



ODM demands 50-50 power share in 2027 coalition talks, Wanga declares
 Gladys Wanga declared on Sunday that ODM would negotiate for an equal share of power in any coalition arrangement ahead of the 2027 general election Page 12



Kindiki: Nithi Bridge will span close to 3km, ranking second in length after Dongo Kundu
 Deputy President Kithure Kindiki announced yesterday that the government was ready to begin construction of the Nithi Bridge Page 18

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Corruption Muturi termed the findings a “grave national concern,” warning that the anomalies point to deeper systemic weaknesses

Muturi: Ghost learners used to steal public funds

LERNERS

973,000

Ghost learners uncovered in the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS)



Justin Bedan Muturi

The Democratic Party of Kenya has called for an urgent and independent audit of Kenya’s population master register following revelations of nearly 973,000 ghost learners uncovered in the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS).

In a press statement issued yesterday, Party Leader Justin Bedan Muturi termed the findings a “grave national concern,” warning that the anomalies point to deeper systemic weaknesses in government data systems beyond the education sector. **Page 9**

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Kindiki announces boost for Infrastructure Projects in Maara constituency

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moment moments as captured in pictures

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has announced the resumption and expansion of key infrastructure projects in Maara Constituency following the settlement of pending contractor debts. Speaking yesterday in Irunduni, Tharaka Nithi County, Kindiki said the move has unlocked stalled road construction works, with additional projects set to begin soon.

He noted that the Chogoria ESP market is nearing completion, while construction of student hostels at Muraga Technical Training Institute is ongoing.

The Deputy President added that rural electrification in the area has reached 70 percent, alongside the implementation of several water projects aimed at improving access to clean water.

Kindiki also revealed plans for the construction of the KSh7 billion Nithi Bridge, an 880-metre suspended structure linking Marima and Mitheru trading centres. The project will include two kilometres of low-gradient approach roads and is expected to commence once wayleave acquisition is finalised.

The remarks came after a meeting with grassroots leaders and professionals from Maara Constituency led by area MP Kareke Mbiuki. Discussions focused on aligning development projects with community needs and ensuring regular progress reviews to address implementation challenges.



The Mt. Kenya Times




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NEWS IN BRIEF



Two people were shot dead after demonstrators stormed Ramula police post in Gem constituency, Siaya County. The group, reportedly from Mwibona area in neighbouring Vihiga County, was protesting against a licensed gold mining firm operating in the area. The protest had earlier disrupted traffic along the Ramula–Luanda Road after demonstrators blocked it with stones. Tensions escalated when the group attacked the police post, destroying property and torching a tractor. Police attempts to disperse them, including warning shots, failed, leading to the fatal shooting of two youths. Siaya County Commissioner Norbert Komora blamed external incitement, while Gem MP Elisha Odhiambo condemned the violence and urged peaceful resolution through proper channels.



The Jubilee Party has intensified grassroots mobilisation in Mombasa to boost voter registration and membership ahead of the 2027 General Election. The drive aligns with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission target of registering 183,000 new voters under the Enhanced Continuous Voter Registration exercise, which would raise the county’s voter base to about 825,000. County chairman Richard Barake said the party is focusing on recruiting youth voters to strengthen its support and secure more seats in the region. He added that the effort is part of a broader plan to dominate Coast politics. Deputy leader Fred Matiang’i is expected to tour the county soon.



Kevin Kasadhe, a clinical research nurse with KEMRI and the Cambridge Centre for Global Health Research, is promoting the use of the Bili Ruler at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital to help reduce neonatal deaths caused by jaundice. The device, used under the PRISMA Study, enables early detection by comparing a newborn’s skin colour to calibrated indicators after gentle pressure is applied. Early findings from the hospital and nearby facilities show it can improve timely diagnosis and referral. Unlike traditional Total Serum Bilirubin testing, which requires laboratory infrastructure, the Bili Ruler is simple and suitable for low-resource settings, helping prevent severe complications like brain damage or death.



World’s oldest president, the 93-year-old Paul Biya of Cameroon, has picked his son, Franck Emmanuel Biya, as Vice President of the Republic and Head of the Armed Forces, consolidating control over the country’s political and military structures at a time of heightened unrest. The appointment, announced in an official decree, also designates Franck Biya as Minister Delegate at the Ministry of Defence, placing him at the centre of Cameroon’s security architecture. The development is already drawing attention to questions around governance, succession planning and the concentration of power in one of Africa’s longest-running administrations. The position was scrapped in 1972 but was recently reinstated by the parliament.



Politicians planning rallies, launches and campaign events will now face significantly higher costs for using music after the government introduced a revised tariff structure that raises licensing fees across all elective positions and political activities. Under the new structure, presidential candidates will pay KSh500,000 each, up from KSh400,000. Gubernatorial candidates will pay KSh200,000, an increase of KSh50,000, while senatorial candidates will pay KSh150,000, up from KSh100,000. Candidates for Member of Parliament and Woman Representative positions will each pay KSh100,000, marking a doubling of the previous fee. Member of County Assembly aspirants will now pay KSh15,000, up from KSh12,500. Meanwhile, the flat annual fee for political parties to use music at rallies, launches and campaign activities will remain at KSh600,000, in line with the previous 2023 consolidated music tariffs.

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Elections Karondo reassured the public that the directive is not as disruptive as it may have seemed

CA moves to reassure Kenyans as digital rules tighten ahead of elections

BY Bernard Munyao
@themtkenyatimes

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) has moved to calm anxieties over both new mobile device directive and fears of internet restrictions ahead of the next election cycle.

In recent days, concerns had been growing among Kenyans following a directive requiring all new mobile devices entering the country to adopt USB type-C charging ports.

For many, the announcement sparked confusion with some fearing they would be forced to discard existing chargers or that their devices could soon become obsolete.

Speaking during a community event in Kambirwa, CA Chairman Charles Karondo reassured the public that the directive is not as disruptive as it may have seemed.

He clarified that the new rule strictly applies to future imports and will not affect devices already in use or those that have already been purchased and are on their way into the country.

According to Karondo, the intention is not to inconvenience consumers but to gradually align Kenya with global technology standards.

“This should not be misunderstood as a ban,” he said, emphasising that the transition to USB type-C is meant to reduce confusion caused



CA chairman Charles Karondo at Kwambira.

by multiple charger types and improve user convenience over time.

The Authority has already notified international manufacturers exporting devices to Kenya, signaling a shift that will see only USB type-C-enabled devices approved for entry into the market moving forward.

However, beyond the device directive, Karondo used the opportunity to address another pressing concern, online freedom during the election period.

He assured Kenyans that internet access will remain uninterrupted underscoring the country's commitment to protecting freedom of expres-

sion within the boundaries of the law.

At the same time, he noted that the authority is not turning a blind eye to the risks posed by digital platforms.

Rising cases of misinformation and incitement online have prompted closer collaboration between state agencies.

Karondo revealed that the CA is working jointly with the National Intelligence Service and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission to monitor online content and promote responsible communication saying the approach is not about censorship but accountability.

“We are not restricting dem-

ocratic space. Our goal is to ensure that communication remains responsible and does not threaten national cohesion,” he said.

Karondo made the remarks during the opening of a house he built for a neighbour in Marewa village, Kiharu, in an event attended by several leaders and local residents.

As Kenya edges closer to another election season the Chairman's message appears clear while regulations may evolve to match global trends and safeguard public discourse.

Athi Water announces five-day shutdown for Nairobi pipeline upgrades

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Athi Water Works Development Agency announced yesterday that water supply to Nairobi and neighbouring counties would be interrupted for five days beginning today, as it undertakes critical upgrades to the Northern Collector Tunnel Bulk Water System.

The planned shutdown, which runs from today to Sunday, is intended to facilitate installation and strengthening works on the Raw Water Gravity Transmission Pipeline between Ndakaini Dam and the Kigoro Water Treatment Plant, as well as improvements to treated water transmission pipelines extending to the Gigiri Reservoir.

The agency said the interruption would affect all consumers dependent on the NCT system, including those served by Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, Gatanga Water and Sanitation Company, Oololaiser Water and Sewerage Company, Mavoko Water and Sewerage Company, and the Export Processing Zones Authority. Together, these utilities serve millions of residents, businesses, and institutions across Nairobi,

Kiambu, Murang'a, Kajiado, and Machakos counties.

The Northern Collector Tunnel system currently supplies approximately 140 million litres of clean water daily to the region, making it one of the most critical components of the capital's water infrastructure. The agency described the works as part of ongoing efforts to optimise operations and enhance the long-term resilience of the bulk supply network.

“AWWDA appeals for patience and cooperation from all affected consumers as it undertakes these necessary works aimed at improving the resilience and overall performance of the regional water supply network,” the agency said in its public notice.

Residents and institutions within the affected zones were advised to store adequate water before the shutdown begins and to use available supplies sparingly throughout the interruption period.

For a region where water scarcity is already a persistent grievance, five days without supply will test both household preparedness and public patience.

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- e** IEBC Constituency Offices

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Business The figures placed Kenya among the world's most active mobile money markets, alongside Tanzania and Uganda

Mobile money loans dominate Kenya's credit market as fraud costs mount globally

Kenya ranked among the world's highest mobile money users as GSMA data shows 32% of adults borrowed through mobile platforms in 2024, even as identity theft and SIM swap schemes bleed the industry

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Mobile money providers displaced banks, saccos, and microfinance institutions as Kenya's dominant source of formal credit in 2024, with nearly a third of all adults borrowing through mobile platforms and one in four doing so exclusively, according to a new State of Industry report by global technology body GSMA.

The figures placed Kenya among the world's most active mobile money markets, alongside Tanzania and Uganda, in a regional surge that saw Sub-Saharan Africa account for nearly two-thirds of global mobile money account growth in 2025. Of the 2.3 billion registered mobile money accounts recorded worldwide that year, Africa's share was decisive — and the continent's influence on the trajectory of digital finance is no longer a projection. It is a reality reshaping how hundreds of millions of people save, borrow, and move money.

The GSMA report found that mobile money borrowing accounted for approximately 60 percent of all formal borrowing across Sub-Saharan Africa in 2024, a figure that would have seemed implausible a decade ago when branch-based banking still dominated the financial services conversation. In Kenya specifically, 32 percent of adults borrowed from a mobile money provider, with 25 percent doing so without any recourse to a bank, sacco, or microfinance institution. The shift was not marginal. It represented a structural reordering of how credit flows through the economy.

"A larger share got a loan through a mobile money account in 2024," the GSMA report noted. "At the same time, bank-only borrowing decreased among those who borrowed only in this way."

The appeal of mobile loans is not difficult to understand. They are low-value, fast to access, and repaid over short durations — features that align closely with the financial rhythms of small traders, informal workers, and rural households who have neither the collateral nor the documentation that formal lenders

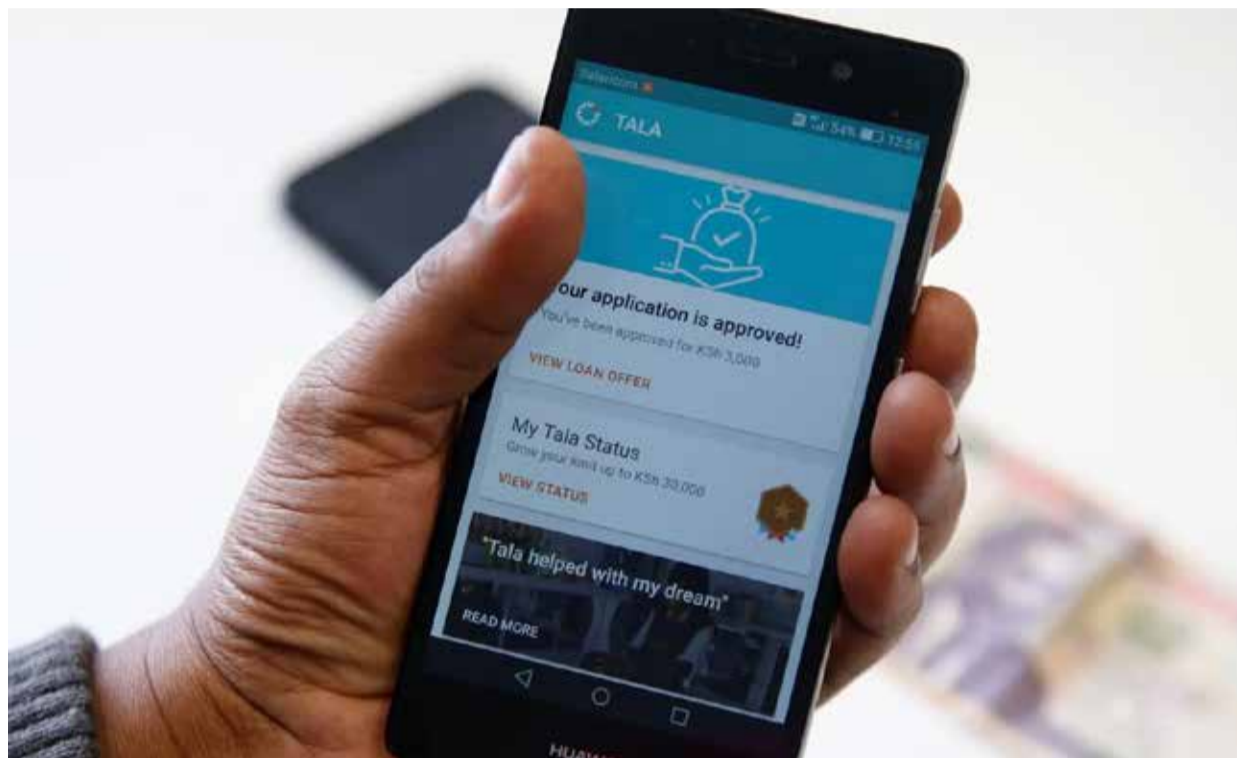
typically require. For mobile money providers, this volume of small, frequent transactions has proved highly profitable, with agents playing a critical role in extending the reach of digital financial services into communities where bank branches remain scarce.

The GSMA data also showed that 20 percent of adults in the region hold mobile money as their only financial account — a figure that underlines both the democratising potential of the technology and the structural gap it is filling in markets where traditional banking penetration has stalled. Savings behaviour has followed a similar pattern, with customers increasingly preferring to hold funds in mobile money accounts rather than deposit them at a bank.

Yet the industry's expansion has not been without cost. Fraud remains a severe and growing threat, one that the GSMA described as the most common complaint among consumers of digital financial services globally. The report estimated that close to 500 billion dollars is lost worldwide annually to fraud — a staggering figure that reflects both the scale of the industry and the sophistication of the criminal networks targeting it. Identity fraud is the most prevalent scheme, with mobile money users also exposed to impersonation, insider fraud by provider staff, agent fraud, cyber attacks, social engineering, and SIM swap schemes. The last of these — in which criminals fraudulently obtain a replacement SIM card and use it to access a victim's mobile money account — has become a particularly damaging form of theft in Kenya and across the region, often wiping out savings and loan balances before victims are aware anything has gone wrong.

Providers have responded by deploying artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies trained on historical fraud data, enabling real-time monitoring of transaction patterns and predictive identification of suspicious activity. The effectiveness of these systems varies, but the industry's investment in AI-driven fraud detection has accelerated markedly in recent years as

losses mounted and customer trust came under strain. Awareness campaigns targeting consumers have also become a standard component of providers' anti-fraud strategies, though the persistence of the problem suggests that education alone is insufficient.



An online financial micro lending platform

Beyond fraud, the GSMA flagged taxation, high remittance costs, inconsistent licensing regimes, and broader policy and infrastructure gaps as structural challenges facing the sector. "Mobile money has become an economic cornerstone in many low- and middle-income countries," the report warned. "However, taxes on mobile money transactions risk affecting millions." In Kenya, transaction levies have been a recurring source of tension between providers, consumers, and the government, with critics arguing that poorly designed taxes disproportionately burden the low-income users the technology was built to serve.

The Kenyan government, for its part, has moved aggressively to expand mobile credit access through state-backed programmes. The Hustler Fund, launched in 2022 under President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration, disburses

personal and small business loans through mobile platforms using a USSD code, targeting Kenyans previously excluded from formal lending. By November 2025, the state reported disbursing over Ksh80 billion in loans and claimed to have redeemed seven million Kenyans who had been blacklisted by credit reference bureaus.

"Today, we have two million Kenyans who borrow religiously from the Hustler Fund," President Ruto said, describing the programme as a cornerstone of his administration's financial inclusion agenda.

In August 2025, the government unveiled a second initiative — the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement project, known as NYOTA, developed in partnership with the World Bank. The programme offers startup capital of Ksh50,000 to young people and vulnerable citizens historically shut out of formal borrowing, also accessible via mobile platforms.

But the Hustler Fund's record has been complicated by a default crisis that has raised serious questions about the programme's long-term viability. As of March 5, 2026, borrowers had failed to repay Ksh12

billion — a default burden that led the government to clip the fund's budget from an ambitious Ksh5 billion to just Ksh300 million in the 2025/26 financial year. Defaulters are disqualified from the NYOTA programme, and the state has begun tracing them through national identification numbers and SIM card records in an effort to recover outstanding loans.

The tension at the heart of Kenya's mobile credit story — between the genuine financial inclusion it has delivered and the governance challenges it has exposed — mirrors a broader dilemma facing the industry across Africa. Mobile money has done what decades of conventional banking could not: it has brought millions of people into the formal financial system. But sustaining that achievement will require confronting fraud, designing smarter policy, and building the kind of trust that keeps borrowers repaying — not because they fear being traced, but because the system has earned their confidence.

That work is still very much unfinished.

Corruption The party singled out potential gaps in data capture, validation, and inter-agency coordination, particularly involving IEBC

Muturi: Ghost learners used to steal public funds

The former Attorney General and Cabinet Secretary in President William Ruto's administration noted that the 973,000 "ghost learners" has exposed flaws in National Data Systems

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Democratic Party of Kenya has called for an urgent and independent audit of Kenya's population master register following revelations of nearly 973,000 ghost learners uncovered in the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS).

In a press statement issued yesterday, Party Leader Justin Bedan Muturi termed the findings a "grave national concern," warning that the anomalies point to deeper systemic weaknesses in government data systems beyond the education sector.

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NEMIS, a centralized platform that draws from foundational identity records such as birth registration data, recently came under scrutiny after the audit revealed widespread irregular entries.

While the discrepancies have largely been linked to possible financial misappropriation through inflated school capitation, the Democratic Party argues the implications are far broader.

According to the party, the scale of the irregularities raises serious questions about the integrity, management, and verification of data across interconnected national registries, including those used in electoral processes.

The party singled out potential gaps in data capture, validation, and inter-agency coordination, particularly involving the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

It warned that unless addressed, such vulnerabilities could undermine public trust in key institutions and processes.

Central to the party's demands is the immediate commissioning of a comprehensive and independent forensic audit of the population master register. The audit, it said, should be conducted transparently by credible private firms and subjected to public accountability to restore confidence in the system.

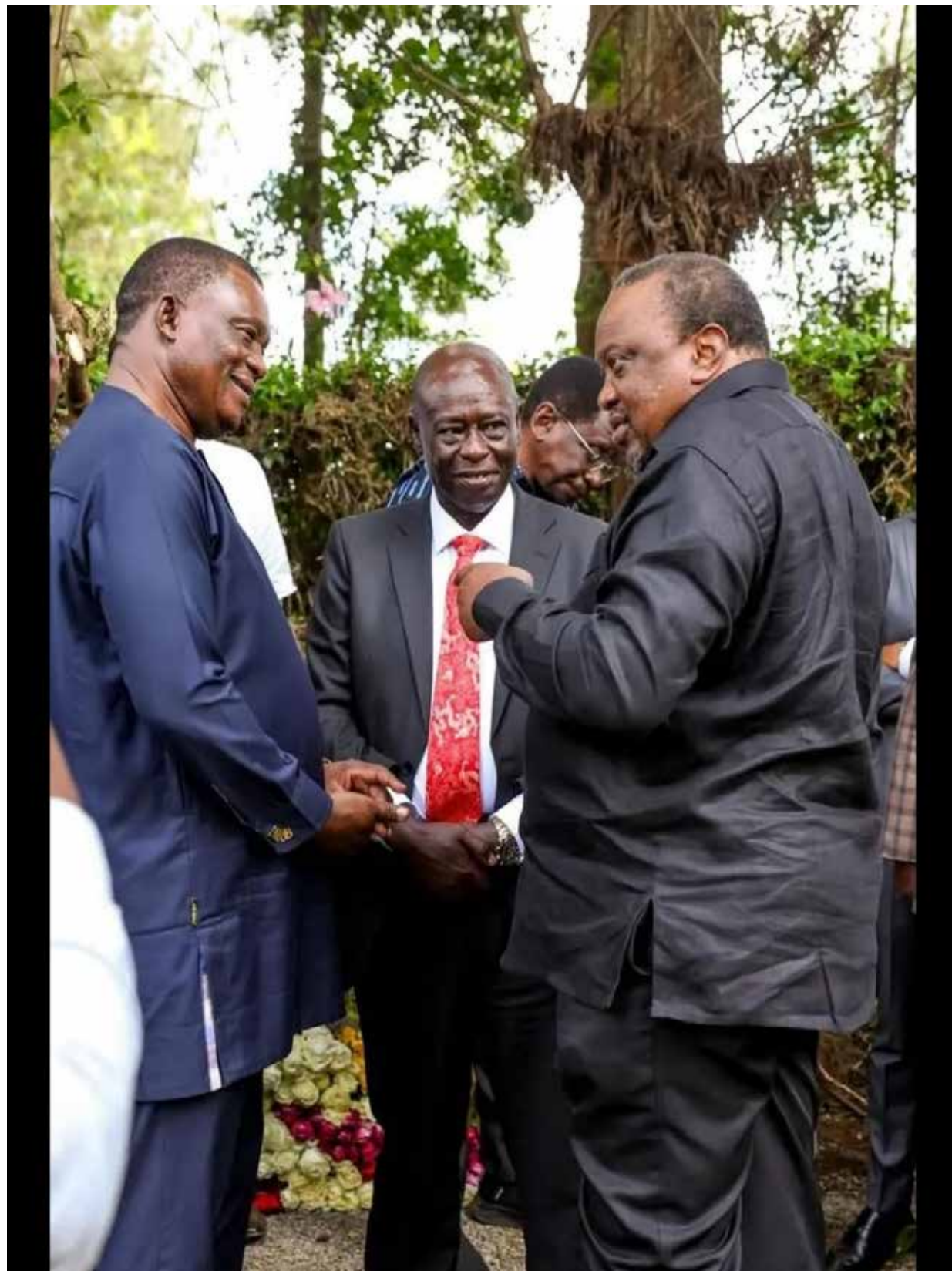
Further, the Democratic Party urged the IEBC to refrain from relying on or making alterations to the current population data until the audit is completed and its findings made public.

In a move aimed at strengthening electoral integrity, the party also called on the IEBC to gazette polling stations early, publish a verifiable list of all polling centres, and ensure each corresponds to a physically existing and publicly accessible location.

This, it noted, would help guard against irregularities similar to the "ghost learners" identified in NEMIS.

The statement also appealed to Parliament and relevant oversight bodies to exercise strict supervision over the process to guarantee independence and credibility.

"Kenya's democratic stability depends fundamentally on the integrity of its data systems," Muturi said, emphasizing that any doubt cast on such systems must be addressed de-



From left: JB Muturi, Rigathi Gachagua and Uhuru Kenyatta during the burial of former Kirinyaga Senator, Daniel Karaba last week | Photo: Courtesy.

cisively, transparently, and without delay.

The party reaffirmed its commitment to accountability, transparency, and the rule of law, warning that

failure to act could erode public trust in national institutions tasked with managing identity, public resources, and elections.

Competition Zhu's remarks landed against a backdrop of surging output from Chongqing, China's leading automotive production city.

Changan chairman warns against "over-competition" as Chinese automaker eyes global expansion

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Zhu Huarong, chairman of China Changan Automobile Group and deputy to the 14th National People's Congress, called yesterday for measures to prevent destructive competition in China's automotive sector and urged an accelerated transition from traditional manufacturing to a modern industry ecosystem, speaking during China's annual Two Sessions legislative gathering

in Beijing. Zhu's remarks landed against a backdrop of surging output from Chongqing, China's leading automotive production city. According to the Chongqing Bureau of Statistics, the municipality produced 2.787 million vehicles in 2025 — a 9.7 percent increase on the previous year — cementing its position at the top of China's automotive hierarchy and underlining the scale of industrial firepower behind companies like Changan as they push aggressively

into global markets. The numbers behind Changan's international ambitions were striking. In an interview with Bridging News on the sidelines of the Two Sessions, Zhu disclosed that the company's overseas sales exceeded 630,000 units in 2025, compared to just 53,000 units in 2020 — an elevenfold increase in five years that placed Changan among the fastest-growing Chinese automakers on the world stage. The trajectory reflected both the maturation of Changan's



Zhu Hurong, deputy to the National People's Congress and Chairman of China Changan Automobile Group, delivers his speech at a press conference. (Photo/Changan)

international strategy and the broader momentum of Chinese vehicle exports, which have reshaped competitive dynamics in markets from Southeast Asia to Latin America and the Middle East. Changan, the third central state-owned automotive enterprise headquartered in Chongqing, has moved beyond simply exporting fin-

ished vehicles. Zhu said the company was now exporting its technology platforms to established international manufacturers including Ford, Mazda, and Stellantis — a development that signalled a meaningful shift in how Chinese automakers positioned themselves globally, not merely as volume producers but as technology partners ca-

pable of licensing innovation to Western industry giants. Zhu outlined a structured global expansion framework, dividing the world into eight regions. Full-scale operations were already under way across China, Southeast Asia, Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central and South America, and the Middle East and Africa. North America and the Japan-Korea corridor were designated strategic long-term research markets, where Changan was studying entry conditions rather than committing to immediate expansion. For African markets, including Kenya, where Chinese vehicles have gained considerable ground in recent years, Changan's deepening regional focus carried direct commercial implications. In a fiercely competitive global industry, Changan was no longer following — it was setting the pace.

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Development This road is not just about shorter travel times,” Omollo said. “It is about opening up an entire corridor to economic activities...”

New Ngong–Suswa highway cuts travel time to western Kenya, Omollo says

The 70-kilometre tarmac road offers motorists a faster, safer alternative to the congested Nairobi–Mai Mahiu escarpment route

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo has announced that the Ngong–Suswa Highway is now fully operational, offering motorists a direct 70-kilometre tarmac alternative to the frequently congested Nairobi–Mai Mahiu escarpment road and significantly cutting travel time to Narok, Bomet, Kisii, and other parts of western Kenya.

Speaking yesterday, Omollo described the road as “a game changer,” saying it addresses one of the most persistent bottlenecks in Kenya’s regional road network. The highway runs from Ngong Town in Kajiado County to Suswa, bypassing the steep and accident-prone escarpment section that has long frustrated long-distance travellers, particularly during festive seasons and periods of adverse weather. For many Kenyans, the old route was not merely inconvenient — it was dangerous, unpredictable, and at times, deadly.

“This road is not just about shorter travel times,” Omollo said. “It is about opening up an entire corridor to economic activity and giving communities faster, more reliable connections to the markets and services they depend on.”

The announcement marks a significant moment in Kenya’s ongoing effort to modernise its road infrastructure and extend the economic benefits of connectivity beyond the capital. The Ngong–Suswa corridor has long been identified by transport planners as a critical missing link in the country’s road network — one whose absence forced millions of travellers and



Ngong–Suswa Highway

commercial operators onto a single, overstretched route through the Rift Valley escarpment. With the highway now open, that bottleneck, for the first time in decades, has a credible alternative.

The Nairobi–Mai Mahiu road, which descends sharply through the Great Rift Valley escarpment, has for years been one of Kenya’s most notoriously difficult stretches of tarmac. Its steep gradients, sharp bends, and exposure to landslides and flooding have made it a recurring site of tragedy. According to the Kenya National Highways Authority, the escarpment section has recorded some of the country’s highest rates of road accidents over the past decade, with heavy commercial vehicles — trucks, tankers, and buses — frequently involved in fatal incidents that close the road for hours and sometimes days at a time.

During the 2023 long rains, for instance, a series of landslides along the escarpment left thousands of motorists stranded for extended periods, with ripple effects felt as far as Kisumu and Eldoret. Perishable goods spoiled in stationary lorries. Fuel deliv-

eries to western counties were delayed. Passengers bound for Narok and Bomet slept in their vehicles. The economic and human cost of that single episode ran into hundreds of millions of shillings, according to transport sector estimates — and it was far from an isolated incident.

It is against this backdrop that the Ngong–Suswa Highway carries such weight. Omollo said the road will help decongest traffic along the escarpment corridor, especially during peak travel periods such as the Christmas and Easter holidays, when daily vehicle counts on the Mai Mahiu route can multiply several times over. Emergency rerouting during accidents or weather-related closures will also become significantly more manageable, with the new highway offering a viable and well-surfaced diversion that does not add prohibitive distance to journeys headed west.

Beyond its role as a safety valve for the national road network, the highway’s most immediate and tangible impact may be felt in the communities it passes through. Omollo said farmers and

livestock traders in Kajiado County stand to benefit most directly, with the improved route enabling them to move produce and animals to Nairobi more efficiently and at considerably lower transport costs. For smallholder farmers who have long absorbed the financial pain of delayed and damaged deliveries, faster and more reliable market access could meaningfully improve household incomes.

“When a farmer in Kajiado can get their vegetables to Nairobi in half the time and at half the cost, that is not a small thing,” said a senior official at the State Department for Internal Security and National Administration, speaking on condition of background. “That is the difference between profit and loss at the end of the season.”

Livestock traders, who have traditionally relied on a patchwork of rural tracks and informal routes to move cattle and goats to urban markets, will find in the new highway a faster, more direct corridor that reduces the stress on animals during transit — a factor that directly affects the quality and value of livestock at sale. For a county like Kajiado,

where pastoralism and agribusiness form the backbone of the local economy, this is not a peripheral benefit. It is central.

The economic ripple effects are already visible, even before the highway has been fully operational for an extended period. Omollo noted that rising land values along the corridor are attracting new investment — petrol stations, vehicle service centres, and hospitality facilities are taking shape at key intervals along the route, creating jobs and stimulating commercial activity in communities that have historically been underserved by infrastructure. Entrepreneurs who once saw little reason to set up along a dusty, underused road are now staking claims on what is quickly becoming a viable commercial corridor.

Property agents active in the Ngong and Kiserian areas have reported a marked uptick in inquiries and transactions since work on the highway neared completion, with buyers and developers drawn by the prospect of improved access and the downstream economic activity it is expected to generate. Land that was changing hands for modest sums two years ago is now commanding significantly higher prices, reflecting the market’s confidence in the corridor’s future.

Transport operators, too, are recalibrating. Several shuttle and public service vehicle operators who spoke to this publication said they are exploring new routes along the Ngong–Suswa corridor, anticipating growing passenger demand as awareness of the highway spreads. For commuters travelling between Nairobi and Narok in particular, the new road promises to cut journey times that could previously stretch to three hours or more during peak periods — a reduction that would transform daily commuting patterns and open up new possibilities for where people live and work.

Omollo said the State Department for Internal Security and National Administration is coordinating road safety awareness campaigns along the new corridor and working with relevant security agencies to strengthen administrative oversight and emergency

response capacity across the route. Speed management, signage, and community engagement with settlements along the highway are among the priorities being addressed in the rollout phase, he said, adding that the government is keen to ensure that the benefits of the new road are not offset by a new generation of safety challenges.

Road safety advocates have cautiously welcomed the highway while urging the government not to treat its opening as the end of the process. “Infrastructure is only as good as the systems built around it,” said a transport safety researcher at a Nairobi-based policy institute, who asked not to be named pending formal publication of their findings. “We need robust enforcement, adequate lighting at key junctions, clear signage, and community education — especially in areas where pedestrian and livestock movement will intersect with high-speed traffic.”

Those concerns are legitimate and, if history is any guide, worth taking seriously. Kenya has a documented pattern of investing in road construction without proportional investment in the safety architecture that determines how those roads perform over time. The Ngong–Suswa Highway, if it is to fulfil its promise, will require sustained attention — not just a ribbon-cutting and a press release.

For now, however, the mood along the corridor is one of cautious optimism. Traders, farmers, commuters, and investors are watching closely, adjusting plans, and beginning to reimagine what is possible when a road actually works. That, in itself, is no small thing in a country where infrastructure promises have so often outpaced infrastructure delivery.

For millions of Kenyans who travel between Nairobi and the western counties — who have navigated landslides and lorry accidents and hours lost to a road that was never built for the traffic it carries — the Ngong–Suswa Highway is more than a new road. It is, at last, a better way home.

Politics “Regarding those positions, we will speak, saying it is 50-50,” Wanga said. “If they take half, ODM also takes half.”

ODM demands 50-50 power share in 2027 coalition talks - Wanga

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Orange Democratic Movement national chairperson Gladys Wanga declared on Sunday that ODM would negotiate for an equal share of power in any coalition arrangement ahead of the 2027 general election, setting a firm baseline that her party expected half of all positions in a future government.

Wanga, who also serves as Homa Bay County Governor, made the remarks during an address to residents in Muhoroni Sub-County on Sunday, signalling that ODM was entering the next political season with a sharper sense of its own weight and a clearer set of demands than it had carried into previous coalition conversations. The statement was among the most direct articulations yet of ODM’s negotiating posture as Kenya’s

political realignments ahead of 2027 begin to take sharper form.

“Regarding those positions, we will speak, saying it is 50-50,” Wanga said. “If they take half, ODM also takes half. If they take the presidency, the deputy is ODM. That is how we will talk as we move forward.”

The declaration landed at a moment of considerable turbulence within the broader opposition landscape, where shifting alliances, personal ambitions, and the lingering aftershocks of the broad-based government arrangement have complicated efforts to build a unified front against the ruling Kenya Kwanza coalition. For ODM, which remains one of the country’s most structurally organised parties with a loyal base concentrated in Nyanza, western Kenya, and parts of the coast, the 50-50 demand was as much a statement of confi-

dence as it was a negotiating opening.

Wanga was careful to frame the party’s approach as one rooted not only in the arithmetic of power but in a genuine commitment to policy. She told residents that when ODM entered coalition talks, it would arrive with a substantive agenda — one that placed the concerns of ordinary Kenyans alongside the question of who occupied which office.

“When we go into negotiations, we will go knowing that we are a big party,” she said. “And as we have said, we will talk about positions, yes, but first, we will also talk about the issues of the citizens.”

That framing — policy before positions — has become a recurring emphasis in ODM’s public communications in recent months, reflecting a broader effort by the party leadership to shed the perception that its political calculations are driven



Orange Democratic Movement national chairperson Gladys Wanga

primarily by elite bargaining rather than grassroots interests. Whether that message resonates beyond the party faithful will depend in large part on what specific policy commitments ODM is able to extract from any future negotiating partner, and whether those commitments survive contact with the realities of coalition governance.

Wanga also provided insight into the internal mandate that the party leadership believes it is operating under, citing the recently held special delegates’ conference as the moment at which the membership authorised the current leadership to begin formal negotiations. That conference, which drew party officials and delegates from across the country, was seen at the time as an effort to consolidate Raila Odinga’s authority over the party’s strategic direction following his return from the African Union Commission race in Addis Ababa — a contest he narrowly lost to Djibouti’s Mahmoud Ali Youssouf earlier this year.

The governor did not name specific potential coalition partners, but her remarks drew a clear line around who ODM considered beyond the pale of political engagement. Targeting what appeared to be elements of the United Opposition front, Wanga was pointed in her exclusions.

“People who divide Ken-

yans, those who divide Kenyans on tribal grounds, people of insults, people who do not understand themselves — those are people we cannot talk to,” she said.

The remarks suggested that ODM’s coalition calculus was not simply transactional but carried a values dimension — or at least wished to be seen as doing so. In a political environment where ethnicity remains a powerful organising force, Wanga’s invocation of tribal divisiveness as a disqualifying factor was striking, even if it stopped well short of naming the individuals or formations she had in mind.

Equally significant was her pushback against narratives of internal fragmentation. In recent weeks, a number of ODM-affiliated figures have made public statements or taken political steps that appeared to distance themselves from the central party leadership, feeding speculation that the organisation was fracturing ahead of 2027. Wanga moved firmly to counter that reading.

Speaking in Muhoroni, she dismissed suggestions that the party was split, insisting that the defections of a small number of individuals did not represent a meaningful rupture in ODM’s organisational cohesion. She assured supporters that the majority of elected leaders under the

ODM banner remained loyal to the party and to its current leadership, and that this alignment would hold through and beyond the 2027 elections.

“ODM still has a majority of the elected leaders loyal to the party and the current leadership,” she said, projecting a confidence that the party’s opponents have been keen to undermine.

Political analysts watching the 2027 realignments have noted that ODM’s ability to maintain internal discipline while simultaneously engaging in complex and potentially divisive coalition negotiations will be one of the defining tests of the party’s institutional maturity. Parties that have entered similar processes in the past — including ODM itself during the run-up to 2013 and 2017 — have often found that the pressures of coalition bargaining accelerate rather than arrest internal tensions.

For now, however, Wanga’s message was one of unity, confidence, and readiness. ODM, she insisted, knew its value, knew its demands, and was prepared to negotiate from a position of strength rather than necessity.

In Kenyan politics, where the distance between a declaration and a deal can stretch across years of shifting loyalties and recalculated interests, the real test of that confidence is still to come.

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Kenya-China Guo described the full implementation of duty-free treatment for African exports as a landmark in China-Africa trade relations

Kenya must reform to reap China's zero-tariff windfall, ambassador warns

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Haiyan warned yesterday that Kenya risked squandering a historic trade opportunity unless it moved swiftly to improve its business environment and the quality of its exports, as China prepares to extend zero-tariff access to goods from 53 African nations starting May 1, 2026.

Speaking at a briefing for Kenyan journalists and scholars, Guo described the full implementation of duty-free treatment for African exports as a landmark in China-Africa trade relations — one first committed to at the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. But she was candid about the conditions attached to its success.

“We hope the Kenyan side will continue to improve its business environment and business climate to

attract more Chinese investment and enterprises to seize the opportunity of zero-tariff treatment, improve the quality of export products, and achieve economic transformation and structural upgrading,” she said.

China began offering partial zero-tariff access to selected African exports in 2005, later extending the policy to least developed countries in 2024. The latest expansion broadens full duty-free access to a wider group of African nations, with expectations of increased trade volumes and deeper investment flows into the continent. For Kenya, whose key agricultural exports — coffee, tea, avocados, and macadamia nuts — already enjoy demand in Chinese consumer markets, the policy represented a tangible opening. The question, Guo made clear, was whether Nairobi would be ready to walk through it.

She described the zero-tariff framework as a “systematic project” de-



Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Haiyan

manding sustained cooperation across trade, investment, technology, and services, and said China was prepared to negotiate broader economic arrangements with Kenya to support long-term growth. Practical support measures were already in

place, she added, including streamlined customs procedures, an expedited cargo clearance system known as the “green lane,” and access to major trade platforms such as the China International Import Expo and the China-Africa Economic and

Trade Expo.

The opportunity is real. Whether Kenya seizes it will depend less on what China offers — and more on what Kenya is willing to fix.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Choosing leaders, not politicians



When seasons of elections rise again,
And voices echo across the plain,
The people gather, hope in their eyes,
Yet too often fall for well-dressed lies.

Sweet are the words that fill the air,
Promises painted bright and fair,
Hands that wave, and smiles so wide—
But truth and service pushed aside.

For not all who seek the seat to lead
Are planted from a noble seed;
Some chase power, fame, and gain,
Leaving behind the people's pain.

A leader stands with vision clear,
With honest heart, with conscience near,
Not one who shines for just a day,
Then turns and slowly walks away.

Oh citizens, arise and see,
Your vote's a voice, your will is key;
Not just a moment, not just a choice,
But shaping futures with your voice.

Look beyond the spoken word,

Let actions past be clearly heard;
For what is done speaks loud and true,
More than the things they say to you.

Do not be swayed by fleeting gold,
Or favors wrapped in stories told;
For what you take in that short hour
May cost you years beneath their power.

Reject the chains of tribal call,
Or blinded hearts that make you fall;
Stand firm in truth, in reason stand,
For better days are in your hand.

And when the votes are cast and done,
The work of change has just begun;
Hold them to task, demand what's right,
Let justice be your guiding light.

For silence feeds the seeds of wrong,
And weakens hope that should be strong;
But watchful eyes and voices loud
Can lift a nation from the crowd.

So choose not those who only claim,
But those who serve beyond the name;
Choose those whose hearts with people stay,
Not those who fade when crowned with sway.

Then shall the tears of regret cease,
And nations walk the path of peace;
For when true leaders take their place,
Hope and progress will embrace.

By Dolphine Kwamboka

No poverty, zero hunger



Where there is a will, there is a way
The way, it takes you to your destination.
Likewise if you feel comfortable
You can perform many things.

The peace in minds
bring joy and happiness.
Having money in your hands
Feeling good and joyful with zero worry.

By singing you forgot your hunger sometime.
Fulfilling your needs, getting contented heart,
Make you overcome yourself
Come away from your poverty.

Rajesh Kanna B N

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M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed.,
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BT Asst
GMHSCHOOL,
TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.
Tamil Nadu, India
Creative Writers.

My mentor, my mother



My mother feels each thorn that touches me
inside,
In all this world, you're my only love, my guide.
A mother's love fills all the world so wide,

She heals the heart like balm no pain can hide.
Because of you, all evil runs away,
You open doors of kindness every day.
The angels come and softly start to pray,
Then spread their wings and light upon your way.
Your prayers bring joy to every day I live,
With tender words, such warmth you always give.
In gentle love, our hearts will always live,
To God I pray long life to you He give.
Happy your day, my mother, pure and bright,
With you, my moments pass in joy and light.
My fearless guard, so strong in any fight,
You are my mother — my eternal light.

Rakhmonova Gulzoda
Uzbekistan

My soldier



Loyalty, kindness, devotion,
all of them are in you.
My pure-hearted, kind-hearted protector,
my guardian is you.
I wish to see you,
just once your face.
You are my support, my soul,
my soldier.

If you come,
this heart of mine will be filled with light.
It will rejoice in happiness,
and all sorrow will fade away.
The flowers you gave me
slowly fade away.
You are my support, my soul,
my soldier.
I thank the fate
that gave you to me.
Was it coincidence or destiny,
or perhaps written for us?
I ask from God
strength and power for you.
You are my support, my soul,
my soldier.
Author: Do'sanova Dilnoza

The boat



Life is like a boat
Rowing against the waves & float
Facing difficulties
To reach the eternity
With oars as hope
Consoling the Anchor to cope

Assuring you would never sink
So don't let your positivity shrink
Though heavy storm disturb
Sail across & do not curb
Until your dreams comes true
Reaching ashore with virtues of hue....

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

G.Sarala.

Love and kindness build the world



Love and kindness built this earth,
A gift from God, our sacred birth.
Mountains rise and oceans wide,
Yet love stands stronger, deep inside.

Power is not in might or name,
But in soft hearts that shine the same.
In tender words and caring ways,
That light the dark and warm our days.

We often wander, lose our way,
Forgetting love in life's display.
But one kind word, one smiling face,
Can fill a soul with quiet grace.

So let your heart be pure and kind,
Leave gentle footprints far behind.
For love and kindness, calm and true,
Can shape the world beginning with you.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
Chengalpatu district
Tamil Nadu India

Crime Their demands came as investigations into the alleged manipulation of the country's fuel supply chain intensified

Lawyers demand private sector arrests in fuel cartel scandal as probe widens

Abdullahi and Kipkorir warned that pursuing only government officials while leaving implicated companies and directors untouched would expose the anti-corruption crackdown as selective and incomplete

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyaintimes

Prominent lawyers Ahmednassir Abdullahi and Donald Kipkorir yesterday called on the government to arrest and charge private sector executives implicated in the fuel cartel scandal, warning that accountability confined to public officials alone would render Kenya's anti-corruption effort meaningless. Their demands came as investigations into the alleged manipulation of the country's fuel supply chain intensified, following President William Ruto's public vow to dismantle corrupt networks in the petroleum sector. The scandal

centred on the alleged diversion of a 60,000-metric-tonne fuel consignment and the deliberate engineering of a national fuel shortage — one that unsettled energy supply across the country and triggered a wave of senior government resignations. Ahmednassir acknowledged the president's assurances but pressed for action that matched the rhetoric. "The four government officials involved in the scam have spent the better part of the Easter holiday as guests of the state in various police stations," he said. "Mr. President, when will you and your government go after the directors and the companies involved in this fraud? Why aren't we see-

ing any steps taken against the private sector players in this scam? Are we taking any steps to get a refund of the money already paid to one of the companies?" Kipkorir was equally unsparing, framing the importation of substandard fuel as economic sabotage implicating a wide network across the entire supply chain. "If all those who conspired to import sub-standard oil aren't arrested and charged with economic terrorism, then we aren't serious on ending corruption," he said. "Diverting a whole ship must have involved hundreds of players across the entire import chain." He called for the prosecution of top Energy Ministry officials, executives


and board members at the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority and the Kenya Pipeline Company, alongside the private sector participants who enabled the scheme. The scandal had already claimed several senior careers. Petroleum Principal Secretary Mohamed Liban, KPC Managing Director Joe Sang, and EPRA Director General Daniel Kiptoo all resigned. Deputy Director of Petroleum Joseph Wafula was questioned by the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, though Liban was later released on medical grounds. Preliminary findings indicated the consignment originated from Saudi Aramco, passed through an international inter-



Ahmednassir Abdullahi and Donald Kipkorir

mediary, and was redirected into Kenya through a local importer in violation of the government-to-government procurement framework. Chief of Staff Felix Koskei said investigators had established that officials deliberately falsified national fuel stock data to manufacture scarcity, enabling emergency procurement that bypassed standard accountability safeguards. President Ruto moved to reassure Kenyans that the probe would not stall. "These cartels in the energy sector will not be allowed to operate freely," he said. "They will not escape accountability." Civil society organisations and opposition figures have echoed the lawyers' calls, warning that a prosecution

targeting only mid-level public servants — while leaving the corporate architects of the scheme untouched — would confirm that Kenya's anti-corruption machinery remains calibrated to protect the powerful. Kenya has a long history of corruption investigations that begin with fanfare and quietly fade before reaching the boardrooms where the real decisions were made. Whether this probe breaks that pattern will determine whether the Easter weekend arrests amounted to justice — or just theatre.




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John C. Maxwell's law number 5 asserts that genuine leadership is all about value addition

By: Ashford Kimani

@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

For teachers, the law of addition calls for a shift in perspective from content delivery to learner development. It is not enough to complete the syllabus; the focus must be on how effectively students are growing in knowledge, skills, and character. A teacher adds value when they simplify complex concepts, provide constructive feedback, and create an environment where learners feel safe to ask questions and make mistakes. Such a classroom does not just produce good grades; it produces confident and capable individuals.

Leadership among staff also reflects this law. School administrators who invest in their teachers—through professional development, mentorship, and recognition—create a culture of growth.

At the heart of effective leadership lies a simple but often neglected principle: leaders exist to add value to others. The fifth law in The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership articulates this with clarity - the law of addition. It asserts that leadership is not about personal gain, recognition or authority, but about intentionally improving the lives and capacity of those being led. In environments such as schools, where leadership directly shapes young minds and professional growth, this principle is not optional; it is foundational.

Many leadership failures stem from a reversal of this law. Instead of asking, "How can I add value to others?" some leaders unconsciously ask, "How can others add value to me?" This shift, though subtle, has profound consequences. It turns leadership into a transactional exercise where people are seen as tools for achieving targets rather than individuals to be developed. In schools, this may manifest in teachers being pressured solely for results without support, or students being valued only for their grades rather than their growth. Such environments may produce short-term outcomes but rarely sustain excellence.

Adding value begins with genuine concern for people. In a school setting, this means understanding learners beyond their academic performance. A student struggling in class may be dealing with challenges outside school—family issues, low self-esteem, or peer pressure. A leader who takes time to understand these underlying factors is better positioned to provide meaningful support. This could involve mentorship, encouragement, or creating opportunities for the student to succeed in different areas. Value is added not merely through instruction, but through intentional care.

For teachers, the law of addition calls for a shift in perspective from content delivery to learner development. It is not enough to complete the syllabus; the focus must be on how effectively students are growing in knowledge, skills, and character. A teacher adds value when they simplify complex concepts, provide constructive feedback, and create an environment where learners feel safe to ask questions and make mistakes. Such a classroom does not just produce good grades; it produces confident and capable individuals.

Leadership among staff also reflects



this law. School administrators who invest in their teachers—through professional development, mentorship, and recognition—create a culture of growth. When teachers feel valued, they are more motivated, more innovative, and more committed to their work. Conversely, when their efforts go unnoticed or unsupported, morale declines, and performance suffers. Adding value to teachers is therefore not a peripheral responsibility; it is central to institutional success.

Another dimension of the law of addition is intentionality. Value is rarely added by accident; it is the result of deliberate effort. Leaders must consciously look for ways to contribute to others' growth. This might involve identifying a teacher's potential and giving them leadership opportunities, or recognizing a student's talent and nurturing it through targeted support. Small, consistent actions—offering guidance, acknowledging effort, providing resources—accumulate into significant impact over time.

The law also emphasizes the impor-

tance of listening. Leaders who add value do not assume they know what others need; they seek to understand. In schools, this means creating channels where students and teachers can express their concerns and ideas. A leader who listens attentively gains insight into real challenges and can respond more effectively. Listening transforms leadership from directive to responsive, making it more relevant and impactful.

It is important to note that adding value does not mean lowering standards or avoiding accountability. On the contrary, it involves helping others meet and exceed high expectations. A leader adds value by challenging individuals to grow while providing the support necessary to achieve that growth. In the classroom, this could mean setting rigorous academic goals while offering the guidance needed to reach them. Among staff, it may involve expecting excellence while equipping teachers with the tools and training to deliver it.

The impact of value-driven leadership is cumulative and far-reaching.

Students who feel valued are more engaged, more disciplined, and more motivated to learn. Teachers who feel supported are more effective and more committed to their profession. Over time, this creates a positive institutional culture where growth becomes the norm rather than the exception. Such a culture cannot be enforced through rules alone; it is built through consistent acts of adding value.

Ultimately, the law of addition redefines the purpose of leadership. It shifts the focus from self to others, from authority to service, and from control to empowerment. In schools, where the ultimate goal is transformation, this law becomes particularly powerful. Leaders who embrace it do not merely manage systems; they shape lives.

Ashford teaches English and Literature in Gatundu North Sub-county and serves as Dean of Studies.

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Nithi Bridge Kindiki defended the time taken to reach this point, revealing that he had personally rejected an earlier design proposal on safety grounds

Kindiki: Nithi Bridge will span close to 3km, ranking second in length after Dongo Kundu

The deputy president confirmed funds have been allocated and a contractor identified for what will be Kenya's second-longest bridge at nearly three kilometres

BY Grace Wanja

@themkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki announced yesterday that the government was ready to begin construction of the Nithi Bridge, dismissing earlier delays as procedural and describing protests over the project as “misplaced” now that funds had been secured and a contractor identified.

Speaking at a public address, Kindiki said land compensation processes through the National Land Commission had been the primary obstacle holding back a project that communities along the Nithi corridor had awaited for decades. He assured residents that those hurdles were now largely resolved and that construction would proceed without further delay.

“We have allocated funds for Nithi Bridge and identified a contractor,” Kindiki said. “The project was delayed due to issues with the National Land Commission and compensation, but now everything is in place and construction will proceed.”

The deputy president said the bridge, which he described as Kenya's second-longest at nearly three kilometres, would rank behind only the Dongo Kundu Bridge along the Mombasa Southern Bypass — a comparison that underscored the scale and ambition of the project for a region that has long felt bypassed by major infrastructure investment.

Kindiki also defended the time taken to reach this point, revealing that he had personally rejected an earlier design proposal on safety grounds. “We were not satisfied with the earlier design,” he said. “I personally rejected it because it would not have solved the problem due to dangerous corners and slopes. That is why it took time.”

The Nithi Bridge has been a festering infrastructure grievance for nearly four decades. Kindiki acknowledged as much, tracing the community's frustrations back to the presidency of Daniel arap Moi.



Nithi Bridge

“Nithi Bridge has been a problem since 1985,” he said. “We appealed to President Moi, but nothing was done. During President Kibaki's time, and even under President Uhuru, the bridge was still not completed.” That succession of unfulfilled promises across four administrations has fuelled deep scepticism in the region — scepticism that recently spilled into street demonstrations demanding government action.

Kindiki was direct in his response to those protests. While he stopped short of condemning them outright, he made clear that construction would proceed on the government's terms and timeline, not in response to public pressure. “The Nithi Bridge will not be built because of demonstrations,” he said. “It will be built because it must be done and we now have the ability to do it.”

He went further, arguing that the demonstrations were counterproductive given his personal involvement in driving the project forward. “When I had no power, protests might have made sense, but now I am in a position to act,” he said. “I am the one in charge of delivering this project. Demonstrating now is like protesting against yourselves. I will ensure the Nithi Bridge is built because I have the power and re-

sponsibility to do so.”

The remaining sticking point, Kindiki said, was the completion of the NLC compensation process for landowners whose property falls within the project footprint. He estimated that approximately Ksh200 million

would be required to settle outstanding claims and appealed for early access to the affected land to accelerate the process. “We are appealing for early access to speed things up, since only a small portion of land is involved,” he said.

The Kenya National Highways Authority, which oversees major road and bridge infrastructure across the country, has previously identified the Nithi corridor as a priority safety concern, citing the narrow and structurally stressed nature of the existing crossing as a risk to the growing volume of commercial and passenger traffic using the route. The new bridge, when completed, is expected to significantly improve road safety, reduce travel times, and open up trade and agricultural movement across the region.

For Kindiki, who represents Tharaka-Nithi County in the political heartland of the project, the bridge carries both infrastructural and personal significance. His repeated emphasis on personal readiness and responsibility — “I am ready, I have been ready since yesterday to begin construction of what will be the second longest and largest bridge in Kenya” — suggested a leader conscious of the political stakes attached to delivering on a promise his predecessors could not keep.

Whether construction begins on the timeline he projected will depend in large part on how quickly the NLC moves on compensation — a process that has already proven slower than anticipated. But with funds committed, a contractor named, and the deputy president's political credibility tied to the outcome, the Nithi Bridge may finally be closer to reality than at any point in its four-decade history.

For the communities who have waited since 1985, that is either cause for cautious hope — or one more promise to hold the powerful accountable for keeping.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki addressing gathering

Manifestos Every electoral cycle in Kenya, there is a flooding of glossy booklets, catchy slogans, and grand promises.

Manifestos without law: Kenya's democratic paradox and the threat to long term national development



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

Scholars, politicians and other stakeholders, locally and abroad have hailed that Kenya adopted the most progressive constitutions in modern times. The constitution promised a decisive break from personality-driven rule, arbitrary decision-making and short-term thinking. It replaced political whim with constitutionalism, planning, public participation and accountability. Yet more than a decade later, one formal document continues to undermine this carefully designed order – the political manifesto.

Every electoral cycle in Kenya, there is a flooding of glossy booklets, catchy slogans, and grand promises. Roads everywhere, jobs for everyone, instant prosperity a promise of a dreamland that has been elusive. These manifestos dominate campaigns, shape voter's expectations, and build infrastructures that will never be in reality. They shorten existing policies, weakens institutions and national developments become episodic, reactive and personality driven. What should be steady national journey turns into a series of political detours every election cycle.

Effectively, manifestos encourage populism over prudence, award exaggeration not honesty. The promises sound good on podium, not what is practically affordable, sustainable or legally permissible. This undermines constitutional principles of prudent

public finance and responsible governance. When leaders feel politically compelled to fulfill manifesto promises at all costs, budgets are distorted, debt grows and long-term national priorities are compromised for short term applauses.

Kenya if it is to prosper, it cannot afford this contradiction. A country that believes in constitutionalism and long-term planning while allowing informal political documents to routinely override legally adopted development framework is not on the right track. Electioneering process should determine who leads and how they implement nationally agreed programmes not short-term politically generated priorities and not to change development priorities after every five years.

The solution is not to ban manifestos, but to align the manifestos with the national

development agendas before approving them for circulation to the public domain as a requirement to all political parties. This allows for political competition and democratic discipline that is legally aligned, and accountable. Manifestos must be brought back to constitutional order and must be subordinated not elevated. They must explain how leaders intend to implement the constitution and national development plans, not replace them.

Going forward, therefore, Kenyans must insist that political manifestos align with the constitutional, national development programmes and approved county plans

before they are circulated to the public. Promises that contradict the law, undermine fiscal sustainability or distort nationally agreed and planned priorities should have no place in a seriously democratic competition. Political freedom cannot continue to mean freedom to mislead.

For Kenya to be serious about development that outlives political careers, then constitutionalism must take precedence at it always, over campaign rhetorics. The constitution was meant to anchor the nation beyond personalities and parties and allowing manifestos to dominate and override governance defeats that purpose. The law gov-

erning electioneering should take this into account and parliament should come up with laws that do not shame them after every electoral cycle.

The real test for Kenya's democratic maturity is no longer whether we can conduct elections, but whether we can protect our long-term national vision from short-term political temptations, which are unconstitutional, unrealistic and in some instances outright wild dreams. At bare minimum, let us lie within the lines of constitution and avoid overstretching the expectations and imaginations of the electorate every electoral cycle. If all the political lies peddled were a reality, Kenya could be looking greater than any imaginable palaces in the world.

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Ethiopia Ethio Telecom's investment is part of a coordinated government-led initiative that aims to build a national EV charging station network

Ethiopia bets big on e-mobility amid state-led expanding charging network

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

Ethiopian government institutions are spearheading a state-driven push for electric mobility through large-scale investments in electric vehicle (EV) charging station networks, especially amid a fuel crisis caused by conflicts in the Middle East.

Last week, state-run operator Ethio Telecom commissioned its fourth public Super-Fast Smart EV Charging Station in Adama City, marking the company's first regional expansion outside the country's capital, Addis Ababa. The station features 12 super-fast chargers, raising the company's total national capacity to serve 60 vehicles simultaneously across four high-tech locations. Since commencing operations in February last year, Ethio Telecom's network has served more than 284,000 EVs, dispensing over 7.15 million kilowatt-hours of energy. The company said its initiative has prevented the emission of over 10 million kg of carbon dioxide, an environmental contribution equivalent to planting more than 49,500 trees.

Ethio Telecom's investment is part of a coordinated government-led initiative that aims to build a national EV charging station network, which will see 2,300 charging stations across the country within the coming 10 years, according to official data. Just last week, the Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU), a state-owned electric energy service provider, inaugurated its own EV charging stations in Addis Ababa. Six charging stations have been built in different parts of the capital, among which three are already commissioned and ready for service. The company disclosed its plan to build 34 additional charging stations throughout the East African country as part of its first-phase project. The EEU further highlighted the construction of charging infrastructure along the Ethiopia-Djibouti trade corridor as its future core ambition, making it a vital investment as the corridor handles an estimated 90-to-95 percent of landlocked Ethiopia's import and export trade.

The emphasis on building a national EV charging station network is part



of the Ethiopian government's ambitious attempt to usher in a swift transition to electric mobility. The Ethiopian government banned imports of petrol and diesel vehicles in 2024, while reducing taxes on EVs, a policy that has accelerated adop-

tion across the East African country. Ethiopia's Minister of Transport and Logistics Alemu Sime recently said the government is making bold strides toward e-mobility to reduce carbon emissions and build an economically resilient transport

system. The transition also aims to ensure energy sovereignty by saving much-needed foreign currency spent on fuel imports.

As part of this national ambition, the government plans to introduce in excess of 500,000 EVs into the

country by 2032. Achieving this will meaningfully restructure the country's vehicle fleet. According to incomplete statistics, there are roughly 1.2 million vehicles in Ethiopia, with a large proportion well over 20 years old. Most of the cars on the road are secondhand imports, and black smoke is often seen rising from the rear of these cars.

Highlighting Ethiopia's abundant renewable energy along with attractive incentives for enterprises engaged in the EV sector, State Minister of Transport and Logistics Bareo Hassen said the government's push is attracting domestic and foreign investment in EV manufacturing and assembly. Official data show that 17 electric vehicle assembly plants are currently in the pipeline across the country, with the government aiming to reach 60 factories by 2030. Current global fuel supply-chain disruptions from the Middle East conflict have added urgency to the cause.

Last week, Ethiopia's Minister of Trade and Regional Integration Kassahun Gofe announced that the country is spending 15-to-20 billion birr (about 96-to-128 million U.S. dollars) monthly on fuel subsidies. He said that over 180,000 metric tons of fuel could not be delivered due to the war, and the uncertainty is forcing the government to purchase supplies at three times the normal price. Amid widespread calls for responsible fuel use, the Ethiopian government has issued a national call to accelerate EV adoption as a critical buffer against external supply shocks.





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Degrees are dead: surviving Kenya's brutal skills-first economy

Kenya's job market is shifting — and it is not waiting for graduates to catch up. Degrees that once guaranteed employment now gather dust, while skilled individuals without formal qualifications build businesses, earn dollars online, and outpace their certificated peers.

The message from employers is clear: show what you can do. Digital literacy, technical ability, creativity, and problem-solving are now worth more than transcripts. From coding and graphic design to plumbing and digital marketing, practical skills are opening doors that degrees alone can no longer unlock.

This is both a crisis and an opportunity. For young Kenyans willing to adapt, freelance platforms and social media marketplaces have created entirely new income streams —



no office, no suit, no certificate required. Entrepreneurship is filling the gaps that formal employment has left behind.

But the deeper problem remains unaddressed. Kenya's education system continues to reward theory over practice, producing graduates who are academically sound but professionally unready. Institutions must close this gap — not with cosmetic reforms, but with genuine integration of skills-based and industry-oriented training.

The responsibility does not rest with schools alone. Em-

ployers, policymakers, and communities must collectively redefine what competence looks like and invest in pathways beyond the classroom.

Kenya's economy has already made its choice. It rewards those who can deliver, adapt, and prove their value through action. The question is no longer whether the shift is happening — it is whether our institutions will move fast enough to keep pace, or whether they will be left behind too.

Caroline Muturi

Youth and mental health: breaking the silence

Every day, young people across Kenya wake up carrying weight that no one else can see — anxiety before class, dread scrolling through a phone, exhaustion that sleep does not fix. Mental health is a crisis hiding in plain sight, and silence is making it worse.

The pressures bearing down on today's youth are relentless. Academic demands, family expectations, financial stress, and the curated perfection of social media create a toxic combination. When young people measure their real lives against carefully filtered highlight reels online, inadequacy follows. Many buckle quietly — too afraid of judgment to ask for help.

That fear is the real problem. Stigma keeps suffering private and solutions out of reach. Young people who might benefit from counseling instead withdraw, self-medicate, or push through until they break.



Communities that dismiss mental health struggles as weakness or a lack of faith are not offering comfort — they are deepening the wound.

Breaking this silence requires deliberate action. Schools must move beyond tokenistic awareness days and invest in accessible, professional counseling services. Families must create space for honest conversation without shame or dismissal. Peers must learn that listening — without rushing to

fix or judge — is itself a form of care.

Mental health is not a luxury concern or a Western concept imported by soft generations. It is as real and as urgent as any physical illness. A young person who cannot cope cannot learn, cannot lead, and cannot thrive.

We cannot afford to keep quiet. Neither can they.

By Lavender Gati Laikipia University

Campus tribal politics

Kenya's universities should be incubators of ideas, merit, and national unity. Instead, tribal politics is quietly poisoning the campus experience — and students are paying the price.

Across many institutions, tribal loyalty increasingly determines who wins student elections, who leads clubs, and even who sits with whom in lecture halls. At Rongo University, the fault lines have grown visible — student politics has become a contest between Luo and Luhya factions, each driven more by ethnic pride than genuine leadership vision. Competent candidates are overlooked. Friendships fracture. Academic collaboration suffers.

This is not harmless rivalry. When students vote along tribal lines, they do not just elect weak leaders — they normalise a culture that will follow them into workplaces, boardrooms, and eventually into the national political arena. The campus is where habits of mind are formed. If ethnic allegiance



trumps merit here, it will do so everywhere else too.

Some student leaders are pushing back. Inter-tribal dialogue sessions and mixed social gatherings are small but meaningful steps toward shifting the conversation from ethnicity to shared purpose. These efforts deserve recognition and institutional support.

Campus administrators cannot remain bystanders. Awareness campaigns promoting inclusivity, merit-based election frame-

works, and disciplinary consequences for ethnic incitement must become standard practice — not occasional gestures.

Students are not just the leaders of tomorrow. They are making choices today that will define what kind of leadership tomorrow produces. The campus must become a place where ideas and integrity win — not bloodlines.

By Oliver Ouma Rongo University

A disservice to Kenyan talent: the cost of government absence in sports

Two gold medals. A Kenyan athlete on a podium in Benin. And not a single word from the Ministry of Sports.

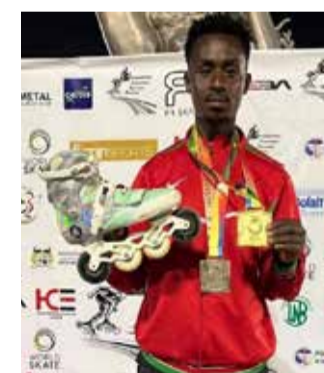
That silence speaks volumes. While Kenyan athletes continue to represent the nation with distinction on the international stage, the government officials tasked with supporting them are repeatedly absent — not just physically, but in every meaningful sense. The ministry's failure to acknowledge a double gold medal victory is not an oversight. It is a pattern.

The problem extends beyond one skater's unrecognised triumph. On April 4th, ministry representatives were nowhere to be seen at a local boxing event — the kind of grassroots platform where future champions are made and young athletes decide whether to persist

or quit. Official presence at such moments is not ceremonial. It signals that the state sees you, values you, and is invested in your development.

When that signal never comes, the damage is real. Funding dries up, motivation fades, and talented athletes are left to carry the nation's flag on personal sacrifice alone. Kenya's sporting reputation has been built largely despite government support, not because of it.

This must change. The Ministry of Sports should establish direct communication channels with athletes across all disciplines, ensure representation at both elite and grassroots events, and create systems to promptly recognise international achievements. Emerging sports deserve funding and visibility — not just football



and athletics when the cameras are rolling.

Kenyan athletes have never stopped showing up. It is long past time the government did the same.

By Brian Karani Laikipia University

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said Kylian Mbappe joined the club to star in key matches like today's Champions League clash against German giants Bayern Munich.

Fit-again Mbappe at Real Madrid for clashes like Bayern tie: Arbeloa



Real Madrid's French forward Kylian Mbappe controls the ball during the UEFA Champions League, league phase day 3 football match between Real Madrid CF and Borussia Dortmund at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on October 22, 2024. (Photo by Thomas COEX / AFP)

Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said Kylian Mbappe joined the club to star in key matches like today's Champions League clash against German giants Bayern Munich.

Arbeloa said Mbappe was a vital part of the team, although questions remain over whether record 15-time winners Madrid can strike the right balance with all their biggest names on the pitch at the same time.

French superstar Mbappe, the club's top goalscorer, did not start either game in the last 16 tie against Manchester City which Madrid won impressively, because of a long struggle with a knee sprain.

Fit once more, Arbeloa indicated Mbappe was likely to feature along with Vinicius Junior in attack at the Santiago Bernabeu against Bayern in the quarter-final first leg.

"I'm delighted to have that kind of problem, to have outstanding players at my disposal and to have a player like Ky-

lian Mbappe, who came to Real Madrid for matches like tomorrow's and for knockout ties like this one," Arbeloa told reporters Monday.

"I'm sure we're going to see Kylian at his best, leading the team the way he's always known how to do, and I have a great deal of confidence in all the players."

England international Jude Bellingham is also finding his way back to fitness after injury and Arbeloa said he would keep betting on the squad's stars when they are available.

Against City young midfielder Thiago Pitarch and attacking midfielder Brahim Diaz played important roles, but they may get less time on the pitch in the Bayern tie.

"It's clear Mbappe has different characteristics and conditions to those Brahim has, so we have to play in a different way, but I'm delighted to have this problem," said Arbeloa.

"Just as you mention Belling-

ham and other great players I have available, for me it's a blessing to be able to count on everyone..." he continued.

"Having a player like Mbappe in the team is an extraordinary stroke of luck. I don't know if there's a coach in the world who wouldn't want to have him.

"I put myself in the shoes of the defenders who play against Real Madrid and have to face Mbappe, Vinicius, Valverde, Bellingham... I think they're some of the best players on the planet."

'Incredible' connection Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior said he worked well together with Mbappe, despite some believing the fit is not right for Madrid.

"People talk a lot... 'Kyli' is here to help us, he's always given us confidence, he scores the goals for us, we have to be connected tomorrow, above all with the fans and all the players," he told reporters.

"It's a difficult game where the best players make the difference, and Kyli is one of those. I have an incredible connection with him, not just on the pitch but off it too."

Vinicius pledged Madrid will be at their best against Bayern Munich after a poor showing in La Liga on Saturday, when they lost 2-1 against Mallorca, leaving them seven points adrift of leaders Barcelona.

"There are days where we are more connected or less connected, and that happened against Mallorca," explained the forward.

"We had come from the international break and today, as the coach said, if we're not at 200 percent, we're not going to win games.

"I hope we are tomorrow, because it's an important day for us."

The winger, who has become a leading figure in the fight against racism, also spoke about the Islamophobic chanting at Spain's friendly against Egypt last week, which Barcelona's teenage star Lamine Yamal criticised.

"It's important that Lamine speaks and that can help people," said Vinicius, who claimed he was racially abused by Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni in a Champions League match in February, which the Argentine denies.

"I'm not saying Spain, Germany or Portugal are racist countries, but there are racists in these countries, especially in Brazil too, in a lot of countries there are racists.

"But if we continue this fight together, I think that in the future new players don't have to suffer these things and above all, people in general too."

AFP

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Konza Technopolis was a beehive of activities as drivers and motorsport enthusiasts gathered for the "Race Wars" over the Easter weekend.

Kithome, Mohamed dominate Konza Race Wars showdown



Konza Technopolis was a beehive of activities as drivers and motorsport enthusiasts gathered for the "Race Wars" over the Easter weekend.

The two-day event was organized in partnership with Delta Motorsports Club and featured 40 high-performance racing cars competing across multiple categories.

The competition included rolling races and dig races held along a half-mile stretch within the technopolis. The format allowed drivers to test acceleration, speed, and control in a structured and controlled racing environment.

Participants competed across

different classes, highlighting both vehicle performance and driver skill.

In the final results, Lexus Musa won the 1000cc bikers category, while Salman Mohamed took first place in the two-wheel drive category.

Jeremy Kithome emerged as the top driver in the open class category after two days of competition.

According to Delta Motorsports Club Chairperson Sunil Bhachu, the choice of venue aligned well with the technical and safety requirements of motorsport events.

He noted that the infrastructure at Konza Technopolis, including wide tarmac roads and a con-

trolled setting, supported both competitive racing and event organization standards.

"The venue offers exceptionally smooth, wide tarmac stretches and a controlled, safe environment ideal for competitive racing, while simultaneously showcasing Konza Technopolis as a versatile, world-class destination beyond its tech reputation."

He also stated that hosting the event at the smart city location contributed to broader visibility and potential economic activity in the surrounding area.

Konza Technopolis Chief Executive Officer, John Paul Okwiri, said the event reflects the broader vision of Konza as a mixed-

use development.

He indicated that such activities demonstrate the city's ability to accommodate not only technology-driven enterprises but also lifestyle and recreational events.

He added that integrating different sectors helps position the technopolis as a functional urban space.

The Race Wars event also reflects a growing trend in Kenya where motorsport is being combined with digital engagement and youth-focused experiences. It provided a platform for interaction between the automotive, creative, and technology sectors.

Citizen sport

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Preserving Luo culture: Heritage, literature, and art in Migori County

By: Vivian Asenath
@themkenyatimes

Q1: Migori County is known for its vibrant cultural heritage. Can you give us an overview of the dominant Luo culture in the region and why it remains so influential today?

STUDENT LEADER: Migori County, located in southwestern Kenya's Nyanza region, is a heartland of the Luo (Joluo) people, who form the majority alongside smaller communities such as the Kuria and Suba. Luo culture is deeply rooted in communal values, oral traditions, and a strong connection to Lake Victoria and the land. Central to this culture is the concept of piny — the world and community — which embodies unity, respect for elders, and resilience. These values have guided the community through centuries of migration, colonialism, and modern-day challenges.

The Piny Luo Cultural Festival, hosted at Rongo University in its 5th edition in December 2025, illustrates this enduring influence. It brings together Luo people from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and the diaspora for three days of celebration centered on heritage, unity, and socio-economic development. Activities include traditional dances, music, crafts, storytelling, and exhibitions that blend culture with enterprise. The festival actively counters cultural erosion by reconnecting generations and positioning Luo identity as a catalyst for tourism, trade, and dialogue.

Q2: Rongo University plays a central role in the region. How does the institution actively preserve and promote Luo culture, literature, and art through its programs and events?

STUDENT LEADER: Rongo University, located in Rongo Sub-County, Migori, integrates culture into its core mission through the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Business and the Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature. These

programs equip students to analyze and preserve socio-cultural knowledge, blending scientific inquiry with the humanities.

The university's vision — to harmonize technological and socio-cultural knowledge — translates directly into action. Hosting the 5th Piny Luo Cultural Festival on its main campus turned the event into a living classroom, featuring exhibitions, performances, and community discussions. Co-curricular activities such as music, drama, and cultural weeks give students platforms to perform and document traditions, while community library projects extend literacy and cultural access across Migori and Homa Bay counties.

Q3: Oral literature is a cornerstone of Luo culture. What genres are prominent in Migori, and can you share specific examples with their cultural significance?

STUDENT LEADER: Luo oral literature in Migori is both rich and functional — it entertains, educates, preserves history, and reinforces moral values. Key genres include proverbs (ngeche), riddles, folk narratives (sigana), and poetry and song. These are woven into everyday life, ceremonies, and festivals.

Among the proverbs, "Wang' mithiedho ema gawi" — "The eye you treat turns against you" — warns against ingratitude and highlights the importance of reciprocity. Another, "Agulu kidiedi maonge tach" — "A water pot cannot stand without support" — underscores the value of community interdependence. At events like the Piny Luo Festival, elders and youth perform these together, ensuring the traditions adapt to modern contexts while retaining their depth and meaning.

Q4: Music and dance are vivid expressions of Luo art. What are some iconic traditional forms performed in Migori, and how do they feature in university-linked events?

STUDENT LEADER: Luo performing arts use music and dance for celebration, mourning, education, and social commentary. Iconic



Luo culture

instruments include the nyatiti (an eight-stringed lyre used for praise poetry and storytelling), the orutu (a one-stringed fiddle), drums, rattles, horns, and the abu (gourds tied with bark).

Among the most prominent dance forms is Ohangla — high-energy drumming with fast rhythms performed at weddings, funerals, and community gatherings, historically associated with twin-birth cleansing rituals. Dodo features graceful, call-and-response songs rooted in social commentary and the celebration of heroism. Rongo University showcases these art forms at the Piny Luo Festival, where traditional dancers and groups perform sacred folk songs and cultural pieces. Students in music and drama rehearse and compete at national level, preserving these traditions while experimenting with contemporary fusions. The university's cultural week further amplifies this by inviting diverse communities to share their own practices, fostering mutual appreciation and understanding.

Q5: How does literature education at Rongo University connect to local Luo oral traditions and contemporary writing?

STUDENT LEADER: The Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature serves as a bridge

between oral and written forms. Courses in Literature and Linguistics analyze Luo genres — including proverbs and folk narratives — alongside global texts, encouraging students to document and publish local stories. Postgraduate programs support research on Dholuo language preservation. This environment nurtures a growing body of contemporary Luo literature, with students producing works inspired by sigana and traditional proverbs. University journals and drama festivals provide platforms that transform oral heritage into published or performed art, addressing modern themes such as identity, development, and belonging.

Q6: What challenges does Luo culture face in Migori today, and how is Rongo University addressing them through art and literature?

STUDENT LEADER: Luo culture faces significant pressures from urbanization, youth migration to cities, and the homogenizing effects of globalization. Traditional practices such as burial rites are increasingly strained by modern economic realities, and oral traditions risk fading without deliberate documentation. Rongo University addresses these challenges by institutionalizing heritage. It hosts the Piny Luo Festival

and advocates for a formal cultural policy document, integrates indigenous knowledge into academic research, and uses literature programs to archive proverbs, riddles, and folk narratives. Engaging students in music and drama ensures that young people see culture not as a relic, but as something dynamic, relevant, and economically viable.

Q7: Looking ahead, how can initiatives like the Piny Luo Festival and university programs ensure the future of culture, literature, and art in Migori?

STUDENT LEADER: Culture, literature, and art are more than entertainment — they are expressions of identity, history, and community values. In Migori County and at Rongo University, culture continues to thrive through music, storytelling, festivals, literature, and artistic expression. The youth, particularly university students, are central to this effort. They are not simply inheritors of tradition but active agents in shaping its future — ensuring that what has been passed down does not fade, but evolves with purpose and pride.

By Vivian Asenath Student, Rongo University, Migori