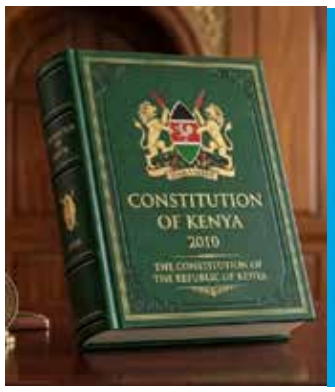

Katiba@16: What the constitution has meant in my own life

Sixteen years ago, Kenya gave itself a new constitutional promise. On 27 August 2010, the Constitution of Kenya was promulgated at a historic ceremony at Uhuru Park in Nairobi.

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Kenya is losing fifteen mothers a day — and the numbers are getting worse

Kenya's rate of skilled birth attendance fell from 69.77 per cent to 65.47 per cent between mid-2025 and early 2026, as fresh data presented to editors in Nairobi yesterday revealed deepening gaps

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Countdown 2027 **Ruto raised concerns about the growing number of court decisions nullifying government policies**

The three-legged stool is wobbling

President William Ruto yesterday used Kenya's Katiba Day celebrations to raise pointed questions about the role of the courts in blocking government policy — even as the judiciary stood accused of doing precisely what the Constitution mandated it to do, and as a sitting High Court judge had already ruled that his Cabinet was unconstitutional and that his mandate had, technically, already expired.

The occasion — the 16th anniversary of the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, marked at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi — brought together the three arms of government in a single hall. It was, on paper, a moment of national unity and constitutional reflection. In practice, it was a public airing of the deepest tensions to have gripped Kenya's constitutional order since the document was signed into law.

Ruto raised concerns about the growing number of court decisions nullifying government policies, arguing that Kenya must balance constitutional oversight with the ability of elected institutions to implement their mandates. "How do we preserve constitutional review without unnecessarily paralyzing legitimate government action?" he asked, posing a series of questions on how the Executive and Parliament should respond when courts find that a policy violates the Constitution.

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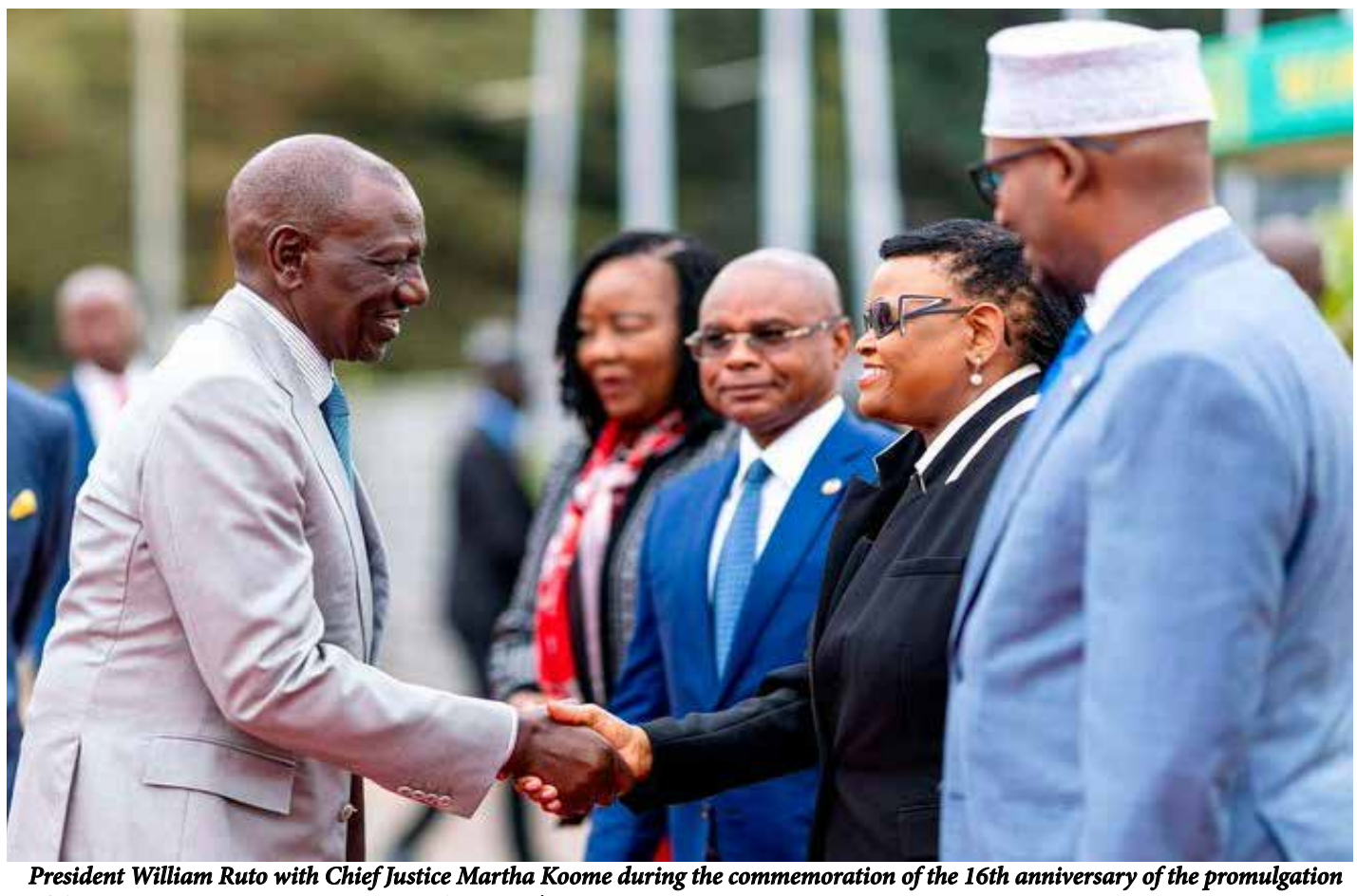

President William Ruto with Chief Justice Martha Koome during the commemoration of the 16th anniversary of the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, at KICC, Nairobi. Photo | PCS

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Kenya's next election is already being fought — and the Constitution is the battleground

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya marked the 16th anniversary of its 2010 Constitution yesterday at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, but beneath the ceremonial pageantry lay a political landscape already convulsed by the calculations, alliances and anxieties of a nation hurtling toward a general election in August 2027.

The occasion — Katiba Day — brought together politicians, jurists, civil society leaders and ordinary citizens to reflect on what the Constitution has delivered and what it has not. What emerged was less a celebration than a national audit, conducted in public, with findings that made for uncomfortable listening.

The verdicts from the podium were blunt. Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka said Kenya had produced "a first-class Constitution and second-class compliance," accusing state institutions and political leaders of selective adherence to constitutional principles. Retired Judge Aaron Ringera went further, drawing

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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.
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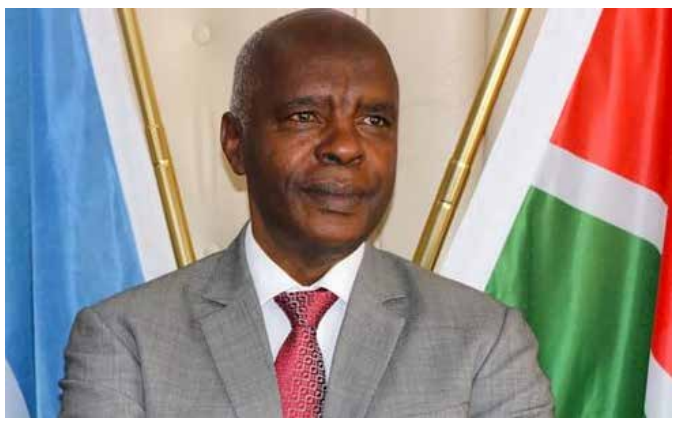
NEWS IN BRIEF

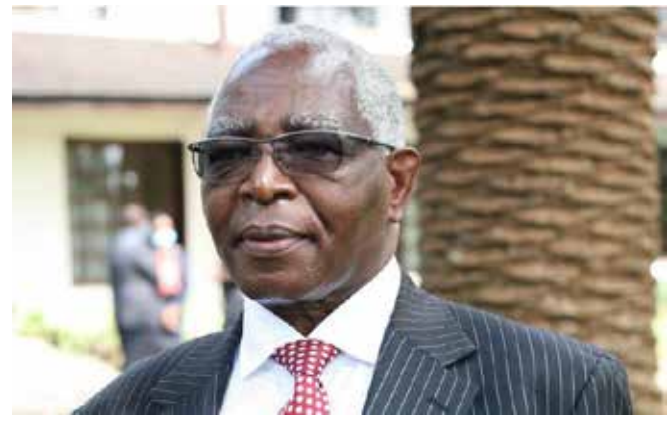
Educators, policymakers and regional bodies across the East African Community are pressing for a unified approach to education that would allow learners, teachers and qualifications to move freely across borders without bureaucratic friction. The push, which has gained momentum in recent months, reflects growing frustration with a patchwork of incompatible curricula, unrecognised certificates and inconsistent teaching standards that continue to frustrate both students and professionals attempting to work or study outside their home countries. Proponents argue that harmonisation would not only deepen regional integration but also strengthen the collective competitiveness of East African graduates in a rapidly shifting global labour market. Formal proposals are now before EAC technical committees, with a decision expected before the end of the year.

County governments along Kenya's flood-prone corridors are moving to evacuate vulnerable communities ahead of forecast El Niño rains expected to bring heavy and sustained rainfall across the region in the coming weeks. Disaster management officials yesterday said early warning data from the Kenya Meteorological Department pointed to above-normal precipitation, particularly in low-lying areas bordering major rivers and the coast. Authorities are urging residents in high-risk zones to relocate to designated relief centres without delay, warning that waiting until floodwaters rise would significantly complicate rescue operations. The coordinated evacuation effort, which involves national and county government agencies alongside the Kenya Red Cross, reflects lessons drawn from the devastating El Niño flooding of previous seasons that left thousands displaced and caused widespread destruction to infrastructure and livelihoods.

Forty-three days after the Kenya Union of Clinical Officers walked off the job, the strain on the public health system has become impossible to ignore. County-level wards that once handled the bulk of outpatient and primary care have fallen largely silent, their corridors emptied of the clinical officers who staffed them. The burden has shifted, unevenly and brutally, to a handful of national and regional referral hospitals now operating well beyond their designed capacity. Patients who would ordinarily receive treatment close to home are travelling longer distances to facilities that lack the staff, beds and supplies to absorb the surge. Negotiations between the union and government have yet to produce a breakthrough, leaving both healthcare workers and the communities that depend on them caught in a deepening and increasingly dangerous standoff.



Former Makueni Governor Kivutha Kibwana yesterday warned that Kenya's constitutional framework was being systematically hollowed out from within, as the Executive moved to reclaim powers deliberately stripped from it by the 2010 Constitution. Speaking candidly at a public engagement, Kibwana argued that the founding logic of the Constitution had been a direct response to decades of authoritarian rule — which was precisely why independent commissions and oversight institutions had been granted powers previously concentrated in the hands of the presidency. That architecture, he said, was now being quietly dismantled. "The Executive is reclaiming that power by ensuring that people appointed to these commissions do what they are told," he said, describing a pattern of calculated institutional capture that, left unchecked, threatened to return Kenya to the very system the Constitution was designed to dismantle.



Retired Judge Aaron Ringera yesterday delivered a pointed indictment of Kenya's constitutional record, arguing that the country's failure to implement its own supreme law lay at the heart of its deepening governance crisis. Speaking at a public forum, Ringera said the Constitution remained the most consequential public policy document Kenya had ever produced — yet its promises had been systematically abandoned at almost every level of government. His sharpest rebuke was reserved for the wave of abductions that has alarmed rights groups and ordinary citizens alike. "If we were implementing the Constitution, would we have abductions in this country? No," he said, his words drawing a direct line between constitutional neglect and the erosion of the most basic protections the law was designed to guarantee every Kenyan.

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday called for the impartial implementation of the 2010 Constitution, warning that selective compliance was quietly eroding the foundations of Kenya's constitutional order. Speaking to mark the 16th anniversary of the Constitution's promulgation, Musyoka did not mince his words. Kenya, he said, had produced a first-class Constitution and paired it with second-class compliance — a damning verdict on the gap between the document's promise and the conduct of those entrusted to uphold it. He accused state institutions and political leaders of cherry-picking which constitutional provisions to honour and which to ignore, arguing that such inconsistency was not merely a governance failure but a betrayal of the millions of Kenyans who voted overwhelmingly to adopt the Constitution in August 2010.

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Constitution Katiba Day — brought together politicians, jurists, civil society leaders and ordinary citizens

Kenya's next election is already being fought — and the Constitution is the battleground

Contd from page 2

President William Ruto with Chief Justice Martha Koome during the commemoration of Katiba @16

direct line between constitutional neglect and the abductions that have alarmed rights groups across the country. "If we were implementing the Constitution, would we have abductions in this country? No," he said, his words landing in a hall where several of the people responsible for that implementation sat in the front rows.

Former Makueni Governor Kivutha Kibwana offered perhaps the sharpest structural critique. The 2010 Constitution, he argued, had been deliberately designed to dismantle the authoritarian concentrations of power that had defined Kenyan governance for decades. Independent commissions, oversight bodies and devolved structures had been given powers previously held exclusively by the Executive — a conscious architectural choice. That architecture, Kibwana warned, was now being reversed. "The Executive is reclaiming that power by ensuring that people appointed to these commissions do what they are told," he said, describing a pattern of institutional capture whose implications extend well beyond this political cycle.

Those implications are sharpening fast. With twelve months separating Kenya from nomination season and fewer than two years from polling day, the country is entering the period that Kenyan political analysts have long called the "danger zone" — a stretch of heightened ethnic mobilisation, institutional stress-testing and elite deal-making that has historically preceded the country's most turbulent electoral moments.

The current political configuration is more fractured and more volatile than it appears. President William Ruto enters the election cycle weakened by the Gen Z protests of 2024, the subsequent collapse of his broad-tent government and the defection of key allies. His administration has responded with a combination of economic nationalism, infrastructure messaging and aggressive opposition to what State House describes as foreign interference in domestic affairs — a framing that has found some traction but failed to rebuild the coalition he commanded in 2022.

The opposition, meanwhile, is anything but unified. The death of Raila Odinga in October last year — at the age of 80, while receiving treatment in Kerala, India — removed the dominant organising force of the Azimio la Umoja coalition, a vacuum that no single figure has convincingly filled. Odinga had waged five presidential campaigns over nearly three decades and remained the gravitational centre of opposition politics until his final days. His absence has left ODM fractured, with competing factions claiming to represent his legacy while pulling in opposite directions.

Musyoka, who spent much of the post-2022 period repositioning himself as a constitutional statesman, is edging back toward the centre of opposition politics. His Katiba Day remarks were as much a political statement as a constitutional one — a signal that he intends to contest 2027 on the ground of governance and institutional integrity, a territory he calculates Ruto is most exposed on.

Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party adds a further layer of complexity. Having been impeached as Deputy President in late 2024, Gachagua has spent the intervening months building a Mt Kenya political movement grounded in grievance and ethnic solidarity. His entry into 2027 as an independent political force — rather than as a subordinate within a larger coalition — changes the arithmetic of the Mt Kenya vote in ways that neither Ruto nor the opposition has fully mapped.

The Constitution sits at the centre of all of it. Devolution, the independence of the judiciary, the powers of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the rights of assembly and expression — each is both a constitutional guarantee and a political flashpoint. How faithfully those provisions are honoured in the months ahead will determine not only the credibility of the 2027 election but the stability of whatever government emerges from it.

Sixteen years ago, Kenyans voted for a Constitution that was supposed to make their politics safer, their institutions stronger and their rights more secure. Yesterday's anniversary offered a clear-eyed reckoning with how much of that promise remains unfulfilled — and a warning that the road to August 2027 will test what remains of it.

Three arrested as multi-agency raid uncovers fake alcohol den in Nairobi

NACADA Chief Executive Officer Dr Anthony Omerikwa

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

A multi-agency operation yesterday netted three suspects and 315 counterfeit alcoholic beverages at a suspected counterfeiting den in Jericho, Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi, as authorities escalated a coordinated crackdown on illicit alcohol across the capital.

Officers from the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Kenya Revenue Authority, the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the National Police Service conducted the raid, finding one of the suspects — a woman — allegedly in the act of mixing and repackaging substandard alcohol on the premises. Alongside the seized beverages, investigators recovered fake KRA excise stamps, empty bottles and bottle tops believed to have been prepared for refilling and redistribution. Several confiscated products bore Tanzanian excise duty stamps, raising serious concerns about cross-border counterfeiting networks supplying Nairobi's illicit alcohol trade.

The three suspects were booked at Jogoo Road Police Station and were expected to appear in court yesterday. The Jericho bust followed a raid in Eastleigh the previous day, where the same multi-agency team seized 868 counterfeit and uncustomed alcoholic beverages and arrested two suspects — back-to-back operations that signal a sharper enforcement posture from authorities.

NACADA Chief Executive Officer Dr Anthony Omerikwa said Nairobi accounts for 55 per cent of consumption of what the authority described as life-threatening alcoholic drinks, making the capital the central front in the nationwide crackdown. "We cannot win this battle alone," Omerikwa said. "We call upon Kenyans to be our eyes and ears and report any suspicious activities or outlets selling counterfeit alcohol." The public can reach NACADA through its official platforms or free helpline 1192. Further operations in high-risk areas are planned.

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Katiba@16: What the constitution has meant in my own life

Sixteen years after promulgation, a teacher reflects on rights, accountability and the distance between constitutional promise and everyday reality

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Sixteen years ago, Kenya gave itself a new constitutional promise. On 27 August 2010, the Constitution of Kenya was promulgated at a historic ceremony at Uhuru Park in Nairobi. I remember that occasion not merely as another national event, but as a moment that seemed to announce a different Kenya — a country where citizens would know their rights, institutions would answer for their conduct, and public power would be exercised within clear legal boundaries. Sixteen years on, I have come to understand that a constitution is not transformed into reality simply because it has been signed into law. Its true test is what happens in the ordinary lives of citizens.

For me, that test has played out largely through life as a teacher. I have spent many years working in education — first in the private sector, later in public service. That journey has given me a front-row seat to some of the opportunities, contradictions and frustrations of a country attempting to live by a new constitutional order. The Constitution promised dignity, equality, fairness and accountability. As a teacher, I have often seen those ideals at work. I have also encountered situations that remind me how far we still have to travel.

One of the most important shifts brought by the 2010 Constitution was the recognition that citizens hold rights the State must respect. That may sound obvious today, but it represented a profound change in how Kenyans should perceive government. A citizen is not a favour-seeker before the State. A teacher is not merely a government employee. A student is not simply a recipient of whatever education the system chooses to provide. We are all holders of rights and participants in a constitutional democracy.

My experience in education has taught me that this distinction matters enormously. Teachers work within a complicated public system involving the Teachers Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Kenya National Examinations Council, school boards and numerous other bodies. Each institution has its mandate. Each has power. But that power is supposed to be exercised within the law. As a teacher, I have sometimes found myself asking difficult questions about accountability, fairness and institutional responsibility. When policies are introduced, who explains them? When decisions affect teachers and learners, are those affected actually heard? When institutions make mistakes, who takes responsibility? These are not acts of rebellion. They are constitutional questions.

The Constitution gave Kenyans a stronger language with which to demand accountability. It made it increasingly difficult to argue that citizens should simply accept decisions because they came from people occupying powerful offices.

My years in education have also shown me the importance of social and economic rights — particularly the right to education. In a classroom, constitutional ideals become very practical. A child sitting on a broken desk does not experience the Constitution as an abstract legal document. A learner studying in an overcrowded classroom does not experience equality as a philosophical concept. A teacher struggling to deliver the curriculum without adequate resources does not experience public policy as something remote. These are constitutional issues because they concern dignity, opportunity and the quality of public services that the State owes its people.

The introduction of devolution similarly changed the Kenyan experience. Government is no longer perceived only through the offices in Nairobi. County governments have become part of everyday life, particularly in healthcare, local infrastructure and development. From where I stand, devolution has been one of the most visible demonstrations that constitutional reform can genuinely alter the relationship between citizens and government. Yet it has also taught us another lesson: moving power closer to the people does not automatically make that power accountable. Whether at national or county level, public power remains public power. It must be scrutinised, questioned and ultimately used to serve the people.

My experience has also made me appreciate the importance of professional independence. A teacher is expected to perform duties professionally, follow lawful policies and remain accountable. But accountability must operate in both directions. Institutions must also answer to the people who serve within them. There is a real danger in creating systems where accountability becomes synonymous with surveillance and compliance, while institutional responsibility is quietly set aside. A constitutional democracy should not simply ask, "Have you obeyed?" It should also ask, "Was the decision fair? Was the process transparent? Were your rights respected?"

Over the years, I have watched how easily Kenyans can grow cynical about public institutions. People complain about corruption, bureaucracy, political interference and unequal treatment. Sometimes they conclude that the Constitution has failed. I do not agree — not entirely. The Constitution has not failed simply because Kenyans have sometimes failed to implement it. A good constitution cannot compensate for poor leadership, weak institutions or a culture that tolerates impunity. It provides the framework. Citizens and institutions must supply the commitment.

That is particularly important for teachers. Schools are among the places where constitutionalism should be taught through practice, not merely through textbooks. When students are treated with dignity, when discipline is administered fairly, when different opinions can be expressed responsibly, and when leadership is grounded in justice rather than fear, young people learn what constitutional democracy actually means. As an English and Literature teacher, I have always believed that education is ultimately about more than examinations. It is about producing citizens who can think, question, analyse and participate meaningfully in society. The Constitution strengthens that mission.

It tells the young Kenyan that their voice matters. It tells them that authority has limits. It tells them that leadership is a responsibility, not a privilege to be abused. It tells them that rights come with responsibilities. And it tells them that this country belongs to them too.

Looking back across the sixteen years since 2010, I see a mixed picture. We have made progress, but we have also disappointed ourselves. We have created institutions, but sometimes struggled to make them genuinely independent. We have expanded rights, but sometimes violated them. We have brought government closer to citizens through devolution, but accountability has not always travelled with power.

Yet I remain convinced that the 2010 Constitution is worth defending. My own experience has taught me that constitutionalism is not something that happens only in Parliament, the courts or State House. It happens in classrooms, offices, hospitals, county governments and ordinary homes. It happens whenever a citizen refuses to accept injustice simply because the person responsible is powerful. It happens whenever a public servant chooses integrity over convenience. It happens whenever a teacher treats a learner with dignity. It happens whenever an institution admits a mistake and corrects it. And it happens whenever Kenyans insist that public power must remain accountable to the people.

At Katiba@16, I do not simply celebrate the Constitution. I interrogate it — and, more importantly, I interrogate ourselves. Sixteen years is long enough to judge what has changed, but not long enough to abandon the dream. The Constitution gave us the promise. My experience has taught me that keeping that promise is not the responsibility of politicians and judges alone. It belongs to every teacher, every learner, every public servant, every parent and every citizen.

The Constitution is Kenya's contract with itself. Sixteen years after its promulgation, the question is no longer whether it belongs to us. The question is whether we are willing to live by it.

GOVERNANCE **The judiciary, for its part, was not silent. Chief Justice Martha Koome said corruption and integrity concerns remain serious issues within the judiciary itself**

The three-legged stool is wobbling

As Kenya marks sixteen years of its 2010 Constitution, President Ruto's open challenge to the courts — and a judiciary that has declared his Cabinet and his election date unconstitutional — exposes a constitutional order under its greatest stress since promulgation

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto with LSK leadershipduring the commemoration of the 16th anniversary of the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, at KICC, Nairobi. | *Photo:* PCS

President William Ruto yesterday used Kenya's Katiba Day celebrations to raise pointed questions about the role of the courts in blocking government policy — even as the judiciary stood accused of doing precisely what the Constitution mandated it to do, and as a sitting High Court judge had already ruled that his Cabinet was unconstitutional and that his mandate had, technically, already expired.

The occasion — the 16th anniversary of the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, marked at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi — brought together the three arms of government in a single hall. It was, on paper, a moment of national unity and constitutional reflection. In practice, it was a public airing of the deepest tensions to have gripped Kenya's constitutional order since the document was signed into law.

Ruto raised concerns about the growing number of court decisions nullifying government policies, arguing that Kenya must balance constitutional oversight with the ability of elected institutions to implement their mandates. "How do we preserve constitutional review without unnecessarily paralyzing legitimate government action?" he asked, posing a series of questions on how the Executive and Parliament should respond when courts find that a policy violates the Constitution.

It was a question that landed with particular weight given what the courts have actually found. In July, a three-judge bench of the High Court declared that the current Cabinet violates the Constitution for failing to meet the two-thirds gender principle under Article 27(8), directing Ruto to reconstitute his Cabinet within 120 days — leaving him with only 42 days from yesterday before the deadline expires. Then, just three weeks ago, a Malindi court delivered an even more explosive ruling. Justice M. Thande held that the IEBC's plan to hold the next general election on August 10, 2027 is based on an incorrect interpretation of the Constitution, declaring that the correct date was August 11, 2026 — a date that has already passed. The judgment means Ruto's tenure, which began on September 13, 2022, constitutionally ends when the next duly elected president is sworn into office, even if he has not served a full five years. The effect was suspended pending appeal, but the constitutional question it raised did not disappear with the stay order.

At Katiba Day, Ruto was asked directly during a panel discussion whether he was aware that his Cabinet had been rendered unconstitutional by the judgment. "Are you aware, sir, that your Cabinet is unconstitutional?" he was asked. He acknowledged the ruling and its implications — a moment of candour that underscored just how exposed the Executive has become to judicial scrutiny in the months leading to a general election now widely assumed to be scheduled for August 2027.

The judiciary, for its part, was not silent. Chief Justice Martha Koome said corruption and integrity concerns remain serious issues within the judiciary itself, while insisting that the institution must remain independent and make decisions without interference. "The judiciary's credibility depends on protecting its independence," she said. The message was unmistakable: the courts would not be retreating from their constitutional role, regardless of the political weather.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga, who is eyeing the presidency under the United Green Movement party, issued a Katiba Day statement warning that the Constitution's protections were being eroded through violations that should concern all Kenyans. He cited the criminalisation of dissent, disregard for court orders and the treatment of public participation as a formality rather than a constitutional obligation as among the most serious threats facing the supreme law. Maraga's intervention was both a legal warning and an opening campaign salvo — a sign of how thoroughly constitutional discourse and electoral politics have become intertwined as Kenya moves toward the next vote.

Ruto, for his part, said voters give elected leaders a mandate to implement their programmes, but that mandate comes with a responsibility to operate within the law — a formulation that acknowledged the constraints of constitutionalism even as he questioned how those constraints were being applied. He framed his Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda as an instrument for implementing the Constitution, and warned that "progressive realisation of constitutional rights cannot mean indefinite postponement."

The parliament, the third arm of the constitutional tripod, has been conspicuously active in ways that have drawn their own judicial scrutiny. The High Court has temporarily barred National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula and Senate Speaker Amason Kingi from using the authority of their offices in partisan political campaigns for Ruto's 2027 re-election bid, pending determination of a constitutional petition that could redefine the political limits of their offices. The case encapsulates a broader question that has begun to dominate Kenya's pre-election landscape: where does constitutional office end and partisan politics begin?

The stakes around the election itself are sharpening by the week. The IEBC has received KSh24.9B for the 2027 election but faces a KSh6.3B funding gap following Parliament's recent rejection of additional allocations, a shortfall that threatens electoral credibility at a moment when the commission's constitutional standing is already under legal challenge. Since the contested 2022 general election, a series of court rulings have placed the IEBC under sustained constitutional scrutiny, with judges clarifying election management rules and warning that electoral processes must strictly meet constitutional standards.

The picture that emerges from Katiba Day 2026 is not one of a constitutional order functioning smoothly sixteen years after promulgation. It is one of three arms of government — Executive, Legislature and Judiciary — each claiming the mantle of constitutional legitimacy while pulling in different directions, their tensions sharpened by proximity to an election that will determine who governs Kenya for the next five years.

President Ruto formally proclaimed August 27 as a perpetual national observance last year, underscoring the profound political and juridical weight attached to this foundational document. With the general election less than 350 days away, the commemoration demands more than ceremony. It compels a frank constitutional audit: how faithfully has Kenya translated the sovereign will of the people into operational governance?

The 2010 Constitution was built on a simple but radical proposition: that no single arm of government should accumulate enough power to govern without accountability to the others. Yesterday's events at KICC demonstrated that the proposition is being tested as never before — by a president frustrated by courts, a judiciary defending its independence, a parliament whose speakers are fighting legal battles over their own political conduct, and an electoral commission whose funding, constitutional standing and planned election date are all simultaneously in dispute.

Ruto told the gathering that Kenyans have a constitutional responsibility to hold institutions to account, but should also recognise their importance in maintaining governance, public order and the rule of law. It was the right thing to say. Whether it reflects the administration's actual posture toward an increasingly assertive judiciary — and an electorate that has not forgotten 2024 — is the question that will define the politics of the coming year.

The three-legged stool that is Kenya's constitutional order is still standing. But each leg is under pressure, and the ground beneath it is shifting fast.

Africa **"Binaries are mental and conceptual divisions in society that render cooperation impossible and collective action illusory," Sing'oei said**

Africa's real barriers are in the mind, Kenya's top diplomat tells continent

Dr. Korir Sing'oei, Principal Secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, delivers remarks at the Africa Mindset Reset Conference, hosted by the Africa School of Governance under the leadership of Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, and Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's Principal Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Dr Korir Sing'oei, told an Africa-wide conference in Rwanda yesterday that the continent's development crisis is as much a crisis of perception and trust as it is one of infrastructure, capital or policy — and that until Africans dismantle the mental divisions that shape how they see one another, progress will remain elusive.

Speaking at the Africa Mindset Reset Conference hosted by President Paul Kagame alongside scholar and pan-Africanist Professor PLO Lumumba and other continental thinkers, Sing'oei made an argument that cut against the familiar narrative of Africa's challenges. The barriers that matter most, he said, are not always visible on a map.

"We are always looking at physical barriers to entry," he told delegates. "But I think there are also conceptual, mental barriers to our engagement. Just like the physical barriers impede progress, my view is that the conceptual, the mental barriers are even a bigger impediment to progress."

He gave these divisions a name: binaries. The tendency to reduce complex relationships between peoples and nations to an us-versus-them calculus — Anglophone versus Francophone, refugee versus citizen, Global South versus Global North — is not merely a philosophical problem, Sing'oei argued. It has direct consequences for policy, for institutions and for the continent's ability to act collectively.

"Binaries are mental and conceptual divisions in society that render cooperation impossible and collective action illusory," he said. "They weaken the social fabric and undermine the social contract."

His most pointed domestic example was Kenya's long-standing treatment of refugees. For nearly three decades, Kenya has hosted approximately 800,000 refugees — the majority of them fellow Africans — yet the dominant policy framework has viewed them largely through a security lens, confining many to camps and treating them as a category apart from the broader population.

"We have looked at refugees as others, outside our limits. And we have put them in camps," Sing'oei acknowledged. "But are these 800,000 people, most of them Africans, really 'others'? Some have spent their entire lives growing up in these camps."

His answer to that question is embedded in Kenya's Shirika Plan, a policy initiative that seeks to move beyond the camp model by integrating refugees into local economies and national public services, building pathways to self-reliance and strengthening the ties between refugees and host communities. It is, he argued, what a continent that has genuinely shed its internal binaries looks like in practice.

The same logic, Sing'oei said, applies to international climate negotiations — a domain where the Global North versus Global South framing has calcified into something that generates more heat than solutions. The divide, built around questions of historical responsibility for emissions and the financing obligations of wealthier nations, is understandable in origin but counterproductive in effect.

"This dichotomy doesn't help us in dealing with the problem of climate change," he said flatly.

He pointed instead to the 2023 Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, which produced the Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative — an attempt to reframe the continent not as a passive recipient of climate finance but as an active participant in the global green economy, leveraging its renewable energy resources, natural wealth and industrial potential to drive growth on its own terms.

The linguistic dimension of Africa's internal binaries drew some of Sing'oei's sharpest remarks. When Kenya was selected to host the France-Africa summit — dubbed Africa Forward — the choice of an Anglophone nation to convene a gathering traditionally associated with Francophone Africa prompted predictable friction. Sing'oei was dismissive of the premise behind the objection.

"There is no Francophone Africa, there is no Anglophone Africa. There is only one Africa, and we must destroy these binaries because they are the ones responsible for holding us back," he said.

Yet even if those divisions were dismantled tomorrow, Sing'oei identified a deeper and harder problem beneath them: trust. The anxiety he said he observed among Africa's young people was rooted not simply in economic frustration but in a widening trust deficit — between citizens and their governments, between neighbouring states and between Africa and the broader multilateral system.

"You can sense the anxiety of young people because of trust. We must address ourselves to the trust, to the widening trust deficit," he said, arguing that the same erosion of confidence that is fracturing relations within African nations is simultaneously undermining the international cooperation the continent needs to advance its interests globally. "The reason the multilateral system is failing today is because of a trust deficit," he added.

The argument Sing'oei made in Kigali was ultimately a simple one, even if its implications are vast: Africa will not think its way to prosperity through better policy alone. It must first change the lens through which it sees itself — and then build enough trust to act on what it finds.

Katiba@16 **Sixteen years after Kenyans voted to redraw the architecture of power, the Constitution's promises are being tested by the very institutions entrusted to protect them**

Written in gold, wielded in iron: Katiba@16 and the realities of power

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Katiba@16 panelist

Sixteen years ago, Kenya did more than promulgate a Constitution. It attempted to redraw the architecture of power itself.

When Kenyans voted overwhelmingly for the 2010 Constitution, they were not merely ratifying a legal draft. They were declaring an end to an era defined by unchecked executive authority, fragile institutional restraints and entrenched impunity. The charter promulgated at Uhuru Park was written in gold — ambitious, progressive and deliberately designed to place the citizen at the centre of governance.

Sixteen years later, the symbolism remains potent. But the contradiction has deepened.

As political leaders, jurists, civil society actors and ordinary citizens gathered at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre for the Katiba@16 symposium yesterday, Kenya found itself commemorating a document whose promises continue to be tested by the institutions entrusted with upholding them. The question is no longer whether Kenya possesses a progressive Constitution. It does. The harder question is whether those who exercise public power possess the discipline to live within its boundaries.

That is where the golden promise of 2010 collides with the iron realities of statecraft.

Nowhere is that collision sharper than in the struggle over public assembly. Article 37 guarantees every person the right, peaceably and unarmed, to assemble, demonstrate, picket and present petitions to public authorities. It represents one of the Constitution's most significant shifts — transforming citizens from passive subjects of state power into active participants in governance.

Speaking at KICC, President William Ruto acknowledged that the 2024 Gen Z demonstrations reflected genuine demands for accountability and better governance. He described peaceful protest, criticism and dissent as essential to democracy, while insisting that constitutional protection does not extend to violence, looting or the destruction of property. He also called for credible allegations of human rights violations to be independently investigated.

That distinction matters. No constitutional right is a licence for criminality. But public order cannot become a convenient cloak for suppressing legitimate dissent. The true test of Article 37 is not whether the State tolerates protest when it is politically comfortable, but whether it protects that right when citizens use it to challenge those in authority. The street remains where the constitutional promise either holds or fractures.

A constitutional government is not defined merely by its capacity to govern. It is defined by its willingness to accept limits on that authority. That is why an independent judiciary is indispensable. The 2010 Constitution did not establish courts simply to resolve disputes — it empowered the bench to police the boundaries of executive and legislative power. When state agencies disregard court orders, delay compliance or treat judicial decisions as political inconveniences, the damage extends well beyond the individual case. It weakens the foundational principle that no office, however powerful, stands above the law.

Former Chief Justice David Maraga's warning that Kenya's constitutional order is under siege speaks directly to that concern. A court order cannot be binding only when its outcome suits the government of the day. Constitutionalism requires legal boundaries to remain binding precisely when they become inconvenient — and most especially then.

The metaphor of power wielded in iron becomes most acute within the security apparatus. The State has legitimate authority to maintain public order, but that authority is constitutionally bounded. Police officers are not exempt from the Constitution; they are subject to it. Allegations of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and excessive force therefore strike directly at the credibility of the Bill of Rights. When citizens fear that political expression could expose them to unlawful state action, constitutional protection weakens in practice, whatever the text says in theory. Ruto's call for independent investigations is significant, but its credibility will ultimately depend on institutions capable of establishing facts and enforcing consequences without fear or favour.

Parliament, too, carries a burden the Constitution did not design it to shed. Its responsibility is not simply to process government policy. It is to scrutinise public spending, investigate executive conduct and represent the sovereign will of the people. Former Attorney General Githu Muigai pointed at the symposium to challenges facing key oversight structures and raised the broader question of whether Parliament is fully exercising its constitutional mandate. Political alignment between lawmakers and the executive is not inherently a constitutional failure — coalition politics naturally produces cooperation. The danger emerges when political loyalty overwhelms institutional duty. When Parliament becomes more concerned with protecting an executive than scrutinising it, one of the Constitution's critical lines of defence quietly disappears.

A fair assessment of Katiba@16 must also engage the government's strongest argument. The Ruto administration presents its Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda as a practical attempt to realise Article 43, which guarantees socioeconomic rights including healthcare, housing, food and social security. Ruto has argued that these rights should be judged by their impact on the daily lives of Kenyans, not merely by constitutional rhetoric. That argument carries genuine weight. But economic delivery cannot substitute for institutional accountability. A government can build housing while remaining bound by court orders. It can expand healthcare while remaining obligated to protect peaceful protesters. It can pursue economic transformation while respecting independent institutions. The Constitution does not demand a choice between development and the rule of law. It demands both.

That is why the voices from civil society, professional bodies and constitutional watchdogs matter as much as those from the podium. A healthy democracy requires journalists, lawyers, activists and civic organisations to scrutinise authority without being treated as enemies of the state. The maturity of a democracy is not measured by how passionately its leaders praise the Constitution. It is measured by how much space exists for those who disagree with them. When that space narrows, constitutional rights risk becoming beautiful words with very little protection behind them.

All of these institutional questions converge, with increasing urgency, on 2027. The next general election will be more than a contest between political coalitions. It will be a full audit of Kenya's constitutional machinery — the independence and readiness of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the integrity of electoral technology and procurement, the neutrality of the security services and the depth of public trust in the process. Elections expose institutional weaknesses because political stakes magnify every flaw. If electoral institutions command public confidence, disputes can be resolved through constitutional channels. If that confidence collapses, suspicion can rapidly harden into conflict. Kenya cannot afford to wait until election day to discover whether its institutions are ready.

The constitutional work of 2027 begins now — and it is already overdue.

The central misconception of the post-2010 era is that drafting progressive rules is sufficient to secure democracy. It is not. Kenya possesses Article 37, Article 43, judicial independence, devolution and a comprehensive Bill of Rights. The constitutional framework is remarkable in its ambition. What remains unfinished is the political culture needed to animate it. A constitution possesses no self-executing power. Judges must interpret it with courage. Parliament must defend it with independence. The executive must submit to it with honesty. Institutions must enforce it without fear. And citizens must demand its protection without apology.

The 2010 Constitution was never meant to sit in legal treatises or be commemorated once a year at KICC. It was designed to safeguard the citizen at the police station, protect rights in the courtroom, enforce accountability in Parliament and guarantee fairness at the ballot box. It was enacted to ensure that the state remains the servant of the people — not its master.

Sixteen years on, Kenya does not need more speeches praising its constitutional design. It needs institutions with the courage to enforce limits when doing so is politically difficult, citizens vigilant enough to defend their rights and leaders honest enough to accept that public power is a constrained trust — not a personal inheritance.

The Constitution was written in gold.

But so long as power continues to be wielded in iron, the struggle to fulfil its promise remains the defining political duty of our time.

Health **Arriving at a hospital should not be the end of the danger. For too many Kenyan women, it is where the danger continues**

Kenya is losing fifteen mothers a day — and the numbers are getting worse

Skilled birth attendance has fallen sharply, family planning uptake is declining, and nearly half of all maternal deaths happen inside health facilities that fail to deliver timely care

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

Maternal health

Kenya's rate of skilled birth attendance fell from 69.77 per cent to 65.47 per cent between mid-2025 and early 2026, as fresh data presented to editors in Nairobi yesterday revealed deepening gaps in maternal and newborn healthcare that are costing lives at a rate the country's own health targets cannot afford to ignore.

The figures, shared at the Wanahabari Editors' Roundtable on Strengthening Media Engagement for Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition, paint a picture of a health system under strain at precisely the moments that matter most — pregnancy, delivery and the fragile hours that follow. Over the same period, the number of women using family planning services dropped from 1,519,066 to 1,385,575, a decline that health experts say is not a footnote but a warning.

Polycarp Oyoo, Programmes Adviser for Maternal and Newborn Health at the International Centre for Reproductive Health Kenya, put the human cost in terms that statistics alone cannot fully carry. "Every day we lose about 15 mothers," he told the gathering, adding that dozens of newborn deaths and stillbirths are recorded daily across the country. Behind each of those numbers is a family, a community and, in too many cases, a death that need not have happened.

The data draws a sharp and troubling map of where the system is failing. Thirty per cent of maternal and newborn deaths are linked to delays in deciding to seek care — a figure shaped by distance, cost, cultural barriers and a lack of confidence in the health system. A further 25 per cent are tied to delays in physically reaching a health facility. But the statistic that demands the most urgent institutional response is the remaining 45 per cent: mothers and newborns who reach a health facility and still do not receive timely, quality care.

Arriving at a hospital should not be the end of the danger. For too many Kenyan women, it is where the danger continues.

Ministry of Health data cited at the meeting reinforces that finding. Only 37 per cent of facilities offering delivery services meet basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care standards — meaning that nearly two in every three delivery facilities in Kenya falls below the minimum threshold for safe childbirth. Medicine shortages compound the problem at every turn. Nearly half of all facilities report a lack of magnesium sulphate, used to prevent seizures in pre-eclampsia. Forty-seven per cent are without benzyl penicillin. Forty per cent face oxytocin stockouts — the very drug used to prevent and treat postpartum haemorrhage, which was identified as the leading reported maternal complication across the five years to 2025.

In six months alone, Kenya recorded 480 maternal deaths, 811 neonatal deaths and 3,590 perinatal deaths, based on figures drawn from the Ministry of Health's health information systems. Nakuru, Kakamega and Nairobi were among the counties registering the highest numbers in the review period, though Oyoo was careful to note that counties reporting few or no deaths also warrant scrutiny — low figures can reflect genuine progress or gaps in reporting, and the difference matters enormously for policy.

The decline in family planning uptake adds a longer-term dimension to the crisis. Maternal health, Oyoo argued, does not begin at the delivery room. It begins with access to family planning services that allow women to make informed decisions about when and whether to become pregnant. Among the groups recording the sharpest drops in uptake are adolescents and young women — a pattern that raises questions about access to contraceptives, the quality of information available to younger women and the structural barriers that continue to push reproductive health services beyond their reach.

"Why are adolescents, why is the younger population not getting this?" Oyoo asked — a question that has no comfortable answer, and one that he challenged both journalists and policymakers to investigate rather than assume away.

The roundtable was held against the backdrop of Kenya's Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere Acceleration Plan 2026-2028, launched by the government in May. The plan sets targets that are ambitious to the point of being confrontational with the current data: reducing the maternal mortality ratio from 355 deaths per 100,000 live births to 140 or fewer by 2028, cutting neonatal mortality from 21 to 12 or fewer deaths per 1,000 live births, pushing skilled birth attendance to 100 per cent and eliminating oxytocin stockouts entirely. A six-month Maternal and Newborn Health Rapid Results Initiative has been introduced under the plan to drive faster implementation at county level.

Whether those targets will be met is precisely the question that health experts, civil society organisations and — increasingly — editors and journalists are being asked to help answer. Irene Choge of Wanahabari urged newsrooms to move beyond the national aggregate and investigate the causes of individual deaths, the stories of the families left behind and the accountability gaps at facility and county level that allow preventable deaths to accumulate without consequence.

Kenya Editors Guild Chief Executive Linda Bach echoed that call, arguing that health reporting must go beyond statistics to ask harder questions: Which counties are failing to spend their health budgets? Which facilities are chronically understaffed? Which supply chains are breaking down and who is responsible for fixing them?

Oyoo pointed journalists toward the Ministry of Health's EWENE dashboard as a tool for tracking deaths at county and facility level — a resource that, used consistently, could shift the terms of public debate from national figures toward the specific, locatable, accountable failures that lie beneath them.

Kenya has a plan. It has targets. It has a dashboard. What it needs now is the political will at every level of the health system — national, county and facility — to treat fifteen mothers a day not as a statistic to be managed, but as a crisis to be ended.

The data knows where the failures are. The question is whether those with the power to act are willing to follow it there.

KRA The revenue authority says the revised minimum yield on consolidated containers is a clearance reference point — not what small-scale traders actually owe

KRA clarifies that KSh3.2M cargo figure is a risk threshold, not a tax bill

BY Jacob Kinyanjui
@themtkenyatimes

The Kenya Revenue Authority yesterday clarified that the revised KSh3.2 million minimum yield on containers carrying consolidated cargo is a risk-management benchmark used to streamline customs clearance, not the tax liability small-scale traders are required to pay.

The clarification, issued in a statement on Thursday, came amid apparent confusion in the trading community about the practical implications of the figure, which took effect on 21 August 2026. KRA was emphatic: the actual tax payable by any trader continues to be determined by the nature, declared value and classification of the specific goods being imported, governed by the East African Community Customs Management Act and aligned with the World Trade Organization Customs Valuation Agreement.

"Where an import declaration is supported by proper commercial documentation, Customs assesses the goods based on the declared transaction value, subject to the applicable legal and risk-management requirements," KRA stated.

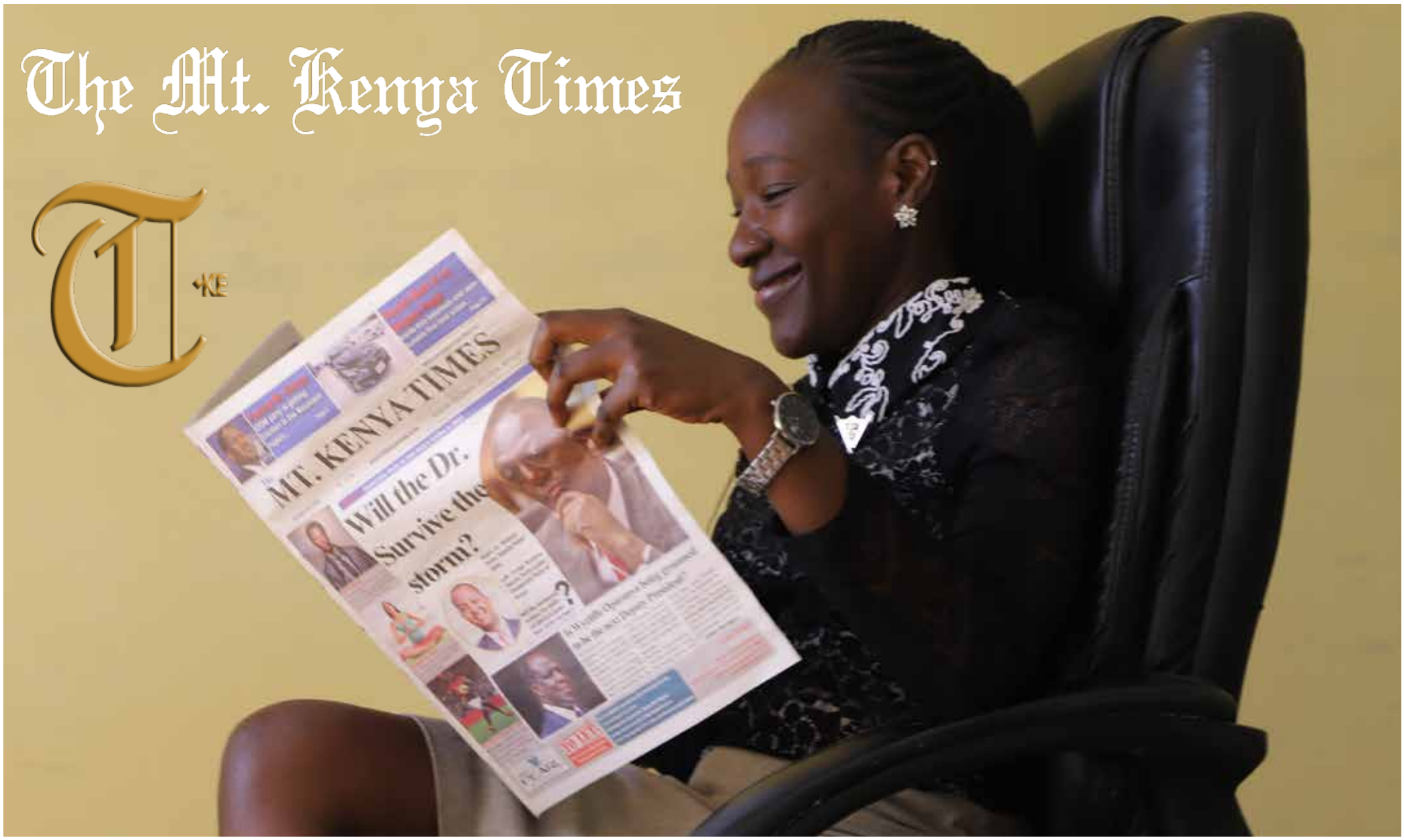
The minimum yield system exists to serve a practical purpose for small-scale traders who consolidate goods into shared containers to reduce shipping costs and simplify the clearance process. Under the arrangement, Customs uses the minimum yield as a reference threshold to identify containers eligible for clearance with minimal intervention — offering traders a faster, more predictable process and reducing the administrative burden of individually assessing large numbers of small consignments.

KRA

KRA said the KSh3.2 million figure had been revised from the threshold set during the 2022-23 financial year, with the update driven by shifts in exchange rates, freight charges and changes to both national and EAC tax laws. The review was conducted in consultation with industry stakeholders, and traders were granted a one-month grace period following requests for additional preparation time before implementation.

Traders uncomfortable with the consolidated arrangement retain the option to request a full physical verification of their containers, with taxes then assessed on actual contents and correct customs values. Alternatively, they may de-consolidate cargo into individual consignments, allowing each importer to file a separate declaration and settle taxes directly with KRA based on their own goods.

The message from the authority was straightforward: the KSh3.2 million is a gateway, not a bill.



The smallest step

A girl stood before a tall mountain,
Wondering how she could reach the top.
The mountain looked too big,
So she thought about giving up.
Then she took one small step.
Then another, and then one more.

She did not climb the whole mountain at once,
She simply kept moving forward.
After many steps, she looked behind
and saw how far she had come.

She smiled and understood
Big dreams do not need big steps.
They need small steps taken every day.
So never be afraid to begin small.

One step today can take you closer to your dream tomorrow.

D.DHANYASRI
GRADE 8
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary school,
Panruti, Tamil Nadu, India.

I wanted to be a poet with all my heart

You filled my soul with pain and grief.
When people could not grasp my simple words,
You made me speak through magic lines.
I am writing poems,
Should I rejoice?
I am filling with pain,
Should I grieve?
If every blessing has its price,
Should I refrain from dreaming?
My God, these words are no rebellion against You,
My heart still beats, my eyes can see.
If this is the burden of being a poet,
Let me adorn myself with the inspiration of pain...

Author: Amirova Nodira

A change of perspective

Endless work,
Too much tiredness,
Long hours, aching feet,
And stress in the mind.

The same work,
Again and again,
Made me feel bored and tired.
I kept thinking,
I can't do this anymore.

My stress felt smaller.
My tiredness felt lighter

Then one moment changed everything.

I saw the workers
Cleaning the toilets in our office,
Working silently without complaint.

Sometimes,
We don't need a new life
We just need
A new perspective.

M. Rekha
Teacher- physics
Puducherry.

Rise Again

Do not fear the dusty ground,
For strength is often quietly found.
Every stumble,
every scar,
Shapes the person that you are.

Mountains test the climber's will,
Rivers carve the hardest hill.
Failure is not journey's end;
It is a wise and faithful friend.

The brightest stars light up the night,
After darkness hides the light.
Hope returns with every dawn, Urging every dreamer on.
Stand once more with steady grace,
Wear each challenge on your face.

True glory is not standing tall— It is rising after every fall.
So lift your heart, embrace the climb,
Each setback serves a greater time.
Victory belongs to those who say,
"I'll rise again—come what may."

D. Renukagandhi
GHSS,
Mullainagar,
Hosur,
Krishnagiri D.T.,

Seasons

The autumn leaves begin to fall,
A quiet carpet on the ground,
The crisp wind whispers through the trees,
Without a single rush or sound.
The golden light begins to fade,
As shadows stretch across the grass,
A gentle mark of passing time,
And all the seasons as they pass.
The world slows down to catch its breath,
In shades of amber, rust, and gold,
A peaceful pause before the frost,
As nature's quiet tale is told.

*S.p saai samyukktha
John dewey matric higher secondary school
Tamil nadu*

The street performer

When I was a child,
I watched a thousand wonders
a race upon a single wheel,
a walk upon a slender wire,
a dance along a trembling rope,
little monkeys performing their tricks,
tiny drums beating their ancient rhythm,
bicycles turning into flying dreams.
All of it
for the hunger of a belly
no wider than a palm.
We forget the hunger
of the little monkeys
dancing beside him.

In the plate he holds out,
only a few coins fall
while the man before us
performs feats
that could have won Olympic gold.
Yet we never learn
the grandeur of his art.
And those who mock
the poverty of the performer
how could they ever understand
the height of an Olympic gold
when they cannot even see
the gold hidden
inside his hands?

Raj Ganesh

Dr. K.R.GANESAN
BLOCK RESOURCE TEACHER EDUCATOR
BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRE,
GOBICHETTIPALAYAM
ERODE Dt.
TAMILNADU, INDIA

Entrepreneurship **Her answer was direct. Kenya does not need more graduates hunting for jobs that do not exist in sufficient numbers. It needs graduates who can create them.**

Mang'eni challenges universities to put entrepreneurship at the heart of learning

The PS for MSME Development told more than 7,000 fresh students at Masinde Muliro that graduation is only the beginning — what Kenya needs is graduates who create jobs, not just seek them

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Principal Secretary for MSME Development Susan Auma Mang'eni

Principal Secretary for MSME Development Susan Auma Mang'eni yesterday challenged universities and colleges to embed entrepreneurship, innovation and industry linkages at the core of higher education, as Kenya works to build a skilled workforce capable of driving genuine economic transformation.

Speaking at the matriculation ceremony at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kakamega, where she joined more than 7,000 first-year students marking their formal entry into university life, Mang'eni urged the new intake to look well beyond the certificate that awaits them at graduation and ask a harder question — what contribution will they make to their communities, their economy and their country?

Her answer was direct. Kenya does not need more graduates hunting for jobs that do not exist in sufficient numbers. It needs graduates who can create them.

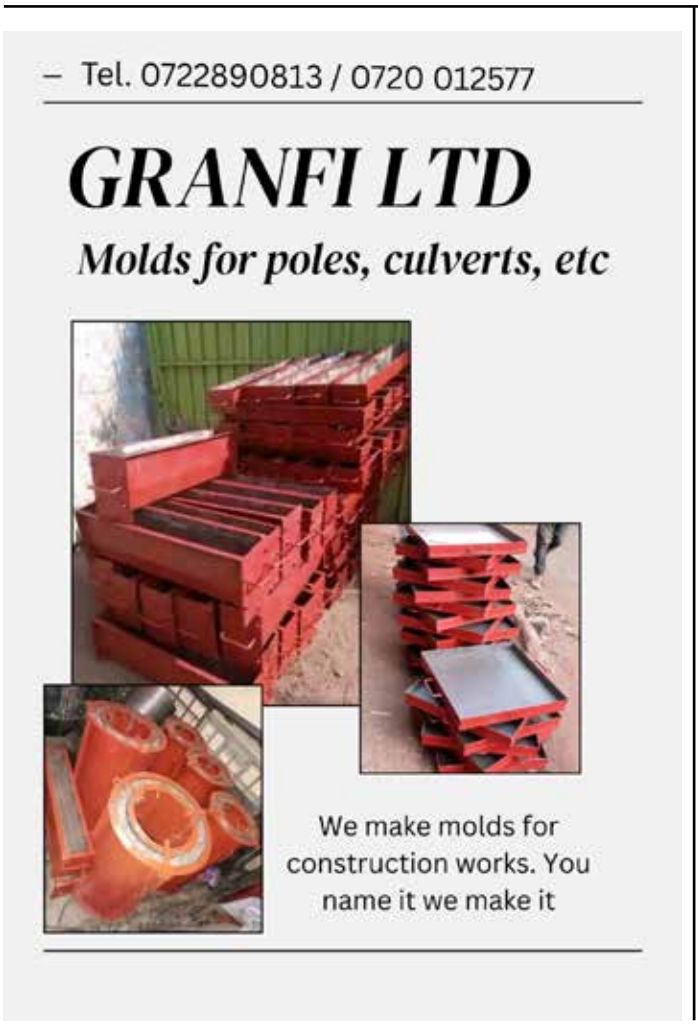
"Entrepreneurship must be embedded as a core component of university education — including in technical disciplines," she said, arguing that institutions of higher learning must ensure students leave not merely with qualifications but with an entrepreneurial mindset and the practical capacity to build opportunities from the ground up.

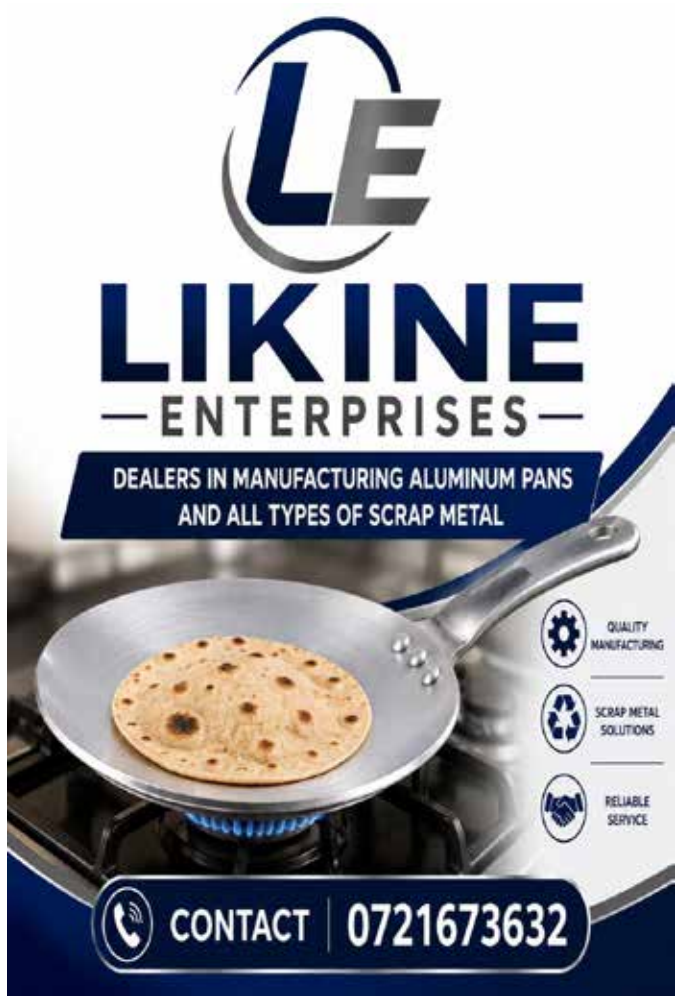
Mang'eni challenged Masinde Muliro specifically to establish and strengthen innovation and enterprise hubs where students can move from idea to prototype, from concept to viable business, and from local solution to scalable enterprise. Drawing on South Korea's experience with incubation hubs as a model for translating university talent into economic output, she said the State Department for MSME Development was ready to partner with the university to build stronger platforms connecting students to mentorship, markets, practical skills and enterprise networks.

It was a message that went beyond the ceremonial. The PS was making the case, plainly and publicly, that the relationship between government, industry and universities in Kenya needs to be fundamentally rewired — and that institutions like Masinde Muliro have a central role to play in that rewiring.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Solomon Shibairo echoed the call with equal conviction. He urged the incoming students to pursue lives defined not by examination results alone, but by purpose, integrity, innovation and impact. Knowledge, he told them, is only as valuable as the use to which it is put — and the measure of a Masinde Muliro graduate should ultimately be the difference they make in the world beyond the campus gates.

Together, the two addresses painted a picture of what Kenya's universities are being asked to become: not simply degree factories, but engines of enterprise, incubators of solutions and partners in the country's broader development agenda. For the 7,000 students who sat in that hall yesterday, the message was both an invitation and a challenge — their education is not a destination. It is a starting point.





Economy **"The CBK now has the power to limit how Kenyan customers access foreign dollar-linked stablecoins through licensed providers," said David Precious**

Kenya built a currency control before it needed one

EBC Financial Group says new stablecoin rules give the Central Bank of Kenya powers to restrict dollar-linked digital assets — enacted while the shilling was stable

BY Angela Njoki
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya has quietly handed its central bank a tool to limit public access to foreign dollar-linked stablecoins — and done so at a moment when the shilling faces no immediate pressure, giving regulators a legal mechanism ready to deploy if currency conditions change.

The Virtual Asset Service Providers Regulations, 2026, gazetted on 22 July under Legal Notice No. 134, contain two provisions that together give the Central Bank of Kenya sweeping authority over which digital assets Kenyans can access through licensed platforms. Regulation 60(6) bars any licensed exchange from listing a stablecoin without CBK approval and requires that it be issued by a licensed stablecoin issuer. Regulation 83 goes further, empowering the CBK to direct licensed firms to restrict access to, or trading in, any stablecoin issued outside Kenya.

The significance, analysts say, lies less in what the rules do today than in what they make possible tomorrow.

"The CBK now has the power to limit how Kenyan customers access foreign dollar-linked stablecoins through licensed providers," said David Precious, Senior Market Analyst at EBC Financial Group, the London-founded brokerage that published an analysis of the regulations yesterday. "The important point is that this power was created while the shilling was stable, not during a currency crisis. If demand for US dollar-linked assets rises later, the CBK already has a legal route to act without waiting for another law."

The shilling's performance during the 2024/25 financial year supports that reading. The currency held within a narrow quarterly average range of KSh129.32 to KSh129.47 per US dollar throughout the year, with a full-year average of KSh129.37. As of 30 July, the rate remained at KSh129.40, while foreign currency reserves stood at USD15.4B — equivalent to 6.4 months of import cover, well above the statutory minimum.

David Precious, Senior Market Analyst, EBC Financial Group

Those conditions make it difficult to argue the regulations were a crisis response. They look instead like pre-emptive architecture: a framework built during calm to be used, if needed, during turbulence.

The practical mechanism is notable for what it does not require. Kenya does not need authority over an overseas stablecoin company to determine whether Kenyan customers can reach its product. Because Regulations 60(6) and 83 operate through licensed local intermediaries — exchanges, wallets, and brokers — the CBK can effectively decide local access to a foreign stablecoin without touching the issuer. A stablecoin can continue trading globally; the question is simply whether licensed Kenyan businesses are permitted to provide access to it.

The wider framework reinforces that reach. Licensed applicants under the new rules must maintain a Kenyan legal presence, a local office, and local banking arrangements — requirements that bring even foreign-based operators serving Kenyan customers within the regulatory perimeter.

The stakes are real. Kenya ranks among the five largest cryptocurrency markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to research firm Chainalysis. Across the region, more than USD205B in crypto value was received between July 2024 and June 2025, a rise of approximately 52 per cent on the prior year. Chainalysis identifies stablecoins specifically as instruments used across Sub-Saharan Africa for cross-border trade and as a hedge against inflation and currency weakness.

That last point has increasing relevance. Kenya's annual inflation climbed from 4.4 per cent in January to 6.5 per cent in July 2026. A sustained rise in the cost of living historically pushes households and businesses toward dollar-denominated assets as a store of value, and stablecoins — digital tokens pegged to the US dollar — offer that exposure without requiring a conventional dollar bank account.

The regulations also adjusted the financial barriers to entry, lowering the minimum paid-up capital for a stablecoin issuer from KSh500 million set in the consultation draft to KSh300 million in the final text. Wallet providers require KSh150 million; exchanges, KSh100 million.

Precious said the capital reductions signal that Kenya still wants regulated crypto businesses operating within its borders, but cautioned that permission to operate is not the same as permission to offer every product. "The more important test is what happens if the CBK later restricts a widely used foreign stablecoin," he said. "Kenyan customers may remain with licensed providers and accept fewer choices, or move towards offshore platforms and direct peer-to-peer trading that is harder for local regulators to monitor."

The regulatory clock is already running. Existing virtual asset service providers must comply with the Virtual Asset Service Providers Act, 2025 by 4 November 2026 — one year after the legislation came into force. Kenya also remains under Financial Action Task Force increased monitoring, following the body's review on 19 June 2026, adding a further layer of international scrutiny to the sector's development.

Beyond Kenya's borders, the framework may serve as a reference point. The East African Community is implementing a Cross-Border Payment System Masterplan aimed at closer regional payment integration and regulatory coordination. How Kenya exercises — or declines to exercise — its new CBK powers over foreign stablecoins will give neighbouring regulators a working model of how to balance a licensed digital-asset market against central-bank control of local currency exposure.

The central question is now which foreign stablecoins the CBK approves for listing, and whether Regulation 83 is ever invoked against one already in use. Those decisions will determine whether Kenya's framework functions as a light-touch licensing regime or a more active instrument of monetary management — and whether customers stay within the regulated perimeter or seek alternatives beyond it.

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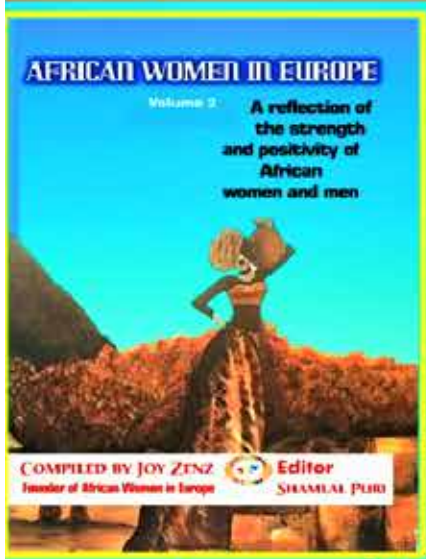

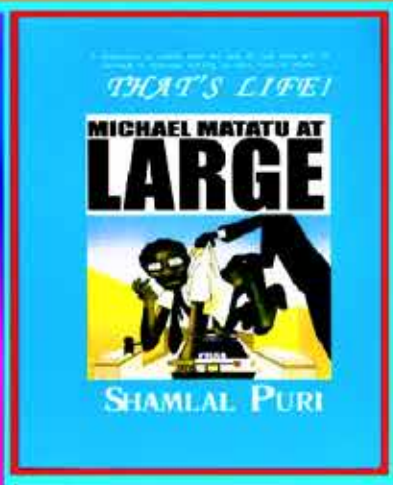

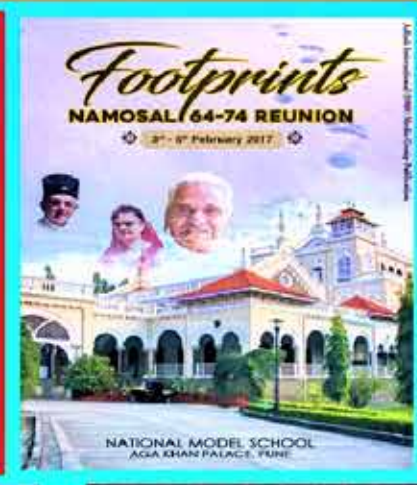

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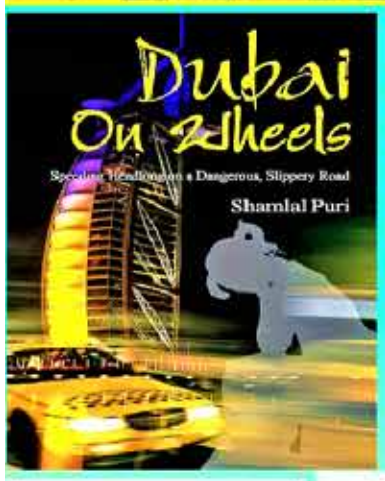

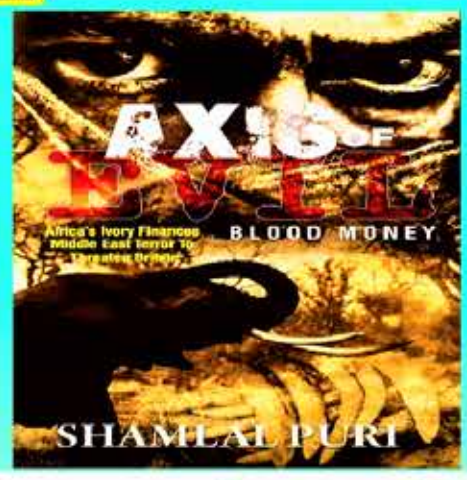

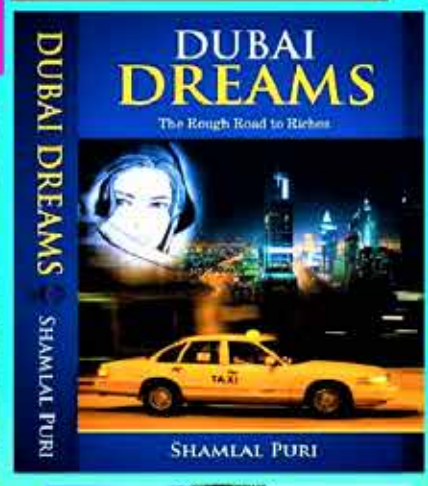

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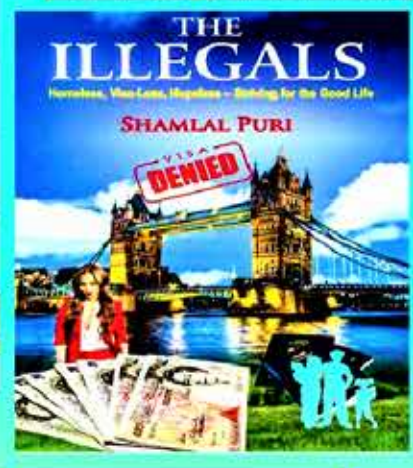

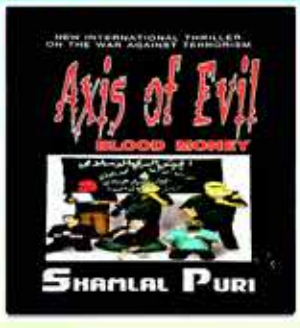

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Law **History sharpens the indictment. Colonial-era dispute systems privileged formal, English-language, paper-heavy procedures that already excluded the majority**

The unfinished covenant: Operationalizing Articles 48 and 54 in Kenya's Construction Adjudication: A call from the concrete barricades

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
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In 2010, the people of Kenya enshrined in their Constitution a solemn promise: Article 48 declares that the State shall ensure access to justice for all persons, and that any fee required shall be reasonable and shall not impede that access. Article 54 further commands that persons with any disability shall be treated with dignity, afforded reasonable access to all places, public transport and information, and enabled to use Sign language, Braille or other appropriate means of communication. Yet fifteen years later, in the steel-and-concrete heart of the nation's economy, the construction sector, these articles remain largely ornamental ink on parchment. Disputes over payments, delays and defects still drag through courts and arbitration chambers for years while projects stall, workers go unpaid, and the most vulnerable among the industry's participants are systematically shut out. This is not mere administrative lag. It is a categorical betrayal of the constitutional covenant.

Construction is the bloodstream of Kenya's development. Roads, housing estates, schools and hospitals rise or rot according to the flow of cash and the speed of resolution when that flow is interrupted. Pending bills in the roads sector alone once peaked at Sh188 billion, freezing hundreds of projects and cascading unpaid wages down the supply chain to small contractors, labourers and suppliers. Arbitration, the default contractual remedy in FIDIC and Joint Building Council forms, often takes 18 to 36 months. Court litigation can stretch longer still. Adjudication the rapid, interim determination designed precisely for construction's cash-flow urgency exists only where parties have the foresight and bargaining power to insert it into their contracts. The proposed Construction Adjudication Bill under Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2024 remains a draft, not law. Until it is enacted and operationalized with deliberate constitutional fidelity, Articles 48 and 54 are denied their practical breath.

History sharpens the indictment. Colonial-era dispute systems privileged formal, English-language, paper-heavy procedures that already excluded the majority. Independence did not dismantle that architecture; it merely repainted it. The 2010 Constitution was meant to be the rupture a document that placed the ordinary citizen, including the disabled citizen, at the centre of justice. Instead, the construction industry has retained a two-tier reality: sophisticated multinational contractors navigate multi-tiered dispute boards with ease, while local subcontractors and persons with disabilities confront a labyrinth of fees, inaccessible venues, inaccessible documents and adjudicators untrained in reasonable accommodation. The correlation is stark and damning. Where access to justice is slow and expensive, cash flow dies. Where cash flow dies, projects stall. Where projects stall, the poor and the disabled already at the margins of formal employment bear the heaviest cost. Dignity becomes a luxury item.

Consider the lived experience. A quantity surveyor who is visually impaired cannot read the dense contractual submissions uploaded as non-accessible PDFs. A site engineer who is hard of hearing is excluded from oral hearings conducted without Sign language interpreters. A wheelchair user cannot enter the multi-storey office where the adjudication is held because the lift is out of order and no alternative venue was contemplated. These are not hypothetical hardships; they are the direct consequence of treating Article 54 as aspirational poetry rather than operational mandate. Access to justice under Article 48 is not merely the right to file a claim; it is the right to participate meaningfully. When the process itself erects barriers of format, language, physical space and cost, the State has failed its constitutional duty.

Intellectual honesty demands that we name the actors who must move. Parliament must pass the Construction Adjudication Bill with explicit provisions that embed constitutional rights. The right to refer a payment dispute to adjudication must be statutory, not contractual, so that the weaker party is not forced to bargain away speed for survival. Timelines must be tight twenty-eight days as the norm mirroring successful regimes elsewhere that have kept projects alive while justice is delivered. Enforcement of adjudicators' decisions as High Court decrees must be automatic, subject only to limited grounds of challenge, so that the interim decision has real teeth.

The Judiciary must develop practice directions that treat construction adjudication as a constitutionally privileged process. Registries must be required to provide documents in accessible formats. Hearings must offer Sign language, Braille, and remote participation as of right, not as discretionary favour. Adjudicators must be trained and accredited not only in construction law and quantity surveying but in disability inclusion and procedural fairness that gives full effect to Article 54. The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Kenya Branch) and other appointing bodies must maintain panels that reflect the diversity of the nation, including persons with disabilities, so that the five-per-cent progressive principle in Article 54 finds concrete expression.

The Executive through the Attorney-General's office, the Ministry of Public Works, and county governments must stop treating pending bills as an accounting inconvenience and recognise them as a constitutional crisis of access to justice. Every delayed payment is a denied remedy. Every stalled project is a denial of the economic and social rights that the Constitution also protects. Industry associations contractors, consultants, quantity surveyors must rewrite their standard forms to mandate adjudication as the first-tier mechanism and to require accessibility audits of every dispute process. Silence from these actors is complicity.

Original insight reveals a deeper structural failure. Construction adjudication is not merely a technical tool for cash-flow management; it is a litmus test of whether Kenya's constitutional order can penetrate the economic engine rooms of the nation. If the sector that builds the physical infrastructure of the republic cannot itself be governed by the republic's highest law, then the Constitution remains a document of the courts and the seminars, not of the site and the scaffold. The correlation between inaccessible dispute resolution and systemic exclusion of persons with disabilities is not accidental; it is the predictable outcome of treating constitutional rights as afterthoughts rather than design principles. Operationalizing Articles 48 and 54 requires that accessibility and speed be engineered into the process from the first notice of adjudication, not bolted on as charitable add-ons.

The emotional weight of this failure is not abstract. It is the contractor who cannot pay school fees because an unpaid certificate sits in arbitration limbo. It is the disabled site supervisor who is told, in effect, that justice is available only to those who can climb the stairs and read the fine print. It is the nation that watches its infrastructure promises rot under the weight of unresolved claims while the constitutional promise of dignity gathers dust. Strong words are required because the stakes are strong. Half-measures will no longer suffice.

The path is clear. Enact the statute. Embed accessibility as non-negotiable. Train the decision-makers. Enforce the decisions. Measure progress not by the number of seminars held but by the number of disputes resolved within weeks, by the number of persons with disabilities who can participate without barrier, and by the volume of cash that returns to the economy instead of languishing in legal purgatory. Only then will Articles 48 and 54 cease to be decorative clauses and become living instruments that speak, with force and clarity, from the construction sites of Kenya to the highest courts of the land. The covenant was made in 2010. The time for its operational redemption is now.

The writer is a social commentator.

Court The Grammy-winning South African DJ sued through his corporate entity after the luxury marque failed to deliver a bespoke MC20 Cielo

Black Coffee wins KSh56M court battle against Maserati over undelivered supercar

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Grammy Award-winning South African DJ and producer Black Coffee

Grammy Award-winning South African DJ and producer Black Coffee has won a KSh56 million court judgment against Maserati South Africa after the Johannesburg High Court ruled that the luxury carmaker breached its contract by failing to deliver a bespoke supercar on the agreed terms and then refusing to refund his trade-in vehicle.

The ruling, handed down by acting judge Sanet van Aswegen, granted summary judgment in favour of Soulistic Music, the corporate entity through which Black Coffee — born Nkosinathi Innocent Maphumulo — conducted the transaction. The court ordered Maserati South Africa to repay the R7 million trade-in amount, equivalent to approximately KSh56 million, along with 10.5 per cent annual interest calculated from 22 August 2025 until full settlement, plus legal costs. A court-issued writ of execution has since authorised the sheriff to seize and auction Maserati South Africa's movable assets to recover the outstanding debt, which has accrued to over R7.725 million.

The dispute has its roots in a 2022 purchase. Black Coffee originally acquired a twin-turbo Nettuno V6-powered Maserati MC20 Coupe for R7 million. Two years later, he decided to upgrade to the MC20 Cielo — the open-top convertible variant distinguished by its retractable glass roof — priced at R9 million, equivalent to roughly KSh73 million. Under a combined written and oral agreement with the local dealership, Maserati South Africa accepted the MC20 Coupe as a R7 million trade-in against the new vehicle, leaving a R2 million balance to be paid upon delivery. That delivery was scheduled for July 2025.

The dealership went further, informing Black Coffee that the Italian factory had made a special exception to reserve a dedicated production slot in recognition of his global profile — a concession that, in hindsight, would become a central point of contention in the legal proceedings that followed.

On 3 June 2025, the dealership informed the artist that the vehicle would not enter production until August and that no firm delivery date could be provided. Black Coffee treated the communication as a fundamental breach of contract, cancelled the agreement and demanded the return of his R7 million trade-in. Maserati South Africa resisted, and Soulistic Music initiated legal proceedings.

> **The dispute has its roots in a 2022 purchase. Black Coffee originally acquired a twin-turbo Nettuno V6-powered Maserati MC20 Coupe for R7 million. Two years later, he decided to upgrade to the MC20 Cielo — the open-top convertible variant distinguished by its retractable glass roof — priced at R9 million, equivalent to roughly KSh73 million. Under a combined written and oral agreement with the local dealership, Maserati South Africa accepted the MC20 Coupe as a R7 million trade-in against the new vehicle, leaving a R2 million balance to be paid upon delivery. That delivery was scheduled for July 2025.**

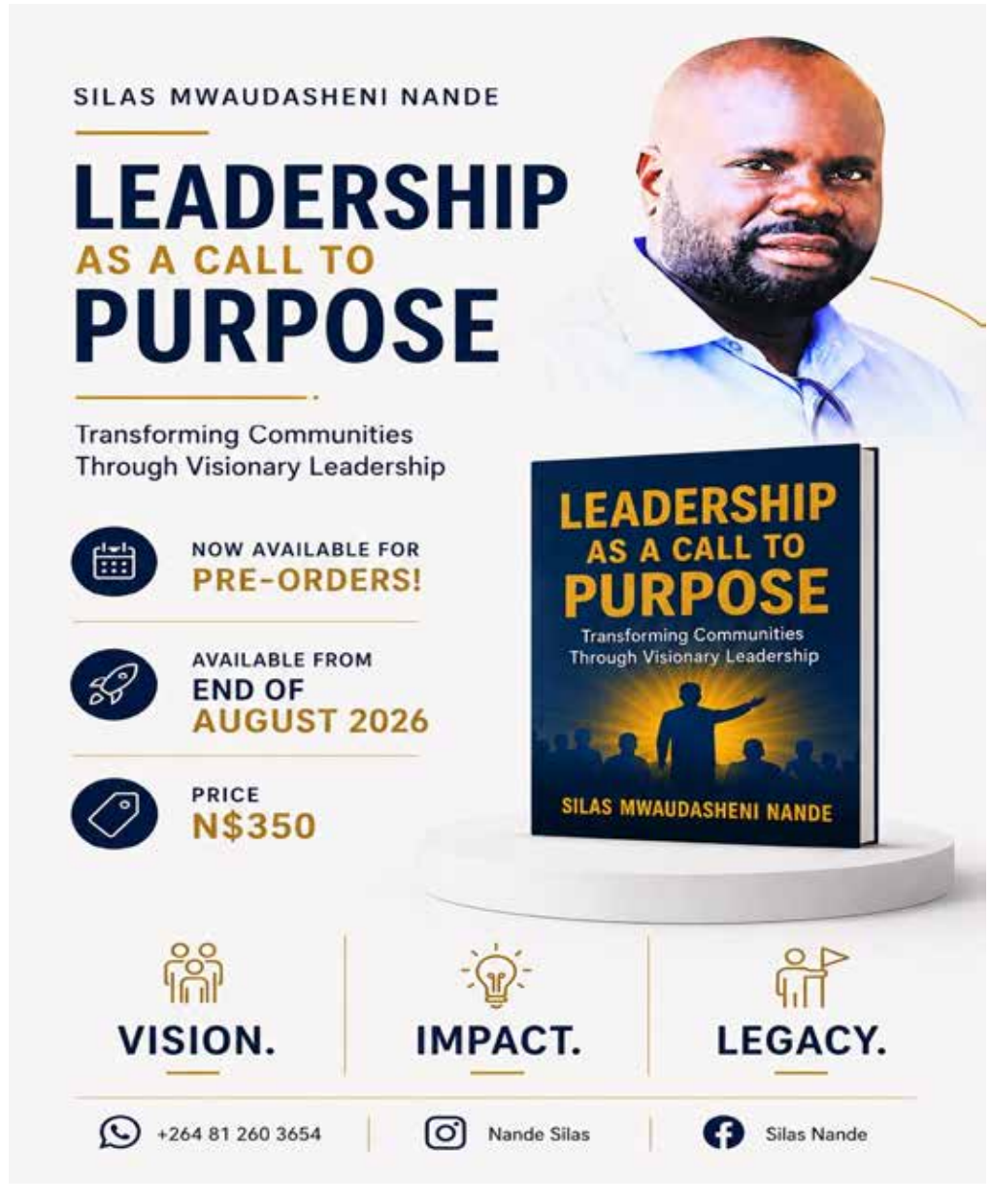
Maserati's defence rested on two main arguments. First, the carmaker contended that no binding July 2025 delivery deadline had ever been formally established and that a complex custom build of this nature naturally requires a minimum of nine months from order confirmation. Second, it pointed to the extent of the customisation Black Coffee had requested — 18 bespoke specifications in total, including Maserati's signature Blu Infinito exterior paint, glossy black diamond-cut wheels, a leather and Alcantara interior, custom stitching, a 12-speaker Sonus Faber sound system and specifically coloured seat belts and brake calipers. The carmaker argued that several of these specifications had not been part of the initial quotation, that their confirmation was still pending head office approval and that this had prevented a final production and delivery schedule from being locked in. Maserati further argued that the R7 million trade-in valuation was contingent on the successful completion of the new purchase — meaning the original coupe would not retain that value outside the deal.

The Johannesburg High Court found those arguments insufficient. The court determined that Maserati South Africa had failed to meet its contractual obligations and that Black Coffee was entitled to cancel the agreement and recover his trade-in value in full. The judgment leaves the carmaker facing not only the principal repayment but mounting interest and the prospect of asset seizure to enforce compliance.

For Black Coffee, the ruling is a reminder that fame and commercial relationships operate on the same contractual terrain as everything else — and that the courts will apply the same standards regardless of the prestige of the parties or the luxury of the product involved.

The victory adds an unlikely legal footnote to a career already defined by superlatives. In 2022, Black Coffee became the first South African producer to win the Grammy Award for Best Dance/Electronic Album for his record Subconsciously, a breakthrough that cemented his standing among the global elite of electronic music. His collaborators have included Drake, David Guetta, Pharrell Williams and Usher, and his personal collection of luxury vehicles — spanning McLaren, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Rolls-Royce and Mercedes-AMG — reflects a lifestyle commensurate with that standing.

One Maserati, however, will not be joining it.



AI **"AI must not replace the human person, but must serve the human person," he said. "You are in a Catholic university, and therefore you are called to be the conscience of society.**

Consolata International University opens new academic year with call to humanise artificial intelligence

Bishop Obed Mosongo told students and staff that Catholic institutions have a prophetic duty to ensure technology serves human dignity, not erodes it

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

Consolata International University yesterday opened its new academic year with a Solemn Holy Mass at its Nairobi campus

Consolata International University yesterday opened its new academic year with a Solemn Holy Mass at its Nairobi campus, with the presiding bishop using the occasion to issue a pointed challenge to the university community: in an age of artificial intelligence, the defence of human dignity is not optional — it is a vocation.

The Eucharistic celebration, held at the university's Edith Einstein Main Hall, brought together students, academic and administrative staff, and invited guests in an atmosphere that blended spiritual solemnity with the energy of a new academic season beginning. Presiding over the Mass was Bishop Obed Mosongo, Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, whose homily set a tone that went well beyond the ceremonial.

Drawing on Pope Francis's consistent teaching on technology and the human person, Mosongo challenged the university community to resist the temptation to treat artificial intelligence as either a threat to be feared or a tool to be adopted uncritically. The Catholic institution, he argued, had a higher calling — to be the conscience of society at precisely the moment when that conscience is most needed.

"AI must not replace the human person, but must serve the human person," he said. "You are in a Catholic university, and therefore you are called to be the conscience of society. Use AI to build, not to destroy — to humanise, not to dehumanise — to promote dignity, not to erase it."

It was a message with urgency behind it. As automation, data analytics and algorithmic decision-making reshape industries, professions and daily life at a pace that has outrun most regulatory and ethical frameworks, Mosongo argued that institutions like Consolata carry a prophetic responsibility — to form graduates who are not merely technically proficient but morally grounded, ethically alert and anchored in values that no algorithm can replicate.

He reserved particular encouragement for the university's leadership, commending the administration for the strides the institution has made and urging continued investment in education that develops the whole person — mind, heart and hands.

"The growth of this university is not just for itself, but for the Church and for society," he said. "Keep your eyes fixed on the common good. Every block you lay, every course you introduce, every student you form is a service to humanity."

Among the distinguished guests was Rev. Fr. Marino Colombo, a member of the Regional Council for the Kenya-Uganda Region of the Consolata

Missionaries, who represented Regional Superior Rev. Fr. Zacharie Kariuki. Colombo conveyed goodwill and blessings from the Regional Superior and reaffirmed the Consolata Missionaries' commitment to the university as a central expression of their evangelising mission through education.

Acting Vice Chancellor Rev. Fr. Dr. Peter Kanyiri, who welcomed both new and continuing students alongside his management team, thanked Mosongo for his presence and the clarity of his message. Kanyiri pledged that the university would continue to weave Catholic Social Teaching, academic rigour and innovation into the fabric of its programmes — not as competing priorities but as complementary ones, consistent with the Church's vision of education as transformation rather than mere instruction.

He called on students to hold fast to three pillars throughout the year ahead: discipline, hard work and faith.

The ceremony marked more than the start of lectures. It was, in the language of the institution itself, a spiritual reawakening — a moment to reaffirm what Consolata International University understands itself to be: a place where faith and reason are not in tension, where tradition and innovation speak to each other, and where the purpose of education is ultimately the transformation of the world rather than simply the advancement of the individual.

The mandate for the year ahead was stated plainly: to form professionals who will wield knowledge — including the formidable and fast-expanding tools of artificial intelligence — not as instruments of dehumanisation, but as means of honouring the dignity that, in the university's tradition, is not conferred by technology or the state, but by God.

Education This trip was not just about changing the classroom environment, but it was an important opportunity for students to learn through first-hand experience

Spleng School Ruiru students enjoy an exciting educational trip to Malindi

BY Winjoy Gacheri
@themtkenyatimes

Spleng School Ruiru students enjoy an exciting educational trip to Malindi

The academic trip by the students of Spleng School, Ruiru to Malindi will be written in the history of the school as one of the most educational, entertaining and exploratory trips that brought great joy to both students and teachers.

This trip was not just about changing the classroom environment, but it was an important opportunity for students to learn through first-hand experience, to explore the environment, to understand tourist attractions and to relate what they have been learning in class to real life.

Everything started in a unique style. The students travelled by SGR train, an event that itself was part of the learning journey. For many of the students, it was their first time traveling on the modern train, so the journey itself was an exciting adventure.

Their eyes were full of joy and curiosity to see new things. On the way, they had a chance to view different landscapes and even see some wild animals from the park. Thus, what students had been reading about the environment, wildlife and travel became more meaningful when they saw it with their own eyes.

Upon arriving in Mombasa, the safari continued with a tour of Mama Ngina Waterfront, where students got a chance to see the beauty of the Indian Ocean and the coastal environment. For many of them, it was a unique opportunity to connect classroom lessons with the reality of the coastal environment.

From Mombasa, the convoy continued to Malindi by road, while joy and excitement to see more attractions continued to increase.

Malindi welcomed the students with beautiful scenery, an attractive environment and various educational and recreational activities.

At the Malindi Marine National Park, students got an opportunity to see and learn about various marine creatures. Among the things that fascinated them was seeing snakes, giant turtles, different species of birds and sea crabs.

For a learner who had been studying about marine creatures in class, seeing them in their natural habitat had a much bigger meaning. The tour gave students a chance to see with their own eyes what they had only read about in books.

As the safari proceeded to Garoda Beach, joy doubled. The beach gave students another chance to enjoy the beauty of the Indian Ocean while participating in various activities.

Some students boarded a boat to go into the sea, while others got a chance to try snorkeling and explore marine life up close.On the other hand, students who loved games were not left behind. Football was played on the shore while the sand turned into a playground. The gentle sea breeze, the sound of waves and the laughter of students made the environment truly unique.After these activities, students got time to rest, swim and enjoy the beach view. It was a day that combined learning, fun, games and building friendship among students.

Among the attractions that fascinated the students most were the sand dunes of Mambrui.Indeed, the environment of Mambrui made many feel as if they had arrived in Dubai. The tall sand dunes in that area created a captivating and unique scenery.The camels that were in that area added to the beauty of the landscape and gave students a chance to see up close an animal many of them had only seen in books, on television or in pictures.

Students enjoyed playing on the sand, exploring the environment and swimming. Every step had something new to learn and every area left a new memory.Mambrui was more than just entertainment. It taught students to appreciate the beauty and diversity of Kenya's environment and to understand that our country has many tourist attractions that can compete with famous areas in the world.

This trip was made even more colorful by the presence of our leaders and teachers who were together with the students at various stages of the journey.

The tour was led by our beloved Director Madam Margret, the Headteacher Mr. Albert Ngari, together with the Deputy Headteacher Mr. Joshua. They were accompanied by our beloved teachers Madam Jennifer and Ms. Winjoy, together with our dedicated secretary Ms. Stecy.

The presence of these leaders and teachers was an important pillar in ensuring the trip went according to a good plan. They ensured students got a chance to learn and enjoy themselves, while their safety and well-being were given top priority.

A trip for many students requires great preparation, discipline and close supervision. Teachers worked together to ensure students follow instructions, stay together and participate in activities safely.

As is the case with any big trip, challenges were unavoidable. However, those challenges were not allowed to spoil the joy of the students.

Through courage, unity, communication and cooperation among students, teachers and leaders, various challenges were able to be handled on time.

The most important thing was to ensure that the safety, comfort and joy of students remained the top priority.

This trip also taught students an important life lesson – that the success of a big undertaking requires cooperation, discipline, mutual respect and listening to each other.

This trip has clearly proven that education is not only within the four walls of a classroom.

A student can learn more when given a chance to see, touch, explore and gain first-hand experience. Some of the things students have been reading in books about the ocean, animals, environment, tourism, travel and geography, they were able to see with their own eyes.

Such a trip also helps students build self-confidence, independence, cooperation with their peers and interaction with people from different environments.

Therefore, educational trips should be taken as an important part of education. They broaden a student's thinking and help them understand that the world is bigger than what they see in class every day.

To parents and teachers, we should continue to support educational trips and student tours. Our children need opportunities to get out of their usual environment and see what they have been reading in books.

It is through such trips that a student can start to have big dreams, discover various talents and aspects of life and even be inspired by careers they never thought of before.

When we take our children to different parts of the country, we also teach them to appreciate the culture, environment, history and wealth of our nation.

In summary, the trip of Spleng School, Ruiru to Malindi was more than just an excursion. It was a class that moved outside the school, full of learning, fun, exploration, games and unforgettable memories.

The students returned with joy, new experience and many stories to tell. They saw some of the things they have been learning in class and got a chance to relate them to real life.

Indeed, this trip has shown us that learning does not have to be done in class alone; sometimes, the world itself is the best classroom.

To anyone reading this article, I welcome you to visit Malindi and its various attractions, to see the beauty of the Indian Ocean, enjoy the scenery of Garoda and Mambrui, and get the experience that we as Spleng School got.

This trip has left a mark in the hearts of our students, and its memories will continue to be told for a long time.

Article prepared by:
Winjoy Gacheri
Teacher, Spleng School, Ruiru

Sports >> ***The World Cup winner heads to Stamford Bridge in a £7.5 million move that reshapes both clubs' goalkeeping plans ahead of the new season**

Chelsea agree deal to sign Martínez from Aston Villa

By **Pascal Okoth**

Chelsea yesterday reached an agreement with Aston Villa to sign Argentine goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez in a deal reported to be worth £7.5 million, bringing one of the Premier League's most recognisable and combative shot-stoppers to Stamford Bridge.

The agreement, which has been in the making over the past 48 hours after Martínez indicated his openness to a move, marks a significant shift in Chelsea's plans between the posts. Formal procedures are now expected to follow before the transfer can be officially completed, but the broad terms are understood to be in place.

Martínez, 32, has spent the past four seasons at Aston Villa, where he established himself as one of the best goalkeepers in the division and became a firm favourite among supporters at Villa Park. His commanding presence, sharp reflexes and almost theatrical approach to penalty shootouts made him a standout figure not only in Birmingham but across European football. It is that personality — as much as the ability behind it — that Chelsea appear to be buying into.

The headline number attached to the deal will raise eyebrows. At £7.5 million for a goalkeeper of his standing and experience, the fee looks modest — perhaps a reflection of his age and the final years of his contract, or simply of Aston Villa's need to move him on cleanly. For Chelsea, whatever the accounting rationale, the football logic is straightforward: they are getting a World Cup winner with proven Premier League pedigree at a price that carries little financial risk.

Martínez's crowning moment came at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where his performances for Argentina — particularly his heroics in the final against France — cemented his place among the elite goalkeepers of his generation. He saved three penalties across the tournament, baited opponents, played to the crowd and generally conducted himself in a manner that divided opinion globally but left nobody in doubt about his competitive edge. Argentina lifted the trophy. Martínez was named the tournament's best goalkeeper.

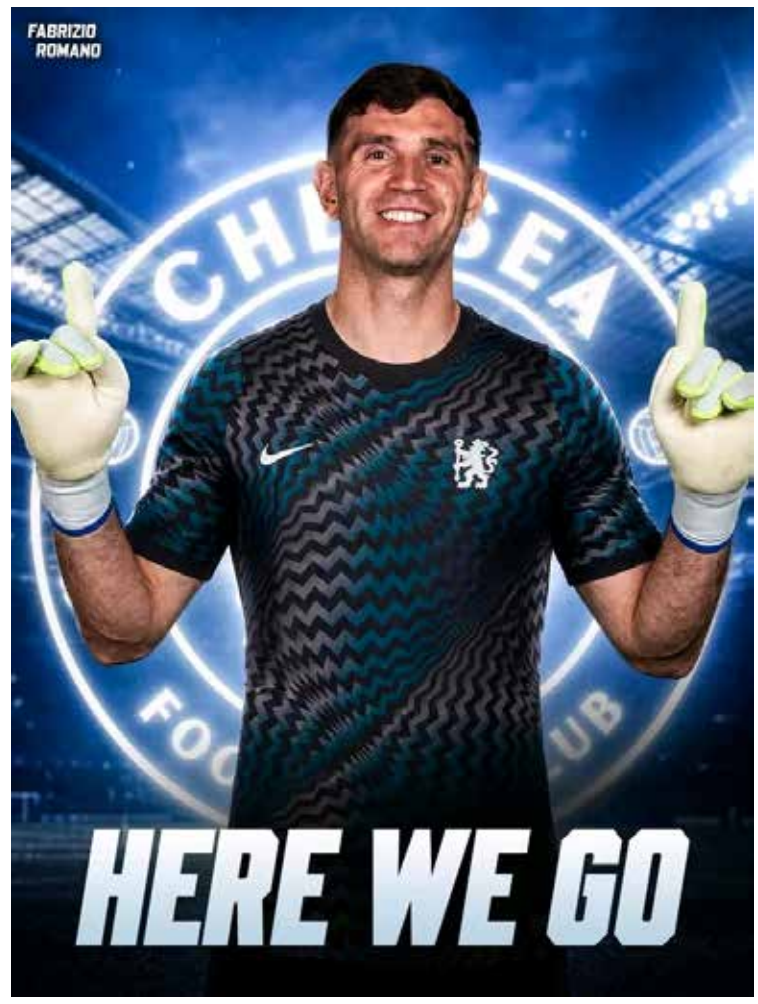
That same quality — an unshakeable belief in himself and a gift for making decisive moments feel personal — is what Chelsea will be hoping transfers into their dressing room and their penalty area. The club finished last season with questions still hanging over their defensive cohesion. A goalkeeper with Martínez's authority could provide exactly the kind of organising presence that settles a backline and lifts a squad's confidence going into a new campaign.

His adaptation to Chelsea's system should not present a significant challenge. Martínez already knows the Premier League intimately — its pace, its physicality, its unforgiving schedule. He will not need a settling-in period. He can, in theory, walk straight into the team and perform.

For Aston Villa, the departure closes a meaningful chapter. Under Martínez, the club climbed from mid-table uncertainty to European competition, and he was central to that journey. His shot-stopping kept Villa in matches they had little right to win and his saves, at crucial moments across several seasons, earned points that proved decisive in the final reckoning. Replacing him will not be straightforward, and Villa's recruitment team will need to move quickly and intelligently to find an adequate successor.

The wider transfer window continues to move at pace, and this deal — quiet in terms of its financial scale — carries outsized significance for both clubs. Chelsea are building again, assembling a squad that they hope can compete across the Premier League and in Europe simultaneously. Adding a goalkeeper of Martínez's profile, mental strength and experience, at a contained cost, fits the logic of that project.

Supporters on both sides of the deal will now watch the remaining formalities closely. Documentation, medicals and the final sign-off are all that stand between Martínez and an official unveiling in west London. If all proceeds as expected, Chelsea will soon have one of the most competitive, colourful and experienced goalkeepers in the game standing behind their defence — and Aston Villa will begin the process of finding someone who can fill very large gloves.



Argentine goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> ***The Harambee Stars winger provided an assist on only his second La Liga start as Real Sociedad fell 4-1 to Real Madrid in the Spanish capital**

Ochieng' makes his mark at the Bernabéu

By **Martin Weche**

Real Sociedad's Job Ochieng' (right) in action against Real Madrid's Denzel Dumfries and Federico Valverde. PHOTO/REAL SOCIEDAD.

Job Ochieng' wrote his name into Kenyan football history yesterday, providing an assist in Real Sociedad's 4-1 defeat to Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabéu — only his second start in La Liga and a performance that announced him as a player of genuine promise on one of Europe's most intimidating stages.

The 23-year-old winger, who plays for the Basque club from San Sebastián, was handed a starting berth by head coach Pellegrino Matarazzo and repaid that faith in the 44th minute with a moment that temporarily silenced the home crowd. Holding off the physical challenge of Ibrahima Konaté — the former Liverpool centre-back — Ochieng' attempted to curl a low shot into the far corner. The ball deflected off a defender and fell perfectly for Luka Šućić, who drove it home to make it 1-1. It was the kind of opportunistic, instinctive play that suggests a footballer comfortable under pressure well beyond his years.

He lasted 66 minutes before being withdrawn, finishing with ten completed passes from eleven attempted — a tidy return that points to composure rather than chaos in a match his side ultimately lost heavily.

The equaliser proved brief. Kylian Mbappé had other ideas entirely. The French forward dismantled Real Sociedad almost single-handedly in the second half, completing a hat-trick that gave him the match ball and underlined why Real Madrid remain the dominant force in Spanish football. Vinícius Júnior added the fourth. By the final whistle, the scoreline told a familiar story — but buried within it was a subplot that will resonate far beyond the Basque Country.

For Kenya, Ochieng's appearance carries historical weight. He is only the second Kenyan to feature for a top-flight Spanish club, following midfielder MacDonald Mariga, who made 14 appearances for Real Sociedad's city rivals on loan from Inter Milan during the 2011-12 season. Harambee Stars captain Michael Olunga also graced La Liga with Girona in 2017-18, famously scoring a hat-trick against Las Palmas in a performance that remains one of the most celebrated by a Kenyan in European club football.

Ochieng' is now writing his own chapter. His debut came in February, when he was introduced after 65 minutes in a 3-1 victory over Elche CF. That appearance offered a glimpse. Yesterday's showing offered something more substantial — a full hour-plus on a grand stage, against world-class opposition, in a match that mattered. The recently assigned squad number 12 at Real Sociedad further suggests the club view him as more than a fringe option. Number allocations in European football are rarely accidental, and this one points toward a meaningful role in the 2026-27 La Liga campaign.

The timing could scarcely be better for Harambee Stars head coach Benni McCarthy, who is quietly assembling the pieces of a squad he hopes will do Kenya proud at the Africa Cup of Nations on home soil next year. Kenya's hosting of the continental showpiece raises the stakes considerably — the expectation, the scrutiny and the opportunity will all be amplified. McCarthy will need performers who have been tested at the highest levels of club football, players who arrive at the tournament not merely in form but battle-hardened.

Ochieng' is building exactly that kind of curriculum vitae. A 23-year-old Kenyan winger, holding off Konaté at the Bernabéu and teeing up an equaliser against Real Madrid, is not a story that needs embellishment. It is the kind of performance that changes how a player is perceived — by his club, by rival scouts, and by the national coaching staff trying to select 23 names from a growing pool of talent.

For McCarthy, it is the most welcome kind of problem: too many good options, too many players putting their hands up at the right moment. Ochieng's assist may have come in a losing cause, but on the evidence of yesterday evening, the young winger has earned the right to more such occasions — and Kenya will be watching every one of them.

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Why Jetour struggles to build a fan base in Kenya

In a market where trust takes years to earn, a well-equipped Chinese SUV must prove it can go the distance — long after the showroom lights go off

By: John Irungu

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Jetour

Kenya is a difficult market for a new automotive brand to crack, and Jetour is finding that out the hard way.

It is not enough to arrive with a well-equipped vehicle, an attractive design and an impressive list of specifications. Kenyan motorists buy with the future firmly in mind. They want to know whether the car will hold up on punishing roads, whether spare parts will be available when something goes wrong, whether any mechanic in their neighbourhood will understand the engine — and, perhaps most pressingly, whether they will find a willing buyer when it is time to move on. These are not secondary concerns. They are often the deciding factor.

This is precisely where Jetour faces its steepest hill.

The Chinese brand has entered Kenya with products such as the T2 — a rugged, modern SUV offering four-wheel-drive capability, a 2.0-litre turbocharged engine, an impressively equipped cabin and the kind of road presence that turns heads at traffic lights. On paper, the proposition is genuinely compelling. In the showroom, it is easy to be impressed.

But getting people to admire a car is considerably easier than getting them to trust a brand.

For decades, Kenyan motorists have built deep, practical relationships with established Japanese and European names. Toyota, Nissan, Subaru and Mitsubishi are not merely popular because their vehicles are good. They are popular because of what surrounds them — an enormous, organically grown ecosystem of independent mechanics, spare-parts dealers, used-car importers and experienced buyers who have handled these vehicles for years. That ecosystem creates a confidence that no brochure can replicate. A motorist buying a Toyota is not simply buying the vehicle. They are buying into a vast support network that has been road-tested on Kenyan tarmac and Kenyan murram for generations.

Jetour does not yet have that depth — and it will not acquire it quickly.

For a prospective buyer, the questions begin the moment the warranty conversation ends. Where will the car be serviced once the dealership's coverage runs out? Can an independent mechanic in Nakuru or Mombasa get to grips with its electronics, its turbocharged drivetrain, its four-wheel-drive transfer case? How long does it take to source a specialised component? These concerns can cool enthusiasm for an otherwise impressive vehicle, because in Kenya, the cost of being stranded — financially and practically — is not abstract.

The T2 illustrates the challenge particularly well. It is the kind of SUV that draws attention immediately, and rightly so. Its styling is purposeful without being garish, its cabin feels genuinely modern, and its mechanical credentials give it a legitimate claim on buyers who need something capable beyond the city. Yet capability and credibility are different things.

Credibility is built over years. It comes from watching the same vehicles survive Kenyan roads season after season. It comes from owners maintaining their cars without drama. It comes from knowing, from personal experience or a trusted friend's, that when something eventually goes wrong — because something always does — the situation is manageable. That kind of reputation cannot be manufactured. It has to be lived.

The second-hand market adds another layer of pressure. Kenyan motorists are acutely conscious of resale value, and for good reason — many buyers use the sale of their current vehicle to partially finance the next one. A car with a strong resale reputation is not just a good car; it is a financial asset. A relatively young brand with few examples on the road and limited market history struggles on this front, not necessarily because its vehicles are unreliable, but because there simply is not enough evidence yet to reassure a cautious buyer.

This creates a difficult cycle. Fewer vehicles on Kenyan roads means fewer used examples. Fewer used examples means less familiarity among independent mechanics and private buyers. Less familiarity means more caution from prospective customers. And without a growing customer base, building a genuine enthusiast community becomes an uphill task.

None of this means Jetour makes poor cars. That may well be the wrong question entirely. The bigger question is whether the brand can persuade Kenyan motorists that it will be present and dependable for the entire ownership journey — not just at the point of sale.

A good car attracts the first buyer. A strong ownership experience creates the second, third and fourth. That is how automotive fan bases are genuinely built, and Jetour's path forward in Kenya runs directly through that logic.

The brand needs more vehicles on Kenyan roads, more robust after-sales infrastructure, more accessible parts supply chains and, above all, more owners who can speak from real experience. Those owners, if well supported, become the brand's most powerful and credible advocates. Word of mouth travels fast in Kenya's car market. One satisfied T2 owner telling friends that the vehicle has been reliable, practical and affordable to run can achieve more than any billboard campaign. But the reverse is equally true — and equally swift.

Jetour's battle in Kenya, then, is not ultimately about horsepower or features or price points. It is a battle for trust. The T2 can open the door with its design and specifications. Keeping it open will require something no marketing budget can purchase overnight: time, reliability, genuine after-sales commitment, and thousands of kilometres of positive ownership experience accumulated on Kenyan roads by real owners living real lives.

Until that foundation is laid, Jetour risks remaining what it currently is — an interesting newcomer with genuine potential. In Kenya's automotive market, becoming known is the easy part.

Becoming trusted is the real work.

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