



Wamatangi's ECDE Feeding Program Transforms Early Childhood Learning In Kiambu

In a decisive effort to combat child hunger and strengthen early childhood education, Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi has launched a county-wide school feeding program that is transforming the lives of thousands of young learners. Under the banner "Maziwa Freshi na Wamatangi", the county now provides fortified porridge every morning, eggs twice a week, and a packet of milk every Thursday Page 12

NAIROBI INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL CONFERENCE, 10TH ANNIVERSARY ROADSHOW
Gala Dinner
 WHERE: TWO RIVERS MALL - NAIROBI
 WHEN: 17-21ST SEPTEMBER 2025

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News>> Uhuru, Bishops Called To Convene Agikūyū Conclave

P. 8. An Industrialist cum politician has urged former President Uhuru Kenyatta and a section of religious leaders to call for a Kikuyu consultative meeting to chart a way forward over several issues affecting them.



News>> Waiguru: Setting Up Of Sagana Industrial Park Taking Shape With Project At 85% Completion

P. 10. Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru says the setting up of the proposed Sagana Industrial park is taking shape with the construction of County Aggregation and Industrial Park (CAIP) and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) now at 85 percent completion.

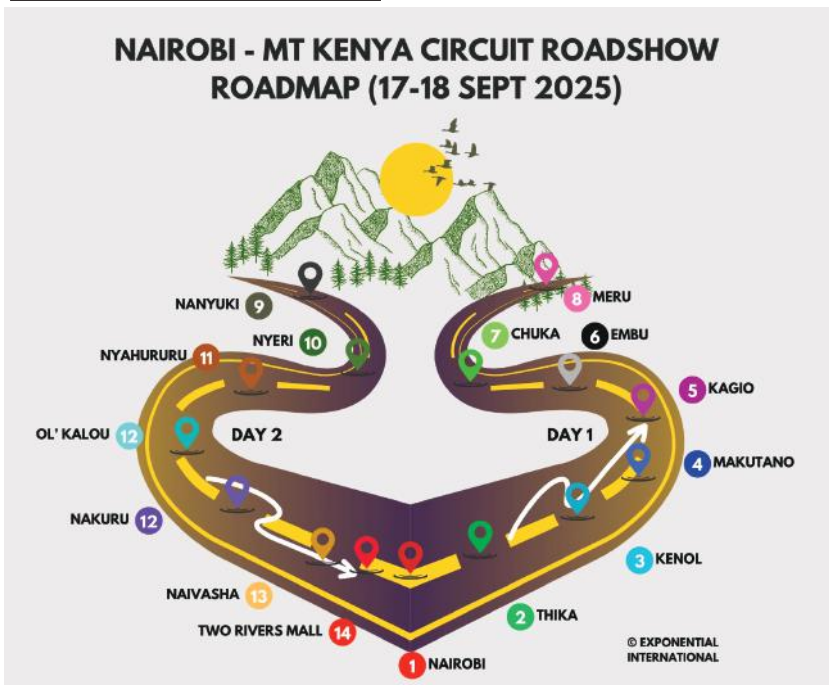
Kenya And Uganda Deepen Ties

Kenya has signed eight agreements with Uganda to boost bilateral cooperation during President Yoweri Museveni's official visit. Speaking at State House Nairobi after witnessing the signing of the memorandum of understanding with President Museveni yesterday, President William Ruto said the new agreements will build on 17 existing agreements and will strengthen ties between the two countries and drive economic development.



President William Ruto and his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni.

STORY ON PAGE 9



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Deputy President Kithure Kindiki Hosts Meru Grassroot Leaders

By: MKT Reporter
 @themkenyatimes

Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures

Deputy President Prof. Kithure Kindiki yesterday hosted grassroot leaders from Meru County. The DP hosted more than 3,500 leaders at Mukothima in his home county of Tharaka Nithi. They included the leadership of farmer groups, women groups and community based groups from all the 9 constituencies in Meru county. In his address to the leaders, the DP noted that during the last three years, the government has carried out an impressive fertilizer subsidy program and implemented measures that have resulted to better returns for farmers of tea, coffee, milk and other agricultural value chains.

“The nationwide programme to construct fresh produce markets, affordable housing and hostels for higher education institution students is not just for the modernization of the built environment but is one of the job creation opportunities, supplementing the climate work kazi mtaani, international labour mobility and digital jobs programmes,” the Second-in-Command noted.

The leaders took the opportunity to highlight various issues that the government needs to adjust to enhance service delivery and create a more inclusive economy with expanded job and income opportunities for the largest possible number of the people of Kenya.



Editor's Desk



The Mt. Kenya Times

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The government has launched the Persons with Disabilities National Policy 2024, a landmark step aimed at fostering equity, inclusion, and social justice for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Principal Secretary for Social Protection and Senior Citizens Affairs, Joseph Motari, led the launch, calling for genuine empowerment beyond tokenism and highlighting reforms such as enhanced cash transfers, vocational training, and assistive device provision. The policy, backed by the forthcoming Persons with Disabilities Act 2025, emphasises data-driven planning, inter-ministerial collaboration, and inclusive infrastructure.



The government has unveiled the Kenya Industrial Wood Sector Vision, a bold blueprint positioning forestry as a catalyst for green industrialisation, climate resilience, and job creation. Launched by Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Deborah Barasa, the plan aims to create 85,000 full-time jobs and unlock Sh13.9 trillion in GDP by 2050 through commercial forestry and agroforestry. Principal Secretary Gitonga Mugambi highlighted the sector's untapped economic potential and called for unified stakeholder action. Backed by UK PACT, Gatsby Africa, and other partners, the initiative aligns with national development goals and sets the stage for forestry-led economic transformation.



Moi University and Sweden's Linköping University have teamed up with the Uasin Gishu County government in a landmark initiative aimed at strengthening responses to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child protection. The partnership will focus on policy development, institutional capacity building, and integrated support systems for survivors, especially in vulnerable communities. The collaboration was launched during a stakeholder meeting led by Prof. Laura Korhonen of Linköping University and Dr. Risper Tororey, Professor of Psychiatry at Linköping University and Dr. Risper Tororey of Moi University. The team also toured the Eldoret Children Rescue Centre, where they assessed ongoing programmes. According to the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Education, Vocational Training, Gender, Social Protection and Culture, Eng. Lucy Ngendo, this initiative marks a turning point in the fight against GBV and child exploitation.



The Ministry of Education has cautioned schools against taking legal action over sports-related disputes, urging them instead to use internal resolution mechanisms. Speaking during the opening of the National Secondary School Games in Kakamega, Director General Elyas Abdi stressed the importance of following structured grievance channels from sub-county to national levels to maintain fairness and avoid unnecessary expenditure. Abdi also reiterated the importance of verifying student-athletes through the Kenya Education Management Information System (KEMIS) to uphold integrity and fairness in school competitions. He affirmed that only students aged 19 and below are eligible to participate in line with global best practices. Over 5,300 students and 1,000 officials are participating in this year's games, which Abdi described as crucial for talent development and national growth.



Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Human Capital Development, and Special Programmes, Geoffrey Ruku, has reiterated the government's commitment to deepening ties with Israel particularly in the areas of technology, innovation, and youth enterprise. Speaking during a breakfast meeting hosted by the Israeli Embassy and the East Africa-Israel Chamber of Commerce, CS Ruku hailed Israel as a global leader in innovation and startups, describing it as a model Kenya and the East African region could emulate to unlock economic opportunities for young people. "We want to make Kenya and East Africa a startup nation. Kenya is already leading in Africa in terms of startup investments, but there's more we can learn and do-especially by leveraging Israeli innovations and partnerships," said CS Ruku. Present at the launch was the Israeli Ambassador to Kenya Michael Lotem, among other dignitaries. The Public Service CS appreciated Israel's achievements in technology and entrepreneurship which he insisted must be infused into Kenya's economic development plans. "We are committed to building a very cordial relationship between the people of Kenya and the people of Israel. If you're looking for a friend of Israel in the Government of Kenya, then you have one in me," CS Ruku said. CS Ruku also highlighted the urgency of creating jobs for Kenya's youthful population, noting that the average age in the country is just 22 years. With millions of young people entering the job market each year, he emphasized that international trade missions, innovation exchanges, and joint ventures like the East Africa-Israel Chamber of Commerce could play a vital role in closing the employment gap. "We must support young people to build businesses and create an environment where startups can thrive. This Chamber can be a powerful platform for investment, innovation, and job creation," he said. CS Ruku expressed unwavering support for the State of Israel, saying the Government of Kenya remains committed to strong diplomatic and economic relations despite global tensions. "In Kenya, you are at home. We stand with the people and government of Israel, and we look forward to even deeper cooperation for mutual benefit," he noted.

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THEME: "Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for sustainable Economic Growth"

Kenya Will Never Abandon Its People Abroad, Says Mudavadi

By: OPCS Press Service
@themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- Mudavadi said that the release of Mr. Muniyako's repatriation follows a complex and sustained diplomatic intervention involving the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, the Presidency, and international partners.
- When the government received the communication on Mr. Muniyako's death sentence, Dr. Mudavadi wrote to the Saudi Foreign Minister and appealed for clemency.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has said that the government will continue to protect Kenyans living and working abroad, affirming that "Kenya will never abandon its people."

Speaking when he hosted Mr. Stephen Muniyako, a Kenyan who had been on death row in Saudi Arabia for 14 years, Mudavadi said that the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not to judge whether one was guilty or not, but to continue to help.

"Kenya will never abandon its people, the government's unwavering commitment is to protect Kenyans living and working abroad, we do not judge them when they have challenges, our role is to ensure they get maximum help," said Mudavadi.

Mudavadi said that the release of Mr. Muniyako's repatriation follows a complex and sustained diplomatic intervention involving the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, the Presidency, and international partners.

When the government received the communication on Mr. Muniyako's death sentence, Dr. Mudavadi wrote to the Saudi Foreign Minister and appealed for clemency.

"This intervention led to a postponement of the execution, initially set for May 15, to allow negotiations over the blood money demanded by the deceased's family. H.E President Ruto also intervened by speaking directly with Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, ruler of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, requesting a delay in the execution as Kenya pursued the matter diplomatically," said Mudavadi.

Therefore, Mr. Muniyako's release is the culmination of months of high-level diplomatic engagement between



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi addressing journalists yesterday..

Nairobi and Riyadh, underscoring Kenya's commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of its citizens abroad.

Mr. Muniyako's death sentence was deferred after the family of the deceased accepted diyya (blood money) amounting to approximately KSh129 million, paving the way for his release. The Prime Cabinet Secretary also commended the efforts of Muniyako's family, the Kenyan diaspora community, the Muslim World League, and civil society actors who helped raise the necessary Diyya (blood money) to secure his release.

Mudavadi said 1000 Kenyans were facing different charges across the world, and the government at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and through the embassies were following up on their matters, like those of Mr. Muniyako.

The PCS said the matter of Muniyako's release had been noted in the cabinet meeting on Tuesday, and the

president was happy with the development.

He asked Muniyako to consider writing his memoirs of his moments of incarceration. "This is not fiction, it is real, and you are now home. You need to consider documenting the miraculous journey of your life," said Mudavadi.

The PCS thanked the family of Muniyako, who accompanied them, for not despairing during the 14 years of uncertainty.

"The fact that you did not despair is a miracle in itself. Your kind of resilience is hard to come by. The support of the family is encouraging," said Mudavadi.

Mudavadi acknowledged the assistance of the Muslim community and particularly the World Muslim League for paying the diyya that occasioned the release of Muniyako.

"I also thank the media for keeping the flame alive. We are all happy that

we remain committed to help each other," said Mudavadi.

Muniyako thanked the government and the Muslim community for the support they gave towards his release.

"For the Kenyans who stood with me, and contributed their money for my release and their prayers, I cannot repay you but simply say thank you," said Muniyako.

The chairman of the 'Bring Stevo Back' strategy committee, Mr. Joseph Odindo, thanked the government and the Muslim community for their support in the release of Muniyako.

"We are grateful to the President, Prime Cabinet Secretary, and all the government officials and the Muslim community for making our plea successful," said Mr. Odindo.

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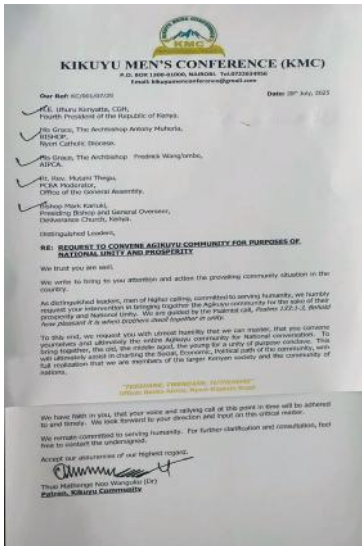
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Uhuru, Bishops Called To Convene Agikuyù Conclave

Kikuyu Community Patron, Dr Thuo Mathenge Has Also Called On President William Ruto To Address The Ever Rising Cost Of Electricity Saying It Is Hurting The Economy Due To High Cost Of Production

By: MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes



Dr Thuo Mathenge when he appeared on Inooro TV on Tuesday night.

An Industrialist cum politician has urged former President Uhuru Kenyatta and a section of religious leaders to call for a Kikuyu consultative meeting to chart a way forward over several issues affecting them.

Dr Thuo Mathenge who is the community's Patron has written a letter to the retired president alongside Archbishop Anthony Muehria of the Nyeri Catholic Archdiocese, Bishop Frederick Wang'ombe of AIPCA, Bishop Mutahi Thigu, PCEA Moderator and Bishop Mark Kariuki of Deliverance Church imploring upon them to urgently convene a meeting for young, middle and old leaders from the most populous community in the country.

The letter dated, July 28 reads in part, ".....to bring together, the old, the middle aged, the young for a unity of purpose conclave. This will ultimately assist in charting the social, economic, political path of the community."

On Tuesday night while appearing on Inooro TV show, Dr Mathenge disclosed that the letter writing issue was promoted by a meeting he held in Eldoret last week.

He noted that the Eldoret meeting was attended by the calibre of leaders he has urged the former president and religious leaders to invite.

The Eldoret meeting, he said was attended by representatives from the Rift Valley and Western regions and supported the community conclave

comprising leaders living in different parts of the country.

During the meeting, leaders will chart the way forward in a bid to forge a united front. He said it was a pity that community leaders were raising against each other for no apparent reason.

At the same time, Dr Mathenge decried the high cost of power where

he urged President Ruto to tame the trend.

He noted that the increase in electricity was the major cause of cost of production for most commodities and increase in prices.

Some firms, Dr Mathenge noted had been forced to relocate to other countries with the ultimate result being loss of the much needed jobs.

Dr Mathenge who is also The New

Democrats (TBD) party leader said the campaign mood created by some politicians was detrimental to the economic progression of the country.

The politicking mood, he noted was partly to blame for the violent incidents being witnessed in parts of the country where some politicians from the opposition camp are targeted.

Kiambu Schools Embrace Solar Power For Sustainable Learning

By: Felix Njenga
@themtkenyatimes

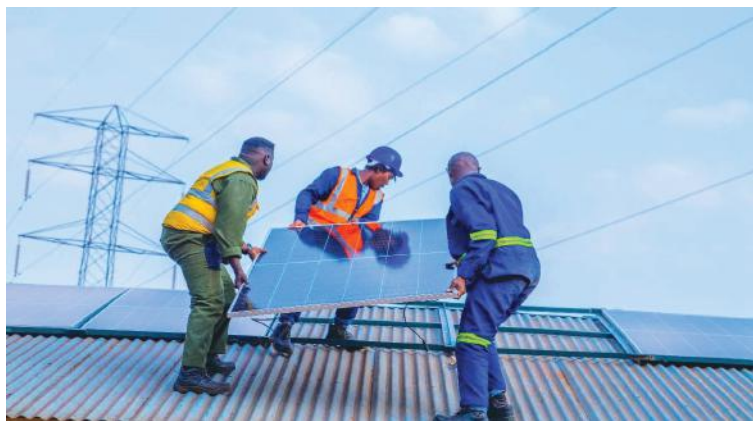
Riabai Primary School is the latest beneficiary of a groundbreaking solar energy initiative in Kiambu Constituency, marking a significant stride towards environmental sustainability and improved educational infrastructure.

This ambitious project, championed by Kiambu MP Machua Waihaka through the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF), is transforming public learning institutions into self-sufficient clean energy hubs.

The ongoing solar installation at Riabai Primary features a robust 12kWp inverter and a 20kWh Energy Storage System (ESS). Once complete, the school will operate entirely off-grid, eliminating its reliance on the national electricity grid.

This bold shift is set to drastically reduce monthly utility costs and end the disruptive power outages that have long plagued learning.

"This is more than just energy, this is



empowerment. This is progress. This is Kiambu Rising," Machua stated, underscoring the broader impact of the initiative.

Riabai Primary joins a growing list of schools that have already transitioned to solar power, including Ting'ang'a Primary School, HGM Ting'ang'a Secondary, St. Peter's Ndumberi, and ACK St. Joseph Riabai.

The legislator emphasized the long-term benefits of these installations. "With every panel we install, we are reducing our carbon footprint, preserving our environment, and ensuring our children have uninterrupted access to learning," he explained.

"Solar lighting means cleaner air, lower emissions, and greater energy independence."

The solar system at Riabai Primary is designed to meet all the institution's energy needs, powering classrooms, administrative offices, and essential equipment without relying on fossil fuels. This ensures a cleaner, safer, and more reliable learning environment.

Teachers and parents at Riabai have warmly welcomed the project.

Nancy Wambui, a teacher at the school, noted its profound significance "This means our children will no longer struggle with poor lighting



or unexpected power outages. It's a huge boost to their education."

Beyond the direct educational benefits, the solar program aligns seamlessly with Kenya's national climate goals and global commitments to clean energy. Environmental experts highlight that switching to solar in schools reduces dependence on fossil fuels, helps conserve water resources, and supports biodiversity.

"This is climate action at the grassroots," observed environmental analyst David Muriuki. "When local communities start adopting clean energy, the ripple effect is massive — economically, socially, and ecologi-

cally."

As more installations are rolled out across the constituency, Machua has reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to positioning Kiambu as a model for sustainable development.

"Every child deserves a learning environment powered by hope, not darkness. And every school deserves the tools to succeed without harming our planet," he asserted.

With solar power illuminating the path forward, Riabai Primary is not just embracing new technology, it is setting a powerful example for a future where learning and sustainability progress hand in hand.

Kenya And Uganda Deepen Ties With Eight New Agreements

By: MKT Reporter
 @themkenyatimes



President William Ruto introducing his deputy Kithure Kindiki, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and Nairobi City County Governor Johnson Sakaja to President Yoweri Museveni. Photos/Courtesy..

Worth Noting:

- The MoUs cover key sectors such as tourism, development of the Greater Busia Metro, mining, fisheries, and agriculture. Other agreements are in livestock, transport, standards and quality assurance, and investment promotion.

- “We are united in our commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation and delivering shared prosperity, while working together towards a stronger and integrated region,” he said.

- President Ruto explained that the MoU on transport and logistics is aimed at modernising transport systems and improving the movement of people and goods.

- He briefed President Museveni on the planned extension of the Standard Gauge Railway from Naivasha to Malaba and into Uganda, as well as the dualling of the Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit road, which is also expected to reach Malaba and continue into Uganda.

Kenya has signed eight agreements with Uganda to boost bilateral cooperation during President Yoweri Museveni’s official visit.

Speaking at State House Nairobi after witnessing the signing of the memorandum of understanding with President Museveni yesterday, President William Ruto said the new agreements will build on 17 existing agreements and will strengthen ties between the two countries and drive economic development.

He noted that the agreements will foster people-to-people ties and ensure that the relationship between the two countries provides real benefits for both nations.

The MoUs cover key sectors such as tourism, development of the Greater Busia Metro, mining, fisheries, and agriculture. Other agreements are in livestock, transport, standards and quality assurance, and investment promotion.

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“The MoU we have just signed provides a strong framework to support that cooperation,” he said.

On standards and quality assurance, the President said the agreement would strengthen collaboration between the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

“The aim is to enhance trade and eliminate illicit or sub-standard goods in both countries,” he said.

President Ruto added that the MoU on agriculture and livestock will deepen cooperation in veterinary services and crop health, supporting food security in the region.

The agreement on fisheries, he explained, will help the two nations tap into the potential of the blue economy.

The President explained that the MoU supporting the Greater Busia Metro Project will enable the imple-

mentation of joint infrastructure and development programmes in Busia on both sides of the border.

The MoU on mining will promote responsible mineral exploitation, build institutional capacity, and tackle cross-border smuggling of minerals, while the tourism agreement will promote joint marketing, cultural exchange, and eco-tourism.

President Ruto also said both governments were addressing cross-border challenges related to shared resources, including the Migingo fishing issue.

“We also acknowledged the ongoing negotiations on other important instruments, notably a Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement, which we hope to finalise soon,” he said.

On trade, the President raised concerns over persistent non-tariff barriers that disrupt the flow of goods and undermine the goals of regional integration under the East African Community (EAC).

“We emphasised the need for a principled, practical, and time-bound resolution of these barriers, given their direct impact on livelihoods, particularly for farmers and small traders,” he said.

He noted that the upcoming Joint Ministerial Commission Mid-Term

Review and the Joint Trade Committee meeting in October 2025 will be critical in addressing these challenges.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen regional institutions and advance East African Community objectives, including the Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and, ultimately, Political Federation.

President Ruto also announced a major industrial initiative between the two countries.

“Kenya and Uganda have agreed to establish the largest steel factory in the region. This joint project will reduce our reliance on steel imports and allow us to produce for export,” he said.

On his part, President Museveni called on East Africa and the wider African continent to consolidate markets and strengthen local production capacity.

He noted that the United States became prosperous because of creating a large market, making trade easier and more efficient.

President Museveni also reaffirmed Uganda’s commitment to resolving the Migingo fishing issue.

Waiguru: Setting Up Of Sagana Industrial Park Taking Shape With Project At 85% Completion

By: MKT Correspondent
 @themtkenyatimes

Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru says the setting up of the proposed Sagana Industrial park is taking shape with the construction of County Aggregation and Industrial Park (CAIP) and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) now at 85 percent completion.

Waiguru said construction of warehouses, cold rooms and other infrastructures at the facility are going on smoothly within the set timelines.

Speaking during project inspection tour on Tuesday, Waiguru added that 18 investors shortlisted to set up factories at the industrial park are roaring to go once all the infrastructure at the facility are in place.

She said the high-value investors will put up agro-processing and manufacturing factories at the park.

“This project is a game-changer for Kirinyaga, we are not only creating infrastructure but unlocking value chains for our farmers and generating sustainable employment opportunities for our young people,” she said.

She noted that the customs controlled



Sagana Industrial Park



Governor Ann Waiguru with other officials and stakeholders

area has already been fully fenced with the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) advancing on steadily.

“One warehouse is at 95%, while the others are at around 80%, only awaiting floor casting and wall finishes,” she explained, adding that the county has committed funds to build two additional warehouses to expand the park’s capacity.

Waiguru said the shortlisted investors will set up industries dealing in the processing and manufacturing of

goods for export, especially agricultural, leather and textiles.

The facility is also in the process of getting the necessary amenities like water, road network, security and electricity connection.

Sagana Industrial Park will be the first climate smart agro industrial city in central region, promoting agro processing and manufacturing and will be source of employment to many of the county residents.

The County plan to advertise for

lease of land and warehouses at the park.

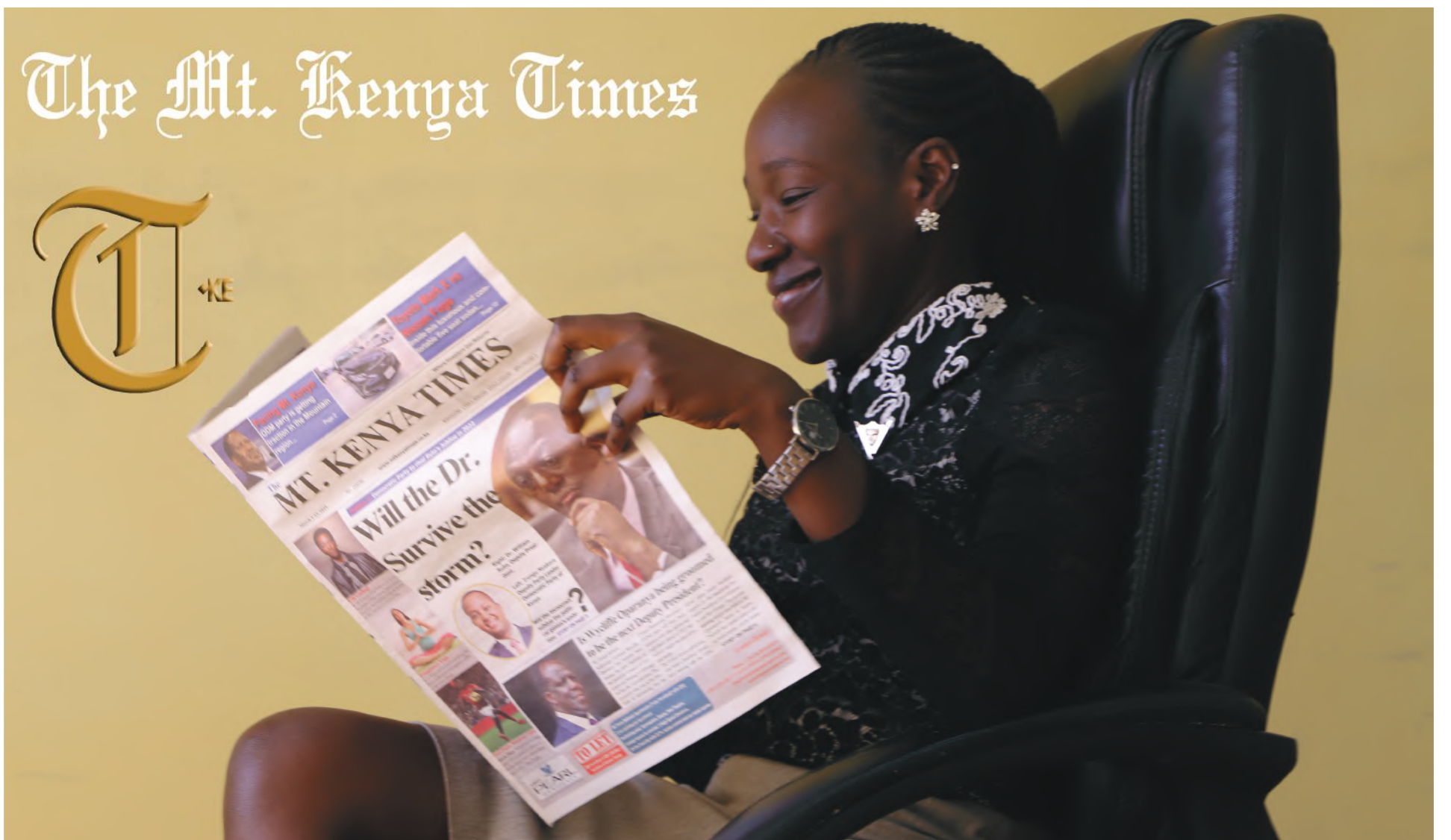
“We are positioning Sagana to become a key industrial hub in the region,” she stated. This development is projected to create more than 5,000 direct and indirect job opportunities for Kirinyaga residents,” he said.

Governor Waiguru also highlighted the broader vision behind the project, which aligns with the national Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

“This is how we bring BETA to life—by investing in real infrastructure that supports production, value addition, and access to markets,” she added.

The inspection tour also included ongoing flood mitigation efforts through the construction of dykes to protect the park from seasonal flooding.

“We are ensuring that this facility is not only functional but resilient. Every detail is being considered to make it sustainable in the long run,” she added.



Quell Political Temperatures And Go Slow On Taxes To Promote Investments, Realtors Urge Government

By: John Kamau
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- Peter Mbugua, the CEO of Gredico Properties Africa Ltd, expressed concern that if the situation persists, the real estate market will continue to face severe challenges.
- Speaking during a press briefing in Thika Town, Kiambu County, Mbugua urged political leaders to tone down rhetoric and engage in constructive dialogue to restore investor confidence.
- He further encouraged Kenyans to view the current climate as an opportunity rather than a setback.
- The realtors also urged the government to go slow on tax hikes so as to promote investments in the country and enable Kenyans to own properties and homes.
- Most Kenyans, according to the sector players, are unable to raise resources to purchase land or homes due to a raft of taxes introduced by the Kenya Kwanza administration, thereby increasing housing deficit in the country.



Gredico Properties Africa Ltd CEO Peter Mbugua speaking during a presser in Thika Town.

The government has been urged to urgently lower political tensions in the country to avert a looming crisis in the investment sector.

Industry players warn that continued political instability is discouraging potential investors and threatening the livelihoods of millions of Kenyans who depend on real estate and related sectors.

According to real estate stakeholders, the heightened political climate has created uncertainty among Kenyans, prompting many to delay or suspend planned investments in property.

The slowdown, they say, has significantly reduced business activity in the sector, which is a key driver of the economy.

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Mbugua reiterated that the many taxes, including taxation on construction materials and deductions from payslips have significantly reduced Kenyans' purchasing power and dealt a huge blow to investments.

The CEO quipped that increased taxation in the sector has undermined investments in the country which has in turn caused ripple effects in the economy.

He singled out the recent increment of stamp duty in municipalities close to urban areas from 2 percent to 4 percent which has seen prices of land and houses in the urban setups skyrocket thereby making it difficult for ordinary Kenyans to own homes.

"The government should be considerate of the current economic situation in the country before introducing more taxes that will scare away investors who are pivotal in turning around the country's economy," he said.

The realtor also called on both the National and County Governments to focus on implementing infrastructure projects including roads, water and

electricity installation even in remote parts of the country so as to open up regions for settlement and investments.

"Most Kenyans have bought property but they are yet to develop them or settle due to lack of requisite infrastructure. This is what the Government should focus on, to enable Kenyans to settle in their own homes. It will solve about 80 percent of the housing problems the country is facing," he noted.

While noting that the real estate sector is the backbone of the country's developments, Mbugua called on the government to come up with laws and policies that will create an enabling environment for the sector.

He quipped that the sector contributes significantly to the country's economic basket as well as creating numerous job opportunities for Kenyans and especially the youth.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Joseph Kamau, the CEO of Monjos Real Estate Ltd, who reiterated that the Real Estate Sector played a pivotal role to the increment of diaspora remittance last year noting that most Kenyans working and living abroad have embraced investments in the sector.

The remittance increased by 17.2 percent to 3.639 Billion USD from 3.106 billion USD for a similar period last year.

Investors led by Phillip Kagichu and

Angelina Phaltang echoed the sentiments saying that the government should create a conducive environment that'll enable Kenyans in the country and abroad to invest in the country and contribute towards the nation's economic growth.

Kagichu, a medic working in the US, bought a home for his mother who has been living under poor conditions in one of the informal settlements in Nairobi.

He at the same time called on Kenyans planning to invest in land or homes to do proper due diligence before investing their hard earned money to avoid falling prey to criminals purporting to sell land.

Kagichu averred that Kenyans have lost billions of shillings to unscrupulous individuals and land buying firms in fake land deals, adding that he was once a victim of the culprits.

"It is important to conduct background searches and doing thorough investigations before investing your hard earned money. Innocent people, and especially those working abroad, have lost their money to corrupt firms," he said.

He urged Kenyans not to be in a hurry but take time conducting searches, companies' profiles and track records before investing their resources.

Wamatangi's ECDE Feeding Program Transforms Early Childhood Learning In Kiambu

By: Felix Njenga
 @themkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- “My daughter is more active, she never wants to miss school anymore,” shared Mary Wanjiru, a parent from Githunguri. “She talks about the porridge every day. I’ve also noticed she’s more alert even at home.”
- Governor Wamatangi says the initiative was designed with a dual purpose: to nourish children and create a better learning environment. “The meal plan addresses the nutritional needs of our young learners, reinforcing the importance of balanced diets for their growth and cognitive development,” he stated.
- Experts back the move. County Executive Committee Member for Health, Dr. Elias Maina, emphasized that early nutrition is vital for long-term health outcomes. “Proper nutrition in early childhood is key for brain development, physical growth, and immunity,” Dr. Maina said. “This program is not just feeding children it’s securing their future.”

In a decisive effort to combat child hunger and strengthen early childhood education, Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi has launched a county-wide school feeding program that is transforming the lives of thousands of young learners.

Under the banner “Maziwa Freshina Wamatangi”, the county now provides fortified porridge every morning, eggs twice a week, and a packet of milk every Thursday to more than 39,000 children enrolled in all 524 public Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centres across Kiambu.

Since its rollout, the program has had a profound impact—ECDE enrolment has surged from 32,000 to over 39,000 learners in just one year. Parents and teachers alike are noticing the difference.

“My daughter is more active, she never wants to miss school anymore,” shared Mary Wanjiru, a parent from Githunguri. “She talks about the porridge every day. I’ve also noticed she’s more alert even at home.”

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In line with this, the Kiambu County Government has embedded the feeding initiative into a proposed ECDE Bill currently under review in the County Assembly. If passed, the legislation will legally mandate the provision of daily porridge, eggs, and milk to all ECDE learners public and private ensuring the program’s sustainability beyond the current administration.

The ripple effects of the program are being felt well beyond the classroom. The county is sourcing porridge flour from local millers and buying eggs from women farmers located near ECDE centers. This local sourcing model not only maintains food quality and affordability but also boosts local economies and empowers small-holder producers.

Teachers report a noticeable differ-

ence in class performance and attendance. “We’ve seen less fatigue, more focus, and better class participation,” said Esther Nyambura, an ECDE teacher in Lari. “The children are motivated to come to school, and they stay attentive longer.”

Strict guidelines have been put in place to ensure the safety and nutritional balance of the meals, with nutritionists working closely with the county to design child-friendly menus. The initiative is a coordinated effort involving the county government, healthcare providers, educators, and parents.

Backed by global data from organizations like the World Bank and World Food Programme, school feeding programs are known to reduce dropout rates, boost school attendance, and improve overall learning outcomes, particularly in low-income settings. When these programs are locally sourced, they also contribute to rural development and food security.

Governor Wamatangi’s administration is also investing heavily in ECDE infrastructure. So far, 109 modern ECDE centres have been equipped and another 130 are under construction. Plans are underway to recruit additional ECDE teachers and improve their compensation in collaboration with the national government.

Ultimately, this initiative is about more than meals. It is about giving every child in Kiambu the opportunity to learn, grow, and dream regardless of their background. As the county moves forward with legal safeguards and local sourcing, Kiam-



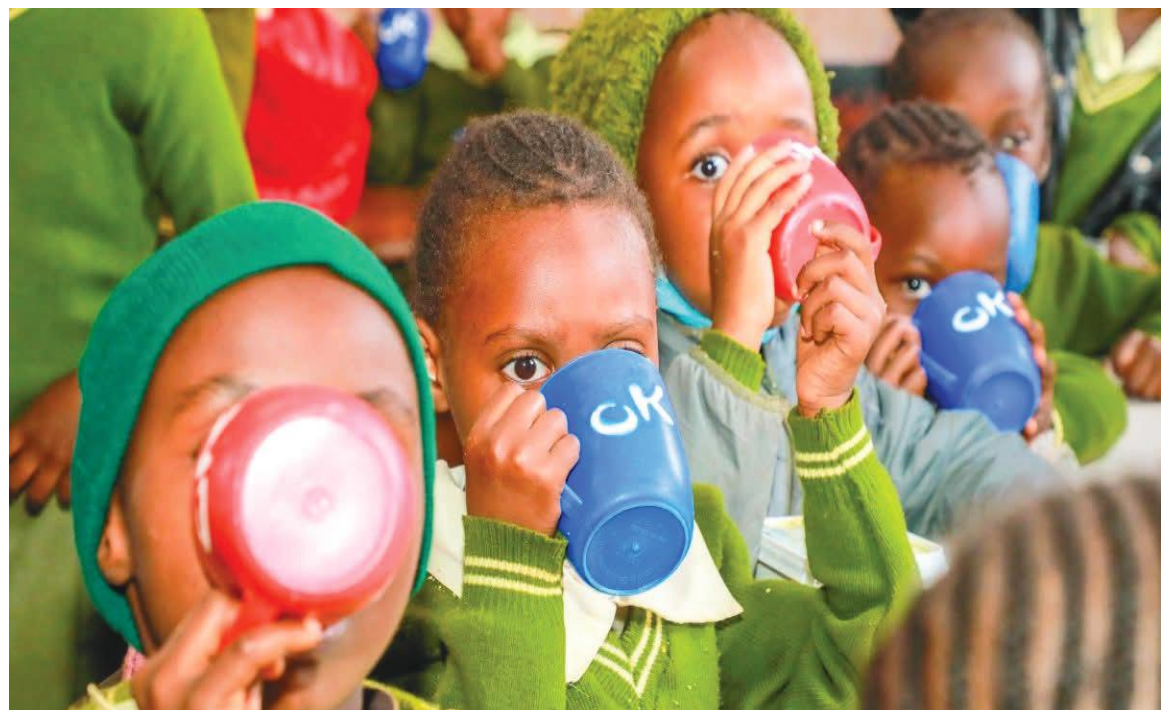
Governor Kimani Wamatangi autographing a book as pupils look on.



Governor Kimani Wamatangi serving milk to pupils.

bu’s model is gaining recognition as a blueprint for other regions in Kenya, and possibly beyond.

“We are building the foundation for a better future, one bowl of porridge at a time,” Governor Wamatangi said.



Pupils enjoying porridge.

Meru Residents Welcome Reviewing Of Fees At National Parks

By: Dennis Dibondo

@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- David Mwenda, another resident, said the reviewing of fees will help local communities near national parks as most roads will be well maintained due to high revenue.
- “I come from Kinna near Meru national park and some roads leading to the park are in a deplorable state reviewing the fees will help make them better,” Mwenda said.
- They spoke yesterday at the CDF offices, North Imenti constituency during the public participation on reviewing national park fees.
- John Wambua, KWS Senior Assistant Director Eastern conversation area, said it has been 18 years since they reviewed the fees.
- He said there is a proposal to add fees in some parks as they are too big and their roads need to be maintained, fences made and some endangered species in big parks need more wardens to protect them.

Meru residents have welcomed reviewing of fees in national parks.

Residents who attended public participation said the reviewing will enable efficiency in the parks, boost tourism as parks will have quality roads among other improvements.

The Kenya Wildlife Service is conducting public participation across the country as it aims at review fees across the national parks in an effort to boost tourism and boost its revenue.

The Kenya Wildlife Service has not reviewed the fees since 2007.

Evalyn Mukiri said she is happy for the scrapping of fees for children below five years, people living with disability and the elderly.

“Am happy that many ECDE children in our county will have access to the park free of charge as there is a proposal not to charge children below 5 years,” Mukiri said.

David Mwenda, another resident, said the reviewing of fees will help local communities near national parks as most roads will be well maintained due to high revenue.

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John Wambua Kenya Wildlife Service senior assistant director Eastern Conservation region. Photo/Dennis Dibondo.

tained, fences made and some endangered species in big parks need more wardens to protect them.

“In parks such as Meru national park that is 870 square kilometres there are roads that need to be repaired,” Wambua said.

Wambua said White and Black Rhino and other endangered species need extra wardens to protect them.

“The wardens need sophisticated weapons, vehicles to be able to tackle poachers and and those animals also need medication, sometimes we translocate animals from one park to another,” he said.

Wambua said the cost of living has increased and KWS also need to re-

view their fees to stay afloat.

“There are also the effects of climate change. When there is drought we need to get water for the wild animals hence conservation becomes more expensive,” wambua said.

He said there is a proposal to scrap park fees for children under 5 years and elderly people and people living with disability in order to encourage people to boost local tourism.

On Human Wildlife conflicts Wambua said the wardens need to respond quickly to help residents get compensation hence an increase of park fees will help.

The KWS is conducting a nationwide public participation exercise to

sensitize and gather feedback from stakeholders on proposed adjustments to park entry and conservation fees.

An impact assessment conducted prior to drafting the new regulations informed the proposed pricing model. Under the new framework, park revenues are projected to grow from KSh7.92 billion in 2024 to KSh16.58 billion by 2028, which is driven by realistic trends in visitation and spending behaviour. Importantly, the proposed changes maintain Kenya’s status as an accessible, competitive, and world-class conservation destination.



Evelyn Mukiri, a Meru resident who attended a public participation on KWS reviewing of fees to national parks yesterday. Photo/Dennis Dibondo..

Help Others Achieve Their Dreams



Help others achieve their dreams,
And yours will follow, surely
Turn disappointment into success,
By lending a helping hand,
you'll surely progress.

When we help others in need,
We find our own path to success
Happiness, joy, and peace are visible to our eyes
As we help others, our hearts are made of gold.

Put others to shame with kindness and care,
Not by becoming anger or showing hatred
Show them the power of compassion
There's a purpose in living, a reason to live
When we help others, we find our own growth

By supporting others on their journey,
We discover our own path clearly.
So let's lend a hand, offer a smile,
And help others achieve their dreams.

Brinda D
CREATIVE WRITERS
GRADUATE TEACHER,
GOVT HIGH SCHOOL,
MELPATTAMPAKKAM
CUDDALORE,
Tamilnadu India

Why Are Kids Reading Less Nowadays?



By Sabina Nafasova

read, children are unlikely to develop a reading habit. Kids learn by watching others – so when adults spend most of their free time on screens instead of with a book or newspaper, children copy that behavior. Similarly, if schools only focus on textbooks and test-related materials, students never get to experience the fun side of reading – like fiction stories, adventure novels, or comics.

What Can We Do About It?

Although this situation is worrying, there are many ways to bring back a love for reading.

Both schools and parents must work together. Schools can help by offering a wide variety of books – from classic novels to modern graphic stories, science books, mysteries, and biographies. Organizing reading hours, author visits, and fun activities like storytelling contests or reading quizzes can make reading more exciting. Libraries and book fairs should also be promoted more.

Parents, too, can make a big difference. Reading bedtime stories to younger children, giving books as birthday gifts, and having regular "family reading time" are simple ways to build a reading habit. Limiting screen time is also important – instead of hours of screen entertainment, children should be encouraged to read at least **15 to 30** minutes a day. Creating small home libraries and praising children when they finish a book can also have a positive effect.

Giving rewards – such as certificates, small gifts, or praise – for finishing books or participating in book clubs can motivate children. Many schools around the world have had success with reading challenges, where children compete in a fun and friendly way to read the most books.

In today's fast-changing and digital world, it has become clear that fewer children are reading books, newspapers, or magazines for pleasure. Compared to previous generations, many young people now spend more time on smartphones, watching videos, or playing online games instead of enjoying a good book. This is a serious issue, as reading is not only important for school success but also for developing creativity, imagination, and communication skills. In this article, I will explain some of the main causes behind this decline and suggest useful solutions.

Academic Pressure and Lack of Interest

First and foremost, many students today are under a lot of pressure to do well in school. Because of exams, homework, and deadlines, they often view reading as just another task they have to complete – not something to enjoy. They mostly read what their teachers tell them to read, which may not always match their personal interests. This makes reading feel boring and stressful.

As a result, reading for fun has slowly disappeared from their lives.

The Power of Technology and Social Media

Another major reason is the rise of digital technology. Almost every child now has access to smartphones, tablets, or computers. These devices offer instant entertainment: video games, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and other apps that are designed to grab attention quickly. Unlike books, which require focus and imagination, digital content is fast, colorful, and addictive.

Many kids say they don't have time to read – but in reality, they are spending hours online. For instance, studies in countries like the USA and UK show that even teenagers are reading much less than they did ten or twenty years ago.

Lack of Role Models and Reading Culture

A child's environment also plays a big role. If parents and older family members don't

The Painted Walls



A friend once handed me a map,
Drawn in laughter, inked with promises,
"This place," he said, "is gold beneath the dust."
Then vanished westward—on a visa's gust.

I walked through hopeful, gleaming gates,
Where smiles bloomed like morning glories,
The walls hummed dreams in warm debates,
And I believed their painted stories
For I saw the gold, or I thought I did.

But soon, beneath the polished tiles,
The air grew heavy with quiet trials,
Summoned by a voice in suit and scorn,
I stood for sins I'd never borne,
I listened rebukes and unknown condemnns.

The masks cracked on friendly faces,
Beauty peeled to bitter traces,
Whispers sharpened into knives,
Behind those desks in ordered lives,
Cause and course, I could not see,
Yet a lamb, I stood silently.

Still, I stayed rooted like a dying tree,
Drinking from dry soil quietly,
New young teachers streamed,
Some, had taught,
Letters had passed beneath the tables,
While I stitched hope with fragile cables,
I murmured, "TSC, hear my plea,"

As others rose, unnoticed me.

Summoned once, then twice again,
Accused by silence or someone's pen,
The principal's eyes, cold as frost,
Measured worth by what I'd lost,
"Too plain," he judged or worse, a threat.
Yet I refused to drown in regret.

I knelt beside my mother's breast,
Asked her to weave my name in prayer,
I stitched my dreams to morning light,
And held them through the longest night,
For I am not the child of a less God,
But one whom storms were meant to test.

Though jobless years sit like stone,
I walk a path not quite alone,
Skill is seed, and time is rain,
And justice comes through silent strain.

I know Mama still prays for me,
And with Papa's whispered legacy,
I'll rise like dust against the sun,
To claim the dream long overdue
The race not ended till it's won.

About the Author
SIMIYU S. STANFORD holds a Master of Arts in Literature in English from Mount Kenya University. He is an accomplished educator and creative writer whose work explores themes of memory, resilience and postcolonial identity. His published books include *The Ring of the Moon* (2023), *Robai Nabisino Makokha* (2023), and *Of Walls Unbroken and Other Stories* (2025). Known for his evocative use of metaphor, symbolism and cultural insight, Simiyu's writing bridges literary aesthetics with social commentary. He has mentored student writers, contributed poetry and prose to regional literary forums, and remains committed to using literature as a tool for reflection, resistance and empowerment.

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GENDER

NGEC Raises Alarm Over Girls' Education Gaps, Urges Stronger Safeguards For Learners

By: Rodgers Wagura
@themtkenyatimes



NGEC chairperson Rehema Jaldesa addressing the media at FK Resort, Nyeri.

Worth Noting:

- Drawing from the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, Jaldesa revealed that in some counties, nearly half of girls aged between 15 and 19 are either pregnant or already mothers.

- “These outcomes reflect more than personal choices. They are a consequence of underinvestment in girls’ education and limited support mechanisms for vulnerable learners,” she said.

- The Commission expressed concern that although the Ministry of Education has reaffirmed the government’s commitment to capitation funding for schools, any delays or funding gaps could amount to indirect exclusion of learners. Such scenarios would be in direct conflict with Article 53 of the Constitution, which affirms every child’s right to free and compulsory basic education.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has sounded the alarm over worsening education outcomes for girls in Kenya, particularly in marginalized regions, citing high dropout rates, early pregnancies, and increasing cases of sexual abuse within schools.

The concerns were raised by NGECC Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa during the Commission’s annual staff summit held at FK Resort, Nyeri, under the theme “Becoming Gender-Transformative: Tools, People, and Purpose.”

Jaldesa noted that the summit is part of NGECC’s broader strategy to transform internally and improve its effectiveness in delivering on its constitutional mandate. She linked the troubling trend of educational inequality to a combination of social and systemic challenges, including poverty, harmful traditional practices, and weak protective structures within schools.

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To address these issues, NGECC is planning to conduct a rapid assessment to examine school-level factors that affect girls’ education in several marginalized counties. This initiative aims to generate deeper understanding of the practical and structural barriers keeping girls out of school.

The Commission has also established a dedicated research committee focused on gender and education,

tasked with building the evidence base required to guide future interventions. This new body will work closely with education stakeholders to ensure gender equality is not just a policy goal but a lived reality in classrooms across the country.

Internally, NGECC is undergoing a process of system reviews to ensure the organization’s structures and operations reflect gender-transformative standards. Jaldesa emphasized that accountability must begin within, and the Commission is committed to setting an example through its own practices.

One of the most urgent concerns raised during the summit is the increasing number of sexual abuse and harassment cases being reported in schools. Alarming, many of these involve teachers as alleged perpetrators. “It is unacceptable that places meant for nurturing children are becoming unsafe. Protecting learners must be a shared responsibility,” Jaldesa stated, who was accompanied by commissioners and senior staff during the briefing.

In a move to address this, NGECC has

written to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), urging it to strengthen oversight on teacher conduct, enforce disciplinary measures where violations occur, improve reporting mechanisms in schools, integrate gender-based violence prevention into teacher evaluations, and enhance GBV education within the school curriculum.

Jaldesa also called for a consultative forum between NGECC and TSC to agree on long-term strategies for ensuring safety and accountability in schools. She reiterated that the Commission is ready to collaborate with all education stakeholders to create learning environments that are safe, inclusive, and respectful of every child’s rights.

The staff summit continues through the week, serving as a platform for reflection, strategic planning, and capacity-building for NGECC officers as they work toward more inclusive and equitable governance.



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Angola On Fire: A Nation's Fury Unleashed By Fuel Hikes And Decades Of Discontent



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themkenyatimes

Introduction

The streets of Angola, a nation forged in the crucible of a protracted war for independence and a devastating civil war, are once again ablaze with the fury of its people. What began as a targeted protest by taxi drivers against a sudden and steep increase in fuel prices in early July has spiraled into a nationwide movement of dissent, marked by widespread riots, deadly clashes with security forces, and a rising death toll that speaks to the deep-seated frustrations of a populace grappling with economic hardship and political stagnation. The current unrest, the most significant in years, has peeled back the veneer of post-war stability to reveal a society teetering on the edge, where the spark of a fuel price hike has ignited a conflagration of long-simmering grievances. As of late July 2025, the Angolan government has reported at least 22 fatalities, including a police officer, with nearly 200 people injured and over 1,200 arrested, painting a grim picture of a nation in turmoil.

This in-depth analysis will dissect the intricate web of factors fueling the current unrest in Angola, moving beyond the immediate trigger of the fuel price increase to explore the profound economic, political, and social currents that have converged to create this perfect storm of public anger. It will trace the timeline of the protests, examine the government's response, and situate the current crisis within the broader historical and political context of this complex southern African nation.

The Spark: A Fuel Price Hike in an Oil-Rich, Cash-Poor Nation

The immediate catalyst for the July 2025 riots was the Angolan government's decision to increase the price of fuel. This was not the first such increase, but part of a broader, ongoing strategy to phase out fuel subsidies, a policy long advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a necessary step towards fiscal consolidation and economic reform. For years, Angola, one of Africa's largest oil producers, has maintained artificially low fuel prices through hefty government subsidies. While intended to cushion the population from the volatility of global oil markets, these subsidies have placed an immense strain on the national budget, diverting resources that could otherwise be invested in critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure.

The IMF's prescription for Ango-



la's economic ailments has consistently included the removal of these subsidies to free up fiscal space and promote a more efficient allocation of resources. The Angolan government, under President João Lourenço, has been receptive to this advice, embarking on a path of gradual subsidy removal. However, the implementation of this policy has been fraught with peril, as it directly impacts the daily lives and livelihoods of ordinary Angolans in a country where the majority of the population lives in poverty.

The July 2025 fuel price hike proved to be the tipping point. The increase had an immediate and cascading effect on the cost of living. For the ubiquitous blue-and-white minibus taxis, the lifeblood of urban transport in Luanda and other cities, the higher fuel costs translated into a sharp rise in fares, placing a significant burden on commuters who rely on this mode of transport to get to work and go about their daily lives. The ripple effects were felt across the economy, as the cost of transporting goods to markets increased, leading to a spike in the prices of food and other essential commodities. For a population already struggling with an inflation rate hovering around 20% and an unemployment rate close to 30%, the fuel price increase was not just an economic inconvenience; it was an existential threat.

The initial response came from the taxi drivers, who organized a strike to protest the fare hikes. However, their demonstration of collective discontent quickly resonated with a much broader segment of the population, tapping into a deep well of public anger and frustration. The protests soon morphed from a targeted industrial action into a widespread, popular uprising, with citizens from all walks of life taking to the streets to voice their opposition to the government's economic policies and, more broadly, to the perceived indifference of the ruling elite to their suffering.

The Fuel on the Fire: A Perfect Storm of Economic, Social, and Political Grievances

To understand the intensity and scale of the current unrest, it is crucial to look beyond the immediate trigger of the fuel price hike and examine the underlying conditions that have made Angolan society so combustible. The riots of July 2025 are not an isolated event but rather the culmination of years of economic hardship, social inequality, and political disillusionment.

An Economy Hooked on Oil, A People Left Behind

Angola's economy is a paradox. It is a nation endowed with vast natural resources, particularly oil, which accounts for over 90% of its export revenues. Yet, this immense wealth

has failed to translate into a better quality of life for the majority of its citizens. The country's over-reliance on oil has made its economy highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global energy prices. When oil prices are high, the state coffers swell, but when they plummet, as they have at various points in recent years, the economy enters a tailspin.

The current global economic climate, coupled with a decline in production from Angola's maturing oil fields, has put significant pressure on the government's finances. The IMF's latest projections have revised Angola's GDP growth for 2025 downward, highlighting the precarious state of the economy. The government's economic diversification agenda, aimed at developing non-oil sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, has yet to yield significant results, leaving the country's economic fortunes tethered to the volatile oil market.

This macroeconomic instability has had a devastating impact on the lives of ordinary Angolans. The official poverty rate is projected to remain high, with around 36% of the population expected to be living in pov-

Worth Noting:

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Angola On Fire: A Nation's Fury Unleashed By Fuel Hikes And Decades Of Discontent

Contd from page 18

erty by 2026. Youth unemployment is a particularly acute problem, with a significant portion of the country's young and increasingly educated population unable to find meaningful work. This has created a generation of disillusioned and disaffected youth who see little hope for a better future under the current system. The stark contrast between the opulence of the ruling elite, who have been widely accused of enriching themselves through corruption and the mismanagement of state resources, and the daily struggles of the masses has fostered a deep sense of injustice and resentment.

The Weight of History: A Legacy of One-Party Rule and Repression

The political landscape in Angola is dominated by the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which has been in power since the country gained independence from Portugal in 1975. The MPLA's long and uninterrupted rule has created a political system characterized by a concentration of power, a lack of accountability, and a suppression of dissent.

While President João Lourenço, who came to power in 2017, initially projected himself as a reformer, promising to tackle corruption and open up the political space, many Angolans have grown disillusioned with the slow pace of change. The opposition, led by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), has been vocal in its criticism of the government's policies, but its ability to effect meaningful change has been limited by the MPLA's entrenched power.

The government's response to dissent has historically been heavy-handed. Human rights organizations have repeatedly documented the use of excessive force by security forces to break up peaceful protests. This has created a climate of fear and intimidation, where citizens are often afraid to voice their grievances for fear of reprisal. The current protests are a significant departure from this trend, as they have seen a large number of people defy the authorities and take to the streets, despite the risks. This suggests a growing sense of desperation and a willingness to challenge the status quo, even in the face of a repressive state apparatus.

The historical context of the An-

golan Civil War (1975-2002) also looms large over the current crisis. The war, which pitted the MPLA against UNITA, left a deep and lasting scar on the nation's psyche. While the end of the war brought a period of relative peace and stability, it did not resolve the underlying political and social tensions that had fueled the conflict. The MPLA's victory in the war consolidated its power, but it did not erase the grievances of those who felt marginalized and excluded from the political process. The current unrest can be seen, in part, as a continuation of these unresolved tensions, as a new generation of Angolans, who did not experience the war firsthand, are now demanding a more inclusive and democratic society.

A Nation in Flames: The Timeline and Trajectory of the July 2025 Protests

The July 2025 protests have unfolded in a series of escalating stages, beginning with peaceful demonstrations and culminating in violent clashes and widespread looting.

Early July: The government's announcement of the fuel price hike is met with immediate condemnation from various sectors of society. Taxi driver associations announce their intention to go on strike.

Mid-July: The first protests take place in Luanda and other cities. These initial demonstrations are largely peaceful, with protesters marching and chanting slogans against the government's economic policies. However, there are reports of a heavy police presence and some isolated incidents of a forceful response from security forces. Human Rights Watch accuses the police of using excessive force, including tear gas and rubber bullets, against peaceful protesters during a demonstration on July 12th.

Late July: The situation escalates dramatically as the taxi drivers' strike begins. The strike paralyzes public transport in Luanda and other urban centers, bringing economic activity to a standstill. The protests grow in size and intensity, with a broader cross-section of the population joining in. The demonstrations turn violent, with reports of protesters clashing with police, setting up roadblocks with burning tires, and looting shops and supermarkets. The government responds by deploying the army to restore order. The number of casualties and arrests rises sharply, with the government confirming 22 deaths by the end of the month.



The geographical spread of the protests is also significant. While the initial demonstrations were concentrated in the capital, Luanda, the unrest has since spread to other provinces, indicating a nationwide sense of discontent. This is a worrying development for the government, as it suggests that the grievances are not confined to a single region or demographic group but are shared by a significant portion of the population across the country.

The Government's Response: A Mix of Repression and Rhetoric

The Angolan government's response to the crisis has been a combination of a heavy-handed security crackdown and public statements aimed at calming the situation. President João Lourenço and his government have condemned the violence and looting, attributing it to "elements with criminal intentions" who have infiltrated the protests. The deployment of the army and the mass arrests of protesters are a clear signal that the government is prepared to use force to restore order.

However, the government has also acknowledged the legitimacy of some of the protesters' grievances. The Interior Minister has spoken of the need to address the social and economic challenges facing the country. There have been discussions within the government about the need for social safety nets and other measures to mitigate the impact of the fuel subsidy removal on the most vulnerable segments of the population.

The opposition, for its part, has been

critical of the government's handling of the crisis. UNITA has accused the government of being disconnected from the reality of the people's suffering and has called for a more inclusive and participatory approach to policymaking. The opposition has also condemned the use of violence against protesters and has called for an independent investigation into the killings.

The Way Forward: Navigating a Perilous Path

The current crisis in Angola is a stark reminder of the fragile nature of peace and stability in a country that is still grappling with the legacies of war and the challenges of development. The path forward is fraught with peril, and there are no easy solutions.

In the short term, the priority must be to de-escalate the violence and prevent further loss of life. This will require restraint on the part of both the security forces and the protesters. The government must ensure that the security forces act with professionalism and respect for human rights, and that those who have been arrested are afforded due process. The protesters, for their part, must find ways to express their grievances peacefully and avoid acts of violence and destruction.

In the medium to long term, the government must address the root causes of the unrest. This will require a fundamental shift in its approach to economic and social policy. The government must move beyond a narrow focus on fiscal consolidation and adopt a more inclusive and peo-

ple-centered approach to development. This means investing in job creation, particularly for the youth, strengthening social safety nets, and tackling corruption and inequality.

Meaningful political reform is also essential. The government must open up the political space, promote dialogue and inclusivity, and ensure that the voices of all Angolans are heard. This will require a willingness to engage with the opposition and civil society, and to create a more level playing field for political competition.

The international community also has a role to play. International partners, including the IMF, must be mindful of the social and political consequences of their policy recommendations. They must work with the Angolan government to design and implement reforms that are not only economically sound but also socially and politically sustainable.

The fires that have raged on the streets of Angola in July 2025 are a warning sign that cannot be ignored. They are a cry for help from a people who have been pushed to the brink. How the Angolan government and the international community respond to this cry will determine the future of this proud and resilient nation. The choice is between a path of continued conflict and instability, or a path of inclusive development, social justice, and lasting peace. The stakes could not be higher.

Reclaiming Ghana's Forests: The Devastating Impact Of Illegal Gold Mining

By: Afia Agyapomaa Ofosu
 @themtkenyatimes

Ghana's forests were once places of balance. From the northern savannahs to the southern rainforests, the land offered both beauty and function. The scent of fresh soil after rain, the shade of Wawa trees, and the harmony of birdsong under Odum and Mahogany trees shaped everyday life for nearby communities.

These forests were more than just beautiful views. They were important places for plants, animals, and farming, providing food, homes, and safety.

Forests on the Brink

Today, in many of these forests, the soundscape has changed. The canopy no longer holds birdsong. Instead, the hum of machinery, smoke from burning roots, and pools of tainted water mark their transformation.

While illegal logging has historically drained Ghana's forests—costing the country over \$100 million annually in uncollected timber revenue, according to research by Prof. Joseph Kofi Teye—illegal gold mining is altering the land more visibly and quickly.

Across six of Ghana's sixteen regions, a staggering 45 out of 288 forest reserves have been ravaged by illegal mining activities. In nine of these, the damage is absolute—ecosystems dismantled, biodiversity lost. The trees that once absorbed carbon and sheltered wildlife are gone, leaving open wounds in the land.

When these trees fall, the systems they sustained also collapse. Rivers shrink, crops wilt, and formerly temperate climates become harsh. According to the Lands and Natural Resources Ministry, 5,252 hectares of forest reserves have been lost to illegal gold mining—known locally as “galamsey.”

The Mechanics of Destruction

Illegal miners, armed with tools such as pickaxes, shovels, changfang machines, excavators, and pump machines, frequently operate in environmentally sensitive areas, including rivers and protected forests.

The process typically begins by clearing vegetation with chainsaws. Excavators then remove soil in search of gold veins. This soil is processed with mercury or cyanide—both hazardous to human and environmental

health.

Galamsy is especially rampant in the Western and Middle Belt regions of Ghana. David Nana Kudiewu-Miod, a geological mining expert with licensed firm Mohammed Brothers in Tarkwa, has witnessed this devastation firsthand. Born in Obuasi and working in Tarkwa—both gold towns—he observes that while illegal mining has long existed, it has worsened drastically in the past two decades.

“Even before the implementation of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), illegal mining was already a concern. Once a mining company, whether licensed or not, disregards the established mining protocols, its operations become illegal. Notably, approximately 70% of illegal mining activities are clandestinely backed by politicians. And the truth is, we know who they are, and they are aware that we know of their involvement.”

The Business of Galamsy

“Galamsy is no longer a haphazard affair. It's an organized illegal business, run by artisanal miners with financial backers, managers, and logistical support.”

“It's the miners who risk their lives underground in search of gold who work the hardest. Interestingly, some of these miners are educated, having completed nursing training, polytechnic, or university programs, as well as junior and senior high school certificates.”

“Their daily earnings vary depending on the samples and machinery used; the more they work, the more they earn. A group of three to four miners can earn up to 10,000 cedis, equivalent to \$1,000, in a month,” he said.

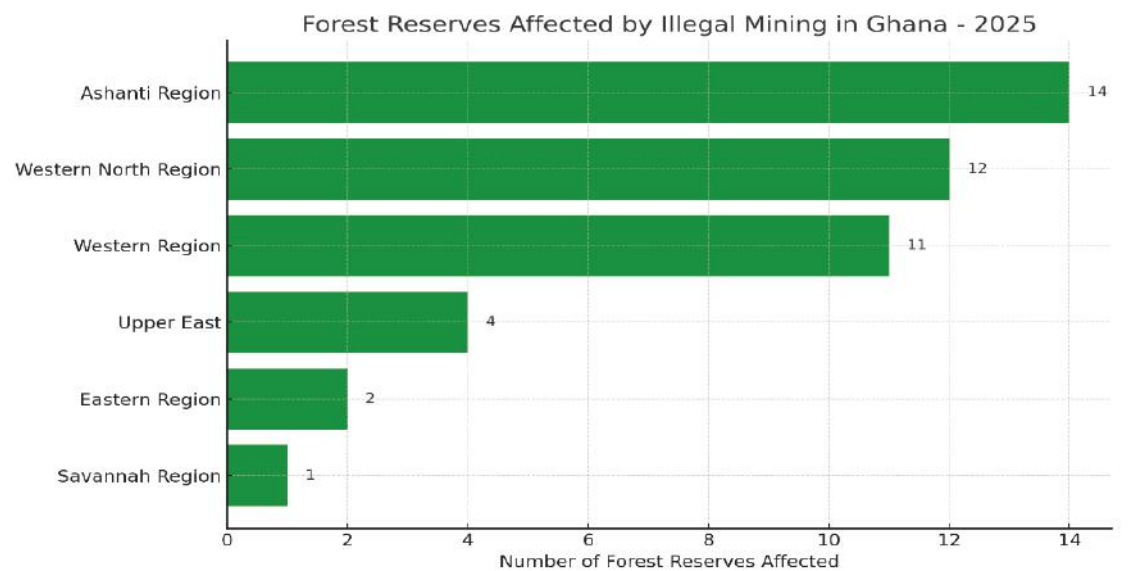
Touching on the health implications of illegal mining, Mr. Kudiewu-Miod revealed a fact: “In 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disclosed findings from a research study conducted with Newmont Mining Corporation in Tarkwa. The study sampled the blood of individuals not directly involved in mining activities, such as food sellers, hawkers, and street traders in Tarkwa. Alarmingly, the results showed higher concentrations of heavy metals, particularly mercury, in their blood.”

Women in the Shadows

Research published in 2022, titled “Gender and Labor Force Inequality in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana,” captured what life looks like for women surviving at the edges of



Part of the Neung Forest Reserve in Nsuaem, Tarkwa, ravaged by illegal gold mining (Drone Shot: Festus Randy Jackson-Davis)



Regional breakdown of affected forest reserves (Source: Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources)

galamsy.

“We wake up at 4 a.m., cook for the men, and then head to the site to pound the rocks,” said Akosua Kwakye, an ore processor in Prestea. “It's not safe, but we don't have options,” added Maame Ama from Tarkwa.

In these communities, girls sometimes leave school to sell food at mining sites. A teacher observed, “What they earn in a day is more than what their mothers earn in a week.”

Yet, the work rarely translates into real recognition. “The men don't think we belong here, so they keep the better tasks and pay for themselves,” one woman said at the Prestea site.

Another shared, “There's no rest. After working at the site, I still have to take care of the house. It's double the work, but no one sees it.”

“Some of the girls stop school be-

cause they can make fast money here. But that money doesn't last,” a food vendor explained.

Poverty, Policy, and Profit

Professor Christopher Gordon, former Director of the Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies at the University of Ghana, doesn't mince words: “We must recognize that climate change presents an opportunity for transformative change. Conversely, our current trajectory is alarming. The relentless pursuit of gold and other minerals is devastating our forest reserves, polluting our waterways, and threatening our very survival.”

“The 1.5-degree threshold is not just a number; it represents a catastrophic new reality. In Ghana, it means that by 2038, we'll no longer be able to

cultivate cocoa, our beloved cash crop. The consequences of idleness will be dire, and it's imperative that we act now to protect our forests, our livelihoods, and our future.”

Ghana's forests are on the brink of collapse, and the impact is disastrous. The landscape is now

Reclamation and Resistance

A flicker of hope emerged on April 3, 2025, when the Lands and Natural Resources Minister Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah announced at a press conference, “Through sustained joint operations, seven of these reserves have now been reclaimed from armed

Reclaiming Ghana's Forests: The Devastating Impact Of Illegal Gold Mining

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artisanal miners.”

“However, these gangs have attempted to re-enter the forests, leading to violent confrontations with the Forestry Commission, including a near-fatal assault on one of our personnel,” he said.

As the minister’s words echoed across the nation, they sparked a sense of cautious optimism. Daryl Bosu, Deputy Director of A Rocha Ghana, an NGO working to protect the environment and help communities adapt to climate change, posed a critical question: “How will reclaimed forests be secured?”

“The reclamation of the seven forest reserves seems to be a charade. As soon as the dedicated task force departs, illegal miners sneak back in, rendering it a futile game of ‘cat and mouse,’” he said.

Moreover, recovering these forests will take time. Restoration can take anywhere from 5 to 15 years, considering the scale of destruction caused by mining. “Several factors determine how long it takes, and the timeline can vary significantly,” says Mr. Bosu.

The presence of residual dormant seeds can aid regrowth, but this process is time-consuming. Initially, the landscape may look barren, but nature slowly starts to reclaim it. “In the first 1-5 years, you’ll mainly see colonizer species like grasses and cover crops.”

Whereas these plants grow, they attract birds and rodents that bring in new seeds, gradually increasing biodiversity.

Meanwhile, if left alone, progress may be slow. “If the government intervenes with targeted efforts like soil improvement, leveling, and planting specific tree species, significant vegetation growth can occur within 5 years.”

While restoration efforts can yield promising results, it’s essential to understand their limitations. “Restored forests can never replicate the ecological functions and characteristics of primary forests,” he notes.

Legislation Fuels Destruction

Today, galamsey has pervaded every aspect of Ghana’s geography. Ironically, this scourge has been perpetuated by a legislative instrument, L.I. 2462, also known as the Environmental Protection (Mining in

Forest Reserves) Regulations. Passed in 2022, this law grants the president discretionary power to approve mining activities in protected forest reserves, citing “national interest” as justification.

A Rocha Ghana remains steadfast in its call for the outright revocation of L.I. 2462. While plans are underway to amend certain sections of the law, requiring the president to obtain prior written consent from the minister responsible for lands and natural resources before approving mining in forest reserves, Daryl Bosu points out that the underlying legal framework still harbors irregularities that perpetuate the problem.

“President Mahama plans to amend the parent law, rendering LI 2462 obsolete. So, why amend it instead of repealing it outright?” Mr. Bosu asked.

As the nation held its breath on June 18, 2025, the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences issued a resounding call to action, penning an open letter to the President and Parliament of Ghana. Titled “Stop Mining In Ghana’s Forest Reserves—Repeal L.I 2462 Now,” the letter opposed the decision to amend rather than revoke the Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations, 2022 (L.I 2462).

The Academy’s President, Emerita Prof. Isabella Akyinbah Quakyi FGA, warned that L.I 2462 was a ticking time bomb, set to devastate Ghana’s protected reserves.

The letter stressed the consequences: destroyed ecosystems, polluted rivers, endangered wildlife, and harm to communities. “A forest reserve is not a mine-in-waiting,” it declared. “Forest reserves exist to protect biodiversity, ensure clean water, regulate climate, and preserve the balance of life.”

The academy argued the law was both unconstitutional and legally flawed, granting powers the minister and president did not lawfully possess.

Unified Voices for Change

Building on the momentum of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences’ open letter, the Ghana Coalition Against Galamsey (GCAG) added its voice to the growing chorus of concern on Thursday, June 19th, 2025, calling for decisive action against the plague of galamsey.

They demanded the government revoke L.I. 2462, end police complicity, and prosecute those involved. Convener Kenneth Ashigbey warned that inaction would threaten national security, saying, “If this government



Murky waters: The aftermath of illegal mining in Ghana's forest reserves (Photo Credit: Festus Randy Jackson-Davis)



A scarred, polluted landscape reveals the toll of forest degradation (Photo Credit: Festus Randy Jackson-Davis)

does not act decisively, no one is safe.”

On the other hand, David Nana Kudiewu-Miod, geological mining expert with licensed firm Mohammed Brothers in Tarkwa, stressed that decisive leadership is essential. “Ghana requires a serious and radical leader who will prioritize the nation’s interests, even if it means making tough decisions regarding friends and family members, and firmly say, ‘Enough, I’m putting a stop to this.’”

Grassroots Fightback

Beyond raising awareness, a growing movement is taking action to restore Ghana’s degraded landscapes. In the Northern Region, Alhassan Abubakari, Coordinator of GLFx Tamale, spearheads community-led restoration efforts that strengthen local women and communities to nurture sustainable shea seedlings.

“We empower farmers with cutting-edge agro-ecological practices that promote environmental conservation. Through our training, farmers gain valuable insights into proper farming techniques, the benefits of traditional and indigenous seeds, and the effective use of organic fertilizers, such as compost.”

“Additionally, they learn to harness the natural pest-control properties of neem leaves, reducing their reliance on chemical pesticides and fostering healthier, more resilient farms,” he said.

Furthermore, the Africa Afforestation Association (AAA) has launched “Operation Hope,” a bold reforestation campaign aimed at restoring 20,000 hectares of land damaged by galamsey in the Ashanti Region. The project aims to plant 1.5 million trees, reviving scarred landscapes.

Using innovative, water-saving technology like the Groasis Waterboxx, AAA is not only bringing trees back to wounded forests but also creating green jobs for women and youth in affected communities.

Similarly, the government of Ghana has introduced the Tree for Life Reforestation Initiative, a groundbreaking effort to plant 20 million trees and restore degraded landscapes, boosting Ghana’s climate resilience.

From seedlings to soil, these sustainable activities revitalize ecosystems and restore dignity to communities ravaged by galamsey, Ghana’s illegal gold mining.

Afia Agyapomaa Ofori is a science journalist with a focus on environmental and climate issues in the extractive industry.

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Sports >> *One ball, one match, and one hopeful young player at a time.

How Sports Are Steering Kisii Youth Toward a Brighter Future



By: Elizabeth Angira

One ball, one match, and one hopeful young player at a time. As Kenya continues to grapple with rising youth unemployment, drug abuse, and crime, local leaders are increasingly turning to sports as a beacon of hope. At the center of this movement is philanthropist and youth mentor Okeng'o Nyambane, whose recent donation of footballs to community youth groups is inspiring change and offering young people a chance to dream beyond the limitations of their environment.

A Passionate Appeal to the Youth

During donation of balls at Ri-odong'a grounds in Nyaribari Chache, hundreds of young people gathered not just to receive sports equipment, but also to listen to words of encouragement, motivation, and vision.

Nyambane, a respected community figure and advocate for youth empowerment, has made

an impassioned plea to the youth to embrace sports as a means of staying focused and avoiding involvement in criminal activities. "Our young people are incredibly talented. However, when they lack platforms to showcase their potential, many are lured into drugs, crime, or idleness. Sports can save lives it gives discipline, purpose, and direction," says Nyambane.

His message struck a chord with many young attendees who have long felt overlooked by both local and national leadership.

The donation included over 50 footballs distributed across youth clubs and schools in Nyaribari Chache with plans to scale the initiative to other parts of Kisii.

A Community Rallies Behind Talent

The donation event was more than a symbolic gesture it was a clarion call to leaders, parents, and the private sector to invest in youth empowerment through sports.

Local youth leader Daniel

Onsare, who helped organize the event, emphasized the importance of creating consistent sporting opportunities.

"Many of our youth here play barefoot on dusty fields. With no proper kits or balls, their talents go to waste. Today is a game-changer. We thank Nyambane for believing in us," Onsare said.

Enock Obino captain of the Ri-odong'a Youth FC says that, the donation brought tears of joy.

"We have been training with one worn-out ball shared by the other teams. This means we can now hold proper sessions and prepare for inter-village tournaments," he says, beaming with pride.

Sports as an Antidote to Crime and Drugs

Kisii, like many regions in Kenya, is witnessing drug abuse and youth gang involvement. Most cases stem from idleness and a lack of structured engagement, especially during school holidays.

Wilson Mokandu Mogire, who

attended the event, acknowledged that while law enforcement plays a role, prevention through community engagement is far more effective.

"Youths can be arrested today, but tomorrow another youth will take their place in crime. The real solution lies in keeping them busy sports is one of the best tools we have," he noted.

Mogire adds that some youth previously flagged as potential offenders have turned their lives around after joining football teams, notes that crime rates often decline during football tournaments.

"When we host youth matches, you will notice reduced loitering, fewer break-ins, and less drug peddling. That's the power of sports," Mogire explains.

Girls Also Want a Seat at the Pitch

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Sports >> *As Kenya continues to grapple with rising youth unemployment, drug abuse, and crime, local leaders are increasingly turning to sports as a beacon of hope.

How Sports Are Steering Kisii Youth Toward a Brighter Future



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While football is largely male-dominated in rural Kisii, local girls are also beginning to embrace sports as a form of empowerment.

Naomi Kemunto, 17, says she had always dreamed of playing football but lacked support and encouragement.

“Most people say girls should not play, but I love it. We also need balls and kits. I hope future donations will include us too,” she says.

Okeng’o promises that his next round of donations would prioritize inclusivity by supporting both boys and girls.

“Talent knows no gender. Girls are equally important. We will empower everyone,” he affirms, drawing applause from the crowd.

More Than Just Games its Mental Health, Too

Experts say the benefits of youth participation in sports extend

beyond physical fitness. It also improves mental well-being and resilience critical tools in navigating the pressures of adolescence.

Ruth Mogaka psychologist emphasized that structured sports reduce anxiety, stress, and depression among youth.

“The endorphins released during physical activity are natural mood boosters. Plus, being part of a team builds a sense of belonging and identity, which many youth struggle with,” Mogaka explains. She adds that some parents dismiss sports as time wasting, not realizing its psychological and academic benefits.

“Some of the best-performing students in Kisii schools are also athletes. Sports teach time management, discipline, and focus skills that translate to academics and life,” she says.

The Bigger Picture: Developing Grassroots Sports Infrastructure

While the ball donation is a welcome move, community members agree that more must be done to

develop sports infrastructure in Kisii.

Local coach Evans Nyabuto, who volunteers, highlights the lack of playing fields, proper goalposts, and coaching materials.

“We have passion, but no facilities. The county government should prioritize building modern fields and offer coaching clinics for volunteers like us,” Nyabuto says.

He urges the county to partner with private stakeholders, NGOs, and individuals like Okeng’o Nyambane to build a robust youth sports ecosystem.

Hope for the Future

For many youths in Kisii, football is more than a game it is a lifeline. A way to stay clean, stay focused, and dream big.

14-year-old Elijah Mochama, the youngest player in Riokindo United, says his dream is to play for Kenya’s national team, Harambee Stars.

“I want to be like Victor Wanyama. I know I can, but I need people to support us,” Elijah said, hugging his new ball tightly.

Youths feels a renewed sense of hope rippling through the crowd. Young people chats excitedly about forming new teams, training harder, and even organizing mini-tournaments during school breaks.

Most of the parents and guardians have changed the perception and can look proudly, perhaps for the first time realizing that the football their child chases across the field could one day chase away poverty, crime, and hopelessness from their lives.

A Call to Action

Okeng’o Nyambane’s initiative is a timely reminder that when communities come together to invest in their youth, the returns are priceless. Many are now echoing his call:

“If every leader could give just one ball, sponsor one tournament, or build one pitch imagine the lives we’d transform.”

As Kisii youth continue to dribble their way toward brighter futures, one thing is clear: the game has only just begun.

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The Mt Kenya Times



The Multifaceted Journey Of Peggy Garabekian



By: Anila Bukhari

@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- Peggy's advocacy extends beyond charity work, as she has worked closely with community organizers, city officials, and state leaders to drive impactful change at both the grassroots and legislative levels. Her role in the Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration March and Candlelight Vigil has brought global attention to the pursuit of justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide.
- Through her work, Peggy has inspired countless individuals and communities. As a testament to her dedication, she has received multiple honors, including a Certificate of Recognition from California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman and a Certificate of Commendation from Glendale City Mayor Ara Najarian. Her commitment to humanitarian values and human rights advocacy serves as a beacon of hope for a brighter, more compassionate future.

In the world of modeling, humanitarianism, and human rights advocacy, few individuals shine as brightly as Peggy Garabekian. With a career spanning over a decade, Peggy has established herself as a force to be reckoned with, leveraging her platform to drive meaningful change and uplift marginalized communities.

Early Beginnings and Pageantry

Peggy's journey in the world of pageantry began in 2015 when she was crowned Miss Armenia for Miss Asia USA. This title marked the beginning of a remarkable journey, with Peggy going on to win numerous titles, including Miss Pacific Coast 2024 and Miss Vizcaya Swimwear 2025. Her success in pageantry has not only showcased her beauty and poise but also provided a platform for her to advocate for the causes she is passionate about.

Modeling Career

As a model, Peggy has worked with top agencies and brands, gracing runways, editorials, and commercial platforms. Signed with NYMMG, she has modeled professionally since 2015, showcasing her versatility and talent in the industry. Her modeling career has taken her to new heights, with opportunities to work with renowned brands and designers.

Humanitarian Efforts

Parallel to her modeling career, Peggy's passion for advocacy shines through her longstanding humanitarian efforts. Since 2009, she has supported organizations such as Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the American Red Cross, and the Special Olympics. Her work with local shelters and foster homes has demonstrated her commitment to giving back to the community.

A Leader in Human Rights

Peggy's advocacy extends beyond charity work, as she has worked closely with community organizers, city officials, and state leaders to

drive impactful change at both the grassroots and legislative levels. Her role in the Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration March and Candlelight Vigil has brought global attention to the pursuit of justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Inspiring Change

Through her work, Peggy has inspired countless individuals and communities. As a testament to her dedication, she has received multiple honors, including a Certificate of Recognition from California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman and a Certificate of Commendation from Glendale City Mayor Ara Najarian. Her commitment to humanitarian values and human rights advocacy serves as a beacon of hope for a brighter, more compassionate future.

Global Impact

Peggy's global impact extends beyond her local community, as she supports Nadia's Initiative, founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad. The organization is committed to rebuilding the Yazidi homeland of Sinjar, Iraq, and securing long-term recovery and justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Peggy's advocacy aligns with these survivor-centered principles, helping to amplify voices that have long been silenced.

A Legacy of Compassion

Peggy Garabekian's journey is a testament to the power of compassion, dedication, and perseverance. Through her work as a model, humanitarian, and human rights advocate, she has inspired countless individuals and communities. As she continues to drive change and uplift marginalized voices, Peggy's legacy serves as a reminder that even the smallest actions can have a profound impact when fueled by passion and purpose.



Peggy Garabekian