

June 25: A Nation Holds Its Breath
 Kenya stands at a crossroads today as dawn breaks on June 25, with conversations reaching fever pitch in homes, markets, universities and workplaces across cities, towns and villages. The question on everyone's lips is the same Page 8



Kalonzo marks June 25 anniversary, demands justice for Gen Z protest victims
 Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka has called for justice, accountability and national remembrance as Kenya marks the second anniversary of the June 25 Page 10

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The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

2nd Anniversary The tension in the days leading to this anniversary has been acute and, at times, alarming

Two years on, Kenya holds its breath

Kenya marks the second anniversary of the June 25, 2024 protests today, as thousands prepare to take to the streets amid government warnings, allegations of state-sponsored violence, and demands for justice that remain unanswered two years on.

More than 120 people were killed in the movement that galvanised a generation of young Kenyans, initially triggered by an overarching tax bill before rapidly broadening into a reckoning with inequality, unemployment, and government corruption. Two years later, the grievances have not been resolved. The government has introduced another Finance Act. The youth are still unemployed. The dead have not been accounted for. And today, thousands are expected to take to the streets again.

The tension in the days leading to this anniversary has been acute and, at times, alarming. At the centre of it is a polarised national mood in which calls for remembrance and accountability are increasingly colliding with fears of infiltration, organised disruption, and potential breakdown of public order. It is not just the government that is anxious.



Gen Z protests in past

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Mudavadi pushes diplomatic, faith-based partnerships for national development

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi has reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to strengthening international partnerships and working with faith-based institutions to advance national development, peace and economic opportunities.

During a meeting with Philippine Ambassador Marie Yvette Banzon-Abalos, Mudavadi discussed ways of deepening bilateral relations between Kenya and the Philippines.

The talks focused on diaspora management, seafarer training and the blue economy, sectors identified as key drivers of skills development, employment creation and knowledge exchange for Kenyan youth. He noted that the Philippines' experience as a leading maritime nation presents valuable opportunities for collaboration as Kenya expands its blue economy potential.

Mudavadi also emphasized the need for appropriate legal and institutional frameworks to translate shared ambitions into tangible outcomes and enhance trade, investment and workforce development.

Separately, the Prime Cabinet Secretary met leaders and professionals from Friends Church Kenya, where discussions centered on the Church's role in promoting peace, unity and community development. He welcomed plans to establish a Peace Centre in Nairobi and expand student accommodation at Kaimosi Friends University College, saying the initiatives would foster dialogue, mentorship and reconciliation while increasing access to higher education.

Mudavadi reiterated the government's commitment to partnering with religious institutions in advancing peace, nurturing future leaders and building a more united, stable and prosperous nation.



The Mt. Kenya Times

Editor's Desk



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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Executive Secretary for KUPPET, Vihiga Branch, Charles Otiende, has called for a revision of acts and laws governing punishment in schools to allow teachers freedom to administer justified punishment to students.

He said stakeholders are involved in deliberate discipline in schools without putting too much focus on corporal punishment. He stated that teachers should be given freedom to decide on the right punishment to administer to their students because their frequent day-to-day interactions with the students enable them to know which punishment is more suitable. He further asked parents to make sure that they pay tuition fees to schools upon reopening to cater for damages caused.



Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA), in partnership with the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA), has launched a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certification programme targeting more than 250 coxswains operating on Lake Victoria. The pilot initiative seeks to improve safety standards, professionalism, skills development and youth employability in inland water transport.

Speaking in Kisumu, BMA Senior Principal Trainer in Nautical Science, Maj. (Rtd) Franklyne Toniok, representing CEO Dr. Eric Katana, said the programme assesses experienced operators who lack formal qualifications for certification as Coxswain Class III operators. By the second day, over 150 coxswains from Kisumu, Migori, Homa Bay and Siaya counties had been assessed. Successful candidates will be recommended to KMA for certification, enhancing employability and promoting safer maritime operations.



Kenya's Permanent Representative to UNEP, Ida Odinga, speaking in Kakamega forest during the marking of this year's World Rainforest Day. Mrs Odinga said her office was committed to advancing sustainable forest conservation because of the vital role they play in livelihood sustenance, biodiversity protection and environmental stabilization. She encouraged the planting of indigenous trees to help accelerate forest restoration and enhance climate resilience. She championed the national mission by the President to grow 15 billion trees by 2032, saying this will ensure sustainable forest management and stressed the importance of engaging local communities in forest protection.

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has arrested Gilbert Momanyi Maturwe, a director of Gimo Security and Investigation Services Limited, over an alleged KSh5.4 million procurement fraud involving a security services contract at Keroka Technical Training Institute. Investigations revealed that although the company was contracted at KSh257,000 per month for two financial years, payments continued at the full rate despite a reduction in the number of guards deployed. EACC also established that a Tax Compliance Certificate submitted during the tendering process was allegedly falsified. Following investigations, the Director of Public Prosecutions approved charges including procurement fraud, uttering a false document and fraudulent acquisition of public property. Maturwe pleaded not guilty before a Kisii court and was released on bail pending mention of the case on July 6, 2026.



Technology experts have urged African youth to position themselves at the forefront of the continent's digital transformation through Artificial Intelligence (AI). Speaking at the Africa Youth Skilling Conference 2026 in Nairobi, organized by the International Energy and Sustainability Summit (IESS), experts emphasized the need for young people to become creators rather than consumers of technology. Chief Information Officer and AI advisor Timothy Laku and AI researcher Louise Mwarangu highlighted opportunities presented by AI but called for investment in local infrastructure, affordable computing resources and skills development. Other sessions focused on rapid software prototyping, no-code website development and climate-smart technologies. Speakers encouraged innovation, adoption of cloud computing, use of local languages in AI systems, and greater youth participation in climate technology and environmental sustainability initiatives.



The Uasin Gishu County Government has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting widows through inclusive development programmes and decision-making processes. Speaking during International Widows Day 2026 through Deputy Governor Evans Kapkea, Governor Dr. Jonathan Bii Chelilim recognized the vital role widows play as caregivers, providers, mentors and community leaders despite the challenges they face after losing their spouses. He pledged continued support through economic empowerment initiatives, social protection programmes and improved access to healthcare under the Social Health Authority (SHA). The governor also welcomed proposals for a Widows Affairs Office and a Widows Rescue Centre, saying the county would explore ways of strengthening existing social services and gender structures to better address widows' needs and welfare.

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SHA Following the suspension, M.P. Shah Hospital acknowledged receipt of the notice

SHA suspends MP Shah hospital as crackdown on fraudulent claims intensifies

BY DMS

@themtkenyatiimes

The Social Health Authority (SHA) has temporarily suspended M.P. Shah Hospital from its panel of contracted healthcare providers, marking the latest development in an ongoing nationwide crackdown against suspected fraud within Kenya's public health insurance system.

In a notice issued by SHA Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mercy Mwangangi, the authority announced that the Nairobi-based hospital had been suspended with effect from Wednesday, pending the conclusion of investigations.

The suspension affects services offered under the Primary Healthcare Fund (PHCF), Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), Emergency, Chronic and Critical Illness Fund (ECCIF), and the Public Officers Medical Scheme Fund (POMSF).

SHA assured beneficiaries already admitted to the hospital before the suspension that they would continue receiving treatment until discharge.

However, patients seeking new admissions, follow-up care or other services have been advised to seek treatment at other SHA-contracted facilities.

While SHA did not disclose the nature of the investigations or the amount of money involved, the suspension comes amid heightened scrutiny of health facilities suspected of submitting fraudulent claims to the authority.

MP Shah responds

Following the suspension, M.P. Shah Hospital acknowledged receipt of the notice and said it was cooperating fully with investigators while conducting its own internal review.

The hospital stated that it takes the matter seriously and is committed to ensuring patients receive benefits to which they are entitled under the Social Health Insurance Fund.

It also said arrangements were being made to support affected patients and facilitate transfers where necessary.

The suspension is part of a much broader campaign by the Ministry of Health and SHA to combat fraud within the health insurance system.

In August last year, the Ministry of Health suspended 40 health facilities across the country after forensic audits uncovered widespread irregularities in claims submitted to SHA.

The facilities were accused of practices such as upcoding medical procedures, falsifying records, converting outpatient visits into inpatient admissions, multiple billing and claiming payments for ghost patients.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale described the fraudulent activities as a serious threat to the sustainability of Kenya's Universal Health Coverage agenda and vowed to recover all improperly paid funds.

Government investigations have also implicated several health professionals.

Eight doctors and four clinical officers were previously stripped of access to SHA



An entrance to MP Shah hospital

systems and referred to investigative agencies for possible prosecution.

The exact amount linked to the ongoing investigations at M.P. Shah Hospital has not been disclosed.

However, government reports suggest that healthcare fraud has exposed SHA to potentially enormous losses.

In August last year, the Ministry of Health reported intercepting fraudulent claims worth approximately

KSh10.6 billion before payment could be made, while dozens of facilities were closed or suspended.

Health authorities have also reported cases where multiple facilities billed SHA for the same patient, facilities converted outpatient vis-



SHA CEO Mercy Mwangangi

its into expensive inpatient admissions, and healthcare providers submitted inflated claims using falsified records.

In April this year, Health CS Adan Duale revealed that more than 1,200 health facilities had been shut down nationwide as authorities intensified investigations into fraud linked to both SHA and the former National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF).

Counties identified as hotspots included Mandera, Kisii, Migori, Homa Bay, Wajir and Bungoma.

The government further disclosed that 24 facilities were undergoing forensic audits while another 250 were under investigation by the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI).

Maraga warns state against intimidating June 25 marchers



Former Chief Justice David Maraga

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatiimes

Former Chief Justice David Maraga has warned the government against intimidating Kenyans planning to participate in today's memorial marches, insisting that the constitutional right to peaceful assembly must be respected and protected, not suppressed.

Speaking on the eve of nationwide commemorations marking two years since the Gen Z protests killed dozens and wounded hundreds, Maraga said the State owed victims and their families justice — not threats. "Tomorrow marks two years since young Kenyans who stood up against political tyranny were killed for it. Many others were maimed. They are living scars of our brutal political system," he said.

He placed the responsibility squarely on the government. "The government is duty-bound to respect and protect it. It should not unleash

goons or interfere," Maraga said, adding that officials must immediately stop threatening citizens organising memorial events. "Cobbling together sham compensation is not justice," he declared, calling for full accountability, appropriate reparations, and permanent memorialisation of those killed in 2024 and 2025. He also demanded an end to alleged abductions linked to political dissent. "Never again should we witness abductions or forced disappearances. Enough."

Interior CS Kipchumba Murkomen struck a measured tone in response, insisting Thursday remains a normal working day while pledging police protection for peaceful demonstrators. "For those who want to hold peaceful protests, the police are ready to provide security," he said — before warning that anyone arriving with stones or weapons would face the full force of the law.

Two years on, Kenya's wound remains open.

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MKU partners with Principals to promote mediation in schools



Ms Judy Ngayu addressing the conference. | Photo: Courtesy.

BY James Wakahiu
@themtkenyatimes

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has launched a strategic partnership with secondary school principals aimed at addressing student unrest and improving school governance through professional mediation training.

The initiative was unveiled during the ongoing 2026 Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KES-SHA) Annual National Conference in Mombasa, where education stakeholders are discussing ways to strengthen schools and support the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

Through its Institute for International and Development Law (IID Law), MKU is advocating a shift from traditional punitive disciplinary approaches to proactive conflict resolution. The university is offering structured mediation training designed to help principals identify and resolve disputes before they escalate into strikes, demonstrations, or acts of arson.

Addressing the conference, Judy Ngayu, Principal of MKU's Institute for International and Development Law (IID Law), said school heads are often the first responders when crises arise and should therefore be equipped with mediation skills to address grievances effectively.

"Through mediation training, we empower principals to address conflicts at their root, fostering stability and preventing escalation," said Ngayu.

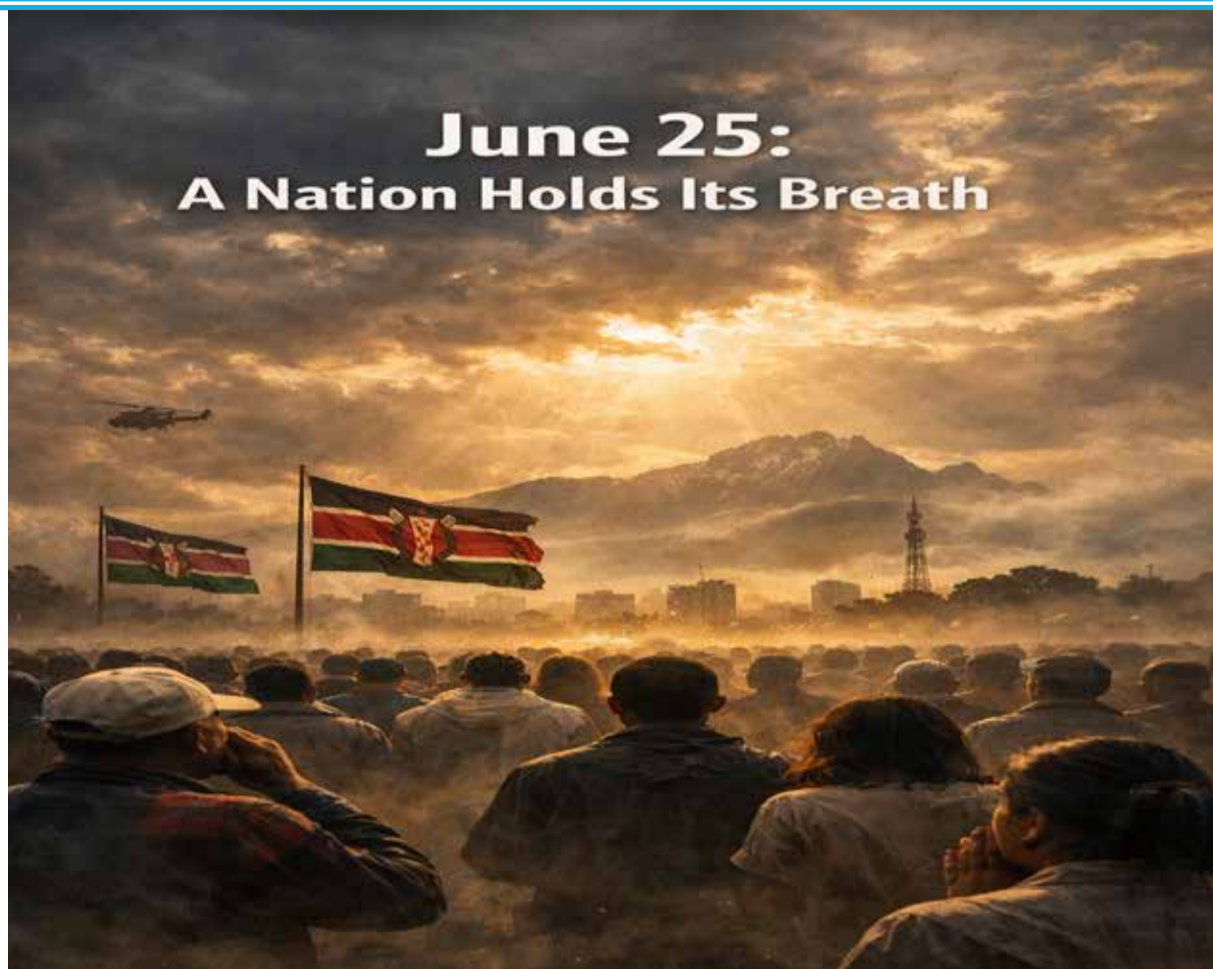
The programme combines expertise from IID Law and MKU's School of Education, providing principals with practical and legal knowledge on conflict management, negotiation and dispute resolution. The collaboration seeks to help schools establish effective internal grievance-handling systems that encourage dialogue and early intervention.

At the centre of the initiative is the Certified Professional Mediation (CPM) programme, which trains participants in conflict analysis, negotiation techniques and mediation frameworks. Graduates can pursue accreditation from the Judiciary's Mediation Accreditation Committee (MAC), enabling them to handle institutional disputes as well as court-annexed mediation cases.

According to MKU, mediation can help create school environments where students feel heard and valued, reducing the likelihood of unrest caused by unresolved concerns. Education experts attending the conference noted that student grievances related to academic pressure, welfare issues and com-

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June 25: A nation holds its breath

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya stands at a crossroads today as dawn breaks on June 25, with conversations reaching fever pitch in homes, markets, universities and workplaces across cities, towns and villages. The question on everyone's lips is the same: what happens now that thousands are on the streets again?

The memories of last year's protests never really faded. Images of determined young people demanding change have continued to shape the national mood, and today those images are live once more. For some Kenyans, this is a day of courage and civic duty. For others, it carries uncertainty, anxiety and quiet dread about what the hours ahead will bring.

The atmosphere is electric. Social media has been a battleground of ideas, opinions and competing expectations in the days leading up to today, and the temperature has only risen. Young people are demanding accountability, transparency and real solutions to the challenges grinding down millions of ordinary citizens — rising living costs, unemployment, corruption and economic hardship that for many feels endless.

Business owners are watching events unfold with cautious eyes. Some have already shuttered their doors, fearing disruptions that could hurt livelihoods and bring daily operations to a halt. Others have stayed open, hoping that today's demonstrations remain peaceful and send a powerful message without tipping into destruction or instability.

Security agencies confirmed they are deployed and prepared to maintain order. Human rights groups have urged restraint from all sides, with a message that is simple but worth repeating today above all: the right to protest must be protected, and peace must remain the guiding principle.

Beneath the political noise lies a deeper and more human reality. Families are struggling to make ends meet. Graduates are still

searching for opportunities that seem perpetually out of reach. Parents worry about school fees, food prices and a future that feels increasingly uncertain. It is these daily pressures, not politics alone, that have brought people onto the streets this morning.

Political leaders have offered different readings of today's demonstrations. Some view them as a legitimate expression of public frustration. Others have argued that dialogue should come first. Yet regardless of political affiliation, the issues being raised today resonate across the country in ways that are difficult to dismiss.

Today, Kenya is not simply watching another day of protests unfold. It is waiting for answers. It is waiting for leadership. It is waiting for solutions that can restore the confidence and hope that so many feel they have been forced to surrender.

The hours ahead will test this country's commitment to democracy, human rights and peaceful civic engagement. They will also reveal something equally important: whether those in power are genuinely willing to listen to the voices that have risen, once again, from every corner of the nation.

The streets are no longer quiet. The questions are louder than ever.

25
JUNE

Gen Z More than 120 people were killed in the movement that galvanised a generation of young Kenyans, initially triggered by an overarching tax bill

Two years on, Kenya holds its breath

Threats have been issued, meetings convened and others cancelled. As the second anniversary of the Gen Z protests arrives today, the nation that was remade by its youth two years ago stands at the edge of another defining moment.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya marks the second anniversary of the June 25, 2024 protests today, as thousands prepare to take to the streets amid government warnings, allegations of state-sponsored violence, and demands for justice that remain unanswered two years on.

More than 120 people were killed in the movement that galvanised a generation of young Kenyans, initially triggered by an overarching tax bill before rapidly broadening into a reckoning with inequality, unemployment, and government corruption. Two years later, the grievances have not been resolved. The government has introduced another Finance Act. The youth are still unemployed. The dead have not been accounted for. And today, thousands are expected to take to the streets again.

The tension in the days leading to this anniversary has been acute and, at times, alarming. At the centre of it is a polarised national mood in which calls for remembrance and accountability are increasingly colliding with fears of infiltration, organised disruption, and potential breakdown of public order. It is not just the government that is anxious. Young people, clergy, business owners, boda boda operators, and school administrators have all been watching the clock with a mixture of apprehension and determination.

President William Ruto struck a firm line. Speaking at a state event on June 19, he warned that demonstrations would not be permitted to descend into destruction. “The one thing that is not going to happen is that people will be mobilised to destroy property or to cause chaos or mayhem,” he said. “Children will go to school because it’s their right to go to school. Workers will go to work because that’s how we raise the productivity of our nation.” Government Spokesperson Dr Isaac Mwaura declared June 25 a normal working day, a statement that organisers received with barely concealed contempt.

Activists have been equally direct. “We are commemorating fellow Kenyans who lost their lives. Demonstrating is a constitutional

right and we will proceed peacefully,” said activist Nyanjom Joshua at a press briefing in Nairobi. Organisers have urged participants to carry flowers and Kenyan flags, to document everything on their phones, and to avoid any confrontation with police. Kenya Human Rights Commission official Fredrick Ojiro urged protesters to maintain peace and avoid destruction of property.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua injected his own dramatic note into the proceedings. Speaking at his Wamunyoru home in Nyeri County, Gachagua alleged that State officials had set aside millions to finance individuals who would disrupt demonstrations in Nairobi and the Mt Kenya region. “We are aware that millions were withdrawn this morning from a bank in Upper Hill for mobilising goons to unleash terror in Mt Kenya and Nairobi,” he claimed, without providing evidence. He further alleged that senior police officers had confided that they had been instructed not to intervene as hired groups caused destruction. The government flatly denied all of it.

The security architecture deployed for today tells its own story. Nairobi Regional Police Commander Issa Mohamud said as recently as Tuesday that police had received no official notification from organisers of the memorial march — a claim that organisers dispute — while assuring residents that law enforcement remains prepared to maintain peace and protect the public. Security firm Securex Agencies issued a separate advisory urging motorists to plan for possible road closures, traffic delays, and disruptions across affected areas, with heightened deployments expected across Nairobi’s Central Business District and around Parliament.

During last year’s first anniversary on June 25, 2025, at least 16 people were killed and more than 400 injured. That memory sits heavily on everyone involved — on the parents of the dead, on the organisers who carry moral responsibility for crowd safety, and on a government that cannot afford another bloodbath in an election year.

The clergy have not been silent. The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a statement that carried

unusual bluntness, called for truth, accountability, and healing ahead of the commemoration, while the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya called for national reflection and peace. The bishops specifically condemned the use of goons to disrupt peaceful protests and demanded independent investigations into abductions, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings that have accumulated since 2024.

What makes this anniversary politically combustible is the scramble among opposition politicians to associate themselves with the Gen Z movement ahead of the 2027 general election. Analysts note that young people, if they register and vote in large numbers, could be the most disruptive electoral force in Kenya’s history. “Unresolved cases of police brutality and fresh incidents reported in the past months have rekindled public outrage. The recent hike in fuel prices and remarks by allies of President Ruto that the regime may interfere with votes in next year’s general election have further angered Kenyans,” analyst David Kuria warned.

Rights groups have demanded that June 25 be declared a public holiday, to be known as a day of national remembrance for the young people who died. Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka has called on the government to pay the Sh2 billion promised to victims’ families before today passes. The government has not yet confirmed it has done so.

The Gen Z movement remains deliberately leaderless, organised on WhatsApp, TikTok, and X, with no fixed headquarters and no official spokesperson — a structure that has consistently frustrated both government attempts at suppression and political attempts at co-option. It is, in that sense, the most honest political force in Kenya: it represents nothing except the accumulated frustration of a generation that was told to wait its turn and decided, two years ago today, that it would not.

What happens in the streets today will not resolve that frustration. But it will tell Kenya — and the watching world — whether a government that has so far answered legitimate grievance with threat and delay has learned anything at all.



Gen Z protests in past



June 25 Recalling the protests that swept across the country, Kalonzo said the youth recognized that the Finance Bill 2024 would place a heavier burden on already struggling citizens

Kalonzo marks June 25 anniversary, demands justice for Gen Z protest victims

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader and Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Coalition principal Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka has called for justice, accountability and national remembrance as Kenya marks the second anniversary of the June 25, 2024 Gen Z protests.

In a statement released yesterday, Kalonzo praised young Kenyans for leading what he described as a historic movement against the controversial Finance Bill 2024, saying their actions inspired a global struggle against in-



Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka (centre) with other United Opposition Principals during a past meeting. | Photo: Courtesy

justice, corruption and poor governance.

Recalling the protests that swept across the country, Kalonzo said the youth recognized that the Finance Bill 2024 would place a heavier burden on already struggling citizens. He linked the demonstrations to earlier opposition-led protests against the Finance Bill 2023/2024, which opposed the high cost of living, the housing levy and increased fuel taxes.

The former Vice President said the protesters were exercising rights guaranteed under Article 37 of the Constitution, which protects peaceful assembly, picketing and demonstrations. He condemned the government's response, describing it as "calculated, shameful and contemptible."

Kalonzo accused the state of using live ammunition against unarmed protesters, carrying out enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests, and labeling demonstrators as terrorists. He recalled personally representing arrested youth in the Anti-Terrorism Court at Kamiti, where he helped secure the withdrawal of charges against them.

He called on the government, Parliament and security agencies to account for every life lost and every person who disappeared during the pro-

tests. He also urged police and other security agencies to exercise maximum restraint during planned commemorative demonstrations, warning against the use of excessive force, hired goons and live ammunition.

Despite the sacrifices made during the protests, Kalonzo criticized Parliament for passing the Finance Bill 2026/2027 and President William Ruto for signing it into law. He said the move suggested that the deaths and suffering witnessed during the 2024 protests had not influenced the country's leadership.

The opposition leader, however, praised 40 Members of Parliament who voted against the bill, including legislators from Wiper, Azimio and members of the ruling UDA party aligned with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP). He criticized 186 MPs who failed to attend the vote, accusing them of abandoning their constitutional responsibilities.

Kalonzo endorsed a six-point agenda advanced by Kenyan youth to commemorate the anniversary, saying it reflected the aspirations of a generation seeking justice, accountability and democratic governance.

He also renewed his call for

June 25 to be officially recognized as Liberation Day, a national public holiday dedicated to honoring those who died or suffered while defending constitutional freedoms.

On accountability, Kalonzo insisted that justice must extend beyond those who carried out abuses to include those who ordered, financed, facilitated or concealed them. He cited the case of 29-year-old Rex Masai, one of the first protesters killed during the demonstrations, as evidence of institutional failure.

According to Kalonzo, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority admitted in court on June 15 that investigators failed to collect critical evidence, including the bullet removed from Masai's body, spent cartridges, CCTV footage and the alleged murder weapon. He warned that such failures could allow suspects to escape justice.

The Wiper leader also called for reparations for victims and their families but argued that compensation alone would not be enough. He demanded a public apology from the country's highest office and a commitment that similar abuses would never occur again.

Kalonzo further highlighted the plight of young Kenyans who were forced into hiding after the protests and who continue to live in fear two years later, saying their disrupted lives and lost opportunities remain an unresolved national concern.

As the country commemorates the anniversary, Kalonzo urged Kenyans to recommit themselves to truth, justice, accountability and democratic governance, saying the sacrifices made by the youth had reshaped the nation's political conversation and reaffirmed the people's sovereign power.

"Their courage awakened a nation," he said, adding that future generations would remember them as patriots who refused to surrender their country.

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Devolution Since the inception of devolution in 2013, county government operations have largely been conducted from iron-sheet (mabati) structures

Tharaka-Nithi set to get permanent county headquarters, 13 years after devolution

BY Alex Njeru
@themkenyatimes

After 13 years of operating from temporary structures, the Tharaka-Nithi County Government is finally on the verge of occupying a fully functional county headquarters, marking a major milestone in the county's devolution journey.

The county headquarters building in Kathwana, which has been under construction for more than a decade, is now undergoing final touches ahead of its completion and commissioning in the 2026/2027 financial year.

Since the inception of devolution in 2013, county government operations have largely been conducted from iron-sheet (mabati) structures in Kathwana, while several departments have continued operating from offices inherited from the defunct local authorities in Chuka, Chogoria and Marimanti.

The Tharaka-Nithi headquarters project is among five county headquarters that were earmarked for support by the National Government following the creation of new county administrative centres after devolution. The other counties are Isiolo, Lamu, Tana River and Nyandarua.



The near completion Tharaka Nithi County executive offices building at Kathwana. The building has been financed by the county government | Photo: Alex Njeru

Under the arrangement, county governments were expected to contribute 30 per cent of the construction costs, while the National Government would provide the remaining 70 per cent through budgetary allocations.

However, county leaders say the promised funding has not been forthcoming in recent years, forcing counties to shoulder the burden of completing the projects.

Presenting the county budget estimates on Tuesday, Finance Execu-

tive Committee Member Lawrence Rweria disclosed that National Government disbursements for the headquarters project stopped years ago, compelling the county administration to seek approval from the County Assembly to finance the completion works.

"The National Government support dried up long ago, leaving the county with no option but to allocate its own resources to ensure the project is completed," said Rweria.

According to county officials, the

county government has invested approximately Sh300 million towards the completion of the headquarters over the years.

Members of the County Assembly, led by Budget and Appropriations Committee Chairperson and Karingani MCA Murithi Gaturo, yesterday toured the site to inspect the ongoing works.

Gaturo noted that while the county had stepped in to complete the project, the National Government should honour its commitment and reimburse the county for the resources already spent.

"The county has done its part to ensure this project is completed. However, the National Government should fulfil its pledge and reimburse the county so that the funds can be redirected to other pressing development priorities," he said.

Majority Leader and Magumoni MCA Justin Kithinji said the new headquarters would provide a conducive working environment for county staff who have endured difficult conditions in the temporary mabati offices since 2013.

He added that the building would centralize county services, improving efficiency and access to government services for residents.

The Assembly leadership said fur-

ther delays were no longer tenable, especially after Governor Muthomi Njuki pledged to ensure county workers relocate from the temporary structures before the end of his second term in office.

The completion of the headquarters is expected to usher in a new era for Tharaka-Nithi County by enhancing service delivery, improving working conditions for staff and providing a permanent administrative home for the county government for the first time since the advent of devolution.

Kathwana town residents have also expressed joy for the completion of the building noting that relocation of all workers into the offices will boost the area's economy.

"The rental houses which have been empty will be occupied after all the workers relocate to Kathwana," said Mr Joel Kithaka, a businessman at Kathwana.

Ms Lucy Kagendo, a hotelier said that their business will grow because of the expected population increase in Kathwana.

She added that under the leadership of Governor Njuki the town which was a small dusty market before devolution has witnessed great achievement including tarmacking of the streets, construction of market, construction of residences for governor, deputy governor and speaker of the assembly.

"Though it has taken a long time, Kathwana is now a fully functional county headquarters under Governor Njuki," said Ms Kagendo.

MKU partners with Principals to promote mediation in schools

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munication gaps often contribute to disturbances in schools.

A representative from MKU's School of Education emphasized that dialogue helps build trust between students and school administrators, making it easier to resolve issues before they become major conflicts.

To encourage participation, MKU announced a special incentive for KESSHA delegates. Principals enrolling in the CPM programme through IID Law will receive a

Sh3,000 discount on application fees when using a designated conference referral code.

University officials said the initiative reflects MKU's commitment to supporting educational leadership and promoting safer, more stable learning environments. They expressed confidence that wider adoption of mediation practices could reduce incidents of student unrest, improve school climates, enhance academic performance and strengthen relationships within school communities.

KESSHA members welcomed the proposal, noting that principals face growing challenges in managing in-



creasingly complex student issues. Many expressed interest in enrolling in the mediation programme as part of their professional development. MKU believes the partnership

could transform how schools handle disputes by placing mediation and dialogue at the centre of school leadership, governance and conflict resolution. If widely adopted, the ap-

proach could help create more stable learning environments and redefine how educational institutions across Kenya address conflicts.

MKU This year's competition attracted 87 teams from over 30 countries, representing nearly 200 academic disciplines.

MKU's global technology award winning teams caution youth on misuse of Artificial Intelligence

BY James Wakahiu
@themtkenyatimes

Mount Kenya University (MKU) teams of students and their instructors who won global awards in America and China recently have warned young people on the continuing misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

A team of four MKU students has put the institution on the spotlight after securing a finalist award at the prestigious Wege Prize 2026, held recently in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The team, represented by Mr. Wesley Njenga, walked away with \$2,500 (Sh323, 650) for their groundbreaking innovation, EcoScrubber, a hybrid emission control and carbon-capture system that transforms toxic pollutants from incinerator chimneys into usable construction materials.

The Wege Prize, organized by Michigan-based Ferris State University's Kendall College of Art and Design (KCAD), challenges university students from around the world to collaboratively solve complex, systems-level problems by developing products, services, and business models based on the three core principles of the circular economy: eliminating waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in circulation, and regenerating natural systems.

This year's competition attracted 87 teams from over 30 countries, representing nearly 200 academic disciplines. Through a rigorous, iterative process spanning multiple phases, teams received in-depth feedback from expert judges, refining their rough concepts into fully-fledged frameworks.

From this competitive field, the MKU team comprising Mr. Wesley Njenga, Mr. Franklin Mwendwa, Mr. Elijah Maina, and Mr. Ejike Chinyere, all from the School

of Public Health emerged as one of five teams invited to pitch in the United States.

The inspiration behind EcoScrubber came from an ordinary yet powerful moment on a road in Thika.

The students witnessed a truck belching thick black smoke while passersby struggled to breathe. That encounter sparked a compelling question: could those harmful emissions be captured and repurposed rather than left to pollute the air?

The team took that question back to the university's Innovation and incubation centre, where they began turning the concept into reality.

Speaking during the award ceremony, team lead Wesley Njenga expressed pride in how the University has supported their journey to the global stage.

"We were honoured to showcase home-grown solutions like Ecoscrubber, as well as compete with the best in the world," he said.

The student was accompanied by the Institutions Head, Innovations, Intellectual Property and community Engagement, Mr. Donatus Njoroge who provided guidance throughout the pitch sessions.

"We are proud of their progress so far and we will continue to offer technical support, and global exposure on their path to commercialization," Mr. Njoroge after the win.

In Shenzhen, China, a Kenyan team including an MKU student secured a historic victory at the Huawei ICT Competition Global Finals, beating over 220,000 participants worldwide.

In a historic victory for East Africa, a Kenyan trio have won the grand prize at the Huawei ICT Competition Global Finals in Shenzhen, China.

Catherine Atieno of JKUAT,

Salem Kim of Machakos University and Brian Ngugi of Mount Kenya University, guided by instructor Kevin Tuei beat thousands of students worldwide to secure the highest honour.

This is the first time a team from Kenya has clinched the grand prize after years of regional success and participation in the competition.

The Huawei ICT Competition Global Finals were held in Shenzhen, China.

The event, organised annually in collaboration with universities worldwide and UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE), is regarded as one of the most prestigious global platforms for emerging technology talents.

The competition assesses participants' knowledge and practical expertise in advanced ICT fields, including 5G, cloud technologies, networking and artificial intelligence.

Congratulating all the various the winners after their return to Kenya, Mr Njoroge, said the institution supports students with innovative ideas to commercialise them, to turn them into businesses.

"Our work revolves around helping students gain access to the training and opportunities locally and abroad, and also gain access to funding to support their innovations," he said.

In the last one year, MKU has had various students competing locally and globally and winning different awards.

"Some students who had traveled to China to participate in Huawei ICT competition and we're really proud that they matched the global winners. Another group of students went to USA and they emerged as one of the winners of the Wage Prize 2026. We are also conducting various trainings and we

have a couple of students in Germany under innovation exchange programmes," he added.



Mr Donatus Njoroge, Head of Innovations, Intellectual Property and Community Engagement at MKU. | Photo: Courtesy.



Catherine Atieno of JKUAT, Salim Kim of Machakos University, Brian Ngugi of Mount Kenya University and their instructor Kevin Tuei beat more than 220,000 students from around the world to win the Huawei global award. | Photo: Courtesy.

have a couple of students in Germany under innovation exchange programmes," he added.

Mr Njoroge said while Kenya has problems with jobs, MKU is committed to creating jobs. We are able to produce workforce that can compete with the best globally.

"We are supporting them in every aspect, plugging in resources and using the grants they are getting from external donors in competitions to improve on the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) so as to commercialise them," he said.

Mr Njoroge called upon companies, corporates, who have challenges in their processes, in their operations, to partner with MKU's Innovation and Equipment Centre, where the institution can use the skills that built over time to solve new processes.

He asked university students to leverage on research, innovation to get businesses, to employ others way before they even finish their stud-

ies. "Students are the best innovators, with fresh minds, they've got the capability, the opportunity. So, we advise that they use their time well, they use their resources, they use their skills to start businesses way before they complete their studies," he said.

Mr Njoroge said the Kenya National Innovation Agency has been doing a great job in supporting innovators, but the government should plug more funding into the innovation pipeline. "We call upon the government to look into the universities, look into their ideas, fund research and increase funding for innovators to help the country come out of the situation of joblessness.

Artificial Intelligence

Mr Njoroge warned against a growing misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Some repercussions of using AI negatively, he cautioned, is

that you cannot differentiate between truth, half-truths and even false information.

He called on the youth to use AI responsibly. "We call upon students to use AI for their benefit. AI is here with us. It is changing the way we do our things. It is supposed to improve our processes, supposed to improve how we do our things. So, we call upon young people to be able to use AI to get jobs, to improve their processes and to make their learning and even their research simpler," he said.

"So, by leveraging on using AI correctly, you're able to separate whatever is truthful, whatever is false, and you're able to get accurate information, especially as you're approaching one's election. So we call upon young people to be able to use AI properly, not to spread rumours, not to spread false information", he

MKU This year's competition attracted 87 teams from over 30 countries, representing nearly 200 academic disciplines.

MKU's global technology award winning teams caution youth on misuse of Artificial Intelligence

Contd from page 12

added.

Brian Ngugi, a student at MKU who took part in the Huawei event, called the success a long journey. He asked IT learners not to ignore competitions. He said he joined the Huawei competition to better himself.

"It's a big achievement. It opens doors for internships," he noted.

He advised students to keep trying, not give up easily. "Do something.... try from where you are. Do something. The world is full of opportunities," he said.

Ngugi also noted that AI is being used negatively, for bad things such as manipulation of videos, alteration information, data and photographs. "Students should leverage on AI to mine data," he added

Wesley Njenga, a founder member of Team EcoScrubber, which had travelled to USA, praised Mr Njoroge for his guidance.

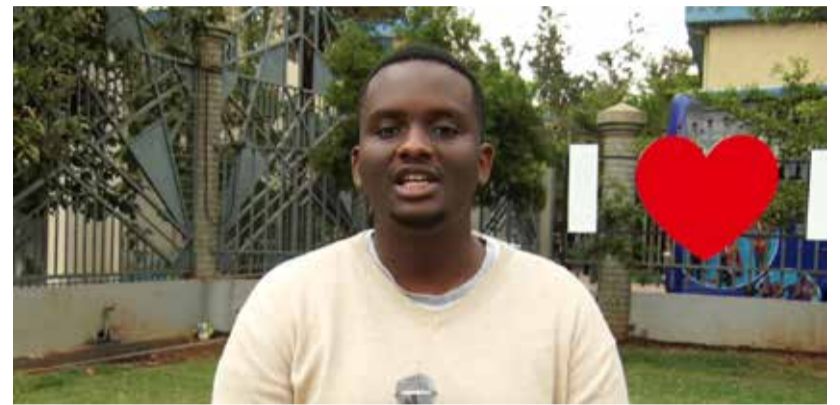
"He was guiding me all through, telling me what to do right and wrong, and clearly it paid off. For winning the finalist award, we were able to get some seed funding, which we were going to use to finalise the MVP. We are just one to two months before the finalization of the MVP," Njenga said.

He encouraged the government to partner with institutions like MKU which has a working innovations hub already. "The government is a key stakeholder in young, budding innovations and startups which really need to access funding, access experts and access policy makers who are all close to the government," he observed.

His project had to use lots of data, information that is not easily available. "We used AI. We are the next generation of solvers of global challenges. AI also helps in validating data. A tool every young person should be utilizing. The MKU innovation hub made things so much easier," he said.

Industry leaders and education stakeholders have hailed the achievement as a strong affirmation of Kenya's growing capacity to compete globally in technology and innovation. The wins also highlights the increasing role of young Africans—and women in particular—in shaping the future of digital transformation.

Together, the MKU partnership and the global competition triumph signal a transformative moment for technology education in Ken-



Wesley Njenga, team lead of EcoScrubber, a group of MKU students who won a finalist award for their ground breaking innovation in pollution control in Michigan, USA recently | Photo: Courtesy.

ya. They demonstrate the country's commitment to equipping learners with future-ready, industry-aligned skills while strengthening international collaboration.

As MKU continues to expand its

global partnerships and Kenyan students excel on the world stage, the nation is positioning itself as a leading hub for ICT talent development, innovation, and digital transformation in Africa.

The Mt. Kenya Times



My sister, my power



Sisters are mostly viewed as protectors, caregivers, and partners in childhood memories. They like fighting, playing and laughing. Described as an angel on earth or a "best friend."

Your sister is your best friend, a role model, And someone who brings out your best model. Living without a sister like living without heart and soul. They are always your mentors and keep you safe.

A sister's love is always unique and beautiful. Her tendency in protecting and taking care of you.

Sister's love is unpredictable and inevitable. Sister's in everyone's life is a symbol of prosperity.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N
M.Sc.,M.A.,
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GMHSCHOOL, TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.
Tamil Nadu
India.
Creative Writers.
Educationist.

When people need distance



Give them enough space.
Let the kite fly its own path
It will learn the value of the string.
Be like salt in their life,
Adding quiet taste.
Your presence may go unnoticed,
But your absence will be felt deeply

Don't fill the gap with stress and worry.
Never chase them when they turn their back.
Silence has its own value, in the right time.

Remember it is not a permanent goodbye.

Butterflies and love must be handled with care.
They are tender, fragile and delicate
If you hold them too tight, and the result may be harmful

Loosen your hold. If their love is genuine,
They will return for sure

Growth needs distance.
A tree needs water, sunshine, and above all, soil.
With only water or sun, it will spoil.

Water is needed, but not too much.
All you need to do is give some space.

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

Be the reason for laughter without a reason



Every time you go to my heart's door,
You would destroy the fear of love.
The happiest person for me to be,
Be the reason for laughter without a reason.

Separation has been a seal in my heart for a year
Suspensions are a vein in my heart without opening.
I didn't ask you to end the world
Be the reason for laughter without a reason.

A flood from the rain of dreams
My love that opened a smallpox, know how to appreciate.

Fill the words in my poem with meanings
Come be the reason for laughter without a reason.

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

When light comes in darkness dissipate



Optimistic thinking keeps your face bright
Letting your way straight

Truth makes your soul emancipate
Problem makes you stronger
Darkness stresses the value of light
Raise everyday to improve plight
Perseve hard, fear face you no longer
Source of ideas is the matured mind
Activate your thoughts to get channelized
Seldom step back or make your actions get relinquished
Be humane, a person of kind
A happy person can keep success at his feet
Keep others also to repeat

N. SIVASANKARI
GMGBHSS Peraiyur Madurai District Tamilnadu

May my mother never see the tears in my eyes



Her condition will become sorrowful,
May my mother never see the tears in my eyes.

Beside her, I stand proud,
Even if I cry, I keep smiling.
I love my mother so much,
May my mother never see the tears in my eyes.

Her own sorrows are enough for her,
Thinking of me, she has forgotten herself.
She, too, has shed many tears,
May my mother never see the tears in my eyes.

For some reason, life is torturing me,
Life throws me into trials.
My dear mother is a wing for me,
May my mother never see the tears in my eyes.

Author: Shohsanam Nomozova

Worrying about me, she will be heartbroken,
If she finds out, it will be very bad.

The real way to gain happiness is to give it to others



Happiness is a powerful emotion.
Why do you look for it outside?
It is hidden inside you.

It blooms through your good deeds,
positive thoughts,
and kind approach to others.

Those who appreciate the good deeds of others
feel peace and happiness.

Happiness does not come from spending money;
it comes from feelings and kindness.

When you give something to needy people,
they may see you as a blessing from God.
Then happiness embraces both you and them.
A helping mind is a gift from God.

Life is very short,
so live with a broad mind and spread happiness to everyone through your deeds.

Give something to others whenever you can;
this is the real way to find happiness.
Happiness fills your life with divine blessings.

__G. YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalyanur block
Villupuram dt

Media The exchange followed a post by President Ruto on X in which he directly referenced Standard Group and its shareholder Gideon Moi

Standard Group defends editorial independence after President Ruto's criticism

BY DMS
@themkenyatimes

A public dispute has erupted between President William Ruto and The Standard Group after the President accused the media house of using its coverage to advance what he termed as "extortionist propaganda," prompting a strong response from one of Kenya's oldest media organizations.

In a statement issued yesterday, Standard Group Chief Executive Officer Chaacha Mwita rejected the President's characterization of the company's journalism, describing the remarks as an attack on the foundations of independent journalism and media freedom.

The exchange followed a post by President Ruto on X in which he directly referenced

Standard Group and its shareholder Gideon Moi, accusing the media house of persistently publishing negative headlines about his administration in an attempt to exert pressure on the government.

The President maintained that such criticism would not influence his administration's agenda.

Responding to the remarks, Standard Group said it was compelled to address the issue because the President had singled out the organization by name. The company argued that criticism of media coverage should be handled through established channels rather than public disparagement.

"We take great exception to the President's characterisation of our journalism," the statement said, adding that the media house remains committed to factual, responsible and

accountable reporting. The company emphasized that its editorial decisions are guided by public interest, professional ethics and constitutional principles. It said it would continue to scrutinize those in power and report on matters affecting the public, regardless of whether such reporting is welcomed by political leaders.

"The Standard is not a propaganda outlet. Our journalism is guided by facts, public interest and professional ethics," the statement read.

The media house also invoked previous remarks by President Ruto in support of press freedom.

During a public event in Naivasha earlier this year, the President reiterated the importance of media freedom and the right of journalists to criticize government actions, a position that Standard

Group said should continue to guide relations between the State and the media.

The latest confrontation comes against a backdrop of growing tensions between the government and sections of the media.

Last month, the Kenya Editors Guild condemned the exclusion of journalists from Standard Group and Media-max from covering a presidential event in Naivasha, describing the move as a threat to media freedom and independent journalism.

In its statement, Standard Group reiterated that it does not take instructions from any individual or office and that its independence remains central to its credibility. The company further warned that it would hold the government responsible should any harm befall its journalists, management, directors or shareholder



A collage of what transpired yesterday between President Ruto and the Standard group.

ers as a result of the President's remarks.

The media house also raised concerns over what it described as outstanding government debts amounting to KSh1.2 billion, arguing that delayed payments have adversely affected its operations.

It questioned the President's reference to blackmail, saying the company itself had been subjected to financial pressure.

Media freedom advocates have increasingly expressed concern about what they view as growing hostility toward critical journalism, warning that public attacks on media

organizations could create a chilling effect on independent reporting.

Despite the dispute, Standard Group said it remains committed to its constitutional role of informing the public, scrutinizing those in power and upholding the public's right to know.

"The Standard Group PLC remains committed to its constitutional duty: to inform, to scrutinise and to uphold the public's right to know," the statement concluded.

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Workers Financial wellness, retirement readiness and financial literacy are no longer optional; they are essential life skills that help individuals build resilience

Mt Kenya workers warned as only 18% achieve financial health



L-R: Destination Resort General Manager Jeniffer Mugo with Octagon Africa CEO (Kenya) Davis Ongiro and Jangwani Safari Lodge General Manager Eric Owora at a Financial Wellness and Retirement Preparedness Forum hosted by Octagon Africa in Kerugoya. Workers across Kenya's Mount Kenya region have been challenged to take a more deliberate approach to saving, investing and retirement planning as economic uncertainty, rising living costs and longer life expectancy continue to reshape the financial realities facing working Kenyans.

BY James Kabotia
@themtkenyatimes

Workers across the Mt Kenya region have been urged to urgently strengthen their saving, investment and retirement planning habits amid growing economic uncertainty, rising living costs and longer life expectancy that continue to reshape household financial stability.

The warning came during a Financial Wellness and Retirement Preparedness Forum organised by Octagon Africa in Kerugoya, Kirinyaga County, which brought together employees, human resource professionals and business leaders to deliberate on strategies for improving financial resilience and retirement readiness.

The forum highlighted key pillars of financial wellness, including budgeting, debt management, emergency fund creation, investment literacy, retirement preparedness and

long-term wealth creation. It also focused on emerging risks facing workers such as inflation, rising healthcare costs, job market disruption, longer life expectancy and changing family responsibilities.

Speaking during the forum, Octagon Africa Kenya Chief Executive Officer Davis Ongiro said financial inclusion gains have not been matched by improved financial resilience among most Kenyans.

"Financial inclusion is only the beginning. True financial wellbeing is measured by an individual's ability to withstand economic shocks, achieve important life goals and retire with dignity," said Ongiro.

He warned that many workers remain financially exposed despite earning incomes and having access to financial services.

"Many people focus on earning an income today without building the financial foundations needed for tomorrow,"

he said. "Wealth creation is not determined by how much you earn, but by how consistently you save, invest and protect your future."

Ongiro further noted that financial security is now a critical component of workforce resilience in a rapidly changing economic environment.

"Today's workforce faces a range of risks that extend beyond the workplace," he said. "Inflation, healthcare expenses, longer life expectancy and economic uncertainty mean that retirement planning can no longer be postponed."

He stressed that financial literacy and retirement planning must be treated as essential life skills rather than optional knowledge.

"Financial wellness, retirement readiness and financial literacy are no longer optional; they are essential life skills that help individuals build resilience and maintain financial independence throughout their lives," he added.

According to the 2024 Fi-

nAccess Household Survey, formal financial access in Kenya has risen to 84.8 per cent, up from 83.7 per cent in 2021. However, only 18.3 per cent of Kenyans are financially healthy, exposing a widening gap between access to financial services and actual financial wellbeing.

The report shows that Mt Kenya counties are only marginally above the national average in financial health. Kiambu leads with 26.7 per cent of adults classified as financially healthy, followed by Kirinyaga (25.9 per cent), Nyeri (25.4 per cent), Embu (23.7 per cent), Nyandarua (22.9 per cent), Murang'a

(21.9 per cent), Laikipia (21.3 per cent), Tharaka-Nithi (20.7 per cent), Nakuru (20.2 per cent) and Meru (19.6 per cent).

The findings underscore a structural challenge in the region: while more citizens are financially included, relatively few are able to convert access into meaningful savings, investment and retirement security.

Participants at the forum were urged to adopt disciplined financial habits, including consistent saving, building emergency funds equivalent to at least six months of living expenses, reducing dependence on expensive credit,

and actively participating in pension and retirement savings schemes.

Experts also encouraged investment through pension schemes, collective investment vehicles and capital markets, emphasizing early participation to take advantage of compounding over time.

The FinAccess Household Survey further shows that pension coverage in Kenya has improved from 15.2 per cent in 2021 to 20.4 per cent in 2024, though uptake remains low, pointing to the need for stronger awareness and voluntary retirement savings among workers.

The forum forms part of Octagon Africa's wider agenda to promote financial literacy, strengthen retirement preparedness and build financially resilient workforces across the country.

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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI

Zimbabwe CAB 3 extends presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, abolishes direct presidential elections in favour of selection by a joint sitting of parliament

CAB 3 clears Zimbabwe's parliament

President Mnangagwa's controversial constitutional bill — which could extend his rule to 2030 and end direct presidential elections — has passed both houses and now awaits his signature.

BY Norman Mwale

@themtkenyatimes

"The love for money is the root of all evil. The Zimbabwean people must just wait and see the repercussions. When principles are traded for convenience, communities pay the price." — Corban Madzivanyika, MP, Mbizo Constituency.

Zimbabwe's Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3 cleared its final parliamentary hurdle on Wednesday night when the Senate approved it by 75 votes to 4, sending the legislation to President Emmerson Mnangagwa for assent.

The Bill had already passed the National Assembly on 18 June by 216 votes to 42, comfortably exceeding the 187-vote two-thirds thresh-

old required for constitutional change in the 280-seat chamber. The speed with which it was pushed through both houses — from gazette to Senate vote in under five months — drew sharp criticism from constitutional lawyers and civic groups who said public consultation had been inadequate.

CAB 3 extends presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, abolishes direct presidential elections in favour of selection by a joint sitting of parliament, enlarges the Senate with ten presidential appointees, and contains transitional clauses applying the new seven-year cycle to the current electoral period — provisions that would extend Mnangagwa's tenure to 2030.

Justice Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi described the amendments as necessary legal re-

finements designed to reduce political polarisation and enhance constitutional coherence. "This is not an abandonment of our constitutional order in any way, shape or form, but a continuation of it," he told parliament.

Critics were unsparing. Social justice activist Pride Mkonzo warned that Zimbabwe could "effectively enter a one-party state, but one dominated by a cartel of individuals." Legal watchdog Veritas and constitutional scholars at ConstitutionNet have described CAB 3 as a fundamental reordering of power that concentrates authority in the presidency while dismantling institutions built to ensure accountability.

What surprised many observers was not that the Bill passed — Zanu PF's supermajority made that likely —

but that roughly three dozen opposition legislators voted with the ruling party in the National Assembly, well beyond what the arithmetic required. Allegations of inducements offered to legislators were widely reported in the lead-up to both votes. The implicated parties have denied the claims.

In the Senate, only four legislators voted against: CCC senators Sesek Zvidzai of Midlands, and Solani Moyo, Meliwe Phthi, and Nonhlhla Mlotshwa of Matabeleland South. The remainder — Zanu PF senators, traditional chiefs, and a substantial bloc of opposition members — fell into line.

In Mbizo Constituency, opposition MP Corban Madzivanyika was contemptuous. He linked the lopsided tallies directly to greed, warning that when lawmakers trade principle for convenience, it is ordinary citizens who are left to carry the cost. One Mbizo resident, speaking anonymously



President Emmerson Mnangagwa

for fear of victimisation, said constituents felt unheard and deeply anxious about clauses they believed threatened local jobs and community resources.

Human rights organisations documented intimidation during the consultation period, including reports that activist Gilbert Mutebuki was assaulted by suspected Zanu PF youths after speaking against the Bill at a public hearing in Chiredzi.

With both houses having voted, the legal challenges now begin in earnest — process challenges arguing that the

Bill's drafting and passage were procedurally defective, and substantive challenges targeting the term-limit provisions that critics say require a referendum under Section 328 of the constitution.

Mnangagwa is widely expected to sign the Bill without delay. When he does, Zimbabwe will have rewritten its constitutional order — not by popular mandate, but by parliamentary arithmetic. Whether the courts prove willing to unravel what parliament has done will define the country's democratic trajectory for years to come.

War This is a war crime and, if committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack, a crime against humanity," said Volker Türk

Sexual violence weaponised as Sudan's war rages on

BY Norman Mwale

@themtkenyatimes

Sudan's war has turned women's bodies into battlefields. That is not a metaphor. It is the finding of a new United Nations report that verified 546 incidents of sexual violence across 16 of Sudan's 18 states between the start of the conflict and mid-April 2026, affecting at least 838 victims — all but 15 of them women and girls.

UN officials are unambiguous: these numbers are, in their own words, "the tip of the iceberg." Shame, fear,



Teenage mother

and the near-total collapse of health services are keeping the vast majority of survivors

silent. "This is a war crime and, if committed as part of a wide-

spread or systematic attack, a crime against humanity," said Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who visited Sudan in January and returned warning that rape was being deployed as a deliberate instrument of terror.

The UN human rights office found that sexual violence has spread alongside front lines and displacement routes, used consistently to humiliate and fracture communities. In Darfur, investigators believe some acts may constitute crimes against humanity. ICC Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan told

the Security Council that "this criminality is being repeated in town after town" and would continue "until this conflict, and the sense of impunity that fuels it, are stopped."

Survivors have described gang rape, abductions, and sexual assault during body searches, with women and girls from non-Arab communities at particular risk.

UN Women reports demand for survivor support has surged 288 per cent since the war began in April 2023. Regional Director Anna Mutavati said women and girls are being raped and killed in their homes and as they flee for food, water, and medical care.

UNICEF spokesperson James Elder described meeting medical staff with direct contact with hundreds of victims — some as young as eight — many held captive for weeks.

The war between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces has killed tens of thousands and displaced nearly 14 million people. More than 4.3 million women and girls are internally displaced, and 17.1 million people require humanitarian assistance in 2026.

UN officials are urging the Security Council to strengthen accountability, protect civilians, and scale up funding for frontline responders.

Without justice, the wounds of this war will fracture Sudan for generations.

Marriage Every “no” they told themselves was a “yes” to him. No new clothes, so he could have textbooks. No holiday, so he could attend camp

She married a dream, but she inherited a legacy

When a wife sees her husband, she should remember the hands that shaped him — and welcome them with love.



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

There is a quiet truth no one tells you on your wedding day. You did not just marry the man standing across from you in his tailored suit, eyes full of promise. You married the story written on his skin before you ever met him. You married the 3 a.m. fevers, the school fees paid in instalments, the worn-out shoes, the prayers whispered over a bowl of porridge. You married the dream man, yes — but every dream man was first someone’s sleepless night.

Wives, let your heart stay soft. Stay ready to make room, ready to feel generous, ready to honour the people who carved the man you now call your own. Not because it is duty. But because gratitude is the most beautiful thing you can wear in a marriage.

You see the man who opens doors for you, who remembers your coffee order, who works late to build a future. But before he learned to hold your hand, there were hands that held him.



There were nights his mother served him the last spoonful of beans and told him she was not hungry. She swallowed pride and drank water so his stomach could be full. She learned the language of “later” so he could learn the language of “possible.” The same man who now insists you eat first at every restaurant learned that lesson on a mat in a small kitchen. That quiet, persistent giving taught him to put others before himself.



..... | Photo:

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His father had a plan too. Perhaps he wanted to be an engineer, to travel, to rest at forty. But he buried that

version of himself the day he held a newborn. He took the job with the long hours — the one that bent his back but kept fees paid. He missed school plays, football matches, bedtime stories, not because he did not care, but because he cared too much to say no to sacrifice. The discipline you admire in your husband was taught by a man who kept clocking in when every part of him wanted to clock out.

Parents borrow. They beg. They stand in queues under the midday sun. They smile at teachers and landlords when their pockets are empty.

A mother sells vegetables by the roadside and still comes home to braid hair and ask about grades. A father walks ten kilometres to work so his son can take the bus to university. They swallowed shame so their child would never have to taste it. The confidence in the man you married was funded by their quiet humiliation. They wore embarrassment like armour so he could walk tall.

His mother’s hands are not smooth because she gave her softness to him. She changed nappies, washed uniforms, nursed chickenpox, sat through parent meetings, and still

woke up to do it again. His father’s hair greyed before its time, not from age, but from worry. They gave their twenties, thirties, and forties so he could have a future at twenty-two. They grew old faster so he could grow up stronger.

Every “no” they told themselves was a “yes” to him. No new clothes, so he could have textbooks. No holiday, so he could attend camp. No rest, so he could rest easy. The selflessness you fell in love with — the way he puts you first — was learned by watching them choose him first, every single day.

When your husband sends money home, when he spends Sunday at his parents’ house, when his phone lights up with “Mum calling” — do not see it as competition. See it as continuity. The same hands that raised him are now resting. The same voice that prayed over him is now asking for his time.

You found him at his peak, polished by their pain. But peaks do not appear from nowhere. Mountains are pushed up by pressure from beneath. His parents were that pressure. Their sacrifice was the underground force that lifted him into the man you love.

A wife who embraces her husband’s parents is not losing her husband. She is gaining roots. She is anchoring her marriage in gratitude rather than insecurity. She is telling her children, without a single word: we honour where we come from.

I know it can feel heavy sometimes. You also have dreams. You also gave up things for this marriage. Your love matters deeply. Your sacrifices matter too. But there is room for both stories at the table.

When you welcome his parents, when you speak kindly of them, when you encourage his care for them, you are not simply being a good wife. You are being a wise woman. You are protecting the source of the man you prayed for. You are ensuring the well does not run dry.

One day, you will be the mother-in-law. One day, another woman will call your son her dream man. The way you treat his parents today is the rehearsal for how she will treat you tomorrow. Love, it turns out, has a very long memory.

So set an extra plate. Listen when they speak. Stand beside him, not behind him with folded arms, when he honours the people who made him.

You married a dream. But dreams do not come from thin air. They are raised, fed, prayed over, and paid for in ways you will never fully see.

Honour the gardeners. Love the roots. And watch how beautifully your marriage blooms when gratitude is the soil.

KNCCI Lucy Muchoki leads strategic talks with a Chinese delegation as Kenyan businesses gear up to seize new opportunities at the world's premier import exposition

KNCCI champions Kenya-China trade ties ahead of Shanghai expo

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry has hosted a high-level Chinese delegation to advance trade and investment cooperation between Kenya and China ahead of the 9th China International Import Expo, scheduled to open in Shanghai on 5 November 2026.

The meeting, held at the KNCCI Secretariat, was led by Lucy Muchoki, Director of Partnerships and Programmes, alongside KNCCI Chief Executive Officer KK Mutai, and focused on strengthening trade and investment ties between the two countries by facilitating the participation of Kenyan businesses in the Expo.

The Chinese delegation was headed by Zhou Zhencheng, Minister Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Kenya, and included Hua Wei, President of the National Exhibition and



Lucy Muchoki

Convention Centre, Jia Liu, Deputy Chief Representative of ICBC Africa, and Vera Otumbi, Trade Finance Specialist at Stanbic Bank Kenya.

The discussions covered business mobilisation, trade promotion, market access, and financial solutions aimed at giving Kenyan exporters, manufacturers, and investors a stron-

ger footing at the globally influential trade fair. Particular attention was paid to how Kenyan enterprises can translate China's recently introduced zero-tariff policy into concrete export gains.

"China has already granted Kenya and the rest of Africa tariff-free access and we are working very hard

to ensure our businesses seize this opportunity," Muchoki said. "Kenya is among the leading exporters of horticultural products to Europe, and with duty-free access to China, we are looking forward to exporting more to China's 1.4-billion-strong consumer market," she added.

Zhou, for his part, noted that bilateral trade between China and Kenya continues to thrive, driven by strong policy support and mutually beneficial cooperation. He described the CIIE as the world's first national-level exposition dedicated exclusively to imports — a platform designed to open China's vast market to global businesses and share development opportunities with the rest of the world.

KNCCI President Erick Rutto said Kenya would send a delegation of exhibitors to showcase high-value agricultural and natural products, including avocados, macadamia nuts, tea, coffee, sesame, and selected horticultural products. The chamber, he added, is determined to maximise

the trade dividends that the zero-tariff arrangement makes possible.

Stanbic Bank Kenya's participation underscored the financial dimension of the partnership, with trade finance solutions forming a key part of the conversation — an acknowledgment that access to market alone is not enough if Kenyan businesses lack the capital structures to compete at scale.

For Muchoki, the meeting is part of a broader, sustained effort to connect Kenyan enterprises with global markets through institutional partnerships that go beyond goodwill and translate into real commercial outcomes. Her track record at KNCCI — spanning bilateral engagements with France, China's Changsha province, and multiple multilateral forums — reflects a methodical approach to building the kind of relationships that open doors for ordinary Kenyan businesses.

The collaboration marks a significant step in Kenya's push to diversify its export base and deepen its economic relationship with China — a relationship that, with the right preparation and support, holds genuinely transformative potential for Kenyan entrepreneurs willing to look east.

Politics Former Deputy President says the ex-MP remains a formidable political force as the party deepens its grassroots push ahead of 2027

Gachagua hails Kigo Njenga in Gatundu North DCP talks

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyatimes

Democracy for Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua has received former Gatundu North Member of Parliament Francis Kigo Njenga at a high-level consultative meeting, praising him as a tested and trusted leader whose previous service left a lasting mark on the constituency.

Njenga, who is among the aspirants seeking the DCP ticket for the Gatundu North parliamentary seat, presented a detailed account of his growing political network and his ongoing efforts to popularise the party across the constituency. The party leadership commended his structured approach, energy, and evident connection with the local electorate.

Gachagua was fulsome in his praise. He described Njenga as a formidable political figure with a clear understanding of constituency needs and a

proven record of delivery — a leader, he said, whose time in Parliament was defined by accountability, transformation, and development that put people first.

The DCP leadership assured Njenga that the party remains firmly committed to free, fair, and transparent nominations, scheduled for the first quarter of next year. The assurance is significant at a time when internal nomination disputes have begun to surface within DCP, with some early loyalists expressing concern that the party's ticket allocation is being influenced by factors beyond merit and grassroots support.

Gachagua has sought to calm such tensions, insisting that the party's nomination process will be credible and competitive. The meeting with Njenga appeared designed, in part, to reinforce that message — that DCP's doors remain open to experienced leaders who bring both a track record and a genuine constituency

base.

The former Deputy President has been positioning DCP as the primary political vehicle for Mt Kenya ahead of the 2027 general elections, a strategy that has drawn both new entrants and internal friction in equal measure. Managing that tension — between rewarding early loyalists and accommodating popular new faces — remains one of his most delicate political challenges.

Njenga was further described as a unifying figure in Gatundu North, with the capacity to mobilise support across different demographics. The party expressed confidence in his ability to restore faith in transformative leadership at the constituency level.

DCP has framed its broader mission around amplifying the voice of ordinary citizens, strengthening grassroots structures, and promoting leadership anchored in service delivery, integrity, and genuine respon-



DCP leader Rigathi Gachagua receiving former Gatundu North Member of Parliament Francis Kigo Njenga

siveness to public need. How well it lives up to those values in its own nominations process will be closely

watched by aspirants, voters, and political observers alike.

DR Congo Conflict-related sexual violence has long been one of the gravest and most persistent consequences of insecurity in eastern DRC

In eastern DR Congo, women seek healing from hidden wounds of war

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

In North Kivu Province, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the scars of war are not only seen in destroyed homes, deserted villages, and displaced families. For many women, the deepest wound remains etched within.

In a serene setting far from the city's bustle, a group of women gathered for a psychosocial support session organized by AIDPROFEN, a local organization that helps women and families heal from the effects of armed conflict. Guided by psychologists, the women took part in breathing exercises, relaxation, songs, physical activities, therapeutic dance, and group discussions. Survivors could speak freely, share their experiences, and receive emotional support, with strict measures in place to protect their identities. "I have gone through many difficulties," said one participant, whose



Asylum seekers rest in the Kigonze camp for internally displaced people (IDP) on the outskirts of Bunia, Ituri Province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on June 9, 2026

identity was withheld for security and privacy reasons. "The memory that comes back to me most often is the day I went to collect firewood in the forest. Unidentified armed men raped me. That trauma is still making me suffer." For her, the group sessions have become an important

step toward recovery. "Since I began sharing my story with other women, they have helped me regain the will to live. Through our exchanges, I feel less stressed and relieved," she said, adding that many survivors still struggle with shortages of food, clothing, water, and medicine.

Conflict-related sexual violence has long been one of the gravest and most persistent consequences of insecurity in eastern DRC, where armed conflict, displacement, and weak access to basic services have deepened the vulnerability of women and girls. According to the United Nations (UN) Population Fund, North Kivu recorded more than 50,000 cases of gender-based violence in 2023 and over 56,000 in 2024. The UN Joint Human Rights Office, working with the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, documented 887 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in the DRC in 2025, involving 1,534 victims, most of them women and girls, mainly in North Kivu. "Trauma is one of the most frequent problems," said Clarisse Mugholi, a psychologist involved in the sessions. "During the war, many women suffered different forms of violence, sometimes even in their homes."

Mugholi said the support combines group therapy, exchanges of experiences, sports activities, and thera-

peutic dance. "They do not heal instantly. But sharing what they have lived through and listening to others gradually gives them strength, confidence, and motivation," she said. For AIDPROFEN, psychosocial support is part of a broader effort to help survivors rebuild their lives after years of violence. "We have already supported a very large number of women and young girls. It is difficult to give an exact figure, but the number in the thousands," said Louise Mataana, a member of AIDPROFEN. "We call on the authorities to strengthen security measures and the protection of women, because they remain the most vulnerable in conflict situations," she said. Beyond psychological care, many survivors continue to face daily hardship, including limited access to food, clean water, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods. According to participants and psychologists, the simple act of speaking, listening, and being believed can help restore dignity to women whose suffering has too often remained hidden. "In these exchanges, I feel relieved," one of the participants said. "They have given me back the will to live."

Humanitarian crisis The clashes come as the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) entered its fourth year

Fighting intensifies across multiple fronts in Sudan amid deepening humanitarian crisis

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

Fighting continues to intensify across multiple fronts in Sudan, with simultaneous battlefield developments reported in the Blue Nile region in the southeast and the Darfur and Kordofan regions in the west, amid mounting warnings over deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

The clashes come as the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) entered its fourth year. The SAF announced Tuesday it had shot down a "hostile" drone north of the Al-Tuwaysha town in North Darfur State. The incident is the latest in a series of aerial confrontations in which drones have become a key tool used by both sides in recent months. Meanwhile,

the SAF's 4th Infantry Division in the Blue Nile region claimed it had made new battlefield gains after taking control of the Al-Bar area following a large-scale military operation covering several locations east of the region. In a statement, the military command said the operation extended beyond the areas of Abu Dugla and Ashambo and culminated in the full capture of Al-Bar after clashes with armed groups it described as "rebel elements."

Government forces had seized weapons and military equipment and captured a number of fighters, it said, adding military operations would continue in the area to secure the border and protect civilians. After months of relative calm, the region has once again emerged as a theater of clashes as the SAF seeks to regain control of the border town of Kurmuk, one of the most strategi-

cally important towns in the region. Observers believe the fighting forms part of broader efforts by the army to expand operations beyond the traditional battlefields of Darfur and Kordofan, with the objective of reasserting control over border areas. In western Sudan, concerns continue to grow over the humanitarian situation in North Darfur State. RSF-affiliated social media accounts posted videos on Tuesday claiming fighters entered North Darfur's Ambro area, days after drone strikes hit the zone and displaced residents fled there from nearby locations.

According to the state's Coordination of Resistance Committees, thousands of civilians have been displaced from the Orshi area toward Ambro in search of safety, pointing out that "violations" against residents in western parts of the state continue. The group said civilians



People line up to receive food aid at a displacement camp near the border town Al-Tina in western Sudan, on June 19, 2026.

are facing extremely difficult conditions in displacement areas, calling for greater independent monitoring and international attention to the humanitarian situation in North Darfur. In North Kordofan State, the rights group Emergency Lawyers said repeated RSF drone attacks on El Obeid last week have destroyed the city's main power substation, triggering widespread outages that disrupted water, health, and transport services. It warned that continued

attacks on civilian and service facilities could accelerate displacement from the city and heighten the risk of a large-scale humanitarian crisis in one of western Sudan's largest urban centers. Since April 2023, fighting between the SAF and the RSF has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions both within Sudan and across its borders, according to United Nations estimates.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kenya's Silicon Savannah is rewriting Africa's digital story

By Linda Omondi

Kenya did not stumble into becoming Africa's Silicon Savannah — it built it, transaction by transaction, startup by startup, in the face of infrastructure gaps that would have discouraged a less inventive nation.

The most visible proof is mobile money. What began as a simple peer-to-peer transfer service has evolved into a financial ecosystem that lets millions of Kenyans save, borrow, pay bills, and run businesses entirely from a basic handset. For rural communities historically shut out of formal banking, it was not just convenient — it was transformative.

The startup wave followed. Young Kenyan entrepreneurs are now building solutions in agriculture, healthcare, education, and transport, attracting serious capital from both local and international investors. These ventures are not just cre-

ating apps — they are creating jobs, solving real problems, and positioning Kenya as a genuine exporter of innovation.

Technology has quietly reshaped farming too. Farmers are receiving real-time weather forecasts, price data, and agronomic advice through mobile platforms, reducing guesswork and improving yields. Tele-medicine is extending medical consultation into remote areas where doctors rarely visit. Digital classrooms are expanding access to quality education beyond city limits.

Government investment in ICT infrastructure has accelerated this momentum, broadening internet access and enabling businesses and citizens to plug into the digital economy more efficiently.

Yet the gaps remain stubborn. Cybersecurity vulnerabilities, patchy connectivity in underserved regions, and low digital literacy threaten to turn Silicon



Savannah into a story of two Kenyas — one thriving, one left behind.

Kenya has built something remarkable. The harder work is making sure everyone gets to live in it.

Linda Omondi is a student at Laikipia University.

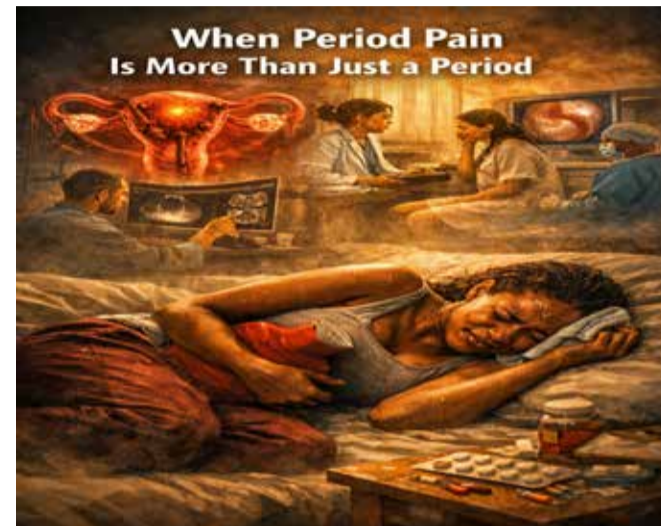
When period pain is more than just a period

By Sharlyn Kyenza

For many women, period pain is something they have simply learned to survive — a hot water bottle, some painkillers, a day lost under a blanket, and then life resumes. But for roughly one in ten women and girls of reproductive age, it is never that simple.

Endometriosis is a condition in which tissue similar to the womb lining grows outside the uterus. It causes severe, often debilitating pain, heavy bleeding, chronic fatigue, and in some cases, long-term fertility complications. It is serious, it is common, and it is still being dismissed as ordinary cramps in clinics and households across the world.

That dismissal is the heart of the problem. Because menstrual pain has been normalised for so long, women are routinely told to endure it. They comply — sometimes for years — be-



fore a doctor finally investigates, and a diagnosis arrives not as relief but as vindication of suffering that should never have been doubted.

The delay is not inevitable. Doctors say the first line of defence is deceptively simple: listening to your body. Pain that forces you to miss school, skip work, or withdraw from daily life is not ordinary. It is a signal. And signals deserve

investigation, not dismissal.

Endometriosis cannot be cured with a painkiller and patience. It requires proper diagnosis, informed medical care, and a cultural shift in how seriously we take women's pain. Period pain is common. Suffering in silence should not be.

Sharlyn Kyenza is a health and women's rights commentator.

Europe buckles under record heatwave

By Alfred Mutua

A ferocious heatwave is sweeping across Europe, pushing temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius in parts of Spain, Italy, and southern France, overwhelming hospitals, and triggering wildfire emergencies that have stretched emergency services to their limits.

Governments across the continent have issued urgent public health warnings, urging residents — particularly older adults and those with underlying conditions — to stay indoors during peak hours, avoid prolonged sun exposure, and keep hydrated. The advice is sound. The scale of the crisis, however, has made it insufficient.

Hospitals in multiple cities are reporting sharp increases in heat-related admissions, from dehydration to heatstroke, as emergency services scramble to cope with a surge that comes

without warning and ends without apology. Mortuaries in past European heatwaves have told the real story — the deaths that register quietly, in apartments, among the elderly, far from the cameras.

The fires have been harder to ignore. Firefighters across southern Europe are battling multiple blazes simultaneously, hampered by strong winds and the kind of bone-dry conditions that turn entire hillsides into kindling within hours. Entire communities have been evacuated. Thousands of hectares have burned.

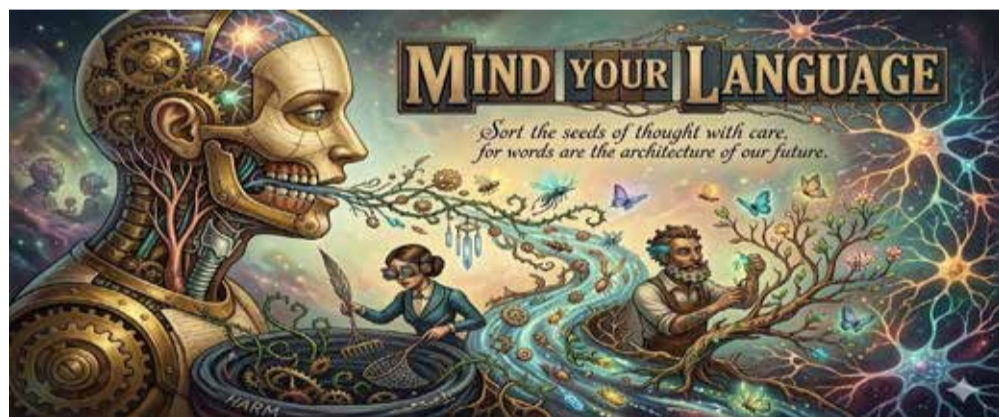
Climate scientists are unequivocal: this is not a freak occurrence. Heatwaves of this intensity are becoming more frequent, more severe, and more deadly — a direct consequence of rising global temperatures driven by unchecked greenhouse gas emissions. Environmental groups have, once again, demanded faster action.



Governments have, once again, promised coordinated responses at meetings yet to conclude.

Europe is burning. The question is no longer whether the climate has changed — it is whether its leaders have.

Mind your language



Kenya's political discourse is sliding into dangerous territory. From rallies to social media, careless remarks, insults, and hate speech have become routine — poisoning public debate and corroding national unity. Words once meant to inspire now divide.

Leaders are entrusted with guiding citizens, not inflaming them. Irresponsible language misleads the public, breeds hostility, and undermines the very peace our democracy depends on. Leadership demands wisdom, restraint, and respect. It is not about trading barbs but

about shaping solutions.

Kenya's progress hinges on dialogue, not derision. Constructive communication builds bridges across ethnic and political lines. When leaders focus on development, governance, and coexistence rather than personal attacks, they strengthen democracy and public trust.

Responsible speech is the hallmark of mature leadership. Those who master their words help build peace, unity, and respect. The tongue can heal or destroy — and in politics, its power multiplies.

Kenya needs leaders who speak hope, not hate; who debate ideas, not identities. Every statement made in public carries weight. Every insult chips away at the nation's cohesion.

It is time to elevate our conversation. Let our leaders be remembered not for the noise they made, but for the wisdom they spoke.

— Justine Chacha Mwita, Kenya Coast National Polytechnic

SPORTS
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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *Ante Budimir came off the bench to break Panamanian resistance as Croatia moved within touching distance of the last 32, with Luka Modric marking his 200th cap in style.

Budimir's late strike keeps Croatia's World Cup dream alive

By Norman Mwale

Ante Budimir came off the bench and changed everything as Croatia edged a stubborn Panama 1-0 at Toronto Stadium, keeping the 2018 finalists firmly in contention for a place in the last 32. The Osasuna striker's composed finish in the 54th minute broke Panama's resistance and left Los Canaleros mathematically eliminated from World Cup 2026 Group L. With England and Ghana drawing 0-0 earlier in the day, Croatia moved to three points — one behind the group leaders — heading into the final round of fixtures.

"I am happy that I scored my first goal at the World Cup. It is important for us to start winning and get back to the team we were before." — Ante Budimir

Tuesday's clash was tight and physical from the first whistle. Panama, without injured talisman Adalberto Carrasquilla, pressed with pace down the wings and almost shocked Croatia early when José Fajardo's header cannoned off the crossbar. Dominik Livaković tipped the follow-up over, and the 2018 runners-up gradually grew into the match. The first half ended goalless, with both sides struggling to create clear openings.

Zlatko Dalić made his move at the break, introducing Budimir for Petar Muša. The switch paid immediate dividends. In the 54th minute, Marco Pašalić back-heeled cleverly to Josip Stanišić on the right, and his pinpoint cross curled to the back post where Budimir guided the ball home with his first meaningful touch. It was the 34-year-old's first World Cup goal and his fifth in competitive fixtures for Croatia — a composed finish that belied the pressure of the moment.

Croatia should have doubled the lead three minutes later when Pašalić was played clean through on goal, but Orlando Mosquera



rushed off his line to smother and Pašalić skewed the rebound over. Panama responded with urgency. Livaković produced three saves inside a minute, the best a leaping stop to deny Carlos Harvey's header from a corner. Harvey had another opportunity in the 80th minute but struck the side netting from close range when a goal looked more likely.

The win carried an additional layer of meaning for Croatia. Captain Luka Modric made his 200th international appearance at the age of 40 and was thrown into the air by his teammates after the final whistle. The image of one of football's great servants

being lifted aloft by the players he has inspired for two decades was worth the admission price alone. "We are grateful to have a captain like Luka — a great player and a great person," Budimir said warmly.

Panama coach Thomas Christiansen was generous in defeat despite the elimination. "I think we need to congratulate them and be proud of how Panama has played against a world power such as Croatia," he said. "These players, after these two World Cup matches, won't be where they are." He expressed hope that the performances would open doors for his players at

stronger clubs.

The result leaves Croatia third in Group L on three points, behind England and Ghana on four. Dalić's side must beat Ghana in Philadelphia on Saturday to guarantee progress to the knockout phase. Panama, who lost 1-0 to Ghana in their opener, face England at MetLife Stadium in their final group match.

For Croatia, the dream lives on. For Panama, a World Cup to remember — just not for the reasons they had hoped.

Scoreline: Panama 0-1 Croatia Scorer: Budimir 54' Venue: Toronto Stadium | Attendance: 43,036

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Thomas Tuchel's side dominated possession and fired 19 shots but could not break down a resolute Black Stars defence in a tense night at Foxborough.

Ghana frustrate England in goalless draw as Group L tightens



By Norman Mwale

England were left to rue a night of wasted chances as Ghana's disciplined Black Stars held the Three Lions to a tense 0-0 draw in their FIFA World Cup 2026 Group L clash at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, leaving both nations level on four points after two matches and edging towards the last 32.

"The goal was exactly to finish the first half with the England team frustrated, with no solutions." — Carlos Queiroz

Played under a constant drizzle on Tuesday evening, the contest became a tactical battle from the first whistle. England controlled possession for long periods but struggled to penetrate Ghana's compact 5-4-1 shape. Declan Rice tested Benjamin Asare with

a free kick in the 13th minute, but the Ghana goalkeeper stood firm. The first half ended without a single shot on target from either side — the first time that had happened at this World Cup.

England increased the pressure after the break. Anthony Gordon forced Asare into a smart save with a dipping strike just before the hour mark, registering England's first effort on target. Bukayo Saka's introduction added urgency and he saw a curling shot brilliantly tipped away by Asare in the 87th minute. Seconds later, Nico O'Reilly looked certain to break the deadlock, his header from Reece James' cross crashing against the crossbar. Harry Kane gathered the rebound and somehow blazed over from six yards with the goal at his mercy — a moment that will haunt him

long after the final whistle.

Ghana were not without threat. Prince Adu broke clear in the second half and looked set to shoot before Ezri Konsa's last-ditch challenge denied him. Deep into stoppage time, substitute Kojo Peprah Oppong — on the pitch for barely three minutes — produced a stunning goal-line clearance to deny Marc Guéhi's header at 90+3', preserving the point Ghana so clearly came to take.

The result leaves England top of Group L on goal difference, ahead of Ghana. Both sides now need only avoid defeat in their final group games to reach the knockout phase. England face Panama at MetLife Stadium on Saturday, while Ghana take on Croatia in Philadelphia.

Tuchel urged patience after-

wards. "I know it's a very different game. It can be difficult to watch. We always try to entertain our fans. It was difficult today. I hope they don't lose belief. It is a long way to go," he said. Ghana coach Carlos Queiroz was unapologetically proud. "I am so proud of the way our players fought. When you have to defend, you defend," he said.

For England, the performance raised questions. For Ghana, it raised something more valuable — hope.

Scoreline: England 0-0 Ghana
Key moments: Rice free kick 13', Gordon save 59', O'Reilly hits crossbar 87', Kane misses rebound 87', Oppong goal-line clearance 90+3' Venue: Gillette Stadium, Foxborough | Attendance: 63,983

SPORTS NEWS



PHOTOS
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BREAKING NEWS



SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Dagne Walle: The Ethiopian Maestro Redefining African Music



By: Paula Otukile
Gaborone, Botswana
Correspondence



Worth Noting:

- **Best MVAA Traditional Artist of the Year 2024 (Nigeria):** In 2024, Dagne's dedication to preserving Ethiopian traditions through music earned him the prestigious title of Best MVAA Traditional Artist of the Year at the Music Video and Awards Africa (MVAA) in Nigeria. This recognition illuminated his ability to weave cultural narratives into his performances, captivating audiences and critics alike.
- **Best MVAA Male Artist of the Year East Africa 2025 (Nigeria):** Building on his success, Dagne was honored with the Best MVAA Male Artist of the Year East Africa in 2025. This award emphasized not only his musical talent but also his role as a cultural ambassador for East African music on a broader platform.

In the vibrant landscape of African music, few artists have managed to capture the essence of culture and emotion quite like Dagne Walle. Hailing from Ethiopia, Dagne's musical journey is a rich tapestry woven with passion, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to his roots. His rise to prominence is not only a testament to his talent but also to the power of music as a unifying force across borders. The Early Days.

Dagne Walle's love for music blossomed in his childhood, steeped in the traditional sounds of Ethiopian folk melodies. From a young age, he was enchanted by the rhythms of local instruments and the storytelling nature of his culture's songs. This early exposure ignited a desire within him to explore and express his identity through music. As he grew, Dagne began experimenting with various genres, seamlessly blending traditional Ethiopian sounds with contemporary styles, creating a unique sound that resonates with audiences both locally and internationally.

A Journey of Recognition

Dagne's journey has been marked by significant milestones and accolades, each highlighting his impact on the music scene:

- **Best MVAA Traditional Artist of the Year 2024 (Nigeria):** In 2024, Dagne's dedication to preserving Ethiopian traditions through music earned him the prestigious title of Best MVAA Traditional Artist of the Year at the Music Video and Awards Africa (MVAA) in Nigeria. This recognition illuminated his ability to weave cultural narratives into his performances, captivating audiences and critics alike.
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- **Best Young Achievers Music Song of the Year 2022 (Kigali, Rwanda):** His song, which resonated deeply with listeners, earned him the Best Young Achievers Music Song of the Year in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2022. This accolade showcased his potential as a young artist making significant contributions to the music industry.
- **Best Star Traditional Artist of the Year 2023 (South Africa):** In 2023, Dagne's artistry was further recognized with the Best Star Traditional Artist of the Year award in South Africa. This honor celebrated his ability to connect with diverse audiences, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

His song, which resonated deeply with listeners, earned him the Best Young Achievers Music Song of the Year in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2022. This accolade showcased his potential as a young artist making significant contributions to the music industry.

In 2023, Dagne's artistry was further recognized with the Best Star Traditional Artist of the Year award in South Africa. This honor celebrated his ability to connect with diverse audiences, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

The Essence of His Music

Dagne Walle's music is more than just sound; it is a reflection of his experiences, emotions, and cultural heritage. His lyrics often explore themes of love, identity, and social issues, making his songs relatable and impactful. By blending traditional Ethiopian melodies with modern influences, he creates a sound that speaks to both the heart and the soul, inviting listeners on a journey through his world.

Bridging Cultures

Dagne's commitment to music extends beyond personal expression; he aims to foster cultural connections. Through his art, he seeks to build bridges between communities, promoting understanding and appreciation for the rich diversity of African cultures. His collaborations with artists from various backgrounds further enhance this mission, showcasing the beauty of musical fusion.

Looking to the Future

As Dagne Walle continues to evolve as an artist, his aspirations remain high. He is dedicated to exploring new musical territories while staying true to his roots. With each new project, he aims to inspire the next generation of musicians in Ethiopia and beyond, encouraging them to embrace their cultural identities and



Dagne Walle

share their stories with the world.

Conclusion

Dagne Walle's journey is a testament to the transformative power of music. His accolades from Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa highlight not only his talent but also his role as a cultural ambassador for Ethiopia and East Africa. As he forges ahead, audiences worldwide eagerly anticipate the next chapter in his remarkable career, confident that Dagne will continue to redefine African music and inspire countless others along the way.

