

THE Weekly Review

For the Thinking Person

ISSUE NO. 1 | September 4, 2022 FREE WITH 'SUNDAY NATION'



QUEEN MOTHER

Mama Ngina is the real definition of 'power behind the throne'. She has been influential through four presidencies—from being the first First Lady to mother of the fourth President



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAJIADO
P.O BOX 11 - 01100, KAJIADO

KAJIADO COUNTY INVESTMENT AUTHORITY



ADVERTISEMENT OF VACANCIES POSITION; MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kajiado County Investment Authority in collaboration with the County Government of Kajiado Invites interested persons with passion and vision to serve as members of the Board of Directors for a term of three (3) years.

Requirements for Appointment

1. Be a Kenyan Citizen;
2. Be a holder of a Bachelor's degree in economics, law, finance, accounting, or any business-related field from a University recognised in Kenya;
3. Have experience of at least ten years in senior level management in the public sector or private sector;
4. Demonstrates participation in local development initiatives;
5. Demonstrate excellent Interpersonal and communication skills;
6. Have the ability to work in a Multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity;
7. Be a resident of Kajiado County.

How to apply;

Interested persons should **Hand Deliver** their application, Curriculum vitae and certified copies of academic testimonials, professional certificates, National Identity card and clearance certificates from Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission, Kenya Revenue Authority, Directorate of Criminal Investigations, CRB and Higher Education Loans Board to the undersigned on or before Thursday **13th September, 2022 5.00 p.m** in plain and sealed envelope marked 'Application for Board of Directors' to the address below.

NOTE;

- ONLY Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and they shall be required to produce original copies of the relevant documents;
- The County Government of Kajiado and Kajiado County Investment Authority is an equal opportunity employer and does not use agents nor does it charge any fees for employment;
- Youth, women, Persons living with Disability, marginalised and minority communities are encouraged to apply;
- Any form of canvassing shall lead to automatic disqualification;

**The County Secretary,
County Government of Kajiado,
P.O BOX 11 - 01100
KAJIADO.**

letter from the editor

Welcome to 'The Weekly Review', pinnacle of journalism



Mutuma Mathiu

Hilary Ng'weno, then a young physicist, returned to Kenya from Harvard and got a job as a reporter for the *Daily Nation*. A precise writer, massively cerebral and idealistic, Hilary was a reporter for all of nine months before he was appointed the paper's first Kenyan editor-in-chief. He represented the optimism of his generation at the birth of the modern African state when it looked like Africans would make a great success of their independence. That was optimistic indeed. By the time he set up this paper in 1975, *The Weekly Review*, the cold chill of disappointment was beginning to dampen the warmth of that initial Afro-optimism. The African elite in government was showing its true colours – vain, venal and tending to regress to a nativism in which tribalism trumped ideology and competence. A mindless acquisitiveness settled upon the land and the patriotism of the early independence days was slowly being replaced by autocracy and entitlement among the ruling classes. *The Weekly Review* was a paper of its time – and fully reflected the character of its editor and the audience it sought to serve: liberal, well educated, clever and strongly critical of the new ruling classes. It was a paper for

'The Weekly Review' wanted to report, reveal, explain and demonstrate the impact of decisions, policies and other events. It tried to help the thinking, probing person figure out what was happening and its consequences to the individual and beyond. It maintained a strong affinity with democracy, the Kenyan construct and human freedoms.

thoughtful, public-spirited individuals who cared about the fate of Africa and were willing to debate issues in a mildly outspoken manner, given government intolerance of even the mildest criticism at the time. Before *The Weekly Review*, the press followed the British tradition of apprenticeship where the reporter started by doing odd jobs in the newsroom and was taught to write and edit by older journalists.

Good qualifications

There was no requirement for advanced qualifications because the average paper merely reported to its readers what had happened the previous day. Hilary hired mainly graduates with good qualifications in subjects such as literature. In that way, he entrenched critical thinking in Kenyan journalism and set off a fad

that was to be copied by the big dailies. It sought to explain, to show the inter-connections between events and their consequences; an objective analysis of the facts and the drawing of conclusions thereof all clothed in excellent, top quality journalism. *The Weekly Review* wanted to report, reveal, explain and demonstrate the impact of decisions, policies and other events. It tried to help the thinking, probing person figure out what was happening and its consequences to the individual and beyond. It maintained a strong affinity with democracy, the Kenyan construct and human freedoms. The challenge of the moment is to reach back 47 years and re-ignite this spirit, modernise it and serve it to a digital marketplace. The modern version is a bridge. It is a place where the older generation will feel perfectly at home. But attempts have also been made to introduce the younger generations, who are unfamiliar with and possibly not too interested in the long-form, argumentative and revelatory story-telling of the past, to the delights of an important story beautifully told. This is an experiment; it will take work to strike the right balance. You are most welcome to take this journey of discovery with the new *The Weekly Review* team.

Inside



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the telescope

■ Learned friends seal 'Supreme handshake'



From left: Lawyers Githu Muigai (left), George Murugara and William Cheptumo at the Supreme Court Nairobi on September 1.
DENNIS ONSONGO | NATION

Kenya holds its breath ahead of verdict

The Supreme Court will on Monday rule on a petition challenging the election of Deputy President William Ruto as the President-elect. Azimio la Umoja One Kenya flagbearer Raila Odinga and seven others challenged the outcome of the August 9 General Election at the apex court. The nation awaits the verdict of Chief Justice Martha Koome, Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwili, Justice Mohammed Ibrahim, Justice Smokin Wanjala, Justice Njoki Ndung'u, Justice Isaac Lenaola, and Justice William Ouko. Odinga claims the election process was marred by

irregularities and fraud. He has urged the court to not only strike out Ruto's victory but also hold those found accountable for any irregularities criminally liable. The Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) chairman Wafula Chebukati, however, maintains the polls were free, fair and verifiable. Ruto was declared the winner with 7,176,141, or 50.49 percent of the votes cast. Odinga was second with 6,942,930 votes, or 48.85 per cent of the cast votes. George Wajackoyah and Wahiga Mwaure were third and fourth, respectively.

■ Ties were severely strained under al-Bashir

First US ambassador to Sudan in 25 years



The first US ambassador to Sudan in 25 years has taken up his post in the latest easing of ties since Washington removed Khartoum from its state sponsors of terrorism list. Ties between the US and Sudan were se-

verely strained under the three-decade rule of ousted president Omar al-Bashir, with Washington slapping crippling economic sanctions on Khartoum. In 1993, the US blacklisted Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism as Bashir's regime hosted Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, who resided in the country between 1992-1996. "Ambassador John Godfrey arrived today in Khartoum, the first US Ambassador to Sudan in nearly 25 years," the US embassy said in a statement.

■ Verstappen on course for a second title

Red-hot Red Bull could dominate races

Lewis Hamilton says Red Bull could be embarking on an era of domination similar to his with Mercedes. Hamilton said: "The chances are very high that that's already happened. They are already on that way. "It's going to be very tough for teams to close that gap." Max Verstappen is on course for a second consecutive title after winning nine out of 14 races so far, while Red Bull are poised for their first constructors' title since 2013. However, Hamilton said he still believed his Mercedes team could make up the necessary ground to challenge Red Bull. "If your car is fast one year, it evolves into a faster car the next year, so the gap they have now

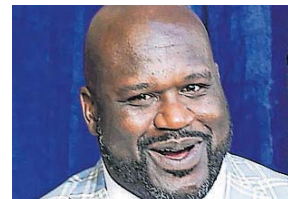
will be very hard for anyone from third down to ever close in this cycle of car design," Hamilton said. "But we have won the last eight world titles. As a team, we've got amazing and talented engineers. I don't doubt they can. "There are limitations with budget and wind tunnel and CFD time and we have to be very clear and precise in the direction we want to go and very efficient in our time." Hamilton praised Red Bull for starting this year's new era of technical regulations so strongly, saying that they were "a great team and they've done an amazing job". And he singled out their chief technical officer Adrian Newey for special praise.



Red Bull's Max Verstappen powers forward during the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francophones on August 28.

■ Basketballer to support Australian 'Voice'

Shaquille supports 'indigenous camp'



American basketballer Shaquille O'Neal will throw his support behind the Australian government's campaign to create an Indigenous "Voice to Parliament", Prime Minister Anthony

Albanese said Saturday. The 7-foot-1 NBA Hall of Famer, who is in the country on a speaking tour, recently met with Albanese and Indigenous Australians Minister Linda Burney in Sydney. O'Neal requested the meeting to learn more about the push to recognise Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the first time in the nation's constitution, said the prime minister.

kenya lens

■ SUPREME COURT JUDGES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

JUSTICE ON TRIAL



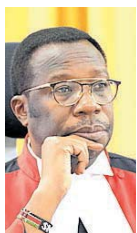
Mohammed K. Ibrahim, 66
This is the fourth presidential election petition while he is in office. He heard the 2013 petition, but skipped the 2017 matters after falling ill. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 2011. Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee on Elections.



Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwilu, 64
This will be her third presidential election petition, having heard the two 2017 matters. Appointed as Deputy Chief Justice and Vice President of the Supreme Court in 2016. Appointed as judge of the Court of Appeal in 2012.



Chief Justice Martha Koome, 62
This is her first presidential election petition. Assumed office as Chief Justice in 2021. Served as senior judge of the Court of Appeal, heading the Criminal Division of the Court.



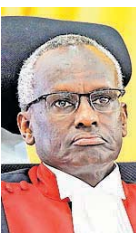
Dr Smokin Wanjala, 62
This is his fourth presidential election petition, having heard the 2013 and two 2017 matters. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 2011.



William Ouko, 60
This will be his first presidential election petition. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 2021. Served as president of the Court of Appeal.



Njoki Ndung'u, 56
This will be her fourth presidential election petition, having heard the 2013 and 2017 matters. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 2011.



Isaac Lenaola, 54
This will be his third presidential election petition, having heard the two 2017 matters. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 2016.

Justice Maraga, signaled his presence by abandoning the green robes. To many, that was not just a fashion preference but an indication that the disruption wrought by the activist outsider, Mutunga, had come to an end and the judicial establishment was reclaiming its place.

Yet a year later, it was the conservative Justice Maraga who presided over a bench that nullified a presidential election, while in similar circumstances in 2013, the liberal activist Mutunga had not dared take such a step. Unlike the United States, it is not easy to profile Kenyan judges and predict how they will find on any particular issue based on their past records or their known ideological or philosophical standpoints.

The 2013 bench, for instance, included, in addition to Justice Mutunga, three other judges who had been his colleagues in civil society or political activism backgrounds, Smokin Wanjala, Njoki Ndung'u and Mohammed Ibrahim. The other three who could have viewed as conservative or establishment types were Deputy Chief Justice Kalpana Rawal and Justices Jackson Ojwang' and Philip Tunoi. When it came to a vote, it was a unanimous decision to throw out the Raila petition and uphold President Kenyatta's victory.

In 2017, Justice Maraga led Deputy CJ Philomena Mwilu and Justices Wanjala and Isaac Lenaola in a 4-2 majority over dissenting opinions presented by Ojwang' and Ndungu. The seventh judge, Ibrahim, did not participate having fallen ill in the course of the hearings. Now Justice Koome leads a bench little-changed from the 2017 team. She replaced Maraga as CJ, with the other new judge being William Ouko, who replaced Justice Ojwang'.

It is easy to see that with the exception of Justice Ouko, who has been a career judicial officer rising through the ranks from the magistracy on to elevation to the Supreme Court in May last year; and Mwilu who was in a practising lawyer before appointment to the High Court in 2008, the other six have backgrounds in human rights advocacy. Yet it would be tricky to use that as basis for any predictions, especially if the 2013 and 2017 decisions are anything to go.

It could be a case of justice on trial, which will place Koome and her six colleagues firmly in the spotlight over the next several weeks, and maybe for a very long time afterwards

● By MACHARIA GAIITHO

As the Supreme Court handles the third successive presidential election petition since it was established under the 2010 Constitution, the seven judges might be acutely aware that that there may be much more at stake this time than at any previous petition.

Beyond just the continuing battle for State House between Deputy President William Ruto and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, are deep undercurrents around alleged infiltration that could destroy credibility of the electoral management body; and counter-claims of government machinery brazenly trying to influence the electoral outcome.

It could also be a case of Justice on trial, which will place Chief Justice Martha Koome and her six colleagues firmly in the spotlight over the next several weeks, and maybe for a very long time afterwards.

With less than 16 months since her elevation to the apex court in May last year, Judge Koome might well be wondering if this pivotal case will stamp her name on the judiciary annals like her two predecessors David Maraga

and Willy Mutunga.

The Maraga Bench gained fame, infamy depending on one's perspective, for the historic 2017 judgement overturning the re-election of President Uhuru Kenyatta and running mate Ruto. The petition filed by the losing candidate was the first ever in Africa where the election of a president had been thrown out by the courts. That was Mr Odinga's second Supreme Court challenge on losing an election after his 2013 petition against the Uhuru-Ruto duo was thrown out by the Mutunga bench.

And herein lies the contradiction, for Justice Maraga was the conservative, non-controversial career judicial officer; a sharp contrast the activist Justice Mutunga who presided over the first bench appointed an establishment of the Supreme Court under the 2010 Constitution.

Dr Mutunga was the radical former University of Nairobi lecturer who had served time for sedition in the jails of former President Daniel arap Moi's one-party regime.

When he took up the mantle of Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court in 2011, one of Dr Mutunga's first actions was to discard the elabo-

rate scarlet gowns and horsehair wigs, which he regarded as antiquated colonial impositions that were no longer required even in Europe. Lawyers appearing before the Supreme Court were not required to don the wigs they were accustomed to in High Court and Court of Appeal.

Discarded the wig

In time, the Godown Arts Centre was commissioned to design new robes for the Supreme Court more reflective of the Kenyan and African context. They came with green ensemble much lighter and simpler than the red robes used by the other judges, and without all the layers of silk, fur and ribbons. The wig was discarded altogether. Many judges and lawyers did not like the new outfit. When Justice Mutunga retired in 2016, his successor, Jus-

Many of Dr Mutunga's civil society and political allies have to date never forgiven him for not taking a step that might have changed the course of history. Yet, ultimately, the petition would have been decided more on the evidence presented rather than extraneous factors.

kenya lens

■ WILL LIGHTNING STRIKE AGAIN?

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Supreme Court judges reduced the 2022 petition to nine fairly straightforward issues to be determined, but the devil was in the unstated, but explosive, details in the various affidavits



● By MACHARIA GAI THO

What could have been just a passing moment in the 2017 presidential election petition in the Supreme Court spoke volumes about how the case eventually concluded. Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwilu asked an apparently innocent question on what a stray ballot was, and how it was eventually accounted for in the final tally of votes cast. The battery of lawyers in court representing the key respondents — President Uhuru Kenyatta and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission — looked at each other in bemusement.

The learned lawyers seemed to be wondering why the judge should be asking such a naïve question, but when a senior lawyer representing the IEBC stood up to explain, he was reduced to stammering. Whispered consultations followed between the armada of IEBC lawyers, and a different one took up the challenge, but only managed to tie himself up in knots as Justice Mwilu persisted in asking for a clear and simple answer. How sniggers were wiped off the faces of the lawyers was illustrative of the combination of factors that ultimately led to the historic nullification of the presidential election results. Another pivotal issue in 2017 was inability, or refusal, of the IEBC to ‘Open the Server’. When one lawyer told the court that the order to allow access to the election results database could not be complied with be-

cause, ‘In France they are still asleep’, it was yet another example of contemptuous approach on the part of the respondents, also exemplified by one lawyer who seemed more intent on bullying and intimidating the Supreme Court judges instead of arguing on law and fact. When the historic judgement was finally delivered by then Chief Justice David Maraga, the clincher in throwing out the electoral victory of President Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto was not on strict proof of ballot stuffing, inflated vote counts, manipulated tallying, hacking and infiltration of IEBC technology systems, or any other mischief that could easily be established by recounts and audits.

It was simply a matter of process. The court found that IEBC could not provide a proper account of the vote counting, tallying and transmission of results, and was also evasive when asked to open its servers to scrutiny, therefore the likelihood that it had something to hide. On those accounts alone, rather than actual proof of rigging, a presidential election result was overturned. The process missteps pointed out by the Supreme High Court have since then been recurrent nightmares for the

The petitions filed by Raila and a myriad others challenging declaration of Ruto as the presidential election winner list a multiplicity of grounds, but eventually all boil down to a few key factors.

electoral commissioners. In the run-up to the 2022 polls, IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati seems to have decided that instead of waiting for an order to open the servers in the event of an election petition, he would simply leave them open from the outset. The petitions filed by Raila and a myriad others challenging declaration of Ruto as the presidential election winner list a multiplicity of grounds, but eventually all boil down to a few key factors.

One, which was what succeeded in 2017, is whether the conduct of the elections met the constitutional thresholds of free, fair, credible, verifiable, transparent and accountable systems. Another is that the election results forms publicly displayed at the at the polling stations, the famous Forms 34 A, were not eventually on the online portal. That leads to another ground that there was industrial-scale hacking into of the IEBC database, so that the forms originally uploaded were altered or replaced. There are also complaints that in various places, vote counts and tallies were manipulated, as well as issues around how Chebukati concluded the tallying to the exclusion, allegedly, of four ‘rebel’ colleagues, and whether his mathematics and computations were accurate. The judges diluted the petition to nine fairly straightforward issues to be determined, but the devil was in the unstated, but explosive, details in the various affidavits.

One was the split in the electoral

body which just before announcement of the results saw four commissioners, Vice-Chair Juliana Cherera, Francis Wanderi, Irene Masit and Justus Nyangaya disown what Chebukati was to declare. In an unprecedented development, the dissenting electoral commissioners went on file responses generally conceding the Raila’s prayer for nullification of the election results. Suffice it to say that the IEBC was split down the middle, with Chebukati, Prof Abdi Guliye and Boya Molu being in the minority against the Cherera, Wanderi, Masit, Nyangaya quartet. By the time the petition approached, the split seemed to have assumed partisan hues, with Chebukati and team seemingly at service of Ruto, and the Cherera group in the Raila corner. It will make for an extremely awkward situation if the petition succeeds, and a repeat poll has to be managed by the same compromised team.

Another explosive issue was in claims by Chebukati that a team from the National Security Advisory Committee had tried to pressure him to change the election results in favour of Raila. The message was that Kenya would ‘burn’ if Ruto was declared winner of the presidential elections, so the results should be ‘moderated’ on national security grounds. If true, the ramifications could be long-running even beyond the elections, and justify Ruto’s constant claims that the Uhuru Kenyatta administration was out to stop him at all costs.

kenya lens

■ EVOLUTION OF ELECTORAL LAWS

• By OSCAR OBONYO

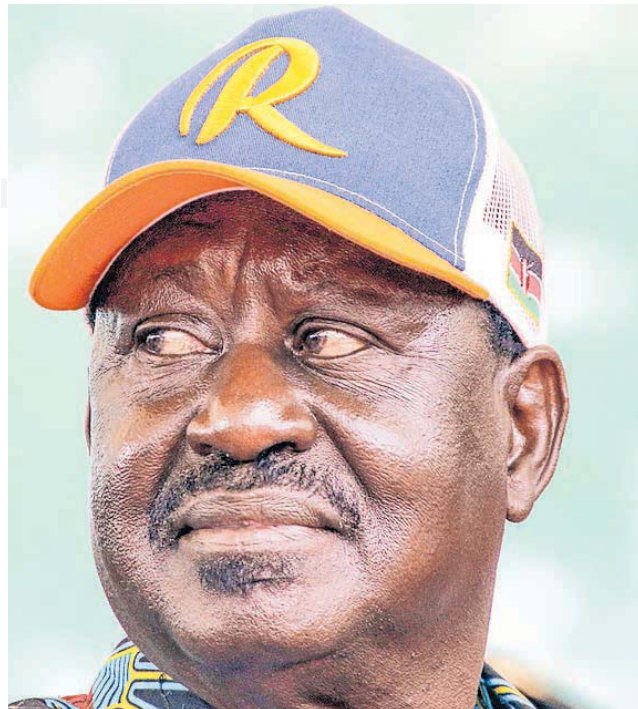
That the political impasse that has gripped the country over the last 26 days will finally be unraveled tomorrow by the Supreme Court, is a most welcome breather to many – thanks to a steady evolution of Kenya's electoral laws. If the script of yesteryears was at play, the most that the Azimio La Umoja-One Kenya presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, would get is a brief mention and hearing before judicial officers. And because no known presidential petition – before promulgation of the 2010 Constitution – ever stretched to full hearing, chances are that the case by Raila and his running mate, Martha Karua, would be kicked out on account of “technicalities”, including failure “to personally serve President-elect William Ruto with petition papers”. However, tomorrow Raila gets a realistic chance to overturn the outcome of the August 9 presidential poll. The case by the Raila-Karua pair alongside 10 other petitioners challenging the declaration of Deputy President William Samoei Ruto as President-Elect is only the third such active case following a new judicial dispensation in 2010. Dr Otiende Amolo, a constitutional lawyer who served as a member of the Committee of Experts (CoE) – the technical team that reviewed and pieced together the 2010 Constitution – explains that the creation of the apex court was aimed at, among other reasons, allowing room for “any presidential candidate who is dissatisfied with election results to seek legal redress”.

The Rarieda MP-elect views the Supreme Court as a powerful entity that has since calmed post-poll political tensions and given renewed hope to would-be victims of poll anomalies. Indeed, Otiende, who has twice participated in the proceedings of the apex court and succeeded once to overturn the win of President Uhuru Kenya in 2017, knows better. Established under Chapter 10 of the Constitution, Article 163, the Supreme Court is designed to enjoy “exclusive original jurisdiction to hear and determine disputes relating to the elections to the office of President”. Such a ruling, under sub article (3), “shall be final”.

Conceding that the Supreme Court has introduced some “healthy buffer zone” between the polling exercise and violent reactions from aggrieved parties, lawyer Harun Ndubi nonetheless says the court operates under

RAILA'S PRAYER

The Azimio leader has a realistic chance to overturn the outcome of the August 9 presidential poll. The case challenging the declaration of Deputy President William Samoei Ruto as President-Elect is only the third such active case following a new judicial dispensation in 2010



Azimio la Umoja One Kenya presidential candidate Raila Odinga at a past campaign rally.

strict deadlines, extreme pressure, and intense threats from interested parties “to freely and independently dispense justice”.

Ndubi, who unsuccessfully challenged Uhuru's win in 2017's repeat poll, cites the incident of Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwilu's bodyguard who was shot at in broad daylight, just when the court was due to hear a last-minute petition demanding the cancellation of a re-run of the presidential poll in October 2017. And at one point, following the chilling incident near Marsabit Plaza on Nairobi's Ngong Road, the then Chief Justice David Maraga showed up in court accompanied only by one colleague, Justice Isaac Lenaola. He said Mwilu was particularly “still traumatised and recovering from the shock attack”. The shooting of Mwilu's bodyguard came hours after a commis-

sioner, Roselyn Akombe, resigned after making similar claims to her life. This followed the murder of Chris Msando, one of the electoral commission's IT managers, barely nine days before the August 2017 poll.

Unless such threats and risks to life are eliminated, Ndubi holds that the good role that the Supreme Court serves “will remain unimportant”. Of great risk to electoral justice, argues Ndubi, is the heavily vested interests of key players in the presidential ballot. Although the Constitution partly addresses this challenge through a decentralised system of government in line with the creation of county governments, the people's mindset has not shifted. Focus remains hinged on the presidency.

Before this court, aggrieved poll losers were a bitter and helpless lot whose slimmest hopes of overturn-

ing results – nay, getting a hearing – lay in lower courts. Judicial officers in these courts were direct appointees of the President. This is contrary to the current Constitution, which spells out clear separation of powers between the three arms of government – Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Presently, the Judicial Service Commission independently hires its officers and the Head of State only nominates a Chief Justice, after an arduous exercise of nomination and vetting by other bodies.

The image of Karua engaging in a shouting match with Ruto at the Kenyatta International Convention Center (KICC) following the highly disputed 2007 elections remains etched in the minds of many. Then, Karua and Ruto were pulling on opposing sides for Mwai Kibaki and Raila, respectively. Owing to lack of free and adequate legal mechanisms, Kibaki and Raila ended up sharing power in a truce brokered by former United Nations Secretary General, the late Dr Kofi Annan.

Looking back over the years, former Vice Chairman of the defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) Vice Chairman, Gabriel Mukele, concedes “the highly discredited and bloody” 2007 ironically helped greatly in engineering major reforms in electoral laws. “Before the advent of the second phase of multi-party politics, presidential elections were a charade – non-competitive, biased and with the incumbent as outright winner,” he says. Mukele, 83, attributes the mischief surrounding polls to the competitive nature of the presidential race. He enumerates the various poll shortcomings right from independence, including lack of a poll register and indelible ink to mark those who have voted, the infamous “kura ya mlolongo”, or the queue voting system under the one-party Kanu regime in 1988, use of different ballot boxes for candidates thereby easily facilitating ballot stuffing, as well as use of opaque ballot boxes. And although Raila has been roundly criticised for “never accepting defeat” and “perennially contesting poll results”, lawyers are in agreement that his cases have greatly contributed towards two key things – stirred electoral reforms in the country and improved the jurisprudence on election matters.

Tomorrow is yet another day that could offer opportunity for a landmark ruling that lawyers believe could help to further tighten and improve Kenya's electoral laws.

kenya lens



President Moi with Mama Ngina Kenyatta during the the 18th anniversary of Mzee Kenyatta's death in Nairobi.

son, Daniel arap Moi. In short order, during the single-party regime when President Moi was experimenting with his novel queue voting system, Ngenji was drummed out of Parliament. It might be instructive that when Uhuru made his political debut in 1997 gunning for the 'family' seat, he came up against Ngenji's brother Capt Kungu Muigai, self-styled boss of one of the myriad Kikuyu Elder's groups, has defied the family line to back Dr Ruto's presidential campaign.

Depended on President Moi

Kungu and Ngenji are sons of the late President Kenyatta's half-brother James Muigai, so it could be a family feud that goes back to inheritance of the founding father's properties. Their sister, Senator Beth Mugo has, by contrast, since the 1970s been a key confidant and business partner of Mama Ngina.

Apart from the 1988 elections, Mama Ngina had come to depend on Moi in many other ways. When President Kenyatta died, he left behind a sprawling and uncoordinated wealth portfolio, most of it tied up land transferred from public ownership, but with the paperwork incomplete.

She depended on President Moi see to completion of the land transfers and issuance of title deeds. She was of limited education herself, and her own children were still in school. The elder step-children from Mzee Kenyatta's earlier marriages were of age and also looking to their inheritance.

From President Moi, she learnt the value of stepping back and engaging professional managers, not family and relatives, to look after the business side of things. It is to her credit that the holdings she inherited were consolidated into the modern and giant business conglomerate with a wide variety of interests in hotels, banking, insurance, agriculture, food processing, real estate, education and media.

Born in 1933, Mama Ngina was the daughter

of a colonial chief Muhoho wa Gathecha, and therefore was actually of elite blood while the Jomo Kenyatta who married her in 1951 was a mere commoner. She was 18 and he was in mid-fifties and already acknowledged leader of the freedom struggle.

Just one year into the marriage, her husband was arrested by the colonial authorities on declaration of the State of Emergency as reaction to the Mau Mau insurgency intensified. She was left alone to look after her newborn child, a daughter Kristina Wambui,

She was not to re-unite with her husband until 1960 when he completed a seven-year term, but remained under detention in a desolate part of northern Kenya. Mama Ngina was allowed to visit Kenyatta in her Kapenguria detention home, and that is where her second child and first son, Uhuru, was conceived. The future president was born in 1961 followed by a sister Anna Nyokabi in 1963 and youngest brother Muhoho in 1965.

Mama Ngina's continuing tight grip on family financial affairs was illustrated in October last year with the leaked Pandora Papers identifying her as principal beneficiary of vast holdings in secret accounts in offshore tax havens.

The secret assets uncovered by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists listed Mama Ngina as First Benefactor and Uhuru Kenyatta as Second Benefactor. Although no evidence was wrongdoing was disclosed, secret accounts in places such as Panama, Switzerland, Bermuda, Jersey and Malta for those out to stash illicit funds or hide wealth from tax authorities.

The exposure embarrassed Uhuru, who was trying to position himself as the president committed to fighting corruption. He said he welcomed the report and promised to issue a comprehensive explanation on return from an overseas visit, but has never uttered a word on the matter since.

MAMA NGINA: THE INVISIBLE HAND

• BY JOHN KAMAU

No woman in Kenya has tasted more power than Mama Ngina Kenyatta. Yet, power has never gone to her head. She has seen power leave and swiftly return to her household, yet she has remained invisible. From being the president's wife, to being the president's mother, Mama Ngina has straddled the Kenyan political space like a colossus.

The story of Mama Ngina has yet to be written. Her take on Kenya's political journey is unknown and remains a historical guesswork. In public, Mama Ngina has always appeared composed and at ease. If she wields any power, it is often by association – but she is the unmistakable fulcrum of the powerful Kenyatta family, which has ruled Kenya for a quarter century.

Publicity shy and always attending low-key village events - where she hardly wades into politics - Mama Ngina has since 1952, and for the last 70 years, been entangled with Kenyan politics, as a target, a participant, an observer or as the invisible hand. She has streets to her name in major towns, a water front in Mombasa bears her name and in Gatundu, her rural, the new Mama Ngina University College is coming up.

Mama Ngina has watched the last four presidencies from close quarters and in between she has grown her family's riches and built an enviable empire. Interestingly, she hardly displays her wealth, bears no hubris, yet she is one of the richest women in Kenya, according to the Forbes magazine. The Venture magazine had a few years back listed her as one of Africa's dollar billionaires, thanks to her interests in banking, energy, hospitality and real estate. Any time her name is mentioned in the negative, silence, rather than confrontation, has been her fortress.

Through fate, thanks to her father Chief Muhoho Gathecha, Mama Ngina had been betrothed to one of Africa's most prominent politicians, Jomo Kenyatta, as the latter settled to manage the local politics after a 15-year sojourn in Europe. Soon, and hardly 20, she had been thrown to the center-stage of Kenya's colonial politics as Jomo crisscrossed the country looking for support for his political party, Kenya African Union (KAU) whose radical wing was the militarized Kenya Land and Freedom Army, the Mau Mau.

Caught up in this political drama, Mama Ngina was one of those targeted for arrest as the crackdown that saw Jomo's incarceration ensued during the State of Emergency in 1950s. The British media and the prison wardens gave Mama Ngina another tag: "the terrorist's wife". Together with her new-born baby, Kristina, Mama Ngina was incarcerated in Kamiti Prison as the crackdown on freedom fighters continued. When she was released she was sent to join her husband in Mararal, where Jomo was under house restriction. She left with her daughter, Kristina.

continued on page 11

kenya lens

■ HOW THEY PRODUCED AN EXCELLENT JOURNAL

‘WR’ VETS: WHERE ARE THEY?

A roll call of former Weekly Review journalists shows that most picked up the pieces after it folded and went on to build formidable careers. The aging journalists are having to contend with an anthropological change in the modern newsroom. Unlike in the old days when staffers would assemble for an in-person editorial conference, the new meetings are now conducted online via Zoom. Even the dummy was projected online during an online meeting.

● By MUIRU NGUGI

Journalists everywhere are often an irrepressible, hardy lot but scribes who worked at *The Weekly Review* deserve a special mention in the pantheon of grit-fueled resilience.

Throughout its 24 years of existence, WR, as the reputable publication was known in media circles, bred a respected crop of writers who went on to make a mark in diverse fields, locally and internationally, building their careers on a solid foundation of hard work, writing prowess, analytical and critical skills, and studious orientation.

Founded in February 1975 by Harvard-educated Hilary Ng'weno, the magazine took an objective, interpretive look at Kenyan political and business news, as well as important African events. *The Independent* of London once described it as “the magazine for thinking Kenyans”. It was published at a time when the Kenyan society was evolving its first crop of an African middle class, providing a provocative yet accessible vehicle for political engagement of this emergent class as it evaluated Kenya's internal negotiations with itself. In addition, the WR offered a connection with the world, particularly the Western world, where some of its editors were educated and from where Kenyan aspirations for liberal democracy were drawn.

Some of the WR writers have now returned to the source, as it were, and are part of the editorial team that is working to revive the legendary Kenyan political magazine, which folded in 1999. As they embark on the new venture, they are having to adopt to the realities of the present, including a vastly changed society and a pluralism of formal and informal media outlets providing both quality as well as commercialized blather and insidious lies.

The veteran journalists also must contend with change in the newsroom. For instance, unlike in the old days when writers would assemble for in-person editorial conferences, meetings are now conducted online. Fortunately, the old hands are working together with newer talent that is more skilled in put-



ting the publication together using new technologies. This cross-breed of the old and the new promises to deliver a great product.

While it is impossible to track down all living former WR employees who worked at the publication during its quarter-of-a-century existence, here are updates on a few of them:

Hilary Boniface Ng'weno, popularly as HBN, founded *The Nairobi Times* and the first independent TV news station in Kenya, STV. He produced documentaries series on Kenyan history, including the *Making of a Nation* and Kenya's Darkest Hour. He died on July 7, 2021, after a long illness, leaving a legacy of excellence and courage in journalism.

One of the editors most associated with the growth and excellence of standards at the WR was Sarah Elderkin, a Kenyan of British extraction. She started off as Hilary Ng'weno's Executive Secretary when the magazine was founded, rising to the position of Managing Editor before proceeding to Cardiff University of Wales for a graduate degree in Journalism. She lives in Nairobi and occasionally contributes to local Sunday newspapers.

Philip Ochieng'one of Kenya's most respected editors, had short stint as Assistant Editor of WR in the late 1970s, he went on to build a stellar career at the Nation as Assistant Managing Editor and *Kenya Times* as Editor-in-Chief. He died last year just a few months before the exit of his contemporary HBN.

Samuel Makinda, who wrote for the WR in the late 1970s, went on to work for the *Daily Nation* and is currently a Professor of Politics and International Studies at Murdoch University in Australia. Another old hand, Peter Kareithi, the inveterate news hound, is now a Professor of Communications at Penn State University in the United States. The relentless investigative reporter, Mutegi Njau, who eulogised the WR for the *Daily Nation* when it folded in 1999, worked as an editor for Royal Media Services before he retired a few years ago.

Wachira Waruru rose for reporter to Managing Editor of the WR before leaving in 1993. He later built a respectable career as a business leader, serving as Managing Director of the Standard Group and the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) before becoming

the Group CEO of Royal Media Services, while building a few businesses of his own, including Chaka Ranch, a theme park-styled resort in Nyeri.

Jaindi Kiseru, one of the best veteran hands in business writing, served at the WR as a Business Editor and later Managing Editor, going to become Nation Media Group's Managing Editor for Business and Economic Affairs until his retirement. Jaindi will be writing for the new *Weekly Review*.

Macharia Gaithe was the WR Assistant Managing Editor till he left in 1993 to join former colleagues Peter Warutere in a similar position at *The Economic Review*. He went on to join a group of investors with a new magazine, *The Analyst*, before joining the *Daily Nation* as Managing Editor in charge of Special Projects. Though retired, Gaithe is still active in journalism, contributing for various publications. He has played a vital role in revival of the *Weekly Review*. Another writer, Gitau Warigi, also joined the *Daily Nation* as a columnist.

Senior reporter Vitalis Musebe left WR to join television station KTN as News Editor, and later became Editor-in-Chief of KBC, after which he worked for the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution. Now retired, he is a farmer and businessman in western Kenya.

After WR, Kwendo Opanga went on to become one of Kenya's leading columnists, writing first for the Nation then the Standard, where he rose to Managing Editor. He later set up his own publications, the *Diplomat* being the most noteworthy, before settling down as a communication consultant.

McOwiti O. Thomas was employed as a science writer at the WR, after which he worked for the United Nations. He lives in the United States and will be one of the contributors to the revived magazine.

After leaving WR, Mwangi Githahu worked for local newspapers including *Kenya Times*, *Nation* and *Star*, before migrating to South Africa, where he now lives and works. Okumba Miruka, who wrote on arts and culture, is an international gender and development consult-

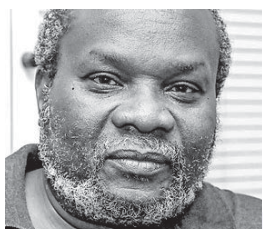
kenya lens



Kwendo Opanga



Jaiindi Kisero



Macharia Gaitho



Wachira Waruru



Lucy Oriang'



Mutegi Njau

ant and scholar.

Okodan Akwap, who had fled Uganda in the early 1980s is now a retired in his home country. When the WR closed shop, he wrote in the *Daily Monitor* of Kampala: "A reputable Kenyan publication, *The Weekly Review*, has folded after 24 years of publication, leaving some who knew its history feeling sad. To me, the feeling goes beyond sadness; it borders on grief, the kind that tugs at your heartstrings when you lose someone dear to you."

Michael Ngwalla, a German-speaking scribe who once had a stint as musician in Vienna, Austria, where he lived for 10 years, now consults in Nairobi as a corporate affairs writer, as does Columbia-educated financial journalist Iraki Kibiriti, who did his stint at WR as a business reporter before joining the World Bank.

Copy editors at the WR included Kibe Kamuyu, who joining the Nation and rose to Production Editor before retiring; Janet Njoroge, who joined Longman Kenya Ltd and rose to the very helm of the company; Wambui Githiora-Updike, who migrated to the US and became a high school teacher; and Wanjiru Ciira, who is also retired and living in Nairobi.

Others are Lucy Oriang', who joined the *Daily Nation* and became its first female Managing Editor; Betty Muriuki, who also joined the Nation Media Group and rose to become Features Editor before joining Amref Health Africa; Judith Ogecha who joined the *Daily Nation* as a sub-editor; and Mugweru Mbutia, who was Production Editor at the *Daily Nation*.

Other accomplished editors, reporters and correspondents who passed through the WR doors included Nixon Kareithi, Margareta wa Gacheru, T J Mukui, John Mula, Ben Omoro, William Ochieng, Blamuel Njururi, Calestous Juma, Masheti Masinjila, John Murumba Chikati, G. Bannaars, Joseph Makhoha, Nicholas Kamau, Tirop Simatei, Adalo Moga, Daniel Sifuma, Joe Rogoiyo, Tom Ochola and Rasna Warah. The pages of the magazine were illustrated with photographs captured by Felix Obuna, Sam Ouma, Muturi Mwangi and William Kimaru

As life would have it, the curtain has fallen on the lives of a number of WR journalists, among them Ben Omoro, Kuria Machang'i, Dishon Shangala, Muturi Mwangi, Mathew Gathigira, Dominic Odipo and Amboka Adere.

It's a brand new journal: Brave, apt and incisive

It is our absolute pleasure to welcome you back to *The Weekly Review* after a 23-year hiatus. When this standard bearer of political reporting in Kenya folded in May 1999, it must have left sad many who knew its history.

The rebirth of one of the most authoritative magazines of political news, commentary and analysis in Africa heralds a new dawn for journalism and democracy in Kenya. For decades, this publication was the torch of our socio-political awakening and development.

Those who had the chance to read *The Weekly Review* in the 1970s, '80s and '90s — "a ground-breaking weekly news magazine that for the first time introduced expert political and economic analysis for Kenyan readers", to quote his eulogist — can speak about the country's political changes with much ease.

There are still more who were lucky enough to have back copies of this magazine and shall testify that it's a treasure trove of Kenyan history.

Serious libraries and the national archives have all the copies neatly bound for perusal by the reading public curious to comprehend our rocky past and the struggles that have shaped our destiny.

One of the nation's greatest editors, Hilary Ng'weno, began this daring journey at the brink of Kenya's independence. He possessed the unswerving resolve to use the power of the pen to highlight the good and the bad of our society.

Hilary attended Harvard University — the first Kenyan to do so — where he studied physics. Often reported by the press as nuclear physics, to his annoyance, Hilary felt alienated and dropped out of the school after two years to attend university in the Soviet Union.

He ended up in the UK, instead, where he did odd jobs before going back to Harvard, where he eventually graduated in the class of 1962, a testimony to his indomitable spirit that would see him launch this magazine in 1975.

Hilary steered *The Weekly Review*, in a largely challenging political environment when freedoms were limited and democracy was alien.

A fearless journalist who stuck his neck out for the truth, he published inflammatory political articles and commentaries that often stirred the wrath of a government, whose power solely rested in one man.



ALLAN BULUKU

Ng'weno breathed his last on July 7, 2021 aged 83, but his dream lives on. Through the rebirth of his baby, we will endeavour to live by his motto and bring you the gem that you have missed for two decades.

Ng'weno breathed his last on July 7, 2021 aged, 83 but his dream lives on. Through the rebirth of his baby, we will endeavour to live by his motto and bring you the gem that you have missed for the past two decades.

Our goal is to bring to you thoughtful and engaging articles on political and social issues, while also exhibiting the nation's creative side through culture, business, and science.

Let us state this at the outset: As a publication, we don't subscribe to any political ideology; we have set standards that will ensure there is always something good for all.

This magazine will cater to the needs of all Kenyans — irrespective of creed, colour, ethnicity, age, gender or political affiliation. It is our hope that, through this revamped magazine, every reader will find a home to share their opinions, faith and experience. That is why we are here.

Based on the impressive history of *The Weekly Review*, we will be as open as possible. And, for this reason, we gladly encourage and welcome comments and criticism.

You are also welcome to submit articles for publication, which we shall subject to our stringent editorial standards. Those that pass muster will have the pride of place on what we believe is the pedestal of Kenya's journalism.

We are excited to be furthering the goals of *The Weekly Review* and to hear your stories. We cannot wait to be part of the unfolding history.

Let the show begin.

abuluku@ke.nationmedia.com

the limelight



An armed member of Saraya al-Salam (Peace Brigade), the military wing affiliated with Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, helps a woman fire a machine gun during clashes with Iraqi security forces in Baghdad's Green Zone on August 30. PHOTO IAFP



A man rides on his donkey cart during a heavy rainfall in the flood hit Dera Allah Yar town in Jaffarabad district, Balochistan province, on August 30. PHOTO IAFP



Kenya's Samuel Oliech (centre) carries the ball towards Scotland's Femi Sofolarin during their match at the Los Angeles 2022 World Sevens Series event at Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson, California on August 27. PHOTO IAFP



Displaced people sit on a tractor with their belongings after fleeing from their flood hit homes following heavy rains in Shikarpur, Pakistan, on August 30. PHOTO IAFP



Serena Williams celebrates after defeating Montenegro's Danka Kovinic during their 2022 US Open singles first round match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York, on August 29. PHOTO IAFP



A ruined building in Mariupol amid the ongoing Russian military action in Ukraine on August 28. PHOTO IAFP



A model displays a creation from the UCF 2023 S/S Collection by UCF design team at Tokyo Fashion Week in Tokyo on August 30. PHOTO IAFP



The Arena

A CUT ABOVE THE REST

Stephen Ndegwa is not your ordinary politician. Raised in a dysfunctional family, he overcame the odds and rode on his shaving skills to win a civic seat in the Nairobi County Assembly.

OPEN SPACE

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

YOUTH VOICE It is a false image and the spuriousness of it quickly dissolves when you come into contact with those who are economically successful than their older counterparts.

• BY MOSES OJWANG

The most popular image of Kenyan youth in the minds of many is the young men and women living in their parents' homes; demanding food and clothing until they are well into their thirties; a posse of lost generation chewing *muguka* under trees and in kiosks while chatting on their phones and watching tic-toc comedies.

These are the unemployed and unperturbed lot that is just an anomaly. It is a false image and the spuriousness of it quickly dissolves when you come into contact with the youth who are so serious and economically successful than their older counterparts.

In Mombasa, I bumped into seven young men in their early 20s. Their job is clear-cut and where they learned their trade is quite a mystery. They did it themselves without aid from any quarters; just their self-drive and ambition.

They now have three shops, which they have turned into mini garages. These lads were once boda boda operators but they saw the futility of marking time making little money and spending it all in one day.

They realised that many more youth without any idea of self-advancement were increasing in the motorbike transport trade and that is where they got the idea. After two years riding their less profitable motorcycles, they ventured into assembling new ones.

Most, if not all motorcycle importers in this country, never bring in a whole motorbike. It is each part comes separately and thus the importer has to assemble them one by one into a complete bicycle. This



way, one contained can carry very many parts which usually take lesser space than if they brought fully assembled motorbikes.

These lads started approaching the importers with requests to assemble the bikes for them, at a fee, of course. They started under a big tree where they did six to eight bikes per day.

They saved their earnings and in six months flat; they had created a niche for their trade and they were in high demand for their clean job.

Motor corporations

At first glance, you may get the impression that they just work and share the money with each other at the end of day. That is far from the truth; they are professionals and their accounts are immaculately kept; they file their tax returns as per regulations and also pay themselves monthly salaries, complete with payslips.

Their work has become easier nowadays since just like in mass production line in the large motor companies like Ford and Toyota, each individual deals with two or three parts in the production line; it is something of a beauty to see a motor cycle take shape as you watch in awe.

It makes one to think there still is work to do in this country; what is missing is just formal employment.

Are you young and ambitious? We would like to hear from you. Send your views and observations on topical issues to: weeklyview@ke.nationmedia.com

MIND SPEAK



Seraphine Okeyo
Young people have become an influential constituency in the country. This underlines the importance of participating in elections as it offers them an opportunity to have a say their next leaders. The youth have unique needs.
— *Miss Heritage Kenya*



Wangu Kanuri
The just-concluded elections show that power belongs to the youth. They can determine the future of this country. Being the majority, many were elected into office on August 9. I believe they will get involved in decision-making.
— *Journalist*



Belly Kanaita
Many young people won various seats. The youth also learnt the impact of misinformation and disinformation on social media; the effects of fake news and harmful online content. Let's always learn to play clean.
— *Digital strategist*



Alex Khamoyi
Elections offer Kenyans an opportunity to decide the direction of the country. The youth, who are the majority, had an opportunity to choose leaders who would vouch for their interests and that is key. Things will be better in 2027.
— *Businessman*

MY TAKE



THE NEW NORMAL

POST-PANDEMIC WORLD: Many companies adapted their businesses to online functionality and managed to thrive through the pandemic. The migration from physical to digital meeting platforms like Zoom, Google Hangout, Microsoft Teams and even WhatsApp enabled many firms to expand their office territory beyond the country.

In December, 2019, I had a meeting with a client in the manufacturing sector who mentioned that something was happening in China that was quite vague at the time but which he predicted could shut down the world. His business relies heavily on global supply chains but for a few weeks, he had been unable to get goods out of China and into Kenya. That is when I first took an interest in Covid-19.

Fast-forward to March of 2020, when the first case was reported in Kenya, and the Government instituted a raft of measures that saw us work from home. In many ways, Covid-19 has impacted every sphere of life. While some were extensively adverse consequences like loss of lives, jobs and economic downturns, there pandemic and the new normal it birthed also had significant positive outcomes.

For instance, we discovered that working from home, a concept that was relatively unheard of until then, was in many ways better than the 8-to-5 physical presence in the office. Teams appeared better rested and were eager to attend to briefs nearly 24 hours a day as there were no time barriers. All this was achieved without the strain of office expenditure like rent, internet, supplies, maintenance or service charge.

The migration from physical to digital meeting platforms like Zoom, Google Hangout, Microsoft Teams and even WhatsApp enabled us to expand our office territory beyond the country. We were able to execute projects fully online as far as Ethiopia, Egypt, Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia, all thanks to technology.

Traditional events

We also reinvented how events were done to keep up with the fast-changing world. While many functions were initially cancelled in line with Covid-19 protocols, this could not be done for too long as life had to go on. As PR and event planners, we either limited in-person attendance to events or introduced online or fully hybrid occasions that were implemented seamlessly to give everyone the feel of being physically present.

While Covid vaporised many traditional roles, the place of the event planner was reinforced rather than threatened. There has been an argument that most companies prefer social media influencers over traditional PR or events companies, but this is quite far from the truth. In fact, companies, businesses and governments are driven by objectives and specific deliverables that can only be achieved through thorough and holistic communication strategies. These are primarily developed by communication experts, who then identify the different talents social media influencers present before making recommendations to clients. As such, the two disciplines do not compete against but complement each other. If anything, we are forced to offer clients competitive solutions to deliver the desired results.

As the pandemic gets behind us, it is worth noting that a unique challenge brought about by working from home was skills transfer. It became quite difficult to effectively train and successfully onboard staff, especially younger team members. As a result, many companies, including ours, have returned to the office.

Still, roles that can be handled remotely are still accommodated. At the same time, digital PR and events have become an integral part of any communication strategy as we seek ways to ensure our clients remain top of mind in their markets. With increased online activity, we find that, as a business, we have also been able to effectively market ourselves and stand out from the crowd, attracting more clients in the process.

Kevin Otiende is the Managing Director of CALLA PR
 kevinotiende1@gmail.com

THE BIG INTERVIEW

FROM BARBER SHOP TO CITY HALL

OVERCOMING THE ODDS: Stephen Ndegwa rode on his grassroots connections and shaving skills to win a seat on the Nairobi County Assembly

Life, someone once said, is a journey whose only certainties are the beginning and the end. Stephen Ndegwa, the newly elected Parklands/Highridge ward representative, knows this saying all too well.

When The Weekly Review met him on Monday morning this week, Ndegwa was busy at his barber shop, Fine Cuts, in Westlands, Nairobi. He offered us a seat as he finished sprucing up his client. As we sat down for the interview, his phone kept ringing. "I am supposed to meet bodaboda riders who have been evicted from their operating area," he explains.

The soft-spoken Ndegwa was born and raised in the informal settlement of Kangemi in Nairobi, where life was a daily battle for survival. His mother sold chang'aa to cater for him and his siblings after his father left to marry someone else and pursue a career in music.

"I struggled to go to school regularly because the chang'aa business could not really sustain the family. My mum would be arrested often, leaving us on our own," he said. Although life was hard, he managed to make it through high school, after which his mother enrolled him in a computer college in the city (which year?).

However, Ndegwa had different dreams: he wanted to be a bus driver, inspired by the character Mr Kamau in the book *Hello Children* that was read by primary school children in the 1980s and 1990s. He believed that was the best job in the world because Mr Kamau made a decent living from his work.

The computer course turned out to be too expensive for his mother and he eventually dropped out. An aunt advised his mother to enroll him for a barber course in the city, which he agreed to despite the fact that his ambition lay elsewhere.

As luck would have it, he got a part-time job as a matatu tout. "After my barbering classes I

would work as a tout; I was confident I would eventually be a driver," he reasons.

The touting job would come to an abrupt end, however, when then Transport Minister John Michuki introduced raft measures to tame the intractable matatu industry. (Why was he affected?). He decided to concentrate on his grooming career and found a job at a barber shop in Westlands where he could put his training to practice.

"Having left college and gone straight into the matatu industry, I did not have the confidence to shave the prominent people who were streaming into the barber shop. After a while, however, when some of his clients began to feature as models in newspapers, he gained the confidence to jump-start his barbering journey.

He saved up and set up his own shop where he would charge Sh30 per cut (where). Twelve years later, Ndegwa admits that running a business has not been easy. He is grateful to his customers who guided him on that journey.

"I had knowledge of doing the barbering business but I did not know how to run a business. Doing the business is coming in and shaving people every day but running a business is moving to your own beat and creating a path of your own," he offers.

Ndegwa's desire to become a politician grew from interactions with prominent leaders such as former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who were among his customers. In 2013, he expressed interest in vying for a seat on the county assembly, but his dream was cut short due to lack of funds. Since his business was doing well, he postponed his ambitions to 2017, hoping to have saved enough by then to finance his campaign. He decided to expand

My aim is to transform the lives of the community by increasing public participation, ensuring residents have access to quality health care and education bursaries, and creating talent and business development programmes for young people.





Newly elected Parklands/Highridge Ward MCA Stephen G. Ndegwa at his Fine Cuts Spa in Westlands. FRANCIS NDERITU | NATION

his business by starting a beauty college, for which he would need a loan. He stopped paying rent for his main barber shop to increase his savings in order to qualify for bank credit. The plan was to save up for four months, after which he would get the loan and use part of it to pay rent arrears.

But his landlord was not that patient and had him auctioned (after how many months, marking the begging of a rough year. (which year?) That same year, two more of his barber shops were torn down during a demolition of the Westlands Market.

His eldest daughter, who had performed well in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exam, was called to the Alliance Girls' High School but lost her slot because he did not have money to take her to the prestigious school.

"The situation was so bad that I wanted to die. I was afraid to go back home in the evening because I didn't know what to tell my daughter," Ndegwa recalls.

With the help of friends and his customers, he decided to start over and pursue his dream of joining politics in the 2022 general election. He soon ran into challenges, the first being party zoning by Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya.

"I begged my party, ODM, to conduct research (for?) on the ground before making the decision and eventually all political parties under Azimio were allowed to front a candidate," said Ndegwa.

According to the father of three, Kenyan pol-



itics is not for the faint-hearted; he was attacked three times and injured badly. His wife was afraid he would end up dead and asked him to drop his bid.

"We stopped talking about what I was doing out there because my wife would get worked up thinking of what I was going through," he recalls.

His campaign was community-based, financed by friends, fellow businesspeople and clients. "I received a lot of support from friends at Westlands Market, where I was well known. Someone printed posters for me and another did T-shirts. Ndegwa opted for a door-to-door campaign, knocking on the doors of almost every business in his ward.

"Having worked here for over 12 years I understand the issues that affect the large population of businesspeople. My key agenda is to transform the lives of the community by increasing public participation, ensuring residents have access to quality health care and education bursaries, and creating talent and business development programmes for young people," he says.

During the campaign period, Ndegwa would go to the barber shop very early in the morning and in the evening to shave clients as he needed money to cater to his family. His daughter, who eventually joined Mugoi Girls' School, will sit her final exam end of this year.

Even with his new responsibilities, Ndegwa is keen to keep running his barber shop. "I want to expand this business and employ more than the eight people I currently have. I still plan to have a training facility where young people can learn beauty and business management," he says.

Staying faithful to his roots, Ndegwa promises to always have his shaving tool in hand as he traverses his ward, just in case anyone needs a haircut.

LAMU IN THE LIMELIGHT

THE KING OF THE SCREEN

He has spent his thriving career creating opportunities for and offering inspiration to the youth of Lamu. At just 28, Daudi Otieno Anguka is a pillar of hope in this archipelago, which he has turned into a thriving location for some of the most watched television shows in Kenya.

“While you’re fighting for a seat at the table, I’ll be down in Lamu building my own,” he said in an interview.

A native of Mombasa, the renowned film producer’s most accomplished projects include the television series, *Pete*, a critically acclaimed Swahili soap opera that aired on MultiChoice’s Maisha Magic East for five seasons.

The experience of producing *Pete* opened up Kenya’s coast to a world of prospects in the film industry.

“We shot the series on Funzi island, working with a crew of 70. It was one of the biggest productions the small island had ever seen,” he offers.

Growing up, Anguka’s mother wanted him to become an engineer, but his passion was in filmmaking. The second child in a family of nine, he went to Unicef Academy and Kajembe High School in Mombasa, completing his secondary education in 2011, but there was no money for him to go to college. He ended his mother in hawking mandazi and samosas in Mikindani to make ends meet.

“In primary school, I liked watching movies and music videos, which aroused my interest in audiovisuals. I joined the drama club in secondary school and that was where my passion for acting was born,” he recalls.

After two years of hawking, Anguka had raised enough money to enrol at the Hot Sun Film School, Nairobi, where he studied film production, graduating in 2016. He first produced a short film for Maisha Magic without a budget. “I convinced them that I could do it and we signed a deal. That was my breakthrough,” he says.

Anguka feels privileged to have achieved his childhood dream. But what satisfies him

ONE OF THE COUNTRY’S BEST FILM PRODUCERS: A young filmmaker is changing lives and turning the focus of the world’s lens to the quiet archipelago with his award-winning productions

more is the fact that he can positively impact lives by nurturing young talent in the film industry and creating job opportunities.

“I have people who depend on me. In one location, we can engage about 300 extras. All these people are paid. When I go home, no matter how tired I am, I know in my heart I have done my part in improving my society.”

He describes the Covid-19 season as the toughest period in his career.

“I had 120 people working on full salary. When everything shut down in 2020, I couldn’t afford to pay them. They would call, begging for money to feed their families. For a couple of months this traumatised me. I explained my predicament to MultiChoice and luckily for me they understood the situation and rescued me.”

Cameraman Hamisi Omar considers it a privilege to work with Anguka. “He has worked on great projects. When I met him, he encouraged me to work hard and bring the best out of everything I filmed. He is a tough taskmaster on set but that is what has kept us going.”

Heavy taxes

Sharif Mohammed Kero, a production director, was first hired to direct a local soap opera, *Sanura*. “We used to be idle but business is good now. There are a lot of opportunities. I have been employed for six years, which never happened in my life before.”

Despite his success, Anguka cites Kenya’s heavy taxation regime as a deterrent to growth of the industry.

“Producing a movie in Kenya is not easy. We are suffering because of the many levies imposed by the regulators. Instead, the government should offer incentives to promote local filmmakers and promote the Coast as





Film producer and director Daudi Otieno Anguka on set during the filming of 'Sanura' in Lamu County. PHOTO | POOL

a film tourism destination," he proposes.

Anguka has won several awards, including the Best Movie (East Africa) and Best Indigenous Language Movie or TV Series in the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards 2017 for his film, *Zilizala*. "The awards motivated me to tap more into TV series filmmaking."

Swahili culture

"I came to Lamu because of its uniqueness. As I scouted for locations in its seven islands, I considered what was happening in modern society and used ideas from different people to create the story of *Sanura*," he offers.

"The show mirrors the Swahili culture, including attire, cuisine, music, rituals and customs that have ensured Lamu maintains the salient features that have been part of its existence for the past 700 years."

He adds: "The story portrays fictional characters and storylines but producing the work in our local setting also gives us a chance to stimulate conversation about elements of our cul-



ture that could have become outdated. Television is an ideal platform to present the conflict between the anxiety of the older generation that fears losing hold of tradition and the impatience of young professionals who seek to abandon outdated customs."

This is the first production of its magnitude in the region; MultiChoice's commitment to an investment of this scale is expected to attract other local and international productions to the coastal location.

In particular, Lamu's rich Swahili architecture, the strong fragrance of history at every corner, and the picturesque, centuries-old Portuguese-style fortresses lined up along thin caramel streets are fine fodder for any camera.

According to Unesco, Kenya's flourishing film and television industry could be a source of export earnings as the country exports talent and equipment to neighbouring countries. Anguka is already tapping into this potential by shining the limelight on Lamu, until now one of the Indian Ocean's best kept secrets.

editorial



■ Order stiff penalties for culprits to act as a deterrent against future disenfranchisement of Kenyans

Punish those subverting the will of the people

Twenty six days ago, Kenyans confidently and peacefully, and in orderly lines long and short, spoke at a General Election. They voted to elect their next members of local assemblies, National Assembly and Senate, women reps, governors and president.

But, thanks to Mr Wanyonyi Wafula Chebukati and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the faction-riven polls umpire that he leads, Kenyans still do not know what they said, or how loudly they said it, in regard to their next President.

It is why their eyes and ears will be trained on the Supreme Court tomorrow as its seven justices pronounce themselves on whether or not Deputy President William Ruto was lawfully declared President-elect by Chebukati on August 15. But even if the Chief Justice Justice Martha Koome-led apex court declares, as is likely, that Ruto was not lawfully declared winner, Kenyans may never know what they said, and how, on August 9.

And whichever way the court rules Kenya will remain polarised for some time to come, which is why Koome & Co are called upon to bear in mind that there must be a country after their pronouncement. That is not surprising because polls polarise, and shambolic and manipulated polls even more so. Still, it is not the purview of the court to tell Kenyans what they said on August 9. The justices and batteries of lawyers come in because the tasks of

The justices and batteries of lawyers come in because the tasks of manually and electronically counting, tallying and transmitting results, especially of the presidential poll, have been rendered a recurrent conundrum by IEBC.



**KWENDO
OPANGA**

manually and electronically counting, tallying and transmitting results, especially of the presidential poll, have been rendered a recurrent conundrum by IEBC. Currently, the only clear things about the August 9 General Election in general and the presidential poll in particular, are the orderly lines of Kenyans queuing up to vote and the eye-watering Sh44.6 billion budget for the ballot. However, this orderliness masked the planned disorder that ran rampant out of sight to distort the poll results. So the justices have been called upon, for the third time in as many poll cycles, to tell Kenyans what they said at the ballot box.

IEBC messed up the ballot

And for its troubles the court has been left with egg on its face whichever way it has ruled. In 2013, beaten presidential hopeful Raila Odinga branded it *koroti bandia* (counterfeit court). He had lost his petition. In 2017, IEBC declared Odinga had lost the presidential poll, but the Supreme Court quashed President Kenyatta's victory and ordered a rerun of the election.

Angry President Kenyatta called the justices *wakora* (crooks) who would steal his victory and promised them retribution. He hissed that the sextet

had no right to reverse a decision rendered by millions of voters. Odinga briefly basked in his victory before boycotting the repeat poll because, he said, IEBC would still rig it anyway. It was a double whammy for the Supreme Court inflicted by Odinga and the President. IEBC went ahead with the poll. So, what should happen tomorrow?

First, Koome & Co. must go beyond the unprecedented irregularities and illegalities and pronounce themselves with finality on the absolute need for IEBC to conduct free, fair, transparent and verifiable elections. The court should order stiff penalties for culprits to act as a deterrent against future disenfranchisement of Kenyans. Second, Koome & Co. aware that IEBC has bungled two elections in a row, must not countenance it running another ballot. Had it been punished in 2017 for its transgressions, Kenya would not have this fine mess.

Third, because many will bristle if the justices turn activist, let alone legislate from the bench, they should make bold recommendations for Parliament to enact watertight legislation to guarantee free, fair, orderly and verifiable elections. Last, IEBC did not act alone. It messed up the ballot in cahoots with political players. They too must be punished for subverting the will of Kenyans.

opinion

■ There have been a succession of brilliant editors driving the new wave of journalism

A gifted editor, HBN had a sense of humour and an eye for raw talent



MACHARIA
GAITHO

If Hilary Ng'weno never had a sense of humour and an eye for raw talent, many of us might never have become journalists.

He had the courage and faith to give a chance to an untrained, untested hopeful; and one at that whose application letter many potential employers would have immediately dismissed as impudent, if not outright insulting.

It's long story. Back towards the end of August 1986, a job advertisement for Sub-Editor in *The Weekly Review* caught my interest.

I was working as a designer and instructor at the Ministry of Labour's Kenya Textile Training Institute, with absolutely no experience or training in journalism. I decided to apply anyway, given my ardent interest in writing and having been an avid reader of *The Weekly Review* since its inception in 1975 when I was just a Form 2 student.

My admiration for Hilary had started much earlier, probably while still in primary school, through his satirical 'My Friend Joe' pieces in the *Daily Nation*. When the fictional character Joe Kihara evolved into a full-fledged humour magazine run by Hilary and the brilliant pioneering editorial cartoonist Terry Hirst, my dad's budget had to include my regular supply of *Joe* magazine.

Along the way, *Joe* evolved beyond humour and satire into serious politics, serving as the launching pad for what was initially titled 'Hilary Ng'weno's Weekly Review'. I went along with the transition and never missed a copy.

Back to my moment of madness. Instead of doing a formal application letter, I took the current edition of *The Weekly Review* and edited the cover story. I didn't just cross the t's and dot the i's, but practically put scissors to paper, cutting out entire paragraphs and shifting them. Working from a design studio where there was plenty of Cow Gum around was a distinct advantage, as was previous experience as a paste-up artist.

My covering letter said that since every week I had so much fun trying to decipher where stray paragraphs and columns ought to have been (That was the era of galley proofs where copy was physically glued together and sometimes mistakes were made), I might as well get paid for doing it. Once done, I put my handiwork in an envelope and on my way home in the evening passed by the *Weekly Review* offices at Agip House and slipped my application under the

door. I never told Wachira Waruru, then Senior Editor and an old high school colleague, what I had done. It was to my surprise that the very next day, I got a call from News Editor Peter Kareithi inviting me to go over as soon as possible. I went over the same day and met Kareithi and Managing Editor Sarah Elderkin. Both were intrigued and amused with my application letter, but suggested that since the Sub-Editor position might not be for me, I might want to try my hand as a reporter.

I jumped at the chance. My interview was to go and write an analysis on the latest instalment of the raging 'Queuing Debate', and bring it back by close of business the same day. I delivered my laboriously-composed handwritten script late that Thursday evening. On Friday morning, I picked up my copy of WR, and found that the cover story was on the same subject I had been tested on. That same afternoon, I got the call. A job offer with starting salary of Sh6,000 per month, a considerable improvement, almost double, my government salary. It was my great pride to start my journalism career at the prestigious and ground-breaking news magazine. With *The Weekly Review*, Hilary had introduced a brand of analytical journalism unseen and unmatched in the region.

Editor-in-Chief of the DN at 25

For me it was a great learning experience that could not have been found at any other media in Kenya. It was refreshing working in the small, tightly-knit newsroom with little bureaucracy and where the boss was simply Hilary or HBN.

And just as important, no suits, ties and other stuffy formal attire. Many at the time assumed that Hilary wrote most of the magazine himself, especially as we did not carry by-lines.

His only regular contribution was the 'Letter from the Editor,' a space he held sacrosanct as Editor-in-Chief. What he did was guide, mentor and train, not in a formal structure but simply by going through copy and making remarks and suggestions and asking questions in his familiar scrawl. The venerable WR, clearly a publication before its time, folded in 1999, but set standards in journalistic

excellence that all else have since tried to emulate. Hilary started his journalistic career at the *Nation Newspapers*, the Harvard University Physics graduate who came back to Kenya at the dawn of independence to set a record as Editor-in-Chief of the *Daily Nation* at the age of 25. He was the first African Editor-in-Chief at the newspaper group established by Ismaili spiritual leader, His Highness the Aga Khan, as a counterpoint to the colonial establishment *East African Standard*.

Hilary quit the prestigious and powerful position after less than a year. He has never quite disclosed why he left, but various conversations indicate that he was not happy holding the position in a regime where a crop of British expatriates kept looking over his shoulders. Hilary was spare, direct and simple in his writing and analysis, avoiding dogma and injection of personal views.

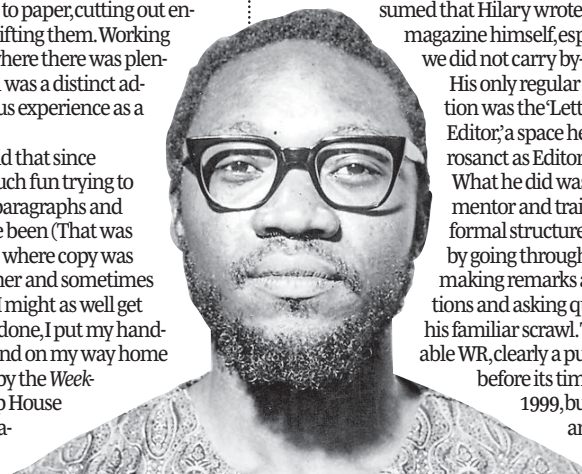
And from there it might be fair to say that the death last year of Hilary marked the last of the old-style editorial bosses of Kenyan newspapers.

There have been many others editors-in-chief, editorial directors, managing editors, or whatever iteration of the title, but very few whom the readers, general public, and those in positions of power and authority recognise instantly as the face and voice of the newspaper, the 'owner' of every word written. The only other editors who also commanded instant recognition were George Githii through two stints at the *Nation* and one at *The Standard*, Henry Gathigira at the *Standard*, and Philip Ochieng', who passed in last year around the same time as Hilary, through stints at the *Nation* and *Kenya Times*.

This is not to say that there have not been many outstanding chief editors in the mainstream media in Kenya. There have been to date a succession of brilliant editors driving the new wave of journalism and armed with much more in terms of education and exposure than their predecessors. The point, however, is that they have for the most part been reduced to relative anonymity except amongst their peers, playing second fiddle to the men in suits.

The board chairs, chief executives, managing directors, commercial directors etc to the public are now the recognised faces and voices of the media houses. Relegation of the editorial department to a lower place in the pecking order is very significant when seen against what might be called loss of the newsroom to business or political interests.

This has affected editorial independence in ways Hilary and the other giants who bestrode the editorial landscape would never have countenanced.



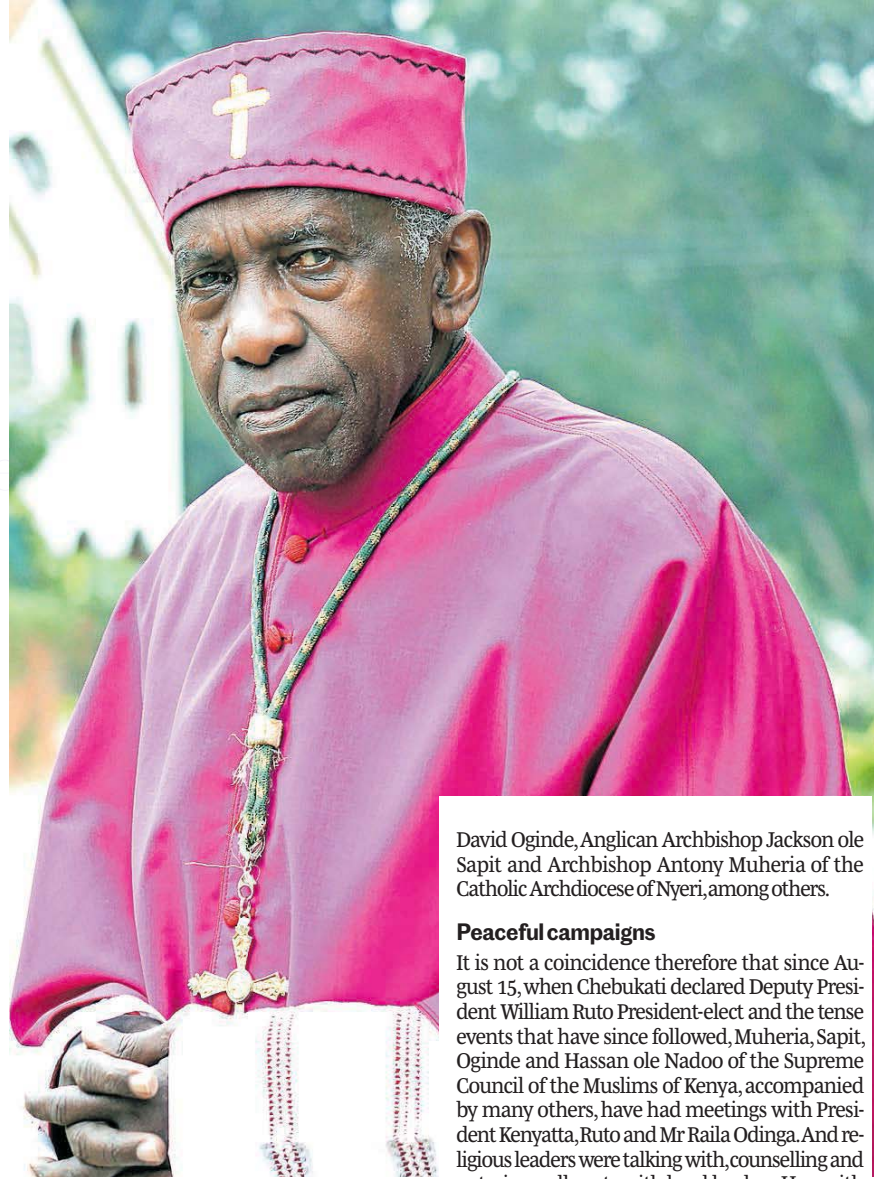
■ MORAL CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION

CHURCH ON THE CROSS

Times have changed and the political and communications landscapes have changed. But the prophetic vision and mission of the church of Christ has not changed. Is the church playing its role in promoting good governance?

• By KWENDO OPANGA

On the second night of the counting of votes in last month's General Election, a good many Kenyans were bemused to see more than a dozen men of the collar and spiritually inclined choirs at the Bomas of Kenya, the national tallying centre of the presidential poll. Studio-bound TV anchors and their reporting colleagues at the Bomas auditorium shared their disbelief. Quizzically, they wondered what the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the poll referee, was up to. Why would Chairman Wafula Chebukati & Co want to treat audiences to sermons and music, rather than serve anxious Kenyans updates of the presidential tallies from their county polling centres strewn around the country? Quick cutaways to the studios followed. Clearly, the bemused Kenyans, and TV journalists, had not been paying attention to increasingly frequent news reports from around the country in which members of the clergy, meeting under various umbrella organisations, prayed and pitched for peace to prevail in the 2022 electioneering and polling. Four nights later, on August 15, the journalists and news seeking audiences had become used to the presence of the choirs and clergy. All, including accredited party chiefs and supporters, were hungry for information. But the anxiety was more evident among the newspeople than the collected choir and the calm people of the collar. The import was unmistakable and the evidence there for all to see. Working closely under different new and old bodies, Kenya's religious leaders had been preparing themselves and their compatriots for an electoral day or night when they all needed to be calm, peaceful and united as one. And the men and women of the cloth did not address themselves



Archbishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki on July 31, 2009.

solely to their congregations or the ordinary Kenyans, they targeted Kenya's top political leadership too. Listen to Pastor Patrick Kuchio of Christ Is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), of Valley Road, Nairobi. "Religious leaders were not going to be caught flat-footed as they were by the electoral violence in 2007. They were going to be involved in electoral politics as mediators, participants, citizens, custodians and advocates of peace. They would preach to their congregations as well as dialogue with and counsel Kenya's top political leadership." Meeting with and counselling President Kenyatta and mediating between him and presidential aspirants, for example, says Kuchio, was assigned eminent leaders of the churches such as CITAM's

David Oginde, Anglican Archbishop Jackson ole Sapit and Archbishop Antony Muheria of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri, among others.

Peaceful campaigns

It is not a coincidence therefore that since August 15, when Chebukati declared Deputy President William Ruto President-elect and the tense events that have since followed, Muheria, Sapit, Oginde and Hassan ole Nadoo of the Supreme Council of the Muslims of Kenya, accompanied by many others, have had meetings with President Kenyatta, Ruto and Mr Raila Odinga. And religious leaders were talking with, counselling and entering poll pacts with local leaders. Herewith Vihiga County-based Dr Isaac Wekesa Wawire, a Bishop, lecturer and a published author: "Religious leaders in the county met poll aspirants, including Governor Wilbur Ottichilo and his challengers and talked about peace and the development of our county. We had breakfast with the gubernatorial candidates and got them to sign a peace deal, to hold peaceful campaigns, debate on TV and to respect the result of the election." And this was a deliberate international effort too. From June 16 to 18 of 2021, more than 400 religious leaders were present at Movenpick Hotel in Westlands, 3,000 others participated virtually and all came from 53 countries to talk about the role of the clergy in the just concluded General Election in Kenya. From here, the stage was set for the role Kenya's clergy have executed diligently in putting peace firmly on the agenda, on the

kenya lens

ballot or at the heart of last month's election and the electioneering before it. Listen to Kuchio again.

"We have spent hours and hours with political leaders, engaging, arguing, persuading, reassuring." So, does the prevailing wisdom that Kenya's present day clergymen have forsaken the path trodden by their fire-spitting predecessors of the 70s, 80s and 90s who constantly locked horns with the political establishment to speak for the voiceless, hold water? The names of Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Timothy Njoya, his Baptist counterpart Mutava Musyimi and departed Anglican bishops David Gitari, Henry Okullu and Alexander Muge plus Catholic Archbishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki, spring to mind. Speaking in his individual capacity, the Reverend Ernest Eshamwata, the Communications Director of the Church of God in East Africa, Kima Mission, politely but emphatically disagrees.

"Times have changed and the political and communications landscapes have changed. But the prophetic vision and mission of the church of Christ has not changed. The National Council of the Churches of Kenya, speaks, acts and advocates for us and as a church we similarly carry out our prophetic functions."

Put another way, the current religious leaders, like their illustrious predecessors above, know and believe that the church is the moral conscience of the nation. But, unlike their predecessors who fought the political establishment tooth and nail, the strategies, tools and theatres of engagement have changed. Kuchio adds to this perspective.

Fight corruption

"They (Njoya & Co) operated under a one party rule when the democratic space was diminished. The democratic space has been expanded considerably. The communications landscape was not as developed and complex as it is now. They had limited avenues for engagement. They spoke for the voiceless from their individual pulpits. Churches are speaking collectively." The two have a point. Who would you say is the speaker here? "Your desire to reduce corruption in Kenya has been compromised. There seem to be very few courageous leaders willing to be truly beyond reproach?" And here? "Corruption is on the lips of everyone, but unfortunately also in the hands of many Kenyans. Even calamity has become an opportunity to plunder the poor and fleece the nation."

These are extracts from an NCKK document titled Memorandum From Religious Leaders During an Audience With His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta With Regard to the State of the Nation. It is dated September 25, 2020 and was presented to the President at State Nairobi House four days later.

The clergy were at State House on the invitation of the President. Their words above could well have been uttered by Njoya & Co in their heyday, but it is difficult to imagine the septet above would have been invited to that hallowed address, much less allowed to lecture President Moi. Importantly, the NCKK memorandum says the gathering "represented diverse faith traditions and religions and diverse religious umbrella bodies" and represented the "moral conscience of the nation", because "a country that veers off the spirit of God or refuses to engage with moral and spiritual voices of the moment, is a country without a soul."

Summing up the role of the clergy in the 2022 General Election, Wawire says, "we did not take sides as individual churches or as members of umbrella bodies. Don't draw a line between clergy and politicians because we are all Kenyans and politicians also are worshippers. The notion that we no longer speak for the voiceless is wrong."

continued from page 9

na, who was enrolled at Mararal DEB Primary as debate continued in London on the political fate of Kenyatta. The colonial government would normally send Dr Arnold Carvalho to check the family. A July 1961 report on the Kenyattas reported that Mama Ngina was "26 weeks pregnant. Expected date of delivery November 4, 1961... could safely travel by air". By this time, the colonial government had made a decision to fly the family back to Nairobi. On August 14, 1961, Mama Ngina was flown back accompanied by a "police nursing sister" and, on October 26, she gave birth to Uhuru Kenyatta.

During the celebration of Kenya's independence the Western media was amused as "Mrs Kenyatta No 3" went to Embakasi Airport to welcome "Mrs Kenyatta No. 2" a reference to Jomo's British wife, Edna, "and both went off happily to meet their husband - Kenya's Prime Minister." As the youngest wife in a polygamous family, Mama Ngina became the most important contact as Kenyatta prepared to take over power. Her proximity to the President and how much she influenced decisions within Jomo's State House is hardly known, though African history is replete with behind-the-scenes and some overt political roles played by First Ladies.

But it was in the land transactions that followed independence that saw Mama Ngina become the target of critics. The Kenya gazette notices of the 1960s and 70s show some of the properties that the family purchased under Mama Ngina's name, or Kenyatta's two eldest sons, Peter Magana and Peter Muigai. For instance, hardly a year in power, Mama Ngina bought in 1965 1,006 acres in Dandora from Messrs Hendrik Rensburg for Sh200,000 - a colossal amount, then. With Kenyatta either busy, or in poor health, it was Mama Ngina who kept him on check. More so, she was always at her Gatundu home with the children - taking the role of mother and making sure that her children did their homework. They never disappointed.

Meanwhile, Ngina was always being targeted by the Western media. When her daughter, Jeni, was graduating with a degree in psychology from Indiana University, the Associated Press said she "led an entourage of bodyguards, ambassadors and interpreters from Nairobi to attend the graduation ceremony" and her photo was on the cover of *Afro-American*, a popular black newspaper published in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1977, the Western media accused her of involvement in ivory trade at a time when it was already banned in Kenya. But as it later emerged, it was her step-daughter Margaret Wambui's company, United Africa Corporation, an exporter of various commodities, which was the culprit. But given that Mama Ngina never fought back, such stories left her at the mercy of her detractors. Kenyatta died as Mama Ngina watched on the night of August 22, 1978. She was 45. As power slipped



President Kenyatta and Mama Ngina dance their way into the New Year at State House, Mombasa.

from her hands, she retreated to her Gatundu home, built a house in Muthaiga, and retained a residence near State House. With new tenants inside State House, Mama Ngina consolidated the Kenyatta empire as she invested in real estate, farming and hospitality industry. She also sold most of the land the Kenyattas had acquired - though was still left with huge acreage - enough to still earn the family some unsavory scrutiny.

During the reign of President Moi, Mama Ngina was only publicly seen during national day celebrations where she always took a seat at the podium or during the memorials of the late President Kenyatta. But, without any substantive office for a former First Lady, she was left on her own, with no duty. Her national profile, an image she had built for 15 years, faded slowly as she kept away from media interviews.

Before Uhuru Kenyatta waded into politics, and with her tacit approval, the house of Mama Ngina had eschewed the country's emerging multi-party politics. She kept a low profile, even as her closest friends faced the wrath of Kanu regime. Apart from the days of Kenyatta's Kanu, it is hard to know her political stand - and yet she remains a powerful political figure, with enough resources to bankroll political candidates. It was only after her son, Uhuru, was implicated in the post-election violence that Mama Ngina publicly asked for prayers. Her photo, as she prayed for her son, attested to the close connection between her and local politics.

But, interestingly, even after Uhuru won the presidency, she has kept a high profile by maintaining a low profile. Those who thought the Mama Ngina of the 70s would resurface with Uhuru got surprised. How much power she wields is only assumed. Whether she is an invisible hand can only be deduced from her interactions with body politic. Has she kept away? Certainly not.

SCIENCE & TECH



NASA: 'NEVER SEEN JUPITER LIKE THIS'

Telescope captures unprecedented views of Jupiter's northern and southern lights, and swirling polar haze. The Great Red Spot, a storm big enough to swallow the Earth, stands out brightly alongside countless smaller storms. One wide-field picture is particularly dramatic, showing the faint rings around the planet, as well as two tiny moons against a glittering background of galaxies.

• AFP

Nasa's James Webb Space Telescope has captured stunning images of the planet Jupiter showing two tiny moons, faint rings and auroras at the northern and southern poles.

"We hadn't really expected it to be this good, to be honest," said planetary astronomer Imke de Pater of the University of California, Berkeley. "It's really remarkable that we can see details on Jupiter together with its rings, tiny satellites, and even galaxies in one image," she said. De Pater headed the observations of Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, with Thierry Fouchet of the Paris Observatory. The composite images were taken with the observatory's Near-Infrared Camera (NIRCam) and were artificially colored because infrared light is not visible to the human eye.

The auroras above the northern and southern poles of Jupiter have been mapped in redder colors while the Great Red Spot, a storm bigger than Earth, appears white.

One image shows Jupiter's faint rings and its moons Amalthea and Adrastea.

Launched in December last year from French Guiana on an Ariane 5 rocket, Webb is orbiting the Sun at a distance of a million miles (1.6 million kilometers) from Earth, in a region of space called the second Lagrange point.

It took the spacecraft almost a month to reach the region, where it remains in a fixed position behind the Earth and Sun to give it a clear view of the cosmos. The Webb telescope is an international collaboration between the US space agency Nasa, the European Space Agency, and the Canadian Space Agency, involving more than 10,000 people.

Why dogs get teary-eyed when they reunite with their owners

Dog owners know the pure joy of returning home from a long trip to be greeted by their tail-wagging, uncontrollably jumping, face-licking companion.

But those ecstatic canines might be shedding more than just fur on your clothes – they might also be tearing-up, according to a new study published Monday in the journal *Current Biology*.

"We had never heard of the discovery that animals shed tears in joyful situations, such as reuniting with their owners," said Takefumi Kikusui, one of authors of the study, which he called a possible "world first." The scientists meas-

ured the amount of tears in the dogs' eyes with the widely-used Schirmer test, which consists of placing a specialized strip under the eyelids. For a baseline reading, they performed the test on dogs during a normal interaction with their owner. When dogs were reunited with their owners after five to seven hours of separation, they "significantly" increased tear production in the ensuing five minutes, the researchers found. They also discovered that the dogs' volume of tears were higher when they reunited with their owner versus other people the dog is familiar with.



africa lens

■ BLACKOUTS COMMON IN WEST AFRICAN NATION



Roadside vendors display wares at a market without electricity at Ibafo, Ogun State southwest Nigeria, on March 22. Blackouts are common in Africa's top petroleum producer, where dilapidated infrastructure often fails to distribute even insufficient electricity supplies. But extended collapses of the power grid over the last several weeks have combined with a global hike in diesel prices to create one of the country's worst recent energy crises. Many businesses rely on diesel generators to keep the lights on when power is out, and since Ukraine's crisis doubled fuel prices in Nigeria, operating costs are sky-high. PHOTO | AFP

NIGERIA IN DARKNESS

The lights are out in Africa's most populous nation. Like an elephant trudging through a field of thorns, the giant economy has been taking hits due to frequent blackouts and power rationing. Africa's top oil producer has been grappling with inadequate generation and distribution of power throughout the nation. Is it a case of sabotage or sheer incompetence?

● By MOHAMMED MOMOH and HARRY MISIKO

Thick, black, choking fumes welcome us to Kugbo furniture market on the outskirts of Nigeria's administrative capital, Abuja.

As if in a biological war zone, the exhaust fumes from generators attack the nostrils from all directions in the expansive trading centre adjacent to Nyanya town – about six kilometres from Abuja's central business district. Moments later, deafening noise from the dynamos bombard our eardrums as half of the more than 128 furniture makers swing into production.

The market's factories had gone silent for almost three days after a major blackout in Karu Urban Area, a conurbation of towns stretching into the Federal Capital Territory.

Some customers can be seen reaching for their face masks and handkerchiefs to cover their noses to avoid inhaling the offensive smoke. Their

eyes tear up as they give in to the assault from toxic chemicals in the gases.

Those who have braved the reek choke and cough intermittently as they shout at the top of their voices to communicate with furniture sellers – a group that appears immune to the din and chaos of the market. The disorder at Kugbo is a pointer of a national crisis that has gripped Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, since independence: blackouts and unstable supply.

With a Gross Domestic Product of U\$515 billion, the West African economic powerhouse has become a 'generator nation', with almost every home, neighbourhood, shop, school, hospital and factory running on generators.

Villages, markets, towns and cities, including the commercial capital Lagos, go without electricity supply from the national grid for days; even weeks. And whenever it is restored, power lasts for at most four hours a day, with the national electricity distributor, Transmission Com-

pany of Nigeria (TCN), load-shedding – switching on some regions while switching off others.

Like an elephant trudging through a field of thorns, the giant economy has been taking hits due to blackouts and power rationing. It has been leaking and limping, investors and experts say. At Kugbo market, for instance, carpenters stay out of business for weeks due to lack of power and wood, and the high cost of diesel to run their rickety generators. "Now we hardly complete a set of furniture in two weeks. It used to take at most two days to produce the same. We find it difficult to buy diesel because of the cost,

...Continued on page 27

Power lasts for at most four hours a day, with the national electricity distributor, Transmission Company of Nigeria, load-shedding – switching on some regions while switching off others.

africa lens

You cannot survive without a generator in Nigeria



Young boys work on a generators at a workshop in the Bulabulin area of Maiduguri, on February 1, 2021. Residents of the northeast Nigerian city Maiduguri struggled with a power blackout for weeks after jihadists blew up supply lines, causing water shortages and disrupting businesses and daily life. The attack was the third time in a month that the IS-linked Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group have plunged the entire city of three million into darkness for days by blowing up transmission lines. PHOTO | AFP

...Continued from page 26

which we find difficult to transfer to customers," says Chucks Ude, owner of Big Time Furniture.

The cost of diesel has shot through the roof, with a litre going for N800 (\$1.93) from N340 (\$0.8) a year ago. Petrol cost is not only beyond the reach of many factory and machine owners, but is also scarce, with filling stations going for days with dry pumps.

Okolo Anslam, CEO of OK Furniture, says shortage of wood has persisted because sawmillers do not have electricity to saw and plane logs. At Akin Ola Sawmilling Company, working hours have been reduced from 12 to between four and six hours a day as the owner seeks to maximise the benefits of expensive diesel to run heavy-duty generators. "You can see the large quantity of logs in the yard. We can neither saw them to size nor plane them for customers," says Akin Olosebikan, CEO of the company. "We service both furniture makers and builders but now we cannot meet orders."

Director-General of Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muda Yusuf blames the electricity crisis for increased cost of doing business and dwindling foreign investment.

"The cost incurred to provide alternative sources of power is, perhaps, the biggest single factor impeding the growth of industrialisation. This issue has made our industries very uncom-

petitive in recent times." The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cited lack of access and unreliable power supply as key constraints to doing business in Nigeria, putting the annual economic loss at about \$29 billion. An IMF report says that despite being a major producer of oil and gas, Nigeria is the country with the largest energy access deficit in the world.

"Power distribution companies lose money on the electricity they receive as part of it is lost to poor distribution infrastructure and power theft, while another part is lost to customers not paying their bills," the report reads in part. "Six in 10 of registered customers are not metered, and their electricity bills are not transparent and clear. This contributes to resistance to pay electricity bills." The situation has been getting worse in the country that is the sixth largest oil producer in the world, with at least 120 million of its 200 million people lacking access to the national grid.

The grid, the property of TCN that aggregates

2005

When the Power Sector Reform Act in Nigeria was enacted. It broke the monopoly of the power holding company into 18 business units; 11 distribution companies; 23 generating companies and one transmission company.

and distributes all the power generated by the various companies (GenCos), has collapsed six times this year, with the latest – on July 20 – throwing the whole country in total darkness.

Numerous power sector reforms have not helped the situation despite the creation of 23 power generating companies managed by independent power providers and the Niger Delta Holding Company.

The 1999 Public Enterprises (Privatisation and Commercialisation) decree changed the National Electricity Power Authority (Nepa) to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) for privatisation. The Power Sector Reform Act was enacted in 2005 and unbundled the public monopoly of Power Holding Company of Nigeria into 18 business units; 11 distribution companies; 23 generating companies and one transmission company.

These reforms have failed to light up Nigerian houses and have only brought more darkness across the country, thus making importation of generators booming business.

Whereas the country's average power requirement is 40,000 megawatts, these companies currently generate less than 5,000 megawatts. This has left millions of Nigerians to their devices, and almost everyone is turning to the generator. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB) Nigeria director Ebrima Faal, Nigerians spent about \$14 billion in 2021 on generators and fuel.

global lens

■ CONSERVATIVE PARTY PICKS NEW LEADER

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss reacts as she answers questions while taking part in a Conservative Party Hustings event in Birmingham, on August 23.
PHOTO | AFP



BATTLE FOR BRITAIN

The Conservatives who will be choosing the next Prime Minister of the UK are older, whiter and more likely to be male than the national averages. Nearly two-thirds are men, compared to an almost even gender split across the UK. Will it be Truss or Sunak?

● AFP

Liz Truss has emerged as the clear favourite to succeed Boris Johnson as leader of the ruling Conservative party and UK prime minister, using her political experience to pull ahead of challenger Rishi Sunak. Sunak helped to spark the contest after resigning in opposition to a series of govern-

ment scandals, prompting others to follow and Johnson to step down. But although considered a better public speaker, he has come under fire for clinging to fiscal orthodoxy to tackle the economic crisis and hamstrung by his image as a wealthy technocrat. Sunak, who would become Britain's first prime minister of colour, has also faced accusations of treachery for bringing down the Tories' Brexit hero

Johnson. Truss meanwhile has doggedly hammered home a direct and consistent message, promising massive tax cuts, and has shied away from criticising Johnson. "She's a better politician," said John Curtice, a political scientist at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. "If you ask me what Liz Truss's campaign was

...Continued on page 28

global lens

Truss favourite to be next UK premier as Conservatives vote

...Continued from page 27

about I will immediately say to you: 'a tax cut not a handout. Very clear,' he told AFP. "There is no strapline for Sunak, nothing." For Curtice, Truss has effectively conveyed "traditional Conservative messages" to Tory members while Sunak has been more nuanced. "It's also a bit of a lecture," he said, assessing that he has come across as "a wee bit brittle" under pressure. "You can see that she's been in the game for longer," he added. Truss, 47, has described her ascent towards the top of British politics as a "journey" that has seen her criticised for being ambitiously opportunistic. She comes from a left-wing family and initially joined the centrist Liberal Democrats before jumping ship to the right-wing Conservatives. She became MP for the South West Norfolk constituency in eastern England in 2010, surviving revelations of an affair that almost cost her the nomination. Since 2012 she has held a series of ministerial posts in the education, finance and departments as well as a difficult spell in justice. In 2016, she campaigned for the UK to remain in the European Union but quickly became one of its



strongest supporters when Britons voted for Brexit. When the UK left the EU, Johnson put her in charge of negotiating new free trade deals before appointing her as foreign secretary last year.

In the role, she took on the controversial task of trying to overhaul differences with Brussels about post-Brexit trade in Northern Ireland.

Like Johnson, she has talked tough on Russia and given unwavering backing for Ukraine.

Truss's dress sense and photo opportunities — posing in a tank in Estonia and wearing a fur hat in Moscow — have earned her comparisons to Tory icon Margaret Thatcher. Her sometimes stiff style has become visibly more relaxed and allies have sought to soften her image, revealing her love of karaoke and socialising. "For a party that's gone in quite a populist direction in recent years, she's been able to present herself as more authentic, more ordinary than Rishi Sunak, who is all too easily presented as part of the global elite," said Tim Bale, from Queen Mary University of London.

"Like Boris Johnson, she is keen on the idea that there is some kind of elite that has to be countered and she sets herself up as being outside the establishment, despite having been in government for eight years." Sunak, 42, the grandson of Indian immigrants, grew up as the son of a doctor and a pharmacist in Southampton, on England's south coast. He attended the prestigious fee-paying Winchester College school, then Oxford University.

2016

Britain's 2016 referendum saw voters split 52-48 percent in favour of leaving the European Union. But Conservative members skew far more towards Brexit.

'Hasta la vista, baby...' What next for the 'Terminator' Boris Johnson?

● AFP

Following a spectacular fall from grace and power, speculation is rife about what outgoing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will do next.

Will he plot a comeback from the backbenches in parliament or cash in and wreak revenge as a political pundit? Johnson, 58, famously

signed off his final performance as prime minister in the House of Commons by telling MPs: "Hasta la vista, baby". He may as well have used another line from the "Terminator" films — "I'll be back" — as it only fuelled speculation that he has unfinished political business. Allies said he wants to lead the Conservative party at the next gen-



eral election, due in two years time, even though a new leader will be crowned on September 5. "I suspect he's not totally given up on the idea of a comeback," politics professor Tim Bale told AFP. "I suspect friends of Boris Johnson... will be talking to journalists off the record all the time and criticising, albeit not openly, his successor."

global lens

■ UNPRECEDENTED MOVE BY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

● AFP

The stunning FBI raid on Donald Trump's palatial Florida home was triggered by a review of 15 boxes of records previously surrendered by the former US president that contained top secret information — including about human intelligence sources.

The FBI, in the affidavit used to justify the August 8 raid of Mar-a-Lago, said it was conducting a criminal investigation into "improper removal and storage of classified information" and "unlawful concealment of government records."

The heavily-redacted FBI affidavit released on Friday laid out the grounds for the authorisation by a Florida judge of an unprecedented raid on the home of a former president, a move which ignited a political firestorm in a bitterly divided nation.

Trump, who is weighing another White House run in 2024, accused the Justice Department under Democratic President Joe Biden of conducting a "witch hunt" and said the judge "should never have allowed the Break-in of my home."

According to the affidavit, the FBI opened the investigation after the National Archives and Records Administration (Nara) received 15 boxes of records in January 2022 that had been improperly removed from the White House and taken to Mar-a-Lago.

It said sensitive National Defence Information was among the records recovered including 67 documents marked as confidential, 92 as secret and 25 as top secret.

Among the documents was intelligence information received from "clandestine human sources" a classification which can include spies and informants and is among the most tightly-held of government secrets.

"Highly classified records were unfolded, intermixed with other records and otherwise improperly identified," according to the affidavit. "Several of the documents also contained what appears to be (Trump's) handwritten notes."

In June, according to the affidavit, the Justice Department informed a Trump lawyer that Mar-a-Lago was "not authorised to store classified information."

When they raided Trump's estate in Palm Beach two months later, FBI



Former US President Donald Trump participates in a roundtable with women small business owners at the White House in Washington, DC, March 27, 2017. PHOTO | AFP

THE GREAT TRUMP RAID

Bold move takes America into uncharted territory as FBI conducts a criminal investigation into 'improper removal and storage of classified information' and 'unlawful concealment of government records': Republican leader accuses US President of conducting a 'witch hunt'..

agents seized a further stash of documents marked "Top Secret," "Secret" and "Confidential."

In a May 25, 2022 letter to the Justice Department released along with the affidavit, a lawyer for Trump said classified information may have been "unknowingly included among the boxes brought to Mar-a-Lago by the movers."

The lawyer, Evan Corcoran, said Trump had "readily and voluntarily" cooperated with Nara's request that records be returned and that

Highly classified records were unfolded, intermixed with other records and otherwise improperly identified. Several of the documents also contained what appears to be (Trump's) handwritten notes.

said any investigation should not "involve politics."

Corcoran asserted that a president has the "absolute authority to declassify documents" and the "criminal statute that governs the unauthorised removal and retention of classified documents or material does not apply to the president."

Government lawyers had opposed the release of the affidavit but the judge ordered it unsealed with redactions the Justice Department said were necessary to protect an ongoing investigation involving national security.

The redactions in the 38-page affidavit included, for example, the removal of the names of what the Justice Department said were a "significant number of civilian witnesses." "If witnesses' identities are exposed, they could be subjected to harms

including retaliation, intimidation, or harassment, and even threats to their physical safety," the Justice Department said.

The search warrant, which was personally approved by Attorney General Merrick Garland, authorised the FBI to search the "45 office" — a reference to the 45th US president's private office at Mar-a-Lago — and storage rooms.

It said the probe was related to "willful retention of national defense information," an offense that falls under the Espionage Act, and potential "obstruction of a federal investigation." In addition to investigations in New York into his business practices, Trump faces legal scrutiny for his efforts to overturn the results of the November 2020 election, and for the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.

O B I T

■ BROUGHT US-SOVIET RELATIONS OUT OF A DEEP FREEZE

ADIOS GORBACHEV!

There are many people in Russia who criticised him for the way he governed the country. He wasn't perfect. No leader is. But this was a man who cared deeply about averting a Third World War. And he cared deeply about his family.

● By STEVE ROSENBERG, BBC

It's March 2013 and I'm interviewing Mikhail Gorbachev at his Moscow think tank. After half an hour the former Soviet leader announces 'Vsyo!' ('That's your lot!'). He gets up, but appears in no hurry to say goodbye. So, we continue to chat. Gorbachev has just published the latest volume of his memoirs, which he's dedicated to his late wife Raisa. She died of leukaemia in 1999. They'd been married for nearly 46 years and from the tender way in which he talks about her it's clear that Gorbachev misses her deeply. He shows me the book. Page one features an entry from Gorbachev's diary, a year after Raisa's death: "My life has lost its principal meaning," he writes. "I have never had such an acute feeling of loneliness." But Gorbachev's eyes light up as he points out pictures of Raisa in the book: the holiday snaps, the family photos, pictures of her accompanying him on official trips abroad. And his two favourite images: matching portraits of Mikhail and Raisa before their wedding day in 1953. They look like Hollywood film stars.

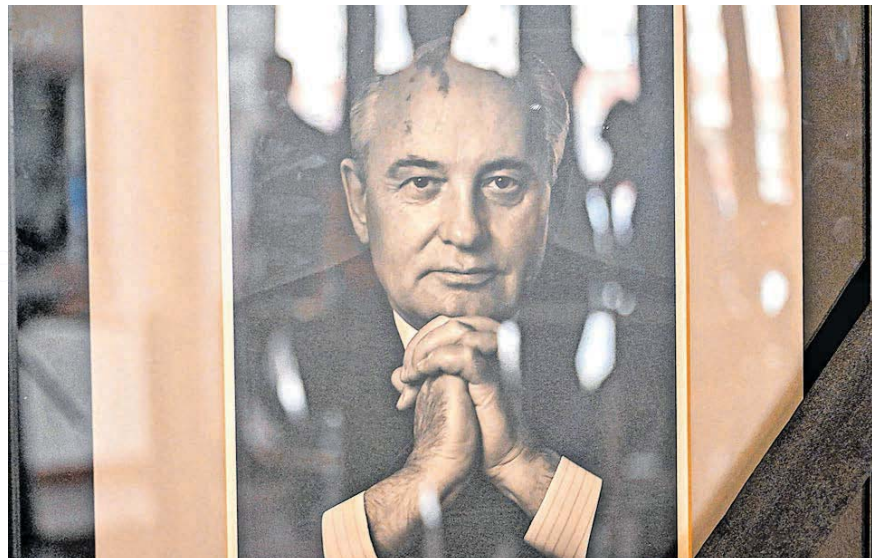
While Gorbachev and I have been looking through the book, our camera operator Rachel has been examining the grand piano in the corner of the room. "Can you play that?" she asks Gorbachev. "No need to, it plays itself!" he replies.

We all laugh. But he isn't joking. Gorbachev walks over to it, presses a button and the piano keys burst into life all by themselves. "That's Chopin," he says and, with a cheeky grin, he mimes like a maestro and pretends to be playing the music himself. Then he flicks a switch and the instrument falls silent. "Of course, you can also play it like a normal piano," he points out. "Can any of you play?" he asks. I tell him I can. "Please, sit down, play something," Gorbachev says.

I didn't expect that. I have to think fast. What should I play? What tune would a former superpower supremo appreciate? Back in the USSR, perhaps? Or Thanks for the Memory? I play safe and launch into the Russian classic Moscow Nights. And, as I'm playing, something even more unexpected happens. Gorbachev starts to sing along. And he's good... in tune. We get to the end and I ask him which other songs he likes. Gorbachev requests the Soviet wartime melody Dark is the Night. It tells of a soldier on the frontline who is thinking about his dear wife back home. "In the dark night," sings Gorbachev, "I know that you, my love, are awake," "Sitting by the crib you're secretly wiping away a tear," "How I love your deep gentle eyes," "How I want to press my lips to yours."

Collapse of the Soviet Union

Then, the man who helped to end the Cold War smiles: a broad, beautiful smile. "Raisa loved my



A portrait of the last leader of the Soviet Union and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev, displayed in his memory in his office. PHOTO | AFP

singing," he says. In that one short sentence, Gorbachev has revealed more about himself than in a whole interview. There are many people in Russia who criticised him for the way he governed the country; who blamed him for the collapse of the Soviet Union. But after those words — and that smile — he came across as a warm hearted, decent man. I first met Gorbachev in May 1996, more than four years after the demise of the USSR. He was attempting a political comeback and challenging Boris Yeltsin in Russia's presidential election.

I was excited to meet the man who, a decade earlier, had inspired me to take Russian at university. In the mid-1980s, Gorbachev had burst on to the political stage with his calls for perestroika (reconstruction) and glasnost (openness). He was the kind of Soviet leader the world had never seen. He was young, relaxed. He seemed determined to build better relations with the West and to reinvigorate the stagnant Soviet economy. By the time he left office, the Soviet Union no longer existed. In the 1996 election, Gorbachev would receive just 0.51 per cent of the vote. He had lost power — and had failed to regain it. But there was one thing Gorbachev still had: his sense of humour.

The following month the cameraman I'd worked with on the Gorbachev trip completed his Moscow attachment. Victor Cooper was a larger-than-life Texan who made everyone around him smile. He hadn't picked up much Russian, but one of the few sentences he'd learnt was a belter: "Samoe glavnoe eto kooritsa!" Which means: "The most impor-

tant thing is chicken!" It came in handy. Whenever Victor got pulled over by the Moscow traffic police, he'd wind down the window of his Suburban and declare in Russian with a big Texan twang: "The most important thing is chicken!" The dumbfounded officer would normally wave him on. At work I was given the task of producing a "goodbye video" for Victor containing goodwill messages from friends and colleagues in Moscow. On the off chance, I called Gorbachev's assistant.

Would President Gorbachev consider contributing a video message? The response was swift: "He'll do it." With another cameraman, I drove to Gorbachev's office.

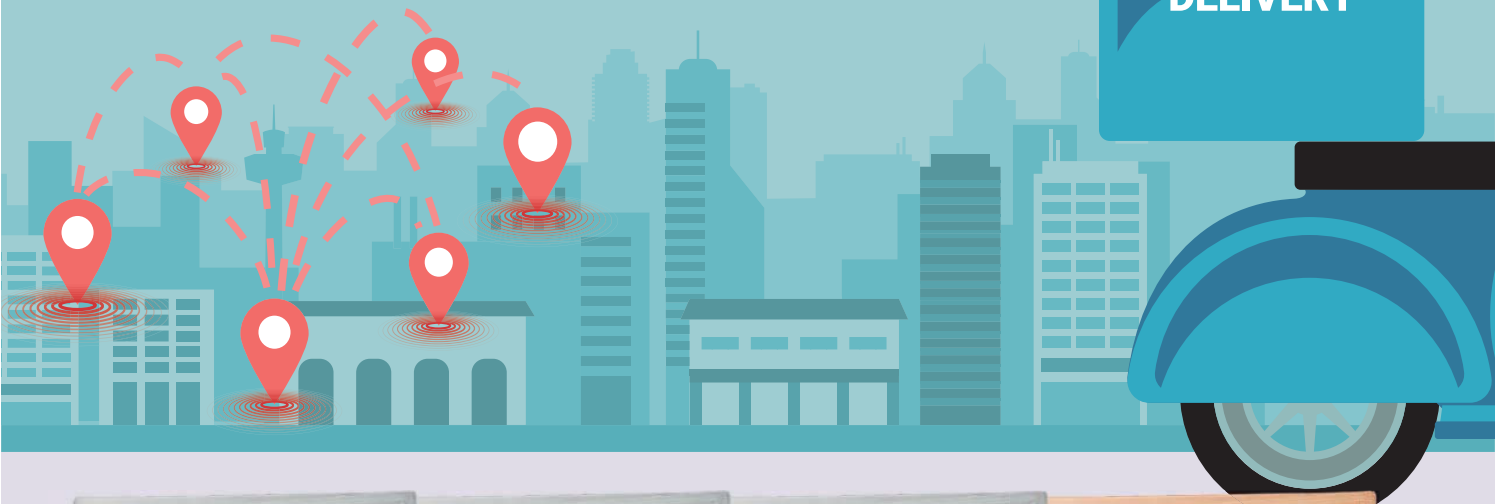
"What would you like me to say?" he asked. I mentioned Victor's poultry knowledge of Russian. Gorbachev turned to the camera and recorded a heartfelt monologue, which concluded with these words: "Victor, as you well know, the most important thing is chicken!"

I had to pinch myself. Gorbachev, formerly one of the most powerful men on the planet, had just sung the praises of poultry. What a good sport. When Victor saw the video, he was astonished and deeply moved. It was a very different Gorbachev I encountered in 2019. This would be the fifth and final interview he gave me. There was a sadness to him I hadn't seen before. As if he sensed that his achievements were being rolled back; that Russia was re-embracing authoritarianism. Gorbachev wasn't perfect. No leader is. But this was a man who cared deeply about averting a Third World War.

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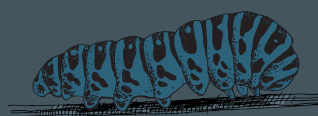
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