

VOL. 17

# CITYBITE

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## FESTAC

### CLOSE WITH THE VILLAGER.

City Bite Magazine had a conversation with FESTAC AFRICA Fashion Ambassador Villager Salami Olamyde Mohammed Ojuinu popularly known as Villager Ojuinu. In the interview, Mr. Olamyde reconstructs his story from a young age, his journey in school and how he encountered FESTAC AFRICA team... [PG 1-3](#)

### 'THE AMERICAN DOCTOR'

Get a critical analysis of the implications of President William Ruto's frequent trips abroad, including the controversial and extravagant visit to the United States... [PG 8](#)

*Villager Ojuinu*





## Raila's mixed signals, Ruto's dilemma and Gachagua's plot to consolidate the Mountain



With his A.U. Commission Chairship aspirations, the long-term opposition chief seems to be well en route to exiting Kenya's political scene, but a couple of statements or more tell of a man yet ready to hang his boots. In basic terms, Mr. Odinga could, after all, be here to stay. Regardless, the dynamics at play that leaves a lot of questions to be asked, rather than hints to be picked. First of all, it was just weeks ago when Mr. Odinga met with both President William Ruto and his Ugandan counterpart H.E Kaguta Museveni, after which the former...

### PHOTO OF THE MONTH



FESTAC AFRICA Chairman Eng. Yinka Abioye (centre) poses for a photograph with Dr. Prakash Heda (left) and Amb. Mohammad Usama Al Syansa (right) during the second edition of the Lake Region Investment Forum held on Thursday 6th June 2024 at Bomaas of Kenya, Nairobi.

### EURO 2024 BEGINS EN VOGUE



This year's Euro tournament has proven to be the most entertaining for ages. In the first 12 games, 34 goals have been scored with 12 of them coming from outside the box. Only Croatia has, among the 12 teams failed to register a win while Germany have enjoyed a dream start.

## CLOSE WITH FESTAC AFRICA FASHION AMBASSADOR THE 'VILLAGER'



FESTAC AFRICA fashion Ambassador Salamy Mohammed Olamyde Ojuinu 'Villager'

The continued westernization of African ways of doing things has corrupted some of the most important aspects of life in the continent, among them fashion. Regardless of the meteoric dominance of Western fashion in Africa and the ubiquitous notion that the exotic way is the path to a better future for the continent, a Nigerian fashion designer artist manager and Immediate Former Private Secretary to the Former Commissioner for Home Affairs/Environmental Sanitation/Culture/Tourism Osun State [ Hon Adebisi Simon Obawale]

Salami Olamyde has dedicated himself to creating awareness on the importance of preserving our indigenous fabric and traditional wear, by establishing his own brand, which according to the man himself is the rarest fashion brand in the whole world.

In this interview, Mr. Olamyde recounts the story of his beginnings, his life experiences, motivation behind his brand and why Africa's development should be pedestalled on intrinsic motivation, rather than adopting foreign ways of living.

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I am not a populist, but I totally agree with the one man, one vote, one shilling conversation.

## IT WAS A DAY TO REMEMBER FOR THE CITY UNDER THE SUN, AS ENG. YINKA ABIOYE LED HIS TEAM TO A SUCCESSFUL INVESTMENT FORUM AT THE BOMAS OF KENYA



From Left, Lake Region Economic Bloc C.E.O Mr. Victor Nyagaya, Elgon Group C.E.O Mercy Wamoto, Kisumu County CECM for Culture Ms Beatrice Odongo, LREB Liaison officer Abigail Koga., FESTAC AFRICA C.E.O Grace Mumo, Suzanna Owiyo and FESTAC AFRICA Chairman Eng. Yinka Abioye, pose for a photograph at Bomas of Kenya media room during the second edition of the LREB Investment Forum. held on 6th June 2024.

For the very first time in his life-time, a skinny young boy from the paisible villages of Siaya County was sat at the famous Bomas of Kenya, for a high profile investment forum, which was to bring together millionaire Chief Executive Officers and other over-achieving luminaries from different disciplines and parts of the country.

It was on Thursday, the 6th of June 2024, a generally humid and overcast day; with little to completely no sunlight. It was cold, something Osure is not usually comfortable with, but the color in the room, gave him a glimpse of hope- that the day was going to be a brilliant one, regardless.

From a distance, Ms. Grace Mumo, the award winning Chief Executive Officer of FESTAC AFRICA could be seen purposefully moving up and down to ensure that everything was in situ for a smooth occasion. She was donning a red African attire, as if to emphasize her confidence on the success of the day ahead. Red, is the symbol of power and passion, and truthfully so, her eyes was full of passion for everything that was going on. She had spent a whole week, with sleepless nights, preparing her team for the day. Indeed, it came a moment she was to taste the fruits of her resilience.

## Thailand's Strategic Move: Joining the BRICS Alliance



By Carol Nyagaki

Thailand recently announced its intention to join the BRICS alliance, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This strategic move marks a significant shift in Thailand's foreign policy, aiming to bolster its economic standing and geopolitical influence. The decision is driven by several factors and comes with potential benefits and challenges that will shape Thailand's future relations with global powers like the United States and the European Union.



# UP AND CLOSE WITH FESTAC AFRICA FESTIVAL FASHION AMBASSADOR VILLAGER OJUINU

## Who is Olamyde?

First of all, I stand on an existent protocol by saying that as an artist manager, I always go by the naturality of an artist myself. but I just don't practice it so the protocol that I am going to stand on is a protocol of realness. I am Villager Salami Olamyde Mohammed Ojuinu. I was born in Nigeria in the year 1983. My origins are in a place called Ikoyi. Right there we have police barracks. My father was a police officer, so I spent a decent part of my childhood in the barracks. I attended St. Georges Primary School in Ikoyi, Lagos after which I proceeded to Ireti Grammar School Akanbi Danmole St, Ikoyi, where I had my Junior Secondary school education, specifically JSS1- JSS3. I then left to complete my senior secondary school studies at Methodist Boys High School Broadstreet, Lagos, Nigeria.

However, due to my love for football, I, at some point dropped out of Methodist Boys High School at SS2. This was also partly influenced by my passion for modelling. I then travelled to South Africa where I stayed for 10 years. While there, I was privileged to study a course on Exercise Science and Sports Nutrition Health from a prestigious Fitness Professional Association Academy for a Diploma certificate. Thereafter, I went back to Nigeria in order to complete my West African Senior School Certificate Examination at Ansar-Ud-Deen High School in Iseyin Oyo State. From there I joined the University of Ibadan, where I studied history and Diplomatic Studies.

In terms of religion, I am from a Muslim background as I was born into a strong Muslim family. However, when I was in South Africa, I converted to Christianity for five years, then reverted to Islam, because that is where my identity and definition really lies. I also have a real sense of Ifa religion which is our traditional Yoruba religion. It encompasses the religious practices of our forefathers. This was influenced by the pride I take in my blackness and the beauty of our indigenous belief systems. I am uncomfortable with the way white people denigrate our original religious beliefs, when in real sense there is actually nothing bad about it. So, yes, in a real sense, I appreciate the principles of both Islam and Ifa religion.

Interestingly, Ifa is practised mostly in Brazil, by the Bahia community or Afro-Brazilians. It is also practised in some parts of the United States like Kansas City, Ohio and New Orleans, where there are black people, among whom some are Babalawos. Babalawo is a spiritual title denoting a high priest in our religion which also spreads in other parts of Africa and the world like Sierra Leone and among the Japanese.

Back to my family story, it is important to mention that I was born into a polygamous family and among twelve other siblings. My father had a daughter before meeting my mother, and from my mother's side of the family I am one son among four sisters. Four of my sisters live in the United States while my immediate younger sister who is a politician and I live in Nigeria.

In a nutshell, I have had a life to live, so full of educative experiences but of importance is that I am motivated by naturality, and I do not appreciate anything that is unnatural.

## BABALAWO

A spiritual title that denotes a high priest of the Ifa oracle



## What does Olamyde do?

I am a couturier, an African clothing fabric investor, a high profile festival consultant, an Aso-Ofi Weaver and a Yoruba Cultural Ambassador. After my studies, during which I also had a short course on human resource management, I started doing modelling work, sports fitness training, played basket ball and football for some time but then at a point I developed interest in other things. My body was communicating to me that I needed to venture into something new. My inner energy was tired of it all, but then I discovered a new passion, which I am glad to be practicing now which is culture and tourism. When I got back to Nigeria, I was appointed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Oshun State as Private Secretary to the commissioner of Culture and Tourism. I spent three years there then resigned. At this point, I still had one full year left for my tenure to end. I then started working with Inspire Africa Connect which happens to be the carrier for FESTAC. FESTAC was founded in 1966 in Dakar Senegal. After 11 years, Nigeria hosted it, then after 45 full years, no other country co-hosted it, then it was revived by Inspire Africa Connect. The third edition of FESTAC was then successfully conducted in Zanzibar in 2022 and in 2023, it was hosted in Arusha and now we are in Kisumu, preparing for FESTAC 2024. That is the point at which my life as Villager Ojuinu stands.



FESTAC AFRICA Chairman Eng. Yinka Abioye (Left) poses for a photograph with an attendee of the FESTAC Festival 2022 in Zanzibar.

Tell us the background of your nickname the Villager?

I know that it is such an unusual nick-name. People ask me that question every other time. But what I can say is that my nick-name started in a very simple way, and that it was God's will for me to have it because I had other names that I was assigned to and other nick-names that people used to refer to me with. But trust me, people have grown to love the name villager. It is, in fact, in simple terms my brand and to a decent extent my identity. It is what it is because I happened to work for the government at some point like I mentioned before. In Osun state where I used to work there is a place called Artist Village inside the grove. But before I accepted the government job, I was an artist manager, like I said before. Most of the artists I managed were working in that artist village. I, therefore would always go there, give them jobs and bring international buyers for their artworks. As such, they fell in love with my persuasion and my ways of doing things. Additionally, the artist village was neither properly built nor branded, and therefore I was fighting for them to be more visible and appreciated. I wanted them to be a cultural hub and like the headquarter of culture in that State, which is what an artist village should be, and by the way, it has always been my wish that in every country I go to, there should be an artist Village in the center of that particular state or anywhere, because art is a mode of communicating ways of life.

In that artist village, they used to add the prefix villager to their own names. So, as we bonded, they refused to call me honorable, as all government officials are referred to in Nigeria. And I loved their point of view because deep inside my conscience, I know very well that the titles, were just like a yard-stick. I wanted something permanent and long-lasting. Something that will go with me into my grave. To me, the sobriquet Villager will be permanent. Its essence will always be pure for me because for a long time, I have worked with local and indigenous communities, and I know their remotest of pains and I feel them. So, in essence, I carry their body and they carry mine. It is, in fact an open stereotype that villagers or anyone called a villager is of low class, but for me, as far as I am concerned, there is a lot of beauty in being a villager.

“The titles of Ambassador, Honorable and what have you were mere yard-sticks for me. I wanted something real, pure and permanent and as such, Villager is the nick-name that will last with me to my grave.”

VILLAGER OJUINU

Elaborate further on your work as an artist and an artist manager.

When I was growing up, art was my favorite subject. I could make a lot of stuff and therefore, I had to make a choice on whether to become a visual artist, a sesame kind of artist and all that. However, deep inside of me, what I wanted was more of something that fit in with my persuasion and who I am as a fitness advisor, a nutritional guru and fashion enthusiast as well. Therefore, I was torn between me weaving Aso Ofi or me becoming a visual artist and I looked everything and made a decision based on the fact that there were way less people doing the Aso Ofi and I needed to support them and help them understand that they are



not all alone. But that was not a limiting factor for me because I still, to this moment support visual artists. Anyways, that is how I chose to become a weaver and to day, as we speak, I own a brand, which is one of the most rarest brands in Africa, and by extension the world. The brand is yet to break to the market but trust me, It'sWhatItIs . It is only a matter of days, so I will not go into it' s details.

## What is Aso Ofi?

Aso Ofi is a botanical name for a rare indigenous fabric found in the South West of Nigeria in 1720 which is pre-dominantly inhabited by the Yoruba people. There are two pronunciation for it. Majority refer to it as Aso Oke, but there is a significance in paying attention to the difference. When you say aso oke, we from the South West refer to people from Elu Oke as the people from Iseyin/Saki/ Kajola/Ijemba

Those are the people from Elu Oke and if they keep using the word aso oke, then you are neglecting the people from Ede,Ondo, Kwara, Benue, Kogi,Plateau to Kano and as well as parts of Ghana call it kente and Burkina Faso refer it as Dan Fani So if you use the word Aso Oke, you are saying that Cloth from "Up Town ", the cloth from the people that live Up town places, and you are neglecting other people. So I went deep into it, fell in love with it and realized that there is a more botanical name for it which is Aso-Ofi meaning.

Aso ni inu Ofi which simply means a Cloth Woven in the loom It makes more sense for you to call it Aso-Ofi.Aso Ofi was originally discovered since 1722. Then, with is important to note that Yoruba people form roughly 80-90 million of the Nigerian population alone and in Nigeria there is no function, formal or informal that will happen without people donning Aso-Ofi.All the elites, the wealthy, the kings and all the high-ranking people in the South West wear it, because it is seen as a regalia for all high-end occasions.

But then I looked at it and remembered my top-model days and I understand how to perch colors brilliantly and that is how I chose to venture into being a \*Couturist\* . I then took my jeans, took its pattern and started making them out of Aso-Ofi and the outcome is PriceLess, which made me go for more research into it, which also made me discover that unlike jeans fabric that can last for a maximum of one thousand years, Aso-Ofi can taste the time of four thousand years and more. This influenced me into pan-Africanism because I established a deeper connection with my work and realized that it had a deeper meaning than what I thought. I then started making caps, jackets/pants and among other really amazing products, bags. From there, as they always say, the rest is history.

## What is the motivation behind your choices in art and fabric?

First of all, you know and need to understand that for me, the three main dimensions of life are food, shelter, and clothing. For me, I am motivated by naturality and love for it, as I mentioned before. I could not consider weaving a waste of time, and therefore, I took advantage of the naturality of aso ofi and made peace with the fact that for me to build a brand that can break into the market, I have to earn it by sheer hard work. If you look at life in the perspective of the aforementioned dimensions, you will appreciate, like me, the fact that fashion is life. There are very few aspects of living that are not directly affected or influenced by fashion. If you are not fashionable, you are less peaceful and to be fashionable, you do not have to be a wealthy person.

As a model, I fell in love with the finer details of fashion and I realized that as a Yoruba native I am obliged to make people understand that for one to be a king, he must wear the robe and look big. I therefore tried to reduce the same outfit in a more commercial way, so that one can get jeans, jackets and many other varied stuff out of it. In a nutshell, the concept of aso ofi was watered down to create all sorts of outfits that can be worn by people from all walks of life. This way, to me, I am giving back to society.

## What made you drop out of school?

I did not drop out from school for the sake of it. I got so indulged in playing football. It was always what I had in mind at my salad age. Every time I was dropped at school, whenever I looked around and saw my parents vehicle disappearing, I chose, instead to go play football. The habit grew on me to a point where I almost got called up for the under-17 National Football Team in Nigeria. I realized I was so good in it, but then my parents were not ready for it and the confusion that it came with messed everything up and stultified my education.

## How did you leverage back to school?

When I dropped out from school stayed away from my parents, so I lived with my sister, who happens to be an educationist by nature. Day by day, she reminded me of the benefits of education and wanted me to go back to school but then I was hesitant. I explored opportunities in modelling, and in the process got the opportunity to travel to South Africa, where I further fell in love with modelling. Throughout my stay there, I was in between football and modelling. The modelling gave me more money

as I got a lot of work, thanks to my fit body. So, generally, it is modelling that put food on my table. But then I realized that I was not getting younger, and I needed education, so I chose to go back to school. As I went on studying, I realized that education was not as boring as I thought. I performed exceptionally well in my first Diploma Course at the university of Pretoria. I then flew back to Nigeria to continue with my studies and I am still continuing and not planning to stop getting education any time soon. Currently, as you know I am pursuing a course in History and Diplomatic Studies. As soon as I am done with it, I will be headed for my masters degree. Noteworthy also is the fact that I am a strong pan-Africanist and I look forward to completing my education in Africa. I want to study in different Universities across different countries in Africa. I have been to West Africa, I want to do my masters in East Africa and my PhD in Southern Africa. In simple terms, I look at pan-Africanism from that perspective.

## Tell me about your journey with Inspire Africa Connect

Working with the government was an eye opener for me. I could package my fashion ideas into an outfit, which I'd wear to office. Even my governor was amazed by my work and was curious to know more and that inspired me. After working for the government, someone from the African Union-ECOSOC came to the office and as I hosted the meeting, the man from A.U kept his eyes fixed on me throughout the encounter. Afterwards, he called me and inquired my role description in the office. He then told me that I should be working with them, rather than be here.

He then started to delegate some little tasks to me and I always did my best. As such, he kept giving me more tasks, until one day he decided he would introduce me to someone who, according to him would pay me the type of money that I deserve. I decided to listen to him, and he introduced me to Eng. Yinka Abioye. At the time, who made me aware of there was a festival in Nigeria called NAFEST, which, like a mini-FESTAC appreciates Nigeria's diverse culture. During the festival which took place in Ekiti state, Eng. Yinka Abioye and Prof. Wale Apata called me and we met. After witnessing my work, they approached me and we had a face to face conversation, during which I introduced myself to them and after only a week, I started working with Inspire Africa Connect, which is the platform that leads the planning of FESTAC AFRICA Festival.

From 2022 to date, I am privileged to be their director for fashion and art exhibition.

## What is FESTAC?

FESTAC is the Festival for Blacks and Arts. It is the biggest cultural heritage festival on the African continent if not the world. It was started in 1966 in Dakar when Leopold Senghor was the president of Senegal. After 11 years, Nigeria hosted it after the civil war. The Nigerian edition was the biggest one, which left a lasting legacy to date. Actually, there is a town named after FESTAC in Lagos. After 45 years, no other country hosted it until 2022 when Inspire Africa revived it and Zanzibar hosted it. We used FESTAC to help Africans heal from the ravaging impacts of COVID-19 and the propaganda it brought with it. After the successes of 2022, we took it to Arusha, Tanzania in an event that was officially opened by Prof. P.L.O Lumumba and attracted over three thousand guests from all over the world. This year, we were to host the Festival in the month of May, between 20th and 26th, but because of floods, we decided to postpone it to August 25th-September 1 this year, in order to support humanitarian intervention.

## How have the people responded to the postponement of FESTAC Festival 2024?

The feedback from both positive and negative minds never miss. However, from my positive faculty is that we have regrouped and all hands are on deck. I want to categorically thank Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o for his immense support and the fact that he has remained positive towards the Festival and it's planning team. That to me, is what leadership should be like. I must also commend the leadership, especially the C.E.O. I want her to stay at the helm of it for more than ten years. FESTAC is something that has changed my life a lot and I can, say with confidence that I can die for it. For you to be part of FESTAC you must bring something on the table, you don't just come out of the blues and join us.



Villager Ojuinu



## How do you think the postponement will influence the success of the Festival?

There is neither a domestic lie nor a foreign truth on the fact that the postponement will affect the Festival. It is outright common sense that this gives us more time. For instance, personally, there are close friends and family members who had complained that they did not have enough time. In as much as some of the complaints were blatant lies, a good number were real. But now we added three more months for preparation, which means there is no room for more excuses. We have more open avenues to come together as a team and to mobilize more people to come and appreciate our beautiful culture. I would not be here, if it was not important. I have a lot of work to do in Nigeria and as such cannot waste time here in Kisumu for nothing.

### Closing remark

Life has always taught me that as long as your heart is clean and intentions right, you will always find yourself at the right place and the right moment. There are certain things that you

will not be able to do again with a second thought. It does not have to do with maturity or age, but spirituality so I always pray that every pan-Africanist if not African should really put more energy in their spirituality and work with it.



# INTERNATIONAL

## INDIAN ELECTIONS



**Dr. Maya Pradeep**

India, a land steeped in history and cultural diversity, stands as a testament to rapid economic progress. With over 1.4 billion people, it is the world's second-most populous nation, characterized by a rich tapestry of traditions, languages, religions, and cuisines. This multicultural society also prides itself on being one of the largest and most vibrant democracies globally. India's democratic journey, marked by its vastness, diversity, and complexity, serves as a beacon for nations striving to foster or enhance democratic governance.

From April 19 to June 1, 2024, India conducted the world's largest general election, with nearly one billion registered voters. This election, one for the history books, saw numerous political parties vying for power, but two stood out prominently: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the world's largest political party, and the Indian National Congress, the country's oldest political entity. The contest was for 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who leads the BJP, managed to form the government in June 2024. The BJP secured 240 seats, falling short of the 272-seat majority in the Lok Sabha. However, with its allies, the BJP garnered a total of 293 seats, enabling them to form the government. This election was particularly notable as the BJP celebrated its victory, while the opposition Congress Party also celebrated its achievement of winning 99 seats, a significant milestone since India's independence 77 years ago.

Despite Modi's decade-long tenure, during which India ascended to become the world's fifth-largest economy and saw significant infrastructure growth, economic stability, and progressive policies for startups, farmers, women empowerment, and tourism, the BJP experienced a sharp decline in its vote share. Modi's vision to transform India into a superpower by 2047 faced unexpected electoral challenges.

Speculation arose regarding foreign interference in the 2024 election. Reports suggested that certain foreign entities, wary of India's rising global influence under Modi, attempted to sway the election through information warfare. Allegedly, these forces propagated narratives of declining democracy, Hindu majoritarianism, and fascism under Modi to influence voter sentiment. Ultimately, the Indian electorate made its choice. Narendra Modi was granted a third term, taking the oath of office in a grand ceremony at the Presidential Palace in New Delhi on June 9, 2024. This marks only the second time in India's history that a leader has secured three consecutive terms. As Modi embarks on this new chapter, we extend our best wishes to him and his vision for India's future.

**The author is a State Executive Member, BJP Karnataka, India**

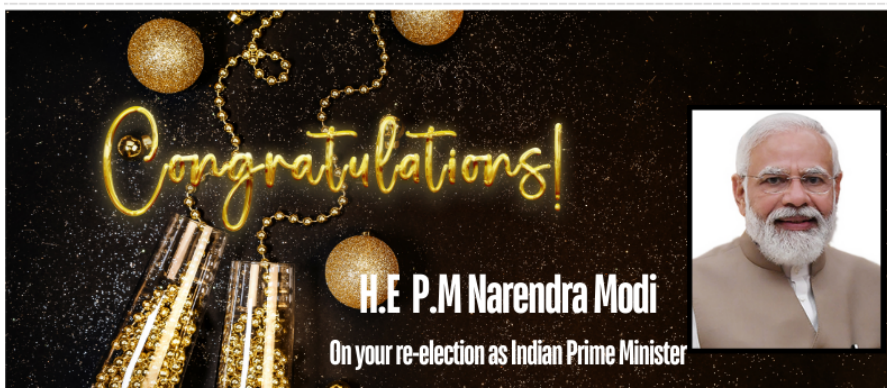
## SLAVERY

Among all the extra-ordinary problems and calamities that ever occurred in human history, none can be compared to human trafficking, majorly known as slavery. In fact, the more I try to think of what it is that might have instigated such kind of an inhuman act, the more I get confused, as it really doesn't make sense at all in my mind, how a human being can turn against his fellow being, just for little material gain. This evil business involved a number of nations globally, although was more extensive in the continent of Africa. You now need to consider that if being sold was so painful, then there could be possibility that the actions that followed were more severe. The slaves would be ferried from Africa to Europe, America among other using noisy ships.

The nature of the transportation system was extremely terrible to an extent that even historians lacked better words to express the situation. Similarly, the air in the transportation ships were unclean the less safe for human health, that if it were in this current world full of air-borne diseases like covid, TB among others, all the slaves would have died midway. In fact, claims has it that close to half of the slaves lost their lives before arrival, due to harsh treatment during the journey. Among the people who lost their lives; some died of various diseases that caught them during the period of transportation, while others died of hunger. Another percentage passed away as a result of inhuman torture they went through. It's also important to remember that the slaves who showed little ability to reach their set destinations, were thrown into the ocean. It is said that the wilds in the oceans fed on humans who fell tired midway as their food for several years of the trade. Perhaps, a number of questions have arose following the physis of this business that involved human commodities.

For instance, one might be eager to know how the business expanded and survived for more than two decades. A bigger percentage tend to argue that one major thing that fuelled this business to its peak, was the tricks used by the whites who visited the continent of Africa in the early medievals. An assumption has been in existence all along that when the whites stepped in Africa, they realized that Africans were so illiterate and should be conquered, and that this would only take place effectively by taking Africans to their countries as mesangers, claiming that it would be a better place for them compared to Africa. Availability of superior weapons was another major advantage that facilitated the invasion and take-over of African land. Africans were set to silence with their inferior weapons as they watched the invaders' actions of superiority over their land. In fact, fighting back the 'wazungu' was like a drop of water into the lake, in that, it could bear very little or no fruit at all.

Furthermore, disunity among African communities and their leaders was also among those that facilitated African invasion. This was clearly evident when a number of African communities together with their leaders chose to collaborate with the whites, a decision that negatively impacted on the unity of Africans. This too, led to the implementation of the 'divide and rule' system of governance by the invaders. The collaborators were branded by their fellow Africans as betrayers, while on the other hand, they received lots of appreciation from the whites such employment. To advance the matter into its interesting point, a better percentage of the employed collaborators were later ferried overseas with the hope of securing better positions in the field of employment, only to end up as slaves latter on. Through all that trickery, the invaders managed to fully take over African land and the ability to rule over them as they pushed forward the slave trade.





# Thailand's Strategic Move: Joining the BRICS Alliance

Thailand recently announced its intention to join the BRICS alliance, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This strategic move marks a significant shift in Thailand's foreign policy, aiming to bolster its economic standing and geopolitical influence. The decision is driven by several factors and comes with potential benefits and challenges that will shape Thailand's future relations with global powers like the United States and the European Union.



Carol Nyagaki

## Advantages for Thailand

Joining BRICS is likely to attract investments from member countries, particularly in sectors like infrastructure, technology, and energy. This investment influx can spur economic growth and development, creating jobs and improving the country's economic landscape.

Technological cooperation with BRICS countries is another advantage. These countries are known for their advancements in technology and innovation. Thailand can benefit from technological transfers and collaborative projects, boosting its technological capabilities and fostering innovation within the country.

As part of a larger coalition, Thailand can enhance its bargaining power in international forums and trade negotiations. This stronger negotiating power can help Thailand secure better terms and conditions for its economic engagements, thus benefiting its economy.

Moreover, Thailand's economy will become less dependent on traditional trade partners, reducing vulnerabilities to economic fluctuations in any single region. This diversification of trade relations can help Thailand achieve more stable and sustainable economic growth.

## Repercussions of Thailand's Decision

However, Thailand's move to join BRICS might strain its relations with the US and the EU. Both have been critical of the geopolitical strategies of some BRICS members, particularly China and Russia. Thailand might face diplomatic pressures and reduced preferential trade terms from Western countries, which could impact its exports and access to Western markets.

The geopolitical alignment with BRICS could expose Thailand to economic sanctions or reduced economic cooperation from the US and EU. This could have significant repercussions for Thailand's economy, especially if Western countries decide to reduce their economic engagements with Thailand.

Thailand will need to carefully balance its foreign policy to maintain cordial relations with the US and EU while fostering closer ties with BRICS countries. This balancing act will require diplomatic finesse and strategic planning, as Thailand navigates the complex dynamics of its international relations.

## Impact on Thailand's Relations with the US and EU

Thailand's trade dynamics with the US and EU might shift as it increases trade with BRICS countries. The US and EU might reassess their trade agreements and policies concerning Thailand, potentially leading to changes in trade terms and conditions.

The move might prompt the US and EU to reconsider their geopolitical strategies in Southeast Asia. They may increase their engagement with other ASEAN countries to counterbalance Thailand's alignment with BRICS, thus altering the geopolitical landscape of the region.

Diplomatic tensions might arise as Thailand navigates its new role within BRICS. The US and EU could push for more stringent adherence to democratic values and human rights, which could become points of contention in Thailand's relations with these Western powers.

On a positive note, Thailand's enhanced role in BRICS could increase its regional influence, making it a key player in Southeast Asia and a strategic partner for both Western and BRICS countries. This increased regional influence can help Thailand assert its interests more effectively on the global stage.

## Conclusion

Thailand's decision to join BRICS is a strategic move aimed at economic growth, diversification, and increased geopolitical influence. While it promises numerous advantages, it also poses significant challenges, especially in terms of its relations with the US and EU. Navigating these complex dynamics will be crucial for Thailand as it seeks to maximize the benefits of BRICS membership while mitigating potential risks. By carefully balancing its foreign policy and leveraging its enhanced position within BRICS, Thailand can achieve sustainable economic growth and strengthen its role on the global stage.

## SOAD NEWS



## SOAD'S DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO CANADA INAUGURATED IN TORONTO, ON JUNE 15

The State of the African Diaspora is pleased to announce the inauguration of its Diplomatic Mission in Canada. The ceremony will take place on June 15 at 2 pm in Toronto, under the auspices of Her Excellency Jannette P. Lumley, SOAD's Ambassador to Canada. The event will be accessible both on-site, at 3761 Victoria Park Avenue, Scarborough, and online, on zoom.

According to the program that has been prepared, the national anthems of Canada and SOAD will be played, the Prime Minister and the two Vice Prime Ministers will speak, and as head of the Diplomatic Mission, Her Excellency Jannette Lumley will present her vision and the major orientations she has chosen to implement. Following on from SOAD's Diplomatic Missions in Malta and Trinidad, this is a further step in the strengthening of the diplomatic network of the State of the African Diaspora.

The history of blacks in the United States is well known, but it is sometimes overlooked that there were also slaves of African origin in Canada, and this since at least 1629. At that time, they often came from the English West Indies or Louisiana. At the same time, some Canadian provinces were also lands of freedom. Thousands of slaves fleeing the plantations of the southern United States took refuge here.

In the 20th century, many migrants from the West Indies, particularly Haiti, also settled in Canada. In a 2016 census, 1.2 million people in Canada declared themselves to be black. This is the environment in which the Diplomatic Mission will be operating.





## SOAD and O.M.A.R. Technology Sign Cooperation Agreement

On June 5, 2024, the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) and O.M.A.R. Technology signed an MOU. Based in Milan, Italy, the company was presented to the Prime Minister, Dr Louis-Georges Tin, by the SOAD Ambassador to Malta, His Excellency Anthony Coleiro, in consultation with Dr Michele Pastorello, Chargé d'Affaires of the Malta Diplomatic Mission.

For 40 years, OMAR Technology has offered modular hospitals and emergency response tools, providing valuable assistance in the event of humanitarian disasters. The company has ready-to-use containers, intensive care or emergency surgery units, transportable analysis laboratories, as well as aeronautical equipment, helicopters, maintenance tools and anything else that can be useful for emergency transport. O.M.A.R.'s transportable infrastructures have been used many times by the Italian army, and also by the UN in peacekeeping operations from Somalia in 1992 to Chad in 2010, for example.

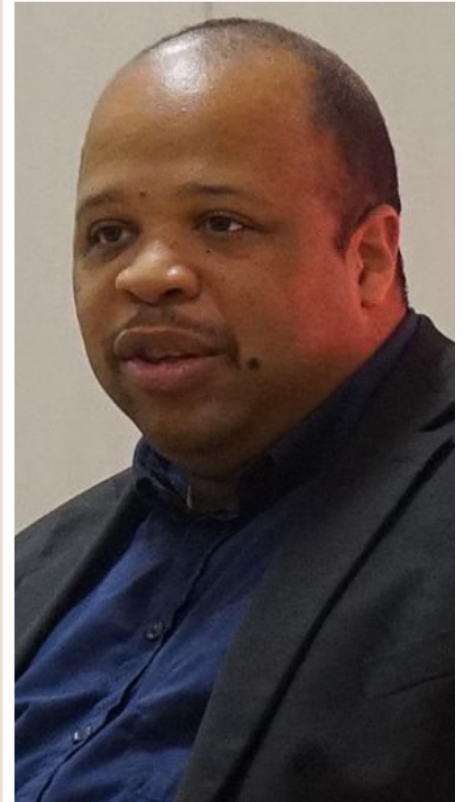
For the State of the African Diaspora, these tools will be very important. Wars can happen anywhere, and in the years to come, climatic disasters will be more and more numerous in general, and in the countries of the South in particular. That is why Mr Melvin Brown, President of the SOAD Parliament, has begun to set up an Emergency Response System. In the future, this SOAD agency will need to have the means and light infrastructure to help people in danger on the ground, whether it's cyclones, floods or military conflicts, for example. That is what this cooperation is all about, to better protect pan-African populations.

## SOAD Signs Cooperation Agreement with the City of Saly-Portudal, Senegal



A few weeks ago, Mr. Massamba Ndao, Ambassador of the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD), put the Prime Minister of SOAD, Dr. Louis-Georges Tin, in touch with the Mayor of Saly-Portudal in Senegal, Mr. Ousmane Gueye. Discussions progressed well, culminating in the signing of a cooperation agreement on June 5.

Under article 2 of this document, the State of the African Diaspora and the commune of Saly-Portudal have agreed to cooperate in the creation of a number of infrastructures, including a solar energy farm, the extension of water and electricity networks, agri-food factories, a medical complex, a media library, a women's centre, a tool centre, nursery schools, secondary schools, a vocational training center, a hotel school, roads, a waste management and processing plant and sanitation facilities.



**DR. LOUIS GEORGES TIN is the Prime Minister for The State Of African Diaspora**

## CITIZENSHIP OF AFRO-DESCENDANTS : OPEN LETTER TO MP HOUNDETE AND THE BENINESE PARLIAMENT

To the Honorable Member of Parliament, His Excellency Eric Houndete

Excellency

On May 8, 2024, President Talon transmitted to the Parliament a bill aimed at granting Beninese nationality to Afro-descendants who applied for it, provided they clearly established their link with Africa. This historic decision has prompted many positive reactions, but as it is unprecedented, it needs to be explained in detail.

Relaying the legitimate questions that some Beninese may have, you have addressed a series of questions to the Government concerning this text: this is why, as Prime Minister of the State of the African Diaspora, and without prejudging the answers that the Government may give you, I have taken the liberty of writing you this open letter addressed to yourself, but more generally to the Beninese Parliament and to all the Beninese people. My intention is to provide some information that may enlighten the debate. I will not answer all your questions, as some of them fall within the government's remit, but I will take the liberty of addressing those that concern us directly.

Question: How do you distinguish Afro-descendants? Who are they? What do they do?  
Before answering, I'd like to thank you for your question, which humbly allows us to introduce ourselves to you and to the Beninese people.

At least since 2003, several African Union and United Nations texts have defined what Afro-descendants are. I'm thinking in particular of the famous resolution adopted on February 3, 2003 in Addis Ababa, and the decision adopted at the 2nd Conference of Heads of State of the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique, on July 11, 2003, which officially acknowledged that the African diaspora constitutes the 6th Region of Africa.

I'm also thinking of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations regarding the Decade of People of African Descent (2015-2024) and the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent created in 2021.

On the basis of these numerous and solid legal texts, which Benin has voted for and consistently supported at continental and international level for over 20 years, we can define the African diaspora as being made up of all people living outside Africa, but claiming to be of African origin.

Some of these people left the continent one, two or three generations ago, usually as migrants: this is what is sometimes called the young diaspora. Others are the result of transatlantic deportation, as their ancestors were taken from the continent at the time of colonial slavery, two, three or four centuries ago, or even more: this is what we call the historical diaspora. Whatever the case, all these people belong to the African diaspora.

Their occupations are manifold. They do all kinds of jobs. Some are manual workers, others clerks or executives. You know many of them: politicians like Barack Obama, the former President of the United States, sportsmen like Jamaican Usain Bolt, singers like Barbadian Rihanna, and all those of previous generations, from Toussaint Louverture in Haiti (who came from Allada), to King Pelé in Brazil, via Aimé Césaire in Martinique, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks in the USA, and so many others known or less well known. In all, there are some 350 million people who make Africa shine throughout the world.

Question: How many of them have already made a trip to Benin? Are there any statistics on those who have expressed a desire to obtain Beninese nationality? Is there a study to assess the number of people who constitute the intended target? To my knowledge, there are no statistics on all these points. But we can roughly estimate that a few thousand people have already made the trip, mainly from the United States, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique

Guyana and Brazil, as these are the countries where the Beninese of yesterday or the day before found themselves, depending on the vagaries of history. These are the people who will undoubtedly be the first to apply for nationality. They are the most pan-African, the most motivated, the most dynamic and the most eager to invest in Benin, to share their professional know-how and cultural experience, and to reconnect with their families.

While we don't have any precise figures on your question, we do have other interesting figures on the diaspora.

The first comes from the World Bank: according to the institution, every year, the African diaspora sends around 70 billion dollars to the continent. This represents 13% of Senegal's budget, 26% of Liberia's budget and 70% of Sudan's budget. And that's twice as much as all international aid, which isn't always aid, as we know. So it's not negligible.

Second figure: In 2019, Ghana has proclaimed and organized the "Year of Return", to encourage the diaspora to return to the country to visit. The government estimates that people from the diaspora who have come have helped develop tourism and generated US\$1.9 billion in one year.

Beyond these specific answers, and a few historical, demographic and economic facts, I would like to stress that for members of the diaspora, including myself, this opportunity to obtain Beninese nationality would be a form of **restitution**. Indeed, particularly for the historical diaspora, we were torn from Africa and deported, as you know. We were stripped of our rights and deprived of our families. Gaining citizenship means regaining our rights, our origins, our cultures, our families, our sisters and brothers, like yourself.



And that is why Maître Germany, Dah Mileko, originally from Martinique, campaigned back in 2016 for this law to be passed. He met Benin's Minister of Justice on the subject. He has continued the dialogue with the President, with the authorities of the Republic and with traditional leaders. That is why we thank him and the President, and as this is a text for the reunion of the Pan-African family, we would be really happy if it were adopted unanimously, by all parties, by all MPs, just as the 2003 decision, recognizing the African diaspora as the 6th region of Africa, was taken unanimously by the African heads of state. The family and Greater Africa reunited at last, this is an issue that transcends all parties, and calls for consensus, concord and joy.

I would be delighted to meet you as soon as possible, in the context of a parliamentary hearing if there is one, and in the fraternal and pan-African framework that is being created, or recreated. In my eyes, meeting you and the other brothers and sisters of the continent is in itself a wonderful and necessary reparation.

## THE STATE OF AFRICAN DIASPORA IS THE SIXTH REGION OF AFRICA, RECOGNIZED BY THE AFRICAN UNION

### OPINION: STARS ARE ALIGNING FOR LABOR PARTY IN U.K ELECTION

The United Kingdom's elections are no longer a joke, this is no longer a dance an old man will dance while carrying his snuff in one capped hand as Chinua Achebe will state in the Anthills of the Savannah about a very tight situation. This election is a conundrum for Rishi Sunak and the conservative party. He finds himself in a cul de sac and whatever he touches does not turn to gold since he lacks the Midas touch currently. He was taunted as a safe pair of hands after his four predecessors in the conservative party were bundled out of office after they fell on their respective swords for failing to read the mood of the country at their given times.

Rishi Sunak has failed to bring back former conservative bigwigs in his fold and this has seen them cast cold water on some of his programs. The world-leading smoking ban he has been vouching for hit a snag when a majority of his members of Parliament failed to support it and instead shelved it for a later date after the elections. The immigration policy he was also fronting where immigrants were to be sent to Rwanda has also failed to kick off since only one person has voluntarily agreed to go to Rwanda. The Israel-Palestine conflict has also been at the heart of the Conservative's tribulations, the failure of Sunak to feel the pulse of the general public which was calling for a ceasefire he was setting up himself for failure.



Peter Wandera

The stars are finally aligning for the labor party after a 15-year-long hiatus from leading the United Kingdom. The party was last in power for thirteen years before it was knocked from its pedestal by David Cameron of the conservative party. The polls indicate that the Labor Party will form the next government and have a majority in parliament. Rishi Sunak announced that a snap election will take place on the 4th of July, despite having until up to January next year to hold one. General elections in the United Kingdom are held within five years of the last one, the last one took place in 2019. The election is intended to elect members of parliament to the House of Commons and also this will be the first election after the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union. This election will also be the first of its kind under the leadership of King Charles. Again, this will be the first election where voter identification is required to vote in person in Great Britain.

The monarch and the government in Britain are joined at the hip since it's believed that the monarch is what brought forth the government, if it wasn't for the kingdom then Britain wouldn't have a government, and hence the monarch is revered and held in high esteem. For the dissolution of the parliament, Sunak needed to seek the imprimatur from King Charles. UK citizens and residents of Irish 18 years and above will be able to cast their votes to elect members of their parliament, who will in turn represent them in the House of Commons for a term of five years. In this election, there are over 50 million voters and 650 constituencies to be fought for.

With Rishi Sunak and the conservative party walking on thin ice and the Labour Party led by Keir Starmer gaining its groove then it's game over for Sunak and his acolytes. The Labour Party is going to form the next government.

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## Raila's mixed signals, Ruto's dilemma and Gachagua's plot to consolidate the Mountain

From an analytical perspective, nothing happens in the political sphere by chance. Everything has an end-game, and today, in Kenya's murky political scene, a dark storm seems to approach, as history seems to be on course to repeat itself. Just days ago, if we were to do a flashback, a promise was made. The vow to never let the country cry for harmony between number one and number two. Vows are traditionally sacrosanct the world over, only that contemporarily, many fail to recognize the strength of said concept.

Promises are made, then broken at the snap of a finger. In the political scene, this is not even an abnormality! It is, in fact, the basis of all strategies. A vow is on the verge of crumbling, or at least things seem so. Echoes of regret loom large in Kenya's sophisticated corridors of power, or at least things seem so. A game of words is at the center of everything, while one man stands to gain the most regardless of the outcome of it all: Raila Odinga.

With his A.U. Commission Chairship aspirations, the long-term opposition chief seems to be well en route to exiting Kenya's political scene, but a couple of statements or more tell of a man yet ready to hang his boots. In basic terms, Mr. Odinga could, after all, be here to stay. Regardless, the dynamics at play that leaves a lot of questions to be asked, rather than hints to be picked.

First of all, it was just weeks ago when Mr. Odinga met with both President William Ruto and his Ugandan counterpart H.E Kaguta Museveni, after which the former

made a verbose social media statement where he affirmed his unwavering support for Raila's ambitions. A flashback to 2018, and the position of A.U High Commission for Infrastructure is created, with the opposition chief becoming the first occupant of that position. At the time, Mr. Odinga was just out of a truce with the then his prime adversary and Kenya's sitting president H.E Uhuru Kenyatta in a certain handshake that birthed a document called the Building Bridges Initiative. This makes the timing of the A.U.C either extremely convenient, or a perfect coincidence, given the NADCO report, which, in the public perspective is of similar magnitude and impact as building bridges initiative.

However, regardless of the similarities, Mr. Ruto has long maintained that he will not run a government without an effective opposition, neither 'would' he allow his own deputy to be disrespected like he was during his time. But the reality does not reflect his vows, with politicians aligned to H.E Rigathi Gachagua already raising red flags on a potential fallout between the commander in chief and his second in command, who for some reasons known only to him has been on the sun-roofs calling on unity among mount Kenya residents.

Regardless of the nobleness of his clarion call, it beats logic that the sense in it has only hit Mr. Gachagua two or so years after he publicly, in the presence of high-ranking global dignitaries remonstrated with Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta during the swearing in ceremony of the Kenya Kwanza administration. The rant was, almost genuine but mostly

political, however today, it seem more baseless by the minute. Nyeri Governor H.E Mutahi Kahiga, a man once so vocal about the beauty of President William Ruto's leadership has now turned the key Gachagua surrogate, with a number of colossal claims about a supposedly crumbling relationship between Mr. Gachagua and William Ruto.

Funnily, Raila Odinga's standpoint leans more towards the Deputy President's ideology, having most recently claimed that regardless of the fact that he is not a populist, he still believes in the one man, one vote, one shilling strategy, which formed the core of both the Azimio La Umoja ideology and the ground upon which Mr. Gachagua has stood on since first 'going rogue'. According to his followers, there is a teething need to unite the mountain and per Mr. Kahiga, his right hand man, the former Mathira constituency parliamentarian has over three million votes behind him and therefore he is not to be overlooked. Like the tanga-tanga sobriquet and movement, a new one has been coined;The villager, and so there, soon will be a movement of villagers all over the nation. In the backdrop of all that chaos, will there be amends to bridge these gaps or will things end up in a fallout abyss just like it was in the previous administration? What exactly was the key finding and objective of the NADCO report? Why has so far, ODM boss given the signals of a man standing at crossroads and why, all over sudden Mr. Gachagua has realized that it was not a wise thing to incite the Kikuyu community against the former president?



# Somalia: Pioneering Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability

Somalia, a country often associated with conflict and humanitarian crises, is now rewriting its narrative. With an unwavering determination to achieve climate resilience and environmental sustainability, Somalia is charting a new course towards prosperity, peace, and development. This essay explores Somalia's efforts and strategies in fostering a sustainable environment, the challenges it faces, and the potential impact on its socio-economic landscape.

## Historical Context and Current Challenges

Somalia's environmental challenges are deeply rooted in its history of political instability, economic hardship, and social turmoil. The prolonged civil war and governance vacuum have exacerbated environmental degradation, leading to deforestation, desertification, and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, climate change poses significant threats, with increased frequency of droughts and floods impacting agricultural productivity and food security.

Despite these challenges, Somalia is taking bold steps to combat environmental degradation and build climate resilience. This transformation is crucial for ensuring long-term stability and development in the region.

## Strategies for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability

### 1. Afforestation and Reforestation Initiatives

One of Somalia's primary strategies for environmental sustainability is afforestation and reforestation. By planting trees and restoring degraded landscapes, Somalia aims to combat desertification and enhance biodiversity. These efforts not only help in carbon sequestration but also improve soil fertility and water retention, essential for agricultural productivity.

### 2. Afforestation and Reforestation Initiatives

Transitioning to sustainable agricultural practices is vital for Somalia's climate resilience. The government, in collaboration with international organizations, is promoting techniques such as agroforestry, conservation tillage, and the use of drought-resistant crop varieties. These practices help reduce soil erosion, enhance water efficiency, and increase crop yields, thereby ensuring food security.

### 3. Renewable Energy Development

Somalia is harnessing its abundant renewable energy resources, particularly solar and wind, to meet its energy needs sustainably. The development of renewable energy infrastructure reduces reliance on fossil fuels, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions, and provides reliable energy access to remote communities. This shift not only supports environmental sustainability but also drives economic development and poverty reduction.

### 4. Community-Based Natural Resource Management

Engaging local communities in natural resource management is a cornerstone of Somalia's environmental strategy. By involving communities in decision-making and providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge, Somalia ensures the sustainable use of resources. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to better conservation outcomes and enhanced livelihoods.

### 5. Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation

Somalia is implementing comprehensive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate adaptation strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change. These include early warning systems, climate-smart infrastructure, and capacity-building programs for communities. By enhancing resilience to climate-related shocks, Somalia is better prepared to protect its people and infrastructure from the adverse effects of climate change.

## Socio-Economic Impact

The pursuit of climate resilience and environmental sustainability has far-reaching socio-economic implications for Somalia. By restoring ecosystems and enhancing agricultural productivity, Somalia can achieve food security and reduce poverty. The development of renewable energy creates jobs and stimulates economic growth, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, sustainable natural resource management contributes to social cohesion and peacebuilding by reducing competition over scarce resources.

## Conclusion

Somalia's commitment to climate resilience and environmental sustainability marks a significant turning point in its history. Through afforestation, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, community engagement

and disaster risk reduction, Somalia is paving the way for a prosperous and sustainable future. These efforts not only address environmental challenges but also lay the foundation for peace, development, and improved quality of life for its citizens. As Somalia continues on this path, it serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for other nations facing similar challenges.

*Somalia is harnessing its abundant renewable energy resources, particularly solar and wind, to meet its energy needs sustainably. The development of renewable energy infrastructure reduces reliance on fossil fuels, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions, and provides reliable energy access to remote communities...*



Carol Nyagaki



Somalia first hybrid plant combining solar power and wind power in Garowe

**COMING SOON**  
*Stay Tuned...for Inspire Africa Magazine & City Bite reface.*



City Bite Magazine is pleased to announce that a reface involving a new logo and a more advanced website is currently underway. Additionally, we are pleased to inform our readers of an upcoming sister project named Inspire Africa Magazine, which will be under the auspice of Inspire Africa Connect .

Inspire Africa Magazine will tell beautiful stories of pan-africanism and incorporate a survey initiative that will give the context, extent and authentic state of affairs in the continent through data analysis and visualization.

This is because the African story has been told, for many years haphazardly. Stay tuned for the exciting journey ahead.



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By Joy Achungo

When I heard of the president's visit to the United States, I had a lot to say but chose to preserve my comments. Not that I fear speaking out but I just felt Kenyans were already having a tough time especially with the transition from the just concluded calamities including floods and displacement of people from their homes. It would have been unfair and inconsiderate of me rubbing salt to their wounds. They were already in pieces and the best I could do was to give them hope that tomorrow is a day to look upon. However, as I was doing my random checks on social media, I came across a letter written by Ngugi Wathiong'o addressed to the president. The letter was published on May 28th 2024 in Atlanta, Georgia and it expressed Ngugi's dissatisfaction towards the president's visit. He reminds the president of the history of NATO, including associating NATO with the death of Muammar Gaddafi who was once the chair of African Union. The letter somewhat provoked me to give my opinion regarding the visit hoping that it will get to the right audience.

While the letter received a lot of criticism from Kenyans who felt that Ngugi should have started criticizing the government way back, including when Uhuru Kenyatta was in power, that Ngugi is biased and seemingly had a share in the last regime, that he is tribalistic and only criticizes people who are not Kikuyus, I really wish to be objective in my opinion. I choose to forget our expectations from Ngugi and look at the letter as if it was from an ordinary citizen who loves his country, that the letter may be from the wrong person but its contents should not be neglected. We may choose to kill the vessel of the message but we should not ignore the message itself.

Looking at his choice of words, I am convinced that something somewhere is not adding up. In fact, in one of his last lines he adds, Ruto, you have decided to sell your country cheaply. Can it be possible that Ruto is selling us to the dogs without negotiating the prices with the people who will be most affected? Can it be true that Ruto has finally forgotten our history and is out there sleeping with the same people that cut our wings when we were just prepared to fly? Can it be true that the military jets are a symbol of an upcoming war that we Kenyans will be forced to fight? Is this but a lull before a turbulent storm?

As I watched Kenyans lament on twitter, the president tried to prove himself as 'Not guilty of the crimes committed' In his official account he tweeted. Fellow Kenyans, I have noted concerns on my mode of transport to USA. As a responsible Steward of public resources and in keeping with my determination for us to live within our means and that I should lead from the front in so doing, the cost would be less than traveling from KQ."

The last statement caught my attention. It was actually a proof that for Kenya to economically advance, then we definitely need leaders who speak more proudly of Kenyan products than the president. I am hoping that we all understand that the government has a huge role to play when it comes to the prices and accessibility of Kenya Airways. This is an airline that has received billions from the government in a bid to keep it afloat. It is therefore very embarrassing to note that the president has washed his hands from the airline and has decided to use cheaper means. What a better way to remind Kenyans that they are on their own. I am hoping the president does not import his clothes just because Kenyan products are more expensive yet he has decided to even tax the air we breathe. Makes me wonder how our products will efficiently compete in the market. Anyways, I am not here to talk about the tax measures today. I am here to address the president's Hollywood arrival to the American dream with our taxes.

Kenya as a country has its own share of challenges. Sadly, most of these challenges have been caused by a weak system of governance that creates an opportunity for leaders to achieve their own personal interest at the expense of Kenyans. I do know and well understand that humans are driven by personal desires and interests. However, their interests should not harm the interests of others, more so when their interests not only affect us but our future generations too

Their interests have suddenly turned into dark desires, that they consume us alive as they sooth us with words. A great way to showcase that we do not just have religious hypocrisy but also political hypocrisy -and there's nothing more dangerous than misplaced hope and faith.



President William Ruto pictured alighting a private jet with Kenya's First Lady H.E. Rachel Ruto during the widely talked about trip to the U.S. (Courtesy, B.B.C)

As Kenyans lament on X, I am reminded that they are not talking about a common man. They are in fact talking about the face of the nation. The man who passionately talks about climate change and reduction of carbon emissions hiring a private jet. A man who forever talks about living within our means being branded as a spendthrift, choosing to use a longer route for him to have a feel of the taxpayers money. A man who talks about Transparency being unable to effectively defend himself and being forced to tweet and beg for trust as if trust is squeezed out of people in a national prayer breakfast. This makes me want to ask a lot of questions including who the president takes Kenyans to be, who the president feels he is leading; fools who can barely calculate the cost of hiring a private plane and compare it to the cost of branding Kenya Airways or maybe people who have been flattered by the education system depriving them of the ability to ask questions, and who is that friend that decided to come to the rescue and why is he interested in the affairs of the country...what deal was made between these two friends was he was a God sent angel who felt that the president needed to live a Hollywood dream and land in the USA like the respected man he is or a man in a mission. I am however restrained since I am afraid that my head might just get chopped before I get a chance to finish my questions.

As I looked at the president's tweet, I am reminded of one thing. Kenya as a country does not have the worst problems that it needs to be declared as a member of NATO, and neither does it need its leaders to be travelling around the world forming alliances with superpowers. Kenya is a country whose boat has leaked and we need to fix that leak, not buy another boat which may cost us more and in fact be harder to maintain. Kenya has citizens who can think for themselves. Amongst these Kenyans, inventions have been made from scratch and people have actually managed to solve some of their day to day challenges. Its people have managed to heal from very sore wounds of the post election violence and have somewhat managed to co-exist as one community. People who are able to stitch themselves from pieces that had been entirely broken are not people who need much. All they need is a leader who is willing to fill this leak that is capsizing our boat-poor governance that have opened a way for corruption and all other injustices.

No matter how pure the president's intentions are, his actions still need to be governed by processes. If every leader decided to wake up and hire a private jet, then definitely our country will go up in flames. What happened to leading as an example? Get me right. I am not saying that I am against the goodies that the president's trip has brought to Kenyans. I mean, I am someone who embraces prosperity. I love seeing nations grow and become productive. However, even as I took a keen look at the goodies that the president says he brought to Kenyans, I am more discouraged. I mean, what happened to the 50 million for a kilometer of a road. What does the 477 billion for a 440 km road mean to Kenyans? Does this imply that as long as the money is for donations, we can use it however we want

it used? That since the money is for donations no rules apply? That free money does not need to be protected?

What does being the first Sub-Saharan country as a member of NATO mean to us? Are these people just offering their services to Kenyans since they saw it fit, that they have enough money to donate to Kenyans and they can just give it out without any expectations. Well well, the last time I checked, is no free lunch. What do the goodies mean to us? Who is responsible for ensuring that these goodies are used responsibly and will not land us to any form of trouble especially more and more debts? The USA has shown a lot of inconsistency especially when it comes to delivering its promises to Kenyans. How sure are we that this time round, the holy spirit has dawned upon them and they have suddenly decided to keep their word? Does this mean that our president is testing our faith? That we should walk by faith and not by sight?

Dear Kenyans, I write to you today. Not to remind us of our misfortunes but our role in this country. We are not puppets. We have undergone a thorough Education system that has given us the power to think and make our own decisions. In fact, the constitution has given us a unique power, that all sovereign power belongs to us. It is therefore time that we make a decision to not be used by the same people who entirely depend on us to stay in power. That they suddenly decide to cut the hand that feeds them and they are suddenly getting comfortable. It is within our power to raise our voices. How many of us have taken a look at the finance bill? Are you comfortable with it? Have you done any memorandum? What issues don't you appreciate in the bill? Is your governor doing his job? Do you like that road that passes through your village? Have you done a petition yet?

While we may choose to blame our leaders for being careless, it is also important that we remind ourselves that we are the majority. The prosperity of a country lies within its people. We are the people to ensure that we are prosperous. We are the people to put our leaders in their place, ensuring they serve us to the latter, and I am hoping as things unfold, we will find our voice.



*Kenya as a country has its own share of challenges. Sadly, most of these challenges have been caused by a weak system of governance that creates an opportunity for leaders to achieve their own personal interest at the expense of Kenyans. I do know and well understand that humans are driven by personal desires and interests.*

Joy Achungo





## Facing Forward: Africa Must Rise Above East vs West Diplomatic Power Ploys

In a recent interview with Aljazeera, President Ruto reiterated the words of Kwame Nkrumah on Africa's stance on diplomacy, this time making it Kenya's position on global diplomacy. "We face neither East nor West, we face forward", the president said to the chagrin of Redi Tihabi, the interviewer, who had sought to cleverly portray him as a US stooge. The conversation served to calm the seismic waves that had for days gathered in the ocean bottoms of diplomatic waters with Ruto's state visit, one given to an African president in 16 years, as emphasized, being termed as the coronation of the new Western puppet. It has been a tradition that many Pan-Africanists or those who want to bear that title have prided themselves in an isolationist policy, especially to their Western erstwhile colonizers and associates of the West. It is therefore not surprising that the world, used to monikers, and a West vs East, duo-political demarcation finds itself grappling with titles to give Kenya's envoy at Washington.

But, to be so caught in such ideological waters is to cut ourselves short of emergence as players. It is to say that we are not as sovereign – as we hold onto any grudges of a colonial past, now gone. It would besmirch Machiavelli to think that any nation can blackmail another to get into any favors; as it would spite any lover to be gaslit and blackmailed into cooperation. The West owes Africa nothing, other than a hand of new opportunities and exploration of a shared future. Africa's entitlement through its victim mentality born out of a saintly colonial past is now a bygone era zero-sum woe-be-gone nanny noise. Thus, Africa must now in this new world era hold of its own accord to be a player in the global affairs – a global era where your contributions is what matters. If I look the world over, the history of the past 80 years has been a mass of atrocities, with the strong pillaging the weak and the wounded strong rising to re-establish themselves. Japan from the ashes of nuclear dust rides high in glory like a phoenix, Israel from the holocaust trauma rises to the realms of the savage, and Russia from the humiliation of the fall of the Soviet Union asserts itself on the world stage like a bulldog.

All this being a testament of a new world order where strength, cunning and sheer will to create rules. And let's not forget China, the weakest and unseen of the ancient powers, long hidden, in 50 or so years, emerges from obscurity to dominance by the power of its determination and discipline. Hence, Africa should admonish herself twice, before she is pillaged over as she plays second fiddle to Western and Eastern hegemonic plays. Now, as Nkrumah, Africa's foremost Pan-Africanist, asserted, Africa is itself an identity that the others, too, should look at – and should seek an alliance with. Away with the binary tussles that Africa sells herself as, either a Western or Eastern ally. These lenses which are often moralistic try to judge each by the front they serve the world with. On one hand: be a democracy else I bomb you, or let's do trade default I own your ports, on the other. All this being 'not like us' diplomatic bars in a no-win war for Africa.



Meshack Nzioka

History in its pragmatic sense is the story of the brute eating the lunch of the weak. Beyond the savvy statements of human rights and democracy among other 21st-century diplomatic monikers, the narrow interests of the global players run as deep as their imperialist pasts in regime change efforts, aid, and loans with strings attached, among other unseen interests. So, in such a scenario, the ideological viewpoints of good and evil belong to the uninitiated. The West and the East, like any other power, shall in self-interest, pursue relations with the nations they consider to serve them and to continue asserting their power. In this game of moving chairs, Africa brings her seat and dances to the rhythm of her interests. That is what looking forward means. Maybe it is time we ceased from pyrrhic ideological wins, as it serves not the person, once a slave, to change hands from one colonial master to the next but to be free.

Free in her engagement, and so face forward. Forward is the look – with new negotiation terms, among these Africa's comparative advantage in green energy global transition, mineral, and human resource capacity, a major consumer market, and new financial architecture where the tools of commerce such as debt are on equal terms. A plain playing field and equal exchange relationships. Else what shall it benefit a nation to be used only as a pawn to level the other? Dumb it must be, and willing slave must it be. As Nelson Mandela once admonished the US, when questioned on South Africa's stance on the Palestine-Israeli issue and South Africa's clamor for a two-state solution, "Your enemies are not necessarily our enemies too". Africa must learn not to inherit enemies. We must face forward.



*Hence, Africa should admonish herself twice, before she is pillaged over as she plays second fiddle to Western and Eastern hegemonic plays. Now, as Nkrumah, Africa's foremost Pan-Africanist, asserted, Africa is itself an identity that the others, too, should look at – and should seek an alliance with. Away with the binary tussles that Africa sells herself as, either a Western or Eastern ally.*

Meshack Nzioka, Founder Waka Africa

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## June 18 protest underscored disregard for Constitutionalism in Kenya



Odima Osure

It was poised to be business as usual in the corridors of power, where a seed of avarice was sprouting; The Finance bill 2024. In all its peculiarity, the bill created a lot of tension in the country, leading up to a chaotic Tuesday that saw at least a police officer lose both his arms. What a shame it was, to lob teargas on a people exercising their constitutional rights?

Where is the rule of law? Where is the principle that states that all sovereign powers belong to the people? Doesn't the constitution provide for peaceful demonstrations and picketing? Why then do we craft the policies if we cannot follow them to the latter?

While it is a massive shame that the country is yawning out of hunger, it is a bigger shame that people who are supposed to; by nature of their status in the society protect the rights of the common man are in fact the ones being used to denigrate them.

Worst of all, a quote from the CS for Tourism H.E Alfred Mutua, in which he blamed picketers for the misery of the police officer who, in full view of the law, was not on the right side. "As we sit here today, Chief Inspector David Karuri Maina has lost both his arms, today he is disabled, this man is a son, a husband and a father... he has been disabled by the protesters," Mutua stated, on Wed 19th June. "My beautiful young people who are being driven by propaganda, look at the facts, don't get involved in activism and violence that leads to bloodshed... That officer who lost his hands, his blood is on you," he added.

How on earth would you blame someone exercising his constitutional right for another's woes, who got caught up in the trouble while violating or rather intimidating the enjoyment of basic freedoms and rights?

It is about time that somebody thumps sense into the wielders of the instruments of power and if those with resources cannot, then the consolidated efforts of the common man must be put to play; and that's exactly what happens.

No Kenyan should be arrested, let alone teargased for demanding what is right for the country and for the constitution. These were among the promises given by the sitting administration at the acme of the 2022 political campaign season.

In his own words, H.E President William Ruto promised that there will never be a point in his tenure, where the security apparatus will be used for wrong reasons and unlike in the past where protests turned into vandalism, the Tuesday demonstration was largely peaceful, only interrupted by the unwarranted arrests of picketers and the lobbing of teargas by officers. What underscores all the vices of this is the fact that it was pre-planned and at some point in time, police commander Bungei had indicated that no protests would be allowed at the capital city.

As defiant Kenyans insist on devolving the strikes to each town, City and county, custodians of law and instruments of law should stand firm and protect the masses, at least if not for their objects, for the subjective love of the constitution and the rule of law.

Odima Osure holds a Bachelors Degree in History and International Relations

**Congratulations!**  
H.E Cyril Ramaphosa  
On Re-election as the  
President of South Africa





# FREE BILLY



# FREE BILLY

#REJECTFINANCEBILL2024 #OCCUPYPARLIAMENT

Dear Kenyan authorities,

If you cannot respect the constitution, please try to respect yourselves. It is with a broken heart that we take cognisance of the fact that even after organising an extremely peaceful protest, a number of young people were injured, some killed and a significant number arbitrarily arrested. What beats logic is that these are people with the keys to the future of our country and should be mentored by the incumbent wielders of the instruments of power. First of all, it is indicated in the consituation that all sovereign powers belong to the people, a supreme policy document which further protects all peaceful demonstrations and demonstrators.

Thirdly, it's a shame that what those demonstrating are fighting for are issues that affect everyone else directly. Policemen for instance are among the least paid in the country, which means that the excessive taxation will have extremely far-reaching implications on their salaries.

Additionally, while they met brutality on the protesters, they also risk their lives, as proven by the officer who lost his arms and has now to live with a self imposed disability which came while trying to violate the constitutional provision.





# FIVE TIPS FOR GREAT SKIN

## 1. Protect yourself from the sun

One of the most important ways to take care of your skin is to protect it from the sun. A lifetime of sun exposure can cause wrinkles, age spots and other skin problems — as well as increase the risk of skin cancer.

For the most complete sun protection:

- Use sunscreen. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Apply sunscreen generously, and reapply every two hours — or more often if you're swimming or perspiring.
- Seek shade. Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Wear protective clothing. Cover your skin with tightly woven long-sleeved shirts, long pants and wide-brimmed hats. Also consider laundry additives, which give clothing an additional layer of ultraviolet protection for a certain number of washings, or special sun-protective clothing — which is specifically designed to block ultraviolet rays.

## 2. Don't smoke

Smoking makes your skin look older and contributes to wrinkles. Smoking narrows the tiny blood vessels in the outermost layers of skin, which decreases blood flow and makes skin paler. This also depletes the skin of oxygen and nutrients that are important to skin health.

Smoking also damages collagen and elastin — the fibers that give your skin strength and elasticity. In addition, the repetitive facial expressions you make when smoking — such as pursing your lips when inhaling and squinting your eyes to keep out smoke — can contribute to wrinkles.

In addition, smoking increases your risk of squamous cell skin cancer. If you smoke, the best way to protect your skin is to quit. Ask your doctor for tips or treatments to help you stop smoking.

## 3. Treat your skin gently

Daily cleansing and shaving can take a toll on your skin. To keep it gentle:

- Limit bath time. Hot water and long showers or baths remove oils from your skin. Limit your bath or shower time, and use warm — rather than hot — water.
- Avoid strong soaps. Strong soaps and detergents can strip oil from your skin. Instead, choose mild cleansers.
- Shave carefully. To protect and lubricate your skin, apply shaving cream, lotion or gel before shaving. For the closest shave, use a clean, sharp razor. Shave in the direction the hair grows, not against it.
- Pat dry. After washing or bathing, gently pat or blot your skin dry with a towel so that some moisture remains on your skin.
- Moisturize dry skin. If your skin is dry, use a moisturizer that fits your skin type. For daily use, consider a moisturizer that contains SPF.

## 4. Eat a healthy diet

A healthy diet can help you look and feel your best. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. The association between diet and acne isn't clear — but some research suggests that a diet rich in fish oil or fish oil supplements and low in unhealthy fats and processed or refined carbohydrates might promote younger looking skin. Drinking plenty of water helps keep your skin hydrated.

## 5. Manage stress

Uncontrolled stress can make your skin more sensitive and trigger acne breakouts and other skin problems. To encourage healthy skin — and a healthy state of mind — take steps to manage your stress. Get enough sleep, set reasonable limits, scale back your to-do list and make time to do the things you enjoy. The results might be more dramatic than you expect.



### A historic moment!

Our Harambee Junior Starlets have qualified for the FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup in style, this afternoon, defeating Burundi 2-0 (5-0 on aggregate) at the Ulinzi Sports Complex in Lang'ata.

We celebrate them for their great achievement!

H.E Raila Odinga



Kenya is a firm believer in the shared global values of multi-lateralism as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We will safeguard shared principles of humanity that enable us to advance peace, security and stability.

Held talks with the Haiti Transitional Presidential Council chaired by Engineer Edgard Leblanc Fils. We shall establish communication channels as part of the ongoing engagement in restoring peace to Haiti.

H.E William Ruto



# CELEBRATING BEAUTY WITH A BRAIN



Hanifa Farsafi is a Kenyan online activist who has played a pivotal role in the organisation and execution of the ongoing Gen Z anti-finance bill demonstrations. Known for her work in the online magazine The Eastleigh Voice, Miss. Farsafi has exhibited an astute bravery throughout the protests, providing commendable leadership, Mobilisation and sensitization throughout the process.

Having been arrested at the height of the protests, she stood her ground and even after release, insisted on waiting for the others to be released. This takes a decent level of selflessness and resilience to think of others regardless of the prevailing difficult circumstances.

Regardless of the arrest, she defiantly went on to join the subsequent protests and still take a centre stage in the planning of the 7 days of rage slated for next week and beyond. Her resolve to see a better Kenya remains steadfast, insisting on holding leaders accountable for their choices and decisions.

Today, Farsafi is still among the leading online voices calling for the freedom of Billy, the vocal influencer who's whereabouts are yet to be known after he was arrested in the protests.



### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

We need reforms at the US Embassy in Kenya. If a visa is denied, they should refund our money or part of it! Once we're done with the Finance Bill, our next focus should be the US Embassy. They reject 99% of the applications, forming a syndicate that mints millions from Kenyans.







# KENYANS SAY NO TO FINANCE BILL 2024, TAKE FRUSTRATIONS TO THE STREETS, POLICE LOSE TWO ARMS TRYING TO QUELL THE PROTEST.

Dear Mr President- I have Read, understood and Rejected the 2024 Finance Bill. One thing that does not sit well with me is the New Taxes imposed on the Creatives. With só Much Burden We do so Much to Entertain and It's unfair to Take away the Little We have Left @BahatiKenya



We have the internet, we no longer need the mainstream media to validate our cause. If we have to sit and record a video we have so many online platforms. Remember the mainstream media is also the enemy. @saddam\_KE



This is what the MPs were feeling when we were spamming them with messages and texts?? Ayayaya beautiful scenes so please don't put me through that 🙄 please let's all talk at the protest Kesho. Kindly @Honeyfarsafi



I stan fearless Kenyan Gen Z baddies fighting for their freedoms online and offline. Your courage and conviction is inspiring. It's giving revolution. We are led @LarryMadowo



Luos have been doing it since we threw eggs at Jomo in Kisumu, Up until after 2022. It's been largely our burden to protest against Pernicious regimes That's Generations. Decades So generation Tik Tok can also take charge I hope they have voters card. Not protests for clout @AokoOtieno\_



The people of Kisumu have notified the media that, tomorrow, they shall be visiting Kondele Police Station to seek their opinion on the Finance Bill 2024. The police will then be allowed to vote YES or NO, and their votes will be tallied in-situ. They welcome election observers @GabrielOguda



I have NEVER Covered on news a Professional Protest like #REJECTFINANCEBILL2024 Gen Z hats off! No looting, no stones only queens language, facts and Maths! Police did not have to use teargas this time. @SteveLetoo



I'm receiving strange calls from strange numbers. It happened since yesterday. I'm not going to stop talking about impunity, if we must die we will die standing rather than live on our knees. The message is clear don't edit or amend but Drop and withdraw the Finance Bill 2024. @edgarwabwire\_



So much POLITICAL GOODWILL lost over a budget proposal prepared by INCOMPETENT and clueless personnel...where did H.E @WILLIAMSRUTO bring from these miscellaneous collections of blundering unskilled labourers? @Ahmednasirlaw



Dear MPs: Have you considered that a foreign power, UNHAPPY with Ruto wants to Occupy Parliament? This protest against Finance Bill 2024 is NOT organic. Telephone numbers etc.. Someone wants to destabilise Kenya and create an Arab Spring! And our FOOLISH children are the TOYS. @MutahiNgunyi







Germany's Ilay Gundogan celebrates after scoring the second goal against Hungary in their second match of the Group A of the Euro 2024 competition

A TOTAL OF:

# 34

GOALS WERE SCORED IN THE FIRST 12 GAMES OF THE EUROS 2024



"This has so far proven to be the best Euros ever witnessed in decades," a post reads X. Truthfully so, we have been served to an aesthetically colorful but dramatically chaotic tournament with the first twelve games being the most entertaining ones ever seen in that particular stage. Leading by example is the host nation Germany, who started their competition in a classic German fashion, having pulled off a performance reminiscent of their 2014 World Cup semi-final annihilation of a then intimidating Brazilian side after thwarting a frantic Scottish national team a commanding five goals to one, which for more context was an own goal from center back Antonio Rudiger.

Out of the 34 goals scored in the opening matches, a whopping 12 of them were from outside the box with all games but a handful witnessing goals galore, with not less than two goals scored in a plethora.

The traditional football giant countries have also not disappointed save for Croatia, which is yet to register an outright win thus far. Unfortunately for France, they might face a challenge filling the boots of Captain Kylian Mbappe who broke his nose in their opening match and if he gets back, will have to play with a face mask.



Kylian Mbappe has to wear protective mask for the rest of the Euro 2024 campaign.



Luka Modric's Croatia lost the opening match against Spain while dropping additional two points in their second match against Slovakia.



# FESTAC AFRICA - LRGB INVESTMENT FORUM NAIROBI









## FESTAC AFRICA- LREB INVESTMENT FFORM



For the very first time in his life-time, a skinny young boy from the paisible villages of Siaya County was sat at the famous Bomas of Kenya, for a high profile investment forum, which was to bring together millionaire Chief Executive Officers and other over-achieving luminaries from different disciplines and parts of the country.

It was on Thursday, the 6th of June 2024, a generally humid and overcast day; with little to completely no sunlight. It was cold, something he is not usually comfortable with, but the color in the room, gave him a glimpse of hope- that the day was going to be a brilliant one, regardless.

From a distance, Ms. Grace Mumo, the award winning Chief Executive Officer of FESTAC AFRICA could be seen purposefully moving up and down to ensure that everything was in situ for a smooth occasion. She was donning a red African attire, as if to emphasize her confidence on the success of the day ahead. Red, is the symbol of passion, and truthfully so, her eyes were full of passion for everything that was going on. She had spent a whole week, with sleepless nights, preparing her team for the day. Indeed, it came a moment she was to taste the fruits of her resilience.

From the background, smooth Afrocentric music was playing to charm and to sooth the high ranking dignitaries who patiently waited for the occasion to begin. Traditionally drinks decorated the room, from the famous Mursik of the Kalenjin community to Madafu from coast tribes and Chwaa of the Luo community. It was indeed an hour of euphoria, as all cultures from Kenya were put in one basket; to tell the world about the beauty in our diversity.

This is the role of FESTAC. It rekindles the flames of black excellence, but most importantly provides an elevated platform where young people can learn, network and chart a path to the destiny of their desires. It is the foundation upon which we want Africa's future based on. ing to set the tone for the beautiful day ahead. A large screen displayed the historical roots of the Worlds Black and African Festival, which is the biggest cultural event in Africa. As the day eased to its peak, Eng. Yinka Abioye's imposing figure took up the stage for his preliminary duties, of welcoming all in attendance.

" I am so happy to see you here," Yinka stated. A lot of work has gone into the planning of this forum," he continued. " But we are not entitled to your attention," he went on. " It is a pleasure to see you all fill the room," he said. " This is a glimpse of what FESTAC Africa can do," Yinka said. " It accentuates the beauty of our afrocentric diversity. It brings all to an umbrella platform, where professionals from different backgrounds can mingle and take a role in exchange of skills and ideas, but most importantly, it is a celebration of Africa's original values," he said. "So welcome to this great platform and let us make FESTAC 2024 bigger than ever before."

In the room was Prof. Julia Ojiambo, who happened to have led the Kenyan delegation to FESTAC 77, who reminisced the beauty that the Festival brought from all over the world to Lagos, Nigeria.

"Nigeria was so colourful," she said. " I hope we can emulate that in Kisumu as well," she said. Known as The renaissance woman, Prof. Julia Ojiambo is a name to beat in Kenya having broken the glass ceiling by becoming the first female ever to become a member of the cabinet in Kenya and the first black African woman to be appointed Lecturer at the University of Nairobi. She used the platform to educate attendees on the value and benefits of the festival to host communities, using the FESTAC AFRICA festival 1977 as the model that the Kisumu-Kenya edition should emulate.

## VIBA EXPLORE TOURS GIVES YOU THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE-TIME



There is never a dull moment in the City of Kisumu, where communities love to live in extreme opulence. The vibe of the city is generally fantamaglorious, with extreme posh cars roving the streets. The Luo nation, the traditional inhabitants of the city by the lake are popular for loving a large life. In the midst of the high-end hotels, beautiful houses and up-market estates, are the beautiful joints along the shores of Lake Victoria including the famous Casa Kiboko Bay, where a certain Vivian Kobe loves to kill her free time. Alias Mamake, Kobe is the Chairperson for Marketing at Lake Victoria Tourism Board and happens to run her own tourism company, known as Viba Explore Tours. She, is also among the keynote speakers for the forthcoming FESTAC AFRICA Festival 2024.

For the quality of her services, she is widely described as affordable and the experiences provided by Viba tours said to be extremely therapeutic. From Lake excursions to game viewing, the diversity of their services accentuates the trajectory of modern tourism and the importance of giving clients value for their money.

In a past encounter with City Bite Magazine, Ms. Kobe emphasized on the importance of putting client needs first as a pillar for the uniqueness of her company services " We are there for them, because without them we won't be here. Your first objective as a tour operator is to make your client comfortable and to ensure you're capable of living a lasting memory in their minds," she said. "Your second objective then is to ensure they want to come back for more," she said. " By that I mean that you want to give them an experience they can never get from other companies," she declared. "You must go an extra mile. You must do something new, and you must think outside the box," she stated. "Our field is a sensitive field. You deal with people from all over the universe. These are those with diverse cultures and have different ways of having fun so you have to get into their perspectives and give them the best experiences ever."





# DARE LIFE MEDIA, CHUNY ONAGI T.V AND YOUNG PEOPLE RE-DEFINING THE DYNAMICS OF COMMUNICATION IN KISUMU

Kisumu City is known for many things. The fast cars, the posh lifestyle of the Luo community and their love for academia. It is, however a little appreciated detail; the energy and creativity of youths in the City County of Kisumu, whose industry is changing the dynamics of digital communications, with youth-led media channels taking over the streets. Jowi FM, Chuny Onagi TV, Kala TV and Dare Life media to name a few, are at the centre of information dissemination in the language of the so called gen-zs. For this volume of City Bite Magazine, we explore the intricacies of running a media platform as a young person through the lenses of Mr. Gerald Bonyo who leads Chuny Onagi TV and Ms. Mercy Okuto, the founder and C.E.O of Dare Life Media, a youth run media platform with a combined over 100,000 followers on the various social media networks.

Okuto, a lady of many talents recently shared with us her story, the challenges she has had to face a long the way and the ones she continue to face, the shifting dynamics in the lives of media personalities and the future of the industry. "It is a herculean task to run any organisation in this world. To start from the beginning, to continue through challenges and to create a brand takes a lot of time and energy," she declared. "But all of it don't matter. It is the resilience that does," she stated. "You wake up tired, get up and do what it takes. You wake up hungry, do the same. You wake up feeling lonely, go and do what it takes because nothing comes for free, you must earn it," Mercy stated. "Through my journey with Dare Life Media I have had a lot to deal with, but I have always believed that growth is a process that requires patience. I want to grow, so I must keep my head down, and that is the basis of my work ethic," she said.

"I started Dare Life Media a few years back, then at some point, I had to take a break because everything was not right. But through resilience, I have risen from the ruins, to most recently launch the organisation on first May 2024," she said. "And of course I want to thank everyone that has supported me through thick and thin. Everyone that supported and contributed to my launch event, I'd like to thank them from the bottom of my heart," she said. "It is difficult to be somebody without a support system. And it is not easy to get a genuine support system but I can proudly say; thank you to my support system," she continued. "Special thank you to Dr. Simon Peter, Hon. Sammy Onyango, Mr. Seth Okumu and all members of the political class that came through for my launch," she said. "Every kind gesture matters in this uncharted waters of life, and those gestures my friend, I appreciate all of them," she said. Talking about her vision, Ms. Mercy waxed lyrical of her dream to build the most authoritative communication brand in Kisumu. "Not only in Kisumu in the future, but Nyanza region in its entirety but yes, Dare Life Media will be the most authoritative communication brand here in the City," she said. "In Nyanza region, we have brains but the others outshine us. Even the biggest Luo Media platform is owned by someone from a different community. That shouldn't be the case. Let us join hands, support one another and harness the energy and the brains to build a platform that will outlast generations."



**Mercie Okuto; Founder of Dare Life Media**

Besides Dare Life Media, Aus The Darer as she's known is also a full time journalist at the local radio station Jowi FM, which is also run by young people. Ask of how she balances between her personal organisation and the mainstream media job, she says its simple when you understand the distinction between the two and the values each represent.

"It's nothing complicated," she said. "Jowi FM is a mainstream media brand," she said. "Dare Life Media is digital," she continued. "The first step is to recognise the difference between the two adjectives -mainstream and digital-. "Once you do, you will then need to differentiate the values of the two different organisations, and respect both, then do your job to the level best," she stated. "I appreciate Jowi FM and the leadership a lot," she stated. "This platform has played a pivotal role in my development upto this minute," she stated. "Through them, I have learnt a lot of things in the media industry. I would love to be here and learn more, even as I continue to Dare with Dare Life Media," she stated.



**Emblem of Dare Life Media**

In a separate conversation, City Bite interacted with Greald Bonyo of Chuny Onagi TV, which according to him is a leading ventricular television channel in the City of Kisumu. It's main objective is to promote the local industries in music, businesses, talents and news. "We are predominantly local," Bonyo said. "We play local music, promote local businesses, promote local talents and everything is done the local way, something no other media platform in Kenya does," he told us. "Our programs cover diverse topics and run from 7 am to mid-night every day," he said. "We also run a live Luo music nights program, where local artists can perform Luo music and entertain," he stated. "We also spearhead cultural activities within the city, through providing coverage for cultural events like Kisumu Festival, The Fish Fiesta, hosting FESTAC AFRICA Ambassadors, among every other event that appreciates the vibe of the Luo nation," he stated. "We, basically create awareness on the beauty of our own traditions and originality," Gerald said.

Over and above that, we are a platform for nurturing young journalists," he declared. "We have young presenters doing all it take to keep everyone updated with what's going on in the world at all the time," he said. "And I want to take this opportunity to thank them all," he said. "Thank you to Mr. Josh Adero, Steve James, Sheila Magare, Myself, Evans Odoyo, Velma Ayiekoh, Beth Otieno, Ken Willis and Mumbo Jakadongo," he said.

"Moving forward, we want to have an organisation that's trusted for giving accurate and trustworthy news," he said. "We will build a platform that is authentic in telling the stories, not only of the Luo nation, but the entire African continent," he stated. "Our indigenous communities deserve to be read about and our beautiful cultures cannot be swept under the bus by the imperialists forever," he said. "In ten years, come back to me and ask these questions, we will see how to go about everything. "



**Gerald Bonyo; Journalist at Chuny Onagi T.V**



**Emblem of Chuny Onagi T.V**



# TWO WEEKS OF ARTS AND EDUTAINMENT, THAT CULMINATED IN A POMPOUS AFRICA DAY ENTERTAINMENT ; KANDA LA ZIWA FESTIVAL 2024.

The beauty of art, is in its versatility. Versatility in the sense that it can be used to achieve a lot of things. Not only can we communicate our feelings through art but we can also entertain. However, a young man from Kisumu has, found a more vibrant functionality for art: To advocate for the well-being of Lake Victoria and to unite communities. For two weeks, last month, Kanda La Ziwa creative residency was hosted by 'The World Famous' Dunga Hill Camp, a renown hub for nurturing talents and creatives from all parts of Kisumu, and to an extent the nation.

It all began in the morning of the fifteenth of May, with a welcoming speech from the host and festival curator Mr. Dave Ojay, followed by remarks from attending guests. In the crowd were officials from the City County of Kisumu, alongside those from the Lake Region Economic Bloc and as a pre-FESTAC AFRICA festival activity, it was graced by Eng. Yinka Abioye and Ms. Grace Mumo, the chairman and the C.E.O of FESTAC AFRICA respectively. Noteworthy is the presence of the Chief Executive Officer of Elgon Group LTD. Ms. Mercy Wamoto, Nyatiti artist Makadem, Punglu Pangla and other notable guests who took part in the opening session, where the basis of discussion was rekindling our originality as Africans, and using art to achieve it. Mr. Ojuondo, the CEO of NAAM Festival underscored, in his speech the teething need to conserve and protect Lake Victoria.



Loquaciously, Mr. Ojay as he's commonly known waxed lyrical of the lake and called for concerted efforts towards conserving it's environs. "If this Lake dies today, what would be the source of livelihood to our fishermen?" he rhetorically asked those in attendance. "However, the first step, for me is to decolonization our way of doing things, and to decolonize the lake completely," he stated. "Let's think about calling it Naam Lolwe, which is it's original name," he stated. "For the next two weeks, we will, not only use art to edutain, but also to advocate for the rights of Lake Victoria," Ojay stated. "This, also is a pre-FESTAC AFRICA Festival activity. FESTAC is an umbrella platform for appreciating African excellence. We welcome the leadership of the festival and ask all to participate in the August bound fifth World's Black and African Festival."



What then followed were a series of activities, throughout the week and the next one leading to the Africa Day celebrations on the 25th of May. Artists of different sects got the platform to express themselves through their different works of art. Mural artists Greig Ogola and Mercedes Nyagaya showcased their flair while Punglu Pangla, Makadem and many more entertained with their traditional music performances.

Dialogue on assorted topics were also held, with emphasis on the importance of using art to change the course of basically many challenges faced among communities in the grassroots. "We can use art to actually create awareness on the ethnic clashes in Sondu," Ojay espouses. "It is a sad thing to see our brothers kill each other, when we are a people basically cut from the same cloth," he stated. "And that's where we should be headed next," he said. "We must use what we have to bridge the gaps bedevilling our society," Ojay declared. "Art, unlike other tools is universal. It doesn't have boundaries, it doesn't have a tribe," he said. "We can, therefore harness it to be a unifying factor."

Among the key partners for this festival was the Goethe Institute, which according to Mr. Ojay came in handy for it's general success. The highlight, however of the entire event was the well articulated press statement released by the planners.



**15-25th**  
**MAY 2024**  
KANDA LA ZIWA  
RESIDENCY TOOK  
PLACE AT DUNGA  
HILL-CAMP

**KANDA LA ZIWA CREATIVE CAMP**  
A FESTIVAL WITHIN A FESTIVAL  
LAKE VICTORIA: A UNITY SYMBOL FOR AFRICA  
FILM SCREENINGS, PAN AFRICANISM DIALOGUE,  
PANEL DISCUSSIONS, ART RESIDENCY &  
EXHIBITIONS, LIVE MUSIC, INNOVATION HUB,  
LAKE CLEAN UP  
14 - 25TH MAY 2024 | DUNGA HILL CAMP  
20TH - 25TH MAY 2024  
#JUSTICEFORLAKEVICTORIA



**Kanda La Ziwa: Pre - Festac Festival Events and Creative Arts Residency**

Kanda La Ziwa Creative Camp residency seeks to implement a pre-Festac festival collaboration in curating artistic expressions with local and regional lakeside artists. Working closely to share knowledge with creatives from the rest of the East African region and the world. NAAM Festival running the #JusticeforLakeVictoria arts advocacy campaign attracts about 2,500 guests in its festival events in Kisumu over 2-3days. This year will see a Festival within a Festival showcase and execute a lakeside creative camp dubbed Kanda La Ziwa to co-create installations and cultural experiences at the lakeside city for the Africa week/day as pre FESTAC Africa events. Great synergies expected in several areas between artists, events practitioners, thought leaders, students, activists, film makers, journalists and the oldest festival in Africa. A Pan-African festival platform that rekindles spirit of unity, celebrating diversity, and pays homage to Africa’s past, present and future.

FESTAC – A Pan African festival of arts and culture seeks to unite black people and Africans from all over the world to proudly share in the uniqueness through art, Music, Dance, Fashion, Food, Culture, Heritage and Storytelling is docking in the port city of Kisumu August 2024. Partnering with Dunga Hill Camp – The world-famous green events and entertainment spot on the shores of Lake Victoria and the Lakeside Peoples Meeting (Kanda La Ziwa) – NAAM Festival. Lake Victoria is a unity symbol of Africa. Kisumu regional meeting point is yet to experience an enthralling cultural extravaganza and a creative public therapy.

We aim to promote Cultural Best Practices, Research for Africa Cultural Diversity, Showcase Diaspora Talent and Festivals Diversity, Bring Black People Together and Celebrate The African Day/Week (May 20 - 25th) through Art and Speakers Panels.

The Dunga Hill Experience and NAAM festival gigs during the Kanda La Ziwa artists master classes have been supported by the Goethe Institute, Strathmore University and the Lakeside School program for Kenya Small Business Development Centre, Musicians Union Nyanza Branch, Lake Hub and Kisumu My Pride.

Featuring artists include Felicity Mudis (KSM), Makadem (Expert Artists-KE), Liboi (NBO), Pungulu Pangala Story teller (KSM), Orato Visual Artist (KSM) among other upcoming artists from the port city.

- Kanda La Ziwa, Kisumu Got Talent artists camp from 15th to 23rd May with visual and performing artists co-creating public art installation and stage showcase of a new Lake/Kisumu City anthem. This is a residency program mounted at Dunga Hill Camp for both musicians and visual artists will lead to public showcasing during the Africa Day and Dunga Hill Experience.

- Open studios for creatives to showcase and share experiences through organized status-free dialogue platforms in the week leading to Africa Week/Day, during and even after the ground activities through collective digital platforms to discuss issues affecting the creative economy and solutions along with promotion of local culture and decolonization of Lake Victoria.

- Film Screenings and hybrid discussions in collaboration with DocuBox at the residency and the Africa week for Pan Africanism discussions featuring Kisumu’s Utalii College, KEMFRI and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University students and professors/lecturers.
- Crew and Local artists media tours for interviews with key organizers and appearances at Urban Radio, Lolwe TV/Radio, KalaTV and East Africa Blog Sites etc

One of the artists in residency acknowledging the impact of this artists program states: “Art is a soft but powerful tool that speaks truth to power and the hearts of the masses while employing millions of youth in the creative economy. Through creative activism we are able to lower the barriers to change and beat poor governance issues, equality, environmental and social injustices while preserving our culture and identity.” Sharon Liboi – Musician

Another highlight of the campaign will be an interactive environmental workshop on sustainable collection of waste during clean ups. It will train participants on how to segregate waste and establish collection stations.

**KANDA LA ZIWA**

**A SWAHILI TRANSLATION OF LAKE REGION**

Another highlight of the campaign will be an interactive environmental workshop on sustainable collection of waste during clean ups. It will train participants on how to segregate waste and establish collection stations. “Human beings are destroying The Nyanza Lake Sango known as Victoria due to colonization. We must shift our business in this Planet from PROFIT to PROSPERITY in order to conserve our Lake and the symbol of unity in the region. We believe its protection is a pathway to a United Africa because it powers 11 basin countries with a population of about 440 million people from Uganda to Egypt via the Nile.” Dave Ojay the director and curator of Kanda La Ziwa Residency.

The residency was launched and flagged off by the CECM Culture and Sports Mrs Beatrice Odongo and in attendance the FESTAC Chairman Eng Yinka Aboye among other guests.







**KENYAN GEN Z ON A TRAFFICK LIGHT DURING THE #REJECTFINANCEBILL2024 PROTEST**



**Youngster Arda Guler goes head to head with 39 year old Cristiano Ronaldo**



**Raila Odinga in S.Africa for Tge swearing in Ceremony of Cyril Ramaphosa as the president of South Africa.**



**C.S Alfred Mutua visits police officer who lost both arms while lobbing teargas on protesters during the Anti- Finance Bill 2024 demonstrations.**

# CITYBITE MAGAZINE



**Police officer points a gun at an peaceful protester during the anti-finance bill demonstrations**

VOL. 17





**FESTAC  
AFRICA  
RENAISSANCE**

# 2024 CALENDAR



JANUARY						
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