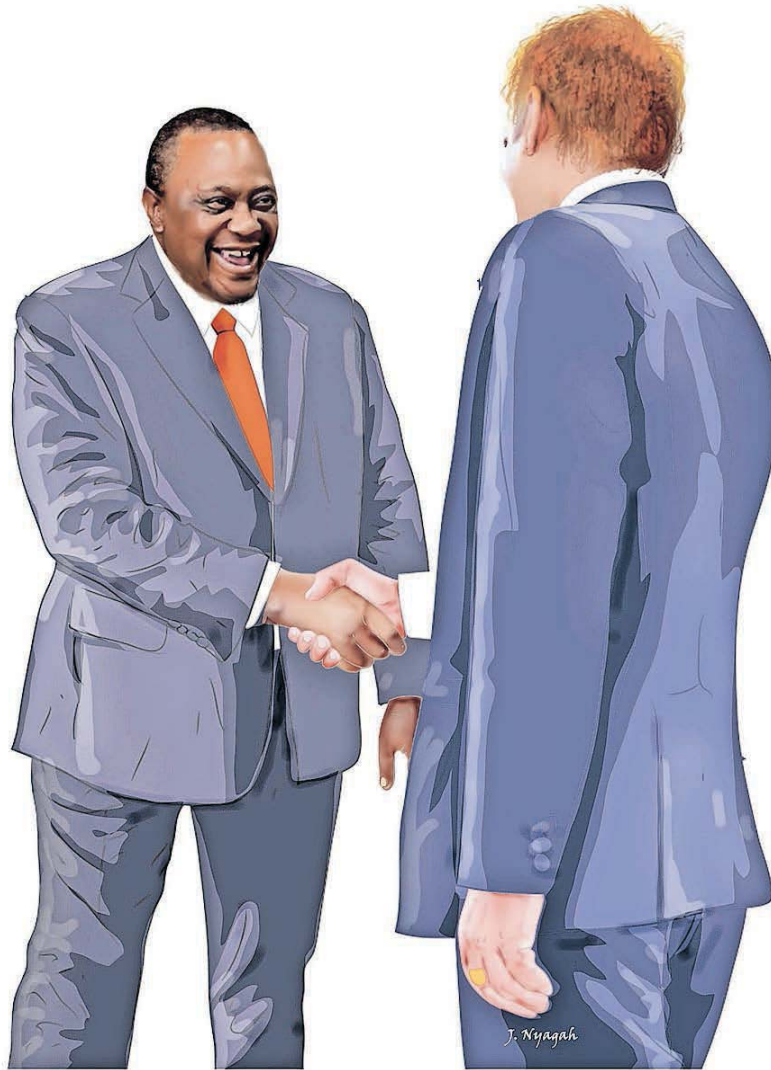


THE Weekly Review

For the Thinking Person

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HOW JUBILEE RIGGED SH160BN ROAD DEAL

The multibillion-shilling Rironi-Nakuru-Mau Summit Highway project was awarded to a firm fronted by a powerful State House operative, despite irregularities flagged by the Treasury. We reveal the intrigues behind the deal and the tough questions the Ruto administration is asking

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letter from the editor

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Nakuru highway contract debacle is double punishment for taxpayers

As you drive down the Nairobi-Nakuru highway is a torturous, mentally stressing affair that is fraught with the ever-present risk of a head-on collision as motorists dangerously overtake trucks moving at a snail's pace.

An estimated 20,000 vehicles hurtle up and down this congested highway every day, some having started their journeys from more than 1,000 kilometres away, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A good number never make it to their destinations, as multiple daily accidents leave them dead or maimed. The highway regularly serves the country with news of some of the deadliest accidents, with some sections already marked out as horrific black spots. Efforts to modify and expand some of the most notorious sections have borne little fruits, as vehicles on the road expand at an estimated rate of four percent every year. When it is not in the news for carnage, the Nakuru highway is in the headlines for logjams that stretch for kilometres. The slightest disruption of vehicular flow at the Gilgil Weighbridge has seen thousands of Kenyans spend long, cold nights in traffic partly due to the limited shoulder allowance that makes it impossible for vehicles to escape the gridlock. Travel for Easter, Christmas and other national holidays has become a lottery, motorists never know whether they will make it in time to be with loved ones in their up-country homes or for their vacation destinations.

That is why news that the 233-kilometre section of the



Washington Gikunju

Travel for Easter, Christmas and other national holidays has become a lottery, motorists never know whether they will make it in time to be with loved ones in their upcountry homes or for their vacation destinations. That is why news that the 233-kilometre section of the highway between Nairobi and Mau Summit would be turned into a dual carriage was received with warm anticipation"

highway between Nairobi and Mau Summit would be turned into a dual carriage was received with warm anticipation.

It did not even matter that the proposal was to make it a toll road, long-suffering motorists were ready to pay their way out of the regular misery.

Unknown to many Kenyans, however, award of the Sh160 billion contract to French conglomerate, Vinci, was shrouded in anomalies. As the lead story in this

week's edition reveals, differences over income tax calculations were brushed over during the bidding process. That is how the French contractor pulled ahead of Portuguese rival Mota Engil Group, despite protests by the Treasury.

Now the political power balance has shifted, and inflections that were deemed minor in Vinci's contract win are working against the French company. There is, of course, a lot more political jockeying going on behind closed doors, which will determine which company carries the day, or whether the contract gets cancelled altogether. Meanwhile, thousands of motorists continue to suffer unnecessarily long hours on the highway every day. The economy continues to bleed billions of shillings in wasted fuel, lost man hours and idle tourist hot-spots whose main undoing is their location along or past the congested highway. The cost of expanding the highway also continues to escalate, in tandem with the inflation rate. This needed not to have been the case. There was a chance to do the right thing and award the contract procedurally, right from the word go. A procedurally issued tender becomes a binding document, regardless changes in political office. It also saves taxpayers a lot of time and money. Any steps that the Kenya Kwanza administration takes going forward with regards to the contract must also be within the law.

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the telescope

■ Time's up for Chebukati, Guliye and Boya

IEBC commissioners leave office

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) chairperson Wafula Chebukati and commissioners Professor Abdi Guliye and Boya Molu will this week leave office at the expiry of a six-year term.

The three were appointed on January 18, 2017 by former President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Their exit will see the process of recruitment of new commissioners and the chairperson heightened.

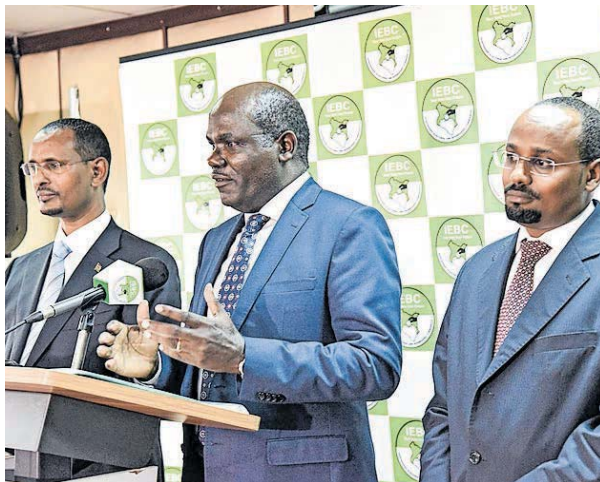
Three commissioners — Juliana Cherera, Justus Nyang'aya and Francis Wanderi — resigned last year after they dis-

puted presidential results announced by Chebukati.

Commissioner Irene Masit is under investigation by a tribunal chaired by Justice Aggrey Muchelule.

Eyes are now on who will form the IEBC selection panel after President William Ruto put out a public notice last year to constitute the team.

The IEBC Act requires the President to appoint a seven-member recruitment panel at least six months before the expiration of the term of the chairperson or member of the commission.



IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati (centre) with Prof Yusuf Guliye (left) and Molu Boya at the anniversary Towers on April 20, 2018.

■ They're seeking to compete as soon as practical



Red Bull Max Verstappen during the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka, Mie prefecture, on October 9, 2022.

Andretti combines with GM to enter F1

The American Andretti Global team have joined forces with US car giant General Motors with the intention of entering Formula 1.

A joint statement said that GM would be represented by its luxury Cadillac brand should their bid be successful. Andretti Global chairman Michael Andretti said: "We are well suited to be a new team for F1 and can bring value to the series."

Andretti said he was "seeking to compete as soon as practical".

And he said he wanted "at least one American driver."

The prime candidate for that seat would be IndyCar driver Colton Herta, who races for Andretti, has F1 aspirations, and missed out on a seat this year with Red Bull's Al-

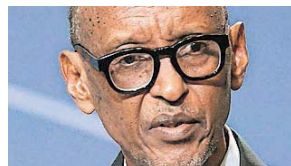
pha Tauri team only because he did not have sufficient licence points to qualify.

Cadillac chairman Mark Reuss said: "We have a long, rich history in motorsports and engineering innovation, and we are thrilled with the prospect of pairing with Andretti Global to form an American F1 team that will help spur even more global interest in the series and the sport."

"Cadillac and F1 both have growing global appeal. Our brand has a motorsports pedigree that's more than a century in the making, and we would be proud to have the opportunity to bring our distinct American innovation and design to F1."

■ Kagame: We should not carry this burden

Rwanda won't accept DRC refugees



Rwandan President Paul Kagame says his country will no longer offer refuge to people fleeing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Decades of instability in the east of the country have forced scores

of refugees across the border into Rwanda. "This is not Rwanda's problem," said Mr Kagame, adding: "I am refusing that Rwanda should carry this burden." He said the rest of the world had completely missed the point when it came to eastern DR Congo. The real threat to security, in his view, is what he describes as the remnants of Hutu extremist forces who tried to wipe out his Tutsi ethnic group in the 1994 genocide.

■ Uproar over video filmed in presidential palace

US rapper apologises for Ghana video



American rapper Meek Mill has apologised after sparking an uproar in Ghana over a music video filmed in the country's presidential palace — also called Jubilee House.

Local media had reported that people were enraged over what

they viewed as the "desecration" of the presidency by Meek Mill and the security issues regarding the filming of a music video in such a high-profile building.

The video was reportedly first posted on Meek Mill's Instagram account on Sunday, according to the news site *GhanaWeb*.

On Monday, the rapper tweeted an apology to Ghanaians and the presidency. He said: "My apologies to the people if any disrespect... My apologies to the office also."

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■ 'ABOUT 10 PEOPLE STOLE BILLIONS FROM THE ECONOMY IN MANIPULATED DEALS'

Top government officials on August 15 at the Bomas of Kenya National Tallying Centre reportedly tried to pressure IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati to 'moderate' the election results.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has been one of the loudest voices for investigations into the Uhuru regime, saying that a State Capture Inquiry would lead to confiscation of wealth allegedly amassed by key figures in the past administration.

According to Chebukati, a National Security Advisory Committee team that included Inspector-General of Police Hillary Mutiyambai and Vice-Chief of Defence Forces Lt-General Francis Ogolla tried to pressure him to doctor the results.

An inquiry into the matter would also drag in former Interior and Coordination of National Government Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i.

Then President Uhuru Kenyatta was the one who had the power to dispatch key government officials to the Bomas of Kenya in a futile attempt to either switch or falsify the election.

The government is considering a Judicial Commission of Inquiry of the type that President Kibaki established in 2003 to probe the Goldenberg scandal.

In the former security establishment, another figure Ruto loyalists would love to punish alongside Matiang'i would be former Principal Secretary for Interior Karanja Kibicho.

George Kinoti, who left office as soon as Ruto took over, is a security operative with a reason to be nervous. The President revealed that he had fired him, contradicting his earlier account that he had accepted his resignation.

STATE CAPTURE: THE BITTER TRUTH

While Ruto is careful and pragmatic on the matter of an inquiry, many around him want an all-out assault against Uhuru, the business interests of the former First Family, and top officials in the past administration

● By MACHARIA GAITHO

Attorney-General Justin Muturi references post-election turmoil in the United States and Brazil to emphasise why it is important the truth be told on an alleged 'coup' plot ahead of the declaration that William Ruto had won the 2022 presidential election.

This is out of claims that top government officials had on August 15 at the Bomas of Kenya National Tallying Centre tried to pressure Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission chairman Wafula Chebukati to 'moderate' the election results so that Raila Odinga was declared the winner, or at least given the

window for a run-off against Ruto.

President Ruto has highlighted the alleged plot to rob him of electoral victory as one of the key issues to be investigated when an inquiry is established to probe the 'State Capture' under his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta. Key figures in the Kenya Kwanza government, including Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, are insistent that crimes allegedly committed by the Uhuru regime be probed.

Ruto himself campaigned on the promise to establish an inquiry into State Capture, and during a January 4 interview with a group of television stations went ahead to give a long list of offenses allegedly committed by the

government he served as Deputy President for 10 years. They included the alleged plot to change the election results, which even roped in the military; extra-judicial killings by the police; arrest and prosecution of his supporters on falsified charges; tax waivers to benefit private business; the Standard Gauge Railway and other major infrastructure contracts; and allocation of public land to individuals, including part of the stalled Galana Kulalu irrigation project. The President, however, cautioned that a full-fledged inquiry might not be a priority right now as he had to balance other interests. "Do I sort out the economy or

Continued on Page 6

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Past injustices: Ruto juggling hot potatoes

Continued from Page 5

do I swing this big thing that will drain our energy?" he posed. According to Muturi, the government is considering a Judicial Commission of Inquiry of the type that President Kibaki established in 2003 to probe the Goldenberg scandal, but is also looking at other options. The insurrection former US President Donald Trump incited when he rejected electoral loss, culminating in an attack in the US capitol by rowdy mobs on January 6, 2021, and recent copycat attacks in Brazil, where supporters of defeated President Jair Bolsonaro last Sunday broke into the nation's Congress, Supreme Court and Presidential Palace, sum up the danger of those in power refusing to accept electoral defeat.

While President Uhuru Kenyatta was not a contender in the elections last August, he openly backed the candidacy of opposition leader Odinga against then Deputy President Ruto. He was the one who had the power to dispatch key government officials to the Bomas of Kenya in a futile attempt to switch or falsify the election, and therefore would be the key

person in the dock in the event of an inquiry.

According to Muturi, however, the issue of such an inquiry, which would seem to target Ruto's predecessor, has to be handled with a caution given Kenya's fragile democracy. The AG conceded in a chat with *The Weekly Review* that there is no clear roadmap on what shape such an inquiry would take, concurring with the President that there is no need to rush into anything that could be interpreted as political vendetta and which could divide the nation. The need to expose misdeeds of the Uhuru government and punish those responsible for abuse of power, corruption and other offenses therefore has to be tempered against the wider national interest and also not divert attention from the Kenya Kwanza government's development agenda.

While Ruto is careful and pragmatic on the matter of an inquiry, there are many around him, particularly the younger politicians, party activists and newly-minted government officials, who would want to throw caution to the wind and go on an all-out assault against Uhuru, the business interests of the former First Family, and top government officials in the past administration.

Gachagua has been one of the loudest voices for investigations into the Uhuru regime, insisting in an *Inooro TV* interview last Sunday that a State Capture inquiry would lead to confiscation of wealth allegedly amassed by key figures in the past administration.

Intriguingly, however, the DP played down establishment of a formal investigatory mechanism such as a Judicial Commission or Presidential Commission because priority was on the government agenda of lowering the cost of living. It therefore remained unclear how those culpable for a host of misdeeds would be identified and punished in the absence of a formal and structured investigation. He said the al-

leged corruption cartel comprised just "about 10 people who stole billions from the economy in manipulated deals".

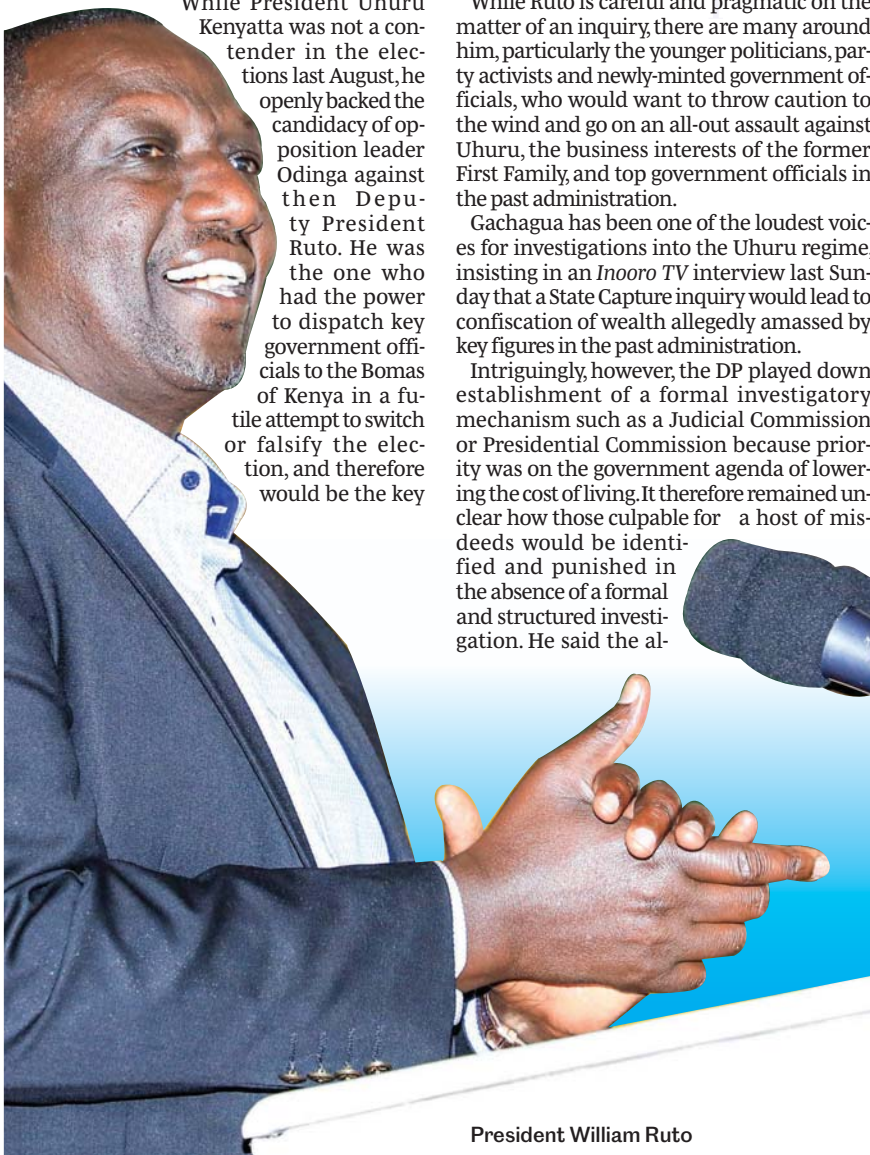
In likely reference to Kenyatta family interests, he charged that the cartels owned banks and controlled interest rates, and that every public policy was designed to earn them handsome profits. He claimed that influential families were behind cartels dominant in the milk, tea and coffee sectors and were blocking reforms so that they could continue enslaving farmers, charging that they even borrowed money to pay tea bonuses from the 'Big Man's' banks. "We will not pay that loan since farmers did not approve it," he said.

"Certainly, we will cancel their ill-gotten title deeds, deals and interests," he concluded, but did not mention that would be through government decree of a formal process. He accused the same cartels, still unnamed, of being behind police corruption and extra-judicial killings. "All those officers and their masters who murdered Kenyans...left people orphans, widows and widowers...we might not come after you but you will never find peace," he said, again not stating how the culprits would be identified. It was also left unclear how they would be punished in the absence of a formal investigations, prosecution and conviction. He revealed that the four-day government retreat at the Fairmont Mt Kenya Safari Club had resolved to drop the idea of a State Capture inquiry so that the government could focus on delivery of its promises to Kenyans, again raising questions on exactly how the promise to bring to book those responsible for various crimes will be realised.

In the meantime, however, the threat of a State Capture inquiry should have many officials in the previous administration looking over their shoulders. Most concerned should be the former President, who would obviously be the first in the dock were a probe mounted into the alleged attempt to illegally overturn the presidential election results.

According to Chebukati's account of the Bomas of Kenya incident, a National Security Advisory Committee delegation comprising the Principal Administrative Secretary at the Office of the President Kennedy Kihara, Solicitor-General Kennedy Ogeto, Inspector-General of Police Hillary Mutyambai and Vice-Chief of Defence Forces Lieutenant-General Francis Omondi Ogolla, tried to pressure him to doctor the results and reverse the impending announcement of Ruto's victory. He claimed that Head of Public Service Joseph Kinyua had called and asked him to receive the team.

Chebukati's account in press statements and an affidavit filed in response to the Raila's Supreme Court petition challenging Ruto's electoral victory added a sensational element to the election dispute drama. It was disputed by Kihara and Kinyua as sensational and damaging allegations that cast aspersions on critical



President William Ruto

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government institutions and offices. It is, however, what Ruto is using to make his case for what would have amounted to a coup against a validly elected contestant, and unprecedented use of the military in political manoeuvres.

On the Bomas of Kenya happenings, most of those involved have already left government or been eased aside from the centre of power with entry of a new regime. However, a probe could be career-limiting for some, such as Lt-Gen Ogolla who, in the normal rotation, would have been well-placed later this year to succeed Gen Robert Kibochi as Chief of Defence Forces. If there was such an attempt as described, it is highly unlikely that the delegation would have visited Chebukati on such a mission without the former President's instructions, or at least his knowledge and assent. Uhuru would clearly be the key target.

An inquiry into the matter would also drag in then Interior and Coordination of National Government Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, who in the last term of the Uhuru presidency was delegated powers that were seen to eclipse Ruto's. The 'Super CS', as he became known, not only presided over the powerful security and national administration dockets, but also became a sort of prime minister in all but name as he chaired cabinet committees to which all other ministerial colleagues reported. He became a target of hatred for Ruto allies, who viewed him as having usurped the DP's powers. They also made him subject of a wide variety of allegations around corruption and misuse of power, some of which those in the new government will be keen to push.

In the former security establishment, another figure Ruto loyalists would love to punish alongside Matiang'i would be then Principal Secretary for Interior Karanja Kibicho. Throughout most of the Jubilee government's final term, the Ruto social media propaganda network, led by his digital strategist Dennis Itumbi, launched wave after wave of attacks on the two, accusing them of all manner of crimes and misdeeds. The team was instrumental in pushing the unproven Mada Hotel narrative about an alleged plot to eliminate the DP, as well as accusations about the Ruara land scandal.

In December 2021, when Itumbi was abducted and badly assaulted by unknown people, spending weeks in hospital with limb fractures, he was quick to blame the security establishment for the attack. His point of view was echoed by Ruto, the clear reason being the incessant attacks on Matiang'i and Kibicho, as well as then Director of Criminal Investigations George Kinoti.

Itumbi will most probably be keen to get his own back on those he claims tormented him. But an investigation of the December 2021 assault will also dredge up another incident a few months earlier, when the controversial caller claimed his car was trailed and fired at by unknown people. He reported what he claimed was a murder attempt at Kasarani Police station, but those in the know, including close associates, doubted the validity of his claims, suspecting the incident was

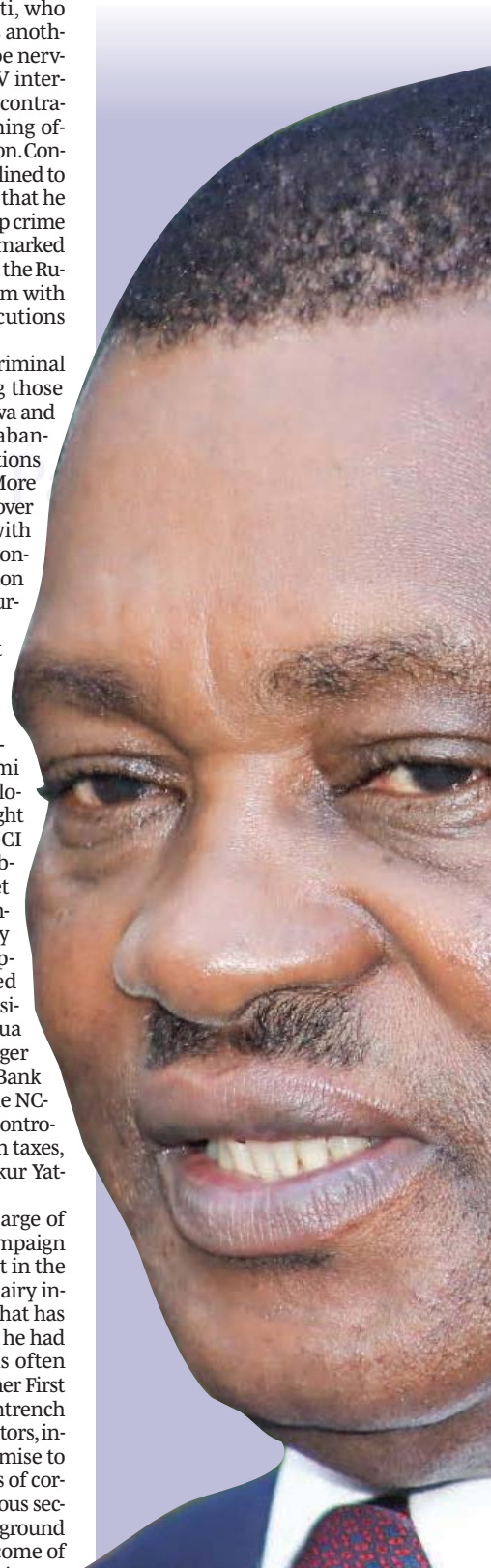
stage-managed as part of an attempt to deter police already on his trail.

Former DCI director George Kinoti, who left office as soon as Ruto took over, is another security operative with reason to be nervous. The President revealed in the TV interview that he had fired the DCI boss, contradicting his earlier account on assuming office that he had accepted his resignation. Contacted by *The Weekly Review*, Kinoti declined to make any comments, except to affirm that he was doing well. However, the former top crime buster surely knows that he could be a marked man, given the vehemence with which the Ruto camp accused him of targeting them with a chain of investigations and prosecutions based on falsified evidence.

Many of the corruption and other criminal cases pushed by Kinoti — including those against Gachagua and CSs Aisha Jumwa and Mithika Linturi — were promptly abandoned by Director of Public Prosecutions Noordin Haji once Ruto took office. More seriously, Kinoti is now being fingered over a spate of extra-judicial executions, with Ruto himself charging that a goods container installed at a Nairobi police station was used as the site for torture and murder.

Soon after the new government took over, it pushed investigations into the abduction and suspected murder last July of a pair of Indian IT experts employed by the Ruto presidential campaign, Mohammed Said Sami and Zulfikar Ahmad Khan, and their local taxi driver, Nicodemus Mwanja. Eight police officers from a disbanded DCI squad accused of the killings were subsequently arrested, but the key target might turn out to be one who held command responsibility. Beyond security operations, an inquiry into State Capture would invariably look at alleged misuse of power to benefit private business interests. Both Ruto and Gachagua have frequently referred to the merger of the Kenyatta family's Commercial Bank of Africa and the NIC Bank to form the NC-BA Bank as having benefited from a controversial waiver of over Sh300 million in taxes, which could put then Treasury CS Ukur Yatani on the spot.

Gachagua, who has been put in charge of agriculture reforms, has since the campaign period exhibited an obsessive interest in the Kenyatta family's dominance of the dairy industry through the Brookside brand that has bought out all major rivals. Although he had never provided any evidence, he has often charged that cartels linked to the former First Family have used political clout to entrench themselves in various agricultural sectors, including dairy, coffee and tea. His promise to seize assets he claimed were proceeds of corruption could send shivers across various sectors, but he might also be on slippery ground unless any such moves were the outcome of judicial processes rather than declarations at political rallies.



Attorney-General Justin Muturi

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SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT

SH 160 BILLION

Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit road concession project is the largest in Africa, backed by the French government and several influential international development institutions

The scope of the project will include widening of the road, building a four-kilometre viaduct through Nakuru Town, and building multiple interchanges

2018

Procured by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) in 2018 and awarded to the French EPC conglomerate, the Vinci Group, the project was negotiated under the private public partnership arrangement

20,000 VEHICLES A DAY

KeNHA statistics show that this section of the Northern Corridor carries an estimated 20,000 vehicles a day and traffic has been increasing at an annual rate of four per cent

The Vinci Group quoted a quarterly charge of Sh5.3 billion, while Mota Engil quoted Sh6.2 billion, implying – on the face of it – that the offer by the French was more competitive

A decision by the Ruto administration to halt the project will carry implications for diplomatic relations with the government of France

NAKURU HIGHWAY DEADLOCK

The dwindling fortunes of the project are attributed to loss of influence by political backers of a French company that was awarded the massive contract after braving a fierce battle with a Portuguese construction conglomerate

• By JAINDI KISERO

As the new administration of President William Ruto having second thoughts about the Sh160 billion Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit road concession project? It's the largest road concession project in Africa, backed by the French government and several influential international development institutions.

The saga has brought to the fore a poignant lesson on the tribulations that large infrastructure projects, whose implementation

straddles different political regimes, are likely to be subjected to when a new government comes to power.

Press reports this week revealed the new administration has decided to put on hold what is billed as former President Uhuru Kenyatta's most expensive road project. Procured by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) in 2018 and awarded to the French EPC conglomerate, the Vinci Group, the project was negotiated under the private public partnership (PPP) arrangement, which

means that the French company is to build the road and assume ownership and control of the highway for 30 years, while the government will be responsible for collecting tolls from road users. A key condition precedent in the deal is that the government must establish a national tolls fund from where the money to pay the concessionaire will be sourced.

By far the most ambitious attempt by Kenya to deal with the perennial congestion on a key and critical part of the Northern Corridor, the project's economic impor-

ance cannot be gainsaid. KeNHA statistics show that this section of the Northern Corridor carries an estimated 20,000 vehicles a day and traffic has been increasing at an annual rate of four per cent.

The scope of the project will include widening of the road, building a four-kilometre viaduct through Nakuru Town and building multiple interchanges along the 233-km highway.

As things stand, the project, to be funded from various sources, including equity by the Vinci Group, early revenues from section-

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al completion, senior debt from international financiers under the World Bank PRG cover, commercial loans guaranteed by US export credits agencies and local loans, has yet to reach financial closure.

A decision by President Ruto’s administration to halt the project will carry implications for diplomatic relations with the government of France, which fully backs the concession, seeing it as a good opportunity to allow its own contractors to play in a space that has for a long time been dominated by Chinese contractors. If it is halted, there will also be implications on relations with international development financial institutions backing the project.

What has made the stakes even higher is politics. Pundits are attributing the apparent dwindling fortunes of the project to loss of influence by political backers of the French company that was awarded the massive contract after braving a fierce battle with the Portuguese construction conglomerate, the Mota Engil Group. Although the phenomenon is hardly articulated in public, the realities of politics of large infrastructure projects in Kenya often force international investors to tie up with politically-influential local middlemen and relatives of powerful State House insiders to help the foreigners navigate through complex webs of interests. A change in the tenant at State House can change fortunes for even the best conceived project.

In the case of Nairobi-Mau Summit Highway, the political undercurrents during the procurement were so strong that the evaluation process became marred by controversy and allegations of infiltration by politically well-connected middlemen. The French side was said to enjoy the support of a freelance influence agent closely linked to former President Uhuru Kenyatta’s State House, while the Mota Engil Group’s middleman and political backer was an influential son of a former minister in the Mwai Kibaki government.

Correspondence seen by *The Weekly Review* shows that it was the National Treasury’s PPP Unit – the body that primarily oversees transparency and accountability in procurement of all PPP projects – that blew the whistle on the irregular manner in which the tender was awarded to the Vinci Group.

Documents show that during the detailed financial evaluation stages, it was discovered that the French Group had committed a major irregularity in computing income taxes in its bid.

It also emerged that KeNHA decided to shut its eyes to the irregularity flagged by the PPP Unit in the French Consortium’s bid on the grounds that the errors were minor, invoking provisions in the bid documents that allowed the contracting party to ignore and dismiss

minor issues as computational errors.

The correspondence also shows that having decided to ignore the irregularities, KeNHA went ahead and asked Vinci to clarify and correct them. When the documents were presented to the PPP Review Committee, the oversight body flagged out the irregularities in the Vinci bid. In a letter to KeNHA dated November 13, 2018, Treasury principal secretary Dr Kamau Thugge said that his committee had arrived at the conclusion that the irregularities in the Vinci bid were not minor.

Without resolving them, he argued, the irregularities would put the Vinci Group in “negative cash-flows for a significant period of the concession, thus impairing overall deliverability of the project”. Secondly, the PPP review committee said that KeNHA had made a big mistake by allowing Vinci to make a counter offer. According to the review committee, what KeNHA had done amounted to “a modification or addition to the bidder’s proposal”, which was unlawful.

Thirdly, Dr Thugge said that the review committee had found that “acceptance of a counter offer would confer on Vinci an unfair competitive advantage”, contrary to the law. Fourthly, the review committee found that “contrary to the position by KeNHA that the irregularities in tax computation were a minor issue”, tax matters are matters of law, not capable of waivers. At the end of it all, the review committee ordered KeNHA to stop the procurement, reconvene the tender evaluation committee, and direct it to consider and accommodate its findings and recommendations. The oversight body directed KeNHA to submit the revised evaluation report to the Treasury within seven days. However,

with the support of powerful political backers, KeNHA stood its ground and awarded the contract to the Vinci Group, arguing that the difference between the offer by French Group and the Portuguese-led consortium was a minor technical disagreement over tax computation. A case filed at the procurement appeals tribunal by Mote Engil did not see the light of day. Critics charged that Kenya might have gone into a deal where risks and the quantum of contingent liabilities were opaque.

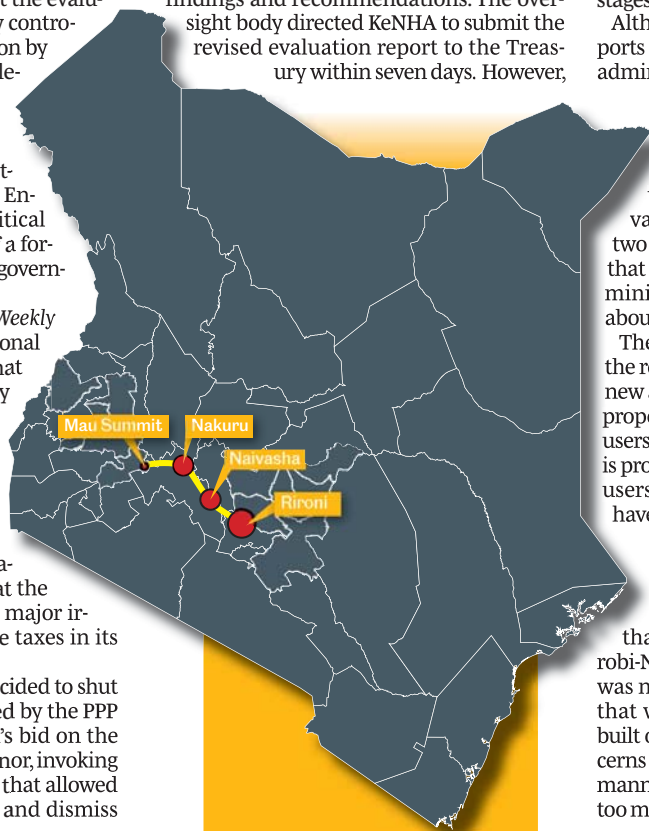
The most controversial part of the concession is the issue of “quarterly charge” – the amount which the concessionaire will be paid by the government on a quarterly basis.

According to the correspondence, the Vinci Group quoted a quarterly charge of Sh5.3 billion, while Mota Engil quoted Sh6.2 billion, implying – on the face of it – that the offer by the French was more competitive. Yet, after computation of taxes due to the government according to the formula that was provided by KRA, quarterly payments translated to Sh4.1 billion for Vinci and Sh3.9 billion for Mota Engil – implying that the Portuguese-led group had a more competitive offer. Apparently, the differences in the calculations arose in application of what is known in technical jargon as the thin capitalisation rule. Because of the opaque way in which the deal was procured, experts maintain that Kenya’s largest highway tolling project was likely to end up in an unstable concession that will require constant renegotiation as risks not flashed out and settled during the procurement and negotiations stages happen in the future.

Although the veracity or not of the press reports about a decision by President Ruto’s new administration to put the project on hold remains an open ended question, interviews conducted by *The Weekly Review* this week with insiders at both the Kenya National Highway Authority and the National Treasury’s Public Private Partnership (PPP) Directorate – the two entities driving the project – confirmed that influential voices in President Ruto’s administration have raised several concerns about the viability of the project.

There are concerns about affordability to the road user with critics of the project in the new administration arguing that the road toll proposed will make it too expensive for road users. There are also concerns that since what is proposed is an open access toll system, road users who do not have the money will not have an alternative route to use.

In a conversation with *The Weekly Review*, an engineer that has been involved in the transaction and a senior official within the new administration argued that a road concession on the critical Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit transport corridor was not the most appropriate for Kenya and that what the corridor needs a new road is built on a green field basis. There are also concerns that the project has been negotiated in a manner where the government will be taking too many risks.



kenya lens

■ THE PCS WILL COORDINATE THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA ACROSS ALL MINISTRIES

THE PRESIDENT'S WINGMAN

Ruto is looking for a non-confrontational person to push his policies, given the strength of the opposition. Interestingly, Mudavadi is liked by both sides

● BY JOHN KAMAU

Only 73 days after appointment of his executive team, President William Ruto's decision to clarify some Cabinet roles was what Musalia Mudavadi might have been looking for. As Prime Cabinet Secretary, Mudavadi's duties seemed to clash with those of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua.

While Mudavadi is the cool gentleman of Kenyan politics, Gachagua shoots from the hip more often than not. Though Mudavadi, on paper, is the third-ranking politician in the Kenya Kwanza administration, the Executive Order No. 1 of 2023 appears to have given him immense powers – almost similar to those enjoyed by former Interior Cabinet Secretary Dr Fred Matiang'i when former President Uhuru Kenyatta gave him roles that would otherwise have been assigned to the DP.

President Ruto now seems to be banking on Mudavadi, one of the most experienced politicians in his Cabinet – thanks to his 34 years in politics – compared with Gachagua's five as Mathira MP, to drive his economic agenda.

More than that, Mudavadi will chair and coordinate National Government's legislative agenda across all ministries and state departments, which will effectively link his office to the party's parliamentary agenda. He will also oversee the implementation of National Government policies, programmes, and projects, giving him some grassroots reach.

How both Gachagua's and Mudavadi's followers interpret the new powers will inform the level of political sanity that will prevail within the coalition, which is slowly settling into its first term. More so, Gachagua is clamouring to become the Mt Kenya kingpin and wants the popu-

lous backyard to rally behind him, much to the chagrin of politicians who fear his meteoric rise.

Political analysts have noted the language of ethnic nationalism and traditionalism within the Mt Kenya region, and the Deputy President has not shied from associating with it. Whether that solidifies the United Democratic Alliance party in central, or his personality, re-

mains to be seen. It is this political balance that President Ruto faced – given that Gachagua is still a neophyte in the Cabinet.

As a former Finance minister for five years, Mudavadi brings more experience than politics. He understands the inner workings of government, having entered President Moi's Cabinet at 30 and survived the backstabbing politics of the Kanu

regime. By banking on Mudavadi, the President is looking for a non-confrontational person to steward his policies, given the strength of the opposition. Interestingly, the PCS is liked by both sides.

Thus, the President is tapping from the experience that Mudavadi has gained over the years – especially when faced with a tottering economy. In January 1993, President Moi faced a similar economic predicament after Kamlesh Pattni's Goldenberg scandal, and donor pressure. He appointed Mudavadi, then 32, to help the Nyayo regime navigate through the crisis.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were on Moi's neck, and all eyes were on Mudavadi to help sail Kenya through its worst economic moment. Mudavadi had donor confidence, and unlike the other Kanu stalwart, he was the least tainted. Moreover, he was part of a group of reformers who believed that Kanu and the economy could be rectified by injection of fresh thoughts, which would unlock budgetary donor support. Inflation had touched an all-time high of 60 per cent.

Mudavadi fully floated the exchange rate, as demanded by donors, and abolished the notorious Forex-C certificates that had been the cash conduit during the Goldenberg saga. However, some payments were made before he settled fully in office, and his critics always blame him for that. He also relaxed fuel, wheat, maize, and sugar price controls, liberalised wheat marketing, and allowed tourist businesses to keep half their foreign exchange earnings. He abolished the pre-shipment finance scheme and import licenses. Kanu hardliners would call Mudavadi and Central Bank Governor Micah Cheserem 'lackeys' of the IMF. By November



As a former Finance minister for five years, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi brings more experience than politics.

kenya lens

1993, Mudavadi had unlocked the donor funding after two years of freeze. Kenya also promised to end corruption in exchange for US\$850 million in aid and \$170 million in the balance of payments support.

One of the tricky moments that Mudavadi faced was his fight with duty-free cartels diverting sugar to the domestic market. He also got hardened, especially as the opposition in 1997 tried to disrupt his budget-reading speech, demanding reforms.

It is this experience that President Ruto would like to tap into and why Mudavadi is the man to watch in this administration. A confessed billionaire, Mudavadi is gaining political momentum in Western Kenya and has edged out Odinga's popularity in some former Orange Democratic Party strongholds. However, this is also creating discomfort in some UDA quarters.

For the last few weeks, a cold war – fought mainly by foot soldiers – appeared to have gathered momentum within the Gachagua and Mudavadi camps of the Kenya Kwanza regime. The Mt Kenya Safari Club retreat was to call the house to order and lessen the emerging tensions.

It is noteworthy that it was the unchecked tensions during Mwai Kibaki's first term between Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party and the National Alliance Party of Kenya over power sharing that broke the Rainbow Coalition. President Ruto has a delicate balance to maintain as both Gachagua and Mudavadi seek to pull as much power to their sides as they can. They both have presidential ambitions, too.

Politically, Mudavadi has the upper hand. He will chair the powerful Principal Secretaries' Committees and supervise the technical monitoring and evaluation of government policies, programmes and projects. In this committee sits those with authority to incur expenditure. The committee is perhaps the most important in the government since these are the drivers of their separate ministries and control all the allocated billions.

For his part, Gachagua has been given the duties of the defunct Ministry of Devolution and will coordinate inter-governmental relations between the National and County governments. He will also chair Cabinet committee meetings and coordinate international development partnerships and the new Nairobi River Commission. The President has also thrown him the troubled coffee sector.

After a series of political goofs, Mudavadi's comeback via the Kenya Kwanza coalition has paid more dividends than he perhaps bargained for. It is terrain he had known since February 1989, when his powerful father, Moses Mudavadi, passed on.

Five years earlier, Mudavadi had graduated from the University of Nairobi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Land Economics and was contented with his career as a land valuer. His father was a powerful Kanu secretary-general and President Moi's Minister for Local Government and Physical Planning. Moi and senior Mudavadi had known each other since 1949 –



From right: President William Ruto, Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua during their recent retreat at the Fairmont Mt Kenya Safari Club in Nanyuki. FILE | NATION

and it was the older Mudavadi, then an education officer, who convinced Moi to leave Tam-

US\$850 MILLION

Kenya also promised to end corruption in exchange for US\$850 million in aid and \$170 million in the balance of payments support. One of the tricky moments that Mudavadi faced was his fight with duty-free cartels diverting sugar to the domestic market.

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bach African School and join politics. At this father's memorial service held at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church on Valley Road, Musalia had emerged as the family spokesperson. So it was not unexpected that the Maragoli elders called a press conference a week after the funeral and endorsed him to take over the Sabatia seat. He was 29. Soon, veterans, including former MP Peter Kibisu, joined the chorus, which was endorsed by the Kanu Kakamega branch under the Minister of State, Burudi Nabwera. On March 23, 1989, Musalia was elected to Parliament unopposed.

With that, Musalia enjoyed a smooth entry into politics – and a meteoric rise, too. Two months later, during the May 1, 1989 Cabinet reshuffle that followed the resignation of Dr Josephat Karanja as Vice-President and his replacement with Prof George Saitoti, President Moi appointed Musalia as his minister for Supplies and Marketing. He had only been a back-bencher for two months.

Mudavadi has played politics of survival, too, but his soft approach has made him a victim of betrayal even in his Western backyard. He has also made personal political blunders. However, the new assignments and prominent roles are more about his character and history. President Ruto seems to trust him.

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the limelight



A pedestrian holding an umbrella walks past Waterstones' flagship Piccadilly bookshop advertising the release of 'Spare' by Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, in London, on January 10. After months of anticipation and a sustained publicity blitz, Prince Harry's autobiography finally went on sale in his native UK, threatening more embarrassment for the royal family. PHOTO | AFP



A Rohingya refugee has a swab sample taken to be tested for the Covid-19 coronavirus at a temporary shelter in Ladong, Indonesia's Aceh Province, on January 9. PHOTO | AFP



Internally displaced people travel on a tractor trolley with their belongings near a makeshift camp in the flood-hit area of Dera Allah Yar in Pakistan's Jaffarabad District on January 9. The UN has called for "massive investments" to help Pakistan recover from last year's devastating floods. PHOTO | AFP



Nicholas Ireri Kamwende, Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations (left) and Director-General Mohamed Amin (centre) escort US ambassador to Kenya Meg Whitman after addressing journalists at DCI Headquarters on January 12. She announced a \$10m bounty on the wanted terror mastermind of the 2019 DusitD2 complex attack that left 21 people dead. SILA KIPLAGAT | NATION



Bolivian biker Daniel Jager Nosiglia competes during the Stage 10 of the Dakar 2023, between Haradh and Shaybah, Saudi Arabia, on January 11. PHOTO | AFP



An aerial view of cars driving through a flooded roadway in Planada, California on January 10. PHOTO | AFP



Demonstrators protest outside the French embassy in Iran's capital, Tehran, on January 11 against cartoons depicting Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Khamenei published by French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. PHOTO | AFP

The
Arena



LAUGH OUT LOUD!

Content creator Muchiri Mike's funny and relatable TikTok videos have earned him popularity and good money

OPEN SPACE

Youth hold key to Africa's development potential

Demographic shift: This is clearly the next frontier for growth, information technology and consumer marketing

• BY SARUNI LEMARGEROI

When looking at Africa's future, experts often cite the continent's large, growing young population as an asset. The youngest continent in the world is undoubtedly Africa. For one thing, half the continent is under the age of 20 and all 10 of the world's youngest countries are in Africa. It counts 40 per cent of its population as under the age of 15 and 20 per cent between the ages of 15 and 24. We would like to think that these are hopeful numbers, reflecting a powerful generation that is shaping the continent's future. Young African leadership brings more than just political emancipation; it represents an opportunity to finally implement the many solutions we have talked about and indeed written about.

The youth are Africa's greatest asset and the continent must invest in them and prepare them for the world. A university degree today does not offer a pass to the job market. In fact, more than 50 per cent of African youth are seeking jobs. They are educated, thoughtful and aspirational, but that does not make the job market any less forgiving.

By 2030, young Africans are expected to make up 42 per cent of the world's youth and account for 75 per cent of those under age 35 in Africa. With such a large population of young people, inclusive development policies and programmes are critical now more than ever. However, harnessing the demographic dividend and expanding opportunities for young people — to the benefit of all Africans — will require sound data and evidence on the status of African youth.

These youth represent a powerful workforce for the next several decades. Similarly, the demographic dividend suggests a pool of future leaders, from local communities to the national level. The young population needs jobs and a helping hand for them to integrate into professional life. Will Africa properly harness the incredible potential of its people?

With Africa's youth population projected to double by 2050, the need for innovative

and sustainable ways to support youth employment only continues to grow in importance. More than half of the world's top 10 growing economies are in Africa. The demographic shift presents the opportunity to lead and influence innovations that will have global significance. Africa will only be able to do that if its young people can lead economic development and contribute meaningfully to their societies.

While the challenge is daunting, it has inspired many of Africa's creative and diligent young people to take charge of their own futures, coming up with innovative solutions to keep themselves employed and actively engaged. Africa's young, emerging leadership is made up of people who have a passion and vision for the continent. Harnessed well, this potential will ensure that African countries benefit from an array of human capital that can take the continent forward.

Africa is the next frontier for development, technology advancement and consumer marketing. This is mostly due to its historically unprecedented youth bulge, which is not only the world's largest youth population, but also predicted to be its longest-lasting one.

Current leaders have a responsibility to engage and cultivate Africa's youth for active leadership. It is incumbent upon the older generation to ensure that young people receive quality education and practical skills, and that they develop character and a commitment to Africa's shared future. In time, these young leaders will use their expertise and experiences to nurture the next generation.

Consequently, training young people in entrepreneurship — how to create and manage businesses — so that their creativity and efforts will bear fruit is central not only to improving individual lives, but for bolstering the entire region's economic gains.

Mr Lemargeroi is a 2019 Mandela Washington Fellow. lemargeroi@gmail.com
Any feedback on topical issues? We would like to hear from you. Send your views to: weeklyreview@ke.nationmedia.com

■ MIND SPEAK



Leslie Osale

The Higher Education Loans Board has helped me since I joined the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I use it to pay my tuition fees and upkeep. Without it, I would very likely have dropped out of university. I do not support abolishment of the fund. It will affect many bright and needy students pursuing higher education.

— Mr Osale is a student at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology



Annabelle Apondi

Comrades demand proper explanation from the national government on how it plans to go about the issue in a way that will not deny learners who want to pursue higher education a chance at fulfilling their dreams. Our main purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one, and therefore no one should deny students this inherent right.

— Ms Apondi is a student at Multimedia University



Faith Sudi

The government's move to establish the National Skill and Funding Council is hazy. As a beneficiary of Helb, I'm not sure whether I'll have to pay the principal plus interest. The specifics, such as which group will benefit from the move, are uncertain. Helb has really helped to make university life manageable.

— Ms Sudi is a student at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology



Brenda Gitonga

The plan to bring together the three funds will leave many in confusion because they are not sure of the end result. A majority of students were, and are, using Helb for tuition and upkeep. *Kuinama*, which means to sleep hungry, has been a common word in universities, even with Helb funds.

— Ms Gitonga is a student at Multimedia University

MY TAKE



• BY WAGA ODONGO

Kenya recently came up with a Bill that seeks to tax owners of digital currencies. The Capital Markets (Amendment) Bill, 2022 seeks to tax exchanges and wallets with transaction charges like the excise duty tax paid with each bank transaction. The Bill will also seek to collect capital gains taxes when digital assets are sold. The Bill would require persons owning or dealing in digital currencies to self-report their dealings to the Capital Markets Authority for tax purposes.

A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade (UNCTAD) earlier in the year estimated that four million Kenyans own cryptocurrencies, the highest percentage ownership on the continent. Trade in exchanges is brisk and at its peak; with bitcoin was ramping upwards, some exchanges were trading in Sh10 billion worth of assets a week.

Money has already evolved from atoms and now is firmly in bits. Our institutions that provide and regulate money must evolve with it. The question of how to regulate digital assets is a vexing one and how these laws will be implemented will lead to either a thriving ecosystem that is used by millions or, if bungled, could kill the industry stone dead.

The first issue the lawmakers need to consider is how to classify the different types of assets. We are dealing with several thousand coins, and anyone with a little bit of programming knowledge can create a currency in under an hour. The European Union, which is further along the regulation process, classifies tokens into four: assets, utility tokens, stable coins and electronic money. While you can potentially make money from an asset like Bitcoin's price going up, you wouldn't be able to take advantage of increase in prices in a stablecoin because its price might

MAKING SENSE OF CRYPTO

Uncharted territory: Programmable money is different from anything that regulators have ever dealt with. Regulating it would be a challenge



be pegged to a real-world asset whose price does not fluctuate. A utility token, meanwhile, might be more or less useless outside its chain as FTX's token FTT showed. So, it would be a category error to treat and therefore tax a utility token as an asset.

We then need to decide which assets attract capital gains tax and which ones get withholding tax.

Another consideration is how to handle issues surrounding custodial services of digital assets. Should the keys of exchanges that operate locally be domiciled in the country? Doing so is important because it would allow the government to protect users in cases of exchanges collapsing.

One way to solve this is to require either keys to be stored locally or some sort of fractional reserve of the assets in question kept in custody by a government body. How this will be implemented in Kenya is anyone's guess.

Call me a cynic but if you have

the 64-character key that can transfer billions of shillings from a cold wallet anonymously to anyone you would not survive a day in Nairobi. The most famous example of the quandary over custodial services involves the failed Canadian exchange, Quadriga. The owner died while on holiday in India with the keys being in his sole possession. The exchange ended up insolvent as a result since no one could move the assets.

How exactly to capture when assets were sold will also be important if we are to calculate the tax. Since a lot of transactions in an exchange do not occur on the main chain of the digital asset, there is concern that exact moments when assets sold will be fudged to coincide with double digit losses. They would be fools not to do so since it would be nearly impossible to catch them lying. This is perhaps why the bill will rely on self-reporting – it's too difficult to determine transaction without

full cooperation of exchanges.

The entire system as currently proposed would be based on the kindness and honesty of the Kenyan public since most exchanges would lose credibility if they were perceived as helping governments collect taxes. Exchanges tend to be extremely secretive with user data.

A further question to consider would be where balances of stable coins are held. Should they be held in the Central Bank as with normal banks?

This would undoubtedly help in serving as proof of reserves held. Management of locally available stable coins would be a nightmare for international exchanges as they could be arbitrarily seized. Answering this question is important as currently the market with the highest volume is not bitcoin in several exchanges; it is the stablecoin market. For many Kenyans, digital currencies are a response to what they perceive as mismanagement of the shilling by the CBK rather than taking a gamble at making a fortune.

If you require all users trading locally to have a KRA PIN, you would disenfranchise a large section of the market. Such a move would make many people opt to use virtual private networks to obscure their locations. The biggest sellers on the peer-to-peer markets locally are not Kenyans. This would also make digital currencies more expensive in Kenya, which would only advantage exchanges and the very rich, who can move money between jurisdictions.

The truth is that programmable money is very different from anything that either the market regulators or central banks have ever dealt with. Regulating it would be a challenge. My free advice to Parliament is to sit back, ignore the industry and wait for Europe, Singapore and America to come up with their regulations, then borrow good ideas.

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MAKING MONEY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

• BY EDDY ASHIOYA

Fun fact: Muchiri Mike is on Facebook. Who? That TikTok guy, the one who plays African mums (Mama Mike), African teachers, and any other roleplaying, really. You know the one.

But there in the background is a lurking evil: that Muchiri Mike (never ‘Mike Muchiri’, or ‘Mike’) is about to reach the stacked-at-check-out level of fame. This is not entirely good news to his consecrated fans, including me, who have admired his content for years but hoarded it as something sacred. We were a tiny cult, but we liked our exclusivity. Muchiri Mike seemed to like it too; he was never in a hurry to be on every popular platform, just a boy doing his thing, and having fun while at it.

Now? Everyone wants a bit of Muchiri Mike. Crucial to his success has been the embracing of his content on TikTok, where pop culture and current events get memed into absurdity. His latest clip (as at the time of publishing this article), has in under a month garnered millions of likes (3.9 million if we are being pedantic) and hundreds of copycats and parodies.

In it, he pretends to be (surprise, surprise!) an old woman who is receiving those calls you might also have received, the scammers who tell you they have sent you money mistakenly. You root for him as he leads them through a maze, makes sure they jump hoops, and beats them at their own game while leaving us, his captive audience, in stitches.

That’s Muchiri Mike for you. He is a lanky, 24-year-old with impish charm who speaks with a soft boy-from-the-mountain accent. But what’s it really like to be Muchiri Mike? “It’s amazing. Sometimes I sit back and envy people who are not me. First, Muchiri Mike is very talented. Very good looking. I love the stage my life is at. It feels awesome to be Muchiri Mike.”

And to think that he has been on TikTok for only one year and some change! The last born in a family of four (three brothers, one sister), recalls that his journey to fame began earlier than TikTok. “I started content creation on Facebook and Instagram. Facebook was my launchpad and it’s where I began getting massive views.”

His average 300K+ views, even then, were an outlier. TikTok winning the race was a small sign of a big shift — he blew up on the platform earlier this year. “Most of my clients now want me to post on TikTok. And sometimes Instagram.” His star may not have been born there, but it had been christened there.

As with most first times, Muchiri Mike’s first video on TikTok flopped. It was also his first time playing the female characters that have taken to him like a moth to light. But at the back of his mind, a curious case of cognitive dissonance was staging a show: “I was a bit hesitant. You know, what would people think? It was very cringe-worthy. Very.” The average number of views he got on TikTok was 500 — which is still higher than for the everyman out here — but that prompted him to quit, albeit only for a short while. He was back in March 2021. TikTok is now his most popular platform,

THAT’S HILARIOUS!

Muchiri Mike’s humourous, relatable TikTok content has rocketed him to fame and is bringing in the fortune



Mike Muchiri is a TikTok content creator and comedian, popularly known for his skit role, ‘Mama Mike’. He won the 2022 Best Influencer of the Year award. EDDY ASHIOYA | NATION

with the majority of people identifying him from it. TikTok sells because its targeted content and loose ties do not rely on your friends to keep you engaged and entertained but rather on “recommendation”— which makes it very easy to become popular on the platform.

His popularity, less of a debate and more of a reflection, draws from being an everyday bro who turns the drudgery of daily life into ‘relatable’ videos. Plus, as his legion of female fans will attest, it doesn’t hurt that Muchiri Mike is conventionally handsome, with an easy smile. Does he know he is a distraction to a lot of people with goldfish memory – and I am not speaking just for myself? He crackles and I rephrase the question: Why do people enjoy his content so much? “Probably because everyone grew up with that typical African mother. Maybe in my alternate life, I was a Kenyan teacher or mother. But I also love to think I am a very observant person.”

He yanks us back to high school, where he recalls doing impressions of teachers, especially female teachers. If you pull the string further, you loosen more memories, of him in primary school, cracking jokes, a happy-go-lucky kind of kid, the one you don’t want to stand next to when the principal is reading you the riot act.

His rarefied talent is putting bread on the table. “I have recently collaborated with Safaricom to market the M-Pesa App.” Don’t be fooled, though; it’s not only Safaricom. His Rolodex of clients include Netflix (to market a South African show called *Savage Beauty*), Juicy Fruit, Baygon, IEBC, Coca Cola (to market the FIFA World Cup) among others.

He uses the word collaboration rather than ‘working for or with’. Why? “When a client tells me what they want I give them a draft and we decide what works for both of our audiences. It’s co-sharing and co-creating.”

Recently, he co-starred in *Too Early for Birds*, a stage play at Loresho’s Jain Bhavan theatre. “Queen Gathoni, who is one of the proprietors of the show, was working with me on a certain project. She told me what she was doing (about the play) and wanted me on board.”

But it wasn’t always like this. The first gig he ever got was in 2017— a year after starting content creation. “I collaborated with a brand and the intermediary agency took quite its sweet time to pay me.” The paycheck then was a cool Shs100,000. The rates, needless to say, have gone up. Exponentially.”

Fame, he says, has massively affected his social life. Or lack thereof. He tells me he can’t walk down the street without someone asking for a picture. Or a joke? He chuckles. “People think I am very bubbly but they could be wrong. If they meet me out there and get what they don’t expect, you know, it’s an issue.” He misses the days when he could go somewhere without a cap or a mask. Just to be normal, a man about town. But that’s one of the Jekyll and Hyde aspects of fame: you cannot be unfamous. Infamous, maybe; unfamous, never.

“I am an ambivert. I am very comfortable being bubbly when I am around people I know. In new environments, I am extremely poor socially.” People expect him to be loud and out there. But he is pretty calm and relaxed. Those who recoil from his public persona would be distressed to learn that in person, he is funny, entertaining and immensely affable.

But what has fame given him? “There are so many advantages of being famous.” He speaks of the brands he has collaborated with, the people he has interacted with and the money that has lined his pockets. He has moved out, settled down and recently bought a car. “Fame has definitely come with the goodies.

The Biomedical Science graduate from Daystar University now identifies as a full-time content creator. It takes him half a day to get his content done.

“Shooting doesn’t take me long.” It doesn’t, of course, when you are a genius, a precocious gift to the verge of pretentiousness, a man with a tabola of talents like himself. “It’s the editing that takes the work.”

I wonder whether he sometimes feels that he has been boxed and typecast as a particular kind of content creator, the comedian-cum-role-player.



A WORSHIP LEADER

Muchiri Mike was voted the Wowzi Best Influencer of the Year 2022 by Digital Media Awards Kenya.

He started content creation in mid-2017, making relatable skits, mainly to bring back childhood memories and escapades.

He has over 300K+ followers across his platforms.

Muchiri Mike is also a worship leader, corporate MC and gospel singer.

Actually, Muchiri Mike considers himself more of a musician than a content creator. “In the foreseeable future, I will release a gospel EP (extended play) with seven or eight songs. It’s a project I have been working on since the beginning of this year. One of my major goals for 2023 is to get serious about my music.”

He mentions God plenty of times in our conversations. He grew up in a staunch Christian family. God was ever present at the dinner table, the de facto head of the family. Sundays growing up were typical of many African homes. “Sundays were for church. If you didn’t want to go, you got the typical Kenyan mom response, ‘Toka basi nifunge nyumba yangu’ (Get out; let me lock my house). He hated the early Sunday mornings but really loved the praise and worship in church.

Who, therefore, is God to him? “God is God to me. I believe in God. And because of personal experiences, I have had to seek God personally and define him in my own terms.” I am not an angel, he says, it is easy to disappoint God. “At the end of the day, it’s really about your relationship and intimacy with God.”

He doesn’t want to turn preachy, he says. But it’s prudent to hear him out. Nobody knows your story better than you do, better than God does. He is searching the crevices of his mind, supplicating to his faith: what God could be for him. What he could be for God.

What do his parents think of his content? “They are extremely supportive. In fact, my dad posts some of my videos on his WhatsApp status and I am like, okay, where did you get that?” If his life was a film, who would play him? “My sister knows me inside out. She could re-enact my scenes exactly as they are. Only she can play me.”

His work, it seems, is to make people happy. But when was the last time he had that snorty, gut-punch stomach laugh? “It’s been a while. Probably when we were rehearsing for *Too Early for Birds* with Esther (Kazungu). That was the last time I genuinely laughed.”

Has his definition of money changed? He speaks of how his family experienced a period of plenty followed by an extended period of lack. The Joseph Effect — you know, the seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine in the Book of Genesis. “Unfortunately, I was born in the season of lack. My siblings had really enjoyed the money. The moment I was born, things changed and we had to adjust to the new life.”

That affected how he interacts with money. He remembers how, initially, he would over-budget and account for each and every shilling. “Now I am a responsible spender, but I also don’t worry too much about money.” However, he insists I should write that he is not getting millions. It’s only that he is comfortable, despite his parents thinking he is rich. “I am still a child. Their child! I am still children!” Not only does he say funny things, he says things funny.

At times like this you see his dogged talent, the thing that has put him on that stage, one of his remarkable characteristics, which is how unremarkable he is, a normal guy from a normal village who just happens to be this excruciatingly blessed and funny.

What’s the secret? Is he smart or just lucky? “I am 100 per cent smart. That, and God.”

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TOURS AND TRAVELS

● BY SINDA MATIKO

Having spent an entire night jabbering with a guard in town for lack of bus fare to go back home after a hard day's work, Mark Steve Nuguti knows only too well what it is like to go hungry in Nairobi.

"Nairobi ni shamba la mawe (literally, Nairobi is a farm full of rocks), my brother. You have to have a heart of steel to survive in this city," he says with a mischievous smile when we meet up at his office situated on the fourth floor of Ngong Lane Plaza.

At the time when he couldn't make it home, he lived in Githurai 45 informal settlement on the outskirts of the city and commuted to town daily looking for white collar jobs, and sometimes blue collar jobs too.

"I graduated in 2010 from the Mount Kenya University in Thika, where I pursued a course in Tourism Management. Being a jobless graduate in this city can be unforgiving. Those were the most difficult years of my life," he recalls.

Now, the 32-year-old is among the youngest millionaires in Kenya. Last year, he was feted in the United Arab Emirates and presented with the Most Influential Youth Leader of the Year Award during the Pan-African Youth Leadership Foundation Global Summit in Dubai.

"It was fulfilling and honouring to be presented the award by His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Majid Al Muall and to be counted among 50 most influential leaders in the world," says Steve.

Soft spoken and articulate, Steve is a workaholic. He no longer sleeps hungry, not unless he wants to, he wears what he wants and drives the best of cars. Every star appears to be aligned for him.

He has built an empire for himself and wants to help fellow youth. Once an employee, Steve is now an employer of 15 youthful professionals at his tours, travel and events company, Spoton Vacation, founded two years ago.

"The oldest of my employees is 35 years old and the majority are women in their 20s. My intention is to nurture and help them in the best way I can in this industry," Steve insists he will not fight to retain even the best of his staff should they want to leave Spoton Vacation for other ventures.

"What will be the point of nurturing someone if you can't allow growth in their careers. We need to create as many young millionaires as we possibly can. It's good for society," he explains.

His journey in the tourism industry began 15 years ago, started as a tour sales consultant then shifting to marketing and finally branding. He worked in four tourism agencies before joining Bonfire Adventure, where he was named Best Manager of the Year several times. He credits himself with making Bonfire Adventures, owned by Susan and Simon Kabu and now his competitors, a popular brand through his marketing strategies.

"I did a lot of work when I was there and I

MINTING MILLIONS FROM TOURISM

Recognised as one of the most influential youth leaders in the world, Steve Nuguti is building a successful travel business and giving young people opportunities to grow in the industry



Mark Steve, Founder and CEO of Spoton Vacation. PHOTO TOMAS MATIKO



Holiday makers at the Leopard Beach Resort in Diani, Kwale, on December 22, 2022. By the end of 2022, Spoton Vacation had taken over 1,000 clients to various local and international destinations, while a further 400 paid top dollar for cruise adventures in Italy, France and Belgium. SIAGO CECE | NATION

am sure the proprietors can attest to that. I left after five years when the company was at its peak to start something of my own. Ten years of experience was good enough to make me a CEO,"Nuguti says, laughing.

Setting up Spoton was an arduous undertaking. But Steve was driven by his dream to become a CEO; there was no turning back.

"I was ready to go it alone. I knew how to manoeuvre the business, thanks to the experience I had gained. As for starting capital, I had saved enough millions over the years for such a large undertaking."

When Spoton began operation, Mark relied

mostly on the network of clients he had handled before and created a bond with. "The first year wasn't about making profit but building the business. I started by employing one person and added another based on demand. My intention is to employ as many as I can."

Despite being in his third year of operation, and with a turnover in the millions, Steve maintains that the business is still at infancy stage. "The money goes back to building the business, so I don't see it as profit just yet. Profit is a conversation we might have perhaps in five years' time," he laughs again.

By the end of 2022, Spoton Vacation had tak-

en over 1,000 clients to various local and international destinations, while a further 400 paid top dollar for cruise adventures in Italy, France and Belgium. "We are opening this space to every Kenyan. We have something for everyone. Vacations are not for the rich only; that's a myth we at Spoton are debunking. We offer packages for as little as Sh2,000 to exotic places and staycations."

His favorite destination? "That's a tough one to answer," he replies. "I have travelled the world and there are countless beautiful destinations, but if I am forced to pick, I will say Kenya and Morocco."

The 911 SIDE
With John Nyaganjyana
jnyaga@ke.nationmedia.com



WOMAN POWER

DR WANJIKU KAMALI-RUTENBERG IS ONE OF FOUR KENYAN WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN NAMED AMONG 100 MOST REPUTABLE AFRICANS IN THE CONTINENT BY REPUTATION POLL INTERNATIONAL, A GLOBAL REPUTATION FIRM. THE OTHERS ARE MARTHA KOOME, MARTHA KARUA AND AMINA MOHAMED. THEY WERE NAMED ALONGSIDE PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO AND PATRICK NJOROGE, GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF KENYA. THEY CONSTITUTE A CLIQUE OF WELL-THOUGHT INDIVIDUALS DRAWN FROM GOVERNANCE, ENTERTAINMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, EDUCATION, AND BUSINESS SECTORS. SHE FOUNDED AKILI DADA, AN AWARD-WINNING LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR THAT INVESTS IN HIGH-ACHIEVING YOUNG WOMEN FROM UNDER-RESOURCED FAMILIES, WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT DRIVING CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

STAR OF THE WEEK



AFRICA'S FASTEST MAN FERDINAND OMANYALA HAS GRADUATED AS A POLICE OFFICER ALONGSIDE 2,880 OTHER OFFICERS IN A CEREMONY PRESIDED OVER BY PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO AT THE NATIONAL POLICE COLLEGE IN KIGANJO, NYERI COUNTY ON JANUARY 10, 2023. OMANYALA, WHO ROSE TO FAME IN 2021 AFTER BREAKING THE AFRICAN 100M RECORD, JOINED THE POLICE SERVICE IN 2022 ON THE INVITE OF FORMER INSPECTOR GENERAL HILLARY MUTYAMBAI. OMANYALA WILL NOW BE ALLOWED TO REPRESENT THE SECURITY FORCES IN FUTURE ATHLETICS COMPETITIONS. WE SALLUTE YOU, OFFICER OMANYALA!

opinion



■ The President should not have so much power as to reject the people's choices on a whim

Keep political rejects out of the Cabinet

As I watched the pictures from the Cabinet and governors' rendezvous in Nanyuki, I could not help but wonder what the power of the people is vis-à-vis the fiat of the President. Among President William Ruto's ministers are people who the electorate rejected at the ballot box but were later appointed to the Cabinet.

And there are Cabinet Secretaries whom the electorate voted for to be their representatives in the twin Houses of Parliament but whom the President appointed to the Executive. This, therefore, sent the electors back to the ballot box to choose some other people to be their representatives in the Legislature.

The people at the ballot box say they do not want certain people to be Members of Parliament. That is, they do not want them to represent them, to oversight the government or to make laws.

Their application fails, but the President says fair enough, be that as it may, I am taking them to the Executive. Whom the people reject, the President appoints.

Then, the people, exercising the power of the ballot that enables them to hire and fire, appoint their reps to the Legislature, but the President intervenes again.

He decides the people have not chosen the right people to make laws for them and to keep government accountable. So he appoints these to the Executive to execute or implement what the Legislature passes.

So, whom the people choose, the President rejects.

Whom the populace says is fit to keep the



**KWENDO
OPANGA**

government accountable, the President says should, instead, be held accountable and so, please, now choose the right person to hold government to account. And, please, do it on your account; yes, from your purse, thank you very much.

Remember something: the people whom the electorate rejected are the President's allies, cronies and assorted influencers. And the people the electorate elected are also the President's allies, cronies and assorted influencers. Something else, what does the Constitution say about constitution of the Cabinet? That its members shall not be Members of Parliament.

This, for many of us, meant CSs shall not be politicians. For many of us, it meant the Cabinet shall be made up of technocrats. And for many of us this meant that politics would be taken out of the Cabinet and serving the people, delivering on election pledges and manifestos would be the preoccupation of the government.

At first, that is in 2013, it appeared that was the case.

They dressed alike. The President and Deputy President presented Kenyans with a Cab-

net of technocrats. But within days, politicians were named CSs, with Ruto, then DP, declaring that there would be only two politicians in the Cabinet, that is he and the President.

That meant the politicians named CSs, namely Charity Ngilu and Najib Balala, would quit politics and turn technocrats.

Fat chance. Next came Mwangi Kiunjuri and the buzz was that the President and DP were finding it difficult to run government without politicians to counter the opposition that was holding their feet to the fire of accountability.

In 2018, there was still some pretence. The Building Bridges Initiative, a political vehicle co-owned by then President Kenyatta and opposition figurehead Raila Odinga, called for changes to the Constitution to, among other things, allow for constitution of the Cabinet from among MPs.

This Cabinet is not made up of politicians because the politicians resigned from political posts. This Cabinet is made up of politicians because the politicians had lost political contests before they were made CSs. Nonsense.

The President should not have so much power as to reject the people's choices on a whim.

opinion

■ LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY ACT

EACC needs more bite than bark to fight graft



MACHARIA
GAITHO

For these and other jokes, please visit eacc.go.ke. That was the first thing that came to mind on learning that the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission is pushing for a law to make it mandatory that all candidates for employment in the public service pass integrity tests.

Unless EACC chief executive Twalib Mbarak (inset), chairman Archbishop Eliud Wabukala and fellow commissioners have just landed from Mars, they will know that such a proposal at this time stands a snowball's chance in hell of winning passage in a legislature controlled by the Kenya Kwanza alliance.

The EACC may mean well, but it is obvious they did not consult before proposing a role in vetting of candidates for public service appointments.

Even before the proposed amendments to the Leadership and Integrity Act have been formally tabled, it is instructive that National Assembly Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah is already dismissing them.

Ichung'wah, the MP for Kikuyu, is a faithful devotee of the Kenya Kwanza administration who long ago forgot that he is a member of the Legislature, an independent arm of government supposed to provide oversight over the government.

He sees himself as both an over-enthusiastic party cadre and also as a member of the Executive. He will, without question, parrot the straight and narrow party path, and that is a path where a record of ethical failings, corruption charges and other criminal offenses is an absolute advantage for one seeking public office.

The EACC, for the record, has performed fairly well in fighting corruption, at least compared to the other official agencies in the same arena. It never got caught up in the scandalous pursuit of political prosecutions that have so disgraced the Directorate of Criminal Investigations and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions.

It has not, unlike the other two agencies, had to cower to political pressure following the change of regime to withdraw a whole litany of criminal charges against party faithful that had been filed without evidence at service of the previous regime.

But the anti-graft agency has also been a toothless bulldog. It is the official agency

established by law to prosecute the fight against corruption, but sat mute as its turf was invaded by the DCI and the DPP, who were busy pursuing politically-motivated prosecutions.

The EACC has also been helpless in enforcing both the Leadership and Integrity Act and Chapter 6 of the Constitution on Leadership and Integrity.

In 2013, when it was decided that Chapter 6 could be ignored so that Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto could stand for President and Deputy President despite being under indictment for Crimes Against Humanity before the International Criminal Court, the EACC could do zero.

Since then, it has become the norm that individuals under investigation or facing criminal charges can run for political office without hindrance.

They can also be appointed to the Cabinet, Judiciary, Constitutional Commissions, Statutory Bodies, State Corporations and other public offices despite the most sordid records.

There is no way the Kenya Kwanza government will allow passage of a law that would decimate maybe three-quarters of the present cabinet and holders of other senior public offices.

The very term 'Integrity' is a dirty and threatening word under the present administration, which is a child of the previous Jubilee regime, and which in turn



There is no way the Kenya Kwanza government will allow passage of a law that would decimate maybe three-quarters of the present cabinet and holders of other senior public offices. The very term 'Integrity' is a dirty and threatening word under the present administration, which is a child of the previous Jubilee regime and which in turn was successor to the Kanu monolith that saw government as a looting machine.

was successor to the Kanu monolith that saw government as a looting machine.

The EACC tried to enforce the Integrity Act during clearance of candidates for the 2022 General Election and failed dismally.

It remained mute when the Ruto government nominated for appointment to public office a record number of individuals facing serious ethical questions. Not a word, not a whimper, not the slightest sign of protest.

The new proposals, therefore, are not only time-barred, but a hopeless cause given that a legislature controlled by Kenya Kwanza will dismiss them with contempt.

They will never get past the relevant departmental committee and will never be formally tabled before the House for debate and consideration. If, by any slight chance, the amendments pass muster at committee, the end product will be so diluted that it will be useless for all practical purposes.

That does not mean, however, that they should be withdrawn.

Even if it knows that prospects of passage are dim, the EACC can move with aggression to extend the debate beyond Parliament.

It can widely publicise the integrity proposals and elevate the debate to public fora beyond the closed backrooms of Parliament.

If citizens can come out loudly and forcefully in support of moves to block thieves and other tainted characters from more opportunities to steal from the public purse, the Kenya Kwanza government will be forced to pay heed.

All that is needed is to make it a question of who is fighting corruption, and who is impeding the war against graft.

This might be the time to force government leaders and parliamentarians to show whether they stand for integrity, ethic and morality in leadership, or for unchecked looting, destruction of public institutions, economic sabotage and impoverishment of the people.

If Twalib Mbarak and his team are serious, they will take off the gloves and fearlessly push their proposals as do or die efforts in the fight against institutionalised corruption.

Even if they fail, they will have made their mark, instigated public debate and put the defenders and promoters of wanton graft in the spotlight.

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kenya lens

■ SUCCESSION POLITICS

● BY OSCAR OBONYO

The position of Deputy President, they say, is a heartbeat away from the presidency. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka rues the day former Head of Civil Service Francis Kimemia and then President Mwai Kibaki's private secretary and adviser, Nick Wanjohi, blew up his chances of ascending to the big seat.

Even as he vows to make up for the lost opportunity, the rise of President William Ruto, who successfully transitioned from the position of DP four months ago, is a constant sore reminder of the Wiper party leader's political missteps, or misfortunes.

Ruto partly achieved his feat by kicking off premature campaigns countrywide against the wishes of his boss, Uhuru Kenyatta. Little wonder, then, that Musyoka, a confessed admirer of Ruto's campaign approach, wants to hit the ground running early.

His lieutenants, including Senate Minority Leader Enoch Wambua, are emphatic that for the Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya coalition party to take over the reins of power in 2027, "we must do what Ruto did. We must begin our campaigns like yesterday".

In a recent interview with NTV's Zainab Ismail, Musyoka declared that he is no longer a fool, a clear reference to his support of Raila Odinga's presidential bids in 2013, 2017 and 2022. "No longer a fool" amounts to breaking away from Odinga's political stranglehold or asking the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) leader to instead support Kalonzo's 2027 presidential bid.

In the same context, getting politically wiser implies reversing the past ill fortunes and grabbing opportunities, such the one presented to Musyoka while he was V-P. Revisiting the Kibaki succession plot, Musyoka narrated in an exclusive interview how powerful forces at State House bullied and elbowed him out of the presidential race.

Kibaki's former principal assistant in the grand coalition government singles out an incident in Machakos Town in 2012, when the President publicly endorsed him as his preferred successor. Then Government Spokesman

NOBODY'S FOOL, NOT ANY MORE

Kalonzo Musyoka is determined to go for the Presidency in 2027 after playing second fiddle to Raila in three past General Elections

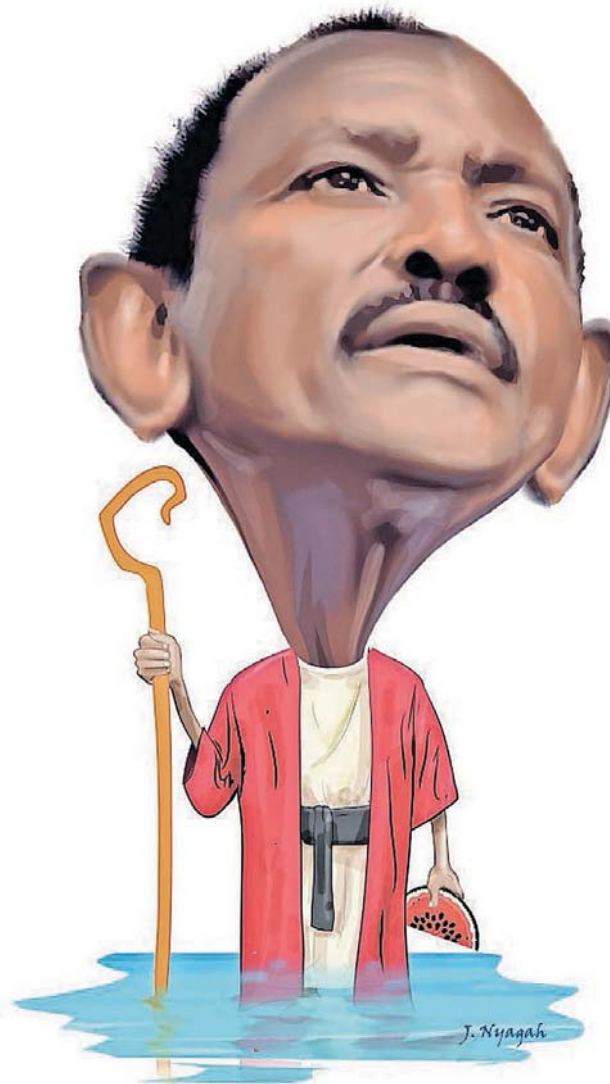
(and now Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs) Dr Alfred Mutua, even dispatched alerts to newsrooms to that effect. However, by the time the President's convoy arrived in Kitui, Kalonzo's home county, where Kibaki was chief guest at the national tree planting day, another alert reversing Mutua's had been sent to newsrooms. Kalonzo attributes the move to behind-the-scenes machinations of some Mt Kenya region political operatives who prevailed upon then Head of the Presidential Press Service Isaiah Kabira to renounce Mutua's statement.

The former VP says it became even clearer to him that he was an unwanted man when former Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi was roped into the succession game plan. He claims Wanjohi and Kimemia, the immediate former Governor of Nyandarua, sprung up with the United Democratic Forum outfit on whose ticket Mudavadi, now Prime Cabinet Secretary in Ruto's administration, vied for presidency in 2013.

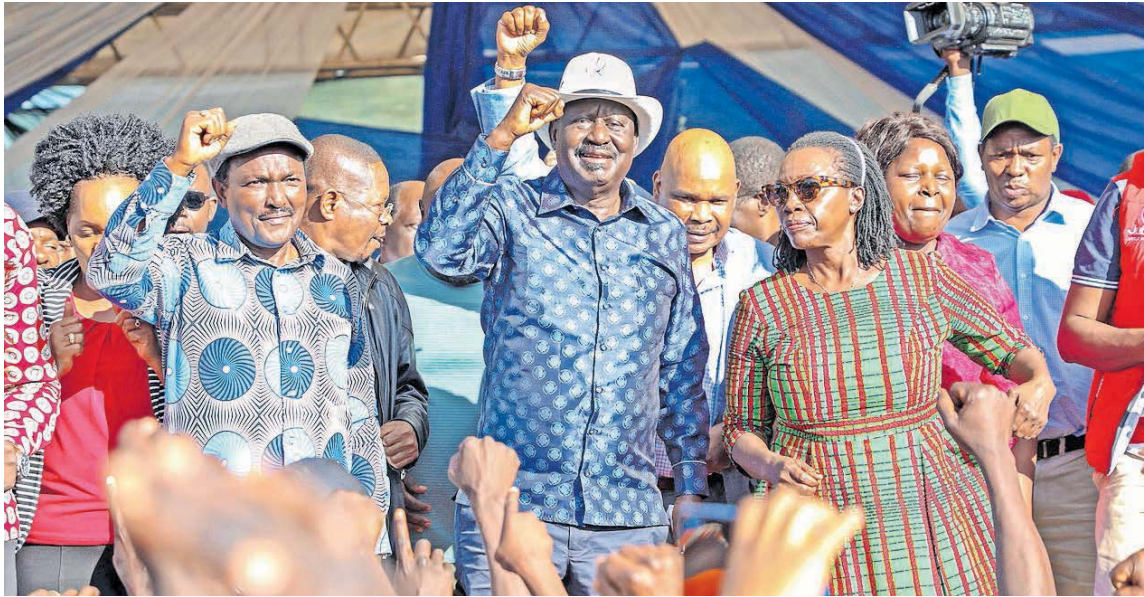
Though he claims to have learnt his lesson, including the fact that in politics "you cannot expect anything on a silver platter", Musyoka comes up against a host of impediments in his latest quest for the top seat. With a politically strengthened Ruto, who was declared winner in the presidential poll last August against all odds, it will be a Herculean task for Musyoka to upstage the President – who now enjoys influence and instruments of incumbency – without the support of compatriots in Azimio.

Even though there is no denying that Musyoka has so far made enough political sacrifice for Odinga and deserves the backing of the former Premier this time round, there is a disagreement between the two leaders and their allies on how best to approach the 2027 campaigns. While the former VP's allies want him to be declared Azimio's flag bearer so that he can hit the campaign trail early, those allied to the former PM want him to first consolidate the political forces within Azimio with a view to countering Ruto's unpopular policies before handing over the leadership mantle.

Appreciating Musyoka's role in



kenya lens



Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya Coalition Party leader Raila Odinga, Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka and Narc-K leader Martha Karua at the Kamukunji grounds in Nairobi on December 7. DENNIS ONSON-GO | NATION

Raila's political career, Azimio Secretary-General Junet Mohamed is emphatic that the strength and unity of the opposition party in playing its oversight role as well as checking excesses of the Ruto administration are of prime importance.

Junet, who is also the Minority Whip in the National Assembly, calls for patience in identifying Ruto's challenger in 2027.

However, Wiper Vice-Chairman Mutula Kilonzo Jr is of the opinion that his party boss should not wait for Odinga's endorsement, but should instead chart his own political path. Arguing that the Azimio dream ended after the team failed to secure election victory, the Makeni Governor points out that players within the coalition party "are only holding on to share the spoils coming their way as they plot the political journey ahead of 2027".

The misunderstanding in Azimio's campaign strategy, which is partly informed by past experience between Odinga and Musyoka, is a major source of concern for insiders.

Odinga is said to be keen on playing a central role in opposition politics, fearing that if the government is not monitored closely, democratic gains realised over the years could be eroded by the Ruto administration.

Besides the Odinga factor, Musyoka has to upstage Narc-Kenya party leader Martha Karua for the Azimio ticket, although other players could still come onto the scene. Presently, Karua is techni-

cally considered more senior than the Wiper party leader by virtue of the fact that she was Azimio's Deputy Presidential candidate. However, Musyoka boasts bigger political clout, courtesy of sizeable numbers in Parliament.

But then there is also the question of campaign funding, which could prove an obstacle to his presidential bid. Unlike Ruto, whose approach he hopes to emulate, Musyoka has been out of government for the last decade, implying that his sources of income and influence are diminished. His spirited push for Mike Mbuvi Sonko to vie for governor in Mombasa on a Wiper party ticket was viewed by pundits as strategic and aimed at boosting his 2027 presidential bid.

The moneyed politician served briefly as Nairobi governor after the 2017 polls, and has since shifted loyalty to President Ruto. The former VP, who has not vied for the top seat since his debut in 2007, has no known weighty poll financiers.

Besides his unsuccessful 2007 run on an ODM-Kenya ticket, Musyoka has twice teamed up with Odinga as his presidential running-mate – under the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy and the National Super Alliance, as well as in Azimio last year, where he was designated to occupy the position of Chief Minister.

The former VP has also been involved in political formations such as Kalenjini-Kikuyu-Kamba alongside Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta ahead of the 2013 polls, and

One Kenya Alliance involving Mudavadi, Speaker of the National Assembly Moses Wetangula and Kanu Chairman Gideon Moi, all which fizzled out before the main race.

This time round, however, Musyoka, who turns 70 later in the year, is faced with one of his toughest political challenges ever since joining elective politics in 1983. Since the death of the political kingpin of Ukambani, Mulu Mutisya, in 2004, Musyoka has been at the helm of political power in the region – a responsibility that he has shouldered almost unchallenged.

But since last year, when he was embroiled in fierce supremacy battles with the then three governors of Machakos, Kitui and Makeni – Mutua, Charity Ngilu and Kivutha Kibwana respectively – his Ukambani backyard has remained restless. Mutua's exit to Ruto's and his elevation to Cabinet Secretary makes for a complex 2027 duel.

Nationally, Musyoka, who joined elective politics in 1988, remains the most experienced political figure on the scene with presidential ambition. He has not been as lucky as Ruto, for instance, who joined Parliament in 1997 and became Head of State a quarter century later, or Rigathi Gachagua, who ascended to the position of DP after only one-term in the august House.

With his supporters nationally and in his Ukambani backyard increasingly getting impatient, it is a do-or-die affair for Musyoka. If he

fails to snatch victory from the incumbent in 2027, for instance, he shall be 79 by the time of the next poll in 2032. This is a reality his backers, who have chided Odinga over his biological age, would want to face.

Wambua, who is Kitui senator, considers his party boss a cut above the rest, courtesy of his wealth of experience as a political leader and peacemaker: "He is a statesman who has created wide networks over time with heads of governments across the globe, meaning he is a well-connected leader who will do this country a lot of good."

This assessment of Musyoka is almost to the point, only that he cannot possibly achieve his budding political dream alone. He will require the support Azimio co-principals Odinga, Karua and former President Uhuru Kenyatta, among others, to bring in the numbers, and finances, to match Ruto's political might.

Over the last four decades that he has been in active politics, Mr Musyoka has perfected the art of loyalty, flexibility and agility, skills that might just prove useful to his cause when he convenes a meeting of the Wiper party's National Executive Council next month.

The meeting, aimed at reviewing events of 2022 and the drawing up of a programme of action, will give the clearest indication of not just the political standing of the former VP, but also the fate of the giant opposition outfit, Azimio.

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SCIENCE & TECH

Sony unveils new controller for PS5 gamers



Sony has teamed up with accessibility experts to announce a PlayStation 5 controller for disabled gamers.

Project Leonardo is a “highly customisable kit” of different buttons, triggers and sticks that lets players create a set-up that suits their needs.

Microsoft’s Adaptive Controller, released in 2018, sells for £74.99 at its UK store — though extra buttons and joysticks can cost much more. But there is currently no release date or price point for Project Leonardo.

A Sony Interactive Entertainment official told *BBC News* it would work “out of the box” to help gamers play “more easily, more comfortably and for longer periods”.

“We feel the breadth of hardware and software customisation options in Project Leonardo is unique and stands out from any other accessibility controller on the market today,” the official said.

“Project Leonardo is a true passion project for our team. We’ve drawn on 28 years of design expertise at PlayStation to create a controller kit that we hope many players with disabilities will find useful.”

Several charities helped, including US-based AbleGamers and UK-based SpecialEffect.

SpecialEffect founder and chief executive Mick Donegan said he was “really excited to see the impact of the controller on helping to make access to gaming available to many more people”.

The charity has previously championed Microsoft’s Adaptive Controller, which officially works with PC or Xbox only but can be used on rival consoles with a third-party adapter.

Other manufacturers, such as Hori, have also developed accessible controllers.

ANDROID PHONES TO GET SATELLITE CONNECTIVITY



Satellite broadband is fast and generally reliable, but more expensive than cable or fibre.

• LONDON

A new partnership between the satellite phone firm Iridium and chip giant Qualcomm will bring satellite connectivity to premium Android smartphones later in the year.

It means that in places where there is no mobile coverage, handsets can connect with passing satellites to send and receive messages.

Qualcomm’s chips are found in many Android-powered smartphones. Apple announced a satellite feature for the iPhone 14 in September 2022.

The service is currently only available for sending and receiving basic text messages in an emergency.

British smartphone maker Bullitt was the first to launch its own satellite service, beating Apple to the post. It is also for emergency use and will be available in selected areas when first rolled out.

The new partnership will make the same service accessible to millions of smartphone users, without tying them to a particular brand

— but it will be down to the manufacturer to enable it.

Iridium is the original satellite phone system, sending its first satellite into orbit in 1997. It completed a refresh of its network of 75 spacecraft in 2019.

The satellites cover the entire globe and fly in low orbit, around 485 miles (780km) above the Earth, and groups of them can communicate with each other, passing data between them.

Qualcomm said that at first the new feature, called Snapdragon Satellite, will only be incorporated into its premium chips so is unlikely to appear in budget devices.

But it will eventually be rolled out to tablets, laptops and even vehicles

It will also become a service that is not restricted to emergency communication — although there is likely to be a fee for this.

Satellite connectivity is broadly considered to be the next frontier for mobile phones because it tackles the problem of “not-spots” — areas where there is no existing coverage.

These tend to be more

common in rural or remote places. It has already been successfully deployed to provide broadband coverage by services such as Elon Musk’s Starlink.

Satellite broadband is fast and generally reliable, but more expensive than cable or fibre connections.

Use of the feature will be subject to local government regulations, as countries including India and China ban the use of satellite phones.

Elsewhere, Samsung expects its profits for the last three months of 2022 to fall by 69 per cent to the lowest level in eight years.

The world’s biggest maker of memory chips, smartphones and TVs forecast its operating profit for the period fell to around \$3.4 billion.

It comes as the global economic slowdown hits memory chip prices and demand for electronic gadgets.

Technology giants around the world have been hit in recent months as consumers tighten their belts.

It was Samsung’s lowest quarterly profit since 2014 and missed investor expectations of around 5.9 trillion won.

africa lens

■ KILLINGS AND KIDNAPPINGS HAVE FORCED MANY PEOPLE TO FLEE VILLAGES

THE BIAFRAN QUESTION



Colonel Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu (right) declares the independence of Biafra on May 30, 1967. The Igbo people of south-east Nigeria seceded, declaring an independent Republic of Biafra and sparking a brutal civil war that left about one million people dead.

An armed group is fighting for the region's independence but the line between its campaign and criminality has become increasingly blurred

● LAGOS

A spate of gruesome killings, kidnappings and extortion rackets has left residents of south-eastern Nigeria living in fear. An armed group is fighting for the region's independence but the line between its campaign and criminality has become increasingly blurred.

The unrest has forced people to flee villages where they led a peaceful life until just a few years ago. "My uncle ran away from the village because these people asked him to give them money to buy guns and bullets. Our villages are empty because they are the law now," said

a man who we will call Chike Anyikwa to protect him from reprisals. Encamped in nearby forests, the armed men have formed a parallel government in Anyikwa's ancestral village and many others in Imo State which, alongside Anambra State, is hardest-hit by the conflict.

Similar camps exist in the three other states, Abia, Ebonyi and Enugu, that make up the south-east — which the fighters would like to become the independent state of Biafra.

The armed men have usurped the powers of government officials and traditional rulers. If anyone wants to hold a marriage or burial ceremony, they need their permission and have

to pay a fee to get the go-ahead.

Gang leaders have even assumed responsibility for resolving disputes among villagers over issues such as land rights — a sign of the extent to which they have taken control.

Anyikwa lives in Enugu city and — like thousands of others — could not spend the last two Christmases at his village, breaking with the tradition of going back to reconnect with his ancestral roots. "A relative did a traditional marriage in our village. Nobody went. Fear didn't allow anyone to go. The security agents come from Owerri (the capital of Imo State)

...Continued on Page 26

africa lens

Continued from Page 25

and then go back because many of the police stations have been destroyed. “The law that people know is the one that has been imposed by the unknown gunmen, who say they are for Biafra, but we know they are not,” he added.

The creation of Biafra has been a long-cherished dream of many Igbo people who want the south-east, and part of the Niger Delta, to be their independent homeland.

Known for their entrepreneurial skills, Igbos are Nigeria’s third-largest ethnic group, making up about 15 per cent of the country’s estimated population of about 217 million, according to *statista.com*.

The secessionist campaign first gained impetus in the 1960s, when an Igbo army officer, Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, declared the birth of Biafra following killings of south-easterners in northern Nigeria, but the attempt at secession ended after a bloody three-year war that led to more than a million deaths from fighting, starvation and a lack of medical care.

Despite the failure of Lt-Col Ojukwu’s campaign, the secessionist sentiment has lingered on ever since, with its latest torch-bearer being the Indigenous People of Biafra (Ipub) group.

Formed in 2012 by two UK-based Igbos, Nnamdi Kanu and Uche Mefor, as a peaceful movement, it launched an armed wing, the Eastern Security Network, in south-eastern Nigeria in 2020, saying it was doing so to defend Igbos, though its critics say it has unleashed violence that has caused huge suffering.

Nigeria’s government has proscribed Ipub and a court has designated it a “terrorist” organisation. Government critics say the attempt to destroy the group through military force has added to the suffering of civilians who have seen their villages raided by troops, and young men being detained or killed on the mere suspicion of being supporters of the movement.

The continued detention by Nigeria’s security agents of Kanu, despite a court ordering his release after ruling that he had been illegally arrested abroad, has meant that the group no longer operates as a coherent force,

Armed men run a parallel government

with a clear command structure or political programme. Instead, it has split into feuding factions, some of which are more violent and less disciplined, causing Ipub to lose the support of many Igbos who had backed it when it was formed. Attacks across the region by armed men, who the Nigerian security agencies link to the group, have led to the killing of hundreds of civilians and security force members since the violence started in 2020.

Women, children and the elderly have not been spared. In a horrific case of violence during the Christmas holiday, the video of a naked and bound woman trended on social media.

She was later identified as a Nigerian army officer who had gone to visit her grandmother in Abia State when gunmen abducted her, and released the video in which they threatened to kill her. A female soldier travelling for her traditional marriage was similarly abducted in May 2022 and her captors released a video showing them killing and decapitating her. Her fiancé, a retired soldier, and his nephew were also killed by the men, who claimed to be separatists.

The abductors of the army officer referred to themselves as Unknown Gunmen fighting for Biafra, and deny being affiliated to Ipub.

This is how many of the gangs identify themselves in their videos, seemingly mocking the media, which often attributes violence in the region to unknown gunmen.

Eyewitnesses told the *BBC* that soldiers were torching homes and businesses in villages as they searched for the army officer and her abductors. The spokesman for the 34 Artillery Brigade in Obinze in Imo State, Capt Joseph Akubo, said that soldiers weren’t responsible

for the arson attacks.

However, such arson attacks are not uncommon in the region. In one of the most shocking cases, soldiers were accused by locals in October 2021 of burning down more than 40 houses in Izombe village in Imo State after two soldiers and a civilian were killed in a clash between youths and soldiers.

Vigilante groups, formed with government backing to help curb insecurity, have also been accused of atrocities — a notable case being the killing of five young men who were said to be returning from a wedding in Awomama village, also in Imo State, in July 2022.

Chigozie Ekesinachi, whose two siblings were among the dead, said the state-sponsored vigilante group, Ebubeagu, was behind the killings. He added that the vigilantes assaulted him and some of his relatives and detained them when they identified themselves as the family of the dead, whose bodies were still at the scene. The Department of State Security later admitted responsibility for the killings, branding the men separatist fighters. People who identified themselves as separatists have also been accused of targeting civilians.

In December 2021, two traditional leaders were abducted from their palaces. One of them, Paul Ogbu, was killed and his body dumped in a pit with other decomposing corpses, while security forces rescued the other traditional leader, Acho Ndukwe, from the gunmen’s camp. A video released later showed the two elderly men being tortured by their captors, accused of being saboteurs of the Biafran independence campaign.

Several other traditional chiefs have also been abducted and had their palaces burnt, or have been killed by suspected separatists.

Chidieube Okeoma, a journalist who covers Imo State for Nigeria’s *Punch* newspaper, said the insecurity extends to the state capital.

“Owerri was known for its nightlife activity, but all that is gone now because of pockets of killing. When people see strange faces, they will take cover. If a car tyre bursts, people will start running. Imo was not like this,” he said.

The city, like all other cities and towns across the south-east, is deserted every Monday as separatists enforce a “sit-at-home” order, shutting businesses, schools and government offices. It has led to students missing crucial examinations and businesses suffering heavy financial losses. “Even the governors are inside their government houses, obeying the sit-at-home order,” Anyikwa commented wryly.

He fears that many people in the south-east will not be able to vote in next month’s general election as some of the separatist factions have called for a boycott of the polls. Furthermore, armed men, claiming to be acting for the Biafra cause have attacked offices of the Independent National Electoral Commission (Inec) and people registering to vote. They also killed an Inec staff member in 2022. “I am very ashamed about the state of insecurity in the south-east,” Anyikwa said. At this point, the violence seems to have no end in sight.

— *BBC*

A pair of child soldiers of the Biafran army in Umuahia as the Nigerian federal troops continue their advance during the Biafran war on August 31, 1968.



global lens

■ 11 TAKEAWAYS FROM PRINCE HARRY'S MEMOIR

WOES OF THE 'SPARE PRINCE'



Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex (left) and Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, at the unveiling of a statue of their mother, Princess Diana at The Sunken Garden in Kensington Palace, London, on July 1, 2021. Prince Harry recounts in his new book how he was physically "attacked" by his older brother during an argument in 2019.

The book offers few revelations in the wake of leaks and high-profile interviews, but it tucks familiar incidents into a broader narrative

● NEW YORK

'Spare', the hotly anticipated memoir by Prince Harry, has captivated people across the world, and is shaping up to be one of the year's biggest books.

A series of high-profile interviews, along with leaked excerpts and premature sales of the book in Spain, heightened interest in a memoir that offers a frank, if one-sided, look at Harry's life.

Harry says he decided to write *Spare* when he travelled to Britain for his grandfather's funeral in

April 2021. There he had the "staggering" realization that neither his father nor his brother truly understood why he and his wife, Meghan, had moved to California. "I have to tell them," he thought. "And so: Pa? Willy? World? Here you go."

Princess Diana's death

The morning after Diana, Harry's mother, died in a car crash in Paris, Charles, his father, woke him up to tell him what had happened.

"He sat down on the edge of the bed," Harry writes. "He put a hand on my knee. Darling boy, Mum-

my's been in a car crash." He went on, "They tried, darling boy. I'm afraid she didn't make it."

Harry writes that "none of what I said to him then remains in my memory. It's possible that I didn't say anything. What I do remember with startling clarity is that I didn't cry."

"Not one tear. Pa didn't hug me. He wasn't great at showing emotions under normal circumstances, how could he be expected to show them in such a crisis? But his hand did fall once more on my knee and he said: 'It's going to be OK.' That was quite a lot for him.

Fatherly, hopeful, kind. And so very untrue."

Years after his mother's death, Harry asked to see the secret police files related to the crash. Harry's private secretary obtained the files, though he removed the most "challenging" ones, Harry wrote. Still, he saw many paparazzi photos of his dying mother.

The men who followed her "never stopped shooting her while she lay between the seats, unconscious, or semiconscious", he writes. "Not one of them was checking on her, offering her help,

Continued on Page 28

global lens

When Harry and Meghan felt blindsided in talks

Continued from Page 27

not even comforting her. They were just shooting, shooting, shooting.”

They begged Charles not to marry Camilla

“When asked, Willy and I promised Pa that we’d welcome Camilla into the family,” Harry writes. “The only thing we asked in return was that he not marry her. You don’t need to remarry, we pleaded... We support you, we said. We endorse Camilla, we said. Just please don’t marry her.”

Press leaks from family were common

According to the book, Charles and sometimes Camilla approved damaging press leaks about Harry and William. On one occasion, Harry writes, Charles — advised by a spin doctor — cooperated with the tabloids on a story about Harry and drugs to bolster his own faltering reputation. “No more the unfaithful husband, Pa would now be presented to the world as the harried single dad coping with a drug-addled child.” Much later, in 2019, Harry writes, William was “seething” because “Pa and Camilla’s people had planted a story or stories about him, and Kate, and the kids, and he wasn’t going to take it any more. Give Pa and Camilla an inch, he said, they take a mile.”

Separately, the news report that Harry and Meghan were leaving England included a tidbit that Harry believes was leaked by the palace. The article, which appeared in *The Sun*, “included the telling detail that we’d offered to relinquish our Sussex titles,” Harry writes. “There was only one document on earth in which that detail was mentioned — my private and confidential letter to my father. To which a shockingly, damningly small number of people had access. We hadn’t even mentioned it to our closest friends.”

He killed 25 Taliban fighters

“Most soldiers can’t tell you precisely how much death is on their ledger,” Harry writes of his tours during the war. “My number: 25.”

He added: “While in the heat of combat, I didn’t think of those 25 as people. You can’t kill people if you think of them as people. They were chess pieces removed from the board, Bads taken away before they could kill Goods. I’d been trained to ‘other-ise’ them, trained well. On some level I recognised this learned detachment as problematic. But I also saw it as an unavoidable part of soldiering.”

Suffered anxiety and panic attacks

Fear of public speaking morphed into a fear of crowds, and then full-blown anxiety attacks on the cusp of his 30th birthday. In the book, Harry sees the afflictions as a form of PTSD, attributing them to both his military service and the death of his mother. When he told his father what was happening, Charles said: “I suppose it’s my fault. I should’ve got you the



Meghan, Duchess of Sussex and Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, at the annual One Young World Summit at Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, on September 5, 2022.

help you needed years ago.” Harry writes: “I assured him that it wasn’t his fault. But I appreciated the apology.”

And a nasty case of frostbite

A trip to the North Pole left Harry with some discomfort. “Upon arriving home I’d been horrified to discover that my nether regions were frost-nipped as well, and while the ears and cheeks were already healing, the todger wasn’t,” he reports. When home remedies — like applying Elizabeth Arden cream — did not work, he finally saw a doctor.

Meghan urged him to return to therapy

One evening during their courtship, “Meg said something I took the wrong way,” so “I snapped at her, spoke to her harshly — cruelly,” Meghan left the room. “I went and found her upstairs. She was sitting in the bedroom. She was calm, but said in a quiet, level tone that she would never stand for being spoken to like that.” Harry writes:

She wanted to know where it came from.

I don’t know.

Where did you ever hear a man speak like that to a woman? Did you overhear adults speak that way when you were growing up?

I cleared my throat, looked away. Yes.

Harry told Meghan he’d tried therapy, but it hadn’t helped. “No,” she told him. “Try again.”

No money to support him and Meghan

The exchange between father and son when Harry announced his intention to marry did not go as expected.

Does she want to carry on working?

Say again?

Does she want to keep on acting?

Oh, I mean, I don’t know, I wouldn’t think so. I expect she’ll want to be with me, doing the job, you know, which would rule out ‘Suits’... since

they film in... Toronto.

Hmm, I see. Well, darling boy, you know there’s not enough money to go around.

I stared. What was he banging on about?

He explained. *Or tried to. I can’t pay for anyone else. I’m already having to pay for your brother and Catherine.*

Harry writes: “Pa didn’t financially support Willy and me, and our families, out of any largesse. That was his job. That was the whole deal. We agreed to serve the monarch, go wherever we were sent, do whatever we were told, surrender our autonomy, keep our hands and feet in the gilded cage at all times, and in exchange the keepers of the cage agreed to feed and clothe us.” But it wasn’t about money, of course: “Pa might have dreaded the rising cost of maintaining us, but what he really couldn’t stomach was someone new dominating the monarchy, grabbing the limelight, someone shiny and new coming in and overshadowing him.”

William didn’t want Harry to be best man

“The public had been told that I was to be best man, but that was a bare-faced lie,” Harry writes. “Willy didn’t want me giving a best-man speech. He didn’t think it was safe to hand me a live mic and put me in a position to go off-script. He wasn’t wrong.” Still, he managed to present the newly married couple with an ermine thong at the wedding reception: “The room let out a collective gasp,” he writes, then “a warm, gratifying wave of laughter.”

Murdoch’s media empire to blame

“I couldn’t think of a single human being in the 300,000-year history of the species who’d done more damage to our collective sense of reality,” he writes. But those hired to shoot photographs for British tabloids are targets of his anger, too. “The paps had always been grotesque people, but as I reached maturity they were worse,” he says. “They were more emboldened, more radicalised, just as young men in Iraq had been radicalised. Their mullahs were editors, the same ones who’d vowed to do better after Mummy died.”

Harry and Meghan felt blind-sided

The couple chose to leave England, but hoped to keep up some of their royal duties and to retain the security that came with their titles. Instead, after a meeting dubbed “the Sandringham Summit” in January 2020, they learned that, in Harry’s words, “the fix was in” — they would no longer represent the Queen and their security would continue for only a 12-month transition period. (In fact, they would lose that security several months later.)

“I love my Mother Country, and I love my family, and I always will,” Harry writes. “I just wish, at the second-darkest moment of my life, they’d both been there for me.”

— *The New York Times*

global lens

■ HIS ANGER AT THE NEWS MEDIA IS WIDE-RANGING

WEIRDEST BOOK EVER BY A ROYAL

There are glimpses of him as a royal stoner, smoking a joint after dinner and worrying the smoke was going to blow over to his elderly neighbour

● LONDON

This must be the strangest book ever written by a royal. Prince Harry's memoir, *Spare*, is part confession, part rant and part love letter. In places it feels like the longest angry drunk text ever sent.

It is the view from inside what he calls a "sur-real fishbowl" and "unending Truman Show".

It is disarmingly frank and intimate — showing the sheer weirdness of his often isolated life. And it's the small details, rather than the set-piece moments, that give a glimpse of how little we really knew. There are glimpses of him as a royal stoner, smoking a joint after dinner and worrying the smoke was going to blow over to his elderly neighbour, the Duke of Kent.

What other royal recollection would cover losing his virginity behind a pub, or go into such prolonged detail about a frost-bitten penis? This royal appendage gets more lines than many of his relatives. Maybe there should be a spoiler alert for the special cushion that's made. He was also keenly conscious of any girl with "throne syndrome", who would be "visibly fitting herself with a crown the moment she shook my hand".

Or there's the story about when he's in Buckingham Palace during the Golden Jubilee concert and listening to Brian May playing on the roof — and notices his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth, is wearing earplugs.

His pre-Meghan life in London was ostensibly full of luxury, but it also feels as though he was undercover in his own life. Harry suffered appalling panic attacks, awful for anyone, but debilitating for someone expected to speak and appear in public. He describes his lonely life at home, self-medicating with psychedelic drugs, drying his clothes on a radiator and planning shopping trips like military raids, to be carried out in disguise and at speed.

He doesn't have an Amazon account, but he hits TK Maxx for clothes and carries out a weekly food shop in a supermarket, rehearsing exactly where to find his favourite salmon and yoghurts. When he's in there one day he overhears shoppers debating whether he's gay.

But it's a profoundly odd life, moving suddenly between this lack of glamour to time with the international jet set.

Harry says he watches the TV show *Friends* on a loop, identifying with the funny guy character of Chandler. But then on a trip to the US he is at a party with Courtney Cox, the actress who plays Chandler's on-screen wife, Monica.

And this really is a trip, because he ends up



taking hallucinogenic drugs and watches a pedal-bin coming to life. It's a long way from the commentary for Trooping the Colour.

The ghost-written work is a fast-paced, quick-fire account, looking out from the inside, always scratchily aware of the bodyguards outside the door and the cameras waiting to catch him. As a schoolboy, smoking cannabis with his friends, he watches the police outside there to guard him.

At the very centre of this story, permeating almost every page, is the huge trauma that seems to have distorted the rest of his life — the death of his mother, Princess Diana.

He adored her unreservedly and an overwhelming sense of unresolved grief is at the hub of all his other anxieties, like spokes on a wheel. He really, really hates the press, blaming them for chasing his mother so relentlessly, including in the events leading to her death in Paris, with Harry returning obsessively to the scene of the car accident. His anger at the news media is wide-ranging, but Rupert Murdoch is singled out in particular and one of his executives is only described in anagram form, so much is his allergic reaction.

The rows with his brother, Prince William, are often framed by references to the closeness they had previously had with their mother. His paralysing anxiety and self-destructiveness also seem to be consequences of the loss

of his mother, taking away an emotional anchor that, until meeting Meghan, he had never replaced. There is also something of a death obsession. Going into Westminster Abbey for his brother's wedding he cheerfully thinks about the 3,000 people buried in the church over the centuries.

What's missing from the book is any sense of awareness of any wider context of the rest of the world outside. It's as if he has been blinded by the paparazzi flashlights. No one worries about paying gas bills in this book. He's back and forth to Africa like he was going a few stops on the Northern Line. Although, that would have been more exotic for him because he says the only time he got on a Tube train was on a school trip. While copiously indiscreet about the interior of royal life — yes, that's his father doing physio exercises in his boxers — it remains strangely silent on any views about the outside world, even though he's no longer a working royal.

There are some glimpses. Harry talks about Prince William making what he calls a "vaguely anti-Brexit speech" that seems to annoy the tabloids. "Brexit was their bread and butter. How dare he suggest it was bullshit," he writes. The other royals are claimed by Prince Harry to be obsessing over the score sheets of how many visits they've carried out compared with other family members, looking over their shoulders in case anyone should question their purpose.

But he is also unmistakably a creature of his own upbringing, describing shooting a deer in a way that doesn't feel like the new-age therapy version of Californian Harry.

So who will be most upset about all these revelations in his book? Netflix mostly. They paid a prince's ransom for six hours of TV waffle and the smug contents of an Instagram feed, whereas the book crackles like a burning log with something bizarre on almost every page. Plenty of the book will get people irritated, too, particularly its self-absorption. He talks about a row over people parking near his palace accommodation with more detail than you'd expect from a small war. There are some off-the-wall claims too, such as comparing the Spice Girls' "crusade against sexism" with "Mandela's struggle against apartheid".

The leaks of the book have focused on the family conflicts and Harry's resentment at a lack of support for him and Meghan. Camilla arrives in the story to become his stepmother, with the narrative exuding a mixture of suspicion and a determined effort to be polite.

— BBC

OBIT

■ HE WAS THE IDENTIKIT ATTACKER OF HIS TIME

The Italian's reputation was forged throughout a stellar career in playing and management, and also by his warm and dignified personality that made him beloved by so many in football around the globe

• ROME

Gianluca Vialli, who died on January 6 aged 58, was one of the modern era's great strikers and also one of its most popular and endearing figures. The Italian's reputation was forged throughout a stellar career in playing and management, and also by his warm and dignified personality that made him beloved by so many in football around the globe, not only team-mates but also opponents and supporters alike.

Vialli played 59 times for Italy after making his debut in 1985, starting his career at lowly Cremonese before coming to wider prominence during a brilliant spell at Sampdoria, then at Juventus and Chelsea, where he was a successful player and manager, winning European and domestic honours.

He was the identikit attacker of his time, powerful and mobile but also capable of grace and skill, adept in the air and on the ground as he swiftly emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Vialli was comfortable through the middle but was also highly effective in the wider areas, testimony to his versatility and game intelligence.

Vialli became a legendary figure at Sampdoria, where he formed a potent attacking partnership with Roberto Mancini. This was a life-long friendship that saw him become part of the coach's backroom staff when Italy won Euro 2020, beating England on penalties in the final at Wembley.

The pair were known as *I Gemelli del Gol* (the goal twins) as the club embarked on what was then an unprecedented period of success. At Sampdoria, he was a key element of the side that won the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1990, Vialli scoring both goals in extra time in the 2-0 win against Anderlecht in Gothenburg. He then led from the front as Sampdoria won their first Serie A title in 1990-91, but there was bitter disappointment when they lost the 1992 European Cup final to Barcelona at Wembley in a game settled by Ronald Koeman's famous free kick in extra time. During this period, Sampdoria also won the Coppa Italia three times.

It was perhaps inevitable that Juventus would come calling and, so it proved: after 141 goals in eight seasons, he made the move to Turin for a then world-record fee of £12m, where further successes followed.

Under the guidance of the great coach and future Italy World Cup winner Marcello Lippi, Vialli became an even more rounded player, improving physically and technically, playing a vital role in what developed into one of



Gianluca Vialli before Euro 2020 final between Italy and England at Wembley on July 11, 2021.

Gianluca Vialli died on January 6, aged 58.

the great Italian club sides.

He was in the Juventus team that won the Uefa Cup in 1993 with a 6-1 aggregate victory over Borussia Dortmund over two legs. He almost won the treble in 1995 but Juve lost the Uefa Cup final to Parma in a season when they claimed the Serie A title and the Coppa Italia.

He ended his time at Juventus on the highest high when he captained 'The Old Lady' to victory in the 1996 Champions League final, beating Ajax 4-2 on penalties in Rome.

Vialli then joined Chelsea on a free transfer as part of Ruud Gullit's reboot of the west London giants, quickly settling in to life in a city he would happily make his home long after he left Stamford Bridge. Once again, Vialli won instant popularity with his genial and modest approach to football and life despite the success and status his talent had won him.

Vialli had chequered early days at Chelsea and only came on as a late substitute for his compatriot, Gianfranco Zola, when they beat Middlesbrough in the 1997 FA Cup final.

Chelsea owner Ken Bates gambled on making 33-year-old Vialli player-manager when things turned sour for Gullit in early 1998, but the rewards were rich.

Within months he fulfilled both roles in the team that won the European Cup Winners' Cup by beating VfB Stuttgart in Stockholm with a goal from Zola. They had already won the League Cup by beating Middlesbrough 2-0 at Wembley as Vialli embarked on a period that will have him cemented in Chelsea folklore forever. Vialli's Chelsea also won the European Super Cup against Champions League holders Real Madrid before he stepped back from playing duties to concentrate solely on management.

He enjoyed one last great victory when Chelsea beat Aston Villa to win the FA Cup at Wembley in May 2000, but Vialli was sacked after an indifferent start to the following season. He returned to management at First Division Watford but this never seemed a comfortable fit and was sacked after one unfulfilling season at Vicarage Road. The Italian's wisdom and engaging personality made him a natural for punditry and his views on the game were often sought. He was a familiar figure on Italy's bench during the delayed Euro 2020 championships in the smart Italian team suit, his beaming smile in victory a regular sight.

It can now be recalled as a poignant and highly emotional scene as the two greats, Vialli and Mancini, so different in personality but so alike in many other respects and bonded by football and true friendship, held each other in a lengthy, tearful embrace on the Wembley turf after the victory.

—BBC

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