



Sifuna climbing the mountain: Kenya's political map is being redrawn

Police lobbed teargas at a Linda Mwananchi rally in Makutano, Meru County yesterday, briefly disrupting a gathering attended by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other opposition leaders — but the canisters did not silence what the rally represented **Page 8**



Who exactly has been governing Kenya?

"A government cannot spend five years explaining why the opposition would have governed worse. At some point, it must explain what it did with the power Kenyans gave it." **Page 12**

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027  **The campaigns have not officially begun, but the counting has started**

Counting regions, chasing power: Kenya's road to 2027

Kenya has a peculiar habit of beginning its national elections long before Election Day. The campaign posters may not yet cover every roadside, political rallies may not yet have reached their full roar, and the ballot papers remain far away. But politically, the country is already counting. Politicians are counting regions, parties are counting alliances, leaders are counting loyalists, and strategists are counting constituencies. Behind closed doors, one question is already taking shape: where will the winning numbers come from when Kenyans finally go to the polls?

This time, however, there is a difference that matters. Kenya is not merely behaving as though the election season has begun — the electoral process itself is moving, while political calculations are accelerating even faster. Governing, campaigning, coalition-building and succession politics are increasingly overlapping. The result is an unusually long political season in which tomorrow's election is beginning to compete with today's government for national attention.

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President William Ruto

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Ward by ward, DCP is dismantling Ruto's Laikipia machine

BY Joseph Wanjohi

@themtkenyentimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Democracy for the Citizens Party ran two simultaneous political operations yesterday — Nyandarua Senator John Methu leading grassroots rallies in Laikipia County while party leader Rigathi Gachagua, now in the United States since 28 August, rested ahead of his first formal diaspora engagement in Spokane, Washington, which begins on 4 September — a deliberate division of labour that signals DCP has outgrown its status as a one-man political vehicle. The optics matter as much as the logistics. In Kenyan politics, an absent leader is a vulnerable leader. Opponents read absence as weakness. Supporters read it as abandonment. The opposition to managing a fifty-day international tour — the longest absence from domestic politics by any senior opposition figure in this election cycle — is therefore not merely logistical. It is a test of whether the structures built around Gachagua over the past year can hold weight independently. Yesterday's answer, at least



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Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Democratic Action Party of Kenya leader Eugene Wamalwa yesterday demanded the cancellation of a controversial police uniforms tender, claiming the multi-million-shilling contract was engineered to benefit individuals within government rather than serve the public interest. Speaking in Kwale County during a church service at PAG Diani and the opening of a DAP-Kenya office in Kinondo, Wamalwa argued that Kenyans were demanding substantive police reforms and better officer pay — not new uniforms. He also condemned the use of teargas against Nairobi traders protesting punitive taxation, and called out attacks on Linda Mwananchi leaders James Orengo and Babu Owino in Migori, demanding that all political formations be allowed to campaign freely ahead of the 2027 general election.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday urged the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to resist political pressure and discharge its constitutional mandate without fear or favour, accusing opposition leaders of attacking the electoral body because they sense defeat ahead of the 2027 general election. Speaking during an interdenominational church service and fundraiser for 22 churches at Kipsamoo School Grounds in Kapseret Constituency, Uasin Gishu County, Kindiki told the opposition to develop a manifesto instead of targeting institutions. “IEBC does not vote. Look for a manifesto and sell it to Kenyans,” he said, adding that President Ruto’s development record across roads, electricity, health and education would secure re-election on merit. Kindiki also warned that the government would fully enforce the law against those using youth to attack political opponents.



Zambian opposition leader Brian Mundubile was yesterday charged with treason alongside 17 others, including his running mate Makebi Zulu, following a political crisis triggered by his rejection of President Hakainde Hichilema’s re-election. His lawyer Milner Katolo confirmed the charges, saying Mundubile looked forward to answering them in court. The arrest followed a deadly security raid on a Lusaka property linked to Mundubile the day after the 13 August election, in which Hichilema secured 60 per cent against Mundubile’s 38 per cent. Mundubile and Zulu had taken refuge at a United Nations building before being detained after presidential pressure on the UN to surrender them. Courts were sealed on the final day for filing election challenges. Hichilema is due to be sworn in tomorrow for his second term.



Aviation workers downed tools yesterday at three major employers — the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority, Kenya Airports Authority and Jambojet — after a government-brokered truce signed on 27 July collapsed when one employer refused to engage on outstanding grievances. Kenya Aviation Workers Union Secretary General Moss Ndiema said members would not return until disputes at all three organisations are resolved. At KCAA, the union contests a refusal to backdate pay awards to 2015, when salary increments last occurred. At KAA, Ndiema accused Managing Director Moses Wekesa of frustrating union members and demanded his removal. At Jambojet, the dispute centres on union recognition, a matter already before the Employment and Labour Relations Court. Kenya Airports Authority confirmed flight delays at its airports, urging passengers to check with their airlines.



The National Police Service yesterday flatly denied reports linking Nalitex Limited to the KSh2.8B procurement of new Kenya Police general duty uniforms, describing the claims as false and malicious. NPS Director of Corporate Communication Muchiri Nyaga said Bedi Investments Limited won the contract after its sample was selected through evaluation and public participation, with Rivatex East Africa, Thika Textile Mills and Sunflag Textiles also invited to submit samples. Only Bedi Investments and Rivatex met the deadline. The NPS said the uniform change stemmed from recommendations by the Maraga Task Force on Police Reforms, not a sudden procurement decision, and that officers had been consulted throughout. “Nalitex did not participate at any stage of the procurement process, was not awarded the contract, and has received no payment from the NPS,” Nyaga said.



Gender Cabinet Secretary Ann Cheptumo yesterday warned chiefs, village elders and local administrators in Baringo County that they face disciplinary action if Female Genital Mutilation cases occur within their areas of jurisdiction, telling them they cannot look away while girls are harmed in communities they oversee. Speaking during a three-day women’s conference held under the theme “Restoring Lost Glory” and attended by women of faith from all six Baringo constituencies, Cheptumo described FGM as retrogressive and said cultural belief cannot shield a practice that violates rights and endangers health. Pastor Salina Chelimo called on the church to actively confront harmful traditions, pledging to work alongside government to educate communities. Concern remains acute in Tiaty Sub-County, where school enrolment among girls drops sharply during periods when the cut is believed to take place.

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Politics Methu's schedule was disciplined and public: a church service at ACK Ngaruru in the morning, a rally at Kinamba Town at 2.30 pm and a closing engagement in Sipili at 4 pm

Two weekends, two fronts: How DCP is fighting on both sides of the Atlantic

While Gachagua prepares his first diaspora rallies in Spokane, Methu held the party line in Laikipia — and the weekend split reveals a political operation maturing beyond its founder

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from Laikipia, was yes. Methu's schedule was disciplined and public: a church service at ACK Ngaruru in the morning, a rally at Kinamba Town at 2.30 pm and a closing engagement in Sipili at 4 pm. The itinerary was released in advance, the venues confirmed, and the meetings held — the basic blocking and tackling of a functioning party machine operating without its principal. This is not nothing. Kenyan political parties have a long history of dissolving into factional confusion the moment their leader leaves the room. DCP has not done that.

Gachagua's US tour is structured with equal deliberateness. After arriving at JKIA on the evening of 26 August and touching down in America two days later, he is spending the first ten days resting with his wife, Pastor Dorcas Rigathi — a period he described as essential after what he called sustained campaigning without a break. "I have not had time to spend quality time with her. I like to take ten days to rest, meditate, pray, read and re-energise," he said before departing. The candour was strategic. It humanised the absence and framed it as personal restoration rather



Nyandarua Senator John Methu leading grassroots rallies in Laikipia County

than political retreat. From Spokane on 4 September, the formal diaspora programme begins. He will move from Washington to Portland, Oregon, then Kansas, Dallas and finally Boston — five cities, five distinct Kenyan diaspora communities, six weeks of sustained political and fundraising engagement. The Kenyan diaspora in the United States remitted approximately KSh370B in the first seven months of this year alone. That figure is not lost on a party that needs resources to fight a govern-

ment-backed incumbent in every corner of a country with 47 counties and thousands of wards. Building relationships with diaspora communities is, in practical terms, building the financial infrastructure of a 2027 campaign. Gachagua was unusually candid about his motivations before departing. "When I'm here, there is a lot of influence — Methu tells me this, others tell me that. This pulls me one way, this the other way. I want to make decisions without undue influence," he said. The remark was self-aware and

politically significant. It acknowledged that DCP's leadership dynamics are not static — that Methu and others have grown into genuine institutional roles — while making clear that strategic decisions ultimately remain with Gachagua. The fifty days in America are, in part, a thinking retreat.

Back in Laikipia, the ground Methu is tending was won at considerable cost. On 29 July, twenty-four sitting MCAs from Laikipia and Nakuru counties formally defected to DCP at Gachagua's Wamun-

yoro residence. Among them was the Laikipia County Assembly Deputy Speaker, Anthony Theuri Wambui — a defection that penetrated not just the political periphery but the institutional structure of county governance. Those MCAs bring ward-level operational capacity: voter registration knowledge, polling day logistics, community networks that no amount of national messaging can replicate. Holding their loyalty during Gachagua's absence is the immediate task. Yesterday's rallies were about doing

exactly that — showing the newly joined MCAs that the party is present, active and worth the political risk they took by crossing over.

UDA has not surrendered Laikipia quietly. The Service Party's Laikipia East MP Mwangi Kiunjuri remains in the field, warning that defection without delivery is no guarantee of voter support. "If you are elected on UDA as MP, senator or governor and you have not delivered, don't think you can decamp to DCP and be sanitised. You will remain as useless," he said. The warning is directed at the defectors, but the audience is the voters — and it is a message DCP cannot afford to ignore. The next five weekends will tell a revealing story. Each Saturday, Gachagua will be addressing Kenyan diaspora communities in American cities. Each Sunday, Methu and the DCP ground operation will be in the field somewhere in Mt Kenya. Whether the two fronts hold together — whether the diaspora dollars flow home and the wards stay green — will determine whether DCP arrives at 2027 as a serious national force or a regional protest movement that peaked too early. The weekends have started. The count has begun.

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Politics To understand why yesterday's rally matters, you have to understand what Kenya's political map looked like eighteen months ago — and how dramatically it has shifted since

Sifuna climbing the mountain: Kenya's political map is being redrawn

With twelve months to the August 2027 general election, Edwin Sifuna's rally in the heart of Mount Kenya country yesterday crystallised a political reckoning that President William Ruto can no longer ignore

BY MJames Mwangi

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Police lobbed teargas at a Linda Mwananchi rally in Makutano, Meru County yesterday, briefly disrupting a gathering attended by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other opposition leaders — but the canisters did not silence what the rally represented. By the time the smoke cleared and the crowd settled back into place, something had already been established: the opposition had arrived, uninvited and unafraid, in territory the government had considered its own.

The symbolism was not accidental. Meru and the broader Mount Kenya East region are quickly emerging as a political powder keg that could determine the outcome of the next presidential race, and Sifuna's presence there — welcomed by former Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza, who backed him for the 2027 presidential race — was a direct challenge to the calculations of every major political actor in the country.

To understand why yesterday's rally matters, you have to understand what Kenya's political map looked like eighteen months ago — and how dramatically it has shifted since.

When Ruto orchestrated the impeachment of his deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, in October 2024, the calculation was straightforward: neutralise the Mt Kenya bloc's most combative voice and replace the loss by folding ODM, with its deep Nyanza and western Kenya roots, into the broad-based government. It was a transaction — Gachagua's departure for ODM's loyalty. For a moment, it appeared to work.

It no longer does.

The confrontation traces back to the death of ODM founder Raila Odinga in October last year, which left the party without the figure who had held its competing wings together. Two camps have since emerged: one led by Siaya Senator Oburu Oginga, who now heads the mainstream ODM structure and has anchored the party firmly within President Ruto's orbit, and another led by Sifuna, Siaya Governor James Orengo and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino through the Linda Mwananchi



Edwin Sifuna and other leaders led by former Governor Kawira Mwangaza in Meru

movement.

The consequence for Ruto is severe. The political dividend he was promised when ODM entered the broad-based arrangement — Nyanza's votes, Western Kenya's weight, a western buffer against Gachagua — is fracturing in real time. ODM is facing a test of strength after two factions emerged: one led by Oburu Oginga and another led by Sifuna and Owino under Linda Mwananchi. Oburu's ODM may be administratively dominant, but it is Sifuna's caravan that is filling the streets.

In Nyanza specifically, the contest is bruising. At the centre of Ruto's sustained Nyanza engagement has been Homa Bay, where Governor Gladys Wanga — also ODM national chairperson — has emerged as the President's most consistent host, helping transform the county into the primary gateway for his Nyanza strategy. But that gateway is now contested. Orengo's engagements across Siaya and the wider Luo belt have drawn thousands, and his decision to declare himself a presidential candidate has upended the neat hierarchy the Oburu-Wanga axis was meant to provide. "Oburu is going for the Siaya senatorial seat, Wanga is going to Homa Bay, yet the Luo community does not have a representative at the national table. It is only me who is left," Orengo said.

In Western Kenya, the terrain is even more unfavourable for the govern-

ment. Sifuna, a Kakamega senator with deep grassroots reach, has effectively swept the region under the Linda Mwananchi banner. "We are going to every corner of this country. We want to listen to Kenyans, understand their problems and build this movement from the ground up," he has said, adding that Linda Mwananchi's strength would come from ordinary citizens rather than political elites. That message has landed. Rallies in Kakamega, Vihiga and Trans Nzoia have drawn crowds that tell a story Nairobi's political strategists cannot explain away with talking points.

Then there is Mount Kenya — the region whose arithmetic has decided every presidential election in the democratic era, and which is currently in a state of three-way fracture.

The renewed push to politically distinguish Mt Kenya East from Mt Kenya West has evolved from a regional identity debate into one of the most significant political battles ahead of the 2027 general election, with implications for Ruto's re-election strategy and DCP leader Gachagua's efforts to consolidate the mountain vote. Deputy President Kindiki has hosted more than 20,000 grassroots leaders from Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Embu and Isiolo counties, vowing to wipe out the opposition's influence in the year ahead. "The opposition should not dare mess with me," he said. "When

we start the campaigns, votes will be pouring into the President's ballot."

The bravado is understandable — and also revealing. A deputy president who did not need to say that would not have said it. Kindiki is fighting for a region he nominally controls but does not yet own.

Mwangaza's alignment with Linda Mwananchi yesterday complicated that picture further. Though elected as an independent and less tethered to national party machinery, her voice carries weight among Meru's grassroots. She has now chosen her side. Her declaration yesterday — "That government, we are sending it home in the morning. Kasongo, Kindiki — shall they go or shall they stay?" — was the clearest signal yet that Kindiki's Mt Kenya East project faces resistance from within.

Meanwhile, Gachagua continues to prosecute his own campaign with the relentlessness of someone with nothing left to lose. After handing Ruto one of his biggest political blows in Mt Kenya West, Gachagua has announced an ambitious six-day political tour of Meru and Embu counties, in what analysts describe as the next phase of a carefully calculated strategy to wrest control of the entire Mt Kenya voting bloc. His candidate Kamau Ng'otho garnered 35,440 votes against Ruto's UDA candidate who received just 5,450 in OI Kalou — a result that demonstrated the scale of the government's Mt Kenya problem with numbers too stark to dismiss.

The Coast, meanwhile, is being assembled into an opposition asset by Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka with methodical precision. His team — comprising Nyali MP Mohammed Ali, Wundanyi MP Danson Mwashako and former Gender Cabinet Secretary Aisha Jumwa — brings together politicians with influence in Mombasa, Taita-Taveta and Kilifi, in what Musyoka described as the beginning of a broader effort to reclaim the Coast for the opposition. Jumwa, once a prominent figure in Ruto's administration who served as Cabinet Secretary for Gender, has announced a massive deregistration exercise of UDA members who will join Wiper, saying: "We are the ones who registered UDA members in Kilifi, and we are embarking

on a grassroots campaign to deregister them."

Musyoka has been unambiguous about his ambition: "We want to unite this country and oust the current administration. Even residents of Baringo and Bomet want Dr Ruto to serve only one term," he said in Kakuyuni.

Taken together, what these regional movements describe is an opposition that has ceased to be a headquarters conversation and become a street-level phenomenon. Linda Mwananchi is in Meru despite teargas. Orengo is in Homa Bay despite resistance. Kalonzo is in Kilifi dismantling UDA's membership registers. And Sifuna, the most improbable frontman in Kenya's recent political history — a senator from Nairobi who grew up in the shadow of Raila, built his career inside ODM, and was eventually expelled from it — is now the movement's most recognisable face.

"The Constitution says that the office of the President is a symbol of national unity, but William Ruto as an individual is a symbol of our collective embarrassment and shame as a people in this Republic of Kenya," Sifuna told the Meru crowd yesterday. The words were sharp and deliberately provocative. But the more important fact was where they were spoken: in Meru, in Deputy President Kindiki's political backyard, to a crowd that cheered.

Twelve months remain. The election is scheduled for August 2027. The government retains the institutional advantages of incumbency — state resources, administrative reach, the ability to announce projects and commission infrastructure. Those are not small things. But they are not sufficient things either, not in a country where the political map is being redrawn county by county, rally by rally, and the teargas — as Sifuna reminded the crowd yesterday — has never yet managed to end a Linda Mwananchi meeting.

"They dared us to come to Meru, but nothing can stop us," he said. "We appreciate the people of Meru for upholding peace and showing how democracy should work."

The mountain has heard him. Whether it agrees is the question that will define 2027.

Politics . Kenya is not merely behaving as though the election season has begun — the electoral process itself is moving

Counting regions, chasing power: Kenya’s road to 2027

The campaigns have not officially begun, but the counting has — and the gap between political arithmetic and everyday reality may decide everything

BY Levis Wangamati
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Kenya has a peculiar habit of beginning its national elections long before Election Day. The campaign posters may not yet cover every roadside, political rallies may not yet have reached their full roar, and the ballot papers remain far away. But politically, the country is already counting. Politicians are counting regions, parties are counting alliances, leaders are counting loyalists, and strategists are counting constituencies. Behind closed doors, one question is already taking shape: where will the winning numbers come from when Kenyans finally go to the polls?

This time, however, there is a difference that matters. Kenya is not merely behaving as though the election season has begun — the electoral process itself is moving, while political calculations are accelerating even faster. Governing, campaigning, coalition-building and succession politics are increasingly overlapping. The result is an unusually long political season in which tomorrow’s election is beginning to compete with today’s government for national attention.

President William Ruto’s political camp faces a complicated strategic test as a result. The broad arrangements surrounding his administration have expanded its political reach considerably, but wider alliances do not automatically eliminate internal competition. Sometimes expansive coalitions simply move the contest from outside the house to inside it. That is why succession calculations within the governing establishment matter so much right now. The question is no longer only how the government performs today, but who remains politically relevant when the next chapter begins.

Nowhere is this calculation more intense than in Mount Kenya. For years, Kenyan electoral strategy has treated the region as a political prize to be captured, negotiated with, or interpreted as a single collective voice. That assumption is becoming harder to sustain. Several competing centres of influence are

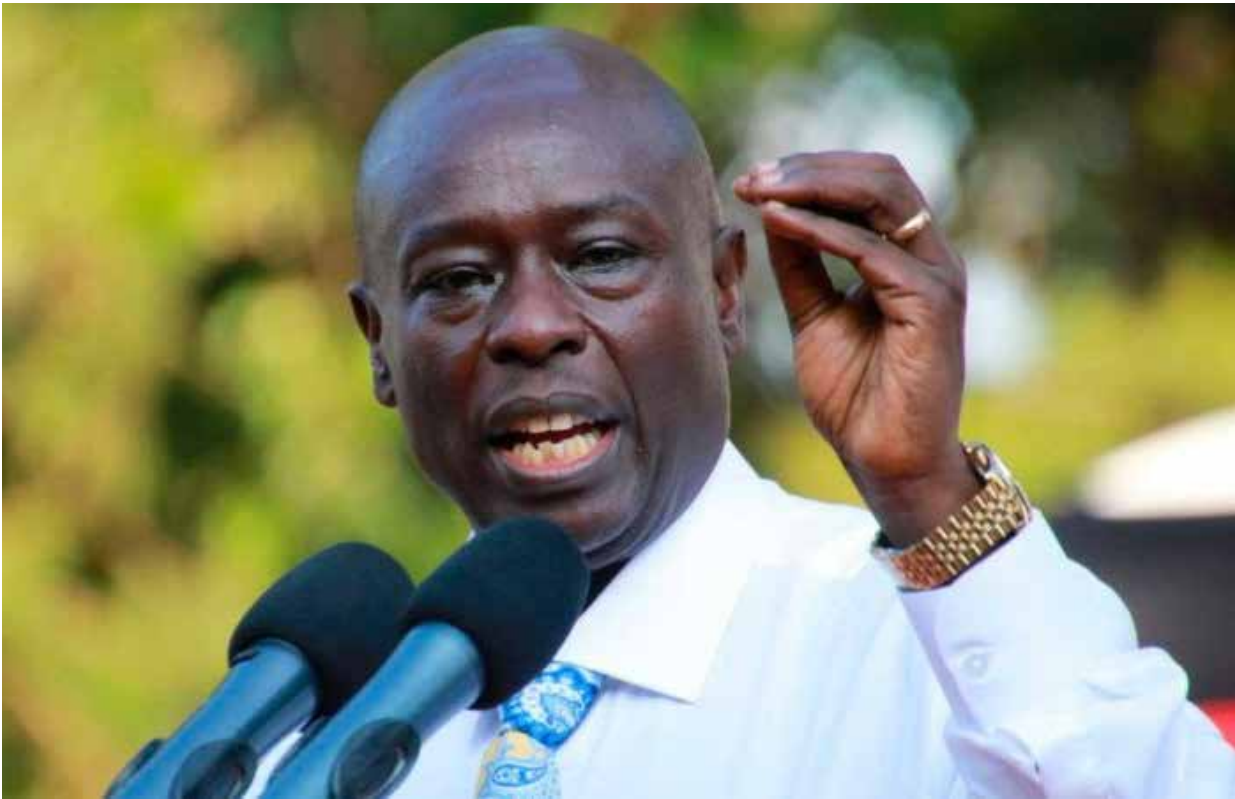
emerging within the region, each seeking to shape its political future on its own terms. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki’s growing footprint in Mount Kenya East is an important part of that evolving contest — and it is not the only one.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua is simultaneously seeking to maintain and expand his influence through the Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP). Political activity across Tharaka Nithi and the wider central region illustrates how local calculations are being reshaped around competing personalities, parties and interests. The significance of this contest extends beyond who is popular today. At its heart is a larger question: who will have the political legitimacy to negotiate the region’s economic and political interests when the next government is being formed?

The old assumption of a single, unified Mount Kenya political direction is giving way to something more fragmented and unpredictable. Regional loyalties, individual ambitions, generational shifts and competing political vehicles could produce a genuinely contested landscape by the time Kenyans vote. Gachagua’s mobilisation adds another variable that is difficult to model, while the government simultaneously attempts to consolidate its own influence across the same terrain.

Ruto faces an equally complex challenge within his own administration. He must demonstrate that his broad governing coalition can retain sufficient national support while managing the competing ambitions of influential figures within it. This makes Kenya’s political landscape considerably more complicated than a straightforward government-versus-opposition contest.

The opposition, for its part, is still searching for its most effective configuration. Several leaders are manoeuvring for influence ahead of the presidential campaign, and the process of converting individual strengths — regional support, national recognition, established constituencies — into a single coherent alternative has proven difficult. The emergence of platforms such as the



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

Linda Mwananchi Movement illustrates that the search for a political centre capable of mounting a credible challenge remains unsettled.

The opposition’s biggest challenge may not be finding capable leaders. There is no shortage of those. It is finding sufficient consensus among leaders whose ambitions frequently overlap. A coalition can contain powerful personalities and still fail at the ballot box if its arithmetic never becomes genuine unity. Leaders who agree on the need for change must eventually confront harder questions: who leads, how is power shared, and what happens after victory?

Those questions are no easier inside the governing coalition. Broad alliances are simplest to assemble when their members share a common opponent. They become considerably harder to sustain when the conversation turns to the distribution of power after an election. That tension explains why Kenya’s political contest is increasingly becoming a battle over tomorrow’s government, even while today’s administration is still expected to deliver on its current mandate.

Then there is the institution that will ultimately manage the electoral contest itself. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission sits at the centre of growing political scrutiny. High-profile figures, including Gachagua, have raised concerns about electoral technology, procurement and institutional integrity. The commission has rejected such allegations and maintained that its operations are guided by constitutional and legal requirements. But the exchanges have intensified the spotlight on an institution whose credibility matters more than perhaps any other in the months ahead.

Kindiki has urged the commission to remain firm against political pressure and challenged opponents to focus on presenting policy alternatives rather than undermining the body responsible for administering the election. Such exchanges are predictable in a competitive political system. The underlying question, however, is considerably more consequential: can Kenya build and maintain enough public confidence in its electoral infrastructure before the political temperature rises beyond the point where institutional assurances

carry weight?

Electoral legitimacy begins long before results are announced. It depends on the credibility of the voter register, transparency in procurement, the independence of oversight institutions, and — above all — public confidence that the rules will be applied fairly. Allegations concerning electoral technology should neither be accepted as established fact without evidence nor dismissed simply because they come from political opponents. They deserve transparent and rigorous scrutiny. The consequences of widespread electoral distrust can extend far beyond a single election day, particularly when political rhetoric is already becoming more confrontational.

Leaders across the political spectrum, including Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga, have warned against political insults, intimidation and violence. Those warnings matter at a moment when campaign language is growing sharper. Elections should be fierce contests of ideas, policies and

Business This is where leadership becomes more than the ability to introduce policy. It becomes the ability to listen

When the tax math changed, Kenyans found their voice

BY Collins Kibet

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's tax debate has entered another defining moment. What began as a government effort to strengthen revenue collection and protect compliant businesses has once again placed taxation, the cost of doing business, and the voice of ordinary Kenyans at the centre of the national conversation.

On Thursday, small-scale traders in Nairobi took to the streets to protest changes to import-duty valuation. The Kenya Revenue Authority had raised the minimum cus-

toms benchmark for a consolidated 40-foot container from KSh2.5 million to KSh3.2 million, effective 20 August. The authority maintains that the measure is designed to address under-declaration and undervaluation of imports — practices that, it argues, disadvantage compliant businesses and local manufacturers.

But for traders, the mathematics is not merely a question of customs valuation. It is a question of survival.

For a small trader operating on narrow margins, every additional cost eventually finds its way to the shop counter. Importation becomes more expensive, prices rise, con-

sumers feel the squeeze, and the trader is left asking a question that has no comfortable answer: how much more can the small business absorb?

That question carries considerable political weight in a country where the memory of the 2024 Gen Z uprising remains vivid and unresolved.

Two years ago, thousands of young Kenyans mobilised against the Finance Bill, transforming what initially appeared to be a debate over taxation into a far broader national reckoning — about the cost of living, public accountability, government spending, and the fundamental relationship between citizens and



Illustration

their leaders. The pressure was sustained, organised, and ultimately decisive. President William Ruto withdrew the Finance Bill. The lesson was unmistakable: Kenyans were no longer willing to discuss taxation only in boardrooms and parliamentary chambers. They wanted to be part of the conversation — and they were prepared to make themselves heard.

Today, that voice is being heard again. Not only from Gen Z, but from traders whose businesses form the backbone of Kenya's informal and small-business economy. The faces have changed. The frustration has not.

The government, however, faces a genuinely difficult balancing act. Kenya requires revenue to finance public services, infrastructure, and national programmes, while simultaneously shielding households and businesses from excessive economic pressure. Revenue collection cannot be separated from the economic realities of the people expected to provide it. That tension is not new. But it is becoming harder to manage in an environment where citizens are more organised, more vocal, and less patient than at any point in recent memory.

This is where leadership becomes more than the ability to introduce policy. It becomes the ability to listen.

The events of the past two years have demonstrated clearly that Kenya's younger generation is politically con-

scious, digitally connected, and increasingly unwilling to remain silent when policies threaten their livelihoods. The Gen Z movement changed the language of political participation. It showed that a generation once dismissed as apathetic could organise rapidly, challenge powerful institutions, and demand explanations — and win. That shift has not reversed. If anything, it has deepened.

The current traders' protests deserve attention beyond the immediate customs dispute. They represent another test of whether government policy can be implemented alongside meaningful consultation with those directly affected — or whether the pattern of announce, resist, and retreat will define this administration's relationship with ordinary Kenyans.

The question before the government is not simply whether taxes should be collected. Of course they should. It is whether the tax system can raise revenue without suffocating the very enterprises that generate economic activity in the first place.

A strong economy is not built on taxation alone. It requires businesses capable of surviving, workers capable of earning, consumers capable of spending, and young people capable of imagining a future within their own country rather than beyond it. When small traders find their margins crushed and their goods priced out of reach, the damage does not stay at

the border. It ripples outward — through markets, through households, through communities that have no buffer against the pressure.

Kenya's government has a legitimate responsibility to collect revenue and protect the integrity of the tax system. Traders, equally, have a legitimate right to question policies that they believe threaten their livelihoods. Between those two responsibilities lies space — not for confrontation, but for dialogue, transparency, and accountability. That space needs to be used.

Because when the tax mathematics changes, it is not only accountants who take notice. The trader notices. The consumer notices. The young person notices. The family notices. And when ordinary citizens begin asking questions, the answer cannot be silence.

Kenya does not need a war between the government and its people. It needs a government confident enough to hear its citizens, a private sector strong enough to create opportunity, and a generation young enough to demand a better future and courageous enough to participate in building it.

The tax debate, once again, is becoming something larger than taxation.

It is becoming a conversation about what kind of Kenya citizens want to inherit — and what kind of Kenya they are prepared to build.

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Politics The foundation remains Ukambani — Machakos, Kitui and Makueni — where Musyoka's grip, though tested, has not broken

Kalonzo becoming a movement: The quiet storm that is scaring Ruto

While rivals hold rallies and trade insults, Kalonzo Musyoka is building something more durable — a multiregional coalition stretching from Ukambani to the Coast and into Maasai country that is reshaping Kenya's 2027 presidential race

BY David Kimani
@themkenyaintimes

Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka has quietly assembled one of the most geographically diverse opposition coalitions in Kenya's recent political history, anchoring his Eastern Kenya base, cracking open the Coast through high-profile defections and making deliberate inroads into Maasai country — a combination that is beginning to unsettle President William Ruto's re-election calculations in ways that no single opposition rally has managed to do.

The strategy is methodical, almost old-fashioned in a political season dominated by caravans, teargas and social media jousting. While Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna fills streets with the Linda Mwananchi movement and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua battles to own Mount Kenya, Musyoka has been doing something different: consolidating ground that was always his, acquiring ground that was never his, and building the structural machinery of a presidential campaign. The Wiper Patriotic Front has formally advertised for a Presidential Campaign Manager under its "Komboa Kenya" banner — a signal that this is no longer a mobilisation exercise. It is a campaign.

The foundation remains Ukambani — Machakos, Kitui and Makueni — where Musyoka's grip, though tested, has not broken. In April,

the united opposition stormed Machakos County in a series of rallies at Masinga, Matuu, Mbiuni, Kangundo, Mwala, Masii and Machakos Town. Musyoka was unambiguous about the message: "It is coming home." Gachagua, standing beside him at Masinga, was equally blunt, urging the region to vote only Wiper candidates in 2027: "You need to vote Wiper six-piece." The combined appearance — two of the country's most powerful opposition figures on the same platform in Musyoka's home region — was designed to project the kind of unified force that had been missing from the opposition for years.

The challenge from within remains real. Ruto's allies in Ukambani have pushed back, accusing Musyoka of running a closed party and denying aspirants fair access to tickets. Some local leaders have openly embraced UDA, and the government has made targeted infrastructure visits to Kitui to chip at Wiper's dominance. Ruto visited Kitui in July specifically to outline development projects for the region. But Musyoka's response has been characteristically direct. "Those who have chosen to walk with Ruto have politically sold out the Kamba people," he told a rally in his stronghold, warning that betrayal of the party line would be punished at the ballot box.

The more striking development has been at the Coast. Here, Musyoka has recruited strategically rather than campaigned broadly, and the

results have been significant. His team — comprising Nyali MP Mohammed Ali, Wundanyi MP Danson Mwashako and former Gender Cabinet Secretary Aisha Jumwa — brings together politicians with influence in Mombasa, Taita-Taveta and Kilifi, in what Musyoka described as the beginning of a broader effort to reclaim the Coast for the opposition. The significance of Jumwa's crossing cannot be overstated. Once a loyal UDA figure who served as Cabinet Secretary for Gender in Ruto's government, she has not merely changed parties — she has declared a counter-mobilisation. "We are the ones who registered UDA members in Kilifi, and we are embarking on a grassroots campaign to deregister them from UDA and join Wiper," she said at her Kakuyuni residence.

Musyoka has rewarded the defection generously. He has proposed Jumwa as Wiper's deputy party leader and endorsed her for the Kilifi governorship. Ali, already serving as the party's deputy leader, has been endorsed for the Mombasa gubernatorial seat. The architecture is clear: Jumwa owns Kilifi's grassroots machinery, Ali brings Mombasa's urban weight and Mwashako anchors Taita-Taveta. Together they cover three of the Coast's six counties — a beachhead that, if held, transforms the region from an assumed government stronghold into a contested battleground.



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka in a rally yesterday

Musyoka was direct about his intentions, speaking in Kakuyuni: "We want to unite this country and oust the current administration. Even residents of Baringo and Bomet want Dr Ruto to serve only one term." The claim about Ruto's own backyard is provocation as much as analysis, but it signals a Musyoka who is no longer campaigning defensively.

Equally significant has been the opposition's foray into the Maa nation — Kajiado, Narok and Samburu — a region containing more than 1.4 million registered voters whose political direction has been scrambled by the death of Raila Odinga in October last year. The scramble by various political camps is significant given the region's voting strength, and for years Maa politics was largely shaped by veteran politician William Ole Ntimama, following whose death in 2016 the region remained largely aligned with Raila — leaving a vacuum that various political players are now seeking to fill. Musyoka has been pictured receiving a delegation from Narok and Kajiado counties at his Yatta home in a consultative meeting — patient, quiet diplomacy rather than headline-seeking rallies.

It is in Taita-Taveta that the coalition's most recent intervention has been both pointed and politically consequential. Yesterday, Musyoka led a high-powered delegation to Mkocheni, Taveta — a short distance from Ruto's Eldoro farm — where dozens of families evicted in disputed land seizures continue to live in

makeshift shelters. The opposition used the visit to accuse senior officials of presiding over evictions that rendered hundreds homeless. "Not even the children have been spared: the land on which their schools stand has also been grabbed, locking them out of their right to an education guaranteed under Article 43 of the Constitution. This will not go unanswered," Musyoka said. The delegation included Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi, DAP-Kenya leader Eugene Wamalwa, Jumwa and more than 20 MPs. Taking the fight to the President's own backyard and framing it as a land-rights issue was politically deliberate — and it landed in a country where land grievances run deep.

All of this unfolds against a backdrop of intensifying personal exchanges between the President and the opposition. Ruto's use of the phrase *hauna akili* — "you have no sense" — directed at political rivals drew a response that was swift and scathing. From Busia, Sifuna fired back: "Wewe ndio hauna akili" — "You are the one with no sense." Musyoka's camp has framed the insults as evidence of a president under pressure. Political analysts have noted that presidents spend the most political energy attacking opponents they consider genuine threats — and the frequency of Ruto's criticism of Musyoka has reinforced the perception that he remains among the opposition's strongest prospects.

Musyoka has, at various points, been dismissed as a

perennial also-ran — a man who has contested the presidency three times without success, whose moment, critics argue, has passed. That narrative is being tested. "There is no other formula," he has said simply. "Unity is the only path to victory." In Tseikuru, he hosted Gachagua, Karua, Wamalwa, Muturi and others for a closed-door strategy session that insiders described as the most serious opposition planning meeting since Raila's death. The gathering signalled something important: the opposition's various components — Linda Mwananchi, DCP, Wiper, PLP, DAP-K — are moving, however fitfully, towards the single-candidate model that is the only realistic path to defeating an incumbent.

Whether Musyoka emerges as that single candidate remains the central open question of Kenya's 2027 race. His coalition's geography — East, Coast, and growing Maasai inroads — is formidable on paper. The test will be whether it translates into disciplined votes on election day, and whether the opposition's assembled personalities can subordinate their individual ambitions to a shared ticket.

What is not in doubt is that the quiet, methodical campaign Musyoka has been running is scaring the right people. A president who insults his rivals by name is a president who is watching them closely.

Kalonzo Musyoka is no longer just a candidate. He is becoming a movement.

Politics Kenyans in 2022 voted because political parties and candidates presented promises and visions of a better country.

Who exactly has been governing Kenya?



BY Fredrick Chelimo

@themtkenyatimes

"A government cannot spend five years explaining why the opposition would have governed worse. At some point, it must explain what it did with the power Kenyans gave it."

There is a curious habit taking root in Kenyan politics. Whenever the government is asked what it has achieved, somebody seems ready with an answer about what the opposition has failed to do. Ask about the cost of living and the conversation suddenly travels back into the history of the opposition. Ask about unemployment and we are reminded that opposition politicians have never created enough jobs. Ask about healthcare and, somehow, we end up discussing the failures of another administration. Raise corruption and before long we are being taken on a tour of scandals from another era. The ordinary Kenyan is therefore left with a deceptively simple question: who exactly has been governing Kenya?

The answer should not require much political mathematics. The government has the mandate to govern. It controls the Executive, prepares and implements the national budget, collects taxes, formulates policies, appoints public officials and directs an enormous institutional machinery that is ultimately financed by the Kenyan taxpayer. The opposition does not possess these instruments of government. Yet there is an increasing tendency to speak as though the opposition should explain why hospitals are struggling, why roads have not been completed, why young people cannot

find work or why the cost of living remains difficult for ordinary families. This is where political rhetoric stops being amusing and starts becoming a problem of democratic accountability.

Kenyans did not vote in 2022 simply to determine which politicians would defeat their opponents. They voted because political parties and candidates presented promises and visions of a better country. They were promised economic transformation, employment opportunities, improved healthcare, agricultural prosperity, better education, housing, infrastructure and a more dignified relationship between citizens and the State. The political formation that won the election therefore inherited much more than an election certificate. It inherited public authority, public resources, government institutions and, above all, the responsibility to deliver on the promises made to the electorate. The opposition inherited something different: the responsibility to scrutinise power.

That distinction is important because criticism of government is not, by itself, an act of sabotage. In a functioning democracy, an opposition is expected to question decisions, examine expenditure, expose failures, challenge policies and offer alternative approaches. It is supposed to make those exercising power uncomfortable when they are tempted to forget that public office is a temporary trust. Opposition politicians are not expected to build every government hospital, employ every nurse, repair every road or collect the taxes from which national programmes are financed. Their constitutional and political role is to scrutinise those who do.

A government should therefore not treat every difficult question as an attack on the State. Public office is not private property, and accountability is not disrespect. Citizens

have every right to ask what has happened to the resources and authority entrusted to their leaders. Indeed, a government that is confident in its record should welcome evidence-based scrutiny because good performance does not become less impressive simply because somebody asks questions about it.

But the opposition cannot escape accountability either. There comes a point when a political movement that hopes to take power must move beyond telling Kenyans what is wrong and explain what it would do differently. It cannot build a credible national alternative entirely from anger, slogans and a catalogue of government failures. At some point, the opposition must answer a straightforward question: if you were given the opportunity to govern, what exactly would you do? That is the democratic conversation Kenya needs. The government should bring its record. The opposition should bring its alternative. The voter should bring memory.

And memory is becoming increasingly difficult for politicians to control. The digital age has quietly destroyed one of the oldest privileges of political life—the ability to forget what was said. Campaign promises are recorded. Manifestos remain online. Interviews can be replayed. Speeches are clipped and circulated. Statements that once disappeared with the political wind can now return years later with remarkable precision. A politician may forget a promise, but the internet has a long memory, and so increasingly does the voter.

This could make the 2027 General Election an important test of Kenya's political maturity. The Kenyan voter is becoming less willing to accept the idea that political loyalty requires unconditional defence of one's political camp. A citizen can support the government and still criticise it. A voter can oppose the govern-



ment and still acknowledge when it has done something right. Someone can change their political opinion without seeking permission from a party headquarters. That is not betrayal. It is the normal behaviour of a citizen who understands that political parties exist to serve the public, not the other way around.

For too long, political competition in Kenya has encouraged citizens to choose sides first and examine evidence later. If one's political camp succeeds, the achievement is celebrated without qualification. If it fails, an explanation is quickly found somewhere else. If an opponent does something useful, its importance is minimised. If one's own side makes a mistake, history is summoned as a defence. The result is a political culture in which accountability can become secondary to loyalty.

A mature democracy must be more demanding than that. A government can achieve something significant and still fail elsewhere. An opposition can identify a genuine problem and still offer a poor solution. A government can inherit difficult circumstances and nevertheless be accountable for how it responds to them. An opposition can correctly expose a weakness without necessarily possessing the right remedy. Democracy is not a football match in which every event must be interpreted as either victory or defeat. It is an accountability system in which evidence should matter more than political allegiance.

That is why the coming election should not be reduced to a contest of personalities, insults, historical grievances and carefully manufactured political drama. The incum-

bent should not be judged by whether the opposition has built a road. It should be judged by whether the government built the roads it promised. It should not be judged by whether opposition politicians created enough jobs. It should be judged by whether government policies produced meaningful and measurable opportunities for Kenyans to work, earn and live with dignity. It should not be judged simply against the failures of previous administrations. It should be judged against its own promises, its own policies and the enormous authority entrusted to it by the electorate.

The opposition, meanwhile, must face equally serious questions. What is its economic plan? How would it create employment? How would it reduce the burden on ordinary households? How would it improve healthcare and education? How would it fight corruption differently? How would it manage public debt and scarce public resources? Most importantly, what would it actually do rather than merely oppose? These questions are not designed to favour one political side. They are designed to restore the voter to the centre of the democratic conversation.

Kenya does not need politicians who simply tell citizens whom to hate. It needs political leaders capable of explaining what they have done, what they failed to do and what they intend to do next. The government has every right to defend its record, but it should defend it with evidence. The opposition has every right to criticise, but it should criticise with facts and present credible alternatives. The citizen, meanwhile, has the ultimate responsibility and privilege of

listening to both sides, examining the evidence and making an independent judgment.

Eventually, the political theatre will end. The rallies will stop, the music will fade, campaign posters will peel from walls, the convoys will disappear and the microphones will fall silent. What will remain is the voter and the memory of what was promised. That is when politics becomes accountability.

The question will not be who shouted the loudest, who produced the most entertaining political clip or who managed to blame the previous administration most convincingly. The question will be much simpler and much harder: who kept their promises, who failed, who explained those failures honestly, who offered a credible alternative and who can still be trusted with the enormous power that comes with public office?

Because Kenyans did not elect governments to spend five years explaining why somebody else would have governed worse. They elected them to govern. And when the music stops, the posters disappear and the political excuses run out, there will be one final institution that no politician can campaign against, intimidate or permanently silence: the memory of the Kenyan voter. In 2027, that memory may prove more powerful than any slogan.

"The ballot will not ask who had the best excuse. It will ask who deserved the people's trust"

By Mr. Fredrick Chelimo – PWD
fkipchelimo@yahoo.com

Politics . Kenya is not merely behaving as though the election season has begun — the electoral process itself is moving

Counting regions, chasing power: Kenya’s road to 2027

The campaigns have not officially begun, but the counting has — and the gap between political arithmetic and everyday reality may decide everything

Contd from page 9

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competing visions. They should not become tests of which political faction can most effectively intimidate the other.

Yet perhaps the most consequential part of the coming election is unfolding far from political rallies and elite strategy sessions. It is happening every day in local markets, shops, small businesses and ordinary households. Yesterday, small-scale traders in Nairobi demonstrated against new customs valuation rules introduced by the Kenya Revenue Authority. At the centre of the dispute is a revised KSh3.2 million cargo benchmark

that traders argue places additional pressure on already struggling businesses. The authority has clarified that the benchmark is a standardised risk-management reference rather than a flat tax, but for small importers operating on narrow margins, the practical consequences remain a serious and immediate concern.

The dispute exposes a disconnect that political leaders would be unwise to ignore. While strategists spend their time counting constituencies, ordinary citizens are spending theirs counting the cost of survival.

That contrast could become one of the defining themes of the next election. Political strategists can spend

months calculating which coalition will capture which voting bloc. But a voter struggling to restock a business, pay school fees, meet household expenses or manage rising living costs will assess political leadership through an entirely different lens. This is where the political class risks making a familiar mistake — confusing electoral arithmetic on a spreadsheet with the real and constantly shifting mood of the electorate.

A constituency is never simply a number on a political map. It is made up of people carrying economic pressures, historical memories, political expectations and personal experiences into the voting booth. A

voter who supported one coalition in the last election is not permanently attached to it. Communities change direction. Previously secure regions become competitive. Yesterday’s stronghold becomes tomorrow’s battleground. No coalition agreement, however carefully constructed, can eliminate that uncertainty.

Kenya’s next political contest is taking shape, but it is not a straightforward battle between two traditional sides. It is a multidimensional contest involving shifting alliances, regional influence, institutional credibility, economic pressure and public trust. While political leaders calculate how to preserve their bases and build new coalitions, ordinary

citizens are asking a simpler and more urgent question: will the next government make life more manageable?

Elections are never ultimately won on spreadsheets or in closed-door strategy meetings. They are decided when individual citizens enter the voting booth and make their choices. Politicians can count regions, alliances, parties and constituencies for as long as they wish. But the final number remains beyond their control until the ballots are cast.

The politicians may already be counting. Kenya’s voters still hold the final number.



The quiet art of becoming



But some will doubt, however hard you try,
They'll question your truth beneath every sky.
No mountain of proof can change a closed mind,
So leave their opinions and doubts behind.

Let progress be quiet, let patience be strong,
You don't have to prove that you ever belonged.
Build yourself slowly, brick by brick, day by day,
And let your becoming be your own display.

For growth is a journey, not a race to impress,
And peace is not the reward of choosing yourself
less,
So,choose your own path, let your true spirit
soar,
Improve, don't prove,become more and more.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator

Take time to grow, but never waste time to prove,
Let your actions speak in the way that you move.
Work on yourself, let your inner light shine,
Become one percent better with each passing
time.

You need not explain what your heart truly knows,
Nor prove your worth wherever the wind blows.
Those who love you will see beyond the show,
And those who believe in you already know.

Presence of mind



But presence of mind is important
Where we are and how to deal
Is a matter of discussion
All things are not alike

Presence of mind shows our real tendency
Brings us pleasure of satisfaction
Adds stamina to our thoughts
Never lets us be away

Saves us from the danger
Pushes to move to the next level
Guides us when we are in trouble
Just like a friend to keep it near

Y.J.AMBIKA
G.H.S.KAKKADASAM

Mind is an active one
Always rocks with its energy
Never fails to work
Without one's order
Does its regular work

What you water today will bloom tomorrow



Blooming is a wonderful thing.
The word bloom does not refer only to a flower; it
can also represent growth and success. When you
try your best and work towards success,
your daily practice is like watering the seeds of
your goals.
At the end, you will achieve victory like a blooming
flower.

Today's good deeds can create tomorrow's
successful life. Whatever you sincerely work for
can become a reality;
otherwise, nothing will happen without effort. So,
water your goals today,
and they will bloom tomorrow

___G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalyanur block
Villupuram dt

he Classroom That Became My Life



By Sangeeta Khattar

Thirty-two years ago, I entered a classroom for
the first time.
I remember the excitement. I remember the
nervousness. And I remember wondering whether
these children would like me.
I had a lesson lan. I had reared my notes. I knew
exactly what I was suosed to teach.
What I didn't know was that, over the next 32
years, the children would teach me far more than I
could ever teach them.

I don't have one dramatic story about what
insired me to become a teacher. For me, it was
something much more ordinary. I had always loved
books and language, and I admired teachers who
could make a classroom come alive. They didn't
just exlain lessons; they made children believe
that they could do something.
I wanted to be that erson for someone else.
My first few weeks were a different story!
I remember standing in front of a class, trying
very hard to aear confident. Inside, I was nervous.
Then came the inevitable question—one I hadn't
reared for.

I didn't know the answer.
For a moment, I thought, What will these children
think of me?
Then I simly said, "I don't know. Let me find out."
Looking back, I think that was one of the best
lessons I ever taught—not to my students, but
to myself.

A teacher doesn't have to know everything. A
teacher has to be honest enough to learn.
Over the years, classrooms became a collection
of little stories.

I remember a child who struggled with studies
and rarely raised his hand. His marks were never
imressive, and I could see that he had slowly
started believing that he wasn't good enough.
One day, instead of asking him about his marks, I
asked, "What do you love doing?"
He started talking about writing.
His eyes changed when he soke about it.
So I gave him oortunities to write. A few lines. A
aragrah. A small resentation.

Nothing extraordinary.
But years later, when I met him again, he
remembered those little moments.
I had forgotten them.
He hadn't.
That is when I truly understood the ower of a
teacher.

We may forget what we say in a classroom, but a
child may carry our words for years.
There have been hundreds of such moments.
A quiet child finally answering a question.
A student returning after years and saying,
"Ma'am, I still remember you."
A handwritten note left on my desk.
A arent saying, "My child talks about your class
at home."

And then there are the moments that make
teachers laugh at themselves!

Lessons that went comletely off lan. Activities
that created more noise than learning. Students
who asked questions so unexected that I had to
rethink my entire exlanation.

I have gone home tired many evenings.
I have sometimes wondered whether I was really
making a difference.
And then, out of nowhere, a former student would
call or walk into school.

And suddenly, I would have my answer.
Teaching has changed enormously in 32 years.
The blackboard has given way to smart boards.
Books have made sace for digital resources.
Children can find information in seconds.
But there is one thing technology cannot relace.
A teacher noticing that a child is unusually quiet.

A teacher recognising that a child needs
encouragement rather than criticism.
A teacher saying, "Try again. I know you can."
That human connection is what kees teaching
secial.

Today, when I walk into a classroom, I no longer
feel the nervousness of that young teacher from
32 years ago.

But I still carry her excitement.
Because every class is a new beginning.
There may be a child sitting in the last row who
thinks nobody notices him.
There may be a student who believes she isn't
good enough.

There may be someone waiting for just one erson
to say, "I believe in you."
erhas that is the real rivilege of being a teacher.
Not teaching a chater.
Not comleting a syllabus.

Not even seeing excellent examination results.
It is knowing that, somewhere along the way, you
may have heled a young erson believe in himself.
After 32 years, I can honestly say that I did not
send these years simly teaching English.

I learnt atience from my students.
I learnt humility from them.
I learnt to celebrate small victories.
I learnt that every child carries a story that may
not be visible in a reort card.

And I learnt that some of the most imortant
lessons in life are never written on a blackboard.
So, what insired me to become a teacher?
Maybe it was my love for language.
Maybe it was the teachers who once insired me.
But what made me stay for 32 years?

The children.
Their questions.
Their laughter.
Their struggles.
Their unexected successes.

And those beautiful moments when a former
student looks at you and says,
"Ma'am, do you remember me?"
I may not remember every name or every lesson.
But I remember the feeling.

And erhas that is what a teacher's life is really
about—
leaving a little iece of yourself in hundreds of
young hearts, and carrying a little iece of them
with you wherever you go.

Thirty-two years later, I still walk into the
classroom.
And every morning, in some small way,
I feel I am beginning again.

Sangeeta Khattar
TGT English
DAV ublic School
NH3, NIT, Faridabad

Disappearances The call came as Kenya joined the world in marking the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances yesterday

Amnesty tells Ruto: Words on disappearances must now become action

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Amnesty International Kenya yesterday called on President William Ruto’s administration to translate its public commitments on human rights into concrete action, citing 19 recorded cases of enforced disappearance in Kenya so far this year and warning that words without accountability mean nothing to families still waiting for answers.

The call came as Kenya joined the world in marking the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances on Sunday, 30 August — a date that carries particular weight this year given the proximity of the 2024 Gen Z protests, during which a significant number of disappearances and extrajudicial killings were document-

ed. Amnesty’s statement was pointed and deliberate: the organisation is not accusing the President of indifference, but it is making clear that acknowledgment and action are not the same thing.

The timing of Amnesty’s intervention was directly linked to remarks Ruto made days earlier during the commemoration of the 16th anniversary of the Constitution of Kenya, in which he acknowledged the pain caused by past violations and declared that no Kenyan should lose their life, liberty or dignity for criticising the government, expressing an unpopular opinion or participating in a peaceful demonstration. The statement was widely welcomed. Amnesty welcomed it too — but conditionally.

“Amnesty International Kenya welcomes this acknowl-

edgment. But words must now be matched with action,” the organisation said.

The numbers behind the statement are stark. According to data from the Missing Voices Coalition, six cases of enforced disappearance were documented in Kenya in 2025, alongside 125 police killings. While that represented a decline from previous years, 2026 has reversed the trend. Nineteen cases of enforced disappearance and 69 police killings have already been recorded this year — figures that suggest the underlying conditions enabling such violations remain in place despite the government’s stated commitments.

Amnesty also raised the unresolved question of reparations. On 15 June 2026, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights present-

ed its national reparations framework and report at State House, Nairobi. The report included 35 verified cases of enforced disappearance alongside other human rights violations linked to recent security operations and protests. Despite the state having established a process to compensate victims, Amnesty says those affected have yet to receive what they are owed.

The organisation’s demands are specific and measurable. It wants every allegation of enforced disappearance investigated promptly, independently and transparently — including cases arising from the 2024 protests. It is calling for the disclosure of the fate and whereabouts of every person subjected to enforced disappearance, and for those still unlawfully detained to be immediately released or



Abduction

brought before an independent court. It wants suspects prosecuted regardless of rank, position or affiliation, and it is demanding effective command accountability within security agencies — insisting that responsibility must not end with junior officers while those who ordered, authorised or concealed violations face no consequences.

Amnesty is also pressing for greater independence and resources for oversight institutions, including the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and the Internal Affairs Unit, and calling on Kenya to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The political context gives

the call additional urgency. As Kenya approaches the 2027 general election, Amnesty has warned explicitly that lessons from the past must inform the present. Political dissent, peaceful protest and criticism of government, the organisation says, should never attract arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture or excessive force.

“No one should disappear for exercising their rights. No family should be left without answers. No perpetrator should enjoy impunity.”

Whether those words reach the people with the power to act on them is the question Kenya’s human rights record now has to answer.

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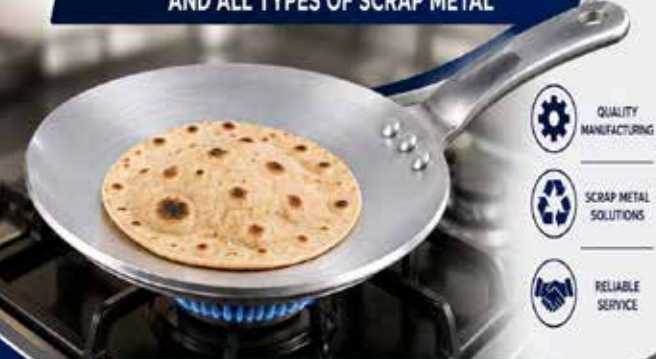
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Digital economy “Digital spaces should not only be places where young people consume content. They should also be spaces where they create, market and earn from their skills,” Kerema said.

Youth urged: Turn digital skills into income

Kenya’s growing digital economy is opening real doors for young creators, entrepreneurs and tech professionals — but only if they step through them.

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyatimes

Young Kenyans have been challenged to move beyond consuming digital content and channel their creativity, skills and online presence into sustainable businesses and income.

Mary Kerema, Secretary for ICT, Digital Economy and Emerging Technologies, said Kenya’s expanding digital economy offers young people a genuine opportunity to build brands, showcase talent, access global markets and generate wealth.

“Digital spaces should not only be places where young people consume content. They should also be spaces where they create, market and earn from their skills,” Kerema said.

She was speaking on Friday evening at the Digitally Fit Awards Kenya Edition, held at Argyle Grand Hotel in Nairobi, where digital creators, entrepreneurs and technology professionals gathered to celebrate innovation and excellence.

Kerema said opportunities were growing across content creation, graphic design, photography, software development, digital marketing, music and fashion. She urged young people to pair creativity with professionalism, consistency, quality and market-relevant skills, saying the message had to be unambiguous: Kenya’s youth must shift from being digital consumers to creators, entrepreneurs and earners.

The call comes as the Government accelerates efforts to build the infrastructure and ecosystem needed to support a more productive digital economy. Kerema said that agenda is anchored on three priorities: infrastructure, access and creation.



Mary Kerema, Secretary for ICT, Digital Economy and Emerging Technologies

“We are aggressively expanding the national fibre backbone to reach every corner of the country,” she said, adding that access to high-speed internet should be treated as a critical enabler of entrepreneurship and economic participation.

The Government is also pushing for the adoption of locally developed technology. Kerema stressed that home-grown solutions can retain capital within the economy, create high-value jobs, address uniquely Kenyan challenges and strengthen digital security. The country, she said, must shift from being primarily a consumer of technology to a producer and exporter of digital solutions.

To support that shift, the Government is implementing regulatory sandboxes for emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, establishing digital hubs across the country and introducing reforms aimed at giving Kenyan-developed software and hardware greater access to public ICT procurement.

“We are not just talking about change; we are institutionalising it,” Kerema said.

She added that Kenya’s digital transformation must ultimately be measured not only by infrastructure and platforms, but by the economic

opportunities they generate. “The success of our digital transformation will be measured by the number of Kenyans whose lives and livelihoods are transformed by technology,” she said.

Kenya is also seeking to scale local innovations beyond its borders through the African Continental Free Trade Area, with a focus on developing digital products and services capable of competing in regional and global markets.

Kerema called for stronger collaboration between Government, industry, academia and investors. Universities, she said, must align training with industry needs, investors must back investment-ready startups, and the private sector must create opportunities for young innovators to test and deploy their solutions.

Strategic sectors — including FinTech, AgriTech, manufacturing and e-government — offer significant room for further digital adoption and economic growth. The Government’s ambition is to build a fully digital Kenya by 2030, with current efforts focused on scaling the adoption of Kenyan technology across Government and key economic sectors.

Kerema also challenged investors and industry leaders to back local innovation, adopt

African and global markets.

“Do not underestimate the economic value of your digital skills,” she told young Kenyans. “Build. Create. Learn. Experiment. Market yourself. Build your brand. Solve a problem — and turn your skills into value and your value into income.”

Dr Ezekiel Mutua, Strategic Communication and Public Administration Specialist, echoed the call, urging young people to harness technology to create economic opportunities, particularly within the creative sector.

The Digitally Fit Awards recognise excellence across

technology, digital marketing, e-commerce, education, finance, agriculture and health. As winners were honoured, Kerema described each award as evidence of perseverance, problem-solving and the growing strength of Kenya’s innovation ecosystem.

On behalf of Cabinet Secretary for ICT, Digital Economy and Emerging Technologies William Kabogo and herself, Kerema extended best wishes to the Digitally Fit Awards chief executive and Secretariat for the successful 14th Edition. The Ministry, she said, remained committed to supporting innovators and strengthening Kenya’s digital transformation ecosystem.

“Kenyan technology must not merely compete with the world. It must lead,” Kerema said, challenging stakeholders to turn the Silicon Savannah into a global benchmark for innovation — with Kenyan technology powering businesses, creating jobs and opening new markets for the country’s digital talent.

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Religion

What the Job story teaches Christians about suffering and faith

BY Ashford Kimani

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The story of Job is one of the Bible's deepest reflections on suffering, faith, grief, and the mystery of God. It confronts questions that human beings have wrestled with across generations: Why do good people suffer? Why do faithful people experience devastating loss? Why does God sometimes remain silent when his children are crying out for answers?

Job was not introduced as a wicked man whose suffering was the consequence of wrongdoing. Scripture describes him as blameless, upright, God-fearing, and a man who turned away from evil. He was a man of integrity, prayer, family, influence, and prosperity. Yet, within a short time, his world collapsed. His wealth disappeared, his children died, his health failed, and his body became a place of unrelenting pain. The man who had once been surrounded by abundance found himself sitting in ashes, covered with sores and overwhelmed by grief.

Job's suffering challenges the belief that every hardship is a punishment and that every painful experience is proof of sin. Too often, when people encounter suffering, they immediately ask: "What did this person do wrong?" When a family experiences tragedy, when a business collapses, when illness strikes, or when a faithful believer faces repeated disappointment, some search for hidden sin as though suffering can always be explained by guilt.

Job's friends believed exactly this. They assumed that God always rewards the righteous immediately and punishes the wicked immediately. Because Job was suffering, they concluded he must have committed some secret sin. Their explanations sounded religious, but they neither understood Job's pain nor the mystery of God's purposes.

At the beginning, Job's friends did something compassionate. They came to him, wept with him, and sat beside him in silence for seven days. They did not rush to explain his suffering. They did not immediately offer advice. They simply remained with him. Their silent presence was perhaps the wisest gift they gave him. But when they began to speak, their comfort slowly became con-



A biblical meditation

demnation. They spoke more about their theories of God than about the wounded man sitting before them. Their words added weight to Job's suffering because they treated his pain as evidence of guilt.

There is an important lesson in this. Not every suffering person needs an explanation. Sometimes people need compassion. When someone is grieving, we should not rush to provide easy answers. When someone has lost a loved one, we should not use religious language carelessly, as though a few familiar words can remove grief. When someone is struggling with illness, poverty, disappointment, or loss, we should not immediately accuse them of lacking faith or concealing sin. Sometimes the most powerful ministry is simply to sit beside someone and say: "I am here." Presence communicates love when explanations fail. Compassion does not always have answers, but it refuses to leave people alone in their pain.

Job did not pretend to be strong. He cried, questioned, lamented, and expressed his anguish before God. He asked why suffering had come

upon him. He struggled with the silence of heaven and longed for God to answer him. Yet, despite his pain, Job continued speaking to God. He did not abandon the relationship. He wrestled with God because, beneath his grief and confusion, he still believed that God was worth seeking. This is a vital understanding of faith. Faith is not the absence of questions — it is continuing to seek God while carrying them. Faith is not pretending that pain does not exist. Faith is bringing pain into the presence of God.

Many believers feel they must hide their tears from God. They imagine that honest questions are signs of weak faith. They fear that expressing disappointment may be disrespectful or sinful. Yet the Book of Job teaches us that God is not frightened by our grief. He is not threatened by our questions. He can receive our tears, confusion, anger, disappointment, and unanswered prayers. We may say, "Lord, I do not understand." We may cry, "Why has this happened?" We may pray through tears when we cannot find the right words. God would rather hear our wounded voice

than have us walk away from him in silence.

After many chapters of grief, argument, and unanswered questions, God finally speaks to Job. But he does not give Job the explanation he had been seeking. He does not reveal every hidden detail behind the suffering. Instead, God speaks from the whirlwind and asks Job questions about creation, the sea, the stars, the dawn, and the mysteries of the universe. He reminds Job that human understanding is limited and that there are realities far beyond what the human mind can grasp. It is as though God is saying: "Job, your pain is real, but your understanding is not complete. You are looking at one chapter, while I see the whole story."

Then something remarkable happens. Job discovers that the presence of God is greater than the explanation he had demanded. He declares: "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you." Job had known about God — now he encountered God. There is a profound difference between knowing religious information and knowing God personally.

We may know Bible verses, church teachings, sermons, and theological arguments, yet still fail to experience the heart and presence of God. Job's friends possessed many ideas about God, but Job encountered God in the depths of suffering.

Sometimes suffering strips away inherited faith and leads us into a faith personally encountered. The God Job met was not small enough to fit into simple human formulas. He was not a God who could be reduced to a system of immediate reward and punishment. He was sovereign, mysterious, present, and infinitely greater than human understanding. Job did not receive every answer he wanted, but he received something deeper: a renewed and living encounter with God.

Perhaps you are carrying a burden today. Perhaps you have prayed for an answer and received only silence. Perhaps you are asking why a door closed, why a relationship ended, why illness came, why a loved one was taken, why a dream failed, or why life became difficult despite your faithfulness. The story of Job does not promise that every "why" will be answered. But it offers a greater assurance: God does not abandon us in our questions. We may not receive an explanation today, but we can receive God's presence. We may not understand the journey, but we can know that God walks with us. We may not see the purpose of our pain, but our pain is not hidden from heaven.

The God who spoke from the whirlwind still speaks into human suffering. He does not always explain the storm, but he reminds us that he is present within it. Do not allow unanswered questions to separate you from God. Bring your questions to him. Bring your grief to him. Bring your disappointment to him. Bring your confusion to him. Like Job, continue seeking God even when life does not make sense. Continue praying when heaven appears silent. Continue trusting when the road is dark.

There may come a moment when we discover that the greatest gift was not the answer we demanded, but the deeper knowledge of the God who never left us. Like Job, we may one day say: "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you." When God does not explain, he still remains present. When life becomes difficult, he is still faithful. When our understanding ends, his wisdom continues. And when we cannot see the way ahead, we can trust the One who sees the whole story.

Health A new national survey exposes a dangerous gap between health awareness and preventive action as non-communicable diseases continue to claim more lives

Most Kenyans know their health numbers but few act on them

BY Angela Njeri
@themtkenyentimes

Most Kenyans can tell you what blood pressure is. Fewer have checked theirs in the past year. And a striking number of those who have never been screened at all will tell you, without hesitation, that they feel perfectly fine.

That paradox sits at the heart of a new national survey released yesterday, which found that while health awareness among urban and peri-urban Kenyans is relatively high, it is not translating into the routine preventive action that could save lives. The findings arrive at a moment when non-communicable diseases (NCDs) — hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and obesity — are placing an increasingly heavy burden on the country’s health system.

The Know Your Numbers Survey, commissioned by Doctors for Healthy Living (D4HL) and conducted by Ipsos Kenya, surveyed 1,100 connected and economically active adults living in urban and peri-urban areas. Its aim was to map public awareness of key health indicators, understand health-seeking behaviour, and identify the barriers standing between Kenyans and preventive care. The results are sobering.

Awareness of blood pressure topped the list at 90 per cent, followed by blood sugar at 78 per cent, Body Mass Index at 66 per cent, and cholesterol at 63 per cent. But awareness of waist circumference — a critical indicator of diabetes and cardiovascular disease risk — stood at just 25 per cent, suggesting that even among the relatively health-literate urban population surveyed, significant knowledge gaps remain.

More worrying still is what happens — or rather, what does not happen — after awareness. While 79 per cent of respondents reported having their blood pressure checked at least once in their



Dr. Robert Mathenge - Co-Founder, Doctors for Healthy Living

lifetime and 59 per cent had measured their BMI, those figures fall sharply for blood sugar, where lifetime screening sits at 47 per cent, cholesterol at 15 per cent, and waist circumference at a mere 9 per cent.

The picture grows darker when the window narrows to the past 12 months. Only 38 per cent of respondents had tested their blood sugar in that period. Just 10 per cent had checked their cholesterol. And only 6 per cent had measured their waist circumference — the very indicator most closely linked to the silent onset of cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes.

The survey identified the single biggest barrier to routine screening, and it was not cost, inconvenience, or distance from a health facility. It was the feeling of being well. Among respondents who had not undergone recent health checks, 72 per cent said they skipped screening simply because they felt healthy. Lack of time was cited by 18 per cent, inconvenient timing by 12 per cent, and cost by just 10 per cent.

It is a finding that cuts to the core of the challenge facing preventive healthcare in Kenya.

“One of the biggest challenges in preventive healthcare is that many people

equate feeling healthy with being healthy,” said Dr. Robert Mathenge, co-founder of Doctors for Healthy Living. “Conditions such as hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and even cancer can develop without obvious symptoms. Detecting health risks and disease early can improve the chances of timely treatment and better outcomes. Knowing and monitoring your key health indicators is one of the simplest and most effective ways of taking charge of your health.”

Mathenge also cautioned that the survey’s findings likely represent the more optimistic end of the spectrum. Because the sample was drawn from urban and economically active Kenyans — people with greater access to information and health services — awareness levels in rural communities could be considerably lower, deepening the case for extending health literacy and preventive screening well beyond the cities.

The survey also highlighted a persistent gender gap in health-seeking behaviour. Women consistently demonstrated higher awareness and screening rates than men across nearly all indicators — a disparity the researchers say underscores the need for targeted interventions to draw

men more meaningfully into preventive healthcare.

On the question of where Kenyans prefer to access screening, the findings point to both opportunity and missed potential. An overwhelming 80 per cent of respondents said they preferred private hospitals and clinics for routine screening, with 71 per cent favouring public health facilities. Yet pharmacies — among the most accessible and frequently visited healthcare touchpoints in the country — were the preferred choice of only 17 per cent, despite their potential as low-barrier screening sites.

Workplaces, too, emerged as an untapped platform. The survey suggests that integrating routine health screening into corporate wellness

programmes could improve employee wellbeing, reduce absenteeism, and support long-term productivity — a compelling argument for employers as much as for public health officials.

Anthony Mugo, Head of Partnerships at Doctors for Healthy Living, put it plainly. “Knowing your numbers should become as routine as servicing your car or renewing your insurance,” he said. “Preventive healthcare must become part of where people live, work, and access everyday services. The easier and more routine we make screening, the greater our chances of detecting disease early and safeguarding our health.”

The broader context makes the survey’s findings all the more urgent. According to the

World Health Organization, NCDs account for 74 per cent of deaths globally, with low- and middle-income countries bearing the heaviest burden. Kenya is not insulated from that trend. As the country’s urban population grows and lifestyles shift, the conditions that drive NCDs — poor diet, physical inactivity, stress, and inadequate screening — are becoming more, not less, prevalent.

The Know Your Numbers Survey does not merely diagnose a problem. It maps a way forward: pharmacies repurposed as screening hubs, workplaces redesigned around wellness, and a public health narrative that moves beyond treating the sick to protecting the well. The tools exist. The awareness, to a meaningful degree, already exists. What Kenya now needs is the habit. Feeling healthy and being healthy, the survey reminds us, are not the same thing.

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AI A South African platform shows how generative AI can handle sensitive financial data without cutting corners on security, accuracy, or oversight

The payroll AI that actually earns trust

BY Mosepe Celesta

@themtkenyatimes

Artificial intelligence promises to save businesses time and money. But for the people who manage payroll — handling some of the most sensitive personal and financial data in any organisation — the promise has come with a nagging question: can we actually trust it?

A South African payroll platform believes it has found an answer. And it did not arrive by moving fast.

Deel Local Payroll, home of the PaySpace payroll platform, yesterday unveiled the thinking and engineering behind AI Assist, a generative AI tool built specifically for payroll environments. The system is designed to handle the relentless stream of queries that bogs down payroll teams daily — why did my net pay decrease, how much overtime did I earn last month, what taxes did I pay — while keeping sensitive data exactly where it belongs.

The backdrop to its development is a technology sector grappling with a trust deficit. A 2025 KPMG survey found that only 46 per cent of company workers trust AI, and that proportion is shrinking. More tellingly, 56 per cent of respondents said they were making more mistakes because of AI, not fewer. Against that backdrop, the instinct of many organisations has been caution. Deel Local Payroll chose a different response: build something that earns trust by design.

“Payroll staff juggle a lot of queries,” said Warren van Wyk, Director at Deel Local Payroll. “Can generative AI handle those queries while adding real context? We believe it can, but that’s not enough. There has to be trust, accuracy, and oversight. How do we create those things? That was the challenge we set for ourselves.”

The challenge is not trivial. Payroll environments are dense with private information, regulatory obligations, and access restrictions. A tool that responds to keywords is not enough. Payroll queries are contextual — an employee asking about their deductions needs a different answer from a payroll administrator querying a tax code formula, even if the underlying words look similar. The AI has to know the difference, and it has to know who is asking.



A South African platform

AI Assist was built with that complexity at its core. Employees can ask specific questions about their own payslips — deductions, tax contributions, overtime calculations — and receive answers calibrated to their individual records. Payroll teams, meanwhile, can use the tool to surface specific components and formulas, interrogate the PaySpace knowledge base, and explore how the platform’s features apply to their organisation’s particular setup. The system provides answers relevant to each organisation’s payroll configuration, including calculation formulas and components linked to specific tax codes.

But the engineering team at Deel Local Payroll was equally focused on what the AI should not do.

Data security in payroll is not a secondary concern — it is the whole game. The team identified the critical failure points of generative AI in sensitive environments: unau-

thorised access to other employees’ salary information, sensitive data surfacing in unintended places, and the risk of private information being absorbed into an AI model where it becomes difficult to contain or audit.

Their response was architectural. Every time a user interacts with AI Assist, the system creates a temporary instance on secure Microsoft Azure cloud infrastructure. No data leaves that environment. What a user can see through AI Assist mirrors precisely what they are authorised to access within the PaySpace platform — nothing more. An employee cannot query a colleague’s salary if they do not have the system privileges to view it in the first place.

“We are very conservative with AI Assist’s features,” Van Wyk said. “The AI will be native to the platform, not an integration. It will conform to ISO and SOC standards, and it will show a user only what they have authority to access. If a feature

cannot meet those criteria, it goes back onto the shelf.”

The team also confronted one of generative AI’s most persistent weaknesses: hallucinations. AI models can generate plausible-sounding but factually incorrect responses, a problem that becomes particularly costly when the subject is someone’s salary or tax liability. Rather than relying solely on the AI model to manage data retrieval and response generation, Deel Local Payroll built subsystems that handle specific queries and data access separately, passing curated information to the AI for processing.

“We cannot use our customers’ data to train the model,” Van Wyk explained. “Instead, we have systems that curate the right data and hand information to the AI, which then responds to the user. This stops data from leaking into the AI model, and it improves answer accuracy because we directly control the mechanisms

that link the data with AI Assist.”

The development philosophy has been deliberately measured. In an industry where speed to market is often treated as a virtue, Deel Local Payroll has chosen to move carefully, test rigorously, and involve customers through pre-engagement sessions and beta testing before expanding AI Assist’s capabilities. Each new feature is evaluated against a clear baseline: does it make things genuinely easier, and can it be delivered with the accuracy and security payroll demands?

It is an approach that stands in deliberate contrast to the hype that has surrounded generative AI since it entered the mainstream. Van Wyk is direct about the gap between what AI is often promised to do and what it reliably can.

“We start from a basic premise: how can generative AI make things easier for our customers, whether they are working on payroll or need answers from payroll? How do we create thoughtful communication that gives them answers they can trust? It is that simple, but it is still very difficult to figure out because this is a new technology with many unknowns. So, we move carefully, test thoughtfully, and involve our customers.”

The early results, by the company’s account, have been striking. Time spent on routine query resolution has fallen significantly. Payroll staff report being able to direct their attention toward more complex and strategic work. And for employees — who typically interact with payroll only when something feels wrong — the ability to get a clear, contextual answer without waiting for a human intermediary represents a meaningful shift in how organisations communicate about pay.

What Deel Local Payroll has built is not the most ambitious AI project in the market. It is, by design, one of the most restrained. And in a sector where a single data breach or a miscalculated payslip can erode years of institutional trust, restraint may be precisely the right instinct.

Generative AI done right, it turns out, looks a great deal like patience.

Sports Isuzu took note too. In the months that followed, the automaker commissioned a limited production run of 159 specially branded D-Max pickups

Kipchoge completes the circle

Six years after Vienna, the 159th and final Isuzu D-Max Limited Edition has found its way home — to the man who inspired every single one

BY John Irungu Maina

@themkenyatimes

There is a particular kind of elegance in things that come full circle. A story that begins with one man running through the streets of Vienna in the early hours of a October morning and ends with a pickup truck parked in his hands — the last of 159, returned to the person who made all 159 possible.

Eliud Kipchoge received the 159th and final Isuzu D-Max Kipchoge 1:59 Limited Edition, bringing to a close one of the more quietly remarkable chapters in the relationship between sport and commerce in Kenya. It was not a product launch or a press event. It was a conclusion — and a deeply fitting one.

The number 159 has never been arbitrary. It is a direct echo of 1:59:40.2, the time Kipchoge recorded in Vienna on 12 October 2019 when he became the first human being to complete a marathon in under two hours. The achievement was made under controlled conditions — pace-makers, a closed circuit, optimal weather — but nothing about what Kipchoge's body did that morning was artificial. He ran 42.195 kilometres in one hour, 59 minutes and 40.2 seconds. The world stopped and took note.

Isuzu took note too. In the months that followed, the automaker commissioned a limited production run of 159 specially branded D-Max pickups — each one a tribute to that historic time, each one carrying the 1:59 identity across its badging, its details, and the story attached to it. For three years, those vehicles made their way to customers across Kenya, each purchase a small act of participation in something larger than a car transaction.

The D-Max was a thoughtful choice of canvas for the collaboration. It is a vehicle built around endurance — tough enough for rough terrain, dependable across long distances, and designed to perform in conditions that would expose any weakness. Those are not random qualities. They are the same qualities that define Kipchoge's career, and the same values he has spoken about publicly for years: discipline, consistency, the refusal to stop when conditions be-



Eliud Kipchoge received the 159th and final Isuzu D-Max Kipchoge

come difficult.

There is a reason Kipchoge has become one of the most quoted athletes on the planet, and it has little to do with marathon times. It is the philosophy behind those times. His training blocks in Kaptagat, his commitment to the group over the individual, his insistence that no human is limited — these ideas have resonated far beyond the running world. They have made him not merely a great athlete but a figure whose story people want to own a piece of. The 1:59 D-Max gave them a way to do exactly that.

The first 158 belonged to those customers. They bought a vehicle, certainly, but they also bought proximity to a moment that mattered. A number on a badge that meant some-

thing specific — not a marketing invention, but a real figure from a real morning when a real man did something no one had done before.

The 159th is different. It belongs to Kipchoge himself.

There is something quietly powerful about that arrangement. The man who created the story did not receive the first vehicle off the line. He received the last. The project ran its course, reached its natural conclusion, and the final piece was returned to its origin. It is the kind of symmetry that does not need to be explained — it simply lands.

Kipchoge's marathon career has been defined by completions. World records set and then broken by himself. Olympic titles defended. The

sub-two-hour barrier approached in Berlin in 2018 and then breached in Vienna a year later. Each chapter has built on the one before, and each has added another layer to a legacy that is already extraordinary by any measure.

Receiving the 159th D-Max adds nothing to that athletic record. It does not change his times or his titles. But it closes a loop that began the moment he crossed the finish line in Vienna and Isuzu's creative team began imagining what a tribute might look like.

A historic time inspired 159 vehicles. Three years of production put 158 of them in the hands of Kenyans who wanted to be part of the story. And now the 159th has come home.

From the streets of Vienna to the roads of Kenya, the number 1:59 has travelled further than any marketing plan could have mapped. It became a moment, then a badge, then a limited-edition vehicle, and finally a symbol sitting in the possession of the man who made it mean something in the first place.

Eliud Kipchoge has completed many circles in his life — on tracks, on roads, in the minds of people who believe that limits are negotiable. This one, modest by comparison but satisfying in its own right, is now complete.

The 159th vehicle has returned to its inspiration.

Kipchoge has completed the circle.

SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS
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Sports >> *The Kenyan champions are one win away from the CAF Women’s Champions League after a commanding 5-0 semi-final victory in Kigali

Kenya Police Bullets eye CECAFA crown after crushing Yei Joint FC in semis

By Alfred Lobawoi

Kenya Police Bullets are through to the final of the CECAFA Women’s Champions League Qualifiers, and they mean business. The Kenyan champions yesterday dismantled South Sudan’s Yei Joint FC 5-0 at Kigali Pele Stadium in Rwanda, booking a showdown with Uganda’s Kawempe Muslim Ladies and putting themselves one step away from a place in the main CAF Women’s Champions League tournament.

It was the kind of performance that announced a team with unfinished business — composed, clinical, and utterly relentless.

Head coach David Bujego Rangoon’s side had entered the tournament in Kigali with something to prove. In 2025, they stumbled at the semi-final stage and finished third. In 2024, they went all the way to the final only to fall short against Ethiopia’s CBE. The ghosts of those near misses have clearly sharpened the squad’s focus this time around, and every performance in the group stage reflected a team that had done its homework and arrived ready.

Police Bullets opened their Group C campaign with a statement result, defeating Tanzania Women’s Premier League champions Simba Queens 2-1. Faith Mboya and Martha Amunyolete were on the scoresheet that day, and the win sent an early message to the rest of the field. Next up were Burundi’s Top Girls Academy, and again the Kenyan side delivered, winning 3-1. Amunyolete, who has been one of the standout performers of the tournament, scored a brace, with Mukhwana adding the third. That result confirmed their place in the semi-finals and the momentum only grew from there.

Against Yei Joint FC, there was never any real doubt about the outcome. Police Bullets were dominant from the first whistle,



Kenya women Champions Kenya Police Bullets

with five different contributors finding the net — a sign of a squad firing as a collective rather than leaning on any single individual. Tereza Engesha opened the scoring, before Amunyolete added two more to her already impressive tally, one of them from the penalty spot. Lorna Nyarinda curled in a beautifully struck free-kick, and Rebecca Okwaro rounded off the evening with a fifth in the dying minutes to complete a comprehensive and fully deserved victory.

For Amunyolete, the tournament has been a personal masterclass. Across three matches, she has scored multiple times, shown a clinical edge in front of goal, and demonstrated the kind of consistency that championship campaigns are built on. She will be central to whatever Police Bullets hope to achieve in the final.

The prize on offer is significant.

The CECAFA Qualifiers serve as the regional gateway to the main CAF Women’s Champions League — the continent’s premier club competition for women’s football. Securing that ticket would represent not only a major achievement for the club but a significant moment for Kenyan women’s football more broadly.

Standing in their way are Kawempe Muslim Ladies, a well-organised and experienced Ugandan side who know how to win at this level. It will not be straightforward. But this Kenya Police Bullets squad has shown across three matches that they are capable of handling the pressure that comes with high-stakes football. The technical bench has been sharp, the players disciplined, and the collective spirit of the group has been evident in the quality and consistency of their performances.

Unlike in previous editions,

where Police Bullets found themselves undone by the quality of sides such as Tanzania’s JKT and Ethiopia’s CBE, this campaign has the feel of a team that has addressed the margins that previously cost them. There is a hunger running through the squad — visible in the pressing, the movement, and the willingness to keep going even when a match is already won.

That hunger will need to be at its sharpest when they face Kawempe. But if this campaign is anything to go by, Kenya Police Bullets are ready for the moment.

The CECAFA Women’s Champions League final takes place in Kigali. For Police Bullets, it is more than a match — it is a chance to rewrite their recent history.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Hussein Mohammed says the proposed Monday start is not final as the federation signals it is willing to negotiate a way forward

FKF opens talks on league kick-off after clubs push back

By Pascal Okoth

Football Kenya Federation President Hussein Mohammed yesterday moved to calm growing tensions with clubs opposed to the federation’s proposed league kick-off date, opening the door for fresh consultations and signalling that no decision had been set in stone.

The intervention came at a delicate moment for Kenyan football. Several top-flight clubs had raised concerns about the planned Monday start to the new season, questioning both the timing and the manner in which the announcement had been made. Mohammed’s response was measured — and notably conciliatory.

“Nothing is cast in stone,” he said, making clear that the proposed date remained open to revision depending on what emerged from further talks between the federation and the clubs. It was a marked shift in tone, and one that appeared to offer the affected teams a genuine avenue for engagement rather than a closed-door directive.

Mohammed also addressed a separate flashpoint that had added fuel to the controversy: the publication of fixtures earlier in the day. He distanced the federation’s leadership from that release, explaining that the Leagues and Competitions Department had moved ahead with publishing the schedule without authorisation from the top of the organisation. The department, he said, had been “too excited to see the league start” and had acted ahead of any conclusive agreement on the kick-off date.

The explanation did something to defuse the situation. Clubs that had been frustrated by what appeared to be a unilateral decision now had a clearer — if imperfect — picture of how the fixtures had ended up in the public domain before the conversa-



Football Kenya Federation President Hussein Mohammed

tion was finished. Whether that clarity is enough to restore confidence will depend largely on what happens next.

At the centre of this episode is a challenge that has long complicated Kenyan football administration: bringing all stakeholders along when decisions need to be made quickly, without leaving clubs feeling bypassed or blindsided. The FKF has been eager to get the new season underway, and that eagerness, it appears, got slightly ahead of process.

The Monday kick-off is now officially uncertain. While the federation had seemed ready to proceed, Mohammed’s comments indicate a genuine willingness to revisit the timetable if the clubs and the federation can reach a different agreement through dialogue. The key word, repeatedly,

was consultation — and the tone suggested this was not simply a public relations exercise.

For the clubs, the next step is clear: engage with the federation, put their concerns on the table, and work towards a start date that works for everyone involved. FKF, for its part, has signalled it is listening.

What happens in those discussions will determine more than just a kick-off date. It will signal whether the federation and the clubs can operate as genuine partners in managing the league, or whether the familiar pattern of announcement, objection, and damage control continues to define the relationship.

Kenyan football has too much potential to keep losing momentum to avoidable friction. If yesterday’s intervention by Mo-

hammed leads to a properly consulted, broadly supported start to the season, it will have been worth far more than the controversy that prompted it. The focus now shifts to those conversations — and to whether the goodwill on both sides is enough to get the country’s top-flight season started on solid ground.

A final decision on the league’s commencement date is expected once consultations between FKF officials and club representatives are concluded.

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Queen Vicky Dynamic: Connecting women, creating impact



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There are people who stumble into purpose, and there are people who seem to have been born into it. Queen Amb. Dr. Victoria Victor Edet — known across the world as Queen Vicky Dynamic — belongs firmly in the second category. From the stages of Nigerian beauty pageants to humanitarian platforms spanning Africa, India, the United States, and the Bahamas, her journey is one of relentless conviction, faith, and a deep-seated belief that when women connect, the world changes.

It is a belief she has spent years turning into reality.

Queen Victoria is the founder and chief executive of Dynamic Empire Global and the creator of When Women Connect International (WWCI), a movement built on a deceptively simple but powerful premise: that women, when brought together with purpose, can transform their communities, their families, and themselves. WWCI is not merely a networking organisation. It is a platform where women discover their potential, develop their talents, and step into the kind of impact that outlasts any title or trophy.

And Queen Victoria knows something about titles. A former beauty queen, she has held some of the most prestigious crowns on the continent and beyond — Most Famous Queen Nigeria 2018, Humanitarian Queen Africa 2020, and Star Role Model India. But to reduce her story to pageantry would be to miss the point entirely. For her, the crown was never the destination. It was the platform.

“I am a blessed gift to my generation,” she has said — and the record of her work makes it difficult to argue otherwise.

Her leadership journey has taken her across institutions and borders. She has served as Deputy Director for Fundraising at the African In-

stitute for Development and United Nations Initiatives (AFRIDU), bringing resources and visibility to causes that often struggle for both. She served as the first IQRA Nigeria President in India, a role that required not only administrative skill but the kind of cultural fluency that comes from genuinely caring about people beyond your own community. In the Bahamas, she took on the role of Nigerian President of When Wives Entrepreneurship Connect, championing the economic agency of women within the often-overlooked space of spousal entrepreneurship.

Each role, in a different country, on a different continent, with a different mandate — yet all of them pointing in the same direction.

Queen Victoria’s advocacy centres on four pillars that she returns to consistently: women’s empowerment, entrepreneurship, education, and personal transformation. These are not abstract ideals for her. They are lived commitments, expressed through programmes, platforms, and the daily work of building organisations that outlast the moment. Through WWCI and Dynamic Empire Global, she has created spaces where women who might otherwise never have found each other — across geography, language, and background — come together to build something larger than themselves.

She is also a published author. Through Yes You Can Academy in the United Kingdom, she has released two books that reflect her philosophy of purpose-driven living. The titles speak to readers who are searching — for direction, for confidence, for the courage to begin. It is the kind of writing that does not merely inform but equips, which has always been her instinct: not to inspire and then leave, but to give people tools they can use after the applause fades.

Academically, Queen Victoria holds an Honorary Doctorate in Humanity from a university in India and a PhD in Philosophy of Education from Maryland State University in the United States — credentials that anchor her advocacy in intellectual rigour and a genuine understanding

of how education shapes human potential. Her recognition in the United States includes the Goodwill Educational Ambassador Award and the Women of Heart Award, honours that reflect both the breadth of her reach and the depth of her impact.

Yet for all the international recognition, Queen Victoria remains grounded in the personal. She is a wife to Prince Victor Edet and a mother of two — a dimension of her identity she speaks about with the same pride she brings to her professional achievements. It matters to her that the women she reaches understand that purpose and family are not in competition; that it is possible to be fully present at home and fully committed to a calling that stretches far beyond it.

That integration — of the personal and the professional, the local and the global, the visionary and the practical — is perhaps what defines her most. Queen Vicky Dynamic is not a character constructed for a stage. She is the same person in a boardroom in Lagos, a conference hall in Delhi, a community meeting in Nassau, or a quiet moment at home. The consistency is rare. And in a world full of platforms and personas, it is also refreshing.

Her message to women is consistent and clear: you are not waiting to be discovered — you are waiting to connect. Connection, in her framework, is not a social nicety. It is a strategic act. It is the moment a woman realises she is not alone in her ambition, her struggle, or her vision. It is the moment a community becomes a movement.

WWCI, under her leadership, has been that moment for thousands of women across the globe. And as the organisation continues to grow — across continents, across cultures, across generations — the woman at its centre remains focused on what she has always believed: that women, connected and empowered, are one of the most transformative forces on earth.

Queen Victoria is not finished. If anything, she is just getting started.



Queen Vicky Dynamic

