate religious practice by imposing excessive fines of upto five million shillings and prison terms of upto three years for religious leaders who violate its subjective provisions.

A section of senior clergy under the umbrella of Association of Pentecostal and Evangelical Clergy

No Pay, No Service: Faith-Based Hospitals Reject SHA Contracts Over KSh.21B Debt

By: Mary Muoki
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- **The medical facilities have similarly taken issue with the government's failure to assure them that monies owed by the defunct NHIF will be paid under the new system, expressing fear that records of what is owed may be destroyed or lost in the transition.**
- **"The reason why we worry about the transition with the claims pending is because there is going to be a system change and we have experience in the past where the system changes and the claims that were on process get lost and it takes time to have them reconstructed, added and paid. We've followed up as FBOs, and individually and as of now it's about Ksh.6 billion pending," said Dr. Samuel Mwenda, the Secretary-General of the faith-based organisations.**

Medical facilities under faith-based organisations and the Rural and Urban Private Hospitals Association of Kenya (RUPHA) have expressed concerns about the new Social Health Authority (SHA) contracts.

The two umbrella bodies maintain that the government has remained non-committal on the payment of over Ksh.21 billion owed to them by the now-defunct National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF).

The facilities have subsequently refused to sign the new contracts, highlighting that the binding agreements are designed to lock them out of service delivery and disenfranchise Kenyans seeking health care services.

The medical facilities have similarly taken issue with the government's failure to assure them that monies owed by the defunct NHIF will be paid under the new system, expressing fear that records of what is owed may be destroyed or lost in the transition.

"The reason why we worry about the transition with the claims pending is because there is going to be a system change and we have experience in the past where the system changes and the claims that were on process get lost and it takes time to have them reconstructed, added and paid. We've followed up as FBOs, and individually and as of now it's about Ksh.6 billion pending," said Dr. Samuel Mwenda, the Secretary-General of the faith-based organisations.

"Government owes health providers Ksh.30 billion, for us at RUPHA it's at Ksh.15 Billion. We have been categorical that there should have been a reconciliation so that each hospital can sign off before NHIF closes. We are concerned that someone could switch off the switch one day and all those claims will be lost," RUPHA Sec-Gen, Dr. Brian Lishenga, added.

The stakeholders maintain that even though they engaged the government in the policy formulation stage where they gave recommendations and voiced reservations regarding the contentious issues, the authority disregarded their opinions.

According to Mwenda, the referral system is a deliberate attempt to cripple their operations.

"Hospitals have been providing outpatient services for patients. In the new arrangement, outpatient services can only be provided in level 2 and 3 which means no other hospital can treat them. We can only treat referrals. The other challenge is there is no system for verification," he said.

"What they are saying is that level 5 hospital cannot provide direct outpatient care to those Kenyans who have been using that hospital. Kenyans don't know this but under SHA, if you walk to that hospital, it is illegal for that hospital to provide you care," Lishenga added.

The two umbrella bodies, which constitute a sizeable portion of healthcare service providers in the country, say they will now treat patients on a cash basis, as there is currently no contract in place.

They also accuse the government of mischief in crafting the SHA contracts, terming the reduced benefits package a slap in the face for many Kenyans who despite the increased contributions, will be forced to make out-of-pocket payments.

The unions insist that members will not sign the contracts until SHA amends the offending clauses.

As the government and key players in the sector engage in a battle of wills, the delivery of healthcare services has been disrupted by the standoff, with opinion divided on whether the transition was rushed or adequate preparation was made.

Reversing Hidden Curses Pt 1

By: Eric Musa
EMEA.ericmusa@gmail.com

We continue with fervent, serious and powerful prayers, with the aim of power changing hands: from evil control/ influences of our lives to Holy Spirit control (freedom) thus reversing hidden curses in the name of Christ Jesus and by the blood of Christ Jesus.

Pray (do not ignore or assume) the following:

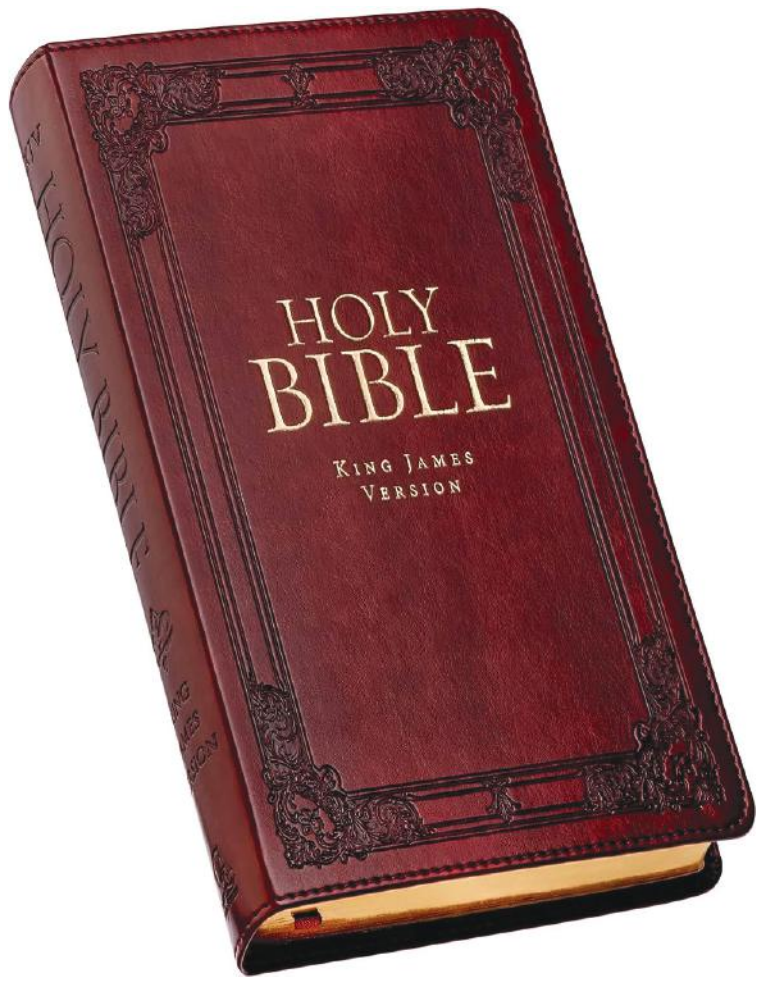
1. Praise the Lord for the redemptive power in the blood of Jesus.
2. Praise the Lord for redeeming us from the curse of the law.
3. Confess all the sins that have given the enemy legal right to place any curse on you or your household
4. Repent and ask God for forgiveness and cleansing.
5. I take authority over every curse upon my life, in the name of Jesus.
6. I command all curses issued against me to be broken, in the name of Jesus.
7. I command all evil spirits associated with any curse to leave me now, in the name of Jesus.
8. I take authority over inherited curses and command them to be broken now, in the name of Jesus.
9. I take authority over any curse emanating from ... and command them to be broken now, in the name of Jesus.

- Evil dedication
- Witchcraft curses
- Spiritual ignorance
- Handling cursed objects
- Living in a cursed land or house
- Being born in a satanic altar
- Strange money or cursed gifts
- Partaking of food sacrificed to idols
- conscious or unconscious performance of demonic rituals
- Ancestral sins
- Satanic agents

10. In the name of Jesus, I break any curse which may be in my family back to ten generations on both sides of the family.
11. I renounce and break all curses put on my family line and my descendants, in the name of Jesus.

AMEN, AND AMEN. GLORY BE TO THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY FOR DOING THIS IN MY LIFE. HAKELUJAH.

Evangelist Eric Musa:
(My message continuously: If you are not saved: Believe, accept, receive and confess Christ Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and be filled with the Holy Spirit, as it is written; "NOW is the acceptable time, TODAY is the day of SALVATION.- 2 Cor 6:2". For prayers, devotion, and to support the ministry contact Evangelist on +254722157300 (Email: EMEA.ericmusa@gmail.com). Remember, God LOVES ❤❤❤ you unconditionally, perfectly and always: SHALOM



Gachagua's Key Ally Reveals That Resigning Of DP Was One Of Options

By: **Joseph Mutua Ndonga**
mutuandonga@yahoo.com

Worth Noting:

- **While tabling the notice of Gachagua's impeachment motion, Kibwezi West MP Mutuse Mwengi the mover of the motion, also seemed to pour cold water on this argument.**
- **He averred that his decision to file the motion of removing Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua from office is informed by articles 150 and 145 of the constitution.**
- **He seemed to point out that the two articles do not compel the Mover to first seek the public views before the notice of motion. The relevant committees of parliament will conduct public participation thereafter.**
- **In the run-up to the filing of the motion, the DP resorted to using scorched earth tactics.**

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

Embakasi North MP James Gakuya is one of the key allies of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

In the eve of filing of the impeachment motion, he laid bare the options they had put in place meant to save the political career of DP.

One of them is advising the DP to resign but stating that this will come as a last resort.

This suggested that the political allies of DP were working closely with the legal experts. The law states that if the impeachment succeeds Gachagua will be barred from running for elective position or holding an appointive position for 10 years.

They spoke at a time when the DP kept reiterating that he was ready to face his accusers.

This day finally came and the motion was tabled in parliament. Attempts by supporters of DP to throw the spanner in the work failed to materialize.

The courts failed to rule in favor of three petitions they had filed seeking an injunction to stop the impeachment process.

The DP is on record stating that the views of Kenyans should have been collected before the motion is filed.

One would have expected the judges to consider this position if it was informed by law.

While tabling the notice of Gachagua's impeachment motion, Kibwezi West MP Mutuse Mwengi the mover of the motion, also seemed to pour cold water on this argument.

He averred that his decision to file the motion of removing Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua from office is informed by articles 150 and 145 of the constitution.

He seemed to point out that the two articles do not compel the Mover to first seek the public views before the notice of motion. The relevant committees of parliament will conduct public participation thereafter.

In the run-up to the filing of the motion, the DP resorted to using scorched earth tactics.

He kept stating that "President William Ruto and I were elected by the people of Kenya via the same ticket of United Democratic Alliance (UDA). As such, the MPs have no power to send me home because I was not elected by them".

As a politician, this was a well calculated political strategy of trying to disarm the MPs and whipping emotions of Kenyans particularly those drawn from his home turf of Mount Kenya.

It is worth noting that as per the law, the entire process of impeachment lies squarely with MPs.

One of the key roles of members of parliament is oversight and the mover avers the motion of impeachment of DP falls in this category.

It therefore follows that any member was free to file the motion after collecting not less than 117 signatures from members supporting the ouster.

Reports indicate that 300 members have signed up so far but DP allies disputed this figure while stating that the final vote will not garner more than 180 votes.

Many believe the DP's allies got a rude shock when the Mover read out the names of 291 MPs supporting the motion. They realized that their mathematics were not adding up.

The number exceeded the threshold of the two-thirds majority which is 233 members required in the final voting.

The final voting takes place after the conclusion of the debate.

Notably, the onus to prove the grounds of impeachment lies with the Mover.

The DP and his allies have all along been trying to drag the name of President William Ruto into woes facing the DP.

This is despite the fact that the President has never commented about this matter.

Besides, he always recognized and appreciated the presence of the DP whenever they shared the same podium. He would assign duties to his deputy.

The DP, on other hand, would be upbeat whenever he represented the President in these functions.

The latest was during the funeral service of 21 pupils of Hillside Endarasha Academy who succumbed to the flames of raging fire that gutted their dormitory at night.

The DP stated that "I'm here to represent my boss President William Ruto and I have his message of condolences ".

At the time, the President was in Germany on an official duty.

The DP's allies avers that President Ruto have the power to stop the MPs from impeaching DP.

Constitutionally speaking, the President does not have the power to interfere with the work of parliament.

Yes, the President is allowed to chair parliamentary group meeting of ruling party/coalition ahead of critical debates in parliament.

This will give members a free hand to build a common position.

We have in the past seen the wish of the President being overruled when the members vote.

Joseph Mutua Ndonga Is A Writer And Social Commentator Based In Nairobi

Government Spokesperson Hails Progress Of Affordable Housing Project

By: Bernard Munyao and Anita Omwenga
@themtkenyatimes

Government Spokesperson, Isaac Mwaura, leads a team to inspect construction of Affordable Housing at Makenji in Murang'a..

Worth Noting:

- **"These units will be affordable to the majority of Kenyans, and I appeal to local residents to be on the frontlines in registering with the Boma yangu platform and paying the required deposit so as to secure a unit," said the Spokesperson.**
- **Mwaura further said the location of the houses is convenient to people working in Nairobi, Thika, and neighbouring areas.**
- **"Fare from here to Nairobi is Sh150, and the houses are located along Thika-Kenol-Marua Highway, so these units are easily accessible and will be convenient to people working in Nairobi, Kiambu, and Murang'a," he added.**
- **Mwaura continued, "This project is employing on a daily basis about 150 workers directly and many more indirectly."**

Government Spokesperson, Dr Isaac Mwaura, has lauded the construction progress of Affordable Houses in the Makenji area of Murang'a County.

Mwaura, speaking when he inspected the project on Tuesday, stated that the construction of 220 house units, is at 45 per cent complete.

He said the project is expected to be completed by March next year, urging locals to register with the Boma Yangu platform, so as to secure a unit once the project is complete.

The nine housing blocks, occupying an area of about two acres, comprise 100 two-bedrooms, 60 three-bedrooms, and 60 studio units.

"These units will be affordable to the majority of Kenyans, and I appeal to local residents to be on the frontlines in registering with the Boma yangu platform and paying the required deposit so as to secure a unit," said the Spokesperson.

Mwaura further said the location of the houses is convenient to people working in Nairobi, Thika, and neighbouring areas.

"Fare from here to Nairobi is Sh150, and the houses are located along Thika-Kenol-Marua Highway, so these units are easily accessible and will be convenient to people working in Nairobi, Kiambu, and Murang'a," he added.

Mwaura continued, "This project is employing on a daily basis about 150 workers directly and many more indirectly."

Apart from the housing units, the project will bring in other amenities, including the upgrading of Makindi Primary School, the construction of a dispensary, and a modern market.

"The project is earmarked to greatly benefit the people of this area. Already, economic activities at Kabati Trading Centres are on rise, considering people employed in this site," added Mwaura.

He lauded the Affordable Housing project being implemented by the Kenya Kwanza Administration, saying the units will uplift living standards for many Kenyans who have poor shelters.

"The government is working on an improved technology, which hastens the construction of housing units. Our target is to have more than 700,000 housing units by the end of this term. Already construction of Affordable Houses is going on in various parts of the country, and some have already been completed," he averred.

A local community leader, Stephen Mugo, underscored the project, saying it has provided employment to scores of local young people.

Mugo observed the engagement of the youths, and has reduced criminal activities in the area, asking the contractor to consider employing more young people from Kandara Sub-county.

"We are happy with this project since it has provided jobs to our children. Initially, we had many criminal cases in this area of Kabati, but now our youth have a source of income. We ask the government to consider building more houses in this region since 220 units is a small fraction," remarked Mugo.

The site clerk of works, Michael Mwalolo, said apart from the employed workers, the project has offered internship opportunities to students pursuing various technical courses.

The internship programme, he noted, has enabled students to gain on-the-job training experience, adding that the National Institute of Technical Authority (NITA) has also assessed some of the masons working in the site who have no valid documents so as to provide them with certificates.

Mwololo said construction of the houses, which kicked off in November last year, was slated for completion this month, but due to heavy downpours experienced in the months of March and April, the completion time was extended to March next year.

Murang'a County Commissioner, Joshua Nkanatha, said the local police post will be expanded and more officers will be deployed so as to provide security in the area.

Nkanatha warned the workers against stealing construction materials after concerns were raised about the theft of some of the construction items.

"I appeal to workers to take care of the construction materials; stealing will land one in prison, and it's ideal to ensure equipment and materials you are provided for the work are taken care of," the Commissioner told the workers.

The Spokesman's team also visited and inspected the Maragua Water Project, where more than 50, 000 households are slated to be connected with clean water for domestic use and another 843 households get water for irrigation.

Remote Schools In Kipipiri Receive Digital Learning Equipment

By: Antony Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

In a bid to integrate ICT and leverage technology in schools, various schools in Kipipiri Sub-County in Nyandarua have benefitted from digital TVs and other learning materials from local philanthropists.

Kipipiri Ward Member of County Assembly (MCA) Paul Wambaire reiterated the need to empower the learners holistically so that they can be competitive and tech-savvy once they leave school.

He lauded the efforts by private citizens giving back to society, saying that learning materials will aid in proper learning, especially in remote schools.

His sentiments were echoed by Toilets Africa Chief Executive Officer Josephine Wacera, during a fete to issue various schools with assorted items, including sanitary towels, to schoolgirls.

She called for concerted efforts by education stakeholders and alumni to support the schools to help boost their academic performances.

Wacera, challenged the government to ensure computer labs in remote schools are fully equipped and connected to the internet, which she argued would make learners enjoy digital learning while at the same time becoming tech savvy.

Lereshwa Secondary School Principal Grace Mwangi, while thanking the well-wishers, noted that the equipment will aid in education and integration of ICT in classes while the digital TV will enable digital learning.

Unclaimed Body Of A Male Protester Lying In Morgue For Two Months

By: Raymond Wanjohi
@themtkenyatimes

Mystery continues over the unclaimed body of a man who succumbed to injuries sustained during the anti-Finance Bill 2024 countrywide protests on June 25.

The protester, identified only as John Thuku, was admitted at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Nyeri County Referral Hospital (NCRH) on June 25 but died a month later while undergoing medication.

Two months later, his body has been lying at NCRH's mortuary, with the government being blamed for allegedly not conducting thorough investigations to assist the concerned family to collect their kin's body for burial.

Vocal Africa Executive Director Hussein Khalid accused the police of allegedly failing to capture the fingerprints of the deceased to ease his identification.

Hussein accused the detectives of laxity in following up the matter despite being advised by the Independent Policing and Oversight Authority (IPOA) to do so.

"One of the reasons leading us to suspect ill-motives by the police is that they were advised by IPOA to ensure that they get the finger prints of John Thuku. It has been two months since he died and one month after he was admitted to the ICU. But no officer or any other agency has taken the effort to collect his finger prints so that he can be identified," Hussein noted.

The Human Rights activist was addressing the media at the mortuary in Nyeri town yesterday.

"This clearly shows the intent of the police to ensure that this person's identity remains unknown. This shows why there is laxity and incompetence in the police service because they don't want the identity of this individual to be known. It is just a simple exercise of taking fingerprints," Hussein observed.

Vocal Africa Executive Director Hussein Khalid addressing the media at Nyeri County Referral Hospital mortuary yesterday. PHOTO BY RAYMOND WANJOHI.

"We are appealing to Kenyans not to allow the government to hide the truth about the extent of killings that occurred during the peaceful protests," he added.

As he was receiving treatment at the Nyeri County Referral Hospital (NCRH), no relatives visited Thuku, neither has been body identified since he died at the ICU in July.

Vibhor Bijoy: A Multifaceted Talent Making Waves In The Literary And Artistic World

By: Vibhor Bijoy

Vibhor Bijoy, a name synonymous with versatility and passion, is making a significant impact on the literary and artistic scene. As a software engineer, business coach, poet, podcaster, and author, Vibhor's multifaceted talents have captivated audiences across various platforms.

A Literary Journey

Vibhor's literary journey began with his love for poetry. His collections, Adhura Lafz, Aaina and Bhav Vibhor, explore themes of love, heartbreak, self-discovery, and the complexities of life. Through his evocative words, Vibhor invites readers to delve into their own emotions and experiences.

Beyond poetry, Vibhor has ventured into prose with Kanpur Ki Kulfi, a captivating novel that follows the journey of a brave young woman named Shivani. Set against the backdrop of a terrorist attack and societal challenges, the story highlights themes of resilience, determination, and the importance of standing up for what is right.

Going to a different zone his latest book Cricket Post covid speaks of major changes that cricket teams across the globe have experienced since the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup. Through the lens of a passionate cricket fan, this book explores the significant transformations that teams underwent during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these changes shaped their journey leading up to the 2024 World Cup.

A Passion for Performance

In addition to his literary pursuits, Vibhor is a dynamic performer. He has graced stages across India, sharing his poetry and captivating audiences with his passion and energy. His online presence, through his podcast channel "The Vibhor Bijoy Show" and YouTube performances, has further expanded his reach and connected him with a global audience.

A Multifaceted Artist

Vibhor's artistic talents extend beyond literature and performance. He is an avid actor, cook, boxer, and cricket player. His diverse interests and experiences contribute to his unique perspective and creativity.

A Rising Star

Vibhor's dedication, talent, and versatility have earned him recognition and accolades. He was awarded the Best Co-Author of 2021 for his contributions to numerous anthologies published by Opus Collesium. His performances at prestigious events like Saahitya Aajtak 2022 have solidified his position as a rising star in the literary world.

As Vibhor continues to explore new horizons and share his passion with the world, his impact on the literary and artistic scene is sure to grow. Keep an eye on this talented individual as he continues to inspire and captivate audiences with his unique blend of creativity and talent.

What Counts Most Before The Eyes Of The Lord?

By Dickson M. Wotuku

Let me ask you a rhetorical question: Is giving to the needy – helping the elderly, orphans, and street children – more valuable than donating an envelope of Ksh100,000 towards the purchase of a church keyboard or contributing Ksh1.5M for the pastor's car? What is more Christ-like, giving Ksh30,000 in a church fundraiser with the promise of "urudishiwe nyota yako," or quietly feeding the hungry?

Why do people find it so easy to fundraise for church paraphernalias worth millions, yet they hesitate to contribute a fraction of that towards paying school fees for a child in need? "Wakuu huko kwenu mnasemanga sadaka huenda wapi?" Someone once told me that it goes to help the poor and needy. Fair enough. But then, does that mean there are no such vulnerable people within our churches and parishes? How many times have you seen this generosity directly extended to the members of your own congregation?

I have observed people in their struggles, individuals society often judges harshly. People with tattoos, people with dreadlocks in the streets – yet many of these are the same individuals who reach out to street families with love. They offer food, clothes, and compassion to those living in poverty. And then, on the other side, we have men in expensive cars and shiny suits – dressed in black suits, white shirts, and red ties – clutching leather-bound Bibles, loitering in the streets with kiondoo in hand. They collect donations under the guise of spreading the Gospel, exploiting the very people who need their help the most. It's disheartening to watch them collect money from the innocent and disappear as if they had just passed through, leaving the street children and needy behind to fend for themselves.

Let me ask you: Why is it that a religious leader must be paid before they read a verse from the Bible, the same Word that God gave freely? they say "pokea prayers" and then be charged afterward? "Tuma baasha ya elfu tano,"they'll say, or *"eka gari mafuta ya Elfu kumi" as a form of compensation for a prayer. Based on your experiences, is this behavior Godly? Is it biblical? Is it the kind of life that Jesus exemplified? If this isn't a form of spiritual manipulation – or dare I say, witchcraft – then tell me, what is it?

Jesus set a perfect example of selflessness and humility. He never asked for a payment to heal the sick or to speak the truth. The Son of God, our ultimate model of servanthood, served out of love and compassion, not for personal gain.

Let's turn to the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. In this story, Jesus explains how a man was robbed, beaten, and left half-dead on the road. A priest passed by, and later a Levite, both respected religious figures. Yet neither stopped to help. It was a Samaritan – an ordinary civilian, from a group often despised by Jews – who showed compassion. He bandaged the man's wounds, brought him to an inn, and paid for his care. Jesus shared this parable to demonstrate that love and mercy transcend religious status or appearance. The message is clear: It is not about how holy or important one looks. The ones we often judge, the ones we think less of, may be the very people who embody Christ's love. While those who present themselves as righteous and pious may fail when faced with the opportunity to act in compassion.

So, when we stand before the Lord in the end times, we may be surprised to find that those we judged by appearance are seated at His right hand. They may have been the ones who loved and served the way Jesus asked us to – without seeking personal gain or recognition. And those who exploited God's name for selfish motives may find themselves far from His kingdom.

Let us remember, in God's eyes, it is the heart that counts – a heart full of love for the least among us. Instead of focusing on flashy donations or self-promotion, we must ask ourselves: Are we truly serving the way Jesus called us to?.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Volume 2
A reflection of the strength and positivity of African women and men
Compiled by Joy Zenz
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Governor Njuki: Evaluate Health Sector For Better Services

By: Mwenda Njeru
@themtkenyatimes

Governors arrives for a health sector conference in Naivasha yesterday

Council of Governors' Health Committee Chairperson and Tharaka-Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki addressing health sector stakeholders at a conference in Naivasha yesterday

Council of Governors' (CoG) Health Committee chairperson Muthomi Njuki has expressed the need to critically evaluate health sector from multiple perspectives.

The Tharaka-Nithi Governor said the evaluation should be aimed at either redesigning, modifying, improving or changing it's structure.

He said the move is the only way to assure improved health services to Kenyans as envisioned in the 2010 Constitution.

Governor Njuki spoke yesterday during a high-level consultative conference of the CoG Health Committee.

The conference being held in Naivasha is also attended many other stakeholders in the health sector including the national government, watchdog bodies and development partners.

"There is a serious need to critically evaluate health sector in a bid to provide Kenyans with quality healthcare services," said Governor Njuki.

The theme of the conference is "Towards improved coordination, cooperation, collaboration, partnerships, and information sharing for delivery of Universal Health Coverage'.

Tharaka-Nithi County has severally been named the county with the best managed health services and the devolved unit with the best maternal care.

In 2017 when Governor Njuki took over the county leadership only 67 percent of households had latrines and today the percentage has increased to 93.

In 2017 the percentage of children who received full immunization was only 27 and now it is over 95 while childbirth in health facilities has improved to over 95 percent from 44 percent.

Anti-natal visits also improved from 56 percent in 2017 to 68 percent while the malnutrition rate has reduced to 20 percent from 32 percent.

The rate of teenage pregnancies has also dropped to 10 percent from 18 percent while referral of health cases right from Community Health Promoters to level five hospitals is now at 100 percent from almost zero in 2017.

On Tuesday, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with County Governments officially rolled out registration or Social Health Authority (SHA) which is also aimed at ensuring that all Kenyans access quality healthcare services.

In the new healthcare insurance, government the most vulnerable population will access free services.

Govt Develops Policy To Empower Minorities Group

By: Boniface Malinda and Jacqueline Adyang
@themtkenyatimes

Josephat Lowoi.

Task force members discussing a concept paper on Operationalisation of minorities and marginalized communities affairs pose for a photograph at Maanzoni Lodge Machakos during the official closing of a two days workshop. Photo/Bonface Malinda

The government is actively working on modalities to develop a comprehensive policy paper aimed at addressing the challenges facing minority and marginalised communities in the country.

Officials from the Directorate of Minority and Marginalised Affairs, under the Executive Office of the President, held a two-day workshop in Machakos County, to develop a concept paper aimed at facilitating the empowerment and inclusivity of less advantaged communities.

The initiative reflects a commitment to ensuring that these communities receive the support and resources they need to thrive.

The Director of Minority and Marginalised Affairs, Josephat Lowoi, stated that the workshop focused on creating a comprehensive concept paper and matrix specifically designed for ethnic minorities and marginalised communities.

Lowoi stated that the document aims to outline a strategic framework and roadmap to address the unique challenges faced by minority and marginalised groups. He emphasized, "Through these collaborative discussions and expert insights, the participants worked tirelessly to ensure that the concept paper reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of these communities."

He expressed optimism that the concept paper would establish a framework for fostering an inclusive and equitable society.

Lowoi reiterated that the government remains committed to addressing the needs of minority and marginalised communities, ensuring their concerns are prioritised in policy development.

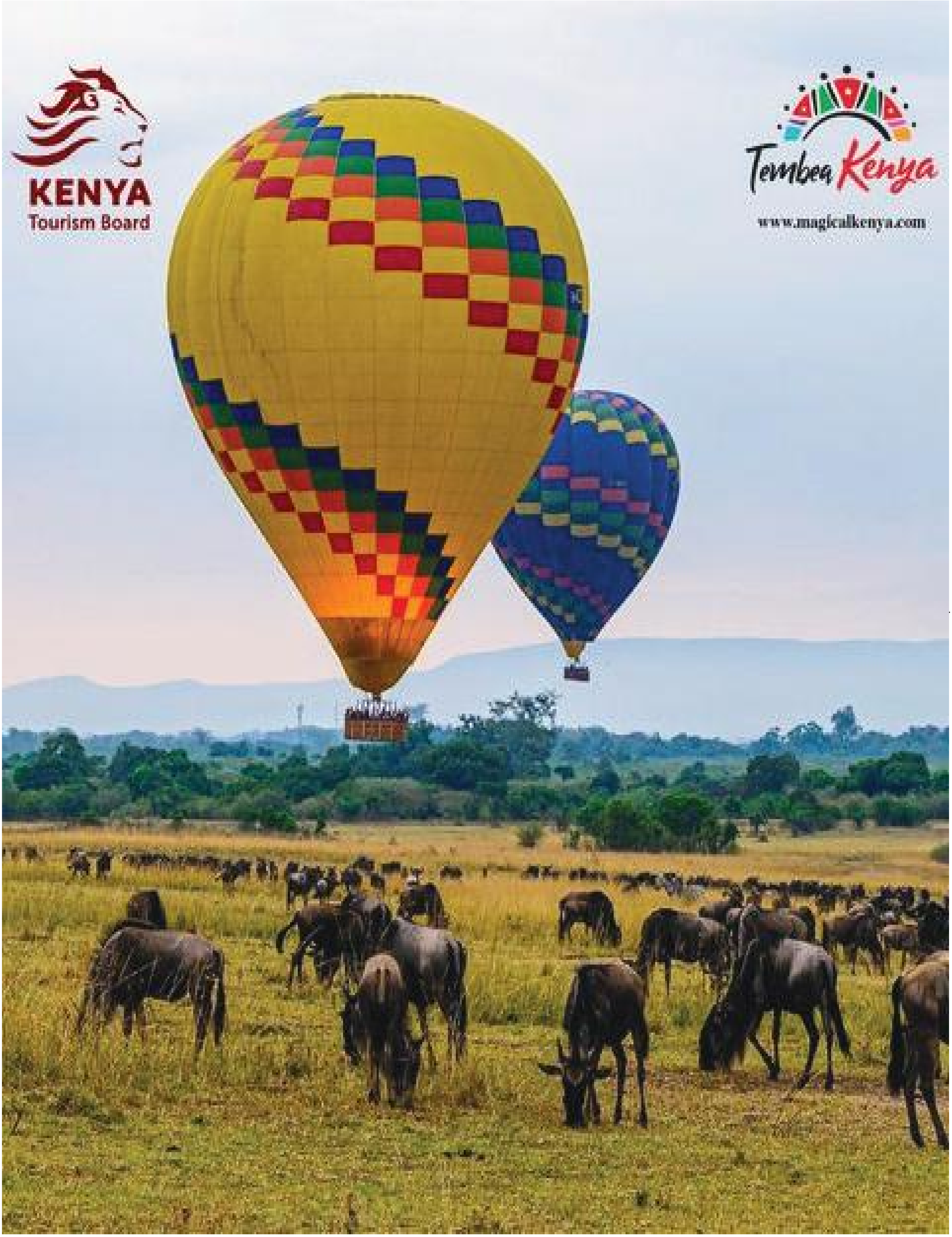
The Director observed that "the outcomes of this retreat will play a crucial role in shaping policies and programmes that promote social justice and equity," said Lowoi, adding the Concept Paper that would guide the government in effectively addressing the needs of these communities.

He said that on the second day, the focus shifted to the development of a detailed matrix. The matrix included specific timelines, responsible parties, and resource allocations to ensure the successful integration of Minorities and Marginalized communities into the national development agenda.

"The matrix is designed to serve as a practical tool for implementing the strategies outlined in the concept paper," he said. It includes specific goals, timelines, and measurable outcomes to track progress and ensure accountability," he added.

The retreat marks the pivotal moment in the journey towards equality and inclusivity.

"By developing a comprehensive concept paper and matrix, we are laying the foundation for meaningful change that will uplift ethnic minorities and marginalised communities across Kenya," he said.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Catalyzing African Integration: The Symbiosis Of Free Trade And Competition Law In The AfCFTA Era

By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- **Competition law serves as the guardian of free markets, ensuring that the benefits of trade liberalization are not undermined by anti-competitive practices. As Professor Eleanor Fox, a leading authority on competition law, aptly states, "Competition law is the handmaiden of free trade." In the context of the AfCFTA, effective competition regimes can prevent market distortions, foster innovation, and ensure that the gains from increased trade are equitably distributed among participating nations and their citizens.**
- **To truly understand the potential impact of competition law on Africa's free trade agenda, we need not look far for inspiration. The European Union's experience in harmonizing competition laws across member states offers valuable lessons for Africa.**

The winds of change are sweeping across the African continent, ushering in a new era of economic integration and cooperation. At the heart of this transformation lies the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a bold initiative that promises to reshape the continent's economic landscape. Yet, as Africa stands on the cusp of this historic opportunity, a crucial question emerges: How can the continent harness the full potential of this free trade agreement while ensuring fair and equitable growth for all? The answer, many experts argue, lies in the often-overlooked realm of competition law.

The AfCFTA, which came into force in 2021, represents a watershed moment in Africa's economic history. By creating a single market for goods and services across 54 African countries, it aims to boost intra-African trade, foster economic growth, and enhance the continent's global competitiveness. However, the mere elimination of tariffs and trade barriers is insufficient to achieve these lofty goals. The success of the AfCFTA is inextricably linked to the development and enforcement of robust competition laws across the continent.

Competition law serves as the guardian of free markets, ensuring that the benefits of trade liberalization are not undermined by anti-competitive practices. As Professor Eleanor Fox, a leading authority on competition law, aptly states, "Competition law is the handmaiden of free trade." In the context of the AfCFTA, effective competition regimes can prevent market distortions, foster innovation, and ensure that the gains from increased trade are equitably distributed among participating nations and their citizens.

To truly understand the potential impact of competition law on Africa's free trade agenda, we need not look far for inspiration. The European Union's experience in harmonizing competition laws across member states offers valuable lessons for Africa. The EU's competition framework, enshrined in Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), prohibits anti-competitive agreements and the abuse of dominant market positions. The European Commission's role in enforcing these laws across national borders has been instrumental in creating a level playing field within the single market.

Africa can draw inspiration from the EU model by establishing a supranational competition authority under the AfCFTA framework. Such an authority could complement national competition agencies, address cross-border anti-competitive practices, and ensure consistent application of competition principles across the continent. This approach would not only foster fair competition but also build investor confidence in the African market as a whole.

Looking eastward, the experiences of Asian countries, particularly China and South Korea, in implementing competition laws while pursuing rapid economic development offer pertinent insights for Africa. China's Anti-Monopoly Law of 2008, for instance, explicitly considers the country's socialist market economy and development goals in its enforcement. Similarly, South Korea's Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act has been instrumental in breaking up chaebols (large conglomerates) and fostering a more competitive business environment.

African nations can adapt these approaches by tailoring their competition laws to address unique developmental challenges while promoting fair competition. For example, competition authorities could be empowered to consider factors such as employment creation, technology transfer, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in their decisions. This nuanced approach would ensure that competition law serves as a tool for inclusive economic growth, rather than a barrier to development.

Within Africa itself, South Africa's competition law regime stands out as a model for other countries on the continent. The Competition Act of 1998 not only addresses traditional antitrust concerns but also incorporates public interest considerations, such as the promotion of a greater spread of ownership, particularly to increase the ownership stakes of historically disadvantaged persons. This approach demonstrates how competition law can be harnessed to address broader socio-economic objectives within the context of a free trade area.

Regional cooperation in competition law enforcement is already taking root in Africa, as exemplified by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Competition Commission. Established in 2004, the Commission has jurisdiction over cross-border mergers and anti-competitive practices affecting trade between member states. By pooling resources and expertise, COMESA countries have enhanced their capacity to tackle complex competition cases and promote regional integration. The AfCFTA could build on this model by establishing a continent-wide competition network, facilitating information sharing, and coordinating enforcement actions across national and regional competition authorities.

Despite the clear benefits of robust competition regimes, significant challenges remain. Many African countries lack comprehensive competition laws or the institutional capacity to enforce them effectively. Political interference and vested interests can also undermine the independence of competition authorities. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and capacity building. The AfCFTA framework could include provisions for technical assistance and knowledge transfer, enabling countries with more developed competition regimes to support their peers. Additionally, incorporating competition policy into the broader AfCFTA negotiations could create momentum for domestic reforms and harmonization efforts.

Effective competition law enforcement requires more than just robust legal frameworks; it necessitates public support and understanding. As noted by Professor Michal Gal, "Competition advocacy is crucial in developing countries where competition culture is often weak." African competition authorities should prioritize public education initiatives to raise awareness about the benefits of competitive markets and the role of competition law in safeguarding consumer welfare. By fostering a competition culture, African nations can ensure that the principles of fair competition become ingrained in their economic fabric.

The ultimate goal should be the development of a Pan-African Competition Policy that aligns with the objectives of the AfCFTA. This policy could establish common principles and standards for competition law enforcement across the continent, while allowing for flexibility in implementation to account for varying national circumstances. Professor Tembinkosi Bonakele, former Commissioner of the South African Competition Commission, argues that "A Pan-African competition policy is not just desirable but essential for the success of the AfCFTA. It would provide a framework for addressing anti-competitive practices that transcend national borders and ensure that the benefits of increased trade are not captured by a few dominant players."

As Africa embarks on its ambitious journey towards continental economic integration through the AfCFTA, the development and enforcement of robust competition laws must be a priority. By learning from global experiences, fostering regional cooperation, and tailoring approaches to African realities, competition law can serve as a powerful catalyst for realizing the transformative potential of the AfCFTA. The path ahead is challenging, but the rewards are immense. A well-functioning competition regime will not only safeguard the integrity of the AfCFTA but also contribute to broader development goals, fostering innovation, empowering consumers, and ultimately driving sustainable economic growth across the African continent. As the AfCFTA takes root, competition law stands ready to play its crucial role in shaping a more prosperous and equitable African economic landscape.

The writer is a lawyer and legal researcher

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Raila Odinga's AUC Bid: A Test of Unity and Vision for Africa

By: **James Kilonzo Bwire**

The recent meeting between President William Ruto and Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye marks a pivotal moment in the political landscape of Africa, particularly as it pertains to the candidacy of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga for the chairmanship of the African Union Commission (AUC). As Ruto rallies support for Odinga ahead of the February 2025 elections, this initiative underscores not only Kenya's diplomatic ambitions but also the broader implications for regional unity and governance on the continent.

Raila Odinga's bid for the AUC chair is not merely a personal ambition; it represents a collective aspiration for a more integrated and prosperous Africa. The backing from East African leaders, including those from Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan, signifies a strong regional consensus that could enhance Odinga's chances against formidable opponents from Djibouti, Mauritius, and Madagascar. This coalition reflects a strategic alignment among East African nations that could set a precedent for future collaboration in addressing continental challenges.

The significance of this candidacy lies in its potential to reshape the narrative around African leadership. Odinga has articulated a vision that prioritizes unity, development, and the empowerment of ordinary Africans. His commitment to making the AUC a people-centered organization resonates with many who feel marginalized by traditional political structures. By focusing on issues such as poverty alleviation, climate change, and youth unemployment, Odinga aims to address pressing concerns that affect millions across the continent.

Moreover, Ruto's active involvement in promoting Odinga's candidacy is noteworthy. Historically, these two figures have been political rivals; however, their collaboration highlights a mature approach to governance where personal differences are set aside for national interest. This partnership could serve as a model for other African leaders who often prioritize political rivalry over collective progress.

The launch of Odinga's campaign website is another strategic move that demonstrates his commitment to transparency and engagement with the electorate. By outlining his priorities and inviting feedback from citizens across Africa, Odinga is positioning himself as a leader who values dialogue and inclusivity. This approach could resonate well with voters who are increasingly demanding accountability from their leaders.

As East African leaders gather to endorse Odinga's candidacy, it is essential to recognize the historical context of such support. The region has often been plagued by divisions rooted in tribalism and political rivalry. However, this united front signals a shift towards collaborative governance that prioritizes regional stability over individual ambitions. It presents an opportunity for East African nations to leverage their collective strength in advocating for shared interests on the continental stage.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. The path to securing the AUC chairmanship is fraught with competition from other candidates who also possess significant credentials and support bases. Odinga must not only consolidate regional backing but also engage effectively with leaders from other regions to build a broader coalition. His ability to navigate these complex dynamics will be crucial in determining his success.

Furthermore, the impending elections present an opportunity for African nations to reflect on their leadership choices. As candidates like Odinga emerge with visions rooted in pan-Africanism and unity, voters must critically assess which leaders can genuinely deliver on these promises. The election will serve as a litmus test for the continent's commitment to transformative leadership.

In addition to addressing immediate political concerns, Odinga's candidacy raises important questions about the future direction of the African Union itself. The AU has faced criticism for its perceived ineffectiveness in addressing conflicts and crises across the continent. If elected, Odinga would need to champion reforms that enhance the AU's capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging challenges.

Moreover, his proposals to eliminate visa requirements within Africa and combat trade barriers align with broader efforts to foster economic integration on the continent. Such initiatives could significantly enhance intra-African trade and mobility, ultimately contributing to sustainable development.

As discussions around Odinga's candidacy unfold, it is imperative for him and his supporters to maintain momentum in their campaign efforts. Engaging with civil society organizations, grassroots movements, and youth groups will be critical in amplifying his message and ensuring that it resonates with diverse constituencies across Africa.

In conclusion, Raila Odinga's bid for the AUC chairmanship represents a significant moment not only for Kenya but for Africa as a whole. It embodies aspirations for unity, development, and transformative leadership that can address pressing continental challenges. As President Ruto meets with regional leaders to consolidate support for Odinga's candidacy, they are collectively shaping a vision for an Africa that prioritizes collaboration over division—a vision that could redefine governance on the continent for generations to come. Whether Odinga succeeds in securing this prestigious position will ultimately reflect not only his capabilities but also Africa's readiness to embrace a new era of leadership focused on collective progress and empowerment.

James Kilonzo Bwire is a Media and Communication practitioner.

The Adani Deal And The Future Of JKIA: A Call For Transparency And Accountability

By: **James Kilonzo Bwire**

The ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed lease of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) to India's Adani Group have sparked significant controversy, particularly following Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi's recent appearance before the Senate. This situation raises critical questions about governance, transparency, and the future of one of Kenya's most strategic national assets.

Senator Richard Onyonka's inquiry into the lease agreement highlights growing concerns over the lack of clarity regarding the terms and implications of this deal. The proposed partnership under the Build Operate Transfer model is intended to address fiscal constraints and infrastructure deficits in Kenya's aviation sector. However, the opacity surrounding the negotiations has left many Kenyans feeling uneasy about the potential consequences of such an arrangement.

One of the most pressing issues is the apparent absence of competitive bidding for the lease. Critics have pointed out that this raises red flags about favoritism and potential corruption in how contracts are awarded. The government's decision to engage Adani without opening the process to other interested parties undermines public trust and raises doubts about whether this is truly in the best interest of Kenyans.

Moreover, President William Ruto's earlier statements asserting that only a "mad man" would sell a national asset like JKIA seem increasingly contradictory in light of these developments. While he has framed this deal as a necessary step towards modernization, it is essential to remember that leasing a national asset should not be taken lightly. The strategic importance of JKIA as Kenya's primary gateway for international travelers cannot be overstated, and any decision regarding its management must prioritize national interests over private gains.

The potential consequences of this lease extend beyond financial implications; they touch on issues of national sovereignty and control over critical infrastructure. Allowing a foreign entity to manage JKIA for an extended period could limit Kenya's ability to make independent decisions regarding its aviation policies and operations. This concern is particularly relevant given the increasing competition from neighboring countries that are investing heavily in their own airport infrastructure.

Furthermore, public participation in this process has been called into question. Senator Onyonka's requests for clarity on whether adequate public consultations have taken place reflect a broader demand for transparency in governance. Engaging citizens in discussions about such significant agreements is not just a legal obligation; it is a moral imperative that fosters trust between the government and its constituents.

The government's assertion that public participation will occur after feasibility studies are completed raises concerns about whether stakeholders will have meaningful input or if their voices will merely be an afterthought. Genuine engagement with affected communities, airline operators, and other stakeholders is essential to ensure that all perspectives are considered before finalizing any agreements.

In light of these complexities, it is crucial for lawmakers to prioritize accountability throughout this process. The Senate must conduct thorough oversight to ensure that all aspects of the deal are transparent and in line with national interests. This includes scrutinizing the financial implications for airlines and passengers who may bear additional costs as a result of this arrangement.

As discussions continue, it is also vital for civil society organizations and advocacy groups to play an active role in monitoring developments related to the Adani deal. By raising awareness and mobilizing public opinion, these groups can help hold decision-makers accountable and ensure that transparency remains at the forefront of negotiations.

In conclusion, while the proposed lease of JKIA to Adani Group may offer potential benefits in terms of modernization and investment, it is imperative that these discussions are conducted transparently and with full accountability. The Kenyan government must prioritize national interests over private gains and engage meaningfully with citizens to rebuild trust in governance. As we navigate these complex issues, it is essential to remember that strategic national assets like JKIA should be managed with care, ensuring they serve the interests of all Kenyans now and into the future.

James Kilonzo Bwire is a Media and Communication practitioner.

The Legislature's Deceptive Dance Reveals Parliament's Betrayal As It Turns Into A Puppet Of Democracy

By: Midmark Onsongo
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Worth Noting:

- **The Kenyan Parliament has lost its roar. It has become a place where words mean little, and actions are even less significant. It exists not as a center of decision-making but as a silent partner to the executive, passing laws and policies without proper scrutiny, oversight, or critical debate.**
- **In what can only be described as a tragic farce, MPs have turned the once powerful legislature into a sideshow of democracy—a mere rubber stamp for decisions already made by the executive. Where is the oversight? Where is the resistance? The Kenyan people wait for answers that never come because their representatives have chosen the path of least resistance, becoming mere shadows of the leaders they claim to be.**

National Assembly.

"If you sell your soul to the devil, don't expect redemption." This quote could not ring truer than in Kenya's current political scene, where the legislature, once regarded as a beacon of hope and democracy, has been reduced to nothing more than a puppet of the executive. The legislature, the supposed watchdog and representative of the people, has transformed into a hollow institution—a prostitutional rubber stamp for executive whims and desires. What was once a chamber of debate and protection for the Kenyan people is now a marketplace where loyalty is bought, and ideals are sold. Kenyan lawmakers have mastered the art of hypocrisy, putting on two faces—one that fiercely criticizes at public funerals and another that meekly obeys when seated in the very chambers of parliament. At public events, Members of Parliament (MPs) can be heard roaring like lions, their voices thunderous and bold, promising the electorate that they will challenge the tyranny of the executive and restore justice to the common folk. With poetic elegance and sharp rhetoric, they evoke passion and hope. The people listen, captivated by the vocal theatrics, thinking they are witnessing the birth of resistance and the revival of democratic oversight. But it is all a well-rehearsed charade. The same MPs who shout with vigor at public gatherings, particularly at funerals, return to parliament with their tails between their legs, submissive, obedient, and utterly docile. Their passionate cries in public fade into pathetic whimpers when faced with real legislative duties.

The Kenyan Parliament has lost its roar. It has become a place where words mean little, and actions are even less significant. It exists not as a center of decision-making but as a silent partner to the executive, passing laws and policies without proper scrutiny, oversight, or critical debate. In what can only be described as a tragic farce, MPs have turned the once powerful legislature into a sideshow of democracy—a mere rubber stamp for decisions already made by the executive. Where is the oversight? Where is the resistance? The Kenyan people wait for answers that never come because their representatives have chosen the path of least resistance, becoming mere shadows of the leaders they claim to be. The transformation of parliament from a vibrant democratic institution into a servile tool for the executive is the ultimate betrayal of the Kenyan people. These lawmakers, the same ones who go to funerals and yell about how the government has failed the people, are the very individuals who, in the confines of the parliamentary chamber, fail to stand up for those same people. Their words at public events may be fiery, but their actions in parliament are cold, calculated, and in favor of the very executive they criticize outside the chamber. It is a betrayal of democracy itself, as the legislature's role is to serve as a check on the excesses of the executive, not as its enabler. This betrayal, however, is not born out of ignorance but out of greed. Many MPs have long abandoned the notion of representing the people, instead seeking personal gain through backdoor deals and political favors. They align themselves with the executive, not because they believe in its policies, but because doing so guarantees them a share of the spoils. Parliament, once a place of ideals, has become a marketplace where political loyalty is traded for money, positions, and power. It is no secret that MPs are willing to sell their votes and their voices for the right price, turning their backs on the very people they claim to represent. It is a grotesque and tragic spectacle—a dance of deception where the puppeteer, the executive, pulls the strings, and the legislature obediently follows. The result of this mockery of democracy is that the Kenyan people suffer. Policies that harm the ordinary citizen pass through parliament with alarming ease. There is no debate, no resistance, and no meaningful opposition. The executive controls parliament like a puppet master, with MPs moving only when directed. This has led to laws being passed that prioritize the interests of the elite over those of the common folk. The people, expecting their representatives to fight for them, are instead left betrayed and forgotten. What remains is an empty shell of democracy, where the legislature no longer represents the people but serves the whims of those in power. It is in this dark reality that the question must be asked: how long will this continue? How long will the legislature be content with playing second fiddle to the executive? The answer, unfortunately, seems to be as long as it is profitable for MPs to do so. Parliament has become a business, and MPs its salespeople, hawking their votes to the highest bidder. The executive knows this, and so it has little reason to fear parliamentary oversight. The legislature, by design, is supposed to be a counterbalance to the executive's power, but in practice, it has become an enabler of executive overreach. The few brave MPs who dare speak out against this system are marginalized, their voices drowned out by the overwhelming tide of sycophants eager to curry favor with the executive. These few, who still hold onto the ideals of democracy, face an uphill battle. They are the minority in a legislature that has turned its back on its purpose. The Kenyan people deserve representatives who will stand up for them, not those who are willing to sell their souls for political and financial gain. The Kenyan people deserve a parliament that will challenge the executive, scrutinize its decisions, and hold it accountable when necessary.

Yet, hope remains. Change must come, not from within the walls of parliament, but from the people. It is the citizens of Kenya who must demand more from their representatives. They must hold their MPs accountable for their actions in parliament, not just their words at public events. The Kenyan people must reject the double-faced politicians who promise one thing at funerals and deliver the opposite in parliament. The people must reclaim their voice, and in doing so, reclaim their parliament. The legislature's current role as a prostitutional rubber stamp for the executive is not inevitable. It is a result of complacency and greed, but it is not irreversible. Parliament can once again be a place where real debates happen, where policies are scrutinized, and where the interests of the people are prioritized over those of the elite. But this will only happen if the people demand it. The Kenyan people must reject the politics of deception and demand a legislature that serves their interests, not the interests of the executive. In the end, it is the people who hold the power to change the course of their country's future. The time has come for the Kenyan people to stand up and say enough is enough. Parliament must be reclaimed, not for the benefit of the few, but for the good of all. The dance of deception must end, and the real work of democracy must begin.

This article was scripted by;
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County Launches Mass Vaccination Campaign Against FMD And Rabies

By: Kiptanui Cherono
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Uasin Gishu County targets to vaccinate more than 800,000 heads of cattle against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

The mass vaccination exercise that kicked off yesterday at Mugundoi and Nairiri cattle dips in Cheptiret/Kipchamo ward in Kesses sub-county, led by the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Agriculture, Edward Sawe, will be carried out in 520 crushes across the county.

The vaccination will also include vaccinating dogs and cats against rabies, said the CECM.

Sawe explained that FMD was a highly contagious disease that affects cattle, sheep, and goats, leading to severe economic losses to farmers and livestock traders due to decreased productivity and trade restrictions.

"This initiative is part of the County's broader strategy to control and prevent the spread of these infectious diseases, which pose significant threats to livestock health and the local agricultural economy," added the CECM.

During the launch, Sawe assured farmers that the county had sufficient vaccines to meet the demands of the ongoing vaccination effort.

"We are committed to safeguarding the health of our livestock and ensuring that our farmers can continue their livelihoods without the fear of disease outbreaks," he stated.

"I encourage all farmers to take advantage of this opportunity and ensure their cattle are vaccinated," he added.

The CECM, who was accompanied by Chief Officer for Livestock Nixon Cheplong and Director Veterinary Services Dr. Philip Biama, engaged with local farmers, demonstrating the vaccination process and addressing any concerns regarding the vaccines' efficacy and the safety of their livestock.

"The safety and health of our livestock are paramount to our agricultural productivity and food security.

Therefore, it is essential that we act swiftly to ensure that all cattle in Uasin Gishu County are vaccinated against these diseases," Cheplong explained during the exercise.

Similarly, the CECM explained that rabies remains a public health concern, and vaccinating dogs and cats was crucial in preventing its spread, particularly in rural communities where close interactions occur between humans and animals.

The initiative has been well-received by the local farming community, many of whom see it as a vital step towards securing their livelihoods against the backdrop of livestock diseases that threaten their investment and resources.

Kesses Sub-County Veterinary Officer Mr. Ditaco Ngoya urged the livestock farmers to keep an eye on vaccination schedules and to reach out to them for any further information or assistance regarding the ongoing vaccination campaign.

Sports >> *Senegalese football federation has dismissed the national team head coach Alliou Cisse' after a run of poor performances in the AFCON 2025 and 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Aliou Cisse Dismissed As Senegal Head Coach After A 9 Year Stint

Alliou Cisse' .

Senegalese football federation has dismissed the national team head coach Alliou Cisse' after a run of poor performances in the AFCON 2025 and 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

After a string of lacklustre performances, Cisse—who created history by leading Senegal to their first-ever Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) championship in 2022 in Cameroon—has come under increasing pressure recently.

The 48 year old captained Teranga Lions to their maiden FIFA World Cup in South Korea and Japan where they wrote history beating the then defending champions France in their group match and went on to reach the quarterfinals where they lost 1-0 to Turkey via golden goal rule.

The federation confirmed that they have started the process of finding a new head coach to head Teranga Lions and notified Cisse of their choice after giving it considerable thought.

There have been rumours that the SFF may choose to hire a foreign coach, but a large section of the football community is in favour of giving the keys to a local manager.

The SFF is anticipated to name Cisse's replacement in the near weeks, a move that will be critical to the national team's progress as it gets ready for the 2018 AFCON qualifiers.

Senegal's head coach, Aliou Cissé, has led the team since 2015.

In 2021, he led the "Lions of Teranga" to their first-ever Africa Cup of Nations victory and two World Cup appearances in a row.

Senegal lost at AFCON 2023 in the Round of 16.

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Sports >> *Multiple brilliant saves by Kenyan Ian Otieno could not prevent Richards Bay losing 1-0 at home to Orlando Pirates on Sunday in the South African Premiership.

Kenyan Star Otieno Cannot Stop Orlando Pirates Winning

Ian Otieno .

Multiple brilliant saves by Kenyan Ian Otieno could not prevent Richards Bay losing 1-0 at home to Orlando Pirates on Sunday in the South African Premiership.

The 31-year-old, a close-season signing from Zambian club ZESCO United, has replaced longtime incumbent Ugandan Jamal Magoola as the first-choice goalkeeper.

He proved his worth by repeatedly defying Pirates in Durban until beaten by a free-kick from substitute Kabelo Dlamini on 82 minutes.

It was the first goal of a season that kicked off last month for Dlamini, the seventh Buccaneer to find the net in league and knockout matches in this campaign.

Pirates lie second, behind defending champions Mamelodi Sundowns on goal difference, after three victories each for the two title favourites.

Former CAF Champions League winners Sundowns are seeking an eighth consecutive Premiership title, while Pirates last topped the final table in 2012.

Richards Bay, who won a mini-league last season to avoid relegation, are 10th after a win, a draw and two losses.

Soweto-based Pirates return to Durban on Saturday for the final of a knockout competition against Stellenbosch with a winners-take-all 10 million rand ($585,000/€525,000) prize up for grabs.

Stellenbosch drew 1-1 at Polokwane City with Lehlohonolo Mojela giving the visitors a lead that was cancelled out by Thabang Matuludi with a deflected shot just before half-time.

Cameroonian Bienvenue Eva Nga opened the scoring for Chippa United in a 2-1 home win over TS Galaxy, whose first league goal of the season came from a new signing, Belgian Dzenan Zajmovic.

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Effie Njoki: From Graphic Designer To Software Engineer

By: Joy Atieno Otieno
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Worth Noting:

- Effie's breakthrough came when she chose to specialize in backend development, even though she initially fell behind her peers. Her specialization project became a defining moment—a culmination of 15 months of hard work during which she developed a groundbreaking solution for efficient app deployment and management.
- "For my project, I aimed to ensure apps not only function but thrive globally," she explains enthusiastically.
- Effie's solution involved containerization, deploying apps on AWS cloud, and automating processes with Terraform—an approach that ensured apps could scale, stay secure, and reach users worldwide within minutes.

In a world where technology often seems dominated by men, Effie's story shines brightly as a tale of determination, resilience, and the pursuit of one's dreams against all odds. Effie, a former graphic designer turned backend developer, is a source of inspiration for women in tech everywhere.

Effie's journey began in November 2022 while she was working in graphic design and animation. Her love for creating animations led her to explore ways to make the process faster and more efficient. This exploration introduced her to coding—using scripts to automate tasks that once took hours.

"I didn't know much about coding at first," Effie recalls. "But I saw how it could automate tasks and make creative work easier."

Driven by curiosity, Effie began learning to code during her lunch breaks, devouring online tutorials. Her passion for learning eventually led her to ALX, a tech education program, where she immersed herself in programming challenges.

"The beginning was tough," she admits. "From mastering C-programming to navigating Python and DevOps, each step was a new challenge."

Despite initial setbacks, Effie remained determined to pursue backend development—a field less explored by those from a graphics background. Her determination to achieve her dreams was her driving force, leading her to quit her job just to focus on her goals.

"After starting with frontend development, I realized I wanted more," she reflects. "I wanted to understand the deeper mechanics that make apps work seamlessly."

Effie's breakthrough came when she chose to specialize in backend development, even though she initially fell behind her peers. Her specialization project became a defining moment—a culmination of 15 months of hard work during which she developed a groundbreaking solution for efficient app deployment and management.

"For my project, I aimed to ensure apps not only function but thrive globally," she explains enthusiastically.

Effie Njoki.

Effie's solution involved containerization, deploying apps on AWS cloud, and automating processes with Terraform—an approach that ensured apps could scale, stay secure, and reach users worldwide within minutes.

"In a few clicks, any app could be set up and managed efficiently," Effie elaborates. "It's about making technology accessible and robust for everyone."

Today, Effie stands as a role model for women in tech, proving that with determination and perseverance, any dream is achievable.

In a world where dreams meet determination, Effie desires to see coding integrated into the early learning curriculum. She believes that if she had known these skills earlier, she would have been unstoppable. She hopes to enable the next generation to acquire these skills early in life, empowering them to turn their dreams into reality.

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