

# The Mt. Kenya Times

WEEKEND ePAPER

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# Ruto Joins Muslim Community for Iftar, Calls for Unity During Ramadan

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

*Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures*

President William Ruto on Friday evening hosted members of the Muslim community for an Iftar dinner at State House Mombasa, marking a moment of reflection and unity during the holy month of Ramadan.

The President said the gathering symbolized the spirit of togetherness that defines Kenya's diverse society.

He noted that Ramadan is not only a sacred period of fasting and prayer for Muslims but also a time that encourages compassion, generosity, and solidarity among communities.

Ruto emphasized that Kenya draws great strength from its diversity of faiths and cultures, adding that shared moments such as Iftar strengthen bonds of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and national unity. He said the government remains committed to supporting all religious communities and ensuring that freedom of worship continues to thrive across the country.

The President also commended the Muslim community for its continued contribution to Kenya's social, economic, and cultural development. He praised Muslim leaders, scholars, and entrepreneurs for promoting peace, supporting education, and driving development initiatives in various regions.

Ruto said the dedication of the Muslim faithful to faith, family, charity, and community service remains a vital pillar in building a more cohesive, inclusive, and prosperous Kenya.

He wished Muslims across the country a peaceful and blessed Ramadan.

The Head of State was accompanied by several leaders from the Muslim community as well as from the National and county governments.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative. It is published by Exponential International Limited, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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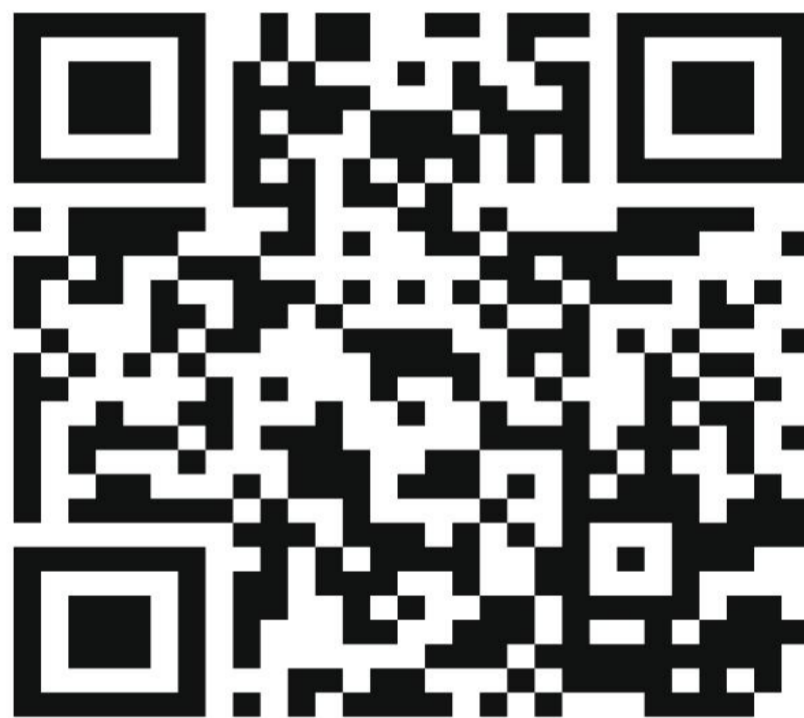


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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Principal Secretary for Science, Research and Innovation, Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, has called on schools to strengthen their alumni networks to enhance connections, mentorship, and institutional support. He emphasized that collaboration between schools, alumni, and communities is essential for improving education standards in the Coast region. Prof. Abdulrazak highlighted that education remains the greatest equalizer and a powerful tool for transforming communities and creating opportunities for young people. "In today's world, it's not just about what you know but also who you know. Through this network, we want to strengthen those connections," he said, encouraging alumni to continue giving back to society.



**KALRO** Board Chairman Dr. Thuo Mathenge, James Njoroge, a scientist based at the KALRO Food Crops Research Center in Njoro, and Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe at the Kilimo Expo showcasing edible oil crop seeds of sunflower and soya.



The ongoing countywide voter registration continues to show worrying numbers, with only 216,000 Kenyans registered as new voters against a target of 6 million. The IEBC is warning that if the trend persists, KSh1.1 billion set aside for voter registration could be wasted. Kenyans who have not registered are asked to do so.



Deborah M. Barasa appeared before the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Environment, Forestry and Mining in Nairobi to present the Forest Conservation and Management (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aimed at strengthening forest governance and aligning forestry laws with evolving environmental and constitutional obligations. Accompanied by Forestry Principal Secretary Gitonga Mugambi, the CS said the reforms will improve institutional coordination, compliance mech-

anisms and management of public, private and community forests. The Bill aligns the Forest Conservation and Management Act with the National Forest Policy 2023 and the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It proposes stronger governance structures, tougher penalties for forest offences, institutional realignment for the Kenya Forestry Research Institute, and new conservation tools such as natural capital accounting and payment for ecosystem services to promote sustainable forest management.



The Basic Education Principal Secretary, Julius Bittok, accompanied by Public Works Principal Secretary Joel Arumonyang and the school's Board of Management Chairperson, launched a modern library at Chewoyet Senior Secondary School. The school's Senior Principal, Stephen Akuto, noted that the launch of the modern library marks a significant milestone in strengthening academic excellence and improving learning facilities at the institution. Among those present at the event were Governor Simon Kachapin; Samuel Moroto, Member of Parliament for Kapenguria Constituency; Peter Lochakapong, MP for Pokot Central Constituency; Rael Kasiwa, the County Woman Representative; and Senator Julius Murgor, along with other dignitaries, including County Commissioner David Saruni.



Kisii County Chief Officer for Health Ms. Susan Kalinda (second left) and Associate Director for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Programs in Western Kenya Dr. Appolonia Aoko (third from left) hand over samples of the Lenacapavir drug to staff at Getembe Dispensary during the launch of the long acting HIV prevention injection in Kitutu Central Sub County, Kisii County, on Friday. Dr. Aoko lauded the Kisii County Government for its vision in leading the HIV response, noting that the launch demonstrated the health department's commitment to strengthening health security in the county and providing solutions to the community. She noted that the Lenacapavir drug had been under research for a long time and was approved by both the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Associate Director pointed out that Kenya is among ten high-burden countries pioneering the rollout of the Lenacapavir drug to up to two million people. "We are starting with 58,000 doses this year. Of these, 33,000 have already come through the Global Fund, while an additional 25,000 will be procured through the United States Department of State, with delivery expected in August 2026," affirmed Dr. Aoko.

Officials from the State Department for ICT and the Digital Economy and Konza Technopolis Development Authority joined the national tree growing restoration campaign at Konza Technopolis, planting 1,000 seedlings across one hectare at the Konza Nature Park. The exercise supports the government's target of planting 15 billion trees by 2032 to raise Kenya's tree cover to 30 per cent. Species planted included *Senna siamea*, *Croton*, *Moringa* and *Acacia*. The initiative aligns with the national tree growing directive issued under the administration of William Ruto, which aims to restore ecosystems and promote environmental sustainability while encouraging public participation in conservation efforts.



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**Politics** Putunoi says her first responsibility as Senator will be to ensure that the voices of Laikipia residents are effectively represented in Parliament

# Why Jane Putunoi Is favorite for 2027 Laikipia Senate seat

**Putunoi says she intends to strengthen direct engagement with residents by establishing operational offices in each constituency**

BY Fatuma Rashid

@themtkenyatimes

With extensive administrative experience, a strong grassroots engagement strategy and a firm commitment to accountability in public spending, Jane Putunoi is positioning herself as a compelling, top and credible contender for the Laikipia Senate seat in the 2027 General Election.

The former County Executive Committee Member says her leadership approach will be anchored on practical governance experience and an intimate understanding of county operations, enabling her to effectively defend the interests of Laikipia residents at the national level.

Her campaign agenda emphasizes strong representation, transparent oversight of county resources, and legislative collaboration aimed at unlocking development opportunities while ensuring that public institutions remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of ordinary residents.

Putunoi says her first responsibility as Senator will be to ensure that the voices of Laikipia residents are effectively represented in Parliament, particularly on pressing concerns that have continued to slow the county's social and economic progress.

"My priority will be to ensure

that issues affecting the people of Laikipia are effectively presented through legislation and strong lobbying, especially on insecurity, human-wildlife conflict, unemployment, and inadequate infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity," she said.

She notes that resolving these persistent challenges will require determined advocacy and sustained engagement with national institutions, arguing that effective representation in the Senate must translate into practical solutions that improve livelihoods across the county.

Putunoi says she intends to strengthen direct engagement with residents by establishing operational offices in each constituency, allowing citizens to present their concerns while enabling her office to closely monitor issues affecting communities across the county.

Through the constituency offices, she plans to systematically track the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan, Annual Development Plans and county budgets to ensure that projects approved by the county assembly are delivered as intended.

She says oversight will also extend to procurement processes, where weak accountability structures have historically created opportunities for misuse of public resources and delayed implementation of development projects

across several counties.

Having previously served as a County Executive Committee member, Putunoi says her administrative experience gives her a clear understanding of the institutional loopholes that often undermine development delivery at the county level.

"I will actively engage the national government and relevant institutions to ensure that the voices of Laikipians are heard and addressed. I will knock on every door neces-



Ms Jane Putunoi

sary to advocate strongly for our people," Putunoi added.

Beyond oversight and representation, Putunoi says she intends to work closely with Members of County Assembly to strengthen the legislative environment and ensure that laws passed at the county level respond effectively to the needs of residents.

She says structured collaboration between the Senate and MCAs, combined with capacity building initiatives, will help improve legislative qual-

ity while strengthening oversight mechanisms designed to safeguard public resources and enhance accountability.

Putunoi has also placed social cohesion and peaceful coexistence at the center of her development agenda, noting that Laikipia's diverse communities must work together if the county is to achieve sustainable economic growth.

She says her leadership will promote dialogue, partnerships and inclusive programs that bring communities to-

gether while working with relevant ministries and stakeholders to initiate development initiatives that benefit all residents regardless of background.

Political observers say Putunoi's blend of administrative competence, grassroots connectivity and focus on oversight has strengthened her profile as one of the emerging candidates likely to shape the conversation around the Laikipia Senate race in 2027.

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## IN BUSINESS

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**Water** They accused some individuals of attempting to introduce politics into the management of water resources

# Residents of Maragua ridge distance themselves from water supply protests

BY Bernard Munyao

@themkenyatimes

Residents of Maragua Ridge in Maragua Constituency, Murang'a County have distanced themselves from a group that recently staged protests claiming there had been disruption of water supply in the area.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, the residents said the claims were misleading, noting that they have been receiving water consistently for both domestic use and irrigation over the past seven months.

They accused some individuals of attempting to introduce politics into the management of water resources, especially at a time when the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) is conducting public participation to review the boundaries of local water companies.

Members of the Maragua Ridge Irrigation Project, led by their chairman Charles Kigotho stated that the community does not want to be dragged into political disputes that could lead to water shortages.

Kigotho explained that since the irrigation project was launched by President William Ruto about seven months ago, farmers in the area have enjoyed a steady supply of water that has significantly boosted agricultural activities.

"Farmers here are now able to irrigate their crops consistently. This has improved farm productivity and livelihoods for many families," observed Kigotho.

He added that Murang'a Water and Sanitation Company (MUWASCO) had earlier stepped in about two years ago to ensure households in the area had access to clean water for domestic use.

According to Kigotho, parts of Maragua constituency are currently served by Muwasco and residents are satisfied with the services.

"We do not want to be taken back to Murang'a South Water and Sanitation Company (Muswasco). For more than 20 years residents struggled without clean water connections," He remarked.

Another resident, Kimani Njane echoed the sentiments saying the ongoing discussions on reviewing the operational boundaries of water ser-



Members of Maragua Ridge Irrigation Project at the farm of one of their members. They called for an end to ongoing water politics being witnessed in the area. |

Photo: Bernard Munyao.

vice providers should not interfere with the supply of water to residents.

Njane noted that the people of Maragua Ridge endured years of water scarcity before Muwasco intervened to supply clean water.

"For many years we suffered without this essential commodity. We appreciate the company that came to our rescue and ensured our homes finally have water," He added.

Susan Chege also dismissed calls by some individuals advocating for the area to revert to Muswasco's jurisdiction arguing that the company already has vast areas under its mandate that are yet to receive adequate water supply.

"We should first address areas that still lack water instead of interfering with places that are already receiving reliable services," She said.

John Mukola, a resident of Kitune village in Kambiti Ward, claimed that some individuals were moving around the area spreading misinformation and attempting to stir unnecessary tensions over water manage-



**Members of the Maragua Ridge Irrigation Project, led by their chairman Charles Kigotho stated that the community does not want to be dragged into political disputes that could lead to water shortages. Kigotho explained that since the irrigation project was launched by President William Ruto about seven months ago, farmers in the area have enjoyed a steady supply of water that has significantly boosted agricultural activities.**

ment.

Mukola, who is living with a disability, said Muwasco had connected him to water free of charge, a move that he described as life-changing for his household.

"Our village suffered for many years without water. Now that we finally have it, we should protect the progress made," He said, urging the company to extend more connections to other households in the area. Meanwhile, investors in neighbouring areas have also raised concerns over persistent water shortages affecting industrial operations.

The General Manager of Greenava Fruit Processing Company located in Kakuzi, Ms Esther Wangari, said the firm has struggled since it was established two years ago due to inadequate water supply.

Wangari explained that the company, which processes mangoes and avocados, requires more than 150 cubic metres of water daily, a demand that cannot be met by boreholes.

She revealed that the company had sought assistance from Muwasco but could not be served because it lies outside the company's jurisdiction.

"Investors in Makuyu and Kakuzi areas are facing serious challenges due to lack of reliable water supply. This has reduced production and affected revenue," Wangari averred.

She called on the Murang'a county government to intervene and support water companies that have the capacity to provide water, especially to industries emerging in the region.

Currently, Murang'a County has five water service providers and the ongoing public participation led by WASREB seeks to review and streamline their operational boundaries to improve service delivery.

**Politics** The ruling marks a significant boost for the Executive, which has been fighting to retain the advisory structure since January

# Court of Appeal grants Ruto's advisers temporary lifeline

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Kenya's Court of Appeal has handed President William Ruto's embattled team of 21 advisers a crucial reprieve, suspending a High Court ruling that had declared their offices unconstitutional. The decision, delivered in Nairobi on Friday by Justices William Korir, Hedwig Ong'udi, and Samson Okong'o, allows the advisers to remain in office pending the outcome of a full appeal.

The ruling marks a significant boost for the Executive, which has been fighting to retain the advisory structure since January, when the High Court nullified the positions. Among those affected are economist David Ndii, National Security Advisor Monica Juma, and constitutional scholar Makau Mutua, alongside 18 other advisers covering portfolios from foreign relations to gender and intergovernmental coordination.

In their judgment, the appellate judges said: "We are convinced that the applicant has satisfied the two limbs for the grant of the order sought. Removing the officials immediately would risk disrupting the operations of the Office of the President."

The Attorney General's office had argued that the advisers were already performing critical public functions when the High Court issued its ruling. State counsel insisted that the President has constitutional authority to appoint personal staff to assist in discharging his duties. "The High Court failed to distinguish between advisory roles and Cabinet positions," counsel submitted, adding that the two sets of officials perform separate but complementary functions.

Civil society groups, led by Katiba Institute, had petitioned the High Court, arguing that the advisory posts duplicated roles already assigned to Cabinet Secretaries and the Attorney General. They warned that the positions were unconstitutional and an unnecessary burden on taxpayers. "This is about accountability. We cannot allow parallel offices that drain public resources," one petitioner told the court.

The appellate judges acknowledged

the weight of the constitutional questions at stake, noting: "Declining to suspend the judgment could create a vacuum within the advisory structure that supports the President's day-to-day work." They recommended that the President of the Court of Appeal fast-track the hearing of the substantive appeal, citing significant public interest.

For President Ruto, the advisers represent more than bureaucratic support—they are his trusted inner circle shaping policy and strategy. David Ndii, for instance, has been instrumental in crafting Kenya's economic recovery plan, while Monica Juma has played a central role in security coordination before her recent appointment by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as the new Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV). Makau Mutua has been a key voice on constitutional interpretation and governance.

Political analysts say the case could redefine the boundaries of presidential authority in Kenya. "This is not just about advisers—it's about the architecture of executive power," observed constitutional lawyer Dr. Kibe Mungai.

The opposition has seized on the controversy, accusing the President of expanding the Executive through unconstitutional means. Azimio la Umoja leaders argue that the advisory posts are a backdoor attempt to create parallel ministries. "We cannot have shadow cabinets funded by taxpayers," said Minority Leader Opiyo Wandayi in Parliament.

Public opinion remains divided. Supporters of the President argue that the advisers are essential for effective governance. "Every modern presidency needs a think tank. These advisers are not luxuries—they are necessities," said political commentator Herman Manyora.

Critics, however, see the positions as symptomatic of bloated government. "We are struggling with debt and high taxes. Why should Kenyans pay for 21 advisers when we already have Cabinet Secretaries?" asked activist Boniface Mwangi.

The debate has spilled into social media, with hashtags such as #Ad-



President William Ruto's inner circle of 21 advisers at past meeting

visersCase and #TaxJustice trending as Kenyans weigh the merits of the Court of Appeal's decision.

At the heart of the dispute is whether the President can create offices outside the framework of the Constitution and the Public Service Commission Act. Katiba Institute argues that the Constitution only allows the President to appoint personal staff within limits, not to establish new public offices.

“

**In their judgment, the appellate judges said: “We are convinced that the applicant has satisfied the two limbs for the grant of the order sought. Removing the officials immediately would risk disrupting the operations of the Office of the President.”**

The Attorney General counters that the advisers are not public officers in the strict sense but personal staff appointed to assist the President. "They do not exercise executive authority; they advise. That distinction is critical," the AG's office said in submissions.

Legal scholars warn that the case could set precedent for future administrations. If the Court of Appeal upholds the legality of the advisers, future presidents may expand advisory teams without parliamentary approval. If it strikes them down, presidential power will be curtailed.

Globally, advisory teams are common in presidential systems. In the United States, the White House employs hundreds of advisers across policy areas. In France, the Élysée Palace has a similar structure. Kenya's case, however, is complicated by constitutional limits on creating public offices.

"Kenya must decide whether it wants a lean presidency or one that mirrors global practice," said Professor Yash Pal Ghai, a leading constitutional expert.

The Court of Appeal has directed that the appeal be fast-tracked. A hearing is expected within months,

with a final ruling likely before the end of the year. Until then, the advisers remain in office, continuing to shape policy at State House.

For now, State House remains intact, but the reprieve is temporary. The appeal will determine whether the President's power to create advisory offices stands or whether the High Court's ruling will prevail.

The Court of Appeal's intervention has bought time, but the final verdict will decide whether these advisers remain part of Kenya's governance framework—or fade into history as an unconstitutional experiment.

For President Ruto, the stakes are personal and political. For activists, the case is a test of constitutional fidelity and fiscal responsibility. For ordinary Kenyans, it is about whether their taxes are funding necessity or excess.

The Court of Appeal has spoken for now, but the last word will come in the full appeal. Until then, the advisers remain in place, the controversy rages, and the nation waits.

The question is stark: will the President's circle survive the storm, or will the law cut them adrift?

**KNCHR** The KNCHR said it has initiated internal technical work, mapped regions heavily affected by protest-related abuses

# Victims of rights abuses set for compensation under new KNCHR reparations plan

BY MKT Correspondent  
@themtkenyentimes

Victims of human rights violations in Kenya could soon receive compensation under a new reparations framework being developed by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights after a High Court judgment and presidential directive.

The Commission says the initiative will create a comprehensive national reparations programme extending beyond financial compensation to include restitution, rehabilitation, acknowledgement of wrongdoing, memorialization, truth-telling and institutional reforms aimed at preventing future violations.

The KNCHR said it has initiated internal technical work, mapped regions heavily affected by protest-related abuses and begun consultations with state agencies, civil society and victim representatives to guide development of the framework.

The process follows a landmark High Court judgment delivered in Kerugoya on December 4, 2025, in Petition E010 of 2025, affirming KNCHR's mandate under Article 59 and the KNCHR Act 2011 to design reparations framework.

The move also follows a presidential proclamation and Gazette Notice issued March 6, 2026, requiring the Commission under Article 254(2) to submit a report to President

outlining the compensation and reparations framework within sixty days.

KNCHR Chairperson Claris Ogangah acknowledged the pain, loss and anxiety experienced by victims, survivors, families and the wider public, saying the Commission remains committed to delivering a credible human-rights-based reparations programme for affected communities nationwide.

He said the Commission acknowledges the pain, loss and anxiety experienced by victims, survivors and their families and the public concern that reparations have taken too long and assured affected persons the Commission will deliver a framework.

"A just and effective repa-



KNCHR Chairperson Claris Ogangah

rations programme includes compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction through acknowledgement, apology, memorialization and truth-telling as well as guarantees of non-repetition," Ogangah said, citing international human rights principles and standards guiding the process.

The Commission has adopted a roadmap to develop both a Reparations Policy and Repa-

rations Bill, establishing technical committees bringing together KNCHR officials, state institutions, oversight bodies, civil society groups and representatives of victims and survivors.

KNCHR said the exercise will be guided by national values including public participation and urged victims of protest-related and other violations to submit documents

such as P3s, medical reports, OB records or post-mortems for verification.

Victims can submit information through SMS code 22359, email reparations@knchr.org, telephone lines or visit KNCHR offices in Nairobi and regional centres including Kitale, Kisumu, Mombasa, Nyahururu, Wajir, Kajiado, Isiolo and Garissa.

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**Health** Muthoni said the engagement provided an opportunity for dialogue on issues affecting the community, particularly in the health sector

# PS Mary Muthoni urges Kirinyaga residents to register for SHA during Ramadhan Iftar

BY WMW  
@themkenyatimes

Residents of Kirinyaga County have been urged to register with the Social Health Authority (SHA) to access affordable healthcare as the government continues implementing Universal Health Coverage reforms. Speaking during an Iftar dinner with members of the Muslim community in Kirinyaga

The Iftar gathering, held during the holy month of Ramadan, brought together national and county government officials, religious leaders, local administrators, healthcare professionals and community members.



Some of the Muslim community members from Kirinyaga.



Principal Secretary Mary Muthoni addressing the Muslim community in Kirinyaga County on Thursday evening. | Photo: Courtesy

County on Thursday evening, the Principal Secretary for Public Health and Professional, Mary Muthoni said the government is committed to ensuring residents benefit from key national development programmes.

The Iftar gathering, held during the holy month of Ramadan, brought together national and county government officials, religious leaders, local administrators, healthcare professionals and community members.

Muthoni said the engagement provided an opportunity for dialogue on issues affecting the community, particularly in the health sector, while also highlighting development initiatives currently being rolled out by the government.

She encouraged residents to enrol in the Social Health Authority, noting that registration would enable families to access affordable and quality healthcare services under the ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening Universal Health Coverage.

The Principal Secretary also highlighted several programmes expected to benefit residents, including the Affordable Housing Programme,

agricultural subsidies for farmers, youth empowerment initiatives, and the planned County Aggregation and Industrial Park.

She further called on residents to prioritise public health and safety, particularly during the ongoing rainy season. Muthoni urged communities to maintain proper drainage systems to prevent disease outbreaks, ensure children are adequately supervised, and work together to address drug and substance abuse among the youth.

The PS also encouraged the community to reflect on the values of Ramadan, including compassion, discipline, unity and peaceful coexistence, saying such principles are essential in building stronger and healthier communities.

The Iftar meeting ended with a call for continued collaboration between government agencies, religious leaders and residents in advancing development and improving the wellbeing of communities in Kirinyaga County.



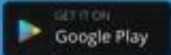

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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI




**Law** In the new law, the Coffee Board is also charged with processing applications for permits and licences, registering coffee dealers

# Ruto signs Coffee, Meteorology and Railway levy bills into law

BY PCS

@themkenyentimes

President William Ruto signed three Bills into law at State House, Nairobi, on Friday.

The legislations are the Miscellaneous Fees and Levies (Amendment) Act, 2026, the Coffee Act, 2023 (Mediated Version), and the Meteorology Act, 2023.

The Coffee Act, 2023, provides for the development and regulation of the coffee industry in Kenya. It reorganises the coffee sector by transferring the regulatory and commercial roles currently undertaken by the Agriculture and Food Authority to the Coffee Board of Kenya.

In the new law, the Coffee Board is also charged with processing applications for permits and licences, register-

ing coffee dealers, and overseeing the implementation of strategies, policies, and funding models for the sector.

The board is also mandated to collect and maintain industry data, conduct market intelligence and surveys, promote Kenyan coffee in local and international markets, and support the application of the Kenya Coffee Mark of Origin.

In addition, the board will develop industry standards and codes of practice in collaboration with the Kenya Bureau of Standards.

The new Act gives the board the role of promoting regional coffee appellations, facilitating technology transfer to county governments, building capacity among industry players, enforcing compliance with relevant policies and standards, co-ordinate representation in international coffee fora, and promoting

digital marketing to expand markets for Kenyan coffee.

In undertaking these functions, the board will collaborate with other licensing authorities and stakeholders in the industry, including county governments and the Capital Markets Authority.

The Act also transfers the coffee research role currently undertaken by the Coffee Research Institute to a newly established Coffee Research and Training Institute. The management of the institute will be vested in a council that includes a chairperson appointed by the relevant Cabinet Secretary.

The primary role of the institute is to advance research and training in the coffee sector. It will develop systems that promote sustainable and diversified coffee development and optimise production through research.

The institute will also co-ordinate research on coffee diseases and the development of new crop varieties.

Additionally, it will facilitate the adoption of improved production technologies within the coffee sector.

Meanwhile, the Miscellaneous Fees and Levies (Amendment) Act, 2026, amends Section 8 of the Miscellaneous Fees and Levies Act to expand the scope of the Railway Development Levy to support a broader range of railway transport infrastructure beyond the construction and operation of the Standard Gauge Railway.

The amended law supports the government's policy objective of mobilising sustainable financing for strategic railway transport infrastructure while strengthening the institutional framework for the management and utilisation of the Railway Development Levy.



President William Ruto and other leaders display three Acts at State House

The amended Act establishes the Railway Development Levy Fund into which all funds collected from the Railway Development Levy will be paid.

The creation of the fund aims to ensure that the resources raised through the levy are properly managed and specifically utilised for the development of railway infrastructure.

Under the law, proceeds from the levy may also be used to support the safety and economic regulation of railway infrastructure, as well as the rehabilitation of existing railway systems.

The rehabilitation of railway transport infrastructure will require approval from both the Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury and the Transport Cabinet Secretary.

The amended Act further establishes the Railway Development Fund Board, which will be responsible for the administration and management of the Railway Development Levy Fund.

The board will be a corporate body with the authority to sue and be sued, enter into contracts, and perform other functions necessary for the proper management of the fund.

The board's responsibilities will include the formulation of the fund's strategic direction, review and approval of programmes and budgets, overseeing the administration of the fund, and ensuring that resources are used efficiently.

On its part, the Meteorology Act, 2023, establishes a legislative framework to regulate meteorological services in Kenya and to co-ordinate and monitor their delivery.

The law also ensures that



President William Ruto

Kenya complies with international standards and obligations governing meteorological services under the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.

The new law establishes the Kenya Meteorological Service Authority, which will serve as the principal technical adviser to both national and county governments on meteorological matters.

The Authority will be responsible for establishing and maintaining meteorological management systems for data processing, analysis, forecasting, and archiving.

It will also prepare and disseminate weather forecasts, issue advisories and warnings for disaster risk reduction through a variety of early warning systems, and develop curricula and training programmes in meteorology aligned with international standards.

In addition, the Authority will register weather stations for meteorological data collection and coordinate research and development in

meteorology.

The new Act also establishes the Meteorology Training and Research Directorate as the successor to the Institute for Meteorological Training and Research.

The directorate will serve as the designated World Meteorological Organization Regional Training Centre, offering certificate, diploma, and professional courses in meteorology, operational hydrology, and related sciences.

The law further empowers the Authority to identify sites for meteorological observation stations and enter into agreements with landowners for the use of their property for observation purposes.


It also provides intellectual property protection for data, advisory services, inventions, discoveries, and innovations generated by the Authority.

In addition, the Act outlines offences that may interfere with the effective delivery of meteorological services.

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## Focus On Yourself, People Come And Go



Health is wealth  
Sound mind in a sound mind  
Face is the index of mind  
These are all simple mantras.  
To keep our body healthy.

You are not a hercules  
To take care on earth.

You are the hero of your family  
Take care and focus on yourself.

Each and every one surround you  
are very busy with their own views.  
Nobody is willing to look at you  
You should think about your health to renew!

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA.B N  
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed., PGD G&C, CELT.,  
BT Asst  
GMHSCHOOL,  
TIRUR.  
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.  
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## Use Pain As Fuel



Use pain as fuel, let it make you win,  
Your pain is the fire that makes you work with  
spirit  
It triggers you, pushes you to succeed,  
Don't be afraid, let the flames in you speak

The fire burns inside, it makes you shoot high,  
Turn struggles into strength, let it touch the sky.  
This pain propels you, moves you further  
The wound reminds you, success is just near you

"No pain, no gain" – the old saying is true,  
Embrace pain happily, let success follow  
It'll chase you without your knowledge  
Use pain as fuel, and watch yourself grow and  
glow.

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

## Inspiring Worlds, Young Author's Heart



Young and talented author Akshika Aggarwal has made a significant mark in the literary world by writing nine inspiring books, published by different publications. Through her creative imagination and meaningful storytelling, she has touched the hearts of readers of all ages.

Her books include "Enter The World of Fantasy," "Roar Like a Lion," "Fear in the Air," "प्यार के रंग," "दोस्ती ही जदिगी है," "जदिगी गरम धूप माँ की ममता शीतल छांव," "वकिलांग बच्चों की अद्भुत शक्तियां," "नन्ही दुनिया बड़ी सीख," and the magazine "उड़ान."

Each book carries a unique theme—ranging from fantasy and courage to love, friendship, family values, and the hidden strengths of children. Her writing reflects positivity, imagination, and deep emotions.

At such a young age, Akshika Aggarwal's dedication to literature is truly inspiring. Her journey encourages young readers and aspiring writers to dream big and express their thoughts through the power of words.

## My Village



My village is a beautiful place,  
Surrounded by green fields with God's grace.

The people in my village are very honest,  
They are kind, humble and tolerant.

My village has many big trees,

They give us fresh and pleasant breeze.

In the morning you can hear birds chirping,  
At noon there is cool shade for resting.

In my village people do farming,  
Cultivating crops and cattle rearing.

Visit my village and enjoy nature,  
Come and feel its love and nurture.

By,  
S.S. Nikshith  
VI Std  
PUMS Chinna Obulapuram  
Gummidipoondi  
Tiruvallur Dt  
Tamil Nadu, India

## Friendship



Friend is not just a word,  
but a magic of God.

They enter our life by accident,  
but make our life a miracle.

They stay in the hard times of our life.

When we cry, their hands are on our shoulder.

We know they will not stay in our whole life,

And in that second we realize they are our world.

V. S. NITHIYASRI  
VII  
JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HIGHER SECONDARY  
SCHOOL PANRUTI, CUDDALORE DISTRICT,  
TAMILNADU.

## Be Brave



Life is a beautiful lesson.  
Be brave in every situation.  
There are many goals to achieve in life.  
Walk every step with confidence to survive.

Every minute is gold, so don't waste it  
Hardwork is the key to succeed.  
Life is a beautiful lesson.  
Be brave in every situation.

By  
S. Barsha Rani Jana  
VIII Std  
PUMS Chinna Obulapuram  
Gummidipoondi  
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**Counties** Njuki said the programme has consistently supported farmers and improved harvests across the region.

# Free certified seeds programme boosts food production in Tharaka Nithi

The distribution exercise began on Monday in the wards of Gatunga Ward, Mukothima Ward, Nkondi Ward, Marimanti Ward and Chiakariga Ward in Tharaka Constituency.

BY Alex Njeru

@themkenyatimes

Farmers across Tharaka Nithi County have reported increased food production and improved livelihoods following the continued distribution of free certified seeds by the county government under Governor Muthomi Njuki.

Before Njuki assumed office in 2017, many parts of the county regularly depended on relief food from the national government due to poor harvests and frequent droughts. However, that trend has gradually faded as farmers embrace the county's free certified seeds programme, which has significantly boosted crop production and reduced hunger.

In a bid to promote crop farming and strengthen food security, Governor Njuki has been issuing free certified seeds to at least 100,000 farmers across the county's 15 wards every rainy season. The programme, which is now in its 12th season, has become one of the county government's flagship agricultural initiatives.

Speaking during the ongoing seed distribution exercise, Njuki said the programme has consistently supported farmers and improved harvests across the region.

"This is my 12th season issuing free certified seeds, with each season benefiting at least 100,000 farmers across the county," he said.

The seeds distributed include maize, beans and green grams, which agricultural officers say have helped farmers achieve better yields due to their quality and resistance to common crop diseases.

The distribution exercise began on Monday in the wards



Tharaka-Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki distributing free certified seeds to farmers across the 15 wards during the 12 season. At least 100,000 farmers benefit every rainy season. | Photo: Alex Njeru.

of Gatunga Ward, Mukothima Ward, Nkondi Ward, Marimanti Ward and Chiakariga Ward in Tharaka Constituency.

The governor kicked off the exercise at Karuguaru Market in Gatunga before moving to Mukothima cereals stalls in Mukothima Ward. He later proceeded to Nkondi Chief's Camp in Nkondi Ward and then to Kaarani Market in Marimanti Ward before concluding the day's activities at Gaceeraka Chief's Camp in Chiakariga Ward.

On Wednesday he distributed the seeds to farmers in Mitheru ward at Mitheru Chiefs camp, Muthambi at Karigini market, Chogoria ward at Karaa market, Ganga ward at Igwanjau chief's camp and finally Mwimbi ward at Magutuni market.

On Thursday, he distributed the seeds in Igambang'ombe ward, Magumoni ward, Mugwe ward, Karingani ward, Mariani ward and on Friday concluded at his official residence, Ruguri.

Njuki was accompanied

by Deputy Governor Nyaga Muisrael, Speaker John Mbabu. County Executive Committee Member for Administration Muthini Karangi, CECM for Gender Kelly Rwigi and Economic Advisor Dr Mutegi Kabisani among other leaders.

According to the county government, the distribution exercise continued yesterday in the five wards of Maara Constituency, starting with Mitheru ward at Mitheru chief's camp and will conclude tomorrow in Chuka/Igambang'ombe Constituency.

Farmers turned up in large numbers at the distribution centres to receive the seeds, with many praising the programme for improving their harvests and helping families become food secure.

Lucy Karimi, a farmer from Gaceeraka, said the certified seeds have played a major role in improving crop yields. "These are the seeds that have improved harvest in our county and we hope the next governor will continue with the programme," she said.

The governor also dismissed critics of the seed distribution programme, saying they were opposing a development initiative that has already proven beneficial to thousands of

farmers across the county.

Meanwhile, the governor also addressed ongoing national political discussions regarding the position of Deputy President currently held by Kithure Kindiki.

Njuki dismissed suggestions by some leaders allied to Oburu Odinga that the position could be negotiated ahead of the 2027 elections. He maintained that leaders from the Mt Kenya region support Kindiki and view him as a key figure in the country's future leadership.

According to Njuki, the region's long-term goal is not only to secure the deputy presidency in 2027 but also to support Kindiki's bid to succeed President William Ruto after the end of his expected 10-year tenure in 2032.

**"This is my 12th season issuing free certified seeds, with each season benefiting at least 100,000 farmers across the county," he said.**

”



Tharaka-Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki addressing residents

**Court** The court found that the occupation of the land by the late Isaac Githinji Rubiru began with permission from his brother Simon Gichuki Rubiru, who was the registered owner.

# Court Upholds 'Promise' In Two-Decade Nyandarua Land Case

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatimes

"People must be held accountable for their promises." With those words, the Environment and Land Court in Nyandarua resolved a decades-long land dispute, dismissing an adverse possession claim but awarding a widow the land she occupies.

Justice Mugo Kamau ruled that Esther Kabui Githinji and her son Chrispine Ngunjiri Githinji had failed to prove they acquired ownership of several parcels through adverse possession despite claiming occupation since 1965.

The case, filed in 2003, sought cancellation of titles for seven parcels excised from the original land parcel Nyandarua/Ol-Kalou South/2, namely parcels 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 915 and 916.

The plaintiffs argued that their family had lived on the land openly and continuously for decades and that the registered owners' titles should therefore be extinguished under the doctrine of adverse possession.

However, the court found that the occupation of the land by the late Isaac Githinji Rubiru began with permission from his brother Simon Gichuki Rubiru, who was the registered owner.

"If Githinji ever occupied the land... he was so occupying as a licensee of Simon Gichuki," Justice Kamau ruled, noting that occupation based on permission cannot legally mature into adverse possession.

The judge explained that the plaintiffs failed to provide documentary evidence proving that Isaac Githinji jointly purchased the land or contributed to repayment of the Set-



Ol-Kalou Law Courts

tlement Fund Trustees loan used to acquire it.

Evidence presented during the hearing showed the original parcel measuring about 35 acres was later sold to Wambugu Gachoya before being subdivided into several parcels and transferred to different buyers.

The land was subdivided into parcels including 216, 218, 219, 220 and 221, while parcel 217 later produced parcels 915 and 916 through further subdivisions over the years.

A government surveyor's report produced in court showed the land had undergone extensive subdivision, with several resulting plots developed with residential houses, rental units and commercial buildings.

The report also confirmed that the first plaintiff occupies a small portion identified as parcel number 915 where she practices small-scale farming and where the grave of her late husband is located.

During a visit to the land, the court observed that the portion occupied by the plaintiff was much smaller than the 25 acres she had claimed during testimony.

The court also noted contradictions in the plaintiffs' evidence regarding the exact parcels they occupied and the location of their home and burial site.

The judge further found that previous lawsuits over the land in the 1980s interrupted any continuous occupation required to establish adverse possession under the Limitation of Actions Act.

Additional subdivisions and transfers of the land to other buyers over the years also disrupted the uninterrupted possession required to extinguish the registered owners' titles.

After reviewing witness testimony, documents and the surveyor's report, the court concluded that the plaintiffs had failed to meet the legal threshold required to acquire land through adverse possession.

However, the court noted evidence that the family of the registered owner had assured Esther Kabui Githinji that she would be allowed to retain the portion she occupies.

Justice Kamau said the widow had relied on that assurance to develop the land and

even bury her husband there, making it necessary for the promise to be honoured.

"People must be held accountable for their promises," the judge stated before ordering that parcel number NYANDARUA/OL-KALOU SOUTH/915 be transferred to the widow.

The court ordered that the title for parcel 915, previously registered in the name of Wambugu Gachoya, be cancelled and the land transferred and registered in the name of Esther Kabui Githinji.

All other parcels mentioned in the dispute will remain with their current registered owners, while the court directed that cautions and restrictions placed on the titles be lifted.

The judge also ordered that each party bear their own legal costs, bringing to an end a complex land dispute that had remained in court for more than two decades.



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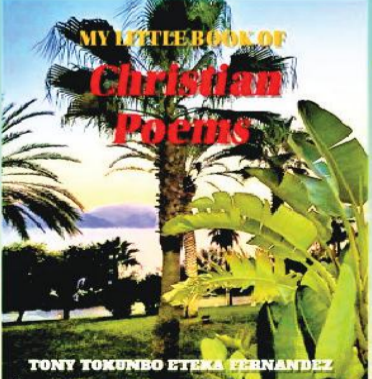
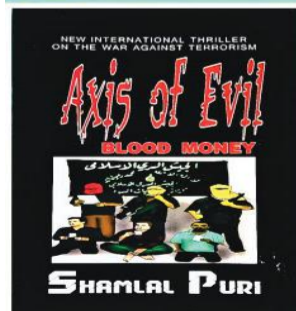
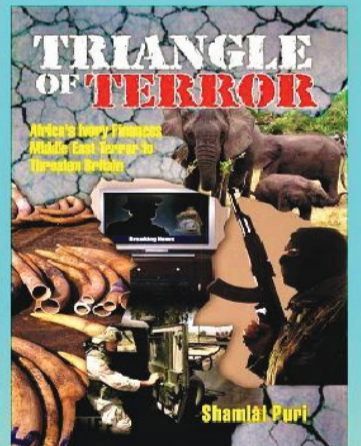
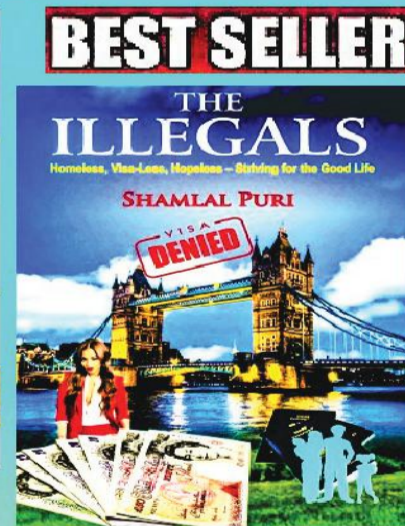
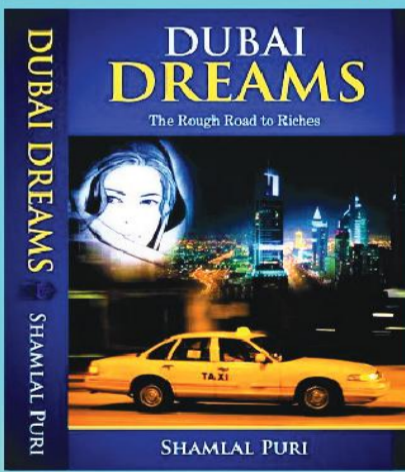
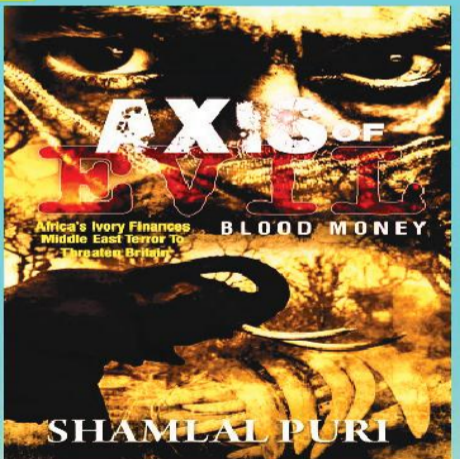
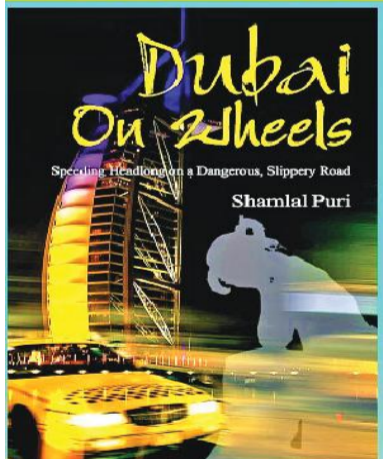
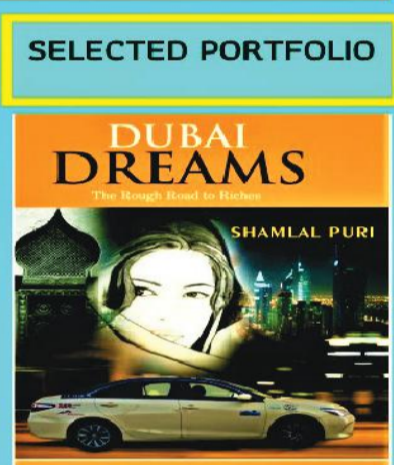
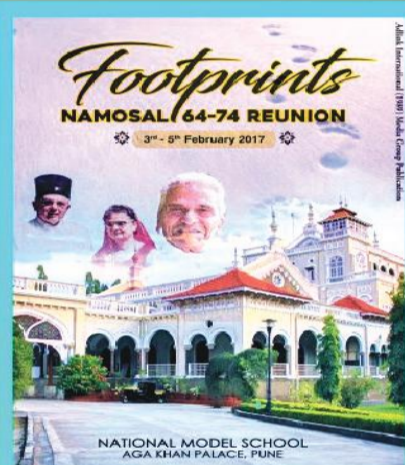
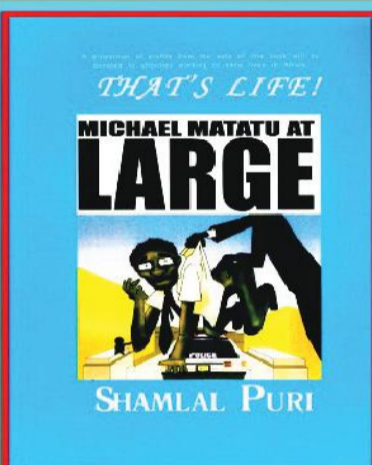
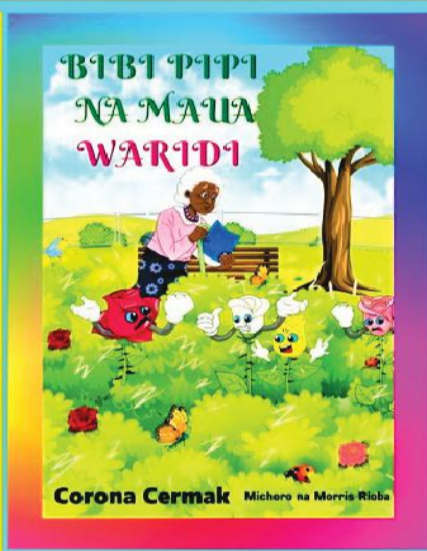
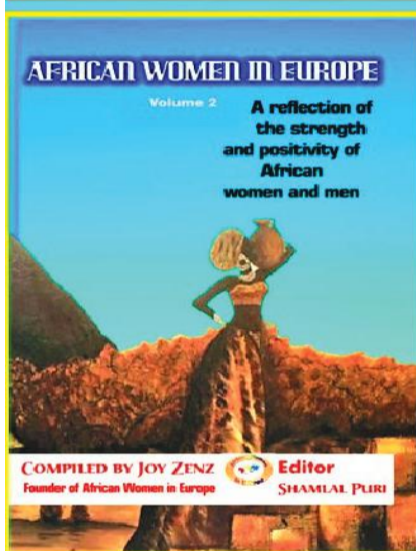
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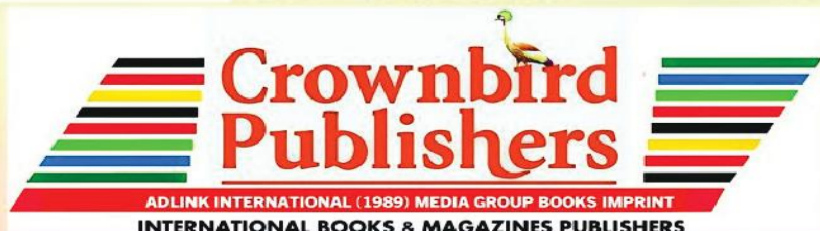
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**Health** The launch, held at Getembe Dispensary, marks a major step in strengthening HIV prevention efforts in the county where the prevalence rate currently stands at 2.9 percent

# Kisii launches injectable HIV prevention drug as county prevalence stands at 2.9%

BY Elizabeth Angira

@themtkenyatimes

Kisii County has joined 15 other counties in Kenya in rolling out Lenacapavir, a long-acting injectable drug designed to prevent new HIV infections among populations at high risk.

The launch, held at Getembe Dispensary, marks a major step in strengthening HIV prevention efforts in the county where the HIV prevalence rate currently stands at 2.9 percent, according to 2025 data. Speaking during the launch, Dr. Matiko Giabe, the County Director of Medical Services, said the county has received an initial supply of nearly 500 doses of the injectable drug, with more expected in the coming months.

“Today marks a significant day for Kisii County and the Department of Health as we join other counties in rolling out Lenacapavir, a drug used to prevent new HIV infections, especially among key populations,” said Dr. Giabe.

He emphasized that, the drug has undergone extensive clinical trials and has already been approved by the relevant regulatory authorities, assuring residents that it is safe and effective.

“This is not a trial drug. Our people will not be used as guinea pigs. Lenacapavir has been approved as safe and effective, and those receiving it should feel confident about accessing the service,” he added.

The medication is administered through an injection and provides

“Lenacapavir protects against HIV infection, but it does not prevent other sexually transmitted infections. People must continue using condoms and other preventive methods,” Dr. Giabe said.

long-term protection against HIV infection.

According to Dr. Giabe, the first dose involves two injections given on the same day, followed by two tablets taken within 24 hours. Protection against HIV begins about 48 hours after administration, and another injection is required six months later to maintain protection.

Despite the introduction of the drug, health officials cautioned that other preventive measures should remain in place.



Vaccine | Photo: Elizabeth Angira



Dr. Matiko Giabe, the County Director of Medical Services addressing the media during the launch of Lenacapavir. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira



Dennis Nyairo addressing the press said that the new injection will help reduce stigma. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira



Judith Mochama, representative of the Gusii Sex Workers Organisation expressed hope that the new intervention would help reduce HIV infections. |

Photo: Elizabeth Angira

“Lenacapavir protects against HIV infection, but it does not prevent other sexually transmitted infections. People must continue using condoms and other preventive methods,” Dr. Giabe said.

He also noted that the drug does not prevent pregnancy, urging sexually active individuals, particularly

those in the reproductive age group, to take appropriate family planning measures.

At Getembe Dispensary alone, the facility has received 44 doses, and several members of the public had already received the injection by the time of the launch.

The county has designated ten

health facilities where the drug will initially be available. These include Getembe, Keumbu, Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital, Gucha, Iyabe, Magenche, Nchekin, Nduru, and Gesusu, among others. More facilities are expected to be added as the programme expands.

According to county health data, Kisii recorded 359 new HIV infections last year, while 310 people died from HIV-related complications. Women remain slightly more affected than men

Key population groups, including sex workers, welcomed the introduction of the injectable drug, saying it will significantly improve HIV prevention and reduce stigma associated with frequent clinic visits.

Judith Mochama, who represented the Gusii Sex Workers Organisation, praised the government and the county health department for including key populations in the rollout.

“We would like to thank the Government of Kenya and the Kisii County Government for involving us in such an important event. This injectable PrEP is very important for sex workers and other key populations who are at higher risk of HIV infection,” she said.

She expressed hope that the new intervention would help reduce HIV infections in the county.

Beneficiaries also shared their experiences, highlighting how the injectable drug will ease the burden of regular clinic visits.

Dennis Nyairo, a Kisii resident who has been using PrEP for the past four years, said the new injection will help reduce stigma and improve access to prevention services.

“Before, we had to visit the health facility twice a month to get PrEP. Now we will only need to go twice a year. This will reduce stigma and make it easier for many people to continue protecting themselves,” Nyairo said.

He encouraged others, especially those at higher risk, to take advantage of the new prevention method.

However, he cautioned that the injection does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections, urging continued use of condoms.

Health officials say the rollout of Lenacapavir forms part of broader efforts to reduce new HIV infections in Kisii County and improve prevention services for vulnerable groups.

As the programme expands, the county hopes the injectable drug will play a critical role in lowering HIV transmission rates and strengthening the fight against the epidemic.

**Women** Women in Kisii County have been urged to step forward and contest for elective positions, challenging long-standing cultural barriers

# Gusii women: Step forward and contest for elective leadership positions

BY Elizabeth Angira

@themkenyatimes

Women in Kisii County have been urged to step forward and contest for elective positions, challenging long-standing cultural barriers in a region widely viewed as patriarchal.

Speaking during a women's leadership forum in Kisii Town, leaders, professionals and grassroots activists said the time has come for women to not only to talk about their rights, but also to translate those rights into action by seeking leadership positions and shaping the development agenda.

Edna Kangwana, a founder member of Gusii Women in Leadership, a women empowerment lobby group, said the meeting was designed as an intergenerational dialogue where women could openly discuss their challenges and the opportunities ahead.

"We wanted to have a conversation that moves from simply talking about women's rights to actually taking action," Ms. Kangwana said.

She said empowering women to participate in leadership is not just beneficial to women.

"When women are given the power and the voice, the entire community benefits," she said.

Ms. Kangwana said women bring wisdom, nurturing, leadership skills and empathy.

"These are qualities that help strengthen communities and institutions," she said.

She noted that women have long demonstrated strong organisational and administrative abilities in homes, businesses and community groups.

"That is why we say we cannot talk about development if we are leaving behind nearly half of the population," she said. "Women can fill many of the gaps we see in development across multiple sectors."

Despite these capabilities, Kisii County has historically struggled to elect women



Gusii Women in Leadership during the meeting at Kisii County have vowed to view for elective positions | Photo: File

leaders.

"We have never had a woman elected to Parliament here (in Kisii County) except through the affirmative action seat (Women Representative) since the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010," she said, "So we must ask ourselves as women how we can change that."

Participants at the forum said cultural expectations and social norms continue to limit women's leadership opportunities.

The participants agreed that women should not support political candidates simply because they are women.

They want women who are ready to show up as leaders, present their agenda and explain what they want to bring to the table," Ms. Kangwana said.

There was a call for society to encourage women aspiring for leadership for taking the first step.

"Even raising your hand to run for office takes courage," she noted, "We must extend grace to women who decide

to stand because that is already a powerful statement."

The forum also explored the economic realities that influence women's participation in politics.

Fridah Omweri, a member, noted that political campaigns require resources that many women struggle to access.

"Women need to build their financial muscle so they can live well, support their families and also participate in leadership," Ms. Omweri said.

Financial independence, she added, allows women to contribute more effectively to development efforts and even fund their own political campaigns.

Property ownership and inheritance also emerged as key concerns.

Ms. Kangwana said cultural traditions sometimes leave women financially vulnerable.

"Even though the law allows women to own property, cultural beliefs still hold many women back since they cannot own property or inherit

family wealth," she said.

To address this, participants encouraged women to formally document family assets and prepare wills to ensure wealth can be passed from one generation to another.

"This is something many women have not taken seriously," Ms. Kangwana said. "But it is very important if we want to secure the future for our families."

The forum also explored how women can support each other in a region where political leadership has traditionally been dominated by men.

"In a patriarchal community like Kisii, women must learn to support other women," Ms. Kangwana said.

She noted that solidarity among women is critical in building confidence and encouraging more women to run for leadership positions.

Participants also discussed opportunities for women in sectors traditionally dominated by men.

These include industries such as construction, media ownership and large-scale business

operations.

"Women have the capacity to lead in any field if they are given the opportunity," said Ms. Kangwana.

Emily Bosire Ogechi said self-doubt remains one of the biggest barriers preventing women from pursuing leadership roles.

"Many women know their rights, but they hesitate to act because they doubt themselves," she said.

She urged women to believe in their abilities and step forward confidently.

"The only way we can move from knowing our rights to taking action is by believing in ourselves," Ms. Bosire said.

She encouraged parents to empower their children and spouses so that leadership is viewed not through the lens of gender but through capability.

"When women come out to lead, they should not be seen simply as women," she said. "They should be seen as leaders."

Discussions at the forum also touched on the two-thirds gender rule, a constitutional

requirement that no more than two-thirds of elected or appointed public officials should be of the same gender.

Violet Nyapara said the rule remains an important tool for ensuring women's representation in governance.

"Women must continue asking where their space is," she said.

Ms. Nyapara called on national leaders to ensure the constitutional provision is implemented.

Participants also raised concerns about the hostile political environment women often face during election periods.

Kangwana warned that violence, intimidation and verbal abuse could discourage women from running for office.

"As a country we are already entering the electioneering period, and we are seeing what is happening across the country," she said.

She noted that male politicians sometimes resort to intimidation tactics during campaigns.

"In Kisii it goes beyond physical goonism," she said. "There is also verbal and emotional abuse where people attack the person instead of discussing the ideas they bring."

Linnet Moruri, Chief Communication of Gusii Women in Leadership, said awareness about constitutional provisions such as access to sanitary pads in public schools remains limited.

"Our constitution guarantees that every girl in a public school should have access to sanitary towels and safe disposal facilities," she said.

However, many schools are not aware of these rights or how to demand them.

"When schools do not know their rights, how do they even begin to talk about them?" Moruri asked.

She said platforms like the women's forum provide an opportunity for learning and collective action.

"It is important for women to know their rights so that they can move from awareness to action," she said.

The leaders expressed optimism that such forums could inspire more women in Kisii to step into leadership roles and influence the region's development agenda.

**World Bank** The WARDIP2 will also support digital skills training for about 9,000 people, including women and youth

# World Bank approves \$137 to boost digital integration, job creation in West Africa

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

The World Bank Group has approved 137 million U.S. dollars to support digital integration and job creation in Benin, Liberia and Sierra Leone under a new regional initiative.

The funding represents the second phase of the Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program (WARDIP), designed to expand digital infrastructure, improve the business environment, and enable companies to operate more easily across regional markets. According to a statement issued Tuesday by the World Bank, the initiative will help connect about 5.2 million people to new or improved broadband internet services and enable 5.4 million additional users to access digitally enabled services across the three countries. "This new initiative positions West Africa to accelerate eco-

nomical transformation by creating jobs, strengthening resilience and enabling a more integrated regional digital market," said Michel Rogy, the World Bank's digital and artificial intelligence regional practice director. The program will invest in expanding resilient broadband networks, strengthening international connectivity, and boosting data-center capacity to support digital innovation and improve public and private-sector service delivery.

The WARDIP2 will also support digital skills training for about 9,000 people, including women and youth, while creating opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digital entrepreneurship. The initiative is also expected to strengthen digital entrepreneurship ecosystems by supporting more than 140 startups, including women-led enterprises, with seed financing, market access, and cross-border digital trade opportunities. Launched in 2023, the broader WARDIP pro-



gram works with partners including the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States

to promote a single digital market in West Africa and expand internet access across the region.

**Sudan and Chad** Border crossings between Sudan and Chad, particularly the Adre crossing, are among the most important commercial routes for residents of Darfur

# At least 13 civilians killed in drone strike on Sudan-Chad border crossing

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

At least 13 civilians were killed when a drone strike hit the Adre border crossing between Sudan and Chad on Thursday, according to local volunteers and eyewitnesses.

The Coordination Council of El Geneina Emergency Rooms, a voluntary civilian group, said in a statement that a drone fired four missiles at the crossing, killing 13 people involved in the fuel trade, including five women, and injuring five others. The strike destroyed the fuel market at the crossing, damaged several civilian vehicles, and burned large quantities of food supplies, the group said. According to the council, all the victims were small-scale traders who transported fuel and goods from the Chadian city of Adre to the crossing using traditional animal-drawn carts as part of their daily



livelihood activities. The group added that the crossing is also used for humanitarian operations, including the delivery of relief supplies, medicines, and shelter materials, as well as the movement of international hu-

manitarian workers.

Meanwhile, an eyewitness, Adam Abdalla, a local fuel trader, told Xinhua that the attack occurred early in the morning while traders were preparing to begin their daily work.

"Several successive explosions hit the fuel market, and the fuel tanks and vehicles caught fire," he said. Abdalla added that the fuel market at the crossing had been a primary source of livelihood for dozens of

families, noting that the strike caused heavy losses for traders and left the site almost completely destroyed. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) accused the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) of carrying out the attack, claiming it was intended to disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Darfur region. The RSF called on the UN Security Council and international organizations to take urgent measures to halt what it described as "attacks" and to hold those responsible accountable.

Border crossings between Sudan and Chad, particularly the Adre crossing, are among the most important commercial routes for residents of Darfur, serving as a key artery for the movement of goods and people. On Feb. 23, Chad announced the closure of its border with Sudan after armed groups involved in the conflict crossed into its territory, while stating that humanitarian exceptions would still be granted subject to prior authorization. Fighting between the SAF and the RSF erupted in April 2023 and has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions inside Sudan and across its borders.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The impact of a Usa–Iran war on global fuel costs

Wars don't just claim lives; they rattle economies. A military clash between the United States and Iran would send shockwaves through global fuel markets, driving prices sky high and squeezing households and industries alike.

The Middle East remains the world's oil heartbeat, and Iran is a crucial supplier. Any strike on its refineries, pipelines, or export terminals would choke supply. Economics is unforgiving: when demand stays steady but supply shrinks, crude oil prices surge. That surge cascades into petrol, diesel, and electricity costs across continents.

The Strait of Hormuz magnifies the risk. This narrow passage funnels nearly a fifth of the world's oil shipments. If war jeopardizes tanker safety, shipping delays or diversions would strangle supply chains. Even rumors of instability in the strait have historically jolt-



ed markets; an actual conflict would be far worse.

The ripple effects would be brutal. Transport firms would bleed cash on fuel, inflating the cost of moving goods. Food, manufactured products, and essentials would climb in price. Developing nations reliant on imports would be hit hardest, their fragile economies buckling under the weight of soaring energy bills.

For ordinary citizens, the pain

is immediate. Bus fares rise, electricity bills swell, and the cost of living spikes. Families already stretched thin would find themselves sacrificing basics just to keep moving.

A USA–Iran war wouldn't just be fought with missiles—it would be fought in wallets worldwide. And in that battle, no one truly wins.

*By Alphonse Kioko, Laikipia University*

### Kenya's Roads Are Becoming Deadlier: How Many More Lives Must Be Lost?

Kenya's roads have become killing fields. Hardly a week passes without headlines of another crash, another family shattered, another life cut short. What should be routine journeys to work, school, or home have turned into perilous gambles.

The recent accident along Valley Road in Nairobi, claiming one life and injuring several others, is not an isolated tragedy—it is part of a disturbing pattern. Reckless driving, poorly maintained vehicles, overloading, and lax enforcement of traffic laws are fueling a steady rise in avoidable accidents.

Public service vehicles, entrusted with thousands of lives daily, too often operate with disregard for safety standards. Mechanical failures and driver indiscipline continue



to put passengers at risk. The consequences are devastating: breadwinners lost, survivors left with lifelong injuries, and communities forced into grief that could have been prevented.

This crisis demands more than reactive outrage. Authorities must enforce traffic laws with consistency, ensure rigorous vehicle inspections, and hold transport operators accountable. Drivers must embrace discipline, while passengers and pedestrians must remain vigilant. Road safety

is a shared responsibility, not a slogan.

Kenya cannot afford to treat road carnage as routine news that fades after a few days. Each death is a national failure, each accident a reminder of negligence. Unless road safety becomes a true priority, the toll will keep rising.

The question is stark and urgent: how many more lives must be lost before Kenya finally takes its roads seriously?

*By Charles Musyoki*

### “It's a gift from God!” Rastafarians defend religious use of bhang in court petition

Religion, rights, and narcotics have collided in a courtroom showdown that could reshape Kenya's legal landscape. The Rastafarian community has petitioned the High Court, demanding recognition of bhang as a sacred herb central to their faith.

At the heart of their case is a claim that criminalizing bhang violates constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and cultural expression. Rastafarians argue the plant is no ordinary drug but a divine gift, used in prayer, meditation, and communal worship. They liken its ritual role to wine in Christian communion or incense in other traditions.

The petition seeks a narrow exemption: the right to possess and use bhang strictly for religious purposes, shielded from



arrest or prosecution. Guidelines, they say, could regulate the practice and prevent abuse beyond spiritual settings.

Government authorities, however, stand firm. Bhang remains illegal under narcotics laws designed to curb drug abuse and trafficking. Legal experts warn the case could ignite a wider debate—how far should courts bend drug policy to accommodate religious freedoms?

Human rights advocates argue the petition raises urgent questions about tolerance and minority rights. Should blanket

bans override the spiritual practices of small faith groups? Or should the law carve out space for diversity in worship?

The court's ruling will be pivotal. A victory for the Rastafarians could set precedent for religious exemptions in controlled substances. A rejection would reaffirm the state's hard line on narcotics.

For Rastafarians, though, the matter is simple: “This herb is not a crime to us; it is a gift from God.”

*By Narleen Nasumba, Laikipia University*

### Did You Score a C- in KCSE? You Can Still Be an Accountant

Too many young Kenyans abandon their professional dreams because of exam grades. But here's the truth: a C- in KCSE does not slam the door shut on becoming a certified accountant. With the right path, you can secure two diplomas and a CPA qualification—recognized as degree equivalent—in just four years.

The journey begins with the Accounting Technician Diploma (ATD), offered by KASNEB. This one year program is open to anyone with at least a C-. Completing ATD makes you a certified Accounting Technician, a credential equal to a diploma in accounting. While pursuing ATD part time, you can simultaneously enroll in a full time business diploma at a public institution through KUCCPS, which often provides up to 60% government sponsorship.

By the end of two years, you'll hold both ATD and a



business diploma—credentials that already open doors to employment. From there, ATD graduates move directly into CPA, skipping several sections thanks to exemptions. Within another two years, you can complete CPA, a qualification widely regarded as equivalent to a degree.

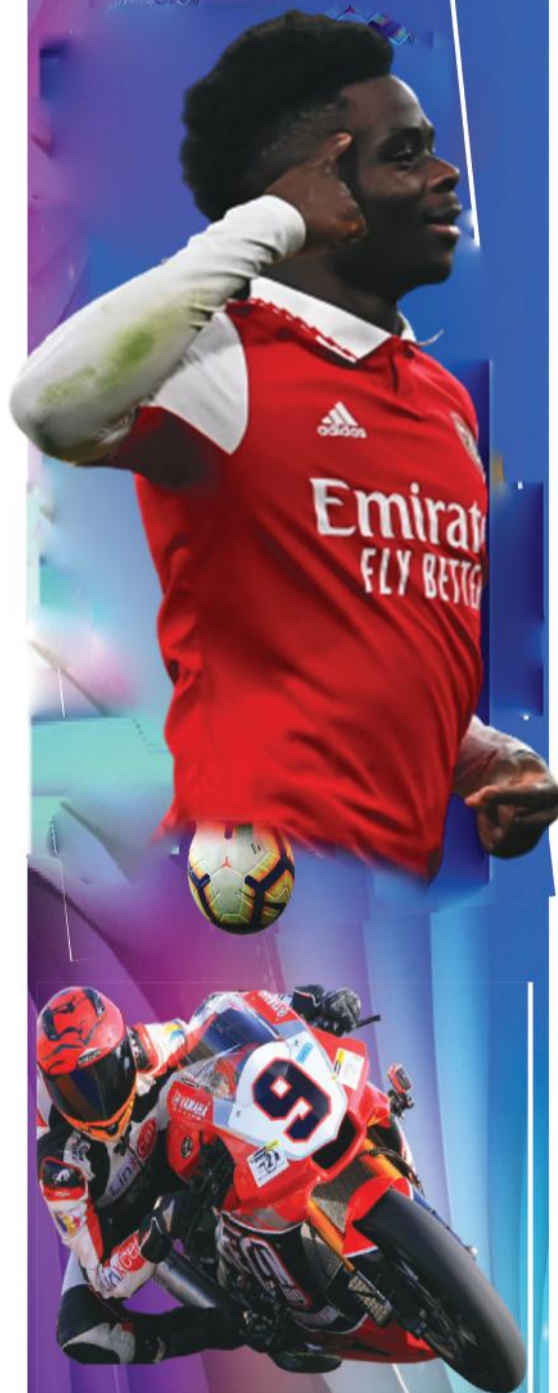
This structured path means that in four years, you can transform a modest KCSE grade into a powerful professional portfolio: two diplomas and CPA certification. Even better, you can begin working

after just two years as a certified technician while advancing toward CPA.

The message is clear: your KCSE grade does not define your future. With determination and planning, you can still rise to the top of the accounting profession.

Dreams don't die with grades—they thrive with grit.

*By Samson Onyango, Laikipia University*

SPORTS  
NEWSPHOTOS  
SCORES  
OPINIONS  
STATISTICS  
SCHEDULES  
BREAKING NEWS

**Sports >>** \*Organisers of the ongoing WRC Safari Rally have announced the cancellation of SS3 Camp Moran 2, which was earlier scheduled as the first stage of Day Two of the competition.

## Why Safari Rally Organisers Cancelled SS3 Camp Moran On Day Two Of Competition



Action at the ongoing WRC Safari Rally. PHOTO/FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIPS X.

Organisers of the ongoing WRC Safari Rally have announced the cancellation of SS3 Camp Moran 2, which was earlier scheduled as the first stage of Day Two of the competition.

In a statement, the organisers said the stage has been cancelled due to heavy rains that have rendered the route impassable and unusable.

“SS3 Camp Moran 2 has been cancelled due to deteriorating road conditions. Today’s action will begin with SS4 at 09:11 (local),” the WRC said.

It was always expected to be

a wet and muddy Safari Rally even as the weatherman predicted the skies to open up unabated and pour down in its entirety.

Competitors came face-to-face with the world’s ‘toughest rally’ on a Day One in which they had to battle wet and slippery conditions in most of the stages.

Frenchman Sebastien Ogier admitted he was mighty relieved to finish third, considering the unforgiving wet conditions.

“You’ve seen the heavy rain in stage one and it was very difficult for us. It was just about surviving, so we are happy we

went through. Of course, it cost us a lot of time, but it’s like this. When the timing of the rain comes at the wrong moment, if you start 15 minutes after the leader, you have to accept that you’re going to lose time,” the Toyota Gazoo Racing driver said.

Ogier further said that the tough conditions on the opening day are just the tip of the iceberg, a preview of what lies ahead over the weekend.

“The weekend is still super long, so I’m sure many things will still happen. I’m sure we

will see some more rain during the weekend,” the 2021 Safari Rally champion said.

At the time of going to press, the drivers were maneuvering through SS5 (KenGen Geothermal 1), with overnight leader Oliver Solberg maintaining his lead.

Defending champion Elfyn Evans and Ogier sit in second and third — as they were on Thursday night — in what is thus far a profitable outing for Toyota Gazoo Racing.

*Capital Sport*

# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Impala RFC's Judith Auma has been recalled to the national women's rugby sevens team ahead of next weekend's Division 2 tournament in Montevideo, Uruguay, set for March 21-22.

# Auma Returns, Adhiambo Dropped As Odongo Names Lionesses Squad For World Rugby 7s Division 2

Impala RFC's Judith Auma has been recalled to the national women's rugby sevens team ahead of next weekend's Division 2 tournament in Montevideo, Uruguay, set for March 21-22. Her inclusion marks a significant boost for the Lionesses, who are seeking redemption after a difficult run in recent competitions.

Auma has endured a frustrating spell with injuries since last year, sidelining her from both the Africa Women's Sevens in November and last month's Division 2 first leg in Nairobi. Her return adds depth and experience to the squad. Also back in the fold is Faith Livoi, who was dropped for the Nairobi leg but now earns another chance to impress.

The squad, however, will miss two influential figures. France based Grace Adhiambo, a long time mainstay of the team, is the most notable absentee. Phoebe Akinyi, who featured in the Africa Women's Sevens and the opening leg of the World Rugby Series, is also unavailable. Their absence leaves gaps in leadership and consistency, but the coaching staff has opted to blend youth with regulars to maintain balance.

Among those retaining their places are Charity Nilah and Marvel Oswago, both of whom earned maiden call ups last month. Their performances were promising enough to secure continuity. The squad remains anchored by seasoned campaigners such as captain Sheila Chajira, Janet "Shebesh" Okello, Sinaida Nyachio, Freshia Oduor—renowned for her pace—and Stella Wafula. Together, they form the backbone of a side determined to prove its resilience.

The Lionesses currently sit fifth in the Division 2 standings with six points, just one place above bottom ranked Brazil. This Mon-



Kenya's Judith Auma in action for Lionesses in a past match against Argentina. PHOTO/KENYA RUGBY X

tevideo leg is therefore pivotal: a strong showing could lift them into mid table contention, while another poor outing risks leaving them in a relegation battle.

Kenya begins its campaign at Estadio Charrua against China on Saturday at 5 p.m. Kenyan time. China's structured play and quick transitions will test the Lionesses' defensive organization. Kenya must rely on Chajira's leadership, Okello's creativity, and Oduor's speed to set the tone early.

After Montevideo, the Lionesses will join their male counterparts, Shujaa, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for the third leg on March 27-28. With the stakes rising, every point will matter. For Auma and Livoi, the tournament offers a chance to reassert themselves; for the Lionesses as a whole, it is an opportunity to demonstrate that they can compete consistently on the global stage.

Capital Sport

### LIONESSES

2026 HSBC SVNS2 - MONTEVIDEO & SAO PAULO

AMUGUNI 1	LINDO 2	CHAJIRA 3	WAFULA 4
LIVOI 14	NARIAKA 13	AUMA 9	MOKAYA 7
MURITU 6	OKELLO 11	ODUOR 8	OSWAGO 18
NILAH 20	Simon Odongo-HC Geoffrey Oyango-SnC Levyce Kituyi-Physio Camillyne Oyuayo-TM		Montevideo-21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sao Paulo-28 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup>

# SPORTS NEWS



PHOTOS  
SCORES  
OPINIONS  
STATISTICS  
SCHEDULES  
BREAKING NEWS





# Sara Knight Turning Survival Into Strength Through The Power Of Story



By: Anila Bukhari  
@themtkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- Sara's perspective as a neurodivergent creative plays an important role in the way she sees the world. Being autistic allows her to notice subtle details and emotional nuances that others might overlook. This unique way of observing life gives her photography a distinctive depth and honesty. Those who work with Sara often describe her presence as calm, intuitive, and reassuring—qualities that help people feel safe enough to relax and reveal their authentic selves in front of the camera.
- Her work has earned international recognition and numerous accolades. Sara was named International Street Photographer of the Year 2023/2024, an honour that highlights both her artistic vision and her dedication to storytelling through imagery. She has also been shortlisted and nominated for several prestigious awards in Australia and around the world.

Sara Knight is an internationally award-winning Australian photographer, author, media creative, and domestic violence advocate whose work is widely recognised for its emotional depth, authenticity, and the powerful way it moves audiences.

As the founder of Sara Louise Photography and Snapling Media, Sara has built creative platforms grounded in one simple but profound belief: stories have the power to change lives when people feel truly seen and heard. Through her camera and creative projects, she has dedicated her career to capturing moments that reveal the strength, vulnerability, and humanity within every person.

Sara's perspective as a neurodivergent creative plays an important role in the way she sees the world. Being autistic allows her to notice subtle details and emotional nuances that others might overlook. This unique way of observing life gives her photography a distinctive depth and honesty. Those who work with Sara often describe her presence as calm, intuitive, and reassuring—qualities that help people feel safe enough to relax and reveal their authentic selves in front of the camera.

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Her resilience and leadership were further acknowledged when she received

the Overcoming the Odds Award from the Australian Ladies in Business Initiative. This recognition celebrated not only her creative achievements but also the remarkable personal journey that shaped her path.

Sara's photography is trusted at the highest levels of professional visibility. Following a recent branding collaboration, her work was selected for the cover of DWC Magazine's International Women's Day edition, showcasing her talent on a global platform. In addition, her images are scheduled to appear on a billboard at Heathrow Airport in 2027, bringing her powerful visual storytelling to one of the world's busiest international travel hubs.

The client involved in that collaboration praised Sara's ability to create a comfortable and supportive atmosphere during photo sessions. They noted that her portraits carried a remarkable level of presence, detail, and emotional authenticity—qualities that made them perfect for international publication and display.

Yet beyond awards, recognition, and professional success, Sara's mission is deeply personal.

She is a proud autistic woman and a survivor of domestic and family violence. Rather than allowing those experiences to silence her, Sara has transformed them into a powerful voice for advocacy. Through her public platform, she speaks openly about resilience, recovery, and the importance of building safer futures for women and children.

Having experienced firsthand the courage it takes to rebuild a life after trauma, Sara approaches her work with extraordinary compas-



Sara Knight.

sion. She understands what it means to reclaim identity, confidence, and visibility. This understanding shapes the way she photographs people—with patience, respect, and a deep commitment to preserving each person's dignity.

In addition to photography, Sara is also an author who creates stories centred on courage, inclusion, and hope. Her writing often reflects the same themes that

guide her visual work: empathy, resilience, and the power of human connection. Whether she is writing for children, speaking publicly, or producing campaigns through Snapling Media, her work consistently amplifies voices that deserve to be heard.

Through her businesses, creative projects, and advocacy, Sara Knight represents a modern model of leadership—one that embrac-

es both vulnerability and strength. She demonstrates that true success is not measured solely by awards or achievements, but by the impact a person has on others and the positive change they help create.

At the heart of everything she does lies a guiding purpose that continues to shape her journey: to turn survival into strength, and stories into lasting change.