



# THE Weekly Review

*For the Thinking Person*

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## DARK SIDE OF KENYAN ATHLETICS

**We bring you the inside story of the doping crisis, where rogue agents collude with athletes to cheat. Their actions threaten to taint the nation's standing as a track giant in the world**

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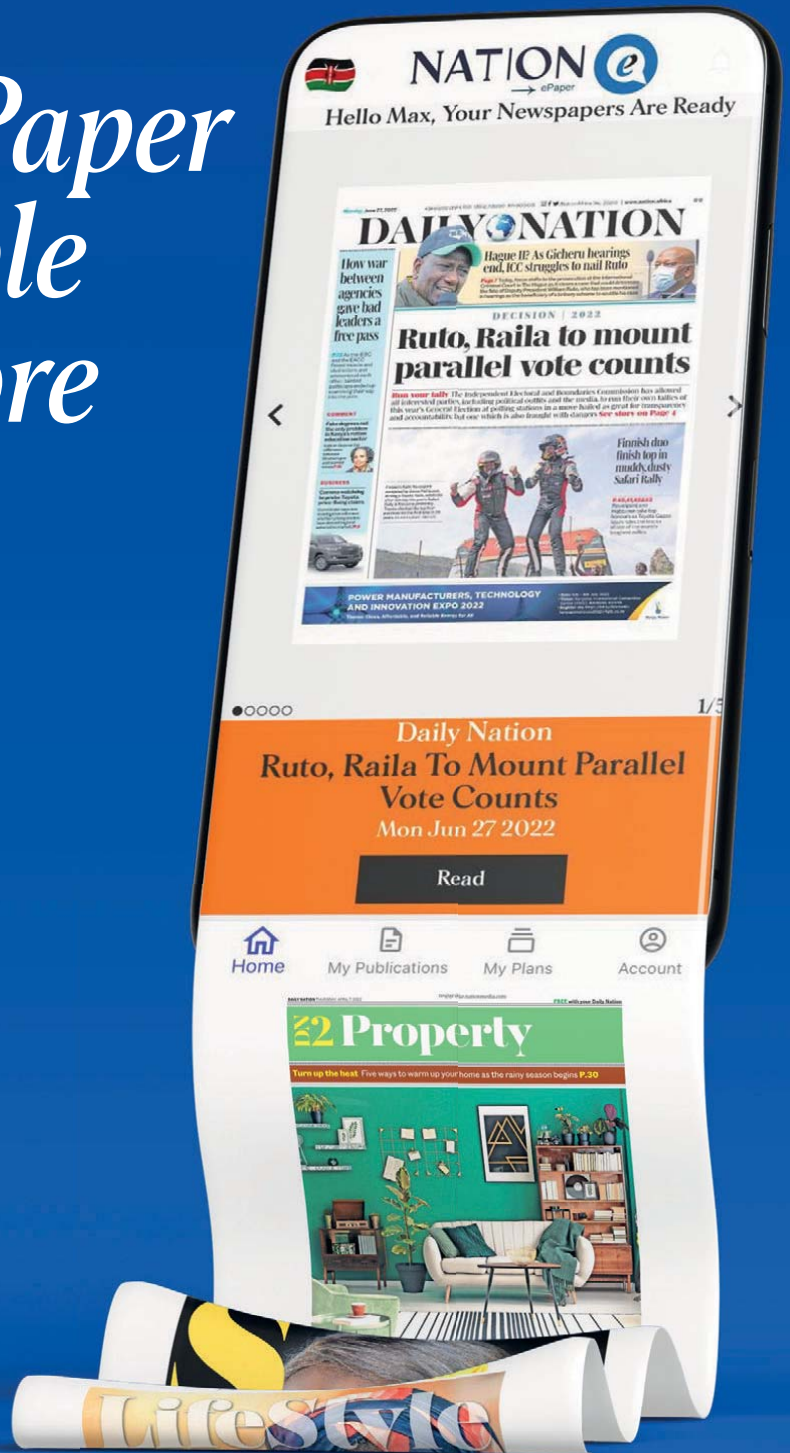
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letter from the editor

Inside

**9 REIGN OF CHAOS:** The clash of docket between Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mithika Linturi and Trade's Moses Kuria could turn out to be early indicators of ongoing turf wars within President William Ruto's administration.

**13 THE PRESIDENT'S TAILOR:** Ashok Sunny specialises in luxurious, bespoke suits made only with high quality fabrics and stitched by hand, and although his garments may seem a little pricey, he is never short of clients.



**22** From the Olympics to the Fifa World Cup, athletes have demonstrated their ability to take the lead in the fight against racism.

**25 IT'S TOTAL WAR ON AL-SHABAAB:** The Somalia government has adopted a multi-pronged counterterrorism effort against the Al-Qaeda affiliate which, despite some early military gains, promises to be long and difficult.

Why Namwamba should make cleaning up athletics his legacy project

Kenya without its famed athletes is hard to image, almost like a cup of tea without tea leaves. For about six decades Kenya has made a mark on the global stage as an athletics powerhouse.

Many people across the world get to hear about the country called Kenya through the exploits of its sons and daughters on the athletics track.

The free marketing that our athletes have given us would cost the Treasury billions of dollars in its advertising space equivalent.

Yet all is not well in Kenya's athletics circles.

More than 30 Kenyan athletes, mostly elite, have been suspended in the past one year alone for flouting anti-doping rules. A whopping 40 per cent of all confirmed doping cases this year are from Kenya.

The integrity of our performance on the athletics track has been put to question, and the World Anti-Doping Agency is watching us closely.

The rampant doping menace has seen Kenya classified in 'Category A', which denotes countries where doping is most prevalent. Only three other countries are in this ignominious list; Ethiopia, Belarus and Ukraine.

An illustrious history of athletics success achieved over many years risks being sacrificed on the altar of greed by a few athletes and their handlers.

A detailed article in this week's edition shines a focus into the dark world of doping, and highlights an emerging culture of mafia-like behavior by purveyors and beneficiaries of the dark underworld.



Washington Gikunju

It is easy to relapse now that a ban is not hanging on our head and sink into an even deeper hole, going by past experience. CS Namwamba's action that brought last-minute reprieve for the honest, hard-working athletes must not become another kick of the can down the road, like it clearly was six years ago.

It is indeed a horror story that captures self-destruction in an industry where so much is at stake.

The government's pledge to increase anti-doping funding, with an allocation of Sh619 million annually for the next five years, helped to avoid a ban from world championships late last month. Such a ban would have drowned dreams of tens of hopeful athletes down the drain, never to recover, given the short lifespan of athletes' careers.

Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba bought the country time after he wrote a letter to the Inter-

national Federation of Athletics Federations detailing plans to raise awareness, implement anti-doping measures and increase the frequency of testing.

This must be a big wakeup call to all in the sports fraternity.

It is easy to relapse now that a ban is not hanging on our head and sink into an even deeper hole, going by past experience.

Kenya escaped going the Russian way and was only allowed to compete at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games after President Uhuru Kenyatta signed into law the 2016 Anti-Doping Act, which saw the establishment of an anti-doping agency and legal framework.

CS Namwamba's action that brought last-minute reprieve for the honest, hard-working athletes must not become another kick of the can down the road, like it clearly was six years ago.

Efforts to promote clean sport must be initiated immediately, institutionalised and sustained.

The message of zero tolerance to doping must become a clarion call in all forums and networks with athletes, coaches and all other stakeholders.

Get-rich-quick brokers, athletes, coaches, agents, managers and rogue officials must be banished from the track once and for all. If CS Namwamba could make this his legacy project early in his tenure, it would be enough to earn him a spot in the history books.

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## the telescope

■ **'Opaque 4' under siege over poll conduct**

### Azimio coalition's case for rallies

Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition party leaders will on December 7 kick off country-wide rallies and protests over plans to kick out four Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) commissioners. The anti-government rallies and protests were to commence on November 30, but Azimio leader Raila Odinga announced that they had postponed the rallies for a week to give room for national examinations to continue uninterrupted. The opposition leaders are accusing the Kenya Kwanza government of orchestrating a witch-hunt against the IEBC 4 for disowning the results of the

August 9 presidential elections. The leaders also cite the decision to import GMO maize, insecurity, and the high cost of living as some of the reasons for their calls for rallies. At the same time, the National Assembly is expected to hold a special sitting to debate the Justice and Legal Affairs committee report on the conduct of the four commissioners. The committee has been considering four petitions lodged against the "Cherera 4" for the past two weeks, listening to the petitioners and the lawyers of the commissioners. Last week Thursday, the committee tabled the report before the National Assembly.



Azimio La Umoja-One Kenya leaders Kalonzo Musyoka, Raila Odinga and Martha Karua.

■ **It will be the first step towards peace, he says**



Tiger Woods plays a shot from the bunker on the second hole during the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on November 12, 2020.

### Woods says Greg Norman 'has to go'

Tiger Woods says Greg Norman "has to go" as commissioner of the LIV Golf Series if the upstart circuit is to exist in harmony with the US PGA and DP World tours.

The 15-time major champion, speaking Tuesday before his Hero World Challenge at the Albany in the Bahamas, echoed comments earlier this month by Northern Ireland star Rory McIlroy, both also saying that litigation between the parties must be dropped if progress is to be made.

"There is an opportunity out there if both organisations put a stay on their litigation," Woods said. "That's the problem."

"There is no willingness to negotiate if you have litigation against you. I think Greg has to go first of all. It

has to start with leadership on their side, understanding that what is happening right now is not the best future for the whole game of golf. "You need to have the two bodies come together and if one side has so much animosity, trying to destroy our tour, then how do you work with that?"

Norman has been the very confrontational face of the breakaway circuit funded by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.

He said in September he had "no interest" in negotiating with the established tours in a bid to heal the bitter split sparked by LIV Golf's luring of some of the game's biggest names with multi-million dollar purses for their 54-hole, no-cut tournaments.

■ **Critics accused him of allowing corruption**

### Memes as Chinese mourn Jiang



Irreverent memes, tributes to the late "toad king" and nostalgia for a time seen as more liberal — Chinese took to social media Wednesday to mourn the death of former leader Jiang Zemin. Over half a mil-

lion commenters flooded a post by state broadcaster CCTV announcing the death on the Twitter-like platform Weibo within an hour, with many referring to the late leader as "Grandpa Jiang". Jiang's legacy is mixed — many welcomed his humorous public persona as a breath of fresh air after decades of staid communist leadership, while critics accused him of allowing rampant corruption and inequality.

■ **Operation Desert Light: Supply chain dismantled**

### Europol take down cocaine 'super cartel'



A drug "super cartel" that controlled about a third of Europe's cocaine supply has been dismantled, police have announced.

Dubbed Operation Desert Light, 49 people were arrested across six European countries, the EU's police

agency, Europol, said. They included a British national, who is suspected of heading the operation. More than 30 tonnes (30,000kg) of drugs were seized during the two-year-long investigation, Europol said. Operation Desert Light saw authorities in Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates work together to bring down the cartel, Europol said in a statement. Those arrested included six "high-value targets" — those most wanted by international police.

## kenya lens

■ FOR GET-RICH-QUICKLY BROKERS, THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

**DOPING SCOURGE: THE TRUTH****Kenya — an athletics powerhouse — has been designated under ‘Category A’ by Wada, which denotes a country with the highest prevalence of cheating**

● BY OMULO OKOTH

It's a mystery that Kenya has not been hounded out of global athletics. Many of its athletes are so deeply mired in doping that the nation, known for decades as a middle- and long-distance running powerhouse, counts itself very lucky to survive the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) sanction.

Victories by Kenyan athletes in big city marathon races are, at best, received with incredulity, and at worst a sneer. Yet, many

of them are still hard-working clean athletes, following in the footsteps of pioneers like Nyantika Maiyoro, Kanuti Sum, Kipchoge Keino, Wilson Kiprugut Chumo, Ben Jipcho, Daniel Rudisha, Charles Asati, Robert Ouko, Sabina Chebichi, Rose Tata Muya, Tecla Chemabwai and hundreds of others who just believed in hard work.

The scourge of doping has completely changed the landscape of global athletics for ever, thanks to get-rich-quick brokers, who include coaches, agents, managers and client rogue officials, and who are only too ready

to demand a pound of flesh, regardless of consequences. To them, the end justifies the means.

Gullible young athletes have unknowingly been taken advantage of and oftentimes led to imbibing liquids, taking tablets or receiving injections laden with performance-enhancing substances whose effects on their bodies are sometimes fatal. It sometimes takes the form of massaging of the muscles and a highly specialised scientific process that entails transfusing of oxygen-laden blood,

Continued on Page 6

## kenya lens

# Why doping is rampant in Kenyan athletics

Continued from Page 5

known as blood doping.

While this procedure helps the athletes win races, and big money, the effects on their bodies are not worth the big dollars they receive. Some have collapsed and died mysteriously, while others have had their reproductive health damaged permanently.

Athletics officials, who should ideally be leading the fight to protect athletes, have blown hot and cold over the issue. Successive Athletics Kenya officials have been accused of protecting agents who perpetrate and perpetuate doping of athletes. It is for this reason that the government set up the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) by an Act of Parliament to help push the agenda to fight the scourge.

But with no teeth to bite and limited by its mandate to take punitive action that would deter abuse of drugs by athletes, ADAK's role has been reduced to sensitising athletes to the dangers of doping.

But it cannot suspend or ban culprits from competing, given that it also acts with the domesticated provisions of Wada. ADAK uses millions of taxpayers' money every financial year, sending officials all over the country, but every month, Kenyan athletes fall afoul of anti-doping rules.

There are many hyenas in the sporting field in general, and particularly in athletics, who purport to care for the athletes but collude with crooked managers to perpetrate the vice.

Unlike Russia, and formerly communist East Germany, which run systemic doping programmes, the Kenya government has not been involved in scientific doping of its runners. That is what has kept the country from being banned from international competitions, although it is still ranked among the top doping nations.

Athletics Kenya, as a corporate entity, has not supported doping either, but it has in its ranks officials, past and current, who have feathered the nest for doping war lords to hold sway in Kenyan athletics. Some officials are beholden to managers or agents, some of whom have the notoriety of slave drivers.

An agent once told me that 95 per cent of elite athletes dope, and that officials, from international federations to affiliates, are either complicit or aware of what is going on.

It did not take long for the proof to emerge when an entire global federation and its acolytes collapsed like a house of cards, amid claims and counter-claims of conspiracy to bribe and conceal revelations of doping on an industrial scale.

Once caught, no one is ready to take responsibility. Athletes are left on their own. Agents disown them and suddenly, they are responsible for what enters their bodies.

Even fellow athletes disown their own. When former Boston and Chicago Marathon winner Rita Jeptoo failed a doping test in 2016, team mates from her management called a press conference to disown her. Jeptoo was just one of many big names to have fallen victim to the doping scourge in the past five years. Others are former world and Olympic champion Asbel Kiprop and 2016 Rio Marathon champion Jemimah Sumgong.

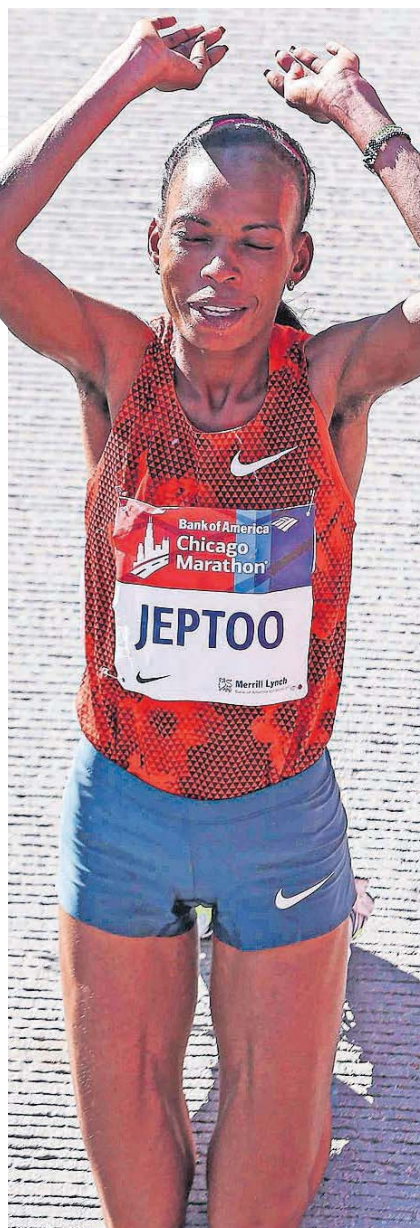
Some have had their doping cases

overturned after being sanctioned, but it is often a Pyrrhic victory after paying high legal fees and having their names dragged through the mud.

Progressive reporters who dare to expose this vice by calling for punitive action and banning of agents whose athletes cheat are bad-mouthed by colleagues, while their acquiescent colleagues are adopted as 'family' and appointed to advisory roles.

Athletics Kenya officials know who among them is associated with the management companies whose athletes are deeply embroiled in the doping quagmire. When technical officials suspected to associate with those promoting doping are appointed to national teams, or to committees supposedly set up to fight doping, what does the appointing authority expect the public to say?

Many officials, unfortunately including journalists who are supposed to expose such malpractices, benefit from junkets offered by the doping promoters. This



Kenya's Rita Jeptoo celebrates winning the 2014 Chicago Marathon on October 12. PHOTO | FILE

**Those who want to engage in doping will suffer the consequences. We want to work with the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU). Those who want to cheat should count their days; there is no shortcut to success. We are determined to protect clean athletes; we will be ruthless with the few cheats who want to drag us into this thing.**

Athletics Kenya



## kenya lens

is why the fight against doping was bound not just to fail, but was to fail spectacularly.

Doping involves a vicious cartel right from the international stage, down to member federations, key officials, pharmaceutical companies, security agencies, media and doctors. Any attempt by well-meaning individuals, especially in the media, to expose the conspiracy, is met with hostility, blacklisting and eventually no invitations to international events.

Four years ago, a Wada-accredited laboratory was set up in Nairobi to test blood samples. The sporting world was told how this would help facilitate testing cheaply. "Everything will be easier, the facility will help us fight this menace, and we won't be going outside the country. It will be very near here, things will be faster, easier and cheaper," we were told.

"Those who want to engage in doping will suffer the consequences. We want to work with the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU). Those who want to cheat should count their days; there is no shortcut to success. We are determined to protect clean athletes; we will be ruthless with the few cheats who want to drag us into this thing," declared AK officials.

AK set up the Kenya Doctors Network, which, its officials said, proved useful in the fight against doping. The AK also set up the Multi Agency Anti-Doping Governance Committee on the advice of AIU. But the doping continues unabated.

Between 2004 and August 1, 2018, a total of 138 Kenyan athletes (from all sports) tested positive for prohibited substances. Of these, the type (i.e. in-competition or out of competition) was only available for 131 athletes.

Of those 131 athletes, only 13 per cent (18 of 131) were caught by out-of-competition testing. The overwhelming majority, 86 per cent (113 of 131) were caught by in-competition testing, according to statistics by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), an agency set up by World Athletics to fight the scourge.

Nandrolone is the most prevalent prohibited substance detected in Kenyan athletes and accounts for 35 per cent (49 of 138) of all (Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs)). Nandrolone promotes power and muscle strength.

The corticosteroids, prednisone, prednisolone and methylprednisolone are the next most prevalent group of prohibited substances and account for 13 per cent (18 out of 138) of all Kenyan AAFs. These are powerful anti-inflammatories that can be administered orally or via injection.

Erythropoietin (EPO) is the third most prevalent prohibited substance detected in Kenyan athletes and accounts for 12 per cent (16 of 138) of all AAFs. It stimulates red blood cell production and improves cardiovascular endurance. It is only administered intravenously or by injection.

Given the prevalence of Nandrolone within distance running and the performance benefits of EPO, the project focused on these two substances.

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### Some of the Kenyan athletes who have violated anti-doping rules this year

1. Ibrahim Makunga Wachira
2. Kenneth Kiprop Renju
3. Michael Kanyunga Njenga
4. Johnstone Kibet Maiyo
5. Lawrence Cheronu
6. Mark Kangogo
7. Philemon Kacheran
8. Felix Kipchumba Korir
9. Emmanuel Saina
10. Joel Maina Mwangi
11. Matthew Kisorio
12. Justus Kimutai
13. Morris Munene Gachaga
14. Edward Kibet Kiprop
15. Paul Kipchumba Lonyangata
16. Kumari Taki
17. Marius Kipserem
18. Diana Chemtai Kipyokei
19. Eglay Nalianya
20. Lilian Kasait
21. Stella Barsosio
22. Purity Changwony
23. Betty Wilson Lempus
24. Vane Nyaboke
25. Tabitha Gichia Wambui
26. Joyce Chepkirui
27. Purity Jerono Talam
28. Teddy Otengo
29. Everylne Syombua
30. Phenus Kipleting
31. Gloria Kite
32. Daniel Wanjiru

Former three-time 1,500m World Champion Asbel Kiprop trains with his friend Meshack Kipchirchir at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret on February 4 after a four year doping ban.

JARED NYATAYA | NATION



## kenya lens

■ POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS IN THE REGION TO LOCK OUT RAILA

## MUDAVADI'S EAR ON THE GROUND

**Disquiet in ODM over distribution of parliamentary slots gives Prime Cabinet Secretary opportunity to rally Western Kenya MPs behind him**

● By OSCAR OBONYO

Coming at a time when Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua is galvanising political support in the Mt Kenya region and former Prime Minister Odinga is in the political cold following the August poll debacle, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi's recent meeting with legislators from Western Kenya could not have been more timely and weighty.

Gachagua and Odinga could stand in the way of Mudavadi's long-time dream of rising to the presidency. Little wonder, then, that the November 22 meeting was considered politically crucial to tame the DP's moves and intentions and make political capital of Odinga's glaring gaffes. The Orange Democratic Movement leader has over the years been accused of betraying the trust of his supporters in Western Kenya by allegedly not sharing election spoils equitably. During the August polls, Mudavadi and Ford-Kenya leader Moses Wetang'ula, who is now National Assembly Speaker, pushed this narrative to the electorate.

What has irked most politicians from the region, and in particular the larger Kakamega County, is the fact that despite their powerful showing at the August poll in support of Odinga's presidential bid, ODM did not allocate anyone from the county a top parliamentary leadership position.

Out of the 12 MPs in Kakamega, ODM has nine, with Amani National Congress (ANC) and Development Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K) holding two and one seat respectively. ODM's Elsie Muhanda and Fernandes Barasa won the Woman Representative and gubernatorial slots as well. ODM did quite well in Busia and Vihiga, too.

Why in the face of such huge support ODM gave Western Kenya a raw deal in key leadership positions is difficult to comprehend. Navakholo MP Emmanuel Wangwe served as Majority Whip in the 12th Parliament. Wandayi and Junet Mohamed, both from Luo Nyanza, occupy the top positions of Minority Leader and Minority Whip.

The friction between western legislators and their Nyanza colleagues is further aggravated by pre-poll manoeuvres that saw Westlands MP Tim Wanyonyi relinquish his quest for the Nairobi governor's seat in favour of Ju-

ilee party's Polycarp Igathe. At the time, Wanyonyi was the front runner.

ODM Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna is also a disappointed man after he was elbowed out of a leadership position at the Senate. He had initially settled for the slot of Minority Whip, a position that was later allocated to Narok Senator Ladama ole Kina. No single Luhya legislator occupies any of the top four parliamentary leadership slots. This reality is fodder for discord that Mudavadi can exploit, a factor that may well have persuaded his decision to invite Western MPs to a breakfast meeting. In a social media post, Mudavadi said they had discussed and agreed on unity of purpose.

"I had a fruitful consultative meeting with parliamentarians from Western. We discussed and agreed on the unity of purpose by leaders, and the sharing of national resources for the region's social-economy development. The progress of our country will be accelerated when leaders unite, focus and advocate for the interests of the people," the Prime CS posted after the November 22 meeting.

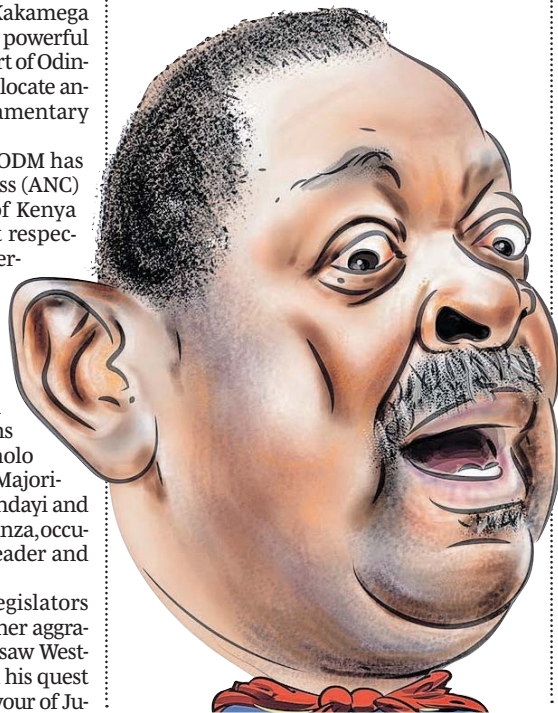
Incidentally, Mudavadi's meeting came just a day after ODM deputy party leader Wy-

cliffe Oparanya reportedly declared his intent to walk out of Odinga's fold and shift focus to unifying the Luhya community. The former Kakamega governor is said to have cited minority slots in the National Assembly and Senate, as well EALA representation, as areas where the community's numerical strength did not count. Oparanya, however, has since denied making such remarks. But Wandayi says this is a democratic country where freedom of association is a given right for everyone. Wandayi, who is also the ODM secretary of political affairs, hides behind the fact that Azimio La Umoja-One Kenya did not form the government. "We are not in power, meaning we have very few slots available in Parliament to share out. It is not just possible to satisfy everybody?"

Opiyo singles out several politicians from Western, including Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi, MPs Wangwe, Tindi Mwale, Raphael Wanjala, Caleb Amisi and Jack Wamboka of Nabakholo, Butere, Budalang'i, Saboti and Bumula respectively, as among those chairing or deputising "some of the lucrative committees". Since his ouster as Sabatia MP in 2002 by Moses Akaranga, Mudavadi has had a shaky hold on the region – partly because of the perception that he chickened out of the presidential race that year at a time when the stars were believably lined up for him. Instead, he backed the presidential bid of Uhuru Kenyatta, a political greenhorn who had only served for one year in Parliament as a nominated legislator.

Mudavadi's career was back on track five years later, when he teamed up with Odinga and William Ruto in the ODM outfit. He rose to serve as the country's Deputy Prime Minister under the Grand Coalition Government following the chaotic and highly discredited 2007 presidential elections pitting Odinga against Mwai Kibaki.

From two senators and 11 MPs elected on his United Democratic Forum (UDF) party ticket in 2013, when he vied for presidency, Mudavadi's political grip on the region has been loosening. Today, ANC has a paltry seven elected MPs compared with 16 (13 in the National Assembly and three in the Senate) in the 12th Parliament. In a move aimed at spreading his political tentacles beyond Western Kenya, Mudavadi relinquished his position of party leader to Lamu County Governor, Issa Timamy, upon appointment to the Cabinet. Matuga MP Kassim Sawa Tandaza says the move will strengthen ANC at the Coast.





## kenya lens

## ■ CONFUSION IN GOVERNMENT

## IT'S A REIGN OF CHAOS

**The clash of dockets between Agriculture CS Linturi and Trade's Kuria could turn out to be early indicators of turf wars in the Ruto administration**

● By JOHN KAMAU

What on the surface looks like a clash of dockets over the importation of maize could indicate serious turf wars between Trade Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria and his Agriculture counterpart, Mithika Linturi. It could also be an indicator of cracks in President William Ruto's Cabinet over portfolios.

It is not the first time that this has been witnessed. Recently, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua announced in Nyeri that he had lobbied Mount Kenya MPs to elect an opposition figure, Kanini Kega, to join the East African Assembly. The move went against the wishes of President Ruto, who had approved a separate line-up. That, and the clash of dockets between Linturi and Kuria, can turn out to be early indicators of the ongoing turf wars within President Ruto's backyard.

As drought ravaged the country, Kuria has been the leading voice over the importation of maize and was the first to announce that the country would import genetically modified food. Days later, Linturi – who had maintained a studious silence – said he was “not aware” of such plans. Maize imports are a multi-billion-shilling business, and whichever ministry handles the business becomes the arena of wheeler dealers and cartels out to win the tenders. Kuria had explained that the government would only buy the maize to replenish the national reserve – a docket in the Agriculture ministry. Why Kuria was making policy pronouncements on agriculture is not clear.

When you look at the history of this kind of confusion, you begin to understand how to read such clashes. Historically, such confusion in business and politics was deliberate. It could be plotted, as well. In the 1960s, Tom Mboya used to overstep his docket to introduce government motions in Parliament, bypassing Vice-President and Leader of Government Business, Oginga Odinga. While MPs would not be sure whether Mboya's motions were government or private members' motions, he would use them to spite Jaramogi – on behalf of other entities that wanted him replaced.

Another incident happened in 1963, when the Ministry of Education under Joseph Otiende received some scholarships from Bulgaria. After identifying the Kenyans who would go for the training, and a few hours before they boarded the plane, Mboya and Dr Njoroge Mungai re-

Moses Kuria



Mithika Linturi



placed the Otiende students and, instead, sent 55 Kanu youth wingers to board the plane. The switch was made on the airport tarmac, and a furious Otiende was left asking: “How many governments exist in this country?”

One of the failures of the 1960s' million-acre scheme project was due to a clash between Agriculture minister Bruce Mackenzie and his Lands and Settlement counterpart, Jackson Angaine. It would also involve Finance Minister James Gichuru. At one point, when dealing with squatters, Gichuru sent a secret letter to Angaine, dated February 14, 1966, reminding him: “As you know,” said the letter, “the policy of the government is not to give any class of people in Kenya land free”.

Angaine was not amused: “I do not recall anywhere where I have stated that squatters should be given land free or for that matter that money used for squatter settlement should not be recovered,” he wrote back. Angaine was of the opinion that Gichuru was not receiving the necessary advice from his officials. “In view of this I see no point in holding further meetings unless these are to be at minister's level,” he wrote, and copied the letter to Attorney-General Charles Njonjo, McKenzie, and Mboya.

During the era of President Moi, there were early clashes between Njonjo and Finance minister Mwai Kibaki in what is now understood to have been supremacy wars. While Moi had a strict hold on his ministers – and they hardly criticised each other, the resignation of Transport and Communications Minister Kenneth Matiba followed criticism from another minister. But it was during Kibaki's presidency that ministers often clashed.

The most pronounced hostilities were usually between Kibaki and his Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, on the interpretation of their shared roles. At one point, the Prime Minister suspended William Ruto, then Agriculture Minister, over a maize scandal – only for him to be reinstated

by President Kibaki.

It was during the same period that Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Martha Karua resigned on April 6, 2009, after she was bypassed by President Kibaki and the Attorney General on the appointment of judges – an indicator of the infighting then over control of the judiciary.

Another notable clash occurred between Fred Gumo's Regional Development Ministry and Kiraitu Murungi's Energy docket over control of a wind power plant in Marsabit North District. Both were fighting to have more say in the now controversial multi-billion project.

In October 2008, Medical Services Minister Anyang'Nyong'o announced that Kenya had been suspended from the Global Fund due to the country's failure to account for billions of shillings. But his Public Health counterpart, Beth Mugo, reading from a different script, said there was no such suspension.

Fast forward to President Ruto's administration, the Cabinet Secretaries seem to be making pronouncements outside their dockets – or before consulting. For instance, Education Minister Ezekiel Machogu had to make an about-turn after making a policy statement on university education. He later blamed the media.

The Cabinet Secretary for Public Services, Aisha Jumwa, recently lifted the ban on disco matanga in Kilifi, which former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i had imposed. While it had been announced that the disco matanga were banned due to rising teenage pregnancies, insiders knew it was a security measure that had nothing to do with teens.

Whether Dr Ruto will call to order his CSs remains to be seen, but it will be interesting to watch how they settle in their dockets. While Ruto has nominated Principal Secretaries, who would help the CSs on policy matters, some seem to be moving blindly – or, either, some serious fissures are emerging.

## kenya lens

■ A DP LOYAL TO THE PRESIDENT? NOT IN KENYA



# GACHAGUA'S GRAND POWER PLAN

**DP's quest for regional leadership vacuum after Uhuru's exit is intrinsically linked to laying the foundation for a future presidential bid**

• By MACHARIA GAITHO

**W**hen Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua openly proclaimed that he had rallied his Mt Kenya region support base in Parliament behind the successful East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) bid of former Kiuni MP Kanini Kega, he would not have been so naïve as to expect that President William Ruto would not take note.

What the Deputy President was publicly affirming, though not in so many words, was that he had mobilised the Mt Kenya bloc within the governing Kenya Kwanza Alliance to defy the President and back a candidate fronted by opposition leader Raila Odinga's Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya coalition.

Though both Ruto and Gachagua have since dismissed talk of a split and insisted that Kenya Kwanza remains united, the apparent rebellion over the EALA vote cannot be glossed over. It is a reflection of simmering tensions already evident between the two biggest ethnic

and regional blocs over issues such as appointments to key government offices including Principal Secretaries, Cabinet Administrative Secretaries, diplomatic postings, and heads of state corporations, statutory and constitutional bodies.

At first glance, and as he is publicly proclaiming, all the manoeuvres are about Gachagua moving to rally the Mt Kenya communities — the Kikuyu and the affiliated Meru and Embu blocs — behind the Ruto government.

Mt Kenya already voted solidly for the Ruto-Gachagua ticket and gave Kenya Kwanza a virtual clean sweep of all electoral seats in the country's largest vote basket, but there are isolated pockets still loyal to former President Uhuru Kenyatta that the DP feels constrained to raid.

In that regard, supporting Kega's EALA bid and thus winning his backing, as well as wooing other prominent Kikuyu figures who supported Raila's presidential bid, looks good for Kenya Kwanza. In any case, it is a key Ruto strategy to weaken Raila by raiding Azimio

and persuading MPs, governors and coalition leaders to cross over. The distinction, however, is that Rigathi's moves could be interpreted as aimed mainly at strengthening his own political position within Kenya Kwanza and the United Democratic Alliance, rather than winning support for the Ruto presidency.

During the presidential campaigns, the forceful former MP for Mathira felt constrained at various rallies to give assurances that as DP, he would be absolutely loyal and obedient to the President, that his role would be to jump when told to do so.

His coup on the EALA vote proved otherwise, and as he moves to consolidate his own political position, it cannot be just about winning Mt Kenya support for President Ruto, but about fortifying his own position. This would be with an eye not just on cementing his role as DP, but building himself up for his own stab at the presidency in future. When he gave assurances that he would be a loyal and obedient number two to Ruto, Gachagua must have been acutely aware that Ruto, as Uhuru's DP,

## kenya lens

was hardly loyal or obedient. He was saying that he would not be a DP like Ruto.

The second term of the Jubilee Party administration was marked by open discord between the President and his deputy. Uhuru tore up the Jubilee presidential succession pact by going into an alliance with Raila under the Building Bridges Initiative, and eventually backing his presidential bid under Azimio.

Ruto went into open rebellion, pushing his presidential election campaign by successfully infiltrating Uhuru's Mt Kenya base, and driving the Hustler vs Dynasties narrative that successfully turned a two-term DP into the 'outsider' candidate leading a popular insurgency against the governing elite.

The Uhuru-Ruto divorce was emblematic of the prickly relations between presidents and their deputies since Independence. President Kenyatta and Vice-Presidents Oginga Odinga and Daniel arap Moi; and President Moi and Vice-Presidents Mwai Kibaki, Josephat Karanja and George Saitoti. All told the story of a president who could not countenance a powerful, head-strong deputy building his own solid political base with an eye on gunning for the top seat at the appropriate time.

That was what Uhuru faced with Ruto, but was hamstrung by the 2010 Constitution, which made the presidential election a package deal. The DP was no longer a mere presidential appointee, but was elected on the same ticket and could not be sacked.

If that was the headache Ruto presented for Uhuru, it looks like it is the same headache Gachagua will present for Ruto as he consolidates an independent political base.

According to Kanini Kega, his reciprocal support for Gachagua after securing the EALA seat is based purely on the need to lobby government support for development in Mt Kenya, rather than anything to do with internal Kenya Kwanza politics. "I don't want to comment on that because I'm not in that political formation," he told *The Weekly Review*.

If there were ongoing political machinations in UDA and Kenya Kwanza around the DP, he was not privy to them and was not bothered since his loyalty remains with the Jubilee Party and Azimio. That might seem like a contradiction, but Kega insisted that agreeing to work with Gachagua was merely recognition of current realities rather than any indication that he was ditching Uhuru's Jubilee and support for Raila under the Azimio banner. He insisted that he remains a loyal member of Jubilee under Uhuru's leadership and its director of elections, and that his commitment to Azimio and Raila are intact.

The new reality, he said, is that Ruto is President and Gachagua his deputy, and therefore any lobbying on matters affecting Mt Kenya would have to go through the most senior person in government from the region. That meant acknowledging Gachagua's position and having Mt Kenya speaking in a united voice in the push for development resources and other common interests.

"We can only go through the per-

son in government, and that is the DP," he said, adding: "We have not gone to politics of 2027", in regard to the next presidential elections.

He explained that Jubilee makes its decisions through the proper organs, and since the elections has not met to review its membership of Azimio, so that status quo remains.

That however leaves open the possibility that the review could be forthcoming.

It is notable, however, that prominent Mt Kenya Azimio figures such as Kega and former Nyeri Town MP Ngunjiri Wambugu now saying they will work with the government are voicing support for Gachagua, rather than for the Ruto government. Do they make a distinction between the president and his deputy? "No, No, No," retorts Kega, saying that they will also work with Ruto in pursuit of the Mt Kenya interests. He points out, for instance, that as an EALA member he will be representing Kenyan interests as may be enunciated by a government headed by Ruto.

He explained that he will be interacting with Ruto and Gachagua at different levels, the former as President and on national issues at EALA and elsewhere, and the latter on Mt Kenya development issues. On supporting Gachagua politically, Kega points out that he is not a member of the UDA or Kenya Kwanza outfits and therefore has no role to play there.

The reality, however, is that Gachagua's quest for Mt Kenya leadership in the vacuum left by Uhuru's exit is intrinsically linked to securing his position in the present government, and also laying the foundation for a future presidential bid. According to Wambugu, it is only natural that the DP bolsters his position in Kenya Kwanza so that he can be in a strong position to negotiate his space beside Ruto at the 2027 elections. It is nothing strange, considering that Kenyan politics is all about using whatever means to secure relevance. The public protests Raila is talking about are all part of political negotiation, he says, adding that the veteran opposition chief has used such tactics in the past to secure space beside Uhuru, Kibaki and Moi.

Wambugu also points out how Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula are negotiating their own spaces by resisting Ruto's UDA encroachment on their western Kenya turf at the Bungoma Senate by-election. He says he is now supporting Gachagua because he is the DP, and would support anyone else in that position who would advance Mt Kenya interests. So is he ditching Raila? He gives an emphatic no, but with the twist that he wasn't a Raila person, but an Uhuru person supporting the former's presidential bid.

"We did our best, paid the price and that election is finished, nothing we can do about it".

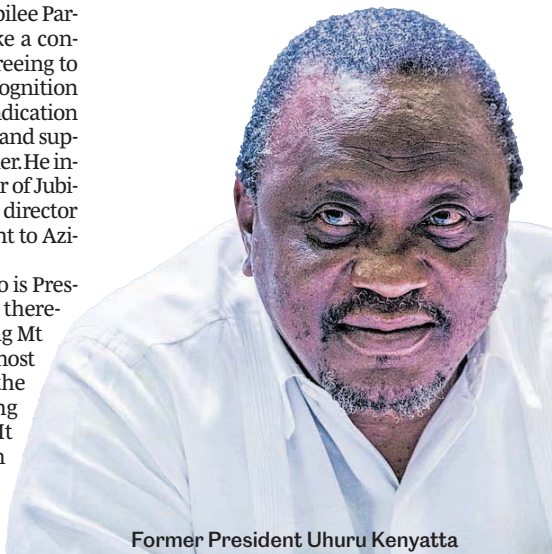
He thought that Raila was the best person to take forward Uhuru's vision, but the reality is that it didn't happen and Jubilee party has to reckon with the new realities. Uhuru, he says has moved on and is busy with his role as Congo DRC peace mediator, and Mt Kenya leaders must also seek to drive their agenda with those now in government. "The new reality is that Ruto is President and Rigathi is DP, and by default the seniormost Mt Kenya leader in government. "The development projects we thought we could pursue under a Raila government have now to be pursued under President Ruto," he states with finality. He says Gachagua can leverage his position to consolidate his position and secure support of people across Mt Kenya. So, is it all about supporting Gachagua rather than Ruto? Wambugu dismisses that as a simplistic question. For him it's not about either of the two because the positions they hold could even have been taken by another pair, but the reality of political competition in Kenya, where ethnic or regional interests hold sway. Wambugu concedes that the DP does have to consolidate his position, being keenly aware that he was not the first choice of the Mt Kenya UDA brigade.

Indeed, it is evident that as those crossing over from Azimio signal support for Gachagua, a significant lot in UDA who were with Ruto from day one and owe their loyalty directly to him seem not as enthusiastic.

Figures such as Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wa, Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro and Cabinet Secretaries Moses Kuria (Trade), Mithika Linturi (Agriculture) and Kithure Kindiki (Interior) might not say it openly, but they might feel that the DP is a Johnny-come-lately who got Ruto's nod ahead of others who had been in his corner much longer.

Kindiki actually beat Gachagua in an internal poll for the running-mate slot but had to grudgingly accept Ruto's prerogative. Nyoro is emerging as a future contender for leadership, and his social media pages are filled with salutations from fans hailing him as the next big thing for Mt Kenya and the presidency. Those are the kind of figures who could be waiting in the wings if Ruto and Gachagua fall out. But as Ruto himself knew, he could openly defy the president, build a rival power base and plot his own bid for power while still ensconced in the DPs official mansion.

The President and Deputy are tied at the hip, for the next five years at least.



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

# the limelight



An aerial view of the march led by Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in the capital to commemorate his fourth year in office on November 27. PHOTO | AFP



A BM-21 'Grad' multiple rocket launcher fires towards Russian positions on the front line near Bakhmut, Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine on November 27. PHOTO | AFP



The 'Poste des Mines' forest shelter in the middle of the Risoux spruce tree forest in le Chenit. The forest is filled with spruce trees which are hundreds of years old, covering the border between France and Switzerland. PHOTO | AFP



Performers take part in a parade during the Dakar Carnival on November 26. The carnival is held in the capital every November celebrating modern cultural heritage with people parading in their local traditional dresses from around country. PHOTO | AFP



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, Facilitator of the East African Community (EAC)-led Nairobi Peace Process, General Évariste Ndayishimiye (right), President of Burundi and President William Ruto arrive for the official opening of the Third Inter-Congolese Consultations of the Nairobi Peace Process, the political track, Nairobi III at Safari Park Hotel on November 28. PHOTO | AFP



A carriage for the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project is unloaded as Tanzania received 14 economy class carriages of South Korean company Sung Shin Rolling Stock (SSRT) at the port in Dar es Salaam on November 25. Tanzania Railway Corporation will operate the first phase of about 300km between Dar es Salaam and Morogoro from January 2023. PHOTO | AFP



A destroyed building in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine on November 29. Once known for its vineyards and cavernous salt mines, Bakhmut has now been dubbed "the meat grinder" due to the brutal trench warfare, artillery duels and frontal assaults that have defined the brutal fight for the city for over six months. PHOTO | AFP

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## **THE PRESIDENT'S TAILOR**

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OPEN SPACE

# WE CAN END CATTLE RUSTLING IN KENYA

**Are they terrorists?** Rustlers no longer seek the blessings of elders before raiding a neighbouring ethnic community

• BY DOMINIC PKALYA

In the recent past, incidents of cattle rustling and banditry have been on the rise in arid and semi-arid lands. This has led to loss of lives, property (livestock), disruption of businesses and closure of learning institutions.

The North Rift and Upper Eastern regions are the most affected, forcing politicians and communities to pressure the government to label rustlers and bandits terrorists and rustling terrorism.

The philosophy behind this pressure is that the terrorist tag will eventually allow the government and the international community to use maximum force to rein in suspects. It may allow government to deploy specialised units and equipment, including the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF).

During a recent security meeting in Samburu County, Interior Cabinet Secretary Prof Kindiki Kithure bowed to pressure by stating that cattle rustling and banditry are equivalent to terrorism and that there is not much difference between rustlers, bandits and Al-Shabaab.

There is no doubt that rustlers have caused untold havoc and suffering to innocent Kenyans, especially in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).

This is why Kenyans have welcomed the governments renewed zeal and commitment to end this menace once and for all. However, labelling rustlers terrorist is not the silver bullet in this age-old fight.

The problem with labelling cattle rustling as terrorism starts with the definition of terrorism. There is no universally agreed legal definition of terrorism. Our own Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) of 2012 does not define terrorism or a terrorist. It defines a terrorist act, group or property. The Act goes ahead to describe “radicalisation” from an ideological and belief perspective.

The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism has defined terrorism by restating the “terrorist acts” as defined by POTA.

The strategy also defines a “terrorist organisation or group” as, amongst others, groups with “disguised command-and-control hierarchy for propaganda, ideological

indoctrination and mass mobilisation”. Using these definitions, it is clear that cattle rustlers and bandits do not ascribe to or promote, through violence and propaganda, a known extreme ideological or belief narrative.

Today’s rustlers no longer seek the blessings of elders before raiding a neighbouring ethnic group or community.

These modern-day millennia rustlers and bandits have abandoned established traditional command and control hierarchies.

Thus, conflating rustling with terrorism is not necessarily the solution to this menace.

If the government cannot fight ragtag bandits, how can it fight hard-core ideologically-inspired terrorists like Al-Shabaab that are increasingly finding new spaces in East Africa to regroup, radicalise and recruit?

Again, if we succeed in labelling rustlers terrorists, then the next thing we may do is to label any other crime that can be easily handled by the Penal Code as “terrorist acts”.

Rustlers and bandits can be tamed using available legal, policy and administrative tools.

What has been missing is political goodwill at the national and county government levels to address this problem.

Research shows that most of the time, police officers deployed to flush out bandits, recover stolen livestock and mop up illicit arms are prevailed upon by the civilian leadership not to fully undertake such operations.

Allowing the security formations to do their work without hindrance, enforcing compulsory basic education, investing in education, and integrating the ASAL economies into the national economy remain the long-term solutions to this menace.

*Mr Pkalya is a conflict analyst.*

*Any feedback on topical issues? We would like to hear from you. Send your views to: [weeklyreview@ke.nationmedia.com](mailto:weeklyreview@ke.nationmedia.com)*

■ MIND SPEAK



**Millicent Naserian**

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua should take the initiative in rallying Kenyans around effective solutions. The welfare of the people should come first, rather than projects that have no effect on the community. The government should work to reduce wasteful spending and reallocate funds to more pressing needs, such as providing food aid and funding projects to reduce the effects of drought.

— Youth leader



**Natalie Wafula**

The Deputy President’s proposal for a national kitty to mitigate the effects of drought may not be practical because many Kenyans are barely surviving. This indicates that the government has yet to set its priorities right and deliver on the pledges Kenya Kwanza made. As the country continues to borrow more loans, there must be accountability on how the money is spent.

— Student, MKU



**Maxwell Munyendo**

Various state and non-state interventions have been employed to feed thousands of Kenyans facing starvation. While we appreciate the measures being taken, I am against Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua’s idea of sharing a Paybill Number for contributions to a national hunger kitty. Such funds end up being misappropriated, thus defeating the cause.

— Governance Analyst



**Nickson Mtai**

The government should support the people facing starvation, especially in arid areas. This is by purchasing maize from the farmers at an agreed price and then donating it to the families affected by drought, therefore reducing the impact of hunger on human population.

— Planning Director, Kiambu Varsities and Colleges Students Alumni

## MY TAKE



● BY MOSES OJUANG\*

The year is coming to a close. At the same time, the education calendar that had been disrupted by the closure of schools occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic is slowly getting back into its groove. For national examinations to take place in a serene environment, all other students are at home and are fast becoming a handful to their parents. It is at this time that Kenyans realise the importance of schools, and teachers by extension, to their mental well-being.

This is also the time when everything about the Ministry of Education seems to come to light. It is a season when senior civil servants in the ministry and middle-level officers tied in some ways to the Kenya National Examinations Council (Kneec) come out of their offices to tell the press and anybody who would care to listen that they play the most critical role in the education of the children. It is a time for clowns to take the stage.

Indeed, one would be tempted to assume that without these comfortable bureaucrats, nothing would happen as expected. They are now extremely busy sprucing up their images and adjusting their faces to wear a visage of competence and an aura of importance. They shall hog the limelight for as long as the examinations last. Hapless teachers will be made to play a peripheral role, despite the fact that it is they who prepared the students for years without the wisdom of the musty bureaucrats.

For the next three weeks, the poor teachers shall know no peace. They shall be the ones administering the examinations all over the country and after that arduous task, they shall spend three weeks at some high school, sleeping on thin mattresses by night and marking the examination papers in the day, far away from the limelight.

The only time the teachers may

# THE KENYAN TEACHER HAS BEEN GIVEN A RAW DEAL

**Children on vacation:** It is at this time that Kenyans begin to realise the importance of schools, and teachers by extension, to their mental well-being



Children on holiday enjoy a swing on a fallen tree branch at Mukur village in Tiaty, Baringo County, as one of them (right), his sibling nestled on his side, lifts and lowers one end of the branch on December 22, 2021. JARED NYATAYA | NATION

feature in the news is when some slight blunder occurs during the administration of the examination.

Right now, Kneec, ministry officials and the Teachers' Service Commission are all united in overseeing the teacher. There is a grey line there; we cannot tell who the employer of the teacher is. Every shouting official has the power to bully and make a teacher unhappy.

This has been going on for far too long and the toothless unions, whose only interest appears to be in the deductions of teachers' salaries, have taken a back seat and relaxed, as if these things do not concern them at all.

The trend has become notorious, especially during the invigilation of examinations, to the extent that many exasperated teachers choose to pull out of the process. The problem is that, without these sacrificing souls,

no examinations would take place in the first place. They now have to be pushed to perform a task that they used to lobby for but which they now consider unsavoury.

At the same time, they are the prime suspects whenever there is a leakage of the examinations. By the end of this exercise, there will be many sad teachers in the docks of our courts charged for all sorts of sins of omission and commission. It goes that way every single year, and it is getting worse.

The Kenyan teacher has been given a raw deal. A nation that does not harbour any respect for the teachers of its children is a nation that has backslidden in terms of culture; a country that knows not how much it sins against its future; a state that requires readjustment.

When there are any hitches, there should be policy on how to deal with them. Lofty warnings

blown towards teachers from high offices are not only embarrassing to the educators but also belittle them in the eyes of society.

When the examinations are over and the Cabinet Secretary has had his time to shine while dishing out results, the teachers shall be back on the ground, preparing a future crop of candidates. Those whose schools will have performed below expectation will still be hounded by the ministry officials.

To add insult to injury, the payments for those who shall have sacrificed their peace of mind for this important exercise will be made sometime in April next year, depending on the mood of Kneec. Things must change this year or else we are creating a huge problem for the future.

Mr Ojuang\* is a social commentator

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## SMALL-SCALE MANUFACTURING

**KICKING UP THE FLAVOUR**

**LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD:** Piquant Spices is on a mission to make cooking a craft rather than a chore, producing spices that can be consumed by the whole family

● BY EDDY ASHIOYA

Failure has many fathers but what has been apparent one hour or so into our conversation with Stephen Machua, co-founder of Piquant Spices, is that failure, depending on how you look at it, or whom you look at it with, can either be a stumbling block or a stepping stone. Failure has many causes, too. I could think of 250,000 reasons because that is the amount Machua and his co-founder, SK Kamau (who had a stint as a chef), lost in their quest for success.

“We actually started with tomato and banana farming because we wanted to learn the whole production process. We invested Sh250,000 but only got a harvest worth Sh9,000.” That’s not even five per cent, I say. Actually, that’s only 3.6 per cent! “Losing 250,000 is not a joke. Or rather, not a cheap joke.”

Failure, too, is a bewildering thing. On one hand, it means you tried, on the other, it’s a judgment that you just aren’t good enough, let alone good. “We discovered that, although we were farming in a low-cost area for banana production, there wasn’t a big market for banana powder. Then we thought that since we had already come this far, we could also try spices.” The third time’s the charm? Maybe – we’ll come to that.

First, how does one know they are good at spices? Machua gives off the impression of a niche entrepreneur (connoisseur?) who does not believe in giving people what they can replicate at home.

“We had to differentiate ourselves. We did a dipstick (research) and discovered that people were not consuming spices because a typical family wants to have only one pot of food. Whenever you want to use spices, you want a spice that can be consumed by everyone in the family. Plus, a lot of people get heartburn from spices, mostly because the spices are not well cleaned or dehydrated.”

Grounded on those two key Unique Selling Points, the world was their oyster, and they were here to flavour it. Enter Piquant Spices, on a mission to make cooking a craft rather than a chore. Piquant, by the way, by design or debate, means ‘something that is stimulating to the mind’.

“Our work is to ensure the spices are consumable by the whole family.”

He tells me they are now on their fifth formulation, having sent out spices to most parts of the country, using the feedback they receive to meet the needs of the people. Opinions, so the legendary adage goes, are like noses; everyone



From right: Stephen Machua, co-founder of Piquant Spices, Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister of Spain, and Ambassador Kimeri Kaberia, Principal Secretary at the State Department for Industrialisation, at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute on October 26.



Some of the Piquant Spices.

has one. More so when it comes to food, or its flavouring.

Measuring spices, one quickly learns, requires the serene focus of a glass blower and the cold precision of a scalpel to an artery. Cognisant of veering into PR descriptions of chef glossary — subtle yet deeply flavoured, complex yet focused — Piquant Spices has found an appetite among its consumers.

The Pilau Masala is their family silver, jumping off the shelf like, well, good spices. With the festive season in full aplomb, Piquant Spices’s check-in account at the bank is only getting fatter. “Pilau Masala is really popular and it could be because of the return of events and festivi-



ties.” Ditto mixed spices.

“We have secured markets in Uganda and Tanzania, specifically Arusha and Moshi.” Interestingly, he says, their regional markets are larger than their local market. “The business is paying the bills and itself.” The bills include the running costs of the business and salaries of nine employees, including seven on casual retainers.

“In Arusha and Moshi, we have almost 30 outlets. In Kenya, we are still onboarding distributors and have only been selling through online channels.” Recently, they started distributing around Kiambu and the Voi-Mtwapa axis; another route covers Ruiru to Githurai, as well as several supermarkets in Nakuru.

Besides Pilau Masala, Piquant has two other spices in the market: Tea Masala, Pilau Masala and Mixed Spices, with ten more at the certification stage with the Kenya Bureau of Standards: Curry Powder, Beef Masala, Chicken Masala, Paprika, Turmeric, Black Pepper, Cinnamon, Cardamom, Ginger and Garam Masala.

At the moment, they source their raw materials from the Marikiti Market (for fresh ginger) in Nairobi as well as Kisii, Kiambu, Uganda and Tanzania. “So far, Ugandan ginger has proven to be consistent in terms of potency. Initially, we were getting it from Kiambu and Kisii.” The issue with the Kenyan ginger, he says, is that it is not consistent, whether in terms of pricing or quality.

Looking back over his career, he pinpoints the particular moments that pushed him to where he is today. “I knew I wanted to get into manufacturing. I stayed in the UK and went for studies in Canada. But eating their tasteless foods and depending on spices to up the flavour ante was the kicker.”

He says the business is growing but the capacity in terms of machinery, especially the drier, is a challenge, seeing that they are incubated at a co-sharing and working space at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute. “Being in a shared space means you are at the mercy of someone else’s whims and fancies. For instance, I am doing production this week, so the next booking I know I will likely get is in March, and this is because the other commercial options are very expensive.”

“And, of course, access to market is a challenge, too. We do not have a lot of rotating capital and if everyone wants goods on credit, then production will be constrained.” If I was given a chance to supply a major supermarket today, he says, and I was paid after 120 days, it means I would have a lot of capital tied up [that I could have used] to produce for other markets.

Entrepreneurship in Kenya, especially for a young person, is a labyrinth of booby traps. “The manufacturing sector was not designed for small boys.” When they were looking for packaging solutions, he says, they always got exorbitant quotations. “Thankfully, we found people who are able to work with us at the level we are at.” And, it must be said, Machua and Kamau rose to the challenge, but not before they had seemed ready to sink into fissures where the molten ore of experience hardened

them into steel.

With disarming honesty, Machua says entrepreneurship has fostered his resilience. He proceeds to tell me an anecdote of how one of his suppliers promised him heaven, only to retract at the eleventh hour and leave him in hell. But winners don’t have excuses and somehow, he came up with a solution. “Entrepreneurship forces you to think on your toes.” But he has also proven himself to be a shape-shifter, a man on a journey who keeps reinventing his persona. Because that’s what it takes to build a business — sweat and bone, blood and pain. That’s

the language of the worker.

How did he get here? “It is coincidence, chance, and opportunity. It was definitely not by design because it happened when we had just applied for a grant and had been waiting for two years. We were not too sure we would get it.”

The grant he talks about is a business grant from MbeleNaBiz Business Plan Competition in 2019 (an initiative of the Government of Kenya under the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project). He had just come back from Canada after graduating with a Master’s in Public Policy from the University of Calgary to complement his Master of Science in Global Urban Development and Planning from the University of Manchester.

“Entrepreneurship teaches you about trust.” Trust is serious business in this industry. Delegating, he says, does not always work in the initial years. You have to be there.

You have to show up. He speaks like a disciple of Lombardian ethics. To Vince Lombardi, touted as the greatest ever football coach, and his cult of Lombardians, winning at all costs, at any cost, is all that matters. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing. “You can’t afford to make a mistake. Especially when you are in the food sector. Some people may take shortcuts and that can cost you your brand.”

He credits family and life experiences for forging him. They are not only part of, but central to his success.

The season of his life that he is in? “Of making money and creating jobs for others.” “Happiness,” he says, “is being able to see that I am making a step in the right direction. Even if it is a small step. And being in good health.” He despises stagnation, and progress is not always monetary.

For Piquant, success is becoming a household name. “But we also have that daily success where we have turned spice atheists into believers.” Have things turned out the way he expected at 31 for the Technical University of Kenya Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) graduate? “Certainly not. I think I saw myself in public policy. And government programmes. But now I am in *jua kali*.” And he is not complaining either.

He says people have a misconception about him. Oh, which one? People think I am very rich. Well, are you? “I will be.” How does one get to where you are today? “I maximise and bank a lot on relationships. To build the Tanzanian market, I have had to cash in on several relationships.” This naturally leads me to the next question. Who does he know that I should know? “You need to know my God.” He is a believer and a stringent one too. “I attribute the success in my life to divine intervention. “People keep referring us to other people. *Ni God manze* (Its only God).”

Of all his spices, which one would he be? Tea Masala, he says. “It has this unique aroma that invites you from a distance. It is also very present and available.” Failure is also present and available and necessary. And why not? Because failure, when you really think about it, is the ultimate spice for success.

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## THE LOWDOWN

Piquant Spices employs seven people.

Piquant was established after winning a business grant from MbeleNaBiz Business Plan Competition in 2019 (an initiative of the Government of Kenya under the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project).

Its first batch in February was dispatched all the way to London and was out of the 75 kilogrammes they had started with.

Before manufacturing the spices, Stephen and Kamau underwent training at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute, which currently hosts them for an incubation programme. It’s also where they host their production.

A 50gm container goes for Sh110 while the 10gm sachet goes for Sh20.

Stephen Machua has been conferred several awards and scholarships, including the African Leaders of Tomorrow (2019), Chevening Award (2018), UNLEASH Silver Award (2017), and UN-Habitat Emerging Community Champion (2016).

Machua is also a Certified Public Accountant (Kenya) and a Professional Member of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

## FASHION AND DESIGN

● BY SINDA MATIKO

When he gave his daughter away last May at her wedding to Nigerian doctor Alexander Ezenagu, President William Ruto was dressed to the nines. For the lavish, invite-only event held at his private residence in Karen, Ruto stunned in a black bespoke suit, a black bow tie, black pair of shoes, a black fedora cap and a black bakora (walking stick). A white, long-sleeved shirt provided contrast and completed the classy look.

The outfit caught the attention of netizens, with many wanting to know who styled him up so well. It turns out that the person responsible for Ruto's catchy attire was 32-year-old fashion designer and stylist, Ashok Sunny.

To this day, it turns out, age-old techniques dating back hundreds of years to around 1538 are used to make bespoke suits. While fashion and style may change, the modus operandi remains the same: starting from scratch, the client's measurements and posture are drafted onto brown paper using tape measure, a set square, chalk and a very keen eye.

The suit is then cut by Sunny or any of his 20 tailors and the first basted fitting is created (the suit is temporarily stitched together with white basting thread for the client to try on); the garment is checked over for fit and style before the basted fitting is ripped down to its individual pieces, re-cut, re-sized and any final adjustments made. The end product is the kind of master creation that Ruto wore to his daughter's wedding.

"Made to measure is what the majority of tailors do in Kenya using machines, and his is what they describe as bespoke. But bespoke tailoring is the art of tailoring a garment from scratch to finish, by hand," says Sunny, who is the CEO of Ashok Sunny Tailored Limited.

On average, drafting the master pattern and cutting the suit takes up to half a day, without interruption. "Anyone who claims to make a bespoke suit within a week is a con. From start to finish, the blazer will take you 50 hours, a trouser 25 hours, then you do over 5,000 hand stitches, finishing and fitting. At least three, four weeks for a quality garment," Sunny says.

Bespoke suits are luxurious, made only from high quality fabrics that require a hand for perfection and not machines for impression. "Depending on the type and quality of fabric, I charge between Sh60,000 to Sh250,000 for a bespoke suit," he offers. For these suits, the fabric is always wool and could be a super 100 to 200 in quality, a vicuna or a cashmere.

He expounds: "Super 100 will cost Sh60,000, super 120 Sh100,000, super 130 Sh150,000 and so on. The higher the super, the lighter the fabric, and the more the garment will cost. Cashmere can be mixed with wool and the end product will cost between Sh250,000 to Sh1 million. Vicuna is the most expensive fabric in the world, which we don't have in Kenya." A square metre of Vicuna is Sh600,000; a suit requires three metres.

"The majority of Kenyan men wear polyester

# DRESSED TO KILL

**STYLE:** Ashok Sunny specialises in bespoke suits that are luxurious, made only with high-quality fabrics and stitched by hand

suits; that's what is available in the market, but they're heavy and not advisable for our tropical weather. The best quality you can get locally is poly-wool, which is 30 per cent wool." For his bespoke garments, Sunny ships in fabric from Italy, London, France and Belgium.

When he started the tailoring business in 2013, his vision was to dress everyone. Never in his mind did he ever think he would end up crafting a luxury tailoring brand. With a capital of Sh20,000 borrowed from his mother, the then 22-year-old set up a stall



President William Ruto during the wedding day of his daughter, June, to Nigerian doctor Alexander Ezenagu, on May 27. PHOTO | FILE



Fashion Designer and Creative, Ashok Sunny, CEO of Ashok Sunny Tailored Ltd PHOTO | POOL

## The majority of Kenya men wear polyester suits, but they're heavy and not suitable for our tropical weather

Ashok Sunny



omniscient, more enlightened, and his financial muscle strengthened, he narrowed down his client list.

"Yes, when I started I stitched for everyone. Right now the lowest quality we use is poly-wool; we want to maintain a certain quality, which is high-end exclusive." Though some might fault him for the move, Sunny says it is good for business and signifies his growth.

"When you do the business more, your understanding and perception change. You get to a point where you understand different fabrics, their qualities and various tailoring techniques, depending on the fabric." He explains.

With the world becoming a global village and the scarcity of quality fabric in Kenya, Ashok saw a good opportunity to change the modus operandi of his brand.

"These days, more and more people are travelling the world than before. They have

information, and they know what quality can be found in Bangkok and what they can get in London. But because they cannot travel every time they need a suit, they want someone locally who can offer that service. So I stepped in."

For clients seeking a bespoke experience on a budget, the Business and IT graduate advises that they use Super 100 to 120 fabric. "This way, if they go into a room where people understand what suits are, you aren't far off the mark." But if one cannot afford the bespoke pieces, a good quality made-to-measure poly-wool suit will cost between Sh30,000 to Sh60,000.

Though his garments might sound a little pricey, Sunny is never short of clients. He refutes the notion that his suits are for people in their 40s and above, with high purchasing power. "Not really. Actually, the majority of my clients are from 30 years upwards, mostly in the corporate world, lawyers and youthful parliamentarians."

He counts among his clients former chief crime buster George Kinoti, 36-year-old Darshan Chandaria, the Group CEO and Director of Chandaria Group, and communications expert and image consultant Mwenesi Musalia, 38.

Out of curiosity, I ask how many bespoke suits he has tailored since the beginning of the year. "Actually that's data we are currently working on. I am not entirely sure but on average I would say 300 pieces. Bespoke suits are currently our highest moving product. Come January we will expand production, relocate to a bigger space and add more tailors," Sunny beams.

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in Nairobi's Umoja estate, equipped with one sewing machine. He employed an 18-year-old rookie tailor and he was the creative designer. As years went by and he became fashion-

### The 911F SIDE

### WOMAN POWER

With John Nyaganjira  
jnyaga@ke.nationmedia.com

NANA FIRMAN IS A FEARLESS CLIMATE JUSTICE ADVOCATE. SHE IS ORIGINALLY FROM INDONESIA BUT NOW LIVES IN CALIFORNIA STATE IN THE US. SHE HAS NOTED THAT AS A MUSLIM WOMAN, HER JOURNEY TO BECOMING A CLIMATE CHANGE JUSTICE ACTIVIST HAS NOT BEEN A WALK IN THE PARK. "IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY. I WAS LABELLED AS A TERRORIST BECAUSE I WROTE AN OPINION PIECE CRITICIZING THE US FOR THREATENING TO LEAVE THE PARIS AGREEMENT DURING THE DONALD TRUMP PRESIDENCY." SHE, HOWEVER, WITHSTOOD THE INSULTS AND THREATS AND CONTINUED ADVOCATING CLIMATE CHANGE JUSTICE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE TH US. AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL.



### STAR OF THE WEEK

ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING STORIES TO EMERGE FROM THE ONGOING WORLD CUP IS THAT OF ABUBAKAR ABBAS, AKA 'METRO MAN'. THE KENYAN MAN WENT VIRAL FOR GIVING PEOPLE DIRECTIONS IN QATAR FOR THE 2022 WORLD CUP USING A MEGAPHONE. HE APPLIED FOR A SECURITY JOB AT THE WORLD CUP AND GOT IT BUT WHEN HE GOT THERE, HE WAS TOLD HE WOULD GIVE FANS DIRECTIONS. "MY FIRST DAY AT WORK, I WAS BORED, AND I FEEL LIKE IT WAS NOT FULFILLING FOR THE FANS ALSO, SO I FOUND A WAY TO ENGAGE THEM." THE WORLD CUP FANS FINALLY GOT THE HANG OF HIS ENTERTAINING WAYS, AND THEY JOINED IN ON THE FUN. "ON THE SECOND DAY WHEN I SAID 'METRO' THEY REPLIED WITH 'THIS WAY' SO INSTEAD OF THEM GOING DIRECT TO THE METRO THEY WOULD STOP FOR PHOTO OPS AND SINCE I CAME HERE TO WORK AND ITS MY PASSION YET IT WASN'T IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION I HAD TO FLOW WITH IT. WE SAY KUDOS TO 'METRO MAN'!



## opinion



■ Until Sakaja intervened, law enforcement had denied there was a surge in crime in Nairobi

# When the police hear no evil, see no evil

It must be remembered that when Nairobi-ans expressed concern about increased criminal activity in the capital early last month, police denied that was the case. Indeed, Nairobi Commander James Mugeru claimed in a television interview that reports of a surge in crime were meant to tarnish the name of the new administration.

Mugeru claimed that only nine violent robberies had been reported between September and October. It is important to look again at Mugeru's comments. First, he went political, saying that what had changed was not the service the police provide, but the political administration. Therefore, the fears of Nairobi-ans held no water and were therefore politically motivated.

By so saying he was evidently attempting to curry favour with the new administration by claiming it was being tarnished. It is an old trick which, unfortunately, tarnishes the reputations of the victims of crime by blaming them for the crimes committed against them. This is so because, by turning the heat on the victims, the criminals are protected and emboldened.

Second, Mugeru drew from a script the police have practised and perfected into an art. Have you ever heard police acknowledge that crime is on the increase? In 1997, when a crime wave hit Nairobi and spawned the nickname Nairobi robbery, I asked a colleague why police maintained there was no surge in crime. A former cop, he asked me: "You want them to confirm they are failing?"

Third, the top cop said that only nine violent



**KWENDO  
OPANGA**

robberies had been reported in two months.

Three issues emerge; one is that it is violent crime which tells Vigilance House that criminal activity is on the increase and, two, if it is not reported to the police, then it did not happen. Three, how many Kenyans report that they have been mugged, had their bags snatched or luggage ripped from their hands by thugs on ride-past motorcycles? Indeed, how many Nairobi-ans have gone to the police to report that they were stopped by a gang that relieved them of their valuables? Does the fact that one did not report one's phone was snatched mean it was not?

Alas, when Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja sounded the alarm over the increase in crime after his friend was knifed and sought audience with Inspector General of Police Joseph Koome, the police changed tune, tack and stance. A tall relative, as Francis Imbuga would well have said, had intervened on behalf of Nairobi-ans.

Sakaja said he had called Koome and the two had agreed to discuss solutions to the crime wave. Soon Nairobi-ans saw police on patrol, presumably in those areas identified as black

spots. This is the way police do it. They come out in force and after a day or two they go away. The criminals stay out of sight or change stations for the duration and then return when the coast is clear.

Enter Prof Kithure Kindiki, the new Interior Cabinet Secretary and therefore holder of the internal security docket. Like Koome before him, he warned criminals to quit their activities because "we are coming for you".

I have checked. Every CS and IG since Joseph Lenku and David Kimaiyo respectively in 2013, goes through this routine of warning, threatening and sounding mean.

Criminals just remain calm, mean and busy. Criminal activities will not cease because mean-looking and sounding police officers patrolled their turf to scare them off. They will decrease when intelligence, infiltration, successful prosecution and long jail stretches deplete and defeat criminal gangs.

Crime will decrease when the government gets tough on crime and causes of crime and police prevent crime.

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opinion

■ HUSTLER LOANS

# Will honest personnel be found to run the Fund?



MACHARIA  
GAITHO

If the Hustler Fund launched on November 30 works as advertised, it will be the fulfillment of what seemed an ambitious, if not audacious and foolhardy, campaign promise and a real boost for President William Ruto, who so far has had more misses than hits in his nascent administration.

More than the political dividend, however, is the fact that it could be a real game changer for hundreds of thousands of small-scale traders who depend on daily or weekly borrowing at usurious rates to stock up and meet their orders.

Questions were still being asked at the time of penning this if the real daily interest on the Hustler loans was 0.002 per cent as announced, or 0.02 per cent, but for those who fork out anything up to 10 per cent daily interest on loans sharks who occupy the mobile or digital lending space, this might be an irrelevant detail.

Those modest loans will be a godsend for the market mama, itinerant hawker, fishmonger, mitumba trader and other small business people whose requirement to stock up daily, sell their wares and repay their loans at the end of the business day before repeating the same cycle at dawn will be more than fully met.

The loan limit, however, calls for the Hustler Fund to drop that mouthful of 'Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises' description created by the usual suspects in the development

agency and NGO mafiosi, and just focus on the Micro.

Those with bigger requirements can either have other friendly products created for them, or make do with the formal credit sector.

For now, however, the Hustler Fund will not only offer revolutionary terms for small traders, but also go a long way towards weaning them away from the clutches of mobile loan sharks controlled by big business in the marriage between banks and mobile telephone companies.

The Hustler Fund should force the mobile lenders to re-evaluate their greedy and predatory practices that somehow have been allowed to evade Central Bank of Kenya guidelines on lending, the charging of interest and levying of penalties in event of default.

The banks, telcos and other operators who had cornered that market must now drastically slash their interest rates to more closely align with the Hustler rates, or shut down.

It is to be hoped, however, that if the commercial lenders close shop, the Hustler Fund will be expanded to fill the gap.

This of necessity means understanding that the Hustler Fund is not free money or a raid on the public purse, but a sustainable kitty that actually pays for itself in loan repayment and generates a surplus for growth and re-investment. And that is where the rubber might hit the road. Ruto's Kenya Kwanza campaign rhet-

**Previous governments have had their share of venal characters who treated public funds as free for the taking, but the Kenya Kwanza administration has outdone all others in purposely selecting for high office people who are indicted for corruption.**

oric was all about dishing out goodies, and the public lapped it up. Realities once in office forced Ruto to go beyond the tired excuses about finding the coffers emptied by President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee administration, where he conveniently overlooked the fact that he was part and parcel of that 10-year fraud on the people of Kenya.

Free or interest-free money was not on the cards, but a model that offers reasonable and affordable rates offers a win-win situation that will provide credit to those in need, but not over-burden the tax payer. The big question is whether the Hustler Fund will work as envisaged, given the high propensity for graft and mismanagement in government.

The Hustler Fund is not the first initiative in Kenya designed to support and empower women, youth and other disadvantaged groups. One can go back to the reign of founding President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and move forward to all his successors, Daniel arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta, and there will be no shortage of special funds and collections for vulnerable groups that folded due to theft.

It is not comforting that the Ruto government is a certified redoubt for some of the most notorious crooks who treat issues around integrity in leadership as alien impositions.

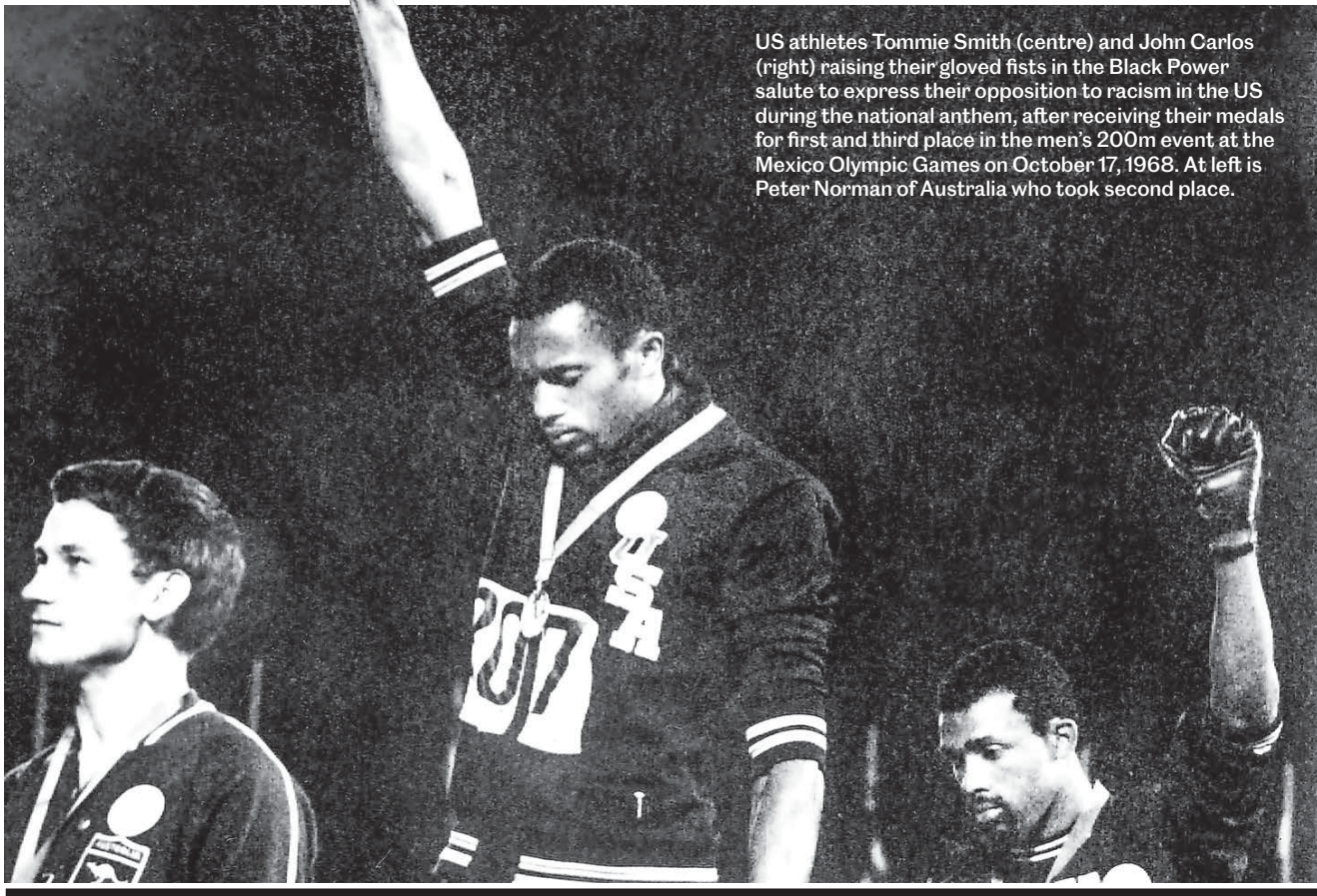
Previous governments have had their share of venal characters who treated public funds as free for the taking, but the Kenya Kwanza administration has outdone all the others in purposely selecting for high office people who are indicted for corruption and other crimes against the people of Kenya.

With such a notorious cast in the Cabinet and also set to populate all senior public service offices, it becomes difficult to see where the honest, conscientious, patriotic personnel required to run the Hustler Fund will be found.

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Kenya Kwanza supporters during a rally at the Nyayo National Stadium on August 6. The Hustler Fund should force mobile lenders to re-evaluate their greedy and predatory practices that somehow have been allowed to evade Central Bank of Kenya guidelines on lending, the charging of interest and levying of penalties in event of default.



US athletes Tommie Smith (centre) and John Carlos (right) raising their gloved fists in the Black Power salute to express their opposition to racism in the US during the national anthem, after receiving their medals for first and third place in the men's 200m event at the Mexico Olympic Games on October 17, 1968. At left is Peter Norman of Australia who took second place.

## ■ SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

# STAND UP TO BE COUNTED

**From the Olympics to the Fifa World Cup, athletes have demonstrated their ability to take the lead in the fight against racism and social injustice**

● BY KWENDO OPANGA

**R**emember Okonkwo, the chief character in Chinua Achebe's debut 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*? He brought honour to his community of Umuofia and rose to be an important and prominent player in its affairs because he was a champion wrestler. It was he who dethroned hitherto unbeatable Amalinze the Cat.

From 1966 and into the early 1970s, the best-known Kenyan around the world was a policeman. He was not infamous for the skull-cracking notoriety of Kenya's red berets. No, Kipchoke Keino was famous for bringing honour and fame to Kenya when, at the Mexico Olympics, he crushed red-hot favourite American Jim Ryun to win gold in the 1,500 metres.

From that time, Kip, as he became popularly known, owned the race and middle-distance running so much so that President Jomo Kenyatta and his Cabinet ministers would fawn over him and fall over each other to admire his medals and congratulate him.

Still in those Olympics, African-American 200 metre sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, standing on the medals podium for gold and bronze respectively, stopped the world. As the national anthem of the US played, they raised black-gloved, clenched fists.

It was the symbol of rejection of, and resistance to, oppression of black people and the struggle for civil liberties in the land of the free and opportunity. On returning home, Smith and Carlos faced both vilification and celebration. For the athletes, however, the Olympics and the serene ceremony presented a perfect setting for a global shot against racism.

Oftentimes, global sports tourneys internationalise local protest just as they showcase national prowess and pride. Fast forward to the 2022 Fifa World Cup in Qatar. As their national anthem played, members of the Iranian football team kept their mouths shut. Their silence thundered in the world's ears. In their pre-match photo, their German counterparts cupped their mouths, a gesture that many mouths talked about around the world.

Two teams from different continents with different cultures, playing on different days and at different stadia, were protesting: the Iranians against the crackdown by their government on women human rights activists in Iran, and the Germans against Fifa for denying them the freedom to express their solidarity with LGBTQ communities. There was the rub: homosexuality is illegal in Qatar.

British LGBTQ campaigner Peter Tatchell had weeks to the football showpiece protested by himself in London and Doha. He railed against Qatar's abuse of LGBTQ, women's and migrant workers' rights and expressed solidarity with Qatari human rights defenders who could not make their voices heard for fear of reprisals from their government.

On the eve of the opener, Fifa President Gianni Infantino whistled himself into global derision at a rambling one-and-a-half-hour news conference. He sought to defend Doha against accusations of human rights abuses, discrimination against gays, deaths and poor pay, es-

Continued on Page 28

kenya lens

# The power of sports protests and activism



Iran players listen to the national anthem ahead of their Qatar 2022 World Cup Group B match against England at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha on November 21.

pecially with regard to the migrant workers whose labour built the Qatari Fifa World Cup infrastructure.

“Today I feel Qatari. Today I feel Arabic. Today I feel African. Today I feel gay. Today I feel disabled. Today I feel like a migrant worker,” he said. But why? “Of course, I am not Qatari, I am not Arab, I am not African, I am not gay, I am not disabled. But I feel like it because I know what it means to be discriminated, to be bullied as a foreigner in a foreign country.”

He sought to focus global attention on football and not the politics around Qatar’s role in human rights abuses and deaths of migrant workers. He dug himself deep into a goop of politics when he accused the West of 3,000 years of oppression and ventured into its treatment of migrants and minorities.

He appeared to set the West against the rest and to prove football and politics are never far away from each other: “We are taught many lessons from Europeans, from the Western world. . .What Europeans have been doing for the last 3,000 years, we should be apologising for the next 3,000 years, before starting to give moral lessons.” Football brings people together and the Fifa World Cup brings the world to the host nation both physically and

via media. The media is taking the world to the Cup and taking the Fifa World Cup to the world.

The World Cup brings to mind Marshall McLuhan’s coinage of the world as a global village, a community of people brought together by technology. It provides a platform for groups and individuals to send messages to the watching, listening and reading world.

The Associated Press told the story of an Iranian woman who lives in the south of Spain who travelled to Qatar on the day Iran played its second match and won. She told the news agency that she was not interested in the score, for that was not her priority. Her priority was to protest against Tehran’s mistreatment of women. She was a protester not a fan or after fun. During the team’s first match, protesters had a field day, but when it came to the second, supporters of the government had been mobilised and turned up in force to intimidate and drown out the protesters, taking pictures of them, countering their slogans with those sympathetic to Tehran and applauding Qatari officials confiscating anti-Tehran paraphernalia.

Tehran’s supporters ensured critics of the government would monopolise the Qatari

stage and so they went in aggressively for a showdown. But all around the cities hosting the 32 teams and the matches, the Fifa World Cup has turned Qatar into an expo of celebration of football and a tapestry of cultures of the world.

George Orwell would not recognise the Qatari Fifa World Cup, would he? Characterising sport at international level as “an unflinching cause of ill-will” and “mimic warfare”, he wrote thus in December of 1945: “Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words, it is war minus the shooting.”

Today I feel Qatari.  
Today I feel Arabic.  
Today I feel African.  
Today I feel gay.  
Today I feel disabled.  
Today I feel like a migrant worker. I know what it means to be discriminated, to be bullied as a foreigner in a foreign country.

Fifa President Gianni Infantino



German players cover their mouths ahead of their Qatar 2022 World Cup Group E match against Japan at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha on November 23.



## SCIENCE &amp; TECH

## Nasa's Orion capsule breaks distance record



The US space agency's Orion capsule has reached a key milestone on its demonstration mission around the Moon.

On Monday, it moved some 430,000km beyond the Earth — the furthest any spacecraft designed to carry humans has travelled. The ship is uncrewed on this occasion, but if it completes the current flight without incident, astronauts will be on the next outing in two years' time.

Nasa is planning a series of ever more complex missions with Orion. They're part of the agency's Artemis programme, which seeks to return people to the lunar surface after a gap of 50 years.

Monday's milestone marks the middle point of the mission.

"This halfway point teaches us to number our days so that we can get a heart of wisdom," said Mike Sarafin, Nasa's Artemis mission manager.

"The halfway point affords us an opportunity to step back and then look at what our margins are and where we could be a little smarter to buy down risk and understand the spacecraft's performance for crewed flight on the very next mission."

Orion has been streaming back some spectacular video of its journey. Just before reaching the record distance, it captured the Moon moving in front of the Earth.

The capsule was launched from Florida's Kennedy Space Center on 16 November on a 26-day mission designed to stretch its systems and make sure it is safe to carry astronauts.

Orion is being pushed through space by a service module provided by the European Space Agency. This vehicle incorporates the big thrusters needed to make manoeuvres.

# ROLLS-ROYCE TESTS HYDROGEN JET ENGINE



A Rolls Royce Trent XWB engine on view on the assembly line in Derby, England. The advantage of hydrogen over batteries is that it provides much more power per kilogramme.

## LONDON

In a windswept corner of a military site on Salisbury Plain in England, a small aircraft jet engine is undergoing tests that could one day lead to huge changes within the aviation industry.

The engine itself is almost completely conventional. It is a Rolls-Royce AE-2100A gas turbine, a design used widely on aeroplanes around the world.

What is wholly unusual about it is the fuel being used. This is the first time a modern aircraft engine has ever been run on hydrogen.

Devoid of bodywork, with its intricate wiring and pipework exposed, it sits securely fastened to a sturdy test rig, while engineers cluster around an array of screens in the control room, a safe distance away.

The tests are being carried out by Rolls-Royce, after development work in Derby and in partnership with the airline easyJet.

The immediate aim is a simple one — to show that it is possible to run and control a jet engine using hydrogen fuel, rather than

conventional aviation fuels.

In the longer term, the plan is for hydrogen power to play a major role in allowing the aviation industry to continue growing, while cutting climate change emissions dramatically.

"The reason we're looking at hydrogen is really the drive for Net Zero," explains Alan Newby, director of aerospace technology at Rolls-Royce.

"Normally we would run this thing on kerosene. Kerosene is a hydrocarbon and therefore produces carbon dioxide when it burns. "The beauty of looking at a fuel like hydrogen is that it doesn't contain any carbon and, therefore, when it burns it produces no CO2".

The project is being supported by easyJet, which has contributed several million pounds towards the initial trials.

The company believes that hydrogen power offers the best route to reducing emissions from short haul aviation.

"We started a few years ago looking at what might power the aircraft of the future," explains David Morgan, easyJet's chief operating officer. "We looked at battery technology, and it

was quite clear that the battery technology was probably not going to do it for the large commercial aircraft that we fly.

"We've come to the conclusion that hydrogen is a very exciting proposition for us."

The advantage of hydrogen over batteries is that it provides much more power per kilogramme. Batteries are simply too heavy to power larger planes. Yet hydrogen aviation remains a very long way off. The tests carried out so far have simply shown that a jet engine using hydrogen can be started up and run at low speed. But to go from there to building a wholly new engine, capable of powering a passenger aircraft safely, will take a great deal more research — and significant investment.

The aircraft themselves will also need to be redesigned. Hydrogen, even in liquid form, takes up about four times as much space as the kerosene required to fly the same distance. To make it into a liquid in the first place, it needs to be cooled to -253C. Then, before being burned, it must be turned back into a gas.



# africa lens

■ THERE ARE ABOUT 8,000 JIHADISTS NATIONWIDE

## TOTAL WAR ON AL-SHABAAB

● MOGADISHU

**S**omalia's government has declared "all-out war" against the militant group Al-Shabaab and adopted a multi-pronged counterterrorism effort which — despite some early headline-grabbing military gains — promises to be long and difficult.

The dogged Al-Qaeda affiliate was driven from Somalia's major cities a decade ago but retains swathes of countryside, where a coalition of armed groups have joined forces against the insurgents in recent months.

Two clans in drought-afflicted central Somalia, sick of living under Al-Shabaab rule, sparked a revolt against the group in July that quickly spread across the regions of Hirshabelle and Galmudug.

In September, the Somali National Army and US-trained "lightning" commandos joined the fray in support of these clan militias, known as "macawisley" after the traditional sarongs worn by their fighters.

"The government wants to seize the current momentum and encourage these types of uprisings across Al-Shabaab-held areas in Somalia," said Omar Mahmood, a researcher at the International Crisis Group think tank.

Though it isn't clear how many combatants are involved in this broad offensive, the fighting has reached an intensity not seen in some years, with unconfirmed reports of hundreds killed in skirmishes.

Sources in Somalia suggest the fighting could have involved 2,000 to 3,000 "macawisley". The jihadists are believed to number 5,000 to 8,000 nationwide.

Supported by US drone strikes and artillery and logistics from the African Union Transitional Force, this combined effort has chased Al-Shabaab from



Somali National Army woman soldier Nimo Ibrahim during an interview at Kismayu Old Airport on January 21, 2014. EVANS HABIL | NATION

...Continued on Page 26

## africa lens

Continued from Page 25

the strategic provinces of Hiran and Middle Shabelle. In July, the country's newly elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud outlined his administration's plan for the Islamists: hit them militarily, choke off their finances, and counter their ideology.

"The previous policies were militaristic policies... attacking, destroying. But Shabaab's problem is more than a military one," he said.

As a first step, he named Mukhtar Robow — one of Al-Shabaab's founders, who left the movement in 2017 — religious affairs minister to challenge the militants' violent expression of Islam.

In October, the government threatened to revoke the business licenses of traders who paid "taxes" to Al-Shabaab and contributed to the millions they raise through extortion.

Somalia's closest foreign ally, the United States, announced \$10 million for information that disrupted cash flows to Al-Shabaab.

Washington recommitted troops to Somalia this year, reversing a decision under former US president Donald Trump.

"The government continues to try and build confidence among the public for them to stand up against the group. We're yet to measure the success of those declarations," said Samira Gaid of the Hiraa Institute, a Somalia-based security think tank.

The militants may have ceded some territory but are playing a long game, said Mahmood.

"Even if they lose in the short term, they will try to find ways to undermine government progress so that they can return."

The jihadists have returned to some areas abandoned in the face of the offensive, and escalated a campaign of bombing.

## Mogadishu vows to crush militants

On October 29, Somalia witnessed its deadliest attack since 2017, with a double car bombing in the capital, Mogadishu, leaving 121 dead and 333 injured.

Gaid said the clan uprising was a "huge threat" to Al-Shabaab and they were adapting accordingly.

"They are responding heavily to try and push it back and to dissuade other clans from joining the fight," she said. President Mohamud told lawmakers in November that "going back or defeat is not an option."

But retaking territory is only half the objective. "The hardest part is holding back that territory" and ensuring people can access services to see the benefit of government rule, he added.

Past gains against the militants have been eroded by bitter clan rivalries, which Al-Shabaab exploits to its advantage.

Clan clashes have already been reported in some areas recently liberated from the insurgents. Mahmood said the government seems keen to expand its operation, but doing so could be fraught.

It's less clear whether the clans would unite against Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia, where the militants have more influence.

Al-Shabaab have resisted military aggression for 15 years and Mohamud himself declared in July "there are strong arguments" for negotiating with the militants.

"But we are not right now in a position to ne-

gotiate with Al-Shabaab," he said. "We will, at the right time. We will negotiate with them."

Gaid said: "It was always clear to the government that negotiation or reconciliation can only happen when you have an upper hand."

This offensive "will assist in giving the government the upper hand to engage in talks further down" the line.

Meanwhile, Somali security forces ended an hours-long siege by Al-Shabaab militants who stormed a popular hotel in Mogadishu overnight, killing eight civilians on Monday.

The attack began at 1700 GMT on Sunday in a hail of gunfire and explosions as they besieged the Villa Rose hotel, which is frequented by parliamentarians and other government officials.

Around 21 hours after the attack started, Sadik Dudishe, a spokesman for the national police, told reporters "the clearance operation in the Villa Rose hotel has ended".

The jihadists "killed eight civilians who stayed in the hotel and the security forces succeeded in rescuing about 60 civilians, no one among the civilians was wounded", he added.

One member of the security forces also died in the operation, he said. The Villa Rose is located in a "secure" central part of the capital, just a few blocks from the office of Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, raising questions about how the militants were able to evade the numerous checkpoints in the area.

Al-Shabaab, which has been trying to overthrow Somalia's central government for 15 years, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The group has intensified attacks against civilian and military targets as Somalia's recently elected government has pursued a policy of "all-out war" against the Islamists.



Somali soldiers patrolling the scene of the explosion of a truck bomb in the centre of Mogadishu on October 15, 2017.

# global lens

■ HAKEEM JEFFRIES MAKES HISTORY IN AMERICAN POLITICS

## THE 'OBAMA OF BROOKLYN'



Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (New York) holds a news conference after he was elected leader of the 118th Congress by the House Democratic caucus at the US Capitol in Washington, DC on November 30. Jeffries was elected to succeed Speaker Nancy Pelosi as leader of the Democrats in the chamber next year, making him the first Black person to lead one of the two major parties in either chamber of Congress.

### The four-term New York congressman's ascension to the top spot of the Democratic Party after Pelosi's exit makes him the first black person to lead a major outfit in the US Congress

#### ● WASHINGTON

**U**S lawmaker Hakeem Jeffries was this week unanimously elected to succeed Nancy Pelosi as the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives.

The four-term New York congressman, 52, has served in the fifth-highest rank of Democratic leadership since 2019.

With his ascension to the top spot, held by Pelosi for two decades, he will be the first black person to lead a major party in the

US Congress.

But he would be minority leader, and not the speaker. In the US midterm elections earlier this month, Republicans failed to secure the “red wave” of victories many had predicted but regained a slim majority in the House, Congress’ lower chamber.

California Republican Kevin McCarthy, who currently serves as minority leader, was nominated as the party’s choice to be House speaker but he must win a majority vote of the full House — 218

votes — in January to secure the role. When Pelosi, 82, announced her retirement on November 17, she said: “The hour has come for a new generation to lead the Democratic caucus.”

The move was apparently co-ordinated with Pelosi’s top two deputies — Steny Hoyer, 83, and Jim Clyburn, 82 — who quickly followed suit by releasing statements on their future plans. Both men endorsed Jeffries, with Clyburn writing that his focus was “doing whatever I can to assist

our new generation of Democratic Leaders, which I hope to be Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark, and Pete Aguilar”.

In a letter to his party colleagues, Jeffries had asked Democrats for their support “as we once again prepare to meet the moment”.

At the time, he lauded Pelosi as “the most accomplished Speaker in American history”, writing that she had been “the steady hand on the gavel during some of the most turbulent times the nation has ev-

Continued on Page 28



## global lens

## ■ THE RISE OF DIGITAL TRAVEL SCAMS

## HOLIDAY SWINDLERS ON THE PROWL

**Social media is tempting people to sample the luxury holiday lifestyle, but what happens when it all goes wrong?**

## ● RIO DE JANEIRO

Digital travel scams are a growing “systemic and global” problem, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a branch of the UN. Dozens of Brazilian women have been finding this out the hard way, after paying for luxury holidays from a man whose Instagram account sparkles with opulent hotels and exotic locations.

Last December, Maria decided to have a break from the heat of the Australian summer and to take her family on a skiing holiday to Europe. It was her first trip since the pandemic and she wanted it to be special. So she paid \$20,000 to a travel agent, Rafael Bessa, a fellow Brazilian who had been recommended by a friend, and made the long flight north.

To begin with, everything was perfect, but as Maria checked out of the third hotel the manager told her the room had not been paid for.

Two further shocks came in quick succession. When Maria contacted Rafael Bessa to ask for help, she noticed he was unable to talk to the hotel manager in French, despite his claim to have attended an exclusive boarding school in the Alps. Then, when the family boarded a train to their next destination, there was a problem with the tickets: he had provided two tickets with the same purchase number, meaning that only one was valid.

At the next hotel, it was a similar story: Maria had to settle the bill, even though she had paid in full already. Initially she had assumed Rafael Bessa was simply incompetent. “Then I said, ‘No, this is not a mistake, this is on purpose. This is in bad faith.’”

Altogether, Maria says she lost \$30,000 on the holiday — \$15,000 of the money she had paid in advance, plus an extra \$15,000 for just one of the hotels. Maria says that as well as telling her he’d paid for the room, Rafael Bessa said he’d got her a free upgrade — but he hadn’t, and the hotel charged the staggering full price for the super de luxe room. Rafael Bessa’s promises of reimbursement came to nothing, Maria says. Although he sent her various “proofs” of money transfers, the cash never actually arrived in her account.

Then, when she posted about her experiences on social media, she says his lawyer got in touch, offering to reimburse \$20,000 as long as she signed a non-disclosure agreement. She refused. We asked Rafael Bessa to comment on Maria’s allegations. He replied that there had



been an unspecified “problem” with the price of one of the hotels, and that the room at this price had not been included in the package. He also sent copies of the train bookings — which, as Maria said, both bore the same purchase number. Another Brazilian woman, Ana Jalenna, booked an Alpine skiing trip and also an Italian summer holiday with Rafael Bessa, after he had organised a “fantastic” family holiday for her in Brazil.

She paid part of the bill in cash, and the plan was that he would put the rest on her credit card. Some time later, she was surprised to see a payment to British Airways appear on her card account and called him to ask about it.

It was the payment for her Italian hotel, he told her. Finding this hard to believe, she emailed the hotel and was told no payment had been made.

Ana decided to ask Bessa for proof that he had at least made the bookings at the ski resort. He gave her two reservation numbers, but the hotel told her they were invalid.

“I lost the money, the dream, the trip. I lost everything,” she says. A similar pattern is repeated again and again. Clients arrive at their destinations, find a hotel has not been paid for, and are unable to get Bessa to pay them back. Bessa denied the allegations made by his former clients, saying he was “shocked.” “I’m really surprised by the amount of errors; 90 per cent of your facts are false,” he wrote.

UNWTO says social media is increasingly be-

ing used by travel agents to persuade customers to buy a dream holiday — one that they too can look forward to posting on social media.

“Because they are being displayed on social media, tourists may have the perception that these services are more reliable than if they would find them on any regular website,” says UNWTO legal counsel Alicia Gomez.

At the same time, digital travel scams are on the rise all over the world, Gomez says.

“This has become a global and systemic problem. Many national consumers and authorities are reporting an increase in online scams, and the number may be even higher as the shame and guilt of tourists that fall for them discourage reporting.”

The UNWTO has developed a code for the protection of tourists, which it says clarifies the responsibilities of social media companies, governments and consumers and describes how governments and private companies can best work together. Seven countries have signed up to the code so far, making it part of their national legislation, while others, including Brazil, are in the process of doing so.

Meta, owner of Instagram and Facebook, said: “We don’t allow fraudulent activity on our platforms and work closely with law enforcement to support investigations and keep scammers out. “We continue to invest in new technologies and spent approximately \$5bn last year alone on safety and security.”

— BBC

# OBIT

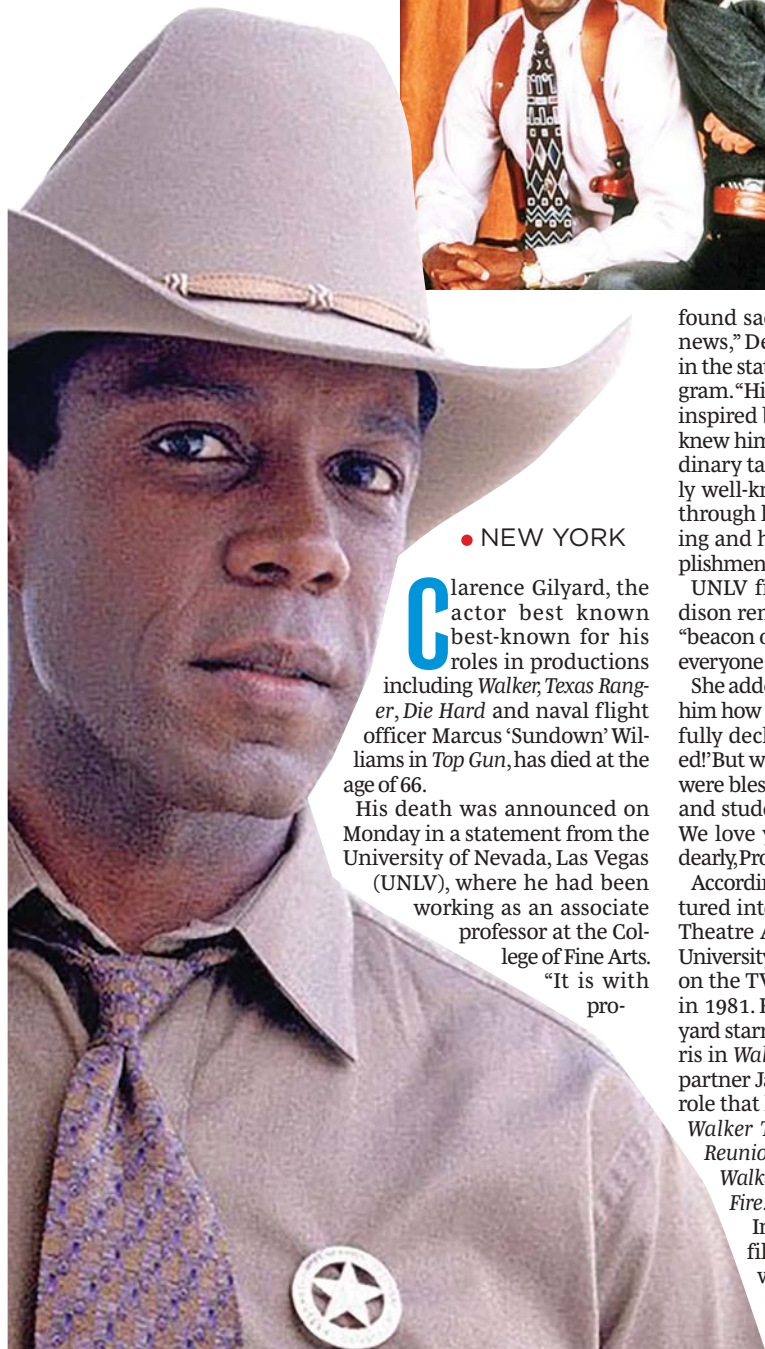
■ HE MADE HIS FILM DEBUT IN 'TOP GUN' IN 1986

## TEXAS 'RANGER' GILYARD BOWS OUT

He starred opposite Chuck Norris in 'Walker, Texas Ranger' as his partner 'Jimmy'



Walker, Texas Ranger stars Clarence Gilyard, Chuck Norris, Sheree J. Wilson and Noble Willingham. Gilyard died on Wednesday.



• NEW YORK

Clarence Gilyard, the actor best known for his roles in productions including *Walker, Texas Ranger*, *Die Hard* and naval flight officer Marcus 'Sundown' Williams in *Top Gun*, has died at the age of 66.

His death was announced on Monday in a statement from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), where he had been working as an associate professor at the College of Fine Arts.

"It is with pro-

found sadness that I share this news," Dean Nancy Uscher said in the statement shared on Instagram. "His students were deeply inspired by him, as were all who knew him. He had many extraordinary talents and was extremely well-known in the university through his dedication to teaching and his professional accomplishments."

UNLV film chair Heather Addison remembered Gilyard as a "beacon of light and strength for everyone around him at UNLV".

She added: "Whenever we asked him how he was, he would cheerfully declare that he was 'Blessed!' But we are truly the ones who were blessed to be his colleagues and students for so many years. We love you and will miss you dearly, Professor G!"

According to UNLV, Gilyard ventured into acting after studying Theatre Arts at California State University. He landed his first role on the TV show *Diff'rent Strokes* in 1981. From 1993 to 2001, Gilyard starred opposite Chuck Norris in *Walker, Texas Ranger* as his partner James 'Jimmy' Trivette, a role that he reprised in spin-offs *Walker Texas Ranger 3: Deadly Reunion*, *Sons of Thunder* and *Walker, Texas Ranger: Trial by Fire*.

In 1986, Gilyard made his film debut in *Top Gun*, in which he played 'Sundown', one of the elite fighter pilots. He was

later cast as Theo, the computer expert who helps Hans Gruber's terrorist group, in the thriller *Die Hard*. He got his big primetime TV break in 1989, when he landed the role of Conrad McMasters on the NBC legal drama *Matlock*, starring opposite Andy Griffith.

Gilyard's acting credits also include *The Karate Kid Part II*, *CHiPS* and the *Left Behind* films. Despite his accomplished career, Gilyard stepped away from acting in 2006 to start teaching at UNLV and directing productions at the university's Nevada Conservatory Theatre.

"I'm wired to teach. And I'm a professional, but the profession has to feed the classroom. It's what stimulates my characters because I'm in touch with people's lives in the 21st century," he told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* in 2017. "I work best as an artist when I'm in a fertile arena. That means creative and imaginative. Being with all those millennials — I don't understand what they're saying but I'm siphoning off their energy."

He did, however, make a brief return to the screen in 2021, when he reunited with Bruce Willis and DeVoreaux White for a *Die Hard* battery commercial. Gilyard made guest appearances as a character actor on TV shows such as *The Facts of Life*, *227*, *Simon & Simon*, and *Riptide*. In 1984, he co-starred with Jim Carrey in the NBC sitcom *The Duck Factory*.

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