



**Dr Thuo Mathenge's influence:** From revitalising KALRO to earning global recognition and eyeing Nyeri top seat  
The growing influence of KALRO Board chairman Dr. Thuo Mathenge received another significant boost last week when IITA appointed him as an AFloSave Ambassador  
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**Nairobi green spaces under growing threat,** conservation groups warn  
A coalition of environmental organizations and community conservation groups has issued a strong warning over what it describes as the accelerating loss and degradation of Nairobi's forests, parks and public green spaces  
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Monday, June 22, 2026 No. 01574 KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)



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# The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

**Fire inferno** Gikomba has burned repeatedly over the decades. Major fires struck the market in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023

# Gikomba burns again

A fire tore through sections of Gikomba Market in the early hours of yesterday morning, destroying business premises, consuming goods worth millions of shillings and deepening the anguish of traders who have lost everything to flames more than once.

The Kenya Red Cross confirmed that the blaze was reported at approximately 4:00 a.m., triggering the deployment of response teams alongside a multi-agency emergency unit. Fire brigade crews spent the better part of the morning battling the inferno and working to prevent it from spreading further into the densely packed stalls that define East Africa's largest second-hand clothing market. No casualties had been confirmed at the time of reporting, though the full extent of the damage was yet to be formally established.

Videos that circulated on social media showed walls of flame and thick columns of smoke rising above the market as traders scrambled to salvage whatever they could. The images were harrowing — but they were also, to anyone who has followed Gikomba's history, painfully familiar.

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Fire raging down Gikomba Market stalls / courtesy

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# Kalonzo calls for June 25 Public holiday to honour Gen Z protest victims

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka has called for June 25 to be officially recognized as a public holiday in honour of victims of the 2024 Gen Z demonstrations, saying their sacrifice should remain a permanent part of Kenya's national memory.

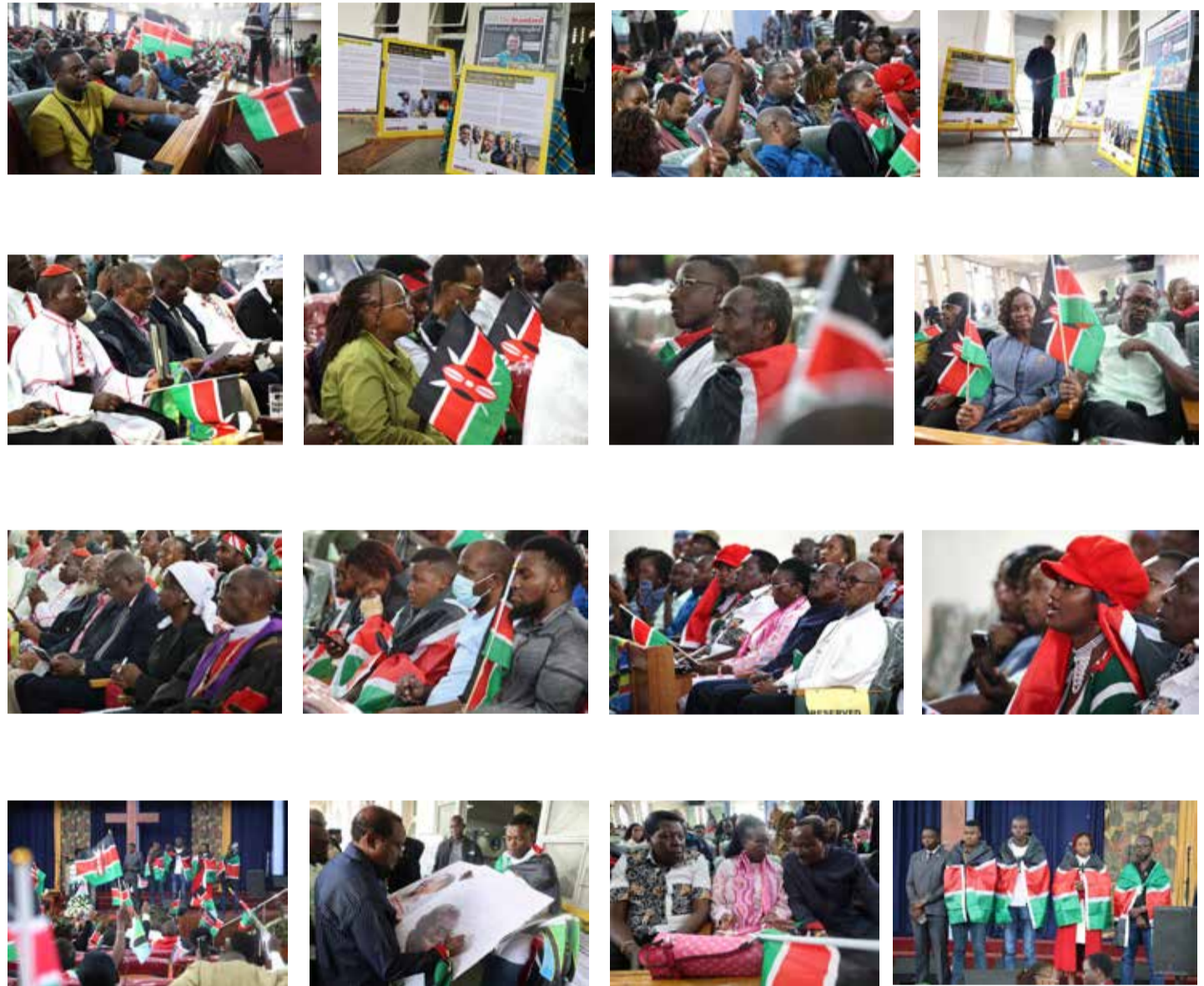
Speaking yesterday after attending a memorial service for families, friends and victims of the June 25 protests at Nairobi Baptist Church, Kalonzo said the country must never forget the young Kenyans who lost their lives during the demonstrations. He proposed the establishment of a national monument to commemorate those he described as heroes whose courage and sacrifice helped shape the country's democratic discourse.

"We gathered to honour the lives of young Kenyans whose courage and sacrifice must never be forgotten," he said.

The former Vice President noted that the memorial service reinforced the need for leaders to exercise compassion and responsibility in serving the public. Drawing from reflections made earlier during a service at CLJ Maranatha Church in Karen, Nairobi, he said leaders should embrace the role of fathers and mothers by offering guidance, protection and care to citizens, particularly young people.

Kalonzo also urged the National Police Service to exercise restraint and professionalism when handling public demonstrations, warning against the use of excessive force on unarmed civilians.

He said Kenya's future depends on justice, accountability and respect for human life, adding that the country must remain committed to protecting constitutional freedoms while safeguarding the dignity and rights of all citizens.



Editor's Desk

## The Mt. Kenya Times



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Members of the Maa community in Kajiado County have launched “Operation Linda Mali,” an initiative aimed at protecting businesses and property ahead of the planned June 25 demonstrations. Speaking in Kitengela, leaders of the Maa Unity Agenda expressed concern over alleged looting, violence and destruction witnessed during previous protests, particularly in Kitengela, Ongata Rongai, Ngong and Kiserian. National Chairman Jonathan Ole Pasha said the group supports peaceful demonstrations but opposes violence and destruction of property. Kaputiei Chapter Chairman Godfrey Ole Ntapayia urged residents to remain vigilant and work with security agencies to maintain peace. The leaders also cautioned youth against being used to cause unrest, warning that such actions discourage investment and job creation in the county.



Permanent Secretary for Youth Affairs and the Creative Economy Fikirini Jacobs has urged young people to embrace Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as the government intensifies efforts to tackle unemployment. Speaking at the National Amani Youth Summit in Eldoret, he said the government is expanding internships, entrepreneurship support, labour mobility programmes and apprenticeship opportunities to equip youth with market-driven skills. He noted that TVET enrolment has grown to about 900,000 students, helping bridge the skills gap and support industrialisation. Jacobs said over 121,000 youth have benefited from NYOTA grants, while 90,000 are undergoing apprenticeship training. He also highlighted employment opportunities under the Climate Works Programme and Nairobi River Regeneration Project, urging youth to take advantage of available government programmes.

Smallholder tea farmers from Getungurumu in Nyaribari Masaba Central Zone have completed an intensive Farmer Field School training programme supported by Kiamokama Tea Factory, aimed at improving tea quality, productivity and sustainability. Over the past year, the farmers received practical training on soil health and nutrition management, quality plucking standards, climate-smart agroforestry and integrated pest management. The programme sought to enhance farm productivity, strengthen resilience to climate change and promote environmental conservation. During the graduation ceremony, Walter Apiri praised the farmers for adopting modern farming practices that support the long-term growth of the tea sector. Graduates are now expected to share their knowledge and promote sustainable tea farming within their communities.



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Murang’a County’s industrialization drive has received a major boost after six companies were issued with allotment letters granting them 99-year leases at the Murang’a Industrial Park, with over 55 percent of the available land already allocated. Governor Irungu Kang’ata said the county has raised Sh240 million in lease fees from investors, funds that will support key county programmes and infrastructure development. The firms include Absolute Healthcare Services, Top Pork, Kenagro Industries, Ashland Traders Limited, Pelican Metal and Joska Enterprises. The 1,300-acre park, developed on former Del Monte land, combines a Special Economic Zone and an Export Processing Zone. Since the 2025 Murang’a Investment Conference, 27 investors have been approved to set up operations. The project is expected to create jobs, boost manufacturing, support farmers through value addition and strengthen the county’s economy.

The Government has reassured Kenyans about the safety of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), saying strict regulatory measures are in place to protect public health and the environment. Speaking in Isiolo, National Biosafety Authority legal officer Moses Sande said no GMO products can be introduced into the country without undergoing rigorous assessment and approval by relevant agencies. He noted that genetically modified cotton is currently the only crop approved for commercial cultivation in Kenya and is being grown in 30 arid and semi-arid counties. Sande added that scientists are developing drought-tolerant crops, including maize and Irish potatoes, to enhance food security. He also highlighted ongoing collaboration between the NBA, KEPHIS and the Directorate of Veterinary Services to ensure GMO safety.



The National Youth Council (NYC) participated in the KIPRA Mentorship Programme for Universities and TVETs held at the University of Nairobi under the theme, “Enhancing Socioeconomic Development in Kenya Through Promotion of Youth Talents.” During a session on youth talent development, the council highlighted various programmes and initiatives aimed at nurturing, promoting and commercializing youth talents. Discussions focused on opportunities available to help young people transform their talents into sustainable sources of income, as well as challenges affecting talent development. The council also emphasized the importance of youth leadership, civic participation and involvement in decision-making processes to influence Kenya’s development agenda.



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**Politics** The DP said there will be no room for law breakers to perpetrate crimes in the name of demonstrations saying the Constitution protects everyone

# Kindiki: No space for looting, property destruction during opposition protests

BY DPCS

@themkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has said the government will not entertain any attempts to exploit the planned opposition protests to loot and destroy property saying stern action will be taken against those who will break the law.

The DP said there will be no room for law breakers to perpetrate crimes in the name of demonstrations saying the Constitution protects everyone including those not participating.

“On Thursday, there will be no room for monkey business anywhere in the republic of Kenya. No one will threaten us from protecting Kenyans who are busy in their businesses, travelling or going about their trade away from the demonstrations,” DP said.

The Second in Command spoke yesterday when attended an interdenominational church service and presided over a fundraiser for 19 churches at Kapsang in Soy Constituency, Uasin Gishu County.

“Demonstrations are permitted by the Constitution. But there will be no space for anyone to infringe on the rights of others, to loot and attack other Kenyans. Everyone will be protected, those participating in the demonstrations and everyone else not participating,” he reiterated.

The Deputy President accused the planners of hanging on lies and falsehoods which had already been debunked

during parliamentary debates and other discourses on the Finance Bill, 2026.

He affirmed that the Bill as adopted by Parliament does not raise any taxes and the government has no intention of burdening Kenyans with more taxes.

“Those who were spreading falsehoods and lies have been exposed in broad daylight. There is no clause raising taxes. Now they have nothing to hang on for their lies, they are saying they will still demonstrate,” he stated.

The DP praised President Ruto for being focused and delivering on his promises pointing out the country’s economic stability, improved agricultural productivity, massive infrastructural development, universal health coverage and ongoing housing projects.

“The President is working hard and he will continue serving the people of Kenya because he was elected to do so,” he noted.

Owing to his impressive development record despite only being in office for under four years and with the full backing of the Constitution, the DP said the Head of State should serve for a full term of 10 years.

“The Constitution envisages a ten-year period for a President to implement the policies and projects in their manifesto. The Constitution doesn’t say the President should serve for only one term. It is designed for a President to serve for two terms,” he declared.

Further, the DP said the



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki (centre) with Governor Jonathan Bii (left) and MP Oscar Sudi yesterday.

framers of the Supreme Law understood the need for a maximum 10 years for the President as the period provides adequate time to start the policies and implement them.

“The first term is to commence the projects and programmes as per the manifesto and the second term is for completing those projects. Anyone speaking about one term should know that it is against the Constitution,” he reiterated.

The DP urged residents from

Uasin Gishu, the President’s home county, to throw their weight behind the Head of State who he revealed is keen to ensure every part of the country is developed.

“I am grateful for the 100 percent support for the President. I beseech you to continue supporting the President and his government,” he said.

The County is a beneficiary of the government’s extensive development agenda targeting the whole country.

A new 4000-bed capacity referral hospital is set for

construction in the area. The County is also a big recipient of subsidized fertiliser owing to it being among the country’s food baskets.

The devolved unit has also benefitted from the affordable housing programme as 10,000 housing units are ongoing. Hundreds of kilometres of roads are also under construction in the county.

Also in attendance were Treasury Principal Secretary Chris Kiptoo, Governors Jonathan Bii (Uasin Gishu), Susan Kihika (Nakuru), Stephen

Sang (Nandi), Wisley Rotich (Elgeyo Marakwet), Jeremiah Lomorukai (Turkana), Nandi Deputy Governor Eulita Mitei; Senators Jackson Mandago (Uasin Gishu), William Kisang’ (Elgeyo Marakwet), MPs David Kiplagat (Soy), Oscar Sudi (Kapsaret), David Gikaria (Nakuru Town East), Joseph Makilap (Baringo North), Irene Njoki, (Bahati), Rahab Mukami (Nyeri County), Joseph Wainaina (Nominated), host of MCAs, thousands of church faithful among others.

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IN BUSINESS

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**Politics** After the payment, he sent his personal assistant, John Kariru to the party's Nyeri office for registration to the aspirants list.

# Gachagua kicks out UDA "mole" from Wamunyoro, heads to roll at DCP hq

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

A Mathira parliamentary aspirants was ejected from the home of DCP party leader Rigathi Gachagua's Wamunyoro home in Nyeri where aspirants were scheduled to meet.

Solomon Maina Muriithi who has had an extensive campaign in the constituency has been at pains shrugging the tag of being a UDA mole.

Impeccable sources at the party headquarters told the Mt Kenya Times that Maina paid his subscription fees on Tuesday last week after he allegedly hoodwinked some officials that he had acquired the party leaders nod after parting with KSh2m and another KSh300k to some undisclosed officials.

After the payment, he sent his personal assistant, John Kariru to the party's Nyeri office for registration to the aspirants list.

Maina is said to have greased the palm of the party's county coordinator Wanyaga Gathaka over time to the tune of close to KSh1 million.

There has been hue and cry by aspirants over extortion running to hundreds of thousands of shillings for running the office.

Among those milked dry by the coordinator in whose premises the office is located are Peter Githinji Tropical, John Kariuki Choromaai, Edmund Kimaru, Anthony Gitonga

among others.

Gachagua is reported to have been highly infuriated on learning of the allegations of him having solicited any funds from the aspirant and sought to know those that approved the registration of the aspirant whom he has not been in talking terms for quite some time.

Maina, the immediate former chairman of KTDA (MS), a job he got courtesy of Gachagua when he was in good books is reported to be a business associate of President William Ruto and Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro.

The trio hold majority shares in Sidian Bank where the president's company holds 27.5%, Wizpro owned by Maina holds 24.5% with the legislator having close to seven percent.

Wizpro also holds the tender for maintain the Thika super highway among other government projects.

The Mathira seat has attracted at least six aspirants with Peter Githinji Tropical a confidant of Gachagua seemingly the front runner in the DCP nominations.

Others in the party include businessman Dominic Muraya, Kirimukuyu MCA Anthony Ndagita and Daniel Kiige.

Engineer Maina Gateru is so far the sole Jubilee aspirant from the constituency while the incumbent MP Eric Wamumbi is unchallenged for the UDA ticket.



Rigathi Gachagua addressing aspirants from Nyeri county last week.

Meanwhile, even before the wounds of a humiliating ejection could start healing, Maina found himself in the midst of a scuffle in a solemn ceremony in Magutu ward in the constituency.

Mourners had gathered at the home of the late Bishop Peter Waruteere at Kiangengi village for prayer and funeral arrangements.

Trouble started when Maina apparently orally stepped on the toes of

area MP Eric Wamumbi who moved in to snatch the microphone from the beleaguered politician.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that Solomon may have lost valuables including cash as the fray got out of hand but the MP's hawk eyed guards ensuring he was unharmed.

This comes in the wake of a worryingly goons menace across the country including attacks in churches.

The abrasive Mathira legislator

has on several occasions been associated with the vice together with the Murang'a Woman Rep Betty Maina who is his wife.

Mathira has had the unenviable tag of political violence for the past half century with most election cycles leaving some families grieving after losing their loved ones to political thuggery.



Rigathi Gachagua addressing aspirants from Nyeri county last week.



Some of DCP aspirants during last week's meeting last week.

**Profile** The recognition places Dr. Mathenge among key African leaders championing agricultural innovation and food safety initiatives

# Dr Thuo Mathenge's influence: From revitalising KALRO to earning global recognition and eyeing Nyeri top seat

*Last week, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) honoured the KALRO chairman as AFloSave Ambassador*

BY WMW

@themtkenyaintimes

The growing influence of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) Board chairman Dr. Thuo Mathenge received another significant boost last week when the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) appointed him as an AFloSave Ambassador. The appointment was announced during the closing ceremony of KALRO's Second Scientific Conference and Innovation Expo 2026 held at the organization's headquarters in Nairobi, an event that brought together researchers, policymakers, development partners, agribusiness players and farmers from across the region.

The recognition places Dr. Mathenge among key African leaders championing agricultural innovation and food safety initiatives aimed at reducing post-harvest losses and enhancing food security across the continent.

AFloSave is an initiative associated with efforts to combat aflatoxin contamination in food systems, a challenge that continues to threaten agricultural productivity, public health and trade opportunities in many African countries. Through the ambassadorship, Dr. Mathenge is expected to advocate for wider adoption of technologies and practices that improve food safety and protect farmers from losses associated with contaminated produce.

The appointment comes at a time when KALRO is increasingly positioning itself as a leading institution in agricultural research, climate resilience, food security and innovation.

## A conference showcasing KALRO's growing profile

The conference where the announcement was made was itself a testament to KALRO's growing stature within the agricultural sector.

Held under the theme of strengthening agricultural innovation systems and building resilient agri-food systems, the event attracted scientists, researchers, government officials, development partners and private

sector stakeholders committed to transforming agriculture through science and innovation.

The conference highlighted KALRO's role in developing technologies, innovations and management practices designed to address challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, declining productivity and market access constraints.

Participants discussed emerging technologies, climate-smart agriculture, livestock improvement, mechanization, digital agriculture and policy interventions necessary to improve livelihoods for millions of farmers.

For many observers, the successful organization of the conference reflected the institution's renewed energy and strategic direction under the stewardship of its current board led by Dr. Mathenge.

## Steering KALRO through a period of renewal

Since his appointment as chairman of the KALRO Board by President William Ruto in November 2024, Dr. Mathenge has emerged as one of the most visible leaders within Kenya's agricultural research landscape.

His appointment marked a new chapter for the institution, which plays a critical role in developing technologies aimed at improving crop and livestock production across the country.

Under his leadership, KALRO has intensified efforts to bring research closer to farmers while enhancing partnerships with county governments, development agencies, universities and the private sector.

Observers credit Dr. Mathenge with helping strengthen the institution's visibility among ordinary farmers, a departure from the traditional perception of research organizations as entities operating far from the realities of rural communities.

His tenure has been characterized by frequent field visits, stakeholder engagement and advocacy for increased adoption of research-based farming practices.

One of his key messages has been that agricultural transformation can only be achieved when farmers gain direct access to scientific knowledge and modern technologies.

Through numerous forums, exhibitions and field days, Dr. Mathenge has consistently urged farmers to seek expert advice from government agencies and research institutions in order to improve productivity and profitability.

He has also been a strong advocate for climate-smart agriculture, emphasizing the need for innovation to address the growing threats posed by climate change.

KALRO under his watch has continued promoting drought-tolerant crop varieties, improved livestock breeds, mechanization and sustainable farming practices aimed at ensuring food security.

## Championing institutional growth

Dr. Mathenge's tenure has coincided with several major developments within KALRO. These include the rollout of the institution's strategic plan aligned to the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), expansion of partnerships with county governments and increased focus on commercialization of research outputs.

He has also championed efforts to improve the organization's outreach programs, encouraging scientists to engage more directly with farming communities. One of the resolutions at the conference was for the researchers and scientists to move out of their offices and laboratories and go to the field so that they can directly engage the farmers.

One of the most significant developments associated with his leadership is the planned establishment of a KSh200 million agricultural research center in Kieni, Nyeri County.

The facility is expected to become KALRO's 65th research center and is intended to bring modern agricultural technologies closer to farmers in Nyeri and neighboring counties.

The center is expected to support research on crops and livestock while facilitating dissemination of improved technologies to farmers.

Industry stakeholders view the project as evidence of Dr. Mathenge's commitment to decentralizing agricultural research and ensuring rural communities directly benefit from scientific innovations.



KALRO chairman Dr Thuo Mathenge displaying a certificate of his appointment as AFloSave ambassador.

Within the institution, he has also pushed for stronger internal systems, improved visibility of KALRO technologies and greater commercialization of innovations developed by researchers.

His call for establishment of stronger marketing and communication structures within KALRO has been viewed as an attempt to bridge the gap between scientific research and practical adoption by farmers.

## Leadership during a strategic transition

Dr. Mathenge also played a central role in one of the most significant leadership transitions in KALRO's recent history.

Earlier this year, he oversaw the appointment of Dr. Patrick Ketiem as the new Director General following the retirement of long-serving DG

Dr. Eliud Kireger.

The transition was widely regarded as smooth and strategic, reflecting institutional stability within KALRO.

In announcing the appointment, Dr. Mathenge emphasized the need for continuity while positioning the organization for greater impact in climate resilience, food security and agricultural transformation.

His handling of the transition earned praise from stakeholders who viewed it as a demonstration of mature leadership and commitment to institutional growth.

## Beyond agriculture: The political dimension

While his profile in agriculture con-

**Profile** The recognition places Dr. Mathenge among key African leaders championing agricultural innovation and food safety initiatives

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continues to rise, Dr. Mathenge's political ambitions remain equally significant.

The businessman and philanthropist is widely expected to mount another bid for the Nyeri gubernatorial seat in the

2027 General Election.

His political journey is not new.

In the 2022 elections, he contested for the Nyeri governorship and emerged second after Dr Mutahi Kahiga who second and final terms ends next year.

Although unsuccessful, he retained considerable support

across various parts of the county and has remained active in community affairs.

Since then, he has maintained visibility through philanthropic activities, economic empowerment initiatives and participation in regional social and cultural forums.

Political observers in the Mt Kenya region believe his



From left; KALRO Director General Patrick Ketiem, Prof. Ratemo Michieka, Dr Thuo Mathenge and Dr Alice Murage during the closure of the event last Friday.

leadership role at KALRO has further enhanced his public profile by placing him at the center of issues that directly affect farmers, who form a significant voting bloc in Nyeri County.

His supporters argue that his experience in business, agriculture and public administration provides him with the credentials necessary to lead the county.

They point to his emphasis on economic empowerment, agricultural modernization and youth engagement as key pillars likely to shape a future gubernatorial campaign.

Dr. Mathenge has also been associated with initiatives aimed at cultural preservation, social cohesion and community empowerment within the Mt Kenya region where he serves as the patron of the Kikuyu community.

These engagements have helped maintain his political relevance and strengthen grassroots networks ahead of future political contests.

## Building a governance narrative

Analysts say Dr. Mathenge appears to be crafting a governance narrative centered on practical solutions rather than conventional politics.

His involvement in agricultural development allows him to showcase tangible interventions and measurable outcomes, a factor that could resonate with voters increasingly interested in performance-oriented leadership.

The establishment of research facilities, promotion of agricultural innovation and advocacy for farmer empowerment provide examples of projects that can easily be translated into a broader county development agenda.

Agriculture is expected to feature prominently in his campaign messaging given Nyeri's dependence on farming activities such as coffee, tea, dairy and horticulture.

## Recognition beyond borders

The AFloSave Ambassador appointment by IITA therefore comes at a significant moment in Dr. Mathenge's career.

It not only recognizes his contribution to agricultural development but also elevates his profile beyond Kenya's borders.

For KALRO, the recognition reinforces its growing reputation as a key institution driving agricultural innovation in Africa.

During the closing ceremony, Dr Mathenge reminded those present that aflatoxin retains the major carrier of cancer which can only be eliminated through aflasave.

For Dr. Mathenge personally, it adds another credential to a career that now spans business, agriculture, community leadership and politics.

As Kenya continues searching for solutions to food insecurity, climate change and rural poverty, leaders who successfully bridge science, policy and grassroots engagement are likely to become increasingly influential.

Whether viewed through the lens of agricultural transformation or political ambition, Dr. Mathenge appears determined to remain at the center of those conversations.

And with international recognition now added to his portfolio, his journey from boardroom leadership to potential county leadership is likely to attract even greater attention in the years ahead.

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**Inferno** Gikomba has burned repeatedly over the decades. Major fires struck the market in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023, each time razing stalls

# Gikomba burns again

*Kenya's largest open-air market has suffered yet another devastating fire — and the question of why it keeps happening demands more than another inquiry*

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyentimes

A fire tore through sections of Gikomba Market in the early hours of yesterday morning, destroying business premises, consuming goods worth millions of shillings and deepening the anguish of traders who have lost everything to flames more than once.

The Kenya Red Cross confirmed that the blaze was reported at approximately 4:00 a.m., triggering the deployment of response teams alongside a multi-agency emergency unit. Fire brigade crews spent the better part of the morning battling the inferno and working to prevent it from spreading further into the densely packed stalls that define East Africa's largest second-hand clothing market. No casualties had been confirmed at the time of reporting, though the full extent of the damage was yet to be formally established.

Videos that circulated on social media showed walls of flame and thick columns of smoke rising above the market as traders scrambled to salvage whatever they could. The images were harrowing — but they were also, to anyone who has followed Gikomba's history, painfully familiar.

This was not an aberration. It was a pattern.

Gikomba has burned repeatedly over the decades. Major fires struck the market in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023, each time razing stalls, destroying livelihoods and generating the same cycle of shock, official condemnation and promises of reform that have yet to produce any structural change. The market, which sprawls across the low-lying banks of the Nairobi River in the city's Eastlands, houses an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 traders and draws buyers from across Kenya and the wider region. It

is not simply a trading hub; it is a primary economic lifeline for hundreds of thousands of low-income families. When it burns, entire households burn with it.

The human cost is rarely captured adequately in damage assessments. Behind every figure cited in the aftermath — stalls destroyed, goods lost, shillings written off — are individuals who borrowed money to stock their businesses, women who rose before dawn to lay out their wares, young men who invested their first savings into a plot at Gikomba because it represented the most accessible rung on the economic ladder available to them. Many of those affected on Sunday had no insurance. Most had no savings buffer to absorb the loss. For them, a fire at Gikomba is not a setback from which recovery is a matter of weeks. It can be a financial catastrophe from which recovery takes years — or never fully comes at all.

The structural vulnerabilities at Gikomba are not difficult to identify. The market is a labyrinthine mass of wooden frames, corrugated iron stalls and tarpaulin overhangs packed so tightly together that fire, once ignited, has every advantage. Electrical cabling — much of it informal and poorly maintained — runs through sections of the market in ways that would not pass any safety inspection. Water access for firefighting is consistently inadequate, and narrow alleyways mean that emergency vehicles struggle to reach the heart of the market before a blaze has already taken hold. The density of combustible materials within the stalls — bales of second-hand clothing, synthetic fabrics, plastic packaging — ensures that once a fire takes root, it spreads with terrifying speed.

Each of these factors has been documented in post-incident assessments going

back years. None has been systematically resolved. That is not an oversight. It is a policy failure, and it deserves to be named as such.

The question of cause is one that investigators will return to in the coming days. Previous fires at Gikomba have been attributed to electrical faults, arson and accidental ignition, though definitive findings have not always been made public. What is consistent across every incident is that the market's physical conditions — its density, its materials, its infrastructure deficits — ensure that whatever the spark, the outcome is catastrophic. Addressing only the ignition source without addressing the environment in which fires spread is the equivalent of treating the symptom while leaving the disease untouched.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has previously directed relevant agencies to investigate the recurring fires at Gikomba and the nearby Toi Market, calling for comprehensive long-term solutions. "The government has instructed relevant agencies to investigate the cause of the frequent inferno in the markets within Nairobi City County, including Gikomba and Toi Market, and provide comprehensive long-term solutions to avoid recurrence," he said. The directive was welcomed at the time. Its tangible results, however, have not been communicated to the public in any form that ordinary traders can point to.

In February, President William Ruto made a commitment that raised expectations significantly. Speaking at State House during the signing of a collaboration agreement between the national government and Nairobi City County, he announced plans to build a Sh5 billion modern market at Gikomba as part of a wider programme to construct 20 upgraded trading



Fire raging down Gikomba Market stalls | Photo: courtesy

facilities across the capital — 12 by the national government and eight by the county. "I was in Gikomba, and we are now designing a modern national market. I have given my undertaking that we are going to build a Ksh5 billion modern market in Gikomba," the President said, adding that the project would strengthen Nairobi's standing as a competitive commercial centre.

It was, on paper, exactly the kind of intervention Gikomba has needed for years. A purpose-built facility with proper electrical infrastructure, firebreaks, water access, emergency lanes and regulated stall allocations would fundamentally alter the risk profile of a market that currently operates as an open invitation to disaster. A modern, planned market would also bring with it the legal frameworks for enforcing safety compliance — something that is structurally impossible in a market that has grown organically and informally over decades.

The question, as always with such announcements, is timeline and delivery. Kenya has a well-documented history of infrastructure pledges that move slowly from announcement to groundbreaking, and more slowly still from groundbreaking to completion. The traders of Gikomba have heard reassuring words

before. What they have not yet seen is the machinery of government move with the urgency that the scale and frequency of these disasters demands.

Traders who spoke in the aftermath of Sunday's fire were not hostile to the idea of a new market. They were simply exhausted. Many of those who lost goods on Sunday had also lost goods in previous fires. Some had rebuilt two or three times. A few had lost everything, borrowed to restart, and lost everything again. Their resilience is remarkable — but it is not infinite, and it should not be treated as a resource to be drawn upon indefinitely in place of institutional action.

Nairobi County has regulatory authority over market infrastructure and is required by law to enforce safety standards within its boundaries. The national government controls the budgetary commitments needed to accelerate the Gikomba redevelopment. Both levels of government have the mandate and, in the current political moment, the stated intention to act. What Sunday's fire underscores, with brutal clarity, is that intention without urgency is indistinguishable from inaction.

The broader context cannot be ignored either. Gikomba sits at the intersection of Kenya's informal economy

and its urban poverty. The market is not simply a place where clothes are sold; it is where economic participation is possible for people who have been excluded from the formal economy. It is where a woman from Mathare or a young man from Korogocho can find a foothold. Burning it down repeatedly — even inadvertently, even through negligence rather than malice — is an assault on that fragile foothold. It is a fire that burns not only merchandise but opportunity.

Gikomba is not simply a market. It is an economic institution that underpins the informal sector at the base of Kenya's urban economy, and it deserves the same seriousness of purpose that the government brings to flagship infrastructure projects — not periodic condolences and another round of investigations, but a funded, time-bound plan with clear accountability, public milestones and enforceable deadlines.

Until that plan is delivered and the new market rises from the current ruins, the traders of Gikomba will continue to sleep uneasily — knowing that the next fire is not a question of if, but when.

**Environment** “Viewed individually, each project may appear limited in scope, but together they represent a steady erosion of a critical urban forest ecosystem,” the statement said

# Nairobi green spaces under growing threat, conservation groups warn

BY DMS

@themtkenyatimes

A coalition of environmental organizations and community conservation groups has issued a strong warning over what it describes as the accelerating loss and degradation of Nairobi’s forests, parks and public green spaces, calling for urgent action to safeguard the city’s natural heritage.

In a joint statement, the groups said Nairobi is experiencing a growing pattern of encroachment, infrastructure expansion, commercialization and land-use changes that threaten some of the capital’s most important ecosystems.

The organizations, operating under the banner of Friends of Nairobi’s Forests and Parks, argued that the challenges facing Karura Forest, Ngong Road Forest, Oloolua Forest, Nairobi Arboretum, City Park and Nairobi National Park are interconnected and reflect broader pressures facing Kenya’s forests and water towers.

According to the coalition, Nairobi’s forests and parks provide irreplaceable ecological services, including air purification, groundwater recharge, flood mitigation, biodiversity conservation, carbon storage and climate regulation. They also serve as important recreational spaces that contribute to public health and well-being.

Despite these benefits, the groups say environmental considerations are increasingly being sidelined in favor of short-term development interests.

Particular concern was raised over developments in Ngong Road Forest, where approximately 50 hectares of forest have already been cleared for the Talanta Sports City project. Conservationists say an

additional 9.5 hectares are at risk from a proposed road connecting the stadium to Bomas of Kenya.

They also expressed concern about plans for a railway line through sections of the forest and the continued construction of a luxury eco-camp despite ongoing legal disputes.

“Viewed individually, each project may appear limited in scope, but together they represent a steady erosion of a critical urban forest ecosystem,” the statement said.

The coalition noted that the cumulative impact of these developments threatens biodiversity, water catchment functions, climate regulation and recreational opportunities provided by the forest.

Elsewhere in the city, City Park continues to face unresolved land ownership disputes and governance challenges that have left it vulnerable to encroachment and degradation.

The groups said years of neglect and piecemeal interventions have failed to address underlying issues affecting the park and called for the development of a comprehensive rehabilitation and management master plan to secure its future.

Oloolua Forest was also highlighted as an area facing increasing pressure. Conservation advocates are currently challenging in court what they describe as the irregular allocation of approximately 69 acres of forest land.

At the same time, concerns have emerged over plans to excise an additional five acres of indigenous forest to facilitate the construction of an anti-narcotics laboratory.

The organizations warned that continued reduction of protected forest land through infrastructure projects and al-

locations undermines national conservation efforts and sets a dangerous precedent.

Karura Forest, widely celebrated as a model of successful urban forest conservation, was cited as another ecosystem requiring stronger protection despite its achievements.

The coalition said recurring infrastructure proposals, adjacent developments and encroachment pressures continue to threaten the long-term ecological integrity of the forest.

The Nairobi Arboretum, one of the city’s oldest green spaces, is similarly facing pressure from rapid urban growth, increased human activity and inadequate ecological buffers. Conservationists argue that preserving the Arboretum’s ecological value will require active investment and protection measures rather than passive management.

The statement also criticized what it described as a planning approach that increasingly treats mature trees and established ecosystems as obstacles to development.

Recent felling and marking of mature trees along State House Road, together with previous road expansion projects in other parts of the city, were cited as examples of infrastructure projects that fail to adequately account for environmental costs.

Nairobi National Park, the only national park located within a capital city, was identified as another ecosystem under mounting pressure.

The groups pointed to concerns over habitat clearing associated with the relocation and expansion of the Nairobi Animal Orphanage, construction of a large parking facility and other developments within the park.

They argued that such proj-



A cyclist at Karura forest

ects, when combined with roads, rail infrastructure and urban expansion, contribute to habitat fragmentation and threaten wildlife corridors that are essential for species survival.

Beyond Nairobi, the coalition warned that similar trends are affecting major forest ecosystems and water towers across the country, including the Mau Forest Complex, Mount Kenya, the Aberdares, Cherangany and Mount Elgon.

The statement linked these pressures to broader concerns about climate change, water security and biodiversity loss.

The groups also expressed concern over recent amendments to Section 56(2) of the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016, which expanded the powers of the Kenya Forest Service to issue permits, licenses, contracts and concession agreements for activities within public forests.

While the amendment is intended to promote investment and sustainable utilization of forest resources, conserva-

tionists fear it could lead to increased commercialization of public forests without adequate transparency, public participation and accountability.

The coalition called for an immediate review and suspension of the application of the provision in cases involving the allocation, leasing or excision of public forest land until stronger safeguards are established.

Among their recommendations, the organizations urged government agencies and regulators to halt activities threatening protected ecosystems where legal and environmental concerns remain unresolved, strengthen enforcement of environmental laws, ensure meaningful public participation in decision-making and develop a Nairobi Metropolitan Green Infrastructure Protection Framework.

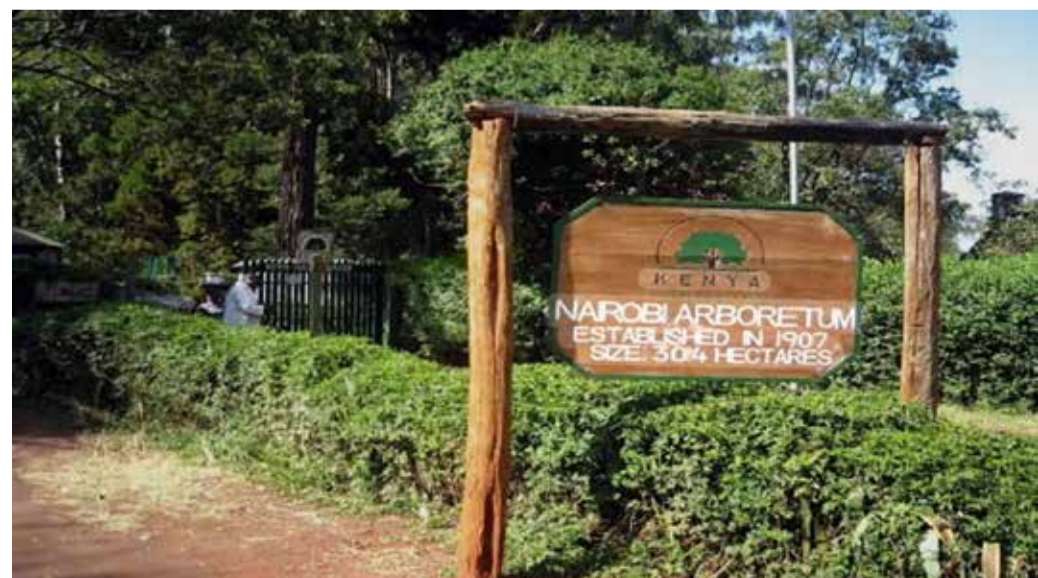
They emphasized that the debate extends beyond environmental conservation alone.

“The loss of our forests and green spaces is not merely

an environmental issue,” the statement said. “It is a public health issue, a climate issue, a water security issue, an economic issue and a matter of intergenerational justice.”

The groups urged Kenyans to defend the country’s forests and green spaces, warning that the choices made today will determine whether Nairobi’s natural heritage survives for future generations.

The statement was signed by several environmental and community conservation organizations, including The Green Belt Movement, JustAct, Friends of Karura Forest, Friends of Nairobi National Park, Friends of City Park, Friends of Oloolua Forest, the Ngong Road Community Forest Association and Friends of Nairobi Arboretum. The groups said they would continue advocating for stronger environmental governance, transparency and public participation in decisions affecting Kenya’s forests and green spaces.



Nairobi Arboretum

**Leadership** In a Father's Day message, Amb. Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba, Supreme Global President of the Global Union for Peace and Development

# Peace organization pays tribute to fathers, calls for unity and responsible leadership

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

A global peace and development organization has paid tribute to fathers worldwide, recognizing their role in nurturing families, promoting social stability and fostering responsible leadership in society.

In a Father's Day message, Amb. Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba, Supreme Global President of the Global Union for Peace and Development (GUPD), praised fathers for their commitment, morals, guidance, protection, provision and moral leadership within their families and communities.

He said fathers play a critical role in shaping disciplined, united and resilient societies through their influence at the household level.

The organization called on fathers across the world to continue promoting peace, love, unity and responsible leadership, noting that lasting



Amb. Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba

peace begins within families before extending to communities, nations and the global society.

The message also recognized leaders serving in various sectors, including government, faith-based organizations, civil society, international institutions and the private sector, for their contribution to development, service and humanitarian causes.

In addition, the organization expressed appreciation to Kenya's President and other male heads of state around the world for their ef-

orts in promoting peace, stability and national development.

The statement urged leaders to continue serving with wisdom, integrity and dedication for the benefit of their respective nations.

Quoting Proverbs 22:6, the organization emphasized the importance of parental guidance and mentorship in shaping future generations.

The message concluded with Father's Day greetings to fathers around the world, wishing them good health, wisdom, strength and long life as they continue serving as pillars of their families and communities.

The statement was issued by the Global Union for Peace and Development (GUPD), Peniel Mission Ministries and affiliated peace, humanitarian and development organizations.



**Fathers** Strong societies are built on strong families, and strong families are often held together by fathers whose efforts go unnoticed

## The forgotten fathers among us

*On Father's Day, the widowers and single fathers raising children alone deserve more than silence*

BY Hadassah Karangu

@themtkenyatimes

Every year, Father's Day arrives with heartfelt messages, thoughtful gifts, family gatherings and warm expressions of gratitude. It is a day set aside to honour the men who provide, protect, guide and sacrifice for their families. Yet amid the celebrations, one group of fathers remains largely invisible: widowers and single fathers carrying the full weight of parenthood on their own.

For many widowers, Father's Day is as much a moment of grief as it is of celebration. These men rise each morning determined to offer their children emotional support, discipline, care and love, even as they navigate the quiet devastation of losing a life partner. The responsibilities do not pause for mourning, and neither do they.

Single fathers face a journey no less demanding. They work to meet the financial needs of their families while simultaneously shouldering the duties that two parents would ordinarily share. From school meetings and homework to meal preparation and bedtime comfort, they strive daily to be both provider and nurturer, often without acknowledgement.

The challenges they encounter are real and rarely spoken about. Society frequently assumes that fathers are less equipped to meet the emotional needs of children, leaving many widowers and single fathers feeling isolated and misunderstood. Financial strain, loneliness, mental exhaustion and the relentless pressure of balancing work with family life can quietly compound into a burden that is difficult to name and harder still to bear alone.

And yet they persist. In doing so, they become quiet symbols of re-



### The forgotten fathers among us

silence, courage and unconditional love. Their stories rarely make headlines. Their sacrifices, however, shape the futures of children who depend on them every single day.

This Father's Day, let us widen our appreciation. Let us recognise not only the fathers surrounded by family and festivity, but also those who

mark the day in private, holding everything together in silence. Let us extend support, understanding and encouragement to every widower and single father doing his best under circumstances most will never fully see.

Strong societies are built on strong families, and strong families are of-

ten held together by fathers whose efforts go unnoticed. This year, let us make certain that no father feels forgotten.

To every widower and single father: your sacrifices matter, your struggles are seen, and your love is making a difference. Today, we celebrate you too.

## The faithful servant



The faithful fruitfull servant  
Planted by the water side,  
A tree stand strong, It roots run wide,  
It trust's the Lord, unyielding strong,  
And in this care it can't go wrong,

It is very strong every time,  
In differant season, whether sun or rain,

It endures through Joy and pain,  
And in this care it is too strong,

The drought may come, The wind might blow,  
But this tree continues to grow,  
It bears it fruit every time,  
And in God's love it is so supreme,

So trust in God with all you soul,  
Let his guidance make you whole,  
Serve him with a willing hear,  
And from his side you will never part,

In his path find your delight,  
In his path do what's right,  
And like that tree faithful and true,  
A fruitfull servant you will

BY EDWARD KABERA  
STUDENT UTUMISHI COMPREHENSIVE -GILGIL

## I'm unique with my attitudes



Ever gifted a smile in latitude  
Giggled by this aptitude  
Ignoring from life's dark magnitude.  
When I was coined (married)as we  
I remained to be me  
Neither inspired by one

Nor I'm inspired by one.  
For I swirl to my own workmanship  
Enriching my soul kingship  
At times red anger hugs me hardly  
But soon turn cool blue as that's my monopoly.  
And I grow friendly green  
Fruitfully coloring myself as queen  
I feel that makes me unique  
Though with identical organs & physique.  
I wish my name to be uniquely depicted  
With unerasable ink printed  
Just to live ideally as a unique finger print  
Leaving my different footprint.  
So I pat myself  
Proudly loving myself.

G.Sarala.

## If i killed myself



When I was sixteen, I wanted to kill myself,  
I remember one day starting by the road side,  
In desire for be knocked by a speeding vehicle,  
But I was afraid of trying it.

I have pain on my heart,  
It is all painted with agony, torments and  
disappointed.

It all started when I was still a little kid,  
I loved dancing, and I gave it a try,  
But I was body shamed,  
Their words were sharp like surgical blades,

That am such a failure, cursed and futureless.

Now am 25, but still I want to die,  
But I still fear to.

This body is too heavy for me to carry,  
I need a light body,  
That won't be body shamed,  
A body that will make me a good dancer.

But a question to you,  
If I killed myself, would you cry for me?  
Would you miss me?  
Would you feel sorry for me?  
Or you would sit back and celebrate loosing a  
useless being in this body?

© Kibalama Rajab  
Pen Knight aka NYT  
rajabvpaige5@gmail.com

## If I had a magical wand



If I had a magic wand,  
I'd paint the world with love.  
I'd place bright stars in every heart  
And rainbows up above

I'd end all tears and wipe out fear,  
So every child could smile.  
I'd fill each home with happiness

And make life worthwhile.

I'd plant the seeds of kindness,  
And let true friendship grow,  
I'd teach the world to care and share,  
More than we'll ever know.

If I had a magic wand,  
I'd make dreams all come true.  
A world of peace, hope, and joy  
For me, for them, for you.

Name: Rakshika.R  
Class:7th A  
GGHSS, pattukkotai

## That closed door saved you



Waiting behind the door helps you to build your  
inner strength.  
And know your potential to be calmly and take a  
breath.  
Waiting behind the doors also to focus on your  
way  
To reach your destination without any grey.

God only knows our path, and he decides when you  
walk.

Until then you can try your best to mark.  
When your time is not started the doors will  
remain closed.  
But when your time starts, nobody can stop you.

Let you wait some more time until your  
time(turn) will come.  
God has created everything for some reason.  
If you realise that you never urge the situation.  
Always God has some plans, you should accept  
the situation.

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.

## Dreams need plan



Dreams can be lovely, bright, and grand,  
But they bloom only through heart and hand,  
A dream alone may drift away,  
A plan gives it a path each day.

"Your right is to action," the Gita says,  
Not to the fruits that come your way,  
So do your work with steady cheer,  
And leave the results without fear.

When doubts arise and hopes grow small,  
The Gita's voice still gently says:

"Lift yourself by your own effort and will,"  
Keep moving forward, and climb the hill.

The mind may wander here and there,  
But practice guides it with loving care,  
Step by step, day by day,  
It helps us walk the chosen way.

Those with purpose, firm and true,  
Keep their goal in constant view,  
With focus bright and courage strong,  
They turn their dreams to deeds before long.

So call it not a dream alone,  
Or a wish by the wind softly blown,  
Dream, then plan, then act each day,  
That is the Gita's timeless way.

Nandini Anandkumar  
Educator, Writer,Motivator,Freelancer  
(In Service of Education)

**Baringo** The destruction is visible everywhere you look. Roads have become impassable, cutting communities off from markets, schools and health facilities

# Trapped by rising waters: Baringo's flood victims plead for hope

*Behind every flooded village is a family longing for safety — and a nation that must not look away.*

**BY Hadassah Karangu**  
@themkenyatimes

The floodwaters arrived swiftly, but for many families in Baringo, the suffering they left behind may linger for months, perhaps years.

Across villages once filled with laughter and the hum of daily life, residents now wade through muddy waters, picking their way past damaged homes and deeply uncertain futures. What should have been a season of growth and harvest has instead become a season of loss, displacement and heartbreak.

For countless families, the floods have washed away far more than houses and crops. They have swept away livelihoods, interrupted children's education and shat-



The floodwaters in Baringo

tered the sense of security that every family deserves. Mothers struggle to find food for their little ones. Fathers watch helplessly as years

of hard work disappear beneath the waterline. Children spend their nights frightened in overcrowded shelters, far from the familiar comfort of

home.

The destruction is visible everywhere you look. Roads have become impassable, cutting communities off from

markets, schools and health facilities. Farmlands that once promised a good harvest now resemble vast, still lakes. Livestock — the backbone of many households' income — have been lost to the raging waters, leaving families wondering how, and whether, they will ever recover.

Perhaps the most painful sight is that of children whose schooling has been disrupted. Some schools have been damaged; others have been turned into temporary shelters for displaced families. Books have been destroyed, uniforms lost, classrooms emptied as young learners are forced to confront a disaster entirely beyond their control.

Health risks are growing, too. As clean water becomes scarce, contaminated sources expose families to dangerous waterborne diseases, while stagnant floodwaters create breeding grounds for mosquitoes. In communities already stretched thin on resources, every new challenge drives the crisis deeper.

And yet, amid all this devastation, the spirit of Baringo's people has not broken. Neighbours are helping neighbours. Community members are sharing whatever little food they have. Volunteers push

on in support of vulnerable families even while facing hardships of their own. Their resilience speaks not only of suffering, but of a quiet, stubborn courage that commands respect.

But resilience alone cannot rebuild homes, restore livelihoods or shield communities from future disasters. The people of Baringo need urgent humanitarian assistance, improved infrastructure, better flood management systems and long-term investments that will strengthen their capacity to weather recurring climate shocks.

As Kenya marks milestones in development and progress, the voices from flood-stricken Baringo must not be drowned out by the rushing waters. Behind every flooded village is a family longing for safety. Behind every damaged home is a dream waiting to be rebuilt.

The waters may eventually recede. But the responsibility to stand with the people of Baringo should not. Their struggle is not just Baringo's story. It is Kenya's story — and it demands Kenya's full attention.

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**Kikuyu Cultural Centre** The facility will be constructed on a one-acre parcel of public land at Nduny'u Trading Centre in Mahiga ward

# Kikuyu Cultural Centre to be established in Othaya to preserve heritage and empower future generations

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

Plans are underway to establish a Kikuyu Cultural Centre in Mahiga Ward, Othaya Constituency, in a move aimed at preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Kikuyu community while promoting social cohesion, youth mentorship, tourism, and economic empowerment.

The facility will be constructed on a one-acre parcel of public land at Nduny'u Trading Centre in Mahiga ward. Once completed, the centre is expected to serve as a focal point for cultural preservation, education, and community engagement.

According to Kikuyu elder Kiiru wa Ngechu, the centre will play a critical role in bridging the gap between traditional heritage and modern society by safeguarding indigenous knowledge, customs, and historical narratives for future generations.

Speaking at the site during a cleansing ceremony, he noted that one of the centre's primary objectives will be the preservation of traditional Kikuyu artifacts, architecture, and cultural practices that are increasingly threatened by modernization.

The facility is expected to showcase traditional structures such as the Thingira and Nyumba, while providing a space where indigenous customs can be documented and shared. "The cultural centre will ensure that our traditions are not lost. It will provide a place where elders can pass on knowledge, values, and history to younger generations," said Kiiru.

The elder further emphasized the importance of youth mentorship, noting that the centre would offer a platform for community elders to guide young people on matters of morality, discipline, and cultural identity.

He said such initiatives could help address growing social challenges, including substance abuse and declining moral standards among the youth.

Beyond cultural preservation, the facility is expected to become a key educational and tourism destination. Schools, researchers, local visitors, and international tourists will have an opportunity to learn about Kikuyu customs, traditional governance systems such as the Kiama, and the community's contribution to Kenya's struggle for independence

through the Mau Mau movement.

The centre is also projected to contribute to the local economy through cultural tourism, guided tours, traditional performances, and the sale of locally made crafts and indigenous foods.

Mahiga Ward MCA and Nyeri County Majority Leader James Kanyugo welcomed the initiative, describing it as an important investment in community development and cultural identity.

Kanyugo said the centre would serve as a gathering place where residents can celebrate traditional rites of passage, music, cultural ceremonies, and other communal activities that strengthen social bonds and unity.

He added that the facility would also provide mentorship opportunities aimed at addressing challenges affecting young men and boys, whom he described as increasingly vulnerable within contemporary society.

As part of preparations for the project, elders from Kiama Kia Ma recently conducted traditional blessing and cleansing ceremonies on the public land designated for the centre.

The rituals, led by Kikuyu spiritual leader Mathenge wa Iregi, were intended to dedicate the site and seek divine blessings before the commencement of development.

The ceremony, broadly referred to



Kikuyu elder Kiiru wa Ngechu speaking during the blessing of the one-acre land where Culture Centre will be established at Nduny'u trading center, Mahiga Ward, Othaya.

as "Igongona ria Kuhura Itoka", involved prayers, sacred rituals, and symbolic offerings designed to connect the community with Ngai, the Supreme Creator in Kikuyu spirituality.

Traditional land blessing rites included the selection and sacrifice of a flawless sheep or ram, depending on the spiritual purpose of the ceremony.

Elders also poured libations, including traditional Muratina brew, and sprinkled sacrificial blood on the ground as symbols of life, unity, and

spiritual cleansing.

Community members participated in prayers and chants led by senior elders, who faced Mount Kenya; known in Kikuyu tradition as Kirinyaga and regarded as a sacred dwelling place of God. During the ceremony, prayers were offered for protection, prosperity, rainfall, fertility, and communal well-being.

Elders explained that while such rituals have historically been used to bless land and seek peace and abundance, they have also been performed to protect communal land

from encroachment and misuse.

Renovation works on office facilities that will support the operations of the cultural centre are currently ongoing. Officials say the centre will be officially opened once the renovation and preparatory activities are completed.

Residents and cultural leaders have expressed optimism that the project will become an important institution for preserving Kikuyu heritage while creating opportunities for education, tourism, and community development in Nyeri County.



Kiama Kia Ma elders led by spiritual leader Mathenge wa Iregi during the blessing of the one-acre land where Culture Centre will be established at Nduny'u trading center, Mahiga Ward, Othaya.

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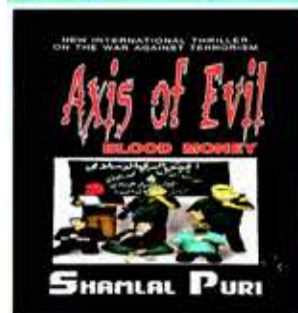
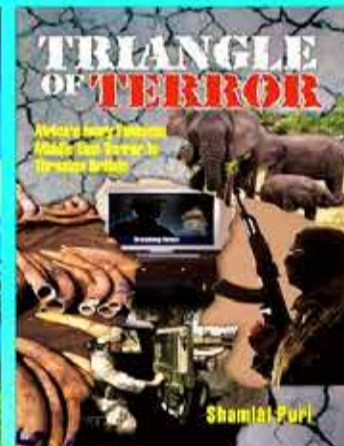
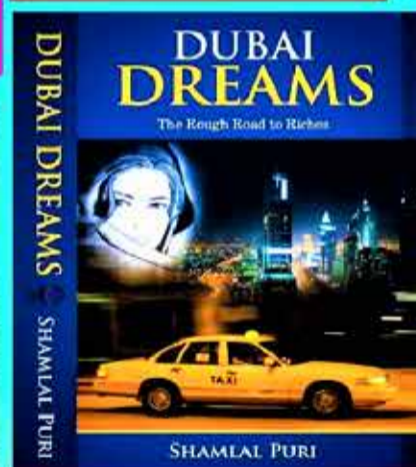
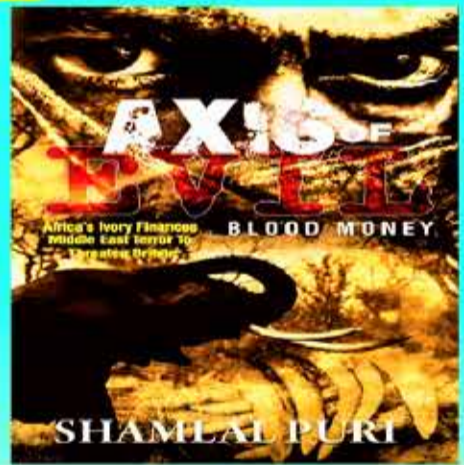
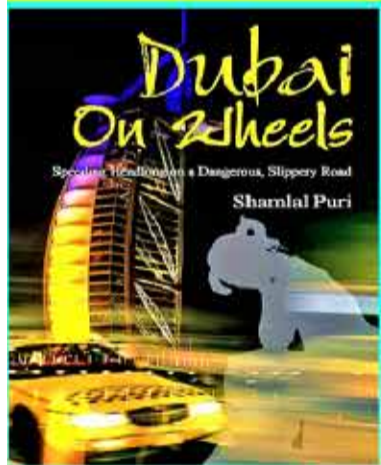
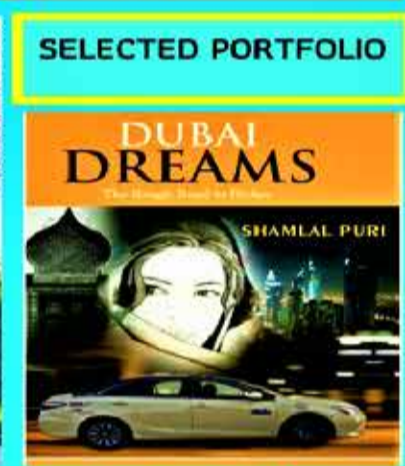
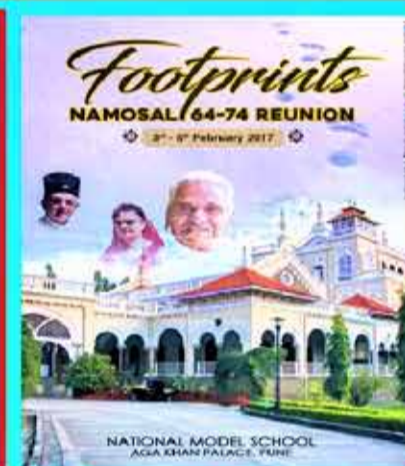
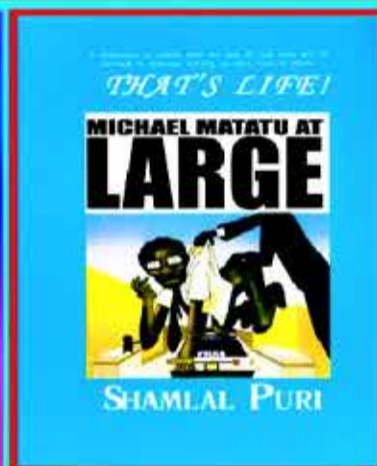
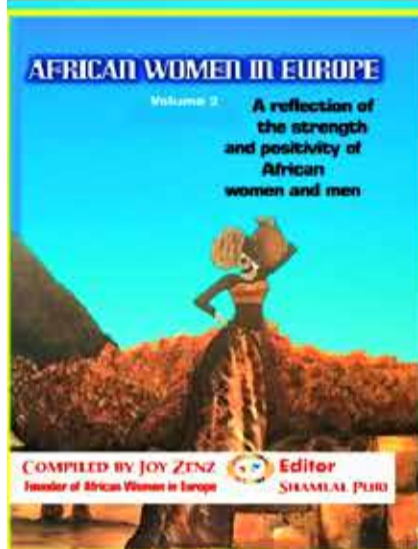
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**Deportation** The deportations come amid heightened scrutiny of migration flows through Beitbridge, Africa's busiest inland port of entry.

# Mass deportation operation sees 1,500 Malawians and Zimbabweans processed at Beitbridge border

*A 13-hour sweep at Southern Africa's busiest inland crossing returns more than 1,500 undocumented migrants to Malawi and Zimbabwe as Pretoria steps up enforcement along the Limpopo*



Southern Africa's busiest inland crossing returns more than 1,500 undocumented migrants to Malawi and Zimbabwe

**BY Norman Mwale**

@themkenyatimes

A record 13-hour operation at South Africa's Beitbridge Border Post has seen more than 1,500 undocumented Malawians and Zimbabweans processed for deportation, as authorities intensify efforts to manage irregular migration across the Limpopo River. The coordinated sweep, which unfolded between Wednesday night and Thursday morning, involved 17 buses arriving from Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, with Public Order Police escorting deportees into Musina for final processing before repatriation.

The Border Management Authority confirmed that 1,129 Malawian nationals arrived in the early hours of Thursday without valid documentation

authorising their stay in South Africa. Working alongside the Malawian High Commission, officials issued Emergency Travel Certificates to facilitate their return. In a separate operation, 467 Zimbabweans were transferred from the Lindela Holding Facility and processed for deportation the same day, bringing the combined total to more than 1,500.

BMA Commissioner Dr Michael Masiapato commended the joint efforts of BMA officials, the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Police Service for completing the operation in just over 13 hours. He said the professionalism displayed by officers, working alongside partner agencies, had ensured due process was followed while addressing the humanitarian needs of those involved.

The deportations come amid heightened scrutiny of migration flows through Beitbridge, Africa's busiest inland port of entry. Several buses carrying undocumented migrants from both countries had arrived from major South African cities, with some individuals reporting they had been travelling since Tuesday. Among them was Mswaya Kamanaga, who expressed relief at returning home despite the abrupt nature of the repatriation, though he acknowledged leaving possessions behind that he could not afford to transport.

In Durban, eThekweni Municipality Mayor Cyril Xaba said a 72-hour plan had been activated to fast-track processing of Malawian nationals, including a drive-in site established to reduce overcrowding at Sherwood Hall. Xaba said the objective was

to stabilise operations, reduce humanitarian and public health risks, and expedite the processing of migrants awaiting repatriation.

Civil society representatives monitoring the border said the scale of the operation reflected the economic desperation driving migration. Among the deportees, some expressed relief rather than distress, with one woman saying she was tired but ready to return to trading at home. Observers noted that many showed little

acknowledgement of having entered South Africa without authorisation, a disposition common along this stretch of the Limpopo.

Despite the mass processing, irregular crossings persist. Just kilometres from Beitbridge, Zimbabwean nationals continue to cross the Limpopo using makeshift raft boats to avoid customs controls, with limited visible patrols at known crossing points. Immigration analysts say deportations through Beitbridge have

become a monthly reality. UNHCR data indicates that roughly 7,300 Zimbabweans are deported from Musina each month, while more than 20,000 are removed from across South Africa annually. The agency has previously raised concerns that asylum seekers may not be properly screened at the border, increasing the risk that genuine refugees could be returned to harm.

As buses departed Beitbridge carrying the latest group of deportees, BMA officials stressed that operations would continue in enforcement of immigration law while working with neighbouring governments on repatriation protocols. For the thousands boarding those buses, the journey home begins with a mixture of relief, uncertainty and the loss of livelihoods built over years in South Africa.



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**Savings** “We realised it was no longer about just saving money; it was about saving lives,” says Beatrice Moraa, the chairperson.

# How women’s savings group became a lifeline for diabetes patients

**BY Elizabeth Angira**  
@themkenyatimes

Rose Bwari, a 60-year-old small-holder farmer in Bomuri Village in Kisii County, was looking forward to ageing gracefully.

Then, in 2020, she began experiencing severe headaches.

“I started feeling weak, and things appeared blurry. I feared I was losing my sight,” she recalls.

At the nearby Ogembo Level 4 Hospital, she was diagnosed with hypertension and put on treatment, but she did not feel better.

Later, a relative took her to Mbagathi County Referral Hospital in Nairobi, where she was diagnosed with diabetes.

“The news shocked me. I always thought diabetes was a disease for rich people, but I learned it can affect anyone,” she recalls.

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic disease characterised by elevated blood sugar. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas produces little or no insulin, while type 2 diabetes, the most common, occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or does not make enough insulin. The disease is a leading cause of heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, and lower-limb amputation.

Living with diabetes has been a daily struggle for Bwari.

“The cost of medicine and the special diet is quite high, especially for families with limited resources,” she says. “One tablet costs about Sh100, which adds up to Sh3,000 a month. That is before you even think about food.”

## Growing diabetes burden

Bwari’s experience reflects a challenge facing thousands of patients, not just in Kisii and Nyamira counties but across the country.

The International Diabetes Federation estimates that more than 800,000 Kenyans live with diabetes, while data compiled by Gendered Health Pathways, using STEPS surveys from the World Health Organisation and other international datasets, places prevalence among adults at 5.8 per cent.

The Ministry of Health says non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, account for more than 50 per cent of hospital admissions and 39 per cent of deaths



**Beatrice Moraa chairperson of Kanyimbo Community Unity, a women’s savings group, says they realized that the group it was no longer about just saving money; it was about saving lives.** | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

in Kenya.

Yet, only 20 per cent of Kenyans living with diabetes are enrolled in comprehensive care programmes, according to figures shared by Dr Ouma Oluga, Principal Secretary for Medical Services, at the 10th Annual Scientific Conference of the Kenya Diabetes Study Group (KDSG) in 2025.

“We see new cases every week,” says Moses Kibegwa, a clinical officer at the Nyamira Level Five Hospital. “But the tragedy is that most people come when it is too late, when complications like kidney failure or neuropathy have already set in.”

Kibegwa says stockouts of insulin, high medication costs and poor follow-up systems undermine the management of the disease.

“Patients are often told to buy insulin at private pharmacies, where prices are unaffordable for most. Others

ration their doses or skip treatment entirely,” he says.

Amid these challenges, communities have found ways to support each other and navigate gaps in the formal healthcare system.

For Bwari, help came through Kanyimbo Community Unity, a women’s savings group in Kisii County.

What began in 2020 as a table-banking initiative with 11 women members to pool savings and share investment information has become a lifeline for people living with diabetes. Four men, who initially accompanied their wives to some of the meetings, have since joined the group.

“A neighbour, who is also diabetic, introduced me to the group,” says Bwari.

Today, members save money together, support each other during medical emergencies, and share practical advice on managing diabe-

tes. Members learn to monitor blood sugar levels, plan balanced meals, and remind each other to take medication

“At least now I can buy food and medicine using the small amounts we save,” says Bwari. “I no longer have to borrow tablets from neighbours.”

## More than a savings group

The turning point for Kanyimbo Community Unity came five years ago when three of its members were diagnosed with diabetes within months of each other. The news shook the group.

“We realised it was no longer about just saving money; it was about saving lives,” says Beatrice Moraa, the chairperson.

Moraa proposed that part of their pooled savings be set aside as a health emergency fund to cushion members needing insulin, transport to hospitals or specialised diets.

“Each member contributes Sh50 ev-

ery Tuesday to this health fund in addition to their regular savings,” she explains.

The money helps members buy insulin, access treatment and cover transport costs to health facilities.

Soon after, health education and support became a part of their regular meetings.

“We realised we were all facing the same struggles revolving around food choices, hospital costs and loneliness,” Moraa explains. “By talking about it, we found strength.”

Mary Nyaboke, who initially joined the group to borrow money for her vegetable stall, says the support has been crucial.

“It has saved my life. When I could not afford insulin, the group stepped in. When I was too weak to work, they visited and supported me,” says the 58-year-old.

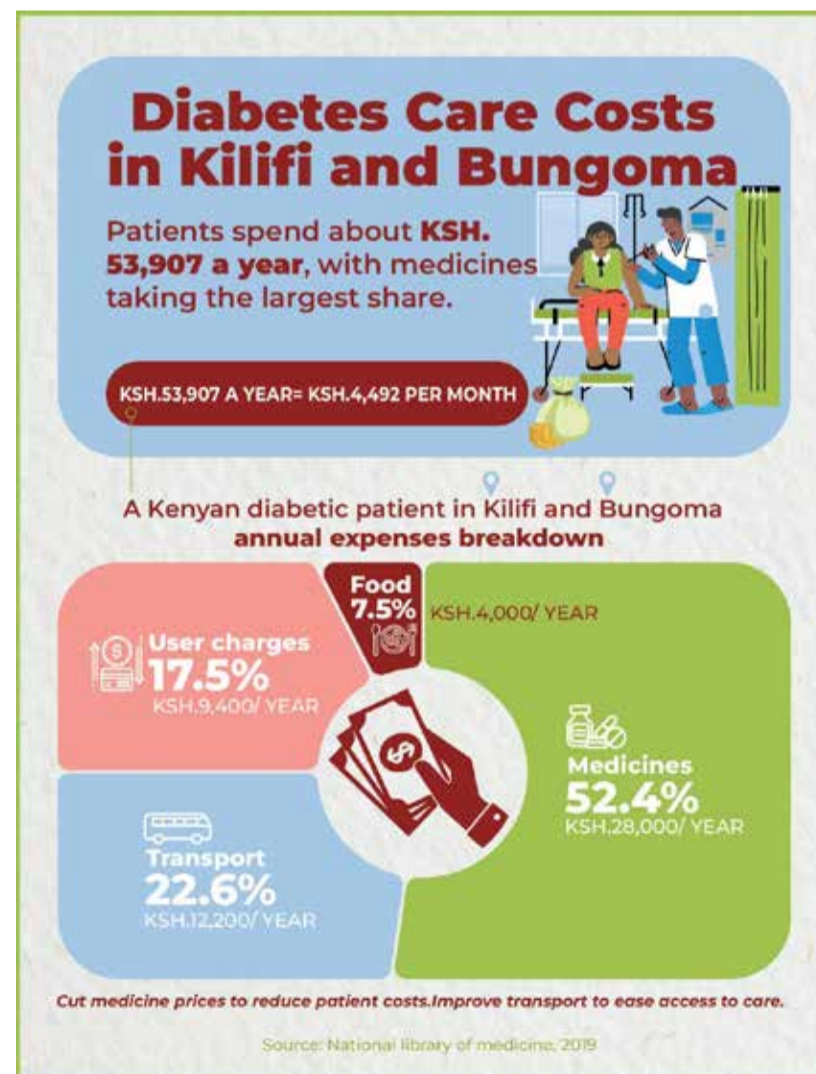
The emotional impact of diabetes can be just as devastating as its physical and financial toll. Beyond financial support, members have created a network of accountability and encouragement that is missing from formal healthcare.

## Peer support

For 46-year-old Monicah Gesare, the group became a source of comfort after her husband died from dia-



**HEADER Diabetes in Kisii and Nyamira** | Photo: Elizabeth Angira



**Savings** “We realised it was no longer about just saving money; it was about saving lives,” says Beatrice Moraa, the chairperson.

# How women’s savings group became a lifeline for diabetes patients

Contd from page 19

betes-related complications.

“I used to cry every night. I thought I was cursed,” she says, “But when I joined the group, I realised I was not alone.”

Gesare now leads a subgroup focused on nutrition education. Every month, members prepare sample meals of arrowroot, sweet potatoes, millet porridge, and indigenous vegetables and share recipes for healthy, affordable diets.

Dennis Bosire, a nutritionist who volunteers with that group, says the members have learnt that traditional foods can manage diabetes effectively.

“By focusing on locally available foods, they are debunking myths that healthy eating is expensive,” he explains.

He adds that peer counselling and support help members manage depression and anxiety, which are common among diabetes patients but are often overlooked in rural healthcare.

## Support for caregivers

The challenges of diabetes extend beyond those living with the condition, and caregivers also find support through the group.

Rachel Ondeyo, the wife and caregiver of Robert, one of the men in the group, says caring for someone with diabetes is emotionally and financially draining. Her husband joined the group after learning it offered health education in addition to savings.

Getting the recommended food is challenging, and helping patients cope requires patience.

“You must follow their diet strictly and know how to calm them down when their sugar levels fluctuate,” she says.

Ondeyo says the group and community health promoters have improved their knowledge and confidence.

“They have taught us how to handle the condition, what to watch out for, and how to act in emergencies,” she says.

She appeals to the government to provide free or subsidised diabetes medication.

“The burden is too heavy for many families,” she says. “Imagine buying special food, taking care of children,



**Rose Bwari, a 60-year-old shares her experience how she is managing Diabetes.**

| Photo: Elizabeth Angira

and still struggling to buy drugs. It is overwhelming.”

## Bridging the gap

The groups work closely with community health promoters (CHPs), who link members to formal healthcare.

Celine Nyasuguta, a CHP in Kisii,

monthly, encourage clinic visits, and even help with referrals,” she adds. “It is community health in action.”

Peter Onchiri, another CHP, says members report improved consistency in insulin use and diet management.

He attributes this to health education and savings, which cover some medical costs and reduce financial



**Kanyimbo Community Unity being addressed by Peter Onchiri CHP | Photo: Elizabeth Angira**

reports that among the groups she works with, the number of hospitalisations due to diabetes emergencies has dropped significantly.

Before, some women used herbs or stopped treatment when they felt better.

“Through these groups, they now understand their condition and follow up regularly,” she says.

“We track members’ sugar levels

stress.

“I used to skip medication when business was low, but now I have not missed my insulin in a year since the group supports me when I am short of finances,” says Nyaboke.

The success of these networks has drawn attention from local clinics, which now collaborate with the groups to conduct screening and awareness campaigns during market

days.

## When the system fails

Beneath these successes lies a troubling reality: the groups are filling a gap left by the health system.

“Insulin should be free or subsidised in public hospitals,” says Dr Eunice Nyorera, Deputy Coordinator for Cancer and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Kisii County. “But because of limited funding and weak supply chains, facilities often run out.”

Dr Nyorera admits that while the county has developed an NCD strategy, its implementation has been slow.

“We need better data, dedicated NCD budgets, and consistent drug supply,” she says. “Instead, diabetes care is competing for attention with other priorities like malaria and maternal health.”

Similarly, the Kenya NCD Alliance notes that despite the existence of a National Strategic Plan for the Control and Prevention of NCDs (2021–2026), implementation at the county level remains weak.

Many counties lack adequate funding for screening, awareness campaigns, and specialised personnel.

“These women’s groups are doing what the system should be doing,” says Dr Joseph Oduor, a public health advocate with the alliance. “They are bridging the last mile, but they should not be doing it alone.”

## Choosing between food and medicine

One of the toughest choices facing patients in rural areas is the trade-off between food and insulin.

“Most patients know what they should eat, but they simply cannot afford it,” explains Bosire. “You cannot tell someone to eat a balanced meal when they barely afford ugali.”

For this reason, the savings groups have ventured into small-scale income-generating projects, such as poultry rearing, vegetable gardens, and soap making, to raise extra income for members. The profits go into their collective fund, helping members buy food and medication.

The funds, however, are often insufficient to meet the medical needs of all members, especially during emergencies.

“Sometimes, two or three members

fall sick at once,” Moraa says. “Our kitty runs dry fast. We do harambees (fundraisers) to help, but we wish the government would recognise and support us.”

## Call for change

Dr Julie Nyamao, a physician in Kisii County, says early detection remains one of the biggest challenges in rural areas.

“Many patients dismiss early warning signs such as frequent urination, constant thirst, fatigue, and unexplained weight loss,” she explains. “By the time they seek care, complications like vision problems, nerve damage, or high blood pressure have already set in.”

She stresses the need for continuous public health education in villages, churches, and local markets to help communities recognise symptoms early and seek prompt treatment.

“Diabetes should never be a silent killer,” she says. “When communities understand the signs, lives can be saved.”

Dr Nyamao emphasises the importance of partnerships between health workers and community groups.

“What we are seeing here is a powerful model where community and health systems complement each other,” she says. “Health workers offer screening and medical guidance, while support groups provide emotional, nutritional, and financial safety nets.”

She says that if counties invest in training more community health promoters, subsidising testing tools like glucometers, and ensuring a stable supply of essential diabetes medication, Kenya could significantly reduce long-term complications.

“Prevention and consistent management are far cheaper than treating advanced diabetes,” she notes.

## New lease of life

For Nyaboke, who once faced the darkness of despair, every meeting renews her strength.

“Before, I was just surviving,” she says, checking her blood sugar with a glucometer. “Now, I am living again with purpose and with people who care.”

As she tucks away her insulin pen and counts her savings, her eyes glow.

The women beside her nod, knowing that they are more than a group. They are a community of survivors, rewriting the story of healthcare, one meeting at a time.

*This article was produced with the support of the Africa Women’s Journalism Project (AWJP).*

**Depression** Pressure related to school and the educational process is also an important factor in the development of depression.

# Causes of depression among adolescents and its prevention



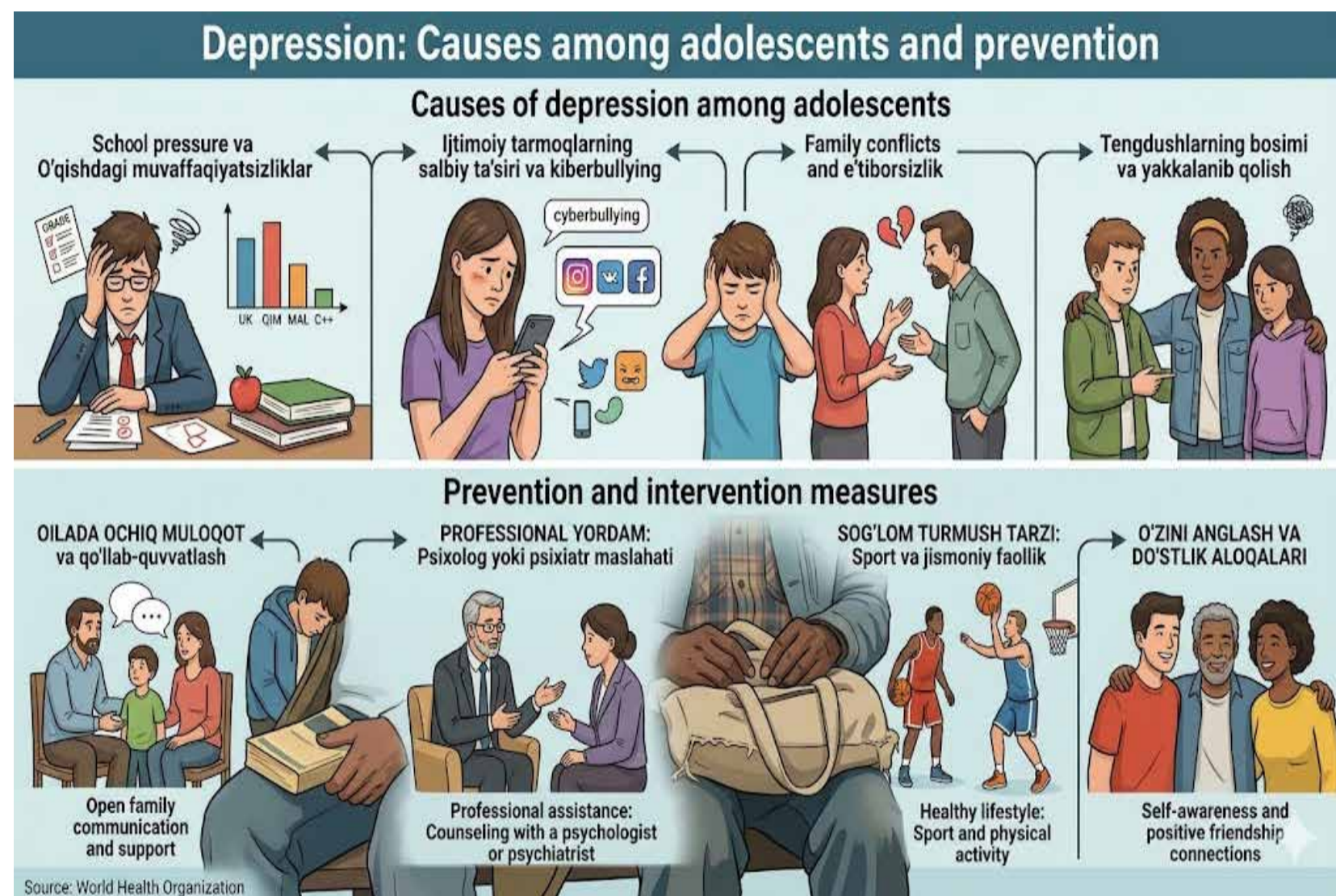
BY MKT REPORTER  
@themkenyatimes

In recent years, mental health problems among adolescents, especially depression, have been increasing significantly. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is one of the most common mental disorders occurring during adolescence. This condition has a serious negative impact on an adolescent's emotional state, academic performance, social relationships, and overall quality of life. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, characterized by physical, hormonal, and psychological changes. These changes often increase emotional instability and the risk of developing depression.

Several factors play an important role in the development of depression among adolescents. First, biological factors should be highlighted. During adolescence, the hormonal system undergoes significant changes, and the balance of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, which regulate mood, may be disrupted. This can lead to sadness, anxiety, and emotional instability. In addition, the parts of the adolescent brain responsible for regulating emotions are not yet fully developed, making adolescents more sensitive to stressful situations.

Another important cause of depression is the family environment. Constant conflicts within the family, parental neglect, excessive control, or, conversely, a lack of attention can negatively affect an adolescent's mental well-being. Disagreements between parents, divorce, or domestic violence may cause adolescents to feel lonely and unprotected. As a result, they may keep their problems to themselves and fall into a state of depression.

Pressure related to school and the



educational process is also an important factor in the development of depression. An increased academic workload, examinations, high expectations for achievement, and problems with teachers or classmates can lead to chronic stress. Prolonged stress, in turn, causes emotional exhaustion and intensifies depressive symptoms. In particular, perceiving oneself as less capable than others can reduce an adolescent's self-confidence.

Relationships with peers also play a significant role in adolescents' mental health. During this period, adolescents strive to find their place in society. Difficulties in adapting to a group, bullying, discrimination, or feelings of social exclusion can contribute to the development of depression. Feeling rejected or unaccepted often results in persistent sadness and anxiety.

In modern society, the widespread

use of digital technologies and social media has also contributed to adolescent depression. Comparing oneself with others on social media, striving for unrealistic ideals, receiving negative comments, or spending excessive amounts of time online can lead to emotional exhaustion. This may reduce real-life communication, increase feelings of loneliness, and contribute to the development of depressive symptoms.

Depression in adolescents is manifested through symptoms such as persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, sleep and appetite disturbances, and decreased self-esteem. If these symptoms persist for an extended period, they should not be considered merely ordinary mood changes.

The family plays a crucial role in preventing depression. Parents should establish open and sincere

communication with their adolescents, avoid dismissing their feelings, and take their problems seriously. A positive and supportive family environment serves as a strong psychological foundation for adolescents. In addition, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important in preventing depression. Regular physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep help stabilize emotional well-being and improve resilience to stress.

The active involvement of psychological services in educational institutions, as well as the organization of counseling sessions and training programs for adolescents, is also important. Teachers should pay attention to students' mental health and support them not only based on academic achievements but also as individuals. Furthermore, teaching adolescents to use digital technologies responsibly, monitoring the

time spent on social media, and encouraging face-to-face communication can help prevent depression.

In conclusion, depression among adolescents is a widespread and serious issue that requires special attention. Biological, family-related, educational, and social factors all contribute to its development. Preventing depression requires supporting adolescents, creating a healthy family environment, strengthening psychological assistance services, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. These measures can help protect adolescents' mental health and contribute to their healthy and well-rounded development.

*E'zoza Salohiddinova*  
*Alfraganus University, Faculty of Medicine,*  
*First-Year Student of Dentistry.*

# SPORTS NEWS

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**Sports >>** \*The Kakamega Golf Club veteran delivers a composed seven-under performance at Limuru to claim his third-leg title

## Indiza's vintage touch spurs him to victory at PGK Equator Tour



*Veteran professional golfer Dismas Indiza*

By **Martin Weche**

Veteran professional golfer Dismas Indiza won the third leg of the 2026 PGK Equator Tour at Limuru Country Club over the weekend, carding a composed 281 (-7) to finish top of the leaderboard and assert his enduring class on the Kenyan professional circuit.

The Kakamega Golf Club member was consistent across all four rounds, pulling clear of a competitive field that included some of the tour's most in-form players. His margin of victory told its own story — two strokes ahead of second-placed Michael Karanga, who finished on 283, with Safaricom-sponsored Samuel Njoroge a further two back on 285 to claim third place.

"I am happy with this win. I am

pleased with how I performed and grateful to come away with the victory. This result gives me confidence as I look ahead to the remaining legs of the PGK Equator Tour," Indiza said after his round.

For a golfer who has long been regarded as one of Kenya's most decorated professionals, the Limuru victory was a reminder of what experience and course management can achieve. Indiza did not overpower the field; he outthought it, round by round, keeping errors to a minimum while his rivals wrestled with a layout that offered little margin for error.

Njoroge's third-place finish was, in its own right, a story worth telling. The Safaricom-backed golfer won the second leg at Thika Sports Club and has now

placed in the top three in back-to-back events, establishing himself as one of the most consistent performers on the 2026 tour. His trajectory suggests that if Indiza is to be challenged for overall honours before the season is out, Njoroge will be among those doing the challenging.

"I am pleased with my performance. The competition was tough, but I stayed focused on my game and managed to secure a podium finish. Finishing third is a good step forward for me, and I will continue working hard to improve in the upcoming legs," Njoroge said.

Rounding out the top ten, Kasozi Philip finished fourth on 288, followed by Lejirma John on 289 and the ever-competitive Greg Snow on 290. Malik Tainur carded 291, Mohit Mediratta

finished on 292, while Mutahi Kibugu and CJ Wangai shared ninth and tenth place on 293 apiece — a leaderboard that reflected the depth and quality now defining the PGK Equator Tour in its 2026 edition.

The tour, which will traverse 11 courses across the country before the season concludes, has now completed three of those legs. Attention turns next to Mombasa, where Nyali Golf Club will host the fourth leg in a fortnight's time. The coastal venue is expected to draw a strong field, with several players looking to consolidate their standings and others seeking to make their move after mixed results in the early rounds.

The PGK Equator Tour continues to grow in stature, backed by a portfolio of corporate partners that includes Safaricom, NCBA, Betika, Kenya Airways, Visa, Britam and Johnnie Walker. Their sustained investment is doing more than funding a competition; it is building a professional infrastructure that gives Kenyan golfers a genuine pathway to development, competitive mileage and, for the most talented among them, a platform to attract wider attention.

For Indiza, the moment belongs to him and to the particular satisfaction of winning with intelligence rather than just ability. At an age when many professionals have already made their peace with the sidelines, he continues to set the standard — and to remind a younger generation that longevity in professional sport is not an accident.

With eight legs still to play, the 2026 PGK Equator Tour is far from settled. But if the first three rounds have offered any indication, Indiza intends to be the last man standing when the final card is signed.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Lamine Yamal scored 10 minutes into his first World Cup start as Spain beat Saudi Arabia to register their first win of the tournament.

# Spain trounce Saudi Arabia 4-0 to reignite World Cup Campaign



Lamine Yamal celebrates his goal against Saudi Arabia. PHOTO/FIFA WORLD CUP

By: **Norman Mwale**

*"We needed to react"* — Luis de la Fuente

Spain reignited their 2026 World Cup campaign with a ruthless 4-0 victory over Saudi

Arabia at Atlanta Stadium on Sunday, a performance that answered the frustration of their goalless opener against Cape Verde and put Luis de la Fuente's side top of Group H with four points from two matches. The

European champions, stung by a 0-0 draw last week, played like a team with a point to prove from the first whistle, dominating possession 65% to 35% and firing 21 shots to Saudi Arabia's three. Lamine Yamal, 18,

made his first start in two months after a hamstring injury and opened the scoring in the 10th minute when Mikel Oyarzabal's low cross found him ghosting in at the back post for a sliding finish and his first World Cup goal. The goal relaxed La Roja and the avalanche followed quickly. Oyarzabal, who had failed to register a touch in the opening half-hour against Cape Verde, doubled the lead in the 21st minute from close range after a corner that Aymeric Laporte nodded down into the mixer. Three minutes later, in the 24th minute, he completed a first-half brace with a beautifully worked volley from a Marc Cucurella cross that Dani Olmo headed into the six-yard box.

Spain went in 3-0 up at half-time and De la Fuente used the platform to rest his scorers, withdrawing both Yamal and Oyarzabal at the break. The fourth arrived four minutes after the restart on 49 minutes when Marc Cucurella's shot was parried by Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais only to rebound off defender Hassan Al-Tambakti and into the net for an own goal. That sealed the rout and allowed Spain to breathe easier, with the 33-match unbeaten run in competitive fixtures extended.

Manager Luis de la Fuente, celebrating his 65th birthday, described his players as having been "stung" after the Cape Verde draw, and that emotion translated into what

Sky Sports called "perhaps the most complete 45 minutes of any nation in North America so far this summer". Oyarzabal was named Player of the Match for his brace and assist. "We needed to react," De la Fuente said after the match, his team's attacking fluency a clear message to Group H rivals Uruguay.

For Saudi Arabia, who had earned a 1-1 draw with Uruguay in their opener, the afternoon was a lesson in how quickly a World Cup can turn; they remain on one point and must now beat Cape Verde to have any chance of reaching the knockout phase. Spain, meanwhile, travel to Zapopan to face Uruguay on Friday knowing a win would secure the group and potentially avoid a round-of-32 clash with Argentina.

# SPORTS NEWS



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# Hollywood's influence on the political landscape, a century in review

By: Kadrolsha Ona Carole  
@themkenyatimes



## Worth Noting:

- Hollywood's primary political tool is storytelling. Movies and TV shows can illuminate complex issues in ways that speeches and policy papers struggle to achieve. From civil rights to environmental issues, entertainment media frequently weaves narratives that encourage audiences to critically engage with significant topics. Personal stories can humanize political matters, allowing viewers to connect emotionally with characters facing challenges that echo real-world debates.
- Celebrities in Hollywood have become impactful voices in political discussions. With millions of followers across social media, actors, musicians, and directors possess platforms rivaling traditional news outlets. Many use their influence to advocate for causes, encourage voter participation, and promote charitable endeavors. While some argue that celebrity opinions should hold no more weight than those of ordinary citizens, the visibility of public figures often ensures that their political viewpoints garner significant media attention.

For over a century, Hollywood has stood as one of America's most potent cultural forces. Through film, television, music, and celebrity influence, the entertainment industry has significantly shaped public opinion, inspired social movements, and impacted political discourse—not only in the U.S. but globally.

### The Power of Storytelling

Hollywood's primary political tool is storytelling. Movies and TV shows can illuminate complex issues in ways that speeches and policy papers struggle to achieve. From civil rights to environmental issues, entertainment media frequently weaves narratives that encourage audiences to critically engage with significant topics. Personal stories can humanize political matters, allowing viewers to connect emotionally with characters facing challenges that echo real-world debates.

### Celebrity Voices in Public Debate

Celebrities in Hollywood have become impactful voices in political discussions. With millions of followers across social media, actors, musicians, and directors possess platforms rivaling traditional news outlets. Many use their influence to advocate for causes, encourage voter participation, and promote charitable endeavors. While some argue that celebrity opinions should hold no more weight than those of ordinary citizens, the visibility of public figures often ensures that their political viewpoints garner significant media attention.

### Political Fundraising and Campaign Support

Hollywood has a long-standing role in political fundraising. Major campaigns frequently rely on entertainment figures who host events, provide financial support, or help attract media attention. Celebrity

appearances at rallies can boost voter engagement, particularly among younger audiences, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between politics and entertainment.

### Social Media and the Digital Age

The advent of social media has dramatically amplified Hollywood's political clout. Today, a single post can reach millions instantly, transforming entertainers into powerful media brands. Political messages and calls for civic action can circulate globally at unprecedented speeds, enhancing the effectiveness of their influence.

### Cultural Influence Beyond Elections

Hollywood's impact stretches beyond elections, helping shape cultural norms and societal values. Films and TV shows reflect and, at times, challenge changing attitudes towards pivotal issues. Through their storytelling, entertainers can subtly influence how audiences perceive the world.

### Criticism and Controversy

Despite its positive contributions, Hollywood faces criticism for its potential to wield disproportionate influence. Some argue that the entertainment industry favors specific political viewpoints while sidelining others, raising concerns about media influence and political representation.

### A Global Reach

Hollywood's influence transcends American borders, making its cultural exports significant worldwide. Political themes in entertainment resonate internationally, affecting discussions in varied contexts. As streaming services expand, Hollywood's role in shaping perceptions and initiating political dialogue is set



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to remain substantial.

### KO's Thoughts:

Hollywood's relationship with politics is complex and evolving. Through varied avenues—storytelling, celebrity advocacy, social media, and global distribution—it

continues to shape public discourse meaningfully. As a powerful participant in the political landscape, Hollywood exemplifies the often close ties between entertainment and politics.