



PG 13

MPs move to end 'under-the-tree' settlements for sexual offences

Coast land war: Ruto warning raises fears of fresh invasions

There are fears that large tracts of privately owned and unoccupied land could become targets for fresh invasions by genuine landless families, opportunistic individuals and organised groups seeking to exploit the squatter question. Ruto accused some unnamed landowners of seeking to exploit the compensation process at the expense of the taxpayer. Ruto added that the government of Kenya cannot be blackmailed or forced to evict occupants' residents simply because owners hold title deeds

FULL STORY PAGE 4



President Ruto engage residents during the issuance of title deeds in Mwatate, Taita Taveta County, October 1, 2026.

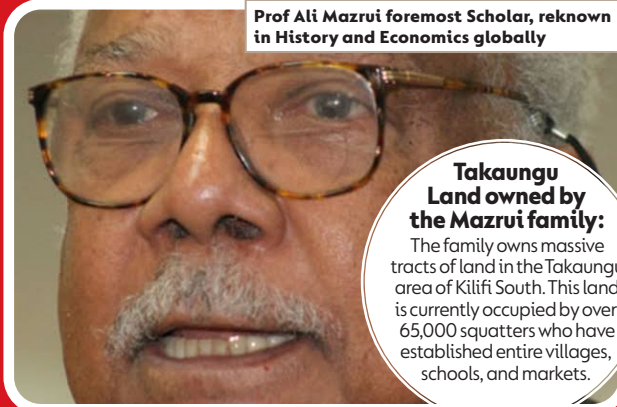
Former First Lady Her Excellency Mama Ngina Kenyatta



Gicheha Farm owned by the founding President Jomo Kenyatta's family:

This expansive property in Taita Taveta has historically been a focal point for thousands of squatters. To resolve ongoing friction, the family has previously surrendered sections of their land holdings such as several thousand acres in the Lake Jipe and Njukini areas to help resettle squatters.

Prof Ali Mazrui foremost Scholar, renowned in History and Economics globally



Takaungu Land owned by the Mazrui family:

The family owns massive tracts of land in the Takaungu area of Kilifi South. This land is currently occupied by over 65,000 squatters who have established entire villages, schools, and markets.

Basil Criticos:

Large sections of the former Taveta MP and assistant minister, Basil Criticos private properties and ranches in Taita Taveta have faced heavily concentrated squatter populations and unauthorized invasions over the years



Former Taveta MP Basil Criticos

EDUCATION

Beyond the degree: MKU searches for graduates changing lives



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POLITICAL ANALYSIS

2027 election rigging chorus continues unabated as Ruto allies cast contest as do or die affair

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THE LEADER

Sifuna gets reprieve as Linda Mwananchi clears key hurdle for 2027 Ruto showdown

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BY KARISA HASSAN

President William Ruto has announced an agreement with Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote to develop a pipeline linking Kenya's oilfields in Turkana to Lamu, paving the way for the country to transport its crude oil to the Coast.

Ruto said Kenya expects to begin extracting crude oil in Turkana by December, with the proposed pipeline designed to ensure the oil can reach Lamu even if initial production volumes are low.

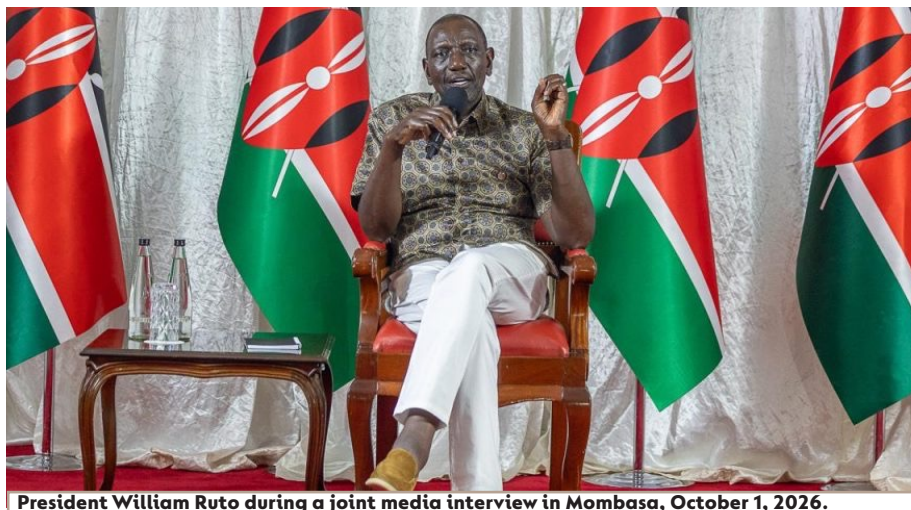
"We have agreed with Dangote that we will invest in a pipeline from Turkana to Lamu so that, however small the quantity, we can transport our crude oil to Lamu," Ruto said during a joint interview in Mombasa.

The President said the planned investment would be developed on government land, with the State having secured about 9,000 acres in Lamu and planning to acquire a further 3,000 acres. He said the government would compensate residents whose land may be required for the project.

Ruto also announced plans to establish a Special Economic Zone covering approximately 5,000 acres, as the government seeks to position Lamu as a major hub for energy, industry and investment.

He described the scale of the planned investment as significant for Kenya's economy, estimating that the facility could account for about 12 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The President said the investment could also help raise Kenya's foreign direct investment inflows to between \$6



President William Ruto during a joint media interview in Mombasa, October 1, 2026.

Ruto: Kenya, Dangote agree on Turkana-Lamu oil pipeline

billion and \$7 billion (about Sh778 billion to Sh908 billion) next year.

Ruto said the government was committed to ensuring Kenya benefits from its natural resources, insisting that minerals should not leave the country without being processed.

He said local value addition would remain a priority in partnerships with investors in the mining sector, with communities expected to benefit from employment and economic opportunities created by such projects.

The president also renewed his pledge to tackle the long-running squatter problem along the Coast, promising to issue more title deeds before the end of the year.

"I will return here before December to issue more title deeds," Ruto said, adding that his administration intended to ensure the issue was "significantly and substantially addressed" before 2027.

On youth employment, Ruto said more than 300,000 young Kenyans are currently earning through online work, ICT hubs, Jitume laboratories and Business Process Outsourcing centres.

He also said about 680,000 Kenyans had secured employment opportunities abroad over the past three to four years, urging more young people to use the National Employment Authority to access opportunities in foreign labour markets.

Police officer found dead as narcotics crackdown nets four suspects

BY TEAM

A police officer was found dead in an apparent suicide incident in Murang'a as authorities separately arrested four suspects and recovered more than 66 kilogrammes of cannabis in a coordinated narcotics crackdown in Busia and Bungoma counties.

Corporal Patrick Munene Muriithi, attached to the Administration Police Service (APS) headquarters in Ithanga/Kakuzi, Murang'a County, was found hanging from a tree behind the Mugumo Assistant Chief's office on Thursday, October 1, 2026.

According to preliminary police reports, the officer had visited the Assistant Chief's compound at about 4:30pm, where they held a general conversation before he left. The administrator reportedly noticed nothing unusual during their interaction.

The officer was later found hanging from a tree using a sisal rope. Investigators processed and documented the scene before his body was moved to General Kago Mortuary, pending a postmortem examination.

Police said there were no visible injuries on the body and no suicide note was recovered. The circumstances and possible motive remain under investigation.

The death comes amid renewed concern over mental health and trauma within the police service, with officials acknowledging that officers face intense occupational pressures, including exposure to violence, difficult working conditions, financial challenges, family disputes and transfers that may separate them from support networks.

Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja has previously directed that cases involving officers experiencing mental-health challenges be addressed promptly. Police authorities and the National Police Service Commission have also established counselling and outreach programmes targeting mental health and substance-abuse challenges among officers.

The developments in Murang'a came as detectives intensified the fight against narcotics trafficking in western Kenya, arresting four suspects and recovering cannabis worth an estimated Sh1.98 million.

In Busia, detectives from the National Anti-Narcotics Investigation Bureau intercepted a Fuso lorry, KDU 981Y, along the Busia-Kisumu Highway. A search uncovered 14 bales of cannabis weighing 59.15kg, concealed beneath dry cassava in two sacks. The consignment is estimated to have a street value of Sh1.77 million.

Evans Josiah Mugambi and Moses Murambula Odwera were arrested and are expected to face charges.

In neighbouring Bungoma, officers patrolling the Siritanyi-Mateka Road stopped a grey Toyota Probox, KCK 089M. Five bales of cannabis weighing 7kg were allegedly recovered from the vehicle, leading to the arrest of Boaz Kwamba and Peter Ndungu.

The four suspects remain in custody as police process them for arraignment, while the vehicles and recovered drugs have been secured as exhibits.



A condoned off scene of crime. FILE PHOTO.

Babu Owino to hold candle-lighting ceremony for Raila at Jacaranda

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

Embakasi East MP Babu Owino will host a candle-lighting ceremony at Jacaranda Grounds to mark the first anniversary of the death of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

Babu has invited Kenyans to attend the afternoon gathering, saying Jacaranda Grounds holds a special place in Raila's political journey and remains associated with memories of the former Prime Minister and his supporters.

"I have organised a candle-lighting ceremony at Jacaranda Grounds, Embakasi East, in honour of our departed BABA," Babu said in a statement.

He described Jacaranda as a place that was "very dear to Baba", saying it held memories of Raila's political journey, his supporters and his efforts for what he termed a better Kenya.

"You are all welcome to join us as we come together to remember, honour and celebrate the life and legacy of the ENIG-



The late Raila Odinga and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino

MA," the MP said.

Raila died on October 15, 2025, aged 80, while receiving medical treatment in India. His death triggered nationwide mourning and was followed by a state funeral before he was buried at his family home in Bondo, Siaya County, next to his father, former Vice-President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga.

Babu's event is among several activities planned to commemorate the former Prime Minister's first death anniversary.

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)

is leading a nationwide candle-lighting exercise as part of its month-long programme dubbed "Mwezi wa Baba", which is dedicated to remembering Raila and his contribution to the country.

The party has asked Kenyans to light candles simultaneously at 6pm on the designated day, either at organised venues or from wherever they are.

In Nairobi, ODM has designated Uhuru Park as the main venue, with activities scheduled to begin at 3pm. Other venues include Treasury Square

in Mombasa and Kisumu Central Square.

The candle-lighting ceremonies are expected to provide a platform for Raila's supporters and members of the public to commemorate his life and political legacy.

Babu's Jacaranda gathering will, however, be separate from the main ODM programme, offering another venue for supporters and members of the public to pay tribute to the late opposition leader.

Meanwhile, the Raila Odinga Memorial National Steering Committee, established outside ODM structures, is preparing a separate programme led by the family.

The committee has announced that Mama Ida Odinga will lead a candle-lighting ceremony at Kang'o ka Jaramogi in Bondo on October 8.

The Bondo event will be held at the site where Raila was laid to rest beside Jaramogi, adding a family dimension to the wider national commemorations marking one year since his death.



Lawrence Lorunyei is awarded a cheque of Sh6.5million after he was successfully nominated and won the alumni award which was announced in July 2025 at MKU Graduation Pavilion by MKU Chairman and Founder, Prof. Simon Gicharu flanked by Vice Chancellor Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi. FILE PHOTO.

Beyond the degree: MKU searches for graduates changing lives

The Mount Kenya University (MKU) has opened nominations for its 2026 Alumni Awards, casting its net across Kenya and the diaspora in search of graduates whose work has made a meaningful and lasting difference to society. At the centre of the search is a USD50,000 prize — about Sh6.47 million — for the alumnus judged to have demonstrated outstanding impact

BY NJOKI MAINA

A university degree can open the door to a career. But sometimes, what a graduate does with that opportunity can open doors for an entire community.

There is the entrepreneur who turns a small idea into jobs for dozens of young people. The doctor, teacher or lawyer whose professional work quietly changes lives. The community organiser who spends years solving problems that rarely make the headlines. And the innovator who sees an everyday challenge and creates a solution where others see none.

These are the stories Mount Kenya University (MKU) wants to find.

The university has opened nominations for its 2026 Alumni Awards, casting its net across Kenya and the diaspora in search of graduates whose work has made a meaningful and lasting difference to society.

At the centre of the search is a USD50,000 prize — about Sh6.47 million — for the alumnus judged to have demonstrated outstanding impact.

But MKU says the award is not a contest to find the graduate with the biggest company, highest office or most impressive title.

“This is not simply a

search for the most successful alumnus. It is a search for impact,” the university’s Alumni Directorate says.

That distinction gives the award a distinctly human dimension.

The person being sought could be working far from the limelight, using skills acquired at university to transform lives in a village, neighbourhood or workplace.

They could be creating employment through an expanding enterprise, developing an innovation to tackle a social problem, influencing public policy or empowering people who might otherwise have been left behind.

Their impact could be measured not merely in money or professional status, but in the people whose lives have been changed by their work.

MKU is also looking beyond Kenya’s borders.

Alumni living and working in the diaspora are eligible for nomination, reflecting the university’s belief that the influence of its graduates can travel well beyond the campuses where their academic journeys began.

For the university, the award is ultimately about answering a simple question: What happens after the graduation gown comes off?

The 2026 awards seek graduates whose education has translated into action — people using their knowledge, skills and opportunities to improve communities, ad-

vance their professions, build businesses and create solutions.

Nominees must be MKU graduates with proven and sustainable contributions in a specific area of impact. They must also demonstrate integrity, professionalism and values consistent with the university’s mission.

The eventual winner will receive the Sh6.47 million prize, a certificate of recognition and something that may prove even more enduring — permanent recognition on the MKU alumni wall of honour.

“The award therefore offers more than financial recognition. It creates a lasting record of an alumnus whose work has made a difference,” the Alumni Directorate says.

Nominations opened on September 1, 2026 and will culminate in a celebration on December 4, 2026 when MKU is scheduled to hold its 30th graduation ceremony and honour the winner.

By then, somewhere among thousands of graduates scattered across Kenya and the world, one alumnus will stand out.

Not necessarily because they became the richest, most famous or most powerful.

But because somewhere along the journey after graduation, their education became someone else’s opportunity, hope or second chance.

Proposed contentious law could bar teachers from commercial venture

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

Teachers running farms, shops, transport businesses or offering consultancy services could face disciplinary action under proposed changes to the law governing Kenya’s teaching profession.

The Teachers Service Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2026, sponsored by National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung’wah, proposes to list “engaging in other gainful employment” among disciplinary offences for teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

The proposal could affect thousands of educators who undertake commercial activities to supplement their employment income, including farming, retail businesses and



Eveleen Mitei, acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

professional consultancy.

The Bill does not, however, provide a detailed list of the commercial activities that would constitute prohibited gainful employment, leaving questions over how the provision would apply to teachers with investments or businesses outside their teaching duties.

The proposed reforms are part of wider changes

seeking to strengthen professional standards, teacher discipline and learner protection.

They also introduce sexual exploitation as a specific form of misconduct. The Bill defines this to include demanding sexual acts from learners in exchange for academic grades, pocket money, school fees, learning materials, protection from punishment, gifts, food, shelter or other basic needs.

Other conduct targeted includes exposing learners to pornography or illicit drugs, cyberbullying, negligence, chronic absenteeism, insubordination and violations of procurement rules.

Teachers facing serious criminal charges could also be suspended from active duty and placed on half basic salary under the proposed framework.

University lecturers strike paralyse public universities over Sh2.2billion CBA dispute

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

Teaching and learning in public universities across the country has been disrupted after lecturers and other university staff began a nationwide strike over the stalled implementation of the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The strike by the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU), Kenya University Staff Union (KUSU) and Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) took effect at midnight after negotiations with the Inter-Public Universities Councils Consultative Forum (IPUCCF) failed to produce a settlement.

The unions rejected the latest employer proposal, particularly an annual four per cent salary adjustment, which they said was inadequate and failed to address their concerns over salaries, allowances, medical cover and staffing.

They also accused university councils, the Ministry of Education and the Treasury of failing to honour commitments contained in a return-to-work formula signed on November 5, 2025.

The dispute intensified during talks at Machakos University on Thursday, with the unions declaring the latest IPUCCF counter-offer unacceptable.

“The three unions wish to state as follows: That UASU, KUSU and KUDHEIHA reject in total the counter-offer from IPUCCF,” the unions said.

They argued that a four per cent annual increment was below the prevailing inflation rate and would not adequately cushion employees against the rising cost of living.

The employers’ proposal to the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) provides for an 8.25 per cent cumulative increase in basic salaries over the four-year CBA period, implemented at two per cent annually.

The proposal was significantly below the unions’ demands. UASU sought salary increases ranging between 36 and 68 per cent, while KUSU proposed increases of between 36 and 113 per cent.

KUDHEIHA demanded increases ranging from 75 to 193 per cent.

IPUCCF also proposed a three per cent increase in house allowances, saying the allowance had remained unchanged since the 2010–2013 CBA despite inflation and rising rental costs.



UASU and KUSU members have vowed to continue the ongoing nationwide by lecturers strike until all dues are cleared.

The unions, however, said the offer failed to address broader concerns, including the need to harmonise allowances under the previous CBA and improve medical benefits.

Staff shortages have also emerged as a major sticking point, with the unions accusing universities of failing to recruit enough academic staff despite rapidly rising student enrolment.

They said the new agreement should provide for recruitment to match the growing number of students in public universities.

The strike follows months of negotiations and a seven-day strike notice issued after the parties failed to agree on the new CBA.

President William Ruto has meanwhile said the Government will engage the lecturers to prevent prolonged disruption of university education.

“Those university lecturers who have threatened to go on strike, we will talk to them,” Ruto said during a media interview in Mombasa.

The President acknowledged that some of the grievances predate his administration, noting that lecturers were raising issues dating back to 2017. He said his administration would nevertheless take responsibility for addressing outstanding matters inherited from previous governments.

Meanwhile, the Kenya Union of Technical and Vocational Education Trainers (KUTVET) has suspended its planned strike for 14 days to allow further negotiations with the Ministry of Education.

The union is protesting what it calls rushed curriculum reviews, concerns over national examinations administered by the TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC), arbitrary transfers and promotions and shortcomings in medical cover.

KUTVET has warned that its members could down their tools on October 19, 2026, if the outstanding grievances are not resolved.

Coast land war: Ruto warning raises fears of fresh invasions

BY TEAM

President William Ruto's renewed intervention in the Coast land question has opened a new front in a decades-old ownership dispute — raising fears that large tracts of unoccupied land could become targets for fresh invasions by genuine landless families, opportunistic individuals and organised groups seeking to exploit the squatter question.

The concern comes after President Ruto warned wealthy landowners in Mombasa against using title deeds to evict residents who have lived on disputed parcels for years, declaring that his government would not allow Coast residents to remain squatters because of ownership disputes.

But while the president's remarks were directed at resolving historical grievances, they have also revived questions about how the government will distinguish genuine squatters with legitimate historical claims from individuals who may seek to occupy private property in the belief that the state will eventually regularise their occupation.

The Coast has a long and complicated history of land disputes involving absentee landlords, tenancy-at-will, historical injustices, contested titles and allegations of illegal acquisition.

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission linked land injustices to colonial-era dispossession, illegal alienation of individual and community land, forceful evictions and land grabbing.

The National Land Commission (NLC) has also identified tenancy-at-will, absentee landlords, insecurity of tenure, disputes and displacement as longstanding problems affecting coastal communities.

Late last month, the NLC held public participation forums in Mombasa and Kwale on historical land injustices and launched research into the Coast's unique tenancy-at-will system.

That history has, however, produced another recurring problem: invasions of land whose ownership is contested or whose owners are absent.

A decade ago, reports documented widespread land invasions and irregular occupations in Kilifi, Mombasa and Taita-Taveta, with thousands of people claiming ancestral rights over properties registered in the names of local and foreign companies.

There have also been cases in which courts have been asked to determine whether long-term occupants are squatters, beneficiaries of historical land injustices or trespassers on privately registered property.

In one case involving land in Taita-Taveta, a private company told the Environment and Land Court that part of its property had been invaded by squatters, while the dispute proceeded through the courts.

The legal battles illustrate the danger of treating every occupant of disputed land as either a victim or an invader before ownership and historical claims have been independently established.



President Ruto engage residents during the issuance of title deeds in Mwatate, Taita Taveta County, October 1, 2026.

Ruto, however, has taken a firm political position on the immediate problem of residents facing eviction.

"You will not be given billions of money," he told landowners whom he accused of demanding huge compensation, challenging title holders to produce receipts showing how much they paid for disputed properties.

"What I have told them is, come and let us sit down. We will give you money, but these citizens will not lose those plots," he said.

The president said the government could not accept a situation in which a title deed was used to remove residents from homes where they had lived for years.

He has pledged to return to Mombasa within two months to issue more title deeds and said the government had allocated Sh10 billion to address the Coast squatter problem, including compensation and settlement measures.

During his current Coast tour, the government is targeting hundreds of thousands of title deeds across the six coastal counties.

Yet the scale of the intervention has created a difficult balancing act.

There are fears that the current directive aimed at settling genuine historical claims might create an

incentive for fresh occupation of private property.

The NLC's current work is expected to play a crucial role. Its historical-injustice process covers claims involving communities and individuals who allege that they were dispossessed through unlawful or unfair processes. The Commission has already handled numerous Coast-related cases involving squatters, tenancy-at-will and contested land ownership.

The stakes are particularly high as major investments arrive in the region.

The proposed Sh2 trillion East African oil refinery in Lamu, together with industrial and infrastructure projects, has already brought land ownership, compensation and resettlement questions back into sharp focus. Residents of Chandavai and Magogoni have gone to court over land earmarked for the refinery, arguing that their families have occupied and developed the area for generations.

Meanwhile, parliament has previously raised concerns over the vulnerability of unoccupied public land at the Coast.

A parliamentary committee found that some Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) parcels had either been invaded by squatters or were vulnerable to grabbing because they were idle or lacked adequate documentation.

The president has been on a weeklong Coastal

region tour and announced that the government is targeting to issue a total of 300,000 title deeds across the region during his development tour this week.

"Issued 31,318 title deeds to residents in land settlement schemes across Taveta, Voi and Mwatate constituencies in Taita-Taveta County," the president posted on his X handle account on October 1, 2026.

He warned landowners saying they would be required to produce valid ownership documents or risk losing their claims over the land, seemingly questioning the legitimacy of some titles.

"Kuna watu mabwenyenye wajeuri ambao nimezungumza nao...wacha mimi niwaeleze leo, nyinyi mabwenyenye wajeuri na watu wa dhara... hamuezi hangaisha wananchi ambao wanaishi sasa kama maskuota na nyinyi mnawasumbua na title... nyinyi mko na hatimiliki mliopata kwa njia sio za halali," said Ruto.

Ruto said his administration would stand with ordinary Kenyans facing harassment from wealthy landowners, insisting that the government would not be blackmailed over the matter.

"Na mnaniskia popote pale mlipo...serikali ya Kenya haiwezi kuwa blackmailed...hiyo tittle nimewaambia njooni tuketi nitawapatia pesa lakini hao wananchi hawatatoka kwa mashamba yao," he said.

NLC vows to pursue Coast land injustices despite decade-long cases

BY KARISA HASSAN

The National Land Commission (NLC) has pledged to pursue historical land injustices affecting Coast residents, warning that some disputes could take more than 10 years to resolve.

NLC Chairman Dr Abdullahi Saggaf Alawy said the commission, appointed by President William Ruto and six months into its term, had organised itself to address longstanding grievances over land ownership and access.

Speaking in Mombasa during the launch of the Tenants-at-Will report and public participation on Historical Land Injustices (HLI), alongside the review of the Grants and Disposition Regulations, Alawy said the commission was committed to finding lasting solutions.

"We are in Mombasa today to

discuss a historical injustice that affects those who own land and those who do not, its causes, the research behind it and the answers," he said.

He described the tenants-at-will problem as a national issue that had become chronic at the Coast, saying resolving it would require sound law, Government goodwill and diligence from citizens.

Alawy disclosed that he had personally experienced a land dispute that was eventually resolved after pursuing it through the NLC and other State agencies.

"I am sad to say that even I am one of those who suffered, but it ended because we followed it up," he said.

He urged residents with pending cases not to lose hope and advised them to keep proper ownership documents.

"Land problems are not solved in one month or one year. They take



National Land Commission Chairman Dr Abdullahi Saggaf Alawy speaking in Mombasa, September 28, 2026.

time, so let us be patient and wise, and God willing, we will succeed," he said.

At the forum, Rajab Sumba traced the Coast land crisis to independence, arguing that the Government should have taken over both the people and land they occupied.

He cited land held under waqf by Liwali Salim Bin Khalfan, saying transfers to his family in 2016 caused hardship to residents.

"A citizen takes pride in land, but we cannot because we have none," Sumba said. Frere Town Descendants chairman Matano Andrew Mwambila said residents had lost land without their consent.

"Our land has been taken without our knowledge and without our permission," he said, calling for the return of land he said Frere Town residents had occupied for more than 200 years.



President William Ruto and First Lady Rachel Ruto hosts Chivayo during Charlene Ruto's engagement ceremony in Kilgoris, 2026.



Wicknell Chivayo and Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema

Wicknell Chivayo: Controversial ex-convict who became a darling of African presidents

BY TEAM

Wicknell Chivayo's life moved between extremes — from a prison cell in Zimbabwe to the corridors of power, from a troubled past in the courts to multimillion-dollar business ambitions, and from humble beginnings to a world of private jets, Rolls-Royces and presidential handshakes.

His sudden death has now brought that extraordinary journey to an abrupt end.

Chivayo, 43, his wife Lucy Muteke and four others died on Wednesday after their helicopter crashed in the Marondera area, about 70 kilometres east of Harare. Zimbabwean authorities said there were no survivors, with investigations into the cause of the crash continuing.

But while Zimbabwe mourned the businessman, his death also reopened questions about the extraordinary wealth he accumulated, the political connections he cultivated across Africa and the controversies that followed him.

Few images captured his unusual rise better than those he himself posted on social media — posing beside presidents, displaying luxury cars, travelling in private aircraft and handing out expensive gifts to celebrities, musicians and religious leaders.

He cultivated the persona of “Sir Wicknell”, despite never having been awarded a British knighthood.

His relationship with Kenya's President William Ruto was among the most visible of his regional political connections.

Ruto described him after his death as a “dear friend”, saying he would remember Chivayo for his friendship, energy and belief in Africa's potential.

The friendship was not merely ceremonial.

Chivayo became a familiar figure at State House in Nairobi and other high-level events involving the President. He publicly shared photographs of meetings with Ruto and First Lady Rachel Ruto and, in August, filmed Ruto personally driving him to a helipad at the President's home in Kilgoris, Narok County.

In September, Chivayo claimed after a dinner meeting with Ruto that his long-standing plan to invest US\$200 million in Kenya through



Tanzanian President Suluhu Hassan hosting Wicknell Chivayo

infrastructure projects was finally taking shape.

There was, however, no official confirmation from State House of the investment announcement.

His Kenyan activities attracted renewed attention in June when reports linked his company, IMC Construction Kenya, to a consortium reportedly associated with the proposed expansion of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

The reported project was valued at about Sh376 billion.

But Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir publicly denied the reports, saying Chivayo's company had not participated in the procurement process and had no role in the project.

That episode illustrated the peculiar world Chivayo inhabited — where claims of vast business opportunities, political access and presidential friendships often travelled together.

He had cultivated similar relationships elsewhere.

He was publicly associated with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa and had displayed photographs with leaders including Zambia's Hakainde Hichilema and Tanzania's Samia Suluhu Hassan, as well as Eswatini's King Mswati III. His ambitions extended into energy and infrastructure projects across the region.

Yet the man seen dining with presidents had another chapter to his story.

In 2005, Zimbabwe's High Court sentenced Chivayo to five years in prison after convicting him in a money-laundering case involving R837,000.

Two years were conditionally suspended, leaving him to serve an effective three-year term at Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison.

He later challenged the conviction, with the appeal complicated by missing court records. Later reporting says the conviction was eventually overturned on appeal.

That legal history is important because it complicates the easy description of Chivayo as simply an “ex-convict”. He was convicted and imprisoned, but the conviction was subsequently overturned.

His later business career produced another major controversy.

Through Intratrek Zimbabwe, Chivayo became involved in the proposed 100MW Gwanda Solar Project. The project was dogged by delays and legal disputes, including criminal proceedings over millions of dollars in payments.

But in March 2023, Chivayo and Intratrek were acquitted in the Gwanda case after a magistrate found that the prosecution had been unreasonably delayed.

None of those legal outcomes, however, answered the question that continued to fascinate Zimbabweans: where exactly did the extraordinary wealth come from?

Chivayo rarely appeared interested in hiding his riches.

He flaunted fleets of luxury vehicles, including Rolls-Royces, Bentleys, Lamborghinis and Mercedes-Maybachs. He publicised multimillion-dollar gifts and cultivated an image of a man who could spend without limits.

He also owned or was associated with luxury properties and private aviation, while his social-media pages became a running catalogue of wealth and influence.

To his admirers, he was a self-made businessman and generous philanthropist who used his success to help others.

To critics, his spectacular rise against the backdrop of Zimbabwe's economic hardships raised uncomfortable questions about the intersection between political connections, public contracts and private wealth.

Those questions became particularly sharp because of his closeness to figures associated with Zimbabwe's ruling establishment and his involvement in government-linked projects.

Chivayo repeatedly denied wrongdoing, and several of the most prominent criminal proceedings against him ended in acquittal or the overturning of earlier convictions.

His death has left behind a complicated legacy.

In Kenya, that scrutiny had increasingly focused on why a Zimbabwean businessman had such unusually close access to the country's highest political office and what business interests lay behind his growing presence.

Chivayo died as he had lived — surrounded by extraordinary wealth, power and mystery.

The man who once documented his meetings with presidents and his extravagant lifestyle on social media is gone.

But the questions surrounding the remarkable journey from Chikurubi prison to presidential circles are likely to remain.

From prison to Rolls-Royces: The mystery behind Chivayo's fortune

BY CORRESPONDENT

Wicknell Chivayo's transformation from a convicted prisoner to one of Zimbabwe's most flamboyant businessmen remains one of the most striking parts of his story.

In 2005, Chivayo was sentenced by Zimbabwe's High Court to five years in prison after being convicted in a money-laundering case involving R837,000. Two years were suspended, leaving him

with an effective three-year prison term, which he served at Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison.

But the conviction did not end his ambitions.

Chivayo later challenged the verdict, arguing that missing court records and delays had compromised his appeal. His conviction was eventually overturned, according to later reporting.

He emerged to build a business empire around energy and infrastructure, most notably



Zimbabwean business mogul the late “Sir” Wicknell Chivayo meets President Ruto and DP Kindiki at Sagana State Lodge, Nyeri. FILE PHOTO.

through Intratrek Zimbabwe.

The proposed Gwanda Solar Project became a defining episode. Chivayo and his company faced criminal proceedings over payments linked to the project but were eventually acquitted in 2023 after a court cited delays in the prosecution.

Then came the extraordinary lifestyle.

Chivayo displayed Rolls-Royces, Bentleys, Lamborghinis and Mercedes-Maybachs, travelled in private aircraft and built lavish

homes.

His social-media accounts showed him giving expensive cars and large sums of money to musicians, religious leaders and public figures.

He called himself “Sir Wicknell” and appeared to revel in the attention.

Yet the source and scale of his wealth remained a subject of fascination and controversy in Zimbabwe.



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From left to right: Wajir Woman Representative Fatuma Abdi Jehow, Kapseret MP Oscar Sudi, Tiaty MP William Kamtet and Belgut MP Nelson Koech.

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA

Claims Ugandans are being registered to vote in Kenya's 2027 General Election in which President William Ruto will be seeking a second term amid fierce opposition and Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale's assertion that they are ready to import voters from Somalia continues a trend in which his allies have depicted the race as a do or die affair.

For several months, Ruto's allies have declared they will use various means to rig the outcome if it does not favour him.

In July last year, Wajir Woman Representative Fatuma Abdi Jehow told residents during the 60th anniversary of Wajir High School that they will use every means to manipulate the presidential election results to ensure Ruto returns to State House.

"As MPs from North Eastern, as I speak from Wajir, we don't talk much. When it comes to the President, we say two terms. We are just waiting for the ballot, even if we don't have votes, we will steal for him. That's no secret," she said.

At the weekend, Duale while commenting on the lifting of vetting procedures for those seeking IDs, suggested it now allows them to import voters from neighbouring Somalia even as he boasted Muslim and pas-

2027 election rigging chorus continues unabated as Ruto allies cast contest as do or die affair

troist communities already have the numbers to defeat the Opposition.

He dismissed former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's position that the Mt Kenya region will deliver eight million votes, saying it was only able to give Ruto three million votes in 2022.

"We have the figures. At night we do the maths, we use the IEBC register, and we compare. Sifuna only has Bungoma County, while Kalonzo only has three counties," Duale told a meeting in Mombasa.

Kapseret MP Oscar Sudi, a member of Ruto's inner circle has previously claimed they have a plan to ensure he wins a second term.

"Those saying Ruto must go, there is nowhere we are going. In this country, there is no president who has only served for five years. He will not ...if we are doing what? Do you think this country belongs to you?" posed Sudi.

Tiaty MP William Kamtet was even more direct, stating: "I come from county 24. We, the people of Baringo we know the history of 24 years in power (Moi's presidency). We are the people

who know how to manufacture a President to serve for 24 years. If they play, we will tell the President to continue," said Kamket.

Belgut MP Nelson Koech, another Ruto ally, has also been quoted as saying: "Who told you we will serve one term? Kibaki and Uhuru did not serve one term. Do you think we are fools to serve one term when it is our turn? We will serve two terms."

UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar also recently stirred controversy when he claimed they will ensure even dead voters cast their ballots.

However, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki and even Ruto himself have downplayed such assertions.

"Hatutaki William Samoei Ruto ashinde kura kwa njia ya mkato. Tunataka ashinde kura kwa mlango wa mbele. We must protect our democracy. We must protect our electoral process. We must protect our institutions. We must advocate for free, fair elections," Mudavadi said in early September.

numbers by listing Ugandan nationals.

Members of the Sabaot and Sebei communities straddle the border between Kenya and Uganda.

However, while it has not responded to Waihenya's letter, IEBC chairman Erastus Etheke has termed the reports "unsubstantiated and untrue."

"...registration is a regulated statutory process conducted under the oversight and authority of the Commission. The exercise is undertaken in accordance with the decisions approved by the Commission Plenary and the applicable law. These include: the designation and Gazettement of registration centers where registration shall take place, the KITs to be used and their movement schedules, appointment and deployment of Registration Officers and the applicable timelines. These measures ensure that voter registration is conducted in a structured, transparent and accountable manner," he said in a statement.

ing determination of this matter. Any loss, alteration or destruction of these records after receipt of this letter will be relied upon," Waihenya warns, saying he expects IEBC to give a response within 21 days as required by law.

According to KTN, the IEBC equipment's movement to Uganda through the Suam border point was facilitated by Mt Elgon MP Robert Pukose, who wants to bolster his

IEBC's face credibility litmus test

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale recently alluded to this when hailed the move as he said President Ruto has support in Muslim-dominated counties to win next year and even went ahead to state they are ready to import voters from Somalia to achieve that goal

BY CORRESPONDENT

Despite spirited denials regarding allegations of registration of Ugandans to take part in next year's General Election, the claims have persisted creating a huge trust deficit in the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

The latest is a claim by KTN that a Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) officer who seized alleged IEBC voter registration equipment found in a vehicle heading to the neighbouring country was strongly warned to withdraw from the matter or face a transfer within a week and later transferred a few days later to DCI headquarters.

However, the DCI denied the claims terming them "false, inaccurate and wholly without foundation."

On his part, IEBC chairman Erastus Etheke said media reports on electoral malpractice or illegality relating to, among others, alleged registration of foreigners as voters in Kenya and abroad remain unsubstantiated and untrue.

"Where credible evidence is presented, the Commission shall take appropriate action including disciplinary action, investigation into criminal conduct and where culpability is established, criminal prosecution and punishment shall be undertaken in accordance with the laws of Kenya," he said in a statement.

The claims come at a time the Commission has proposed to expand diaspora voter registration and participation from 12 countries covered during the 2022 General Election to 26 countries.

Concerns over alleged importation of voters and registration of foreigners to vote in the presidential contest in the Diaspora have been fueled by an assertion by Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen that Kenyans living along the country's borders can now get IDs after President William Ruto lifted the stringent vetting process they were previously subjected to thus allowing them to vote.

Eyebrows were raised as the CS was speaking in Uganda where he was accompanied by UDA elected leaders on a voter mobilisation rally at Amanang Secondary School in Bukwo district.

Kiminini MP Kakai Bisau added they are ready to vote either in their respective countries of residence in line with the East African Community charter or cast their ballots in Kenya

On his part, Trans Nzoia Senator Allan Chesang said: "Ati sijui kuna watu wa Uganda, eti watu wa Kenya? Hapa mimi naona wengi ni Wakenya tu wamekuja kufanya biashara pande hii."

Trans Nzoia Woman Rep Lilian Siyoi was more candid about their September 26 mission.

"Na uko na haki ya kupiga kura, bora uko na kitambulisho na uko na IEBC card na msitishiwe, endeeleni kusimama na sisi," she said.

The Sabaot and Sebei communities just like the Somalis and Tesos and Samias straddle Kenya's borders with neighbouring countries allowing for ease movement, which some say could be manipulated to achieve political goals especially with the lifting of vetting.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale recently alluded to this when hailed the move as he said President Ruto has support in Muslim-dominated counties to win next year and even went ahead to state they are ready to import voters from Somalia to achieve that goal.

"President Ruto is already sure of getting the 25 per cent requirement from the pastoralist and Muslim-dominated counties, Mombasa included. And when you add the seven in Rift Valley and Western counties, President Ruto has already 45 counties," Duale told a Muslim gathering in Mombasa at the weekend.

IEBC acknowledges that negative media reports and reckless political rhetoric may undermine public confidence in the electoral process but there have been concerns over whether it is proactive with some of observers to the reactionary posture it has largely adopted with regard to such reports.

And while IEBC says that its mandate does not extend to issuance of IDs and passports, former Attorney General Justin Muturi has called on the National Security Council to intervene.

However, some pundits say movement of people across the border is not an election malpractice but it becomes one if someone ends up being registered as a voter and casts his ballot.

Amid the persistent claims on registration of foreigners focus is likely to shift to the cleaning, validation, de-duplication and an independent audit of the voters register before certification to enhance its credibility and IEBC's ability to conduct free and fair elections.

According to IEBC's schedule, the audit is scheduled for February and March 2027.

Lawyer seeks access to IEBC data amid reports foreigners being registers as voters

BY ERIC NYAKAGWA

A lawyer has formally written to Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) seeking access to records relating to reports that foreign nationals were registered as Kenyan voters in areas along the Kenya-Uganda border.

The request, dated September 28, 2026 by lawyer Waihenya Peter, seeks Kenya Integrated Elections Management System (KIEMS) deployment records in Trans Nzoia County, registration centres and officers involved voter registration and transfer statistics, identification and verification records, complaints and investigations, safeguards against unlawful registration, and audit reports for the 2026 registration exercise.



Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission chair Erastus Edung (center) flanked by fellow commissioners address the media at the commission offices in Nairobi on January 27, 2026.

The request follows media reports, including a KTN investigation, which exposed foreign nationals who were being registered as voters and movement of registration materials towards Uganda.

"The Commission is hereby put on notice to preserve all KIEMS data, system logs, kits records, registration forms and correspondence relating to the above areas pend-



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale during a KMPDU Conference in Mombasa on May 10, 2025.

Sifuna gets reprieve as Linda Mwananchi clears key hurdle for 2027 Ruto showdown

The development gives Sifuna's political vehicle a fresh lease of life after months of uncertainty over whether the movement would secure the identity under which it has mobilised across the country

BY JAMES WASIKE

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna has secured a major reprieve in his bid to lead a united opposition against President William Ruto in the 2027 General Election after the government formally cleared the reservation of the Linda Mwananchi Movement (LMM) name.

The approval by the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) removes a major obstacle that had threatened to derail Sifuna's emerging presidential campaign and gives his political camp a 90-day window to complete the next stages of party registration.

Registrar of Political Parties John Cox Lorionokou, in a letter dated October 1, 2026 confirmed that the application had been approved following a September 30 decision by the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal (PPDT).

"Pursuant to the judgment in PPDTA/E001/2026 Michael Caroli Omondi &

Another vs Registrar of Political Parties and Section 8 of the PPA, your application for the name Linda Mwananchi Movement (LMM) has been approved," Lorionokou said.

"The reservation of the name shall be for a period of not more than 90 days from the date of this letter."

Sifuna immediately shared the letter, simply captioning it "wametii", in an apparent reference to the Registrar's reversal of the earlier rejection.

The decision comes at a crucial point in Sifuna's political journey, days after Linda Mwananchi leaders formally endorsed him as their presidential candidate for 2027.

At a September 26 retreat, the movement resolved to close ranks behind Sifuna and announced that he would lead its presidential campaign, with the political vehicle expected to be unveiled in early October.

Sifuna has increasingly positioned himself as a possible rallying point for an opposition seeking to field a common candidate against Ruto.

In September, he openly declared his intention to challenge the President, saying his nationwide mobilisation tours had strengthened calls for him to take on a bigger national political role.

His challenge, however, extends beyond securing a party ticket.

The Nairobi senator now faces the larger task of bringing together competing opposition formations and presidential ambitions behind one candidate if the opposition is to mount a single presidential campaign in 2027.



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna (right) and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino during a past Linda Mwananchi rally.

That question has become increasingly prominent as figures including former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Kalonzo Musyoka, Fred Matiang'i and Siaya Governor James Orengo have pursued or been linked to presidential ambitions.

Orengo, who had also expressed interest in the Linda Mwananchi presidential ticket, was absent when Sifuna was endorsed. His allies said he was attending to a sick family member and that his absence should not be interpreted as a split.

On October 2, Orengo subsequently reaffirmed his support for opposition unity and said the opposition needed to identify a single presidential candidate. He also welcomed Linda Mwananchi's progress.

The latest ORPP decision follows a bruising legal battle over the Linda Mwananchi name.

The Registrar had initially rejected the application, citing public-interest concerns and the existence of the Liberty National Democratic Alliance (LINDA).

The promoters — Suba South MP Michael Caroli Omondi, former Law Society of Kenya president Faith Odhiambo and activist Pauline Njoroge — challenged the decision before the PPDT.

The tribunal subsequently set aside the

Registrar's decision and found that the earlier LINDA reservation had lapsed by operation of law. It ordered the Registrar to act on the Linda Mwananchi application.

The tribunal also found no sufficient similarity between Linda Mwananchi and LINDA to justify blocking the application.

The ruling effectively reopened the path for Sifuna's political vehicle just as his presidential ambitions were entering a decisive phase. But the legal victory does not amount to full registration.

Linda Mwananchi must now complete the remaining statutory requirements within the 90-day reservation period, while the Registrar has separately been asked to consider another application by Charles Wanyonyi, who says he applied to reserve Linda Mwananchi Party of Kenya on February 24, months before the June 4 application that went before the Tribunal.

For Sifuna, the clock is therefore running on two fronts — formalising his political vehicle and consolidating an opposition coalition capable of presenting a single challenger to Ruto.

The Linda Mwananchi endorsement has given him the first formal platform for that presidential bid.

US confirms Wooster as Kenya envoy, puts 2027 elections under close watch

BY CORRESPONDENT

The United States Senate has confirmed career diplomat Henry Wooster as Washington's next Ambassador to Kenya, placing a new American envoy in Nairobi as the country heads towards the politically consequential 2027 General Election.

Wooster, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, was confirmed by the Senate by voice vote on Wednesday, September 30, alongside a batch of other ambassadorial nominees.

His confirmation and approval effectively restores a permanent American diplomatic presence in Nairobi as the country heads into the 2027 General Election.

His arrival comes at a critical juncture in Kenya-US relations, with Nairobi playing a significant role in regional security, multilateral diplomacy and Washington's engagement in East Africa.

But it is Wooster's remarks

on Kenya's next election that are likely to attract the greatest attention in Nairobi.

During his September confirmation hearing, Wooster told US senators that Washington would "watch closely" as Kenya prepares for the 2027 elections, while stressing that the United States would not take sides in the contest.

"We are not picking sides in the election," Wooster said, framing US interest around stability rather than support for a particular candidate or political formation.

The remarks offer an indication of how the incoming ambassador intends to approach Kenya's increasingly competitive political environment, where President William Ruto is expected to seek another term and opposition formations are working to build a united challenge to oust him.

Wooster's confirmation also comes as Kenya continues to pursue a foreign policy that maintains relationships with multiple global powers, including the United States and China.



New US Ambassador to Kenya, His Excellency Henry Wooster.

Asked by Senator Chris Coons how he would pull Nairobi "solidly into the American orbit", Wooster rejected the suggestion that Kenya's engagement with China represented an ideological shift away from Washington.

He described Kenya as a pragmatic partner whose relations

with Beijing were driven largely by national interests rather than ideological alignment.

Wooster pointed to Kenya's role in regional and international security, including its leadership of the multinational mission in Haiti and its contribution to counterterrorism efforts,

describing the country as "indispensable" to US interests in East Africa.

His comments suggest that Washington intends to work within Kenya's increasingly diversified foreign-policy relationships rather than treating its engagement with China as evidence of a strategic realignment.

That approach will be tested against the backdrop of the 2027 election, when Washington is expected to pay close attention to political developments, democratic processes and stability.

Wooster's confirmation ends a prolonged period without a Senate-confirmed US ambassador in Nairobi and restores a permanent senior diplomatic presence at a time when Kenya is seeking a greater role in global affairs.

Kenya is co-chairing the Partners for Multilateralism, advocating reforms to the UN Security Council and balancing its relationships with competing global powers.



Wamatangi loses bid to halt Sh813million graft-linked asset seizure, forfeiture

EACC's investigation is centered on payments made through road construction contracts awarded by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA)



Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi (center) and his lawyers led by Deputy Registrar Judith Omollo during the site visit at his demolished facility at Madaraka next to Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi. FILE PHOTO.

BY NJOKI MAINA

Kiambu Governor Paul Kimani Wamatangi has failed to stop an Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) suit seeking to recover Sh813.1 million allegedly linked to irregular road construction tenders.

High Court Judge Rose Ougo dismissed applications by Wamatangi and other defendants seeking to have the case struck out, ruling that the allegations raised by EACC must be tested through evidence at a full hearing.

The decision clears the way for the anti-graft commission to pursue recovery

of Sh813,145,532.40 from Wamatangi and 13 other defendants over transactions dating back to the 2018/2019–2021/2022 financial years.

EACC's investigation is centered on payments made through road construction contracts awarded by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA).

EACC alleges that companies associated with Wamatangi obtained the contracts through fraud, misrepresentation and falsification of documents. The commission further alleges that Wamatangi improperly

influenced the award of tenders and remained a signatory to some of the companies' bank accounts.

The agency wants the court to declare the disputed funds recoverable and order forfeiture of assets allegedly acquired through unlawful conduct. Wamatangi mounted several challenges seeking to bring the proceedings to an end.

He argued that the case was sub judice, claiming that a separate constitutional petition involving him had already resulted in conservatory orders that affected the EACC proceedings.

Justice Ougo rejected the argument,

finding that Wamatangi had failed to provide evidence showing that the parties and issues in the two cases were identical.

EACC had maintained that the conservatory orders only prevented the Director of Public Prosecutions from charging Wamatangi and did not bar the commission from pursuing a civil asset recovery claim.

The governor also invoked parliamentary privilege, arguing that some of the allegations related to his former role as chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Roads, Transportation and Housing.

The judge dismissed that argument, holding that parliamentary privilege does not shield alleged unlawful acts and that the allegations did not concern protected parliamentary proceedings.

The defendants also challenged the case on the grounds that EACC had not established individual causes of action against them, particularly where companies had been sued alongside their directors and associates.

Justice Ougo declined to strike them out, saying allegations of fraud, misrepresentation and falsification of documents required evidence and should be determined at trial.

The court extended existing orders freezing the defendants' bank accounts and other assets. EACC's application for injunctions will be heard on November 12, 2026.

Wamatangi and the other defendants have denied the allegations, which remain unproven.

Defence lawyers have urged the court to fast-track the case, arguing that the frozen funds are affecting the operations of the companies.

Court bars Senator Onyonka from 'defaming' Kisii Governor Arati

BY WILSON ONCHARI

Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka has been barred from repeating remarks about Governor Paul Simba Arati that the High Court has found, on the face of it, defamatory.

High Court Judge Nixon Sifuna issued an injunction restraining Onyonka from making similar statements about Arati at public meetings, political rallies, media briefings, press conferences or through other public platforms, including social media.

The order, however, does not restrict the senator's constitutional role as a member of Parliament.

Justice Sifuna specifically clarified that Onyonka may continue making statements concerning Arati in Parliament, its committees and other parliamentary structures while exercising his oversight mandate.

"But not to those that the Defendant will in the exercise of his parliamentary oversight role as Senator, make in Parliament or in Parliament's committees and structures," the judge ruled.

Arati sued Onyonka after the senator issued a press statement following a visit to Kisii County by the Senate Budget and Finance Committee in June 2025.

In the statement dated June 9, 2025, Onyonka accused the governor of hiring goons and criminals to attack a Senate team comprising officials from his office who had visited the county

government to audit and oversee its books and expenditure.

Onyonka said the Senate team had gone to Kisii to conduct its constitutional oversight mandate and not to engage in physical confrontations.

Arati argued that the allegations were defamatory, disparaging and intended to damage his reputation among residents of Kisii and the wider public.

In granting the injunction, Justice Sifuna said the words used in the press statement, when given their ordinary meaning and considered without the surrounding context, were "ex facie defamatory".

The judge said the statement could be understood as portraying Arati as a governor who was incompetent, lacked integrity and was associated with violence, goons and criminality.

"This can lower his estimation not only in the eyes of the people of Kisii County, but also in the eyes of right-thinking members of society and any persons of good conscience," Justice Sifuna said.

The court stressed that the findings at this stage did not finally determine the defamation claim.

Justice Sifuna said Onyonka would have an opportunity during the full trial to deny, justify or substantiate the assertions contained in the statement.

The judge also declined Arati's request to have the press statement deleted or pulled down, ruling that it would be required as evidence during the trial.



The High Court of Kenya, Milimani, Nairobi.

High Court split over retired presidents' political roles

The divergent decisions now leave an important constitutional question open for further determination, particularly if either ruling is appealed

BY JAMES WASIKE

Kenya's High Court has delivered two conflicting judgments this month on the political rights of retired presidents, creating uncertainty over whether former Heads of State can continue holding senior positions in political parties.

The conflicting rulings have particular significance for retired President Uhuru Kenyatta, whose continued role in Jubilee Party and involvement in national politics have come under scrutiny.

On September 21, 2026, Justice Bahati Mwamuye declared unconstitutional and void the law restricting retired presidents from holding political party office beyond six months after leaving State House. He also struck down provisions allowing Parliament to reduce or withdraw a former president's retirement benefits in specified circumstances.

The judgment came barely weeks after Justice Lawrence Mugambi reached the opposite conclusion on the political office provision.

On September 3, Justice Mugambi upheld Section 6 of the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act, ruling that a retired president

cannot hold a political party leadership position for more than six months after leaving office. He clarified that the provision does not prevent former presidents from remaining party members or participating in political activities.

Justice Mwamuye's ruling arose from a petition by Sheria Mtaani and lawyer Shadrack Wambui, who challenged Sections 4 and 6 of the Act following a May 4, 2026 Senate motion seeking a review of Kenyatta's retirement benefits.

The judge anchored his decision on Article 151(3) of the Constitution, which protects retirement benefits payable to a former President and Deputy President from being varied to their disadvantage during their lifetime.

He rejected the argument that Parliament could override that protection through a two-thirds majority, holding that a constitutionally prohibited act does not become lawful simply because it receives a higher parliamentary threshold.

Justice Mwamuye also found the restriction on political party office inconsistent with constitutional political rights. He noted that leaving the presidency ends executive authority but does not strip a former president of citizenship or constitutional freedoms.

"Influence is not office. Influence is not a constitutional disability," the judge said.

By contrast, Justice Mugambi held that the six-month restriction was a reasonable limitation because of the unique influence associated with former presidents and did not prevent them from participating in politics.

Justice Mwamuye did not quash the Senate motion because no final decision had been made on it.

Instead, he barred reliance on the invalidated provisions to reduce a retired president's protected benefits or enforce the party-office restriction.

40-year church name fight heads back to Registrar

BY WILBERFORCE KIGEN

A four-decade battle over the name 'Gospel of God Church' has returned to the statutory drawing board after the High Court declined to determine which of two rival factions has the lawful claim to the name and a sprawling property portfolio acquired over the years.

The dispute, involving competing registration records, church buildings, land, vehicles and other assets, dates back to the church's recognition in Kenya in 1968 and has survived deregistration, fresh registration, reinstatement and years of litigation.

The latest chapter ended last week when High Court Judge Roseline Aburili struck out a constitutional petition filed by Gospel of God Church International (SOC 45700), saying the faction had moved to court before exhausting the appeal mechanism provided under the Societies Act.

The case pits SOC 45700 against Gospel of God Church (SOC 7670), formerly known as African Gospel Church, with both sides claiming legitimate rights to the disputed identity.

SOC 7670 traces its history to 1968, when the church received an exemption certificate allowing it to operate as a society.

In 1985, however, the Assistant Registrar rescinded the exemption following changes in the church's leadership and the departure of its foreign leaders.

That decision became the foundation of a bitter legal disagreement.

The faction now known as Gospel of God Church International argued that the 1985 action effectively ended the original church's legal existence.

Local leaders subsequently registered Glorious Gospel of God Church of Kenya in 2004, before changing its name to Gospel of God Church International in 2005.

But in 2009, the Registrar reinstated the earlier Gospel of God Church, SOC 7670, setting the stage for the present conflict.

The dispute intensified in 2024 when the Registrar directed SOC 45700 to abandon the name Gospel of God Church International and revert to Glorious Gospel of God Church within 30 days or risk cancellation of its registration.

The faction challenged the decision, seeking exclusive rights to the Gospel of God Church name, an order stopping the rival faction from using it and compensation.

But Justice Aburili held that the faction should first have appealed the Registrar's decision to the Cabinet Secretary before approaching the High Court.

"Consequently, I find that the petition is prematurely filed in total disregard of both the provisions of the Societies Act and the Fair Administrative Actions Act," the judge ruled.

The court also found a procedural problem with the case, noting that societies cannot litigate in their own names without identifying their registered officials and producing the required written authorisation.

The rival faction maintains that SOC 7670 is the legally recognised church and claims rights over what it describes as a multi-billion-shilling property portfolio.

The Registrar, however, presented conflicting records indicating that both entities had recognition at different points.



Gospel of God Church International



Kisii Governor Simba Arati (left) and Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka (right).

«EDITORIAL»

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Stop chasing the sellers, hunt down the alcohol cartels

KENYA'S WAR against illicit brews and counterfeit alcohol will remain incomplete for as long as enforcement agencies continue to concentrate disproportionately on the people at the bottom of the supply chain while the manufacturers, financiers, distributors and networks supplying the dangerous products remain in business.

The government, security agencies, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) must change the centre of gravity of this fight.

Raid the factories. Follow the money. Intercept the trucks. Identify the warehouses. Trace the distributors. Shut down the production lines. Prosecute the financiers and the people who deliberately put dangerous products into the market.

The small shopkeeper or roadside seller found with a few bottles of illicit liquor is part of the problem, but is rarely the beginning of it.

Someone manufactured that alcohol.

Someone supplied the raw materials.

Someone packaged it.

Someone acquired or forged the excise stamps.

Someone transported it.

Someone stored it.

Someone financed the operation.

And someone built a distribution network capable of moving thousands of bottles into neighbourhoods across the country.

That is where the real enforcement effort should concentrate. KRA itself recognises that illicit trade and counterfeiting undermine legitimate manufacturers, government revenue and consumer safety. Its Excisable Goods Management System and secure excise stamps are specifically designed to help track excisable products and detect counterfeits.

NACADA, too, has an enforcement mandate that goes beyond raiding individual outlets. Its Compliance and Enforcement Directorate is responsible for intelligence gathering, surveillance, inter-agency cooperation, intelligence-led operations, seizure of counterfeit alcohol and legal follow-up.

That intelligence-led approach should now become the defining feature of the campaign.

Kenya does not need an enforcement model that merely produces impressive photographs of confiscated bottles and arrested shopkeepers. It needs an enforcement chain that moves from the bottle on the shelf backwards to the warehouse, distributor,



Authorities link unregulated and counterfeited drinks to poisoning.

manufacturer and financier.

There is a simple test. If a particular illicit brand keeps appearing in different towns, authorities should ask who is repeatedly supplying it.

If the same counterfeit labels are appearing across counties, investigators should determine who is producing or importing them.

If hundreds or thousands of litres of illegal alcohol are being distributed, investigators should establish where the product is coming from and how it is being transported.

And where licensed manufacturers or distributors are implicated in diversion, under-declaration, tax evasion or other illegal practices, the investigations should follow the evidence without fear or favour.

This is not to suggest that retailers should be allowed to sell dangerous alcohol with impunity. They must comply with the law. KRA has previously warned that possessing, distributing or offering for sale excisable goods manufactured or imported by unlicensed persons is an offence.

But enforcement must distinguish between the last link in the chain and the people controlling the chain.

Arresting a trader selling counterfeit vodka may remove a few bottles from one shop. Dismantling the distribution network supplying 100 shops could remove thousands. Closing the production facility responsible for those supplies could prevent the problem from returning altogether.

That is the difference between treating the symptom and disrupting the supply chain.

There is also a serious public-health dimension. Consumers often have no reliable

way of knowing what is inside an illicit or counterfeit alcoholic drink. The danger is therefore not simply lost tax revenue or unfair competition. It is the possibility that unsuspecting Kenyans are consuming products manufactured under unknown conditions and with unknown contents.

NACADA's own recent enforcement reports illustrate the scale of the challenge. Its January-March 2026 quarterly publication documented operations involving counterfeit alcohol, including the seizure of more than 400 litres of industrial ethanol in a suspected counterfeit alcohol operation in Trans Nzoia.

Such cases should trigger a bigger question on who was supposed to receive that product.

The answer to that question could be more important than the arrest of the person found guarding it.

The government should therefore establish a genuinely integrated intelligence operation bringing together KRA, NACADA, the National Police Service, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the Kenya Bureau of Standards, the Anti-Counterfeit Authority and other relevant agencies.

Data on suspicious excise stamps, unusual production volumes, tax declarations, transportation routes, warehouse locations, licensing records and seizures should be analysed together.

The objective should be to identify patterns rather than simply conduct random raids.

And prosecutions must follow.

Where evidence establishes that individuals are financing, manufacturing, importing, distributing or knowingly facilitating counterfeit and illicit alcohol, they should face the full force of the law.

At the same time, legitimate manufacturers and distributors should be protected from unfair competition by counterfeiters and illicit traders.

Kenya has fought the illicit alcohol problem for years. What is needed now is not simply more raids, but smarter raids.

Do not measure success by the number of small traders arrested or bottles displayed before television cameras.

Measure it by the number of production facilities dismantled, distribution networks broken, financiers prosecuted, illegal supply routes closed and repeat offenders brought to justice.

The sellers are visible. The networks are hidden.

The government must follow the trail all the way to the source.



Illicit brew seized in West Pokot County.



Before Sh2.2 trillion Lamu refinery, Kenyans deserve answers

In Lamu, due process is not the price of development. It is what makes development legitimate

THE GROUNDBREAKING of the proposed Sh2.2 trillion Dangote refinery in Lamu should have been a moment to celebrate investment, jobs and Kenya's ambition to become a major energy and industrial hub.

Instead, it arrived against the backdrop of unresolved questions over land, compensation, environmental safeguards, public participation and the transparency of agreements surrounding one of the country's most ambitious private-sector investments.

That timing matters.

A project of this scale cannot be judged solely by the size of the investment, the number of jobs it promises or the volume of crude it is expected to process. At an estimated capacity of up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil a day, the proposed refinery is a project with consequences extending far beyond its construction site.

It will affect land, communities, infrastructure, water resources, marine and terrestrial ecosystems and the wider economic future of Lamu.

That is precisely why the Government should be prepared to answer difficult questions before asking Kenyans to embrace the project without reservation.

The refinery was officially launched in Lamu on September 30, 2026, with President William Ruto and Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote presiding over the groundbreaking ceremony.

The event projected confidence and momentum.

But a groundbreaking ceremony cannot settle a court dispute.

It cannot determine whether affected residents have been properly compensated. It cannot substitute for environmental assessment. And it cannot extinguish the constitutional and statutory rights of communities that believe their interests are threatened.

Kenya's environmental laws are clear that development and environmental protection are not competing concepts.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) requires projects falling within prescribed categories to undergo environmental assessment before implementation, with an environmental licence required before commencement where applicable.

Oil refineries and petrochemical projects are precisely the type of developments for which environmental assessment is particularly important.

Such assessments are not simply technical exercises involving engineers and environmental experts. They are intended to examine the broader consequences of projects, including impacts on ecosystems, water, human health, livelihoods, cultural resources and communities.

Public participation is therefore not an administrative favour granted by the Government or an obstacle created by environmental activists.

It is part of the process through which communities affected by major projects are supposed to have their concerns heard and considered.

That distinction is important.

The argument should not be that every mega-project must obtain a standalone document labelled a "Social Impact Assessment" regardless of what the law requires.

The stronger and more legally grounded argument is that the environmental and social consequences of the refinery must be properly assessed through the applicable environmental and social safeguards, with meaningful participation by affected communities.

A project cannot be sustainable merely because it is economically attractive.

The Constitution places sustainable development and environmental protection at the heart of Kenya's governance framework. Article 42 guarantees every person the right to a clean and healthy environment, while Article 70 provides a mechanism through which citizens can seek judicial redress when that right is threatened.



Nigerian billionaire and industrialist Aliko Dangote (left) and President William Ruto (right) at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Dangote East African Refinery in Lamu on September 30, 2026.

These provisions matter especially in Lamu.

The county is not an empty economic canvas waiting for a mega-project.

Lamu contains communities whose livelihoods are deeply connected to land, fishing, farming, tourism and the coastal environment. Lamu Old Town has also been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001 because of its exceptional cultural and historical significance.

That heritage creates an additional responsibility for both national and county authorities. Development around a place of such ecological and cultural sensitivity must be approached with particular care. Infrastructure and industrialisation can bring enormous economic opportunities, but they can also create permanent consequences if environmental and social safeguards are inadequate.

The Government therefore owes the public more than assurances.

President Ruto has said residents' interests will be protected and that environmental and social impacts will be properly addressed.

Those commitments should now be demonstrated through documents, processes and independently verifiable safeguards.

Who owns the land required for the project?

How were affected residents identified?

How was compensation determined?

Have all legitimate claims been resolved?

What environmental safeguards have been imposed on the investor?

What mechanisms will monitor compliance once construction begins?

What happens if environmental or social commitments are breached?

And perhaps most importantly, what exactly has the Kenyan Government agreed to with the investor?

These are not hostile questions.

They are basic questions of accountability for a project involving trillions of shillings and potentially profound public consequences.

The Government should therefore make public the relevant agreements, land arrangements, compensation frameworks,

environmental obligations and any commitments involving public resources.

If the project is commercially sound and legally compliant, transparency should strengthen it rather than weaken it.

Indeed, secrecy creates precisely the suspicion that a major investment should seek to avoid.

The president's reported description of individuals questioning the refinery or pursuing court action as "extortionists" is therefore unhelpful.

Government has every right to challenge claims it considers false, opportunistic or politically motivated. Investors also have a legitimate interest in protecting their projects from unlawful obstruction.

But criticism, litigation or demands for information should not automatically be equated with extortion.

Court action is a lawful avenue available to citizens seeking to challenge government decisions or protect property and environmental rights.

A resident who asks whether compensation is adequate is not necessarily an opponent of development. A community that demands information about environmental risks is not necessarily anti-investment. And a citizen who goes to court is exercising a constitutional right, not automatically attempting to derail an economic project.

The Government should distinguish between unlawful obstruction and legitimate public accountability.

That distinction is particularly important because the history of large infrastructure projects in Kenya demonstrates that unresolved community grievances can become more expensive and disruptive over time.

The easiest stage at which to address legitimate concerns is before construction gathers momentum, not after billions of shillings have been spent and disputes have hardened.

There is also a wider national question.

Kenya needs investment. It needs jobs, manufacturing capacity, energy security, export opportunities and infrastructure capable of supporting a growing economy.

There is nothing inherently contradictory between those objectives and strong environmental or community safeguards.

Indeed, the two should reinforce each other.

The real choice is not between development and environmental protection. It is between lawful, accountable development and development that leaves unresolved grievances in its wake.

The Dangote refinery has the potential to become a significant component of Kenya's industrial and energy strategy. But its success should not be measured only in barrels per day, investment figures or political speeches.

It should also be measured by whether affected communities believe they were heard; whether compensation was fair; whether environmental obligations are enforceable; whether cultural heritage is protected; and whether the public can understand the commitments made on its behalf.

The Brundtland Commission's enduring principle remains relevant: development should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

That principle is particularly important in a place like Lamu, where economic, ecological and cultural interests intersect.

Kenya does not need anti-investment politics.

Neither does it need unquestioning enthusiasm for mega-projects simply because the headline investment figure is impressive.

What it needs is lawful investment.

If the refinery is as economically transformative as its promoters contend, then the Government should have every incentive to subject it to the highest standards of transparency, environmental protection, public participation and legal scrutiny.

The test of leadership is not whether Government can silence criticism long enough to hold a groundbreaking ceremony.

The test is whether it can deliver a project whose legitimacy survives scrutiny long after the cameras leave Lamu.

For Dangote and Kenya, the billions involved are enormous.

For the people whose land, livelihoods and environment are directly affected, however, the stakes are personal.

That is why before the refinery produces its first barrel, Kenyans deserve answers.

In Lamu, due process is not the price of development. It is what makes development legitimate.

The author is Senior Reporter at The Informer Media Group, James Wasike.

GRAPEVINE

OIL DEALER'S SHADOW LOOMS LARGE IN NEW APPOINTMENTS AT ENERGY MINISTRY

A PROMINENT oil dealer is said to be wielding considerable influence behind the latest appointments at key energy parastatals, with insiders linking the businessman to the reshuffle of top leadership positions under the Ministry of Energy.

But behind the official announcements, whispers in

energy and business circles suggest that a well-connected oil dealer may have played a significant role in influencing who landed the lucrative positions.

The claims, which have triggered quiet speculation over the extent to which private interests may be shaping

leadership decisions in the strategic energy sector.

And the grapevine does not end there. The same businessman is being linked to the anticipated appointment at Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen), although the identity of the next occupant remains the subject of intense speculation.



Ministry of Energy

BY KARISA HASSAN

Mombasa County ordered to pay Sh350million over Mwakirunge dumpsite pollution

The Mombasa County Government has been ordered to pay more than Sh350 million to over 200 residents of Mwakirunge for violating their constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment through pollution from the area's dumpsite.

Environment and Land Court Judge Lucas Naikuni found that the residents, represented by environmental activist Ainea Ragen, had proved that the continued operation of the dumpsite had exposed them to environmental harm and violated their rights under Article 42 of the Constitution.

The court found that both the county government and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) failed to take adequate measures within their respective mandates to prevent and control pollution and environmental degradation arising from the dumpsite.

"The Mwakirunge dumpsite and the effects of pollution have been there for a very long time. Secondly, the Mwakirunge dumpsite is still operational to date, thus the residents' right to a clean and healthy environment is continuously being violated," Justice Naikuni said.

The judge ordered the county government to immediately begin construction of a concrete perimeter wall around the dumpsite, measuring at least six metres high and topped with razor wire.

The facility must also have secure entrance and exit gates, controlled access and adequate security personnel. The works are to be completed within 12 months.

The county was further directed to provide designs and commence the development and installation of modern waste management facilities, including solid-waste incinerators that meet international safety and health standards.

However, the court declined to declare the 50-acre parcel hosting the dumpsite community land and consequently declined to order the county government to relocate the facility.

Mwakirunge, in Kisauni Sub-County, is Mombasa's main solid-waste disposal site and



Monors scavage through the Mwakirunge dumpsite

lies about 12 to 25 kilometres north of the city's central business district.

Residents told the court that communities had occupied the area since the early 1900s, with more families settling there in the 1920s and 1930s after moving from parts of Malindi and Kilifi.

They said the dumpsite was initially established at Marimani by the defunct Municipal Council of Mombasa in 2002 before being moved to its present location in Colorado, Mwakirunge, in 2007.

According to the petition, residents were already living on the land when the dumpsite was relocated. The municipal council allegedly

promised to provide amenities including a school, health clinic, police station and perimeter wall.

Instead, residents said waste was dumped close to their homes without adequate consultation or compensation, exposing them to foul odours, smoke and other hazardous substances.

Some families were subsequently forced to move from the area.

The residents also alleged that the dumpsite occupied part of a graveyard and that about 50 acres had been excised from the wider Mwakirunge area without adequate public participation.

Their petition detailed years of complaints

over pollution, hazardous and medical waste, fires, accidents involving garbage trucks and the impact of the dumpsite on children and families.

The court also heard concerns over the facility's proximity to Moi International Airport.

In 2007, the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority and Kenya Airports Authority reportedly raised concerns that the dumpsite was within the approach path of the airport runway and could attract birds, posing a potential aviation safety risk.

Studies commissioned by ActionAid Kenya and Kenyatta University students in 2015 also documented alleged social and environmental effects linked to the dumpsite, including pollution, fires, insecurity, disruption of children's education and health problems.

The studies recommended that the dumpsite be relocated.

The residents told the court that despite repeatedly raising their concerns with government agencies since 2007, little meaningful action had been taken to address the problems.

Justice Naikuni ruled that the evidence demonstrated a failure by both the county government and NEMA to take adequate and effective measures to prevent and address the environmental harm.

"I am therefore satisfied that the Petitioner has established, on a balance of probabilities, that the acts and omissions of the 1st (Mombasa County) and 4th Respondents (NEMA) resulted in a violation of the Mwakirunge Community Residents' right to a clean and healthy environment," the judge said.

The ruling places the burden on the county government not only to compensate the affected residents but also to undertake significant measures to improve the management and security of one of Mombasa's main waste disposal facilities.

SHA transition deadline extended as Gachagua's collapse warning resurfaces

The latest transition push comes months after former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua warned that SHA could face a serious operational crisis

BY TEAM

The Social Health Authority (SHA) has given healthcare providers a final 14-day window to complete contracting under the 2026–2029 cycle, as the government moves to transition the health insurance scheme to a new system.

In a notice dated October 1, SHA Chief Executive Officer Dr Mercy Mwangangi said the contracting deadline had been extended from September 30 to October 14, giving facilities additional time to complete the process.

The extension comes amid a major transition in the management of healthcare services under SHA, with Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale warning facilities that those who fail to move to the new system risk being locked out of treating SHA beneficiaries.

"We are closing down SHA and transition to a new system. To all hospitals, make sure you transition because if you don't, you cannot serve a patient in Kenya," Duale said.

During the 14-day extension, facilities will continue operating under their existing contracts. However, Mwangangi said the contracts will lapse once the extension expires, with no further extension expected.

Providers will receive revised contracts through SHA's e-contracting platform and must accept, sign and return them within three days to maintain continuity of services.

"Service provision to SHA beneficiaries will only continue in facilities that accept the 14-day extension period," Mwangangi said.

Facilities that decline the extension have been directed to liaise with SHA county managers to transfer patients undergoing treatment to contracted providers.

The authority will also establish HAKIKA contracting clinics in every county from October 5 to assist facilities facing difficulties completing the process.

SHA said 10,006 healthcare providers had so far expressed interest and were at various stages of contracting, while



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale (Center) flanked by Social Health Authority (SHA) CEO Dr. Mercy Mwangangi while announcing a major upgrade of Moi County Referral Hospital in Taita Taveta County. FILE PHOTO.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

facilities with all required documents have been urged to complete the process without waiting for the deadline.

The latest transition push comes months after former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua warned that SHA could face a serious operational crisis.

Speaking at the ACK Diocese of Kirinyaga in Ndia Constituency on March 29, 2026, Gachagua claimed he had information that SHA could collapse within six months, potentially triggering

a nationwide healthcare crisis.

"I have information that SHA will collapse in six months and we will have a crisis in the health sector," he said.

Gachagua attributed the risk to mounting unpaid claims owed to hospitals, particularly faith-based and private facilities, warning that financial pressures could threaten service delivery.

The government has since made payments towards outstanding claims, including Sh15.4 billion disbursed in

March and a further Sh4.1 billion towards arrears inherited from the defunct National Hospital Insurance Fund.

The government has also committed to settling future hospital claims by the 14th of every month.

With the new October 14 deadline approaching, healthcare providers now face a final window to complete the transition — with SHA warning that facilities that fail to sign up will no longer be able to serve its beneficiaries.



BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

For years, some victims of sexual violence have found themselves facing a painful choice after the crime: pursue justice through the courts or accept an offer of money, livestock or other compensation negotiated by families and community elders.

For many women and girls, the second option can mean living with the consequences of an assault while the perpetrator walks free.

Now, MPs want to close that door.

The National Assembly is considering a proposed amendment to the Sexual Offences Act that would effectively outlaw out-of-court settlements in sexual offence cases, requiring such crimes to be dealt with exclusively through the formal justice system.

The proposal, contained in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill moved by Garissa County Women Representative Amina Udgoon, seeks to introduce a new Section 40A declaring void any agreement or settlement purporting to dispose of a sexual offence outside the court process.

The proposed law comes against concerns that victims, particularly women and children, are sometimes pressured by relatives and communities to accept compensation in exchange for abandoning criminal proceedings.

Udgoon told the National Assembly that sexual offences are not private disputes that families can negotiate away.

They are crimes that cause lasting physical, emotional and psychological harm and, because of their wider impact on society, must be treated as offences against the State.

“This bill introduces a new Section 40A to expressly provide that offences under the Sexual Offences Act shall be prosecuted exclusively through the formal judicial system,” Udgoon said.

She argued that informal settlements can deny victims justice while allowing perpetrators to escape accountability.

In some communities, disputes involving sexual violence are handled through traditional mechanisms, with families negotiating compensation in the form of money, livestock or other forms of restitution.

But Udgoon said such arrangements can silence victims and place the interests of families or communities above the rights of those who have suffered the abuse.



National Assembly of Kenya.

MPs move to end ‘under-the-tree’ settlements for sexual offences

For a child who has been defiled, the consequences can extend far beyond the crime itself.

The victim may experience stigma, withdraw from school, face pressure to remain silent and continue living in the same community as the alleged perpetrator.

Nominated MP Harun Sulekha, who seconded the Bill, said sexual offences should never be reduced to matters that can be settled informally.

She described the proposed legislation as a way of ensuring that justice does not become something that can be negotiated “under a

tree”.

“Justice is not for sale,” Sulekha said, arguing that the proposed amendment would help protect girls from stigma and enable them to continue with their education after sexual abuse.

Her argument touched on one of the most difficult consequences of sexual violence involving children — the disruption of education.

Where families choose an informal settlement, the immediate financial compensation may do little to address trauma, protect the child or guarantee that the perpetrator will face consequences.

Sulekha said the formal justice system provides safeguards that community negotiations cannot necessarily offer.

The debate also exposed the continuing tension between traditional dispute resolution and criminal justice in Kenya.

Article 159 of the Constitution encourages alternative forms of dispute resolution, but it also places limits on their application where they are repugnant to justice and morality or inconsistent with the Constitution.

Udgoon argued that sexual offences fall squarely within those limitations.

“Victims, particularly women and children, are frequently pressured by families or communities to accept compensation or informal settlement to avoid stigma,” she said.

“Such settlements are rarely voluntary and often deny victims access to justice, protection and rehabilitation.”

For Kisii County MP Doris Donya, the issue is also closely connected to harmful practices affecting girls and women.

Donya, who said she comes from a community where female genital mutilation is still practised, used the parliamentary debate to condemn both FGM and the informal handling of sexual offences.

She questioned how communities could continue negotiating over the rights and dignity of girls when the consequences of such practices can last a lifetime.

“What is this thing with FGM? I have never

understood. Why should parents even discuss about FGM?” Donya asked.

She expressed concern about girls who could undergo FGM during the December holiday period and backed the proposal to ensure that sexual offence cases are taken through the courts rather than settled through arbitration.

North Imenti MP Rahim Dawood recalled a case in his constituency in which a girl was allegedly defiled but the matter was eventually withdrawn after an out-of-court settlement, which he attributed to the family's poverty.

His account highlighted another concern raised during the debate: whether informal settlements create a two-tier justice system in which vulnerable families are more likely to accept compensation because they cannot afford a prolonged legal battle.

Dawood argued that sexual offences are criminal matters, not civil disputes that can simply be compromised.

He proposed further consideration of the role of the Director of Public Prosecutions in ensuring that cases are not withdrawn merely because families have reached private agreements.

Tharaka MP George Murugara also backed the Bill, arguing that the proposed amendment largely reinforces the existing legal position that serious criminal offences cannot simply be negotiated away.

Murugara acknowledged that Article 159 recognises alternative dispute resolution but said it should not be used for serious sexual crimes.

“Most, if not all sexual offenses relate to women,” he said, arguing that there should be no mediation or informal settlement in cases involving violations of women's dignity.

The MPs' arguments reflect a broader concern about accountability.

When a sexual offence is handled through the courts, investigators and prosecutors create an official record, while the judicial process provides a framework for evidence, trial and sentencing.

Udgoon said this is important not only for individual victims but also for public safety because offenders who escape prosecution may remain in their communities without any formal accountability.

She further argued that informal settlements can undermine deterrence and create circumstances in which a person's ability to pay compensation determines whether they face prosecution.

“A poor or vulnerable victim should not receive compensation when wealthy offenders escape prosecution,” she said.

The proposed amendment also seeks to reinforce Kenya's obligations under international and regional human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Maputo Protocol, which address discrimination and violence against women.

Udgoon said the proposed changes would clarify Parliament's intention and remove uncertainty over the use of alternative dispute resolution in sexual offence cases.

The Bill, she said, would not interfere with constitutional rights or county government functions and would not require additional public expenditure.

At the heart of the parliamentary debate, however, is a question that goes beyond legal wording: what happens to a victim when justice is replaced by a negotiated settlement?

For MPs backing the Bill, the answer should no longer depend on the victim's family, community elders or ability to resist pressure.

A sexual offence, they argue, should trigger the formal machinery of justice regardless of whether relatives later agree on compensation.

The proposed law seeks to move sexual violence cases away from the bargaining table and firmly into the courtroom — where the victim's rights, rather than the interests of those negotiating on their behalf, are expected to take centre stage.



Garissa County Women Representative Amina Udgoon.

How a drone could change farming and planning in Vihiga



The drone was handed over through the European Union-Food and Agriculture Organisation (EU-FAO) Digital Land Governance Programme. PHOTO BY COURTESY.

The drone will enable the county to collect more accurate and timely information on farms, land use, infrastructure, natural resources and physical features—information that can be used to guide decisions ranging from agricultural planning to disaster preparedness and environmental protection

BY GILBERT OCHIENG

For farmers in Vihiga, a bird's-eye view of their land could soon become an important tool in deciding what to plant, where to build and how to prepare for disasters.

Vihiga County has received a drone to strengthen land mapping, agricultural planning and real-time data collection, in a move expected to improve how the county manages its land and delivers services to residents.

The equipment was handed over through the European Union-Food and Agriculture Organisation (EU-FAO) Digital Land Governance Programme, with Vihiga also expected to develop expertise that can benefit other counties.

The drone will enable the county to collect more accurate and timely information on farms, land use, infrastructure, natural resources and physical features—information that can be used to guide decisions ranging from agricultural planning to disaster preparedness and environmental protection.

For residents, the technology could translate into more practical benefits: better identification of areas vulnerable to flooding and other haz-

ards, improved planning of roads and public facilities, more informed agricultural decisions and stronger management of natural resources.

"This is not simply the transfer of equipment. It is an investment in better data, better planning, and better decision-making across the 47 County Governments," said FAO Country Representative in Kenya Farayi Zimudzi.

The initiative builds on a decade-long partnership between FAO, the EU, the Council of Governors and Kenya's 47 county governments to strengthen digital land governance and geospatial planning.

So far, the programme has supported Geographic Information Systems (GIS) laboratories in 39 counties and at the Council of Governors, trained more than 241 technical officers and established a network of more than 1,700 County GIS Departmental Champions.

The technology is expected to have applications far beyond agriculture. Counties can use geospatial information in health, water, infrastructure, environment, finance and disaster-risk management.

But FAO says the drone itself is only one part of the equation. Counties must invest in skilled personnel, functioning GIS systems and adequate budgets if the

technology is to produce lasting results.

FAO is urging county governments to strengthen GIS units and accelerate the preparation and implementation of GIS-based County Physical and Land Use Development Plans.

For Vihiga Governor Wilber Ottichilo, the county intends to make the new technology a resource for more than its own residents.

The county plans to train specialists who can eventu-

ally support technical teams from the other 46 counties, turning Vihiga into a centre for drone-based mapping expertise.

Ottichilo said the county was already using GIS to guide planning and decision-making, adding that the new technology would strengthen its capacity to prepare for disasters and build climate resilience.

"Whoever has the data today has the power," he said.

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David Nyarango Ombego, Deputy Clerk and Director of Legislative, Legal Procedure and Committee Services and Joyce Onyiego, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation.

BY WILSON ONCHARI

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has arrested two senior Nyamira County Assembly officials over alleged irregularities in the award and implementation of a Sh367 million office-block construction tender, bringing to five the number of officials facing investigation in the case.

The commission said the alleged procurement irregularities resulted in the loss of Sh30.18 million in public funds.

Those arrested are David Nyarango Ombego, Deputy Clerk and Director of Legislative, Legal Procedure and Committee Services, and Joyce Onyiego, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation.

EACC investigators arrested the two within Kisii County during an operation on Friday and transferred them to the commission's South Nyanza Regional Office in Kisii, where they were being processed ahead of their arraignment.

The suspects are expected

EACC arrests two more Nyamira Assembly officials over Sh367million tender fraud

ed to face charges including abuse of office, wilful failure to comply with laws governing the management of public funds and negligence of official duty.

The arrests deepen an investigation into the procurement and construction project, with EACC alleging that public funds were lost through irregularities in the tender process.

Ombego and Onyiego are accused of playing various roles in the procurement and oversight of the project,

with investigators seeking to establish how the alleged violations occurred and how they contributed to the loss of public funds.

They join three other Nyamira County Assembly officials who have already been arrested and charged in connection with the same tender.

They are Nyamira County Assembly Clerk Duke Simeon Onyari, Chief Officer for Roads and Public Works Engineer Josephat Matini Oruru and Infrastructure Officer Simon Ondari Ogecha.

Manufacturers seek clarity before KRA rolls out eTIMS stock tracking

BY WANJIKU WAWERU

Manufacturers are seeking clearer rules, adequate transition time and practical solutions before the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) fully rolls out a new eTIMS stock management functionality requiring businesses to electronically track the movement of goods through their operations.

The system will require taxpayers to account electronically for stock movements, including purchases, receipts, sales, transfers, returns, adjustments and disposals.

KRA issued a public notice on September 7, 2026, directing taxpayers engaged in business to maintain accurate and up-to-date stock records through TIMS/eTIMS.

The authority has since begun consultations with businesses and other stakeholders to identify technical and operational challenges before the functionality becomes fully operational.

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) wants the implementation framework clarified, particularly how the system will interact with existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) platforms used by large manufacturers.

KAM Chief Executive Officer Tobias Alando said manufacturers needed certainty over the requirements and sufficient time to prepare before implementation.

"Over the years, we have collaborated to

sensitise our members on taxation issues and processes. We are keen to engage our members so that their feedback is heard and reflected, ensuring the system is well aligned to the realities of manufacturing by the time it is rolled out," Alando said.

He spoke during a meeting with a KRA team led by Commissioner for Micro and Small Taxpayers George Obell.

A major concern is system integration. Many manufacturers already use sophisticated ERP systems to track raw materials, work-in-progress, finished goods, sales and warehouse movements. They want KRA to explain how these systems will connect with eTIMS without creating duplicate reporting requirements or disrupting operations.

Manufacturers are also seeking clear rules on acceptable stock variances, particularly where physical inventories do not immediately match electronic records.

The association wants clarity on how KRA will capture manufacturing processes in which raw materials are converted into finished products and may generate wastage, by-products, damaged goods, samples and other materials that do not result in conventional sales.

Another concern is the treatment of imported raw materials and inputs. KAM is seeking clarification on whether the stock-management system will integrate with the Integrated Customs Management System (iCMS) and how import documentation will be reconciled with eTIMS records.

Other issues include inter-warehouse transfers, promotional goods, samples and procedures for accounting for legitimate stock discrepancies.

Manufacturers are also seeking contingency measures for system downtime, particularly where factories must continuously receive raw materials or dispatch finished goods.

Obell said the stock-tracking initiative is intended to tackle missing-trader transactions, in which businesses generate tax invoices without genuine underlying commercial transactions, thereby reducing their tax liabilities.

KRA also expects the system to improve tax reporting, curb market distortions and promote fair competition between compliant and non-compliant businesses.

The existing eTIMS architecture includes functions for stock inventories, imported items, stock-in and stock-out histories, stock movements and opening and closing balances.

The consultations come as manufacturers push for a more predictable tax environment, warning that unclear requirements and frequent implementation changes could raise compliance costs and complicate investment and production planning.



Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) CEO Tobias Alando

Bamburi targets Sh2trillion Lamu refinery cement bonanza

BY KARICA HASSAN

The Bamburi Cement Plc is positioning itself to supply cement and concrete products for the planned 700,000-barrel-per-day Lamu Crude Oil Refinery, with the mega project expected to consume about one million tonnes of cement and concrete during construction.

Bamburi Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Ndugwa said the company is in discussions with Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemical SEZ, the developer of the proposed refinery, as it seeks a share of the construction materials market.

"The civil and related construction works for the 700,000 barrel-per-day refinery will consume an approximate one million tons of cement and concrete solutions, and we are well positioned to manufacture and deliver to the project site from our Mombasa plant," Ndugwa said.

The proposed refinery, estimated

at about Sh2 trillion, is planned as a single-train facility capable of processing different grades of crude oil sourced from various regions.

For Bamburi, the project presents a major commercial opportunity as Kenya moves to increase local participation in large infrastructure and industrial projects.

The cement manufacturer said its Mombasa plant has the capacity to produce and supply products suited to major civil engineering and marine construction works required for the Lamu development.

The refinery is also expected to generate significant demand for locally manufactured construction materials during its construction phase, with the Government encouraging developers to source locally where suitable products are available.

Bamburi is simultaneously expanding its own production capacity to meet anticipated demand from major infrastructure and construction projects.



The proposed Lamu refinery is expected to have a capacity of 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day once completed.

The company has signed a \$250 million (about Sh32 billion) engineering, procurement and construction contract with Sinoma CBMI Construction Co. Ltd for a new clinker plant in Matuga, Kwale County.

The plant will have an annual clinker production capacity of 1.6 million tonnes.

Once operational, Bamburi expects the expansion to raise its clinker production capacity from one million tonnes to 2.6 million tonnes annually, while cement production capacity will increase from 1.8 million tonnes to four million tonnes a year.

The capacity expansion could strengthen the company's ability to supply large-scale projects such as the proposed Lamu refinery while supporting growing demand for cement and concrete across the construction sector.

The Lamu refinery is expected to become one of Kenya's largest industrial investments, with the planned facility designed to process up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day once completed.

Bamburi's pursuit of the supply opportunity comes as the project enters a critical phase, with construction expected to drive demand across a range of sectors, including cement, steel, transport, engineering and other local supply chains.



Rapper Rick Ross arrested in Miami over domestic violence case



American rapper Rick Ross whose legal name is William Leonard Roberts II.

BY WANJIKU
WAWERU

American rapper Rick Ross has been arrested in Miami Beach and charged with felony battery by strangulation and misdemeanor battery following allegations that he assaulted his girlfriend at his home.

Ross, whose legal name is William Leonard Roberts II, 50, turned himself in to police on Thursday morning and was booked at the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center.

According to a Miami Beach Police Department statement and criminal affidavit, the alleged assault occurred on August 28 at Ross' home on exclusive Star Island, where he was living with his girlfriend at the time.

Police said the woman reported that Ross struck her several times during an argument and restricted her breathing by twisting the collar of the hoodie she was wearing.

The woman, who has not been publicly identified by police, told detectives that Ross became angry after she was tagged in an Instagram photograph and accused her of lying to

him.

According to the affidavit, Ross allegedly slapped her across the face before later accusing her of having a romantic relationship with a man she said was only a friend.

The woman alleged that Ross then struck her several times in the chest and choked her "to the point she could not breathe" by grabbing and twisting her hoodie.

She further told police that Ross grabbed her ponytail and slammed her against a wall.

The woman provided detectives with a sworn statement and photographs that police said documented her injuries. She told investigators that she managed to leave the house and later returned to collect her belongings after Ross had left.

The couple had reportedly been dating for about a year.

Ross has pleaded not guilty and strongly denied the allegations.

His lawyers, Steve Sadow and Bradley Horenstein, said the rapper was "being wrongfully accused by an ex-girlfriend whose true motivations are unclear."

"Mr. Roberts is innocent and has pled not guilty to the charges," the lawyers said, urging

the public not to prejudge the case while the judicial process continues.

Ross also maintained his innocence after leaving jail, describing the allegations as fabricated.

"I'm totally innocent of these fabricated allegations made against me," he said.

His bond was initially listed at \$5,000 for the felony strangulation charge and \$1,000 for the misdemea-

nor battery charge, with court records subsequently listing total bond at \$6,000.

The arrest came days after Ross' former girlfriend Jazzma Kendrick publicly accused him of physical abuse. Kendrick shared photographs of a swollen lip on social media and alleged that Ross had caused the injury.

Those allegations have not been established in

court and are separate from the charges arising from the August 28 incident.

Ross is scheduled to appear for arraignment on October 22.

The Miami-based rapper rose to international fame with his 2006 hit "Hustlin'" and has since released 12 studio albums, earning nine Grammy nominations. His other major hits include "Aston Martin Music" and

"Stay Schemin'."

He has also collaborated with major artists including Drake, DJ Khaled and Nicki Minaj.

Ross released his latest album, *Set in Stone*, in July, featuring artists including Gucci Mane, The-Dream and Yung Miami.

Despite the arrest, Ross said he planned to travel to Dubai and Paris in the days following his release.

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Trump warns Iran of ‘very hard’ response over Flydubai cockpit attack

BY CORRESPONDENT

US President Donald Trump has warned Iran it would face a “very hard” response if investigators establish that Tehran was linked to an alleged attempt by a Flydubai co-pilot to crash a passenger jet bound for Israel.

Trump issued the threat on Thursday as investigators in Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia sought to establish the motive behind the dramatic mid-air attack, which left the captain injured and sent the aircraft into a steep descent.

Asked at the White House whether he had been briefed on possible links between

the Omani co-pilot and Iran, Trump said: “We’re working on it right now.” He added that, based on information he was hearing, he believed there could be a connection.

Asked whether the United States would retaliate against Tehran if Iran was found to be behind the incident, Trump replied: “Oh they’ll be hit, very hard, don’t worry.”

Trump did not provide evidence for the alleged Iranian link.

Stalled diplomacy

The remarks came as diplomatic efforts to end the seven-month war involving Iran appeared to have stalled.

Iranian officials said they had received an official US response to Tehran’s latest

Flydubai flight FZ1073 from Dubai to Tel Aviv, carrying more than 170 passengers, most of them Israelis, September 30, 2026.



the indications suggested the co-pilot intended to bring down the aircraft.

Israeli security officials have initially assessed that he may have acted alone, while investigations continue into whether he had outside direction or links to terrorist organisations.

The UAE has launched an investigation into the circumstances and motive, including whether the incident was connected to terrorism or involved prior planning or direction.

The attack has also exposed questions over Israeli aviation security procedures. Israeli media reported that Omani pilots had been allowed to operate flights into Israel despite Oman having no diplomatic relations with Jerusalem.

Under arrangements associated with the Abraham Accords, pilots from countries without diplomatic ties with Israel are not supposed to operate flights into the country.

Reports indicate that Israel had relied on foreign airlines to enforce the restriction rather than conducting comprehensive background checks itself.

Israeli security agencies, including the Shin Bet and Mossad, are now examining how the Omani co-pilot was cleared to operate the flight and whether existing safeguards were



Pilot Smit Machar is credited with saving the lives of 174 passengers on board FlyDubai Flight FZ1073 from Dubai to Tel Aviv. Machar was stabbed by his co-pilot during the flight, but managed to open the locked cockpit and send emergency messages. The United Arab Emirates say they are launching an investigation into the incident.

adequately enforced.

Saudi authorities said the captain and co-pilot were treated for their injuries before leaving for Abu Dhabi after receiving medical clearance. The investigation remains ongoing, with authorities yet to establish whether the attack was an isolated act or part of a wider operation.



A collage photo of US President Donald Trump and a motorist at a fueling station.

Trump mulls US diesel export ban as global prices surge

BY TEAM

US President Donald Trump has said that he is considering asking European countries to release diesel reserves as his administration weighs restricting US fuel exports amid soaring global prices.

Trump’s comments came after Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent urged European allies to release stored diesel supplies immediately, arguing that American farmers, truckers and businesses should not bear the full burden of rising fuel costs.

The US exports an estimated 1.2 million to 1.5 million barrels of diesel a day, making it a major supplier to international markets. Analysts warn that an export ban could further tighten global supplies and push prices higher.

Trump has argued that retaining diesel supplies domestically could help lower prices for US consumers, particularly ahead of November’s midterm elections.

Britain held talks with European partners on Thursday over a possible coordinated release of strategic

fuel reserves. UK Energy Minister Martin McCluskey participated in discussions with European counterparts as governments assessed the potential impact of US export restrictions.

The UK Government said there was no immediate threat of diesel shortages, although prices were expected to rise further. A European Commission spokesperson said discussions were under way with US officials and other partners.

UK diesel prices reached a record 199.79 pence per litre, according to the RAC, up sharply from 142.38p a year earlier.

Global fuel markets have been disrupted by the war involving Iran, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a major route for global oil shipments. Restrictions on Russian diesel exports have added pressure.

David Fyfe, chief economist at Argus Media, warned that cutting US diesel exports could send international prices sharply higher.

The UK is particularly exposed because its refineries produce insufficient diesel to meet domestic demand. More than 15 million diesel vehicles were on British roads at the end of June, although the number has fallen from the previous year.

Tennessee halts executions after inmate survives execution through two lethal doses

BY CORRESPONDENT

Tennessee Governor in the United States of America Bill Lee has suspended all executions in the state until at least the end of the year after a botched lethal injection left death row inmate Christa Pike alive and in critical condition.

Pike, 50, survived two doses of pentobarbital during Wednesday’s attempted execution at the death chamber in Nashville. She was later taken to hospital, where her lawyer Randy Spivey said she remained in critical condition and was receiving life-saving medical care.

Spivey said the execution team spent about an hour trying to establish an intravenous line, using at least seven needles in Pike’s left arm. He described the procedure as “cruel” and “torturous”, and said one needle appeared bent when removed.

Lee called the incident “deeply disturbing” and ordered an independent investigation, saying there were “a lot of questions” that needed to be answered.

“This is a tragedy,” Lee said, adding that the execution “shouldn’t have happened” in the manner it did. Pike was sentenced to death in 1996 for the 1995 murder of 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer, whom she and her then-boyfriend, Tadarly Shipp, beat and tortured before killing her.

Her lawyers are seeking commutation of her death sentence and exploring further legal options. The US Supreme Court had allowed the execution to proceed following a last-minute legal challenge.

The Tennessee Department of Correction said officials followed the state’s approved execution protocol.



Christa Pike in critical condition after botched execution.



Eritrean President, Isaias Afwerki (right) seemed open to a dialogue with his longtime enemy, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed (left), after decades of hostility. FILE PHOTO

Eritrea severs diplomatic ties with Ethiopia in tit-for-tat move

BY TEAM

Eritrea has severed diplomatic ties with Ethiopia after Addis Ababa ordered the closure of its embassy in Asmara and expelled 10 Eritrean diplomats, further escalating tensions as fighting intensifies in northern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia’s Foreign Ministry said Thursday it had closed its embassy in Asmara over what it described as Eritrea’s “direct and indirect acts of hostility and belligerence” against Ethiopia. The 10 Eritrean diplomats were given 48 hours to leave the country.

Eritrea’s Foreign Ministry responded by saying it had “no option but to reciprocate in kind and sever all diplomatic ties with Ethiopia,” warning of “all the negative corollaries” arising from the decision.

The diplomatic rupture came amid renewed fighting involving Ethiopian federal forces and an opposition alliance led by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF).

Addis Ababa has accused Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt of supporting the alliance, allegations all three countries

deny.

The latest clashes are the most serious escalation since Ethiopia’s 2020–2022 Tigray war, which killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Explosions were heard in Addis Ababa overnight, raising fears that the conflict could spread beyond the northern battlefields.

An opposition source claimed the alliance carried out drone strikes in the capital, including attacks targeting military facilities. Reuters could not independently verify the claims.

Ethiopia has since banned drone flights over Addis Ababa, while government-aligned forces reported fresh battlefield gains in Tigray and Afar.

Relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea had improved after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s 2018 rapprochement with Asmara, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

However, tensions have since resurfaced, including over Ethiopia’s demand for access to the Red Sea.

The diplomatic breakdown now adds a major regional dimension to the renewed conflict.



World Athletics Head of Competition Management Pierce O'Callaghan while he toured Railla Odinga International Stadium as preparations for Nairobi 2029 continue. He was accompanied by NOCK 1st Vice President Barnaba Korir, Athletics Kenya Director of Competitions Kennedy Tanui, and marathon legend Tegla Loroupe.

World Athletics inspects Kenya facilities ahead of 2029 championships

BY JAMES WANJIKU

World Athletics has begun assessing Kenya's sports infrastructure ahead of the country's historic hosting of the 2029 World Athletics Championships.

World Athletics Director of Competition Management Pierce O'Callaghan is in the country to inspect key facilities and provide guidance on infrastructure upgrades required to stage the global athletics showpiece.

O'Callaghan, accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Sports and Athletics Kenya, toured the Kasarani Stadium on Wednesday evening before inspecting Nyayo Stadium and

Ulinzi Sports Complex on Thursday.

He later held talks with Sports Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi, who reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring Kenya is adequately prepared to host the championships in September 2029.

The inspection is the first by World Athletics since Kenya was awarded the hosting rights for the biennial championships.

The assessment is expected to help identify areas requiring renovation, modernisation or additional investment to ensure the facilities meet World Athletics standards before the event.

Kenya's selection marked a milestone for the continent, with the country set to become the first African nation to host the World Athlet-

ics Championships.

Kenya secured the rights after overcoming competition from Rome, Italy, and London, United Kingdom.

The World Athletics Council announced Kenya as the host at its meeting in Budapest last month.

The 2029 championships are expected to place Kenya's athletics infrastructure and organisational capacity under international scrutiny as the country prepares to welcome athletes and officials from around the world.

The government and Athletics Kenya will now be expected to work closely with World Athletics on the infrastructure, technical and organisational requirements leading up to the championships.

Oduor names 43-player Harambee Starlets squad for Seychelles Olympic qualifiers

BY TEAM

Interim Harambee Starlets head coach Godfrey Oduor has named a 43-player provisional squad as Kenya begins preparations for the 2028 CAF Women's Olympic qualifiers against Seychelles.

The Starlets will face Seychelles in a two-leg first-round tie, with both matches scheduled for Nyayo Stadium.

The opening match will be played on Thursday, October 8, with the return leg set for Monday, October 12. Both encounters will kick off at 3pm.

The provisional squad brings together established national-team players, returning faces and several newcomers as Oduor seeks to build a team capable of negotiating the two-legged assignment.

The players were expected to report to camp yesterday, Friday, October 2, 2026 giving the technical bench several days to assess the squad before the opening fixture.

Among the players returning to the national-team setup are Simba Queens midfielder Corazone Aquino, Gor Mahia Queens goalkeeper Monica Odato, Kibera Soccer Women defender Janet Mumo and Mathare United Women defender Wincaate Kaari.

Haymanaspor midfielders Lavine Achola and Euphrasier Shilwato are also included, alongside Kenya

Police Bullets forward Faith Mboya, Wacker Innsbruck Women forward Sylvia Makungu and Madira Soccer Assassins forward Charity Midewa.

Oduor has also opened the door for fresh talent, with Kayole Starlets defender Hellen Ochieng and forward Magneta Ocharo earning maiden call-ups. Madira Soccer Assassins defender Abigael Njeru, Gideon Starlets midfielder Mercyline Wafula and Vihiga Queens midfielder Josephine Warenga have also been handed opportunities to break into the senior side.

The squad has five goalkeepers, 14 defenders, 11 midfielders and 13 forwards, giving Oduor a broad pool from which to select the final match-day squad.

Among the other notable names are experienced forwards Jentrix Shikangwa of FC Masar in Egypt, Valerie Nekesa of CD Tenerife in Spain and Mwanalima Adam of HB Koge in Denmark.

The provisional list will now be trimmed as preparations intensify for the Seychelles tie.

The Starlets are seeking to advance from the first round and move another step closer to the 2028 Olympic Games, with the two matches at Nyayo set to provide the first major test of Oduor's interim tenure.

Harambee Starlets provisional squad comprises of 43 players among them five goalkeepers, 14 defenders, 11 midfielders and 13 forwards.



Harambee Starlets team members

Mombasa United edge Sharks to seize playoff advantage

BY CORRESPONDENT

Mombasa United seized the initiative in the battle for the final SportPesa League place after edging Kariobangi Sharks 2-1 in a pulsating promotion-relegation playoff first leg at Mbaraki Sports Club yesterday.

The hosts struck twice in an eight-minute burst after half-time through Dennis Toeri and Rawhide Waziri before Wayne Dalvine Otieno pulled one back for Sharks in the 83rd minute to keep the tie alive.

The result gives Mombasa a narrow advantage heading into Tuesday's decisive return leg in Nairobi, where Sharks will need to overturn the one-goal deficit to secure their place in the 2026/27 SportPesa League.

The opening half was a tense tactical affair, with neither side willing to surrender space. Sharks patiently worked possession through midfield, while Mombasa maintained a compact defensive shape and looked to exploit spaces on the counter.

The deadlock was finally broken in the 55th minute when Toeri finished off a period of sustained pressure to send the home crowd into celebration.

Sharks had barely recovered when Mombasa doubled their lead eight minutes later. Waziri kept his composure from the penalty spot, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way to put the hosts firmly in control.

Mombasa's 4-3-3 formation began to cause Sharks problems as their wide players stretched the visitors' defence, while the midfield pressed high to disrupt attempts to build from the back.



Frankline Amolo of Kariobangi Sharks battles for the ball with Waziri of Mombasa United

Sharks coach William Muluya responded by committing more players forward, sacrificing some of the control his side had shown in the first half in search of a way back into the contest.

The pressure eventually paid off in the 83rd minute when Otieno reacted quickest inside the box to reduce the deficit and give Sharks a crucial lifeline.

The goal transformed the closing stages, with Sharks pushing for an equaliser while Mombasa were forced to defend their slender advantage.

Mombasa coach Abdulhamid Moallin praised his players for their determination but warned that the tie remained far from settled.

"We knew it would be a difficult game, but the boys showed character and gave everything. We have won the first leg, but the job is not finished. We have another 90 min-

utes in Nairobi, and we have to remain focused," Moallin said.

Sharks captain Patilah Omotto also insisted the tie was still open and urged his teammates to regroup ahead of the return leg.

"We have lost the first leg, but the tie is not over. We know what we need to do in Nairobi, and we have to stay focused, regroup and fight for the result we need," Omotto said.

For Omotto, the playoff carries added significance after he helped Sharks secure promotion to the top flight in 2016.

"Personally, this fixture means a lot. We worked so much in 2016 to get promoted from the National Super League. We shall work extremely hard to replicate the same feat in Nairobi next week," he said.

With only one goal separating the teams, Tuesday's return leg promises another tense contest, with the winner earning the final place in the



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