Kenya's diesel costs fell 24% — but drivers paid the same

Diesel import costs fell by nearly a quarter in Kenya's last fuel pricing cycle, yet the pump price of diesel did not move by a single shilling — and analysts at EBC Financial Group warned

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Why Kenyans keep voting for the politics they complain about

In 2024, only 38 percent of Africans used the internet, against a global average of 68 percent. Sub-Saharan Africa produced roughly 0.89 percent of the world's AI research publications

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The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 Failed: Ruto: The opposition's financial backer is a man who failed to deliver during his own ten-year presidency.

The war Kenya never saw coming

President William Ruto yesterday publicly accused former President Uhuru Kenyatta of financing the opposition Linda Mwananchi movement, sharpening a political confrontation between two once-inseparable allies that now defines the contours of Kenya's most consequential electoral contest in a generation.

Speaking to residents in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Ruto did not name Kenyatta directly but left no ambiguity about his target. He described the opposition's financial backer as a man who had failed to deliver affordable housing, universal health coverage, and free education during his own ten-year presidency, and who had now dispatched surrogates to destabilise a successor who was delivering what he could not. The language was blunt, the setting deliberate — Eldoret is Ruto's political heartland, and the crowd was his most loyal.

"Every leader is judged by the work they have done," Ruto said, in remarks translated from Swahili. "Nobody will come and deceive us with slogans — 'one term', 'must go' — and then we hand them power. That is foolishness." He went on to dismiss the opposition as a movement without policy, agenda, or ideas, promising to deal with them decisively. "Those people — I will wash them early in the morning," he said, in a phrase that carried the contemptuous confidence of a politician who believes he controls the political weather.

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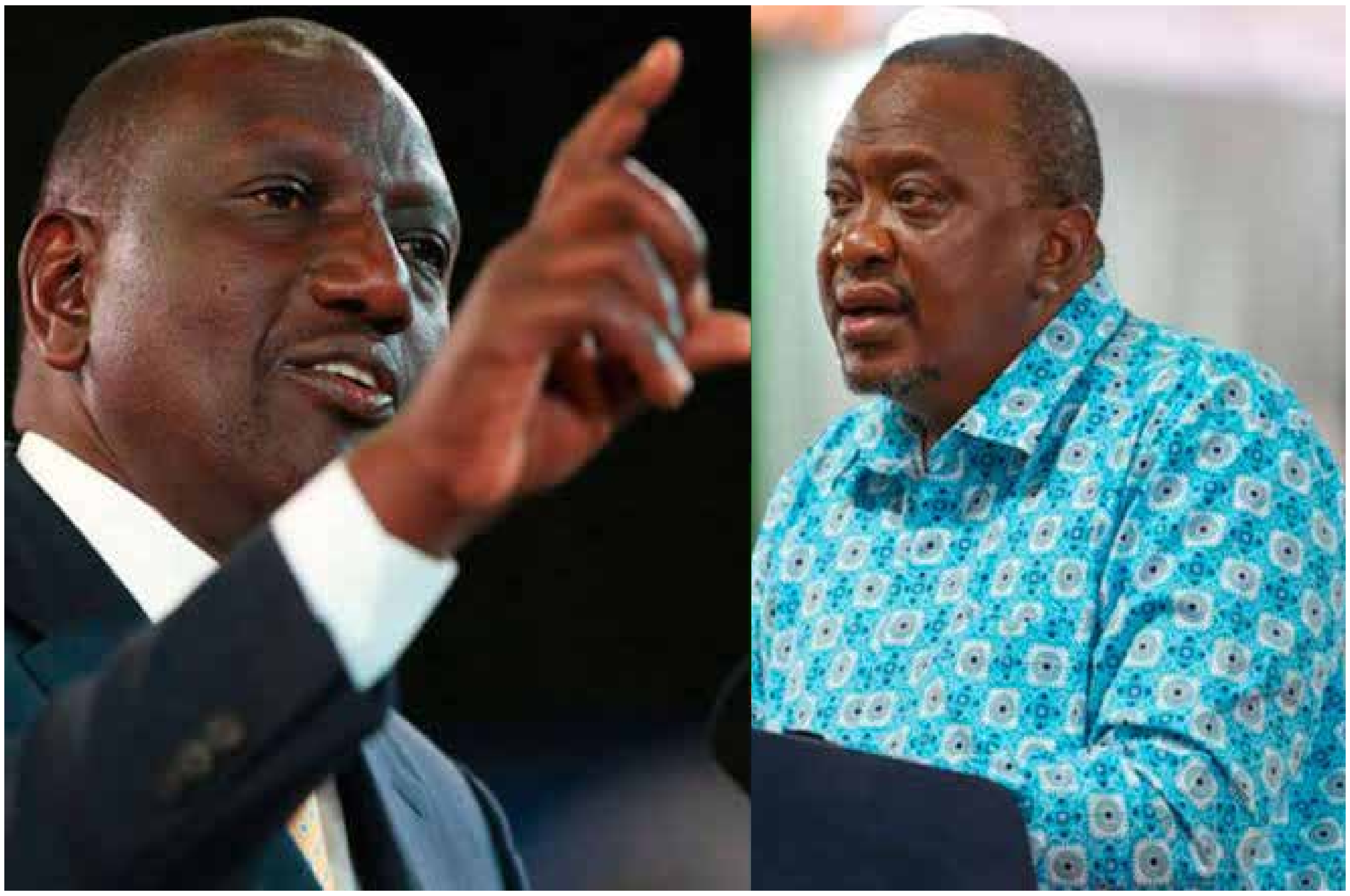

A photo collage of President William Ruto and his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta. Photo/Courtesy

MKU Creative Arts shine at National Music Festival

BY James Wakahiu
@themtkenyatimes

Some of MKU fraternity moments as captured in pictures

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has continued to assert its dominance in Kenya's creative arts scene after its teams posted an impressive 19 overall wins, 25 second-place finishes and 14 third-place positions at the 98th Kenya National Music Festival.

The university's choir excelled in several categories, emerging top in "Zilizo Pendwa" with live instruments, gospel pop adaptations and arrangements, and popular Kenyan secular tunes. The choir also won a special composition sponsored by Equity Group, earning a KSh100,000 prize, and emerged victorious in a class sponsored by the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. It placed third in the Central Bank of Kenya-sponsored set piece, winning KSh50,000.

The Verses team added more victories in special compositions sponsored by the Communications Authority and Amref Kenya on tuberculosis, as well as the French verse category.

Dean of Students Dr Emmanuel Awour congratulated the teams, saying they had exceeded expectations. Team leaders Tracy Mulindi and Brillian Ochieng attributed the success to faith, sacrifice and rigorous rehearsals.

The festival, held at Kibabii University, Bungoma brings together learners from across Kenya under the theme of enhancing the creative economy.

Despite fatigue towards the end, MKU's largely first- and second-year team gained valuable experience, positioning the university for greater success in future competitions.














Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times


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Group Executive Chairman
M. Danson
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/

Our Contacts
P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262
Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,
News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web**: www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Kenya and China are exploring areas of cooperation to accelerate the country's digital transformation agenda. Principal Secretary for ICT and the Digital Economy, Eng. John Tanui, held talks with a delegation from Guodong Network Communication Group on potential areas of collaboration. The discussions focused on investment in digital infrastructure, expanding digital connectivity, developing smart cities and strengthening Kenya's digital economy. Tanui reaffirmed the Government's commitment to accelerating digital transformation by expanding infrastructure and improving connectivity across the country. The engagement is expected to open opportunities for increased investment and partnerships in technology and digital infrastructure, supporting Kenya's efforts to build an inclusive and competitive digital economy.

Garissa Airport has begun attracting new airline services following a KSh710 million modernization project jointly funded by the national and county governments. The upgraded facility features an expanded runway, improved taxiways, VIP halls, checking areas, a prayer room and a larger aircraft apron. Skyward Airlines yesterday launched flights on the Nairobi-Garissa route, operating four times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays at a one-way fare of KSh9,000. Governor Nathif Jama said the service would improve connectivity, facilitate movement of people and goods, and boost tourism, trade and investment. He said the airport's modernization was already attracting business opportunities and expressed optimism that more would follow once the Kenya Airports Authority fully equips the facility.

Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe has assured Kenyans that the country will remain food secure despite drought and unpredictable weather patterns. Speaking during a visit to Trans Nzoia County, where he assessed the impact of dry conditions on maize production and seed multiplication, Kagwe said maize output is expected to decline. He said the Government would import maize, including from the COMESA region, to supplement local supplies and prevent shortages. Kagwe also said the country has adequate maize seed stocks despite the drought, with an estimated 25 to 30 per cent of the seed crop potentially lost. He said changing weather patterns require a new approach to agriculture, with the Government relying on meteorological forecasts to prepare for drought, El Niño and other extreme weather events.

The Government has called for stronger partnerships between Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and industry to bridge the skills gap and improve graduate employability. TVETA Acting Secretary Joseph Njau said Kenya is shifting towards competency-based training focused on practical skills, innovation and productivity. Speaking at a Nairobi workshop, he urged employers to help shape curricula, provide workplace exposure and participate in training. A partnership between the State Department for TVET and the Fresh Produce Consortium of Kenya will strengthen practical training, research, innovation and technology transfer in the agricultural sector. FPC Kenya President Okisegere Ojepat said the initiative will align training with industry needs, boost exports and create jobs, while Nyandarua National Polytechnic chief principal Dr Jane Gitau called for measurable outcomes.

Tea Board of Kenya Chairman Ndung'u Gathinji and Chief Executive Officer Willy K. Mutai yesterday held a consultative meeting with the Board of Directors of Iriaini Tea Factory to discuss ongoing reforms and developments in the tea sector. The discussions focused on the Tea Levy and its role in supporting sustainable financing for tea research, market promotion, climate resilience and value addition. The leaders also reviewed the Government's Tea Factory Modernization Programme, which seeks to improve processing capacity and tea quality while enhancing the competitiveness of Kenyan tea in international markets. They further discussed emerging challenges facing the industry and stressed the importance of continued collaboration among stakeholders to promote sustainable growth, strengthen the tea sector and improve returns


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Business The meeting signals Kenya's push to deepen bilateral trade ties through mutual recognition of quality frameworks.

KEBS chief hosts Indonesian envoy in trade standards talks

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya Bureau of Standards Managing Director Esther Ngari yesterday hosted Indonesian Ambassador Witjaksono Adji for talks centred on expanding trade cooperation between the two countries, with standards harmonisation and consumer protection at the heart of the discussions.

The courtesy call at KEBS headquarters in Nairobi covered practical frameworks for facilitating trade between Kenya and Indonesia while ensuring that quality assurance systems on both sides meet internationally recognised benchmarks. The two sides explored areas of potential collaboration in conformity assessment, standards recognition, and regulatory alignment — technical but consequential matters that determine whether goods move freely across borders or face rejection on arrival.

Ngari, who has led KEBS since her appointment, has increasingly positioned the bureau as an active participant in Kenya's trade diplomacy rather than a purely regulatory body. Under her direction, KEBS has pursued bilateral engagements with trading partners as a deliberate strategy to expand market access for Kenyan manufacturers, whose exports depend on the credibility of the standards frameworks governing them.

Kenya Bureau of Standards Managing Director Esther Ngari with Indonesian Ambassador Witjaksono Adji

"Standards are not barriers to trade," Ngari has said on previous occasions. "When intelligently developed and mutually recognised, they become powerful enablers of trade." That philosophy has shaped KEBS's approach to international engagement, where technical discussions on quality assurance are framed within the broader context of economic competitiveness and industrial growth.

The Indonesian engagement is part of a wider pattern. Kenya and Indonesia share membership in international standards bodies, and both countries have expressed interest in expanding trade beyond their current levels. Indonesia is one of Southeast Asia's largest economies, with significant manufacturing capacity in sectors including processed foods, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and consumer goods — all areas where standards compatibility directly affects the ease and volume of trade.

For Kenyan exporters, the significance is practical. Access to Indonesian markets — and, by extension, to broader Association of Southeast Asian Nations trading networks — depends in part on whether Kenya's standards regime is recognised as credible and compatible by importing countries. Equally, the growing volume of Indonesian goods entering the Kenyan market places pressure on KEBS to ensure that imported products meet domestic consumer protection requirements.

Consumer confidence sits at the intersection of both concerns. A functioning trade relationship requires not only that producers can export but that consumers on both ends trust what they are buying. Regulatory bodies like KEBS carry the institutional weight of that trust — an unglamorous responsibility that nonetheless underpins billions of shillings in commercial activity annually.

Ngari's approach to this responsibility has been notably methodical. Rather than high-profile announcements, her tenure has been characterised by institutional engagement — building relationships with counterpart bodies in other countries, tightening surveillance of imported goods, and advancing Kenya's participation in international standards-setting forums. The Indonesia meeting fits squarely within that pattern.

The visit also reflects a broader diplomatic trend in which technical regulatory agencies are playing increasingly visible roles in bilateral economic relations. As trade agreements become more sophisticated and non-tariff barriers more consequential, institutions like KEBS find themselves at the negotiating table alongside trade ministries and diplomatic missions. The line between technical regulation and economic diplomacy has, in that sense, grown considerably thinner.

For Kenyan industry, the practical outcome of such engagements matters more than their symbolism. Manufacturers seeking to export to Indonesia need to know whether their certifications will be recognised, what conformity assessment procedures apply, and whether mutual recognition arrangements are on the horizon. Those answers will emerge from the working-level discussions that follow diplomatic engagements of this kind.

Whether yesterday's meeting produces a formal cooperation agreement, a memorandum of understanding, or simply a clearer shared understanding of each country's standards architecture remains to be seen. What is clear is that KEBS under Ngari's leadership regards such engagements as essential institutional work — unglamorous, technical, and entirely necessary for the trading relationships Kenya needs to grow.

Fuel **“Oil prices have put a lot of pressure on costs in Kenya this year, but the latest market move doesn’t tell us what will happen at the pump next,” he said.**

Kenya’s diesel costs fell 24% — but drivers paid the same

EBC Financial Group says today’s fuel price review must be read fuel by fuel, not as a single headline figure.

BY David Precious
@themtkenyatimes

EBC - Kenya Diesel Relief

Diesel import costs fell by nearly a quarter in Kenya’s last fuel pricing cycle, yet the pump price of diesel did not move by a single shilling — and analysts at EBC Financial Group warned yesterday that the same pattern could repeat itself when the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority announces its next price review today.

The numbers tell a striking story. The cost of importing diesel dropped 23.9 percent to USD984.37 per cubic metre during the last pricing window, while petrol import costs fell by roughly one percent to USD886.92. The gap between those two movements was substantial, and under EPRA’s pricing formula — which ties pump prices to the average cost of cargoes arriving during each review period — diesel should have had considerably more room for a price reduction than petrol. Instead, pump prices in Nairobi held firm across the board: KSh214.03 per litre for petrol, KSh222.86 for diesel, and KSh191.38 for kerosene. The KSh8.02 per litre of headroom created by diesel’s falling import cost was redirected to keep petrol and kerosene prices stable, with a further KSh945 million drawn from the Petroleum Development Levy Fund to complete the support.

In plain terms, diesel users paid the cost of stability for everyone else.

EBC, which has tracked this pattern across multiple pricing cycles, says the central question for today’s review is whether diesel finally receives the relief its import cost trajectory warrants — or whether that relief is once again quietly redistributed to other fuels. Precious, the group’s senior market analyst, urged transport operators, farmers, and other diesel-dependent businesses to look beyond the headline announcement.

“Oil prices have put a lot of pressure on costs in Kenya this year, but the latest market move doesn’t tell us what will happen at the pump next,” he said. “The cargo window has now closed, so the real question is what Kenya actually paid for petrol, diesel and kerosene during that time, and how much of any relief reaches the people who rely on each one.”

The cargo window that determines today’s review closed on 9 August. EBC analysts say three factors will determine whether today’s announcement represents genuine relief or a managed holding exercise: what Kenya actually paid for each fuel during that window, since diesel, petrol, and kerosene can move in markedly different directions even when crude oil moves as a single number; how much of any cost reduction is shifted between fuels rather than passed directly to consumers of the fuel that generated it; and how much of the final price reflects government support from the levy fund rather than a genuine fall in import costs.

> **“Oil prices have put a lot of pressure on costs in Kenya this year, but the latest market move doesn’t tell us what will happen at the pump next,” he said. “The cargo window has now closed, so the real question is what Kenya actually paid for petrol, diesel and kerosene during that time, and how much of any relief reaches the people who rely on each one.”**

Murban crude oil fell 7.3 percent in the week to 6 August, and the Kenyan shilling remained broadly steady against the US dollar — both developments that can ease the pressure on import costs. A stable shilling reduces Kenya’s exposure to currency risk when paying for fuel imports priced in dollars. Neither development, however, automatically translates into lower pump prices, because EPRA’s formula is built on the actual cost of refined fuel cargoes that arrived during the pricing window, not on the crude oil price prevailing on the day the review is published. Any movement in crude after 9 August will affect only future reviews.

The stakes extend well beyond filling stations. Diesel underpins road freight, farming operations, public transport, industrial activity, and power generation across Kenya. When diesel costs rise or fail to fall despite cheaper imports, those pressures filter through freight rates, farm-to-market transport, and bus fares before eventually reaching food prices and the broader cost of living. Transport costs last month were already 15.6 percent higher than a year earlier — a rate more than double overall inflation of 6.5 percent, and significantly above food inflation of 9.0 percent. Transport alone accounted for approximately 1.5 percentage points of that overall inflation figure.

Kenya’s fuel costs have been under sustained pressure for much of this year, driven in part by renewed conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, which disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world’s most critical oil transit routes. Tensions eased briefly in April before escalating again, injecting fresh uncertainty into global energy markets and adding to the complexity facing EPRA’s pricing committee.

The regulatory framework adds further layers. Fuel currently carries an eight percent value-added tax rate, applicable until 14 October, which reduces the tax burden relative to the higher rate that preceded it. On top of that, the Petroleum Development Levy Fund can be deployed to absorb part of any price movement, and relief generated by one fuel’s falling import cost can be legally redistributed to stabilise another. A pump price that holds steady or falls modestly can therefore conceal two entirely different realities: a genuine drop in import costs passed directly to consumers, or government support and cross-fuel subsidisation quietly doing the work instead.

“Diesel deserves its own attention because it’s a direct cost for freight operators, farmers and public transport providers,” Precious said. “When diesel relief is shifted to other fuels, those industries get less benefit from cheaper imports. With transport costs still rising fast, giving more direct relief on diesel could ease some of that pressure — although how much it helps overall depends on how long the lower costs last, and whether businesses pass the savings on to their customers.”

EBC’s advice to anyone seeking to understand today’s EPRA announcement is to read it fuel by fuel — comparing each product’s import cost, any levy fund support applied, relief shifted from other fuels, and the final pump price — rather than treating a single unchanged or reduced figure as evidence that cheaper imports have been passed on to those who need them most.

Whether diesel users finally receive the relief that falling global costs appear to offer, or whether that relief is once again absorbed into the broader pricing system, may not be visible in today’s headline number. It will be visible only in the detail — and in Kenya’s fuel pricing, the detail is where the real story has always lived.

Politics **“Nobody will come and deceive us with slogans — ‘one term’, ‘must go’ — and then we hand them power. That is foolishness.”**

Ruto vs Uhuru: The war Kenya never saw coming

With fourteen months to polling day, a bitter falling-out between two former allies is reshaping the battle for State House.

BY Dan Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday publicly accused former President Uhuru Kenyatta of financing the opposition Linda Mwananchi movement, sharpening a political confrontation between two once-inseparable allies that now defines the contours of Kenya’s most consequential electoral contest in a generation.

Speaking to residents in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Ruto did not name Kenyatta directly but left no ambiguity about his target. He described the opposition’s financial backer as a man who had failed to deliver affordable housing, universal health coverage, and free education during his own ten-year presidency, and who had now dispatched surrogates to destabilise a successor who was delivering what he could not. The language was blunt, the setting deliberate — Eldoret is Ruto’s political heartland, and the crowd was his most loyal.

“Every leader is judged by the work they have done,” Ruto said, in remarks translated from Swahili. “Nobody will come and deceive us with slogans — ‘one term’, ‘must go’ — and then we hand them power. That is foolishness.” He went on to dismiss the opposition as a movement without policy, agenda, or ideas, promising to deal with them decisively. “Those people — I will wash them early in the morning,” he said, in a phrase that carried the contemptuous confidence of a politician who believes he controls the political weather.

Whether that confidence is warranted is the central question hanging over Kenya as it enters the final fourteen months before the August 2027 general election.

The Ruto-Kenyatta rupture is by now well-documented, but its consequences continue to reshape the political landscape in ways that were not fully anticipated when the two men parted ways after the 2022 election. Kenyatta, who endorsed Raila Odinga against his own deputy in that contest and lost, has since retreated from public political life

A photo collage of President William Ruto and his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta | *Photo:* Courtesy

— but not, his critics insist, from political financing. A section of Kenya Kwanza leaders has spent weeks alleging that Kenyatta is the invisible hand behind the Linda Mwananchi movement, the opposition vehicle through which Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna is building a presidential platform ahead of 2027.

Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot was the most explicit. Speaking at an empowerment event in Taita Taveta County on 24 July, he described Linda Mwananchi as a collection of criminals being bankrolled by “that retired gentleman” to soil the president’s name. The language was deliberately provocative — the kind deployed not to inform but to define, placing the opposition outside the bounds of legitimate political competition before the campaign has formally begun.

Sifuna denied it flatly. “He does not provide financial assistance, maybe just encouraging us,” the senator said in a Citizen TV interview on 28 July, referring to Kenyatta. “When he speaks, and he does it in public, he says young people need to be encouraged to take leadership.” It was a careful formulation — acknowledging the relationship, minimising its content, and framing Kenyatta’s involvement in the most anodyne terms available.

The truth, as is almost always the case in Kenyan politics, is likely more layered than either side is willing to concede publicly. What is clear is that Kenyatta’s shadow falls heavily across the opposition’s calculations, whether or not his fingerprints are on any cheque. His endorsement — implicit or explicit — carries weight in vote-rich Central Kenya, a region that delivered for Ruto in 2022 but whose loyalty the president cannot afford to take for granted as economic pressures mount. If Kenyatta is seen to be actively working against Ruto, the political mathematics in the Mount Kenya region become considerably more complicated.

Speaking to residents in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Ruto did not name Kenyatta directly but left no ambiguity about his target. He described the opposition’s financial backer as a man who had failed to deliver affordable housing, universal health coverage, and free education during his own ten-year presidency, and who had now dispatched surrogates to destabilise a successor who was delivering what he could not. The language was blunt, the setting deliberate — Eldoret is Ruto’s political heartland, and the crowd was his most loyal

That is the subtext beneath Ruto’s Eldoret remarks. The president is not simply responding to opposition taunts. He is attempting to delegitimise Kenyatta’s political re-entry before it gains momentum — to define the former president as a sore loser operating through proxies rather than as a statesman whose concerns about governance deserve a hearing. It is a strategy that carries risk. Attacking a predecessor with the stature Kenyatta still commands in certain quarters can elevate rather than diminish the target.

For Sifuna and the Linda Mwananchi movement, the government’s attention is, paradoxically, the best thing that could have happened. A crowdfunding campaign that raised KSh6.5 million from thousands of ordinary Kenyans in its opening days generated the kind of organic political energy that money alone cannot manufacture. When Cheruiyot responded by calling the movement’s supporters criminals, he handed Sifuna a narrative gift — the image of an establishment rattled by a citizen-funded challenge to its authority. Opposition movements throughout Kenya’s democratic history have drawn sustenance from exactly this kind of overreach.

The broader political environment into which all of this is projected is one of genuine economic anxiety. Transport costs rose 15.6 percent year-on-year in July. Food inflation sits at nine percent. Housing levy and social health insurance deductions have reduced take-home pay for formal sector workers in ways felt at kitchen tables across the country. Ruto’s administration points to construction sites, affordable housing units, and youth employment programmes as evidence of delivery. The opposition points to the same statistics and argues that the president’s agenda has been paid for by the people least able to afford it.

Both narratives contain truth. That is what makes the next fourteen months so genuinely uncertain. Kenya has historically rewarded incumbents who can demonstrate tangible development, but it has also punished presidents whose economic stewardship is seen to have failed. Ruto occupies both possibilities simultaneously, and the outcome will depend significantly on which story voters choose to believe by August 2027.

What is already beyond doubt is that this election will be fought with an intensity that reflects the personal stakes involved for every major actor. For Ruto, it is about vindication — proof that his presidency delivered and that his enemies could not stop him. For Kenyatta, whatever role he ultimately plays, it is about legacy and perhaps a measure of settling scores. For Sifuna and the opposition, it is about whether a movement built on small contributions and large ambitions can translate energy into votes at the constituency level where elections are actually won and lost.

Kenya’s elections have a long history of being decided by factors that emerge only in the final weeks. But the battle lines are already drawn, the financing is already being contested, and the personal animosities are already too deep for polite accommodation.

The campaign, in every meaningful sense, has already begun.

Politics **“Why can’t you prepare a comprehensive rebuttal on the four-year performance of Gachagua?” he asked. “Provide evidence.”**

Methu draws battle lines: Show us the record or admit failure

The DCP offensive is no longer about Gachagua alone — it is a structured, evidence-based assault on four years of Kenya Kwanza governance.

Nyandarua Senator John Methu and other DCP members during a press briefing

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Nyandarua Senator John Methu yesterday threw down a direct challenge to the Kenya Kwanza administration, demanding a comprehensive public account of President William Ruto’s four-year record and dismissing government responses to the Democracy for the Citizens Party’s accountability offensive as evasive and substanceless.

The challenge came a day after DCP leader and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua issued what the party described as a comprehensive audit of the Ruto administration’s performance since 2022 — a document that ranged across the cost of living, taxation, public debt, healthcare, education, insecurity, and human rights. Methu, speaking with the precision of a legislator building a legal case rather than a politician trading insults, told the government to produce a detailed rebuttal or concede the argument.

“Why can’t you prepare a comprehensive rebuttal on the four-year performance of Gachagua?” he asked. “Provide evidence.”

It was a deceptively simple demand, but its implications were substantial. By framing the DCP’s challenge as a factual audit rather than a political attack, Methu was attempting to shift the terms of the debate — away from the government’s preferred ground of questioning Gachagua’s credibility as a critic, and onto the harder terrain of documented delivery against specific promises. Every government prefers to fight elections on its own narrative. The DCP is trying to ensure that does not happen.

The questions Methu posed were not rhetorical flourishes. They were a structured inventory of the promises on which Ruto won the 2022 election — and the gap, as the opposition sees it, between what was pledged and what has been delivered. Are Kenyans better off on the cost of living than they were in 2022? Has taxation on income increased or decreased? How much public debt did Ruto inherit, and how much has been added since? Are universities, schools, students, and parents experiencing less financial pressure than before? Is the Social Health Authority delivering better and more affordable healthcare than the system it replaced?

Each question was calibrated to land where the government is most vulnerable. The cost of living remains the defining anxiety of most Kenyan households. Transport costs rose 15.6 percent year-on-year in July. Food inflation sits at nine percent. The introduction of the housing levy and social health insurance deductions reduced take-home pay for formal sector workers at precisely the moment when household budgets were already under strain. The government’s response — that these are investments in long-term structural change — is an argument that resonates less urgently when families are calculating whether they can afford school fees at the end of the month.

Methu reserved particular scorn for the government’s use of soft drink consumption as a proxy for economic wellbeing. “You are telling us more Kenyans are taking soda and therefore the economy is good,” he said. “It must be felt in people’s pockets. Don’t just tell Kenyans the economy has grown. Are Kenyans saving more? Are businesses making profits? Are young people finding jobs?” He added, with a sharpness that drew laughter, that the rise in soda consumption was attributable to State House itself. “The consumption of soda has increased because of its consumption in State House. That is what President William Ruto feeds his delegation.”

The joke landed, but the serious point beneath it was not lost. Economic indicators that do not translate into lived household improvement are politically useless to an administration seeking re-election. Gross domestic product figures and foreign investment announcements do not vote. People do — and they vote on whether their lives feel materially better than they did four years ago.

On healthcare, Methu pressed a wound that has been open since July. “Is William Ruto aware nurses are on strike?” he asked. “They have been on strike since July 2026.” The nurses’ industrial action has paralysed services at public health facilities across the country, exposing the gap between the government’s flagship SHA programme — sold as a transformative improvement on the National Hospital Insurance Fund — and the grinding realities of an underfunded, understaffed public health system. That a senator needs to ask publicly whether the president is aware of a strike entering its second month says something about the disconnect between State House communication and ground-level governance.

Methu also renewed the DCP’s demand for accountability over the January attack at St Peter’s ACK Church in Witima, Othaya, where a service attended by Gachagua was disrupted after tear gas was fired and violence broke out outside the building. Police stated in February that investigations were ongoing. No arrests have been made. “Why haven’t the attackers of Witima Church been arrested?” Methu asked. The opposition has announced plans to pursue private prosecution against 12 police officers and two members of parliament over the incident — a legal escalation that signals the DCP’s intention to keep the matter alive as a political liability for the government into the election period.

The government’s standard defence against Gachagua’s criticism — that he spent four years as deputy president and therefore bears co-responsibility for every failure he now decries — is one that Methu directly anticipated and dismissed. “Yes, Gachagua was inside government but it does not invalidate what he is saying,” he argued. “If a former DP tells the people of Kenya that certain things are happening, is what he is saying true or false?” It is, as a matter of logic, a fair point. The messenger’s past does not determine the accuracy of the message. Whether it will be persuasive to voters who remember Gachagua’s own role in the administration he now attacks is a different question — and one that will be answered only at the ballot box.

What Methu’s intervention makes clear is that the DCP’s electoral strategy is not built on Gachagua’s personality alone. It is built on accountability — the methodical accumulation of unanswered questions, unmet promises, and uninvestigated incidents that the party intends to lay before Kenyan voters between now and August 2027. The approach carries genuine risk. Accountability politics requires discipline, consistency, and the patience to keep repeating uncomfortable truths long after the news cycle has moved on. It also requires that the party’s own record withstand the scrutiny it is applying to others.

But if the government cannot produce the comprehensive rebuttal Methu has demanded — evidence-based, promise-by-promise, number-by-number — then the silence itself will become the answer.

And in an election year, silence is never neutral.

President William Ruto

Education A degree and a diploma are different qualifications, and neither should be misrepresented as being identical to the other

Degree or diploma: Does more time in class make you better at the job?

Degree or diploma

Kenya's obsession with university qualifications misses a more important question — what can you actually do?

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

For years, Kenyan society has treated the question of whether a degree is better than a diploma as though there is only one acceptable answer: a degree. A student who spends four years at university is routinely assumed to be more knowledgeable, more capable, and more employable than someone who spends two or three years pursuing a diploma. Parents proudly announce that their children are "doing a degree", while diploma courses are spoken about in hushed tones, as though they are merely a consolation prize for those who did not quite make the cut.

But perhaps we need to ask a more important question: does spending more years in school automatically make someone more skilled, more experienced, or better prepared for the demands of working life?

The honest answer is no.

A degree and a diploma are different qualifications, and neither should be misrepresented as being identical to the other. A degree generally provides broader and deeper academic grounding and, in many professions, is the required entry point for specific career paths. A diploma, by contrast, often delivers more focused technical or occupational training and can offer a faster, more direct route into the workplace. In some careers, a degree opens doors that a diploma simply cannot. In others, practical training and accumulated experience matter just as much — sometimes more.

The problem begins when we confuse qualification with competence. A certificate can tell us what someone studied. It cannot tell us everything that person can actually do.

Consider two young people starting out. One spends four years pursuing a degree but gains little practical exposure to the profession. The other completes a diploma, enters the workplace immediately, and spends the next three years working, making mistakes, learning from experienced colleagues, and dealing with real clients and real deadlines. Ask who holds the higher academic qualification and the answer is straightforward. Ask who has more practical workplace experience and the answer may be entirely different. That is precisely where our understanding of education needs to evolve.

Take journalism as an example. A person can spend four years studying the craft and still struggle to write a compelling news story under pressure. Another can complete a diploma, walk into a newsroom, and spend years writing, reporting, conducting interviews, attending press briefings, chasing sources, and absorbing daily feedback from editors. After five years, who is likely to be the more capable reporter? Quite possibly the diploma holder — not because the diploma is inherently superior, but because experience is built through doing. Writing improves through writing. Interviewing sharpens through interviewing. Reporting strengthens through reporting. Theory provides the foundation, but eventually you have to walk into the field, find the story, verify the facts, and file it before the deadline.

Banking tells a slightly different story. In financial services, certain specialised roles require or strongly prefer a bachelor's degree, and academic grounding in finance, economics, or accounting is genuinely essential for some positions. But even here, a degree alone does not make someone an excellent banker. A fresh graduate may understand financial theory with impressive clarity, while a colleague with several years of practical experience understands customers, banking systems, workplace pressure, and problem-solving with a depth that no textbook fully captures. One brings academic preparation; the other brings accumulated practical wisdom. The strongest professional, over time, needs both.

Medicine is where the argument requires particular care. Experience is valuable in every profession, but it cannot simply replace a legally required qualification. A nurse, clinical officer, laboratory technologist, and doctor each bring valuable expertise, but their training, responsibilities, and professional boundaries are distinct. Experience can deepen and strengthen a qualification. It cannot substitute for one where the law and patient safety demand otherwise. That is an important distinction that any honest discussion of qualifications must acknowledge.

Architecture offers another instructive case. Some technical roles within the built environment can be entered through diploma-level training, while becoming a registered professional architect requires a more advanced educational and professional pathway. The profession demonstrates that qualifications and experience are not in competition — they are designed to work together.

So when someone asks whether a degree is better than a diploma, perhaps the first question should be: better for what? The answer depends heavily on the profession, the specific role, and the individual's goals and circumstances.

The real issue is never the certificate itself. It is what you do with it.

A person can graduate with first-class honours and still struggle to perform basic workplace tasks. Another can complete an ordinary qualification and become exceptionally good at their work because they never stopped practising, learning, and seeking out experience. This is precisely why employers consistently ask for both academic qualifications and demonstrated experience. They want to know not only what you studied, but whether you can apply it. Can you solve a problem? Can you communicate professionally under pressure? Can you take responsibility when something goes wrong? Can you learn something you were never taught? No certificate guarantees any of those things.

Students themselves have a critical role to play here. If you are pursuing a degree, do not wait until graduation to begin building experience. Intern. Volunteer. Freelance. Write. Build projects. Find mentors. Attend professional events. Create a portfolio long before anyone asks to see one. If you are pursuing a diploma, do not allow anyone to make you feel academically inferior. Build your expertise deliberately. Pursue professional certifications where they add value. Continue your education if your chosen career eventually requires it. Your diploma is a starting point, not a ceiling.

We also need to stop treating education as a race in which the person who spends the longest time in a classroom automatically wins. One person may spend four years earning a degree and then struggle to find their first opportunity. Another may spend two years earning a diploma, enter the workforce earlier, and accumulate years of experience while their counterpart is still studying. A decade later, their careers may look completely different — and there is no guarantee that the degree holder is further ahead.

Perhaps the most persistent misconception is that more years in school automatically produce more experience. They do not. Four years of studying is four years of education. Four years of working is four years of experience. The two can overlap and reinforce each other, but they are not the same thing, and conflating them does a disservice to both.

Education remains enormously important. It provides knowledge, discipline, theoretical grounding, and the foundation upon which practical competence is built. Experience then tests that knowledge against reality, often revealing gaps that no examination ever exposed. The strongest professional is not necessarily the person with the most impressive certificate or the shortest route into employment. It is the person who keeps learning and knows how to apply what they have learned in conditions that rarely resemble the classroom.

So perhaps we should stop asking young people only whether they are doing a degree or a diploma, and start asking a better question: what can you actually do?

Because eventually, the workplace is far less interested in how impressive your qualification sounds than in whether you can deliver when it matters. A degree can open a door. A diploma can open a door. But once you walk through it, your skills, your attitude, your experience, and your willingness to keep growing are what determine how far you go.

Education may qualify you for the opportunity. Competence is what makes you valuable once the opportunity arrives.

Politics Consider ethnicity — perhaps the most enduring force in Kenyan electoral politics. A politician does not always need to convince voters that their policies are superior

Why Kenyans keep voting for the politics they complain about

The problem is not only who gets elected — it is what voters continue to reward

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Illustration

Kenya has a peculiar political habit. We complain about tribalism, then ask who is "our person." We condemn political betrayal, then celebrate it when it benefits our side. We demand accountability from leaders, yet defend them with a loyalty they have done little to earn. Every election cycle brings the same frustrations: the cost of living is too high, corruption remains entrenched, public services disappoint, young people cannot find meaningful work, and politicians make sweeping promises only to discover, after winning, that governing is considerably harder than campaigning. Yet when the next election arrives, many of the same political habits return intact.

This raises an uncomfortable question Kenya rarely asks seriously: if citizens consistently complain about the politics they experience, why do they keep rewarding the behaviour that produces it?

The answer is not simply that Kenyans choose bad leaders. Political choices are shaped by identity, economic circumstance, historical grievance, local interest, and the deeply held belief that one's community must remain close to power to protect itself. But politicians also learn from those choices. They learn what excites voters, what frightens them, what divides them, and — most importantly — what wins elections. That is where democracy becomes a system of incentives. If ethnic mobilisation delivers votes, politicians have little reason to abandon it. If short-term handouts generate loyalty, campaigns will keep offering immediate relief instead of long-term solutions. If voters forgive corruption because the accused belongs to their political camp, accountability becomes selective and ultimately meaningless.

This does not absolve politicians. Those who hold public office carry greater power and greater responsibility. They control public resources, shape institutions, and make decisions that affect millions of lives. They cannot escape accountability by pointing to the voters who elected them. But politicians do not operate in a vacuum either. They respond to incentives, and elections create some of the most powerful incentives in public life. If a particular style of politics repeatedly produces electoral rewards, there is little rational reason for political actors to abandon it.

Consider ethnicity — perhaps the most enduring force in Kenyan electoral politics. A politician does not always need to convince voters that their policies are superior. Sometimes it is enough to convince them that the alternative threatens their community. The question shifts from "what will this candidate do for Kenya?" to "what happens to people like us if this candidate loses?" Once politics becomes a contest for collective security rather than competing ideas, policy is quietly pushed into the background, and it rarely finds its way back.

Yet it would be unfair to pretend that voters choose ethnic candidates without reason. Political elites have repeatedly exploited genuine historical grievances, inequalities, and fears of exclusion. Communities have legitimate concerns about representation, development, and access to state resources. The problem arises when those legitimate concerns harden into permanent, unconditional political loyalty. A community should be able to demand representation without surrendering its right to question the person representing it. Representation should amplify a citizen's voice — not silence their scrutiny.

The same contradiction runs through Kenya's political alliances. Kenyans often complain that politicians have no principles. Leaders campaign fiercely against one another, exchange accusations, and present themselves as irreconcilable opposites — only to share a platform months later. Yesterday's enemy becomes today's ally. Yesterday's promise becomes today's negotiation. We call it hypocrisy. Politicians call it strategy. The language is adjusted accordingly: betrayal becomes "political maturity", opportunism becomes "realignment", and a sudden improbable friendship becomes "national unity." Political betrayal rarely destroys a career in Kenya, because supporters can be remarkably forgiving when they believe a shift serves their interests. If political loyalty is negotiable for leaders but unconditional for supporters, politicians have very little reason to fear changing sides.

Then there is the harder conversation about economic survival. It is easy to tell voters to reject political handouts when one is not struggling to pay rent, buy food, or keep a child in school. For a household under genuine financial pressure, immediate assistance can feel far more tangible than a promise of institutional reform several years into the future. That is where political morality meets economic reality. Handouts are no substitute for jobs, functioning public services, or sustainable opportunity — but neither should we pretend that citizens make political choices in a vacuum. A voter responding to an immediate need is not necessarily ignorant or easily manipulated. Sometimes they are simply making the best choice available to them. The deeper problem is when the political system consistently makes that immediate transaction more valuable than the long-term public interest.

This is why changing Kenya's political culture requires more than instructing voters to "choose wisely." Voters need better choices. Political parties must become something more substantial than vehicles for individual ambition. Candidates should compete on records, competence, and ideas rather than on political networks and tribal arithmetic. The media must scrutinise political claims rather than simply amplify political drama. Civic education must be continuous — not something rediscovered only when election season approaches. Most critically, citizens must learn that supporting a politician does not require defending everything that politician does.

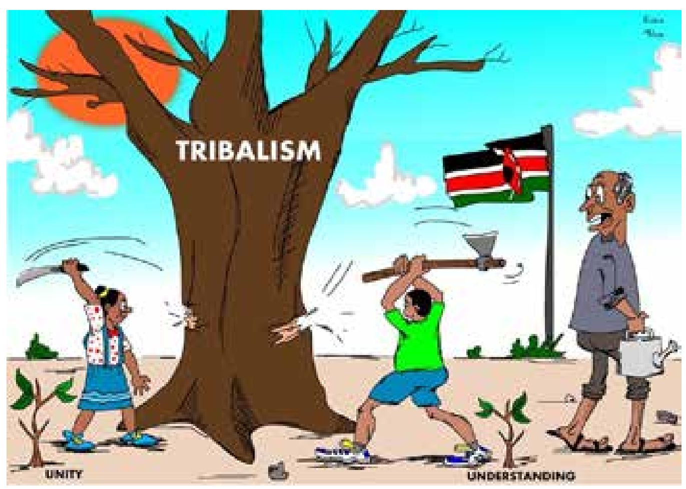
We have grown accustomed to treating criticism of "our" politician as a personal attack on ourselves. When someone exposes incompetence, corruption, or dishonesty within our preferred political camp, the instinct is often to defend the politician before asking whether the criticism deserves a genuine answer. That is precisely how accountability becomes tribal. Once it does, every side can manufacture an excuse. The government points to the opposition. The opposition points to the government. Politicians blame their predecessors. Communities blame one another. Everyone has an explanation, but almost nobody accepts responsibility. Meanwhile, the citizen waits.

The deeper danger is not merely that Kenya will occasionally elect a disappointing government — all democracies do. The real danger is entrenching a political culture in which failure carries no meaningful political cost. A politician who knows that voters will forgive corruption on grounds of political identity has less reason to fear accountability. A politician who knows supporters will defend every decision has less reason to explain those decisions. A politician who knows campaign promises will be forgotten after election day has less reason to make realistic ones. In that sense, elections do not only choose leaders. They teach leaders what citizens are willing to tolerate.

Kenya needs a different kind of political competition — not merely a contest over who can produce the loudest slogan, assemble the largest coalition, or dominate the news cycle, but a competition over demonstrated competence, integrity, and results. That requires politicians to change, but it equally requires voters to change. We cannot demand less tribal politics while voting primarily through tribal calculations. We cannot insist on accountability while practising selective accountability. We cannot condemn political opportunism in our opponents while rewarding it in our allies.

Democracy is not only about the leaders we elect. It is about the behaviour we reward. Kenya will not transform its politics simply because politicians update their speeches. It will change when citizens begin changing the incentives those speeches are designed to win.

Politicians may write the promises. But ultimately, voters write the rules.



Tech Mr Flowers said the department, which a Digital Agricultural Transformation Manager will head, will enable the firm to accelerate Ag-Tech ventures

Kakuzi accelerates Digital Technology adoption efforts

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Listed agribusiness firm Kakuzi PLC has stepped up its agricultural technology (Ag-Tech) adoption strategy as part of an elaborate business development plan, the firm's Managing Director, Mr Chris Flowers, has said.

As part of the Kakuzi Ag-Tech adoption strategy, the firm has established a fully-fledged Digital Agricultural Transformation Department to spearhead technology adoption and application across its operating fronts.

Mr Flowers said the department, which a Digital Agricultural Transformation Manager will head, will enable the firm to accelerate Ag-Tech ventures necessary for its transition to climate-smart agriculture.

"The Kakuzi Ag-Tech journey is firmly on course and is anchored on several sustainability initiatives and resilient agronomy practices that we continue to embed across all operations," Mr Flowers said. He added, "As we face more and more uncertainty and unpredictability in our traditional climatic patterns, it is essential that agriculture adapts and adopts new technology."

Among other initiatives, Kakuzi is actively implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data analytics solutions to improve decision-making and operational performance.

For example, Mr Flowers said the Kakuzi Macadamia Processing Plant already incorporates an AI-powered Intelligent Optical Sorting system that automates macadamia nut grading to boost production quality.

The firm is also deploying the latest Ag-Tech technology in the fields alongside enhanced drone security surveillance systems, he added.

Kakuzi MD Chris Flowers with President William Ruto and Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata

Apple trees

Apple trees stand calm and tall,
I love Apple to eat it is very tasty,
Greeting sunshine through the day.
Their branches spread with gentle care,
Holding apples bright and round.
Birds visit with cheerful songs,
Bees hum softly among the blooms.
Each season brings a special gift,

From tiny flowers to juicy fruit.
Children smile beneath the shade,
Gathering apples with happy hands.
The apple tree teaches us to grow with patience,
And to share our blessings with everyone.

V.Joshika
Grade 8
John dewey matric higher secondary school, Link road, panruti.

In the end you have only yourself

From the dawn to dusk
Round the clock- brisk
Working with peaceful mind
And soulfully assigned
Nuturing others welfare
As the brain points the unfair
For in the end you have only yourself.
The hugs & applauses from all your loveable
May garland you to be sensible
But heart beats slowly to march
Waiting for the body to recharge
Standing to apologise your mind & soul
Living a life to console
Proving that in the end you have only yourself.
Pat yourself & save yourself Unesteeming yourself as an elf...

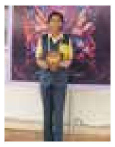
G.Sarala

Marks are not just numbers

Nothing says untouched by moments
Not even the people we love the most
Life questions they laughter
bends their posture
And add unseen weight to they heart
You notice it enough sudden word they speak
That may be usual to them
But for you??
Are new pattern of their eyes
We want to keep them as they were
Frozen memories, carving years
Yet every marks are real
And proof of the affection
Only I know what is the capacity I have

S.P SAAI SAMYUKKTHA
JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL
TAMIL NADU

Exam Hall



When I enter
the exam hall,
my confidence
begins to disappear.
Before the exam,
my friend asks,
"Did you study everything?"
I confidently say,
"Yes, I read everything."
But the moment
the question paper
reaches my hands,
my confidence
drops to minus five hundred.

Even the answers
I knew well
seem to disappear.
I quietly pray to God,
and start reading.

When I try
to revise the answers
with the question paper
in my hands,
my mind
starts loading
YouTube Shorts.

When I try
to remember
the one-mark answers,
Tamil songs
begin playing
inside my head.
The formulas disappear,
the definitions hide,
and the lyrics
become crystal clear.

At that moment,
I wonder,
"Why does my brain
remember songs
instead of my lessons?"
Then, little by little,
my memory returns.
I stop worrying,
write what I know,
give my best,
and leave the rest
to God.
That is the funniest
friendship
between me
and the exam hall.

V. S. NITHIYA SRI
VIII-D
JOHN DEWEY MAT HR SEC SCHOOL,
TAMILNADU.

Lock and key game

The lock was waiting, strong and bright,
The little key danced with delight.
It turned around with happy cheer,
Click said the lock you're welcome here.

We laughed and played the whole day through,
Finding the key was fun to do.
Each little win brought smiles so wide,
With friend and joy right by our side.

The game was full of fun and glee,
A happy adventure for you and me.
With every lock and every key,
We made sweet memories happily.

Written by: S. Bavanya
Class:7th A
School:GGHSS, pattukkottai

Value what you have, when you have it

Value means respect.
If a student values his present time ,
It will take him to the world of prime.
The world will write a worthable rhyme on him.

Value means acceptance
If a farmer values every drops of rain
He will harvest more crops without pain.
The profitable harvest helps him sustain.

Value means planning
If a salaried person values his money,
He will multiple his money and gain more honey.
This leads him to set up a profitable company.

A bird in the hand is better
Than two in the bush
Value what we have at present
As the present is real and helps to invent.
.....
Penned by
RANGANATHAN E
B.T.Asst(Eng)
Marwar Govt.Boys Hss,Acharapakkam.

International Youth Day

International Youth Day is celebrated on August 12 every year.

It encourages young people to do something special.
It helps youth to understand their rights
It was started by the United Nations in 1999.
It is a very important day for young people.

It helps them grow and achieve success.
Support our youth;
they will achieve great things.
In the future, they will shine like stars and go very far.

They are like a golden bar,
strong and valuable.
They will stand tall
and never fall.

They will sit in big halls
and achieve their goals.
They will not be fools;
they will follow wisdom and rules.

– S.P. Ambuja

Show The A.S.K delegation expressed appreciation to the Nyeri County Government for its continued partnership and support towards the organisation of the show

Central Kenya ASK Show preparations gather pace in Nyeri

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Preparations for the 2026 Central Kenya National Agricultural Society of Kenya (A.S.K) Show have intensified, with dozens of exhibitors set to take part next month.

The Show that will take place in Nyeri has seen the local county government pledging its continued support towards the successful hosting of the event.

Governor Mutahi Kahiga yesterday hosted officials from the Central Kenya A.S.K Branch, who paid a courtesy call at his office, a month to the event.

Governor Mutahi Kahiga, his officers and Central Kenya ASK officials after yesterday's courtesy call. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

The delegation was led by Central Kenya A.S.K Branch Chairman Patrick Karinga and Branch Manager Amos Kirui.

The four-day event will be held from September 9 to 12 at the Kabiru-ini Showgrounds, about six kilometers from Nyeri town.

It will be held under the theme of, "Promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth."

The show is expected to bring together exhibitors and stakeholders from a wide range of sectors, including financial institutions, universities and other institutions of higher learning, health and hospitality, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, trade, manufacturing and non-governmental organisations.

Youth enterprises and women-based groups are also expected to showcase their products, services and innovations during the event.

Beyond exhibitions, the show will provide visitors with opportunities to acquire knowledge, explore new technologies, network with industry players and discover emerging opportunities in agriculture and enterprise development.

A variety of funfair and entertainment activities have also been lined up to provide an enjoyable experience for showgoers.

Governor Kahiga assured the A.S.K officials of the county government's continued partnership and support in ensuring its success.

He urged residents of Nyeri and the wider Central Kenya region to take advantage of the event to learn about modern agricultural practices, establish business networks and explore technologies that can improve productivity and incomes.

The governor said the county administration would continue investing in modern farming techniques, technology and innovation as part of efforts to strengthen the agricultural sector.

He added that the county would continue equipping and supporting farmers to enhance productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and improve the overall performance of agricultural enterprises.

The A.S.K delegation expressed appreciation to the Nyeri County Government for its continued partnership and support towards the organisation of the show.

Also present during the meeting were County Executive Committee Members James Wachihi, in charge of Agriculture, and Margaret Macharia, who oversees Education.

Other A.S.K officials included Chief Steward Job Kanyi, Francis Mathari, Joseph Thamaini and Muchiri Kibira, among others.

The Show is expected to provide a platform for stakeholders to showcase innovations, products and services while promoting knowledge-sharing, trade and investment.

The event will also offer farmers and other visitors an opportunity to learn about climate-smart agriculture and technologies aimed at building resilience and supporting sustainable economic growth.

With agriculture remaining a key driver of the regional economy, organisers say the show will provide an important platform for farmers, entrepreneurs, researchers, financial institutions and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and explore opportunities for growth.

Security The President spoke yesterday during the passing-out parade for Recruits Cohort 01/2025 at the Defence Forces Recruits Training School in Eldoret

Ruto backs KDF role in civilian projects amid procurement scrutiny

BY Suleiman Mbatiah
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto has defended a continued role for the Kenya Defence Forces in national development, pointing to the military's involvement in the Raila Odinga International Stadium, the Bomas International Convention Complex and local shipbuilding as an approach Kenya should keep.

Ruto said the military's first responsibility remains defending the country, but argued that its engineering, logistics and medical capacity can also support infrastructure, disaster response and industry. His remarks come amid concerns from some senators about procurement transparency and the impact of military involvement on civilian contractors, issues he did not address in the speech.

The President spoke yesterday during the passing-out parade for Recruits Cohort 01/2025 at the Defence Forces Recruits Training School in Eldoret, where more than 5,000 recruits graduated.

"The first duty of the Kenya Defence Forces remains, and will always remain, the defence of our Republic. Nothing dilutes that mandate. But the same capabilities that defend a modern nation also build one," Ruto said.

He said military engineers could help strengthen strategic infrastructure, while KDF logistics and medical units could support the country when civilian systems are overwhelmed by emergencies or disasters.

KDF's role in the major civilian projects is supervision, coordination and project management, rather than serving as the civil-works contractor.

The Ministry of Defence said in April that it was using KDF engineering and project management personnel to coordinate work on the stadium and convention centre, including roads, railway connections,


President Ruto presenting a trophy to one the recruits. On the left is General Kahariri.

water systems, utilities and security installations.

"Today, KDF engineering supports the construction of the Raila Odinga International Stadium at Talanta Sports City and the Bomas International Convention Complex. Through Kenya Shipyards Ltd and the Kenya Navy, we are rebuilding our shipbuilding capacity - MV Uhuru II, built locally and now moving trade across Lake Victoria, shows how a defence capability becomes an industrial one," Ruto said.

The 60,000-seat Raila Odinga International Stadium is being developed at Talanta Sports City as a main venue for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations, which Kenya will co-host with Uganda and Tanzania. The Ministry of Defence has also overseen upgrades at Kasarani, Nyayo, Afraha and Kipchoge Keino stadiums as part of preparations for the tournament.

The stadium project has, however, faced questions in Parliament over procurement and cost.

At a Senate committee hearing in May, government officials said the contract was signed at Sh45.8 billion after an initial estimate of Sh34.6 billion. They said the gap came from taxes, levies and import-related charges that were not included in the preliminary estimate prepared by University of Nairobi consultants.

Senators questioned the more than Sh10 billion difference and the use of direct procurement. Sports Cabinet Secretary Salim Mvurya said the contract price had not been varied because the Sh34.6 billion figure was only an estimate, not the signed contract amount. He told the committee the ministry would submit records to support the procurement process and cost.

The wider use of KDF in public works had already come under scrutiny before that hearing. On October 29, 2025, Marsabit Senator Mohamed Chute asked the Senate Standing Committee on Roads, Transportation and Housing to establish the procurement method used for every public infrastructure project involving KDF since 2020.

Chute also asked the committee to explain why open tendering was not used in some cases and why KDF was chosen despite the availability of qualified civilian contractors. Yesterday, Ruto did not respond to those procurement concerns or announce any changes aimed at improving public disclosure, parliamentary oversight or competition in contracts tied to KDF-supervised projects.

"Kenya must keep building its own model of defence contribution to national development, grounded in the Constitution and shaped by what our nation actually needs," Ruto said.


Afraha stadium that is being constructed by KDF. | *Photo:* Courtesy.

Article 241 of the Constitution gives KDF three main functions: defending Kenya's sovereignty and territorial integrity, assisting other authorities during emergencies or disasters, and restoring peace in areas affected by unrest or instability with National Assembly approval. It does not explicitly list routine civilian infrastructure construction as a separate military function.

The government has framed military supervision as a way to use KDF engineering skills and enforce deadlines and quality standards. The parliamentary questions focus on whether that arrangement provides enough procurement disclosure and whether work that could be done by civilian firms is being shifted under military supervision without sufficient justification.

Ruto also pointed to Kenya Shipyards Limited as an example of a defence-linked investment with commercial value. The state corporation, which operates under the Ministry of Defence, built MV Uhuru II in Kisumu with technical collaboration from Dutch shipbuilder Damen Gorinchem.

The vessel was commissioned in October 2023 and can carry 1,063 tonnes of petroleum products and dry cargo across Lake Victoria. The Ministry of Defence said its construction took 24 months and gave local personnel practical shipbuilding training.

Ruto linked the military's development role to the broader discussion on Kenya's plans beyond Vision 2030, saying infrastructure and economic ambitions would need to be matched by measures to protect digital systems, food supplies, energy networks, ports and other strategic assets.

"Security and development are not competing priorities. They are the same foundation, viewed from two directions. Security enables development. Development strengthens security," Ruto said.

Intelligence The numbers make the danger vivid. Africa’s AI market is projected to grow from roughly $3.7–4.5 billion toward $16.5 billion by 2030

The algorithmic rift: When Africa’s failure to forge its own intelligence becomes the architecture of permanent inequality

By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo
@themtkenyatimes

By Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

In 2024, only 38 percent of Africans used the internet, against a global average of 68 percent. Sub-Saharan Africa produced roughly 0.89 percent of the world’s AI research publications. The continent that is home to nearly one-fifth of humanity controls less than one percent of global data-centre capacity and AI compute. These are not abstract statistics. They are the opening coordinates of a new geography of power.

If Africa does not deliberately and urgently build its own AI future its own models, its own data infrastructures, its own talent pipelines, its own regulatory sovereignty the emerging AI divide will not remain a technical lag. It will harden into a social divide of unprecedented depth, amplifying inequality and locking in a structural power imbalance that no later redistribution can easily undo. The algorithm will become the new soil, and those who do not till it will find themselves permanent tenants on land they once owned.

Consider the correlation that history keeps teaching and we keep forgetting. For centuries, raw materials left African shores while finished value returned as dependency. Today the pattern mutates. African data mobile money trails, agricultural patterns, health records, linguistic diversity feeds global models trained elsewhere. The finished intelligence returns as expensive cloud services, foreign platforms, and black-box systems that neither understand local languages nor serve local priorities. Compute is the new mine. Talent is the new ore. Without indigenous capacity, Africa risks becoming a data colony in an intelligence economy it did not design.

The numbers make the danger vivid. Africa’s AI market is projected to grow from roughly $3.7–4.5 billion toward $16.5 billion by 2030. Optimistic scenarios from the African Development Bank and others speak of up to $1 trillion in additional GDP by 2035 if AI is deployed inclusively across agriculture, finance, health, and manufacturing. The IMF estimates that accelerated adoption could lift Sub-Saharan Africa’s output by about 4 percent over a decade twenty times the anaemic 0.2 percent expected under current trajectories. These gains are not automatic. They require electricity that does not vanish, broadband that is affordable, data centres that are local, and models that speak Swahili, Yoruba, Amharic, and Zulu rather than treating African languages as afterthoughts.

Instead we see concentration so extreme it borders on the pathological. Four countries Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Egypt absorb the overwhelming majority of AI startup funding, data-centre capacity, and skilled talent. More than 80 percent of AI venture capital on the continent flows to this quartet. The rest of the continent watches from the margins. Within countries the urban–rural chasm yawns: internet use reaches 57 percent in cities and collapses to 23 percent in rural areas. Women, older citizens, and the informal majority remain disproportionately offline. When generative AI traffic is measured, Africa’s contribution is a rounding error around one percent.

This is not merely a lag. It is the early architecture of a caste system written in code. Those who control the models will set the terms of credit scoring, medical diagnosis, agricultural advice, educational pathways, and even political discourse. Those who only consume will find their opportunities filtered, ranked, and rationed by systems optimized for other realities. The young Africa’s greatest asset, with a median age near 19 and more than 60 percent of the population under 25 will confront a world in which the tools of advancement are owned elsewhere. Their creativity will be invited to annotate, to label, to clean data for foreign models, while the highest-value creation remains offshore. The demographic dividend risks becoming a demographic disappointment.

Intellectual honesty demands we name the mechanisms. First, compute scarcity. Training frontier models requires energy and silicon at scales most African grids and capital markets cannot yet sustain. Second, data asymmetry. Global models are trained on internet-scale corpora that under-represent African contexts; the result is systems that hallucinate local knowledge or simply ignore it. Third, talent leakage and thin pipelines. Only a minority of African universities offer dedicated AI programmes; many of the brightest leave for denser ecosystems. Fourth, regulatory and strategic fragmentation. While some nations have drafted AI strategies, continental coherence remains fragile, and many governments still treat AI as a fashionable add-on rather than a foundational infrastructure of sovereignty.

The emotional weight of this is not sentimental. It is the quiet fury of watching a generation’s potential rationed by infrastructure that never arrived. A farmer whose yield prediction model was trained on European or North American data will mis-time planting. A clinic whose diagnostic tool cannot parse local disease patterns will misdiagnose. A student whose language is invisible to the dominant large language models will find her ideas harder to express and her opportunities narrower. Inequality compounds: those already connected accelerate; those offline fall further behind. The social fabric frays not through sudden violence but through the slow, algorithmic sorting of life chances.

There is a deeper insight here that must be stated without apology. AI is not neutral technology. It is crystallized power, power over classification, prediction, and allocation. When a continent outsources that power, it outsources part of its future agency. The countries that currently dominate AI development did not arrive there by accident; they invested, protected, and directed. Africa’s own history of technological leapfrogging mobile money, for instance—proves the capacity exists when political will and local problem-definition align. The same energy must now be directed at sovereign compute, representative datasets, open African-language models, and educational systems that treat AI literacy as basic citizenship rather than elite privilege.

To refuse this work is to accept a future in which the AI divide becomes the primary social divide of the twenty-first century. Wealth gaps will widen not only between continents but within them, as a thin urban technocratic class connects to global systems while the majority remains spectators. Power imbalances will calcify: decisions about African resources, African health systems, African financial inclusion will increasingly be mediated by algorithms whose values and training data were shaped far from African soil. Dependency will deepen, dressed in the language of partnership and cloud credits.

Nevertheless, the window remains open. The same demographic youthfulness that makes the stakes so high also supplies the urgency and the numbers. The same linguistic and cultural diversity that current models ignore is precisely the richness that could produce more robust, less biased systems. The same necessity that once produced mobile money can produce AI solutions tailored to informal economies, climate-vulnerable agriculture, and fragmented healthcare. What is required is not mimicry of Silicon Valley or Shenzhen, but the deliberate construction of African AI capacity public and private, continental and national, technical and ethical.

The factual starting point is stark: 38 percent online, less than one percent of global compute, a vanishing share of research. The issue that follows is existential. If Africa does not build its own AI future, the divide will not stay digital. It will become the organising principle of inequality and the quiet architecture of diminished power. History will not ask whether the technology was impressive. It will ask whether a continent of a billion and a half people chose to shape the intelligence that will shape them or allowed others to write the code of their tomorrow. The choice is still open. The cost of hesitation is not.

Debt A new Old Mutual report finds a generation earning more and saving harder, yet dangerously exposed to financial shocks.

Young Kenyans are optimistic about money — but debt and betting tell a harder story

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Eight in ten young working Kenyans say they are optimistic about their financial futures, yet nearly half have borrowed money to cover basic daily expenses and one in four is gambling in an attempt to make ends meet, according to a major new financial wellness survey released yesterday.

The Old Mutual Financial Wellness Monitor 2025, published ahead of International Youth Day, surveyed Kenyans aged between 20 and 29 and found a generation caught between genuine economic progress and structural financial vulnerability. Financial satisfaction among young people rose from 34 percent in 2024 to 45 percent in 2025, and 42 percent reported earning more than they did the previous year. Those are meaningful improvements, and they reflect a cohort that has responded to economic pressure with creativity — diversifying income streams, starting businesses, and building savings goals with a discipline that might surprise those who dismiss young Kenyans as financially reckless.

But the same report that documents this progress also reveals how thin the margins are. Only 36 percent say their savings could sustain them for more than three months if they lost their primary income. A striking 79 percent of businesses owned by young respondents carry no insurance whatsoever. And just 26 percent are actively saving for retirement — a figure that, if it does not improve significantly, will create a long-term social crisis that current policymakers will leave to their successors to manage.

"Young Kenyans are increasingly building their financial lives around more than one source of income," said Annie Nibishaka, Old Mutual Group Head of Marketing and Communications. "The growth of entrepreneurship and diversified income streams demonstrates strong adaptability. However, this progress needs to be matched by greater financial protection, emergency savings and long-term planning if it is to translate into sustainable financial security."

The income diversification picture is genuinely encouraging. Nearly a quarter of respondents — 24 percent — earn from multiple sources, while 39 percent own or part-own a business. That level of entrepreneurial activity among people in their twenties represents a structural shift from the employment-dependent financial model that defined previous generations. It also reflects necessity: formal employment has not kept pace with the number of young Kenyans entering the labour market each year, and entrepreneurship has filled a gap that government policy has struggled to address.

Beyond formal income and business revenue, 27 percent of young people report receiving financial support from family, friends, and local or international networks. The informal social safety net — the harambee instinct embedded in Kenyan culture — continues to function as a buffer against financial shocks, even as the economy grows more complex. That reliance cuts both ways: it provides genuine resilience in hard times, but it also means that financial distress is rarely contained within a single household. When a young person's income collapses, the pressure radiates outward to parents, siblings, and extended family who may be no more financially secure than the person they are supporting.

The savings picture is similarly contradictory. An impressive 97 percent of young respondents say they have a savings goal — a figure that reflects genuine financial aspiration. Their priorities are practical and, in many cases, productive: 29 percent are saving to start a business, 23 percent to invest in an existing one, 21 percent to fund their children's education, 20 percent to buy a home, and 19 percent to build an emergency fund. These are not the savings goals of a generation without ambition or discipline. They are the goals of people who understand what financial security requires and are trying, within significant constraints, to work towards it.

The constraints, however, are real and pressing. Forty-three percent of respondents have borrowed money to meet everyday expenses — not to invest, not to expand a business, but simply to get through the month. Mobile money loans are the most common credit source, used by 39 percent of borrowers. The convenience of mobile lending has been a genuine financial inclusion success story in Kenya, but its flip side is a generation that can accumulate debt with a few taps on a phone, often at interest rates that compound faster than incomes can grow.

On retirement, the findings are sobering. The three most common reasons young people give for not saving for retirement are that they feel too young to start (35 percent), that they have insufficient funds (30 percent), and that retirement does not feel like an immediate priority (30 percent). All three reasons are understandable. None of them will feel adequate in forty years. The consequence is already visible in the numbers: 79 percent of young respondents say they lack confidence that their retirement savings will ultimately be adequate. That is not a fringe anxiety — it is the majority view of a generation that, on current trajectories, may reach old age without the financial cushion to sustain it.

The betting findings deserve particular attention. Nearly a quarter of young respondents — 23 percent — participate in sports betting, with young men significantly overrepresented. The economic logic is stark: 55 percent of those who bet say they do so in an attempt to generate additional income. That framing matters. These are not primarily people gambling for entertainment. They are people gambling because the legitimate economy has not provided them with sufficient income, and because the promise of a quick return feels more accessible than the slow accumulation of savings. Forty percent of young gamblers report having experienced financial difficulties as a result — a figure that captures only those willing to admit it, and almost certainly understates the true scale of the problem.

The report found that 78 percent of young working Kenyans want financial institutions to provide practical tools and information to improve their financial literacy. That demand should not go unanswered. Banks, insurance companies, mobile money providers, and regulators all have a role in building the financial infrastructure that a generation of optimistic, entrepreneurial, and genuinely vulnerable young people needs to convert aspiration into security.

The optimism is real. So is the exposure. The distance between them is where Kenya's next financial crisis — or its next generation of prosperity — will be decided.

Africa The answer is uncomfortable, because Africa is not poor. Africa has been kept waiting. And the cruelest part is that much of the waiting has been engineered by our own hand

Africa: Burying gold while begging for bread

How tribalism, poor leadership, and a poverty of ambition have kept the richest continent on earth on its knees.

By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

Burying gold while begging for bread

I have walked through villages where the soil is so fertile that a dry stick planted in the morning sprouts leaves by evening. I have stood beside rivers that could power entire cities, and beside mines that hold the cobalt, gold, and rare earths that run the modern world. I have looked into the eyes of children in Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Kinshasa, and Addis Ababa — eyes that carry fire, questions, and dreams bigger than any skyline we import from abroad.

And yet the question that refuses to let me sleep is simple and brutal: with all this wealth, why has Africa not yet taken off?

The answer is uncomfortable, because Africa is not poor. Africa has been kept waiting. And the cruelest part is that much of the waiting has been engineered by our own hands.

We must first admit a fundamental contradiction. God did not shortchange this continent. We possess the minerals that charge the world's batteries, the oil that moves its machines, the diamonds that adorn its crowns, and the youngest, fastest-growing population on the planet. We have sun for 300 days and rain for the rest, and minds capable of solving problems the West has not yet named. But wealth in the ground is useless in the presence of poverty in the mind.

For decades we accepted the lie that development must come from outside. So we export raw cocoa and import chocolate at ten times the price. We export crude oil and import refined fuel. We export our best graduates and then pay to import their ideas back home. In effect, we became landlords who do not live in their own house — tenants in the very economies we built.

No single factor explains this stagnation more painfully than tribalism. It is the knife with which we cut our own feet and then wonder why we cannot run. Tribalism taught us to say: he is not your brother — he is Kikuyu, Luo, Hutu, Igbo, from the North, from the South. It made us vote for stomachs instead of vision. It made us award contracts to cousins instead of to competence. It made us burn schools because the teacher spoke a different dialect, and cheer when "our man" ate, even as the whole village starved.

Here is the truth we must speak plainly: every tribe has both intellectuals and opportunists. Every tribe produces doctors who heal and politicians who steal. Every tribe has mothers who pray at four in the morning and demagogues who lie at four in the afternoon. To reduce an entire people to the failures of one leader is to insult the teacher, the nurse, the farmer, and the student from that tribe who is crying for the same future we all want. Tribalism has not built a single road. It has only built walls between people who share the same sun, the same struggles, and the same hope. A plane cannot take off when half the passengers are busy arguing over which wing belongs to which tribe.

But tribalism is not our only chain. We are also bound by leadership without accountability. Too many of our leaders came to eat, not to serve. They built mansions while clinics ran out of basic medicines. We are bound by an education system without purpose — one that produces certificate holders who can quote Shakespeare but cannot repair a borehole, trained to pass examinations rather than solve problems. We are bound by a dependency on aid that made us experts at writing donor proposals instead of national budgets, waiting for NGOs to feed us while forgetting that we have hands to farm and land to till. Above all, we suffer from a deep fear of ourselves. We copied everything from the outside world except self-belief. We dress like them, speak like them, and then ask why we do not build like them.

And yet Africa is not dead. Africa is delayed. In the midst of the noise there are still teachers instructing under trees, nurses walking ten kilometres to save one life, and software developers building applications during power blackouts. There are seminarians, artists, farmers, and mothers who refuse to surrender to despair.

The takeoff will not be delivered to us at a summit in Europe. It will come only when we make three painful but necessary decisions.

First, we must choose competence over tribe. The next president, legislator, engineer, and chief executive must be the best person for the job — not the closest relative. As long as we hire by bloodline rather than by talent, we will continue to bury our future.

Second, we must turn resources into results. We must stop exporting raw materials and start building factories. Let the cobalt become batteries here. Let the coffee be roasted here. Let our universities be funded to solve our problems, not merely to award degrees.

Third, we must remember that we are one family. The struggling farmer in my community and the professional in yours will both suffer from the same broken road, drink from the same contaminated river, and bury children from the same preventable disease. A hungry child does not ask what language her mother speaks before she cries.

I am tired of watching Africa beg for what it already owns. I am tired of holding funerals for our potential. But I am not without hope, because I have seen what happens when we stop fighting and start building. One school, one clinic, one cooperative can transform an entire village. Multiply that by fifty-four countries and 1.4 billion people, and you begin to see what is possible.

Africa's delay is not permanent. It is a labour pain — and every labour pain ends with a birth. So let us put down the knife of tribalism, honour the best in every community, and reject the greed and smallness that diminish us all.

The gold is in the ground. The genius is in our youth. The only thing missing is our decision to rise.

Africa, it is time to take off. The world is watching. And more importantly, our children are waiting.

Crowdfunding What matters here is not the amount. It is the impulse behind it. These were not donations extracted through obligation, ethnic loyalty, or the quiet expectation of a future favour

Rejecting the billions: Can crowdfunding clean up Kenyan politics?

The Linda Mwananchi movement has sparked a serious question about whether citizen-funded campaigns can break the grip of money on Kenya's democracy.

BY Angela Mwanga
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's political culture may be shifting in ways that would have seemed improbable even five years ago. Voters who once accepted cash handouts as a routine feature of election season are increasingly questioning the influence of wealthy political patrons — and, in some cases, putting their own money behind the candidates they believe in. It is an early and fragile development, but it is real, and it deserves to be examined honestly.

The clearest recent example is the Linda Mwananchi movement led by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna. In a deliberate break from the transactional financing that has long defined Kenyan politics, Sifuna invited ordinary citizens to contribute as little as KSh10 towards the movement's activities. The response was striking. Within 36 hours, his campaign reported that more than 9,000 Kenyans had collectively contributed over KSh2.2 million. That figure subsequently rose to KSh6.5 million — a sum that, by conventional standards, is modest, but in political terms carries enormous symbolic weight.

What matters here is not the amount. It is the impulse behind it. These were not donations extracted through obligation, ethnic loyalty, or the quiet expectation of a future favour. They were voluntary, small, and spread across thousands of individuals who wanted a stake in something they believed was worth supporting. That is a meaningfully different political transaction from the one Kenyans have grown accustomed to — and the difference matters more than the money.

Sifuna has been deliberate in framing the Linda Mwananchi model as a challenge to the patronage system that has distorted Kenyan democracy for decades. The argument is straightforward: a politician who is funded by citizens answers to citizens. A politician who is funded by a handful of wealthy backers answers, eventually, to those backers. The funding structure of a campaign does not merely reflect the values of a candidate — it shapes the incentives of the leader they become. If that logic holds, then changing how campaigns are financed is not a peripheral reform. It is a central one.

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

A similar mood was visible in the recent Ol Kalou by-election, where voters demonstrated that electoral outcomes are not always dictated by the depth of a candidate's pockets. The contest generated genuine conversation among Kenyans about whether something is changing in the relationship between money and votes — whether citizens are beginning to prioritise integrity and demonstrated commitment over the size of the handout placed in their hands on polling eve. The results were not conclusive proof of a revolution, but they were evidence of a conversation worth having.

It is tempting, and understandable, to read these developments as signs of a permanent cultural shift. But crowdfunding alone cannot eradicate corruption, and it would be a mistake to overstate what these early signals mean. Kenya's governance challenges are structural as much as they are behavioural. Campaign financing rules remain weak and poorly enforced. Oversight institutions lack the independence and resources to hold powerful political actors to account. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has repeatedly faced questions about its capacity to monitor campaign expenditure in any meaningful way. And the informal economy of political patronage — the harambees, the handouts, the constituency development fund manipulation, the last-minute voter inducements — operates through channels that no fundraising platform can reach or disrupt on its own.

Research into Kenya's campaign finance system consistently points to the same conclusions: meaningful reform requires empowered voters, yes, but also transparent disclosure requirements, enforceable spending limits, independent electoral oversight, and real consequences for those who break the rules. The legal framework exists in outline. The political will to enforce it has been consistently absent. Citizen enthusiasm is a necessary condition for change. It is not, by itself, a sufficient one, and history offers sobering lessons about how quickly popular energy can be absorbed and neutralised by entrenched systems.

There is also a class dimension to this conversation that is rarely addressed directly. The Kenyans most likely to contribute KSh10 to a crowdfunding campaign are also, broadly speaking, the Kenyans most likely to have alternatives — urban, connected, educated, and with enough economic security to make political choices based on values rather than immediate material need. In rural constituencies, where the economy is harder and the state more distant, the handout remains a rational calculation for many voters, not a moral failure. Any honest reckoning with money politics in Kenya must grapple with that reality rather than simply celebrating the behaviour of those who can afford to reject it.

None of that diminishes what is happening. The willingness of thousands of ordinary Kenyans to contribute KSh10 to a political movement — knowing it will not buy them a favour, a job, or a seat at any table — reflects a maturing democratic instinct that deserves to be taken seriously. It suggests that at least a meaningful portion of the electorate is no longer content to be a passive recipient of political largesse, but wants instead to be an active participant in how power is sought, exercised, and ultimately judged. That is not a small thing. In a country where politics has for so long been experienced as something done to citizens rather than by them, it represents a genuine shift in self-conception.

Technology has made this shift easier to act on. Kenya's mobile money infrastructure — among the most advanced on the continent — means that small contributions can be aggregated quickly, transparently, and at scale. The barrier to political participation has been lowered in a practical sense, and platforms like M-Pesa have made it possible for the kind of broad-based fundraising that once required physical infrastructure to happen in days rather than months. That is a structural advantage that Kenyan reformers should be building on far more systematically than they currently are.

If the instinct visible in the Linda Mwananchi campaign can be sustained beyond the excitement of a single political moment, and if it is matched by the institutional reforms that Kenya's democracy still urgently needs, the combination could genuinely alter the country's political economy. Leaders funded by citizens tend to answer to citizens. That is not a Kenyan observation alone — it is a lesson drawn from every democracy that has tried to reduce the corrupting influence of concentrated money in public life.

The billions have not gone anywhere. They will return at the next election cycle, deployed with the same efficiency and the same expectations attached. The question is whether enough Kenyans will have decided, by then, that the price is simply too high — and whether the alternative they are beginning to build today will be strong enough, and broad enough, to hold.

Sports >> *Doué's second-half strike proved decisive as the French champions held off a determined Villa fightback in Salzburg

PSG retain Super Cup with victory over Aston Villa

By **Pascal Okoth**

Paris Saint-Germain retained the UEFA Super Cup yesterday, defeating Aston Villa 2–1 in a competitive and absorbing encounter that underlined the French champions' growing stature in European football.

PSG settled quickly and looked threatening from the first whistle, their possession-based approach creating problems for a Villa side still finding its footing in the contest. The opening goal arrived in the 20th minute when Khvicha Kvaratskhelia finished with composure to give the Parisians an early advantage, rewarding the pressure they had sustained and setting the tone for an entertaining evening.

Villa, however, were not prepared to be overwhelmed. The English side gradually asserted themselves, found space in behind PSG's defensive line, and grew into a match they had initially struggled to contain. Their persistence paid off just before the interval when Brian Madjo equalised in the 45th minute, ensuring both sides went into the break level and leaving the tie entirely open.

The second half brought renewed intensity from both teams. PSG moved to retake control while Villa remained dangerous on the counter-attack, and the midfield contest became increasingly fierce as each side sought the decisive moment. It arrived in the 61st minute through Désiré Doué, the young attacker exploiting space in the Villa defence to finish calmly and restore PSG's lead. That goal would prove the difference.

Villa pushed hard in the closing stages, committing players forward and testing PSG's defensive discipline. The French side absorbed the pressure with composure, however, holding their shape and denying their opponents the opening they needed. When the final whistle came, PSG had their trophy — and their opponents were left to reflect on how close they had come to forcing a different outcome.

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG)

For PSG, the victory carried significance beyond the silverware. The club has invested heavily in building a squad capable of sustaining a challenge across multiple fronts, and performances like this — measured, technically accomplished, and resilient under late pressure — demonstrate that the project is maturing. Kvaratskhelia's early goal signalled intent; Doué's clinical finish showed depth. Together they gave manager Luis Enrique exactly what he needed from a season-opening test of character.

For Villa, the defeat stings, but the manner of their performance offers genuine encouragement. They conceded early, responded well, drew level, and remained a threat deep into the second half against a side that reached last season's Champions League final. That is no small achievement for a club still establishing itself among Europe's elite. The ability to recover composure after falling behind, and to sustain pressure against technically superior opposition, suggests Unai Emery's side possess the resilience required to compete at this level consistently.

The match also illustrated a recurring truth about high-stakes European football: concentration cannot waver, even for a moment. Villa had worked hard to restore parity and had every reason to believe they could push for a winner. PSG's second goal, arriving as it did midway through the second half rather than in the dying minutes, forced Villa to chase the game all over again — and this time there was no way back.

Kvaratskhelia's return to form will be particularly pleasing for the PSG hierarchy after a campaign in which the Georgian forward carried heavy expectations following his arrival from Napoli. His performance yesterday suggested a player growing in confidence, increasingly comfortable within a system that demands as much intelligence as it does individual brilliance. Doué, meanwhile, continues to develop at a rate that justifies every expectation placed on him. At 20 years old, he is delivering in moments that count.

PSG depart Salzburg with a trophy and a statement. Villa depart with a defeat and a lesson — one that Emery, a manager who has won this competition four times as a coach, will know exactly how to use.

The Super Cup is rarely the most glamorous prize in European football, but for the clubs that contest it, it matters. It sets a tone, builds confidence, and provides early evidence of where a season might lead. On this occasion, PSG have that evidence. For Villa, the work continues — and on the strength of yesterday's performance, it is work that looks far from futile.

Sports >> *The African football chief backs due process as support for the embattled FIFA president continues to crumble across Europe.

Motsepe insists elections must decide Infantino's fate

By **Martin Weche**

Confederation of African Football president Patrice Motsepe yesterday declared that Gianni Infantino's future as FIFA president must be settled through elections, as Ireland became the latest football association to withdraw its support for the embattled Swiss administrator.

FIFA president Giani Infantino (L) and CAF president Dr. Patrice Motsepe

The position puts Motsepe — who also serves as a FIFA vice-president — at direct odds with UEFA, CONCACAF and the Asian Football Confederation, whose governing bodies this week issued a joint letter warning that trust in Infantino had been "broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority." The three confederations are understood to want Infantino gone before he can seek re-election in March next year. Motsepe is having none of it.

"If anybody has got any problem against anybody, whether it's Gianni, whether it is anybody else, follow the process, follow the FIFA process, simple as that," Motsepe told Sky News. "If you want to take him out, go for elections; let the 211 member associations decide. Do that and the vote will express whether they've got confidence in him or not. You've got to be very careful. There are elections taking place next year. Shouldn't we allow that process to continue?"

The remarks came as Infantino fights to preserve a presidency that has lurched into its gravest crisis since he first took office in 2016. The immediate cause is his aborted proposal to sell equity stakes in the World Cup to private investors — a plan advanced without the knowledge or consent of FIFA's member associations, and one that has since ignited fury across the game's major power centres. Infantino has since apologised, conceding that the process could have been handled differently. For many of his critics, the apology has arrived too late.

Motsepe, who attended the UEFA Super Cup in Salzburg on Wednesday for talks with UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin, sought to project measured caution rather than outright defence of his FIFA colleague. "I've heard so many stories about various issues and am careful to pass judgement on anything," he said. "Everybody has a right to be heard. Let's have a hearing, and a proper forum." CAF had already formally backed Infantino's continued tenure, and Motsepe argued that no rules had been broken because the World Cup sell-off proposals would ultimately have required approval from FIFA's full membership before taking effect.

"There's a lot that's problematic and negative that they have to fix," he acknowledged. "But he has apologised and said maybe there's a different way these things should have been done, but we also take advice."

That concession has done little to arrest the slide. The Football Association of Ireland yesterday became the latest member body to pull its support for the 56-year-old, joining the English FA and Welsh FA in formally rescinding earlier letters of backing. The decision followed an FAI board meeting and was communicated directly to FIFA headquarters in Zurich.

"Following an FAI board meeting, the decision was taken to rescind the letter of support that the Association supplied earlier this year," the FAI said. "Recent events have raised significant concerns regarding governance, transparency and the lack of meaningful consultation."

The language is diplomatic but the direction of travel is unmistakable. Each withdrawal chips further at Infantino's claim to a broad democratic mandate — the very argument Motsepe is now deploying to defend him. If the 211 member associations are the final arbiters, as the CAF president insists, then the growing number of defections from Infantino's coalition carries real political weight.

The European dimension is particularly consequential. UEFA represents the wealthiest and most commercially influential confederation in world football. Its threat to boycott both the World Cup and the Club World Cup is not posturing — it is a calculation about leverage, and it reflects how seriously Ceferin regards the constitutional breach at the heart of this dispute.

At the centre of this storm is a question that goes beyond one man's political survival. The World Cup privatisation plan reflected a genuine ambition to expand football's commercial footprint in ways traditional governance structures have struggled to accommodate. Whether Infantino survives or not, the tensions that produced this crisis will outlast him.

For now, Motsepe's position offers Infantino a lifeline — the argument that due process cannot be short-circuited by the pressure of powerful confederations. It is a defensible constitutional stand. Whether it is sufficient to hold the line against a European bloc that controls the game's financial centre of gravity is another matter entirely.

The ballot box may yet save Gianni Infantino. But with allies peeling away by the week, the count is moving in the wrong direction.

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The breath of independence and the modern screen: Technological advancement in Uzbek television

By: Boqiyeva Shodiya
@themtkenyatimes

ABSTRACT:
This article analyzes the stages of development of Uzbek television during the periods before and after independence. It highlights television as an integral part of societal life, emphasizing its unparalleled role in disseminating information to the public, fostering spiritual and educational growth, and promoting national values.

KEYWORDS:
Television, digital television, satellite technologies, artificial intelligence, broadcasting.

Worth Noting:

- While initially only the "O'zbekiston" channel existed, the post-independence era saw the establishment of channels such as "Toshkent" and "Yoshlar." In recent years, private channels—including "MilliyTV," "Zo'RTV,"and "SevimliTV"—have launched alongside state-run broadcasters.
- Furthermore, satellite technology has played a pivotal role in the development of digital television, enabling broadcasts to be transmitted from anywhere in the world. Today, television channels stream live content via YouTube and operate with great agility.
- Artificial intelligence also plays a significant role in the current stage of television development. AI has streamlined the work of journalists; tasks such as generating subtitles, cleaning audio, and performing automated editing save time across various stages of production.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, television plays an unparalleled role in the political, economic, educational, and cultural life of society. Prior to independence, however, there was a lack of adequate technical equipment for the development of television. The broadcasting process was complex and involved multiple stages.

In the early years of independence, magnetic videotapes were widely used to record and store television programs. These tapes were known as "shalinafol." However, these magnetic tapes had several drawbacks:

— The quality of the recordings on the tape would deteriorate over time;
— Transporting them was somewhat inconvenient;
— Editing was complex and time-consuming;
— Quality was lost during copying.

During the early years of independence, the Uzbek feature film "Abdullajon" and the comedy "Temir Xotin" (The Iron Woman) were broadcast. These films quickly won a place in the hearts of viewers, as they offered spiritual enrichment and held educational value. Television is not merely about broadcasting information and news; it is also a means of imparting knowledge to the audience. Additionally, the "Axborot" (Information) program was one of the most popular and iconic broadcasts of that era. Through this program, viewers had the opportunity to stay informed about the latest developments taking place in our society.

....

Following independence, the technical infrastructure of television channels was upgraded. Modern studios were constructed and equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Today, these studios feature:

— professional cameras capable of 4K recording;
— LED lighting equipment;
— teleprompter systems;
— green screen filming capabilities;
— automated broadcast control systems, among other features.

During the early years of independence, the Uzbek feature film "Abdullajon" and the comedy "Temir Xotin" (The Iron Woman) were broadcast. These films quickly won a place in the hearts of viewers, as they offered spiritual enrichment and held educational value. Television is not merely about broadcasting information and news; it is also a means of imparting knowledge to the audience. Additionally, the "Axborot" (Information) program was one of the most popular and iconic broadcasts of that era. Through this program, viewers had the opportunity to stay informed about the latest developments taking place in our society.

While initially only the "O'zbekiston" channel existed, the post-independence era saw the establishment of channels such as "Toshkent" and "Yoshlar." In recent years, private channels—including "MilliyTV," "Zo'RTV,"and "SevimliTV"—have launched alongside state-run broadcasters.

Furthermore, satellite technology has played a pivotal role in the development of digital television, enabling broadcasts to be transmitted from anywhere in the world. Today, television channels stream live content via YouTube and operate with great agility.

Artificial intelligence also plays a significant role in the current stage of television development. AI has streamlined the work of journalists; tasks such as generating subtitles, cleaning audio, and performing automated editing save time across various stages of production.

CONCLUSION.

Independence has propelled Uzbekistan's television sector to new heights. Since gaining independence, the industry has achieved significant progress—not only in terms of content but also regarding technical and technological capabilities. Having initially operated on simple analog systems, the sector has evolved into a modern media ecosystem integrated with digital technologies, state-of-the-art studios, high-definition image formats, and internet platforms. Looking ahead, the further expansion of technical capabilities will continue to elevate Uzbekistan's television industry to an even higher level

Boqiyeva Shodiya was born on November 24, 2005, in Tashkent. She is currently a fourth-year student specializing in TV and Radio Broadcasting at the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan. She is the author of the book "Hayot Muallim" (Life is a Teacher) and has written various poems, short stories, and articles. She communicates fluently in English and Turkish and holds IELTS and TYS certificates.

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