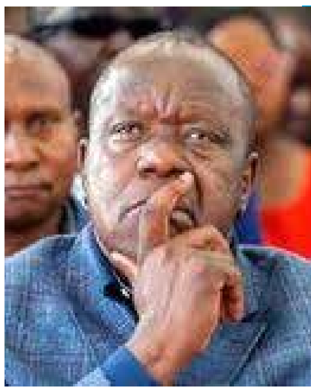
The extortion charge: Ichung'wah fires back at Gachagua with KSh300M allegation

Kimani Ichung'wah yesterday accused former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua of attempting to extort KSh300 million from the China Road and Bridge Corporation Page 8



Ruaraka land saga: How KSh1.5B was paid for land the government already owned

EACC is moving to recover KSh1.5B in public funds after a Court of Appeal ruling confirmed that compensation paid for land occupied by two Nairobi public schools Page 12

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

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 No. 01611 KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)

themtkenyatimes Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

www.mountkenyatimes.co.ke

Politics "Over the last four years, William Ruto has captured the state," Gachagua said, his voice measured and deliberate.

Gachagua goes for the jugular

Rigathi Gachagua stood before journalists in Nairobi yesterday and did what Kenya's political establishment has rarely seen done so openly: he named figures, cited institutions, quoted valuations and accused a sitting president of being a dollar billionaire built on stolen public wealth. It was not a political rally speech. It was a prosecutorial address — methodical, detailed and deliberately designed to follow William Ruto into the 2027 election campaign like a shadow that will not lift.

The Democracy for the Citizens Party leader, impeached as deputy president in October 2023 after a falling-out with Ruto that has since curdled into open warfare, has spent months sharpening his critique of the administration he once served at the second-highest level. Yesterday's address in the capital represented the sharpest edge yet — a speech that moved beyond political rivalry into something closer to a documented indictment, one that the government will find difficult to dismiss with the usual denials.

"Over the last four years, William Ruto has captured the state," Gachagua said, his voice measured and deliberate. "He has focused on centralising control of independent constitutional commissions, state entities, public sector procurement and the sale of strategic national assets. All these measures are aimed at achieving the objective of enriching himself at the expense of 55 million Kenyans." He did not stop there. "He has achieved the milestone of being certified as a US dollar billionaire in a four-year record, courtesy of looting Kenyan public coffers."

Page 9

Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua

NEXT GENERATION CLASSIFY
"ONE-STOP NATIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY"

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

SCAN TO REGISTER

ngLASSIFY
"ALL BUSINESSES ONE PLATFORM"

Opposition leaders renew push for one presidential candidate in 2027

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Opposition leaders under the United Alternative Government have renewed their commitment to unite behind a single presidential candidate in next year's General Election.
Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua said the leaders had met yesterday, exactly one year to the August 2027 polls, and agreed to present one candidate to challenge President William Ruto.
Gachagua declared that the "WANTAM" campaign would take shape, saying the coalition was determined to send President Ruto home and restore the country's dignity.
The meeting brought together former Cabinet Secretaries Martha Karua, Justin Muturi, Fred Matiang'i and Peter Munya, alongside Lenny Kivuti, Eugene Wamalwa and Mohamed Ali, representing Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka.
Munya said the meeting focused on accelerating efforts to unite the opposition and settle on one presidential candidate.
Karua said she remained committed to strengthening opposition unity and building a credible front, but cautioned that the final decision would rest with voters.
Matiang'i said the leaders remained united in their mission to "fix" the country and restore the dignity of Kenyans.














Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times

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

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

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

Facebook: Mt. Kenya Times, **Instagram:** Mt. Kenya Times , **Twitter**: @themtkenyatimes
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/mt-kenya-times-a07999115/

NEXT GENERATION CLASSIFY

"ONE-STOP NATIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY"

ngLASSIFY

"ALL BUSINESSES ONE PLATFORM"

FREE REGISTRATION

REGISTER NOW!

SCAN TO REGISTER

Contact Us:

+254 720 918 828 / +254 713 318 438
+254 706 237 040 / +254 721 274 369
+254 724 613 401 / +254 100 423 971
+254 724 613 401

business@exponentialinternational.com

www.businessavaibale.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) has called for the preservation of indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional practices, warning that valuable knowledge held by older generations is increasingly being lost among young people. Speaking during celebrations to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Director of the Institute of Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural Studies and Climate Change Prof Josephine Ngaira said the institution was working to empower communities to preserve indigenous forests, foods and medicines using modern methods. The celebrations, themed "Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being," highlighted the role of traditional midwives in preserving health knowledge. Traditional midwife Philis Mutei urged youth to embrace safe traditional family-planning practices. MMUST also plans to plant 130,000 indigenous trees across Western Kenya to combat climate change and conserve biodiversity.

The national government is implementing multibillion-shilling infrastructure projects along the Coast to stimulate economic growth and position the region as a major logistics and economic hub. Key projects include the Sh20 billion Mwache Multipurpose Dam, Sh32 billion Dongo Kundu Bypass, Sh48 billion Lamu Port, Sh2.6 billion Shimoni Fish Port, Sh12.5 billion Galana-Kulalu Food Security Project and Sh7.5 billion Mtwapa Bridge. The Mwache Dam is 99 percent complete, with a storage capacity of about 127 million cubic metres. The completed Shimoni Fish Port, Kenya's first industrial maritime hub dedicated to commercial fishing and fish processing, can handle 50,000 metric tonnes of fish annually. The projects are creating jobs, supporting local businesses and strengthening the region's blue economy.

The Ministry of Health has engaged the media ahead of the inaugural Kenya Health Summit scheduled for August 18–19 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC). The summit, themed "Reforms Delivered, Health as a Right," will assess progress towards Universal Health Coverage and shape the next phase of health reforms. The Government said more than 31.2 million Kenyans have registered with the Social Health Authority, which has processed nearly 7.9 million claims worth about Sh164 billion. More than 107,000 Community Health Promoters are providing preventive and basic healthcare through 277 Primary Care Networks. The Government is also strengthening emergency response, pharmaceutical manufacturing, medical infrastructure and disease surveillance. Journalists were urged to assess reforms beyond statistics by engaging patients, healthcare workers and communities.

Masalani Township in Ijara Sub-County, Garissa County, experienced a power outage lasting nearly six hours, disrupting businesses and daily activities. The blackout began at about 4pm and power was restored around 9.50pm, with residents attributing it to a faulty transformer near the Masalani water supply. Residents have urged local leaders, including Governor Nathif Jama and Ijara MP Abdi Ali, to engage Energy Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi to address the problem. Former Garissa County Council chairman Mohamed Gure, Ijara youth leader Salah Yarrow and Masalani Watchdog chairman Abdullahi Abdi called for upgrading the local KPLC substation. They also urged banks to establish branches and demanded Huduma services to reduce long journeys to Hola and Garissa.

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) is using the 98th Kenya Music Festival to promote digital safety and awareness among learners, teachers, parents and communities. The Authority is sponsoring the theme "Child Online Protection and Safe Use of the Internet" under its Child Online Protection Programme, focusing on risks such as cyberbullying, exploitation, harmful content, misinformation, scams and privacy violations. CA Director General David Mugonyi said the festival also promotes productive Internet use, online etiquette, positive digital identity, responsible sharing and identifying genuine mobile phones. The Authority has introduced classes on building positive digital identities for learners with disabilities and supports ICT accessibility standards and assistive technologies. The initiatives seek to equip the public with practical skills for safe, inclusive and responsible participation in the digital environment.

Young people aged 15–24 in Nyeri Municipality are set to benefit from the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF), which will provide grants for locally led projects addressing climate change and strengthening community resilience. The grants will range from Sh129,390 to Sh646,950 for initiatives focusing on climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem restoration, green innovation, climate governance and climate education, among other areas. Applications will open on August 18, 2026, and close on September 30, 2026. Nyeri County has urged young people to take advantage of the programme by developing practical solutions that protect the environment while creating opportunities and promoting sustainable communities. The programme is powered by Bloomberg Philanthropies and implemented through the Youth Climate Action Fund, with county officials already preparing for its rollout.


The Africa Largest
eCOMMERCE
www. gotyou.co.ke
NOW
OPEN
Call/Text/WhatsApp: +254 714 090 155

Tea **“Our tea farmers deserve a government and leadership that will stand with them and fight for their interests wherever those interests are at stake,” Kalonzo said**

Kalonzo takes tea crisis to Mombasa in direct pitch for farmers

The government’s parliamentary front man has accused Kenya’s most vocal opposition critic of attempting to extort millions from a Chinese state firm while serving as deputy president — a counter-strike that signals the ruling coalition is done playing defence.

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday visited the East African Tea Trade Association headquarters in Mombasa for direct talks on the crisis gripping Kenya’s tea sector, with Sudan’s ban on Kenyan tea exports emerging as the central concern of an industry that supports millions of livelihoods across the country.

The visit, which Kalonzo described as a follow-up to a recent engagement with the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, brought him face to face with the association’s leadership, including Managing Director and Chief Executive George Omuga. The discussions, by Kalonzo’s own account, were candid — a word that in political parlance usually signals that what was said in the room was considerably more alarming than what is said for the cameras.

Sudan has historically been one of Kenya’s most significant tea export destinations, and its decision to ban Kenyan tea has sent tremors through an industry already navigating volatile global commodity prices, climate-related production pressures and the chronic challenge

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka (R)

of ensuring that smallholder farmers receive a fair share of the value generated by one of the country’s most important agricultural exports. The ban has not only reduced revenue — it has exposed a structural vulnerability that successive governments have failed to address: Kenya’s dangerous over-reliance on a narrow band of export markets for a crop that anchors the rural economy of entire regions.

“Our tea farmers deserve a government and leadership that will stand with them and fight for their interests wherever those interests are at stake,” Kalonzo said following the meeting. “That is why I am engaging directly with the industry and pressing for the reopening of the Sudanese market, while working to secure and diversify markets for Kenyan tea.”

The framing is deliberate. Kalonzo is not positioning himself as a sympathiser dropping in for a photo opportunity in an industry town. He is positioning himself as an operator — someone willing to engage embassies, sit with trade association chief executives and follow up on commitments. The sequence matters: embassy engagement first, industry leadership second, public statement third. It is the architecture of a man running a shadow foreign economic policy, and it is aimed squarely at a farming constituency that has felt invisible to the current administration.

The East African Tea Trade Association, which manages the Mombasa Tea Auction — the largest in the world — occupies a unique position in Kenya’s agricultural economy. The auction sets benchmark prices that ripple through the incomes of hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers, the majority of whom operate through Kenya Tea Development Agency factories across the central highlands, the Rift Valley and the Nyanza tea-growing belt. When export markets contract, the auction feels it, the factories feel it and the farmers feel it in the prices paid at the weighing bridge. Sudan’s ban is not a diplomatic abstraction. It is money out of farmers’ pockets.

Kalonzo acknowledged the breadth of the challenge, committing not only to pressing for the Sudanese market’s reopening but also to working on market diversification — an implicit acknowledgement that Kenya cannot continue to be caught flat-footed when a single importing country closes its doors. The tea sector has long needed a coherent export diversification strategy, and the current crisis has given political opposition figures an opening to make that case more forcefully than the government has been willing to do.

“I thank the leadership of EATTA for their frankness and for the confidence they have placed in this engagement,” Kalonzo said, adding that the Mombasa visit was part of a wider programme of sector engagements he intends to carry out across the country. “I will keep listening. I will keep engaging. I will keep pressing Kenya’s case.”

The pledge has the rhythm of a campaign promise, and that is precisely what it is. With the 2027 election cycle drawing closer by the week, Kalonzo is building a case for economic stewardship one sector visit at a time — tea in Mombasa today, agriculture elsewhere tomorrow. Whether the government responds to the pressure on the Sudanese market or leaves the opposition to own the issue entirely may well determine which side of the argument Kenya’s farming communities find more compelling when they finally cast their votes.

For now, the farmers are waiting. And Kalonzo is making sure they know someone is listening.

The MT. KENYA TIMES
Where Investors Get Returns

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

ADLINK INTERNATIONAL
(1989) MEDIA GROUP
GLOBAL PRINT, BROADCAST OUTDOOR & DIGITAL ADVERTISING
SERVING YOU SINCE 1989

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


NEWS PAPER
IN BUSINESS
The Mount Kenya Times
+254 724 439 949, +254 720 918 828, +254 721 103 040, +254 713 318 438
website: https://mountkenyatimes.co.ke

Politics "Rigathi's bitterness with China Road and Bridge Corporation exposes his insatiable greed," Ichung'wah said.

The extortion charge: Ichung'wah fires back at Gachagua with KSh300M allegation

The government's parliamentary front man has accused Kenya's most vocal opposition critic of attempting to extort millions from a Chinese state firm while serving as deputy president — a counter-strike that signals the ruling coalition is done playing defence.

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah yesterday accused former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua of attempting to extort KSh300 million from the China Road and Bridge Corporation while serving as the country's second-in-command, escalating the most combustible political feud in Kenya's recent history into territory that could have serious legal consequences for both sides.

The accusation, delivered at Parliament grounds in Nairobi with a phalanx of broad-based lawmakers standing behind him, was the government's most direct and specific counter-offensive yet against Gachagua, who a day earlier had accused President William Ruto of state capture, systematic looting and achieving dollar billionaire status through the plunder of public coffers. Where Gachagua had spoken in the language of financial forensics, Ichung'wah responded in the language of criminal allegation — and the charge he levelled was unambiguous.

"Rigathi's bitterness with China Road and Bridge Corporation exposes his insatiable greed," Ichung'wah said. "While calling others corrupt, Gachagua is the high priest of corruption. He attempted to extort KSh300 million from CRBC when he was deputy president for their alleged transgressions during the Uhuru Kenyatta regime." The Kikuyu MP added that CRBC, as a state-owned enterprise of the Chinese government, had declined the alleged demand, citing the fact that its contracts are governed by Kenyan law and subject to scrutiny by institutions including the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority.

The allegation is significant on multiple levels. CRBC is one of the most prominent Chinese contractors operating in Kenya, responsible for major infrastructure projects including sections of the Standard Gauge Railway and various road construction

National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah addresses the press, flanked by broad-based MPs

programmes. Any suggestion that a serving deputy president sought to leverage the corporation's past conduct for personal financial gain would, if substantiated, constitute a serious abuse of office. Gachagua has not yet formally responded to the specific CRBC allegation. His office did not issue a statement by the time of publication.

Ichung'wah did not stop at the CRBC claim. He also alleged that Gachagua had separately demanded

"

The accusation, delivered at Parliament grounds in Nairobi with a phalanx of broad-based lawmakers standing behind him, was the government's most direct and specific counter-offensive yet against Gachagua, who a day earlier had accused President William Ruto of state capture, systematic looting and achieving dollar billionaire status through the plunder of public coffers. Where Gachagua had spoken in the language of financial forensics, Ichung'wah responded in the language of criminal allegation — and the charge he levelled was unambiguous.

KSh10B to, in his words, "fix Mount Kenya politics" during his tenure in government — a charge that, if true, would suggest the former deputy president ran a political operation of extraordinary financial ambition from within the executive itself. No supporting documentation was produced at the press conference, and the majority leader did not indicate whether the matter had been referred to investigative authorities.

What the press conference made clear, however, is that the Kenya Kwanza administration has made a strategic decision to confront Gachagua's narrative with a counter-narrative of equal aggression rather than the studied silence or mild rebuttals that characterised earlier responses. The choreography of the event — Ichung'wah flanked by legislators, the Parliament grounds as backdrop, the timing a day after Gachagua's own high-profile address — left nothing to interpretation. This was a coordinated political response, not an impromptu reaction.

Ichung'wah dismissed Gachagua's sweeping critique of the government's economic record with a line that was equal parts dismissive and cutting. He claimed that Gachagua had himself previously admitted to lacking a grasp of economics during his time in office, and that a man who was excluded from economic recovery meetings while serving as deputy president was poorly positioned to deliver lectures on public debt management. "He has made numerous, wild and frivolous allegations without proof," Ichung'wah said. "He is determined to dilute objective national security agencies by aiming his petty political arsenals at diligent security officers."

The majority leader also returned to the constitutional grounds on which Gachagua was removed from office, framing the impeachment not as a political act — which is how Gachagua and his supporters consistently characterise it — but as a necessary institutional correction. "We continue to remind Kenyans why he was impeached: violating the constitution, undermining institutions and the rule of law," Ichung'wah said. It is a formulation the government has repeated consistently, and one it clearly intends to keep repeating as 2027 approaches.

The political context surrounding this exchange is as important as the allegations themselves. Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party is in the process of consolidating an opposition identity anchored in Mount Kenya grievance politics — the argument that the region delivered the presidency to Ruto in 2022 and has received inadequate returns on that political investment. His attacks on the government's economic record, his detailed allegations about Sidian Bank's asset growth and his accusations of systematic corruption are all designed to speak directly to that constituency and to position himself as its most credible champion heading into the next election cycle.

The government's calculation, reflected in yesterday's press conference, appears to be that the most effective way to neutralise that positioning is not to defend the economic record — which is genuinely mixed, with debt levels, the cost of living and public service delivery all presenting political vulnerabilities — but to destroy the credibility of the messenger. If Gachagua can be made to appear not as a principled whistle-blower but as a corrupt former official exploiting his insider knowledge for political rehabilitation, the moral authority of his critique evaporates regardless of whether the underlying allegations have merit.

It is a high-risk strategy. Accusations of extortion made at a press conference without accompanying evidence or referral to investigative agencies can quickly appear to be political theatre rather than genuine accountability. And if Gachagua and his team produce documentation or witnesses that contradict the CRBC narrative, the government will have handed its most dangerous critic a gift it cannot easily retrieve.

For now, both sides are speaking to their own audiences and measuring success in social media reach, rally sizes and the daily temperature of public sentiment in Mount Kenya's county headquarters. The 2027 election is still more than a year away. But the war has already started, and yesterday made clear that neither combatant intends to fight it quietly.

Kenya's political season has arrived early, and it has arrived loud.

Politics The allegation of dollar billionaire status is extraordinary even by Kenya's turbulent political standards.

Gachagua goes for the jugular: The speech that shook a nation

Kenya's impeached former deputy president has delivered his most forensic assault yet on William Ruto's government, accusing the president of state capture, systematic looting and engineering his own billionaire status on the backs of 55 million Kenyans.

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Rigathi Gachagua stood before journalists in Nairobi yesterday and did what Kenya's political establishment has rarely seen done so openly: he named figures, cited institutions, quoted valuations and accused a sitting president of being a dollar billionaire built on stolen public wealth. It was not a political rally speech. It was a prosecutorial address — methodical, detailed and deliberately designed to follow William Ruto into the 2027 election campaign like a shadow that will not lift.

The Democracy for the Citizens Party leader, impeached as deputy president in October 2023 after a falling-out with Ruto that has since curdled into open warfare, has spent months sharpening his critique of the administration he once served at the second-highest level. Yesterday's address in the capital represented the sharpest edge yet — a speech that moved beyond political rivalry into something closer to a documented indictment, one that the government will find difficult to dismiss with the usual denials.

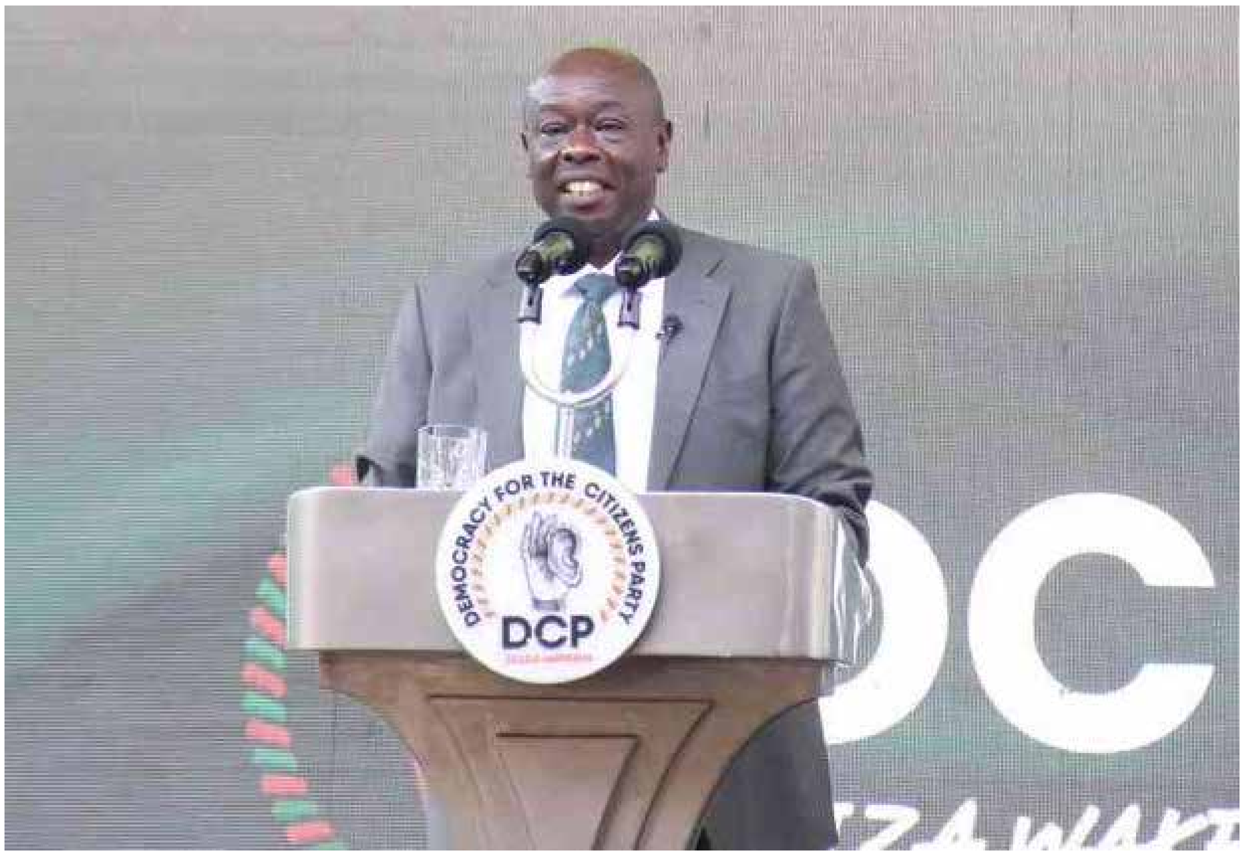
"Over the last four years, William Ruto has captured the state," Gachagua said, his voice measured and deliberate. "He has focused on centralising control of independent constitutional commissions, state entities, public sector procurement and the sale of strategic national assets. All these measures are aimed at achieving the objective of enriching himself at the expense of 55 million Kenyans." He did not stop there. "He has achieved the milestone of being certified as a US dollar billionaire in a four-year record, courtesy of looting Kenyan public coffers."

The allegation of dollar billionaire status is extraordinary even by Kenya's turbulent political standards. Gachagua offered no independent audited evidence to substantiate the claim, and the presidency has consistently denied wrongdoing in relation to Ruto's personal finances. Yet the specificity of the charge — and the platform from which it was made — ensures it will circulate far beyond yesterday's press conference and lodge itself in the public consciousness precisely when Ruto needs to be constructing his re-election narrative.

The numbers Gachagua cited were designed to be remembered. He claimed the current administration borrows an average of KSh3.5B daily while simultaneously stealing KSh3B daily from public resources. He broke that figure down with the precision of a forensic accountant: KSh125 million stolen per hour, KSh2 million per minute, every minute, around the clock. Whether or not the arithmetic withstands independent scrutiny, the rhetorical effect was immediate. These are not abstract policy failures. These are figures that translate into the cost of a classroom, a hospital bed, a borehole — and Gachagua knows it.

He turned next to what he described as the systematic weaponisation of flagship government programmes. The Hustler Fund, which Ruto championed as a financial lifeline for ordinary Kenyans during the 2022 campaign, has become, in Gachagua's framing, a hollow symbol of broken faith. The Affordable Housing project — announced with considerable fanfare as a plan to build 250,000 units annually — has delivered nowhere near that figure in four years, and Gachagua alleged it has been converted into a mechanism for acquiring public land and cornering construction material supply chains for the benefit of those connected to power. The Social Health Authority, introduced to replace the National Hospital Insurance Fund, has attracted its own controversy since launch, with widespread complaints about functionality and access that have made it politically toxic in many constituencies.

The most pointed section of Gachagua's address concerned Sidian Bank. He alleged that the financial institution, in which Ruto has an interest, has undergone a transformation in asset base that correlates directly with the president's time in office. "Sidian is valued at KSh95B, comprising KSh74B in customer deposits and a reported KSh1.7B net profit in the year ending 2025," Gachagua said. "Notice the sudden change in fortune — it had KSh42B in assets in 2022 and KSh30B in customer deposits. Since William Ruto bought it, you can see the transformation." He alleged that state institutions and the Nairobi County Government had been directed to deposit public funds into the bank, inflating its balance sheet to the benefit of its owner. Sidian Bank has not publicly responded to the allegations. The Central Bank of Kenya has not commented.



Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua

What makes yesterday's speech politically significant is not merely what was said, but who is saying it and why it is likely to be heard differently from what any opposition leader could offer. Gachagua was there. He sat in Cabinet. He attended the security briefings. He was in the room when decisions were made. His accusations carry the implicit weight of insider knowledge, even when they cannot be independently verified, and that is precisely what makes them so difficult for the government to neutralise. Dismissing him as a disgruntled former ally is possible. Explaining away the specificity of the figures he cites is considerably harder.

The broader political context sharpens the significance further. Kenya is entering the gravitational pull of the 2027 election cycle, and the battle lines are being drawn with unusual clarity. Gachagua's DCP is positioning itself as the vehicle for Mount Kenya's political grievances, a region that delivered decisive votes for Ruto in 2022 and now feels, in the assessment of many community leaders, that the bargain was not honoured. The former deputy president's public profile in that region remains substantial, and his ability to frame Ruto's record in terms of personal enrichment rather than policy failure gives the critique a populist edge that resonates well beyond Nairobi's political class.

Gachagua closed with a direct challenge. He warned Ruto that his four-year track record would be subjected to intensive scrutiny as the election approaches, and urged him to seek a second term on the basis of results rather than a fresh set of promises. "Kenyans," he said, "have heard the promises. What they are waiting for now is the reckoning."

It was a closing line calibrated for a campaign, not a press conference. Rigathi Gachagua is no longer merely an impeached former official nursing his wounds. He is a candidate in all but formal declaration, and yesterday's address in Nairobi was less a speech than an opening statement to a jury that will deliver its verdict in August 2027.

The trial, in every meaningful sense, has begun.

Politics The camp, themed "Promoting Preventive Healthcare for Healthy Communities," will be held at PCEA Church-Tumaini, Baraka, Nanyuki, the entire day

Kamuri Foundation to hold free medical camp in Nanyuki

BY Diplomatic Media Services
@themtkenyatimes

Laikipia Deputy Governor Reuben Kamuri's philanthropic initiative, the Kamuri Foundation, will hold a free preventive health medical camp in Nanyuki this Saturday. This is part of the Deputy Governor's efforts to promote early detection and management of common diseases in the community.

The camp, themed "Promoting Preventive Healthcare for Healthy Communities," will be held at PCEA Church-Tumaini, Baraka, Nanyuki, the entire day.

Residents will have access to a range of free health services, including blood pressure and diabetes screening, prostate cancer screening, body mass index (BMI) assessment, HIV testing and counselling, nutrition counselling and health education.

Those found to require further medical attention will be referred for appropriate management.

The initiative by the Kamuri Foundation is expected to benefit residents who may otherwise delay seeking medical attention because of the cost of screening and other barriers to accessing healthcare.

Kamuri who has declared his interest in being the next Laikipia County governor has invested in education and social support for less fortunate members of society and has a particular interest in quality public healthcare.

The foundation's preventive-health initiative also complements Laikipia County's stated emphasis on strengthening preventive and promotive healthcare, increasing access to primary healthcare services and expanding screening for non-communicable diseases.

Kamuri has in recent years participated in community and health-related programmes in the county.

In April this year, he led a mental-health sensitisation walk in Nanyuki ahead of a scientific conference, signalling the county leadership's focus on screening, early intervention and improved access to mental healthcare.

The foundation's medical camp is being supported by National Bank, Laikipia Health Services and PCMF under the banner "Together for a Healthier Laikipia."

Yesterday, Kamuri urged residents of Nanyuki and surrounding areas to take advantage of the camp to know their health status and seek early intervention where necessary.

The initiative places emphasis on preventive healthcare, with residents encouraged to undergo routine screening even when they have no apparent symptoms.

Laikipia Deputy Governor Reuben Kamuri addressing a public meeting in the past. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

Mau Mau “Today, we have signed the memorandum of understanding between groups advocating for peace, love and unity in our nation,” Kasisi said.

Mau Mau veterans sign peace pact, renew compensation push ahead of 2027 polls

Three organisations have united to advance veterans’ reparations and warn Kenyans against tribal politics as the election cycle gathers pace.

BY Brian Gitonga
@themtkenyatimes

The Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mwamko Mpya Initiative Peace Movement and Kenya Veterans for Peace, committing the three organisations to a joint campaign for peace, unity and compensation for Mau Mau veterans ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The signing ceremony, held at Bluepost Hotel in Thika, drew representatives from across all 47 counties. Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG chief executive Emma Kasisi said the agreement marked a significant step as the country entered another election cycle, and that a united front would give the veterans’ long-running compensation campaign greater visibility and political weight.

“Today, we have signed the memorandum of understanding between groups advocating for peace, love and unity in our nation,” Kasisi said. “Our unity will speed up the compensation agenda and strengthen our voice in preaching peace, love and unity.”

Beyond peacebuilding, Kasisi said the partnership would intensify efforts to have Mau Mau reparations formally incorporated into national policy and budget priorities, with the organisations planning to mobilise communities and engage Parliament and other stakeholders on the issue. She also issued a direct warning to young Kenyans, urging them to stay alert as political activity intensifies, and to resist being used to advance interests that could fracture the country’s social fabric.

Khadija Theuri, a Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG member from Nyeri, spoke on behalf of the Mwamko Mpya Peace Initiative, which she said was registered in 2013 and has since grown to approximately 1.7 million members across the country. Theuri said the initiative had joined the partnership out of a shared commitment to national unity, and that the ceremony itself was proof that Kenyans from different communities — including representatives from Nandi and Pokot — could come together without reservation.

“We have come here so that we can work together in unity with our brothers and sisters from Mau Mau without discriminating against each other on the basis of tribalism,” Theuri said. She added that Kenya’s history was shaped by the sacrifices of people from many communities, and that citizens owed it to that history to reject tribal divisions.

James Muriuki, national chairperson of Kenya Veterans for Peace, said his organisation brought together retired Kenya Defence Forces personnel who had carried their commitment to service beyond the barracks. He said the organisation had been promoting peaceful coexistence since 2007, when the country faced one of its most turbulent post-election periods.

“Since we started preaching peace in this country, the change is evident — and you too can see the evidence of that change,” Muriuki said, describing the new partnership as a natural extension of work his members had been doing for nearly two decades.

A note of caution was sounded by Silas Mbaabu, a Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG member from Meru, who praised the leadership for bringing diverse groups together but warned the public against imposters. Mbaabu said a number of individuals and organisations were fraudulently using the Mau Mau name to solicit money from unsuspecting Kenyans by making false promises of benefits.

“We know there are many other groups claiming to be Mau Mau and conning people. We ask people to be alert and avoid being deceived,” he said.

The partnership reflects a broader anxiety within civil society about the direction of public discourse as 2027 approaches. For the Mau Mau veterans and their allies, the message is consistent: Kenya’s future depends on unity, and the sacrifices of those who fought for independence deserve acknowledgement — not just in words, but in policy and in public funds.

Silas Mbaabu, a Mau Mau Veterans Association CLG member from Meru adresses the press. | *Photo:* Brian Gitonga

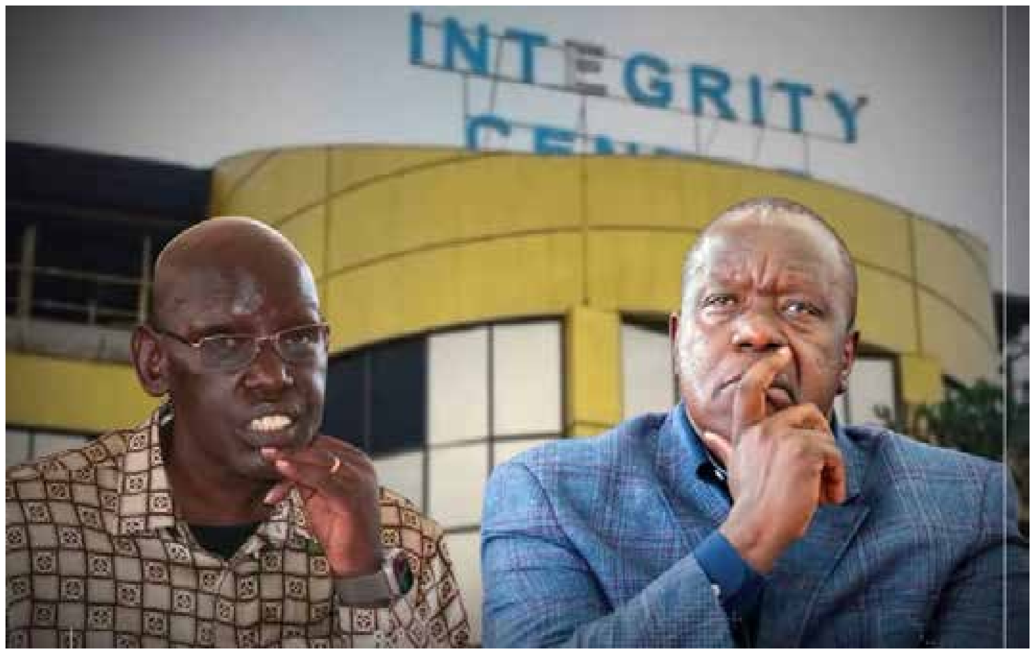
Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG CEO Cherotich Emma Kasisi adresses the press. | *Photo:* Brian Gitonga

Khadija Theuri, a Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG member from Nyeri. | *Photo:* Brian Gitonga

A section of Mau Mau Veterans Associate CLG members follow the proceedings. | *Photo:* Brian Gitonga

Corruption The case has drawn in several prominent names. Former Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and former Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang

Ruaraka land saga: How KSh1.5B was paid for land the government already owned



Former Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and former Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang

A Court of Appeal ruling has cleared the way for Kenya's anti-corruption body to recover billions paid as compensation for public land that was never legally available for acquisition in the first place.

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission is moving to recover KSh1.5B in public funds after a Court of Appeal ruling confirmed that compensation paid for land occupied by two Nairobi public schools was unlawful, because the government had been paying for property it already owned.

The disputed land — approximately 13.5 acres in Ruaraka, Nairobi, on which Ruaraka High School and Drive-In Primary School stand — has been at the centre of one of Kenya's most contentious public land disputes for years. The core question was deceptively simple, and yet it took years of investigations, Senate inquiries and protracted litigation to answer: how does a government end up paying for land that already belongs to it?

According to investigations cited in the case, the land had been surrendered to the State as a condition attached to the approval of the subdivision of LR No. 7879/4, meaning it was designated for public utilities and had ceased to be private property available for later acquisition. Despite that, the National Land Commission proceeded with a compulsory acquisition process and paid KSh1.5B to private interests — a payment the Court of Appeal has now declared null and void.

In its July 3 judgment, the appellate court affirmed that there was no legal basis for the commission to compulsorily acquire land that already belonged to the government. For the EACC, the ruling vindicates years of investigation. "The court's decision has cleared the way for us to pursue recovery of the funds and further action against those implicated in the transaction," the commission said.

The case has drawn in several prominent names. Former Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and former Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang are among the public officials whose names have appeared in connection with the transaction. Their appearance in the proceedings should not, however, be read as a finding of criminal guilt — responsibility for any wrongdoing remains a matter for the courts and the relevant prosecutorial processes to determine. That distinction matters enormously in a case that has accumulated considerable political heat over the years.

The Senate had previously sounded the alarm. Its inquiry found that the land on which both schools stood had been surrendered for public purposes and recommended investigations into the circumstances surrounding the compensation, specifically questioning the roles played by officials involved in the acquisition process. Those recommendations were not enough to stop the payment going through.

Recovering the money will not be straightforward. A court finding that a payment was unlawful does not automatically translate into criminal liability for everyone associated with the transaction. The EACC must establish the legal basis for recovery from specific individuals or entities, and where criminal conduct is alleged, investigators and prosecutors must satisfy the evidentiary standards of the criminal justice system. Due process is not a bureaucratic inconvenience — it is the foundation on which any credible anti-corruption effort must stand.

The case also illuminates a systemic problem that runs deeper than any single transaction. Kenya's land administration involves multiple agencies, records, approvals, surveys, valuations and legal processes. When those systems fail to communicate with one another, or when ownership status is not conclusively established before public funds are committed, taxpayers end up bearing enormous costs. The EACC has previously identified serious weaknesses in the State Department of Lands and Physical Planning — irregular approvals, inaccurate surveys, double registration of parcels, forged documents and missing land records. These are not minor administrative glitches. They are the gaps through which public resources disappear.

KSh1.5B is not merely a figure in a court document. It is money that could have built classrooms, staffed hospitals, laid roads or supplied clean water to communities across Kenya. When public funds vanish through unlawful transactions, the opportunity cost extends far beyond the headline number — and the message sent to the public, if no one is held accountable, is a corrosive one: that government resources can be lost through questionable dealings without meaningful consequences.

Recovery matters. But so does reform. Returning the money addresses the loss. Fixing the systems that allowed the transaction to proceed in the first place addresses the underlying problem. Government agencies need reliable mechanisms for verifying land ownership before any acquisition is approved. Warning signs should trigger scrutiny, not be quietly filed away as administrative inconveniences.

The Ruaraka saga has taken years to reach this point. The Court of Appeal has now answered the ownership question. What remains to be seen is whether Kenya can answer the harder ones — about accountability, institutional reform and what it will take to ensure that taxpayers are never again asked to buy back what already belongs to them.

Former Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i

Education The visit was led by senior teacher Verah Katikit, who served as team leader, with class teachers Davis Onchagwa and Annette Khaveye guiding their respective groups throughout the day

Bikeke school takes 83 pupils on Nairobi civic tour

Junior school learners visited parliament, the courts, the National Archives and KICC yesterday in a trip designed to bring civics education to life.

BY Daniel Kipchumba | Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Eighty-three junior school learners from Bikeke Comprehensive School yesterday toured some of Nairobi's most significant public institutions, including the National Assembly, the Senate, Milimani Law Courts, the National Archives and the Kenyatta International Convention Centre, as part of a school-organised civic education programme.

The visit was led by senior teacher Verah Katikit, who served as team leader, with class teachers Davis Onchagwa and Annette Khaveye guiding their respective groups throughout the day. They were supported by teachers Gideon Kemboi, Martin Lusweti and Noel Eyauma, who helped manage the learners as they moved through the various venues, including coordinating entry and exit at the National Assembly building.

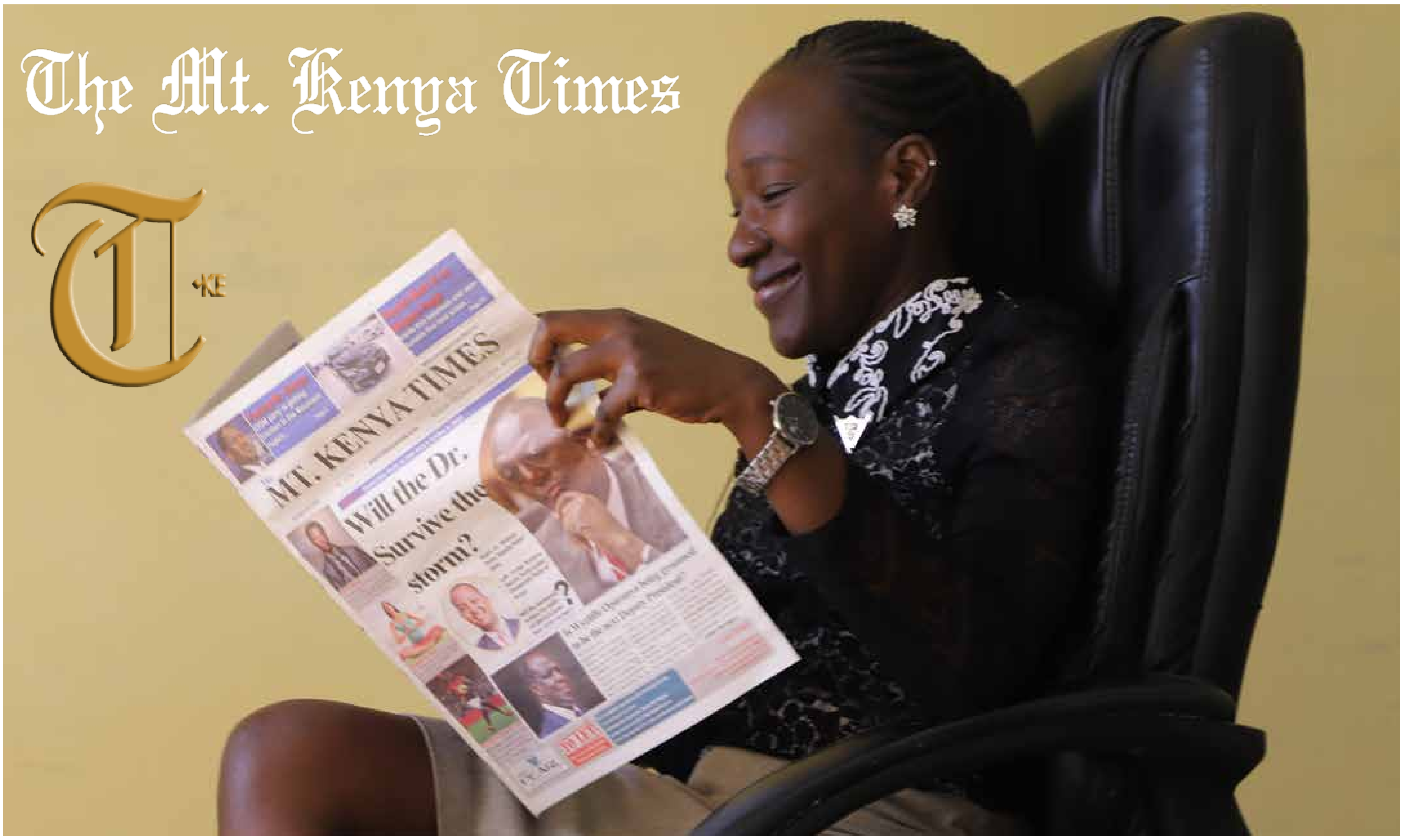
Students at Bikeke comprehensive school at national assembly Nairobi.

Students Bikeke comprehensive school

At parliament, teachers took the opportunity to explain how Kenya's legislative process works, walking pupils through the roles of both the National Assembly and the Senate in a way that connected classroom civics lessons to the real structures of government.

The tour was organised with the full backing of the school's head of institution, Ronald Francis Toili Wamalwa, who has been a consistent advocate for educational excursions as a tool for broadening learners' horizons beyond the classroom.

Bikeke Comprehensive School has built a reputation for investing in leadership development among its pupils, and yesterday's outing reflected that commitment. For many of the junior school learners, it was their first encounter with the institutions that shape national life — a foundation, the school believes, for nurturing informed and engaged citizens.



Take only the green memories and leave the footprints

It brings a gentle smile to your lips
That smile will never fade away from memory.

Nothing we brought at birth,
nothing we take after death.
All we have are only memories.
So cherish them fully.

Enjoy every moment with interest,
be it positive or negative.
Each and every thing is special.
Be it a flower, a bud, or fallen leaves
each one has its own beauty.

Shout from the mountain top and listen to the echo.
Travel by ship and boat and make lasting
memories.
Smell the flowers, touch the grass,
watch the sunset and the small creatures.
Feel the morning dew drops
It gives immense pleasure.

Don't burden your heart with worries.
Instead, overload it with memories.
That makes your heart light.

Leave all trash behind.
Just do your work sincerely.
Let people remember your smile
and your kind-hearted soul,
not anger, hatred, or jealousy.

Take photos with your mind,
and be kind.
Take the memories,
and leave only footprints.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam Cuddalore dist Tamilnadu
India

The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams

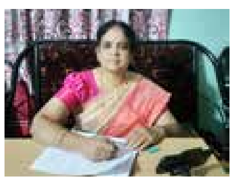
All living things have the power of dreaming
Only the focused people have the power of fulfilling
their dreams .Others only enjoy day dreaming
As They are simply scheming.

The dream of a pupa enables it to become a butterfly
The dream of Write brothers let them fly in the sky
The dream of a stream makes it a widened river
The dream of a noble man makes him a giver.

Life is an adventurous trip
One careless mistake makes us slip
If we think we can achieve our dream
The whole universe will act as a team.

Penned by
RANGANATHAN E
B.T.Asst(Eng)
Marwar Govt.Boys Hss,Acharapakkam

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.



We never see people who never fall in life.
But we do see people who rise every time they fall.
That is the spirit of a successful life.

When you fall, never give up and never be discouraged.
No one knows the future, but everyone can make a plan.
You should continue your journey according to your plan.
That path will have ups and downs;
however, keep moving toward your destination.

Never focus on your failures.
Instead, focus on rising every time you fall.
So, think positively, act with energy, and live happily.
Life is a beautiful journey, and you should enjoy every moment.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

You carve yourself

You carve yourself, step by step,
Through every fall, through every depth.
There is no sculptor shaping you,
No guiding hand to pull you through.

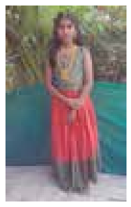
Your pain becomes your chisel's mark,
Your courage lights the inner dark.
Each wound you heal, each choice you make,
Becomes a shape no one can break.
You are the artist of your soul,
You choose your path, you take control.

Through trials faced and fears you felt,
Your strength is slowly carved and built.
Rise strong remember, stand sincere,
Your power comes from staying near

To truth, to hope, to faith in self
You carve yourself, not someone else.
There is no sculptor working here,
Your hands, your heart, your will are clear.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
Chengalpattu district

Morning light



Dawn breaks soft and gold
Birds sing gentle morning Song Sunlight paints
the quit Sky New day begins today!

Leaves dance in warm breeze coffee drink near
the window flowers delight and bloomed new day
begins today

I step outside and breath
World feels fresh and kind
Cities wakes with slow rhythm new day begins today

P.Dhurgadevi
VII - A
John Dewey International School Senior
Secondary (CBSE) in panakuppam
Tamil Nadu
India

The self confidence

A small pencil became very short.
It thought, "I am no longer useful."
But a little girl picked it up,v
And wrote her best poem with it.
The pencil smiled without a word.
It understood its true value.
It was not its size that mattered,
But the confidence to keep writing.

D.Dhanyasri
Grade 8
John Dewey Matric Higher secondary school, Link Road, Panruti, Tamil Nadu

My sweet home

Sweet home is where I start my day,
We eat together, laugh, and play,
Making memories every day.
Through sunshine bright or skies of gray,
My sweet home lights up my way.
With smiling faces on my way.
It keeps me safe when storms appear,
And fills my heart with love and cheer.

The rooms are full of happy sound,
With kindness and laughter all around.
No palace can be better than home,
My sweetest place wherever I roam.

V.Joshika
Grade 8 John dewey matric higher secondary school, Link road, panruti

Politics "As we approach the 2027 General Election, we must recognize that elections are particularly vulnerable to organised violence," she said.

Stakeholders call for urgent action to curb political violence

BY Zipporah Odionyi and Lilian Gichohi
@themtkenyatimes

IPOA Commissioner Dr. Annette Mbogoh addressing the forum.

Kenya must shift from reactive to preventive measures to curb organised political violence ahead of the 2027 General Election, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) has said.

IPOA Commissioner Dr. Annette Mbogoh said political violence had evolved into an organized and coordinated threat to constitutional democracy, public safety, and the rule of law, requiring intelligence-led policing, stronger community partnerships, and accountability for those behind the violence.

"Political goonism is no longer an isolated security concern. It is evolving into an organized and coordinated threat to constitutional democracy, public safety, and the rule of law," Mbogoh said.

The Commissioner, who was the keynote speaker at a National Multi-stakeholder on Political Violence meeting, said IPOA had monitored 29 by-elections conducted in 2025 and 2026 and identified the infiltration of peaceful demonstrations, political gatherings, and electoral activities by organised criminal groups.

She said such groups had been used to intimidate voters, disrupt political meetings, suppress opponents, and influence electoral participation, warning that unchecked violence could undermine both electoral integrity and public confidence in democracy.

"As we approach the 2027 General Election, we must recognize that elections are particularly vulnerable to organised violence," she said.

Mbogoh called for comprehensive mapping of electoral hotspots, improved intelligence sharing, and joint operational planning by security agencies.

She said investigations should extend beyond individuals committing violence on the streets to those who organize, finance, and sponsor political violence.

"Investigations must go beyond those who just commit violence on the streets. I'm talking of investigations also targeting organizers, financiers, and sponsors of political violence, who must also be identified and also held accountable," she said.

Mbogoh also urged authorities to strengthen community policing, saying communities were often the first to detect emerging tensions, mobilization of criminal groups, and political intimidation.

She emphasised the need for professional and impartial public-order policing, noting that the presence of criminal elements in a demonstration should not result in the indiscriminate treatment of an entire assembly as criminal. "Professionalism is our strongest defense against escalation," she said.

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) Kenya Chairperson Christine Alai said Kenya had the constitutional and institutional tools needed to prevent a recurrence of electoral violence but warned that failure to confront the networks financing and organizing violence could have serious consequences.

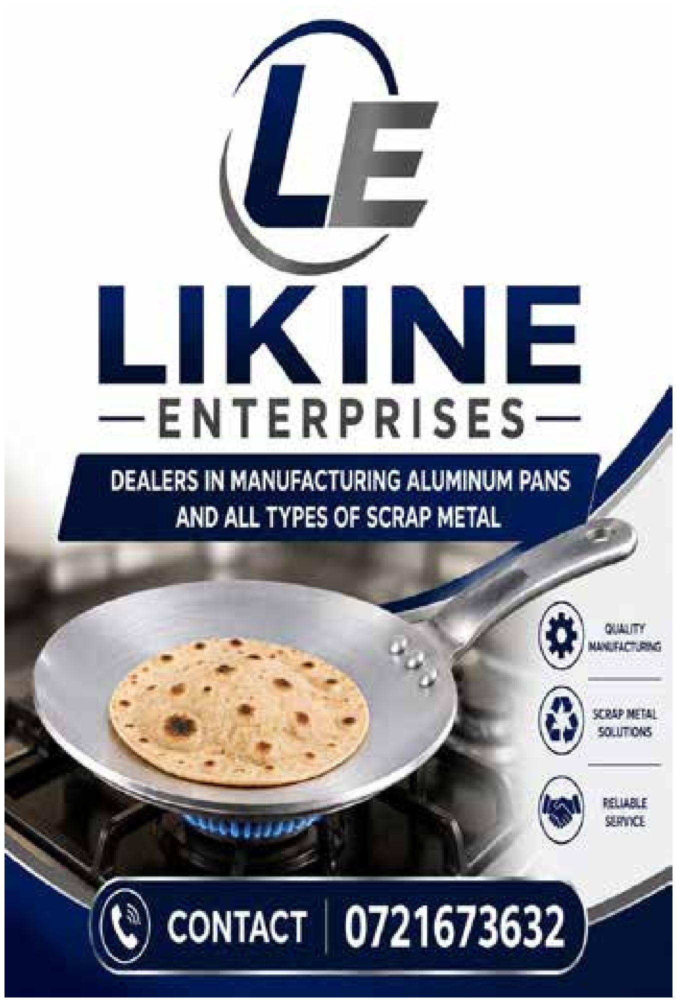
"We are not helpless; we have the tools, we have the Constitution. We may be worried, but I hope that we leave today with the solutions to take action," Alai said.

Alai said political violence had evolved from the recruitment of youth by individual politicians and parties into a sophisticated political economy involving recruitment, financing, and mobilization.

She further warned that digital platforms had added a new dimension to political violence through misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, and artificial intelligence-generated content.

"The weapons of violence are no longer just machetes and stones. They are now sophisticated tools of misinformation and disinformation, amplified by social media and increasingly powered by artificial intelligence," she said.

The stakeholders called for stronger coordination among State institutions, civil society, communities and other actors to develop practical measures for preventing violence and strengthening accountability before the 2027 elections.



KeNHA Eng. Opondo said the transformation had also generated wider economic benefits in areas along the corridor

KeNHA calls for new approach to managing Thika Superhighway

BY Donald Ngala
@themtkenyatimes

Part of Thika Superhighway

The Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) has called for a new approach to managing the Nairobi-Thika Superhighway, saying the road's success under Kenya's Vision 2030 has created a second generation of challenges requiring integrated corridor management.

KeNHA officials said the priority should now shift from construction to preserving the highway, improving road safety, managing traffic, protecting the road reserve, and integrating the corridor with rapid urban development.

Speaking during an inspection tour of major roads in the Nairobi region, KeNHA Deputy Regional Director Engineer Antony Mugo said major projects along Corridor C, covering Thika Road to Moyale, had been completed in line with Vision 2030 projections.

Senior Inspector of roads on corridor C, Engineer Lawrence Opondo, said the Nairobi-Thika Superhighway had opened up the region, improved connectivity and eased congestion that previously characterized the narrow Thika Road.

Constructed between 2009 and 2012 and officially opened on November 9, 2012, the approximately 50-kilometer highway was designed to address severe congestion and improve transport links between Nairobi, Thika, and surrounding areas.

The project that cost approximately US$360 million, introduced widened carriageways, interchanges, flyovers, underpasses, service roads, pedestrian facilities, drainage and street lighting.

Eng. Opondo said the transformation had also generated wider economic benefits in areas along the corridor.

Speaking at Muthaiga Exchange Road, he said improved accessibility had contributed to enhanced security, increased business activity, employment opportunities, and a rise in real estate development.

At the Roysambu flyover, cleaners and repair workers Meshak Ndungu and Juma Tsuma said the highway had provided them with employment through performance-based maintenance contracts, enabling them to support their families.

Residents also said the road had opened access to previously difficult-to-reach areas.

Joseph Kioko said the highway had reduced congestion, particularly during morning and evening peak periods, while creating opportunities for young people and women.

"Women make and hawk tea and vegetables to pedestrians and other road users, while the youth operate car wash businesses along the highway," he said.

Francis Njuguna said the highway had contributed to a boom in construction and real estate, resulting in higher land prices and increased rental development.

He added that improved connectivity had made access to health facilities, including Kenyatta University Referral Hospital, easier.

However, residents warned that the growth stimulated by the highway was placing increasing pressure on its capacity and surrounding infrastructure.

Njuguna called for expansion of the highway to accommodate rising traffic volumes, while Kioko requested an access road linking a 500-meter stretch from Kahawa West to Kamiti Road.

Residents also called for additional road-safety measures at identified black spots.

Kioko proposed bumps at a black spot around Njathaine village and Route 44, while Njuguna suggested a footbridge to reduce pedestrian exposure to traffic.

KeNHA's assessment indicates that recurring congestion is now among the most significant challenges facing the corridor.

Engineer Opondo says that although the original expansion substantially increased capacity and reduced journey times, improved accessibility has encouraged population growth, commercial development, increased vehicle ownership, and greater trip generation.

"There's congestion around busy activity and interchange areas, including Githurai, Kahawa, Roysambu, Kasarani, Garden City and Pangani, where through traffic interacts with local traffic, public transport, pedestrians and roadside businesses", said Opondo.

He noted that the problem is therefore no longer simply one of highway capacity, but also of traffic management, access control, public transport operations and land-use planning.

The engineer pointed out pavement deterioration as another growing concern after more than a decade of intensive traffic.

He also noted that heavy commercial vehicles, water infiltration, blocked drainage, utility works, overloaded vehicles, and deferred maintenance have contributed to potholes, cracking, rusting, and edge deterioration.

"There's a need for systematic asset management, regular condition surveys, and preventive maintenance to prevent minor defects from developing into expensive structural failures," he observed, adding that pedestrian safety has also emerged as a major concern as urbanization creates new pedestrian movement patterns.

Broken or discontinuous footpaths, encroachment on non-motorized transport facilities, inadequate crossings, poor lighting and conflicts involving motorcycles expose pedestrians to high-speed traffic.

Engineer Mugo said the authority recommends designing pedestrian facilities around actual movement patterns and ensuring continuity between footpaths, bus stages, residential areas, markets and commercial centres.

Noting that public transport operations present a challenge when matatus frequently pick up and drop passengers outside designated areas, obstructing traffic and creating conflicts with pedestrians, Engineer Mugo said KeNHA proposes rationalizing bus stages and providing properly designed passenger facilities, including bus bays, shelters, lighting, drainage and controlled entry and exit arrangements.

Uncontrolled development and activities within or near the road reserve have also reduced the effectiveness of the highway.

Informal businesses, roadside parking, advertising structures, uncontrolled access points, markets and drainage encroachments increasingly compete with the highway's primary function of moving traffic.

KeNHA is proposing formal roadside stations outside the operational road reserve where traders could operate legally while providing parking, public transport facilities, toilets, waste management, lighting and security.

Engineer Mugo pointed out that this approach seeks to protect road safety without eliminating the economic opportunities that have developed along the corridor.

Drainage is another priority as rapid urbanization has increased impervious surfaces and storm water runoff.

Blocked drains, siltation, damaged culverts, inadequate outfalls, illegal connections and encroachment on drainage reserves can cause flooding, pavement deterioration and traffic disruption.

KeNHA says a comprehensive drainage capacity and condition assessment is needed in addition to routine cleaning.

According to Opondo, KENHA has already undertaken several interventions to preserve and improve the highway.

These include continuous performance-based maintenance contracts, surface dressing, construction of the Allsops overpass, additional entry and exit lanes at locations such as Safari Park, Githurai, Ruiru, Juja, Kimbo and Toll, as well as additional pedestrian crossings.


DO YOU WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?
ARE YOU A WRITER OR CORPORATE?
Let Professional Editors and Authors turn your story into a Dream Book.
THRILLERS - FICTION - FACTION - BIOGRAPHIES - TRAVELOGUES - HUMOUR- COFFEE TABLE - BROCHURES
London-based contract Publishers for independent and self-publish authors.
We offer one-stop top notch Editing, Expert Design, Proof Reading, Book Covers, Artwork, Digital, Litho Printing, E-Books, Corporate Brochures and UK ISBN number. Reasonable costs.
We print and deliver books. Authors retain 100% sales profits.
AFRICAN WOMEN IN EUROPE
A reflection of the strength and positivity of African women and men
Compiled by Joy Zenz
Editor Shamlal Puri
BIBI PIPI NA MAUA WARIDI
Corona Cermak
THAT'S LIFE!
MICHAEL MATATU AT LARGE
SHAMLAL PURI
Footprints
NAMOSAL 64-74 REUNION
NATIONAL MODEL SCHOOL
SELECTED PORTFOLIO
DUBAI DREAMS
SHAMLAL PURI
BEST SELLER NOVELS
Dubai On Wheels
Shamlal Puri
AXIS OF EVIL
BLOOD MONEY
SHAMLAL PURI
DUBAI DREAMS
The Rough Road to Riches
SHAMLAL PURI
THE ILLEGALS
SHAMLAL PURI
DENIED
TRIANGLE OF TERROR
Shamlal Puri
Axis of Evil
BLOOD MONEY
Shamlal Puri
The Cosmopolitan Nomad
A Globetrotter's Story
Karim
G R Ladak
MY LITTLE BOOK OF Christian Poems
TONY TOKUNBO ETEKA FERNANDEZ
The Crownbird Publishers logo and imprint owned by Adlink International (1989) Media Group London
Copies of some books available for sale: hard copy/ digital. Contact us:
media@adlinkinternational.com
Email Subject: Crownbird Books
Crownbird Publishers
ADLINK INTERNATIONAL (1989) MEDIA GROUP BOOKS IMPRINT
INTERNATIONAL BOOKS & MAGAZINES PUBLISHERS
ADLINK INTERNATIONAL (1989) MEDIA GROUP
Books Division
16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0AF (UK)
Tel: 44 330 606 1438
Email: media@adlinkinternational.com
www.adlinkinternational.com

Politics That fracture remains. Identity politics in Kenya is not a side conversation; it is the operating system of power

When the ballot becomes a blade: Identity politics and the brittle limits of law in Kenya

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya Ballot box

In the final days of December 2007 and the opening weeks of 2008, Kenya's contested presidential election ignited ethnic violence that left at least 1,133 people dead, more than 600,000 displaced from their homes, and tens of thousands of properties reduced to ash. Women and girls suffered a documented surge in sexual violence; entire settlements were emptied along ethnic lines; a church in Kiambaa became a furnace for the living. These were not abstract statistics. They were neighbours turned executioners, political loyalty distilled into the flash of a panga, and a nation that had prided itself on relative stability suddenly staring into the mirror of its own fracture.

That fracture remains. Identity politics in Kenya is not a side conversation; it is the operating system of power. Ethnicity functions as both shield and sword. Belonging becomes a currency that politicians mint and spend with ruthless efficiency. The law, for all its solemn declarations, has proven repeatedly that it can describe the crime yet struggle to extinguish the impulse that produces it.

Kenya's more than forty ethnic communities are not the problem. The problem is the systematic conversion of cultural difference into political weaponry. Since the return of multiparty politics in the early 1990s, electoral cycles have claimed at least 4,433 lives and displaced more than 1.8 million people. The pattern is grimly consistent: elites mobilise co-ethnics with narratives of historical grievance and existential threat; the ballot becomes a census of enemies; the aftermath is measured in body counts and IDP camps. The 2007–2008 crisis was simply the most catastrophic expression of a longer pathology. Land, jobs, and state resources are framed as zero-sum ethnic spoils. A Kikuyu presidency is read by some as Kikuyu dominance; a Kalenjin or Luo ascent is read by others as revenge or restoration. The individual citizen is reduced to a demographic proxy.

The 2010 Constitution was supposed to be the corrective. Its preamble celebrates ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity while demanding unity as one indivisible nation. It outlaws political parties organised purely along ethnic lines. It embeds national values of equality, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, and non-discrimination. Devolution was designed to disperse power and resources, reducing the winner-takes-all stakes of the centre. Article 27 prohibits discrimination on ethnic grounds. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission was created to police hate speech and promote national cohesion. On paper, the architecture is sophisticated.

Even so paper is not steel. County public service audits continue to reveal stark ethnic monopolies: some counties employ more than 95 percent of their staff from the dominant community, leaving dozens of smaller groups with negligible representation. Political rhetoric still traffics in coded and not-so-coded ethnic appeals. By-elections in recent years have featured intimidation and violence that revive the ghosts of 2007. Warnings ahead of 2027 already speak of rising polarization and an elevated risk of election-related conflict. The law has multiplied institutions; the underlying grammar of politics has changed far less.

Here lies the deeper limit. Law can criminalize the speech and punish the overt act, but it cannot by itself rewire the moral imagination that treats "the other" as less fully human when the stakes of power rise. Identity politics thrives on selective memory and manufactured scarcity. Historical injustices colonial land allocations that favoured certain communities, post-independence patronage that entrenched others are real. But they are weaponised. Grievance becomes a renewable resource. Politicians do not invent ethnic sentiment; they industrialize it. They correlate poverty and unemployment among young men with the presence of the "outsider" community. They equate national leadership with ethnic destiny. The correlation is not accidental. It is strategic.

Consider the emotional architecture. Fear of exclusion is more mobilising than the abstract promise of constitutional equality. Belonging feels warmer than citizenship. When a politician tells a crowd that "our people" must take what is theirs, the appeal lands in the gut before it reaches the mind. Law speaks the language of rights and procedures; identity politics speaks the language of blood and soil. One is cool and universal; the other is hot and particular. In moments of stress, heat wins.

This is not an argument against law. Without clear legal prohibitions on ethnic incitement, without independent institutions capable of investigation and prosecution, without devolution that gives counties genuine fiscal and administrative space, the situation would be worse. The 2010 settlement and subsequent reforms prevented a full slide into sustained civil war. Prosecutions at the International Criminal Court, however imperfect and ultimately incomplete, signalled that absolute impunity was no longer guaranteed. Legal frameworks matter. They establish the floor below which society must not sink.

But floors are not ceilings. The ceiling requires something law alone cannot supply: a cultural and ethical shift that treats ethnic identity as one layer of the self rather than the organising principle of political life. Original thought begins here. Kenya's crisis is not primarily a failure of legal drafting. It is a failure of elite restraint and popular imagination. The same leaders who write constitutions and chair cohesion commissions often return to ethnic arithmetic when elections approach. Citizens, in turn, reward them. Voting patterns still track ethnicity with striking regularity in many regions. Tolerance surveys show most Kenyans claim to value national identity and would accept neighbours of different ethnicities; yet large minorities still report that their group is treated unfairly by government, and electoral mobilisation continues to exploit those perceptions.

The correlation is clarifying: where political elites refuse to demobilize ethnic grievance, legal institutions become reactive rather than preventive. They clean up after the fire rather than remove the fuel. Where development is perceived as ethnically skewed, the formal equality of the Constitution feels like a cruel joke. Where young people see public employment and contracts distributed along ethnic lines, the abstract language of citizenship loses persuasive force.

What would intellectual honesty demand? First, relentless naming of the practice. Call out the politicians who still campaign in the vocabulary of "our community versus theirs." Call out the quiet ethnic stacking of appointments that turns public institutions into private ethnic clubs. Call out the voters who accept such bargains because short-term patronage feels safer than long-term national reform. Second, strengthen the practical enforcement of existing law hate speech prosecutions that are timely and even-handed, county employment audits that trigger real consequences, electoral reforms that reduce the personalization of presidential power. Third, and most difficult, cultivate a public culture that treats ethnic pride as compatible with, rather than competitive against, Kenyan belonging. Pride without supremacy. Memory without vendetta. Solidarity that is not restricted to the bloodline.

The alternative is cyclical. Another disputed election. Another round of machetes and burned churches. Another generation of children who learn early that the neighbour's tribe determines whether the door opens in welcome or in threat. The law can restrain the hand that holds the blade. Only a deeper reordering of political incentives and moral vision can persuade the hand to put the blade down.

Kenya has survived its worst moments because enough citizens still refuse the full logic of ethnic warfare. That refusal is the real ground of hope. It is fragile. It requires constant renewal. The Constitution is necessary. It is not sufficient. The ballot must cease to be a blade. Until identity politics is starved of the oxygen of elite calculation and popular acquiescence, the limits of law will continue to be written in blood.

The Writer is a Social Commentator

Politics Behind the flags, rallies, slogans, defections and carefully choreographed photographs, another politics is taking place quietly—in boardrooms

The wholesalers have priced the vote—But the voter has the last word

BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

Every political electoral cycle has its theatrics with each cycle presenting a more drama than the previous one. It is no longer a formal democratic process where aspirants present themselves to the electorate explaining and expressing their vision and strategic plans according to the electoral constituency of choice and leave electorate to make a choice in the ballot box. The entire scenario has been turned into a more dramatic chaotic place worse than a market place.

Kenya's political marketplace is entering one of its most intriguing seasons. Behind the flags, rallies, slogans, defections and carefully choreographed photographs, another politics is taking place quietly—in boardrooms, private homes, hotels and secluded political meetings where leaders sit across tables calculating the value of constituencies they claim to command.

There, political alliances are negotiated like commercial contracts. Positions in the next government are whispered about. Appointments to parastatals and boards are discussed. Development projects are dangled. Political protection is promised. Money and influence become bargaining chips. And somewhere in the middle of all this, the Kenyan voter is being treated as merchandise.

The political wholesaler arrives at the negotiating table carrying what he describes as a political "block"—thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of votes supposedly under his personal control. He speaks with astonishing certainty: my people are with us; my constituency has decided; my community will vote this way. But there is an inconvenient question that the political marketplace rarely asks: Who gave one politician ownership of the conscience of thousands of citizens?

Kenya Ballot box

A leader may have one voter's card. So does the farmer in the village, the teacher in the classroom, the boda boda rider at the stage, the trader in the market and the young person searching unsuccessfully for employment. Yet somehow, once a politician enters the negotiating room, that single vote magically multiplies into thousand That is the great fiction upon which political wholesale trade is built.

A representative is not the owner of the people. An MP, governor, senator, MCA or party official may possess influence, networks and political experience, but representation is a trust, not a title deed over citizens' political choices. But the business remains profitable because the political class continues to confuse influence with ownership. The wholesaler promises the votes. The buyer provides the resources. The brokers calculate the numbers. Everyone leaves the room believing that a constituency has been secured. But there is one small problem. The ballot has not yet been marked. And that is where political mathematics can suddenly collapse.

Inside the polling station, the voter becomes wonderfully independent. The broker is absent. The political party is outside. The village kingpin cannot see the ballot. The government official cannot dictate the mark. The candidate cannot whisper into the voter's ear. For a few precious moments, democracy reduces itself to its most elemental form: one citizen, one ballot and one conscience. That is why the political class should be careful about believing its own spreadsheets.

The Kenyan voter has memory. He remembers the road that was promised and never built. She remembers the water project that appeared in speeches but not on the ground. The young person remembers the promised job. The farmer remembers the campaign-season fertilizer and the post-election silence. The citizen remembers the empowerment programme that somehow found its way into the hands of political friends while the genuinely vulnerable remained spectators. Citizens are keeping their own scorecards.

And political sycophancy has not escaped their attention either. They remember those who defended every failure because they were close to power. They remember leaders whose principles mysteriously changed whenever political alliances changed. They remember the permanent praise singers who discovered courage only after leaving government. They remember those who crossed political floors not because the national interest had changed, but because their personal interests had.

The electorate is writing political biographies in real time. This is why the coming political season may surprise those who imagine that Kenya can still be managed entirely through political brokerage. The political marketplace may see constituencies as blocks, but communities are made up of individuals. A village is not a voting machine. An ethnic community is not a single mind. A constituency is not one enormous ballot paper that its political representative can sign away in a hotel room. People have different hopes, fears, loyalties, disappointments and aspirations. They may cheer one politician today and vote differently tomorrow.

Indeed, there is an emerging sophistication among voters that politicians often underestimate. A citizen may accept the campaign money, eat the food, board the hired vehicle, attend the rally, dance to the music and wave the party flag—and still retain the most valuable possession in a democracy: the freedom to make an independent decision in the polling booth. The handout may purchase attendance, applause, a photograph, temporary loyalty but may not purchase conscience. That distinction is becoming increasingly important.

The political wholesaler may return to headquarters announcing that a constituency has been delivered. The buyer may proudly include those supposed votes in an electoral calculation. The candidate may celebrate an alliance as though the election has already been won. Then the votes are counted. And the mathematics refuses to cooperate.

This is the uncomfortable truth politicians must confront: you can negotiate a political alliance, but you cannot pre-sign another citizen's ballot. Democracy is ultimately an act of individual sovereignty. The coming contest may therefore be less about which political alliance looks strongest on the stage and more about whether the electorate believes the people negotiating in its name deserve its trust.

The wholesalers will calculate. The brokers will bargain. The politicians will promise. The crowds will cheer. The music will play. But beneath the noise, ordinary citizens will remember.

They will remember who came looking for their votes and who came looking for their interests. They will remember who promised empowerment and who delivered patronage. They will remember who spoke for them and who merely spoke about them. And when voting day comes, the political wholesaler will discover the fundamental weakness of his business model. He never owned the votes, he only claimed to, the ballot belongs to the voter. the conscience belongs to the voter, and the final decision belongs to the voter.

And when the results arrive, those who priced the electorate like merchandise may stare at their carefully prepared spreadsheets in disbelief. The promised numbers may not materialise. The political merchandise may have disappeared. It will not have disappeared. It will simply have returned to its rightful owner. The voter.

The political wholesaler may negotiate the price. The auctioneer may announce the bid. The broker may promise delivery. But ultimately, the voter writes the final answer.

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo PWD
Chairperson, Jiamini Disability network Community Based organization
Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Dream Consider the weight of what you call normal. The bed you think is too small is the answered prayer of a mother sharing a single mat with her children

Did you know you are already living someone's dream?

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

There is a quiet crisis in our time, and it will not appear in any economic report or breaking news bulletin. It unfolds in the early hours before dawn, in the silence of a morning commute, in the pause between notifications, in the hollow feeling that settles in the chest on a Sunday evening for no particular reason. It is the crisis of a generation waking up each day and regarding its own life with contempt — not dramatic despair, but a low, persistent dissatisfaction that has become so common we have stopped questioning it.

We have become remarkably skilled at naming what is absent. We have shelter and critique its aesthetics. We have food and scroll past it to envy another person's table. We have health and call ourselves exhausted. We have employment and describe it as a trap. We are surrounded by people who love us, yet we chase the validation of strangers on the internet. We have time and fill it with complaint. In doing so, we overlook a humbling and urgent truth: the life you are currently living — and perhaps despising — is the very life someone else is praying to have. Not metaphorically. Literally. Right now, as you read this.

Consider carefully the weight of what you call normal. The bed you think is too small is the answered prayer of a mother sharing a single mat with her children on a cold floor. The job you describe as draining is the aspiration of a graduate who has sent out hundreds of applications over two years without a single reply. The body you criticise in the mirror — too heavy, too thin, too scarred, never quite right — is the miracle someone in a hospital ward is pleading with God to recover. The relationship you take for granted is the loneliness someone else carries in silence every single day. The routine you rush through — wake, work, return home, rest — is the stability that a refugee, a widow or an orphan would give anything to possess. We are not merely existing. We are existing on grace that was never guaranteed. Every breath is not owed to us. Every step taken without pain is a privilege. Every uneventful Tuesday is a luxury in another part of the world. And yet we treat our days as though they are disposable, as though another will always arrive to replace the one we have just wasted.

Our lives are rarely squandered in a single dramatic act. They are diminished in quiet, repeated choices that accumulate over months and years until the person looking back from the mirror is someone we no longer fully recognise. We waste our lives through comparison — granting curated, filtered, carefully constructed versions of other people's lives access to our one real and unrepeatable life. We measure our beginning against another person's middle and conclude, with remarkable confidence, that we have failed. We forget that behind every polished image is a person carrying burdens we cannot see and fighting battles they have never posted about.

We waste our lives through ingratitude, relegating blessings to the background until they become invisible. Clean water from a tap. Electricity restored after an outage. A message from a friend checking in. Parents who are still alive and within reach. Children who came home safely. A body that carried you through another day without collapse. We no longer call these things mercies. We call them basic, as though they were automatic, as though they could not be taken away before morning.

We waste our lives through haste — so preoccupied with the next promotion, the next milestone, the next version of ourselves, the next chapter, that we refuse to inhabit the version we are in now. We have perfected the art of being somewhere other than where we are. We defer joy with the phrase "I will be happy when" — when I get the job, when I finish school, when I move house, when things settle down — and in doing so, we postpone it indefinitely, always arriving at the next threshold only to discover that the happiness we expected has moved further ahead once again.

We waste our lives through self-rejection, perhaps the most painful form of waste of all. We speak to ourselves with a cruelty we would never direct at a friend, a child or even a stranger. We label our story insignificant. We call our progress insufficient. We measure what we have built against what we imagined we would have built by now, and we find ourselves wanting. We overlook the quiet, remarkable fact that to rise again after disappointment — to get up, to keep going, to try again despite everything — is itself an act of profound and underrated courage. This is how a life is lost. Not all at once, in some great dramatic collapse, but in a thousand small acts of disregard for what is, in favour of an obsession with what is not.

Hear this clearly: your life has weight. Not because of your position, your income, your follower count or your public recognition. Your life matters because there has never been another you in the history of the world, and there never will be. The precise combination of your experiences, your wounds, your laughter, your particular way of seeing things — it is singular. It will not be repeated. The way you encourage a colleague when morale is low and no one else notices. The way you show up for your family when you are tired and would rather be anywhere else. The way you choose kindness when cynicism would be far easier and far more socially acceptable. The way you keep going on the days when stopping feels like the only sensible option. These are not small things. They are irreplaceable contributions to the world, even when the world does not pause to acknowledge them.

Someone, somewhere, is praying for your challenges because they would mean provision. Someone is praying for your ordinary job because it would mean dignity and a reason to rise in the morning. Someone is praying for your imperfect family because it would mean belonging, warmth and the sound of another person in the house. Someone is praying for one more day of the health you assume will always be there, the mobility you take for granted, the clarity of mind you have never thought to be grateful for. You are not an extra in someone else's narrative. You are the protagonist of a story that another person is asking God to write for them.

If contempt is the disease of our age, gratitude is the cure — but gratitude properly understood, not as a performance or a platitude. Gratitude is not denial. It is not pretending that difficulty does not exist or that pain is not real. It is the deliberate, disciplined decision to recognise goodness in the midst of imperfection. It is thanking God for the job you have while pursuing the one you want. It is honouring the home you can afford while saving for the one you envision. It is caring for the body you have today while working toward the health you seek. It is holding two things at once: honesty about where you are and genuine thankfulness that you are still here to work toward somewhere better.

Contentment, equally, is not passivity or the abandonment of ambition. It is peace — the deep, settled conviction that you do not need to despise today in order to build tomorrow. It is the ability to say, with clarity and without performance: this is not my final destination, but it is a gift, and I will treat it accordingly.

When gratitude becomes genuine practice rather than occasional sentiment, something real shifts. Your vision clears and you begin to notice mercies that were previously invisible — a kind word, a sunset, the simple fact of waking. Your heart softens, and bitterness gradually loses its grip. Anxiety recedes. Desperation quiets. Your life enlarges — not because your circumstances change instantly, but because you finally begin to live inside them, fully and honestly, instead of spending your energy running from them toward a future that keeps moving.

I am not naive about the weight you carry. Some seasons genuinely feel like deserts, and they are. There are debts that keep you awake. Grief that does not follow a schedule. Delays that make no sense. Disappointments that landed when you could least afford them. This is not a call to minimise any of that. It is a call to remember that even in a desert, there is water. That even in waiting, there is life. That even in the not yet, there is a right now that someone else would exchange everything to have.

Do not dispose of your life. Do not speak of it as though it were worthless. Do not scroll past it, rush past it or complain past it into oblivion. Hold it. Honour it. Give thanks for it — today, imperfectly, with whatever you have.

Because the life you are living, with all its complications, all its unfinished edges and all its quiet, stubborn beauty, is someone else's dream. And perhaps the moment you stop despising it will be the moment you finally recognise it for what it has always been: a gift far greater than you have yet allowed yourself to receive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The fierce reality after the graduation gown comes off

BY Lauryn Wakia
@themtkenyatimes

In Kenya, a university degree has long carried a particular kind of promise. Parents scrimp and sacrifice through years of school fees, driven by a quiet but powerful conviction: that education is the surest path to a better life, and that one day their child will return home, certificate in hand, ready to repay that investment. The reality that greets many graduates today is something else entirely.

Across the country, thousands of young men and women who spent years in lecture halls are now selling eggs on street corners, hawking snacks through bus windows, touting SIM cards at busy junctions or, in the most desperate cases, drifting toward crime. Their degree certificates sit in suitcases, gathering dust. The careers they trained for remain frustratingly out of reach.

This is not a new problem, but it is a worsening one. For years, students have been graduating into a job market that simply cannot absorb them. What is changing, and changing dangerously, is the psychological toll. Frustration and depression are quietly consuming a generation of young Kenyans who did everything they were told to do, only to find the promised rewards withheld. Firstborns, often carrying the weight of entire family expectations, stay away from home out of shame. Some have taken their own lives. The grief behind that statistic deserves more than a passing mention.

There is also a more insidious dimension to unemployment: the pay-to-work culture that has taken root in corporate Kenya. Job seekers report being asked to pay bribes simply to be considered for positions at established companies — a grotesque irony for graduates who are already surviving hand to mouth. When the system demands money from people who have none, it does not just fail them. It tells them they do not belong.

The question of blame is complicated, though not without answers. Government bears a significant share of responsibility. Kenya has industries, infrastructure and natural resources that could generate substantial employment if developed with intent and accountability. An industrial policy that genuinely prioritises youth employment — not in rhetoric but in implementation — could meaningfully change the picture. The current trajectory, however, is pointed in the wrong direction. Insecurity is rising, and the evidence consistently points to unemployed young people as among the most vulnerable to radicalisation and criminal recruitment.

This is the part that tends to get lost in the policy conversation: unemployment is not merely an economic inconvenience. It is a security issue, a mental health crisis and a generational wound. A medical graduate selling roasted maize by the roadside is not a quirky anecdote. It is a failure of national planning, and it should be treated as one.

Kenya's youth are not asking for handouts. They are asking for a functioning system — one where qualifications matter, where industries are opened up rather than gatekept, and where the energy and ambition of young people can be channelled into building the country rather than surviving it. That is not an unreasonable request. It is, in fact, the minimum a government owes its people.

The graduation gown comes off. The certificate goes into the suitcase. And a young Kenyan stands at a crossroads, wondering whether the years of study meant anything at all. Until that moment changes, Kenya's human capital — its most valuable resource — will continue to be squandered, one graduate at a time.

Viral moment The phrase traces its origins to "Kitemeo," a high-energy Gengetone track by Kenyan rapper Kapitani

Bag ni ya nini? The anatomy of a Kenyan viral moment

BY David Nyaga
@themtkenyatimes

A single question has been stopping Kenyans in their tracks: "Bag ni ya nini?" — and the answer, no matter what you say, is always the same.

The craze follows a simple but irresistible formula. An unsuspecting person is casually asked why they are carrying a bag. They begin to answer — sensibly, earnestly, perhaps mentioning finances, daily essentials or the actual contents of their backpack — and are promptly cut off with the punchline: "Alele mtoto." The interrogator walks away. The victim is left bewildered. The crowd, if there is one, loses it entirely.

The phrase traces its origins to "Kitemeo," a high-energy Gengetone track by Kenyan rapper Kapitani. What began as a catchy lyric quickly evolved into a TikTok dance challenge, and from there it escaped the algorithm entirely, spilling into

street corners, office corridors and, inevitably, political rallies. To fully appreciate the joke, it helps to know that "bag" in contemporary Kenyan street slang generally refers to money, while "ni ya nini?" is Swahili for "is for what?" — a combination that turns even the most innocent laptop bag into comic fodder.

Corporate Kenya, as it tends to do, spotted the trend and moved swiftly. Parastatals and private firms alike began producing their own TikTok skits: young employees arriving at work in the morning, bags slung over their shoulders, only to be ambushed by a colleague with the famous question. The resulting videos typically featured stiff laughs from bewildered managers gamely attempting to play along. KenGen was among the organisations that joined in, as public relations teams across the country concluded that participating in a Gen Z meme was the most efficient route to appearing relatable.

Gen Z was not impressed. The backlash was swift and pointed. Creators who had championed the trend from its earliest days took to X to register their displeasure, arguing that millennials had invaded their cultural space, executed the dance moves all wrong and, most damningly, drained all the fun out of it. The consensus among younger users was clear: the moment a human resources department adopts your slang, the slang is finished.

Politicians, undeterred, pressed on regardless. Former Chief Justice David Maraga wrapped up a public address with a grin and put the question to his audience: "Taita Taveta, bag ni ya nini?" Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka, perhaps more creatively, posted on his official X account: "Ati bag ni ya nini? Alele mtoto na Card basi!" — a reference sharp enough to suggest someone on his team actually understood the joke.

And therein lies the curious genius of the trend. "Bag ni ya nini?" was never really about bags. It was a generational temperature check — a way for young Kenyans to poke fun at seriousness, puncture pretension and remind anyone within earshot that not everything requires a logical answer. The fact that it migrated from the streets to the boardroom to the political stage in a matter of weeks says less about the joke itself and more about how quickly urban youth culture moves in Kenya, and how desperately everyone else scrambles to keep up.

The cool factor, as Gen Z will tell you, has already expired. The next one is already loading.

Sports >> *Real Madrid's hire of José Mourinho, their most combustible signing in years, sets the stage for a three-club LaLiga title fight that promises to be as turbulent in the boardroom as it is on the pitch.

Mourinho's Bernabeu gamble fires up LaLiga's title race

By **Martin Weche**

LaLiga's new season opens with José Mourinho back at Real Madrid, a title-hungry Barcelona reinforced by World Cup heroes and Atlético Madrid already in the grip of an internal crisis before a single ball has been kicked.

The timing is almost poetic. Spain's football landscape had barely processed the national team's extraordinary triumph in New Jersey — their second World Cup, added to a European Championship already in the cabinet — when the club season muscled its way to centre stage. But it is not Spain's golden generation that dominates the pre-season conversation. It is the return of a man who once called himself special.

Florentino Pérez, newly re-elected as Real Madrid president, has made the most audacious managerial appointment in European football this summer, bringing Mourinho back to the Bernabéu from Benfica after an absence of more than a decade. The 61-year-old arrives without a league title since 2013 and without any trophy at all since 2021 — a drought that would have ended the ambitions of a lesser manager at a lesser club. At Madrid, it is presented as a renaissance.

The backdrop makes the gamble more comprehensible, if no less striking. Two successive trophyless seasons have left a club accustomed to perpetual conquest feeling oddly rudderless. The 2024 LaLiga and Champions League double, which delivered Madrid their record-extending 15th European Cup, now feels like a distant memory. The arrival of Kylian Mbappé alongside Jude Bellingham and Vinícius Júnior was supposed to open a new era of dominance. Instead, the glittering attack produced noise without silverware.

Pérez has not stood still. This summer has brought Yan Diomandé, Marc Cucurella, Denzel Dumfries, Ibrahima Konaté, Bernardo Silva and Carlos Espí through the doors at Valdebebas, while Vinícius has been tied to a new contract worth in excess of one million euros per week after more than a year of fraught negotiations. What remains uncertain is whether Mourinho, brilliant at installing defensive solidarity and psychological edge, can fill the creative void left by the departures of Toni Kroos and Luka Modrić. That question will define Madrid's season.

At the Camp Nou, Barcelona have answered with a different philosophy. Manager Hansi Flick, whose first season delivered the LaLiga title, retains the backing of a board that believes in his methods and trusts his squad. There is good reason for that confidence. Lamine Yamal, Pedri, Dani Olmo, Pau Cubarsí and Ferran Torres all featured prominently in Spain's World Cup victory, with Torres scoring the extra-time winner against Argentina in the final. The squad's blend of youthful exuberance and tactical discipline is formidable.

Yet Flick heads into the campaign with genuine uncertainty around his ranks. Reports from Catalonia suggest Paris Saint-Germain have submitted an offer for Torres, whose future remains unresolved following PSG's acquisitions of Anthony Gordon and Karim Adeyemi. More ambitious still is Barcelona's reported pursuit of Rodri, the Spain captain and Manchester City midfielder whose metronomic influence on the national team made the World Cup possible. A successful bid would constitute a seismic shift in LaLiga's balance of power and would land as a direct provocation to Madrid.

Atlético Madrid enter the picture carrying a different kind of weight. Diego Simeone, preparing for his fifteenth season in charge, faces mounting questions about whether his methods can still deliver a league title after a five-year wait. Last season offered encouragement — a Copa del Rey final appearance and a Champions League semi-final run ended only by Arsenal on penalties — but no prize. Now Simeone must also manage the increasingly public discontent of forward Julián Álvarez, who has requested a transfer and attracted reported interest from Barcelona.

Atlético have stated bluntly that they will not sell to their Catalan rivals. Whether that stance holds as the season unfolds is another matter entirely.

Three clubs. Three different kinds of pressure. One title. Mourinho's return alone would have made LaLiga appointment viewing — but in a season already bristling with transfer intrigue, World Cup afterglow and old rivalries sharpened to a new edge, Spanish football has rarely entered a campaign with quite this much at stake.

Sports >> *Three confederations, a World Cup host nation prime minister and a Norwegian federation chief have demanded accountability — but FIFA's embattled president still has Africa, Mexico and Donald Trump in his corner

Infantino clings to power as football's civil war breaks into the open

By **Martin Weche**

FIFA president Gianni Infantino

FIFA president Gianni Infantino faces the gravest crisis of his tenure after three of football's most powerful confederations publicly declared their loss of confidence in his leadership, exposing a schism at the heart of the global game that no amount of backtracking has been able to close.

The 56-year-old Swiss administrator, once considered a certainty for re-election to a fourth and final term at FIFA's congress in Rabat next March, now finds himself fighting for political survival on multiple fronts. His decision to shelve a controversial plan to bring private investment into the commercial operations of the World Cup — and his subsequent apology for the manner in which the proposal was launched — has satisfied none of his most determined opponents. For them, the issue was never the plan. It was always the man.

The crisis deepened ten days ago when Infantino made what many inside FIFA privately described as a humiliating climbdown, withdrawing the investment proposal under mounting pressure from member associations. Yet rather than drawing a line under the affair, the retreat appeared to embolden his critics. UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin, CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani and AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al-Khalifa released a joint letter whose language left little room for interpretation. "Leadership in football is not a possession," the letter read. "When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned." FIFA, in turn, responded with equal bluntness, accusing unnamed parties of mounting "a concerted and ongoing effort to undermine FIFA and its president."

UEFA went further still, reiterating its threat to withdraw its member associations from FIFA competitions unless two conditions were met: a permanent withdrawal of the privatisation proposals and binding assurances that no similar attempt to, in UEFA's words, "disfigure the game" would ever be made again. "These conditions have not been met," UEFA stated flatly, leaving the spectre of a World Cup boycott hovering over football's governing body.

The calls for resignation have grown louder and more specific. Lise Klaveness, president of the Norwegian Football Federation and one of Infantino's most consistent public critics, dispensed with diplomatic language entirely. "We are going to ask the FIFA president to resign now," she said. Prince Ali bin Al-Hussein, president of the Jordanian Football Association and Infantino's opponent in the 2016 FIFA election, went further still, alleging that FIFA had withheld funds owed to his federation unless he endorsed Infantino's re-election bid. "The whole situation amounts to blackmail and we refuse to give in to that," Prince Ali said. The allegation, if proven, would represent a serious governance failure. FIFA has not responded to the specific charge.

The crisis has now crossed football's borders into the realm of high politics. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, whose country co-hosted the recently concluded 48-team World Cup, said plainly: "Certainly I don't have confidence in Mr Infantino, after this point, given what transpired." It was an extraordinary intervention from a serving head of government and one that underscored how far the scandal has travelled beyond the football world.

Infantino's allies, however, remain vocal and strategically significant. The Confederation of African Football reaffirmed its support unanimously. Mexico's Football Federation backed him publicly, even as the national associations of fellow World Cup co-hosts the United States and Canada aligned themselves with the critical open letter. And US President Donald Trump, a personal friend of Infantino and one of the more striking figures in the president's support network, posted on Truth Social that FIFA "would be making a terrible mistake" by removing him. "He is fantastic," Trump wrote, crediting Infantino with producing what he described as the most successful and profitable World Cup in history. For Infantino's opponents, the closeness to Trump — cemented by the awarding of the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize to the US president — is itself part of the problem.

Even those within FIFA's inner circle have spoken carefully. Arsène Wenger, the legendary former Arsenal manager appointed by Infantino as chief of global football development, said the withdrawal of the investment project was "absolutely necessary and beyond question" — damning the plan without directly condemning the man who commissioned it.

The vote in Rabat is months away. In football, that is a long time. But the walls are closing in on Gianni Infantino, and not even the world's most powerful friends may be enough to hold them back.

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

The MT. KENYA TIMES
The Mt Kenya Times
375778 201602

Happiness, after all…

By: Soatova Aziza
@themtkenyatimes

It was around four in the morning. Another melancholy winter dawn. The night had yet to pull its black veil away from the face of morning. The wind, however, had already awakened. At times, it tossed things about; at others, it broke them. I lay there in the damp, sterile-smelling hospital room, watching it all, feeling the cold breath of death upon me. A moment ago, the nurse had entered the room and, without even having time to turn and look at me, changed my medication.

"Sir, how are you feeling? Get some good rest," she said in a cold, formal manner.

Even those words could not rescue me from the loneliness that surrounded me. The cold silence of the room was broken only by the steady, monotonous, and heart-wrenching sound of the cardiogram machine. At that moment, a tremor ran through my body. Yet, somewhere deep within my heart, a desire to live awakened once again. I began to despise myself, and a question echoed inside me:

"Was seventy years not enough for you?" Yes, I had not lived a short life, but I had made far too many mistakes. You might say that everyone makes mistakes. But mine were not ordinary ones. Let me tell you about them...

I think of childhood as cotton candy. Because until you touch it, it keeps its round, beautiful shape. Hidden inside it are countless dreams and worlds full of joy. That is why, whenever you asked children about their dreams, my younger brothers would answer without hesitation that they would become astronauts and fly to the Moon, or become presidents. But the moment you touch cotton candy, it collapses, becoming smaller and emptier. As we grow older, it is as though someone has touched that cotton candy, and our dreams slowly begin to fade. I think most people experience this at some point in their lives. But in my case, I had never even possessed that cotton candy to begin with. I do not know why. Perhaps it was because I had grown tired of people. Even as a young boy, I was repulsed by the way people's hearts became stained, by the way they constantly made life harder than it needed to be, always trying to trip one another up and hurt each other. If I were to tell you everything I had witnessed, even a whole book would not be enough.

And yet, I lived among those people, but I never became one of them. Life seemed to teach me one thing: getting close to people meant getting close to pain. And I simply did not want that pain. But I found salvation in books. I read, I searched, and I wondered whether perhaps people were better somewhere else. So I chose to leave these places and travel as far away as I could. I never started a family. To me, the word "family" seemed to consist of nothing but obligation and resentment. That was what I saw in every family around me. Even in my own.

My parents lived beneath the same roof. But the lovelessness in their eyes was heavier than any argument. One evening, during dinner, I heard my father say to my mother in a whisper, without even looking father: "If it weren't for these children, I wouldn't stay in this house for even a single day." Those words remained sealed in my memory for the rest of my life. They hated each other and stayed together only because of us. And when I looked around, I saw that the lives of many other people were much the same. Rather than witnessing love, I learned to run away from it. I believed that love was nothing but pain and tears. I was not afraid of starting a family; I was afraid of repeating the same story, afraid of being unhappy.

Years passed, and I continued living alone in a foreign country. At first, I found it wonderful. No one troubled me. No one hurt me. There was simply me and me alone.

Sometimes, my relatives from far away would call and say:

"You're getting older. Aren't you going to get married and find someone to lean on?". Their words would irritate me, and I would hang up the phone.

But every time I returned home, only a single pair of shoes in the hallway and one lonely cup sitting on the table would be waiting for me.

The days passed like that. Year after year was added to my age, and the season called old age did not pass me by either. That was when the thorn of loneliness slowly began to sink into my heart. As I walked through the streets, I could no longer remain indifferent to the world around me. I would see beautiful couples looking at each other with love, parents delighting in the ringing laughter of their children as they played, and elderly couples sitting together, talking quietly. I could feel a sense of regret slowly taking hold of my heart. Whenever I returned home, it felt as though something inside those empty rooms was slowly swallowing me whole.

That was when I finally understood: loneliness is not happiness.

I had judged life by looking only at its broken pieces. And now, lying in this room, with the cold breath of death upon my face, I finally understood that I had been wrong. Sadly, I understood it far too late. And by the time I did... it was already too late.

Outside the window, the night was slowly retreating. It was as though the black veil was gently slipping from the face of dawn, while the light timidly crept into the room. The wind had grown quiet as well, as if it, too, had said everything it had come to say. The cardiogram machine drew one final line. I took a deep breath. Slowly. Heavily. But this time, there was no fear. Instead, I felt a kind of peace I had never known before. As though, at last, all my questions had found their answers.

Dawn broke.

And I ... closed my eyes.

Happiness.

Soatova Aziza was born in 2007 in Muzrabot district, Surkhandarya Region, Uzbekistan. She graduated from Secondary School No. 44 in her native district and is currently a first-year student at Termez State University Faculty of Uzbek Philology. She has a strong interest in literature, creative writing, and the study of the Uzbek language. Through her writing, she seeks to explore human emotions, inner conflicts, loneliness, love, family, and the meaning of happiness. Her works often focus on the human soul and the life choices that shape a person's destiny.

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