



Mwaura hands over government spokesperson's office after 33 months
Former Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura yesterday formally handed over the Office of the Government Spokesperson to his successor, Charles Owino, after 33 months **Page 8**



Outspan Global University in historic first ceremony as it unveils Community Health Research Programme
Outspan Global University (OGU) will tomorrow write a new chapter in its history when it holds its first graduation ceremony, conferring diplomas and certificates on 878 graduates. **Page 12**

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Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Visions Two presidents. Two long-range development blueprints. Two nations in the same regional bloc

Two visions, one region

President William Ruto yesterday challenged opposition leaders to face him at the ballot in 2027 rather than reject his proposed national development charter, as he hosted Muslim religious leaders from all 47 counties at State House, Nairobi, widening the political fault lines over a plan that will formally launch next Wednesday — the same week Kenya's southern neighbour, Tanzania, activated the implementation machinery for its own generational blueprint.

The convergence is striking. On one side of the border, Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan launched the implementation, monitoring and acceleration tools for the National Development Vision 2050 at State House in Dar es Salaam, fulfilling a directive she issued when the strategy was officially unveiled on July 17, 2025, in Dodoma, outlining Tanzania's goal of becoming a high-income, inclusive and resilient nation by 2050. On the other side, Ruto announced that Kenya will formally launch a National Conversation on its Future Beyond Vision 2030 on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, describing it as the most consequential exercise in national reflection and public participation since the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010.



Page 9

Collage of President William Ruto and Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan

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Ruto launches SHA 922 national emergency medical lifeline

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday launched the Social Health Authority (SHA) 922 Lifeline and the National Ambulance Dispatch Centre, introducing a single nationwide emergency medical number to improve access to lifesaving care.

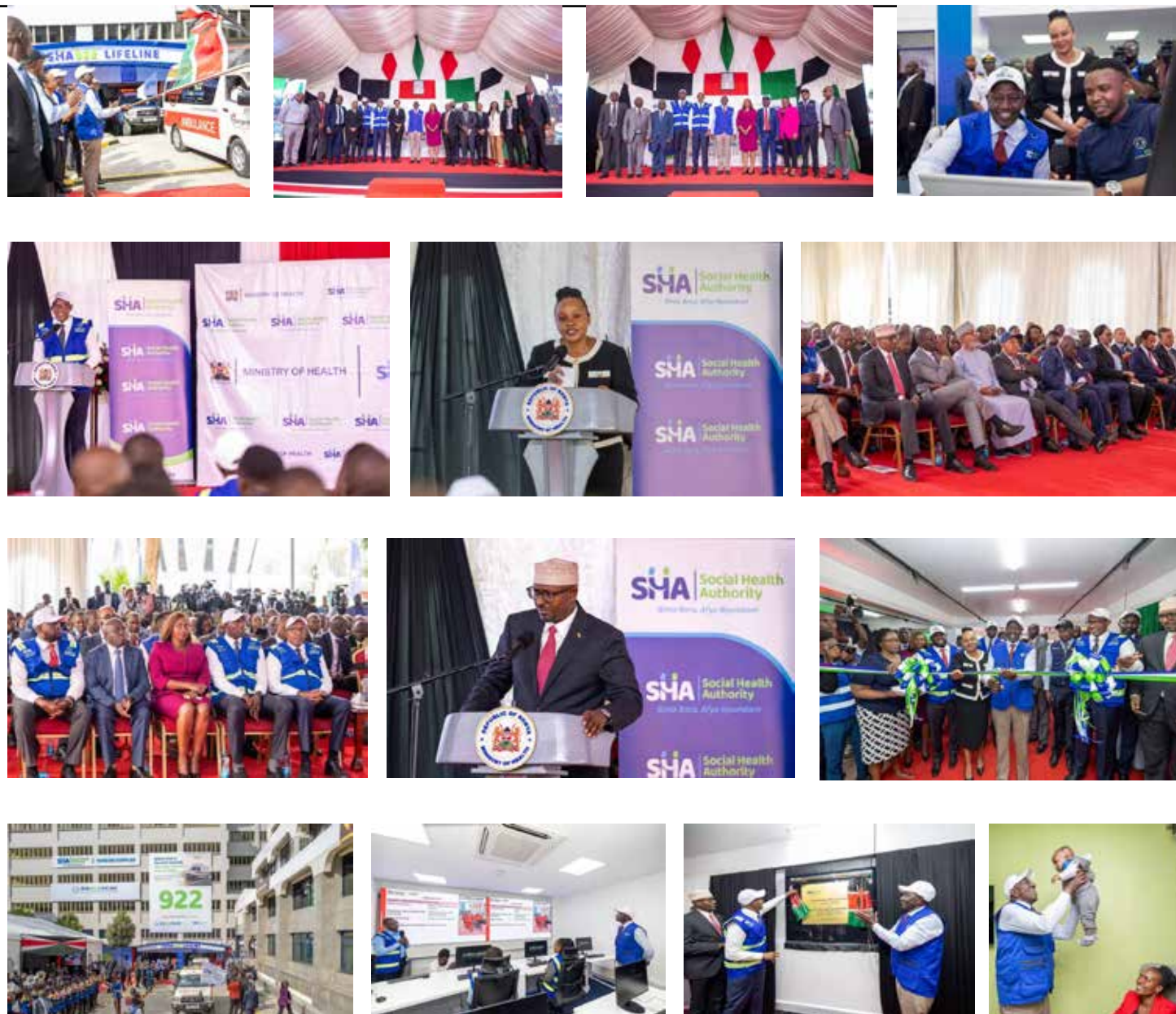
The toll-free service will provide emergency call handling across all mobile networks, coordinate ambulance dispatch and finance ambulance evacuation together with the first 24 hours of emergency treatment, regardless of whether a patient is registered with SHA.

Speaking during the launch in Nairobi, President Ruto said the initiative fulfils the constitutional guarantee under Article 43(2) that no Kenyan should be denied emergency medical treatment because they cannot afford to pay. He directed all SHA-contracted health facilities to admit emergency patients without delay over payment or registration concerns.

The President said 1,243 ambulance and emergency service providers have already been contracted under SHA, while the dispatch centre will coordinate, rather than centralise, ambulance services nationwide.

Ruto also highlighted progress in health reforms, saying 32.2 million Kenyans have registered with SHA, eight million have received treatment and KSh178.5 billion has been paid to health facilities. He added that 107,000 Community Health Promoters have been deployed, KSh23.3 billion disbursed through the Primary Healthcare Fund, and KSh8 billion allocated to the Emergency, Chronic and Critical Illness Fund.

Health CS Aden Duale and Council of Governors Chair Ahmed Abdullahi hailed the reforms, saying they have strengthened emergency healthcare delivery across the country.



The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Sustainable tree growing requires consistent care to ensure seedlings survive and thrive. Trees need protection from browsing, regular watering during dry periods, mulching to retain soil moisture, and frequent weeding to reduce competition for nutrients and prevent overshadowing. At the Dedan Kimathi Foundation Children's Home in Kinangop, Nyandarua County, children are actively participating in tree-growing activities as part of environmental conservation efforts. Their enthusiasm and commitment have made them an inspiring force in nurturing trees and protecting the environment. By involving children in conservation from an early age, the foundation is helping to raise a generation of environmental ambassadors who will play a vital role in safeguarding Kenya's natural resources for the future.



Public Service Commissioner Dr. Francis Owino has emphasized the need for public servants to uphold national values to improve accountability and service delivery. Speaking in Naivasha during a week-long engagement with Directors of Human Resources, Owino said the initiative is part of a broader plan to strengthen patriotism, national unity, the rule of law, human rights, transparency, accountability and good governance across the public service. He noted that the programme aims to move beyond compliance reporting by ensuring public officers fully internalize and practise the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Owino cited Article 10 on national values and principles of governance and Article 232 on public service values, saying they should guide the conduct of every public officer in advancing Kenya's development agenda and national aspirations.



Hundreds of fisherfolk in Msambweni Constituency, Kwale County, are set to benefit from a Sh126.9 million fisheries facility handed over by the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA). Built under KPA's Corporate Social Investment programme, the facility includes cold storage, a fish storage unit, an ice plant, an administration block, and a fishing boat with outboard engines. The project is designed to improve fish handling, preservation and market access while reducing post-harvest losses and boosting incomes. Speaking during the handover, KPA CEO Capt. William Ruto said the investment supports coastal livelihoods and advances the government's blue economy agenda. He added that KPA will evaluate the project's impact after three years to assess its sustainability and community benefits.



A Kabarnet court has sentenced 19-year-old Isaac Kosgei to two years in prison after he pleaded guilty to stealing five chickens worth more than Sh3,000 in Baringo Central. The theft occurred on the night of July 21 when Kosgei stole three hens and two cocks belonging to Robert Bowen. The following morning, Bowen discovered the chicken coop open and the birds missing. After alerting neighbours, he later spotted three of his missing chickens being sold by a poultry trader in Kabarnet town near Equity Bank. Bowen identified the birds and informed the seller they had been stolen. The seller contacted Kosgei, who had delivered the chickens and was waiting for payment, leading to his arrest and prosecution.



Youth leaders and peace advocates have urged young Africans to use democratic spaces, legal frameworks and digital platforms to promote peace during election periods. Speaking at the 7th Regional Youth in Action Forum in Nairobi, participants emphasized the need to place youth at the centre of peacebuilding, civic engagement and democratic participation to prevent election-related violence. The three-day forum brought together over 30 youth leaders from six East African countries. Norwegian Church Aid's Shirleen Njoroge called for meaningful youth involvement in governance and responsible use of social media to counter hate speech and misinformation. South Sudanese youth advocate Janet Isaac Diko and peacebuilder Joe Muturu stressed civic education, dialogue, tolerance and youth empowerment as key to peaceful elections and sustainable development.



Turkana Deputy Governor Dr. John Erus has urged faith-based organizations implementing development and humanitarian programmes to formalize their partnerships with the county through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Speaking during a meeting with officials from the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK), Dr. Erus said formal agreements would improve coordination, prevent duplication of projects and ensure initiatives align with the County Integrated Development Plan. The delegation introduced the Ubunifu Youth and Environmental Project, a three-year programme targeting out-of-school youth aged 18 to 35 with employable skills and climate change adaptation training. Dr. Erus praised FPFK's development work since 2019 and said the County Attorney's office would help develop an MoU to guide the partnership.

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Mau Mau The association said complaints from Meru had escalated sharply in recent weeks following a wave of fraud allegations

Mau Mau body warns Meru residents over benefit scams

Association dissolves county leadership and vows to work with government administrators after elders were left stranded in Nairobi

BY Brian Gitonga
@themtkenyatimes

The Mau Mau Veterans Association CLG yesterday warned Meru County residents against fraudsters posing as officials of Mau Mau organisations and collecting money from elderly people with false promises of title deeds and visits to State House.

The association, known formally as MMV Associate CLG, said the most recent incident involved dozens of elderly residents who travelled to Nairobi after being told they would be taken to meet President William Ruto and receive title deeds, only to be abandoned in the city, confused and without support.

Speaking at a press briefing with journalists in Meru, MMV Associate CLG Director James Njuguna Mahuria said the organisation had received a mounting volume of complaints from residents who had been deceived by individuals claiming to represent legitimate Mau Mau bodies. He was emphatic that no private group or individual can independently facilitate the payment of benefits — that process, he said, is anchored firmly in law.

“Payment of Mau Mau benefits is guided by the Public Benefits Organizations Act No. 18 of 2013 and the National Administration Village

Policy 2024 signed by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki,” Mahuria said.

The association said complaints from Meru had escalated sharply in recent weeks following a wave of fraud allegations, prompting it to take direct action. In response, MMV Associate CLG announced it had dissolved its entire Meru County leadership structure — from ward to county level — to allow for the election of fresh officials who will restore credibility and work more closely with government administrators.

“People in the villages say some individuals are pretending to represent us, while others claim to be Mau Mau elders. We want every genuine Mau Mau descendant across the 47 counties to receive the benefits they deserve,” Mahuria said.

Going forward, the association said it would collaborate with chiefs, assistant chiefs, county commissioners and community elders to educate residents on the legitimate process for accessing benefits. Local media will also be engaged to broaden public awareness and help shield vulnerable residents from exploitation.

MMV Associate CLG Chief Executive Officer Emma Cherotich Kasisi said the organisation had documented multiple complaints involving groups collecting money from residents in exchange

for promises of State House visits, title deeds and other benefits — none of which materialised.

“We have dissolved the Meru leadership and given members one week to elect new officials who will work with county commissioners, deputy county commissioners and chiefs to stop the scams,” Kasisi said.

She was particularly pointed in her condemnation of incidents in which elderly residents paid money for promised trips to State House, only to be left stranded in Nairobi. “These elderly people deserve to be treated with dignity,” she said. “What is happening to them is not only fraudulent — it is cruel.”

Kasisi confirmed that MMV Associate CLG operates strictly within government guidelines, maintaining working relationships with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Culture and the Kenya National Archives. She described the association as the umbrella body formally recognised by the Ministry of Interior to handle the affairs of Mau Mau descendants, and called on other groups operating in the space to join the organisation through its established procedures rather than act independently.

Gilbert Mugambi Kathurima, a Meru resident and association member, said the proliferation of self-proclaimed Mau Mau organisations had

created serious confusion among residents trying to access genuine benefits. He urged the public to exercise caution.

“MMV Associate CLG has no links to the other organisations in Meru claiming to champion Mau Mau benefits. Some are asking people for money while promising them land — we urge residents to be cautious and avoid falling into such traps,” Kathurima said.

The warning comes at a sensitive moment. Mau Mau descendants have long awaited structured government support, and the emergence of fraudulent groups exploiting that expectation has drawn growing concern from community leaders and county officials alike. For the elderly men and women who fought or suffered during the liberation struggle, the prospect of being deceived by those claiming to speak in their name carries a particular and painful weight.

MMV Associate CLG said it would provide updates on the Meru leadership election once the process is complete.



MMV Associate CLG Director James Njuguna Mahuria addresses the Press | Photo: Brian Gitonga



MMV Associate CLG Chief Executive Officer Emma Cherotich Kasisi addresses the press. | Photo: Brian Gitonga



Gilbert Mugambi Kathurima, a Meru resident and member of the association speaks to the press | Photo: Brian Gitonga

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DP chairman defends multi-party democracy, rejects calls to dissolve political parties



DP National Chairman Peter Ndubai

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

The Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) has strongly defended Kenya's multi-party democracy, warning against attempts to pressure established political parties into dissolving and joining newly formed outfits, saying such moves threaten constitutional freedoms and the country's democratic gains.

In a statement, DP National Chairman Peter Ndubai said Kenya's Constitution guarantees political pluralism, freedom of association and every citizen's right to choose their preferred political party and leaders.

Ndubai's remarks come amid heightened political activity in the Mt Kenya region following recent calls by Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua urging parties such as DP, PNU, Umoja na Maendeleo Party and BUS Party to dissolve and join DCP ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The remarks have triggered sharp reactions from leaders of several political parties, who insist that every registered party has a constitutional right to exist and independently pursue its political agenda.

According to Ndubai, the Mt Kenya region is home to more than 32 registered political parties, demonstrating the diversity of political thought and democratic participation among residents.

He described DP as the country's second-oldest political party, saying it has played a significant role in Kenya's democratic development and remains a respected national institution with a rich political legacy.

"Any proposal that seeks to pressure established political parties into dissolving or merging into

newly formed parties undermines the spirit of the Constitution and the democratic gains that Kenyans fought and sacrificed to achieve," he said.

Ndubai argued that political competition strengthens accountability, promotes innovation in public policy and gives citizens meaningful choices during elections.

He cautioned that attempts to create what he termed a de facto one-party system, whether directly or indirectly, would be inconsistent with constitutional democracy, inclusive governance and national unity.

According to the DP chairman, reducing political diversity would weaken democratic institutions, discourage healthy political competition and ultimately undermine good governance and economic development.

Ndubai who is seeking to be the next Tigania West constituency MP called on political leaders to respect the independence of political parties and uphold every Kenyan's constitutional right to participate freely in the political process.

Instead of focusing on political realignments aimed at eliminating smaller parties, Ndubai urged leaders to prioritise economic growth, job creation for young people, the fight against corruption and improved service delivery.

His statement adds to the growing debate over political alliances and party mergers as leaders position themselves ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Ndubai maintained that Kenya's strength lies in robust democratic institutions, constitutional freedoms and peaceful political competition, saying every political party should be allowed to compete on the strength of its ideas, leadership and service to the people while leaving the final decision to voters at the ballot box.

Mwaura hands over government spokesperson's office after 33 months

BY John Kariuki

@themkenyaintimes

Former Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura yesterday formally handed over the Office of the Government Spokesperson to his successor, Charles Owino, after 33 months and 17 days in the role, saying he was leaving behind an institution transformed from a one-person operation into a multi-disciplinary communications body.

The ceremony was held at the Government Spokesperson's Media Centre at Harambee Annex, where Mwaura transferred a comprehensive set of institutional documents — among them a handover report, strategic plan, organisational and staffing framework, operational structure, work plan, procurement plan, standard operating procedures, guiding policy, prospectus, product catalogue and a two-year performance scorecard. The breadth of the documentation was deliberate. Mwaura said the records were designed to preserve institutional memory, strengthen governance and accountability, and ensure that the transition of leadership did not mean the loss of institutional momentum.

"The greatest legacy a leader can leave is not the office they occupy, but the systems they build, the people they empower and the vision they leave behind," he said.

The numbers Mwaura presented in support of that claim were substantial. During the 2025/26 financial year, the Office reported achieving 150 per cent of its annual target for press statements and media releases, 150 per cent for regional media forums, 187.5 per cent for radio dissemination and 162.5 per cent for television dissemination. Performance in other areas was even more pronounced — 237.5 per cent for inclusive communication and Uzalendo initiatives, 225 per cent for strategic communication narratives and 279.2 per cent for print media publications.

Over the course of his tenure, the Office produced 276 GOK Today headlines, 83 one-minute GOK Today videos, 254 weekly press briefings and media releases, 180 newspaper articles and opinion pieces, 175 radio programmes and 121 television programmes. It also gen-



Isaac Mwaura hands over government spokesperson's office to Charles Owino

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Outgoing spokesman transfers institutional documents and performance records to successor Charles Owino at Harambee Annex

erated 32 episodes of the Sema na Spox Bonga Na Gava podcast, 20 documentaries, 2,512 short videos, 1,280 reels, 844 GAVA Quotes, 120 live streams, 56 weekly bulletins, more than 700 sponsored hashtags, 180 weekly narratives, over 12,000 photographs and 209 GODANEB features, among other communication products.

Mwaura attributed the scale of the output to the dedication of staff, strategic partners, the media fraternity and the support of Kenyans, saying their collective effort had turned the office into a modern, technology-driven and citizen-centred institution. When he took charge, the spokesperson's function was essentially a single-desk operation. By the time he left, it had grown to 80 officers, including interns, and was organised into six functional departments.

The transformation is not merely a

matter of headcount. What Mwaura appeared most determined to leave behind was a documented, replicable way of doing things — a set of systems that could survive a change in leadership and continue functioning regardless of who sat at the top. That instinct, to institutionalise rather than simply perform, is rarer in government than it should be and arguably more valuable than any single communication product the office produced.

Mwaura is moving to his new role as Head of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Disability Rights, a position he said he approaches with the same commitment to building lasting structures. He expressed gratitude to President William Ruto for the confidence placed in him throughout his tenure and wished Owino well as he takes on one of the more demanding communication roles in the public service.

"I leave knowing that the Office is stronger, more innovative, more resilient and better prepared for the future than ever before," Mwaura said. "Leadership may change, but institutions endure. Systems remain. Service continues."

For Owino, the handover represents both an inheritance and a challenge — a well-documented institution with high performance benchmarks already on the record, and a public that has come to expect a certain pace and quality of government communication. The foundation is there. What he builds on it is now entirely his own.

Visions Two presidents. Two long-range development blueprints. Two nations in the same regional bloc, both racing to define what their economies will look like a generation from now

Two visions, one region, one race against time

As Ruto dares the opposition to face him at the ballot and Tanzania rolls out its own generational blueprint, East Africa's two largest economies are betting their futures on the politics of long-term planning — with starkly different odds

BY Dan Mwangi

@themkenyaintimes

President William Ruto yesterday challenged opposition leaders to face him at the ballot in 2027 rather than reject his proposed national development charter, as he hosted Muslim religious leaders from all 47 counties at State House, Nairobi, widening the political fault lines over a plan that will formally launch next Wednesday — the same week Kenya's southern neighbour, Tanzania, activated the implementation machinery for its own generational blueprint.

The convergence is striking. On one side of the border, Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan launched the implementation, monitoring and acceleration tools for the National Development Vision 2050 at State House in Dar es Salaam, fulfilling a directive she issued when the strategy was officially unveiled on July 17, 2025, in Dodoma, outlining Tanzania's goal of becoming a high-income, inclusive and resilient nation by 2050. On the other side, Ruto announced that Kenya will formally launch a National Conversation on its Future Beyond Vision 2030 on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, describing it as the most consequential exercise in national reflection and public participation since the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010.

Two presidents. Two long-range development blueprints. Two nations in the same regional bloc, both racing to define what their economies will look like a generation from now — and both navigating the same treacherous gap between vision and delivery.

In Nairobi, Ruto used the gathering of Muslim clerics to sharpen his political messaging around the dialogue. Speaking in Kiswahili, he argued that the charter was designed to give citizens an ownership stake in Kenya's long-term future. "We must come together to deliberate on national development through what we call public participation," he said. He then turned his fire on the United Opposition, accusing its leaders of rejecting the proposed development charter not out of principled objection but naked political calculation. "They oppose the development charter — they have no interest in development. The development they



President William Ruto and Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan

want is to seize power and divide Kenyans," Ruto said. He went further still, dismissing the opposition's policy credentials entirely. "They have no agenda. Their work is to go around dividing Kenyans on ethnic and hatred lines," he added.

The dare to face him at the ballot was equally combative. "They think winning an election is about chanting 'One Term' — I am watching them carefully. All they have is empty noise," Ruto said.

The opposition's response confirmed just how fiercely contested this terrain has become. Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka, speaking in Yatta, Machakos County, dismissed Ruto's push for a new development charter as pointless propaganda, saying: "It's daylight propaganda — nothing substantial will come out of it. Kenyans are not fools." Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua dismissed the planned national conversation as wishful thinking, saying: "How can the same person in power who failed to deliver his promises to Kenyans now purport to deliver?" Jubilee Deputy Party Leader Fred Matiang'i was equally blunt: "President William Ruto's proposal to launch a national conversation on Kenya's development post-Vision 2030 is a clear case of misplaced priorities — this is only meant to divert our attention from Ruto's gross violations of the Constitution and leadership failures."

The government's response came from Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, who challenged the opposition to present its own long-term devel-

opment blueprint instead of dismissing the government's proposed agenda, saying national planning should rise above partisan politics.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale, speaking at the State House gathering, thanked Ruto for what he described as equitable development across all religious communities. "We are very grateful because you do not discriminate against the Islamic faith through development," Duale said. Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi reinforced the message of inclusivity. "The important thing is that all Kenyans are served equally," he said.

But the question that neither the government's enthusiasm nor the opposition's derision fully addresses is this: what exactly is being proposed, and does Kenya have the institutional machinery to deliver it?

Ruto is advocating for a new plan to take Kenya forward beyond Vision 2030, a long-term national development plan launched in 2008 by President Mwai Kibaki, which aimed to turn Kenya into a newly industrialised, middle-income country. Nearly two decades later, Ruto wants to build on that foundation by replacing a government-owned planning framework with a constitution-anchored National Development Charter that he says will belong to Kenyans and endure beyond administrations. The intellectual scaffolding has been provided by an expert panel that includes Japanese political scientist Hiroyuki Hino, Kisumu Governor Anyang' Nyong'o and three University of Nairobi ac-

ademics — Michael Chege, Karuti Kanyinga and Peter Wanyande. Nyong'o has described the process as "the first steps towards the preparation of the plan of the transition to the first world."

Compare that with Tanzania's approach and the contrasts are instructive. Vision 2050 was developed through a nationwide consultation process that began in April 2023, with more than 1.17 million Tanzanians contributing ideas before Parliament endorsed the final document in June 2025. The blueprint targets a GDP of one trillion US dollars and a per capita income of seven thousand dollars by 2050, up from approximately one thousand and eighty dollars in 2020. Implementation has already begun: ministries and public institutions began aligning their programmes on July 1, 2026, through the Fourth Five-Year National Development Plan. For the financial year 2026/2027 alone, Tanzania estimates development financing needs of TZS 86.3 trillion, with the private sector expected to contribute approximately 70 per cent.

Tanzania's blueprint is already in execution. Kenya's conversation has not yet begun. That gap — between a neighbour rolling out implementation tools and a country still debating whether to talk — is the uncomfortable backdrop against which Ruto's August 12 launch must be read.

There is also the question of political legitimacy. Commentary from analysts notes that Ruto consulted his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta and former opposition leader Raila Odi-

ga in developing the charter concept, but appeared to bypass present-day opposition leaders such as Kalonzo Musyoka, Matiang'i and Gachagua — an oversight, or deliberate snub, that helps explain the outright rejection from the opposition side. A development charter that cannot command cross-party buy-in risks becoming exactly what its critics say it already is: a re-election platform dressed in the language of generational planning.

The United Opposition, meanwhile, faces its own credibility problem. It has been months past its self-imposed deadline for unveiling a presidential flagbearer, with no announcement imminent despite vows of unity. A coalition that cannot agree on its own candidate is poorly positioned to offer a coherent counter-narrative to Ruto's development agenda — however valid their specific critiques of it may be.

The deeper question — one that neither government nor opposition appears eager to confront — is whether either side has truly grappled with the structural reforms that long-term economic transformation requires. Tanzania's Vision 2050 is ambitious, but analysts note that the country must sustain growth rates, institutional reforms and private sector confidence over a quarter century to make good on its targets. Kenya's track record on Vision 2030 was mixed: real progress in infrastructure and the financial sector, but persistent deficits in manufacturing, inequality and governance.

What East Africa's two biggest economies share is the recognition that the development horizons of five-year electoral cycles are not equal to the scale of the challenge. Both Ruto and Samia are reaching for frameworks that outlast their own administrations. Both are betting that the discipline of long-term planning can override the short-termism of politics.

Whether they are right is a question that history, not the next election, will answer.

For now, as Nairobi prepares for August 12 and Dar es Salaam moves from vision to implementation, one thing is clear: the race to define East Africa's future has begun, and the starting positions could not be more different.

Politics Pelagiah Muthoni is running on an empowerment platform, but a crowded DCP field and a formidable incumbent stand between her and Parliament

Pelagiah: A new voice eyes Murang'a's women's seat

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

Pelagiah Muthoni has a warm manner and a practised stump speech. Ask her why she wants to be Murang'a County's Woman Representative and the answer comes quickly: empowerment, dignity, inclusion. Ask what she has done before — and the conversation requires more time.

Muthoni, known to supporters as Pragiah, yesterday confirmed she is seeking the Murang'a Woman Representative seat on a Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) ticket in the 2027 General Election. Her campaign is built around three pillars: economic empowerment for women, skills development for youth, and greater inclusion for persons

living with disabilities.

The pitch is earnest. Whether it is enough to break through in what is shaping up to be one of Murang'a's most contested races is a different question.

The incumbent and the field

Muthoni will not have the seat to herself. The current Murang'a Woman Representative is Betty Maina, a former director of the Athi Water Development Agency who won the seat in 2022 on a United Democratic Alliance (UDA) ticket, polling 278,443 votes — more than double her nearest rival. Maina sits on the Finance and National Planning Committee in the National Assembly and remains the name most Murang'a voters associate with the seat.

The county itself is also in political flux. Governor Irungu Kang'ata recently crossed from UDA to DCP, pledging to defend his seat under Gachagua's party banner — a move that signals growing DCP momentum in the county but also means the party's internal primary for every seat, including the women's representative race, could be fiercely competitive.

DCP opened registration for 2027 aspirants last month, setting a registration fee of KSh10,000 for Woman Representative hopefuls, with reduced fees of KSh5,000 for youth and persons with disabilities. Several names are expected to join the queue.

What the platform promises



Pelagiah Muthoni

Muthoni's agenda covers familiar but important ground. She has pledged to champion accessible financing for women entrepreneurs, invest in technical and digital skills for youth, and push for programmes that bring persons with disabilities into the economic mainstream.

"Restoring dignity means ensuring that every person, regardless of physical ability, has an equal chance to contribute meaningfully to society," she said in a statement outlining her candidacy.

The ambitions are not unusual for a first-time candidate. What observers will want to know is how she intends to move them from rhetoric to legislation, and what networks she commands to deliver resources to a county whose development needs are considerable.

Murang'a's own county budget priorities for 2025-2026 identify food security, reliable water access, road infrastructure, universal healthcare and social and economic empowerment of youth, women and persons with disabilities as key intervention areas — precisely the terrain Muthoni says she wants to occupy. The

overlap between her platform and existing county priorities is notable, though it also raises questions about what a national legislator can add to programmes already underway at county level.

The credibility question

Muthoni's campaign materials describe her as a leader with "a heart of gold." Voters will be looking for something more specific: a professional record, community work, institutional affiliations or prior public service that demonstrates she can navigate Parliament and deliver for constituents.

Those details have not yet been made public. Her campaign, at this stage, rests heavily on aspiration. That is not uncommon at the early stages of a race — but in a county where the incumbent won by a commanding margin and where DCP's own primary is likely to attract multiple credible candidates, aspiration alone may not be sufficient.

Political analysts who follow Mt. Kenya electoral dynamics note that the Woman Representative seat has historically rewarded candidates with

strong grassroots networks, visible community presence and the ability to distribute resources. Murang'a's electorate, they note, has consistently distinguished between candidates who speak about empowerment and those who demonstrably practise it.

The bigger picture

Muthoni's entry into the race reflects a wider pattern across Mt. Kenya, where DCP has announced plans to field candidates in all 47 counties across every elective category as part of Gachagua's ambition to build a nationally competitive party ahead of 2027. For Muthoni, the DCP ticket offers visibility and association with a party that is generating real momentum in the region.

Whether that momentum translates into a primary victory — and then a general election win against a well-resourced incumbent — will depend on factors that no amount of platform rhetoric alone can resolve.

For now, Muthoni is in the race. Murang'a's voters will have the final word.

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Birds “This lost bird species, only found in this forest globally, was last sighted more than a decade ago,” Odhiambo said.

Kenyan birders gain global acclaim as they rediscover the Red Weaver Bird in Boni forest



Red Weaver Bird 2026 Photo | Photo: Simon Odhiambo

onomists considered the bird a subspecies of the Red-headed Weaver. It was not until 2024 that eBird recognised the Red Weaver as a distinct species, and by 2025 it had cycled onto the Lost Birds list.

To search for this enigmatic bird, Omenya assembled a team that blended scientific expertise, local knowledge, and logistical support. He led the expedition alongside bird photographer Odhiambo, environmentalist Dr Victor Ikawa, Paul Kabere of the Environmental Compliance Institute, and East Africa tour guides James Mburu and John Gitiri. Motorcycle riders Mohammed Noor and Charles Manhala of Aweer Conservancy, together with driver Caleb, guided and transported the survey team. Their work relied on a wider network of chiefs, county commissioners, village elders, and armed escorts. In the most remote areas, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) offered protection against the risk of militant activity.

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Two Kenyan birders, James Apolloh Omenya and Simon Odhiambo, have gained global acclaim after their recent sighting of the elusive Red Weaver Bird in the Boni-Dodori Forest in Lamu County last month.

The two birders have received global recognition in environmental conservation and ornithology for their recent sighting and documentation of the Red Weaver Bird, which had not been seen or documented since 2014.

Speaking when he confirmed the sighting, Simon Odhiambo, a Murang’a County-based conservationist popularly known as The KenyanBirder, said the rediscovery of the Red Weaver Bird was a thrilling experience after an 11-day field expedition in the wildlife-infested and security-cordoned forest.

“We were excited to make the rediscovery of the Red Weaver Bird in Boni-Dodori Forest. This lost bird species, only found in this forest globally, was last sighted more than a decade ago,” Odhiam-

bo said.

Odhiambo, a Senior Executive at Kakuzi Plc, was accompanied in the field survey and expedition by Omenya, a 29-year-old ornithologist and bird guide, who was also one of five recipients of the 2026 Ornithology x Lost Birds Expedition Grants. The award supports birders aged 18-30 years who wish to find a lost species.

In the 2026 Ornithology x Lost Birds Expedition Grants award, Omenya chose two birds: the Red Weaver, a target of a prior expedition cut short by security concerns, and the Tana River Cisticola, last documented in 1967. Their core ranges overlap in remote areas of northeastern Kenya near the border with Somalia — landscapes rarely visited by birders and ornithologists.

According to a report published on the Search for Lost Birds web portal, on the morning of July 3, 2026, two voices rose above the shrill call of the Sombre Greenbul in Kenya’s Boni-Dodori Forest. “Our birds!” they shouted as three flashes of red emerged from a bush. The voices belonged to Kenyan birders

James Apolloh Omenya and Simon Odhiambo, who had travelled miles by motorbike in search of a species last documented in 2014. After more than a decade, the lost Red Weaver had finally appeared.

According to the Search for Lost Birds web portal, records of the Red Weaver are sparse. “To our knowledge, the species had been photographed only once before Omenya and his team ventured into the field: in April 2014, when John Musina documented a single male in the Boni-Dodori Forest. The limited number of records is due in part to long-standing uncertainty about the weaver’s identity,” the web portal said.

For more than a century, tax-

The two birders have received global recognition in environmental conservation and ornithology for their recent sighting and documentation of the Red Weaver Bird, which had not been seen or documented since 2014.



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Education The graduation ceremony, to be held at the university's Graduation Square near Nyeri town will be presided over by the institution's Chancellor, Prof. Marion Wanjiku Mutugi

Outspan Global University in historic first ceremony as It unveils Community Health Research Programme

BY Wilfred Muchire

@themkenyaintimes

Outspan Global University (OGU) will tomorrow write a new chapter in its history when it holds its first graduation ceremony, conferring diplomas and certificates on 878 graduates.

The institution is further expected to mark another milestone through unveiling of an ambitious community-based health research programme aimed at transforming disease prevention and healthcare training.

The graduation ceremony, to be held at the university's Graduation Square near Nyeri town will be presided over by the institution's Chancellor, Prof. Marion Wanjiku Mutugi.

The event marks the university's inaugural graduation since its transition from Outspan Medical College to Outspan Global University following early this year's award of a Letter of Interim Authority, signalling its evolution into a fully-fledged university focused on health sciences, research and innovation.

Speaking yesterday during a media briefing ahead of the graduation, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Paul Mbugua said the institution is entering a new phase that goes beyond training healthcare professionals to generating research that directly addresses community health challenges.

Accompanied by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Dr. Lydia Muthoni, Prof. Mbugua announced the rollout of the Family Health Ecosystem Programme, an initiative that will involve researchers working closely with communities to identify, document and study diseases affecting families with the aim of finding long-term solutions.

He said the programme will

collect scientific data on illnesses prevalent in different families and communities, enabling researchers to establish patterns, recommend preventive interventions where applicable and provide families with information that can reduce disease burden.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, the initiative will also identify broader social and environmental challenges affecting family health and propose practical interventions to mitigate them.

"The programme is intended to help us understand diseases at the family and community level while generating evidence that will inform healthcare practice and policy," he said.

Prof. Mbugua added that findings from the research will help shape future medical training at the university, particularly as Kenya prepares to transition to the Competency-Based Education (CBE) model at university level.

The first cohort of learners under the new education system is expected to join universities in 2029.

He said universities must adapt their curricula to prepare graduates capable of solving emerging healthcare challenges through research, innovation and community engagement.

The institution's first graduating class comprises students from Nursing, Clinical Medicine, Health Records and Information Technology, Nutrition, Psychology, Perioperative Theatre Technology and Health Support Assistance programmes.

This year's graduation is themed "Innovating Health Education for Sustainable Global Impact," reflecting the university's focus on producing professionals equipped to respond to changing healthcare needs both locally and internationally.

University officials said the graduation represents more than the conferring of academic awards, describing it as a milestone that affirms the institution's commitment to producing ethical, competent and service-oriented professionals.

Outspan Global University says it is guided by a vision of becoming a global reference institution that trains professionals capable of providing sustainable, quality and holistic solutions to healthcare challenges.

The university's training model integrates classroom instruction with practical learning through the Outspan Teaching and Referral Hospital, a Level Five teaching hospital in Nyeri, as well as other partner health facilities, enabling students to acquire hands-on clinical experience alongside academic knowledge.

Officials noted that the integrated education and healthcare ecosystem provides students with opportunities to participate in clinical practice, research and innovation while responding to real-world health challenges.

Tomorrow's ceremony is expected to attract senior government officials, leaders from academia, healthcare professionals, development partners, industry representatives, alumni, parents, guardians and members of the public.

For the graduates, the ceremony will mark the culmination of years of academic effort.

For the university, it represents the beginning of a new chapter as it seeks to strengthen its position as a centre for health sciences education, research and community service while contributing to Kenya's growing demand for highly skilled healthcare professionals.



Outspan Global University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Paul Mbugua and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Dr. Lydia Muthoni briefing journalists at the institution yesterday | Photo: Courtesy.

Health Addressing the media in Chuka Town, Mr. Marigu said the county branch had no mandate to call off the nationwide strike declared by the union’s national office

Tharaka Nithi nurses resume duty from the national strike

BY Alex Njeru
@themkenyentimes

Nurses in Tharaka Nithi County will resume work today after their union’s county leadership directed members to return to duty in compliance with an active court order obtained by the county government, even as the nationwide nurses’ strike remains in force.

The Kenya National Union of Nurses (KNUN) Tharaka Nithi County branch, led by Secretary Fabian Marigu and Chairperson Joshua Mwithi, announced the decision after a meeting with county officials led by County Secretary Alex Muratha and Health Chief Officer Rose Micheni.

Addressing the media in Chuka Town, Mr. Marigu said the county branch had no mandate to call off the nationwide strike declared by

the union’s national office but was obliged to respect the court order.

He said the county officials had demonstrated goodwill in addressing grievances affecting nurses in the county, prompting the local branch to ask its members to resume work while negotiations continue.

“We are asking our members to resume duty in respect to an active court order and as a gesture of the goodwill shown by the county leadership to address grievances that concern them,” said Mr. Marigu.

He added that the union and the county government had reached an understanding on some of the county-specific concerns, while discussions on the remaining issues would continue alongside efforts to have the national grievances addressed.

Among the local demands are the promotion of 98 nurses and the confirmation of nine nurses to permanent and pensionable terms.

County Secretary Alex Muratha welcomed the decision by the nurses to return to work, saying it would restore healthcare services that had been disrupted by the strike.

“As a government, we apologise for the inconveniences caused to our people and thank the nurses for agreeing to resume duty,” Mr. Muratha said.

He reaffirmed the county government’s commitment to dialogue and consultation with health workers and urged residents to seek services at public health facilities from today as normal operations resume.

The nurses joined the nationwide strike to demand the implementation of the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which seeks to improve salaries, allowances and working conditions.

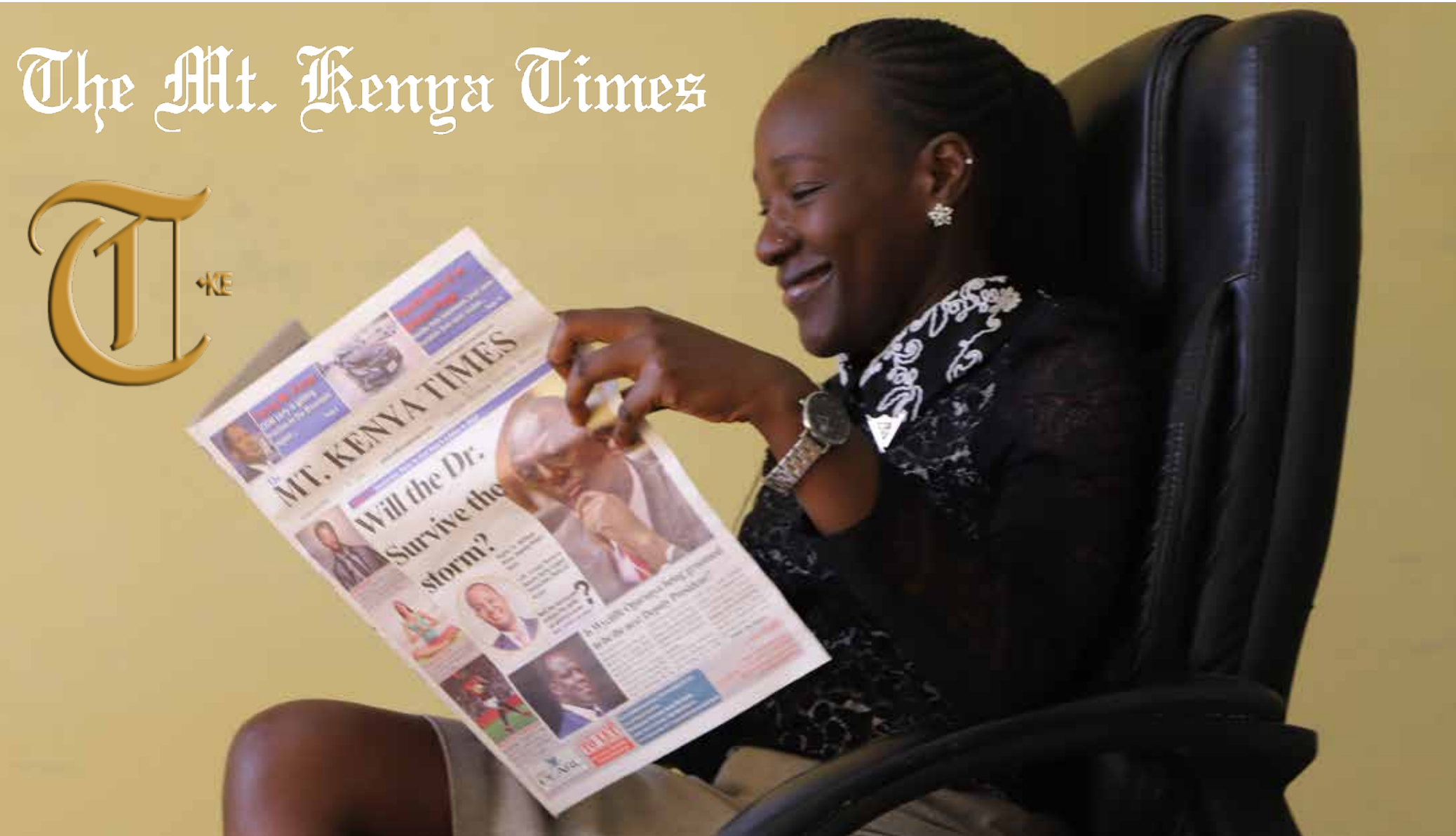
They are also pushing for the implementation of career progression guidelines, improved staffing lev-



Kenya National Union of Nurses Tharaka Nithi County chapter chairperson Mr Joshua Mwithi addressing journalists in Chuka town yesterday | Photo: Alex Njeru

els, better working conditions and adequate medical supplies in public health facilities.

The Tharaka Nithi County branch said it remains in solidarity with nurses across the country and will continue supporting the national union’s efforts to have the outstanding grievances resolved.



Afraid to love



I am haunted by your darkness,
and you, haunted by my light.
But we are more afraid
of losing ourselves.

In your shadow, I seek warmth.
In my glow, you find solace.
Yet in the space between,
we tread carefully, afraid to lose.

Your fears seep into my dreams.
My hopes dance in your nightmares.

A delicate balance we maintain,
scared to unravel the threads that bind.

Together, we walk the line,
a dance of shadows and light,
clinging to each other,
yet fearing the embrace.

In the silent moments,
our souls whisper secrets,
But the echo of our fears
keeps us apart, yet intertwined.

Our hearts beat as one,
in a rhythm of love and fear,
afraid to let go,
yet terrified to hold on too tight.

© Keith Onyango - Rongo university

This is For my sister Amirdha
varshini



She knows my smiles, she knows my tears,
She walks beside me through the years.
A little fight, a laugh, a cry,
But she's my strength when times are dry.

She shares my dreams, my secrets too,
Makes dark days feel a little new.
More than a friend, my forever stay -
My sister, love in every way.
S.P. Ambuja

The tree of my life



I was once a tiny seed,
My parents gave me all I need.
My parents are my roots so deep,

Their love and care are mine to keep.
My teacher's are my strong, tall stem,
Helping me grow every day through them.
I am the leaves upon the tree,
Growing with kindness for all to see.
So, I am grow well and make my parents and
teachers happy and proud of me.
S.sahana,
Grade 8,
GHSS Kandigai,
Chengalpattu.

To the Best Grandfather



My grandfather is very, very special.
I love my grandfather,
and I enjoy every moment with him.
My grandfather is very loving and caring.
He is my best friend.
He also plays with me.

My grandfather is my guide.
I feel very happy with my grandfather.
He is the best grandfather in the world.
He tells me wonderful stories
and teaches me many good values.
He always encourages me
and makes me smile.
I love my grandfather very much.
I thank God for giving me such a wonderful
grandfather.

MEENA SRI.S
CLASS 8-B
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR

TET Exam



Exams are normally for children.
Parents drop children at school.
They check which room by the hall ticket number.
They wait till their ward come out

But for the TET exam,
Children drop their parents at center school.
They wait till their parents come out.

Normally parents tell children,
“Don’t watch TV, don’t use mobile, don’t waste
time on social media.”
Now children warn parents,
“Don’t watch TV or mobile.
Concentrate only on studies.” Exams are nearing

Normally parents ask,
“How many questions did you answer?”
They check Google to calculate marks.

Now students ask parents,
“How did you perform?”
“How much will you score?”
And they eagerly calculate marks online
and check the answers.

Parents naturally help children
and feel happy to see their performance.
They are happy when their child qualifies.
Here children are happy if parents score good
marks

Parents advise students to score more marks.
Now students advise parents to score well.

Sitting in the exam hall, in front of CCTV cameras.
Hall supervisor doesn’t allow anyone to turn left
or right.
No talking,
even though everyone is a teacher and even
friends.
A junior teacher may be the invigilator.

Sitting For 3 long hours in the same seat, without
any movement
Sitting with full attention and concentration

All studied answer are forgotten and gone
beyond the boundary
everything studied all went in vain
All options are looking like the right answer.

The tragedy is
Teachers who have taught for decades,
who created doctors, engineers, teachers,
scientists, leaders , entrepreneur
are told they are “not qualified”
if they don’t clear this test.

Oh What a pity... What a pity
An exam without sympathy or empathy mercy
grace
No support, no guidance, no care.

The guide teachers write exam and the student
invigilates. Sad
And the rules say “with effect from...” Future
date
How can a test be “with effect from” the past?
I doubt if this is even fair.

After 50 years of age,
this is truly tedious and hedious
So many health issues.
B. P. Diabeties, neuro, rheumatic aritiritics
feminine issues
Yet they want to clear exam
and sit to write the test.
Unable to shade OMR sheet
Hands trembling and shivering.
Eyes are blurred. Heart palpitating

Announcements keep coming.
“30 minutes left. 20 minutes left. 10 minutes
left.” Hope heart will stop ringing before the bell
rings

Unable to concentrate.
Unable to manage time
Marking all answers wrong.
All shortcuts and tricks go to waste.
Nothing seems to work.

looking at the watch,
doing mental workouts to beat the trap.
They’re supposed to drink water only from a
transparent bottle,
since steel bottles are not allowed.

Laments poor elder teachers

Brinda. D
Creative writers
Ghs Melpattampakkam Tamil Nadu India

Die with Memories, Not Dreams



Everyone has a birth and a death.
Between these two days, you should achieve
something from your dreams.
According to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, “Birth is an

event, but death should be a history.”
You bring nothing when you are born, but when you
die, you should leave behind valuable memories.
Small steps lead to great achievements, and
those achievements create the story of your life.
If you work hard, you will create a successful
history.
Your good deeds and achievements will keep your
name alive even after your death.
So, life should be filled with valuable memories,
not just unfulfilled dreams.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Politics Personal ambition is also a factor that cannot be ignored. As 2027 draws closer, every political leader is weighing nominations, influence and future positioning

Is the resistance to Gachagua a sign of distrust?

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Politics is often described as a game of numbers, but behind those numbers lies something far more important: trust. As former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua works to consolidate support under the Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP), resistance from some regional leaders has sparked a pointed question — why are some reluctant to follow, and does that reluctance signal a deeper crisis of confidence?

The pushback suggests that the road to political unity is more complicated than Gachagua’s camp had anticipated. He has consistently argued that a single, united party would strengthen Mt. Kenya’s bargaining power ahead of the 2027 General Election. Not everyone is persuaded.

Several leaders insist their objection is not to unity itself



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

but to the manner in which it is being pursued. They believe cooperation can be achieved while preserving each party’s distinct identity. Others worry that concentrating too much power in one structure could stifle internal democracy and marginalise diverse voices.

That raises a harder question: has the region lost faith in its individual leaders, or are politicians simply guarding their own interests?

Kenyan political history offers a consistent lesson — alliances are rarely built on personalities alone. They require consultation, compromise and mutual respect. Leaders are far more likely to unite when

they feel they have a genuine role in shaping a coalition, not merely an expectation that they will fall in line behind one figure.

Personal ambition is also a factor that cannot be ignored. As 2027 draws closer, every political leader is weighing nominations, influence and future positioning. That reality makes many hesitant to dissolve their parties or surrender their political identities before negotiations are even complete.

For ordinary Kenyans, however, the endless realignments grow wearisome. Most citizens are less interested in which party a leader belongs to and more concerned about the cost of living, unemployment, healthcare, education and economic opportunity for young people. While politicians debate coalitions and structures, everyday hardships continue.

The current standoff should also serve as a reminder that unity cannot be imposed. Genuine cohesion grows from shared values, common purpose and trust among leaders. Without that foundation, rallying everyone behind a single party banner may produce the appearance of unity — but little of the substance.

As these developments unfold, a wider question looms: where is Mt. Kenya politics heading? Will leaders find common ground, or will internal divisions erode the region’s influence in national affairs? The answer will carry real consequences for the opposition’s shape going into 2027.

The resistance to Gachagua’s consolidation strategy should not automatically be read as proof of personal distrust. There are legitimate political calculations, ideological differences and strategic interests at play. But the situation does confirm that trust remains one of the most valuable currencies in politics — and without it, even the most ambitious unity plans face serious headwinds.

The coming months will reveal whether dialogue can bridge these divides. One thing is already clear: the choices made today will shape not only Mt. Kenya’s political direction but the broader national landscape as Kenya moves towards 2027.

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SGBV CJ directed the Principal Judge to lead the establishment of an SGBV Working Group within the Court Users Committee to coordinate responses to emerging challenges

CJ Koome calls for urgent action on rising SGBV cases in Vihiga

BY Elizabeth Angira

@themkenyaintimes

Chief Justice Martha Koome has called for urgent and coordinated action to tackle the rising cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Vihiga County, warning that the county continues to record some of the highest numbers of such cases in the country.

Speaking during a meeting with Vihiga Law Courts staff and members of the Court Users Committee (CUC), the Chief Justice urged all justice sector stakeholders to strengthen collaboration in responding to SGBV, increase public awareness, and implement coordinated interventions aimed at preventing the crime and ensuring justice for survivors.

She directed the Principal Judge to lead the establishment of an SGBV Working Group within the Court Users Committee to coordinate responses to emerging challenges and improve case management.

Justice Koome also called for the refurbishment of the child protection unit at the local police station, improvement of the county's Gender Violence Rescue Centre, and establishment of a holding facility for children in conflict with the law.

She emphasized the need for sustained public education on SGBV, plea bargaining, and Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) to enhance access to justice and promote peaceful dispute resolution where applicable.

On succession disputes, the Chief Justice said the Judiciary's digitized case management system has significantly improved the processing of cases, particularly benefiting widows who have traditionally faced lengthy delays in accessing justice.

She also warned against corruption within the justice sector, urging Court Users Committees to strengthen integrity



Chief Justice Martha Koome

committees to safeguard public confidence in the administration of justice.

The Judiciary delegation, which included Chief Registrar Winfridah Mokaya, Judicial Service Commission Vice Chairperson Isaac Ruto, Court of Appeal President Justice Daniel Musinga, High Court Principal Judge Eric Ogola, Court of Appeal Judge Prof. Joel Ngugi, Justice Aggrey Muchelule, and other senior Judiciary officials, also met court staff who raised various administrative challenges. Justice Koome assured them that the Judiciary would work towards addressing the concerns.

During the meeting, justice sector stakeholders outlined several challenges affecting service delivery.

Vihiga Prison officials requested the establishment of a functional virtual court, training of prison officers as paralegals, and a review of bail and bond terms to ease prison congestion.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions reaffirmed its commitment to people-centred prosecutions, stronger inter-agency collaboration, and wider use of diversion programmes to promote timely justice.

The National Police Service called for expanded virtual hearings to reduce the cost of transporting witnesses to court, while mediators urged the fast-tracking of the Mediation Bill and expansion of Alternative Dispute Resolu-

tion mechanisms.

Civil society organisations appealed for greater attention to SGBV and succession disputes affecting widows. County security officials linked the increasing cases of defilement and incest to illicit brews and drug abuse, noting that enforcement operations are ongoing to curb the problem.

Justice Joel Ngugi announced plans to establish an Alternative Justice Systems Centre in Vihiga, while Justice Aggrey Muchelule revealed that 305 cases have already been referred to Court-Annexed Mediation, significantly reducing the time taken to resolve disputes.

CJ Meets Governor Ottichilo to Enhance Access to Justice Earlier, Chief Justice Koome held talks with Vihiga Governor Dr. Wilber Ottichilo on strengthening justice delivery in Vihiga County and the wider Western region.

Governor Ottichilo identified Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, land disputes, and succession cases as the region's most pressing justice challenges.

He observed that many SGBV cases fail to reach conclusion due to witnesses withdrawing or failing to testify, stressing the need for the entire justice sector to work closely with communities to address the root causes of violence and develop long-term solutions.

"The county has established a Gender Violence Rescue



Chief Justice Martha Koome meets Governor Ottichilo to enhance access to justice

Centre, but more coordinated interventions are needed to end the vice," the Governor said.

Justice Koome announced that the Judiciary will establish both a Mediation Centre and an Alternative Justice Systems Centre in Vihiga to help resolve land and succession disputes more efficiently. She clarified that while crim-

inal offences such as SGBV cannot be handled through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, community engagement remains critical in preventing the violence before it occurs.

The Chief Justice also commended Governor Ottichilo for allocating land in Emuhaya for the construction of a new law court.

"The Judiciary aspires to establish a court in every constituency. With the planned Emuhaya Court, we are moving closer to that goal, and Vihiga County is leading by example," she said.

Chief Registrar Winfridah Mokaya confirmed that the Judiciary has already secured funding to operationalise the Emuhaya Court during the current financial year, bringing judicial services closer to residents.

Presiding Judge Reuben Nyakundi praised the strong partnership between the Judiciary, the County Government and the community through the inclusive Court Users Committee.

He also pointed to drug and substance abuse as a major driver of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and called for joint efforts to address the problem.

Justice Koome is currently on a service inspection tour of courts across Western Kenya, where she is engaging judges, judicial officers, court staff and justice sector stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities for improving justice delivery.




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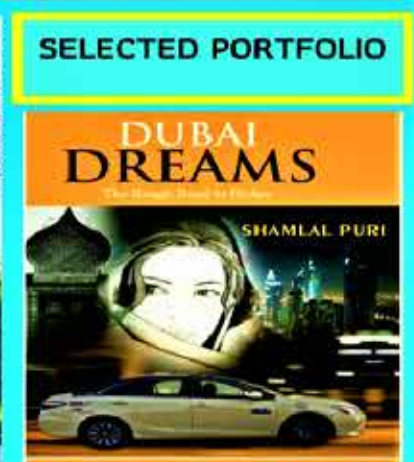
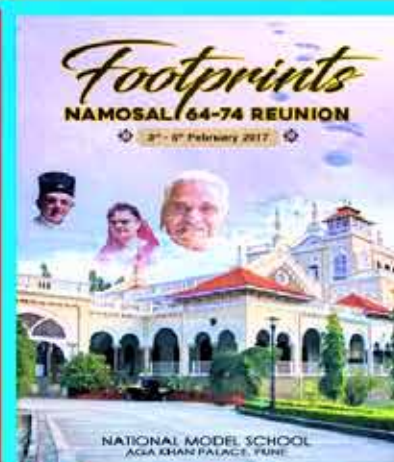
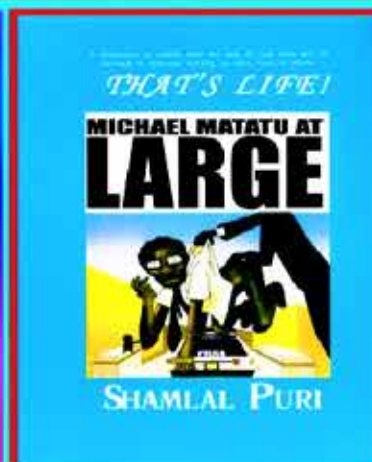
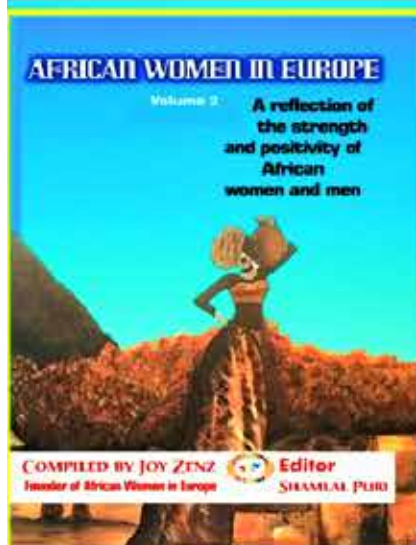
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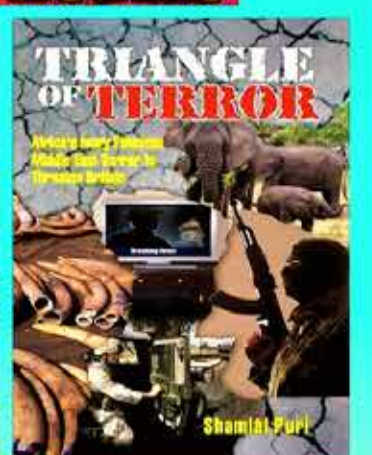
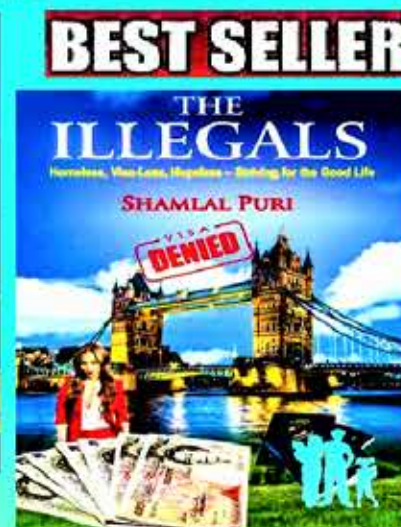
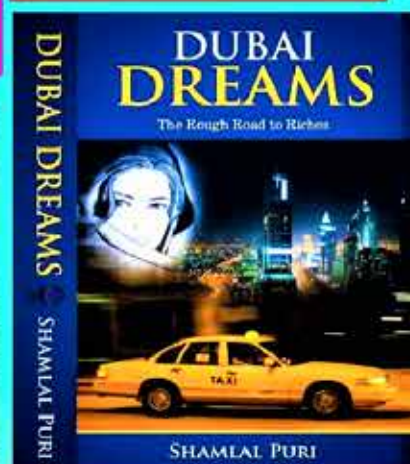
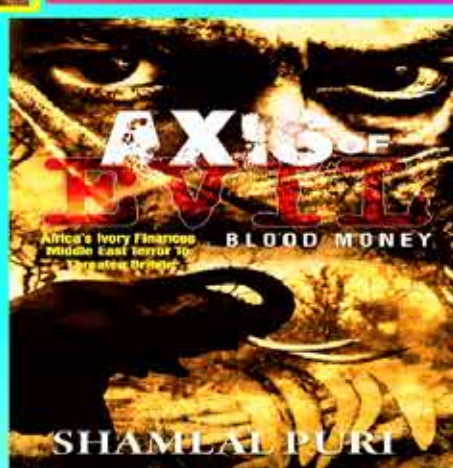
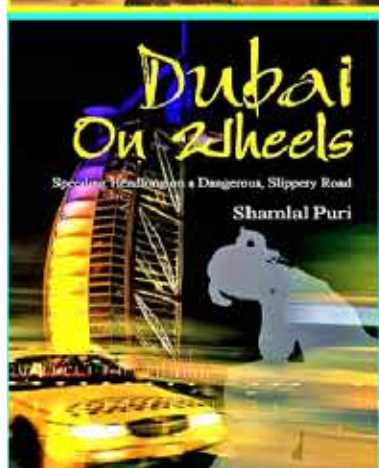
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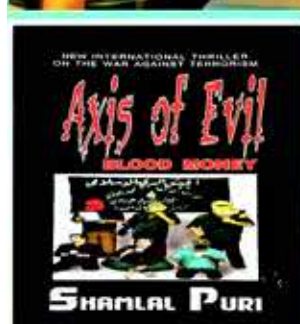
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Education Kenya's classrooms tell a different story. Decades after independence, the dominant inheritance remains an exam-obsessed machine that rewards the perfect regurgitation of syllabus points

The fortress of the unexamined mind: How Kenya's schools forged compliance while Iran's tempered sovereignty against empire



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyatimes

In 1979, as Iran's revolution sealed its borders against Western dominance, the United States began constructing the most comprehensive sanctions regime in modern history choking finance, technology, and medicine. Yet by the early 2020s, Iranian researchers were publishing nearly 80,000 scientific papers annually, ranking among the world's top five in nanotechnology output and claiming double-digit global positions in biotechnology. Women, once largely excluded, now form majorities in many university cohorts; literacy among the young exceeds 97 percent. Domestic production covers over 90 percent of medicines. Missiles, drones, and air-defense systems emerged from laboratories that never waited for foreign blueprints. This is not miracle. It is the visible fruit of an educational philosophy that treats the mind as a fortress rather than a warehouse.

Kenya's classrooms tell a different story. Decades after independence, the dominant inheritance remains an exam-obsessed machine that rewards the perfect regurgitation of syllabus points. Students memorize model compositions, drill past papers until the ink fades, and emerge with certificates that certify obedience more than insight. Critical thinking is named in policy documents, then strangled by marking schemes that punish deviation. The Competency-Based Curriculum promises liberation from rote learning, even so teachers still teach to the test, parents still buy revision booklets that flatten knowledge into bullet points, and the nation's intellectual bloodstream remains thin. The result is a generation



that can recite the symptoms of underdevelopment but rarely diagnoses its own mind as the primary patient.

Here lies the first lesson Kenya missed: education without a living philosophy is merely technical training dressed in academic robes. Iran's Fundamental Reform Document of Education anchors the entire system in the transcendent theosophy of Mulla Sadra and the broader Islamic intellectual tradition reason yoked to revelation, the pursuit of perfection, the coherence of the universe, the human being as seeker of knowledge who must also purify the self. Philosophy is not an elective for specialists; it saturates the curriculum through compulsory courses on Islamic thought, the roots of the revolution, and the ethical dimensions of every discipline. The Iranian student is taught that knowledge is not neutral commodity but moral weapon. The Kenyan student is taught that knowledge is a passport to employment. One produces citizens who can endure isolation; the other produces job-seekers who collapse when the external market shifts.

Consider the correlation. When sanctions severed Iran's access to Western technology, the philosophical insistence on self-reliance rooted in the idea that dependence is a form of spiritual and political humiliation drove reverse-engineering on a national scale. Engineers who had

studied under a system that valued indigenous capacity simply refused to accept absence as destiny. They built what they needed. Kenya, by contrast, continues to import curricula, textbooks, and even the metrics of success. Its brightest minds still measure themselves against foreign rankings and foreign degrees. The correlation is brutal: a nation that trains its youth to think as consumers of knowledge will forever remain a consumer nation. A nation that trains its youth to think as producers of meaning will invent its own necessities.

The second lesson is deeper still. Philosophy does not merely decorate the curriculum; it forges psychological resilience. Iranian education, whatever its authoritarian excesses and documented failures in open critical inquiry, embeds a narrative of resistance. The student learns that the nation stands under siege not by accident but by design, and that intellectual labour is a form of defence. This narrative has sustained operations against continuous American pressure for nearly half a century. Scientists continue working under isolation; universities expand even when journals are blocked; young researchers publish despite banking restrictions. The mind has been prepared for siege. In Kenya the narrative is thinner. Education is framed as individual mobility within

a global order whose rules are written elsewhere. When that order withholds visas or capital, the Kenyan graduate has no philosophical armor. The result is brain drain without corresponding domestic fortification, complaint without corresponding invention.

Data sharpens the indictment. Iran's higher education expanded from roughly 150,000 students before the revolution to nearly four million. Scientific output rose from a marginal 0.1 percent of world production to over 2 percent. Kenya's enrolment has grown, yet learning outcomes remain stubbornly mediocre: large percentages of secondary candidates score below the threshold that opens meaningful pathways, and employers repeatedly lament graduates who cannot analyse, synthesize, or invent under pressure. The Competency-Based Curriculum attempts to pivot toward skills and values, but the deeper architecture the philosophical foundation that would make skills serve sovereignty rather than mere employability remains missing. Without it, competency becomes another form of compliance.

Literary history offers a mirror. The Persian intellectual tradition never divorced hikmah (wisdom) from practical science; Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and Sadra treated the intellect as both analytical and illuminative. That inheritance, however

imperfectly realised in modern Iranian schools, still pulses beneath the surface. Kenya inherited a colonial system designed to produce clerks and interpreters for an empire, then never fully replaced the soul of that system with one of its own. The result is an education that can produce competent technicians yet struggles to produce original thinkers capable of redesigning the national order itself.

The third lesson is the most uncomfortable. An education system that fears philosophy fears the very faculty that questions power including domestic power. Iran's system is tightly controlled; critical thinking that challenges the theocratic core is constrained. Yet the same system has produced enough disciplined intellectual capacity to keep the state operational under extreme external assault. Kenya's system, more open in formal terms, produces less of that capacity because it never demands the hard labour of first principles. It trains students to answer questions, not to interrogate the questions themselves. The difference is the difference between a mind that can endure blockade and a mind that waits for the blockade to be lifted by others.

Kenya need not copy Iran's ideology. It must, however, confront the vacuum at the centre of its own educational soul. Until the Kenyan classroom teaches the young that thinking is an act of national survival, that knowledge without ethical and philosophical depth is merely sophisticated dependency, the country will continue to graduate citizens who can describe their problems eloquently while remaining incapable of inventing durable solutions. Iran's endurance against American pressure is not primarily military or oil-based. It is the slow, stubborn product of an education that refused to treat the mind as a neutral instrument. Kenya has treated the mind as exactly that an instrument to be filled, tested, and certified. The instrument works. The fortress does not.

The choice is no longer abstract. In a world of intensifying geopolitical pressure, the nation whose schools cultivate only compliant competence will discover that competence is the first casualty of isolation. The nation whose schools cultivate philosophical depth however imperfectly, however ideologically freighted will discover that depth is the last redoubt. Kenya has spent decades perfecting the warehouse. It is time to begin building the fortress.

The writer is a social commentator

Health Today, however, beneath the optimistic speeches, colourful launches and impressive registration figures lies a painful reality confronting thousands of ordinary Kenyans

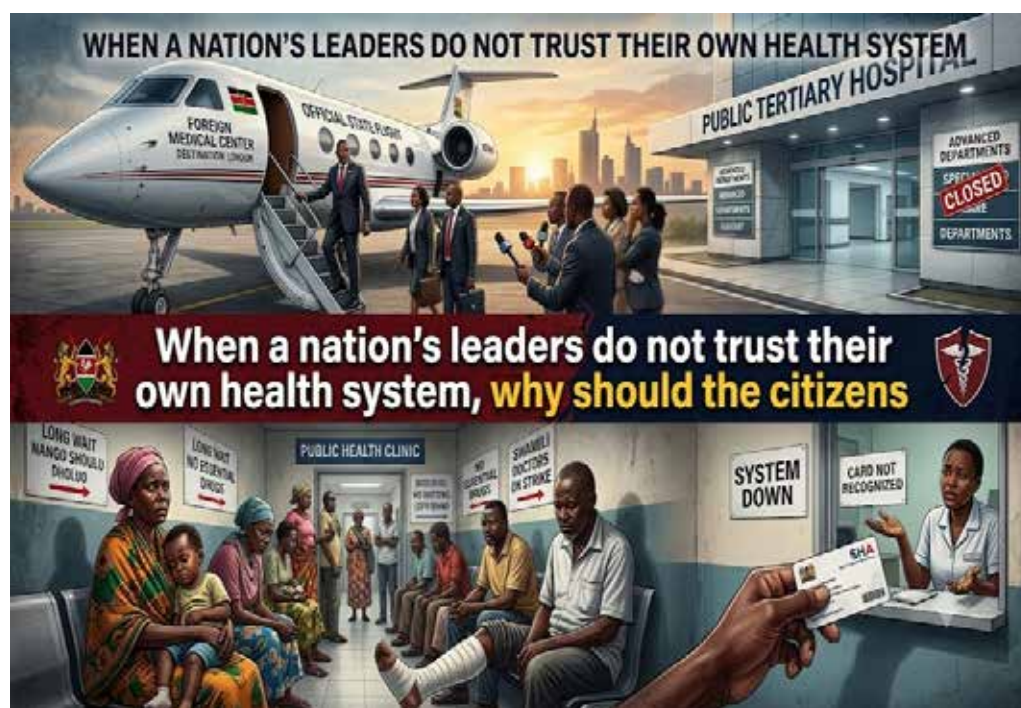
When a nation's leaders do not trust their own health system, why should the citizens?



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyaintimes

Few responsibilities of government are as sacred as protecting the health of its people. Roads facilitate movement, schools impart knowledge, and security preserves order, but healthcare preserves life itself. A nation may survive poor infrastructure for years and recover from economic hardship with prudent leadership, but when its healthcare system ceases to command public confidence, the very social contract between the State and its citizens begins to fracture. That is why the promise of Universal Health Coverage under the Social Health Authority (SHA) was welcomed with hope across Kenya. It was presented not merely as another government programme, but as a historic transformation that would finally liberate ordinary Kenyans from the indignity of choosing between seeking treatment and feeding their families. It promised equity over privilege, dignity over despair, and access over exclusion. It was, in every sense, a promise of a healthier and more compassionate republic.

Today, however, beneath the optimistic speeches, colourful launches and impressive registration figures lies a painful reality confronting thousands of ordinary Kenyans. Across villages, market centres and urban settlements, citizens continue to narrate remarkably similar experiences. They arrive at health facilities expecting treatment only to encounter unavailable medicines, delayed digital verification, requests for out-



of-pocket payments, referrals from one facility to another, or clinics unable to provide even the most basic laboratory services. Mothers carrying feverish children wait in queues only to leave without medicine. Elderly citizens who faithfully registered under SHA still struggle to obtain treatment for chronic illnesses. Patients are sent from dispensaries to health centres, from health centres to county hospitals, and sometimes from one county to another in search of services that should have been available much closer to home. For them, Universal Health Coverage remains an aspiration rather than an experience.

The greatest danger facing SHA is not technical failure but the growing gap between official narrative and lived reality. Governments naturally celebrate reforms, and every major policy deserves time to mature. Yet healthcare is unlike any other public service because illness does not wait for policy implementation schedules. Disease does not postpone itself while systems stabilise. Pain does not recognise administrative transition. Every day that a patient fails to obtain timely treatment is

not merely a statistical inconvenience; it is a human tragedy unfolding quietly in homes across the nation.

Healthcare cannot be measured by the number of people registered in a database. Registration is only the doorway; treatment is the destination. A digital card cannot lower a child's fever. An enrolment certificate cannot control diabetes. A policy document cannot stop a mother from bleeding during childbirth. The true measure of Universal Health Coverage is astonishingly simple: when a Kenyan walks into the nearest health facility, can that citizen receive timely diagnosis, appropriate treatment and essential medicine without financial humiliation? Until the answer to that question is consistently yes, declarations of success will continue sounding hollow to those standing in hospital queues.

The burden borne by primary healthcare facilities should concern every Kenyan. These facilities were designed to become the backbone of preventive and community-based healthcare, treating common illnesses before they become medical emergencies. When they lack medicines, diagnostic equipment, laboratory

capacity or reliable reimbursement, the consequences cascade throughout the entire health system. Patients bypass local clinics and overwhelm referral hospitals with conditions that should never have reached that level. Healthcare workers become exhausted, waiting times lengthen, hospital budgets stretch beyond capacity, and public confidence steadily evaporates. A healthcare system is only as strong as its weakest clinic, not its finest referral hospital.

Perhaps the most uncomfortable question facing the nation is not whether SHA was conceived with good intentions, but whether those entrusted with its stewardship possess sufficient confidence to entrust their own health to it. If SHA is indeed the world-class healthcare revolution repeatedly described by political leaders, why do many of those same leaders continue enjoying separate, generously funded medical schemes financed by taxpayers? Why should the ordinary citizen be persuaded that one system is excellent while another, more expensive system quietly remains available for the political and administrative elite? Such contradictions inevitably

bly breed scepticism. Confidence cannot be legislated; it must be demonstrated.

Leadership has never been about asking citizens to embrace standards that leaders themselves avoid. The greatest leaders throughout history have shared the hardships of those they governed because they understood that credibility is earned through example, not proclamation. A captain who abandons his own ship cannot inspire confidence among the crew. Likewise, no government can expect citizens to place unwavering faith in a healthcare system that its own highest office bearers appear reluctant to rely upon. If the political class sincerely believes that SHA represents the future of quality healthcare in Kenya, then nothing would restore public confidence more powerfully than voluntarily receiving the same healthcare under the same conditions as every ordinary Kenyan. Shared experience is the highest form of accountability.

This is not an argument against reform. It is an appeal for honesty, humility and urgency. Every Kenyan wants SHA to succeed because healthcare should never become another casualty of political competition. Success would mean fewer families descending into poverty because of medical bills, healthier children attending school, more productive workers contributing to the economy, and elderly citizens living with dignity rather than anxiety. Failure, on the other hand, would deepen inequality and erode one of the most fundamental obligations of government.

The Government therefore faces a defining moment. It can continue celebrating enrolment statistics while public confidence quietly diminishes, or it can confront implementation challenges with transparency, accelerate reim-

bursement to health facilities, strengthen medicine supply chains, improve digital reliability, equip primary health-care facilities and invite independent public scrutiny of the system's performance. Citizens are remarkably patient when leaders acknowledge shortcomings honestly and act decisively to correct them. What they cannot endure is being repeatedly assured that everything is working perfectly while their own experiences tell a very different story.

Healthcare is ultimately not about systems, institutions or legislation. It is about the frightened mother praying that her child survives the night. It is about the elderly pensioner hoping that life-saving medication will still be available tomorrow. It is about the young graduate injured in an accident who simply wants treatment without first proving financial worth. Behind every statistic is a human face, behind every policy is a human life, and behind every delayed reform is a family carrying invisible pain.

The measure of Universal Health Coverage will never be found in launch ceremonies, official speeches or registration dashboards. It will be found in the confidence with which an ordinary Kenyan enters the nearest health facility knowing that illness will be met not with excuses, but with competent care; not with empty shelves, but with medicine; not with uncertainty, but with dignity. Until that becomes the lived experience of every citizen, Universal Health Coverage remains not a fulfilled promise, but an unfinished covenant between the State and the people it exists to serve.

"The legitimacy of a government is measured not by the splendour of its promises, but by the quiet confidence with which its poorest citizen walks into a public hospital, certain that dignity, compassion and healing await."

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo PWD
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Strait of Hormuz On Tuesday, Baghaei described those discussions as “positive” at both technical and political levels, adding that Iran is seeking to develop mechanisms

Deal to reopen Strait of Hormuz appears possible amid progress in talks

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

A deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz appears increasingly within sight, with officials from Washington, Tehran and regional mediators signaling progress in ongoing diplomatic efforts.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Tuesday that an agreement could be reached within days. “I think there is a chance we may have a deal today or tomorrow to open the strait and move towards a more normalized position in this conflict,” Bessent told CNBC. Later Tuesday, President Donald Trump told Fox News that the United States is “having very good discussions” with Iran, while also warning that Tehran will be “hit very hard” if the strait is not reopened “very soon.” A day earlier, Trump had described the talks as “going on right now” and called it Iran’s “last chance” to sign a deal. Tehran, however, has rejected the U.S. characterization. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei



Strait of Hormuz

said Monday that no negotiations with Washington were underway or scheduled, insisting that the only talks taking place were with Oman over the management of the strait.

On Tuesday, Baghaei described

those discussions as “positive” at both technical and political levels, adding that Iran is seeking to develop mechanisms with Oman to manage future shipping traffic through the strategic waterway. He told state-

run IRIB TV that any new routes must safeguard the sovereign rights and national security of both Iran and Oman. Any final arrangements would be announced after the talks concluded, he added. State-run Press

TV also cited a senior Iranian official as saying that once operational, the new corridor will replace the existing northern and southern routes. The official described the measure as defensive and “fully consistent with the rights of any sovereign state to protect its territorial waters from external threats.”

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that the United States was involved in negotiations between Oman and Iran aimed at increasing traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. “There has been progress in those talks, but not finality yet. We’re hoping that will happen very shortly,” he told reporters. Qatar also confirmed on Tuesday that mediation efforts between the United States and Iran remain underway, with draft language for a possible agreement continuing to be exchanged between the two sides.

Majed Al Ansari, adviser to Qatar’s prime minister and spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that talks had reached “very progressive stages.” The official said Qatar, Pakistan, and Oman were coordinating closely to facilitate indirect contacts between Washington and Tehran. Al Ansari said Qatar’s immediate priority was “avoiding escalation, reopening the strait and reopening the door for diplomacy between the parties.”

UNICEF According to UNICEF, the East African country has continued to face “a complex humanitarian crisis” during the first half of 2026

UN agency appeals for urgent funding to meet Ethiopia’s humanitarian needs

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has warned that a critical funding shortfall is hampering its humanitarian response in Ethiopia as the country faces various humanitarian needs.

The UN agency said in its mid-year Ethiopia Humanitarian Situation Report, released late Monday, that its Humanitarian Action for Children 2026 Appeal requires 401.5 million U.S. dollars to address the critical humanitarian needs of children, ad-

olescents, women, and men in Ethiopia. “Currently, only 88.7 million dollars is available for this appeal, which represents 22 percent of the total financing required,” UNICEF said. “This significant shortfall underscores the necessity for continued support to bridge the gaps in funding,” it added, calling on the international donor community to provide urgent assistance “to ensure that children and their caregivers receive the lifesaving and life-sustaining aid they desperately need in 2026 and beyond.”

According to UNICEF, the East African country has continued to face

“a complex humanitarian crisis” during the first half of 2026, driven by the combined effects of conflict, climate-related shocks, disease outbreaks, and economic challenges. It noted that insecurity, violence, climatic stresses, and public health emergencies have exacerbated humanitarian needs in different regions of the country, leading to displacement, increased food insecurity, and significant disruptions to essential services. It further highlighted the humanitarian needs of Ethiopia’s growing refugee population. Ethiopia is currently the third-largest refugee-hosting nation in Africa, home



to over 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea.

Meanwhile, the UN agency called for enhanced stakeholder collaboration for early preparedness and targeted response measures to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Nino events on vulnerable communities.

Emphasizing that anticipatory actions are essential for strengthening preparedness and advocacy efforts, UNICEF underscored the vital importance for all concerned stakeholders to act ahead of forecasted hazardous events, thereby preventing or reducing the impact on lives and livelihoods.

Office of the Deputy President Democracies depend on citizens willing to seek public office and persuade voters that they deserve to lead

The office everyone wants

Kenya's addiction to succession politics is crowding out the harder work of governing

BY Levis Wangamati

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Politics is often described as the art of leadership. In Kenya, it has increasingly become the art of succession. Before one administration has settled into the demanding work of governing, another contest quietly begins. Corridors of power fill with speculation, alliances are redrawn with remarkable speed, and public debate shifts from the performance of government to the distribution of offices. Long before the next ballot is cast, the race is already underway.

At the centre of this familiar ritual stands the Office of the Deputy President. It is a constitutional position of immense significance, yet the fascination surrounding it says more about our political culture than about the office itself. The question dominating public discourse is no longer what the office can do for the country, but who will occupy it next. In that subtle shift lies one of the deepest weaknesses in Kenyan politics.

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At the centre of this familiar ritual stands the Office of the Deputy President. It is a constitutional position of immense significance, yet the fascination surrounding it says more about our political culture than about the office itself. The question dominating public discourse is no longer what the office can do for the country, but who will occupy it next. In that subtle shift lies one of the deepest weaknesses in Kenyan politics. There is nothing wrong with ambition. Democracies depend on citizens willing to seek public office and persuade voters that they deserve to lead. But ambition must remain a servant of purpose, not its replacement. When the pursuit of office becomes more important than the responsibility attached to it, politics ceases to be an instrument of public service and risks becoming an endless competition for status.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki

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That inversion explains why political negotiations are energetic while governance appears subdued. Coalition arithmetic dominates headlines. Regional bargaining captures public attention. Speculation over succession fills television panels and social media timelines. Yet the issues shaping the daily lives of millions of Kenyans rarely command the same urgency.

Young graduates continue searching for opportunities in an economy that demands experience before offering employment. Families recalculate household budgets as the cost of

living stretches incomes to breaking point. Farmers contend with unpredictable weather that threatens food security and livelihoods. Public universities wrestle with financial uncertainty. Healthcare remains beyond the reach of many. These are not challenges that disappear because politicians have agreed on who sits in which office.

The debate surrounding the Deputy President's office therefore reflects something larger than a contest over one constitutional position. It exposes a national habit of treating leadership as an event rather than a continuous responsibility. We celebrate appointments with extraordinary enthusiasm but examine performance with far less consistency. We invest enormous political capital in the journey to office — and far less in measuring what happens once the oath has been taken.

History offers a useful reminder. Nations are rarely transformed by elections alone. They are trans-

formed by what leaders choose to do after the celebrations fade, after the cameras leave, and after campaign slogans give way to the ordinary discipline of governing. Roads are not built by political declarations. Jobs are not created through coalition agreements. Hospitals are not improved by succession debates. Progress demands the quieter virtues of competence, consistency, accountability and sustained public service.

There is a deeper irony at work. We have become remarkably efficient at preparing for the transfer of power but far less disciplined about evaluating the exercise of it. Political conversations revolve around tomorrow's possibilities while yesterday's promises quietly fade. We analyse potential successors before demanding accountability from current office-holders. In doing so, we risk turning democracy into a perpetual campaign — where anticipation eclipses performance and the next contest becomes more captivating

than the unfinished work of the present.

Perhaps this is why every election cycle begins with extraordinary optimism but ends with familiar frustration. We have conditioned ourselves to treat winning office as the climax of politics, rather than recognising it as the beginning of responsibility. The applause reserved for victory is invariably louder than the scrutiny demanded by governance.

A mature democracy asks different questions. Not only who should lead, but why. Not merely who deserves an office, but what ideas, experience, integrity and record of service they bring to it. Above all, it understands that power is borrowed from the people and must be repaid through tangible improvements in their lives.

As fresh political alignments take shape and competition for high office intensifies, citizens should resist becoming mere spectators in a contest of personalities. Leadership must never be reduced to political calculations or ethnic arithmetic. The true contest should be over ideas, competence, integrity and the willingness to confront the country's most persistent challenges. Offices matter because they enable service — not because they satisfy ambition.

The Office of the Deputy President will one day be occupied by someone else, as every office before it has changed hands. That is the nature of democracy. History, however, has never been generous to those who merely occupied office. It remembers those who transformed it. Years from now, Kenyans are unlikely to ask who negotiated the cleverest coalition or secured the most influential appointment. They will ask a far simpler question: when you held power, what changed for the people who trusted you with it?

That is the only verdict that endures.

The tragedy of Kenyan politics is not that too many leaders aspire to high office. It is that too few seem equally consumed by the work waiting beyond its doors. A nation is never built by the titles its leaders carry, but by the burdens they are willing to shoulder. Until Kenya learns to admire service more than status, ideas more than personalities, and results more than rhetoric, every election will begin with deafening promises and end with familiar disappointment.

The office everyone wants is never the office that changes a nation. It is the work done once the office is won.

Sports >> *Boys and girls sides open Africa 5s qualifying campaign at Sikh Union Club today

Kenya U18 hockey teams chase World Cup place in Nairobi

By Martin Weche

Kenya's Under-18 boys' and girls' hockey teams begin their bid for a Hockey5s World Cup berth today when the Africa 5s Tournament opens at Sikh Union Club in Nairobi, with five nations competing across three days for a place on the global stage.

The championship, which serves simultaneously as the Hockey5s World Cup qualifier, brings together Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda — a field that both coaching staffs acknowledge is formidable but one they believe the host nation is equipped to handle.

For the girls' side, head coach Barbara Simiyu has spent the past month sharpening a squad she believes is ready for the intensity of the five-a-side format. The team moved into residential camp several weeks ago, with the technical bench targeting both ends of the pitch. "Our training started about four weeks ago before we moved into residential camp and, with hockey being a high-scoring game, we have focused on both attack and defence," Simiyu said. Her message to supporters was equally direct: come out and fill the stands.

The boys' camp carries a similar confidence. Head coach Kevin Lugalía named South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda as the sides he expects to test Kenya most severely, but he stopped well short of conceding ground. "We are aware we have tough opposition, but we are ready for the task ahead and our expectation is to win the championship and qualify for the Under-18 World Cup," Lugalía said. His selection process was deliberate — the final squad was assembled on the basis of technical ability, speed, tactical awareness and decision-making, qualities he considers non-negotiable in the fast-



Twinkle hockey club players

paced Hockey5s format where margins are slim and errors are punished instantly.

That format demands a particular kind of player — one who can read the game quickly, press without losing shape, and convert the limited scoring opportunities that the condensed playing surface creates. It is a discipline that rewards preparation over improvisation, and both coaching staffs have structured their pre-tournament work accordingly.

The captains, too, project a settled readiness. Girls' captain Shanel Hilda said the volume of preparation matches played in the build-up had given the squad the sharpness and cohesion a tournament of this nature demands. "The preparations have been good and we have played many matches in preparation and we are ready," Hilda said, adding her own appeal for sup-

porters to make the journey to Sikh Union and create the kind of home atmosphere that can tip a close contest.

On the boys' side, captain Kelvin Onyango identified finishing and defensive solidity as the two areas his team has worked on most deliberately. "We have worked hard on scoring and making sure we convert our chances and strengthened our defence because every team will be a challenge," he said. It is the language of a squad that understands the qualifier's unforgiving arithmetic — win and advance, fall short and wait another cycle.

The setting adds its own dimension. Sikh Union Club has a long and distinguished place in Kenyan hockey history, and hosting the tournament at a venue with genuine grassroots meaning gives the campaign a resonance that a neutral ground would not. Both camps are counting on

the home crowd to function as something closer to a sixth player — a source of momentum in the tight moments that tend to define short-format competition.

Kenya has invested steadily in age-group hockey development in recent years, and this tournament represents one of the clearest measures yet of how that investment is translating at the competitive level. A World Cup qualification would mark a significant step for the programme and provide the country's most promising young players with exposure to the highest level of junior international competition.

The stakes, in other words, could hardly be plainer. Three days at Sikh Union Club. Five nations. One ticket. Kenya wants it.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *A squad of 23 athletes arrives in Oregon after flight disruptions, with five finals places already secured on day one

Kenya opens World U20 campaign in Eugene with medals in sight

By Martin Weche

Kenya launches its 2026 World Athletics Under-20 Championships campaign at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon, today, with eight athletes in action on the opening day as the country targets an improvement on its fifth-place finish at the 2024 edition in Lima.

The day unfolds in stages, beginning with the men’s 800 metres heats where Nashon Pkiach and Collins Tajewou will look to advance, before Nancy Jepngetch enters the women’s 800m first round. Mercy Chepngeno and Anatasha Cheptoo then line up in the women’s 3,000 metres steeplechase, with Kenya’s most immediate medal prospects arriving in the evening when both the women’s and men’s 5,000 metres finals are contested — events in which Kenya has historically been difficult to beat at this level.

Leading the men’s 5,000m challenge is Frankline Kibet, the reigning World Under-20 cross-country champion, alongside Nehemiah Kipngeno. In the women’s final, Joyline Chepkemoui and Cynthia Chepkirui — the African Under-18 3,000 metres champion — will carry Kenya’s hopes. The presence of four finalists on the opening day alone signals the depth of a squad that head coach Robert Ngisirei has assembled with a clear ambition: surpass the seven medals won in Lima, where Kenya claimed three gold, three silver and one bronze.

The journey to Eugene was not without difficulty. The squad of 23 — twelve boys and eleven girls — endured a series of flight delays and cancellations before eventually clearing United States customs and settling into their base. Ngisirei chose to focus on what lay ahead rather than what had gone wrong. “We had challenges with our journey because



of several flight delays and cancellations, but everyone is now here and ready,” he said. “We held an evening training session to help the athletes shake off the jet lag. The weather is good, the athletes have prepared well and we expect good results.”

It is the kind of composure that distinguishes experienced coaching from reactive management. Jet lag is a known variable at championships held across multiple time zones, and the decision to schedule a light recovery session rather than rest completely reflects a technical staff that understands how elite young athletes respond to disruption. The signs, at least from within the camp, are encouraging.

Kipngeno offered perhaps the most telling insight into Kenya’s collective mindset. A personal best of 13 minutes 23 seconds gives him genuine podium credentials, but his focus, he made clear, was not on the clock. “I thank all Kenyans for your prayers. Please continue praying for the entire team so that

we can bring medals back home and celebrate together as one nation. My best time is 13:23, but tomorrow it’s not about the time, it’s about the position,” he said. It is a sentiment that resonates across the Kenyan athletics tradition — the understanding that championship racing is a tactical exercise as much as a physical one, and that the athlete who controls the race often matters more than the one with the fastest personal best.

Chepkemoui brings a dimension that sets her apart from most of her rivals in Eugene. Earlier this year she competed alongside senior athletes at the World Cross Country Championships — an experience that, she said, has recalibrated her sense of what is possible. “Racing with the seniors gave me confidence. I want my future to be bright and I want to become a champion,” she said. She then added a line that captured something genuine about where Kenyan athletics draws its emotional sustenance. “I thank my mum for always

praying for me and I promise her and my fans that I will do my best to bring something good home.”

Hayward Field, widely regarded as the finest track and field venue in the world, has hosted global championships before and its fast surface suits Kenya’s distance runners well. The championships have historically served as a launchpad for the country’s greatest careers — Faith Kipyegon and David Rudisha both announced themselves on the world stage at this level before going on to rewrite the record books.

Whether any member of this year’s squad will follow that trajectory remains to be seen. What is certain is that Kenya arrives in Eugene with purpose, with talent, and — delays notwithstanding — with ambition fully intact. The medals start today.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Mental health problems among people and their prevention

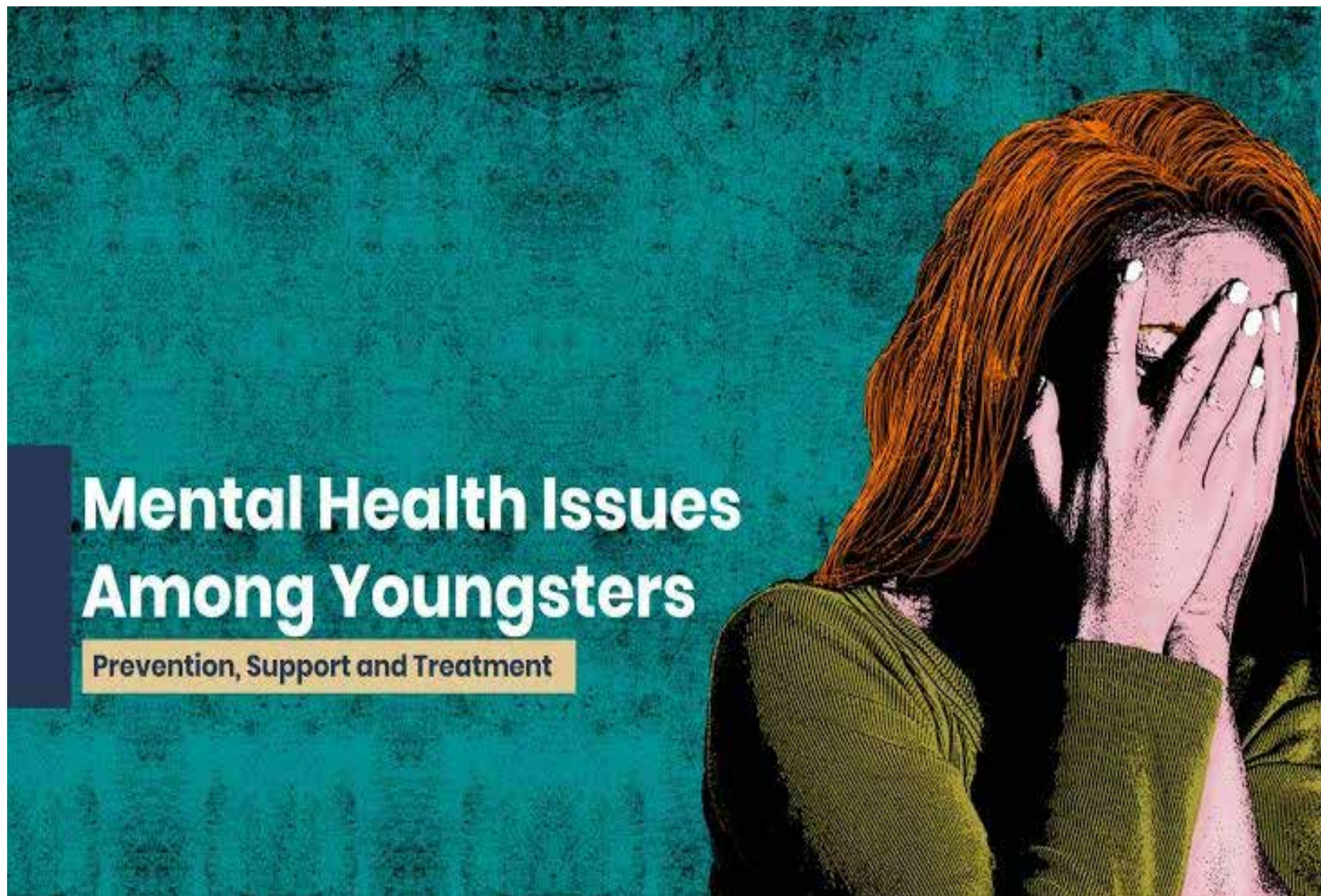


By: Davletova Zuxra
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- Engage in regular physical exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Get sufficient sleep. Adults should sleep approximately 7–8 hours each night.
- Maintain a healthy and balanced diet.
- Spend time communicating with family members, relatives, and friends.
- Limit the amount of time spent on social media, mobile phones, gadgets, and other communication devices. If complete restriction is not possible, try to reduce screen time as much as possible.
- Stay engaged in enjoyable hobbies such as drawing, creating handicrafts, baking, singing, sewing, or any other activity that brings personal satisfaction.
- Read books related to psychology and mental health and learn to establish healthy personal boundaries.



Today, mental health is considered one of the most pressing issues worldwide. Millions of people around the globe live with mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. The rapid pace of modern life, economic pressure, the widespread use of social media, and family-related problems all have a significant impact on people's psychological well-being.

Mental health is a state in which an individual is able to realize their abilities, cope with the normal stresses of everyday life, work productively, and contribute to the development of society.

The increasing prevalence of mental health problems among young people is mainly caused by academic pressure, difficulties in finding employment, family conflicts, and internet addiction.

Chronic stress can weaken the im-

mune system and increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases and sleep disorders. Depression is a serious mental disorder that may develop as a result of prolonged and repeated exposure to stress.

The following are some of the most important ways to strengthen mental health:

- Engage in regular physical exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Get sufficient sleep. Adults should sleep approximately 7–8 hours each night.
- Maintain a healthy and balanced diet.
- Spend time communicating with family members, relatives, and friends.
- Limit the amount of time spent on social media, mobile phones, gadgets, and other communication devices. If complete restriction is not possible, try to reduce

screen time as much as possible.

- Stay engaged in enjoyable hobbies such as drawing, creating handicrafts, baking, singing, sewing, or any other activity that brings personal satisfaction.

- Read books related to psychology and mental health and learn to establish healthy personal boundaries.

Mental health is an inseparable part of overall health. Protecting it contributes not only to an individual's well-being but also to the prosperity of society as a whole. Therefore, expanding preventive mental health programs, increasing public awareness, and improving access to psychological support services are among the most important tasks of today.

Depression affects women more frequently than men. Research suggests that approximately one-third of

women experience at least one major depressive episode during their lifetime. Furthermore, if a person's first-degree relative has suffered from depression, their own risk of developing depression is estimated to be around 20%.

In conclusion, mental health is one of the fundamental components of human health. Early prevention, timely psychological support, a healthy lifestyle, and increased public awareness can significantly reduce the prevalence of mental health disorders and improve the quality of life for individuals and society.

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