



IEBC and private sector strike strategic alliance to guard 2027 polls against economic shocks
 To shield the economy from election shocks, the IEBC and private sector have forged a strategic partnership to deliver a credible and peaceful 2027 General Election. Page 11



Approaching descent: Kenya's moment of reckoning in an age of economic strain and political uncertainty
 As Kenya edges closer to another defining electoral moment, the convergence of economic hardship, social unease, and a restlessness Page 18

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The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

ODM The campaign, marks the opening salvo of what the party is describing as a broad activation programme designed to re-energise its base

ODM exit strategy

The Orange Democratic Movement will this month launch a nationwide youth mobilisation campaign across 25 counties before convening a high-stakes joint leadership retreat in early May, as the party moves to shore up its structures and sharpen its political footing ahead of the 2027 general election.

The campaign, announced by ODM Deputy Secretary General Catherine Omanyo, marks the opening salvo of what the party is describing as a broad activation programme designed to re-energise its base, resolve lingering grassroots disputes, and align its various leadership arms behind a common organisational vision.



ODM Deputy Secretary General Catherine Omanyo

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SCAN TO REGISTER

Kindiki meets Githunguri elders amid housing dispute

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday hosted a delegation of elders from Githunguri Constituency at his Karen residence, where they presented a unified proposal on the establishment of a cultural centre and the siting of the Affordable Housing Project.

The meeting, attended by Githunguri MP Gathoni wa Muchomba and Nominated MP Joseph Wainaina, focused on balancing development with cultural preservation.

According to participants, the elders outlined an agreed position prioritising both the protection of heritage sites and implementation of the government's housing agenda.

The discussions come amid heightened tensions over the project, following a High Court order halting construction on a disputed 58-acre parcel of land considered culturally significant by local communities.

Community leaders have raised concerns that the development could affect historical sites linked to the Mau Mau struggle, while the government maintains the housing programme is key to expanding access to affordable homes.

The engagement signals ongoing efforts to find consensus between state-led development and local cultural interests.



Editor's Desk



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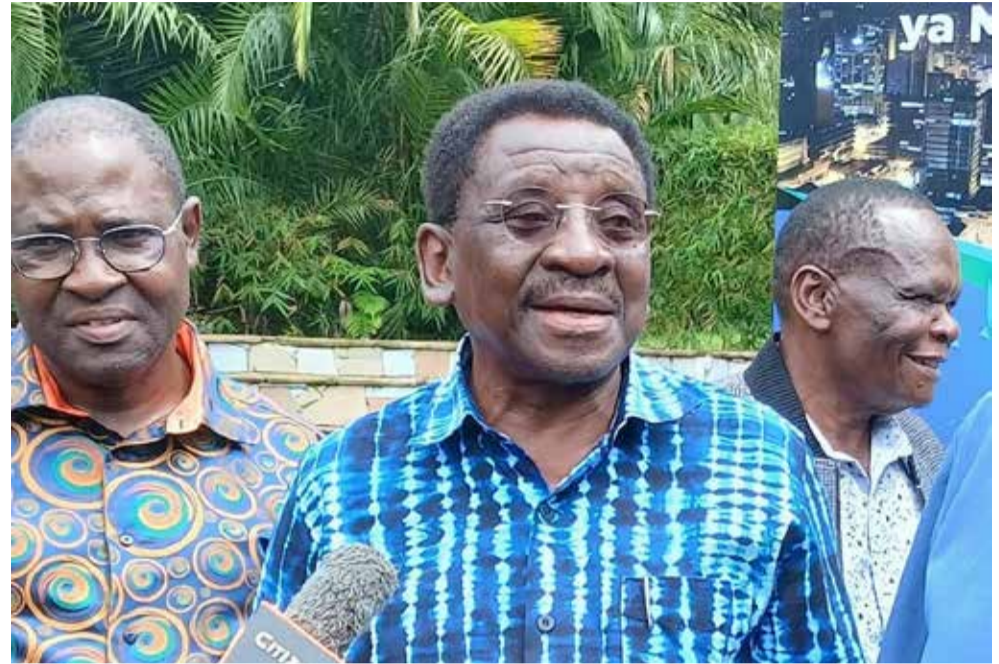


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NEWS IN BRIEF



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale (centre) receives a gift from the Kenya Medical Association President Dr. Simon Kigundu (left) during the 53rd Kenya Medical Scientific Conference held in Naivasha. The government has committed to settling Sh4 billion in verified debts, owed to health-care facilities by the defunct National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) by next week. According to Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, the payment has been provided for under the recently enacted supplementary budget and will prioritise bills of up to Sh10 million.



Siaya governor James Orengo addressing the media in Kisumu where he mounted a scathing attack on the latest fuel price hike, terming it punitive, economically reckless and a direct blow to already struggling households and hopes the reduction announced soon after will immediately reflect on the fuel pumps across the country. Orengo said the 25 per cent increase was unjustified and would trigger a chain reaction across the economy by driving up the cost of production, transport and essential goods, ultimately slowing down growth.



Nyeri Central Deputy County Commissioner Ngunyi Maina (holding a beer bottle) together with law enforcement display counterfeit alcohol valued at Sh90,000 that was impounded during a crackdown on illicit brews in Nyeri town. One of the bottles of alcohol bearing a genuine Kenya Revenue Authority stamp.



Ruiru Stadium upgrade, which officially began 12 days ago under Governor Kimani Wamatangi's administration in Kiambu County, is progressing steadily. A management team, led by County Youth Affairs, Sports, and Communication Executive (CECM), Osman Korar and Chief Officer for Sports, Godfrey Masolo, visited the site to inspect ongoing works. The contractor is currently constructing the drainage system and perimeter fencing. Upon completion of this phase, ground compaction will follow, paving the way for installation of a new astro-turf surface that will greatly enhance the pitch quality and usability.



From Left: Henry Rithaa, representing Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives and MSMEs Development, Wycliffe Oparanya, MESPT Chairman Noah Meely, and MESPT CEO Rebecca Amukhoye, during the launch of the MESPT 2026-2030 Strategic Plan in Nairobi.



Total of 120 senior school teachers in Kericho County have been trained on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into classroom teaching, in a bid to enhance delivery under the Competency-Based Education (CBE) system. The three-day training, conducted by the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTE), focused on equipping teachers with AI skills inured to align emerging technologies with modern teaching methods. Speaking during the closing of the training at Moi Tea Girls Secondary School, Kericho County Quality Assurance Officer Joseph Ochieng, who was the Chief Guest, underscored the importance of embracing digital tools to improve learning outcomes and prepare students for a technology-driven future.

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Funds Officials noted that unresolved legal issues have affected key administrative processes

MPs review Hustler Fund and Uwezo Fund operations amid calls for reform

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

The National Assembly's Special Funds Accounts Committee held a stakeholder engagement with the State Department for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development, the Financial Inclusion Fund (Hustler Fund), and the Uwezo Fund, in a meeting focused on strengthening accountability, legal reforms, and expanding financial support to millions of Kenyans.

The consultative workshop brought together Principal Secretary Susan Mang'eni, Hustler Fund Chief Executive Officer Henry Tanui, and Uwezo Fund Chief Executive Officer Peter Lengapiani, alongside Members of Parliament and senior government officials.

Speaking during the meeting, Committee Chairwoman Fatuma Mohammed emphasized that public funds must deliver measurable impact to citizens and be managed with the highest standards of integrity.

"Accountability is not a bureaucratic inconvenience; it is the foundation upon which public trust is built," she said, noting that the Committee's oversight role is aimed at correcting weaknesses, closing loopholes, and ensuring 'wananchi' benefit fully from the funds established to support them.



The National Assembly's Special Funds Accounts Committee held a stakeholder engagement with the State Department for MSMEs

The Uwezo Fund leadership raised concerns over challenges in its legal framework, saying the Public Finance Management (Uwezo Fund) Regulations, 2014, no longer adequately respond to the evolving needs of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Officials noted that unresolved legal issues have affected key administrative processes, including gazettement procedures and renewal of terms for Constituency Uwezo Fund Management Committees, which oversee operations at the grassroots level.

Lengapiani appealed to the Committee to support the review of Legal Notice No. 21 in order to close identified gaps, align governance structures with current policies, and address recurring concerns over possible merger

proposals.

The Fund also requested consideration for the write-off of long outstanding receivables considered unrecoverable, arguing that retaining them in the books distorts its true financial position.

Uwezo Fund further sought extra resources to unlock its full potential, requesting, Sh400 million for loans to groups, Sh200 million for completion of digitization and ICT infrastructure, KES. 156.6 million for constituency facilitation and Sh76.4 million for additional operational support.

On its part, the Hustler Fund sought Parliament's assistance in deepening public understanding of the Fund's impact, saying it currently serves over 22 million Kenyans.

Hustler Fund CEO, Tanui urged lawmakers to support

more funding for nationwide financial literacy and public sensitization campaigns, as well as increased allocations to strengthen the Fund's liquidity and develop independent ICT systems.

The Chairperson in her closing remarks described the two funds as lifelines for ordinary citizens, saying they enable small traders to restock businesses, help youth launch enterprises, and support persons with disabilities to become economically independent.

The Committee pledged continued collaboration with the State Department and fund managers to ensure the Hustler Fund and Uwezo Fund remain effective tools for fighting inequality, creating jobs, and empowering grassroots enterprise across Kenya.

Relief at the pump as MPs slash fuel VAT to 8 percent



Parliament

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The National Assembly has approved the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2026, cutting VAT on petroleum products from 16 percent to 8 percent for 90 days in a bid to ease the burden of rising fuel costs on Kenyan households and businesses.

Finance Committee Chairperson Kuria Kimani, who seconded the motion, said Parliament was responding to a national crisis. "This House is rising to the occasion to address fuel prices. That is why we resolve to reduce VAT on fuel from 16 percent to 8 percent," the Molo MP said.

MPs backed the Bill broadly but used the debate to push for wider reform. Budget and Appropriations Committee ranking member Makali Mulu urged faster passage and broader tax relief, arguing that Kenya's fuel prices are inflated primarily by accumu-

lated levies. "We need to pass this Bill as soon as possible to cushion Kenyans against high fuel prices," he said.

Kabuchai MP Majimbo Kalasinga supported the reduction but demanded that transport operators pass the savings to commuters immediately, warning against a situation where fuel prices fall but fares do not.

Kitutu Masaba MP Clive Gisario welcomed the cut but questioned its temporary nature, warning that a 90-day window offers little certainty. He also called for the reversal of the Sh7 Road Maintenance Levy introduced in 2024, which he said continues to drive costs higher.

Suba North MP Caroli Omondi raised concerns about the government-to-government fuel import framework, questioning whether its structure is competitive or efficient.

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Economy The architecture of fuel pricing in Kenya reveals a system weighed down not just by taxation, but by opacity.

The paradox of expensive fuel in a transit economy



By: Gitile Naituli
@themtkenyatimes



Expensive fuel in Kenya

There are moments in the life of a nation when numbers stop being mere statistics and begin to speak as moral indictments. Fuel prices in Kenya have reached that point. Economics, in its simplest form, obeys logic: costs accumulate along a supply chain, and those furthest from the source pay the most. Yet in East Africa, that logic has collapsed. Kenya, the importer, the transit hub, the gateway through which fuel flows to landlocked neighbors, consistently records higher pump prices than countries that depend on it for supply. This is no longer an anomaly. It is a contradiction so stark that it forces a more uncomfortable question: are Kenyans simply paying for fuel, or are they being compelled to finance something else hidden within its price?

In any rational system, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi should bear higher fuel costs. Their dependence on Kenya's port of Mombasa, extended transport routes, and added logistical layers should naturally inflate prices. Yet repeatedly, their pump prices are lower. The conclusion is unavoidable: the Kenyan consumer is not paying more because of geography or global market forces. They are paying more because of decisions made within Kenya. And those decisions are not neutral.

The architecture of fuel pricing in Kenya reveals a system weighed down not just by taxation, but by opacity. By the time a litre of petrol reaches the consumer, it has been loaded with a dense web of taxes, levies, margins, and adjustments. Each component is explained, each justified in bureaucratic language. But collectively, they produce a price that is detached from economic logic and increasingly aligned with political convenience. It is here that the issue ceases to be purely economic and becomes unmistakably political. Recent developments in the ener-

gy sector have exposed what many Kenyans have long suspected: that fuel pricing is not merely a fiscal tool, but a site of extraction. Allegations of irregular procurement, opaque oil deals, and the troubling proximity of senior government officials to the oil business raise fundamental questions about conflict of interest and regulatory capture. When those entrusted with oversight are themselves entangled in the very market they regulate, the line between governance and profiteering becomes dangerously thin. In such a system, high fuel prices begin to look less like policy outcomes and more like engineered results.

The most disturbing implication is this: Kenyans are not just paying for fuel. They are being forced to sustain a system in which inefficiency, rent-seeking, and possible corruption are embedded into the cost structure. The burden at the pump becomes a silent transfer of wealth, from struggling households and businesses to networks of power that thrive in opacity.

This reframes the government's claim that it has "moved with speed to cushion Kenyans from the fuel cri-

sis." Cushioning, by definition, implies protection from harm. But what protection exists when the harm is internally generated? What relief is being offered when the price structure itself may be compromised? Cushion from what, precisely? If global shocks were the primary driver, Kenya would still retain a relative advantage over its landlocked neighbors. If logistics were the constraint, geography would work in our favor. But neither explains the disparity. What explains it is a domestic system that appears increasingly misaligned with the interests of its own citizens. And the consequences are profound.

Fuel is not just another commodity; it is the bloodstream of the economy. When its cost is inflated, the entire system absorbs the shock. Transport becomes expensive, food prices surge, businesses suffocate under rising operational costs, and households are forced into impossible trade-offs. What begins at the pump ends at the dining table, in the classroom, and in the survival strategies of millions.

But beyond economics lies a deeper moral crisis. A government derives

its legitimacy not merely from elections, but from the integrity with which it manages public resources. When citizens begin to feel that they are being overcharged not for public good, but to sustain hidden interests, that legitimacy erodes. Trust is not lost in dramatic moments; it is worn down in daily transactions, at the fuel station, in the market, in the quiet arithmetic of survival.

To ask Kenyans to endure high fuel prices while their regional peers pay less for the same commodity is already difficult to justify. To do so in the shadow of scandals, unanswered questions, and apparent conflicts of interest is to invite public outrage. Because at that point, the issue is no longer cost. It is fairness. Why should a Kenyan farmer pay more to transport produce than a farmer in a landlocked country supplied through Kenya? Why should Kenyan businesses operate at a disadvantage within their own region? Why should citizens shoulder a burden that appears inflated by factors beyond transparent taxation? And perhaps most critically: why should the ordinary Kenyan fund a system they do not benefit from?

As the country approaches another electoral cycle, these questions will not fade. They will intensify. Citizens are no longer measuring leadership by declarations of intent, but by the credibility of outcomes. The gap between what is said and what is experienced has become too wide to ignore. The path forward demands more than technical adjustments. It requires a fundamental reckoning with the structure of fuel pricing, a commitment to radical transparency, and a clear separation between public office and private interest. Without these, any talk of reform will remain unconvincing.

Until then, the paradox will persist: a transit economy where those at the source pay more than those at the end of the line. And beneath that paradox will linger a more troubling truth, that the high cost of fuel in Kenya is not just an economic failure, but a reflection of a system where the citizen pays, and someone else benefits.

And that is a burden no nation should be asked to carry.

The writer is a former Commissioner with NCIC who comments on topical issues

Politics The first youth convention is scheduled for Nairobi on Monday, April 20, followed by a second in Mombasa on Sunday, April 26.

ODM to chart new course after May consultative meeting

Kenya's opposition party launches a sweeping activation programme across 25 counties as it moves to consolidate structures and settle internal disputes ahead of 2027

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Orange Democratic Movement will this month launch a nationwide youth mobilisation campaign across 25 counties before convening a high-stakes joint leadership retreat in early May, as the party moves to shore up its structures and sharpen its political footing ahead of the 2027 general election.

The campaign, announced by ODM Deputy Secretary General Catherine Omany, marks the opening salvo of what the party is describing as a broad activation programme designed to re-energise its base, resolve lingering grassroots disputes, and align its various leadership arms behind a common organisational vision.

The first youth convention is scheduled for Nairobi on Monday, April 20, followed by a second in Mombasa on Sunday, April 26. Those gatherings will serve as a curtain-raiser for the main event — a joint National Executive Committee, Parliamentary Group, and Governors retreat running from May 1 to May 3, a convening that party insiders say will be decisive in shaping ODM's next political chapter.

“As part of the activation programme, we shall be embarking on countrywide tours for a series of youth conventions aimed at rejuvenating, revamping and re-energising the party,” Omany said, signalling that the effort is as much about internal renewal as it is about public outreach.

The timing is deliberate. With Kenya's political cycle beginning to accelerate — coalition negotiations hardening, electoral alliances shifting, and the competition for the 2027 presidential narrative already under way — ODM is under pressure to demonstrate that it remains a coherent, disciplined, and nationally relevant force. The party, which has historically drawn its greatest strength from western Kenya and Nairobi's informal settlements, faces the dual challenge of retaining its traditional

base while broadening its appeal to a younger, more digitally connected electorate that is increasingly sceptical of established political movements.

The youth conventions are a direct response to that challenge. By opening the programme in Nairobi and Mombasa — Kenya's two largest urban centres and home to the country's most politically restless youth populations — ODM is signalling that it understands where the next election may be won or lost. Urban youth turnout was a decisive factor in the 2022 election, and all major parties are now scrambling to lock in that constituency well ahead of the campaign season.

Yet the activation programme is not only an outward-facing exercise. Omany was candid about the internal work that still needs to be done, particularly around grassroots elections that in several counties remain incomplete or contested. The party's Central Committee has urged members to resolve outstanding disputes through ODM's internal mechanisms rather than allowing them to fester into public divisions that opposition rivals — and the ruling Kenya Kwanza coalition — would be quick to exploit.

“We urge our party members in areas where grassroots elections have not been concluded to exhaust the relevant internal dispute resolution mechanisms to reach an agreeable conclusion that will see the exercise completed so that we can all get on the journey of building our party as we head into the election year,” Omany said.

The language is measured, but the message is firm. ODM's leadership is acutely aware that a party visibly at war with itself cannot credibly present itself to Kenyans as a government-in-waiting. Internal cohesion, the Central Committee appears to have concluded, is not a luxury to be achieved once the external battles are won — it is the precondition for winning them.

The joint NEC, Parliamentary Group, and Governors retreat in May will be the crucible in which



ODM Deputy Secretary General Catherine Omany



The timing is deliberate. With Kenya's political cycle beginning to accelerate — coalition negotiations hardening, electoral alliances shifting, and the competition for the 2027 presidential narrative already under way — ODM is under pressure to demonstrate that it remains a coherent, disciplined, and nationally relevant force. The party, which has historically drawn its greatest strength from western Kenya and Nairobi's informal settlements, faces the dual challenge of retaining its traditional base while broadening its appeal to a younger, more digitally connected electorate that is increasingly sceptical of established political movements.

that cohesion is tested. Bringing together elected governors, members of parliament, and the party's executive leadership under one roof for three days is a logistically and politically complex undertaking. Governors, who control devolved budgets running into billions of shillings, often operate with a degree of independence that can sit uneasily alongside centralised party direction. Members of parliament, meanwhile, are frequently pulled between constituency interests and national party positions. Aligning all these actors behind a single roadmap will require both skilful facilitation and genuine political will.

What emerges from the retreat is likely to set the tone for ODM's posture through the remainder of 2026 — a year that, while not yet an election year, is the period in which the groundwork for 2027 will effectively be laid. Decisions on coalition strategy, candidate identification, policy positioning, and resource mobilisation cannot be deferred much longer if the party is to mount a credible challenge.

ODM has been in this position before. The party, founded by Raila

Odinga and built across two decades into one of Kenya's most durable political institutions, has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to reconstitute itself after electoral setbacks and internal turbulence. Whether it can do so again — and do so quickly enough to matter in 2027 — is the question that the coming weeks will begin to answer.

For now, the youth conventions offer the party an opportunity to re-introduce itself to an electorate that has grown more demanding, more impatient, and less forgiving of political organisations that fail to deliver. If ODM can channel the energy of those gatherings into the disciplined organisational work that the May retreat demands, it may yet arrive at the election year in a position of genuine strength.

If it cannot, the activation programme risks becoming what too many Kenyan political rallies have become before — noise without consequence, motion mistaken for momentum.

Health CHAs will now cascade the training to Community Health Promoters, who serve as the first point of contact in households across the county.

Kijabe Hospital Trains Kiambu CHAs on Maternal Health

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

Community Health Assistants (CHAs) in Kiambu County have received specialized training on maternal and newborn child health to strengthen supervision of Community Health Promoters (CHPs) at the grassroots level.

The training, conducted by the community health team from AIC Kijabe Mission Hospital, took place at the County Commissioner's office in Kiambu.

It formed part of the routine monthly meetings that have been held twice a month since

February this year.

The session focused on equipping CHAs with up-to-date knowledge and skills to better support mothers and newborns, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. CHAs will now cascade the training to Community Health Promoters, who serve as the first point of contact in households across the county.

Simon Mbugua, an officer from Kijabe Mission Hospital, explained the objective of the programme, saying it aims at imparting skills to CHAs, who will in turn train CHPs based at the grassroots.

“Our aim is to have the mothers from vulnerable back-

grounds benefit from the education gained by the CHAs. They will be required to go train the CHPs and be able to demonstrate that,” Mbugua said.

Maternal and newborn health remains a critical area in Kiambu County and across Kenya. Timely access to quality antenatal care, skilled delivery, postnatal support, and newborn care significantly reduces risks of complications such as maternal hemorrhage, infections, preterm births, and neonatal mortality.

Community-level interventions play a vital role in bridging the gap between households and health facilities



An expert taking through professionals during the training.

by promoting early antenatal booking, nutrition education, danger sign recognition, exclusive breastfeeding, immunization, and hygiene practices.

Through this capacity-building initiative, CHAs are better positioned to mentor and supervise CHPs effectively.

The promoters, embedded in villages and estates, conduct home visits, educate families, link mothers to nearby clinics, and follow up on high-risk

cases.

Strengthened supervision ensures that accurate information reaches pregnant women and new mothers, encouraging health-seeking behavior and reducing delays in seeking care.

Participants discussed practical strategies for community education, data collection, and referral systems.

Emphasis was placed on practical demonstrations so that CHPs could confidently

pass on life-saving knowledge to families.

The health officials noted that empowered Community Health Workers contribute directly to national goals of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality.

Improved community awareness is expected to lead to higher uptake of services such as focused antenatal care, facility deliveries, and postnatal visits.

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Elections The private sector is our key pillar and our number one partner in strengthening trust,” Mr. Ethekeon told the forum.

IEBC and private sector strike strategic alliance to guard 2027 polls against economic shocks



Members of the Private Sector under the umbrella of Mkenya Daima Initiative and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) on 15th April, 2026, during a high-level consultative meeting in Nairobi.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

In a decisive move to insulate the national economy from the perennial tremors of election cycles, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the private sector have entered into a high-level strategic partnership aimed at delivering a credible and peaceful 2027 General Election. The pact, sealed during a consultative forum in Nairobi on April 15, 2026, sees the electoral arbiter joining forces with the Mkenya Daima Initiative—a multi-sectoral platform spearheaded by the KEPSA Foundation—to ensure the country’s democratic processes do not come at the expense of its fiscal stability.

The meeting comes at a critical juncture for Kenya. With

the global economy buffeted by Middle East tensions and fluctuating oil prices, the Kenyan business community is increasingly wary of local political instability. Recognizing that a “wait-and-see” approach by investors often cripples growth during election years, the IEBC and Mkenya Daima have resolved to form a joint strategic team to oversee a roadmap toward the August 10, 2027, polls.

IEBC Chairperson Erastus Edung Ethekeon, providing a rare glimpse into the commission’s operational readiness, revealed that the machinery is already in motion with 12,000 staff deployed across the country. The Commission has set an ambitious target to register 2.5 million new voters in its initial phase, eyeing a total register of 28 million citizens by 2027. However,

this roadmap is not without its hurdles. Mr. Ethekeon flagged a daunting Sh20 billion budget deficit that currently hampers essential functions such as civic education and media outreach.

“The private sector is our key pillar and our number one partner in strengthening trust,” Mr. Ethekeon told the forum. “We are prioritizing legal reforms and have engaged Parliament to fast-track laws that will enhance our capacity to deliver transparent elections.” He challenged the business community to help bridge the resource gap, framing the election not just as a civic duty, but as a prerequisite for a thriving marketplace.

Echoing these sentiments, KEPSA CEO Carole Kariuki noted that political stability is the bedrock of economic resili-

ence. For a country striving for global competitiveness, the stakes could not be high-

er. Ms. Kariuki called for a culture of inclusion and tolerance, asserting that the continuity of a conducive business environment depends entirely on the integrity of the ballot. This human-centric approach to economics was further emphasized by Mucai Kuniya, Chairperson of the Mkenya Daima Initiative, who argued that “politics is too important to be left to the politicians alone.”

Mr. Kuniya identified a triad of modern threats—corruption, political violence, and an increasingly volatile media landscape—as the primary obstacles to a seamless transition. To counter these, Mkenya Daima has introduced a “Peace Pledge,” a moral contract requiring politicians and citizens alike to respect the rule of law. The initiative aims to provide a platform where the “silent majority” of productive Kenyans can influence the country’s leadership trajectory.

The deliberations also delved

into the digital frontier. In a world where artificial intelligence and deepfakes can spark real-world unrest, stakeholders expressed concern over the “trust deficit” among a digitally active youth demographic. The rise of “goonism” and its impact on urban commerce remained a recurring theme in the plenary sessions. In response, IEBC Acting CEO Moses Sunkuli expressed his intent to leverage the private sector’s influence to set a more constructive pace for national discourse.

As the meeting concluded, a clear implementation roadmap emerged. The IEBC and Mkenya Daima have committed to a multi-agency coordination strategy with security organs to protect both citizens and property. Furthermore, there is a renewed focus on leveraging technology to ensure the management of results is beyond reproach. Gloria Ndekei, Executive Director of the KEPSA Foundation, perhaps summarized the collective mood best, noting that the private sector stands ready to ensure the IEBC fulfills its promise of transparency for the betterment of the Republic.

As Kenya begins its long march toward 2027, this alliance signals a departure from the adversarial politics of the past, suggesting that the path to the ballot box must be paved with economic foresight and institutional integrity.



IEBC Chairperson Erastus Edung Ethekeon

Politics Mandago said the mission follows a public outcry emanating from a simmering crisis in the over 200 health facilities spread in nine sub-counties of the region.

Senate Committee on Health Gives Ultimatum to Baringo County

BY KNA

@themtkenyatimes

The Senate Committee on Health has sounded a warning to the Baringo County government to address systemic issues bedeviling the local Health Department or face dire consequences.

Speaking outside Baringo County Referral Hospital in Kabarnet town after concluding a two-day visit and fact-finding mission, Committee Chairperson Jackson Mandago, who is also the Uasin Gishu Senator, noted with concern an embarrassing state of affairs in selected facilities they toured.

Mandago said the mission follows a public outcry emanating from a simmering crisis

in the over 200 health facilities spread in nine sub-counties of the region.

The Senator said that the delegation was able to point out a severe crisis marked by mismanagement, lack of essential supplies and poor service delivery, despite the millions of cash allocated every financial year.

“You cannot leave Kimalel Health Centre, which is among the selected health facilities we have just visited to rot away and allow patients to travel all the way to Kabarnet town for treatment,” he said.

Mandago, while in the company of other committee members, Richard Onyonka and host Senator Vincent Chemitei, said they were in no way witch-hunting Governor Benjamin Cheboi for defiance



Some of the Parliamentary committee members and Baringo county health staff members.

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to honour Senate summons, stating that their business was purely geared towards improving services in the critical sector.

Mandago also pointed out a discrepancy by the Baringo County Public Service Board for allegedly conducting fresh recruitments of employees, leaving out experienced staff in the health department who have been working on contracts for over 20 years under difficult circumstances.

“We have asked the County Assembly to do an audit of recruitments that have been done for the last three years and ascertain why those already in service were not confirmed,” he said.

Speaking outside Baringo County Referral Hospital in Kabarnet town after concluding a two-day visit and fact-finding mission, Committee Chairperson Jackson Mandago, who is also the Uasin Gishu Senator, noted with concern an embarrassing state of affairs in selected facilities they toured.



On his part, Onyonka noted that the environment at the County Referral Hospital was unwelcoming due to challenges like poor infrastructure, garbage and other litter around the compound, ill equipped kitchen and lack of alternative source of power.

He said he was optimistic that the budgeted Facility Improvement Fund would be utilized well to transform the Level Five Hospital, which is a central hub for smaller health facilities within the County.

“We want proactive engagements going forward, change those small things that you can change, children are here in the pediatric wards and they don’t have clothes to wear, some of the medicines are not available, we are looking at some of the employees, who are being deducted part of their salaries to cover for SHA and people are retiring without getting their benefits,” he said.

During the visit, the Senate Health Committee suspended the Baringo County Health Facility Improvement Fund, which they lamented was depriving smaller health facilities in terms of improvement of service delivery.

Grief According to preliminary accounts, the incident unfolded between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the presence of the couple's four year old daughter

Tragic death of Annita Mugweru sparks calls for justice

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyentimes

Nakuru is reeling from the shocking death of Ms. Annita Mugweru, a young professional whose life was cut short in a brutal domestic incident on April 14, 2026. Mugweru, a Branch Marketing Officer at ICS Technical College's Nakuru Campus, was fatally stabbed at Clermont Apartments near St. Mary's Teachers College. The attack allegedly involved her estranged husband, Captain Edwin Kaunga, a military officer stationed at Gilgil Barracks.

According to preliminary accounts, the incident unfolded between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the presence of the couple's four year old daughter and a house help. Witnesses say attempts to intervene failed. Mugweru managed to flee the house in search of

medical help but succumbed to her injuries shortly afterward.

Family members revealed that the couple had separated and that Mugweru was rebuilding her life independently. They further disclosed that she had previously reported threats and domestic concerns to police, seeking protection from her husband. Her death has reignited urgent questions about the effectiveness of Kenya's systems for safeguarding victims of domestic violence.

The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has confirmed that a suspect is in custody as inquiries continue. The family has demanded a thorough and transparent investigation, urging authorities to deliver justice without delay. They have also appealed to the media to highlight the case as part of a broader effort to condemn gender based violence and prevent similar tragedies.

Community leaders and rights advocates say Mugweru's death underscores the devastating impact of domestic violence, which continues to claim lives across the country despite repeated calls for reform. For many, her story is a painful reminder that behind statistics are real families shattered by preventable loss.

As funeral arrangements are prepared, the family has requested privacy, particularly for the minor, while pledging full cooperation with investigators. Their message is clear: Annita's death must not be in vain. It must serve as a turning point in the fight against domestic violence in Kenya.



The Mt. Kenya Times



The future is in the hands of youth



The future is in the hands of youth
Children happily gain knowledge,
For this, opportunities are always enough.
Under this sky we walk and play,
Even the clouds above fly with joy.
Opportunities are given to us now,

If unused, life would become hard somehow.
Today our country is in the hands of youth,
Victories walk with them along their path.
You and I are children of this land,
Descendants of great and noble ones.
May our homeland always flourish,
May our happy moments never be forgotten.
Let no sorrow remain in young hearts,
For our country is in their hands!

👉 Sabina Qiyomova
7th grade student, School No. 30
Member of the "Ilhom" club

A love that broke, yet bloomed



We were a dream that couldn't stay,
A fragile bond that slipped away.
Yet in the cracks, a light still grew,
A broken love... still felt so true.

Your name still echoes in my chest,
In silent beats that find no rest.
Though words may fail to tell it all,
My soul still hears your gentle call.

We spoke in glances, soft and deep,

In promises we couldn't keep.
A thousand feelings left unsaid,
Still dance like shadows in my head.

It wasn't loud, nor meant to last,
Just moments slipping into past.
Yet every second, every tear,
Made something timeless linger here.

We fell apart, yet didn't end,
Like shattered hearts that still can mend.
For even pain, when love is true,
Turns every scar to something new.

So here we are—no longer "we,"
Yet bound by what we couldn't be.
A love once lost, yet somehow proved...
Even broken... it softly bloomed.

@Dr. Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

The age



The veiled are fined, pushed aside,
While fashion praises what should be denied.
Torn, tight clothes they proudly display—
Ask the faithless, who guides their way?

Young hearts have lost their sense of shame,
Showing themselves without any blame.
Parents may smile, unaware or blind,
Faith finds no place in their children's mind.

No fear of lies remains today,
Orphans' rights are swept away.
Lost in TikTok, Telegram streams,
They waste their lives in empty dreams.

The hijab is worn as a style, a show,
Not for faith, but for outer glow.
A scarf on the head, yet modesty gone—
Honor and shame are no longer known.

Without the Word of God they live,
To music their restless hearts they give.
Speak of prayer—they turn aside,
Yet face the truth they cannot hide.

Author: Asila Ilyasova

This world is drowned in chaos and deceit,
No soul to another remains truly sweet.
Good deeds now seem like a distant dream,
They chase this world with endless extreme.

Before your face, they're gentle and kind,
Words so pure would dazzle the mind.
But turn away, just step aside—
They fall back into corruption and pride.

Faith has faded from hearts so deep,
While wealth in their souls its palace will keep.
A season of lies has entered their days,
Truth is a stream, lost in dark ways.

Far from the Prophet's righteous way,
Yet call on God when skies turn gray.
For "likes" and fame they fiercely compete—
Is the bread they earn truly pure to eat?

Whose fault??



Is it the fault of the nature

You say heat is heat, it is burning
who do you think is the real cause of this,
Only you and I?

trees are uprooted and thrown away as needed,
Only by you and I?

You say that planting trees will bring rain
But You enjoy cutting down trees and making
furniture

You say that hydrocarbons are the cause of
global warming

But you will not live without the use of
refrigeration equipment

If you and I unite, we can cool the earth and enjoy
the heat.
Live long and enjoy prosperous life

P. R. Helen
Graduate teacher
Social science
GHS Melpattampakkam Cuddalore dist Tamilnadu
India

Uzbekistan's economy



people.

Uzbekistan has a mixed economy. This means
both the government and private businesses
are involved in economic activities. The state
controls some strategic sectors, while
private companies work in trade, services, and
production.

One of the strongest sides of Uzbekistan's
economy is its natural resources. The country
is one of the top gold-producing countries in the
world. It also has large reserves of natural.

My name is Shonazarov Shohjaxon, born on
January 17, 2008. I am currently a first-year
Economics student at Tashkent State Geological
University.

Uzbekistan is a country in Central Asia with
a population of more than 35 million people.
It became independent in 1991 after the
collapse of the Soviet Union. Since independence,
Uzbekistan has been building its own national
economy. In the last several years, the country
has started important economic reforms to
develop a market economy, attract foreign
investors, and improve the quality of life for its

Importance of participation



Dear students, always try,
Spread your wings and learn to fly!
Participation helps you grow
And makes your hidden talents glow.

In speech and drama, take your part,
They build your voice and shape your heart.
In debate, dear ones, learn to speak
With courage strong and thoughts unique.

In dance, you move with joy and grace,

A happy smile lights up your face.
In handwriting, practice makes you bright,
Your words will shine so neat and right

In sports, dear hearts, play with cheer,
Building strength year after year.
Win or lose, don't ever fear,
Each brave try brings success near.

So, dear students, take your part,
Participation is a work of heart!

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
PUMS KONGANANCHERRY
CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT
TAMIL NADU

Politics Kindiki said demonstrations do not solve anything noting that policy measures are key to cushioning Kenyans against high prices.

Keep off politics and demonstrations from fuel prices, Kindiki warns opposition

BY DPCS
@themkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has warned opposition leaders against politicizing fuel prices saying the war in Iran has disrupted the global oil sector leading to higher importation costs.

Prof. Kindiki said the government has taken necessary measures to lessen the pain for most Kenyans calling on politicians to stop inciting the public on a matter caused by external factors.

“Do not politicize fuel prices. The rise in fuel prices has not been occasioned by the Government of Kenya. This has been caused by the war between the USA and Iran that has escalated to the countries in the Persian Gulf,” he said.

The Deputy President spoke



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki in Kilifi yesterday.

yesterday when he commissioned and inspected development projects in Chonyi Constituency, Kilifi County.

He said demonstrations do not solve anything noting that policy measures are key to cushioning Kenyans against high prices.

“We have taken required measures to respond to the emerging situation. There is no solution in demonstration. We can only find solutions in short-term and long-term policy interventions. Already the President has directed the reduction of VAT on fuel from 16 percent to 8 percent and he will announce more measures,” he explained.

During the visit, he laid the foundation for student hostels at Rabai TTI, commissioned the construction of a tuition block at Chonyi Comprehensive School and inspected the works at Rabai Huduma Center. The DP also inspected ongoing electrification works for Misufini A Last Mile Electricity Supply Project and later held a public sensitization engagement at Uwanja wa Faya in the Constituency.

The DP revealed that Kilifi County is a beneficiary of 385 kilometers of road projects costing 25 billion shillings and 17 modern markets, af-

fordable houses, hostels and institutional accommodation at a cost of 22 billion shillings.

The government has also allocated 2.1 billion shillings to connect additional 23, 589 houses to electricity in the coastal county.

Prof. Kindiki said the government is keen to develop every part of the country, reiterating that no section will be discriminated against as was the case before.

He challenged the opposition to present an alternative development agenda instead of endless insults.

“Our competitors must find a better agenda not insults they have become experts in. We must compete on what we are doing to improve the lives of the people, not insults that are not helping anyone,” he said.

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Lifestyle Muthoni has become a powerful corporate voice in the Mt. Kenya region, lending credibility to brands and helping them connect with grassroots consumers.

Beyond the mic: The making of Muthoni wa Kirumba, Kameme FM's 'Mother Hen'



Gladys Muthoni Njoroge aka Muthoni wa Kirumba

BY David Nyaga
@themtkenyatimes

In Kenya's crowded vernacular radio market, few voices cut through the noise quite like Gladys Muthoni Njoroge. Better known to her fans as Muthoni wa Kirumba—or affectionately, “Baby Top”—she has spent more than a decade ruling the mid morning airwaves. Behind the laughter that lights up Kameme FM's Changamuka show lies a sharp strategist, a generous philanthropist, and a fiercely private mother who has built one of the most recognisable brands in regional broadcasting.

Born in 1990 in Mombasa

to a Kikuyu father and Kamba mother, Muthoni's childhood was shaped by boarding schools and frequent relocations. A rebellious streak saw her change schools often, but her brilliance was undeniable: she scored an impressive 435 marks in her KCPE, silencing doubters early. Her story is one of resilience—proof that mischief and intellect can co-exist, and that determination can turn youthful turbulence into triumph.

After secondary school she pursued Mass Communication and Journalism, turning her gift of conversation into a career. She began at Bahasha FM in 2011 before moving to Kameme FM the following year. It was here that she

truly found her rhythm. Today, alongside co host Chef Gathemba, she anchors Changamuka from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.—a lively mix of banter, real life issues, and music. The show's relatability and energy have made it one of Kenya's most listened to programmes, earning her the title of Best Female Radio Presenter at the Starbrands East Africa Awards.

Her influence, however, extends far beyond the studio. Muthoni has become a powerful corporate voice in the Mt. Kenya region, lending credibility to brands and helping them connect with grassroots consumers. Her endorsement of products such as Kavagara (Raha Premium) demon-

strates her ability to bridge corporate marketing with local trust, a skill few media personalities manage with such authenticity.

Yet her most profound impact is philanthropic. Nicknamed “Mother Hen,” she channels her influence into supporting single mothers, vulnerable families, and young people. Her charity work is not a side project but a central part of her identity, ensuring that her platform translates into tangible help for those who need it most. In a media landscape often criticised for superficiality, Muthoni's commitment to community service sets her apart.

Despite her fame, she guards her private life with determi-

nation. A proud single mother to Adrian, 10, she deliberately shields him from the glare of publicity. Off air, she is known for her unapologetic boundaries and insistence on authenticity—traits that have occasionally sparked public clashes with colleagues but also reinforced her reputation as a woman unwilling to compromise her values.

Her dual identity—joyful entertainer on air, no nonsense guardian off it—has become central to her brand. Love her or loathe her, Muthoni wa Kirumba embodies the modern media personality: equal parts entertainer, influencer, and community leader. She has shown that radio can be more than chatter and music;

it can be a platform for cultural influence, corporate credibility, and social change.

In many ways, her journey mirrors the evolution of Kenyan vernacular radio itself. Once dismissed as niche, it now commands vast audiences and shapes public opinion. Muthoni's success illustrates how local language broadcasting can produce national icons, capable of influencing markets and communities alike.

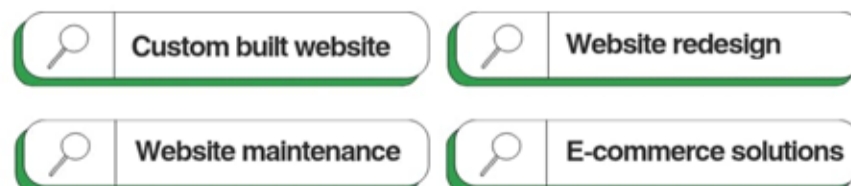
Her story is still unfolding, but one thing is clear: Gladys Muthoni Njoroge has carved out a legacy that blends entertainment with impact. She is not simply a voice on the airwaves—she is a cultural force, a philanthropist, and a masterclass in personal branding. In the world of Kenyan radio, “Baby Top” has proved that authenticity, resilience, and community spirit can resonate far louder than any microphone.



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Business “This partnership reflects our commitment to leveraging drone technology to enhance agricultural productivity while prioritizing safety, sustainability, and environmental protection,” Musili stated.

Kenya Airways’ Fahari Aviation partners with CropLife Kenya to revolutionize precision farming



Mr Hawkins Musili, Fahari Aviation General Manager and Mr. Joel Mutai, Ag. CEO aak-GROW / CropLife Kenya exchanging signed MoUs to accelerate the adoption of drone-enabled precision agriculture across Kenya

building by equipping farmers and agronomists with the technical skills to operate and utilize drone data effectively.

Researching the most effective ways to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and satellite imagery with drone operations to optimize crop health.

Policy Advocacy by engaging with regulators to develop frameworks that ensure drone use is safe, legal, and aligned with international standards and environmental stewardship by implementing programs that focus on reducing chemical runoff and lowering the carbon footprint of traditional farming methods.

The shift toward precision agriculture is expected to yield immediate results for the local value chain. By using drones for the targeted application of fertilizers and pesticides, farmers can sig-

nificantly reduce input costs while increasing crop yields.

Beyond the balance sheet, the initiative addresses critical health concerns. Aerial application minimizes the need for manual spraying, drastically reducing a farmer’s direct exposure to hazardous chemicals. Furthermore, the digital nature of drone technology allows for better traceability and accountability, ensuring that every drop of input is tracked and accounted for.

As Kenya continues to grapple with climate change and the need for food security, this alliance between aviation and agriculture signals a shift toward a more efficient, data-driven, and environmentally conscious future for the backbone of the Kenyan economy.

BY Felix Njenga

@themkenyatimes

In a move set to redefine the landscape of Kenyan agriculture, Fahari Aviation, a subsidiary of national carrier Kenya Airways, has inked a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with aak-GROW / CropLife Kenya. The partnership aims to fast-track the integration of drone technology into farming, ushering in a new era of high-tech, sustainable food production.

The collaboration fuses Fahari Aviation’s specialized knowledge in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) with the regulatory and stewardship expertise of aak-GROW / CropLife Kenya. By combining these strengths, the organizations intend to modernize how agricultural inputs are distributed while upholding the highest standards of environmental safety and chemi-

cal compliance.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, Hawkins Musili, General Manager of Fahari Aviation, emphasized the role of innovation in securing the country’s food future.

“This partnership reflects our commitment to leveraging drone technology to enhance agricultural productivity while prioritizing safety, sustainability, and environmental protection,” Musili stated. “By empowering farmers with innovative tools, we are contributing to a more resilient and future-ready agricultural sector.”



“This partnership reflects our commitment to leveraging drone technology to enhance agricultural productivity while prioritizing safety, sustainability, and environmental protection,” Musili stated. “By empowering farmers with innovative tools, we are contributing to a more resilient and future-ready agricultural sector.”

Echoing these sentiments, Joel Mutai, Acting CEO of aak-GROW / CropLife Kenya, highlighted the importance of responsible innovation.

“We are reinforcing our commitment to responsible pesticide use and advancing sustainable agriculture. By combining innovation with strong stewardship, we can support farmers in improving productivity while safeguarding their health and the environment,” Mutai added.

The partnership is structured around a multi-faceted approach to modernize the sector like training and capacity

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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI

Economy This is no longer a season for political ambiguity. It is a moment that demands clarity. Clear policies, clear directions and above all, clear accountability.

Approaching descent: Kenya's moment of reckoning in an age of economic strain and political uncertainty



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyatimes

As Kenya edges closer to another defining electoral moment, the convergence of economic hardship, social unease, and a restless, informed youth population is reshaping the national conversation in a profound way. The rising cost of living, driven largely by ambitious government priorities and an emerging unstable energy sector, has tightened the margins of survival to many citizens. At the same time, a generation that has both highly aware and structurally excluded from meaningful economic participation is increasingly demanding action, now and then, not slogans.

This is no longer a season for political ambiguity. It is a moment that demands clarity. Clear policies, clear directions and above all, clear accountability. The traditional tools of political persuasion, rhetoric, symbolism, and short-term incentives, are proving insufficient in the face of a population that is both agitated and informed. The Kenyan youth in particular, are no longer passive spectators. They are alert and sensitive to governance failures, conscious of their numerical strengths, and increasingly impatient with any system that appears to sideline their aspirations.

In such a situation, the current governance ecosystem must reassess its performance and match the base of such demands. The margin of error is narrowing and like any strained system, the nation has its elasticity limits, a point beyond which pressure yields irreversible damage. Economic distress, compounded by political miscalculation, self-aggrandizement and institutional inertia, risks pushing the country towards that threshold. Avoiding this outcome requires deliberate, coordinated and transparent action across all arms of government.

Governance, much like aviation, is a



Balancing growth against looming risks

discipline of precision, foresight and trust. When an aircraft is preparing to take-off, the pilot does not leave the passengers guessing, but provides a professional structured briefing and clear communication about airport of departure, destination, enroute weather conditions, emergency procedures, cruising speed and altitude and duration of flight, including any major adverse conditions. This is not merely routine; it is a foundational to building confidence and managing expectation throughout the journey.

Kenya's political leadership, at the outset of its governance journey, made comparable commitment comments to the citizenry. It presented a vision of economic transformation, social inclusion, and institutional reform anchored on the constitution, as the nation's flight manual. The citizens boarded the flight with these expectations of direction, stability, and progress in anticipation of deriving these promised benefits.

Now, as the country approaches what may metaphorically be described as the "top of descent", the critical phase before landing, and final landing brief, the need for clarity becomes even urgent. This is the moment when the passengers

look out of the window, assessing the journey thus far, and beginning to form judgements about the the competence of the crew. Were the



Governance, much like aviation, is a discipline of precision, foresight and trust. When an aircraft is preparing to take-off, the pilot does not leave the passengers guessing, but provides a professional structured briefing and clear communication about airport of departure, destination, enroute weather conditions, emergency procedures, cruising speed and altitude and duration of flight, including any major adverse conditions.

promises aligned with the reality? Was the turbulence if any managed effectively? Has the destination remained consistent or has the course shifted mid-flight?

Every Kenyan carries a unique experience of this journey> For some, the flight has been turbulent from the outset, buffeted by rising costs, shrinking opportunities, and persistent unfulfilled promises. For others, the signs of progress may be visible, though often uneven and fragile. These individual experiences, taken together, will ultimately shape the national verdict. At this stage, critical questions emerge; should the passengers retain the current pilot and crew, retain a few or an entirely new crew with new command? The answer squarely lies on performance. Trust in leadership is not sustained by promise alone, but by demonstrable competence, transparency and ability to respond effectively to adversity.

Meanwhile, the agitation from standby pilots, those positioning themselves to take charge in the next phase of the journey, has begun in earnest. Their voices growing louder by the day. Displaying their credentials and faulting the current pilots of

hard landing, nose landing or causing a near miss on landing and attributing these to a lost grip on controls. Yet the nature of turbulence remains contested, as to its cause. This distinction is not trivial; it is in fact the central question that passengers must interrogate with sobriety and clarity. For aviation, as in governance, not all turbulence is equal, and not all responsibility can be deflected.

Ultimately, the citizens, the passengers, are not powerless observers. They are attentive, present, and increasingly discerning. They hear the announcement, they feel every turbulent moves, and they watch every decision made at the cockpit. Most importantly they hold the ultimate authority to deliver a verdict. The political class must therefore resist the temptation to rely on narrative over substance. The electorate is no longer content with broad assurances; it seeks measurable outcomes and honest communication. Where challenges persist, they must be acknowledged, where plans exist, they must be articulated with specificity. And where failures occurred, accountability must be embraced rather than evaded

Equally, the youth must recognize the weight of this moment. Their agitation, while justified, must translate into constructive civic engagements, demanding better, participating more deeply on governance process, and ultimately shaping electoral outcomes with discernment rather than impulse. The magnitude of uncollected identity cards, if anything to go by, is alarming and detrimental to the youth positive impact in influencing the outcomes of electoral process through the ballot.

The delicate descend phase is unforgiving; it requires steady hands, clear understanding and proper interpretation of instruments, and constant situational and positional communication. Any miscalculation at this stage can undo the gains of the entire journey. With discipline, transparency, and collective responsibility, it is a moment that can restore confidence and ensure safe landing.

In the end the scorecard will not be written by politicians alone, but will be authored by every citizen, each one a passenger with a story, a stake, and a voice. And as the ground draws closer, one truth becomes unavoidable; we are here to hear, to feel, to watch and ultimately to decide

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo
PWD

Chairperson, Jiamini Disability network Community Based organization

Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Education Campus life, for all its promise, is as much about survival as it is about education.

Books, bills and broken nights

Behind the pride of joining university lies a harsher truth — one of hunger, debt and silent desperation that thousands of students navigate every single day

BY Diana Brenda Akinyi

@themkenyaintimes

Every year, thousands of young Kenyans walk through university gates carrying something heavier than their bags — the weight of expectation. They arrive with big dreams, family pride, and a quiet determination to change their circumstances. What nobody warns them about is what comes next: the fees calls home at midnight, the days that pass without a proper meal, and the creeping anxiety that no lecture hall prepares you for.

Campus life, for all its promise, is as much about survival as it is about education.

The fees crisis sits at the centre of it all. Government loans and sponsorships exist, but for many students they barely scratch the surface of what university actually costs. The shortfall falls on families who are often already stretched thin.

"I almost missed my exams last semester because of fees," says Brian, a third-year student. "I had to keep calling my parents, and they were struggling too. It was incredibly stressful." His story is far from unusual. Across campuses, students attend lectures knowing they carry outstanding balances, living in quiet dread of the day they are turned away at the exam hall. Others defer their studies entirely, their ambitions placed on hold by arithmetic.

Academic pressure compounds the financial strain. University demands independence and discipline — assignments stack up, deadlines arrive in clusters, and lecturers expect students to keep pace without hand-holding.

"Sometimes you have three assignments due in the same week," says Jane, a business student. "It becomes completely overwhelming." Students push through the small hours to meet deadlines, running on little sleep and con-



Showing student being admitted in the university

siderable anxiety. Layered beneath the academic demands is the pressure that comes from home — the unspoken understanding that a family has invested everything, and failure is simply not an option.

Then there is hunger — the reality that campus life's glossy image most consistently obscures.

"There are days I go the whole day without eating," says James, a first-year student. "You just drink water and try to survive." Hunger is not a fringe experience on Kenyan campuses; it is a quiet, widespread one. Students skip meals to preserve money for rent or transport. Others survive on one meal a day, often cheap and nutritionally poor, because it is all their budget allows.

"I skip meals to save money for other expenses," says Faith, a third-year student. "It is not easy, but you get used to it." That a young person should have to get used to going hungry while pursuing a degree speaks to a systemic failure that university administrations and policymakers are yet to adequately address.

To bridge the gap, many students take on part-time work or small enterprises. Jane — who juggles her business studies with running an egg-selling operation — is typical of a generation forced to be both student and entrepreneur simultaneously. It is admirable. It is also exhausting.

"By the time I get back to my room after work, I am too tired to read," she says.

The cumulative toll of all this — financial anxiety, academic pressure, hunger, and fatigue — lands hardest on mental health. Depression, anxiety, and loneliness stalk campuses far more widely than official statistics tend to reflect. Students suffer in silence, reluctant to speak openly about struggles they fear others will not understand.

"There are times I just sit in my room and feel lost," says Brian. "You don't want to talk to anyone because you think they won't understand."

Social media sharpens the pain. Scrolling through feeds populated with peers who appear to be thriving — traveling, celebrating, succeeding — students already under pressure find their self-worth quietly eroded.

"When you see others posting nice things online, you feel like you are failing," says Faith. "But you don't know what they are really going through."

And yet, amid all of this, something quietly remarkable is happening. Students are holding each other up. Friendships forged in shared struggle become lifelines. Support groups, faith communities, sports, and the simple act of talking to a trusted friend keep many going when the alternative feels unbearable.

"My friends keep me going," says Sheila, a communications student. "We support



A picture of Jane the egg seller on duty

each other and share our problems."

Universities do offer coun-

selling services and financial aid programmes, though awareness of these resources

remains patchy and take-up is low. The gap between what is available and what students actually access remains a challenge administrators must urgently confront.

What emerges from all of this is not a portrait of defeat, but of extraordinary resilience. The students navigating fees, hunger, deadlines, and mental health struggles are not failing — they are, in the truest sense, surviving and growing in equal measure.

"I have learned how to survive on my own," says Faith. "It is not easy, but it has made me stronger."

Campus life is rarely what the brochure promises. It is harder, lonelier, and more financially brutal than most students anticipate. But it is also — for those who make it through — the crucible in which character is forged, resilience is built, and the foundations of a life are quietly, stubbornly laid.

The dreams that carried these students through the gates are still intact. They are simply being earned the hard way.

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U.S.-Iran talks Pakistan has stepped up its shuttle diplomacy to bridge differences between the two sides

U.S.-Iran talks show signs of progress amid blockade, shuttle diplomacy

Diplomatic efforts have also drawn broader international attention. Russia and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday underscored the need to continue political and diplomatic engagement between Washington and Tehran under Pakistan's mediation.

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

Discussions over a new round of face-to-face talks between the United States and Iran are ongoing, the White House said on Tuesday, even as Washington has fully enforced a blockade on Iranian ports and regional mediation efforts have intensified, with no date yet set for the next round of negotiations.

On Wednesday, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt told a press briefing that the U.S. willingness to hold talks with Iran is contingent on the reopening of the Strait "with no limitations or delays," adding that the next round of talks is likely to take place again in Islamabad, Pakistan. She also denied reports that Washington had formally requested an extension of the current ceasefire, saying both sides remain engaged in dialogue. U.S. officials were cited by media reports as saying that U.S. and Iranian negotiators made progress in talks on Tuesday, moving closer to a framework agreement to end the war. One official said both sides have maintained backchannel communications with all the countries and are "getting closer," while another noted that although the U.S. side is eager for a deal, consensus within the Iranian government remains a key hurdle.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has stepped up its shuttle diplomacy to bridge differences between the two sides. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, beginning a four-day tour that will also take him to Qatar and Türkiye. On the same day, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir led a delegation to Tehran, where Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi received him. According to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, Tehran will assess the outcome of its discussions with the Pakistani



White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt speaks during a White House press briefing in Washington, D.C., the United States, April 15, 2026. | Photo: Li Yuanqing/Xinhua

delegation before deciding whether to engage in another round of talks with the United States. A source cited by the report said that the ceasefire in Lebanon will be a "positive signal" for Iran's decision for the next round of negotiations, while stressing that Washington must drop "excessive demands" and avoid "violating the promises it made before the ceasefire." Uncertainty also persists over whether the ceasefire between the United States and Iran will be extended. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Tuesday that such speculation could not yet be confirmed, citing what he described as inconsistent U.S. positions and questioning Washington's commitment to honoring any potential agreement. At the same time, the U.S. military said on Tuesday that U.S. forces have completely halted economic trade going into and out of Iran by sea in less than 36 hours since the blockade was implemented. However, a report

“**U.S. officials were cited by media reports as saying that U.S. and Iranian negotiators made progress in talks on Tuesday, moving closer to a framework agreement to end the war. One official said both sides have maintained backchannel communications with all the countries and are “getting closer,” while another noted that although the U.S. side is eager for a deal, consensus within the Iranian government remains a key hurdle.**

by British maritime analytics firm Windward indicated that some ships have managed to bypass the restrictions. It said that “Iranian crude and refined product exports remained active, supported by dark loading activity at Kharg Island, Bandar Abbas, and sanctioned tanker movements.”

Diplomatic efforts have also drawn broader international attention. Russia and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday underscored the need to continue political and diplomatic engagement between Washington and Tehran under Pakistan's mediation. In a phone call on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud expressed support for an inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders aimed at guaranteeing long-term stability and security in the region. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying on Wednesday that the United States had rejected its proposal that Russia take all

of Iran's enriched uranium out of the country as a way to help resolve the Middle East conflict, but Russian President Vladimir Putin is ready to return to it.” This would be a good decision. But unfortunately the American side rejected this proposal,” he said. Despite signs of diplomatic movement, key differences remain and the path toward a comprehensive agreement remains uncertain.

South African opposition politician Malema sentenced to 5 years in prison

South African opposition politician Julius Malema

South African opposition politician Julius Malema was sentenced on Thursday to five years in prison for firearm-related offenses.

Malema, the founding leader of the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), is one of the most prominent politicians in South Africa. The lengthy sentence was delivered on Thursday morning at the Magistrate's Court in KuGompo City, formerly East London, in the Eastern Cape province. Large screens were set up outside the courthouse, where hundreds of EFF party supporters gathered to hear the fate of their political leader. The charges stem from an incident on July 28, 2018, when Malema discharged a semi-automatic assault rifle into the air during an EFF political rally in Mdantsane, a largely residential township in Eastern Cape province. The act was described by EFF as a “celebratory shot” during the rally commemorating the party's fifth anniversary to entertain the crowd, and no injuries were reported.

Malema was convicted in October last year on five charges, including unlawful possession of a firearm and discharging a firearm in a public area. On Thursday, he was also sentenced to pay a 20,000 rand fine for each of the other three charges, totaling 60,000 rand, or alternatively serve six months' imprisonment on each count. The EFF has indicated that it will appeal the court's decision. If confirmed after all appeals, the sentence would bar Malema from serving as a lawmaker. Malema served as president of the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League from 2008 to 2012. He went on to form the EFF in 2013 and was elected to the National Assembly in 2014, after his expulsion from the ANC in 2012 for sowing divisions within the party and bringing it into disrepute. Following the 2024 general elections, the EFF became the fourth-largest political party in the parliament, but chose not to join the Government of the National Unity (GNU)

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes



South African opposition politician Julius Malema

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KYISA games kick off in Laikipia, uniting Kenya's youth through sport

Laikipia is alive this week with the energy of hundreds of young athletes, and with them comes something Kenya's youth desperately need: honest competition, friendships across county lines, and a renewed sense of national purpose.

The Kenya Youth Intercounty Sports Association (KYISA) games opened on April 10 and run until April 19, drawing participants from more than 20 counties including Nyandarua, Migori, Narok, and Tana River. Governor Joshua Irungu launched the tournament with a call to embrace sport as a foundation for discipline, teamwork, and confidence.

But the message from leaders went deeper than athletics. Speakers urged young people to anchor themselves in talent and growth, resisting the lure of politicians who exploit their en-



ergy for partisan gain. It was a blunt reminder: Kenya's youth are most powerful when they are building, not being used.

And build they are. Beyond the tracks and pitches, the KYISA games have become a cultural exchange. Athletes from vastly different backgrounds are sharing meals, stories, and perspectives—discovering that what unites them outweighs what divides them. For many, the friendships forged here matter as much as the medals.

Organisers say that is the

point. Sport, at its best, does not just produce athletes. It produces citizens.

As the games unfold, Laikipia is hosting more than a tournament. It is hosting a vision of Kenya's future—where youth are not pawns of politics, but architects of change.

This week, the scoreboard matters less than the lesson: Kenya wins when its youth play for unity.

By Samuel Rotich, second-year student, Laikipia University

Kenya's fuel crisis: the hidden cost driving everyday life

Fuel prices are no longer just a motorist's headache—they are reshaping Kenya's economy and daily life. From matatu fares in Nairobi to food costs in rural markets, the ripple effects of rising fuel costs are squeezing households, businesses, and the nation's growth prospects.

Kenya's heavy reliance on imported petroleum lies at the heart of the crisis. Global oil price swings and a weakening shilling have driven up import costs, setting off a chain reaction across the economy. Transport is the first casualty: matatu fares rise almost instantly, forcing workers to spend more just to reach their jobs. Disposable income shrinks, slowing consumer spending and dampening economic activity.

Food prices follow closely. Farmers must transport produce over long distances, and higher fuel costs inflate



delivery expenses. Retailers pass these costs to consumers, making basic necessities less affordable. The hardest hit are low- and middle-income households already struggling with stagnant wages.

Small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of Kenya's economy, face mounting operational costs. From transporting goods to powering machinery, fuel expenses erode profit margins. Some businesses raise prices, others cut staff or scale back operations, deepening economic uncertainty.

The broader impact is infla-

tion. As costs rise across the board, purchasing power declines, leaving policymakers with the difficult task of balancing growth and stability.

Yet the crisis also presents opportunity. Kenya's leadership in geothermal and wind energy positions it to accelerate a shift toward sustainable alternatives.

Fuel prices are not just numbers at the pump—they are defining Kenya's economic future. The urgency to act has never been greater.

By Tracy Achieng, Laikipia University

The alarming rise of infertility in Kenya

Infertility is no longer a private struggle—it is a national crisis. One in ten Kenyans faces fertility challenges, a figure that translates to more than 4.2 million people requiring medical intervention. Yet the issue remains underreported, underfunded, and misunderstood.

The causes are clear but neglected. Untreated sexually transmitted infections account for 85 percent of infertility cases in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 33 percent in the Global North. This disparity exposes glaring gaps in sexual health education and access to timely treatment. Lifestyle factors—drug abuse, excessive alcohol, smoking, and exposure to toxins—compound the problem. For women, unsafe abortions, irregular cycles, and delayed childbearing add further risk.

Treatment exists, but affordability is a cruel barrier. A single IVF cycle costs around Ksh



500,000, far beyond the reach of most families. Kenya has only a handful of embryologists in private practice, making specialist care scarce and prohibitively expensive. Rural couples face even steeper odds, trapped by geography and stigma.

The social toll is devastating. Infertility carries a heavy stigma, often isolating couples and fueling psychological distress. Silence becomes the norm, and those who need help most are

left without support.

Solutions are within reach: expand reproductive health education, invest in affordable fertility services, and confront lifestyle and environmental risks head-on.

Kenya cannot afford complacency. Infertility is not a hidden burden—it is a public health emergency. The time to act is now.

By Agnes Otieno, Laikipia University

Global fuel prices and mounting economic pressure

Fuel prices are rising again, and the shock is rippling across the global economy. What began as localized geopolitical tension has morphed into a crisis squeezing governments, businesses, and households from Washington to Nairobi.

At the center is the escalating standoff between the United States and Iran, raising fears over the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow artery through which much of the world's oil flows. Any disruption there sends instant tremors through energy markets. Add the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which continues to choke energy exports to Europe, and the result is a fragile global system vulnerable to every political flare-up.

The consequences are immediate. Transport costs climb, pushing up the price of goods and services. Industries from aviation to agriculture see profit margins shrink, often



passing the pain to consumers. China's growth slows as energy costs disrupt trade, while developing nations face inflation spikes, weakened currencies, and mounting debt.

For ordinary citizens, the crisis is personal. Petrol and diesel hikes raise commuting costs, while food and utility bills soar. In cities like Nairobi, rising fares and unaffordable essentials fuel public frustration and protests.

Governments scramble to cushion citizens with subsidies and tax cuts, but the fiscal burden is heavy and unsustainable. The IMF warns pro-

longed subsidies could deepen debt crises. Meanwhile, the volatility is accelerating calls for renewable energy investment and supply chain diversification.

This is more than an energy story. It is a test of resilience. Nations that act decisively today will shape not just recovery, but the future of global energy security.

The world cannot afford to drift—fuel volatility demands bold leadership now.

By Victor Ochieng – Laikipia University

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Sports >> *World Athletics has dealt a decisive blow to Turkey's ambitious athletics recruitment drive, rejecting applications from five Kenyan stars

World Athletics Blocks Kenya's Finest From Donning Turkish Colours



Brigid Kosgei crosses the finish line to win the Abu Dhabi Marathon. PHOTO/ABU DHABI MARATHON.

By **Martin Weche** | Athletics Correspondent

World Athletics has dealt a decisive blow to Turkey's ambitious athletics recruitment drive, rejecting applications from five Kenyan stars — including marathon great Brigid Kosgei — who sought to switch nationality and represent the nation at future international competitions.

The global governing body ruled that the transfer of allegiance applications were procedurally flawed and tainted by what it described as improper financial inducements orchestrated by the Turkish government, exposing a bold and controversial strategy to assemble a world-class athletics team ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

In a damning statement, World Athletics said the applications “formed part of a coordinat-

ed recruitment strategy led by the Türkiye government acting through a wholly-owned and financed government club, to attract overseas athletes through lucrative contracts.” The panel found that the scheme was designed not to integrate athletes organically into Turkish athletics, but to fast-track their eligibility for international competition — a clear violation of the sport's nationality transfer principles.

Those principles, World Athletics stressed, exist to protect the integrity of competition, preserve confidence among athletes that national teams are built on merit rather than the highest bidder, and — crucially — to incentivise member federations to nurture homegrown talent rather than simply shopping abroad.

The implications for Kenya are significant. Among those blocked from switching alle-

giance is Kosgei, the former world marathon record holder and one of distance running's most decorated performers. She is joined by Catherine Reline Amanang'ole, who claimed bronze at the World Half Marathon Championships; Olympic 5,000 metres silver medallist Ronald Kwemoi; and fellow Kenyans Brian Kibor and Nelvin Jepkemboi — a collective of formidable talent that, had the bids succeeded, would have transformed Turkey overnight into a long-distance powerhouse.

The full list of rejected applicants extends beyond Kenya's borders. Jamaica's Jaydon Hibbert, Wayne Pinnock, and Rojé Stona — all sprint and field luminaries — were similarly blocked, as were Nigeria's Favour Ofili, Jamaica's Rajindra Campbell, and Russia's Sophia Yakushina, painting a picture of

a recruitment campaign that was sweeping in its ambition and audacious in its execution.

Turkey's plan, in hindsight, was breathtaking in scope: assemble a ready-made Olympic squad by the back door, bypassing the painstaking years of athlete development that rival nations invest in. World Athletics has made clear that such shortcuts will not be tolerated.

There is, however, a concession. The athletes remain free to live, train, and compete in Turkey in club or personal capacities, and may participate in one-day meetings and road races — meaning their relationship with the country need not end entirely, even if international vest representation is firmly off the table.

For Kenya Athletics and its rivals, the ruling offers reassurance. The sport's soul, it seems, is still worth defending.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The dust has settled, the trophies have been lifted, and the Matildas have flown out of the 254 — but the impact of the last week on Kenyan soil will be felt for years to come.

Historic Impact: Lessons from FIFA's Global Women's Series



Harambee Starlets captain Mwanalima Adam (2nd left) and her Australian counterpart, Alanna Kennedy (2nd right) line up before their match. PHOTO/HARAMBEE STARLETS

By **Martin Weche**

The dust has settled, the trophies have been lifted, and the Matildas have flown out of the 254 — but the impact of the last week on Kenyan soil will be felt for years to come. The inaugural FIFA Women's Series wasn't just about the scorelines; it was a statement of intent for women's football in Africa, a bold declaration that the continent is ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the world's best.

From Sam Kerr's backflips — mental or literal! — to the roar of a record-breaking crowd, Nairobi delivered moments that will live long in the memory. Here are the five biggest takeaways from a beautiful week of football.

1. Nairobi is a Women's Football Fortress

If anyone doubted the hunger for women's sports in Kenya, Wednesday night provided the answer in emphatic fashion. The crowd that packed Nyayo National Stadium for Kenya vs.

Australia was easily the largest ever to witness a women's game in the country. Seeing thousands of fans chanting for the Starlets against a top-15 world power proved that if you provide the stage, the fans will bring the noise. Nairobi didn't just host a tournament; it hosted a movement.

2. The Gap is Closing Fast

On paper, a match between the world-class Matildas and our Starlets looked like a mismatch. But on the pitch? The Matildas knew they were in a game. From Fasila Adhiambo rattling the woodwork to the Starlets' high-intensity press that rattled Chelsea's Sam Kerr in the opening minutes, the lesson is crystal clear: African teams are no longer just making up the numbers. They are competing, pressing, and threatening. The gap that once seemed a chasm is narrowing with every tournament, every camp, and every brave performance like the one we witnessed this week.

3. Infrastructure Investment Pays Dividends

Hosting a FIFA-sanctioned event of this magnitude requires more than goodwill; it demands facilities, organisation, and belief. Kenya delivered. Nyayo National Stadium proved it can hold its own on the international stage, and the smooth running of the tournament showed that African football federations can punch above their weight when given the right backing. The lesson for policymakers and sponsors alike: investment in women's football infrastructure is not charity — it is a strategic bet that pays back with interest.

4. Homegrown Stars are Ready for the Spotlight

The tournament gave Kenyans a chance to fall in love with their own heroes. Names like Fasila Adhiambo, who tormented the Australian defence with breathtaking skill, are no longer just whispers in local football circles — they are household names.

The Starlets showed that Kenya has the talent; what's needed now is the structured pathway to take these players from local pitches to global stages. This series has lit that fuse.

5. This is Just the Beginning

Perhaps the most important lesson of all is this: the inaugural FIFA Women's Series was not the destination — it was the launchpad. The momentum generated this week must not be allowed to dissipate. Leagues need investment, academies need funding, and girls across Kenya need to see that football is a viable, celebrated path for them. If the football community — federations, sponsors, government, and fans — keeps the faith and sustains the energy, the story of women's football in Kenya will only get better from here.

The Matildas may have flown home, but the spirit of this tournament remains right here in Nairobi. And that, more than any scoreline, is the real victory.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Disconnected: The unraveling of human connection in the age of digital deception

How social media's fake perfection is killing genuine relationships and breeding a generation of lonely souls



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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Worth Noting:

- The pressure to conform is structural, not incidental. Platforms are engineered to reward performance over authenticity. Post the perfect selfie. Curate the provocative feed. Chase the dopamine hit of a rising like count. In this environment, the distinction between what is real and what is manufactured has become dangerously blurred, and the capacity for genuine self-expression is quietly eroding.

- The damage extends well beyond aesthetics. Human relationships themselves are being hollowed out. Online friendships, virtual communities, and digital validation have increasingly substituted for the messy, irreplaceable complexity of face-to-face connection. The result is a generation trading depth for breadth — accumulating vast networks of acquaintances whilst growing more estranged from the people physically closest to them.

A quiet crisis is unfolding across the world's most connected societies. Despite carrying devices that link us to billions of people in an instant, rates of loneliness are at epidemic levels, youth mental health is deteriorating, and the quality of human relationships is in measurable decline. The culprit, researchers and clinicians increasingly agree, is the very technology that promised to bring us together. Social media, for all its democratising potential, has mutated into something far more corrosive — a hall of mirrors that reflects back our insecurities, amplifies our fears, and feeds us a relentless diet of air-brushed reality. Photoshopped to improbable perfection, these curated digital lives set impossible standards against which millions of ordinary people — disproportionately the young — measure themselves and invariably fall short. The pressure to conform is structural, not incidental. Platforms are engineered to reward performance

over authenticity. Post the perfect selfie. Curate the provocative feed. Chase the dopamine hit of a rising like count. In this environment, the distinction between what is real and what is manufactured has become dangerously blurred, and the capacity for genuine self-expression is quietly eroding. The damage extends well beyond aesthetics. Human relationships themselves are being hollowed out. Online friendships, virtual communities, and digital validation have increasingly substituted for the messy, irreplaceable complexity of face-to-face connection. The result is a generation trading depth for breadth — accumulating vast networks of acquaintances whilst growing more estranged from the people physically closest to them. Young people bear the heaviest burden. Raised in an environment where social media is not a novelty but a given, they are being shaped by its defining values: instant gratification, constant external validation, and an

unrelenting pursuit of perfection. The consequences are well-documented. Anxiety, depression, and disordered self-image are rising sharply among adolescents across the developed world, and the evidence linking these trends to heavy social media use is growing harder to dismiss. The pandemic accelerated what was already a troubling trajectory. Forced into isolation, entire populations leaned further into digital life — replacing physical presence with virtual substitutes, touch with emoji, and community with content. Mental health services in countries from the United Kingdom to Kenya have since reported surging demand, particularly among the young. Yet the crisis is not confined to any single generation. Adults, too, have been drawn into the performance economy of social media, curating highlight reels for strangers whilst neglecting the relationships that sustain them. The platforms benefit from the compulsion; the users bear the cost. There are, however, reasons for

measured optimism. A growing counter-movement is pushing back against the digital tide. Campaigners, clinicians, and legislators in several countries are demanding greater regulation of social media platforms, particularly those targeting children. Meanwhile, at an individual level, people are increasingly choosing to disengage — reclaiming time, attention, and the slower, richer rewards of in-person connection. The evidence is unambiguous: the architecture of modern social media is, by design, inimical to genuine human connection. Reforming it will require political will, corporate accountability, and a fundamental shift in how societies value depth over reach, presence over performance, and authenticity over the approval of strangers. The technology that was supposed to connect us has, in too many ways, driven us apart. Reversing that damage begins with acknowledging it honestly — and choosing, deliberately, to do things differently.