Archbishop Ole Sapit: Name the goon masters
Anglican Church of Kenya Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit has challenged the country's leadership to move beyond rhetoric and dismantle the culture of political thuggery he says is pushing Kenya toward the edge Page 8

Money now key to winning elections, says NCCK study
Money has become a major factor in determining electoral success in Kenya, with 91 per cent of citizens saying candidates are unlikely to win elections unless they give voters cash Page 12

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Politics Gachagua has declared that if courts block his political ambitions ahead of the 2027 general election

Gachagua: I'll pass the baton

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has declared that if courts block his political ambitions ahead of the 2027 general election, he will hand over leadership to a younger figure — a striking public acknowledgement from the impeached former deputy president that his path back to power faces serious legal obstacles.

Speaking in a wide-ranging interview on KTN News, Gachagua was characteristically combative, using the Democracy for the Citizens Party's performance in the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election as a launching pad for a broader political argument: that Mt Kenya has permanently broken from President William Ruto's UDA, and that the 2027 election will be fought on entirely different terms from the last.

"Our marriage is over — irreversibly broken," Gachagua said, deploying the analogy he has returned to repeatedly when describing the relationship between the Mt Kenya vote bloc and the ruling party. He left no ambiguity about his reading of the Ol Kalou result.

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

LSK reaffirms court boycott in push for judicial accountability

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

The Law Society of Kenya (LSK) yesterday reaffirmed its nationwide boycott of court proceedings, saying the action is aimed at defending judicial accountability, the rule of law and the independence of the Judiciary.

Speaking during a press briefing at the Supreme Court in Nairobi, LSK President Charles Kanjama, said the Society would continue pressing for reforms to strengthen public confidence in the administration of justice.

Kanjama was accompanied by Council members Wycliffe Oyoo, Vivian Eyase, Effie Sheila Achieng and LSK Deputy Chief Executive Officer Charles Owiti.

The briefing drew a broad section of the legal fraternity, including Senior Counsel Bar Chair Philip Murgor, Senior Counsel Moses Kurgat, former LSK Presidents Ahmednasir Abdullahi, Nelson Havi, Eric Theuri, and Faith Odhiambo, as well as East Africa Law Society President Ramadhan Abubakar. LSK Nairobi Branch Chair Eric Kivuva and other advocates also attended.

The Society urged advocates across the country to remain united in the boycott, describing it as part of a wider effort to safeguard an independent, accountable and credible Judiciary.

The boycott comes amid growing concerns within the legal profession over judicial governance and accountability, with the LSK maintaining that protecting the integrity and independence of the courts is essential to upholding constitutionalism and public trust in Kenya's justice system.

Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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Group Executive Chairman
M. Danson
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/

Our Contacts
P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262
Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,
News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web**: www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Construction of solar coffee dryers at Kiamwangi Coffee Factory in Iria-ini Ward, Mathira East Sub-County, is nearing completion under the World Bank-funded Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Programme. The project comprises four modern metallic drying beds with a capacity of 16 tonnes of coffee beans per drying cycle. Once operational, the facility will reduce drying time from about 14 days to seven days, improve bean quality, minimise contamination and boost the competitiveness of Nyeri coffee in local and international markets. It also includes a tree-planting component to support environmental conservation and climate change mitigation. Governor Mutahi Kahiga said the investment demonstrates the county's commitment to climate-smart agriculture, value addition and improving coffee farmers' incomes through faster, cleaner and more efficient post-harvest processing.

The National Treasury has launched the Financial Year 2027/28 Budget and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) preparation process, committing to prudent fiscal management, wider public participation and targeted spending to support economic growth. Speaking at the launch in Nairobi, Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi said the process had started early to allow adequate stakeholder consultations and parliamentary scrutiny before the 2027 General Election. He said the budget will be anchored on Kenya Vision 2030, the Fourth Medium-Term Plan and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, with priority given to agriculture, affordable housing, universal healthcare, MSMEs and the digital superhighway. Mbadi also called for reduced non-essential spending, adoption of zero-based budgeting, improved tax compliance through technology, and nationwide public participation on tax proposals and budget implementation.

Leaders in Isiolo have condemned the fatal shooting of businesswoman Angela Kananu at the town's main bus park, calling for urgent action to address rising insecurity. Ward representatives Salesio Kiambi, David Waithaka and Nicholas Lorot urged Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen to strengthen security operations, including deploying more police officers if necessary. Kananu was reportedly shot six times at close range shortly after closing her shop, while a motorcycle rider who had gone to pick her up was also shot and injured. Isiolo Police Commander Isaac Sang confirmed the incident. The leaders said recent attacks have threatened lives, property and businesses, and called for renewed security measures to safeguard residents and restore public confidence.

The government has established a multi-sectoral committee to review obsolete laws and statutory provisions that are unconstitutional or inconsistent with the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Chaired by Kenya Law Reform Commission Chairperson Christine Agimba, the committee will examine statutes and subsidiary legislation that conflict with court rulings. Speaking during its inauguration in Nairobi, Attorney General Dorcas Oduor said the team will review judicial decisions, identify unconstitutional and outdated laws for repeal, address legislative gaps, and recommend amendments, repeals, consolidation or enactment of new laws. It will also assess policy and institutional gaps arising from constitutional and judicial developments. Oduor said many laws declared unconstitutional by the courts remain on the statute books because Parliament has not amended or repealed them, creating a governance gap that the committee aims to address.

Garissa Governor Nathif Jama during a press briefing outside his office following a meeting with stakeholders on national ID and voter registration in the county. He said that despite the President's abolition of the ID vetting process in the northeastern region, registration for national IDs among local residents remained disturbingly low.

Narok West MP Gabriel Tongoyo has urged political leaders to tone down political rhetoric and concentrate on development, saying excessive politicking could derail efforts to improve the lives of Kenyans. He called on leaders across the country to unite around a common development agenda, warning that divisive politics and ethnic mobilization threaten national progress and economic growth. Speaking in Ilmotiook Ward after commissioning two modern classrooms at Kipsongol Primary School, Tongoyo said leaders should prioritize service delivery instead of early political campaigns. He noted that the time for seeking votes would come during the next General Election and maintained that voters would assess leaders based on their development record, rewarding those who deliver meaningful projects.

Education “Investing in education is investing in the future prosperity of the constituency and the nation as a whole,” he said

Rarieda MP Otiende Amollo opens Rarieda lab

New 45-capacity facility at Rarieda Secondary School opens doors to modern science education

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Rarieda MP Otiende Amollo has commissioned a new 45-capacity science laboratory at Rarieda Secondary School, funded through the National Government Constituencies Development Fund, in a move set to expand access to practical science education for students across the constituency.

The facility, inspected and handed over by Amollo during an official ceremony, is equipped to accommodate 45 learners at a time and is designed to meet modern educational standards for the teaching and learning of science subjects. For a constituency where access to well-resourced learning infrastructure has historically been uneven, the addition of a functional, purpose-built laboratory represents a concrete shift in what students can expect from their schooling.

The NGCDF has been the primary vehicle through which constituency-level infrastructure improvements have been delivered across Kenya since the fund’s establishment, and Rarieda has drawn on it consistently to invest in education. The science laboratory is among the more substantive projects completed under the current allocation cycle, reflecting a deliberate prioritisation of facilities that directly affect learning outcomes rather than cosmetic improvements.

Rarieda MP Otiende Amollo commissioning a new 45-capacity science laboratory at Rarieda Secondary School

Amollo, a senior advocate who has maintained a prominent profile in constitutional and legal affairs at the national level, framed the commissioning within a broader argument about the relationship between infrastructure and opportunity. A well-equipped laboratory, he said, was not a luxury but a prerequisite for students expected to compete in an increasingly science-driven academic environment.

“Investing in education is investing in the future prosperity of the constituency and the nation as a whole,” he said. “By prioritising quality infrastructure through the NGCDF, we are creating an enabling environment where learners can excel academically and compete favourably at the national level.”

The timing carries particular relevance. Kenya’s Competency-Based Curriculum, which places greater emphasis on practical learning, applied skills and scientific inquiry than the system it replaced, has increased the pressure on schools to provide functional laboratory facilities. Without them, students are taught theory they cannot test and assessed on competencies they have had no meaningful opportunity to develop. The gap between curriculum design and physical infrastructure has been one of the most persistent challenges in the CBC’s rollout, and it falls disproportionately on schools in constituencies where private investment in education is limited and government allocations are stretched.

At Rarieda Secondary School, that gap has now narrowed. Teachers will be able to move practical science lessons out of the theoretical and into the experiential, with students gaining hands-on exposure to the kind of experimental work that builds both scientific understanding and the broader habits of inquiry, precision and analytical thinking that extend well beyond the laboratory.

The reaction from the school community was one of genuine relief as much as celebration. Teachers noted that the absence of a proper laboratory had long been a constraint on how effectively they could deliver the science curriculum, and that the new facility would remove one of the most significant obstacles they faced in preparing students for national examinations and further study.

Parents who attended the commissioning ceremony expressed similar sentiments. Many had watched children travel to schools in better-resourced areas or make do with demonstrations that could not substitute for direct practical experience. The opening of the laboratory, several noted, meant that students in Rarieda no longer needed to look elsewhere for what their own school could now provide.

For the students themselves, the laboratory opens a specific and tangible set of possibilities. Access to practical science facilities at secondary school level correlates strongly with performance in science subjects at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, and strong KCSE results in sciences remain among the most reliable pathways into degree programmes in medicine, engineering, environmental science and technology — fields where national demand for qualified graduates consistently outstrips supply.

The NGCDF model, for all the scrutiny it attracts over accountability and prioritisation, has in cases like this one demonstrated its capacity to deliver infrastructure that public school budgets could not otherwise fund. Whether the Rarieda laboratory is maintained, kept adequately stocked with reagents and equipment, and staffed by qualified science teachers over the years ahead will determine whether the investment fulfils its promise or becomes another underutilised facility.

The ribbon has been cut. The experiments, in every sense, are just beginning.

Goons **“Words without action will not build public confidence. So if the leadership of the nation wants to regain public confidence, action needs to be taken,” Ole Sapit said.**

Archbishop Ole Sapit: Name the goon masters

Anglican archbishop demands justice beyond arrests as All Saints Cathedral is cleansed after violent invasion

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Anglican Church of Kenya Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit has challenged the country’s leadership to move beyond rhetoric and dismantle the culture of political thuggery he says is pushing Kenya toward the edge of instability, speaking as he led the cleansing of All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi after last month’s violent invasion by goons.

The ceremony, which reopened the St Nicholas Chapel for the first time in nearly six weeks, was at once an act of spiritual restoration and a political statement. For Ole Sapit, reconsecrating a building was the straightforward part. Reconsecrating a country in which sacred spaces are no longer safe from organised political violence is a far weightier undertaking — and one he made clear the government has so far failed to begin.

“Words without action will not build public confidence. So if the leadership of the nation wants to regain public confidence, action needs to be taken,” Ole Sapit said.

Five suspects were paraded before the public in the aftermath of the cathedral attack. The archbishop acknowledged that much, and then set it aside. Arrests of foot soldiers, he said, are not justice. They are theatre — the minimum gesture that can be offered while the people who planned, financed and directed the violence remain unnamed, unquestioned and at liberty.

“No case has been heard, no response has been given to us and our ask, even when I made a public statement that we do not want to see only goons arrested. We want to see the owners of the goons displayed, and we want to be told who attacked us,” Ole Sapit said.

His demands were precise. He wants the financiers and masterminds identified and brought before the law, not merely the men who were sent through the cathedral gates to carry out the assault. He also wants accountability for the murder of teacher and blogger Albert Ojwang’, whose death has become a symbol of the broader culture of impunity that Ole Sapit argues is now accelerating rather than receding.

“Without action will not yield to anything. Let us take the right action. The first action that is needed — and Kenyans are waiting — is the apprehension of those people in hoods and Prados, who are displayed in broad daylight. And the follow-up of the Albert Ojwang’ case — we need to see the apprehension of the perpetrators and the planners. That will restore public confidence,” he stated.

The attack itself, which took place last month, began at the cathedral entrance when goons forced their way past security guards and onto the church grounds. They moved beyond the main church building into the conference section, where a post-budget civil society gathering was underway. Within minutes they had reached the second floor, destroying conference materials and assaulting attendees before police eventually intervened and dispersed them. The brazenness of the assault — at a cathedral, in broad daylight, in the capital — shocked religious leaders and civil society organisations across the country.

For Ole Sapit, however, the attack was not an aberration. It was a symptom of something more systemic and more dangerous, and the weeks since have only reinforced that view.

“Who is in charge of law and order in Kenya? Is it the goons, or the police? Even after the attack on the cathedral, it has not reduced. It has heightened. It has been hyped. It is going to another level,” he said.

The trajectory he describes is one that independent human rights monitors have corroborated in their own documentation of recent events, including the violence that disrupted the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election earlier this month, where hooded and armed men attacked voters and journalists at polling stations in scenes that drew condemnation from across the political and civil spectrum. Former Chief Justice David Maraga called it the most serious degradation of Kenya’s democracy yet. The Kenya Human Rights Commission said the pattern of violence across successive by-elections suggested it was becoming entrenched rather than exceptional.

Ole Sapit’s warning, delivered from the steps of a cathedral that should never have needed cleansing, fitted precisely into that picture.

“The culture of goonism that is taking root in Kenya will not give us the desires and dreams that we have for Kenya. It will not result in a better Kenya — it will descend Kenya into a place of hardness and despair. And now, coupled with economic hardships and we are facing an election, we have made elections into a matter of life and death,” he said.

Anglican Church of Kenya Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit

That final phrase carried the full weight of the moment. Kenya is a country in which elections have historically been flashpoints for violence, and the period from 2007 to 2008 remains a wound in the national memory. The progress made in subsequent cycles — imperfect, contested, but real — is precisely what Ole Sapit fears is being quietly dismantled. Each incident normalises the next. Each set of arrests that goes nowhere teaches the masterminds that the cost of ordering violence is negligible.

The government has issued condemnations. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has pledged investigations and announced further security operations. Those pledges have yet to produce the accountability Ole Sapit and growing sections of civil society are demanding.

A cathedral can be cleansed with prayer and ceremony in a single morning. A democracy being corroded by organised violence and protected impunity requires rather more than that.

The archbishop knows it. The question is whether the people with the power to act are listening — or merely waiting for the noise to pass.

Politics "Our marriage is over — irreversibly broken," Gachagua said, deploying the analogy he has returned to repeatedly

Gachagua: I'll pass the baton if courts bar me

Former deputy president signals succession plan as DCP rides Ol Kalou wave toward 2027

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has declared that if courts block his political ambitions ahead of the 2027 general election, he will hand over leadership to a younger figure — a striking public acknowledgement from the impeached former deputy president that his path back to power faces serious legal obstacles.

Speaking in a wide-ranging interview on KTN News, Gachagua was characteristically combative, using the Democracy for the Citizens Party's performance in the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election as a launching pad for a broader political argument: that Mt Kenya has permanently broken from President William Ruto's UDA, and that the 2027 election will be fought on entirely different terms from the last.

"Our marriage is over — irreversibly broken," Gachagua said, deploying the analogy he has returned to repeatedly when describing the relationship between the Mt Kenya vote bloc and the ruling party. He left no ambiguity about his reading of the Ol Kalou result. As far as he was concerned, the question was never whether DCP would win, but by how much. The margin, he argued, was proof that UDA's grip on the region had not merely loosened — it had collapsed entirely, and that no amount of government spending or last-minute intervention could reverse the tide.

The by-election result carries weight well beyond the constituency itself. Mt Kenya has historically functioned as a decisive bloc in Kenyan presidential politics, and the speed with which Gachagua has moved to reframe its loyalties since his dramatic impeachment last year has unnerved the establishment. For Ruto, who built his 2022 coalition on the assumption of continued Mt Kenya support, the trajectory is deeply uncomfortable reading. Losing Ol Kalou was not merely a by-election defeat — it was a signal, and both sides of the political divide understood it as such.

Gachagua was contemptuous of what he described as the government's attempts to purchase the Ol Kalou vote. He claimed the administration deployed billions of shillings in project announcements and cash handouts in the constituency in the days before polling — and that residents rejected the overtures regardless. "They threw everything at Ol Kalou," he said, "and the people still chose us." Whether that characterisation withstands independent scrutiny is another matter, but politically the narrative served its purpose: positioning DCP as the authentic voice of a community that has grown weary of transactional politics and can no longer be moved by last-minute state largesse.

The interview also served as a platform for Gachagua to address the broader national political picture with unusual candour. He spoke of the erosion of public trust in state institutions, the rising cost of living, and what he characterised as a systematic failure of leadership at the centre. These were not the talking points of a man content to play a regional role. They were the arguments of someone positioning himself — or his movement — for a national conversation.

Beyond the by-election, Gachagua used the interview to lay out what amounts to a grassroots defence architecture for 2027. He unveiled a detailed vote-protection blueprint built around a tiered volunteer deployment model: 500 volunteers at large polling stations, 300 at medium-sized stations and 200 at smaller ones. His instruction to supporters was unambiguous — remain at polling stations until counting is complete and results are formally confirmed, regardless of how long the process takes. He also proposed a phased voting sequence, with youth between 18 and 35 voting first, followed by women and then older voters, as a mechanism for ensuring maximum turnout from the demographics he considers most energised by DCP's message.

The plan drew immediate scrutiny. Critics questioned both its legal basis and its practical implications, raising concerns about whether large-scale volunteer deployments at polling stations would be sanctioned by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, or whether they risked creating friction and potential confrontation in what is already a charged political environment. Gachagua gave no indication that he was deterred by such concerns, framing the initiative as a necessary and proportionate response to what he described as systematic vote manipulation in previous electoral cycles. For his supporters, the blueprint reads as vigilance. For his critics, it raises questions that deserve direct answers before 2027 arrives.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

His commentary on security and investment carried perhaps the sharpest edge of the entire interview. Gachagua issued a direct and public warning to tourists and foreign investors, urging them to stay away from Kenya until the government could demonstrate a credible and sustained improvement in public safety. He accused the Ruto administration of a fundamental failure to guarantee the security of ordinary citizens and suggested that the consequences for Kenya's international reputation and economic standing were already materialising in ways the government was reluctant to acknowledge.

The remarks provoked swift condemnation from government quarters, with officials accusing Gachagua of deliberately undermining Kenya's investment climate for narrow political gain. The tension between his role as an opposition figure with a formidable public platform and his responsibilities as a former senior state official — one who retains access to audiences both domestically and internationally — is one that will only intensify as the election approaches and the stakes rise on both sides.

On the question of national expansion, Gachagua was explicit and confident. DCP's ambitions are not confined to Mt Kenya. He described active outreach into Nairobi, the South Rift, the Maa region and the Coast, and spoke of delegations from across the country arriving to explore political alignment with his movement. The picture he painted was of a man constructing a national political vehicle rather than simply consolidating a regional base — though whether those delegations translate into durable alliances or merely reflect the curiosity that naturally surrounds any prominent opposition figure with momentum remains to be tested against the realities of coalition-building.

Within Mt Kenya itself, Gachagua made clear he intends DCP to be the dominant and ultimately the sole credible political vehicle in the region. The implicit target was rivals such as Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata, whose own positioning within the opposition space Gachagua appears determined to neutralise. Consolidating the Mt Kenya bloc under a single umbrella, the argument goes, maximises its negotiating power in any future coalition arrangement — and, crucially, maximises Gachagua's personal leverage within it.

It was against that backdrop that his remarks about succession carried their full weight. Asked about the legal challenges that continue to shadow his political future, Gachagua did not dismiss them or reach for the usual deflections. Instead, he offered a contingency: if the courts ultimately barred him from the 2027 race, he would pass the baton to a younger leader. It was a carefully calibrated statement — one that acknowledged real vulnerability while simultaneously projecting a movement designed to outlast any single individual, including its founder.

Whether that movement is as broad and as deep as Gachagua insists, or whether it remains heavily dependent on his personal brand and the grievance energy generated by his impeachment, is the central question the next eighteen months will answer.

For now, he is making noise, winning by-elections, and daring anyone to suggest that Mt Kenya has moved on.

It has not. And he intends to make sure everyone knows it.

Land No Kenyan should travel long distances or incur unnecessary costs to access essential land services. We are making land administration more accessible - Kindiki

Kindiki brings land home to Yatta

New Kithimani registry ends years of costly trips to Machakos as 1,300 title deeds issued

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has officially opened the Kithimani Land Registry in Yatta Sub-county, bringing land administration services directly to an estimated 235,000 land parcels and ending years of costly travel to Machakos town for thousands of residents.

The opening, which took place yesterday, was accompanied by the issuance of 1,300 title deeds to local residents — a tangible delivery that gave the ceremony weight beyond the ribbon-cutting. Kindiki was joined by Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development Cabinet Secretary Alice Wahome and Lands and Physical Planning Principal Secretary Generali Nixon Korir, signalling the government's intent to frame the occasion as part of a broader national reform agenda rather than a localised gesture.

The practical significance for residents of Kithimani and the wider Yatta Sub-county is immediate and measurable. Previously, accessing services such as land registration, searches and transfers required a journey to Machakos town — a round trip that cost many residents upwards of KSh1,000 in transport alone, before accounting for the working hours lost and the logistical burden placed on those who could least afford either.

"No Kenyan should travel long distances or incur unnecessary costs to access essential land services. We are making land administration more accessible, efficient and people-centred," Kindiki said.

The registry opens with 19 officers already deployed, with Wahome confirming that plans are in place to add 11 more as demand grows. The facility will administer 19 adjudication sections and 17 settlement schemes, with all land records for the area now maintained locally rather than centralised in Machakos. That shift in itself addresses one of the most persistent frustrations in rural land administration — the difficulty of tracking, verifying and acting on records held at a distant office with limited working hours and unpredictable queues.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki accompanied by Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development Cabinet Secretary Alice Wahome and Lands and Physical Planning Principal Secretary Generali Nixon Korir during the official opening of the Kithimani Land Registry.

Wahome said the benefits would extend beyond convenience. Bringing records closer to the communities they serve, she argued, would enhance the security of those records and reduce the window for the kind of fraud and manipulation that has historically plagued land transactions in Kenya.

Korir framed the opening within the ministry's wider decentralisation agenda, noting that the government is simultaneously accelerating title deed issuance and expanding the reach of the Ardhisasa digital land records platform. The Kithimani registry is not an isolated project but part of a rolling programme that has seen similar facilities opened in Malindi, Mogotio, Kamwangi and Ol Kalou over the past year.

Yatta MP Robert Basil Ngui welcomed the development, saying it would not only save residents time and money but would also stimulate economic activity in the area by making land transactions faster and more reliable. Secure, accessible land records underpin everything from agricultural investment to access to credit, and communities that have historically struggled to formalise land ownership often find themselves locked out of economic opportunities that title deeds unlock.

That point was made most directly by Gregory Mulwa, one of the residents who received a title deed at the event. For Mulwa and the 1,299 others who walked away with documents in hand on Wednesday, the opening of the registry was not an abstraction about government policy. It was the resolution of a process that, in some cases, will have taken years — and the beginning of a set of possibilities that formal land ownership makes available.

Land in Kenya is never merely a bureaucratic matter. It is bound up with identity, inheritance, security and the deepest sources of household wealth and vulnerability. The history of land administration in the country is long, contentious and in many regions unresolved — a legacy of colonial-era adjudication, post-independence resettlement schemes and decades of institutional neglect that left millions of Kenyans without formal documentation of land they had occupied and farmed for generations.

Against that backdrop, the opening of a new registry and the issuance of 1,300 title deeds in a single afternoon represents genuine, if incremental, progress. The test of any decentralisation programme lies not in the opening ceremony but in the sustained quality of service that follows — whether the officers are present, the records accurate, the processes transparent and the waiting times reasonable months and years after the deputy president's vehicle has left the compound.

For the residents of Yatta, Wednesday was a good day. Holding them to that standard is the work that comes next.

Mining Every collapse is a reminder that behind every statistic is a human story. The five who died were not merely miners

Beneath the promise of gold: The deadly reality of Kenya's mining pits

Kenya's mining pits keep claiming lives — and the questions they leave behind demand answers

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's mining pits keep claiming lives

Five miners died when a gold mine collapsed in Kenya, reigniting urgent questions about safety standards in a sector that sustains thousands of families but continues to bury them with alarming regularity.

The promise of gold has captivated humanity for centuries. People have crossed deserts, climbed mountains and dug deep into the earth in pursuit of the precious metal, and in Kenya — from Migori to Kakamega and beyond — that hunger endures. Every morning, thousands of men and women descend into the earth with one ambition: to find enough gold to change their lives. It is a dream as old as the hills they burrow into, and as dangerous as the shafts they disappear down each dawn. For many, it is not a choice born of adventure or optimism. It is a choice born of necessity, made in the absence of anything better.

For the five who died, the mine was never just a workplace. It was school fees, groceries, rent — the possibility of a better tomorrow compressed into a daily act of courage that the rest of the country rarely stops to acknowledge. That hope was buried beneath tonnes of soil and rock in an instant. As rescue efforts unfolded, communities gathered at the site and prayed. Relatives waited helplessly, hoping against reason that those trapped would somehow emerge alive. Neighbours who had shared meals with the missing stood at the perimeter, unable to help, unable to leave. For five families, those prayers ended in devastating loss.

The tragedy is not an isolated event. It is a chapter in a long and painful story that Kenya's mining communities know by heart — a collapse, a frantic rescue attempt, a period of national mourning, and then a quiet return to business as usual until the next disaster forces the conversation open again. The pattern has repeated itself across the country's gold-bearing regions with grim consistency, and the failure to break it is no longer an oversight. It is a choice, even if an unspoken one.

Deep underground tunnels are routinely dug with limited engineering support, inadequate equipment and minimal safety measures. Workers descend into narrow shafts every day aware of the risks: walls that can weaken without warning, heavy rains that destabilise already fragile ground, poor ventilation that creates invisible hazards in the darkness below. They descend anyway, because for many there is simply no alternative. The mine does not offer comfort or security. It offers income, and in communities where that is the scarcest resource of all, income is everything.

Poverty has a way of making dangerous choices feel entirely rational. Agriculture has grown increasingly unpredictable as weather patterns shift and seasons that once arrived reliably now disappoint with drought or arrive with destructive floods. Formal employment remains scarce across many rural counties, particularly for young men without qualifications or connections to urban job markets. Faced with limited options, residents of mining communities view the gold pits as their most accessible — sometimes their only — path to a livelihood. That dependence sometimes comes at a terrible cost, and the country has been slow to reckon honestly with why.

Every collapse is a reminder that behind every statistic is a human story. The five who died were not merely miners. They were fathers, brothers, sons, friends — anchors of their families and fixtures of their communities. Each had a name, a history, a reason to come home. Each had people who depended on them and people who loved them in ways that no government condolence statement can begin to address. Their absence will echo at dinner tables, school gates and places of worship for years to come. Children will grow up without parents. Parents will grieve children they expected to outlive them. Wives will raise families alone. The emotional weight of one afternoon's collapse will be carried for generations, invisible to policymakers but present every single day for those left behind.

The incident demands serious answers from those entrusted with oversight of this sector. Are inspections being conducted with sufficient frequency and rigour, or are they perfunctory exercises in paperwork? Are mining operators genuinely adhering to safety guidelines, or merely signing forms and ignoring their obligations the moment the inspector's vehicle disappears down the road? Are local authorities equipped — financially, technically and in terms of personnel — to monitor sites that can kill without notice? Are the penalties for non-compliance meaningful enough to change behaviour, or so negligible that violations are treated as an acceptable cost of doing business? These are not rhetorical questions. They are obligations that have gone unmet for too long, and five more deaths make the failure to answer them unconscionable.

Experts have warned for years that artisanal and small-scale mining operations in Kenya require far stronger regulatory oversight. Legislation without enforcement is little more than decoration. The economic contribution of mining to communities like those in Migori is real and significant, underpinning local economies and funding services that government transfers alone cannot sustain. But that contribution cannot be used as justification for conditions in which workers gamble with their lives each time they descend into the earth. No family should lose a loved one because basic safety precautions were ignored, cut short for cost reasons, or simply never implemented.

The human cost accumulates silently between disasters. Miners who survive collapses often carry lasting physical injuries — broken limbs, damaged lungs from years of dust inhalation, hearing loss from relentless underground noise. Mental health consequences are rarely discussed but widely felt: anxiety, sleeplessness, the particular psychological burden of descending into the same shaft where a colleague died the previous month because there is nowhere else to go. The occupational health dimension of artisanal mining in Kenya is almost entirely unaddressed by policy, invisible to a regulatory framework that barely manages to count the fatalities, let alone attend meaningfully to the survivors.

Honest solutions must reckon with ground realities. Shutting down mines without creating alternative livelihoods would simply transfer one form of suffering into another — removing the danger without removing the desperation that drives people into it. The harder and more necessary task for policymakers is building a framework that protects lives while preserving the economic oxygen that mining communities depend on. That means investment in safer technologies scaled to artisanal operations, structured training programmes delivered in accessible formats, proper equipment made genuinely available rather than merely prescribed in guidelines no one enforces, and consistent unannounced inspections carried out by personnel who cannot be pressured to look the other way. Public awareness campaigns, designed with workers rather than simply directed at them, could also help communities identify warning signs before disasters unfold.

The five deaths must be more than a moment of national sadness. Kenya has had those moments before and allowed them to pass without lasting consequence. Government agencies must properly resource mine safety inspectorates and hold them accountable for outcomes, not just activity. Mining operators must accept genuine responsibility for conditions at their sites. Community leaders must create space for safety conversations that do not require a collapse to happen first.

Gold can enrich economies, generate revenues and attract investment. It has done all of those things for Kenya, and it will continue to do so. But no amount of it can replace a father who does not come home, a son whose future is cut short, or a worker whose last day on earth was spent searching for something better in the dark.

Five lives have been lost. Five families are in mourning. Five futures have been erased. As the dust settles over the collapsed mine, one question demands an answer that Kenya's leaders can no longer afford to defer: how many more must be buried before meaningful change finally reaches those who dig for the nation's gold?

Politics The forum was held under the theme, "Strengthening Governance, Accountability and Trust for Credible Elections."

Money now key to winning elections, says NCCK study

BY Felix Njenga
@themtkenyatimes

Money has become a major factor in determining electoral success in Kenya, with 91 per cent of citizens saying candidates are unlikely to win elections unless they give voters cash or gifts, a new study by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) has found.

The findings have raised concerns over the influence of poverty and campaign spending on the country's democratic process, with the church body warning that economic hardships are making voters increasingly dependent on political handouts.

The report was unveiled during a governance forum ACK St Paul church in Kirigiti, Kiambu County, on Tuesday, where participants discussed ways of improving accountability, public trust and the credibility of elections.

The forum was held under the theme, "Strengthening Governance, Accountability and Trust for Credible Elections."

The study, conducted under the NCCK's Angaza Project, found that a majority of Kenyans believe money and material benefits have become an integral part of election campaigns.

The findings suggest that voters facing financial difficulties are more likely to view campaign donations and gifts as an important source of assistance, a situation the NCCK said could encourage voter bribery and deepen transactional politics.

The report established that 22 per cent of Kenyans earn KSh10,000 or less a month, while 31 per cent take home between KSh10,001 and KSh30,000.

The NCCK said the figures demonstrate the level of economic vulnerability among a significant section of the population and the need to address poverty and unemployment as part of efforts to improve the quality of Kenya's elections.

The study also drew attention to the escalating cost of seeking elective office, saying the huge financial requirements were increasingly making politics the preserve of wealthy individuals and those with access to significant financial resources.

It estimates that a candidate seeking a Member of County Assembly position needs at least KSh5 million for a competitive campaign.

A parliamentary or Senate race could cost about KSh50 million, while a gubernatorial campaign may require approximately KSh100 million.

The report puts the estimated cost of a presidential campaign at about KSh12 billion, with roughly KSh7 billion expected to go towards logistics and the balance spent on mobilisation and voter incentives.

The NCCK warned that such high campaign costs could discourage qualified Kenyans from seeking elective positions and weaken political competition.

Speaking at the forum, NCCK Coordinating Committee Secretary Bishop Joseph Ngigi said there was an urgent need to strengthen accountability mechanisms and ensure elected leaders remain answerable to citizens.

He said Kenyans should be able to hold leaders to account for their actions and performance once they assume office.

"We must bring our leaders to account. They must be answerable to the people of Kenya. Sovereign power belongs to the people as stipulated in the Constitution," Bishop Ngigi said.

He also called for changes to the legal framework governing the recall of elected representatives, arguing that voters should have a more effective way of removing non-performing MPs.

According to the bishop, the recall provisions should be strengthened to make it possible for citizens to take action against legislators who fail to deliver on their responsibilities.

"We are saying that the Article on the recalling of an MP should be strengthened. It should not only be governors or the President who can be removed from office. If an MP is not performing, the people should have an effective mechanism to recall them," he said.

Bishop Ngigi further challenged churches to become more involved in governance and civic education, saying religious institutions had a responsibility to help citizens make informed political decisions.

He said the Church should not remain silent when citizens face poor leadership and abuse of public office.

"People are saying that the current oppressive leaders were put into power by the Church, and now the same Church has the responsibility to help the country correct that. It is time for the Church to wake up," he said.

The study found that religious institutions remain among the most trusted organisations in the country, with 84 per cent of respondents expressing confidence in them.

The NCCK said churches could use this public trust to promote civic education, encourage ethical leadership and mobilise communities to demand accountability from elected officials.

The council also cautioned against the assumption that young people alone would determine the outcome of the 2027 General Election.

Bishop Joseph Ngigi, Secretary to the NCCK Coordinating Committee

Some of the participants of the governance forum held by NCCK.

Business TRA said licensed tourism enterprises must verify the licensing status of their business partners before making payments

TRA warns against dealing with unlicensed tourism operators

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

The Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) has warned tourism stakeholders and the public against engaging unlicensed tourism operators, saying the practice exposes visitors to fraud, undermines legitimate businesses and threatens Kenya's reputation as a leading tourism destination.

In a public advisory issued ahead of the country's peak tourism season, the Authority directed all tourism enterprises to transact only with businesses holding valid TRA licences in compliance with the Tourism Act, 2011.

The advisory applies to accommodation facilities, tour operators, travel agents, destination management companies, online travel platforms and tourist transport operators.

TRA said licensed tourism enterprises must verify the licensing status of their business partners before making payments, referrals or entering into commercial agreements.

The Authority further cautioned that no licensed tourism enterprise should pay commissions, referral fees, incentives or any other form of remuneration to any person or entity required to be licensed under the law unless they hold a valid TRA licence.

"Licensed tourism enterprises, tourists and the general public should insist on being provided with a valid TRA licence before making any commission or referral payment, verify that the licence is current and corresponds to the enterprise presenting it, refrain from entering into commercial arrangements with unlicensed tourism enterprises, and report suspected unlicensed tourism operations to the Authority," the advisory stated.

TRA noted that dealing with unlicensed operators violates tourism laws and could attract regulatory action.

The Authority warned that illegal operators not only create unfair competition for compliant businesses but also expose tourists to substandard services, financial losses and safety risks.

Kenya has in recent years intensified efforts to professionalise the tourism industry through stricter licensing, inspections and enforcement measures aimed at improving service quality and protecting visitors.

The tourism sector remains one of Kenya's leading foreign exchange earners, with the government banking on improved regulation, product diversification and aggressive marketing to sustain growth in international arrivals and domestic tourism.

TRA urged stakeholders who are uncertain about the validity of a licence to seek verification through its online licence verification portal or contact the Authority before entering into any business arrangement.

Director-General Norbert Talam reaffirmed the Authority's commitment to protecting visitors, supporting compliant tourism enterprises and maintaining high standards of quality, professionalism and accountability across Kenya's tourism industry.

Silence has a voice

But it needs a soul to understand it.
Not everyone can hear this silence.
It is so quiet, it only whispers.
It can be felt like a pulse or like a heartbeat.

Only genuine souls can hear it.
Its voice is like flowers blooming,
Like leaves sprouting from trees
It cannot be heard by all ears.
Only an understanding heart can listen.
It may be falling of tears
Be it joyous tears or broken hearted tears

Yes, this silence has a voice.
It can be felt and heard only by soulmates.

So let's gather as many soulmates as we can,
To listen to the soft, silent voice.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
Teacher
Ghs Melpattampakkam
Tamil Nadu India

The pilgrim within: A journey home

I know not why I came to Earth,
Nor who first whispered my soul to birth.
Like a tiny leaf upon Time's flowing stream,
I drifted gently through life's unseen dream.

My first cry echoed across emerald isles-
The Andaman and Nicobar, adorned with smiles.
Where sapphire waves kissed sunlit sand,
And forests cradled my innocent hand.

There childhood blossomed, carefree and bright,
Bathed in nature's emerald light.
The sea became my first wise guide,
Teaching that hope walks with every tide.

Then I learnt the story of my roots,
That the one who gave me life belonged
To Kerala, God's Own Country fair,
Where rivers sing and palms lift prayers.
Its gentle beauty engraved my heart,
Adding another sacred part.

The winds of destiny carried me on
To Coimbatore, where the Suruvani waters shone.
Pure as truth and calm as grace,
They mirrored dreams upon their face.
There learning flowed like a crystal spring,
Giving my soul enduring wings.

Love then beckoned with gentle cheer,
Leading me to Pondicherry, ever dear.
There life unfolded, page by page,
A timeless script upon Earth's stage.

The road was never smooth or straight,
Joy walked beside me, so did fate.
There were mountains of trials, valleys of pain,
Yet every loss became hidden gain.

Along the course of life's long way,
I travelled where dawn greets the day,
Across the length and breadth of my motherland,
From mountains proud to oceans grand.
Each state a verse, each culture a song,
Teaching where every heart belongs.

Beyond my homeland's cherished shore,
Thailand opened another door,
Sweden whispered beneath northern skies
That wisdom wears a thousand eyes.
Every journey, every land,
Placed fresh horizons in my hand.

Travel became my silent teacher,
Beyond every map and every feature.
It taught that languages may differ,
Yet kindness makes every distance shorter,
That humanity wears many faces,
Yet love alone unites all races.

My own journey found a noble role
In nurturing every growing soul.
Within the classrooms where dreams arise,
I learnt that teaching is to humanise.
Each child became a lamp to tend,
For teachers learn even as they mend.

I met kind hearts along the way,
Some stayed forever, some could not stay.
They gifted laughter, tears and light,
Like constellations adorning the night.
Every handshake, every goodbye,
Became a star in memory's sky.

Then one day, amidst life's endless climb,
I paused beyond the hands of time.
The answer I sought was not afar,
Nor hidden in fortune's brightest star.

The purpose was never power or fame,
Nor the pursuit of a fleeting name.
It was to know the Self within,
Where every ending births a new begin.
To peel away illusion's veil,
And let the light of the soul prevail.

The search continues, silent and deep,
Beyond the waking, beyond the sleep.
For every step this pilgrim takes
A deeper dawn within awakes.

As Lord Krishna reminds us in the Bhagavad Gita:

"Uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam avasadayet"
"One should uplift oneself by one's own mind and never degrade oneself."
— Bhagavad Gita 6:5

So I journey not merely from place to place,
But from ignorance into grace.
From island shores to distant lands,
From classrooms filled with eager hands,
From every smile, every tear I've known,
To the quiet truth that calls me home.

For life is not measured by miles we roam,
But by the light we awaken within.
The greatest voyage is not across oceans wide,
It is the sacred pilgrimage to the Divine inside.

Nandini AnandKumar
Educator
In Service of Education

Age is only a number

Day by day, we grow in years,
But let us also grow beyond our fears.
Keep your mind active, bright, and free;
Wear a smile for all to see.

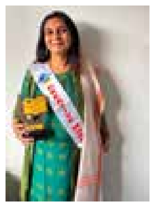
Learn to rule your thoughts each day,
Choose the positive in every way.
Be optimistic, strong, and wise;
Hope will help your spirit rise.

Don't let your mind swing like a pendulum,
Or let small worries leave you glum.
Relax, be joyful, laugh and sing;
Let every day new happiness bring.

Think young in heart, be active and strong,
Keep moving forward all life long.
Never let your age define your worth
It is only a number, not your value on this earth.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Fight for what you want to achieve



Fight for what you want to achieve,
You will reach your goal one day.
Falling or failing may be part of the journey,
But never let them stop your way.
Try hard, fight hard,
Keep moving through the fray.
You will surely reach your destination
And find your brighter day.

Chetna Bhatia
Mumbai

Sea view

Deep below the ocean blue,
A magic world comes into view.
Colorful fish swim with delight,
Corals glow so warm and bright.
Turtles glide with gentle grace,
Dolphins race from place to place.
Nature's heart , calm and free
A wonderful foots under the seas....

S.P SAAI SAMYUKKTHA
VIII
JOHN DEWEY MAT. HR. SEC. SCHOOL.

Say a new hello

I intend to forget old chapters,
The vicious, toxic captors,
Pillow tears, forever fears,
The words that prick like spears.

Pain when they shut you out,
Better to say good bye
Than to lose self respect,
Get away before they cut you out.

Leaves may fall, but spring comes,
Even the darkest nights end,
Life gives a glimmering hope
Like the first rays of the Sun.

Be brave and say good bye,
Be true, never hide in a lie,
Life will paint a golden yellow,
It will reward you with a new hello.

RAJITHA D
BT ASSISTANT
GGHSS PADAPPAI
KANCHIPURAM
TAMILNADU
INDIA

Health The union's frustration is rooted in years of deferred implementation. The salary adjustments in question flow from the 2017–2021 CBA

Doctors issue strike ultimatum

KMPDU warns of immediate industrial action if July payslips fail to reflect long-delayed CBA salary adjustments

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union has threatened a nationwide doctors' strike if county governments fail to reflect revised salary scales in July 2026 payslips, warning it will simultaneously pursue contempt of court proceedings against non-compliant accounting officers.

In a circular to members dated July 21, KMPDU Secretary General Davji Atellah directed doctors across all 47 counties to scrutinise their July payslips and confirm whether the salary adjustments anchored in the 2017–2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement had been effected. The message was unambiguous: compliance would be verified, and the consequences of non-compliance would be immediate.

"Should any county government fail to reflect the adjusted basic salary rates or issue a clear schedule for disbursing outstanding arrears, we will act immediately," Atellah said. "KMPDU stands ready to execute nationwide industrial action and initiate contempt of court proceedings against non-compliant accounting officers without further notice."

The union's frustration is rooted in years of deferred implementation. The salary adjustments in question flow from the 2017–2021 CBA, a legally binding agreement that has passed through successive rounds of negotiation, court orders and administrative processes without translating into revised pay for the doctors it was meant to benefit. A Return-to-Work Formula signed on May 8, 2024, and a December 2024 addendum were intended to resolve the outstanding issues. They have not.

Atellah said every procedural obstacle previously cited by government agencies had now been cleared, leaving no credible justification for further delay. The trail of correspondence he outlined makes that case in detail. In July 2025, the Council of Governors wrote to the State Department for Public Service requesting a new payroll code for the revised salaries, while confirming that national government resources for arrears payments had been made available. In September 2025, the Salaries and Remuneration Commission approved the basic salary notches developed by a multi-agency team for CBA implementation. As recently as June 29 this year, Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale wrote to the Ministry of Public Service seeking urgent coding of the revised salary scales in the government's Human Resource Information System. Four days later, Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku confirmed that the payroll system already contains the necessary special salary code and requires no further modification.

In the union's reading, that sequence of events removes every technical and administrative excuse that county governments might otherwise invoke. The budget provisions exist. The regulatory guidance exists. The payroll infrastructure exists. What has been missing, Atellah argued, is the will to act.

"There is now zero justification for any further delay by any county government or Ministry department," he said.

The union had set a deadline at its Annual Delegates Conference on May 9 this year. That deadline has elapsed. KMPDU issued a final ultimatum to the Council of Governors on July 6 before joining a multi-agency consultative meeting convened by the council on July 13 to discuss the rollout — a gesture of continued engagement that Atellah framed as evidence of the union's good faith rather than its patience.


File image of KMPDU Secretary General Dr. Davji Atellah addressing the press, flanked by other union officials. PHOTO | COURTESY

"We have engaged in good faith, followed every legal process, and dismantled every roadblock in our way. We will not allow administrative inertia to rob doctors of their dignity and hard-earned rights," he said.

The stakes are high for a public health system already under severe strain. A nationwide doctors' strike would immediately affect services across all 47 counties, with the heaviest impact falling on patients in public hospitals who have no realistic alternative. Kenya has lived through doctors' strikes before — the 2016–2017 industrial action lasted 100 days and caused documented harm to patients across the country — and the institutional memory of that period has not faded from either side of the dispute.

Branch Executive Committees have been instructed to lead the payslip audit process and report findings upward as the union's National Advisory Council prepares to determine next steps. Members have been told to remain on standby.

The July payslips will tell the story. If they do not reflect what nine years of a signed agreement, court orders and intergovernmental correspondence say they should, Kenya's doctors will not be waiting much longer.

Tea Mudavadi said that the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is continuously addressing the teething issues affecting the tea sector.

Mudavadi hails Mudete tea factory as a catalyst for economic transformation in Western Kenya

BY OPCS Press Service
@themtkenyatimes

PCS Musalia Mudavadi being taken through some of the products at the tea factory.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening Kenya's tea sector, urging farmers to remain focused as the government addresses challenges affecting the industry, including high taxation, poor infrastructure, fluctuating global tea prices, pests, and diseases.

Mudavadi said that the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is continuously addressing the teething issues affecting the tea sector.

He said policy issues such as high taxation can be resolved through the appropriate channels, adding that farmers should focus on tea farming rather than clearing tea bushes.

"Policy related issues are there and we can resolve," said Mudavadi. "You don't bring down the house because the roof is leaking," he added.

Mudavadi was speaking during his development tour of the Western Region, where he visited Mudete Tea Factory one of the largest processing facilities in the region.

He used the visit to assess the factory's operations and progress while reflecting on the journey that led to its establishment nearly three decades ago.

The visit underscored his longstanding connection to the factory, having served as the Member of Parliament for Sabatia Constituency when the project was actualized.

Describing Mudete Tea Factory as a transformative investment, Mudavadi said it has significantly improved the livelihoods of thousands of families in Western Kenya while diversifying the region's agricultural economy, creating sustainable incomes, generating employment, and strengthening the region's economic resilience.

According to Mudavadi, the impact extends beyond the registered farmers, with each farmer supporting at least five people through tea farming. He claimed that tea farmers are among the few farmers who receive a regular monthly income.

"Today, Mudete Tea Factory serves approximately 12,000 tea farmers across Vihiga County and its neighbouring Kakamega County. Tea remains to be is the only crop in the region that guarantees farmers pay slips every month," he said. "Every tea farmer earns something from their sweat." he added.

Recalling the challenges farmers faced before the factory was built, Mudavadi noted that tea growers had to transport their green leaf over long distances to Chebut in neighbouring Nandi County for processing. "We used to take tea to Chebut in Nandi County for processing and this was a tedious journey for our farmers. Since the establishment of Mudete Tea Factory our farmers can now put a smile on their faces." he recalled.

He acknowledged the efforts of his late father, Moses Mudavadi, alongside other regional leaders who championed the establishment of a tea factory closer to farmers. Mudavadi said that upon becoming the Member of Parliament for Sabatia, he worked with stakeholders to ensure the project became a reality.

Mudete Tea Factory was established in 1997 during the administration of late President Daniel arap Moi, with the support of the late Minister for Agriculture, Simon Nyachae, and the Minister for Finance. The factory received funding from both the Government of Kenya and the European Investment Bank (EIB), marking a significant milestone in expanding tea farming in Western Kenya.

The Prime Cabinet Secretary said the decision to establish Mudete Tea Factory has since transformed the economic fortunes of the region by bringing tea processing services closer to farmers and creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Mudavadi observed that for decades, Western Kenya had largely been associated with sugarcane farming. However, he said the establishment of tea factories such as Mudete has broadened the region's agricultural base and provided farmers with an alternative source of income.

"When we talk about Western Kenya, the debate has been sugarcane," he said.

Giving the example of the Kisii region, which has similar population pressure and climate as most part of Western Kenya, he encouraged stakeholders to expand tea cultivation and establish additional processing factories, noting that the tea industry has significantly improved livelihoods across the region. "Kisii, for example, has the same population pressure and rainfall patterns as the Western Region, yet Kisii has more than eight tea factories while the whole of Western Kenya has only one," he said.

The Prime Cabinet Secretary further highlighted tea's strategic importance to Kenya's economy, noting that it remains one of the country's leading export commodities. He said that nearly 95 percent of Mudete's tea is exported, with only 5 percent consumed locally, emphasizing the need to continue strengthening production, value addition, branding, and market access. "Ninety-five percent of the tea produced here is exported, while only five percent is sold locally," Mudavadi said.

Mudavadi urged young people to embrace technology-driven agriculture. "Young people should look at tea farming as a serious investment because the government has invested in technology, particularly in branding and marketing," the Prime Cabinet Secretary said.

The factory's leadership echoed the Prime Cabinet Secretary's sentiments, describing tea farming as a key driver of economic growth in the region.

Board Chairman Mr. Avugana Khasiani and Factory Manager Mr. Peter Munialo called for the establishment of additional tea factories to accommodate the growing number of farmers while encouraging more residents to venture into tea cultivation.

They revealed that Mudete Tea Factory has paid out KSh10.5 billion to farmers since its inception, reflecting the factory's significant contribution to household incomes and the local economy.

The leaders also acknowledged the role played by the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), under whose management Mudete Tea Factory operates, commending its leadership for supporting the growth and competitiveness of Kenya's tea industry.

Despite the factory's success, the leadership appealed to the government to reduce taxes affecting the tea sector and invest in better road infrastructure to ease the transportation of green leaf from farms to the factory.

They further urged the government to strengthen trade negotiations with international partners to expand access to foreign markets, arguing that increased exports would create more employment opportunities and generate greater returns for tea farmers.

PCS Musalia Mudavadi with other officials at Mudete tea factory.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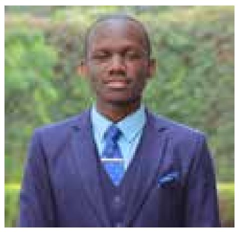
Report They are indictments of a system where public funds bleed out while citizens queue for medicines that never arrive

The Auditor General's silent alarm: Why Kenya's watchdog reports must bite, not just bark



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes

Auditor General Nancy Gathungu

In the financial year ended June 2024, Auditor General Nancy Gathungu's reports laid bare a staggering reality: billions of Kenyan shillings vanished into the shadows of unaccounted expenditures, diverted revenues, and unsupported claims. From Sh955.8 million in hospital revenues never banked into county accounts to Sh2 billion in undocumented spending across government entities, these are not mere accounting footnotes.

They are indictments of a system where public funds bleed out while citizens queue for medicines that never arrive and roads that crumble before completion. The figures echo across newspaper pages with depressing regularity: ghost workers draining counties, Sh50 billion anomalies in the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHA), and 79% of audit recommendations left to gather dust. This is not inefficiency. It is a slow-motion heist on the Kenyan dream a betrayal of the social contract where taxpayers surrender their hard-earned shillings expecting schools, hospitals, and security, only to watch the fruits rot in the orchards of impunity.

Imagine a shepherd entrusted with a vast flock who returns each evening with tales of wolves at the gate, yet the herd thins year after year. The wolves feast, the shepherd files reports, and the owners the people grow thinner. This metaphor captures the Auditor General's office: a constitutional sentinel under Article 229, armed with forensic insight and independence, yet rendered toothless when its roars dissolve into polite parliamentary whispers. The tragedy deepens when we confront the data. Nearly 80% of recommendations ignored signals not oversight fatigue but deliberate contempt for accountability.

Kenya loses an estimated Sh194 billion annually to corruption and inefficiencies, according to African Development Bank figures funds that could build hospitals, hire teachers, or stabilize volatile markets. Auditor reports paint a visceral picture: Sh33.6 billion queried in just six poorly performing counties with adverse opinions; Sh14 billion lost in public universities through irregular payments and dubious contracts; ghost schools and learners siphoning capitation funds. Payroll fraud in counties threatens billions more, with a special audit revealing 25% of sampled employees unverified.

These are not abstract statistics. They translate into mothers burying children denied timely care, youth idling in unemployment lines while funds meant for skills programs evaporate, and a nation's promise deferred indefinitely. The emotional toll compounds the fiscal hemorrhage. When Daily Nation reports Sh956 million diverted from county hospital accounts, it is not dry bureaucracy it is blood money extracted from the veins of the vulnerable.

Literary giants like Chinua Achebe warned of societies where "things fall apart" when the center cannot hold. In Kenya, the center is the rule of law, and it buckles under the weight of selective amnesia. High-profile graft cases former governors walking free after years of spectacle erode public faith. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) forwards files, yet the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) clears only a fraction for prosecution. Systemic delays and evidentiary "shortcomings" become convenient shields.

Auditor General reports are not suggestions for polite debate; they are forensic maps to stolen treasure. Their recommendations rooted in evidence, cross-verified ledgers, and statutory breaches must trigger automatic, time-bound actions by investigative and prosecutorial agencies. Dependence on politicians' goodwill is a fatal flaw in any democracy aspiring to maturity. Goodwill is ephemeral, often extended only to allies or when political winds shift favorably. History shows repeated reports on the same scandals: unsupported expenditures recurring like seasonal floods, procurement irregularities that defy lessons supposedly learned.

The law must take its inexorable course. This demands legislative fortification: amend the Public Audit Act and Public Finance Management Act to impose mandatory timelines for agencies to investigate flagged matters, with automatic referrals to the DPP and EACC upon serious findings. Accounting officers who ignore recommendations or fail to provide documentation should face personal liability—fines, surcharges, bans from public office, and criminal charges where theft is evident. Section 62 of the Public Audit Act already hints at penalties for non-cooperation; strengthen and enforce it without mercy.

Intellectually, this is unassailable. An independent Auditor General, constitutionally shielded yet practically hamstrung by underfunding and non-implementation, mocks the separation of powers. True mastery of public finance demands closing the feedback loop: audit → investigation → prosecution → recovery → deterrence. Without prosecution, audits become performative theater, soothing the conscience while emptying the purse. Original insight here: treating Auditor reports as mere advisory documents perpetuates a principal-agent problem where politicians (agents) evade accountability to citizens (principals). Institutionalizing automatic triggers realigns incentives toward stewardship, not predation.

Consider the counterfactual. If even 50% of flagged losses were recovered and perpetrators prosecuted visibly, the cultural shift would be seismic. Youth would see justice as more than rhetoric; investors would trust the system; service delivery would improve as wastage shrinks. Data from improved audit opinions in some MDAs shows progress is possible when pressure mounts but it remains fragile without enforcement teeth.

The Kenyan people have endured enough. From the pain of mothers in understaffed hospitals to the frustration of taxpayers funding luxury vehicles for officials while roads remain impassable, the emotional ledger is overdrawn. We must reject the cynicism that "this is how Kenya works." No. This is how *impunity* works, and it can be dismantled.

Parliament, as the people's voice, must rise above partisan shields. Enact laws that bind agencies to act on Auditor General findings within defined periods, insulated from executive interference. The judiciary must expedite related cases, rejecting endless technical adjournments. Civil society, media like The Standard and Daily Nation, and vigilant citizens must sustain the drumbeat naming, shaming, and demanding.

The Auditor General's office embodies intellectual rigor: meticulous, data-driven, unflinching. Its reports deserve the force of law, not the mercy of goodwill. Only then does the shepherd not merely count the missing sheep but hunt the wolves. Only then does Kenya honor its Constitution not as parchment, but as covenant.

Let this be the turning point. Not another report filed and forgotten, but a clarion call: audit with excellence, prosecute with vigor, recover with determination. The future of millions hangs in the balance children yet unborn deserve ledgers untainted by yesterday's theft. The law must course through the veins of governance, pure and unyielding. Anything less is complicity in the quiet strangulation of a nation's promise.

The writer is a social commentator

Politics Speaking in a media interview on Monday, Muhia did not confine herself to celebrating the DCP's crushing win

Wanjiku Muhia: Ol Kalou's day of terror

Kipipiri MP Muhia reveals how hooded gunmen, state intimidation and a landslide result rewrote Kenya's political map

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

Kipipiri MP Wanjiku Muhia has laid bare the violence, intimidation and electoral manipulation that accompanied the Democracy for the Citizens Party's landslide victory in the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election on July 16, describing scenes she called disturbing even by the standards of Kenyan politics.

Speaking in a media interview on Monday, Muhia did not confine herself to celebrating the DCP's crushing win. She delivered a detailed and at times chilling account of what unfolded on polling day in Nyandarua County — and what it portends for the country's democracy as the 2027 general election approaches.

The result itself was unambiguous. DCP candidate Sammy Kamau Ngotho garnered approximately 35,440 votes, nearly seven times more than his closest rival, UDA's Samuel Muchina Nyagah, who received around 5,450 votes. Other candidates, including Jubilee's Wilson Mwaniki Kigwa, managed only a few hundred votes each. By any measure, it was a rout. But Muhia's account of how that result was achieved — and what the government allegedly did to prevent it — cast a shadow over the celebration.

What started as a normal voting day quickly spiralled into near anarchy when gun-toting men in masked faces descended on the constituency, causing terror, mayhem and lawlessness. Hooded gunmen carrying assault rifles attacked unarmed voters and journalists, with the violence unfolding in the full view of uniformed police officers. Nation Media Group journalists were attacked at AC Primary School polling station by men wearing balaclavas, who also made away with two cameras.

Kipipiri MP Wanjiku Muhia

The Kenya Human Rights Commission, which deployed 12 election monitors and four staff members across the constituency, documented serious human rights violations. James Muigai Mwathi, aged 30, died from injuries sustained during violent attacks involving heavily armed security officers and organised groups. Dozens of others were injured, while many reported assaults and robbery.

Muhia told her interviewer that the attacks targeted more than 20 polling stations in a coordinated attempt to suppress the DCP vote. "The attacks at more than 20 polling stations were an attempt to scare you, but you stood firm against the goons and the guns. Your resolve was unshakeable," she said in a congratulatory message to the MP-elect. That resolve, she argued, was the real story of Ol Kalou — a constituency that voted overwhelmingly despite being made to feel afraid.

The violence drew swift condemnation from across the political spectrum. Former Chief Justice David Maraga condemned the attack on journalists and the broader violence. "We condemn the assault on the press by hooded gunmen, whose clear mission is to conceal evidence of electoral malpractice and gross violations of human rights," Maraga said. "The reports from the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the Electoral Observation Group and independent journalists on the ground are unanimous: the Ol Kalou by-election represents the most serious degradation of our democracy yet."

The most explosive dimension of the post-election fallout involved a vehicle linked to Kiambaa MP John Njuguna Kawanjiku. A Nation investigation traced a black Toyota Land Cruiser, registration KDL 477Q, seen alongside the attackers to Kawanjiku. An amateur video recorded by a resident shows a man resembling the MP standing beside a vehicle matching the description of the Land Cruiser, speaking to a group of men before one of them — whose face was concealed by a mask, scarf and hat and who was dressed in military-style fatigues — opens the vehicle's door for him. Kawanjiku confirmed he was the man in the footage and that the vehicle belonged to him, but denied any involvement in the violence, saying he would not have used his personal vehicle if he had intended to engage in any wrongdoing.

Muhia connected the violence to a broader pattern of government overreach throughout the campaign. She claimed the administration flooded the constituency with resources in a last-ditch attempt to sway voters — and that residents rejected the overtures regardless. Rigathi Gachagua, DCP party leader, said the deployment of 2,000 police officers across the 144 polling stations was itself an attempt at intimidation. "The fact that 2,000 police officers were deployed across the 144 polling stations in Ol Kalou in an attempt to intimidate voters, yet failed, speaks for itself," Gachagua said.

For Muhia, the result was inseparable from the political anger that has been building in Mt Kenya since Gachagua's impeachment. She argued that leaders allied to the government had repeatedly targeted both Gachagua and retired President Uhuru Kenyatta, a move that angered many residents. "Having elected this government with nearly 47 percent of the vote, they then impeached the deputy president, and as if that is not enough, they wake up every day saying, 'This man is tribal.' So the people said, 'Okay, he's ours, and if you say we are tribal, then let us show you that we are tribal,'" Muhia said.

She was equally insistent that the anger was not confined to Mt Kenya. Muhia likened the voter frustration witnessed in Ol Kalou to the growing dissatisfaction being felt across the country, arguing that the constituency merely reflected the national mood — sentiments no different from those being experienced by Kenyans in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kitui and Nakuru. She pointed to the economic pressures bearing down on ordinary families, with rural households increasingly dependent on relatives in urban centres who themselves struggle to make ends meet.

The Kenya Human Rights Commission warned that Ol Kalou mirrored concerns documented during the Malava and Mbeere North by-elections, where violence, intimidation, misuse of public resources and declining confidence in electoral institutions were also recorded. "The recurrence of these violations across successive by-elections suggests that they are becoming entrenched in Kenya's electoral environment. Unless decisive action is taken, these conditions are likely to re-emerge during the 2027 general election, with serious implications for electoral credibility, public confidence and constitutional governance," the commission said.

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen condemned the violence and directed security agencies to investigate those responsible, while the Directorate of Criminal Investigations launched formal inquiries into the incidents. Murkomen also announced what he described as a second phase of intelligence-led operations against organised criminal gangs. "We are now going to do round two with full force, targeting those involved in robberies and political violence," he said. For many observers, however, the pledge rang hollow against the backdrop of similar assurances issued after previous incidents that produced no meaningful accountability.

Muhia's own campaign had not been without controversy. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission fined her KSh1.5 million over remarks during the campaign that drew accusations of inciting exclusion, with the IEBC Electoral Code of Conduct Enforcement Committee warning that any subsequent violation could result in a bar from future elections. She dismissed the sanction as selective enforcement, and the landslide that followed suggested that whatever controversy her words generated, they did not cost DCP the votes that mattered.

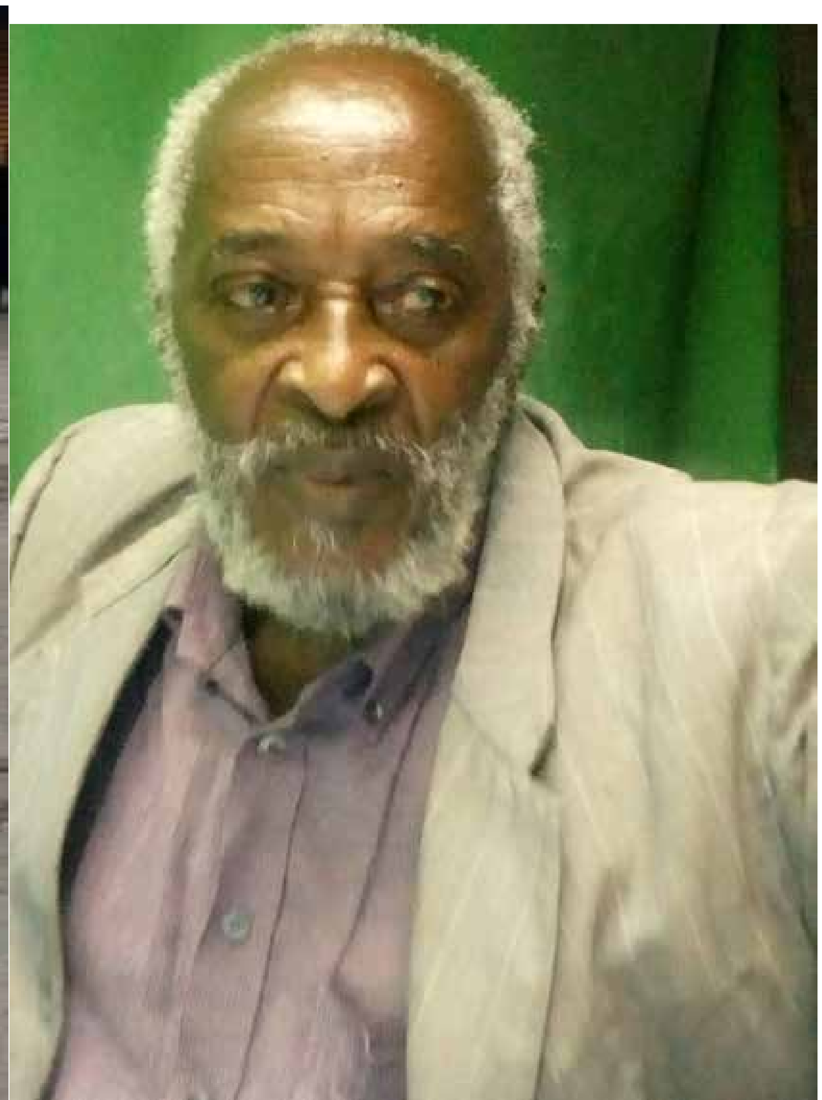
What Ol Kalou has produced, ultimately, is not merely a by-election result. It is a documented case study in the fragility of Kenya's electoral institutions under pressure — and a warning, delivered in numbers too large to ignore, that the political ground beneath the Kenya Kwanza administration is shifting faster than anyone in government appears willing to acknowledge.

The guns failed. The ballot spoke. And the questions left behind will not be silenced before 2027.

Tribute His death marks the end of a life that combined the preservation of Kikuyu traditions with outspoken public activism, making him one of the most recognizable elders in the region

Kikuyu elder Githui Karue, remembered for Parliament protest during Gen Z demos, dies

The late Githui Karue walking to Parliament last year.



The late Mzee Githui Karue

Kikuyu traditional elder Mzee Githui Karue, a prominent cultural figure in Central Kenya who gained national attention after storming Parliament precincts during the Gen Z protests last year, has died.

Karue died yesterday at Consolata Hospital Mathari near Nyeri Town, where he had been receiving treatment for the past few days, family members said.

His death marks the end of a life that combined the preservation of Kikuyu traditions with outspoken public activism, making him one of the most recognizable elders in the region.

Karue became a household name in June last year when he walked into the Parliament precincts during demonstrations led by Gen Z protesters. Dressed in traditional regalia and carrying symbols associated with Kikuyu elders, his appearance drew widespread public attention and sparked debate over the role of elders in national affairs.

Although the protests were largely driven by young Kenyans demanding better governance and accountability, Karue's participation was viewed by many as a symbolic gesture of solidarity between generations.

Beyond his political activism, Karue was a familiar figure at Kikuyu traditional ceremonies across the Mount Kenya region. He regularly presided over or participated in cultural rites, blessings, reconciliation meetings and community gatherings, where he advocated for the preservation of Kikuyu customs, values and identity.

Many residents regarded the former freedom fighter as a custodian of indigenous knowledge and traditions, often inviting him to officiate cultural events and offer counsel on matters affecting families and communities.

News of his death prompted an outpouring of tributes from cultural leaders, residents and Kenyans on social media, who described him as fearless, outspoken and deeply committed to preserving Kikuyu heritage while speaking on issues affecting ordinary citizens.

His son James Karue said his father fell sick on Thursday last week and was admitted to a Nairobi before being transfered to the Nyeri facility over the weekend.

He said he suffered stroke twice within hours which resulted to his hospitalization.

Scores of his friends led by a former freedom fighters and their descendants caucus; MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria and Spiritualist Wambugu Nyamu alias Múkui Mondo sent their condolences to his family.

Mahuria noted that the late Karue was his long time friend and a confidant.

"We regularly met with him and I benefitted from his wise counsel," Mahuria noted.

On Monday, Mahuria sent a delegation from his caucus to the hospital to visit him, an indication that they were close friends.

On his part, Mùkui Mondo posted on his Facebook page, "Rest in peace Guka wa GEN Z Mzee Karue. You were among the Agikũyũ high priests that believed in reverenve to Jehova him i call Murungu Mwene Nyaga ,who stood for Uthamaki wa Thayũ and peace. You taught me a lot. RIP Awa. You served Ngai with dedication and was an ambassador of peace,".

Funeral and burial arrangements are expected to be announced by the family later.

The late Githui Karue (left), MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria (2nd left) and other leaders at Blue Post hotel, Thika last month.

Farmers In our country, comprehensive measures are being carried out to develop machinery and technologies that allow soil protection

A machine that prepares the soil for planting field and vegetable crops under a covered tunnel

BY Erkinov Jaloliddin
@themtkenyatimes

Introduction. Nowadays, growing field crops using traditional methods on arable lands does not meet modern requirements. Water scarcity needs to be prevented, arable lands are not being used effectively, and people need to be provided with quality food products. Planting seedings is slow and requires a lot of manual labour. The costs are also high. Yield is low and crop production is limited.

Main part.

Considering that the demand for food products is increasing rapidly among the world's growing population today, providing our country's population with affordable food and producing food products for the world market using traditional methods on today's fallow lands does not meet the requirements of the time. Therefore, growing field crops on open lands using innovative methods has become an urgent issue.

In our country, comprehensive measures are being carried out to develop machinery and technologies that allow soil protection, saving energy resources and increasing labour productivity during main soil work, and certain results have been achieved. In the 2017-2021 Action Strategy for further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, important tasks were set, including '...introducing intensive methods in vegetable and agricultural production, primarily modern agrotechnologies that save water and resources, and widely using highly productive agricultural machinery.'

These days, to meet the rapidly growing world population with affordable and quality vegetables, and to increase our country's export volume to the global market, there is a high demand among farmers and growers in our country and neighbouring republics for a machine that prepares the soil for planting vegetables and crops under a covered film, allowing productive use of currently underutilised virgin land with low energy consumption. Because a machine that prepares the soil for planting under a tunnel film is several times more productive than planting by hand. This machine allows large areas to plant vegetable seedlings under the film quickly, which helps the crops ripen faster. Currently, no machine for preparing soil for planting under tunnel film is manufactured in our country or neighbouring republics. If the proposed machine is produced in series, it will create additional jobs and can also be exported to our country and the neighbouring republic.

A machine that prepares the soil for planting field

It is known that in our country, arable land covers more than 800 thousand hectares. Of these, 130 thousand hectares are areas supplied with rainfall. Our farmers and herders have been using these lands along with irrigated areas. Today, based on our President's ideas on making efficient use of arable land through innovative irrigation systems such as drip and sprinkler irrigation to ensure food security in our country, it is planned to grow horticultural crops on arable lands and apply innovative planting technologies using new equipment and technologies.

Field crops are considered drought-resistant and can be grown without irrigation in hot-climate upland areas. Irrigated field farming is located on upland plains and terraces 1200-1500 m above sea level, where the average annual rainfall is 400-500 mm. Also, on plains at 500-700 m above sea level with an annual rainfall of 250-300 mm, field crops can be grown without irrigation.

Clay soil vegetable farming is very important because the fruits grown here are sweeter than irrigated ones, in foothill areas growing vegetables is somewhat cheaper, and plants in clay soil vegetable farming are less prone to diseases. Clay soil vegetable farming is widespread in Samarkand, Jizzakh, Kashkadarya, Syrdarya, Surkhandarya and Tashkent regions, covering a total area of 7.5-8 thousand hectares.

In our country, there is potential to extend irrigated land to 30-40 thousand hectares and increase the total yield of vegetables to up to 150 thousand tonnes. Making full use of this potential is an important factor in meeting people's demand for vegetables.

Different types of field crops adapt to sandy farming in various ways and give different results. Since the watermelon plant's roots go deep into the soil, it helps this crop adapt to sandy conditions.

The optimal size of the nutrition area for field crops largely depends on the annual weather conditions. According to the results of experiments conducted at the Scientific Research Institute of Crop Farming, in years with heavy rainfall, the nutrition area for melons and watermelons should be small (2.5-3 m2) and conversely, in dry years, it should be large (3-5 m2). The purpose of the machine that prepares the soil for planting field seedlings under a closed tunnel film is to reduce the time for planting seedlings under a closed tunnel film early in the spring in our country.

The machine performs the following tasks:

- It loosens the soil on the prepared field ready for planting, buries two edges of the film, places the irrigation hose under the film, and moves on.
- After planting the seedlings under the film, it creates a semi-circular arch about 45-50 cm high over the seedlings, and a thermostatic layer is made over the planted seedlings by pulling the film over the formed arch.

Watermelon varieties that are quick-ripening, short-vined, and disease-resistant are used for growing under temporary film covers. Specially prepared 35-45 day old seedlings are planted and covered with a single-layer polyethylene film arch. Immediately after the seedlings are planted or seeds sown, a tunnel-like film cover should be set up. These tasks are currently done manually, which increases costs.

Each tunnel has an irrigation pipe running along the middle, covering two crop rows on either side. The tunnel is 160-180 cm wide, 60-70 cm high, and 50-60 m long depending on conditions. The space between the tunnels is 180-190 cm and is left open to serve as a walkway. Later, this walkway will hold the plant trays. When setting up the tunnel, first the hoop frame is installed. The hoop frame is made from wires 4-6 mm thick and 2.8-3.0 m long. The ends of the hoop are embedded 20-25 cm into the ground, with a spacing of 1.0-1.5 m. The hoops are linked together in 1-3 rows using the connector system. Over the hoops, a film 2.8-3.0 m wide is stretched along the length of the tunnel, with the edges covered with soil. At both ends of the tunnel, the film edges are tied to stakes. To build a tunnel on a 1-hectare field, 800-1000 kg of plastic film, 1200-1300 kg of steel wire, and 200-250 stakes are used. When the weather turns good, the tunnel is ventilated during the day by opening several spots on its sides.

Polyethylene antistatic hydrophilic film stands out with its good physical properties and prevents water droplets from forming. It retains heat well, allows more light through, and has a usage period of 1 month. In the early morning hours, the soil and air warm up more quickly, causing the humidity to drop fast. When this film is used as a covering, ventilation should be done in time and frequently. Rigid and semi-rigid plastics are used as light-transparent materials. The built-up thermostat floor film keeps the seedlings protected from the cold outdoor air until enough heat is generated for the seedlings under the film. When the air temperature reaches days that won't harm the seedlings, the top layer of film is removed and the steel wire pieces used for half-arch formation are collected. The film laid on the soil surface remains there until the harvest is fully collected. The remaining film prevents weeds that may later emerge from the soil and at the same time helps retain moisture and prevent the seedlings from drying out too quickly.

Author's opinion.

The machine we are proposing is ready to plant vegetable seedlings under tunnel film in the fields we suggest, and in the future, we plan to improve it further, making it a set of two machines. The first machine prepares the soil for the tunnel film in the open field, lays the film onto the soil, covers its two edges with soil, and simultaneously lays irrigation hoses under the film. It then makes holes in the film and plants the vegetable seedlings one by one according to their type (watermelon, tomato, bell pepper, eggplant, cabbage, etc.), adjusting the planting depth and spacing according to agro-technical requirements. The second machine covers the planted tunnel film with arched film, inserts standard wire staples into the tunnel film, stretches the top film tightly over it, and buries its sides with soil. Compared to watermelon seedlings planted in open fields, seedlings planted under tunnel film ripen 40-45 days earlier, and yield is 20-30% higher when organic fertilisers are supplied through a hose in dissolved form. Also, when seedlings are planted in open fields using a machine, the planting time is significantly reduced and the spacing and depth of planting are made uniform.

Conclusion.

The machine that prepares the soil for planting vegetable seedlings under tunnel film is in high demand not only in our country but also in neighbouring republics, because scientific research and analyses show that until now, crops have not been grown in open fallow fields, making tunnel film farming labour-intensive and increasing costs, which raises the production cost of crops and causes several problems with irrigation hoses under the tunnel film. This demonstrates the demand for the proposed machine and its market potential.

Sports >> *Venues, squad and title defence converge as Nairobi braces for Africa's biggest volleyball showdown

Kenya's volleyball D-Day

By **Martin Weche**

Kenya is racing to complete two major sports venues and finalise a 25-player squad ahead of the 2026 Women's African Nations Volleyball Championship, scheduled for Nairobi from August 23 to September 5.

Kenya Volleyball Federation deputy president Paul Bitok confirmed yesterday that the Kasarani Indoor Arena and Ulinzi Sports Complex are both undergoing renovations, with Kenya Defence Forces engineers working round the clock to deliver the Ulinzi facility after it stood below 50 per cent completion just a month ago.

"Kasarani will be our main venue for the competition. We have our second venue, the Ulinzi Complex, which was below 50 per cent one month ago but I want to report today that work is going on," Bitok said. "KDF managed to get sponsorship to ensure the place is ready. They are working 24 hours and we are expecting to receive the venue at the end of this month or the beginning of next month."

Kenya is hosting the biennial championship for the first time since 2015, when the Malkia Strikers defeated Algeria 3-0 to lift the title at Kasarani under coach David Lung'aho. Sixteen nations will converge on the capital, including former champions Cameroon, Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Algeria, DR Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Mali and Burkina Faso.

The stakes extend well beyond continental glory. The tournament doubles as a qualification pathway for the 2027 FIVB Women's World Championship in Poland and the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, with Africa's sole Olympic qualification ticket going to the nation that accumulates the highest ranking points by the championship's close.

Kasarani Indoor Arena is set to be the main host venue for the 2026 Women's African Nations Volleyball Championship.

Kenya enters as both defending champions and the continent's top-ranked side — sitting 21st globally with 172 points, well ahead of Cameroon on 58 points and Egypt on 46. Malkia Strikers will be seeking a record-extending 11th continental title after defeating Egypt 3-0 to win the 2023 edition and end Cameroon's eight-year stranglehold on the trophy.

"If you look at the rankings, we are number 21 in the world and currently number one in Africa. This tournament here will decide who represents Africa at the 2028 Olympics," Bitok emphasised.

On the administrative front, the African Volleyball Confederation's second joint inspection is pencilled in for the first week of August, when CAVB president Bouchra Hajij is expected to officially launch the tournament logo and competition during her visit. International Volleyball Federation president Fabio Azevedo has also written to confirm his attendance at the final, lending the championship significant global endorsement.

"We will have the African president who will be coming here to launch our logo and the tournament when she comes for the second inspection," Bitok said. "We also want to confirm that the FIVB president has written to us and confirmed that he is going to be here during the finals."

Head coach Geoffrey Omondi has submitted a 25-player squad that will begin non-residential training at Kasarani on July 28. The squad is set to be trimmed over successive ten-day blocks before a final selection is named one week before the championship opens. From August 1, the retained players will enter a residential camp at Kasarani.

Plans for a pre-tournament tour to Serbia to secure warm-up fixtures were abandoned after opponents could not be arranged, meaning the entire preparation will take place in Nairobi. Bitok expressed confidence that the squad's recent competitive activity would offset the absence of international friendlies.

"Earlier, we had expected to go to Serbia to see if we could get friendly matches as our sponsor was ready to take us there. However, we could not get friendly matches to play against them so our training will take place right here in Kenya," he said. "This year we have been fortunate because players have been very active with many competitions taking place. The task now is bringing them together."

The squad blends established internationals with emerging talent, including Malyne Terry Tata, who announced herself as a breakout performer at the last African Championship.

With venues still under construction, Olympic qualification on the line and the weight of home expectation on their shoulders, Kenya's preparations carry the hallmarks of a nation that knows exactly what is at stake — and is determined not to blink.

Sports >> *England forward ends contract uncertainty with four-year deal as Maresca era begins at the Etihad

Foden commits to City

By **Martin Weche**

Phil Foden has signed a four-year contract extension with Manchester City, ending uncertainty over his future and handing new manager Enzo Maresca an early boost ahead of the new season.

The deal, which includes an option for a further one-year extension, secures the 26-year-old forward beyond what would have been the final year of his previous contract. It draws a line under a turbulent period for one of English football's most decorated players — and signals that City's faith in Foden, despite a difficult twelve months, remains firmly intact.

"Committing my future to City means everything to me," Foden said. "Playing for this club is all I've ever wanted to do and it's always an honour to wear the shirt."

The extension is particularly significant given how steeply Foden's fortunes fell over the past season. An injury-plagued campaign sapped his confidence and consistency, and he started only seven of City's last 26 matches as Pep Guardiola's reign unravelled before the Spaniard's resignation at the season's end. The low point came with his omission from England's squad for the World Cup — a public reminder of just how far the 2024 PFA Players' Player of the Year had slipped from his peak.

A year ago, Foden himself offered a rare window into the personal toll, speaking openly about his struggles with mental health — a candour that earned him widespread admiration beyond the game. That honesty, and the vulnerability behind it, made his willingness to recommit to City all the more telling.

Manchester City's English midfielder Phil Foden

"It's not lost on me that I've been lucky enough to be part of a historic period with so many titles won, but we're always looking to the future and trying to win more," he said. "I hope I'll be able to repay the fans for years to come."

The numbers underpinning Foden's City career remain staggering. Since graduating from the club's academy, he has made 369 appearances, scoring 110 goals — a record that places him among the finest products English football's academy system has ever produced. He has won six Premier League titles, the Champions League, two FA Cups and five League Cups, making him the most decorated player in City's history, level with Bernardo Silva and John Stones — both of whom departed in the close season, leaving Foden as the last of that golden generation still at the Etihad.

The arrival of Maresca — appointed in June after leaving Chelsea — adds fresh intrigue to Foden's renewal. The Italian was part of Guardiola's backroom staff during City's treble-winning 2022-23 campaign, and Foden made clear that familiarity played no small part in his optimism about what lies ahead.

"So excited. Obviously, I've had Enzo before. When we had him in the treble season, he was brilliant," Foden said. "His attention to detail, the small things that make a big difference — even training with him at the moment, you can tell how good of a coach he is. The way he likes to play out from the back and play a lot of possession-based football suits my game really well."

Maresca's preferred style — patient, structured, possession-heavy — is widely regarded as the most natural environment for a player of Foden's technical profile. Where Guardiola's later iterations at City increasingly relied on physicality and direct transitions, Maresca's system promises to restore the kind of intricate, fluid patterns in which Foden has historically thrived.

For City, the renewal also carries strategic importance. With Silva gone to Barcelona and Stones departing for Arsenal, the squad faces a significant generational shift. Retaining Foden provides continuity and a focal point around which Maresca can rebuild — a player who knows the club's culture, demands and methods as intimately as anyone alive.

There will be pressure to perform. Foden knows it, and so does the club. But in choosing to stay rather than seek a fresh start elsewhere, he has made his intentions clear: the redemption arc, if there is to be one, will be written at the Etihad.

Manchester City, and a watching football world, will want to see whether this chapter ends differently from the last.

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

The MT. KENYA TIMES

Karua: It's all or nothing

PLP leader rules out deputy president role, vows to back united opposition flag bearer or run herself

By: Daisy Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua has declared she will not accept the deputy president position under any united opposition arrangement, saying she will either contest the presidency herself or throw her full weight behind whoever the coalition selects as its flag bearer.

Speaking on Citizen TV's The Explainer on Tuesday night, Karua was unambiguous. The rules of the alliance would determine the candidate, and she would honour that process — but the running mate slot was categorically off the table, regardless of who emerged at the top of the ticket.

"I will support the one who is chosen in accordance with the rules we have set. The only thing I will not do is be a running mate. That one I say. I've no wish to be a running mate. I did a good run with Raila Odinga. That's just about enough. But it's all or nothing," she said.

The declaration carries considerable political weight. Karua served as Raila Odinga's running mate in the 2022 general election under the Azimio Coalition, becoming the first woman to contest the deputy presidency on a major party ticket in Kenya's history. That experience, she made clear, was sufficient. She has no appetite for a repeat, regardless of the stature of the principal.

"If I am not the flag bearer, I will support one hundred per cent. But I won't be a running mate," she added, leaving no room for ambiguity or negotiation on the point.

The position reshapes the arithmetic of the emerging united opposition coalition in ways that will take time to fully compute. With Karua removing herself from contention for the deputy slot, attention now turns to who fills that space. The coalition's current principals form a crowded and formidable field: Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka, Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua, Jubilee's Fred Matiang'i, former Chief Justice David Maraga, and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna of Linda Mwananchi are among those whose names now feature more prominently in conversations about the deputy president position. Each brings a different regional calculus and a different set of political expectations to the table, and the task of assembling a ticket that satisfies all factions while maximising the coalition's electoral reach will test the alliance's internal cohesion well before a single vote is cast.

Beyond the question of the ticket, Karua used the interview to lay out with unusual specificity what she would do if elected president. Her answer was not abstract. She reached immediately for the rule of law — not as a slogan, but as an operational priority — and gave a timetable.

"I will immediately enforce the rule of law; make sure that we adhere to the rules of the game that we have made as Kenya, safeguard Kenyans' interests first, ensure that quality services are delivered in the critical areas of health, education, and service delivery," she said.

She went further, committing to a functional state within 90 days — a bold claim that she grounded not in aspiration but in precedent. Karua was a minister in the National Rainbow Coalition administration that came to power in 2002 under Mwai Kibaki, an era widely remembered as a period of rapid early institutional renewal following decades of single-party stagnation.

"Within 90 days, you should have a functional state. And I say that with boldness because I saw it when we came in as the NARC administration. No law was changed, not even the constitution. And within a matter of days, things were running differently," she said.

The argument is that transformation begins at the top, not in legislation. When leadership's actions align with its words, Karua contended, the effect cascades downward through the public service and into the wider citizenry.

People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua

"When the top shows that their actions match their words, the people of Kenya take cue. Government employees take cue. And Kenyans are very good at assisting leadership in doing the work that is supposed to be done," she said.

It is a governing philosophy built on accountability rather than structural overhaul — the premise that the institutions Kenya has are adequate, and that what has been missing is the will to make them function as designed. Whether that argument resonates with a public that has heard variants of it from successive administrations will depend heavily on Karua's ability to project credibility over the course of a long campaign.

On the question of accountability, she was pointed. Lawbreakers, she said, would be dealt with regardless of their rank or political proximity to power — a remark that, in the current political climate, carries implications that most listeners will not struggle to decode.

"I would ensure that services, normal service delivery, resume, and that lawbreakers, whatever their position or rank, are dealt with. And that's how you begin transformation," she said.

The interview confirmed what many in opposition circles have suspected: Karua is not positioning herself as a kingmaker or a coalition asset to be deployed at someone else's discretion. She is running — or she is stepping aside entirely. There is no middle ground, and she has made that plain with a clarity that is increasingly rare in Kenyan politics.

For the united opposition, the message is both a complication and a gift. Karua off the deputy ticket narrows one set of options. But Karua fully behind the coalition's candidate, on her own unambiguous terms, is a different and potentially powerful proposition.

In a coalition where ambiguity has become a survival strategy, she has chosen the other path entirely.

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