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# The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

**Education** KNUT demands emergency talks as a term-two capitation circular lays bare the yawning chasm between government rhetoric and classroom reality

# Free education falls short



Basic Education Principal Secretary Julius Bitok

## KSh 188 per child

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The headline figure disguises a troubling detail. Under Account One alone, KSh40 goes towards exercise books, KSh35.25 for stationery, KSh15 for teachers' guides and reference materials, and KSh5 for textbook maintenance. KNUT Secretary General in Nyanza, David Obuon, was unsparing in his assessment. "This is a 48-page exercise book, one. How about the rest of the learning areas? Where will the learner get the rest of the exercise books? This in essence is telling parents of this country to dig into their pockets to support the learning of their children," he said. **Page 9**



Pupils studying under a tree

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# Mountain Bongos return to Kenya in landmark conservation boost

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

Kenya has marked a major milestone in wildlife conservation following the successful repatriation of four critically endangered Mountain Bongos from the Czech Republic.

The rare antelopes arrived at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport aboard a KLM cargo flight on Tuesday night and were received by Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano, alongside key conservation stakeholders, led by Humphrey Kariuki who owns their new home.

The bongos had been under the care of Zoo Dvůr Králové and were repatriated under the National Recovery and Action Plan for the species.

The initiative reflects years of planning and collaboration between the Kenyan government, conservation groups, and international partners, including the Czech Republic.

Kenya Wildlife Service Director General Erustus Kanga described the return as a moment of renewed hope and commitment to saving one of the world's rarest large mammals.

Czech Ambassador Nicol Adamcova termed the exercise a testament to strong bilateral conservation ties.

The four males were safely transported to Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy near Nanyuki town, where they arrived early yesterday.

Their addition brings the conservancy's population to 102 bongos, strengthening genetic diversity and breeding resilience.

The repatriation moves Kenya closer to restoring the species to its natural habitats and securing its long-term survival.



**Editor's Desk**

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# NEWS IN BRIEF



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has urged senior government officials to accelerate delivery of key programmes ahead of the 2027 General Election, warning time is running out. Speaking at the National Development Implementation Committee meeting in Nairobi, he cited global economic pressures, including the Russia-Ukraine war and Middle East tensions, as risks to Kenya's economy. Mudavadi emphasized efficient execution of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, focusing on lowering living costs, job creation, and growth. He flagged funding gaps in social programmes like Inua Jamii and called for strategic action in agriculture, healthcare, and macroeconomic stability to ensure tangible results.



Mombasa County Junior School intern teachers, in conjunction with KUPPET, yesterday demonstrated along Moi Avenue, Mombasa calling for the immediate confirmation of 44,000 intern teachers, compensation for months worked, and better working conditions. The teachers were carrying placards and a banner listing their key demands.



The Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA) launched a borehole at Kosholoi Village, a major water project in West Pokot County in a bid to improve livelihoods, enhance food security, and strengthen climate resilience in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs).



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki addressing delegates at the closing of the 2026 World Health Summit Regional Meeting at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, accompanied by health ministers; UN, WHO and CDC officials; and global policy leaders in Gigiri, Nairobi City County.



Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) principals and trainers have been warned over rising cases of sexual exploitation in institutions. TVET Principal Secretary Dr. Esther Muoria revealed reports of misconduct, including principals and trainers engaging in sexual relationships with female students, leading to pregnancies and disrupted learning. Speaking at a leadership workshop in Mombasa attended by Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba, she condemned the behavior as widespread misadministration. Muoria directed regional TVET directors to take immediate action, stressing zero tolerance for such violations and warning that decisive measures would be taken against those found culpable.

Taita Taveta Governor, Andrew Mwadime, when he appeared before the National Assembly's Public Petitions Committee to defend a petition seeking the recategorisation of Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks and a revenue-sharing framework for Taita Taveta County.



Cabinet Secretary for Education Julius Ogamba has underscored the critical role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in driving Kenya's economic transformation. Speaking during the closing of the Kenya Association of Technical Training Institutions (KATTI) capacity-building workshop in Mombasa yesterday, the CS described TVET as a cornerstone of national development. He noted that TVET is central to Kenya's economic transformation.



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**Research** The study also documents a rise in hard-to-treat organisms, signalling a shrinking arsenal of effective treatment options

# Blind antibiotic use fueling drug-resistant wound infections, study warns

BY Chris Mahandara  
@themtkenyatimes

A new study conducted at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital has raised fresh concerns over the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), warning that widespread use of non-laboratory-guided treatment in wound care is accelerating drug resistance in Kenya.

The research, led by Dr. Silas Awuor, reveals that many clinicians continue to rely on empirical antibiotic therapy, prescribing drugs without laboratory confirmation of the causative bacteria despite mounting evidence that the approach is becoming increasingly ineffective.

“Wound management continues to rely heavily on empirical antibiotic therapy, often without microbiological confirmation,” Dr. Awuor states in the study, cautioning that the practice is driving the emergence of resistant pathogens.

According to the findings, resistance to commonly used antibiotics such as ampicillin and cotrimoxazole has exceeded 90 percent in some wound infections.

The study also documents a rise in hard-to-treat organisms, signalling a shrinking arsenal of effective treatment options.

The research further highlights a growing mismatch



Dr Silas Awuor

between laboratory diagnostics and clinical decision-making, with many infections failing to respond to standard therapies.

This is particularly evident in chronic wounds such as diabetic ulcers and post-surgical infections, which are increasingly found to harbor multiple bacteria, many of them drug-resistant.

A major complicating factor identified in the study is the presence of biofilms, protective bacterial layers that shield pathogens from both antibiotics and the body’s immune system.

These biofilms, common in chronic wounds, significantly reduce the effectiveness of conventional treatment, often requiring physical removal through procedures such as debridement.

“Biofilms are a major reason why wounds fail to heal de-

spite ongoing treatment,” the report notes, adding that their presence allows bacteria to persist and evolve resistance even under sustained antibiotic exposure.

While Kenyan healthcare providers have adopted innovative, low-cost interventions—including honey-based dressings and acetic acid applications—the study cautions that such measures, though beneficial, are insufficient to counter the underlying microbiological threat.

Central to the problem, researchers say, is the limited use of diagnostic tools such as culture and sensitivity testing, which are critical in identifying the specific bacteria involved and determining the most effective drugs to administer.

The study is now calling for a systemic shift toward microbiological stewardship—

an approach that prioritizes laboratory-guided treatment, early diagnostic testing, and closer collaboration between clinicians and microbiologists.

Without such reforms, the research warns, antimicrobial resistance could lead to prolonged hospital stays, rising healthcare costs, and increased mortality.

With AMR already recognised as a global health crisis, the findings underscore the urgency of addressing the issue in resource-limited settings, where diagnostic gaps and treatment constraints are most pronounced.

“The future of wound care depends on moving from guesswork to evidence-based healing,” Dr. Awuor concludes, urging health systems to place microbiological stewardship at the centre of modern wound management.

## Elite police units deployed on Mwingi–Garissa road amid deadly border attacks



DIG Lagat conducts security assessment in Tseikuru on Apr 26

Photo: NPS

BY MKT REPORTER  
@themtkenyatimes

The government has deployed specialised police units to escort vehicles along the Mwingi–Garissa Road following a spate of deadly attacks and rising tensions along the Kitui–Tana River border.

The National Police Service confirmed that elite teams, including the General Service Unit and the Rapid Deployment Unit, have been dispatched to restore order along the critical corridor linking Nairobi to northeastern Kenya. “The NPS has deployed specialised teams to escort vehicles along the Mwingi–Garissa Road and to enhance safety and security for businesses, travellers and the general public,” police spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga said.

The deployment follows a deadly April 25 attack at Kwa Kamari trading centre in Tseikuru, Kitui County, where seven people were killed by armed assailants who also

torched shops and a petrol station. Authorities say the violence is part of a cycle of retaliatory incidents traced to the killing of a herdsman near Mwingi Game Reserve in late March, with disputes over grazing land fuelling growing inter-community tensions.

Police have described the perpetrators as “enemies of peace” who represent no community, clan or family — a pointed appeal for calm in a region where transport operators have suspended services amid safety fears. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has arrested a political aspirant linked to alleged incitement.

Former Attorney General Justin Muturi has urged urgent structural reforms within the security apparatus. “The senseless killings must stop,” he said, warning that continued violence reflects failures in security leadership.

Investigative and intelligence teams are actively pursuing leads, with authorities assuring the public that those responsible will face justice.

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**Health** The level 4 medical facilities, fully funded by Amsons Group through a grant to the Government of Kenya, will be constructed over three fiscal years

# Landmark maternal health boost as Amsons group commits KSh4.5 billion grant for the construction of 10 Level-4 mother and child hospitals

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Pan-African Business conglomerate Amsons Group has, in a landmark corporate grant to the Government of Kenya, committed to establishing 10 Mother-and-Child hospitals in Kenya within the next 3 years to alleviate the plight of more than 1 million underserved women.

In the largest-ever private-sector-financed boost to prevent maternal deaths, Amsons Group will fully finance the construction and equipping of the ten facilities to the tune of KSh4.5 billion (US\$ 35 million), under a Build, Equip, and Transfer (BoT) model.

The level 4 medical facilities, fully funded by Amsons Group through a grant to the Government of Kenya, will be constructed over three fiscal years: 2026/2027, 2027/2028, and 2028/2029.

Speaking at the State House, Nairobi, during the signing of a Letter of Intent (LOI) between the Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Health, and Amsons Group, President William Ruto welcomed the corporate social investment initiative, dubbed the Amsons Mama na Mtoto Kwanza project.

While describing the firm's philanthropic support in advancing Kenya's maternal health goals as a timely major national milestone, flanked by Amsons Group CEO Mr Edha Nahdi and Ministry of Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, President Ruto said reducing maternal and newborn deaths is a national priority.

Available statistics indicate that in Kenya, 5,000 children and 3,600 mothers die at delivery, with 26 counties currently identified as high-burden maternal death counties.

He confirmed that over the last three years, Kenya has undertaken the most ambitious health system transformation since independence. The support by Amsons Group, President Ruto noted, will help deepen ongoing health infrastructure expansion under the national Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) project.

The Government, through the Ministry of Health, he said, intends to

implement the HSS Project, which intends to increase the number of adequately equipped health facilities, especially at level 4 and 5, to serve as the first point of access for inpatient care, critical referral and specialised care, support emergency and critical services, and offer advanced diagnostics and treatment.

The development and equipping of the ten new facilities, each with a 250-bed capacity, he acknowledged, will help alleviate the plight of more than 1 million women seeking pre- and postnatal care in remote and rural locations.

The government, through the Ministry of Health and the respective county governments, he said, will provide the necessary support, including staffing and medical supplies.

"The support by Amsons Group, a corporate investor in Kenya associated with both Bamburi Cement Plc and East Africa Portland Cement, is a timely intervention.. With the support of Amsons Group, the government will now be in a better position to guarantee maternal health and curb maternal and newborn mortality as part of our national development agenda," President Ruto said.

He added, "The Government of Kenya deeply appreciates the support of Mr Edha Nahdi and Amsons Group, first by choosing Kenya as an investment destination and secondly for their devotion to share in our social development through health care systems transformation."

On his part, Amsons Group Managing Director Mr Edha Nahdi said the firm will invest more than US\$3.5 million in the construction of each Amsons Mama na Mtoto Kwanza facility as part of its shared prosperity social investment goals.

Amsons Group, he said, currently holds a controlling stake in 16 market-leading firms in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Bamburi Cement and East African Portland Cement Plc (EAPC), and will continue to support development programmes as part of the firm's social investment agenda.

"Amsons Group and its 16 subsidiaries operate in more than seven countries in Africa under a treasured shared prosperity model. Under this



Amsons group CEO Edha Nahdi (left) with CS Health Adan Duale with copies of the signed Letter of Intent.

model, we are committed to playing a key part in Kenya's first-world transformation journey," Nahdi said.

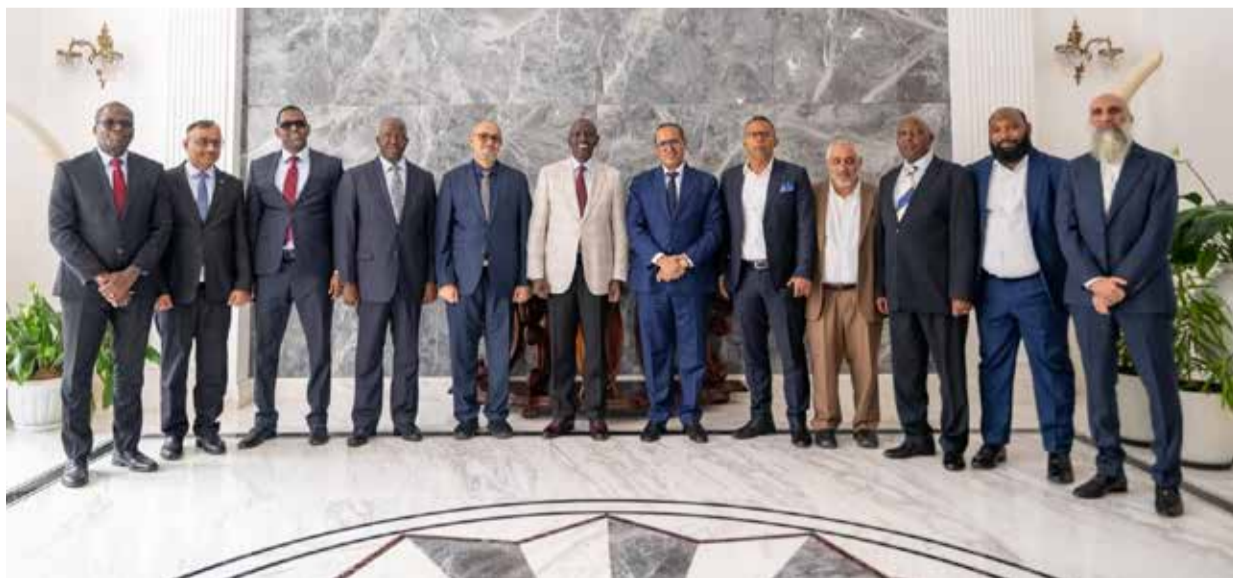
He added, "As a responsible corporate citizen, Amsons Group shares in the government's obligation to ensure that we reduce maternal and newborn deaths. In this project, Amsons Group is not building hospitals;

we are helping advance healthcare delivery in Kenya."

By making the social investment, Amsons Group, Mr Nahdi said, is stepping up to reduce maternal and infant mortality in some of the 26 high-burden maternal death counties in Kenya. The firm's support, he said, will help to reduce the current

rate of newborn and maternal deaths.

The ten target counties for the Amsons Mama na Mtoto Kwanza facilities include Nairobi (2), Kwale, Mombasa, Garissa, Kisumu, Embu, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and West Pokot.



President William Ruto (5th left), CEO Amsons group Edha Nahdi (6th right) and other officials after the signing ceremony. | Photo: courtesy.

**Education** KNUT demands emergency talks as a term-two capitation circular lays bare the yawning chasm between government rhetoric and classroom reality

# KSh188 per child: Kenya's free education promise rings hollow

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Kenya National Union of Teachers has demanded an emergency stakeholder meeting over the government's decision to allocate just KSh188 to each primary school learner for the second term, a figure that education leaders say makes a mockery of Kenya's free primary education promise and leaves parents to shoulder the burden the state has declined to carry.

The allocation, contained in a circular dated April 23 and signed by Basic Education Principal Secretary Julius Bitok, breaks down a per-learner disbursement so thin that it has drawn ridicule and alarm in equal measure from teachers, parents and policy analysts. The KSh188 total is divided between two accounts: KSh95.25 under Account One for instructional materials — exercise books, stationery, teachers' guides and textbook maintenance — and KSh93.08 under Account Two for operational costs such as support staff wages, infrastructure repairs, utilities and co-curricular activities.

The headline figure disguises a troubling detail. Under Account One alone, KSh40 goes towards exercise books, KSh35.25 for stationery, KSh15 for teachers' guides and reference materials, and KSh5 for textbook maintenance. KNUT Secretary General in Nyanza, David Obuon, was unsparing in his assessment. "This is a 48-page exercise book, one. How about the rest of the learning areas? Where will the learner get the rest of the exercise books? This in essence is telling parents of this country to dig into their pockets to support the learning of their children," he said.

The rebuke cuts deeper given the government's own ambitions for the Competency-Based Curriculum, which places science and technology at its centre. The circular allocates just KSh2 per learner for science and technology — a sum that Obuon called an outright contradiction. "Today you are talking CBC, where science and technology has been the core. We are talking about STEM as a pathway. This is a mockery," he said.

The public outcry over the allocation has intensified across Kenya,

with parents, stakeholders and policy analysts questioning whether the amount reflects the current economic reality. Legal expert Willis Otieno went further, framing the shortfall as a governance failure. "This is no longer just about budgeting. A nation that underfunds education while overfunding politics is slowly mortgaging its future generation," he said.

The frustration is especially acute given the scale of the national education budget. The education sector has been allocated KSh702.7 billion in the 2025/26 financial year — approximately 16.6 per cent of the total national budget of KSh4.239 trillion. Yet the gap between that headline figure and what actually reaches a classroom desk has become one of Kenya's most persistent and damaging policy failures. An Auditor-General's report released in July 2025 exposed major gaps and irregularities in the disbursement of capitation funds to public schools — including payments to ghost and defunct institutions — contributing to a staggering KSh117 billion funding shortfall over the past four financial years.

Parliament's own committees have confirmed that not all capitation funds reach schools due to deductions — KSh75 per primary pupil, for instance, is channelled to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development for textbooks, while KSh20 supports co-curricular activities. In practical terms, what arrives in a school account after these deductions is rarely sufficient to sustain a full term of learning, a reality that head teachers across the country have documented with grim precision. Some primary schools received as little as KSh87 when the government released Term Two funds in May 2025 — prompting one head teacher in Nyanza to ask aloud: "What is KSh87?"

The current capitation stands at KSh1,420 annually per primary learner, disbursed across three terms in a 50:30:20 ratio. The second term therefore carries the 30 per cent share, and what schools receive reflects both the structural inadequacy of the annual rate and the government's struggle to disburse even that amount in full. Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi has told Parliament that the inconsistency in disbursing capitation arises because the



Basic Education Principal Secretary Julius Bitok

amount budgeted for falls short of expectations, while PS Bitok has acknowledged that budget allocations for junior schools have consistently fallen below actual funding needs.

Parents who spoke to this newspaper were blunt. Rachael Otundo called for urgent prioritisation of education spending. "Enough resources should be allocated to the Ministry of Education because it is the core ministry for the purposes of growth," she said. Another parent, Zachary Nyamatari, captured the unease shared by millions of families. "The education of our children is not something we take lightly — it is a sensitive matter, because their entire future depends on the learning they receive now," he said.

PS Bitok has sought to contextualise the figures, clarifying that the KSh95.25 per learner is exclusively for learning materials such as books and stationery, while the KSh93.08 covers school operations including staff, maintenance, utilities and exams, and that the amounts shown are per learner, not per school. He directed head teachers to publicly display capitation details on school notice boards and assured Parliament that funds are disbursed strictly on the basis of verified learner numbers drawn from the National Education Management Information System.

But the clarification has done little

to quell the outrage. KNUT Deputy Secretary General Hesbon Otieno has urged the government to act decisively: "Government, stop joking with our children. Give them money so that learning can continue." The union has maintained that funding shortfalls have been accumulating for years, with schools across the country carrying debt just to keep classrooms open.

There is a sliver of hope on the horizon. Funding for primary school education is set to increase by 58 per cent to KSh2,238 per learner, with Basic Education Director-General Elyas Abdi confirming that official communication on the new rate has

been issued. The Elimu Bora Working Group has welcomed the move but cautioned that even the higher figure falls short of what is genuinely required. "That is a good intention, but it should be implemented on the interim as a unit cost analysis is done so that what is provided for learners is adequate," said the group's Policy and Strategy Advisor, Boaz Waruku.

For now, the nation's 10 million primary school children begin the second term with KSh40 in the government's pocket for exercise books — a number that says everything about who Kenya's education system is truly serving, and who it is leaving behind.



Students learning unnder tree

**Trade** Kenya must urgently address the underlying challenges affecting competitiveness, including cost of doing business, border taxation, and logistical inefficiencies

# State moves to strengthen cross-border trade as Lungalunga border gains strategic focus

BY KNA  
@themtkenyatimes

The government has intensified efforts to enhance cross-border trade between Kenya and Tanzania, with increased focus on the Lungalunga border as a key gateway for regional commerce under the East African Community (EAC) framework.

Principal Secretary for East African Community (EAC)

Affairs, Caroline Karugu, held a consultative meeting with Kwale Governor Fatuma Achani to explore joint interventions between the national and county governments aimed at improving trade efficiency and unlocking the economic potential of border points.

Karugu said Kenya collected KSh321.6 billion in revenue from EAC trade in the past financial year, noting that Lungalunga border contributed

KSh1.1 billion to the total.

She described Lungalunga as an emerging strategic trade corridor, saying improved efficiency at the facility would enhance revenue collection and strengthen Kenya's competitiveness in the region.

"The Lungalunga border is an increasingly important trade corridor within the East African region. Enhancing its operational efficiency will improve revenue collection and reinforce Kenya's competi-

tiveness in regional markets," she said.

However, Karugu raised concern over what she termed declining competitiveness in Kenya's trade and logistics sector compared to neighbouring countries, particularly Tanzania.

She cited high cost of doing business, border taxation challenges, and logistical inefficiencies as key constraints affecting trade performance.

"Kenya must urgently address the underlying challenges affecting competitiveness, including cost of doing business, border taxation, and logistical inefficiencies," she said, adding that a review of trade facilitation measures was necessary to improve the ease of doing business.

Governor Achani welcomed the initiative, terming it timely in boosting economic opportunities for communities along the border.

She said enhanced access to the EAC market would benefit small-scale traders and contribute to inclusive growth.

"Expanding access to the



PS Caroline Karugu (right) with Governor Governor Fatuma Achani.

East African Community market will have far-reaching benefits, particularly for small-scale traders. This collaboration presents an opportunity to drive inclusive growth and revitalise border towns such as Lungalunga," she said.

Achani noted that Lungalunga had historically lagged in development, expressing

optimism that coordinated investments and policy interventions would transform it into a key economic hub.

The discussions underscore ongoing government efforts to improve trade facilitation, strengthen regional integration, and enhance the competitiveness of Kenya's border points within the EAC bloc.

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**JSC** The nomination has been forwarded to President William Ruto for formal appointment in accordance with Article 166(1)(a) of the Constitution

# JSC nominates Justice Mohamed Warsame to Supreme Court, announces major judicial reforms

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) yesterday nominated Court of Appeal Judge Mohamed Abdulahi Warsame for appointment to the Supreme Court of Kenya, marking a significant step in strengthening the country's apex court following the death of Justice Mohammed Kadhar Ibrahim earlier this year.

In a statement, JSC Chairperson, Chief Justice Martha Koome said the Commission had concluded a rigorous recruitment and selection process and settled on Justice Warsame as the most suitable candidate for the position.

The nomination has been forwarded to President William Ruto for formal appointment in accordance with Article 166(1)(a) of the Constitution.

The vacancy arose after the passing of Justice Ibrahim, described by the Commission as a founding member of the Supreme Court and a jurist of exceptional integrity whose contribution to constitutionalism and access to justice left a lasting legacy.

The recruitment process began with the declaration of the vacancy on January 13, followed by an advertisement on January 28.

Six candidates applied, with five shortlisted for interviews conducted on Tuesday and yesterday at the Milimani Law Courts in Nairobi.

The interviews were conducted publicly and broadcast live, allowing Kenyans to follow the proceedings in real time.

According to the Commis-



Justice Mohamed Warsame

sion, the process also involved extensive stakeholder engagement, drawing input from the legal profession, academia, civil society, faith-based organisations, the Judiciary, the media, and government institutions. Members of the public were invited to submit memoranda on the candidates, while comprehensive background checks were carried out in collaboration with relevant constitutional bodies and security agencies.

The Chief Justice said the entire exercise adhered strictly to the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and the Judicial Service Act, and was guided by principles of merit, integrity, fairness, inclusivity, and regional

balance.

"The Commission is fully satisfied that Hon. Justice Warsame demonstrated the qualities required of a Judge of the Supreme Court, including professional competence, unimpeachable integrity, sound judgment, and a firm commitment to the rule of law and public service," she said.

She added that Justice Warsame's extensive legal experience and depth of knowledge position him to make a meaningful contribution to the development of Kenya's jurisprudence at the highest level.

Koome also commended the other candidates who participated in the process, noting that their willingness to un-



Chief Justice Martha Koome

dergo public scrutiny reflected a strong commitment to service. She further acknowledged stakeholders and members of the public for their ac-

**The Chief Justice said the entire exercise adhered strictly to the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and the Judicial Service Act, and was guided by principles of merit, integrity, fairness, inclusivity, and regional balance.**

**"The Commission is fully satisfied that Hon. Justice Warsame demonstrated the qualities required of a Judge of the Supreme Court, including professional competence, unimpeachable integrity, sound judgment, and a firm commitment to the rule of law and public service," she said.**



tive engagement, describing it as a sign of growing civic interest in the country's judicial processes.

The JSC Chairperson also praised the Commission's Secretariat, led by Chief Registrar of the Judiciary Winfridah Mokaya, for ensuring a professional and transparent recruitment process, as well as media houses for facilitating public access to the interviews.

Beyond the nomination, the Commission highlighted what it described as an unprecedented expansion of Kenya's judicial capacity in 2026. Earlier this year, the JSC nominated 15 judges to the Court of Appeal, all of whom were subsequently appointed. In addition, 24 judges have been nominated to the High Court and 13 to the Environment and Land Court, with their swearing-in expected soon.

In total, 52 judges will have been appointed across three superior courts within a single year—the largest such expansion in Kenya's recent history. The Commission said the move is aimed at addressing growing demand for judicial services and reducing case backlogs.

Koome emphasized that the increase in judicial personnel must translate into tangible improvements in service delivery, including faster resolution of cases and enhanced ac-

cess to justice for all Kenyans. She noted that performance measurement for judges and judicial officers would play a critical role in ensuring accountability.

In this regard, the Commission announced a new policy requiring the Judiciary to begin publishing individual performance data for judges and judicial officers starting July 1, 2026.

The framework, she said, will be structured to enhance transparency while safeguarding judicial independence and institutional integrity.

"This is in recognition of our duty to remain accountable to the people of Kenya, who are the ultimate consumers and financiers of justice," Koome stated.

The JSC reaffirmed its commitment to promoting an independent, accountable, efficient, and transparent Judiciary, as envisaged under the Constitution.

Justice Warsame's nomination now awaits presidential appointment, after which he is expected to join the Supreme Court bench at a time when the Judiciary is undergoing significant transformation aimed at improving efficiency and public confidence in the justice system.

Bongo PCS said the government remained firmly guided by national policies and legislative frameworks, particularly the Wildlife Conservation and Management

# Mudavadi hails Mountain Bongo repatriation as landmark step in Kenya's conservation efforts

BY OPCS PT

@themkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi, has described the repatriation of the critically endangered Mountain Bongo as a significant milestone in Kenya's conservation journey.

Speaking at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on Tuesday night when he received the repatriation of the critically endangered Moun-

tain Bongo back into Kenya from the Czech Republic, Mudavadi said that with fewer than 100 Mountain Bongos remaining in the wild, Kenya was confronted with both a challenge and a responsibility. "The story of the Mountain Bongo is, in many ways, a reflection of our broader environmental reality. Once thriving across our montane forests, from the Aberdares to Mount Kenya, Mau, and Eburu, this iconic species now faces the stark reality of near extinction," said Mudavadi.

PCS said the government

remained firmly guided by national policies and legislative frameworks, particularly the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013, instruments, that provide a robust foundation for species protection, habitat restoration, and the management of biodiversity as a national heritage. "Today's milestone, anchored in science, collaboration, and long-term planning, demonstrates the effectiveness of policy when matched with action. The Mountain Bongo Recovery Programme aligns directly with Kenya's



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi with other stakeholders at JKIA on Tuesday night.

national biodiversity strategies, our climate action commitments, and the global Sustainable Development Goals," said PCS.

Mudavadi said that the collaboration between the government, conservation institutions such as Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy, and

international partners exemplified the multi-sectoral approach that must continue to be embraced.

"Conservation today requires unity of purpose across borders, institutions, and communities. Let me emphasise that species recovery is not an isolated effort; it is a strategic national priority. It speaks to our environmental security, our tourism economy, and our intergenerational responsibility," said Mudavadi.

He said that as the country received the Mountain Bongos from the Czech Republic, Mudavadi reaffirmed Kenya's position as a global leader in wildlife conservation and sent a strong message: that through sound policy, strategic partnerships, and sus-

tained commitment, recovery was possible.

"I commend all stakeholders involved and assure you of the Government's unwavering support in strengthening conservation frameworks and ensuring that Kenya's biodiversity continues to thrive," said Mudavadi.

PCS thanked CS Rebecca Miano, Ministry of Tourism & Wildlife, Dr. Erustus Kanga, Director General, Kenya Wildlife Services, Humphrey Kariuki, Founder & Patron, Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy, for facilitating the repatriation and Moses Wekesa, Managing Director, Kenya Airport Authority for his support to the handling of the wild animals at the airport.

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A box containing the Mountain Bongo

**Court** It is unclear what evidential process Bia Tosha expects the court to follow in awarding it billions of shillings in a constitutional and human rights court

# High Court to set the record straight in long-running Bia Tosha petition

**BY MKT REPORTER**  
 @themtkenyatimes

The High Court has intervened to streamline proceedings and set the record straight in the decade-old legal dispute between Bia Tosha Distributors Limited and East African Breweries PLC (EABL).

During a court session dedicated to managing the complex litigation, the presiding Judge directed that before any further substantive hearings take place, the court must first determine exactly which version of the petition is officially on record.

Over the years, the case has accumulated numerous filings, including pending applications and a Further Amended Petition filed in January 2026 by Bia Tosha; which is designed to stop the Diageo-Asahi sale by way of injunction and to

introduce a colossal money claim of KSh45 billion.

These new additions have been opposed by EABL and Diageo as the matter is filed before a constitutional and human rights court, and yet the remedies sought are ordinarily to be found only in commercial cases.

It is unclear what evidential process Bia Tosha expects the court to follow in awarding it billions of shillings in a constitutional and human rights court which is only used to declaration of laws and human rights issues.

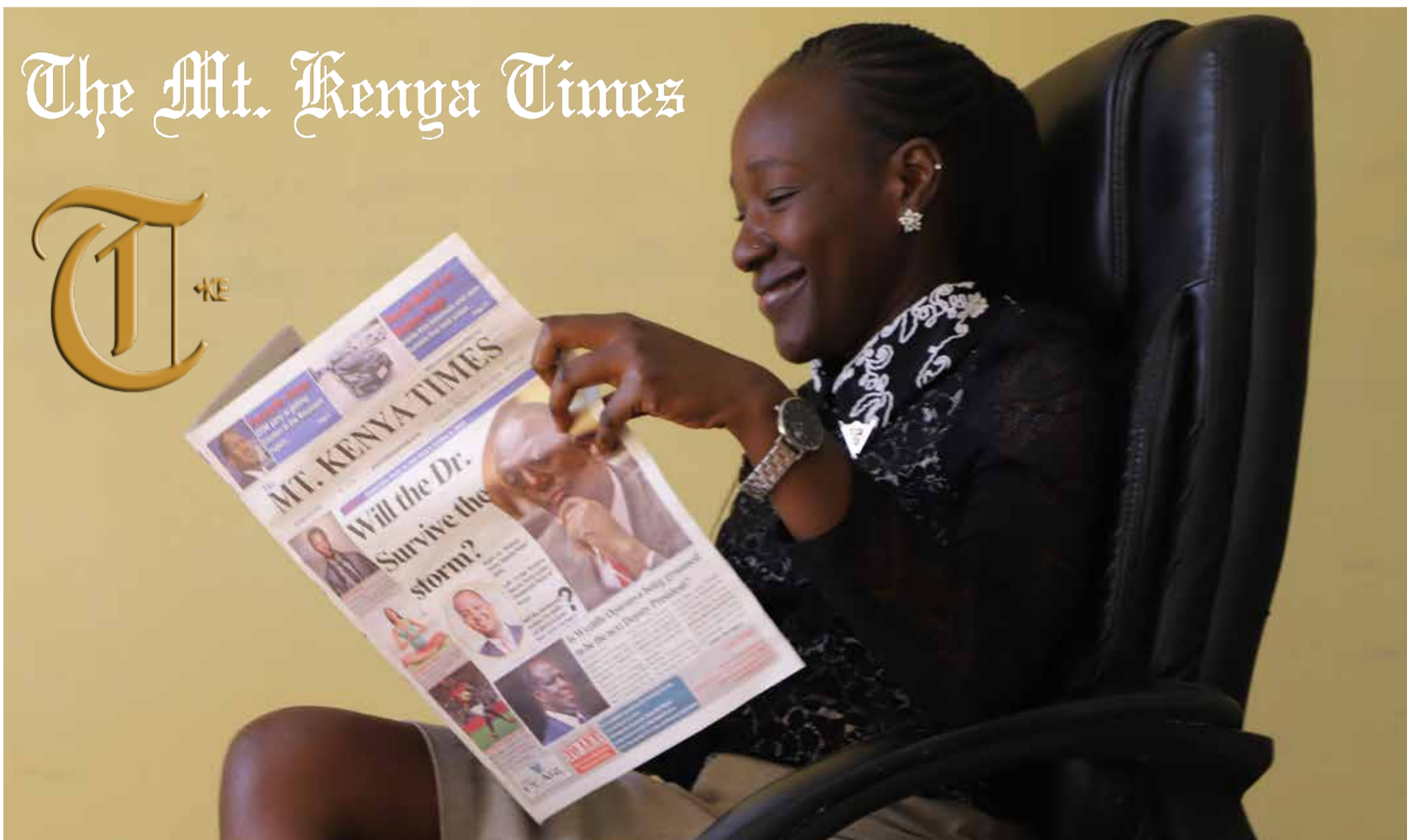
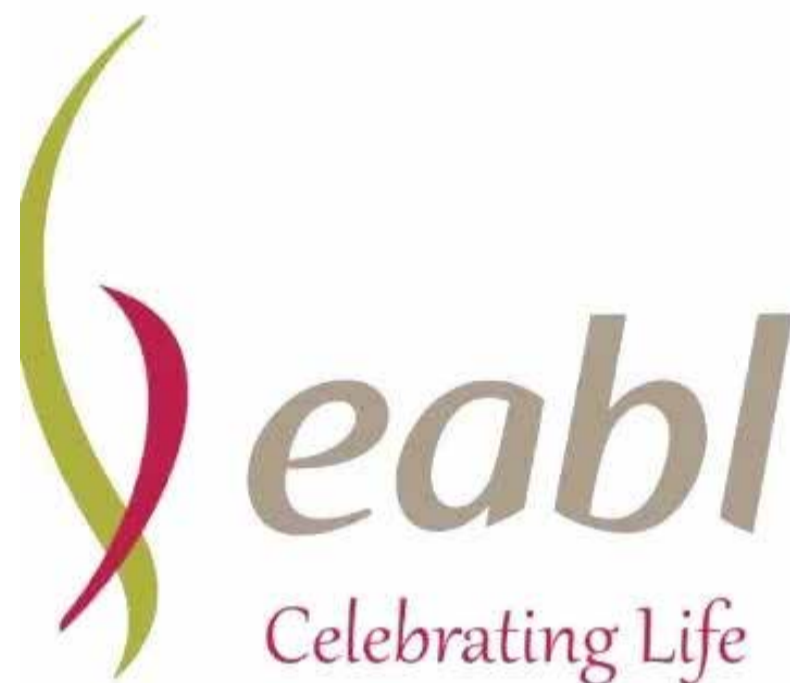
To ensure judicial time is used optimally and to avoid procedural confusion, the Judge ruled that clarifying the exact pleadings before the court is paramount.

The court has directed all parties to highlight their submissions specifically regarding the status and admissibility of the Further Amended Petition.

Once the court issues a ruling to set the record straight on this foundational issue, it will then provide clear directions on the sequencing of the hearing; including whether the main petition and the various pending applications will be heard sequentially or determined together in a single judgment.

The parties agreed to return to court on 28 May 2026, to highlight their submissions on this procedural matter.

This latest directive is viewed as a necessary administrative step to bring order to one of the oldest pending petitions in the Constitutional Division, ensuring that when the case proceeds to a full hearing, all parties are arguing from a clearly defined and judicially confirmed set of pleadings.



## More than the universe could ever hold



You asked me softly, "why me?"  
as if love needs a reason to be—  
as if the sky explains its blue,  
or stars justify why they shine through.

If I could gather the endless sky,  
and count each star that flickers high,  
I'd still fall short in trying to say  
how much you matter... in every way.

The moon may glow with borrowed light,  
the sun may burn both day and night,  
but even they, in all their hue,  
feel dim compared to what I feel for you.

The oceans stretch, so vast, so deep,  
holding secrets they forever keep,  
yet every wave that meets the shore  
whispers your name... and still wants more.

The universe may never end,  
with galaxies it cannot comprehend,  
but even infinity feels small and blue  
when I try to measure my love for you.

You're not just someone I choose each day,  
you're the calm when my storms lose their way,  
the quiet answer my chaos knew,  
long before my heart found you.

So when you ask me "why you?"  
it's because no sky has ever been this true,  
no star has ever felt this right—  
you are my universe... my endless light.

©Dr. Daksha Udhani  
Ahmedabad

## Using others as a "platform" may give quick attention



Using others as a "platform" may give quick  
attention,  
but it doesn't build real respect.

In real life, growth comes from your own effort—  
learning skills, improving step by step,  
and showing what you can do without stepping on  
others.

When you depend on putting others down,  
people may notice you for a moment,  
but they won't trust or value you for long.

A better way is to support others,  
grow together, and let your work speak.

True performance is not about standing on  
someone—  
it's about standing strong on your own.

SRIPRIYA R  
BT ENGLISH  
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT  
TAMILNADU  
INDIA

## A Shadow is a proof, that there is light



A shadow walks where light has been,  
A quiet trace of what is seen.  
It follows close, yet speaks no sound,  
A silent truth upon the ground.  
Where darkness falls, it still appears,

A sign that light is always near.  
It shifts with time, yet never lies,  
A faithful mark beneath the skies.  
Do not fear the shade you find,  
It's born from light that stands behind.  
For every shadow softly bright  
Is living proof there is a light.

Name: Dr. SREE VARSHINI R  
Designation : Teacher

## The right people will stay to figure it out with you



Life is a journey, winding and wide,  
With shadows that fall and tides that rise.  
Ups and downs walk hand in hand,  
Unwritten stories, uncharted land.

People arrive like seasons in time,  
Some leave softly, without a sign.  
Not every soul is meant to stay,  
On this long, uncertain, human way.

In poignant moments, hearts seek hearts,  
In silent grief, in fractured parts.  
Through heavy hours and weary days,  
We look for warmth in countless ways.

In sickness, in sorrow, in unseen fears,  
We need a presence to calm our tears.  
In joy and laughter, in celebrations bright,  
We need shared smiles to feel the light.

Who stays with you—this truth runs deep,

Through storms that wake and nights that weep.  
Family stands through thick and thin,  
A constant shore when tides rush in.

True friends linger when skies turn grey,  
They hold your hand, they choose to stay.  
And sometimes strangers, kind and wise,  
Offer empathy that never dies.

When time aligns, when paths feel true,  
Life gently unfolds its view.  
The right souls gather, steady and new,  
To stand beside and walk with you.

Not to fix, nor to lead the way,  
But to sit with you, come what may  
For in the end, what matters most,  
Is not the path, but who stays close.

\*Nandini AnandKumar\*N Nandini  
Vice- Principal  
Universal Academy Senior Secondary School  
Neravy  
Karaikal -609604  
Puducherry

## Right people will stay to figure it out with you.\_



I walk my path with steady effort  
I do my duties at the right time  
I stay focused on what is mine to do  
Problems come without warning  
Sometimes I don't know what to do next  
But I don't remain alone  
At the right moment

The right people come into my life  
They stand with me and help me understand  
It feels like a quiet blessing  
As if they are sent when I need them most  
Because I stayed true to my work and  
responsibility.

KRISHNAVENI  
GRADUATE TEACHER  
CUDDALORE  
TAMIL NADU  
INDIA.

## A few years ago, while traveling on a bus



A few years ago, while traveling on a bus,  
I saw a woman forcing a child to listen to sounds.  
The boy refused again and again,

I was confused and asked her to stop.  
But the woman did not stop.  
After some time, I understood—  
the boy was hard of hearing.  
I felt deeply for him and questioned her.  
Later, I realized the heart of a mother  
she was not wasting even a single minute.

K.Mohana BT,PUMS Kovakkulam, Karur, Tamil  
Nadu.



Life throws storms and then it calms,  
We take the hits, we miss the charms.  
Alone at times, with help sometimes,  
The ones with you restore your confidence.

Some will argue, some will leave,  
Few give advice, few help you breathe.  
The right ones trust, the right ones stay,

They stand with you and light your way.

Misery shows who's real and true,  
Who guards your heart in all you do.  
They shield you safe from hurt and harm,  
They never go — they keep you warm.

Whatever comes, hold them tight,  
Their hand in yours is proof of might.  
For when you walk through new doors thrown,  
You'll never have to walk alone.

RAJITHA D  
BT Assistant English  
GGHSS PADAPPAL  
KANCHIPURAM  
TAMILNADU

## New doors

**Politics** The elders warned against what they termed increasing cases of political intolerance and provocation in the area that could polarize the region if not tamed

# Elders rebuke Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji over alleged role in Ishiara burial chaos

BY KNA  
@themkenyatimes

A section of elders from Mbeere North Constituency in Embu County have condemned Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji for allegedly disrespecting their MP Leonard Muthende and orchestrating chaos during the burial of the two victims of Ishiara Level Four Hospital protests.

The funeral of Morris Mugo held last Friday turned chaotic after two rival factions clashed pitting “one term” proponents led by Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji and the “two term” group led by MP Muthende.

Speaking to the press in Siakago town on Tuesday, the elders expressed deep concern over the recent chaos witnessed during the burial



Some of the elders

of two young men who were fatally shot during the protests over deplorable state of the facility.

The elders warned against

what they termed increasing cases of political intolerance and provocation in the area that could polarize the region if not tamed.

Elder James Kugocha alleged that the disruptions witnessed at the emotionally charged burial were not accidental but rather a calculated

move orchestrated to embarrass and undermine leaders from Mbeere North and, more so their sitting MP.

According to the elders, such

actions if left unchecked risk eroding the respect and unity that has long defined leadership structures in the region.

They maintained that funerals, especially those involving tragic loss, should remain sacred moments of mourning and solidarity and not turned into platforms for political theatrics or confrontation.

The elders called Mukunji to exercise restraint and accord fellow leaders the respect they deserve, regardless of political differences.

“We will not sit back and watch our MP being disrespected and humiliated in his own backyard,” Kugocha asserted, emphasizing that leadership dignity must be protected at all costs.

Echoing the sentiments, former MCA Ngari Makenge urged politicians across the county to embrace decorum and mutual respect, reminding them that leadership is a status of honor that demands decorum and responsibility.

Siakago Town Business Community Chair Kathuri Nganjire warned that the growing trend of political rivalry spilling into public events could easily ignite deeper divisions among residents if not addressed urgently.

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**Mau Mau** The elders led by Mzee Samson Kachio and Christopher Loritakou also endorsed a resolution made by some other communities last week

# Pokot elders support Mau Mau caucus director quest to lead compensation initiative



MMV Associates CLG Director James Njuguna Mahuria with Pokot community elders at Blue Post Hotel, Thika yesterday. | Photo: courtesy.



Some of the MMV Associates CLG executive members with their director James Njuguna Mahuria and Pokot elders yesterday.

A section of Pokot community elders yesterday held a special ceremony where they appointed the director of a former freedom fighters caucus to lead them, and the rest of concerned Kenyans in their quest to be compensated over atrocities meted on them and their colleagues during the struggle for Independence.

The elders held a special blessings ceremony for MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria at Blue Post hotel in

Thika, Kiambu county that was witnessed by the organization's executive members, drawn from various parts of the country.

The elders led by Mzee Samson Kachio and Christopher Loritakou also endorsed a resolution made by some other communities last week, where they proposed President William Ruto to be the caucus's patron.

They said they hoped that with the special occasion, the group's efforts of seeking compensation of land and cash from the former colonialists and Kenyan government would yield fruits soon. They noted that most of the

former freedom fighters have since passed on with most of the remaining few being incapacitated.

However, they were optimistic that the former freedom fighters descendants would fully enjoy the fruits of independence through the proposed compensation.

On his part, Mahuria gladly accepted the offer, saying he would pursue the matter with dedicated so that the remaining Mau Mau members would enjoy the fruits of their struggle.

Mahuria said his caucus would also reach out to other Mau May groups that have been agitating for the former

freedom fighters compensation.

He noted that the number of former freedom fighters that were compensated by the British government in 2013 were very few compared to those who took part in struggle for independence.

All those who suffered before and immediately after independence must all be compensated, Mahuria asserted.

Last week, at the same venue, Mahuria was made a Kikuyu elder in a ceremony that was presided over by senior citizens from the community and witnessed by dozens of his caucus members from different parts of the country.

The executive team is today expected to present a petition, supporting a bill that is seeking to bar governors from seeking election as Senators, immediately, upon completing their gubernatorial terms. The public participation event is taking place at KICC Nai-

robi.

Tomorrow, some of the executive members are set to take part in Labour day celebrations in Vihiga where the national event will be taking place.



Mzee Samson Kachio blessing James Njuguna Mahuria yesterday.

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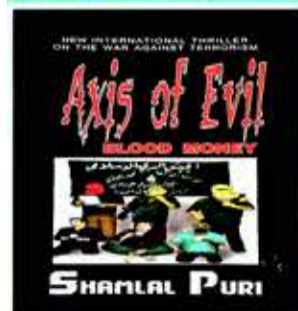
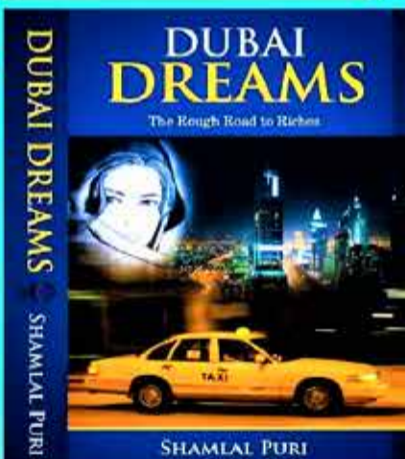
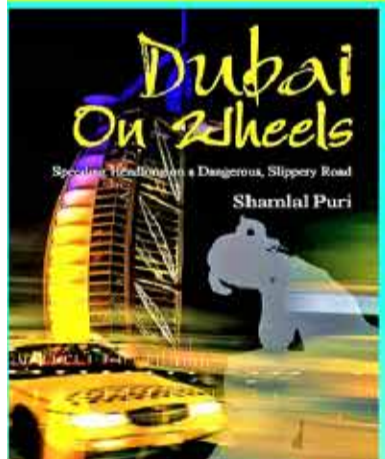
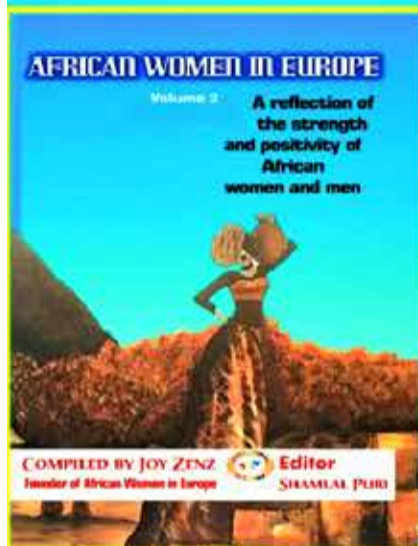
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**Road Safety** These technologies exist, are scalable, and, with the right policy direction can be adapted to Kenya's unique context.

# From roadblock to technology: Reimagining Kenya's road safety for smarter, safer future



BY Fredrick Chelimo  
@themkenyatimes



Smart traffic cities concepts utilize IoT sensors, AI, and real time data to optimize urban mobility, reducing congestion and pollution. This includes utilization of intelligent traffic signals, automated surveillance and connected vehicle infrastructure using platforms like vaidio (software-based AI video analytics platform) or Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control (ATSAC). These systems utilize traffic density to improve flow, enhance safety and enable data driven planning.

William Phelps Eno is widely regarded as the Father of Traffic Safety and a pioneer of modern traffic control after developing the first traffic codes for New York, Paris and London. Since then, traffic has evolved over years to what is currently referred to as "smart traffic". These systems utilize adaptive traffic lights where lights adjust to traffic density detected by cameras as opposed to timers., detection of emergency vehicles and clearing path by turning green lights ahead, real time traffic monitoring, smart parking and intelligent routing among others.

Currently, there is a familiar rhythm to Kenya's roads, one that is plays out with unsettling predictability. The morning rush marked by urgency and improvisation, the midday lull punctuated by roadside checks, and the evening descent with congestion, impatience, and too often, tragedy. Sirens cut through the noise, not as anomalies, but as a recurring note in a system that has normalized crisis management over prevention. Beneath this rhythm lies a deeper question that the country has yet to confront with sufficient honesty; why, despite the presence of institutions, laws, and enforcement, do our roads remain persistently unsafe?

At the center of this question stands two critical actors; the National Transport and Safety Authority

(NTSA) and the National Police Service, particularly its traffic department. Both were designed to serve the public good – safe, efficient, and reliable transport. Yet over time, their roles are blurred, overlapped, and, in some instances, conflicted. What was intended as a coordination has evolved into fragmentation; what should have been clarity has given way to ambiguity. The result is a system where responsibility and shared, but accountability is diffused. For the ordinary Kenyan, this institutional complexity is not experienced on policy documents but on the tarmac. It is felt in uncertainty of enforcement, the inconsistency of compliance, and the quiet, often unspoken negotiations that have come to define interaction between motorists and authority. There exists, whether we admit it or not, a parallel logic of the road – one that operates alongside the formal law, shaped by discretion, perception and survival. In such an environment, compliance becomes less civic duty and more a calculated risk.

It would be too easy, and ultimately unhelpful, to reduce this reality to a simple narrative of institutional failure or individual misconduct. The truth is more complex, and more structural. Kenya's roads safety challenge is not merely a problem of enforcement' it is a problem of system design. We have built a frame work that depends heavily on human discretion, and then expressed surprise when that discretion produces inconsistent outcomes. We have layered institutions without clearly delineating their mandates, and then won-

dered why duplication and tension arises. We have in effect constructed a system that makes seamless execution of tasks almost impossible.

Globally, the countries that have succeeded in reducing road fatalities have done so not by intensifying enforcement and reducing speeds, but by redesigning the entire ecosystem. They have shifted from reactionary to predictive and pre-emptive models. They moved from policing behaviour to shaping environments. They have recognized human error is inevitable, and therefore designed systems that are resilient to it.

Our country stands at the threshold of similar transformation. Advances in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and intelligent transport systems prevent an opportunity not merely to improve the existing framework, but to fundamentally redesign it. Creating roads where compliance is not negotiable at roadsides checkpoints, but ensured through seamless, automated systems. – where violations are detected instantly by intelligent cameras, fines issued transparently through digital platforms, and traffic flows that are optimized in real time by adaptive algorithms. Where accident hotspots are identified before they claim lives, and intervention deployed proactively rather than retrospectively.

This is not a distant vision reserved for more developed countries. These technologies exist, are scalable, and, with the right policy direction can be adapted to Kenya's unique context. What is required is not invention but intention. For citizens such a system would present a profound

shift – from uncertainty to fairness. The rules would no longer subject to interpretation or negotiation; they would apply uniformly, predictably and transparently. Trust which has been eroded over years of inconsistent enforcement, could beginning to rebuilt.

For the traffic police , this transformation offers not redundancy, but renewal. Freed from the burden of routine roadside enforcement, officers would focus on higher value functions; responding to incidences, managing emergencies, and upholding safety in a more professionalized and less discretionary environment. It is, in essence, a transition from gatekeeping to professional guardianship.

As for National Transport and Safety Authority, the moment would call for return to first principles. Its strength lies not in duplicating enforcement, but in designing and managing systems – collecting data, setting standards, and coordinating a coherent national strategy. By embracing a technology-driven approach , NTSA can redefine itself, not as a perceived revenue collector, but as architect of a safer mobility future for Kenya.

And for legislators, the responsibility is both immediate and historic. The legal framework must evolve to support this new paradigm to the futuristic path to smart, intelligent road transport. Clear boundaries should exist between regulations and enforcement with clear codification. Automated systems must be recognized as primary tools of compliance. Revenues collected from the

road use and penalties must be transparently reinvested into safety infrastructure and emergency response. Above all, the law must align incentives with outcomes, ensuring that the system rewards safety rather than inadvertently benefiting from its absence.

No successful reform would be complete without addressing the elephant at the heart of public discourse; corruption. It is a word often spoken with resignation, as though it was an immutable feature of the system. But corruption in this context, is less a cause than a symptom – a reflection of frameworks the permits discretion without adequate oversight. When enforcement is manual, outcomes variable, and process opaque, the space for manipulation expands. The solution therefore, lies not in moral exhortation, but in structural redesign. By reducing human discretion and increasing transparency, an intelligent system can close the gaps through which corruption seeps.

There are however, those who would argue that such transformation is too ambitious, too costly, or too disruptive. Actually, the cost of inaction is far much greater. It is measured not only economic inefficiency and lost productivity, but in human lives- cut short, altered, or burned by preventable tragedy. Every accident avoided is not merely a statistic improved, but a family spared, a future preserved.

What lies before Kenya is not simply a policy choice, but a national crossroads. One path continues the familiar pattern; incremental adjustments, periodic crackdowns, and a persistent gap between intention and outcome. The other path demands courage – the willingness to question inherited structures, to embrace innovation, and to build a system that reflects both the realities of the present and the possibilities of the future.

A nation is not ultimately defined by the complexities of its institutions, but by the effectiveness of its systems in safeguarding the lives of its people. Kenya has the knowledge, the technology, and the institutional foundation and capacity to transform its road safety landscape. What remains is the collective will to act, with clarity of purpose, boldness and vision

"A nation does not become safer when it punishes more drivers – it becomes safer when it designs systems where danger has no space to exist and inflict but enforces the values of human life"

By Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo PWD  
Email: fkipchelimo@yahoo.com

**Tax** Joseph Otieno, a farmer from East Kanyamkago, recounted receiving a tax demand exceeding Sh450,000; an amount he says far surpasses his actual income

# Migori Sugarcane farmers protest ‘punitive’ tax demands by KRA

**BY MKT Correspondent**  
@themkenyatimes

Thousands of sugarcane farmers in Migori County have protested against what they term as punitive and unfair taxation by the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), warning they could abandon the crop if the government fails to intervene.

The farmers, drawn mainly from Awendo and Uriri sub-counties, accused the taxman of issuing hefty tax demands under the Electronic Tax Invoice Management System (eTIMS), contrary to earlier assurances that the system would not impose additional financial burdens.

Speaking during a press briefing in Ulanda, Awendo, the visibly frustrated farmers said KRA is taxing their gross earnings from millers without factoring in the high cost of production, including land leasing, seed cane, labour, and farm inputs.

Joseph Otieno, a farmer from East Kanyamkago, recounted receiving a tax demand exceeding Sh450,000; an amount he says far surpasses his actual income.

“We were assured during sensitisation that registering for eTIMS would not lead to such taxes. Now, just months later, I am being asked to pay over Sh450,000, yet I only have Sh5,000 in my account,” he said.

The farmers claimed the sugarcane sector is being unfairly targeted compared to other crops such as maize, coffee, and tea. They also pointed fingers at millers, including Sukari Industry in Ndihiwa, accusing them of working with KRA in ways that shift the tax burden onto farmers.

They argued that the nature of sugarcane farming makes compliance with electronic tax requirements difficult, as many services, such as weeding and harvesting are carried out by casual labourers who do not issue digital receipts. “You cannot generate an



East Kanyamkago Ward MCA Norman Ogola addressing the media.

Caleb Okello, also from East Kanyamkago, warned that farmers could take drastic action, including halting cane deliveries and pursuing legal redress.

“We are being taxed on our working capital. If this continues, we will block factory gates and go to court,” he said.

East Kanyamkago Ward MCA Norman Ogola backed the farmers, calling for urgent dialogue between KRA, farmers, and local leaders.

“The law is clear—you tax profit, not gross turnover. KRA must clarify what is taxable,” he said, urging regional MPs and senators to raise the matter in Parliament.

Farmers have since petitioned the Ministry of Agriculture and their elected leaders, warning they will stop supplying cane unless the taxation issue is resolved.

electronic receipt for someone who weeds your farm in the village. Yet KRA is taxing us on gross income without considering our expenses. After two years of waiting, profits can be as low as five percent,” said another farmer.

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**Afro-China** China's increasingly voracious appetite for coffee offers a reprieve. As orders swell, Gabru's AWO Coffee Company has pivoted

# Bitter, spicy, sour, sweet: How Africa's flavors found their way to China

BY Xinhua News Agency  
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The mellow bitterness of Ethiopian coffee, the searing heat of a Rwandan chilli, the crisp acidity of a South African vintage, the honeyed sweetness of a Beninese pineapple -- starting May 1, 2026, China's abolition of tariffs on goods from 53 African nations is carrying these flavors, and countless others, onto Chinese tables. Trade across thousands of miles has never been just about tonnage; it is where taste meets life.

## Bitter: The daily grind

Ethiopia is the cradle of Arabica. Legend dictates that a millennium ago, a shepherd on the southwestern Kaffa plateau stumbled upon the energizing properties of the coffee shrub. The land has yielded the bean ever since. Today, Ethiopia churns out 600,000 tonnes of coffee a year. For some 25 million people -- roughly a fifth of the population -- it is the bedrock of their livelihood and the country's premier export. Yet for farmers like Tesfaye Gabru, who came of age on these highlands, the economics of coffee have long been decidedly bitter. He has watched generations of growers lug meticulously tended beans down mountain trails, queue at local purchasing stations, and walk away with prices that bore little relation to the effort they had put in. Vagaries in global commodity markets, capricious weather, and a dearth of domestic processing capacity meant that premium beans rarely fetched premium prices. That injustice -- endured season after season, year after year -- is the bitterness that sits behind the flavor.

China's increasingly voracious appetite for coffee offers a reprieve. As orders swell, Gabru's AWO Coffee Company has pivoted; virtually its entire export volume is now destined for China. Steady demand allows the firm to offer smallholders better margins and expand its harvest-season payroll. The zero-tariff policy has emboldened Gabru further, providing the financial runway to build his own roasting facility on the outskirts of Addis Ababa -- something



Workers pack freshly harvested pineapples in the commune of Ze, a major pineapple producing area in southern Benin, March 16, 2026. | Photo: Seraphin Zouneykpe/Xinhua

he now has the confidence to do for the first time. Chinese firms are venturing directly to the source. Changsha Saturnbird Coffee recently inked a strategic pact with the Ethiopian side, forging a direct sea-rail logistics corridor stretching from the African highlands to the heart of Hunan Province. Wang Ling, the firm's general manager, says Ethiopian beans are a hit with Chinese consumers, and plans to scale up direct procurement to "benefit both grower and drinker." For the farmers who have spent years queuing for a pittance, that is more than a corporate pledge -- it is years of quiet hardship slowly coalescing into a tangible return.

## Spicy: A burning ambition

Herman Uvizeyimana spent years studying in China, where he saw firsthand how Chinese goods -- affordable and well-made -- found eager buyers the world over. When he returned to Rwanda in 2018, he went into trade between the two countries. But the doctorate-holder from the Chinese Academy of Sciences had a deeper ambition. Bringing Chinese

goods in was not enough. He wanted to send Rwandan products the other way -- to earn hard currency for his country and put real income in the hands of Rwandan farmers. In 2021, he heard that Rwandan dried chillies had secured access to the Chinese market. He saw an opening: Rwandan dried chilli packs a punch four times hotter than standard varieties, and China has one of the world's most devoted communities of spice lovers. But chilli was a niche crop in Rwanda, and local farmers were skeptical. Uvizeyimana led from the front -- going into the fields himself, learning from scratch how to select land, propagate seedlings, and dry the harvest. The first year was bruising. Uneven quality meant only a single container made it out the door. "It was a serious blow," he said. He did not give up. He taught farmers the basics of cultivation and pest control, went door to door to collect fresh chillies, and stood over the drying and processing at the factory to keep quality consistent. Trust, slowly, was earned. In the second year, exports jumped to 10 containers. "Our confidence was built up

little by little." Today, Uvizeyimana's Fischer Global ships 200 to 300 tonnes of dried chilli to China each year, with planted area now at 300 hectares. What his years in China gave him was more than knowledge and technique -- it was the courage to spot an opportunity and the will to bring others along for the journey. Spicy is not merely a sensation; it is the drive to set out, and to lead the way.

## Acidity: The vintage advantage

The harvest may have concluded, but the bottling lines at Diemersdal Wine Estate in Cape Town hum relentlessly. Much of this liquid cargo is bound for China. "South Africa's viticultural roots date back to 1659, making us the oldest of the New World producing regions," said Steffi Layer, the estate's international sales manager, with evident pride. Cultivated on ancient granite soils under a Mediterranean sky, South African wines are celebrated for their bold yet refined character -- warming fruitiness wrapped in minerality, with a bright and unapologetic acidity. It

is precisely this "tartness," shaped over centuries by soil and sun, that gives the Cape's vintages their distinct voice in a crowded global cellar. Despite a 17-year presence in the Chinese market and a growing appetite for wine among China's middle class, South African labels have struggled to close the gap with their European rivals. Tariffs and steep shipping costs have been a persistent drag. Layer sees the zero-tariff policy as a turning point. Remove the levies, she argues, and the gains will ripple across the entire supply chain -- shippers, importers, and vineyards alike. "I'm confident South African wine will find a much warmer welcome on Chinese shelves."

## Sweet: Fruits of their labor

In Benin, the pineapple of choice is the "Sugarloaf" -- celebrated across Africa for its intense sweetness and negligible acidity. This unassuming fruit is an economic pillar for the West African nation, with annual production of around 450,000 tonnes generating 1.2 percent of GDP and sustaining tens of thousands of farming families. Paradoxically, growers like Tchegbenangnon Lanmandoclevo once dreaded a bumper crop. Abundance brought not joy but anguish: mountains of pineapples rotting in local markets too small to absorb the glut. "Without the Chinese export market, it would be impossible to sell this volume," he said. Beninese pineapples clinched Chinese market access in 2023, stealing the show at the China International Import Expo and securing tens of millions of dollars in orders. Today, the 55-year-old Lanmandoclevo has tripled his plantation to nearly three hectares. The zero-tariff policy promises to sweeten the deal further. At a recent export launch ceremony in the agricultural hub of Allada, Gaston Dossouhoui, Benin's minister of agriculture, hailed the policy as a catalyst for rural modernization, job creation, and improved livelihoods. The sweetness on a diner's tongue is a farmer's livelihood. Every Sugarloaf carries, within it, a family's rekindled hope. Taste, it turns out, is the one language that needs no translation. An old African philosophy holds: "I am because we are." As China's vast consumer market becomes a vast opportunity for Africa, the continent's flavors -- finding their way into Chinese cups and onto Chinese plates -- are the most everyday and honest proof of a shared destiny across mountains and seas.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Gachagua's next move: Comeback, coalition or candidacy?

By Oliver Ogutu

Rigathi Gachagua is fighting on three fronts simultaneously — in the courts, in the court of public opinion, and inside the shifting alliances of Kenyan politics — and the outcome of each will determine whether he returns to power, reshapes the opposition, or bets everything on the presidency.

His legal team is arguing that the impeachment was procedurally flawed and politically motivated, driven by power struggles rather than any genuine constitutional breach. His adversaries insist the process followed proper channels and reflected legitimate concerns about leadership and accountability. The courts will have the final word — and that word carries enormous consequences.

If the judges rule in his favour, Gachagua returns to the political arena with his credibility restored and a grievance narrative powerful enough to mobilise substantial support. A vindicated Gachagua is a dangerous Gachagua — and those who moved against him will know it. If the impeachment is up-

held, however, his path to high office narrows sharply, at least in the short term. His credibility takes a blow, his options contract, and the burden of reinvention becomes heavier.

Yet Kenyan political history offers a consistent lesson: careers rarely end in courtrooms. Politicians who have been written off have returned, and those who appeared untouchable have fallen. The third possibility — prolonged legal uncertainty with no swift resolution — may paradoxically serve Gachagua best in the immediate term. Ambiguity keeps him relevant. Every court date is a news cycle. Every ruling, however partial, is a platform. Uncertainty, managed well, is a political resource.

Beyond the courts, his trajectory will likely follow one of three paths, each with its own logic and risks.

The first is reconciliation. A return to government ranks remains possible, particularly if reuniting with President Ruto becomes politically useful to both men. Kenya has a well-documented tradition of unlikely reunions — old rivals discovering shared interests, for-

mer enemies finding common ground when electoral arithmetic demands it. Should consolidating Mount Kenya's regional support require a renewed partnership, ideology will yield to calculation, as it almost always does in Kenyan politics.

The second path is coalition-building. Gachagua could turn his back on the ruling establishment entirely and begin assembling a fresh political vehicle — engaging opposition figures, regional leaders, and constituencies that feel unrepresented or aggrieved by the current administration. This route would recast him not as a defeated insider but as a reform figure standing outside the system. It is a longer game, but it builds something durable if executed with discipline.

The third, and boldest, option is a presidential run in 2027. It would require nerve, resources, and a compelling storyline — but Gachagua has the raw material. His recent battles could be woven into a narrative of resilience and resistance, positioning him as a man the establishment tried to silence and failed. Kenyan voters have re-



Rigathi Gachagua

warded such narratives before. Underdogs who frame their struggles as the people's struggles can convert personal setbacks into political momentum.

What is clear is that Gachagua has not been finished by what has happened to him. He remains a figure with a regional base, a national profile, and a genuine grievance — a combination that, in Kenyan politics, is rarely without value. The question is not whether he has a future in public life. The question

is which future he chooses, and whether he has the strategic clarity to pursue it with the discipline that moment demands.

Kenya's 2027 political season is still taking shape. Gachagua intends to be part of it — one way or another.

*Oliver Ogutu is a student at Rongo University.*

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## Kericho residents urged to collect their national IDs to access government services

fully enjoy their basic human rights and access essential government services.

During a ceremony to issue Kenya National Identity Cards to residents of Kaptaboiti in Belgut, Kericho County, Assistant County Commissioner Dorenew Wanjala revealed that for several years, hundreds of ID cards belonging to eligible residents had been sitting uncollected at local Registrar offices — simply because people did not know their cards were ready for pickup.

Wanjala noted that the government's One-Stop-Shop outreach initiative — designed to bring public services directly to communities — had made a real difference. Through the programme, residents were informed about the issuance process, and progress was already visible: of the 600 IDs held at the Registrar's office in



Elon Kipngeno gets issued with his Identification card by Kaptaboiti Area Chief Ben Leitich, Looking over is Belgut Assistant County Commissioner Dorenew Wanjala at Office of Area Chief in Belgut Sub County, Kericho County

Belgut, 500 had already been distributed, leaving only 100 remaining. Those outstanding cards will be issued through Chiefs across the Sub-County. "An ID is the key to all government services — education, politics, business, and much

more," Wanjala said, urging members of the public to keep their identification documents safe and close at hand.

# SPORTS NEWS

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**Sports >>** \*Every once in a while a match comes along that reminds us all why football is referred to as the beautiful game.

## A record-breaking semi-final – the antidote to modern football?



PSG/GETTY IMAGES

Every once in a while a match comes along that reminds us all why football is referred to as the beautiful game.

Paris St-Germain’s record-breaking 5-4 Champions League semi-final first-leg victory over Bayern Munich was one such occasion.

It was the highest scoring semi-final since Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 6-3 in the 1959-60 European Cup – and will live long in the memory.

Not for its tactical genius or calculated gameplans, but for two sides with remarkable attacking quality throwing everything at it in the hope of securing a place in next month’s final in Budapest.

In a campaign where set-pieces have become king, defensive interventions are celebrated like goals and the long throw-in has made a comeback, this was a refreshing reminder that simply scoring more goals than your op-

ponent can be the key to success.

Bayern opened the scoring in a breathless first half, but defending European champions PSG came back in thrilling style to gain a three-goal advantage at 5-2 and surely put one foot in the showpiece.

But the German champions showed their tenacity and talent to reduce the deficit to one and ensure they remain in the tie for next week’s return leg in Munich.

As pundits and fans celebrated an extraordinary advert for the game, PSG boss Luis Enrique enjoyed it too.

“It was amazing. I think it was the best match I have ever managed as a coach,” he said.

“It had amazing rhythm, trying to play offensive football, trying to show their quality. I think everybody had fun watching the match. I’m happy because we won.”

### ‘This is the way to play football’

The tone was set for a dazzling European encounter when both sets of fans unfurled giant tifos before kick-off – PSG’s was emblazoned with the words ‘the conquest of Europe’, while the visitors’ banner urged their side to ‘give everything’.

In a chaotic opening 45 minutes at the Parc des Princes, both sides did just that.

It was fitting the two top-scoring sides in the Champions League this season put five goals on the scoreboard in a mesmerising, end-to-end opening period.

Harry Kane’s penalty was cancelled out by Khvicha Kvaratskhelia’s clinical finish, before Joao Neves’ glancing header and Michael Olise’s moment of individual brilliance left the sides level.

Many will suggest the PSG penalty, awarded after Bayern defender Alphonso Davies was deemed to have handled an Ousmane Dembele cross in the box, was harsh. Dembele calmly converted to give PSG a 3-2 lead at the break.

But the controversial incident was ultimately overshadowed by what pundits called one of the greatest halves of football they had ever witnessed.

Former England captain Alan Shearer said on Amazon Prime: “I can’t stop smiling at how open and bonkers this game is.

“It’s one of the greatest games I’ve ever been to. Two teams that believe in their own ability to outscore their opponent.”

The chaos continued after the break with PSG building a three-

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**Sports >>** \*Every once in a while a match comes along that reminds us all why football is referred to as the beautiful game.

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goal cushion, again through Kvaratskhelia and Dembele, leaving some to wonder if the outcome had been settled.

But Bayern were unwilling to let the chance of a first Champions League title since 2020 get away from them as they fought back in fearsome fashion.

Goals from Dayot Upamecano and Diaz were met with stunned silence from the home fans and no further response from the PSG players as the hosts finished with a slim advantage.

“I have been managing for more than 15 years, and I have to say it was the most exciting [match],” added Luis Enrique.

“It is important to show that that is the way to try to play football. OK, we are not happy as a coach when you concede four goals, but I’m happy because we won.”

It was the first time in any major European semi-final that both sides had scored at least four goals, and just the second time in a Champions League knockout match after Chelsea and Liverpool drew 4-4 in the 2008-09

quarter-final.

With PSG netting 43 goals and Bayern 42, it was also the first time two teams have each scored more than 40 times in a Champions League campaign.

### But was it a defensive disaster?

In a match littered with fascinating battles, it was ultimately a showdown between Europe’s two most potent attacking line-ups.

For PSG, there was the composure and speed of Vitorinha, the incisive passes and clinical finishing of Dembele and the moments of Kvaratskhelia magic.

Bayern had the electrifying ability of Olise, the explosive energy of Diaz and the ruthlessness of Kane. The trio have netted more than 100 goals between them across all competitions this season.

### But at times, defences could be called into question.

Bayern’s full-throttle approach in the second half left them exposed at the back and PSG duly punished them, while the Ligue

1 side appeared stunned as the visitors pulled back two goals, unable to believe they had not put the tie to bed.

Bayern boss Vincent Kompany admitted: “We suffered but we were dangerous. Five goals away from home in the Champions League normally means you’re out but the chances we had, made us believe.

“I’ve seen a lot of good defending today but the game is such fine margins, you either go full into the battles, or retreat fully. The in-between doesn’t work against that level of players.”

Kane also praised his side’s defence, despite it being the first time Bayern had conceded five goals in the competition since 1994-95.

But former England forward Wayne Rooney disagreed with the sentiment as he added: “I love Harry Kane but there is no way he can be praising his defenders. The defending from both teams was really bad, I think he is being modest there.”

### A boost for Arsenal or Atletico Madrid?

While this was the opposite to

the style many fans have become weary of this season – defensive set-ups and an over-reliance on set-pieces – it is perhaps unlikely to be replicated in Wednesday’s second semi-final between Arsenal and Atletico Madrid.

Two sides who pride themselves on their defensive resilience, and more likely to be found holding out for a late goal than playing heavy metal football, will have watched this match with caution.

Chances from open play have been tough to come by for the Gunners this season and a battle to see who can outscore who may not fall in their favour.

But they know they can rely on their defensive strengths and that may prove crucial to preventing a chaotic final.

“Ask the goalkeepers if they were happy with the scoreline,” said former AC Milan and Real Madrid midfielder Clarence Seedorf. “We’ve seen teams like Arsenal getting so many clean sheets and making a difference.

“If there is a team that could bring it home, it could be them.”

BBC

# SPORTS NEWS



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# SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



## A legacy of heart, heritage, and intentional change



By: Anila Bukhari  
@themkenyatimes

Mona Liza Santos is an award-winning Filipina-American author, social entrepreneur, and empowerment advocate whose work has been reshaping the global conversation around emotional literacy for children. Through her visionary platform, she has created more than 40 children's books that focus on kindness, resilience, and cultural identity. Her work is not only literary but deeply transformative, offering young readers the tools to understand their emotions, celebrate their heritage, and build confidence in who they are.

Her journey into authorship is rooted in a deeply personal turning point. In 2020, during the global pandemic, Mona experienced a sudden shift when she was laid off from her corporate career. At the same time, she found herself homeschooling her son in an uncertain and rapidly changing world. What could have remained a challenging chapter instead became the beginning of a powerful transformation. Drawing from her role as a mother, she began writing stories that would comfort, guide, and educate her child. These early efforts soon evolved into a broader mission that would extend far beyond her home.

Mona's life experiences have played a significant role in shaping her voice and perspective. As a military spouse, she has lived a life of movement and adaptation, traveling to more than 70 countries. These global experiences, combined with her identity as a proud daughter of the Philippines, have allowed her to create stories that resonate across cultures while remaining deeply rooted in heritage. Her writing bridges the gap between universal emotional experiences and the importance of cultural pride, making her work relatable to children and families around the world.

Her debut book, *Mama I Love You*,

marked a significant milestone in her career. The book received the prestigious , establishing her as a respected and emerging voice in children's literature. This recognition was not just a professional achievement but a validation of her mission to create meaningful, impactful stories that nurture emotional intelligence from an early age.

One of the defining aspects of Mona Liza Santos's work is her commitment to representing and uplifting the Filipino diaspora. Through culturally significant titles like *Mama I Love You*, she provides children—especially those growing up outside their homeland—with a sense of belonging and pride in their roots. Her stories help young readers understand that their identity is something to celebrate, not hide. In doing so, she has become a cultural bridge, connecting generations and communities through storytelling.

However, Mona's impact extends far beyond the pages of her books. She has successfully transformed storytelling into a platform for real-world change through a "social-impact-first" approach. As a social entrepreneur, she has created national initiatives that bring the values of her stories into everyday life. One of these initiatives is *Be Kind Human Week*, observed on August 24. This day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of mindful actions and acts as the official kickoff for *Be Kind Human Week*. It encourages individuals, families, and communities to practice kindness in intentional and meaningful ways.

In addition, she founded *Be Kind Human Week*, celebrated on October 15. This initiative is dedicated to honoring cultural heritage while promoting cross-cultural understanding and compassion. Through this observance, Mona emphasizes the importance of embracing one's roots while fostering empathy and connection with others. These initiatives reflect her belief that emotional intelligence and cultural awareness should not be abstract ideas but lived experiences.

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, Mona provides free, grade-level-specific digital toolkits through World Love Press. These resources are designed for educators, parents, and communities, enabling them to integrate emotional literacy and cul-



Mona Liza Santos

tural awareness into daily learning environments. By removing financial barriers, she ensures that her mission reaches as many people as possible, regardless of their background or circumstances.

What sets Mona Liza Santos apart is her ability to merge creativity with purpose. Her work is not limited to storytelling; it is a comprehensive approach to building a more compassionate and emotionally aware generation. She understands that stories have the power to shape perspectives, influence behavior, and inspire change. By combining literary excellence with actionable initiatives, she has created a model that goes beyond traditional authorship.

Her influence continues to grow as she gains recognition in glob-

al communities, media platforms, and educational spaces. Yet, despite her achievements, Mona remains grounded in her core mission—to create a kinder world through intentional action. Her journey reflects resilience, adaptability, and a deep commitment to making a difference.

At its heart, Mona's work is about connection. It is about helping children understand their emotions, embrace their identities, and develop empathy for others. It is about empowering families and communities to have meaningful conversations about kindness, culture, and self-worth. Through her books and initiatives, she is not only educating but also inspiring a shift in how emotional literacy is perceived and practiced worldwide.

Mona Liza Santos is not simply building a career; she is creating a legacy. Her work serves as a blueprint for how storytelling can be used as a force for good. By turning personal challenges into global impact, she demonstrates that meaningful change often begins with small, intentional actions.

As her influence continues to expand, her vision remains clear—to leave behind a world that is kinder, more inclusive, and more emotionally aware. Through her dedication, creativity, and unwavering purpose, she is shaping the future of children's literature and social impact, proving that one story, told with heart, can truly change the world.