



When The Guardians Become Executioners: A Nation's Cry For Justice In The Wake Of Albert Ojwang's Tragic Death

Death is one sure thing in the natural order of existence but meeting it in the hands of the men in blue saddens the soul and renders the heart heavy with grief that pierces through the very fabric of our humanity.

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News >> Parliamentary Committee Accuse EACC Of Undermining Its Work


P. 8. Marsabit Governor Mohamed Ali has told a watchdog committee of the Senate that he is keen to know the reasons for his arrest by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC).



News >> Boost For Kiambu Poultry Farmers As Korean Group Provides Inputs, Training For Increased production

P. 12. Poultry farmers in Kiambu County are upbeat about increasing their production after an international firm donated farm inputs and training on better practices to improve yields.

Treasury CS To Present KSh4.2 Trillion Budget

 **National Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi is set to deliver his first official Budget Day speech on Thursday before the National Assembly.**

The proposed national budget for the 2025/2026 Financial Year stands at KSh4.239 trillion and is anchored on President William Ruto's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) and the broader goals of Vision 2030.



Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi

STORY ON PAGE 9

WE GOT SOMETHING NEW

COMING SOON



Parliamentary Budget Committee Holds Virtual Meeting With Stakeholders Ahead Of Budget Presentation On Thursday

By: MKT Reporter
 @themtkenyentimes

Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures During The Consultative Meeting

In a bid to enrich its observations and recommendations to the House on the twin Bills; the Finance Bill, 2025 and the Virtual Asset Service Providers Bill, 2025, the Departmental Committee on Finance and National Planning yesterday conducted extensive consultations with a number of government agencies. The engagements were conducted virtually on the sidelines of the ongoing preparation of the report on the two Bills set to be tabled in the House on Thursday. The Committee brought to the attention of the government agencies some of the issues raised by stakeholders and members of the public during public hearings on the two Bills which concluded last weekend. Among those who were in the meeting that was chaired by the committee chairman and Molo MP Kuria Kimani were National Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi.



Editor's Desk



The Mt. Kenya Times

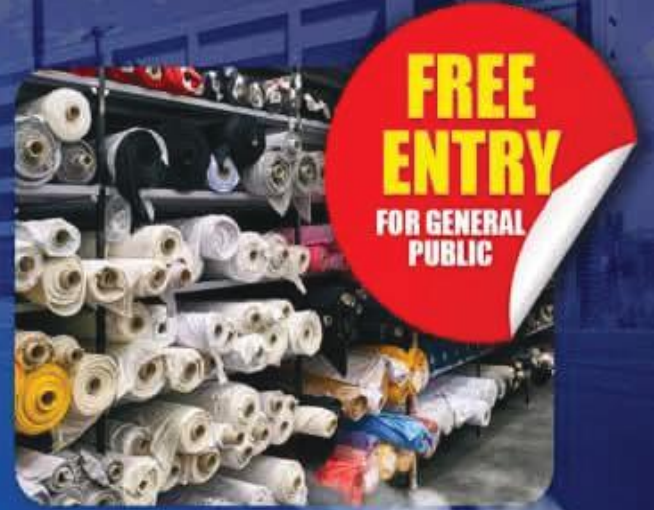
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NEWS IN BRIEF



Health PS Mary Muthoni displays one of the nicotine products during the sensitization campaign in Kirinyaga County. Muthoni expressed the government's commitment to working with local leaders, security agencies, faith-based institutions, and the 47 counties to strengthen prevention efforts, promote community education and support access to treatment and rehabilitation services. The PS asked those engaging in nicotine product businesses to look inwardly and first think about the greater public good before even thinking about making money.



NEMA County Director Beatrice Wanjohi has urged companies with recycling capacity to step up and take part in tackling the pollution menace.

She cited local initiatives by residents who repurpose used plastics to make items such as brooms and ropes, noting that individual actions can significantly contribute to a cleaner environment. Wanjohi also called on the public to take personal responsibility in maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.



The Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) has launched an 11-day wildlife census in Garissa and Wajir counties to assess population trends, particularly in the face of ongoing climate-related challenges. The initiative is part of the 2024/25 National Wildlife Census under the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act. WRTI Principal Scientist Bernard Ngoru said the census will generate critical data to guide conservation strategies, especially for species like the reticulated giraffe, which is heavily concentrated in the region. The last census in 2021 estimated 6,000 giraffes, but the 2022 drought likely altered those numbers.



A 25-year-old man was sentenced to 25 years by a Murang'a court after he was found guilty of defiling a 13-year-old girl. Asaph Kamau, who was employed at the victim's homestead as a farmhand, was accused of repeatedly defiling the Grade 9 school-going girl on diverse dates between July 7 and July 20, 2024, in the Githambo area of Kahuro Sub County. According to the victim's aunt, the girl revealed what Kamau did to her on the night of July 20, 2024, after she failed to respond to her call when she wanted the girl to bring her a water jug.



Kirinyaga Central constituency's NG-CDF officials yesterday handed over the newly constructed Modern Ablution Block at St. Faustina Kerugoya Girls High School. This facility marks a significant step in improving sanitation and hygiene standards for the students, providing a cleaner, safer, and more dignified environment. Area MP Gachoki Gitari extended gratitude to all partners; contractor, school leadership, and community members who supported the successful completion of this project. The school fraternity thanked the MP and his team for supporting the school.



Three suspects, including a police officer were arrested on Saturday night after being found vandalizing high-voltage underground power cables near Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi. The cables are the primary supply to Ragati and Nairobi West substations, which provide electricity to Upper Hill, Kenyatta National Hospital, Community area, South C, Nairobi West, Madaraka, parts of South B and Industrial Area, parts of Langata road, Ngumo estate, Mbagathi hospital and KEMRI. According to Kenya Power, the vandalism of the cables has also affected power supply redundancy Nairobi's central business district and surrounding areas. The three, Thomas Mutua, Joseph Kyalo and Dennis Mbithi Nzioki, a police officer attached to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), Makadara, were among a group of 10 men armed with crude weapons who were caught vandalizing the 66kV cables.

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Hospital Launches Home Blood Collection To Enhance Healthcare

By: Kamau Daniel and Naif Rashid

@themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Speaking during the launch at the hospital premises, Chief Executive Officer Mr. Felix Osano said the initiative aligns with the hospital's commitment to enhancing patient-centred care and leveraging innovation to improve service delivery.
- "In today's fast-paced economy, this service allows patients to receive care at their workplaces or homes, saving valuable time while ensuring that vulnerable individuals are not inconvenienced," Mr. Osano said.

The Nairobi Hospital has launched its new Home Blood Collection Service, a transformative initiative aimed at improving healthcare access and convenience for patients across Nairobi.

The service targets patients with chronic or acute illnesses, persons living with disabilities, expectant mothers, children, and busy professionals who may find it difficult to visit the hospital for routine laboratory tests.

Speaking during the launch at the hospital premises, Chief Executive Officer Mr. Felix Osano said the initiative aligns with the hospital's commitment to enhancing patient-centred care and leveraging innovation to improve service delivery.

"In today's fast-paced economy, this service allows patients to receive care at their workplaces or homes, saving valuable time while ensuring that vulnerable individuals are not inconvenienced," Mr. Osano said.

Osano acknowledged that the hospital has made deliberate investments in infrastructure and resources to improve patient outcomes through efficient and timely healthcare delivery.

"Patients seeking the service can place requests through a dedicated contact number or email, which, upon approval, licensed phlebotomists from the hospital will be dispatched to collect samples, which will be processed at the hospital's main laboratory," he added.

The Nairobi Hospital Chief Pathologist Dr. Rahul Zode said the service is available to all patients and is affordable, with a nominal fee of Sh200 per visit, subject to insurance provider approval.

"Once a request is made, our team processes the insurance approval and



The Nairobi Hospital officials and staff during the launching ceremony.

dispatches trained staff to the patient's location. Samples are handled with confidentiality and processed promptly," said Dr. Zode.

Dr. Zode added that test results will be delivered via password-protected email or as hard copies upon request, ensuring data security and patient privacy.

The service reflects global trends in home-based healthcare, which have been driven by increased awareness, technological advancements, and demand for convenience.

Board Chairman of the Kenya Hospital Association, Dr. Barclay Onyambu, noted that access to healthcare remains a key challenge for many Kenyans, adding that the initiative is designed to improve accessibility.

"Access is one of the pillars of a quality healthcare system. Wherever the patients are in Nairobi, we will bring the service to them," Dr. Onyambu

said.

He further stated that while the service is currently limited to Nairobi, the hospital plans to expand to satellite areas such as Kiambu and eventually to other towns across the country.

Nairobi Hospital Director of Medical Services and Research, Dr. Samuel Odede, said the hospital's advanced laboratory will support the new service by ensuring high-quality, timely diagnostics.

"We are extending our value chain by bringing services to the clients. Blood samples and other tests will be collected from patients' homes and analysed at our state-of-the-art laboratory," Dr. Odede said.

Dr. Odede disclosed that results would be shared directly with physicians and patients using secure digital platforms and that the hospital would initially operate the service on weekdays, with plans to extend to weekends.

He also revealed that The Nairobi Hospital is working on other home-based services, including home nursing and telemedicine consultations.

"We want to make services accessible to all Kenyans. This is not limited to a particular demographic. Our focus is to bring quality healthcare closer to the people," he said.

He urged the public to shed the notion that The Nairobi Hospital is unaffordable, emphasising that the institution offers competitive rates while maintaining high standards of care.

The hospital plans to review feedback from users during the pilot phase before expanding the service to other regions.

The launch of the Home Blood Collection Service underscores The Nairobi Hospital's continued effort to bridge gaps in healthcare delivery through innovation and patient-focused solutions.

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Tharaka Nithi's AI Revolution: How Subsidized Artificial Insemination Is Powering Dairy Farmers' Profits and the County Economy

By: Alex Njeru
@themkenyatimes

When Governor Muthomi Njuki stood before a crowd of farmers and agricultural stakeholders on October 14, 2019, to officially launch subsidized Artificial Insemination (AI) services in Chuka Town, many may not have imagined the monumental transformation it would bring to Tharaka Nithi's agricultural landscape.

Four years later, the impact is undeniable—dairy farming in the county has been revitalized, household incomes have surged, and the local economy is steadily thriving. The picture that few could see.

At the heart of this transformation is a bold initiative: reducing the cost of quality semen from a steep Ksh7,500 and Ksh1,200 to a subsidized Ksh4,500 and Ksh400 respectively. The move was designed to empower smallholder farmers, enabling them to afford high-quality breeding services and transition from subsistence farming to agribusiness.

Mr. Joseph Mutembei, a dairy farmer from Muthambi in Maara Constituency, is one of the thousands who have benefited from the program. Standing beside a pair of healthy, high-yield dairy cows in his neatly fenced farm, he reflects on how far he's come.

"Initially, I had a challenge affording the expensive AI services," he says. "But with the subsidy, I can now access high-quality semen and improve my herd. The difference is like day and night. I now make good money."

Like Mr. Mutembei, many farmers across the county have embraced the AI services, which have led to nearly 50,000 successful inseminations since the program's inception.

This has translated into a remarkable jump in milk production—from 25 million litres annually before the initiative, to 50 million litres last year. And the county is not stopping there; Governor Njuki has set an ambitious target to hit 100 million litres by 2027.

Cooling the Spoils, Warming the Economy

But increased milk production is only part of the equation. Ensuring that milk gets to market in top condition is just as critical. To this end, the county government has installed 25 milk cooling plants across strategic points, greatly reducing post-harvest losses and spoilage.

"These cooling plants are game changers," says Mr. Peter Kimathi, Chief Officer Agriculture. "Previous-



Mr Charles Kimathi from Igambang'ombe ward with his cross-breed cow produced through the Tharaka Nithi County government subsidised Artificial Insemination programme. Photo/Alex Njeru.

ly, farmers had to rush to sell their milk before it spoiled, often at throw-away prices. Now they can store their milk safely while waiting for better prices or collection."

This improved storage infrastructure has stabilized milk prices and enhanced farmers' bargaining power, translating to better incomes and a more resilient rural economy.

For Ms. Anita Kagendo from Igambang'ombe, the AI program has done more than increase her milk output—it has given her family a lifeline.

"I used to keep traditional kongoni cows that gave me just one litre of milk a day," she recounts. "Now, with high-grade dairy cows, I can proudly say I'm doing farming as a business. I pay school fees, put food on the table, and meet other family needs—all from my two cows."

Ms. Kagendo's story is echoed in countless homes across the county, where farmers have shifted from low-yield indigenous breeds to crossbred or exotic dairy cattle known for their high productivity.

With production on the rise, the county is now eyeing value addition. Governor Njuki is looking at establishing a milk processing plant in the region. This would not only reduce depen-

dency on external processors but also open up new income streams through products like yoghurt, cheese, butter, and packaged milk.

"Value addition is the next frontier," Governor Njuki said in a recent agricultural forum. "We want our farmers not just to produce more, but to earn more from what they produce. The plant will also create job opportunities for our youths"

A Holistic Agricultural Vision

Tharaka Nithi's agricultural revival does not end with dairy. Complementing the AI program is another flagship project: distribution of free certified seeds—green grams, maize, and beans—every rainy season.

This initiative, especially critical in drier parts of the county, has effectively ended perennial food shortages and reduced dependency on relief supplies from the national government.

"The seeds programme has restored dignity to our people," says Ms. Jane Muthengi, a green grams farmer in Munyari village Tharaka constituency. "Now, even households in semi-arid areas harvest enough to feed themselves and have a surplus

to sell."

Tharaka Nithi's approach to agricultural development offers a compelling model for other counties. Through well-targeted subsidies, investments in infrastructure, and forward-thinking leadership, the county has turned smallholder farming into a viable economic engine.

The subsidized AI services, in particular, are more than a breeding program—they are a symbol of empowerment, resilience, and the promise of prosperity. For farmers like Mr. Mutembei and Ms. Kagendo, the cow is no longer just a domestic animal—it is a cornerstone of financial freedom and a beacon of hope for a better future.

As the county marches toward its 2027 milk production target, the gains so far are a testament to what can be achieved when government and citizens work together toward a shared vision. Tharaka Nithi is no longer just milking cows—it is milking opportunity, innovation, and sustainable growth.

Worth Noting:

- Mr. Joseph Mutembei, a dairy farmer from Muthambi in Maara Constituency, is one of the thousands who have benefited from the program. Standing beside a pair of healthy, high-yield dairy cows in his neatly fenced farm, he reflects on how far he's come.

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- Like Mr. Mutembei, many farmers across the county have embraced the AI services, which have led to nearly 50,000 successful inseminations since the program's inception.

Parliamentary Committee Accuse EACC Of Undermining Its Work

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Marsabit Governor Mohamed Ali has told a watchdog committee of the Senate that he is keen to know the reasons for his arrest by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC).

Detectives from the anti-graft agency raided the County headquarters in March 2024 and arrested the Governor on allegation of multibillion corruption in the county.

Governor Ali's office was raided just a week after he had appeared before the Committee.

Other County Bosses who have been summoned to EACC are Governor Kimani Wamatangi (Kiambu) and Governor George Natembeya (Trans Nzoia).

However, more than one year later, the Governor has neither been arraigned nor been told the reason why he was arrested.

The matter became an issue of heated debate when the Governor ap-



Marsabit Governor Mohamed Ali explaining a point when he appeared before the committee yesterday.

peared before the County Public Accounts Committee (CPAC) yesterday.

The Committee, which is chaired by Senator Moses Kajwang, sought to know from the Governor why he was arrested and the status of the investigations, wondering how long it will take to conclude investigations, more

than a year later.

"We ask because our credibility as a committee is being threatened by lack of action from the EACC," he told the Committee even as he warned that the Commission had politicised the war on corruption.

"They announce arrests for optics



The committee during yesterday's session.

and we would like the EACC to tame its appetite for shouting," he added, noting that it should only focus on cases that it can win.

Senators Edwin Sifuna, Enock Wambua and Okongo Omogeni wondered how long it takes for EACC to investigate matters.

The Committee resolved to invite the Commission leadership to appear so as to explain the challenges they are facing and which appear to undermine investigations.

"After more than one year, it is only fair that the EACC makes settles this matter and lets the world to know whether the Governor is corrupt," said Senator Kajwang.

The Governor agreed saying that he found the raid at his office unfair, unprocedural and out of tune with the best practises.

"I am also waiting to know why the EACC did what they did to me."

MPs Condemn Alleged Killing Of Albert Ojwang', Call For Swift Investigation And Justice

By: PSCU

MPs drawn from Nyanza region led by Seme's James Nyikal have condemned the alleged killing of Albert Omondi Ojwang'.

In a press briefing yesterday Nyikal stated that one has a right to arrest, murder, or kill a person merely because he or she disagrees with their views.

"The death of Albert Omondi Ojwang', who was arrested in Homa Bay County on Saturday and turned up dead the next morning at Central Police Station in Nairobi, is a stark reminder that the question of police brutality is one whose answers we are yet to find," Nyikal said.

The MPs called on the President to take charge and restore order in the security apparatus of the nation arguing that Article 33 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information.

"It is time for the President to deploy the big broom and sweep away characters in the regime who abrogate themselves the power to determine the level of freedom enjoyed by citizens, and who play judge, jury and executioners, in perpetuating the growth of rogue culture in the country," the MPs said.

According to the MPs, the rise of social media as a tool of expression for especially young people, has created the space for expression of views and ideas that may not necessarily be popular with all, however, no one has a right to kill anyone but can sue for libel or slander.

"The death of Albert Ojwang' must not joint the statistics, as one more young person killed in vain. A red line must be drawn this time, upon which the investigation and prosecutions of those found culpable must be firm and swift," Nyikal said.

Millie Odhiambo Mabona from Suba North who was also present during the briefing called on the investigating agencies to move with swiftness and unearth what indeed killed the young man.



Millie Odhiambo with James Nyikal during the press briefing yesterday.

According to Odhiambo, the level of intolerance has spiraled in the country and no one should take someone's life just because they differ or attack them in social media platforms.

"We first want to know who gave order for the young man to be arrested. We are also calling on for swiftness in the investigation into this just like we saw in Were's case. Killing of people

is non-negotiable, if you differ there is a block button. So, we are calling on the government to crack the whip on these people who are violating human rights," she said.

Treasury CS To Present KSh4.2T Budget In Parliament

By: PSCU

National Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi is set to deliver his first official Budget Day speech on Thursday before the National Assembly.

The proposed national budget for the 2025/2026 Financial Year stands at KSh4.239 trillion and is anchored on President William Ruto's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) and the broader goals of Vision 2030.

The gross expenditure is structured into three key categories: KSh1.79 trillion for recurrent expenditure, KSh1.337 trillion for Consolidated Fund Services (CFS), and KSh707.8 billion for development expenditure.

Education has been allocated the highest share of the national government budget at KSh701.1 billion, representing 28.1 per cent. This will cover capitation grants, teacher salaries, and infrastructure development for both basic and higher education institutions.

The Energy, Infrastructure, and ICT sector follows with an allocation

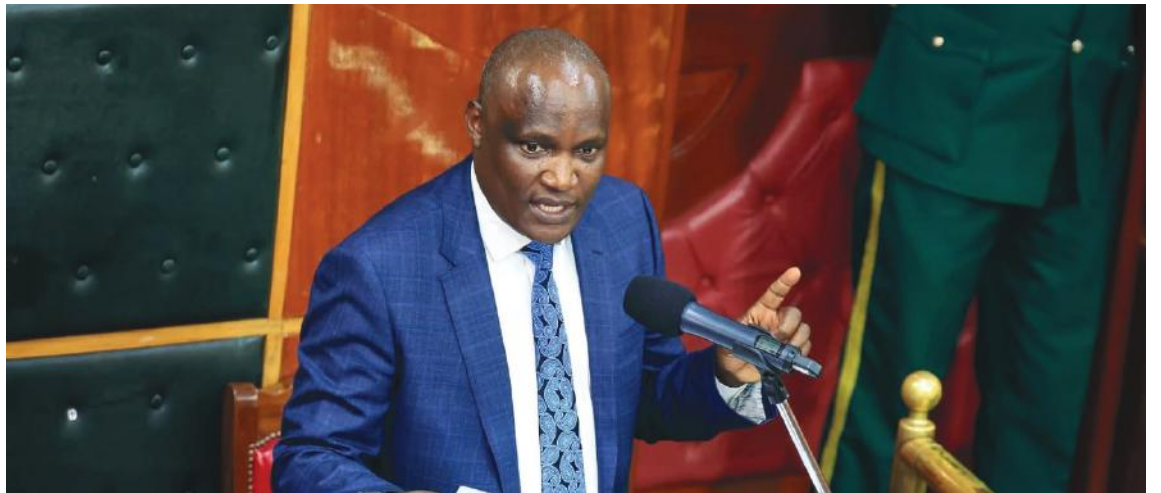
of KSh500.7 billion. This includes KSh195 billion for roads, KSh119 billion for housing and urban development, and KSh92 billion for the energy and petroleum sector.

National Security has been allocated KSh251 billion, while the health sector will receive KSh136.8 billion. Of this, KSh54 billion is earmarked for referral services, KSh16.6 billion for disease control programs, and KSh10 billion to support chronic and emergency illness interventions as part of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program.

The agriculture sector will receive KSh78 billion, which includes KSh8.2 billion for fertilizer subsidies and KSh10.2 billion to support value chain development.

To support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the government has set aside more than KSh12 billion. These funds will support County Aggregation and Industrial Parks as well as enterprise recovery programs. The MSME sector contributes an estimated 24 per cent to the country's GDP.

Counties are set to receive an equitable share of KSh405.1 billion to enhance service delivery at the de-



Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi during a past appearance in the National Assembly chambers. Photos/Courtesy.

involved level.

In housing, the government aims to deliver over 215,000 affordable housing units and 94,000 hostel beds. This initiative is expected to stimulate employment opportunities for youth and boost the construction sector.

The digital economy has been allocated KSh3.7 billion under the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Project. This funding will support the installation of 35,000 kilometers of fiber optic cable, connect 43,000 pub-

lic institutions, and establish 15,000 Wi-Fi hotspots nationwide.

The 2025/2026 Budget is based on a projected economic growth rate of 5.3 per cent, up from 4.7 percent in 2024. This growth is expected to be driven by improved performance in agriculture, tourism, construction, and information and communication technology.

"This budget must not only support growth but also safeguard the country from debt vulnerabilities," said

Samuel Atandi, the chairperson of the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Members of the National Assembly began debating the proposed estimates last week, ahead of the formal presentation by the Treasury CS.

The June 12 address is expected to offer clarity on how the government plans to finance the ambitious spending plan amid constrained fiscal space.

From Arrest To Death: The Final 48 Hours Of Albert Omondi Ojwang

By: Aoma Keziah

@themtkenyetimes

Police have opened an investigation into the death of blogger Albert Omondi Ojwang, who died while in custody at Central Police Station in Nairobi over the weekend.

Ojwang was arrested on Friday, June 6, in Homa Bay County by detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). Authorities say he was being held on suspicion of publishing false information, followed by complaint by his deputy Eliud Lagat, concerning the social media post.

He was later transferred to Nairobi, where he was questioned at DCI Headquarters on Saturday.

"Later that night, he was booked into Central Police Station. He was entered into the Occurrence Book (OB) at 9:35 p.m. In the early hours of Sunday morning, officers carrying out a routine inspection found him unconscious in his cell. He was taken

to Mbagathi Hospital for emergency treatment at around 1:39 a.m., but was declared dead on arrival," stated Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja

Accompanied by Deputy Inspector Generals Gilbert Masengeli and Eliud Lagat, the inspector General confirmed the events during a press briefing when he visited the Central Police Station, saying that the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) had been notified, as required by law, to begin a formal investigation.

"Given the circumstances, it was necessary to launch a full and independent review of the case," said Kanja.

The Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) Chairperson Isaac Hassan, also called for full transparency and accountability in the investigation surrounding the death of Ojwang.

"I saw Ojwang's father speak on television. I want to assure him and the public that IPOA will do everything possible to ensure that justice is served for the family," he affirmed.



In picture, the Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja, alongside his Deputy Inspector Generals Gilbert Masengeli and Eliud Lagat during a press briefing at the Central Police Station Nairobi.

To allow for an impartial process, several officers have been interdicted, including the Officer Commanding Station (OCS), the duty officer and cell sentry on shift that night, as well

as all officers who were stationed at the report office. Any other personnel found to have been involved will also face suspension as the investigation continues.

The police service says it will fully cooperate with IPOA and has pledged to support efforts to establish what led to Ojwang's death.

Waiguru's Football Tournament Get More Thrilling As Women Matches Kickoff

By: MKT Correspondent
 @themtkenyatimes

Governor Anne Waiguru's football tournament got into another critical stage on Sunday with the official kick-off of the Women's League running alongside the ongoing Men's Pool Stage matches.

Played across various venues, the day brought together energy, competition, and strong messages of inclusion and empowerment for women in sports.

Governor Anne Waiguru, who presided over the launch of the league, reaffirmed her administration's commitment to supporting all athletes.

The tournament whose theme is 'fomu ni futa badala ya kamnyweso' aims to provide the youth, both male and female, with the opportunity to nurture their talents.

"We want our young girls to also have equal opportunity to play and show that they can keep up with the boys," she said.

At Mukinduri Primary school

ground, Kiaga Starlets FC defeated Gathuthuma FC 3-0 in a thrilling match that marked the start of Pool A women's fixtures.

Team captain Hellen Nyawira said the team has all it takes to win the tournament.

"We are happy with our match-winning performance today, this performance serves to show that we are fully determined and have our eyes on the prize of 1 million shillings," she added.

Despite the loss, Gathuthuma FC captain Beatrice Muriuki expressed hope that the team will make a comeback and win remaining matches.

"As team captain I believe that despite our loss, we did our best and the practice has helped, the loss hurts but it is just the beginning of the tournament, so we still have a chance to redeem ourselves," she added.

Meanwhile, the Men's League moved into Week 11 with high-stakes matches in all four pools. At Kerugoya Stadium, Baricho FC took on Kiamaina FC while Njegas FC faced Kiranja FC. Mukinduri Grounds saw Gakoigo FC go head-to-head with



Kiburu FC. Over at Mwea Prison Ground, the crowd witnessed Jumbo T FC vs Ndindiruku FC, Silencer FC vs Mahigaini FC, and Mwea Prisons FC vs Thiba Stars FC.

Kianyaga Stadium featured Pool C clashes between Kiandai FC and Jubilee followed by Hot Bullet FC against Gathunguri FC. Kagio Primary School Playground hosted Pool D

games where Gitoiini FC faced Young Eagles FC and Ngothi FC battled Al-Muslim FC in fierce competition that drew large audiences.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Ndagani's Night Queens: The Women Who Keep A Sleeping Town Awake

By: Maxwell Omondi and Alex Njeru

@themtkenyatimes

As darkness drapes the township of Ndagani which hosts Chuka University in Tharaka Nithi County, most homes wind down, children are tucked in, and the streets fall silent. But while much of the town sleeps, a different kind of marketplace stirs quietly to life.

From 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., a group of resilient women transform this semi-urban space along the busy Nairobi-Meru highway into a makeshift bazaar. Their food stalls—dimly lit and minimally equipped—become lifelines for the town's night shift workers, from boda boda riders to hospital staff.

"I'm Janet Kamau, a resident of Ndagani," says one of the vendors, standing beside her modest stall. A single battery-powered lamp casts a soft glow on trays of hot potato chips, boiled eggs, and samosas. "I've been working here for four years. I sell things that are easy to eat on the go." Janet begins her second shift only af-

ter completing her first: making dinner, putting her children to bed, and preparing her supplies. Then, with a heavy bag on her back and heavier responsibilities on her shoulders, she walks through the hushed streets to her corner of the night.

"It's quiet at night, but not lonely," she adds with a faint smile. "We know each other here. We talk, we laugh when we can, and we support one another."

Her customers are those whose jobs keep them awake: taxi operators, watchmen, cleaners, and late-night commuters. Her stall offers more than just food—it offers a sense of community.

But behind the camaraderie and small talk is a struggle for survival.

"This market pays for everything—school fees, rent, hospital bills," Janet says. "But even then, it's not enough. Some days I go home with very little. Prices go up, but our customers' pockets don't grow. It's a struggle."

Just a few steps away, Lucy Ndeke tends to a sputtering charcoal stove, flipping chapatis with practiced ease. A night vendor for five years, Lucy switched to nocturnal business after

the daytime hustle proved unprofitable and overcrowded.

"At night, the customers are more consistent," she explains. "But that doesn't mean the money is good. Some nights we barely make anything after buying stock. You work the whole night and go home with almost nothing."

Challenges abound: cold nights that drive customers indoors, the ever-present fear of insecurity, and occasional harassment from intoxicated patrons.

"There are security lights but are not enough," Janet notes. Sometimes we get scared, especially when drunk people show up and start causing trouble. But we can't afford to leave because we depend on this place."

Beyond safety, exhaustion takes a heavy toll. By dawn, while others are waking up, these women are just winding down—only to begin another shift as mothers, caregivers, and homemakers.

"My shift ends at dawn, but my day isn't done," Janet says. "I go home, wake my children, prepare them for school, clean the house, and maybe catch a short nap, if I'm lucky."



Aerial view of Ndagani market in Tharaka Nithi County.

Yet, amidst the sleepless nights and harsh realities, hope endures. Both Janet and Lucy dream not of riches for themselves, but of better lives for their children.

"I want my children to rest at night," Lucy says. "I want them to have jobs where they don't have to worry about rain or fear. I want them to dream big."

In the stillness of Ndagani's nights, these women keep the heartbeat of the town alive. Unseen by most, uncelebrated by many, they are the silent engines of a fragile economy—carrying more than just food, but also the weight of resilience, hope, and survival.

Gambling's Grim Grip: A Generation At Risk

By: Victoria Mwende and Alex Njeru

@themtkenyatimes

In the tranquil village of Marimanti, nestled in the heart of Tharaka constituency, grief hangs heavily in the air. The Mwenda family is mourning the loss of their 22-year-old son, Daniel Mwenda—a bright university student whose future once shone with promise, but was tragically cut short. Daniel took his own life after falling deep into the clutches of sports betting—a habit that began with hope and ended in despair. His story is a painful example of a growing epidemic sweeping across the county and far beyond: the silent, seductive and often deadly lure of gambling among the youth.

Daniel's journey into betting began innocently enough. What started as small stakes placed on football matches quickly spiraled into addiction. Unable to escape the mounting debts and overwhelmed by shame, he chose a permanent escape, leaving behind a devastated family and a shocked community.

Across Tharaka Nithi, an increasing number of young people are falling

prey to the bright lights and false promises of the betting industry.

According to a 2023 report by Geo-Poll, a staggering 76% of Kenyan youth aged between 17 and 35 have participated in gambling—most commonly through football betting. Alarming, 40% of them place bets daily, often with money borrowed from friends, family, or mobile lenders.

"I started betting in December 2024," says Martin Munene, a 21-year-old from Chuka town. "At first, I was staking just 50 shillings. Then I started winning and thought I had found a way out of poverty. Now I bet up to 300 shillings a day, mostly on Aviator."

But behind the glossy promotions both online and on the billboards lies a grim reality—lost savings, ruined relationships, growing mental health issues, and in tragic cases like Daniel's, suicide.

"Many youths now consider betting a side hustle," says Danson, a 23-year-old student also from Chuka. "I began with the hope of raising school fees. But it has become something I can't control."

The accessibility of betting platforms and other online betting apps only makes things worse. With smart-

phones and internet bundles, betting can happen anytime, anywhere—between lectures, during work breaks, or even late at night in bed.

Authorities have taken some action. In November 2024, police conducted a major crackdown, seizing over 69 illegal gambling machines across the county. Officers reported that betting was fueling petty crime, school dropout rates, and domestic strife.

In some cases, desperate youth were caught selling household items—including their parents' property—just to fund their bets.

"It's a vicious cycle," says Mary Wanjiku, a local counselor who has seen a sharp rise in youth seeking mental health support. "They win once or twice, and then they're hooked. When they start losing, the stress becomes unbearable. We're seeing more cases of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts."

Wanjiku insists that combating gambling addiction requires more than enforcement. "We need a multi-pronged approach—community support, awareness campaigns, access to counseling, and better economic opportunities for our young people."

Government-led initiatives have started to take root, including digital literacy programs and entrepreneur-



Burning betting machines..

ship training. But experts warn that without active community involvement, the gains will be short-lived.

Teachers, parents, churches, and youth groups are being urged to open conversations about gambling and its risks. Meanwhile, calls are growing for tighter regulation of betting advertisements, especially those targeting young audiences.

As the country grapples with this modern menace, the memory of Daniel Mwenda lingers—a painful re-

minder of what's at stake. His mother, seated quietly beside his framed graduation photo, speaks through tears.

"He wanted to make us proud. He didn't know how to ask for help."

Daniel's story may have ended in tragedy, but it could also be a turning point. With united effort—from the ground up—there is still hope that other young lives can be saved before it's too late.

Boost For Kiambu Poultry Farmers As Korean Group Provides Inputs, Training For Increased production

By: John Kamau
@themkenyatimes

Poultry farmers in Kiambu County are upbeat about increasing their production after an international firm donated farm inputs and training on better practices to improve yields.

The Korean Programme for International Co-operation in Agriculture Technology (KOPIA) has already built a poultry house and stocked it for farmers in Kahero village in Kikuyu constituency as it seeks to spread the project in various parts of the county.

According to the country Director, Dr. Ji Gang Kim, KOPIA is seeking to empower small-scale farmers to embark on modern farming using the latest agricultural technologies, which will help them maximize production.

Speaking while unveiling the poultry farm for Kahero Farmers Group-A, a local farmers' group comprising women, men, and youth, Dr. Kim quipped that the farmers are benefiting from high-quality chicks, among other farm inputs, as well as training on the latest practices.

The training includes feed production and mixing for improved yields which comes amid high feed prices in the country, a problem that has seen most farmers make little or no profit from their ventures.

The Director noted that farmers have been struggling with low-quality and insufficient feeds hence low productivity and dwindled returns from their farming.

The training will help the farmers generate affordable quality feed recipes for poultry from locally available ingredients with a potential to be a game changer for struggling poultry farmers.

Dr Kim noted that the initiative will see the women and men groups manufacture their own poultry feeds and sell the surplus to local farmers. This, he said, will enable them to eke high proceeds from their farming and feed-making venture.

Kim noted that KOPIA has been training farmers on the need for adoption of modern farming technologies and the commercialization of harvests to increase their incomes.

"We will also be assisting the farmers to integrate their farming with modern and advanced technologies, such as improved hatcheries for better poultry rearing and upgraded crop-farming systems, the farmers' performance and profitability will be enhanced," he said.

The Director also pointed out that diseases have also been a major setback for poultry farmers noting that most of the farmers have been equipped with requisite knowledge and skills on how to deal with disease



Korean Programme for International Co-operation in Agriculture Technology (KOPIA) Kenya Director joins Kahero farmers in opening the poultry house donated to small-holder farmers.

outbreaks and how to prevent them.

"We are also training them on how to deal with poultry diseases for reduced losses. With the training, we hope to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills that will enable them to produce more, thereby enhancing their proceeds for better livelihoods," he said.

Dr Kim at the same time urged farmers to seek alternative markets, noting that market accessibility has been a major hiccup for small-scale farmers due to the influx of middlemen in the business.

Kim also revealed that besides introducing current technologies that facilitate enhanced production and offering farmers disease-resistant seedlings, the cooperation further seeks to introduce storage facilities to curb post-harvest losses for potatoes and other crops.

"We want to make a continuous rela-

tionship with farmers by contributing towards the development of the local community through introduction of tailor-made agricultural technologies. We intend to help farmers enjoy improved food safety, security and nutrition status," said Kim.

He noted that KOPIA will partner with the Kiambu County Government as well as other devolved units so as to reach out to many farmers in the region and the country at large.

Farmers led by Joyce Nyaruiru, Karongo Mbugua and Nancy Njeri hailed the project as transformative noting that it will perk up the living standards of most peasant farmers in the region and ensure they eke a living from the farming.

Nyaruiru, the chairperson of Kahero farmers' group reiterated that with the training they have received and linkages provided by KOPIA with other players in the industry will help im-

prove their production while cutting costs hence an assurance of increased returns.

Mbugua welcomed the training saying that it will turnaround their fortunes as they will be able to cut on production costs. He noted that most farmers have already quit farming due to high cost of production including expensive and low-quality feeds.

"With this training, we are now optimistic of becoming successful breeders and suppliers of improved indigenous chickens, which now fetch good prices in the market," he said.

Farmer Nancy Njeri said that poultry farming, a crucial venture for their economic sustainability and enhanced food security, should be supported by both the National and county governments so as to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.



A poultry house donated by KOPIA to small-holder farmers in Kahero village, Kikuyu constituency.

Worth Noting:

- The Director noted that farmers have been struggling with low-quality and insufficient feeds hence low productivity and dwindled returns from their farming.

- The training will help the farmers generate affordable quality feed recipes for poultry from locally available ingredients with a potential to be a game changer for struggling poultry farmers.

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Experts Urge Cooperatives To Embrace Tech, Broaden Investments

By: Wangari Ndirangu

@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Cooperative movement, though leading in Africa and being among the top five in the world in terms of membership and deposits, is yet to deepen its presence in other sectors of the economy.

CIC Insurance Group Chairman Nelson Kuria, however, says that the cooperative societies in the country have made strong strides, mainly in financial deepening, especially in serving customers outside the mainstream financial ecosystem.

“Our cooperative movement is thriving well on the continent and globally. Recently controlling more than Sh1 trillion worth of assets and very healthy loan books in addition to controlling more than 30 per cent of the national savings,” he said.

Kuria, who was giving a talk to cooperative leaders on ‘making cooperatives work’ during a Cooperative Alliance of Kenya (CAK) forum on the Ethical Leadership and Governance Forum for Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), noted that the movement has also succeeded in the development of human capital as well as creating rural wealth.

“All this can be attributed to the vision initiated by the pioneer fathers and maintenance of the same by the succeeding leaders, but despite SACCOs thriving in enhancing financial deepening for income earners, competition in the market segment has been increasing as commercial banks have equally developed products targeting the small earners.

Kuria noted that it is time that cooperative societies in the country diversify their areas of interest in the economy in order to strengthen their resilience to endure the cutthroat competition in the global market.

“Our SACCOs are doing better than some commercial banks in terms of deposits and membership and our success as a cooperative movement has attracted other countries on the continent to come for benchmarking and the country has equally exported human resources to other African countries to help in initiating cooperative movements,” he noted.

However, Kuria argued that the cooperative societies are yet to deepen their presence in various sectors of the economy, for example, hospitality, health, education, mining, wholesale and retail, and industrial economic zones.

“These are areas that, even though

the societies have invested in, are yet to deepen their potential in order to be more competitive in the global market. One strategy to help in exploiting the untapped areas is through business integration and innovation. This will help in consolidating and increasing resources within the cooperative ecosystem,” he added.

Business integration, if well managed, can produce impressive results and thus serve as a case study to other trade players yearning to incorporate their businesses. Kuria acknowledged this, noting that some institutions in the past tried to incorporate their business units but failed due to corruption, leadership wrangles, conflicts of interest, and lack of innovation and foresight.

“Integration is a key component to stimulate high business growth. But it is not easy to achieve, as the same requires sound management, a high level of innovation, and visionary leadership,” said Kuria and urged the cooperative leadership to shift from a self-mentality to a broad-based approach encompassing current business realities.

Cooperative Alliance of Kenya (CAK) Chairman McCloud Malonza confirmed that the movement, in conjunction with the government, is fast-tracking capacity building of leaders to equip them with the necessary skills to survive in the current business environment.

He added that the cooperative movement has grown over time despite some challenges and also competition from big corporations.

He specifically mentioned governance issues, which he termed unfortunate, and named the ongoing legal and financial issues surrounding the Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives (KUSCCO).

“There is no sector that is 100 per cent; but we want to be there, and that is why we are reinforcing the issue of governance and values in leadership, which should be about change and transformation for the people we are leading, and that is why we are in this meeting,” he reiterated.

Malonza said the cooperative bill, which is currently at the Senate level, once passed, will ensure addressing long-standing governance and management challenges bedeviling the movement.

“Going forward, our mission is to strengthen the institutions and help our cooperative organisations to cope with the changing global business dynamics,” Malonza said.

Thomas Gachie, CEO of CoopTech, a cooperative-owned technology



From left: Daniel Marube, CEO CAK; Thomas Gachie, CEO CoopTech; McCloud Malonza, Chairman CAK; and CIC insurance group Chairman Nelson Kuria during the Ethical, leadership and governance forum at Naivasha..

company that supports and provides shared services to the cooperative movement in Kenya, told the 56 leaders representing the movement to incorporate technology in their services. “When we build the ecosystem using CoopTech, it means that we are going to reach the members from their homes, where they can access cooperative services, transact on their phones without having to go to apply for a loan from the cooperative branches,

access credit facilities, or even make transactions from anywhere within the Country.

Gachie noted that the sum total of technologies that have been put in place by individual SACCOs runs in the tens of billions of shillings, but now, through the creation of a shared capability, money spent on technology within the movement will reduce.

“CoopTech will be able to accelerate uniform technology adoption and

information sharing, which will inadvertently result in lower fees for its members through economies of scale on transaction volumes,” he said.

Gachie further said that the utilisation of the shared platform will strengthen industry risk management, sound commercial agreements, and secure transactions and bring convenience to customers.



Nelson Kuria..

14 POEMS

Choose A Good Heart Not A Good Face



A good heart offers a comforting space,
A shoulder to lean on in troubled times
A gentle touch that wipes away tears,
A love that lasts, through all of life's fears.

These qualities aren't found in pretty faces
But it is found in the hearts of those who show love
So choose a good heart, and you'll find all good,
That is the best treasure for anyone.
It will be forever so kind.

Brinda. D

MRS. BRINDA.D
Teacher

CREATIVE WRITERS GRADUATE
TEACHER, GOVT HIGH SCHOOL,
MELPATTAMPAKKAM CUDDALORE,
Tamilnadu India

Always choose a heart that's kind and true,
Not just a face that's beautiful to view.
A good heart is hidden deep inside,
While a face may shine, outside

Look beyond external appearances
Choose qualities that shine with might.
Seek kindness, sympathy, and empathy
Compassion that flows, not artificial love

Roho ya Korosho



Wewe mvimbisha kichwa, ninazungumza nawe,
Acha kujifanya mchwa, kuniona mimi jiwe,
Unadhani nimeachwa, sababu siendi nawe?
Mwenye roho ya korosho, je unafaidi nini?

Wewe wajifanya bubu, nia yako iko wazi,
Kweli ulinighilibu, ndipo ukapande ngazi,
Sasa utapata tabu, kama ndiyo yako kazi,
Mwenye roho ya korosho, je unafaidi nini?

Wewe hata huna haya, unachofanya si sawa,
Ndiyo ya kwako tabiya, tangu ulipozaliwa,
Kizuri kwako kiba ya, husiti kukichukua,
Mwenye roho ya korosho, je unafaidi nini?

Mtunzi: Alfred Lobawoi
Mahali: Ruiru

Wewe usiyenitaka, kuniona hadharani,
Kisa chuki umeweka, wanidharuliani?
Mimi nisiye na shaka, nina zangu hamkani,
Mwenye roho ya korosho, je unafaidi nini?

Buriani Nguli Ngúgi Wa Thiong'o



Thiong'o

4.

Wastahiki maziko ya hadhi iso mfano
Mzee wetu uliko, Mola kakupe usono
Latukaba hangaiko, waandishi tu hapano
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa Thiong'o

5.

Maudhui ainati ya vya taifa vituko
Yote uliweka kati, ukamwa wapenda choko
Kwenye zako harakati, hukutishwa na viboko
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa Thiong'o

6.

Ulitaka badiliko, katika siasa zetu
Ulipinga machafuko ya kuvunja utu wetu
Wengi twapiga vidoka, twakupeza kito chetu
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa Thiong'o

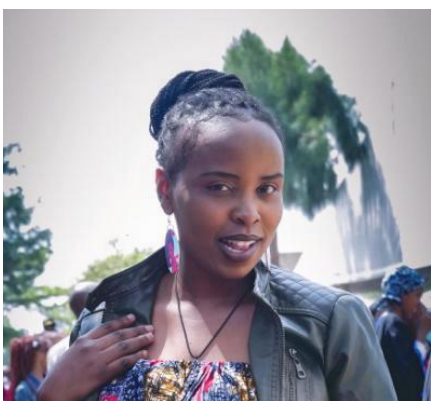
Mtunzi: Paul Ndetei
Lakabu: Mshairi Msi Shari
Nairobi

1.
Nyoyo zimetuatua, habari za kifo chako
Ni zaidi ya Tanzania, lakithiri sikitiko
Mengi umetuachia, nguli ulokwenda zako
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa Thiong'o

2.
Mbinu ya kalamu yako, litikisa miamba
Hukutoa neno lako, ovyo likenda kuumba
Yasikitisha mauko, hapa mbolezi twaimba
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa Thiong'o

3.
Ujombani Mlimani, uliko usuli wako
Mila zetu na imani, pamoya nayo miiko
Uliweka vitabuni, tena bila babaiko
Pumzika kwa amani, Fundi Ngúgi wa

Moments



We often place our attention
In the past or future,
But that makes us
Miss what passes before our eyes.
For everything, all fulfillment,
Exists in that fleeting moment.

When we want to feel love,
To give love, to express it,
We can only do so in the present moment.
But all regret and hopelessness
Belong to the past or the future.

The present holds only bliss, joy, and happiness.
Nothing exists beyond this moment.
A life fully lived is always lived in the present—
No escape, only purpose, revealed to you.
The moment finds gods within us .

By Cathren Gathoni

Life is a moment after a moment.
In a second, a moment becomes past,
And the future becomes present.
In truth, past and future
Live only in the mind—
And only the moment exists.
If you want to feel happiness
Or enjoy anything,
You cannot do so without being in the moment.
And this fleeting moment of time
Is all we ever truly have.

Try not to ignore the present moment.

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BUSINESS

Agriculture Remains Pillar Of Kenya's GDP Despite Slower Growth In 2024



By: Aoma Keziah
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- “The nominal GDP rose to KES 16.2 trillion from KES 15 trillion the previous year. The service sector made up 61.1% of the economy, with agriculture contributing 22.5%. GDP per capita also grew, reaching KES 309,460 in 2024, up from KES 291,770 in 2023,” stated Alpesh Vadher, PKF East Africa Chief Executive Officer
- To support economic activity, the Central Bank cut the policy rate to 10% in April 2025 from 11.25% in December 2024. Other short-term rates also eased, including the 91-day Treasury bill rate, which fell to 8.29% in May. While average commercial bank lending rates remained high at 16.89%, PKF expects further downward pressure on rates due to easing global inflation and falling global interest rates.

According to PKF Kenya, an accounting and business advisory firm, Kenya's economy expanded by 4.7% in 2024, slowing slightly from 5.7% the year before. The performance still reflects resilience in several sectors, although the country faces structural challenges that need close attention.

They say that Growth was mainly supported by services and agriculture, the financial and insurance sectors grew by 7.6%, while real estate and transport also showed improvement. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing grew by 4.6% a slowdown compared to 2023, but still a key driver of GDP. However, the construction sector contracted by 0.7%, and mining saw an even steeper drop of 9.2%, dragged down by lower production of key minerals.

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“Inflation cooled to 4.5% in 2024, the lowest rate in five years, lower food prices were the main factor. Inflation is expected to stay within the official target range, supported by a stable exchange rate and reduced energy costs,” Vadher added.

The Kenyan Shilling regained ground in 2024, strengthening against major currencies like the US dollar and Euro. PKF attributes this to stronger investor confidence, boosted by the refinancing of the 2024 Eurobond and successful issuance of infrastructure bonds. Many investors shifted funds from foreign currency holdings to local bonds, increasing the supply of dollars in the market.

The currency also benefited from external factors, including a weaker US dollar driven by changes in trade policy. Within East Africa, the Ken-



In picture, Alpesh Vadher, PKF East Africa Chief Executive Officer, James Mulili, Director Tax at PKF, and Michael Mburugu, Regional Tax Partner PKF during a media engagement in Nairobi.

yan Shilling gained against the Ugandan and Tanzanian currencies but lost ground to the Rwandan Franc.

“By June 2024, Kenya's public debt stood at just under KES 10 trillion. Domestic debt rose by over 12%, and multilateral debt increased slightly, with the IMF's exposure rising by 25.5%. We note that while debt remains sustainable, it is still a concern, especially in light of global economic volatility. The Government aims to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio to around 55% by 2028 through fiscal consolidation and increased use of concessional borrowing,” explained James Mulili, Director Tax PKF.

The 2024/25 budget projects a deficit of KES 862.7 billion. Tax revenue is expected to reach KES 2.5 trillion, but PKF cautions that this will be a tall order given current economic conditions and a narrow tax base.

They also noted that the Government's effort to widen the tax net has shown progress. In 2023/24, over 1.2 million new taxpayers were added, and tax revenues increased by KES 24.6 billion under the expansion strategy. Despite this, compliance

remains low relative to the country's adult population.

“We support the ongoing measures like improved rental income monitoring, digital platform taxation, and stricter enforcement, but the gap between potential and actual collections remains wide,” Mulili added.

On the Finance Bill 2025, they said it proposes a major shift in how tax incentives are offered, expressing concerns over plans to restrict the carry forward of tax losses to five years, repeal key investment deductions, and remove preferential corporate tax rates for manufacturers and developers. These changes, if implemented, could hurt investment and long-term growth.

“Further, proposals to change how VAT refunds are handled may worsen cash flow issues for businesses, even as they aim to reduce backlog and plug revenue leakages,” the PKF Tax Director continued to say.

One controversial proposal in the Finance Bill is the removal of legal restrictions that prevent the tax authority from accessing trade secrets and personal data, the company rais-

es strong objections to this, saying it undermines privacy protections and could damage trust between taxpayers and authorities. The lack of a clear legal framework for data protection adds to the risk.

The firm also emphasizes the need for a consistent tax environment. The National Tax Policy and the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy, both introduced in 2023, were intended to address this, but progress has been limited. Frequent and unpredictable changes to tax laws remain a major concern for businesses.

PKF believes that Kenya's economic outlook for 2025 is broadly positive, with growth expected to continue, especially if favorable weather supports agriculture and global interest rates keep falling. However, it cautions that this growth must be balanced with responsible debt management, a fair tax regime, and better policy consistency to build long-term resilience.

Lobby Raises Alarm Over Increasing Alcoholism Rates, Urge Youth To Harness Creativity For Economic Empowerment

By: John Kamau
 @themkenyatimes

A lobby group has raised alarm over increasing alcoholism rates among youths in the country and especially central Kenya.

Rose Kirika Foundation; a group led by Kiambu County Deputy Governor Rosemary Kirika, claims that most youths in the region have resorted to alcoholism and drug abuse due to frustrations in life including unemployment and poverty.

The group maintains that deliberate and concerted efforts must be adopted so as to salvage and free the youth from the shackles of brews and substance abuse.

Speaking while marking the first anniversary of the Foundation at a Nairobi Hotel over the weekend, Mrs Kirika said she was jostled into taking action after realizing that a large number of those who attend political meetings are usually intoxicated and in a state of despair.

“During the 2022 campaign period, I observed that a big percentage of those who attended the political rallies were intoxicated and I resolved that if God gave us the favour to lead

Kiambu County, one of my main objectives would be to restore sobriety in our society,” she said.

Kirika said that her Foundation has been focusing on Psychological training and advocacy, economic empowerment of reformed addicts as well as talent development adding that they will adopt a family approach to complete partnering with corporates, academic institutions, expert trainers, churches, the government and other stakeholders to ensure success of the fight.

During the event, Rev Fredrick Nguni-a Board Member of the National Authority For the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), said statistics show that at least 4.1 per cent of men in Nairobi and Central Kenya are addicted to alcohol.

“About one in six people is using one or another drug or substance and the most affected are men because one in every three is using either drugs or alcohol. The initiative by this foundation is worth our support and especially to fight the menace in Central region which is worst affected by the menace,” the official said.

He noted that Nacada will partner with Rose Kirika Foundation in conducting trainings on prevention and treatment including the aftercare

handling of the affected in the region with target areas being schools and tertiary institutions.

Economic Empowerment

Meanwhile, Mrs Kirika made a clarion call to the youth urging them to turn their creativity and education into tools for self-reliance and economic empowerment rather than languishing in hopelessness over unemployment.

She asserted that many of the world’s most successful businesses were built from scratch by daring individuals who turned their dreams into action.

Kirika expressed concern over the rising levels of joblessness, which she said had pushed many young people into depression, hopelessness, and substance abuse.

She divulged that her Foundation in partnership with Bellafam Africa and Equity Bank has already imparted crucial apiculture training to youth and farmers’ groups within Kiambu County.

The programme is aimed at providing farmers with an alternative source of income. They were trained on general beekeeping, honey bee biology and behavior, bee botany, beekeeping equipment, honey bee diseases, pests and predators, hive



Rose Kirika Foundation Rosemary Kirika speaking during the anniversary celebrations in Nairobi.

products processing and marketing and product utilization and quality control.

During the event, a section of youths led by Peter Kuria who is also one of the Foundation’s mentees highlighted the urgent need for grassroots-level interventions to combat drug abuse and foster empowerment for youths.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Maryanne Waithera who rallied both the National and county governments to support and fund youth-led ventures and especially agricultural activities.

Waithera- a Biotechnology graduate

who now deals with Azolla farming- noted that if well supported, agriculture can absorb a significant number of unemployed young people and contribute meaningfully to food security and economic growth.

Dr Sonvir Singh, the Group Chairman at Shri Krishana overseas Ltd who was the chief guest at the event called on community members, leaders, and institutions to rally behind initiatives that promote youth development, entrepreneurship, and mental health awareness which he described as critical pillars in reversing the tide of unemployment and substance abuse.

Cuzo Chronicles: When Former Dp Rigathi Gachagua Turned Politics Into A Family Affair Along The Coast

By: David Nyaga
 @themkenyatimes

During an extensive political tour along Kenya’s coast, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, accompanied by Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka, brought an unexpected twist to his public addresses. Instead of the usual formal salutations, Gachagua greeted crowds with a hearty “Cuzo”, a casual slang for “cousin” that instantly caught everyone’s attention.

This informal, street-style greeting quickly became the talk of the region. What began as a simple attempt to connect with the coastal communities turned into a viral moment that transcended the rally grounds.

Across social media platforms like TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook, young Kenyans have em-

braced “Cuzo!” with humor and creativity. Memes, parody videos, and witty posts flooded timelines, turning the Deputy President’s phrase into a national joke and a trending hashtag. The phrase has found its way into casual conversations, chat groups, and even daily banter, much to the amusement and sometimes bewilderment of the public.

Supporters argue that the greeting was a clever way for Gachagua to break down political barriers and present himself as a relatable figure. In a country where ethnic and political identities often dictate alliances, calling people “cuzo” was a subtle message of unity and kinship, especially along the diverse coastal region.

Critics, however, dismiss the moment as mere populist theatrics, questioning if catchy phrases can substitute serious policy discussions. Regardless, the “Cuzo!” greeting has undeniably sparked conversa-



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, and Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka

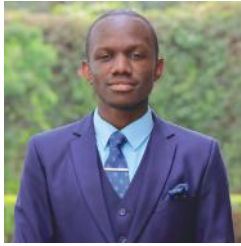
tion, laughter, and a renewed interest in political engagement among the youth.

In Kenyan politics, where messaging often shapes public perception,

Gachagua’s “Cuzo” moment proved that sometimes, a single word, casual, catchy, and unexpected can reverberate louder than a thousand speeches. Whether embraced or

mocked, “Cuzo” has become part of Kenya’s political lexicon, at least for now.

When The Guardians Become Executioners: A Nation's Cry For Justice In The Wake Of Albert Ojwang's Tragic Death



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
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Death is one sure thing in the natural order of existence but meeting it in the hands of the men in blue saddens the soul and renders the heart heavy with grief that pierces through the very fabric of our humanity. The tragic and deeply unsettling death of Albert Omondi Ojwang in police custody is not merely a statistic to be filed away in government reports, it is a damning indictment of a system that has lost its moral compass, a brutal reminder of the unchecked impunity that continues to fester like an untreated wound within our law enforcement agencies.

Here was a young teacher, a beacon of knowledge and hope, a father to a young child whose laughter will forever echo in empty rooms, whose only transgression was exercising his constitutional right to free expression. He was arrested under the cover of darkness, spirited away from his family like a common criminal, and delivered into the hands of those sworn to protect and serve, only to emerge hours later as another cold statistic of custodial death. This is not justice; this is state-sanctioned murder dressed in the uniform of law enforcement. As James Baldwin once wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced" and today, we face the ugly truth of what our police force has become.

The mobilization of the entire machinery of the National Police Service, with all its resources and personnel, to pursue what is fundamentally a civil matter of alleged defamation is both galling and deeply ironic, representing a gross misallocation of state power that would be laughable if it were not so tragic. The Constitution of Kenya is unequivocal in its protection of freedom of expression and due process, principles that form the bedrock of any civilized democracy.

Defamation, by every legal standard and precedent established in our courts, is a civil dispute; not a criminal enterprise warranting midnight arrests and deadly detentions that transform police stations into execution chambers. The weaponization of criminal law to settle what should be civil disagreements represents a dangerous erosion of the rule of law and a return to the dark days of authoritarian rule. When police officers become judge, jury, and executioner over matters that belong in civil courts, we witness the complete breakdown of the separation of powers that protects citizens from tyranny. This is not law enforcement; this is state terrorism against its own people, disguised in the language of maintaining order.



Albert Ojwang.

Custodial deaths are not merely unacceptable, they are an abomination that strikes at the very heart of our humanity, eroding public trust in law enforcement and signaling a terrifying disregard for the sanctity of human life that should be sacred to every civilized society. The Constitution, under Article 29, guarantees every Kenyan the right to freedom and security of the person, including the explicit right not to be subjected to any form of violence from either public or private sources and freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. These are not mere words on paper; they are the sacred covenant between the state and its citizens, a promise that has been broken with Albert's blood. When a citizen enters police custody, they enter a sacred trust the state becomes their guardian, responsible for their safety, their dignity, and their life. That trust has been shattered, ground into dust beneath the boots of officers who have forgotten that the uniform they wear is meant to serve, not to terrorize. As Nelson Mandela reminded us, "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity" and in the cells of Central Police Station, Albert Ojwang's humanity was not just challenged but extinguished.

Custodial deaths are not statistical anomalies or unfortunate accidents that can be explained away with bureaucratic doublespeak they are systematic violations of the most fundamental human right: the right to life, which stands as the foundation upon which all other rights are built. Every time a Kenyan dies in police custody,

we witness the complete collapse of the social contract between the state and its citizens, a contract written not in law books but in blood and tears. How can we trust a police force that cannot guarantee the basic safety of those in their care, that transforms detention cells into death chambers? How can we have faith in a justice system where being arrested for a social media post becomes a death sentence, where words on a screen warrant the ultimate punishment without trial, without defense, without mercy? The badge has become a license to kill, the uniform a shield against accountability, and the police station a place where justice goes to die. This is not the Kenya our forefathers envisioned, not the democracy they fought and died to establish. As Maya Angelou powerfully stated, "Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible" and the prejudice against citizens' rights by those in uniform has rendered justice inaccessible to the very people it should protect.

The interdiction of officers is mere window dressing, a cosmetic response to a cancer that has metastasized throughout our entire criminal justice system, spreading its poison from the lowest constable to the highest ranks of command. The interdiction of the officers at Central Police Station and the involvement of the Independent Policing Oversight Authority are necessary steps, but they are cold comfort to a nation that has seen too many such investigations fade into oblivion like morning mist, with justice perpetually delayed and

systematically denied. We have witnessed this theatrical performance before officers suspended with pay, investigations launched with fanfare, families promised justice that never comes, and eventually, silence as the media moves on and public attention wanes. This cycle of impunity must end, for it makes a mockery of our courts, our constitution, and our collective conscience. The family of Albert Ojwang deserves more than empty promises and bureaucratic procedures; they deserve answers, accountability, and above all, justice that is swift, decisive, and uncompromising. As Martin Luther King Jr. warned us, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," and the injustice in Central Police Station threatens the very foundation of justice in our entire nation.

Justice Ogolla's landmark decision in the Alexander Monson case made it crystal clear that police officers who torture, deny treatment, or fail in their fundamental duty of care to those in custody are criminally liable, and their actions constitute a gross violation of the right to life and dignity that cannot be overlooked or forgiven. The chilling echoes of that case resound through the corridors of Central Police Station today, where yet another family has been left to mourn a son, a father, a teacher whose only mistake was to speak his mind in a country that supposedly guarantees freedom of expression.

Worth Noting:

- The mobilization of the entire machinery of the National Police Service, with all its resources and personnel, to pursue what is fundamentally a civil matter of alleged defamation is both galling and deeply ironic, representing a gross misallocation of state power that would be laughable if it were not so tragic. The Constitution of Kenya is unequivocal in its protection of freedom of expression and due process, principles that form the bedrock of any civilized democracy.

- Defamation, by every legal standard and precedent established in our courts, is a civil dispute; not a criminal enterprise warranting midnight arrests and deadly detentions that transform police stations into execution chambers.

A Generation On The Edge: Gen Z Graduates Grapple With Joblessness, Depression And Drugs

By: David Nyaga
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They graduate with hope in their eyes, degrees clutched tightly, parents watching proudly, dreams freshly born. But what follows for many of Kenya's Gen Z is not the life they envisioned. Beneath the academic gowns lies a quiet storm, unemployment, mental distress, and growing substance abuse.

An investigative look into the lives of recent graduates reveals a troubling pattern. Months, even years after leaving campus, thousands remain jobless. Some have resorted to casual labor, others are simply idle, living under the weight of unmet expectations.

X, a 25-year-old communication graduate, describes life post-graduation as "a slow collapse." After applying to over 100 jobs without

a single callback, X spends most days indoors, drained and anxious. "Sometimes, I stay in bed until mid-day. I have no reason to get up," X says.

In more alarming cases, joblessness is driving some into drugs. Y, who studied business management, turned to marijuana and prescription pills to "numb the silence." It began as weekend use, now, it's daily. "It makes me forget I'm wasting away," Y confesses.

Mental health professionals confirm a rise in depression among young adults. The pressure to succeed, paired with limited opportunities, is pushing many over the edge. Social expectations, employment, independence and marriage, now feel out of reach for a generation raised to believe in upward mobility.

Even relationships are affected. "How do I marry or start a family when I can't afford to support myself?" X asks, reflecting a common



fear among peers. The traditional timeline of adulthood has shattered.

What emerges is a grim picture: a well-educated generation, brimming with potential, slowly sinking under

economic strain and psychological distress.

Unless deliberate interventions are made, from employment reforms to youth mental health support, this

generation risks becoming the most educated, yet most broken in the nation's history.

When The Guardians Become Executioners: A Nation's Cry For Justice In The Wake Of Albert Ojwang's Tragic Death

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The Monson precedent established that ignorance is not a defense, that following orders is not justification, and that the uniform does not grant immunity from the law principles that seem to have been forgotten in the darkness of police cells. Albert's death is not an isolated incident but part of a pattern, a systematic failure that has turned our police stations into houses of horror where citizens enter alive and leave as corpses. The legal precedent is clear, the constitutional principles are unambiguous, yet officers continue to act with the confidence of men who believe they are above the law. As Chinua Achebe observed, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" and the leadership of our police force has failed not just Albert Ojwang, but every Kenyan who believes in justice.

This tragedy transcends the individual case of Albert Ojwang; it represents every Kenyan who has

been silenced by fear, brutalized by power, or killed under the false pretext of law enforcement in a system that has lost its way. It is about the systematic misuse of police powers to settle personal scores, intimidate critics, and suppress the very dissent that is essential to a healthy democracy. It is about a justice system that now stands at a crossroads, forced to decide whether it will stand with the people who fund it, vote for it, and believe in it, or with the perpetrators of state violence who have turned the instruments of justice into weapons of oppression. The badge that should symbolize protection has become a mark of fear; the uniform that should inspire confidence now instills terror in the hearts of ordinary citizens. When teachers fear to speak, when fathers are afraid to express opinions, when citizens self-censor for fear of death, we have not achieved order we have created a police state. This is not about politics or personalities; this is about the fundamental question of whether Kenya will remain a democracy or slide into the abyss of authoritarianism where might makes right and the strong prey upon the weak.

We must ask ourselves as a nation: How many more Albert Ojwangs must die before the state acknowledges that a badge is not a license to kill and a uniform is not a shield against accountability that protects the guilty while condemning the innocent? The time for half-measures and hollow promises has passed; the moment for decisive action is now, before more families join the tragic fellowship of those who have lost loved ones to police brutality. We demand nothing less than a transparent, public, and genuinely independent investigation into Albert Ojwang's death that leaves no stone unturned and no question unanswered.

We demand the immediate prosecution of all those responsible not just the foot soldiers who carried out the killing, but those who gave the orders, those who created the culture of impunity, and those who continue to shield murderers from accountability. We demand prompt and regular feedback on the progress of investigations, not the usual bureaucratic silence that allows cases to die in dusty files. We demand comprehensive police reforms that transform our law enforcement from



Albert Ojwang.

an occupying army into a service that truly protects and serves all Kenyans regardless of their social media posts or political opinions. The Constitution is not a suggestion to be ignored when convenient; justice is non-negotiable and cannot be bartered away for temporary peace. The blood of Albert Ojwang cries out from the ground for answers, and this nation will not rest, will not be silent, will

not be pacified until every stone is turned, every lie exposed, every cover-up unraveled, and every guilty party from the constable to the commander is brought to book and made to face the full weight of the law they have so callously violated.

The writer is a legal researcher and lawyer

The Unseen Hand: Cyber Espionage, African Sovereignty, And The Imperative For Digital Independence



By: Silas Mwandasheni Nande
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In an era defined by bits and bytes, the battlefield of nations has extended beyond conventional borders, finding its most insidious frontier in the digital realm. The notion that major global powers engage in cyber espionage against other nations to gain economic, political, and strategic advantages is no longer a fringe theory but a well-established reality.¹ This pervasive activity carries particularly profound implications for African nations, whose vast natural resources, burgeoning economies, and increasing geopolitical significance render them undeniably attractive targets. When an African nation's financial, intelligence, and military systems are infiltrated, or its critical communications compromised, the consequences are dire: a weakened negotiating position, exposed vulnerabilities, and a direct undermining of national sovereignty. This critical analysis will delve deep into this alarming phenomenon, examining the motivations behind such espionage, its tangible impacts on African states, and charting a robust path forward for the continent to branch out independently, ensuring its safety and safeguarding its digital future.

The New Gold Rush: Why Africa is a Prime Target for Cyber Espionage
Africa's rising profile on the global stage, marked by demographic growth, increasing urbanization, and significant economic potential, has unfortunately made it a magnet for covert digital operations. Global powers are not merely observing; they are actively seeking to exploit digital weaknesses to secure advantages across multiple fronts.

1. Resource Riches and Economic Intelligence: Africa remains the world's richest continent in terms of natural resources, including critical minerals essential for global industries like rare earths, cobalt, lithium, and vast reserves of oil, gas, and agricultural land. Cyber espionage targeting African ministries of mining, energy, finance, and trade can provide invaluable insights into resource reserves, extraction costs, projected outputs, and, crucially, negotiation strategies for lucrative deals. Knowing a nation's bottom line or its internal assessment of a resource's value can grant a foreign power immense leverage in trade agreements, investment bids, or even land acquisition. Intelligence on national budgets, economic diversification plans, or upcoming ma-

ior infrastructure projects also falls into this category, allowing external actors to pre-empt opportunities or shape market conditions to their benefit.

2. Geopolitical Influence and Diplomatic Leverage: Africa's collective voice, particularly through the African Union (AU) and regional blocs, carries increasing weight in international forums like the United Nations.² Understanding the internal political dynamics, policy intentions, and strategic alignments of African leaders and nations is paramount for global powers seeking to build alliances, secure votes, or counter rival influences. Cyber espionage targeting foreign ministries, diplomatic missions, and the personal communications of high-ranking officials can yield sensitive information that can be used to predict policy shifts, influence diplomatic outcomes, or even create divisions.³ For instance, intelligence about a nation's stance on a critical UN resolution, its internal debates on a trade agreement, or its relationship with a competing global power can be exploited to apply targeted pressure or offer tailored incentives.

3. Military Capabilities and Strategic Advantage: While many African militaries may not possess the most advanced hardware, their strategic locations, peacekeeping roles, and involvement in regional conflicts make them targets for military intelligence gathering. Cyberattacks on defense ministries, military communications, and intelligence agencies can expose troop movements, logistical plans, equipment inventories, and strategic doctrines.⁴ Such intelligence provides a clear advantage in potential conflicts, counter-terrorism operations (where shared intelligence can be controlled), or even in influencing arms deals. Understanding an African nation's defense weaknesses or its internal security challenges can also inform a foreign power's regional security strategies or its capacity-building efforts, potentially shaping the recipient's military trajectory.

4. Technological Adoption and Inherent Vulnerabilities: Many African nations have embraced digital transformation at a rapid pace, often leapfrogging older technologies directly into mobile and cloud-based systems.⁵ While this offers immense potential, it has frequently outpaced the development of robust cybersecurity infrastructure, skilled personnel, and comprehensive regulatory frameworks. This creates a fertile ground for cyberattacks. Nascent security cultures, reliance on imported technologies with potential inherent vulnerabilities, and a shortage of indigenous cybersecurity talent make these rapidly digitalizing societies relatively 'softer' targets compared to more mature cyber powers. This asymmetry of preparedness is a key factor in why Africa is so frequently targeted.

Case Studies: The Tangible Impacts of Cyber Infiltration



While the covert nature of cyber espionage means many incidents remain undisclosed, publicly available information and expert analyses paint a concerning picture of compromise across various critical sectors in Africa.

A. Financial Systems: Erosion of Economic Sovereignty

Infiltrations of financial institutions and central banks are arguably the most damaging, as they directly threaten a nation's economic stability and integrity.

1. Central Bank of Kenya (CBK): Reports in 2024 indicated that an Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) group, widely linked to state-sponsored Chinese actors (APT41), allegedly infiltrated the Central Bank of Kenya. The suspected objective was to gain insights into Kenya's emerging digital currency (e-Shilling) transactions and broader economic policy. Such an intrusion not only exposes sensitive financial data but could also provide foreign powers with information to manipulate currency values, influence monetary policy, or gain unfair advantage in financial markets.⁶

2. South African Financial Sector: As the continent's most developed economy, South Africa's financial sector is under constant siege. While specific state-sponsored breaches are rarely confirmed, the sheer volume of sophisticated attacks suggests persistent attempts at economic espionage. Compromise of major banks or financial regulators could lead to data exfiltration impacting millions of citizens, disruption of payment systems, or even destabilization of the national banking sector, all of which weaken economic confidence and increase external dependence.

3. Ghana's e-Cedi: While Ghana has not reported a direct cyberattack on its e-Cedi system, the potential for such an attack, combined with politically motivated disinformation campaigns (as seen in 2023 with fake news driving bank runs), highlights how digital currencies, while innovative, introduce new attack surfaces that foreign adversaries could exploit to destabilize

a national economy.

B. Military and Intelligence Sectors: Compromising National Defense

Attacks on these sectors directly undermine a nation's security apparatus, exposing its strengths and weaknesses.

1. African Union (AU) Headquarters: The revelations in 2018 that the AU headquarters' servers were allegedly transmitting data to Shanghai, China, for years, remain a stark example of suspected state-sponsored espionage against a key African intergovernmental body.⁶ If confirmed, this would mean that sensitive discussions, strategic plans, and intelligence shared amongst member states were potentially compromised, severely undermining the AU's collective security efforts and diplomatic integrity.

2. Ethiopia's INSA and GERD: The 2020 cyberattack by the 'Cyber Horus Group' (reportedly Egypt-based) against Ethiopia's Information Network Security Agency (INSA) and various government websites, directly linked to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dispute, showcases cyber warfare being deployed in regional geopolitical conflicts.⁷ While the direct attack on critical infrastructure was thwarted, the incident demonstrated intent to exert 'economic, psychological, and political pressure,' illustrating how cyber means can be used to weaken a nation's resolve or disrupt its strategic projects.

3. Pervasive Surveillance Malware: The widespread use of sophisticated surveillance malware like Pegasus, found to have infected systems in numerous African countries, underscores the risk to government officials, journalists, and activists. While not always state-sponsored in origin, the use of such tools by foreign entities or even domestic actors (potentially with foreign assistance) can compromise intelligence gathering, undermine national security operations, and erode trust in secure communications.

C. Government and Diplomatic Espionage: Undermining Negotiating Positions

Targeting ministries handling foreign affairs, trade, energy, and key diplomatic missions provides a goldmine of information for external powers.

1. Negotiating Weakness: If a foreign power knows an African nation's exact negotiating red lines, its internal disagreements, or its true fallback positions before a trade deal, resource extraction agreement, or international climate negotiation, that African nation enters the discussion at a severe disadvantage. The compromised data gives the foreign power immense leverage, enabling them to secure more favorable terms that may not be in Africa's best long-term interest.

2. Policy Manipulation: Awareness of a nation's policy vulnerabilities or internal political tensions can allow external actors to craft targeted disinformation campaigns or use other influence operations to sway public opinion or political decisions, subtly undermining the democratic process and national autonomy.

3. Erosion of Sovereignty: The continuous threat of cyber espionage and the awareness of being a constant target can create a chilling effect, leading to self-censorship in communications or a reluctance to share sensitive information even amongst allies. This erosion of trust and operational freedom is a direct assault on the essence of national sovereignty.

Is There A Deliberate Weakening?: A Critical Analysis

The concept of 'deliberate weakening' is crucial to dissect. It's rarely about a grand, explicit conspiracy by 'those who developed the internet' to universally debilitate Africa. Instead, it's a more nuanced, yet equally damaging, consequence of global power dynamics and the pursuit of national interests in the digital age.

1. The Asymmetry of Power

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and Intentional Exploitation: The internet's open architecture, while democratizing information, was not designed with intrinsic security for all. Major global powers, having invested decades and billions into developing offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, possess a profound advantage. When they target African nations, they are not randomly choosing victims; they are exploiting known vulnerabilities stemming from this vast asymmetry in cyber power. The 'deliberate weakening' thus stems from the intentional exploitation of these vulnerabilities to achieve specific strategic objectives. If weakening an African state's negotiating position, for example, helps a global power secure a better resource deal, then that weakening, while perhaps not the sole intent, is a calculated and desired outcome of the cyber operation.

2. **Technological Dependency as a Vector for Influence:** African nations, in their quest for rapid digitalization, have largely relied on foreign-developed hardware, software, and cloud services. This reliance, while practical, creates potential avenues for exploitation. Concerns about 'backdoors' or inherent vulnerabilities in foreign-sourced technology, potentially accessible to the originating nations' intelligence agencies, are legitimate. While not necessarily a malicious act by the vendors themselves, this dependency means that the digital infrastructure powering African nations might have embedded weaknesses that can be exploited by the very nations that produced the technology. This isn't a direct attack, but it certainly facilitates external influence and compromises independent digital operation. The 'deliberate weakening' here arises from the strategic advantage gained by those who control the underlying digital architecture.

3. **The 'Digital Resource Curse':** Just as abundant natural resources can sometimes paradoxically hinder holistic development (the 'resource curse'), Africa's growing digital footprint and data wealth can become a target. The vast amounts of data generated by its large populations, emerging economies, and critical infrastructure are invaluable. If this 'digital resource' is primarily harvested and exploited by external powers, rather than being controlled and leveraged by African nations for their own development, it perpetuates a new form of neo-colonialism in the digital sphere. The deliberate intent is to extract value and influence, and the consequence is a weakening of the targeted state's ability to fully control its digital destiny.

4. **Strategic Patience and Long-Term Objectives:** Major pow-

ers often engage in cyber espionage with long-term strategic objectives.¹⁰ These are not always about immediate destruction but about building a comprehensive intelligence picture, maintaining a pervasive presence, or subtly shaping geopolitical landscapes over years. The cumulative effect of sustained cyber intrusions, data exfiltration, and influence operations is a gradual but significant erosion of a nation's autonomy and capacity, a 'slow weakening' that is nonetheless deliberate in its execution.

Way Forward: Branching Out Independently for Safety Reasons – The Imperative for Digital Sovereignty

For Africa to truly safeguard its interests and assert its sovereignty in the digital age, a fundamental shift towards digital independence and robust cyber resilience is not merely advisable but an existential imperative. This involves a multi-pronged strategy that addresses technological, human, legal, and collaborative dimensions.

1. **Strategic Investment in National Cyber Infrastructure and Digital Autonomy**

1. **African Data Centers and Cloud Services:** Reducing reliance on foreign cloud providers by investing heavily in building and operating secure, continentally-located data centers and cloud services. This ensures that African data remains on African soil, subject to African laws, and less susceptible to foreign legal or intelligence mandates.

2. **National Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) & Internet Governance:** Maximizing local internet traffic exchange through IXPs ensures that intra-African communication does not unnecessarily traverse foreign networks, reducing interception points and improving security.¹¹ Actively participating in global internet governance forums to advocate for African interests and shape a more equitable digital future.

3. **Domestic Telecom and IT Infrastructure Development:** Encouraging and funding African companies to research, develop, and produce their own hardware, software, and cybersecurity solutions. This could involve promoting open-source technologies, fostering local innovation hubs, and incentivizing homegrown digital solutions that can be independently audited and secured.

4. **Secure Government Networks:** Building secure, segregated government communication networks and adopting stringent 'zero trust' security architectures for critical state assets.

2. **Building Human Capital at Scale: The African Cyber Warriors**

1. **Massive Investment in Cy-**



bersecurity Education: From primary school digital literacy to vocational training and advanced university degrees in cybersecurity, forensic analysis, and ethical hacking. Curricula must be tailored to African contexts and threats.

2. **Attracting and Retaining Talent:** Offering competitive salaries, creating challenging career paths, and fostering a culture of recognition for cybersecurity professionals.¹² Encouraging the diaspora to return or contribute remotely.

3. **Pan-African Cyber Training Academies:** Establishing regional centers of excellence to pool resources and expertise, conducting joint training exercises, and certifying African cybersecurity professionals to internationally recognized standards.

4. **Robust and Harmonized Legal and Regulatory Frameworks**

1. **Full Ratification and Implementation of the Malabo Convention:** This foundational African Union convention on cybersecurity and personal data protection must be universally adopted and enforced across all member states to create a unified legal front against cybercrime and espionage.

2. **Comprehensive Data Protection Laws:** Enacting and rigorously enforcing strong data privacy laws similar to Europe's GDPR, ensuring that personal and sensitive national data is protected from unauthorized access, both foreign and domestic.

3. **Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Regulations:** Developing and enforcing mandatory cybersecurity standards and audit requirements for all critical national infrastructure (energy, water, telecommunications, financial services, transportation) to ensure their resilience against attacks.

4. **Fostering Pan-African Collaboration and Threat Intelligence Sharing**

1. **Establishment of an African Cyber Command/Response Units:** A centralized or regionally coordinated African cyber security agency capable of monitoring threats, sharing intelligence, and providing rapid incident response support to member states. This could involve joint cyber exercises and simulation drills.

2. **African Threat Intelligence Platforms:** Creating secure platforms for African nations to share real-time threat intelligence, indicators of compromise, and best practices among themselves and with trusted international partners.

3. **Continental Security Operations Centers (SOCs):** Developing and linking national SOC's to a broader continental network for enhanced visibility and coordinated defense.

4. **Strategic Partnerships with Caution and Diversification**

1. **Pragmatic Engagement with Global Powers:** While seeking to reduce reliance, African nations must continue to engage with global technology providers and cybersecurity experts. However, this engagement must be strategic: demanding transparency, independent security audits of foreign technologies, and clear agreements on data sovereignty and non-interference.

2. **Diversification of Technology Suppliers:** Avoiding over-reliance on any single foreign vendor for critical infrastructure. Promoting a multi-vendor strategy to reduce the risk of systemic vulnerabilities or undue influence from one nation.

3. **Technology Transfer and Knowledge Sharing:** Insisting that partnerships include genuine technology transfer and capacity-building components, ensuring that African nations progressively gain the expertise to manage their own digital security.

5. **Public Awareness and Cultivating a Culture of Cyber Hygiene**

1. **Nationwide Awareness Campaigns:** Educating citizens, businesses, and government employees on basic cyber hygiene, phishing awareness, password security, and the risks of online manipulation.

2. **Leadership Engagement:** Ensuring that top political and business leaders understand the gravity of cyber threats and champion cybersecurity initiatives from the highest levels.

Challenges and Conclusion

Branching out independently in the cyber domain is an ambitious, costly, and complex undertaking. It demands significant financial investment, sustained political will that transcends short-term electoral cycles, and unprecedented levels of pan-African coordination and unity. Overcoming the existing capacity gaps and resisting the allure of quick-fix foreign solutions will be monumental challenges.

However, the alternative is far graver: continued vulnerability, erosion of sovereignty, and the constant threat of external manipulation. The notion that cyber espionage weakens African states is not merely a theoretical construct; it is a demonstrable reality playing out in compromised financial systems, exposed military intelligence, and undermined diplomatic positions.

Africa's future in the digital age hinges on its ability to assert its digital sovereignty.¹⁴ By strategically investing in its own infrastructure, nurturing its own talent, strengthening its legal frameworks, and forging unbreakable bonds of pan-African collaboration, the continent can transform from a prime target into a formidable digital power. This path towards digital independence is not just about safety; it is about securing Africa's true autonomy, its economic destiny, and its rightful place as a sovereign and influential force in the interconnected world.

Sports >> *Royal Nairobi Golf Club's John Lejirma surged to the top of the leaderboard after a sizzling 6-under par 66 on Day One of the Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing at Ruiru Sports Club.

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Lejirma Takes Lead On Day One Of Sunshine Development Tour

By: Capital Sport

Royal Nairobi Golf Club's John Lejirma surged to the top of the leaderboard after a sizzling 6-under par 66 on Day One of the Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing at Ruiru Sports Club.

The elite amateur opened with a composed front nine, picking up birdies on the 2nd, 8th, and 9th holes, offset by a lone bogey at the par-3 6th.

His charge continued on the back nine, where he rolled in birdies at the 10th, 13th, 14th, 17th, and 18th holes.

Despite a bogey on the 12th, Lejirma finished the day as the man to catch heading into Round Two.

"I am happy to be back for the second leg of the Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing. I'm really pleased with how I held it together out there. The front nine was smooth, my putting was hot, and I gave myself chances. Fairways, greens, and it all came together," Lejirma said.

He added: "The back nine was a bit slower— my putter cooled off a little—but I regrouped and finished strong. I've learned from the last two events; I came second in the first leg and fourth in the second. Each tournament is a lesson, and I'm here to build on that and come back stronger." Ndumberi Golf Club's Michael Karanga carded a solid 2-under par 70 to sit second on the leaderboard.

He played a steady front nine with birdies at the 8th and 9th, closing the first half at 34.

On the back nine, he added a birdie on the 13th and held par on the rest of the holes, save for a dropped shot at the 18th.

Tied in third on 1-under par 71 were Dismas Indiza (Kakamega Golf Club) and Njoroge Kibugu (Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club).

Indiza recovered from a bogey



John Lejirma during Sunshine Development Tour-EA Swing. PHOTO/RAYMOND MAKHAYA.

on the 1st with birdies on the 3rd, 8th, and 9th to make the turn at 35.

He birdied the 13th and 18th coming home, with bogeys on 10 and 16 slightly marring his scorecard.

"The course is playing well. There's opportunity out there to score, and I'll be looking to improve some aspects of my play heading into Round Two," Indiza said.

Kibugu, the winner of the Thika Greens leg, played a mixed round with birdies on the 6th, 9th, 10th, and 11th holes, but gave shots back on the 3rd, 7th, 15th, and 16th.

He remains well within striking distance heading into moving day. A large group of players finished the day tied for fifth on level par (72).

The group included Rwanda's Celestin Nsanzuwera, Ken Abu-

to, Abraham Ainamani, Isaac Makokha, Elvis Muigua, Samuel Njoroge, Rafael Leming'ani, and Nuru Mollel.

Among the standout performers in the women's field was Naom Wafula of Vipingo Ridge, who posted a promising 1-over par 73 to emerge as the top-ranked lady after round one.

Wafula had a strong start with birdies on the 2nd, 5th, and 9th holes, but a triple bogey on the par-4 7th set her back on the front nine.

On the back nine, she bounced back with birdies on the 13th, 14th, and 17th, offset by bogeys on the 12th and 18th.

"After round one today, I'm happy with how I played. Despite a triple bogey on one hole seven, I managed to fight back and finish strong. That gave me confidence heading into tomorrow. I know I can shoot under par, and I'm go-

ing to work on a few things this evening to get ready for the second round," Wafula said.

The day also witnessed a historic moment as Muthaiga Golf Club's Eugene Wafula recorded the first-ever hole-in-one at a Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing event, aching the 11th hole.

Round Two action tees off tomorrow at Ruiru Sports Club, with players eyeing a spot in the top 30 to make the cut for Wednesday's final round, where a KES 2 million prize fund is up for grabs.

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Sports >> *Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo seems set to remain with Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr.

Ronaldo Hints At Staying With Saudi's Al-Nassr



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates his goal for Al Nassr. PHOTO/Al Nassr/X

Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo seems set to remain with Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr.

The 40-year-old forward is out of contract at the end of this month and although sources have told BBC Sport that they are confident of extending his deal, there has still been speculation over his future.

The former Real Madrid, Juventus and Manchester United striker last week posted a cryptic message on social media hinting he was set to leave the club he joined

in January 2023.

But, speaking after Portugal's dramatic Nations League victory over Spain on Sunday, he suggested he would not be moving on.

"Future? Nothing will change. Al Nassr? Yes," the forward told reporters after the game where he scored a record-extending 138th international goal which levelled the scoring at 2-2.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was replaced in the 88th minute and was not involved in the resulting penalty shootout.

He was in tears after Ruben Neves slotted home the winning penalty following Diogo Costa's save from Alvaro Morata's spot-kick.

On Saturday, Ronaldo said he would not be playing at this month's Club World Cup after turning down offers from participating teams.

Fifa president Gianni Infantino had raised the prospect of him joining a team involved at the tournament after Al-Nassr's failure to qualify.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



The Fruit Of Freedom: A Philosophical-Hermeneutic And Cultural Critique Of Elisa Mascia's Poem



By: Elisa MASCIA
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not merely retell the religious story; she reconstructs it through a personal lens, where experience advances the meaning. Here, the poem enters what Jan Assmann calls "cultural memory," as collective memory meets individual experience and the symbol is reborn from a theological marker into a living spiritual journey.

The Philosophical Dimension – Freedom as an Ontological Experience

Within this dimension, we see in the poem's first bite of the apple an ontological transformation. Freedom, in the text's context, is not a matter of shedding external constraints—it is a radical internal act: a redefinition of the self. This idea resonates with Martin Heidegger's concept of "openness to being" (Erschlossenheit). Heidegger posits that freedom is not a state bestowed upon us, but a fundamental decision to engage with the path of existence. When Mascia writes:

"At the first succulent bite gain new perception, new inspiration, life-blood, pulse and breath..."

she evokes a moment akin to existential revelation, as if the apple itself is an invitation to reclaim one's being. This dimension also aligns with Jean-Paul Sartre's view of freedom as a burden of responsibility—freedom is not a gift, but the anxiety that comes from the ceaseless demand to choose.

The Hermeneutic Dimension – Symbol as an Open Text

In the hermeneutic dimension, Mascia's poem exemplifies what Paul Ricoeur calls "the living symbol." This concept transcends the superficial understanding of the symbol as a static metaphor or image; instead, it becomes a horizon of endless interpretation. The apple, saturated with layers of meaning, shifts from the "fruit of perdition" to the "fruit of freedom," from an act of falling to an act of flight. This metamorphosis affirms the text's refusal to be pinned down to a single, static meaning, opening it up to interpretive play. Here, the poem becomes what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls a "space of hermeneutic play," where meaning emerges from the



dynamic encounter between text and reader.

The Cultural Critique – Liberation from Inherited Discourses

The poem also reveals a latent cultural struggle: how can religious and cultural symbols that have shaped our collective consciousness be reimagined in ways that resonate with modern subjectivity? The apple, a primordial symbol of sin, is transformed by Mascia into a tool of spiritual liberation. This brings to mind Michel Foucault's insights on "the power of discourse"—how inherited symbols impose their meanings upon us, but also how modern subjectivity can resist and reconfigure them. Likewise, the poem resonates with Edward Said's notion of "rewriting dominant texts," as the apple is recast from a repressive emblem into one of emancipation. Thus, the poem becomes a subtle arena of resistance against cultural dogmas.

The Poetic Language – Simplicity that Hides Symbolic Density

The poem's language is marked by apparent simplicity, yet beneath this clarity lies immense symbolic density. Its short sentences and pared-down syntax inject fresh poetic energy, inviting the reader to become an active co-creator of meaning rather than a passive consumer. In this simplicity, we hear echoes of Maurice Blanchot's idea of "writing as absence"—where meaning is not presented directly but emerges through the gaps and silences of language. We can also approach the poem through Roland Barthes'

idea of the "death of the author," as the poem does not impose a single interpretation, but instead invites a multiplicity of readings, moving beyond the author's voice to an open linguistic horizon.

Poetry as a Continuous Celebration of Being

At the poem's close, a mystical tone emerges, celebrating life as an ever-renewed divine gift:

"With comforting language they approach together in the kingdom of freedom

From the throne he can issue respected laws and write epithets dogmas of living..."

This quiet sanctification of life recalls Gaston Bachelard's

This quiet sanctification of life recalls Gaston Bachelard's vision of the "material imagination"—every fruit, every breath, every pulse becomes an intimate communion with the world. Here, freedom is a daily practice, a celebration of being in each moment.

Freedom in Mascia's poem is an endlessly unfolding possibility of interpretation, a poetic revelation of how inherited narratives can be dismantled and reimagined through continuous acts of reinterpretation. The apple is not the end of the story—it is the beginning: an invitation for the reader to keep traveling, both within the poem and beyond it. In this sense, Paul Ricoeur's insight becomes a living truth: "The symbol gives thought something to think about endlessly." And so, the poem itself becomes a wing of freedom—freeing language from

its confines and opening an infinite field of meanings.

– Haider Al-Adib
Critic from Iraq

Fruit of freedom

I chased through streets and alleys,
narrow paths where, with difficulty
step by step, I went towards life
generously offered me baskets of
apples with a poisonous bite.

Delicious solitary apple left there
waiting
loved the wait.

At the first succulent bite
I gain new perception,
new inspiration, lifeblood, heart-
beat and breath.

Life saved by the fruit of ancient
perdition today gives transmutation
of the chains to the wings of free-
dom to fly higher than imagination
where the ephemeral has moved to
the ocean depths.

To re-emerge to his caressing gaze,
with comforting language they ap-
proach together in the kingdom of
freedom

From the throne he will be able to
issue respected laws and write epi-
thets dogmas of living
imbued with spiritual feeling
they raise their hearts in a dance
that lightens the body to celebrate
at every moment of the day the im-
mense gratitude to the architect God
the Father who designed and laid
the solid foundations to be free to-
day and always.

Elisa MASCIA

Elisa Mascia's poem, *The Fruit of Freedom*, operates as a revealing space for the depths of human experience. It offers a fertile poetic landscape for contemplating the dialectic of symbol and meaning, illustrating how a religious symbol can transform from an image of sin into an expression of existential emancipation. Through its simple construction and profound symbolic energy, the poem unfolds a multidimensional horizon—existential-philosophical, hermeneutic, and cultural-social. This richness gives it a poetic power that transcends a mere celebration of freedom, becoming an interpretive text through which the reader tests the very limits of language itself.

Between Myth and Personal Experience

In the poem's movement between myth and personal experience, Mascia evokes a collective memory deeply linked to Western religious tradition through the metaphor of the apple—the same apple that, in Genesis, represents the primal act of disobedience. Yet the poet does