



CBK reopens long-term Treasury Bonds in KSh50 billion borrowing plan
The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has reopened two long-term Treasury bonds in a fresh effort to raise KSh50 billion for budgetary support, offering investors attractive fixed returns amid easing inflation. **Page 8**



Safina party gains ground in Mt Kenya region
The political landscape of the larger Mt. Kenya region witnessed a major shift over the weekend when over 550 delegates gathered at Kunste Hotel, Nakuru City for the Safina party leaders Conference. **Page 12**

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The Mt. Kenya Times
Daily ePAPER

Fuel This month increased the price of super petrol by Sh16.65 per litre and diesel by KSh46.29 per litre,” Gachagua said

Gachagua fires from London

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, speaking from London yesterday, launched a fierce public broadside against the Ruto administration over Kenya’s escalating fuel crisis, made explosive allegations that President William Ruto is personally profiting from the pricing structure to the tune of Ksh30 per litre on petrol and Ksh40 per litre on diesel, dismissed the government’s midnight concession as woefully inadequate, and demanded that ruling party leaders cease what he described as a coordinated campaign of intimidation against retired President Uhuru Kenyatta.

The address, delivered via live broadcast from the United Kingdom where Gachagua is conducting a diaspora engagement tour under the banner of his Democracy for the Citizens Party of Kenya (DCP), was one of his most direct and wide-ranging public interventions since leaving office. It arrived against the backdrop of a second consecutive day of nationwide transport disruptions and street protests that by Monday had left four people dead and at least thirty others injured — lending his words an urgency that transcended routine political point-scoring. **Page 9**



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

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Kindiki pays tribute to Kinangop MP's Father

BY MKT REPORTER

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Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday eulogised the late Mzee Eshbon Thuku Kwenya as a disciplined and hardworking family man who lived a life dedicated to service, education, and strong moral values. Speaking during a burial ceremony in Rugongo, Kinangop Constituency, Nyandarua County, Kindiki said the deceased belonged to a generation of men who prioritised the welfare of their families and ensured their children received proper education and guidance.

“Mzee Kwenya lived a life of hard work, discipline and commitment to family life. He has left behind a successful family and a legacy of great achievements,” the Deputy President said.

Kindiki extended his condolences to the bereaved family, singling out one of his sons and Kinangop Member of Parliament Zachary Kwenya Thuku. He urged the family to find strength in the legacy left behind by the late patriarch, noting that his values and contributions would continue to guide future generations.

The ceremony brought together family members, leaders, and residents who joined in celebrating the life of the deceased.

Some of the leaders who attended the ceremony were CS Rebecca Miano and Speaker of the National Assembly Moses Wetangula.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Central Police Station OCS Dishen Angoya, who was arrested after allegedly releasing 64 detainees linked to fuel protests, has been released after being hospitalised at Lang'ata hospital over high blood pressure. The National Police Service said the issue was being handled internally, denying that he had been arrested, though he was being guarded while at the health facility.



Siaya MCAs have threatened to initiate impeachment proceedings against Governor James Orengo and announced a boycott of all executive functions following remarks he allegedly made in Homa Bay County. The ward representatives are demanding a public apology from the governor, stating that the County Assembly will suspend working relations with the executive until the issue is resolved. They also directed the Assembly leadership to take disciplinary action against party members who are perceived to have supported or aligned themselves with the governor's alleged remarks or who have defied the party's leadership structure. The MCAs insist that their decision is aimed at enforcing accountability and maintaining party discipline within the county leadership and broader political framework.



The Retail Trade Association of Kenya (RETRAK), the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) have raised concerns over provisions in the proposed Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill. RETRAK boss, Wambui Wamwiri Mbarire (pictured) noted that the organisations are particularly opposed to the proposed ban on flavoured nicotine products, arguing that policy efforts should instead prioritize tackling the growing problem of counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes, which they say is causing significant tax losses to the government. They recommend stronger enforcement against illicit trade, enhanced protection of minors, and improved regulation of legal tobacco products. The groups also caution that overly strict regulations could push small traders into informal mar-

kets, worsening the illicit trade challenge. They emphasize the need for a balanced approach that supports public health objectives while ensuring fair regulation, stakeholder engagement, and protection of legitimate businesses and consumers.



Residents of Liwatoni in Mvita Sub-County have raised concerns over the poor condition of the Tangana link road, saying it has become nearly impassable due to deep potholes filled with stagnant water. They report frequent traffic congestion, vehicle damage, and risks to pedestrians who are forced to navigate along unsafe edges. The situation is worsened by an ageing railway crossing that disrupts traffic flow, forcing motorists, motorcycles, tuk-tuks, and trucks to slow down significantly. Residents, led by Sheikh Hassan Omar, say their complaints to authorities have gone unanswered for over a year and are now warning of possible demonstrations if urgent repairs are not undertaken to restore safe and reliable access.



Kisii Governor Simba Arati has commended county revenue officers for their strong performance in boosting revenue collection and improving efficiency. Speaking during a meeting at the Kisii Agricultural Training Centre, Arati said the county had significantly exceeded its own-source revenue target for the 2024/2025 financial year by 178 percent. He revealed that the county had collected a record Sh1.5 billion, attributing the achievement to improved coordination and dedication among revenue staff. The governor encouraged the officers to maintain teamwork, integrity, and commitment in order to sustain and further improve revenue performance. He emphasized that strong revenue collection is key to supporting the county's development agenda and ensuring continued delivery of services and projects for residents.

Mbeere South National Government - Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) offices in Kiriti Town, Embu County were yesterday burnt down by protestors during the second day of the matatu strike over high fuel prices.



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CBK CBK announced the re-opening of the 15-year FXD3/2019/015 bond and the 20-year FXD1/2021/020 bond

CBK reopens long-term Treasury Bonds in KSh50 billion borrowing plan

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has reopened two long-term Treasury bonds in a fresh effort to raise KSh50 billion for budgetary support, offering investors attractive fixed returns amid easing inflation and growing appetite for government securities.

In a prospectus released yesterday, CBK announced the re-opening of the 15-year FXD3/2019/015 bond and the 20-year FXD1/2021/020 bond, with the sale running until May 20 and settlement scheduled for May 25.

The 15-year bond, which now has 8.3 years remaining to maturity, carries a coupon rate of 12.34 percent and matures in July 2034. The 20-year infrastructure-style bond, with 15.3 years remaining, offers a higher coupon of 13.444 percent and will mature in July 2041.

Analysts say the reopened bonds are likely to attract pension funds, insurance firms and high-net-worth investors seeking stable long-term returns as Treasury bill yields begin to soften.

"The rates remain attractive compared to inflation, which has moderated significantly over the past year," said a Nairobi-based fixed income analyst. "Institutional investors are still keen on locking

in double-digit returns for the long term."

CBK has allowed non-competitive bids from as low as KSh50,000 up to KSh50 million, a move aimed at encouraging retail investor participation. Competitive bids will require a minimum investment of KSh2 million per Central Depository System (CDS) account.

The bonds will be traded at the Nairobi Securities Exchange after settlement, with secondary market trading beginning on May 25 in multiples of KSh50,000.

Under the pricing schedule released by CBK, investors in the 15-year bond quoting the coupon yield of 12.34 percent will buy the security at a clean price of about KSh99.96 per KSh100, before accrued interest of KSh4.27 is added. For the 20-year bond at the coupon yield of 13.444 percent, investors will pay a dirty price of roughly KSh103.82 after adding accrued interest.

Interest earned on both bonds will attract a 10 percent withholding tax.

Market observers expect strong subscription levels following recent oversubscription trends in government securities, driven by improved liquidity in the banking sector and investor preference for relatively risk-free assets.

Kenya has increasingly relied on domestic borrowing



CBK Governor Kamau Thugge

to finance budget deficits and manage debt repayments as it balances pressure from external debt obligations and a weakening shilling environment.

The reopened bonds also

qualify for statutory liquidity requirements for banks and non-bank financial institutions, further boosting their appeal among institutional investors.



Gov't seeks KSh2B for police reforms



Interior PS Raymond Omollo

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

National Police Service, Interior Principal Secretary Dr Raymond Omollo has said, dismissing claims that the concurrent recruitment of officers is politically motivated ahead of the 2027 general election.

Speaking on Citizen TV yesterday, Dr Omollo said the reforms were designed to correct years of institutional neglect within the security sector, particularly regarding officer welfare and working conditions. "Whenever there's a criminal act, the first question is where are the police? Over the years police have suffered neglect in terms of investment in their space, and what President Ruto did is correct the ills that have been in the security sector," he said.

Central to the reforms has

been a phased salary increment for junior-ranking officers, ranging between four and forty percent depending on rank, to be implemented across three years. "We have implemented what was needed in the first two years," Dr Omollo confirmed, adding that Parliament had availed funding for both completed phases, with a further Ksh300 million budgeted for the final phase in the 2026/27 financial year. "Cumulatively, we're looking at a budget of around Ksh2 billion," he said.

On housing, the PS revealed that approximately 5,000 units were already in place, with a further 23,000 in the pipeline. He also noted that Kenya has historically fallen below the internationally recommended ratio of one police officer for every 400 citizens, making the ongoing recruitment a matter of operational necessity rather than electoral calculation.

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Fuel In a series of statements, leaders from across the political divide expressed concern over the rising cost of fuel and its ripple effects on households

Leaders demand action over fuel crisis

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

A wave of political leaders, civil society actors, and public officials has intensified calls for urgent government intervention to address the ongoing fuel price crisis, which triggered nationwide protests, economic disruption, and growing public discontent.

In a series of statements, leaders from across the political divide expressed concern over the rising cost of fuel and its ripple effects on households, transport operators, and businesses, while also urging restraint following protests and a matatu strike that affected parts of the country.

Kenya Patriots Party (KPP) leader and Nairobi gubernatorial aspirant Agnes Kagure announced the suspension of all her political engagements, saying the decision was made in solidarity with Kenyans struggling under the high cost of living.

“In light of the ongoing fuel hike protests, and in solidarity with Kenyans overburdened by the high cost of living, we have suspended all our political engagements and lined-up activities until further notice,” she said.

Nyeri senatorial aspirant Nick Mararo warned that rising fuel and kerosene prices were placing unbearable pressure on households and small businesses, calling for structured fuel subsidies and tighter control of government spending.

He also urged restraint among protesters, warning against looting and destruction of property during demonstrations.

Opposition leader and presidential aspirant Martha Karua of the People’s Liberation Party (PLP) accused the government of responding to public anger with force rather than dialogue, saying reports of deaths during protests were deeply concerning.

“Kenyans are crying out over the rising cost of living, unemployment, high fuel prices, and economic hardship,” she said, adding that the government must prioritize accountability and urgent reforms instead of “brutality and intimidation.”

The National Federation of Public Benefits Organizations (PBOs) and Global Partnership Organization (GPO), through CEO Stephen K. Cheboi, condemned violence and destruction of property during recent transport-related strikes, extending condolences to affected families and calling for calm.

He urged all parties to resolve grievances peacefully, emphasizing that

the safety and well-being of citizens must remain a priority as investigations continue.

Nairobi lawyer and Westlands MP aspirant Nelson Havi said the fuel crisis affects all Kenyans and called for a structured resolution through Parliament.

He urged stakeholders to petition the National Assembly to deliberate on the matter and come up with a comprehensive settlement.

Former Cabinet Secretary and Party of National Unity (PNU) leader Peter Munya announced the postponement of his party’s planned political tour, citing the nationwide fuel crisis.

He criticized the government over alleged issues surrounding fuel imports and the continued hardship faced by citizens due to rising costs.

Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga also called for urgent government intervention, saying ordinary Kenyans should not be left to suffer amid soaring fuel prices.

Gem MP Elisha Odhiambo called on the Speaker of the National Assembly to recall Parliament to urgently review fuel taxation, including Value Added Tax and other levies that have contributed to high prices.

Othaya parliamentary aspirant Anthony Gitonga Antogito welcomed the suspension of the matatu strike but stressed that the underlying fuel crisis remains unresolved, urging immediate action to ease pressure on households and businesses.

Dr Thuo Mathenge, chairman of the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and Nyeri gubernatorial aspirant, also called for broad tax reductions, arguing that high taxation is making it difficult for Kenyans to meet basic needs.

Across the statements, leaders consistently highlighted the worsening cost of living, with fuel prices identified as a central driver of economic strain affecting transport, food prices, kerosene-dependent households, and business operations.

While condemning violence and destruction during protests and strikes, they urged peaceful expression of grievances, restraint among citizens, and a swift policy response from government and Parliament to stabilize fuel prices and ease the economic burden.

The growing chorus of appeals underscores mounting political pressure on the state to address the crisis through tax review, subsidies, policy reforms, and improved transparency in fuel pricing, as Kenyans continue to grapple with rising living costs.



Peter Munya



Mutahi Kahiga



Nick Mararo



Martha Karua



Agnes Kagure



Thuo Mathenge

Politics At the centre of his remarks was Kenya's deepening fuel crisis, and his response to the government's eleventh-hour attempt to contain the damage.

Gachagua fires from London: fuel crisis, Uhuru's rights, and a nation at breaking point

Speaking from the United Kingdom yesterday, Kenya's former deputy president delivered his most pointed intervention yet — condemning soaring fuel costs, making explosive personal allegations against the president, and demanding respect for the retired head of state

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, speaking from London yesterday, launched a fierce public broadside against the Ruto administration over Kenya's escalating fuel crisis, made explosive allegations that President William Ruto is personally profiting from the pricing structure to the tune of Ksh30 per litre on petrol and Ksh40 per litre on diesel, dismissed the government's midnight concession as woefully inadequate, and demanded that ruling party leaders cease what he described as a coordinated campaign of intimidation against retired President Uhuru Kenyatta.

The address, delivered via live broadcast from the United Kingdom where Gachagua is conducting a diaspora engagement tour under the banner of his Democracy for the Citizens Party of Kenya (DCP), was one of his most direct and wide-ranging public interventions since leaving office. It arrived against the backdrop of a second consecutive day of nationwide transport disruptions and street protests that by Monday had left four people dead and at least thirty others injured — lending his words an urgency that transcended routine political point-scoring.

At the centre of his remarks was Kenya's deepening fuel crisis, and his response to the government's eleventh-hour attempt to contain the damage. Following a six-hour consultative meeting with public transport operators, the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority announced on Monday evening that diesel prices would be reduced by Ksh10.06 per litre, bringing the Nairobi pump price down to Ksh232.86. In a move that drew immediate public anger, kerosene was simultaneously increased by Ksh38.60 per litre to Ksh191.38, while super petrol was left entirely unchanged at Ksh214.25. EPRA said the adjustments were aimed at narrowing the price gap between diesel and kerosene to minimise the risk of fuel adulteration.

Transport operators were unconvinced. They rejected the revised prices outright, arguing that the Ksh10.06 reduction in diesel was wholly insufficient and insisting the price should instead be reduced by Ksh46 per litre — the full amount of the recent hike — to meaningfully cushion the public transport sector. The nationwide strike, they declared, would continue. Thousands of Kenyans endured a second consecutive day of disruption, walking long distances to workplaces, schools, and businesses as most public service vehicles remained off the roads.

Gachagua, watching events unfold from London, was equally scornful of the concession. "The pump price was increased last month, and Kenyans kept quiet. Mr William Ruto mistook the silence of Kenyans for complacency and this month increased the price of super petrol by Sh16.65 per litre and diesel by Sh46.29 per litre," he said. Reducing diesel by Ksh10 while simultaneously hiking kerosene by Ksh38, he argued, was not relief — it was political theatre that shifted the burden from bus operators directly onto the shoulders of the poor, who depend on kerosene for cooking and lighting. The net effect on ordinary Kenyans, he insisted, was worse, not better.

His most explosive allegation, however, concerned who he believes is benefiting from the crisis. Gachagua alleged directly that President Ruto is personally pocketing Ksh30 from every litre of petrol and Ksh40 from every litre of diesel sold in Kenya under the current government-to-government procurement arrangement — a claim the government has not responded to publicly. The opposition has previously alleged that President Ruto stands to gain about Sh5 per litre of fuel consumed under the current pricing structure, translating to an estimated Sh2.5 billion from roughly 500 million litres of consumption, and up to Sh30 billion since the introduction of the G2G arrangement. In his London address, Gachagua escalated those figures significantly, framing the arrangement as a systematic extraction



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

of public resources through a captive pricing mechanism. These are allegations the government has consistently and categorically denied.

He moved swiftly to dismantle the government's principal official defence. Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi and Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi had both attributed the price increases to instability around the Strait of Hormuz. "Let me say that we should not be told that we are having a challenge because of the Strait of Hormuz," Gachagua said, dismissing the explanation as deliberately misleading and accusing senior government officials of deceiving the public over the true causes of the crisis.

His counter-evidence, he argued, was right next door. Gachagua pointed out that Uganda, despite transporting its fuel by road from the Port of Mombasa through Kenya, sells petrol at Ksh188 per litre and diesel at Ksh181. Rwanda offers petrol at Ksh175 and diesel at Ksh171, while Tanzania still comes in below Kenya with petrol at Ksh204 and diesel at Ksh210. "These neighbours are getting fuel from the same source, and their fuel is supposed to be more expensive than ours because their fuel comes through Kenya," he said. The

implication was plain: Kenya's elevated prices were a product of policy failure, embedded corruption, and politically connected intermediaries bleeding the supply chain dry — not global market forces.

On the question of intermediaries, Gachagua was equally direct. He called for all middlemen currently benefiting from commissions within the G-to-G procurement chain to be stripped of those earnings entirely. He gave President Ruto an ultimatum to scrap the G-to-G fuel procurement arrangement and completely remove Value Added Tax on petroleum products, arguing that these two measures alone would cushion consumers from continued price shocks and expose the true structural drivers of Kenya's elevated pump prices. VAT, he argued, should be reduced to zero on fuel — not merely halved — and the government should stop using taxation as a revenue instrument in a sector already burdened by opaque procurement.

Gachagua then raised a concern that will resonate with every Kenyan who owns a motor vehicle or depends on agricultural machinery: the quality of the fuel now flowing through Kenyan pumps. He urged motorists, matatu operators, and

owners of agricultural machinery to reject what he described as substandard petroleum products currently in the market, warning that poor-quality fuel could cause serious and lasting mechanical damage to vehicles and equipment. "Much as we are saying we want the cost of fuel to come down, all owners of vehicles, private matatu owners and owners of planting equipment must demand the removal of this bad fuel from the market because it will give us problems as we go along," he said. Gachagua has previously warned that excessive sulphur content in imported fuel could have devastating mechanical effects, warning of a "national crisis" unfolding quietly beneath the surface of the more visible price protests. Farmers relying on tractors, irrigation pumps, and diesel-powered processing equipment, he argued, faced long-term damage that no price reduction could repair once it had been done.

From London yesterday, Gachagua also trained his sights firmly on the treatment of retired President Uhu-

Politics At the centre of his remarks was Kenya's deepening fuel crisis, and his response to the government's eleventh-hour attempt to contain the damage.

Gachagua fires from London: fuel crisis, Uhuru's rights, and a nation at breaking point

Contd from page 9

ru Kenyatta, whose renewed public commentary on Kenya's political direction has provoked sharp and threatening responses from ruling party legislators. Nandi Senator Cherargei had been among the most vocal, threatening in Parliament to initiate a motion stripping Kenyatta of his retirement benefits. "He gets 80 per cent of the President's salary. The government provides his security and offices. Yet he insults the government. I want to ask my colleagues that when we return to Parliament, we strip his benefits,"



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

the senator had said.

Gachagua's response was characteristically blunt. "Uhuru Kenyatta is our leader. Just because he is retired doesn't mean his mind is retired. He still has an opinion. He still retains his constitutional right to express his opinion and to have a political choice," he said. He then turned the threat into a campaign promise. "Don't intimidate the retired president, saying you can withdraw his retirement benefits. Even if you did, it would just be for a short time. Once we come in next year, we will restore the benefits with arrears and pay him with interest," he said. He appealed directly to Kenyatta himself: "I want to ask Uhuru not to be intimidated. You are a Kenyan like the rest. Please do not chicken out. History will judge you harshly if you shy away from assisting the country to get good governance."

Gachagua also called on police to protect demonstrators and passed his condolences to families of those who had

lost their lives. "Allow me to pass my deepest sympathies to the Kenyans who lost their lives in the call for justice and wish a quick recovery to those injured," he said. He condemned the use of organised gangs to loot businesses, extort motorists, and destroy property during the demonstrations, calling on those responsible to desist immediately.

The government has maintained that the G-to-G arrangement and fuel price adjustments reflect genuine global market realities, and has categorically denied all allegations of personal benefit. The next scheduled EPRA review falls on June 14.

That is twenty-six days away. For millions of Kenyans walking to work, absorbing dearer kerosene costs, and worrying quietly about what substandard fuel is doing to their vehicles and machinery, it is a very long time to wait.

Gachagua is not waiting. He is coming home.

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Economy The Safina's boss argued that debt repayment was consuming nearly all government revenue, leaving little room for development or social services

Wanjigi blames debt for economic crisis

The Safina party leader and its presidential candidate links Kenya's economic crisis to debt, taxes, fuel prices and rising statutory deductions

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Safina Party Leader Jimi Wanjigi has said the country was nearing economic collapse, warning that rising debt repayments were consuming nearly all government revenue and deepening poverty nationwide.

Wanjigi has called for cancellation of illegal public debt that has been borrowed and stolen, arguing that Kenya's economic crisis is driven by unsustainable borrowing and excessive taxation.

He says the country was nearing economic collapse, warning that rising debt repayments were consuming nearly all government revenue and deepening poverty nationwide.

Speaking during a citizen TV show on Sunday, he highlighted that Kenya's political and economic challenges were now inseparable from the country's debt burden, arguing that successive governments had failed to confront the root cause of the crisis.

"We are at a momentous time in our history, with an opportunity to transform our lives, and we must not lose it to mere rhetoric and sloganeering; instead, we should seize the moment by cancelling the debt burden, removing it from our lives, and paving the way for an amazing future," he reaffirmed.

The Safina's boss argued that debt repayment was consuming nearly all government revenue, leaving little room for development or social services.

"Our issue is the economy," he stressed, insisting that the country's fiscal problems were at the centre of rising taxes, high fuel prices and de-

clining living standards.

He claimed the government faced mounting repayment obligations in the final months of the financial year.

"Between now and the end of June, they've got to find Sh800 billion to pay debt," he noted. "Their revenue is showing that they can't collect more than Sh500 billion. There's a possible default of Sh300 billion."

The discussion revolves around Kenya's debt which has increasingly drawn criticism from activists and economists who describe part of it as "odious debt", loans allegedly acquired unlawfully, without public benefit, or through opaque processes.

Petitioners such as Busia Senator, Okiya Omtatah, claim that up to KSh6.95 trillion borrowed between 2014 and 2025 was unauthorized and failed to follow constitutional and parliamentary approval procedures.

The disputed debt includes Eurobond borrowings and major infrastructure loans linked to projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway.

Kenya's total public debt now stands at over Sh12.8 trillion, with critics arguing that taxpayers are burdened by repayments despite allegations of corruption, mismanagement and missing funds in some borrowing programmes.

Wanjigi also linked the crisis to recent increases in fuel prices and transport costs, saying Kenyans were carrying the burden of excessive taxation.

The leader stressed that protests and planned nationwide strikes by public service vehicle operators reflected growing frustration among ordinary citizens.

"I support strikes. I support everything," he stated. "But

what they should be striking about is why government is unable to cushion them from these international factors."

Wanjigi also criticised deductions imposed on workers through taxes and statutory contributions, arguing that citizens were paying more while public services continued to deteriorate.

His criticisms come amid Kenyan workers facing mounting statutory deductions from their salaries as the government expands collections through taxes and mandatory contributions. He says government is struggling to raise revenue shortfalls. This why it can't afford to lower taxes but lying to workers on tax relief.

Under the Affordable Housing Levy, employees contribute 1.5 percent of their gross pay, matched by a similar 1.5 percent from employers, bringing the total levy to 3 percent.

Workers are also required to remit 2.75 percent of their gross salary to the Social Health Authority (SHA) under the Social Health Insurance Fund, while NSSF deductions now stand at 6 percent of pensionable earnings from employees, matched equally by employers.

Combined, the deductions significantly reduce take-home pay for formally employed Kenyans, sparking debate over the growing tax burden amid rising living costs and concerns over accountability in the management of public funds.

Wanjigi also described Kenya's debt as "bad debt" and "illegal debt", pledging that a Safina administration would suspend repayments immediately after taking office.

The Safina Party boss dismissed concerns that suspend-



Jimi Wanjigi during the show. | Photo: Courtesy.

ing debt repayments could damage Kenya's international credit standing or trigger sanctions from lenders.

He also argued that domestic borrowing had not been approved by Parliament, claiming that much of the debt had been accumulated outside constitutional processes. This single item debt is sinking us all. It is not stopping. We project it will keep increasing and remain until 2040.

"There's no domestic borrowing that is approved by Parliament," he said. "None of this money has entered the consolidated account which we're accountable for. They have created slush fund".

Beyond debt, Wanjigi framed the economic crisis as part of a broader struggle for what he called economic liberation struggle for the people of Kenya.

The Safina boss claimed that more than 60 per cent of Kenyans were living below the poverty line and said economic hardship had become a unifying national issue beyond ethnicity and political divisions. Economic pain is in everyone household. It is

sinking everyone.

He also criticized political leaders whom he accused of supporting punitive taxation measures including the controversial Finance Bill 2024. Young people fought for fiscal justice. Yet some of key people in opposition today supported the Finance Bill 2024 leading to killing of more than 60 young people. This is fact.

The businessman-cum-politician says since 2008 financial crisis the world political landscape shifted. Economic devastation became driving force for politics. Young people started uprising and participating in politics aggressively. Most old out of touch political establishment got defeated and ousted out of power. For the first time, world saw a large number of leaders who had not held political office previously getting elected.

This is the direction Kenya is heading. It will be fresh start from MCA to Presidency. A clean slate. A political rupture.

Wanjigi compared himself to why Americans elected Trump and Argentines (debt crisis) elected Javier Milei in 2023.

Both outsiders, anti-political establishment appeal, strong economic agenda, and young generation revolt push.

Wanjigi said Safina Party was focused on building a national political movement centred on economic revolution with strong rule of law and clean governance rather than ethnic alliances.

"Kenya is at pivotal turning point. It has to be a new political and economic order. We are bringing to end a 120 years Mbeberu extraction economic system responsible for misery of Kenyans. It is reset of the country. It end of devastating economic plague.

We are offering a radical economic PESA FIST Agenda to the people Of Kenya. It is Safina Ya Uchumi. This is blueprint where people's economic issues, lives and concerns come before politics. It is new beginning. A new direction to shared prosperity and greatness" Wanjigi asserted, noting that the other opposition figures had not outlined their agenda apart from the one-term rhetoric.



Jimmi Wanjigi with his host Jeff Koinange.

Politics More than 37 aspiring MCAs, 13 parliamentary aspirants, several senatorial hopefuls, and gubernatorial aspirants formally joins Safina Party.

Safina party gains ground in Mt Kenya region

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The political landscape of the larger Mt. Kenya region witnessed a major shift over the weekend when over 550 delegates gathered at Kunste Hotel, Nakuru City for the Safina party leaders Conference.

The historic meeting brought together delegates and aspirants drawn from Nakuru, Laikipia, and Nyandarua counties, signalling growing confidence in the revitalised Safina Party leadership under party leader Jimi Wanjigi, who is also a presidential candidate.

The conference marked one

of the most significant political realignments in the region ahead of the 2027 General Election.

More than 37 aspiring Members of County Assembly (MCAs), 13 parliamentary aspirants, several senatorial hopefuls, and gubernatorial aspirants formally announced their defection from various political parties to join Safina Party.

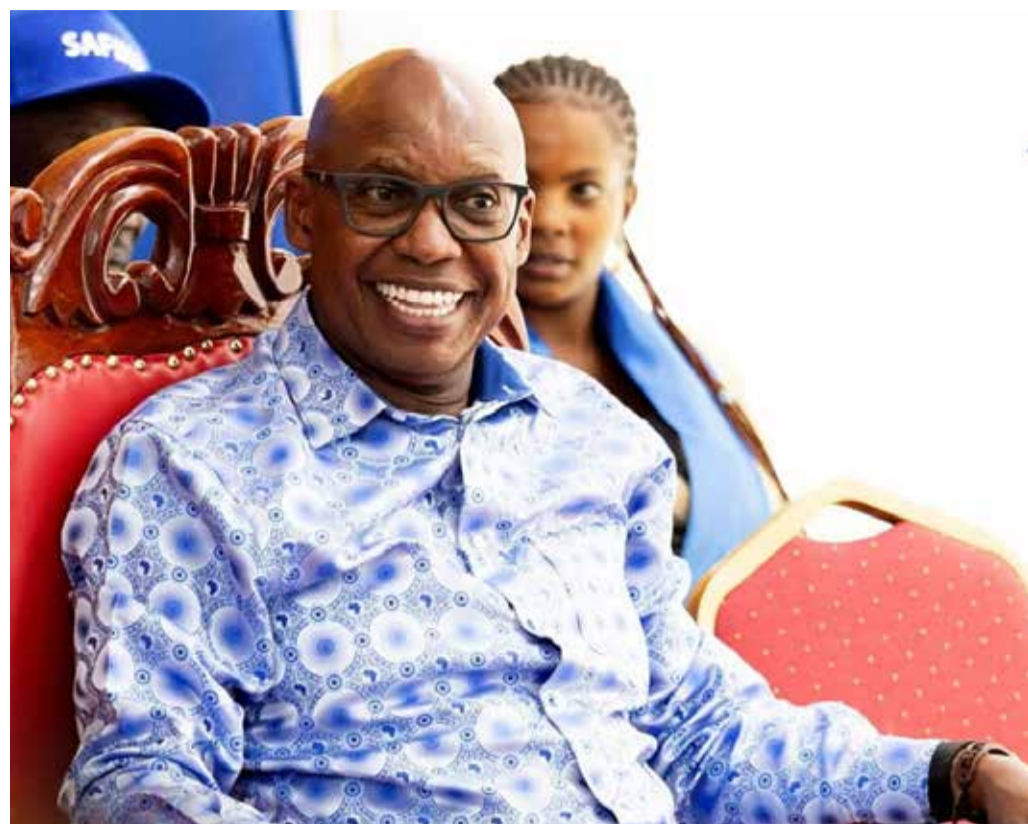
Delegates described the gathering as a turning point in Kenya's democratic and governance journey, with discussions centred on restoring issue-based politics, economic empowerment, accountable leadership, and offering citizens an alternative political

platform focused on public welfare.

Speaking at the conference, Wanjigi reaffirmed his commitment to transformative leadership and national unity beyond tribal and political divisions. He urged leaders to embrace integrity, servant leadership, and policies addressing the rising cost of living, unemployment, and economic inequality.

He said Safina Party was opening its doors to leaders committed to transparency, inclusivity, and development, adding that the party aimed to build strong grassroots structures nationwide ahead of the 2027 elections.

"The future of Kenya de-



Safina party leader Jimi Wanjigi in Nakuru.

pend on courageous leaders willing to stand with the people and defend justice, equality, and economic freedom," he said to cheering delegates.

The atmosphere at the conference was energetic and optimistic, with delegates expressing confidence that Safina Party is emerging as a strong national movement capable of reshaping Kenya's political direction.

Leaders from the three counties pledged intensified grassroots mobilisation and party popularisation at ward and constituency levels.

Several defecting aspirants cited lack of internal democracy, favoritism, and weak ideological direction in their former parties, praising Safina Party for inclusivity and opportunities for youth, women, professionals, and grassroots mobilisers.

The conference also featured discussions on youth empowerment, women's leadership, agricultural reforms, business growth, devolution, and ethical governance. Delegates unanimously resolved to strengthen party structures and recruitment drives across the region.

Political observers described the conference as a key milestone that could influence Mt. Kenya's political dynamics ahead of the 2027 elections, noting Safina Party's growing appeal among aspirants and grassroots leaders.

The meeting ended with renewed unity and optimism, signalling what delegates described as the beginning of a new political chapter under Wanjigi's leadership and Safina Party's expanding national presence.

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Safina party leader Jimi Wanjigi, other officials and some delegates in Nakuru. | Photo: Courtesy

Kindiki expresses government commitment to lower fuel prices

BY DPCS
@themtkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has expressed government's commitment to lower fuel prices calling on all stakeholders in the sector to observe peace for quicker resolution to the impasse.

Further, the DP thanked operators of public service vehicles for calling off their strike to allow for talks saying they have shown their patriotism and readiness to engage for the good of the country.

"The government is committed to engage the stakeholders and come up with a solution so that our country and the economy continue flourishing. We will get a solution to the fuel issue. There is no problem that is so big that we cannot handle," DP assured.

Speaking yesterday during the fu-

neral service of Mzee Eshbon Thuku Kwenya, the father of Kinangop MP Kwenya Thuku that was held at Ru-gongo in the Constituency, Kindiki said the administration has taken action to cushion Kenyans from higher prices and is working on more measures to bring it down.

The Second in Command revealed quick steps already taken including reducing Value Added Tax on fuel from 16 percent to 8 percent and releasing over 12 billion shillings to subsidize price and the latest cut on diesel prices by 10 shillings.

"We have reduced diesel prices by 10 shillings and we are holding further talks on what more we can do. We appreciate the stakeholders for calling off the strike and coming to the table for talks. As the government we thank them for being patriotic and allowing room for engagement as we look for an agreeable

solution," he stated.

The Deputy President assured the country that the government is fully seized of the matter calling for peace and maintenance of law and order warning that violence will not solve it.

"I urge all of us to keep peace. Let us not use the opportunity to break the law, loot, torch vehicles and disrupt transportation. Violence will not bring any solution. A solution can only be achieved through engagement the way we have done," he noted.

Additionally, the DP said the government is balancing necessary interventions with the need to ensure a stable economy and continuity in other critical sectors such as education and roads.

Prof. Kindiki also beseeched Mt. Kenya residents to be peaceful and not attack each other because of po-



DP Kithure Kindiki addressing mourners yesterday | Photo: DPCS

litical affiliations.

"We have been actively involved in the politics of Kenya for a long time. We fought for our independence, we were at the forefront to fight for

multi-partyism. We did all these without destroying our properties and killing ourselves. Politics will come and go," he urged.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Childhood Memories



Childhood is an awesome time in our life.
It has no worries, no pain, no loss, no depression...

Even during the hardest times in life, we laugh.
We didn't know what was right or wrong,
But we did all silly things happily.

In our childhood, we played with Barbie toys,
And drew simple natural scenery.
We all watched Motu Patlu, Shinchan, and cartoons.

We played in the rain,
And made boats and ships to float.

Ice creams, cotton candies, and chocolates,
Happy days and peaceful nights.

School bells, holidays at grandma's house, lunch boxes,
And fears about maths class and homework.

No tension about tomorrow's plans,
We enjoyed every single day.

Everyone loved us so much.
They are truly beautiful memories.

But the truth is —
They never come back at any cost.

V. S. NITHIYASRI
VIII
JOHN DEWEY MATRIC MATRIC SECONDARY
SCHOOL, PANRUTI, TAMILNADU.

Forgive me, mother, I am full of regret



Placing my head upon your cold grave,
With tears in my eyes that could make mountains weep,
With the patience I gave to no one else,
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

I ran through the world searching for happiness,
I forgot you while thinking only of myself,
Today I whispered words to your photograph,
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

When I enter the door, you no longer call me "my child,"
When I drown in sorrow, you no longer share my pain,
Even if I say I am hungry, you cannot feed me now.
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

There was paradise beneath your feet,
There was strength within your prayers,
But in me, there was only sorrow.
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,

Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

I became the reason for your hair turning white,
Whenever pain came, you were always the one to care,

Now who is left to support me?
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

Would it not have been enough for you to stand beside me at my wedding?
Would it not have been enough for you to see your grandchildren?

Could you not come into my dreams just once?
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

I could never fulfill the rights this world owed you,
Nor can I bring you back from the path you took,
Forgive me, I cannot even express my words.
I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

Pray for me now, may your spirit protect me,
May God illuminate your path in the hereafter,
May your daughter's heart ache with longing for you.

I brought them all to you, look, dear mother,
Forgive me, I am regretful, my mother.

Egamberdiyeva Dilnura
Student of Secondary School No. 18

Where is happiness?



Happiness is hidden within ourselves.
Most people think happiness means having a big house and luxurious things.

Some people are addicted to social media and seek happiness through likes.

Many people are very busy with their business and jobs.

So, they think they do not have time to spend with their families.

They do not spend time with their children.
Children need their parents' love, so they feel anxious.

They feel sad and nostalgic.
Happiness is a feeling.

It blooms in the heart, not in a luxurious house or expensive things. Even a small house can have a lot of happiness.

It may be situated in a natural place.

The sun shines brightly on the house.
The moon smiles in the evening, creating a pleasant moment.
The flowers bloom gently.

The stars twinkle brightly.
The clouds move slowly.
The rain falls happily.
The soft breeze blows sweetly.
Children play together.
They live naturally in their surroundings, so they are very happy.

The family talks with joy.
A small house may have no money, but it has much happiness. Happiness does not depend on money or a luxurious life.

It depends on feelings.

Happiness is hidden within you;
you may never find it outside.

You should spend time with your family.
It brings happiness to you and your family.

Where you live and what you have are not important.

How you live is the most important thing.
Happiness is not outside;
it blooms from your heart.

So live happily with your family.
Do not search for happiness elsewhere.
Your happiness is within you.

_G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

Shield your soul



The world may smile with hidden face,
Yet steal your calm, your inner grace.
It asks and asks, yet gives so less,
And leaves the heart in loneliness.

Some love only when you bend,
And drain your light without an end.
You pour your care like endless rain,
Yet harvest silence, hurt, and pain.

Cruel words may pierce like sharpened knife,
Toxic souls may darken life.
Narcissistic hearts may take
Till your spirit starts to break.

But guard within a sacred flame,
A joyful soul none else can claim.
For peace inside becomes your shield,
A strength no cruel world can steal.

Smile not because life is fair,
But because your soul still cares.
Keep your heart in gentle bloom,
Even when surrounded by gloom.

For the happiest soul will always rise,
Beyond the hurt, beyond disguise.
And in a world so cold and wild,
A happy soul stays undefiled.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator, Writer, Freelancer
No 18, Kamarajar Street
Neravy, Karaikal

Never feel defeated



If failure comes, never worry,
It is not the end of your journey.
Keep trying again and again,
Because every effort brings you closer to success.

Motivate yourself in difficult times,
Believe in your strength and move forward.
One day, your hard work and patience
Will take you to the place you dream of.

R.Krishnaveni
Teacher
Creative writer group
Cuddalore
Tamilnadu.

When life pushes you down.
In this world, everyone is running,
Trying to reach their own goal.

Competition is growing every day,
But opportunities are growing too.
Do not lose hope by seeing others move ahead,
Your path is waiting for your steps.

Silence and Smile - the two S's



When the world turns harsh and cold,
And hearts around me lose their hold,
I have a shield that stays with me,
And that shield is silence!

When pain and betrayal cloud my day,
And cruel words are thrown my way,
I have a shield shining all the while,
And that shield is my gentle smile!

Silence protects my wounded heart,
And keeps my inner peace apart.
My smile may hide the tears I bear,
Yet it shows the world I still repair.

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer,
Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, India

Inflation According to KAM, fuel costs have risen by an average of KSh80 between March and May this year.

KAM warns of rising inflation due to fuel prices

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyatimes

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has raised alarm over the latest increase in fuel prices, warning that the sharp rise will trigger higher production costs, increased consumer prices and further strain on Kenya's struggling economy.

In a statement, KAM expressed concern over the new prices announced by the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) on May 14, describing them as the highest in Kenya's history.

According to KAM, fuel costs have risen by an average of KSh80 between March and May this year.

The manufacturers' lobby said the increase would have a ripple effect across key sec-



tors including transport, agriculture, food production and manufacturing, ultimately pushing up the cost of living

and weakening the competitiveness of local industries.

KAM noted that fuel remains a critical input in manufactur-

ing, from sourcing raw materials to production and distribution of finished goods. Manufacturers heavily rely on

Automotive Gas Oil, Industrial Diesel Oil and Heavy Fuel Oil to sustain operations.

"Access to affordable, reliable and quality fuel is essential to sustaining industrial productivity and competitiveness," the association said.

The lobby group acknowledged the Government's decision in April to lower VAT on petroleum products from 16 percent to 8 percent, but argued that the move had not sufficiently cushioned businesses and households from escalating fuel costs.

KAM attributed the high prices partly to heavy taxation, saying taxes and levies account for about 46 percent of retail fuel prices. These include Excise Duty, VAT, the Road Maintenance Levy, Petroleum Development Levy, Railway Development Levy and the Anti-Adulteration Levy.

The association warned that rising fuel prices would significantly increase transportation and electricity costs, with the fuel cost charge on electricity expected to rise from the current KSh3.47 per kilowatt-hour.

It also pointed to disruptions

in the transport sector following recent protests and work stoppages by public transport operators over rising fuel costs. The disruptions left many commuters stranded and affected business operations.

KAM warned that manufacturers were already facing delayed production schedules, supply chain inefficiencies and reduced productivity due to the transport challenges.

The association has now called on the Government to urgently review fuel-related taxes and levies to ease pressure on businesses and households.

"KAM remains committed to working with the Government and other stakeholders in identifying sustainable solutions to the challenges currently facing businesses, consumers and the economy at large," said KAM Chief Executive Tobias Alando.



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Talent hunt According to Kahiga, the top teams in each category will receive cash prizes alongside sporting equipment.

Nyeri launches governors' cup talent hunt

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

The County Government of Nyeri has launched a grassroots sporting tournament aimed at identifying and nurturing youth talent across all 30 wards.

The competition, dubbed the Governors' Cup 2026, officially kicked off on Sunday under the Department of Gender, Youth, Sports and Social Services, with teams competing in both football and volleyball categories for men and women.

Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga said the initiative is designed to promote talent development, strengthen community cohesion, and encourage active youth par-

ticipation through structured sporting activities.

He noted that the tournament will run through three levels; ward, sub-county and county before culminating in the final matches scheduled for June 14.

According to Kahiga, the top teams in each category will receive cash prizes alongside sporting equipment.

In football, winners will take home KSh200,000, followed by KSh130,000 for runners-up, KSh100,000 for third place, and KSh50,000 for fourth place.

Volleyball champions will receive KSh120,000, with second place earning KSh80,000, third place KSh60,000, and fourth place KSh30,000.

"All participating teams will also receive uniforms, balls

and nets to support their engagement in the competition," Kahiga said during the launch.

He added that a technical committee has been formed to ensure fairness, standardised rules, and professionalism across all stages of the tournament.

"The Governor's Cup Tournament 2026 is a flagship grassroots sports initiative designed to promote talent development, community cohesion, and active youth participation," he said, adding that logistical arrangements have been put in place to ensure smooth execution.

The county government estimates that at least 300 teams from each ward will take part in the two-month competition, making it one of the larg-



Some of the participating teams. | Photo: Courtesy.

est grassroots sports events in the region.

Gender CECM Esther Ndung'u said the county intends to use the tournament to identify promising athletes who can progress to higher levels of competition, including national leagues.

She noted that many talented teams at the grassroots level

often fail to advance due to lack of resources and exposure.

"One of our objectives is to go down to the village level and identify teams with unique talent but limited opportunities," she said.

Ndung'u added that the department hopes to link outstanding players to recognised

sporting bodies such as national federations, enabling them to access professional platforms and wider opportunities.

The county says the initiative will play a key role in advancing sports development while creating a vibrant and competitive environment for young people across Nyeri.

Protest In a joint statement issued yesterday, the organisations expressed "grave concern" over violence witnessed during Monday's demonstrations

Rights groups condemn protest crackdown

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

The Law Society of Kenya and the Police Reforms Working Group have condemned what they'll termed as excessive force and unlawful arrests during the fuel prices protests.

In a joint statement issued yesterday, the organisations expressed "grave concern" over violence witnessed during Monday's demonstrations, in which at least four people were reportedly killed.

The groups urged the National Police Service and the Executive to exercise maximum restraint and uphold constitutional rights, including freedom of assembly, association and expression.

They also called on the Independent Policing Oversight Authority to in-

vestigate the reported killings and allegations that police officers were being pressured to pursue unlawful charges against protesters.

The statement strongly criticised the arrest, detention and reported hospitalization of Nairobi Central Station Police Commander Chief Inspector Dishen Angoya after he released 64 protesters on police bond.

According to the organisations, granting police bond is lawful and protected under Kenya's legal and constitutional framework.

"Criminalising the exercise of this discretion undermines the rule of law, chills professional judgment within the police service and signals unlawful interference in operational independence," the statement said.

The groups further warned against attempts by senior police officers to label transport operators and protesters as perpetrators of "economic sabotage."

They argued that the stay-away and withdrawal of services by private transport operators were legitimate forms of peaceful protest against high fuel prices and rising living

costs.

"Attempting to charge spokespersons for the transport industry with economic sabotage will be an abuse of office," the statement added, while calling on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to apply the law independently and fairly.

The organisations also demanded the immediate protection of the rights of all arrested persons, including access to legal representation, medical care and due process, and called for their unconditional release unless credible evidence is presented in court.

They urged Kenyans to continue exercising their constitutional rights peacefully, while insisting that accountability, due process and institutional independence must remain central to public order management.

The statement was signed by several civil society organisations, including Amnesty International Kenya, Katiba Institute, Kenya Human Rights Commission and Federation of Women Lawyers.



Police Reforms Working Group - Kenya

Quality Service Accountability Participation Police Welfare

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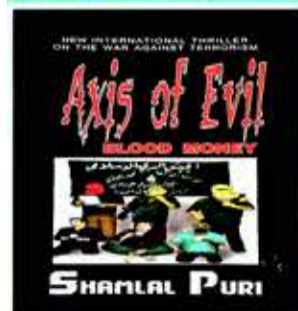
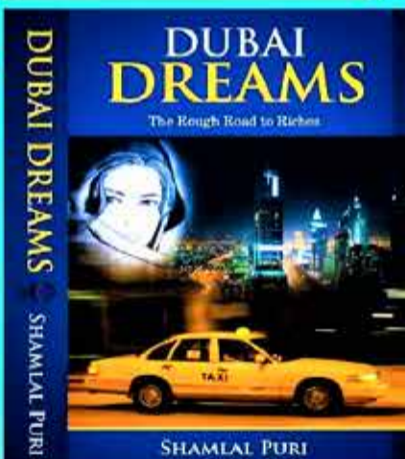
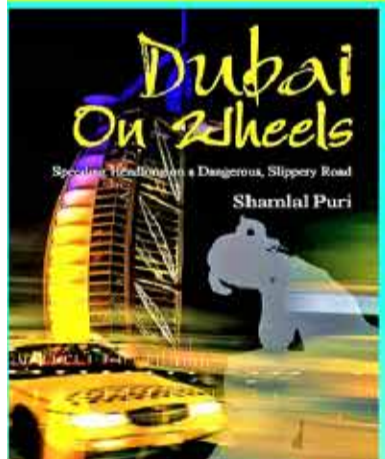
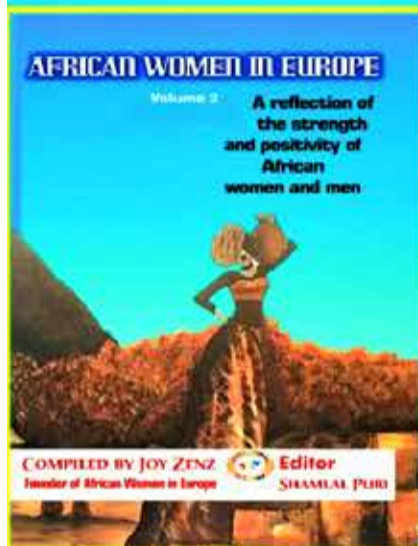
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Inclusion The report identified critical thematic areas including policy and legal frameworks, governance and institutional structures

Inclusion without accountability is mere symbolism: Why Kenya's county disability report must move beyond generalizations



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyatimes



Persons with Disabilities

A disability accountability baseline report establishes a baseline for initial benchmarks for evaluating an organization or government's commitment to disability inclusion. It outlines present status in key areas, creating a foundation against which future progress can be accurately measured. This includes identifying clear gaps, clear benchmarks and clearly defined corrective recommendations.

When the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) released its August 2025 baseline assessment report on disability inclusion in county governments under the theme "Promoting Inclusive Governance for Sustainable Development," many persons with disabilities across Kenya welcomed it with hope, expectation and cautious optimism. For years, disability stakeholders have demanded a serious national conversation around the actual status of inclusion within devolved governments, where most public services directly affecting the lives of persons with disabilities are administered.

The report, carrying forward statements from Cabinet Secretary Dr. Alfred Mutua, the Principal Secretary for Social Protection and Senior Citizens Affairs, the Chairperson of the Council and the CEO of the Council, projected institutional commitment toward disability mainstreaming and inclusive governance. Its objectives were equally clear and commendable. It aimed to establish the level of disability mainstreaming across county governments, identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, and provide evidence-based recommendations capable of informing future planning and implementation.

At face value, the report represented progress. It signaled a growing recognition that disability inclusion must become part of measurable governance practice rather than re-

main confined to ceremonial speeches and policy declarations. Yet beneath its ambitious objectives lies a troubling institutional weakness that continues to undermine disability governance in Kenya: the absence of precise, county-specific accountability mechanisms.

The report gathered substantial information and presented broad national observations, but its findings remained largely generalized and insufficiently detailed to serve as an authoritative accountability framework for counties. This is where the report falls short of its transformative potential.

A baseline assessment is not merely meant to describe conditions in broad terms. It is supposed to establish measurable realities. It should tell the public exactly which counties are compliant, partially compliant or non-compliant. It should provide factual indicators capable of guiding public oversight, civic engagement and policy correction. Most importantly, it should empower persons with disabilities themselves with evidence they can use to either hold their county governments accountable or commend them for meaningful progress.

Unfortunately, the report does not adequately achieve this threshold. A person living with disability in Uasin Gishu County, Kisumu County, Mombasa County or Nairobi County cannot confidently extract and establish the actual disability inclusion status of their county government from the report. The findings are too broad to enable objective county-by-county accountability.

This is particularly problematic because devolution in Kenya transferred significant governance responsibilities to counties. Counties control major sectors affecting persons with disabilities, including

healthcare, infrastructure, public participation, vocational training, early childhood education, social welfare and local employment opportunities. Disability inclusion therefore cannot be assessed meaningfully through generalized national summaries that conceal local disparities and institutional failures.

The report identified critical thematic areas including policy and legal frameworks, governance and institutional structures, accessibility and usability, healthcare services, education, employment and economic empowerment, social assistance, public awareness and advocacy, data collection and monitoring, and participation and inclusion. These areas are indeed central pillars of disability governance. However, the report does not go far enough in providing measurable county specific indicators within these sectors.

Under policy and legal frameworks, for instance, the public is not clearly informed which counties have enacted disability laws, operationalized disability policies, allocated ring-fenced disability budgets or established implementation mechanisms. Such information is critical because disability rights cannot be realized without enforceable legal and financial commitments at county level.

The governance and institutional framework section similarly lacks sufficient detail regarding the existence and effectiveness of county disability directorates, disability mainstreaming committees, advisory boards and representation structures for persons with disabilities. Inclusion without institutional representation remains fundamentally incomplete.

Accessibility and usability, one of the most visible indicators of inclusion, also received generalized treatment. Yet accessibility is mea-

surable. Counties should have been individually assessed based on accessible public buildings, transport systems, hospitals, digital platforms, emergency services and communication systems. Without measurable accessibility audits, inclusion risks becoming rhetorical rather than practical.

Healthcare services remain one of the greatest areas of exclusion for many persons with disabilities in Kenya. Still, the report does not comprehensively establish which counties provide disability-sensitive healthcare services, rehabilitation support, assistive technologies, sign language interpretation, mental health services or inclusive reproductive healthcare. Such omissions weaken the report's usefulness as an accountability tool.

The same pattern emerges in education. There is inadequate county-specific evaluation of inclusive schools, special needs education investment, assistive learning technologies, disability scholarships and teacher preparedness. Education remains one of the strongest pathways toward empowerment, yet the report stops short of exposing the actual depth of exclusion or progress across counties.

Employment and economic empowerment deserved far stronger interrogation than was provided. Kenya's Constitution and disability laws envision equitable representation and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, unemployment levels among persons with disabilities remain alarmingly high. A credible baseline assessment should have clearly identified which counties comply with disability employment quotas, affirmative procurement opportunities and workplace accommodation obligations.

Social assistance, public awareness and participation were similarly discussed in broad developmental language without sufficient county-specific accountability indicators. In many counties, persons with disabilities still face exclusion from budgeting processes, public participation forums and decision-making structures. Yet the report does not clearly measure these failures in a manner capable of triggering institutional reform.

Perhaps the most concerning weakness lies in the area of data collec-

tion and monitoring. Disability governance without accurate data becomes institutional guesswork. Counties cannot plan effectively without credible disability statistics. At the same time, citizens cannot demand accountability when information remains vague, fragmented or generalized. Ironically, the report itself reflects the very data weaknesses it seeks to address.

Future editions of the report should therefore introduce a comprehensive county disability inclusion compliance index. Such an index would rank counties based on measurable indicators across all thematic areas and establish annual performance benchmarks. Counties would then be publicly identifiable as either leaders, moderate performers or laggards in disability inclusion.

The report should also recommend mandatory annual disability inclusion audits conducted jointly by county assemblies, the Senate of Kenya, disability organizations and independent oversight institutions. These audits should not merely exist as procedural exercises; they should directly influence budget approvals, policy reviews and institutional evaluations.

County assemblies must equally establish standing disability oversight committees responsible for monitoring implementation, budget absorption and policy compliance. Disability inclusion should not remain confined within social welfare departments alone. It must become a cross-cutting governance obligation integrated into planning, infrastructure, health, education and economic policy.

Importantly, the next editions of the report must speak directly to persons with disabilities themselves. The report should empower them with factual tools to ask difficult questions. Does my county allocate disability funds? Are public buildings accessible? Are disability employment quotas implemented? Are healthcare facilities disability-friendly? Are persons with disabilities represented in county decision-making structures? Without such factual clarity, accountability becomes impossible.

Yet despite these shortcomings, the report still deserves recognition as an important beginning. Establishing a national disability inclusion baseline, however imperfect, signals institutional acknowledgment that inclusion can no longer remain invisible within county governance systems. It provides a foundation upon which stronger, more detailed

Jealousy Look closely at what happens when you allow it to take root. The friend you once cheered for becomes a threat

The thief in your chest



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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Jealousy never kicks down the door. It slips in through the cracks — when you are tired, when you are scrolling, when you are measuring your behind-the-scenes against someone else’s highlight reel. It settles beside you like an old friend and whispers that you deserve more, that you are being left behind, that if life had been a little fairer, you would already be where they are. And because it sounds so reasonable, you let it stay. You feed it with your attention, your time, your peace. What you do not realise is that while you are listening, it is already eating.

It does not begin with your worst parts. Jealousy is far too cunning for that. It starts with your best parts — the things that make you most human. It takes the generosity in you and turns it into calculation. It takes the joy you once had for others and replaces it with a quiet, nameless ache. It takes your patience and makes it feel like foolishness. It takes your integrity and convinces you that if you refuse to play dirty, you will lose. The person you were slowly becomes a stranger, and you do not even notice until the damage is done.

We tell ourselves that jealousy

is normal. That everyone feels it. That it is simply proof we want better for ourselves. But there is a meaningful difference between healthy ambition and a poison that hollows you out from the inside. Normal or not, unchecked jealousy writes a sentence for your life — and that sentence reads: slow decay. It does not make you better. It makes you bitter. It does not push you forward. It chains you to a life of measuring, resenting, and never quite arriving.

Look closely at what happens when you allow it to take root. The friend you once cheered for becomes a threat. The cousin whose wedding you should be celebrating becomes a reminder of what you do not yet have. The colleague’s promotion becomes evidence that the world is rigged against you. And in that shift, something quietly dies inside you — the part that could love without keeping score, that could be genuinely happy for others, that could rest without the gnaw-

ing feeling of falling behind.

Jealousy is the only emotion that returns nothing for the pain it demands. Anger can burn away what is false. Grief can deepen your capacity to love. Even fear can sharpen your instincts and keep you alive. But jealousy takes your hours, your sleep, your peace — and gives back nothing but emptiness and a distorted mirror. It sells you the lie that life is a race with a single finish line, and that if someone else crosses it first, you have already lost.

What makes it truly dangerous is how little it needs to grow. One photograph. One announcement. One unguarded moment of “why not me?” And it spreads through your mind like fire through dry grass. Soon you are not only jealous of what they have — you are jealous of how they carry it. Their confidence. Their calm. Their ability to laugh without running the numbers in their head. You begin to resent in them the very things you have not yet

chosen to build in yourself.

And while you are watching them, your own life goes unattended. Gratitude cannot breathe in the same room as envy. Contentment cannot survive when you are convinced you are perpetually missing out. Generosity withers when every act of kindness feels like a transaction. Integrity bends when winning starts to matter more than how you win. The qualities that once made you a pleasure to be around become heavy, performative, and eventually absent.

Jealousy shrinks you. It narrows the world until everything is a competition you are losing. It makes you small in your thoughts, small in your words, small in your choices. It makes you say things you will regret, do things you will hide, and become a version of yourself you would not trust with your own secrets. And the cruelest part? The person you are envying may not even know your name. You are suffering, shrinking, and betray-

ing yourself for a life that is not paying you the slightest attention.

This is precisely why it cannot simply be managed. It cannot be negotiated with or given a little corner to occupy. Jealousy is not a pet. It is a parasite. It does not stop at a little — it wants everything. Your joy, your relationships, your self-respect, your future. And it will take all of it if you do not cut it out at the root.

Cutting it out is painful work. It means confronting the lie that your worth is determined by someone else’s life. It means sitting with the discomfort of watching others win while you are still in the middle of becoming. It means learning to say, sincerely, “I am genuinely happy for you” — even when every part of you wants to look away. It means redirecting the energy you waste on watching and pouring it into building what is actually yours.

It also means waking up to a truth that jealousy depends on you forgetting: no one’s success cancels yours. The world is not running out of love, opportunity, or recognition. Your friend’s marriage does not make your singleness a failure. Your neighbour’s house does not make your apartment worthless. Your classmate’s thriving business does not erase your potential. Jealousy feeds on the lie of scarcity, because desperate people are far easier to keep small.

The moment you stop using other people’s lives as a ruler for your own, your better qualities return. Gratitude comes back and makes the ordinary

feel quietly rich. Contentment returns and makes the present feel like enough. You remember that the only race worth running is the one against the person you were yesterday — and that a life built entirely on comparison is a life lived in exile from yourself.

But if you let jealousy stay, it will keep taking. It will turn your kindness into resentment, your ambition into ledgers of who owes whom what. It will leave you present in body but absent in spirit — a ghost walking through your own life while everyone around you is actually living theirs.

So be honest with yourself. What has jealousy already stolen from you? How many nights have you surrendered to comparison? How many relationships have grown cold because you could not bring yourself to celebrate them? How many opportunities slipped past because you were looking sideways instead of forward?

The answer is probably heavier than you want to admit. And that is precisely why you cannot afford to carry it any further.

Jealousy is not a harmless quirk or a manageable mood. It is a thief — one that steals your peace, your character, your capacity to love, and your future, quietly and without apology, until there is nothing left of you worth recognising.

Cut it out. Choose freedom over comparison. Choose to build what is yours rather than mourn what is not. Because a life spent watching others live is not really a life at all.

Inclusion without accountability is mere symbolism: Why Kenya’s county disability report must move beyond generalizations

Contd from page 18

and more transparent future assessments can be built. The challenge now is for future

editions to evolve from descriptive reports into authoritative accountability instruments capable of driving measurable change. Persons with disabilities in Kenya do not merely require policy language that sounds compassionate. They require verifi-

able governance standards, enforceable institutional obligations and measurable inclusion outcomes.

A truly inclusive society is not built through declarations alone. It is built through evidence, transparency, accountability and the courage to con-

front uncomfortable truths about exclusion. And until disability inclusion in Kenya is measured with precision and honesty, many institutions will continue speaking the language of inclusion while silently preserving the structures of exclusion.

“Inclusion is not proven by the promises governments make, but by the measurable dignity, access and opportunity experienced by the most excluded citizen in every county.”

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo
PWD
Chairperson, Jiamini Disability Network Community Based organization
Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Ebola The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rarer Ebola strain than the Zaire strain that has driven most previous outbreaks

Why DR Congo's latest Ebola outbreak is raising regional alarm

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

The latest Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has spread beyond its initial epicenter in Ituri province to additional areas in eastern DRC, with confirmed imported cases reported in neighboring Uganda, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare an international public health emergency.

About 435 suspected cases as well as 116 suspected deaths have been reported, DRC Government Spokesperson Patrick Muyaya said late Monday as health authorities race to contain the outbreak amid growing fears of wider regional transmission.

Why this outbreak is different

The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rarer Ebola strain than the Zaire strain that has driven most previous outbreaks in the DRC. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, director of the DRC's National Institute of Biomedical Research, said the country has recorded 17 Ebola outbreaks since 1976, most caused by the Zaire strain. The Bundibugyo strain, however, has appeared only once before in the country, after first being identified in Uganda in 2007 and later causing an outbreak in eastern DRC in 2012. He said the Zaire strain is generally more lethal, with fatality rates that can exceed 80 percent, while Bundibugyo is estimated to be less deadly. However, he warned that the current outbreak remains dangerous because it



Health workers in a ebola affected area.

was detected late, is spreading in a conflict-affected region, and involves a strain for which no approved vaccine or specific treatment is available.

The WHO has also noted that, unlike Ebola Zaire, there are currently no approved therapeutics or vaccines specifically targeting the Bundibugyo virus, increasing concerns about potential regional spread. Officials of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said vaccine candidates are under consideration for research, but remain at an early stage.

Why detected late

Health officials and experts have identified two main

reasons for the delayed detection: the outbreak may have been spreading for weeks before confirmation, and early laboratory tests were looking for the wrong Ebola strain.

According to authorities in Kinshasa, the presumed index case was a nurse in Ituri's Rwampara health zone who died after developing symptoms. However, Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director General Jean Kaseya said the true index case had not yet been identified. "This outbreak started in April. So far, we don't know the index case. It means we don't know how far the magnitude of this outbreak is," Kaseya said Saturday. Muyembe said the outbreak was discovered "very late,

even too late," largely because early samples were tested with tools designed to detect Ebola Zaire, not Bundibugyo. He said samples initially tested negative because local laboratories were using tools specific to Ebola Zaire. Broader testing conducted later in Kinshasa detected the Bundibugyo virus in several samples. The WHO said it received an alert on May 5 about suspected cases and later deployed a mission to Ituri. This helped confirm the outbreak after weeks of unexplained deaths in the region.

What is being done?

Muyembe said the risk of further spread is high in eastern DRC due to pop-

ulation movement and the challenges of responding in a conflict zone. He warned that the virus could spread beyond the current health zones to other areas or provinces.

Insecurity complicates response efforts, including the safety of health workers, sample transport, supply delivery, patient transfers and communication with communities, he said, recalling that health workers were killed and facilities attacked during the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreak. With no specific vaccine or treatment for the Bundibugyo strain, health officials said response efforts rely on basic measures such as isolating patients, contact tracing and community engagement. Muyembe noted that a 2012 outbreak of the same strain in northeastern DRC's Isiro was contained through such public health interventions. "If you break the chain of transmission, you can control the outbreak," he said, adding that standard care techniques for hospitalized patients could help stop its spread if properly applied.

Health Minister Roger Kamba said on Sunday that three new treatment sites are being built in the country to increase the capacity of health facilities in the face of the scale of the epidemic. Neighboring countries, including Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, have stepped up surveillance, border screening and emergency preparedness measures.

UN calls for proactive measures to reduce emissions in construction sector

A UN report released yesterday said the construction of new buildings should adhere to regulatory measures to achieve net-zero emissions given that the construction sector is responsible for 37 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, the largest of any sector.

Launched by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, the 10th edition of the Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction (2025-2026) calls for accelerating decarbonization of the sector to mitigate the climate crisis and shield communities from energy price volatility. Amid a global housing and energy affordability crisis, the report evaluated the construction sector across key indicators, including policies, finance, technologies and investments aligned with the quest for a net-zero emissions pathway by 2050.

UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen noted that with half of the world's buildings yet to be built or renovated by 2050, governments have a critical opportunity to drive zero-emission, resilient construction through better policies, codes and investment. The sector is responsible for nearly 50 percent of global material extraction.

Accounting for 11-13 per cent of global gross domestic product, the building and construction sector employs about 9 per cent of the global workforce spanning construction, renovation, demolition and civil engineering, said the report.

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes



Ms Inger Andersen

Economy As global ratings shift, the continent's economies are splitting into two groups — those unlocking cheaper capital through reform, and those left paying the price for delay

Africa's two-speed credit divide: reformers rise, strugglers stagnate

BY Norman Mwale

@themkenyatimes

Africa is no longer moving as one. From Lagos to Abidjan, Harare to Kigali, the continent's economies are being sorted in real time by credit markets — and the verdict is unforgiving. Reform is rewarded with cheaper capital and renewed confidence. Stagnation is punished with higher borrowing costs and shrinking leverage. In this new era, a country's credit rating is no longer just a number on a spreadsheet. It is a measure of political will, institutional credibility, and the ability to deliver development that ordinary citizens can actually see and feel.

Africa's sovereign credit landscape is fragmenting faster than at any point since 2020, carving a stark divide between states that have stabilised their public finances and those still trapped in a cycle of fiscal stress. That divide was laid bare in May 2026 when Standard and Poor's upgraded Nigeria from B- to B — its first upgrade in fourteen years — on the very same day the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Peer Review Mechanism published a joint outlook warning that the continent was advancing at “sharply different speeds.”

The divergence is not new, but its pace has quickened sharply since early 2026. Côte d'Ivoire secured an upgrade from Fitch, underpinned by political stability, growth exceeding six percent, and proactive Eurobond buybacks. Botswana, by contrast, was downgraded by both Moody's and S&P after a sharp fall in diamond revenues. Cape Verde received a positive outlook revision, while a broader pattern of upgrades has emerged among countries that completed fiscal consolidation and debt restructuring before the Hormuz shock disrupted global energy markets.

For investors and policymakers, the shift marks a clear departure from the post-pandemic era, when African sovereigns were largely lumped together under the sweeping label of high-risk. “African sovereign credit is diverging faster than at any point since 2020, and the rating agencies are only now catching up with a sep-



Credit markets

aration the primary data has been showing for months,” wrote analyst Joel Akingunola in his widely read Macro Monday column. The practical effect is already visible: borrowing costs for reforming states are falling, while others continue to shoulder a persistent “Africa premium” that inflates their interest payments by tens of billions of dollars every year.

Not every country has managed to engineer that turnaround. Zimbabwe remains among the states struggling to service external debt, despite prolonged engagement with creditors. Outstanding arrears and limited access to concessional finance have strangled investment in infrastructure and social services, leaving the country well outside the cohort of upgraded sovereigns. The contrast with its neighbours is difficult to ignore — where Côte d'Ivoire and

Rwanda have used debt restructuring and fiscal discipline to rebuild market confidence, Zimbabwe's path forward remains blocked by unresolved obligations and persistent governance concerns.

The credit split mirrors deeper political and economic fault lines. Nigeria's upgrade was tied to improved policy credibility and early signs of fiscal consolidation, even as the country continues to wrestle with inflation and foreign exchange volatility. President Bola Tinubu has framed the challenge in continental terms, arguing that Africa must transition from being a price-taker to an architect of its own financial architecture. At the Africa CEO Forum in May 2026, he renewed calls for an African-owned credit rating agency, insisting that the current system imposes a structurally unfair risk premium on African borrowers. Tinubu

was pointed in his criticism, publicly condemning the “Africa premium” imposed by Western agencies that inflates the continent's collective borrowing costs by tens of billions of dollars annually.

Resilience through reform is visible elsewhere too. Côte d'Ivoire's trajectory demonstrates that consistent fiscal discipline, combined with infrastructure investment and active liability management, can shift market perception within a single credit cycle. Rwanda's 9.4 percent growth and expanding tourism sector have similarly been cited as evidence that deliberate domestic policy choices can meaningfully alter how external risk assessors view a country.

Yet the dangers of a two-speed continent remain real and acute. Countries that failed to restructure debt or address governance weaknesses before 2026 are finding market access

both harder and more expensive. Nigeria, South Africa, Mozambique, and Burkina Faso only exited the Financial Action Task Force grey list in late 2025 — a meaningful step that improved their standing, but one that has not yet translated into uniform credit upgrades across the board. For those still left behind, higher borrowing costs crowd out spending on health, education, and infrastructure, deepening the gap with faster-growing neighbours year by year.

The debate now centres on whether Africa can build the institutions needed to ensure a fairer assessment of risk. Proponents of an indigenous rating agency argue that locally grounded institutions would better understand structural reforms and regional dynamics, reducing the bias that many African leaders believe is baked into current assessments. Critics, however, caution that credibility will ultimately depend on technical rigour and genuine independence — not simply continental ownership.

What is beyond dispute is that the old blanket narrative of “Africa risk” no longer holds. The continent is separating into clusters of reformers and strugglers, with credit markets rewarding the former and penalising the latter. As the UN ECA and APRM warned in their joint outlook, this separation is accelerating — and the choices governments make in the next eighteen months will likely determine, perhaps for a generation, which side of that divide they occupy.

If Africa is to avoid hardening into a permanent credit caste system, it must build the institutions, the discipline, and the political courage to make “African risk” mean something fundamentally different tomorrow than it does today.

SPORTS
NEWSPHOTOS
SCORES
OPINIONS
STATISTICS
SCHEDULES
BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *Basco Paints officially launched the Duracoat Golf Masters Series 2026, a premier national golf circuit aimed at growing the game of golf in Kenya, at Sarova Stanley Hotel on yesterday.

All to play for as Basco Paints launches Duracoat Golf Masters Series

Basco Paints officially launched the Duracoat Golf Masters Series 2026, a premier national golf circuit aimed at growing the game of golf in Kenya, at Sarova Stanley Hotel on yesterday.

The launch event brought together leaders from Kenya's golfing fraternity, club captains, and members of the media as they ushered in a platform that will not only enhance the game's development but also propel Kenya as one of golfing giants in Africa.

The event was attended by Kenya Golf Federation President Philip Ochola, Kenya Golf Union Chairman Chris Kinuthia and Kenya Ladies Golf Union Chairperson Mukami Wangai, among other distinguished guests.

The inaugural will feature twelve qualifying tournaments hosted across selected premier golf clubs in Kenya, with golfers allowed to compete in up to three qualifying events, which will officially tee off on 22nd May 2026 at Vet Lab Sports Club, Nakuru Golf Club, Sigona Golf Club, Nanyuki Sports Club, Karen Country Club, Ruiru Sports Club, Nyanza Sports Club, and Limuru Country Club.

Others are Nyalii Country Club, Muthaiga Golf Club, Kericho Golf Club, and Eldoret Golf Club, and it will culminate in a grand finale slated for 28th November 2026 at Mt. Kipipiri Golf Club.

Speaking during the launch, Basco Paints Managing Director Kamlesh Shah described the series as a strategic platform designed to promote sportsmanship, competitiveness, youth empowerment, and talent development through a structured and inclusive national golf circuit.

"The Duracoat Golf Masters Series 2026 is a statement of intent of our intention to actively shape the future of sport, youth empowerment, and community



engagement in Kenya," he said.

The launch coincides with Basco Paints' golden jubilee celebrations, marking 50 years of excellence, innovation and service across Kenya and the East African region.

Basco Paints Chairman Bipin Shah noted that the company remains committed to supporting sports development, youth empowerment, and positive community transformation through strategic partnerships and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

"The Duracoat Golf Masters Series is more than just a tournament. It is a strategic platform designed to grow the game of golf in Kenya, nurture emerging talent and strengthen partnerships within the sporting ecosystem," he said.

He further highlighted the company's continued support for multiple sporting disciplines, including golf, cricket, and padel, as well as sponsorship of key tournaments such as the Sigona Ladies Open, Junior Open, AAK Golf Tournament, and IQSK

Golf Tournament.

Through its CSR programs, the company is also expanding support for sports development in schools with a focus on identifying and nurturing talent at an early stage.

As part of the tournament incentives, Jetour Kenya has partnered with Basco Paints to reward every first hole-in-one achieved during the 13 tournaments with a brand-new Jetour vehicle valued at over Ksh 4 million.

The grand finale at Mt. Kipipiri Golf Club will feature over Ksh 1 million in prizes reinforcing the organizers' commitment to rewarding excellence and elevating competitive golf in Kenya.

Sales and marketing director Mital Shah lauded sports federations, corporate partners, golfers, and the media for supporting the initiative and reaffirmed the company's commitment to delivering impactful sporting and community programs.

"The Duracoat Golf Masters Series 2026 embodies our values of sportsmanship, partnership, excellence, and opportunity by

bringing together stakeholders under one national platform," he said.

As Basco Paints celebrates 50 years of "Coloring Spaces and Inspiring Generations," the launch of the Duracoat Golf Masters Series 2026 marks a significant milestone in the continued growth of golf in Kenya and demonstrates the impact of collaboration between sporting bodies and the private sector in advancing sports development, youth empowerment, and national transformation.

Citizen sport

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Harambee Stars face Bafana Bafana in emotionally charged group stage as McCarthy prepares to face his homeland

Kenya placed in group D of 2027 AFCON qualifiers



Kenya's Harambee Stars

By **Martin Weche**

Kenya's Harambee Stars have been drawn in Group D of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations PAMOJA 2027 qualifiers alongside South Africa, Guinea, and Eritrea, following a draw conducted in Cairo, Egypt, that sets the stage for one of the most compelling storylines in the history of Kenyan football.

The draw, conducted by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), carries a deeply personal dimension for Kenya's head coach Benni McCarthy. A South African football icon and his nation's all-time leading scorer, McCarthy will now be required to marshal Harambee Stars against the very country whose colours he once wore with pride — a meeting of divided loyalties that is already generating enormous anticipation across the continent. "Every match I coach, I give everything for the team I serve," McCarthy has said of his commitment to

Kenya. "That will not change regardless of the opposition." For Kenyan supporters, those words will carry particular weight when Bafana Bafana come calling.

Kenya, alongside fellow East African co-hosts Uganda and Tanzania, has already secured automatic qualification for the 2027 finals, meaning the qualification campaign serves not as a lifeline but as a crucible — a competitive proving ground in which McCarthy can sharpen his squad, test combinations, and build the match fitness and tactical cohesion that a home tournament will demand. For a team still in the process of rebuilding its continental identity, that distinction matters enormously.

Group D promises to be formidable preparation. South Africa, the 1996 African champions who claimed the continent's greatest prize on home soil in Johannesburg nearly three decades ago, arrive with a squad that has shown steady improvement under Hugo Broos. Guinea,

perennial dark horses of West African football, boast a generation of technically gifted players with strong club pedigrees across Europe. Eritrea, the group's relative newcomers, will be hungry to demonstrate that East Africa's emerging football nations are no longer an afterthought on the continental stage.

CAF has distributed the three East African co-hosts across separate groups, a deliberate architectural choice designed to maximise the qualification campaign's competitive integrity. Uganda will contest Group H against Tunisia, Libya, and Botswana, while Tanzania face a daunting challenge in Group L alongside Nigeria, Madagascar, and Guinea-Bissau. Elsewhere, Morocco anchor Group A with Gabon, Niger, and Lesotho, as the Atlas Lions seek to build momentum toward a tournament where they will be among the frontrunners. Senegal, meanwhile, have been placed in Group J with Mozambique, Sudan, and

Ethiopia — a grouping that flatter only on paper.

The qualification schedule is structured across three international windows. Matchdays One and Two are set for September 21 to October 6, 2026, with Matchdays Three and Four following from November 9 to 17, 2026. The final rounds of group stage football will be played between March 22 and 30, 2027 — leaving precious little time for any side to recover from a slow start before the finals begin.

For Kenya, the stakes are both competitive and symbolic. The nation that hosts Africa's greatest football festival cannot afford to be merely a passive backdrop. Harambee Stars must arrive at the 2027 finals having been tested, hardened, and ready — and Group D, with the emotional thunder of McCarthy facing Bafana Bafana at its centre, may prove to be precisely the furnace the team needs.

The road to PAMOJA 2027 does not get easier from here. Good.

SPORTS NEWS



PHOTOS
SCORES
OPINIONS
STATISTICS
SCHEDULES
BREAKING NEWS



SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



A fearless voice: Madzivanyika's stand against executive overreach

BY Norman Mwale

@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- It is a warning worth taking seriously. Parliament's constitutional role is not to affirm or celebrate the Executive. It is to question, scrutinise, and where necessary, restrain it. When that function is blurred — whether through political deference, partisan loyalty, or simple habit — the institution loses the very quality that gives it meaning.
- The same sitting offered a vivid, if uncomfortable, illustration of the pressures Parliament is navigating. A debate on youth representation, in which Government Chief Whip Togarepi noted that the ruling party had already implemented a youth quota — with ten young MPs appointed to Parliament outside of direct election — descended sharply into disorder when Agency Gumbo, MP for Hatcliffe, Harare, remarked dismissively of some of his parliamentary colleagues: "They do not know anything." The chamber erupted.

Corban Madzivanyika, the Member of Parliament for Mbizo in Kwekwe, has built one of Zimbabwe's more formidable reputations as a legislator unafraid to speak uncomfortable truths to power — and his latest intervention suggests that reputation is very much intact.

Over the course of his parliamentary career, Madzivanyika has grilled officials over the protracted collapse of ZISCO Steel, championed small and medium enterprises suffocated by bureaucratic red tape, spotlighted the decay in local council service delivery, exposed corruption at Air Zimbabwe, and delivered a scathing rebuke of the controversial Constitutional Amendment Bill 3. Each intervention has added another layer to his standing as a genuine advocate for the ordinary Zimbabwean. Now, with characteristic composure, he has turned his attention to something arguably more fundamental: the slow erosion of Parliament's ability to hold the Executive accountable.

Rising on a point of order with the unflappable calm that has become something of his trademark, Madzivanyika told the House that while appreciation for the President's efforts is entirely warranted, it must never come at the expense of Parliament's constitutional mandate to scrutinise those in power. "Invoking the President's name risks undermining Parliament's ability to hold the Executive accountable," he said, his words cutting cleanly through the chamber's noise. He warned that the daily, almost reflexive, referencing of the President's name on the floor risked creating a damaging perception — that Parliament had been, in his words, "captured by the Presidium" — an impression he argued would compromise the institution's relevance and credibility in the eyes of both citizens and the international community.

It is a warning worth taking seriously. Parliament's constitutional role is not to affirm or celebrate the Executive. It is to question, scrutinise, and where necessary, restrain it. When that function is blurred — whether through political deference, partisan loyalty, or simple habit — the in-



Corban Madzivanyika, the Member of Parliament for Mbizo in Kwekwe

stitution loses the very quality that gives it meaning.

The same sitting offered a vivid, if uncomfortable, illustration of the pressures Parliament is navigating. A debate on youth representation, in which Government Chief Whip Togarepi noted that the ruling party had already implemented a youth quota — with ten young MPs appointed to Parliament outside of direct election — descended sharply into disorder when Agency Gumbo, MP for Hatcliffe, Harare, remarked dismissively of some of his parliamentary colleagues: "They do not know anything." The chamber erupted. MPs rose from their seats, voices overlapping in protest. One female parliamentarian, visibly incensed, slammed her fist on her desk as she responded. The Speaker intervened swiftly, ordering Gumbo to withdraw the remark or leave the House — but the pandemonium had already taken hold.

The episode was, in many ways, more revealing than any formal debate. A legislature consumed by personal animosity and performative outrage is one that struggles to perform its core function — and that, precisely, is the environment in which executive overreach tends to quietly flourish. When Parliament is distracted, the Executive advances. When the institution is seen as captured or chaotic, public trust erodes, the rule of law weakens, and the conditions for corruption and abuse of power become considerably more hospitable.

The international dimension matters too. Zimbabwe is watched closely by donors, development partners, and potential investors, all of whom take their cues partly from the quality and independence of its democratic institutions. A Parliament perceived as a rubber stamp is not simply a domestic governance failure — it carries real economic and diplomatic con-

sequences.

Madzivanyika's intervention will not, on its own, resolve these tensions. But it represents exactly the kind of principled, institutionally grounded pushback that Zimbabwe's legislature needs more of, not less. The question is whether enough of his colleagues are willing to set aside partisan comfort and join him in defending what Parliament is actually for.

An oversight institution that has forgotten how to oversee is not an institution at all. It is a formality. And Zimbabwe, at this moment in its history, can ill afford the difference.