Families of Gen Z victims march to police ahead of second anniversary

Families of Kenyans killed during the June 25, 2024 Finance Bill protests marched to the Inspector General of Police's office at Jogoo House in Nairobi Page 8

KALRO, KNCCI forge alliance to unlock billions in global agricultural markets

Kenya's agricultural research and business communities have been challenged to urgently align science, production and commerce to enable the country to seize massive export opportunities

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Finance Bill 2026 The bill retains VAT exemptions for selected medical products, electric transport technologies, and agricultural inputs

MPs pass Finance Bill 2026 in shadow of Gen Z anniversary

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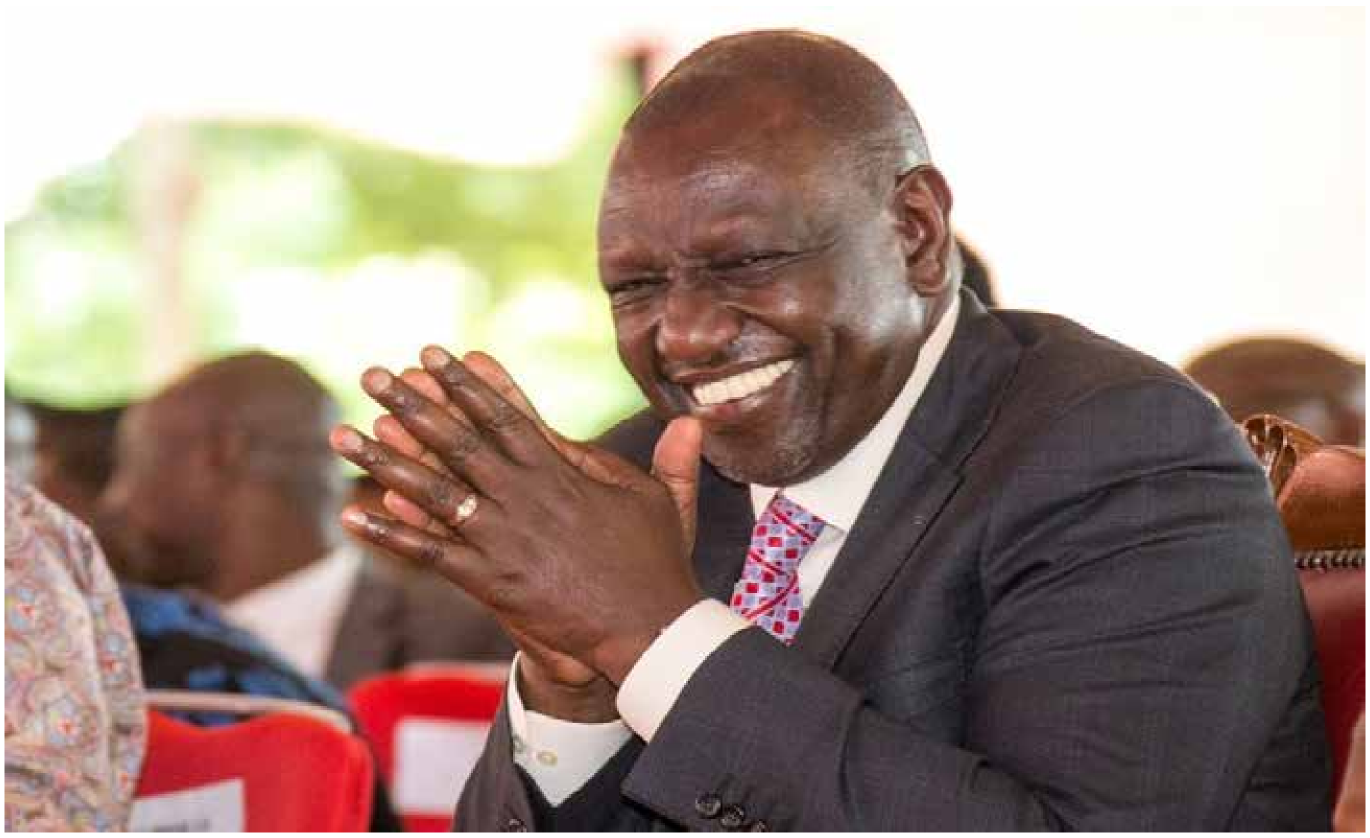
The bill cleared the House on a Thursday evening electronic vote after lawmakers adopted all amendments proposed by the Finance and National Planning Committee. Not a single member abstained. The House had initially approved the bill by acclamation, but when several legislators demanded a formal division and the required threshold was met, Speaker Moses Wetang'ula directed that an electronic vote be conducted in accordance with parliamentary procedures. The result was unambiguous — but the margin told its own story. The 2024 Finance Bill, the one that triggered mass protests, the storming of Parliament, and the deaths of more than 60 young Kenyans, passed with 195 votes in favour. This one passed with 122. The majority is smaller. So, apparently, is the stomach for confrontation. Page 9



President William Ruto

Ruto urges action as Global Ocean Conference closes in Mombasa

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto has called on countries and stakeholders to move beyond pledges and accelerate action to protect the world's oceans, as the 11th Our Ocean Conference concluded in Mombasa.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, President Ruto said the success of the conference would be measured not by commitments made but by tangible outcomes achieved in safeguarding marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable use of ocean resources.

"As we bring the 11th Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa to a close, we must translate promises into tangible action. The health of our oceans will not be secured by declarations alone," he said.

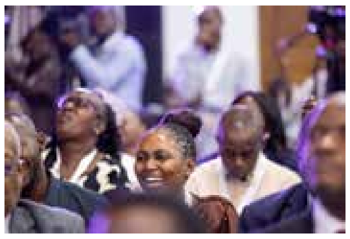
The President emphasized the need for innovative financing, technology transfer, capacity building and stronger implementation of commitments made during the conference, which brought together governments, scientists, investors and conservation groups from across the world.

He announced that Kenya would fully implement the 50 commitments it made at the conference, aimed at strengthening the country's blue economy, currently valued at more thank $1.1 billion (Sh142 billion).

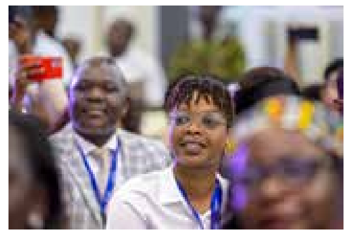
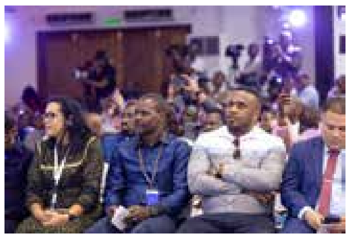
Ruto said sustainable management of oceans is critical for food security, climate resilience, tourism and economic growth.

He thanked delegates for their partnership and commitment to ocean conservation and invited visitors to explore Kenya's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and investment opportunities.

Some of the moments as captured in pictures













Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Kenya is seeking to expand international markets for its agricultural products following talks between Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe and Oman's Ambassador to Kenya, Nasra Salim Mohamed Al-Hashmi. The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral trade relations and increasing exports of key Kenyan products, including tea, coffee, livestock, flowers, fruits and other horticultural produce. The two leaders also explored opportunities for investment partnerships and land commercialization initiatives aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, value addition and market access. The engagement forms part of Kenya's broader strategy to diversify export destinations, reduce reliance on traditional markets and attract strategic investments into the agricultural sector. Both Kenya and Oman reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing cooperation in agriculture, trade and related economic sectors, with the talks expected to open new avenues for trade, investment and economic collaboration between the two countries.

Children with disabilities in Kajiado County are benefiting from increased educational and social support through the Kajiado County Disability Mainstreaming Act, enacted in 2023. The law established a Sh50 million fund to promote social inclusion and support persons with disabilities. According to County Director for Social Services Irene Katete, Sh6.5 million has already been disbursed to assist 261 learners in secondary schools, colleges, universities, TVET institutions and special schools. More than 400 additional beneficiaries are set to receive support from a Sh10 million allocation. The county has also distributed 500 assistive devices in partnership with Joni and Friends and received Sh6 million from Action Foundation to support disability prevention and rehabilitation programmes.

Youth leaders in Uasin Gishu County have been urged to join political parties and actively participate in political processes to effectively advocate for their rights and leadership opportunities. The call was made during an electoral preparedness training organized by the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) at Rift Valley Technical Training Institute in Eldoret. ORPP officials encouraged political parties to embrace inclusivity by giving young people leadership positions and educating them on party constitutions and electoral laws. Participants were also cautioned against political violence, goonism and misinformation. Representatives from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) used the forum to promote voter registration and civic education. Youth leaders welcomed the initiative, saying it would help them better understand political processes and prepare for future leadership roles.

The Ombudsman participated in a workshop at the Kenya School of Government's Embu Campus to evaluate the implementation of public sector reform policies, frameworks and programmes in Kenya. The forum brought together representatives from various government institutions to assess the progress, effectiveness and sustainability of ongoing reforms. During the workshop, the Commission's Chief Compliance Officer, Charles Cherogony, highlighted key initiatives in access to information and public complaints management, emphasizing efforts to promote transparency, accountability, responsiveness and citizen-centred service delivery. The Commission outlined its role in implementing the Access to Information Act, 2016, and strengthening complaints-handling mechanisms to improve service delivery and public trust. Participants also discussed governance, digitization and institutional performance, while identifying recommendations to guide future public sector reforms.

Kenya Shipyards Limited (KSL) is showcasing locally manufactured Glass-Reinforced Plastic (GRP) boats at the 11th Ocean Conference in Mombasa, highlighting their potential to improve maritime safety and transform the fishing industry. Made from fibreglass-reinforced composite material, the boats are lightweight, durable, corrosion-resistant, fuel-efficient and require less maintenance than traditional wooden vessels. With a carrying capacity of up to three tonnes, they can be insured and used to secure financing through logbooks. Initially introduced on Lake Victoria, the boats feature auto-recovery mechanisms, integrated buoyancy systems and enhanced stability, making them safer in rough waters. KSL says the innovation will help reduce accidents, improve fishing productivity and strengthen livelihoods while promoting safer and more sustainable use of Kenya's blue economy resources.

The Turkana County Department of Health and Sanitation Services has received maternal and neonatal health equipment and life-saving commodities from AMREF Health Africa through its Imarisha Jamii Project. The donation includes five vaccine storage fridges and a solar power system comprising an inverter, solar panels and batteries to strengthen cold chain infrastructure in health facilities. The support is expected to address gaps in maternal and child health, immunization and nutrition programmes. AMREF also donated nutrition supplies, including therapeutic milk and Vitamin A supplements, to help combat malnutrition. County health officials welcomed the donation, saying it will improve service delivery for mothers and children. The equipment will be distributed to five health facilities across Turkana's sub-counties to enhance healthcare access and outcomes.

Illicit liquor At least three people are reported to have died after consuming the poisonous stuff that is said to be transported from as far as Kenol

Alarm over wanton sale of Illicit liquor, deaths at Juja's Witeithie estate

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Residents of Witeithie village in Juja sub county, Kiambu County have sounded an alarm over the wanton sale of second generation liquor that is reported to have led to the deaths of several consumers.

Also concerned are bar operators who claim that the illicit drinks are sold in unlicensed dens that give them undue competition and also deny the government revenue.

At least three people are reported to have died after consuming the poisonous stuff that is said to be transported from as far as Kenol in Murang'a County, among other supply areas.

"My brother died as a result of consumption of these cheap drinks which are sold between 25 and 30 shillings. I am appealing to the government to take action and end this menace," said a resident Joseph Thuku.

He explained how his younger brother George Chege, a small scale trader who was progressive and had even built an expensive house in their Murang'a rural home, became a casualty of the cheap liquor.

"He had even started constructing a house worth Sh 2 million before he became addicted to the illicit liquor. This led him to part ways with his wife, before he got sick and eventually died from liver failure," Thuku added.

It has also emerged that these illegal alcohol joints which operate on a 24-hour basis, also act as a conduits for the trafficking of drugs and contraband substances in Witeithie.

The dealers are reported to have hired young men to peddle rolled sticks of bhang from designated joints.

"You will see these young and visibly 'charged' youth at various wines and spirits joints where customers come to pick the stuff," a concerned villager disclosed.

Locals gave the names of the notorious joints, some located only a few meters from the local police station.

Residents say the liquor dens, mostly operating as wines and spirits outlets, are not licensed, but sale goes on day and night unabated.

In some of the joints, we observed that they apparently remain closed but not under key and lock, allowing customers easy access.

Most of the clients being touts and other "hustlers" at the Witeithie highway stage, flock in and out in drones from as early as 8am.

Shockingly, some of the 'patrons' are very young, supposedly in their teenage years, a thing that raised concern from parents.

Villagers claim that chiefs and local security officers have been compromised by sellers, some allegedly receiving bribes on a daily or weekly basis, to turn a blind eye.

Reached for comment, Juja Deputy County Commissioner Daniel Ndege said he has received complaints from concerned parties and added that a multi-agency team has been formed to deal with the menace.

"We are taking decisive action involving a multi-agency team. I do not want to divulge details of the operation because we don't want their moles to leak information," Ndege said.

A bar operator from Juja, Paul Karanja said the sale of second generation alcohol has badly affected the business as most of the customers are flocking to these outlets, crippling their business.

"Unfortunately, the consumers of these brews are the ones who dictate terms. They don't care about the effects of the lethal stuff they consume, they simply want to get drunk," Karanja added.

This, he noted, has led to genuine liquor businesses to incur losses or even close down for lack of customers.

Some of the operators are said to be in a panic after getting wind of an impending crackdown.

One of the suspected drug and illicit alcohol dealers in Witeithie area, known famously as 'Bena' has been in and out of police and court cells countless times.

He is reportedly behind the manufacture of illegal brews which are discreetly carted into some selet outlets and onwards to the consumers.

The suspect has previously been fined and handed custodial sentences but always bounces back to continue with the illegal business.

This also brings to the spotlight the Kiambu county government which is the licensing authority.

Efforts to get a comment from local county officials proved futile as they were unreachable.

Similar incidents have been reported in parts of Murang'a, where a man was recently fined Sh 9.2 million after being found guilty of multiple offences related to illegal manufacture and possession of alcoholic products and counterfeit excise stamps.

Dennis Muiruri Kamande was convicted and sentenced by Resident Magistrate Renna Jakinda of the Kenol law courts, in a judgment delivered on June 10, 2026. The magistrate ordered the accused to pay the fine or alternatively serve four years in jail.

Kamande faced six counts under the Excise Duty Act, 2015 and the Anti-Counterfeit Act, 2008.

The charges included manufacturing excisable goods without a valid excise duty licence, possessing excisable goods obtained in contravention of the law, possessing alcoholic products affixed with counterfeit excise stamps, and trading in counterfeit goods.

In her ruling, Ms Jakinda said the prosecution led by Ms Peris Gathu had proved its case beyond reasonable doubt after presenting evidence from 11 witnesses.

Patrons queuing for a shot (unlock) at a Witeithie wine and spirits outlet at night. This particular joint operates 24/7.

Part of the estate


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Kenya Power moves to protect wildlife, cut outages

A photo showing a Kenya Power utility vehicle and electricity transmission line | *Photo: Courtesy.*

BY DMS
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya Power has launched a new initiative aimed at protecting wildlife from electrocution while improving the reliability of electricity supply across the country.

The utility company, through its Institute of Energy Studies and Research (IESR), has partnered with US-based Kaddas Enterprises to retrofit wildlife-friendly covers on power lines located along key wildlife corridors.

The project, unveiled at Soysambu Conservancy in Nakuru County, targets sections of the electricity network identified as hotspots for wildlife electrocution, particularly among birds of prey.

According to Kenya Power, animal-related incidents account for nearly half of all power outages recorded on its network, with wildlife contact with power lines contributing about 30 per cent of the disruptions.

Speaking during the launch, IESR Head of Research Eng. Henry Pwani said the initiative seeks to strike a balance between environmental conservation and energy infrastructure development.

"Wildlife is part of our national heritage and a key driver of tourism, while reliable electricity is critical to economic growth. Our goal is to promote peaceful coexistence between nature and energy infrastructure," he said.

Soysambu Conservancy, located about 130 kilometres northwest of Nairobi, is home to several raptor species, including the Augur Buzzard and the Martial Eagle, which frequently use power poles and lines as perching and hunting points. The area has recorded numerous cases of bird electrocution over the years.

The five-year partnership is expected to significantly reduce wildlife deaths while minimizing power interruptions caused by animals coming into contact with electricity infrastructure.

"By safeguarding wildlife, we are also improving power supply reliability for our customers. This is a win-win for both the environment and our business," Eng. Pwani added.

The project will initially focus on the Lanet–Naivasha Interconnector, which passes through Soysambu Conservancy and serves large parts of Nakuru County. The transmission line has experienced repeated outages linked to the electrocution of birds and animals, including giraffes.

Kenya Power's Nakuru County Business Manager, Wesley Kerich, said lessons learned from the pilot phase will guide the expansion of the programme to other wildlife-electrocution hotspots across the country.

Beyond infrastructure upgrades, the partnership also includes training for Kenya Power technical staff to enhance wildlife-sensitive design and maintenance of electricity networks.

The initiative is expected to strengthen conservation efforts while improving service delivery for electricity consumers nationwide.

Families of protest victims and political leaders march to IG Douglas Kanja's office at Jogoo House.

Families of Gen Z victims march to police ahead of second anniversary

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Families of Kenyans killed during the June 25, 2024 Finance Bill protests marched to the Inspector General of Police's office at Jogoo House in Nairobi yesterday, formally notifying authorities of a planned nationwide commemoration march and demanding guarantees of protection for what they insist will be a peaceful event.

The procession, which included relatives of people who died during the anti-government protests, was led by Siaya Governor James Orengo and former Justice Minister Martha Karua. They were joined by human rights defenders and other political figures united behind a single message: two years on, the families of the dead are still waiting for justice.

Among those marching were the mothers and siblings of Rex Masai, Erickson Mutisya, Kennedy Onyango, Andrew Kelvin, and Brian Kasaine — young men whose names have come to represent a generation of Kenyans who took to the streets and did not come home. Jecinta Anyango, Kennedy Onyango's mother, addressed the gathering in raw, unadorned terms. "Mimi ningeomba hiyo tarehe iwe holiday miaka na miaka na miaka. June 25th naomba iwe holiday ya mashujaa watoto wetu, na tunaomba hiyo siku askari wasiuwe watoto wetu tena," she said. The request was not political. It was maternal.

Brian Kasaine's brother Kelvin Simba said police had given assurances that officers accompanying the march would not carry live ammunition. "Wametuhakikishia watatupatia security na wamesema hawatabeba zile ziko na marisasi. Tunaambia Wakenya watoke all counties, it will be peaceful," he said. Erickson Mutisya's mother, Carolyne, was more measured but no less determined. "Tumesema ni asante petition yetu imechukuliwa na tutakuwa sawa 25th," she said.

The organisers are calling for justice and accountability for victims, compensation for affected families, a formal public apology from the government, and the declaration of June 25 as a national day of remembrance. They have also demanded the arrest and prosecution of all police officers who bear command responsibility for the killings, torture, and enforced disappearances. Rex Masai's mother, Gillian Munyao, put it plainly: "Make a clear commitment that never again will the police kill innocent Kenyans."

The political leaders who joined the march sharpened that demand considerably. Governor Orengo called on President William Ruto to formally retract his "shoot-to-incapacitate" directive, arguing it had no basis in constitutional law. Lawyer Gitobu Imanyara was blunter still. "These young parents are not asking for privileges and are not asking for tokenism. They want an acknowledgement that the worst possible crimes have been committed by his officers," he said. Martha Karua, leader of the People's Liberation Party, pledged solidarity. "As leaders, we are out here with them, urging the police to respect the Constitution and the rule of law," she said.

The KNCHR documented approximately 60 deaths, over 600 injuries, abductions, and other abuses during the 2024 protests alone. Veteran politician Kalonzo Musyoka has proposed declaring June 25 a national holiday, to be known as Gen Z Revolution Day, should the opposition win in 2027. The government has so far rejected the proposal. Government spokesperson Isaac Mwaura dismissed the idea, urging Kenyans to ignore the calls and treat June 25 as a normal working day.

The families plan to march to Parliament on June 25, lay flowers at the sites where their children were shot, and present a memorandum of demands. They are not asking for very much — only the truth, accountability, and the assurance that it will never happen again. In a functioning democracy, that should not be too much to ask.

Finance Bill **The bill retains VAT exemptions for selected medical products, electric transport technologies, and agricultural inputs**

MPs pass Finance Bill 2026 in shadow of Gen Z anniversary

With 122 votes for and 40 against, the National Assembly approves the tax legislation — but the ghosts of June 25, 2024 hang over every page

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The National Assembly yesterday passed the Finance Bill 2026 by 122 votes to 40, sending the legislation to President William Ruto for assent just days before the second anniversary of the protests that brought Kenya to a standstill and left dozens of young people dead.

The bill cleared the House on a Thursday evening electronic vote after lawmakers adopted all amendments proposed by the Finance and National Planning Committee. Not a single member abstained. The House had initially approved the bill by acclamation, but when several legislators demanded a formal division and the required threshold was met, Speaker Moses Wetang'ula directed that an electronic vote be conducted in accordance with parliamentary procedures. The result was unambiguous — but the margin told its own story. The 2024 Finance Bill, the one that triggered mass protests, the storming of Parliament, and the deaths of more than 60 young Kenyans, passed with 195 votes in favour. This one passed with 122. The majority is smaller. So, apparently, is the stomach for confrontation.

The Finance and National Planning Committee had already moved to remove several contentious proposals ahead of the vote, acting on recommendations from stakeholders and public submissions. Among those dropped were a proposed tax on mitumba imports and a measure that would have imposed new levies on mobile phones — two proposals that drew immediate public hostility when the bill was first published in April. The committee's decision to excise them before the bill reached the floor was a calculated act of political risk management, a lesson apparently learned from 2024, when the government's refusal to make concessions early enough cost it dearly in the streets.

The bill retains VAT exemptions for selected medical products, electric transport technologies, and agricultural inputs, and extends tax amnesty provisions to encourage compliance. It also proposes to extend the timeline for tax amnesty on interest, penalties and fines, shifting the qualifying period to December 2025 and the payment deadline to December 2026. For businesses that have accumulated arrears during two years of economic turbulence, that extension is not an abstraction — it is a lifeline.

The legislation amends six principal statutes: the Income Tax Act, the Value Added Tax Act, the Excise Duty Act, the Tax Procedures Act, the Miscellaneous Fees and Levies Act, and the Stamp Duty Act. The changes are designed to broaden the tax base, tighten compliance, and raise revenue sufficient to underwrite government spending in the 2026/2027 financial year. Unlike the Finance Bill of 2024, which was ultimately withdrawn after triggering catastrophic public opposition, the 2026 bill contains fewer outright tax-increase proposals — a fact analysts attribute in part to the government's desire to ease public anxiety ahead of next year's general elections. Whether that restraint reflects genuine sensitivity to the public mood or mere electoral arithmetic is a question Kenyans are well placed to answer for themselves.

That political calculation was made visible in the chamber itself. Of the 40 members who voted against the bill, the majority represent constituencies where the cost of living is not a policy abstraction but a daily reality, and where memories of the Gen Z protests remain sharp. They included Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro, Embakasi East's Babu Owino, Wundanyi's Mwashako, Naivasha's Jayne Kihara, Starehe's Mwago, and Roysambu's Mwafrika. Siaya's Oundo of Funyula and Saboti's Caleb Hamisi registered their opposition, as did Suba South's Caroli, Bumula's Wamboka, Manyatta's Mukunji, and Nyali's Moha. In the no lobby, government and opposition members stood side by side — a level of cross-party dissent unusual for a money bill, and worth noting.

The full list of dissenters maps almost precisely onto Kenya's most economically pressured communities. From Kitui County alone, seven

Members of the National Assembly during voting on the Finance Bill 2026.

MPs voted against the bill: Nzengu of Mwingi North, Makali of Kitui Central, Mwalika of Kitui Rural, Kasalu the Kitui Woman Representative, Edith of Kitui West, Mulyungi of Mwingi Central, and Kimilu of Kaiti. Machakos and Makueni returned five more dissenters between them: Mbui of Kathiani, Kamene the Machakos Woman Representative, Makau of Mavoko, Mawathe of Embakasi South, and Kiamba of Makueni. In Nairobi, opposition clustered in the heavily populated eastlands: Mwenje of Embakasi West, Gakuya of Embakasi North, Mejja Donk of Embakasi Central, and Mwago of Starehe voting no alongside Babu of Embakasi East. Gatanga's Wakili Edward Muriu and Kigumo's Munyoro added their voices from the Mount Kenya region, as did Kirinyaga Woman Representative Njeri, Tetu's Wandeto, and Kajiado North's Ngogoyo. Funyula's Oundo and Saboti's Caleb Hamisi completed a no lobby that, taken together, represents a significant geographic and demographic cross-section of Kenyan opinion.

It is worth pausing on what that opposition means. In a legislature where the ruling coalition commands a commanding majority, 40 dissenting votes on a Finance Bill is not a rebellion. But it is a signal — and signals, in Kenyan politics, have a way of hardening into something louder when left unheeded. The government should read the constituency map carefully. The MPs who voted no did not do so out of procedural principle. They did so because their constituents sent them there to push back.

The timing of the bill's passage is not incidental. June 25 — now six days away — has become the most politically charged date on Kenya's calendar. Families of those who died during the anti-government protests have formally notified police of plans to hold peaceful commemoration marches across all 47 counties, and political leaders have joined them in calling for a national day of remembrance. Against that backdrop, passing a Finance Bill in the same week is either an act of governmental self-assurance or one of considerable political miscalculation. Both interpretations are being made, with equal conviction, in equal measure.

The bill is expected to take effect from 1 July 2026, with some provisions coming into force from January 2027. President Ruto is expected to sign it into law before the end of the month, completing the annual budgetary cycle and unlocking the revenue measures needed to fund government spending in the new financial year. The process has been, by the standards of recent years, relatively orderly. There were no mass protests outside Parliament, no teargas on Harambee Avenue, no live rounds. Whether that calm reflects public acceptance, fatigue, or simply the restraint of a population watching and waiting, remains to be seen.

Two years ago, Kenya's young people rewrote the country's political grammar. They reminded those in power that a Finance Bill is not a technocratic document — it is a statement about who matters and who does not. The 2026 version is more modest in its ambitions and more careful in its drafting. But the underlying question has not changed. When the President picks up his pen, Kenyans will want to know, as they always have, on whose behalf he is signing.

The bill has passed. The nation watches. And June 25 is coming.

Conservation **MKT said it has invested more than Sh140 million in conservation initiatives in the Imenti region over the past nine years**

Outrage as Airstrip construction threatens Imenti forest

BY DMS
@themtkenyatimes

Conservationists have intensified opposition to the ongoing construction of an airstrip inside the Upper Imenti Forest Reserve, warning that the project threatens a critical water catchment, wildlife habitat and years of costly forest restoration efforts.

In a statement, Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) condemned the destruction of part of the forest, saying the project was approved and undertaken without public participation, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or the necessary licences, contrary to constitutional and environmental protection laws. The trust argued that the development violates Articles 42, 69 and 70 of the Constitution and provisions of the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016.

The controversy has sparked a growing backlash from environmental organisations, including Rhino Ark, the Green Belt Movement and Greenpeace Africa, all of which have called for an immediate halt to the project pending compliance with environmental regulations. Conservation groups say the airstrip is being constructed without a NEMA licence or an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment.

MKT said it has invested more than Sh140 million in conservation initiatives in the Imenti region over the past nine years, including Sh69 million for the restoration of 522 hectares of forest, Sh30 million for human-wildlife conflict mitigation infrastructure and Sh40 million in ranger operations supporting the Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Wildlife Service.

The trust warned that the loss of forest cover could undermine Kenya's commitments to increase national tree cover, restore degraded landscapes and protect biodiversity. It noted that Imenti Forest forms part of the larger Mount Kenya ecosystem, a vital water tower supporting agriculture, livelihoods and water security for hundreds of thousands of people downstream.

Environmentalists are also concerned about the impact on wildlife, particularly elephants that depend on the forest as a refuge and migration corridor. Conservation groups say the area hosts one of the highest concentrations of elephants in the Mount Kenya ecosystem during dry seasons and serves as an important maternity zone.

The dispute comes as the government defends the project as a catalyst for economic development in Meru County. However, critics argue that any short-term economic benefits are outweighed by the long-term environmental costs. A court has already issued interim orders halting further alterations and construction in the forest pending determination of a petition challenging the project.

"We stand with those defending the protection of Imenti Forest and all protected areas for future generations," MKT said.

MOUNT KENYA TRUST
www.mountkenyatrust.org

Kenya activates anti-counterfeit security device regime to protect consumers

BY Paskal Osonga
@themtkenyatimes

Nelson Gaichuhie addressing the forum.

The Anti-Counterfeit Authority (ACA) has announced the rollout of a new Anti-Counterfeit Security Device Regime aimed at strengthening the fight against counterfeit goods and enhancing consumer protection across the country.

Speaking in Nairobi during the commemoration of World Anti-Counterfeiting Day, ACA Board Chairman Nelson Gaichuhie said Kenya was moving beyond policy discussions to practical implementation measures in the war against counterfeit trade.

Gaichuhie noted that the Counterfeit Act, which established the authority, was enacted nearly two decades ago and no longer adequately addresses emerging challenges in the modern marketplace.

"The law has not kept pace with the criminals. When the law was enacted, counterfeiting largely took place through traditional trade channels. Today, counterfeiters operate through e-commerce platforms, social media channels and complex international supply chains. We must therefore modernize our legal framework," he said.

He revealed that the ACA Board had initiated a comprehensive review of the Counterfeit Act of 2008 to address emerging threats, particularly those linked to online commerce and digital marketplaces.

According to the chairman, the global counterfeit trade continues to pose significant economic and public health risks.

Citing international estimates, Gaichuhie said counterfeit trade accounts for a substantial share of global commerce, while counterfeit medicines and other illicit products continue to endanger lives, particularly among vulnerable populations.

"These are not abstract figures. Counterfeit products destroy livelihoods and, in many cases, cost lives. We have a responsibility to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from this criminal economy," he said.

At the centre of the authority's latest intervention is the operationalisation of Section 34B of the Counterfeit Act, a provision introduced through the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act of 2018.

The provision requires the recordation of intellectual property rights for imported goods and provides for the issuance of certification marks in the form of anti-counterfeit security devices.

Gaichuhie said the legal framework supporting the programme, including the Anti-Counterfeit Recordation Regulations of 2021, was already in force and that all goods bearing intellectual property rights imported into Kenya must be recorded with the authority.

"The recordation regime is live and the law is already in place. What has been missing until now is the full activation of the authentication mechanism provided under Section 34B," he said.

Under the new system, designated products will carry a verifiable certification mark before entering the Kenyan market. The mark will be traceable through consumer devices and enforcement tools, enabling both regulators and consumers to verify product authenticity.

"Every scan will reveal intelligence. Every genuine product becomes part of its own defense system," said Gaichuhie.

The chairman explained that the initial pilot phase would focus on product categories that pose the highest risk to public health and safety.

Among the targeted products are alcoholic beverages, human and veterinary medicines, agrochemicals, seeds, cosmetics, skincare products, portable water, edible oils, food products, electrical and electronic goods, and automotive components such as tyres and brake pads.

"We are starting where counterfeits cause the greatest harm. When counterfeit products kill, the genuine products must be visible. When the counterfeit hides, the genuine must shine," he said.

Gaichuhie expressed concern over the prevalence of counterfeit alcoholic beverages and electrical products in the market, noting that such products have been linked to poisoning, blindness, fires and deaths.

He said the programme would be implemented in collaboration with key regulatory agencies, including the Pharmacy and Poisons Board, the Pest Control Products Board, the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the Kenya Revenue Authority.

The security device will be integrated with existing government verification and enforcement systems and supported by a mobile application that will allow consumers to authenticate products from anywhere in the country.

According to the chairman, the system will also be linked to the authority's Anti-Counterfeit Information Management System (AIMS), enabling real-time intelligence gathering and enforcement action.

"When a parent buys medicine for a child, they should be able to scan the product and verify beyond doubt that it is genuine. That is the level of confidence we want to provide to Kenyan consumers," he said.

Gaichuhie called for support from government agencies, Parliament, manufacturers and brand owners to ensure successful implementation of the initiative.

He urged policymakers to provide the necessary legislative and budgetary support while encouraging manufacturers to view the certification mark as a market-trust asset rather than an additional compliance requirement.

"The genuine mark will become a commercial advantage because consumers will increasingly demand products they can verify," he said.

He added that the speed and success of the rollout would depend on collective commitment from regulators, industry players and policymakers.

The ACA chairman reaffirmed the authority's commitment to strengthening intellectual property protection and safeguarding consumers through modern enforcement tools, legislative reforms and strategic partnerships.

"As we move forward, our focus is not only on enforcement but also on building consumer confidence and protecting legitimate businesses. The future of anti-counterfeiting lies in technology, collaboration and a modern legal framework that matches the realities of today's marketplace," he said.

Friday, June 19, 2026 The Mt. Kenya Times

Market **"We have markets. The demand is there. What is lacking is the capacity to consistently produce the volumes required by international buyers," said Dr. Rutto.**

KALRO, KNCCI forge alliance to unlock billions in global agricultural markets

BY WMW
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's agricultural research and business communities have been challenged to urgently align science, production and commerce to enable the country to seize massive export opportunities currently slipping through its fingers.

Speaking during a Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) event, Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) President Dr. Erick Rutto called for a radical transformation of Kenya's agricultural sector from fragmented subsistence farming to large-scale, technology-driven commercial production capable of serving global markets.

Dr. Rutto said although agricultural exports earned the country approximately Sh700 billion last year, Kenya was still failing to capitalize on enormous international demand due to inadequate production volumes, inconsistent supply and weak commercialization of research innovations.

"We have markets. The demand is there. What is lacking is the capacity to consistently produce the volumes required by international buyers," said Dr. Rutto.

Drawing from market intelligence gathered through KNCCI's international networks, he revealed that foreign buyers are increasingly seeking large-scale agricultural supplies from Kenya.

"There are markets that have requested up to five million goats. These buyers are not looking for occasional shipments; they want continuous and reliable supply chains. This presents a major opportunity for Kenya if we can organize production and scale up our capacity," he said.

Dr. Rutto challenged KALRO scientists and livestock researchers to develop breeding programmes and production systems capable of expanding local herds to meet such demand.

He noted that while Kenya continues to enjoy a global reputation for producing high-quality agricultural commodities, production volumes remain significantly below potential.

Using coffee as an example, Dr. Rutto observed that Kenya produced approximately 49,000 metric tonnes last year, far below neighbouring Ethiopia's estimated 600,000 metric tonnes and Uganda's 400,000 metric tonnes.

"Our coffee is among the best in the world, but quality alone cannot sustain competitiveness if volumes remain low. Global buyers require both quality and quantity," he said.

Dr. Rutto argued that Kenya has historically concentrated too heavily on policy discussions and governance structures while neglecting the industrialization and commercialization of agriculture.

He urged policymakers, researchers and private sector players to focus on scaling production, value addition and market-driven innovation.

"The future of agriculture lies in aggregation, mechanization, climate-smart production and commercialization. Research must directly support industry, and industry must support farmers to meet market standards," he said.

To improve competitiveness, Dr. Rutto said agricultural products must first be affordable and commercially viable within the domestic market.

He disclosed that KNCCI is actively lobbying for harmonization of county taxes and levies, which continue to increase production and export costs for farmers and agribusinesses.

At the same time, he announced a strategic partnership between KNCCI and KALRO aimed at accelerating the commercialization of agricultural technologies developed by researchers.

With a membership base of more than 60,000 businesses and extensive international networks, the Chamber, he said, is well-positioned to connect innovations from laboratories to markets.

Dr. Rutto invited KALRO scientists to participate in KNCCI's bi-weekly county business forums to showcase technologies such as Aflasafe, improved seed varieties, livestock genetics and climate-smart dairyk solutions.

"We must ensure that innovations do not remain on the shelves. Research only becomes meaningful when it reaches farmers, creates jobs and generates income," he said.

KALRO Board Chairman Dr. Thuo Mathenge welcomed the growing collaboration between researchers and the private sector, saying commercialization of research remains critical to transforming agriculture and improving livelihoods.

He noted that over the years, KALRO has developed and commercialized numerous crop varieties, livestock breeds and farming technologies that have significantly improved productivity among smallholder farmers across the country.

"Our responsibility as a research institution is to ensure that innovations developed by our scientists ultimately benefit farmers and agribusinesses. Partnerships with organizations such as KNCCI provide an important pathway for scaling technologies and creating economic impact," said Dr. Mathenge.

He added that strengthening climate resilience, sustainable food systems and market-oriented production remains central to KALRO's strategic agenda.

KALRO Director General Dr. Patrick Ketiem emphasized the importance of strengthening linkages between research institutions, industry players and farmers to accelerate agricultural transformation.

He said science must increasingly focus on practical solutions that respond to market demands while helping farmers improve productivity, resilience and profitability.

"Research must translate into tangible outcomes for farmers. We are committed to strengthening partnerships that ensure technologies move beyond research stations and into the hands of producers who need them most," said Dr. Ketiem.

The Director General said KALRO would continue investing in innovations that address climate change, food security, mechanization, post-harvest management and value addition.

He further noted that collaboration with private sector actors would be critical in accelerating adoption of technologies and opening new domestic and international market opportunities for Kenyan farmers.

Agriculture remains one of Kenya's most important economic sectors, contributing about a third of the country's Gross Domestic Product and employing millions of Kenyans directly and indirectly.

Industry stakeholders say unlocking export markets, improving productivity and accelerating commercialization of agricultural research could significantly increase earnings while creating jobs and strengthening food security.

The emerging partnership between KALRO and KNCCI is expected to play a key role in bridging the long-standing gap between scientific innovation and commercial application, helping position Kenya as a more competitive player in regional and global agricultural markets.

Kalro Chairman Dr Thuo Mathenge holding a cabbage in a past exhibition forum.

Kalro Chairman Dr Thuo Mathenge holding a cabbage in a past exhibition forum.

KNCCI President Dr Erick Rutto addressing stakeholders yesterday. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

Vivo Energy Dubbed the Shell Magical Friday, Vivo Energy Kenya will extend the attractive discount to its loyal customers in appreciation of their continued patronage

Shell magical Fridays: Vivo Energy Kenya confirms price offer on Shell V-Power today

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Vivo Energy Kenya, the company that distributes and markets Shell products and services in the country, has announced plans to deliver a customer appreciation offer today, with the premium Shell V-Power priced at the same price as the Shell FuelSave Unleaded.

Dubbed the Shell Magical Friday, Vivo Energy Kenya will extend the attractive discount to its loyal customers in appreciation of their continued patronage.

Speaking after confirming the customer appreciation gesture, Vivo Energy Kenya Managing Director Peter Murungi said that this Friday, customers across the country will get to enjoy the exclusively imported Shell V-Power at the same price as Shell FuelSave Unleaded.

"Vivo Energy Kenya appreciates the support and patronage from all our loyal customers who have continued to use our products despite the challenging market dynamics." Mr Murungi said. He added, "Shell V-Power is sourced and shipped to Kenya exclusively by Vivo Energy. It 100% cleans critical engine parts, giving our customers enhanced engine protection and an unmatched performance."

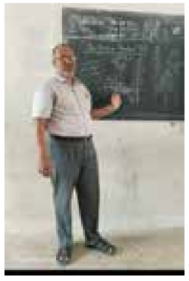
Further, tomorrow, Vivo Energy Kenya is partnering with Inchcape and the BMW Owners Club Kenya to host a BMW Owners Club Connect, bringing together automotive enthusiasts to explore the growth of Kenya's premium automotive sector while celebrating their passion.

With a portfolio of more than 340 Shell service stations countrywide, Vivo Energy Kenya continues to invest heavily in developing modern sites that provide its customers with access to high-quality products, services, and greater convenience.

Established in November 2012 following the acquisition of Shell's downstream business in Kenya from Kenya Shell Ltd, Vivo Energy Kenya is currently ranked as the leading national oil marketing company (OMC) with a 20.0% market share according to the sector regulator and serves all market segments from retail to commercial customers with a full range of automotive fuels, lubricants, aviation fuels, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and black fuels.

A Vivo Energy Kenya Shell Service Station.

Don't use others back as a platform to showcase your best performance



Use your own walk to reach your destination.
Or take your own decision to reach.
If you follow others, you should obey them.
Choose your own decision and you are free.

If you have any hurdles with your decision.
You never stick with the same as magnet.
You never disappoint with your decision.
And you will have the courage to solve the problem.

You are the leader of your decisions
You never allow others to give any suggestions.
Today it may be easy for you to travel on others.
But it may be difficult when they are absent.

Rajesh Kanna B N

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

Never forget: It's a luxury to have zero health problems:

Never forget to wear a smile
That sparkles beyond a mile
A luxury costume that decorate as a stardom
Resultant of zero health problem
Wisely follow elderly custom
As balanced food is essential
To hold your body potential
Close your western
consumption that governs

Hospitalizing you to unknown diseases
Your mirror image reflects you to please
As not only diet but proper fitness necessitates
For walking, meditation & yoga will speculate
-that diet & exercise not only educates
For zero health issues
As it never argues.

Grab the vitamin from the sun
To strengthen borne
Kiss the earth
That organically feeds to be in mirth
And salute the air
Oxygenating always fair
And as water plays a crucial role
Enroll gratitude that gives life to the soul
So never forget to love & protect nature
That formulates luxurious life to nurture.

G.Sarala.

When phones were tied with wires, people were free

Now that phones are wireless, people are tied to them.
Everything that is rare gets more respect.
Phones tied with wires stayed in one place,
and people waited eagerly for their loved ones' calls.
It brought a lot of happiness.
How can we explain that happiness? Words cannot describe it.
It was a golden invention.
People lived happily and did their work diligently.
Now, many people are tied to their phones.
Even children are fully immersed in them.
They do not do their work properly and do not play
outdoor games.
They play only mobile games.
This causes mental problems.
Wireless phones are like waves that move everywhere, and many people are drowning in them.
A phone is like a net in which people are trapped.
It is a magical net.
Phones are useful, but we must use them only when necessary and not waste time on unwanted activities. They have both positive and negative sides.
Use the positive side and avoid the negative side.
Everything depends on our mind.
Think positively, do good things, and live happily.
Then life will become beautiful.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

It's your difference that makes you unique

Be proud of who you are. Your difference is you advantage.
Your uniqueness is your voice.
Distinction leads to greatness.
Stay original, stay remarkable.

Your true colors make you special.
Your difference is your destiny.
Unique souls light the way. Different roots, beautiful flowers.
Stand apart with purpose. Dare to be authentically you.
Your individuality is your strength.
Original hearts leaves lasting marks.
Celebrate your own path.

RANJANI VEERA,
SOORYA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL,
MUTHIALPET,
PONDICHERRY.
INDIA.

Health is wealth

A man with a colorful and rich wardrobe
But also taking colorful medicines is not rich.
A man with limited and simple clothes,
But no medicine is actually rich.

Traveling business class with illness is not wealth,
Being able to run fast to catch a train is wealth,
Eating just a salad in a posh restaurant is not wealth,
Eating what you like in a roadside hotel is wealth.

A watch made of gold is not a blessing,
A heart beating strongly is a blessing,
Sleepless nights in a big bungalow are not prosperity,
Sleeping peacefully wherever you lie down is prosperity.

We admire the wealthy and powerful,
Yet often overlook the truly fortunate,
The richest person is not the one who owns the most,
But the one with a body that falls ill the least.

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

Little paws big heart

Little paws so soft and small,
They bring happiness to all.
Running, playing in the sun,
Every day is full of fun.
Big hearts filled with love and care,
Helping friends everywhere.
With a wag and gentle smile,
They make life bright all the while.
Kind and sweet in all they do,
Always loyal, always true.
Little paws, big hearts indeed,
Spreading love in every deed.

S. Yasir shihan
VII std
Government high school
Sakkarakkottai

US-Kenya **"These natural resources can no longer be exported and processed elsewhere" — President William Ruto**

Kenya on verge of landmark mineral deal with Trump administration, Ruto says

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto with US counterpart Donald Trump and Prime CS Musali Mudavadi at sidelines of G7 summit

Kenya is closing in on a landmark critical minerals agreement with the United States that would see its rare earths and strategic metals processed domestically, President William Ruto confirmed on the sidelines of the G7 summit yesterday. The announcement signals a shift in how Africa negotiates resource partnerships with Western powers, with Nairobi demanding that value addition remain in-country rather than shipping raw ore overseas.

Speaking to Reuters after talks with G7 leaders including US President Donald Trump, Ruto said Nairobi and Washington had agreed on terms that are "mutually beneficial". "We have agreed that the minerals will be processed in Kenya," he said. "We've agreed with them on what is mutually beneficial between Kenya and the United States, and President Trump and the American administration are happy with it." The framework is still in advanced negotiation rather than ratified form, but both sides appear aligned on core conditions.

The deal covers rare earths as well as Kenya's large untapped deposits of niobium, lithium, graphite, copper and nickel. Much of the focus centres on the Ksh8.1 trillion Mrima Hill deposit in Kwale County, where the Ministry of Mining opened a tender in March and has drawn interest from American, Chinese and Australian firms. Cortec Mining Kenya previously estimated the site's value at more than $60 billion.

Ruto framed the agreement as part of a wider reset in Africa-West ties. "These natural resources can no longer be exported and processed elsewhere. They have to be processed in-country and in-continent. We have to create value out of them," he said. He added that the model mirrors what the US is pursuing in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to ensure agreements benefit host nations. The push reflects a continent-wide move to keep more value from mining at home, with competition intensifying between Western nations and China over resources needed for the energy transition and advanced technology.

Washington's interest is strategic. The US has mobilised more than USD100 billion through its Office of Strategic Capital and has cut permitting timelines from 29 years to under one year in some cases. A senior State Department official recently praised Kenya for its regulatory transparency and investment-friendly policies, calling it a "commercial partner with a governance framework to facilitate responsible mining development".

Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry Lee Kinyanjui said Kenya was advancing a bilateral trade agreement alongside AGOA renewal talks, with mineral processing at the centre. "We are partnering with the US on mineral exploration and processing to avoid exporting raw minerals and also take advantage of opportunities in the digital space to create jobs for the youth," Kinyanjui stated.

For Kenya, the stakes are high. If concluded, the deal would be the first of its kind between a sub-Saharan nation and Washington and could cushion exporters as the African Growth and Opportunity Act faces renewal uncertainty. Ruto said he would push for a minimum five-year AGOA extension, calling it "a platform that connects Africa and the US in a very fundamental way".

For now, both sides say terms are broadly accepted, with domestic value-add established as non-negotiable. If signed, the agreement could turn Kenya's geology into jobs and industrial growth, rather than another shipment of raw ore.

Business **"By sourcing seeds locally, we are supporting farmers and strengthening agricultural value chains within our communities," Ndega said.**

Chuka TVC innovates natural edible oils to support food security and cut import dependence

BY Felix Njenga
@themtkenyatimes

Chuka TVC displaying edible oils that they are producing at the institution.

Chuka Technical and Vocational College (TVC) is making significant strides in agricultural value addition through the production of natural sunflower and canola cooking oils, an innovation that is not only generating income for the institution but also contributing to Kenya's efforts to reduce its heavy reliance on imported edible oils.

The institution showcased its edible oil processing project during the 4th International Research Conference, Skills Competition, Innovation, Career Guidance and Expo held at Kabete National Polytechnic, drawing attention from educators, industry stakeholders, students and policymakers.

Speaking during the exhibition, Victoria Ndega of Chuka Technical and Vocational College explained that the institution produces sunflower and canola oil using a cold-pressing technology that preserves the nutritional value of the oils without the use of additives or preservatives.

"We produce sunflower and canola oil through a cold-pressing process. The seeds are fed into a hopper, pressed in a chamber, and we obtain two products — the oil and a by-product known as sunflower or canola cake," she said.

According to Ndega, the extracted oil is left to settle for two to three days before being filtered, refined and packaged for the market. She emphasized that the product remains entirely natural throughout the process.

"We do not add any preservatives or additives. It is fresh from the farm to the market, making it healthier for consumers," she noted.

The college says the oils contain Vitamin E, an important antioxidant that helps protect body cells from damage and supports overall health. The products are also cholesterol-free, making them attractive to health-conscious consumers seeking healthier cooking alternatives.

What distinguishes Chuka TVC's products from many conventional cooking oils is the cold-pressing technique, which avoids excessive heat and helps retain essential nutrients and natural flavor.

"The uniqueness of our products lies in the cold-pressing process. Quality is our priority because the health of our consumers matters most to us," Ndega explained.

The innovation has already entered the market, having commenced commercial production last year. The institution is now pursuing expansion plans aimed at distributing its products across the country.

The oils are currently retailing at competitive prices, with a half-litre bottle selling at KSh160, one litre at KSh320, two litres at KSh630, three litres at KSh930 and five litres at KSh1,500.

Beyond producing cooking oil, the initiative is creating a market for local farmers who supply sunflower and canola seeds to the institution.

"By sourcing seeds locally, we are supporting farmers and strengthening agricultural value chains within our communities," Ndega said.

The college is also looking to diversify its product portfolio, with plans underway to introduce castor oil and avocado oil processing in the near future.

The project comes at a time when Kenya is seeking sustainable solutions to reduce its dependence on imported edible oils.

According to Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Sen. Mutahi Kagwe, Kenya imported more than 900,000 metric tonnes of edible oils in 2023 at a cost exceeding KSh139 billion, making edible oil one of the country's largest food import expenditures.

To address this challenge, the Government has launched a sunflower-soybean initiative through the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA), targeting a reduction of the country's edible oil import bill, currently estimated at approximately KSh145 billion annually.

"This initiative is designed to increase local production of oilseed crops that can be processed into edible cooking oil within the country," CS Kagwe has stated.

The Agriculture and Food Authority, through its Nuts and Oil Crops Directorate, is spearheading efforts to regulate, promote and expand the cultivation, processing and marketing of crops such as sunflower, soybean, canola and sesame.

Industry experts believe that innovations such as the one pioneered by Chuka TVC demonstrate the critical role Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions can play in driving industrialization, agribusiness development and food security.

Ndega noted that the edible oil project is also serving as a practical learning platform for students, reflecting the institution's skills-based training approach.

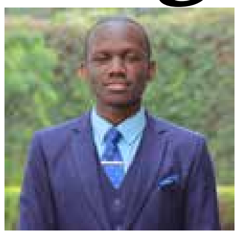
"At Chuka TVC, students spend about 90 percent of their time in practical workshops and only 10 percent in theory. This enables them to acquire hands-on skills quickly and become innovative entrepreneurs capable of creating their own employment opportunities," she said.

She encouraged young people to embrace technical education, describing TVET as a pathway to innovation, self-reliance and economic empowerment.

As Kenya pushes for increased local manufacturing and agricultural value addition, Chuka Technical and Vocational College's edible oil innovation stands out as a model of how educational institutions can transform research and skills into commercially viable solutions that benefit farmers, consumers and the national economy alike.

Governance **The first is procedural: open and transparent management of public resources, with clear chains of authority and consequence**

Eating the elephant: Governance, corruption, and the Kenyan state's long war against itself



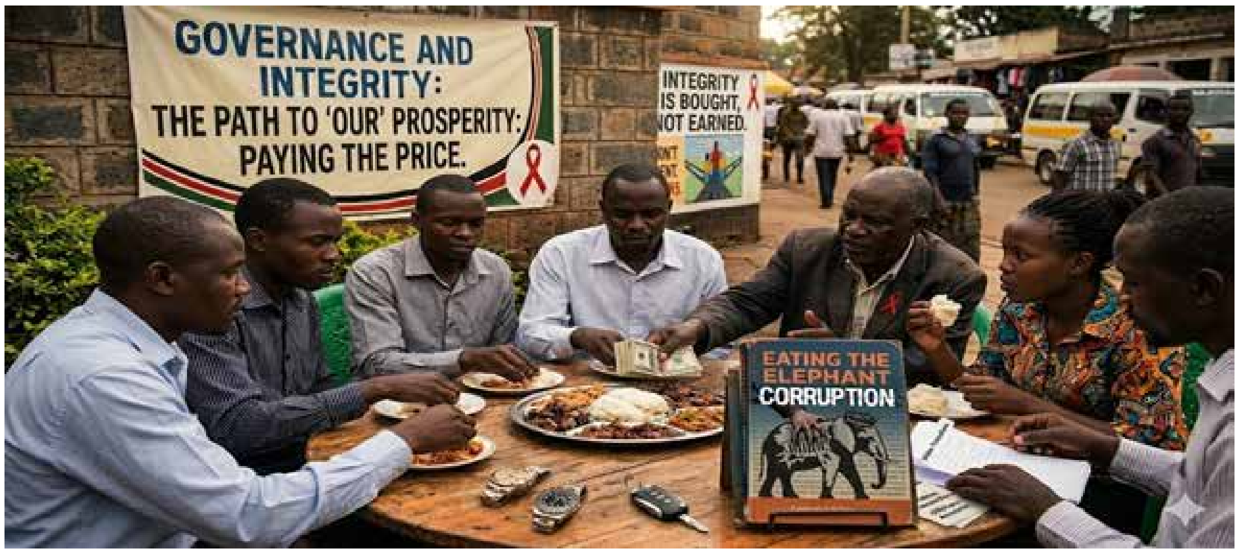


Illustration of corruption

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes

There is a scene in Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People that ought to hang, framed and laminated, above the entrance of every Kenyan ministry, county assembly, and constitutional commission. Chief Nanga, politician, rogue, and beloved son of the soil declares with magnificent, unembarrassed candour: "A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. Our ancestors were right when they said that a man should not, out of pride, cause his in-law to carry a heavier load than necessary." Nanga, of course, had just looted the treasury. He said so cheerfully, as a man confessing to a minor dietary preference. The village applauded. Kenya, four decades after Achebe wrote those words as satire, seems to have mistaken them for a governance manual.

Let us be precise, because precision is the first casualty when the powerful discuss their own conduct. Effective public governance the kind contemplated by Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which consecrates transparency, accountability, integrity, and sustainable development as binding national values is not a luxury dispensed at the discretion of those who hold office. It is a constitutional obligation, a jurisprudential imperative, and a moral contract with citizens who, in the language of Article 1, retain sovereign power and merely delegate its exercise. The Constitution does not whisper these values. It thunders them. And yet the distance between constitutional aspiration and Kenyan administrative reality has become so vast that one could lose an entire government manifesto in the chasm and nobody would notice.

The theoretical scaffolding is elegant and established. Scholars of transformative constitutionalism, from Karl Klare's foundational intervention in the South African post-apartheid literature to the Kenyan school of thought represented by jurists like Willy Mutunga, argue consistently that constitutions of this generation are not merely descriptive instruments they are transformative projects. They envision a rupture with the past and the construction of a new social contract. Article 73 of Kenya's Constitution, which demands that public officers act in public interest and demonstrate integrity, is not decorative text inserted to beautify a document. It is the juridical expression of a civilization's aspiration to govern itself with honour. To violate it is not merely a breach of professional ethics; it is a constitutional tort against the people.

Even so, governance in Kenya has developed an almost artistic genius for violating the spirit of these imperatives while observing, with lawyerly pedantry, their letter. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission exists on paper, in buildings, with staff and budgets. So does the Controller of Budget. So does the Office of the Auditor-General, whose annual reports read like literary tragedies: billions unaccounted for, procurement irregularities of Shakespearean proportion, financial management so creative it ought to be eligible for the Booker Prize. The institutions are present. The accountability is absent. This is governance as theatre and Kenyans have been seated in the stalls for so long that many have confused the performance for the thing itself.

Accountability, properly understood, operates on two inseparable axes. The first is procedural: open and transparent management of public resources, with clear chains of authority and consequence. The second is substantive: an actual change in outcomes for citizens, schools that teach, hospitals that heal, roads that do not swallow vehicles whole. Kenya has invested heavily in the procedural vocabulary of accountability frameworks, taskforces, anti-corruption units that multiply like bureaucratic rabbits while the substantive outcomes remain stubbornly, insultingly unchanged. As the Committee of Experts that drafted Kenya's 2010 Constitution observed in its final report, the crisis of governance in Kenya was never primarily a problem of legal architecture. It was a problem of political will. One cannot engineer integrity through institutional design alone when the designers are themselves among the beneficiaries of its absence.

This is where Achebe becomes not merely metaphorical but prophetic. Chief Nanga is not an aberration in A Man of the People; he is the system operating exactly as designed. He steals, but he also builds. He loots, but he is generous at funerals. He is corrupt, but he is useful and usefulness, in the transactional calculus of patronage democracy, purchases silence far more effectively than any anti-corruption statute. The Kenyan variant of Chief Nanga has perfected this formula. The harambee is held. The bursary cheque is distributed. The crowd roars. And meanwhile, the public officer who signed away a public land title for a private developer receives his handshake in an envelope so discreet it is practically invisible to the naked eye of the law.

One must not be naive about the structural dimensions. Corruption is not, as the moralists would have it, merely a failure of individual character. It is the predictable product of systems that concentrate power without accountability, that reward proximity to the state over productive activity, and that have never resolved the foundational question of whose Kenya this actually is. The devolution architecture established under Chapter Eleven of the Constitution was a deliberate attempt to fracture that concentration, to push resources and decision-making towards communities who would exercise direct oversight. That the county governments have, in several instances, simply replicated at smaller scale the corruption architectures of the national government is not evidence that devolution has failed. It is evidence that corruption is not a problem of level it is a problem of culture, incentive, and impunity.

Integrity and transparency, the twin tenets of any governance system worthy of the name, cannot be wish-listed into existence. They require three conditions that Kenya has consistently struggled to sustain simultaneously: first, institutions with genuine independence, not merely nominal independence disrupted by executive displeasure the moment they become inconvenient; second, citizens with the information, literacy, and political consciousness to exercise meaningful oversight; and third, a legal framework that punishes corruption not merely in principle but in practice, with sentences that descend upon the powerful with the same velocity they descend upon the petty thief. When a Kenyan is jailed five years for stealing a chicken and a cabinet secretary walks free after misappropriating a hospital's entire drug budget, the state has communicated its hierarchy of values with devastating clarity.

The path forward is neither mysterious nor unknown. It has been charted, repeatedly, in reports that gather dust with a dedication that suggests they were designed for precisely that purpose. It requires, at minimum, the genuine insulation of oversight institutions from political interference; the full implementation of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, with sanctions that bite; the operationalisation of whistleblower protections robust enough to actually protect; and a citizenry that demands, rather than merely requests, that its sovereignty be respected.

There is, in the end, a question that every governance framework must answer not in its preamble but in its practice: who pays the price when the state fails? In Kenya, the answer has been consistent across governments, across decades, across constitutional moments. The poor pay. They pay in the clinics with no medicine. They pay in the schools with no books. They pay in the bridges that collapse and the water that does not flow. The architects of the failure, meanwhile, write their memoirs, attend their grandchildren's graduations at foreign universities, and occasionally return to offer, with the breezy authority of experience, advice on governance reform.

Achebe concluded A Man of the People with a military coup the logical terminus of a democracy that had eaten itself from within. Kenya has, thus far, resisted that terminus. But constitutions, however beautifully drafted, do not enforce themselves. The Republic will be governed with integrity or it will be governed by those who have made peace with its absence. There is no third option. And the clock, as it always has, runs only in one direction.

The scholar is a social commentator

Corruption Kenya occupies unique paradoxical position within Africa's governance landscape; it is simultaneously celebrated for institutional innovation

When Africa chooses to study corruption from within: The promise, the paradox, and the questions surrounding Kenya's new anti-corruption research Centre

BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

EACC launches Africa anti-corruption research centre

The recently established Centre for Anti-Corruption Studies and Research in Africa (CEREAC) here in Nairobi has provoked interpretations, invited hope, suspicion, intellectual enquiry and public debate in equal measures. In Africa, establishment of such institution means far more than opening just an ordinary office, unveiling plaques or signing of agreements. Officially launched to serve as Africa's central research and capacity building institution on anti-corruption and financial integrity, the Centre arrives with an ambitious mandate; to deepen continental knowledge, strengthen investigative capacities, produce policy solutions, and support anti-corruption agencies facing increasingly complex forms of financial crimes in recent times.

In an age where corruption has migrated beyond envelopes and cash filled briefcases into digital networks, offshore structures, procurement ecosystems, algorithmic manipulation, and transnational financial flows, the argument for a specialized African research institution appears both timely and compelling. Yet almost immediately after its establishment, another conversation emerged – one more less administrative and more philosophical. Why Kenya? Why here? What does it mean that Africa has chosen Nairobi to host the intellectual headquarters for understanding and confronting corruption?

The responses have been revealing. For some the decision is a continental vote of confidence in Kenya's institutional maturity, administrative infrastructure, diplomatic positioning, and historical role as a regional governance and commercial hub. For others the symbolism cuts differently, the see irony, and perhaps discomfort. After all societies rarely build institutions in response to problems they have already conquered. Hospitals are built where disease burdens exist, agricultural research centres where food systems require transformation and financial think tanks flourish where commerce concentrates.

Could it therefore be argued that locating a continental anti-corruption research centre in Kenya reflects not only confidence, but recognition of proximity to the problem itself? That question may sound provocative, but it deserves intellectual honesty rather defensiveness. Because anti-corruption, at its highest level, is not only the study of crime, it involves the study of power. And power rarely welcomes mirrors.

Kenya occupies unique paradoxical position within Africa's governance landscape; it is simultaneously celebrated for institutional innovation and questioned for recurring governance controversies. It has become a place where digital public systems coexist with allegations of procurement leakages; where constitutional progress sits beside public frustration; where anti-corruption rhetoric is abundant, yet public trust often remains fragile. That contradiction is not uniquely Kenyan, it mirrors a wider African experience.

Across the continent, governments have invested heavily in anti-corruption architecture. Ethics commissions have been formed, integrity laws enacted, audit institutions strengthened, parliamentary oversight expanded, investigative agencies funded and international conventions ratified. And yet corruption persists, not because Africa lacks institutions, but perhaps because corruption itself has evolved faster than institutional imagination.

For decades public discourse treated corruption primarily as a moral failure-bad individuals making unethical choices. Modern scholarship is increasingly challenges this assumption. Political economists and governance scholars now argue that corruption is often systemic before it becomes personal. It is embedded in incentives, power arrangements, electoral structures, social expectations, economic inequality and institutional design.

This perspective changes everything. If corruption is systemic, the arrest alone cannot solve it, if it is political, prosecution alone cannot dismantle, if reproduces itself through networks of survival and patronage, then legal instruments alone become insufficient. This is where institutions such as CEREAC potentially matters. Research should ask uncomfortable questions that enforcement cannot. Why do leaders accused of corruption continue winning elections? Why do citizens condemn corruption publicly yet privately tolerate it when benefits toward their communities? Why do anti-corruption campaigns intensify around political transitions? Why do technologically advanced systems reduce petty bribery but leave elite massive extractions intact? Why do public institutions designed to restrain power sometimes become instruments for protecting it?

These are not courtroom questions, they are questions of human behaviour, political economy. Question of history and question of institutional psychology. And perhaps this explains why reactions to the centre's establishment have been so wide, varied and mixed. Among the anti-corruption crusaders, there is cautious optimism. They see an opportunity to finally generate African evidence rather than relying indefinitely on imported governance theories.

Among scholars, the Centre offers a rare opportunity to produce long-term continental datasets and deeper understanding of corruption's structural drivers. Within the legal fraternity, hopes emerge of stronger jurisprudence and policy reform informed by evidence rather than political urgency. But among sections of the public and political class, skepticism remain alive. Will this become another institution that diagnoses' endlessly but cures none? Will it produce shelves of reports while roads remain unfinished, public hospitals underfunded, and procurement scandals cyclical? Will citizens experience change – or simply hear more sophisticated language describing old failures? These questions should not be dismissed as cynicism; they reflect accumulated public memory.

Africans have witnessed commissions established, frameworks launched, strategic plans unveiled, and declarations signed. Many ordinary citizens have learned to reserve celebrations until outcomes become visible, And perhaps rightly so, because institutions derive legitimacy not from their architecture but from their consequences. If the centre produces knowledge that remains inside conference halls, its relevance will fade. If research become donor language disconnected from lived realities, public confidence will evaporate. If findings challenge only weak actors while avoiding powerful interests, credibility will collapse.

Institutions can illuminate hidden corruption pathways, strengthen independent inquiry, democratize public accountability, and translates research into measurable governance reforms, it may become one of Africa's most consequential governance investments. The burden is therefore unusually high. Kenya is not only hosting a building, but hosting a scrutiny, expectation and a continental conversation about whether Africa can finally move anti-corruption beyond symbolism and into structural transformation will be answered.

History is not generous to institutions that promise renewal and deliver bureaucracy, but remembers those that alter the outcomes. Years from now, Africans are unlikely to remember the speeches delivered during the launch of this centre. They will remember simpler things. Whether procurement became cleaner, institutions become clever, public offices became less profitable, public trust returned and most importantly whether the difference was felt. That is the true examination awaiting Africa's newest anti-corruption institution

G7 **Chaired by France, the G7 summit concluded without issuing a final communique, marking the second consecutive year that the bloc has failed to produce a unified closing document**

G7 summit ends without communique, exposing deepening divisions

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

The three-day Group of Seven (G7) summit concluded Wednesday in Evian, France, amid visible divisions among member states, as leaders struggled to bridge differences on major international and economic issues.Although the summit produced a series of thematic outcomes, it once again failed to deliver a unified final communique, highlighting growing challenges to consensus-building within the bloc.

Fractured unity

Chaired by France, the G7 summit concluded without issuing a final communique, marking the second consecutive year that the bloc has failed to produce a unified closing document, following a similar outcome under Canada's chairmanship in 2025. Instead, nine thematic deliverables were released, covering areas such as geopolitics, the global economy and public health. Summit organizers had already abandoned the idea of a final communique during the preparatory phase, opting instead to publish thematic documents to mask differences between the United States and its allies, Kyodo News reported, citing diplomatic sources. French President Emmanuel Macron described the summit as "objectively a success," while acknowledging persistent differences between the United States and the other six members on issues such as climate change and the United Nations.

Tensions between the United States and its allies were evident even before the summit began. U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday threatened tariffs of up to 100 percent on French wine, demanding that France scrap its digital services tax targeting American technology companies. Macron rejected the demand, stressing that such taxation falls within Europe's legal framework. "Partners should never impose tariffs on one another or create instability," he said. Differences also surfaced in the security domain. Disagreements persisted over how to respond to tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. While European countries signaled willingness to participate in maritime escort operations, Trump argued that restoring navigation would not require external involvement. According to news outlet Politico, European leaders sought to avoid a direct confrontation with Trump at the summit, particularly as he shifted focus from the Iran crisis back to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Officials fear that, no longer constrained by Middle East tensions, Trump could attempt to reassert control over Ukraine peace efforts, sideline European diplomacy, and undermine their strategy of maintaining maximum pressure on Russia while supporting Ukraine. Divisions extended into the technological sphere. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney warned ahead of the summit that excessive reliance on U.S. AI models poses strategic risks. Macron criticized Washington's restrictions on access to cutting-edge AI technologies, calling the move "a bad thing" and warning it reflected an overly "nationalist" approach. Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced plans to ban social media use for individuals under 16, a move CNN described as "sure to infuriate Trump's tech oligarch allies."

G7 leaders and their guests during a meeting recently.

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Uncertain partner

Analysts increasingly view the United States as the principal source of uncertainty within the G7. The strains have become particularly evident amid the fallout from the Middle East conflict. The war has disrupted global energy markets, exacerbating inflationary pressures worldwide. While the United States has absorbed some economic impact, the consequences have been far more severe for countries heavily dependent on the Strait of Hormuz. European allies are eager to see the waterway fully reopened and shipping volumes return to prewar levels. However, experts note that clearing naval mines laid by Iran following U.S.-Israeli strikes in February will take time, delaying full normalization. European leaders have sought to keep Trump engaged in the G7 process despite growing divergence. Trump, who left last year's summit in Canada early, has long displayed limited enthusiasm for the grouping. CNN noted that he "seemed a little bored" as Macron outlined this year's summit objectives. In an apparent effort to avoid another premature departure, Macron arranged a lavish dinner forget Trump at the Palace of Versailles following the summit.

However, French newspaper La Tribune criticized Macron for prioritizing Trump's presence, even at the expense of removing climate and gender-related issues from the agenda. "What we are increasingly seeing is Europeans beginning to think about a life with less America," said Victor Cha, head of geopolitics and foreign policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. A recent survey published by the European Council on Foreign Relations highlights a sharp shift in public opinion: only 11 percent of Europeans now view the United States as an ally, down from 16 percent six months ago and 22 percent in November 2024. Nearly half of respondents regard the United States as merely a "necessary partner," while around a quarter see it as a rival, reflecting a significant erosion of trust in transatlantic relations. Sebastien Jean, a member of the French Council of Economic Analysis, argued that Trump has become the greatest challenge facing the G7, raising doubts about whether member states can still engage with one another as genuine allies.

Diminishing global relevance

The G7's internal divisions point to a deeper structural issue: its declining capacity to represent and manage global affairs in an increasingly multipolar world.

Founded half a century ago, the grouping once served as a central platform for coordinating economic and geopolitical policies among advanced economies. However, its cohesion has weakened significantly in recent years. Economist Christian de Boissieu argued that with the rise of emerging economies such as the BRICS countries, the G7 no longer adequately represents the global economy. Without broader participation, it is increasingly difficult to address major global challenges effectively. Sebastien Jean further noted that while the G7 once styled itself as the "steering committee" of the global economy and financial system, it can no longer credibly claim that role. Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University, said that on issues ranging from global economic governance and supply chain stability to climate change, security and development, the G7 alone is increasingly unable to deliver effective solutions.

Although the bloc has recognized its limitations and sought broader participation, it remains reluctant to genuinely share its leadership with non-Western countries on an equal footing, he added. This lack of representativeness is also reflected in its agenda-setting. La Tribune observed that although France placed "reducing global economic imbalances" on the summit agenda, it overlooked other critical issues, including extreme wealth concentration and outdated international tax systems. Similarly, Swiss outlet Beobachter argued that the G7 no longer reflects today's geopolitical realities, criticizing the removal of climate change from the agenda to accommodate the United States as a "major omission."

HIV **Kenya has made real gains against HIV — but young people are still bearing the heaviest burden**

A silent victory, a growing warning: HIV cases fall but Kenya's youth remain in danger

Kenya has made real gains against HIV — but young people are still bearing the heaviest burden

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Illustration

Kenya has every reason to feel a measure of quiet pride in its fight against HIV and AIDS. Over the years, the country has made remarkable progress — infections have declined, treatment has improved, and people living with HIV are living longer, healthier lives.

But beneath that progress lies a troubling reality that cannot be brushed aside.

Young people and children remain at the heart of the epidemic. Data from the Ministry of Health shows that young people aged 15 to 24 now account for 41 percent of all new HIV infections recorded this year — a figure that has alarmed health experts who warn this age group is growing more vulnerable, not less, despite decades of awareness campaigns.

Kenya still has approximately 1.3 million people living with HIV, one of the highest totals in the region. Treatment is more accessible than ever, yet more than 19,000 new infections were recorded in 2025 alone. Of those, 58 percent occurred among people aged 15 to 34 — a generation that should be thriving.

Children, too, remain caught in the crisis. Significant strides have been made in preventing mother-to-child transmission, but the gains are slipping. Recent reports show the transmission rate from mothers to babies has climbed from 7.3 percent to 9 percent, underlining the urgent need for stronger maternal healthcare and earlier testing.

Experts point to a cluster of factors driving infections among young people — risky sexual behaviour, peer pressure, misinformation circulating on social media, substance abuse, and a fading of the HIV awareness culture that defined earlier generations. Perhaps most tellingly, many young Kenyans today say they fear an unplanned pregnancy more than HIV, a shift in perception that is quietly costing lives.

There is, however, cause for cautious hope. This year Kenya became the first country in East Africa to introduce Lenacapavir, a breakthrough HIV prevention injection that provides six months of protection with just two doses a year. Health officials are counting on the innovation to help turn the tide among adolescents and young adults.

The broader message is not complicated. Kenya is winning important battles, but the war is far from over. Every new infection among a young person is a dream interrupted, a future placed in jeopardy — and a reminder that awareness, testing, and prevention must remain national priorities, not seasonal campaigns.

Progress is real, and it should be acknowledged. But if Kenya is serious about raising an HIV-free generation, the focus must shift decisively towards protecting its young people and children — before the hard-won gains of recent years begin to unravel.

School fires **In 2025, Hillside Endarasha lost twenty-one children in a dormitory fire. Now Utumishi adds sixteen more**

Sixty-nine children too many: Why Kenya must finally fix its broken school safety system

Burnt dormitory

BY Jane Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

In my years working in the education sector, I have witnessed five mass casualty events involving children. The Moi Girls fire of 2018 claimed ten lives. In 2019, Precious Talent Academy collapsed, killing eight children. In 2020, Kakamega Primary saw fourteen children die in a stampede. In 2025, Hillside Endarasha lost twenty-one children in a dormitory fire. Now Utumishi adds sixteen more to that painful tally.

That is sixty-nine children.

And that number does not include the many others lost in fires, accidents, drowning incidents, and school-related tragedies that never make headlines.

After every tragedy, Kenya follows a familiar script: blame is assigned, simple explanations are offered, and the country moves on. We speak of discipline, parenting, or moral decline. But these are only fragments of a much larger picture.

In the case of Utumishi, there is also a criminal dimension that must be confronted. Accountability for deliberate harm is necessary and unavoidable.

But alongside that truth is another we repeatedly avoid: systemic failure.

Overcrowded dormitories, weak inspections, inadequate water supply, blocked exits, and ignored safety standards are recurring realities. These conditions do not cause every tragedy — but they turn manageable incidents into mass casualty events.

Had safety systems been functioning as intended — inspections consistent, enforcement real, and standards non-negotiable — the scale of loss would have been significantly reduced.

This is not new.

From St Kizito in 1991, Bombolulu in 1998, Nyeri High in 1999, Kyanguli in 2001, and Moi Girls in 2017, the pattern is consistent: weak enforcement, overcrowding, unresolved grievances, and delayed institutional response.

After Kyanguli, Kenya briefly grasped a hard truth: punishment is not prevention. That moment informed genuine reforms, including revised safety standards and new regulatory frameworks. But urgency faded, and implementation weakened with it.

Today, inspections are often predictable, violations persist, and enforcement is largely reactive — triggered only after tragedy strikes.

We have built systems that assume compliance rather than enforce it.

Yet we know what works. Where regulators are empowered and independent, standards hold and unsafe institutions are shut. Basic education should never be the weakest link in the regulatory chain.

This conversation must move beyond outrage and blame toward structural reform. We must confront overcrowding, strengthen inspection regimes, and ensure accountability is continuous — not episodic.

Because the truth is simple: children are safest in systems designed to prevent failure, not merely respond to it.

Sixty-nine children is not a statistic. It is a warning.

Utumishi, Endarasha, Kyanguli, Moi Girls — these are not isolated tragedies. They are symptoms of a system under strain.

We know what must be done. The question is whether we will finally do it.

If we truly believe that the life of a Kenyan child is priceless, then that belief must be reflected in how we design, fund, inspect, and enforce safety in our schools.

Not after the next tragedy. Now.

Jane Mwangi is an education sector professional with experience spanning school safety, policy, and child welfare in Kenya.

Sports >> *Recalled by Carlo Ancelotti, Casemiro became an untouchable figure for Brazil - until a disappointing World Cup start made him a prime target for criticism at home.

Casemiro, Ancelotti's lieutenant and symbol of Brazil troubles

Casemiro of Brazil during the FIFA World Cup USA 2026 Group C match between Brazil and Morocco at New York, New Jersey Stadium, United States, on June 13, 2026. (Photo by Ayman Aref / NurPhoto / NurPhoto via AFP)

Recalled by Carlo Ancelotti, Casemiro became an untouchable figure for Brazil - until a disappointing World Cup start made him a prime target for criticism at home.

The former Real Madrid player, one of the leaders of the squad chasing a sixth world title, looked destined as the man to anchor Brazil's midfield at the tournament after an impressive final season with Manchester United.

But his limp display in Saturday's 1-1 draw with Morocco, in which he was replaced at half-time, has left the 34-year-old enduring his lowest moment since first pulling on the famous yellow shirt in 2011.

The performance has also strained the bond between Brazilian fans and Ancelotti, hailed as the man who could lead the five-time champions back to the summit for the first time since 2002.

In his first squad selection, Ancelotti surprised many by recalling Casemiro, a five-time Champions League winner with Madrid during a nine-year spell in Spain.

The holding midfielder had been out of the Brazil picture for more than 18 months, but Ancelotti revived his international career, starting him in 12 of the 13 matches he has overseen.

Casemiro captained the side four times, scoring twice and providing two assists. While Brazil continued to show defensive frailties - conceding 12 goals in those 13 matches - his presence brought balance to the midfield.

Ancelotti sees Casemiro as an on-field extension of the coach, giving the team structure and controlling the rhythm in possession.

"There are no players in Brazil with the same characteristics as Casemiro," Ancelotti said last year.

When some suggested two years ago that Casemiro's legs had gone during a turbulent patch at United, Ancelotti did not share that view.

- Biggest disappointment –

However, in the opening match of his third World Cup, Casemiro looked off the pace, out of sync with Bruno Guimaraes and struggled to recover possession, a hallmark of his game.

"He was the player who disappointed most on debut," former Brazil great Romario said on his YouTube channel.

"Casemiro is the coach's favourite -— that's normal -— but given what he represents for the coach and the team, he really disappointed."

Casemiro, who admitted on arrival in the United States that Brazil were "a little step behind" the main favourites, was completely upstaged by 18-year-old Ayyoub Bouaddi against Morocco.

He said Ancelotti explained that his premature substitution was to protect him after he picked up a booking. Fabinho replaced him and provided greater solidity alongside Guimaraes.

Questions now surround whether Casemiro will start Friday's Group C match against Haiti in Philadelphia.

The Caribbean side, appearing at the World Cup for the first time since 1974, pushed Scotland before losing 1-0 in Boston.

"In Brazil we always want the best, we want to win, but it still depends on us," Casemiro said after the opener.

Recovering his form is crucial as his club future remains uncertain following his departure from United.

Reports claim Casemiro has agreed terms to join Lionel Messi's Inter Miami, but the move is on hold due to a compensation dispute with another MLS club, Los Angeles Galaxy, a source close to the player told AFP.

According to the source, Galaxy are claiming discovery rights -- a mechanism that grants MLS clubs priority to negotiate with players.

In this case, it concerns Ancelotti's embattled right-hand man with Brazil.

AFP

Sports >> *"The Czechia team is very powerful, but my side pushed well to have an equaliser. With this evening's performance, we can win over South Korea." Hugo Broos, South Africa Coach

Bafana roar back: Mokoena penalty stuns Czechia in Atlanta fightback

By **Norman Mwale**

"The Czechia team is very powerful, but my side pushed well to have an equaliser. With this evening's performance, we can win over South Korea." Hugo Broos, South Africa Coach

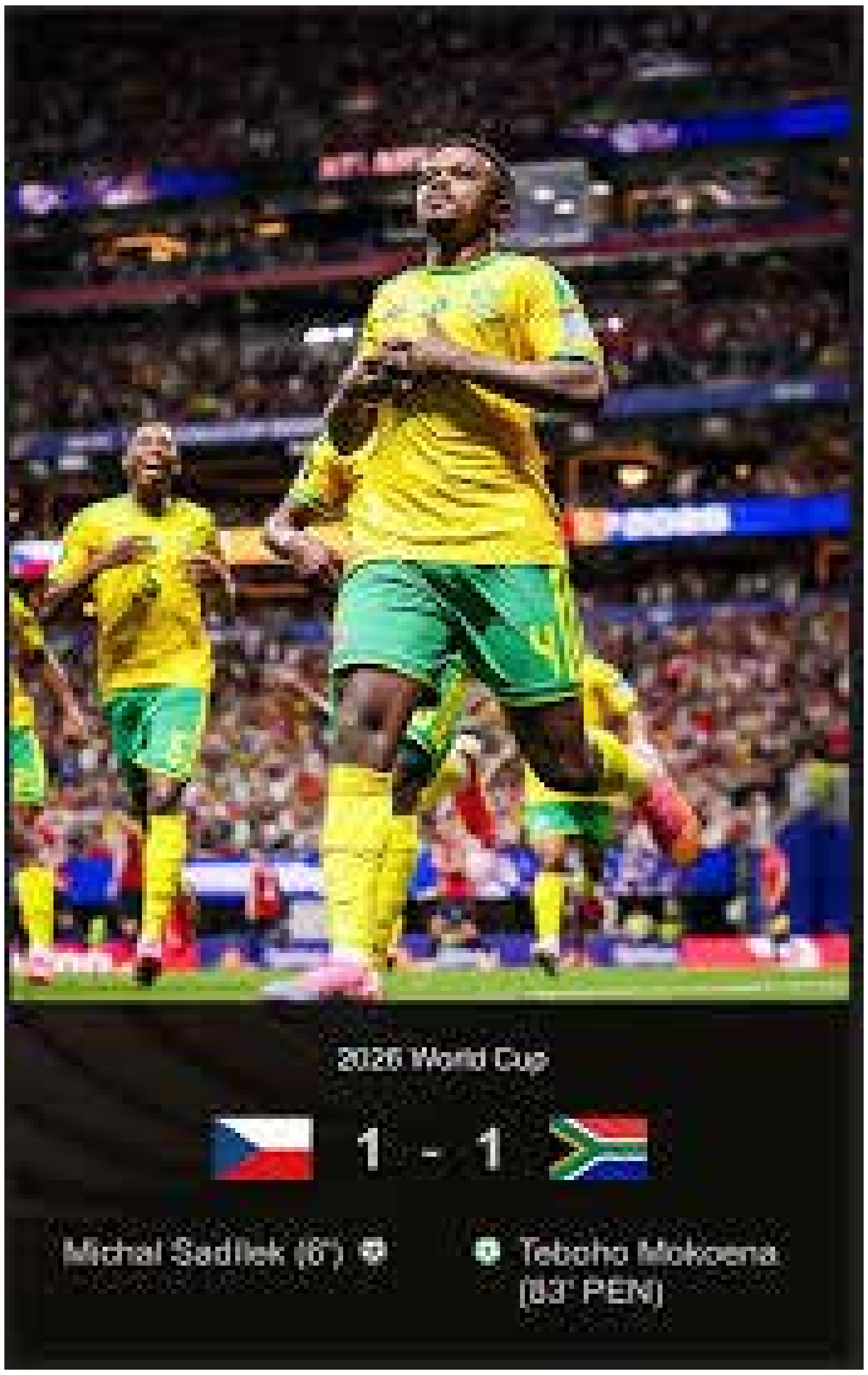
South Africa roared back from an early setback to stun Czechia with a late equaliser and leave Atlanta Stadium with a hard-fought 1-1 draw on Thursday night. A sixth-minute strike from Sadilek looked set to hand the hosts victory, but Theboko Mokoena's powerful 80th-minute penalty ensured Bafana Bafana finished the stronger side after seven minutes of added time. Mokoena was named man of the match for his composure under pressure and decisive intervention.

The Czechs struck first when Sadilek finished clinically from a right-wing cross in the 6th minute, catching South Africa cold. "We started the game with intensity and got the goal we wanted," a Czechia team official said afterwards. "To concede so late from a penalty is disappointing, but we must take the point."

South Africa struggled to respond before the interval and went into the break trailing 1-0 despite winning their second corner in the 35th minute, which came to nothing. The first half ended with four minutes added on and both Theboko Mokoena and Mbatha already in the referee's notebook following mistimed challenges, the latter for a dangerous foul lifted over the bar.

Bafana coach Hugo Broos made his first change early in the second half, bringing Mofokeng on for Adams as South Africa chased the game. The substitution injected energy down the flanks and the visitors grew in confidence. Ladislav was cautioned for Czechia in the 73rd minute as pressure mounted, and seven minutes later the breakthrough arrived. Mokoena, already booked in the 32nd minute, stepped up from the penalty spot in the 80th minute and drove the ball powerfully into the net, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way. "I am very proud and excited, the way we played, we were confident on the ball. I am proud of the team," Mokoena said. "I just had to keep my composure and hit it hard. We showed character. No one believed we could come back after that early goal, but this team never gives up."

Czechia pushed for a winner during seven minutes of added time but South Africa defended resolutely to secure a deserved point. The result leaves both sides with work to do in the group, though Bafana's resilience will give them belief ahead of their next fixture. "We showed spirit and we showed quality," a South Africa official said. "To come from a goal down away from home and take a point, that is the mentality we need. The lads deserve credit." For Czechia, the early goal and Ladislav's late yellow summed up a night of missed opportunities. "We controlled the first half, but football is 90 minutes plus," the Czech official added. "We must learn to close games out."



**Score line:* Czechia 1-1 South Africa*

**Scorers:* Sadilek 6' Czechia; Mokoena 80' pen South Africa*

**Man of the Match:* Theboko Mokoena, South Africa*

**Cards:* Theboko Mokoena 32' South Africa; Mbatha South Africa; Ladislav 73' Czechia*

**Substitution:* Mofokeng on, Adams off South Africa, second half*

**Corners:* Czechia 1, South Africa 2*

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

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From brokenness to purpose: A journey of faith, resilience, and renewal

Irene Vaksberg: Turning Pain into Purpose and Inspiring Others to Live Again

By: Anila Bukhari
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Irene Vaksberg is a woman whose life story is a powerful testament to resilience, faith, determination, and the extraordinary strength of the human spirit. Her journey is not simply one of survival but of transformation—a remarkable story of overcoming unimaginable challenges and rediscovering hope when life seemed impossible. Through pain, loss, and adversity, Irene emerged stronger, becoming an inspiration to countless people seeking courage in their own struggles.

Born in the former Soviet Union, Irene carried with her dreams of building a meaningful and successful life. More than four decades ago, she moved to the United States, a country she proudly calls home. For 44 years, America provided opportunities that allowed her to create the life she had envisioned. As a dedicated single mother, she worked tirelessly to build a future for her family while pursuing her own ambitions and dreams.

Throughout her life, Irene demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial spirit. She successfully built and operated businesses, including owning her own salon, a dream she had worked hard to achieve. Her determination, work ethic, and passion enabled her to create a life filled with accomplishments and cherished experiences. She traveled to destinations she had always dreamed of visiting, checked off many items from her bucket list, and embraced life with enthusiasm and gratitude.

Family has always been at the center of Irene's world. She is the proud mother of two beautiful daughters, now adults, who have been a source of love, strength, and motivation throughout her journey. Today, she is also blessed with five wonderful grandchildren who bring immense joy and meaning to her life. To those who know her, Irene's greatest accomplishment is not measured by business success or material achievements but by the love and dedication she has poured into her family.

For many years, life seemed to be unfolding exactly as she had hoped. However, life often reminds us that even the most carefully planned paths can change in an instant.

Approximately fifteen years ago, Irene's life was forever altered by a devastating car accident. What initially seemed like a tragic event soon became the beginning of an extended battle with chronic pain, physical suffering, and emotional despair. The accident left her with severe health complications that dramatically affected every aspect of her life.

For six long years, Irene lived in relentless pain. Daily life became a struggle as she endured chronic physical discomfort accompanied by anxiety and depression. The treatments intended to help her often brought only temporary relief. She underwent numerous medical procedures, including epidural injections and hip injections, while relying on a large collection of medications in an attempt to manage her symptoms.

As her condition worsened, Irene eventually found herself dependent on morphine. The powerful medications affected her nervous system, causing shaking, spasms, and additional complications that further diminished her quality of life. What had once been a vibrant and active existence became overshadowed by physical limitations and emotional suffering.

The consequences of her condition extended far beyond her health. The successful businesses she had spent years building began to collapse under the weight of circumstances beyond her control. Financial pressures mounted, bills accumulated, and the future she had worked so hard to create seemed to disappear before her eyes.

The emotional toll was equally devastating. Irene found herself battling hopelessness, fear, and despair. The confidence and faith that had guided her through previous challenges were shaken. She felt trapped inside a body that no longer functioned as it once had and struggled to imagine a future worth living.

Perhaps the most heartbreaking moment came when medical professionals informed her that they had exhausted all available treatment options. After years of searching for answers, doctors told her there was little more they could do and suggested she prepare herself for life in a wheelchair.

For someone who had spent her life building, creating, and caring for others, the news was devastating. The possibility of losing her independence felt unbearable. Already exhausted by years of pain and disappointment, Irene felt as though the final spark of hope had been extinguished.

During this dark chapter, she reached a point where she no longer wanted to continue fighting. The physical suffering, emotional exhaustion, and uncertainty about the future became overwhelming. She feared becoming dependent on her daughters, particularly the thought of burdening them with lifelong caregiving responsibilities. It was not the life she envisioned for herself, nor the future she wanted for her family.

In her deepest moments of despair, Irene prayed. At first, those prayers came from a place of hopelessness. She prayed for an end to the suffering and questioned whether she could continue enduring the pain. Yet what followed would become a defining turning point in her life.

Over time, Irene began to experience a profound shift in perspective. The prayers that once focused on giving up gradually transformed into prayers for strength, healing, and purpose. She realized that although her circumstances had changed, her value, purpose, and ability to impact others had not disappeared.

This awakening marked the beginning of a remarkable personal transformation. Rather than allowing pain to define her future, Irene chose to reclaim her life one step at a time. She began rebuilding her faith, rediscovering hope, and embracing the possibility that her greatest purpose might emerge from her greatest struggle.

Irene Vaksberg.

Through perseverance and determination, she learned that healing is not always about returning to who we once were. Sometimes healing means becoming someone stronger, wiser, and more compassionate because of what we have endured.

Today, Irene Vaksberg's story serves as a beacon of hope for people facing illness, loss, uncertainty, and adversity. Her journey demonstrates that even when every door appears closed, new possibilities can emerge. She reminds others that circumstances do not define a person's worth and that resilience can be found even in life's darkest moments.

Her life stands as proof that setbacks do not have to become endings. Through faith, courage, and an unwavering commitment to keep moving forward, Irene transformed a story of pain into a story of purpose. She continues to inspire others to believe that no matter how broken life may seem, hope remains possible, healing can begin, and a brighter future can still be written.

For those who hear her story, Irene Vaksberg offers a powerful message: never stop believing in the possibility of a new beginning. Sometimes the chapters we never wanted to live become the chapters that inspire others the most.

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