

Peter Banura and Rajiv Ruparelia: Sad tale of the price of lawlessness

Still grieving over the very unfortunate and untimely demise of Kikuube LC5 chairperson Peter Banura. I came to know Peter when he'd just entered politics a few years ago. He's the one who took the initiative to reach out to me. I was hesitant to talk to a stranger, but when he said he was Gen Matayo Kyaligonza's son, I relaxed.

As a journalist, I interviewed Gen Kyaligonza several times. I liked him. Very interesting chap. Nice and easy, but chaotic and unpredictable at times. A man I learnt to approach the way one approaches a loaded gun—carefully, and never twice the same way. He could blow up mid-interview, order you to get lost, and then laugh about it, and the interview would resume. I last met him a few years ago in Bujumbura, Burundi, at what, at least back then, was a small, threadbare, run-down excuse of an airport. We exchanged polite greetings on the tarmac. I've seen some Generals who wouldn't be fit to command a troop of Boy Scouts. But Kyaligonza is a different kettle of fish. He is a General who has actually been to the battlefield and can tell a story about a fight he actually took part in and the series of exploits that earned him his pips.

As a ruling party 'Historical' Gen Kyaligonza belongs to the small, privileged elite that has run the country 40 years now. Ordinarily, a man you cannot touch anyhow. And presumably, therefore, a man insulated against the ineptitude of a government that, beyond staying in power and enjoying privileges, really has no vision for the nation and employs strategic lawlessness as a pillar of longevity. Those with power, money, or regime loyalty somehow navigate the chaos safely. The rest of us are left at the mercy of fate.

Our calls for reform are always sneered at. But you see, disaster never issues notice of inten-

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Gawaya Tegulle
Objection



tion to visit. One step out of his car, and Peter was mowed down by a reckless taxi driver. To many, this was just an accident, but to the more discerning, it was a verdict—delivered by a system that has long surrendered the roads, and much else, to chaos. It was the quiet arithmetic of lawlessness finally adding up.

Taxi drivers, bus drivers, and boda boda riders are a law unto themselves. They do whatever they want. A perfect example of how much we have failed as a society.

Eventually, the failure of the system catches up with even the powerful, at the least opportune time and in the most painful of ways.

That is how Rajiv Ruparelia—a young man with everything a person could wish for—met a sad, sudden death in May 2025 because people in certain places, made a mess of the entire road project. Images of tycoon Sudhir Ruparelia carrying his son's casket were very painful to watch. No parent should go through that—burying their be-

loved child prematurely, courtesy of an accident that, in a functional society, should never have happened.

We must decide, deliberately and decisively, to build a country that works—not for the privileged few who can navigate chaos, but for everyone.

That begins with the restoration of the rule of law in reality, not rhetoric. Enforcement of rules in every sector must be consistent, visible, and blind to status. The culture of impunity—where violations are routine and consequences rare—must be dismantled, not through episodic crackdowns, but through sustained institutional discipline.

Beyond the roads lies a deeper reform necessary: the reimagining of the State itself. A country that works is one where systems replace favours, where rights replace permissions, where citizens do not need proximity to power to access safety, justice, or opportunity. This is not a technical challenge. It is a political choice.

The very disorder that shields the powerful from accountability also strips them of protection. It creates a country where proximity to power may delay consequences, but cannot ultimately prevent them. The jungle does not remember who built it, nor does electricity remember the one who invented it.

We can continue as we are—curating chaos, managing crises, and consoling ourselves that the fallout will always land elsewhere. Or we can confront the harder truth: that disorder, once entrenched, spares no one.

Mr Tegulle is an advocate of the High Court of Uganda | gtegulle@gmail.com