



Ruto: Suspicion among neighbours undermines regional progress
 President William Ruto has renewed calls for stronger regional unity, telling Tanzania's Parliament that East Africa's future depends on trust, shared institutions, and collective action **Page 8**



Kenya's plan to cut KSh14 billion food imports: Inside CS Kagwe's strategy to transform agriculture
 Kenya is stepping up efforts to reduce its annual food import bill of about KSh14 billion, with a mix of policy reforms, targeted subsidies, and structural investments **Page 12**

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Labour day reflection At the heart of Gachagua's address, held at Radisson Blu Hotel, was the shrinking value of the Kenyan payslip

Gachagua blasts Ruto over workers' plight



A stormy political showdown is brewing over the state of Kenya's workforce after former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua delivered a scathing critique of the government during a public address yesterday.
 Speaking at a national forum reflecting on the 2026 Labour Day celebrations, Gachagua painted a grim picture of a country where millions of workers, he said, are overtaxed, underpaid, and increasingly disillusioned.
 "More than 20 million Kenyans wake up every morning to work, but their effort no longer guarantees dignity," he declared, accusing the administration of President William Ruto of pursuing policies that have eroded workers' purchasing power and deepened inequality. **Page 9**



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

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Kenya, Tanzania deepen ties with new trade targets and cooperation deals

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto has announced renewed efforts to strengthen Kenya's relationship with Tanzania, setting ambitious targets of KSh130 billion in new trade and KSh65 billion in cross-border investments. Speaking during his State visit, Ruto emphasized the need to eliminate barriers that hinder the free movement of goods, services, and people.

He said Kenya and Tanzania aim to remove non-tariff barriers such as border delays and non-harmonised standards by June 30, 2026, to unlock exponential growth in trade.

The President noted that deeper cooperation is essential, stressing that both nations' progress is interconnected.

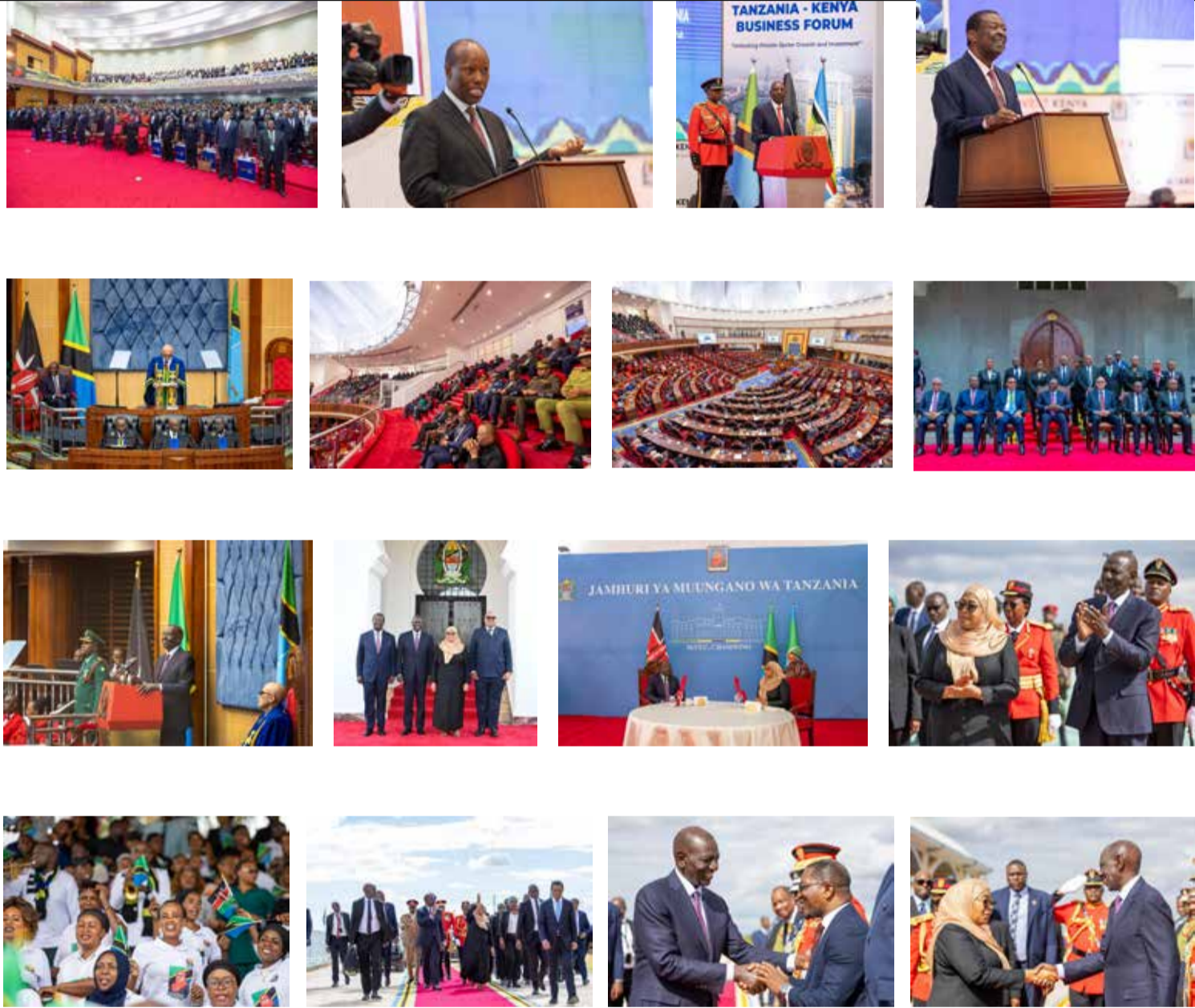
He called for an end to mistrust and rivalry, urging stronger regional integration under the East African Community and alignment with opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

During the visit, Ruto held talks with President Samia Suluhu Hassan and addressed Tanzania's Parliament in Dodoma.

The two leaders also presided over the signing of eight agreements covering infrastructure, trade, logistics, security, energy, and public service.

At the Tanzania-Kenya Business Forum in Dar es Salaam, attended by over 300 private sector players, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to creating a stable, predictable, and investor-friendly environment to drive private sector-led growth.

Ruto said the strengthened partnership will deliver shared prosperity and expand economic opportunities for citizens of both nations.



Editor's Desk




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NEWS IN BRIEF



Motorists and pedestrians in Wajir Town are already benefiting from newly upgraded tarmac roads as infrastructure projects accelerate ahead of Madaraka Day celebrations on June 1. Residents say the improved roads have eased transport, boosted business activity, and enhanced mobility within the town. Many locals, especially youth, have gained employment through ongoing construction works, including road upgrades, housing projects, and stadium development. Community members have welcomed the changes, noting a positive impact on livelihoods and local economic growth. They expressed hope that the government will sustain investment beyond the celebrations to ensure long-term development and continued job creation in the region.



An Administration Police constable accused of fatally shooting Karatina businessman George Gathu has been granted bond by the High Court in Nyeri. Justice Kizito Magare released the officer, Peter Wamiti on a Sh 1 million bond, with a surety of a similar amount. The judge also directed Wamiti deposit his passport in court. Additionally, Wamiti has been barred from carrying any weapons, including firearms and knives, for the duration of the trial. He is also prohibited from going within one kilometre of the Rubis petrol station in Karatina, where the incident occurred, as well as the deceased's home. The case will be mentioned on June 9.



Bishop Aron Kwambai (right) leading other church leaders during the special prayers sessions at the historic Kamariny stadium, Elgeyo Marakwet county. The clergy, drawn from various churches across the county, congregated at the stadium grounds, where they offered prayers and expressed optimism that the long awaited project will be completed without further delays. The leaders emphasized the significance of the stadium, describing it as a transformative investment poised to nurture young talent, promote sports development and open up economic opportunities for the youth. They noted that the project holds both social and economic value, adding that once operational, the stadium is expected to boost local revenue streams for the county government, while enhancing Elgeyo Marakwet's status as a hub for athletics.



The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal has handed Senator Edwin Sifuna a reprieve after ruling it has jurisdiction to hear his complaint against the party. ODM had sought to block the matter through a preliminary objection, but the Tribunal dismissed the attempt, allowing Sifuna's case to proceed to a full hearing. The panel, however, declined to issue interim conservatory orders, noting that no conclusions could be made until the substantive issues are fully examined. The Tribunal further directed that any outcome from an Alternative Dispute Resolution process between Sifuna and ODM will remain suspended until its final determination.

The Principal Secretary for Water and Sanitation, Julius Korir yesterday met with a delegation from the World Bank led by Soma Ghosh Malik to review ongoing water and sanitation programs in Kenya. Key projects discussed included the Mwache Dam under the Kenya Water Security and Climate Resilience Program, the Horn of Africa Program, and the Kenya Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program, all aimed at improving water access and service delivery. Korir reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening implementation through adequate funding to ensure timely completion. Both parties also agreed to develop a new pipeline of projects to support Kenya's goal of achieving universal access to water and sanitation by 2030.

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Environment The CS declared that the era of “pollute now, pay later” has officially ended

CS Barasa leads crackdown on environmental degradation

BY Joseph Ng'ang'a
@themkenyatimes

Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry CS Dr. Deborah Barasa has led a high-stakes inspection of the Nairobi River system, marking a significant escalation in the government's crackdown on environmental degradation.

The CS also declared that the era of “pollute now, pay later” has officially ended, reaffirming that environmental compliance is a mandatory legal and moral obligation for all industries operating in Kenya.

Accompanied by the Director General of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Dr. Mamo B. Mamo, Barasa toured various industrial sites to evaluate the measures taken by the private sector to prevent the discharge of harmful effluents into the city's primary waterways.

During the visit, the CS emphasized that the condition of the Nairobi River has evolved from a mere environmental worry into a critical, measurable challenge that directly threatens the health of the ecosystem.

The inspection highlighted a sobering scientific reality, where the river system is currently



CS Deborah Barasa and other stakeholders during the visit.

overwhelmed by a cocktail of industrial chemicals, raw sewage from informal settlements, and hazardous stormwater runoff.

It is estimated that over 70 per cent of the wastewater generated within Nairobi is released into the environment entirely untreated, a fact that Barasa identified as a primary driver of the ongoing crisis.

In response, a directive was issued to NEMA to move beyond simple acknowledgment and begin a phase of uncompromising enforcement, targeting all facilities that have long allowed industrial negligence to dictate the health of the river.

To address these systemic failures, the CS outlined a strict “zero

tolerance” policy for specific violations that will now trigger immediate sanctions and facility closures.

Key among these is the operation of any facility without a functional effluent treatment plant or the use of treatment systems that fail to meet national discharge standards.

“The Ministry is targeting the open burning of waste, a practice prohibited under the Air Quality Regulations of 2024 due to the release of carcinogenic dioxins, and the failure to implement proper waste segregation using color-coded bins as mandated by the Sustainable Waste Management Act of 2022,” said Dr. Barasa.

The CS also addressed

the broader responsibilities of producers and the importance of ecological buffers. Under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations, companies are legally required to take responsibility for the waste their products generate, and the Ministry has called for better incentivization of waste pickers within this value chain.

Additionally, the enforcement of riparian setback lines between 6 and 30 meters was emphasized as essential for natural flood control and water filtration.

Nyeri vendors oppose proposed street trade law



Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina when he chaired the parliamentary sub-committee on Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

Street vendors in Nyeri have called for more public awareness and better coordination with small business owners before the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill, 2023 is passed into law.

The traders spoke during a public participation forum held by a sub-committee of the National Assembly Committee on Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

They said their views should be included to ensure the law does not harm their businesses.

Many vendors raised concerns about the requirement for licensing and the restriction of vending to specific zones.

They said this does not match how their businesses operate.

One vendor gave an example of a person who has extra eggs at home and decides to sell them on the street. Such a person, they said, may not manage to get a license since they are not a regular trader.

The vendors also opposed the penalties for unauthorized vending. The bill states that anyone selling in a restricted or non-vending area without a permit may face a fine of up to KSh10,000, six

months in jail, or both.

Traders said this punishment is too harsh, especially since most of them earn between KSh500 and KSh1,000 per day.

They also warned that the law could give county enforcement officers too much power, which may lead to harassment.

According to the vendors, their work cannot always be limited to one place since they move to where the traffic is.

The traders rejected the bill in its current form, saying some clauses are unfair and may hurt small businesses.

Sub-committee chairperson and Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina assured them that their concerns will be considered.

He said the bill aims to protect vendors and improve their working conditions.



Some of the Nyeri vendors who attended the forum.

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Pressure mounts to amend Kenya's sexual offences law as oversight committee reveals deep concerns in prison



The team after the Kisumu engagement.

BY PSC

@themkenyatimes

Kenya's Sexual Offences Act No. 3 of 2006 is facing renewed scrutiny amid concerns that its strict sentencing provisions are disproportionately affecting young men and contributing to prison overcrowding.

The concerns emerged during inspection visits by the Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee (CIOC) to correctional facilities in Kisumu County led by the Chair Bernard Kitur, as part of a broader audit on constitutional implementation.

Stakeholders including legal experts, prison officials, and inmates argued that the law's mandatory minimum sentences of 15 to 20 years for defilement deny courts the flexibility to consider circumstances such as age proximity, consent between adolescents, and lack of predatory intent. This has particularly affected "Romeo and Juliet" cases involving teenagers.

The Committee was also told that legal inconsistencies have further complicated the issue, with conflicting High Court rulings on the constitutionality of mandatory sentences leading to uneven application of the law.

Lawmakers also pointed to what they termed discrimination against the boy child, noting that adolescent boys are often prosecuted and jailed while their female peers face no charges. Judges have in the past raised concern that a law intended

to punish adult offenders is increasingly being used against teenagers. Statistics presented to the Committee showed that sexual offences account for over 31 percent of the prison population, with defilement cases making up 78.3 per cent many involving young men.

The CIOC Chair called for urgent reforms, including scrapping mandatory minimum sentences to allow fair and individualized rulings.

"A lot of our men, especially the youth, are wasting away in jail because of this Act. There is a need for review, and I will champion this agenda to save the 'boy child'," Kitur. There is a need for review," he added.

Inmates who engaged the Committee also presented a memorandum calling for reforms beyond the Act. Key proposals included easier reintegration through access to employment, improved prison workshops for skills training, timely healthcare, expanded education programs, and increased use of non-custodial sentences.

They also urged faster processing of appeals, enhanced support for paralegals, and a review of outdated legal frameworks governing prisons.

While the Sexual Offences Act remains a crucial tool in combating sexual violence, the concerns raised highlighted the need to address unintended consequences.

Stakeholders urged Parliament to review the law to ensure it protects vulnerable groups while also upholding fairness, proportionality, and justice for all.



Health CS Adan Duale with other stakeholders during the launching event.

Kenya boosts childhood cancer care with new KNH unit

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Kenya has taken a significant step forward in the fight against childhood cancer with the launch of a modern Paediatric Haemato-Oncology Outpatient Unit at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) and the opening of Phase I of the Lions Hope Hostel in Nairobi.

The dual milestone reinforces the country's drive towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by expanding access to specialised care for children.

Speaking during the event, Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said the Government is prioritising the transformation of paediatric cancer services through targeted investments to improve early diagnosis, treatment pathways, and long-term follow-up.

He noted that strengthening these services is key to improving survival outcomes and ensuring no child is left behind.

The Lions Hope Hostel adds a critical support component to care delivery.

As the first phase of a five-part development, it provides accommodation for patients and caregivers travelling long distances for treat-

ment, easing the burden of travel and lodging while improving treatment adherence and patient experience.

The developments align with the National Cancer Control Strategy 2023–2027, which emphasises partnerships and patient-centred infrastructure.

Collaboration with partners, including the Lions Clubs International Foundation, continues to support delivery of these interventions.

The facility has also been strengthened with the installation of a state-of-the-art Elekta Versa HD Linear Accelerator (LINAC), funded by the government.

The technology enables highly precise cancer treatment, particularly for complex cases such as brain tumours, allowing clinicians to target affected areas while protecting healthy tissue.

Together, the new unit, patient hostel and advanced treatment technology signal a more coordinated and compassionate approach to cancer care in Kenya, integrating treatment, support, and innovation to deliver improved outcomes for children.

The Dean of the University of Nairobi Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof. Daniel Ojuka, said the Pae-

diatric Haemato-Oncology Outpatient Chemotherapy Daycare Centre is a purpose-built, child-friendly facility that allows for the safe delivery of chemotherapy on an outpatient basis.

"It will operate throughout the week, significantly expanding access while improving patient flow, reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and enhancing the overall treatment experience, while the Paediatric Oncology Hope Hostel will provide safe and affordable accommodation for clinically stable patients and their caregivers.

It ensures that children remain close to the hospital between treatment cycles, making it easier to continue care without disruption," he said.

"Individually, each of these interventions is impactful, but together, they are transformative. Since we understand that treatment does not happen in isolation, transportation and accommodation are major barriers to care. By addressing these, we are making outpatient chemotherapy not just possible but sustainable," he added.

KNH Ag. CEO Dr. Richard Lesiyampe appreciated the partners for their kind gesture while reiterating KNH's commitment to utilising the resources provided.

Labour Day At the heart of Gachagua's address, held at Radisson Blu Hotel, was the shrinking value of the Kenyan payslip.

Gachagua slams government over workers' plight in fiery Labour day reflection

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

A stormy political showdown is brewing over the state of Kenya's workforce after former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua delivered a scathing critique of the government during a public address yesterday.

Speaking at a national forum reflecting on the 2026 Labour Day celebrations, Gachagua painted a grim picture of a country where millions of workers, he said, are overtaxed, underpaid, and increasingly disillusioned.

"More than 20 million Kenyans wake up every morning to work, but their effort no longer guarantees dignity," he declared, accusing the administration of President William Ruto of pursuing policies that have eroded workers' purchasing power and deepened inequality.

Payslip under siege

At the heart of Gachagua's address, held at Radisson Blu Hotel, was the shrinking value of the Kenyan payslip.

He claimed that statutory deductions; including taxes and social contributions now consume between 30% and 45% of workers' gross income.

"What used to symbolize dignity now reflects deprivation," he said. "The payslip shows what you cannot afford."

He warned that proposed levies could push deductions to nearly half of workers' earnings, further squeezing households already grappling with high living costs.

Rising discontent across sectors

From teachers and police officers struggling with healthcare access under the Social Health Authority (SHA), to informal workers left out of national planning, Gachagua described a workforce abandoned by both government and unions.

He took particular aim at the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), accusing its leadership of failing to advocate for workers' rights.

"Workers are on their own," he said.



National forum reflecting on the 2026 Labour Day celebrations

"Those entrusted to defend them have instead aligned with power."

The speech highlighted the plight of Kenya's vast informal sector, which accounts for roughly 80% of employment. From market traders to domestic workers, Gachagua said these groups remain "marginally excluded, socially unprotected, and functionally exploited."

He cited the struggles of ride-hailing drivers and boda boda operators, describing a system where long hours and high platform commissions leave many earning less than KSh100 per hour during off-peak times.

"This is not just unfair, it is modern-day exploitation," he asserted.

Billions collected, little delivered

Gachagua also questioned the transparency of government programs such as the Affordable Housing Levy, which he said has collected tens of billions of shillings without delivering clear benefits to contributors.

He further alleged that public funds



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were being funneled into private financial institutions, pointing to the rapid growth of Sidiya Bank as evidence of questionable financial practices.

"These are not voluntary contributions," he said. "They are deductions made in the name of development, yet accountability remains elusive."

Linking workers' struggles to broader economic trends, Gachagua noted a slowdown in growth; from 7.6% in 2021 to 4.6% currently, alongside rising fuel prices, inflation, and lending rates.

He warned that the cumulative effect of these pressures is pushing families into crisis, with many unable to afford basic needs such as rent, food, education, and healthcare.

The address also touched on the growing trend of labour migration, with thousands of Kenyans reportedly leaving the country each year in search of work abroad. Gachagua raised concerns about the safety and dignity of these jobs, particularly in the Middle East and conflict zones.

"No Kenyan should be forced into dangerous or undignified work," he

said.

"Employment abroad must meet standards of fairness and safety."

Political undertones

While framed as a workers' advocacy speech, Gachagua's remarks carried clear political undertones, positioning himself as a defender of the working class ahead of the 2027 general elections.

He urged Kenyans to "mobilize peacefully" and use their vote to demand leadership that prioritizes their welfare.

"Your destiny is in your hands," he concluded. "We must restore the dignity of work and the value of the Kenyan pay."

As economic pressures mount and political rhetoric intensifies, the condition of Kenya's workforce is fast becoming a central issue in the national conversation; one that could shape the country's political and economic trajectory in the years ahead.

Electricity KenGen Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Peter Njenga said all dams are operating under controlled conditions

KenGen reports increased hydropower generation following heavy rains

BY Anita Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's electricity supply has received a significant boost from increased hydropower generation driven by ongoing heavy rains, even as water levels in key reservoirs remain within safe operational limits, Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) has said.

The state power producer reported that sustained inflows into major dams pushed hydropower production to 9.57 million kilowatt-hours on Monday, strengthening supply to the national grid and easing reliance on costly thermal energy.

mal energy.

KenGen Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Peter Njenga said all dams are operating under controlled conditions, supported by coordinated water releases across the system.

He noted that the prevailing weather conditions have created an opportunity to maximise low-cost renewable energy while maintaining dam safety.

The gains are largely being realised within the Tana River cascade, which hosts a chain of hydropower dams fed by catchments in Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Ranges, regions currently experiencing

sustained rainfall.

At Masinga Dam, the country's largest reservoir, water levels have slightly exceeded the full supply level, reaching 1,057.43 metres above sea level.

However, KenGen said the excess remains within the dam's design capacity, with controlled spillages underway to stabilise the system.

Njenga explained that regulated discharges from Masinga are supporting downstream operations while ensuring power generation units continue to run efficiently.

He said other dams in the Seven Forks scheme, Kamburu, Gitaru and Kindaruma, are



KenGen CEO Peter Njenga with Energy PS Alex Wachira briefing journalists in a past function.

operating within normal ranges, sustaining steady output.

Meanwhile, Njenga said Kiambere Dam is marginally above its full supply level but remains under active management, with no immediate risk reported.

"Hydropower remains among the country's most economical energy sources, and the increased output may contribute to reduced reliance

on thermal generation, a shift that could ease electricity costs for consumers," Njenga explained.

Despite the positive outlook for power generation, KenGen has cautioned residents living downstream, especially along the Tana River basin, to remain vigilant as controlled water releases continue.

Communities in flood-prone areas have also been advised

to avoid riverbanks and follow safety guidance from local authorities.

KenGen, which accounts for about 60 per cent of Kenya's installed electricity capacity, said it will continue to monitor dam levels and rainfall patterns, issuing updates as necessary to safeguard both power supply and public safety.

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Diplomacy Ruto framed Kenya and Tanzania as interdependent partners whose shared prosperity relies on deeper integration, expanded trade, and coordinated policy reforms

Ruto: Suspicion among neighbours undermines regional progress

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto has renewed calls for stronger regional unity, telling Tanzania's Parliament that East Africa's future depends on trust, shared institutions, and collective action rather than rivalry among neighbouring states.

Addressing lawmakers in Dodoma during a State Visit, President Ruto framed Kenya and Tanzania as interdependent partners whose shared prosperity relies on deeper integration, expanded trade, and coordinated policy reforms across the East African Community.

He credited historical ties between the two nations, rooted in the leadership of Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta, for laying a foundation of cooperation that continues to shape regional diplomacy and economic collaboration.

President Ruto said persistent mistrust and fragmented markets have historically limited growth, warning that unresolved tensions still influence regional relations and risk undermining collective progress if not addressed through sustained and deliberate cooperation efforts.

"The conversation we are



Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu bidding farewell to her Kenyan counterpart William Ruto after a two-day visit.

having today is significant and consequential, not only for our two countries but also for our region and continent. At its core, it is about one central task: Growing mutual trust to build shared strength," said President Ruto, underscoring the central theme of his address on rebuilding confidence among neighbouring states.

He pointed to shared geography, language, and cross-border communities as evidence of natural integration, noting that an 800-kilometre boundary functions as a corridor for trade, culture, and human connection between both na-

tions. President Ruto highlighted economic ties, stating bilateral trade reached about 860 million dollars in 2025 and is projected to hit one billion dollars, supported by rising investments and expanding private sector partnerships across key industries.

Kenyan firms have invested more than 1.7 billion dollars in Tanzania, while Tanzanian investments in Kenya have surpassed 336 million dollars, with both sides expecting accelerated growth driven by joint ventures and regulatory harmonisation.

He said infrastructure proj-

ects, including coastal road corridors, planned railway links into the Great Lakes region, and a 500-kilometre power interconnector, are reshaping regional connectivity and strengthening energy security and trade efficiency.

"Our biggest barrier is not infrastructure or policy; it is the quiet mistrust that pervades our relations. That suspicion has cost us time, opportunity, and prosperity, and we can no longer afford it," he said, calling for a shift from suspicion to practical cooperation across the region.

President Ruto outlined reforms agreed at the East African Community summit, including a new financing

model, elimination of non-tariff barriers by mid-2026, and streamlined decision-making processes to improve institutional efficiency and accountability.

He also cited recent data showing total East African Community trade rose to 156.6 billion dollars in 2025, with intra-regional trade increasing to 19.3 billion dollars, though still below its full potential for economic transformation.

He called for stronger continental coordination, urging reforms in the African Union, global financial systems, and the United Nations Security Council to ensure Africa's interests are better represented in global governance frameworks.

"Because from neighbours, to nations, to the global stage, our future will be defined not by what separates us, but by what we choose to build together," he noted, while calling for unity as the foundation of regional and global influence.



Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu bidding farewell to her Kenyan counterpart William Ruto after a two-day visit.




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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI

Agribusiness To reduce reliance on imports, the government is targeting key commodities such as edible oils, rice, dairy, and poultry.

Kenya's plan to cut KSh14 billion food imports: Inside CS Kagwe's strategy to transform agriculture

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

Kenya is stepping up efforts to reduce its annual food import bill of about KSh14 billion, with a mix of policy reforms, targeted subsidies, and structural investments aimed at revitalizing local the Multi-billion sector, Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe has said.

In a detailed media briefing, Kagwe outlined a broad government strategy designed to make farming more productive, resilient, and commercially viable, while addressing systemic challenges that have long undermined the sector.

Kenya's high food import bill, highlighted in the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Economic Survey, reflects persistent gaps in production, storage, and supply chains.

According to Kagwe, the government is now relying on data-driven reforms informed by the 2023–2024 3FS (Food Systems Financial Flows) pilot study.

Supported by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the study tracks financial flows within the food system, identifying inefficiencies and guiding resource allocation.

"It is not just about producing more food," Kagwe noted, adding, "It is about ensuring investments are directed to areas that deliver the highest impact."

Subsidies, irrigation and

mechanization

At the core of the government's intervention is the continued provision of subsidized fertilizers and certified seeds, enabling farmers to increase yields of key staples such as maize, rice, wheat, and potatoes.

Simultaneously, irrigation expansion remains a priority. Large-scale projects like the Galana-Kulalu Irrigation Scheme, alongside smallholder initiatives, aim to reduce dependence on rain-fed agriculture and enable year-round production, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions.

Mechanization is also being accelerated through tax reductions on agricultural machinery and the rollout of tractor leasing programs via county governments.

These measures are expected to lower labor costs and improve efficiency, especially for large-scale farmers.

Building stronger value chains

To reduce reliance on imports, the government is targeting key commodities such as edible oils, rice, dairy, and poultry.

Expansion of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme is expected to boost domestic rice production, while incentives are being offered to local processors to reduce imports of finished food products.

The government is also strengthening the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) to stabilize prices and guarantee markets for farmers, particularly during

harvest seasons when prices typically fall.

Post-harvest losses; estimated at 20% to 30% for some crops remain a major contributor to food shortages.

To address this, the government is investing in modern storage infrastructure, including silos, cold chains, and milk cooling facilities.

Farmers are also being encouraged to adopt technologies such as hermetic storage bags to preserve produce and reduce waste.

Financing farmers and embracing technology

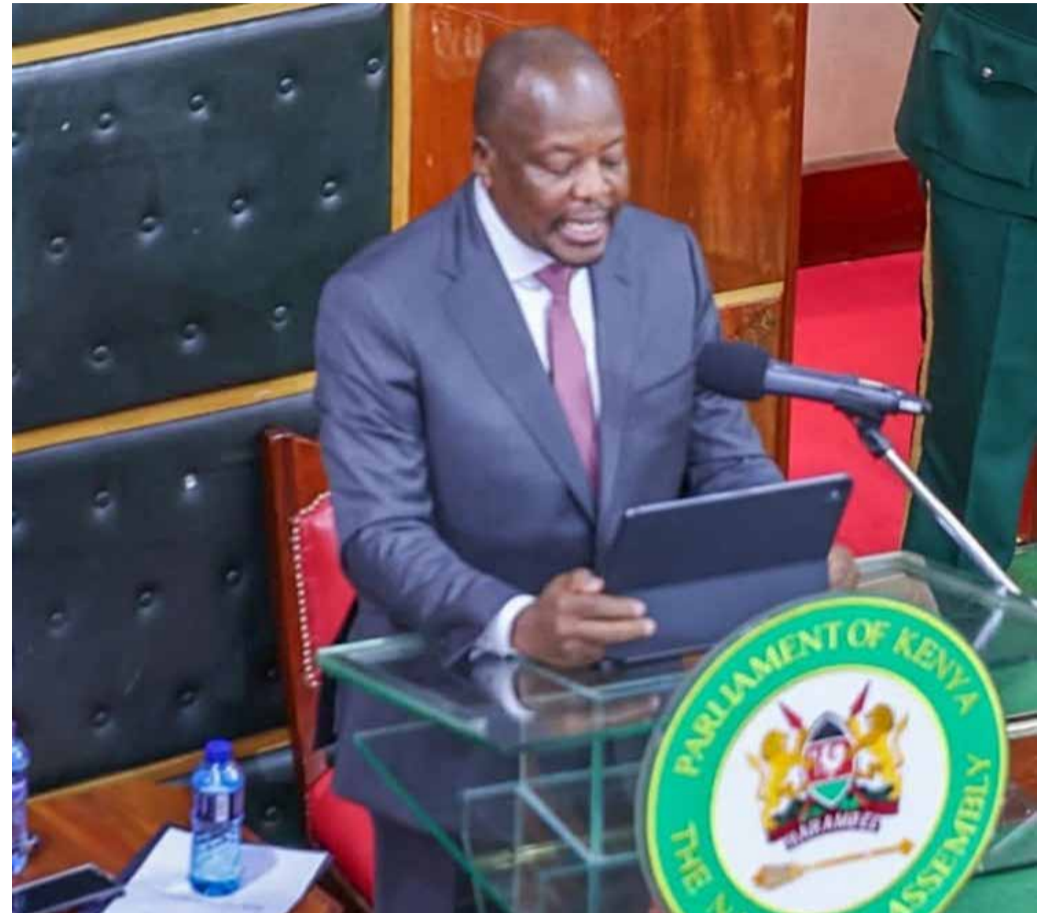
Access to affordable credit is being expanded through the Agricultural Finance Corporation, alongside partnerships with banks and mobile lenders to provide working capital.

Digital innovation is another pillar of reform. Through the Kenya Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (KIAMIS), over 7.1 million farmers have been registered, creating one of the country's largest agricultural databases.

The system requires farmers to register via USSD (*616#) or local agricultural offices, capturing details such as land size, crop type, and location.

This data-driven approach has transformed fertilizer subsidy distribution, ensuring that support reaches genuine farmers through e-voucher systems while reducing leakages and corruption.

Fake seeds: A "national security issue"



CS Mutahi Kagwe addressing the National Assembly in the past. | Photo: Courtesy.

Kagwe raised alarm over the widespread circulation of counterfeit agricultural inputs, particularly seeds, which he described as a "national security issue."

According to the Anti Counterfeit Authority, counterfeiting accounts for about 9.3% of Kenya's GDP; approximately KSh829 billion with agricultural inputs among the hardest-hit sectors.

At least 15 cases related to fake seeds have already been prosecuted, underscoring the scale of the problem.

Fake inputs reduce yields,

worsen food insecurity, and deepen reliance on imports.

In response, the government is intensifying enforcement through tougher laws, criminal prosecutions, enhanced market surveillance, and the introduction of anti-counterfeit technologies.

Public awareness campaigns and partnerships with seed companies are also being strengthened to detect fake packaging and protect farmers.

Reviving agricultural research

Longstanding concerns over underfunding of agricultural research are also being addressed. While Kenya's policy target allocates about 2% of GDP to research, actual funding remains significantly lower.

The government is now increasing support to institutions such as the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization

Contd page 13



CS Kagwe with other stakeholders explaining the benefits of growing sunflower.

Agribusiness To reduce reliance on imports, the government is targeting key commodities such as edible oils, rice, dairy, and poultry.

Kenya's plan to cut KSh14 billion food imports: Inside CS Kagwe's strategy to transform agriculture

Contd from page 12

(KALRO), as well as sector-specific bodies in tea, sugar, and coffee.

Legal reforms; including the Tea Act 2020, Sugar Act 2024, and Coffee Act 2025 have reintroduced commodity-based levies to support research.

Tea currently allocates 20% of a 1% levy to research, while sugar and coffee funding mechanisms remain less clearly defined.

Kagwe said the focus is shifting toward climate-smart innovation, stronger collaboration with global research institutions, and improved links between researchers and farmers.

"The real measure of success is whether innovations reach farmers and translate into higher yields," he emphasized.

Global pressures and local responses

Kenya's food security is also being tested by global geopolitical tensions, including the ongoing conflict involving Iran, which has disrupted

supply chains and driven up fuel and fertilizer prices.

These shocks are increasing the cost of food production and distribution, with the greatest impact on low-income households.

To mitigate these risks, the government is maintaining fertilizer subsidies, strengthening strategic food reserves, and diversifying import sources.

Partnerships with countries like Morocco; a leading producer of phosphate fertilizers are being explored, alongside plans for local production of green ammonia using geothermal resources in the Rift Valley.

Macroeconomic measures are also being deployed to manage inflation and stabilize food prices.

Supporting livestock farmers

Rising feed costs; accounting for up to 70% of production expenses have placed significant strain on dairy farmers. In response, the government is promoting fodder production, silage making, and alternative feed innovations.

Additional measures include subsidized livestock inputs, milk price

stabilization programs, expanded credit access, veterinary services, and the establishment of strategic feed reserves to cushion farmers against seasonal shortages.

Soil health takes center stage

Soil degradation remains a critical threat to agricultural productivity. Kenya has responded by prioritizing soil health through policy and continental initiatives.

In May 2024, Nairobi hosted the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit, culminating in the Nairobi Declaration and a 10-year action plan to restore soil fertility across the continent.

Domestically, the Agricultural Soil Management Policy (2023) provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable soil use, addressing issues such as erosion, nutrient depletion, and acidity. The policy promotes integrated soil fertility management, agroforestry, water conservation, and research-driven solutions.

Digital soil mapping, tailored fertilizer recommendations, and conservation farming practices are also being scaled up to improve long-term



CS Kagwe sampling mangoes.

productivity and climate resilience.

The road ahead

While the government's strategy is comprehensive, Kagwe acknowledges that success will depend on consistent implementation, improved infrastructure, and tackling corruption.

"The policies are in place," he says, adding, "The challenge is ensuring

they deliver real benefits to farmers."

As Kenya works to reduce its dependence on food imports, the focus is increasingly on building a resilient, self-sufficient agricultural sector; one capable of feeding the nation while driving economic growth. For millions of Kenyan farmers, the outcome of these reforms could determine not just their livelihoods, but the country's food security for years to come.

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Sabar & Shukar: The soul's quiet strength



When life grew loud with silent pain,
And hope felt lost in endless rain,
I held on tight to sabar's thread,
Through nights that whispered fear instead.

Each wound I carried, deep yet still,
Was shaping me against my will,
For every fall that bent my spine,
Was carving strength by grand design.

In broken prayers and heavy sighs,
I searched for peace beyond the cries,
And though the road was rough and long,
My patience slowly turned to song.

Then softly came shukar's grace,
A gentle calm I could embrace,

For every tear that once would fall,
Now felt like blessings after all.

I thanked the storms that made me grow,
The unseen paths I couldn't know,
For pain had purpose, loss had art,
It stitched resilience in my heart.

Sabar stood firm when I felt weak,
Shukar gave voice when I couldn't speak,
Together they lit my darkest hour,
And turned my wounds into quiet power.

Now every dawn, I rise anew,
With faith more deep and vision true,
For what I lost and what I found,
Both wear a sacred, grateful crown.

Sabar and Shukar, side by side,
My soul's compass, my inner guide—
In patience, I learned how to stand,
In gratitude, I understand.

©Dr. Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

May your place be in Paradise, my dear Aunt



Only a few days are left until the end of March...
It feels as if even time itself has slowed down,
pressing heavily on my heart...
Because I had comforted my eldest aunt — my
dear Novvotoy — who had been bedridden for so
long, saying:

"If we can just get through March safely,
everything will be fine..."

"Pray well during the month of fasting... will I get
better?" — she sighed...

In that sigh, there was both hope and fear...
"Yes, you will get better, Aunt..." I said...

But even I could feel the tremble in my voice...
Yet, forgetting her own pain, she asked about us
again:

"How are your studies? How is your husband?
How is your son?"

"They are all well, Aunt..." I replied...
I sat beside her for a while...

Then, not to tire her, I gently hugged and kissed
her goodbye...

That embrace was not an ordinary one...
It felt as though all my love, fear, and longing had
gathered into that single moment...

I left...
But her fragile state, her eyes full of kindness and
love, never left my mind...

"I hope she will get better, if God wills..." I
thought...

I did not know...
I never even imagined that we would lose her...

We hoped so much...
We waited for her to recover...
But... it didn't happen...

That day, they say, she was laughing, talking,
sharing moments...
Who could have imagined...?
That behind those smiles were her final
moments...
I never knew that day would be the last time I saw
her...
The last time I spoke with her...
When I went to her funeral and saw her cold
face...
Held her cold hands...
I wished I could warm them again...
I hugged her, kissed her face...
And cried so much...
Because... I loved her deeply...
She was a very precious person to all of us...
Even now... I cannot believe that you are gone...
It all feels like a dream...
If only... these days could turn out to be just a
dream...

I would leave everything behind, run to you...
And once again talk to you endlessly...
Look at you to my heart's content...
But... now it is only a dream...
We will always remember you...
You now live in our hearts — forever...
May your place be in Paradise, my dear Aunt...
May your resting place be filled with light...
May your grave become one of the gardens of
Paradise...

May angels surround you
And serve you with mercy...
May your grave be wide and bright,
With the breeze of Paradise flowing through it...
May every moment of yours be filled with mercy
and forgiveness...

May Allah forgive your sins
And grant you the most beautiful places in
Paradise...

And we... every time we pray, every moment we
miss you,

We will remember you and live on...
Because you were our pride, our love, our
support...
And now...

You have become the most painful, yet the most
sacred memory in our hearts...

Dedicated with love by your niece,
Zulfiya Bobonova

In loving memory of my dear Aunt.
Republic of Uzbekistan
Sirdarya Region

Crying without tears



It also helps the body to be stress free.
And crying souls expect a hand to wipe.

Flowing water helps to clean its path.
Make its surroundings rich and greenery.
Like crying makes everyone become light hearted.
Give the nourishment to the heart.

Rajesh Kanna B N

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

Tears may not be a stream or river.
Tears heal the mind and strengthen the body.
Consoling hearts easily hurt.
And they can't bear their betrayal.

The more we are concerned, the more we are
defeated.
Our emotions will overflow like cries.

Be strong and of good courage



Like a child with a trusting hand,
Walking where they don't understand,
Faith is not in knowing it all—
But rising each time you fall.

Be strong, not by never breaking,
But by the chances you keep taking,
For every fear you face inside
Turns into strength you cannot hide.

So stand, even when you feel small,
You are braver than it all—
And in each step, come what may,
Courage will light your way.

When the road feels long and unclear,
And silence is louder than cheer,
Hold your ground, don't drift apart—
There is quiet strength in your heart.

Courage isn't a roaring flame,
Sometimes it whispers your name,
Telling you, "Just take one more step,"
Even when your eyes are wet.

R. SRIPRIYA
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Heavy Philosophy



By Islombek Mirzaqulov

Time went by — my father grew old,
The sapling stretched its height toward the sky.
"My child, one day I will leave this world—
When I die, build my coffin yourself."
Life holds many unseen philosophies,
A person is often puzzled by their own deeds.
I used to tell my father, "You plant it, yet
Its benefits will go to someone else."
Only now, slowly, I begin to understand—
The memory pricks my soul like thorns.
So as not to burden his own child,
He had already thought of his own coffin.

My father used to say, "Plant a sapling, son,"
But unwilling, I swallowed silent bitterness.
I couldn't refuse while looking at his face—
In the end, I gave in and planted one.

Aflatoxin Dr. Ambrose Agwaye, a paediatrician at KEMRI, said the initiative was informed by high household consumption of grains, particularly maize

Project launched to tackle aflatoxin risks among children

BY Stephen Mrira
@themtkenyatimes

The government, in collaboration with the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), has launched the Tackling the Risk of Aflatoxins and Climate Effects on Child Health in Africa (TRACE) project to establish the impact of aflatoxins among children arising from climate change and develop policies in an effort to safeguard children's health.

Speaking to journalists in Kilifi during the launch workshop of the programme, health stakeholders in the region said global efforts to reduce child mortality are facing setbacks as indicated by rising deaths, prompting the government to seek scientific solutions through research and policy interventions.

Dr. Ambrose Agwaye, a paediatrician at KEMRI, said the initiative was informed by high household

consumption of grains, particularly maize, which is highly susceptible to aflatoxin contamination.

"The need to initiate this programme was necessitated by the high consumption of grains, especially maize, which is a staple in many households but is often contaminated by aflatoxins," he said.

Dr. Agwaye noted that recent studies indicate aflatoxin exposure may interfere with vaccine effectiveness in children, weakening their immunity and contributing to stunting.

"Exposure to aflatoxins may reduce vaccine effectiveness and weaken children's immunity, increasing vulnerability to diseases," he explained.

Dr. Agwaye also attributed the rising aflatoxin threat to climate change, saying drought stress and extreme wet conditions have created an environment conducive for the growth of aflatoxin-producing fungi.

"Rapid climate change has accelerated aflatoxin production, with

drought and extreme rainfall creating favourable conditions for the fungus," he explained.

He said the multi-sectoral programme will bring together stakeholders from the health, agriculture and climate sectors to develop long-term solutions.

Dr. David Githang'a, a paediatrician from the Kenya Paediatric Research Consortium (KEPRECON), said exposure to aflatoxins can begin before birth.

"Aflatoxin exposure starts during pregnancy when toxins are transferred to the foetus and later through breastfeeding, and this can have severe long-term effects on the child," he said.

He warned that severe exposure can damage vital organs and increase the risk of cancer.

High levels of aflatoxin exposure, he added, can damage the liver and also affect brain development.

Stakeholders urged the public to



Dr. Ambrose Agwaye

remain vigilant and ensure that food consumed is approved by relevant authorities such as the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS).

The three-year study will examine community behaviours that expose children to aflatoxins, with findings

expected to inform policy interventions aimed at protecting future generations.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Coffee Governor Joshua Irungu, who presided over the launch, said the programme aligns with national agricultural priorities and is designed to deliver sustainable returns for farmers

Laikipia launches coffee drive to boost production, incomes

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatimes

Thousands of farmers in Laikipia are set to benefit from subsidised coffee seedlings and extension support under a newly launched programme aimed at boosting productivity, improving bean quality, and increasing household incomes.

The initiative, unveiled in Siron, Marmanet Ward, is part of a broader county strategy to strengthen the coffee value chain and position Laikipia as an emerging production hub amid shifting dynamics in Kenya's traditional coffee-growing regions.

Governor Joshua Irungu, who presided over the launch, said the programme aligns with national agricultural priorities and is designed to deliver sustainable returns for farmers while expanding acreage under coffee.

"The programme represents a strategic intervention aimed at enhancing the coffee value chain, improving productivity and quality, and positioning Laikipia as a competitive coffee hub," he said.

Implementation is anchored on the FSRP Batian initiative, with seedlings already being distributed across Sosian, Ol Moran, Rumuruti, Igwamiti, Salama, Marmanet, Ngobit, and Githiga wards under a structured cost-sharing model.

Farmers pay KSh30 per seedling while the county subsidises the remaining KSh70.

Coffee farming in Laikipia is rapidly transitioning from subsistence to commercial production, with the number of registered growers rising from 398 in 2023 to more than 1,117 in 2025, reflecting strong farmer uptake.

This expansion is supported by large-scale seedling distribution, with more than 23,000 seedlings issued between 2022 and mid-2025, along-



Governor Joshua Irungu distributing coffee seedlings.

side over 38,000 additional certified seedlings supplied through cooperative channels to accelerate adoption across key wards.

Farmers are increasingly shifting to coffee due to improved profitability compared to traditional crops, with reports indicating earnings exceeding KSh800 per bush during recent harvest cycles, significantly strengthening household incomes and financial resilience.

The county's production model is anchored on improved coffee varieties, with farmers predominantly cultivating Batian and Ruiru 11, both of which are disease-resistant, high-yielding, and well-suited to Laikipia's evolving climatic conditions.

Early production data indicates growing market integration, with Laikipia delivering high-quality coffee beans and recording more than 6,300 kilogrammes sold during the 2024 to 2025 season through brokers including New KPCU and Kipkelion Broker Company.

Agricultural researchers have identified several zones including Igwamiti, Ol Moran, Marmanet, and Ngobit as suitable for Arabica coffee, with highland areas showing strong performance in pilot

cultivation of improved varieties.

New data from the Agriculture and Food Authority places Laikipia among the fastest-growing coffee regions in Kenya, recording a 32.8 percent increase in acreage during the 2022 to 2023 crop year, ahead of several established counties.

At the farm level, pricing structures remain a key incentive, with parchment coffee fetching about KSh 330 per kilogramme and dried coffee trading at approximately KSh200 through cooperative channels that also provide advance payments and technical support.

Governor Irungu said the county is targeting up to KSh 10 billion in coffee revenues within four years, alongside plans to establish a processing factory and distribute 500,000 seedlings supported by ward-level nurseries.

He added that youth-focused training programmes are being rolled out to build technical capacity and ensure long-term sustainability of the sector.

The county initiative comes against the backdrop of a broader national recovery in the coffee industry. Kenya's production is projected to rise from 750,000 bags

in the 2024 to 2025 season to 850,000 bags in 2025 to 2026, supported by reforms, improved prices, and farmer support programmes.

Export performance has also strengthened, with 45,249.88 metric tonnes valued at KSh 43.36 billion shipped between January and September 2025, while prices at the Nairobi Coffee Exchange reached a record average of KSh 1,025.03 per kilogramme in September that year.

The national government is pursuing an ambitious revival plan targeting output growth to 150,000 metric tonnes, backed by the distribution of more than 20 million seed-

lings, a KSh 500 million support programme, and an KSh 8 billion Coffee Cherry Fund. Kenya's coffee sector remains heavily reliant on smallholder farmers, who account for about 70 percent of production across approximately 800,000 growers organised into cooperatives and estates.

Back in Laikipia, the county government is also investing in complementary infrastructure, including the Ol Jabet Warehouse project, which is expected to enhance storage and aggregation capacity ahead of commissioning later this year.

Irungu said the facility will play a critical role in improving market access and strengthening value chains as more farmers transition into commercial coffee production.



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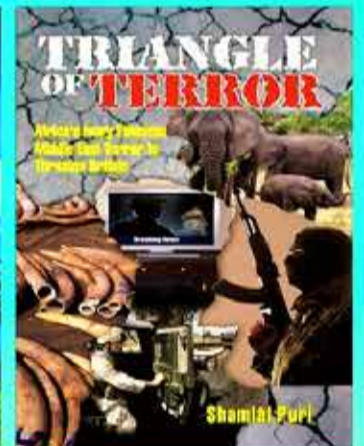
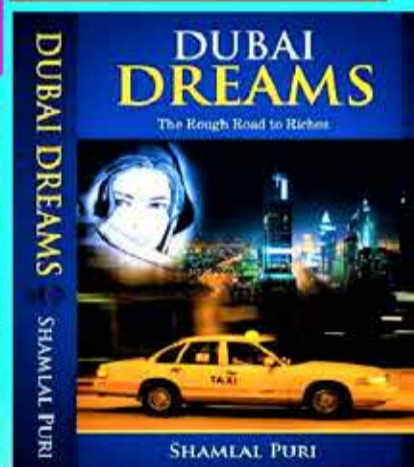
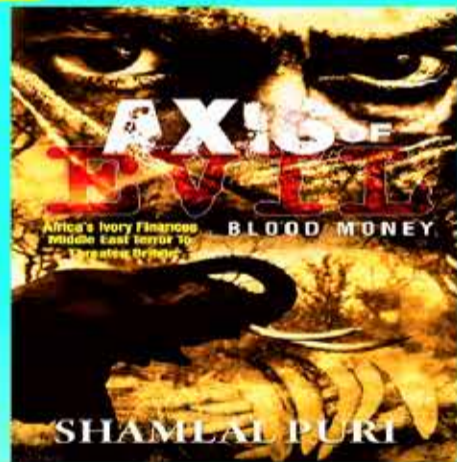
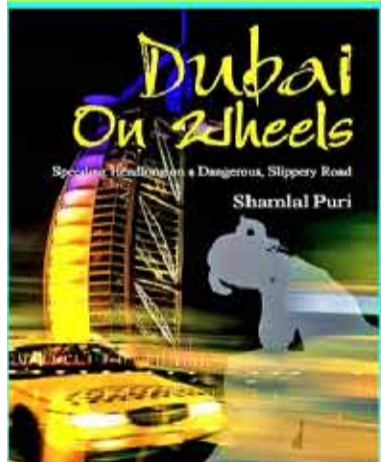
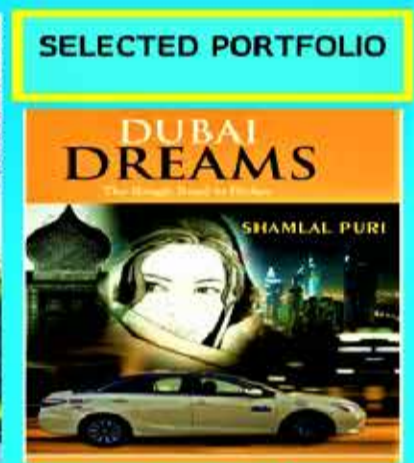
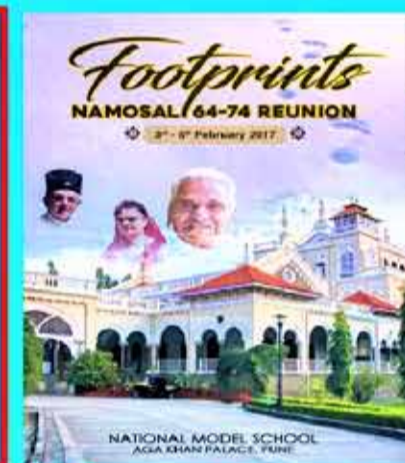
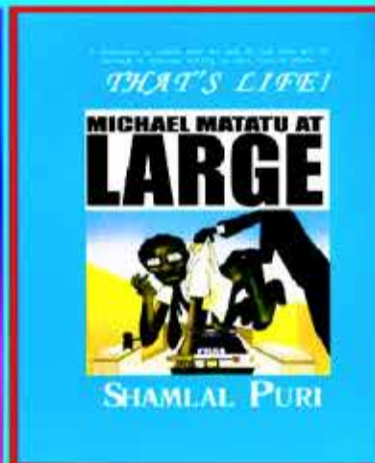
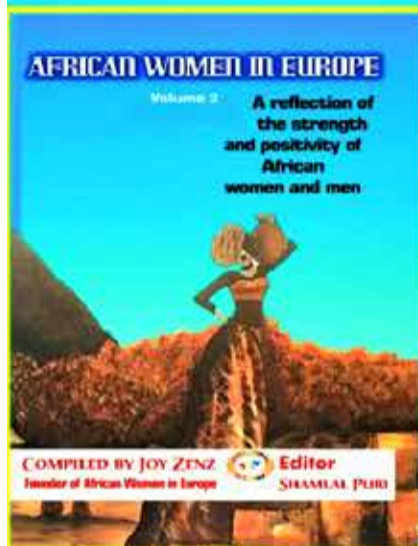
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Politics The voices of the young people who are no longer dazzled by slogans, but asking harder questions – who can actually fix what is broken?

Where hope meets leadership: Why is Kenya turning to the National Vision Party



BY **Fredrick Chelimo**
@themtkenyatimes

In the political arena, something is quietly changing across Kenya. Kenyans have seen a Vision in the vision party. Kenyans have seen the light at the end of the tunnel that seems to be brighter. Conversations have shifted from handouts to healthcare, from promises to performance. The voices of the young people who are no longer dazzled by slogans, but asking harder questions – who can actually fix what is broken? And you see in it a growing attention to National Vision Party, a party that is choosing, deliberately, and unapologetically, to do politics differently.

Doing it, not in the usual political wave that raises noise and collapses under its own weight. This is a steady build, a patient construction, a movement that understands that trust is not demanded, it is earned, conversation by conversation, community by community. Under the abled leadership of Eng. Anthony Chelimo, the party has resisted the temptation of political theatrics and instead invested in something far more powerful; credibility.

In partnership with Dr. Isaac Newton Kinity Kenya human rights activist and anti-corruption crusader stepping forward as its presidential candidate, the National Vision Party is no longer a quiet alternative but a serious option for a country that is tired of going in circles, tired of recircle promises, and tired of leaderships that remembers the people only during elections.

But perhaps the real story is not in Nairobi boardrooms or national headlines. It is unfolding in places like Emurua Dikirr, where politics is no longer about who shouts the loudest, but who understands the people best. Here the reception given to Lawyer Gideon Koech – Wakili to many – is not manufactured excitement. It is recognition. Recognition that, for once, a candidate reflects



Dr, Isaac Newton Kinity – Presidential Aspirant

the actual needs of the people. Land in Emurua Dikirr is not just soil, it is identity, it is livelihood. It is history - sometimes painful, often unresolved. For years, the communities have lived with disputes that stretch across generations, especially on issues of land boundaries which are unclear, ownerships contested, justice delayed. These are not problems that yield to charisma, but demand knowledge, patience, and a determined person who understands both

the history and the legal pathway.

This is where Wakili Gideon Koech changes the equation. He arrives with actionable assurance, tools to engage, to interpret, and importantly resolve. The people can see it, hear it in the way speak to him – not as a distant politician, but as someone they expect to sit with them, to listen, and to act. It is this alignment, between the people's needs and a leader's capacity – that is becoming the quiet strength of the National Vi-



Gideon Koech – NVP Aspirant



Eng. Anthony Chelimo – Party Leader

sion Party. The party is not chasing popularity; it is building relevance. It is not assembling crowds; it is cultivating belief

Yet even as this belief grows, there is a deeper truth that must be confronted – one that has defined Kenyan politics for far too long. Leadership has too often been reduced to a transaction. Vites exchanged for money. Conscience traded for convenience. But the time has come to call this practice what it is; not generosity, not empowerment, but distortion of democracy. Any money advanced to citizens to influence a voter must be seen plainly, as an attempt to purchase power, often drawn from resources that rightfully belong to the public. It is not a gift; it is a fraction returned, stripped of accountability. A repayment without honesty, and accepted without question, it mortgages the future of entire community for entire generations.

Our political arenas must rise above this. They must cease to then fields of quiet money laundering disguised as campaigns and become what they were always meant to be , venues of serious, genuine, and transparent search for leadership. Spaces where ideas compete, where integrity is examined, and where the question is not who can spend more , but who can serve better and efficiently. This is where the invitation becomes personal. The voters deserve leadership that understands them not just to vote. They deserve lead-

ers whose commitment is measured not in campaign seasons appearance, but in consistent service. Leadership elected on their own proven ability to serve, diligently, transparently and with unwavering dedication.

The electoral candidates, it is your moment to understand that leadership is about service and not survival. It is about purpose not self-aggrandizement, and the National Vision Party offers opportunity for such leaders. The opportunity accorded is not to outspend, but outthink, out serve, and outlast through integrity. Whether you are a teacher, a farmer, a lawyer, young professional, woman or a person with disabilities, there is space for you to lead and to shape the future of this country

For the community of Emurua Dikirr, the call is even greater, the future lies not in the loudest promise, but in the most capable hands. It lies in leaders who can carry forward the legacy of those who served with honor, who can build on that foundation with even greater commitment, and who understands that leadership is not an event, but a heavy responsibility. What is however, emerging in a slow and sure way, is a different kind of political culture. One where respect replaces ridicule. Where genuine dialogue replaces division. Where leadership is measured not by how many people you command, but how many lives you have touched and improved.

Kenya has seen and heard promises before, witnessed waves of excitement that fades as quickly as they came, but what is taking shape within the national vision party feels different – not because it is louder, but because it is deeper and reassuring. In Emurua Dikirr, the message is already clear; the people are not just listening, they are deciding. In that decision, lies the possibility that stretches far beyond one constituency. A possibility that Kenya can choose leaders not out of habit, but out of hope grounded in reason

The road ahead is not easy with worthy competitors for the coveted seat. Change is never easy. When voters choose integrity over inducement, when candidates choose service over self, and when leadership becomes a calling rather than a career, a nation begins to shift. That shift has already begun and more so in Emurua Dikirr. “A nation is not transformed by the money that changes hands during elections, but by the integrity of the leaders chosen when no one is watching”

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

Demise Contributions for our brother's send-off — five hundred here, two thousand there, a cow from the village, a tent from the SACCO, food for three hundred mourners

We wait until you're dead to show up



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

We bury people lavishly in death while abandoning them quietly in life — and it is time we admitted what that says about us.

We will let a man drown in silence, then throw him a funeral fit for a king.

We watch him sell his phone to pay rent. We hear that his child has been sent home over unpaid school fees. We know the bank is calling, the landlord is knocking, and the hospital is holding his mother because the deposit is short by fifty thousand shillings. We see all of it. We scroll past it. We tell him: be strong, brother. God will make a way.

Then he dies. And suddenly, the way appears.

The WhatsApp groups explode. Committees form. Budgets are scribbled in exercise books. Contributions for our brother's send-off — five hundred here, two thousand there, a cow from the village, a tent from the SACCO, food for three hundred mourners, a glossy programme with his photo, edited and smiling. In three days, we raise what he begged for over three years and never received.

Why is it so much easier to fund a burial than to rescue a life?

Because death is clean, and life is messy. A corpse does not disappoint you. It will not take your twenty thousand shillings and spend it on airtime instead of medicine. It will not relapse, or fail to pay you back, or embarrass you by still being poor next month. A corpse closes the account. But a living man is complicated. If you pay his hospital bill, you now carry a stake in his recovery. If he fails, your help looks wasted. If he succeeds, he may still



Memory candle

struggle again. Death has no follow-up questions. And finally, it turns out, is deeply comfortable.

We fund burials because burials are transactions we can control. Rescues are relationships we cannot.

There is also the matter of audience. A funeral is a public performance of generosity. The tent has a contributors' list. The MC reads the names aloud. The community sees you. The cameras catch you. Your goodness is witnessed, recorded and applauded. But a hospital bill is settled in a quiet office. A bank loan is cleared with a silent transfer. A utility bill is paid with a mobile money beep at two in the morning. No one claps. No one records it. There is no programme, no speeches, no goat slaughtered in your honour.

We are not as generous as we think. We are performers. And death gives us the finest stage.

Guilt, it turns out, is cheaper than responsibility. It is easier to pay for a coffin than to have answered the phone call that came before it — because that call would have asked something real of us. Time. Money. Inconvenience. Emotional labour. It would have made us complicit in the

man's struggle. So we ignored it. And when he died, we paid the guilt tax. The funeral contribution is not love. It is penance — buying back our conscience at retail price. We could have saved him with two hundred thousand while he lived. Instead, we spend eight hundred thousand to bury him, because somehow eight hundred thousand feels lighter than the weight of knowing we did nothing.

We worship memory, not men. A living man is an uncomfortable mirror. His debt reminds us we are one lost salary away from the same edge. His sickness reminds us that bodies break. So we avoid him. But a dead man is safe — he is now a story, a lesson, a symbol. We print t-shirts with his face. We write long tributes. You fought a good fight. Yet we never helped him fight.

Poverty has no deadline. Burials do. A bank will wait and add interest. A landlord will shout and eventually lock the door. A hospital will detain a body and still release it eventually. Poverty is patient — it erodes slowly, and we tell ourselves we will help next month. But death has a date. The body is in the morgue. The church is booked

for Saturday. The committee meets tonight. You cannot postpone a burial. And so the urgency we refused the living, we willingly surrender to the dead.

So what do we do with this? Bury your dead with dignity — but before the hearse arrives, ask yourself honestly: what would this money have done last month? That five thousand shillings going toward the casket — could it have bought his prescription? That twenty thousand for the tent — could it have kept his children in school? That cow your clan is preparing — could it have cleared the loan that broke him?

If the answer is yes, then we must admit something painful: we are a people who love each other far better in eulo-

gies than in emergencies.

The next time someone tells you they are struggling, do not wait to prove your love at their funeral. Rescues are not glamorous. They are awkward, uncertain, and they require you to risk being disappointed. Do it anyway.

Because the most brutal truth is this — the money is always there. It is simply locked behind our excuses. We find it for flowers. We can find it for medicine. The only difference is whether the person we are funding can still say thank you.

Call him. Today. Not with sorry for your loss later. With how can I help now.

Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza is a writer and commentator. He can be reached at mukphix@gmail.com.

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Business Participants will gain access to hands-on training, financial education, and tailored solutions spanning savings, investment, debt management, and risk protection.

Old Mutual launches nationwide financial wellness drive to support SMEs and households navigate rising financial pressures

BY Wangechi Wahome

@themtkenyatimes

Old Mutual has launched a county-wide financial wellness drive to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and retail customers with practical tools to better manage their finances amid rising economic pressure.

The initiative, which will run across key towns in Kenya, including Thika, Machakos, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, Nyeri, Meru, and Mombasa, will feature week-long activations that bring together financial experts, business owners, and industry partners.

Participants will gain access to

hands-on training, financial education, and tailored solutions spanning savings, investment, debt management, and risk protection.

The initiative is anchored in insights from the recent Old Mutual Financial Wellness Monitor 2025, which shows that while 70% of Kenyans are optimistic about their financial future, many continue to face pressure from rising costs, high debt levels, and unpredictable income streams, thereby straining households and businesses.

“Across the country, we are seeing resilient entrepreneurs who are growing their incomes but still facing real financial pressure, from rising costs to inconsistent cash flows.

Through this initiative, we are mov-



Old Mutual launches nationwide financial wellness drive

ing beyond conversations to action, giving customers practical tools to manage their money better, protect what they are building, and plan with greater confidence,” said Old Mutual Life Assurance Kenya (OMLAK) Managing Director Martin Karenju.

As part of the financial wellness drive, Old Mutual will roll out a series of country-wide public engagement activities to translate financial wellness insights into action. These include the launch of the “There Will Be Signs” campaign, a national awareness effort that highlights the everyday patterns of financial stress often overlooked by individuals and businesses. The campaign will be supported by on-ground engagements, including practical financial literacy sessions and personalised advisory clinics to help Kenyans recognise these signs early and get on the path to financial wellness.

The financial wellness drive reflects Old Mutual’s broader commitment to advancing financial inclusion and empowering individuals and businesses with the knowledge and resources needed to make informed financial decisions. The program will deliver accessible, inclusive engagements tailored to the real-world financial challenges faced by Kenyan households and enterprises.



If emergencies
zina kupata
unprepared...

SAVE. INVEST. INSURE.

IT'S A
SIGN



If kila month
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IT'S A
SIGN

Politics Kenya's former president has not disappeared from political life — he has simply changed how he operates within it.

Uhuru after power: Retired or recalibrating?

BY Oliver Ogutu

@themkenyatimes

When former President Uhuru Kenyatta handed over power, many expected him to follow the well-trodden path of retired African heads of state — quiet withdrawal, ceremonial appearances, and the occasional advisory role. But as time has passed, his continued presence in Kenya's political space suggests something far more deliberate is unfolding. The question is no longer whether he remains active, but how, and to what end.

His post-presidency has been defined less by loud declarations and more by calculated restraint. Unlike politicians who thrive on rallies and headlines, Uhuru's moves have been subtle: strategic meetings, regional engagements, and quiet consultations with key political actors. That low-profile approach has only deep-

ened the speculation. Is he easing back into the arena, or simply reshaping his legacy from behind the curtain?

Part of the intrigue lies in timing. Kenya's political environment remains fluid, with shifting alliances, internal party tensions, and an opposition still finding its feet. In such a landscape, a figure of Uhuru's stature — armed with experience, networks, and international standing — cannot easily fade into irrelevance. His occasional reappearances are therefore rarely read as coincidental. Each one is dissected for meaning, treated as a signal by those watching closely.

Supporters argue that his continued involvement is both natural and necessary. They see a seasoned leader unwilling to abandon his country at a moment when experienced guidance could help steady political discourse. To them, Uhuru is not interfering — he is contributing, offering perspective in a system that too often lacks

institutional memory.

Critics read the situation rather differently. They view his sustained engagement as an effort to retain influence, or perhaps to push back against the current administration by other means. In a country where political rivalry rarely concludes with the handing over of a flag, Uhuru's presence is seen by some as a lingering shadow — one that complicates governance and quietly feeds suspicion.

The more compelling truth, perhaps, sits somewhere between those two readings. Retirement in Kenyan politics is rarely absolute. Power does not simply vanish when a leader leaves office — it transforms. Uhuru may no longer command the instruments of the state, but he still holds considerable political capital: relationships built over decades, enduring loyalties, and a name that carries genuine weight both at home and on the continental stage.



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

What makes this current chapter so fascinating is its deliberate ambiguity. He is neither fully inside the political arena nor entirely removed from it. That middle ground offers real flexibility — the ability to influence without direct accountability, to engage without the constraints of office, and to redefine his role entirely on his own terms. It is a position few former leaders manage to occupy with any grace, and fewer still by design.

Ultimately, asking whether Uhuru Kenyatta is retired or recalibrating may be the wrong question altogether. He appears, rather, to be doing both — stepping away from the

weight of formal leadership while quietly repositioning himself within the broader architecture of power. In that sense, his journey reflects something deeper and more universal about politics: leaving office is not the end of influence. It is often the beginning of a different kind of it.

As Kenya continues to navigate an evolving and at times unpredictable political landscape, Uhuru's next moves — quiet as they are likely to be — will remain closely watched. Not because he holds office, but because he has shown, convincingly, that he no longer needs to in order to matter.

Zimbabwe A recent report by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) highlights a USD19 million inventory discrepancy, six unregistered aircraft, and a stranded plane

Rot in the Skies: Air Zimbabwe's governance failure as Madzivanyika throws open the curtain

BY Norman Mwale

[The PenPusher]

@themkenyatimes

Zimbabwe's national carrier, Air Zimbabwe, is flying into a storm of controversy, with millions in missing funds, grounded planes, and a reputation that's taking off in the wrong direction. The airline's financial woes have sparked urgent questions about governance, accountability, and the rot that's eating away at the country's parastatals.

A recent report by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) highlights a USD19 million inventory discrepancy, six unregistered aircraft, and a stranded plane in South Africa since 2014. Hon. Corban Madzivanyika, a firebrand MP and vocal advocate for transparency, last Wednesday threw open the curtains, letting the cat out



Mr. Corban Madzivanyika

of the bag, attributing these issues to "systemic corruption and gross negligence" within Air Zimbabwe's management. His scathing remarks

have sparked intense debate in Parliament and beyond.

Madzivanyika revealed that Air Zimbabwe hasn't submitted any

Quarterly Payment Dues (QPDs) since 2019 and has no PAYE schedule, highlighting the airline's tax evasion and non-compliance. "How can COVID-19 stop stock-taking when other companies managed to do so?" he questioned, urging decisive action against corruption and leadership change at Air Zimbabwe. The inventory discrepancy, initially blamed on COVID-19, has raised concerns about accounting practices and transparency.

Air Zimbabwe's financial struggles reflect Zimbabwe's broader governance challenges, with corruption estimated to cost the country over USD2 billion annually. Corruption has had a devastating impact on Zimbabwe's economy, leading to widespread poverty, with over 80% of the population living below the poverty line and unemployment ex-

ceeding 90%.

Madzivanyika has long championed transparency, moving a motion in Parliament to implement a comprehensive sign language policy in public healthcare facilities. He criticized the 2026 National Budget, labeling it "unresponsive" and "out of touch" with ordinary Zimbabweans, and questioned the government's handling of CDF funds.

Addressing corruption requires strengthening institutions, implementing robust financial reporting, enacting whistleblower protection, and fostering citizen participation. International organizations like the IMF, World Bank, and African Development Bank can support these efforts through technical assistance, financial support, diplomatic pressure, and monitoring and reporting.

The situation at Air Zimbabwe underscores the need for transparency and accountability in Zimbabwe's parastatals. As the country grapples with economic challenges, addressing corruption is crucial for rebuilding public trust, attracting investment, and charting a sustainable path towards economic recovery. The ball is now in the government's court to act decisively and restore Zimbabwe's tarnished reputation.

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Sports >> *Iran's World Cup place hangs in the balance as FIFA scrambles to resolve a diplomatic row sparked by a border clash that sent the federation chief home in fury.

FIFA invites Iran to headquarters for World Cup talks

By **Martin Weche**

Iran's World Cup place hangs in the balance as FIFA scrambles to resolve a diplomatic row sparked by a border clash that sent the federation chief home in fury.

FIFA has invited the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) to its Zurich headquarters for talks over Iran's participation in this year's World Cup, a source told AFP on Tuesday.

The invitation asks the FFIRI to visit FIFA's base by May 20 "to prepare for the World Cup" — a deadline that underscores the urgency of resolving a stand-off that has cast a shadow over one of the tournament's more competitive group-stage draws. Iran is scheduled to compete at the tournament, held across the United States, Canada and Mexico between June 11 and July 19, but their presence has been uncertain since the outbreak of war in the Middle East in February following strikes by the United States and Israel.

The crisis sharpened last week in Vancouver, where the FIFA Congress convened its full 211-member assembly. Iran's delegation was conspicuously absent — the only federation missing from the gathering — after a confrontation with Canadian border officials that ended with federation president Mehdi Taj and two colleagues boarding a flight home. Iranian media reported the officials were "insulted" by immigration officers. Canada, which designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organisation in 2024, said individuals linked to the force were "inadmissible" under Canadian law. Taj is a former IRGC member.

On his return to Tehran, Taj told local media he was seeking a formal meeting with FIFA — a request the governing body has now, in effect, answered.

Yet even as the diplomatic row



FIFA President Gianni Infantino

escalated in Vancouver, FIFA president Gianni Infantino moved to extinguish speculation that Iran might be excluded. Addressing delegates at the congress, he was unequivocal. "Let me start by the outset, confirming straightaway that of course Iran will be participating at the FIFA World Cup 2026," Infantino said. "And of course, Iran will play in the United States of America."

Those words will offer some reassurance to Iran's players, whose sporting ambitions have been caught in the crossfire of geopolitics entirely beyond their control. The more pressing practical question — whether Iranian officials, some with institutional ties that Washington regards with suspicion, will be granted

the visas required to enter the United States — remains unanswered.

Iran is scheduled to be based in Tucson, Arizona. They face New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt in Group G, opening their campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. It is a group that offers a realistic path to the knockout rounds, should the off-field turbulence be resolved in time.

The May 20 deadline FIFA has set is tight. With fewer than six weeks to the opening fixture, the window for administrative and logistical preparation is narrowing rapidly. For Iranian fans who have waited years to see their team on football's grandest stage, the uncertainty has been an unwelcome companion

to what should be a moment of anticipation.

FIFA's summons to Zurich signals intent. Whether it produces resolution is another matter entirely.

Martin Weche is The Mt Kenya Times' senior sports correspondent covering international football and Olympic sports.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *A dramatic weekend of Premier League football has left Arsenal three wins from their first title in 22 years after Manchester City threw away a winning position to draw 3-3 at Everton.

Premier League title race: Arsenal close in as City wobble and Spurs rediscover their stride



Arsenal

By **Martin Weche**

A dramatic weekend of Premier League football has left Arsenal three wins from their first title in 22 years after Manchester City threw away a winning position to draw 3-3 at Everton.

Arsenal are on the verge of ending a 22-year wait for the Premier League title after Manchester City squandered a lead to draw 3-3 at Everton on Saturday, leaving the Gunners needing only three wins from their remaining fixtures to be crowned champions.

City's failure to hold on at the Hill Dickinson Stadium was as damaging as it was avoidable. Everton had barely threatened in the first half, yet the second period brought a remarkable defensive disintegration from Pep Guardiola's side, gifting the hosts chances they had done nothing to earn. City ultimately salvaged a point by clawing back from 3-1 down with seven minutes remaining, but the manner of the collapse left serious questions

about whether they can now win all four of their remaining games — the bare minimum required to keep pressure on Arsenal.

The Gunners, for their part, did precisely what was asked of them. A commanding 3-0 victory over Fulham at the Emirates on Saturday was built on the kind of attacking cohesion that had been conspicuously absent for much of the season. The catalyst was the return of Bukayo Saka to the starting eleven for the first time in six weeks. His presence transformed the team, and Arsenal scored three goals in a single match for the first time in 16 attempts — a statistic that illustrates both how much they had missed him and how significant his comeback is as the title run-in approaches.

Manager Mikel Arteta has constructed this title challenge on defensive solidity, and that foundation has held. Now, with Saka fit and the confidence of a convincing win behind them, Arsenal face a run of fixtures that ought, in ordinary circumstanc-

es, to deliver the championship: West Ham, already-relegated Burnley and Crystal Palace stand between them and history. Whether the weight of a 22-year wait constitutes ordinary circumstances is another matter entirely.

At the foot of the table, the weekend brought a rather different kind of drama. Tottenham Hotspur, who had endured a wretched 118 days without a Premier League win in 2026, produced their most encouraging performance of the year with a 2-1 victory at Aston Villa — a result that lifted them out of the relegation zone and restored a measure of belief to a club that had appeared to be sleepwalking toward the Championship.

Manager Roberto De Zerbi had insisted after last weekend's scrappy 1-0 win at Wolves — Spurs' first league victory since January — that all his side needed was that breakthrough result for confidence to return. The display at Villa Park suggested he was right. Spurs were sharper, more purposeful and consider-

ably more organised than they had appeared for months.

De Zerbi was philosophical in the aftermath, offering a view on football's volatile psychology that carried the authority of experience. "In football it is very easy to change," he said. "If you lose, you are stupid. If you win, you are a champion. You have to find a balance. We have to remember in ourselves what we have done in the past."

Aston Villa's cause was not helped by manager Unai Emery selecting a heavily rotated side — seven changes in total — with one eye fixed firmly on Thursday's Europa League semi-final against Nottingham Forest. Whether that decision costs Villa in the European race remains to be seen, but for Spurs it was a lifeline gratefully taken.

Three games, three points apiece, and a title that has been 22 years in the making. Arsenal have it in their hands.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Teaching methods for ESL teachers

By: Kamalova Gulasal Rustamjon
@themkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- The PPP model (Presentation, Practice, Production) is another widely used instructional framework in ESL teaching. In this model, lessons are structured into three stages: first, new language is presented; second, it is practiced through controlled exercises; and finally, students produce the language freely in meaningful contexts. This method is particularly effective for beginner and intermediate learners (Harmer, 2007). However, modern methodology experts recommend combining PPP with more communicative and interactive approaches.
- Total Physical Response (TPR) is another effective teaching method developed by James Asher. This approach is based on the coordination of speech and physical movement. In TPR activities, the teacher gives commands, and students respond through physical actions. This method is especially effective for beginners, as it reduces anxiety and improves vocabulary retention (Asher, 2009).



The PPP model (Presentation, Practice, Production).

In the context of globalization, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) requires not only the transmission of linguistic knowledge but also the development of learners' real communicative competence. Therefore, modern ESL pedagogy has shifted from traditional grammar-based instruction toward more learner-centered, interactive, and contextual approaches. These changes in language teaching are strongly supported by second language acquisition theories and empirical research. In particular, Stephen Krashen emphasizes in his Input Hypothesis that learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level (Krashen, 1982).

One of the most widely used approaches in ESL teaching is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This method focuses on using language as a tool for communication rather than simply learning grammatical rules. In CLT classrooms, students actively participate in role-plays, pair work, group discussions, and problem-solving activities.

The teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a sole knowledge provider. This approach is closely related to the concept of communicative competence introduced by Dell Hymes (Hymes, 1972). As a result, learners are able not only to understand the language but also to use it effectively in real-life situations.

Another important methodology is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which is based on completing meaningful tasks using the target language. For example, students may be asked to plan a trip, conduct an interview, or write a formal email. Through such activities, learners develop both linguistic and cognitive skills while using language in practical contexts. This method encourages learner autonomy and critical thinking (Willis, 1996). TBLT is strongly associated with constructivist learning theory, which suggests that knowledge is actively constructed through experience.

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new language is presented; second, it is practiced through controlled exercises; and finally, students produce the language freely in meaningful contexts. This method is particularly effective for beginner and intermediate learners (Harmer, 2007). However, modern methodology experts recommend combining PPP with more communicative and interactive approaches.

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Content-Based Instruction (CBI), also known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), is another modern approach in ESL teaching. In this method, language is taught through academic subjects such as history, geography, or science. As a result, students learn En-

glish in a meaningful context while simultaneously acquiring subject knowledge. This approach enhances motivation and supports academic language development (Brown, 2014).

In conclusion, there is no single "best" method for teaching ESL. Each approach has its own strengths and limitations, and effective teaching requires a combination of different methodologies depending on learners' needs and proficiency levels. A competent ESL teacher should be able to integrate and adapt these methods flexibly in the classroom. In this way, language learning becomes more effective, meaningful, and engaging for students.

Bio:

Kamalova Gulasal Rustamjon kizi, was born in 13.11.1999 in Namanagan, Uzbekistan

She graduated the Uzbekistan State World Languages University in 2021. From 2025 till the present day, she has been working in vocational school N 1 in Uychi district.

She likes teaching students. Her hobby is reading books and articles