Kirinyaga fish farmers strike gold with ornamental fish farming

Kirinyaga County's aquaculture sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with more than 1,600 commercial fish farmers shifting from traditional tilapia farming to high-value ornamental fish production Page 8

A degree on credit: Why Kenya's new university funding model could shape the future of an entire generation

For generations, a university education has been regarded as one of the surest paths to success. Parents have sacrificed savings, sold livestock and borrowed money so their children could sit in lecture halls Page 12

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Politics A legal tangle over the Linda Mwananchi brand exposes the fragile state of Kenya's emerging opposition as the 2027 election clock starts ticking

Sifuna's party faces name war

A fresh legal dispute over the name "Linda Mwananchi" has plunged Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's nascent political movement into a branding crisis, after the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties approved the registration of a rival outfit — the Liberty National Democratic Alliance, also known as LINDA — while a third claimant simultaneously filed a demand letter asserting prior rights to the name, threatening to tie the entire matter up in court precisely when Sifuna needs clean political momentum heading into 2027.

The dispute is, on the surface, a bureaucratic squabble over a party name. But it is also a window into something far larger: the turbulent, often chaotic process by which Kenya's opposition is attempting to reconstitute itself in the post-Raila Odinga era, with Sifuna at the centre of a political gamble whose outcome remains far from certain.

The sequence of events that produced this tangle is worth laying out carefully. On 18 July 2026, during a grassroots tour of Taita Taveta County, Linda Mwananchi leaders formally announced their intention to break away from ODM and register a new political party. Page 9

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, Embakasi East MP Babu Owino at a past event

Kalonzo appeals to Sudan to lift Kenyan tea import ban

BY Diplomatic Media Services
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka has appealed to the Government of Sudan to lift its ban on Kenyan tea imports, warning that the restriction continues to hurt exporters and thousands of tea farmers.

Speaking after visiting the Sudanese Embassy in Nairobi, Kalonzo said the ban, imposed in March 2025 following a diplomatic fallout between the two countries, has disrupted one of Kenya's key export markets.

Sudan had been among Kenya's top five tea destinations, importing about 35 million kilogrammes of tea worth approximately US$70 million annually.

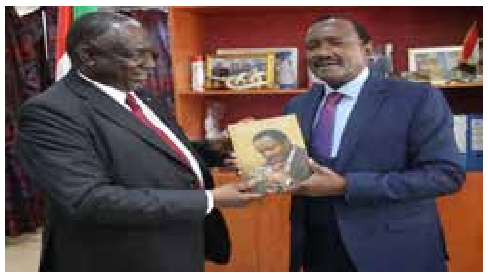
He noted that when the ban took effect, tea worth more than US$24 million was either in transit or awaiting shipment, including 207 forty-foot containers stranded at the Port of Mombasa. More than 3.44 million kilogrammes of tea valued at over US$10.3 million remains in Mombasa warehouses after being specially blended and packaged for the Sudanese market, making it difficult to sell elsewhere.

Kalonzo urged Sudan to restore tea imports, saying the move would protect farmers' incomes, stabilise tea prices and strengthen the longstanding trade relationship between the two countries.

He also thanked Sudan's Ambassador, Kamal Jabara Gubara, and embassy officials for receiving his delegation and engaging positively on the matter, expressing hope for an amicable resolution.









Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times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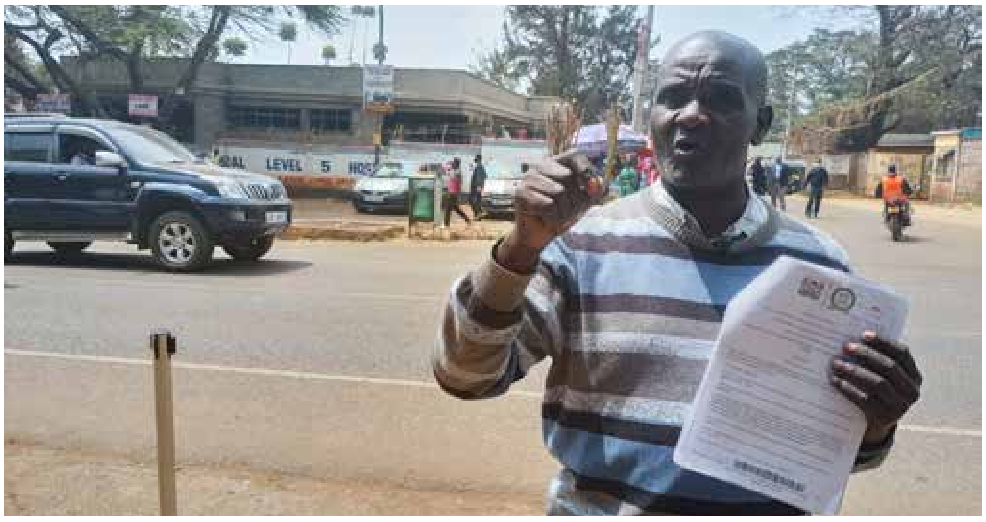

The Environment and Land Court in Thika has ordered an immediate halt to construction at Kiambu Level 5 Hospital pending the hearing of a constitutional petition challenging the project. Justice J.A. Mogeni issued interim conservatory orders on Tuesday, directing all parties to maintain the status quo and barring further construction or land transactions, with the Kiambu OCS tasked with enforcing compliance if necessary. However, petitioner Patrick Mwangi Muiruri (pictured) on Friday alleged construction has continued despite the court order. He argued the project, which he says includes commercial stalls, a hotel and public toilets, is being undertaken on public land reserved for healthcare without public participation or a NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment licence. The case will be mentioned on September 21, 2026, after parties file responses and submissions. Report/ Felix Njenga.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA) have signed a funding agreement to support studies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from freight transport along the Northern Corridor. The initiative will assess emissions from heavy-duty vehicles, examine the feasibility of introducing electric truck drayage and electrifying vehicles operating within the Port of Mombasa, update the corridor's greenhouse gas emissions accounting framework and develop a gender-inclusive green freight transport programme. The Northern Corridor links the Port of Mombasa to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. Between 2,000 and 3,000 trucks transport about 75,000 tonnes of cargo daily, making the corridor both an economic lifeline and a major source of carbon emissions.

Kirinyaga Central MP Gachoki Gitari (wearing a Kenya bracelet) receives an update from the contractor on the progress of construction works at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) campus in Kirinyaga County. The MP and National Government Administration Officers (NGAO) expressed confidence that the long-awaited Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) campus in Kirinyaga will be completed within the next few months. This marks a major milestone for a county that has for years lacked a public medical training institution. The legislator said construction works are now in the final phase, with contractors indicating that the main building is expected to be completed by next month.

More than 800 learners and out-of-school youth in Wajir County have gained digital skills through a week-long Digital Literacy Bootcamp aimed at preparing them for opportunities in the digital economy. The programme, held at Wajir Girls Secondary School, was implemented by the Frontier Counties Development Council in partnership with the Ministry of Education, TSC, UNICEF, the Raspberry Pi Foundation, Action Foundation and Kenya Connect. It trained 600 junior school learners and later 200 out-of-school youth in digital literacy, artificial intelligence, digital marketing, online safety, entrepreneurship, employability and responsible technology use. FCDC Education and Governance Sector Lead Abdullahi Hassan Maalim (pictured) said the initiative seeks to bridge the digital divide in Kenya's frontier counties and enhance youth employability.

The Nairobi Coffee Exchange recorded strong trading activity during this week's auction, with 18,089 bags of coffee weighing 1.115 million kilogrammes sold for KSh994 million, reflecting sustained international demand for Kenyan coffee. The auction achieved an average price of KSh44,503 per 50-kilogramme bag, with premium grades attracting the highest returns. Grade AA coffee earned KSh107.8 million from 1,738 bags, while grade AB generated KSh461.1 million from 7,761 bags. Ngugu-ini Factory in Kirinyaga achieved the highest price at KSh53,041 per bag, followed by Muisuni Farmers' Co-operative Society in Machakos and Kiriaini Factory in Kirinyaga. New KPCU handled the largest volume traded. On the buying side, C. Dorman SEZ Limited dominated purchases, acquiring coffee worth KSh412.5 million, followed by Ibero Kenya and Kenyacof Limited.

Democratic Party of Kenya leader Justin Muturi has reaffirmed his party's commitment to empowering young people, describing them as active partners in shaping Kenya's future rather than leaders of tomorrow. Speaking after meeting a group of youth who influence public discourse through social media, Muturi said the engagement provided an opportunity to exchange ideas while strengthening personal connections. He praised the participants for their energy, creativity and passion, saying their contributions inspire optimism about the country's future. Muturi said the Democratic Party remains committed to expanding opportunities for meaningful youth participation in leadership, governance, innovation and nation-building. He also encouraged young Kenyans to continue speaking out, asking difficult questions and championing positive change.


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Business Joshua Oigara, chief executive of Stanbic Holdings Plc, described the results as a vindication of the bank's approach

Stanbic Holdings posts KSh6.6B H1 profit as assets surge 27%

Strong lending, record deposits and landmark deals drive resilient first-half showing

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

Stanbic Holdings Plc recorded a net profit after tax of KSh6.6 billion in the first half of 2026, the group announced yesterday, as total assets climbed 27% to KSh602 billion and customer deposits hit KSh422 billion — a 28% jump that underscores the confidence Kenyans continue to place in the institution.

Customer loans grew 24% to KSh290 billion, with financing channelled into trade, energy, agriculture, and manufacturing — the sectors that form the backbone of Kenya's economy. That credit activity rippled outward into business expansion, consumer spending, and employment across the country.

Joshua Oigara, chief executive of Stanbic Holdings Plc, described the results as a vindication of the bank's approach.

"Our performance in the first half demonstrates the discipline and resilience that continue to define our business. We remain well-capitalised, deeply customer-centric, and steadfast in our commitment to support Kenya's economic growth. Our prudent risk management approach and continued investments in technology are enhancing client experience while strengthening shareholder value," he said.

From left: Stanbic Bank Kenya Chief Finance and Value Officer, Dennis Musau and Stanbic Holdings Plc Regional Chief Executive, Dr Joshua Oigara during the Stanbic Holdings PLC Half Year 2026 Financial Results.

The performance comes as Kenya's banking sector navigates a significant structural shift — the full transition to risk-based pricing anchored on the Kenya Shilling Overnight Interbank Average (KESONIA) benchmark rate — while also contending with tighter monetary policy, geopolitical headwinds, elevated energy costs, and a volatile global economy.

Through it all, Stanbic kept a firm grip on credit quality. The bank delivered a credit loss ratio of 0.5%, among the best in the sector, and held non-performing loans at 7.73% — well below the industry average.

Dennis Musau, chief financial and value officer of Stanbic Bank Kenya, said the numbers reflect a careful balancing act.

"Our half-year financial performance reflects a disciplined balance between revenue growth, cost optimisation, and proactive risk management. While the operating environment remains dynamic, our strategic investments, execution discipline, and strong risk management framework position us well to capture opportunities and deliver sustainable value for our stakeholders."

Musau added that improving conditions in the credit market bode well for the months ahead. "The rebound in private-sector credit signals a healthier operating environment, and we are well positioned to support this growth while maintaining strong risk discipline, enabling sustainable and high-quality earnings as the credit cycle continues to normalise."

Beyond its core lending book, Stanbic was at the centre of several headline transactions during the period. The group played a key role in the Kenya Pipeline Corporation IPO — one of the biggest listings in East Africa in years, which opened in January and closed in February 2026 — as well as Safaricom share-related transactions and Kenya's government-to-government petroleum importation programme, directly supporting national energy security.

The group extended more than KSh21 billion in financing to small and medium enterprises during the half, reinforcing its long-standing commitment to entrepreneurship and job creation. Through the Stanbic Foundation, it further extended KSh181 billion in concessionary lending to MSMEs, supporting entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey.

Wealth management also had a strong half. Assets under management rose 63% to KSh7 billion as clients increasingly sought diversified investment solutions beyond traditional deposit products.

On the digital front, Stanbic introduced new functionalities on its mobile banking platform and rolled out Dynamic Currency Conversion across its ATM network — moves designed to improve convenience and accessibility for customers at home and abroad. The group's customer base grew 6% year-on-year to 258,000.

The strong operational performance was mirrored in the market. Stanbic ranked among the top three best-performing banking stocks on the Nairobi Securities Exchange during the period, and collected a clutch of industry awards: Best Bank in Tier 1 at the Think Business Awards; Winner, Mergers and Acquisitions Financial Adviser by Deal Flow at the 2025 Dealmakers Africa Annual Awards; and Best Investment Bank in Kenya at the Euromoney Awards.

Oigara said the group heads into the second half with clear priorities. "Despite prevailing macroeconomic headwinds, our strategic priorities remain clear: supporting our clients' growth ambitions, accelerating our digital transformation agenda, strengthening our balance sheet, and delivering sustainable value for our shareholders."

Farming A delegation from the development partners touring Kirinyaga to assess the impact of the eight-year ABDP programme praised the county's progress

Kirinyaga fish farmers strike gold with ornamental fish farming

BY Jane Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes

Kirinyaga County's aquaculture sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with more than 1,600 commercial fish farmers shifting from traditional tilapia farming to high-value ornamental fish production, creating new income opportunities and tapping into lucrative international markets.

The transition has been made possible through support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank and the Aquaculture Business Development Programme (ABDP), which have invested in strengthening fish farming as a commercial enterprise rather than a subsistence activity.

Initially, farmers were trained to rear common fish species such as tilapia and catfish, but many have since diversified into ornamental fish farming and hatchery operations, producing fingerlings for both local and international markets. The ornamental fish business is gaining popularity because of its strong global demand and attractive prices.

A delegation from the development partners touring Kirinyaga to assess the impact of the eight-year ABDP programme praised the county's progress, noting that farmers had successfully embraced innovation and expanded into more profitable ventures.

ABDP National Programme Coordinator Sammy Macharia said the programme had exceeded expectations, transforming fish farming from a livelihood activity into a thriving commercial enterprise. He noted that Kirinyaga's 1,600 commercial fish farmers have diversified into ornamental fish production while establishing their own hatcheries to produce fingerlings.

Macharia said the programme has worked with smallholder farmers in 15 counties by addressing production challenges and strengthening fish marketing systems. Support has included provision of pond liners to reduce water loss, predator and bird nets to minimise pre-harvest losses, as well as advisory and extension services.

He commended Governor Anne Waiguru for her commitment to aquaculture development, describing Kirinyaga as one of the programme's best-performing counties. According to Macharia, the county government has provided skilled technical staff to support farmers, while the governor has demonstrated leadership by actively engaging in fish farming herself.

The programme has also promoted youth-led agribusinesses such as black soldier fly production for fish feed, fish eateries and Smart Fish Kiosks aimed at improving value addition and expanding access to fresh fish markets.

Macharia said the programme has significantly improved productivity since its launch in 2018. Farmers who initially harvested less than 10 kilograms of fish annually are now producing between 200 and 300 kilograms each year, reflecting the success of improved farming practices and better access to inputs.

Governor Waiguru said her administration has deliberately transformed aquaculture into a commercially viable value chain. The county currently produces 71.3 tonnes of fish annually and aims to increase production to 400 tonnes.

She said the county has invested heavily in aquaculture by supplying pond liners, fingerlings, fish feeds and extension services to farmers. It has also purchased a fish feed extruder to enable farmers to manufacture their own feeds, reducing production costs and increasing profitability.

County Executive Committee Member for Agriculture, Livestock, Veterinary and Fisheries Dr. John Gachara said the county has strengthened fish marketing through the establishment of the Kiaga Fish Aggregation Centre while helping farmers reduce production costs through the fish feed extruder.

He described ABDP as a key partner in commercialising fish farming by supporting farmers to grow from small-scale producers into successful commercial enterprises.

Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management at IFAD-ABDP Michael Waweru said Kirinyaga has become a national model for aquaculture innovation. He noted that when the programme began, many farmers operated ponds measuring only 20 to 25 square metres. Through the initiative, more than 1,200 farmers received pond liners and expanded their ponds to nearly 300 square metres, significantly boosting production.

ABDP National programme Coordinator Sammy Macharia (in a blue cap/jacket), Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management at IFAD-ABDP, Michael Waweru, Mrs Elizabeth Muriithi, (a fish farmer feeding her fish during a visit. | Photo: Jane Mugambi

According to Waweru, annual production per pond has increased from about 80 kilograms to around 144 kilograms, translating into higher incomes for farmers. He added that Kirinyaga's success in ornamental fish farming, hatchery development and fingerling production has inspired other counties, with all 15 ABDP-supported counties now adopting similar practices.

Farmers have also reported significant gains. Margaret Wairimu, who joined commercial fish farming in 2022 after receiving support through IFAD and the county government, said the provision of pond liners and fish feeds had enabled her to build a successful enterprise.

John Karoki of Kiandai Village said fish farming has become a reliable source of income. With five ponds stocked with between 300 and 1,000 fingerlings each, he practices staggered stocking to ensure continuous production throughout the year. He said he has already earned more than Sh100,000 from fish sales this year and continues to restock his ponds regularly to meet growing market demand.

Officials and experts inspect a fish pond during an aqua visit. The pond belongs to a Kinyaga Fish farmer who has diversified to ornamental fish farming.

Politics The dispute is, on the surface, a bureaucratic squabble over a party name. But it is also a window into something far larger

Sifuna's party is in a name war — and that is the least of his problems

A legal tangle over the Linda Mwananchi brand exposes the fragile state of Kenya's emerging opposition as the 2027 election clock starts ticking

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

A fresh legal dispute over the name "Linda Mwananchi" has plunged Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's nascent political movement into a branding crisis, after the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties approved the registration of a rival outfit — the Liberty National Democratic Alliance, also known as LINDA — while a third claimant simultaneously filed a demand letter asserting prior rights to the name, threatening to tie the entire matter up in court precisely when Sifuna needs clean political momentum heading into 2027.

The dispute is, on the surface, a bureaucratic squabble over a party name. But it is also a window into something far larger: the turbulent, often chaotic process by which Kenya's opposition is attempting to reconstitute itself in the post-Raila Odinga era, with Sifuna at the centre of a political gamble whose outcome remains far from certain.

The sequence of events that produced this tangle is worth laying out carefully. On 18 July 2026, during a grassroots tour of Taita Taveta County, Linda Mwananchi leaders formally announced their intention to break away from ODM and register a new political party. Suba South MP Caroli Omondi, the movement's spokesperson, was unambiguous. "It has now become necessary that we dissolve the bonds that we have had with the Orange Democratic Movement. It is now time to break away from ODM," he declared. He went further, addressing the President directly: "Stop telling the Registrar of Political Parties not to approve the registration of the Linda Mwananchi party."

That accusation — that the Ruto administration was interfering with the registration process — was a serious charge, and it spoke to the high political stakes now surrounding the movement's transition from faction to party. Sifuna, who has been fronted by Luhya leaders allied to Linda Mwananchi as their preferred presidential candidate for 2027, is seeking to build a new political vehicle capable of consolidating Western alliance networks and mounting a credible national challenge. At least ten Members of Parliament are reportedly prepared to quit ODM alongside him, including Siaya Governor James Orengo, Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi, Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka, and MPs Babu Owino, Anthony Kibagendi, Caroli Omondi, and others.

The name dispute, then, is not merely inconvenient — it is a potential stumbling block at the most sensitive moment of Sifuna's political transformation.

Into this already crowded picture stepped Charles Wanyonyi. Through his advocates, Wanzau, Odhiambo & Associates, Wanyonyi filed a demand letter dated 5 August 2026 asserting that he was the first person to apply for the reservation of the name "Linda Mwananchi Party of Kenya" — doing so on 24 February 2026, weeks before Sifuna's faction began publicly agitating for the name. The Registrar had rejected his application on 4 March, citing similarities with already reserved names including Linda Mkenya and Boresha Kenya, and finding it contrary to public interest under the Political Parties Act.

Wanyonyi's lawyers argue that the ongoing review of that decision — initiated after representations by politicians allied to the Linda Mwananchi movement — directly concerns their client's prior application and cannot lawfully proceed without his involvement. Invoking Article 47 of the Constitution and the Fair Administrative Action Act, they demand that Wanyonyi be admitted as a primary participant in the review, that his original application be reconsidered on its merits, and that the Registrar refrain from allocating the Linda Mwananchi name to any other party until his claim is determined. "Our client was the first person to lodge an application seeking reservation of the name 'Linda Mwananchi Party of Kenya'," the advocates state. "Any review of the earlier decision necessarily concerns his application and cannot lawfully proceed in his absence."

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, Embakasi East MP Babu Owino at a past event

The advocates add a pointed observation: that the politicians associated with the Linda Mwananchi movement only became aware of Wanyonyi's application through media reports and had filed no prior application of their own — a detail that, if proven accurate, significantly complicates the movement's claim to the name.

Human rights lawyer Faith Odhiambo, who recently aligned herself with the Sifuna-led movement, acknowledged in a July interview that the party might not necessarily bear the Linda Mwananchi name when it launches. "The party might not necessarily bear the name Linda Mwananchi, but we intend to unveil it soon, this year," she said. That remark, made before the latest legal salvo, now looks prescient. The name war may ultimately force Sifuna's hand and accelerate a decision the movement had hoped to make on its own terms.

For months, Sifuna has steadily transformed Linda Mwananchi from what initially appeared to be a pressure group into a structured political movement — complete with regional rallies, grassroots coordinators and an expanding list of elected leaders. In Western Kenya, the momentum has been tangible. Vihiga Elders Council chairman Fred Omido, a former MP, publicly broke with ODM to back Sifuna, saying: "We have resolved to stand with our son Sifuna because he has demonstrated courage, consistency and the willingness to speak for ordinary Kenyans."

That organic groundswell is Sifuna's most valuable asset — and the one most vulnerable to the kind of institutional friction now materialising at the Registrar's office. ODM's National Executive Committee has already voted twice to remove Sifuna as secretary-general, with Acting Secretary-General Catherine Omanyo confirming after the second vote that "Senator Sifuna ceases to be the secretary-general of ODM Party." Each skirmish has cost political energy and legal fees that the movement can ill afford as it attempts to build toward 2027.

The broader context matters enormously here. ODM's decision to enter the broad-based government arrangement with President Ruto effectively collapsed the traditional opposition architecture in Kenya. As Omondi put it in Taita Taveta: "ODM has betrayed not just Raila but the ideas he stood for." That vacuum is what Sifuna is racing to fill — and what makes the name dispute, legally modest as it may be, politically consequential. A movement that cannot secure its own brand in time risks losing the narrative at the very moment the narrative matters most.

The Registrar of Political Parties now sits at the intersection of law, politics and electoral competition, with three competing claimants, a newly registered LINDA party, and a 2027 election cycle that will not wait for the courts to catch up.

Sifuna has built his movement on the argument that ordinary Kenyans deserve better than what the political establishment has delivered. The irony is that the first serious test of his organisation's competence is not a policy debate or a public rally — it is a dispute at the party registration office over who got to the counter first.

Guard We agreed that work is work, and yours is work. 'Watchman' was disrespectful and came from the colonial rule . You are no longer watchmen - Ruto

Ruto bans 'watchman' and 'guard' titles in overhaul of private security sector

President orders law changes, 15% wage compliance and career framework for Kenya's 27,000-strong security workforce

BY Anne Wanjiku
@themtkenyatimes


President William Ruto with private security officers at Statehouse

President William Ruto yesterday ordered all government agencies to immediately stop referring to private security personnel as "watchmen" or "guards," directing that the titles be stripped from legislation, regulations and official documents and replaced with the designation "private security officers."

The directive came during a meeting with about 27,000 private security officers at State House, Nairobi — the biggest such gathering ever hosted at the seat of government — and was triggered in the room itself. A security officer rose to appeal directly to the President to replace the titles, arguing that the change would accord the profession the respect it deserves. Ruto agreed on the spot.

"I know that these terminologies are in the law and regulations, but I am instructing all government agencies to expunge references to all private security officers as watchmen and guards," the President said. "We agreed that work is work, and yours is work. 'Watchman' was disrespectful and came from the colonial rule. You are no longer watchmen; you are private security officers. The laws will be changed."

The language was blunt and the framing deliberate. Ruto said the terminology was a remnant of the colonial era that had no place in a modern, independent Kenya, drawing an explicit line between the old vocabulary and the country's history of external subjugation. It was a moment that carried symbolic weight well beyond the gates of State House — an acknowledgement, long overdue in the view of many in the sector, that the words a society uses to describe its workers shape the dignity with which those workers are treated.

The practical consequences are considerable. Amendments will be made to the Private Security Regulatory Authority framework, the General Wages Order, the Private Security Wages Order and other regulations to adopt terminology that reflects the professional standing of the sector. Relevant agencies and security officers' representatives were directed to implement the changes and report back within 60 days.

But the title change was only part of the story. Ruto announced sweeping reforms aimed at professionalising Kenya's private security industry, saying the government will harmonise training standards, create clear career progression pathways and strengthen collaboration between private security officers and the National Police Service. He directed the Private Security Regulatory Authority, employers and relevant government ministries to develop a clear career progression framework for private security officers across the country.

On training, Ruto directed government agencies and private sector stakeholders to develop a harmonised training curriculum for all private security officers — a move he said would eliminate confusion, standardise training, and prevent duplication of roles.

Then came the sharpest warning of the day. The President put employers on notice over non-compliance with his Labour Day directive to raise private security officers' wages by at least 15 per cent, expressing concern that some companies had not yet implemented the increase and others were still paying as low as KSh6,000 per month. "I want to put you on notice that our laws must be followed because this is against the Constitution," he said, tasking the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labour with ensuring immediate compliance.

The wage question sits at the heart of a broader tension that Thursday's gathering made visible. Kenya's private security industry employs hundreds of thousands of people and forms a critical layer of the country's safety architecture — protecting homes, businesses, hospitals, schools, and government installations around the clock. Yet for decades the sector has operated in a grey zone of low pay, poor conditions, inconsistent training and official language that reflected neither the risk its workers carry nor the value they provide.

One officer who addressed the President captured the sentiment of those gathered: "We thank you, President Ruto, for welcoming us at State House. The team that is here most often are called watchmen. I would like that to change." It was a simple request — modest, even — but it carried the weight of a profession that has long felt invisible to the state it serves.

The President's response was to turn the moment into policy. Whether the ministries tasked with implementation move at the pace the occasion demands remains to be seen. Kenya has a long history of announcements made in the heat of large public gatherings that cool significantly by the time they reach the drafting table. The 60-day reporting deadline gives the sector a concrete benchmark against which to measure follow-through.

What is already certain is that the language has changed — at least at the top. All government institutions, public offices and employers have been directed to adopt the official designation "private security officers" across all official records and communications with immediate effect. For an industry whose workers spend their nights outside in the cold so that others may sleep soundly, being called by their proper name is, at the very least, a start.

Counties The report, launched yesterday by the Senate, awarded Embu an overall CFPMI score of 0.689, placing it at the top of the 47-county ranking

Embu tops Senate county fiscal ranking as Kisumu trails in new scorecard

A landmark index exposes stark gaps in how Kenya's 47 counties manage billions in public funds

Embu Governor Cecile Mbarire

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Embu County has been ranked Kenya's best-performing county in the 2024/25 financial year while Kisumu finished last, according to the Senate's inaugural County Fiscal Performance Measurement Index (CFPMI) — a new evidence-based scorecard that lays bare the wide disparities in how devolved governments manage public finances.

The report, launched yesterday by the Senate, awarded Embu an overall CFPMI score of 0.689, placing it at the top of the 47-county ranking. Narok and Wajir followed in second and third place respectively, expanding the number of counties attaining the highest performance grade from two in the previous financial year to three. Kisumu, at the foot of the table, highlighted the persistent fiscal management challenges that have dogged some counties despite years of growing allocations from the national government.

The index was developed by the Parliamentary Budget Office and measures counties across seven indicators: development expenditure, own-source revenue, expenditure on wages and benefits, pending bills, audit opinions, budget implementation, and county assembly expenditure. The tool is designed to give the Senate an objective, data-driven framework for monitoring county governments' adherence to public finance management principles — replacing a system that, for years, relied on fragmented reports and, too often, political opinion.

Launching the report, Senate Speaker Amason Kingi described the index as a turning point in the way Parliament exercises oversight over devolved governments.

"The County Fiscal Performance Measurement Index is much more than a publication. It is a practical, evidence-based instrument for assessing county governments' adherence to the fiscal responsibility principles enshrined in the Constitution, the Public Finance Management Act and the County Governments Act," Kingi said. He was direct about what the index is not meant to be. "The purpose is not to generate a league table or encourage unhealthy competition among counties. Rather, it is to identify good practices, highlight areas requiring improvement and provide an objective basis upon which we can determine whether public resources are translating into meaningful development for our people."

The timing is significant. The equitable share allocated to counties has risen from KSh370B in the 2022/23 financial year to KSh428B in 2026/27 — a trajectory that makes accountability not a courtesy but a necessity. Kingi made the point plainly: "Greater allocation of resources to counties must be accompanied by greater accountability. Every shilling allocated to county governments must be applied prudently, lawfully and for the benefit of the people."

Overall, 35 of the 47 counties attained a "C" grade in the 2024/25 assessment, indicating gradual but positive progress in budget execution and fiscal management. Yet the report is candid about the limitations: several counties remain constrained by structural weaknesses, governance deficits, and poor resource management. The 2024/25 results also reflect notable shifts compared to the previous financial year, with some counties demonstrating improved fiscal discipline while others continued to slide.

Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot used the occasion to challenge his colleagues to let data, not politics, drive their engagement with county governments. "This is pure science. It is not what Parliament has generated or what senators think about governors. It is based on data from independent constitutional institutions," he said. He also sounded an alarm over the persistently low share of county resources reaching actual development projects. "It should worry us as senators that only about half of the required development allocation is actually being spent. Ultimately, only about 15 per cent of county resources end up financing development projects. That should concern us because it directly affects service delivery."

That figure — 15 per cent — is arguably the most damning number in the entire report. It suggests that for all the billions flowing to county governments each year, the roads, dispensaries, and water systems that ordinary Kenyans expect in return are being crowded out by recurrent expenditure, bloated wage bills, and pending bills that accumulate year after year.

Minority Leader Stewart Madzayo welcomed the publication and framed it as an opportunity rather than an indictment. "Every assessment presents an opportunity to celebrate progress, identify areas requiring improvement and share best practices that can strengthen service delivery across all 47 counties," he said.

Senate Clerk Jeremiah Nyegenye went further, articulating what many Kenyans have long demanded. "Kenyans do not just want to know how much money counties receive. They want to know whether that money is building dispensaries, buying drugs, paying health workers and improving services. The CFPMI is our answer." Nyegenye stressed that the index draws exclusively on publicly available data from the Office of the Auditor-General, the Controller of Budget, and the Commission on Revenue Allocation — institutions whose independence lends the scorecard its authority.

The Parliamentary Budget Office has signalled that the CFPMI will be published annually, creating a longitudinal record of county performance that will be increasingly difficult to dismiss or deflect. Over time, it is expected to become a cornerstone of Senate oversight — enabling legislators to track progress, identify policy gaps, and hold governors to account with the kind of precision that political debate alone has never been able to provide.

Devolution is now well into its second decade. The promise it carried — of bringing government closer to the people, of translating national revenue into local development — remains only partially fulfilled. The CFPMI will not build a single road or stock a single pharmacy. But in a system where accountability has long been the weakest link in the devolution chain, a credible, independent, annual scorecard may prove to be exactly the lever the Senate has been missing.

Whether county governments rise to meet it, or find new ways to explain away the numbers, is the question Kenya's 47 governors will now have to answer — every year, in public, on the record.

Kisumu Governor Anyang Nyong'o

Education The biggest worry is straightforward: many students will complete their studies carrying larger education loans than ever before

A degree on credit: Why Kenya's new university funding model could shape the future of an entire generation

The shift from grants to loans is forcing a hard national conversation about what happens after the graduation square

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

A degree on credit

For generations, a university education has been regarded as one of the surest paths to success. Parents have sacrificed savings, sold livestock and borrowed money so their children could sit in lecture halls and reach for a brighter future. A degree has always represented more than an academic qualification — it has symbolised hope, opportunity and the promise of a better life. Today, however, that promise is being tested.

Kenya's university funding system has undergone a significant transformation. Under the new model, many students now rely more heavily on loans than grants. The government argues the reforms are necessary for sustainability and fairness, but students, parents and education stakeholders remain deeply concerned about the long-term consequences. The debate is no longer simply about paying university fees. It is about the future of an entire generation.

The biggest worry is straightforward: many students will complete their studies carrying larger education loans than ever before. Unlike grants, loans become a financial obligation that follows graduates into the next chapter of their lives — and that reality grows more troubling when set against Kenya's unemployment challenge.

Every year, thousands of graduates leave university full of ambition and confidence. Unfortunately, the labour market tells a different story. Many spend months searching for work. Others spend years. Some eventually settle for jobs unrelated to their studies; many remain unemployed despite possessing the qualifications employers say they want. The question therefore demands to be asked: if graduates cannot secure employment soon after completing university, how will they comfortably repay the loans they accumulated while studying?

This concern dominates conversations among students across the country. Graduates are expected to begin repaying education loans after a relatively short grace period. For many young people, that window closes fast. Some are still completing internships. Others are volunteering to gain experience. Many are still attending interviews without landing stable work. Beginning loan repayments during such financially uncertain times could become an enormous burden.

For those who do secure employment, monthly deductions may leave little room for rent, transport, food and family obligations. For those who remain unemployed, the pressure could be even greater. Instead of entering adulthood with the freedom to save, invest or start businesses, many graduates may find themselves focused first on settling education debts. For a country that champions innovation, entrepreneurship and youth empowerment, that raises an important policy question: can young people truly build wealth if they begin adult life carrying significant financial obligations before establishing stable careers?

The reduction in grant funding adds another layer of concern. Grants once played a vital role in ensuring students from disadvantaged backgrounds could access higher education without accumulating excessive debt. With fewer students qualifying under the new system, many families worry that university may become increasingly out of reach for vulnerable households. Parents already struggling with the high cost of living now fear their children will graduate with debts that could take years to clear.

Students are equally anxious. Some question whether certain degree programmes are financially worthwhile if employment prospects remain uncertain. Others fear that financial pressure may discourage talented young people from pursuing higher education altogether. Access to university has expanded considerably over the years — but if the cost of a degree becomes a barrier for students from low-income families, much of that progress risks being undone.

The government has introduced initiatives such as Jielimishe, which aim to provide additional financing for learners pursuing higher education and further studies. Supporters believe such programmes can open doors for students who might otherwise be unable to continue — particularly those seeking postgraduate qualifications or professional development. Access to financing matters. But financing alone cannot solve the broader challenges facing higher education.

Funding reform must be accompanied by policies that create employment opportunities. A country cannot continuously produce graduates without expanding the economy's capacity to absorb them into meaningful work. Without job creation, education loans risk becoming financial burdens rather than investments in the future. The conversation must therefore move beyond how students pay for university. The real discussion should focus on what happens after graduation.

Will graduates find jobs? Will the economy generate enough opportunities? Will employers absorb the thousands entering the labour market each year? Will loan repayment systems remain flexible enough to accommodate graduates facing unemployment or low incomes? These are the questions that deserve urgent national attention.

A successful university funding model should not simply ensure students enter university. It should position them to leave with dignity, confidence and realistic opportunities for success. Education is an investment in human capital — it should empower young people to contribute to national development, not leave them overwhelmed by financial obligations before they have had the chance to build their lives.

Kenya's future depends heavily on today's students. The doctors, teachers, journalists, engineers, lawyers, scientists and entrepreneurs currently sitting in lecture halls will shape the country's economy tomorrow. They deserve a funding system that not only supports them while they study but also protects their transition into the world of work.

Policymakers have an opportunity to listen — to students, parents, universities and employers alike. The goal should not merely be balancing government budgets. It should be building a system that gives every deserving student a fair chance to succeed without turning education into a lifelong financial burden.

A university degree should remain a ladder to opportunity, not the starting point of years of debt and uncertainty. Kenya's future will not be determined solely by how many students enrol in universities. It will also be determined by what kind of lives those graduates are able to build once they walk out of the graduation square and into the real world. Education should inspire hope, not fear. It should unlock opportunities, not create barriers. Striking the right balance between access, affordability and sustainability will determine whether the dreams of today's students become tomorrow's success stories — or tomorrow's financial struggles.

Dairy Solar-powered cooling units under the LVCSP mark a concrete step in transforming dairy farming across the Rift Valley

Kenya's dairy sector takes a major leap as government boosts milk value chain

BY Waithaka Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya Dairy Board National Chairman Genesio Mugo has praised the government's continued investment in the dairy sector, describing Kenya's position as Africa's leading milk producer as a significant achievement under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

Mugo was speaking at the handover of solar-powered bulk milk coolers under the Livestock Value Chain Support Project (LVCSP), calling the initiative clear proof of the government's commitment to modernising the dairy value chain through improved infrastructure and farmer-focused interventions.

The handover ceremony, held in Nandi and Uasin Gishu counties, was presided over by Director of Livestock Production Bishar Fille, who represented Principal Secretary for Livestock Development Jonathan Mueke.

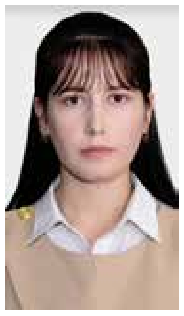
The solar-powered cooling facilities are expected to reduce post-harvest losses, improve milk quality, support value addition and widen market access for dairy farmers. The project is also designed to strengthen dairy cooperatives and lift household incomes by 30 percent by 2028.

More than 15,500 dairy farmers stand to benefit from the initiative, which will support the aggregation of approximately 31,000 litres of milk daily, create more than 200 direct jobs and pump over KSh122 million into modern dairy infrastructure.

Mugo reaffirmed that the government remains committed to practical, farmer-centred solutions — ones that raise productivity, improve livelihoods and unlock the full potential of Kenya's livestock sector, with dairy farming now a key pillar of agricultural transformation under BETA.

Kenya Dairy Board National Chairman Genesio Mugo

Write to me just once...



Write to me just once—let your words be my cure,
Let them become a voice within the silence.
My heart is waiting for a simple message,
Just one question: "How are you?"

Write to me just once—I ask for nothing more.
I will never force your heart to call for me.
I only wish to know if, even for a moment,
You ever remembered me.

Write to me just once—perhaps nothing will change,
Perhaps our paths will never cross again.
Yet that single message from you
Would bring me more joy than a hundred silent days.

Write to me just once...
And if you cannot, that's alright—just be happy.
As for me, I will keep living
With the unanswered messages I sent,
And with the prayers I whisper for your happiness.

Hamdamova Dildora was born in Nishon District, Kashkadarya Region, Uzbekistan. She is currently an undergraduate student in the Cadastre program at Karshi State Technical University.

Aim requires sleepless efforts

Great men sleep less.
They put their heart and soul to rise up
They burn the midnight oil.

They give little importance to pleasure and comfort.
They work hard, with all their heart.

They wait patiently until they achieve their goal.
They keep the fire burning in their heart.
They keep their spirit high.

They wake up early and go to bed late.
For them, sleep comes second.

No one can achieve a goal
by sitting in the comfort zone.
Aim requires only sleepless efforts

They are not tired
until they reach their goal.
They try their best.
They are unstoppable.
No one can stop their burning spirit.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Tamilnadu India

The only permanent thing in life is change

Life is filled with many changes.
No one knows what changes the future holds.
Life is like a circle;
it goes through many changes,
just as the Earth revolves around the Sun,
bringing different seasons and creating a beautiful environment. Likewise,
life is filled with both happy and sad moments.
Sometimes we are wealthy,
and sometimes we face poverty.
Poor people may become rich,
and rich people may become poor.
Every child grows into an adult.
So, live happily and spread happiness to others
because our precious life is not permanent.
One day, it will reach its destination.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Die with memories not dreams

There are two frogs living in a well
One of the frogs thinks well is like a cell
As the well makes him live only in the shell.
He wants to see a wider world to dwell.

The other frog tells him the well is well
As it protects from all the danger.
So the frog gently avoids the changer
He starts treating him like a stranger.

The mighty frog thinks of mighty kings
Who fought bravely depicted in History
He gets inspired by their victory
Like a bird,His courageous mind makes him fly with wings.

The coward frog thinks of lost kings
Who lost their nation and rings .
Instead of losing they should have been hiding
He thinks abiding is better than ruling.

The coward reigns the world in his dream
He builds his own sand castle and lives away from his team.
But the mighty frog's leap makes him out of the well
To leave a strong impression Dying with memories is better than living a coward king in dreams.

...

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

Trees

Trees are very, very important.
Trees give us fruits and vegetables.
Trees give us cool shade.
Trees give us oxygen.
Trees give us fresh air.
Trees are homes for flying birds.
Trees give us many useful things.
Trees give us wooden toys.
Trees give us paper.
Trees help us build houses.
Trees give us wooden kitchen things.

Trees are a wonderful gift of nature.
They help people, animals, and birds every day.
Let us love trees,
Plant more trees,
And protect them forever.

MYTHILI R
CLASS -8 B
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR

MOTIVATED BY
KUMARESWARI S
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR

Women empowerment

She rises strong, she stands up tall,
No fear inside, she breaks each wall.
With courage bright and dreams so high,
She spreads her wings across the sky.

Her voice is clear, her heart is bold,
More precious far than gems or gold.
No chain can bind, no rule can stay,
A woman finds her rightful way.

Through darkest nights her light will glow,
With strength and grace she starts to grow.
Empowered hearts will always say-
A woman's power leads the way

S.P. Ambuja

Tharaka-Nithi The County Commissioner warned that the government would not tolerate attempts to incite members of the public to vandalize or interfere with critical public infrastructure

TWWDA, County Commissioner defend Chuka sewerage project, warn against incitement

BY Alex Njeru
@themtkenyatimes

The Chief Executive Officer of the Tana Water Works Development Agency (TWWDA), Eng. Philip Gichuki and Tharaka-Nithi County Commissioner David Gitonga have defended the ongoing Chuka Sewerage Project, accusing some politicians of misleading residents by claiming that untreated sewage is being discharged into River Tungu.

Speaking separately to the media, the two officials dismissed the allegations as false, saying the Ntuntuni Sewerage Treatment Plant only releases fully treated water that is safe for the environment.

"It is very wrong for politicians to interfere with such a project merely for political gain. The water being released into the river is completely treated and safe for the environment," said Eng. Gichuki.

Chuka Sewage system in Tharaka Nithi County | *Photo:* Alex Njeru.

He explained that the Chuka Sewerage Project is a modern wastewater treatment facility designed to meet environmental standards, adding that discharging treated effluent back into rivers is a globally accepted practice.

"The plant has been professionally designed, and the treated water meets the required environmental standards before being released. This is standard practice across the world," he said.

The County Commissioner warned that the government would not tolerate attempts to incite members of the public to vandalize or interfere with critical public infrastructure.

He said politicians raising concerns over the project should first have sought clarification from relevant technical agencies, including the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Public Health Department or TWWDA, instead of mobilizing residents for demonstrations.

"It does not mean that because someone is a politician they know everything. Those who organized demonstrations against the project should have first sought the truth from the relevant technical institutions such as NEMA and Public Health," said Gitonga.

He cautioned residents against being misled into destroying public infrastructure for political interests.

"No government can deliberately release raw sewage into a river. Such claims are misleading and unnecessary," he added.

Mitheru MCA Nevert Kinuthia and Igambang'ombe MCA Njeru Ing'ara led demonstrations by residents protesting what they alleged was the discharge of raw sewage from the Ntuntuni Sewerage Treatment Plant into River Tungu. The two MCAs demanded the closure of the facility.

On Monday, the two ward representatives were summoned by officers from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) in Chuka to record statements over allegations of incitement following the demonstrations.

The Chuka Sewerage Project is being implemented by the Tana Water Works Development Agency and comprises the construction of a 24-kilometre secondary sewer network, a 21-kilometre trunk sewer system and a sewage treatment plant at Ntuntuni with a capacity of 2,300 cubic metres per day.

The project is expected to benefit about 17,940 residents in Tharaka-Nithi County and will be handed over to the county government upon completion.

Profile She firmly believes that communication is most effective when it reflects the voices, experiences and aspirations of ordinary people

Lilian Kimeto: The quiet force shaping Kenya's national story

A seasoned public servant whose work has helped preserve, document and communicate Kenya's development journey for present and future generations

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Some leaders make headlines through loud pronouncements and public spectacle. Others build enduring legacies through diligence, discipline and an unwavering commitment to service. Lilian Kimeto belongs firmly to the latter category — a seasoned public servant whose work has helped preserve, document and communicate Kenya's development journey for present and future generations.

At the helm of the Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board, Kimeto has become synonymous with professionalism, strategic leadership and excellence in public communication. Her career reflects a steadfast belief that a nation's story deserves to be told accurately, authentically and comprehensively. Through her leadership, the Board has continued to evolve into a respected national publisher that captures Kenya's achievements, challenges and aspirations.

Unlike leaders who seek the spotlight, Kimeto has built her reputation by letting results speak for themselves. She has demonstrated that true leadership is measured not by publicity but by impact. Her calm, methodical approach has enabled the institution to strengthen its role as the official custodian of Kenya's documented national narrative.

From the outset of her career, Kimeto understood that information is one of the most powerful tools for nation-building. As a participatory communication expert trained at Daystar University, she developed a deep appreciation for people-centred communication — recognising that sustainable development is achieved when citizens themselves become active participants in shaping and disseminating messages that

Lilian Kimeto

affect their lives. Her training equipped her with the knowledge and practical skills to design and execute grassroots communication strategies that place communities at the heart of public engagement, rather than treating them as passive recipients of information.

She firmly believes that communication is most effective when it reflects the voices, experiences and aspirations of ordinary people. Kimeto has also championed the use of African indigenous communication systems — including songs, storytelling, proverbs, folk theatre, community dialogue and other traditional forms of expression — as powerful tools for civic education, behaviour change, cultural preservation and social transformation. By blending these time-tested approaches with modern communication techniques, she has demonstrated that authentic public messaging must be culturally grounded, participatory and inclusive.

Every policy implemented, every infrastructure project completed, every innovation introduced and every milestone achieved contributes to the larger story of a country. Recording those achievements faithfully ensures that future generations understand not only where Kenya stands today, but also how it got there.

This appreciation for documentation has defined her career. She has consistently championed accuracy, credibility and editorial integrity — qualities that have become hallmarks of the Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board under her stewardship.

As Chief Executive Officer, Kimeto oversees an institution whose mandate extends far beyond publishing books. The Board serves as a national repository of verified information, producing authoritative publications that showcase Kenya's governance, economy, culture, tourism, innovation, environment and development milestones. These publications have become invaluable resources for researchers, policymakers, investors, students, diplomats and citizens seeking factual information about the country. Under Kimeto's leadership, the institution has continued to embrace innovation while maintaining the highest editorial standards.

One of Kimeto's greatest strengths lies in her ability to modernise public institutions without abandoning their core mission. She understands that today's audiences consume information very differently from previous generations. Digital platforms, multimedia storytelling and online accessibility have become indispensable tools for public communication, and recognising this shift, she has championed efforts to ensure the Board remains relevant in the digital age. By encouraging innovation and embracing technology, she has helped position the institution to reach wider audiences while preserving its credibility as an authoritative source of national information.

Yet technology, in Kimeto's view, is only a means to an end. The ultimate goal remains the same: ensuring that every Kenyan has access to accurate, balanced and well-researched information about their country.

Kimeto's leadership style is distinguished by collaboration. She appreciates that documenting a nation's story requires cooperation across government ministries, counties, state agencies, development partners, academia and the private sector. Building these relationships has enabled the Board to compile comprehensive publications that reflect Kenya's diversity and complexity. Her ability to foster partnerships has strengthened institutional capacity while promoting a culture of shared responsibility in preserving Kenya's historical record.

Beyond administration, Kimeto has consistently advocated for knowledge as a strategic national asset. Countries that invest in preserving their history and documenting their progress create stronger foundations for policy formulation, education and national identity. By ensuring Kenya's development journey is accurately recorded, she contributes to a broader culture of transparency, accountability and institutional memory — particularly vital in a rapidly changing world where misinformation can spread at alarming speed.

Those who have worked with Kimeto often describe her as meticulous, disciplined and deeply committed to quality. She believes excellence is achieved through careful planning, rigorous research and attention to detail — principles that have guided both her personal leadership philosophy and the institutional culture she continues to nurture. Her commitment to professionalism also extends to mentoring her teams and creating an environment where creativity, innovation and integrity flourish side by side.

Kimeto's work reflects a broader vision of patriotism. For her, documenting Kenya's journey is not merely an administrative function — it is an act of nation-building. Every publication produced by the Board becomes part of the country's collective memory, preserving stories that might otherwise be lost. Whether documenting advances in infrastructure, agriculture, education, healthcare, technology, environmental conservation or cultural heritage, the institution plays a vital role in showcasing Kenya's transformation — and under Kimeto's leadership, these stories are presented with accuracy, context and balance.

Her tenure comes at a time when Kenya is increasingly positioning itself as a regional leader in innovation, diplomacy, investment and sustainable development. Communicating these achievements effectively requires institutions capable of producing credible, accessible and high-quality information. Kimeto has embraced this responsibility with quiet determination, ensuring the Board remains a trusted partner in national development communication.

Despite the demands of executive leadership, she continues to embody humility and public service. She represents a generation of leaders who believe institutions matter, professionalism matters and facts matter. Her work reminds us that behind every successful nation stands a dedicated group of professionals committed to preserving its history and informing its future.

Her leadership also illustrates the importance of women occupying senior positions within public institutions. By excelling in a role that combines strategic management, editorial oversight and national communication, she serves as an inspiration to young women aspiring to careers in public administration, publishing, journalism and knowledge management.

As Kenya continues its journey towards inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, the importance of preserving accurate national records will only grow. Future policymakers, scholars and citizens will depend on today's documentation to understand the decisions, achievements and experiences that shaped the nation. Kimeto's contribution therefore extends well beyond the present — it is an investment in Kenya's historical legacy.

The story of Lilian Kimeto is ultimately one of purpose, discipline and service. It is the story of a leader who understands that nations are strengthened not only by roads, bridges and buildings, but also by the stories they preserve, the knowledge they share and the truths they record.

Through her stewardship of the Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board, she continues to ensure that Kenya's remarkable journey is documented with professionalism, integrity and pride. In doing so, Lilian Kimeto has established herself as one of the country's quiet architects of institutional excellence — a leader whose influence will be felt not merely in the pages of published volumes, but in the enduring preservation of Kenya's national story for generations to come.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COMPILED BY JOY ZENZ
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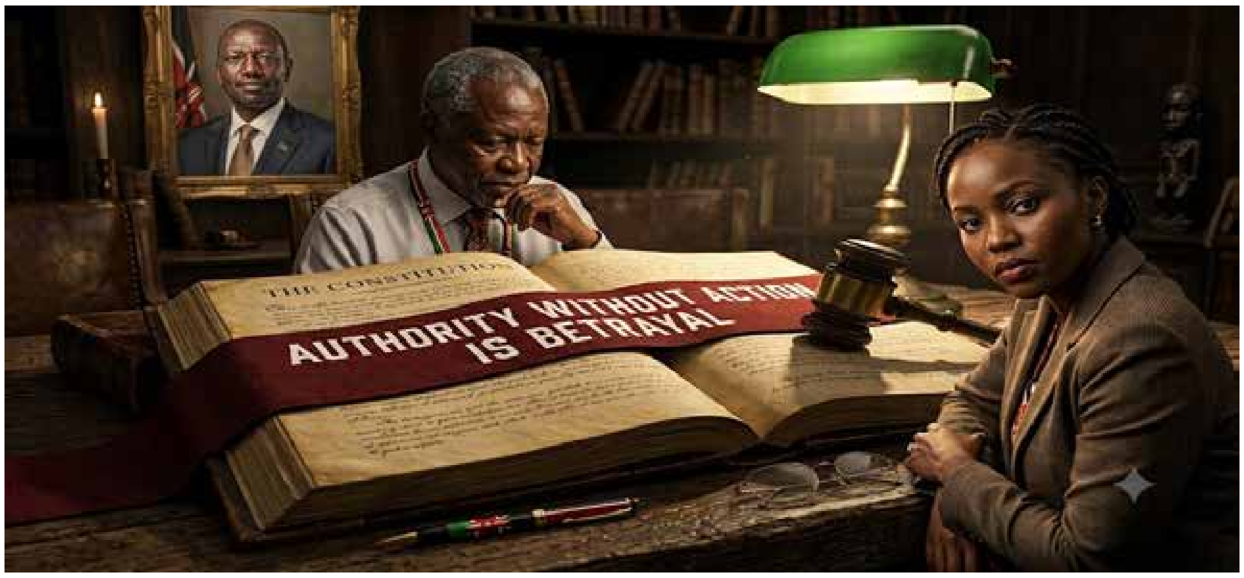
Constitution To treat the constitution as self-executing is to indulge a form of magical thinking the belief that words alone can restrain ambition, allocate power, and secure dignity

The constitution's silent demand: Authority without action is betrayal

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes



The constitution's silent demand, Authority without action is betrayal

It is a settled fact of constitutional architecture that a constitution is not self-executing. Its provisions do not spring into life by the mere force of ink on parchment. Where the text merely declares a principle, sketches a policy, or directs the legislature to act, the document remains inert until human hands those invested with authority give it force through legislation, enforcement, interpretation, and daily fidelity. This is not obscure theory. Courts across jurisdictions have long distinguished self-executing clauses, which supply a complete and judicially workable rule, from those that require enabling statutes or executive machinery. A provision that merely gestures toward social justice, equality, or the general welfare often stands as a directive rather than an immediately enforceable command. The issue is therefore stark: the highest law of the land is frequently a set of unfinished instructions, and the burden of completion falls squarely on those granted the power to act.

Consider the architecture itself. A constitution is a map drawn in broad strokes. It charts the rivers of liberty and the mountains of limited government, yet it does not dig the canals, pave the roads, or staff the bridges. Those tasks belong to legislators who must translate aspiration into statute, executives who must translate statute into practice, and judges who must translate both into coherent judgment. When that translation fails, the map becomes decorative. Rights exist on paper while citizens navigate a landscape of selective application, delayed remedies, and quiet nullification. The document's silence on the mechanics of implementation is not an invitation to inertia; it is a demand for deliberate, continuous action by those who swore to uphold it.

This demand is not abstract. Empirical patterns across nations reveal a persistent de jure–de facto gap. Constitutions that catalogue extensive rights frequently coexist with incomplete enforcement. Studies tracking constitutional compliance over decades show that formal guarantees of civil, political, and socio-economic rights often outpace actual practice, particularly where political will falters or institutional capacity is deliberately starved. In Europe, a substantial share of leading human-rights judgments from the European Court of Human Rights have remained unimplemented for years, leaving systemic problems unresolved and citizens without the practical fruits of adjudicated rights. Globally, the phenomenon of "sham constitutions" documents that promise much while delivering little clusters in places where those holding authority treat the text as optional rhetoric rather than binding architecture. Correlation here is instructive: stronger democratic accountability and institutional independence tend to narrow the gap, while concentrated power and weak oversight widen it. The pattern is not random. It tracks the presence or absence of officials willing to treat constitutional commands as operational duties rather than ceremonial ornaments.

The intellectual failure is deeper still. To treat the constitution as self-executing is to indulge a form of magical thinking the belief that words alone can restrain ambition, allocate power, and secure dignity. Words do none of these things without agents. A prohibition against unreasonable searches is inert until officers, prosecutors, and judges apply it. A guarantee of equal protection remains ornamental until legislatures refuse to craft discriminatory schemes and courts refuse to ratify them. Even clauses that appear complete require interpretation, prioritization, and resource allocation. The text supplies the standard; authority supplies the will and the means. When those who hold authority decline the labor when they pass vague statutes that invite selective enforcement, starve institutions of funding, or treat judicial remedies as political inconveniences they convert a constitutional order into a theater of pretenses.

Literary analogy clarifies the stakes. Imagine a symphony score of extraordinary beauty placed before an orchestra that refuses to rehearse or perform. The notes exist; the music does not. Or picture a fortress whose blueprints are perfect yet whose walls are never built because the masons prefer the comfort of the drawing table. The constitution is that score and those blueprints. It is not a self-playing instrument or a self-raising fortress. It is a demanding instrument that requires disciplined hands. Those hands belong to the officials who take oaths. Their failure is not neutral omission; it is active betrayal of the instrument they claimed to serve.

The emotional weight of this betrayal is borne by the governed. A citizen who reads a guarantee of due process yet faces arbitrary detention experiences not abstract legal shortfall but concrete humiliation. A community promised environmental protection or educational opportunity, only to watch enabling legislation languish or enforcement budgets vanish, experiences the constitution as a broken promise rather than a living shield. The gap between text and reality does not merely disappoint; it erodes trust, breeds cynicism, and invites the very concentration of power the document was meant to prevent. When authority treats the constitution as optional, the people learn that power, not principle, is the true currency. That lesson is corrosive. It teaches that the highest law is negotiable, and negotiable law is no law at all.

Original insight lies in recognizing that the non-self-executing character of much constitutional text is not a defect to be lamented but a deliberate structural feature that places moral and political pressure precisely where it belongs: on those who exercise power. The framers and ratifiers of constitutions understood that pure textual force is insufficient. They therefore distributed responsibility across institutions precisely so that no single actor could claim the text was complete without further effort. This distribution is both a safeguard and a test. It safeguards against the fantasy of automatic justice. It tests the character of those who hold office. Do they treat the constitution as a finished product that excuses further labor, or as an unfinished mandate that requires continuous construction? The answer distinguishes constitutional states from mere paper regimes.

Data reinforce the point. Where constitutions include mechanisms for dismissing leaders who violate the text, compliance tends to improve. Where enforcement institutions are independent and resourced, the de jure–de facto gap narrows. Conversely, where political branches treat constitutional directives as discretionary suggestions, non-compliance becomes normalized. The correlation is not perfect culture, history, and economic capacity matter but the pattern is clear enough to reject the excuse of inevitability. Non-implementation is rarely a technical accident; it is frequently a political choice. Those who hold authority choose whether to fund courts adequately, whether to draft precise enabling laws, whether to accept adverse judgments as binding rather than temporary inconveniences. Each choice either breathes life into the text or leaves it gasping.

The call-out is therefore unavoidable. Officials who invoke the constitution while refusing the labor of implementation are not merely negligent; they are architects of constitutional hollowness. They wrap themselves in the prestige of the document while denying its operative force. They demand public reverence for the text while treating their own duty to complete it as optional. This is not statesmanship. It is performance. True fidelity requires the harder work of translation: converting principles into statutes with clear standards, funding the institutions that apply those standards, accepting judicial correction without institutional retaliation, and measuring success not by the beauty of the parchment but by the lived experience of the governed.

Deep insight emerges when we grasp that the constitution's demands are recursive. It demands not only that authority act, but that authority act in a manner that preserves the possibility of future action. When officials hollow out institutions, politicize enforcement, or allow gaps to harden into custom, they do more than fail a present generation; they degrade the instrument itself for those who come after. The constitution then becomes progressively less capable of constraining power because power has taught the public that constraint is optional. The cycle is self-reinforcing until broken by deliberate recommitment.

In the end, the constitution is a living demand, not a static relic. It is not self-executing because no document of that ambition could be. Its power lies precisely in the unfinished character that forces continuous human agency. Those granted authority are not the passive recipients of a completed gift; they are the necessary builders. When they refuse the work, the edifice remains unfinished, the music unplayed, the fortress unraised. The text endures. The people wait. And the silence of unfinished implementation becomes the loudest indictment of those who held the tools and chose not to build.

The writer is a social commentator.

Education Students and parents have questioned how funding bands are determined, why families with seemingly similar circumstances sometimes receive different classifications

When the cost of learning becomes the cost of dreaming

Kenya's university funding debate is ultimately a test of fairness, transparency and national ambition

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Every education policy tells a story about what a nation values. Some reward excellence. Others expand access. The best attempt to do both. Kenya's university funding debate is therefore about far more than scholarships, loans or budget allocations. It is a test of whether the country can preserve higher education as a pathway to opportunity while confronting the financial realities of sustaining it.

The introduction of the new funding model marked a significant shift in how public support is allocated. Rather than treating all students alike, the system seeks to direct greater assistance to those with the greatest financial need. The principle is difficult to dismiss. Public resources are finite, and governments have a responsibility to ensure that those most in need receive meaningful support.

Yet good intentions alone do not guarantee public confidence.

The strongest criticism of the funding model has not always been its objective but its implementation. Students and parents have questioned how funding bands are determined, why families with seemingly similar circumstances sometimes receive different classifications, and whether the assessment process is sufficiently transparent. When uncertainty surrounds decisions that determine whether a student can remain in university, trust inevitably suffers.

This is why the debate should move beyond whether the model is politically popular. The more important question is whether it is consistently fair.

A funding system earns legitimacy when people understand how decisions are made, when they can challenge errors through a credible appeals process, and when outcomes appear consistent across similar cases. Transparency does not eliminate disagreement, but it gives citizens confidence that decisions rest on clear principles rather than arbitrary judgment.

The discussion should also acknowledge a reality that is often overlooked. Kenya's universities have faced financial strain for years. Rising operational costs, expanding enrolment, delayed funding and recurring industrial disputes have exposed structural challenges that no single policy can resolve. Reforming student financing without strengthening universities themselves risks treating one symptom while leaving the underlying illness untouched.

Higher education is not simply another line item in the national budget. It is an investment in the country's future workforce, research capacity and long-term competitiveness. Every engineer, teacher, doctor, journalist, scientist, entrepreneur and public servant who graduates from a Kenyan university represents more than an individual success — they represent skills and knowledge the nation will depend upon for decades.

That is why financial uncertainty carries consequences beyond individual students. When talented young people defer their studies, accumulate unmanageable debt or abandon university altogether because of cost, Kenya risks losing potential innovators whose contributions may never be realised.

Supporters of the funding reforms are right to argue that unlimited public financing is unrealistic. The demands on the national budget continue to grow, and every shilling allocated to higher education competes with equally important priorities — healthcare, infrastructure, agriculture and security. Sustainable financing matters.

Critics are equally justified in insisting that sustainability must never come at the expense of fairness. A policy that cannot earn the confidence of those it affects will struggle to achieve its intended purpose, regardless of its economic logic.

The challenge, therefore, is not to choose between affordability and equity. It is to design a funding system that advances both.

That means refining the criteria used to assess need, ensuring appeals are resolved efficiently, communicating decisions more clearly, and continuously evaluating whether the model is delivering the outcomes it promised. Reform should be viewed as an ongoing process, not a completed project.

Education has always been one of Kenya's most powerful instruments of social mobility. It has enabled generations of young people to overcome poverty, transform families and contribute meaningfully to national development. That promise should not become less certain simply because financing has grown more complex.

The success of this funding model will not ultimately be measured by the number of regulations issued or the amount of money distributed. It will be measured by whether qualified students — regardless of background — can pursue higher education with confidence that the system is fair, transparent and dependable.

Kenya's future will not be built solely by balancing budgets. It will also be shaped by whether the country continues to invest in the dreams of its young people. The cost of learning may be high, but the cost of denying opportunity is far higher.

China China's appeal begins with what it has accomplished at home. Over four decades, China has lifted nearly 800 million people out of poverty

Why the world is looking more favorably at China

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

For Canadians surveyed in a poll three years ago, the favorability rate gap between the United States and China was exceptionally wide. By this spring, China's favorability rating in Canada had surpassed that of the United States, reaching 44 percent compared to 33 percent.

The shift is especially striking because it occurred not in a distant country, but in one of the United States' closest allies and economic partners. It is also the clearest illustration of a much wider change. In a Pew Research Center study in July of 42,151 adults, China was viewed more favorably than the United States in 25 of 36 countries. The change reflects a shift in what much of the world now expects from a major power. At a time of mounting geopolitical uncertainty, the survey is more than a ranking of national images. Its findings suggest a growing preference for partnership over pressure, predictability over capriciousness and shared development over zero-sum rivalry.

A staff member trains a robot to sort items at Maniformer, a physical AI data service platform, in Shanghai, east China on Wednesday.

Why China is appealing

China's appeal begins with what it has accomplished at home. Over four decades, China has lifted nearly 800 million people out of poverty. The country built the world's largest high-speed rail network, transformed itself into a manufacturing power, and became a global leader in electric vehicles, renewable energy and digital services. Taken together, these achievements tell a larger story: China has repeatedly turned long-term plans into changes that people can see in their incomes, mobility and daily lives. That record carries weight abroad because many countries are wrestling with the same practical questions China has confronted: how to build infrastructure, create industrial jobs, reduce poverty and make new technologies affordable.

Wang Lei, a professor at Beijing Normal University, noted that a growing number of overseas scholars are studying China's five-year plans and seeking to understand the logic of its governance. China's record of stable development and improving living standards, he said, has become its most persuasive national calling card. In this sense, China's appeal rests less on how it describes itself than on the results it has produced.

What reliability

Pew did not ask respondents to explain their overall opinion of China. But in 17 middle-income countries, it asked whether China was a reliable partner, took the interests of countries like theirs into account, and contributed to global peace and stability. In South Africa, 72 percent described China as reliable. Sixty-four percent said it respected their interests, and the same share credited it with contributing to peace and stability, up from 47 percent in 2023. Wang said the findings reflected a desire for a partner whose policies remain steady and predictable. Reliability, however, is established less through diplomatic language than through repeated delivery.

Sizo Nkala, a researcher at the University of Johannesburg's Center for Africa-China Studies, pointed to railways, ports, power plants and communications networks. "Young people see all these things." The China-Laos Railway, Indonesia's Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway and Peru's Chancay Port have made cooperation visible on a national scale. Smaller-scale programs -- from Juncao technology and Luban Workshops to Chinese medical teams -- have delivered benefits more directly to local communities.

China is also extending its development cooperation into emerging technologies.

At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, it announced 5,000 AI training opportunities for developing countries over the next five years and joined 28 other countries in establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization. This move addresses a growing concern in the developing world: that countries lacking technological expertise and a voice in AI governance could be left further behind. Such initiatives also broaden the meaning of partnership with China -- from building roads and ports to sharing know-how needed for the next stage of development.

Seeing China up close

China's wider opening to foreign visitors has also created millions of smaller encounters. Its 240-hour visa-free transit policy is now available to travelers from 55 countries. Visitors have filled social-media feeds with high-speed trains, mobile payments, night markets and ordinary street life. Such videos cannot explain the results of a 36-country poll by themselves, but they allow distant audiences to compare inherited impressions with firsthand experience.

Roger Tan Wei Jian, deputy secretary-general of the Association of Interaction Malaysia-China, said visits to China had shown him a country sharing its experience in economic transformation, poverty reduction and innovation while also listening to others. What impressed him was the pursuit of progress through "mutual exchange, mutual learning and the creation of cooperation opportunities."

Culture offers another point of entry.

The animated film Ne Zha 2 and the video game Black Myth: Wukong have recast Chinese mythology in contemporary forms, while UNESCO's inscription of the Spring Festival has accompanied its growing visibility around the world. Together, these cultural expressions present a China that is not only ancient, but also creative, modern and open. Impression changes when a distant country becomes tangible: a railway opens, a journey starts, a technology used or a story told.

Politics

Cherargei rises as Sifuna is stripped of his last Senate perch

A routine committee reshuffle carries an unmistakable political message: dissent in the broad-based era has a price

BY Joseph Mutua
@themtkenyatimes

Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei

Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei was unanimously elected vice chairperson of the Senate County Public Accounts Committee (CPAC) on Thursday, stepping into a role vacated as part of a sweeping parliamentary reshuffle that has simultaneously completed the institutional isolation of Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna — one of the most consequential acts of political engineering to pass through the Senate chamber this year.

The two events are inseparable. To understand why Cherargei's election matters, you must first understand what was done to Sifuna to make room for it.

On 29 July 2026, the Senate approved changes that removed Sifuna from CPAC — one of the most powerful oversight committees in Parliament — and reassigned him to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. It was the second time in quick succession that Sifuna had been stripped of a significant institutional position. He had already been removed as ODM's Senate Deputy Minority Whip weeks earlier. Now his seat on the committee that summons governors and scrutinises billions of shillings in county expenditure was gone too. The reshuffle also saw Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi lose his chairmanship of the County Public Investments and Special Funds Committee, with the two senators — both leading voices in the Linda Mwananchi movement — removed from the Senate's two most influential county oversight panels in a single stroke.

Sifuna, characteristically, refused to perform distress. "They're sending me to the Fisheries Committee, which they think is a punishment. But I actually need to learn about agriculture, fisheries and the blue economy because of the coming assignments," he said — a line carefully constructed to signal that he is thinking beyond the current parliamentary term, not fighting to preserve his position within it.

But the political mathematics behind the reshuffle are harder to wave away. Observers noted that Sifuna's replacement on CPAC by Senate Minority Leader Stewart Madzayo was widely read as an attempt to install legislators more accommodating to the broad-based political arrangement between President Ruto and sections of the opposition. The shake-up prompted debate over whether the broad-based government is systematically removing outspoken critics from key accountability committees to tighten its grip on Parliament.

Into the space left by Sifuna stepped Cherargei, a senator with a long and combative history on CPAC. The Nandi lawmaker is no stranger to the committee's dynamics — or to the controversies it generates. In February 2026, the Council of Governors singled out Cherargei, alongside Kajwang, Sifuna and then-vice chairperson Johnes Mwaruma, alleging they had been "notorious" for misconduct during CPAC oversight sessions, accusing the four of engaging in extortion, political witch-hunts, intimidation and harassment of county chiefs summoned to respond to audit queries. Senate Speaker Amason Kingi rejected the governors' demand for the committee's reconstitution, but the episode illustrated just how high-voltage CPAC proceedings can become when county billions are on the table.

Now Cherargei is deputy chair of the very committee the governors once sought to dismantle. Homa Bay Senator Moses Kajwang, who has chaired CPAC through its most turbulent period, retained his position and welcomed back a familiar face. "I am happy to have you back again as my vice chairperson. Let us work for the people," Kajwang said. Cherargei responded with a pledge that sounded purposeful rather than ceremonial. "I want to assure members that we will work together to ensure we properly perform our role of checking county governments," he said.

The committee's new composition also includes Kilifi Senator Stewart Madzayo and Lamu Senator Joseph Githuku, who replace Sifuna and Mwaruma respectively. Mwaruma, for his part, has been moved to the County Public Investments and Special Funds Committee — the panel Osotsi once chaired.

Taken together, the reconstitution amounts to a near-total reconfiguration of the oversight architecture around county finances, executed in two phases over the space of a fortnight. The political logic is clear: those who have aligned themselves with Linda Mwananchi, the dissident movement openly hostile to ODM's cooperation with Kenya Kwanza, have been systematically relocated to committees with lower visibility and less leverage over county executives.

The institutional consequences are significant. CPAC and its sister committee are the Senate's primary instruments for holding governors accountable — the forums in which audit reports become political accountability, where pending bills become headlines, and where county chiefs face the most pointed questioning about how public money has been spent. The senators who sit on those committees wield disproportionate influence over the political fortunes of 47 governors. Removing Sifuna and Osotsi from that terrain narrows their capacity to generate the kind of sustained institutional pressure that builds reputations and coalition support ahead of an election cycle.

The broader reshuffle also saw Migori Senator Eddy Oketch — appointed Senate Deputy Minority Whip following Sifuna's removal from that role — transferred off other committees to accommodate the cascade of changes. The Senate's committee architecture has been quietly but thoroughly reordered.

For Sifuna, the cumulative losses are considerable: ODM secretary-general, Senate Deputy Minority Whip, Senate Energy Committee seat, and now CPAC. Each removal has been dressed in procedural language — committee reconstitution, party discipline, Senate Standing Orders — but the directional logic is unmistakable. An elected senator who once commanded one of the upper House's most feared oversight platforms now finds himself assigned to fisheries.

Whether that exile accelerates the Linda Mwananchi movement's break from ODM and its transformation into a formal opposition party — which its leaders have publicly committed to — remains the central question of Kenya's pre-election political season. What is already clear is that the broad-based arrangement is not merely a governing coalition. It is an active force reshaping the Senate's institutional landscape in ways that will define who holds power, who holds accountability, and who holds nothing at all when the 2027 campaign begins in earnest.

Cherargei has his vice chairmanship. Sifuna has his fishing rights. The rest is politics.

Sports >> *More than 50 professionals tee off in the sixth leg of a season where every stroke could lead to Paris 2028

Nakuru next: PGK Equator Tour heats up as Olympic spots beckon

By **Martin Weche**

The golfing fraternity is turning its attention to Nakuru this week as the PGK Equator Tour returns for its sixth leg, with the stakes higher than ever. More than 50 professional golfers are set to compete in a tournament where Order of Merit points, a place at the 2027 Magical Kenya Open and a shot at the 2028 Olympic Games are all on the line.

The Nakuru leg, played at one of the country's most celebrated courses, got underway yesterday and runs through to Sunday. It comes on the back of a successful fifth leg at Ruiru Sports Club and arrives precisely at the halfway point of what has been a fiercely competitive season.

Leading the charge is Safaricom-backed Samuel Njoroge, who heads into Nakuru sitting comfortably at the top of the Order of Merit standings with 2,852 points. Njoroge, who was speaking during a training session at Thika Sports Club ahead of the tournament, made clear he has unfinished business with this particular course.

"Nakuru is like a second home to me. The course is always in excellent condition, with fairways that suit my game," he said. "The last time I played there during the inaugural edition of the circuit, I finished second in a very close contest — just two strokes behind Dismas Indiza. This time, I want to go one better and claim the title."

It is the kind of motivation that makes Njoroge a compelling favourite, though the chasing pack is far from willing to hand him anything. Greg Snow sits second on the standings with 2,320 points, while Indiza — the man who pipped Njoroge at that inaugural Nakuru edition — is breathing down Snow's neck on 2,290 points. The gap between the top three is slim enough to make every hole count.

Leading the charge is Safaricom-backed Samuel Njoroge

Fourth on the standings is fellow Safaricom-backed golfer Mohit Mediratta with 2,050 points, while fifth-leg winner David Wakhu, fresh from his Ruiru triumph, rounds out the top five on 1,800 points. Wakhu's victory last week will have done wonders for his confidence, and a strong showing in Nakuru could dramatically reshape the standings heading into the second half of the season.

The PGK Equator Tour has built impressive momentum since its launch. The circuit has already visited Vet Lab Sports Club, Thika Sports Club, Limuru Country Club, Nyali Golf and Country Club and Ruiru Sports Club — a route that has tested players across a diverse range of terrains and conditions. Nakuru now adds another chapter to what is shaping up to be one of Kenyan golf's most compelling seasons in recent memory.

With six more legs still to come after Nakuru, the race for Order of Merit honours is far from settled. But the halfway point of any season has a psychological weight of its own. Players who find form now, who accumulate points while rivals stumble, can enter the closing stretch with a confidence that is difficult to shake.

The twin prizes dangling at the end of the season give the tournament an added dimension that extends well beyond domestic bragging rights. Qualification for the 2027 Magical Kenya Open, one of the flagship events on the DP World Tour, represents a career-defining opportunity for the professionals competing on the Equator circuit. Beyond that, the pathway to the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles turns every birdie putt into something that carries genuine international significance.

For golfers like Njoroge, Indiza and Snow, the Nakuru leg is therefore not simply another tournament on a long calendar. It is a statement of intent — a chance to separate themselves from the field at a moment when the season is finely poised and the pressure is beginning to mount.

As the fairways of Nakuru await, Kenyan golf has rarely had so much to play for. The race to Los Angeles 2028 has well and truly begun.

Sports >> *Manchester City midfielder Rodri may have a huge decision to make this summer on whether to join La Liga giants Real Madrid or Barcelona – should he decide to leave Etihad Stadium

Barcelona? Real Madrid? Man City's Rodri has a decision to make

Manchester City and Spain midfielder Rodri savours his moment. PHOTO/Ballon d'Or/X.

By: BBC

Manchester City midfielder Rodri may have a huge decision to make this summer on whether to join La Liga giants Real Madrid or Barcelona – should he decide to leave Etihad Stadium.

The 29-year-old is into the final year of his deal at City and is yet to sign fresh terms.

Real have held a long-term interest in signing the player, but two separate sources told BBC Sport on Thursday that Spanish champions Barcelona have joined the race for his signature.

To add to the intrigue, Barca sources have distanced themselves from such talk when approached to comment by BBC Sport.

A big decision to make

Rodri missed much of the 2023-24 campaign after sustaining a serious knee injury, and parts of last season were disrupted by a hamstring issue.

However, the 2024 Ballon d'Or winner was back to his best at the World Cup in the summer, leading Spain to their second title and being named player of the tournament.

Rodri said earlier this season his future would be sorted out after the tournament, but he is currently out of action after undergoing back surgery.

City are currently on a pre-season tour in the Far East and face Arsenal in the Community Shield next Sunday, but Rodri is yet to link up with his teammates. Once he does return, he has a major decision to make.

Does he sign the deal that is on offer from City, see out the final months of his contract and become a free agent next summer or take up the tantalising prospect of a return to his homeland?

City sources have previously told BBC Sport they are "counting on" the player for next season, while a significant fee would need to be offered to even consider a sale of the player.

A move to Barca would allow Rodri to join the title winners for the past two seasons and unite with national team compatriots Ferran Torres, Lamine Yamal, Pau Cubarsi and Pedri.

However, he may enjoy a quick reunion with ex-City team-mate Bernardo Silva, who joined Real on a free this summer, and the club will be led by the returning Jose Mourinho.

Rodri, though, may not receive a universal reception if he joins one of the two Spanish giants.

He played for Atletico Madrid in the past and having previously said "you can't turn down the best clubs in the world" with regards to Real, the reception at Nou Camp would be highly interesting if he did end up there.

Who could replace Rodri?

Rodri has won four Premier League titles, the Champions League and two FA Cups since joining City in 2019 and has established himself as being not only integral to the side, but as one of the best midfielders in the world.

Having already lost Silva this summer, losing Rodri would be a significant blow and would require one of Mateo Kovacic, Nico Gonzalez or Tijjani Reijnders to step up, with all three featuring in pre-season so far.

Club record signing Elliot Anderson is set to be a starter, so there would be a big hole to fill alongside the England international.

City remain in talks to sign 18-year-old midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi from Lille, but it would be a big ask for the Moroccan teenager to fill such esteemed boots.

SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

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Renée Ambarees: A Journey of healing, leadership, and purpose

By: Anila Bukhari
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- **Before becoming an entrepreneur, Renée spent 22 years in competitive sports. She competed at the Allianz Olympics in Paris, reaching the final in the 100-meter sprint. Those years taught her discipline, determination, patience, and respect for the body's strength. She learned that real success is built through consistency and dedication.**
- **Later, she spent 15 years working as an expert for Allianz across Germany and Austria, and went on to train "Peak Performance Without Side Effects" programs, focused on memory, eyesight, and focus, for major institutions including insurance companies, banks, the University of Vienna, ORF (Austrian public broadcasting), and HIPP, teaching the BrainRead® method.**

Every successful person has a story, and Renée Ambarees' journey is one of courage, resilience, and transformation. She is the founder of Yoga4Face®, the creator of Leadership4Presence, an international bestselling author, and an Embodiment & Identity Shift Mentor. Through her work, she has inspired thousands of women to reconnect with themselves, build confidence, and live with authenticity.

Renée is one of the first certified Face Yoga trainers in Europe. She received her certification directly from Fumiko Takatsu, the founder of the Face Yoga Method®.

But Yoga4Face® is not classical Face Yoga. While her early certification gave her a foundation, the method she went on to build is entirely her own, developed from her own life, from the injuries of 22 years in competitive sport, through her corporate career, all the way to the face. Yoga4Face® works with the whole being, body, voice, nervous system, and alignment, not facial muscles alone. For Renée, yoga means unfolding your uniqueness on every level of your being, understanding that you are more than what you can hold in your hands. Her four-step method brings this into daily life, without ritual, without building an altar. It is about coming home to yourself, and the real smile is the key that opens that door, the foundation of what she now calls the Smile Revolution.

During the past nine years, she has worked with more than 10,000 people from around the world, helping them improve not only their facial wellness but also their emotional well-being and self-confidence.

Her success did not happen overnight. It is the result of many years of learning, personal growth, and life experience.

Before becoming an entrepreneur, Renée spent 22 years in competitive sports. She competed at the Allianz Olympics in Paris, reaching the final in the 100-meter sprint. Those years taught her discipline, determination, patience, and respect for the body's strength. She learned that real success is built through consistency and dedication.

Later, she spent 15 years working as an expert for Allianz across Germany and Austria, and went on to train "Peak Performance Without Side Effects" programs, focused on memory, eyesight, and focus, for major institutions including insurance companies, banks, the University of Vienna, ORF (Austrian public broadcasting), and HIPP, teaching the BrainRead® method. Through this work, she gained deep experience in leadership, communication, teamwork, and business, and she came to understand the challenges many women face while trying to succeed in demanding professional environments. These experiences shaped her belief that women should never have to lose themselves in order to achieve success.

However, the biggest lessons in Renée's life came from personal challenges. She experienced grief, betrayal, heartbreak, and difficult moments that changed her forever. Instead of allowing these experiences to define her, she chose to transform them into wisdom and purpose. She believes that even life's darkest seasons can become the beginning of something meaningful.

This personal journey became the foundation of her work.

Renée created Yoga4Face®, Leadership4Presence, the 10 Magic Minutes Head-to-Toe Activation, and The Smile Code to help women reconnect with themselves. Her methods encourage women to release stress stored in the body, understand the connection between emotions and facial expressions, restore their natural energy, and build genuine confidence from within.

She believes beauty is not about looking perfect. True beauty comes from feeling peaceful, confident, and comfortable in your own body. Her mission is to help women stop pretending to be someone they are not and instead embrace their true identity.

Her work especially speaks to women who have ever doubted themselves or felt they were not good enough. Renée reminds them that they do not need to work harder to prove their worth. Instead, they need to reconnect with who they truly are.

One of the deepest sources of inspiration in Renée's life is her children. She lovingly dedicates her work to them and believes they continue to guide her from heaven. Their memory motivates her every day to make a positive difference in the lives of women across the world.

Renée Ambarees.

Born in Northern Germany, Renée now lives between Germany, Austria, and the Dominican Republic. Today, she works internationally, supporting women from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds through mentoring, speaking, and transformational programs.

Her message is simple but powerful: every woman deserves to feel confident, valued, and connected to herself. Through compassion, knowledge, and lived experience, Renée continues to inspire women to choose healing over fear, authenticity over perfection, and purpose over limitations.

She often shares three meaningful reminders that reflect her philosophy:

"Your body is your message."
"Your face is your business card."
"Your smile is your key."

To experience her work for yourself, you can join the Smile Revolution for free at 4magicmoves.com.

Above all, Renée Ambarees believes that no matter how difficult life has been, transformation is always possible. Her journey reminds us that our greatest challenges can become our greatest strength, and that with courage, hope, and self-belief, a new beginning is always within reach.

Her message to every woman is beautifully simple:

"Anything is possible — also for you."

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