



Ruto fires back: if you can't offer a plan, stop the attacks
President William Ruto's challenge to Kenya's opposition raises a much larger political question than the familiar exchange of accusations between government and its critics. **Page 8**



The strike is over — but Kenya's healthcare crisis has only changed its uniform
For 43 days, Kenya's public healthcare system operated under extraordinary pressure as nurses stayed away from duty in a nationwide industrial action **Page 11&12**

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Countdown 2027 The poll's findings on institutional trust add an even more troubling dimension to the political landscape

76% of Kenyans say the country has lost its way

Three in four Kenyans believe their country is headed in the wrong direction, according to a sweeping new TIFA Research poll released on Wednesday that delivers the starkest public verdict yet on President William Ruto's administration and sets the tone for what promises to be one of the most consequential election cycles in Kenya's post-independence history.

The survey, conducted between June 13 and 22 among 2,048 adults across all 47 counties, found that 76 per cent of Kenyans believe the country is moving in the wrong direction — the highest level recorded in TIFA's tracking period — while only 14 per cent said Kenya was on the right track. The numbers represent more than a data point. They are a political earthquake arriving eleven months before Kenyans return to the polls in August 2027, and they raise a question that will define the coming campaign season: can any leader — or coalition of leaders — convert this tidal wave of disillusionment into a credible mandate for change?

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Public concern rises as Kenyans say nation has lost direction



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Ruto tells Rift Valley “I love you” — but a million unregistered voters tell a different story

BY Joyce Kemunto

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday made an emotional appeal to voters in the South Rift, declaring his affection for a region that delivered him the presidency in 2022 but is showing signs of restlessness ahead of next year's election. Touring Bomet and Kericho counties, Ruto sought to counter growing claims that his administration has sidelined its most loyal supporters in the allocation of development resources. He urged young people to register as voters and turn out in force in 2027. “I will be back soon because a lot of work is pending. I am so happy and I love you so much. You are great people,” the President told the crowd. The warm words, however, could not entirely obscure the scale of the challenge. Ruto himself acknowledged that approximately one million eligible voters in the Rift Valley remain unregistered — a figure that, in a tight presidential race, could prove decisive either for or against him. The tour also came against the uncomfortable backdrop of unresolved grievances in neighbouring Narok, where thousands of families evicted from Mau Forest are still awaiting compensation after a scheme that paid out KSh200,000 to 13,000 households left roughly 15,000 others entirely excluded. With a TIFA poll released yesterday showing 76 per cent of Kenyans believe the country is on the wrong track, Ruto's charm offensive in his own backyard signals that even the President's inner circle understands that goodwill earned in 2022 has a limited shelf life. The Rift Valley, it appears, still loves its son — but it is beginning to count what that love has cost it.



Editor's Desk

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Group Executive Chairman

M. Danson

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/>

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyetimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyetimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mtkenyetimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mtkenyetimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kenyan students their futures, according to education stakeholders who are pressing the government to act with urgency. Rogue institutions are issuing fraudulent admissions letters, enrolling students in unaccredited programmes and, in some cases, collecting fees for courses that do not legally exist. Victims, many of them from low-income families who sacrifice everything for a university place, often discover the deception only at graduation — when their certificates are rejected by employers or professional bodies. Stakeholders are demanding that the Ministry of Education, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority and relevant accreditation bodies move beyond periodic warnings and pursue systematic inspections, prosecutions and permanent deregistration of offending institutions.



The Kenya Union of Clinical Officers yesterday condemned what it described as a violent assault on clinical officers in Makueni County, calling on Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jnr to take immediate and personal responsibility for the safety of health workers who remain on strike across the country. The union said the attack, which it attributed to individuals acting with impunity during the ongoing industrial action, represented an alarming escalation that crossed a clear legal and ethical line. Clinical officers, like all workers exercising a constitutional right to withdraw their labour, are entitled to protection from intimidation and violence, the union said. KUCO demanded that those responsible be identified and prosecuted, warning that the safety of its members was non-negotiable and that silence from county leadership would be treated as complicity.

silence from county leadership would be treated as complicity.



Kenya's elections are among the most expensive per voter in the world, and a new report says the country has both the means and the opportunity to change that — if the political will exists. The analysis, which examines spending patterns across multiple electoral cycles, identifies procurement inefficiencies, last-minute contracting and the bloated cost of technology systems as the primary drivers of an election bill that consistently strains the national budget. The report recommends multi-year procurement planning, renegotiated technology contracts and a leaner IEBC operational model as practical routes to significant savings. Critically, it argues that high election costs are not inevitable but are largely the product of institutional habits that have never been seriously challenged — and that reforming them would not compromise electoral integrity but strengthen it.



Attorney General Dorcas Oduor yesterday unveiled proposed regulations that would fundamentally reshape how lawyers are trained and admitted to the bar in Kenya, setting the stage for the most significant overhaul of legal education in the country in years. The draft 2026 Advocates Training Programme Regulations introduce tighter academic entry requirements, structured professional competency assessments and clearer standards for institutions offering legal training — changes that supporters say are long overdue in a profession where quality has been uneven. The proposals, released for public comment, also seek to align Kenya's legal training framework with regional and international standards. The Law Society of Kenya and university law faculties are expected to weigh in before the regulations are finalised and gazetted.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale is waging what allies describe as the most consequential political campaign of his career — not for a national office, but for something he considers equally vital: undisputed supremacy over North Eastern Kenya's political landscape ahead of the 2027 general election. Once the region's most dominant parliamentary voice during his long tenure as Majority Leader, Duale now finds himself in a more complicated terrain, navigating a crowded field of ambitious county governors, senators and MPs who have spent the past three years building their own independent bases. His calculation, according to sources close to his camp, is that consolidating regional influence now — through government resource allocation, strategic appointments and grassroots mobilisation — will translate into decisive leverage when coalition negotiations for 2027 reach their most critical stage.



A Kenyan court has delivered a ruling with far-reaching implications for couples in long-term cohabiting relationships, finding that a prolonged “come we stay” arrangement constitutes a legally recognised marriage and carries the full rights and obligations that formal marriage entails. The decision, which draws on provisions of the Marriage Act 2014 and established case law on customary unions, affirms that duration and public recognition of a relationship can create binding legal ties — regardless of whether a ceremony was ever conducted or a certificate ever signed. Legal experts say the ruling will have immediate consequences for property rights, inheritance disputes and the division of assets upon separation. It is expected to prompt fresh litigation from parties in similar arrangements who have previously been denied legal standing in family courts.

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Politics The Gachagua-Nyoro conflict has introduced fresh instability into a mountain region

Matiangi breaks silence on DCP's Mt Kenya grip, Jubilee's future and the Nyoro war

The Jubilee presidential hopeful says 120 days is all he needs — but the mountain's political arithmetic may not be so accommodating

BY Grace Wanja

@themtkenyatimes

Jubilee Deputy Party Leader Fred Matiangi yesterday broke his characteristic public reticence to address the three questions dominating Mt Kenya's political conversation: the growing dominance of Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party in the region, the accelerating haemorrhage of members from Jubilee, and the bitter public feud between Gachagua and Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro that is threatening to fracture the opposition before it has even settled on a presidential candidate.

Speaking on a local media station, Matiangi was notably measured on Jubilee's defections, projecting calm where his party's secretary general, Moitalel Ole Kenta, has sounded increasingly defensive. "I have no problem with anyone defecting from Jubilee and joining other parties within the united opposition," Matiangi said. "We are all championing the same cause. We are in the political transfer season, and it is democratic for them to do so." The conciliatory framing masked a harder political reality: Jubilee has been losing members to DCP at a pace that has rattled its grassroots structures, with Kamukunji MP Yusuf Hassan and eleven constituency chairpersons the latest to cross to Gachagua's



Jubilee Deputy Party Leader Fred Matiangi

party.

On campaigning, Matiangi was equally composed. Asked why he had not been crisscrossing the country with the urgency the 2027 calendar seems to demand, he offered an answer that was either supremely confident or strategically opaque. "People have been asking me why I am not campaigning. I don't need to campaign daily. One hundred and twenty days are enough for me," he said. Whether the electorate will agree is another matter entirely. A TIFA Research poll released yesterday found that 76 per cent of Kenyans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction — the highest reading since tracking began in March 2023 — with opposition backing still split among Matiangi, Kilonzo Musyoka, Edwin Sifu-

na and Gachagua, a fragmentation that continues to work in President William Ruto's favour.

The Gachagua-Nyoro conflict has introduced fresh instability into a mountain region the opposition desperately needs to deliver as a unified bloc. Gachagua's allies have accused Nyoro's newly launched People's Party of Kenya of being a state-sponsored vehicle designed to split the Mt Kenya vote, a charge Nyoro has flatly denied. Matiangi's response was telling in what it chose to signal rather than say directly — he publicly congratulated Nyoro on the PPK launch, writing that he "enthusiastically looked forward to engaging and collaborating" with the new party. The gesture was read in political circles as a deliberate

positioning move: Matiangi signalling openness to every opposition formation, including ones that Gachagua regards as hostile.

The mountain's political arithmetic remains deeply unsettled. DCP's Ol Kalou by-election victory reinforced Gachagua's claim to regional dominance, dealt Jubilee a bruising setback and left Matiangi's path to the presidency dependent on a unity of purpose that the opposition has so far managed to proclaim more convincingly than it has demonstrated.

Eleven months remain. The knocking, as Matiangi himself has said, has begun. Whether anyone answers the door is the question that will define 2027.

Counties foot the bill for health deals they never signed



Murang'a Deputy Governor Stephen Munania

BY Grace Wanja

@themtkenyatimes

Murang'a Deputy Governor Stephen Munania yesterday accused the national government of negotiating health worker agreements and leaving county governments to meet the financial consequences without the resources or legal authority to do so.

Speaking on Spice FM, Munania said the structural flaw lay at the heart of devolution itself. Health is a shared function — counties staff and equip public hospitals while the national government sets policy — but the arrangement breaks down the moment Nairobi makes commitments it expects counties to honour. "One of the greatest challenges is that the national government commits itself to agreements with health workers without providing counties with the resources needed to

implement them," he said.

The numbers in Murang'a illustrate the bind. The county allocates approximately KSh3.4B of its total budget to healthcare, with KSh2.4B of that consumed by salaries alone for nurses, doctors, clinical officers, pharmacists and other health workers. The wage bill currently stands at 54 per cent of the county's total budget — nearly twenty percentage points above the 35 per cent ceiling counties are expected to target. "We cannot spend more than we have," Munania said plainly.

His remarks came as nurses returned to work yesterday following a 43-day strike, with a return-to-work agreement giving both parties 45 days to conclude negotiations on the implementation of the long-delayed 2017 Collective Bargaining Agreement. For counties like Murang'a, those negotiations cannot move fast enough.

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Politics Ruto's challenge is politically strategic. By demanding that his opponents present their own programme, he attempts to shift the conversation away from his administration's record

Ruto fires back: if you can't offer a plan, stop the attacks

The President's challenge to the opposition raises a bigger question — one that cuts both ways

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenyentimes](#)

President William Ruto's challenge to Kenya's opposition raises a much larger political question than the familiar exchange of accusations between government and its critics. As the country enters another politically charged season, Ruto is essentially asking his opponents to move beyond criticism and demonstrate that they possess a credible alternative vision for Kenya.

The question is uncomfortable — but it is necessary. If the opposition believes this government has failed, what exactly would it do differently?

For years, Kenyan politics has been dominated by personalities, shifting alliances and increasingly hostile rhetoric. Governments are attacked, opponents are accused, promises are made and crowds applaud. Yet when the noise subsides, ordinary Kenyans are left confronting the same stubborn problems: unemployment, the rising cost of living, limited economic opportunity, inadequate public services and growing anxiety about the country's financial future.

Ruto's challenge is politically strategic. By demanding that his opponents present their own programme, he attempts to shift the conversation away from his administration's record and towards the opposition's preparedness to govern. It is a shrewd counterattack, because criticism is relatively easy. Governance is not.

It is easy to stand before a crowd and declare that taxes are too high. It is considerably harder to explain which taxes should be reduced, how much revenue the government would lose as a result, and where the replacement funds would come from. It is easy to condemn public debt. It is far harder to explain how Kenya would service its existing obligations while continuing to finance essential government programmes.

It is easy to promise millions of jobs. It is harder — much harder — to explain where the investment, industries, infrastructure and economic reforms required to create those jobs would actually come from.

This is where Kenya's opposition must raise its game.

Kenyans deserve an opposition that



President William Ruto

does more than identify government failures. They deserve one capable of presenting a detailed, credible alternative — a real economic and social programme with substance behind it. If the government says its policies will transform the economy, the opposition should be able to demonstrate precisely why those policies are falling short and offer something better in their place.

But there is an equally important other side to Ruto's challenge, and it must be stated plainly.

The President cannot demand that the opposition present a plan while simultaneously expecting Kenyans to stop asking difficult questions about his own government's record. In a functioning democracy, criticism is not an act of treason. Political disagreement is not an attempt to undermine the state. Those entrusted with public power must expect — and welcome — scrutiny. The opposition has a constitutional and democratic responsibility to question government decisions, expose weaknesses and represent citizens who feel their interests are being ignored. A government that wants less criticism must deliver more convincing results.

This matters especially because the

economic conversation cannot be reduced to slogans.

For the ordinary Kenyan, economic growth is meaningful only when it translates into something tangible — a job, a profitable small business, affordable food, accessible healthcare, manageable school fees, greater security at home. National statistics may improve on paper while families continue struggling to make ends meet. That disconnect is precisely why political leaders on both sides must explain not only what the economy is doing in the abstract, but how their policies affect real people in practice.

The opposition therefore has a genuine opportunity to turn widespread public frustration into a coherent political programme. Instead of simply saying Ruto is wrong, it should tell Kenyans what it would do about debt. Instead of condemning taxation, it should explain how it would broaden the tax base without suffocating businesses. Instead of promising lower living costs, it should explain how it would reduce production and distribution costs up and down the supply chain. Instead of accusing the government of failing young people, it should present a serious, detailed employment strategy.

And it must go further still.

Kenyans should be told how an alternative government would tackle corruption, strengthen institutions, improve public accountability, reform healthcare, support agriculture, expand manufacturing and create meaningful opportunity for the youth. They should be given numbers, timelines, priorities and measurable targets — not political declarations dressed up as policy.

That distinction is what separates an opposition movement from a government-in-waiting.

Ruto's administration, however, faces its own test in equal measure. If the President believes his government has a better plan for Kenya, he must communicate that plan clearly and demonstrate its results. Citizens cannot be expected to celebrate policy announcements indefinitely while waiting for improvements they can actually feel.

Ultimately, Kenya cannot afford a political contest in which one side spends all its energy defending itself while the other spends all its energy attacking. The country needs something bigger than that. It needs a genuine competition of ideas — leaders who can sit before Kenyans and answer difficult questions without

retreating behind party slogans; an opposition that can say, here is what the government has done wrong, and here is precisely how we would do it differently; a government capable of saying, here is what we promised, here is what we have achieved, here is what remains unfinished, and here is how we intend to fix it.

The next political contest should not simply be a referendum on Ruto. It should be an examination of everyone seeking to replace him.

Kenyans should ask every opposition leader the same question the President is now putting before them: if you were handed the instruments of power tomorrow, what would you actually do differently?

Because Kenya does not need leaders who are merely good at describing problems. It needs leaders capable of solving them. And if any opposition party wants to convince Kenyans that it deserves power, attacking the person in State House cannot be the entirety of the campaign strategy.

Bring the alternative. Bring the numbers. Bring the plan.

Then let Kenyans decide.

Politics The poll's findings on institutional trust add an even more troubling dimension to the political landscape

76% of Kenyans say the country has lost its way

With the 2027 election less than a year away, a damning new poll lays bare a crisis of confidence that reaches from State House to the streets — and hands the opposition both an opportunity and a test it has yet to pass

BY David Kimani

@themkenyatimes

Three in four Kenyans believe their country is headed in the wrong direction, according to a sweeping new TIFA Research poll released on Wednesday that delivers the starkest public verdict yet on President William Ruto's administration and sets the tone for what promises to be one of the most consequential election cycles in Kenya's post-independence history.

The survey, conducted between June 13 and 22 among 2,048 adults across all 47 counties, found that 76 per cent of Kenyans believe the country is moving in the wrong direction — the highest level recorded in TIFA's tracking period — while only 14 per cent said Kenya was on the right track. The numbers represent more than a data point. They are a political earthquake arriving eleven months before Kenyans return to the polls in August 2027, and they raise a question that will define the coming campaign season: can any leader — or coalition of leaders — convert this tidal wave of disillusionment into a credible mandate for change?

The deterioration in public sentiment is particularly striking when placed in historical context. Dissatisfaction has risen from 68 per cent in November 2025 to the current 76 per cent, with TIFA describing the trend as evidence of a "sustained and increasingly entrenched negative public mood." The trajectory is not a blip. It is a direction of travel, and the data offers no comfort to a government that came to power in 2022 on a platform of economic transformation.

The regional breakdown is equally sobering for the Ruto administration. Mt Kenya recorded the highest level of pessimism at 90 per cent, followed by Nairobi at 89 per cent, Lower Eastern at 83 per cent and South Rift at 82 per cent. That Mt Kenya — the region that delivered Ruto his electoral bedrock in 2022 — now leads the country in disillusionment is not merely a political embarrassment. It is a structural warning that the President's core coalition is fracturing under the weight of economic disappointment. Even in the most optimistic regions, the numbers offer little reassurance. In Northern Kenya, which recorded the



Public concern rises as Kenyans say nation has lost direction

strongest positive sentiment, only 38 per cent said the country was moving in the right direction.

The economic dimension is central to understanding the poll's findings. Sixty-five per cent of Kenyans said their personal or family economic situation had worsened since the 2022 general election, while only 12 per cent reported an improvement. For a government that staked its legitimacy on the promise of a bottom-up economic transformation, those figures represent the sharpest possible public rejection of its record. Jobs, food prices, fuel costs and the persistent weight of taxation have combined to produce a household-level misery that no amount of infrastructure ribbon-cutting can obscure. The ordinary Kenyan is not experiencing policy through press conferences. They are experiencing it through an empty wallet.

The poll's findings on institutional trust add an even more troubling dimension to the political landscape. Not a single major public institution commands the trust of a majority of Kenyans, with the presidency, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and the National Police Service all struggling to earn the confidence of even a third of the population less than a year before the 2027 general election. The Judiciary ranked highest at 36 per cent, followed by county government

leadership at 31 per cent. The IEBC recorded 30 per cent, while the presidency and police hovered around 29 per cent, and Parliament ranked last at 27 per cent.

The significance of the IEBC figure cannot be overstated. An electoral body trusted by fewer than one in three Kenyans is an institution whose legitimacy is already contested before a single vote is cast. Opposition leaders have demanded electoral reforms and greater confidence in the IEBC, arguing that the credibility of the 2027 election will depend on the integrity of the electoral process. If those demands go unmet, the risk of a disputed result — and its attendant instability — grows considerably.

The Broad-Based Government, the political arrangement that brought Ruto's UDA and the late Raila Odinga's ODM into a de facto coalition, has fared no better in public opinion. Fifty-two per cent of Kenyans oppose the arrangement compared to 30 per cent who support it, with TIFA noting that nearly twice as many Kenyans oppose the BBG as support it. TIFA said the stability in BBG support — unchanged at 30 per cent since May 2026 — could be linked to divisions within ODM over the matter of supporting the President's re-election bid, suggesting a fairly stable ceiling on how much public backing the arrangement can attract.

For the opposition, the poll is simultaneously a gift and a gauntlet. The public mood is more favourable to change than at any point since Ruto took office. The question is whether the leaders seeking to channel that mood are capable of the unity required to do so. The latest opposition consultations on September 1 brought several principals together again, including Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka, People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua, Jubilee's Fred Matiang'i and DAP-K's Eugene Wamalwa, with the meeting serving as yet another indication that coalition-building remains a continuing process rather than a decision already reached.

The opposition's central problem is one of fragmentation. TIFA's own data showed opposition backing split among Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna at 15 per cent, Matiang'i at 14 per cent, Kalonzo at 13 per cent and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua at seven per cent — a fragmented landscape that continued to work in the President's favour. Political analyst Martin Oloo has argued the point plainly. "For Ruto and Raila to lose in 2027, there needs to be one big coalition — an alternative political juggernaut such as Narc against Kanu in 2002," he has said. "If the opposition does not come together and front one candidate, Ruto and Raila will sponsor mi-

nority presidential candidates who will chip away enough votes to give them a clear win." The arithmetic of Kenyan elections is unforgiving of division.

DAP-K leader Eugene Wamalwa, one of the coalition's senior figures, has acknowledged that the process will take time. "Coalition building is not an event. It's a delicate process that takes time, patience, consistency, perseverance and persistence," he said following the September consultations. That measured counsel is pragmatic. It is also a luxury the opposition may not have much longer. With the IEBC having already warned aspirants that campaigning cannot begin before May 29, 2027, the window for building a credible, unified alternative to the government is narrowing.

What September 9's poll ultimately reveals is a Kenya at a political crossroads. Public dissatisfaction of this magnitude, spread this uniformly across regions, age groups and economic classes, does not simply evaporate. It searches for an outlet. In 2002, it found one in a united opposition and produced the most peaceful transfer of power in the country's history. In 2007, division squandered a similar moment with catastrophic consequences. The lesson of those two elections has never been more relevant than it is today.

Ruto's administration still has time to shift the trajectory. Economic conditions can improve, policy communication can be sharpened, and the weight of unpopular measures can, in theory, be replaced by tangible results. But the data suggests that the room for manoeuvre is shrinking with each passing month. A government that has lost the trust of 90 per cent of its own Mt Kenya base is not simply managing a public relations problem. It is managing a political emergency.

Kenya's voters have delivered their interim verdict clearly and loudly. Eleven months remain to determine whether their leaders — on both sides of the political divide — are equal to the moment the country is demanding of them.

Health Dr Kariuki regretted that the health worker-to-population ratios remain far below need, yet community oral health officers are essential to primary care — if deployed, supervised and supplied

Oral health workers told to maintain medical ethics

KPMDC cautions dentists as ten cases are lodged against community oral health officers

BY James Wakahiu
@themkenyatiimes

Ten cases have currently been lodged against community oral health officers malpractices in the sector continue to be reported in the profession. These irregularities include practicing without registration and valid licensure, false advertising especially unrealistic promises or costs and use of title “doctor,” and operating beyond training capacity or competence.

Dr David G. Kariuki, Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC) Chief Executive Officer and

Registrar said the council is also mandated to regulate the training and practice of medicine, dentistry and community oral health. “KMPDC is also mandated to regulate operations of health facilities within the country,” he said.

He said illegal clinics and title misuse harm patients and the reputation of every licensed officer. Investigations followed by disciplinary measures will be undertaken against those found culpable. “Enforcement must be faster, public and coordinated with counties,” he said.

Dr Kariuki regretted that the health worker-to-population ratios remain far below need,

yet community oral health officers are essential to primary care — if deployed, supervised and supplied. More graduates are needed, but not at the cost of intern stations, supervisors or clinical exposure. “Quantity without quality is a delayed safety failure. Patients lose when incorrectly treated/managed,” he added.

The CEO said one must assess and offer care only in areas they are trained on and competent in to earn public trust. “Oral health is still too often an afterthought in county plans, facility design and insurance benefit packages. We will invest more on maintaining accurate data on our



Chief Guest - Chief Executive Officer and Registrar KMPDC, Dr David G. Kariuki (2nd Right) with Director KMPDC Moses Kiptanui (Right) visits Mount Kenya University exhibition stand and is received by Mwangi Irungu (Left) Faculty Dental Sciences during the ongoing Oral Health Association of Kenya conference at a Naivasha hotel. | Photo: Courtesy

register, licensure status and complaints which will inform on gaps that need to be addressed,” he said.

The CEO spoke in a presentation during the ongoing 32nd Annual Scientific Conference, the Oral Health Association of Kenya (OHAK) held at the held at Lake Naivasha Resort, Nakuru County. Dr Kariuki was the chief guest at the forum which is running from 8th to 11th September, 2026.

Promoting oral health awareness among learners

As part of the conference, the Oral Health Association of Kenya (OHAK) conducted a pre-conference community outreach programme at Mirera Comprehensive School in Naivasha aimed at promoting oral health awareness among learners. OHAK has a membership of more than 2,000.

The outreach focused on encouraging positive oral health practices through interactive educational sessions. Learn-

ers were guided on proper tooth-brushing techniques, the importance of maintaining healthy dietary habits, and the need for regular dental check-ups. They were also encouraged to take an active role in safeguarding their oral health as an essential component of their overall well-being.

To support the oral hygiene education initiative, learners received dental kits to help them adopt and maintain good oral health practices at home and in school.

This impactful activity was made possible through a partnership between the Mount Kenya University (MKU)’s Department of Dental Sciences and the Oral Health Association of Kenya (OHAK), reflecting a shared commitment to promoting oral health awareness, preventive care, and community engagement.

Through this collaboration, both institutions continue to play a vital role in advancing oral health education, fos-

tering preventive healthcare practices, and contributing to the development of healthier communities across Kenya.

Speaking during the event, the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC) Director Moses Kiptanui encouraged members of the public to seek oral health services from registered and licensed practitioners and to avoid quacks.

KMPDC is mandated to regulate the training and practice of medicine, dentistry and community oral health within Kenya. The council is also mandated to regulate operations of health facilities within the country.

The Scientific conference themed, “Bridging gaps, breaking boundaries: collaboration in oral health” is set to attract hundreds of oral health delegates to discuss pertinent issues to promote one health in support of government agenda of universal health coverage



Learners and staff of Mirera Comprehensive School, Naivasha received oral health education and dental kits during a pre-conference community outreach programme organised by the Oral Health Association of Kenya in partnership with MKU department of dental sciences | Photo: Courtesy

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Healthcare A government that signs an agreement with healthcare workers creates a reasonable expectation that the agreement will eventually be honoured

The strike is over — but Kenya’s healthcare crisis has only changed its uniform

Nurses are back at work, but the 43-day shutdown revealed institutional failures that a return-to-work agreement alone cannot fix

BY Levis Wangamati
@themkenyentimes

For 43 days, Kenya’s public healthcare system operated under extraordinary pressure as nurses stayed away from duty in a nationwide industrial action that exposed weaknesses far deeper than a disagreement over salaries and allowances. Yesterday, the Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives and the Council of Governors signed a return-to-work formula, bringing the prolonged strike to an end and directing nurses to resume duty immediately or within 24 hours.

The agreement gives both parties 45 days to conclude negotiations on the implementation of the 2017 Collective Bargaining Agreement. County governments have also committed to developing a model career guideline for nursing personnel within the same period. The agreement further provides for the employment of Universal Health Coverage staff by all 47 county governments on permanent and pensionable terms from July 1, 2026, subject to the applicable remuneration framework.

The return of nurses is unquestionably welcome. For the millions of Kenyans who rely almost entirely on public hospitals, dispensaries and health centres, the announcement means that an essential part of their healthcare system can begin functioning again. Yet celebrating the end of the strike without honestly examining why it lasted more than six weeks would be a serious mistake. The central dispute did not emerge overnight, and neither did the grievances behind it. At the heart of the confrontation was the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement dating back to 2017 — meaning some of the issues now being



Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives and the Council of Governors signed a return-to-work formula

negotiated have remained unresolved for nearly a decade. The strike may have ended, but the institutional failures that produced it have merely moved from hospital corridors back to negotiating tables.

This is the uncomfortable reality Kenya must confront. A government that signs an agreement with healthcare workers creates a reasonable expectation that the agreement will eventually be honoured. When implementation takes years, the consequences extend far beyond the workers themselves. Public healthcare is not an ordinary sector in which institutional delays stay confined to offices. The nurse who is dissatisfied with an unresolved agreement is also the nurse standing beside a hospital bed at three in the morning — monitoring patients, administering treatment, responding to emergencies and providing continuous care

that other cadres cannot simply absorb. When that workforce withdraws its labour, the disruption quickly becomes a public health emergency rather than merely an industrial relations dispute.

The past six weeks demonstrated precisely how interconnected Kenya’s healthcare workforce is. When nurses stayed away, doctors were left carrying additional responsibilities in facilities already struggling with shortages and impossible workloads. On September 7, the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union gave the government seven days to resolve the nurses’ dispute, warning that doctors could issue their own strike notice if the situation remained unresolved. The union argued that doctors could not indefinitely absorb duties normally carried by nurses, and that the prolonged disruption was placing unbearable pressure

on an already strained system. That warning was significant because it showed the dispute was no longer confined to one professional group.

It should have been read as a sign of systemic vulnerability. Kenya’s healthcare system does not operate through isolated professions working independently of one another. Doctors, nurses, clinical officers, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, radiographers, nutritionists and support staff form an interconnected chain in which the failure of any single component places pressure on all the others. A hospital may possess modern equipment and qualified doctors, but without sufficient nurses to provide continuous patient care, the institution cannot function normally. The lesson from this strike is therefore bigger than the immediate dispute: Kenya cannot build a resilient healthcare system by negotiating with its

workforce only when the system is already on the verge of collapse.

The human cost of that collapse was perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the crisis. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights warned on September 4 that the strike had evolved from a labour dispute into a public health and human rights concern, citing disruptions to the rights to life, health, emergency medical treatment and dignity. The commission also reported 79 maternal, neonatal and perinatal deaths between August 31 and September 2. Such figures must always be interpreted with care — the relationship between industrial action and individual deaths can require detailed clinical investigation — but the broader message is unmistakable. When essential healthcare services are disrupted for weeks, it is the most vulnerable patients who carry the heaviest burden.

For the ordinary Kenyan, the constitutional right to health is not tested in policy documents or budget speeches. It is tested when a parent walks into a county hospital with a sick child and expects someone to attend to them. It is tested when a pregnant woman requires urgent maternity care, when an accident victim needs immediate attention, or when an elderly patient depends on a public facility because private treatment is financially out of reach. These citizens experience healthcare through waiting times, available staff, medicines, functioning equipment and the competence of the people attending to them — nothing more, nothing less.

That is why the government must resist treating the return-to-work agreement as the conclusion of the matter. It is better understood as a deadline for accountability. The next 45 days should not become another period of negotiations in which each side issues statements while underlying commitments remain unresolved. The country needs a clear implementation framework, identifiable responsibilities, concrete timelines and transparent communication about what has been agreed. If there are genuine financial constraints, the government should explain them openly. If certain commitments require phased implementation, that process should be made public. What Kenya cannot afford is another agreement that quietly becomes another unresolved historical document.

The dispute also raises serious questions about the financial architecture of devolved healthcare. Since health services were devolved to county governments, counties have carried significant responsi-

Healthcare A government that signs an agreement with healthcare workers creates a reasonable expectation that the agreement will eventually be honoured

The strike is over — but Kenya's healthcare crisis has only changed its uniform

Nurses are back at work, but the 43-day shutdown revealed institutional failures that a return-to-work agreement alone cannot fix

Contd from page 11

bility for frontline delivery. Yet healthcare workers remain affected by national remuneration frameworks, national policy decisions, county budgets and intergovernmental negotiations — a complicated chain of responsibility in which a worker employed at county level may find that crucial aspects of their pay and conditions are influenced by institutions entirely beyond the county's control. This complexity may explain certain disagreements, but it can never become an excuse for allowing essential services to deteriorate.

Kenya needs a more predictable mechanism for resolving healthcare labour disputes before they become national emergencies. Negotiations should begin long before agreements expire or grievances accumulate into industrial action. Government and unions should have structured channels through which unresolved implementation questions are identified and addressed continuously — not saved up for a strike notice. Parliament, county governments, the national government and relevant commissions must also understand that healthcare labour relations are not peripheral administrative matters. They are a matter of national health security.

The argument that government must operate within its budget is entirely legitimate. No responsible administration can honour every demand without considering available resources, competing priorities and long-term fiscal sustainability. But fiscal constraints cannot serve as a permanent justification for failing to implement agreements that government institutions have already entered into. If

an agreement is genuinely unaffordable, that reality must be confronted during negotiation — not after years of accumulated frustration have sent workers to the picket line.

There is also a clear lesson for county governments. The 47 counties cannot simultaneously demand greater responsibility for healthcare and then distance themselves from the consequences when the system experiences a labour crisis. The return-to-work formula places considerable responsibility on counties, including the commitment to develop a model career guideline for nursing personnel and address employment arrangements for UHC staff. Those responsibilities must be approached collectively and consistently. A Kenyan seeking treatment in one county should not face dramatically different standards of staffing, remuneration or service simply because healthcare administration stops at a county boundary.

The crisis also exposes the danger of treating Universal Health Coverage primarily as a financing question. Insurance reforms, enrolment systems and new health financing mechanisms all matter enormously, but universal healthcare cannot exist on paper alone. A person may be financially covered and still fail to receive timely treatment if a facility lacks sufficient healthcare workers. A sophisticated insurance system cannot substitute for a nurse beside a patient. A digital claims platform cannot administer medicine. A policy document cannot monitor a patient through the night. Universal healthcare ultimately depends on human beings — and those human beings require functional institutions, fair working conditions and predictable employment.

The nurses' strike should therefore change the way

Kenya discusses healthcare investment. Building facilities matters. Purchasing equipment matters. Expanding insurance coverage matters. But the workforce must remain at the centre of the equation. A hospital is only as effective as the people operating it. If Kenya is serious about improving maternal health, emergency care, primary healthcare and chronic disease management, it must invest not only in buildings and technology but in recruitment, retention, training, career progression and professional welfare.

The government now has an opportunity to demonstrate that this crisis can produce a lasting institutional improvement. The 45-day negotiation period should deliver something far more durable than a temporary truce. It should establish a credible framework for implementing the outstanding provisions of the 2017 CBA, clarify responsibilities between national and county governments and reduce the likelihood of another prolonged confrontation. The country should not have to endure another 40 days of disruption before discovering that an agreement signed years earlier still contains unresolved obligations.

There is another reason to act with urgency. The doctors' ultimatum demonstrated how easily one unresolved dispute can spread through an interconnected system. Had the nurses' strike continued, the country could have faced a broader confrontation involving another critical group of healthcare workers. Industrial action in healthcare is fundamentally different from disruption in other sectors. When hospitals cannot function properly, the consequences fall on people who are already vulnerable, already frightened and often with nowhere else to turn.



Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives and the Council of Governors signed a return-to-work formula

Kenya should also remember the patients who became largely invisible during this dispute. Press conferences naturally focused on unions, governors and government officials — those are the people at the negotiating table. But behind every statement were patients whose treatment was delayed, families scrambling to find alternatives and healthcare workers who remained at their stations under conditions of extraordinary stress. Their experiences must form part of any honest national reckoning with what happened. A healthcare crisis cannot be judged solely by whether two parties eventually sign a document. It must also be judged by what happened to the citizens the system was created to serve.

The return of nurses should be warmly welcomed — but relief must not become complacency. Hospitals can resume their normal routines, patients can begin receiving services again, and healthcare workers can return to their stations. But the country has not yet earned the right to move on without fully understanding what happened. The strike revealed how quickly unresolved labour disputes

become public health emergencies. It revealed the fragility created by staffing shortages. It revealed the cost of delayed implementation. And it reminded Kenya that healthcare workers are not simply employees on a government payroll — they are a central pillar of the country's social infrastructure.

The real test begins now. Government officials, governors and union leaders have negotiated a temporary pathway back to work, but the credibility of that agreement will depend entirely on what happens during the next 45 days. If the commitments are genuinely implemented, Kenya will have converted a damaging confrontation into an opportunity to strengthen its healthcare system. If the promises once again become trapped in bureaucratic delay, the country will merely have postponed the next crisis.

Kenya does not need another healthcare strike to remind it that its hospitals are fragile. It does not need another ultimatum from doctors to understand that nurses cannot simply be replaced. It does not need another generation of healthcare workers waiting years for agreements negotiat-

ed in good faith.

What it needs is a healthcare system in which government commitments are honoured, workers are heard before they are forced to walk out, and patients do not become collateral damage in disputes between institutions.

The nurses are returning to work, and Kenya should welcome them back with genuine gratitude. But the country should also listen — carefully — to what their 43-day absence revealed. The problem was never simply that nurses had stopped working. The deeper problem is that a healthcare system so essential to national life had allowed unresolved grievances to fester for years until the consequences finally reached the hospital gates.

The strike is over. The negotiations are beginning again. The responsibility now belongs to every institution involved to ensure that the next chapter is written differently.

Because Kenya's healthcare system should not have to collapse before its leaders remember that the people who keep it alive deserve to be heard.

Mining The mines, a cluster of artisanal gold fields in the Dabel area of Moyale that once supported tens of thousands of miners and traders from across the region

Methu demands action on Ruto’s idle Moyale gold mine order

BY mes Mwangi
@themkenyentimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party Secretary General and Nyandarua Senator John Methu yesterday challenged the government to explain why President William Ruto’s directive to reopen the Hillo Gold Mines in Moyale, Marsabit County, remains unimplemented four months after it was issued.

Methu raised the demand after meeting DCP National Executive Council member for the Mt Kenya North–Upper Eastern Region, Yussuf Huka Jillo, and Marsabit elder Hussein Jama, who brought formal community concerns about the mines’ continued closure. “On behalf of the people of Moyale and Marsabit, we are asking why President Ruto’s directive to reopen the

Moyale Hillo Gold Mines has not been implemented,” Methu said. “A presidential directive cannot be announced with great fanfare only to disappear into bureaucratic files.”

The mines, a cluster of artisanal gold fields in the Dabel area of Moyale that once supported tens of thousands of miners and traders from across the region, were shut following security and safety concerns. Ruto subsequently instructed the Ministry of Mining to fast-track their reopening, and on July 22 Mining Cabinet Secretary Hassan Joho chaired a high-level meeting with Marsabit Governor Mohamed Ali, Senator Mohamed Chute and area members of parliament, establishing a multi-agency team and giving it seven working days to conduct a comprehensive field assessment. That deadline has long passed with no announced outcome.

Geological mapping, geophysical surveys and geochemical sampling had already begun in Dabel in June, with Governor Ali confirming the work after receiving a delegation from the State Department for Mining. Yet for residents watching their livelihoods stall, ground surveys have not translated into open gates. Community leaders told Methu that local people had been watching outsiders and illegal operators exploit the area’s mineral wealth while licensed access for residents remained blocked.

Methu framed the delay in terms that resonate far beyond Marsabit. With a TIFA poll released yesterday showing 76 per cent of Kenyans believe the country is on the wrong track, the gap between presidential announcements and on-the-ground delivery has become a national credibility question — and Moyale is its



Nyandarua Senator John Methu meeting with DCP Upper Eastern Region leaders

latest, most visible exhibit. The communities of Marsabit, Methu said, are not asking for new promises. They are asking for the one already made to be kept.



Patience turns ordinary moments into extraordinary outcomes



One who is patient today will have a better future tomorrow by the way
Can face the race with more ease by the bye to say,
Keeping the mind calm helps him to think better
Than rushing to prove himself greater,
Where there's calmness, good things happen naturally
Allowing peace and serenity to loiter around the

surroundings casually,
The person who maintains patience
Will be free from vengeance and violence,
And keeps his heart pure by inviting only true companionships
Thereby manifesting a life of peace, purpose and noble relationships,
Patience props up healthy connection among friends and relations
Without confronting brawls or oppositions,
Patience and smile in a person can do any magic
Making life extremely majestic and truly fantastic.

Manimozhi Albert
Graduate Teacher,
Govt. Girls Hr. Sec. School, Sandhaipettai,
Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Nightmare



One late night at eleven thirty
After completing the household duty
Sat on the dinning chair
Heard the anklet sound very clear.
As all my family members
Half way on their sleep
Ran to my bedroom with a temper
As he came late but now snoring deep

The pulsation of my heart quickened
After a long time, the moment I just curled
Alas! woke up as I was hardly stricken
It was Hubby so; consoled
As he was answering the (nightmare) solely
My children humorously told that it might be the dinner made dad so to be unfair.
I replied I never fear
As practiced living with beasts mere.
It's not just the night mare
Dragging us to scare
Its our soul we bear.
With a fiction creating fear.

G.Sarala.
Creative writers
India

The fairy disappears; the girl seeks a love guide!



Why is the screen blank? Her heart aches silently,
Her eyes speak volumes, pain lingers all around.
As a white swan hiding or revealing secrets,
Her eyelids flutter in the night breeze.

Like a tender leaf, love whispers, "what wonder is this?"
In dreams, the bull-like man is a canal,
The virgin woman is like a flowing river.
Did she blush with anger or burn with passion?

The moon in the clouds is a lonely woman longing

for love,
Desires pour down like summer rain.
In a crisis, her lover disappears, leaving her bewildered.
The innocent woman is like a delicate flower.

Oh forest peacock! Help the virgin woman.
Speak to her man, pour honey words into her ears,
May her Cupid meet her and guide her heart to love!
Let she sparkle brighter like a twinkling star in the sky.

B. Valli Murugan
Graduate Teacher
Creative Writer
Uthangarai Block
Krishnagiri District
Tamilnadu

What you water today, will bloom tomorrow:



Sow the seed of hope
Never let your courage slope
Pour water of confident
Energizing yourself as component
Weed negatives & schedule your work
As sun that shines without irk

Enjoy the sprout that shoots
Manure when buds bloom with positive thoughts
Sway the fragrance of will power
Watch yielding fruitful prosperity forever
Every drops of your sweat
With sacrifice you've made in wet
Gifts you a positive treat
To be inspired by your next Genre to greet
So planting your present worthy
Earns you the future wealthy.

G. Sarala
CREATIVE WRITERS

The story of our friends



We should not treat anyone differently we should see everyone as our friends

Characters

Me
Malar
Meena
Nila
Yazhini

Come, let's read the story
One day,I

went to school. I went to school.A new friend joined our class at our school. Her name was Meena .

Me: Hi meena come and set near me".
Malar: NO, Meena you sit beside me."
Nila: Hi meena, I welcome you to our school.
Meena: I will sit beside malar."
Nila: Meena,why didn't your leg come? what happened.

Meena: I fell down while I was riding a vehicle so my leg is not working properly.that's why I couldn't come".

Yazhini: They Laughed at the girl because her leg was not working.
Me: Everyone look at meena.she is also our friend too, right ?
Nila: Meena cried,why?
Meena: everyone is laughing at me '
Me: the other friend Said, don't cry, Meena here for you
"One day, everyone went for a break,but Meena stayed there.
"At that, Yazhini slipped and fell.no was there than.meena come slowly and helped her get up.
Meena: Yazhini,get up slowly drink this water; and gave her some water.

Yazhini: thank you, Meena. Luckily, you saved me.i treat you.sarry Meena . you are my new.friend she said.

Meena and Yazhini walked hand in hand
Me: have you both become friends?
Meena and Yazhini: Yes,we both have become friends

"The school time was over nila, Meena, Me,malar and I all come outside."
Meena: "she said , I really Like this school."
After that , everyone went to their houses.

What do we learn from this story?

By
Sheevani
IX-D
GHSS - Sathuvachari
Vellore.

Rise Again



Do not fear the dusty ground,
For strength is often quietly found.

Every stumble, every scar,
Shapes the person that you are.

Mountains test the climber's will,
Rivers carve the hardest hill.

Failure is not journey's end
It is a wise and faithful friend.

The brightest stars light up the night,

After darkness hides the light.

Hope returns with every dawn,
Urging every dreamer on.

Stand once more with steady grace,
Wear each challenge on your face.

True glory is not standing tall—
It is rising after every fall.

So lift your heart, embrace the climb,
Each setback serves a greater time.

Victory belongs to those who say,
"I'll rise again—come what may."

D.RENUKAGANDHI
GHSS,MULLAINAGAR,
HOSUR,KRISHNAGIRI D.T.,

Politics Okode, a lawyer by profession who is serving his third consecutive term as Speaker, has long championed civic engagement in Siaya

Siaya assembly joins push to put every eligible voter on the register

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyaintimes

Siaya County Assembly Speaker George Okode yesterday met with members of the county assembly and officials from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's county office to review voter registration statistics and strengthen preparations for the 2027 General Election, in what observers are calling one of the more concrete examples of county-level electoral engagement seen this cycle.

The meeting, which focused on the current state of voter registration in Siaya and the broader challenge of expanding civic participation ahead of next August's polls, reflects a growing recognition among county leaders that the task of building a credible electoral register cannot be left to the national commission alone. With the IEBC projecting a target voter register of approximately 28.5 million

— up from the 22.1 million registered voters who participated in the 2022 General Election — local institutions have a critical role to play in closing that gap.

Okode, a lawyer by profession who is serving his third consecutive term as Speaker, has long championed civic engagement in Siaya. During an earlier phase of the continuous voter registration exercise, he adopted three polling stations within his home area of Siger sub-location in Rarieda Constituency, personally committing to ensure that every eligible voter in those areas was registered. Yesterday's meeting extended that commitment to the institutional level, bringing together elected members and electoral officials in a structured exchange that went well beyond routine administrative protocol.

"We need to use every possible means to reach every potential voter," Okode told members at the meeting, urging colleagues to treat the

registration exercise as an urgent priority rather than a peripheral concern. His message carried weight not only because of his office but because of the county's historical significance in Kenyan electoral politics — Siaya has consistently produced some of the country's most engaged voters and has been a decisive constituency in multiple national elections.

The timing of the engagement is significant. Kenya is now in the thick of pre-election season, with the IEBC having already gazetted the 2027 election period and unveiled key timelines for aspirants and campaigns. The commission launched its Enhanced Continuous Voter Registration exercise in March 2026, targeting 2.5 million new registrations in the first phase alone and deploying officials and KIEMS kits to registration centres across all 47 counties. Despite that momentum, with nearly three million new registrations recorded since the exercise began in September

2025, significant work remains to reach the projected target.

County assemblies occupy a distinctive position in Kenya's democratic architecture. Their members are closer to the ground than any national institution — they understand which communities lack accessible registration centres, which demographic groups remain disengaged, and what practical barriers are preventing eligible citizens from joining the register. When that local intelligence is brought into direct conversation with IEBC officials, as happened yesterday in Siaya, the result is a more responsive and better-targeted registration effort.

The barriers are real and varied. In some parts of Siaya and counties like it, distance to registration points remains a challenge. In others, low awareness — particularly among young first-time voters and residents of remote sub-locations — continues to suppress uptake. Yesterday's meeting gave county assem-



Siaya County Speaker George Okode, Members of the County Assembly, and officials from the IEBC County Office

bly members the opportunity to surface these issues directly with IEBC officials and agree on practical responses, from identifying additional registration sites to coordinating community outreach with local leaders and civil society organisations.

There is also a broader democratic argument at stake. A voter register that fails to capture the full eligible population does not just reduce participation numbers — it distorts representation. When large groups of citizens go unregistered, the governments elected in their absence are structurally less accountable to them. Every eligible Kenyan who registers and votes strengthens the mandate of whoever wins and the legitimacy of the institutions that emerge from the polls.

For Siaya, a county with a strong tradition of civic awareness and political participation, yesterday's meeting is a signal that local leadership intends to deliver a comprehensive registration drive in the months remaining before the register closes. With Okode leading from the front and members of the county assembly now formally engaged with the IEBC, the county is well-placed to set a standard that others might follow.

The IEBC's message to all eligible Kenyans who have not yet registered remains simple and urgent: the time is now, and the 2027 election will be shaped by those who show up — beginning with those who register.

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Health The pain you cannot see is still pain — and it deserves the same care as any broken bone

Mental health and pain: The invisible wound



By: Wanjohi P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes

We know exactly what to do with physical pain. If you cut your hand, you wash it, bandage it, go to hospital if you need to. People see it. People say sorry. But there is another kind of pain that has no bandage, no X-ray, no plaster.

Mental pain is the pain of being rejected for a job you were fully qualified for. The pain of friends disappearing when the money runs out. The pain of a marriage falling apart. The pain of failing an exam after studying through the night. The pain of sitting in a bedsitter in Kayole with a degree on the wall and an empty pot on the stove. This pain is real — not imagined, not exaggerated. Brain scans confirm that social rejection activates the same part of the brain as physical injury. That is why heartbreak can physically hurt in your chest. That is why unemployment can make your entire body feel heavy and exhausted.

Psychologists call this psychache — the pain of a mind that says, “I cannot continue like this.” In Africa, we have been taught to hide that pain. We have phrases designed to silence it: a man must endure; be strong; stop crying, you are not alone — said in a tone that tells you to shut up and carry on. Endurance is a virtue. But endurance without expression becomes poison. A pot with no outlet for steam will eventually explode.

Mental pain, when kept inside for too long, becomes mental illness — not because the person is weak, but because the brain, like any other organ, can become overwhelmed. Just as the stomach develops ulcers when exposed to too much acid for too long,



the brain develops depression when subjected to too much disappointment, shame and loneliness for too long without rest and support.

There are signs that the pain has grown beyond what you should carry alone. Sleeping too much or too little. Eating excessively or losing your appetite entirely. Feeling exhausted even after rest. Losing interest in the things you once loved — football, music, faith, conversation. Feeling worthless, like a burden. Withdrawing from people, dreading phone calls, fearing the outside world. Having thoughts like, “People would be better off without me.”

If three or more of those have been true for you for more than two weeks, it is not laziness. It is your mind asking for help — the same way a fever asks for medicine.

Pain becomes depression when it goes unspoken and unsupported for too long. Think of soil. One day of rain and the soil drinks it in — good. Sixty days of rain without a single hour of sun and you have a flood, not growth. Three rivers are flooding many minds in Kenya today.

The first is rejection. We tell our children to study hard and get a good job. Then they en-

ter a job market that absorbs perhaps 200,000 people a year out of the more than one million young people entering it. A graduate spends two years knocking on doors. Every regret email quietly tells their brain: you are not enough. After twenty of those, the brain begins to believe it — even though the truth is that this is an economic reality, not a personal failure. And then parents, however lovingly, ask: when will you marry? What have you built? Each question adds weight.

The second river is loneliness. We live in an age of a thousand Facebook friends and five hundred followers, but zero people to call at two in the morning when the chest tightens. City life in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu is crowded, but profoundly lonely. Everyone is hustling. When money runs low, many friends go quiet. The phone that once rang all day falls silent. The brain, which is wired for community and belonging, registers that silence as danger — and begins to shut down to conserve energy. That is why a person in depression stays in bed. Not laziness. The brain in survival mode.

The third river is shame.

Many Kenyans carry trauma that has never been spoken aloud — childhood violence, sexual abuse, domestic pain, betrayal in business. We are told to forget it and move on. But the body does not forget. Trauma lives in the nervous system. Guilt says you did something wrong. Shame says you are something wrong. Shame locks you in from the inside.

When rejection, loneliness and shame flow together for months without a safe person to say “I am here, I am not going anywhere” — the flood happens. That flood is depression, anxiety, panic attacks.

Our culture can make things worse by reaching immediately for spiritual explanations: you have demons, you lack faith, you are bewitched. Sometimes pain is simply

pain — pain that needs human care, not exorcism. Prayer helps. Prayer combined with honest conversation, professional support and genuine rest heals faster and more completely.

Healing does not mean the pain disappears. Healing means the pain no longer controls your life.

Talk to someone. Not a hundred people online — one safe person who will listen without trying to fix you or judge you. A mother, a sibling, a pastor who truly listens, a counsellor. If there is no one in your life right now, call a professional: Kenya Red Cross — 1199 (Suicide prevention helpline, free, 24 hours)

ULTO CARE — 0718 770 343

Saying “I am not okay, I am hurting” is not weakness. It is

courage — the same courage it takes to say “I have malaria, I am going to the hospital.”

And if the weight feels impossible right now, start small. Sweep the house. Wash the dishes. Take a twenty-minute walk around the estate. Water one plant. Teach one child something. Small acts tell the brain: I can still do things. The brain responds by producing dopamine again. In a farm, you do not plough ten acres on the first day. You plant one row.

You have survived every single one of your worst days so far. That is not a small thing.

Your pain is real. But it is not permanent. A mind, like soil after a flood, can grow again — if given sunlight, rest and care.

You are not alone.

If thoughts of not wanting to live are coming to you, please call 1199 now. Someone is there, and they want to listen. It is not too late to heal. It is not too late to dream.




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Constitution The question is not whether Kenya's constitutional democracy is an experiment in liberal failure. That framing is a convenient alibi

How Kenya's elite wipe their boots on the 2010 constitution while preaching its sanctity



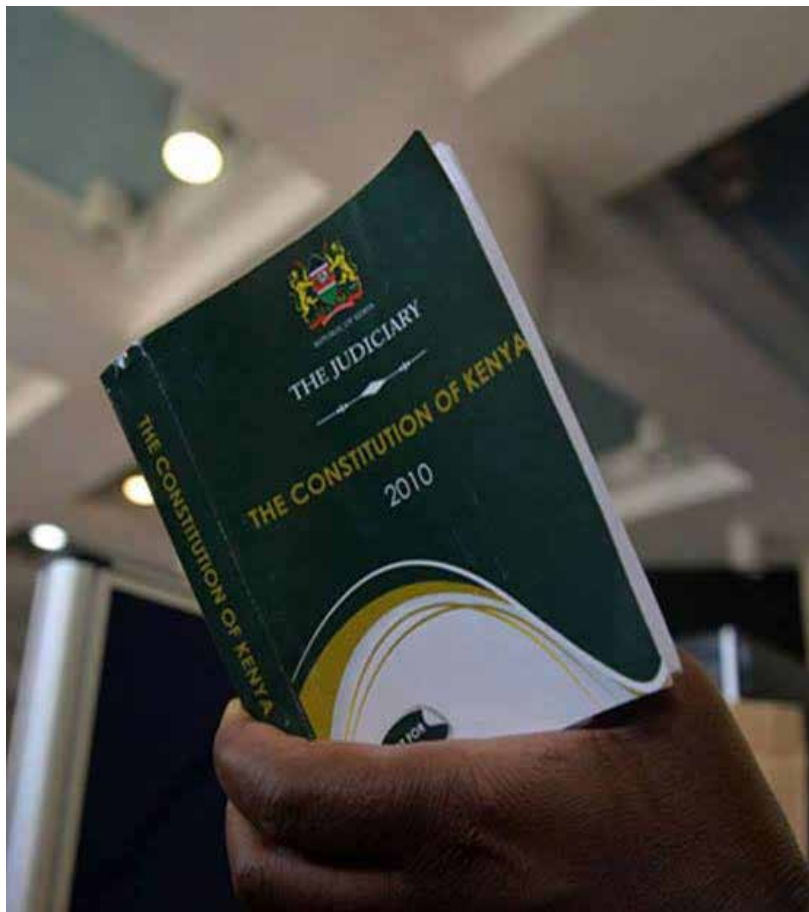
By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyentimes

On 27 August 2010, more than two-thirds of Kenyans who voted affirmed a new Constitution born from the ashes of the 2007–2008 post-election violence that killed over a thousand and displaced hundreds of thousands. That document was not a casual political pamphlet. It was a deliberate, hard-won architecture of restraint: devolution of power to forty-seven counties, an expanded Bill of Rights that treated socio-economic claims as justiciable, Chapter Six's uncompromising standards of leadership and integrity, an independent judiciary shielded from executive whim, and independent commissions meant to police the powerful. Sixteen years later the same document is routinely treated as a doormat useful for wiping muddy political boots before the elite step inside to plunder, then kicked aside when it becomes inconvenient.

The question is not whether Kenya's constitutional democracy is an experiment in liberal failure. That framing is a convenient alibi. The document itself is not the problem. The failure is one of implementation, of political will, of situational ethics that treat the Constitution as optional furniture rather than binding covenant. Cherry-picking enforcement has become the governing style. The real danger is bequeathing this hard-won charter to people who regard it as an obstacle to be dismantled or a baby to be smothered for personal advancement.

Consider the evidence. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index gives Kenya a score of 30 out of 100 in 2025 ranking it near 130th among measured countries after years of oscillation in the low thirties. Chapter Six was written precisely to break this cycle. Yet enforcement remains selective, episodic, and politically timed. High-pro-



file cases dissolve into technicalities or quiet withdrawals. County governments, the supposed laboratories of devolution, receive substantial resources yet remain plagued by accountability gaps; the national government retains the ability to starve or manipulate them through budget negotiations. The two-thirds gender principle, a constitutional command reinforced by court orders, still languishes because Parliament repeatedly finds the political will to protect male incumbency more compelling than the text it swore to uphold.

The Building Bridges Initiative offered the purest recent illustration of the elite's relationship with the Constitution. Framed as a unity project after the 2017 electoral crisis, it sought sweeping amendments that would have expanded the executive, altered the architecture of independent institutions, and, in the view of the courts that struck it down, been driven by presidential initiative rather than genuine popular ownership. The High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court sequentially dismantled the process, affirming that the Constitution is not a private playground for those temporarily in power. That judicial resistance was

a rare moment of institutional spine. It also revealed the underlying contempt: when the text obstructs elite accommodation, the impulse is not to obey but to rewrite.

This is not abstract. Historical pattern supplies the correlation. Independence in 1963 brought a Constitution that was promptly amended into an imperial presidency. The one-party state of 1982 formalised what had already become practice. The 2005 referendum rejected a draft that smelt of elite capture. The 2010 document was the people's answer an attempt to constrain the very class that had repeatedly treated earlier charters as provisional. Yet the same class largely survived into the new dispensation. Many who now administer the Constitution once opposed its more radical provisions. The result is predictable: institutions are established, then starved or captured; court orders are obeyed when convenient and ignored when costly; integrity standards are invoked against rivals and suspended for allies.

Situational ethics is the operating system. A politician discovers the beauty of devolution when out of national power and the necessity of

central control when in it. The same voice that praises judicial independence after a favourable ruling discovers the judiciary's "overreach" the moment a decision threatens political projects. Police reforms are celebrated in white papers and abandoned in the streets when protesters become inconvenient. The Constitution becomes a prop for legitimacy rather than a limit on power. This is not liberal failure; it is the failure of stewards who never internalized the document's moral demand.

The danger of bequeathing the Constitution to those who treat it as a doormat is existential. A constitution is not self-executing. It lives or dies by the character of those who interpret, enforce, and live under it. When the powerful regard Chapter Six as decorative, when independent commissions are reduced to ceremonial offices, when the people are told the problem is the "rigid" text rather than the flexible consciences of its guardians, the social contract frays. Young Kenyans who marched against the Finance Bill and other excesses already understand this intuitively: the document's promises of dignity, participation, and accountability ring hollow when state violence and elite impunity answer their petitions. Cynicism hardens into withdrawal or rage. Both corrode the foundations of constitutional order.

Original insight is required here. The 2010 Constitution functions as a mirror. It does not create virtue; it reveals the absence of it. Those who claim the document is too ambitious or culturally alien are often the ones who profit from the gap between text and practice. The real experiment is not liberal democracy as such, but whether a society long habituated to personalised power can sustain impersonal rules when those rules constrain the powerful. Kenya's answer so far has been partial, contested, and reversible. Devolution has delivered tangible local presence and some service improvements, yet corruption simply migrated downward. The judiciary has produced landmark rulings that momentarily check executive excess, yet it remains underfunded and under constant political pressure. Civil society and ordinary citizens have repeatedly de-

fended the document most dramatically during the BBI litigation and the rejection of earlier elite drafts but vigilance is exhausting when institutions designed to share the burden instead share the impunity.

The call to action is therefore categorical and multi-layered. Parliament must stop treating the Constitution as a menu from which to select convenient clauses. Leadership and integrity provisions require consistent, non-selective application; the gender principle requires legislation, not endless progressive excuses. The executive must fund independent institutions at levels that allow them to function rather than negotiate their survival annually. The judiciary must continue to insist that no office is above the text, even when the political cost is high. Independent commissions must recover the courage of their founding mandates rather than settle for bureaucratic survival. Citizens cannot outsource eternal vigilance. Electoral choices that reward those who treat the Constitution as optional guarantee its further erosion. Civil society, the academy, and the media must keep naming the gap between oath and action without the polite fiction that both sides are equally sincere.

Irony saturates the present moment. The same political class that once warned Kenyans against "foreign" constitutional ideas now invokes the Constitution's sanctity whenever it suits them, while working to hollow out its constraints. They speak of national values while practising ethnic arithmetic. They celebrate the people's sovereignty while engineering processes that exclude genuine popular ownership. The Constitution is praised as sacred until it is needed as a doormat.

Kenya does not suffer from an excess of liberalism. It suffers from a deficit of constitutionalism the lived habit of subordinating power to principle. The 2010 document remains one of the most progressive constitutional texts on the continent. Its failure would not prove that progressive constitutions cannot work in African contexts. It would prove that a determined elite can still defeat a people's attempt to bind them. That outcome is not inevitable. It is a choice, renewed every time selective enforcement is tolerated, every time integrity is postponed, every time the baby is treated as disposable. The words of the Constitution are clear. The test is whether those who hold power will finally treat them as binding, or continue to wipe their boots and walk on.

The writer is a social commentator.

Success The distinction matters because many people spend their lives chasing success, only to discover that it does not automatically bring fulfilment

Being successful isn't the same as being valuable

Einstein's timeless challenge: stop chasing success and start creating value

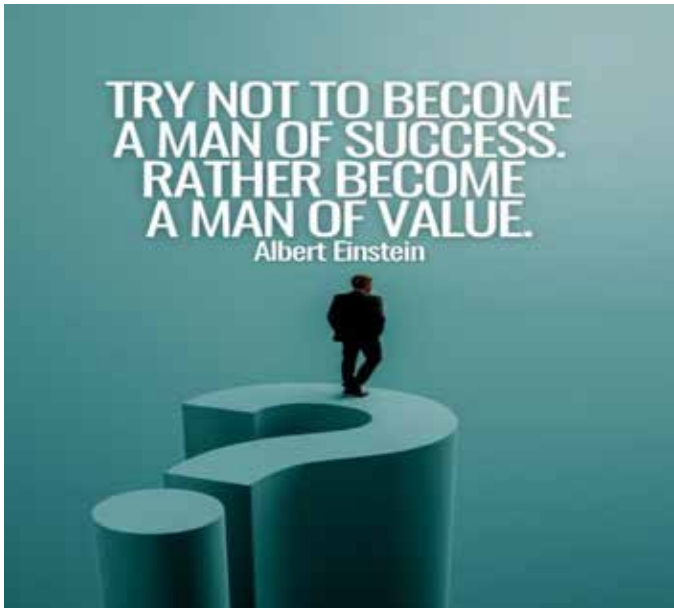
BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Before he became one of the most celebrated scientists in history, Albert Einstein offered a simple but profound piece of advice: “Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.” In a world that increasingly glorifies wealth, fame, power and public recognition, those words challenge us to rethink what truly matters.

Success and value are often treated as the same thing, yet they are fundamentally different. Success is usually measured by external indicators — money in the bank, titles on a business card, academic certificates, social media followers, or public applause. Value, on the other hand, is measured by the positive impact one has on others. It is about contribution rather than accumulation, service rather than status, and character rather than credentials.

The distinction matters because many people spend their lives chasing success, only to discover that it does not automatically bring fulfilment. We have all encountered individuals who appear successful on the outside but are deeply unhappy, disconnected, or lacking any real sense of purpose. Conversely, we have met people of modest means whose lives radiate meaning precisely because they have dedicated themselves to helping others, building communities and making a difference.

The education landscape offers a telling example. Across Kenya and much of the world, academic achievement is often held up as the ultimate goal. Parents, teachers and students focus intensely on examination grades, university placements and professional careers. These are important milestones, of course — but they should never be-



come the sole measure of a person's worth.

A student who scores an A but lacks honesty, compassion and a sense of responsibility may be considered successful, but not necessarily valuable. A learner who demonstrates integrity, resilience, empathy and a genuine willingness to serve others, on the other hand, possesses exactly the qualities that society desperately needs. Education should therefore aim not only at producing successful graduates but at nurturing valuable human beings.

The lesson extends naturally into leadership. Many leaders pursue positions because of the prestige and authority they confer. Yet history remembers leaders not for the offices they held, but for the value they created. The most admired are those who improved lives, inspired hope, and left institutions stronger than they found them.

In schools, for instance, an effective principal is not simply one who delivers impressive examination results. It is one who builds a culture where students feel safe, teachers feel supported, and learning genuinely flourishes. Such a leader may never receive national recognition, but the value created within that institution can transform

generations.

The same is true of teachers. Years after graduation, students rarely remember every lesson taught in class. What they do remember is the teacher who believed in them when no one else did, the mentor who offered encouragement during a difficult moment, the educator who helped them discover what they were capable of. These acts may never appear in performance evaluations, but they leave a mark that lasts a lifetime.

Einstein's advice is equally relevant in today's digital age. Social media has amplified the pursuit of success by rewarding visibility and popularity above almost everything else. Young people are constantly exposed to images of luxury lifestyles, celebrity culture and overnight success stories. The pressure to appear successful — rather than to actually be useful — can be overwhelming.

His counsel offers a refreshing alternative. Instead of asking, “How can I become famous?” or “How can I make more money?”, he invites us to ask, “How can I be useful?” and “How can I improve the lives of those around me?” These questions shift the focus from self-promotion to service, from personal gain to collective good.

Interestingly, many of the world's most respected individuals became successful precisely because they focused on creating value. They solved real problems, served their communities, advanced human knowledge, or championed causes that mattered. Their success was very often a by-product of that contribution, not the primary objective.

The ongoing conversations about leadership, education and national development in Kenya reinforce this truth. Our country does not merely need successful professionals — it needs valuable citizens. We need doctors who care deeply about their patients,

teachers who nurture character as well as competence, business leaders who act with integrity, and public servants who place the common good above their own interests.

Parents, too, play a critical role. Children should be taught early that their worth is not determined solely by grades, possessions or social status. Kindness, honesty, responsibility and a spirit of service are equally important measures of achievement, and they provide a far stronger foundation for life than any certificate or title ever could.

Einstein's message is not, ultimately, a rejection of success. There is nothing wrong with striving for excellence,

pursuing ambitious goals, or seeking to advance professionally. The danger lies in making success the final destination. When success becomes the sole objective, people risk compromising their values in the chase for recognition. When value becomes the priority, success tends to follow — naturally, and sustainably.

More than a century after Einstein spoke those words, they remain remarkably relevant. In a society consumed by achievement and appearances, they remind us that the true measure of a life is not what we gain but what we give. Titles fade, wealth can disappear, and fame is often fleeting. The value we create in the lives of others, however, endures long after we are gone.

The challenge is simple, yet profound: do not merely strive to be successful. Strive to be valuable. In the end, it is value — not success — that leaves a lasting legacy.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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BOOKS & LITERATURE with Muzamal Afzal

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHENAB, GUJRAT Department of English

PROJECT ON ROMANTIC POETRY

NAME: Muzamal Afzal

PROGRAM: BS English –
5th semester

SUGGESTED BY: Adnan Ali
Gujjar

PROJECT: Romantic Poetry

In the literary realm, we come across a big gun also acknowledged widely as the father of romantic poetry, William Wordsworth. Born on April 7th, 1770. Most of his poems describe nature and the beauty it carries. While delving in the ocean of the literary history of poetry, we come across the fact that William Wordsworth carved a completely new path for poetry by dressing it differently from the previous essence of classical conventions. Since the narrative structure of the classics was mostly based on flourished and complex narrative structure, however, William Wordsworth's narrative style deflects from the standard oratory and delves in the kind of language that is comprehensible for common men. The core themes found in his literary knittings, time and time again, revolve around nature, nostalgia, memories, ordinary men and elucidating the beauty of nature through his own experiences. He wrote a number of writings that showcase his unique approach to nature and offer insights to his nostalgic associations towards nature and its aspects.

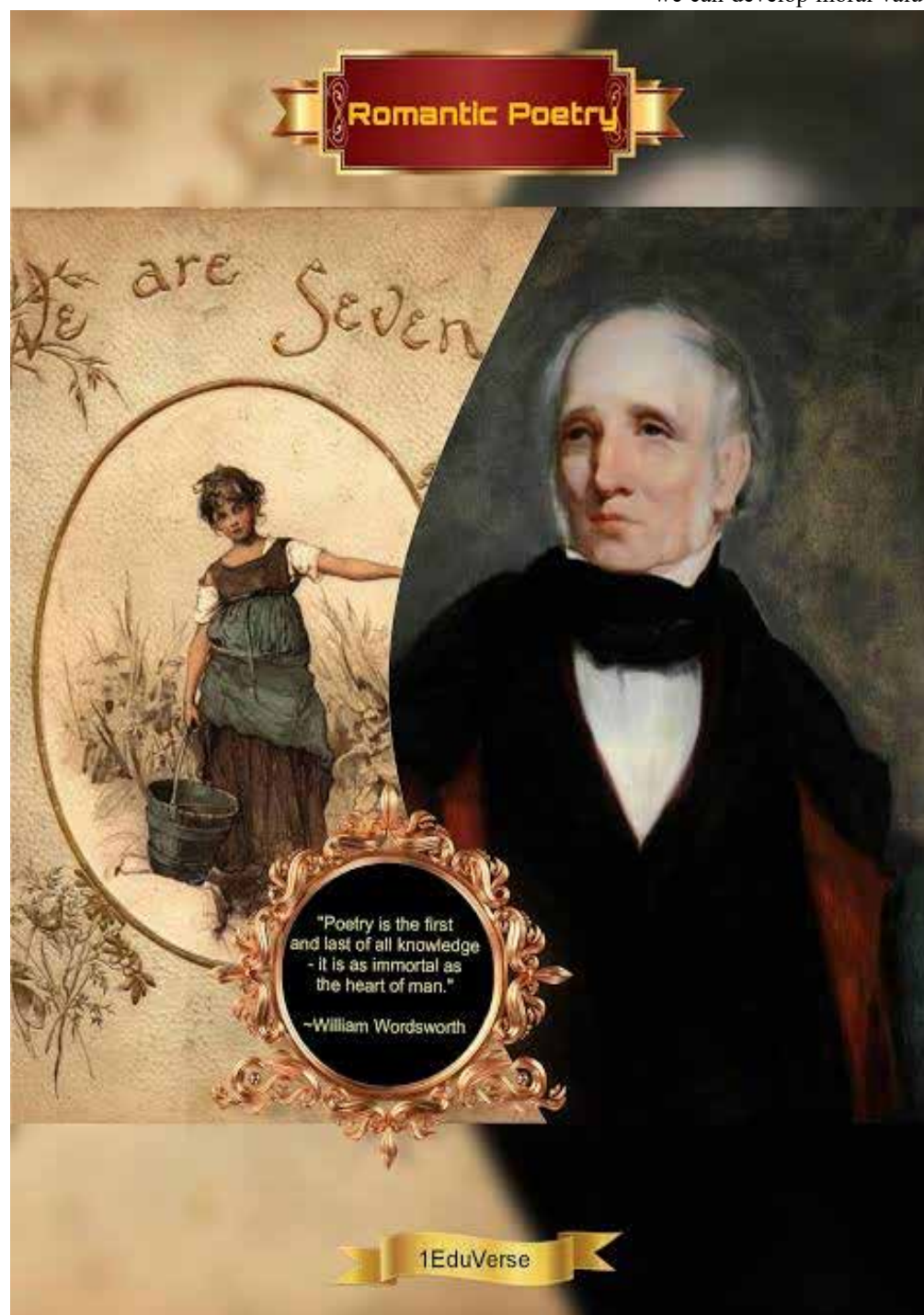
As we come across the the origin of this profound and thought provoking insights, we witness his efforts as he revolutionized poetry by negating the flourished writings of 18th century and focusing more on imagination, memory, nostalgia and nature. The collaborations of William Wordsworth with Samuel Tay-

lor Coleridge actually mark the start of Romantic era. Many of his works are celebrated widely including The Prelude, Lyrical Ballads, I wandered Lonely as a Cloud and Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey. He collaborated with Samuel Taylor Coleridge Through his remarkable style of writing, he revolutionizes the thoughts of the poets and readers alongside by bringing nature into account and changing the perspective of future generations.

One of the remarkable features that enlighten him as a different poet is Nostalgia. This feature is strongly focused in his poem which is Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey. This work of William Wordsworth stands tall in revealing the glimpses of his nostalgia and his insights to beautiful imagery of nature and roaming by the lake with his sister, Dorothy. Being the father of romantic poetry, he is also acknowledged as prophet of poetry because he was the first poet who actually brought a change in English poetry and transcended it to a higher level. In his remarkable work, Lines Written a Few Miles above

Tintern Abbey, he unveils the salient characteristics of romantic age. The fundamental features of romantic era are love for nature, imagination, nostalgia and depiction of emotions through spiritual reflection.

In the poem, he visits the



bank of River Wye after approximately five years. Five years before the current time, he visited the same site with his beloved sister that brings back the memories of his nostalgia alongside highlighting the relationship between nature and man. The whole poem is deeply enthusiastic full of emotions and glimpses of moments of his past bringing the philosophical and emotional aspects into limelight. The title in itself suggests that the poem is quite nostalgic and personal.

He does not depict the abbey solely rather he underscores the kind of emotions that rise in himself when he focuses on the nature and scenery around the abbey itself. So, the core feature of nostalgia is vividly showcased in this work as he recalls his memories from past of visiting Tintern Abbey with his sister.

Another feature in his writing is Pantheism. Pantheism, in simple words, means the art of seeing God through nature. This feature actually highlights him as a Pantheist

alongside being the father of nature. In his work, he showcases that nature is not merely a collection of objects to be seen by naked eye and praises by tongue rather, it actually possesses a divine power in itself. He believes that nature is actually a guide and a teacher that reforms the human soul. He perceived that if we live close to nature then we can develop moral values

some profound truths and fruitful experiences that are often neglected. He brings those experiences by using very simple style of writing so it can be interpreted by every men. His core focus remains on ordinary men and rural life alongside beautifying the beauty of nature. As he believes that the deep feelings of men are transformed and get their shape through thought-provoking reflection.

On the other hand, despite being the father of romantic poetry, he has faced severe criticisms, even though he deploys a very unique approach in his writing which is based on clarity and simplicity, he still endured some criticism from many other critiques. Some critiques highlight that the poetry of William Wordsworth is subjective to a very extreme extent and it carries the glimpses of philosophy that extends beyond what is considered standard. They perceive that his poetry is very philosophical. Other critics argue that his poetry actually faces a backlash in the respect that it lacks the kind of emotions and emotional intensity that his previous works carried abundantly and profoundly. However, his literary works engrave a thought-provoking insight on the minds of the readers that such sorts of criticism do very little to dim the lights of his contributions in the world of English Literature.

To put it all in a nutshell, William Wordsworth still stands as one of the tallest pillars in the era of romanticism through his ground breaking approach to nature and ordinary life. Through his powerful insights to the use of simple language, love of nature and nostalgic associations, he still lives a successful man to change the path of English poetry. His poetry still continues to inspire and change the minds of readers through their exclusive themes of relationship between humanity, the Almighty and nature.

through the gentleness it carries inside it.

Another important feature which we come across through his poetry is his focus on daily life, common men and ordinary people. He focuses on everyday experiences in his poetry. The writing style of William Wordsworth is quite easy for even a common to understand. In his poetry he mostly focuses on lives of ordinary people because he believes that the lives of ordinary men is filled

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The problem of translating abbreviations in the names of international organizations



Bo'riyeva Madinabonu Davron qizi
Master's Student, University of Exact and Social Sciences

The names of international organizations rarely travel intact from one language to another. English-based forms such as UN, EU, or WHO sometimes keep their original letters wher-

ever they go; elsewhere, a fully local abbreviation is built instead, drawn from a translation of the organization's complete name. Neither path is inherently wrong, but the coexistence of both, often within a single body of text, produces a kind of quiet inconsistency that most readers notice only as vague unease rather than a clearly identified problem.

This thesis focuses on that inconsistency and traces where it tends to come from. Well-established organizations are rarely at issue: decades of diplomatic and journalistic use have settled their names into fixed, widely recognized forms. The real

difficulty appears at the edges — newly founded alliances, recently signed agreements, regional groupings still in the process of building a public identity. Here, no settled convention yet exists, and different translators, publications, or institutions may each arrive at a different rendering, sometimes within weeks of one another. Once several versions are in circulation, none of them has any obvious claim to being the correct one, and readers are left to guess which form refers to which body.

The thesis argues that resolving this problem is less a matter of individual translator skill

than of coordination. Official terminology databases, national language commissions, and international press agencies could, in principle, converge on a single rendering far more quickly than they currently do, and closer cooperation between translators and standardization bodies would measurably reduce the confusion that currently surrounds newly formed institutions. Until such coordination becomes routine, translators are advised to favor the most widely circulated existing form, note any known alternatives, and avoid introducing yet another competing version unless genuinely necessary.



The moment before courage



By: Narputatova Gulruh

A week before the event, when I learned that I would be the host, my first emotion was not joy, but anxiety. I had never spoken in front of such a large audience before, and now the responsibility of hosting a solemn ceremony dedicated to the National Flag of the Republic of Uzbekistan was on my shoulders.

At night, I would try to memorize the script. Yet every time I looked at myself in the mirror, I did not see confidence. Instead, I felt somehow artificial, as though I were trying to become someone I was not. As the days passed, these feelings did not fade. They only grew stronger.

On the morning of the event, I put on my national attire and looked at myself in the mirror. I realized that this was not an ordinary day. Just like the flag, I too had to represent my homeland. That thought filled me with both pride and responsibility.



As soon as I entered the hall, my eyes fell on the audience. The students were waiting for the ceremony to begin, dressed beautifully in traditional national clothing. In the front rows sat our university rector, our dean, and our teachers. It seemed as though every one of them was looking at me, waiting for me to begin. This only made me more nervous.

Before stepping onto the stage, I could feel my hands trembling. The trembling was not

only in my hands—it was in my voice as well.

I walked onto the stage, took the microphone, and began with a few words about the symbolic meaning of our national flag. As I continued speaking, my voice trembled exactly as I had feared. I realized that I could hear it myself, and that those sitting in the front row could probably hear it too.

After a few sentences, I completely forgot part of the speech I had prepared. For a moment,

it felt as though my mind had gone blank and all the words had simply disappeared.

I froze.

The silence stretched on, and those few seconds felt like an eternity.

At that very moment, my eyes instinctively fell on our dean, who was sitting in the front row. He looked at me and gently nodded, giving me a quiet, reassuring gesture that seemed to say, "Everything is fine. Keep going."

That small gesture was enough. At that very moment, I understood that I simply had to continue.

I took a deep breath and began speaking again. I did not return to the exact place where I had forgotten my words. Instead, I continued with the sentences I could still remember. I do not remember exactly what I said, but I remember that I kept speaking.

When the event ended, some people I knew came up to me and said:

— It went well.

But deep inside, I knew it had not been perfect.

That night, when I returned to my room, I had an honest conversation with myself.

"Why am I so afraid?"

I kept analyzing why my voice had trembled and why I had forgotten my words.

And then I understood.

The problem was not that I did not know the words. The problem was that I did not believe in myself.

From that day on, I set myself a goal. I realized that there was only one way to overcome my fear: I had to speak in front of people.

Whenever I had the opportunity, I tried to speak, even if it was only in a small gathering. Each time, my voice trembled a little less. Each time, I discovered a little more of who I really was.

Months passed. Then, at another solemn event, I held the microphone in my hands once again.

I remembered that first day—the trembling voice, the forgotten words, the silence in the hall, and that small but powerful gesture from my dean.

But this time, my voice was steady.

The words came naturally.

And I stood there with confidence.

For the first time, I felt an incredibly powerful sense of happiness.

Because I realized something: This was my voice.

And that day, I understood that sometimes the greatest step forward begins with simply finding the courage to take the first step.

Narputatova Gulruh
Second-year student at the Faculty of English Philology, Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

SPORTS
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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *The former Ivory Coast midfielder says his landmark achievement signals a new era for African coaches in European football

Touré makes history as first African coach in Champions League

By Pascal Okoth

Yaya Touré has described his historic achievement of becoming the first African to coach a team in the UEFA Champions League as the beginning of a new era for the game on the continent.

The former Ivory Coast international has made the transition from an outstanding playing career to management, reaching one of the biggest stages in European football. His achievement represents a significant moment — not only for Touré personally, but for every African coach who has long sought greater opportunity at the elite level.

Reflecting on the milestone, Touré acknowledged the surreal nature of it while making clear just how much it means to him.

“It is true that it feels a bit strange. But on a personal level it is really nice. This is an important new era,” he said.

Touré spent years competing at the highest level as a midfielder, establishing himself as one of the most influential African players of his generation. His playing career included celebrated spells in European football, most notably at Manchester City, where he became a central figure in the club’s rise to domestic dominance. Now, with his focus firmly on coaching, reaching the Champions League marks another defining chapter.

He believes his presence in the competition is evidence that the landscape is beginning to shift. For years, African coaches have struggled to secure positions at the top of European football, despite the continent producing generations of talented players and technically astute tacticians. His breakthrough may well carry significance far beyond his own career.

“We can say that things are now changing and moving forward,” he added.



Yaya Touré .

Those words carry real weight. The Champions League is widely regarded as the pinnacle of European club football, and coaching at that level demands tactical sophistication, leadership under pressure and the ability to prepare a squad to compete against the continent’s very best. For Touré, it represents an entirely different challenge from his playing days. As a midfielder, he controlled games from the engine room, scored crucial goals and led by example on the pitch. As a coach, he must now shape matches from the technical area, build tactical plans and guide players towards results — a test of a very different kind.

His rise also carries the weight of expectation from African football supporters across the continent. Success at this level could encourage clubs in Europe to look beyond traditional coaching markets when appointing managers, and to give more serious consideration to coaches from Africa.

The broader picture reinforces just how overdue that shift is. African players have long been central to the Champions League — many from the continent have lifted the trophy — yet representation among coaches at the highest level has remained remarkably thin. Touré’s arrival on the Champions League touchline could help challenge that imbalance.

His journey is also a reminder of the importance of former players investing seriously in coaching education and preparing methodically for life after retirement. Touré has continued developing his understanding of the game since hanging up his boots, building experience steadily before taking on greater responsibilities.

Ultimately, success will not be measured simply by his presence in the competition, but by the performances of his team and his ability to compete against some of Europe’s most experienced coaches. Nevertheless, reaching

the tournament itself is no small thing.

For young African coaches watching his journey closely, the message is clear: the possibilities are expanding. Touré’s historic appearance could become a reference point for future generations who dream of coaching at the elite level in Europe. If more African coaches follow the same path, this moment may eventually be remembered not as an isolated milestone but as the start of something much larger.

Touré himself seems determined to see it that way. Rather than simply celebrating a personal accomplishment, he views the moment as evidence that football is genuinely moving forward.

He has already secured a lasting legacy as one of Africa’s greatest footballers. Through coaching, he now has the opportunity to build another — one that could shape the future of African representation in the European game for years to come.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *.Six clubs won on a thrilling opening night of the new-look, 36-team UEFA Champions League

Europe’s biggest football night is back — and it delivered

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

It is that time of year again. The UEFA Champions League is back, and European football’s grandest stage wasted absolutely no time in reminding us why we love it so much. Matchday One of the 2026–27 edition — now expanded to a 36-team league phase — produced goals, drama and late twists across the continent, with six clubs picking up winning starts.

The evening got under way with good news for English supporters. Aston Villa travelled to Belgium and came away with a hard-earned 3–2 victory over Club Brugge, with John McGinn claiming the honour of scoring the very first goal of the new campaign. Meanwhile, AEK Athens made it a night to remember for Greek football, beating Austrian debutants LASK 1–0 at home — their first win in the Champions League proper in 20 years, secured by a magnificent Răzvan Marin free kick midway through the first half.

Then came the main event. At the Santiago Bernabéu, Real Madrid hosted Inter Milan in the kind of fixture that makes the Champions League the spectacle it is. Kylian Mbappé opened the scoring in the 14th minute, and Federico Valverde doubled Madrid’s lead nine minutes later. Carlos Augusto pulled one back for Inter before the break, and the visitors pushed hard for an equaliser, but Madrid held firm to take the points in a tense, absorbing contest that could have gone either way.

Across the city of Manchester, Erling Haaland was simply doing what Erling Haaland does. The Norwegian was the undisputed star of the show as Manchester City defeated Porto 2–0 at the Estádio do Dragão. Porto goalkeeper Diogo Costa kept the visitors at bay with a string of fine saves in the first half, but



after the break there was no stopping City. Haaland headed in a cross from Matheus Nunes before converting at close range in stoppage time to seal a comfortable win. His tally now stands at 59 goals in as many Champions League appearances — a remarkable statistic for a man still seemingly just getting started. In France, Real Betis pulled off one of the nights’s most dramatic results. Making their first appearance in the Champions League in 21 years, the Spanish side came from two goals down to beat Lille 3–2 in a contest full of twists and plenty of nerve. Betis defender Marc Bartra was the hero, heading in twice to bring his side level before Troy Parrott found the bottom corner to complete the turnaround. Lille, who

played the final 34 minutes with ten men after Ethan Mbappé was shown a red card for elbowing, will rue what might have been. For Betis, it was the perfect way to announce their return to Europe’s biggest stage. Germany provided another five-goal thriller. Borussia Dortmund edged Villarreal 3–2 in a match where all five goals arrived after the break. Serhou Guirassy was the decisive figure, netting twice — in the 80th and 85th minutes — to give the home side the win after an own goal and a Villarreal equaliser had made for a tense and unpredictable second half. A deflected free kick from Nicolás Pépé gave the Spanish side brief hope, but time ran out and Dortmund celebrated a winning start. So, at the close of a wonderful

opening night, six clubs took maximum points: Real Madrid, Manchester City, Borussia Dortmund, Aston Villa, Real Betis and AEK Athens. The goals flowed, the drama was plentiful, and the new expanded format is already delivering on its promise of more football, more competition and more memorable moments. The action continues in the days ahead, with Liverpool facing Atlético Madrid, Napoli hosting Arsenal, Barcelona welcoming Feyenoord, and PSG taking on Slovan Bratislava among the fixtures still to come. If Matchday One is anything to go by, this is going to be quite a season.

SPORTS NEWS

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When Gen Z rises

By: Irfan Khan

@themkenyatimes

Youth today, across the world, is in full swing—with their ability to fearlessly question dynastic politics, one-sided decisions by powerful elites, and the legitimacy of governments, and, indeed, publicly vouching for their basic human and political rights. In well-educated, morally refined and economically empowered youth lies the true strength of a nation—it is undoubtedly for any state the greatest opportunity and the greatest challenge. In a world where people strongly believe in democracy, supremacy of law and in principles of equality and justice, nations that fail in building these pillars risk falling behind permanently.

Gen Z (born between 1997–2012) continues to break the ice— independently fighting against mighty elite-capture and defending their political rights. For them today, might is no longer right, silence is a grave crime and resistance is the only option against what feels like injustice and inequality. No force in the world, however brutal it may be, can throw cold water on the courage, enthusiasm and valiance of Gen Z.

Truth is evergreen. States can no longer silence the voice of youth; if they fail to ensure the rule of law, accountability, transparent and digital governance and fair distribution of resources, it may turn out that weeks can bring about what decades could not. For any state to prosper and succeed, it is then imperative to ensure the rule of law, uphold justice, expand public facilities and promote employment opportunities.

Before our eyes, India is an ostensible example where Gen Z—now united by a unanimous political platform, Cockroach Janta Party—took to the streets against a repressive system (Modi's BJP)—widely defined by the flagrant violation of basic rights, dominance of elite-capture, economic mismanagement, decadent education system and weaponization of mainstream media. Initially, the uprising began against the unfair examination system, but it ultimately broadened into a wider



A Gen-Z Revolution in Pakistan

movement, advocating for economic and democratic rights. Unquestionably, it bitterly exposed Modi's regime and its cunning tactics. It may not have swept away the government; yet it has made considerable headway, earning support from other sections of society and demanding justice for millions of economically deprived and mentally exhausted students. While the mainstream media kept the mass public protest led by youth off the wall, the social media platforms served as mobilizing tools that united the voice of Indian youth.

Likewise, the revolution in Bangladesh was triggered by mass public protests led by hapless students against the 15-year iron-fist rule of Sheikh Hasina Wajid—who had established an unfair job quota system that largely benefited members of the ruling party. Besides, her order for the deployment of troops in the name of maintaining law and order, use of brutal military force and making ridiculous remarks (such as "Razakar") further inflamed the youth's wrath and ire. Although many were reportedly killed in road clashes with security forces, yet the students achieved victory at the end. And Bangladesh's prime minister

fled to India—a prelude to a freely elected government and a defining victory in Bangladesh's politics.

Moreover, what factor sparked revolt in Nepal was frequent bans on social media platforms, which disrupted people's access to internet facilities. Youth, which was already facing growing unemployment, elite-capture and economic mismanagement due to bulk corruption, could no longer remain silent spectators; they understood that what can be cured must not be deliberately endured. In this long struggle led by Gen Z, dozens of protesters were killed in what is widely viewed as a flagrant violation of human rights in Nepal's modern political history. Within days, the prime minister stepped down, and a young leader was installed as the new prime minister, with the elections that followed months later.

At the same time, in 2022 in Sri Lanka, Gen Z lit up the streets and amplified resistance against a tyrant regime.

Unlike Bangladesh and Nepal, Sri Lanka's case was quite different: it was the product of years of struggle against the dynastic political family that had captured the country's politics and economy. In addition, cor-

ruption, misgovernance, ingrained poverty and soaring inflation added to people's miseries. It was largely the efforts of the young population that opened doors for democracy to stand on its feet and the economy to flourish.

Over the last few years, whatever has unfolded in these South Asian states has bare and clear lessons for Pakistan and its elites. In Pakistan, Gen Z makes up a significant portion of the population, numbering near to 70 million. And yes, its contributions to the economy, information technology, medicine, science and technology, and in other walks of life cannot be neglected at any cost.

However, in Pakistan, youth has been facing crisis after crisis. For the last few decades, people have been grappling with poverty, economic impoverishment and terrorism—the result of years of inconsistency in governance, alienation of people, democratic erosion, militarism and fragile domestic policy. Additionally, frequent bans on social media platforms, shrinking freedom of speech and imprisonment of political/social activists have only exacerbated people's anger rather than silencing them. There is no dearth of events where law-enforcement

agencies resort to unconstitutional and coercive measures to torture pacifist citizens protesting against state policies and demanding constitutional rights. Similarly, the administrative system has been frail and fragile; the judiciary itself is in shackles; corruption is at peak; gap between citizens and state is wider; the economy largely depends on external assistance, which cuts our financial autonomy. Poverty stands at 41%. The country has the lowest rank in the South Asian human capital development ladder.

Whatever is unfolding in KP, Balochistan and AJK is a case in point. State's angry remarks against social and political activists and its draconian policies—combined with politicians' lack of willingness and harmony—cause the fire to intensify instead of extinguishing it. What is the greatest trauma, I see, is the sheer negligence and apathy of powerful stakeholders, turning a blind eye to the obstacles the Gen Z is encountering and keeping grave silence on the collapse of democratic rule.

The world must learn from South Asia's Gen Z moment. We must be the first. When Gen Z rises, everything changes. Government, leaders and politics. The more we empower youth and make them democratically minded, the more prosperous becomes country. On the other hand, their political, economic and social deprivation unleashes seriously negative consequences sooner or later.

Let us not fool ourselves. Let the state uphold the rule of law, ensure the independence of the judiciary and protect the rights of its citizens. Gen Z vehemently desires a freely elected government, rule of law, transparent and digital governance, the right to express themselves freely, and open access to economic opportunities and other facilities. If we prioritize these outstanding pillars, we can then move on the road to peace, progress and prosperity. We will remain in a quagmire and doldrums if we fail to do so.

The writer is a student. The views expressed here are his own.