



In Moi's footsteps: Ruto's bag of goodies to win over teachers ahead of 2027 polls

Dead lawyer's signature cited in multi-billion Embakasi Ranching land grab claims

Shareholders accuse judge of relying on disputed court papers, allege impersonation of deceased chairman and police intimidation; JSC promises to process petition as Koome advises appeal. The petition further alleges that one of the applicants is former company chairman Godfrey Muhuri Muchiri, whom the shareholders say died on May 31, 2006. They claim the court has continued handling the matter despite repeated notifications that the chairman referenced in the proceedings is deceased. They accuse Justice Ruttoh of attempting to determine the company's leadership and impose directors, undermining shareholders' statutory right to elect their representatives through established corporate processes.

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Chief Justice Martha Koome



Justice Rhoda Ruttoh



Judicial Service Commission's (JSC) response to Embakasi Ranching Company Limited shareholders' petition



The late chairman of Embakasi Ranching Company Limited, Samuel Mwangi Thuita.



Embakasi Ranching Company Limited in Ruai, Nairobi

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26 publishers to share Grade 11 textbook tender as Sh7billion debt looms



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Double tragedy for Imanyara as court upholds Karen home auction, orders Sh91.76million payment

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Fresh court petition questioning Kenya Railways chief's mandate raises governance concerns as thousands of landowners await compensation for railway project

BY TEAM

The planned Sh25 billion compensation payout to landowners affected by the construction of the Naivasha-Kisumu-Malaba Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project risks being overshadowed by a fresh legal battle over the continued stay in office of Kenya Railways Corporation Managing Director Philip Mainga.

The dispute threatens to shift attention from one of the government's major infrastructure undertakings to questions about leadership legitimacy, accountability and the legal authority under which decisions involving billions of shillings in public resources are being made.

The Informer Media Group can authoritatively reveal that a section of the Kenya Railway Board members wants a substantive MD in place before the compensation process kicks off.

Also, the fresh petition filed by the Centre for Litigation Trust in August 2026 has reopened the controversy over Mainga's tenure, days after an earlier case challenging his continued occupation of the office was withdrawn.

"The board wants a substantive Managing Director in place before the compensation process begins," our source intimated.

The new petition seeks conservatory orders barring Mainga from making further substantive decisions as managing director and chief executive until the High Court determines whether he has a valid legal mandate to

remain in office.

At the centre of the dispute is the contention that Mainga's second three-year term expired on February 2, 2026, raising questions about the legal basis of his continued exercise of executive powers.

The Centre argues that the Government Owned Enterprises Act, 2025, which took effect on December 5, 2025, introduced a statutory framework governing the appointment and tenure of chief executives of state corporations.

It wants Kenya Railways and its board to produce the documents underpinning Mainga's continued tenure, including appointment and renewal letters, board resolutions and any legal opinions relied upon to justify his stay in office.

Although the court has yet to determine the merits of the fresh petition, the dispute presents a potentially sensitive governance question for an institution overseeing a multibillion-shilling infrastructure project.

The timing is particularly significant because Kenya Railways is advancing preparations for compensation of people whose land is required for the railway's construction.

Managing Director Mainga has said the National Land Commission is conducting public participation ahead of the payouts and has granted the corporation early access to some sections of land as valuation and negotiations with affected landowners continue.

The planned compensation programme is critical to securing



Kenya Railways Corporation Managing Director Philip Mainga

Mainga tenure dispute threatens to overshadow Sh25billion SGR compensation payout

public cooperation, facilitating access to construction sites and minimising disputes that could delay the project.

Affected communities have expressed willingness to participate in the process, with residents welcoming the railway's potential to improve connectivity and open up economic opportunities across western Kenya.

The proposed railway will traverse Narok, Bomet, Nyamira, Kericho, Homa Bay and Kisumu counties, forming part of the wider Naivasha-Kisumu-Malaba SGR corridor.

Kenya Railways plans to establish logistics hubs and value-addition facilities along the route, supporting agricultural produce, livestock, tea, coffee, sugar and fish distribu-

tion. The line is also expected to strengthen links between production areas and the Port of Mombasa.

President William Ruto launched construction on March 19, 2026, with completion projected within approximately two years.

However, the leadership controversy could complicate public confidence in the management of the project if questions surrounding the chief executive's authority remain unresolved as compensation and construction decisions advance.

The petitioner argues that decisions involving procurement, contracts, expenditure and public assets could create obligations whose validity may subsequently be challenged.

MPs question AFC, Ford Foundation privileges over accountability concerns

Lawmakers demand safeguards against corruption and legal impunity as AFC targets Sh260billion investment through Nairobi office

BY NJOKI MAINA

Lawmakers have questioned proposed privileges and immunities for the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and Ford Foundation, warning that the arrangements must not undermine Kenya's sovereignty, anti-corruption efforts or legal accountability.

The National Assembly Committee on Delegated Legislation, chaired by Ainabkoi MP Samuel Chepkonga, scrutinised the proposed Privileges and Immunities (Africa Finance Corporation) Order, 2026, and the Privileges and Immunities



National Assembly Committee on Delegated Legislation chairman who also doubles as Ainabkoi MP Samuel Chepkonga.

(Ford Foundation) Order, 2026, during a meeting with Prime Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi.

Members sought clarification on the scope of the exemptions and whether Kenyan oversight institutions would retain their authority

over the two organisations.

Vice-chairperson Robert Gichimu questioned whether the privileges proposed for AFC were comparable to those granted by other countries hosting the corporation.

Chepkonga also sought justification for granting the financial institution special treatment compared with other foreign financial institutions operating in Kenya.

MP Innocent Mugabe, meanwhile, demanded assurances that the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) would retain its powers to investigate suspected corruption involving the institutions.

The committee was told that AFC would operate within a framework comparable to that governing diplomatic missions while complying with Kenyan laws.

AFC Director Fola Fagbule urged MPs to support the proposed order, saying the establishment of the corporation's

first regional office outside Lagos in Nairobi would unlock significant economic opportunities.

The corporation is targeting approximately Sh260 billion in additional investment through its Nairobi operations, potentially supporting infrastructure development, capital mobilisation and local businesses.

Mudavadi urged lawmakers to consider the strategic benefits of hosting international financial institutions as Kenya seeks to strengthen Nairobi's position as a regional financial hub.

"We are here to appeal to this Committee to keep in mind that these are opportunities that we should hold onto dearly," he said.

Fagbule also cited AFC's support for the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor, calling for infrastructure investments to generate tangible economic returns.

The committee also scrutinised the proposed Ford Foundation order, emphasising that any privileges granted must be clearly defined and consistent with Kenya's laws.

KeNHA unveils safety measures after Salma crash killed 17

BY OLIVER MUSEMBI

The Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) has announced a raft of short, medium and long-term measures to curb road accidents along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway following a grisly crash that killed 17 Catholic faithful at Salama.

KeNHA Director of Maintenance Ezekiel Fukwo said the government would improve road signage, install additional guardrails and solar lighting, and enhance lane separation to reduce accidents along the notorious stretch.

Fukwo spoke during a fact-finding visit to the scene of the October 2, 2026, accident, in which all 17 occupants of a van ferrying Catholic faithful, mostly women from the Mombasa Catholic Diocese, to Subukia Shrine in Nakuru County died.

He was accompanied by officials from KeNHA, the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), traffic police and the Road Safety Association of Kenya.

The medium-term interventions include improving road markings, delineating climbing lanes and installing reflective road studs to enhance visibility at night.

Fukwo said long-term plans involved redesigning the highway section to include concrete barriers separating opposing traffic and an emergency runaway ramp for trucks experiencing brake failure while descending.

He urged motorists and other road users to observe traffic rules, stressing that road safety required collective responsibility.

Road safety campaigners, however, called for stronger enforcement and lasting infrastructure improvements.

Road Safety Association of Kenya chairman David Kiarie said upgrading the Nairobi-Mombasa highway into a dual carriageway would offer a lasting solution to recurring fatal crashes.

He also urged NTSA and traffic police to intensify vehicle inspections, particularly for heavy trucks prone to brake failure.

Association Secretary-General John Mutisya said speed cameras alone could not detect mechanical defects, calling for stricter enforcement of vehicle safety regulations.

Meanwhile, Nairobi Catholic Archbishop David Kamau expressed sorrow over the deaths, describing the tragedy as shocking because the victims had been travelling on a religious pilgrimage.

He urged Christians to remain spiritually prepared at all times.



Government officials led by KeNHA Director of Maintenance Ezekiel Fukwo (second left) at the scene of last week's grisly road crash in Salama which claimed 17 lives. On the side is the mangled wreckage of the van in which 17 people perished last week when it collided head on with a trailer at Salama along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway. Photo by Oliver Musembi.



Education Cabinet Secretary, Julius Migos Ogamba (center) flagging off the distribution of Grade 11 textbooks and literary texts to schools across the country at KICD, Nairobi, October 6, 2026.

26 publishers to share Grade 11 textbook tender as Sh7billion debt looms

State-owned Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) emerged among the biggest beneficiaries, securing supplies for 12 subjects and one literature title. Mountain Top Publishers won eight subjects and one literature title, while East African Educational Publishers (EAEP) secured four subjects and five literary titles. Other successful publishers include Booklyst, Moran Publishers, Mentor Publishers, Oxford University Press East Africa, Longhorn Publishers, Storymoja, OnePlanet Publishers, Doritex, Magic Papers, Frontrow, Highland and Hummingbird

BY JAMES WANJIKU

Twenty-six publishers have secured contracts to supply textbooks and literary materials for Grade 11 learners in public schools, in a multibillion-shilling procurement ahead of the transition to senior school in January 2027.

The awards cover core subjects, specialised learning pathways and prescribed literature for the pioneer cohort under the Competency-Based Education (CBE) system.

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Mountain Top Publishers won eight subjects and one literature title, while East African Educational Publishers (EAEP) secured four subjects and five literary titles.

Other successful publishers include Booklyst, Moran Publishers, Mentor Publishers, Oxford University Press East Africa, Longhorn Publishers, Storymoja, OnePlanet Publishers, Doritex, Magic Papers, Frontrow, Highland and Hummingbird.

KLB will supply books for French, General Science, Music and Dance, Arabic, German, Computer Studies, Metal Work, Marine and Fisheries, Media Technology and Islamic Religious Education.

EAEP will supply English, Essential Mathematics, Chemistry and Agriculture textbooks, alongside literature titles including *The Parting Clouds* and *Voices from the Woods*. Mountain Top Publishers will supply materials for Business Studies, Christian Religious Education, Agriculture, Geography, Home Science, Wood Work and Sports and Recreation.

The procurement document does not disclose individual contract values, quantities or the total budget, despite the lucrative nature of the textbook market serving approximately one mil-

lion learners currently in Grade 10.

The distribution exercise began on October 6 and will run until October 23 before pausing for national examinations. It will resume on weekdays and continue until December 23, 2026.

Education Cabinet Secretary, Julius Migos Ogamba flagged off the distribution of Grade 11 textbooks and literary texts to schools across the country, marking a major milestone in the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

KICD Council Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu urged the Ministry of Education to provide publishers with enhanced, timely and adequate facilitation to ensure smooth delivery of the books.

He also called for accurate and complete data on schools, learner numbers and subject choices to prevent delays, oversupply or shortages.

KICD Council Chairperson, Prof. Simon Gicharu, assured stakeholders that the approved Grade 11 textbooks and literary texts had undergone a rigorous evaluation process to ensure that they meet the required curriculum goals and standards of relevance, accuracy, quality. "I have no doubt that they will immensely contribute to the process of nurturing the learners' potential and producing an Engaged, Empowered and Ethical citizen," said Prof. Gicharu.

Gicharu noted that KICD, in line with its mandate, continues to play a central role in the development, evaluation and approval of curriculum designs and support materials as the country implements CBE.

"I also urge the Ministry of

Education to supply the Institute with timely, complete and accurate data on the number of schools, number of learners and their subjects to avoid delays, oversupply and/or under-supply of textbooks," Gicharu said.

KICD Chief Executive Officer Prof Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo urged school principals to ensure staff are present to receive the deliveries.

"The distribution will continue after examinations during weekdays until December 23. Principals are urged to ensure that there will be staff present in schools to receive the books," he said.

The rollout comes amid concerns over government debts to publishers. Ong'ondo said the State owed publishers Sh9 billion as of September 1, but had paid Sh2 billion, leaving approximately Sh7 billion outstanding.

Kenya Publishers Association chairman Musyoki Muli confirmed the partial payment, saying the debt relates to earlier supplies for primary schools, junior schools and Grade 10. He said publishers were not owed money for the new Grade 11 deliveries, but warned that the outstanding bills continue to affect their operations.

Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba said the government was committed to observing distribution timelines and providing the resources required to support implementation.

KICD has also cautioned schools against using unapproved learning materials, warning that the practice is unlawful under Section 27 of the KICD Act, 2013.



KICD Council Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu speaking during the flagging off the distribution of Grade 11 textbooks and literary texts to schools across the country at KICD, Nairobi, October 6, 2026.

Schools face legal action over unapproved textbooks

BY KARISA HASSAN

Schools risk legal action for using unapproved textbooks and learning materials, with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) warning that the materials could expose learners to inaccurate and poor-quality content.

KICD Chief Executive Officer Prof Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo issued the warning as the institute launched the distribution of Grade 11 textbooks, teachers' guides and literary texts ahead of the transition to Grade 11 in January 2027.

"Today the media published the list of approved books for Grade 11. We want to inform our public: please do not use books that are not approved by the institute. It is utterly illegal," Ong'ondo said.



KICD Chief Executive Officer Prof Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo.

He said the approval process ensures learning materials align with curriculum requirements and meet quality standards, including accuracy, relevance, inclusivity, language and suitability for

teaching.

"When we use books or any other materials that are not approved by the institute, then we are not just committing a crime, but chances are that we are giving the children material that is not quality assured, and sometimes that has wrong, inaccurate content," he warned.

The institute said using unapproved materials contravenes Section 27 of the KICD Act, 2013, and is punishable by law.

Teachers and parents have been urged to consult the official approved list, known as the Orange Book, before recommending or purchasing textbooks.

Meanwhile, publishers warned of textbook piracy, accusing some head teachers of photocopying supplied books. The Kenya Publishers Association said it would work with the Kenya Copyright Board and law enforcement agencies to pursue offenders.

Nairobi County Assembly to introduce live proceedings, paperless services



Nairobi City County Assembly Clerk, Edward Gichana and Deputy Clerk, Administration Pauline Akuku following proceedings. PHOTO BY ADIERI MULAA.

Digital reforms expected to cut printing costs, improve public access and enable residents to interact with MCAs in near real time

BY ADIERI MULAA

The Nairobi City County Assembly is preparing to introduce live broadcasts of plenary proceedings and paperless digital services aimed at improving transparency, efficiency and public participation.

Assembly Clerk Edward Gichana said the ongoing digitisation programme would allow Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) to access documents and conduct House business electronically while enabling Nairobi residents to follow proceedings and engage with their representatives almost in real time.

"We are digitising the institution and we will soon be going live in the chambers, where we will not use papers," Gichana said during a media training workshop for communication officers in Mombasa.

He said the initiative would reduce expenditure on printing and stationery while easing administrative workloads.

Gichana added that Nairobi, being the country's largest county assembly, was seeking to establish standards that other county legislatures could emulate.

The planned reforms follow the example of the National Assembly and Senate, which have established platforms for public access to parliamentary proceedings.

The Clerk also underscored the importance of effective communication in legislative operations, urging media practitioners to work closely with the Assembly administration to improve information dissemination and public engagement.

He credited consultations between the Assembly and the media with helping the institution address challenges experienced since the advent of devolution in 2013.

Deputy Clerk Pauline Akuku said the Assembly was reviewing its performance during the Third Assembly, whose term began in 2022, while preparing for the transition to the Fourth Assembly.

She noted that the growing influence of social media and artificial intelligence (AI) was changing communication practices and would increasingly affect the Assembly's daily operations.

Workshop facilitator Awino Gilbert urged communication officers and journalists to embrace AI and understand how algorithms could improve their work.

However, participants cautioned against relying excessively on AI to prepare Hansard records and reports from legislative activities, including public participation forums.

They warned that without careful human review and editing, AI-generated reports could compromise accuracy and distort the original meaning of proceedings.

Akuku acknowledged the challenges, saying institutions needed to adapt responsibly to emerging technologies.

Gichana urged journalists covering the Assembly to raise professional concerns directly with the administration, promising continued engagement to improve working relations and strengthen public communication.

Report accuses officials, recruitment agencies and Russian counterparts of collusion as Mudavadi reveals 84 Kenyans are dead or missing

BY WILSON ONCHARI

A newly released United States report has implicated Kenyan government officials in the alleged fraudulent recruitment of more than 1,000 Kenyan men to fight for the Russian military in the ongoing war against Ukraine.

The 2026 Trafficking in Persons Report, published by the US Department of State on Thursday, October 8, raises concerns over suspected collusion between Kenyan officials, recruitment agencies and Russian government officers to facilitate the recruitment of Kenyans for military service.

“Officials reported that some Kenyan officials colluded with recruitment agencies and government officials from Russia to facilitate the fraudulent recruitment of more than 1,000 Kenyan men to fight for the Russian military,” the report states.

The report says some Kenyans were allegedly lured by promises of lucrative employment in security and construction before being pressured into signing contracts with Russia’s Defence Ministry.

It further faults the Kenyan government for failing to take sufficient action against recruitment agencies reportedly owned by public officials and allegedly implicated in trafficking-related offences.

“The government did not report taking action against recruitment agencies reportedly owned by government employees that were allegedly complicit in facilitating trafficking crimes; lesser charges, such as failing to register a recruitment company, were frequently levied,” the report adds.

The findings raise questions about potential conflicts of interest in the recruitment industry, citing Kenyan media reports indicating that more than 10 per cent of government officials hold ownership interests in private employment agencies.



Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi appearing before Parliament.

US report links Kenyan officials to mercenary recruitment of 1,000 men for Russia war

The report also notes that three Ministry of Labour officials had been investigated over alleged bribes linked to human trafficking.

Beyond military recruitment, the US assessment highlights concerns over fraudulent employment schemes targeting foreign nationals, including Africans, with promises of vocational training and jobs in Russia.

Some African women aged between 18 and 22, including Kenyans, were reportedly recruited under the guise of vocational training before being placed in Russian military drone-production facilities.

Workers in the facilities were reportedly exposed

to hazardous conditions, surveillance, violations of working-hour and wage arrangements, changes to employment contracts and recruitment fees.

The findings underscore the risks facing Kenyans seeking opportunities abroad, where deceptive recruitment practices can expose job seekers to forced labour, exploitation and potentially dangerous military deployments.

The revelations come as the Kenyan government faces mounting pressure to account for citizens recruited into the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Appearing before a Senate committee investigating the recruitment of Kenyans to Russia, Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Cabinet

Secretary Musalia Mudavadi disclosed that 84 Kenyans involved in the war were either dead or missing. Mudavadi told senators that approximately 354 Kenyans had been directly involved in the conflict, providing a snapshot of the scale of the recruitment crisis and its human cost.

According to the ministry’s records, 77 Kenyans were on the front lines, while 38 were in camps and 52 were listed as being in unknown locations or under unclassified status.

Another 34 Kenyans had been hospitalised, 62 repatriated and five identified as prisoners of war. One person was in detention, while another had completed their contract, Mudavadi said.

Police arrest Homa Bay ‘chief goon’ as KRA seizes smuggled sugar worth millions

Arrest follows August Linda Mwananchi rally chaos as tax investigators intercept 46 tonnes of sugar in Lodwar and additional consignments in Kakamega

BY TEAM

Police in Homa Bay have arrested a man described as a “chief goon” following months of investigations into violence at a Linda Mwananchi rally in the county, as authorities intensify separate operations against suspected criminals and illicit trade.

Kassim Abdi Sebo was arrested at Homa Bay Bus Stage on Thursday night while officers were executing a warrant issued by the Homa Bay Law Courts on August 14, 2026.

Preliminary police findings indicate that the warrant relates to an alleged offence of assault causing actual bodily harm, contrary to Section 251 of the Penal Code.

The operation was conducted by officers from Homa Bay Police Station and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), under County

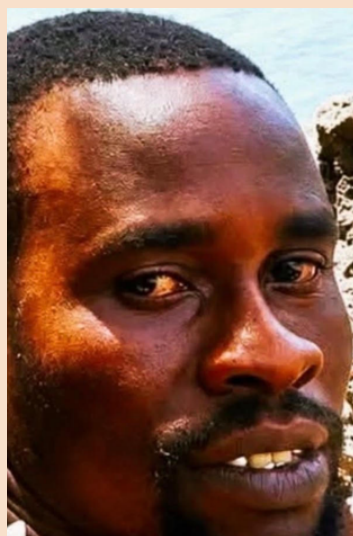
Police Commander Lawrence Koilem.

Seven other men were arrested after allegedly obstructing officers during Sebo’s arrest. They were identified as Achiando Victor Odhiambo, 26; Isaac Masika Muli, 30; Oyege Moses Geoffrey, 27; Geoffrey Njore, 25; Odhiambo Wesley Arnold, 26; Joseph Kobila, 28; and Alfred Nyagi Aliwa, 26.

The eight suspects were being held for pre-charge processing before being presented in court.

Meanwhile, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) has seized approximately 46 tonnes of suspected smuggled sugar in Lodwar, Turkana County, and intercepted additional consignments in Kakamega County in an intelligence-led crackdown on illicit trade.

The Lodwar operation, conducted at about 2am on Thursday, October 8, led to the interception



Kassim Abdi Sebo.

of two lorries carrying 920 bags of KALIRO-branded sugar. Each bag weighed 50 kilogrammes, with the consignment attracting an estimated tax implication of Sh9.73 million.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the sugar entered Kenya from

Moroto, Uganda, through Nadapal without payment of applicable taxes or compliance with customs requirements.

In Kakamega, officers intercepted a Probox carrying 30 bags of brown sugar, weighing 50 kilogrammes each. The consignment was valued at approximately Sh1.524 million before the vehicle and exhibits were detained at Matungu Police Station.

In a separate incident along Mumias Road in Matungu, officers pursued a lorry whose driver allegedly failed to stop for a compliance check. The driver and two other occupants abandoned the vehicle and fled.

Police apprehended one suspect, while an inspection established that the lorry was carrying 100 bags of sugar. KRA estimated the consignment’s value at Sh500,000, with taxes at risk amounting to approximately Sh3 million.

The authority warned that smuggling undermines government revenue, disadvantages compliant traders and exposes businesses to legal penalties. It urged the public to report suspected tax evasion and

illicit trade.

In Machakos County, police are investigating the killing of a 68-year-old night guard during a suspected break-in at Kinyau Market in Kathiani.

James Ndolo Muia, who guarded Uamani Shop, was found dead at about 6:50am on Thursday by a shopkeeper arriving to open a business.

Police found his body on the ground with injuries to the forehead, left eye and right wrist. Investigators established that three shops had been broken into.

A bar attendant told police she heard screams at around 4am but assumed they came from quarry workers passing nearby.

Another guard said Muia had complained of a severe headache before leaving work at around 11pm the previous night.

The body was taken to Machakos Funeral Home mortuary for an autopsy, as the Kathiani Sub-County Criminal Investigations Officer leads investigations into the killing and the break-ins.

IEBC CEO war: Commissioners split as Sunkuli poised to make comeback



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Director of Electoral Operations Moses Ledama Sunkuli.



IEBC chairperson Erastus Edung Etheke and other commissioners addressing the media. FILE PHOTO.

Sunkuli, the commission's Director of Electoral Operations, was appointed acting CEO and Commission Secretary on February 5, 2026, following the departure of Marjan Hussein Marjan

BY INVESTIGATIONS DESK

A fierce power struggle has erupted within the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) over the appointment of a substantive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with internal divisions threatening to delay the recruitment of the official who will oversee the electoral machinery ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The dispute comes in the wake of a completed recruitment process handled by KPMG Kenya, which was contracted by the commission to identify candidates for the powerful position.

Impeccable sources familiar with the process intimated that KPMG has completed its work and submitted its recommendation to the IEBC, but commissioners have reportedly failed to agree on the preferred candidate.

When contacted for comment, IEBC Chairman Erastus Edung Etheke was not reachable by the time of going to press.

There are claims that internal suggestions were made to KPMG to reconsider its recommendations and replace the candidate it had selected. KPMG is said to have declined, deepening the stand-off.

Also, the claims could

not independently be verified, while the IEBC did not respond to requests for comment.

The widening divisions have also thrust former acting CEO Moses Ledama Sunkuli back into the centre of the succession battle, amid claims that powerful government figures are lobbying for his return as substantive CEO.

Sunkuli, the commission's Director of Electoral Operations, was appointed acting CEO and Commission Secretary on February 5, 2026, following the departure of Marjan Hussein Marjan. The IEBC said he would serve for six months or until a substantive CEO was appointed.

The commission's leadership includes Etheke as the chair, vice-chair Anne Nderitu and commissioners Moses Mukhwana, Karen Sorbit, Hassan Noor, Francis Aduol and Fahima Abdalla.

His acting tenure expired on August 4, 2026 after which Ruth Kulundu took over on August 5, 2026 for two months or until the recruitment of a substantive office holder was completed.

But with Kulundu's acting tenure understood to be approaching its end, pressure is mounting for the commission to resolve the impasse.

The reported push for Sunkuli has not

been independently confirmed, nor has it been established that he is the candidate at the centre of the KPMG dispute.

However, the claims have raised fresh questions over the independence of the appointment process and whether external political interests are seeking influence over the IEBC's administrative leadership.

The seven-member commission, chaired by Erastus Etheke, is reportedly divided over the way forward.

Its leadership includes vice-chair Anne Nderitu and commissioners Moses Mukhwana, Karen Sorbit, Hassan Noor, Francis Aduol and Fahima Abdalla.

The reported stalemate comes at a critical moment when the electoral body has already formally placed the August 10, 2027 General Election on its calendar, with preparations involving voter registration, staffing, procurement, logistics, technology and voter education already under way.

The Secretary/CEO heads the IEBC Secretariat and serves as its accounting officer, making the position central to implementation of Commission decisions and the administration of the electoral process.

The office will oversee procurement of election materials, recruitment and training of officials, voter registration, logistics, technology, polling station preparation and results-management systems.

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Dead lawyer's signature cited in multi-billion Embakasi Ranching land grab claims

BY TEAM

The unending, vicious and at times deadly wars for vast tracts of land and leadership control of the troubled Embakasi Ranching Company Limited have reared its ugly head once more with shareholders accusing a group of individuals of using allegedly forged court documents, signatures attributed to a dead lawyer and the impersonation of deceased officials in a scheme to dispossess them of their land and seize control of the multimillion-shilling land-buying company.

In a blow-by-blow petition to the country's top judicial oversight bodies, the shareholders claim the disputed court proceedings are being used to legitimise an illegal takeover, sideline the company's recognised leadership and undermine their property rights, raising serious questions about the integrity of the documents underpinning the case.

Bona fide shareholders allege that the well-choreographed scheme involves forgery, impersonation of deceased persons and police-assisted intimidation in a dispute they claim is designed to facilitate an illegal takeover of the company and grab its land.

In a petition addressed to Chief Justice Martha Koome, the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), Commission for Administrative Justice (CAJ) popularly known as Office of the Ombudsman and the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), the shareholders accuse Milimani High Court Commercial Division Judge Rhoda Ruttoh of relying on a disputed court order allegedly obtained through an application bearing the signature of a lawyer who died two decades ago.

"The matter was fraudulently executed using the signature of Howard Njoroge Mburu—a lawyer who had been dead for 13 years when his signature was affixed to the document," the petitioners claim.

They also dispute the authority of individuals presenting themselves as former directors of the land-buying company, alleging they have never held the positions claimed and have failed to provide evidence establishing their credentials.

"They have never been directors, lack official credentials, and have continuously relied on forged and fraudulent documents to institute and maintain legal proceedings," the shareholders argue.

The petition further alleges that one of the applicants is former company chairman Godfrey Muhuri Muchiri, whom the shareholders say died on May 31, 2006. They claim the court has continued handling the matter despite repeated notifications that the chairman referenced in the proceedings is deceased. The shareholders maintain that the company's legitimate leadership is reflected in records held by the Registrar of Companies, including current CR12 documents.

They say the individuals named as defendants constitute the lawful board, while those pursuing the suit were removed from office at a shareholders' meeting on April 13, 2019.

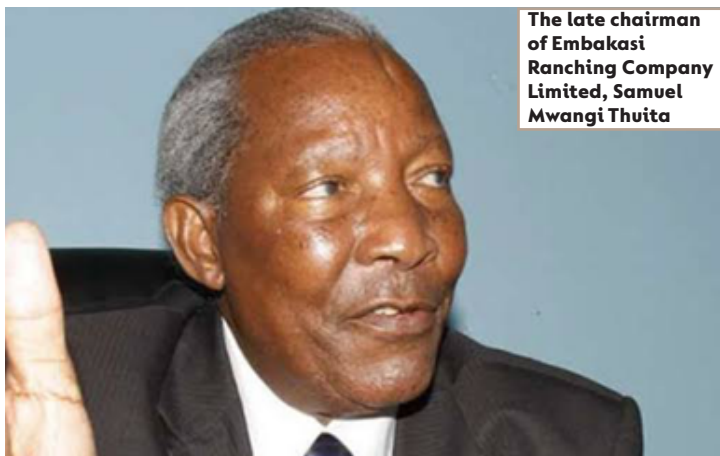
They accuse Justice Rhoda Ruttoh of attempting to determine the company's leadership and impose directors, undermining shareholders' statutory right to elect their representatives through established corporate processes.

The petitioners further allege that genuine shareholders have repeatedly been denied opportunities to participate in the proceedings as interested parties, effectively excluding those whose interests are directly affected.

"There are severe procedural irregularities and systemic bias designed to protect ousted former leaders, including Walter Kigera Waireri and Lucy Nyokabi Mathege," they state.

They also question Justice Ruttoh's handling of a ruling delivered on August 6, 2026, claiming only its concluding portion was read in open court, while the complete written decision was uploaded six days later.

The petition describes the written ruling as having been "reverse-engineered" following alleged instructions from powerful external figures to protect what the shareholders call a land-grabbing enterprise. No independently verified evidence has been presented in the allegations to establish that the ruling was altered or influenced by outside actors.



The late chairman of Embakasi Ranching Company Limited, Samuel Mwangi Thuita

The shareholders also fault the court for allegedly disregarding arguments based on Section 275A(1) of the Companies Act, which they contend should have resulted in termination of the case.

They say the prolonged litigation has paralysed essential corporate governance functions, including the holding of annual general meetings required under the law.

"The case has effectively prevented the company from conducting mandatory AGMs and exercising normal corporate operations," the petition states.

Outside the courtroom, the shareholders accuse former officials of illegally occupying company premises without shareholder authority. They further allege that police officers drawn from Kayole, operating under a Sub-County Police Commander, have repeatedly sided with the disputed leadership faction.

According to the petition, company offices have been raided at least eight times, with officers allegedly disrupting shareholder gatherings and facilitating the continued occupation of the premises by individuals whose authority is contested.

The shareholders describe the alleged interventions as intimi-

dation intended to frustrate their efforts to protect the company and their interests. The claims of police misconduct have not been independently verified.

In their demands, the petitioners want Justice Ruttoh removed from the case and the file reassigned to an independent bench. They are also urging the JSC to "launch formal disciplinary proceedings against Justice Ruttoh" over alleged violations of judicial independence and what they describe as the facilitation of an illegal corporate takeover.

They further want the proceedings terminated as a "legal nullity" allegedly founded on forgery, impersonation and fraudulent signatures.

In response, the JSC assured the petitioners that their complaint would be processed in accordance with the law and that they would be informed of the outcome.

Chief Justice Koome, however, advised the shareholders to appeal Justice Ruttoh's ruling, saying she lacked the power to terminate or transfer a matter pending before a judge.



Judicial Service Commission's (JSC) response to Embakasi Ranching Company Limited shareholders' petition.



Justice Rhoda Ruttoh

Court froze Embakasi Ranching land cases in directors' dispute

BY CORRESPONDENT

In May this year, the High Court halted multiple cases involving Embakasi Ranching Company Limited as a protracted dispute over the company's directorship and representation threatens shareholders' interests and the management of its land assets.

The orders aimed at preventing parallel proceedings from producing conflicting decisions on who has the legal authority to represent the land-buying company, which has been embroiled in leadership wrangles for years.



Embakasi Ranching Company Limited in Ruai, Nairobi.

In a ruling delivered on May 6, 2026, the Environment and Land Court allowed Embakasi

Ranching Company, through directors listed in its CR12 records, to appeal out of time against decisions in related cases.

The court stayed proceedings in three Milimani cases pending the hearing and determination of the appeal, citing the need to prevent conflicting decisions on the question of company representation.

The leadership dispute was also drawn complaints from shareholders who say prolonged litigation has affected their ability to participate in company affairs and protect their land interests.

In a separate application in the

company's ongoing commercial case, proposed interested parties argued that disputes between rival factions had exposed members to alleged illegal land transactions, double allocation of plots and interference with property rights.

They also complained that the company had failed to convene annual general meetings, undermining shareholders' participation in corporate governance.

The opposing parties challenged their application, arguing that they had not demonstrated the legal standing required to join the proceedings.

Embakasi Ranching's dark history of leadership feuds, mysterious deaths

A trail of killings, sudden deaths and bitter boardroom battles has cast a shadow over the multibillion-shilling land-buying company for decades

BY TEAM

Embakasi Ranching Company Limited's longstanding land disputes and leadership wrangles have been accompanied by a disturbing history of killings, unexplained deaths and violent attacks involving individuals linked to the company.

The deaths of several directors, alongside persistent disputes over land allocation, ownership and control of the company, have fuelled questions about the risks surrounding one of Nairobi's most contentious land-buying entities.

Among the most prominent figures was founding chairman and former MP Godfrey Muhuri Muchiri, who died in May 2006 under circumstances described as abrupt. His death came amid mounting pressure over the allocation and subdivision of the ranch's land.

His successor, Kariuki Mwaganu, reportedly died of a heart attack in 2009, during a period of intense shareholder disputes.

Mwangi Thuita, who was associated with the company between 2010 and 2018, died in 2018 in circumstances described as suspicious.

His death was officially attributed to a heart attack, although accounts cited in connection with the dispute claim he had previously expressed fears for his safety and alleged that land cartels were targeting him. These claims have not been independently verified.

James Njoroge, another figure associated with the company's leadership, died on August 26, 2023, following a reportedly brief illness.

His death was also attributed to a heart attack and occurred amid disputes surrounding the government-backed land-titling process and the company's future.

The company's turbulent history has also been marked by a wave of targeted shootings between 2015 and 2016, leaving several directors dead and deepening concerns about security among those involved in its affairs.

On July 7, 2015, directors Josphat Kibe Nyoi and Zakary Chege Kiratu were reportedly killed in a double murder. Weeks later, on July 28, influential director Paul Muhuri Bernard was shot dead by gunmen. Peter Kimani Kuria, another director, was gunned down on May 10, 2016, following intense internal boardroom wrangles, according to accounts of the company's troubled history.

Suspects were arrested in connection with some of the killings, but the supplied account says most were eventually acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence.



Founding Embakasi Ranching Company chairman Muhuri Muchiri (left) is confronted by Ruai Councillor Dick Waweru during the firm's shareholders meeting. PHOTO BY COURTESY.

Hard part begins for Edwin Sifuna as he secures new political home

BY JAMES WASIKE

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna last weekend unveiled The Equitable Party (TEP) as his political vehicle through which he would pursue his presidential ambitions.

The move followed a series of setbacks fueled by refusal by the Registrar of Political Parties to register the Linda Mwananchi Movement (LMM), which has since been struck down by the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal.

This even as the opposition movement vowed they will continue to pursue formation of LMM, which has been reserved in their favour following the tribunal's ruling.

While having his own party is a major boost for Sifuna's presidential ambitions, political pundits say the hard part has only just begun for the youthful lawyers whose rebellion against the broad-based government formed by President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM following the death of its leader Raila Odinga last October has electrified young voters, especially Gen Zs.

He must first seek to sustain unity within the movement where various key leaders are pursuing their own ambitions with some forming their own parties to realise them.

For instance, Siaya Governor James Orengo, who also harbours presidential ambitions and was pushing for a competitive process of picking Linda Mwananchi's flagbearer, has been associated with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the outfit Raila used in 2002 to partner with the National Party of Kenya (NPK) to form

the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) on whose ticket Mwai Kibaki won the presidency.

During the party's unveiling, Orengo, however, rallied his support for Sifuna's presidential bid.

"With Sifuna, I have an unqualified opinion that he is fit to be the President of Kenya and I will not change that position," he said.

Embakasi East MP Babu Owino, who is eyeing the Nairobi gubernatorial seat, also launched The Mwananchi Party (TMP) while Trans Nzoia Governor George Ntembeya has been associated with the United Democratic Party (UDP) though its officials rejected an earlier plan to have Sifuna run on its ticket.

Saboti MP Caleb Amisi in August also unveiled the People's Renaissance Movement (PRM).

While the current strategy is to have the various parties join hands to form LMM once the registration hurdle is overcome, their unveiling adds to the history of mistrust politicians are known to harbour each election cycles with many finding safety in their own outfits especially when it comes to nominations.

This means LMM, once former, will have to find ways of dealing with sibling rivalry while maintaining their eyes on the ball if Sifuna is to get endorsement as the joint opposition candidate.

This is because he navigates TEP's relations with the other outfits in LMM if they finally secure its registration will determine how much he will be able to negotiate with other opposition principals when he enters into negotiations with the United Opposition, The Ukombozi Alliance or individual parties - to field a single presidential candidate to face off with Ruto



Edwin Sifuna

on August 10 next year, analysts say.

Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale put it more candidly when he told him not to get excited.

"Edwin Sifuna, do not get excited. The hard part has now started. If you think it is easy, ask Orengo. If you think it is easy, ask Kalonzo Musyoka. Ask all of them. It is so difficult," he said.

"You are going to need to stand on the shoulders of Orengo. You will need to humble yourself and stand on the shoulders of Rigathi. You will need to humble yourself, and I mean it, to stand on the shoulders of Kalonzo Musyoka, on the shoulders of Martha Karua, on the shoulders of your elder brother Eugene Wamalwa," he added.

At the moment, those backing Sifuna's candidature belong to disparate formations with Suba MP Caroli Omondi, for instance, also doubling as The Ukombozi Alliance Secretary General.

At the TEP launch, he, however, vowed that they will unite behind his candidature.

"In this journey to deliver this change, we are going to be led by one, and I now want to declare here that this formation will be led by one presidential candidate, Edwin Watenya Sifuna; we shall be united in this course," Omondi said.

Opinion polls put the Nairobi senator as the leading candidate among President Ruto with substantial support among Gen Zs and the urban youth who are dissatisfied with the Kenya Kwanza government over its handling of high levels of unemployment, endemic corruption and the high cost of living.

This has led to suggestions he must be on the ticket if the opposition is to achieve its plan to make Ruto a one-term president.

However, a lot depends on whether he retains enough support to push himself to the top of the ticket or at least as running mate when ranged against Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka, Democracy for Citizens Party's Rigathi Gachagua, Jubilee's Dr Fred Matiang'i or Martha Karua of the National Liberation Party, among others.

Uhuru quits Azimio Chairmanship as Kalonzo takes charge of Ukombozi

BY WILSON ONCHARI

Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta has resigned as chairperson of the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition, weeks after relinquishing his leadership of the Jubilee Party, paving the way for a new leadership structure ahead of the 2027 General Election.

In a letter dated October 5, 2026, Kenyatta said his resignation followed the formal handover of Jubilee leadership to former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i.

"Following the official handover of the Jubilee Party Leadership, I am writing to formally resign from my leadership position within the Azimio La Umoja Coalition, effective immediately," he said.

Kenyatta stressed that he was not abandoning the opposition coalition, describing his exit as part of the renewal of democratic institutions.

"This decision is not a departure from our shared political journey, but a necessary step in the continuous renewal of our democratic institutions," he said.

He said he would remain an active coalition member, offering support and counsel when required.

His resignation follows a High Court ruling by Justice Lawrence Mugambi barring retired presidents from holding political party office more than six months after leaving State House, while allowing them to remain party members and participate in political activities.

Kenyatta subsequently



Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta (left) and Wiper party leader Kalonzo Musyoka. File photo.

handed Jubilee leadership to Matiang'i, who had served as deputy party leader.

The move has seen Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka assume the political leadership of the rebranded opposition outfit, now

known as The Ukombozi Alliance (TUA).

Kalonzo moved to quell speculation of a leadership

vacuum, saying Uhuru's position as chair of council was separate from that of party leader.

"The party leader and the chair of council are two distinct offices, and they have never been one and the same," Kalonzo said on October 7.

He said he remained TUA's political and executive head, insisting: "There is no vacuum at the helm of Ukombozi, and no change in the party's leadership, direction or programme."

TUA was rebranded in September as opposition parties reposition themselves for 2027.

Kalonzo thanked Uhuru for his leadership and said the former President would be invited for an official visit and formal handover, while remaining a committed member of the coalition.

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA, POLITICAL EDITOR

Known her unreserved pro-people and head on approach just like her late father ranging from braving police bullets and teargas from the trenches to spending final days with her father in India, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) legislator Winnie Odinga enjoyed a special place in her late father Raila Odinga's political world and after his demise on October 15, 2025, she was widely seen as the natural heir to his throne.

While her uncle, Siaya Senator Dr Oburu Oginga, replaced him at Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party leader Winnie lurked in the shadows and even for some time joined those opposed to the party's continued stay in the broad-based government formed with President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) after the June/July 2025 Gen Z revolt as well as a proposal to support his re-election next year.

At one time, she and her brother Raila Jnr attended a rally held by Linda Mwananchi faction led by then-ODM Secretary General Edwin Sifuna where he launched a scathing attack on the Linda Ground group led by Oburu accusing them of throwing liberal minds out of the party as soon as they took the driving seat after her father's death.

While a family meeting seemed to have led to a truce, observers held that it was only a matter of time before she re-enters the political stage.

It is for this reason that her coronation as Raila's heir by Luo elders last Sunday was not only symbolic but also carried immense political significance as they invited her to step into her father's shoes.

Winnie used the occasion, which was attended by her mother, Mama Ida Odinga, her sister Rosemary, the Luo Council of Elders and other members of the wider Odinga, to confirm her return to the Kenyan political scene after what she described as a break to mourn her



Former Raila Odinga's daughter Winnie Odinga carries his hat as she walks ahead of the arrival of the body at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi on October 16, 2025.

What next for Winnie Odinga as she inherits her father's throne?

father.

Her brother was, however, not present at the ceremony with their mother saying she was held up elsewhere.

While Raila Jnr, who was installed as the head of the family after their father's death, would have been expected to inherit his political throne, many say he deliberately set out to groom her as his successor.

Apart from influencing her nomination to EALA, Winnie was also an influential figure in his inner circle playing a critical role in crafting his strategy and campaigns as a close confidante, personal assistant and logistics/communications strategist.

As the 2027 General Election approaches, many will be keenly following her political journey, including which seat she will be going for.

Winnie has previously been associated with a bid for the Kibra seat, which has since attracted interest from Raila Jnr, who had previously been linked to Em-

bakasi East constituency.

There have also been calls for her to go for the Nairobi Senator's seat currently held by Sifuna, who has expressed presidential ambitions.

Within ODM, many will be watching to see if she will seek a top position after Nairobi delegates previously endorsed her to occupy one of the deputy party leader positions.

Some pundits say this will be significant as Oburu is likely to lessen his involvement due to health issues and age sparking a potential succession contest with a section of MPs from Western already calling on Cooperatives Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya to divide his time between the ministry and helping him manage ODM.

At the same time, Winnie is seen as a strong, outspoken voice that can help spearhead a generational reset within ODM thus helping the party remain relevant in the wake of the exit of the Sifuna rebel group.

Ruto unveils Raila's mausoleum as ailing brother Oburu misses ceremony

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

President William Ruto officially unveiled and dedicated the mausoleum of the late former Prime Minister Raila Odinga at Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo, Siaya County on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, as preparations gather pace for the first anniversary of the former opposition chief's death.

Ruto, accompanied by Raila's widow Mama Idah Odinga, members of the Odinga family, clergy and other dignitaries, led the ceremony on Wednesday before a memorial service at the historic site.

The president also read a presidential citation honouring Raila's contribution to Kenya's political and democratic history, describing him as a courageous leader, patriot and Pan-Africanist who devoted his life to the pursuit of freedom, justice and democracy.

Ruto reflected on Raila's decades-long political career, including his years in detention and political adversity, saying the former Prime Minister remained steadfast in his pursuit of a fairer and more democratic Kenya.

He said the country had lost an extraordinary leader who occupied a central place for decades in the struggle to expand Kenya's democratic space.

Ruto said the mausoleum would serve not only as Raila's final resting place but also as a lasting testament to his contribution to the country's democratic journey.

Mama Idah formally dedicated the mausoleum to God and invited the church to bless the grounds.

Flanked by members of the family and government officials, she said the site should remain a sanctuary of peace and a reminder of Raila's long life of public service.



Raila Amolo Odinga Mausoleum at Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo, Siaya County

The ceremony culminated in the unveiling of a commemorative plaque by Ruto and Mama Idah, marking the formal dedication of the site where Raila was laid to rest.

However, the solemn ceremony was attended by a notable absence, with Raila's elder brother, Siaya Senator Oburu Oginga, unable to attend after falling ill.

Oburu is currently hospitalised at Nairobi Hospital, where he is receiving treatment, just days before the much-awaited first anniversary celebrations of his younger brother's death.

His absence was particularly poignant given his close association with Raila throughout the latter's political career and the family's public life.

The anniversary events are expected to draw political leaders, family members, Raila's supporters and other Kenyans to Bondo to commemorate the life and legacy of the former Prime Minister.

Political legacy kept alive as more Odinga scions' eye elective seats in 2027

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Member of Parliament (MP) Winnie Odinga's installation as heir to her father's throne last Sunday is believed to be the beginning of her active involvement in the country's politics continuing a family history that begun her grandfather Jaramogi Odinga Odinga before independence. After becoming the country's first vice president, a deadly fallout with President Jomo Kenyatta saw him consigned to the cold until the return of multi-party democracy in the early 1990 though he continued to engage in politics as part of the op-



Winnie Odinga during her anointing by Rose Otumba, Women Representative of the Luo Council of Elders in Siaya, in Bondo, Siaya County, on October 3, 2026.

position against President Daniel Moi. Though he failed to clinch the presidency in 1992, he was elected as Bondo MP and served until his death in 1994 after which he was succeeded by his elder son Dr Oburu Oginga.

In that election, he father, Raila Odinga, was elected as Langata MP, which has since been split into two to birth Kibra.

Since the Odinga family has retained its place in Kenyan politics with Raila vying for the presidency five times and serving as Prime Minister after the 2007/08 post-election violence.

On his part, Oburu has also served as nominated MP and now Siaya Senator as well as Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party leader after succeeding Raila following his death in October last year.

Winnie's aunt, Ruth Odinga, is the Kisumu Women Representative.

In the 2027 elections, the list is set to go up as her brother, Raila Jnr is eyeing the Kibra seat while their cousin Jaoko Oburu is going for the Bondo seat.

While Winnie was symbolically crowned as the political heir of her late father by a section of the Luo Council of Elders at Opoda Farm in Bondo, Siaya County, Mama Ida Odinga and sister Rosemary Odinga attended the event, while her brother Raila Odinga Junior was absent due to other commitments.



President William Ruto leads the unveiling of the Raila Amolo Odinga Mausoleum at Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo, Siaya County in presence of the Raila family and government official. October 7, 2026.

Double tragedy for Imanyara as court upholds Karen home auction, orders Sh91.76million payment

Veteran lawyer loses 17-year battle against Ecobank after judge dismisses suit challenging sale of his residence

BY TEAM

Veteran lawyer and multi-party democracy crusader Gitobu Imanyara has suffered a double financial setback after the High Court upheld the auction of his Karen residence and ordered him to pay Ecobank Sh91.76 million in outstanding loan obligations.

Justice Freda Mugambi dismissed Imanyara's suit challenging the sale of the property, ruling in favour of the bank in a dispute that has dragged on for more than a decade.

The ruling, delivered on October 2, 2026, leaves the former Imenti Central MP facing a substantial financial liability despite losing his residential property at a public auction in March 2016.

The property, registered as L.R. No. 13460/19 (I.R. No. 62482), was sold by Valley Auctioneers on March 23, 2016, with Isaac Ochieng Opondo declared the highest

bidder at Sh47 million.

Ecobank maintained that the auction was lawful, denying allegations by Imanyara that the transaction was fraudulent or that Opondo acquired the property illegally.

Court records indicate that Imanyara obtained bank financing to construct his residence, with the lender advancing funds secured through a legal charge over the property.

In a letter of acceptance dated May 11, 2009, Ecobank granted him a term loan of Sh11 million and a mortgage facility of Sh22.5 million.

The term loan was intended to settle existing liabilities with Co-operative Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank, the Parliamentary Mortgage Scheme and Bunge Sacco, while the mortgage facility financed his residential property.

The bank told the court that Imanyara defaulted on monthly repayments of Sh197,400 for the term loan and Sh403,772 for the mortgage facility, prompting the issuance of a statutory notice on March 19, 2013.

Negotiations between the parties subsequently resulted in an agreement dated July 10, 2013. However, Ecobank argued that Imanyara's breaches led to the rescission of the arrangement, reverting their relationship to the original loan

agreement and charge.

The lender later issued another statutory notice on January 28, 2014, and commissioned property valuations to establish its market and forced-sale values.

Valuations by Lloyd Masika placed the property's market value at Sh60 million, mortgage value at Sh50 million and forced-sale value at Sh45 million.

Ecobank subsequently instructed auctioneers to serve Imanyara with a 45-day redemption notice on August 24, 2015.

The property was initially advertised for auction in October 2015, but the sale was temporarily halted after Imanyara obtained an injunction. The court dismissed the injunction on December 21, 2015, paving the way for the eventual auction.

In challenging the sale, Imanyara argued that the bank had failed to register a further charge he had executed, leaving additional advances beyond the

originally secured Sh33.5 million unsecured.

He also accused the lender of disregarding agreements under which the property was to be sold through a private treaty, with the proceeds used to settle the outstanding loan and any surplus credited to his account.

Imanyara further complained that Ecobank had failed to provide him with the sale memorandum and a statement explaining how the proceeds were applied, yet continued demanding payment.

In his re-amended plaint filed on April 13, 2021, he sought to invalidate the auction, cancel Opondo's title and have ownership reverted to him. He also sought a permanent injunction restraining the bank from initiating bankruptcy proceedings over the loan.



Veteran lawyer and multi-party democracy crusader Gitobu Imanyara. PHOTO BY COURTESY.

Man charged over threatening text to magistrate remanded, denied bail

Man charged over threatening text to magistrate remanded, denied bail

BY NJOKI MAINA

A man charged with cyber harassment after allegedly sending a threatening text message to a magistrate over the handling of a case involving Gabriel Saka has been remanded after the court denied him bail yesterday.

Francis Kamau Karanja had appeared before Milimani Law Courts Magistrate Irene Thamara on Thursday, where he denied the charge of cyber harassment contrary to Section 27(1)(a), as read with Section 27(2), of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act.

Yesterday, ruling on his bail application, the accused denied bail by the court.

According to the charge sheet, Karanja allegedly sent the message on September 28, 2026, to a mobile phone number registered in the name of Magistrate Margaret Murage, accusing her of bias in the proceedings involving Saka.

The message allegedly warned the magistrate to be careful and claimed the sender knew where she lived, raising concerns over her personal safety.

"Greetings Hon. MM, I have not the great bias in the case of Gabriel Saka. It seems you have taken side and we will not allow it. I will not

stop at anything to ensure justice is done. Be warned. Chungu kazi yako. Na ujichunge sana, Tunajua kwako," the message read.

The Kiswahili phrases in the text included warnings for the magistrate to be careful in her work and a statement that the sender knew where she lived.

The prosecution alleged that the message contained words likely to cause apprehension or fear of violence to the judicial officer.

Opposing Karanja's release on bond, the prosecution described the matter as extraordinary because the alleged victim is a judicial officer.

The prosecution told the court that the alleged threats had caused the magistrate to avoid using her residence and vehicle,



Francis Kamau Karanja before Milimani Law Courts, October 8, 2026.



Francis Kamau Karanja (left) in the dock at Kibera Law Courts appearing before Magistrate Victor Wakumile, October 7, 2026.

However, defence lawyer Muriithi Mbaabu asked the court to grant his client reasonable and lenient bail terms.

The defence argued that Karanja had been arrested and denied police bail without being informed of the reason for his arrest. He was taken to Kilimani Police Station on Tuesday but was not presented in court that day.

He was subsequently

taken to Kibera Law Courts on Wednesday, where plea-taking was deferred after the prosecution sought to have the case transferred to Milimani. The Kibera court directed that Karanja be presented before Milimani Court 1 for plea-taking, noting that proceeding with the matter at Kibera could expose the process to allegations of bias.

«EDITORIAL»

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Kenya cannot afford an Ebola lapse that could shut its borders

If Kenya fails to contain the imported case, the conversation will change from “Kenya has detected Ebola” to “Kenya is transmitting Ebola.”

KENYA IS not in an Ebola outbreak. That distinction matters. But neither can the country afford to behave as though the danger has passed.

The confirmation of Kenya's first imported case of Bundibugyo Ebola virus disease has exposed uncomfortable questions about how effectively the country is screening travellers, tracing contacts and enforcing its preparedness measures.

The patient travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo through Uganda before flying into Nairobi, despite having fallen ill while in the DRC. Kenya's Health Ministry says he was isolated after arriving at Nairobi Hospital and subsequently tested positive. He died on October 6.

That sequence should trigger more than official assurances. It should trigger an urgent audit of the country's entire border-health system.

Health officials led by Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said it has invested heavily in preparedness.

Its Ebola readiness score rose from 66 per cent in May to 82 per cent in July, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), while health authorities have expanded surveillance, testing, isolation facilities and trained response teams.

But preparedness is ultimately measured at the point where theory meets reality.

And that is where the hard questions begin.

How did a traveller who had reportedly been sick in the DRC manage to travel across the region and board a flight to Nairobi? Was he screened adequately?

Were his symptoms recognised? Were travel-health declarations properly assessed? Did medication mask his symptoms? Were there weaknesses in information-sharing between the DRC, Uganda and Kenya?

These are not academic questions. They go directly to whether Kenya's much-advertised surveillance system works when confronted with a real case.

More worrying is what happens next.

Kenya's Health Ministry says it has identified 57 contacts linked to the patient, with 10 already accounted for and quarantined while efforts continue to trace the rest.

That is a race against time.

Every unidentified contact potentially represents another chain of transmission. Every person who boarded public transport, entered a hospital, attended a workplace or interacted with family members before being identified increases the complexity of the response.

The country has already seen how quickly an imported disease can become a national crisis.

The lesson of Covid-19 was that governments can lose precious time while reassuring citizens that everything is under control. Kenya must not repeat that mistake.

The United Kingdom has already updated its travel advice following confirmation of the imported case, urging travellers to follow Kenyan health guidance and warning that enhanced screening may apply to travellers arriving from Uganda, Ethiopia and the DRC.

That does not mean Kenya is being shut down. It does mean international confidence is already being tested.

And this is where the economic danger lies.

A country does not need to be formally placed under lockdown for the consequences to resemble one.

If more cases emerge, foreign governments could introduce additional screening requirements for travellers from Kenya.

Airlines could reassess operations. International conferences could be postponed. Tourists could reconsider bookings. Insurance costs could rise.

Businesses could delay travel. Kenya's reputation as an aviation, tourism, business and regional transport hub could take a hit.

WHO is currently advising against blanket travel or trade restrictions on Kenya, stressing that screening, contact tracing and other targeted measures are more effective. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has specifically commended Kenya for reporting the



Ebola surveillance and preparedness in Kenya amid local virus confirmation, regional outbreaks

case promptly and urged countries not to punish transparency with unnecessary travel restrictions.

But that goodwill cannot be taken for granted.

If Kenya fails to contain the imported case, the conversation will change from “Kenya has detected Ebola” to “Kenya is transmitting Ebola.”

That distinction could be economically devastating.

The country therefore needs to demonstrate that its contact-tracing machinery is as strong as its public statements.

It is encouraging that Kenya has designated isolation and treatment capacity and trained thousands of health workers. But beds and training statistics mean little if contacts cannot be found, monitored and quarantined rapidly.

Nor should the government wait for a second confirmed case before tightening weaknesses exposed by the first.

Every passenger manifest must be reconciled. Every potentially exposed health worker must be accounted for. Every high-risk contact must be monitored through the required observation period. Border agencies must share information in real time.

Hospitals must recognise suspicious symptoms quickly. And the public must receive consistent, credible information.

Most importantly, Kenya must establish exactly how the first patient passed through its screening net.

The answer should not be buried under bureaucratic language.

If medication suppressed his symptoms, officials must explain what screening protocols can realistically detect. If procedures were not followed, those responsible must be held accountable. If the system itself has gaps, they must be fixed immediately.

This is not about blaming frontline health workers. It is about identifying systemic weaknesses before they become systemic failure.

Kenya has been given an opportunity to prove that its preparedness investments are real.

It must seize it.

The alternative is frightening: not necessarily a formal government-imposed lockdown, but something potentially just as damaging — a country increasingly isolated by other nations, airlines, travellers and businesses because confidence in its ability to contain a deadly virus has collapsed.

Kenya should not wait for that point.

The first imported case was a warning. A second case would be a test. Sustained transmission could become a national crisis.

The country's best defence is therefore not panic, border closures or empty assurances. It is fast detection, ruthless contact tracing, transparent communication and accountability for every failure exposed by this case.

Because when dealing with Ebola, there is no room for a system that works only on paper.

THE WEEKLY CARTOON



IEBC CEO battle puts 2027 election credibility at risk

KENYA'S 2027 election will be judged long before the first ballot is cast. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) must confront its troubled history, restore public confidence and ensure its next CEO is recruited transparently and without political influence.

The credibility of Kenya's 2027 General Election will be determined long before the first ballot is cast.

It will be shaped by whether Kenyans, political parties, civil society and international observers believe the electoral machinery is independent, professional, transparent and beyond political manipulation.

That is why the recruitment of the next Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Secretary and Chief Executive Officer must be treated as a matter of national consequence, not an internal administrative exercise.

The appointment comes at a particularly sensitive moment for an institution whose credibility has repeatedly been tested by political disputes, internal divisions, court challenges, procurement controversies and accusations of interference.

The IEBC cannot afford to enter the 2027 election carrying the baggage of its past.

It must demonstrate, from the recruitment of its CEO onwards, that it has learnt the lessons of previous elections.

A troubled history of electoral mistrust

Kenya's electoral commission has spent years operating under intense political scrutiny. The 2017 presidential election remains one of the clearest examples. The Supreme Court annulled the presidential election and ordered a fresh poll, citing illegalities and irregularities in the conduct of the election. The ruling placed the IEBC's procedures, technology, transmission of results and internal decision-making under unprecedented scrutiny.

The 2022 election presented a different but equally damaging institutional crisis.

Although the Supreme Court ultimately upheld President William Ruto's election after considering the consolidated presidential petitions, the final days of the election were overshadowed by a dramatic split within the IEBC itself.

Four commissioners — then Vice-Chairperson Juliana Cherera, Francis Wanderi, Justus Nyang'aya and Irene Masit — publicly distanced themselves from the presidential results announced by then-chairperson, the late Wafula Chebukati at Bomas of Kenya.

They described the final stage of the tallying and declaration process as opaque.

The disagreement was not merely political theatre. It exposed a profound weakness inside the electoral institution: the possibility that commissioners appointed to collectively manage the same election could reach fundamentally different conclusions about the credibility of its most consequential result.

The four commissioners subsequently left the commission. Cherera resigned in December 2022, while the other commissioners also departed amid the controversy and subsequent proceedings.

The episode left an uncomfortable question hanging over the IEBC: how can an electoral referee command confidence if its own officials cannot maintain institutional unity at the most critical moment?

That question remains relevant as Kenya approaches 2027.

The accusations have not stopped

The IEBC has also repeatedly faced accusations over procurement, technology, voter registration and political interference. Ahead of the 2022 election, the procurement of election technology became a major source of controversy.

Questions were raised about the Smartmatic contract and the security of the electoral technology, while accusations of attempts to manipulate the system circulated widely.

The Supreme Court, however, found that the procurement of the technology complied with the law and that IEBC had not abdicated its role in the procurement process.

The court also found that the electoral technology had been accessible for interrogation by agents of the presidential petitioners under court-supervised arrangements.

But an electoral commission cannot ignore the political consequences of persistent allegations, particularly where public confidence is concerned.

Indeed, research examining Kenya's 2022 elections found that the IEBC's internal divisions exposed the fragility of the institution and argued that politicised appointment processes were among



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Chairman Erastus Edung Etheke during a past event.

the structural weaknesses affecting the Commission.

The lesson is therefore not simply that the IEBC must defeat allegations. It must build systems so transparent and independently verifiable that allegations become considerably harder to sustain.

That is the standard Kenya should demand before 2027.

The CEO appointment is the next credibility test

The IEBC has now advertised the position of commission Secretary and CEO and is undertaking the process of identifying a substantive office holder after a period of acting leadership.

Ruth Kulundu assumed the acting position on August 5 following the expiry of Moses Sunkuli's six-month tenure.

Reports of disagreement among commissioners over the recruitment process, including concerns surrounding the shortlist prepared by KPMG, are therefore troubling.

They should not be dismissed as ordinary bureaucratic disagreements. The CEO will be at the centre of the Secretariat responsible for implementing Commission decisions and managing the machinery that supports the election.

That includes voter registration, logistics, procurement, staffing, technology, election materials, stakeholder engagement and implementation of electoral programmes.

The IEBC's own Election Operations Plan for 2025–2027 describes the Commission as the institutional guarantor of the people's democratic choice and places integrity, transparency, accountability, inclusivity and efficiency at the centre of preparations for the August 10, 2027 election.

The person appointed CEO will therefore have enormous influence over the operational environment in which those commitments are translated into reality.

The recruitment cannot consequently be merely technically compliant. It must be visibly credible.

No room for political capture

Kenya has witnessed enough controversy surrounding the perceived politicisation of electoral institutions.

The answer is not to appoint people based on which political camp is likely to approve of them.

The answer is to establish a process in which professional qualifications, experience, integrity, independence and demonstrated competence are the decisive considerations.

The IEBC Act requires the Commission Secretary to be appointed through an open, transparent and competitive process.

The commission should therefore be prepared to demonstrate that the recruitment has met that standard.

It should disclose, to the extent permitted by law, the criteria used to evaluate candidates, the stages of the process and the basis upon which the eventual candidate emerged.

The public does not need to know confidential personal information about unsuccessful applicants.

But it does deserve confidence that the person chosen was the

best-qualified candidate under objective and consistently applied criteria.

No candidate should secure the position because of political connections, ethnic considerations, personal loyalty or proximity to power.

Equally, no qualified candidate should be excluded because a political faction considers that person inconvenient.

An electoral referee cannot be perceived as belonging to either team.

The IEBC itself recognises its institutional weaknesses

The commission's own recent assessments provide another reason for caution.

IEBC has acknowledged challenges including the prolonged absence of a fully constituted Commission, inadequate funding, unfilled positions, electoral security risks and delays affecting some electoral activities. It has recommended, among other measures, filling vacancies and ensuring commissioners are recruited sufficiently ahead of general elections.

Its annual report has also recorded significant staffing gaps, with 883 staff in post against an approved establishment of 1,145 positions in the 2023–2024 reporting period.

These are not insignificant administrative details.

Running a national election involving millions of voters, tens of thousands of polling stations, thousands of election officials and several different electoral contests requires an institution that is stable, adequately staffed, properly financed and capable of making timely decisions.

The IEBC is targeting a voter register of about 28.5 million for 2027, compared with 22.1 million registered voters in 2022. It also expects the number of polling stations to rise substantially.

The scale of the task makes competent Secretariat leadership indispensable.

2027 preparations cannot be hostage to internal rivalry

The election clock is already running.

Voter registration is underway. Technology systems are being prepared. Logistics are being planned. Stakeholder engagement is ongoing. Electoral boundaries, polling stations, staffing, voter education and dispute-resolution mechanisms require sustained attention.

The Commission's Election Operations Plan contains hundreds of activities covering the electoral cycle through August 2027.

There is therefore no room for prolonged uncertainty at the top of the Secretariat.

Nor can the CEO's office become another arena for political competition.

The commissioners must recognise that their institutional credibility is larger than any individual political dispute.

Their responsibility is to the Constitution, the law and the Kenyan voter.

Independence must be demonstrated, not proclaimed

The Constitution provides independent commissions with protection from direction or control by any person or authority.

But independence is not secured merely by constitutional language.

It is demonstrated through conduct.

The IEBC must show that procurement decisions are defensible, electoral technology is independently verifiable, voter registration is auditable, recruitment is merit-based, communications are impartial and political parties are treated equally.

It must also demonstrate that government and opposition politicians are subjected to the same electoral rules.

This is particularly important as political temperatures rise ahead of 2027.

The Commission has already faced fresh allegations of corruption, political interference and voter suppression in the run-up to the election. IEBC has rejected those claims as unsubstantiated and defended the legality of its procurement and voter-registration processes.

That exchange illustrates precisely why institutional transparency matters.

The IEBC cannot control what politicians allege.

It can control whether its own systems, decisions and records are sufficiently transparent to allow those allegations to be tested against evidence.

By The Informer Media Group Editorial Team

GRAPEVINE

PS, PARASTATAL BOSS IN BREWING POWER WAR

A FRESH power war is brewing in government, with a recently transferred Principal Secretary and a parastatal boss under his new State Department reportedly locked in a bitter battle for influence.

The PS, who has been moved to his third docket since President William Ruto appointed him, is said to have rubbed the parastatal

chief the wrong way with what insiders describe as a controlling and domineering style.

But the chief, who reportedly boasts of enjoying the ear of powerful figures and is fond of name-dropping senior political players, is said to be preparing a counter-offensive to cut the PS down to size.

Grapevine has it that the feud has now spilled into political circles, with strategy teams associated with the two camps reportedly taking positions as the contest escalates.

With the two principals being kinsmen, insiders fear the simmering power struggle could soon explode into an ugly political confrontation.



State House, Nairobi.

The question on the lips of health experts and Kenyans generally is how a person who had fallen ill while in DR Congo and sought treatment there was able to travel by bus to Kampala and board a flight to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) in Nairobi

BY NJOKI MAINA

Since May 2026 when the 17th Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was confirmed caused by the Bundibugyo virus species, Kenya ramped up surveillance to ensure the deadly does not get through the country's borders.

However, the country faces a fresh Ebola scare after health authorities isolated a 20-year-old man in Wajir over suspected viral haemorrhagic fever, hours after the UK issued a travel advisory following confirmation of the country's first imported Bundibugyo Ebola case.

The man, a resident of Habaswein in Wajir South Sub-County, was isolated after developing fever, headache and cough following recent travel through the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and several parts of Kenya.

He is currently admitted at Albadar Nursing Home, where health officials are monitoring him as samples are prepared for testing at the National Public Health Virology Laboratory (NPHVL).

The suspected case has heightened concern in Wajir, coming just a day after the Ministry of Health confirmed Kenya's first imported case of Bundibugyo Ebola.

According to a police report, the man arrived in Habaswein on September 20 after travelling by trailer from the DRC through Uganda.

He told health officials that he developed fever and headache while in the DRC on September 2, where he worked as a "tan boy" on a cargo truck or trailer.

He remained in Uganda for about five days and sought medical treatment before travelling through Malaba, Nairobi and Isiolo to Habaswein.

On arrival, he was initially treated at Hilac Medical Clinic for pneumonia and septicaemia for about three days, but his condition failed to respond to treatment.

The measures included screening of passengers from DR Congo and Uganda at the country's border points and airports.

Before the first imported patient, who died two days later, arrived in the country last Saturday, October 3, 2026, Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said health authorities had screened 652,584 travellers and tested 267 samples across five laboratories.

They are the National Virology Reference Laboratory, Kenya Medical Research Institute laboratories in Nairobi



Medical workers carry out disinfection work at an Ebola treatment center in Bunia, the capital of Ituri Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, July 6, 2026. PHOTO BY COURTESY.

Ebola death, travel restrictions: Was Kenya caught napping or utter negligence?

and Kisumu, and mobile laboratories at the Busia and Lwakhakha border points with one sample testing positive.

This is commendable by any measure. However, the question on the lips of health experts and Kenyans generally is how a person who had fallen ill while in DR Congo and sought treatment there was able to travel by bus to Kampala and board a flight to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) in Nairobi.

Jambojet has moved to trace passengers and crew members who may have come into contact with Kenya's first confirmed Ebola patient.

The airline said the passenger travelled on flight JM 8523 from Entebbe to Nairobi on Saturday, October 3, 2026.

"Jambojet is aware of reports concerning a guest who travelled on Saturday 3rd October on flight JM 8523 from Entebbe to Nairobi," the airline said in a holding statement on Tuesday.

The airline said it was working closely with the Ministry of Health, Port Health Services and other relevant authorities to support the ongoing public health response.

This includes the identification and management of other guests and crew who may have been in contact with the individual.

"The health and safety of our guests, crew and staff remains our highest priority," Jambojet said.

Experts have offered varied reasons including that the patient might have been cleared by Port Health Services officers because the symptoms could have been suppressed due to medication and that authorities could have let their guard down especially after Uganda was declared free of the virus.

"When he came to Kenya he was on medication and must have taken heavy medications that helped him not to be detected at our thermal scanners at JKIA," Duale said on Wednesday during an engagement on NTV's Fixing the Nation programme.

Whichever the reason, the lapse could prove costly for the country if the virus spreads before all the contacts are traced and quarantined.

If there is an outbreak, it could see travel into the country restricted while Kenyans travelling to countries such as the United States may be required to isolate for 21 days.

While announcing the patient's death on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, Duale said the ministry had identified 28 contacts, including family members and health workers who attended to him at a Nairobi hospital and was also tracing 23 passengers and four crew members who travelled on the same flight with a view to quarantined those considered to be at high risk.

There are fears that if the virus spreads, it could put the country's isolation and treatment capacity to a stern test.

Kenya has 15 isolation and treatment units, with plans to expand this capacity to 22 facilities, prioritising counties identified as high risk.

But their capacity has come into question with experts noting that Kenyatta National Hospital, for instance, has only eight isolation beds.

However, Duale has asked Kenyans not to panic and instead follow Ebola prevention guidelines and follow reliable information, saying the country will not be caught off guard as happened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the NTV interview, he also clarified that Kenya does not have an Ebola outbreak.

According to the CS, Kenya remains vigilant and is strengthening its capacity to detect and respond to Ebola and other public health threats.

He said a total of 4,971 health workers at national and sub-national levels have received training in Ebola prevention and management.

He has, however, called for consideration of a 200-bed Level 6 regional infectious disease referral hospital to strengthen Kenya's long-term capacity to manage outbreaks and complex infectious diseases.

The development comes as the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) updated its travel advice for Kenya following confirmation of the first imported Bundibugyo Ebola case.

The UK advisory, issued on October 7, urged travellers to follow guidance from Kenyan health authorities and monitor updates from the Ministry of Health.

"On 6 October 2026, the Kenyan Ministry of Health confirmed its first imported case of Ebola," the advisory said.

The UK said Kenya was implementing contact tracing, surveillance, border screening and quarantine arrangements for people considered to have been at risk.

It also warned that travellers arriving in Kenya, particularly those from Uganda, Ethiopia and the DRC, could face enhanced health screening because of the regional Ebola situation.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged countries against imposing travel or trade restrictions on Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda following the confirmation of an imported Ebola case in Kenya.

In a statement on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus said the organisation was working with the governments of the three countries to strengthen measures aimed at identifying possible contacts and preventing further transmission of the virus.

"WHO advises against any restriction of travel to, or trade with, the affected countries based on the currently available information. We continue to closely monitor and, where necessary, verify travel and trade measures in relation to this epidemic," he added.

"WHO is supporting the governments of Kenya, the DRC, and Uganda in contact tracing, surveillance, screening, and other response measures to rapidly identify potential cases and prevent further spread of the virus," Tedros added.



Passengers alight on Jambojet's flight to Entebbe, Uganda. FILE PHOTO.



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale addressing journalists at Afya House, Nairobi, October 6, 2026.

From cataracts and glaucoma to neurosurgery, fistula repair and paediatric operations, the January camp aims to give more than 1,500 residents a chance to access treatment closer to home

BY KARISA HASSAN

A week of hope: 70 specialists to bring free surgery to Lamu

For some families in Lamu, the journey to specialist medical care can be almost as daunting as the illness itself.

A patient requiring surgery may have to think beyond the hospital gate — about the cost of transport, accommodation, specialist consultations, treatment and the possibility of spending days away from home and work.

For families already surviving on limited incomes, those costs can turn an otherwise treatable condition into a prolonged source of pain, anxiety and financial hardship.

But for one week in January, specialist medical care will be brought closer to the communities that need it most.

More than 70 medical specialists and health professionals are expected to converge in Lamu County from January 25 to 30, 2027, for a free specialist surgical camp designed to tackle unmet surgical needs while strengthening the county's health system.

The initiative, led by Rotary District 9216, the Surgical Society of Kenya (SSK) and the Lamu County Government, is expected to screen more than 1,500 people, conduct over 800 specialist assessments and perform approximately 500 surgical procedures.

It will be a week in which operating theatres, consultation rooms and health facilities become places of renewed hope for patients who may otherwise have faced long waits or struggled to raise money for specialist treatment.

The visiting team will include general surgeons, neurosurgeons, ophthalmic surgeons, gynaecologists, paediatric surgeons, urologists, anaesthetists and other healthcare professionals.

Among the procedures expected to be performed are neurosurgery, cataract and glaucoma surgery, fistula repair, paediatric surgery and other general



Specialists undertake an operation during one of the surgical camps.

surgical procedures.

But the camp is about more than the number of operations that will be performed.

For many patients, it could mean reclaiming a normal life.

A successful operation can enable someone to return to work, resume caring for children or other family members and regain independence after months or years of living with an untreated condition.

Taking the theatre to the people

Lamu's geographical realities make access to specialised healthcare particularly important.

The January initiative will therefore reach beyond Lamu Island to communities in Lamu East, Mokowe, Mpeketoni, Lamu West, Hindi,

Witu and surrounding areas.

The aim is simple: reduce the distance — both physical and financial — between patients and specialist care.

Lamu County health teams will play a central role in identifying patients, mobilising communities and facilitating referrals.

Residents with surgical conditions, people already waiting for operations and those requiring specialist assessment are being encouraged to come forward.

Importantly, the organisers say patients without medical cover will also be eligible for the services.

For a family that has delayed treatment because it could not afford the cost, the camp could represent an opportunity that would otherwise remain out of reach.

For an elderly resident struggling with poor eyesight, cataract or glaucoma surgery could mean seeing clearly again.

For a child requiring specialised surgery, it could mean avoiding years of complications.

For a woman suffering from a fistula, treatment could restore dignity and improve her ability to participate in family and community life.

And for patients with conditions requiring more specialised interventions, including neurosurgery, the presence of specialists in the county could eliminate some of the barriers associated with travelling elsewhere for treatment.

Rotarian Mwendu Mulinge, Disease Prevention and Treatment Lead for Rotary District 9216, says the ambition is to ensure that the impact of the initiative goes beyond the operating theatre.

"This camp is about creating lasting impact beyond the operating theatre."

Mulinge says surgery should not only be viewed as an immediate medical intervention, but as a means of helping patients regain their livelihoods and reduce the emotional and financial burden associated with waiting for treatment.

For someone who has been unable to work because of an untreated condition, an operation could mean the difference between dependence and self-reliance.

For families, it could mean fewer days spent

caring for a sick relative and more time earning an income.

A classroom inside the hospital

While patients will be at the heart of the January camp, another group will also benefit: Lamu's healthcare workers.

The visiting specialists will work alongside county surgeons, clinicians, nurses and theatre teams.

This will provide an opportunity for local healthcare professionals to observe specialist procedures, acquire new skills and learn from practitioners working in different areas of surgery.

The camp will also provide mentorship and hands-on learning opportunities.

Medical students and trainees will similarly have an opportunity to interact with specialists and gain practical exposure.

It is this element that organisers believe could make the camp's impact last long after the visiting doctors have left Lamu.

Instead of simply bringing experts into the county to perform operations, the model seeks to leave behind knowledge, experience and stronger professional capacity.

In this sense, every operation could become both treatment for a patient and a learning opportunity for a healthcare worker.

Lessons from Narok, Makueni and Homa Bay

The Lamu initiative will be the fourth specialist surgical camp delivered through the Rotary-SSK partnership.

The programme has previously travelled to Narok in 2023, Makueni in 2024 and Homa Bay in 2025.

The numbers from the three counties illustrate the scale of the unmet need.

In Narok, 385 patients were screened and 281 surgeries were performed while in Makueni, 1,434 people were screened and 511 surgeries undertaken.

Homa Bay recorded 621 people screened and 256 surgeries.

But the camps have produced more than surgical statistics.

They have also provided valuable insights into health problems within communities — information that can help county governments identify emerging needs and improve planning.

In Makueni, for example, specialists identified more than 40 patients with thyroid or goitre conditions.

The unusually high number prompted the county to investigate the prevalence and possible causes of goitre in the area.

That experience demonstrated how surgical outreach programmes can become an important source of health intelligence.

A camp can therefore serve two purposes at once: treating patients who need immediate attention and revealing patterns that may require longer-term public-health intervention.

From one camp to a sustainable programme

Rotary District 9216 and the Surgical Society of Kenya now hope to build on the experience by developing a model capable of supporting at least three specialist surgical camps every year.

The camps would be directed towards counties where the need for specialist surgical services is greatest.

The proposed model combines several elements — treatment, mentorship, health data, skills transfer and county-led follow-up.

That approach is intended to ensure that specialist outreach does not become a once-off event in which patients are treated and visiting teams simply leave.

Instead, the ambition is to strengthen local systems so that counties can progressively improve their ability to identify, manage and refer surgical cases.

The Lamu Specialist Surgical Camp will run from January 25 to January 30, 2027.



A patient undergoing a cataract surgery.

Court exposes fertiliser scandal, faults government for violating farmers’ rights

Judge faulted the government for failure to constitute statutory board as NCPB distributed fertiliser that failed quality tests

BY JAMES WASIKE

The government violated farmers’ rights by allowing the sale and distribution of substandard NPK fertiliser under the National Fertiliser Subsidy Programme, exposing serious failures in the regulation and quality control of agricultural inputs, the High Court has ruled.

In a landmark ruling issued on Wednesday this week, the court found

that the government unlawfully failed to regulate fertiliser as NCPB supplied farmers with substandard Kelgreen product, while KEBS tests exposed quality failures and manufacturer faced regulatory action.

Justice Gregory Mutai also found that the Cabinet Secretary responsible for agriculture acted unlawfully by failing to constitute the Fertiliser and Animal Foodstuffs Board of Kenya, a statutory body required by law.

The judge held that the failure to constitute the board was inconsistent with Articles 10(2)(c) and 129(2) of the Constitution, while the sale of fertiliser that did not match its declared composition violated farmers’ rights protected under Article 46.

The landmark ruling followed a petition by the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) after complaints emerged in March 2024 that fertiliser being distributed under the Government subsidy programme was substandard or counterfeit.

The controversy centred on Kelgreen NPK 10:26:10, manufactured by the seventh respondent and supplied to the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB), which distributed the product to farmers during the 2024 long-rains season.

Complaints from farmers and the media began emerging around March 18, 2024, prompting investigations and the suspension of distribution.

The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) inspected the manufacturer’s plant and tested samples of NPK 9:16:6, NPK 10:17:0 and NPK 10:26:10.

The tests found that the products failed to comply with KS EAS 912:2019, including requirements relating to nitrogen, phosphorus, moisture and copper content.

KEBS subsequently suspended the manufacturer’s standardisation permits and directed it to stop manufacturing and distributing the affected products.

Justice Mutai found that the fertiliser sold to farmers did not conform to the composition declared on the bags or the



KTDA Holdings National Chairman Enos Njeru and Agriculture Principal Secretary Kipronoh Rono when they flagged off the first consignment of 99,000 metric tonnes of fertiliser at the Port of Mombasa on September 8, 2026.

applicable quality standard.

“The farmers who bought subsidised fertilizer at the 4th respondent’s depots were consumers. They paid for it, and the 4th Respondent, a public entity, offered it to them,” the judge ruled.

“This court has found that the fertilizer was not of reasonable quality; it fell far short of the composition declared on the bag and of the specification the 4th Respondent had tendered for.”

The court further noted that it had been confirmed in writing that all the Kelgreen NPK 10:26:10 sold was unfit for distribution.

“The farmers’ economic interests were plainly affected,” Justice Mutai said.

The judgment places the failure to protect farmers within a wider regulatory chain involving the Government, NCPB, the standards regulator and the manufacturer.

However, the judge stopped short of imposing personal liability on individual Government officials, saying they had not been sued in their personal capacities.

“A finding of personal culpability, or of unfitness under Chapter Six, is by its nature a finding about a natural person,” he said.

The court also declined LSK’s request to direct the Directorate of Criminal

Investigations (DCI) and Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) to investigate and prosecute all those allegedly involved.

Justice Mutai noted that the agencies had already investigated the matter and charged six suspects, including the then Managing Director of NCPB, within weeks of the complaints.

“An order directing the DPP to ‘prosecute all individuals involved’ would be the very direction that Article 157(10) forbids,” he ruled.

LSK had sought compensation for all farmers affected by the substandard fertiliser. The court rejected the claim, saying the affected farmers had not been identified and their individual losses had neither been proved nor quantified.

The government told the court that farmers who had not used the fertiliser received replacements, while those who had already applied it were provided with equivalent top-dressing fertiliser.

Justice Mutai said farmers whose losses had not been made good remained free to pursue individual claims.

The court declined to stop the fertiliser subsidy programme and ordered each party to bear its own costs.



Kelgreen NPK 10:26:10

DP Kindiki urge farmers to embrace data, technology for higher yields

Deputy President says smart farming, digital farmer records and livestock tracking are transforming production, markets and agricultural services

BY KARISA HASSAN

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has urged Kenyan farmers to embrace data and technology as the Government steps up efforts to modernise agriculture, improve productivity and connect producers to markets.

Speaking at the Agriculture and Food Security Transformation Summit at the Jamhuri Park ASK Showground in Nairobi earlier this week, Kindiki said Kenya was increasingly moving towards smart and precision agriculture as

digital technologies reshape the farming sector.

“I am very happy to see technology being applied in our farming; the world is moving towards smart farming, and I have seen a lot of technology,” Kindiki said.

He cited the growing use of drones and precision farming, which enables farmers to apply fertiliser and pesticides only where they are required and in the right quantities.

“That is the future of agriculture where you apply fertiliser and pesticides to the crop that requires that input and not to apply everywhere,” he said.

Kindiki said increased investment in research and innovation had also delivered improved crop varieties, animal breeds and more efficient farming technologies.

He noted that the national farmer register had expanded dramatically, from about 300,000 farmers to 7.2 million crop farmers and three million livestock keepers.

The expanded database, he said, was enabling the government to better identify farmers, target interventions and deliver agricultural services.

The government is also rolling out livestock identification and tracking systems aimed at strengthening animal disease surveillance, combating cattle rustling and livestock theft, and allowing animals to be traced from birth to



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki holds a drone during the Agricultural and Food Security Transformation Summit in Nairobi on October 7, 2026.

slaughter.

Kindiki said 8.9 million cattle had so far been vaccinated under an ongoing programme targeting 22 million cattle

and 50 million small stock.

He said stronger disease-control systems would help Kenyan livestock meet international health requirements and open up

more export markets.

The Deputy President also highlighted reductions in the cost of key agricultural inputs, saying a 50-kilogramme bag of fertiliser had fallen from Sh7,000 to Sh2,000, while certified maize seed had dropped from Sh300 to Sh150 per kilogramme.

The price of sexed dairy cattle semen has also declined from Sh8,000 to Sh1,400 per dose, he said.

Kindiki attributed part of the gains in the agricultural sector to these interventions, noting that national milk production had risen from 4.6 billion litres to 5.2 billion litres.

He said the government’s broader objective was to build a more productive, technology-driven and commercially organised agricultural sector capable of creating jobs, improving farmer incomes and strengthening food security.

In Moi's footsteps: Ruto's bag of goodies to win over teachers ahead of 2027 polls

Presidential incumbents have often had to compromise with teachers' unions or sometimes bulldoze them to abandon their quest for better remuneration and other welfare issues especially around election time. The most memorable of such manouvres happened in October 1997 when then-President Moi tricked – some say pressurised – Ambrose Adongo, the fiery Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), to abandon a strike that was 12 days old in return for a mouth-watering pay hike of 150-200 per cent

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA,
POLITICAL EDITOR

Teachers have long been considered influential political operatives in the village, the reason why politicians, including those eyeing the presidency, always go out of their way to court them.

This has been especially so for incumbents who often have to compromise with teachers' unions or sometimes bulldoze them to abandon their quest for better remuneration and other welfare issues especially around election time.

The most memorable of such manouvres happened in October 1997 when then-President Moi tricked – some say pressurised – Ambrose Adongo, the fiery Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), to abandon a strike that was 12 days old in return for a mouth-watering pay hike of 150-200 per cent.

The political deal came two months to the elections and Moi did not want the revolt to diminish his chances of re-election.

He was to abandon it after securing victory and it was only until the late third President Mwai Kibaki became president five years later that implementation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) but after another struggle.

Ahead of next year's elections, President William Ruto appears to be borrowing from Moi's playbook as engages in a charm offensive seen as an effort to woo teachers to back his re-election.

During this year's World Teachers Day celebrations at the Kasarani Stadium ear-



A collage photo of President William Ruto (top left) addressing teachers during the 2026 World Teachers Day Celebrations, October 5, 2026.

lier this week, he followed up on promises made to teachers at State House Nairobi to the delight of teachers and their unions.

For instance, he assured them that the Career Progression Guidelines, which had been stuck at the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) due to lack of funding, will be implemented soon.

He further directed the promotion of 50,000 teachers up from 34,016, saying TSC's budget has been doubled to Sh2 billion to actualise it. This will be the largest teacher promotion exercise implemented in a single year in the country's history.

In addition, Ruto said the government will employ an additional 20, 000 teachers by December to add to the 100,000 hired since he came to power in 2022.

At the same time, Ruto cited improvement of teachers' insurance coverage under the Social Health Authority (SHA), introduction of a new system that will see their pensions paid within one week and reservation of 20 per cent of affordable homes for the educator, which will be financed through payroll deductions, as other gains they have secured under his administration.

However, not everyone was impressed by the President's goodies to teachers.

People's Party of Kenya (PPK) party leader who also doubles as the Kiharu Member of Parliament Ndindi Nyoro, for instance, questioned why their salaries should be deduct to finance the home ownership plan yet they pay the housing levy.

"William Ruto, Kenyan teachers are asking you a simple question. You are deducting money from them for the housing levy, yet they are not getting that money, and they do not have houses," the People's Party of Kenya (PPK) leader said during a rally in Igembe North.



People's Party of Kenya (PPK) leader and Kiharu Member of Parliament (MP) Ndindi Nyoro speaking to his supporters during a public rally in Laare, Igembe North Constituency, Meru County, October 5, 2026.



Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya during vetting in parliament in 2024.

High Court paves way for charging CS Oparanya in Sh2.2billion graft claims after quashing DPP's withdrawal attempt

BY JAMES WASIKE

The High Court has now paved way for the embattled Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya to face the previously dropped Sh2.2billion graft charges marking a major blow to Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Renson Ingonga after the court quashed his decision to withdraw Sh 2.2 billion intended corruption charges against CS.

In a judgement rendered by Justice Benjamin Musyoki declared the DPP's July 8, 2024 decision to review and reverse an earlier decision to charge Oparanya with corruption-related offences unconstitutional, irregular and void.

"A declaration is hereby issued that the DPP decision to review its decision to charge the Oparanya with the offences of conflict of interest, abuse of office, money laundering and conspiracy to commit an offence of corruption contained in its letter dated 8th of July 2024 was irregular and unconstitutional and it is therefore null and void," the judge ordered.

Effectively, the CS is now not off the hook from the graft charges despite the temporary reprieve in 2024 that saw him appointed to Cabinet and his smooth sailing through during vetting in Parliament.

Oparanya is now expected to face charges of conflict of interest, abuse of office, money laundering and conspiracy to commit an offence of corruption arising from allegations made against him during his tenure as Kakamega governor.

The case followed investigations by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), which alleged that Oparanya irregularly benefited by Sh56.7 million from companies that received contracts from Kakamega County between the 2013/14 and 2021/22 financial years.

The companies under investigation were linked to 60 contracts valued at more than Sh2.2 billion with EACC alleging that Oparanya received benefits and kickbacks through companies associated with him.

EACC recommended that Oparanya, his spouse, county officials and company directors be prosecuted.

The ODPP initially concurred with EACC's recommendation in December 2023.

The judge also issued an order of certiorari quashing the decision, dealing a blow to the prosecution's attempt to

close the case without charging the former Kakamega governor.

"a certiorari is hereby issued quashing the DPP's decision to review its decision to charge Oparanya with the offences of conflict of interest, abuse of office, money laundering and conspiracy to commit an offence of corruption contained in his letter dated the 8th of July 2024," Justice Musyoki stated.

However, after Oparanya's lawyers sought a review, Ingonga reversed the decision in July 2024 and directed that the file be closed for lack of sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction.

In the July 8, 2024 letter, the ODPP stated: "In the circumstances and bearing in mind the standard of proof required in criminal cases which is proof beyond any reasonable doubt, the Director of Public Prosecutions finds that it will be an uphill task to secure a conviction in this matter."

But Justice Musyoki found that the ODPP could not consider alleged fresh evidence and make a unilateral decision without involving EACC, which had conducted the investigations.

"Only after the EACC investigated the alleged fresh evidence, would the ODPP be constitutionally mandated to make a decision based on the same," the judge ruled.

"Anything short of that would be usurping the constitutional and statutory powers of the EACC, a separate constitutional and independent body."

The judge further found that the process through which the charges were withdrawn was not transparent and did not serve the public interest.

"It was shrouded in mystery and therefore worked against the public interest hence in violation of Article 157(11) of the Constitution," Justice Musyoki said.

The judge dismissed the argument that prosecutorial independence gave the DPP unlimited discretion to review the case without consulting investigators.

The court noted that although the DPP has the constitutional mandate to make prosecutorial decisions, that power must be exercised within the law and with accountability.

EACC had opposed Ingonga's decision, maintaining that its investigations had established sufficient grounds for prosecution.

It said it had not been consulted before the ODPP reversed its earlier decision to prosecute Oparanya.

Justice Musyoki, however, stopped short of declaring Oparanya's appointment as Cabinet Secretary invalid.



KAM challenges 433pc excise duty jump, warns Sh40 levy on industrial sugar will drive up production costs, squeeze businesses and ultimately hit consumers

BY NJOKI MAINA

Kenyan manufacturers have gone to court to stop a controversial 433 per cent increase in excise duty on imported industrial sugar, warning that the massive tax shock will raise production costs, threaten jobs and make everyday goods more expensive for consumers.

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has filed a petition at the High Court challenging the increase, which pushed excise duty on imported industrial sugar from Sh7.50 to Sh40 per kilogramme under the Finance Act, 2026.

The new rate came into force on July 1, immediately piling additional costs on manufacturers who rely on industrial sugar as a critical raw material.

KAM is challenging Section 36(a)(vi) of the Finance Act, arguing that the steep increase was excessive, discriminatory and introduced without adequate consultation or assessment of its impact on the manufacturing sector.

The association says the tax threatens to undermine the Government's own efforts to promote local manufacturing, create jobs and make Kenyan products competitive.

Industrial sugar is a critical input for a wide range of industries, including beverages, confectionery, pharmaceuticals and baking.

Manufacturers warn that the additional tax will inevitably filter down the production chain, putting pressure on the prices of goods purchased by ordinary Kenyans.

KAM says taxes, levies and port charges on imported industrial sugar now account for about 90 per cent of its cost, insurance and freight value, creating what it describes as an unsustainable burden for manufacturers.



President William Samoei Ruto hosts officials drawn from Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) at State House, Nairobi, April 2024.

Sugar tax shock: Manufacturers fight back in court

"No manufacturing enterprise in any economy can absorb such a shock," KAM said.

The manufacturers are also challenging the manner in which the tax increase was introduced, claiming the amendment was inserted during parliamentary debate rather than appearing in the Finance Bill as originally published.

KAM says it sought the Hansard record to establish how the amendment was introduced but did not receive the document.

The association further argues that the Government failed to undertake an adequate impact assessment or provide sufficient justification for imposing such a drastic increase on an industrial input.

The manufacturers have also questioned why pharmaceutical manufacturers and licensed sugar refineries have been exempted from the higher rate while other industries using industrial sugar must pay the full Sh40 levy.

KAM argues that the exemptions create an uneven playing field among manufacturers using the same raw material.

The association says the new tax will not necessarily protect local sugar producers because Kenyan sugar factories largely produce table sugar rather than the industrial-grade sugar required by manufacturers.

This means manufacturers cannot simply switch to locally produced sugar to escape the tax burden, KAM argues.

The association says it attempted to resolve the matter through consultations with the National Treasury, Kenya Revenue Authority and Parliament, submitting memoranda and position papers and seeking meetings with officials.

It says the efforts failed to produce a solution.

"With the avenue of amicable settlement now exhausted, and the Respondents having declined or failed to act, the daily haemorrhage of jobs, markets, contracts and productive capacity continues unabated," KAM says in its petition.

The High Court has certified the case as urgent and directed KAM to serve the Attorney-General, the National Treasury Cabinet Secretary and KRA. The matter is set for mention on October 15 for further directions.

KAM wants the court to declare the Sh40-per-kilogramme excise duty unconstitutional and unlawful and to quash the amendment.

It is also seeking restoration of the previous Sh7.50-per-kilogramme rate.

The court battle now places the government's taxation policy against its manufacturing agenda, with manufacturers warning that continued taxation of production inputs could make Kenyan goods increasingly expensive while weakening local industry's ability to compete in regional and international markets.

Tourism Fund steps up skills drive to boost Kenya's hospitality competitiveness

BY NICHOLAS WAITATHU

Kenya's hospitality industry is set for a major skills boost as the Government intensifies efforts to address workforce gaps and equip workers with competencies required to meet changing global standards.

Through the Tourism Fund (TF), the Government is implementing a nationwide Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and upskilling programme targeting workers, managers, directors and owners in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Tourism Fund Chief Executive Officer David Mwangi said RPL was providing an important pathway for workers who had acquired skills through years of experience but lacked formal qualifications to have their competencies assessed, recognised and certified.

"The Recognition of Prior Learning provides an important pathway for recognizing and validating the knowledge, skills and experience that individuals have acquired over time," Mwangi said.

He said a skilled and motivated workforce was critical to improving service delivery, visitor experiences and Kenya's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

The two-week programme is being implemented across the country in partnership with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, which provide training and assessment services.

According to Michuki National Polytechnic Chief Principal Anne Mbogo, the assessment places greater emphasis on practical competence, with 90 per cent of the assessment based on practical work and 10 per cent on theory.

She said the approach was designed to identify existing skills gaps and equip workers with modern communication and technological competencies.

"The main role of the TVET institution is to assess and establish whether what they claim to possess is actually what they can demonstrate. With that, we close the gaps



Tourism Fund board of trustees chairperson Samson Some in Kaiboi National polytechnic in Nandi County during graduation of 237 beneficiaries of upskilling programme.

with communication and technology inputs," Mbogo said.

TVET Authority Director of Training Management Lawrence Guantai said the programme was anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework and enabled workers without formal training to have their industry-acquired skills recognised and certified.

Last week, 489 beneficiaries graduated, with 237 receiving certificates at Kaiboi National Polytechnic in Nandi and 252 at Michuki National Polytechnic in Murang'a.

The programme has so far benefited more than 9,000 people, including 6,539 workers, 1,808 managers and 1,041 youth trained in content creation. The latest institutions bring the number of training centres offering the programme to 34 nationally.

Tourism Fund has also provided Sh330 million through a revolving fund administered by the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), benefiting 5,800 students pursuing hospitality courses in TVET institutions.

TF Board of Trustees chairperson Samson Some said a skilled and adaptable workforce was essential as changing consumer expectations, technology and competition continued to reshape the hospitality industry.

The programme also includes a two-day course for hospitality directors and managers focusing on leadership, supervision, decision-making and organisational performance, alongside digital content creation training for youth.

Nandi Governor Stephen Sang said strengthening skills would create employment and enterprise opportunities while improving the quality and competitiveness of hospitality services.

The programme comes amid rapid urbanisation, infrastructure development and increased investment in counties, factors expected to drive demand for modern hotels and hospitality services.



Michuki National Polytechnic Chief Principal Anne Mbogo

Court halts auction of 14 Riverside Drive property in Sh577 million dispute

BY NJOKI MAINA

The High Court has stopped the planned auction of a property at Nairobi's 14 Riverside Drive complex, ruling that the process leading to the proposed sale was defective and invalid.

Justice Moses Ado ruled in favour of Cape Holdings, setting aside warrants and auction notices that had paved the way for the sale following a long-running commercial dispute with Synergy Industrial Credit Limited.

The court also dismissed an objection by Synergy challenging its jurisdiction and ordered allegations made by the company against the court to be expunged from the record.

The ruling means any fresh attempt to auction the property must begin afresh and comply with the court's directions, including having

the reserve price determined by the court.

The dispute dates back to 2010 and arose from a transaction involving the purchase of an office block within the Riverside development.

Synergy had paid approximately Sh577 million as a deposit towards the purchase before the transaction collapsed.

The company later sought a refund, arguing that delays in completing the development had frustrated the agreement and prevented the transaction from being completed as initially envisaged.

Cape Holdings disputed the claim, maintaining that some of the delays were attributable to design changes requested by Synergy during the development process.

The disagreement subsequently escalated into a prolonged commercial dispute, with efforts eventually made to recover the disputed funds



14 Riverside Drive Complex located along Riverside Drive in Nairobi.

through the proposed auction of the property.

Cape Holdings challenged the auction process, arguing that the steps taken to facilitate the intended sale had not complied with the applicable legal requirements.

In his determination, Justice Ado found merit in the challenge and declared the auction process defective and invalid.

The judge consequently set aside the warrants and auction notices, effectively stopping the planned sale of the property.

The decision, however, does not determine the underlying financial dispute between Cape Holdings and Synergy.

Instead, it requires any future enforcement action involving the property to comply with the court's directions and applicable legal procedures.

Any subsequent auction will therefore have to start afresh, with the property's reserve price subject to determination by the court.

Bensoul teams up with Ywaya Tajiri on sensual new single ‘Mariwana’



Award-winning Kenyan singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and producer Benson Mutua Muia popularly known as Bensoul.

BY WANJIKU
WAWERU

Award-winning Kenyan singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and producer Benson Mutua Muia popularly known as Bensoul has released his latest Afro-Pop single, “Mariwana,” featuring contemporary artist Ywaya Tajiri.

The track delivers a raw and intimate narrative centred on passion, chemistry and emotional connection between partners, blending playful energy with a sensual, bass-driven sound.

Bensoul said the song is also an affirmation to women who embrace

their individuality and self-confidence.

“It’s an affirmation to women who believe in themselves and love themselves just as they are. The core of this track is about being completely present, uninhibited, and celebrating warmth, passion, and true connection in the moment,” he said.

“Mariwana” was produced by MP Jazbeatz, with sound engineering by Trevor Magak and mixing and mastering handled by Hendrick Sam.

The song begins with a stripped-back acoustic guitar before building into a fuller groove driven by bass, percussion and electric drum dynamics. Bensoul and Ywaya Tajiri deliver the

lyrics in a natural blend of English and Swahili, adding to the song’s contemporary Kenyan sound.

The release is accompanied by an official visualizer designed to complement the track’s warm and sensory mood.

The collaboration also reunites Bensoul and Ywaya Tajiri, who have previously

worked together on “Send It” and “Kesha”, both featured on Bensoul’s second studio album, *The Party & The After Party*. Tajiri co-wrote and contributed lyrics to both tracks.

“Mariwana” arrives as Bensoul continues to expand his career beyond Kenya. The multi-instrumentalist, who plays more

than 10 instruments, rose to prominence as a flagship act under Sol Generation, with hits including “Lucy” and “Nairobi.”

He has also earned a co-writing credit on Burna Boy’s Grammy-winning album *Twice As Tall* on the track “Time Flies.”

Now operating under his independent imprint

Lion of Sudah, Bensoul has performed to sold-out audiences in London, Amsterdam, Helsinki and Australia.

Meanwhile, Ywaya Tajiri, known for his work with duo Watendawili and songs such as “Chai ya Saa Kumi,” brings his distinctive harmonies and emotive vocals to the new collaboration.

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Pentagon orders US forces to prepare for possible Iran strikes

BY CORRESPONDENT

The Pentagon has ordered the US military to prepare for a possible resumption of military operations against Iran, according to US officials cited by international media, as tensions escalate following a series of developments involving American forces and Tehran.

The order does not set a date for renewed hostilities, and President Donald Trump has not made a final decision on whether to resume strikes, the reports said. However, the potential operation could come before Israel's elections later this month.

A White House official told

Axios that the US remained in a strong position, citing control of the Strait of Hormuz and what the official described as a collapsing Iranian economy.

"Iran has been decimated, and things will go one of two ways: the easy way or the hard way," the official said.

The official added that Trump "holds all the cards" and would act in what he considers the best interests of the United States.

Any renewed US strikes could target Iranian nuclear, infrastructure and energy facilities.

The developments come days after Washington withdrew a group of bombers from RAF Fairford in Britain, citing security threats to the base.

The Pentagon confirmed Sunday that the aircraft, believed to include about a dozen B-1 bombers, had been moved back to their home bases in the United States.

Trump said Monday that Washington had received intelligence about a threat to the base.

"There were some threats. And rather than tempting the enemy, we'll capture the enemy and beat the enemy," Trump told reporters.

He said the bombers had not been moved "by accident" and that the US knew who was behind the threat.

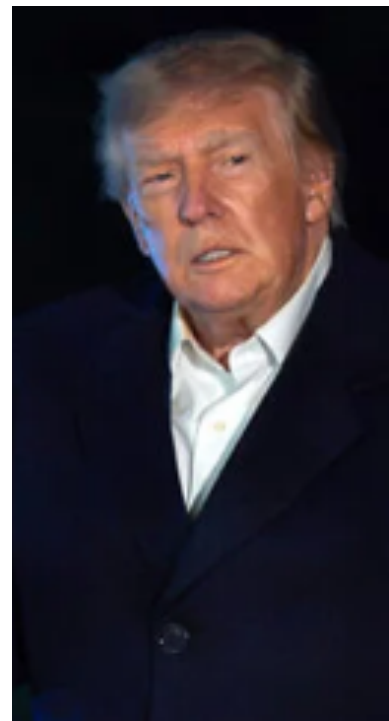
When pressed on whether Iran was linked to the threat, Trump later said those responsible "would be linked to Iran".

US media reports have suggested intelligence indicated that Iran could have been planning a drone attack.

The exact nature of the threat remains unclear, with US sources suggesting it could have involved sabotage or an attempt to strike the sensitive aircraft in anticipation of renewed hostilities.

One source close to the White House cited Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb, in which drones were smuggled into Russia and used to attack military airbases, as an example of the type of threat Washington may be considering.

The source said the suspected threat was taken "extremely seriously" as the US weighs its next move against Iran.



US President Donald Trump waves to reporters as he walks on the South Lawn upon his arrival to the White House, October 8, 2026, in Washington. PHOTO BY COURTESY.



President Salva Kiir Mayardit (right) hosts his Kenyan counterpart President William Ruto at his residence for peace process, the Tumaini Initiative and bilateral talks, November 6, 2024.

Juba copies Ruto in foreign traders' crackdown

South Sudan orders Kenyans, Ugandans, Ethiopians and other foreigners out of small retail businesses weeks after Kenya issued similar directive

BY CORRESPONDENT

South Sudan has followed Kenya's lead in cracking down on foreign nationals operating small-scale businesses, with authorities in Juba ordering Kenyans and other foreigners to quit retail trade and move into wholesale, manufacturing and larger investments.

Juba County Caretaker Commissioner Kalisto Lado Foustino said foreigners would no longer be allowed to run small shops, roadside stalls, chapati businesses,

charcoal outlets or motorcycle taxi operations in the county.

The directive, issued on Monday evening, October 5, 2026 during a meeting with traders at Kuburi Haboba market in Gudele Two, comes barely a month after President William Ruto ordered a crackdown on foreigners operating small businesses in Kenya. "Any foreigner must not be a retail trader in Juba County. No foreigner should do small business," Lado declared.

"You cannot leave your country to come and make chapati, retail kilos of onions and tomatoes. What will our

women in South Sudan sell?"

Lado said the government was not shutting its doors to foreign investors but wanted them to invest in businesses that create jobs and expand production rather than compete with ordinary South Sudanese in petty trade.

"To all Somalis, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Kenyans, Ugandans and all other nationals, we welcome you. We will give you security and have you stay without discrimination, but the retail business is only for South Sudanese," he said.

He challenged foreign traders to establish wholesale businesses from which South Sudanese could buy goods for retail, or set up factories and employ locals.

"Open factories and employ South Sudanese but you cannot leave your country to come and squeeze and compete with South Sudanese in retail business," Lado said.

The commissioner also questioned the presence of foreigners in businesses such as charcoal vending and boda boda operations, saying such activities should be left to South Sudanese youth. "A foreigner coming to sell charcoal, what then will a South Sudanese do? A foreigner want to do boda boda in Juba. What will our youth in Juba do?" he asked.

The crackdown also targets roadside and open-air traders, who have been given seven days to comply

with new requirements or risk demolition of their structures.

Traders have been ordered to construct concrete stalls, obtain licences and display their business names on electronic signs.

Lado said authorities would provide security and other services to businesses that complied with the law.

The directive bears striking similarities to Ruto's September 7, 2026 order for a crackdown on foreigners operating small shops, hawking and other businesses reserved for Kenyans.

Addressing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises traders at State House, Nairobi, Ruto directed the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry to begin enforcement, saying the government would not wait for Parliament to pass proposed legislation.

"All those traders and hawkers doing these small businesses should close down," Ruto said.

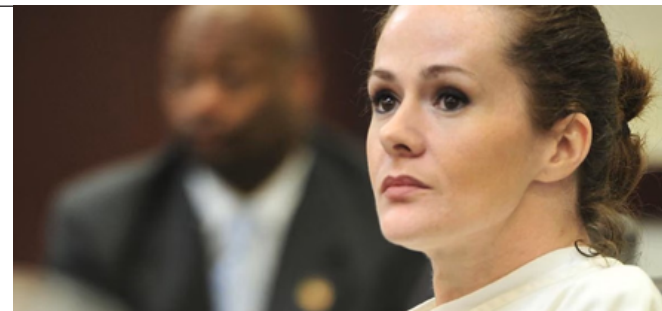
Ruto said Kenya had built investor confidence to attract serious investors capable of creating jobs and expanding production, not foreigners competing with Kenyans in petty trade.

"We have not built investor confidence so that hawkers can come to Kenya," he said.

"The investor confidence we have built is for investors to come to Kenya, not hawkers and traders."



Juba County Commissioner Kalisto Lado Foustino addresses foreign traders at Kuburi Aboba in Gudele Two, Juba County, Central Equatoria State, on Monday, October 5, 2026. PHOTO BY COURTESY.



Tennessee death row inmate Christa Pike

US death row inmate wakes up after surviving two lethal injections

BY TEAM

Tennessee death row inmate Christa Pike has regained consciousness and begun speaking days after surviving two lethal injections in a failed execution that has sparked a legal battle over the state's execution procedures.

Pike, 50, was taken unconscious but alive to hospital last Wednesday after Tennessee officials administered two doses of the barbiturate pentobarbital in an attempt to execute her.

Her lawyers said she was declared brain dead on Monday and that her legal team was informed plans were under way to remove her from life support the following day.

However, in a dramatic turn of events, Pike regained consciousness and began speaking.

"She woke up and began talking," lawyer Randy Spivey told reporters on Wednesday, saying her first words were reportedly: "Where am I?" and "Who are you?"

Pike remains in hospital in critical condition. Her lawyers said she is suffering from pneumonia and a blood clot and cannot move either of her severely injured arms.

She is also reportedly shackled to her hospital bed despite requests from medical staff that the restraints be removed.

Spivey said Pike remained cognitively confused but was

asking about people, including members of her legal team and the family of the woman she was convicted of killing.

"She is angry and confused about everything right now," he said.

The developments followed a contentious hearing in Nashville, where Judge T'Ashea Myles ordered Tennessee officials to preserve all evidence connected to the failed execution.

Pike's lawyers accused state officials of attempting to conceal evidence from the execution chamber, arguing that materials and records could be crucial if authorities seek to execute her again.

Attorney Luke Ihnen said the state had made no commitment that Pike would not face another execution.

"The state has made no promises that Pike will not be subject to a future execution," Ihnen said, warning that evidence from the failed procedure could be central to future legal challenges.

Pike is believed to be the only person known to have survived a lethal injection.

Witnesses previously described hearing her breathing heavily and irregularly after the first injection. She was subsequently taken to hospital after the second dose also failed to kill her.

Her lawyers say the extent of her injuries and whether she will regain movement in her arms remain uncertain.

Chemnung chases maiden marathon victory in Chicago

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

National 10,000m champion Loice Chemnung will be chasing her maiden marathon victory when she lines up at this weekend's Chicago Marathon, hoping to improve on last year's fourth-place finish.

The 29-year-old Kenyan made an impressive marathon debut in Chicago last year, clocking 2:18:24 to announce herself as a rising force over the 42km distance.

Chemnung had earlier gained marathon experience as a pacemaker at the Osaka Women's Marathon before returning to the Japanese race in January this year in the same role. Her teammate, Uganda's Stella Chesang, went on to win the race in 2:19:31.

Chemnung's breakthrough came at the Boston Marathon on April 20, where she finished second in 2:19:35 behind compatriot Sharon Lokedi, who won in 2:18:51.

She now returns to Chicago determined to convert her growing marathon experience into a first victory.

"I am thankful and excited to toe the line for the Chicago Marathon. I will try to improve my time from last year," Chemnung said.

Despite being relatively new to the marathon, Chemnung has built an impressive record on the road, particularly over the half marathon and 10km distances.

She won the Tokyo Legacy Half Marathon in 1:07:27 in 2024 before claiming back-to-back victories in Malaga. She improved her time from 1:05:58 in 2024 to 1:05:46 in 2025.

She was also runner-up at the Condor Executive Antrim Coast race in 2024 and 2025.

Over 10km, Chemnung has re-



Kenya Prisons' Loice Chemnung celebrates after winning the 10 000m women finals during National Athletics Championship/Trials for 2026 Commonwealth Games on June 19 2026 at Nyayo National Stadium.

corded victories in Buri, where she ran 31:26 in 2025, as well as Hong Kong (30:25) and Brasov (30:13) in 2024.

Her 2026 campaign has further underlined her credentials. After pacing in Osaka, she smashed the Barcelona Half Marathon course record with 1:04:01, lowering the previous mark of 1:04:13 set by Joyciline Jepkosgei in 2025.

She followed that performance

with her runner-up finish in Boston before returning to the track to win the Athletics Kenya National Championships 10,000m title in 31:46.90.

Diana Wanza finished second in 31:56.80, while Selah Busienei was third in 32:01.85.

Chemnung's latest outing came on June 28 when she won the Port Gentil 10km in 30:52.

Safaricom fires up Safari 7s with Sh2million boost

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

Safaricom has committed Sh2 million to the 2026 Safari 7s as thousands of rugby fans continue to converge at Nyayo National Stadium for ongoing three days of action that began on Thursday October 9, 2026 and ending tomorrow, October 11.

The sponsorship, delivered through M-PESA, will see the telecommunications company boost connectivity at the venue while bringing its digital, payment and customer-service offerings closer to fans, teams and businesses during the tournament.

Safaricom will strengthen network capacity at Nyayo to enable spectators to share and follow the matches seamlessly, while dedicated connectivity will support live broadcasting of the tournament.

"Safari 7s is an important platform for showcasing Kenya's sporting talent and bringing fans together. Our support reflects Safaricom's commitment to using technology, connectivity and digital services to enhance the experience for fans, athletes and organisers," said Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa.

"We wish Shujaa and the Lionesses success as they defend their titles."

The sponsorship builds on Safaricom's two-year partnership with the Kenya Rugby Union (KRU), valued at more than Sh100 million, through which M-PESA supports

Kenya's national Sevens teams, Shujaa and the Kenya Lionesses.

The wider partnership provides players and officials with monthly allowances, comprehensive medical insurance, airtime allowances and financial literacy programmes.

KRU chairperson Harriet Okach welcomed the latest support, saying Safaricom's investment would help improve the experience for fans while contributing to the growth of Kenyan rugby.

"We are grateful to Safaricom for its continued collaboration with KRU and its commitment to supporting the growth of rugby in Kenya," Okach said.

"Its investment in connectivity will help fans stay connected and follow the action, while its support for women's rugby through the M-PESA partnership continues to make a meaningful difference."

Fans will also have access to Safaricom's digital and financial services during the tournament. Through My OneApp, spectators will be able to access matchday tickets through the Tikohub MiniApp, alongside streaming bundles to follow the action.

Visitors can also use M-PESA GlobalPay as a payment option during the tournament.

The 28th edition of Safari 7s will feature 18 teams competing in the men's and women's categories, with defending champions Kenya Shujaa and Kenya Lionesses seeking to retain their titles.



Safari 7s players.

WADA boss warns Kenya: Clean up athletics before 2029 worlds

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

Kenya must demonstrate that it can maintain a clean athletics environment if it is to protect its credibility as host of the 2029 World Athletics Championships, World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) president Witold Banka has warned.

Banka spoke at the end of a three-day visit to Nairobi, where he held talks with President William Ruto, government and sports officials, the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (Adak), athletes and law-enforcement agencies.

His visit came weeks after Nairobi was selected to host the 2029 World Championships, becoming the first African country to stage the global event.

Quoted while speaking to the

BBC, Banka said Kenya's reputation as the "home of champions" must be matched by a strong commitment to clean sport.

"Kenya calls itself proudly 'home of champions', but every home has to have a good host and has to be clean to be credible," he said.

"We absolutely need to instill the culture of clean sport."

More than 140 Kenyan athletes, mostly distance runners, have been suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit since 2017, increasing scrutiny of the country's anti-doping efforts.

Banka said President Ruto had given a clear commitment to a zero-tolerance approach but warned that promises must be backed by action.

"Wada will monitor this situation and observe the dynamic. Action speaks louder than



President William Ruto holding talks with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President Witold Banka and Sports Ministry leadership led by Cabinet Secretary Salim Mvurya at State House, Nairobi, October 5, 2026.

words," he said.

He said discussions with Ruto also focused on strengthening Adak's independence and ensuring it receives adequate government support.

Banka said Nairobi 2029 would

provide a major test of Kenya's anti-doping system, stressing that the biggest challenge was implementation rather than the rules themselves.

Africa currently has no Wada-accredited doping laboratory after the Bloemfontein facility in South

Africa lost its accreditation in May 2025 following repeated compliance failures.

Although Kenya is interested in establishing its own laboratory, Banka cautioned that accreditation takes years and should not be relied upon as a solution for 2029.

He also rejected attempts to portray doping as an African or Kenyan problem.

"Doping has no colours and flags," he said, citing cases in countries including the United States, Germany and Poland.

Banka urged authorities to target wider doping networks, including coaches, doctors, managers and suppliers.

"We are not a superpower. We are not law enforcement," he said, urging police and other agencies to pursue those supplying prohibited substances and exploiting athletes for profit.

Court declines to shield Flexitech directors from arrest in Sh31million Naivas dispute



Directors, Flexitech Group Limited

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

The High Court has declined to issue interim orders blocking the arrest and prosecution of Flexitech Group Limited and its directors over allegations that more than Sh31 million collected through a digital payment platform was not remitted to Naivas Limited.

In a ruling delivered on October 8, 2026, following an inter partes hearing, the court rejected the petitioners' request for temporary protection against arrest, detention and prosecution pending the determination of their application.

The dispute stems from an agreement signed on February 10, 2021, under which Flexitech operated a digital layaway platform allow-

ing Naivas customers to pay for goods through the Flexpay platform and assisted payment channels.

Under the arrangement, Flexitech was required to remit the customer payments to Naivas while retaining an agreed five per cent commission.

Naivas alleges that Flexitech failed to remit the funds and instead treated the money as its own. Court documents indicate that the retailer claimed an outstanding balance of Sh31,213,730 as of March 9, 2026.

The retailer lodged a complaint accusing the petitioners of stealing by agent, contrary to Section 283 of the Penal Code.

However, Flexitech and its directors argued that the dispute was commercial in nature, with both businesses

claiming that the other owed them money.

Their lawyer told the court that Naivas had allegedly withheld loyalty points worth more than Sh20 million, despite claiming that Flexitech owed it over Sh31 million.

The petitioners warned that criminal proceedings would damage their business reputations and sought constitutional protection against prosecution.

Their lawyer further told the court that two petitioners had already been arrested and released on police bond, with charges expected, while another faced the risk of arrest.

Naivas and the other respondents opposed the application, arguing that there was insufficient justification for urgent intervention.

In declining to grant the interim orders, the court observed that

reputational damage and potential business losses, on their own, did not provide sufficient legal grounds to halt an intended prosecution.

The judge noted that applicants seeking such protection must demonstrate an imminent threat to their constitutional rights and establish grounds such as abuse of process, lack of legal foundation or a constitutional bar to prosecution.

The court clarified that it was not determining the merits of the underlying petition or the allegations against the petitioners at this stage.

The application for conservatory orders will proceed to a substantive hearing, which the court directed should be fast-tracked.

The parties agreed to an oral hearing scheduled for October 23, 2026, at 8:30am.



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