



Opposition faults government over punitive taxes, warns against elections rigging
 Opposition leaders have accused President William Ruto's administration of overburdening Kenyans through punitive taxes, high fuel prices and harsh economic policies **Page 8**



Nyeri's call for proactive leadership: Reviving a legacy of national impact
 Nyeri County, once a benchmark for principled and forward-looking leadership in Kenya, is being urged to reclaim that mantle as aspiring Senator Nick Mararo calls for a decisive return to proactive governance. **Page 12**

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Security ...any breach involving the security of the President is unacceptable and a matter of the gravest national concern - Kanja

Kanja overhauls Ruto's guard after Kilifi breach

Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja Kirocho has ordered immediate changes to President William Ruto's security detail and constituted a special investigations team after a man carrying a Bible breached multiple security layers, ascended the presidential dais, and briefly clung to the Head of State during a public event in Ganze, Kilifi County on Sunday.

The incident unfolded during a thanksgiving ceremony for Youth Affairs Principal Secretary Fikirini Jacobs, where footage showed the man moving from the crowd, climbing onto the dais, and approaching the President while holding a Bible. In the brief but chaotic moments that followed, Ruto nearly lost his balance as security officers struggled to remove the intruder, with the President visibly shaken by the ordeal.

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The man moved from the crowd, ascended the dais, and approached the President while holding a Bible, appearing to seek engagement with him. Inset Noah Maiyo who was moved as Presidential Escort Commander Photo | Courtesy.

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Ruto praises Youth PS Fikirini as symbol of hope for young Kenyans

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in moments

President William Ruto has hailed Youth Principal Secretary Fikirini Jacobs as a symbol of determination and hope, saying his rise from Bamba in Ganze, Kilifi County, to national leadership demonstrates the potential of young people across the country.

Speaking yesterday during a thanksgiving service held in honour of the PS at Mnagoni Primary School grounds in Bamba, President Ruto said Fikirini's appointment reflects the government's belief that leadership is defined by commitment, integrity, and service rather than one's background.

The Head of State noted that the youthful PS has already distinguished himself as a hardworking and focused leader dedicated to championing the interests of young people. "It is rare for a young man from a remote part of our country to rise to such a distinguished office. His journey is a testament to the limitless potential that exists in every corner of Kenya," Ruto said.

The President added that the government will continue supporting and mentoring young leaders to prepare them for greater responsibilities in the future.

Residents and local leaders who attended the event described Fikirini's appointment as an inspiration to youth in the Coast region and the country at large.

The fete saw a serious security breach where an individual walked to the president as he addressed the gathering before he was whisked away.

The incident led the change of the top presidential guard team.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Farmers at Lokipetot and Naurenpuu villages in Turkana Central have received 53 acres of land on Thursday in a deliberate move to enhance food self-sufficiency. The farmers beamed with excitement, each getting half an acre, and showed readiness to farm, owing to the current rainy season. "There is a need to utilize farm mechanization for farmers to start farming and tap water flowing in River Turkwel," said Charles Ayanae Namus, Lokipetot Irrigation Management Committee Chairperson. Rael Amase, a farmer, asked county officials for support with seeds and farm tools to start planting after clearing bushes and managing Prosopis. She noted most of the farm beneficiaries are female-headed households.



Kaimosi University has reinforced its commitment to addressing societal needs through responsible research following the successful completion of a three-day training programme on Research Ethics and Bioethics. The training equipped researchers, students and academic staff with critical knowledge and skills on ethical research practices, human dignity, informed consent and the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research. It was aimed at enhancing ethical standards in research and innovation while ensuring that studies involving human participants are conducted with integrity and respect for fundamental rights. The university Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Thomas Kiprugat noted that the training has strengthened efforts to promote responsible research and foster a culture of ethical conduct among researchers, students and academic staff.

Igembe is among the regions in Meru county blessed with fertile soils and reliable rainfall suitable for growing a wide variety of fruits. Farmers in the area cultivate fruits both for family consumption and for sale in local markets, making fruit farming an important economic activity in the region.

Some of the common fruits grown in the region include mangoes, avocados, watermelons, bananas, pawpaws, oranges, passion fruits and pineapples. Most of these fruits are available depending on the season, with mangoes being among the most common fruits between February and March.



The Fellowship of Bishops in Busia County has called for urgent dialogue between police, political leaders, and youth following tensions that left two people dead in Busia town. Led by Bishop George Odhiambo, the clergy urged peaceful engagement to restore calm and allow businesses to operate normally. They condemned excessive use of force by police, saying guns cannot solve current challenges. Bishop John Sireka warned that looting and destruction were hurting businesses and the local economy, especially in the border town. Bishop Joseph Mwangi urged residents and leaders to uphold the rule of law and seek peaceful solutions. The unrest followed a confrontation after youths attempted to storm Busia police station demanding release of a suspect.



Forest Service has intensified efforts to restore degraded forests in Homa Bay County amid growing challenges posed by invasive plant species particularly Lantana camara. Speaking during a 'Back to School with a Seedling' tree planting initiative at Lake Primary School in Homa Bay town, County Conservator of Forests Sharon Cheluget said invasive species continue to threaten several forest stations in the county. According to Cheluget, forests most affected include Wire, Koderia, and Homa Hills forest stations, where illegal activities such as deforestation and charcoal burning have further undermined conservation efforts.



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Grabbing Last week, Muniu wrote to Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi demanding action against the premises.

Kiambu businessman protests land grabbing, demands closure of Village bar

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

A businessman from Nderi village in Sigona Ward, Kikuyu Constituency, has raised concerns over an alleged land grabbing dispute that has now escalated into a battle over the operation of a bar on the contested property.

Lawrence Muniu claims he legally purchased a piece of land from a local land-buying society, but part of the property was allegedly taken over shortly after the purchase.

According to Muniu, attempts to reclaim the land through legal processes have not succeeded despite obtaining tribunal orders directing the alleged occupant to vacate the property.

“This person has completely refused to move out of my land. I even acquired an eviction order, but it has not been enforced,” Muniu said.

The businessman now wants authorities to shut down a bar that has reportedly been established on the disputed land, arguing that it is operating illegally within a residential village setting.

Muniu alleged that the outlet is selling illicit alcohol and other drugs, claims he says should be investigated by relevant authorities.

He further argued that the bar’s location violates government directives on the op-



Lawrence Muniu

eration of liquor businesses, saying such establishments should be located within designated shopping centres.

Last week, Muniu wrote to Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi demanding action against the premises. He also copied the letter to Kikuyu Sub-County administrators and local police officers.

In his complaint, he questioned how the County Liquor Licensing Board approved the business despite its location in a village environment.

“This is a residential village

with children, visitors, and schools nearby. Such a business should not be operating here,” he said.

Muniu also accused customers at the bar of vandalizing

Lawrence Muniu claims he legally purchased a piece of land from a local land-buying society, but part of the property was allegedly taken over shortly after the purchase.



his iron-sheet fence and littering the compound with empty bottles, shopping bags, and tissue papers.

“They sneak into my land and leave behind dirt and destruction. Every time I visit the farm, I find the place in a terrible state,” he said.

He maintained that he will continue pursuing legal avenues to reclaim the land and push for closure of the bar, insisting that the establishment does not meet the standards required for operation.

Kenya and Indonesia youth vow to act



Indonesian Embassy and university partners host 150 youth delegates in Nairobi.

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

Young leaders from Kenya and Indonesia have called for deeper cross-border collaboration following the Indonesia-Kenya Youth-to-Youth Dialogue, held in Nairobi and organised by the Indonesian Embassy in partnership with Daystar University, Padjadjaran University, and President University.

The forum, themed “Bridging Indonesia and Kenya through Youth Leadership for Global Impact,” drew more than 150 participants in person and approximately 200 online, with discussions centred on youth leadership, innovation, and international cooperation.

Indonesian Ambassador to Kenya Witjaksono Adji said youth engagement must move beyond symbolism. “The success of this dialogue will be measured by the ideas that continue, the connections that grow, and the commitments that turn into action,” he said, adding that relations between Jakarta and Nairobi are increasingly anchored on direct engagement between citizens

rather than government agreements alone.

“This activity is expected to encourage innovative, mutually respectful, and peaceful relations between young people from both countries.”

— Prof. Justus Musya, Daystar University

Prof. Justus Musya, Head of the Department of Peace and International Studies at Daystar University, stressed the growing importance of cross-border diplomacy, saying platforms such as this are vital in fostering peaceful and innovative relations between nations.

Student panelists from both countries explored three pillars: turning awareness into action, translating values into impact, and building lasting international connections. Participants also signed a symbolic “Commitment of Hope” tree, pledging personal action toward social change.

The forum featured exhibitions of Indonesian culture, including traditional instruments such as the Angklung and Gamelan, with organisers calling for similar engagements to be held regularly.

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Leaders urged to unite for peace and humanitarian service at Kenya forum



Amb Cardinal Prof Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba addressing a forum last week

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

Religious leaders, peace ambassadors, humanitarian organizations, and civil society representatives have been urged to embrace unity and collective responsibility in addressing social and economic challenges facing the country.

Speaking during the Peace, Humanitarian and National Unite Leadership Forum held at Weston hotel, Amb Cardinal Prof Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba called on leaders across all sectors to work together in promoting peace, justice, and humanitarian support for vulnerable communities.

The forum, organized through a collaboration of local and international organizations including GUPD, EACC, UNACCC, International Gospel Missionaries (IGM), Nouvelle Perspective International, United Nations Peacemakers Women International, Peniel Mission Ministries, and the National Federation of PBOs, brought together delegates from various institutions and faith-based organizations.

Addressing the gathering, Amb Nzabonimba emphasized that peace remains the foundation of national development and social stability.

“Without peace, there can be no meaningful development, justice, or sustainable progress,” he said.

He noted that increasing social divisions, economic pressures, youth vulnerability, and humanitarian crises require leaders to rise above differences and work together for the common good.

The peace ambassador urged leaders to prioritize support for vulnerable groups, including struggling families, unemployed youth, and marginalized communities.

“True leadership is not defined by position, but by the ability to serve, uplift, and bring hope to those in need,” he stated.

He further challenged leaders to embrace unity, cooperation, and peaceful dialogue as key pillars for national cohesion.

“Leaders must work together in harmony, support one another across all sectors, and focus on helping those facing hardships,” he added.

The forum also recognized the contribution of religious leaders, interfaith representatives, humanitarian delegates, and peace ambassadors in strengthening social cohesion and moral values within communities.

Special tribute was paid to Mau Mau veterans for their role in securing Kenya’s independence and inspiring patriotism and unity among citizens.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to peacebuilding, humanitarian support, community empowerment, human rights, and international cooperation.

The meeting concluded with a renewed call for unity among nations and communities, with delegates expressing hope for a peaceful Kenya, a united Africa, and a compassionate world.

“Let us replace hatred with understanding, division with cooperation, conflict with dialogue, and bitterness with reconciliation,” Amb Nzabonimba said.



Opposition leaders

Opposition faults government over punitive taxes, warns against elections rigging

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Opposition leaders have accused President William Ruto’s administration of overburdening Kenyans through punitive taxes, high fuel prices and harsh economic policies contained in the proposed Finance Bill.

Speaking during an interdenominational peace prayer meeting at Blue Post Hotel in Murang’a County led by Wiper Patriotic Front party leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, the leaders claimed the government had ignored the struggles facing ordinary wananchi, warning that the Finance Bill would further raise the cost of living for already strained families.

The opposition leaders faulted the Kenya Kwanza administration over what they termed hard-hitting economic decisions that continue to push millions of Kenyans into hardship.

“Kenyans are suffering because of punitive taxes, high fuel prices and policies that do not favour ordinary

citizens. Instead of easing the burden, the government is introducing more measures that will make life even harder,” Kalonzo said.

He said if not careful, the government will push the citizens to a position that may cause tensions and revolt, a situation that could be avoided by being responsive to their demands of lowering the cost of living.

Kalonzo also cautioned politicians against targeting communities for political gain, saying the country must avoid divisions similar to those witnessed during the 2007 post-election violence.

“We should not profile or attack any community because of politics. Kenya belongs to all of us and leaders must promote unity instead of incitement,” he said.

The former Vice President further termed claims by some United Democratic Alliance leaders about a possible rigging of the 2027 General Election in favour of the government as reckless and inciteful, warning that Kenyans would not allow manipulation of the electoral process.

He urged the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to involve all stakeholders in electoral preparations to ensure transparency and public confidence ahead of the polls.

Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi called for respect among political leaders during campaigns, saying insults and looking down upon others were unnecessary and could fuel tensions in the country.

“Leaders must respect one another even when they disagree politically. Belittling others and using inflammatory language can easily divide Kenyans and heighten political tensions,” said Muturi.

Meanwhile, former Nyali MP Mohammed Ali warned the IEBC against any attempts to manipulate the 2027 elections.

Security ...any breach involving the security of the President is unacceptable and a matter of the gravest national concern,” Kanja said in the statement.

IG Kanja orders overhaul of Ruto’s security team after “unacceptable” Kilifi breach

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatimes

Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja Kirocho has ordered immediate changes to President William Ruto’s security detail and constituted a special investigations team after a man carrying a Bible breached multiple security layers, ascended the presidential dais, and briefly clung to the Head of State during a public event in Ganze, Kilifi County on Sunday.

The incident unfolded during a thanksgiving ceremony for Youth Affairs Principal Secretary Fikirini Jacobs, where footage showed the man moving from the crowd, climbing onto the dais, and approaching the President while holding a Bible. In the brief but chaotic moments that followed, Ruto nearly lost his balance as security officers struggled to remove the intruder, with the President visibly shaken by the ordeal.

The National Police Service, in an official press statement signed by Kanja, confirmed the breach occurred while the President was addressing members of the public and said the investigation would be swift, thorough, and uncompromising. The statement warned that any attempt to breach security at events involving the President or other national leaders would be met with the full force of the law.

“Although security agencies responded swiftly and decisively to contain the situation and restore order, any breach involving the security of the President is unacceptable and a matter of the gravest national concern,” Kanja said in the statement.

Ruto, appearing to recover his composure at the scene, was heard telling security personnel to stand down, before quipping: “That young man has no problem. I think he learned from Fikirini Jacobs not to miss any opportunity. I will deal with him later.” Authorities had not confirmed by press time whether the individual had been arrested or charged.

The Ganze breach is the latest in a sustained pattern of security failures at presidential public engagements. On May 4, 2025, a shoe was hurled at the President during a rally in Kehancha, Kuria West, Migori County, striking him as he addressed residents. Footage showed Ruto deflect-

ing the projectile with his arm before security officers rushed the stage. Four suspects faced possible treason charges, which carry the death penalty under Kenyan law, though their families maintained the men were not present at the rally.

On January 9, at the launch and disbursement of the NYOTA Project Business Start-Up Capital for the South Rift region at the Nakuru ASK Showground in Nakuru Town West, a youth broke from the crowd and sprinted toward the podium where the President was speaking to young entrepreneurs. Security officers moved in quickly before Ruto intervened and engaged the intruder in a light-hearted exchange that briefly eased tensions at the venue.

A month later, on February 6, a man identified as Jeremiah broke from the crowd and ran toward the dais at the Jomo Kenyatta Showground in Mombasa, where Ruto was presiding over the disbursement of Sh147 million in NYOTA business start-up capital to 5,880 young entrepreneurs from Mombasa, Kwale, and Taita-Taveta counties. Ruto intervened and briefly engaged him before the event continued.

Six days later, on February 12, a man identified as Ahmed Mohamed charged toward the podium at Wajir Stadium during the NYOTA funds disbursement forum and was swept away by a presidential guard before being arrested and interrogated on his motive. Kanja responded by forming an inquiry team and giving it a strict three-day deadline to submit findings and recommend immediate remedial measures. That Sunday’s Ganze breach, coming just over three months later, suggests those recommendations have not fully closed the gaps.

“The security of the Head of State is a matter of national security and will be treated with the utmost seriousness,” Kanja said in the statement issued from National Police Service Headquarters.

Security analysts have attributed the recurring breaches partly to the 360-degree campaign-style arrangement now commonly used at presidential events, which leaves the Head of State exposed from multiple angles. Close-protection expert Byron Odera, a former Special Forces officer, has called on those responsible for presidential security to re-ex-



The man moved from the crowd, ascended the dais, and approached the President while holding a Bible, appearing to seek engagement with him. Photo | Courtest

amine those set-ups entirely.

The most serious physical breach in recent memory occurred in October 2025, when a spear-wielding intruder fatally attacked a General Service Unit officer at Gate D of State House, Nairobi, while the President was within the compound. Kenya’s presidential protection structure

draws personnel from the Presidential Escort Unit, the General Service Unit, and other specialised formations across the security services.

The National Police Service said it would take every necessary measure to ensure the incident was not repeated and that the highest standards of security were maintained for the

President, national leadership, and the nation. The findings of the special investigations team are expected to inform further structural changes to the presidential protection arrangement.



Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja Kirocho

Ethnic profiling UDA's secretary general issues a formal regret after remarks targeting the Mt Kenya region ignite a cross-party firestorm — but many leaders say sorry is not enough.

Mt Kenya leaders reject Omar's apology over ethnic profiling storm

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar has issued a formal apology over remarks widely condemned as ethnic profiling of the Mt Kenya community, but leaders from the region have largely rejected the gesture as inadequate, deepening a political crisis within the ruling party just over a year before the 2027 General Election.

The controversy erupted after Omar, speaking at a public event along the Coast, made a series of pointed remarks linking protests in the Mt Kenya region to former President Uhuru Kenyatta, accusing sections of the community of sabotaging the government of President William Ruto. Critics across the political divide swiftly characterised the comments as ethnic baiting — a charge that sparked an unusually swift and unified

backlash from Central Kenya's political establishment.

Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru was among the first and most vocal to respond, drawing a sharp line in the sand. "I have stood against ethnic-based politics when espoused by some leaders in Mt Kenya. In equal measure, I strongly stand against the Hassan Omar type of ethnic baiting that seeks to isolate the people of Mt Kenya," she said in a post on X, according



UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar

to Capital FM. Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika, Kiambaa MP John Njuguna Kawanjiku, and Nyeri Woman Representative Rahab Mukami also condemned the remarks, as did Naivasha MP Jayne Kihara, who went further, accusing both Omar and President Ruto of deliberately stoking anti-Kikuyu sentiment ahead of the next election.

"He made commitments during the 2022 campaigns, and many of those commitments remain unfulfilled. The people have every right to hold him accountable — and he cannot respond by weaponising ethnicity against them."

— Naivasha MP Jayne Kihara

Former nominated senator Millicent Omanga was equally unsparing. "Hussein Omar, stop tribal profiling and show respect to former President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Kikuyu community. The truth is that Kikuyu votes played a major role in building UDA," she said, according to

The Eastleigh Voice. KANU spokesman Tony Gachoka, writing on X, dismissed the remarks as deserving of "contempt," adding that he joined what he called the "wholesale condemnation of this idiocy," as reported by People Daily. Former Mukurweini MP Kabando wa Kabando accused Omar of betraying leaders who had previously supported him personally and politically.

Faced with the mounting pressure, Omar issued a written apology on 24 May 2026, maintaining that his words had been "misinterpreted and taken out of context." The statement, released through the office of the UDA Secretary General, read in part: "My comments were never intended to demean, offend, or target any community. To all those who may have been offended, I sincerely regret the misunderstanding and extend my apology." He attributed his original remarks to his long-standing advocacy on historical land injustices affecting Coast communities,

according to Kahawatungu. The explanation satisfied few. Leaders who had demanded an unqualified apology noted that Omar's statement still denied any wrongdoing, framing the controversy as a misunderstanding rather than an error of judgment. With the National Cohesion and Integration Commission mandated to monitor and act on incitement to ethnic tension, pressure is growing on authorities to take a firmer institutional stance on political rhetoric that targets communities by identity.

For UDA, the episode is an uncomfortable reminder of the fragility of the Kenya Kwanza coalition's hold on Mt Kenya — a region whose votes were critical to Ruto's 2022 victory, and whose loyalty ahead of 2027 is no longer something any party strategist can take for granted.




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CSR From the roadside to the delivery room, Boda Girls are putting women in the saddle to earn, heal, and carry mothers to care

KSh7 M Bikes boost Kisumu mothers

BY Chris Mahandara
@themtkenyatimes

Women in rural Kisumu will now access free and safer transport to health facilities following a Sh7 million motorcycle donation aimed at improving maternal healthcare services and reducing delays in accessing treatment. The donation of 32 motorcycles to Boda Girls Kenya by Car and General will support trained female riders to ferry expectant mothers, children and vulnerable women to hospitals across parts of Kisumu County.

The motorcycles were unveiled last week during the launch of two new Boda Girls operational sites at Ahero Medical Centre in Nyando Sub-County and Chiga Hospital in Kisumu East Sub-county.

Speaking at Ahero Multipurpose Training Centre in Nyando Sub-County during the launch of the initiative, Car and General General Manager George Rubiri said the partnership seeks to address transport barriers that continue to hinder women from accessing maternal healthcare services on time.

Rubiri said the programme goes beyond economic empowerment for women riders and directly targets maternal health outcomes within rural communities.

“The ladies are being empowered not only economically through Boda Girls but also to support the community in transporting mothers who require maternal support and access to hospitals,” he said.

He noted that besides donating the motorcycles, the company would also train the women on road safety, motorcycle handling and technical maintenance skills to ensure safe and professional operations.

“We are not just here to donate bikes. We are also here to train them in safe riding because safety is a major concern on our roads. We are

supporting them with technical knowledge so they understand the motorcycles and can use them efficiently to earn an income that enables them to live dignified lives,” said Rubiri.

Rubiri described the Kisumu launch as the beginning of a wider partnership that could eventually be rolled out nationally.

“This is just the start. We want to pilot, monitor and support the programme because the impact we have already seen is huge,” he said.

He revealed that the motorcycles donated under the programme are valued at more than Sh7 million, excluding additional operational and training support costs.

“The biggest thing for us is not just the cost of the motorcycles but the impact this programme is already having in communities,” he added.

According to Boda Girls Kenya Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nancy Otieno, the programme was created to tackle unsafe transport experiences for women while also improving access to healthcare services.

Otieno said the organisation trains women to become motorcycle riders, health advocates and entrepreneurs within their communities.

“Boda Girls Kenya is a women-led organisation that trains women to become motorcycle riders and also health advocates within their communities and businesswomen,” she said.

She explained that the programme was first piloted in Siaya County following concerns over sexual harassment and insecurity faced by women using conventional boda boda transport services dominated by male riders.

“As we know, about 98 per cent of boda boda riders are male and many women do not feel safe. Border Girls was created to offer women safe mobility while also improving access to healthcare,” she said.

Otieno said the riders work

closely with health facilities, community health volunteers, churches and local leaders to identify pregnant women and vulnerable patients in need of medical attention.

“These Boda Girls are health advocates within the community. Once trained, they work closely with community health volunteers to identify mothers from their first antenatal clinic visits and support them throughout their healthcare journey,” she explained.

Besides transporting expectant mothers for antenatal and delivery services, the riders also support women seeking cancer screening, family planning services and survivors of gender-based violence.

Otieno said the pilot phase of the programme had already demonstrated major improvements in maternal healthcare uptake.

“Within two years and with only 20 Border Girls riders, we were able to increase facility deliveries by 67 per cent. Maternal and child health visits doubled and cancer screening uptake also increased significantly,” she said.

She cited UNICEF data indicating that about 5,000 women die annually in Kenya due to delays in reaching healthcare facilities while another 3,000 infants die because mothers fail to access hospitals in time.

“Boda Girls is directly contributing to reducing maternal deaths by ensuring women can access hospitals quickly and free of charge,” she said.

The organisation, she said, currently operates in Kisumu, Siaya and Homa Bay counties and plans to have 160 active riders by the end of the year across Kisumu, Siaya, Migori and Homa Bay.

In the next five years, the programme targets expansion to 43 hospitals in 14 counties while supporting at least 800 women riders and reaching more than one million beneficiaries annually.

Otieno said the initiative was also transforming livelihoods for women entering the



Car and General General Manager George Rubiri | Photo: Chris Mahandara

male-dominated boda boda industry.

“Besides reimbursements from health facilities, the Boda Girls are also free to take private clients, which allows them to earn additional income to support their families and educate their children,” she said.

Ahero Medical Centre Director Ojowi Morris welcomed the initiative, saying it would improve reproductive healthcare uptake and immunisation coverage within Nyando Sub-county.

“This partnership will increase our coverage within the community because wom-

en of reproductive age will now get free rides to the facility for medical services,” said Morris.

He said poor transport systems and fear of rough treatment by male boda boda riders had contributed to low uptake of maternal healthcare services in remote villages.

“Some of the areas where these women come from have poor access roads and transport has been a major challenge. Many women also feared rough treatment from male boda boda riders,” he said.

Ojowi expressed optimism that the female riders would

encourage more women to seek timely healthcare services.

“With Border Girls, women will feel safer and more comfortable accessing services in our facility,” he added.

He further disclosed that the facility would offer incentives to the riders for every successful referral made to the hospital.

“We will pay Sh500 for every successful delivery referral and Sh100 for every general patient referral. This will improve their livelihoods while strengthening healthcare services within the community,” he said.



Boda Girls Kenya Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nancy Otieno addressing journalists at Ahero Multipurpose Centre in Nyando Sub-County during the launch of the initiative. | Photo: Chris Mahandara

Leadership “Nyeri leads in non-communicable diseases, yet our leaders have not taken any initiative to arrest the situation,” Mararo said

Nyeri’s call for proactive leadership: Reviving a legacy of national impact

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Nyeri County, once a benchmark for principled and forward-looking leadership in Kenya, is being urged to reclaim that mantle as aspiring Senator Nick Mararo calls for a decisive return to proactive governance. Speaking at Ichuga in Kieni during a prize-giving awards for youth who participated in a music competition he sponsored, Mararo argued that the coun-

ty’s current leadership vacuum stands in stark contrast to the legacy of national respect it earned in the 1970s and 1980s.

“The Nyeri we knew was feared and respected at the national table,” Mararo told the crowd. “That respect was not accidental. It came from leaders who anticipated problems, mobilized resources, and acted before crises deepened. That spirit is missing today.”

Mararo’s remarks were anchored in both nostalgia and urgency. Nyeri is home to

some of Kenya’s most iconic figures: former President Mwai Kibaki, Nobel laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai, Mau Mau Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, former Chief of Defence Forces General Julius Karangi, and public servants like Joseph Kinyua, Waruru Kanja, Matu Wamae, and Davidson Kuguru among countless others. Their influence extended far beyond county borders, shaping policy, conservation, and national security. For Mararo, that history sets a standard that current

leaders have failed to meet.

His sharpest criticism centered on health and economic inertia. Nyeri now leads the country in non-communicable diseases, a trend linked to lifestyle changes, aging demographics, and limited preventive programs. Yet, according to Mararo, county leaders have offered no concrete strategy to reverse the trend.

“Nyeri leads in non-communicable diseases, yet our leaders have not taken any initiative to arrest the situation,” he said. He pointed to the 2024 US-Kenya health pact worth \$1.6 billion as a missed opportunity. The agreement was designed to strengthen primary healthcare, disease prevention, and local health systems across Kenya. “The governments of the US and Kenya signed that 1.6 billion dollar health pact, but no local leader has pursued a share of the same to address the worrying health threat in the county,” Mararo lamented.

For him, the failure is one of imagination and initiative. Proactive leadership, he argued, would have seen Nyeri’s health department develop bankable proposals, convene stakeholders, and lobby both national government and development partners for a targeted allocation. Instead, the county remains reactive, waiting for top-down solutions while preventable illness rises.

Mararo also turned to land and agriculture, identifying underutilization as a brake on youth employment and wealth creation. Nyeri’s highland soils and climate are suited to high-value crops, yet large tracts remain idle or under-cultivated. The problem, he noted, is structural: much of the land is owned by elderly residents who lack the physical capacity to farm at scale, while energetic youth lack access to land and capital.

“I am cognizant of the fact that land is owned by the elderly who do not have the energy, while the youth who possess immense energy don’t have the land,” he said. “But with focused leadership, synergy could breed marvels.”

Mararo outlined a model of proactive intervention: coun-



Nick Mararo addressing the winners.

ty-facilitated partnerships where landowners lease land to youth groups under structured agreements, supported by extension services, input financing, and guaranteed markets. He revealed he already has a ready market for cassava, a drought-resistant crop that can thrive in parts of Kieni and Mathira. With proper coordination, he said, Nyeri could become a supplier for both domestic food processing and export markets, creating income streams for thousands of households.

The music competition he sponsored was presented as a small-scale example of what proactive leadership looks like: identifying talent, providing a platform, and rewarding effort to build confidence and opportunity among youth. “Leadership is not about waiting for Nairobi to act. It is about seeing a problem on Monday and having a plan by Friday,” he said.

Mararo’s broader argument is that Nyeri’s decline is not due to lack of resources or talent, but to a deficit in anticipatory leadership. The county has human capital, institutional memory, and natural endowment. What it lacks is a leadership class willing to diagnose problems early, broker partnerships, and take political risk to implement

solutions.

He called on voters and civil society to demand more than speeches and ribbon-cutting. “We need leaders who will sit with health officials to design NCD prevention programs, who will sit with elders and youth to unlock land, and who will knock on every door in Nairobi and Washington to bring resources home,” he said.

The speech resonated with many at Ichuga who recalled Nyeri’s past prominence in national affairs. For a county that produced a president, a Nobel laureate, and military leaders who shaped Kenya’s history, the bar for leadership remains high. Mararo’s challenge is simple: restore the ethic of proactive service that made Nyeri respected, or risk becoming another county defined by potential unrealized.

As the 2027 election cycle approaches, his message frames leadership as a question of action versus inertia. In his view, Nyeri does not need new slogans. It needs leaders who will act before the next health statistic worsens, before another acre of land lies idle, and before another generation of youth leaves for Nairobi in search of opportunities that could have been created at home.

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Competition Mararo thanked everyone who participated on social media online and vowed to support more youths.

Nyeri youth reap big in Nick Mararo dancing competition

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Aspiring Nyeri Senator Nick Mararo has awarded winners of the Nick Mararo Dance Challenge after a two-month competitive stiff competition.

It was a more exciting moments for the youth who have different dancing talents as they danced for creative economy.

Mararo thanked everyone who participated on social media online and vowed to support more youths.

“A big thank you to everyone who took time to participate, support, and keep the energy alive. Your creativity, excitement, and spirit have made this journey amazing — and this is only the beginning” He said.

Best male individual - Prince Ken and best female individual - Addiel

took home Ksh. 20,000 each while best boys group -Ultimate Best Crew and best girls group - Thee

Girlies took home Ksh. 50,000 each.

This was a golden opportunity for the local creatives to seize the opportunity, emphasizing the importance of nurturing talent while promoting civic awareness.

The two exciting challenges brought creativity, dance, and civic awareness to the forefront.

He created spaces where talent met opportunity and creativity spoke for itself.

The initiative, dubbed the “Dance Challenge Competition,” under the hashtag ‘TeamNickChallenge’ ran across social media platforms including Facebook and TikTok, targeting individuals and group performers within the county.

Mararo’s initiative reflects his growing engagement with the peo-

ple of Nyeri, particularly the youth, whom he has consistently positioned at the center of his agenda.

Mararo has also started initiatives for empowering women in the county.

He also encouraged women groups to join Access To Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) program where there are many opportunities to benefit them.

AGPO is a Kenyan affirmative action program designed to empower marginalized groups by legally reserving 30% of all Government tenders for enterprises owned by youth, women, and Persons Living With Disabilities.

Over recent months, he has been involved in grassroots outreach programs, community forums, and empowerment drives aimed at addressing unemployment and creating opportunities through innovation



Nick Mararo awarding the winners

and talent development.

Political observers note that such initiatives not only spotlight emerging talent but also serve to connect

leaders with constituents in more relatable and impactful ways, especially in an increasingly digital era.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Kindness and generosity



One day, while I was playing near our gate with my friend Gulshan, Matluba opa came up to me and said:

“My dear girl, do you have any ingredients for cooking at home? I have run out of mine. Could you give me some?”

“Alright, grandma, I’ll ask my mother,” I replied.

I quickly went inside and told my mother. She said, “Of course, my daughter. I’ll put some in a container for her.”

I ran outside and gave it to Matluba opa. She blessed me, saying, “May your life be full of blessings, my child,” and then went back home.

Later, my mother came to me and said, “My daughter, never refuse Matluba opa whenever she asks for something. She has done many good things for us. We should return her kindness as well. Remember, kindness should always be repaid with kindness.”

— Saitkulova Fotima

Our neighbor, Matluba opa, who lived a few houses away from us, used to live a very good life. However, her sons did not grow up to be well-mannered. Matluba opa herself was a generous, humble woman who never refused to help others. Whenever women from the village came asking for household items, she would willingly give them whatever they needed without hesitation. She never argued or quarreled with anyone.

But because her sons grew up without proper manners, her living conditions gradually became more difficult. When neighbors came to borrow household things from Matluba opa, they often returned empty-handed because she no longer had much to give.

The cosmic dance



Unseen breath that gives us voice,
Moving trees and making choice.
Cooling breeze and sweeping gale,
Lifting up the spirit’s sail.
Its none other than Vayu (Air)

Boundless canvas, quiet dome,
Where all the cosmos finds a home.
The empty womb where thoughts begin,
The vast without, the deep within.
Its our Akasha (Space)

Five threads woven by cosmic hands,
Across the universe, through all lands.
In every planet, star, and cell,
The Pancha Boothas breathe and dwell.
It’s the infinite Cosmic Dance

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Silent, steady, holding deep,
Ancient secrets in her keep.
Flesh and bone and mountain high,
Rooted strong beneath the sky.
It’s the earthen Prithvi (Earth)

Flowing, weeping, carrying grace,
Carving paths through time and space.
Blood and ocean, storm and tear,
Washing clean the weight of fear.
It’s thirst quench Apas(Water)

Fierce and dancing, burning bright,
Turning darkness into light.
Spark of hunger, spark of soul,
Consuming all to make us whole.
It’s hot Agni (Fire)

The sky still writes my name



No storm can steal the light meant here to stay,
For fallen hearts still learn to touch the sky.

I trust the time that heals what words cannot,
And hold my faith when every door feels gone.
What’s truly mine will never miss my spot,
For even darkest nights still birth the dawn.

So I will rise with faith no dark can bend,
Because what’s truly mine will find me in the end.

M. Ashwin Niranjana,
IInd PhD (Forestry),
Doctoral Research Fellow,
Forest College and Research Institute, TNAU
Mettupalayam

What leaves my hand was never mine to keep,
Yet every loss became a hidden flame.
The night may wound the soul and bury sleep,
But dawn still whispers softly through my name.
The roads that broke my steps still shaped my way,
And silent scars became my wings to fly.

Bloom again



Each step you take, each breath you claim, each
time you choose to stay,
Is proof your heart is learning how to find a
brighter way.

The flowers do not hate themselves for blooming
late in May,
The moon does not apologize for fading day by
day.
Why then should you be cruel to you for healing at
your pace?
Your journey is a masterpiece, not something to
erase.

And one day you’ll look back and see the person
you’ve become,
Not broken by the storms of life, but
strengthened by each one.
You’ll smile because the love you sought was
never far above—
It quietly grew inside your heart, and blossomed
into love.

So heal, dear soul, and take your time, let every
wound grow light;
For the stars shine brightest not despite the
dark—but through the night.

There is a garden in your soul, still waiting for the
spring,
Though storms have bent your fragile leaves and
clipped each hopeful wing.
The scars you wear are not your shame, they’re
proof that you survived,
A map of every battle fought, a sign you’re still
alive.

The mirror may reflect your pain, the tears you’ve
tried to hide,
But look a little deeper there—your strength
stands by your side.
You are not the hurt you hold, nor every harsh
goodbye,
You are the dawn that always comes when
darkest nights pass by.

So speak to yourself gently now, as you would a
dear friend,
For healing is not found in haste but in the time
you spend.

@Dr. Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

The night sky



I like to watch the sky with my family.
The moon gives soft white light.
Some stars look bright and big.
The night sky feels calm and peaceful.
I love the beautiful night sky.

Yasir Shihan
VII std
GHS Sakkarakkottai
RAMANATHAPURAM district
TAMILNADU
INDIA

The night sky is very beautiful.
I can see the moon and many stars.
The stars shine like tiny diamonds.
Sometimes I see clouds moving slowly.
The cool wind makes me happy.

People on a Path to Purpose Don't Have Time for Drama



For focused feet keep marching forward
With its spirit soared.

“What next? What next? What next?”
The spirit sings all day,
Like waves that race to kiss the shore
And never choose to stay.

Drama knocks with disguised masks,
Demanding time and tears,
But purpose stands tall and firm
And shuts the gate to fears.

The hands of time keep marching on,
The distant dawn keeps calling,
And focused hands craft paths of hope
To create a brighter scope.

For souls that sail with sacred goals
Do not drift in empty seas,
They rise like the ever rising sun
After every dark night.

Life finds its spark
When purpose leads the path,
When dreams resonates deeply
Within the eager heart.

The mind becomes a busy bee,
Searching nectar here and there,
While visions showup like fire flies
And pull the soul toward light.

Purpose becomes an ardent passion,
Tip-toeing one for action,
Its fierce flames chase away
The cloud of pointless drama.

There is no room for unnecessary noise,
No space for petty drama,

Nandini AnandKumar
In service of Education

Coffee Ms Wanjiru said officials of Rodi Kenya impacted the members with the knowledge of packaging roasted coffee and herbs that were in demand in the market

Nyeri youth group in roasting and packing

The group was initially engaged by Rodi Kenya in 2024 to help restore the degraded Nyeri Hill Forest through tree planting, an exercise that was later praised by Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga and the Kenya Forest Service.

BY Morris Githenya

@themkenyatimes



Group members in their farm. | Photo: Morris Githenya

A youth group in Nyeri County is reaping big returns from coffee value addition and organic farming after venturing into roasting, packaging, and marketing coffee products and herbal powders.

Nyeri Hill Organic Herbs and Eco Fuel Enterprises says the initiative began a year ago after members received training from agricultural experts and partners involved in environmental conservation projects.

The group was initially engaged by Rodi Kenya in 2024 to help restore the degraded Nyeri Hill Forest through tree planting, an exercise that was later praised by Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga and the

Kenya Forest Service.

Group chairperson Pauline Wanjiru said members later discovered several herbal

plants within the forest area and began processing them alongside coffee products for commercial purposes.

“We produce powdered guava, soursop, and stinging nettle products, which we sell in towns such as Nyeri, Ruiru,

and Nanyuki,” she said.

Vice-chairperson Samson Ngure noted that the group secured access to a coffee farm from a neighbour, enabling them to venture into coffee processing and branding.

Rodi Kenya project coordinator Peter Chege said the youth were trained in coffee processing, packaging, and marketing after expressing interest in value addition.

Meanwhile, coffee farmers linked to Kihuyu Coffee Factory in Kieni West have reported increased yields and earnings through organic farming practices.

Factory manager Joseph Ndung'u said production rose from 42,954 kilograms in the 2023/2024 season to 130,251 kilograms in the current season, with payments increasing from Sh83 to Sh133 per kilogram of cherry.

In Mukurwe-ini, farmers attached to Giathugu Coffee Factory have diversified into beekeeping, with over 350 beehives distributed to members.

Group chairman Joseph Gathirimu said honey production has become a key source of income, with a kilogram of natural honey retailing at between Sh800 and Sh1,000.

“We produce powdered guava, soursop, and stinging nettle products, which we sell in towns such as Nyeri, Ruiru, and Nanyuki,” she said. Vice-chairperson Samson Ngure noted that the group secured access to a coffee farm from a neighbour, enabling them to venture into coffee processing and branding.



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Constitution Sovereignty has historically been celebrated as the supreme authority of people to determine their political, economic, and social destiny

Sovereignty or Symbolism? The unfinished struggle between constitutional power



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

Jean Bodin recognized as the father of sovereignty defined sovereignty as “the absolute and perpetual power of a common wealth”. Kenya through its constitution 2010 proclaimed that “all sovereign power belongs to the people”. And I hold the opinion that “sovereignty is the legitimate, constitutional, economic, technological, and political capacity of a people and their institutions to determine their collective destiny freely, responsibly and independently within an interconnected world”.

Sovereignty has historically been celebrated as the supreme authority of people to determine their political, economic, and social destiny free from external domination. From the absolutist monarchies of medieval Europe to the democratic revolutions that vested authority on citizens, the concept has evolved from the define entitlement of rulers to the collective mandate of the governed. In modern era sovereignty, has become increasingly complex, contested and layered beyond the simplistic symbolism of flags, borders and national anthems.

For Kenya, sovereignty emerged through the painful crucible colonial dispossession and anti-colonialism resistance. The 1963 independence represented the formal restoration of African self-rule after decades of imperial domination. However, while colonial authority departed physically, many of its centralized administrative structures, economic dependencies, and political cultures remained deeply embedded within the post-independence



Illustration of The unfinished struggle between constitutional power

state. Sovereign authority became concentrated within powerful executive institutions, often exercised over citizens rather than on their behalf.

The promulgation of the 2010 constitution marked a historic constitutional rupture by fundamentally redefining sovereignty as belonging exclusively to the people. Through devolution, constitutional supremacy, judicial oversight, and expanded civic rights, Kenya attempted to transition from state-centered authority toward citizen centered governance. Yet constitutional declarations alone cannot fully resolve the deeper contradictions of modern sovereignty.

The contemporary world has expose sovereignty forces far more sophisticated than conventional territorial invasion. Economic globalization, foreign debt dependency, multinational corporate influence, digital surveillance, cyber manipulation, and geopolitical realignments increasingly shape national decision-making process. Consequently, many state retain judicial sovereignty while simultaneously operating withing invisible networks of external influence and internal elite capture.

Technology has further transformed the sovereign

landscape and empowered citizens with unprecedented capacities for mobilization, accountability, and political participation, weakening historical monopolies over information. Simultaneously, the same technologies have introduced new vulnerabilities through surveillance architectures, algorithmic influence, misinformation ecosystems, and foreign controlled digital infrastructures. Sovereignty is therefore no longer exercised exclusively through military or legislative power alone, but increasingly through data control, information flows, financial systems, and technological dominance.

Kenya consequently occupies a delicate intersection between constitutional aspiration and structural limitation. Legally, the republic is sovereign. It commands its borders, elects its leaders, signs treaties, and governs under an internationally recognized constitutional order. Yet the deeply philosophical question persists; does sovereignty genuinely reside within the lived realities of ordinary citizens, or does it largely remain ceremonial – proclaiming rhetorically while constrained economically, technologically, and politically?

A truly sovereign society cannot merely exist through

constitutional text or diplomatic recognition. Genuine sovereignty must manifest

through institutional integrity, economic self-determination, equitable distribution of resources, protection of human dignity, technological autonomy, and meaningful public participation. It must be reflected not only in state authority, but in the empowerment of citizens to influence the system governing their lives.

The future of sovereignty in Kenya will therefore not be determined solely by elections, political transitions, or patriotic symbolism. It will depend on whether the republican transcend performative independence and construct a governance order anchored upon accountability, inclusion, economic resilience, constitutional fidelity, digital self-determination all under a

tranquil environment of peace assured by a strong national security structure.

The defining question of our era is no longer where Kenya is sovereign in law. The deeper question is whether sovereignty meaningfully resides in the every day lives of the citizens or whether it remains largely ceremonial. The constitution may proclaim that power belongs to the people, but the true test of sovereignty lies in whether ordinary citizens genuinely feel that the nation, its institutions, its economy, and its future actually belongs to them.

A nation is sovereign when its citizens genuinely control the systems, resources, institutions and future that governs their lives. It begins where fear ends, where accountability thrives, and where citizens stop being subjects of power and become custodians of the republic.

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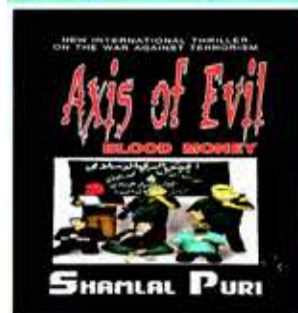
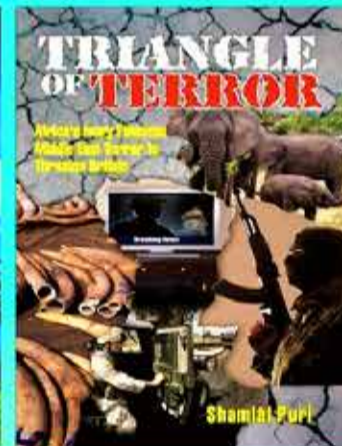
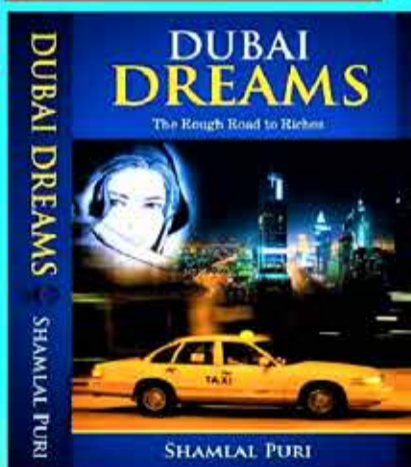
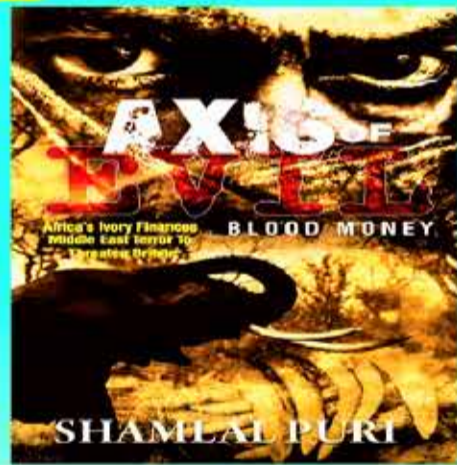
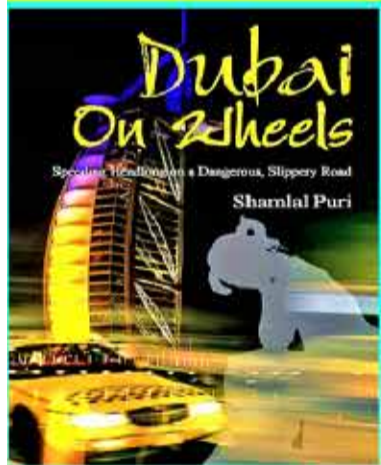
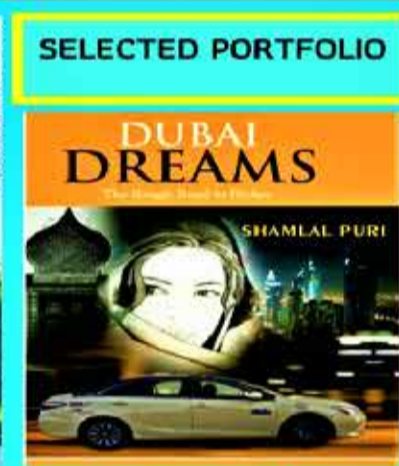
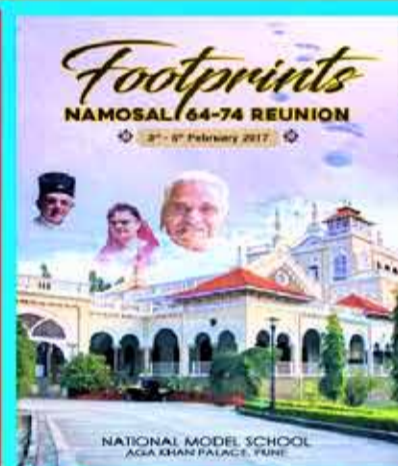
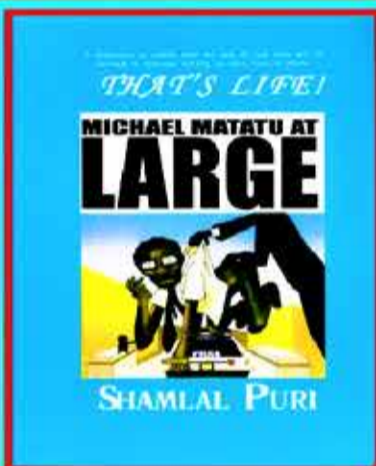
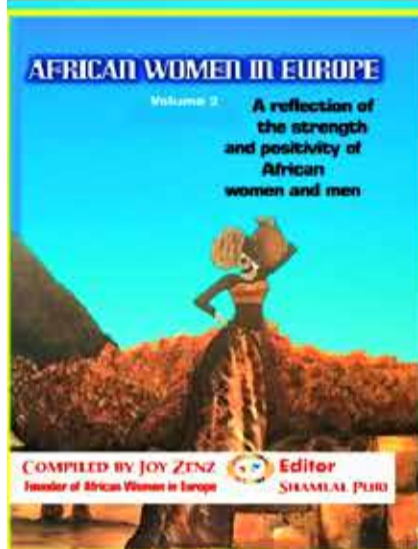
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Hollywood: Loyalty in Hollywood is not without its costs. When one chooses to stand up for a friend or ally, it can come with substantial personal and professional repercussions.

Loyalty in Hollywood: Does It Really Exist?

BY K. O. Carole
@themtkenyatimes

In the glitzy, high-stakes world of Hollywood, loyalty is a concept both revered and questioned. Fame, fortune, and the constant pressures of the entertainment industry can create an environment where personal relationships often feel transactional rather than devoted. But is there real loyalty in Hollywood, or is it just an illusion, a fleeting sentiment in an ever-changing landscape?

The Illusion of Loyalty

Hollywood is notorious for its revolving doors of friendships, partnerships, and allegiances. The relationships formed in this industry often seem contingent on mutual benefit rather than genuine affection. Stars rise and fall, and with every ascent, there's a shifting of loyalties that can leave even the most steadfast companions behind.

For instance, many actors forge alliances with directors, producers, and fellow stars to enhance their careers. This can create a façade of loyalty—apparent camaraderie in public appearances, social media posts, and joint projects. However, behind closed doors, the pressure to succeed often leads to alliances that dissolve as quickly as they're formed.

The Nature of Hollywood Loyalty

Yet, amidst the skepticism, there are examples of enduring bonds that challenge the notion that loyalty is an illusion. Long-term collaborations, such as those between actors and directors like Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, showcase a commitment to one another that transcends mere professional obligation. These partnerships often lead to groundbreaking cinema, fueled by trusts built over years of working together.

Additionally, loyalty can manifest in grassroots organizations and causes supported by Hollywood elites. Many stars advocate for social issues, forming a tight-knit community that showcases loyalty to shared values. Movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp evidenced how Hollywood figures rallied around one



Kadrolsha Ona Carole

another to address systemic issues, showcasing solidarity and a more profound sense of loyalty that extends beyond the screen.

The Cost of Loyalty

However, loyalty in Hollywood is not without its costs. When one chooses to stand up for a friend or ally, it can come with substantial personal and professional repercussions. Take the case of celebrities who have faced backlash for publicly supporting a colleague accused of misconduct. The fallout can be severe, leading to career setbacks and damaged reputations. This raises the

question: how deep does loyalty run when there is so much at stake?

Moreover, the industry's competitive nature fosters an environment where self-preservation often trumps loyalty. Rising stars might find themselves torn between supporting established friends or forging new relationships that could advance their own careers. This internal struggle highlights the complexity of loyalty in an industry built on ambition and success.

The Digital Age and Loyalty

The rise of social media has also transformed the landscape of loyalty

in Hollywood. Platforms like Instagram and Twitter allow for real-time sharing of support and promotion, often creating an illusion of closeness among industry leaders. However, this can be misleading. The digital age has given rise to "performative loyalty," where public displays of support may lack the depth of genuine trust and camaraderie. Following or unfollowing someone on social media can signal loyalty—or its absence—in a matter of moments.

KO's thoughts

In conclusion, loyalty in Hollywood is a nuanced and multifaceted concept. While there are undeniable instances of deep, enduring loyalty, the pervasive culture of ambition and competition can create doubt about its authenticity. Genuine connections do exist, often hidden beneath layers of professional obligation and public personas.

Ultimately, as the industry continues to evolve, loyalty will remain a complicated interplay of trust, ambition, and authenticity. Those who navigate this landscape successfully may find that, in a world rife with uncertainty, loyal relationships still hold significant value—if only for a moment.

Where Compassion, Creativity, and Education Unite

Born and raised in Türkiye, Gülbin Özdemir built her life around a profound belief that education is not limited to textbooks, classrooms, or examinations. For her, teaching has always represented something far greater — a way of inspiring young minds, connecting cultures, and empowering individuals to discover their unique voices and abilities. Over the years, she became recognized not only as an accomplished English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher, but also as an international project coordinator, speaker, mentor, and advocate for innovative and inclusive education. Her journey reflects the story of a woman who transformed teaching into a mission of hope, creativity, and social impact.

From the earliest stages of her professional career, Gülbin demonstrated a strong passion for language learning and intercultural communication. She viewed language as more than a tool for communication; she saw it as a bridge capable of bringing people together across borders, cultures, and experiences. This perspective shaped the foundation of her teaching philosophy and inspired her commitment to helping students become confident, globally aware individuals prepared to engage meaningfully with the world.

As an educator, she devoted herself to creating learning environments where students felt encouraged, respected, and inspired. Rather than relying solely on traditional teaching methods, she embraced student-centered and research-based approaches that prioritized creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. She believed every learner possessed untapped potential and that education should nurture not only academic achievement but also emotional in-

Contd page 19

Hollywood: Loyalty in Hollywood is not without its costs. When one chooses to stand up for a friend or ally, it can come with substantial personal and professional repercussions.

Loyalty in Hollywood: Does It Really Exist?

Contd from page 18

telligence, confidence, and curiosity.

Her dedication became especially evident through her work with gifted and talented students in Türkiye. Gülbin recognized that these learners often required more than standard academic instruction. She believed they needed opportunities to explore ideas deeply, express creativity freely, and develop a broader understanding of the world around them. Through innovative lessons and meaningful projects, she encouraged her students to think independently, communicate confidently, and embrace their individuality.

As her experience and vision expanded, Gülbin became increasingly involved in international educational initiatives, particularly within Erasmus+ and European youth programs. This involvement marked a turning point in her career and allowed her to combine her passion for education with her belief in intercultural exchange. She understood the transformative power of bringing people from different backgrounds together and creating spaces where dialogue, understanding, and collaboration could flourish.

Throughout the years, she designed, coordinated, and participated in numerous international projects focused on youth empowerment, inclusion, environmental awareness, cultural understanding, non-violence, arts, sports, migration awareness, and social integration. Her projects consistently reflected her belief that education should extend beyond classroom walls and connect learners to real-world experiences and global perspectives.

One of the most significant milestones in her journey was



her role in initiating and coordinating the Erasmus+ youth mobility project “Melody of Special Acts – An Intuitive Choir (MOSAIC),” developed in collaboration with partners from Denmark, Norway, and Serbia. The project represented her dedication to inclusive education and demonstrated how music, creativity, and intercultural communication could unite young people from diverse backgrounds. Through this initiative, she promoted empathy, cooperation, and shared human experiences while encouraging participants to discover the strength found in diversity.

Her earlier international projects also reflected her commitment to meaningful social change. In 2010, she successfully coordinated the youth exchange project “Crack the Barriers through Photography” in Mersin, Türkiye. This initiative brought together participants from different countries and used photography as a powerful medium for intercultural dialogue and artistic expression. The project encouraged young people to challenge stereotypes, communicate beyond language barriers, and explore social issues through creativity.

In the years that followed, Gülbin became actively involved in many additional European youth exchanges and collaborative programs across countries such as Greece, Poland, Croatia, Slovakia, Montenegro, and the Netherlands. These projects focused on themes including healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability, marine conservation,

migration awareness, youth participation, and peacebuilding. Her ability to coordinate diverse teams and create impactful educational experiences earned her growing respect within international educational communities.

Alongside her international work, Gülbin continued strengthening her role as an educational leader and advocate for modern teaching practices. She actively participated in conferences, webinars, podcasts, workshops, and panel discussions centered on the future of education and language teaching. Her contributions reflected both practical classroom expertise and a forward-thinking vision of how education must evolve to meet the needs of future generations.

One of the most meaningful recognitions of her professional journey came when she was honored as “The Most Inspiring Teacher of 2022 in Turkey” by INGED. The award celebrated not only her accomplishments as a language educator but also her broader influence as a mentor, innovator, and changemaker within educational communities. Despite receiving recognition, Gülbin remained grounded in her belief that teaching is ultimately about service, compassion, and responsibility toward others.

Her passion for innovation later led her toward the growing field of artificial intelligence in education. Recognizing the changing landscape of learning, she became involved in discussions and initiatives exploring how

AI could support language education and personalized learning experiences. Rather than viewing technology as a replacement for educators, she advocated for responsible integration that enhances creativity, accessibility, and student engagement while preserving the essential human connection at the heart of teaching.

Colleagues, students, and collaborators often describe Gülbin as compassionate, energetic, visionary, and deeply collaborative. She became known for building supportive environments where people felt heard, valued, and empowered to grow. Her leadership style consistently reflected emotional intelligence

alongside professional excellence, allowing her to connect authentically with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Another defining aspect of her journey has been her commitment to lifelong learning. Whether attending international workshops, participating in educational exchanges, mentoring fellow educators, or exploring emerging technologies, she continuously sought opportunities for personal and professional growth. She viewed education as an evolving mission that requires adaptability, curiosity, and openness to change.

Beyond awards, titles, and professional achievements, Gülbin Özdemir’s story is

ultimately one of connection — connection between cultures, between education and social transformation, and between people who seek to create a more compassionate and collaborative world. Through classrooms, conferences, Erasmus+ projects, and international partnerships, she demonstrated how one dedicated teacher can inspire meaningful change far beyond the boundaries of a single school or community.

Today, her work continues to inspire educators, students, and young leaders across different countries and cultures. As a teacher, mentor, project leader, and advocate for transformative education, Gülbin Özdemir represents a generation of educators redefining the true purpose of teaching in the modern world. Her journey serves as a powerful reminder that education is not only about knowledge — it is also about empathy, creativity, courage, and the ability to inspire others to believe in their own potential.

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Ebola In Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and the largest city under rebel rule, two 60-bed Ebola treatment centers are under construction

Ebola outbreak tests conflict-hit eastern DR Congo as cases reach rebel-held areas

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

The Ebola outbreak spreading through eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is increasingly testing the country's fragile response capacity as the virus reaches areas controlled by the March 23 Movement, where insecurity, population displacement, limited access and political mistrust are complicating efforts to contain the disease.

The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, was declared on May 15, the 17th outbreak in the country since 1976. It has left 177 suspected deaths and almost 750 suspected cases, according to the World Health Organization, amid the absence of an approved vaccine or specific treatment for this strain. In the areas under M23 control, confirmed cases have been reported, deepening concern that the virus could spread through major urban centers already affected by conflict and population movements.



Members of a Red Cross burial team take samples from a woman suspected of dying of Ebola in the village of Dia in the past.

Center of pressure

In Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and the largest city under rebel rule, two 60-bed Ebola treatment centers are under construction, though humanitarian assessments warn that capacity may fall short if suspected cases continue to rise. One treatment center has been installed in Munigi on the northern outskirts of the city, the M23 group said after announcing a confirmed Ebola case on May 17.

The city is considered particularly vulnerable because of its dense population, overcrowded living conditions and limited access to basic services. Goma has a population of about 750,000, including more than 333,000 internally displaced people and 154,000 refugees and asylum seekers, according to figures cited in humanitarian assessments. On Thursday, the M23 also announced a confirmed case in Bukavu, the provincial capital of South Kivu, a city it captured in February 2025. The UN refugee agency, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has said more than two million people

are internally displaced in the affected provinces of Ituri and North Kivu. WHO officials have said their teams remain present in Goma despite the insecurity. "We always have a team in Goma, and we always continue to provide support to the population," said Marie Roseline Belizaire, the WHO's acting regional emergency director and incident manager. "We never left Goma during all the insecurity happening, so we will continue staying to provide support to the community we serve."

The M23 in Goma has announced contingency measures to prevent a wider spread of the virus. Benjamin Mbonimpa, a senior official within the rebel group, said "coordination with medical teams is already in place" to ensure a rapid response and protect the population against the health threat. But residents and local health workers said the security situation could weaken the response. "We are afraid that the war will make things even more complicat-



The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, was declared on May 15, the 17th outbreak in the country since 1976. It has left 177 suspected deaths and almost 750 suspected cases, according to the World Health Organization, amid the absence of an approved vaccine or specific treatment for this strain. In the areas under M23 control, confirmed cases have been reported, deepening concern that the virus could spread through major urban centers already affected by conflict and population movements.

ed," said Zawadi Clarisse, a trader in downtown Goma. "Most of the doctors specialized in Ebola response are no longer in the region because of the current situation. Hospitals no longer work as before. How will this be handled under such special circumstances?" A staff member with a local health organization said Ebola has long triggered community resistance in North Kivu, while the current political situation may make people even more reluctant to go to health facilities. "Authorities will struggle to trace contacts and sensitize the population properly," the staff member said. According to humanitarian sources, persistent insecurity could hamper contact tracing, the deployment of medical personnel and community awareness campaigns.

Trading accusations

The spread of Ebola into eastern provinces has sharpened tensions

between the DRC government and the M23 rebel group.

DRC officials said the presence of the disease in areas outside government control is alarming because the rebel movement lacks the capacity and experience needed to manage a major epidemic. Government spokesperson Patrick Muyaya said in an interview with French media on Friday that the rebel group has "no experience" in managing epidemics. Foreign Minister Therese Kayikwamba Wagner also said the disease in rebel-held areas was alarming because the M23 was "thoroughly ill-equipped" to fight it, noting that the government and the rebels were not communicating on the outbreak. The M23 has rejected accusations that it is politicizing the health emergency. At a press conference in Goma, Freddy Kanyiki, an epidemiologist and senior M23 official tasked with coordinating the Ebola response in areas under the movement's control, said the group is ready to cooperate with all actors involved in the response. "We are ready to collaborate with everyone without any political condition in order to support the response and save the lives of the population threatened by this pandemic," Kanyiki said.

The movement also said areas under its control should benefit from international support mobilized for the Ebola response, including financial and logistical assistance. The dispute has put Goma International Airport back at the center of the crisis. The airport has remained closed since the M23 took control of the city, and its reopening has been discussed for months in political negotiations, alongside proposals for a humanitarian corridor. Muyaya said closed borders and the continued closure of the airport would complicate the movement of samples, experts and medical supplies. He said the response in rebel-held areas requires reinforcement, including health personnel and specialized equipment, but added that "with a closed airport, it is complicated." However, the M23 said the reopening of the airport remains linked to broader negotiations and should not be turned into a precondition during the health emergency.

Opinion Attachment is supposed to help students grow professionally. Yet some organisations have turned it into a business opportunity

Attachees or office slaves?

Across Kenya's workplaces, thousands of attachment students arrive full of hope — and leave having done little more than make tea and run errands. Something is badly wrong.

BY Oliver Ogutu
@themtkenyatimes

In offices and institutions across the country, attachment students occupy a deeply uncomfortable position: they are called “learners” when it comes to payment and rights, but treated like full employees when it comes to workload and responsibility.

This contradiction sits at the heart of a growing and largely unspoken crisis. Industrial attachment was conceived with a clear and worthy purpose — to bridge the gap between classroom theory and practical experience. Universities and colleges send students to organisations so they can absorb workplace culture, apply what they have learned, and gain professional exposure before graduating. The ideal, as any lecturer will tell you, is that an attachee should be guided, mentored, and supervised. In too many workplaces today, that ideal bears little resemblance to reality.

Many students arrive at their placement offices full of ambition, only to discover that they are expected to perform at the level of permanent staff. They report early, leave late, absorb the full pressure of office life, and sometimes carry responsibilities that stretch well beyond their training. Some are assigned tasks that regular employees quietly avoid. Rather than learning, they become a convenient substitute for underpaid or absent workers — their youth and eagerness quietly weaponised against them.

“Attachment is supposed to help students grow professionally. Yet some organisations have turned it into a business opportunity.”

The situation grows more troubling still when money enters the picture. Some organisations now demand payment from students before accepting them for attachment — “facilitation fees,” “administrative charges,” or simply cash handed over in brown envelopes, all in exchange for a placement. This is, to put it plainly, an ethical scandal. Attachment exists to help young people



Symbolic depiction of workplace hierarchy and exploitation

grow. That some institutions have converted it into a revenue stream deserves far more public outrage than it currently receives.

After paying these fees, many attachees still receive no allowance, no transport support, and no meaningful mentorship. They are expected to deliver results while surviving on their own resources. In some offices, the daily reality amounts to making tea, photocopying documents, running

personal errands for senior staff, and performing repetitive tasks that have nothing to do with the course they are studying. Others are quietly deployed to plug staff shortages, with neither recognition nor compensation.

The human cost of this exploitation is real and cumulative. Financially, students struggle to cover transport, food, and accommodation during what are often unpaid weeks

or months. Emotionally, many lose confidence after being made to feel invisible or inferior. Academically, the entire purpose of attachment collapses when a student completes the experience having gained no skills relevant to their profession. The stamp in the logbook means everything; what fills the hours behind it often means nothing.

Underneath this lies a broader and more uncomfortable truth about

Kenya's labour market. Some organisations exploit attachment students precisely because they can. Youth unemployment is high, competition for placements is fierce, and students know that complaining risks their placement — or worse, a damaging evaluation from a supervisor with a grudge. So they endure. They smile, they comply, and they say nothing.

It would be unfair, however, to paint every organisation with the same brush. There are companies and institutions that take attachment seriously — that mentor students properly, expose them to genuine professional environments, offer modest allowances, and send them home with real skills and renewed confidence. These organisations understand something the exploitative ones have forgotten: that attachment is not a favour extended to students. It is an investment in the workforce of tomorrow.

Educational institutions carry a responsibility here too. Colleges and universities must do more than simply dispatch students and await their reports. They should regularly evaluate placement centres, act decisively on student feedback, and refuse to send future cohorts to organisations with a record of exploitation. Government and labour authorities, for their part, need to establish clear, enforceable policies that protect attachment students — not guidelines that gather dust, but rules with consequences.

The central question — are attachees employees or learners? — may sound like a legal technicality. It is not. The answer shapes everything: how students are treated, what they are owed, and what they are entitled to demand. They are learners first. They may contribute to the organisations that host them, but their primary purpose is education and professional development. The moment an organisation begins treating them purely as a source of cheap, disposable labour, it has not only failed those students — it has betrayed the very idea of training.

Kenya's future workforce deserves better than to spend its formative professional years making tea for people who cannot be bothered to teach them anything.

SPORTS
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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *A commanding 3–0 victory lifts the Red Devils to third in the Premier League with one match to play, while their Portuguese captain scripts history.

Fernandes rewrites the record books as United cruise past Brighton



Manchester United swept aside Brighton & Hove Albion

By Norman Mwale

Manchester United swept aside Brighton & Hove Albion 3–0 at the American Express Community Stadium yesterday, with Bruno Fernandes breaking the all-time Premier League single-season assist record to crown a dominant afternoon on the south coast.

Patrick Dorgu opened the scoring in the 33rd minute, rising to meet a perfectly weighted corner from Fernandes and directing a firm header beyond the helpless Robert Sánchez. It was a set-piece executed with the precision that has defined United's resurgence in the second half of the campaign — and it was only the beginning of an afternoon shaped almost entirely by their Portuguese captain.

“Bruno has been extraordinary all season. What he did today — setting up that

goal to break the record, then going and scoring himself — that is what great players do on the biggest stages.”

— Rúben Amorim, Manchester United head coach

Eleven minutes later, with the hosts still searching for a foothold, Fernandes turned provider again, threading a first-time pass through Brighton's backline to release Bryan Mbeumo, who finished with clinical composure to make it 2–0 just before the interval. It was Fernandes's 21st league assist of the season — a landmark that surpasses the previous Premier League record and places him in a conversation with the very finest creative midfielders the English game has ever seen.

Brighton manager Fabian Hürzeler cut a frustrated figure at half-time, and rightly so. The Seagulls had enjoyed significant spells of possession but were undone by the yawning gulf in

quality in the final third. “We moved the ball well but gave them too much space in behind,” Hürzeler said. “On days like this, the difference between the sides is clinical. They were clinical. We were not.”

Fernandes completed the rout early in the second half, latching onto a swift counterattack to slot past Sánchez with the unhurried certainty of a man playing within himself. It was a fitting personal postscript to a record-setting display — one that United supporters inside the stadium greeted with a prolonged standing ovation.

The result moves United to third place in the Premier League table with 68 points from 37 matches — their best league position in several seasons. They have won 20, drawn 11 and lost just seven times in the league this campaign. Brighton, by contrast, remain eighth on 53 points after 38 matches, their European ambitions effectively extinguished

for another year. “We have a lot to reflect on this summer,” Hürzeler admitted. “This was not the finish we wanted.”

For United, the contrast could hardly be more stark. From a club that spent much of the decade in strategic drift, Sunday's performance suggested a side beginning to find both identity and momentum. The scaffolding — a coherent pressing structure, a genuinely world-class conductor in Fernandes, and the decisive contributions of deadline-day additions like Dorgu and Mbeumo — has started to resemble something durable.

As the Premier League season approaches its final weekend, United know that consolidating third place would represent a significant statement of intent ahead of what promises to be a pivotal summer in the club's long-term rebuild. On the evidence of Brighton, the platform is being built — one record at a time.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *A ruthless second-half display at the Emirates sends Arsenal five points clear at the top of the Premier League and brings Aston Villa's remarkable eleven-game winning run to an emphatic halt.

Gunners end Villa's winning streak



Arsenal demolished Aston Villa 4-1 at the Emirates Stadium

By Norman Mwale

Arsenal demolished Aston Villa 4-1 at the Emirates Stadium, halting the visitors' extraordinary eleven-match winning streak and opening a commanding five-point gap at the summit of the Premier League table.

It was a match that, on paper, promised a genuine contest between two of the division's form sides. What it delivered, from the moment Gabriel Magalhães rose to meet a Bukayo Saka corner and plant a firm header beyond Emiliano Martínez in the 48th minute, was a lesson in efficiency from a side that has spent much of the season fielding questions about its title credentials. Those questions, at least for one evening, were decisively answered.

Martin Zubimendi extended the lead just four minutes later, capitalising on a precise through-ball from Martin Ødegaard to make

it 2-0 and leave Unai Emery's visiting side with a mountain to climb before the hour mark had even been reached. Villa, who had arrived at the Emirates on the back of one of the most sustained winning runs in recent Premier League memory, suddenly looked precisely like a team whose momentum had been abruptly and thoroughly broken.

"I'm so happy. We play every three days, and today we played an opponent that has won eleven games in a row. Gabriel's goal opened the floodgates, and Villa couldn't cope with our increased intensity."

— Mikel Arteta, Arsenal head coach

Leandro Trossard added a third in the 69th minute, and Gabriel Jesus confirmed the rout nine minutes later, finishing with the composure of a man who has spent the season waiting patient-

ly for exactly this kind of opportunity. Ollie Watkins converted a consolation in stoppage time — a goal that will do little to soften the blow of an evening that exposed Villa's vulnerability once genuine pressure was applied.

The statistics told a story that the scoreline confirmed. Arsenal created 22 shots to Villa's 11, registering seven on target to the visitors' three. Remarkably, Villa enjoyed the majority of possession — 53 per cent — and yet their inability to convert territory into threat was the defining failure of their evening. It is a paradox familiar to those who have watched Arsenal this season: outpossessed but relentless in attack, they punish hesitation with a ruthlessness that few sides in Europe can match.

Villa's Morgan Rogers, who had been one of the few bright sparks in his side's collective disappointment, was measured

in defeat. "We just have to dust ourselves down and be proud of the winning run we've been on," he said — words that carried the dignity of a player refusing to let one bad night define a genuinely impressive period for his club.

For Arsenal, the implications stretch well beyond three points and a champagne New Year's Eve at the Emirates. The victory opens a five-point cushion over second-placed Manchester City, who have the opportunity to trim that margin when they travel to Sunderland on Thursday. Whether City seize it or not, Arteta's side have made a statement that the title race, for all its twists, runs through north London.

It has become something of a cliché to observe that Arsenal are a work in progress. After Tuesday, that particular cliché feels overdue for retirement.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



The AFN Announces 1,000KM “Miles4Meals & Dignity” Run to Fight Hunger and Period Poverty in Kenya

By: MKT Reporter

@themkenyatimes

The Africa Feature Network (AFN) has officially announced the “Miles-4Meals & Dignity – 1,000 Kilometre Run Challenge”, a nationwide advocacy and resource mobilisation campaign aimed at addressing child hunger and period poverty in Kenya. The announcement was made during a press conference held at the Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani, on Saturday, where AFN Founder and CEO Peter Aowa unveiled details of the campaign before members of the media.

The endurance run is scheduled to take place from September 14 to October 10, 2026, covering approximately 1,000 kilometres from Kilifi town on the Kenyan coast to Busia town at the Kenya-Uganda border, with the campaign concluding on October 11, 2026, with a celebration and community engagement event.

Speaking during the press conference, Aowa said the campaign seeks to draw national attention to the realities many learners continue to face across Kenya, particularly hunger in schools and lack of access to menstrual hygiene products among school-going girls.

He noted that the initiative aims to raise KES 13 million to support two flagship programmes under the Africa Feature Network.

The first is a School Feeding Programme targeting 1,000 learners across six primary schools in three counties for one academic year. The second is the Pad a Girl Initiative, which seeks to support 5,000 school-going girls with sanitary towels and menstrual health support along the campaign corridor.

Aowa said the campaign goes beyond awareness creation and seeks to mobilise communities, institutions, and partners around practical interventions capable of improving learning conditions for vulnerable learners.

“As the Africa Feature Network, we strongly believe that journalism should not end at highlighting prob-



Caption; The founder and CEO of The Africa Feature Network, Peter Aowa (centre), leads members of the secretariat shortly after the press conference at Moi International Sports Centre | Photo: Humfrey Onyala.

lems alone. Media and advocacy platforms also have a responsibility to help drive conversations around practical responses, community participation, and sustainable solutions to challenges affecting society,” he said.

Aowa further announced that the run will be conducted alongside community participation categories that will allow organisations and individuals to join different sections of the route.

Participants will register under 5-kilometre, 10-kilometre, 15-kilometre, and 20-kilometre categories, with major activation points planned in Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, and Eldoret.

He added that the official registration portal for institutions, organisations, schools, universities, fitness groups, corporate teams, and individual participants will open on Friday, May 29, 2026.

According to AFN, the School Feeding Programme will operate under a sustainability framework that integrates schools, local farm-

ers, women groups, and surrounding communities into the programme structure through locally driven food production and supply systems.

The organisation also clarified that operational and logistical costs associated with the run are being pursued separately through in-kind partnerships to ensure that funds raised through sponsorships and donations go directly towards programme implementation and beneficiary support.

AFN is inviting corporations, financial institutions, manufacturers, development organisations, county governments, media houses, universities, civil society organisations, and members of the public to support the campaign through sponsorships, media collaboration, logistical support, and programme partnerships.

In a statement released during the announcement, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Africa Feature Network, Dr. Harriet Scott, described the initiative as a powerful symbol of collective responsibility and African solidarity.

support to vulnerable populations across the continent,” she said.

Dr. Scott noted that millions of Africans continue to struggle with hunger, exclusion, and loss of dignity, adding that the initiative serves as a reminder that meaningful change requires people willing to act, serve, and stand with vulnerable communities.

“We are bringing together leaders, athletes, institutions, media, and citizens to participate in a cause that speaks to the heart of our shared humanity,” she stated.

She said that beyond the run itself, the initiative represents a growing movement of compassion, service, and social responsibility — one that challenges us to use our influence, resources, and platforms to uplift others and strengthen communities in Kenya.

She reaffirmed AFN’s commitment to supporting African-led initiatives that create measurable impact and inspire unity across borders.

The “Miles4Meals & Dignity” campaign is expected to combine endurance sport, advocacy, storytelling, and public mobilisation as AFN seeks to build wider national engagement around education access, nutrition, dignity, and community-centred solutions.

The run is expected to be the first longest charity run in Africa to be livestreamed along the entire journey.



Peter Aowa during a solo sprint | Photo: Humfrey Onyala.