



Kenya establishes National Cybersecurity Agency to bolster digital security
 Kenya has taken a major step toward strengthening its digital security architecture following Parliament's approval of the National Cybersecurity Agency Order, 2026

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Ruto unveils coffee revival plan, defends direct payment model despite court ruling
 President William Ruto yesterday launched an ambitious coffee revitalisation programme, outlining a series of reforms aimed at increasing farmers' earnings

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Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

Persona non grata Kenya's senior counsel held incommunicado at Entebbe, phones seized, then forced onto return flight

Uganda deports Martha Karua, declares her persona non grata

Uganda deported Senior Counsel Martha Karua yesterday after detaining her incommunicado at Entebbe International Airport, confiscating her phones and forcing her onto a return flight to Nairobi — a dramatic sequence of events that has drawn fierce condemnation from legal bodies across the region and raised profound questions about the future of justice and free movement within the East African Community.

Karua, who serves as lead counsel for veteran Ugandan opposition politician Dr Kizza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale in an ongoing high-profile treason case, had travelled to Kampala to support the defence team of her colleague, Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago. She arrived at Entebbe aboard a Kenya Airways flight at 8:50 a.m. alongside Law Society of Kenya President Charles Kanjama and two other legal colleagues. What happened next was, by her own account, swift, deliberate and deeply alarming.

"I arrived at Entebbe Airport at 8:50 aboard KQ and I was with three others," Karua told journalists after her return to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. "I only had hand luggage and while waiting for my colleagues, an immigration officer came and told me she had been told that she had made a mistake and there was a note on me. I was taken to a man called the Principal Immigration Officer at the airport and I told them there is no problem. By then, two of his juniors had already snatched my phones by force. They did not even ask me. They are very ill-behaved fellows."

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Senior Counsel Martha Karua

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"ALL BUSINESSES
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Ruto launches national coffee revival programme to boost farmers' earnings

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday launched the National Coffee Revival Through Cooperative Societies Programme in Kianyaga, Kirinyaga County, reaffirming the government's commitment to transforming Kenya's coffee sector and increasing farmers' incomes. The President said reforms implemented over the past two years have strengthened cooperatives, improved market access, and safeguarded farmers' earnings, leading to coffee prices rising from between KSh30 and KSh70 per kilogram to between KSh120 and KSh160. Ruto announced that the government is working to ensure that at least 80 percent of proceeds from coffee sales go directly to farmers, with payments being made within five days of a sale to improve cash flow and livelihoods. To boost production, the government is supporting farmers with subsidised fertiliser, quality seedlings, modern farming techniques, and enhanced extension services. The administration is also targeting increased acreage under coffee and higher productivity. The President further emphasized value addition, saying Kenya will shift from exporting raw coffee to local processing, packaging, and branding to create jobs and retain more value within the country. The programme forms part of broader efforts to revive the coffee industry and position Kenyan coffee competitively in global markets.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



First Lady Mama Rachel Ruto yesterday donated school shoes to all 1,665 learners at Karen C. Comprehensive School in Nairobi as part of efforts to support access to education and improve learners' welfare. During her visit, the First Lady interacted with pupils and encouraged them to remain focused on their studies, embrace discipline, and work hard to achieve their goals. She emphasized the importance of education in shaping a brighter future and urged learners to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Rachel Ruto said the initiative seeks to promote dignity in learning and create a conducive environment for children to thrive. She noted that investing in children's education is an investment in the future development and prosperity of the nation.



More than 7,300 members of the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KESSHA) have gathered in Mombasa for a four-day annual conference amid growing concerns over student unrest in schools across the country. KESSHA National Chairman Willie Kuria said the rising cases of unrest will be a major agenda item, with school heads expected to discuss the causes and identify practical solutions. He noted that the second term of 2026 has been particularly challenging for school administrators and suggested that learners who struggle to adapt to boarding school life should consider enrolling in day schools, where they can receive closer parental supervision. The 49th KCB/KESSHA Conference is themed "Strong Schools and Collaborative Leadership for Promoting Competency-Based Education," highlighting the need for strong leadership, partnerships, and continuous professional development to support education reforms.

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The AAK Board of Trustees met yesterday to discuss key issues aimed at enhancing the Association's long-term sustainability and effectiveness. The deliberations focused on strengthening governance and compliance frameworks, improving stewardship of AAK assets and properties, exploring strategic revenue-generation opportunities, and fostering closer collaboration between the Trustees, Secretariat, and Governing Council. Members also underscored the need for transparent reporting during Annual General Meetings (AGMs), emphasizing measurable impact, outcomes, and accountability to members. The meeting reaffirmed the Board's commitment to providing strategic oversight and supporting initiatives that promote institutional growth and resilience. Through continuous engagement and sound governance, AAK remains focused on advancing a stronger, sustainable, and professional built environment sector.



The Court of Appeal has elected Justice Gatembu Kairu as its new President after securing 26 of the 41 votes cast in elections held yesterday. He emerged victorious against fellow contenders Lady Justice Lydia Achode, Justice Patrick Kiage, and Lady Justice Agnes Murgor. In his acceptance message, Justice Gatembu emphasized collaboration, mutual respect, and collective leadership as the foundation of his vision for the Court. He noted that the strength of a collegiate court lies in its collective wisdom and pledged to serve judges and staff while facilitating the Court's work. He said his presidency would focus on enhancing administrative efficiency and upholding justice, describing the position not as one of singular authority but as a commitment to service and institutional excellence.



Aviation and Aerospace and Development PS Teresia Mbaika addresses residents during a women empowerment forum where she questioned the decision by Makeni Members of Parliament to vote against the Finance Bill 2026, arguing that the legislation is important for raising revenue needed to fund development projects and government programmes across the country. Speaking during a women's empowerment forum at Kisau/Kiteta Ward in Mbooni Sub-County on Sunday, Mbaika said the government requires adequate resources to initiate new projects and complete ongoing development initiatives.



Mobile money subscriptions in Kenya increased by two million during the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, reaching 53.4 million accounts, according to the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA). The growth was supported by a significant expansion of mobile money agents, whose numbers rose by over 101,000 to 602,470. Safaricom continued to dominate the market with an 89.1 percent share, boosted by its upgraded M-PESA Fintech 2.0 platform. During the financial year, M-PESA processed 46.41 billion transactions valued at Sh41.68 trillion. Mobile money platforms are also expanding beyond payments into investments, insurance, and wealth management. Ziidi MMF emerged as the largest investment product, while insurance offerings such as Tuunza continued to attract increasing numbers of users.

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Cybersecurity The agency was established through the National Cybersecurity Agency Order, 2026, issued by President William Ruto under the provisions of the State Corporations Act

Kenya establishes National Cybersecurity Agency to bolster digital security

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

Kenya has taken a major step toward strengthening its digital security architecture following Parliament's approval of the National Cybersecurity Agency Order, 2026, paving the way for the establishment of a dedicated national agency to coordinate cybersecurity efforts and safeguard the country's critical digital infrastructure.

The new National Cybersecurity Agency (NCSA) will operate as an autonomous regulatory and technical institution responsible for coordinating cybersecurity activities across government, private sector organizations, and critical national infrastructure.

The agency was established through the National Cybersecurity Agency Order, 2026, issued by President William Ruto under the provisions of the State Corporations Act.

The Ministry of Interior and National Administration described the move as a landmark achievement in Kenya's efforts to secure its rapidly growing digital economy.

Rising cyber threats

Over the past decade, Kenya has emerged as one of Africa's leading digital economies, powered by innovations in mobile money, digital financial services, e-government platforms, telecommunications, healthcare systems, education technology and e-commerce.

While digital transformation has created opportunities for growth and improved service delivery, it has also increased exposure to cyber threats. Government officials noted that cybercrime, ransomware attacks, online fraud, identity theft, malicious software, data breaches, misinformation campaigns and attacks on critical digital infrastructure continue to pose significant risks to national security, economic stability and public confidence in digital services.

The Ministry said the establishment of the NCSA reflects the government's recognition that cybersecurity has become a strategic national priority as institutions, businesses and citizens increasingly rely on digital technologies.

Broad national mandate

The NCSA will serve as Kenya's central cybersecurity regulatory and technical institution, coordinating efforts to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from cyber threats.

Its responsibilities will include formulating and overseeing national cybersecurity strategies, auditing and certifying critical information infrastructure, managing the National Cybersecurity Operations Centre, supporting sector-based cybersecurity operations centres and coordinating responses to cybersecurity incidents.

The agency will also conduct technical assessments of digital networks, identify emerging vulnerabilities and

issue cybersecurity advisories to strengthen resilience across both public and private sector systems.

To promote collaboration, the agency will work closely with government institutions, security agencies, regulators, industry players, academia, development partners and international cybersecurity networks.

Building skills and innovation

A major focus of the new agency will be addressing Kenya's cybersecurity skills gap and promoting home-grown technological solutions.

The NCSA will establish a Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence to support research, innovation, skills development and the creation of locally developed cybersecurity technologies. It will also lead professional certification programmes, specialized training and technical capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's cybersecurity workforce.

The agency's board will bring together representatives from key institutions including Internal Security, the National Treasury, Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, the Office of the Attorney-General, the Kenya Defence Forces, the National Police Service, the National Intelligence Service and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, alongside representatives from academia and the private sector.



Parliament buildings

The government said a secure digital environment is essential for protecting public institutions, safeguarding citizens' data, supporting business continuity, attracting investment and advancing Kenya's digital

transformation agenda.

As Kenya continues to position itself as a regional technology and innovation hub, officials expressed confidence that the National Cybersecurity Agency will play a central

role in strengthening national resilience against cyber threats while supporting economic growth and public trust in digital systems.



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BANK

SMEP Microfinance Bank appoints Bernard Kivava as new CEO



BY DMS

@themkenyatimes

SMEP Microfinance Bank has appointed Bernard Mutinda Kivava as its new Chief Executive Officer, marking a significant leadership transition as the lender seeks to strengthen growth, innovation and service delivery in Kenya's microfinance sector.

Mr. Kivava joins SMEP with more than 20 years of experience in the microfinance industry, having built a reputation for driving institutional growth, financial inclusion and organizational transformation across East Africa.

Before joining SMEP, he served as Chief Executive Officer of Juhudi Kilimo from 2015 to 2025, where he led a successful turnaround strategy that transformed the institution from a loss-making organization into a profitable enterprise.

During his tenure, Juhudi Kilimo significantly expanded its branch network while more than tripling its active customer base and loan portfolio.

Prior to that, Mr. Kivava headed Letshego Rwanda Limited, where he oversaw the growth of the institution's loan book and profitability. He also played a key role in its transition from a credit-only institution to a Deposit Taking Microfinance Institution, helping align operations with regional standards while improving productivity and service delivery.

His career began at Faulu Kenya Deposit Taking Microfinance Institution, where he rose through the ranks from a loan officer to Branch Manager and later Head of Business Development.

Speaking on the appointment, SMEP Microfinance Bank Board Chairman Dr. Nelson Kuria said the board was confident that Mr. Kivava possesses the experience, vision and leadership required to steer the institution through its next phase of growth.

"His proven ability to drive growth and execute successful turnarounds aligns perfectly with our mission of transforming lives and meeting our customers' needs as a Christ-centered microfinance organization," said Dr. Kuria.

The bank said Mr. Kivava's appointment reflects its commitment to strengthening financial inclusion and supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises across the country.

SMEP Microfinance Bank provides financial services to entrepreneurs and small businesses, with a focus on empowering communities through accessible and sustainable financial solutions.

The lender expressed optimism that Mr. Kivava's leadership will usher in a new era of growth, innovation and enhanced customer experience as it seeks to expand its impact in Kenya's competitive financial services sector.



Amb. Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba (4th right) with other ambassadors during the press briefing yesterday.

Kenyans urged to embrace unity and peace

BY DMS

@themkenyatimes

A group of peace ambassadors have called on Kenyans to embrace peace and unity as they are virtues of development and prosperity.

Speaking yesterday during a press briefing at the sidelines of Peace Ambassadors consultative forum held at Ofafa Jericho Comprehensive School, Nairobi, the team noted that the country was prone to economic and social challenges if peaceful co-existence didn't prevail.

Led by founder and CEO, for Global Unity for Peace and Development (GUPD) Ambassador Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba, the leaders said they were preparing to embark on nationwide peace mission.

Amb. Nzabonimba said his team that has members from all the 47 counties was disturbed by some political leaders who were fond of spewing hatred among Kenyans.

"Without peace, there is no development, without peace, learners will not be able to concentrate with their studies. Without peace, all

things grounds to a halt," he said as he called on leaders to embrace peace, more so during the upcoming electioneering period. He said without peace, Kenyans will have a hard time and no where to turn to.

Amb. Nzabonimba called both public and private sectors to support his organization's initiative so that they could be able to accomplish their mission.

While noting that Kenyans had constitutional rights of holding peaceful demonstrations, such privileges should not be abused by targeting government or private properties for destruction as it has been witnessed in the past.

His sentiments were supported by his colleagues; Ambassadors Mark Korir from Rift Valley region and his Western counterpart Emmily Nafula who went further to call on churches to reign on leaders who took advantage of church podiums to preach hatred among Kenyans.

Amb. Korir noted that those advancing hatred among Kenyans were just a few leaders, who he advised the churches to disregard and stop giving them forums to attack fellow Kenyans.

On her part, Amb. Nafula urged leaders to always be mindful of what they say in public.



Law Security officials switched off her mobile phones to prevent any external communication during the ordeal before she was forced onto a return flight to Nairobi

Uganda deports Karua, declares her persona non grata in blow to EAC rule of law

Kenya's senior counsel held incommunicado at Entebbe, phones seized, then forced onto return flight as region's legal fraternity erupts in condemnation

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

Uganda deported Senior Counsel Martha Karua yesterday after detaining her incommunicado at Entebbe International Airport, confiscating her phones and forcing her onto a return flight to Nairobi — a dramatic sequence of events that has drawn fierce condemnation from legal bodies across the region and raised profound questions about the future of justice and free movement within the East African Community.

Karua, who serves as lead counsel for veteran Ugandan opposition politician Dr Kizza Besigye and Hajji Obeid Lutale in an ongoing high-profile treason case, had travelled to Kampala to support the defence team of her colleague, Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago. She arrived at Entebbe aboard a Kenya Airways flight at 8:50 a.m. alongside Law Society of Kenya President Charles Kanjama and two other legal colleagues. What happened next was, by her own account, swift, deliberate and deeply alarming.

"I arrived at Entebbe Airport at 8:50 aboard KQ and I was with three others," Karua told journalists after her return to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. "I only had hand luggage and while waiting for my colleagues, an immigration officer came and told me she had been told that she had made a mistake and there was a note on me. I was taken to a man called the Principal Immigration Officer at the airport and I told them there is no problem. By then, two of his juniors had already snatched my phones by force. They did not even ask me. They are very ill-behaved fellows."

Karua was held incommunicado for several hours in a restricted transit area. Security officials switched off her mobile phones to prevent any external communication during the ordeal before she was forced onto a return flight to Nairobi. She later said officers wanted to take her to a holding cell, but she insisted on waiting at the Kenya Airways lounge for the next available flight home. She left her phone behind upon departure, fearing it had been tampered with.

Speaking upon her arrival at JKIA, Karua accused Ugandan authorities of interference with the legal defence of Besigye. "This is political persecution of Besigye, and it is interference with his defence because the hearing of his case was even supposed to start last week," she said. Her verdict on the day's events was unambiguous: the deportation was not an immigration matter. It was a political act.

A letter from Uganda's Ministry of Internal Affairs, seen by KFM, confirmed that Karua had been formally declared persona non grata — a designation typically reserved in diplomacy for foreign nationals deemed unwelcome by a host government. No reasons were given. Uganda's Ministry of Internal Affairs and immigration authorities had not issued a formal statement clarifying the legal or security grounds for the decision by press time.

The incident did not occur in isolation. The legal entanglement dates to November 2024, when Besigye was allegedly abducted in Nairobi during Karua's book launch and secretly transferred to Uganda, where he has since faced trial before a military court. Karua has been co-lead counsel in his defence ever since. Then, on 15 June 2026, Uganda's Special Forces Command raided the home of Kampala Lord Mayor and Besigye co-counsel Erias Lukwago, arresting him. His arrest was first publicly confirmed not by police or the courts, but by a social media post on X from Chief of Defence Forces General Muhoozi Kainerugaba. Lukwago has since been charged with misprision of treason — the offence of concealing knowledge of a plot to overthrow the government. Yesterday, the same day Karua was deported, Lukwago was brought before Makindye Chief Magistrate's Court, where his bail ruling was deferred and he was further remanded. He is due back in court on 30 June.

LSK President Charles Kanjama, who was cleared by immigration officials while Karua was turned away, described her deportation as an affront to regional integration. "Senior Counsel Martha Karua was issued with a special licence to practise in Uganda but to our dismay, when



Senior Counsel Martha Karua

she came on a legitimate observatory mission, her passport was duly stamped but it is unfortunate that she was then denied entry and forcibly deported," he said. "This development undermines the spirit of East African integration because we believe that for a bigger picture — including the East African Federation — to be achieved, we must start with the free movement of labour."

The condemnation extended far beyond the legal fraternity. Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka visited Karua alongside former Chief Justice David Maraga and former Cabinet Secretary Justin Muturi, among others. "What transpired is deeply troubling and sets a dangerous precedent for our region," Kalonzo said. "The arbitrary denial of entry to a respected leader and Senior Counsel is not only an affront to her dignity, but also a direct violation of the principles that underpin the East African Community." He warned that the incident reflected shrinking democratic space across the region. "We must not allow the continued shrinking of democratic space within our region to become the norm. Today it is Martha Karua, tomorrow it could be any voice that

dares to stand for justice," he said, adding: "We stand in full solidarity with Martha Karua and with all those who continue to champion a just, open, and democratic East Africa."

Ugandan defence lawyer Medard Lubega Sseggon, speaking outside Makindye Court as news of the deportation filtered through Kampala, was direct in his assessment. "What would you expect a coward to do? I know that Martha Karua has not been denied entry but detained at the airport and deported. It is not within the spirit of the East African Community. As a professional, I am deeply concerned that an accused person is entitled to have a lawyer of his or her choice from anywhere," he said.

The East Africa Law Society noted pointedly that Karua held a valid Ugandan practising certificate registered through Lukwago's law firm. This was also not Karua's first deportation in the region. She was deported from Tanzania last year to prevent her from attending the court case of opposition leader Tundu Lissu, who also faces treason charges. The pattern is difficult to dismiss.

Both the Law Society of Kenya and

the East Africa Law Society have demanded a formal explanation from Kampala, citing EAC treaty obligations on the free movement of persons, the independence of legal practitioners and the right of accused persons to counsel of their choice. The Uganda Law Society announced it would stage a nationwide strike on 26 June in protest at what it described as ongoing lawlessness and disregard for the rule of law.

The Besigye case has always been more than a domestic criminal matter. His alleged abduction from Kenyan soil, his detention in a Ugandan maximum security prison without bail for more than eighteen months, his trial before a military tribunal despite being a civilian, and now the deportation of his lead counsel from two different EAC member states — each development has chipped away at the credibility of regional institutions and the bloc's founding commitments to governance, human rights and the rule of law.

What happened at Entebbe yesterday was not merely an immigration decision. It was a message — and the region heard it clearly.

Courts Duale held a similarly firm line. Despite the court orders, he told parliament earlier this month that the government “will not stop it”

Duale found in contempt of court over Ebola quarantine facility as court orders sentencing

BY Hadassah Karangu

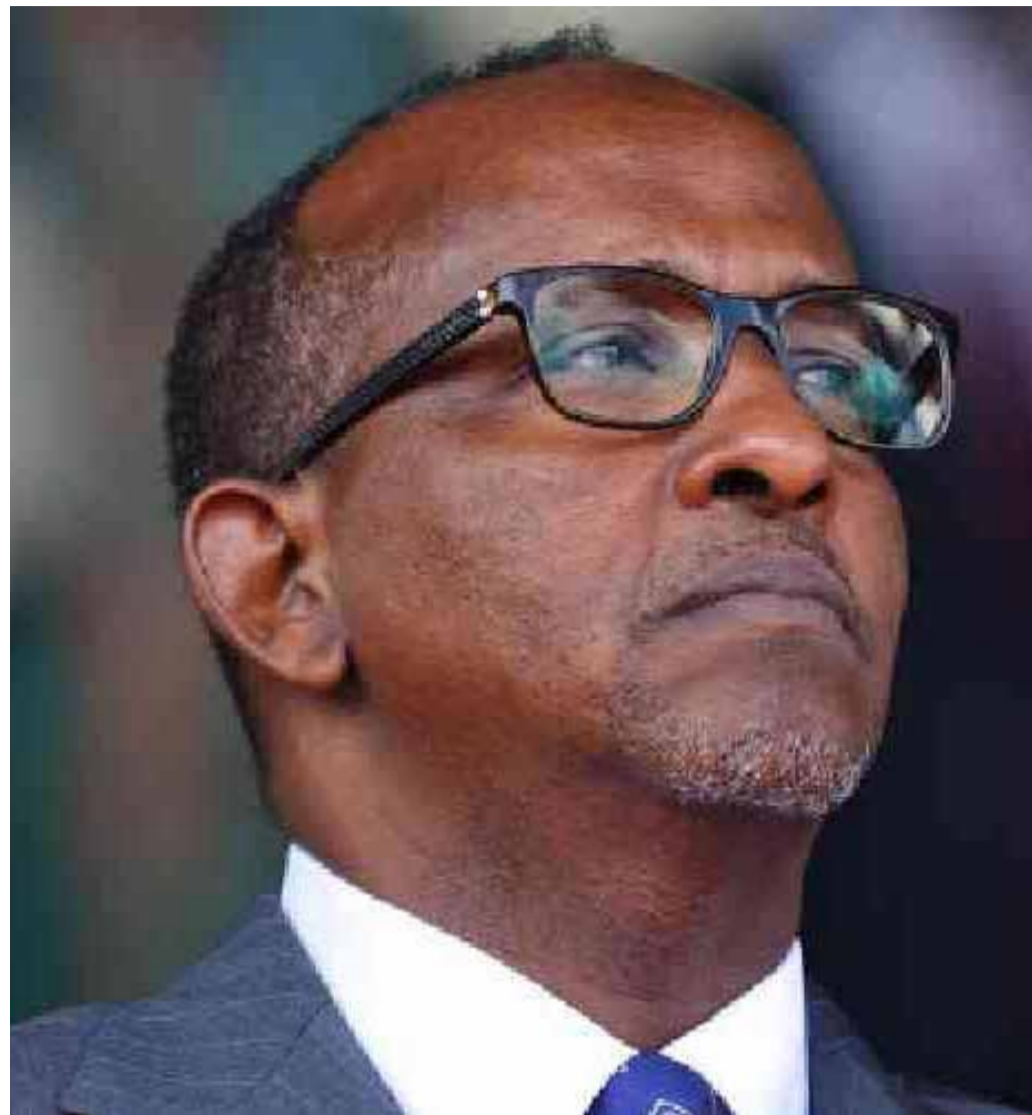
@themkenyatimes

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale was yesterday found guilty of contempt of court after the High Court ruled that he had proceeded with construction of a controversial Ebola quarantine facility at Laikipia Air Base near Nanyuki, in direct defiance of multiple court orders directing that work be suspended. Justice Patricia Nyaundi

Mande, delivering the ruling, found that Duale had commissioned construction at the site despite orders issued in late May and early June to halt all activities pending the hearing of the case. “The court cannot permit its orders to be rendered hollow,” the judge wrote. Duale has been ordered to appear in court today for mitigation and sentencing. Contempt of court carries a maximum fine of 200,000 shillings — approximately

\$1,500 — and, or up to six months in imprisonment.

The case was brought by the Law Society of Kenya and the Katiba Institute, a constitutional watchdog, who argued that the government had no right to press ahead with the project while legal proceedings were active. Their petition raised fundamental concerns about the rule of law, the accountability of public officials, and the rights of citizens — particularly those



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

in Laikipia County — to be consulted on matters affecting their land and livelihoods.

At the heart of the dispute is the nature of the facility itself. The quarantine centre was designed to house United States nationals exposed to the Ebola virus outbreak currently affecting the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Kenya, which has recorded no infections, agreed to host the facility as part of a health and security partnership with the United States, which has pledged approximately \$13.5 million toward the arrangement. President William Ruto publicly defended the project, saying he “gave the okay” because it was “an agreement and a partnership with friends who have walked with Kenya.”

Duale held a similarly firm line. Despite the court orders, he told parliament earlier this month that the government “will not stop it” — a statement that now sits uncomfortably alongside Monday’s contempt finding. Public opposition to the fa-

cility has been fierce. Protests erupted across the country last month, with some demonstrations turning violent — at least three people were reportedly killed by gunfire during the unrest. Demonstrators carried placards reading “Tumekataa Ebola” — We refuse Ebola — expressing anger at what many saw as the importation of a deadly virus and a lack of transparency in the deal struck with Washington. Civilian groups and health-care workers have been vocal in their criticism, arguing that Kenya’s health infrastructure is already under strain and cannot safely absorb such a risk.

The US embassy maintained that the facility posed no danger to local communities and said it was “actively working with the Kenyan government to resolve any objections.” The Ebola outbreak in the DRC, confirmed in May, had resulted in 896 confirmed cases and at least 232 deaths as of 17 June, according to the World Health Organisation. Uganda, which shares a bor-

der with Kenya, had reported 19 confirmed cases and two deaths.

The contempt finding now puts the case at the centre of a broader and more pressing question: how should public officials respond when courts intervene in major state projects? Monday’s ruling is a sharp judicial reminder that the answer cannot be to simply carry on regardless. The relationship between the executive and the judiciary depends on mutual respect, and when one institution appears to override the other, the entire architecture of democratic governance is tested.

Whatever sentence is handed down on Tuesday, this case has already delivered a verdict of its own kind — one that will resonate well beyond the courtroom.

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Coffee revival The programme seeks to reverse years of declining production attributed to ageing coffee bushes, climate change

Coffee revival gains momentum as Kenya targets 150,000 tonnes by 2028



Coffee berries

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

Kenya's ambitious coffee revitalization programme is beginning to deliver results, with production forecast to increase significantly and farmer earnings rising as the government intensifies efforts to restore the crop's status as one of the country's leading foreign exchange earners.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, coffee production is projected to reach 63,836 metric tonnes in the 2025/2026 season, representing a 26.2 per cent increase from current levels. The growth is part of a broader strategy aimed at tripling national output from 50,000 metric tonnes to 150,000 metric tonnes by 2028.

The programme seeks to reverse years of declining production attributed to ageing coffee bushes, climate change, high production costs and governance challenges within cooperative societies. Smallholder farmers con-

tinue to dominate the sector, accounting for 70 per cent of coffee production, while women make up 30 per cent of participants in the value chain. More than 550 cooperatives are involved in coffee production and marketing across the country.

Farmers earn more as production rises

A key achievement of recent reforms has been a significant increase in farmer earnings.

Average payments have risen by 52 per cent, from KSh78.99 per kilogram to KSh120 per kilogram, providing fresh incentives for farmers to invest in coffee production.

To support the sector's recovery, the government has invested KSh500 million under the Coffee Revival Programme, resulting in the distribution of 2.98 million coffee seedlings to farmers.

The ministry has also trained 986 coffee champions across 33 coffee-growing counties to strengthen extension services and promote modern farming

practices.

Of those trained, 570 are men and 416 are women. The programme currently reaches farmers in 495 wards.

County production figures show Kirinyaga remains the country's leading coffee producer with 8,999 metric tonnes, accounting for 17.77 per cent of national production.

Kiambu follows with 8,224 metric tonnes or 16.34 per cent, while Nyeri produced 5,701 metric tonnes. Kericho and Murang'a recorded 5,260 metric tonnes and 5,160 metric tonnes respectively.

Expanding access to international markets

The coffee revival initiative is also focused on strengthening Kenya's position in international markets, particularly in Europe, which remains the country's largest export destination.

The European Union accounts for 55 per cent of Kenya's external coffee sales. In 2024, coffee exports generated KSh38.2 billion, highlighting the crop's continued importance to the economy.

To comply with the European Union Deforestation Reg-

ulation (EUDR), Kenya has accelerated farm mapping and traceability efforts.

The ministry reports that 91 per cent of coffee farms have been mapped under EUDR requirements, while all 33 coffee-growing counties have completed the mapping process.

Officials say the move will help secure continued access to lucrative European markets and position Kenyan coffee favourably as buyers increasingly demand sustainable and traceable products.

Climate-Smart Investments drive long-term growth

The government is placing climate resilience at the centre of its long-term strategy for the coffee sector.

Plans are underway to produce 179 million climate-resilient coffee seedlings over the next five years through collaboration with the Coffee Research and Training Institute (CRTI) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI).

The programme also includes the rehabilitation of 30,000 hectares of coffee farms and the planting of 18 million trees to support environmen-

tal conservation and climate adaptation.

In addition, the government intends to strengthen 200 cooperatives and 49 SACCOs through financial inclusion and corporate governance programmes aimed at improving farmer access to credit and enhancing institutional management.

Agriculture stakeholders say the combination of improved earnings, increased production, expanded market access and climate-smart investments has renewed optimism in the sector.

If the current momentum is sustained, Kenya could not only achieve its target of 150,000 metric tonnes by 2028 but also reaffirm its reputation as one of the world's leading producers of premium-quality coffee, while improving livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of farming households across the country.



Coffee beans

Coffee “Farmers should get their pay on the fifth day after sale. This will ensure that the farmer has money when they need it. It is not a favour; it is a right,” Ruto said.

Ruto unveils coffee revival plan, defends direct payment model despite court ruling

BY MKT Correspondents

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday launched an ambitious coffee revitalisation programme, outlining a series of reforms aimed at increasing farmers’ earnings, boosting production, and strengthening Kenya’s position in the global coffee market.

Speaking at Kianyaga Stadium, in Kirinyaga county, the President reaffirmed his administration’s commitment to transforming the coffee sector through faster payments, value addition, expanded market access, and increased domestic consumption.

However, his remarks also reignited debate over the controversial Direct Settlement System (DSS), a payment model that remains the subject of legal and political contestation.

The President insisted that coffee farmers should receive their proceeds within five days after the sale of their produce, arguing that delayed payments have historically disadvantaged growers and weakened the sector.

“Farmers should get their pay on the fifth day after sale. This will ensure that the farmer has money when they need it. It is not a favour; it is a right,” Ruto said.

The statement was interpreted by some stakeholders as a reaffirmation of the government’s support for the Direct Settlement System, under which farmers receive payments directly through mobile money and bank accounts rather than through traditional cooperative structures.

The DSS model has faced opposition from a section of coffee farmers and coopera-

tive leaders who successfully challenged its implementation in court.

In a ruling issued by the High Court in Kerugoya, Justice Edward Mureithi suspended the mandatory implementation of the payment system after petitioners argued that it had been introduced without adequate public participation and consultation with stakeholders.

Farmers opposed to the model contend that routing payments directly to mobile phones may encourage impulsive spending, particularly among smallholder farmers. Others argue that cooperative societies have traditionally served as financial intermediaries, helping farmers access credit facilities from banks based on expected coffee earnings.

Following the court ruling, the State Department for Cooperatives indicated that the government would suspend compulsory implementation of the system and engage stakeholders before making further decisions.

However, remarks made by the President during yesterday’s event have prompted

fresh criticism from some farmers who accuse the government of disregarding the court’s directive.

Njoroge Mtetezi, a coffee farmer and sector advocate, said many growers remain concerned about the future of the payment system.

“The President appears to be pushing ahead with a model that farmers challenged in court. We believe the concerns raised by farmers should be addressed first because the current mode of payment is not favouring many small-scale growers,” he said.

Ambitious production targets

The President unveiled a broad strategy aimed at restoring Kenya’s coffee industry, which has experienced declining production over the past several decades due to shrinking acreage, rising production costs, land subdivision, and changing market dynamics.

Ruto said the government is targeting an increase in annual coffee production from the current levels to 150,000 metric tonnes by 2028.



President William Ruto addressing coffee stakeholders yesterday.

He further announced plans to improve productivity at the farm level by increasing yields per coffee tree.

According to the President, the government wants to raise average production from approximately two kilograms per stem to as much as 20 kilograms through improved farming practices, better seedlings, extension services, and modern processing technologies.

A key pillar of the reforms is increasing the share of coffee revenues that goes directly to farmers.

The President said farmers should retain up to 80 percent of earnings from coffee sales, while millers, marketers, cooperative societies, and other service providers share the remaining 20 percent.

“If it is the farmer who does the work, then the farmer must benefit the most. We want a

system where the farmer receives 80 percent and the rest of the value chain shares the remaining 20 percent,” he said.

The proposal aligns with reforms introduced by the government over the past two years aimed at reducing operational costs across the coffee value chain and increasing transparency in marketing and payment systems.

KSh4 billion set aside for sector support

The Head of State also announced that the government has allocated KSh2 billion to support coffee debt management and another KSh2 billion for the production and distribution of certified coffee seedlings.

The debt issue has remained a major concern in coffee-growing regions, with many cooperative societies burdened by historical loans that have affected operations and farmers’ earnings.

However, the President stopped short of confirming whether all outstanding debts owed by coffee cooperatives in Kirinyaga and other counties would be fully settled under the programme.

In addition, the government plans to invest KSh2 billion in modern eco-pulpers to improve coffee processing efficiency and enhance the quality of Kenyan coffee destined for export markets.

Call for greater local consumption

President Ruto challenged Kenyans to embrace coffee consumption as part of efforts to build a stronger domestic market.

While Kenya is internationally renowned for producing premium-quality coffee, local consumption remains relatively low compared to major coffee-producing countries such as Brazil and Ethiopia.

The President noted that domestic consumption currently accounts for only a small fraction of total production and called for deliberate efforts to increase uptake.

“If we want our coffee to be respected globally, we must also consume it locally. Other countries consume a significant portion of what they produce. We need to increase our consumption and create our own coffee culture,” he said.

Industry stakeholders have long argued that expanding local consumption would reduce reliance on volatile international markets and create a more stable source of demand for farmers.

The President also highlighted ongoing trade negotiations and agreements aimed at expanding market access for Kenyan agricultural products.



President William Ruto being taken coffee processing process. | Photo: Courtesy.

Coffee “Farmers should get their pay on the fifth day after sale. This will ensure that the farmer has money when they need it. It is not a favour; it is a right,” Ruto said.

Ruto unveils coffee revival plan, defends direct payment model despite court ruling

Contd from page 12

He said Kenya has secured or is pursuing arrangements with countries including Belgium, India, Italy, China, and South Korea to ease market access barriers for exports such as coffee, tea, and nuts.

According to the President, reduced tariffs and improved trade relations will enable Kenyan products to compete more effectively in international markets.

Ruto further defended the government’s policy of promoting local processing and value addition, citing the ban on the export of raw in-shell macadamia nuts as an example of efforts to retain more value within the country.

“We cannot continue exporting our products in raw form while other

countries create jobs and wealth from them. Value addition must happen here in Kenya so that our people benefit from the full value of what they produce,” he said.

Mixed reactions

While many farmers welcomed government commitments to improve earnings and reduce payment delays, others expressed reservations over unresolved issues surrounding the DSS payment system and cooperative governance reforms.

Coffee sector analysts note that the success of the revitalisation programme will ultimately depend on implementation, stakeholder consensus, access to affordable farm inputs, and the government’s ability to balance reforms with the interests of smallholder farmers who account for the majority of Kenya’s coffee



President William Ruto with some of the leaders during the unveiling ceremony yesterday.

production.

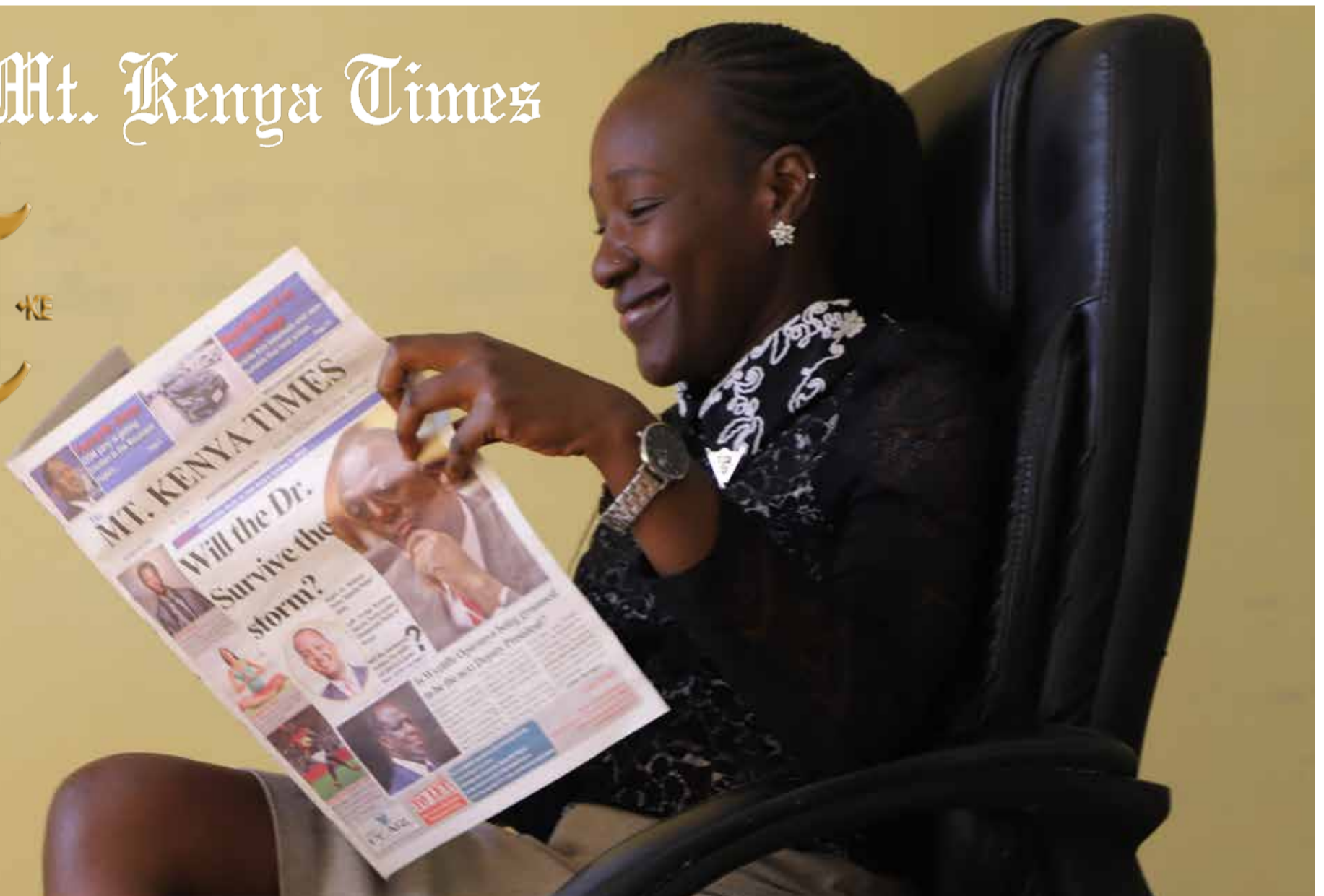
For now, the launch signals the government’s determination to revive one of Kenya’s most valuable cash crops, even as debate continues over

the best path to achieving that goal.

The president was accompanied by several government and private sector stakeholders led by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki and Cabinet

Secretaries Mutahi Kagwe and Wycliffe Oparanya. Several Governors and lawmakers from coffee growing areas were also present.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Hug trees feel better



And make your food as a whole -food.
If needed add more supplements.
Take deep breath and pranayama in your trends.

Spend more time with open areas
Parks and beaches, Groves and garden
They are always helpful to the human beings
Hugging and playing with the trees help away
from cortisol.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N
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PGDG&C,B.Ed., CELT.
BT Asst.
GMHSCHOOL, TIRUR.
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Creative Writers.
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Hugging trees lowers cortisol, calms your nervous system, and genuinely heals your mind.

Cortisol is a steroid hormone.
And affecting metabolism, immune system and BP.
Maintain a calm state of mind otherwise leads to downfall.
So many ways are here to help lower your cortisol.

Add sprouts and millets in your food

A Journey Begun with Ixlos



Like morning stars across the skies.
With every challenge, in every test,
Students are taught to give their best.

From distant lands to global stage,
They turn another hopeful page.
From Turkey's shores to Egypt's sun,
To Qatar's dreams, their journeys run.

Not every journey starts with fame,
Nor seeks the glory of a name;
Some paths are born in quiet grace,
Where hearts find their place.

And when they leave these cherished walls,
They carry more than academic calls.
They take the strength to stand and strive,
And keep their deepest dreams alive.

Before the lessons, grades, and praise,
Come values that will light our days.
For knowledge shines its brightest light
When kindness leads and hearts are right.

A path of faith, of care, of grace,
Of countless dreams we all embrace.
And long into tomorrow's light,
May Ixlos School continue bright.

Within these halls, ambitions rise,

Sherova Orzigul

Faith



If you have no words left, remain in silence,
If you have no feelings left, remain in silence,
If you have no deeds left, remain in silence,
But never cut off the true FAITH.
If your gaze gives no remedy to hearts,
If your tongue cannot cut sharper than blades at times,
If the world around you walks in cold indifference,
Never, ever cut off the true FAITH.

By Kholova Yulduz

Our heart looks deeper than our eyes



They judge by wealth, name, face. Fame
Eyes are bias, pride, and partial and prejudice

But outer beauty fades with time,
External beauty is not permanent
The heart sees what is inside which last for ever

So let us shape our hearts to see
What is inside the heart
eyes can't find

Only heart can look into human heart
The beauty of a loving soul can be seen only be
heart not by eyes

Its looks deep within.
It does not see mere outer appearance
Not color, caste, nor creed, nor skin beauty

It sees the soul that lies inside,
And values love, and care, and concern
It honors kindness, truth,
It sees empathy sympathy and soft corner of
heart

Our eyes see only outer appearance

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Cuddalore district
Tamilnadu India

The kind bird and the little girl



Once upon a time, in ancient days, there lived a kind little girl named Zebora. Every day, she watered the flowers in her garden and scattered seeds for the birds.

One day, she found a little bird with an injured wing. Zebora took the bird home and cared for it with great kindness. After a few days, the bird recovered and was ready to fly again.

Before flying away, the little bird said, "Your kindness will never be forgotten."
The next morning, when Zebora went into her garden, she saw that the dry tree had become green and full of beautiful flowers and delicious fruits. The little bird returned with its friends and made the garden even more beautiful.

From that day on, Zebora's garden became the most beautiful garden in the whole village. Everyone admired her kindness and generosity. My name is Davlatova Zebanda. I am a second-year student in the History Education program at Termez State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan.

Our heart looks deeper than our eyes



Eyes can see the world outside,
But hearts can see what we hide.
Eyes may notice face and dress,
A kind heart sees much more than this.

Eyes can miss a silent tear,
A caring heart can feel it near.
Eyes see distance, near and far,
The heart sees who we truly are.

When eyes stop at what they find,
The heart looks deeper into the mind.
So let your heart lead every day,
And show kindness along the way.

Sripriya R
BT ENGLISH GHSS KOLAPAKKAM
KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT TAMILNADU INDIA



When we do something wrong,
She scolds us to make us strong .
Sometimes she may punish us too,
But only to guide us in what is true.

If we do not make any mistake,
She treats us with love for our sake.
My sister plays me everyday,
She brings me joy in every way.

We both share everything together,
In happiness or trouble, whatever the weather.

Our home is filled with love so bright,
My sweet home is my heart's delight.

In our home, we are three,
My mother, my sister, and me.

My mother is very special to me,
My sister is special too, you see.

I love my mother very much,
She cares for us with so much love one touch.

Written by:
R.Rakshika
Class: 7th A
GGHSS, pattukkotai

DPP The ODPP was careful to leave the door open for future proceedings. The High Court, it noted, had expressly acknowledged that new evidence

DPP presses on with abduction charges against ex-DCI officers over disappearance of Ruto campaign aides

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

The Director of Public Prosecutions will proceed with criminal charges against fifteen former officers of a disbanded Directorate of Criminal Investigations unit over the abduction and disappearance of two Indian nationals and their Kenyan driver in the weeks before the August 2022 general election, even as it withdraws separate murder charges filed against them.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions confirmed it would discontinue the murder case at the High Court in Kiambu through a nolle prosequi — a formal declaration that the State will not pursue that particular charge — but made clear that the accused would continue



The 15 accused officers, charged in October 2023, are alleged to have participated in offences including abduction, torture, conspiracy, and forgery connected to the disappearance of the three men/
FILE | Photo: FILE

to face prosecution at the Kahawa Law Courts on serious counts including abduction, torture, conspiracy and forgery. “The discontinuation of the murder charge does not

amount to an acquittal of the accused persons,” the ODPP said.

The case centres on the July 2022 disappearance of Mohamed Zaid Sami Kidwai,

Zulfiqar Ahmed Khan and their driver, Nicodemus Mwanja Mwangi, who vanished under unexplained circumstances during one of the most contested election seasons

in Kenya’s recent history. The two Indian nationals had been engaged in digital and communications work linked to President William Ruto’s presidential campaign before they went missing. Their fate remains unknown.

The fifteen officers were charged in October 2023. Prosecutors had initially filed the additional murder charges in June 2024 after fresh evidence emerged suggesting the three men may have been killed. The State then sought to consolidate the murder case with the existing abduction proceedings, but the High Court rejected that bid on 30 May 2026. Following a review of both the ruling and the available evidence, the DPP resolved to drop the murder charge while keeping all remaining counts alive.

The ODPP was careful to leave the door open for future proceedings. The High Court, it noted, had expressly acknowledged that new evidence could give rise to fresh charges at a later stage. “Our decisions are guided by the Constitution, the law, available evidence, and the broader interests of justice,” the office said.

The case is among the most politically charged to emerge from the 2022 election period. The fifteen accused served in a specialised DCI unit that operated under former Director-General George Kinoti, whose tenure was marked by both celebrated prosecutions and persistent controversy over the conduct of his officers. Kinoti left office in 2023. The unit in question has since been disbanded, but the legal reckoning over its operations continues.

For the families of the three missing men, the procedural twists offer little comfort. Years on, there are no bodies, no confirmed cause of death and no verdict. What there is, the ODPP insists, is an ongoing prosecution — and a state commitment to see it through. The matter now returns to Kahawa Law Courts, where the abduction charges will proceed and the question of accountability for one of Kenya’s most unresolved disappearances will, eventually, have to be answered.

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Mosquito While there are more than 3,500 mosquito species globally, only a small number can transmit malaria.

Why is mosquito one of the world's most studied insects

BY African Media Agency (AMA)

@themkenyatomtimes

Despite weighing only a few milligrams, mosquitoes have proven that some of the world's biggest challenges can come in very small packages.

This week (June 22-28) is Insect Week, and scientists are answering why mosquitoes are one of the most researched, and notorious, insects on the planet.

Despite its tiny size, the mosquito has shaped human history more than perhaps any other insect. Responsible for transmitting diseases that have affected millions of people, mosquitoes continue to command the attention of researchers around the world.

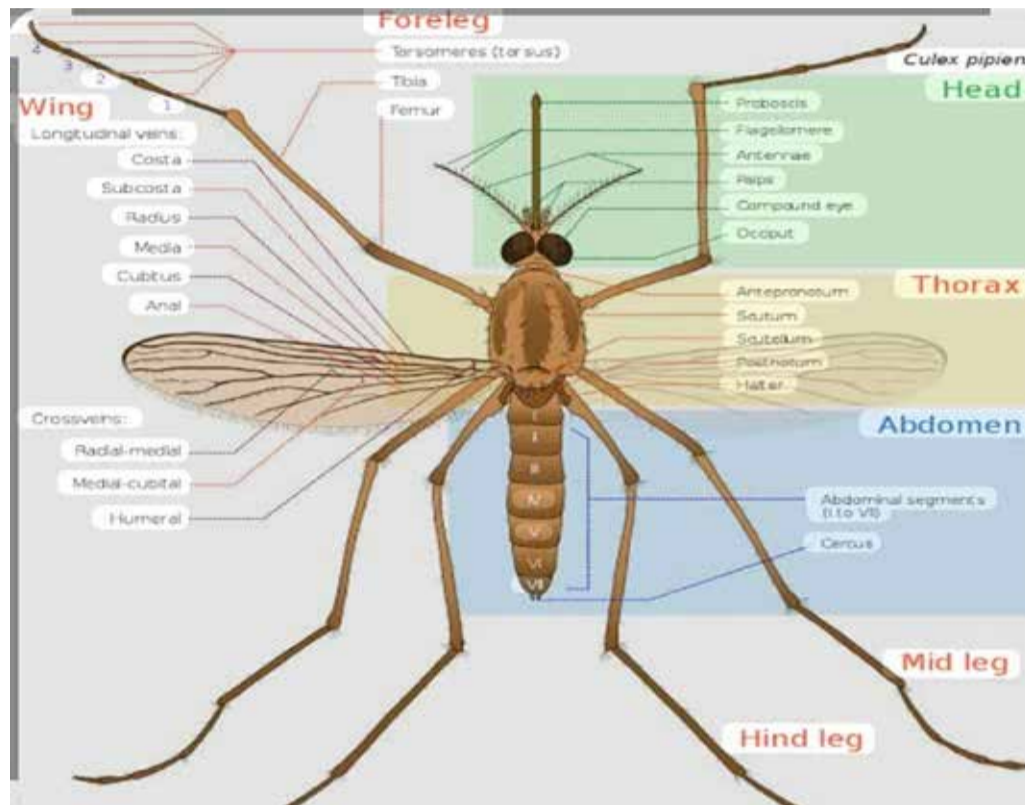
For scientists working to combat malaria, understanding the mosquito remains one of the most important scientific challenges of our time.

While there are more than 3,500 mosquito species globally, only a small number can transmit malaria.

Among these, mosquitoes belonging to the *Anopheles gambiae* species complex are particularly effective vectors and are responsible for much of the malaria transmission in sub-Saharan Africa. The *Anopheles gambiae* complex is often referred to by scientists as one of the most efficient disease-transmitting insects on Earth because of its strong preference for feeding on humans and its ability to thrive near human settlements.

Rogers Atugonza, a field entomology officer part of the Young Scientist Network (YSN) for Target Malaria at the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI), says that what makes malaria mosquitoes so fascinating is their remarkable ability to adapt and survive.

"Malaria mosquitoes have evolved alongside humans for thousands of years. They are highly specialised, exception-



The anatomy of a mosquito

ally resilient, and have developed behaviours that make them incredibly successful at finding human hosts and reproducing.

Research has shown that mosquitoes rely on a sophisticated combination of senses to locate people, detecting carbon dioxide from our breath, body heat, movement, and even chemical compounds released through our skin.

Female mosquitoes, which require a blood meal to produce eggs, can accurately identify and track hosts over surprisingly long distances.

One of the mosquito's most remarkable adaptations is its reproductive efficiency.

A female mosquito will usually mate just once, storing enough sperm to fertilise multiple batches of eggs over her lifetime and potentially produce hundreds of offspring.

Unlike females, male mosquitoes do not bite people at all.

Male mosquitoes feed on plant sugars and spend much of their short adult lives searching for mates.

Scientists have also observed

how malaria mosquitoes adapt their behaviour in response to environmental changes and disease control efforts.

In some regions, mosquitoes have altered when and where they feed or rest, helping them survive despite widespread malaria interventions.

This adaptability is one of the reasons malaria remains such a formidable public health challenge in Africa.

"Every time we develop a new way to reduce mosquito populations or prevent bites, we learn more about how remarkably adaptable these insects are," says Rogers.

"Continuous investment in science is essential because it helps us design better tools to reduce ongoing malaria transmission."

Over the years, the growing body of scientific research on mosquitoes has contributed to significant advances in malaria control, including improved bed nets, new insecticides, vaccines, and emerging technologies like gene drive; currently under research.

Although substantial progress has been made against malaria over the past two de-

acades, the disease continues to disproportionately affect African communities, particularly young children under five, and pregnant women.

"Malaria mosquitoes are small but powerful. They have influenced human settlement patterns, public health systems, economic development, and scientific research for centuries. Few insects have had a greater impact on human history," says Rogers.

By continuing to study the mosquito, young African scientists are helping build the knowledge needed to support future efforts to reduce the burden of malaria and move closer to a world free from the disease.

About Target Malaria

Target Malaria is a not-for-profit research consortium that aims to develop and share new, cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies to modify mosquitoes and reduce malaria transmission. Our vision is to contribute to a world free of malaria. We aim to achieve excellence in all areas of our work, creating a path for responsible research and development of genetic technologies, such as gene drive.

This story is distributed by African Media Agency (AMA) on behalf of Target Malaria

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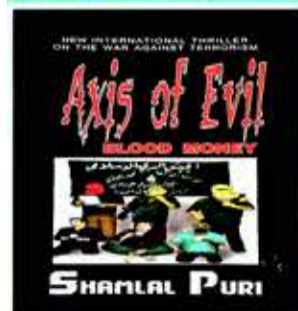
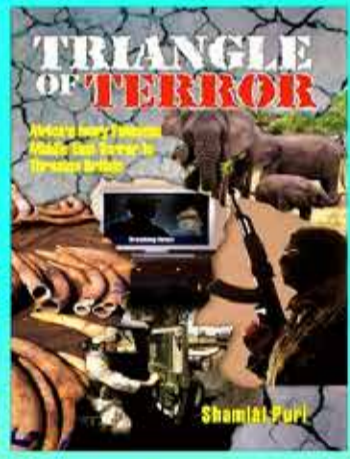
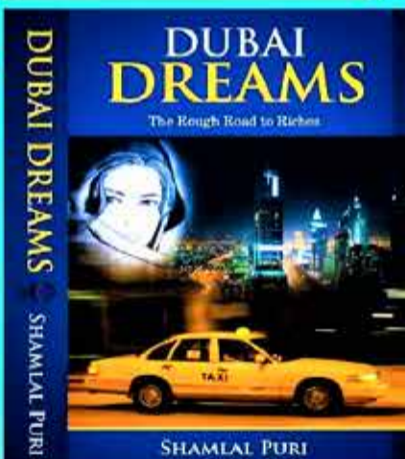
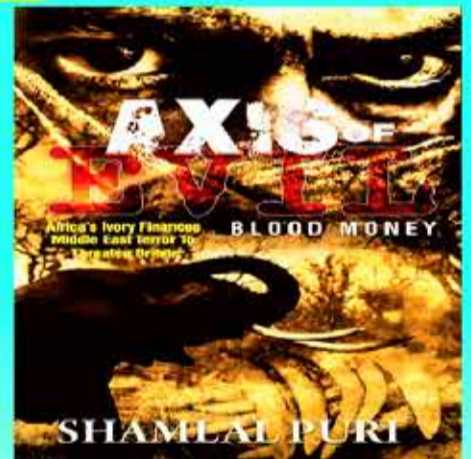
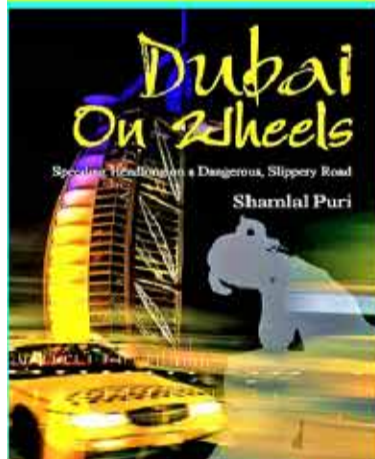
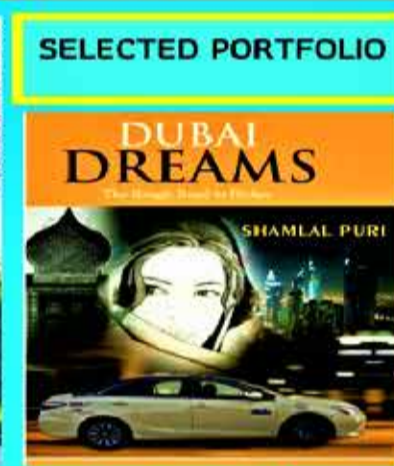
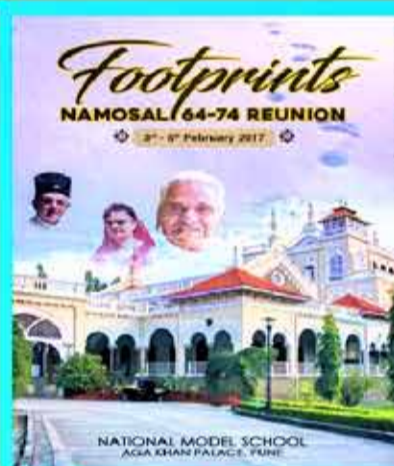
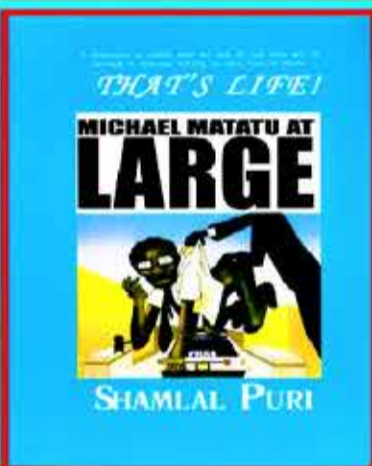
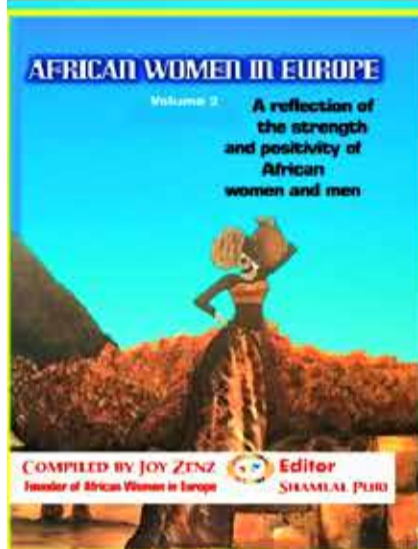
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Demise Walk into any neonatal ward in a well-resourced hospital in Nairobi's leafy suburbs, and then walk into one in Turkana or Mandera

How wonderful that death, at least, does not discriminate against the poor



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor
Odhiambo
@themkenyetimes

Every eleven seconds, somewhere on this earth, a child under the age of five draws a final breath not from war, not from earthquake, not from the inexorable tide of some exotic plague, but from poverty. From the profound, grinding, entirely preventable condition of not having enough. That is the fact with which we must begin, because facts are the only honest currency in a conversation that humanity has long preferred to conduct in the comfortable coin of sentiment and strategic amnesia. Eleven seconds. Read that again. And again. Let it settle in the chest like a stone.

Death, we are often told by those who have mastered the art of consoling the living, is the great equalizer. It is the democracy none of us can escape, the referendum in which every vote is cast in flesh and bone. Kings and paupers, philosophers and fools, the man in the mansion and the woman beneath the flyover bridge all shall bow, all shall return to dust. It is a beautiful idea. It is also, in the most consequential sense possible, a lie. Death is not equal. Death is not democratic. Death, like almost everything else in the architecture of human civilisation, has always had its favourites.

Walk into any neonatal ward in a well-resourced hospital in Nairobi's leafy suburbs, and then walk into one in Turkana or Mandera, and tell me with a straight face that the infant in each place faces the same odds. Tell me that the woman delivering in a county referral hospital with one functioning incubator shared between a corridor of desperate mothers is meeting death on the same terms as the woman whose obstetrician has been selected from a pamphlet of specialists. We have built an entire civilisation on the pretence of equality before death while meticulously ensuring that death arrives earlier, more violently, and far more predictably for those who were born on the wrong side of the ledger.



There is a particular cruelty in the way we speak about mortality. We wrap it in philosophy and theology, we dress it in the robes of the universal and the inevitable, and in doing so we launder the specific social crimes that determine who dies young and who lives long enough to complain about the indignities of age. When a child in a slum dies of a waterborne disease that has not threatened a middle-class neighbourhood in living memory, we call it tragic. We light candles. We post condolences. What we rarely do, what we almost constitutionally refuse to do, is call it what it is: a policy outcome.

The poet in us wants to believe that in the final moment, in that narrow passage between breath and silence, all human beings stand equal. Perhaps they do. But the road to that passage is not equal at all. It is paved, in some places, with the finest interventions that medical science can offer early screening, preventive care, personalized medicine, the extraordinary arsenal of a health system that sees its citizens as worth preserving. And in other places, the road to death is rutted and unpaved, strewn with the rubble of underfunded clinics, absent doctors, expired medication, and the bureaucratic cruelty of a system that charges a consultation fee to

a mother who walked three hours to reach it.

We speak of life expectancy as though it were a neutral statistic, a mere arithmetic of the biological. But life expectancy is a political document. It is a verdict delivered by governments upon their people, a measure not merely of how long the body endures but of how much the state has decided a particular life is worth sustaining. In Kenya, as in most of the world, that verdict falls with devastating consistency along the lines of geography, income, ethnicity, and gender. The child born into a pastoral community in the arid north does not merely face a harsher climate. She faces a harsher arithmetic of survival, one that was written into the national budget long before she was born.

And then there is war. Let us not pretend that war, too, is blind. The wars that consume the poorest communities on earth are not fought for the ideals of those communities. They are fuelled, more often than not, by interests that reside far from the frontlines in boardrooms, in diplomatic lounges, in the quiet corridors of power where the calculus of geopolitics is conducted with a coldness that would shame a mathematician. The child soldier, the bombed mar-

ketplace, the refugee drowning in a sea that was never meant to receive her these are not accidents of history. They are, with nauseating regularity, the predictable outputs of decisions made by those who will never themselves be asked to die for them.

It would be easy, and it would be dishonest, to restrict this indictment to the failures of distant governments and faceless institutions. We must look closer. We must look at ourselves at the ways in which we, ordinary people, have colluded with the mythology of equal death. Every time we accept the explanation that the poor die younger because of their lifestyle choices, their diet, their alleged fatalism, we participate in a fiction. We participate in the evasion of structural accountability. We allow the conversation to be redirected from the murderer to the murdered, from the system to the symptom, from the cause to the corpse.

The theologians among us have wrestled with these questions at the intersection of faith and public life will remind us that human beings are made in the image of the divine, that each life carries an inalienable dignity that no government can confer and none should dare to destroy. If we hold that belief, and hold it seriously, then the differential mortality

rates of the poor and the wealthy are not merely a political problem. They are a theological crisis. They are an indictment of our collective fidelity to the values we profess. Every preventable death in a marginalised community is a statement about what we actually believe, as opposed to what we merely claim to believe.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o wrote that the pen is mightier than the sword, but that the gun of oppression has the final answer in many places. He was right and yet, the pen must not fall silent. The death of language around these matters, the sanitized vocabulary of development-speak and policy briefs, is itself a form of violence. When we say a community is experiencing elevated under-five mortality, we are describing dead children in the passive voice. When we say maternal health indicators are suboptimal in rural areas, we are describing women who died giving life in a language designed to keep us at a clinical distance from our grief and from our guilt. We should name what is happening. Children are dying. Women are dying. They are dying because decisions were made and we should have the courage to say that plainly.

There is hope in this and I insist on naming it, because despair is a luxury that the dying cannot afford, and neither should the living. Across this continent and across this world, there are communities, advocates, researchers, and leaders who refuse the counsel of inevitability. Who understand that the mortality gap is not a law of nature but a law of neglect, and that what neglect has made, political will can unmake. Every dollar redirected toward primary health-care, every girl kept in school, every community health worker trained and paid and respected these are acts of defiance against the tyranny of unequal death. They are small rebellions, and they add up.

We began with a fact: a child dies every eleven seconds from preventable causes. Let us end with a demand: that this fact be treated not as a tragedy to be mourned but as a crime to be prosecuted in the court of public conscience, in the legislature, in the design of every budget and every policy that governs how public resources are allocated and for whose lives they are spent. Death may not be defeatable. But the democracy of death the lie that it comes for us all in equal measure can be. That lie, we must kill it ourselves, and bury it without ceremony.

The writer is a social commentator

Finance Bill 2026 At its core, the Finance Bill 2026 is about widening the tax net and tightening compliance rather than dramatically increasing rates

The Finance Bill 2026 and what it means for Kenya

BY Linda Omondi
@themkenyatimes

Every year, the government introduces a Finance Bill to propose changes to how Kenya raises money. This year's edition — the Finance Bill 2026, tabled before the National Assembly in May — has drawn unusually close public scrutiny, and for good reason. It touches almost every corner of the economy, from digital payments and financial services to landlords, manufacturers and small businesses.

The Bill arrives against a familiar backdrop: a government under pressure to raise more revenue, reduce its reliance on external borrowing and fund an ambitious development agenda. What is less familiar, and perhaps more encouraging, is the tone. Unlike the Finance Bill 2024 — which was withdrawn after widespread public protests — this year's proposals are notably more restrained, targeting specific sectors rather than reaching broadly into everyday household costs.

What the Bill actually proposes

At its core, the Finance Bill 2026 is about widening the tax net and tightening compliance rather than dramatically increasing rates. Key proposals include expanded withholding tax obligations on digital payments, changes to VAT exemptions, and reforms to capital gains tax rules, particularly for indirect share transfers.

In practical terms, this means businesses that process card payments — and the banks and platforms that enable them — will face new withholding tax obligations on merchant service fees and interchange fees. The Bill also proposes to impose value added tax on digital financial services, including money transfer, payment processing, settlement, and payment



gateway services supplied via software platforms for a fee or commission. For millions of Kenyans who use mobile money platforms daily, this is a change worth watching.

Landlords, too, are affected. The residential rental income tax rate is proposed to rise from 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent — a change that could push rents higher in an already stretched housing market.

On the administrative side, the Kenya Revenue Authority would gain expanded enforcement powers, return filing timelines would be shortened, and a tax amnesty would be reinstated, offering taxpayers the opportunity to regularise outstanding liabilities before the end of 2026. That last measure has been broadly welcomed by businesses carrying legacy tax exposure.

There are some relief measures too. The Bill proposes to exempt dialyzers from VAT, remove excise duty on bottled water, and exempt property transfers to approved real estate investment trusts from capital gains tax and stamp duty. The proposed reduction in excise duty on certain fuels is also expected to lower transportation and logistics costs for businesses and consumers, potentially easing inflationary pressure across several sectors.

What it means for ordinary

Kenyans

The impact on households will largely depend on how businesses respond. Companies facing higher compliance costs or new tax obligations often pass those costs on to consumers — through higher prices for goods, services, banking and communication. For low-income families already navigating a difficult cost of living, even modest price increases can have a real and immediate effect on daily life.

That said, the government argues — with some justification — that sustainable tax revenue is what funds the schools, hospitals, roads and social programmes that ultimately improve lives. The question is not whether taxation is necessary, but whether the burden is being distributed fairly.

What it means for business

The Bill sends a clear signal to the private sector: the era of operating in the gaps of Kenya's tax system is narrowing. The Finance Bill 2026 signals a significant shift in Kenya's tax and regulatory landscape, with far-reaching implications across financial services, manufacturing, telecommunications, real estate, infrastructure, digital services and cross-border investment.

field against competitors who have not. For those in the digital economy or financial services sectors, however, the new obligations will require careful review of contracts, pricing structures and compliance systems.

Several anticipated reforms, including a proposed reduction of corporate income tax from 30 per cent to 25 per cent, have not been introduced — a disappointment for business groups that had lobbied for a lower rate to stimulate investment.

The bigger picture

Kenya's economic ambitions are real, and financing them requires a broader tax base. But economists consistently caution that there is a tipping

point: push compliance costs and tax rates too high, and you risk discouraging investment, slowing business growth and ultimately collecting less revenue, not more.

The Finance Bill 2026 is not that tipping point — it is, by most assessments, a measured document. But its success will depend as much on implementation as on legislation. Expanded KRA enforcement powers are only as useful as the systems and oversight behind them. Tax amnesty only works if taxpayers trust the process.

Public participation, which the National Treasury invited ahead of the Bill's drafting, remains critical. Kenyans from every walk of life — business owners, employees, farmers, students — have a stake in how their government raises and spends money. The Finance Bill 2026 deserves exactly the scrutiny it is receiving.

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Ebola The outbreak remains in a “growth phase” or “ascending phase,” DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba said Thursday at a press briefing in Bunia

DR Congo's Ebola outbreak yet to peak as cases surpass 1,000

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themkenyatimes

Confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have topped 1,000, a new mark in an outbreak that remains active and continues to grow.

The DRC Health Ministry said on Sunday that the country has recorded 1,003 confirmed cases, including 254 deaths, since the outbreak was declared in mid-May. Public health officials and experts said the outbreak has yet to show signs of peaking. The specific virus involved, gaps in case detection and contact tracing, and the complex security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC have all made it difficult to determine when the outbreak will stabilize.

Peak not yet in sight

The outbreak remains in a “growth phase” or “ascending phase,” DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba said Thursday at a press briefing in Bunia, the capital of the eastern Ituri province and an epicenter of the outbreak.

Kamba said the rise in cases should not necessarily be seen as negative, as it also reflects expanded case-tracking and the identification of previously undetected cases in communities. Kamba said the outbreak can only be declared as peaked when key indicators stabilize or fall, adding that response efforts must continue for now. According to figures released by the health ministry on Sunday, 100 patients have recovered, while 365 patients are in isolation or hospitalized. The current contact-tracing rate stands at 58 percent, still far below the ministry's target of 95 percent. “We are still in the middle of the outbreak. We can say we are in an ascending phase, an active phase,” Dieudonne Mwamba Kazadi, head of the National Institute of Public Health, told Xinhua. Kazadi said rising case numbers were straining Ebola treatment centers and that additional capacity must be prepared in advance to accommodate more suspected and confirmed cases.

Marie Roseline Belizaire, a WHO expert, said the increase in cases also shows that the epidemiological surveillance system is beginning to



Health workers with suspected Ebola patients. | Photo: Courtesy.

function and detect cases in the community, including living patients and community deaths. Belizaire also warned that each Ebola-positive community death could represent “another chain of transmission that continues.” The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola virus, for which there are currently no approved vaccines or licensed therapeutics. Kamba said the disease is clinically difficult to detect because many patients do not show bleeding symptoms commonly associated with Ebola. Early symptoms can resemble malaria or other common illnesses in the area, delaying diagnosis and treatment. Kamba said patients have a better chance of recovery when they reach treatment centers early. Many, however, arrive after developing severe diarrhea and vomiting, when they are already significantly weakened.

Response scaled up

As cases continue to rise, the DRC government, regional institutions and international partners are stepping up response measures. According to the DRC Health Ministry, measures being intensified include case track-

ing and investigation, community awareness and mobilization, and treatment and testing capacity. Kamba said more than 500 beds had been set up in about one month, while laboratory capacity had increased from about 20 tests a day from the outset of the outbreak to more than 2,000 tests a day. Belizaire said dedicated Ebola treatment centers increased from zero to nine, providing medical treatment, as well as psychosocial and nutritional support. Kazadi said treatment centers, beds and patient transfer capacity in Ituri had been reinforced and would be further expanded. The government also plans to build a larger Ebola treatment facility to prepare for a possible further increase in cases.

At a high-level virtual meeting on the Ebola response held on June 16, African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf called for sustained solidarity and collective action among African countries and their partners to prevent further transmission of the disease and invest in resilient health systems across the continent. Youssouf underscored the importance of enhancing national and regional response plans, strengthening

cross-border coordination, and scaling up preparedness, surveillance and containment measures.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said the meeting had mobilized 910 million U.S. dollars, including 80 million dollars from African member states, to counter the outbreak. It warned that if transmission is not rapidly contained, projected needs could rise to as much as 1.5 billion dollars.

Gaps to be closed

Despite the expanding response, major gaps remain. Inadequate contact tracing remains a major bottleneck in containing the outbreak. Kazadi told Xinhua that to contain the outbreak, “we must be sure that all contacts of confirmed cases have been listed and are being followed.” The main danger, he added, is the emergence of cases outside known epidemiological chains. “Once all contacts are being followed, and all new cases arising from contacts are isolated, then we can be sure we are on the path toward controlling the epidemic,” he said.

Wessam Mankoula, an Africa CDC

official, said the outbreak's spread was outpacing current response capacity. Based on the scale of confirmed cases at the time, the contact list should have included roughly 35,000 people, but only about 12 percent of expected contacts were under active follow-up, he said. In addition, the existing humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC is increasing transmission risks. The WHO said that the outbreak is unfolding in a complex humanitarian and conflict-affected environment, characterized by highly mobile and often displaced populations, often lacking access to basic services, including food, clean water, shelter, healthcare and protection. Overcrowded displacement camps have added to prevention pressures. The WHO also said increasing security incidents affecting health facilities had disrupted surveillance and response activities, restricted access for response teams in some areas and heightened the risk of undetected transmission.

Although Ituri remains the epicenter of the outbreak, Africa CDC also singled out North Kivu as a major concern. Highlighting the security situation in the province, he warned that if humanitarian corridors and access for responders continue to be delayed, teams might eventually enter those areas only to find a surge in cases. Community-level response measures remain fragile amid mistrust and resistance from the local population. Kamba said given the absence of approved vaccines or specific therapeutics for the virus causing the current outbreak, the response still depends mainly on early detection, isolation and care, contact tracing, safe burials, and other community-based public health measures. However, the effectiveness of these measures ultimately depends on community cooperation. Pierre Akilimali, an incident manager with the National Institute of Public Health, said that risk communication and community engagement are part of a behavior-change process that “is not automatic.” He said communities often respond to an outbreak with hostility, denial and mistrust at the beginning, and that changing attitudes takes time, adding that community engagement is essential to breaking transmission chains

Schools The concerns driving these calls are not new, but they have never felt more urgent. Parents point to the crippling financial burden of boarding education

Pressure mounts to scrap boarding schools as Kenya's education crisis deepens

A wave of fires, strikes and student unrest has reignited a long-running debate that parents, lawmakers and school heads are no longer willing to defer

BY Pascal Okoth

@themkenyaintimes

Something broke in Kenya's relationship with its boarding schools on the night of 27 May 2026. Sixteen girls died in a dormitory fire at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County. They were asleep. The dormitory was congested — beds spilling into corridors, beds blocking doors. When the smoke came, there was nowhere to go.

That single tragedy, devastating as it was, arrived in the middle of a broader crisis. In the weeks surrounding it, some of Kenya's most celebrated schools — Alliance High, Mang'u High, Lenana, Kakamega School, Moi High Mbiruri, St Joseph's Girls Kitale — erupted in strikes, arson and unrest. Dormitories were set alight. Students were sent home. The National Security Advisory Committee convened an emergency meeting. And across the country, parents began asking the same question, quietly at first and then loudly: is it time to end the boarding school system altogether?

The calls for abolition are no longer fringe. Lurambi MP Titus Khamala has vowed to introduce a Bill in the National Assembly seeking the gradual abolition of all boarding institutions. "We have trouble in our schools," he said. "Parents should take up their roles and advise their children. In developed countries, including America and Europe, there are no boarding schools. Children learn and go back home." Kisii Woman Representative Dorice Donya was equally blunt in parliament: "We should not have boarding schools because we have had more deaths because of these boarding schools."

Former Deputy Inspector General of Police Edward Mbugua — the man who founded Utumishi Girls Academy itself — has gone further, proposing that existing dormitories be converted into laboratories and



Illustration of Pressure mounts to scrap boarding schools as Kenya's education crisis deepens

workshops. Speaking at a memorial service for the sixteen students who perished, he argued that strengthening local day schools would eliminate the need for learners to travel long distances in search of quality education, and remove the overcrowding that has made so many institutions dangerous.

The concerns driving these calls are not new, but they have never felt more urgent. Parents point to the crippling financial burden of boarding education — tuition, accommodation, meals, uniforms and, increasingly, levies to cover property damaged during student unrest. They worry about what happens to their children in institutions where supervision has clearly, in too many cases, broken down. Drug abuse, bullying, the influence of social media, and the sheer disconnection between students and their families are recurring themes at parent meetings across the country.

"Whether through stronger parental involvement, reforms in school

management, improved learning conditions, or even a rethink of the boarding school model itself, the country has reached a defining moment," said National Parents Association chairman Silas Obuhatsa. He is not wrong.

Yet the debate is far from settled. Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura has firmly rejected outright abolition, arguing that the crisis reflects deeper societal failures that cannot be resolved by changing school structures. "Abolishing

boarding schools is not a solution. We need to have an honest conversation on discipline," he said. Basic Education Principal Secretary Julius Bitok sought to contextualise the scale of the problem: out of 9,500 secondary schools, he said, fewer than 80 had experienced disruptions. Of 3.2 million secondary learners, roughly 2,000 were involved. "We are not going to interfere with the school calendar because of a few students," he said.

Supporters of the boarding model make a practical case too. For students from remote or arid areas, and for children from difficult home environments, a boarding school is not a burden — it is a lifeline. Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association chairman Willie Kuria pointed instead to structural failures: inadequate funding, crumbling infrastructure, the strain of the government's 100 per cent transition policy, which pushed more students into schools already struggling to accommodate them. "Schools are struggling with electricity bills, water bills, infrastructure maintenance and demands from learners that parents cannot afford," he said.

Rarieda MP Otiende Amolo made the same point in parliament: "When you look at Utumishi, the dormitory was congested. There were beds on the corridors, beds next to the door. This 100 per cent transition is part of the problem."

That tension — between systemic failure and individual accountability, between reform and abolition — sits at the heart of the crisis. And it will not be resolved quickly. What is clear is that the current situation is untenable. Children are dying. Schools are burning. Parents are angry. And the government faces a defining test of whether it can match its rhetoric about education with the reforms that will actually make classrooms, and dormitories, safe.



SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Salah's goal and corner assist spark second-half revival as Pharaohs go top of Group G in Vancouver

Egypt end 92-year wait with historic 3-1 comeback win over New Zealand

By Norman Mwale

Egypt secured their first World Cup victory in 92 years with a stirring 3-1 comeback against New Zealand at BC Place, Vancouver on Sunday, a result that sends the Pharaohs to the top of Group G and puts the knockout rounds firmly within their grasp.

It was a long time coming. Since their debut at the 1934 tournament in Italy, Egypt had appeared at three World Cups — 1934, 1990 and 2018 — without registering a single win, collecting only draws and defeats across seven matches. Sunday's result finally ends that drought and gives a nation of passionate football supporters the three points they have waited nearly a century to celebrate.

The evening did not begin according to script. New Zealand were sharp and purposeful in the opening exchanges, and it was defender Finn Surman who gave the All Whites a deserved lead in the 15th minute, rising to power a header beyond goalkeeper Mohamed Shobeir from Tim Payne's corner. Egypt struggled to find rhythm in the first half, with Mohamed Salah's best effort — a curling free-kick from the edge of the area — drifting wide of the left post. Darren Bazeley's side went into the interval a goal up and looking comfortable.

What followed was a transformation. Coach Hossam Hassan made his feelings clear at half-time, telling his players they would not return to the pitch unless they were genuinely determined to win. Egypt came out a different side. With pace, purpose and growing confidence, they pushed New Zealand deeper and deeper, and the equaliser duly arrived in the 58th minute. Mostafa Zico rose unmarked at the back post to head home Mohamed Hany's cross from the right, his effort carrying enough



power to beat Crocombe despite the goalkeeper's best efforts.

Nine minutes later, Egypt were in front. Zico and Salah combined in a slick, incisive one-two before the Egypt captain swept a left-footed finish into the bottom left corner — a goal in the trademark style he made famous across a decade at the highest level in the Premier League. It was Salah's first of the tournament and, in the context of Egypt's World Cup history, one of the most significant goals the country has ever produced. The travelling Egyptian supporters, draped in red from the stands, erupted.

Salah was not finished. Eight minutes from time, he delivered an outswinging corner from the left and substitute Mahmoud Trezeguet flung himself forward to meet it with a diving header at the near post, sealing the three points and confirming a famous victory. Crocombe, who

had kept the deficit respectable throughout, had no chance.

The result means Egypt top Group G on four points, having drawn 1-1 with Belgium in their opener. For New Zealand, it was a painful evening that followed a pattern already set in this tournament — they also surrendered a lead in a 2-2 draw with Iran — and Bazeley's side must now beat Belgium in Vancouver to have any hope of survival. "It's frustrating," the New Zealand coach said. "We played so well in the first half, scored a great goal, created lots of chances and felt comfortable. We went out second half and just weren't able to recreate the tempo and quality that we showed in the first half." He acknowledged that Egypt had "come out with a different attitude and upped the tempo", adding: "That could be us celebrating on the pitch at the end."

Hassan was understandably emotional after the final whis-

tle, singling out Salah for his influence and revealing he had deployed the captain in a central role to maximise his threat. "At half-time I told the players we were not going back out onto the pitch unless we were determined to win," he said. Salah, who has now either scored or assisted in every World Cup match he has played, led the celebrations with the fans who had made BC Place feel, in his words, like home. "It feels like we are playing in Egypt, with all the fans wearing red," he said. "Everybody is happy and excited. I do not know what to say — it is a great atmosphere. In years to come we will remember that this was one of the achievements in history."

Egypt need only avoid defeat against Iran in Seattle on Thursday to book their place in the round of 32. New Zealand, meanwhile, face Belgium in Vancouver knowing only a win will do.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Lionel Messi broke the all-time World Cup scoring record and sent Argentina into the knockout stages with a 2-0 victory over Austria at Dallas Stadium yesterday

Messi breaks World Cup scoring record as Argentina seal knockout place



Lionel Messi

By Norman Mwale

Lionel Messi broke the all-time World Cup scoring record and sent Argentina into the knockout stages with a 2-0 victory over Austria at Dallas Stadium yesterday, the defending champions brushing aside a spirited European challenge to top Group J with a game still to play.

Messi, 38 and appearing at his sixth World Cup — itself an unprecedented feat in the history of the game — scored in the 38th minute and again deep into stoppage time to move to 18 World Cup goals, two clear of Germany's Miroslav Klose whose record of 16 had stood since 2014. The brace took his tally to five goals in two Group J appearances, following a hat-trick in Argentina's 3-0 opening victory over Algeria six days ago.

It was a night of history and tension in equal measure before a crowd of 70,649 at Dallas Stadium. Argentina were awarded an early penalty after VAR ruled that Lautaro Martinez had been fouled inside the area, but Messi,

who rarely misses from the spot, drove his effort straight at Alexander Schlager. For a moment, the stadium held its breath. The miss briefly threatened to stall an occasion laden with expectation, but the captain would not be denied.

His record-breaking first goal arrived on 38 minutes when Facundo Medina's low cross from the left found Messi arriving late into the box. He finished with a trademark low drive into the near corner, sending the blue-and-white-clad sections of the stadium into delirium. The goal surpassed Klose's mark and drew an immediate acknowledgement from Messi, who raised his eyes to the sky before being swamped by team-mates.

Austria, who had beaten Jordan in their opener and entered the game on three points, were far from passive opponents. Ralf Rangnick's high-pressing 4-2-3-1 system caused Argentina discomfort in the opening exchanges, with Konrad Laimer and Marcel Sabitzer disrupting the rhythm of Enzo Fernandez

and Alexis Mac Allister in the middle of the park. Kevin Danso produced a superb last-ditch block to deny Nicolas Gonzalez when a second Argentine goal looked certain, and Austria created isolated moments of threat on the counter. Michael Gregoritsch, leading the Austrian line, was kept in check by Lisandro Martinez and Cristian Romero, who were largely composed under pressure before Romero limped off late on, raising concerns over his fitness ahead of the Jordan fixture.

Messi settled the contest and secured his place in history in the fifth minute of stoppage time. Julian Alvarez drove forward on a counter-attack and his effort was beaten away by Schlager, but the rebound fell to Messi who stabbed home at the second attempt to make it 2-0 and put the final score beyond question.

"Beyond anything, I am so happy for the win," Messi said after the final whistle. "It was huge, tough and difficult. All matches in this World Cup are very even, very intense. I was really angry

about missing the penalty, but I was able to make up for it." Lisandro Martinez was equally effusive about his captain. "He is a class above. I do not have the words. It is a great feeling that he is Argentinian. We have to cherish him." Julian Alvarez added: "There is not much to say — we can all see that he is the best in the world. We have started with our foot on the accelerator and we have to carry on like this."

Austria's Michael Gregoritsch acknowledged the damage done by the late second goal. "Now we need to recover and win against Algeria," he said. Austria remain in contention for progression as one of the eight best third-placed teams should they fail to beat Algeria on the final matchday, but Rangnick will know the margin for error has narrowed.

Argentina, by contrast, can now rotate their squad freely against Jordan on 27 June, with their knockout place secured and the weight of history lifted — or rather, rewritten — by the man who continues to define this tournament.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



The master diplomat: How Amir Temur turned power into prestige

Six centuries before the age of soft power, a Central Asian conqueror was already playing the long game



By: Ruxshona Rajabova,
@themkenyatimes

We tend to measure power today in economic weight, diplomatic networks and international reputation — what scholars call soft power. It may surprise many to learn that more than six centuries ago, a ruler in the heart of Central Asia had already mastered precisely these arts. Amir Temur, known to the Western world as Tamerlane, built one of history's most formidable empires not only through military genius but through a sophisticated understanding of legitimacy, law, and the careful cultivation of international relationships.

Popular history has not always been kind to Temur's complexity. He is most often remembered for his battlefield ferocity and the sheer scale of his conquests. But to understand only the soldier is to miss the strategist — and the diplomatist — entirely.

When Temur rose to power in the second half of the 14th century, the Chagatai Khanate was fractured by internal conflict and paralysed by a strict rule: only direct descendants of Genghis Khan could legitimately claim the title of Khan. Temur, born into the Barlas clan, had no such lineage. Rather than fight this legal barrier head-on, he outmanoeuvred it with characteristic ingenuity. He married Saray Mulk Khanum, daughter of Qazan Khan and a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, earning the title Güregan — son-in-law of the Khan — which gave him the dynastic standing he needed without violating the letter of steppe law.

As historian Beatrice Forbes Manz has documented, Temur spent his entire career portraying himself as the restorer of Chinggisid rights, using Islamic symbols and the language of legitimacy to justify his campaigns. He placed nominal Khans on the throne and issued royal decrees, currency and diplomatic correspondence in their names — all while holding real authority himself. It was a masterstroke of political theatre.

That diplomatic sophistication extended far beyond his own borders. Temur's foreign chancellery maintained active embassies with an



Amir Temur



Worth Noting:

- Popular history has not always been kind to Temur's complexity. He is most often remembered for his battlefield ferocity and the sheer scale of his conquests. But to understand only the soldier is to miss the strategist — and the diplomatist — entirely.

- When Temur rose to power in the second half of the 14th century, the Chagatai Khanate was fractured by internal conflict and paralysed by a strict rule: only direct descendants of Genghis Khan could legitimately claim the title of Khan. Temur, born into the Barlas clan, had no such lineage. Rather than fight this legal barrier head-on, he outmanoeuvred it with characteristic ingenuity. He married Saray Mulk Khanum, daughter of Qazan Khan and a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, earning the title Güregan — son-in-law of the Khan — which gave him the dynastic standing he needed without violating the letter of steppe law.

extraordinary range of powers: the kingdoms of Castile, France and England, the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and the Byzantine Empire all exchanged formal missions with Samarkand. His correspondence with Western European monarchs was notably forward-looking in its tone — built on the language of mutual respect, equality and commercial partnership. His letter to King Charles VI of France still reads today like a manifesto for open trade: let your merchants come to our lands, he wrote, and they will be welcomed with dignity; let ours travel to yours, and let their safety be equally guaranteed. For a 14th-century ruler, this was a remarkable vision.

The Battle of Ankara in 1402 — in which Temur defeated the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I — transformed his standing in the eyes of Europe almost overnight. Western powers who had long feared Ottoman expansion suddenly found themselves writing letters of gratitude to Samarkand. Both Henry IV of England and Charles VI of France corresponded warmly with Temur in the aftermath, reflecting just how significantly the

battle had shifted his international reputation. He was not merely a conqueror; in European eyes, he had become a guarantor of stability.

Central to all of this was Samarkand itself. Temur transformed his capital into one of the great cities of the medieval world — a gleaming hub of trade, science and culture that functioned as the empire's most powerful diplomatic tool. Ambassadors who arrived there were received with meticulous ceremony, offered lavish hospitality and sent home deeply impressed. The Spanish ambassador Ruy González de Clavijo, dispatched by Henry III of Castile and received at court in 1404, left behind detailed accounts of the experience: the grandeur of the gardens, the opulence of the royal receptions, and — perhaps most significantly for a diplomat — the strict observance of diplomatic immunity and international legal norms. That last detail is telling. Temur understood that to be taken seriously in the community of nations, you had to play by its rules, even as you rewrote them from within.

What Temur built was not simply a

foreign policy — it was a coherent diplomatic school, one that wove together the traditions of the Chagatai steppe, the principles of Islamic law and the cultural ambitions of a ruler determined to be remembered as a civiliser as much as a conqueror. The synthesis proved remarkably durable. The Timurid Renaissance that followed his reign — in architecture, astronomy, literature and the arts — was, in many ways, the long dividend of the cultural investment he had made.

For students of history and governance alike, the Timurid example repays close attention. The question of how a ruler legitimises power, builds alliances and projects influence across cultural and geographic boundaries remains as pressing in the 21st century as it was in the 14th. Temur's answer — that military strength alone is never enough, and that lasting power must be grounded in legal cleverness, cultural prestige and the patient cultivation of trust — is one that still resonates.

Ruxshona Rajabova is a student of history at Bukhara International University.