



**Cancer crisis deepens as MPs call for urgent national action**

A parliamentary committee has sounded the alarm over the rising cancer burden in Kenya, calling for a nationwide, multi-sector response amid growing concerns that the disease is fast becoming a leading cause of death.

Page 12



**PSC faults obsolete systems as fake academic papers slip into Civil Service**

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has blamed ageing technology for its inability to decisively curb the proliferation of fake academic certificates in the civil service.

Page 18

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# The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

**SHA** The companies running this system are proxies. Millions are being paid out, yet hospitals are burdened with unpaid bills and patients are suffering - Gachagua

# SHA row deepens



## SCANDAL

Gachagua alleged that the SHA framework is riddled with irregularities, claiming that firms operating the system are linked to the Health CS and are benefiting at the expense of struggling public hospitals.



A fresh political storm is brewing over the country's health reforms after opposition leaders intensified their attack on the Social Health Authority (SHA), accusing the government of mismanaging the sector and facilitating large-scale financial impropriety. Speaking during a press briefing in Makueni, DCP Party leader Rigathi Gachagua led a coalition of opposition figures under the United Alternative Government, sharply criticizing Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale and President William Ruto over the implementation of the new health insurance system.

A side-by-side image of Democracy for Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua and Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale.

Page 9

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# Gikomba traders' outcry as leaders condemn nighttime demolitions

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the scenes at Gikomba after the night raid by government agencies*

Gikomba Market traders were yesterday left reeling after a nighttime demolition destroyed property and goods worth millions of shillings, prompting strong reactions from political leaders.

Scores of leaders condemned the action accusing the government of being insensitive to the plight of the traders. DCP Party leader Rigathi Gachagua described the action as "inhuman and beastly," accusing the government of using the raid as part of a political scheme. He condemned the targeting of small-scale traders and called on Kenyans to stand with the affected traders ahead of the 2027 elections. Kenya Patriots Party leader and Nairobi gubernatorial aspirant Dr. Agnes Kagure criticized Governor Johnson Sakaja for "hiding" while traders' livelihoods were destroyed, insisting Nairobi requires leaders who show up for their people.

Starehe MP Moses Mwago Maina condemned the demolitions as poorly planned and disruptive, emphasizing the need for humane, consultative approaches that respect the dignity and livelihoods of traders. "Development must be pursued with transparency and fairness," he said.

MP Babu Owino expressed solidarity with traders, highlighting that some of the affected businesses were protected by court orders. He called the demolition a violation of both law and human dignity and urged authorities to ensure accountability.

Traders, many of whom rely on daily sales for survival, now face losses that threaten their livelihoods and the local economy. The incident has reignited debate over the government's approach to urban development, highlighting tensions between enforcement, legal protections, and human rights.

As the political fallout intensifies, leaders across the spectrum are demanding respect for court rulings, humane enforcement practices, and greater accountability for actions affecting vulnerable traders in Nairobi's informal economy.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



The Kiruki Kiende Irrigation Project in Gaturi South, Embu County, is set for expansion to boost water supply for farming. Established in 2012 through a partnership between the Government of Kenya, KfW, Equity Bank and local farmers, the project supports year-round cultivation and reduces reliance on rain-fed agriculture. However, upstream water abstraction has reduced flow, affecting irrigation capacity, especially during dry periods. Farmers sought government support to construct an additional intake, a sedimentation basin and a 1.5-kilometre conveyance line to increase water availability. The project aims to enhance food security, raise household incomes and improve climate resilience. The site was officially handed over to Gamachu Construction Limited in a ceremony attended by national and county officials.



Officials and members of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) in Nairobi yesterday during the issuance of certificates to candidates who won in the party primaries for the forthcoming by-elections. UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar underscored the credibility of the process, noting that the party had not received any formal complaints. He described the nominations as a milestone for the party, attributing the success to the adoption of technology in managing the electoral process.



Narok County is set to boost its tourism economy through the construction of a Sh1.4 billion international airport aimed at improving access to the Maasai Mara. Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu said the project, funded by both county and national governments, will allow direct travel to Narok, reducing reliance on small aircraft from Nairobi's Wilson Airport. The airport is expected to cut travel time, attract more tourists, and increase foreign exchange earnings. It will also support conservation by reducing frequent flights within the reserve. Featuring modern facilities such as a runway, terminal, and flight school, the project is also expected to create jobs and enhance local economic growth.



Director General of the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Kenya (GRAK), Peter Karimi, delivers a speech at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre yesterday during a public participation forum on gambling regulation. He said the Authority plans to raise funds through regulated gambling activities, with the proceeds aimed at supporting key sectors such as healthcare, education, and cultural development, among other public benefits.



Wildlife Conservation Secretary John Chumo and Wildlife Research and Training Institute Director Dr. Patrick Omondi led a bamboo planting campaign in Budalang'i, where 10,000 seedlings were planted. The initiative aims to address environmental challenges while creating economic opportunities for local communities. Chumo encouraged residents to adopt bamboo farming, highlighting its role in controlling floods, preventing soil erosion, and generating income through its value chain. Omondi emphasized that bamboo restoration is crucial in flood-prone areas, noting its strong root system helps stabilize riverbanks and reduce erosion during heavy rains. The project, implemented with community groups, seeks to promote sustainable environmental conservation and enhance livelihoods.



The M-PESA Foundation has launched a Sh75 million project to rebuild Mapera Primary School in Ndal, Tongaren Sub-County, Bungoma County, to improve access to quality education. The initiative will replace dilapidated structures with modern facilities, including classrooms, science laboratories, and a digital learning centre. Bungoma Governor Kenneth Lusaka said the project will enhance the learning environment and restore hope for students. Foundation Trustee Michael Joseph noted the school was selected due to its urgent needs and emphasized the foundation's commitment to boosting academic performance through ICT integration, improved infrastructure, and promotion of digital literacy among learners in the area.

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**Climate partnerships** Mrs Ruto commended the mission for becoming Kenya's first net-zero diplomatic mission

# First Lady Rachel Ruto champions climate partnerships at Belgian Embassy visit

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

First Lady Rachel Ruto has urged stronger collaborations between governments, development partners, and the private sector to accelerate Kenya's transition to net-zero emissions and sustainable energy.

Speaking during a visit to the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi, Mrs Ruto commended the mission for becoming Kenya's first net-zero diplomatic mission, describing it as "a powerful statement of environmental leadership, innovation, and shared responsibility."

She highlighted that the embassy's sustainability practices are embedded in its design and operations, including solar energy integration, water recycling systems, hydroponic vertical gardens, biodigesters, and wastewater treatment technologies.

"It is particularly encouraging to see the use of local expertise and Kenyan contractors. This demonstrates how sustainability can drive innovation, build skills, and create economic opportunities locally," Mrs Ruto said.

The First Lady emphasised that Kenya is well positioned to lead Africa's green transition, noting that almost 93 percent of the country's electricity comes from renewable sources, placing it among global leaders in clean ener-



**First Lady Rachel Ruto holding talks with Belgian Ambassador Peter Maddens at the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi yesterday. | Photo: Courtesy.**

gy. She pointed to Kenya's abundant sunshine and forward-looking policies as key enablers for scaling environmentally sustainable and economically empowering solutions.

Mrs Ruto also stressed that people-centred approaches remain critical for long-term success, ensuring that climate action delivers tangible benefits to households and livelihoods. Through her office, she continues to champion initiatives aligned with national priorities, including clean cooking solutions, tree-planting and ecosystem restoration, and youth engagement through the First Lady's Mazingira Awards, where she serves as patron.

Belgian Ambassador Peter Maddens, who hosted the First Lady and guided her on a tour of the facility, reaffirmed

Belgium's commitment to supporting climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and sustainable growth. He highlighted the embassy's approach as a model for embedding sustainability into daily operations while advancing shared global goals for a healthier planet and a prosperous future.

**"It is particularly encouraging to see the use of local expertise and Kenyan contractors. This demonstrates how sustainability can drive innovation, build skills, and create economic opportunities locally," Mrs Ruto said.**



The visit underscores the importance of strategic partnerships in achieving Kenya's climate ambitions and demonstrates how diplomacy, innovation, and local expertise can be leveraged to deliver sustainable development outcomes.

Mrs Ruto's engagement with the Belgian mission reflects her ongoing commitment to advancing climate action in Kenya, particularly through initiatives that combine environmental stewardship with socio-economic benefits for communities.

The Embassy of Belgium's net-zero facility sets a global benchmark for sustainable diplomatic missions, demonstrating practical solutions that countries can adopt to reduce carbon footprints while fostering local skills and economic opportunities.

# AHB, Huduma Kenya partner to bring affordable housing services closer to Kenyans



**AHB Acting Chief Executive Officer Joseph Kagicha and Huduma Kenya CEO Ben Kai signing the MoU**

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Owning a home in Kenya just got a little less complicated — at least in theory.

The Affordable Housing Board has signed a memorandum of understanding with Huduma Kenya to establish dedicated housing service desks across all Huduma Centres nationwide, creating a single access point for Kenyans navigating the government's Affordable Housing Programme. The partnership is designed to cut through the bureaucratic complexity that has long discouraged prospective homeowners from engaging with the process.

Under the arrangement, the desks will guide applicants through every stage — from registration on the Boma Yangu platform to payment procedures, the required five percent deposit, instalment plans and unit allocation. With Huduma Centres already delivering over 5,000 government services countrywide, the outreach infrastructure is firmly in place.

AHB Acting Chief Executive Officer Joseph Kagicha said the move is intended to demystify home ownership. "We will establish dedicated information desks in every Huduma Centre, clearly branded and staffed to ensure that every Kenyan can access accurate information and make informed decisions about home ownership," he said at the signing ceremony at Huduma Centre City Square, Nairobi.

Huduma Kenya CEO Ben Kai welcomed the collaboration. "The introduction of AHB desks responds directly to the growing demand for clear, reliable information on affordable housing opportunities," he said.

Over one million Kenyans have registered interest through Boma Yangu. The Board is overseeing construction of 273,067 units across 111 constituencies, with more than 8,800 completed since 2022.

The desks are a welcome step. Whether they translate registrations into actual keys handed over remains the real test.

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NAIROBI

# Azimio leaders revolt against plan to handpick 2027 flagbearer in secret retreat



A faction of Azimio coalition leaders at press briefing

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The opposition is at war with itself — and the election is still two years away.

A faction of Azimio coalition leaders has broken ranks over reported plans by Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka to determine the coalition's 2027 presidential flagbearer through a closed-door retreat, warning that such a move risks fracturing an alliance that can ill afford internal discord. The pushback, delivered publicly and with unusual bluntness, signals that tensions within the opposition are already running high well ahead of the campaign season.

Speaking to the media, the dissenting leaders called for an open, transparent and consultative process, arguing that a candidate selected by a small circle of insiders would lack the grassroots legitimacy needed to mount a credible challenge against President William Ruto. Several pointed to past electoral cycles as a cautionary tale, noting that imposed candidacies have historically weakened rather than united opposition coalitions in Kenya.

National Liberal Party Secretary General Omondi K'Oyoo was direct in his rebuke. "A boardroom candidate remains a closed-circle candidate," he said, urging Kalonzo to abandon what he characterised as exclusionary tactics and instead convene all coalition partners for

a genuinely inclusive deliberation. His message was unambiguous: no single figure, however senior, should unilaterally determine the coalition's direction.

NLP Party Leader Dr Augustus Kyalo Muli echoed the sentiment with equal force. "We request that you shelve that plan, if indeed it exists, and give room to all parties and participants in this critical process," he said. "We require a participatory process that births an all-inclusive candidate for the coalition." His remarks drew applause from supporters present, reflecting broader anxiety within the alliance about the direction of its internal democracy.

Coalition figure Saulo Busolo went further, warning that Azimio's credibility as a democratic opposition outfit would be fundamentally undermined if it resorted to secrecy on a question as consequential as its presidential ticket. A closed retreat, he argued, would erode grassroots trust and ignite damaging tensions at precisely the moment unity matters most.

The episode exposes a tension at the heart of opposition politics in Kenya: the gap between the language of democratic reform and the instinct, when power is at stake, to manage outcomes rather than contest them openly.

If Azimio cannot agree on how to choose its candidate, voters may reasonably wonder whether it is ready to govern.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday.

## Kindiki: SHA is here to stay; over 30 million Kenyans enrolled

BY DPCS

@themkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has said SHA will not collapse but will grow stronger as the government enhances its efficiency and enrolls more Kenyans.

The DP dismissed opposition leaders claiming otherwise saying they are prophets of doom who do not mean well for Kenyans and the country.

"Those are prophets of doom who are wasting their time. SHA will not collapse. It will be much better. We are targeting to enroll 45 million Kenyans by December and all the 55 million Kenyans by June 2027," he said.

He spoke yesterday when he inspected development projects in Runyenjes Constituency, Embu County.

He checked the progress of Karurumo ESP Market and the ongoing Kanyuambora-Kamumu-Siakago Road.

Kindiki said it is wrong for the

politicians to spell doom for a huge project benefitting millions of Kenyans, saying the previous NHIF coverage only covered 7 million Kenyans locking out many more in need of medical insurance.

"These people who believe Kenya cannot have universal health coverage should be patient. We pray to God to give them a long life so they can see SHA transforming the health of the people of Kenya in our lifetime," he stated.

SHA, Kindiki revealed, has eased the burden for many Kenyans who had suffered from punitive medical bills for many years. He noted that the teething challenges are being dealt with to ensure the system is foolproof and efficient.

"We are making it better. We will raise the limits so that it covers all medical costs so as to free our people from harambees to pay hospital bills," DP declared.

The Deputy President accused the opposition of venting out their frustrations on government programmes after failing to push for tangible development when they occupied powerful offices.

"Our opponents are frustrated that they did nothing for the people when they were in power. Now they are out of office they are full of anger and regret for doing nothing," he revealed.

The ongoing road is among several road projects worth 12 billion shillings being done by the government in the County.

Twelve modern markets are also at advanced stages and are among many other development projects costing billions of shillings funded by the administration in Embu.

Kindiki said he will not be distracted but will use his time as DP effectively for the benefit of all Kenyans.

"I will work hard every day for Kenyans and the people of Embu because leadership is for a period. I don't want to waste time but focus on service to the people," he emphasized.

He urged residents not to be misled by those who are lying to them yet they did not bother to address their challenges when they occupied senior offices in government.

**SHA** Gachagua alleged that the SHA framework is riddled with irregularities, claiming that firms operating the system are linked to the Health CS

# Opposition escalates attack on SHA as health sector row deepens

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

A fresh political storm is brewing over the country's health reforms after opposition leaders intensified their attack on the Social Health Authority (SHA), accusing the government of mismanaging the sector and facilitating large-scale financial impropriety.

Speaking during a press briefing in Makueni, DCP Party leader Rigathi Gachagua led a coalition of opposition figures under the United Alternative Government, sharply criticizing Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale and President William Ruto over the implementation of the new health insurance system.

Gachagua alleged that the SHA framework is riddled with irregularities, claiming that firms operating the system are linked to the Health CS and are benefiting at the expense of struggling public hospitals.

"The companies running this system are proxies. Millions are being paid out, yet hospitals are burdened with unpaid bills and patients are suffering," he said.

He further claimed that the transition from the defunct National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to SHA was engineered to create avenues for siphoning public resources, describing the new system as "a fraudulent scheme."

He claimed that the defunct NHIF had requested for about KSh800 million to upgrade its systems but instead, the government decided to procure and establish a new system all together.

The new system, Gachagua revealed was procured at a cost of KSh1 billion but Kenyans were told it cost KSh104 billion, thereby those in the administration pocketing about KSh103 billion.

The former Deputy President also raised concerns over the management of the system's digital infrastructure, alleging that critical IT functions had been outsourced abroad, leaving the country without proper oversight of financial flows.

According to Gachagua, Kenyans continue to shoulder a heavy tax burden under the new system but receive little benefit in return, with

patients in public hospitals reportedly being forced to buy essential medical supplies out-of-pocket.

"These taxes are not translating into services. Instead, patients are being asked to pay cash for basic items, which defeats the purpose of universal health coverage," he said.

His remarks were echoed by DAP-K Party leader Eugene Wamalwa, who said the health sector was in a state of distress and that the reforms had eroded public confidence in government institutions.

"Kenyans are losing trust in the system. What was meant to improve healthcare access is instead creating confusion and suffering," Wamalwa said.

Democratic Party of Kenya leader Justin Muturi and his Wiper Patriotic Front counterpart Kalonzo Musyoka also weighed in, arguing that the challenges facing the health sector reflect broader governance failures and calling for urgent reforms.

The opposition's criticism comes amid growing concern from healthcare stakeholders, including hospital administrators and medical practitioners, who have warned of delays in reimbursements under the new system.

Reports from various public hospitals indicate mounting debts, shortages of essential supplies, and operational challenges linked to the transition to SHA. Some facilities have reportedly scaled down services or demanded upfront payments from patients due to cash flow constraints.

In response to earlier criticism, government officials have defended the SHA rollout, maintaining that the reforms are aimed at achieving universal health coverage and improving efficiency in healthcare financing. The Ministry of Health has previously stated that the transition is ongoing and that initial challenges are being addressed.

However, Gachagua dismissed these assurances, insisting that the system is fundamentally flawed and requires a complete overhaul.

The opposition also used the platform to criticize the government over the recent demolition at Gikomba market, terming it inhumane and insensitive to the plight of small-scale traders.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua addressing the media in the, company of several opposition leaders. | Photo: Courtesy.

Gachagua questioned the government's priorities, accusing it of turning against ordinary citizens instead of addressing pressing economic challenges.



**"The companies running this system are proxies. Millions are being paid out, yet hospitals are burdened with unpaid bills and patients are suffering," he said.**

**He further claimed that the transition from the defunct National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to SHA was engineered to create avenues for siphoning public resources, describing the new system as "a fraudulent scheme."**

"Why is the government at war with its own people? From healthcare to livelihoods, Kenyans are being pushed to the wall," he said.

The leaders argued that the country is in need of a "reset," claiming that the current administration has failed to effectively manage resources and deliver on its promises.

The escalating war of words under-

scores deepening political divisions over key policy issues, with the health sector emerging as a major battleground.

As pressure mounts, the unfolding debate is likely to shape public discourse around healthcare reforms and governance, with both sides seeking to win public support ahead of the next general election.



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

**Safaricom** The decision is set to take effect today, or at a later date once all required approvals are secured.

# MPs approve partial sale of Safaricom stake amid court battle

BY Contributor

The National Assembly has approved the sale of 15 per cent of the government's 35 per cent stake in Safaricom to Vodacom, in a deal expected to raise Ksh.240 billion for the National Infrastructure Fund.

The approval comes despite ongoing court cases seeking to block the sale, with National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula insisting that no court order can interfere with parliamentary proceedings.

The decision is set to take effect today, or at a later date once all required approvals

are secured.

"Are we supposed to be discussing something that is still pending before the court?" Suba South MP Caroli Omondi posed.

Wetang'ula responded, "Parliament is not a party to those proceedings. The orders given, if authentic, are not directed at Parliament. This House has a constitutional responsibility to transact its business."

National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah added, "Caroli Omondi participated in the debate and opposed it; he should have raised those issues at that stage."

A report tabled by a joint parliamentary committee on Finance and National Plan-

ning and Public Debt and Privatisation early this month endorsed the proposed divestiture on condition that the deal will not result in any job losses.

The proceeds from the sale are expected to bolster the newly established National Infrastructure Fund kitty.

In approving the sale of the shares to Vodacom valued at Ksh.204 billion, the joint committees observed that the valuation exercise applied safeguards to protect public interest.

The committees noted that the negotiated price of Ksh.34 per share aligns with market movements, adding that negotiating with Vodacom mi-



nimises execution risks and preserves market confidence. They also assured that personal data will be protected under the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act.

The committee further recommended that Safaricom's 855,000 direct employees' jobs be safeguarded.

It also proposed that Vodacom pays Ksh.40.2 billion

dividend upfront to the government and that proceeds from the transaction be ring-fenced under the National Infrastructure Fund.

Safaricom last week urged the High Court not to halt the proposed sale of government shares in the telco, arguing that the transaction is lawful, subject to regulatory oversight, and does not warrant

conservatory orders.

Through its lawyers, the telecommunications firm told the court that stopping the process at this stage would distort the market and negatively affect investor confidence.

It maintained that the matter before the court is largely a commercial dispute already undergoing scrutiny by the relevant regulatory bodies.

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**COG** .Shortly after the appearance, Sakaja, in a press briefing, termed the attempted arrest “unprocedural and unfortunate,” saying he voluntarily honoured the Senate invitation

# Sakaja Senate showdown deepens rift as governors accuse police of political scheme

BY William Muchiri  
@themkenyaintimes

A deepening standoff between county governments and the Senate escalated yesterday after Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja appeared before senators amid a failed attempt to arrest him, with governors now accusing the police and some lawmakers of orchestrating a political scheme.

Sakaja, who had initially been at the centre of an attempted Monday late-night arrest at City Hall, later presented himself before the Senate Public Accounts Committee (CPAC), where he defended Nairobi County’s financial management and dismissed the drama surrounding his summons as unnecessary.

During the session, the governor maintained that he respects constitutional oversight but insisted that due process must be followed. He told senators that accountability should not be turned into intimidation, adding that

**“I am here out of respect for the rule of law and institutions. There was no need for theatrics or attempts to arrest me at night. We must uphold proper procedures and mutual respect between institutions,” Sakaja said.**

counties are ready to cooperate within the law.

Shortly after the appearance, Sakaja, in a press briefing, termed the attempted arrest “unprocedural and unfortunate,” saying he voluntarily honoured the Senate invitation to avoid escalating tensions.

“I am here out of respect for the rule of law and institutions. There was no need for theatrics or attempts to arrest me at night. We must uphold proper procedures and mutual respect between institutions,” he said.

However, the developments did little to ease tensions, as the Council of Governors (CoG) strongly condemned the attempted arrest, describing it as illegal and politically motivated.

Speaking at the CoG headquarters in Nairobi, Chairperson Ahmed Abdullahi said investigations by the council had established that no lawful arrest warrant had been issued against Sakaja.

“Officers who were deployed at City Hall were acting either on verbal instructions or on a letter from the Clerk of the Senate, which is not sufficient under the law to effect an arrest,” Abdullahi said.

He argued that any enforcement action arising from a Senate committee must be formalized through the Inspector General of Police, including issuance of a valid warrant—something he said was absent in this case.

The governors went further to accuse sections of the Senate and the police service of collusion, alleging that the Inspector General had aligned himself with certain senators

to frustrate county leadership.

The row is linked to the ongoing boycott by governors of CPAC sessions, with county chiefs refusing to appear before the committee until four senators they accuse of running an extortion ring are removed.

The governors reiterated that position, insisting that CPAC remains “a no-go zone” until their grievances are addressed.

“We have evidence of extortion but will only submit it to the Speaker if given a fair hearing. Those being accused are resisting dialogue because they know the truth will come out,” Abdullahi said.



Tharaka-Nithi governor Muthomi Njuki addressing Senate Finance and Budget committee last week as CoG chairman Ahmed Abdullahi (left) and other officials listen. | Photo: Courtesy.

CoG Vice Chairperson Anne Waiguru criticized Senate leadership for failing to de-escalate the situation, saying the standoff risks undermining intergovernmental relations.

“This has moved from oversight to political intimidation. We need leadership from the Speaker to restore order and ensure fairness,” she said.

The governors also questioned the timing of the at-

tempted arrest, noting it was carried out at night despite ongoing calls for dialogue, terming it a sign of bad faith.

They have now called on Senate Speaker Amason Kingi to convene a meeting between the two sides to resolve the impasse and restore cooperation.

Despite Sakaja’s appearance before the Senate, the broader conflict remains unresolved,

with governors warning that continued pressure and alleged misuse of institutions could paralyze oversight processes.

The unfolding standoff highlights growing friction between county governments and the Senate, raising concerns over the balance between accountability and political influence in Kenya’s devolved system.



Nairobi City County governor Johnson Sakaja addressing journalists after his appearance in Senate yesterday.

**Health** We need a serious national cancer dialogue to establish the status of the disease, evaluate our response, and determine the magnitude of the problem

# Cancer crisis deepens as MPs call for urgent national action

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

A parliamentary committee has sounded the alarm over the rising cancer burden in Kenya, calling for a nationwide, multi-sector response amid growing concerns that the disease is fast becoming a leading cause of death.

The National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Health now plans to convene key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, researchers, and development partners, to chart a comprehensive strategy to tackle the crisis.

Committee Chairperson and

Seme constituency MP Dr. James Nyikal said the country must urgently assess the true scale of cancer cases and strengthen interventions, warning that delayed action could worsen outcomes.

"We need a serious national cancer dialogue to establish the status of the disease, evaluate our response, and determine the magnitude of the problem," said Nyikal during a committee meeting at Bunge Towers.

The lawmakers' concerns come amid growing data from health agencies indicating a steady rise in cancer incidence and mortality.

According to recent estimates by health authorities,

Kenya records tens of thousands of new cancer cases annually, with many patients diagnosed at advanced stages when treatment options are limited.

Medical experts attribute the rising cases to a combination of factors, including lifestyle changes, environmental risks, infections, and limited access to early screening services.

Members of the committee, including Prof. Jaldesa Guyo (Moyale) and Dr. Robert Pukose (Endebess), emphasized that many cancer-related deaths are preventable through early detection and timely treatment.

"We have cancers that are both preventable and treat-

able, such as cervical cancer. If we scale up screening and the uptake of the HPV vaccine, we can significantly reduce the disease burden," said Prof. Jaldesa.

Health stakeholders have also pointed to low awareness levels, cultural stigma, and high treatment costs as key barriers preventing patients from seeking early care.

In many rural areas, limited diagnostic facilities mean patients must travel long distances for screening and treatment.

Dr. Pukose called for increased funding for research and data-driven interventions, urging the government to empower institutions such as the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and the National Cancer Institute to map cancer prevalence across regions.

"To effectively respond, we must understand which cancers are most prevalent in specific regions and invest in targeted solutions," he said.

Beyond Parliament, oncologists and public health experts have repeatedly raised concerns about the strain on Kenya's healthcare system.

Major referral hospitals, including Kenyatta National Hospital, have reported increasing patient loads, with oncology units often overwhelmed.

The shortage of specialized personnel, including oncologists, radiologists, and oncology nurses, has further compounded the challenge, leading to delays in diagnosis



Health committee chairman Dr James Nyikal during yesterday's meeting. | Photo: Courtesy.

and treatment.

Additionally, the high cost of cancer care continues to place a heavy burden on families, despite efforts by the government to expand coverage through the Social Health Authority (SHA). Patients often struggle to afford chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and supportive care, forcing some to abandon treatment midway. Civil society organizations and cancer advocacy groups have called for increased investment in prevention, including public awareness campaigns on lifestyle changes such as healthy diets, reduced tobacco use, and regular screening.

They have also urged the government to expand cancer treatment infrastructure beyond major urban centers to ensure equitable access.

During the Health parliamentary committee meeting, lawmakers Julius Sunkuli (Kilgoris) and Cynthia Muge (Nandi) backed calls for a co-

ordinated, multi-agency approach, likening the response needed to the successful national efforts that curbed the spread of HIV/AIDS.

"This is a national crisis that requires the same level of attention and coordination we saw with HIV. We must bring together all stakeholders to tackle it," said Sunkuli.

The planned national dialogue is expected to bring together policymakers, health-care providers, researchers, and development partners to develop a long-term strategy focused on prevention, early detection, treatment, and palliative care.

As cancer cases continue to rise, stakeholders warn that time is of the essence. Without urgent and sustained intervention, the disease could place an even greater strain on Kenya's health system and economy, underscoring the need for decisive action to save lives.

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Some of the committee members during yesterday's session.

DCI The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has confirmed that every body exhumed from a clandestine burial site in Kericho County originated from Nyamira

# All 33 exhumed bodies trace back to Nyamira referral hospital, DCI finds

BY MKT REPORTER  
@themtkenyatimes

A mass grave. Thirty-three bodies. And a paper trail leading back to a single public hospital mortuary — one whose own records cannot account for where dozens of infants went.

The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has confirmed that every body exhumed from a clandestine burial site in Kericho County originated from Nyamira County Referral Hospital, delivering a direct rebuke to county officials who had initially claimed responsibility for only 13 of the remains. DCI Director Mohamed Amin, who toured the grave site in person, said the findings were corroborated by hospital management and CCTV footage recovered from

the facility's mortuary.

The footage told its own story. "Four bags were loaded into a white Toyota Land Cruiser registration number GKA 549L by Jason Mochara Nyabi, who is the chief mortician at the referral hospital, under the supervision of the public health officer," Amin told journalists at the scene. The vehicle's movements, captured on camera before and after it left the facility, implicated health officials directly in the transfer of the remains.

Standing at the grave site where homicide detectives have maintained a permanent presence, Amin was unequivocal. "All the remains recovered from the mass grave where we are standing this morning actually originated from Nyamira County Referral Hospital mortuary, and this has been acknowledged by the man-

agement and officials of the said hospital," he stated.

The investigation has since uncovered what investigators describe as grave lapses in mortuary protocols. Hospital records indicate that 46 infants died in the wards and were transferred to the morgue, yet mortuary documentation contains no record of how or when their remains were discharged. "Their remains may have left the morgue under unclear circumstances," Amin warned — a phrase that, in the context of a mass grave, demands urgent answers.

Three suspects have been released. Remaining in custody are hospital medical superintendent David Makori, chief mortician Jason Mochara and cemetery caretaker Robert Towett. Autopsies have been completed and DNA samples collected;



detectives are now working to trace the families of victims, including patients whose amputated limbs were also found at the site.

For the families still waiting, the truth is only beginning to surface.



## Why are students lacking in studies?



Once upon a time, students were obedient and innocent.

They trusted their teachers and followed their guidance with respect. Learning was simple writing on slates with chalk, correcting mistakes again and again. Through this process, they developed patience, discipline, and the habit of self-improvement.

There were fewer distractions no overload of television, no constant digital screens. Students spent their time reading books, thinking deeply, and truly understanding concepts. That is why many great scientific discoveries were made during those times because minds were focused, curious, and determined.

But today, the habit of reading is slowly fading. Students often prefer quick and easy information short notes instead of deep

learning. The desire for instant results has replaced the joy of understanding.

Teachers, too, face challenges. Many are expected to produce rank holders rather than nurture thoughtful and balanced individuals. Education is becoming mechanical, and the true purpose of learning how to live wisely and peacefully is often overlooked.

At home, life has also changed. With parents working and fewer joint families, children miss learning essential values like sharing, patience, and adjustment through everyday experiences.

So, the problem is not with students alone. It is a collective change in society. Today, we are producing students, but not always shaping human beings.

"We don't need more rank holders, we need better human beings"

V. JAYANTHI  
Graduate teacher  
Creative Writer  
Chengalpattu district

## Teacher



In my life, you came as shining light,  
And made my future warm and bright.  
Though I was weak and far behind,  
You lifted me with care so kind.  
Like lovely parents, you stood by me,  
And helped me grow to what I will be.  
Though you stand in a little place,  
You lead us all with love and grace.

S Harshini  
Grade 7  
GHSS Kandigai  
Chengalpattu District

## The boat



Life is like a boat  
Rowing against the waves & float  
Facing difficulties  
To reach the eternity

With oars as hope  
Consoling the Anchor to cope  
Assuring you would never sink  
So don't let your positivity shrink  
Though heavy storm disturb  
Sail across & do not curb  
Until your dreams comes true  
Reaching ashore with virtues of hue....

If boat speaks:  
Hello! though I'm just with wooden heart  
I ever stay smart  
Helping to reach your destination  
Freezed as your fascination  
At flood & theme park  
Rejoicing you with peaceful life to embark.

G.Sarala.

## Space



You can see the joy on their face.  
Space has planets, big and small,  
With rocks and minerals found on them all.

Earth's natural satellite is the Moon,  
Sometimes we can see it at noon.  
Let us protect our Earth and space,  
They are precious gifts by God's grace.

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

Space is a beautiful place,  
It holds countless stars and the Milky Ways.  
Space has many different layers,  
And many asteroids travel there.

There are many astronauts who work in space,

## When life gets blurry, adjust your focus



Meditation and pranayamam  
Gives you fresh breath and new thoughts .

Melodies of music feels fresh and healthy  
Taking tours and beverages makes you steady.

Keeping calm, aiming to focus  
Reach your destination with a bonus.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N  
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PGDG&C, CELT.,  
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GMHSCHOOL,  
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When life gets blurry, it's time to focus  
By engaging yourselves with your favourites.

Spending time with your beloved one  
Makes you feel relaxed and fun.

Reading your favourite novels takes you  
The new world and see admirable views.

Consuming your favourite food energizes you  
Helps you to get involved in your actions.

Chatting with favourite friends  
Make you a new trend.

## The weight of the unspoken end



Searching for where it went dim,  
But answers hide in shadows deep,  
Where even memories start to weep.

And then the soul... oh, the silent cry,  
The part of you that cannot lie,  
It doesn't shatter, it slowly fades,  
Like light that slips through closing shades.

It aches in ways no tears can show,  
In depths no living words can go,  
A hollow space, a quiet scream,  
A life that feels like half a dream.

Death is not just breath's last plea,  
It's all the things we'll never be,  
It's every "almost," every "could,"  
Buried beneath what never stood.

And those who stay must learn to live,  
With all the pain death doesn't give—  
For it takes more than just a life...  
It leaves behind a silent knife.

There comes a silence, heavy and deep,  
Not the kind that lets you sleep...  
But one that settles in your chest,  
And steals the air, denies you rest.

The heart forgets its gentle beat,  
It stumbles slow, then skips a seat,  
Each throb now feels like quiet ache,  
A fragile thread about to break.

The mind... it screams, yet makes no sound,  
Lost in thoughts that spin around,  
It replays moments, torn apart,  
A thousand endings in one heart.

"Why?" it whispers, cold and thin,

©Dr Daksha Udhani  
Ahmedabad

**Counties** All sub counties are conducting trials, and the selected players will converge on Thursday this week at Kajiunduthi Stadium for the final county team selection

# Tharaka Nithi Sports Chief Officer assures formidable teams to bring home KYISA trophies

BY Alex Njeru.  
@themtkenyatimes

The Tharaka Nithi County Sports Department has stepped up efforts to assemble formidable football and volleyball teams that will represent the county at this year's Kenya Youth Inter-County Sports Association (KYISA) games set to take place in Laikipia County from April 10 to 19.

The rigorous selection process is currently underway across various sub counties, drawing talented youths eager to secure a place in the final squads.

Speaking at Chuka Boys' High School during the Chuka Sub County trials, County Sports Chief Officer Alex Kinyua reaffirmed the department's commitment to transparency, merit, and fairness in

identifying the best talent.

Kinyua, who personally oversaw the trials, said the exercise has been structured to ensure that only the most deserving players earn the opportunity to represent the county at the regional competition.

"All sub counties are conducting trials, and the selected players will converge on Thursday this week at Kajiunduthi Stadium for the final county team selection," he said.

The selection panel, which includes key sports stakeholders in both football and volleyball, is continuing its countywide scouting mission. The team is scheduled to visit Kairuni Stadium for Maara Sub County trials and Kajiunduthi Stadium for Muthambi Sub County trials as part of efforts to ensure no talent is left out.

Kinyua emphasized that strict eligibility criteria are being enforced to maintain fairness and integrity in the process. Only players aged between 18 and 23 years, those born between 2003 and 2008 are being considered. Participants must also present valid identification documents.

Additionally, the trials are open to first-time conference league players, including those registered in FIFA Connect, provided they did not feature in Division Two or higher leagues in the previous year.

"We want a level playing field where every young person with talent has a fair chance," Kinyua noted, adding that only players from within the county who meet all qualifications will be selected.

Beyond talent identification, Kinyua raised concern over

rising cases of substance abuse among youth, cautioning players against engaging in alcoholism and the use of miraa and muguka. He said such habits could undermine their health and athletic performance.

"Discipline is key in sports. We urge our young players to take care of their health and remain focused if they want to succeed," he said.

He further highlighted the county government's commitment to developing sports, noting that Governor Muthomi Njuki has prioritized investment in sports infrastructure and youth development. Ongoing construction of stadiums and plans to procure a bus for transporting players are part of broader efforts to nurture and expose local talent.

However, the Chief Officer expressed concern over the



Tharaka Nithi County Sports Chief Officer Alex Kinyua (centre in red jacket) having time with players during Chuka Sub County trials for KYISA games | Photo: Alex Njeru.

low turnout of female athletes during the trials. He called on young women across the county to actively participate in sports, stressing that athletics is not exclusively for men. "We encourage our girls to come out in large numbers. There are equal opportunities for everyone in sports," he said.

For many participants, the trials represent more than just a sporting opportunity; they offer a potential pathway to personal and professional growth.


James Mutembei, one of the players attending the trials, praised the process, describing it as transparent and inclusive.

"This is good and we have

confidence in the ongoing selection because it is very transparent. The best talents are being identified," he said.

As the selection process nears its final stage, anticipation continues to build among players and officials alike. The county is banking on a strong, disciplined, and talented squad to compete favorably and bring home trophies from the upcoming KYISA games in Laikipia.

The final teams selected later this week will carry not only the county's hopes but also the dreams of many young athletes striving to make their mark through sport.




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**Livestock farming** This bill is about moving with the times," Akwimbi said. "We want farmers to benefit from technologies that helps them manage their livestock better

# Chips, tags and markets: inside Kenya's plan to modernize livestock farming

system would rely on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, where animals are fitted with two ear tags: a visible tag and a tamper-resistant microchip. The devices will be linked to transponders capable of geolocation and real-time tracking.

Importantly, the government plans to provide the identification devices free of charge to farmers during the initial rollout phase, as part of a five-year program aimed at achieving nationwide coverage.

Once fully implemented, the ANITRAC system is expected to transform Kenya's livestock value chain enhancing food safety, boosting farmer incomes, improving disease response, and restoring confidence in Kenyan livestock products in both local and international markets.



**Senior Deputy Director for Livestock Policy, Research and Regulations at the State Department for Livestock Development, Dr. William Akwimbi, addressing the press has said that the proposed law builds on the old Branding Act. Photo/Elizabeth Angira** | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Kenya's livestock sector could soon enter a new era of efficiency and global competitiveness if the Animal Identification and Traceability (ANITRAC) Bill 2026 is passed.

Currently undergoing public participation, the proposed law seeks to establish a modern system for animal identification, registration, and traceability. The goal is to strengthen disease surveillance and control while opening up access to premium regional and international markets for livestock farmers.

Speaking during a stakeholder engagement forum in Kisii bringing together participants from Kisii, Nyamira, Migori, and Homa Bay counties, the Senior Deputy Director for Livestock Policy, Research and Regulations at the State Department for Livestock Development, Dr. William Akwimbi, said the bill marks a significant shift from outdated practices to modern, technology-driven systems.

He noted that the proposed law builds on the old Branding Act, which largely relied on traditional methods such as hot-iron branding. With advances in technology, the new system introduces electronic identification tools capable of tracking animals in real time and storing critical data, including health records and feeding history.

"This bill is about moving with the times," Akwimbi said. "We want farmers to benefit from technologies that not only help them manage their livestock better but also enable them to meet international market requirements."

Under the proposed framework, all livestock farmers will be required to register themselves and their animals. Each animal will be fitted with identification devices that carry detailed information, allowing authorities and farmers to trace the animal's journey from birth to market.

This traceability, Akwimbi explained, is a key requirement in high-value export markets, particularly in Europe and the Middle East. Without it, Kenyan livestock products risk being locked out

of these lucrative opportunities.

Beyond market access, the system is expected to significantly improve disease control. By capturing and storing animal health data, authorities will be better equipped to monitor outbreaks, manage vaccinations, and curb the spread of transboundary animal diseases that have long affected the sector.

Livestock theft, a persistent challenge for many farmers, is also expected to reduce as animals become easier to track and identify.

Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Allan Kimutai said the ANITRAC system is already operational, with successful pilot programs conducted in seven government farms, including Kabete, Machakos, Naivasha, Oyani, Maseno, and Wajir.

"We have developed a web-based platform supported by a mobile application, with a central server hosted at the Directorate of Veterinary Services in Kabete," Kimutai said.

Following the pilot phase, the government is now preparing to roll out the system



**Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Allan Kimutai addressing the press has said the ANITRAC system is already operational.** |

Photo: Elizabeth Angira

in six counties Garissa, Siaya, Kiambu, Taita Taveta, and Ki-tui before scaling up to cover the entire country.

The rollout will begin with

cattle, before expanding in phases to include sheep, goats, donkeys, camels, poultry, pigs, and even pets.

Kimutai explained that the



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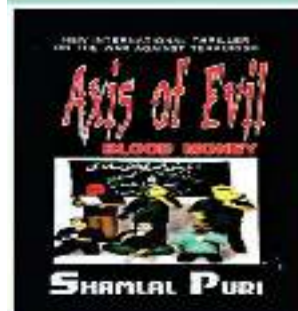
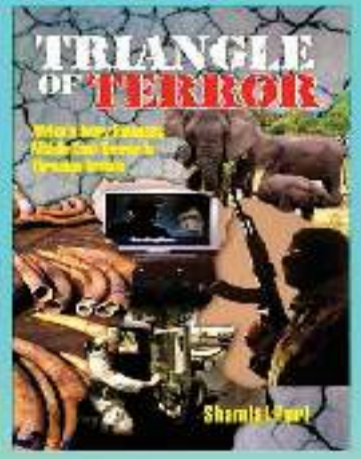
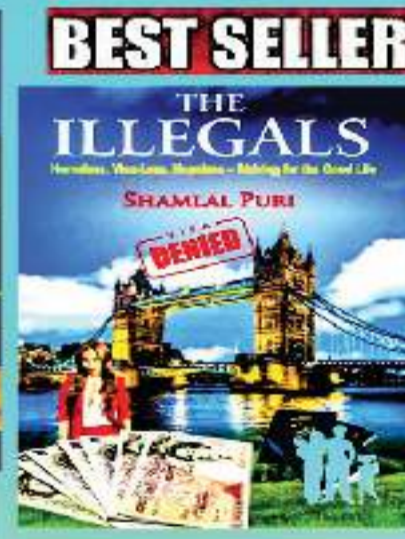
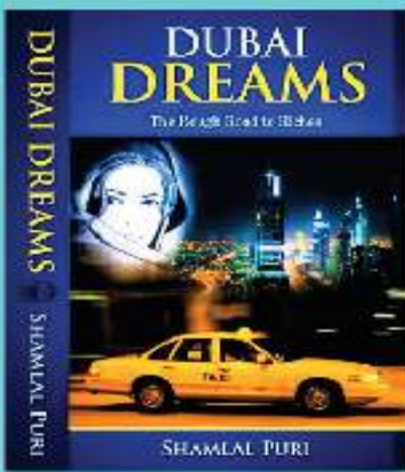
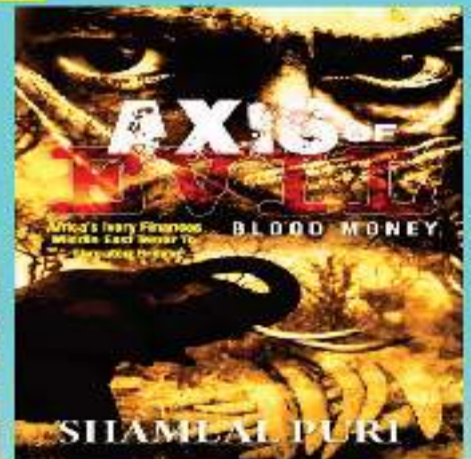
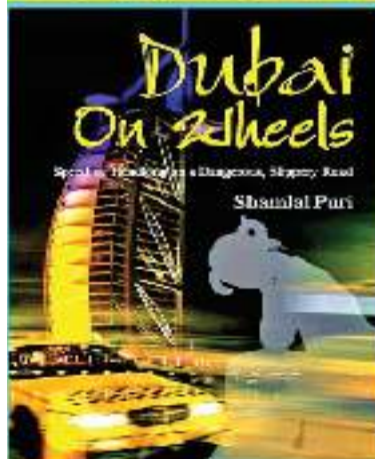
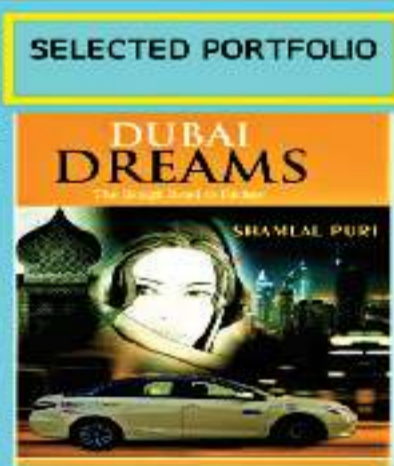
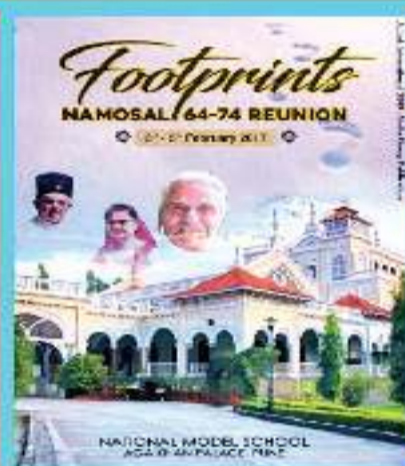
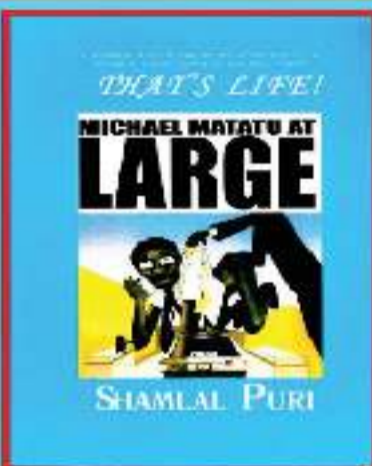
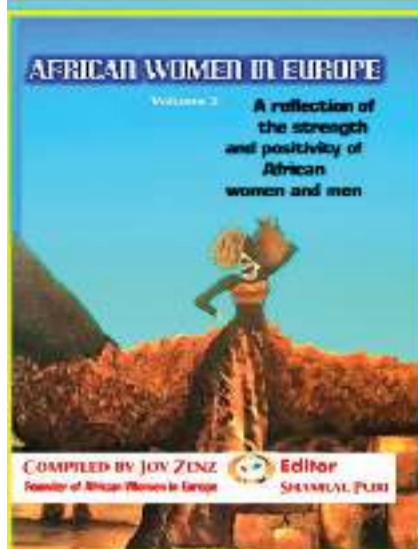
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**Civil Service** The Commission is relying on old technology to verify and weed out fake papers. As a result, the process takes too long and is expensive

# PSC faults obsolete systems as fake academic papers slip into Civil Service

BY PCS CT

@themkenyatimes

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has blamed ageing technology for its inability to decisively curb the proliferation of fake academic certificates in the civil service.

This emerged as lawmakers piled pressure on the agency over staffing gaps and governance concerns.

Appearing before the National Assembly Committee on Cohesion and Equal Opportunities, PSC Chairman Francis Meja said the Commission's verification systems are outdated, slow and costly.

This, he said, is creating loopholes that have been exploited by job seekers using forged credentials.

"The Commission is relying on old technology to verify and weed out fake papers. As a result, the process takes too long and is expensive," Mr Meja told the committee during a session at Bunge Tower.

He, however, signalled a shift, revealing that the PSC is working with the Commission for University Education (CUE) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) to roll out a modern, integrated system capable of instantly authenticating academic documents.

"We are carrying out reforms with the two institutions that will enable us to detect a fake academic document at the press of a button," he said.

Mr Meja was responding to concerns raised by Ndhiwa MP Martin Owino, who questioned the Commission's failure to stem the rising use of forged certificates to secure public jobs and promotions.

The session also exposed internal capacity challenges at the PSC with Chief Executive Officer Paul Famba disclosing a significant staffing shortfall that is hampering operations.

"The approved staff establishment is 518 but we currently have only 273 employees leaving a gap of 245," said Mr Famba.

Lawmakers termed the situation ironic, noting that a body mandated to recruit public servants is itself understaffed.

Led by Luanda MP Dick Maungu, members urged the Commission to lead by example by filling vacant positions.

"If PSC, whose core mandate is to hire public servants, is complaining about staff shortages, what about

other State agencies?" posed Mr Maungu.

The committee further pushed back on the Commission's proposal to decentralise services to the county level.

It termed the plan overly ambitious given current budgetary constraints.

Kisumu Central MP Joshua Oron advised a phased approach.

"Your plan to move services to the county level is very ambitious. Due to lack of resources, you should start by decentralising to regional levels first," he said.

Concerns over governance also emerged with Committee Chair Adan Yussuf Haji questioning why six officers above the mandatory retirement age of 60 remain on the PSC payroll.

"What justification do you have for keeping retirees in your system while many young people remain unemployed?" he asked.

Mr Haji also faulted the Commission for operating without a comprehensive policy framework to guide recruitment and other key functions. Malava MP Athman Ndakwa echoed the concern and attributed it to persistent challenges in the public service to the absence of a clear employment policy.

Kamukunji MP Yussuf Haji accused the Commission of failing to guarantee a fair and transparent recruitment process.

"Chairman Meja, I hope you are the new broom that will clean up corruption, nepotism and other bad practices in the Commission," he said.

On youth employment, Mr Famba told the committee that the PSC has recruited 8,200 interns since 2019 supported by an annual budget of Sh2 billion for stipends.

He however noted that additional funding is required to sustain and expand the programme.

"We need more resources to support recruitment, training, monitoring and evaluation of interns," he said.

Mr Meja maintained that the Commission is undergoing far-reaching reforms aimed at modernising its operations and restoring integrity in public service hiring.

"The system we are using is 15 years old. We are making major changes that will have a positive impact. I urge the Committee to support an increase in our budget so we can fund our programmes effectively," he said.



Parliamentary committee chairman Adan Yussuf Haji



PSC chairman Francis Meja (left) with CEO Paul Famba (right) before the parliamentary committee yesterday. | Photo:

Courtesy.

**Gulf** Nearly 1,500 Iranian civilians have been killed — including hundreds of children. Hospitals, schools and homes have been hit. The human cost is staggering and growing

# Fire over the Gulf: inside the explosive Iran–US–Israel war shaping the world in 2026



**BY JAFFARY NDEGWA**  
@themkenyatimes

The Middle East is on fire. As of late March 2026, the region is caught in one of the most dangerous and far-reaching conflicts of this century — a direct military confrontation between Iran, the United States and Israel that is reshaping alliances, rupturing energy markets and killing civilians at a pace that should alarm every government on earth.

The roots of this war stretch back decades. Since Iran’s 1979 revolution, Tehran and Tel Aviv have remained bitter adversaries, their rivalry playing out through proxy conflicts, covert operations and competing regional ambitions. But it was the collapse of diplomatic negotiations over Iran’s nuclear programme in early 2026 that finally broke the dam. On 28 February, Washington and Jerusalem launched coordinated military strikes — and the Middle East has not drawn a calm breath since.

The American operation, reportedly codenamed “Epic Fury,” has targeted more than

10,000 sites across Iran, destroying a significant portion of its navy and weapons production facilities. The strategic ambition was sweeping: cripple Iran’s missile arsenal, neutralise its nuclear infrastructure, and remove it as a credible military threat. It has not gone to plan. Intelligence assessments now indicate that only roughly one-third of Iran’s missile stockpile has been definitively destroyed. Tehran remains, in the bluntest terms, armed and angry.

Iran has adapted with unsettling effectiveness. Rather than launching mass salvos, it has shifted to fewer but more precise, longer-range



**“The conflict has long since spilled beyond its original geography. Israeli forces have struck Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. Iran has attacked US bases across the broader Middle East and — in a dramatic signal of intent — fired long-range missiles toward a US-linked facility in the Indian Ocean.**

missile strikes — harder to intercept and more disruptive. Israel’s advanced missile defence systems have absorbed much of the punishment, but several strikes have broken through, injuring thousands and forcing repeated airspace shutdowns. For ordinary Israelis, the rhythm of daily life has been replaced by the rhythm of air raid sirens.

Nearly 1,500 Iranian civilians have been killed — including hundreds of children. Hospitals, schools and homes have been hit. The human cost is staggering and growing.

The human toll on the Iranian side is staggering and deeply troubling. Close to 1,500 civilians have been killed in US and Israeli airstrikes since the war began, with some estimates placing the figure above 1,900. Hundreds of children are among the dead. Hospitals, schools and residential buildings have been struck, prompting urgent warnings from humanitarian organisations about the conduct of the campaign. These are not abstract statistics — they are families.

The conflict has long since spilled beyond its original geography. Israeli forces have struck Hezbollah targets in

Lebanon. Iran has attacked US bases across the broader Middle East and — in a dramatic signal of intent — fired long-range missiles toward a US-linked facility in the Indian Ocean. The message was unambiguous: Tehran is prepared to take this war wherever it needs to go.

Nowhere has that threat landed more heavily than in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran’s effective control of this vital shipping lane — through which a substantial share of the world’s oil passes daily — has disrupted up to 95% of maritime traffic in the area. The global energy crisis that followed was swift and severe. Oil prices surged. India, Japan and Vietnam scrambled

for emergency measures. The OECD has warned that a prolonged conflict could push US inflation to 4.2% and drag down global growth. What happens in the Gulf does not stay in the Gulf.

Politically, the picture is as unstable as the battlefield. President Donald Trump has oscillated between escalation and tentative signals of openness to talks, recently delaying planned strikes on Iran’s energy infrastructure while claiming negotiations were progressing — a claim Iranian officials flatly rejected. Israel, for its part, has made its intentions clear, warning that Iran will “pay a heavy price” for every continuing attack. Pakistan has emerged as a

potential mediator. Germany and the G7 are watching with mounting alarm. And behind it all, there are credible accusations that Russia is quietly supplying Iran with intelligence — adding yet another combustible layer to an already volatile situation.

As the conflict enters its second month, Iran remains defiant, exploiting its geography, its underground military infrastructure and its stranglehold on critical trade routes to sustain pressure far beyond what its adversaries anticipated. The United States and Israel, meanwhile, are pursuing military objectives that are proving far harder to achieve than the pre-war planning suggested.

There is no clean ending in sight. What began as a calculated strike to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran has become something far messier, more costly and more dangerous. The world is watching — and the world is worried. It should be.

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EAC Ariik said that science, technology, and innovation are at the core of the EAC's regional development agenda

# EAC conference calls for responsible AI development, stronger regional collaboration



Some of the delegates

BY Xinhua News Agency  
@themtkenyatimes

Delegates at the fourth East African Community (EAC) Regional Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Conference have called for the responsible development of artificial intelligence (AI) and stronger regional collaboration to drive inclusive growth and innovation.

The meeting, which opened on Monday in Kigali, Rwanda, brought together people from all walks of life, including government officials, legislators, academics, development partners, and private sector representatives, to explore AI opportunities while addressing risks related to governance, infrastructure, and skills across the region. Speaking at the conference, Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, deputy secretary general for Infrastructure, Productive, Social, and Po-

litical sectors at the EAC, emphasized the transformative potential of AI for the region. "For the East African Community, AI presents an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate regional integration, enhance productivity, and address some of our most pressing challenges, including food security, healthcare delivery, education access, climate resilience, and industrial growth," Ariik said.

Ariik said that science, technology, and innovation are at the core of the EAC's regional development agenda, stressing the need for responsible AI deployment. "As we advance, we share a collective responsibility to ensure AI is developed and deployed responsibly; safeguarding data privacy, promoting fairness and transparency, mitigating bias, and ensuring no one is left behind, especially women, youth, and vulnerable communities," he added. Rwanda's Minister of

ICT and Innovation Paula Ingabire called for a unified regional approach, urging East African countries to act as a bloc rather than individually to maximize AI's potential. She highlighted emerging innovations across the region, including AI tools supporting farmers and platforms expanding financial inclusion. "Our data stays in our hands; our citizens' rights are protected by our laws; our AI systems reflect our values, and the economic value generated by AI in East Africa accrues to East Africans," she said.

Ingabire emphasized that achieving this vision requires pooling research capacity, building shared data infrastructure, and developing local talent to ensure the region captures the value created by AI. Uganda's State Minister of East African Community Affairs James Magode Ikuya underscored the importance of empowering youth as drivers of innovation, en-

trepreneurship, and job creation. "Let this conference be a turning point. From dialogue to decisive action. Together, we can harness artificial intelligence to build East Africa that is resilient, inclusive, and innovative, and one that leaves no one behind," he said. Held under the theme "Harnessing AI for a Resilient, Inclusive, and Innovative East Africa," participants called for urgent action to address skills gaps, infrastructure readiness, governance frameworks, and regulatory preparedness, while accelerating regional integration and sustainable development. The conference, which runs through Wednesday, is expected to boost networking, partnerships, and multi-stakeholder collaboration within the regional AI ecosystem, while providing a platform to showcase AI-driven solutions, according to organizers.

## South Sudan ceasefire under threat amid heavy clashes



BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

Ongoing heavy clashes between the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) and opposition forces in parts of the country are putting immense pressure on a fragile ceasefire that has been in place since fighting erupted in March 2025, peace monitors warned yesterday.

Teshome Anagawe Ayana, chairperson of the Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), said the permanent ceasefire signed by the warring parties in December 2017 remains under significant threat, with its implementation uneven and challenged by localized violations and structural weaknesses. "In view of the current situation, CTSAMVM recommends that signatory parties ensure full compliance with the ceasefire, take command responsibility, protect civilians and respect human rights, and strengthen joint mechanisms and their oversight roles," Ayana said during a meeting of ceasefire monitors in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. He called on the parties to ensure freedom of movement and humanitarian access, restore essential services, and facilitate the return of internally displaced persons.

The statement follows deadly fighting between the SSPDF and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In-Opposition, which has displaced about 280,000 people since March 6 in Akobo, Jonglei State. Ayana noted that the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance remain inconsistent, with notable gaps in conflict-affected areas. He stressed that while there are indications of stability and recovery in certain regions, the overall situation remains fragile and requires a sustained commitment by all parties to fully implement the provisions of the 2018 revitalized peace agreement. "The continued use of heavy weapons, as evidenced by the reported aerial bombardments, suggests non-compliance with provisions relating to the cessation of hostilities and the reduction of military capabilities," Ayana said. He emphasized that the lack of fully integrated and deployed unified forces across the country reflects incomplete implementation of the agreed security arrangements, adding that the existence of separate operational zones controlled by different parties further highlights the absence of a unified command structure. "These gaps indicate that the transitional security arrangements have not yet achieved their intended objective of establishing a cohesive and nationally representative security apparatus. Consequently, the effectiveness of security provision and civilian protection remains constrained, and mistrust between the parties continues," Ayana said.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Fire ravages Gikomba market, again

Flames tore through Gikomba Market in the early hours of yesterday, reducing stalls to ash and wiping out millions of shillings in stock — most of it uninsured.

The fire spread fast, fed by the dense, flammable clutter that characterises East Africa's largest open-air market. Traders scrambled to salvage what little they could. Many failed.

Nairobi County firefighters eventually brought the blaze under control, but not before a significant portion of the market had been destroyed. Their response was slowed by narrow access routes and inadequate water supply — the same bottlenecks that have hampered emergency crews at this site before.

Investigators are examining whether an electrical fault ignited the fire. A full report is pending. But the cause almost does not matter. What matters is the pattern.

Gikomba has burned before. It



will burn again unless authorities stop treating each incident as a one-off tragedy deserving a visit, a photo opportunity, and a promise. Elected leaders have toured the wreckage. Officials have vowed action. Traders have rebuilt. Then it has burned again.

The market is not merely a trading hub — it is a lifeline for tens of thousands of low-income families who cannot absorb losses of this scale. The absence of affordable insur-

ance, functional fire breaks, adequate water infrastructure, and a credible emergency response plan is not an accident. It is a policy failure, repeated in slow motion.

Gikomba deserves more than sympathy. It deserves a government that treats informal traders as the economic backbone they are — before the next fire, not after.

By Belinda Oloo, Laikipia University

### A new roof, a new life: how affordable housing is changing Kenya

For a mother of two on the outskirts of Nairobi, the rain used to mean dread. Today, her children sleep soundly in a permanent home. That shift — from fear to stability — is what Kenya's affordable housing drive, at its best, looks like.

Across the country, new apartment blocks are rising where informal settlements once sprawled. For thousands of low-income families, they represent something more fundamental than shelter: the ability to plan a future rather than simply endure the present. With a fixed address comes security of tenure, access to clean water and sanitation, and the quiet dignity that comes from knowing you will not be evicted in the night.

The economic ripple effects are real. Construction sites are employing thousands, from



artisans to material suppliers, injecting money into local economies and sustaining small businesses along the supply chain. Urban planners see something longer-term still — planned communities with roads, drainage, schools and clinics gradually replacing the chaotic sprawl that has defined Nairobi's edges for decades.

But honesty demands acknowledging the gaps. Demand continues to vastly outstrip supply. Financing remains inaccessible for the most vulnerable, and there are legit-

imate questions about whether completed units are genuinely reaching low-income earners or quietly drifting upmarket. A housing programme that prices out the people it was designed to serve is not a solution — it is a rebranding exercise.

Kenya's housing ambition is real. So is the unfinished work. The measure of success will not be how many units are commissioned, but how many of the poorest families actually get to call one home.

By Tracy Achieng, Laikipia University

### Power, pressure and accountability: Kenya's governance crisis deepens

Kenya is not short of governance controversies. It is short of consequences.

Two flashpoints are currently testing the country's democratic patience: the Senate's escalating standoff with Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja over contempt of parliamentary summons, and a swirling KSh 6.3 billion question mark hanging over the eCitizen platform. Together, they reveal a system straining under the weight of its own unfinished business.

The Sakaja situation is not merely a Nairobi story. When a sitting governor can reportedly ignore audit queries and parliamentary summons without immediate sanction, every other county executive is watching. The Senate's push for compliance sends a necessary signal — but signals without enforcement are just noise. The eCitizen controversy is



arguably more alarming. The platform was built on a promise: digital systems would reduce corruption by eliminating the brown envelope. If billions can move through that system without clear public accounting, the entire digital governance agenda is compromised. Investor confidence, already fragile, does not survive repeated shocks of this nature.

Oversight institutions — the Senate, Auditor-General, EACC, Parliament — are once again in the spotlight. Kenyans have seen this before. Investigations are launched. Committees convene. Reports are

tabled. Then the news cycle moves on, and the figures at the centre of the scandal resurface at the next political rally, unscathed.

Public frustration is no longer just ambient noise. It is a verdict — on leaders who treat accountability as optional and institutions that treat impunity as unfortunate but unavoidable.

Kenya's democratic credibility will not be settled by who controls the next press conference. It will be settled by whether anyone actually goes to court.

By Kimberly Matroba, Laikipia University

### The digital ballot: how TikTok and social media are reshaping voter trends

Democracy used to require a newspaper, a television set, or a town hall. Today, it requires a smartphone and fifteen seconds of your attention.

TikTok has become one of the most consequential political platforms of the modern era — not because it is the most accurate, but because it is the most addictive. Political messages that once needed a press conference now need only a trending sound and a relatable face. For younger voters who have never read a manifesto and never will, the algorithm has effectively become the editor-in-chief.

This is both a breakthrough and a warning. Social media has genuinely democratised political discourse, stripping away the gatekeepers who once decided which voices



deserved amplification. Politicians can now speak directly to citizens; citizens can organise, challenge and hold leaders to account in real time. That is not nothing — in fact, in many contexts, it has been transformative.

But the same architecture that enables participation also enables manipulation. Algorithms reward engagement, not accuracy. Outrage travels faster than correction. Echo chambers harden into certainties. A voter shaped entirely by curated content is not an informed citizen — they are a

target.

The platforms are not neutral infrastructure. They are profit-driven systems that benefit when users are emotionally activated, regardless of whether the content activating them is true. Expecting them to self-regulate is like asking a fire to put itself out.

Digital literacy is no longer a nice-to-have for a functioning democracy. It is the ballot itself — and far too many voters are going to the polls without it.

By Caroline Nyambura, Laikipia University

# SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS  
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BREAKING NEWS



**Sports >>** \*The decision to strip Senegal of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations title is "abject" and "we have to denounce it", a senior figure at African football's governing body has said.

## Denounce 'Abject' AFCON Decision – Senior CAF Member

The decision to strip Senegal of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations title is "abject" and "we have to denounce it", a senior figure at African football's governing body has said.

Senegal beat Morocco 1-0 in January's final, but the Confederation of African Football (Caf) overturned the result on Tuesday because Senegal's players walked off the pitch in protest when hosts Morocco were awarded a stoppage-time penalty.

Play resumed in the final after a 17-minute delay, and Brahim Diaz's penalty for Morocco was saved, and the game went to extra time, where Senegal's Pape Gueye scored the winner.

Following an appeal by the Moroccan Football Association (FRMF), Caf ruled that by walking off the pitch, Senegal had forfeited the match, with the "result being recorded as 3-0 in favour" of Morocco.

Augustin Senghor, a Caf executive committee member and former head of the Senegalese Football Federation, told BBC World Service's Newsday: "In a situation like this, we have to fight against injustice.

"Football is fair play, football is played is on the field, not in offices.

"What happened with Caf was unacceptable.

"When you see a committee taking such a decision in violation of our rules, in violation of the Fifa laws of the game, to take the trophy and give it to Morocco, I think it is something very abject.

"We have to denounce it."

The FRMF said in a statement on Wednesday that the Caf verdict "upholds respect for rules that are necessary for the prop-



Senegal the defending champions of CHAN. Photo/COURTESY

er functioning of international competition".

It added: "This decision helps to clarify the framework applicable to similar situations in the future and contributes to the consistency and credibility of international competitions, particularly African football."

But Senghor believes that the decision was made after pressure from the FRMF.

"Senegal will fight because what happened is happening for the first time in the story of African football, in world football," he added.

"I am sure that if we [appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport] then we will win and the trophy will never leave Senegal. It is clear in my mind."

Speaking on Wednesday, Caf president Dr Patrice Motsepe said the incidents that took

place during the final undermined work carried out regarding "integrity, respect, ethics, governance, as well as credibility of the results of our football matches".

"It is important that the decisions of our Caf disciplinary board and the Caf appeals board are viewed with the respect and integrity that is very important to us," said the Caf president.

"Not a single country in Africa will be treated in a manner which is more preferential or more advantageous or more favourable than any other."

Former Cameroon, Ghana and Senegal coach Claude le Roy was also critical of Caf and Gianni Infantino, president of world football's governing body Fifa.

"For a long time with Caf, there is nobody of high quality driv-

ing this confederation and they are under control of Mr Infantino, and I think all problems are coming from there," he told BBC Newsday.

"Before this it was a fantastic Africa Cup of Nations, the most beautiful in the history of Afcon. "We cannot understand this decision so long later. That means that they killed all the spirit of this so beautiful Afcon in Morocco."

Morocco are among six joint hosts of the 2030 World Cup, alongside Spain and Portugal, with special matches being held in Uruguay – to mark the centenary of hosting the first final in 1930 – plus Argentina and Paraguay.

**BBC**

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**Sports >>** \*Kenya's co-hosting of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations is hanging by a thread — and the government has no one to blame but itself.

## AFCON 27 dilemma: contractors down tools at Kasarani and Nyayo over unpaid billions



Ongoing works at the Kasarani Stadium. PHOTO/FOOTBALL KENYA FEDERATION

Kenya's co-hosting of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations is hanging by a thread — and the government has no one to blame but itself.

In a damning admission before the National Assembly Sports and Culture Departmental Committee this week, Sports Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi confirmed what many had feared: the contractors renovating both Nyayo National Stadium and Moi International Sports Centre Kasarani have either abandoned their sites or drastically reduced operations, citing billions of shillings in unpaid dues. With the Confederation of African Football's six-month infrastructure deadline bearing down, Kenya has, in the PS's own words, "nothing to show."

The numbers are difficult to look away from. The government owes the Kasarani contractor upwards of KSh 3.7 billion. At Nyayo, the figure stands at

more than KSh 2.6 billion — enough to drive the contractor off-site entirely. Two stadiums. Two suspended renovations. One tournament that the continent is watching Kenya prepare for.

"The Kasarani Stadium — we owe the contractor in excess of KSh 3.7 billion and the contractor has reduced his workforce," PS Mwangi told MPs. "At the Nyayo Stadium, we have not paid the contractor in excess of KSh 2.6 billion, who has vacated the site. So we have nothing to show."

That admission, delivered in the measured language of bureaucratic accountability, carries consequences that are anything but measured. Kenya's co-hosts — Uganda and Tanzania — have already completed their infrastructure. They are ready. Kenya is not. The contrast is stark and, for a country that lobbied vigorously for the right to host Africa's most prestigious football tournament,

deeply embarrassing.

CAF president Patrice Motsepe sought to provide reassurance last month, publicly ruling out any rescheduling to 2028 despite earlier speculation that Kenya's 2027 general elections could complicate the tournament calendar. His confidence, however, was offered before the full extent of Kenya's stadium crisis became a matter of parliamentary record. Whether Motsepe's patience extends to abandoned construction sites and a government unable to honour its contractual obligations is another question entirely.

The political stakes could not be higher. The AFCON bid was sold to Kenyans as a transformational moment — a catalyst for infrastructure investment, a showcase for the country's organisational capacity and a source of national pride. If Kenya is stripped of its hosting rights, or forced into a humiliating last-minute scram-

ble, those promises will return to haunt the officials who made them.

At its core, this is not a sporting failure. It is a fiscal and administrative one. Contractors do not walk off billion-shilling projects without exhausting every avenue first. That two have now done so — simultaneously, at the country's two most prominent stadiums — points to a deeper dysfunction in how public infrastructure contracts are managed and funded.

The government must act immediately: clear the arrears, return the contractors to site, and present CAF with a credible, fully costed recovery timeline.

The clock is running. The stadiums are not.

*Martin Weche, MKT Sports Desk*

# SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



# From struggle to strength: meet the advocate turning pain into purpose



By: Ayesha Talib

@themkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- Her youngest son, Jeremiah, lives with cerebral palsy. It is a reality that has shaped everything — her advocacy, her writing, her ministry and her unflinching honesty about the emotional toll of caregiving. “Having a Moment with Moni,” her weekly podcast and radio show, strips away the polished veneer often applied to disability narratives, offering instead a raw and transparent account of single parenthood, caregiving, faith, survival and recovery from domestic violence, homelessness and sexual assault.
- “I share my testimony because silence never helped anyone,” Duell has said on the show, which airs every Friday at 10am EST on Hod Radio Network from Benin, Nigeria, and streams on Apple Podcasts, iHeart and Spotify.

When Monique Duell speaks, people listen — not because she demands it, but because she has lived it.

A mother, author, preacher, international speaker and fierce disability rights advocate, Duell has built a life’s work from the kind of hardship most people would prefer to forget. Through her organisation, This Ability LLC, she has become one of Prince George’s County, Maryland’s most recognised voices for special needs families — offering advocacy, education, support and resources to those navigating a system that too often leaves them behind.

Her youngest son, Jeremiah, lives with cerebral palsy. It is a reality that has shaped everything — her advocacy, her writing, her ministry and her unflinching honesty about the emotional toll of caregiving. “Having a Moment with Moni,” her weekly podcast and radio show, strips away the polished veneer often applied to disability narratives, offering instead a raw and transparent account of single parenthood, caregiving, faith, survival and recovery from domestic violence, homelessness and sexual assault.

“I share my testimony because silence never helped anyone,” Duell has said on the show, which airs every Friday at 10am EST on Hod Radio Network from Benin, Nigeria, and streams on Apple Podcasts, iHeart and Spotify.

Her academic and professional credentials match her personal determination. A graduate of the Arc of Maryland’s Partners in Policymaking Advocacy Program — which trains individuals to engage effectively at local, state and federal levels — Duell has channelled that training into real policy conversations. This Ability was inducted into the ForbesBLK community in June 2023, a recognition of the organisation’s growing national footprint.

The awards have followed. Duell is a 2026 WCW Global Finalist for the Disability Inclusion Impact Award. She received the Community Heroes Award from PIC TV Network president Dr David Evans in November 2022, and was honoured with the

SISTERS Award for Encouragement that same month. Earlier, in 2016, she received the Grace Girl Award in the “She Overcomes” category for her perseverance through extreme adversity.

Her literary output is equally prolific. She is the author of four books — Grief is a Gangster, Jeremiah the Jackrabbit, Handicapped Mom: Lessons I Learned Through Cerebral Palsy and How Do I Handle a Special Needs Child? — and co-author of two anthologies. Her poem “Mother, Mother” was featured in Stellar Woman Magazine’s inaugural Christmas edition in December 2022.

Duell has been featured on platforms across the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the United States, and her presentation “Caregiver C.P.R.” — delivered at the Faith and Mental Health Summit 2022 — earned widespread praise for its frank approach to recognising and preventing caregiver burnout.

She previously served as Associate Pastor of God’s End Time Deliverance Ministry under the late Apostle Philip Williams.

For a woman who has navigated cerebral palsy, single motherhood, homelessness and grief, Monique Duell’s story is not one of survival alone. It is one of deliberate, disciplined transformation — and she is determined to bring as many families with her as she can.

For more information, visit [linktr.ee/moniqueduell](https://linktr.ee/moniqueduell)

