



Ruto assents to Finance Act and Budget Laws, unveils multi-billion shilling investments in education, health and jobs
President William Ruto yesterday assented to the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill into law at State House Nairobi.

Page 8



Wamatangi pledges greater support for Chess as Kiambu celebrates young champions
Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting youth talent development following the impressive performance

Page 12

THANK YOU FOR ADVERTISING WITH US
For any news you would wish us to publish, email us: news@mountkenyatimes.co.ke
For Adverts & Sponsorship
email us: ads@mountkenyatimes.co.ke

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 No. 01576 KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)

themtkenyatimes **Voice of the People**



The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

2nd anniversary I have intelligence that Murkomen, Omollo, Kihika and others have organised goons to cause mayhem - Gachagua

Gen Z anniversary: Kenya holds its breath

Kenya stands at a charged crossroads on the eve of the second anniversary of the June 25, 2024 protests, with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua warning that the government will deploy hired gangs to butcher demonstrators tomorrow, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops demanding justice and protection for protesters, and Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen vowing ruthless action against anyone who uses the commemorations as cover for violence.

Speaking yesterday in Nairobi, Gachagua, the Democracy for Citizens Party leader, alleged that the government intended to deploy criminal gangs to terrorise demonstrators and urged Kenyans to stay at home. The warning marked a dramatic reversal for a man who, days earlier, had publicly pledged that the United Opposition would march alongside the youth in the streets. Gachagua alleged that Interior CS Murkomen, Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo, and Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika had coordinated and financed the deployment of goons in Nairobi, the broader Central region, Kajiado, and Narok to infiltrate protests and trigger a crackdown.

Page 9



Gen Z potestor in past and Alleged goons wielding batons march alongside police vehicles as protests continue in the CBD

NEXT GENERATION CLASSIFY
"ONE-STOP NATIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY"

Contact Us:

+254 720 918 828 / +254 713 318 438
+254 706 237 040 / +254 724 613 401
 business@exponentialinternational.com



SCAN TO REGISTER



"ALL BUSINESSES
ONE PLATFORM"

Kenya backs regional oil refinery to shield economy from global supply shocks

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya is pushing for the establishment of a regional oil refinery as a long-term solution to recurring fuel supply disruptions and price volatility caused by global geopolitical crises, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has said. Speaking after a meeting at Karen, Nairobi, Kindiki said officials from relevant ministries, departments and agencies had reviewed Kenya's contribution to the proposed East African refinery project and explored measures to reduce the country's dependence on unpredictable global oil supply chains.

The move comes as the ongoing conflict involving Iran and other Middle East oil-producing nations continues to disrupt fuel supplies and drive up global energy costs, exposing Kenya's vulnerability as a net importer of refined petroleum products. Recent reports have highlighted supply shortages, rising freight costs and concerns over fuel security across East Africa as tensions affect key shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz.

Kenya and its regional partners are already discussing a joint refinery project aimed at reducing reliance on imported fuel and cushioning economies from future supply shocks. Relevant Cabinet Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and heads of government agencies attended yesterday's meeting.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative. It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

Group Executive Chairman

M. Danson

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/>

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyetimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyetimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mtkenyetimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mtkenyetimes.co.ke

Facebook: Mt. Kenya Times, **Instagram:** Mt. Kenya Times, **Twitter:** @themtkenyetimes

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mt-kenya-times-a07999115/>



NEXT GENERATION CLASSIFY

"ONE-STOP NATIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY"



"ALL BUSINESSES
ONE PLATFORM"



SCAN TO REGISTER

FREE
REGISTRATION



Contact Us:

+254 720 918 828 / +254 713 318 438



+254 706 237 040 / +254 721 274 369

+254 724 613 401 / +254 100 423 971

+254 724 613 401

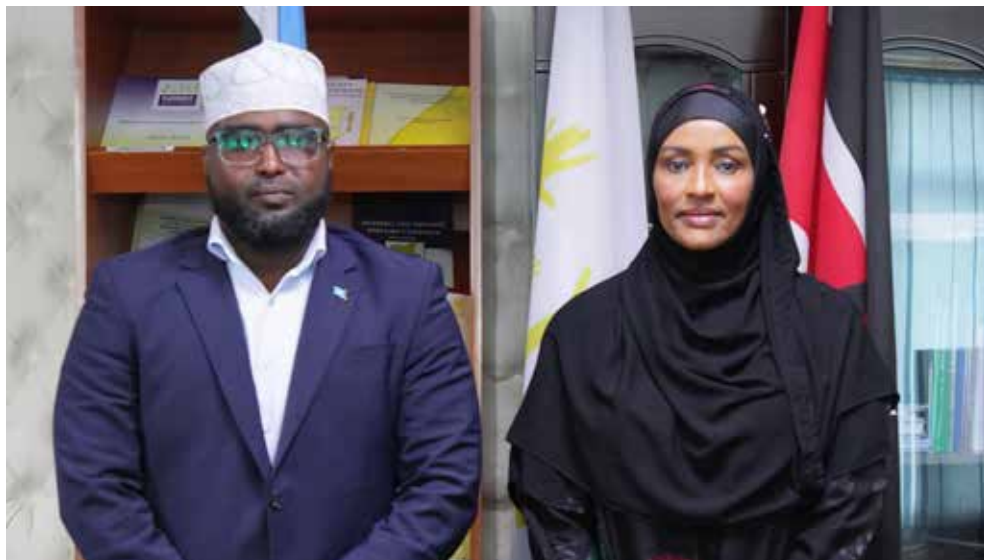


business@exponentialinternational.com



www.businessavaibale.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) Chairperson Rehema Dida Jaldesa hosted Jubaland State Minister for Planning, Investment and International Cooperation, Abdirahman Abdi Ahmed, for discussions aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and promoting inclusive development. The meeting focused on addressing shared challenges that transcend borders, including gender inequalities, climate-related vulnerabilities, displacement, and unequal access to essential services. Both leaders emphasized the importance of ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, minorities, and other marginalized groups are at the centre of development planning and policy implementation. They also explored opportunities for collaboration in evidence-based planning, institutional capacity building, knowledge sharing, and the promotion of inclusive governance. The engagement reaffirmed a joint commitment to advancing equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination as key drivers of sustainable development and responsive institutions that leave no one behind.



The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) participated in nationwide public participation forums on the Draft Universities Regulations, 2026, organized by the Commission for University Education on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Education. The forums, held between June 8 and 17, 2026, took place at various institutions, including Pwani University, South Eastern Kenya University, Meru University of Science and Technology, Garissa University, and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. The engagements brought together stakeholders from the education and training sector to provide input, raise concerns, and contribute to the development of a stronger regulatory framework for university education in Kenya. KNQA also clarified key issues related to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework, including credit values, volume of learning, learner progression, and qualification comparability.



The National Youth Service (NYS), in partnership with the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), marked the successful completion of a joint tree-planting initiative at the NYS Camp in Athi River. The event was officiated by the Deputy Commandant General and a representative of the CA Director General and also featured the launch of an Artificial Forest aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The initiative supports national efforts to increase tree cover and achieve Kenya's environmental conservation goals by 2032. NYS officers and servicemen pledged to not only plant trees but also nurture them to maturity to ensure long-term impact. The Communications Authority praised NYS for its discipline, dedication, and commitment, describing the Service as a reliable partner in advancing environmental conservation programmes.



Kenya and India have pledged to strengthen cooperation on environmental conservation, climate action, waste management, and sustainable development following a meeting between Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Deborah Barasa and Indian High Commissioner to Kenya Dr. Adarsh Swaika. The discussions highlighted the alignment between Kenya's 15 Billion Tree Initiative and India's "Plant in the Name of Your Mother" programme, with India committing to plant 500,000 trees in the Amboseli Conservancy. The CS emphasized the need for increased climate financing for developing countries and greater collaboration in global climate negotiations. The leaders also explored partnerships in waste management, including e-waste recycling, composting, and Material Recovery Facilities. Additionally, Kenya expressed interest in adopting India's expertise in bamboo cultivation and development. The meeting concluded with plans to establish a Memorandum of Understanding and promote joint environmental research initiatives.



A 19-year-old Form Four student from Nyalenda Mixed High School in Rachuonyo South Sub-County drowned in Lake Victoria while on a school trip to Mbita for the Homa Bay County Music Festival. According to police, students had travelled to participate in the event at Mbita Boys High School and later visited the lakeside for sightseeing after their performances. A group of male students entered the lake to swim at a public bathing area when one of them, identified as Levis Ouma, was overwhelmed by strong waves and drowned. His body was later retrieved by the Kenya Coast Guard and members of the public. The body was taken to Mbita Sub-County Hospital Mortuary pending a post-mortem examination as investigations continue.

Business owners and traders affiliated with BAHILITA in Nakuru have called on Parliament to suspend consideration of the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill and conduct comprehensive nationwide public participation. They argue that ordinary traders and affected stakeholders have not been adequately involved in discussions surrounding the proposed legislation, which is currently before the National Assembly Health Committee chaired by Seme MP James Nyikal. The traders expressed concern that proposals such as banning flavoured nicotine and tobacco products could fuel illicit trade, reduce government tax revenues, and negatively affect legitimate businesses. They maintained that public participation is a constitutional requirement under Articles 10 and 118. Their demands echo similar calls made to the Senate last year by traders in the bars and entertainment sector seeking broader consultations on the bill.



The Africa Largest eCOMMERCE



[www. gotyou.co.ke](http://www.gotyou.co.ke)

**NOW
OPEN**

Call/Text/WhatsApp: +254 714 090 155

Gen Z The activists expressed fears that security agencies could use excessive force against protesters

Activists urge global scrutiny of Gen Z protests amid crackdown fears

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyetimes

Human rights activists have called on the international community to closely monitor tomorrow's planned Gen Z anniversary protests and take firm action against any human rights violations, amid growing concerns over the government's response to the demonstrations.

The activists expressed fears that security agencies could use excessive force against protesters commemorating the 2024 anti-Finance Bill demonstrations, which left scores of young people dead, injured, or missing during nationwide unrest.

Human rights defender Dr Isaac Kinity urged foreign governments and international institutions to increase scrutiny of Kenya's handling of the planned protests, arguing that public pressure could help deter potential abuses and safeguard the rights of demonstrators.

"President William Ruto has warned that the government will deal firmly with protesters planning to cause chaos and mayhem during the June 25 Gen Z protests anniversary this Thursday, insisting that the demonstrations must be held within the law," Kinity said.

He claimed that the international community, particularly the United States, should not remain silent amid concerns over the safety of protesters and called for stronger diplomatic engagement

ahead of the demonstrations.

He argued that the government has been deploying goons to scuttle otherwise peaceful demonstrations leading to police using excessive force on genuine demonstrators, referring to the deadly 2024 anti-government protests that erupted over a controversial Finance Bill.

Kinity further appealed to US President Donald Trump and American lawmakers to push for accountability regarding alleged human rights violations, enforced disappearances and abductions that have been reported in Kenya over the past two years.

"This is a very serious matter because the lives of the Kenyans have to be saved," he said, adding that democratic nations should remain vigilant in defending fundamental freedoms and the right to peaceful assembly.

President Ruto has alleged that sections of the opposition were planning to sponsor the protests and praised Members of Parliament who passed the Finance Bill 2026, describing them as heroes for supporting the legislation.

Rights groups have repeatedly raised concerns over allegations of excessive force, unlawful arrests, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings linked to the security response during and after the 2024 protests.

Those concerns were amplified in late 2024 when the United States publicly expressed alarm over a wave of reported abductions in Kenya. Then Nairobi



Dr Isaac Kinity holding hands with other activists.

Chargé d'Affaires Marc Dillard called for accountability and adherence to the rule of law while paying tribute to former US President Jimmy Carter.

"In the spirit of his legacy, we join the calls in Kenya for accountability and respect for rule of law. Abductions must end," Dillard said at the time.

According to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, at least 82 people had reportedly been abducted by unidentified armed individuals following the June 2024 anti-government protests, with dozens still unaccounted for by the end of that year.

Several rights organisations, including Amnesty International, accused security agencies of involvement in the disappearances, allegations

that were strongly denied by the National Police Service.

Inspector General Douglassville Kanja maintained that the police were not involved in any abductions and said the Independent Policing Oversight Authority would investigate the allegations.

The Law Society of Kenya, however, argued that official denials alone were insufficient and called for decisive investigations and prosecutions against those responsible for the disappearances.

Bishops demand answers over Laikipia Ebola facility



Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyetimes

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops has called on the government to pursue genuine and transparent dialogue over a proposed Ebola quarantine facility linked to Laikipia Air Base, warning that unilateral decisions on sensitive national matters carry grave consequences.

The 28-member conference, led by Archbishop Maurice Muhatia and flanked by Vice Chair Most Rev. Anthony Muheria and Nairobi Archbishop Philip Anyolo, expressed alarm at the conspicuous absence of public participation, parliamentary oversight, and scientific clarity in the handling of the project — reportedly intended to receive Ebola patients, including foreign nationals, under a Kenya-United States collaboration.

"This initiative has been imposed on Kenyans without adequate public consultation, parliamentary oversight, or

transparent disclosure," the bishops said. "There is an inherent threat to the life of Kenyan citizens because we would be importing a deadly disease."

Their intervention came as Health CS Aden Duale confirmed in the High Court that both governments had agreed to suspend the collaboration following mounting public opposition and legal challenges. The court declined to pursue contempt proceedings but issued a firm warning on compliance with judicial directives.

The bishops called for structured engagement involving government, civil society, religious leaders, and health-care professionals before any such facility proceeds. "Kenya must affirm its sovereignty," they declared, insisting all agreements affecting national assets remain subject to full public accountability.

Silence, the bishops made clear, is no longer an option.

The **MT. KENYA TIMES** Where Investors Get Returns

To advertise in Mt. Kenya Times read by discerning Kenyan professionals and the business community contact our exclusive **UK & Europe Advertising and Marketing representatives.**



ADLINK INTERNATIONAL (1989) MEDIA GROUP
16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0AF
Phone: 0330 606 1438 (44 330 606 1438)
Email: media@adlinkinternational.com
www.adlinkinternational.com
Contact: Mr Shamlal Puri

NEWS PAPER

IN BUSINESS



The Mount Kenya Times

+254 724 439 949, +254 720 918 828, +254 721 103 040, +254 713 318 438

website: <https://mountkenyatimes.co.ke>

Finance Act and Budget Laws President Ruto cautioned Kenyans against falling for propaganda and misinformation about the Finance Act

Ruto assents to Finance Act and Budget Laws, unveils multi-billion shilling investments in education, health and jobs

BY PCS

@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday assented to the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill into law at State House Nairobi.

The President explained that the two laws will provide the legal framework and resources required to finance Kenya's transformation priorities, create jobs, strengthen livelihoods and invest in more programmes and projects under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda.

"The vision is clear, the agenda is set, the plan is funded and on course, the transformation is happening and, together, we are building the prosperous, inclusive and modern nation that we all deserve," he said.

President Ruto cautioned Kenyans against falling for propaganda and misinformation about the Finance Act propagated by the opposition to advance their selfish cause.

"Together, we must reject propaganda, misinformation, disinformation, fake news, insults, hate, ethnic bigotry and profiling, and division," he said.

He said the Finance Act, 2026, does not raise taxes that affect ordinary citizens.

Instead, he said, it improves fairness by strengthening compliance, closing loopholes and ensuring that every individual and business pays what is lawfully due.

"We are pursuing tax avoidance, not taxpayers; offshore schemes, not ordinary wages; and leakages, not livelihoods," he said.

Contrary to misinformation, he explained, there are no taxes on freehold land, no taxes on mitumba, no changes on rental income tax, no tax on bottled water, no new tax on M-PESA or mobile money transactions, no new tax on mobile phones, airtime or data, and no new tax on locally manufactured packaging.

The President pointed out that the Finance law supports livelihoods through incentives for motorcycles, electric buses and bicycles, solar batteries and locally assembled mobile phones.

He added that the duty on imported sugar has been increased from KSh7.50 to KSh40 a kilo to protect local producers, safeguard 17 operational factories and support the livelihoods of 10 million Kenyans who

depend on the sector.

He further noted that a six-month tax amnesty will waive penalties and interest on outstanding tax obligations while mortgage tax benefits previously available only through banks have been extended to borrowers in microfinance institutions.

He also announced that the duty-free allowance for returning travellers and Kenyans in the diaspora has been increased from KSh39,000 to KSh260,000.

President Ruto explained that tax incentives for projects implemented through public-private partnerships and the National Infrastructure Fund will lower delivery costs, accelerate implementation and support efforts to progressively reduce the country's debt burden.

"This is what a fair tax system looks like: One that protects the vulnerable, rewards enterprise, promotes compliance and shares responsibility fairly," he said.

On the Budget, the President noted that it invests in people, productivity and prosperity.

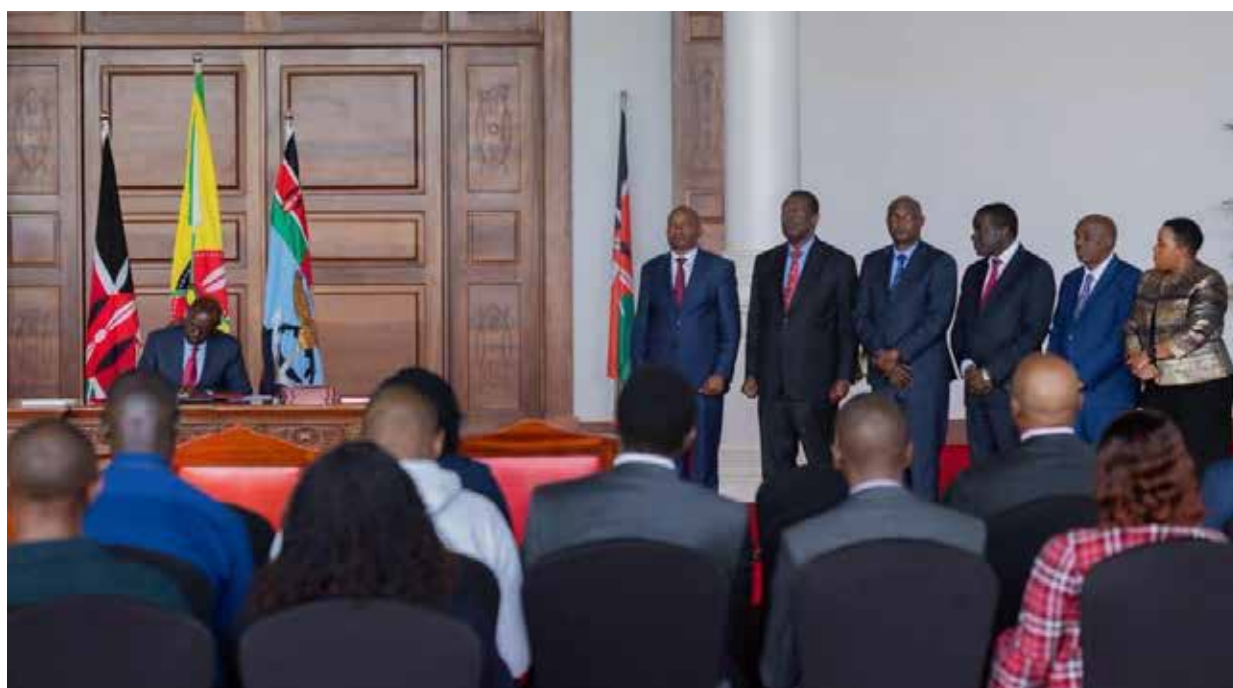
He said education has received the highest allocation at KSh784 billion, up from KSh526 billion in 2022, while funding for health has increased from KSh132.4 billion to KSh175.5 billion and agriculture from KSh44 billion to KSh63 billion.

On education, the President pointed out that 20,000 teachers on contract will be employed on permanent and pensionable terms, while a further 24,000 teachers will be recruited, bringing the total number hired under his administration to 124,000.

In higher education, funding for the Higher Education Loans Board has increased to KSh56.7 billion, while KSh40.4 billion has been allocated for university, Kenya Medical Training College and TVET scholarships.

He pointed out that KSh3 billion has been allocated for school feeding programmes to support 2.8 million vulnerable learners while KSh15 billion will be spent on construction of classrooms and laboratories, and the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education under the Competency-Based Education and Training system.

On healthcare, President Ruto noted that KSh19.1 billion has been allocated to primary healthcare, ensuring Kenyans registered under the Social Health Authority (SHA) can



President William Ruto assenting to the Finance bill yesterday.

access outpatient services at accredited facilities without paying.

"As a result, no Kenyan should pay for outpatient services at dispensaries, health centres and sub-county health facilities in SHA-accredited public, private or faith-based hospitals," he said.

He added that KEMSA funding has increased from KSh5 billion to KSh21 billion to strengthen the supply of medicines and medical commodities across the country.

On agriculture, President Ruto noted that funding for the sector has increased to KSh63 billion from KSh44 billion last year.

He explained that KSh20 billion has been allocated for seed and fertiliser subsidies, up from no allocation in 2022, helping maintain fertiliser prices at KSh2,500 a bag, down from KSh7,500 in 2022. He noted that 6.5 million farmers are already benefiting from the programme.

The President added that KSh5.4 billion has been allocated for food resilience programmes, KSh2.7 billion to support farmers and workers in the sugar sector, KSh2 billion to waive coffee farmers' debts and KSh500 million for the Coffee Cherry Fund.

He further noted that young farmers will benefit from a KSh1.3 billion credit facility, while pastoralists resilience and livestock commercialisation programmes have received KSh3.3 billion and KSh1.3 billion respectively.

In addition, KSh5.5 billion has been

allocated to support 300,000 pastoralist farmers in 21 arid and semi-arid counties through cooperatives.

Additionally, the President noted that KSh 110 billion has been committed to programmes targeting women, youth and vulnerable groups.

This includes KSh22.6 billion for youth programmes, KSh12.4 billion for the National Youth Service, KSh8.8 billion for affordable credit to small businesses and KSh25 billion for cash transfers benefiting 1.2 million vulnerable households.

To enhance access to justice and strengthen the rule of law, funding for the Judiciary has increased from KSh16 billion in 2022 to KSh30 billion in the financial year's budget.

A total of KSh138 billion has been allocated to affordable housing and urban development.

"We are investing in housing, infrastructure, energy and digital connectivity because growth requires jobs, mobility and opportunity," he said.

The President also highlighted major investments in infrastructure, energy and connectivity, including KSh225 billion for roads, KSh52 billion for transport infrastructure and KSh20.8 billion for the extension of the Standard Gauge Railway from Naivasha to Kisumu and Malaba.

To cushion Kenyans against fluctuations of fuel prices, KSh21.5 billion has been set aside for fuel stabilisation.

He also explained that KSh10.5 bil-

lion has been allocated to the digital economy to expand fibre connectivity, digitise government services and create more opportunities for young people.

At the same time, President Ruto said KSh112.4 billion has been allocated to water, sanitation and environmental protection projects, while KSh 9.4 billion has been set aside to address the longstanding land question at the Coast region through the settlement of landless families and squatters.

He further noted that investments in the blue economy will support the establishment of 15 fish landing sites and markets, rescue centres, rescue boats and expanded ferry services.

In sports, KSh26.4 billion has been allocated to complete 39 stadia, prepare for AFCON 2027 and support sportsmen and sportswomen who participate in sporting activities globally.

"The ultimate measure of this Budget will be the opportunities it creates and the lives it transforms," he said.

The President also assented to the Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2026.

Present were Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula, ODM Party Leader and Senator of Siaya Oburu Oginga, and MPs led by National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah.

Gen Z anniversary I have intelligence that Murkomen, Omollo, Kihika and others have organised goons to cause mayhem- Gachagua

Kenya on edge as Gen Z anniversary looms

Two years after young Kenyans stormed Parliament and forced a government retreat, the nation braces again — this time with a fractured opposition, a defiant church, and a state that is promising both protection and consequences.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya stands at a charged crossroads on the eve of the second anniversary of the June 25, 2024 protests, with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua warning that the government will deploy hired gangs to butcher demonstrators tomorrow, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops demanding justice and protection for protesters, and Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen vowing ruthless action against anyone who uses the commemorations as cover for violence.

Speaking yesterday in Nairobi, Gachagua, the Democracy for Citizens Party leader, alleged that the government intended to deploy criminal gangs to terrorise demonstrators and urged Kenyans to stay at home. The warning marked a dramatic reversal for a man who, days earlier, had publicly pledged that the United Opposition would march alongside the youth in the streets. Gachagua alleged that Interior CS Murkomen, Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo, and Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika had coordinated and financed the deployment of goons in Nairobi, the broader Central region, Kajiado, and Narok to infiltrate protests and trigger a crackdown.

"I have intelligence that Murkomen, Omollo, Kihika and others have organised goons to cause mayhem in Mt Kenya. Two hundred million shillings was withdrawn today in Upperhill from the Interior account, meant to finance goons for Thursday," he claimed. The government has flatly denied the allegations.

Gachagua said the country's Constitution provides a mechanism for citizens to express political choices through the ballot, urging those dissatisfied with the current administration to channel their energy toward the electoral process. "Let everybody stay at home. Let us not give an opportunity for loss of life and destruction of businesses. It is pointless. It does not make sense," he said.

His appeal was pointed and personal. "Please, my sons and daughters, we need you alive to help us transform this country next year. You cannot do it when you are dead or

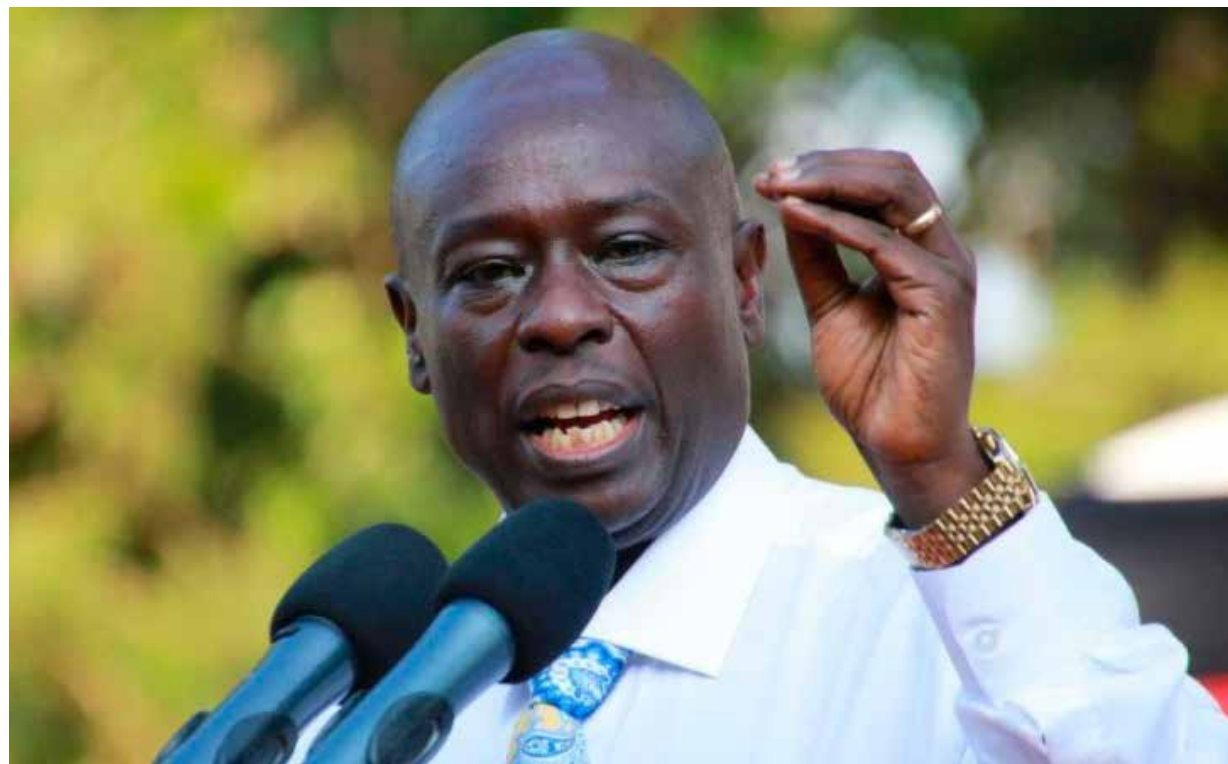
injured," Gachagua said, insisting that the strategy was not cowardice but calculation — that a nationwide economic shutdown would send a stronger signal than street demonstrations marred by state-sponsored chaos. "The strategy is that the state organises goons, accompanied by officers in plain clothes, wreak havoc, destroy property, and then police come in. The goons withdraw and leave innocent people to be arrested," he warned.

The irony of a man once eyebrow-deep in the Ruto administration now casting himself as the protector of Kenya's youth was not lost on observers. Political analyst Steve Kabita noted that opposition politicians were jostling to stand in solidarity with Gen Z, who are expected to play a decisive role in next year's general election. "The youth, mainly the Gen Zs, are a force you cannot ignore. Every politician seems to be keen to entice this constituency, which could translate into millions of votes," Kabita said.

The government's response has been a study in calculated messaging — part reassurance, part warning. Murkomen, speaking during a televised interview on Monday night, admitted that the government could not guarantee that criminal elements would not infiltrate the demonstrations. "I cannot guarantee there will be no goons. I can only guarantee security," he said, pledging tough action against anyone found engaging in violence, looting, or destruction of property.

"We will be ruthless in dealing with criminals seeking to infiltrate peaceful protests. We must ensure Kenyans are safe and cannot allow the country to slide into anarchy," Murkomen said, adding that State House Road and Uhuru Highway would be out of bounds to demonstrators, with police deployed from across the country. He also revealed plans to install CCTV cameras in major cities, with procurement expected to conclude within two months.

Murkomen specifically targeted leaders who had publicly called for schools and businesses to shut down during the protests, terming such utterances deeply irresponsible and warning that when leaders tell children to stay home on demonstration days, those same children carry that



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

message into classrooms, normalising defiance. President William Ruto echoed that line, urging Kenyans to maintain normal economic activity and warning that participants would not be permitted to destroy property or disrupt the economy.

Into this volatile space stepped the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, whose voice carries moral authority no politician can easily dismiss. In a collective statement read out in turns, the KCCB declared that young people "deserve listening and support, not suppression," recalling how the 2024 protests began peacefully, motivated by rising taxation, limited opportunities, and an unresponsive system, only to turn tragic through what they termed "brutal use of force" that led to the deaths of many young Kenyans.

Led by KCCB Chairperson Rev. Maurice Muhatia, the bishops strongly condemned the deployment of goons and excessive force during demonstrations, demanding justice and urging authorities to protect civilians and facilitate meaningful dialogue. "The use of goons to disrupt or hijack peaceful protests is illegal and criminal. It must stop," Muhatia said. "Our young people are not enemies of the state. They should be heard and supported in building a better future for all," the bishops

emphasised.

In their press conference, the bishops cautioned against any crackdown on civic voices and human rights defenders, declaring "we must not threaten dissenters with death" and calling on the government to acknowledge the "mysterious deaths" that had occurred under its watch. "If the Government cannot protect its citizens, then who can?" they asked. They further demanded independent investigations into abductions, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings, and called for the institutional strengthening of the Independent Police Oversight Authority and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

Human rights organisations have documented at least 67 deaths linked to the June 25, 2024 protests. The anniversary has since evolved into a broader symbol of youth activism, accountability, and demands for justice — with organisers planning peaceful marches, vigils, and memorial events across all 47 counties. The United States Embassy in Nairobi issued a security advisory to American citizens warning of the possibility of demonstrations in major urban centres, particularly in Nairobi's Central Business District.

Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka has demanded that the Sh2 billion

the government promised to victims' families be paid on or before June 25. "We want the Sh2 billion that the government has promised paid on or before June 25," Musyoka said, acknowledging that compensation alone does not amount to justice but arguing that every family that lost a loved one deserves both.

Organisers, including Gen Z activists, civil society groups, former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, PLP leader Martha Karua, Siaya Governor James Orengo, and Senior Counsel Gitobu Imanyara, plan to march to Parliament Buildings, lay flowers at locations where protesters were shot, and present a memorandum demanding justice and an end to police brutality.

Unresolved cases of police brutality, fresh incidents reported in recent months, and the recent hike in fuel prices have all fuelled renewed public anger toward the Ruto administration. As one analyst put it, without meaningful engagement, street protests could become a permanent fixture in Kenya's political landscape.

Two years on, the questions that drove young Kenyans into the streets remain stubbornly, painfully unanswered — and tomorrow, Kenya will discover once again whether its government has learned anything at all.

Business AFA acting director general Calistus Kundu confirmed it has taken 10 years to develop the system and ensure all the stakeholders are involved and trained

New system expected to trigger high horticulture exports to EU market

BY Nicholas Waitathu
@themtkenyatimes

Horticulture farmers are expected to increase exports to the European Union (EU) market as the Government commissions a new traceability system to increase competitiveness of the fresh produce through enhanced transparency in the supply chain.

The Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) board of directors in conjunction with other value chain players commissioned the National Horticulture Traceability System (NHTS) focusing to increase market confidence and safeguard the livelihood

of more than 4 million small-holder farmers and workers involved in export horticulture.

During the commissioning of the new system AFA chairman Cornelly Serem said the new system designed to trace horticulture exports from farm to markets is expected to boost Kenya foot prints globally.

“We expect to grow our exports to the EU market enormously as farmers are expected to strictly adhere to the outlined good agricultural practices. Further full implementation of the system will enhance Kenya’s horticulture industry profile in the international market,” said Mr.

Serem when he presided over commissioning of the new system at Institute of monetary Studies in Nairobi.

He explained that AFA developed and upgraded the NHTS to automate the process of tracking fresh horticulture produce from farms in Kenya all the way to international markets.

Also the system he added seeks to increase transparency and accountability in horticultural supply chains in response to challenges faced by the industry, in complying with the EU and international food safety requirements.

AFA acting director general Calistus Kundu confirmed it



AFA chairman Cornelly Serem (Third Left) flanked by other board members addressing the media at the Institute of Monetary Studies after commissioning the National Horticulture Traceability System (NHTS).

has taken 10 years to develop the system and ensure all the stakeholders are involved and trained. “the system is simple as farmers can register with their phones even while in the farms. The system will help to trace produce from the farm to the market and even identify all the actors handling the produce, for example, the farmer who harvested the crop. This is a game changer as it will boost our exports to

the external market,” said Mr. Kundu.

The structure is expected to enhance timely detection of inconsistencies and accountability by tracing interceptions back to a particular producer. In addition to facilitating a rapid response to food safety risks by providing the capacity to identify, isolate and rectify non-compliant producers and expediting responses to food safety issues for both the domestic and international markets.

Kundu added, “The system will also provide a platform for processing other regulatory functions including registration and licensing, facilitation of export and import processes and provision of data analytics. This will enhance regulatory efficiency and increased compliance levels for value chain players in the horticulture sub-sector.”

Horticultural Crops Directorate Christine Chesaro said the system will be implemented in phases starting with exporters for its full realisation.

“The system will give the farmers more attention as the exporters will be required to register all the growers. Further the arrangement will help in minimizing cases of theft of fresh produce, mainly avocados,” said Chesaro.

Avocado Aggregator Association (AAA) chairman Munyui Wanjohi said the implementation of the new system is long overdue as Kenya fresh produce has continued to face a lot of challenges, mainly interception in the EU market.

“We request the Government implement the system in phases to prevent emergence of new bottlenecks. Equally we expect enhanced capacity building of the farmers and other value chain actors to make it easy for implementation,” said Mr. Wanjohi.

Karen Rosses export manager Julia Tele commended the new trading platform saying it will end rampant theft of fruits in farmers’ farms. “This is a relief to the huge paper work one has to undergo before exporting the produce,” said Tele.

In 2025, Kenya exported 457,860 tons of horticulture produce valued at Kshs 143.7 billion. The export commodities were flowers (55 per cent), vegetables (15 per cent) and fruits (30 per cent) by value. The main export destinations of our produce are the European Union and Middle East. Emerging markets include India, China, Eastern Europe, Far East, Scandinavian countries and North Africa.

“We expect to grow our exports to the EU market enormously as farmers are expected to strictly adhere to the outlined good agricultural practices. Further full implementation of the system will enhance Kenya’s horticulture industry profile in the international market,” said Mr. Serem when he presided over commissioning of the new system at Institute of monetary Studies in Nairobi.



Where Moments Become Memories

Use Promo Code **TOURISM26**

Sales valid until 15th March 2026
Travel valid until 30th June 2026

ENJOY **6% OFF** DOMESTIC ROUTES

Book on: www.kenya-airways.com, or via KQ Mobile App

www.kenya-airways.com

Kenya Airways
The Pride of Africa

EACC Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Abdi A. Mohamud said public resources should never be used to advance personal, political or partisan interests

EACC cracks down on politicians branding public projects with personal names

BY DMS

@themkenyaintimes

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has warned politicians and public officers against branding government-funded projects and programmes with their personal names, images or political symbols, saying the practice amounts to abuse of office and misuse of public resources.

In an advisory issued yesterday, the anti-graft agency said it had observed a growing trend in which public projects financed by taxpayers are being associated with individual political leaders, a move it says violates the Constitution and undermines principles of accountability in public service.

The Commission noted that reports received from various parts of the country indicate that some elected and appointed leaders have consistently branded publicly funded projects with their names, portraits and political identities, creating the false impression that such projects are privately funded or personal initiatives.

EACC Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Abdi A. Mohamud said public resources should never be used to advance personal, political or partisan interests.

“While recognition of public service is important, branding of publicly funded projects and programmes with the identities of political office holders amounts to abuse of office, misuse of public resources and unethical conduct,” the advisory states.

The Commission cited Articles 10, 73 and 75 of the Constitution, as well as Article 201(d), the Public Finance

Management Act, 2012, and the Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012, as the legal framework prohibiting the practice.

According to EACC, leadership in public office is a public trust that must be exercised in a manner that demonstrates respect for the people, promotes public confidence and places public interest above personal gain.

The Constitution further requires state and public officers to uphold transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and maintain high standards of integrity while discharging their duties.

The advisory comes amid increasing public debate over the branding of roads, classrooms, health facilities, water projects, markets and other government-funded programmes with the names and images of politicians.

In some counties and constituencies, project signboards have carried large photographs of governors, members of parliament, senators, members of county assemblies and other leaders, often accompanied by political slogans and campaign colours. Critics argue that such branding transforms public projects into campaign tools funded by taxpayers.

Governance experts have repeatedly questioned the practice, arguing that development projects are financed through public funds collected from citizens and should therefore be attributed to the government institution responsible for implementation rather than individual leaders.

The EACC has now directed all public entities to ensure that public projects and programmes do not bear the names, portraits, images or symbols of serving state offi-

cers, public officers, political leaders or political parties before, during or after implementation.

Instead, the Commission said project identification should clearly indicate the responsible government agency and specify whether the project is funded by the national government or a county government.

The anti-corruption watchdog further advised state and public officers to refrain from using public resources to promote personal achievements or cultivate political goodwill.

“Where recognition is necessary, it must only reflect the responsible government entity and clearly indicate whether the project or programme is supported by the National or County Government, without

EACC Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Abdi A. Mohamud said public resources should never be used to advance personal, political or partisan interests.

“While recognition of public service is important, branding of publicly funded projects and programmes with the identities of political office holders amounts to abuse of office, misuse of public resources and unethical conduct,” the advisory states.

The Commission cited Articles 10, 73 and 75 of the Constitution, as well as Article 201(d), the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, and the Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012, as the legal framework prohibiting the practice.



EACC Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Abdi A. Mohamud

including personal identifiers or portraits,” the Commission said.

The advisory is expected to affect hundreds of ongoing and completed projects across the country where politicians have prominently featured their names and images on project signboards.

Legal experts say the Commission’s position reinforces the principle that development projects belong to citizens and not individual leaders.

They argue that allowing politicians to claim ownership of public projects distorts accountability by creating the impression that services are being provided through personal generosity rather than through public resources.

The directive also comes at a time when the country is witnessing heightened political activity ahead of the next electoral cycle, with concerns that some leaders may be using development projects to enhance their political visibility.

Anti-corruption campaigners have welcomed the move, saying it could help curb the misuse of taxpayer-funded projects for political mileage.

They contend that public

project branding has increasingly blurred the line between government service delivery and political campaigning, particularly in rural areas where citizens may perceive projects as gifts from individual leaders rather than entitlements financed through taxes.

EACC has warned that it will closely monitor compliance with the advisory and take appropriate administrative or legal action against those found violating the directive.

“The Commission will closely monitor adherence, and violations may attract administrative or legal sanctions,” Mohamud said.

The warning signals a tougher stance by the anti-graft agency in enforcing integrity standards in public service and protecting public resources from being used for personal or political gain.

If fully implemented, the directive could lead to the removal or alteration of numerous project signboards and public communication materials across the country, marking a significant shift in how government development initiatives are presented to the public.



Competitions Wamatangi emphasized that his administration remains committed to investing in sports and youth development programmes

Wamatangi pledges greater support for Chess as Kiambu celebrates young champions

BY Felix Njenga
@themkenyatimes

Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting youth talent development following the impressive performance of the Kiambu County Under-18 Chess Team at regional competitions held in Kampala, Uganda.

The governor hosted the young players, drawn from various schools across Kiambu County, after they returned home with several medals and accolades from the international tournament.

Their achievement earned praise from county leaders, education stakeholders, and sports officials who described the team as an example of the potential that exists among young people when talent is identified and nurtured.

Speaking during the reception, Governor Wamatangi congratulated the players for representing both Kiambu County and Kenya with distinction. He said their success demonstrated that the county has the capacity to produce world-class talent capable of competing on regional and international stages.

According to the governor, chess is more than just a game, noting that it helps learners develop critical thinking, concentration, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and sound decision-making skills. He described the young champions as role models whose achievements

should inspire other learners to pursue their talents with discipline and determination.

Wamatangi emphasized that his administration remains committed to investing in sports and youth development programmes through sponsorships, training opportunities, and participation in both local and international competitions. He said the county government recognizes the important role sports play in empowering young people and preparing them for future success.

County Sports Executive Committee Member Osman Korar highlighted ongoing efforts to promote indoor games alongside traditional sports. He revealed that the county government is exploring partnerships aimed at providing chess equipment, strengthening coaching programmes, and creating more opportunities for talented players to participate in international competitions.

The county is also planning to train more instructors to support the expansion of chess programmes in schools and communities. Officials believe this approach will help identify and nurture talent at an early stage while increasing participation in the sport.

Leaders present at the event applauded the county government's continued investment in sports and youth empowerment. Members of the County Assembly called for increased funding for chess programmes, arguing that

the sport has consistently delivered positive results while contributing to learners' intellectual development.

Governor Wamatangi challenged society to give intellectual sports the same recognition accorded to football, athletics, and other popular disciplines. He noted that chess helps young people develop confidence, discipline, patience, and analytical skills that can positively influence their academic performance and future careers.

In a move aimed at nurturing talent from an early age, the governor proposed introducing chess lessons in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centres across Kiambu County. He said ex-

posing children to the game during their formative years would help sharpen their minds and build a foundation for future champions.

To achieve this objective, Wamatangi called for collaboration between the county government, schools, trainers, and chess federations to ensure more children gain access to the sport regardless of their location or background.

The governor also acknowledged that many talented young players often face financial challenges that limit their ability to participate in major competitions. He pledged to establish sustainable support systems and structured funding programmes to ensure deserving

players receive the sponsorship they need to compete and excel.

Beyond chess, Wamatangi highlighted the county's broader youth empowerment agenda, which includes investments in sports development, ICT training, coaching initiatives, and economic empowerment programmes.

The event also saw representatives of the International Association of World Peace Advocates confer upon Governor Wamatangi the title of International Eminent Peace Ambassador. The organization commended his contributions to education, youth empowerment, peace-building initiatives, and the county's investment in early childhood

education.

Receiving the honour, the governor dedicated the recognition to the people of Kiambu and pledged to continue supporting programmes that expand opportunities for young people.

The celebration concluded with the presentation of gifts to the chess players and renewed calls for greater investment in mind sports. Leaders expressed confidence that the success of the Kiambu Under-18 Chess Team would inspire more young people to embrace chess and position the county as a leading centre for talent development in Kenya.



Governor Kimani Wamatangi being awarded the title of International Eminent Peace Ambassador.



Governor Kimani Wamatangi hosting members of the Kiambu county Chess Association under 18 team who recently returned from regional chess championships in Kampala, Uganda.

Prisoners High Court in Nairobi held that failure to credit time spent in lawful pre-trial detention amounts to a violation of the constitutional right to liberty

Prisoners win right to have remand time counted in sentences

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyentimes

Thousands of prisoners across Kenya could have their sentences reviewed following a landmark High Court ruling that convicted persons cannot be forced to serve additional time in prison because courts failed to account for periods spent in remand custody.

In a judgment with far-reaching implications for the criminal justice system, the Constitutional and Human Rights Division of the High Court in Nairobi held that failure to credit time spent in lawful pre-trial detention amounts to a violation of the constitutional right to liberty.

Justice Roselyne Aburili ruled that every day spent in police custody or remand prison before conviction forms part of the total period during which the State has deprived a person of liberty and must be recognised during sentencing.

“The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 requires that every day of liberty taken by the State be justified by

law. No day spent in lawful custody should be rendered invisible by the sentencing process,” the judge said.

The decision arose from a petition filed by Elispher Muthoni, who was convicted of murder in 2011 and sentenced to 30 years in prison after spending about nine years in remand custody awaiting the conclusion of her trial.

The court ordered prison authorities to recalculate Muthoni’s sentence by taking into account the entire period she spent in custody from the date of her arrest until sentencing.

Justice Aburili said compliance with Section 333(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code is not merely a procedural requirement but a constitutional obligation tied to the rights to liberty, human dignity, equality before the law and a fair trial.

Section 333(2) requires sentencing courts to consider the period an accused person has already spent in custody before conviction. However, the provision has often been inconsistently applied, resulting in prisoners serving longer periods than those intended by law.

The judge noted that where a trial court fails to give credit for time spent in lawful pre-trial custody, the omission can result in a person serving a prison term longer than that authorised by law.

“Where a trial court fails to give credit for time spent in lawful pre-trial custody and such omission results in a person serving a period of incarceration longer than that authorised by law, the omission constitutes a violation of the constitutional right to liberty,” she said.

The ruling also establishes fresh guidelines requiring judges and magistrates to expressly account for every day a criminal suspect spends in police cells, remand prison or any other lawful custody before conviction. Sentencing courts are expected to clearly indicate how the custody period has been factored into the final sentence.

Muthoni was convicted alongside Elizabeth Waithira over the killing of Alexander Kungu, a 2½-year-old child, between February 21 and 27, 2004.

The trial court found that she assist-



Prisoners in one of the Kenyan facilities. | Photo: Courtesy.

ed her co-accused in killing the child and disposing of the body in a toilet.

Legal experts say the judgment could trigger numerous applications from inmates seeking sentence reviews where remand periods were ignored or inadequately considered.

Human rights groups have long argued that many prisoners remain behind bars longer than legally required because courts fail to properly implement Section 333(2).

By elevating the requirement to a constitutional standard, the High Court has reinforced the principle that no person should remain in prison for a single day longer than the law permits.



My homeland Uzbekistan



Our future generation
Our homeland is our glory
We are capable of noble deeds
My homeland is Uzbekistan
A great state itself

Our history is our word
A flourishing land is us
My homeland Uzbekistan
Science and culture
The support of society
The rule of law
The trust of our nation
The support of our country
The unity of the young generation
Security among our people
A sign of stability
As long as there is a beautiful homeland
Independence lives
On the path to prosperity
A hero takes a step.

Bobonazarova Yulduz, 2nd year student of
Urgench State Pedagogical Institute

True friends sit with you in tough times



They don't find fault or blame.
They never point a finger at each other,
They understand their feelings and emotions

Especially when troubles surround turn
They are ready to lend a helping hand.
They think with logic, act practically
They always try to understand each other

They're sympathetic, empathetic
They feel their pain, they know their heart.

Each one listens to each other
They care each other

Many run away during tough times
But true friends stay together
they never leave each other

They share their food, their feelings and emotions

True friends don't go for name or fame or glory,
They're ready to sacrifice anything for true
friendship
At any cost, they are not ready to sacrifice
friendship,

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu India

When the wrong people get Promoted, The best People Leave...



If the wrong cap is screwed,
The content in the bottle will not be stored properly.
Likewise if the wrong person was chosen as the captain of the team
The entire team will be spoiled to achieve their goal.

When the wrong person deputed to lead something
The right people simply express their absence while taking decisions.
When the wrong person was chosen for their leader
The entire team loses their position.

Rajesh Kanna B N

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

True friends make our life magical



It is not easy to find a true soul of friendship.
If you find one, never let it go.
They are like stars in the sky,
And like flowers blooming on a plant.

They do not pretend or use flattering words;
Every word comes straight from their heart.
Even when we are struggling,
They try to console us
And help us feel free from pain
As long as they are by our side.

When we are crying,
Their hands wipe away our tears.
Life is full of ups and downs,
So do not worry about anything.

Failures are the stepping stones to success,
Helping us learn, grow, and achieve something greater.
With true friends beside us,
Every challenge becomes easier,
And life feels a little more magical.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
Chengalpattu district

Everyone has a dream



A dream means a future plan.
Some people have a big dream of building a big house, and some dream of getting different jobs.

Every plan grows from a dream.
A dream is not just a word; it gives meaning to life.
It gives us self-confidence and helps us move to the next step.
If you do not have any goal, life goes like a wild river flood. It does not have a proper path.
So, you should fix your goal.
Don't call it a dream; call it a future plan.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

Don't call it a dream, call it a plan



Don't call it a dream, call it a plan,
It's definitely a dream, not a plan initially,
Inspite it turned a plan of success later, surely,
When I studied my level of confidence,
Wow! What a coincidence!
My plans turned my dreams victorious, in dissipation.
A sudden change in my designation,
Unexpected transformations in my behavioural execution,
Surprising raise in my own economic condition,

Tremendous upliftment in humane communication,
Magnanimous development in charity contribution,
More accountability in self realisation.
Meritorious space in helping hospitalization,
Successive achievements in building stones of education,
Massive creative thoughts in production,
Acceptance of true evaluations,
My dreams come true in great transformations,
Assigning it as perfect plan and protocol.
But tiring too hard for it,
And stepping up and up with nil expectations,
Being thankful to the Almighty... Forever!

— V.R. Vijayalakshmi, Graduate Teacher, CW
Writers Group, Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

Crime According to the ODPP, the suspects will face 16 counts of murder, corresponding to the number of victims who lost their lives

Students to face 16 murder charges over deadly Utumishi Girls Academy fire

BY DMS
@themtkenyatiimes

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) has approved murder charges against students implicated in the deadly arson attack at Utumishi Girls Academy in Nakuru County that claimed 16 lives last month.

In a statement, the Director of Public Prosecutions said the decision followed a review of a preliminary inquiry file submitted by the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) concerning the tragic incident that occurred on May 28, 2026.

According to the ODPP, the suspects will face 16 counts of murder, corresponding to the number of victims who lost their lives in one of the country's deadliest school

tragedies in recent years.

"The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has received and reviewed the preliminary inquiry file submitted by the Directorate of Criminal Investigations regarding the tragic arson incident that occurred at Utumishi Girls Academy in Nakuru County on 28th May 2026," the statement said.

"Upon careful assessment of the evidence, the Director of Public Prosecutions has approved charges against the implicated students. The suspects will face sixteen counts of murder arising from the incident."

The move marks a significant development in investigations into the fire that shocked the nation and reignited concerns about safety standards, student welfare, and discipline in educational institutions.

The ODPP expressed concern over a recent rise in cases of arson and other forms of criminal conduct reported in schools across the country, warning that those found responsible for such acts would be held accountable under the law.

"The DPP expresses deep concern over the recent increase in reported incidents of arson and other related acts of criminal conduct in educational institutions across the country," the statement said.

The prosecution office further cautioned students against engaging in criminal activities, emphasizing that educational institutions must remain safe environments for learning and personal development.

The Utumishi Girls Academy tragedy sparked widespread grief among families, education stakeholders, and the

public. The loss of 16 students in the incident prompted calls for thorough investigations and stronger measures to prevent similar occurrences in schools.

Fires have remained a recurring challenge in Kenya over the years, with authorities often attributing such incidents to indiscipline, unrest, or criminal actions. Education stakeholders have repeatedly called for enhanced counselling services, improved dormitory safety measures, and stronger mechanisms for addressing student grievances before they escalate into violence.

The ODPP reiterated its commitment to ensuring justice for the victims and their families through a fair, impartial, and evidence-based prosecution process.

"The Office remains com-



The main entrance to Utumishi Girls Academy

mitted to ensuring justice through a fair, impartial and evidence-based prosecution process," the statement noted.

The prosecution office also extended its sympathies to the families of the victims, friends, teachers, and the wider school community affected by the tragedy.

As the criminal proceedings commence, the case is expected to attract national attention due to its gravity and the broader questions it raises about student safety, accountability, and discipline within learning institutions.

The ODPP emphasized that it will continue to uphold the rule of law, protect the public

interest, promote the administration of justice, and ensure accountability wherever criminal conduct is established through investigations.

The accused students are expected to be arraigned in court as the murder case formally begins, setting the stage for what is likely to be a closely watched legal process.

The tragedy remains one of the most devastating incidents to hit a Kenyan learning institution in recent years and serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of criminal acts within schools.

Human rights abuses A total of 348 victims will receive compensation amounting to KSh448.7 million in the first phase of the exercise.

Victims of human rights abuses begin receiving KSh448.7 Million in historic reparations programme

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatiimes

Hundreds of victims of human rights violations committed during demonstrations and public protests over the past decade have started receiving compensation under a landmark government-backed reparations programme aimed at delivering justice, accountability and healing.

The Panel of Experts on Compensation of Victims of Human Rights Violations, including those arising from demonstrations and public protests between 2013 and 2025, announced that it has officially com-

menced the first phase of compensation payments to verified and eligible victims.

The programme, which is being coordinated under the national reparations framework developed by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), marks a significant milestone in the country's efforts to address long-standing grievances arising from excessive use of force, unlawful killings, injuries, sexual violence and economic losses suffered during periods of political unrest and public demonstrations.

In a statement, the Panel's Chairperson and Principal Coordinator, Prof. Makau Mutua, said a total of 348

victims will receive compensation amounting to KSh448.7 million in the first phase of the exercise.

"This is the first phase of the compensation programme and it will be implemented continuously until every eligible victim has been compensated. We are committed to ensuring every verified victim is compensated promptly, fairly and with the dignity they deserve," said Prof. Mutua.

The compensation package covers six categories of harm, including fatalities, severe injuries, moderate injuries, minor injuries, sexual offences and economic losses.

According to the panel, families of 115 victims who lost their lives during demonstrations and related



Prof. Makau Mutua

The panel emphasized that only victims who have completed the entire claims process and given final consent are currently being compensated.

Consent, it said, is the final requirement before disbursement of funds.

"Eligible beneficiaries are encouraged to provide consent without delay so that they can receive their compensation," the statement said.

KNCHR and civil society groups, have repeatedly documented allegations of excessive force by security agencies and violations of constitutional rights during such events.

The launch of the compensation programme is therefore being viewed

Documentation If our lives were fully documented, people would not just see our achievements. They would see our journey

If our lives were documented, would we live differently?

The camera you fear most is not the one outside your door — it is the one inside your conscience.



BY Hadassah Karangu
@themkenyatimes

Imagine waking up tomorrow to find a camera crew outside your door. Not for a day or a week — for the rest of your life. Every conversation, every decision, every act of kindness, every mistake, every quiet triumph and every humiliating failure: recorded, preserved, and available for the world to see.

Would you live differently?

It sounds like a simple question. But sit with it for a moment, and it starts to reveal uncomfortable things. Most of us would immediately think about the habits we would drop, the words we would swallow, the corners we would stop cutting. Others would begin performing — working harder, speaking more carefully, curating a version of themselves fit for public consumption.

But the more honest question is not what we would change.

It is what our current lives already say about us.

We are already documenting ourselves, of course. Social media gives us the edited highlights: the graduations, the milestones, the carefully lit photographs. We choose what the world sees. What we rarely show is the larger, messier story behind the frame — the sleepless nights, the financial anxiety, the relationships held together with hope and stubbornness, the private doubts of people who look, from the outside, completely fine.

If our lives were fully documented, people would not just see our achievements. They would see our journey. The days we nearly gave up but did not. The mistakes that cost us something and taught us something. The sacrifices made in silence, with no applause and no audience.

A documentary about a perfect person would be unwatchable. We connect with stories because they contain struggle. We admire people not because they never fall,

but because they get up — and because getting up costs them something real.

This matters especially now, in an era when image has become a currency. Many people invest enormous energy in building the appearance of success while quietly neglecting the character that makes success worth having. Likes and followers can manufacture the illusion of significance. But a person's true character does not reveal itself when everyone is watching. It reveals itself when nobody is.

If cameras followed us everywhere, would we still treat people with respect when there was nothing to gain from it? Would we remain honest when dishonesty was easier and less likely to be noticed? Would we keep working when there was no recognition coming?

Those questions are the ones that define us.

The thought experiment opens outwards, too. What would happen to public life if every act of corruption were automatically exposed? If ev-

ery promise made by a leader could be replayed verbatim years later? Would accountability sharpen? Would trust — real trust, earned rather than performed — begin to return?

And for ordinary people: how much of our time is genuinely spent pursuing the things we say matter to us? How much is lost to distraction, delay, and the comfortable fiction that we will start tomorrow?

For young people building the early chapters of their lives, this reflection carries particular weight. Success is not assembled in a single dramatic moment. It is built from daily choices that feel, at

the time, almost too small to matter — an hour of practice, a skill developed quietly, a setback absorbed and learned from. Years later, those small moments turn out to have been the whole story.

Here is the thing: our lives are already being documented. Not on film, but in the memories of everyone we have ever encountered. People forget our words far more readily than they forget how we made them feel. Communities remember those who served. Families carry the weight of sacrifices made in love. Friends do not forget loyalty shown in difficult seasons.

Long after the photographs fade and the social media posts are buried under a decade of new content, character remains. It is the only thing that does.

Each of us is the author of our own story. Every day adds a chapter. Every choice contributes a line.

So the question is not really whether a camera is watching. The question is whether you are living a life you would be proud to watch yourself.

If a documentary of your life were released one year from today, what would it show? Courage or avoidance? Discipline or excuses? Genuine kindness or the performance of it? Growth, or the same conversation about growth you were having five years ago?

The answer is not determined by tomorrow's choices. It is being determined right now.

The story of your life is being written every single day — camera or no camera.

| Photo




DRINK . CLEAN . SANITIZE

GET STARTED WITH MAJISAFI IN 4 STEPS

- 1 Download the App from Google PlayStore
- 2 Sign up & verify your phone number
- 3 Go to services and click "Add account"
- 4 Link the account associated to your number

GET STARTED NOW!

Download Majisafi app today!

GET IT ON Google Play

0701 038 226



SCAN FOR MAJISAFI



DAP-K The move is part of a broader strategy to strengthen grassroots structures and position the party competitively ahead of the 2027 General Election

DAP-K strengthens presence in Mt Kenya ahead of 2027 elections

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyetimes

The Democratic Action Party–Kenya (DAP-K) has stepped up its efforts to establish a strong political presence in the Mt Kenya region following the appointment of Jane Kihungi as the party’s regional chairperson.

The move is part of a broader strategy to strengthen grassroots structures and position the party competitively ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Speaking during the launch of the party’s regional headquarters in Kiambu County, Kihungi announced her intention to vie for the Kiambu Senate seat in 2027 on a DAP-K ticket. She said her immediate focus would be to coordinate the party’s activities across the nine counties that make up the Mt Kenya region while overseeing recruitment and expansion efforts.

According to Kihungi, the establishment of the regional office in



Jane Kihungi DAP-K party Mt. Kenya chairperson holds meeting with aspirants at the Kiambu office.

Kiambu marks the beginning of an aggressive mobilization campaign aimed at building strong party structures and attracting new members and aspirants.

She noted that DAP-K has already begun setting up organizational structures in all nine counties and plans to establish additional offices at constituency and sub-county levels.

She described DAP-K as a national political party with representation in both Parliament and county governments, adding that the party is committed to ensuring that every county has capable leaders ready to serve the public. Kihungi said her appointment reflects the confidence the party leadership has placed in her to strengthen its presence in a region regarded as one of Kenya’s most influential political blocs.

The regional chairperson urged aspiring leaders seeking elective positions in 2027 to consider joining DAP-K, promising transparent and credible nomination processes. She

argued that many politicians often face challenges in larger parties due to disputed nominations, which sometimes result in divisions and defections. DAP-K, she said, intends to offer a fair platform where aspirants can compete on equal terms and focus their energies on engaging voters once nominations are concluded.

Kihungi emphasized that the party is guided by democratic values and people-centered leadership. She described DAP-K as a national and inclusive party that seeks to unite Kenyans around development, accountability, and good governance rather than ethnic interests. According to her, the party’s vision is to provide an alternative political platform that prioritizes service delivery and citizen participation.

She also conveyed greetings from party leader Eugene Wamalwa and deputy party leader, Trans Nzoia Governor George Nitembeya, praising their commitment to accountable leadership and public service. Kihungi highlighted Nitembeya’s

development record in Trans Nzoia, saying he has demonstrated effective oversight of public projects and prudent management of resources.

As part of its expansion strategy, DAP-K plans to establish offices throughout the Mt Kenya region to serve as centers for recruitment, political education, and support for aspiring candidates. Kihungi pledged that the party would work closely with potential candidates by offering training, guidance, and strategic support as they prepare for the 2027 elections.

She noted that the region currently hosts numerous political parties competing for influence, creating uncertainty for many aspirants. In her view, DAP-K provides a stable political home for leaders seeking fairness, integrity, and transparent internal processes.

Political observers view the launch of the regional headquarters as a significant step in DAP-K’s efforts to expand beyond its traditional strongholds and establish itself as a national political force. With recruitment efforts underway and new offices being established across the region, the party hopes to reshape political alignments and offer voters an additional platform as preparations for the 2027 General Election gather momentum.

Human rights abuses A total of 348 victims will receive compensation amounting to KSh448.7 million in the first phase of the exercise.

Victims of human rights abuses begin receiving KSh448.7 Million in historic reparations programme

Contd from page 15

by many human rights advocates as a critical step toward restorative justice and national healing.

Analysts note that while compensation alone cannot erase the pain suffered by victims and their families, it represents official recognition of their suffering and an acknowledgement of the state’s responsibility to address past injustices.

The panel revealed that every claim approved for compensation underwent a rigorous administrative process, including registration, verification, authentication, categorisation of harm, approval and eventual disbursement.

To enhance transparency and public accountability, the names of compensated beneficiaries will be published periodically in the Kenya Gazette in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2019.

The panel also appealed to victims who have not yet filed claims or submitted banking and payment details to do so as soon as possible to facilitate future phases of compensation.

“We honour the resilience and dignity of the victims who came forward. To them, the long wait is over. Today, we begin to make right what was wrong,” Prof. Mutua said.

The compensation exercise is expected to continue in phases as additional claims are processed and approved. Human rights groups have welcomed the move but urged au-

thorities to complement reparations with broader institutional reforms aimed at preventing future violations.

Among the reforms being advocated are enhanced police accountability mechanisms, improved oversight of law enforcement agencies and stronger protections for constitutional rights such as freedom of assembly, expression and peaceful protest.

Observers say the success of the reparations programme will ultimately be measured not only by the number of victims compensated, but also by the country’s ability to ensure that the abuses that gave rise to the claims are never repeated.

Victims seeking information about the programme have been advised to contact the Panel’s offices at the



Human rights abuses

Kenya International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi or use the official communication channels provided by the secretariat.

As compensation payments begin reaching beneficiaries across the country, many victims and families

are hoping the initiative marks the beginning of a new chapter; one founded on justice, recognition and accountability for past human rights violations.

KICP Why the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme represents a model worth watching, studying and replicating

Kaptagat and the future of community conservation in Africa

Why the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme represents a model worth watching, studying and replicating

BY M. Danson

@themtkenyetimes



Across the world, environmental restoration programmes begin with ambition. Only a handful mature into movements. Fewer still evolve into living examples that reshape how communities, governments and institutions understand the relationship between conservation and development.

After observing the trajectory of the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme (KICP) over the past decade, one conclusion becomes increasingly difficult to resist: KICP appears to be on the right path.

Not because it claims perfection. Not because it has solved every environmental challenge facing the Rift Valley's forest margins. But because it reflects something that global conservation science is converging upon with growing confidence — lasting ecological restoration happens where communities become central participants in the solution, not peripheral beneficiaries of it.

What the global record shows

International experience offers compelling evidence for this direction.

In Costa Rica, long-term forest recovery gained genuine momentum only after environmental restoration became structurally linked to local economic incentives and a sustained national commitment that outlasted individual administrations. Payment for ecosystem services schemes, once regarded with scepticism, proved transformative precisely because they made conservation financially rational for smallholders.

In Rwanda, large-scale landscape restoration increasingly succeeded by weaving ecological protection into community livelihoods rather than positioning them as competing priorities. The country's restoration commitments under the Bonn Challenge — among the most ambitious on the continent — have been most durable where local ownership is deepest.

Across the African Great Green Wall initiative, stretching from Senegal to Djibouti, the emerging lesson is unambiguous: restoring degrad-

ed land without simultaneously restoring local economic opportunity rarely delivers outcomes that persist beyond the project cycle. Communities do not sustain what offers them nothing.

From these and many other cases, a set of shared characteristics emerges in restoration programmes that genuinely endure. Clear local ownership. Strong institutional coordination across government, civil society and the private sector. Meaningful community participation, not performative consultation. Economic inclusion so that conservation creates rather than competes with livelihoods. Long-term stewardship structures that function after donor attention moves elsewhere. Practical implementation grounded in local knowledge. And measured, transparent progress that builds credibility over time.

KICP reflects many of these same principles. In doing so, it positions itself within a serious global conversation rather than as an isolated local initiative.

An integrated philosophy

What distinguishes the Kaptagat programme is not simply the restoration activity visible across the landscape. Its strength appears to lie in a deliberately integrated approach — one that resists the temptation to

treat conservation as a standalone environmental project.

Rather than framing restoration as an obligation imposed upon communities from outside, KICP increasingly presents it as a shared opportunity. That distinction matters enormously. Programmes built on obligation produce compliance. Programmes built on shared opportunity produce stewardship.

The four pillars through which KICP operates illustrate this philosophy clearly.

Pesa Mfukoni — literally, money in the pocket — acknowledges that livelihoods are not a distraction from conservation but a precondition for it. Communities that are economically secure have the latitude to invest in their environment. Communities that are struggling rarely do.

Kawi Safi Nyumbani, which centres on clean energy in households, recognises that sustainability must begin at the domestic level. Dependence on firewood and charcoal is not only an environmental problem; it is a poverty trap. Breaking it simultaneously serves the forest and the family.

Maji Safi addresses water security — one of the most strategically important natural assets in any East African landscape. Kaptagat sits within a watershed that supplies water to significant downstream populations. Protecting the forest is, among other

things, protecting the water.

Mazingira Safi focuses on broader ecological continuity — the health of the landscape as a functioning system rather than a collection of separate interventions. Biodiversity, soil integrity, forest cover: these are the long-term bets on which everything else ultimately depends.

Together, the four pillars represent something that many restoration programmes claim but fewer achieve — a practical and human-centred conservation philosophy that is genuinely coherent rather than merely presented as such.

The hardest lesson

Perhaps the most important insight embedded in KICP's approach is one that many restoration efforts discover too late: people protect what improves their lives.

This is not a cynical observation. It is an empirical one. Conservation history is littered with technically sophisticated programmes that failed because they assumed that ecological value, once explained, would be sufficient motivation for communities to absorb costs and alter practices. It rarely is. Not because communities are indifferent to their environment — overwhelmingly, they are not — but because the transaction costs of conservation fall on those least equipped to bear them

when the benefits are distant, diffuse or captured elsewhere.

KICP's insistence on linking ecological outcomes to tangible household and community benefits reflects an understanding of this dynamic. It is the programme's most important strategic insight.

Recognition long overdue

This journey deserves recognition — and it deserves it plainly, without qualification.

The communities of Kaptagat and the surrounding landscape have borne the patient work of restoration on which everything else rests. The Community Forest Associations and local stewardship structures that carry daily responsibility for the landscape deserve acknowledgement not only for what they have protected but for remaining committed through seasons when results were invisible and incentives were thin.

Sponsors and development partners deserve recognition for understanding that meaningful conservation investment cannot be structured around single funding cycles. The organisations and individuals who returned — who deepened rather than simply renewed their commitments — have been essential.

Government agencies and public institutions deserve recognition for their engagement with a programme that sits at the intersection of forestry, water, agriculture and community development. These are precisely the intersections where institutional coordination most often breaks down. That it has not broken down in Kaptagat is itself an achievement.

The Patron deserves particular recognition for helping sustain long-term momentum and for maintaining confidence in an approach that links restoration with community outcomes at a time when shorter-term, more transactional conservation models remain attractive to funders. That kind of anchor is not incidental to programme continuity; it is often decisive.

Programme leadership and technical teams deserve acknowledgement for the unglamorous work of converting aspiration into operational reality. Environmental transformation does not announce itself through ceremonies. It accumulates through planning cycles, community meetings, field adjustments and the daily management decisions that determine whether a programme remains coherent as it scales.

Persistence is often the least visi-

Protest The Matatu Owners Association says its members will keep the country moving as Kenya marks the second anniversary of the Gen Z protests

Matatu owners assure Kenyans of normal operations tomorrow

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyentimes

The Matatu Owners Association (MOA) has assured commuters that public transport will operate normally across the country tomorrow, as Kenya marks two years since the protests that shook the nation in 2024.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, MOA President Albert Karakacha said the association is committed to keeping services running smoothly while prioritising the safety of passengers, transport workers and the general public.

Karakacha acknowledged the weight of the occasion. The association, he said, stands in solidarity with families affected by the events of June 25, 2024, but underlined that public transport carries a responsibility that cannot be set aside.

“We believe that justice, accountability, and respect for the rule of



MOA President Albert Karakacha

law remain essential to national healing,” he said. “At the same time, public transport is an essential service, and our members will continue operations responsibly and professionally.”

MOA called on matatu owners, drivers, conductors and support staff to remain calm, exercise restraint

and carry out their duties within the law. The association reaffirmed its respect for the constitutional rights of all citizens while stressing the importance of public safety and order.

It strongly condemned violence, vandalism, arson, looting and destruction of property, warning that such actions harm businesses, destroy livelihoods and endanger lives. “The safety and wellbeing of passengers, transport workers, businesses and the public remain our foremost priority,” the statement read.

Karakacha urged citizens, community leaders, civil society organisations, businesses and government agencies to embrace peaceful engagement and constructive dialogue as the country reflects on a defining moment in its recent history.

MOA said its members will remain vigilant and cooperate with relevant authorities throughout the day to ensure smooth operations — a commitment that should bring considerable relief to the millions of Kenyans who depend on matatus every single day.

KICP Why the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme represents a model worth watching, studying and replicating

Kaptagat and the future of community conservation in Africa

Contd from page 18

ble but most important ingredient of successful conservation. Environmental transformation rarely arrives through a single campaign, a single funding cycle or a single ceremonial event. It is built season by season. Year by year. Relationship by relationship.

What Kaptagat may yet become

The wider lesson from Kaptagat may ultimately extend beyond the Rift Valley.

It suggests that Kenya — and indeed Africa more broadly — already possesses the ingredients required to

lead globally in integrated conservation. The ecological knowledge is present. The community structures are present. The institutional frameworks, however imperfect, are present. What is most needed is continuity: the organisational discipline and resource commitment to sustain what works long enough for it to demonstrate its full potential.

If KICP continues on its current trajectory — strengthening its evidence base, sustaining and deepening partnerships, reinforcing community ownership and protecting the long-term ecological outcomes it has already begun to produce — Kaptagat may become something more than a successful conservation programme. It may become a learning landscape. A place where policymakers vis-

it not for ceremonial endorsement but for substantive lessons. Where communities from other landscapes exchange knowledge about what works at the household and association level. Where researchers study outcomes over time-horizons long enough to understand what genuine restoration looks like. Where the relationship between conservation and development is not argued about theoretically but demonstrated concretely.

Programmes worthy of admiration are important. Programmes worthy of replication are rare. The difference lies not in ambition but in evidence — in the accumulated demonstration that an approach works, can be understood, and can be adapted by others.



Kaptagat appears to be building toward that distinction. The next decade will be important. The conditions are present. The institutional memory is intact. The community investment is real.

If the programme sustains its momentum, this may become one of Kenya’s enduring conservation stories — not simply a chapter in the history of one forest, but a contribution to how the world understands what community-led ecological restoration can achieve.

This article represents an independent reflection informed by global restoration practice and observations of integrated conservation approaches in East Africa and beyond. Its intention is to stimulate learning, dialogue and continuous improvement, and to recognise the contribution of communities and institutions shaping restoration outcomes in Kaptagat.

M. Danson is an Editor with The Mt. Kenya Times danson@mountkenyentimes.co.ke

Britain The decisive moment came on Friday, when Burnham won a parliamentary by-election in Makerfield and returned to the House of Commons

Where British politics is headed post-Starmmer?

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced in a speech outside 10 Downing Street on Monday that he would resign as leader of the ruling Labour Party, while remaining prime minister until his successor is chosen. His resignation follows a rapid collapse in support inside Labour, accelerated by the return to parliament of Andy Burnham, the figure now widely regarded as the favorite to replace him. Why did Starmer resign now? How will the transfer of power work? And who is most likely to become Britain's next prime minister?

What happened?

Starmer entered Downing Street on July 5, 2024, after leading Labour to a landslide victory, winning 411 seats in the House of Commons and ending 14 years of Conservative rule. He had campaigned on a promise to revive economic growth, improve public services, curb irregular migration and restore stability after years of political turmoil. But less than two years later, he had lost the confidence of a substantial part of his own party. His position had been weakened by criticism of the government's handling of migration and energy policy, as well as by the continuing controversy surrounding Peter Mandelson, the former British ambassador to the United States, over his links to the late financier Jeffrey Epstein. Pressure from within Labour had also been building for months.

The decisive moment came on Friday, when Burnham won a parliamentary by-election in Makerfield and returned to the House of Commons. His victory gave him the platform he needed to mount a formal challenge for the Labour leadership and was widely seen as the immediate trigger for Starmer's departure. After Burnham's victory, calls for Starmer to stand down intensified. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander urged him on Friday to set out a timetable for his departure. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and other senior ministers had previously made similar demands. Sky News reported on Sunday that Foreign



UK PM Kier Starmer

Secretary Yvette Cooper had also privately told Starmer to step down. The Financial Times reported on Sunday that over 100 Labour members of parliament, a quarter of the party's parliamentary caucus, had called for Starmer's resignation.

What's next?

Starmer said in his resignation speech that he had asked Labour's National Executive Committee to draw up a timetable for the leadership election. Nominations will open on July 9. The contest is expected to be completed before the parliament's summer recess, meaning a new Labour leader will be in place before the parliament returns in September.

Under Labour's current rules, a candidate must first secure nominations from at least 20 percent of Labour members of parliament. Based on the party's current strength in the House of Commons, that's at least 81 lawmakers. Candidates must also be nominated by "at least three affiliates of the Labour Party (at least two must be trade unions) where the combined membership of nominating affiliates should be at least 5 percent of affiliated membership," according to the rules. If more than one candidate reaches the nomination threshold, Labour members and eligible affiliated supporters will vote to choose the new leader. Once a successor has been elected, Starmer will formally visit Buckingham

Palace and tender his resignation to King Charles III. The King will then invite the person most likely to command the confidence of the House of Commons to form a government. Because the Labour Party still holds a majority in the parliament, the King is not expected to play any role in deciding the outcome of the party contest. The new Labour leader would normally be appointed prime minister immediately and would then begin forming a new cabinet. According to British think tank Institute for Government, a change of prime minister does not necessitate a general election. The next Labour leader could continue governing until the end of the current parliamentary term or choose to call an early

election.

Who's next?

Burnham is the clear frontrunner. A former cabinet minister under former prime minister Gordon Brown, he previously stood twice for the Labour leadership and has served as Mayor of Greater Manchester since 2017. Burnham's victory in Makerfield, where he defeated the candidate of Reform UK, a far-right political party, by a wide margin, strengthened the argument among his supporters that he is better placed than Starmer to win back working-class voters and contain Reform's advance.

Stuart Wilks-Heeg, an elections expert at the University of Liverpool, told Xinhua that Burnham is expected to become the next prime minister, and the scale of his victory would give him a major political advantage. "Momentum is everything in politics, and Andy Burnham has got it right now," he said. Burnham has presented himself as offering a more substantial break with the current government. He has called for fundamental changes to Britain's economic, migration, education and industrial policies, rejected what he describes as a failed trickle-down economic model and advocated a new program of industrial development for northern England. Polling suggests that he has a commanding lead among Labour members. A YouGov survey published in May found that 47 percent named Burnham as their first choice for leader. In a hypothetical contest against Wes Streeting, the former health secretary, Burnham led by 80 percent to 10 percent.

Streeting said on May 16, two days after he resigned, that he would stand if a leadership election were held and is regarded as Burnham's most plausible challenger. But not everyone in the party favors an uncontested transfer of power. ITV reported on Sunday that Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle opposed allowing Burnham to take over without a formal contest. Kyle argued that Labour should use the leadership election to debate how best to stop Reform UK, while also ensuring that the transition from Starmer to a new prime minister remained orderly. Other possible candidates include former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, Energy Secretary Ed Miliband and Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood.



Absa bids to raise Kenya bank stake

By Alfred Mutua

Absa Group has launched a KSh30.91 billion tender offer to acquire up to 896 million additional ordinary shares in Absa Bank Kenya, lifting its stake from 68.5 per cent to as much as 85 per cent.

The offer price of KSh34.50 per share represents a premium of 28.2 per cent to the bank's 180-day volume-weighted average price. The tender offer window is set to open on 30 June and close on 11 August 2026, subject to approval by Kenya's Capital Markets Authority.

Charles Russon, group executive for Africa regions, said Kenya remained central to Absa's East Africa growth ambitions, adding that the transaction reflected confidence in the bank's leadership, strategy and long-term growth prospects.

Absa Bank Kenya's net earnings surged from KSh7.4 billion in 2019 to KSh22.9 billion



in 2025, while return on equity peaked at 24.5 per cent in 2024 before moderating to 22.8 per cent last year. The incremental stake is expected to add roughly two per cent to Absa Group's headline earnings.

Absa's move is part of a broader push by South African lenders into East Africa. Nedbank is separately acquiring a majority stake in Kenya's NCBA Group,

while Standard Bank reportedly aims to become Kenya's largest lender by 2030.

Absa Group said it intends to maintain Absa Bank Kenya's listing on the Nairobi Securities Exchange and has no plans to alter the bank's strategy, management or staffing. Kenya, it seems, is where South Africa's banking ambitions come to grow up.

The Kenyan budget should prioritise ordinary citizens

By Alvis Ndambuki

Kenya's national budget is the most consequential document the government produces each year. It does not merely allocate money — it reveals priorities. And for too long, those priorities have not been ordinary Kenyans.

Education, healthcare, job creation and support for small businesses remain chronically underfunded. Meanwhile, young people crowd unemployment queues and families absorb a cost of living that rises faster than their wages. A budget that fails to address these realities is not a development tool — it is a missed opportunity.

The argument that infrastructure and economic growth must come first is not wrong in principle. Roads, ports and energy matter. But growth that does not reach the household level is simply a statistic. In-



clusive development demands that ordinary citizens feel the budget in their daily lives — through functional clinics, affordable schools and a business environment that rewards enterprise rather than punishes it.

Transparency is equally non-negotiable. Citizens pay taxes with the reasonable expectation that public funds are managed with discipline and accountability. That expecta-

tion is too often disappointed.

A successful budget is not measured by the figures tabled in parliament. It is measured in classrooms with teachers, hospitals with medicine, and streets with opportunity.

Kenya has the resources to build a country that works for everyone. The question is whether those in power have the courage to budget like they mean it.

How many more fires before Gikomba is protected?

By Joyleen Jepkoech

Another fire has torn through Gikomba Market, leaving traders to rebuild from nothing — again. The destruction is grim enough. What is unforgivable is that it keeps happening.

Gikomba is not simply a market. It is the economic backbone of thousands of Nairobi families, a sprawling engine of informal trade that absorbs the city's hustlers, school-fees earners and breadwinners. Every fire that guts its stalls does not just destroy merchandise — it destroys livelihoods, wipes out savings and pushes families deeper into poverty.

Yet the response follows a familiar, exhausting script: shock, sympathy, a government statement, and silence — until the next blaze.

Kenya does not lack the capacity to protect Gikomba. What it lacks is the political will. Stronger fire safety infrastruc-



ture, mandatory inspections, properly resourced emergency response units and enforceable building standards are not revolutionary demands. They are minimum obligations that any responsible government owes to its citizens.

The traders of Gikomba are not asking for charity. They are asking for the basic protec-

tion that enables them to work, trade and survive without fearing that a single spark will erase everything overnight.

Fires at Gikomba are not acts of God. They are the predictable consequence of neglect — and neglect, unlike fire, is entirely preventable.

Kenya must do more to defeat malaria

By Cynthia Jemutai

Malaria remains one of Kenya's most persistent and preventable killers. Each year, millions of Kenyans — disproportionately children and pregnant women — fall ill from a disease that science has long given us the tools to control. That we have not controlled it is a policy failure, not a medical mystery.

Recurring shortages of mosquito nets expose the gap between government promises and ground-level delivery. In many regions, healthcare facilities remain understaffed, undersupplied and overwhelmed. Patients arrive early and leave without treatment. Children develop complications that proper care would have prevented. The burden falls hardest on those already carrying the most.

Prevention programmes exist on paper. What they often lack



is funding, coordination and follow-through. Public awareness campaigns reach urban centres while rural communities — where malaria transmission is highest — remain poorly served. This is not ignorance. It is neglect dressed up as a resource constraint.

The government must move beyond seasonal responses. A credible anti-malaria strategy demands year-round net distribution, trained community health workers, stocked facil-

ities and robust surveillance systems that detect outbreaks before they become crises.

Citizens, too, have a role — in adopting preventive habits, seeking early treatment and holding local health officials accountable. But accountability must flow upward as well as downward.

Malaria is not inevitable. It is a choice Kenya keeps making by refusing to fund the solution.

SPORTS
NEWSPHOTOS
SCORES
OPINIONS
STATISTICS
SCHEDULES
BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *Two goals, four for the tournament, and a Viking row for the ages — Erling Haaland is making Norway believe at their first World Cup in 28 years.

Haaland sends Senegal reeling as Norway reach knockouts



By **Norman Mwale**

Erling Haaland scored twice for the second match running as Norway beat Senegal 3-2 at New York New Jersey Stadium on Monday, securing their place in the knockout round with a game to spare at their first World Cup since 1998.

The Manchester City striker, who now has four goals in two appearances, put on another masterclass after a dominant display against Iraq in the opener. Substitute Marcus Holmgren Pedersen had broken the deadlock in the 43rd minute, latching onto a loose Kalidou Koulibaly clearance to rifle past Édouard Mendy, and Haaland took control from there.

Three minutes after the restart, Martin Ødegaard threaded a perfect pass between the Senegal centre-backs and Haaland timed his run to perfection, controlling before drilling a left-footed finish past Mendy's outstretched hand to make it 2-0. It was the

kind of movement and finish that has become almost routine for him — and yet, at a World Cup, it never quite loses its ability to take the breath away.

Senegal responded. Ismaïla Sarr, Senegal's most dangerous threat throughout, collected a Sadio Mané lay-off in the 53rd minute and shrugged off David Møller Wolfe to poke home and halve the deficit. But Norway were not done. In the 58th minute, Patrick Berg won possession in the penalty area after Koulibaly again failed to clear, and his low cross was met by Haaland, who lifted his weaker right foot to volley in off the underside of the crossbar. Three-one.

Senegal pushed for a way back and Sarr got his second in the third minute of stoppage time, firing home to set up a tense finish that Solbakken later described as "the longest ten minutes of our lives." Norway held on through nine minutes of added time to clinch all three points and their place in the last 32.

Haaland, who now has 59 goals in 52 international appearances and has scored in 12 consecutive competitive matches for Norway, was his usual understated self afterwards. "I'm just really good at scoring goals," he said. "It's my specialty. To qualify for the first time in 28 years and go through the group stage — yes, I would say that is my World Cup. Every single Norwegian on the planet today should be happy."

Solbakken praised his striker while warning against complacency. "He is the best striker — he is not playing for France or Argentina, he scores for Norway," the coach said. "He could have scored four. He missed an open goal. But he is on fire, and I am very happy for him." He also confirmed that Norway's viral Viking row celebration with the travelling supporters after the final whistle was not going away. "It was fun," he said. "We will not be rowing after the World Cup, but this can be a gimmick during the tournament."

Senegal coach Pape Thiaw refused to single out Haaland as the problem. "He is very efficient," Thiaw said. "We've got everything left to play for." His side, now bottom of Group I without a point, must beat Iraq in their final group game to preserve any hope of advancing as a third-place qualifier.

Norway, level with France on six points at the top of Group I, face Les Bleus in Foxborough on Friday. First place — and a potentially easier knockout path — is the prize.

At this rate, Haaland will not settle for just making history. He looks like a man who wants to win it.

*Scoreline: Norway 3-2 Senegal
Scorers: Pedersen 43', Haaland 48', 58', Sarr 53', 90+3'
Venue: New York New Jersey Stadium, East Rutherford*

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *A first-half brace from Cristiano Ronaldo — his 9th and 10th World Cup goals — rewrites the record books as Portugal announce themselves as genuine contenders.

Ronaldo makes history as Portugal trounce Uzbekistan 5-0



By Norman Mwale

Cristiano Ronaldo became the first player in history to score at six World Cups as Portugal swept aside Uzbekistan 5-0 in Houston on Tuesday, silencing the critics who had written him off after a flat 1-1 draw with DR Congo and emphatically reasserting his place at the heart of this tournament.

The 41-year-old struck twice in a dominant first half before Nuno Mendes, an own goal and substitute Rafael Leão completed the rout, sending Portugal to the top of Group K and announcing their tournament credentials with the kind of ruthless, one-sided authority that their opening draw had conspicuously lacked.

It had been a difficult week for Ronaldo. Portugal’s failure to beat DR Congo drew a wave of criticism, with questions mounting over whether Roberto Martínez should drop his captain entirely. Ronaldo had managed just 25 touches in that match, and a drought of 10 games without a goal in major tournaments — stretching back to November 2022 — was impossible to ignore.

The doubters were loud. They did not stay loud for long. Ronaldo opened the scoring in the 6th minute, ghosting to the near post to convert João Cancelo’s low cross with a composed finish. It was his 9th World Cup goal, drawing level with the late Eusébio as Portugal’s all-time leading scorer at the tournament. He celebrated with his trademark “Siu”, and the crowd at Houston Stadium — all 68,777 of them — celebrated with him.

The second goal arrived in the 17th minute through a cleverly worked set-piece. With everyone expecting Ronaldo to take the free kick, he stepped aside and let Nuno Mendes crash a left-footed drive into the bottom corner. It was a moment of tactical generosity that said much about the team’s collective confidence on the night.

Ronaldo’s own second came in the 39th minute. Bruno Fernandes split the Uzbekistan defence with a precise through ball, and Ronaldo raced onto it, finishing coolly past goalkeeper Abduvohid Nematov in a one-on-one. It was his 10th World Cup goal — one more than Eusébio — making him Portugal’s all-time top scorer at the finals.

The brace also made him the oldest player to score multiple goals in a single World Cup match, at 41 years and 138 days, and the second-oldest scorer in World Cup history, behind only Cameroon’s Roger Milla, who was 42 when he netted at USA ‘94.

Uzbekistan did threaten briefly. Aziz Ganiev smashed a strike home before the interval that briefly raised hopes of a contest, only for VAR to intervene, ruling it out for a foul on Cancelo in the build-up. It was the closest the Central Asian debutants came to troubling Portugal, who were otherwise entirely in control.

Portugal made the contest safe in the 60th minute. Fernandes delivered a corner that was flicked on by João Félix at the near post, the ball deflecting off Abdukodir Khusanov before ricocheting off Nematov into the net for an own goal that summed up Uzbekistan’s miserable evening. Substitute Leão completed the rout in the 87th minute, combining with fellow substitute Nelson Semedo before lashing Semedo’s cutback into the roof of the net with the

authority of a man who knew the game was long over.

Portugal finished with 17 shots, nine on target. Uzbekistan managed two. The numbers tell the story cleanly.

Martínez, who had faced pointed questions about his team selection all week, was measured but satisfied afterwards. “We controlled the game, we created, and we defended well,” he said. “That is the standard we want.”

Ronaldo, named Player of the Match, was characteristically defiant. “They said I should retire,” he said. “But I am here. The noise from outside is always like this but we can’t control it. We keep going and we are united.”

He has been scoring at World Cups since 2006. Twenty years on, he is still doing it — still rewriting the records, still proving the doubters wrong, still the last man anyone should write off.

Scoreline: Portugal 5–0 Uzbekistan
Scorers: Ronaldo 6’, Nuno Mendes 17’, Ronaldo 39’, Nematov OG 60’, Leão 87’
Venue: Houston Stadium | Attendance: 68,777

SPORTS NEWS



PHOTOS
SCORES
OPINIONS
STATISTICS
SCHEDULES
BREAKING NEWS



SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Hire hands, not just headlines

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza

@themkenyentimes

For the last few decades, we have been obsessed with paper. Degrees, diplomas, certifications with Latin names and gold seals. We ask “Where did you study?” before we ask “What can you do?” We reward the person who can write a brilliant thesis on water scarcity more than the one who can actually install a borehole in a village that has been dry for three years.

That model made sense when knowledge was scarce and credentials were the only way to prove time spent learning. Today, the model is backwards. Knowledge is everywhere — YouTube, GitHub, WhatsApp groups, community workshops. What is scarce now is skill applied to real problems.

The problems don’t care about your GPA

Climate change is not waiting for another paper with “Paradigm-Shifting Framework” in the title. Coastal towns in Uganda, Bangladesh, and Florida need people who know how to build sea walls, redesign drainage, and plant mangroves. They need civil engineers who have mixed concrete, not just simulated it.

Hospitals are not understaffed because we lack research on patient care. They are understaffed because we do not have enough nurses, technicians, and community health workers who can start an IV, calm a panicked mother, and keep accurate records. A first-aid certificate and steady hands beat a 4.0 in Biology if the patient is bleeding now.

Power grids fail, crops rot, code crashes, and small businesses collapse. None of those problems pause to check academic honours. They respond to competence — to someone who has done the work before, made mistakes, learned, and can do it better this time.

We confused credentials with capability



Illustration of Beyond the Resume: Celebrating the Power of Practical Skills

Paper is a proxy. It says “This person sat in class for four years.” It does not say “This person can lead a team when the generator dies during surgery.” It does not say “This person can talk to a farmer in Runyan-kole and explain soil pH without jargon.”

We built hiring systems around that proxy because it was easy to filter. HR software scans for “BSc, MSc, First Class.” Governments write job advertisements requiring “PhD preferred” for roles that mostly need field experience. The result is conference rooms full of brilliant talkers and empty workshops where nothing gets built.

That is how you get cities with 40 per cent youth unemployment and 40 per cent of construction projects delayed because there are no skilled welders, masons, or electricians. That is how you get smart policy papers that never survive contact with reality.

What skill actually looks like

Skill is messy. It is not a transcript. It is a portfolio, a track record, a scar from a mistake you fixed.

A skilled person does the work with-

out supervision. Give them a broken solar pump and they do not start with theory — they start with a multimeter. A skilled person solves problems in context: they know the textbook answer and when to ignore it, because the local water has more iron, the budget is smaller, and the client needs it working by Friday. A skilled person teaches others. One good carpenter trains five apprentices. One academic paper gets cited ten times and sits on a shelf. A skilled person learns fast. They do not need another degree to adapt — they need access, tools, and permission to try.

You can measure all of that. Give them a test, a trial project, a two-week contract. Let the roof they fix be the interview. Let the app they debug be the CV.

Countries already shifting

Germany’s apprenticeship system puts 16-year-olds in factories and hospitals while they study. The result is low youth unemployment and factories that actually run. Singapore funds “SkillsFuture” credits so adults can retrain in cybersecurity, logistics, and healthcare without chasing another degree.

In Kampala, the best boda mechan-

ics never went to university. The best urban farmers learned from YouTube and trial-and-error on a 20-by-20 plot. The NGOs getting clean water to rural schools are not led by people with the fanciest titles — they are led by people who know how to negotiate with district officials and drill through rock.

The pattern is clear. When stakes are high and time is short, we stop asking for credentials and start asking for proof.

What needs to change

Hiring must lead with “Can you build this? Show us” — not “Must have a Master’s degree.” Use skills tests, portfolios, and paid trial periods. Make degrees optional unless the law requires them.

Education funding should treat technical schools, vocational training, and paid internships with the same seriousness as universities. Give equal respect to the electrician and the economist. One keeps the lights on.

Governments should buy solutions, not proposals. A contract to reduce maternal mortality should go to the team that has already reduced it in three districts — not the team with

the best-written grant application.

And culturally, parents should stop asking “When will you graduate?” and start asking “What can you build? Who have you helped?” Celebrate the welder who opens a workshop and hires six people as loudly as we celebrate the graduate with honours.

The world we need

Imagine a world where a 19-year-old who can repair phones, manage a supply chain, and train her neighbours is called a professional without apology. Where a farmer with 20 years of soil knowledge gets consulted before the soil scientist who has never touched dirt. Where hospitals, ministries, and companies compete for people who deliver results, not just ideas.

That world will not come from abandoning education. Theory matters. Research matters. But theory without practice is trivia, and practice without theory is luck. The sweet spot is people who combine both — and we have been screening them out with our obsession with titles.

The problems of 2026 — energy, water, health, jobs, food — will not be solved in lecture halls. They will be solved in workshops, clinics, fields, and garages by people with calloused hands and clear thinking.

So the next time you are hiring, funding, or voting, ask one question: “Can this person fix the thing that is broken?” If the answer is yes, the paper they carry can be blank. If the answer is no, it does not matter how impressive the title on their thesis sounds.

The world does not need more credentials. It needs more competence. Let us start hiring accordingly.