



The Insurance Theory Of Judicial Independence: Why Authoritarian Regimes Sometimes Create Strong Courts
 The Insurance Theory of Judicial Independence posits that political leaders, even in authoritarian contexts, may strategically empower courts as a hedge against future uncertainties. This framework, developed by scholars like Tom Ginsburg, suggests that when incumbents anticipate a potential loss of power due to electoral competition, internal fractures, or regime transitions they invest in judicial autonomy to safeguard their interests post-tenure. Page 18

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News>>Lawmakers Demand Clarity On National Infrastructure Fund As Treasury Pushes Safaricom Divestiture

P. 12. Members of a joint parliamentary session pressed the National Treasury for detailed plans on the proposed National Infrastructure Fund, following the Cabinet Secretary's announcement that proceeds from the partial divestiture of Safaricom shares will serve as seed capital for the initiative.

Ruto To Youth: Choose Jobs Over Chaos

President William Ruto has asked politicians to stop inciting young people to violence to advance their political agenda, saying it is selfish to exploit the youth without offering solutions to their challenges. The President said his administration has a clear and deliberate plan to create opportunities for young people and move the country forward. "The youth want a better future; they want to know how they will get jobs, better education, how they will venture into business, and what support they will get from their government. And that is what we are doing," he said.



President William Ruto

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SCAN TO REGISTER

Treasury Seeks Parliamentary Approval For Partial Sale Of Safaricom Stake

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures

The Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Economic Planning John Mbadi yesterday appeared before a Joint Sitting of the Departmental Committee on Finance and National Planning and the Select Committee on Public Debt and Privatization to discuss the proposed partial divestiture of the Government of Kenya's shareholding in Safaricom.

The Ministry is leading public sector stakeholders in presenting the economic rationale for the sale, which is expected to raise approximately KSh204 billion, along with an estimated KSh40.2 billion in dividends, generating total proceeds of about KSh244 billion.

These funds will reduce dependence on public borrowing and provide seed financing for the National Infrastructure Fund and the Sovereign Wealth Fund, supporting key sectors including energy, transport, water, aviation, and digital infrastructure.

The plan involves selling a 15 percent stake while retaining a strategic 20 percent shareholding and board representation. Working in partnership with Vodacom Group, the transaction aims to safeguard national interests, preserve Kenyan leadership and jobs and enhance Safaricom's market position and innovation.

During the session, the CS Mbadi and Principal Secretary Chris Kiptoo engaged committees on the 2025 Sessional Paper on divestiture, outlining policy, economic benefits, and long-term strategic considerations for the proposal.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



The National Land Commission (NLC) will maintain full operational focus and service delivery despite the ongoing transition as the country awaits the appointment of new commissioners, Chief Executive Officer Kabale Tache Arero said yesterday. Chairing a top management meeting of directors, heads of department and deputy directors, the CEO commended staff for their dedication and resilience over the past year, describing the secretariat as the backbone of the Commission's progress. The meeting reviewed performance for the first half of the 2025/26 Financial Year, identifying achievements and areas requiring renewed attention. The CEO said the Commission is now consolidating its plans for the second half of the financial year to accelerate implementation of its mandate, including advancing land reforms, improving efficiency and ensuring better service to the public.



Jubilee Party Secretary General Jeremiah Kioni yesterday reaffirmed the party's commitment to national unity and issue-based politics, saying Jubilee will not be drawn into divisive narratives based on tribe, class or religion. Speaking after a meeting with the party's Nairobi grassroots team led by Pastor Mercy Promise Ngota at Jubilee headquarters, Kioni said the party had agreed to approach all political and national issues from a broad national perspective. He said Jubilee's ideology is anchored on putting Kenya first and promoting inclusive leadership that brings all communities together. Kioni added that the country deserves leadership focused on solutions rather than political rhetoric, noting that Jubilee remains committed to building a united and forward-looking nation.



Energy Principal Secretary Alex Wachira yesterday met with representatives from INTEC GMK GmbH, a German firm known for designing and building power generation systems that use Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) technology to convert waste heat and geothermal energy into electricity. The PS said the discussions focused on Kenya's vast untapped geothermal potential, particularly in the northeastern corridor, an area with a rich geological history that presents strong prospects for expanded power generation. He noted that Kenya's long-standing partnership with Germany remains central to strengthening the energy sector, adding that such collaborations will help expand the national grid, support industrial growth, and improve livelihoods across the country.



The Principal Secretary for Water and Sanitation, Julius Korir, together with WASPA, held technical talks with the Acumen Group on addressing Non-Revenue Water in Kenya's water sector. NRW currently accounts for losses of up to 44 per cent of treated water, costing the sector about KSh 11 billion annually. Acumen presented a satellite-based system that can accurately map water networks, detect leaks, illegal connections, and inefficiencies. The discussions explored how this technology could reduce losses, improve efficiency, and strengthen the financial sustainability of Water Service Providers, reinforcing the government's commitment to innovative, technology-driven solutions.

The UDA party yesterday handed over certificates to its flag bearers who will contest for Isiolo South constituency and Evurore, Muminji and West Kabras wards in the February 26 by-election. Party Chairperson, Embu Governor Cecily Mbarire issued nomination certificates at Hustler Plaza to Isiolo South MP nominee Tubi Mohammed Tubi and MCA nominees Elphas Kainanga Shalakha, Peterson Njeru Njiri, Dancun Muratia Nyaga for Malava's West Kabras and Mbeere North's Muminji and Evurore wards respectively. Secretary General Sen. Hassan Omar assured the candidates of the party's full support, even as Mbarire urged them to be humble in their campaigns to deliver victory to the party at the mini-polls. Also present at the event were National Elections Board Chairman Anthony Mwaura, Executive Director Nicodemus Bore, his deputy Higgins Mbugua, Mbeere North MP Leo Wamuthende and the entire National Elections Board members.





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NCBA And Inchcape Partner To Boost Agricultural Mechanisation In Kenya

By: William Muchiri
@themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

Speaking at the launch yesterday, Inchcape Managing Director Marion Gathoga-Mwangi highlighted that the partnership is a major step in supporting Kenya's agricultural transformation agenda.

"Access to the right equipment should never be a barrier. This initiative empowers farmers and agribusinesses to acquire tractors more easily, affordably, and widely across the country," she said.

Mwangi emphasized that mechanisation improves efficiency, increases yields, lowers production costs, and enhances farm profitability while reducing labour intensity and ensuring timely farm operations during peak seasons.



During the signing ceremony yesterday. Photo/Courtesy..

Global automotive and equipment distributor Inchcape has partnered with NCBA Bank in a strategic initiative aimed at accelerating agricultural mechanisation and enhancing farm productivity across Kenya. The collaboration will provide farmers with access to modern tractors and farm implements through flexible financing, addressing long-standing barriers that have limited mechanisation, especially among smallholder farmers.

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she said.

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Inchcape will supply tractors and implements from its portfolio of global brands, focusing on New Holland tractors engineered for African conditions. The range includes 55 to 80+ horsepower models in two-wheel and four-wheel drive, alongside compatible implements such as ploughs, harrows, sprayers, and balers.

Mwangi assured farmers of nationwide support through Inchcape branches in Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Kisumu, with expansion planned for Mombasa, Nanyuki, and Meru.

Mobile service vans and facto-

ry-trained technicians will provide after-sales support, maintenance, and spare parts.

NCBA Group Director for Asset Finance, Lennox Mugambi underscored the need to modernise Kenya's agriculture sector, which contributes about 21 percent of GDP and employs nearly 40 percent of the population, rising to 69 percent in rural areas. He noted that motorised farm power in Kenya currently stands at only 30 percent, with women and youth bearing the brunt of labour-intensive farming. "Women spend over 40 hours a week on farming, and many young people are abandoning agriculture," he said.

Under the partnership, NCBA will finance up to 95 percent of the cost of tractors and selected implements, with additional working capital of up to KSh500,000 for eligible farmers.

Flexible repayment plans aligned

with farming cycles, including a 60-day grace period before the first instalment, have also been introduced. All financed assets will be insured through NCBA's insurance intermediary to protect farmers and the bank.

The initiative aligns with the government's National Agricultural Mechanisation Policy of 2024, aiming to increase mechanisation and productivity while improving incomes. Both Inchcape and NCBA expressed confidence that the programme will enable farmers to expand acreage, improve yields, and strengthen livelihoods, ensuring that mechanisation becomes accessible nationwide rather than a privilege for a few.

"This partnership is about more than machinery—it is about empowering farmers, enhancing food security, and driving economic growth," Mwangi affirmed.

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Kiambu County Partners With Family Bank Foundation To Support Vulnerable Learners

By: Grace Naishoo
 @themtkenyatimes



Family Bank Foundation and County government officials during the assessment exercise.

The Kiambu county government, through the Directorate of Social Services has partnered with the Family Bank Foundation ensure accurate identification of learners from vulnerable households for scholarship opportunities.

The scholarships are being offered under a Family Bank Foundation national education program targeting 300 learners across the country.

As part of this nationwide initiative, the county was allocated five slots, all of which have been filled following a structured identification and verification process coordinated by the Directorate of Social Services.

Identification of potential beneficiaries begins at the sub-county level, where Social Services officers work closely with local administrators and community structures like chiefs and

Nyumba kumi leaders to identify learners facing social and economic challenges that threaten their ability to remain in school.

Shortlisted candidates were then subjected to a detailed verification process through home visits.

The recent assessment exercise was conducted in Kiambaa, Juja and Gatundu North sub-counties by a multi-sectoral team comprising officers from the county Directorate of Social Services and the Department of Gender and Social Services, operating under the Office of the Chief

Officer for Gender and Social Services, Emily Nkoroi, alongside representatives from the Family Bank Foundation.

The team assessed household living conditions, sources of income and overall welfare to ensure the support reaches the most deserving learners.

County officials noted that the partnership underscores the importance of collaboration between county governments and private sector institutions in strengthening social protection and expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged

learners.

The initiative aligns with the national government's education and social protection priorities, including the Social Protection Policy and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which emphasize investment in human capital as a driver of inclusive growth.

By targeting learners from vulner-

able households, the program complements national efforts to improve access to education, enhance retention and completion rates, and reduce inequality, while contributing to the long-term goal of breaking generational cycles of poverty through education.

KTDA Foundation Celebrates 2025 National Tea Scholarship Achievers

By: WMW
 @themtkenyatimes

The KTDA Foundation has announced outstanding results for the 2025 National Tea Scholarship, with 68 students from tea-growing communities across Kenya achieving impressive grades in their KCSE exams.

Two students earned straight A's, three secured A-, 10 attained B+, 19 achieved B, 17 scored B-, 11 attained C+, four achieved C, while one student each earned C- and D+.

This strong performance has resulted in a 62 percent transition rate to university for the scholarship recipients, contributing to an overall 91 percent university transition rate among the cohort; a clear reflection of the program's impact in nurturing academic excellence.

Launched in 2012 under KTDA's

Farmer First Transformation Strategy, the National Tea Scholarship targets bright but financially disadvantaged students from tea-growing regions. Beyond financial support, the program provides mentorship, helping students excel academically and become agents of positive change in their communities.

In 2015, 240 students benefited from mentorship workshops and in 2024, 70 scholars had a 93 percent transition rate to university, with two students topping the national charts.

This year, KTDA has awarded one scholarship at each of the 71 factories it manages.

Those eligible must have achieved a cumulative score of 63 points or higher and exceeded expectations in at least two subjects in the 2025 KJSEA examinations.



Ruto To Youth: Choose Jobs Over Chaos

By: PCS
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- The President said his administration has a clear and deliberate plan to create opportunities for young people and move the country forward.
- “The youth want a better future; they want to know how they will get jobs, better education, how they will venture into business, and what support they will get from their government. And that is what we are doing,” he said.
- He made the remarks during the launch of NYOTA business start-up capital disbursement of KSh103.9 million to 4,159 young entrepreneurs from Samburu, Isiolo, Laikipia and Marsabit counties at Archer’s Post, Samburu County.
- President Ruto was accompanied by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, Youth Affairs Cabinet Secretary Salim Mvurya, Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, and Governors Jonathan Lati Lelelit (Samburu), Mohamud Ali (Marsabit) and Joshua Irungu (Laikipia), among other leaders.

President William Ruto has asked politicians to stop inciting young people to violence to advance their political agenda, saying it is selfish to exploit the youth without offering solutions to their challenges.

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The President urged young people to focus on meaningful economic activities that will transform their lives.

“Let us not mix a one-day political affair with the matters that concern your daily lives,” he said.

He challenged his competitors to present a solid agenda for the country, saying sloganeering and divisive politics will not succeed.

“Stop tribal talk, hatred and falsehoods and present your plan. Kenyans can differentiate those with a plan from those without a plan,” he said.

President Ruto noted that countries that have achieved first-world status did so by investing in their people and in strategic projects. He pointed out that Kenya is spending 30 per cent of its budget on education to build skilled human capital, while also creating pathways for jobs and enterprise for those completing school.

He cited the Affordable Housing Programme, overseas job placements, digital jobs and youth empowerment initiatives such as the NYOTA programme.

He said the NYOTA Business Support Programme targets 100,000 youth; 70 in each of the country’s 1,450 wards and urged beneficiaries



President William Ruto, his deputy Kithure Kindiki and other guests being entertained by Samburu youths yesterday.

to invest the funds wisely to improve their livelihoods.

On affordable housing, the President said the government is building 400 modern markets, 240,000 affordable housing units and hostels for 180,000 students across the country.

“This is how to transform a nation,” he said.

Later, President Ruto launched the construction of the Rumuruti Modern Market in Laikipia County, which will accommodate 750 traders. The KSh260 million facility is expected to provide a conducive environment for business.

In Laikipia County, he disclosed that the government is investing KSh15 billion in affordable housing, 14 modern markets and student

hostels.

He also announced that funding has been secured for the construction of the Rumuruti–Nanyuki road, as well as the Kinamba–Mwenje–Matwiku, Nanyuki–Doldol and Mutanga–Njambi roads.

A modern stadium will also be built in Nanyuki and completed by the end of the year.

Deputy President Kindiki commended President Ruto for tackling insecurity in Laikipia and other banditry- and cattle-rustling-prone areas, restoring peace and stability. Governor Irungu echoed the sentiments, praising the strengthening of security and the rollout of transformative development projects in the county.

Governor Lelelit described the

NYOTA programme as the most impactful initiative in the region, saying it will help many young people grow their businesses and earn a decent living.

The Interior CS said the government is using intelligence-led operations to disarm civilians in possession of illegal firearms in Laikipia County and the Kerio Valley, ensuring residents are not harassed or unfairly treated.

Youth Affairs CS added that the NYOTA programme is enhancing inclusivity in previously marginalised areas.

“This is a clear demonstration that your leadership is taking opportunities to all parts of Kenya,” he said.



From left; DP Kithure Kindiki, President William Ruto and Governors Jonathan Lati Lelelit (Samburu) as well as Mohamud Ali (Marsabit) at Archers Post yesterday. Photo/PCS.

Constant Water Supply Increases Rice Production In Mwea

By: Mutai Kipng'etich
 @themtkenyatimes

Rice farmers in the Karaba section of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme are recording significantly higher rice production following improved water supply after the aligning and rehabilitation of irrigation canals.

The steady and reliable water supply, coupled with the expansion of land under irrigation, has led to increased annual rice output in the area.

Farmers say the developments include new canals, improved water management systems and greater efficiency and value addition in rice farming.

In the past, farmers struggled to access sufficient water for their farms.

However, the completion of the Thiba Dam has greatly improved water availability in the Karaba K7 section, easing the challenges farmers face while growing rice.

Mwea Irrigation Scheme Farmers Chairman, Peter Chege says the expansion of irrigation canals has had

a positive impact on rice production, despite occasional challenges caused by reduced water volumes during dry seasons.

Chege explains that improved water management measures have been put in place to ensure equitable distribution of water in the rice fields. He adds that many residents have returned to farming and calls on the government to construct a new dam along River Nyamindi to further support the expansion of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme.

"I thank the farmers for putting enough effort; we harvested the main crop and are now on ratoon and ready to move on to the second crop. We are continuing with the expansion of rice farms in Karaba, Mutithi, and Tebere therefore I urge the government to expand the canal to align with expanded land," Chege said.

Paul Muriuki, a rice farmer, noted that the construction and improvement of water canals has enabled multiple cropping seasons. Unlike before, when they could only plant once a year due to water shortages, farmers are now cultivating rice up to three



A rice farmer injecting his crop. Photo/Courtesy

times annually.

They added that the expansion of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme has transformed livelihoods by creating employment opportunities through farming. Mwea rice irrigation scheme plays a critical role in enhancing na-

tional food security and reducing reliance on imported rice.

The project, managed by the State Department of Irrigation through the National Irrigation Authority, is expected to boost rice production and reduce imports. Currently, Kenya

produces about 304,000 metric tonnes of rice annually against a national demand of approximately 1.3 million metric tonnes.



KWS To Immortalise Amboseli's Famed Super Tusker Craig Through Scientific Preservation

By: MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has announced that it has begun an intensive taxidermy process to preserve Craig, the world-renowned Amboseli super tusker whose death earlier this month marked the end of an extraordinary era in African wildlife history.

Craig, who lived to the remarkable age of 54, was celebrated across the globe for his towering frame, sweeping ivory and gentle disposition.

For decades, he was a familiar and much-loved presence in Amboseli National Park, attracting researchers, photographers and wildlife enthusiasts from every corner of the world.

Born in January 1972 to Cassandra, the legendary matriarch of Amboseli's CB elephant family, Craig belonged to a vanishing elite known as super tuskers; elephants whose tusks each weigh more than 45 kilograms.

With only a tiny number of such giants still roaming the continent, Craig

came to represent both the magnificence of Africa's elephants and the fragility of their future.

KWS says the decision to preserve Craig through taxidermy reflects his immense ecological, historical and cultural importance.

Specialists are now carefully treating and conserving his skin and physical structure in order to create a realistic life-size mount.

Once completed, the preserved specimen will allow the public, students and scientists to continue learning from Craig long after his passing.

Throughout his lifetime, Craig was closely monitored by conservation teams and became a powerful symbol of what sustained protection can achieve.

He sired many calves, spreading his rare genetic traits across Amboseli's elephant population and was widely admired for his calm, non-aggressive behaviour even in the presence of vehicles and people.

"Craig was not just another elephant — he was a living icon of Kenya's conservation success story," said KWS Director General Prof. Erustus

Kanga.

He added, "By preserving him through taxidermy, we are giving future generations the opportunity to connect with his story and understand the value of protecting our wildlife."

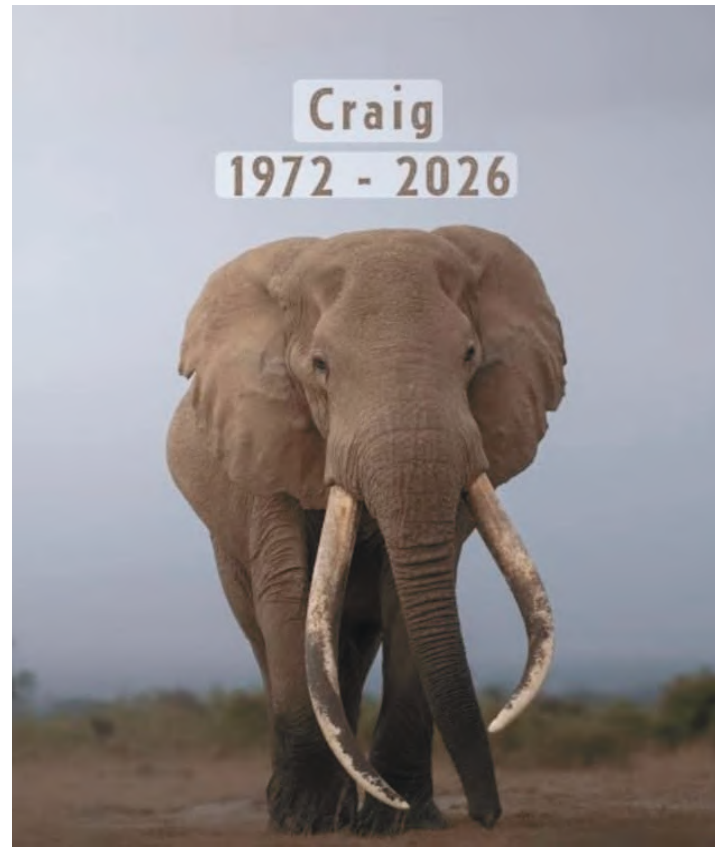
When the preservation work is complete, Craig's mount will be placed in a designated public facility where it will serve as an educational and conservation awareness exhibit.

KWS has indicated that details on the final location and opening schedule will be released at a later date.

The agency has urged Kenyans and the global conservation community to use Craig's story as a reminder of what is at stake in the fight to protect elephants and other endangered species.

His life, KWS noted, demonstrated how strong law enforcement, scientific monitoring and cooperation with local communities can allow even the most threatened wildlife to thrive.

As Craig takes on a new form in preservation, his legacy as Amboseli's gentle giant and one of Africa's last true super tuskers is set to endure for generations to come.



Craig died on January 3.

Real Estate Stakeholders Dismiss Architects' Report On Substandard Buildings

By: Irene Mwangi

@themkenyatimes

The Real Estate Stakeholders Association (RESA) has dismissed as misleading a recent report by an architects' association claiming that 85 per cent of buildings in Kenya are substandard.

Speaking at a press conference in Nairobi on Monday, RESA strongly opposed the findings, saying the claims were unsubstantiated and risked undermining public confidence in the country's real estate sector.

In a statement read by the association's spokesperson, Perminus Kariuki of Nyota Njema Real Estate, RESA noted that architects are directly involved in the design and approval of most developments undertaken by its members and had not raised compliance concerns during the approval stages.

"While we fully acknowledge the need for continuous enforcement of

building standards and the elimination of illegal developments, such a sweeping statement is misleading, alarmist, and unsupported by verified data," Kariuki said.

"It unfairly undermines public confidence in Nairobi's real estate sector and risks causing unnecessary panic among property owners, investors, and tenants."

RESA Chairman Dr Chrispus Wachira of Almond Properties reaffirmed that all members of the association comply with existing construction laws and regulatory requirements.

He said RESA enforces internal self-regulation mechanisms, including mandatory display of compliance certificates at construction sites.

"We came together as an association to self-regulate and to end the blanket blame that has often been placed on investors," Wachira said.

"We urge that individual companies and stakeholders responsible for substandard buildings be held accountable, rather than condemning the entire sector for the actions of a few."

The association's lobbying committee chairperson, Surveyor Kigathi Ki-



onywe of Hotstep Holdings Ltd, said RESA conducts annual renewal of members' certificates and takes disciplinary action against firms found to be non-compliant.

"If a company is found to be non-compliant, its membership is not renewed, and the public is formally notified that it is no longer part of RESA," Kionywe stated.

RESA also addressed allegations linking Kenya's real estate sector to money laundering, following the ongoing Minnesota money laundering investigations.

Vice Chairperson Zuena Wambui distanced the association from the claims, stating that RESA does not condone illicit financial activities and supports ongoing investigations by

Kenyan and US authorities.

"RESA and its members are not involved in money laundering or the use of real estate as a vehicle for illegal financial flows," Wambui said.

"We encourage thorough, independent investigations by the Government of Kenya, its relevant agencies, and enforcement institutions in the United States."

Lawmakers Demand Clarity On National Infrastructure Fund As Treasury Pushes Safaricom Divestiture

By: MKT Reporter
 @themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- The session brought together the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Finance and National Planning and the Select Committee on Debt and Privatization, co-chaired by Kuria Kimani and Abdi Shurie.
- CS John Mbadi outlined that the Safaricom transaction is aimed at mobilizing substantial resources for infrastructure without increasing national debt or raising taxes.
- "The proceeds of the Safaricom share sale will be exclusively used to derisk and lower the cost of infrastructure projects," Mbadi emphasized, clarifying that the funds would not be used for recurrent government expenditure.
- Lawmakers expressed concerns over the legal framework establishing the Fund, directing the CS to provide the registration details of National Infrastructure Fund Limited, along with its articles of association and a comprehensive list of projects proposed for funding.

Members of a joint parliamentary session pressed the National Treasury for detailed plans on the proposed National Infrastructure Fund, following the Cabinet Secretary's announcement that proceeds from the partial divestiture of Safaricom shares will serve as seed capital for the initiative.

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Lawmakers expressed concerns over the legal framework establishing the Fund, directing the CS to provide the registration details of National Infrastructure Fund Limited, along with its articles of association and a comprehensive list of projects proposed for funding.

"As we speak, there is no legal framework for the establishment of the Fund," Kimani said, stressing that its focus and governance must be transparent.

The Committee sought clarity on whether the Fund would prioritize commercially viable ventures or essential but less profitable infrastructure.



John Mbadi and Chris Kiptoo before the committee yesterday. Photos/Courtesy.

The CS assured legislators that the Fund would ring-fence capital for commercially viable projects, freeing government resources to support projects without immediate commercial returns.

Proposed projects include over 2,500 kilometers of roads, 50 mega dams and power generation initiatives.

Addressing the Safaricom divestiture, Mbadi explained that Vodacom was identified as the preferred buyer due to its longstanding partnership and financial capacity to ensure business continuity. He defended the KSh34 per-share valuation, noting it was determined through rigorous market and income-based assessments.

Lawmakers also raised concerns over data sovereignty, job protection, and supplier safeguards. Mbadi assured that national data would remain secure, that two government representatives would retain seats on Safaricom's board, and that measures would be taken to protect staff, suppliers, and contractors during the three-year divestiture timeline.

The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) and Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) endorsed the move, describing it as financially prudent and legally sound.

They noted that the exit price exceeds recent market averages, protecting taxpayer value while main-

taining market confidence.

Stakeholder consultations are set to continue, with Safaricom limited scheduled to present its position to the Committee today.

At the same time, last evening, the committee announced the launch of the official portal for submission of public views regarding the Sessional Paper on the proposed divestiture.

While launching the portal the joint chairpersons encouraged the public to submit their views on the proposed sale saying they will consider the views along those from the ongoing stakeholder engagements, which commenced today.



Kuria Kimani



Abdi Shurie

Police Uncover Fake Vodka Factory In Murang'a, Seize 1,777 Counterfeit KRA Stamps

By: The DCI @themtkenyatimes

Police in Murang'a South have uncovered a major illicit alcohol operation after raiding a residential house in Kimorori area that had been turned into a makeshift liquor packaging plant.

The discovery followed a tip-off from a house agent who became concerned after a tenant, identified as Peter Waambu Waweru, failed to pay rent for two months and suddenly vanished, leaving the house locked.

The agent alerted the area sub-chief, who peered through a window and noticed suspicious activity inside the premises, raising fears that it was being used for illegal brewing.

Officers from Kenol Police Station moved in and found a large cache of contraband alcohol and brewing materials.

Among the items recovered were

six cartons of Supa Vodka containing 250ml bottles branded as Smart Vodka, 24 cartons of Trace Vodka, three cartons of Lyniber Vodka, and 109 cartons of Crywan Vodka falsely labelled as Kingston Vodka.

Police also seized cartons of J-Movers and Rangers Vodka, large quantities of liquid suspected to be used in brewing illicit alcohol, and one carton of UDV Vodka.

Further searches revealed five sacks of assorted liquor bottle tops from different brands, 15 bags full of empty bottles ready for refilling, several drums and jerrycans believed to have been used to transport ethanol, and two alcohol content thermometers used to measure potency.

In a major boost to the investigation, officers also recovered 1,777 counterfeit Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) excise stamps, confirming that the operation was designed to pass off fake liquor as legally taxed products. Authorities established that all the stamps found on the packaged alcohol and those awaiting use were



Some of the seized goods

fake.

All the seized items have been taken to Kenol Police Station as exhibits as police intensify efforts to track down

the suspect, who remains at large.

Members of the public have been urged to report any information that could lead to his arrest through the

DCI's toll-free hotline 0800 722 203 or via WhatsApp on 0709 570 000.

County Bans Modified Exhausts, Illegal Lights In Nanyuki Municipality

By: MKT Correspondent

@themtkenyatimes

Operating vehicles and motorcycles fitted with modified exhaust systems is now a criminal offence within Nanyuki Municipality, Laikipia County.

The ban targets vehicles and motorcycles, including boda bodas, that emit noise levels exceeding 84 decibels during acceleration.

Nanyuki Municipal Board Manager Anthony Rukwaro said the directive also outlaws the use of unauthorized neon lights, red lights, strobe lights and other modified lighting systems.

He said the decision was issued under Article 184 of the Constitution and provisions of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, 2011.

"The measures are intended to control noise pollution, enhance road safety and restore public order within the municipality," Rukwaro said.

The ban is further anchored in national laws, including the Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act, the Traffic Act and regulations issued by the National Transport and Safety Authority.

Enforcement will be carried out by the Laikipia East Deputy County Commissioner, the Nanyuki Traffic Commander and municipal enforcement officers.

"Failure to comply with this notice will attract penalties, fines and or prosecution," he said.

Noise pollution linked to modified exhaust systems has drawn increasing complaints from residents, especially at night, with concerns raised over public safety, disturbance and disregard of traffic regulations.

Authorities have urged motorists and riders to comply, warning that enforcement operations will be intensified across the municipality.

Those flouting the regulations face arrest or a fine of up to Sh10,000.



A police officer attempting to arrest a bodaboda rider. Photo/Courtesy.

Please Control Your Mouth, Mood, Money, Mind Movement M's



Please control your mouth, mood, money,
mind movement M's
Control these four M's - Mind, money,
mood, mouth, movement
Because these things, if it goes beyond
control, it goes very bitter
It will land in negative result, like a
withered flower

Be gentle and humble, keep these under
control
All are necessary and important, don't let
them go beyond
Don't make them control you, instead keep
them under your control
Easily you can find a right way, without
confusion or ambiguity

Keeping mind under control, it won't waver
here and there
Money is good, but let it not become your
master
Control your mood, don't become too
emotional
Adjust to all situations, happy or sad

Most of all control your mouth
When not needed don't speak., speak less
but with good value
Speak wisely, speak kindly, let words be
sweet
Control your mouth, and your life's path will
be neat

Brinda. D
GRADUATE TEACHER,
GOVT HIGH SCHOOL,
MELPATTAMPAKKAM
CUDDALORE, Tamilnadu India
creativewritersmag@gmail.com

Slow Steps, Strong Foundations



A hut can be built in a single day,
But a palace takes years to rise and stay

A seed is planted in soft brown ground,
But a fruit-filled tree takes years to be
found.

A narrow road may form overnight,
But a strong bridge needs time and might.

A wall can stand with bricks and lime,
But a dam is built through years of time.

A meal is cooked in an hour or two,
But aged rice gains flavour as seasons
move.

A dress is stitched in a single day,
But a silk saree needs months on the loom's
way.

A house is painted, fresh and new,
But a temple takes years in careful view.

A book is printed and ready to sell,
But a library grows as years pass well.

A bicycle rolls out quickly made,
But a train is built by long hard trade.

Small things are fast, but greatness is
slow,
Great things take time—they grow, not
rush, to show.

Durgadevi V
Graduate Teacher
GHS Nesal
Tiruvannamalai Dt

Integrity



In the labyrinthine recesses of the human
heart,
A luminous gemstone glances, unsullied by
art.

'Tis integrity, that apotheosis of the soul,
Unwavering, unshakeable, it makes our
moral whole.

Through labyrinthine corridors of doubt and
fear,
It navigates the darkness, shedding light
that's clear.

A moral compass, guiding us through life's
tempests wild,

Integrity's beacon illuminates the path
undefiled.

With each principled stance, we fortify our
inner citadel,
And fortify the bastions of our conscience,
unassailable.

Though the hydra-headed beast of
corruption raise its head,
Integrity's aegis shields us, our honor
untainted, unsaid.

In the crucible of trial, our mettle is refined,
And integrity's sterling essence, like gold,
is aligned.

'Tis the touchstone of character, that
proves our inner strength,
And in its unyielding flame, our true nobility
finds its breadth.

Dr. S. Latha
Creative writers

Kenya, This Is How I Named You



Norman Mwale [The PenPusher]
Zimbabwean Author -Poet

In the whispering winds of Kirinyaga's peaks,
I heard the ancestors' breath, a sacred
speak.
A mountain with white snow, a place of God's
resting,
A sanctuary of beauty, where spirits take
wing.

I named you Kirinyaga, a name that echoes in
time,
A testament to the majesty that makes my
heart climb.

The British came, and Kenya you became,
A territory on the map, but my essence
remains.

From the savannah's golden light,
To the highlands' misty, mystical night.
Your landscapes whisper stories, of
struggles and of might,
A cradle of humanity, where life's intricate
dance takes flight.

The Maasai's red earth, the Kikuyu's fertile
soil,
The Luo's great river, where stories and
secrets boil.

Your people, a tapestry, woven with threads
of strength,
A nation born of diversity, where cultures
length.

In your valleys, where wildlife roams free,
I see the heartbeat of a land that's wild and
free.

The roar of the lion, the cry of the eagle's
flight,
These are the sounds that echo, through my
Kenya's night.

Kenya, you are more than just a name,
A symphony of voices, a dance of earth and
flame.

You are the essence of Africa, distilled in one
land,
A testament to resilience, to strength, to
the human hand.

And as I look upon your beauty, I know,
That I named you well, with a heart that
overflow.

Kirinyaga, Kenya, a name that's forever true,
A reflection of the beauty, that my heart has
known, in you.

I named you Kenya, a tribute to your strength
A testament to your resilience and pride
In your soil, I see the echoes of ancestors
past
Their legacy alive in every sunrise

May your story be told in whispers and roars
A symphony of triumphs and struggles
endured

Kenya, this is how I named you
A timeless ode to a land so pure.

How We Define Africa



Norman Mwale [The PenPusher]
Zimbabwean Author -Poet

In the cradle of humanity, where the first
breaths were drawn,
Africa's heartbeat echoes, a rhythm that's
forever sown.
A tapestry woven with threads of resilience
and strength,
The scars of history, the weight of colonial
chains that clength.

But Africa is not just a story of pain,
A land of contrasts, where life and death
entwine in a delicate dance.
It's the laughter of children in dusty villages,
the warmth of community,
The call to arms, the cry for freedom that
refuses to be silenced.

It's the majesty of pyramids, the ancient
wisdom of the Nile,
The rock-hewn churches of Ethiopia, where
faith and history collide.
The rhythms of the drum, the beat of the
human heart,
The languages of the ancestors, that carry
the weight of every art.

Africa is the Sahara's burning sands, the
dunes that stretch and sway,
The Congo's green lungs, that breathe life into
our shared humanity's gray.
It's the richness of resources, the gold and
diamonds that shine,
The potential for greatness, that lies within,
waiting to be aligned.

From Kenya's misty highlands, where Mount
Kenya's peaks touch the sky,
To Zimbabwe's roaring waterfalls, where
Victoria's secrets lie.
The Serengeti's endless plains, where
wildlife's migrations unfold,
The Okavango's delta wetlands, where
nature's beauty never grows old.

But Africa is also the struggles of the
present,
The weight of poverty, the sting of inequality
that's prevalent.
Yet, in the midst of shadows, there's a light
that shines,
A beacon of hope, that Africa's spirit will
forever redefine.

Africa is not just a place, it's a heartbeat, a
pulse,
A symphony of voices, that rise, that
whisper, that scream, that hush.
It's the story of humanity, in all its beauty
and pain,
A testament to resilience, to strength, to
the power of the human brain.

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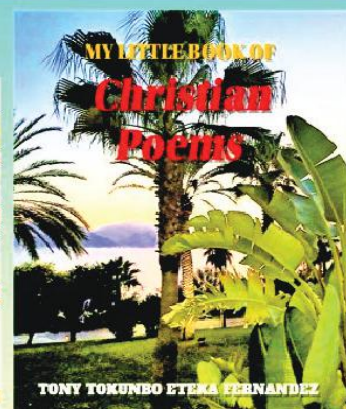
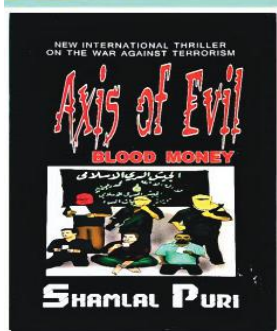
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EDUCATION

Aspirants For Kuppet positions In Murang'a Want Elections To Proceed As Scheduled

By: Bernard Munyao
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- KUPPET Murang'a branch chairperson aspirant Suleiman Salim condemned the suspension, saying the halt aims to deny teachers a critical opportunity to participate in union democracy.

- He said the move had angered many members who are ready to vote and be heard.

- "Stopping these elections is denying us our democratic right and the elections must go on as scheduled," Salim stated, saying they will move in court to overturn the order that was issued last Friday and served on Monday.

- Another chairperson aspirant, Dominic Gitau, said the decision had demoralized teachers who had invested time and resources in campaigns.



A section of aspirants for various Kuppet positions in Murang'a protesting a court order halting elections of the union branch officials. Photo/Bernard Munyao

Aspirants for various positions in Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (Kuppet) Murang'a branch have protested halting of county elections through a court order demanding that the polls proceed as scheduled on Saturday.

Addressing members of the press yesterday, the teachers said the court order halting the elections has caused frustration and uncertainty among aspirants and voters, warning that the delay undermines their democratic rights and confidence in union leadership.

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Another chairperson aspirant, Dom-

inic Gitau, said the decision had demoralized teachers who had invested time and resources in campaigns.

He noted that many aspirants had reorganized their teaching schedules and personal commitments in preparation to elect new leaders for the union.

"We have sacrificed our time and prepared adequately, yet our elections have been stopped while other counties have already concluded theirs," Gitau said.

He further questioned the motive behind the court action, alleging it was meant to sabotage the process.

He said the member who went to court had no valid reason to do so and was being used by some individuals who are scared of the elections to disrupt unity among teachers.

"I believe he is being used by unknown individuals to cause mayhem and chaos to ensure these elections do not take place," he said.

On his part, Polycarp Muriithi, another aspirant also faulted the suspension, describing it as a setback to the growing recognition of junior secondary teachers.

He called for the autonomy of JSS

from the primary school system, arguing that their unique roles require independent representation within the union.

Muriithi stressed teachers under JSS should be allowed to vote and bring new leadership, saying continued linkage to primary school structures weakens their voice.

"Junior secondary schools must be treated as a distinct organization with their own representation," Muriithi said.

He further emphasized the need for full inclusion of JSS teachers in union electoral processes, noting that many feel sidelined.

He said excluding them from voting contradicts the principles of fairness and representation. "All JSS teachers must be included in the election register as eligible voters," he said.

Meanwhile, aspirant representing persons with disabilities, Stelah Gakii, decried the financial and emotional strain caused by the postponement.

She said candidates had spent considerable resources on campaigns with the expectation that elections would be held on the scheduled date.

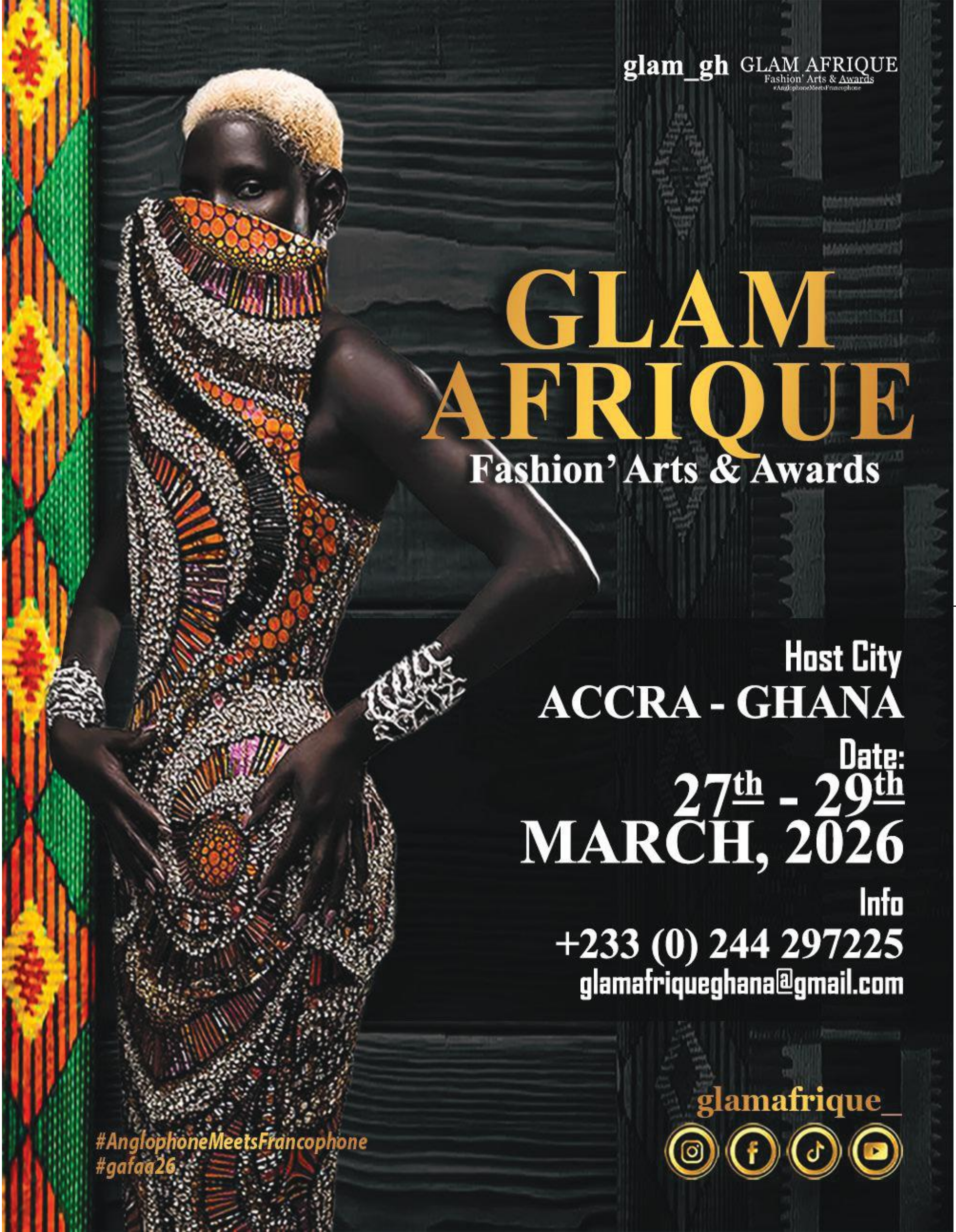
"We have used a lot of our resources

campaigning in good faith, and postponing the elections is unfair to us," Gakii said.

Gakii added that prolonged delays interfere with teachers' core responsibilities, noting that educators must balance union activities with their duty to learners.

"We need these elections conducted on January 17 because we also have students to attend to and other professional responsibilities," she said.

The JSS teachers have now appealed to KUPPET leadership and relevant authorities to urgently resolve the impasse, insisting that allowing the elections to proceed as scheduled will restore confidence, unity and normalcy within the union.



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The Insurance Theory Of Judicial Independence: Why Authoritarian Regimes Sometimes Create Strong Courts



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- At its core, the theory hinges on the concept of “political insurance,” where authoritarian rulers perceive independent judiciaries as mechanisms to mitigate risks in an unpredictable future. In regimes where power is concentrated but fragile, leaders recognize that today’s dominance could become tomorrow’s vulnerability; thus, bolstering courts serves as a preemptive shield, ensuring that successors cannot arbitrarily dismantle legacies or pursue vendettas.
- Analytically, this involves a cost-benefit calculus: the short-term dilution of executive authority is offset by the judiciary’s role in enforcing contracts, resolving disputes neutrally, and potentially constraining opponents. However, this insurance is not foolproof it requires credible commitment, such as constitutional entrenchment, to bind future actors, highlighting the theory’s reliance on forward-looking rationality in otherwise opaque authoritarian decision-making.

The Insurance Theory of Judicial Independence posits that political leaders, even in authoritarian contexts, may strategically empower courts as a hedge against future uncertainties. This framework, developed by scholars like Tom Ginsburg, suggests that when incumbents anticipate a potential loss of power due to electoral competition, internal fractures, or regime transitions they invest in judicial autonomy to safeguard their interests post-tenure. Rather than viewing strong courts solely as democratic artifacts, the theory reframes them as rational calculations in high-stakes political environments, where leaders weigh the immediate costs of ceding control against long-term protections like property rights enforcement or immunity from reprisals. This challenges traditional views that judicial independence emerges organically from liberal values, emphasizing instead the instrumental logic of self-preservation amid volatility.

At its core, the theory hinges on the concept of “political insurance,” where authoritarian rulers perceive independent judiciaries as mechanisms to mitigate risks in an unpredictable future. In regimes where power is concentrated but fragile, leaders recognize that today’s dominance could become tomorrow’s vulnerability; thus, bolstering courts serves as a preemptive shield, ensuring that successors cannot arbitrarily dismantle legacies or pursue vendettas. Analytically, this involves a cost-benefit calculus: the short-term dilution of executive authority is offset by the judiciary’s role in enforcing contracts, resolving disputes neutrally, and potentially constraining opponents. However, this insurance is not foolproof it requires credible commitment, such as constitutional entrenchment, to bind future actors, highlighting the theory’s reliance on forward-looking rationality in otherwise opaque authoritarian decision-making.

Authoritarian regimes, characterized by limited pluralism and suppressed dissent, might seem antithetical to judicial strength, yet the insurance theory explains anomalies where dictators tolerate or enhance court independence. Deep reasoning reveals that such regimes often face endogenous threats, like elite defections or popular unrest, prompting leaders to institutionalize safeguards. Unlike democracies, where competition is routine, authoritarian insurance emerges sporadically, tied to moments of perceived weakness; this analytical lens underscores how judicial empowerment can prolong regime survival by attracting investment or legitimizing rule, while also preparing for downfall. Critically, the theory predicts variability: independence flourishes when exit risks are high but not imminent, allowing strategic reforms without immediate backlash.



The theory’s mastery lies in its integration of game-theoretic insights, where leaders model opponents as rational actors who might exploit weak institutions. In authoritarian settings, this manifests as a prisoner’s dilemma variant: incumbents defect from total control to avoid mutual destruction in power shifts. However, limitations arise: if risks are overestimated, reforms may backfire by emboldening opposition; conversely, underestimation leads to judicial subservience. Empirical depth requires examining how contextual factors, like economic interdependence or international pressures, amplify insurance motives, transforming courts from regime tools into ambivalent guardians. One compelling example is Mexico under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) hegemony in the 1990s, where judicial reforms illustrated the insurance logic amid eroding dominance.

As the PRI faced unprecedented electoral challenges from opposition parties like the National Action Party (PAN), President Zedillo initiated sweeping changes in 1994, expanding the Supreme Court’s size, introducing merit-based appointments, and enhancing judicial review powers. This was no altruistic democratization; analytically, it stemmed from foresight that prolonged one-party rule might collapse, leaving PRI elites exposed to reprisals over corruption or electoral fraud. By fortifying the judiciary, the regime insured against post-transition purges, ensuring neutral arbitration of disputes that could protect former officials’ assets and rights. In Mexico, the reforms’ depth reveals strategic depth: the PRI sacrificed short-term judicial pliability previously used to rubber-stamp executive decrees for long-term credibility.

Outcomes were mixed; while courts gained autonomy, enabling landmark

rulings on indigenous rights and electoral integrity, they also shielded PRI remnants during the 2000 transition to PAN rule. This analytical scrutiny shows the theory’s predictive power: reforms occurred precisely when uncertainty peaked, post-NAFTA economic shifts and Zapatista unrest amplified risks, demonstrating how external factors catalyze insurance calculations in soft authoritarianism. Taiwan under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the mid-2000s provides another nuanced case, where judicial reforms aligned with insurance motives amid political flux.

Following the DPP’s 2000 ascent, ending decades of Kuomintang (KMT) authoritarianism, the regime confronted opposition alliances and anticipated electoral reversals by 2008. Reforms to the Court Organization Law, including presidential nomination of the Prosecutor General with parliamentary approval and a fixed four-year term, were propelled by civil society groups like the Judicial Reform Foundation. Analytically, the DPP’s ascent, despite retaining nomination leverage, reflected a visionary relinquishment of control, hedging against KMT resurgence that could weaponize prosecutors against DPP figures. Taiwan’s reforms deepened prosecutorial independence through bodies like the Prosecutorial Personnel Review Council and Special Investigation Division, addressing historical KMT abuses.

This analytical layer exposes the theory’s adaptability: in a democratizing authoritarian context, short-term political instability marked by corruption scandals and cross-strait tensions prompted insurance, yielding outcomes like impartial investigations that bolstered regime legitimacy while protecting outgoing elites. However, it highlights risks; post-2008 KMT victories tested these

safeguards, underscoring that insurance efficacy depends on institutional entrenchment amid volatile party systems. Chile under Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship exemplifies how insurance theory operates in hard authoritarianism, with the 1980 Constitution empowering courts as a pre-transition safeguard.

Facing internal pressures and international isolation by the late 1970s, Pinochet’s regime entrenched judicial review via a Constitutional Tribunal, anticipating a 1988 plebiscite loss. Analytically, this was rational foresight: independent courts could enforce the constitution’s economic model and grant amnesties, insulating military elites from democratic retribution. Yet, the judiciary’s pre-existing conservatism sharing Pinochet’s anti-communist ideology ensured alignment without full subservience, revealing the theory’s nuance in ideologically congruent settings. In conclusion, the insurance theory illuminates why authoritarian regimes sporadically foster strong courts, as seen in Mexico’s electoral hedging, Taiwan’s reformist concessions, and Chile’s constitutional foresight.

Deep analytical reasoning underscores its mastery: judicial independence emerges not from moral imperatives but strategic imperatives, with profound implications for transitions facilitating smoother handovers while risking elite entrenchment. Limitations persist; in highly repressive contexts, insurance may falter if courts remain complicit, urging further research into conditional factors like elite cohesion. Ultimately, this framework enriches our understanding of power dynamics, showing how vulnerability breeds institutional innovation even in unlikely regimes.

The writer is a socio-legal commentator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Disturbing Trend Of Newborns Abandoned In Dustbins

Kenya is grappling with a grim reality: newborns discarded in dustbins, a chilling symbol of desperation and neglect. These cases are not isolated tragedies but the visible scars of deeper social and economic fractures.



Unwanted pregnancies remain a leading driver. In poor communities, nearly 40 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 become pregnant, many without the resources or support to raise a child. Faced with stigma, shame, and crushing poverty, some young mothers resort to abandonment. The lack of comprehensive sex education and limited access to contraception only fuels this cycle of despair.

The consequences are devastating. Infants left in unsanitary conditions face death or lifelong health complications. Each abandoned child is a stark reminder of systemic failures—failures in education, healthcare, and social protection.

Economic hardship compounds the crisis. Families already struggling to survive often view an unplanned child as an unbearable burden. Without adequate healthcare, social services, or community support, vulnerable mothers are left isolated, their choices narrowed to the unthinkable.

Solutions exist, but they demand urgency. Expanding access to prenatal care and safe delivery options, embedding comprehensive sex education in schools, and ensuring contraception availability are critical steps. Equally vital is building

support networks for young and single mothers, while communities must confront and dismantle the stigma surrounding out of wedlock births.

Kenya cannot afford to look away. Every newborn deserves dignity, care, and a chance at life. Abandonment is not just a crime—it is a national shame that must be confronted head on.

Agnes Otieno, Laikipia University

IShowSpeed: The Rise Of A Global Digital Star

The age of digital fame has found its most electrifying face in Darren Watkins Jr., better known as IShowSpeed. What began as a teenager's gaming streams has exploded into a global phenomenon, proving that the new frontier of celebrity is not Hollywood or football stadiums—it is the livestream.



Speed's meteoric rise on YouTube was powered by his unfiltered energy, comedic reactions, and unabashed love for Cristiano Ronaldo. Millions of young fans across continents now tune in daily, drawn to his authenticity and unpredictability. In an era where attention is currency, he has mastered the art of turning raw personality into global influence.

His January 2026 visit to Kenya underscored the reach of digital stardom. Crowds thronged Nairobi streets, schools, and public spaces to catch a glimpse of the streamer. He sampled local cuisine, engaged with youth, and broadcast Kenyan culture to millions worldwide. For many, it was more than entertainment—it was a moment of cultural exchange and global

visibility.

IShowSpeed's journey is emblematic of a broader shift: digital creators are no longer fringe entertainers but central figures shaping youth culture, conversations, and even national image. His story demonstrates that creativity, consistency, and connection can transform online platforms into powerful careers. The lesson is clear: in today's

world, fame is no longer bestowed—it is streamed, shared, and amplified. And in that digital spotlight, IShowSpeed stands as one of the defining stars of a generation.

By Whytney Nasir, Laikipia University

The Battle Between West And North In The AFCON Semi-Final

The 2025 Africa Cup of Nations has delivered the kind of drama fans crave: a semi-final clash pitting West Africa's flair against North Africa's discipline. Nigeria and Senegal, two giants of the west, lock horns with Egypt and hosts Morocco, the proud standard-bearers of the north. Between them, these four sides boast an astonishing 13 AFCON titles—a testament to their pedigree and dominance.



Egypt, the record holders with seven championships, last lifted the trophy in 2010. Morocco, champions in 1976, are desperate to end a decades-long drought on home soil. Nigeria, with four titles, last triumphed in 2013, while Senegal, the reigning champions from 2021, are hungry to prove their golden generation was no fluke.

Beyond the statistics lies a deeper narrative: regional pride, continental bragging rights, and the chance to etch new heroes into AFCON history. The final, set for January 18, will not just

philosophies. West Africa brings attacking flair, raw pace, and individual brilliance. North Africa counters with tactical discipline, defensive solidity, and a mastery of game management.

crowns a champion—it will settle a battle of styles that has defined African football for decades. The stage is set, the stakes are high, and only two will march on. In this semi-final, history is not just remembered—it is rewritten.

By John Thuku Mwangi, Sports Journalist

The semi-final fixtures promise fireworks: Senegal versus Egypt at 8 p.m., followed by Nigeria against Morocco at 11 p.m. Each encounter is more than a game; it is a clash of footballing

Living On The Edge: How The Cost Of Living Is Redefining Everyday Life In 2026

The year 2026 has brought with it a sobering reality: the cost of living is no longer an abstract economic statistic but a daily struggle etched into shopping lists, rent receipts, and transport fares. What was once a policy debate has become a lived crisis, reshaping how families plan, spend, and survive.



Persistent inflation sits at the heart of this storm. Food, fuel, housing, and healthcare costs continue to climb, forcing households to stretch every shilling. Even those with steady jobs find their wages lagging behind expenses, while economists warn that recovery headlines mask the harsher truth of ordinary life.

Technology's rapid advance has added another layer of pressure. Artificial intelligence is transforming industries, creating new opportunities but erasing traditional roles. Workers face short-term contracts and job insecurity, while young graduates enter a market brim-

ming with competition but thin on stability. Financial uncertainty has become the new normal. The strain extends beyond wallets. Mental health experts report rising stress and burnout linked to economic hardship. Families delay milestones like marriage or home ownership, students juggle studies with side hustles, and parents take on extra work just to keep households afloat. The crisis is eroding dignity, well-being, and social cohesion. Public frustration is mounting.

Citizens demand action on wages, taxation, housing, and social protection, urging leaders to prioritize human welfare over hollow growth figures.

The defining story of 2026 is clear: survival has become the benchmark of success. Unless governments act decisively, hope itself risks becoming unaffordable.

By Juliet Dandu, Laikipia University

How 2026 Will Strengthen China-Africa Educational Ties

By: Xinhua News Agency
 @themkenyatimes

In July 2025, braving Typhoon Co-may's gales, a planeload of 20 Zhejiang Normal University students and teachers landed at Port Elizabeth in South Africa, becoming one more wave in an unflinching stream of China-Africa educational exchanges launched in recent years.

With the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges now underway, the university sustains its grassroots bonds by sending roughly 100 personnel south annually as new African cohorts arrive each term. Throughout the years, the influence of China-Africa collaboration in classrooms has extended far beyond the educational sphere. It stands as a vivid testimony to a partnership that has empowered tens of thousands of students and drawn the two sides ever closer across continents.

Building bridges

The past year marked the 10th anniversary of the Chinese language being formally incorporated into South Africa's national education system. The impact is often measured in policy terms, but its most revealing effects are quieter, unfolding through the choices of young people. For Musfirah Yasir, those choices are deeply personal. Born in Pakistan and raised in Johannesburg, she is now a global marketing student at the University of Johannesburg. After class, she practices Mandarin tones repeatedly, then studies the fine details of traditional Chinese dance in front of a mirror. Performing at cultural events organized by the Chinese Embassy in South Africa, Yasir felt the distance between herself and China begins to narrow. "It stopped feeling abstract," she said. "It felt closer." Her experience reflects the work of the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg over the past 10 years. Students from universities encounter Chinese in the classroom, then carry it beyond campus -- toward study opportunities in China or early careers with Chinese-linked companies. Practical language programs for public institutions and businesses have helped Mandarin move from the classroom to everyday use.

For Yasir, this shift brings clarity. Language study, cultural practice and academic ambition now converge, where China-Africa educational cooperation is no longer an idea, but daily effort, measured in

pronunciation drills, careful dance movements, and a future slowly coming into focus." With over 1,000 students enrolling each year, the impact is tangible," said Li Baosheng, Chinese director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg. "Our goal is to help more young people turn language learning into real opportunities, and I believe every institute shares the same mission." Nait Si Youssef, once a German major at Hassan II University in the Moroccan city of Casablanca, changed his degree to Chinese after his first class at the campus Confucius Institute. That single decision, he says, rerouted his life: He is now a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. "I discovered I loved the tones and the characters, but more importantly, I saw a future attached to them," said Youssef. Within months, he switched majors. Within years, he crossed continents. Now focusing his research on China-Africa relations, Youssef hopes to pursue a future in diplomacy after graduation and to help build wider cultural links between China and Morocco. "Language opens doors," he said. "Understanding keeps them open."

The "Lagos boy"

Since 1964, when China first offered government scholarships to Nigerian students, more than 1,700 Nigerians have studied in China on such grants. Over the years, Chinese students have also been heading to this West African nation. Liu Hongwu, founder and director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, is now 67. Among the earliest Chinese to engage in academic exchange in Africa, he arrived at the University of Lagos as a visiting scholar about 35 years ago. While there, Liu went far beyond his coursework, determined to walk the length and breadth of Africa. He observed that many African countries paid scant attention to history; in numerous primary and secondary schools, the subject was not taught at all, leaving countless young Africans ignorant of their own past. Ten years later, drawing on the contacts and materials he had gathered, Liu published "From Tribal Society to Nation-State: A Survey of the National Development of Nigeria." An English edition, released in 2024, is now available in Nigeria. "This work is one of the most detailed books on Nigeria's history and by a foreigner," said Ikenna Emewu, editor-in-chief of Africa China Economy Magazine. "His book teaches Nigerians the Ni-



Students taste Chinese tea during an event celebrating the upcoming International Chinese Language Day at the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg in Johannesburg, South Africa last year. (Xinhua/Zhang Yudong)

gerian history."

To many in Nigeria, the arrival of the book feels like Liu's homecoming. Young and old alike have taken to calling him the "Lagos Boy," greeting him as a return of a long-lost family member, and as living proof that China-Africa exchanges run straight into people's hearts. "I love the nickname," Liu said. "It means my African friends have taken me in." From the moment he first set foot on African soil, he believed every partnership must be built on trust. Guided by that conviction, Liu founded China's first university-based African studies institute at Zhejiang Normal University in September 2007. Starting from scratch, he rallied the university, government and African partners to forge China's research on Africa into what it is today. Modern Africa, scarred by colonial conquest, was long denied sound technical schooling. After independence, many nations never managed to build an education system capable of feeding economic and technological advances.

Liu boiled it down to one idea: tailor education to African realities and tie it straight to development. Today, Zhejiang Normal University's annual training sessions have attracted more than 4,000 African participants. With his initiative, the institute joined forces with the China Scholarship Council to open a West African branch at Nigeria's University of Ibadan. Every year, more than 100 staff and students travel to

Africa for study, fieldwork, or exchanges. "People-to-people ties are the cornerstone of cooperation," Liu said. "In Africa, I'm not a professor, not a director, just a 'Lagos Boy' back home."

Lasting board

A representative case of China-Africa cooperation in recent years is the educational cooperation between Zhejiang Normal University and Nelson Mandela University. The partnership took a decisive turn on Sept. 10, 2019, when the two universities jointly hosted the 2nd China-South Africa Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum in South Africa. Despite a six-hour time difference, collaboration between the two universities has remained in lockstep. That event marked their first formal, institutional collaboration. Six years on, what began as an experiment has matured into a durable academic relationship. "From our university's perspective, the partnership with Zhejiang Normal University has developed in a steady, structured and increasingly institutionalized manner," said Johannes van Rensburg, director of partnerships and programs of the SAC Think Tank at Nelson Mandela University. "What started as academic engagement and exploratory exchanges has gradually evolved into a formal cooperation framework covering student mobility, short-term study programs, joint research activities and academic visits," he added.

Li Zhaoying, director of the China-Africa Media Research and Communication Center at Zhejiang Normal University, spent six months in 2024 and 2025 as a visiting scholar at Nelson Mandela University. "They are genuinely interested," Li said of her South African students. "They recognize China's rapid rise in recent decades and its progress in science and technology, but they know much less about China's humanities and social sciences." Her lectures on China's social science traditions and differences between Chinese perspectives on international relations and Western frameworks were warmly received. "That curiosity is what makes the exchange meaningful," she said. "Under the Belt and Road Initiative, universities in China and Africa are fighting side by side for the shared development of education," said Mammo Muchie, a professor at Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria, South Africa. "If we strengthen action-oriented research, teaching, training and community-based problem-solving," Muchie said, "the China-Africa partnership can achieve genuine and lasting impact."

Government Backs South Lokichar Oil Plan As Parliament Races Against Review Deadline

By: MKT Correspondent

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The Government has mounted a robust defence of the South Lokichar Field Development Plan (FDP) as Parliament begins a tightly timed review that will determine the future of Kenya's most ambitious oil project.

Appearing before a joint sitting of the National Assembly and Senate energy committees, Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi said the approval of the FDP and revised Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for Blocks T6 and T7 was lawful, economically justified and essential to unlocking the country's upstream petroleum potential.

Wandayi told lawmakers that the plan complies with the Petroleum Act, 2019 and the Constitution, noting that while commercial oil discoveries had been made in both

blocks, the fields were marginal if developed separately.

He said the decision to pursue a joint development model was aimed at improving economic viability and lowering operational costs.

"The joint development ensures optimal use of infrastructure, including a shared central processing facility, and aligns with international industry best practice," Wandayi said.

The two parliamentary committees are under pressure to complete their review within strict legal timelines.

Senator William Kisang, who co-chairs the joint committee, said Parliament must table its report by February 24, warning that failure to do so would have serious consequences.

"We are working against very tight deadlines," Kisang said.

National Assembly co-chair David Gikaria cautioned that Parliament has only 60 days to collect public views and submit them to both Houses for consideration. If that window lapses, the FDP will be automatically ratified without parlia-

mentary input.

The South Lokichar Basin is estimated to hold 2.85 billion barrels of oil in place, with recoverable resources put at about 429 million barrels over the life of the project. The most advanced fields include Ngamia, Ekales, Amosing and Twiga.

One of the most contentious issues is the increase of the cost recovery ceiling to 85 per cent for both blocks, up from 55 per cent for Block T6 and 65 per cent for Block T7.

Critics argue the move could reduce the government's share of early revenues, but Wandayi said it was necessary to attract investors to a capital-intensive project that has struggled to secure partners amid a global shift away from hydrocarbons.

He added that countries such as Angola, Cameroon and Ghana allow cost recovery ceilings of between 85 and 100 per cent, and that Kenyan law does not prescribe a fixed limit.

Under the revised terms, the Government has also retained a 20 per



CS Opiyo Wandayi and his team when he appeared on Monday. Photo/Courtesy.

cent participation interest, meaning it will contribute its share of development costs if it opts to take up the stake.

The joint committee is set to conduct public hearings in Turkana, West Pokot, Lamu, Mombasa, Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu as part of the

public participation process before Parliament makes its final decision.

Mutunga Sounds Alarm Over Foreign Military Bases In Kenya

By: MKT Correspondent

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Former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga has reignited national debate on the presence of foreign military bases in Kenya, warning that ordinary citizens risk becoming collateral damage should global conflicts spill into the country.

In a strongly worded statement, Mutunga questioned the silence surrounding installations in Lamu, Nanyuki, Wajir, and Turkana, insisting that decisions of such magnitude cannot be made without public participation as guaranteed by the Constitution.

"Why are we not debating military bases in our country? If war breaks out between their owners and other nations, our people will pay the price," he cautioned.

Mutunga urged communities hosting these facilities—and Kenyans more broadly—to demand transparency and civic involvement not only in matters of security but also in wider national policies on trade, debt, and foreign loans.

Framing the issue as one of sovereignty, he warned that unchecked external influence could reduce Kenya to what he termed a "slave plantation." He called for collective civic action to reclaim democratic control over policy choices and safeguard national interests.

His remarks come at a time when Kenya's security partnerships, rising foreign debt, and delicate balance between sovereignty and geopolitical alliances are under renewed scrutiny.

Mutunga's intervention underscores a growing concern: that Kenya's future cannot be shaped behind closed doors, but must be openly debated to protect citizens from the hidden costs of global power struggles.



Former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga. /FILE

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Sports >> *Michael Carrick has agreed to become Manchester United's interim head coach, and former England assistant manager Steve Holland is set to be his number two.

Carrick Agrees To Become Manchester United Interim Head Coach



Steve Holland (right) worked under Jose Mourinho, Antonio Conte and Rafael Benitez at Chelsea..

Michael Carrick has agreed to become Manchester United's interim head coach, and former England assistant manager Steve Holland is set to be his number two.

Jonathan Woodgate, Jonny Evans, and Travis Binnion will also be part of Carrick's staff.

Former United and England midfielder Carrick agreed a deal on Monday night, with an announcement due on Tuesday once the necessary paperwork has been signed.

United sacked Ruben Amorim after 14 months on 5 January, and Darren Fletcher took charge as caretaker boss for two matches.

Carrick will be in the dugout

for Saturday's Premier League derby against Manchester City at Old Trafford.

The 44-year-old had a three-game stint as United's temporary boss after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's dismissal in 2021.

Holland worked under Gareth Southgate with England and spent several years with Chelsea, where he had major success under a number of managers.

The 55-year-old was sacked as manager of Japanese club Yokohama F Marinos in April after only four months in charge.

Woodgate worked under Carrick at Middlesbrough, while former United defender Evans will also return to Old Trafford. Binnion is already part of the

club's coaching staff.

Carrick held face-to-face talks with United officials last Thursday and is understood to have impressed chief executive Omar Berrada and director of football Jason Wilcox with his vision for the team.

The former England midfielder is set to play a 4-2-3-1 system, a move away from the three at the back set-up employed by Amorim.

Solskjaer, who has played and managed United, also held talks with the hierarchy over the vacancy.

But Carrick has been chosen, given that he is more of a hands-on coach than Solskjaer.

Darren Fletcher, who took

charge of the games against Burnley and Brighton immediately after Amorim's exit, will return to the Under-18s.

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Sports >> *The National Olympic Committee of Kenya (NOC-K) has officially launched Athletes Week 2026, reaffirming its commitment to athlete welfare and holistic preparation

NOC-K Launches Athletes Week 2026 Ahead of Demanding International Games Cycle



The National Olympic Committee of Kenya (NOC-K) has officially launched Athletes Week 2026, reaffirming its commitment to athlete welfare and holistic preparation as Kenya enters a demanding international sporting cycle.

The week-long programme was launched on January 13 at Sportview Hotel, Kasarani, bringing together 140 athletes from more than 30 national sports federations.

Athletes Week combines the National Athletes Forum and the Athlete365 Career+ Programme, creating a comprehensive platform focused on athlete voice, wellbeing, performance support, and life beyond sport.

The opening session was led by IOC Athletes' Commission Member and former NOC-K Athlete Representative Humphrey Kayange, reinforcing the athlete-centred nature of the initiative.

Kayange emphasized the importance of athletes actively engaging in conversations that shape their careers, welfare, and representation within sport.

Officially opening Athletes Week, NOC-K president Shadrack Maluki highlighted the significance of the programme as Kenya prepares for a packed global calendar that includes the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games, the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games, and the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Maluki stressed that athlete success goes beyond competition results, noting that mental health, safeguarding, career transition, and access to structured support systems are critical pillars of long-term performance.

"Athlete wellbeing is not optional; it is essential. Our respon-

sibility is to ensure athletes are supported not just to compete, but to thrive during and after their sporting careers. We want to train you to give back to the same federations that you are coming from," Maluki said.

The National Athletes Forum, running on January 13 and 14, provides a safe and inclusive space for athletes to engage on key issues affecting their careers.

Discussions during the forum cover topics such as mental health, safeguarding, anti-doping, financial literacy, personal branding, media engagement, and effective athlete representation.

NOC-K Secretary General John Ogolla noted that Athletes Week plays a crucial role in ensuring athlete feedback directly informs NOC-K programmes and policies, strengthening governance and accountability across the Olympic movement.

The week will conclude with the Athlete365 Career+ Programme on 15 and 16 January, equipping athletes with practical skills for education, employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership, while preparing them for life beyond elite competition.

Through Athletes Week 2026, NOC-K continues to demonstrate its long-term commitment to building strong support structures that place athletes at the centre of Kenya's sporting ecosystem, ensuring they are fully prepared on and off the field for the challenges of the international stage.

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The Role Of The Speech Therapist In Inclusive Education



By: Xoshimjonova Nozima
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Inclusive education aims to ensure equal access to quality education for all learners, including children with speech, language, and communication disorders. In this context, the role of the speech therapist (speech-language pathologist) becomes increasingly important. This article examines the functions, responsibilities, and impact of speech therapists in inclusive educational settings. It also highlights collaboration with teachers, parents, and multidisciplinary teams as a key factor in supporting learners with special educational needs.

Keywords: inclusive education, speech therapist, speech and language disorders, special educational needs, collaboration

Introduction

Inclusive education has become a global priority in modern educational systems. Its main goal is to provide equal learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, sensory, or communicative differences. Among students with special educational needs, children with speech and language disorders represent a significant group. These difficulties may affect academic performance, social interaction, and emotional development.

A speech therapist plays a crucial role in identifying, preventing, and correcting speech and language disorders. In inclusive education, the speech therapist not only works with individual learners but also contributes to creating a supportive and accessible learning environment.

Speech and Language Disorders in Inclusive Classrooms

Children in inclusive classrooms may experience various speech and

language difficulties, including articulation disorders, fluency disorders (such as stuttering), voice disorders, and language delays. These challenges can limit a child's ability to express thoughts, understand instructions, and actively participate in classroom activities.

Without appropriate support, learners with speech and language disorders may face academic underachievement, low self-esteem, and social isolation. Therefore, early identification and intervention are essential components of inclusive education.

Key Roles of the Speech Therapist in Inclusive Education

Assessment and Diagnosis

One of the primary responsibilities of a speech therapist is to assess speech, language, and communication skills. Through standardized tests, observations, and interviews, the therapist identifies individual needs and determines the severity of the disorder. Accurate assessment forms the basis for effective intervention planning.

Individual and Group Intervention

Speech therapists design individualized intervention programs tailored to each learner's needs. These programs may include exercises to improve pronunciation, vocabulary development, sentence structure, and communication strategies. In inclusive settings, therapy can be conducted both individually and in small groups to encourage peer interaction and social communication.

Collaboration with Teachers

Effective inclusion requires close collaboration between speech therapists and classroom teachers. Speech therapists provide teachers with strategies to support communication development during lessons. This collaboration helps integrate speech and language goals into everyday classroom activities, ensuring continuity and consistency.

Support for Parents and Families

Parents play a vital role in a child's development. Speech therapists guide parents on how to support speech and language development at home. Regular communication with families strengthens the effectiveness of intervention and promotes positive outcomes.



Participation in Multidisciplinary Teams

In inclusive education, speech therapists often work as part of a multidisciplinary team that includes special educators, psychologists, and medical professionals. This teamwork allows for a holistic approach to addressing learners' educational and developmental needs.

Impact of Speech Therapy on Inclusive Education

The involvement of speech therapists significantly improves the quality of inclusive education. With proper speech and language support, learners gain better communication skills, increased academic participation, and improved social relationships. Moreover, inclusive classrooms become more accepting and responsive to diversity when communication barriers are reduced.

Research shows that early and consistent speech therapy interventions contribute to long-term academic success and social integration. Thus, speech therapists are essential contributors to achieving the goals

of inclusive education.

Challenges and Future Perspectives

Despite their importance, speech therapists in inclusive education face several challenges, such as large caseloads, limited resources, and lack of awareness about their role. To overcome these challenges, educational systems should invest in professional training, provide adequate staffing, and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

Future developments in inclusive education should emphasize the integration of innovative technologies, evidence-based practices, and continuous professional development for speech therapists.

Conclusion

The speech therapist plays a vital role in inclusive education by supporting learners with speech and language disorders, collaborating with educators and families, and promoting effective communication within the classroom. Their contribution enhances not only individual student outcomes but also the overall quality of inclusive educational

environments. Strengthening the role of speech therapists is essential for building truly inclusive and equitable education systems.

Xoshimjonova Nozima Nurulloqizi was born on May 27, 2006, in Uchqo'rg'on district of Namangan region. She graduated from Secondary School No. 23 in her home district. Currently, she is a first-year student majoring in Speech Therapy (Logopedics) at Namangan State Pedagogical Institute.

Due to her strong interest in medicine, her first academic articles are partially related to the medical field. Nozima's main goal is to become a highly qualified specialist in her profession and to apply all the knowledge she has acquired in practice, providing corrective support to individuals in need of speech therapy services.