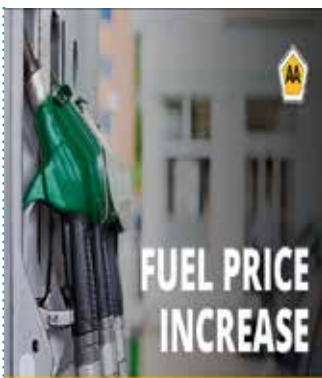




Goons: Riggy-G hits back
Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has launched a scathing attack on the government, dismissing allegations linking him to political violence and instead accusing state actors of orchestrating disruption of opposition activities **Page 9**



Sharp fuel price increase despite tax relief measures
The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) yesterday announced new maximum retail fuel prices for the one month. **Page 13**

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IMF Kenya has raised at least KSh335 billion by securitising specific tax flows to bankroll major construction projects across the country

IMF want Infrastructure fund made public debt



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has directed Kenya to classify the KSh335 billion raised through future tax pledges as public debt. This is a directive that directly threatens President William Ruto's infrastructure financing strategy and his government's push for a new IMF lending programme. The IMF made this position clear in a report published on its website, saying Kenya has raised at least KSh335 billion (about USD2.6 billion), by securitising specific tax flows to bankroll major construction projects across the country. **Page 8**



President William Ruto

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Gachagua champions grassroots economic empowerment in Murang'a engagements

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Rigathi Gachagua has called for stronger support for local economies, saying sustainable community growth depends on empowering the ordinary mwananchi with meaningful purchasing power.

He argued that punitive tax regimes undermine local enterprise and are counterproductive to national development.

Speaking during an economic inclusion dialogue in Mbiri Ward, Kiharu Constituency, Gachagua engaged residents on what he described as a people-centered development model aimed at ensuring citizens at the lower end of the economic pyramid are not excluded from growth.

The meeting brought together local leaders, including MCA Ruiru Miako, who supported the push for inclusive economic initiatives.

He reiterated his commitment to continued grassroots engagement, saying his approach to development is rooted in inclusivity, selflessness, and humility. Gachagua emphasized that his team would persist in advocating for policies that prioritize ordinary citizens and improve livelihoods at the community level.

The DCP leader also visited Kangema Constituency, where he interacted with residents and listened to their concerns. He praised their resilience and assured them that their voices would be considered in shaping future interventions.

His engagements also included an empowerment programme in Kambirwa Ward within Kiharu Constituency, focusing on supporting local economic activities and strengthening community-driven growth. He urged unity among residents and leaders as efforts continue to improve living standards across Murang'a County.



Editor's Desk




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NEWS IN BRIEF



Leaders affiliated to the Democracy for Citizens Party (DCP) in Embu County have called for the resignation of Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen over failure to curb the growing threat of political violence. Speaking in Runyenjes Town after addressing DCP delegates, Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji faulted the CS for his inaction in the face of increasing cases of hired goons disrupting opposition political gatherings. Mukunji argued that the responsibility of ensuring security during political activities squarely lies within the CS's ambit yet he had made little or no effort at all to curb the growing culture of political violence.



Former freedom fighters caucus; MMV Associates CLG director James Njuguna Mahuria has lost a close relative. His cousin, Joseph Njuguna Mugi (above) died in a road accident along Thika road on Saturday. The deceased who hailed from Nyahururu will be laid to rest on Tuesday next week at the same place. Yesterday, the MMV Associates CLG director called on wellwishers to assist the late Njuguna young family through contributions via 0700646344 which belongs to the burial preparation committee treasurer, Jackson Wang'ombe.



Murang'a county governor Irungu Kang'ata has blamed delays by the Controller of Budget for stalling key county projects, citing slow scrutiny of documents. He warned that the Kang'ata Care programme risks discontinuation by the Social Health Authority due to missed renewal timelines. Speaking at the Murang'a County Assembly, Kang'ata said multiple counties face similar challenges linked to delayed approval of requisitions. Despite this, he highlighted progress in healthcare, noting that 180 health facilities are operational across all 35 wards. On ECDE, the governor called for dialogue to address teachers' demands for permanent and pensionable terms, urging a balanced and sustainable approach.



A woman draws water from an improvised pipe at a natural water point in Tinderet Sub County, Nandi County. The devolved unit has partnered with the National Government and development partners to supply clean and reliable piped water to the locals. The initiative is under the ambitious last-mile water connectivity programme, in line with the County's long-term development blueprint. It is also anchored within broader national water reforms and is also a key priority under the Nandi County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023–2027, which outlines an ambitious roadmap to achieving universal access to safe and clean water, expanding distribution networks and improving water storage and management systems across the county.



The government has initiated steps to formally recognise the Pare community in Taveta Sub-county, aiming to address long-standing statelessness. The announcement was made during an event led by Andrew Mwadime with support from the Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit. The recognition process is expected to grant the community full Kenyan citizenship, ending years of exclusion from essential services and economic opportunities due to lack of documentation. The initiative follows a presidential directive targeting marginalised groups, with National Government Administrative Officers tasked to fast-track registration. A public petition before the National Assembly triggered the move, with registration set to enable access to IDs, education, healthcare, and jobs.

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Grief Leaders condemned the incident, describing it as both tragic and unacceptable, while calling for accountability

Outrage and grief after fatal shooting of protesters in Embu

Muturi emphasized that no society should tolerate a system that strips its people of dignity in healthcare.

BY MKT Correspondents

@themtkenyatimes

Shock and anger have gripped Ishiara area, Mbeere North in Embu County following the fatal shooting of three protesters during demonstrations over the state of Ishiara Level 4 Hospital.

Leaders condemned the incident, describing it as both tragic and unacceptable, while calling for accountability and urgent reforms in the healthcare system.

Democratic Party (DP) leader Justin Muturi termed the killings a “cold-blooded execution,” expressing deep pain over the deaths of the three individuals who had taken to the streets to voice concerns about deteriorating health services.

He described the act as barbaric and one that should outrage all Kenyans, noting that many citizens across the country continue to suffer due to inadequate healthcare, lack of essential supplies, and unsafe conditions.

Muturi emphasized that no society should tolerate a system that strips its people of dignity in healthcare. He urged that the deaths serve as a rallying point for Kenyans to demand justice, better services, and respect for human rights.

He further called on the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) to launch immediate investigations and ensure that any officers involved are held accountable

through administrative action and prosecution.

Echoing similar sentiments, Mbeere North Member of Parliament Leonard Wamuthende expressed deep sorrow over the loss of trio. He extended his condolences to their families and described the escalation of a peaceful protest into a deadly confrontation as deeply troubling.

Wamuthende condemned the use of excessive force, particularly the deployment of live ammunition against unarmed civilians.

He noted that such actions undermine the constitutional right of citizens to protest and express grievances peacefully.

The MP revealed that he was engaging Embu County leadership, including Governor Cecily Mbarire, to urgently address the concerns surrounding the hospital and ensure that residents’ grievances are resolved.

He stressed the importance of dialogue, accountability, and safeguarding human life.

Both leaders called for calm among residents even as investigations are pursued, underscoring the need for justice and systemic change. The incident has intensified calls for reforms in both policing and healthcare, as Kenyans demand a system that protects lives rather than endangering them.

Two of the victims died immediately after being shot while the third, later at the hospital.



Justin Muturi



Leonard Wamuthende

Ruto Orders Removal of Contractor Over Stalled Kisii Road



President William Ruto

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto has directed the immediate removal of a contractor from the Soserera-Ramasha-Ekona-Kiomiti road project in Nyaribari Chache Constituency, Kisii County, citing incompetence and deliberate delays that have stalled completion for eight years.

The project, awarded in 2018 and launched during Ruto’s tenure as Deputy President, was envisioned as a key infrastructure link to boost regional connectivity and economic activity. However, despite repeated deadlines, the road remains incomplete, sparking frustration among residents.

During a site visit, the President expressed anger at the prolonged delays, questioning how a contractor could remain on site for nearly a decade without delivering results. “Huyo contractor anaitwa Mahan mwambie atoke kwa barabara yangu aende huko achome makaa,” Ruto

declared, ordering the firm to vacate immediately.

Documents show the Kenya Rural Roads Authority had previously issued notices to Mahan Limited over stalled works, with the company attributing delays to harsh weather conditions. Despite this, Ruto insisted the contractor be removed from all related projects, directing that a new firm be engaged to fast-track completion.

The President emphasized that funds are available to complete the road and warned against further sabotage of service delivery. Kisii Governor Simba Arati, who hosted Ruto during his three-day tour of the county, affirmed continued support for the government’s broad-based arrangement, pledging collaboration in future development initiatives.

Ruto’s directive underscores his administration’s commitment to accountability in infrastructure projects and timely delivery of services to citizens.

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NAIROBI

KNH nurses end strike after agreement with government



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Nurses at Kenyatta National Hospital have officially called off their strike following intensive negotiations with government representatives, restoring normal operations at Kenya's largest referral facility.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale confirmed that a return-to-work formula had been agreed upon between hospital management and the Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives. The deal addresses key grievances raised by the nurses, including enhanced medical cover, structured promotion pathways, and measures to ease workload pressures.

"I am pleased to announce that the industrial action by nurses at Kenyatta National Hospital has been officially called off following hours of intensive and constructive negotiations," Duale stated.

The agreement also provides for the gradual absorption of nurses on contract into permanent and pen-

sionable terms. Duale commended both parties for their professionalism and goodwill, noting that the resolution marks an important step toward strengthening staff welfare, motivation, and retention within the health system.

The strike, which had disrupted critical services across wards, outpatient clinics, and emergency units, was triggered by long-standing concerns over delayed salaries, job insecurity, and limited access to pension benefits.

The Ministry of Health has pledged to fully implement the agreement within the agreed timelines, with monitoring mechanisms in place to prevent future disruptions. Duale urged nurses to resume duty immediately and maintain high standards of professionalism, emphasizing the importance of delivering quality, timely, and compassionate healthcare.

The government reiterated its commitment to reinforcing Kenya's health workforce and improving service delivery across public health facilities.



IMF directs Kenya to reclassify Ksh335 billion infrastructure funding as Public debt



By: Ndung'u Wainaina

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has directed Kenya to classify the KSh335 billion raised through future tax pledges as public debt.

This is a directive that directly threatens President William Ruto's infrastructure financing strategy and his government's push for a new IMF lending programme.

The IMF made this position clear in a report published on its website, saying Kenya has raised at least KSh335 billion (about USD2.6 bil-

lion), by securitising specific tax flows to bankroll major construction projects across the country.

This implies that the government has been using future tax collections as collateral to raise cash today, funding roads, railways, stadiums, and airports, without officially adding those obligations to the national debt register.

The IMF pointed out key infrastructure projects under the Ruto Presidency, stating categorically that the funds used to steer these mega projects ought to be regarded as debt liabilities on the international scale.

"Such income should be recognised as a debt liability under the international statistical standards," stated the IMF.

IMF reported that the sports levy has been pledged to finance a new national stadium, Talanta Stadium, while a fuel tax is used to fund road construction; Mau-Rironi Summit Dual Carriage.

At the same time, an import duty

is funding a brand-new railway line, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) extension from Naivasha to Malaba, expected to ease cargo movement, and a passenger tax has also been earmarked for a major upgrade at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA).

The fund went further, laying out exactly how the reclassification should work, giving Kenya two specific options for how securitisation proceeds must be recorded and reported going forward, stressing that the proceeds must be treated as a loan.

"Securitisation of future revenue should either be treated as a loan to the securitisation unit or as direct borrowing of the government," stated the IMF.

The writer is a Transitional Justice and Human Security Fellow who works at Africa Council on Human Security

Goonism “This culture of goonism is being driven by the state to intimidate opponents and create the impression that the opposition is disorderly,” Gachagua said.

Goons: Riggy-G hits back

BY MKT REPORTERS

@themkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has launched a scathing attack on the government, dismissing allegations linking him to political violence and instead accusing state actors of orchestrating disruption of opposition activities in what is shaping up to be a deepening political standoff.

Speaking yesterday in Mbiru Ward, Kiharu Constituency in Murang'a County, Gachagua denied claims of involvement in goonism and political intolerance, insisting that such actions are part of a broader state-sponsored strategy to undermine dissenting voices.

He directly accused Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen and Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo of being behind disruptions witnessed at opposition gatherings across the country.

According to Gachagua, several meetings organized by opposition figures have in recent months been disrupted by groups of goons, sometimes in the presence of security agencies, yet no arrests or prosecutions have followed despite investigations reportedly being concluded. “This culture of goonism is being driven by the state to intimidate opponents and create the impression that the opposition is disorderly,” he said.

His remarks come amid heightened political temperatures, with reports from various parts of the country indicating increased confrontations between rival political camps and growing concerns over shrinking democratic space.

Gachagua also took aim at Kimani Ichung'wa, the Kikuyu Member of Parliament, accusing him of allegedly mobilizing police to disrupt his recent political tour.

He claimed the MP's actions reflected desperation and suggested that his political influence was waning.

On the broader political landscape, Gachagua raised alarm over what he described as attempts by President William Ruto to weaken the opposition, particularly the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM).

He alleged that there are plans to dissolve or destabilize the party and warned that such a move would undermine Kenya's democratic founda-

tions.

He further claimed that alternative political outfits were being cultivated within ODM strongholds as part of a strategy to dilute the party's influence.

“Kenya is a democratic country, and political parties must be respected,” Gachagua said, urging ODM leaders and supporters to remain vigilant.

The former deputy president also weighed in on a recent incident in Githunguri involving the alleged teargassing of members of the Kikuyu Council of Elders, terming it an affront to cultural institutions.

He accused the president of interfering with land considered sacred by the community and attempting to undermine traditional structures.

In a controversial claim, Gachagua further alleged that a “fake” Akorino religious group had been mobilized in the aftermath of the incident in a bid to manage public backlash; an assertion that has yet to be independently verified.

His statements add to mounting criticism from sections of the political class over government policies and handling of dissent.

Analysts note that the accusations, if left unaddressed, could deepen political polarization and erode public trust in state institutions.



He directly accused Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen and Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo of being behind disruptions witnessed at opposition gatherings across the country. According to Gachagua, several meetings organized by opposition figures have in recent months been disrupted by groups of goons, sometimes in the presence of security agencies, yet no arrests or prosecutions have followed despite investigations reportedly being concluded.



Former DP Rigathi Gachagua addressing the public in Kiharu, Murang'a county yesterday. | Photo: Courtesy.

Despite the sharp criticism, Gachagua maintained that he remains focused on offering solutions to the country's challenges, positioning himself as an alternative voice amid growing economic and political concerns.

The government has yet to formally respond to his latest claims, but the unfolding exchanges signal a potentially volatile period ahead as political alignments shift and competition intensifies in the run-up to future electoral contests.

The former DP was accompanied by dozens of former, current and aspiring political leaders from different parts of the country.



Some of the leaders who accompanied the DCP party leader Rigathi Gachagua in Murang'a yesterday.

Stadium Its construction had stopped following a decision to change the original design over limited space in the area.

Construction of Othaya stadium resumes after change of design



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki launching the construction of Othaya stadium last year. Looking on are leaders led by Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina (standing centre). | Photo: Courtesy.

BY WMW
@themtkenyatimes

Construction of ultra-modern Othaya stadium has resumed in earnest and is now expect-

ed to be completed in the next few months.

Its construction had stopped following a decision to change the original design over limited space in the area.

Once it is completed, bud-

ding sports talents in Othaya Constituency will benefit from a state-of-the-art facility whose construction was commissioned by Deputy President Prof Kithure Kindiki in June last year.



Workers at Othaya stadium yesterday | Photo: Courtesy.

The stadium is one of the projects that President Dr William Ruto promised to deliver to the residents following a request by area MP Wambugu Wainaina.

The facility is being constructed at a cost of KSh55 million and is now expected to be completed in August.

It will feature a standard football pitch with natural grass

and four multi-purpose courts which will be utilised for volleyball, basketball, tennis and handball.

It will also have an athletics track, an indoor multi-purpose hall for hosting meetings, fine arts theatre performances and indoor games.

The area, MP said the facility will act as a platform for building the talent scouting

network where talented local players will be identified for nurturing.

The stadium is one of the many projects that the area MP has been lobbying for since he was elected during the 2022 General Elections.

Others are in roads, water, electricity as well health sectors, all amounting to hundreds of millions of shillings.

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PBO The week-long event, running from Monday to Friday brings together stakeholders from across the country

Organizations showcase their potential and transformative agenda at PBO Week

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

This year's annual Public Benefits Organization (PBO) week kicked off on Monday with renewed push for partnerships and impact across the country

The country is this week marking the annual Public Benefits Organization (PBO) week with a strong call for partnerships, collaboration, and sustainable transformation under the PBO Act.

The week-long event, running from Monday to Friday brings together stakeholders from across the country; including government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector actors, and members of the public.

Under the guidance of Public Benefits Organization Regulatory Authority (PBORA), activities are taking place at the iconic Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) as well as in regional hubs across Eldoret, Garissa, Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nakuru; underscoring the nationwide scope and inclusivity of the initiative. At the heart of this year's theme, "A New Dawn in Action is Powered by Partnerships," is the recognition that collaboration is key to amplifying impact within Kenya's development ecosystem.



Public Benefits Organization Regulatory Authority (PBORA) boss Laxman Kiptoo (left) at MMV Associates CLG exhibition stand at KICC grounds where he was received by the caucus team led by Ms Joy Ndirangu (centre). | Photo: Courtesy.

Benefits Organization Regulatory Authority (PBORA), activities are taking place at the iconic Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) as well as in regional hubs across Eldoret, Garissa, Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nakuru; underscoring the nationwide scope and inclusivity of the initiative.

At the heart of this year's theme, "A New Dawn in Action is Powered by Partnerships," is the recognition that collaboration is key to amplifying impact within Kenya's development ecosystem.

The event highlights the role of PBOs in advancing social justice, economic empowerment, and community resilience.

Showcasing impact and building connections

Organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, PBO Week provides a platform for organizations to showcase their work, exchange ideas, and build strategic partnerships.

Participating partners include prominent organizations such as MMV Associates CLG, Joyful Women Organization (JOYWO),

World Vision Kenya, Trócaire, RACIDA, FAWA Africa, Grant Thornton Kenya, and Hatch Technologies, among others.

Their participation reflects the diversity and strength of Kenya's PBO sector, which continues to play a critical role in addressing societal challenges and supporting government development priorities.

A key highlight of the opening days was a visit by Laxman Kiptoo, the Director General PBORA, who toured exhibition stands at the KICC grounds in Nairobi yesterday.

During his visit, Kiptoo engaged with various organizations, including the former freedom fighters and their descendants caucus; MMV Associated CLG where he was received by representatives led by Ms Joy Ndirangu on behalf of the organization's director, James Njuguna Mahuria.

Ms Ndirangu outlined the organization's mission, which focuses on advocating for the rights and welfare of for-

mer freedom fighters and their descendants where they continues to seek recognition and compensation for injustices suffered during Kenya's struggle for independence.

After the visit, Mahuria commended Kiptoo's leadership in steering PBORA following its transition from the NGO Coordination Board, expressing optimism that the authority will strengthen support for organizations and help them achieve their missions.

A nationwide movement

While Nairobi hosts the central events, the energy of PBO Week is being felt across the country. From coastal regions to northern and western Kenya, communities are actively engaging in exhibitions, dialogues, and outreach initiatives.

Organizers have encouraged Kenyans to participate in events happening near them, emphasizing that the movement is not confined to the capital city but is a national effort to strengthen civic engagement and development partnerships.

Driving the PBO agenda forward

The PBO Week 2026 has come at a pivotal time as stakeholders continue to operationalize the PBO Act, which aims to create a more enabling environment for civil society organizations.

The Act is expected to enhance transparency, accountability, and collaboration within the sector, while also fostering stronger partnerships between government and non-state actors.

As the week unfolds, the focus remains on celebrating impact, connecting voices, and laying the groundwork for long-term transformation.

With growing momentum and widespread participation, the PBO Week is shaping up to be more than just a celebration; it is a call to action for all stakeholders to work together in building a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable Kenya.

Kihika's development reset targets service delivery gaps In Naivasha

BY Suleiman Mbatiah
@themtkenyatimes

The County Government of Nakuru has signaled a renewed push to accelerate service delivery and economic growth in Naivasha Sub-county following high-level consultations with grassroots leaders, outlining targeted investments in health, water, trade and infrastructure. The engagement with opinion leaders from Lakeview, Viwandani and Hellsgate wards surfaced urgent gaps in healthcare access, water supply and livelihoods, prompting county officials to prioritize upgrades at Naivasha Sub-county Hospital and

expand social support programmes. Planned interventions include modernization of the maternity wing, installation of a CT scan, completion of ICU and IDU units, and equipping a new outpatient complex, alongside long-term plans to elevate the facility to Level 5 status. "We are aligning our development agenda with the priorities raised by local leaders to ensure our investments directly improve livelihoods, expand access to essential services and drive sustainable economic growth in Naivasha," said Governor Susan Kihika. She said the measures are expected to reduce patient con-



Governor Susan Kihika arriving at the forum in Naivasha. | Photo: ourtesy

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gestion, improve emergency response capacity and expand specialized care, while complementary upgrades to Kabati, Kayole and Mwiciringi dispensaries aim to decentralize essential services. Beyond healthcare, the county is scaling up flagship initiatives such as bursaries, the Uji Programme and concessional financing through the Wezesha Fund, with a new Boda Boda Fund expected to unlock income opportunities for youth. The county also issued a warning against illegal encroachment and backfilling of Lake Naivasha, linking the activities to disrupted fishing

livelihoods and increased human-wildlife conflict, particularly rising hippo attacks in nearby communities. "We will not allow illegal activities to compromise livelihoods or endanger residents, and we are taking firm action to protect Lake Naivasha and restore order along its access corridors," Governor Susan Kihika added. The Governor further urged leaders to prioritize unity and accountability, emphasizing that sustained collaboration will be critical in delivering inclusive development and long-term socio-economic transformation across the sub-county.



EPRA In its latest review, EPRA said Super Petrol will increase by KSh28.69 per litre, while Diesel will rise by KSh40.30 per litre.

Sharp fuel price increase despite tax relief measures

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) yesterday announced new maximum retail fuel prices for the one month.

In its latest review, EPRA said Super Petrol will increase by KSh28.69 per litre, while Diesel will rise by KSh40.30 per litre. The price of Kerosene, however, will remain unchanged for the period under review.

In Nairobi, the updated maximum retail prices have been set at KSh206.97 for Super Petrol, KSh206.84 for Diesel, and KSh152.78 for Kerosene.

The regulator noted that the prices are inclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT) and reflect adjustments under various tax and finance laws, including the VAT Act 2013, the Fi-

nance Act 2023, and the Tax Laws (Amendment) Act 2024.

EPRA further explained that although VAT on petroleum products has been reduced from 16% to 13% in a bid to cushion consumers, the relief has been outweighed by rising international oil prices and increased landed costs.

The adjustments also factor in revised excise duty rates linked to inflation.

To mitigate the impact on consumers, the government will also deploy approximately KSh6.2 billion from the Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) Fund to stabilize pump prices. Despite these interventions, EPRA noted that global market pressures continue to exert significant upward pressure on local fuel costs.

The sharp increase in Diesel prices is expected to have a ripple effect across the economy, potentially rais-



ing transportation and production costs, which may in turn contribute to higher prices of basic goods and services.

Economic analysts have previously warned that sustained fuel price hikes could deepen the cost-of-living burden on households, especially in urban areas where transport and

energy costs form a significant share of daily expenses. Businesses reliant on logistics and manufacturing are also likely to feel the impact.

EPRA has urged consumers to use energy efficiently as global oil market volatility persists, emphasizing that future price adjustments will continue to reflect international

market trends, exchange rate movements, and applicable tax policies.

The latest review underscores ongoing challenges in stabilizing fuel prices amid fluctuating global oil markets, even as government measures attempt to cushion consumers from sharper shocks.

The Mt. Kenya Times



From strangers to soulmates of time



From sharing work to sharing pain,
From "how's your day?" to "stay, explain,"
You read my eyes before I spoke,
In every tear, in every joke.

Deadlines came and days flew fast,
Yet something deeper came to last.
In coffee breaks and random chats,
We built a world—just us, like that.

No longer strangers, no disguise,
A friend I found, my safe sunrise.
Who knew a colleague I once knew,
Would turn into a heart so true.

Now time may change, and paths may bend,
But one thing stays—you're my best friend.

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We started as strangers in a crowded space,
Just passing smiles, a formal face.
A simple "hello," a nod each day,
No thought that fate had more to say.

Between the desks and ticking hours,
Grew silent bonds like unseen flowers.
Small talks turned into laughter loud,
Two quiet souls, now standing proud.

Education empowering individuals



Our country introduces the right to education
And ensures no-one under fifteen without
education.

And helps each and every child get free education
And build their potential and strength of the
nation.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed.,
PGDG&C, CELT.,
BT Asst
GMHSCHOOL,
TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.
Tamil Nadu, India
Creative Writers

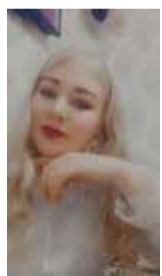
Education empowering individuals
and helps to build confidence and values.

It is the backbone of everyone
Use this wisely wherever we have gone.

It gives the solutions and helps overcoming from
the challenges.

Every country recognises the education
is a fundamental right to everyone.

My mother



Your smile lights up the world around me,
My joy, my comfort — in you I confide.

Author: Madina Mirzayeva

Mirzayeva Madina Asliddinovna was born on
July 13, 2011, in the Kasbi district of the
Kashkaryana region. She is an 8th-grade student
at School No. 16 "Jasorat."

She is a young talented student with a strong
passion for reading and creative writing. Madina
has actively participated in various online
competitions and was awarded a collection of
books in the "We Love Books" competition.

Her works have been published on the
international literary platform ATUNIS POETRY,
earning her international certificates. She
has also appeared on regional TV channels and
achieved success in several contests.

Madina aims to build her future in the field of
literature and creativity.

In this wide world, I am lost without you,
My only one, my heaven — my mother.
From your moonlit face, soft radiance flows,
My earthly angel, my eternal shelter.

Each word you speak is filled with wisdom,
Your gentle voice soothes my weary soul.
My tender-hearted, sweet-spoken guide,
You are my happiness, you make me whole.

For me, you give your all without measure,
When I am weak, you stay close by my side.

No one is truly with you



Sometimes heart feels,
No one is truly with you.
People will come and go,

And moments will change.
But in the end,
You are the one who stands for you.

Your strength, your courage,
And your belief carries you forward.
Learn to depend on yourself,

And trust your inner power.
Because the strongest support comes from
within you.

V. S. NITHIYASRI
VII

JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HIGHER SECONDARY
SCHOOL, PANRUTI, CUDDALORE DISTRICT,
TAMILNADU.

I choose today



I to today a plan,
With my family or friends,
I can choose today a trip,
Tomorrow I choose a plan,

Today I choose to be a great roll,
As her mother ,sisters and father,

Around the world,
May take a rolls to value in,
Carry when are we going to be,
Real human let us,
Choose the rolls,
Let's travel meaningful,

Choose for today
What we become in tomorrow.

P.HEMANYA
VII

JOHN DEWEY MAT HR SEC SCHOOL
PANRUTI CUDDALORE DISTRICT.

My lovely village



My village is a very peaceful place,
Children play with joyful grace.

I am a villager, proud and free,
Living my life so happily.

The trees are green and standing tall,
I love my villag,my home, my all.

Colourful birds fly in the sky,
They look like butterflies passing by.

At night, I rest inside my home,
While birds sleep in nests of their own.

They chirp sweet songs in the morning breeze,
At night, in the cold, I gently freeze.

By

C.Hemanath
VIII Std
PUMS Chinna Obulapuram
Gummidipoondi
Tiruvallur Dt
Tamilnadu, India

Mother



How can I repay your endless beauty?
With your prayers, my pain feels free,
Your sorrowful eyes—
I miss you, Mother.

A lullaby still echoes in my ear,
Those childhood days remain so clear,
Sweet memories we all hold dear,
Your sorrowful eyes—
I miss you, Mother.

To make you proud is my one duty,

Far from you, I knew your worth,
I wandered cities for my home and hearth,
Regret I caused you brings me hurt,
Your sorrowful eyes—
I miss you, Mother.
I will value you, I surely will, Mother.

Saidakbar, poet Surxoniy

Nairobi River At the centre of the petition are claims that the Nairobi Rivers Commission's clean-up project could displace long-settled communities

Nairobi River clean-up faces legal challenge over land rights and evictions

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes



Part of Nairobi river. | Photo: Courtesy.

Efforts to rehabilitate the Nairobi River into a clean and productive public asset have run into a legal and social hurdle following a petition by residents of Kangemi, raising concerns over land rights, evictions, and due process.

The dispute has drawn the attention of Parliament, with National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula directing the Departmental Committee on Environment, Forestry and Mining to fast-track its review of the petition. In a departure from the standard 60-day review period, the committee has been instructed to complete its work and table a report within the shortest time possible, underscoring the urgency and sensitivity of the

matter.

At the centre of the petition are claims that the Nairobi Rivers Commission's clean-up project could displace long-settled communities liv-

ing along the riverbanks.

The petition, filed by Kangemi residents and led by Joseph Ngure and Mugo Gichenga, alleges that the rehabilitation initiative is being used as a pretext to evict resi-

dents from ancestral land.

Petitioners argue that their occupation of the land dates back to the 1930s and is supported by historical documentation, including records from the 1934 Morris Carter Land

Commission.

They maintain that they hold valid freehold titles and regard the land as culturally significant, citing ancestral graves and deep-rooted community ties.

The petition further accuses the National Environment Management Authority and the Nairobi Rivers Commission of failing to follow due process and not adequately involving affected communities in planning and decision-making. Residents have also expressed growing anxiety and psychological distress due to fears of displacement and uncertainty surrounding the project.

Addressing Parliament, Wetang'ula stressed the need for a swift resolution, warning against delays that could derail the broader environmental agenda. He noted that pollution from the Nairobi River extends beyond the capital, flowing into the Athi River and eventually into the Indian Ocean, posing wider ecological risks.

Lawmakers were informed that the petition raises key constitutional issues, including the protection of property rights, adherence to due process, and the requirement for meaningful public participa-


tion in projects involving land acquisition.

Despite the concerns, Wetang'ula pointed to global examples such as the restoration of the River Thames to demonstrate that environmental rehabilitation can be achieved without undermining development goals.

Petitioners are seeking the suspension of project activities on private land in Kangemi, enforcement of riparian boundaries, and assurances that no evictions will occur without legal compliance and community consent.

However, the Speaker clarified that parliamentary committees do not have the authority to halt ongoing projects, limiting their role to making recommendations for consideration by the House.

The unfolding dispute is emerging as a critical test of Kenya's ability to balance environmental restoration efforts with constitutional protections on land ownership and community rights, leaving affected residents uncertain about their future.




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Bill It targets agricultural products and other locally rooted goods whose value is closely associated with their place of production.

Kenya moves to protect origin-based products with new Geographical Indications Bill

Analysts note that many Kenyan products remain vulnerable to exploitation, especially in export markets where origin labeling significantly influences pricing and consumer trust. The proposed Bill is expected to address this gap by introducing enforceable standards and certification mechanisms.

If enacted, the Geographical Indications Bill, 2026, is set to transform how Kenyan products are marketed and protected, preserving cultural heritage while enhancing the country's competitiveness in high-value global markets.



PS for Industry Juma Mukhwana

BY Suleiman Mbatiah
@themtkenyatimes

Thousands of Kenyan producers could soon benefit from stronger market access and brand protection under the proposed Geographical Indications Bill, 2026, a new legislative framework aimed at safeguarding products tied to specific regions.

The Bill, currently being developed by the State Department for Industry, seeks to formally link goods to their geographical origin, ensuring their quality, reputation, and identity are legally recognized and protected.

It targets agricultural products and other locally rooted goods whose value is closely

associated with their place of production.

According to Principal Secretary for Industry Juma Mukhwana, the proposed law will enable producers to distinguish their goods in both domestic and international markets while curbing imitation and misrepresentation that have historically undermined authentic Kenyan products.

"This Bill will empower our producers to secure recognition for their unique goods and compete fairly in the global marketplace," Mukhwana said.

The legislation aligns with constitutional provisions on intellectual property rights and is positioned as a key

driver in supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

It is also anchored in the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, which emphasizes value addition, enterprise growth, and expanded market access for small-scale producers.

Officials believe the law will unlock new revenue opportunities for rural communities by strengthening branding and certification systems. Products that are properly identified and protected often command premium prices, offering greater economic returns to producers.

Initially developed in 2018, the Bill has been revised to reflect evolving global trade

dynamics and the growing importance of origin-based branding. Countries with similar frameworks have successfully protected products such as specialty coffees, teas, and traditional crafts—models Kenya hopes to emulate.

Public participation on the draft law is currently underway, with forums scheduled in major towns including Nairobi, Nyeri, Kisumu, Nakuru, Garissa, Embu, Kakamega, Eldoret, and Mombasa. These forums aim to gather input from producers, industry stakeholders, and the public, in line with constitutional requirements on inclusivity.

The government has also

opened additional channels for submissions, including online platforms, email, and physical delivery to the Kenya Industrial Property Institute. The deadline for submissions is April 23, 2026.



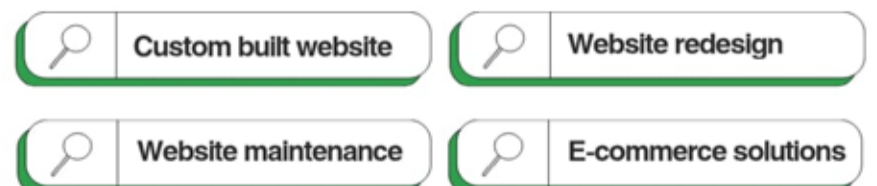
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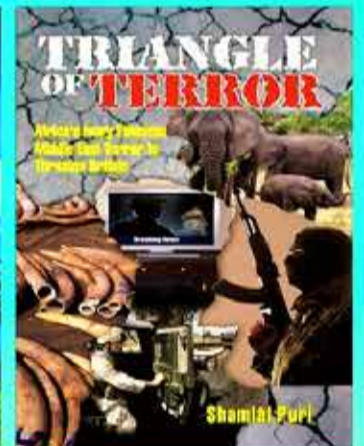
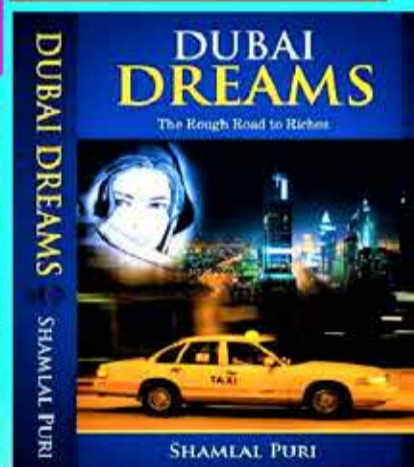
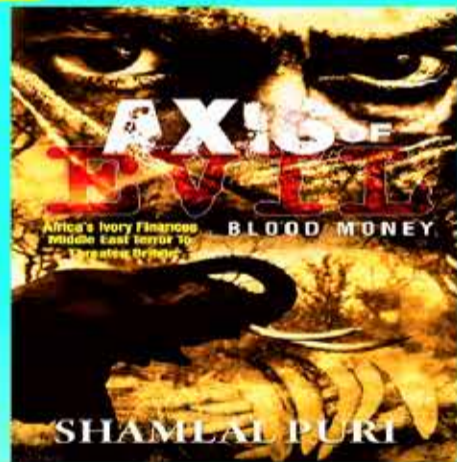
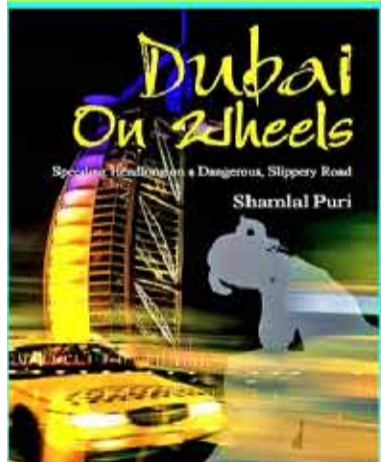
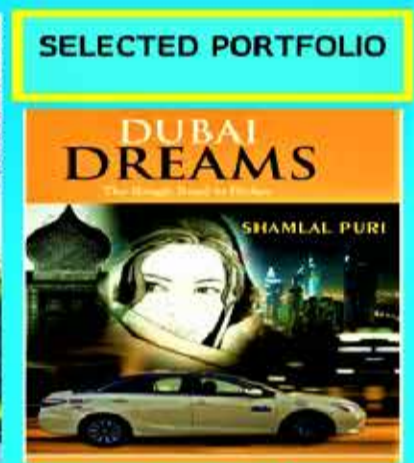
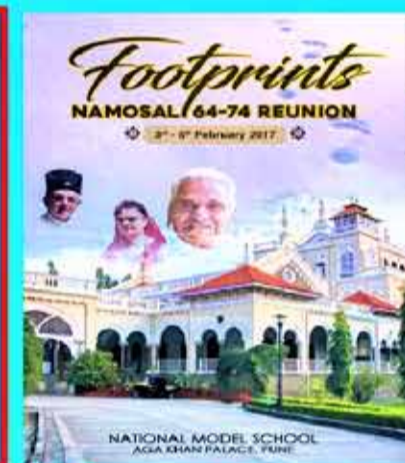
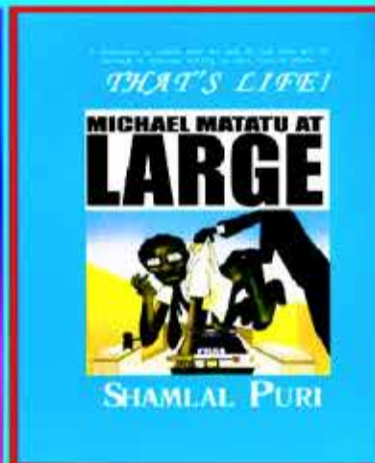
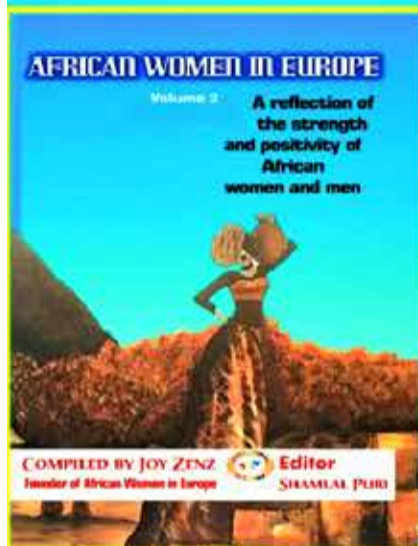
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Disabilities Bill There is a growing unease, grounded in observable patterns, that the legislative process has become alarmingly expedient

A fragile tripod and a tattered garment: A disability perspective of reclaiming dignity in Kenya's governance



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyatimes



Disabilities Bill

The transformation from the persons with Disabilities Bill, proposed in various forms between 2020-2023 to the final person with disabilities Act 2025 in Kenya the bill underwent some significant changes that watered it down. Several intended benefits including job quotas, funding guarantees, direct stipends, free medical care to highest standards and strict enforcement timelines were either differed, made voluntary, eliminated or reduced in scope.

For those who navigate life through the lens of disability, the language of structure, balance, and design is not symbolic, but it is lived reality. A tripod does not negotiate with imbalance. It stands firmly when all three legs are equal in strength and purpose. The failure of one does not merely weaken the structure but renders it unstable, unreliable and ultimately unusable. In much the same way, Kenya's governance architecture was carefully envisioned under the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and was never meant to function with compromised legislature. The Constitution established a deliberate equilibrium between the executive, legislature and the judiciary, each arm entrusted with a distinct but interdependent mandate. This balance was intended to safeguard against concentration of power and guarantee that public interest, especially that of vulnerable populations, would remain protected. Today, this balance appears strained.

From the standpoint of persons living with disabilities, governance is not an abstract interplay of institutions. It is deeply personal, it determines whether policies translate into accessible infrastructure, whether laws ensure economic participation, whether rights are upheld in practice or merely articulated in paper. When parliament, the institution constitutionally mandated to represent the

people, fails to robustly interrogate executive proposals, it is not simply a procedural lapse, but a direct erosion of protection for those who rely most on legislative vigilance.

There is a growing unease, grounded in observable patterns, that the legislative process has become alarmingly expedient. Proposals appear to move at supersonic speeds from executive conception to parliamentary approval, often without the depth of scrutiny, debate and public participation that the constitution demands. In such an environment, parliament risks being perceived not as a guardian of people's will, but as a conduit for executive intent.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the evolution of disability legislation. The efforts of Sen. Crystal Asige and the team in advancing a progressive disability framework raised legitimate hope within the disability community. The vision was clear, bold and humane and anchored in the recognition that dignity must be underpinned by tangible support, including a proposed minimum monthly stipend of Ksh 10,000 per person with disabilities.

However, in the final legislative form, the persons with disabilities Act 2025 fell short of these promises. What emerged was a law marked with ambiguity, differed obligations,

and an overreliance on future delegated regulations for its operational substance. Critical provisions were diluted, timelines blurred, and enforceability weakened. The result is a statute that acknowledges rights in principle but postponed their realization in practice to a future uncertain date.

To appreciably understand the magnitude of this, one must turn to another simple but profound analogy. A garment, like a law, must be carefully designed from the outset. It must be measured precisely, cut with intention, and be tailored to fit the needs of its wearer. When this process is rushed or compromised, no amount of patchwork can restore its integrity. Each repair, each alteration, does not strengthen the garment, but diminishes it. Overtime, what was meant to confer dignity becomes a patchwork of inadequacies, a tattered piece that neither fits nor protects.

This is the path that disability legislation in Kenya has taken. By failing to get it right at inception, Parliament has effectively set the stage for prolonged cycle of amendments, petition, appeals, and administrative interventions. What should have been a definitive instrument of empowerment is instead becoming an evolving negotiation, one that de-

mands constant correction before it can deliver meaningful benefits.

For persons with disabilities, this is not a theoretical inconvenience. It is a lived burden. Each delayed regulation translates into postponed access to essential drugs, tools and services. Each ambiguous provision creates room for exclusion. Each unimplemented promise deepens the gap between constitutional ideals and everyday reality. The consequences is sustained suffering, continued marginalization, and the persistence of systemic discrimination.

The fragmentation currently witnessed within the disability sector, manifested in scattered petitions, appeals, and advocacy efforts, is itself a symptom of legislative inadequacy. In the absence of clear, enforceable provisions, stakeholders are compelled to pursue different pathways in search of clarity and redress. This not only weakens collective advocacy but also shifts the responsibility of enforcement into those least equipped to bear it.

At the broader level, this reality compels a difficult but unnecessary reflection on public accountability. Parliament operates in a significant public investment. Taxpayers fund not only the remuneration of legislators but also the institutional infrastructure, technical expertise, and

technological systems that underpin legislative work. This investment carries with it an expectation of value, of law that are thoroughly and thoughtfully crafted, rigorously debated and effectively implemented.

When this expectation is not met, when legislation emerges incomplete or differed, the question of return on investment becomes unavoidable. For persons with disabilities, the answer is measured not in abstract metrics but tangible outcomes – access, inclusion, opportunity, empowerment and dignity. Where these remain elusive, the system cannot be said to be delivering.

It must be emphasized that the Constitution of Kenya 2010 did not envisage a Legislature that would legislate by approximation. It envisioned a Parliament that would act with precision, foresight, and accountability. A Parliament that would recognize that for vulnerable populations, delays are not neutral, they are harmful and often irreversible. The path forward requires both institutional courage and civic resolve. Parliament must reclaim its constitutional mandate by strengthening legislative scrutiny, ensuring clarity in lawmaking, and prioritizing the immediate operationalization of statutes that affect vulnerable groups, if possible, at speeds that supersedes their packs request. Law must be designed to function not merely to exist.

At the same time, the disability community must move towards greater cohesion and strategic engagement. Advocacy must evolve from reactive petition to coordinated, sustained efforts that demand accountability at every stage of governance. The promise of inclusion cannot be left to chance and international disability days celebrations, but be pursued with deliberate and unified resolve.

A tripod cannot stand on imbalance. A garment cannot serve when reduced to patches. And a governance system cannot deliver justice when its laws are conceived without rigour and implemented without urgency. For persons with disabilities in Kenya, this is not simply a critique, it is a call to restore, to reclaim purpose, and ensure that structures meant to support do not become the very instruments of exclusion.

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo
PWD

Chairperson, Jiamini Disability network Community Based organization

Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Cybercrime law At the centre of the dispute are Sections 22 and 23 of the law, which criminalise false and misleading online publications.

Public Prosecutor appeals annulled Cybercrime law provisions at the Supreme Court



Supreme Court of Kenya/FILE

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyatimes

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) has filed an appeal at the Supreme Court seeking to overturn a Court of Appeal decision that declared Sections 22 and 23 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act unconstitutional.

The Public Prosecutor announced the appeal yesterday setting the stage for a high-stakes legal battle over regulation of online speech in Kenya.

In its petition, the ODPP says it is dissatisfied with the March 6, 2026 judgment in which a three-judge bench — Justices Korir Weldon Kipyegon, Aggrey Muchelule and Patrick Kiage — found the provisions to be overly broad, vague, and capable of criminalising lawful expression.

The appellate judges held that the provisions lacked precision and could easily be misused against ordinary citizens engaging online, warning that they were “so broad, wide, untargeted, akin to unguided missiles, and likely to net innocent citizens.”

At the centre of the dispute

are Sections 22 and 23 of the law, which criminalise false and misleading online publications.

Section 22 provides that: “A person who intentionally publishes false, misleading or fictitious data or misinforms with intent that the data shall be considered or acted upon as authentic... commits an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding five million shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both.”

It further limits freedom of expression under Article 33 of the Constitution, stating that protection does not extend to false or misleading publications that are likely to propagate war, incite violence, constitute hate speech, or negatively affect the rights and reputations of others.

10 years in jail

Under Section 23, the Act further spells out a Sh5 million fine and 10-year jail term for violations.

“A person who knowingly publishes information that is false in print, broadcast, data or over a computer system, that is calculated or results

in panic, chaos, or violence among citizens of the Republic, or which is likely to discredit the reputation of any person commits an offence and shall on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding five million shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, or to both,” the Section provides.

The Court of Appeal found that both provisions failed to meet the constitutional threshold under Article 24, which requires that any limitation of rights be reasonable, justifiable, and proportionate.

The judges warned that the law, in its current form, could be used to police social media activity and punish individuals for unknowingly sharing false information.

The Bloggers Association of Kenya and other civil society groups had challenged the provisions, arguing that they infringe on freedom of expression guaranteed under Article 33 of the Constitution.

Scams

Despite the ruling, the State has consistently defended the cybercrime framework, arguing it is necessary to combat misinformation, cyber fraud,

terrorism-related online activity, SIM-swap scams, and digital exploitation.

Through the appeal, the ODPP is now asking the Supreme Court to reinstate the provisions in full, arguing that they are essential tools

for maintaining order in the digital space and protecting citizens from harm.

“The ODPP remains committed to executing its constitutional mandate in accordance with the rule of law, public interest and the administration

of justice,” the office said.

The case adds to a growing line of constitutional disputes over the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes framework, parts of which have already faced judicial scrutiny and suspension at the High Court level.

With focus now turning to Supreme Court, the apex court’s final determination could significantly reshape the balance between online regulation and free expression in Kenya’s rapidly evolving digital environment.



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Strait of Hormuz In accordance with Trump's proclamation, the blockade will be enforced "impartially" against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports

USA blockade of Strait of Hormuz; sustainability and consequences

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

After negotiations with Iran failed to yield any agreement, the United States took drastic measures on Monday by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for the global energy market.

Experts say that, given the complexity of the strait and the potential blowback to U.S. own interests, a full blockade may be difficult to sustain. Nevertheless, this "reckless move" could further disrupt the global economy and heighten the risk of renewed regional conflict.

"Reckless move"

After U.S. President Donald Trump threatened on Sunday to block ships attempting to enter or leave the Strait of Hormuz, U.S. Central Command



On Monday afternoon, the U.S. blockade of the Strait of Hormuz came into effect. In a press conference following the blockade, Trump warned that the U.S. military will "eliminate" any Iranian ship if it comes close to the U.S. blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. The blockade adds yet another hurdle to a globally vital shipping route already battered by the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict. U.S. blockade of the Strait of Hormuz "is not just a geopolitical escalation but a reckless move that risks choking the global economy, with American consumers bearing the brunt," Iranian semi-official Tasnim news agency opined on Monday.



Strait of Hormuz

said that U.S. forces will begin implementing a blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports.

In accordance with Trump's proclamation, the blockade will be enforced "impartially" against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including "all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman," according to the statement. On Monday afternoon, the U.S. blockade of the Strait of Hormuz came into effect. In a press conference following the blockade, Trump warned that the U.S. military will "eliminate" any Iranian ship if it comes close to the U.S. blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. The blockade adds yet another hurdle to a globally vital shipping route already battered by the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict. U.S. blockade of

the Strait of Hormuz "is not just a geopolitical escalation but a reckless move that risks choking the global economy, with American consumers bearing the brunt," Iranian semi-official Tasnim news agency opined on Monday.

Unsustainable blockade

While the United States seeks to pressure Iran by blocking the strait to secure concessions on issues such as the reopening of Hormuz, experts say that a full blockade is unlikely to be either feasible or sustainable.

The United States is likely to rely on enhancing its naval presence, intensifying monitoring and inspection operations, and possibly imposing "selective restrictions" on the movement of certain vessels, said Abdulaziz Alshaabani, a Saudi re-

searcher at Al Riyadh Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

"However, it is unlikely that the naval blockade would be complete or absolutely effective, given the complexities of maritime routes and the entanglement of international interests," Alshaabani added. Mohammed Al-Jubouri, a professor at al-Iraqia University in Baghdad, echoes Alshaabani's assessment. "Iran does not need to engage the U.S. fleet directly to undermine the blockade," Al-Jubouri said.

"It suffices for Tehran to employ tactics involving fast-attack craft, naval mines, coastal missile batteries, or even proxy attacks in other parts of the region. Such tools are capable of transforming any blockade into a prolonged war of attrition." Abu Bakr al-Deeb, an advisor at the Cairo-based Arab Center for

Research and Studies, argues that a complete blockade could end up shooting the United States in the foot, ultimately working against its own interests. "The United States can impose temporary or partial control, but it would face immense difficulty in transforming that control into a stable, long-term blockade without incurring significant political and economic costs," he added.

Far-reaching impact

Even if a long-term blockade may be beyond Washington's reach, the move is sure to send additional shockwaves through a global energy market already roiled by ongoing U.S.-Iran tensions and could further jeopardize the fragile ceasefire between the United States, Israel and Iran, raising the risk of renewed conflict.

A blockade of a strait as vital as Hormuz cannot remain a "purely American affair" in terms of its impact, al-Deeb said, adding, "The global economy -- particularly Asia and Europe -- would suffer immediate and direct harm." Following the outbreak of the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict on Feb. 28, Brent Crude oil prices have already soared, reaching highs of over 120 U.S. dollars per barrel by early April. Oil could rise to 150 dollars a barrel under a U.S. blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, Jorge Montepeque, managing director at Britain-based Onyx Capital Group, told Bloomberg. The U.S. blockade is also believed to raise the risk of hostilities reigniting between Washington and Tehran, potentially undermining the ceasefire that was just agreed upon last week. "The U.S. insistence and lack of flexibility regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz ... reveals Washington's intention to use these issues as a pretext for launching further strikes and attacks," said Al-Jubouri. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has vowed to use new military capabilities if the war with the United States and Israel continues. "We have not yet used our capabilities, and if the war continues, we will unveil capabilities that the enemy has no idea about," IRGC spokesperson Hossein Mohebbi said after the U.S. blockade took effect.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kenyan politics is taking a new shape

For decades, Kenyan politics ran on a predictable engine: ethnic alliances, political dynasties and a handful of powerful voices that drowned out the rest. Ordinary citizens — especially the young — were expected to show up on election day and stand aside. That arrangement is collapsing.

A new wave of civic awareness, youth activism and digital mobilisation is fundamentally reshaping how politics is practised in this country. The change is neither accidental nor cosmetic. Kenya has one of the youngest populations on the continent, and that generation has decided it will no longer watch from the margins. It is organising, demonstrating and demanding accountability — not as a courtesy to its elders in power, but as a right.

Technology has accelerated this shift. Platforms such as X, TikTok and Instagram have become formidable political tools, enabling young Kenyans to



share information, interrogate policy and coordinate action at a speed that no traditional party structure can match. Online debate no longer stays online — it spills into the streets, the courts and the legislative chambers, as recent protest movements have demonstrated with striking force.

The old political class would be wise to pay attention. What is emerging is not simply a youthful mood — it is a structural shift in who holds political legitimacy and how it

is earned. Leaders who once traded on name recognition and ethnic arithmetic now face an electorate that cross-references their voting records, circulates their broken promises and organises replacements.

Kenya's democracy is entering a new era — one defined not by the voices at the top, but by the fury and the ambition rising from below.

By Protus Nyongesa, Laikipia University

When perception becomes power: reputation politics in Kenya

In Kenya's public life, what is said about you arrives before you do. By the time you respond, judgment has already been delivered. Perception travels faster than fact — and reputation frequently decides outcomes long before truth is examined.

A single screenshot, misquote or poorly framed statement can erase years of discipline. Explanations are dismissed as excuses; silence is read as guilt. The standards applied are rarely equal. Men are judged by lapses in discipline; one stumble invites questions about character. Women are judged by perception alone — once doubt enters the public imagination, even truth must defend itself.

Kenya's digital space has sharpened this dynamic considerably. Platforms that



promised democratic participation now function as courts of instant judgment. Gossip is no longer idle noise; it is a political instrument — testing public reaction, shaping expectations and assembling consequences before institutions or facts can intervene.

The gap between character and reputation has never been wider. Character is formed in private through consistent conduct. Reputation is manufactured in public, shaped by what others choose to believe. The careless confuse noise for power; the naive mistake honesty for safety. The Swa-

hili saying captures it with precision: *Lisemwalo lipo* — what is spoken already exists. Speech no longer merely describes reality. It creates it.

The uncomfortable lesson is this: guard your actions not only to be good, but to remain untouchable. Once a narrative takes hold, it does not ask whether it is true — only whether it is useful. In Kenya's modern public sphere, usefulness, not accuracy, decides fate.

By Elvis Oweri, Laikipia University

Navigating Kenya's fuel crisis in a changing global oil market

Kenya's fuel crisis is no longer a passing inconvenience—it is a national emergency throttling households, transport, and the wider economy. When fuel prices spike, the ripple effect is immediate: fares climb, goods cost more, and inflation erodes the purchasing power of ordinary citizens.

At the heart of this turmoil lies global instability. Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, a hub of oil production, have disrupted supply chains and rattled markets. For an import-dependent country like Kenya, every tremor in global oil prices translates into higher local costs. The weakening shilling compounds the pain, making petroleum imports even more expensive.

The fallout is visible everywhere. Commuters pay more to get to work, small businesses struggle to absorb rising operational costs, and farmers face inflated expenses for machin-



ery and transport. Food security is threatened, productivity slows, and economic uncertainty deepens.

Kenya cannot afford to treat this as a temporary storm. Short-term measures—such as stabilizing pump prices, bolstering strategic reserves, and tightening import management—can cushion consumers. But the long-term solution lies in reducing dependence on volatile oil markets. Investing in renewable energy, diversifying energy imports, and strengthening resilience against curren-

cy shocks are no longer optional—they are urgent.

Energy efficiency, local resource exploration, and a deliberate pivot to solar and wind power can help Kenya build a more secure future. The lesson is clear: the country must stop reacting to crises and start building a system that withstands them.

Kenya's fuel crisis is a wake-up call. The time to act is not tomorrow—it is now.

By Collins Kibet, Koitalel University

Are Gen Zs future-oriented or not?

Gen Z is the most scrutinized generation of our time—praised for its activism yet questioned for its priorities. Born into a digital-first world, they are hyper-connected, globally aware, and quick to adapt. But the real question is whether they are truly future-oriented or simply caught in the churn of the present.

Evidence suggests a generation leaning forward. Many young people are at the forefront of climate action, mental health advocacy, and technological innovation. Their career choices and lifestyle decisions—from coding to sustainable living—signal a deliberate attempt to shape tomorrow rather than just survive today.

Yet the counterargument is hard to ignore. The culture of instant gratification, amplified by TikTok trends and viral content, often rewards short-term thinking. Add financial



insecurity, unemployment, and volatile prospects, and it is no surprise that many Gen Zs focus on immediate survival rather than long-term planning.

The truth lies in the balance. Gen Z is both ambitious and cautious, aware of global uncertainties yet unwilling to be boxed into conventional paths. They are not merely inheriting the future—they are interrogating it, reshaping it, and demanding that it reflect their

values. This generation may not fit the traditional mold of "future-oriented," but their approach is no less strategic. They are rewriting the rules of progress, blending pragmatism with bold experimentation.

Gen Z is not waiting for the future to arrive—they are busy building it.

By Oliver Ouma, Rongo University

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Sports >> *Kenya's Harambee Starlets insist they will not be cowed by a 119-place ranking gap as they prepare to face the Matildas in a landmark final at Nyayo Stadium

FIFA Series: Starlets' Adam eyes historic upset against Australia in dream final

By Martin Weche

Mwanahalima Adam Jereko has declared that Kenya's Harambee Starlets are ready to seize their moment against one of the world's most formidable women's football nations, insisting that Wednesday's FIFA Women's Series final against Australia at Nyayo Stadium is not merely a destination — it is a statement of intent.

The Starlets earned their place in the showpiece with a composed and disciplined 2-0 victory over India on Saturday, a result that underscored the rapid strides Kenya have made on the international stage in recent seasons. Now, in front of what promises to be a roaring home crowd at the iconic Nairobi venue, they face the Matildas — ranked 15th in the world and fresh from a ruthless 5-0 dismantling of Malawi in their opening group fixture.

The gulf in the FIFA world rankings — Australia sitting 119 places above Kenya at 134th — would give many sides cause for caution. Not this Starlets team. Forward Valerie Nekesa, one of the more dynamic attacking forces in the Kenyan setup, was characteristically bullish when asked about the enormity of the occasion.

"When it comes to Australia, we are not afraid," Nekesa said with the quiet conviction of a player who has long since stopped being dazzled by reputations. "We will play our usual game, neat touches, and try to make the best of any chance that we will create. They are a very good side but so are we, and we will be ready to show it on Wednesday."

It is the kind of defiance that has become the hallmark of this Starlets generation. For Adam Jereko, the final carries a dual significance — a chance to etch her name into Kenyan football



Harambee Starlets forward Valerie Nekesa.

history, and equally, a priceless dress rehearsal for the Women's Africa Cup of Nations, which looms large on the continental calendar this July and August.

"It will be a tough match considering that Australia is a high-ranked team, but a nice opportunity to learn from the best," Adam Jereko reflected. "We are gearing up to play in the WAFCON tournament in July-August and this will be good preparation ahead of the continental showpiece." The midfielder's measured pragmatism speaks to a squad that understands every elite opponent faced now is currency banked for the battles

ahead.

Australia's Matildas arrive in Nairobi with momentum and muscle. Their demolition of Malawi — five goals without reply — was the performance of a side operating on a different plane, possessing the technical precision and physical intensity that has made them a fixture among the elite of the women's game. They will not, by any measure, be easy opposition.

Yet football, as Nekesa and her teammates are well aware, is rarely settled by spreadsheets and ranking algorithms. Kenya's win over India was built on organisation, pressing with

purpose and clinical finishing — qualities that, if replicated on Wednesday, could unsettle even the most pedigreed of opponents. Nyayo Stadium, meanwhile, will provide the sort of hostile, partisan atmosphere that has proved the undoing of visiting sides before.

The final is scheduled to kick off at 5:50 PM East Africa Time, preceded by the third-place playoff between India and Malawi at 2:00 PM. A nation will be watching. For the Harambee Starlets, this is their stage — and they intend to make the most of it.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Kenya face a daunting group featuring Australia, New Zealand and the United States as they seek to reignite their top-tier ambitions

Shujaa eye strong start in Hong Kong 7s despite tough pooling



The Shujaa squad poses for a team photo during a past tournament. (Photo: Kenya Rugby Union)

By **Martin Weche**

Kenya's national rugby sevens side, Shujaa, are sharpening their weapons ahead of the Hong Kong Sevens, with head coach Kevin Wambua warning his charges that there will be no room for complacency when the opening leg of the three-part HSBC World Championship Series kicks off on April 17.

The tournament, which runs until April 19 at the iconic Hong Kong Stadium, represents far more than a standalone event for the Kenyans. It is the first instalment of a three-leg promotion campaign that also takes in Valladolid and Bordeaux, with a top-eight aggregate finish across the series the price of admission back to the HSBC SVNS 1 — the sport's premier circuit — in 2027.

Wambua has retained the core of the squad that caught the eye in the 2026 SVNS 2, where Shu-

jaa delivered a series of commanding performances to finish as runners-up — a result that underlined both their potential and the competitive strides the team has made in recent months. The coach believes continuity is a virtue heading into a gruelling series where momentum matters as much as raw talent.

After an intense competitive stretch, Wambua gave his players a three-week break over Easter — a deliberate decision to allow them to rest their bodies and reconnect with their families before the demands of the World Championship Series take full hold. But the holiday is firmly over.

“We gave the boys time off, but now the focus is back,” said Wambua. “Last week we raised our intensity, and this week is about sharpening our technical and tactical approach.” The message from the technical bench is unambiguous: Hong Kong de-

mands nothing less than clinical precision.

Kenya find themselves in Pool C, arguably the most demanding group in the draw, alongside Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Americans, who pipped Shujaa to the SVNS 2 title, are a particularly potent reminder of what is at stake. Yet the memory of Kenya's emphatic 31-14 victory over the USA in São Paulo remains fresh, a result that demonstrated Shujaa are more than capable of mixing it with the world's elite when they are at their ferocious best.

The presence of Australia and New Zealand, two nations steeped in sevens tradition, adds further layers of complexity. Both are renowned for their physicality, speed and rugby intelligence — qualities that can expose the slightest lapse in concentration.

Wambua, however, insists his team will not be overawed. His

tactical plan is pragmatic and clear-eyed: take the tournament one match at a time, beginning with the Wallabies. “All our focus is on the first game against Australia,” he said. “A strong start will set the tone for the tournament.” In sevens rugby, where a single result can swing a team's fortunes dramatically, that philosophy makes considerable sense.

For a side that has spent years fighting to reclaim their place among the game's elite, these three legs — Hong Kong, Valladolid, Bordeaux — represent Shujaa's most significant opportunity in recent memory. If Wambua's squad can replicate the discipline and dynamism that earned them a runners-up finish in SVNS 2, a return to the top flight of the global series could well be within their grasp.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



‘We dream of 1,000 libraries’: The man building Uganda’s most vulnerable communities from the ground up

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

There are parts of Uganda that development rarely reaches — places where displacement, poverty and neglect have layered themselves so deeply into daily life that hope can seem like a foreign language. Kiryandongo district, carved out of Masindi in the country’s north-west, is one such place. It is home to a patchwork of communities — migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees from South Sudan, survivors of the Lord’s Resistance Army insurgency in Northern Uganda, and landslide victims from the East — all thrown together in a corner of the country that the Uganda Bureau of Statistics consistently ranks among the most socio-economically deprived.

It was here, a decade ago, that Brian Kharis Okello chose to begin. The founder and team leader of Raising Empowered Foundation — Uganda (REF), also known as Charis for Sustainability, sat down with the Mt Kenya Times to explain why, and what comes next.

Q: Tell us about yourself and what led you to start Raising Empowered Foundation.

A: My name is Brian Kharis Okello. I am the founder and team leader of Raising Empowered Foundation — Uganda, which we also call the Charis Initiative for Social Justice and Sustainability. The foundation was realised in 2016, and it grew from a simple but urgent conviction: that young people in this country are capable of driving their own development if given the right tools, opportunities and support. We started in Kiryandongo district, which is a community of migrants, marginalised people and internally displaced persons, including refugees from South Sudan, LRA survivors from Northern Uganda, and landslide victims from Eastern Uganda. It is a multilingual, deeply underserved community, and that is precisely where we felt our presence was most needed.

Q: What is the core vision driving REF, and how does that translate into day-to-day programming?

A: Our vision is a vibrant, sustainable and empowered generation. Our motto is simple: ‘For knowledge and empowerment.’ Everything we do flows from that. Our mission is to promote sustainability, social justice and socio-economic transformation, with a focus on reading culture, literacy, education, youth empower-

ment, good health, human rights and climate change. On the ground, this means we are running programmes on early pregnancy and early marriage prevention, sexual and reproductive health rights, maternal and child mortality, gender equality, child protection, domestic and gender-based violence, mental health, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. For refugees and internally displaced persons specifically, we provide education and mentorship, legal aid, psychosocial support, financial literacy training and conflict mediation. The values that guide us — to inform, teach, build, reach out and empower — are not just words on a wall. They are the framework for every interaction we have with a community.

Q: Kiryandongo is described in reports as having very low education and literacy levels, with high rates of school dropout, early marriage and teenage pregnancy. How do you tackle such entrenched challenges?

A: With patience, presence and consistency. You cannot parachute into a community, deliver a workshop and expect lasting change. We invest in relationships. Our children’s development programme directly pays school fees for unprivileged children, orphans and the vulnerable, and we supply scholastic materials and sanitary pads to keep girls in school — because something as basic as not having sanitary products forces girls out of classrooms every month. We support children in primary and secondary school up to the age of eighteen, and sometimes beyond depending on circumstances. We also run book clubs, dialogue sessions, debates and discussions that give children and teenagers a structured space to identify the problems they face and work through solutions together. We train and mentor them on life skills and leadership, and we offer career guidance — because many of these young people have never had an adult sit with them and ask: what do you want to be?

Q: You mentioned refugees specifically. What does your work with that community look like in practice?

A: It is one of the most demanding parts of what we do, and also one of the most rewarding. The refugee populations in and around Kiryandongo have experienced profound trauma — loss, displacement, violence, family separation. Our psychosocial support programmes try to address that trauma before anything else, because a child or young person

who is carrying enormous emotional weight cannot fully absorb education or skills training. From there, we work on peaceful coexistence, resettlement, integration into host communities, and mediation where there are intercommunity tensions. We also provide legal aid and advice, because many refugees do not know their rights or how to navigate the systems that are supposed to protect them. Financial literacy is another pillar — equipping people with the knowledge to manage what little they have, and potentially grow it.

Q: REF also has a strong focus on youth economic empowerment. What skills and livelihood programmes are you running?

A: This is an area I am particularly passionate about. We run an entrepreneur development programme that takes a systems-thinking approach — we are not just teaching skills in isolation, we are helping young people understand markets, value chains and how to sustain a business over time. Practically, we train young men and women in craft shoe-making, beadwork, cake-making and baking, hairdressing, tailoring, sanitary pad and liquid soap production, book-making, secretarial and computer skills, as well as poultry and piggery keeping. These are not glamorous industries, but they are industries where a young person with the right training can generate a reliable income, achieve independence and contribute to their household and community. The goal is always economic dignity.

Q: What about the environment? Climate action seems like a relatively unusual focus for a grassroots community foundation.

A: I would push back on that framing slightly. Climate change is not an abstract problem for communities like Kiryandongo — it is already there in failed harvests, unpredictable rainfall, increased displacement. The people we work with are among the most climate-vulnerable on earth. So for us, incorporating climate action is not a theoretical exercise; it is a survival imperative. We run youth go-green campaigns, tree-planting initiatives in schools and communities, and we engage young people in dialogue and advocacy on environmental policy. We want them to be active citizens who understand the connection between their environment and their future.

Q: You have an ambitious long-term dream — constructing over a thousand libraries, resource centres, schools, hospitals and or-



phanages. How realistic is that goal, and what do you need to get there?

A: We have never been afraid of dreaming big. When I started REF in 2016, people thought the ambition was too large for the resources we had. But ambition is not determined by your current resources — it is determined by your conviction and your willingness to work. The thousand libraries, resource centres, schools, vocational centres, hospitals and care homes are a long-term vision for what rural and vulnerable communities across Uganda deserve. It is the North Star. What we need to get there is what every credible non-profit needs: sustained partnerships, principled funding, and a government and international community that takes grassroots organisations seriously as partners in development rather than simply as service deliverers. We are open to collaboration with any individual, institution or government body that shares our values.

Q: What has been your proudest moment since founding REF, and what keeps you going on the difficult days?

A: The proudest moments are always the quietest ones. A girl who

was on the brink of dropping out of school writing to tell me she has sat her final examinations. A young man who went through our shoe-making training opening his own small workshop. A refugee family that has found a measure of stability and peace. Those moments do not make headlines, but they are what the work is for. On the difficult days — and there are many; funding shortfalls, logistical obstacles, the sheer scale of need against limited capacity — I return to the vision. A vibrant, sustainable and empowered generation. That is what we are building, one community, one child, one opportunity at a time.

Raising Empowered Foundation can be reached via email at refoundation35@gmail.com or briankharis2@gmail.com, and by telephone on +256 702 369 100 or +256 770 829 059. The organisation maintains an active presence on Facebook under Brian Kharis and Raising Empowered Foundation, and on Instagram and Twitter as @briankharis1 and @refoundation respectively.

For a country still working to realise the promise of its young and rapidly growing population, organisations like REF — imperfect, resource-constrained, but unshakably rooted in community — may well be among its most important assets.