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Why Mama could beat these men come 2027

By Antony Rugendo

As Meru County braces for a pivotal court ruling that could change its political landscape, the air is thick with tension and intrigue.

Governor Kawira Mwangaza's ongoing battle with impeachment proceedings has ignited a fierce political rivalry among some of Kenya's most powerful figures, including former Agriculture Cabinet Secretaries Peter Munya, Mithika Linturi and ex-Governor Kiraitu Murungi.

The political landscape of Meru County has also evolved with all eyes on embattled Governor Mwangaza and her tumultuous journey leading ahead of 2027 elections. Following Mwangaza's dramatic rise and ongoing battle against impeachment challenges, many are already placing their bets on her potential triumph in the 2027

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A picture of former Cs's Peter Munya, Mithika Linturi, former Governor Kiraitu Murungi, MPs MCA's and other leaders in a recent meeting



Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza with a section of MCA'S allied to her and other leaders from her administration



A section of Meru MCA's paid a visit to the office of Senator Kathuri Murungi in Nairobi



Meru political giants From [right] Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza, First Gentleman Murega Baichu, Senator Kathuri Murungi, former CS Mithika Linturi, former Governor Kiraitu Murungi and former CS Peter Munya

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Impeachment verdict; will GVN Kawira rise like a phoenix or vanish completely?

Continued from page 1...

gubernatorial elections if the court overturns her impeachment.

According to political pundits if Governor Mwangaza will be on the ballot in 2027 most voters will view her not merely as a candidate but as a symbol of resilience against entrenched political elites, and this would make her victorious.

Where its started



Governor Kawira Mwangaza issuing gumboots during a Operation Okolea program at Kienderu North Imenti

The drama unfolded immediately after the August 2022 elections, where Mwangaza triumphed in a contentious showdown, leaving the seasoned Murungi stunned and in third place.

Her ascent, buoyed by strategic campaigns that included pro-woman slogans and the support of grassroots movements, painted her as a beacon of hope against Kenya's entrenched political elites. However, this victory has not come without its trials; Mwangaza has seen her leadership repeatedly challenged by what she refers to as "cartels" within the political establishment.

The stakes have escalated significantly with the court's decision on her impeachment expected to land on March 14, 2025.

The sympathy factor



Governor Kawira Mwangaza with the First Gentleman Murega Baichu and other leaders from Meru after a court session at the Milimani Law Courts

Should the courts rule in Mwangaza's favor, it would solidify her position as a formidable force heading into the 2027 elections.

Analysts believe that her resilience in the face of political adversity has endeared her to the electorate, creating a "sympathy factor" that could swing votes in her favor.

"I refused to dine with the powerful because I



Former CS Mithika Linturi



Former Governor Kiraitu Murungi

stand for the common man," Mwangaza declared, echoing sentiments that resonate deeply with an electorate weary of power



Former CS Peter Munya

struggles among political titans.

Political titans unite

Yet, Mwangaza's rivals are not standing idle. In recent clandestine meetings, Murungi, Munya, and former CS Mithika Linturi have united to strategize against the governor, conjuring visions of a consolidated front to counter her growing influence.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua in a past political rally after his impeachment

Their alliance, described as a last-ditch effort to reclaim control, poses a significant threat if they can present a single, formidable candidate against Mwangaza in 2027.

However, Mwangaza's camp remains confident, believing the political machinations of her rivals will only further galvanize her

support among constituents who view her as a champion of the common man in a landscape marred by political betrayal and cartels

Wamunyoro effects

Adding fuel to the political fire, the influential



Senator Kathuri Murungi

"Wamunyoro factor," spearheaded by former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, looms larger than ever.

As Gachagua consolidates power in Mt. Kenya, his sway over local elections could swing decisively in favor of Mwangaza or her adversaries.

With rumors circulating of potential political exits from UDA by Murungi and company, the upcoming court decision could dictate whether they rally around Gachagua or stick to their own ambitions.

A dark horse on the ascendancy?

Then there's the wildcard: Kathuri Murungi. While often dismissed as unserious, Murungi's presence could siphon votes from Mwangaza or even reinvigorate her campaign. His alignment with established leaders could complicate the race, forcing Mwangaza to recalibrate her strategies to ensure she retains her grassroots support base as the opposition

remixes itself.

The Meru political saga has also taken an intriguing turn with the Njuri Ncheke elders, who have fractured over Mwangaza's leadership.

A faction accused her rivals of plotting to drag the county

into opposition, heightening suspicions about the motives behind their recent unity discussions.

Okolea program

As the narrative unfolds, Mwangaza's grassroots initiatives, particularly the acclaimed Okolea program aimed at marginalized communities, have positioned her as a leader with a direct connection to her constituents.

In the midst of these complex rivalries, Mwangaza is establishing herself as the people's choice. Her recent statements exuding confidence signal that she is undeterred by her rivals' coalition or the impending court ruling. "Meru supports the government. I am the only leader in Meru who holds a meeting without ferrying crowds," she asserts, emphasizing her authentic connection to the people.

Observers argue that aligning herself with President William Ruto could further bolster her standing, as she deftly negotiates the volatile political waters of Meru.

Looming court ruling

However, the looming court ruling casts a long shadow over the political landscape. If Mwangaza's impeachment is overturned, she could transform into an unstoppable force; however, should she falter, the coordinated efforts of Murungi, Munya, and Linturi are poised to leverage any weakness, potentially drawing voters away from her burgeoning coalition.

The political clock is ticking toward 2027, when every vote will reflect not just numbers but deep-seated sentiments of loyalty, betrayal, and aspiration for a unified Meru.

With old rivalries intensifying and new alliances forming, Governor Mwangaza stands on the brink of either a monumental victory or a dramatic downfall.

As Meru County holds its breath, one question looms large: Can Kawira Mwangaza rise like a phoenix amidst the ashes of political machinations, or will she succumb to the fierce winds of opposition?

The unfolding drama in Meru is captivating, and one thing is certain; the political landscape is set for an electrifying showdown.



Justice Bahati Mwamuye



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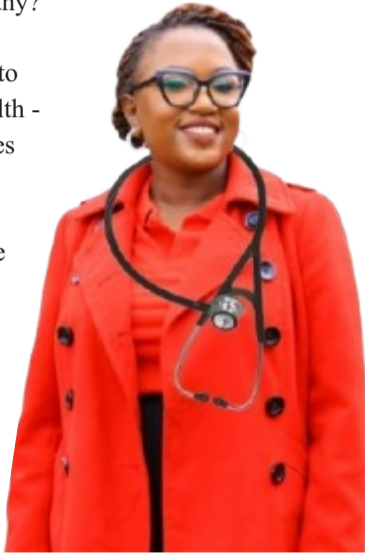
Healthcare
As human as you

The health hub with Dr Kendi Kiogora

Embrace Your Wellness Journey in 2025

By Dr Kendi Kiogora

As we navigate the landscape of modern living, one question that reverberates in the minds of many—and is frequently posed to me as a practitioner and advocate of health—is, “Daktari, is this healthy?” Our society is increasingly attuned to the intricacies of health—scrutinizing what goes into our bodies. But understanding health goes far beyond mere dietary choices or trendy workouts. True wellness encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being, creating a holistic approach to living life to the fullest.



Dr. Kendi Kiogora Health Center Manager, AAR Healthcare - Meru Clinic

As we usher in a month and year as well, it's time to dissect the nuances of health and uncover the keys to thriving in the coming year. Here's how we can collectively foster a culture of well-being that transcends conventional wisdom:

Transform Your Plate: The Power of Nutrition

The adage "you are what you eat" resonates deeply, and it couldn't be more accurate. Every morsel we consume shapes our body

and influences our future health outcomes. Imagine planting orange seeds and then expecting mangoes to sprout- it's a fantasy that reflects a common misconception in our dietary choices. If you nourish your body with high-cholesterol foods, the consequence is likely obesity. Conversely, a vibrant diet filled with fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains promotes vitality and resilience. But nutrition isn't the only pillar of wellness. The old saying also holds true: "If you don't use it, you'll lose it." Regular exercise, whether through a vigorous workout or a simple walk, engages our bodies and minds, keeping them fit and healthy. In 2025, make a commitment to challenge yourself physically and embrace movement as part of your daily routine!

Restorative Sleep: Your Body's Natural Repair Mechanism

In our busy lives, sleep often takes a backseat, but it is an essential cornerstone of good health. Think of sleep as your body's personal garage — a place for repair, rejuvenation, and restoration. Quality rest allows your mind and body to reset, preparing you to tackle the day ahead with clarity and energy.

Prioritize sleep as an investment in your health! Aim for a consistent sleep schedule and create a calming bedtime routine to help you drift off peacefully. Imagine waking up

refreshed, ready to seize each day in 2025!

Mastering Stress: Cultivate Calm Amid Chaos

In today's fast-paced world, stress is an unavoidable reality. However, the key is not to eliminate stress entirely, but to manage it effectively. Our bodies are often awash with cortisol, the stress hormone, and to counter its effects, we need to engage in activities that promote relaxation and joy. Take a 30-minute break in your day to indulge in calming practices such as nature walks, soothing music, or even a refreshing power nap. Each moment spent in relaxation will contribute to lowering cortisol levels and enhancing your overall health.

Purpose-Driven Living: The Key to Fulfillment

In a world rife with 'purpose poverty,' where many exist rather than truly live, finding your deeper motivation is crucial. Reflect on your life's purpose and aspirations. What ignites your passion? What legacy do you wish to impart? As you align your daily actions with your intrinsic goals, you create a compelling narrative that enriches your existence.

Let your purpose infuse meaning into every aspect of your life. This will not only bring you joy but will also bolster your mental and emotional well-being, ensuring you don't just survive, but thrive!

Live Well in 2025!

As we stand on the threshold of a new year,

let's commit to living well in 2025 and beyond. It's not merely about surviving; it's about thriving with a sense of fulfillment and health that encompasses our entire being.

So, take charge of your wellness journey today! Reflect on what you feed your body, how you nurture your mind, and the meaningful purpose you seek in life. Remember, don't just exist, live well, With health in mind.

Dr. Kendi Kiogora is the Health Center Manager, AAR Healthcare - Meru Clinic

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Big win for miraa farmers, dealers as prices double

By Nancy Kinoti

For years, miraa traders and farmers have decried the poor price of miraa in the market. There have been numerous meetings held by the Miraa Farmers Association leaders and other local leaders to deliberate and find a way of increasing the crop's market price, but their efforts seemed to bear no fruit.

On 12th February this year, a highly productive

life for the community and fostering sustainable growth in the region and beyond.

Following the consultative meeting, three days later, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, through the Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe, released the revised miraa prices, which were expected to take effect immediately for the benefit of the farmers and the traders.



Meru leaders and officials from the ministry of Agriculture & Livestock in a consultative meeting on Miraa

consultative meeting between elected leaders from Meru County and other stakeholders from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development brought light to the devastated farmers who could no longer cater for their families, relying on the miraa crop compared to a few years ago when miraa had a good market and farmers reaped big from the crop.

Among the issues discussed in the meeting were the exploitation of miraa farmers transport,

The miraa prices almost doubled according to the grade, where grade 1 rose from 700 Kshs to 1300 Kshs per kilogram, grade 2 rose from 350 Kshs to 700 Kshs per kilogram, and Alele rose from 500 Kshs to 1000 Kshs per kilogram.

The government has promised to continue addressing the market access challenges to expand on export opportunities in the current and new miraa markets.



Harvested bundles of Miraa ready for sale

licensing, pricing, and quantity, which had prompted a boycott by farmers, disrupting the entire value chain.

The leaders agreed that resolving these challenges is critical to enhancing the quality of

The miraa industry is valued at Kshs 13 billion, with an annual production of 32,000 metric tons, involving 107,000 farmers from Meru County, and thus the need to prioritize addressing the challenges within the sector.

A beacon of inspiration: Youthful PhD holder motivates youth

By Christine Ngitori

In the small village of Gitareni, Alex Mbaabu was born in the year 1995. He attended St. George's Greenland School in Nakuru for his primary school education.

His father was working there then. During his primary school days, Alex always woke up early, and early morning attendance ended up impressing the school administration, and he was appointed the school timekeeper by the time he was in standard six.

By the time he did his KCPE in 2010, all his teachers were sure he would attend a good secondary school, but little did anyone foresee him as being not only a PhD holder but the youngest from his county. But as fate would have it, on joining Meru School, he put his best foot forward and secured a place to pursue land economics at the University of Nairobi.

At his age of thirty, the youth has finally become a beacon of inspiration. In an event that set Gitareni village abuzz, the now Dr. Alex Mbaabu held a profound Thanksgiving ceremony that was graced by enthusiastic young people from the county. It marked a milestone not just for Alex but for the entire community. He has achieved a remarkable feat by earning the only PhD in Kenya on digital and built environments from Stanford University, UK, becoming a beacon of hope and inspiration for

encouraging the young attendees to prioritize education and strive for excellence in their endeavors. His words resonated deeply with the audience, inspiring a renewed sense of determination and ambition among the youth. "Education is the key to unlocking the future.

It has the power to transform lives and communities," Alex remarked during his speech. "I urge you all to work hard, stay focused, and never give up on your dreams. The journey may be challenging, but the rewards are beyond measure," he added.

The event was not only a celebration of Alex's academic accomplishments but also a reminder of the potential that lies within the youth of Tharaka Nithi County. By sharing his story and achievements, Alex Mbaabu has ignited a spark of hope, encouraging young people to believe in themselves and their abilities.

The peak of the event was marked with the revelers dancing to gospel music after a well-prepared buffet that was taken in his parents rural home in Mugwe ward in Chuka Sub-county. He was joined by his parents to cut a cake and share it with his friends and relatives amid admiration by his peers who were really awed by his great academic achievement.

As the ceremony concluded, the young attendees left with a sense of pride and motivation, ready to

embrace the challenges ahead and pursue their dreams with unwavering determination. Alex Mbaabu's journey stands as a testament to the power of education and the impact one individual can have on



Dr Alex Mbaabu is sandwiched between his father and mother as he cuts a cake during a Thanksgiving ceremony held at his Gitareni village, Mugwe ward, Chuka Sub-County.

many. His relentless pursuit of excellence and passion for education have set him apart as a role model for the youth.

During the Thanksgiving ceremony, Alex Mbaabu delivered an inspiring speech,

an entire community.

This Thanksgiving ceremony will be remembered as a pivotal moment, not just for Alex but for all those who aspire to follow in his

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63 alcohol outlets near schools face closure in Meru

By Gerald Mukembu

The CEO of the Meru County Alcoholic Drinks Control Board, Dr. Mbabu Muguna, has launched a decisive campaign against bars and alcoholic beverage outlets located near educational institutions.

Effective this year, the Board will no longer issue licenses to establishments operating within 300 meters of schools. Dr. Muguna highlighted the detrimental impact these outlets have on the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors, citing a rise in violence, accidents, and disturbances spilling over onto school grounds.

"Bars situated near learning institutions undermine the safety of learners, particularly during school hours and extracurricular activities. We will take firm action," Dr. Muguna stated.

This initiative aligns with a directive from the Ministry of Interior issued approximately



Meru County Alcoholic Drinks Control Board, Dr. Mbabu Muguna leads an operation to destroy illicit alcohol

or shut down the offending establishments.

Dr. Muguna urged collaboration between the Board and National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs), particularly chiefs and their assistants, to enforce the new regulations effectively.

"The administrators play a crucial role in the licensing inspection committee and must work together with other stakeholders to ensure that no bars in close proximity to schools receive approval for licensing," he emphasized.

According to a mapping conducted by the State Department for Basic Education, there are currently 63 bars, local brew outlets, and wine and spirits shops near schools in Meru County. However, Dr. Muguna believes the actual number is higher, as some outlets closer to schools were not included in the initial survey.

three months ago, calling for the closure of alcoholic beverage outlets near schools.

Dr. Muguna expressed concern that such establishments often attract minors, exposing them to the risks of alcohol consumption. "As a Board, we are committed to enforcing stringent

regulations on liquor licensing this year to prevent these premises from being approved," he said.

He also warned that some bar owners use questionable tactics to obtain licenses and cautioned that if such practices are identified, the Board will not hesitate to revoke licenses



Dr Muguna leads an operation to determine bars situated near schools

Njuki drums up support for SHA registration

By Christine Ngitori

In a call to action for improved healthcare access, Tharaka Nithi Governor

any amount to the hospital, the system is cashless, and if anyone asks for cash to offer you

be treated free of charge," he reiterated.

Muthomi Njuki has urged the county residents to come out in large numbers to register with the Social Health Authority (SHA).

Speaking at a press conference at his office in Chuka today, Governor Njuki revealed that only 123,486 residents out of the 463,000 population have registered,

representing a mere 27% of the eligible population.

Governor Njuki highlighted that registered members can access outpatient services at health centers and dispensaries free of charge. Additionally, the governor said starting today, registered members who have met the necessary requirements will receive free treatment at level 4 and 5 hospitals in Tharaka Nithi County. The Governor also stressed that the hospital payment system is entirely cashless. When paying



Tharaka Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki address the media at his office in Chuka town. To his right (in a blue suit and holding a diary) is the County SHA Manager Alex Muthamia.

The County S H A Manager A l e x Muthamia echoed the Governor's call, urging all citizens to register with the authority in order to avoid medical bills. He called on the

services, report immediately to 1513," he stated

Governor Njuki further clarified that for those who are registered with SHA and have paid the required amount, any additional money requested by hospitals in Tharaka Nithi should not be paid.

"If you are told there is additional money you need to pay, that money is not supposed to be paid," he emphasized. "For those already registered and paid the required amount, no top money will be paid, and they will

media to promote the registration drive to ensure that every community member benefits from the services provided.

Muthamia assured residents that SHA offices and Huduma centers are ready to assist with the registration process.

This initiative aims to enhance healthcare accessibility and affordability for all Tharaka Nithi residents, promoting better health outcomes for the entire community

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Capital Sacco leads Kenya's co-operative sector with innovative financial solutions

In the competitive landscape of Kenya's Cooperative sector, few have made as significant an impact as Capital Sacco. Established in 1972 and originally part of the Meru Farmer's Cooperative Union Limited, this Sacco has evolved into a formidable financial entity that continually attracts members from rival cooperatives with its innovative and customer-centric approach.

With 80,000 members and growing, Capital Sacco is not just a financial institution but a beacon of hope and empowerment for its clientele throughout the nation.

From humble beginnings to market leader

Capital Sacco began its journey by serving dairy and coffee society members, but its mission quickly evolved to embrace a broader spectrum of clients.

In 2005, the Sacco transitioned to become Meru Farmers Sacco, and by 2012, it rebranded itself as Capital Sacco. This pivot allowed it to cater to a diverse clientele-including entrepreneurs, salaried individuals, institutions, youth, and children-enhancing its appeal and consolidating its presence nationwide.

The move was timely. With the ever-evolving financial needs of Kenyans, Capital Sacco has found a way to adapt by offering affordable and reliable financial products and services, marking a stark difference from its competitors.

Embracing digitization for growth

In the face of an economic downturn and intense competition, Capital Sacco has managed to not only survive but thrive-thanks primarily to its strategic digitization initiatives. The Sacco has prioritized the modernization of its service delivery through technology.

This tech-led transformation has optimized operations, reduced turnaround times, and provided easier access to services for members, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction.

"Digitization has been key in allowing us to meet the diverse needs of our members while ensuring their convenience in accessing our

services," noted Mr James Mutua, the Sacco Chairman during the Sacco recent AGM. "We understand the importance of staying ahead of the curve, and our continued investment in technology is proof of our commitment to our



Capital Sacco Executive Board Members

members."

Achievements that speak volumes

The financial results for the past fiscal year reflect the effectiveness of Capital Sacco's innovative service delivery and management strategies.

For the Financial Year ending December 31, 2024, Capital Sacco reported impressive growth, with its asset base increasing from KSh 4.9 billion to KSh 5.4 billion.

This remarkable increase has led to the Sacco's elevation from Tier Two to Tier One status as classified by the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (Sasra).

Mr. Mutua highlighted the importance of this development at the Sacco's Annual Delegates Meeting, noting how the successful share drive campaign was aimed at fostering financial inclusion and enhancing community capital.

"We are thrilled to have reached Tier One status. This is a testament to our hard work and our ongoing mission to empower our members through efficient financial services," he said.

Putting members at the center

What sets Capital Sacco apart is its unwavering focus on member satisfaction. Through a dedicated customer service avenue, the Sacco swiftly addresses queries and concerns, effectively building loyalty among its members. Its customer-centric approach fosters a sense of community, making members feel valued and heard.



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CAPITAL SACCO LTD



Capital Sacco maintains market dominance with tailor-made products and services

The Sacco through the leadership of its ambitious Chairperson, Board members and CEO Bishop Stephen Murithi regularly engages with its members through nationwide education and training forums, gathering pertinent feedback that drives continuous improvement.

Financial empowerment

Capital Sacco plays a fundamental role in economic development by providing affordable credit to its members. Competitive interest rates and innovative financial products enable members to enhance their economic prospects and secure their financial futures.

Furthermore, the Sacco is not just about numbers; it is deeply committed to products and services that have a lasting impact on the communities it serves.

A leader in financial services

Capital Sacco's commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction did not go unnoticed; Some months ago it was named the best-ranked Sacco in the region.

This honor is a reflection of its dedication to providing superior financial services while effectively addressing the needs of its ever-growing membership.

With a mission to deliver quality, innovative financial solutions, Capital Sacco is well-positioned to lead in the industry. The Sacco



Capital Sacco delegates attentive during the AGM

offers a wealth of products tailored to different financial needs from savings accounts and loans to investment opportunities solidifying its role as a partner in economic growth and stability.

Strong future ahead

As it forges ahead, Capital Sacco is realigning its business model to resonate with the government's development agenda for national growth.

The cooperative is poised to enhance its impact this year and beyond, ensuring that members not only weather economic challenges but prosper amidst them.

By fostering inclusivity and sustainable growth through strategic initiatives, the Sacco remains committed to enhancing the welfare of all its members.

The statistics speak volumes: In 2024, the total un-withdrawable deposits and share capital increased by 17.86%, while the loan portfolio surged by 10.48%. These numbers reflect prudent investment strategies and strong

management practices, positioning Capital Sacco as a well-managed financial institution in the region.

In a time where many financial institutions face challenges, Capital Sacco stands out as a symbol of resilience, innovation, and commitment to its members. By prioritizing customer service,

embracing technology, and investing in community development, Capital Sacco has set a new standard within the cooperative sector.

As it continues to evolve and grow, its influence on the financial landscape of Kenya promises to remain significant.

The journey from humble beginnings to becoming a market leader is a testament to the power of vision, dedication, and an unwavering



Capital Sacco office-Meru Branch

commitment to empowering communities. Capital Sacco is not just building a financial institution; it is shaping brighter futures for all its members.



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Activists want urgent establishment of rescue center in Isiolo to combat FGM

By Lotini Kiprop

For 14-year-old Amina, the threat of forced marriage and the dreaded ritual of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) loomed large over her life in Kambi Garba, Isiolo County. Fleeing from home was not just a desperate act; it was her only viable escape from a deeply entrenched cultural practice that threatened to cut short her dreams. "I was afraid, but staying home meant shattered dreams, as my parents wanted me to undergo FGM and marry an older man," Amina recounted.

After seeking refuge with a classmate, her fear persisted that her parents would soon discover her whereabouts. Thankfully, she was rescued by a human rights organization within days and taken to a safe location in a neighboring county, allowing her to continue her schooling uninterrupted.

Yet Amina's story is not unique. County Anti-Gender Based Violence (GBV) officer Francisca Akope notes that many girls face similar predicaments but often hesitate to seek help due to the absence of a safe harbor in Isiolo.

"The lack of a rescue center discourages girls from reporting cases. Many prefer to stay in danger rather than risk the consequences of speaking out," Akope explained.



Women's rights advocates march peacefully in Isiolo in a past event

In November of last year, the Isiolo County government announced plans to allocate Sh5 million for establishing a safe center at the Isiolo Referral Hospital.

However, progress has stalled, leaving countless girls vulnerable. According to Akope, the absence of a GBV desk at the referral hospital further complicates matters by delaying essential healthcare for victims of sexual abuse.

"There's a critical time window for treating

sexual violence cases, and the lack of a dedicated unit often leads to delays and missed medical support," she emphasized. During the recent International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM, human rights advocates reiterated the urgent need for a rescue center and comprehensive support systems for girls trapped in oppressive situations.

"We call for medical, psychological, and legal assistance, as well as safe educational opportunities for those fleeing FGM," stated a

joint statement from the group.

The activists also urged the county government to recognize communities that publicly denounce FGM, encouraging a shift towards alternative rites of passage.

"The county should empower community leaders to take proactive steps in eradicating this harmful practice," they added.

According to the 2022 Kenya Demographic Health Survey, 66% of girls and women aged 15-45 in Isiolo have undergone FGM, a slight decrease from 68% in 2014.

However, this statistic highlights an ongoing challenge. Bernadette Loloju, CEO of the Anti-FGM Board, emphasized that despite notable efforts, much work remains to be done to eliminate FGM entirely. "Subjecting girls to this practice can inflict lifelong trauma, and it affects their futures. Education is the key to breaking this cycle," she asserted.

The global community remains steadfast in its commitment to end FGM by 2030, but experts warn that shifting attitudes within high-prevalence communities is essential for meaningful change.

The prevalence of emerging trends such as cross-border FGM and the medicalization of the practice further complicate eradication efforts.

UDA sidelines Mt. Kenya in grassroots elections

Once again the region is not included in the party's grassroots elections schedule for April 2025

By Nancy Kinoti

President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) has scheduled elections at the county level for April this year. In a notice dated February 13, UDA's National Elections Board Chairman, Anthony Mwaura, confirmed the schedule for the upcoming elections. The second phase of its grassroots elections is expected to take place in April 2025 across 22 counties.

However, Mt. Kenya region is once again left out. During last year's grassroots elections, Nyandarua, Tharaka Nithi, Kiambu, Embu, Meru, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, and Laikipia counties were lined up for the second phase of the elections, which never took



UDA party delegates at the Bomas Of Kenya

place. According to the UDA's grassroots poll schedule, the second phase of elections will be conducted on April 11 and April 12. On Friday, April 11, the exercise will take place in Kitui, Machakos, Makueni, Kajiado, Turkana, Kisii, Nyamira, Bungoma, Migori, Siaya, and Kisumu counties. The polls will continue the following day in Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Isiolo, Taita Taveta, Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu, and Tana River counties.

According to the party, the two-day exercise is open to all aspiring candidates. The elections are part of leaders' efforts to rejuvenate and strengthen party structures and enhance grassroots networks ahead of the

2027 general election. Their conduct will help shape perceptions of the parties' competence and integrity. Regarding the Mt. Kenya pools, it is said that the growing political hostility against President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) in Mt. Kenya could have forced the ruling party to skip the region in its new schedule for grassroots elections.

Some of the Mt. Kenya counties had been scheduled for the phase two polling center-level grassroots elections initially planned for June 2024 before they were postponed following the nationwide Gen Z protests. But in the new schedule set for April, the party has opted to conduct the grassroots elections in

North Eastern, Nyanza, Ukambani, and parts of the Western region, where the ruling party largely has no major political influence.

The UDA party, which was a near religion in Mt Kenya after sweeping most seats in the 2022 general elections, is currently facing an uncertain future amid growing hostility following the impeachment of the former Deputy President, Mr Rigathi Gachagua. Some of the UDA's top leaders have since become unwelcome guests in the region, with others facing public heckling.

Some officials have since avoided holding political engagements in the region over the perceived hostility. This as Mr. Gachagua continues to fan anti-Ruto sentiments in the



Gachagua's tour in Murang'a after his impeachment

region with a promise of leading the populous Mt. Kenya away from President Ruto's UDA. However, the party will still have to hold grassroots elections in the region to meet the requirements set for political parties.



National Election Board (NEB) Chairperson, Antony Mwaura

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Solution Sacco is making significant waves in the financial sector, showcasing impressive performance while offering exceptional services to its members.

The institution's long-standing history and solid track record reflect its comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of the Sacco industry.

Positioned as a reliable partner, Solution Sacco leads the way in delivering innovative financial services and promoting sustainable community growth. Its rise to prominence has been marked by a steadfast dedication to excellence, characterized by a tireless commitment to innovation, integrity, and member service.

Through its creative and cost-effective credit offerings, Solution Sacco is enabling its members to enhance their quality of life.

At the recent 32nd Annual General Meeting, the Sacco reported robust growth across all key market segments, boasting a total asset base of Ksh 9.9 billion, fueled by increased interest income, lower expenses, and growing engagement with Sacco products and services.

The organization is undoubtedly brightening the financial prospects of its members through its exceptional offerings. The



Solution Sacco Chairman Francis Rimberia (left) shakes hands with Cooperatives PS Kiburi Kilemi during the AGM

financial reports for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024, presented during the AGM, confirm that Solution Sacco is on a positive trajectory.

A legacy of trust and growth

A primary goal of the Sacco is to provide credit to its members, a mission it has accomplished through streamlined processes

that ensure timely loan disbursements. New products tailored to meet members' needs while addressing current economic challenges have resulted in loan approvals totaling Ksh 7.37 billion, alongside recorded revenue of Ksh 1.64 billion and a surge in deposits reaching Ksh 6.67 billion.

The Chairman Francis Rimberia attributes

the strong financial situation to the ongoing trust members place in the Sacco. Thanks to the introduction of innovative products and improved loan disbursement processes, members can access loans with remarkable speed.

Additionally, the Sacco prioritizes financial literacy training to empower its members in wealth accumulation through various investment ventures. To further support education, training, and information sharing, the Sacco leadership has collaborated with essential stakeholders.

The Society's emphasis on member-centered services and personalized delivery continues to set it apart, fostering enhanced engagement and loyalty among its members. Impressively, the Sacco's membership has grown to 37,054 by the end of 2024—a testament to the trust bestowed upon Solution Sacco's offerings, as noted by the former CEO Daniel Marete.

The institution's financial strength continues to grow, easily surpassing the capital adequacy requirements outlined by regulators. Clinging to the regulations and guidelines set forth by the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA), the Sacco firmly maintains its compliance.

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Solution Sacco's innovative strategies propel members towards financial success

“We are committed to delivering outstanding value to our members. We sincerely appreciate their continued support and trust in the Sacco. We look forward to an even brighter future and improved financial results as we approach 2025,” Marete remarked during the annual meeting.

In light of its exceptional performance, Solution Sacco continues to engage in meaningful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, primarily centered on education and environmental stewardship, aiming to enact lasting positive changes within the community.

By enhancing processes for faster and more efficient services, Solution Sacco demonstrates its unwavering commitment to empowering its members. The Sacco is further adapting to meet its members' evolving needs and expectations amid an increasingly digital and competitive environment through significant advancements in digital transformation.

While the transition has faced challenges-from technical complexities to organizational change management-Solution Sacco has successfully navigated this evolving landscape, showcasing the resilience, determination, and adaptability of its leadership, staff, and stakeholders.

This shift signals a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to embrace



New Solution Sacco CEO Esther Ebuthania during the recent AGM

change in the quest for excellence. “Technology is the future. Solution Sacco has made significant strides by investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure, core banking systems (CBS), and enhanced channel management

systems meticulously designed to improve operational efficiency, streamline processes, and elevate service delivery,” stated the Sacco chairperson.

Commitment to sustainable growth

The Sacco has expanded its services for members overseas by partnering with RIA Money Transfer, facilitating seamless remittance for those living abroad. Additionally, the Sacco plans to introduce a Call Center System, an Automated Feedback System, and a more robust Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to enhance the member experience and service delivery.

Furthermore, the Sacco has enhanced its USSD capabilities by acquiring an additional USSD code, *687#, in addition to the existing *686#, improving accessibility and convenience for its members.

The swift payment messaging for "Lipa na Solution Sacco" has addressed delays in funds collection for the business community, ensuring efficiency by directing funds straight into Sacco accounts.

To improve customer service, Solution Sacco has broadened its alternative channels, including optimizing the ATM network, expanding agency banking, and enhancing mobile banking platforms to provide secure solutions and promote transaction migration to alternative channels.

With the establishment of branches and satellite offices in various towns across Kenya, the Sacco has implemented agency banking services to make financial solutions more accessible to the populace.





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Good governance at the core as Solution Sacco builds trust and transparency in financial management

“Let's unite and grow together! The Sacco is committed to leveraging technology to provide our members with the best credit facilities available. We're always here to listen and assist our members in achieving their financial goals,” CEO Marete emphasized.

With over 29,300 registered cooperatives in Kenya, representing over 14 million members and an asset base exceeding Ksh 1.5 trillion (accounting for 30% of Kenya's annual savings), Solution Sacco stands out as a leading DT Sacco. It remains competitive by embracing modern strategies, facilitating meaningful customer interactions, adopting digital banking, and offering customer-centric services.

The transformation of Solution DT Sacco began in 1993 when it changed its name from Meru Mwalimu Sacco, allowing members from various sectors to join. It now operates under a common bond, including members from the education and health sectors, cooperatives, county and national government employees, MSMEs, investment groups (chamas), and other community organizations.

Following regulations from the Sacco Society Regulatory Authority (SASRA), the organization has witnessed outstanding asset growth since 2011. From Ksh 2.3 billion in assets in 2011, Solution Sacco has seen



Solution Sacco Members following updates during the 32nd AGM

substantial increases over the years, reaching Ksh 9.9 billion in 2024.

This rapidly growing Sacco continues to capture attention and accolades among its peers, recently earning several awards at the esteemed Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) show in Meru and Nanyuki. With victories including the Best Cooperative Movement/Sacco Stand and accolades for

excellence in various sectors such as Insurance Services and Property and Real Estate, Solution Sacco demonstrates its unwavering commitment to exceptional service to its members.

These accomplishments not only highlight the cooperative's commitment to excellence but also reinforce its reputation as a leading institution in the financial sector.

The ongoing Solution Sacco success can also be attributed to principles of good governance, innovation, adaptability, sound financial management, and responsiveness to its members' needs. These elements have propelled Solution Sacco to new growth heights while maximizing member benefits. Financial inclusion has been prioritized, diversifying membership and improving savings culture through product digitization. The great achievements of Solution Sacco also illustrate the profound impact of strong management practices grounded in trust and confidence among its members.

Trust is fostered through effective governance, transparent operations, and, most importantly, unwavering accountability from the board of directors. This board embodies a unique sense of responsibility, making critical decisions that direct the organization toward its mission of effectively serving its members.

At Solution Sacco, board accountability transcends duty; it is a guiding principle. Board members recognize the need to justify their decisions and actions, cultivating a culture where transparency is paramount. This obligation extends to include legal and fiduciary responsibilities that safeguard prudent resource management. A board committed to accountability strengthens member confidence, builds trust, and ensures long-term sustainability.

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Solution Sacco empowers members' financial growth with high returns

The cooperative's emphasis on financial transparency is among its defining strengths. Board members recognize their stewardship of substantial member funds, pledging responsible management. Through regular and accurate financial reports, members gain insights into income, expenditures, and overall financial performance, enhancing trust in the organization's objectives.

Adherence to regulatory frameworks represents another cornerstone of Solution Sacco's governance. Operating under stringent legal regulations, the board ensures compliance with rules designed to protect its members' interests and maintain stability. With oversight from the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA), Solution Sacco exemplifies a commitment to compliance with licensing, governance standards, and reporting obligations, reinforcing legal standing while fostering member trust.

Accountability also plays a crucial role in the decision-making processes. Board members are encouraged to make well-informed choices based on comprehensive analyses focusing on the Sacco's well-being. The crucial role of independent audits and performance evaluations in promoting board accountability is underscored as



A member asks a question during the Sacco's AGM

Solution Sacco utilizes these mechanisms to assess its financial health and operational effectiveness objectively. Regular performance reviews help identify areas needing improvement, ensuring directors fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Such practices reflect Solution Sacco's

commitment to accountability and a continuous enhancement of its governance. Open communication with members is a hallmark of Solution Sacco's operational ethos. The board prioritizes keeping members informed about organizational activities, challenges, and successes through

annual general meetings, newsletters, and digital updates. This proactive approach promotes active member engagement in governance, holding the board accountable for its decisions.

Finally, the ethical conduct of board members remains a priority. Adhering to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism is non-negotiable, as even the slightest breach could erode member trust and tarnish the cooperative's reputation. Upholding a strict code of ethics and modeling these values, the board reinforces a culture of accountability throughout the organization.

What truly makes Solution Sacco unique?

How can investing in this cooperative enhance your financial well-being and pave the path to a prosperous future? The answers lie in the diverse range of robust financial products and services available, supported by the organization's exceptional member-oriented philosophy.

One significant advantage of investing in Solution Sacco shares is the guarantee of a secure and worry-free retirement. In an unpredictable financial environment, Solution Sacco offers an attractive alternative. With high annual dividend returns of up to 15%, members can rest assured of a comfortable retirement lifestyle.

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Solution Sacco satisfies members, shareholders with exceptional products and services

Retirement should be a time to enjoy the rewards of hard work, not a source of financial stress. By becoming a member of Solution Sacco, you are not just securing your future; you are joining a cooperative that prioritizes members' prosperity.

Investing in Solution Sacco shares means becoming a member-owner, which grants you a voice in the cooperative's governance and decision-making processes.

This democratic structure empowers members to contribute to the growth and future of the Sacco, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. As shareholders, members play an essential role in shaping the financial landscape of Solution Sacco, rather than being passive depositors.

The cooperative also provides various investment options, including a Fixed Account that offers significantly higher interest rates compared to standard savings accounts.

Looking ahead, Solution Sacco remains dedicated to ensuring sustainable growth that benefits both its members and the broader community. As the global economy faces challenges, the importance of ethical and



Solution Sacco Board Members led by Chairman Mr Francis Rimberia in a past event

responsible investing becomes increasingly vital.

With a commitment to social responsibility, Solution Sacco actively involves itself in community initiatives aimed at enhancing financial literacy, supporting environmental sustainability, and improving members' quality of life. This comprehensive growth

approach ensures that investments yield financial returns while also contributing to the greater social good.

In conclusion, investing in Solution Sacco shares embodies a proactive effort towards securing your financial future. The cooperative's unwavering commitment to its

members, diverse financial products, and strong member education initiatives make it an optimal choice for those seeking a stable and prosperous life.

With impressive dividend returns, comprehensive financial education, and a community-focused approach, Solution Sacco is more than just a financial entity; it is a gateway to financial independence and empowerment. Your journey toward financial freedom begins here, and Solution Sacco is ready to be your partner every step of the way.



Solution Sacco chairman Mr Francis Rimberia

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Wamunyoro riddle in Mt Kenya East that Kindiki must solve to secure his future in Kenya Kwanza

From back page...

The political "battle lines" are drawn starkly, as supporters of both Kindiki and Gachagua mobilize ceaselessly, each seeking to solidify dominance ahead of the next elections.

Governor Cecily Mbarire echoed concerns of factions stirring divisiveness, reminding locals of the need for unity in pushing for essential services.

"We won't allow ourselves to be pitted against the President," Mbarire declared, highlighting

the political discourse towards progress. Many political insiders believe he has a crucial assignment: to rally the Mt. Kenya East constituency and demonstrate their alignment with President Ruto's governance.

"Unity is a national goal," said Tigania East MP Mpuru Aburi, indicating confidence in Kindiki's ability to bring together a politically divided region. "Our focus shouldn't be solely on the mountain," he added, stressing the need for national cohesion.

Simultaneously, Gachagua's political resurrection after his ousting has startled many who believed he would fade into obscurity. Instead, he quickly regrouped, demonstrating his resilience and seasoned political acumen by solidifying local support as he adjusts to the shifting political dynamics.

The looming homecoming event in Tharaka Nithi, anticipated to symbolize Kindiki's re-affirmation of

influence, has yet to happen-raising eyebrows over possible delays with pundits blaming ongoing efforts from Gachagua to regain foothold in the region.

Kindiki hopes to hold with President Ruto as

the chief guest in the homecoming event, is poised to serve as a crucial platform for reestablishing his influence in the region.

Though the exact date for the homecoming remains uncertain, its significance as a show of unity in the wake of recent political turbulence cannot be overstated.

With the election cycle approaching, both

Kindiki and Gachagua are aware that their strategies may very well dictate their political survival.

As political rhetoric intensifies, the fate of the Kenya Kwanza administration in Mt. Kenya East hangs delicately in the balance, awaiting resolution in the unfolding saga of Kithure Kindiki versus Rigathi Gachagua.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki with Meru leaders at his Karen home.

the growing backlash against Gachagua's attempts to raise local ire against the government.

Despite the tumult, Kindiki has shown resolve to dismantle the Gachagua narrative and steer



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua in a rally after his impeachment

Isiolo youth transform from banditry to entrepreneurs

By Lotini Kiprop

In the rugged terrain of Isiolo's Oldonyiro ward, where harsh climatic conditions are as common as community raids, a remarkable transformation is taking place. At the heart of this change is Paramase Lesanagi, a 26-year-old who once toiled as a bandit but has now turned his life around without ever stepping foot in a classroom.

Lesanagi's upbringing was shaped by the realities of pastoralist life, characterized by

Lesanagi regularly snuck back to check on his mother's well-being.

"I would think about what would happen if I were killed during a raid. Who would take care of my mother? It was these thoughts that pushed me to seek a better path," he shared in a recent interview.

Lesanagi's pivotal change began in 2018 when he discovered the Rangelands Sacco, an initiative aimed at promoting financial literacy

and economic empowerment among marginalized communities. Founded in 2016, the Sacco has been a lifeline for many, offering sustainable approaches to counter climate shocks affecting livestock keepers in the region.

The impact was immediate for Lesanagi. "I started saving Sh100 daily and soon qualified for a Sh30,000 loan, which I

used to establish a motorbike spare parts shop," he explained.

Today, he proudly operates a business that not only supports his family but also provides a sense of pride and stability he never thought possible.

Lesanagi's story is just one among many. Across over 40 Community Conservancies in Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, Garissa, and beyond, dozens of former bandits are embracing transformation.

Former highway bandit Lekan Lempaso is another shining example. He recalls, "We used to depend on attacking road users for a living. Now, thanks to the Sacco, I am in the livestock business, and it has given me so much pride."

The Rangelands Sacco continuously equips its members with crucial financial management skills, helping them make the most of their agricultural resources.

Lesanagi highlighted this support, explaining how, during a recent drought, he sold his animals, saved the money, and later reinvested when conditions improved.

Women like Nabiki Lesuper are also experiencing a renaissance. The entrepreneur from Samburu's Archers Post has channeled the financial literacy skills gained through the Sacco into owning rental units, a feat she previously thought impossible. "After joining the Sacco, I learned how to manage my income and find new avenues for sustainable income," she said with a smile.

During the Annual Delegate's Meeting held recently in Archers Post, Peter Ngunu, the Sacco's Senior Enterprise Officer, highlighted

the transformative power of their programs. "We are committed to uplifting the living



Paramase Lesanagi receives an award for being the best male saver in 2024

standards of over 6,300 members in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of Northern and Coastal regions of Kenya, guiding them toward financial independence," he said.

Since its inception, the Rangelands Sacco has issued over Sh230 million in loans and accumulated Sh52 million in savings, distributing a record Sh6.8 million in dividends this year—up from Sh2.6 million last year. This remarkable growth is a testament to the determination of the communities it serves.

As Lesanagi, Lempaso, and Lesuper continue to pave their paths towards prosperity, their stories stand as beacons of hope for other young people in pastoralist communities, proving that it is never too late to choose a life of dignity over desperation. In their footsteps, they urge others to embrace education and financial literacy as stepping stones to a brighter future.



Rangelands Sacco officials, members and delegates during their annual meeting

raids, retaliations, and survival challenges. Raised as the only child of a single mother, he often found himself torn between the cultural expectations of becoming a Moran and his responsibilities at home.

Despite the tradition dictating that Morans should not reside in their mother's compound,

Benni McCarthy appointed Harambee Stars head coach

By Ken Kinyua

South African football legend Benni McCarthy has been officially appointed as the new head coach of Kenya's national football team, the Harambee Stars, as confirmed by the Football Kenya Federation (FKF). The former Manchester United first-team coach is expected to arrive in Kenya by the end of the week to take over from interim coach Francis Kimanzi.

A senior FKF official, who requested

and all team decisions, including player call-ups, will be based strictly on merit," he added.

In a departure from previous appointments, McCarthy will not bring in his own coaching staff; instead, he will collaborate with the current technical team, which will take on supportive roles.

"This time, we believe we've made the right decision. The finer details of the agreement will be released soon, but he is our new coach, and we expect him to build a competitive squad," the FKF official affirmed.

Ahead of his first assignment, McCarthy is expected to attend the much-anticipated Mashemeji Derby on Sunday, where AFC Leopards will face off against Gor Mahia.

McCarthy's inaugural challenge as head coach will be a pivotal 2026 FIFA World Cup Group 'F' qualifier against Gabon on March 24 at Nyayo National Stadium. This match marks a significant milestone as it will be Kenya's first home international fixture in over a year, following a series of matches held in Uganda and South Africa due to stadium restrictions. Additionally, it will serve as a test for Nyayo Stadium's readiness to host the rescheduled 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN).

Currently, Kenya sits fourth in Group F with five points from four matches, trailing leaders

Côte d'Ivoire (10 points), Gabon (9 points), and Burundi (7 points). Gambia (3 points) and Seychelles (0 points) round out the group standings.

As a coach, McCarthy has managed Cape Town City and Amazulu, and he served as an assistant coach at Belgian side Sint-Truiden. From 2020 to 2024, he was part of Manchester



Benni McCarthy, the newly appointed Harambee Stars head coach

anonymity, expressed confidence in McCarthy's ability to lead the national team to success.

"We have secured Benni McCarthy as our new head coach. He is highly qualified, and we believe he can elevate the team to new heights," the official stated.

The official also emphasized FKF's commitment to rebuilding the national team through merit-based player selections.

"Our goal is to restore Kenya's football glory,



Harambee Stars players celebrate a goal in a past match

Benni McCarthy's Stellar Career

At 47 years old, McCarthy stands as one of South Africa's greatest footballers, holding the record as Bafana Bafana's all-time top scorer with 31 goals in 79 appearances. His illustrious club career includes stints at Ajax, Celta Vigo, Porto, Blackburn Rovers, West Ham, and Orlando Pirates, where he won the UEFA Champions League with FC Porto under José Mourinho in 2004.

United's coaching staff, working under Erik ten Hag as a strikers' coach.

With his extensive experience in European and African football, FKF is hopeful that McCarthy can revitalize Kenya's national team and lead them to greater success. His arrival is anticipated to herald a new chapter for the Harambee Stars as they pursue qualification for major international tournaments.

Blackpanther Queens FC empowering girl child through football

By Gitari Dominik

Blackpanther Queens was formed back in 2022 to give young girls from Majengo Meru County an opportunity to keep them engaged and away from Drug and substance abuse and early pregnancies. After a series of friendly matches they registered for Football Kenya federation Meru County Women league in 2024. Indeed, this was one of the best seasons for them after finishing third in Meru Betika Tournament and finishing as first runners

Razack Mbogori said. He also applauded the women's football for gaining recognition not only in Meru but also in the country as fans flock the fields to watch the girls play.

"We are committed to becoming the best women's team in the larger Eastern province while empowering Young girls through football." Mbogori added.

The team has registered for Meru County women league for a second season alongside other 15 teams divided into two zones with a thirst to feature in the Women's Premier League in the next four years while providing a conducive environment where the girls can play and thrive.

The league kicked off on February 16th and Blackpanther fc secured a 2-nil win against rivals Kiirua TTI Fc. "The match was not easy for my girls but we really utilized our chances and secured a win despite some of my key players missing" Blackpanther Queens Head Coach Latifa Karambu.

She further thanked everyone who continues to support team's journey and she believes in a brighter future for her team and women's Football and welcomed anyone willing to partner or sponsor the team while welcoming fans to cheer and celebrate with them during their matches, Blackpanther Queens plays their home matches at Kaaga Methodist ground commonly known as Sansiro.



Blackpanther queens Fc in a past match. Photo courtesy of Empress Damah

in Betika Bingwafest held recently in Meru.

The team's resilience, skills, determination and quest for success led them to topping the inaugural Meru County women League with 39 points, one point ahead of Kiirua TTI Fc. "The team faces numerous challenges including lack of enough funds, but the girl's spirit remain high." Blackpanther Fc Secretary General

Tharaka Nithi teams cry for help

Division two teams from Tharaka Nithi County are calling well-wisher to come in aid of the teams.

After earning promotion to Division two in 2022 after emerging the champions of regional League in the previous season, Livewire FC has faced difficulty in honoring their matches due to inadequate funds. A promising team with talented players based at Iriani Primary School, Mukothima Ward is on the verge of being relegated after issuing two walk overs this season.

The same has been witnessed with the newly promoted team to the league Awakening Lions FC from Mariani ward, Chuka Igambang'ombe Constituency. The team has also been facing challenges to honor their away matches, as they have to play two matches in one weekend far from home forcing them to incur more costs of accommodation, transport, refreshments and players allowances.

"It is a difficult moment for us as a team, we've really tried our best to see the team progress, we have knocked doors but luck has not been on our side, We gave two walk overs to ASU and Itoleka, one more and we will be relegated" Livewire team manager Moses expressed his worry.

The two teams are appealing to the county gov't through Youth and Sports docket to hear

their cry and help them settle some expenses like logistics and officiating fee.

"We are appealing to the county gov't to support the team by catering for logistics and officiating fee and accommodations which is the biggest burden we are facing currently " Awakening Lions Team manager Morris said.

Awakening Lions FC and Livewire FC are the only teams from the county representing in the fourth-tier league.

The two teams are also appealing for any well-wisher or organization to offer a helping hand in ensuring that the talents they are nurturing don't go to waste. As football is the only way to keep the youths engaged hence curbing emerging vices like drug and substance abuse in the community.



Awakening Lions FC

Kindiki rattled as Gachagua invades bedroom

By Rugendo Antony

The political landscape in Mt. Kenya East is heating up as Deputy President Kithure Kindiki grapples with formidable opposition from Rigathi Gachagua.

Just months into his tenure, Kindiki finds himself fighting to maintain his foothold in his home region, where support is rapidly coalescing around his predecessor, Gachagua. Once hailed as a promising figure in the Kenya Kwanza administration, Kindiki is now navigating a bewildering political maze.

Following Gachagua's unexpected ouster from the Deputy President position in October, the former DP has been working diligently to re-establish his influence, hosting numerous meetings at his Wamunyoru residence that have drawn in political heavyweights and community leaders eager to rally behind him. Kindiki's base of support appears to be at risk, with critics suggesting a growing alignment



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua & Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

within the region favoring Gachagua. The former Deputy President has even claimed familial ties to Meru County, further deepening his ties within the region. This bid to reclaim allegiances has left Ruto's allies on edge, as tensions mount in a region that has historically been a stronghold for Kenya Kwanza.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua attending a church service in Igembe North recently

The stakes are high-Mt. Kenya East, encompassing Meru, Embu, and Tharaka Nithi, boasts over 1.3 million votes. With the 2027 election looming, Gachagua is intent on reclaiming his political clout and stripping away Kindiki's base. "He's storming into Kindiki's bedroom," quipped a political analyst, highlighting the intensity of the burgeoning rivalry.

In response, Kindiki has been proactive, inviting delegations to his official residence in Karen,

despite criticism over the venue choice.

Detractors argue that such meetings should be held locally in Meru County, suggesting the gatherings lack authenticity and make it harder to connect with voters back home.

"Concerns for development should be discussed within our County-not at some posh residence far from our issues," Samuel Mwirigi a Meru resident told County Focus.

While Kindiki emphasizes gratitude for President Ruto's selection of him, asserting that Mt. Kenya East has reasons to embrace its Deputy President, he faces mounting pressures to unify a region that is threatening to fragment politically.

"Why should we not be thankful that President Ruto has for the first time in history remembered Mt. Kenya East with the Deputy Presidency?" he asked during a recent meeting.

Continued on page 14...



RETURNS TO MEMBERS

YEAR	%DIVIDENDS	%MEMBER DEPOSITS
2014	10%	8%
2015	10%	10%
2016	12%	11%
2017	15%	11%
2018	13%	11%
2019	13%	12%
2020	13%	12%
2021	15%	12%
2022	18%	13%
2023	19%	13%
2024	19%	13%

DIVIDENDS

PAYOUT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2024

DIVIDENDS 19%
MEMBER DEPOSIT 13%

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