

## **Lawyer accused of Sh26 million fraud released on bail**



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A Nairobi lawyer accused of obtaining Sh26 million from a client pretending he would represent her in a case has been released on bail after denying the charges. David Chege Mboche a long-term partner at Miller & Advocates was released by Milimani Principal Magistrate Ben Mark Ekhubi on a cash bail of Sh500,000. The lawyer was charged with obtaining Sh26 million from a client by pretending that he would defend her in a non-existent civil case. He is alleged to have obtained the money from Marianne Kamau on dates between February 1, 2022 and July 30, 2023, with intent to defraud. It is alleged that he committed the offence jointly with others not before court, at an unknown place in the country. The prosecution alleged that Chege told Kamau that he would conduct a civil case at Milimani law courts on her behalf. The fees were allegedly meant for filing the case but it turned out to be non-existent. Chege is also accused of conspiring to defraud Kamau of Sh26 million. It is alleged that he committed the offence with another person who is yet to be charged. The court delivered the ruling after receiving the pre-bail report and hearing objections from the prosecution, opposing his release on grounds that he had two other pending criminal cases. He was serving at a law firm associated with lawyer Cecil Miller. Chege had pleaded with the court to be freed on lenient bail terms saying he has been ailing and is currently undergoing medication at Mbagathi hospital.

## **What you need to know about childhood cancer**



*In Summary • The World Health Organisation warns that cancer is a leading cause of death for children and adolescents • Globocan estimates that in Kenya, there are about 3,000 new cases of childhood cancer diagnosed each year*

Only two in every 10 children diagnosed with cancer in Kenya survive compared to eight in 10 among their counterparts in developed countries. This means that the likelihood of surviving a diagnosis of childhood cancer depends on the country in which the child lives. The most common types of cancer diagnosed in children aged below 14 years are leukemias, brain and other central nervous system (CNS) tumors, and lymphomas. The World Health Organisation warns that cancer is a leading cause of death for children and adolescents. Globocan estimates that in Kenya, there are about 3,000 new cases of childhood cancer diagnosed each year. However, these numbers are likely underestimates due to inadequate reporting of cases to the national cancer registries. Experts from the University of Nairobi on the other hand have raised concern that many children with cancer are often misdiagnosed as other conditions that present with clinical symptoms and signs that are similar to those of childhood cancers. But what exactly causes cancer in children? You can suspect your child might be having cancer if they exhibit a range of warning symptoms, such as fever, severe and persistent headaches, bone pain and weight loss. Unlike cancer in adults, the vast majority of childhood cancers do not have a known cause. "Many studies have sought to identify the causes of childhood cancer, but very few cancers in children are caused by environmental or lifestyle factors," the WHO says. "Cancer prevention efforts in children should focus on behaviours that will prevent the child from developing preventable cancer as an adult," it adds. However, the Global Health Agency says that current data suggest that approximately 10 per cent of all children with cancer have a predisposition because of genetic factors. Some chronic infections, such as HIV, and malaria are also risk factors for childhood cancer. Due to this, parents are urged to ensure their children are vaccinated against hepatitis B to help prevent liver cancer and against human papillomavirus to help prevent cervical cancer. "However, it is important to pursue other methods such as early detection and treatment of chronic infections that can lead to cancer," WHO advises. Since preventing cancer in

children is not possible, experts call for prompt, correct diagnosis followed by effective, evidence-based therapy with tailored supportive care. Early diagnosis will mean a greater probability of survival, less suffering, and often less expensive and less intensive treatment. September is the Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The month aims to generate awareness and support for children suffering from cancer.

## Climate Summit: Ki-moon challenges African leaders to honour climate adaptation pledges



In Summary Ki-moon said the future of the continent lies not only with the decisions that leaders take not but in ensuring that we stick to them. He recognised that many promises have been made especially on doubling the financing and it is now time it is honored.

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on African youth to challenge their leaders to take climate adaptation seriously. Ki-moon said the voices of the youth are vital in ensuring leaders make the continent a sustainable place to live. "I beseech you, tell your leaders that this is the world we are going to live in, make it sustainable...use your voting power," he said. Ki-moon said the future of the continent lies not only with the decisions that leaders take not but in ensuring that we stick to them. He recognised that many promises have been made especially on doubling the financing and it is now time it is honored. Ki-moon who is also the chair of the Global Center on Adaptation noted that unless decisive climate actions are taken, the "future is incredibly bleak". "Accelerating Africa's climate adaptation is a global agenda as it benefits everyone...Unlocking the untapped potential of the African youth to drive the resilience agenda is one of the pillars of the Africa Acceleration program," he stated. The five-year program, he said, is worth \$25 billion (Sh3.5 trillion). He spoke when he opened a high-level intergenerational dialogue aimed at driving adaptation solutions and jobs on climate change in the continent. The sideline event being held at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies is part of the ongoing Africa climate summit which opened in Nairobi Monday. He

was however optimistic that the summit would unlock the private sector financing on climate solutions in the region. "There is no time to waste, too much has been wasted and we cannot afford to waste it anymore," said Ki-moon. He further appealed to the developed nations to support the African countries by pushing harder for adaptation. African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina, former South African first lady Graca Machel and Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba are among the guests who attended the event. Ababu said plans to increase forest cover by 30 percent to mitigate the effects of climate change are on course. He said the country plans to recruit one million green army warriors to plant 50 billion trees.

## Sakaja's Dishi na County to get Sh160m from French government



In Summary •The feeding program which was effected last week will be implemented through an innovative three-stage approach •At least 81, 208 school children in 42 schools in Nairobi will enjoy their meals in Phase One of the programme

Nairobi's Dishi na County programme has been handed a boost after the French Government pledged Sh 160 million towards the school feeding programme. The money will go towards ensuring all children in Public Primary Schools and ECDs get a nutritious meal through the programme partner Food for Education. The pledge was made by the French Minister of State for Development, Dr. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou on Monday when she joined Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja Johnson in Olympic Primary School, Kibra to oversee the feeding programme. Welcoming the move, Sakaja said the funds will be well utilized to ensure the targeted children get their meals. "The French Government has committed to support us in this program to the tune of €1 Million which adds to the 1.7b shillings we have provided as Nairobi County Govt and will help us continue subsidizing meals for the Children and scaling," he said. The feeding program which was effected last week will be implemented through an innovative three-stage approach.

## Pastor Dorcas urges women to take up climate actions



*In Summary • She said under the guidance and leadership of First Lady Mama Rachel Ruto, women were going to achieve much in fighting climate change. • The Second Lady praised the strategic actions adopted by Rachel and her office in amplifying positive environment care and climate actions including tree planting.*

Second Lady Pastor Dorcas Rigathi has urged women to get involved in climate actions for faster and more sustainable wins in the global call for action-oriented climate goals. She noted that women have a great influence in the upbringing of children and through their nurturing nature, they could influence generations towards a positive climate care. She said under the guidance and leadership of First Lady Mama Rachel Ruto, women were going to achieve much in fighting climate change. "When as mothers and women take up action-oriented climate actions right from when our babies are in the cradle when bringing them UP and under the leadership of our First Lady. I believe we will head in the right direction," she said. The Second Lady praised the strategic actions adopted by Rachel and her office in amplifying positive environment care and climate actions including tree planting. Dorcas spoke on Monday during a meeting at the KICC, where Mama Rachel had hosted First Ladies from across the continent. Among the attendees were Burundi First Lady Angeline Ndayishimiye and Sierra Leone First Lady Fatima Maada. The First Ladies attended a session on 'Driving Green Growth and Climate Solutions for Africa'. The session was also graced by government officials, the private sector, human rights activists and community organisations from across the globe.

## Calls for change in Africa's narrative as climate summit kicks off in Nairobi



*In Summary • African nations are among the most vulnerable to climate change effects and have significant natural assets that could provide global climate solutions • Despite this, the continent receives a disproportionately small amount of global climate finance compared to other regions*

As African leaders gather in Nairobi to discuss the escalating climate crises, urgent action is mandatory to mitigate its effect on the whole world. The One Campaign is urging all leaders to use this pivotal moment to unite around a shared pan-African agenda – one that brings justice and prosperity. The Africa Climate Summit themed "Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World" will also provide African leaders the platform to challenge narratives and perceptions of Africa being the constant docile recipient. It will showcase the continent's strength and aptitude to take a leading role in the fight against climate change and nature loss. This moment calls for active participants in the pursuit of solutions. African nations are among the most vulnerable to climate change effects and have significant natural assets that could provide global climate solutions. Despite this, the continent receives a disproportionately small amount of global climate finance compared to other regions. The estimated annual cost of Africa's climate adaptation by 2050 is US\$50 billion and the region has the world's highest potential for renewable energy. Yet the continent currently receives US\$19.5 billion per year in total climate finance and only 3% of global investment in clean energy. ONE is therefore calling on all leaders to use the Summit as a tool to elevate the following policy changes to start the journey of building a more balanced trade and more resilient African economy: For World Bank shareholders and donor governments to commit to tripling grants and loans from the IBRD and IDA, which could deliver an additional \$1.2 trillion in finance by 2030. For donor governments to deliver on their commitment to double adaptation finance and commit to a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation that is needs-based and includes targets and/or indicators. Unblock the barriers so Special Drawing Rights can be recycled through multilateral development banks and the African Development Bank in particular. Serah Makka, Director for Africa at The ONE Campaign, said: "The key to unlocking the untapped potential of this continent isn't handouts or second-hand solutions

from rich nations. It's removing the barriers standing in our way."African countries possess the tools, talent and renewable resources to fuel their own growth and be at the vanguard of efforts to tackle climate change, poverty and inequality everywhere. But they are being blocked by a broken global financial system that denies them access to the affordable finance needed to unleash this potential."No country must choose between improving the lives of their people and protecting the planet. If the rest of the world truly gets behind Africa they can help unleash a green economic revolution that will drive growth and prosperity across the continent and help the whole world to rise to the biggest shared challenges we face."Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Africa Union Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, said:"Africa accounts for the smallest share of global greenhouse gas emissions, at just 3.8 percent, in contrast to 23 percent in China, 19 percent in the US, and 13 percent in the European Union. Yet, the continent is the most vulnerable to climate change hazards."Ahead of COP28, Africa needs to negotiate not from a victim perspective, but from a solutions perspective. We need to work together as a continent. We have all the resources needed to mitigate climate change challenges."Sacko adds:Development partners need to also honour their promise made in the Paris Agreement of investing \$100 billion in mitigating Africa's climate challenges. We have not seen the investment yet."

## **Kenyans must have voice on visa removal plan - Ex-CJ Mutunga**

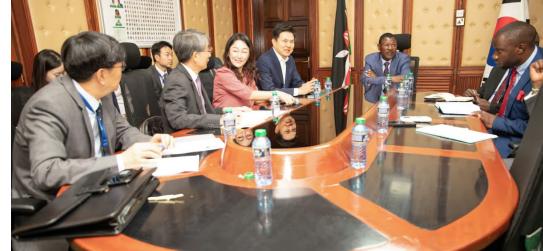


In Summary •Countries enjoying visa-free requirements while coming to Kenya include Indonesia, Eritrea and Djibouti. •While giving his opening address at the Africa Climate Summit at KICC, President Ruto said it was unfair to ask one of visa requirements when they were coming home.

Former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga has weighed in on President William Ruto's plan to abolish any visa requirement while travelling to Kenya.In a statement on X on Monday, the former CJ claimed that Kenyans should have been involved in the decision through public participation.Mutunga pointed out that Kenyans

exercise their direct sovereign power in such cases."Kenyans should demand public participation in all these decisions. How do we use our direct sovereign power if not in cases like this?" he posed.Mutunga was responding to activist Boniface Mwangi after he said that the government should explain a policy to Kenyans before implementing it."Ruto announced VISA-free without reciprocity without involving us. Ruto is changing our foreign policy. The budget deficit from visa fee collections will be paid by us," Mwangi posted.While giving his opening address at the Africa Climate Summit at KICC, President Ruto said it was unfair to ask one of Visa requirements when they were coming home."We are having a conversation as Kenyans because it is unfair to ask anybody coming home for visas," he said.In May during the African Private Sector Dialogue Conference on Free Trade, President Ruto told the African delegates that, that might be the last time they will pay for visas to visit the country. "This is home. We support wholeheartedly the AfCFTA and we must remove any impediments to the movement of people around our continent," he said. Ruto had apologised to the African Private Sector Dialogue on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) delegates for paying visas to visit Kenya. Countries enjoying visa-free requirements while coming to Kenya include Indonesia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

## **Kenya, South Korea hold talks to deepen trade, investment ties**



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Kenya and Korea have today held bilateral talks to enhance trade and investment ties.National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula met the chairpersons of the Republic of South Korea's, Parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee Kim Tae-Ho and Parliamentary Industry, Energy, SMEs and Startups Committees Lee Jae-Jung.Wetang'ula said South Korea's impressive advancements in technology offer valuable lessons for Kenya. "We plan to establish a Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) to deepen parliamentary diplomacy and collaborate on mutual interests," he said.Wetang'ula commended the Korean government for supporting development projects in Kenya, including a \$5 million water project."This project holds the potential to bring transformative changes to our Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) Sector, particularly for our youth," he said. Wetang'ula emphasized Kenya's commitment to planting 15 billion trees over the next decade aiming to increase forest cover from 4-15 per cent. He added that Kenya and South Korea have a long history of friendly relations. "Trade relations are strong, with Kenya exporting goods like tea, coffee, and tobacco, and importing various items from South Korea," he said. "We look forward to strengthening our ties with Korea, marking a promising chapter in our diplomatic and economic relations, and working for the benefit of both nations and our people."

## I wasn't kicked out of young MPs association, Babu Owino clarifies



*In Summary • He went on to this was done in consultation with fellow young elected leaders from the Azimio coalition who held positions in the association. • The Embakasi East MP added that he also does not need the association and instead it needs him.*

Embakasi East MP Babu Owino has dismissed reports that he was forced out of the leadership of the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA). In a statement on Monday, the legislator insisted that he voluntarily decided to step down from his secretary general position in the association. He went on to say this was done in consultation with fellow young elected leaders from the Azimio coalition who held positions in the association. Babu said that they also stepped down from their roles to allow others to take charge in the spirit of having a rotation leadership at the KYPA. "We did meet as 15 members of parliament from the Azimio coalition party and I decided as Babu Owino to step down from my position as secretary general and give a chance to other new members of parliament to get to serve us in various positions." I stepped down, Hon. Mark Mwenje (Embakasi West) also stepped down as deputy secretary general since he is now minority whip and Hon Hezana Lemaletian (nominated senator) stepped down as treasurer and we gave these opportunities to other members," Babu said in a video. The Embakasi East MP added that he also does not need the association and instead, it needs him. "Do I look like someone who can be kicked out of KYPA? It is KYPA that needs Babu, it is not Babu who needs

KYPA." The legislator further noted that at the time, they had only served for one year in the parliamentary association, save for him. He had served as SG for five years in the previous parliament. Babu said their exits were in the best interest of the association, urging the current leadership to not be swayed by the government and forget to defend the rights of youths. "It must not be overtaken by the government because this is a caucus that should protect the interests of youths in this nation. Otherwise, there was nothing like Babu being kicked out."

## Taita Taveta dwellers seek Sh2bn from KPC over 2016 oil spill



*In Summary Through their Lawyer Kenneth Amondi, they claimed the oil spill destroyed their crops and land which they say is their main source of livelihood. "The spillage further caused many to develop asthma and other respiratory diseases," they claimed.*

Dwellers of a village in Taita Taveta are seeking Sh2 billion in damages from the Kenya Pipeline Company over what they claim was an oil spill that occurred in 2016. The 270 residents living in Miasenyi-Majengo Mapya village want the court to compel KPC and Nema to implement permanent rehabilitation and restoration of the land and ecosystem. According to their court documents, the main Pipeline that traverses Miasenyi and Majengo Mpya villages burst spilling oil that affected over 100 villagers. Through their Lawyer Kenneth Amondi, they claimed the oil spill destroyed their crops and land which they say is their main source of livelihood. "The spillage further caused many to develop asthma and other respiratory diseases," they claimed. "This has interfered with school-going children. Talks on how they will be compensated or rehabilitated have not bore any fruits since 2017." The dwellers have asked the court to take note that oil spills can take several years to clean up. "Hence in respect of our case, a projected cost of Sh2 billion would be sufficient given that the costs of clean up, restoration and reclamation are often enormous and far-reaching," they said in court documents. The oil spill, they claimed, completely tampered with the soil making it infertile. "The oil spill compromised human safety and has in effect resulted in a permanent threat to ecological and socio-economic dimensions," they

claimed.

## Gabon coup leader vows free elections - but no date



In Summary Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009. He was succeeded by his son.

The leader of Gabon's military junta has vowed to return power to civilians after "free, transparent" elections. However, in a speech after being sworn in as interim president, he did not give a date for military rule to end. Gen Brice Nguema led last Wednesday's coup against Ali Bongo, toppling the president shortly after he was named winner of a disputed election. Crowds of cheering civilians turned up at the inauguration - the coup was welcomed by many eager for change. However, some say Gen Nguema's rule will be a continuation of the 55-year Bongo dynasty. Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009 and was succeeded by his son. The general spent most his career in the Bongo's inner circle and is even thought to be Ali Bongo's cousin. At Monday's inauguration, Gen Nguema gave a defiant speech, referencing the likes of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, French statesman Charles de Gaulle and former Ghanaian leader Jerry Rawlings. "This patriotic action will be a lesson learnt that will be taught in the books of our schools," said the new president, dressed in the red ceremonial costume of the Republican Guard. He added that a fresh government would be formed "in a few days" and recommended new electoral legislation, a new penal code and a referendum on a new constitution. Gen Nguema also said he had instructed the new government "to think without delay" about freeing all political prisoners. The ceremony was broadcast live on Gabonese TV and across online platforms. Former ministers from the ousted government showed up, but were booed by a crowd of junta sympathisers. General Nguema's inauguration is the latest in a series of military takeovers across West and Central Africa. Gabon is the sixth Francophone country to fall under military rule in the last three years as former colonial power France struggles to maintain its influence on the continent. Gabon been suspended from the African Union following the coup, which has been condemned by the UN and France.

## UN SG Guterres jets in for the

## Africa Climate Summit



In Summary •Guterres was received at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport by Foreign Affairs CS Alfred Mutua •Also present were his Asal and EAC counterpart Rebecca Miano and Deputy Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly Gladys Boss

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is the latest dignitary who has jetted into the country for the Africa Climate Summit. Guterres was received at the Kenyatta International Airport by Foreign Affairs CS Alfred Mutua. Also present was Asal and EAC CS Rebecca Miano and Deputy Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly Gladys Boss. Guterres joins a list of delegates who are already in the country, including Former UN boss Ban Ki-Moon. Heads of State already in the country include Comoros President Azali Assoumani, President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, Burundi's Évariste Ndayishimiye and the Côte D'Ivoire Vice-President Tiémoko Meyliet Kon. The five-day summit currently underway at KICC was officially opened by President William Ruto on Monday. The summit has attracted over 20,000 participants from across the globe who have been registered and accredited. The Africa Climate Summit is expected to provide an opportunity for African leaders to support big ideas that drive climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation efforts. Stakeholders are keen to see solutions and action-oriented goals laid out in the Nairobi Declaration which is scheduled to be adopted on the final day of the summit. Kenya's special Climate Envoy Ali Mohamed said they are certain the declaration will have an inclusive resolution that represents all stakeholders and aspirations of the continent. "The summit will present an opportunity for our leaders to set a bold and ambitious vision for a green economic transformation, that optimises the continent's abundant human and natural resources and integrates enhanced climate adaptation and mitigation outcomes," he said. With the Africa Climate Summit being a key moment that will lay the ground for COP28, there is anticipation that the continent will see more commitments.

## Gold firm asks appellate court to intervene in case with Amadi



*In Summary They are also disputing Mabeya's finding on Bruton's affidavit sworn in Dubai with the United Arab Emirates. The company told the court how fake documentation was procured in an attempt to mislead them that they were committing to a genuine transaction.*

A Dubai-based firm has asked the Court of Appeal to suspend proceedings before a lower court that unfroze the bank accounts of Judiciary's Chief Registrar Anne Amadi in an alleged gold syndicate case. Through their lawyer Joseph Murage, Bruton Gold Trading LLC says they are doubtful that they will get a fair hearing if the matter proceeds before High Court Judge Alfred Mabeya. "His(Mabeya) conduct has left us in fear that Amadi is exerting her influence behind the scenes to improperly vindicate herself and deny us access to justice," Bruton said. They are also disputing Mabeya's finding on Bruton's affidavit sworn in Dubai with the United Arab Emirates. "This application should be certified urgent and heard on priority basis as Mabeya not only made final determinations that should have been considered only in the main case but made findings that would cancel all affidavits filed before Kenyan courts notarised outside the commonwealth," Bruton said. The application has since been certified as urgent and the President of the Court of Appeal will be appointing a three-judge bench to hear the matter. The gold trading company moved to court in June this year claiming that Amadi, Amadi and Associates law firm, her son Brian Ochieng had pledged to deliver 1,500kg of gold bars. The company told the court how fake documentation was procured in an attempt to mislead them that they were committing to a genuine transaction. A tracking number was also provided by the parties involved to prove that the consignment of gold had left Kenya aboard a Kenya Airways Flight to Dubai. The company subsequently obtained an order freezing the law firm's bank accounts and those of Amadi's personal accounts. Dissatisfied Amadi challenged the orders. She distanced herself from the matter saying she was not aware of the alleged fraudulent transactions between the law firm and the gold company. Justice Mabeya subsequently lifted orders freezing her personal bank accounts saying there was nothing to show she benefited from the over Sh100 million allegedly paid by Bruton for the purchase of 1,500kgs gold bars. The judge also said there was no proof that she was involved in the day-to-day activities of the law firm registered in her

name.

## Gen Z TikTok account translates Bible into modern slang, goes viral



*In Summary • The account's most viral video titled "Annunciation," retells the birth of Jesus which has garnered about four million views. • The account has gained over 200,000 followers since August 19.*

An anonymous Gen Z has become an internet sensation after translating Bible passages into modern slang. TikTok account "Gen Z Bible Stories," has gained over 200,000 followers and attracted millions of views since posting its first video on August 19. The account's most viral video titled "Annunciation," retells the birth of Jesus which has garnered about four million views. In the video, the creator refers to "Mary" to be a "Pick me girl for God," who was "simping in him in prayer." It continues to say that angel Gabriel appeared to her and said "you've passed God's vibe check and he wants you to be the mother of the main character[Jesus], the son of the top G." The content creator went on to use slang such as "body count" referring to the number of sexual partners one has had. In a video titled "Our Father" the content is about Jesus teaching on giving to the needy, how to pray, and on the Lord's prayer (Mathew chapter 6). Jesus in the bible told his disciples that whenever they help the needy, they shouldn't announce it to be honoured by others but give it in secret as God sees and will reward them. Gen Z Bible Stories translation is " Sacred Blu said, when you give alms, don't post it for views. For on God, I tell you, you have received your reward from the Tik Tok Creators Fund." Similarly, whenever they pray, Jesus told the disciples not to be like hypocrites who pray to be seen by others, but they should pray in secret. "Similarly, whenever you talk to the top G, do not post it to your Insta story, nor spam it in the comments, hoping to be seen by him, for he always checks everyone on his notifications. But rather, slide into his DM's," Gen Z Bible stories creator translated. Another Gen Z slang that viewers found hilarious was the Lord's prayer on God giving us our daily bread which was translated to "Secure us this day our daily bag." The modern take by Gen Z Bible stories to retell the Bible stories has received different opinions. Some viewers are praising the TikTok account creator with some saying the videos are helping them to understand the Bible better. Others

say they are helping them to learn Gen Z slang and are finding it to be hilarious. However, some have questioned how long these videos will last being that slang becomes quickly outdated. Some have also questioned the appropriateness of the translations. Despite these dividing opinions, the positive feedback from the comments superseded the negatives with one branding as a "masterpiece."

## Climate Summit: Ki-moon opens high-level Youth4Adaptation dialogue



In Summary The sideline event being held at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies is part of the ongoing Africa climate summit which opened in Nairobi Monday. It brings together youth from across the continent under the banner Youth4Adaptation.

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday opened a high-level intergenerational dialogue aimed at driving adaptation solutions and jobs on climate change in the continent. The sideline event being held at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies is part of the ongoing Africa climate summit which opened in Nairobi Monday. It brings together youth from across the continent under the banner Youth4Adaptation. The group is pushing for the involvement and empowerment of youth to actively contribute to building climate resilience across the continent. Ki-moon is the chairperson of the Global Center on Adaptation. African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina, former South African first lady Graca Machel and Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba are among the guests attending the event. The Center is working as a solutions broker in accelerating action and support for adaptation solutions in realising a climate-resilient future. It was founded in 2018 and is headquartered in the Netherlands. It engages in innovative solutions to drive adaptation at scale, high-level policy development, new research contributions, advocacy, communications, and work with public and private partners to deliver action on the ground. "Our work focuses on those who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change including the poorest people in the poorest countries," a statement from the organisation reads.

## Violent protests after Quran burning in Sweden



In Summary • Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday. • Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo.

Three men have been arrested in connection with a violent riot following a Quran burning in Sweden. Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday. Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo. Several vehicles were set on fire after about hundred people gathered in response to the burning. Mr Momika set fire to a Quran in Varnhemstorget, a main square in the city on Sunday afternoon. He has previously desecrated the Quran, in a series of anti-Islam protests, and his actions have caused diplomatic outrage across the Middle East. A group of angry protesters tried to stop the burning, which resulted in a showdown between them and police. Officers said they were pelted with stones, while some demonstrators threw electric scooters at police vehicles. Several police cars were set on fire in Malmo's Rosengard neighbourhood, which has a large immigrant population, and has experienced other violent protests in the past. "I understand that a public gathering like this arouses strong emotions, but we cannot tolerate disturbances and violence like the ones we saw on Sunday afternoon," Malmo police area commander Petra Stenkula told local media. "It is extremely regrettable to once again see violence and vandalism at Rosengard." Scandinavia has witnessed a spate of Quran burnings this year. In June, Mr Momika set fire to a copy outside Stockholm's central mosque, as Muslims celebrated the first day of Eid al-Adha - one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar. Swedish police had given Mr Momika a permit for the protest, in accordance with their staunch free-speech laws. It later emerged the incident was being investigated for incitement of hatred. In January, Rasmus Paludan, a politician from the Danish far-right Stram Kurs (Hard Line) party, burnt a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Last month, neighbouring Denmark, which has also seen a several public burnings of the Quran, said it planned to ban public desecration of holy books. Sweden has pledged to

explore legal means of abolishing protests that involve burning texts in certain circumstances.

## Kenyan firm listed as finalist in climate innovation awards



*In Summary • The awards will be announced on Monday during the African Climate Summit. • Head of Awards at Ashden Stephen Hall lauded the finalists for innovating ways to raise income and improve health, even with the challenges in climate financing.*

A Kenyan firm has been listed as a finalist in the climate innovation awards by Ashden Climate Solutions in Action. Revealing the finalists for its 2023 awards, Ashden, which is a climate charity said there are eight finalists in various categories from the Global South. Usafi Green Energy Limited was listed as one of two finalists under the Ashden Award for empowering refugees and displaced people. The group manufactures and supplies affordable, low-carbon cookstoves at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. This has seen the creation of jobs and health improvement for displaced people and host communities. It was listed alongside Nigeria's Care for Social Welfare International. Ashden has partnered with Global Refugee-Led Network in the award, which will see the winner get a prize of £25,000 (Sh4,603,082.34). Further, three Kenyan firms managed to get to the shortlist in three different award categories. Under the Ashden Award for Powering Future in Clean Energy, Kenya's Women in Sustainable Energy and Entrepreneurship (WISEe) was shortlisted alongside a Sierra Leone organisation. WISEe provides training, hands-on skills, mentorship and networking opportunities. Under the category, a Nigerian firm emerged among the finalists with an organisation from Senegal. Farmer Lifeline Technologies, a Kenyan firm that helps farmers beat pests and diseases with an affordable solar-powered device was shortlisted under the category for an award for powering agriculture. The device scans crops for signs of danger. The other shortlisted firm was from India. The finalists are Collectives for Integrated Livelihoods Initiative (CINI) from India and Zimbabwe's Mobility for Africa. Under the Ashden Award for Integrated Energy Africa which aims to boost the continent's clean energy pioneers, Husk Power (Nigeria) and Uganda's Power for All

have been shortlisted. Kenya's Aceleron was shortlisted alongside Beacon Power Services, Pan-Africa. Aceleron is a factory focusing on repurposing waste batteries and turning them into energy storage technology for homes, offices and electric vehicles. The awards will be announced on Monday during the African Climate Summit. Head of Awards at Ashden, Stephen Hall lauded the finalists for innovating ways to raise income and improve health, even with the challenges in climate financing. "Our finalists show the huge power of clean energy to raise incomes, protect health, and create opportunity for women and young people," he said. "All while putting countries on the path to a zero-carbon future. And even more impressive when we consider how little climate finance actually reaches innovators in the Global South." He called for financing for innovators to be prioritised in the climate talks. "We urge funders and politicians to put energy access centre-stage at this week's Africa Climate Summit, COP28 and other major climate moments," Hall said. "It's vital we unlock new and effective finance for energy access solutions – and that it reaches frontline organisations like those on our shortlist."

## Climate Summit: Ki-moon challenges African leaders to honour climate adaptation pledges



*In Summary Ki-moon said the future of the continent lies not only with the decisions that leaders take but in ensuring that we stick to them. He recognised that many promises have been made especially on doubling the financing and it is now time it is honored.*

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on African youth to challenge their leaders to take climate adaptation seriously. Ki-moon said the voices of the youth are vital in ensuring leaders make the continent a sustainable place to live. "I beseech you, tell your leaders that this is the world we are going to live in, make it sustainable...use your voting power," he said. Ki-moon said the future of the continent lies not only with the decisions that leaders take but in ensuring that we stick to them. He recognised that many promises have been made especially on doubling the financing and it is now time

it is honored.Ki-moon who is also the chair of the Global Center on Adaptation noted that unless decisive climate actions are taken, the "future is incredibly bleak"."Accelerating Africa's climate adaptation is a global agenda as it benefits everyone...Unlocking the untapped potential of the African youth to drive the resilience agenda is one of the pillars of the Africa Acceleration program," he stated.The five-year program, he said, is worth \$25 billion (Sh3.5 trillion).He spoke when he opened a high-level intergenerational dialogue aimed at driving adaptation solutions and jobs on climate change in the continent.The sideline event being held at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies is part of the ongoing Africa climate summit which opened in Nairobi Monday.He was however optimistic that the summit would unlock the private sector financing on climate solutions in the region."There is no time to waste, too much has been wasted and we cannot afford to waste it anymore," said Ki-moon.He further appealed to the developed nations to support the African countries by pushing harder for adaptation.African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina, former South African first lady Graca Machel and Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba are among the guests who attended the event.Ababu said plans to increase forest cover by 30 percent to mitigate the effects of climate change are on course.He said the country plans to recruit one million green army warriors to plant 50 billion trees.

## Torrential rain in Spain causes major flooding



In Summary •Sunday's football match between Atletico Madrid and Sevilla was suspended due to the torrential rain. •Residents in Madrid have been asked to stay at home due to "the exceptional and abnormal" rainfall, the mayor said.

Several weather warnings have been issued across Spain as heavy rain causes major flooding across parts of the country.Maximum red weather alerts are in place in the Madrid, Toledo and Cádiz regions.Sunday's football match between Atletico Madrid and Sevilla was suspended due to the torrential rain.Residents in Madrid have been asked to stay at home due to "the exceptional and abnormal" rainfall, the mayor said.In the Spanish capital alone, firefighters have been called to alleviate the situation in flooded roads 190 times.Much of the

rainfall, brought by Storm Dana, has been concentrated in Cádiz, Tarragona and Castelló - coastal regions across the country.In the eastern province of Castelló, flooding led to firefighters rescuing a man trapped in his car, which was surrounded by waist-high flood water.People have also been advised to avoid unnecessary trips in the north-eastern city of Alcanar, Tarragona - where 215 litres per square meter of rain has fallen in the past 24 hours.Juan Carlos Penafiel, who was visiting the city, said he was woken up by the water entering his second-floor apartment."We organised amongst ourselves to make ropes with towels and bed sheets and used them to pull two young men who were grabbing on to columns," he told Reuters news agency."We pulled them to the top floor and saved them. It was terrifying, very very scary with small children, women. Nobody showed up, we were left alone to save ourselves," he added.Storm Dana has caused debris and mud to slide onto Spanish roads, while many vehicles have struggled to move in heavily flooded areas.According to El País newspaper, some train services have been called off across Spain and drivers have been warned to avoid certain flooded roads in heavily flooded areas.This weekend's weather events follow a scorching hot summer in Spain and much of southern Europe.

## Lawyer accused of Sh26 million fraud released on bail



In Summary David Chege Mboche a long-term partner at Miller & Advocates was released by Milimani Principal Magistrate Ben Mark Ekhubi on a cash bail of Sh500,000. The lawyer was charged with obtaining Sh26 million from a client by pretending that he would defend her in a non-existent civil case.

A Nairobi lawyer accused of obtaining Sh26 million from a client pretending he would represent her in a case has been released on bail after denying the charges.David Chege Mboche a long-term partner at Miller & Advocates was released by Milimani Principal Magistrate Ben Mark Ekhubi on a cash bail of Sh500,000.The lawyer was charged with obtaining Sh26 million from a client by pretending that he would defend her in a non-existent civil case.He is alleged to have obtained the money from Marianne Kamau on dates between February 1, 2022 and July 30, 2023, with intent to defraud.It is alleged that he committed

the offence jointly with others not before court, at an unknown place in the country. The prosecution alleged that Chege told Kamau that he would conduct a civil case at Milimani law courts on her behalf. The fees were allegedly meant for filing the case but it turned out to be non-existent. Chege is also accused of conspiring to defraud Kamau of Sh26 million. It is alleged that he committed the offence with another person who is yet to be charged. The court delivered the ruling after receiving the pre-bail report and hearing objections from the prosecution, opposing his release on grounds that he had two other pending criminal cases. He was serving at a law firm associated with lawyer Cecil Miller. Chege had pleaded with the court to be freed on lenient bail terms saying he has been ailing and is currently undergoing medication at Mbagathi hospital.

## Pastor Dorcas urges women to take up climate actions



*In Summary • She said under the guidance and leadership of First Lady Mama Rachel Ruto, women were going to achieve much in fighting climate change. • The Second Lady praised the strategic actions adopted by Rachel and her office in amplifying positive environment care and climate actions including tree planting.*

Second Lady Pastor Dorcas Rigathi has urged women to get involved in climate actions for faster and more sustainable wins in the global call for action-oriented climate goals. She noted that women have a great influence in the upbringing of children and through their nurturing nature, they could influence generations towards a positive climate care. She said under the guidance and leadership of First Lady Mama Rachel Ruto, women were going to achieve much in fighting climate change. "When as mothers and women take up action-oriented climate actions right from when our babies are in the cradle when bringing them UP and under the leadership of our First Lady. I believe we will head in the right direction," she said. The Second Lady praised the strategic actions adopted by Rachel and her office in amplifying positive environment care and climate actions including tree planting. Dorcas spoke on Monday during a meeting at the KICC, where Mama Rachel had hosted First Ladies from across the continent. Among the attendees were Burundi First

Lady Angeline Ndayishimiye and Sierra Leone First Lady Fatima Maada. The First Ladies attended a session on 'Driving Green Growth and Climate Solutions for Africa'. The session was also graced by government officials, the private sector, human rights activists and community organisations from across the globe.

## Violent protests after Quran burning in Sweden



*In Summary • Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday. • Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo.*

Three men have been arrested in connection with a violent riot following a Quran burning in Sweden. Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday. Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo. Several vehicles were set on fire after about hundred people gathered in response to the burning. Mr Momika set fire to a Quran in Varnhemstorget, a main square in the city on Sunday afternoon. He has previously desecrated the Quran, in a series of anti-Islam protests, and his actions have caused diplomatic outrage across the Middle East. A group of angry protesters tried to stop the burning, which resulted in a showdown between them and police. Officers said they were pelted with stones, while some demonstrators threw electric scooters at police vehicles. Several police cars were set on fire in Malmo's Rosengard neighbourhood, which has a large immigrant population, and has experienced other violent protests in the past. "I understand that a public gathering like this arouses strong emotions, but we cannot tolerate disturbances and violence like the ones we saw on Sunday afternoon," Malmo police area commander Petra Stenkula told local media. "It is extremely regrettable to once again see violence and vandalism at Rosengard." Scandinavia has witnessed a spate of Quran burnings this year. In June, Mr Momika set fire to a copy outside Stockholm's central mosque, as Muslims celebrated the first day of Eid al-Adha - one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar. Swedish police had given Mr Momika a permit for the protest, in accordance with their staunch free-speech laws. It later emerged the incident was being investigated for incitement of

hatred. In January, Rasmus Paludan, a politician from the Danish far-right Stram Kurs (Hard Line) party, burnt a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Last month, neighbouring Denmark, which has also seen several public burnings of the Quran, said it planned to ban public desecration of holy books. Sweden has pledged to explore legal means of abolishing protests that involve burning texts in certain circumstances.

## Biden disappointed Xi will not attend G20 summit



In Summary • Beijing said on Monday that its premier Li Qiang would lead China's delegation at the summit in Delhi this week. • US-China ties remain tense despite a flurry of diplomatic visits from Washington this year to revive dialogue.

US President Joe Biden has said he is "disappointed" that his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping plans to skip the upcoming G20 summit in India. "I am disappointed... but I am going to get to see him," Mr Biden told reporters on Sunday, but did not say when that meeting may take place. Beijing said on Monday that its premier Li Qiang would lead China's delegation at the summit in Delhi this week. Mr Xi and Mr Biden last met at the G20 summit in Indonesia last year. US-China ties remain tense despite a flurry of diplomatic visits from Washington this year to revive dialogue. China's foreign ministry neither confirmed nor denied Mr Xi's attendance at the Delhi summit when asked pointedly at Monday's press briefing. "Li Qiang will lead Chinese delegation to attend G20 summit. It's a major and important global economic forum. China has always attached importance on it and actively participated related events," a foreign ministry spokeswoman said. But news reports, citing unnamed sources familiar with the matter, said last week that Mr Xi does not plan to attend. The news comes amid worsening relations between China and India. Among other things, the two countries are facing off against each other along their disputed border in the Himalayan region. Just last week, India protested after Beijing released a map that claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin plateau as Chinese territory. Mr Xi and Mr Biden may still have an opportunity to speak in November, at a meeting among leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in San Francisco. About two months after the two leaders met in the Indonesian island of Bali last November, an alleged Chinese spy balloon in

skies above the US punctured hopes for a re-set in bilateral relations, delaying efforts to kickstart dialogue by months. The two countries disagree over a range of issues - Russia's invasion of Ukraine, human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, territorial claims to Taiwan and the South China Sea, and economic restrictions that limit Beijing's access to high-tech components. In an attempt to improve ties, a series of top US officials have travelled to China in recent months. They include Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, and US Special Envoy for Climate John Kerry. Meanwhile, Mr Xi continues to portray Beijing as a leader of the developing world, rallying support for an alternative to the Washington-led world order. In a visit to South Africa last month to meet with leaders of the Brics nations, he criticised the West's "hegemony" and urged developing nations to "[shake] off the yoke of colonialism" in his speeches. The Brics originally refers to five-nation club of developing countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Six new countries - Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - are set to join in January, in what's widely seen as a diplomatic win for Beijing.

## Israel considers tough steps to deport rioting Eritreans



In Summary Police in riot gear fired tear gas, stun grenades and live rounds as officers on horseback tried to push the protesters away. An investigation has been opened into whether the use of live fire was within the law.

Israel is considering tough steps including the immediate deportation of Eritrean asylum seekers involved in riots in Tel Aviv on Saturday. Some 170 people were injured in violent clashes with police and in-fighting between groups of supporters and opponents of the Eritrean regime. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "a red line" had been crossed. He also ordered a new plan to remove all African migrants that he described as "illegal infiltrators". Saturday's unprecedented disorder began after activists opposed to the Eritrean government said that they had asked Israeli authorities to cancel an event organised by their country's embassy. They broke through a police barricade around the venue, which was then vandalised. Police in riot gear fired

tear gas, stun grenades and live rounds as officers on horseback tried to push the protesters away. An investigation has been opened into whether the use of live fire was within the law. Israeli police - several dozen of whom were among the injured - said they felt their lives were at risk. There were also dramatic street battles between large crowds of Eritreans armed with pieces of wood, metal and rocks. As well as attacking each other, they smashed shop windows and cars. The divisions within Eritrea over the rule of President Isaias Afwerki have spilled over into the diaspora, and this is the latest outbreak of violence in recent weeks. Residents said the streets of central Tel Aviv sounded like a war zone over several hours, with police helicopters hovering overhead and sirens blaring.

**Hardline choices** The rioting has put the divisive issue of migrants back on the political agenda, at a time when Israel is already split over the hardline government's highly controversial judicial overhaul plan. Mr Netanyahu and others in his cabinet have blamed the Supreme Court for blocking earlier attempted action to push migrants out of Israel. "Now there remains a serious problem with the illegal infiltrators in south Tel Aviv and elsewhere," the prime minister said at Sunday's special government meeting. "We want harsh measures against the rioters, including the immediate deportation of those who took part." He requested that the ministers present him with plans "for the removal of all the other illegal infiltrators". The far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir now plans to propose a bill that would overturn part of Israel's quasi-constitutional basic law on human dignity and liberty to press ahead with the mass deportation of migrants who entered the country illegally. It is estimated that there are about 18,000 asylum seekers from Eritrea in Israel, most of whom arrived illegally years ago by crossing Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. They say they fled danger, persecution and compulsory military conscription in one of the world's most repressive countries. Although Eritreans supporting the regime would not appear to be in need of international protection as refugees, the authorities in Israel have not made differentiations between asylum seekers based on their political affiliations until now. As Eritrea marks 30 years of independence from Ethiopia, festivals have been held by its diaspora. But as well as Israel, some in Europe and North America have been marred by outbreaks of violence - last month a three-day Eritrean cultural festival in Toronto, Canada, was cancelled after supporters and opponents of Eritrea's regime clashed.

## US jail in lockdown as 100 prisoners stage protests



*In Summary* • Members of a crisis negotiation team were deployed to the Stillwater correctional facility on Sunday. • In total, about 1,200 inmates are incarcerated at the facility, according to department records.

A jail in the US state of Minnesota has been placed under emergency lockdown after about 100 inmates refused to return to their cells. Members of a crisis negotiation team were deployed to the Stillwater correctional facility on Sunday. A spokesperson for the state's Department of Corrections (DOC) said the reasons behind the incident "remains unclear". But advocates say the move is in protest over prison conditions. Excessive heat, limited access to showers and ice and unclean drinking water are among the reasons cited for the incident which took place in one of the facility's living units on Sunday. Extra police units, firefighters and other emergency teams are stationed outside the facility in Baywater, about 25 miles (40km) east of the state's largest city Minneapolis. A US National Weather Service heat advisory is in place until Tuesday for the area, warning temperatures could reach up to 100F (37.7C). The increasing frequency of dangerously hot conditions has drawn renewed attention to US prisons and calls for reform. Inmates have reportedly been on intermittent lockdowns since Friday because of staffing issues, meaning they are kept in their cells which reportedly do not have air conditioning. AFSCME Council 5, the union which represents Minnesota correctional officers, said that understaffing was to blame for Sunday's incident. A spokesperson said the incident was "endemic and highlights the truth behind the operations of the MN Department of Corrections with chronic understaffing". Such conditions upset inmates because of restrictions placed on program and recreation time "when there are not enough security staff to protect the facility", they added. The DOC says that two correctional officers are safe in the unit's secure control area. All DOC staff have been removed from the common areas of the unit currently occupied by prisoners. The special operations response team had been deployed "out of an abundance of caution", a spokesperson said, adding the situation was "currently stable". In total, about 1,200 inmates are incarcerated at the facility, according to department records.

## Teacher suicide exposes parent bullying in S Korea



*In Summary •On 3 July the primary school teacher wrote that she had become so overwhelmed by the craziness of work she "wanted to let go". •Two weeks later, the 23-year-old was found dead in her classroom store cupboard by her colleagues. She had taken her own life.*

On 5 June, Lee Min-so\* described in her diary the fear that overtook her body as she entered her classroom to teach: "My chest feels too tight. I feel like I'm going to fall somewhere. I don't even know where I am." On 3 July the primary school teacher wrote that she had become so overwhelmed by the craziness of work she "wanted to let go". Two weeks later, the 23-year-old was found dead in her classroom store cupboard by her colleagues. She had taken her own life. Min-so's cousin, Park Du-yong, struggles not to cry as he straightens out her small, empty apartment, now home to just her goldfish. Her bed is unmade, and beside it sits a pile of drawings from her first-grade students, telling her how much they loved her. Underneath is a stack of library books on how to cope with depression. Park says his cousin had been teaching for little over a year, fulfilling her childhood dream by following her mother into the profession. She had adored the kids, he says. So in the days after his cousin's death, which police quickly pinned on a recent breakup, Park assumed the role of detective. He unearthed hundreds of diary entries, work logs and text messages. They revealed that in the months leading up to her suicide, Min-so had been bombarded by complaints from parents. Most recently, one of her pupils had slashed another child's head with a pencil, and she'd been embroiled in heated late phone calls and messages with the parents. This tragedy has unleashed a wave of anger from primary school teachers across South Korea, who have started to share their experiences of being bullied by overbearing parents and unruly children. Tens of thousands of them have gone on strike to demand better protection at work. They say parents frequently push them to breaking point, by calling their personal phones every hour of the day and weekends, incessantly and unfairly complaining. Some of the complaints have an especially sinister edge. Teachers can be reported for child abuse for restraining a violent child, while a telling off is frequently labelled as emotional abuse. Such accusations can see teachers immediately

removed from their jobs. One teacher received a complaint after denying a parent's request to wake their child up with a phone call each morning. Another was reported for emotional abuse after taking reward stickers off a boy who had cut his classmate with scissors. For the past six weeks, tens of thousands of teachers have rallied in Seoul, claiming they are now so scared of being called child abusers, they are unable to discipline their students and intervene as they attack each other. They accuse parents of exploiting a child welfare law, passed in 2014, which dictates that teachers who are accused of child abuse are automatically suspended. At one protest, 28-year old teacher Kim Jin-seo said that she had experienced suicidal thoughts, and needed three months off work, following two particularly aggressive complaints. In one case she had asked a disruptive pupil to take five minutes to gather their thoughts in the toilet, while in the other she had reported a child to his parents for fighting. In both instances, the school forced her to apologise. Kim said she reached the point where she did not feel she could safely teach her class: "We teachers feel extremely disempowered. Those who have had experienced this first-hand are fundamentally changed, and those who haven't, have seen it happen to others, so either way it is debilitating." Fuelling this culture of complaining is South Korea's hyper-competitive society, where almost everything hinges on academic success. Students compete fiercely for the best grades from a very young age, to one day get into the best universities. Outside school, parents send their children to study at expensive extra-curriculum schools known as hagwons, which operate from 5am to 10pm. Whereas families in Korea used to have five or six children, now most have just one, meaning they have just one shot at success.

## Sakaja's Dishi na County to get Sh160m from French government



*In Summary •The feeding program which was effected last week will be implemented through an innovative three-stage approach •At least 81, 208 school children in 42 schools in Nairobi will enjoy their meals in Phase One of the programme*

Nairobi's Dishi na County programme has been handed a boost after the French Government pledged Sh 160 million towards the school feeding

programme. The money will go towards ensuring all children in Public Primary Schools and ECDs get a nutritious meal through the programme partner Food for Education. The pledge was made by the French Minister of State for Development, Dr. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou on Monday when she joined Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja Johnson in Olympic Primary School, Kibra to oversee the feeding programme. Welcoming the move, Sakaja said the funds will be well utilized to ensure the targeted children get their meals. "The French Government has committed to support us in this program to the tune of €1 Million which adds to the 1.7b shillings we have provided as Nairobi County Govt and will help us continue subsidizing meals for the Children and scaling," he said. The feeding program which was effected last week will be implemented through an innovative three-stage approach.

## Stations with most cancellations revealed



*In Summary •The government said operators needed to deliver punctual services and improve delays and cancellations. •The analysis of National Rail data, collated by On Time Trains, shows that, of the 100 busiest railway stations, Manchester Victoria had the second highest cancellation rate at 10%.*

Britain's busiest railway stations with the highest rates of cancelled trains this year have been revealed. As of 31 July, Huddersfield has had more than 5,500 scheduled trains cancelled - the highest rate at 13%. BBC analysis of National Rail data also shows that almost half of the trains that ran across Britain were at least one minute late. The government said operators needed to deliver punctual services and improve delays and cancellations. The analysis of National Rail data, collated by On Time Trains, shows that, of the 100 busiest railway stations, Manchester Victoria had the second highest cancellation rate at 10%. York, Newcastle and Manchester Oxford Road all followed at 9%. Caroline Devonport, from South Kirkby, has been catching the train to Huddersfield for five years. "The last six months have been absolutely horrendous," the 48-year-old said. "Because of the risk of delay, I now leave an hour early for work. I'm absolutely shattered all the time from being on trains." I've seen quite a lot of aggression towards guards from other passengers because people are late and delayed and frustrated. "The strikes have an impact, but the train companies themselves are really

badly managed, and their customer services are often very rude." TransPennine Express (TPE), which manages Huddersfield, was brought under government control in May after months of complaints about delays and cancellations. Prior to being taken over, it had the highest cancellation rate of all train operators, according to data from the Office of Rail and Road. Chris Jackson, interim TPE managing director, said, since coming under government control, "we have seen improvements in performance and have made real progress in rebuilding union relationships on a local level". He said that the resumption of drivers working on rest days had helped bring cancellations at Huddersfield down "to 3.5%, with an overall figure of 5.5% for the entire TPE network". "We know there is more to do, and we are actively developing plans to deliver the reliable, punctual and resilient railway our customers expect and deserve," Mr Jackson added. 'Sort this out' The analysis of data for 2,555 stations also suggests that, between 1 January and 31 July: In total, 3% of trains in Great Britain were cancelled, 56% were on time, while 41% were at least one minute late. Overall, stations in Wales had the highest cancellation rate, at 7%. Of the English regions, the North East had the highest cancellation rate, at 6%. But Yorkshire and the Humber had the lowest percent of trains on time, at 42%. Paul Tuohy, chief executive officer of the charity Campaign for Better Transport, said: "We want people to travel by train so high rates of cancellations are unacceptable." The government and industry need to sort this out and ensure services run to schedule so that passengers can travel with confidence. Christine Wise, 57, from Stalybridge, said she cannot rely on the local train to get to her new job in Manchester. "At least one a morning is cancelled," she said, adding that she now drives to Ashton-under-Lyne to catch a tram. "It takes much longer, about 40 minutes. It's irritating because it's lost time. I get up quite early in the morning to get to work, to get in early, to get my work done. I don't like the lost time element of things." Over my lifetime, trains have never really run to time, but there weren't as many delays and cancellations as there are now. It's markedly worse. "Quietly scrapped" Network Rail said: "We know performance has not been good enough for passengers and we're working closely with train operating companies to improve." Moving forward, the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) will allow us to take a holistic view of performance, simplifying our rail network and providing better, more reliable services for our passengers and freight customers. "In March, Derby was chosen to host GBR's headquarters, a planned public body which will run trains across the country and set most fares and timetables. Four months later, Rail Minister Huw Merriman reassured the city that the government remains "really committed" to GBR, denying reports it had been "quietly scrapped." The railways have seen strike action each month this year. On 1 September, members of the Associated Society of Locomotive

Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) went on strike, impacting 16 operators. The following day, 20,000 RMT members also took action. Mike Whelan, general secretary of ASLEF, said the rail industry had declined under the Conservative government. "That's the price we are all paying - passengers, staff, and businesses in Britain - for privatisation which everyone in the railway industry - except the ideologues in the government - knows hasn't worked," he said. "We should be encouraging more people to use our trains - taking cars off the roads and reducing carbon emissions - rather than trying to deter passengers from travelling." A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "Ministers have been clear with operators they need to deliver punctual services, keeping delays to a minimum." To help make our railways more reliable, it's crucial unions agree to reforms that will modernise the industry."

## Starmer to reshuffle Labour shadow cabinet

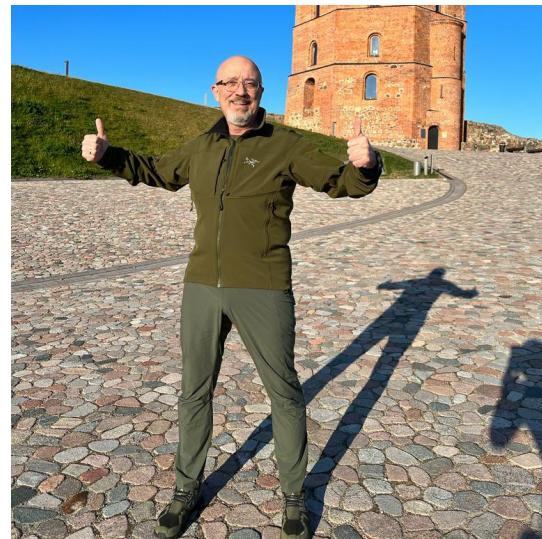


In Summary • Angela Rayner was directly elected to be deputy leader by party members, meaning she will keep that position no matter what. • The reshuffle will come on Sue Gray's first day as Sir Keir's chief of staff. The former civil servant rose to fame during her investigation of Partygate.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer is expected to reshuffle his shadow cabinet on Monday. The long-awaited change of Labour's top team coincides with MPs returning to Westminster from their summer break. There is much speculation over what role Sir Keir may give his deputy leader Angela Rayner. The reshuffle will come on Sue Gray's first day as Sir Keir's chief of staff. The former civil servant rose to fame during her investigation of Partygate. It is not expected that Sir Keir will swap his most senior colleagues - including the shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves, shadow health secretary Wes Streeting and shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper. Angela Rayner was directly elected to be deputy leader by party members, meaning she will keep that position no matter what. But she also currently shadows the Cabinet Office brief, which focusses on government procedure and the effective running of government. In government the Cabinet Office is headed up by Ms Rayner's opposite number the deputy prime minister Oliver Dowden. In recent years she has focused heavily on scrutinising ethical issues in politics, from so-called "sleaze" to accusing her opposite numbers

of "wasting taxpayers money". Some Labour sources expect that she may be put in charge of running a specific, domestic policy area instead. A few names that have been tipped for possible promotion include the chair of parliament's business committee - Darren Jones. He has been widely regarded as an effective communicator and his forensic grilling of companies such as Thames Water, Royal Mail and P&O; at various committee hearings has often landed him positive headlines. If promoted, it is not clear what policy area could be vacated for him to fill. He could possibly cover the environment, if Jim McMahon is demoted. Labour still also has not appointed anyone to shadow the government's new science, innovation and technology secretary. Mr Jones has been vocal about, for example, his belief that Artificial Intelligence and technology can be a "force for good" if adopted in the right way and should be central to Labour's plans for improving education or the NHS. Lucy Powell currently covers the digital, culture and media brief for Labour so could also be a potential candidate should this role be filled. Rishi Sunak also made a few changes to his top team last Thursday. He replaced the former defence secretary Ben Wallace with Grant Shapps, and promoted his close ally Claire Coutinho to be the energy and net zero secretary. The prime minister is expected to carry out a wider government reshuffle in the coming months. Both parties are holding annual party conferences in October and both leaders are hoping to get their top teams in shape ahead of the next general election - expected at some point next year.

## Ukraine's defence minister dismissed by Zelensky



In Summary • Reznikov had led the ministry since before the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. • Rustem Umerov, who runs Ukraine's State Property Fund, has been nominated by Mr Zelensky as Mr Reznikov's successor.

Ukraine's Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov has been dismissed from his post, the country's leader

Volodymyr Zelensky has announced. Mr Reznikov had led the ministry since before the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. But in his nightly address, President Zelensky said it was time for "new approaches" in the defence ministry. Rustem Umerov, who runs Ukraine's State Property Fund, has been nominated by Mr Zelensky as Mr Reznikov's successor. "I believe that the ministry needs new approaches and other formats of interaction with both the military and society as a whole," the Ukrainian president said in his address from the capital Kyiv. Ukrainian media has speculated that Mr Reznikov will become Kyiv's new ambassador in London, where he has developed good relations with senior politicians. The 57-year-old has become a well-known figure since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Internationally recognised, he has regularly attended meetings with Ukraine's western allies and played a key role in lobbying for additional military equipment. But his dismissal has been anticipated for some time. Last week, Mr Reznikov told reporters he was exploring other positions with the Ukrainian president. According to local media, the former defence minister said that if Mr Zelensky offered the opportunity for him to work on another project he would probably agree. Ukrainian defence advisor Yuriy Sak told the BBC that Mr Reznikov spearheaded the transformation of the ministry, laying the groundwork for future NATO membership. "His legacy is that he has convinced ministers of defence around the world that the impossible is possible," he said in reference to Mr Reznikov's successful lobbying of foreign governments for arms. But experts have observed that the cabinet reshuffle is unlikely to lead to any major change in Ukraine's battlefield strategy, with Gen Valery Zaluzhny - the commander of Ukraine's armed forces - overseeing the campaign. Mr Reznikov's dismissal comes amid a wider anti-corruption drive in Mr Zelensky's administration, with weeding out graft in the state seen as essential to Ukraine's desire to join Western institutions like the EU. According to the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Ukraine ranks 116th out of 180, but efforts in recent years have seen its position improve significantly. While Mr Reznikov is not personally accused of corruption, there have been a number of scandals at the ministry of defence involving the procurement of goods and equipment for the army at inflated prices. Earlier this year Mr Reznikov's deputy, Vyacheslav Shapovalov, resigned in the wake of the scandal. It was widely reported at the time that Mr Reznikov barely held on to his own post. At the time, he said the stress he had endured was "hard to measure precisely", adding that his "conscience is absolutely clear". The defence ministry has also been rocked by several recent arrests at regional recruitment offices, where officers have been accused of taking bribes to allow men to avoid Ukraine's military draft. On Friday, the US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met with senior Ukrainian anti-corruption officials and urged

them to continue prosecuting anti-graft cases "no matter where they lead". Mr Reznikov will be replaced by Mr Umerov, who represented Ukraine in peace talks at the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion. The ex-MP allegedly suffered symptoms of suspected poisoning during peace negotiations in March 2022 alongside Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich - who was also part of the negotiating party. In a statement posted to Facebook he later denied the reports, urging people not to trust "unverified information". Speaking to the BBC at the time, he said it took courage to find solutions but he was determined "to find [a] political and diplomatic resolution to this brutal invasion". A member of the Crimean Tatar community, he has become a key member of Mr Zelensky's international outreach efforts, focussing on fostering ties in the Islamic world. Mr Reznikov's dismissal comes as Ukraine wages a slow and bloody counter-offensive after securing more advanced weapons from Western allies. Progress on the frontline has been slow but top Ukrainian generals said on Sunday that their forces have broken through a key line of Russian defences in the south of the country. Meanwhile, Russia reported several attempted drone attacks on its territory overnight. The defence ministry said it shot down two drones over the Kursk region, which borders Ukraine, early on Monday. The region's governor Roman Stravoit also reported on Sunday that debris from a destroyed drone had caused a fire at a non-residential building in the city of Kurchatov. Elsewhere, Russia launched its own overnight attack on Izmail port - one of Ukraine's two major grain-exporting ports on the Danube River in the Odesa region. The Danube ports have become Ukraine's major exporting route since the collapse of the Black Sea grain deal in July. Moscow has launched frequent attacks on the Danube since withdrawing from the deal.

## One dead in Burning Man during heavy rain



In Summary • Revellers have been told to take shelter and conserve their food, while roads in and out of the event are closed as vehicles can barely move. • Burning Man is held in the Black Rock Desert, which is usually dry and dusty.

An investigation has been launched into the death of a person during torrential rain at the Burning Man festival in the US state of Nevada. Thousands of

people remain stranded at the event after the bad weather turned the ground to deep, slippery mud. Revellers have been told to take shelter and conserve their food, while roads in and out of the event are closed as vehicles can barely move. Burning Man is held in the Black Rock Desert, which is usually dry and dusty. In a statement on Saturday, the Pershing County Sheriff's Office said it is "currently investigating a death which occurred during this rain event" but did not give any further details on the circumstances. The person's family had been notified, the statement added. The unusual rainstorms came towards the end of the nine-day festival, when the biggest crowds arrive to see the grand finale - the burning of the giant wooden man. The worst of the rain has now passed, according to BBC Weather, but there is still a risk of some further showers and thunderstorms. It could be several days before the ground dries up enough for people to leave and for this reason, they have been told to conserve their food, water and fuel. The festival's toilets are also out of use, revellers say, because the service vehicles cannot drive on the mud to empty them. According to the sheriff's office, some people who had tried to drive out of the festival had instead made the muddy ground even worse. Festival-goers told the BBC they watched on as some people tried to drive away - but they quickly became bogged in the thick clay-like mud. More than 70,000 people had arrived at the site before it was closed on Saturday but the exact number of those still there is unclear. Some have managed to leave the site, however, American DJ Diplo wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that he and comedian Chris Rock walked 5 miles (8km) to a road, where they were given a lift by fans. Others have also had to rely on strangers. Ashley Smith, who lives in London, told the BBC that he and his friends left a lot of their gear behind and walked to the road, where they managed to hitchhike to San Francisco. The whole journey took 14 hours. The event's organisers have arranged for buses to pick people up from the road and take them to the city of Reno, more than 100 miles away. Photos show tents partially submerged in muddy flood water. Milia Nirshberg, 12, who is at the festival with her father for the second year running, told the BBC that they had let friends stay in their campervan, and were also allowing people to use the van's toilet. "The people in the tents are having a hard time because it's flooding. Since we're in a campervan we're trying to invite people to come stay with us because they don't have food or water," she said. Burning Man is one of America's most well-known arts and culture events. Visitors create a temporary city in the middle of the desert, and are expected to be largely self-sufficient while they are there. "We have come here knowing this is a place where we bring everything we need to survive," said Burning Man in a statement. "It is because of this that we are all well-prepared for a weather event like this." As well as music, the festival usually features giant interactive art installations - but

many of the attractions had to be cancelled. Nonetheless, many were trying to make the best of the situation, dancing in the mud to techno music. "We're taking it as an opportunity to hang out and spend more time with our new friends and old friends in the camp," reveller, Josiah Roe said. Burning Man was founded in June 1986 and was first held in Nevada's Black Rock Desert in 1990. Tickets can be very hard to get and festival-goers sometimes interview to get into popular camps and have to prove their commitment to its ideals. Some groups spend the entire year planning their camp, artwork and theme. But this year there had been worries about the weather and tickets were changing hands on the secondary market at below market rate.

## Global search for Paul McCartney's lost guitar



In Summary McCartney bought the instrument for £30 (\$38) in Hamburg, Germany, in 1961, but it disappeared eight years later. The bass features in The Beatles' music of those years, including the hits Love Me Do and She Loves You.

A global search has been launched to find one of the world's most iconic instruments - Paul McCartney's original Höfner bass guitar. The Lost Bass Project is appealing for information about what it describes as "the most important bass in history". McCartney bought the instrument for £30 (\$38) in Hamburg, Germany, in 1961, but it disappeared eight years later. The bass features in The Beatles' music of those years, including the hits Love Me Do and She Loves You. Nick Wass is heading Höfner's search project and has joined forces with two journalists in trying to solve the "greatest mystery in the history of rock and roll". He has collaborated extensively with McCartney and written a book about the missing Höfner 500/1 Violin Bass. Wass told the BBC that the famous Beatle asked him about the guitar during a recent conversation - and that is how the campaign to find it began. It is not clear what happened to the instrument, which was put away presumably after the Beatles finished filming Get Back in 1969, he said. "It's not clear where it was stored, who might have been there. "For most people, they will remember it... it's the bass that made the Beatles," Wass said.

## Ukraine punches through key Russian line, generals claim



*In Summary • Ukrainian forces raised the country's blue and yellow flag over the village more than a week ago, and are now trying to widen the gap to allow larger infantry. • If that can be achieved, there is a chance Ukraine's offensive can gain momentum as it approaches second and third defensive lines.*

Ukrainian generals claim they have breached Russia's formidable first line of defences in the south, as the counter-offensive launched earlier this summer may be poised to gather pace. Since June, Kyiv's territorial gains have been very small - but is Ukraine finally at a turning point? "Yes, it's true," says Yuriy Sak, an advisor to Ukraine's defence minister, when asked if the breach had happened. "Little by little, I think we're gaining momentum," he said. "We are now between the first and second defensive lines," one of Ukraine's top generals in the south, Brig Gen Oleksandr Tarnavskiy told Britain's Observer newspaper. His words echoed those of the White House spokesman John Kirby, who on Friday told reporters in Washington that Ukrainian forces had "achieved some success against that second line." The focus of Ukraine's counter-offensive effort in recent weeks has been an expanding bridgehead around the tiny village of Robotyne, some 56km (35 miles) south-east of the city of Zaporizhzhia. Ukrainian forces raised the country's blue and yellow flag over the village more than a week ago, and are now trying to widen the gap to allow larger infantry and armoured units to pass through without coming under Russian fire. If that can be achieved, there is a chance Ukraine's offensive can gain momentum as it approaches second and third defensive lines, which may not be quite as robust as the first. Fighting has been reported east of Robotyne, on the edge of the larger village of Verbove, but like everything so far, it's slow, painstaking work. A glance at the map shows a mass of overlapping, complex Russian defensive lines, complete with minefields, tank traps and trenches. Some of them converge at Verbove. Without air cover and in the face of sometimes withering Russian artillery fire, small Ukrainian units have been clearing a way through these hazards, preparing the ground for a larger assault. "When these openings appear, of course, it makes it easier for our forces to advance," Mr Sak said. The fog of war is hard to assess the significance of the latest claims. Ukrainian officials are extremely tight-lipped when asked for precise details, preferring to allow the fog of war to

shroud Kyiv's intentions and extremely reluctant to avoid releasing sensitive information. It does not help that the forces closest to the fight sometimes give very different accounts of what is happening at the front. Approached by the BBC on Saturday, Ukraine's 46th Air Assault Brigade said fighting was continuing near Russia's first line of defence, but that "no one has yet managed to go beyond the first line." This may be less surprising than it sounds. A plethora of units are operating up and down the front, each concentrating on their own narrow section and specific tasks. They do not necessarily know what is going on elsewhere. One of those units, a volunteer battalion known by its commander's call sign "Skala", told Reuters news agency that its men had broken through Russia's first line on 26 August. On Sunday, Skala told us his men were still pushing forward. "Literally, we are moving along the Zaporizhzhia region to the sea," he said in a voice message, without giving further details. "I don't want to rush ahead, but both we and the General Staff are doing everything for the fastest victory." Hard as it is to gauge the precise nature and direction of Ukraine's recent gains, it is clear that the Kremlin is alarmed. It has recently sent elite troops from other parts of the long front line to bolster defences between Robotyne and the key road and railway hub of Tokmak, 21km to the south. According to the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW), this is the third time since June. "The second lateral deployment in the span of a few weeks suggests an increasing Russian concern about the stability of Russian defences," the ISW reported in its assessment on 1 September. This, Ukrainian experts claim, is part of Kyiv's plan: forcing Moscow to move front line units from one place to another in an effort to wear them down. "We're trying to involve their reserves and exhaust them," says Serhiy Kuzan, of the Ukrainian Security and Cooperation Centre, a Kyiv think tank with close ties to the military. The next job, he says, is to exploit any sign of Russian weakness. "The main thing is to widen this bridgehead," he says. "There won't be any orders to go deeper until we do that." Despite the apparently glacial progress of the offensive since June, Mr Kuzan says the fundamental objective has not changed: control of the south. What that looks like by the time winter arrives is an open question. Ideally, Kyiv would like its forces to have reached the Sea of Azov, cutting through Moscow's "land bridge" to the Crimean Peninsula. But even if this does not happen, Ukraine is determined to cut the supply lines that allow Russian forces to maintain a presence in the southern part of the Kherson region, between the Dnipro river and Crimea. Some of those links, including the railway that passes through Tokmak, are already highly vulnerable to Ukrainian long range weapons, such as the HIMARS multiple rocket launcher. With the other key rail link - the one across the Kerch Bridge - the target of repeated Ukrainian attacks since last October, Mr Kuzan says Russia is transporting 70% of its supplies along the

M-14 highway, which runs closer to the coast."We have to get the land route... under fire control," he says, meaning that Ukrainian guns need to be close enough to be able to target the road.That's still a distant goal.The M-14 is still more than 80km away. There are multiple Russian lines of defence, and Ukrainian forces will be attacked from the ground and air every step of the way.Another glance at the map shows that Ukraine's territorial gains, since June, have been tiny.Kyiv's first encounter with Russia's well-entrenched defences was always going to be among the hardest phases. It may be some time before we know if the breach at Robotyne represents a turning point."Tough battles are to be expected," Mr Kuzan adds.

## The new generation taking over from Asia's richest man



*In Summary This transition signifies the company's entry into its third generation of family leadership. The Ambanis are a ubiquitous presence in India, and everything the family does has been the subject of intense public fascination.*

For months, the world has been captivated by the last season of Succession, the Emmy-winning TV drama on the lives of the corporate élite.But in India, a real-life succession plan, involving a fortune of billions of dollars, is making news.The three children of Mukesh Ambani, Asia's richest man and head of Reliance Industries, have now taken seats on the board of his expansive \$220bn (£173bn) retail-to-refining conglomerate.Twins Isha and Akash, 31, and Anant, 28, will join the board following shareholder approval. "The combination of the experience of senior leaders and the ambition of new leaders will script newer and more exciting chapters in Reliance's every growing book of achievements," Mukesh Ambani said in a statement on Monday.This transition signifies the company's entry into its third generation of family leadership in what is perhaps corporate India's most anticipated succession plan.With a sprawling business empire which ranges from oil, telecoms, chemicals, technology, and fashion to even food - the Ambanis are a ubiquitous presence in India, and everything the family does has been the subject of intense public fascination.The children have their task cut out.The group plans to enter general and health insurance possibly in partnership with global firms. It is planning to introduce 5G wireless broadband services in 200 million homes and develop 2,000 megawatts of AI-ready computing capacity.It plans an ambitious wind energy business and a solar giga factory. The firm's ambitious retail arm has revived a popular 1970s soft drink, Campa Cola, and is planning to take it global.Sandeep Nerlekar, who runs succession advisory firm Terentia Consultants, says that Mr Ambani and his wife Nita have been grooming their children for this moment for years."They did not inherit the business just because they're Mukesh Ambani's children, it's a well-thought-out strategy. He has taken time to plan a succession, very clearly identifying business vertical based on their strengths."Mr Ambani has been described as an "inscrutable" man who was raised poor and prefers to maintain a low profile. His children grew up in utmost luxury. They were raised in mansions, frequently traveling on private planes and mingling with celebrities.Unlike Mr Ambani, who had to drop out of Stanford to look after his father's business, twins Isha and Akash graduated from Yale and Brown, respectively. Together, they routinely make appearances in corporate events and adorn the covers of magazines. Both of them have married into other wealthy industrialist

families, with the lavish ceremonies graced by stars from across the world, including Beyoncé. Mr Nerlekar says the entire family, including Mr Ambani, has been "under the radar" for various reasons including their spends on luxury, weddings and properties. The fact that the children are still young heightens the excitement around their lives and could now put them under more spotlight - but "they know what they are doing and have been groomed well". After completing college, Akash joined the leadership team at the group's telecom unit, Reliance Jio, in 2014. He manages the Mumbai Indians cricket team in the cash-rich Indian Premier League. Akash was also part of a team that brokered a \$5.7bn investment in 2020 by Meta Platforms in a Reliance unit, Jio Platforms. Isha, on the other hand, has been already tasked with driving the company's retail, e-commerce and luxury plans. She is said to be behind the firm's expanding presence in fashion through the company's e-commerce app as well as its growing partnerships with top international luxury brands. Isha's rise in Reliance's core business is significant because she has been given a senior leadership role, when other women in the family have played largely peripheral roles in the business till now. In 2021, Fortune magazine referred to her as "heiress on duty" while ranking her the 21st most powerful woman in India. And according to her father, she is also feisty. In an interview with the New York Times, Mr Ambani said that his daughter often questioned her father's way of doing business. She once asked him to "re-evaluate" his portfolio, he recalled, because some of his companies were in the plastics business, which "pollutes a lot". The younger son, Anant, is involved in Reliance's energy businesses, which range from fossil fuels to developing solar panel manufacturing. Also a graduate of Brown University, Anant, who serves on the board of Reliance Charity alongside his mother, is often seen accompanying her to their team's cricket matches during the IPL season. Himanshu Rai, director of IIM-Indore, told Business Standard newspaper that the succession was a positive signal to all stakeholders and "will also prevent any dispute in the future". Many remember the bitter feud between Mr Ambani and his younger brother, Anil Ambani, over their inherited conglomerate after their father's death in 2002. Without a will to divide the assets, the brothers could not agree on how to run the family business for years before their mother worked out a compromise. "What they went through was bitter so they would want to define their succession at the right time," Mr Nerlekar says. He adds that after the pandemic, people around the world are focusing more on their own mortality, wanting to put their succession plans and wills in order. "The uncertainty and the simple fact that you could fall seriously ill or die has played a part in Mukesh Ambani's succession plan." The change in leadership also comes at a time when the Ambani empire's dominance has been challenged by the rise of coal and infrastructure tycoon Gautam Adani, who

briefly overtook him as Asia's richest man last year. The two are in direct competition for India's renewable energy market and their increasing competition is keenly watched in India's business circles. For now, Mr Ambani has said he will remain chairman and managing director for five more years, preparing Reliance's "Next-Gen leaders" and mentoring his children "so that they can provide collective leadership and dependably take Reliance to greater heights". Mr Nerlekar says that Mr Ambani has a good team who has been with him for years and will help the next-generation leaders in defining the future growth strategies. But only time will tell how the children will take it from here and the next few years will be crucial. "After Mr Ambani, someone has to lead the group, so he will use this plan to identify the right leader," Mr Nerlekar says. "But he's in no hurry."

## Infant leukaemia: Mum hopes study spares other from her heartbreak



In Summary Callan Brett, 33, from Ipswich, lost her son Henry to infant acute myeloid leukaemia in May 2021. Diagnosed at five months old, Henry was just 14 months old when he died.

A mother whose baby son died of a rare form of blood cancer says she hopes new research will spare other families from similar "heartbreak". Callan Brett, 33, from Ipswich, lost her son Henry to infant acute myeloid leukaemia in May 2021. Diagnosed at five months old, Henry was just 14 months old when he died. Mrs Brett says a new research project into infant leukaemia at the University of Edinburgh meant the "the world" to her and her family. The research, co-funded by Leukaemia UK and Worldwide Cancer Research, aims to uncover kinder and more effective treatments for infant leukaemia - a rare but devastating disease which affects babies under 12 months. The project is being led by Prof Katrin Ottersbach at Edinburgh's Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Prof Ottersbach says: "The treatment of infant leukaemia has not improved for decades. "This research will allow us to investigate what makes blood cancer in infants unique, and how we can treat it more efficiently." Mrs Brett says: "I was shell-shocked when we were told that Henry had infant leukaemia. "The only way I can describe it is total devastation. "All I could feel was sheer panic. "Later, I felt such guilt as well. If he'd been my first child, I might have worried sooner, but because

he was my second - and because he was such a happy baby - I was more relaxed. I just felt so guilty."What is infant leukaemia?Leukaemia is a form of blood cancer which is caused by abnormal white blood cellsInfant leukaemia, which affects children under the age of one, is rare and very difficult to treatDespite progress made in treating leukaemia for older children and adults in recent decades, researchers have struggled to achieve the same success in treating infant leukaemia - with aggressive treatment methods largely unchanged since the 1960sHenry spent more than half of his life in hospital and underwent four rounds of chemotherapy.Two years after Henry's death, Mrs Brett and her husband James hope sharing Henry's story will raise awareness of infant leukaemia and highlight the need for research."My baby cannot have died for no reason," she says. "His death has to mean something."If I have to live the entire rest of my life without him, then there has to be progress in that time."Mrs Brett recently met with Prof Ottersbach to learn more about the project."It means so much to be here, and to meet the amazing, dedicated people who are working on defeating this disease," she says. "It just means the world.""We cannot stand by knowing that more research could spare another family from his type of heartbreak."Prof Ottersbach's project runs until October 2025.It will investigate two genes that are involved in the most common type of infant leukaemia."Both of these genes, SGMS1 and ELOVL1, are involved in regulating the fat content of cells," she says, "Suggesting that infant leukaemia cells have specific fat requirements that are important to keep them alive."Maybe if you can stop the cancer cells getting the fat they need, you can potentially stop the cancer from growing."

## One in six Welsh shops are now empty, data shows



In Summary The Welsh government said its retail action plan was working to bring "vibrancy" back to town centres. Sara Jones said Welsh retailers were "grappling with several cost challenges".

Wales has the second highest number of vacant shops in the UK, according to new figures.Just over one in six shops in Wales are empty, analysis from the Welsh Retail Consortium (WRC) shows."Clearly that's bad news for the economy because retail plays such an integral role," said Sara Jones from the WRC.The Welsh government said its retail action

plan was working to bring "vibrancy" back to town centres.Sara Jones said Welsh retailers were "grappling with several cost challenges". "They come from all different quarters - whether it is business rates, energy prices or local challenges like antisocial behaviour affecting footfall in shops," she said.The rate of empty shops in Wales rose from 16.5% to 17.0% in the second quarter of 2023, according to the WRC. It's a mess'Research carried out by the Centre for Cities in 2021 found that Newport had more empty units than any other city in the UK.Jeanette Scurry, who was shopping in Newport, said: "I usually go to Cardiff or Cwmbran even though I live in Newport."But I thought today I'd come to Newport. I don't know why I bothered. There's nothing here, it's a mess."Image caption,High Street and Commercial Street in Newport city centre have many vacant shops and boarded up businessesJohn Richards, 79, also from the city, said: "I used to come to Newport and get what I needed and go home with it, but I can't do that anymore."I need to go out of town or to one of big supermarkets."Newport City Council said some "significant and high-profile" projects had come to fruition in the city over the last few years, "such as the successful transformation of Newport Market, the regeneration of Market Arcade and the Chartist Tower development."These would have formed part of the count of "vacant shops" in the report which looked at around 60 places in the UK and claimed Newport had the highest number of empty units."It is worth noting that the city council does not own the city centre or the shops."A good proportion of empty units are owned by absent or disengaged landlords, but the council is taking action wherever possible to make them take responsibility for taking proper care of their buildings and bring them back into beneficial use."Shopping habits changingThe Covid-19 pandemic prompted a huge acceleration to digital and online sales.In 2006, buying online represented just under 3% of total retail sales. At the start of 2023, the figure was 27%.Homeware chain Wilko announced last month it was going into administration, putting 12,500 jobs at risk.Twenty-nine of its stores are in Wales and mainly on high streets which are already struggling - including in Morriston, Swansea.Image caption,Morriston shopper Gillian Roberts said there was "nothing left" on her High Street"It's terrible, there's nothing left in Morriston now," said shopper Gillian Roberts. "You can eat, get your hair cut, but for shopping this high street has gone to the dogs."Mike Williams said Morriston's High Street consisted of charity shops, cafes and barbers."It's very sad. If you haven't got a car, you get a bus into town - but now there's not much in town," he added.Elaine Arundale, a regular at the Wilko store in Morriston, said: "What are we going to do? We're all getting older, and we'll be lost without it."There's going to be nothing left in Morriston."Bucking the trendBut Dr Robert Bowen, a lecturer at Cardiff Business School, said some High Streets in Wales were bucking the trend."There are

challenging times, but we are seeing different trends across Wales," he said."In 2020, Treorchy won the UK High Street of the Year Award, beating rivals Narberth and Swansea. We're seeing some really good examples across Wales of High Streets that are doing really well."Treorchy, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, was nominated for the award by local pub landlord Adrian Emmett.He took over The Lion pub in the town eight years ago, and it is now the sponsor of eight sports teams and two choirs."The key to our growth in Treorchy has been focusing on independent businesses," he said."We've changed our mindset operating as one community and one voice."Mr Emmett put the decline of the High Street "down to supermarket and the online traders". "It needs to be more than just retail. Rather than the products it's about the people," he said.The Welsh government's retail action plan, which launched in May, said the key to reversing the trend was increasing footfall and having more people living in towns and city centres.The Welsh government said: "Our retail sector is one of the largest private sector employers in Wales and has a vital contribution to make to our town and city centres and rural communities."In May, we launched our retail action plan to grow and strengthen the sector during a period of significant change and bring vibrancy back into our town centres."

## Violent protests after Quran burning in Sweden



In Summary • Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday. • Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo.

Three men have been arrested in connection with a violent riot following a Quran burning in Sweden.Unrest erupted after an Iraqi anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika set fire to a copy of the Islamic holy book on Sunday.Police said they detained 10 people for disturbing public order in the city of Malmo.Several vehicles were set on fire after about hundred people gathered in response to the burning.Mr Momika set fire to a Quran in Varnhemstorget, a main square in the city on Sunday afternoon. He has previously desecrated the Quran, in a series of anti-Islam protests, and his actions have caused diplomatic outrage across the Middle East.A group of angry protesters tried to stop the burning,

which resulted in a showdown between them and police.Officers said they were pelted with stones, while some demonstrators threw electric scooters at police vehicles.Several police cars were set on fire in Malmo's Rosengard neighbourhood, which has a large immigrant population, and has experienced other violent protests in the past."I understand that a public gathering like this arouses strong emotions, but we cannot tolerate disturbances and violence like the ones we saw on Sunday afternoon," Malmo police area commander Petra Stenkula told local media."It is extremely regrettable to once again see violence and vandalism at Rosengard."Scandinavia has witnessed a spate of Quran burnings this year.In June, Mr Momika set fire to a copy outside Stockholm's central mosque, as Muslims celebrated the first day of Eid al-Adha - one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar.Swedish police had given Mr Momika a permit for the protest, in accordance with their staunch free-speech laws. It later emerged the incident was being investigated for incitement of hatred.In January, Rasmus Paludan, a politician from the Danish far-right Stram Kurs (Hard Line) party, burnt a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm.Last month, neighbouring Denmark, which has also seen several public burnings of the Quran, said it planned to ban public desecration of holy books.Sweden has pledged to explore legal means of abolishing protests that involve burning texts in certain circumstances.

## Biden pledges Florida support in wake of storm damage



In Summary He added that no "intelligent" person could doubt the impact of climate change in the wake of the storm. Meanwhile, Governor Ron DeSantis chose not to meet the president on his trip.

US President Joe Biden has vowed to give Florida any support it needs to rebuild in the wake of Tropical Storm Idalia's destruction.Mr Biden was speaking during a visit to the state, where at least two people are known to have died after the storm made landfall on Wednesday,He added that no "intelligent" person could doubt the impact of climate change in the wake of the storm.Meanwhile, Governor Ron DeSantis chose not to meet the president on his trip.Mr DeSantis, who is standing to become his Republican party's candidate for president, had earlier suggested Mr Biden's presence could hinder disaster response efforts. Mr Biden, who has spoken to Mr DeSantis

multiple times this week, had said they would be meeting in person. But a spokesperson for Mr DeSantis said on Friday that the governor had no plans to meet with the president, adding that security preparations required for such a meeting would "shut down ongoing recovery efforts". Mr Biden praised Mr DeSantis during his visit on Saturday and said he was not disappointed by the Republican governor's absence. "He sat with Fema (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and decided where we should go, where would be the least disruption," Mr Biden told reporters in front of a storm-damaged house in the town of Live Oak, one of the worst-hit areas. Mr Biden did meet Rick Scott, one of the state's two Republican senators, and said it was a "reassuring" sign that the state leadership and federal authorities were working well together. Mr DeSantis spent the day about 50 miles (80km) south, touring small communities along Florida's Gulf Coast, according to his official schedule. The president and First Lady Jill Biden also met evacuated residents at an elementary school. "As I told your governor, if there's anything your state needs, I'm ready to mobilise that support," Mr Biden said at a news conference afterwards. "Your nation has your back, and we'll be with you until the job is done." Idalia landed as a powerful hurricane in Florida's Big Bend area on Wednesday and has been described by officials as the worst storm to hit the region in 100 years. The storm has since travelled north, hitting the neighbouring state of Georgia and the Carolinas. Homes and businesses have been flooded, and power has been knocked out for hundreds of thousands of people. Fema head Deanne Criswell told reporters on Saturday that search and rescue operations had ended and officials were focusing on restoring power to the affected regions. She added that less than 1% of Floridians were without power, though that figure was significantly higher in some areas directly impacted by the hurricane. Mr DeSantis has consistently polled second for the Republican presidential primary nomination, trailing far behind frontrunner and former President Donald Trump. The 2024 election is widely expected to be a repeat of 2020 between Mr Biden and Mr Trump.

## Nobel committee reverses Russia and Iran invitation



*In Summary It won around a fifth of votes in last year's general election. Its leader, Jimmie Akesson, has said he will not attend after being invited for the*

*first time.*

The Nobel Foundation has reversed a much-criticised decision to invite Russia, Belarus and Iran to this year's awards ceremony in Stockholm. "We recognise the strong reaction in Sweden," the foundation said. Russia and its ally Belarus were not invited last year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while Iran was left out over its human rights record. Ukraine had criticised this year's decision and hailed Saturday's U-turn as "a victory for humanism". The awards ceremony is held in Stockholm on 10 December - the anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel, the man who established the fund. There, the king of Sweden honours laureates in fields including medicine, physics, literature, and economics. The Nobel Peace Prize ceremony is held on the same day in the Norwegian capital, Oslo. In its announcement on Saturday, the Nobel Foundation defended its earlier decision, saying "it is important and right to reach out as widely as possible with the values and messages that the Nobel Prize stands for - for example, through last year's clear political message with the peace prize awarded to human rights fighters from Russia and Belarus as well as to Ukrainians who work with documenting Russian war crimes". But it acknowledged that the reaction had "overshadowed this message". "We, therefore, choose to repeat last year's exception to regular practice - that is, to not invite the ambassadors of Russia, Belarus and Iran to the Nobel Prize award ceremony in Stockholm. As before, all ambassadors will be invited to the ceremony in Oslo," the foundation said. Saturday's announcement does not address another part of the earlier message that has caused additional concern in Sweden. It centres on the invitation to "all parties that have parliamentary representation in Sweden through democratic elections". This includes the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats - a party founded by Nazi sympathisers, who had been shunned by the mainstream for decades. It won around a fifth of the votes in last year's general election. Its leader, Jimmie Åkesson, has said he will not attend after being invited for the first time. "Unfortunately I'm busy that day," he wrote on Facebook on Thursday.

## Burning Man festival-goers told to conserve food and water



*In Summary The weather has been so bad that access in and out of the event in the US state of*

Nevada has been "halted", organisers said in a statement. US media reported that more than 70,000 people were stuck there on Saturday.

Burning Man festival-goers have been told to conserve their food and water after heavy rain turned the campsite into a mud bath. The weather has been so bad that access in and out of the event in the US state of Nevada has been "halted", organisers said in a statement. US media reported that more than 70,000 people were stuck there on Saturday. Held in Black Rock Desert, the annual festival is one of America's most well-known cultural events. Footage on social media shows attendees struggling to walk on muddy paths. Organisers have said "no driving is permitted until the playa surface dries up, with the exception of emergency services". Participants are encouraged to conserve food, water, and fuel, and shelter in a warm, safe space," they added in a statement. Before the festival officially started on 27 August it was hit by the remnants of Hurricane Hilary, prompting organisers to close the gates to early arrivals. Now, after a night of continuous rain, this massive festival is mired in mud - the day before people were due to start heading home. Given the possibility of more rain tonight, it could be several days before the ground becomes dry enough for vehicles here to leave. The event usually features giant interactive art installations and a huge wooden man that is burnt at the end of the event. But one man at the festival told the BBC most events have been called off as they largely take place in the playa - where there is currently no way to get in and out. Another festival-goer told the BBC that the usual groups of "weekend warriors" - people who only plan to attend at weekends - were not there this year. Anatoly - who did not want to give his surname - is at the festival with his daughter for the second year in a row. He said that they had come prepared for dust storms in the usually hot and dusty desert, but had instead been greeted with heavy rain. "Everyone is fine, but there is an aspect of uncertainty," Anatoly said, as "some people's tents got flooded" and "signal [across the camp] is the problem, we can't really communicate with anyone". The pair said portable toilets were out of use, as they cannot be emptied due to weather conditions. They said they were letting tent owners use the family's campervan toilets. Nonetheless, many here are trying to make the best of it, dancing in the mud to techno music. One festival-goer who spoke to the BBC, Shervin Natan, said that despite the muddy conditions, "the party's still going, it's business as usual." "There are worse conditions than this, everyone is helping each other out, that's what Burning Man is all about," he added. They are used to dust storms here - the motto of Burning Man is "radical self reliance" - but that motto is being put to the test in a way that few of the regular attendees at this event can remember. Burning Man was founded in June 1986 when Larry Harvey and his friend Jerry Goodell

burned a wooden man on Baker Beach in San Francisco to mark the summer solstice. It was first held in Nevada's Black Rock Desert in 1990. Festival-goers sometimes interview to get into popular camps and have to prove their commitment to its ideals. Some groups spend the entire year planning their camp, artwork and theme. But this year there had been worries about the weather and tickets were changing hands on the secondary market at below market rate.

## Starmer to reshuffle Labour shadow cabinet



*In Summary •Angela Rayner was directly elected to be deputy leader by party members, meaning she will keep that position no matter what. •The reshuffle will come on Sue Gray's first day as Sir Keir's chief of staff. The former civil servant rose to fame during her investigation of Partygate.*

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer is expected to reshuffle his shadow cabinet on Monday. The long-awaited change of Labour's top team coincides with MPs returning to Westminster from their summer break. There is much speculation over what role Sir Keir may give his deputy leader Angela Rayner. The reshuffle will come on Sue Gray's first day as Sir Keir's chief of staff. The former civil servant rose to fame during her investigation of Partygate. It is not expected that Sir Keir will swap his most senior colleagues - including the shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves, shadow health secretary Wes Streeting and shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper. Angela Rayner was directly elected to be deputy leader by party members, meaning she will keep that position no matter what. But she also currently shadows the Cabinet Office brief, which focusses on government procedure and the effective running of government. In government the Cabinet Office is headed up by Ms Rayner's opposite number the deputy prime minister Oliver Dowden. In recent years she has focused heavily on scrutinising ethical issues in politics, from so-called "sleaze" to accusing her opposite numbers of "wasting taxpayers money". Some Labour sources expect that she may be put in charge of running a specific, domestic policy area instead. A few names that have been tipped for possible promotion include the chair of parliament's business committee - Darren Jones. He has been widely regarded as an effective communicator and his forensic grilling of companies such as Thames Water, Royal Mail and P&O; at

various committee hearings has often landed him positive headlines. If promoted, it is not clear what policy area could be vacated for him to fill. He could possibly cover the environment, if Jim McMahon is demoted. Labour still also has not appointed anyone to shadow the government's new science, innovation and technology secretary. Mr Jones has been vocal about, for example, his belief that Artificial Intelligence and technology can be a "force for good" if adopted in the right way and should be central to Labour's plans for improving education or the NHS. Lucy Powell currently covers the digital, culture and media brief for Labour so could also be a potential candidate should this role be filled. Rishi Sunak also made a few changes to his top team last Thursday. He replaced the former defence secretary Ben Wallace with Grant Shapps, and promoted his close ally Claire Coutinho to be the energy and net zero secretary. The prime minister is expected to carry out a wider government reshuffle in the coming months. Both parties are holding annual party conferences in October and both leaders are hoping to get their top teams in shape ahead of the next general election - expected at some point next year.

## King Charles dons new tartan for Highland games



In Summary Events include Highland dance and heavyweights such as the hammer throw. King Charles and Queen Camilla arrived to cheering crowds before taking their seats in the Royal pavilion.

King Charles, Queen Camilla and the Princess Royal have joined thousands of Highland games spectators at the annual Braemar Gathering. The King attended for the first time since his coronation, wearing a kilt in the new King Charles III tartan. Before her death, Queen Elizabeth was a regular at the event while staying at the nearby Balmoral estate in Aberdeenshire. Events include Highland dance and heavyweights such as the hammer throw. King Charles and Queen Camilla arrived to cheering crowds before taking their seats in the Royal pavilion. Peter Fraser, president of the Braemar Royal Highland Society said: "A new king, it's very special. It's great that the Royal Family has carried on this tradition. All the Royal family take a great interest in the games, there's no question about that." One of the everlasting memories I have of the whole Royal Family watching the sack race with the little kiddies - and whatever happened everyone was bursting with

laughter." The King arrived at Balmoral Castle last month for his first summer residence in Scotland since the death of Queen Elizabeth. He is expected to be there on the first anniversary of the Queen's death on 8 September. The Scottish Tartans Authority said the design of the King's kilt was based on the Balmoral tartan sett which dates from 1850. The new tartan has been registered with the Scottish register of tartans, which is administered by the National Records of Scotland.

## Biden disappointed Xi will not attend G20 summit



In Summary • Beijing said on Monday that its premier Li Qiang would lead China's delegation at the summit in Delhi this week. • US-China ties remain tense despite a flurry of diplomatic visits from Washington this year to revive dialogue.

US President Joe Biden has said he is "disappointed" that his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping plans to skip the upcoming G20 summit in India. "I am disappointed... but I am going to get to see him," Mr Biden told reporters on Sunday, but did not say when that meeting may take place. Beijing said on Monday that its premier Li Qiang would lead China's delegation at the summit in Delhi this week. Mr Xi and Mr Biden last met at the G20 summit in Indonesia last year. US-China ties remain tense despite a flurry of diplomatic visits from Washington this year to revive dialogue. China's foreign ministry neither confirmed nor denied Mr Xi's attendance at the Delhi summit when asked pointedly at Monday's press briefing. "Li Qiang will lead Chinese delegation to attend G20 summit. It's a major and important global economic forum. China has always attached importance on it and actively participated related events," a foreign ministry spokeswoman said. But news reports, citing unnamed sources familiar with the matter, said last week that Mr Xi does not plan to attend. The news comes amid worsening relations between China and India. Among other things, the two countries are facing off against each other along their disputed border in the Himalayan region. Just last week, India protested after Beijing released a map that claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin plateau as Chinese territory. Mr Xi and Mr Biden may still have an opportunity to speak in November, at a meeting among leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in San Francisco. About two months after the two leaders met in the Indonesian island of Bali

last November, an alleged Chinese spy balloon in skies above the US punctured hopes for a re-set in bilateral relations, delaying efforts to kickstart dialogue by months. The two countries disagree over a range of issues - Russia's invasion of Ukraine, human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, territorial claims to Taiwan and the South China Sea, and economic restrictions that limit Beijing's access to high-tech components. In an attempt to improve ties, a series of top US officials have travelled to China in recent months. They include Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, and US Special Envoy for Climate John Kerry. Meanwhile, Mr Xi continues to portray Beijing as a leader of the developing world, rallying support for an alternative to the Washington-led world order. In a visit to South Africa last month to meet with leaders of the Brics nations, he criticised the West's "hegemony" and urged developing nations to "[shake] off the yoke of colonialism" in his speeches. The Brics originally refers to five-nation club of developing countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Six new countries - Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - are set to join in January, in what's widely seen as a diplomatic win for Beijing.

## Threats, insults: How Russian diplomacy died under Putin



*In Summary In the years leading up to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, diplomats lost their authority, their role reduced to echoing the Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric. BBC Russian asks former diplomats, as well as ex-Kremlin and White House insiders, how Russian diplomacy broke down.*

Russia's diplomats were once a key part of President Putin's foreign policy strategy. But that has all changed. In the years leading up to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, diplomats lost their authority, their role reduced to echoing the Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric. BBC Russian asks former diplomats, as well as ex-Kremlin and White House insiders, how Russian diplomacy broke down. In October 2021, US Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland went to a meeting at the Russian foreign ministry in Moscow. The man across the table was Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who Ms Nuland had known for decades and always got along with. Mr Ryabkov's American counterparts saw him as a practical, calm negotiator - someone they could talk to

even as the two countries' relationship frayed. This time, things were different. Mr Ryabkov read Moscow's official position from a piece of paper and resisted Ms Nuland's attempts to start a discussion. Ms Nuland was shocked, according to two people who discussed the incident with her. She described Mr Ryabkov and one of his colleagues as "robots with papers", the people said (the State Department declined to comment on the incident). And outside the negotiating room, Russian diplomats were using increasingly undiplomatic language. "We spit on Western sanctions." "Let me speak. Otherwise, you will really hear what Russian Grad missiles are capable of." "Morons" - preceded by an expletive. These are all quotes from people in positions of authority at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recent years. How did we get here? A new Cold War might be hard to imagine now, but Mr Putin himself told the BBC back in 2000 that "Russia is ready to co-operate with Nato... right up to joining the alliance". "I cannot imagine my country isolated from Europe," he added. Back then, early in his presidency, Mr Putin was eager to build ties with the West, a former senior Kremlin official told the BBC, leading talks on deeper co-operation with European countries, and ensuring a peaceful transition after a revolution in Georgia. But as Mr Putin became more powerful and experienced, he became increasingly convinced he had all the answers and that diplomats were unnecessary, says Alexander Gabuev, the director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, who is living in exile in Berlin. The first signal that a new Cold War was beginning came in 2007 with a speech Mr Putin made to the Munich Security Conference. In a 30-minute diatribe, he accused Western countries of attempting to build a unipolar world. Russia's diplomats followed his lead. A year later, when Russia invaded Georgia, Moscow's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reportedly swore at his UK counterpart, David Miliband, asking: "Who are you to lecture me?" Western officials still thought it was worth trying to work with Russia. In 2009, Mr Lavrov and the then-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pressed a giant red "reset button" in relations, and the two countries seemed to be building co-operation - especially on security issues. But it soon became obvious to US officials that their Russian counterparts were simply parroting Mr Putin's growing anti-Western views, says Ben Rhodes, deputy national security advisor to former US President Barack Obama. Mr Rhodes recalls President Obama having breakfast with Mr Putin in 2009, accompanied by a folk orchestra. He says Mr Putin was more interested in presenting his view of the world than discussing co-operation and that the Russian leader blamed Mr Obama's predecessor, George W Bush, for betraying Russia. As the Arab Spring, the US involvement in Libya, and the Russian street protests unfolded in 2011 and 2012, Mr Putin decided that diplomacy wouldn't get him anywhere, Mr Rhodes says. "On certain issues - Ukraine in

particular - I did not get the sense that [diplomats] had much influence at all," says Mr Rhodes. As an example, when Mr Lavrov, the foreign minister, was appointed nearly 20 years ago he had an "international perspective and his own position", a former senior Kremlin official told the BBC. The Kremlin used to consult him even when it knew he might have a different view to Mr Putin, says Mr Gabuev. But when troops were sent into Ukraine in 2022, Mr Lavrov only found out a few hours before the war began, according to a report in the Financial Times. Andrei Kelin, Moscow's ambassador to the UK, rejects the idea that Russian diplomats have lost their influence. He has worked on relations with Western countries throughout his diplomatic career. In an interview with the BBC, he refused to concede that either Moscow or individual diplomats bear any responsibility for the collapse of relations with the West. "We are not the ones doing the destroying," he said. "We have problems with the Kyiv regime. There is nothing we can do about it." He says war in Ukraine is "a continuation of diplomacy by other means". Diplomacy as a spectacle As foreign policy officials became less and less influential, they turned their attention back to Russia. Maria Zakharova, who became the ministry's spokesperson in 2015, is a symbol of this new chapter. "Before her, diplomats behaved like diplomats, speaking in refined expressions," says former foreign ministry official Boris Bondarev, who resigned in protest over the war. But with Ms Zakharova's arrival, foreign ministry briefings became a spectacle. Ms Zakharova often yelled at reporters who asked her difficult questions and responded to criticism from other countries with insults. Her diplomatic colleagues were going the same way. Mr Bondarev, who used to work for Moscow's mission to the UN in Geneva, recalls one meeting where Russia blocked all proposed initiatives, prompting colleagues from Switzerland to complain. "We said to them: 'Well, what's the problem? We are a great power, and you are just Switzerland!'" That's [Russian] diplomacy for you," he says. This approach was aimed at impressing Russians back home, says Mr Gabuev, the foreign policy analyst. But an even more crucial target audience for diplomats is their own bosses, according to Mr Bondarev. Official telegrams sent to Moscow after foreign meetings are focussed on how passionately diplomats defended the country's interests, he explains. A typical message, according to him, would be something like: "We really gave them a hard time! We heroically defended Russian interests, and the Westerners couldn't do anything and backed down!" If everyone writes about "putting Westerners in their place" and you write that you "achieved consensus", you will be looked at with disdain, he says. Mr Bondarev recalls a dinner in Geneva in January 2022 when Mr Ryabkov, from the foreign ministry, met US officials. US First Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman hoped to avert the invasion of Ukraine through 11th-hour negotiations. "It was

awful," says Mr Bondarev. "The Americans were like, 'Let's negotiate.' And instead Ryabkov starts shouting, 'We need Ukraine! We won't go anywhere without Ukraine! Take all your stuff and go back to the 1997 [Nato] borders!' Sherman is an iron lady, but I think even her jaw dropped at this." [Ryabkov] was always very polite and really nice to talk to. And now he's banging his fist on the table and talking nonsense. It should be noted that, in recent years, the diplomatic tone has changed in other countries too, albeit on a smaller scale. A few years earlier, Japan's representative for human rights at the UN, Hideaki Ueda, demanded that foreign colleagues "shut up" at a meeting. Gavin Williamson used the same words against Russia when he was the UK defence secretary. And Ukraine's ambassador to Germany, Andriy Melnyk, last year referred to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz as an "offended liver sausage". The US can't snap their fingers and end this war. After a year and a half of war, is there any hope that diplomacy could help to bring the fighting to an end? Most of the people the BBC spoke to think it is highly unlikely. Usually, 95% of diplomats' work is "unofficial meetings and having coffee", explains Mr Bondarev. Such contacts have greatly declined, he says - there is no longer much to talk about. Ambassador Kelin has been banned from entering the UK Parliament. At one point, he says, the Russian embassy in London was almost left without gas and electricity, and insurance companies refused to insure the mission's cars. Sooner or later, dialogue will have to happen, says RAND analyst Samuel Charap. The only alternative to negotiations is "absolute victory", and it's unlikely either Kyiv or Moscow could achieve this on the battlefield, he argues. But he does not expect talks to happen soon. "Putin has changed pretty dramatically over the course of his term in power," he says. "And frankly, I don't know whether he's going to be willing to engage." The Ukrainian authorities complain that Russia is once again offering ultimatums instead of compromises, such as demanding that Ukraine accepts the annexation of occupied territories. Kyiv has no intention to negotiate under such conditions, and its Western allies publicly support this decision. Russia seems set on relying on its military machine, intelligence services and geo-economic power for influence - rather than diplomacy. In these dispiriting circumstances, why aren't Russian diplomats simply voting with their feet and resigning from the foreign service altogether? "It's a problem for everyone who's been stuck in their positions for 10 to 20 years," a former Kremlin employee told the BBC. "There's no other life for you. It's terrifying." Mr Bondarev, the former diplomat, can relate to that. "If it hadn't been for the war, I probably would have stayed and put up with it," he says. "The job isn't so bad. You sit, suffer a bit and in the evening you go out."

## Stations with most cancellations revealed



*In Summary •The government said operators needed to deliver punctual services and improve delays and cancellations. •The analysis of National Rail data, collated by On Time Trains, shows that, of the 100 busiest railway stations, Manchester Victoria had the second highest cancellation rate at 10%.*

Britain's busiest railway stations with the highest rates of cancelled trains this year have been revealed. As of 31 July, Huddersfield has had more than 5,500 scheduled trains cancelled - the highest rate at 13%. BBC analysis of National Rail data also shows that almost half of the trains that ran across Britain were at least one minute late. The government said operators needed to deliver punctual services and improve delays and cancellations. The analysis of National Rail data, collated by On Time Trains, shows that, of the 100 busiest railway stations, Manchester Victoria had the second highest cancellation rate at 10%. York, Newcastle and Manchester Oxford Road all followed at 9%. Caroline Devonport, from South Kirkby, has been catching the train to Huddersfield for five years. "The last six months have been absolutely horrendous," the 48-year-old said. "Because of the risk of delay, I now leave an hour early for work. I'm absolutely shattered all the time from being on trains. I've seen quite a lot of aggression towards guards from other passengers because people are late and delayed and frustrated." The strikes have an impact, but the train companies themselves are really badly managed, and their customer services are often very rude. TransPennine Express (TPE), which manages Huddersfield, was brought under government control in May after months of complaints about delays and cancellations. Prior to being taken over, it had the highest cancellation rate of all train operators, according to data from the Office of Rail and Road. Chris Jackson, interim TPE managing director, said, since coming under government control, "we have seen improvements in performance and have made real progress in rebuilding union relationships on a local level". He said that the resumption of drivers working on rest days had helped bring cancellations at Huddersfield down "to 3.5%, with an overall figure of 5.5% for the entire TPE network". "We know there is more to do, and we are actively developing plans to deliver the reliable, punctual and resilient railway our customers expect and deserve," Mr Jackson added. 'Sort this out' The analysis of data for 2,555 stations also suggests that,

between 1 January and 31 July: In total, 3% of trains in Great Britain were cancelled, 56% were on time, while 41% were at least one minute late. Overall, stations in Wales had the highest cancellation rate, at 7%. Of the English regions, the North East had the highest cancellation rate, at 6%. But Yorkshire and the Humber had the lowest percent of trains on time, at 42%. Paul Tuohy, chief executive officer of the charity Campaign for Better Transport, said: "We want people to travel by train so high rates of cancellations are unacceptable." The government and industry need to sort this out and ensure services run to schedule so that passengers can travel with confidence. Christine Wise, 57, from Stalybridge, said she cannot rely on the local train to get to her new job in Manchester. "At least one a morning is cancelled," she said, adding that she now drives to Ashton-under-Lyne to catch a tram. "It takes much longer, about 40 minutes. It's irritating because it's lost time. I get up quite early in the morning to get to work, to get in early, to get my work done. I don't like the lost time element of things." Over my lifetime, trains have never really run to time, but there weren't as many delays and cancellations as there are now. It's markedly worse. "Quietly scrapped" Network Rail said: "We know performance has not been good enough for passengers and we're working closely with train operating companies to improve." Moving forward, the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) will allow us to take a holistic view of performance, simplifying our rail network and providing better, more reliable services for our passengers and freight customers. In March, Derby was chosen to host GBR's headquarters, a planned public body which will run trains across the country and set most fares and timetables. Four months later, Rail Minister Huw Merriman reassured the city that the government remains "really committed" to GBR, denying reports it had been "quietly scrapped." The railways have seen strike action each month this year. On 1 September, members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) went on strike, impacting 16 operators. The following day, 20,000 RMT members also took action. Mike Whelan, general secretary of ASLEF, said the rail industry had declined under the Conservative government. "That's the price we are all paying - passengers, staff, and businesses in Britain - for privatisation which everyone in the railway industry - except the ideologues in the government - knows hasn't worked," he said. "We should be encouraging more people to use our trains - taking cars off the roads and reducing carbon emissions - rather than trying to deter passengers from travelling." A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "Ministers have been clear with operators they need to deliver punctual services, keeping delays to a minimum. To help make our railways more reliable, it's crucial unions agree to reforms that will modernise the industry."

**Gabon coup leader to be sworn in**

## as interim president



*In Summary • Supporters of the military leadership in Gabon are expected to attend the inauguration of Gen Nguema. • The mood in the country is calm but with heightened security.*

The head of the military junta in Gabon, Gen Brice Oligui Nguema, is due to be sworn into office as the interim president of the country. The army toppled President Ali Bongo on Wednesday shortly after he was declared winner of a disputed election. Supporters of the military leadership in Gabon are expected to attend the inauguration of Gen Nguema. The mood in the country is calm but with heightened security. The coup leader is said to be the cousin of ousted President Ali Bongo, raising doubts about whether this really marks an end to the 55-year-long Bongo era. Gen Nguema has said he won't rush to return the country to civilian rule, to avoid past mistakes. The opposition has warned that the military shows no sign of handing back power. Gabon is the sixth Francophone country to fall under military rule in the last three years as former colonial power France struggles to maintain its influence on the continent.

## Gabon coup leader vows free elections - but no date



*In Summary Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009. He was succeeded by his son.*

The leader of Gabon's military junta has vowed to return power to civilians after "free, transparent" elections. However, in a speech after being sworn in as interim president, he did not give a date for military rule to end. Gen Brice Nguema led last Wednesday's coup against Ali Bongo, toppling the president shortly after he was named winner of a disputed election. Crowds of cheering civilians turned up at the

inauguration - the coup was welcomed by many eager for change. However, some say Gen Nguema's rule will be a continuation of the 55-year Bongo dynasty. Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009 and was succeeded by his son. The general spent most his career in the Bongo's inner circle and is even thought to be Ali Bongo's cousin. At Monday's inauguration, Gen Nguema gave a defiant speech, referencing the likes of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, French statesman Charles de Gaulle and former Ghanaian leader Jerry Rawlings. "This patriotic action will be a lesson learnt that will be taught in the books of our schools," said the new president, dressed in the red ceremonial costume of the Republican Guard. He added that a fresh government would be formed "in a few days" and recommended new electoral legislation, a new penal code and a referendum on a new constitution. Gen Nguema also said he had instructed the new government "to think without delay" about freeing all political prisoners. The ceremony was broadcast live on Gabonese TV and across online platforms. Former ministers from the ousted government showed up, but were booed by a crowd of junta sympathisers. General Nguema's inauguration is the latest in a series of military takeovers across West and Central Africa. Gabon is the sixth Francophone country to fall under military rule in the last three years as former colonial power France struggles to maintain its influence on the continent. Gabon been suspended from the African Union following the coup, which has been condemned by the UN and France.

## Torrential rain in Spain causes major flooding



*In Summary • Sunday's football match between Atletico Madrid and Sevilla was suspended due to the torrential rain. • Residents in Madrid have been asked to stay at home due to "the exceptional and abnormal" rainfall, the mayor said.*

Several weather warnings have been issued across Spain as heavy rain causes major flooding across parts of the country. Maximum red weather alerts are in place in the Madrid, Toledo and Cádiz regions. Sunday's football match between Atletico Madrid and Sevilla was suspended due to the torrential rain. Residents in Madrid have been asked to stay at home due to "the exceptional and abnormal" rainfall, the mayor said. In the Spanish

capital alone, firefighters have been called to alleviate the situation in flooded roads 190 times. Much of the rainfall, brought by Storm Dana, has been concentrated in Cádiz, Tarragona and Castelló - coastal regions across the country. In the eastern province of Castelló, flooding led to firefighters rescuing a man trapped in his car, which was surrounded by waist-high flood water. People have also been advised to avoid unnecessary trips in the north-eastern city of Alcanar, Tarragona - where 215 litres per square meter of rain has fallen in the past 24 hours. Juan Carlos Penafiel, who was visiting the city, said he was woken up by the water entering his second-floor apartment. "We organised amongst ourselves to make ropes with towels and bed sheets and used them to pull two young men who were grabbing on to columns," he told Reuters news agency. "We pulled them to the top floor and saved them. It was terrifying, very very scary with small children, women. Nobody showed up, we were left alone to save ourselves," he added. Storm Dana has caused debris and mud to slide onto Spanish roads, while many vehicles have struggled to move in heavily flooded areas. According to *El País* newspaper, some train services have been called off across Spain and drivers have been warned to avoid certain flooded roads in heavily flooded areas. This weekend's weather events follow a scorching hot summer in Spain and much of southern Europe.

## **Our action was necessary - Gabon junta leader**



*In Summary • Speaking after being sworn in as Gabon's interim president, Gen Brice Nguema defended the seizure of power last week, saying that it was a patriotic act.*

General Brice Nguema has just been sworn in as president of the transitional government in the capital Libreville. General Nguema, who toppled long-time leader Ali Bongo, officially becomes Gabon's interim leader. Speaking after being sworn in as Gabon's interim president, Gen Brice Nguema defended the seizure of power last week, saying that it was a patriotic act. He quoted Ghana's former military leader, and later elected president, Jerry John Rawlings, saying that: "When the people are smashed by the leaders, then it's the military who must give them back their dignity and freedom." It is in this spirit that we the defence forces took their responsibilities by refusing the... biased electoral

process."in his inaugural address, Gen Brice Nguema said:There should be a referendum on a new constitutionThere should be a new electoral law and a new penal codeThere will be a free and transparent elections

## **Zimbabwe president to be sworn in for second term**



*In Summary • Official results gave him close to 53% of the vote in a presidential election which international observers said fell short of democratic standards. • Mnangagwa's main rival Nelson Chamisa has called for fresh elections.*

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa is set to be sworn in for a second term in office. Official results gave him close to 53% of the vote in a presidential election which international observers said fell short of democratic standards. His Zanu-PF party won close to two-thirds of the parliamentary vote. Mr Mnangagwa's main rival Nelson Chamisa has called for fresh elections. He has until Monday to ask the court to overturn the results. The red carpet has been rolled out and several heads of state have confirmed that they will attend Mr Mnangagwa's inauguration. The government is confident it will go ahead as planned. But an official told the BBC that if the opposition lodged their court application before the ceremony, it could be called off. Mr Chamisa's Citizens' Coalition for Change has rejected Mr Mnangagwa's election win as fraudulent – but hasn't officially confirmed whether it will go to court. International observers' harsh criticism of his election win is likely to hinder Mr Mnangagwa's plans for greater international re-engagement and an economic turn-around. But the attendance of some regional leaders is likely to give him a semblance of the legitimacy that he seeks.

## **Gabon leader says suspension of democracy 'temporary'**



*In Summary The coup in Gabon is the eighth in west and central Africa since 2020, following Niger, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Chad. It has been condemned by the UN, the African Union and France.*

Gabon's new military leader has pledged to return the country to democracy but has refused to provide a timeline for fresh elections. Gen Brice Oligui Nguema said the country's state institutions would be made more democratic and their suspension was only "temporary". But Gabon's opposition coalition says the military shows no signs of handing power back to a civilian government. The deposed president, Ali Bongo, was placed under house arrest this week. Army officers appeared on state TV in the early hours of Wednesday to say they had seized control, ending the Bongo family's 55-year hold on power in the central African state. They said they had annulled the results of Saturday's presidential election, in which Mr Bongo was declared the winner but which the opposition said was fraudulent. In a televised address on Friday evening, Gen Nguema said the military would move "quickly but surely" to avoid elections that "repeat the same mistakes" by keeping the same people in power. "Going as quickly as possible does not mean organising ad hoc elections, where we will end up with the same errors," he said. Gabon's main opposition group, Alternance 2023, which says it is the rightful winner of Saturday's election, urged the international community on Friday to encourage a return to civilian rule. "We were happy that Ali Bongo was overthrown but ... we hope that the international community will stand up in favour of the Republic and the democratic order in Gabon by asking the military to give back the power to the civilians," Alexandra Pangha, a spokesperson for Alternance 2023 leader Albert Ondo Ossa, told the BBC. She added that the plan for Gen Nguema to be sworn in as transitional president on Monday was "absurd". The coup in Gabon is the eighth in west and central Africa since 2020, following Niger, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Chad. It has been condemned by the UN, the African Union and France - its former colonial power which had close ties to the Bongo family. Mr Bongo, who had been in power since 2009, appeared in a video at his home this week calling on his "friends all over the world" to "make noise" on his behalf. But his removal has also been celebrated by many in Gabon who have grown resentful of his, and his family's, regime. Crowds in the

capital, Libreville, and elsewhere were seen celebrating the army's declaration earlier this week.

## Africa to find climate solutions not be the victims - Ruto



*In Summary • The meeting in Nairobi is the first of its kind in Africa. • It aims to come up with a common plan to present to other world leaders at the COP 28 United Nations climate summit later this year.*

African heads of state are gathering in Kenya for the Africa Climate Summit, where they will discuss the continent's approach to climate change. The meeting in Nairobi is the first of its kind in Africa. It aims to come up with a common plan to present to other world leaders at the COP 28 United Nations climate summit later this year. Over the next three days, delegates at the summit will consider a new funding model to help governments reduce carbon emissions. Kenyan President William Ruto said Africa should be part of the solution to global warming, rather than a victim. "For a very long time we have looked at this as a problem. It is time we flipped and looked at it from the other side," he told delegates at the opening of the meeting. "There are opportunities, immense opportunities as well. And that is why we are not here to catalogue grievances and list problems, we are here to scrutinise ideas, assess perspectives, so that we can unlock solutions." African countries are among the smallest contributors to climate change, but suffer some of its worst effects.

## No evidence S Africa gave arms to Russia - inquiry



*In Summary • The US has previously raised concerns about joint naval exercises between Russia and South Africa. • The panel rejected claims made by the US ambassador to South Africa that a Russian ship*

was loaded with ammunition and arms in Cape Town last December.

An independent inquiry has found no evidence that South Africa supplied weapons to Russia, President Cyril Ramaphosa has said. The panel rejected claims made by the US ambassador to South Africa that a Russian ship was loaded with ammunition and arms in Cape Town last December. The allegations had raised questions over the country's professed neutrality in the war with Ukraine. Mr Ramaphosa said it had damaged the nation's currency and reputation. "The panel found that there was no evidence to support the claim that the ship transported weapons from South Africa destined for Russia," the president said in a televised address to the nation on Sunday. "No permit was issued for the export of arms and no arms were exported." The inquiry found instead that the Russian cargo ship had delivered a consignment of weapons from Russia to South Africa, ordered in 2018. Ambassador Reuben Brigety's claims referred to the docking of Lady R in the Simon's Town naval base between 6 and 8 December 2022. He told a media briefing in Pretoria in May he was "confident" weapons and ammunition were loaded to the vessel "as it made its way back to Russia". A day later, South Africa's foreign ministry said Mr Brigety had "apologised unreservedly" for the claims. Writing on social media after the meeting, Mr Brigety said he was "grateful for the opportunity to... correct any misimpressions left by my public remarks". Mr Ramaphosa ordered an independent judge-led inquiry in the wake of Mr Brigety's comments. "None of the persons who made these allegations could provide any evidence to support the claims that had been levelled against our country," Mr Ramaphosa said following the inquiry's conclusion. The president will only be releasing an executive summary of the report, for security reasons. The inquiry had visited the naval base, heard from almost 50 people and reviewed more than 100 documents, Mr Ramaphosa added. South Africa has sought to maintain friendly relations with Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, drawing criticism from the US and other Western nations. It is one of only a handful of nations that has abstained from a number of UN votes on the conflict, refusing to publicly condemn Russia on the matter. The US has previously raised concerns about joint naval exercises between Russia and South Africa.

## Lagos traffic jams disappear. But this isn't good news



*In Summary •The notorious miles-long traffic jams have drastically reduced. •Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that when compared to the second quarter of 2022, the contribution of road transport to the economy within the same period this year fell by around 47%.*

Lagos feels different, the boisterous - often chaotic - energy that drives Nigeria's commercial centre has been subdued by the removal of a fuel subsidy that had kept the price of petrol low for decades in Africa's largest economy. Since June, fuel costs have tripled, leading transport fares to shoot up and forcing many employees to return to the pandemic era by working from home. Many private cars are off the roads. And with fewer passengers to tussle over, some of the yellow, fume-belching buses, pride of the city's eternal hustle spirit, now idle at motor parks. The notorious miles-long traffic jams have drastically reduced. This bustling city of an estimated 20 million people is quieter, but for once that is not a good thing. What Lagos has gained in tranquillity it has lost economically since President Bola Tinubu abruptly ended the supply of cheap fuel in his first day in office at the end of May. Oil-rich Nigeria, he said, could no longer afford to subsidise petrol which was costing billions of dollars a year. Mr Tinubu also ended currency restrictions that had been put in place by the previous government, and while many experts agree that it was the right thing to do, it has led to a weakening of the local currency. The double whammy of rising fuel costs and a weak currency has sent the economy into a tailspin, and nowhere is the biting hardship more apparent than in Lagos - a commercial behemoth that is often a snapshot of the rest of the country. Many small businesses have packed up, and some low-income earners who live in the suburbs of the mainland and commute to the business districts on Lagos Island have stopped going to work. "I was spending 600 naira a day on transport, it jumped to 1,000 naira. By the end of the month I was spending all my salary on transport," a cleaner said, adding that she had been forced to resign from her job. She lives in Ikorodu, a congested part of Lagos state, which is popular with low-income earners. Previously, the 41km (25 miles) between Ikorodu and upmarket Victoria Island took two-three hours during rush hour. Now, it can be done in 45-50 minutes. Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that when compared to the second quarter of 2022, the contribution of road transport to the economy within

the same period this year fell by around 47%. As that data only captured one month since the policy changed, things could be even worse now. That economic hit would have been mostly felt in Lagos, home of Nigeria's busiest port and the city that the Nigerian president prides himself on building. "He was right to remove [the] subsidy but not at this time, not without fixing the refineries," said professor of Economics Uchechi Ogbuagu. Because Nigeria's oil refineries are not functioning, most fuel is actually imported. "An essential commodity like energy - if you tamper with the price, there will be a multiplier effect," he said. What to do with the expensive fuel subsidy was one of the major talking-points before elections earlier this year, with almost all economists and politicians agreeing that it had to go. Nigeria was spending money it did not have to keep fuel prices low and it was no longer sustainable, the arguments went. Previous investigations found that the system was riddled with corruption, and as was evident after it was stopped, a large portion of the subsidised fuel was smuggled to neighbouring countries where it was sold at higher rates. Some experts and government agencies argued that the fuel subsidy benefited rich Nigerians more than the poor, while opponents said removing it would inflict hardship on the latter group. But even among those who wanted the subsidy gone was an admission that it needed to be done in phases, certain things had to be put in place first. The labour unions wanted the local refineries working, the main opposition wanted government to get out of the oil-importation market. Others asked for subsidised transportation - especially to move farm products, and there were also questions about how the money saved would be used. But despite having some of these in his manifesto, Mr Tinubu used an off-the-cuff remark in his first speech as president to remove the subsidy, initially sending the system into shock before prices went up. "I was possessed with courage and I said 'subsidy is gone', " Mr Tinubu said of his now-famous remark on 29 May. "We are tired of feeding smugglers, making few people rich and subsidising the next-door neighbour," he later said at a function in France. With prices of petrol up, small businesses like the popular motorcycle food-delivery companies, that provided employment to young people, have had to rethink their strategies. Some workers have been laid off while others like Happiness Emmanuel have resorted to using bicycles for deliveries, a rare sight in the scorching heat of Lagos, where there is a lack of bicycle lanes. "I make more money and it is less expensive to maintain," he told the BBC at his food court location in the Ikeja area. Some of his colleagues have also started using bicycles because of the high cost of fuel, he said. Even the city's Bus Rapid Transport, which recently added electric buses to its fleet, has seen an upsurge by as much as 30%, a spokesman told the BBC. This was helped by prices that were halved by the government, he said. The state is also commencing operations on its metro system on

Monday, and its affordable fares should get more residents on the move again. President Tinubu announced in early August that more than 1 trillion naira (\$1.3bn; £1bn) had been saved since subsidy was removed - money that otherwise would have gone to "smugglers and fraudsters", he said. He acknowledged the hardship, asked people to "look beyond the present temporary pains," and assured that saved funds would benefit families. Tuition loans have been introduced for poor families with children in university and talks are ongoing for the minimum wage to be raised. The government has also distributed grains, announced plans to convert cars from fuel to gas, while some states have introduced electric buses. For some, the current realities put an end to the arguments about who benefits from the fuel subsidy. Many want it back and now argue that fuel subsidy is not a bad if it can be ring-fenced from corruption. "Subsidy, if implemented well, benefits all," said Prof Ogbuagu. "Everybody was buying fuel at the same price. The poor may not have lots of TVs and fridges, but transport fares would be low," he said. Mr Tinubu has assured that there are no further plans for petrol prices to rise - which ought to happen as the naira weakened further - all but signalled that the subsidy was back. He has also announced his cabinet, filling up important posts that are crucial in driving the economy. It demonstrates how difficult it is to do away with what is a popular policy, even for President Tinubu who has often boasted of having the will to carry out difficult decisions. He will not be the first Nigerian president to walk back on the scrapping of the fuel subsidy, though predecessors faced far stiffer opposition, such as nationwide protests in 2012. There have been pockets of protests in some states against the hardship and the labour unions staged lacklustre demonstrations but they barely registered. Such demonstrations have often kicked off in Lagos in the past, with other parts of Nigeria feeding off its energy to join in. But for once, the city that never sleeps is low on fumes, literally and metaphorically.

## Gabon coup will not end rule by Bongo clan - source



In Summary They announced a military takeover shortly after President Ali Bongo had been declared the winner of a disputed election. He has been put under house arrest.

The military takeover in Gabon will merely lead to a continuation of rule by the Bongo clan which has been in power for 55 years, a source close to the deposed president has told the BBC."General Brice Oligui Nguema is a direct product of the Bongo clan," said the source, who wanted to remain anonymous for security reasons.He warned those celebrating the coup not to expect too much to change.The military vowed to put an end to the Bongo regime when they seized power.They announced a military takeover shortly after President Ali Bongo had been declared the winner of a disputed election. He has been put under house arrest.Our source's comments echo those of opposition leader Albert Ondo Ossa, who told the Associated Press that the coup was a "palace revolution", engineered by the Bongo family to retain their power.The coalition backing Mr Ossa, Alternance 2023, which says it is the rightful winner of last Saturday's election, has urged the international community to push for a return to civilian rule."We were happy that Ali Bongo was overthrown but... we hope that the international community will stand up in favour of the republic and the democratic order in Gabon by asking the military to give back the power to the civilians," Mr Ossa's spokesperson, Alexandra Pangha, told the BBC.She added that the plan for Gen Nguema to be sworn in as transitional president on Monday was "absurd".The coup has been condemned by the UN, its neighbours and France - its former colonial power which had close ties to the Bongo family.Gabon has been suspended from the African Union.In a televised address on Friday evening, Gen Nguema said the military would move "quickly but surely" to restore civilian rule but did not give a timeline. He said they would avoid elections that "repeat the same mistakes" by keeping the same people in power.However, our source said that the new strongman, the head of the elite Republican Guard, was "a direct product of the Bongo clan. He is the spiritual son of Omar Bongo and has always been closely tied to the presidential family", adding that some believe he is Ali Bongo's cousin.Omar Bongo was in power for 41 years before his son Ali succeeded him following his death in 2009.Ali Bongo's subsequent election victories have always been marred by opposition claims of widespread fraud.Our source said that the coup caught everyone unawares, despite rumours floating around Gen Nguema."It completely took our team by surprise but for the past two years, there had been rumours alleging that if there was one man capable of disrupting the hierarchy, it would have to be him. He has always played a crucial role within the Bongo clan and has a natural but discrete authority."It is said that just before Omar Bongo's death in 2009, Gen Nguema promised him he would look after his family. However, when Ali Bongo took over, the military man was sent away to serve as an attaché to the Gabonese embassies in Morocco and Senegal."Upon his return in 2019, Gen Nguema realised that the power circle had extended beyond the close

members of the family and that the state control was slipping out of the grasp of the Bongo clan," explains our source. This was after Ali Bongo suffered a stroke which side-lined him for a year and prompted calls for him to step aside.The coup has seen many people take to the streets of the Gabonese capital, Libreville, to celebrate but our source says this is mainly because "they wanted to be freed from the Bongo family name".But the reality is that the coup is very much a continuation of the same system just with a different name."Shortly after the coup was announced, several allies of the ousted president were arrested, including his 31-year-old son Noureddin Bongo Valentin, who has been accused of high treason and corruption. National TV has shown images of him and other close Bongo allies in front of suitcases of cash it said had been seized from their homes. They have not commented on the allegations.But our source says this is largely for show."He wants to send a strong message to the population by arresting the president's son."Everyone is celebrating now but we shouldn't forget that the transition leader ate at the Bongo family's table for decades. He has a lot of experience and was able to bring back hope, but the Gabonese people must remain alert".

## Sudan conflict: Air strike on Khartoum kills at least 20



In Summary • The army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been fighting for control of Khartoum since April. Hundreds have been killed. • The country's health ministry says more than 1,100 people have died across the country, but the real numbers are likely to be much higher.

An army air strike on the Sudanese capital has killed at least 20 people, including two children, activists say.Many of the victims of the attack, in the Kalakla al-Qubba neighbourhood of south-west Khartoum, have been buried in the rubble, they said.Artillery and rocket fire have been reported in several areas on Sunday.The army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been fighting for control of Khartoum since April. Hundreds have been killed.The country's health ministry says more than 1,100 people have died across the country, but the real numbers are likely to be much higher.Many civilians have been caught in the crossfire.Roughly 2.2 million people have been displaced within Sudan and more than half a million are sheltering in neighbouring countries, according to the United Nations.The conflict began

after army chief Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the RSF head Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo fell out over the future of the country. Several ceasefires have been announced to allow people to escape the fighting but these have not been observed. The RSF controls much of Khartoum and its twin cities of Omdurman and Bahri. The army has carried out frequent artillery and air attacks to try and dislodge the paramilitary fighters. Saturday's strike is one of the heaviest. Clashes have spread beyond the capital, including to the western Darfur region which has seen an outbreak of ethnic violence. Across the country, hundreds have been killed and almost three million people have been forced from their homes.

## Burkina Faso and Russia discuss military ties



*In Summary • There were also discussions on areas of economic co-operation and nuclear energy, it said.*

Burkina Faso's interim President Ibrahim Traoré has held talks with a Russian delegation on military co-operation, the Burkinabe presidency says. It said the visit, led by Russian Deputy Defence Minister Yunus-bek Yevkurov, was a follow-up to talks between Mr Traoré and President Vladimir Putin at the Russia-Africa summit in St Petersburg in July. The talks focused on aspects of military support including "the training of Burkinabe officer cadets and officers at all levels, including pilots in Russia", the statement, issued on Thursday, said. There were also discussions on areas of economic co-operation and nuclear energy, it said. The visit comes as Russia seeks to step up efforts to court political and economic influence in Africa. The Russian mercenary group Wagner, whose leader Yevgeny Prigozhin died in a plane crash last week, had wanted to expand its operations to Burkina Faso.

## What doctor's death in a lift tells us about Africa's debt crisis



*In Summary • A new report from One Campaign, focuses on the staggering amount of private loans African countries have to service, often to the detriment of development. • It's not possible to draw a direct causal link between Nigeria's debt crisis and the doctor's death but every dollar spent servicing debt is one that cannot go into vital infrastructure.*

Friends of a doctor who died in Nigeria because the lift in her hospital accommodation fell nine floors with her inside are not surprised by a new study that reveals the country spends twice as much money on debt repayments as on health and education combined. The major new report from the One Campaign, an anti-poverty group, focuses on the staggering amount of private loans that African countries have to service, often to the detriment of development. It is not possible to draw a direct causal link between Nigeria's debt crisis and the death last month of Dr Vwaere Diaso, but every dollar spent servicing debt is one that cannot go into vital infrastructure. Dr Diaso was just two weeks away from finishing her training at Lagos General Hospital when she died. She had repeatedly complained to management about the crumbling infrastructure, power cuts and lack of funding in one of Nigeria's major public hospitals. She knew it was costing the lives of patients. She had no idea it would also cost her own. "I remember Vwaere for her smile, she was the world's happiest person," her friend and colleague Dr Joy Aifuobhokhan tells us. "She actually loved her job and she loved to take care of people." Dr Diaso suffered massive trauma after the elevator plummeted, but might have survived, had the hospital's oxygen supply and other facilities been working. "I believe funding was a major issue in both our accommodation and the hospital in general. We complained to the management but the response we would get is that they did not even have enough funds to supply electricity to the hospital, let alone to spend money on the doctors' quarters." It is just one example of a healthcare system in crisis. In 2018, Nigeria spent \$5.9bn (£4.7bn) repaying loans. This year it is forecast to spend \$8.4bn. That compares to just \$2.2bn on education and \$1.4bn on healthcare. The One Campaign report estimates the poorest nations are paying 500% more for debt than they need to. The organisation, which aims to reduce poverty particularly in Africa, has people like former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, former British Prime Minister David Cameron and former Meta boss Sheryl Sandberg on its board. It is led by Gayle E

Smith, a former adviser to three US presidents who also used to run US development spending. She says that the situation now is potentially bigger than the debt crisis of 2005."This is more countries simultaneously heading into crisis. And I think that this is going to have greater ripple effects, if you look at the number of countries that are at risk," says Ms Smith, warning of the economic and political consequences.Why is it happening?While the situation has been getting worse for a few years, the report says that rising interest rates in the US have supercharged the problem.Rate rises cause the dollar to strengthen, in turn devaluing currencies like Nigeria's naira. Since most foreign debt is held in dollars, this instantly makes the problem worse.On top of that, there is a well-established connection between the interest rate offered by the Federal Reserve, the US's central bank, and the rate commercial lenders will offer to other countries.Add to this the soaring inflation seen around the world and a lack of finance from lenders like the World Bank."We've seen for the first time in 25 years an increase in extreme poverty," Ms Smith says about the impact already being witnessed."We saw a huge negative impact on health and education and the progress that's been made over the years."If you're spending over 90% of your budget on servicing debt, there's not much left to do anything with. And so breaking that cycle is near impossible."The report calls for a massive increase in lending by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other global lenders.The calls are similar to those made by the recent Bridgetown Initiative, spearheaded by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley, who wants reform and modernisation of the international monetary system.Of course, global institutions are not the only bodies being called on to reform."If you don't deal with issues around corruption, we're just going to be a lot of talk and no action," says Sam Chidoka, an expert on good governance in Nigeria.He worries that the benefits of any debt reduction would not be passed to the people."There's nothing wrong with borrowing. It is what you do with money you borrowed. Has it been used to make the country more productive or are we borrowing to finance lifestyles, fly private jets and run large convoys for government functionaries?"The issue of corruption is one the report does not deal with directly, but not one Ms Smith shies away from."There's no question that there needs to be transparency around the money that is provided. Policy and governance is a problem, but it is not the problem."Many will be reminded of the Make Poverty History campaign of 2005, and with good reason. The report's authors helped set up that global movement, which saw a landmark deal on debt. While that did have a lasting impact, things are possibly even worse than they were before that was signed.Following Make Poverty History, African external debt fell to a little more than \$180bn. Now, it stands at \$645bn, with private loans making up a far

larger proportion of the total."We're not talking about the need for global charity," says Ms Smith."It is in the interest of Europe and the United States, Canada, the whole of the G7, plus indeed the G20, to see Africa develop."That argument, that this is about enlightened self-interest rather than benevolence, is central to this report.Debt-crippled economies fail to help tackle climate change or provide opportunities for their young people, who then seek opportunities in Europe or elsewhere.That exodus is already being seen in Nigeria's healthcare system, with many young doctors seeking opportunities abroad because of poor pay and conditions. According to Dr Aifuobhokhan, her friend Dr Dioso was one of those who did not want to leave."Then this incident happened where we see that someone is clearly dying because of poorly funded facilities, no infrastructure or emergency responses."

## DR Congo forces criticised as 43 protesters killed



*In Summary • The government has said that at least 43 people were killed when soldiers broke up a demonstration against UN peacekeepers in the eastern city of Goma on Wednesday. • Dozens were wounded and more than 150 arrested, including the leader of a religious sect.*

Rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) has criticised security forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo for killing dozens of protesters demonstrating against UN forces.The government has said that at least 43 people were killed when soldiers broke up a demonstration against UN peacekeepers in the eastern city of Goma on Wednesday.Dozens were wounded and more than 150 arrested, including the leader of a religious sect.Initially the authorities had put the number of fatalities at just seven, including a police officer who had been stoned to death.In a statement, HRW said the officials "who ordered the use of unlawful lethal force should be suspended, investigated, and held accountable in fair and public trials".It said the troops appeared to have fired into a crowd to prevent a demonstration against the UN, calling it an "extremely callous as well as unlawful way to enforce a ban".It said it had authenticated two videos showing soldiers throwing bodies onto the back of a truck.The government says it has begun an investigation into

the matter.

## Gabon suspended from African Union following coup



*In Summary • Earlier, the Gabonese junta said it would phase in what it is calling transitional institutions after the removal of President Ali Bongo.*

The African Union has suspended Gabon's participation in all of its activities following Wednesday's military takeover, which it strongly condemned. The decision followed a meeting on Thursday of the bloc's Peace and Security Council. Earlier, the Gabonese junta said it would phase in what it is calling transitional institutions after the removal of President Ali Bongo. The soldiers gave no details on how long these would remain in place nor on how or whether power might be handed back to a civilian government. The main opposition alliance has urged the junta to discuss the best way forward. It added that Gabonese should be grateful that they had dethroned the Bongo dynasty but called on the military to act responsibly.

## Gabon coup leader vows free elections - but no date



*In Summary Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009. He was succeeded by his son.*

The leader of Gabon's military junta has vowed to return power to civilians after "free, transparent" elections. However, in a speech after being sworn in as interim president, he did not give a date for military rule to end. Gen Brice Nguema led last Wednesday's coup against Ali Bongo, toppling the president shortly after he was named winner of a disputed election. Crowds of cheering civilians turned up at the inauguration - the coup was welcomed by many eager for change. However, some say Gen Nguema's

rule will be a continuation of the 55-year Bongo dynasty. Ali Bongo's father, Omar, was in power for 41 years before he died in 2009 and was succeeded by his son. The general spent most of his career in the Bongo's inner circle and is even thought to be Ali Bongo's cousin. At Monday's inauguration, Gen Nguema gave a defiant speech, referencing the likes of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, French statesman Charles de Gaulle and former Ghanaian leader Jerry Rawlings. "This patriotic action will be a lesson learnt that will be taught in the books of our schools," said the new president, dressed in the red ceremonial costume of the Republican Guard. He added that a fresh government would be formed "in a few days" and recommended new electoral legislation, a new penal code and a referendum on a new constitution. Gen Nguema also said he had instructed the new government "to think without delay" about freeing all political prisoners. The ceremony was broadcast live on Gabonese TV and across online platforms. Former ministers from the ousted government showed up, but were booed by a crowd of junta sympathizers. General Nguema's inauguration is the latest in a series of military takeovers across West and Central Africa. Gabon is the sixth Francophone country to fall under military rule in the last three years as former colonial power France struggles to maintain its influence on the continent. Gabon been suspended from the African Union following the coup, which has been condemned by the UN and France.

## Jet ski tourists shot dead off coast of Algeria



*In Summary • They were among four French-Moroccan dual nationals who had set off by jet ski from the Moroccan resort of Saidia. • A third member of the group was arrested by the coastguard which patrol the two states' closed border.*

The Algerian coastguard have reportedly shot dead two tourists holidaying in Morocco who strayed into Algerian waters on their jet skis. They were among four French-Moroccan dual nationals who had set off by jet ski from the Moroccan resort of Saidia. A third member of the group was arrested by the coastguard which patrol the two states' closed border. The shooting sparked anger in Morocco after a fisherman posted video of a lifeless body floating in the sea. The border between Algeria and Morocco was closed in 1994, with Algiers severing ties two years ago. It

accused Morocco of hostile acts - an allegation rejected by Rabat. Mohamed Kissi was the only one of the group of four to make it back to Morocco, AFP news agency reports, quoting Moroccan media. He said the group had got lost and had run out of fuel. "We got lost but we kept going until we found ourselves in Algeria," said Mr Kissi, whose brother Bilal was killed. "We knew we were in Algeria because a black Algerian dinghy came towards us" and those on board "fired at us", he said. "Thank God I wasn't hit but they killed my brother and my friend," he added. "They arrested my other friend. Five bullets hit my brother and my friend. My other friend was hit by a bullet." He was eventually picked up by the Moroccan navy and brought back to Saidia, he added. Abdelali Merchouer has been named as the second man killed. The man arrested by the Algerian coastguard, named as Smail Snabe, reportedly appeared before a prosecutor on Wednesday but no details were given. A Moroccan government spokesman declined to comment on the shooting, telling AFP it was "a matter for the judiciary". There was no immediate comment from Algeria. The two nations have a long history of tensions, as they continue to dispute Western Sahara. They share a border nearly 2,000km (1,242 miles) long which has been a source of tension since independence from French colonial rule. It was closed in 1994 for security reasons after Islamist militants bombed a hotel in the historic Moroccan city of Marrakesh.

## Johannesburg fire: 'Others jumped too, but they didn't make it'



In Summary Mr Hamissa, from Tanzania, had lived in the building for three years. He knew all the other Tanzanians in the apartment block and said a lot of them did not make it out.

Mussi Hamissa woke up to the sound of a massive roar. His bed was shaking and he heard people shouting: "Fire! Fire! Fire!" In shock, he rubbed his eyes open to see the orange glow of flames coming into his makeshift apartment on the third floor of the building, formerly owned by the South African city of Johannesburg, that had become an informal home to migrants. Mr Hamissa got his wife and their one-year-old baby out of bed. He realised that their only chance of survival was to jump out of the window. So that is exactly what he did. It was a rough landing on concrete and he is quite bruised. But he is alive. Mr Hamissa's wife dropped their baby from the

window and he caught him safely. His wife then tied a bed sheet to the satellite dish and shimmied down to the sidewalk. "People started copying us. They jumped too, but they didn't make it," he said, eyes welling up. "There were a lot of dead bodies... So many dead bodies. And I couldn't help them." Mr Hamissa, from Tanzania, had lived in the building for three years. He knew all the other Tanzanians in the apartment block and said a lot of them did not make it out. "I lost so many brothers and sisters. My family. They were all there, but I could only take my wife and baby." The family also lost their money, passports and all their possessions. Living in this building as a squatter, Mr Hamissa had not had to pay rent. And now with his important documents gone and a low-paying job, he's not sure what to do or where to go. So he's sitting across the street from his home, smoke still rising from its shell, just hoping he has a roof for his son tonight. "I don't know what they're going to do to us, but we don't know where it can go. The government should help us because we lost all of our things," he said. Many were less fortunate than Mr Hamissa. Sphiwe Ngcobo was outside the building at her street vending stand when the fire erupted. She said it happened so quickly that by the time she ran across the street to the building's entrance, the flames were already blocking the way. She had two children inside - both on the second floor, both unreachable. Ms Ngcobo waited for what felt like hours as people started to evacuate from the burning building. Finally her five-year-old son was carried out by a neighbour. He was foaming at the mouth. He had inhaled so much smoke and was in such a state of shock that he was unable to stand on his own. The paramedics took him to the hospital and she hasn't heard about his condition since. Ms Ngcobo stayed behind, waiting at the scene of the fire for more information on where her two-year-old's body has been taken. She wants to say goodbye, to have some closure. "I don't know what to do, I don't know where to go," she said. "I don't know what hospital my child is in, and I don't know what mortuary my other child is in. So I'll wait here for news." Mr Hamissa and Ms Ngcobo were sitting in a group of about 50 people, all trying to get some sleep while they waited for officials to tell them what would happen. There was a stench in the air of old smoke and expired food. The pavement was littered with garbage and unknown liquids. For now, that's where they will be staying.

## Fresh search for Johannesburg fire victims begins



*In Summary • The fire service says it wants to be sure that no-one has been left behind. • The cause of the fire remains unknown but forensic investigators are also at the site picking through the charred remains of the burnt-out building.*

South African firefighters have gone back inside the Johannesburg building destroyed by fire on Thursday to see if they can find any more bodies. The blaze, in the overcrowded and condemned five-storey building, claimed 74 lives, including 12 children. The fire service says it wants to be sure that no-one has been left behind. The cause of the fire remains unknown but forensic investigators are also at the site picking through the charred remains of the burnt-out building. Relatives who believe that family members may have been among the victims of the fire have been asked to visit the mortuary to help identify the bodies. Visiting the scene in central Johannesburg on Thursday evening, President Cyril Ramaphosa called the tragedy a "wake-up call for us to begin to address the situation of housing in the inner city". The building used to be a home for abused women and children, but once the lease expired, it was "hijacked", President Ramaphosa explained to reporters. Many properties around the area where the blaze happened have been deemed unfit to live in. Yet these old blocks, abandoned by their owners or the city authorities, are full of families, often paying rent to criminal gangs who run them. Some of those who use the buildings include undocumented migrants, mostly from other African countries.

## Zimbabwe president to be sworn in for second term



*In Summary • Official results gave him close to 53% of the vote in a presidential election which international observers said fell short of democratic standards. • Mnangagwa's main rival Nelson*

*Chamisa has called for fresh elections.*

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa is set to be sworn in for a second term in office. Official results gave him close to 53% of the vote in a presidential election which international observers said fell short of democratic standards. His Zanu-PF party won close to two-thirds of the parliamentary vote. Mr Mnangagwa's main rival Nelson Chamisa has called for fresh elections. He has until Monday to ask the court to overturn the results. The red carpet has been rolled out and several heads of state have confirmed that they will attend Mr Mnangagwa's inauguration. The government is confident it will go ahead as planned. But an official told the BBC that if the opposition lodged their court application before the ceremony, it could be called off. Mr Chamisa's Citizens' Coalition for Change has rejected Mr Mnangagwa's election win as fraudulent – but hasn't officially confirmed whether it will go to court. International observers' harsh criticism of his election win is likely to hinder Mr Mnangagwa's plans for greater international re-engagement and an economic turn-around. But the attendance of some regional leaders is likely to give him a semblance of the legitimacy that he seeks.

## Our action was necessary - Gabon junta leader



*In Summary • Speaking after being sworn in as Gabon's interim president, Gen Brice Nguema defended the seizure of power last week, saying that it was a patriotic act.*

General Brice Nguema has just been sworn in as president of the transitional government in the capital Libreville. General Nguema, who toppled long-time leader Ali Bongo, officially becomes Gabon's interim leader. Speaking after being sworn in as Gabon's interim president, Gen Brice Nguema defended the seizure of power last week, saying that it was a patriotic act. He quoted Ghana's former military leader, and later elected president, Jerry John Rawlings, saying that: "When the people are smashed by the leaders, then it's the military who must give them back their dignity and freedom." It is in this spirit that we the defence forces took their responsibilities by refusing the... biased electoral process." In his inaugural address, Gen Brice Nguema said: There should be a referendum on a new constitutionThere should be a new electoral law and a

new penal codeThere will be a free and transparent elections

## 73 dead in Johannesburg apartment block fire



*In Summary • Johannesburg authorities say it's unclear what sparked the blaze at the five-storey building in the city centre.*

At least 73 people have died in a fire in a Johannesburg building, South African authorities say. More than 50 others are injured. Officials say it is unclear what sparked the blaze at the city centre five-storey building, which had been abandoned but was being occupied by homeless people. The city of Johannesburg confirmed in a news conference that it owned the building but said cartels had taken it over. A spokesman for the emergency services, Robert Mulaudzi, told the BBC that firefighters had been able to bring out some of the occupants. He said the fire had gutted the building, and that the search for other victims was continuing. Disaster management officials are also in the area to help provide relief for surviving residents. Mr Mulaudzi said the scene will be handed over to the South African police service after emergency services had finished searching for victims. "We are moving floor by floor conducting these body recoveries," Mr Mulaudzi told local broadcaster ENCA. A video posted to the platform X, formerly known as Twitter, by Mr Mulaudzi showed fire trucks and ambulances outside the building with burnt-out windows. Photos from the scene showed covered bodies lined up near the burned building. One woman told journalists she was outside the building searching for her 24-year-old daughter. "As soon as I heard the building was burning down, I knew I had to run here to come and look for her", she said. "Now that I'm here, I'm kept in suspense because I really don't know what is happening. I don't get any direction - so I'm actually very anxious, I don't know if my daughter is alive." The building is located in what was formerly a business district in South Africa's economic hub. It was being used as an informal settlement, Mr Mulaudzi said. The inner city neighbourhood is infamous for "hijacked" buildings, a term used in South Africa to refer to buildings illegally taken over by undocumented migrants, mostly from other African countries. Mr Malaudzi told the BBC that the building had been abandoned previously, but homeless people had moved in looking for shelter during the current cold

winter months. He added that - since it was not a formal accommodation with a lease - the building was not properly looked after, and makeshift structures and debris had made it hard to search for and rescue people. Lebogang Maile, the politician responsible for housing in the province said there was a chronic problem with housing in the area, and there were 1.2 million people looking for somewhere to live. When asked whether his administration would take responsibility for the tragedy, the Mayor of Johannesburg, Kabelo Gwamanda, said the government was dealing with the issue of cartels hijacking buildings which was taking place across the city. In the wake of the fire, many South Africans on social media have condemned the online xenophobic attacks that some have made against the victims and survivors of the fire.

## Gabon coup leader to be sworn in as interim president



*In Summary • Supporters of the military leadership in Gabon are expected to attend the inauguration of Gen Nguema. • The mood in the country is calm but with heightened security.*

The head of the military junta in Gabon, Gen Brice Oligui Nguema, is due to be sworn into office as the interim president of the country. The army toppled President Ali Bongo on Wednesday shortly after he was declared winner of a disputed election. Supporters of the military leadership in Gabon are expected to attend the inauguration of Gen Nguema. The mood in the country is calm but with heightened security. The coup leader is said to be the cousin of ousted President Ali Bongo, raising doubts about whether this really marks an end to the 55-year-long Bongo era. Gen Nguema has said he won't rush to return the country to civilian rule, to avoid past mistakes. The opposition has warned that the military shows no sign of handing back power. Gabon is the sixth Francophone country to fall under military rule in the last three years as former colonial power France struggles to maintain its influence on the continent.

## Cameroon president rejigs military after coup next door



*In Summary • President Paul Biya of Cameroon carried out a wide-ranging reshuffle of his country's defence ministry and armed forces on Wednesday. • Colonel Cyrille Guemo, the director of communications at Cameroon's ministry of defence, told a Turkish news agency that the new appointments had been on the president's table for many days.*

One of Africa's longest-serving presidents has appointed new military leaders on the same day a junta seized power in neighbouring Gabon. President Paul Biya of Cameroon carried out a wide-ranging reshuffle of his country's defence ministry and armed forces on Wednesday. No reason was given for the shake-up. Colonel Cyrille Guemo, the director of communications at Cameroon's ministry of defence, told a Turkish news agency that the new appointments had been on the president's table for many days. But with the "tsunami of military coups that is sweeping across former French colonies... leaders that have been in power for a very long time" should be concerned, says David Otto, a security expert. "The younger generation which is made up of military leaders is no longer tolerant of regimes that operate in some kind of dynasty," Mr Otto said. Although Mr Biya's presidency initially came under threat when soldiers tried to seize power soon after his first election, he has since succeeded in maintaining the military's loyalty. While Wednesday's new military appointments are wide-ranging, observers say the roles involved lack the power and capacity to stage a coup.

## Anonymous Sudan hacks X to get Elon Musk's attention



*In Summary • "Make our message reach to Elon Musk: 'Open Starlink in Sudan,'" the hackers posted on Telegram. • X is the latest victim of the gang attacking to "benefit Sudan and Islam".*

A hacking group called Anonymous Sudan took X, formerly known as Twitter, offline in more than a dozen countries on Tuesday morning in an attempt to pressure Elon Musk into launching his Starlink service in their country. X was down for more than two hours, with thousands of users affected. "Make our message reach to Elon Musk: 'Open Starlink in Sudan,'" the hackers posted on Telegram. X is the latest victim of the gang attacking to "benefit Sudan and Islam". Over several weeks of private conversations with the group on the chat app Telegram, the BBC spoke to the hackers about their methods and motives. One member of the group, who calls himself Crush, told the BBC that Tuesday's attack flooded X's servers with huge amounts of traffic to take it offline - the same blunt and relatively unsophisticated hacking techniques for which the gang is known. The outage-tracking site Downdetector said nearly 20,000 outage reports were logged by users in the US and the UK, with a far higher number of people likely to have been affected. Another hacking group member - Hofs - said the so-called DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attack was aimed at raising awareness about the civil war in Sudan which is "making the internet very bad and it goes down quite often for us". X has not publicly acknowledged the disruption caused, and Mr Musk has not responded to questions to launch his satellite internet service in Sudan. Located in Sudan, the gang has been accused by many in the cyber-security world of being a Russian cyber-military unit in disguise and causing cyber-chaos for the Kremlin under the cover of a foreign hacktivist outfit. The theory stems from its online support for Russian President Vladimir Putin and an apparent alignment of motives with other hacking gangs in the country. But the criminal group has repeatedly denied it is Russian, and for the first time shared evidence with the BBC that it is located in Sudan. Crush, the group's main spokesperson and key member, shared his live location on the Telegram app as proof. Crush and Hofs also sent pictures of their Sudanese passports and other screenshots suggesting they are in Sudan. These things can be faked with varying degrees of difficulty, but after weeks of conversation with the BBC and cyber-security researcher Intel Cocktail, there is nothing to suggest the hackers are lying. "Our long-term goal is to show the world that Sudanese people, although with limited capabilities, have very good skills in many different fields," said Crush. In June, the gang posted a message of support for the Russian government to end an ongoing rebellion by the Wagner forces. However, Crush explained that "a similar thing happened to our country and Russians stood with us so we wanted to pay them back", referring to Russia's support for the Sudanese government as it fights the ongoing civil war. He insists that their group is made up of a "small number" of Sudanese hackers who are launching the attacks from the country in spite of regular internet outages. Since it emerged in January, Anonymous

Sudan has successfully disrupted dozens of organisations and government web services in France, Nigeria, Israel and the US. For the past month the gang has attacked Kenya, claiming the country's government is "meddling in Sudanese affairs". One attack heavily disrupted the country's eCitizen portal used by the public to access more than 5,000 government services. When challenged about the impacts on citizens, Crush defended the actions and said: "The reason we hit infrastructure is to teach the country and its rulers a lesson, and yes we have red lines, that is if our attacks harm a lot of innocents." However, the group has also unsuccessfully attacked hospitals. The gang claims to be carrying out the criminal attacks to "defend the Truth, Islam and Sudan", but on at least two occasions it has also tried to extort victims for Bitcoin. It has also targeted websites like OnlyFans, Tumblr and Reddit, saying that they promote what it calls "disgusting smuts and other LGBTQ+ things". In June, the hackers celebrated when the US cyber-authority issued an official warning about a wave of attacks against American organisations which it warned "can cost an organisation time and money and may impose reputational costs while resources and services are inaccessible". Its most high-profile attack in June disrupted Microsoft services including Outlook and OneDrive, forcing the tech giant to issue a report with advice to customers on how to prevent being affected by the group.

## Africa to find climate solutions not be the victims - Ruto



*In Summary • The meeting in Nairobi is the first of its kind in Africa. • It aims to come up with a common plan to present to other world leaders at the COP 28 United Nations climate summit later this year.*

African heads of state are gathering in Kenya for the Africa Climate Summit, where they will discuss the continent's approach to climate change. The meeting in Nairobi is the first of its kind in Africa. It aims to come up with a common plan to present to other world leaders at the COP 28 United Nations climate summit later this year. Over the next three days, delegates at the summit will consider a new funding model to help governments reduce carbon emissions. Kenyan President William Ruto said Africa

should be part of the solution to global warming, rather than a victim. "For a very long time we have looked at this as a problem. It is time we flipped and looked at it from the other side," he told delegates at the opening of the meeting. "There are opportunities, immense opportunities as well. And that is why we are not here to catalogue grievances and list problems, we are here to scrutinise ideas, assess perspectives, so that we can unlock solutions." African countries are among the smallest contributors to climate change, but suffer some of its worst effects.

## Kenya Kwanza insincere on forest conservation – Raila



*In Summary • Raila said the move by the government to allow people to cut trees in forests is a clear indication that the government is ignorant to the protection of all water towers. • He reiterated that his opponents used the controversial Mau forest issue to fight him politically when he was the Prime Minister in the grand coalition government.*

Azimio La Umoja leader Raila Odinga has waded into the thorny Mau Forest issue saying the Kenya Kwanza government is uncommitted in conserving the water tower. Raila said it is sad that the illegal encroachers have returned to the forest and continue to cause more destruction to the resource. "I have been frequently flying over the forest and what I'm currently seeing is totally destruction to the forest and that should stop with immediate effect," Raila said. He spoke during a Sunday prayer service and thanksgiving for ODM nominated MCA Christine Lemeon in Narok county. In attendance were Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi, former Devolution CS Eugene Wamalwa, former Nominated Senator Judith Pareno, former Narok North MP Moitalel ole Kenta, Narok lawyer Martin Kamwaro among other leaders. Raila added that the move by the government to allow people to cut trees in forests is a clear indication that the government is ignorant to the protection of all water towers. "Many people are depending on these forests on their livelihoods and destroying them means destroying their lives," he said. He reiterated that his opponents used the controversial Mau forest issue to fight him politically when he was the Prime Minister in the grand coalition government. Raila said his rivals turned the conservation of the largest water tower in the East

Africa region into a political weapon to deny him votes from the vast Rift Valley region."I was fought hard because of my stand to conserve all the water towers in the country but Mau should be rehabilitated," Raila. After the church service, Raila and other Azimio leaders embarked on a meet and greet session within Narok town. At one point, Raila's motorcade was blocked by police officers near Narok Boys High School as they head to Narok town. After a brief meeting with the police, Raila and his team were allowed to proceed. While thanking the Maasai community for standing with him in the rehabilitation of Mau forest, Raila said Mau forest should be conserved at all cost as millions of people depend on it. The former Prime Minister faulted the Kenya Kwanza administration for reversing the gains of devolution where they interfere with the mandate of the devolved units. On his part, Wamalwa defended Wiper party leader Kalonzo Musyoka saying he was quoted out of context over the recognition of President William Ruto. "I have just spoken to him on phone and he said that the journalists misquoted him. He said Ruto's legitimacy will only be confirmed with the opening of the IEBC server," Wamalwa said.

## Expectations high for Kimani as he takes over Ulinzi



In Summary •Kimani said he is aware of the huge responsibility placed on his shoulders. •Kimani has been a free agent since mid-last season when he parted ways with coastal side, Bandari, on a mutual agreement

The newly appointed Ulinzi Stars head coach Anthony "Modo" Kimani has pledged to end the Kenyan Premier League club's 13-year title drought. Kimani said the management of the club had

already made their expectations clear to him upon appointment. "As I join the club, I have my work cut out, and that is to secure titles," Kimani said. "I am joining a side that has displayed immense potential in the past by winning four KPL titles. We have amazing management around here and some exceptionally talented players to help us in delivering the title," he remarked. Kimani said he is aware of the huge responsibility placed on his shoulders. Kimani has been a free agent since mid-last season when he parted ways with coastal side, Bandari, on a mutual agreement. The club brought the development to light through a statement released on Wednesday. "Ulinzi Stars are delighted to announce the appointment of Anthony Kimani as our new head coach," the statement read. Sources say the final list was whittled down to two candidates, leading to a final contest between Kimani and the immediate former KCB head coach Zedekiah "Zico" Otieno. "Both of them enjoy impressive CVs and fitted the description of the candidate we desired to have in the role. It was a tough decision to make because of the close contest," the source said. "We finally decided to pick Kimani for the job after a painstaking search," the source said. Kimani joined Bandari in February 2021 to deputise Rwandese tactician Andre Casa Mbungo who also happened to be his boss at AFC Leopards. Kimani took over the reins in an acting capacity in February last year after Mbungo was sent packing following a horrendous run in the league. The ex-Kenyan international and Mathare United defender was ultimately confirmed to the role in August last year after impressing in the second leg of the preceding campaign. He is expected to turn around the fortunes of the soldiers who have endured a long spell without any major local silverware since 2010 when they last clinched the KPL title. Ulinzi have been rummaging through the market for a suitable candidate following the departure of Bernard Mwalala who switched allegiance to KCB at the beginning of July. Initially based at Lanet in Nakuru county, the Kenya Defence Forces affiliated club recently shifted base to the newly constructed Ulinzi Sports Complex at Langata in Nairobi. They romped to consecutive titles from 2003 to 2005 and bagged another one in 2010.

## RUTO & JABER: Joint statement on COP28 milestones



*In Summary A critical element will be a plan to fundamentally transition the world's energy systems and vastly scale investments in clean energy. Africa has the potential to lead this transition and deliver enormous benefits for the region and globally.*

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges confronting the world today. Both the Africa Climate Action Summit and COP28 will be critical milestones in the year of the Global Stocktake for the international community to come together and provide a solutions-oriented path forward. A critical element will be a plan to fundamentally transition the world's energy systems and vastly scale investments in clean energy. Africa has the potential to lead this transition and deliver enormous benefits for the region and globally. In addition to being home to one of the planet's most important carbon sinks, it is endowed with significant untapped hydro potential along the Congo and Nile rivers, geothermal potential along the Rift Valley, and solar and wind potential across the Continent. It is also home to the current and next generation of climate leaders, entrepreneurs, business, and civil society that will help unlock the solutions to transformative action. On a continent where almost half of the population still lacks electricity, clean energy provides an opportunity to supercharge economic growth and improve lives and livelihoods. Realizing this potential will require a step change. Clean energy investment in Africa represents only 2 per cent of the global total and less than 10 per cent of the \$120 billion a year that is required. We must transform the way we deploy public, concessional, and philanthropic capital to drive the private investment that is needed for climate action in Africa. We need to fundamentally rethink the way financiers, governments, global institutions, and technology providers engage with each other. We must all play our collective part. The Africa Climate Action Summit in September will be a pivotal moment for Africa and on the Road to COP28 to accelerate the energy transition and bring African solutions to Dubai this November. COP28 and the Africa Climate Action Summit will drive a just energy transition that leaves no one behind, underpinned by real action including the tripling of renewables and mobilising the partnerships and finance to deliver on the transition. We [President Ruto and COP28 President Dr Sultan] are determined to work hand in hand to ensure COP28 and the Africa Climate Action Summit will deliver real and tangible results for the climate and for the people of Africa and the world. To underscore our commitment to results we [President Ruto and COP28 President Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber] have today launched a joint working group between the Africa Climate Action Summit and COP28 with a focus on the just energy transition and unlocking climate finance to accelerating green growth in Africa in the lead up to the respective summits. Our commitment to realizing Africa's potential in the energy transition begins with

participation at the Africa Energy Forum in Nairobi on June 20th. Joint Statement between H.E President William Ruto and Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 President-Designate

## **Reprise for Kioni and team as High Court suspends ouster**



*In Summary • Political Parties Dispute Tribunal had ruled that they were legally removed from office. • Justice Asenath Ongeri issued the orders and directed that it be served to the respondents for inter partes hearing on July 26, 2023 before Justice Visram.*

Besieged Jubilee party secretary general Jeremiah Kioni has gotten temporary reprieve after the High Court on Thursday issued conservatory orders stopping the rebel group from taking over the party. The order issued at the Milimani court stopped the removal of Kioni as SG, vice chairman David Murathe and the suspension of Treasurer Kagwe Gichohi. Justice Asenath Ongeri issued the orders and directed that it be served upon the respondents for inter partes hearing on July 26, 2023 before Justice Visram. Kioni and his team filed the case against the National Disciplinary Committee of the Jubilee party and the party's deputy secretary general Joshua Kutuny. "In the meantime, conservatory orders are granted in terms of prayers 1,2,3 and 4 of the application dated July 12, 2023," Justice Ongeri ordered. The petitioners through Awele Jackson Advocates wanted the court to declare the majority decision of the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal dated July 10, 2023 null and void and substitute it with the minority decision of the Tribunal issued on the same day. At a press conference convened by the Azimio, Kioni welcomed the court ruling saying the court had delivered a reasoned judgment. He said the PPDT ruled against them in a split decision of four versus three, something he said was a first in the history of the tribunal. "This is useful to know that within our system we still have parts of the Judiciary that is judicious, specifically the High Court, that they are able to listen to issues," he said. The tribunal had in its verdict thrown out an appeal filed by Kioni and his team which sought to nullify their ouster from office by the faction led by the East African Legislative Assembly MP Kanini Kega. The tribunal

also struck out a suit against Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu whom Kioni's team wanted found at fault for ratifying their removal from office in a letter dated May 19. The applicants also wanted the court to quash all and any actions undertaken pursuant to the majority decision of the PPDT which included an order that Kioni's team bears the cost of the appeal to the respondents and interested parties. Justice Ongeri did not, however, pronounce herself on the issue of who bears the costs in the application. She, however, granted the fourth prayer sought by the applicants by declaring the entire decision of the PPDT a mistrial and consequently ordered a new trial before a new bench. Kioni and his team want their complaints heard by a different panel other than Wilfred Mutubwa, Theresa Chepkwony, Abdirahman Abdi ABDIKADIR and Muzna Mohamed Yusuf Jin of the PPDT.

## TSC to recruit 111,870 teachers in next five years



In Summary The government will recruit teachers to reduce the National Teacher shortage in all basic institutions. the commission has been allocated a total of 4.68 billion for the recruitment of 20,000 intern teachers.

Teachers Service Commission is set to recruit 111,870 teachers over the next five years. TSC chief executive officer Nancy Macharia said the government will recruit teachers to reduce the national teacher shortage in all basic institutions. "During the five years, we project to recruit a total of 111,870 teachers," Macharia said. Macharia spoke during the launch of the Commission strategic plan 2023-2027. The CEO said Sh134 billion is required to recruit 111,870 teachers in five years. She added that the commission has been allocated a total of 4.68 billion for the recruitment of 20,000 intern teachers.

## [PHOTOS] Lawyer Steve Ogolla posts photos after traditional wedding



In Summary The two got married on Wednesday, December 28, in a traditional wedding ceremony. In Thursday's post, Ogolla is in all-white pants and a shirt and a green hat while Koks is in a white dress with golden decorations.

City Lawyer Steve Ogolla has taken to Facebook, posting photos of himself and his wife Cebbie Koks. The two got married on Wednesday, December 28, in a traditional wedding ceremony.

## 'Can't afford rice' quote lands journalist in jail



In Summary Samsuzzaman Shams of Prothom Alo daily appeared in court and was denied bail, a day after he was arrested. His story - which ran on 26 March, the country's Independence Day - is alleged to have "smeared the government".

A journalist at a leading Bangladeshi newspaper has been jailed on charges of publishing "false" news after his report on high food prices went viral. Samsuzzaman Shams of Prothom Alo daily appeared in court and was denied bail, a day after he was arrested. His story - which ran on 26 March, the country's Independence Day - is alleged to have "smeared the government". Rights activists have denounced the arrest and accused the government of stifling press freedom. The government denies the allegation but media rights groups have warned of a steady erosion in freedoms under the governing Awami League, in power since 2009. Reporters Without Borders ranked Bangladesh 162 out of 180 countries in last year's World Press Freedom Index, below Russia and Afghanistan. The paper Mr Shams

works for is Bangladesh's largest and the most influential daily. It was not immediately clear how long he would stay in jail. The reporter was picked up at his home outside Dhaka early on Wednesday morning by plain-clothes officers. His employers had no idea of his whereabouts for nearly 30 hours as police and other security agencies said they had no information on him. The report for which Mr Shams was detained featured ordinary Bangladeshis talking about their lives on Independence Day. One quotation was from a labourer who asked: "What is the use of this freedom if we can't afford rice?" The comment was seen to reflect growing worries about escalating food prices, which have soared around the world since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Prothom Alo article was shared by large numbers of people. When the paper posted the report on Facebook, it used a wrong photo of a person. "Once we realised the error, we immediately pulled it down and issued a clarification under the (amended) report," Sajjad Sharif, the paper's executive editor, told the BBC. "But we stand by the original report. The quote of the labourer on the food price was genuine," he said. But supporters of the governing Awami League accused the daily of tarnishing the image of the country. Police have also launched an investigation against its editor, Matiur Rahman, as well as a video journalist from the newspaper and several other people under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA). Law Minister Anisul Haq said Mr Shams had "misrepresented facts with the mala fide intention of creating discontent". "The case was filed by an individual not by the government. Due process will follow," Mr Haq told the BBC. He said the editor and the publisher of the daily also had responsibility for the report - and that's why police were investigating them. The latest developments come amid concerns over the alleged harassment of human rights defenders and media personnel in the build-up to elections later this year. The Media Freedom Coalition, an initiative by a group of Western nations in Dhaka, has expressed concern over recent reports of violence and intimidation of journalists, including the detention in the Prothom Alo case. Bangladeshi journalists say there are increasingly under pressure for reporting that is critical of the government of Sheikh Hasina. They say the DSA has created a culture of fear. According to media rights groups, cases have been filed against around 280 journalists under the DSA since it was enacted in 2018. Mr Haq says the government is working with media houses on issues concerning the act. "I engaged with them [editors] to remove the fear. We are trying to take the best practices. If the DSA has to be improved we will make rules to do that," he said.

## **Pathologists conduct 34 more autopsies in Shakahola**



*In Summary So far the pathologists have conducted 79 postmortems since the second phase of postmortems began last week. Dr Johansen Oduor the government chief pathologist said today they did posmoterm for 22 bodies of adults and 12 children.*

The team of detectives and pathologists conducting a postmortem on Monday managed to do 34 autopsies on bodies exhumed in Shakahola Forest. So far the pathologists have conducted 79 postmortems since the second phase of postmortems began last week. Dr Johansen Oduor the government chief pathologist said today they did posmoterm for 22 bodies of adults and 12 children. Speaking during the daily briefing at the Malindi Sub County Hospital he said the bodies were decomposed; 21 females and 10 men. The gender of the three bodies could not be determined because they were badly decomposed. "We were unable to determine the causes of death for 20 of the bodies but twelve had features of starvation," he said. Oduor said most of the bodies were severely decomposed. He said 32 of the bodies were severely decomposed while two of them were moderately decomposed. The pathologist said they found that being that many were very badly decomposed, they were unable to get the cause of death in 22 of them while in 12 of them, they found features which looked like starvation. "Since many of the bodies were unidentifiable, we took samples for further tests which the Government Chemist would use for DNA purposes so they can be identified," he said. Currently, autopsies have been conducted on 191 out of the 241 bodies of the victims of Paul Mackenzie's cultic teachings in which the controversial preacher is accused of influencing his followers to starve to death to meet Jesus. The exercise is likely to end this week so that phase three of the exhumation kicks off.

## **How five counties were picked for emergency response vehicles**



In Summary •Mandera County was considered due to its vastness while Elgeyo Marakwet was picked as a beneficiary due to the hardships especially due to the insecurity in the area •Bungoma on the other hand is among the best performing counties in the immunisation programme particularly in HPV vaccination among the teenagers

The decision by the Ministry of Health to give emergency response vehicles to counties on Friday was arrived at after a thorough need assessment. Health CS Susan Wafula acknowledged that despite health being a devolved function, it is a shared responsibility hence the decision to share the vehicles with the counties based on emerging disease patterns and their strategic locations. The five counties considered for the vehicles include Mandera, Elgeyo Marakwet, Embu, Bungoma and Nyamira. Mandera County was considered due to its vastness while Elgeyo Marakwet was picked as a beneficiary due to the hardships especially due to the insecurity in the area. "Especially now when there are insecurity challenges I was told it is quite difficult for the response to be done in the county. In my view together with my technical team we were convinced that Elgeyo Marakwet County deserved to get support," Wafula said. Bungoma on the other hand is among the best performing counties in the immunisation programme particularly in HPV vaccination among teenagers.

## Knut, Kuppet in talks with TSC for teachers' salary rise



In Summary Knut is pushing for a 60 percent pay rise while Kuppet is demanding a 42 percent increase. The two unions are said to have met TSC bosses in

Nakuru last week in initial talks.

Teachers' unions have initiated talks with their employers in a fresh push for enhanced salaries and allowances. The unions want the Teachers Service Commission to review the current 2021-202 collective bargaining agreement (CBA) to allow for an increase in their pay. Two leading teachers' unions—the Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (Kuppet)—have already separately met with TSC to begin talks. The two unions met TSC bosses in Nakuru last week in initial talks where, according to officials, they tabled their proposals. Details from the two private talks show that Knut is pushing for a 60 per cent pay rise while Kuppet is demanding a 42 per cent increase. The current CBA signed between the two unions and TSC in 2021 did not have a monetary component. This was occasioned by lack of funds by the government following the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the country in 2020. Knut Secretary-General Collins Oyuu and Kuppet National Deputy Treasurer Ronald Tonui said teachers are facing tough economic times. They argued that the employer had failed to increase their salaries in the past seven years despite the raging inflation and high cost of living. "We sat as the Knut National Steering Council and agreed to push for a 60 percent salary increase for teachers," Oyuu said. He spoke in Bomet County on Sunday after a meeting with 32 branches countrywide during the Bomet Knut branch's annual general meeting. Oyuu said the 2021-25 CBA was not cast in stone and was open to reviewing by both parties owing to the tough economic times teachers are facing. "We have commenced discussions with the TSC on the review of the 2021-2025 CBA, which was non-monetary, and we are confident that we will reach an agreement that is workable for all parties," Oyuu said. Under his leadership, he said, Knut would not encourage strikes to press for salary increases as had happened in the past. "What teachers need is to be treated with dignity, to have their issues addressed by the employer and stakeholders. As a union, we cannot ask teachers to demonstrate on the streets when their issues can be dealt with diplomatically and amicably by the employer and the unions," said Oyuu. In the 2023/2024 Budget Policy Statement, the TSC has been allocated Sh322 billion.

## UDA retains Kandara seat as Chege Njuguna wins by-election



In Summary Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro congratulated Njuguna saying that he won the seat decisively. Senate Majority leader Aaron Cheruiyot said UDA had emerged victorious in three out of four seats.

United Democratic Alliance has emerged victorious after Chege Njuguna was declared the winner for the Kandara MP seat. Njuguna garnered 21,650 votes against Ford Asili's Titus Njau Mbuchi who got 14,678 votes in the by-election. Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro congratulated Njuguna saying that he won the seat decisively. "Congratulations to the great people of Kandara for the confidence. Tunawashukuru sana (we thank you). Chege Njuguna will work and deliver progress. We are Africans and Africa is our Business," he said. Senate Majority leader Aaron Cheruiyot said UDA had emerged victorious in three out of four seats. "The wheelbarrow still reigns supreme. Well done to all our candidates. Thanks also to the people of Garrissa, Kandara and Elgeyo Marakwet for reaffirming your belief in Kenya Kwanza," he said. The constituency fell vacant following the appointment of former MP Alice Whaome as Water Cabinet Secretary. Whaome had been elected for her third term in the August 2022 polls.

## Come here, go there! Itumbi reacts after CAS post nullification



In Summary Itumbi is among the 50 CASs whose appointment was quashed by the High Court on Monday. He had been appointed to the Ministry of Information and Communication and Digital Economy.

Blogger and digital strategist Dennis Itumbi has reacted after the High Court quashed the appointments of 50 CASs made by President William Ruto. Itumbi is among the 50 CASs whose appointment was quashed by the High Court on Monday. He had been appointed to the Ministry of Information and Communication and Digital Economy. In a ruling on Monday, a three-judge bench found that the law was not complied with in the establishment of the said office. The High Court termed the creation of the 50 CASs unconstitutional. In a statement after the ruling, Itumbi said: "Come here, go there. Focus, service and connecting dreams to opportunities," he said. The comment can remind one of his role in government before he was appointed CAS. In January, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua allayed fears that Itumbi was jobless. Gachagua said even though Itumbi had no designated office, he was a close aide to Ruto. "Many of you wonder what is the work of Itumbi. His office is known as come here, go there. He is a close friend of our President," he said. "Itumbi has no office, but he is in charge of everything. He arranges everything, he is the president's handler." Gachagua was responding to critics from Azimio who had claimed that Itumbi had been sidelined by Ruto while forming his government.

## Kakamega MCA Stephen Maloba stabbed to death in fight

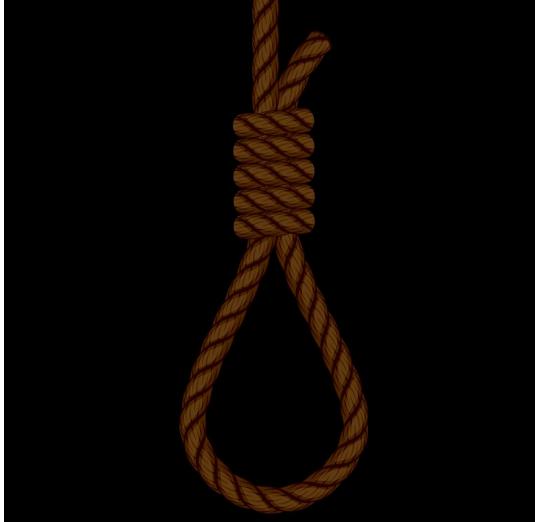


In Summary The ward representative was confirmed dead by Kakamega county leaders led by Governor Fernandez Barasa. Khwiser OCPD Samuel Kogo confirmed the incident happened at a public meeting.

Kisa East MCA Stephen Maloba succumbed to stab injuries after being caught in a scuffle with people believed to have links with Khwiser MP Christopher Aseka. The ward representative was confirmed dead by Kakamega county leaders led by Governor Fernandez Barasa. Khwiser OCPD Samuel Kogo confirmed the incident happened at a public meeting. He said they are looking for the suspected assailants. "We can't say what the motive was for now but we are looking for suspects," he said. Maloba, who was voted on a KANU ticket, passed away after a

melee ensued between supporters of the two camps. Kakamega deputy governor Ayub Savula made the announcement at a public event in the area. "We would like to stay here longer, but we can't. Apologies for that. An MCA has just passed away in Khwiser Constituency," he said. Kakamega senator Boni Khalwale added that the MCA was killed due to political indifference. However, the legislator did not disclose the cause of the altercation that resulted in the death of the MCA.

## Body of man found in bathroom in Nairobi's Kahawa West



In Summary • Police say they register up to two cases of suicide daily. • Suicide is a leading cause of death nowadays, officials say.

A 35-year-old man died by suicide in his bathroom after he left his shower head running for a day in Nairobi's Kahawa West area. The body of Anthony Ndungu Waithanje was found dangling on a manila rope in his bathroom with the shower water running. He is suspected to have died on the night of April 18, police said. This is the latest case of suicide in a series that have been reported in the country amid calls to address the trend. According to a neighbor of the deceased, he arrived home on April 19 in the evening and heard the shower of Ndungu running. He assumed the deceased was taking a shower after daylong activities. The deceased stayed alone. But an hour later, the shower was still on with water running down the drain. The neighbour went to knock on Ndungu's door but there was no response as the door had been locked from the inside. He also tried to call his mobile phone but established it had been switched off. He told police he peeped through the window and spotted his body hanging on a shower even as the water ran. Nairobi police boss Adamson Bungei said police were called and broke into the house where the body was found. He said they are yet to establish the motive of the incident and that the body was moved to the mortuary. Police say they register up to two cases of suicide daily. Suicide is a leading cause of death nowadays, officials

say. The World Health Organization says such cases are attributed to joblessness, death, academic failures or pressures, legal difficulties and financial difficulties. Other reasons are bullying, previous suicide attempts, history of suicide in a family, alcoholism and substance misuse, depression and bipolar disorder. WHO rates suicide as a serious global public health issue that is among the top 20 leading causes of death worldwide.

## PS Omollo warns against misuse of NPRs in Mara Reserve



*In Summary • Acknowledging that the county and the state had cordial relations, Omollo said the move to launch the NPR was aimed at enhancing security coverage of Mara Reserve. • "Any cases of indiscipline, misuse or abuse of firearms issued today will be met by the full force of the law. I think this is important. It needs to sink in," he said.*

Interior PS Raymond Omollo has warned against the misuse of the Narok County National Police Reservists. Acknowledging the cordial relations between the county and the state, Omollo said the move to launch the NPR was aimed at enhancing security coverage of Mara Reserve. Omollo spoke on Thursday during the commissioning of the 592 NPR officers at Keekorok lodge, Maasai Mara National Reserve. "Any cases of indiscipline, misuse or abuse of firearms issued today will be met by the full force of the law. I think this is important. It needs to sink in," he said. AdChoicesADVERTISING Omollo added: "In addition, the NPR will not be a tool to use by misguided quotas to settle differences be they personal or political." The PS said the national government was committed to ensuring that they treat the Narok NPRs the same way they treat any other reservists in the country. Omollo said Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu had made the call to convert county rangers to NPR. He called upon the county residents to embrace the relationship between the national and county governments as they work to ensure peace and security across Narok. "The starting point is for all of us here to be peace crusaders and indeed if we observe the rule of law, support and respect the institutions charged with managing our day-to-day security, we will surely have a peace and forward-looking county in terms of socio-economic development," he added. Further noting that the

rangers had limitations in training and equipment, the PS said the NPRs had undergone vigorous training in the GSU Training College in Embakasi, KWS Academy in Manyani and other military schools. They had also been equipped with improved modern firearms. Omollo reiterated that the graduate NPR officers were well-qualified and dedicated to working anywhere within the county. The tourism PS John Olotua was present, alongside other state officials.

## French-Moroccan ties marked by affection and tensions



*In Summary The relationship France has with Morocco is not nearly as traumatic as with neighbouring Algeria, which fought Paris in a bloody seven-year War of Independence that scars both nations to this day. But as in any post-colonial relationship, Morocco, which won independence in 1956, has its grievances with France, most notably over the question of visas.*

France and Morocco have a relatively relaxed post-colonial relationship but ties are still not without tensions that risk being exposed when their national football sides clash in a World Cup semi final in Qatar. The relationship France has with Morocco is not nearly as traumatic as with neighbouring Algeria, which fought Paris in a bloody seven-year War of Independence that scars both nations to this day. But as in any post-colonial relationship, Morocco, which won independence in 1956, has its grievances with France, most notably over the question of visas. Over a million Moroccans are believed to live in France and security forces will be on alert during the match Wednesday for any clashes like those in Brussels that marked Morocco's shock win over Belgium in the group stages. There were exuberant scenes in central Paris on Saturday when Morocco overcame Portugal in the semi finals but only minor incidents were reported among the roughly 20,000 fans gathered amid a heavy police presence. For Wednesday night, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told parliament that 5,000 police and security forces would be deployed in the Paris region, mainly on the iconic Champs-Elysees avenue, and a further 5,000 throughout the rest of France. "The relationship between Morocco and France is not a replica of France's relationship with Algeria. The relationship is calmer," the Moroccan writer and political scientist

Hassan Aourid told AFP. "There are unquestionably segments of Moroccan society that have a very emotional relationship with France," he added. - 'Language of elite' - But Aourid acknowledged that the growing influence of pan-Arabism and Islamism meant there were now also segments in society for whom France is not just a Western country, "but the enemy who dominated and colonised Morocco". In a sign of the emotional complexities of the game, many on the Moroccan team were born outside the country, including in France, such as manager Walid Regragui and defender Romain Saiss. France are the overwhelming favourites to win the showdown and keep alive their hopes of retaining the World Cup. But with Morocco emerging as the breakout team in this World Cup -- and with rousing support from across the Arab and African world -- it could yet pull off one of the biggest upsets in the history of the competition. Moroccan independence put an end to 44 years of French and Spanish protectorates over separate parts of its territory. Since then, France has become Morocco's leading economic partner and by far the main foreign investor. And French culture remains very popular among Moroccan elite, most of whom were trained in French institutions. Ruled by King Mohammed VI, the country is seen as a Western ally in North Africa, and in 2020 he angered some in the Muslim world including Algeria by re-establishing ties with Israel and pursuing security cooperation with the Jewish state. But elsewhere in Africa, France has seen its influence eroded in recent years by new competitors, as shown by growing numbers of schools teaching in standard Arabic and English as well as the presence of China's controversial Confucius Institutes. The younger generations in particular "have seized on English because it is the language of new technology and social networks, but also because French is seen as the language of the elite," the prominent young Moroccan novelist Hajar Azell told AFP. - 'Feeling of hostility' - The rise in importance of relationships other than with France has led to a loss of "economic and political influence" of France in Morocco, Beatrice Hibou, a director of research at France's CNRS institute, told AFP. But the greatest source of tension stems from a decision taken by France at the end of 2021 to halve to the number of entry visas granted to Moroccans every year, citing its reluctance to readmit illegal immigrants who have arrived in France. Rabat had slammed the move as "unjustified". "We must not underestimate the question of visas, which is crucial," said Hibou, adding that Morocco saw the French move "as a slap in the face, with a real anti-French feeling and a great waste." There are also bilateral tensions over the conflict in Western Sahara has pitted Morocco against the Sahrawi independence fighters of the Polisario Front, supported by Algeria, for more than 40 years. Moroccan academic Ali Bouabid told AFP that he fears the controversy will leave a lasting mark fuelling a "feeling of hostility towards France".

## Turkey earthquake: Where did it hit and why was it so deadly?



In Summary It was a big earthquake. The one near Gaziantep was estimated to be 7.8, classified as "major", on the official magnitude scale. Its centre was relatively shallow at about 18km (11 miles), causing serious damage to buildings on the surface.

More than 2,000 people have been killed and thousands injured by a huge earthquake which struck south-eastern Turkey, near the Syrian border, in the early hours of Monday morning. The earthquake, which hit near the town of Gaziantep, was closely followed by a second nearby, which was almost as large. Why was it so deadly? It was a big earthquake. The one near Gaziantep was estimated to be 7.8, classified as "major", on the official magnitude scale. Its centre was relatively shallow at about 18km (11 miles), causing serious damage to buildings on the surface. Prof Joanna Faure Walker, head of the Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction at University College London, said: "Of the deadliest earthquakes in any given year, only two in the last 10 years have been of equivalent magnitude, and four in the previous 10 years." But it is not only the power of the tremor that causes devastation. This incident occurred in the early hours of the morning, when people were inside and sleeping. The sturdiness of the buildings is also a factor. Dr Carmen Solana, reader in volcanology and risk communication at the University of Portsmouth, says: "The resistant infrastructure is unfortunately patchy in South Turkey and especially Syria, so saving lives now mostly relies on response. The next 24 hours are crucial to find survivors. After 48 hours the number of survivors decreases enormously." This was a region where there had not been a major earthquake for more than 200 years or any warning signs, so the level of preparedness would be less than for a region which was more used to dealing with tremors. What caused the earthquake? The Earth's crust is made up of separate bits, called plates, that nestle alongside each other. These plates often try to move but are prevented by the friction of rubbing up against an adjoining one. But sometimes the pressure builds until one plate suddenly jerks across, causing the surface to move. In this case it was the Arabian plate moving northwards and grinding against the Anatolian

plate. Friction from the plates has been responsible for very damaging earthquakes in the past. On 13 August 1822 it caused an earthquake registering 7.4 in magnitude, significantly less than the 7.8 magnitude recorded on Monday. Even so, the 19th Century earthquake resulted in immense damage to towns in the area, with 7,000 deaths recorded in the city of Aleppo alone. Damaging aftershocks continued for nearly a year. There have already been several aftershocks following the current earthquake and scientists are expecting it to follow the same trend as the previous big one in the region. How are earthquakes measured? They are measured on a scale called the moment magnitude scale. A tremor of 2.5 or less usually cannot be felt, but can be detected by instruments. Quakes of up to five are felt and cause minor damage. The Turkish earthquake at 7.8 is classified as major and usually causes serious damage, as it has in this instance. Anything above 8 causes catastrophic damage and can totally destroy communities at its centre. How does this compare with other large earthquakes? The earthquake off the coast of Japan in 2011 was registered as magnitude 9 and caused widespread damage on the land, and caused a series of giant tidal waves - one of which led to a major accident at nuclear plant along the coast. The largest ever earthquake was 9.5 recorded in Chile in 1960.

## 'Granby Girl' identified 45 years after her murder



In Summary Ms Tucker's body was found buried under leaves on a logging road in the town of Granby on 15 November, 1978. She had been shot in the temple and her death was ruled a homicide.

A woman found shot to death in the state of Massachusetts in 1978 has finally been identified with advances in DNA technology, officials said. Patricia Ann Tucker, then 28, was known for decades only as "Granby Girl" after the small town where her body was found. DNA samples from her son - who was five when she disappeared - helped identify Ms Tucker. For decades, she was buried with a headstone marked "Unknown". "Thank you for never giving up on her," her son, Matthew Dale, said in a statement. "At least I have some answers now after 44 years. It's a lot to process, but hopefully, the closure can begin now." AdChoicesADVERTISING Ms Tucker's body was found buried under leaves on a logging road in the town of Granby on 15 November,

1978. She had been shot in the temple and her death was ruled a homicide. The autopsy concluded she had been dead since about June of 1978 and that she was between 19 and 27 years old. But her identity remained a mystery. "It was advances in forensic science, and in particular, forensic genetic genealogy that provided a new source of hope for identifying the victim," said First Assistant Northwestern District Attorney Steven Gagne at a press conference on Monday. About two years ago, authorities obtained Ms Tucker's DNA profile through a forensic laboratory and eventually identified a woman in Maryland who was likely related to her. That relative told police that her aunt had gone missing in the 1970s and she gave police the names of her aunt's two sons, Mr Gagne said. One of those sons, Matthew Dale, confirmed his mother, Patricia Tucker, went missing in 1978. Comparison of his DNA to Ms Tucker's DNA resulted in a 100% parent-child match, officials said. "While it's satisfying to finally know who 'Granby Girl' actually was, the investigation won't stop until we identify her killer," said Mr Gagne. Investigators found Ms Tucker was married to Gerald Coleman at the time of her death but he never reported his wife missing. In 1995, Coleman was convicted on charges including rape and assault, and he died in prison in 1996. Police say Coleman is a "person of interest" in his wife's murder. "We do not yet formally have probable cause to charge anyone with Patricia's murder," Mr Gagne said. "Our hope is that today's press conference will generate some additional leads that will help to move this investigation further and ultimately identify a murderer."

## **Kenya Kwanza insincere on forest conservation – Raila**



*In Summary • Raila said the move by the government to allow people to cut trees in forests is a clear indication that the government is ignorant to the protection of all water towers. • He reiterated that his opponents used the controversial Mau forest issue to fight him politically when he was the Prime Minister in the grand coalition government.*

Azimio La Umoja leader Raila Odinga has waded into the thorny Mau Forest issue saying the Kenya Kwanza government is uncommitted in conserving the water tower. Raila said it is sad that the illegal encroachers have returned to the forest and continue to cause

more destruction to the resource. "I have been frequently flying over the forest and what I'm currently seeing is totally destruction to the forest and that should stop with immediate effect," Raila said. He spoke during a Sunday prayer service and thanksgiving for ODM nominated MCA Christine Lemeon in Narok county. In attendance were Vihiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi, former Devolution CS Eugene Wamalwa, former Nominated Senator Judith Pareno, former Narok North MP Moitalel ole Kenta, Narok lawyer Martin Kamwaro among other leaders. Raila added that the move by the government to allow people to cut trees in forests is a clear indication that the government is ignorant to the protection of all water towers. "Many people are depending on these forests on their livelihoods and destroying them means destroying their lives," he said. He reiterated that his opponents used the controversial Mau forest issue to fight him politically when he was the Prime Minister in the grand coalition government. Raila said his rivals turned the conservation of the largest water tower in the East Africa region into a political weapon to deny him votes from the vast Rift Valley region. "I was fought hard because of my stand to conserve all the water towers in the country but Mau should be rehabilitated," Raila. After the church service, Raila and other Azimio leaders embarked on a meet and greet session within Narok town. At one point, Raila's motorcade was blocked by police officers near Narok Boys High School as they head to Narok town. After a brief meeting with the police, Raila and his team were allowed to proceed. While thanking the Maasai community for standing with him in the rehabilitation of Mau forest, Raila said Mau forest should be conserved at all cost as millions of people depend on it. The former Prime Minister faulted the Kenya Kwanza administration for reversing the gains of devolution where they interfere with the mandate of the devolved units. On his part, Wamalwa defended Wiper party leader Kalonzo Musyoka saying he was quoted out of context over the recognition of President William Ruto. "I have just spoken to him on phone and he said that the journalists misquoted him. He said Ruto's legitimacy will only be confirmed with the opening of the IEBC server," Wamalwa said.

## **Expectations high for Kimani as he takes over Ulinzi**



*In Summary • Kimani said he is aware of the huge responsibility placed on his shoulders. • Kimani has been a free agent since mid-last season when he parted ways with coastal side, Bandari, on a mutual agreement*

The newly appointed Ulinzi Stars head coach Anthony "Modo" Kimani has pledged to end the Kenyan Premier League club's 13-year title drought. Kimani said the management of the club had already made their expectations clear to him upon appointment. "As I join the club, I have my work cut out, and that is to secure titles," Kimani said. "I am joining a side that has displayed immense potential in the past by winning four KPL titles. We have amazing management around here and some exceptionally talented players to help us in delivering the title," he remarked. Kimani said he is aware of the huge responsibility placed on his shoulders. Kimani has been a free agent since mid-last season when he parted ways with coastal side, Bandari, on a mutual agreement. The club brought the development to light through a statement released on Wednesday. "Ulinzi Stars are delighted to announce the appointment of Anthony Kimani as our new head coach," the statement read. Sources say the final list was whittled down to two candidates, leading to a final contest between Kimani and the immediate former KCB head coach Zedekiah "Zico" Otieno. "Both of them enjoy impressive CVs and fitted the description of the candidate we desired to have in the role. It was a tough decision to make because of the close contest," the source said. "We finally decided to pick Kimani for the job after a painstaking search," the source said. Kimani joined Bandari in February 2021 to deputise Rwandese tactician Andre Casa Mbungo who also happened to be his boss at AFC Leopards. Kimani took over the reins in an acting

capacity in February last year after Mbungo was sent packing following a horrendous run in the league. The ex-Kenyan international and Mathare United defender was ultimately confirmed to the role in August last year after impressing in the second leg of the preceding campaign. He is expected to turn around the fortunes of the soldiers who have endured a long spell without any major local silverware since 2010 when they last clinched the KPL title. Ulinzi have been rummaging through the market for a suitable candidate following the departure of Bernard Mwalala who switched allegiance to KCB at the beginning of July. Initially based at Lanet in Nakuru county, the Kenya Defence Forces affiliated club recently shifted base to the newly constructed Ulinzi Sports Complex at Langata in Nairobi. They romped to consecutive titles from 2003 to 2005 and bagged another one in 2010.

## **Reprise for Kioni and team as High Court suspends ouster**



*In Summary • Political Parties Dispute Tribunal had ruled that they were legally removed from office. • Justice Asenath Ongeri issued the orders and directed that it be served to the respondents for inter partes hearing on July 26, 2023 before Justice Visram.*

Besieged Jubilee party secretary general Jeremiah Kioni has gotten temporary reprieve after the High Court on Thursday issued conservatory orders stopping the rebel group from taking over the party. The order issued at the Milimani court stopped the removal of Kioni as SG, vice chairman David Murathe and the suspension of Treasurer Kagwe Gichohi. Justice Asenath Ongeri issued the orders and directed that it be served upon the respondents for inter partes hearing on July 26, 2023 before Justice Visram. Kioni and his team filed the case against the National Disciplinary Committee of the Jubilee party and the party's deputy secretary general Joshua Kutuny. "In the meantime, conservatory orders are granted in terms of prayers 1,2,3 and 4 of the application dated July 12, 2023," Justice Ongeri ordered. The petitioners through Awele Jackson Advocates wanted the court to declare the majority decision of the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal dated July 10, 2023 null and void and substitute it

with the minority decision of the Tribunal issued on the same day. At a press conference convened by the Azimio, Kioni welcomed the court ruling saying the court had delivered a reasoned judgment. He said the PPDT ruled against them in a split decision of four versus three, something he said was a first in the history of the tribunal. "This is useful to know that within our system we still have parts of the Judiciary that is judicious, specifically the High Court, that they are able to listen to issues," he said. The tribunal had in its verdict thrown out an appeal filed by Kioni and his team which sought to nullify their ouster from office by the faction led by the East African Legislative Assembly MP Kanini Kega. The tribunal also struck out a suit against Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu whom Kioni's team wanted found at fault for ratifying their removal from office in a letter dated May 19. The applicants also wanted the court to quash all and any actions undertaken pursuant to the majority decision of the PPDT which included an order that Kioni's team bears the cost of the appeal to the respondents and interested parties. Justice Ongeri did not, however, pronounce herself on the issue of who bears the costs in the application. She, however, granted the fourth prayer sought by the applicants by declaring the entire decision of the PPDT a mistrial and consequently ordered a new trial before a new bench. Kioni and his team want their complaints heard by a different panel other than Wilfred Mutubwa, Theresa Chepkwony, Abdirahman Abdi Abdi and Muzna Mohamed Yusuf Jin of the PPDT.

## Come here, go there! Itumbi reacts after CAS post nullification



In Summary Itumbi is among the 50 CASs whose appointment was quashed by the High Court on Monday. He had been appointed to the Ministry of Information and Communication and Digital Economy.

Blogger and digital strategist Dennis Itumbi has reacted after the High Court quashed the appointments of 50 CASs made by President William Ruto. Itumbi is among the 50 CASs whose appointment was quashed by the High Court on Monday. He had been appointed to the Ministry of Information and Communication and Digital

Economy. In a ruling on Monday, a three-judge bench found that the law was not complied with in the establishment of the said office. The High Court termed the creation of the 50 CASs unconstitutional. In a statement after the ruling, Itumbi said: "Come here, go there. Focus, service and connecting dreams to opportunities," he said. The comment can remind one of his role in government before he was appointed CAS. In January, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua allayed fears that Itumbi was jobless. Gachagua said even though Itumbi had no designated office, he was a close aide to Ruto. "Many of you wonder what is the work of Itumbi. His office is known as come here, go there. He is a close friend of our President," he said. "Itumbi has no office, but he is in charge of everything. He arranges everything, he is the president's handler." Gachagua was responding to critics from Azimio who had claimed that Itumbi had been sidelined by Ruto while forming his government.

## FALSE: There's no travel advisory to Florida over an increase in leprosy cases



In Summary Leprosy cases are surging in Florida, suggesting the chronic infectious disease may have become endemic in southeastern US. Number of cases more than doubled in the southeastern states over the last decade.

Reports that a travel advisory has been issued to Florida state in the US due to increased cases of leprosy are FALSE. A number of X users (formerly known as Twitter) had taken to their socials claiming that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had issued an advisory to Florida, allegations which the agency denied. "The CDC has issued a travel advisory for the state of Florida due to an increase in leprosy cases. Maybe Ron DeSantis should focus on that instead of Mickey Mouse and drag queens," read one of the posts on the platform. Another claimed, "The CDC has issued a travel advisory for the State of Florida due to an increase in cases of leprosy." But the disease control body in a statement on August 2, stated that it has not issued a travel advisory for Florida, or any other state, due to Hansen's disease (leprosy). The CDC in the statement explained that leprosy is very rare in the United States, with less than 200 cases reported per year. "Most people with Hansen's disease in the U.S. became infected in a country where it is more common. In the past, leprosy

was feared as a highly contagious, devastating disease, but now we know that it's hard to spread and it's easily treatable," read part of the statement.Leprosy cases are surging in Florida, suggesting the chronic infectious disease may have become endemic in the southeastern United States.The number of cases more than doubled in the southeastern states over the last decade, with Florida among the top reporting states, the CDC said in its latest report.Hansen's disease (also known as leprosy) is an infection caused by slow-growing bacteria called *Mycobacterium leprae*.It can affect the nerves, skin, eyes, and lining of the nose (nasal mucosa). With early diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be cured.People with Hansen's disease can continue to work and lead an active life during and after treatment.However, if left untreated, the nerve damage can result in crippling of hands and feet, paralysis, and blindness.This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## **FALSE: Government won't fund 45,000 university students only**



In Summary Ringera said a total of 869,782 learners sat for last year's KCSE examination. He said only 173,127 scored the minimum entry grade for university which is a C+.

Higher Education Loans Board Chief Executive Officer Charles Ringera has dismissed claims by Embakasi East MP Babu Owino that the government will only fund 45,000 learners set to join universities for the 2023/2024 academic year. Ringera said those who qualified to join universities will all benefit from government funding, but only 45,000 will get 100 percent funding. "45,000 are the first two categories with 100 percent GOK funding, the rest will get 93 percent funding and family will contribute 7 percent," Ringera told the Star in an interview on Friday. The two categories of learners that will get full funding are the vulnerable and extremely needy. On Thursday, Owino, through his social media account claimed that 800, 000 learners are set to join varsities this year but only 45, 000 will be funded. "The students who did their KCSE exams and are being admitted in different universities are around 800, 000. Of which the government's intention is only to sponsor 45, 000

students. This means that over 750,000 students will not be sponsored," Owino claimed. Ringera dismissed this figure, clarifying that a total of 869,782 learners sat for last year's KCSE examination. He said only 173,127 scored the minimum entry grade for university which is a C+. Of the 173,127 learners who qualified, only 140,107 applied and were placed into various programs across the public universities in the country. Ringera urged learners to keep on applying for government funding through the Higher Education Fund website as the deadline draws closer. The deadline for application for funding is September 7.

## **FAKE: Media Council hasn't condemned bullying of journalists by Kericho county officials**



*In Summary The statement dated August 2, insinuated that members of MCK were bullied and blackmailed during the coverage of circumstances surrounding the embezzlement of funds meant for the Londiani crash victims. MCK CEO David Omwoyo told the Star Fact-Checker that the council did not even receive any complaint from journalists who were covering the said event.*

The Media Council of Kenya has termed as Fake a statement purporting to be from the council condemning the mishandling of journalists by some officials at the office of the Kericho County Governor.The statement dated August 2, insinuated that members of MCK were bullied and blackmailed during the coverage of circumstances surrounding the embezzlement of funds meant for the Londiani crash victims.“A case in hand is when our member tried to ask a substantive question. Derogative terms were used which is insensitive and uncalled for since it violates the dignity of a journalist and as such, can present a culture that can easily erode our gains in the industry,” read part of the statement.However, the media regulator in a post X (formerly Twitter) flagged the communication as fake adding that it didn’t originate from the regulator.MCK CEO David Omwoyo told the Star Fact-Checker that the council did not even receive any complaint from journalists who were covering the said event.The communication came at a time the Kericho County government was battling allegations of embezzling Londiani accident victims’ funds raised through Harambee, to assist the

53 fatalities who perished and 24 others injured. However, the Kericho County Government denied the allegations according to this story by KBC. County Secretary Wesly Bor days later indicated that all victims had been fully compensated according to this news item by Citizen TV. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FALSE: TSC has not started demoting non-graduate headteachers



*In Summary "We wish to inform the public to ignore this fake article being circulated through social media," TSC said in a tweet. The Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWER) had in made a proposal to demote non-graduate primary school head teachers without degrees.*

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has not announced it will start the process of demoting non-graduate headteachers in schools. This blog post alleged that TSC had taken the move to determine the appropriate number of headteachers with degrees. "The commission requests that the school administrators include information such as their greatest level of education (P1, Degree, Masters in an excel file," the blog post read. It further claimed that TSC is currently working to put the education taskforce's recommendations into action, which call for combining nursery, primary, and junior schools under the direction of a single principal.

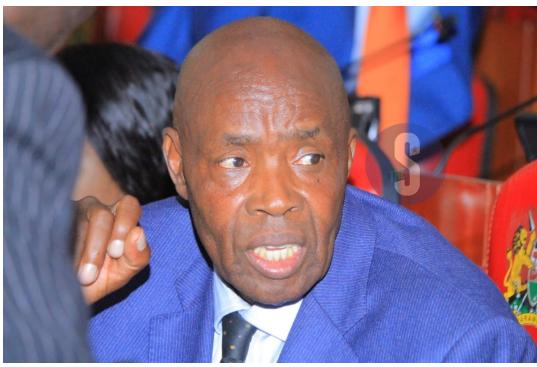
## FAKE: This Nation screenshot showing Kericho DG questioning president's office over Londiani money is fabricated



*In Summary The card also has some abnormalities as the text is in bold which is contrary to how Nation does its posts. The grammar used in the post is poor and Kericho Deputy Governor's name is not mentioned after his title.*

A Nation Africa screenshot that went viral on social media allegedly claiming that Kericho Deputy Governor Fred Kirui questioned the office of the president over money meant for Londiani accident victims is FAKE. A section of Kenyans have been sharing the fake digital card bearing the trademarks of Nation Africa. Through their verified Facebook page, Nation Africa denied ownership of the card. The card also has some abnormalities as the text is in bold which is contrary to how Nation does its posts. The grammar used in the post is poor and Kericho Deputy Governor's name is not mentioned after his title. "Deputy Governor Kericho Questioned the Office of the President disbursement promised 300K to victims by the president not yet: We will investigate the reasons for the delays in disbursement of promised funds from the office of the president and provide a transparent explanation to the public. #KenyaKwanzaIsAScam," the Facebook post read. In July 2023, the Kericho government was accused of allegations of misuse of funds meant for Londiani crash victims. The accident, which took place on June 30, claimed the lives of 53 people. The allegations followed the emergence of reports that out of the Sh13.6 million raised in a fundraiser, only Sh5.7 million reached the victims. In the documents seen by the Star, 53 families that lost their relatives were each paid Sh90,000 while 12 who got injured received Sh60,000. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FAKE: CS Machogu hasn't ordered exam rewriting for older generation



*In Summary "Every centre manager are personally accountable for any irregularities. We designed a form for security personnel to sign how things went," he said. The company said all its social media accounts are verified.*

Education Cabinet Secretary Ezekiel Machogu has not issued an order for Kenyans aged between 29 to 35 years to rewrite national examination over alleged cheating in schools during their period. Through an X (formerly Twitter) post, a pseudo account belonging to NationAfricKE, the user claimed that Machogu had said that Kenyans between 29 and 35 years old are to re-sit KCSE exams due to rampant cheating in the years they sat for the national examinations. "Education CS Ezekiel Machogu has today said that Kenyans between 29 and 35 years old are to re-sit KCSE exams due to rampant cheating in the years they sat for the national examinations," the post read. The post was made on May 8, 2023.

## **FALSE: CDC didn't say vaccinated people are more at risk of new COVID variant than unvaccinated**



*In Summary The center, in a risk assessment summary published on August 23, stated that the SARS-CoV-2 variant labeled BA.2.86, may be more capable of causing infection in people who have previously had COVID-19 or who have received COVID-19 vaccines. It did not say that vaccinated people are at a higher risk than the unvaccinated.*

Claims that the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that a new COVID-19 variant is more contagious among vaccinated people than those who are unvaccinated are false. The center, in a risk assessment summary published on August 23, stated that the SARS-CoV-2 variant labeled BA.2.86,

may be more capable of causing infection in people who have previously had COVID-19 or who have received COVID-19 vaccines. It did not say that vaccinated people are at a higher risk than the unvaccinated. Posts on X (formerly Twitter) had claimed that the new COVID variant is more contagious among vaccinated people than those unvaccinated, quoting the CDC report. However, the Star fact check has established that this is a distortion of the CDC's Risk Assessment report as the agency said those who've been vaccinated or previously infected may be more susceptible than they were to prior variants. In its statement, the agency said that it is still closely monitoring the variant but that it is too soon to know its severity and encouraged people to stay up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccines. "It is too soon to know whether this variant might cause more severe illness compared with previous variants. CDC is closely monitoring hospitalization rates to identify any potential early signals that the BA.2.86 variant is causing more severe illness. At this time, locations where this variant has been detected have not experienced increases in transmission indicators," read the statement. To keep the new variant and other infections at bay CDC has advised the public to: Get vaccinated against COVID-19, stay at home if they feel sick, wear a high-quality mask (if they choose to wear a mask), improve ventilation, and also wash their hands regularly. According to the CDC as of August 23, the SARS-CoV-2 variant had been reported in the U.S., UK, Denmark, South Africa and Israel. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## **TSC to recruit 111,870 teachers in next five years**



*In Summary The government will recruit teachers to reduce the National Teacher shortage in all basic institutions. the commission has been allocated a total of 4.68 billion for the recruitment of 20,000 intern teachers.*

Teachers Service Commission is set to recruit 111,870 teachers over the next five years. TSC chief executive officer Nancy Macharia said the government will recruit teachers to reduce the national teacher shortage in all basic institutions. "During the five years, we project to recruit

a total of 111,870 teachers," Macharia said. Macharia spoke during the launch of the Commission strategic plan 2023-2027. The CEO said Sh134 billion is required to recruit 111,870 teachers in five years. She added that the commission has been allocated a total of 4.68 billion for the recruitment of 20,000 intern teachers.

## **FALSE: Claims that Kisumu Day secondary school won appeal against Agoro Sare high school are FAKE**



In Summary Agoro Sare High School played Kisumu Day Secondary in the finals of the Nyanza Region boys football game on Monday, July 24, 2023, during which the former won 7-6 in a penalty shoot-out. As a result of the loss, Kisumu Day appealed against the win claiming that Agoro Sare High School fielded an ineligible player.

Claims shared on social media indicating that Kisumu Day Secondary School has won a football match appeal against Agoro Sare Secondary School are FALSE. Agoro Sare High School played Kisumu Day Secondary in the finals of the Nyanza Region boys football game on Monday, July 24, 2023, during which the former won 7-6 in a penalty shoot-out. As a result of the loss, Kisumu Day appealed against the win claiming that Agoro Sare High School fielded an ineligible player. In the letter addressed to the Secretary of the Kenya Secondary Schools Sports Association, Kisumu Day claimed that one of the players fielded was a form three student of Dagoretti Secondary School last year and was, therefore, not supposed to play.

## **FALSE: Kings Outreach church wasn't deregistered over Shakahola tragedy**



In Summary The church through Senior Archbishop Major Gen. (Rtd) George Kyaka said the deregistration was after church members unanimously agreed to dissolve it. He denied any links to the Shakahola tragedy saying the reports claiming so are misleading and malicious.

Prophet Dr David Owuor's Repentance and Holiness Church has denied claims that the Kings Outreach Church was closed over links to the Shakahola tragedy. This comes after reports on social media claimed that. The church through Senior Archbishop Major Gen. (Rtd) George Kyaka said the deregistration was after church members unanimously agreed to dissolve it. He denied any links to the Shakahola tragedy saying the reports claiming so are misleading and malicious. "In that AGM at the end of the year 2022, it was resolved to dissolve and deregister King's Outreach Church. It is based on that AGM Resolution that Kings Outreach Church was deregistered and therefore the deregistration of Kings Outreach Church has nothing to do with Shakahola," Senior Archbishop Major Gen. (Rtd) George KyakaHe said, the registrar of societies also implored them to shut the Kings Outreach Church to boost its operation efficiency. "The resolution was due to counsel from the registrar of societies to ease operations like filing of returns and administration. This decision was reached way before Shakahola happened," he added.

## **FALSE: These images are not of diplomats leaving Kenya in July 2023**



In Summary • On 11 July 2023, the United States Embassy in Kenya issued a demonstration alert to its citizens in light of the 12 July demonstrations. • The first image was used on this website post dated April 2014, while the second picture was used as the

*thumbnail image on this video dated November 2019.*

These images on Twitter purportedly of diplomats leaving Kenya in July 2023 are FALSE. The tweet accompanying the images reads: "Breaking News; Happening now at JKIA. Diplomats leaving Kenya in such a hurry & in short notice. Tic tac tic tac tic tac!! I repeat, I am not a Prophet But,,,,,, (sic)." The pictures are of people boarding Kenya Airways aircraft. The hub of the Kenyan national carrier is Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). One of the images has also been shared here with the same claim. While the tweet does not explicitly state the reason for the supposed exit of diplomats, it was shared on 16 July 2023, two days after Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya coalition leader Raila Odinga announced three-day anti-government protests to be held consecutively in different parts of the country. This follows two earlier protests on 7 July and 12 July 2023 against the high cost of living. On 11 July 2023, the United States Embassy in Kenya issued a demonstration alert to its citizens in light of the 12 July demonstrations. But are the images of diplomats leaving the country? We checked. Google reverse image searches for the first and second images accompanying the tweet show that they are not recent. The first image was used on this website post dated April 2014, while the second picture was used as the thumbnail image on this video dated November 2019. Similarly, Bing searches here and here bring up the images we are fact-checking, which have been online before July 2023. PesaCheck has reviewed two images on Twitter purportedly of diplomats leaving Kenya in July 2023 and found them to be FALSE.

## **FAKE: Rwanda's communiqué didn't pledge to shed light on killing of Congolese politician**



*In Summary The purported statement dated July 14, 2023 was allegedly done on behalf of Rwandan President Paul Kagame. Relevant authorities in D.R Congo are investigating the matter even as the circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear.*

This communiqué, supposedly from the Office of the Prime Minister of Rwanda pledging to give more information on the killing of former minister of D.R Congo, Cherubin Okende is FAKE. The purported statement dated July 14, 2023 was allegedly done on

behalf of Rwandan President Paul Kagame. The release noted that the Rwandan government regretted to learn of the death of Okende who resigned last December from his post as Minister of Transport. "The government of Rwanda promises to shed light on this file thanks to its surveillance satellite which covers all of Central Africa," read part of the statement. It went ahead to say "In the meantime, Rwanda offers its condolences to its biological and political family". However, the spokesperson of the Rwandan government Yolande Makolo in a tweet termed the communiqué as FAKE and urged the public to ignore it. According to a story published by The Associated Press, the Body of Okende who had joined Together for the Republic party, was found in his car on one of the roads in Kinshasa on July 13 2023. The opposition party stated that Okende's body which was found a day after he was reported missing was riddled with bullets. Relevant authorities in D.R Congo are investigating the matter even as the circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## **FAKE: UDA didn't issue statement about Londiani accident victims compensation fraud**



*In Summary • The document dated August 1 had the logo of the UDA Party and was supposedly signed by Secretary-General Cleophas Malalah. • On 30 June 2023, a tragic road accident occurred in Londiani, along the Nakuru-Kericho highway leading to the death of 55 people.*

A document shared on Facebook alleging that the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) issued a statement on compensation of Londiani accident victims being fraudulent is FAKE. The document also shows UDA asking Kericho Governor Erick Mutai to clear the air on the issue. "As a party, we are alarmed by the news of the alleged theft of the fundraised money meant for victims of the Londiani accident," part of the statement read. The document dated August 1 had the logo of the UDA Party and was supposedly signed by Secretary-General Cleophas Malalah. To authenticate the document's validity, we cross-referenced the verified UDA Facebook page and X (formerly Twitter), where the party had not

published the statement. However, we came across this post on UDA's authentic Facebook page terming the statement in question as fake. At the same time, Malalah also denounced the statement as fake. On 30 June 2023, a tragic road accident occurred in Londiani, along the Nakuru-Kericho highway leading to the death of 55 people. Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua took the initiative to preside over a funds drive for Londiani accident survivors. After, the initiative, there was an uproar about the funds being misused with the Kericho county government in the eye of the storm over allegations of misuse of funds meant for Londiani crash victims. Reports emerged that out of the Sh13.6 million raised in a fundraiser, only Sh5.7 million reached the victims. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FAKE: Facebook account purporting to issue statements in name of NPS spokesperson is an imposter



In Summary • The account has made several posts, including this one promising police officers better days ahead as the government seeks to improve their welfare. • The account's bio section does not indicate when it was created. However, it made its first post on 8 November 2022.

This Facebook account issuing statements as the National Police Service (NPS) spokesperson Resila Onyango is FAKE. The account 'Resila Onyango' uses Onyango's image and has an intro reading "works at Vigilance House", the Kenya police headquarters. The account has made several posts, including this one promising police officers better days ahead as the government seeks to improve their welfare. The account's bio section does not indicate when it was created. However, it made its first post on 8 November 2022. A search on Facebook established that several pages use the NPS spokesperson's name, but none is verified. A similar search on Twitter did not confirm Onyango's account. We, however, found this statement disowning the account we are debunking on the NPS' official Twitter account and Facebook page. "The existing accounts are maintained by unscrupulous imposters with criminal

intent to defraud unsuspecting persons... Please note that NPS Spokesperson does not operate any social media account and only transacts her official duties through NPS official communications platforms," NPS said. In December 2022, we debunked another page purporting to be that of the NPS spokesperson. PesaCheck examined a Facebook account issuing statements in the name of Kenya's National Police Service (NPS) spokesperson Resila Onyango and found it to be FAKE.

## FALSE: This image doesn't show remains of Thika woman found dead 9 months ago

A screenshot of a X (Twitter) post by Mike Sonko (@MikeSonko). The post includes a caption and a photograph of a skeletal remains.

**X Post**  
Mike Sonko (@MikeSonko)  
Morning watu wangu. Imagine sijalala poa coz hii story imenisumbua sana. I am man enough but I had to shed tears after reading this story. This old shosho of 82 yrs whose decomposing body was found in Thika was left to die alone 9 months ago. Life without our mothers is very tough, for me it has been over 25 years since my lovely mum Saumu went to be with God but I still feel the pain everyday. Our parents are human and they are not perfect, they go through very difficult situations and sacrifice a lot to provide for their children. Bla blessings za wazazi, life can become very difficult. Watu wangu hurumeni your parents na pia tuwaheshimi especially in their old age. Mama wanastahili heshima, shukrani, utunzaji na upendo wetu wakati wote hasa katika uzee wac.

Proverbs 23:22 says "Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old."

A photograph showing a skeletal remains lying on a bed. The remains appear to be a human skeleton, possibly an elderly person, lying in a state of decomposition. The setting looks like an indoor room with some debris and a chair visible in the background.

In Summary The image portrayed a skeleton of a human being that is beyond recognition. In his caption to the image, Sonko claimed the remains were of a woman, identified as Leah Njeri, who was discovered 9 months after her death in Thika, Kiambu County.

An Image shared by former Nairobi Governor Mike Mbuvi Sonko allegedly portraying the remains of a woman who was found dead in her house in Thika is OLD. The image portrayed a skeleton of a human being that is beyond recognition. In his caption to the image, Sonko claimed the remains were of a woman, identified as Leah Njeri, who was discovered 9 months after her death in Thika, Kiambu County. "Morning watu wangu. Imagine sijalala poa coz hii story imenisumbua sana. [Morning my people. Imagine I haven't slept well because this story has bothered me a lot]. I am man enough but I had to shed tears after reading this story. This old shosho (grandmother) of 82 yrs whose decomposing body was found in Thika was left to die alone 9 months ago," Sonko captioned the image. The Star Fact-Checker has however established that the image shared by Sonko was published before the matter emerged. A Google Reverse Image Search indicates that the incident did not happen in Kenya but in Nigeria. The image, according to various publications in Nigeria, is of a landlord named John

Aderemi Abiola who was discovered in his house in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State almost four years after he was last seen in December 2018. Reliable news websites in Nigeria such as Frontline News the Editorial and Global Times Nigeria among many other blogs reported the incident on September 9, 2022. It's important to note that reports of Leah Njeri's death first emerged on August 6, 2023, almost a year after the image shared by Sonko was first published. The Star Fact Checker has debunked the image and can authoritatively say it is MISLEADING to claim it is that of a Thika woman. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FAKE: Miguna did not create tweet criticising Ruto, Gachagua



It's now evident who the enemy of the people. @WilliamsRuto was never an option for Kenya and having Rigathi Gachagua as his Deputy makes it even worse. A guy who can't chair a room full of chiefs How then can He chair foreign delegates or diplomats.

#rejectRutoRigathi

16:33 · 12 Jul 23 · Twitter Web App

678 Retweets 53 Quote Tweets 2.5K Likes



In Summary The tweet on the screenshot is dated July 12, 2023. Miguna in July addressed the tweet and stamped it as fake.

A Twitter screenshot shared on different WhatsApp groups and on Facebook claiming to show Lawyer Miguna Miguna criticising President William Ruto and his deputy Rigathi Gachagua is Fake. The screenshot reads: "It's now evident who the enemy of the people @WilliamRuto was never an option for Kenya and Having Rigathi Gachagua as his deputy, makes it even worse. A guy who can't chair a room full of chiefs. How can he chair foreign delegates for

diplomats". The tweet on the screenshot is dated July 12, 2023. After a close look into Miguna's official Twitter channel, the tweet does not appear. The alleged tweet does not also follow the correct Twitter format as Twitter has the reply, retweet, like, number of views, and share engagement icons. The tweets on the screenshot only have the reply, retweet, and like engagement buttons with the number of views icon missing.

## FALSE: HELB hasn't officially opened portal for loan application



Dr. Miguna Miguna ✅  
@MigunaMiguna

It's now evident who the enemy of the people. @WilliamsRuto was never an option for Kenya and having Rigathi Gachagua as his Deputy makes it even worse. A guy who can't chair a room full of chiefs How then can He chair foreign delegates or diplomats.

#rejectRutoRigathi

16:33 · 12 Jul 23 · Twitter Web App

678 Retweets 53 Quote Tweets 2.5K Likes



In Summary On July 24, HELB added that they will communicate on the official opening of subsequent loan applications in due course. The blog post also went on to state conditions in which a student will be eligible to request and get the loan.

The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) has announced that it has not opened the loan application portal for first year students joining the university in September 2023. Through its official Facebook account, HELB flagged a blog post by Education Highlights written and updated on July 23 that was purporting their portal is open for 2023/2024 registration and loan application. "Beware of fake news, Always get reliable information from our official channels," HELB said in a post on July 10. On July 24, HELB added that they will communicate on the official opening of subsequent loan applications in due course. "HELB shall officially communicate on the

opening of subsequent loan applications in due course. Applicants will be allowed adequate time to make their applications."The Education Highlights blog post had claimed that the HELB had created a portal for first year undergraduate students for the 2023/24 academic year. "In addition to those who have been placed through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS), applications are now being accepted from students participating in self-sponsored programs at private and public universities in Kenya and the East African Community," the blog post read. The blog post also went on to state conditions in which a student will be eligible to request and get the loan, including documents needed by the applicant, available HELB desks at Huduma Centers and the amount one expects to receive if successful in the application. "Loans for undergraduate students at universities might range from Sh40,000 to Sh60,000. While self-sponsored students have their tuition fees deposited directly to the university once a year, students placed through Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) split the loan amount between their tuition and upkeep expenditures," the blog post continued. The Star has looked into an article published by the Education Highlights blog claiming that the HELB portal is open for the 2023/2024 loan applicant and found it to be false. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## ALTERED: Video claiming Duale said Raila won 2022 election not authentic



In Summary A TikTok user by the name Getagonda captioned the video "It's Ramadhan and I don't want to lie, Raila Odinga won that election of 2022, by CS Duale".

A TikTok video doing rounds indicating that Defence Minister Aden Duale said that Opposition Leader Raila Odinga won the 2022 general election has been altered. A TikTok user by the name Getagonda captioned the video "It's Ramadhan and I don't want to lie, Raila Odinga won that election of 2022, by CS Duale". In the video, which was also posted on Facebook, the CS is heard saying "I am a Muslim I don't want to lie. Raila Odinga won that election of

two thousand and... Through the action of the IEBC, the difference was about 200,000 votes when really proper tallying was done. But you can win". The true position is the CS was interviewed in 2021 on matters elections. We came across the original video by performing a Google reverse search of a screenshot from the video. In the original video, Duale said that the opposition leader won the 2007 elections but not the 2022 one. "The difference was about 200,000 votes when really proper tallying was done. But you could win at that time, we were under the old constitution and the 50 plus one margin was not there ... So, and I am a Muslim I do not want to lie, Raila Odinga won that election of 2007," Duale says in the original video. The authentic video was posted on a YouTube channel dubbed "Kenyan Historian" over a year ago. The Star has looked into a TikTok video doing rounds indicating that Defence Minister Aden Duale said that Opposition Leader Raila Odinga won the 2022 general election and found it to be altered. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## ALTERED: Image of Raila in police attire carrying gun is doctored



In Summary A tweet accompanying the image reads: "Commander in Chief of Maandamano (protests) Association (sic)." The tweet was shared on 12 July 2023 as Odinga led anti-government demonstrations in various parts of the country.

This image on Twitter of Azimio coalition leader Raila Odinga in police uniform and carrying a gun has been ALTERED. A tweet accompanying the image reads: "Commander in Chief of Maandamano (protests) Association (sic)." The image has also been shared here. The tweet was shared on 12 July 2023 as Odinga led anti-government demonstrations in various parts of the country. The opposition had planned to hold a rally at Kamukunji grounds in Nairobi but cancelled it, citing a plan, purportedly by the government, to attack the attendees. The ex-prime minister was not in police attire during the media briefing. We performed a Google reverse image search to determine the authenticity of the image. The original image has been shared online, as seen here and here. The picture was taken on 10 July

2023 as Odinga walked to take a matatu (minibus) to the city centre. In the original image, Odinga is neither in police uniform nor carrying a gun. PesaCheck has looked into an image on Twitter of Azimio coalition leader Raila Odinga in police uniform and carrying a gun and found it to have been ALTERED.

## FALSE: This photo isn't of Homa Bay County governor's park



In Summary Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga launched a governor's park on 30 June 2023, alongside a stadium and other infrastructure projects. A video shared by Governor Wanga showcasing the park confirmed that it is structurally different.

This Facebook post with a photo supposedly of Homa Bay County's new governor's park in Kenya is FALSE. "The current state of the Homabay governor's Park, just opposite KCB bank. Ng'ama nong'eyo yawaaa. Wang'ni lich (Who knew? This time it is crazy) Thank you H.E Governor Gladys Wanga for giving us a reason to smile again," the post reads. Homa Bay Governor Gladys

Wanga launched a governor's park on 30 June 2023, alongside a stadium and other infrastructure projects. But is the photo of the park launched in Homa Bay? We performed a Google reverse image search on the photo and established that it is of RH Rooftop Restaurant in New York, USA. The picture depicts garden rooms on the restaurant's rooftop. The rooms are inspired by European gardens and feature Japanese boxwood hedges and London plane trees, among others.

## FALSE: Image shared with claims Thika Road was blocked because of Azimio demos old



*In Summary The Image shows one section of the Thika Superhighway barricaded with stones. A crowd is seen gathering on the road with a contingent of police officers pictured patrolling the road. In the image, two Police water cannons can be seen on the other side of the road.*

A Facebook post with an image that went viral on July 12, 2023, claiming that Thika Super Highway has been blocked ahead of Azimio La Umoja protests is FALSE. The Image shows one section of the Thika Superhighway barricaded with stones. A crowd is seen gathering on the road with a contingent of police officers pictured patrolling the road. In the image, two Police water cannons can be seen on the other side of the road. Azimio La Umoja had called its supporters to turn out in large numbers on the said date to protest against President William Ruto's government. In honour of the call, several parts of the country witnessed mass protests that were characterized by barricading of roads and lighting of bonfires. But even as protests were witnessed countrywide, a section of Kenyans shared an image with claims that Thika Super Highway had been blocked. One such claim was shared by Swift Media Ke News which posted the image on its Facebook timeline and captioned it, "Current situation on Thika road

#MaandamanoWednesday." The Fact Checker has, however, established that the Image is not of Azimio protests held on July 12, 2023. A Google reverse image search indicates that the image was taken on July 14, 2022. The Star Fact Checker established that events surrounding the image were not related to the ongoing protests, but a fuel tanker accident that occurred on Thika road. The road was barricaded to block motorists from plying on it to prevent a tragedy that may arise considering fuel is highly flammable. The image was published by Kenyan media websites including Star Kenya and Nairobi News which reported on the accident. Additionally, a search for credible reports on Google to establish whether Thika Superhighway was blocked on the day of the Azimio protests reveals that there was no such incident. Being a major highway that motorists ply when accessing various destinations, blocking the Superhighway during protests would have been a major news item. The Star Fact Checker has debunked the claims shared with the image on Facebook, claiming to show the situation on Thika Road during the Azimio protest held on July 12, 2023, and established it to be false. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FALSE: Government won't fund 45,000 university students only



In Summary Ringera said a total of 869,782 learners sat for last year's KCSE examination. He said only 173,127 scored the minimum entry grade for university which is a C+.

Higher Education Loans Board Chief Executive Officer Charles Ringera has dismissed claims by Embakasi East MP Babu Owino that the government will only fund 45,000 learners set to join universities for the 2023/2024 academic year. Ringera said those who qualified to join universities will all benefit from government funding, but only 45,000 will get 100 percent funding. "45,000 are the first two categories with 100 percent GOK funding, the rest will get 93 percent funding and family will contribute 7 percent," Ringera told the Star in an interview on Friday. The two categories of learners that will get full funding are the vulnerable and extremely needy. On Thursday, Owino, through his social media account claimed that 800, 000 learners are set to join varsities this year but only 45, 000 will be funded. "The students who did their KCSE exams and are being admitted in different universities are around 800, 000. Of which the government's intention is only to sponsor 45, 000 students. This means that over 750,000 students will not be sponsored," Owino claimed. Ringera dismissed this figure, clarifying that a total of 869,782 learners sat for last year's KCSE examination. He said only 173,127 scored the minimum entry grade for university which is a C+. Of the 173,127 learners who qualified, only 140,107 applied and were placed into various programs across the public universities in the country. Ringera urged learners to keep on applying for government funding through the Higher Education Fund website as the deadline draws closer. The deadline for application for funding is September 7.

## **FALSE: There's no travel advisory to Florida over an increase in leprosy cases**



*In Summary Leprosy cases are surging in Florida, suggesting the chronic infectious disease may have become endemic in southeastern US. Number of cases more than doubled in the southeastern states over the last decade.*

Reports that a travel advisory has been issued to Florida state in the US due to increased cases of leprosy are FALSE. A number of X users (formerly known as Twitter) had taken to their socials claiming that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had issued an advisory to Florida, allegations which the agency denied. "The CDC has issued a travel advisory for the state of Florida due to an increase in leprosy cases, Maybe Ron DeSantis should focus on that instead of Mickey Mouse and drag queens," read one of the post on the platform. Another claimed, "The CDC has issued a travel advisory for the State of Florida due to an increase in cases of leprosy." But the disease control body in a statement on August 2, stated that it has not issued a travel advisory for Florida, or any other state, due to Hansen's disease (leprosy). The CDC in the statement explained that leprosy is very rare in the United States, with less than 200 cases reported per year. "Most people with Hansen's disease in the U.S. became infected in a country where it is more common. In the past, leprosy was feared as a highly contagious, devastating disease, but now we know that it's hard to spread and it's easily treatable," read part of the statement. Leprosy cases are surging in Florida, suggesting the chronic infectious disease may have become endemic in the southeastern United States. The number of cases more than doubled in the southeastern states over the last decade, with Florida among the top reporting states, the CDC said in its latest report. Hansen's disease (also known as leprosy) is an infection caused by slow-growing bacteria called *Mycobacterium leprae*. It can affect the nerves, skin, eyes, and lining of the nose (nasal mucosa). With early diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be cured. People with Hansen's disease can continue to work and lead an active life during and after treatment. However, if left untreated, the nerve damage can result in crippling of hands and feet, paralysis, and blindness. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## **FAKE: This Nation screenshot showing Kericho DG questioning**

## president's office over Londiani money is fabricated



*In Summary The card also has some abnormalities as the text is in bold which is contrary to how Nation does its posts. The grammar used in the post is poor and Kericho Deputy Governor's name is not mentioned after his title.*

A Nation Africa screenshot that went viral on social media allegedly claiming that Kericho Deputy Governor Fred Kirui questioned the office of the president over money meant for Londiani accident victims is FAKE. A section of Kenyans have been sharing the fake digital card bearing the trademarks of Nation Africa. Through their verified Facebook page, Nation Africa denied ownership of the card. The card also has some abnormalities as the text is in bold which is contrary to how Nation does its posts. The grammar used in the post is poor and Kericho Deputy Governor's name is not mentioned after his title. "Deputy Governor Kericho Questioned the Office of the President disbursement promised 300K to victims by the president not yet: We will investigate the reasons for the delays in disbursement of promised funds from the office of the president and provide a transparent explanation to the public. #KenyaKwanzaIsAScam," the Facebook post read. In July 2023, the Kericho government was accused of allegations of misuse of funds meant for Londiani crash victims. The accident, which took place on June 30, claimed the lives of 53 people. The allegations followed the emergence of reports that out of the Sh13.6 million raised in a fundraiser, only Sh5.7 million reached the victims. In the documents seen by the Star, 53 families that lost their relatives were each paid Sh90,000 while 12 who got injured received Sh60,000. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FALSE: CDC didn't say vaccinated people are more at risk of new COVID variant than unvaccinated



*In Summary The center, in a risk assessment summary published on August 23, stated that the SARS-CoV-2 variant labeled BA.2.86, may be more capable of causing infection in people who have previously had COVID-19 or who have received COVID-19 vaccines. It did not say that vaccinated people are at a higher risk than the unvaccinated.*

Claims that the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that a new COVID-19 variant is more contagious among vaccinated people than those who are unvaccinated are false. The center, in a risk assessment summary published on August 23, stated that the SARS-CoV-2 variant labeled BA.2.86, may be more capable of causing infection in people who have previously had COVID-19 or who have received COVID-19 vaccines. It did not say that vaccinated people are at a higher risk than the unvaccinated. Posts on X (formerly Twitter) had claimed that the new COVID variant is more contagious among vaccinated people than those unvaccinated, quoting the CDC report. However, the Star fact check has established that this is a distortion of the CDC's Risk Assessment report as the agency said those who've been vaccinated or previously infected may be more susceptible than they were to prior variants. In its statement, the agency said that it is still closely monitoring the variant but that it is too soon to know its severity and encouraged people to stay up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccines. "It is too soon to know whether this variant might cause more severe illness compared with previous variants. CDC is closely monitoring hospitalization rates to identify any potential early signals that the BA.2.86 variant is causing more severe illness. At this time, locations where this variant has been detected have not experienced increases in transmission indicators," read the statement. To keep the new variant and other infections at bay CDC has advised the public to: Get vaccinated against COVID-19, stay at home if they feel sick, wear a high-quality mask (if they choose to wear a mask), improve ventilation, and also wash their hands regularly. According to the CDC as of August 23, the SARS-CoV-2 variant had been reported in the U.S., UK, Denmark, South Africa and Israel. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.

## FAKE: Media Council hasn't

## **condemned bullying of journalists by Kericho county officials**



*In Summary The statement dated August 2, insinuated that members of MCK were bullied and blackmailed during the coverage of circumstances surrounding the embezzlement of funds meant for the Londiani crash victims. MCK CEO David Omwoyo told the Star Fact-Checker that the council did not even receive any complaint from journalists who were covering the said event.*

The Media Council of Kenya has termed as Fake a statement purporting to be from the council condemning the mishandling of journalists by some officials at the office of the Kericho County Governor. The statement dated August 2, insinuated that members of MCK were bullied and blackmailed during the coverage of circumstances surrounding the embezzlement of funds meant for the Londiani crash victims. "A case in hand is when our member tried to ask a substantive question. Derogative terms were used which is insensitive and uncalled for since it violates the dignity of a journalist and as such, can present a culture that can easily erode our gains in the industry," read part of the statement. However, the media regulator in a post X (formerly Twitter) flagged the communication as fake adding that it didn't originate from the regulator. MCK CEO David Omwoyo told the Star Fact-Checker that the council did not even receive any complaint from journalists who were covering the said event. The communication came at a time the Kericho County government was battling allegations of embezzling Londiani accident victims' funds raised through Harambee, to assist the 53 fatalities who perished and 24 others injured. However, the Kericho County Government denied the allegations according to this story by KBC. County Secretary Wesly Bor days later indicated that all victims had been fully compensated according to this news item by Citizen TV. This fact check was published by The Star with support from Code for Africa's PesaCheck and African Fact-Checking Alliance.