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Tragedy As investigations into the cause of the inferno began, leaders across the political divide expressed grief, offered condolences to affected families

Kenyans mourn Utumishi Girls School fire victims



A sombre mood engulfed the country yesterday as political leaders, government officials, parties and civil society organizations joined grieving families in mourning the victims of the deadly fire tragedy at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County.

The tragic incident, which occurred in the early hours yesterday claimed the lives of 16 students and left more than 70 others injured, sparking national outrage and renewed calls for stronger disaster preparedness and school safety measures.

As investigations into the cause of the inferno began, leaders across the political divide expressed grief, offered condolences to affected families and demanded swift action to prevent similar tragedies in future.

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Leaders, parents, teachers and students at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County after tragedy

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Utumishi Girls School fire tragedy

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments in pictures

The Utumishi Girls Academy fire incident in Gilgil, Nakuru County triggered national mourning and widespread concern following reports of significant loss of life and injuries among students. The fire reportedly broke out in a school dormitory during the early hours of the morning, trapping learners as emergency response teams rushed to the scene. At least 16 students are reported to have died, while more than 70 others sustained injuries and were taken to nearby health facilities for treatment. The tragedy has prompted strong reactions from government officials, political leaders, and institutions, who have expressed condolences to the affected families and called for urgent investigations to establish the cause of the fire. Leaders across the political divide emphasized the need for improved safety measures in boarding schools and stronger disaster preparedness systems to prevent similar incidents in the future. Various statements also highlighted the emotional toll on families and the nation, with calls for psychosocial support for survivors and bereaved relatives. Government agencies, including child protection and emergency response units, have been deployed to assist affected learners and coordinate relief efforts. The incident has reignited debate on school safety standards in Kenya, with renewed demands for accountability, stricter enforcement of regulations, and long-term reforms in disaster management within learning institutions.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kiambu County health officials are conducting a cervical cancer prevention outreach programme at a local school. Kiambu County Director of Health, Dr. Hillary Kagwa, said the outreach program is expected to improve vaccine uptake and significantly reduce future cervical cancer cases in the county. Healthcare workers are also carrying out public awareness sessions to address misinformation surrounding the HPV vaccine and encourage parents to support the immunization programme.



The National Government has donated over 800,000 sanitary pads to support school girls in Siaya County. Speaking during the launch of the distribution exercise in Gem Yala and Gem Wagai sub counties, National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) Siaya County Coordinator Nancy Okademi said a total of 815,614 sanitary pads will be distributed to girls in public primary and junior secondary schools across the county. According to Okademi, the initiative will benefit more than 85,000 girls, helping improve menstrual hygiene management and school attendance. She noted that 85,613 girls are targeted under the programme across all sub counties in Siaya County.



A total of 47 youths have graduated from a 45-day Socio-Emotional Skills Training (SEST) programme under the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project Phase Two (KISIP 2) and the National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA). The training, conducted in Nairobi's Kayole informal settlement, aimed at equipping vulnerable youths with communication, financial management, resilience and confidence-building skills. Officials from the World Bank, Nairobi City County and KISIP 2 attended the graduation ceremony. Participants were encouraged to use their savings to start businesses and improve their livelihoods. Graduates said the programme helped them overcome hopelessness, unemployment and drug abuse while preparing them for economic independence and future employment opportunities in Kenya's evolving economy.



The KMPDU has issued the government with a 48-hour ultimatum to make public ongoing negotiations between Kenya and the United States regarding the proposed establishment of an Ebola quarantine and treatment facility at Laikipia Air Base. KMPDU Sec Gen Dr. Davji Atellah accuses the government of engaging in "backdoor negotiations" and warns that the union would mobilise nationwide industrial action if the deal proceeds without public disclosure and reforms in the country's healthcare system. Elsewhere, Katiba Institute has also Filed a Petition Challenging the Proposed Establishment of Ebola Quarantine and Treatment Facilities in Kenya.



Human rights groups in Mombasa have joined leaders from Lamu County in demanding the immediate lifting of the seven-year-old night curfew following a court order suspending its enforcement. The conservatory orders were issued on May 21, 2026, by Justice Jesse Nyagah of the Garsen High Court, pending determination of a petition challenging the legality of the curfew introduced in 2017 over terrorism and insecurity concerns linked to the Boni Forest. Activists, residents and transport operators accused police of ignoring the ruling by continuing night roadblocks and vehicle inspections along the Mombasa-Lamu highway. They said the restrictions have disrupted transport and business activities, caused delays and exposed travellers to insecurity, while police insist the measures remain necessary due to persistent bandit attacks.



President Ruto yesterday re-assigned Principal Secretaries to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of the PS for the State Department for Petroleum. Mr. Kello Harsama, CBS moves from ASALs & Regional Development to Petroleum, while Dr. Caroline W. Karugu takes on the ASALs docket in an acting capacity alongside her EAC Affairs.

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Business Kariuki was part of the panel discussion titled “Governing and Financing the Ocean in a Fragmented World”

Businessman Humphrey Kariuki calls for greater investment in Blue Economy

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

Businessman and conservation investor Humphrey Kariuki has called for stronger collaboration, community involvement and increased private investment in protecting Africa's oceans and coastal ecosystems.

Speaking during the 17th edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative in Monaco, Kariuki said sustainable ocean conservation can only succeed when communities are placed at the centre of environmental efforts and allowed to benefit economically from conservation initiatives.

Kariuki was part of the panel discussion titled “Governing and Financing the Ocean in a Fragmented World”, alongside Sylvie Goulard, Valerie Hickey and Mahima Sukhdev.

Drawing from his experience as an entrepreneur investing in conservation, he highlighted similarities between land and ocean conservation, noting that both rely heavily on the participation and support of local communities.

“Communities are the custodians of conservation,” he said. “Even where governments, policies and institutions create the right conditions for investment, conservation efforts whether on land or at sea cannot succeed unless communities see tangible benefits and become part of the solution.”

He stressed the need for



Mr Humphrey Kariuki with other panelists during the discussion. | Photo: Courtesy.



The panelists and other participants who attended the session.

conservation efforts to move beyond preservation alone and focus on building regenerative ecosystems capable of creating long-term environmental and economic value.

Kariuki also underscored the importance of the ocean in global development, saying it remains one of the most overlooked sectors despite supporting millions of livelihoods across Africa.

According to Kariuki, Africa's more than 30,000 ki-

lometres of coastline and 38 coastal and island states generate over \$300 billion annually through fishing, tourism, transport and other coastal economic activities.

“In Africa, a collaborative approach is needed to protect our coastlines and strengthen sustainable coastal economies,” he said.

He pointed to the Great Blue Wall Initiative as one of the key projects already helping to turn regenerative ocean

ideas into reality by restoring ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs while supporting local livelihoods.

As global conversations on sustainability continue to grow, Kariuki said philanthropic organisations and private investors will play a critical role in financing the transition toward a regenerative blue economy.

“The role of philanthropic and private capital will become more defined in driving the shift toward a more sustainable and regenerative blue economy,” he noted.

The Monaco Blue Initiative brings together policymakers, conservationists, investors and development experts to discuss solutions aimed at protecting marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable ocean governance.

Kariuki thanked the Institut océanographique, Fondation Albert Ier, Prince de Monaco, Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco and the Government of Monaco for convening the forum.

The discussions at the summit focused on the future of ocean governance, biodiversity protection and financing mechanisms needed to support sustainable marine economies globally.

Five suspects behind motor vehicle and stock theft arrested



Some of the exhibits

BY The DCI

@themkenyatimes

Detectives have arrested five suspects believed to be members of a notorious, ruthless gang behind motor vehicle and livestock thefts across Kirinyaga, Nyeri, and Murang'a counties.

The intelligence-led operation was launched after a Toyota Sienta, registration number KCY 467A, vanished without a trace, in a case reported at Kiaruhii Police Station.

Armed with crucial intel, law enforcement swooped in on the gang's ringleader, Martin Ndegwa Kinyua, at Kagicha area, as he plotted to meet his partners in crime to sell off the stolen vehicle.

Under interrogation, Ndegwa led detectives to Skuta area in Nyeri, where the stolen Sienta lay camouflaged with fake plates KDJ 765J.

The operation continued with

a further ambush, intercepting a getaway vehicle registration number KCS 523H, a Toyota Succeed carrying four of Ndegwa's accomplices: Bernard Njeru Kimathi, Edwin Muchira Mwinga, Tobias Macharia Mwangi, and James Muthama Muriuki.

A quick search of the vehicle turned up ten sisal ropes, a panga, two knives, a rungu, and a master key, further revealing their criminal intentions.

As detectives delved deeper, they uncovered that, on the same night the gang stole the vehicle, they also stole and slaughtered livestock and sold the meat to shady butchers, fueling a black market that has no regard for the law. It has also been established that the gang is linked to an ongoing stock theft case currently ongoing at the Kerugoya Law Courts.

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DP Party Chairman Ndubai Condemns Attacks on Uhuru



Peter Ndubai

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyatimes

The Democratic Party of Kenya National Chairperson, Peter Ndubai, has condemned recent attacks and alleged disrespect directed at former President Uhuru Kenyatta, saying such actions threaten national unity and democratic values.

In a statement issued yesterday, Ndubai said leaders should focus on addressing the economic hardships facing Kenyans instead of engaging in divisive politics and personal attacks.

“The recent disrespect and attacks directed at former President Uhuru Kenyatta undermine the values of democracy, constitutionalism and national unity that Kenyans should uphold,” said Ndubai, who is also eyeing the Tigania West parliamentary seat in the 2027 General Election.

He noted that millions of Kenyans are currently grappling with the high cost of living, unemployment, corruption, poor healthcare services and rising fuel and production costs.

“At a time when citizens are struggling economically, leaders should focus on solutions rather than political hostility and division,” he said. Ndubai called for visionary and servant-minded leadership committed to peace, accountability, development and economic growth.



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

The Democratic Party official further urged political leaders and citizens to reject tribal politics and safeguard the independence of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

He also warned against reckless statements regarding election rigging, saying such remarks could endanger national stability ahead of the 2027 polls.

“Elections will come and go, but Kenya will always remain our shared home. Let us choose peace, unity and nationhood above division,” he said.

Ndubai reaffirmed his commitment to promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive leadership, adding that the country’s stability should remain a top priority for all leaders regardless of political affiliation.

Mt Kenya Chief Seer wants probe into UDA SG Hassan Omar over military uniform claims

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyatimes

Mt Kenya Chief Seer Henry Munyori Kinyenje has written to the Inspector General of Police seeking investigations into alleged conduct by UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar Hassan, claiming the politician’s recent actions have caused fear and concern among Kenyans.

In a letter dated May 28, 2026, Kinyenje accused the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) member of engaging in activities he termed suspicious and potentially threatening to national security.

He alleged that during the 2022 General Election period, Hassan Omar was seen wearing full military attire despite not being a serving member of the Kenya Defence Forces.

He further claimed that the UDA official had recently travelled to Uganda alongside political allies and was allegedly seen wearing Ugandan combat uniform and saluting members of the Ugandan army.

“Such actions have left the people of Kenya in fear, panic, uncertainty and intimidation,” Kinyenje stated in the complaint addressed to the Kenya National Police Service.

He expressed concern that the politician’s recent statements and conduct could pose a threat to national stability, urging security agencies to carry out swift investigations.

“As the Chief Seer, having followed Hon. Omar Hassan closely, I am left without any doubt that he intends to cause a huge crime that



Chief Seer Henry Munyori Kinyenje Muhuri. | Photo: Courtesy.

would leave Kenyans in devastation,” he wrote.

Kinyenje appealed to the Inspector General to undertake what he termed as “expeditious and thorough investigations” into the matter within seven days.

He also requested that appropriate legal action be taken should the investigations establish any wrongdoing on the part of the legislator.

“I also shall avail myself to appear before the Kenya Police Service to provide further statements that could assist in the investigations,” the letter added.

Copies of the letter were also sent

to the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, the Director of Criminal Investigations, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Cabinet Secretary for East African Community Affairs.

This publication saw a stamped letter, indicating that it was duly delivered and received in all the offices.

Efforts to obtain a response from Hassan regarding the allegations were unsuccessful by the time of publication.



Hassan Omar Hassan in Uganda



Hassan Omar Hassan during the last General Election day.

Tragedy As investigations into the cause of the inferno began, leaders across the political divide expressed grief, offered condolences to affected families

Kenyans mourn Utumishi School fire victims

BY MKT Team

@themkenyatimes

A sombre mood engulfed the country yesterday as political leaders, government officials, parties and civil society organizations joined grieving families in mourning the victims of the deadly fire tragedy at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County.

The tragic incident, which occurred in the early hours yesterday claimed the lives of 16 students and left more than 70 others injured, sparking national outrage and renewed calls for stronger disaster preparedness and school safety measures.

As investigations into the cause of the inferno began, leaders across the political divide expressed grief, offered condolences to affected families and demanded swift action to prevent similar tragedies in future.

Nyandarua Senator and Democracy for Citizens Party (DCP) Secretary General-designate John Methu blamed the government for what he termed as weak disaster preparedness and negligence, arguing that the tragedy could have been avoided had proper safety mechanisms been put in place.

Speaking on behalf of DCP, Methu said Kenya was once again mourning a preventable school disaster.

“We send our heartfelt condolences to the families that have lost their children and pray for quick recovery to those nursing injuries in hospital,” said Methu.

The senator questioned the country’s disaster response systems, noting that Kenya had continued losing students in school fires despite painful lessons from previous tragedies such as the St Kizito and Hillside Enderasha Academy incidents.

“No parent should be forced to go through such pain. One death is already too many,” he said.

Methu also criticized the national government for allegedly failing to prioritize disaster management and school safety, claiming the National Disaster Response Management Bill had stalled while learners remained exposed to danger.

He further accused Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen of failing to respond swiftly after reports of the tragedy emerged and called for his resignation alongside the censure of education officials.

“The country deserves leaders who act with urgency when lives are at



Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County

stake,” he added.

The Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services, through the State Department for Children Services, also issued a statement expressing profound sorrow following the tragedy.

In a statement signed by Cabinet Secretary Hanna Wendot Cheptumo, the ministry said child protection response mechanisms had already been activated in line with the Children Act, 2022.

The ministry announced deployment of Children Officers and Child Protection personnel to coordinate emergency interventions, including safeguarding affected learners, family tracing and reunification, and provision of psychosocial support.

“Psychosocial support and trauma counselling services are being coordinated for survivors, bereaved families, teachers and first responders,” the ministry stated.

The ministry further appealed to the public and media to respect the dignity and privacy of affected children and families by avoiding circulation of graphic images or identities of minors.

Jubilee Party also joined the nation in mourning the victims, describing the tragedy as heartbreaking and devastating.

In a statement signed by Secretary

General Moitalele Ole Kenta, the party said the incident had robbed families of daughters full of hope and dreams for the future.

“No parent should ever have to endure the pain of losing a child in such a painful and tragic manner,” the statement read in part.

The party called for speedy investigations into the cause of the fire and urged Kenyans to stand together in unity and compassion during the difficult moment.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua termed the tragedy unfortunate and called for accountability from those responsible.

“I urge speedy investigations into this matter and those culpable of commission or omission must face the full force of law,” Gachagua said.

He emphasized the need for disaster preparedness and planning to be treated as an integral part of government operations rather than a reactionary measure after tragedies occur.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki said he had learnt of the tragedy with deep shock and profound sorrow.

“To lose young girls, full of hope and dreams for the future, in such a cruel and painful way is a stark reminder of how fleeting life on earth is,” Kindiki said.

The Deputy President assured af-

affected families that the government stood with them and remained committed to supporting the school community through the difficult period.

Safina Party leader Jimi Wanjigi also mourned the victims, saying the nation had lost young girls whose promising futures had been tragically cut short.

“This is a traumatizing incident, and I pray that we go through it held together in love as a nation,” Wanjigi stated.

He called for urgent and decisive action in matters disaster management and urged authorities to ensure those responsible are held accountable.

Attorney General Dorcas Oduor expressed deep sorrow over the incident and called for a transparent and expeditious investigation.

In her statement, the Attorney General commended emergency responders, including firefighters, medical personnel, security agencies and humanitarian organizations for their swift response efforts.

“This heartbreaking tragedy serves as a painful reminder of the need to strengthen safety measures, preparedness and emergency response systems within our learning institutions,” she stated.

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, who came under criticism from sections of the op-

position, defended the government’s response and expressed solidarity with the affected families and school community.

Murkomen said he had visited injured students at St Joseph’s Mission Hospital in Gilgil where he offered comfort, prayers and assurances of government support, including counselling services.

“As investigators work to establish the cause of the fire, we ask the public to remain calm and join us in praying for the affected,” he said.

The CS pledged that anyone found responsible for the tragedy would face justice and reiterated the government’s commitment to ensuring the safety of children across the country.

Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka also joined Kenyans in mourning the victims, describing the deceased students as daughters, sisters and friends whose lives had been cut short prematurely.

“With a heart weighed down by profound grief, I join all Kenyans in mourning the precious lives of the young girls taken from us,” Kalonzo said.

Meanwhile, the Global Union for Peace and Development (GUPD), a peace ambassadors forum led by founder and Chief Executive Officer Ambassador Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba, joined other organizations in mourning the students.

The organization termed the tragedy unfortunate and called for thorough investigations into the incident.

Across the country, Kenyans continued to express grief and outrage as questions emerged over safety standards in boarding schools and the state of emergency preparedness in learning institutions.

The tragedy has reignited national debate on school safety, with leaders calling for urgent reforms, improved infrastructure, regular safety inspections and stronger emergency response mechanisms to protect learners.

As families mourned their loved ones and survivors continued receiving treatment, the nation remained united in grief, prayer and calls for accountability following one of the country’s deadliest school fire tragedies in recent years.

Peace We are increasingly seeing dangerous political narratives that are dividing communities and creating unnecessary tension among Kenyans

Peace caucus warns against divisive politics, calls for enhanced presidential security

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

A peace advocacy organization has expressed concern over rising political intolerance, hate speech and what it described as growing security lapses surrounding President William Ruto.

Officials from the Global Union for Peace and Development (GUPD) issued the warning after a consultative meeting held at The Leg-

end Hotel in Karen, Nairobi, where they urged political leaders across the country to embrace tolerance and national cohesion ahead of the next election cycle.

Led by the organization's founder and Chief Executive Officer, Ambassador Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba, the peace ambassadors said the country was witnessing worrying trends of ethnic profiling and inflammatory political rhetoric that could

threaten national stability if not addressed early.

"We are increasingly seeing dangerous political narratives that are dividing communities and creating unnecessary tension among Kenyans. Leaders must exercise restraint and promote peaceful coexistence," said Ambassador Nzabonimba.

The officials warned that continued incitement and divisive utterances could revive painful memories of the



Peace Ambassadors: From left; Mark Korir, Emilly Nafula, Vincent Kinuthia, Mary Wahogo and Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba after yesterday's meeting at The Legend Hotel, Karen. | Photo: Courtesy.

2007/2008 post-election violence that left hundreds dead and displaced thousands of families across the country.

The delegation included peace ambassadors Mary Wahogo, Emilly Nafula, Mark Korir and Vincent Kinuthia, who jointly called on leaders from across the political divide to respect differing opinions and avoid using inflammatory language for political gain.

According to the caucus, unity and peace remain the foundation of economic growth, social development and political stability in the country.

As part of its national peace agenda, GUPD announced plans to roll out a nationwide peace sensitization campaign targeting all the 47 counties. The initiative, expected to begin next month, will involve grassroots engagement forums bringing together elders, youth leaders, religious leaders, women groups, civil society organizations and political actors.

The caucus said the cam-

paign would focus on conflict prevention, promotion of peaceful political discourse, civic education and national unity.

Ambassador Nzabonimba noted that GUPD has in the past participated in community mediation initiatives, youth mentorship programmes and peace-building forums aimed at strengthening cohesion among communities in Kenya and across the East African region.

He added that the organization has been working with local leaders, diplomats and community-based organizations to champion dialogue, reconciliation and sustainable development.

At the same time, the peace ambassadors called for the strengthening of President William Ruto's security following recent incidents that they claimed had exposed the Head of State to potential danger during public engagements.

The officials said the safety of the President should remain

a national priority regardless of political affiliation, noting that any threat to the Head of State could undermine the country's stability.

They urged security agencies to remain vigilant and ensure proper protection measures are enforced during presidential functions and public gatherings.

The caucus further appealed to Kenyans to reject divisive politics and instead embrace peaceful dialogue, national unity and issue-based leadership as the country gradually enters a politically charged period.

"We must safeguard peace at all costs. Kenya belongs to all of us, and every citizen has a responsibility to protect the unity and stability of this nation," the officials said.

At the same time, the officials called for through investigation on the Utumishi Academy fire incident as they sent messages of condolences and quick recovery to the affected students and their families.




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Business In a year when many industries are cautious, participation at IFTEX sends a very different message. This sector is resilient

Kenya flower industry defies global headwinds

BY Chris Mburu
@themkenyatimes

Kenya's floriculture industry is demonstrating renewed resilience and global competitiveness despite mounting geopolitical, freight and sustainability pressures, as organizers announced a record-breaking edition of the upcoming International Floriculture Trade Expo (IFTEX) 2026.

The 13th edition of IFTEX taking place next week, between Tuesday and Thursday will bring together 210 exhibitors, up from 189 last year, marking the highest participation in the event's history and underscoring growing international confidence in Kenya's position as one of the world's leading flower exporters.

Speaking during the official pre-IFTEX 2026 media launch, HPP International Group CEO Dick van Raamsdonk said the exhibition had become a "true barometer for the global flower trade," with the latest growth reflecting strong investor confidence in Kenya as a global cut flower production hub.

"In a year when many industries are cautious, participation at IFTEX sends a very different message. This sector is resilient, confident and forward-looking," said van Raamsdonk.

"IFTEX no longer only showcases flowers; it showcases the future of the industry."

He noted that nearly 20 percent of the growth in exhibitors comes from new growers, signaling expansion and diversification within the industry. Since the post-pandemic recovery in 2023, exhibitor numbers have grown from 159 to 210; a one-third increase in just three years.

The event comes at a critical moment for Kenya's flower industry, which remains one

of the country's top foreign exchange earners and a major employer. According to the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), the sector generated approximately KSh110 billion (USD845 million) in export earnings in 2025, directly contributing 1.5 percent to Kenya's GDP while supporting more than one million livelihoods across the value chain. More than 60 percent of the workforce are women.

In remarks delivered on behalf of KFC CEO Clement Tulezi, Membership Engagement and Communications Manager Lina Jamwa described the industry as "one of Africa's greatest agricultural success stories," adding that Kenya was increasingly positioning itself as the global benchmark for sustainable floriculture.

"Kenya is not simply participating in global floriculture — Kenya is leading it," Jamwa said. "With the right partnerships, supportive policies and strategic investments, Kenya can become the undisputed global leader in sustainable floriculture."

The industry, however, is facing mounting operational pressure linked to geopolitical instability in the Middle East, supply chain disruptions and soaring freight costs. KFC warned that air freight costs have risen from about

"Kenya is not simply participating in global floriculture — Kenya is leading it," Jamwa said. "With the right partnerships, supportive policies and strategic investments, Kenya can become the undisputed global leader in sustainable floriculture."



USD3.10 per kilogram to nearly USD5.00 per kilogram in recent weeks, pushing logistics costs to as much as 60 percent of export expenses during peak periods.

The council estimates that approximately USD4 million worth of flower exports are currently at risk every week, while fertilizer prices have surged by 25 percent within a week and some farms have reported revenue declines of up to 75 percent due to shipment delays and perishability losses.

Industry projections indicate that prolonged disruption could result in export losses exceeding USD15 million per month and threaten up to 50,000 jobs if urgent interventions are not implemented.

Even amid these pressures, Kenya continues to dominate regional floriculture exports. The Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) says the country exported horticultural produce worth KSh143.78 billion in 2025, with cut flowers accounting for 62 percent of total export value. Kenya exported flowers to 143 destinations globally, with roses making up approximately 69 percent of total flower exports.

Acting AFA Director General Calistus Kundu said the sector remained central to inclusive economic growth, employment creation and rural livelihoods. "IFTEX 2026 offers a strategic platform to showcase Kenya's global leadership in floriculture and strengthen confidence in the country's horticultural sector," Kundu said in remarks delivered on his behalf by Isdora Odundo, Principle Market and product development officer at AFA.

"Beyond serving as a key trading platform, the event will also provide an important opportunity for stakeholders to collaborate in addressing emerging challenges affecting



Ms Lina Jamwa, Membership Engagement and Communications Manager at Kenya Flower Council, briefs the media in Nairobi, Kenya, ahead of the International Flower Trade Exhibition (IFTEX) which returns to Nairobi from June 2–4, 2026. Photo)Bob Kogi.

the flower industry."

Kenya's competitiveness is also being reinforced through stricter phytosanitary compliance and digital certification systems aimed at protecting key export markets.

Dr. Isaac Macharia, Director of Phytosanitary and Biosecurity Services at the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), said Kenya continues to strengthen compliance through automation, advanced laboratory infrastructure and enhanced pest management systems.

"As we look forward to IFTEX 2026, adherence to market requirements is not just

a regulatory necessity but Kenya's premier competitive advantage," Macharia said. "KEPHIS remains fully prepared to facilitate business, support industry expansion and protect the global integrity of Kenyan flowers."

KEPHIS noted that Kenya currently commands approximately 38 percent of the European Union's rose cut flower market and is actively pursuing market diversification opportunities in Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

Organizers say IFTEX 2026 will not only serve as a global trading platform for growers, breeders, exporters and

buyers, but also as a strategic forum for addressing sustainability, compliance, logistics and market diversification challenges shaping the future of floriculture.

Ranked among the world's top specialized cut flower trade fairs, IFTEX has become a critical gateway for Kenya's flower industry to expand into emerging markets including North America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.



A worker selects flowers for packing ready for sale at farm in Kiambu county. Photo/Bernard Malonza

Health Kang'ata underscored use of technology facilitated by a stable internet will improve access to healthcare services across the county.

Murang'a government switches to satellite internet for all public health facilities

BY Bernard Munyao
@themtkenyatimes

Murang'a County has launched a major upgrade of internet connectivity in all its 170 public health facilities by shifting from WiFi-based systems to satellite internet in a move aimed at improving healthcare delivery across the county.

Launching the upgrade at Muriranjas Hospital which hosts Telemedicine Hub, Governor Irungu Kang'ata confirmed that the service

will be provided by Starlink through its local authorized agent, Paratus.

Kang'ata underscored use of technology facilitated by a stable internet will improve access to healthcare services across the county.

"This upgrade strengthens Murang'a County's commitment to digital health and ensures every resident, regardless of location, can access quality healthcare," observed the governor.

He noted that the transition to satellite internet is expected to cut connectivity costs by 70

percent compared to the previous WiFi setup, freeing up resources for patient care and medical equipment.

"The new system cuts connectivity costs by 70 percent compared to the previous WiFi setup, freeing up resources for patient care and equipment," explained the governor.

He revealed that while using WiFi, some facilities were spending up to KSh90,000 per month but with the new upgrade, a hospital will be spending about KSh3,500 per month.



Governor Irungu Kang'ata at Muriranjas hospital in Kahuro Sub County during launch of satellite internet.

Kang'ata further said the satellite internet system would provide reliable coverage in remote and underserved areas where terrestrial internet services have been weak or unavailable.

"Satellite reaches remote and underserved facilities where terrestrial WiFi is weak or unavailable, ensuring no health centre is left offline," he said.

The governor added that the high-speed and low-latency connectivity would support real-time telemedicine, digital records management and diagnostics without interruptions.

"Doctors can consult specialists instantly, access patient records across facilities and transmit lab results faster, reducing referral delays," he added.

The county chief also noted that the system would enhance resilience in healthcare services since satellite systems are less affected by fiber cuts, outages and power issues.

The internet upgrade is ex-

pected to complement the county's ongoing medical facilities solarisation programme With Kang'ata noting that 140 out of the 170 public medical facilities are expected to be solarized by June 30, 2026, while the remaining 30 facilities are projected to be completed by June 2027.

He however said Murang'a Level 5 hospital is not currently under satellite internet as there is a process which needs to be done since the facility is located in the urban centre.

The Internet, Kang'ata said, has also helped the county government to digitize delivery of other key services like in collection of revenue.

He further announced that neighboring public institutions, including schools and churches located within a 14-kilometre radius of upgraded medical facilities, may also benefit from the satellite network at a cost to be agreed upon by the county and the service provider.

Interested institutions have

been advised to submit application letters to the County Executive Committee Member for Health, Dr. Mbugua, for consideration.

Paratus Group Chief Commercial Officer Martin Cox said the satellite internet will be stable and will help the Murang'a hospitals improve healthcare service delivery.

He noted that the internet is becoming a utility in the modern world and doesn't need to be expensive since delivery of key services are currently being delivered under facilitation of the internet.

Cox lauded Murang'a government for embracing digital transformation delivery in healthcare noting that satellite internet provides dependable connectivity even in remote and underserved areas where terrestrial internet infrastructure remains unreliable.

"This project demonstrates how satellite technology can transform healthcare delivery by ensuring medical facilities remain connected all times," He added.

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A medical officer offering telemedicine services at Muriranjas hospital.

CAIPs The President said, the government is investing KSh2.4 billion in common user facilities for the CAIPs programme, with KSh150 million allocated to each facility

Ruto oversees KSh4B CAIPs deal signing

BY PCS

@themkenyatimes

The National and county governments have signed a KSh4 billion agreement on phase two of the establishment of 16 County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs).

President William Ruto, who witnessed the signing ceremony, said the government has disbursed a total of KSh8.5 billion for CAIPs at KSh250 million to each of the 34 participating counties.

Additionally, the President said, the government is investing KSh2.4 billion in common user facilities for the CAIPs programme, with KSh150 million allocated to each facility to support specific value-addition priorities of every county.

He noted that the programme is transforming counties into engines of industrialisation, innovation, job creation, and economic transformation and moving Kenya “from a consumption economy to a production

economy”.

“Once operational, these industrial parks will significantly expand value addition to agricultural and natural resources at the county level, reduce post-harvest losses, create jobs for thousands of young people, expand market access for local products, attract private investment into manufacturing and agro-processing, strengthen exports, and enhance the competitiveness of our counties and our country,” he said.

Speaking during the signing ceremony at State House Nairobi yesterday, President Ruto noted that 10 out of the first 18 CAIPs are now complete and ready for investors.

Governors, led by Council of Governors Chairman Ahmed Abdullahi and Trade Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui, among others, were present.

The President noted that the programme has taken industry closer to the people, unlocked the productive potential of counties, and will ensure

that every part of Kenya participates meaningfully in national growth and prosperity.

He explained that countries that have succeeded in exporting products started from the grassroots.

“The County Aggregation and Industrial Parks programme is one of the most consequential economic transformation initiatives under our Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda,” he said.

He urged implementing counties to fast-track infrastructure development, strengthen governance and accountability systems, ensure prudent utilisation of public resources, prepare for investor onboarding and operationalisation, and work closely with the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industrialisation and relevant agencies in resolving any emerging issues.

“The ministry remains fully committed to providing the policy direction, technical support, and coordination necessary for the successful



President William Ruto addressing the forum yesterday.

implementation of this programme,” he said.

Governor Abdullahi pointed out that counties will continue cooperating with the government to fully implement the CAIPs.

Additionally, Mr Abdullahi, who is also the governor of Wajir, noted that the Affordable Housing Programme is among the biggest estate development projects in the counties.

“On behalf of the governors, I thank you for the effort you continue to make to change Kenya for the bet-

ter,” Mr Abdullahi said.

He confirmed that counties have already contributed their co-funding while the National Government has disbursed its contribution.

Mr Kinyanjui said the CAIPs reflect President Ruto’s vision of a nation that produces for itself, adds value, and creates jobs.

“The programme was a good example of how a nation can be self-reliant,” he said.

The Mt. Kenya Times

T KE



A beautiful soul is never forgotten



Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.,
PGDG&C,B.Ed.,
CELT.
BT Asst
GMHSCHOOL, TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.
Tamil Nadu.
India
Creative Writers.
Educationist.

Even in their absence we never forget those souls
They have done remarkable things for us.
We always remember their timely response
Their own way to make us, away from the end.

A beautiful heart with soul always receives the
best

A person who is responsible for others happiness
They are to be treated as salvatore.
They are always taking care of their followers.

All is well



Command your soul to listen clear,
And not be ruled by doubt or fear.
These simple words can ease the role
Of burdens resting in the soul.

When you stumble, when you fall,
These magic words can strengthen all.
What has happened is already done,
We cannot change the setting sun.

So live today in the present light,
With hopeful thoughts and courage bright.
Through every rise and every swell,
Keep whispering softly — "All is well."

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
PUMS Konganancherry
Chengalpattu district
Tamil Nadu India

The magic words — "All is well,"
Can calm the storms we cannot tell.
Our life is written by God above,
Guided softly with unseen love.

We never know what comes each day,
Joy or sorrow along the way.
So train your heart to stand up bold,
And walk with courage, calm and strong.

Whatever dream you wish to do,
Move ahead and remain true.
Tell your mind, "All is well,"
Like a peaceful healing spell.

A fleeting flame



But like a mirage, it vanishes in the air,
Leaving emptiness, and a heart that's bare.

Love's gentle warmth, a flame that burns so true,
A steady heartbeat, that forever shines through.
It's a choice that's made, a commitment that's
strong,

A bond that's unbroken, where hearts belong.

So let us not confuse, the fleeting with the real,
Lust's momentary pleasure, with love's enduring
feel.

For love's the anchor, that holds us fast,
A love that's pure, and forever will last.

© Keith Onyango
Journalism, communication and PR
Rongo university

Lust's fiery passion, a burning desire,
A fleeting flame, that soon expires.
It masquerades as love, with a deceitful guise,
But leaves only ashes, and a hollow, lonely sigh.

It's a craving that consumes, a hunger that's
never still,
A restless longing, that seeks to fulfill.

Use your time well



What will you do with it before it ends?
Will you heal, forgive, and befriend?
Time is borrowed, swift as air,
Gone before we're even aware,

Lend a helping hand, thank God,
Let's not waste life chasing gold,
While hearts grow empty and cold.
Let's not put kindness on hold.

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

The clock chimes at midnight,
And the day starts with a delight.
You are lent twenty-four hours,
Not more, not less, it's ours.

What is meant for me



for the PG TRB exams.
I qualified,
but I did not get
the PG Assistant post.

However,
I will never give up.
If it is meant for me,
I will surely get it.
Otherwise,
I will continue trying.

I believe
hard work never fails.
So, never give up
on my goals.

What is meant for me,
I will receive
at the right time.
This is self-confidence.
It helps bring
all my dreams true.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

What is meant for me
will never miss me,
and what misses me
was never meant for me.

What is meant for me
will surely come to me
and never go away from me.
Maybe it takes its own time;
however, it will reach me
at the right time.

I did not study
for seven years
after higher secondary school,
but now I am a teacher.
It was meant for me;
it is mine.

I never stopped myself.
Nowadays, I am trying

Motivate yourself



Mistakes are footprints on the sand,
Proof you dared, proof you stand.
The one who falls and tries once more
Will reach the long-awaited shore.

Do not wilt when people see
Only flaws, not possibility.
Flowers bloom through storm and rain,
Strength is often born from pain.

Lift your spirit, hold your flame,
Do not surrender to fear or shame.
Keep your vision vast and wide,
Let determination be your guide.

For mountains bow to hearts that try,
And dreams take wings that touch the sky.
So cheer yourself through all you do,
The greatest believer must be you.
Nandini AnandKumar

Self motivation is the spark within,
A silent fire beneath the skin.
It does not rest on a dusty book shelf,
The strongest push comes from yourself.

Life is not carved in flawless frame,
Every journey has thorns of blame.
When you dare to rise and try,
Some will mock and criticize.

Fault-finding tongues may loudly croak,
Throwing arrows wrapped in jokes.
But be the deaf frog climbing high,
Unshaken by the noisy sky.

Title deeds Landmark titles lock in community land and public utilities across one of Kenya's most land-contested counties

Communities secure historic land rights as Wahome issues 60 title deeds across 369,000 acres in Samburu

BY Waithaka Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Sixty title deeds covering more than 369,000 acres of community land and critical public utilities have been handed over in Samburu East, in what has been described as one of the most significant land tenure milestones the region has ever witnessed.

Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Housing and Urban Development Alice Wahome presided over the landmark ceremony, saying the deeds would empower local communities, reduce long-standing land disputes and open the door to lasting socio-economic development across the county.

"Today, we have made history in Samburu East," Wahome said. "This milestone secures over 369,000 acres for the people of Samburu



CS Alice Wahome in Samburu

and lays a strong foundation for future development." Her words drew an enthusiastic response from residents and leaders who had gathered for the occasion.

Wahome emphasised that the exercise was not mere-

ly an administrative process but a deliberate step towards fulfilling the government's constitutional obligation to protect community land rights and ensure equitable access to land ownership for all Kenyans, regardless of where they

live.

The deeds cover both community land and critical public utilities, meaning schools, health facilities and other public assets in the area now enjoy formal legal protection. For many residents, it is the first time their land has been officially recognised, ending years of uncertainty that had discouraged investment and fuelled conflict.

Local leaders were unanimous in welcoming the development. They said the titles would provide the legal certainty that communities needed to plan for the future, attract meaningful investment and support sustainable development programmes across Samburu East and the wider county.

Wahome was joined at the ceremony by Lands Principal Secretary Nixon Korir, Samburu Governor Jonathan Lati



CS Alice Wahome issuing title deed in Samburu

Lelelit, Woman Representative Pauline Lenguris, Samburu East MP Lentoijoni Lekumontare, Waso Ward MCA Lpesina Kelvin Lemantaan and Senator Steve Ltumbesi Lelegwe, alongside other local leaders and officials.

Their presence underscored the political and institutional weight behind the exercise, signalling a coordinated commitment at both national and county level to resolve historical land injustices and put communities on firmer footing.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development says the Samburu East exercise is part of a broader na-

tional programme to streamline land ownership, protect public land and deliver inclusive development. Similar exercises are expected to be rolled out in other counties in the months ahead.

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Peace When empowerment tips into rivalry, the emotional ground shifts — and the consequences for modern marriages are quietly devastating

Where peace lives, love follows: the emotional truth behind why some men seek comfort beyond their marriages



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

Behind polished doors and carefully curated social media smiles, a quiet conflict is playing out in many modern homes — one that few people dare to name out loud, let alone examine honestly.

A man holds the title of head of the family. Yet he finds himself constantly redirected, corrected and overruled in the very space where his voice was meant to carry weight. It is a slow, silent erosion. And it is reshaping relationships in ways that society is only beginning to confront.

As that erosion deepens, something equally unsettling begins to take shape: an emotional migration. The man's sense of comfort, respect and validation starts to drift — not always into betrayal, but into comparison, into quiet observation, and into the disquieting realisation that peace sometimes appears in the most unexpected places.

Which brings us to a question that is controversial, often whispered, but rarely examined with any honesty — why do some men find themselves emotionally, and at times romantically, drawn to the women who work in their homes? The answer is far less scandalous than it might first appear, and far more rooted in human psychology, perception and unmet emotional need.

The modern wife is empowered, educated and economically independent — rightly and deservedly so. But in some households, that empowerment has taken an unintended turn. It begins to express itself not as partnership but as competition, not as collaboration but as assertion.



Decision-making becomes a contest rather than a conversation. A man is no longer simply heard; he is instructed, corrected and, at times, diminished beneath what gets framed as the noble pursuit of equality.

Meanwhile, the domestic worker moves quietly through the same home, without agenda or demand. She does not compete for authority or arrive with titles to assert. She suggests rather than commands, supports rather than confronts, and reads the emotional rhythms of the household with an attentiveness that costs nothing yet means a great deal. While the wife engages the external world — career, ambition, the relentless noise of modern life and digital validation — the domestic worker often becomes the unseen stabiliser of the internal one, tending to the quiet needs that do not trend on any platform but define the texture of daily life.

The result is a dangerous emotional imbalance. Not because one woman is better than the other, but because one is filling a psychological space the other has unintentionally left vacant. It is a space where a man feels ac-

knowledged rather than challenged, trusted rather than second-guessed, respected rather than perpetually debated.

Here lies the provocative truth that most people are reluctant to say plainly: many men do not simply crave authority. They crave peace. They want a space where they are not constantly negotiating their role, not made to feel like contestants in a power struggle happening inside their own home. When that space is denied — when every decision must be balanced, challenged or overridden in the name of equality — a man begins to lose not just influence but identity within the family structure. And in that loss, he becomes quietly vulnerable to any environment that restores his sense of worth, even one that society barely notices.



This is not a call for women to diminish themselves, nor a romanticisation of submission. It is a warning about imbalance — and about what happens when emotional intelligence fails to keep pace with social progress. Empowerment without emotional awareness can quietly become dominance. Leadership without humility can harden

into tyranny. The tragedy unfolding in some modern homes is not that women have risen — it is that the rise has, in certain cases, been misread as a mandate to rival rather than reinforce, to lead over rather than lead with.

The man caught in that dynamic is not yearning for superiority. He is yearning for peace.

And until that harmony is honestly restored — through open conversation, mutual respect and the kind of emotional generosity that sustains long-term partnership — the quiet rebellion playing out behind closed doors will continue. It will not be loud enough to make headlines. But it is powerful enough, and pervasive enough, to reshape marriages, families and communities in ways that will take generations to fully understand.

The home, after all, is where everything begins. What happens inside it matters more than most of us are willing to admit.

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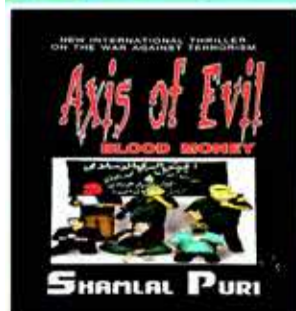
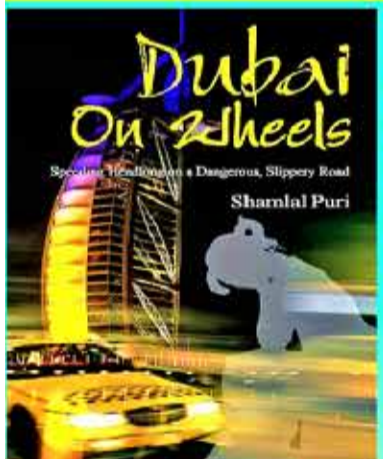
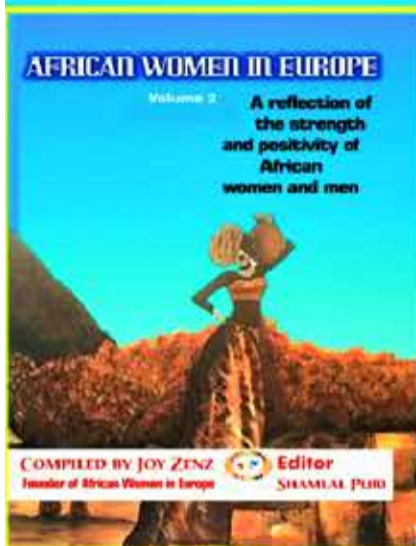
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Politics This coming political cycle, presents a far more difficult challenge for political leaders, especially members of parliament.

The age of political memory: Kenyan voters are watching more closely than ever before



BY Fredrick Chelimo

@themtkenyatimes

Every five years, Kenya enters a familiar season of hope, anticipation and a mixture of sigh and relieve depending on the line of inclination of the ending governance era. As we enter this period, the atmosphere is changing rapidly with convoys roaring back to the villages and towns, campaign songs dominate airwaves, promises become more prominent and generous, and politicians suddenly rediscover the language of ordinary citizens. For many Kenyans, these are not just events, but emotional moments filled with anticipation for a better future, affordable living, better healthcare, quality affordable education, improved roads, employment opportunities, and government that finally listens to the people.

History has perpetually shown, these hopes often fades with time, once governments settle into office, the reality of governance slowly replaces campaign excitement. The public starts to observe not just what the leaders say, but how they behave. Citizens pay attention to what they prioritize, humility or arrogance displayed by leaders, handling of public resources and seriousness with which their promises are pursued. These characteristics give an indication of whether a government is genuinely mitted to transformation or simply interested in consolidating power.

This coming political cycle, presents a far more difficult challenge for political leaders, especially members of parliament. Unlike in the past, when political memory was short of information difficult to access, today's Kenya is operating in the age of digital accountability. Every vote cast in parliament, every motion supported or rejected, every public statement, every controversial silence, and every policy position is now permanently documented and



Kenyan voters

easily accessible.

For this first time in the country's democratic history many politicians are facing an electorate that no longer depends entirely on campaign rallies to determine leadership performance. Citizens can now verify for themselves how leaders acted, when they acted, and whether they truly defended public interests or sided against them.

Parliamentary records, social media archives, investigative journalism, online civic platforms, and digital activists have fundamentally changed the political landscape. The modern Kenyan voter is becoming less emotional and more analytical. Politician may address thousands of supporters at a rally, but a single verified parliamentary record shared online can shape public opinion far more powerfully than hours of speeches. Kenyans are increasingly asking difficult but necessary questions. When taxes burdened citizens, where did our leaders stand? When constitutional principles were threatened, who defended them? When the cost of living rose sharply, who spoke for ordinary families?

These are no longer abstract political conversation; they are deeply personal questions tied directly to

daily survival. What is emerging is a population growing tired of symbolic politics and increasingly interested in measurable leadership. The electorate is slowly shifting from listening to promises toward examining evidence. Development is no longer judging by speeches alone but by visible outcomes and documented action. Perhaps one of the most telling signs of this changing political culture is the evolving attitude

toward voter bribery and political handouts.

Traditionally, tokens, cash, and "facilitations" were viewed as tools capable of influencing electoral outcomes. Today however, many citizens openly describe such handouts as a small return of public resources already taken from them through corruption, wastage or failed leadership. The psychological power of political handouts appears to be weak-

ening, particularly among younger and economically frustrated voters.

This does not mean that money, tribal alliances and political populism have disappeared from Kenyan politics, but are still influential. But their dominances are increasingly challenged by a politically conscious generation that is connected, informed, and deeply affected by the economic realities of the country. This frustration is understandable as over the years, the abdication of people's aspirations has become painfully and glaringly visible.

Many Kenyans feel abandoned by the institutions and leaders who were entrusted with protecting public welfare but ended up protecting their own welfare. Visible widening gaps between political elites and ordinary citizens, youth struggling with unemployment, rising taxation, poor healthcare and higher cost of living is a constant feature. Public debts continue to grow, while social services remain strained and amid all this, citizens are asking whether leadership has truly remained connected to the people it claims to serve.

The coming election may represent more than just another political transition. It represent a moment of accountability, a moment of voter reward evidence over rhetorics, integrity over noise, and service over symbolism. It marks an entrance to a new era where leaders are not only heard, but recorded; not only praised, but scrutinized, not elected but continuously assessed. The days when political charisma, empty promises, and short public memory are fading faster. The political leadership should realize that in the digital age, citizens do not forget as easily anymore. Every action leaves a footprint, every decision creates a record, and every betrayal of public trust will be remembered prominently and more so at the ballot.



Writer In his breakout play, *Almasi ya Nyota*, he masterfully plunges readers into the turbulent socioeconomic currents navigating poverty

The creative prodigy writing their own future



Mutavania Mbiro

BY Alfred Lobawoi
@themtkenyatimes

In a fast-paced digital age where contemporary art often favors transient trends, an exceptional literary force is proving that the classical pen still holds absolute sovereignty over the human conscience. Mutavania Mbiro intellectually known across academic corridors as Carlos Obiero, and celebrated in the creative cosmos by his moniker Malenga Adhimu is rapidly cementing his status as the definitive voice of his generation. Balancing his academic pursuits at Murang'a University of Technology with a fierce literary crusade, Mbiro is boldly repurposing Swahi-

li literature as both a societal mirror and a moral compass. His artistic brilliance lies in his refusal to shy away from the raw, unvarnished anxieties of 21st-century youth a rare depth that has already earned his mashairi (poetry) a coveted, regular home in the prestigious pages of Taifa Leo. Mbiro's exceptional storytelling shines brightest through his acclaimed dramatic works that dissect the triumphs and tribulations of contemporary life. In his breakout play, *Almasi ya Nyota*, he masterfully plunges readers into the turbulent socioeconomic currents navigating poverty, institutional greed, and personal betrayal, ultimately using his characters to engineer an

inspiring blueprint for resilience and unyielding hope. He shifts this provocative lens to the friction between rigid cultural traditionalism and modern romance in his play, *Mivuke ya Hatia*. By tracking a generation that dares to love across ethnic divides, the narrative ignites critical public discourse on social identity, showcasing how modern affection can simultaneously act as a bridge to heal historical fractures or a catalyst to destabilize outdated societal foundations. The author's artistic versatility peaks as he transitions from the high stakes of the theatrical stage to the introspective sanctuary of verse in his acclaimed anthology, *Karatasi Nyeupe*. This collection is an evocative, rich

tapestry woven with intricate metaphors, sharp imagery, and an impeccable command of traditional poetic rhythm. Here, Mbiro shifts his focus to the quiet battlegrounds of human existence dissecting love, moral decay, and the structural burdens choking modern African spaces. Each poem serves as a profound sanctuary for self-reflection, urging a hurried society to pause, look inward, and evaluate the ethical trajectory of its collective future. What separates Carlos from a detached academic is his deep

immersion in real-world pedagogy as a student teacher, elite drama coach, and dynamic shairi vocalist. His insights are extracted directly from the classrooms and youth circles he engages with daily, allowing him to train students to dominate national music and drama festival stages. Beyond academia, his creative pen and voice are available for professional commissions including custom-crafted poetry for schools, churches, corporate events, and cultural functions. To book his performance ser-

vices, books, secure training engagements, or collaborate on literary projects, Carlos can be reached directly via email at mbiromutavania@gmail.com or online platform, proving that he is not just publishing books, but actively sculpting Kiswahili into a living instrument for societal transformation.

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Farming Joyce Nyaruiru, the leader of Kahero farmers group, said in an interview that farmers in the area are already overstretched by the demand for cucumbers.

Kiambu county farmers find fortune in cucumber farming



Kahero farmers group chairperson Joyce Nyaruiru.

BY John Kamau

@themkenyatimes

Cucumber farming has become a highly lucrative venture for farmers in Kiambu County, offering a rapid return on investment due to the high demand in urban markets, hotels and supermarkets.

Farmers say that cucumbers are slowly turning into green gold noting that they are generating high proceeds from the crop that has a short maturity period of 40 to 60 days.

Cucumbers are widely preferred for their high water content, nutritional value and health benefits associated with hydration and wellness.

The farmers in Kahero village, Kikuyu constituency, assert that besides enhancing food security and creating job opportunities, cucumber farming has significantly turned around their fortunes and improved their economic status.

Joyce Nyaruiru, the leader of Kahero farmers group, said in an interview that farmers in the area are already overstretched by the demand for cucumbers.

She averred that there's always a year-round demand for the crop due to constant consumption in households and a booming hospitality industry which keep the market active.

"Cucumbers are surely becoming our green gold. The market is ready with better prices of not less than

sh 100 per kilogram and we actually cannot meet the demand. Adoption of this farming has empowered farmers economically, created jobs and boosted our fortunes," Nyaruiru said.

Farmer Samuel Gikonyo noted that farmers in the area have adopted greenhouse cultivation which has proven to be the best method to yield high quality cucumbers.

He pointed out that they are currently cultivating English cucumbers which usually fetch premium prices in the markets.

"Although open field farming method is budget-friendly and can thrive in rural and peri urban areas, we have decided to farm our cucumbers in greenhouses to control pests and diseases as well as protect our crops from harsh weather. We realized that controlling pests and diseases has been eating into our proceeds," Gikonyo said.

For Samuel Gikonyo, another farmer in the area, the venture has changed his outlook on farming entirely.

"Before this, farming felt like a struggle. Now I can comfortably support my family and even employ young people during planting and harvesting seasons. The income is much better compared to what we earned before," he said.

Cucumber farming in the area has been actualized through a partnership between the Korean Program for International Cooperation in Ag-

riculture Technology (KOPIA) and the Kiambu County Government.

(KOPIA), which has initiated diverse agriculture programmes designed to help smallholder farmers across the country, has been in the forefront in training farmers on modern farming technologies and latest agricultural practices aimed at increasing productivity and improving household incomes.

KOPIA Kenya Director Dr. Ji Gang Kim said the programme is focused on equipping farmers with practical skills that guarantee quality production and sustainable farming.

"Our goal is not only to teach farming techniques but to instill life values such as responsibility, innovation, and self-reliance. Agriculture should not be seen as a fallback plan but as a viable, modern profession that can secure livelihoods and feed communities," he said.

Farmers are trained on proper crop management, irrigation, pest control and post-harvest handling to ensure they produce high-quality cucumbers that meet market standards.

He noted that agriculture remains one of the strongest tools for improving rural livelihoods and enhancing food production if farmers are supported with the right knowledge and technologies.

Kiambu County Chief Officer for Agriculture Benson Njogore said that the county government will help the farmers with new market linkages as well as extension services to enable them maximise their production and eke high proceeds from their venture.

He at the same time called on youths to embrace modern farming as an alternative for employment noting that farming holds the key to their economic freedom and stability.



KOPIA Kenya Director Dr. Ji Gang Kim speaking at Kahero village in Kikuyu, Kiambu County.



English cucumber plants at a greenhouse in Kahero village, Kikuyu constituency.

Drugs BMA Commissioner Michael Masiapato has repeatedly warned that South Africa's borders will no longer serve as soft targets

Beitbridge bust exposes the scale of drug smuggling the BMA must now dismantle

A R1-billion (USD 61.3) million seizure at South Africa's busiest land border is a landmark moment — but the harder work of dismantling the syndicate behind it is only just beginning

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

South Africa's Border Management Authority has landed its biggest blow yet against cross-border drug syndicates, intercepting a consignment estimated at R1-billion at Beitbridge Border Post. The seizure, which broke on SABC and eTV on Wednesday morning, marks a significant turning point in the battle against narcotics trafficking through the Limpopo corridor — and lays bare the brazen scale of smuggling operations targeting the country.

According to the BMA, the drugs were concealed in a truck that had originated in Malawi, passing through Mozambique and Zimbabwe undetected before being stopped at Beitbridge. That a vehicle carrying such a staggering load could traverse three international borders without a single interception raises serious and deeply uncomfortable questions about regional intelligence sharing and the vulnerabilities that criminal networks continue to exploit with worrying ease. It is a detail that demands answers — not just from South Africa, but from every country the truck passed through.

BMA Commissioner Michael Masiapato has repeatedly warned that South Africa's borders will no longer serve as soft targets, and this haul gives powerful weight to that declaration. If confirmed, it dwarfs previous drug busts at Beitbridge — including a R7-million heroin seizure hidden in a false truck compartment in 2008 — and suggests that syndicates are now moving larger consignments in fewer runs to maximise profit while minimising the risk of detection. The sheer audacity of the operation points to networks that are sophisticated, well-resourced and emboldened by years of operating in the shadows of a porous regional border system.

The use of a Malawi-originated truck also points to an evolving and



South Africa's Border Management Authority

increasingly complex trafficking route. Malawi is being cited with growing frequency as a transit hub for drugs destined for South African markets, suggesting that traditional entry points are being supplemented — or in some cases replaced — by newer corridors that exploit weaker border controls further up the chain. For investigators, unravelling that web will be as important as the seizure itself.

The timing of the bust is telling. In recent weeks, the BMA rolled out integrated surveillance, mobility and command-and-control systems at Beitbridge in partnership with DCD Protected Mobility, Aselsan South Africa and Unipro Protective Wear. The investment was substantial, and early results were modest — earlier operations netted comparatively minor contraband hauls including food items and batteries. But this R1-bil-

lion seizure demonstrates the real potential of that technology platform when it is paired with credible, intelligence-led targeting. It is a proof of concept that the authority badly needed, and one that should now energise further investment in border security infrastructure across the country.

Yet the BMA must resist the temptation to treat this as a moment of arrival rather than a point of departure. One spectacular seizure, however historic, does not constitute a dismantled network. Drug syndicates operating at this scale are structured to absorb losses. A single confiscated consignment, devastating as it is financially, will not necessarily deter an organisation with the resources and reach to move narcotics across four countries undetected. The BMA must now prove this is not a one-off success but the opening move in a

sustained campaign to disrupt, degrade and ultimately destroy established trafficking routes through the Limpopo corridor and beyond.

That campaign must begin with a thorough and relentless investigation into the truck itself — its ownership, its documentation, its declared cargo, the route it was cleared to travel and the individuals who loaded, dispatched and were expecting to receive it. Every thread must be pulled. Every financial trail must be followed. The goal is not simply to keep the drugs off South African streets, as vital as that is, but to identify, arrest and prosecute the architects of the network responsible. Asset forfeiture proceedings should follow swiftly, hitting the syndicate where it hurts most.

Regional cooperation is equally critical, and arguably the most complex challenge the BMA faces in

the aftermath of this bust. A truck travelling from Malawi through Mozambique and Zimbabwe should, by rights, have triggered alerts well before it reached Beitbridge. The absence of any interception along that route is not simply an oversight — it signals gaps, and possibly complicity, that drug lords are actively and systematically exploiting. Working through the Southern African Development Community framework, South Africa must press urgently for tighter coordination, real-time intelligence sharing and joint cross-border operations. The Beitbridge bust must become the catalyst for a regional reckoning with the narcotics trade, not merely a South African headline.

There is also a broader conversation to be had about the communities at the receiving end of these drug pipelines. For ordinary South Africans, the numbers attached to this seizure are staggering in the abstract but devastating in their practical implications. A consignment of this value represents not just a loss to the state in unpaid duties and seized assets, but a potential flood of narcotics capable of fuelling addiction, crime and social breakdown across communities already struggling under the weight of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Every kilogram intercepted at Beitbridge is a kilogram that will not end up on the streets of Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town or the countless smaller towns that have been quietly hollowed out by the drug trade over the past two decades.

The human cost of what was stopped at Beitbridge cannot be overstated. It must inform the urgency with which authorities pursue the network responsible.

South Africa finds itself at a defining moment in its fight against organised crime and narcotics trafficking. The BMA has demonstrated, in the most dramatic fashion possible, that it has the capability and the will to intercept at the highest level. The question that now hangs over Pretoria, and over every law enforcement agency with a stake in this outcome, is whether that capability will be matched by the institutional follow-through — the arrests, the prosecutions, the dismantling — that transforms a landmark seizure into a genuine and lasting blow against the syndicate that sent the truck.

Beitbridge has proven it can catch the big fish. The real test begins now.

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Sports >> *A 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano in Leipzig ends 120 years without continental silverware and sends the Eagles into next season's Europa League

Palace lift first-ever European trophy after Conference League glory



Crystal Palace

By **Norman Mwale**

Crystal Palace have written their name into football history, lifting their first continental trophy with a composed 1-0 victory over Rayo Vallecano in the UEFA Conference League final at Leipzig's Red Bull Arena on Wednesday evening.

In a night that south London will recount for generations, the Eagles transformed the disappointment of being assigned to European football's third-tier competition into something truly extraordinary — a historic triumph that crowns 120 years of club history with silverware on the continental stage.

The decisive moment arrived six minutes into the second half. Adam Wharton's rasping drive

from the edge of the area was parried by Rayo goalkeeper Augusto Batalla, and Jean-Philippe Mateta pounced to tap home from close range on 51 minutes. It was a finish of poise and inevitability from the French striker, who had tormented the Spanish defence throughout and later drew another fine save from Batalla as Palace pressed for a second. Rayo's late surge — most memorably when Yerey Pino struck both posts with a free-kick — threatened to unsettle the Eagles, but they held firm to preserve the clean sheet and claim the trophy.

The victory completes a remarkable farewell for manager Oliver Glasner, who announced his departure from Selhurst Park in January and now leaves with

a hat-trick of honours following the 2025 FA Cup and Community Shield. Former England international Glenn Hoddle summed up the sentiment perfectly: "This is justice. They should have been in the Europa League and now they have qualified for it next year." Glasner paid warm tribute to his squad, praising the resilience and spirit that carried them through a demanding campaign.

Mateta, visibly overwhelmed at full-time, captured the dressing room mood with characteristic exuberance: "I feel fantastic. We did it. First time in Europe. We did it. Now I just want to celebrate. It's incredible." Goalkeeper Dean Henderson echoed that joy, crediting Glasner's influence: "The manager came in and made this team believe we can

win any game. It's been a difficult season but we've delivered another final, which is fantastic."

The triumph also secures automatic qualification for next season's Europa League — a fitting reward for a club that had previously been denied entry to that competition due to multi-club ownership regulations. As Glasner received a guard of honour from his players before marking the occasion with a jubilant dive on the pitch, the message rang out loud and clear: Crystal Palace have not merely arrived in Europe. They have conquered it.

Norman Mwale is a sports journalist covering European club football and international competitions.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *South Africa end a 16-year wait with a squad that blends domestic firepower and overseas experience ahead of a mouth-watering opener against Mexico

Broos names final 26 as Bafana gear up for World Cup return

By Norman Mwale

Hugo Broos has named his final 26-man squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, drawing heavily on the core that ended South Africa's long exile from the global stage while introducing fresh talent as the nation braces for one of the most anticipated moments in its football history.

The squad was unveiled on Wednesday at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in the presence of President Cyril Ramaphosa — a setting that captured the national significance of the moment. The group blends domestic dominance with international experience, with Mamelodi Sundowns and Orlando Pirates each contributing eight players and seven members currently based abroad.

Captain and goalkeeper Ronwen Williams leads the side with the authority and composure that have defined his tenure, completing a goalkeeping trio with Ricardo Goss and Sipho Chaine. The defensive unit includes Khuliso Mudau, Nkosinathi Sibisi, Ime Okon, Khulumani Ndamane, Aubrey Modiba, Samukele Kabini, Thabang Matuludi, Olwethu Makhanya, Kamogelo Sebelebele, Bradley Cross and Mbekezeli Mbokazi, who has since joined Chicago Fire in Major League Soccer.

The midfield engine will be driven by Teboho Mokoena, Sphephelo Sithole and Jayden Adams — a quartet offering energy, control and defensive discipline in equal measure. Up front, Burnley's Lyle Foster leads the line alongside Oswin Appollis, Iqraam Rayners, Tshepang Moremi, Relebohile Mofokeng, Evidence Makgopa, veteran playmaker Themba Zwane and Thapelo Maseko, giving Broos a fine blend of pace, guile and experience to trouble any defence.



The two notable additions from last week's 32-man provisional list are uncapped defenders Makhanya and Cross. Missing out are Brandon Peterson, Thabiso Monyane, Brooklyn Poggenpoel, Lebohang Maboe, Patrick Maswanganyi and Thapelo Morena.

Broos, who has confirmed the tournament will be the final chapter of his coaching career,

acknowledged there were "some hard decisions to make" but expressed confidence in the balance and cohesion of the group. It is South Africa's first World Cup appearance since they hosted the tournament in 2010.

Bafana open their campaign against co-hosts Mexico on 11 June at the iconic Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, before facing Czechia in Atlanta and South

Korea in Monterrey — with the tantalising prospect of progressing beyond the group stage for the first time in their World Cup history very much alive.

Norman Mwale is a sports journalist covering African football and international tournaments.

SPORTS NEWS



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Where storytelling, advocacy, and healing become one voice



By: Anila Bukhari
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- As an author, Confidence Nkem Obianke has written across several genres, particularly focusing on self-help, wellness, and personal development. Her books speak directly to readers seeking guidance, resilience, and inner transformation. Among her notable works are *Fire in Still Water* and *Decide, Build, Own It!* — titles that reflect her passion for encouraging personal growth, courage, and independence among African women.
- Her writing resonates strongly because of its honesty and relatability. Rather than using overly complex language, she communicates in a simple and accessible style that allows readers from different backgrounds to connect with her message. She writes about faith, emotional strength, identity, purpose, and financial empowerment with sincerity and cultural awareness.

Nkem Obianke is a dynamic Nigerian author, content creator, women and child rights activist, and book publisher whose work continues to inspire conversations around healing, empowerment, and social transformation. With a Master's degree in Literature and a passion deeply rooted in storytelling, she has built a career that blends creativity with advocacy, using words not merely for entertainment but as instruments of education, restoration, and change. Across literature, digital media, health communication, and activism, she has become a respected voice committed to uplifting African women and vulnerable communities.

From an early stage in her journey, Confidence understood the power stories carry. To her, storytelling was never just about writing books or creating content. It was about giving voice to silent struggles, shining light on hidden realities, and creating spaces where people could feel seen, heard, and understood. This vision became the foundation upon which she built her professional identity. Through every project she undertakes, she consistently demonstrates a desire to connect deeply with people and address real societal issues with empathy and authenticity.

Her academic background in Literature strengthened her understanding of language, culture, and human emotion. It gave her the intellectual tools to explore how narratives shape societies and influence personal growth. Rather than limiting herself to academic achievement alone, Confidence transformed her education into a practical mission that reaches beyond classrooms and into communities. She became determined to use literature and media as channels for awareness, empowerment, and healing.

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for encouraging personal growth, courage, and independence among African women.

Her writing resonates strongly because of its honesty and relatability. Rather than using overly complex language, she communicates in a simple and accessible style that allows readers from different backgrounds to connect with her message. She writes about faith, emotional strength, identity, purpose, and financial empowerment with sincerity and cultural awareness. Many readers find comfort and motivation in the way she addresses real-life challenges without judgment or pretension.

What distinguishes Confidence as a writer is her ability to merge vulnerability with strength. Her stories and teachings acknowledge pain, struggle, disappointment, and uncertainty, yet they also offer hope, practical wisdom, and encouragement. She understands the emotional realities many African women face and uses her platform to remind them of their worth, resilience, and capacity to rebuild their lives.

Beyond publishing books, Confidence has also established herself within health communication and digital media. Recognizing the growing need for accurate and accessible health information in African communities, she became actively involved in creating health-related content for Nigerian audiences. Her work covers critical topics such as maternal health, women's wellness, chronic disease awareness, and public health education.

In many communities, complex medical information often remains inaccessible to ordinary people because of technical language or lack of awareness. Confidence bridges this gap by transforming health education into relatable and understandable conversations. Through her content, she helps people make informed decisions about their well-being while encouraging healthier lifestyles and greater awareness around women's health issues.

Her passion for public education also led her into broadcasting and online media engagement. Every



Nkem Obianke

Thursday, she hosts a health talk on the YouTube platform New Dawn TV International, where she discusses important health and wellness matters affecting everyday people. Through these conversations, she creates a safe and informative space where audiences can learn, ask questions, and become more conscious about preventive healthcare and personal wellness.

Her presence in digital media reflects her understanding of modern communication and the influence social platforms have in shaping public conversations. As a content creator and social media strategist, Confidence combines storytelling with strategy, helping brands and organizations develop voices that genuinely connect with audiences. Her work

demonstrates a deep understanding of African digital culture and audience behavior, allowing her to create meaningful and impactful content.

Rather than focusing solely on visibility or online trends, she prioritizes authenticity and human connection. She believes content should not only attract attention but also inspire action, build trust, and create value. This philosophy has earned her recognition as someone capable of blending creativity with purpose-driven communication.

At the heart of Confidence Nkem Obianke