Sat & Sun, July 4-5, 2026

Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

WEEKEND ePAPER

www.mountkenyatimes.co.ke

KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)

No. 0300 themtkenyatimes

Linda Mwananchi promises united opposition

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Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital begins new era as autonomous Level VI facility

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital has officially become an autonomous Level VI referral facility after its full handover from Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), marking a major milestone in Kenya's health sector reforms.

The transition, held on Thursday was presided over by Principal Secretary for Medical Services Dr. Ouma Oluga and attended by KNH Board Chair Dr. Abbas Gullet, Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital Board Chair Gen. (Rtd.) Robert Kibochi, KNH CEO Richard Lesiyampe, hospital CEO Dr. Peter Muiruri, and Nyeri MPs Wambugu Wainaina, Maina Mathenge and Njoroge Wainaina.

Dozens of stakeholders witnessed the colourful ceremony.

The hospital attained autonomous status in 2024 following lobbying by Nyeri MPs and approval by President William Ruto, before receiving its first independent budget in the 2025/26 financial year.

Dr. Oluga said the move will strengthen regional referral services and announced plans for a cancer treatment centre while urging staff to uphold former President Mwai Kibaki's values of integrity and professionalism.

Since gaining autonomy, the hospital has acquired a CT scan, a state-of-the-art MRI machine and expanded dialysis services. Gen. Kibochi announced a KSh500 million Kenya Defence Forces grant to build the first phase of a modern surgical tower.

The hospital has launched its 2025-2030 Strategic Plan focusing on oncology, surgery, emergency care, research and innovation. Leaders said the facility is already attracting patients from 16 counties, boosting investment opportunities while reducing referrals to Nairobi and improving access to specialized healthcare across the Mount Kenya region.

















Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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

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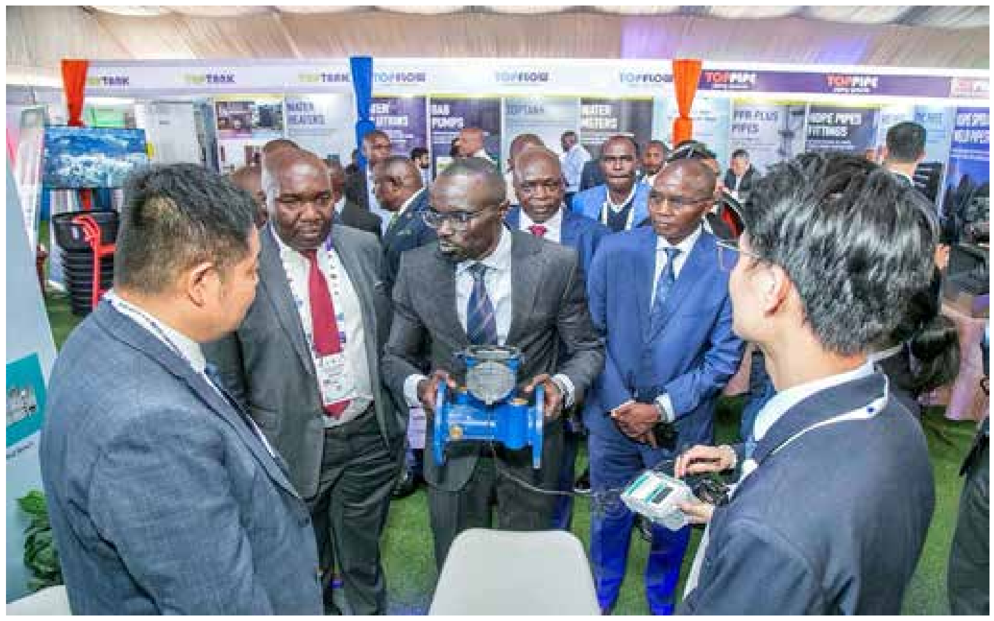
NEWS IN BRIEF

Kaimosi Town in Hamisi Constituency has officially been granted municipality status, becoming the second municipality in Vihiga County after Governor Wilber Ottichilo handed over its municipal charter. The move, in line with Article 184 of the Constitution, is expected to improve urban planning, governance and service delivery. The municipality will have its own board and administration, enabling it to access more funding and development resources for roads, markets, water, sanitation, street lighting, recreational facilities and agricultural support. Governor Ottichilo said the new status would attract investors, create jobs, raise property values and promote sustainable urban growth. Leaders, including Woman Representative Beatrice Adagala and Deputy Speaker Eric Odei, welcomed the development, while calling for transparent employment and improved security. Kaimosi Municipality will cover Kaimosi, Muhudu, Shiru and Shamakhokho.

Stakeholders in the nuclear energy sector have been urged to intensify public education and awareness campaigns to boost acceptance of Kenya's proposed first nuclear power plant in Siaya County. Speaking during a sensitisation forum, WePlanet Africa Programme Coordinator Peter Gichuki said collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, politicians and local leaders was needed to dispel myths and misinformation about nuclear technology. Kenya Young Generation in Nuclear President Linet Kerubo said the government should address concerns over displacement and compensation to build public trust, noting that fears of eviction have fueled opposition to the project. She also called for information centres and regular community engagement in local languages. Residents expressed concerns about losing their land and livelihoods and criticised local leaders for failing to provide adequate information.

The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) has introduced policy reforms and initiatives to strengthen Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by making certification and quality assurance more affordable. Speaking at the Nakuru Agricultural Show, KEBS South Rift Regional Manager Josephat Bangi said MSMEs now benefit from discounted certification fees, free product testing, factory inspections and certification for additional products at no extra cost. KEBS is also training entrepreneurs on standards compliance, quality management, intellectual property rights and product certification through its innovation pipeline workshops. The agency aims to help MSMEs produce high-quality products, improve market access, attract investment and create jobs. KEBS also urged consumers to verify product authenticity by sending the standardization mark code via SMS to 2023.



Five ASAL border counties—Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, Marsabit and Garissa—will benefit from a Sh13.5 billion groundwater resilience project funded by the national government and the World Bank to address chronic water shortages. The project is expected to provide sustainable water supplies, improve livelihoods and strengthen drought resilience. Speaking at the Non-Revenue Water Conference in Naivasha, Water Cabinet Secretary Eric Muuga said treated water losses had risen from 44 to 48 per cent due to leakages, vandalism and ageing infrastructure, costing the sector over Sh15 billion annually. He urged water providers to adopt smart metering and billing systems to improve efficiency. The government also plans performance-based targets, while county leaders called for greater investment, policy reforms and modern technology to reduce water losses and expand access.

Africa's agricultural transformation depends on investing in youth skills, strengthening systems and expanding access to finance, Swisscontact Country Director Sharon Mosin said during the FINAS 2026 Forum in Nairobi. She described skills, systems and capital as interconnected pillars needed to modernise agriculture and attract investment. Mosin noted that outdated training has left many young people unprepared for technology-driven agriculture, creating a gap between education, industry and financial institutions. She called for stronger collaboration among governments, the private sector, training institutions and development partners to promote apprenticeships, mentorship and industry-led training. Mosin also urged governments to modernise TVET institutions and agricultural colleges, saying equipping young people with practical and climate-smart skills would strengthen agribusinesses, improve resilience and unlock sustainable agricultural financing.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Agriculture Beacco said the prison is modernising its agricultural operations to increase the production

Nyandarua Prison expands certified potato seed production to strengthen food security and inmate rehabilitation

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Officials briefing journalists

Nyandarua Prison has intensified certified potato seed production as part of efforts to enhance food security, support farmers and equip inmates with practical agricultural skills for successful reintegration into society.

The correctional facility, which serves as a multi-sectoral centre providing correctional, probation and aftercare services, is implementing the programme in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the International Potato Centre (CIP). The collaboration focuses on improving potato seed production through technical support, capacity building and skills transfer.

Speaking during an inspection tour of ongoing projects at the facility, Correctional Services Principal Secretary Salome Beacco said the prison is modernising its agricultural operations to increase the production of certified potato seed while enhancing food self-sufficiency within correctional institutions.

Beacco noted that the prison has already made significant progress in producing first and second-generation potato seed and is now seeking to expand production. Currently operating on 20 acres, the programme is set to double in size with an additional 20 acres earmarked for cultivation.

"We are collaborating with specialists in seed production, and we are pleased that our partners have agreed to continue supporting this initiative. Our goal is to expand potato seed production from the current 20 acres by adding another 20 acres," she said.

The Principal Secretary added that the recent gazettement of the prison enterprise will enable the facility to commercialise the project. Certified seeds produced at the prison will be supplied to farmers across the country, helping improve access to quality planting materials and boosting agricultural productivity.

Commissioner General of Prisons Patrick Arandu said the initiative is expected to generate income for the prison service while reducing government expenditure on food through increased agricultural production within correctional facilities.

Beyond potato farming, Nyandarua Prison has diversified into orchard farming and environmental conservation activities. The institution regularly plants fruit, herbal and indigenous trees as part of a monthly tree-growing programme aimed at promoting environmental sustainability.

The agricultural initiative also plays a key role in inmate rehabilitation by providing practical farming skills that can be used for self-employment and income generation after release.

JICA Programme Officer Simon Kariuki said the agency is supporting the programme through technical training to ensure prison staff and inmates acquire modern potato seed production skills. He noted that the knowledge gained will also benefit farmers who access certified seeds and improved farming techniques.

Director of Farms at the Kenya Prisons Service Patrick Kariri emphasized that capacity building remains central to the programme, noting that many inmates come from farming backgrounds.

Officials said Nyandarua Prison is the first correctional facility in Kenya to undertake potato seed propagation on such a large scale. The institution plans to produce several potato varieties and is targeting high-quality certified seed capable of delivering higher yields and reducing post-harvest losses, ultimately contributing to improved food security nationwide.

Esther Ngari: steering KEBS to new heights of excellence and innovation

KEBS Managing Director Esther Ngari (R)

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Bureau of Standards' recognition as second runner-up in the State Corporation Productivity Award category at the National Productivity and Performance Awards 2026 stands as a fitting tribute to the leadership of Managing Director Esther Ngari.

Under her stewardship, KEBS has continued to raise the bar in operational excellence, innovation and service delivery, reinforcing its place as one of Kenya's most impactful public institutions. Her focus on quality management, prudent resource use and customer-centred service has helped build a high-performance culture that consistently delivers value to the country.

Ngari has distinguished herself as a leader who understands that excellence is rarely accidental — it is built through strategy, teamwork, accountability and continuous improvement. By championing innovation and institutional efficiency, she has positioned KEBS as a key driver of Kenya's industrial growth, consumer protection and global competitiveness.

This national recognition speaks to more than organisational success. It affirms the leadership, professionalism and strategic direction Ngari has instilled throughout the institution. Her ability to inspire staff, strengthen stakeholder confidence and embed a culture of integrity and innovation continues to set KEBS apart as a model public institution.

Through her leadership, KEBS has remained steadfast in safeguarding product quality, supporting local industries, facilitating trade and ensuring Kenyan goods and services meet internationally recognised standards — achievements that have contributed to national development while strengthening public trust in the institution.

Ngari's leadership continues to inspire excellence across the public sector. Her commitment to innovation, quality assurance and service delivery has not only earned KEBS national recognition but has reinforced its role in advancing Kenya's economic transformation and sustainable development.

Gachagua links Ruto to Kedong, Kibiko land disputes

DCP leader accuses president of blocking a lasting solution to the Narok and Kajiado land conflicts he pledged to resolve in 2022

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua accused President William Ruto on Friday of failing to resolve long-standing land disputes over the Kedong and Kibiko ranches in Narok and Kajiado counties, despite promising to do so during the 2022 election campaign.

Gachagua made the remarks while receiving a delegation of opinion shapers and grassroots leaders from Narok County at his Wamunyoro residence, a courtesy call that gave the former deputy president a fresh platform to revisit one of the most contentious land questions in the Maa region.

He alleged that Ruto has vested interests that have obstructed a genuine settlement of the dispute, arguing that land earmarked for the Maasai community was instead being pushed toward development that serves other interests. "The place where the Maasai live is the very place they now want to turn into an industrial park. They have moved the Maasai out and want to resettle them on the hillside, on land they call 6,000 acres. But that ground is full of rocks and deep gullies where water cuts through — you cannot farm it. Not a single Maasai should be sent to that hillside acreage," Gachagua said.

His remarks referenced a long-disputed 6,000-acre parcel of Kedong Ranch, which President Ruto allocated to the Maasai community during a tour of Narok in May 2025, bringing the total land handed to the community to 10,000 acres alongside an existing 4,000 acres. The Kedong Ranch dispute, which involves land hosting the Naivasha Inland Dry Port, has for years drawn accusations that politically connected figures from past administrations sought to appropriate it. The neighbouring Kibiko dispute in Kajiado has similarly featured in Gachagua's past accusations of irregular land allocations to individuals close to the government, a claim he has raised at previous rallies in the region.

Positioning himself as untainted by the unresolved conflicts, Gachagua presented himself as the leader capable of delivering a lasting resolution, accusing Ruto of using the land question as a political bargaining chip rather than pursuing genuine reform. "Even a year of hunger can be ended with a single plate of food. Is waiting until December really such a long time? Haven't you already waited all these years? Aren't we removing Kasongo so that we can take over government ourselves? So do not move. Stay exactly where you are. Let no one remove the Maasai from that land — stay there and do not leave," he told the gathering, using a nickname opposition leaders have adopted for the president.

Gachagua's remarks came amid intensifying activity at his Wamunyoro home, which has increasingly become a hub for delegations from beyond his traditional Mt Kenya base, including from Kajiado, Narok, Samburu and Western Kenya, as he builds toward a 2027 challenge to Ruto.

Turning to the immediate contest ahead, Gachagua expressed confidence that his party would win the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election scheduled for July 16, dismissing what he characterised as a last-minute government push to influence voters through a surge of development announcements in the constituency. He argued that residents would not be persuaded by initiatives introduced only in the run-up to the vote. "The message there is simple — we elected this Ruto in 2022 and he gave us nothing. Now that an opportunity has come up, he wants us to hand it back to him. The money Ruto is spending there now is really a debt owed since 2022. But they are saying the vote on the 16th will go their way? Not a chance. And let me tell the Kikuyu community — do not underestimate what is happening here. Ruto will be shocked when the results are announced," Gachagua said.

The Ol Kalou by-election has emerged as an early test of political sentiment in Nyandarua County, a region considered part of Gachagua's Mt Kenya stronghold, and its outcome is likely to be read nationally as a signal of the DCP leader's standing ahead of the 2027 general election. Gachagua's camp has framed the contest as a referendum on the president's standing in a region that backed the Kenya Kwanza ticket in 2022 but has since grown more openly critical of the administration.

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua with delegation from Narok and Kajiado counties.

The land question in Narok and Kajiado, meanwhile, remains one of the more emotionally resonant issues in Maa politics, touching on decades-old grievances over ownership, resettlement and access to fertile ground. Successive administrations have promised resolution without delivering one that satisfies affected communities, and Gachagua's intervention adds another layer to a dispute that has already drawn presidential attention. Whether his renewed criticism translates into political traction in the Maa region — a constituency he has been actively courting in recent months — will likely become clearer as the 2027 electoral map takes shape.

For now, Gachagua's message to his Narok visitors was unambiguous: stay on the land, resist any relocation, and wait for a change in government he insists will deliver the resolution the community has been promised for years.

Agriculture AGRA Vice President for Programme Delivery, Prof. Hamadi Boga, said limited access to affordable financing remains one of the biggest obstacles

AGRA and GAIN call for inclusive agricultural financing to strengthen Africa's food security

BY DMS
@themtkenyatimes

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) have called for far-reaching reforms in agricultural financing across Africa, saying affordable and inclusive credit is essential to unlock the continent's agricultural potential, improve food security and build resilience against climate change.

Speaking during the Financing Agri-Food Systems Sustainably (FINAS 2026) Forum at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, the two organisations urged governments, financial institutions, development partners and the private sector to adopt financing models that support farmers, agribusinesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) throughout the agricultural value chain.

AGRA Vice President for Programme Delivery, Prof. Hamadi Boga, said limited access to affordable financing remains one of the biggest obstacles preventing farmers and agribusinesses from adopting modern technologies, expanding production and increasing productivity.

He noted that despite significant investments in improved seeds, mechanisation, agro-dealer networks and agricultural innovations, many farmers continue to struggle because they cannot access the capital needed to invest in these technologies.

"We have invested heavily to bring quality inputs closer to farmers, but access to finance remains the biggest challenge for farmers and agribusinesses seeking to adopt these innovations and expand their operations," Prof. Boga said.

He observed that smallholder farmers and agribusiness SMEs, who contribute a substantial share of Africa's food production, are often considered high-risk borrowers, limiting their access to formal credit.

According to Prof. Boga, governments and financial institutions should work together to make farmers and SMEs more bankable by developing financing products that respond to their unique needs. He also called for stronger collaboration with the private sector to complement public agricultural extension services and improve farmers' access to quality inputs, technical knowledge and markets.

He warned that climate change, global conflicts, pandemics and declining development assistance have exposed vulnerabilities within Africa's food systems, making innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms increasingly important.

Ms Ruth Okowa

Prof. Hamadi Boga

GAIN Kenya Country Director Ruth Okowa echoed the call, urging policymakers to broaden agricultural investments beyond food production by allocating more resources to nutrition, food safety and climate resilience.

Okowa said financing decisions should also prioritise women, youth and smallholder farmers, who continue to face significant barriers in accessing affordable credit despite playing a critical role in food production.

She noted that nearly 60 per cent of Africa's population experiences moderate or severe food insecurity, highlighting the need for financing models that not only increase agricultural output but also improve the quality and accessibility of nutritious food.

Okowa cited Kenya's food systems financing analysis, which shows that 70 per cent of investments are financed through domestic resources while 30 per cent comes from international partners. However, she pointed out that only 12 per cent of these investments are directed towards nutrition and just nine per cent towards climate action, leaving critical sectors underfunded.

She said GAIN is supporting the implementation of the Kenya National Agrifood Systems Investment Plan (NASIP) 2026–2030, which seeks to mobilise Sh1.081 trillion from both public and private sources to transform the country's agrifood systems.

The organisation is also working with national and county governments to strengthen nutrition financing, improve food safety standards, promote healthy diets, expand food fortification programmes and support agribusinesses and SMEs in increasing access to nutritious foods.

Both AGRA and GAIN stressed that Africa's agricultural transformation will require stronger partnerships among governments, financial institutions, development agencies and the private sector. They said inclusive financing models that expand access to affordable credit while supporting nutrition, climate resilience and agricultural innovation will be key to improving livelihoods, strengthening food security and building resilient agrifood systems across the continent.

Linda Mwananchi promises united opposition

Sifuna and Maraga present a united front in Kisii as attackers strike their convoy, hardening opposition resolve ahead of 2027

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Orange Democratic Movement Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna dismissed claims yesterday that he or the Linda Mwananchi movement intend to split the opposition vote ahead of the 2027 general election, even as suspected attackers targeted the convoy carrying him and fellow opposition leaders during a tour of Kisii County.

Addressing a women's empowerment forum in Mosocho, Sifuna insisted the movement remains committed to forging a single opposition front capable of defeating President William Ruto's administration. "As Linda Mwananchi, we will not divide the opposition vote. If anyone thinks Sifuna can be convinced to run independently so that Kasongo can sneak through the middle and win, they should think again. That will not happen," he told supporters.

Sifuna said opposition leaders needed to set aside individual ambitions and instead rally behind a single presidential candidate. He singled out former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i as central to that effort, saying the two camps needed to sit down and agree on a joint strategy. "We will look for Matiang'i, sit down with him and agree on the team that can deliver victory. Let him also share his views so that together we can field one team," he said.

Both Linda Mwananchi and the rival United Opposition bloc, Sifuna argued, have the individual capacity to defeat President Ruto — but a combined ticket would settle the contest decisively rather than leaving it closely fought. He urged Kenyans to back efforts toward a single opposition coalition, saying the country needed a clear and convincing outcome rather than a fractured field of challengers.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga, who leads the UGM Party and is himself among those eyeing the presidency in 2027, joined Linda Mwananchi leaders at the Mosocho gathering, a move likely to intensify speculation over his political alignment heading into the election. His appearance came days after he hosted Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata and Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi for consultations on the country's political direction.

Linda Mwananchi movement leaders at Kisii

Speaking at the rally, Maraga said his recent engagements were driven by the need for leaders committed to Kenya's transformation to work together in defence of constitutionalism, the rule of law and inclusive economic opportunity. He called on leaders aligned with the Ukombozi movement to unite around efforts to "reset" the country by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting accountable leadership. The Linda Mwananchi forums, he said, are designed to give residents of Kisii and Nyamira counties a platform to engage leaders on governance and constitutional rights.

The tour's final leg took a violent turn when suspected assailants attacked the convoy carrying Maraga, Sifuna and Siaya Governor James Orengo at Keumbu, as the group made its way to a scheduled rally in Keroka. The leaders accused political rivals of orchestrating the assault in an attempt to block their entry into the town. Stones were reportedly hurled at several vehicles in the convoy; no serious injuries were reported, though some vehicles sustained damage, and security officers accompanying the leaders intervened to restore order.

Addressing supporters after reaching Keroka despite the disruption, the leaders characterised the attack as an attempt to intimidate the opposition and suppress its political activity. "They have been telling us that we will not make it to Keroka, but I want to confirm we are in Keroka. I rebuke those who orchestrated an attack on us at Keumbu — their days are numbered, because when we form Kenya's sixth administration, you will be held to account," Sifuna said.

> **Addressing a women's empowerment forum in Mosocho, Sifuna insisted the movement remains committed to forging a single opposition front capable of defeating President William Ruto's administration. "As Linda Mwananchi, we will not divide the opposition vote. If anyone thinks Sifuna can be convinced to run independently so that Kasongo can sneak through the middle and win, they should think again. That will not happen," he told supporters.**

Maraga was sharper still in his assessment of the motive behind the attack. "If we continue like this, we may not hold the general elections in 2027, and that is what he wants. He is sending planted goons all over to disrupt our meetings. He is free to hold a rally wherever he wants, but he should also allow us to exercise our right to assemble," he said, without naming the individual he held responsible.

Maraga reiterated that leaders committed to Kenya's transformation needed to work collectively to uphold the rule of law, strengthen democratic institutions and expand economic opportunity, adding that the Linda Mwananchi forums in Kisii and Nyamira would continue to serve as a platform for that conversation.

The events in Kisii underscore the delicate balancing act facing Kenya's opposition as it heads toward 2027. Linda Mwananchi, which emerged from within ODM's ranks under Sifuna's leadership, has spent recent months touring the country and drawing crowds independently of the more established United Opposition coalition fronted by former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka. The prospect of two rival opposition platforms entering 2027 without a merger has fuelled persistent concern among anti-Ruto strategists that a split vote could hand the incumbent an easier path to re-election — a risk Sifuna appeared eager to address head-on in Mosocho.

Whether Wednesday's rhetoric translates into a genuine merger of the two camps remains to be tested. Matiang'i, widely regarded as a leading opposition contender in his own right, has previously insisted that any process to select a joint flag bearer must be transparent and driven by consensus rather than backroom deals. For now, Sifuna and Maraga have signalled where they stand. Whether their rivals — and their attackers — respond in kind will shape the opposition's fortunes long before ballots are cast.

Politics Media freedom carries an important responsibility to uphold the highest standards of accuracy, fairness, impartiality and professional ethics

UDA calls for responsible journalism, urges media to uphold professional standards

BY KNA
@themtkenyatimes

The United Democratic Alliance (UDA) has accused sections of the Kenyan media of abandoning professional journalism in favour of sensationalism, political activism and the publication of unverified information, saying the trend is eroding public trust and undermining national cohesion.

Speaking to the Media on Friday, UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar Hassan said while the party remains committed to constitutional freedoms, including media freedom, journalists must exercise that freedom responsibly.

UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar Hassan (in specs) and other leaders listen as former Nairobi Governor Evan Kidero briefs the press. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

"Media freedom carries an important responsibility to uphold the highest standards of accuracy, fairness, impartiality and professional ethics. We have been taken aback and are increasingly concerned and astonished by instances where sections of the media appear to prioritise sensationalism over verification, commentary over facts, speculation over responsible reporting and politicisation masked as free media," said Omar.

He said journalists have a professional and ethical obligation to publish verified, accurate and balanced information while clearly distinguishing facts from opinion and speculation.

According to the UDA Secretary General, the growing circulation of unverified claims, misleading headlines and opinion presented as fact threatens public confidence in the media and weakens informed national discourse.

"The growing circulation of unverified claims, misleading headlines and opinion presented as fact risks eroding public trust, deepening polarisation and undermining informed national discourse. Journalism should contribute to national development by informing citizens objectively, scrutinising institutions fairly and facilitating constructive public debate," he said.

Omar singled out sections of the media, including some mainstream media houses, accusing some editors, producers, anchors and reporters of abandoning objectivity in favour of partisan political interests.

He alleged that the decline in editorial independence and professional ethics had diminished the credibility of journalism by placing ratings, political narratives and commercial interests above rigorous fact-checking and responsible reporting.

The Secretary General further criticised what he described as the increasing involvement of media personalities in politics, arguing that the practice compromises journalistic integrity.

"The media personalities have chosen to actively participate in civil society politics, journalistic gymnastics and outright street activism. We invite those responsible to resign from their media roles and join the political arena if they wish to engage in politics. We are ready to square it out in a political duel rather than hiding behind the veil of the freedom of the media," he said.

Former Nairobi Governor Evans Kidero said the media has a constitutional responsibility not only to inform the public but also to educate citizens and promote national cohesion through factual and balanced reporting.

Kidero cautioned against sensational reporting, saying unverified reports have the potential to create fear and undermine public confidence.

"Nairobi is the country's economic hub, accounting for the largest share of Kenya's economy and hosting millions of residents. As leaders, we have a duty to ensure that information shared with the public promotes peace, stability and national development," he said.

He maintained that security agencies have a constitutional obligation to protect lives and property whenever public order is threatened, adding that allegations concerning missing persons or abductions should be formally reported to the relevant authorities to facilitate investigations.

Kidero urged Kenyans to support government efforts aimed at maintaining peace and strengthening national unity.

Omar defended the party's commitment to human rights, saying its support for constitutional freedoms and socio-economic rights remains unwavering.

He cited constitutional guarantees on housing, healthcare, sanitation, water and education as central to the party's governance agenda.

Responding to questions on the relationship between the government and the media, Omar said Kenya remains committed to protecting press freedom while emphasising that journalism should be exercised responsibly and within the law.

The Kenyan media has nothing to fear. What is important is responsible journalism that serves the interests of the public and contributes to peace and national cohesion, he said.

On governance, Omar said the government respects court decisions and will comply with judicial pronouncements, including recent rulings touching on the composition of the Cabinet, adding that constitutional processes would continue to guide decisions made by the Executive.

Kirinyaga sets pace as model for industrialization as Bungoma benchmarks County Aggregation and Industrial Park

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Kirinyaga County is emerging as Kenya's benchmark for the implementation of County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs), with other counties visiting to learn from its successful model as it positions itself as a leading destination for agro-industrial investment.

Bungoma County's Department of Trade, Energy and Industrialization toured the County Aggregation and Industrial Park (CAIP) at Sagana to benchmark on its implementation ahead of rolling out a similar project back home. The visit follows an earlier benchmarking mission by Kitui County, further cementing Kirinyaga's position as a national leader in industrial park development.

The CAIP is one of the flagship developments within the 252-acre Sagana Agro-Industrial City, a designated Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located in Ndia Constituency. Once fully developed, the industrial city is expected to create more than 10,000 direct jobs and a further 100,000 indirect employment opportunities while transforming Kirinyaga into a major manufacturing, processing and export hub.

The expansive development will also host an Export Processing Zone (EPZ), agro-processing industries, hotels, a golf course, affordable housing projects and other commercial investments, making it one of the country's most ambitious county-led industrialization initiatives.

The benchmarking visit comes as the CAIP enters its final phase of construction, with the project now 96 per cent complete. Eight warehouses have already been completed, while the County Government has begun onboarding investors interested in establishing industries at the park ahead of its commissioning.

Governor Anne Waiguru welcomed the Bungoma delegation, saying county-to-county learning continues to strengthen devolution and accelerate economic development across the country.

"County-to-county learning remains one of the greatest strengths of devolution, and we are glad to share our experience in advancing agro-industrialisation and value addition," the Governor said.

Kirinyaga Investment Development Authority (KIDA) Chairman Michael Ndwiga said only a few finishing works remained before the project is completed. "The project is now 96 per cent complete and what remains are the final touches, mainly landscaping and cabro works," Ndwiga said.

He said the county had already gazetted KIDA regulations, paving the way for investor onboarding. "Investors are already submitting applications. They are evaluated and, once they qualify, they are issued with lease agreements to establish industries at the park," he said.

Ndwiga said early investor onboarding would ensure industries begin setting up operations immediately upon completion of the park, accelerating value addition, job creation and investment in the county.

Bungoma County Chief Officer for Trade, Energy and Industrialization Stephen Wamalwa said the delegation selected Kirinyaga because of the remarkable progress it has made in implementing its County Aggregation and Industrial Park.

"We came to Kirinyaga because they are way ahead of us in the implementation of CAIPs. We wanted to benchmark and collect lessons that will help us implement ours," Wamalwa said.

Some of the delegates visiting the Kirinyaga CAIP

He said the delegation had gained practical insights that would improve implementation in Bungoma and help speed up completion of its own project.

"We have gained valuable insights that we can apply back home. They will help us move faster and also push our contractor to pull up his socks," he said.

Wamalwa noted that the team had also benchmarked in Meru and Laikipia counties but found Kirinyaga to be the most advanced.

"We have visited Meru and Laikipia too, but Kirinyaga is ahead of the rest. We appreciate the support we have received from the County Government and KIDA, and we hope to come back for more benchmarking," he added.

Some of the delegates visiting the Kirinyaga CAIP

Mau Mau MMV Associates CLG intends to establish a comprehensive banking structure stretching from county level to the grassroots

Mau Mau caucus launches members' nationwide banking drive

The caucus; MMV Associates CLG has launched the nationwide banking drive for it's over 185,000 Mau Mau veterans, widows and descendants

BY DMS
@themtkenyatimes

MMV Associates CLG Director General James Njuguna Mahuria briefing journalists after meeting the caucus's representatives from all 47 counties last Monday| *Photo:* Courtesy.

MMV Associates CLG, a national organization representing Mau Mau war veterans, widows and descendants, has announced the resumption of a nationwide bank account opening exercise targeting more than 185,000 registered members across Kenya's 47 counties.

In a letter dated July 1, 2026, addressed to the Branch Manager of National Bank of Kenya's Karatina Branch, the organization requested the bank to immediately facilitate the opening of both group and individual accounts to support its expanding national operations.

The initiative marks a significant step in formalizing financial management within one of the country's largest grassroots organizations dedicated to preserving the legacy of Kenya's freedom fighters while promoting the welfare of their families.

The letter, signed by MMV Associates CLG Chief Executive Officer Ms. Emmah Kasis, states that the organization had temporarily suspended the account opening exercise but is now ready to proceed following internal preparations.

According to the communication, MMV Associates CLG intends to establish a comprehensive banking structure stretching from county level to the grassroots. The proposed framework includes 47 county accounts, 314 sub-county accounts and accounts covering all of Kenya's 1,450 wards.

Each account will carry the organization's name alongside the relevant county, sub-county or ward designation to enhance accountability and ease of identification.

Besides the group accounts, the organization is also seeking to facilitate the opening of individual accounts for verified members.

These include Mau Mau veterans, widows and descendants who have undergone verification through the organization's official membership registration process coordinated by county and grassroots officials.

The move is expected to provide members with easier access to financial services while creating a centralized system for managing welfare programmes, community projects, membership contributions and future development initiatives.

Strengthening governance

To safeguard the funds and enhance transparency, MMV Associates CLG has proposed a structured governance model for all group accounts.

Under the proposed arrangement, each group account will be overseen by a ten-member Leadership Council, comprising five executive officials.

The organization has further proposed that four officials serve as mandatory signatories for every account.

The fourth signatory will either be the Director General, James Njuguna Mahuria, or Ms Kasis, acting on behalf of the Director General.

The signatory arrangement is intended to strengthen internal controls and minimize the risks associated with mismanagement or unauthorized transactions.

Call for banking partnership

The organization has requested National Bank of Kenya to provide an official schedule outlining dates, venues and documentation required for opening both group and individual accounts.

It has also requested the appointment of a liaison officer at the Karatina Branch to coordinate the exercise with MMV county, sub-county and ward coordinators.

Additionally, MMV Associates CLG has asked the bank to provide updated guidelines and requirements applicable to large community organizations opening multiple group accounts.

In the letter, the organization assured the bank that all members would undergo strict verification before any account is opened.

"All accounts shall be opened under strict procedures, with consent forms and MMV verification as required," the letter states.

The organization further pledged full compliance with banking regulations while emphasizing its commitment to transparency, accountability and fraud prevention.

Preserving the Mau Mau legacy

The banking initiative comes as organizations representing Mau Mau veterans continue to advocate for improved welfare, recognition and socio-economic empowerment of surviving freedom fighters and their descendants.

Although Kenya attained independence in 1963, many Mau Mau veterans and their families have continued to call for greater inclusion in national development programmes, better access to social services and preservation of the movement's historical contribution to the country's liberation.

In recent years, various organizations have intensified efforts to document the history of the liberation struggle while supporting descendants through education, cultural preservation, land advocacy and economic empowerment programmes.

MMV Associates CLG says its mission includes mobilizing members, documenting indigenous knowledge, safeguarding the welfare of veterans and preserving the legacy of the Mau Mau movement for future generations.

Nationwide mobilisation

Once National Bank of Kenya provides the requested operational schedule, MMV Associates CLG is expected to begin mobilizing members across all 47 counties for the account opening exercise.

The programme is anticipated to become one of the largest coordinated community banking initiatives undertaken by a grassroots organization in Kenya, covering thousands of local leadership structures and individual members.

Copies of the communication were also forwarded to the Head of Retail and Operations Banking at National Bank of Kenya headquarters and to MMV County Coordinators in all 47 counties, signaling the organization's intention to roll out the exercise simultaneously across the country.

Leaders of the organization say the banking programme will strengthen financial accountability, improve service delivery and create a more organized platform for implementing future welfare and development projects benefiting Mau Mau veterans, widows and descendants nationwide.

Some of the MMV Associates CLG members checking their accounts details.

Innovation Sura ya Pili will not only entertain audiences but also create job opportunities for the cast and the many professionals involved in its production

StarTimes deepens investment in local content, AI innovation with launch of Sura ya Pili

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

StarTimes Media has reinforced its commitment to Kenya's creative industry with the launch of Sura ya Pili, a new locally produced television drama set to premiere on Monday on Rembo TV.

The launch signals the broadcaster's continued investment in original Kenyan productions as it seeks to grow the country's creative economy, create employment opportunities and embrace emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), to enhance content production and distribution.

Speaking during the launch, StarTimes Marketing Director Tamima Ibrahim said the company remains committed to supporting local storytellers by investing in quality productions that reflect Kenyan experiences while creating sustainable jobs for actors, writers, directors, producers and technical crews.

"We are investing heavily in the promotion of the creative economy through quality local productions. Sura ya Pili will not only entertain audiences but also create job opportunities for the cast and the many professionals involved in its production," said Ibrahim.

She noted that while AI is increasingly transforming the global media and entertainment industry, StarTimes views the technology as a tool to complement—not replace—human creativity. She said the company is exploring AI-powered solutions to improve production workflows, audience engagement and content distribution while ensuring that Kenyan creatives remain at the centre of storytelling.

Ibrahim added that investment in local content remains a key pillar of StarTimes' strategy, saying authentic Kenyan stories are essential in preserving culture, nurturing talent and expanding opportunities within the country's fast-growing creative sector.

The drama features a strong cast led by renowned musician Jovial Ayub, alongside Gibson Ausa, Ivy Wanjiku and other talented actors.

Launch of Sura ya Pili

A father's love

Can the love of a father
Ever be fully expressed in words, O world?

He is the visible God on earth—
Can you ever deny it?

So that you may see and experience the world,
He toils day and night.

His love expects nothing in return;
It is a love that endures forever.

Just hearing your voice
Makes him forget everything else.

To satisfy your hunger,
Even the wounds on his hands become a source of joy.

To raise you with care and affection,
He endures countless hardships.

So that you may grow freely like a little bird,
He buys you comforts as soft as silk.

To help you sleep peacefully,
He fans you gently and brings soothing breezes.

So that you may grow up in comfort,
He turns his own hands into your entire world.

He encourages and appreciates
Every little step you take.

So that you may study well,
He wakes you up early every morning.

When you earn your degree,
He feels as though he has conquered the world.

When you secure a good position in life,
He proudly shares the news with everyone.

For your wedding,
He strives to make it a celebration admired by all.

He lovingly raises the next generation too,
Showering them with endless affection.

Becoming a humble servant,
He gladly performs every duty.

Until his very last breath,
Thoughts of you flow through him like blood.

He can help you recover from every loss
As long as he stands beside you.

But if you lose your father,
Nothing in this world can truly replace him.

A father's love is a peak beyond measure,
An eternal lamp that never fades.

The story of a father's love continues forever;
It can never be completely told.

He is the visible God before our eyes;
We must cherish and protect him like our own eyes.

Though he may appear strict on the outside,
His heart is always gentle within.

Is there any gift in this world
Greater than a father?

A father is life's greatest blessing,
The hand that protects and guides us.

A father's love...
As long as the world exists,
Can it ever be confined within words?
Can it ever be fully spoken, O universe?

A father is not merely a word—
He is the guiding mantra of life itself.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

My dog

My dog is cute.
I feed him fruit cake.
He likes a bone throughout the day.
He plays with me all day.
I take him out to play.
His skin is soft and shiny too.
When a stranger comes, he barks.
I love my dog very much.

S. Rakshitha
Sixth standard
PUMS Kongancherry
Chengalpattu district

My trip to the moon

Last night I closed my sleepy eyes,
And dreamed beneath the starry skies.
A silver rocket took me high,
Past fluffy clouds into the sky.

The moon smiled bright with gentle light,
Its sparkling hills were snowy White.
I danced with stars and touched the sky,
Watching planets drift nearby.

I planted dreams upon the ground,
Where hope and joy could all be found.
The moon whispered "dreams big each day,
Your dreams will always light your way".

When morning came, I woke with delight,
Still holding moonbeams shining bright.
Though I was back in my cozy room,
My heart still danced upon the moon.

Written by:S. Bavanya
Class:7th A
School:GGHSS, pattukkottai

A Letter to the next generation

Dear Children

I wonder what your world will look like.

Will the trees still whisper in the wind? Will strangers still stop to help one another? Will people look up at the stars, or only down at their screens?

We leave you a world full of possibilities, but also full of questions. Some things we cared for. Some things we neglected. For both, we owe you an explanation.

You will hear many voices telling you what to believe, who to follow, and what success should look like. Listen to them—but listen to your heart, too.

Be brave enough to be kind in a world that sometimes rewards cruelty. Be strong enough to admit when you're wrong. And be wise enough to know that no one rises by making another fall.

If you find our mistakes, learn from them. If you find our dreams, carry them forward.

And when your turn comes to write a letter to those yet unborn, I hope you can tell them that you chose love over hate, understanding over judgment, and hope over fear.
That would be the greatest reply to this letter.

With faith in you

Someone who believes tomorrow is in good hands.

The hand master

Once the landline stood in one quiet place,
Its ringing gathered footsteps into home,
No names appeared, no endless streams of calls,
Each word was weighed and carried some true need.

The message came and left within its time,
No space was there for idle wandering speech,
A voice was used for what a voice was made,
And silence still remained a trusted friend.

Now phones live always folded in our palms,
They call us out though we sit still inside,
We scan the screen and judge if it deserves
A moment from the hours of living life.

One little tool became a crowded world—
The games, the shows, the endless moving scenes,
It eats the golden portions of our day
And leaves us busy, yet with little done.

We thought we held the master in our hands,
Yet slowly found our hands obeyed its pull,
No message waits, no purpose calls us near,
But still we check the prison in our palms.

V Durgadevi
Graduate Teacher
GHS Nesal
Tiruvannamalai District

Friend is our customised foretrack

As we feel(fri)freeend (friend) to relax
My friend as WATER hydrates me
Flushing out my toxin thoughts to be glee.
She holds me in her heart
A valuable LAND that never depreciates.
She's the FIRE to ignite my negatives
Motivating my positives.

She's the moisturing AIR
Freezing atmospheric love to be fair.
She has been widely spread within me as SKY
As the only shinning star to lie.
My friend guides as an oar
To SWIM against the storm reaching the shore.
She helps me to FLY high as eagle
To touch the goal & to not be fragile.
She leads me to a clear path
To WALK with faith.

Sarala..
Creative writers

Health Okoa Malaika, an initiative implemented through the Office of the Spouse to the Prime Cabinet Secretary with support from partners

Tessie Mudavadi donates Neonatal Incubators to four counties to improve care for premature babies

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Mrs Tessie Mudavadi addressing stakeholders during the handing over ceremony.

Mrs. Tessie Mudavadi, the spouse of Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, has donated eight neonatal incubators to health facilities in Narok, Kajiado, Kericho and Bomet counties under the Okoa Malaika infant pre-term aid programme.

The equipment was handed over during a ceremony at Narok County Referral Hospital attended by Narok Central Deputy County Commissioner Kennedy Mwangome, Narok Deputy Governor Tamalinye Koech, County Executive Committee Members for Health and First Ladies from the four beneficiary counties.

Okoa Malaika, an initiative implemented through the Office of the Spouse to the Prime Cabinet Secretary with support from partners including the Mudavadi Memorial Foundation and Ushiriki Wema, seeks to improve maternal and newborn healthcare by supplying essential neonatal equipment to hospitals across the country. According to Mrs. Mudavadi, the programme has so far reached more than 20 counties.

She said the initiative complements the government's efforts to reduce neonatal mortality by ensuring premature babies receive specialised care during their most vulnerable days. Kenya currently records about 22 neonatal deaths for every 1,000 live births, with many of the deaths linked to complications arising from preterm births.

Mrs. Mudavadi noted that many families continue to face challenges in accessing specialised neonatal care due to inadequate medical facilities, limited resources and geographical barriers.

"With the donation of these incubators to the respective counties, however modest it may seem, we are taking an important step towards ensuring that pre-term infants receive the care and stability they need during those critical early days," she said.

She also called on Kenyans to support the Social Health Authority (SHA), saying the country's transition to the new health insurance system is critical to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

"As a nation, we are transitioning into a new health insurance platform, and I urge every Kenyan to support it so that it delivers the intended benefits to all citizens," she said.

Mrs. Mudavadi further appealed to communities to abandon harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and early pregnancies, noting that such practices continue to undermine efforts to improve maternal and child health. She added that the government remains committed to integrating modern healthcare with positive cultural practices while discouraging traditions that endanger lives.

She also observed that the expansion of the Linda Jamii health cover is expected to help address the growing number of premature births, currently estimated at about 13 per cent of all deliveries in Kenya.

In a speech delivered on his behalf by Deputy Governor Tamalinye Koech, Narok Governor Patrick Ntutu lauded the donation, saying premature infants require specialised care that is often unavailable in many health facilities. He noted that many newborns die from complications related to premature birth, while survivors may experience lifelong disabilities, including visual, hearing and learning challenges.

He said investing in neonatal equipment not only saves newborn lives but also protects mothers from emotional trauma and strengthens families.

According to health experts, Kenya recorded 4,112 neonatal deaths out of 20,156 under-five deaths reported in health facilities last year, with an estimated three-quarters of the deaths considered preventable through timely and affordable medical interventions.

Narok Central Deputy County Commissioner Kennedy Mwangome expressed concern over the rising cases of defilement, incest, female genital mutilation and teenage pregnancies in the county. He warned chiefs and village elders against resolving defilement cases through informal "kangaroo courts," saying the practice denies survivors justice and protects offenders.

Mwangome reaffirmed the government's commitment to prosecuting perpetrators of gender-based violence and eliminating harmful cultural practices that threaten the health, education and future of girls.

Weekend So many of us spend years chasing goals without ever pausing to ask whether those goals still reflect who we want to become

The weekend mirror: Why reflection may be the most important thing we do

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

The weekend mirror

Every weekend arrives carrying a quiet promise.

For some, it promises rest after a demanding week. For others, it means time with family and friends, a chance to catch up on unfinished tasks, or simply room to breathe. But beneath the relief of stepping away from routine lies something far more valuable than leisure. The weekend offers us a mirror — not one that reflects our appearance, but one that reflects our lives.

In a world that constantly pulls at our attention, reflection has become a rare habit. We wake up, rush to work or school, answer messages, meet obligations, worry about finances, chase opportunities, and move from one responsibility to the next. Days pass quickly. Weeks disappear. Months slip by. And before we know it, another year is behind us.

The real question isn't whether time is moving. It's whether we're moving with purpose.

So many of us spend years chasing goals without ever pausing to ask whether those goals still reflect who we want to become. We grow so fixed on the destination that we forget to notice the journey. We celebrate our wins but rarely sit with the lessons that made them possible.

This is exactly why the weekend matters. It gives us permission to pause and ask the harder, more honest questions:

- What did I learn this week?
- What mistakes did I make?
- Who did I help?
- What opportunities did I miss?
- Which habits are helping me grow — and which ones are holding me back?
- Am I becoming the person I once dreamed of becoming?

These questions might sound simple, but the honesty of our answers can shape the direction of an entire life.

Here's the truth: personal growth rarely announces itself with fanfare. It doesn't arrive with fireworks or grand celebrations. More often, it shows up quietly, through small choices made again and again.

Growth happens when a student chooses one more hour of studying instead of giving up after a disappointing grade. It happens when a young entrepreneur keeps building despite setbacks and criticism. It happens when a parent chooses patience over anger at the end of a hard day. And it happens when someone finally chooses to forgive an old hurt instead of letting bitterness shape their future. The most meaningful transformations almost always begin in the most ordinary moments.

Unfortunately, the world around us often pushes in the opposite direction. We're surrounded by messages urging us to move faster, achieve more, and measure ourselves against everyone else. Social media has built a culture where success looks instant and effortless — we scroll through other people's carefully curated highlights and quietly wonder if we're falling behind.

But what we see is rarely the whole story. Behind every success is usually a struggle nobody witnessed. Behind every achievement sit countless failures, sacrifices, disappointments, and quiet moments of doubt. The student with top grades may have spent countless nights studying while others slept. The professional now thriving may have faced years of rejection before their first real opportunity. The athlete holding up a trophy may have carried injuries and defeats that no one else remembers.

The truth is that growth is usually invisible before it becomes visible — much like a seed that grows quietly beneath the soil long before it ever breaks through the surface. Personal development works the same way: it happens in the dark before anyone sees the results in the light.

This is why patience matters so much. Many dreams don't fail because they're impossible — they fail because people give up on them too soon. We live in an age obsessed with immediate results, yet the most meaningful accomplishments still take time. Character takes time. Wisdom takes time. Trust takes time. Success takes time. The weekend reminds us that progress isn't always about speed. Sometimes the greatest victory is simply refusing to quit.

Maybe this week didn't go as planned. Maybe a goal was missed, a mistake was made, or something entirely out of your control got in the way. That doesn't mean the week was wasted. Failure often becomes the classroom where life's most valuable lessons are taught. Every disappointment carries a lesson in resilience. Every setback teaches adaptability. Every challenge reveals strength we didn't know we had.

The people we admire most were rarely the ones who never failed — they were the ones who kept moving forward despite it. Time and again, history shows that resilience matters more than raw talent. The ability to rise after falling, to hope after disappointment, and to keep going after adversity has shaped some of humanity's greatest achievements.

As another weekend unfolds, it's also worth pausing to reflect on gratitude. In a world that so often focuses on what's missing, gratitude gently reminds us of what remains: the roof over our heads, the food on our tables, the family who supports us, the friends who encourage us, the opportunities still in front of us, and the simple gift of waking up to another day. Gratitude doesn't erase our challenges, but it does change how we carry them. It shifts our focus from scarcity to possibility, reminding us that even an imperfect life still holds countless reasons to move forward with hope.

For young people standing at the crossroads of uncertainty, the future can feel intimidating. Questions about careers, finances, relationships, and purpose have a way of stirring up anxiety, and the pressure to have it all figured out can feel like too much to carry. But here's something worth remembering: almost no one truly has all the answers. Most successful people didn't begin their journeys with certainty — they simply took the next step in front of them. They learned, adapted, failed, tried again, and slowly found their way.

The future isn't built in a single day. It's built one decision at a time, one habit at a time, one lesson at a time — one weekend reflection at a time.

As Sunday evening settles in and thoughts begin turning toward the week ahead, perhaps the best investment we can make is a few honest minutes of reflection. Celebrate your progress, however small it may seem. Acknowledge your mistakes without letting them define you. Learn from what you've been through. Set new goals. Renew your resolve. Then step into the coming week with a little more confidence than before.

Life will keep moving forward whether we stop to reflect or not. But reflection is what allows us to move forward with wisdom, clarity, and purpose — instead of just momentum.

The weekend is more than a pause between busy weeks. It's a chance to reconnect with ourselves. It's a reminder that growth is always still possible. It's proof that every ending can become a new beginning.

And perhaps, most importantly, it's an invitation to believe that the person we become tomorrow is shaped by the choices we make today.


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School fires **The historical record is damning. In 1991, at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Meru, 19 girls died in a stampede**

Do we learn nothing? The recurring tragedy of school fires in Kenya

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
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School fires in Kenya

Kenya's boarding schools, once symbols of discipline, aspiration, and upward mobility, have repeatedly become scenes of horror. Over the past few decades, fires and related stampedes have claimed more than 150 young lives. Each tragedy follows a grimly familiar script: an outbreak of fire in overcrowded dormitories, locked exits, barred windows, panic, and preventable deaths. Public outrage erupts, promises are made, commissions are formed, and then silence returns until the next inferno. The question that haunts every Kenyan who has followed this pattern is simple yet devastating: Do we learn nothing?

The historical record is damning. In 1991, at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Meru, 19 girls died in a stampede after male students raided their dormitory during a strike. Overcrowding turned a place of refuge into a death trap. In 1998, Bombolulu Girls Secondary School in Kwale lost 26 students when a fire swept through an overcrowded dormitory with locked exits and grilled windows. The deadliest incident occurred at Kyanguli Secondary School in Machakos in 2001, where 67 students perished after two boys set a mattress ablaze; barred windows and a padlocked door sealed their fate. Similar stories echo across the years: Nyeri High School (1999, 4 deaths), Endarasha Boys (2010, 2 deaths), Asumbi Girls (2012, 8 deaths), Moi Girls (2017, 10 deaths), Hillside Endarasha Academy (2024, 21 deaths), and most recently, Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil in May 2026, where 16 students died after a mattress fire near an exit that reportedly remained locked.

These are not isolated accidents. They reveal deep, recurring structural and behavioral failures. Many dormitories remain overcrowded, with narrow walkways and inadequate emergency exits. Safety infrastructure fire alarms, extinguishers, clear evacuation routes is often symbolic rather than functional. Windows are still barred "for security," turning buildings into cages when fire strikes. Electrical faults, arson by disgruntled students, and negligence by staff appear with tragic regularity. The pattern suggests that recommendations from previous inquiries gather dust on shelves while the same conditions persist.

Where are the school inspectors? Kenya has a system of education quality assurance and standards officers under the Ministry of Education. Their mandate includes ensuring compliance with safety regulations, infrastructure standards, and overall school governance. Even so tragedies continue unabated. This raises uncomfortable questions about the effectiveness of inspection regimes: Are inspections routine and rigorous, or perfunctory box-ticking exercises? Do inspectors have the authority, resources, and political backing to enforce closures or major upgrades when schools fall short? The repetition of the same hazards locked exits, overcrowding implies systemic weakness in enforcement. Without accountability that bites, inspections become theater rather than safeguard.

Public discourse after each tragedy often slides into familiar grooves: blame the students, blame the parents, blame the government, or invoke general moral decay. There is truth in acknowledging individual responsibility some fires have been deliberately started by students seeking to force transfers, protest, or settle scores. Nevertheless, the rush to pathologize individual "bad manners" or romanticize student unrest as mere youthful rebellion avoids harder systemic questions. Equally problematic is the reflex toward victimhood narratives that absolve institutions and families of any role. Parents who pay fees and entrust their children to boarding schools deserve assurance that basic safety is not negotiable. When it fails, shared responsibility must be confronted honestly, not through partisan finger-pointing.

This cycle thrives on cognitive dissonance. We decry the loss of life while continuing practices that make such losses probable. We speak of children as the future yet tolerate environments that stunt their emotional and social development. Many students resort to extreme measures arson, strikes, violence because they lack constructive channels for expressing disgruntlement and disagreement. Boarding school life, with its rigid hierarchies, limited counseling, and high pressure, often neglects the cultivation of emotional intelligence (the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions) and social intelligence (navigating relationships, empathy, and conflict resolution). When young people feel powerless, unheard, or overwhelmed, destructive outlets become tragically attractive.

A zoomed-out perspective reveals that school fires are symptoms of broader societal and institutional malaise. Kenya's education system emphasizes academic performance and examination results, sometimes at the expense of holistic development, safety, and character formation. Behavioral dynamics power imbalances between students and administration, poor conflict management, and inadequate mental health support fuel unrest. Romanticizing "student power" or, conversely, responding with heavy-handed punishment without dialogue only deepens alienation. Pathologizing every incident as isolated "indiscipline" prevents us from addressing root causes: poor infrastructure investment, weak regulatory oversight, and a culture that normalizes blaming others instead of solving problems collaboratively.

Concrete solutions demand moving beyond rhetoric. First, infrastructure: mandatory audits of all boarding schools with enforceable timelines for upgrades fire-resistant materials, multiple unlocked emergency exits, functional alarms, and reduced occupancy ratios. Schools failing basic safety standards should face closure or probation until rectified. Second, strengthen inspection and accountability. Empower inspectors with clear mandates, digital reporting tools, and consequences for negligence at every level school boards, county education officers, and national ministry. Third, invest in human development. Integrate emotional and social intelligence curricula into teacher training and student programs. Teach conflict resolution, anger management, and responsible dissent from early stages. School counselors must be adequately trained and resourced, not afterthoughts.

Fourth, foster better management and behavioral dynamics. School leaders should prioritize participatory governance student councils with real voice, regular dialogue forums, and transparent grievance mechanisms. Parents, teachers, and administrators must sit together, not to assign blame but to co-create safer environments. Community oversight committees could monitor compliance and support schools in resource-scarce areas. Finally, shift national conversation from episodic outrage to sustained reform. Media and civil society should track implementation of recommendations across administrations, maintaining pressure for continuity.

The Utumishi tragedy of 2026, like those before it, should not become another footnote. Eight students face murder charges, but prosecuting individuals, while necessary, cannot substitute for systemic overhaul. We are, in many ways, a society still grappling with "bad manners" not merely among youth, but in leadership that repeats mistakes, in institutions that fail to protect, and in a public culture quick to blame yet slow to build. Breaking the cycle requires rejecting isolationist thinking: school fires are not just education issues; they intersect with governance, mental health, infrastructure, and values.

A wholesome perspective recognizes young people as both vulnerable and agentic. They need guidance in channeling discontent productively, but they also need environments that model maturity, accountability, and care. Kenya cannot afford to wait for the next tragedy. The time for concrete action sustained, coordinated, and monitored is now. Learning from history is not optional; it is the only ethical path forward if we truly value the lives entrusted to our schools. Only then can we replace the recurring nightmare with institutions worthy of our children's dreams.

The writer is a social commentator

Afrophobia Attacks on African migrants, the destruction of businesses owned by fellow Africans, and increasingly hostile rhetoric

South Africa’s defining moment: Why Africa must choose unity over Afrophobia

At a time of rising tensions, South Africa faces a choice between division and reconciliation.

By Njoroge Wanjigi
@themtkenyatimes

Afrophobia

There are defining moments in the life of every nation — moments when history pauses and asks a people to choose between fear and hope, resentment and reconciliation, division and unity. South Africa stands at such a moment today.

Across the continent and beyond, recent events in South Africa have been deeply painful. Attacks on African migrants, the destruction of businesses owned by fellow Africans, and increasingly hostile rhetoric have left many asking how the nation that once symbolised reconciliation now finds itself wrestling with tensions directed largely toward fellow sons and daughters of Africa.

It is for this reason that I deliberately refer to the current phenomenon as Afrophobia rather than xenophobia. Xenophobia broadly describes hostility toward foreigners regardless of origin. Yet many observers note that hostility has fallen disproportionately upon Black African migrants from neighbouring countries, while foreigners from other regions have not faced comparable levels of organised hostility. Whether one agrees with this distinction or not, it deserves thoughtful national conversation rather than dismissal.

This is not merely South Africa’s conversation. It must be Africa’s conversation.

No responsible Pan-African can ignore the frustrations confronting millions of South Africans. Unemployment remains high, poverty persists, crime robs communities of peace, corruption weakens public confidence, and service delivery often falls short of constitutional promises. Rising living costs burden citizens and migrants alike. These realities demand decisive and patriotic leadership.

Every sovereign nation has the right to regulate its borders, enforce immigration laws, protect national security, and safeguard opportunities for its citizens. Respect for sovereignty and respect for human dignity are not competing values; they are complementary responsibilities. The danger arises when legitimate concerns become attached to entire communities simply because of where they were born.

The Black African entrepreneur running a spaza shop is not, by nationality alone, responsible for unemployment or inequality. To suggest otherwise risks reducing complex national challenges to a convenient but incomplete explanation. Immigrant-owned businesses have become part of township life, supplying affordable goods where investment was scarce and extending informal credit to struggling households. Recognising these contributions does not diminish South African aspirations; it challenges all to ask why these gaps exist and how they can be closed for everyone’s benefit.

The more important question is not who owns the spaza shop, but why, more than three decades after democracy, millions of South Africans still struggle for meaningful economic opportunity.

Responsible leadership begins by asking courageous questions: Who benefits when African communities distrust one another? Who profits when township businesses are destroyed? Who gains when fear replaces cooperation? History reminds us that when ordinary people fight among themselves, those with greater economic or political power often remain untouched.

Wisdom, not outrage, must guide the response. Some commentators suggest that prolonged oppression leaves societies with deep psychological scars, sometimes redirecting anger toward those who are neither the architects nor beneficiaries of that oppression. This invites reflection on whether South Africa’s deepest struggle is not only economic but also one of healing from generations of division deliberately engineered under apartheid.

Healing begins when we correctly identify both the wound and its cause. During apartheid, countless African nations stood beside South Africans — opening borders, training freedom fighters, offering diplomatic support, and making sacrifices in the belief that South Africa’s liberation would strengthen Africa itself.

Permit me a brief reflection. As a boy in Kenya, I once uttered an insensitive remark toward a South African child. My late grandfather corrected me with wisdom, reminding me that South Africa’s struggle was Africa’s struggle, and that no African child should regard another as a stranger. That lesson has remained with me throughout my life.

Pan-Africanism does not require abandoning sovereignty. It reminds us that sovereignty and solidarity can coexist. We can secure borders without abandoning humanity, enforce laws without surrendering compassion, and protect national interests while preserving dignity.

The answer to unemployment is not violence. The answer to poverty is not hatred. The answer to inequality is not destroying livelihoods. The answer lies in ethical leadership, accountable institutions, quality education, inclusive growth, entrepreneurship, regional cooperation, justice, and healing.

Civic education is now one of our generation’s defining responsibilities. Nations rise when citizens are equipped with knowledge, values, and hope. They decline when misinformation and resentment dominate public discourse.

To South Africa’s leaders, I offer this appeal. As demonstrated by Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani, Steve Biko, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Thomas Sankara and many others, leadership is not measured by echoing public anger. True leadership transforms anger into purpose. The greatest leaders elevate society beyond fear, build bridges where others build walls, and heal where others divide.

To Africans beyond South Africa, let us not allow disappointment to extinguish brotherhood. Millions of South Africans continue to reject hatred and work for reconciliation. Their voices deserve to be heard alongside those calling for division.

Africa has overcome slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. Surely, Africa has the courage to overcome Afrophobia. The generation before us secured political freedom. Our generation must secure economic justice, integration, reconciliation, and healing.

As the Swahili proverb says: “Vita vya panzi ni furaha ya kunguru” — when locusts fight, the crows rejoice. Whenever brothers and sisters are consumed by conflict, outsiders benefit while Africa grows weaker.

Let us defend justice without abandoning mercy. Let us defend sovereignty without sacrificing solidarity. Let us choose healing over hatred, wisdom over anger, and unity over division. Africa’s greatest strength has never been minerals or markets, but her people — united in purpose, steadfast in hope, and convinced that our shared destiny is greater than our present disagreements.

God bless South Africa. God bless Africa.

Njoroge Wanjigi Pan-African commentator and writer

Yoga **The programme, dubbed "6 Million Minutes of Fitness to the Global Defence," is being spearheaded by HRIM Yogshala**

India–Kenya wellness initiative promotes yoga for security officers

During the training

BY KNA

@themtkenyatimes

An Indian wellness organisation has launched an initiative to promote yoga among Kenya's security personnel as part of efforts to enhance physical fitness, mental resilience and overall well-being, while strengthening people-to-people ties between India and Kenya.

The programme, dubbed "6 Million Minutes of Fitness to the Global Defence," is being spearheaded by HRIM Yogshala, an international wellness and yoga organisation, and seeks to equip police officers and other security personnel with yoga techniques to help them manage stress, improve resilience and maintain holistic health.

In celebration of the International Day of Yoga, commemorated annually in June, more than 4,250 uniformed officers from the Kenya Police Service and Nairobi City County participated in yoga sessions, contributing more than 327,000 minutes to a global fitness campaign.

The initiative formed part of HRIM Yogshala's broader "6 Million Minutes to Fitness" campaign, which promotes physical activity and wellness while raising awareness of the health risks associated with physical inactivity.

The combined participation of Kenyan officers made the country one of the largest contributors to the campaign in terms of engagement by uniformed and public safety personnel.

HRIM Yogshala founder Rajvi Shailesh Mehta told KNA that the initiative aims to strengthen wellness while fostering cultural exchange between India and Kenya through yoga.

"Through HRIM Yogshala, we are building a movement that connects wellness, service and international friendship. We are honoured to contribute to a mission that promotes fitness, resilience and India-Kenya cultural diplomacy," she said.

She added that security personnel carry significant physical and emotional responsibilities in safeguarding communities, and yoga offers a simple but powerful tool for stress management, resilience and overall well-being.

"This initiative is dedicated to security officers worldwide in recognition of their service and sacrifice. Promoting their health contributes to building safer and more peaceful societies," she said.

HRIM Yogshala co-founder Raj Shailesh Mehta said the programme reflects a commitment to deepening cooperation between India and Kenya beyond trade and investment.

He said the initiative aligns with the growing bilateral partnership by promoting wellness, innovation and stronger people-to-people connections.

Mehta expressed appreciation to the Governments of India and Kenya, the Nairobi City County Government and the Kenya Police Service for supporting the programme.

"As an investor and long-term stakeholder in Kenya's growth, we believe in contributing beyond business by supporting community well-being, stronger institutions and cultural diplomacy," he said.

He added that HRIM Yogshala intends to continue working with Kenyan partners to expand wellness programmes that promote healthy communities while strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Yoga originates from the Sanskrit word "yuj," meaning "to yoke" or "to unite." It broadly represents ancient physical, mental and spiritual practices aimed at harmonising the mind, body and spirit.

Undergoing training.

Media freedom under threat

By **Pascal Okoth**

Kenya's press stands at a crossroads, and silence is not an option.

Media freedom is a pillar of democracy. It lets journalists report facts, hold leaders accountable, and give citizens the information they need to make informed decisions. Yet across Kenya and beyond, that freedom faces mounting threats.

Journalists routinely face intimidation, harassment, arrest, and even physical attack in the course of their work. Some are barred from public events; others face lawsuits or online abuse for exposing corruption, human rights violations, or government failures. The effect is chilling: fear discourages the very investigative journalism democracy depends on.

Political interference compounds the problem. Media owners and reporters face pressure from politicians, businesses, and advertisers to alter or bury stories. When financial or political interests dictate what is published, the public is denied balanced, truthful information.

Digital media adds a further layer of difficulty. Social platforms have widened access to information but also become vectors for misinformation and hate speech. Governments have responded with content regulations that, however well-intentioned, can be misused to restrict legitimate expression when applied without transparency.

Protecting press freedom demands collective will. Governments must uphold constitutional guarantees and safeguard journalists' safety. Newsrooms must maintain rigorous ethical standards and resist undue influence. Citizens, too, must support independent journalism and scrutinise what they consume and share.

A free press is not a favour to journalists — it is every citizen's guarantee of the truth. Defend it, or lose it.

Every African deserves safety and dignity

By **Alvis Ndambuki**

No one should have to flee a country simply for being African in it.

Reports of Kenyans leaving South Africa amid intensifying anti-migrant operations are a sobering reminder of what many Africans face when they live and work outside their home countries. Every person deserves dignity and respect, regardless of nationality.

Every country has the right to enforce its immigration laws and protect its borders. But that right comes with a responsibility: enforcement must be fair, lawful, and consistent with basic human rights. Migrants who obey the law should not be forced to live in fear, or targeted simply because of where they were born.

Many Kenyans travel abroad in search of education, employment, and better opportunities. Their safety should not become a bargaining chip in political disputes. Governments have a duty to protect their citizens wherever they are, and that duty is best served through dialogue and diplomacy rather than silence.

As a media student watching this unfold, I believe African nations should be building cooperation, not allowing tension to pull them apart. The continent's strength has always lain in unity, not division.

Mutual respect, lawful immigration enforcement, and the protection of human rights are not optional extras — they are the foundation of a more united, more prosperous Africa. Every migrant deserves better. Every African deserves to belong.

Court allows Finance Act 2026 to remain in force

By **Mercy Kanini**

The taxman keeps his mandate, for now.

The High Court in Lodwar has declined to suspend the Finance Act, 2026, allowing the government's new tax measures and the 2026/27 national budget to remain in effect while a constitutional petition challenging the laws proceeds.

The petitioners argued that the Finance Act was passed without adequate parliamentary participation, pointing to the absence of more than half of MPs during the Third Reading, and questioned the integrity of the legislative process. The court ruled that halting the law at this stage would risk disrupting government operations and the delivery of public services, and that the wider public interest favoured allowing it to stand.

The ruling means the Finance Act and the Appropriation Act will continue to apply until the case is fully heard and determined. The outcome carries significant implications for government revenue collection and public expenditure in the coming financial year — a reminder that in Kenya's courts, the tussle over how the country is taxed is far from settled.

Respect students' rights during security checks

By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**

Safety should never come at the cost of dignity.

Reports that students at St George's Girls Senior School were allegedly subjected to invasive body searches have rightly alarmed parents and the wider public. Schools carry a genuine duty to protect learners and keep dangerous or illegal items off their compounds. But that duty can never justify security measures that strip away a student's privacy, dignity, and rights.

Any allegations of inappropriate searches must be investigated thoroughly and transparently, with consequences for those found responsible. Going forward, clear, written guidelines should govern how such checks are conducted — who carries them out, under what circumstances, and with what oversight. Parents, too, deserve to be informed in advance about the procedures used to protect their children, not left to learn the details from a distressed daughter after the fact.

Security and dignity are not competing priorities. A school that protects its students' bodies while violating their sense of safety and self has failed at the very thing it set out to do.

School safety and students' rights must go hand in hand — or neither truly exists.

Andalo Christine Ingutia
Kenya Coast National Polytechnic

Sports >> *Gor Mahia and Kenya Police FC head to Kigali for the CECAFA Kagame Cup as K'Ogalo eye continental preparation and long-awaited regional glory

K'Ogalo face tough opposition in quest for first Cecafa title since 1985

Gor Mahia's Chris Alpha Onyango in action against Kakamega Homeboyz. PHOTO/GOR MAHIA FC

By **Martin Weche**

FKF Premier League champions Gor Mahia will fly the Kenyan flag alongside Kenya Police FC at the upcoming CECAFA Kagame Cup, set for Kigali, Rwanda, from July 18 to August 9.

According to organisers, the three-time regional champions are among a strong field of clubs from East and Central Africa battling for glory at the tournament, which has increasingly positioned itself as a key pre-season platform ahead of the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup campaigns. Other notable teams expected in contention include Tanzanian giants Simba SC, Sudanese powerhouse Al-Merrikh SC, and Rwanda's APR FC and Rayon Sports, alongside Uganda's Vipers SC and Tanzania's Young Africans.

"We are excited that the tournament will give our teams a platform to prepare ahead of the CAF competitions kicking off in September," a CECAFA official said in a statement announcing the tournament schedule.

The matches will be held at Amahoro Stadium and Kigali Pele Stadium.

K'Ogalo return to the regional competition for the first time since their 2019 campaign, where they reached the quarter-finals before losing 2-1 to Zambia's Green Eagles.

Speaking earlier in the week, Gor Mahia chairman Ambrose Rachier said the club would commit resources to ensure the team is properly prepared for the tournament.

"We will start our preparations upon the advice of the technical team. We will prepare for Cecafa, which begins soon. We need to be ready because we also have the Community Shield cup coming up in August. Whatever we are doing now should be in anticipation, so that we are not caught unawares," Rachier said.

Gor Mahia's Cecafa titles came in 1980, 1981 and 1985 — a dry spell that will only sharpen K'Ogalo's hunger to end it in Kigali. As part of their preparations, Gor Mahia have also been invited to face Rwandan side Rayon Sports in a friendly on August 17 at Amahoro Stadium, offering coach Charles Akonnor a chance to test his squad against continental opposition before the tournament proper begins.

Beyond the fight for regional glory, this year's competition doubles as a quasi-pre-season assignment for K'Ogalo, who face a demanding campaign ahead: a CAF Champions League preliminary round in September and the defence of their FKF Premier League title.

Sports >> *Egypt survive a nervy penalty shootout in Dallas to reach the last 16 for the first time in their history

Pharaohs show nerves of steel to beat Australia, qualify for World Cup round of 16

By **Agencies**

Egypt continued their fairytale run at the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a hard-fought 4-2 win on post-match penalties over Australia in their Round of 32 tie in Dallas on Friday night, sealing their first-ever knockout victory at a men's World Cup.

The Pharaohs took the lead after 13 minutes when Emam Ashour headed past Australian goalkeeper Patrick Beach, capitalising on a floated cross from the right delivered by Karim Hafez. The early goal, scored in front of a crowd of 70,000 at the air-conditioned home of the Dallas Cowboys, put the onus on a shot-shy Australian side that had scored only twice in the group phase.

However, the North Africans lost their grip on the game as the Socceroos poured forward in search of an equaliser. They came close inside the opening five minutes when Cristian Volpato, who switched allegiance to Australia from Italy on the eve of the tournament, rattled the crossbar. Egypt were eventually made to pay for their lapse in concentration roughly ten minutes into the second half, when defender Mohamed Hany unluckily headed the ball into his own net from a dangerous Australian free kick swung into the box — his second own goal of the tournament.

Emam Ashour celebrates his goal against Australia. PHOTO/FIFA WORLD CUP .

Stung by the equaliser, Hossam Hassan's side picked up the pace in the latter stages of normal time, but the Australians matched them for offensive threat throughout. Mohamed Salah, playing after recovering from a hamstring strain and largely peripheral for much of the contest, grew into the game during extra time but could not find the breakthrough his side craved. At the other end, Australian goalkeeper Patrick Beach produced a smart save deep into stoppage time to keep the Socceroos alive.

With nothing to separate the sides after 120 minutes, the tie went to a penalty shootout — a prospect that would ordinarily have unsettled Egypt, who had lost their four previous World Cup shootouts. Australia coach Tony Popovic gambled by introducing experienced goalkeeper Mathew Ryan for the shootout in place of Beach, but the switch failed to pay off.

The Egyptians showed cool heads and composed technique from the spot, converting all four of their kicks through Mahmoud Saber, Ramy Rabia, Mohamed Salah — who calmly dinked a Panenka down the middle — and Hossam Abdelmaguid. Australia, by contrast, faltered under pressure. Leicester City defender Harry Souttar, their first kicker, blazed his effort well over the crossbar, while young substitute Lucas Herrington struck the bar with what would have been their fifth kick.

It was left to Abdelmaguid to confirm the Pharaohs' passage into the last 16, sending Ryan the wrong way with a composed finish into the corner to spark wild celebrations among the Egyptian players and a standing ovation from thousands of travelling fans inside the stadium. Coach Hossam Hassan was seen in tears at the final whistle as his players celebrated the historic achievement.

The result marks Egypt's fourth World Cup appearance and the first time the seven-time African champions have progressed beyond the round of 32, extending a dream run that has captured attention across the continent. The Pharaohs will now await the winner of the Round of 32 clash between Argentina and Cape Verde, with the two sides set to meet in Atlanta for a place in the quarter-finals.

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

The MT. KENYA TIMES

Bricks for children, not builders: the inheritance that is collapsing

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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Across cities and villages in East Africa, the skyline tells one story while the interiors tell another. New gates, high walls, German cars, and names etched in stone — "Mirembe Villa," "Joshua Court," "Shalom Heights" — dominate the view in places like Kampala, Nairobi, Kigali, Bujumbura, Dodoma, Addis Ababa, Juba, Mogadishu, Asmara and Djibouti.

Behind those gates, though, a quieter story is unfolding. In Kampala, a 62-year-old man holds three plots in Kololo, a seven-bedroom mansion nearing completion, multiple bank accounts and a SACCO membership. Asked about his sons, he says the suffering has already been done for them — they will never have to suffer as he did. Notice what's missing from that answer: the sons' names. Only the bricks get mentioned.

This exchange is not isolated. It reflects a regional pattern in which parents gather land, fill accounts and erect houses for their children, working from the assumption that material provision equals protection. What often goes missing is the deliberate work of building character — the virtues, the habits, the training a child needs to generate wealth, not merely inherit and consume it.

The shift becomes clear when you compare generations. Earlier generations in East African homes had far less to work with — a hoe, a mat, a Bible — and spent their evenings on the veranda, where correction was direct. Children were told to sit, watch and try again. Stories, discipline and shared labour formed the daily curriculum.

Today's generation has land titles, mobile banking, forex access and far longer working hours. The goal — that children must not start from zero — has produced 16-hour workdays, school meetings missed for land transactions, and family dinners skipped for tenders. It's described as love and sacrifice, and in many ways it is. But the outcome is incomplete: houses go up while the person meant to maintain them never gets formed. Accounts are funded, but nobody teaches the discipline to guard them. Vehicles are bought, but the restraint to use them wisely is never instilled. A home with walls but no formed occupant is simply a structure waiting to decay.

Illustration

The belief that land, cash and property will keep children safe persists widely, but experience across Nairobi, Kigali, Bujumbura, Dodoma, Addis Ababa, Juba, Mogadishu, Asmara and Djibouti tells a different story. Land does not correct foolishness — it magnifies the consequences. Cash does not restrain pride — it finances it. A mansion does not cure isolation — it amplifies it.

One case illustrates the pattern well. A man in his late twenties inherited four rental units in Nairobi with no business training, no mentor and no habit of work. Within three years, tenants had vacated, the roof had deteriorated, and two units were sold to chase speculative cryptocurrency. He now rents a single room and blames his father for the collapse. But the failure wasn't in the earning — it was in the forming. Wealth without wisdom behaves like a weapon in untrained hands, and more capital keeps being handed over without the capacity to steward it.

In traditional East African practice, inheritance began with conduct. Children were taught to rise early before the day dictated terms, to apologise quickly before pride hardened, to handle small money under supervision before large money arrived, to respect elders in preparation for becoming one themselves, and to endure failure without blaming the clan or community.

That curriculum has been quietly set aside, on the reasoning that the world is harsh, so childhood should be soft. The result is a child softened by ease who cannot withstand a harsh world.

A grandmother in Kampala raised nine children on one small shop, with no land title to her name — yet her children show remarkable stability in crisis, because virtues were taught long before maize was ever stored. Compare that with households in Kampala, Nairobi and Mogadishu today, full stores and all, where children cannot endure a single month of financial pressure without panic.

A parent's job was never to kill the animal for a child's whole life — it was to teach tracking, waiting, aiming, missing, and trying again. Across Juba, Bujumbura, Asmara and Djibouti, the opposite is happening. Late school fees are covered, failed businesses bailed out, rent arrears settled, heartbreak soothed with new devices. The intent is protection. The effect is disablement.

A child who has never known hunger does not value food. A child who has never lost money does not respect it. A child who has never heard "no" collapses the moment the world says it. Capacity is built through practice — a small budget handed over with room to fail, chores that demand sweat and consistency, books read and then explained back, elders heard without interruption, prayer and reflection carried out beyond a parent's watchful eye. That is how you build wealth that can't be stolen, taxed or devalued.

The coming years will test these patterns. Over the next 15 years, Kampala, Nairobi, Kigali, Dodoma, Addis Ababa, Juba, Mogadishu, Asmara and Djibouti will see a large-scale transfer of land and cash, as the generation that built its wealth in the 1990s and 2000s grows old. Where character formation hasn't happened, the record will show it — headlines about sons selling a father's six acres within eight months, daughters fighting siblings in court over rental property, family businesses shutting down soon after a father's burial.

The walls will still stand. The name will still be on the gate. But the spirit of the home will be gone. A house is not a home once discipline, gratitude and reverence have left it.

Feeling uncomfortable with this is, in itself, a sign that change is possible — and the right response depends on where a parent stands. For those who already hold substantial wealth, correction can start now: sit down with the 22-year-old, reclaim one plot, and transfer title only after 24 months of managing a small project with audited accounts. Money should be made visible, so children can watch budgeting happen, watch bad deals get rejected, watch generosity in practice. Mentorship deserves investment too — an elder, a pastor, a disciplined relative willing to walk alongside the child, because tuition can be bought, but fatherhood cannot. It can only be supported.

For parents still building their wealth, time itself should be treated as capital. Reserve one device-free evening a week for story, prayer and correction. Require work before inheritance. Treat land as a responsibility, not a gift, and test competence on small matters first. Make virtue part of the dinner-table conversation — in Nairobi, Kampala, Kigali or Addis Ababa alike — so that honesty gets discussed more often than land prices. Children repeat what they hear repeated.

There is one gate that can never be reopened. The iron gate will remain. The bank will eventually freeze the account. The land board will transfer the title. What crosses with the child, in the end, is the person they have become. Two inheritances are on offer: a mansion with a stranger inside it, or character with a hunter inside it. Mansions can burn. Accounts can empty. Land can be seized. But a son or daughter who can rise early, work diligently, wait patiently, worship sincerely and walk with integrity — that cannot be taken from them.

The task, then, is clear. The focus must shift from building only houses to building men and women. Because the saddest inheritance of all is a full house with empty people inside it.

Published at Shashil Court Westlands & Printed at Mombasa Road, Nairobi by Exponential International Limited. P.O. Box 101675 - 00101 Nairobi.
Email: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke | To place Adverts: Email: ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke Tel: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262, 0781 894 777. www.mtkenyatimes.com