

The world of athletics mourns the devastating loss of not only one, but two talented individuals following a fatal road accident on Sunday, February 11th in Kenya.

Kenyan marathon world record holder Kelvin Kiptum, 24, and his Rwandan coach Gervais Hakizimana tragically lost their lives in the incident, leaving a deep void in the sport and sending shockwaves across the globe.

Kiptum's meteoric rise in 2023 captured the hearts of fans and athletes alike. His historic performance at the Chicago Marathon, where he shattered Eliud Kipchoge's long-standing world record by 34 seconds, marked him as a rising star with immense potential.

Hakizimana, Kiptum's dedicated coach, played a crucial role in guiding him to this pinnacle. His expertise and support were instrumental in Kiptum's success, making their joint loss even more heartbreaking.

From fellow athletes like Kipchoge to sporting bodies like World Athletics, tributes poured in honoring both Kiptum and Hakizimana. Their talent, dedication, and positive impact on the sport were widely recognized and celebrated.

IOC President Thomas Bach was among those who led tributes to Kiptum and his coach Hakizimana.

"It is with extreme sadness that I learnt of the tragic passing of world marathon record-holder Kelvin Kiptum from Kenya in a car accident," Bach said. "We had been looking forward to welcoming him into the Olympic community at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and seeing what the fastest marathon runner in the world could achieve. Our thoughts are with his family and friends as well as with those of his coach, Gervais Hazimana, who also died in the accident."

While the cause of the accident remains under investigation, the tragedy raises concerns about road safety in Kenya and the potential risks faced by athletes traveling and training.

It also highlights the importance of driver education and awareness, especially for those navigating challenging road conditions.

Kiptum broke the men's marathon record in Chicago on 8 October 2023, with a time of two hours and 35 seconds. He was scheduled to run at the Rotterdam Marathon on 14 April.

The Kenyan slashed 34 seconds off two-time Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge's previous world record from Berlin in 2022 to become the first man to run the marathon under two hours and one minute.