Kenya has the minerals, but who will own the value?
Kenya is sitting on a resource that could redefine its economic future. Beneath its soil lie minerals that the world increasingly considers strategically critical
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From farm waste to farm wealth: How Nyeri entrepreneur is doubling farmers' earnings
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The Mt. Kenya Times
Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **Kenya is now inside twelve months of a general election that is shaping up**

Kenya's voter data clash

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission yesterday threatened arrests over social media allegations that an official conducting voter registration at Kenyatta University was secretly transferring students to vote in Wajir North — an incident that, whatever its facts, laid bare the fragility of public trust in Kenya's electoral machinery less than a year before the country goes to the polls.

The video, which circulated rapidly on social media on Wednesday, showed a group of students confronting an IEBC clerk at a registration desk inside the university. The youths waved slips they claimed were evidence of transfers to a distant constituency in northern Kenya and demanded an explanation. The clip spread within hours, igniting accusations of "voter dumping" — the manipulation of electoral rolls by moving voters into target constituencies to swing outcomes — and triggering a political firefight that forced the commission to issue a detailed clarification before the day was out.

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IEBC chair Erastus Ethekon

Gachagua takes 2027 campaign to Portland as US diaspora tour intensifies

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua yesterday arrived in Portland, Oregon, continuing a 50-day United States tour aimed at consolidating diaspora support and raising resources ahead of the 2027 general election.

Gachagua announced his arrival on his official social media account, saying he hoped discussions with Kenyans in the city would be fruitful.

Portland is his second stop on a five-city itinerary that began in Spokane, Washington, on 4 September and will take him through Kansas, Dallas and Boston before his expected return to Kenya in mid-October.

The DCP leader has been candid about what he is hearing on the ground. "As I continue to engage with Kenyans across various states in the USA, one thing is crystal clear: there is a deep sense of frustration with how our country is being governed," Gachagua said. He added that despite those frustrations, diaspora Kenyans remained committed to advocating for what he described as responsible governance and a new political dispensation.

Gachagua departed Kenya on 26 August, saying time away from domestic political pressure would allow him to reflect and make independent decisions about his 2027 strategy — free, he noted pointedly, from the daily noise of partisan influence.

Some of the moments as captured in pictures












Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times


The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative.
It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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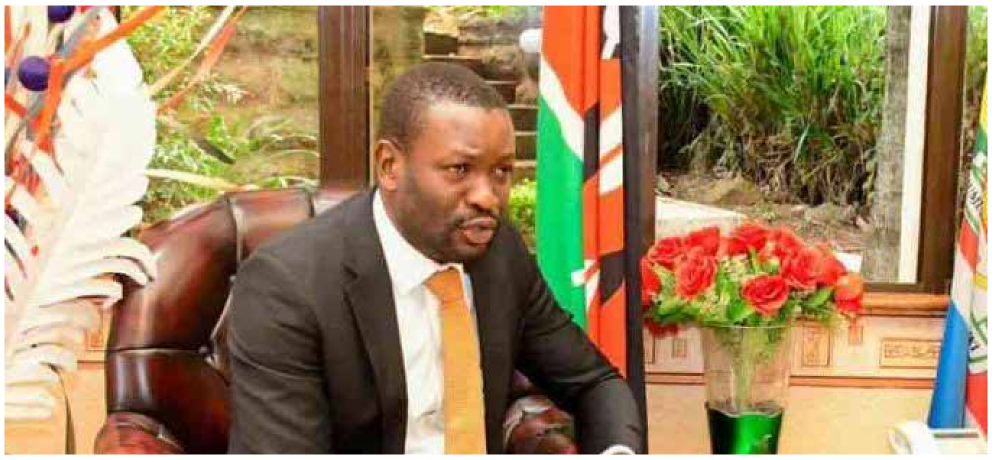
NEWS IN BRIEF

Chief Justice Martha Koome yesterday challenged the newly appointed Teachers Service Commission commissioners to approach their roles as a duty of service rather than an exercise of authority, warning against the temptation to treat public office as personal power. Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony, Koome drew a clear distinction between holding office and serving the public, urging the commissioners to keep the interests of Kenya's teachers and learners at the centre of every decision they make. The appointment of the new commission comes at a critical moment for the education sector, with unresolved disputes over teacher welfare, staffing shortages and curriculum implementation placing the TSC under sustained pressure to demonstrate responsive and accountable leadership across the country's public schools.



The Political Parties Disputes Tribunal yesterday upheld the removal of Edwin Sifuna as Secretary-General of the Orange Democratic Movement, dismissing his third legal challenge against his ouster in a ruling that effectively closes the door on his bid to reclaim the position. The tribunal's decision delivers a definitive blow to Sifuna, who had persistently contested his removal through successive legal challenges since being ejected from the party's top administrative role. Each attempt has failed to persuade the tribunal that his dismissal was procedurally or substantively flawed. The ruling lands at a turbulent moment for ODM, which is navigating a significant leadership transition following the death of longtime party leader Raila Odinga, with the party now consolidating under Oburu Oginga ahead of the 2027 general election.

Thousands of law graduates could gain new pathways to qualify as advocates of the High Court of Kenya if draft regulations proposing an overhaul of professional legal training are adopted, in a development that would mark the most significant shake-up of the country's legal profession in decades. The proposed changes would break the Kenya School of Law's longstanding monopoly over the Advocates Training Programme, opening the qualification route to additional accredited institutions and potentially easing one of the most persistent bottlenecks facing graduates of Kenya's rapidly expanding law schools. Critics of the current system have long argued that limited training capacity artificially restricts entry into the legal profession, leaving qualified graduates in a prolonged holding pattern while the public suffers a shortage of accessible legal representation.

Kenya yesterday moved to close the gap between technical training and employer needs as the International TVET Conference 2026 opened in Nairobi, drawing policymakers, educators and industry leaders into a shared conversation about skills, employment and the future of work. The conference, hosted against a backdrop of persistent youth unemployment and a rapidly changing labour market, centres on strengthening partnerships between training institutions and the private sector — a relationship that critics say has long been too weak to produce graduates ready for the workplace. With Kenya's Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector under growing pressure to deliver practical, job-ready skills at scale, delegates are expected to push for curriculum reforms, stronger industry linkages and clearer pathways from the classroom to sustainable employment.

United States President Donald Trump yesterday declared that the war with Iran would end following the upcoming midterm elections, signalling a potential shift in American military posture in the Middle East after months of sustained conflict that has roiled global energy markets and rattled international financial systems. Trump's remarks, characteristically brief and unaccompanied by strategic detail, offered no timeline, no diplomatic framework and no indication of what form an end to hostilities might take — whether through negotiation, military conclusion or a unilateral American withdrawal from active engagement. The announcement nonetheless sent immediate signals across international markets, given the war's significant impact on global oil prices since hostilities escalated in February, with Kenya among the countries that applied for emergency financing partly in response to the resulting economic pressure.

Kenya Railways Corporation's legacy business bled deeper into the red yesterday, with operating losses widening by KSh719.6 million in the year ended 30 June, dealing a fresh blow to the agency's long-running and so far unsuccessful efforts to return its traditional rail operations to financial health. The deterioration underscores the structural challenges facing the corporation's metre-gauge network, which has struggled to compete with road transport, attract sufficient freight volumes and shed the weight of ageing infrastructure and accumulated inefficiencies that have dogged it for years. The widening losses arrive as Kenya Railways juggles the financial demands of the Standard Gauge Railway alongside a legacy business that continues to consume public resources without delivering a credible path to sustainability, raising uncomfortable questions about the long-term future of the old network.

Politics Addressing residents in Bomet Town, Ruto said a KSh1.7B water project had been completed

Ruto tours Bomet amid Gachagua criticism over delivery record

The president unveiled billions in infrastructure pledges during a four-day South Rift visit, as his impeached former deputy questioned whether national promises have been kept

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday continued a four-day working tour of Bomet and Kericho counties, launching and inspecting development projects worth billions of shillings, while facing sharp criticism from Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua, who accused the administration of failing to deliver on its 2022 campaign commitments to the South Rift region.

Ruto kicked off the tour on Wednesday with the laying of a foundation stone for the Kapkwen Modern Market in Bomet and went on to unveil what the government described as a KSh19B roads programme for the county. On Thursday he presided over the groundbreaking of a KSh3.1B road project covering the 53-kilometre Sabunit–Kapkurer/Furaha–Hill Tea Access Road in Kipkelion East, Kericho County, with the contractor expected to complete works within 24 months.

Addressing residents in Bomet Town, Ruto said a KSh1.7B water project had been completed, with an additional KSh600M earmarked to expand connections across the county by December. He also announced KSh2.8B for last-mile electricity connectivity to 25,000 households,

President William Ruto yesterday continued a four-day working tour of Bomet and Kericho counties

11 modern markets at a cost of KSh1.7B, 220 affordable housing units already under way and a KSh1B stadium. Cabinet Secretaries Aden Duale (Health), Davis Chirchir (Roads), Alice Wahome (Lands and Housing) and Hassan Joho (Mining and Blue Economy) accompanied the president.

"We are fulfilling our promises to the people as we accelerate the transformation of our nation. Across the country, the results speak for themselves," Ruto told the crowd. Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot, who was also present, said leaders from the region had intensified their campaign for Ruto's re-election, citing the projects as evidence of the government's achievements ahead of the 2027 general election.

The visit was also marked by an emotional moment when a young girl broke down in tears while sharing her family's struggles during a public engagement. Ruto was visibly moved, wiping his own tears with a handkerchief before comforting the girl.

Gachagua, who was removed from the deputy presidency through a parliamentary impeachment process in 2023, used the occasion to mount a pointed political attack. In a statement issued on Thursday, the DCP leader claimed there was not a single new national government project for Ruto to launch, commission or inspect, accusing the administration of relying on county government facilities — including the Bomet County Assembly and the Mother and Child Hospital — to demonstrate development.

"Such tears will no longer move Kenyans into voting for the wrong person," Gachagua said, dismissing the emotional exchange with the girl as performative.

The government did not respond directly to Gachagua's statement. Ruto is scheduled to conclude his South Rift tour on Saturday with visits to Chebunyo in Bomet before proceeding to Kericho Town. With the 2027 election cycle now firmly in view, the tour underscores the political significance of the South Rift — a region that delivered strong support for Ruto in 2022 and which both the government and the emerging opposition regard as contested ground.

Omtatah ejected from Senate for three days over 'yapping' remarks

Busia Senator Okiya Omtatah

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Busia Senator Okiya Omtatah was yesterday ejected from the Senate and barred from its sittings for three days after refusing to withdraw remarks in which he described President William Ruto as "yapping."

Senate Speaker Amason Kingi ordered the removal after Omtatah declined to comply with a ruling made during the previous sitting that the word was unparliamentary. Rather than withdraw, Omtatah chose to defend his language, arguing the term was a permissible description of excessive political communication and citing Westminster parliamentary precedent.

"Yapping is not unparliamentary. Go and check the record of the Westminster Parliament," Omtatah said from the floor before Kingi cut him short.

"I order you to leave the chamber for three sitting days consecutively," Kingi ruled, warning that defiance would bring the Sergeant-at-Arms and a 90-day suspension. "Don't make me direct the Sergeant-at-Arms to come for you. Let's observe decorum."

Several senators expressed unease. Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale argued the word merely meant talking too much. "If we are going to start punishing senators for their opinions, it means we are breaching the doctrine of freedom of speech in this House," Khalwale said. Homa Bay Senator Moses Kajwang' warned that suspending a senator effectively left an entire county without Senate representation.

Kingi held firm, saying the previous ruling stood and could not be reviewed. Senators wishing to change the rules, he added, could seek formal amendments to the Standing Orders.


NEWS PAPER
IN BUSINESS
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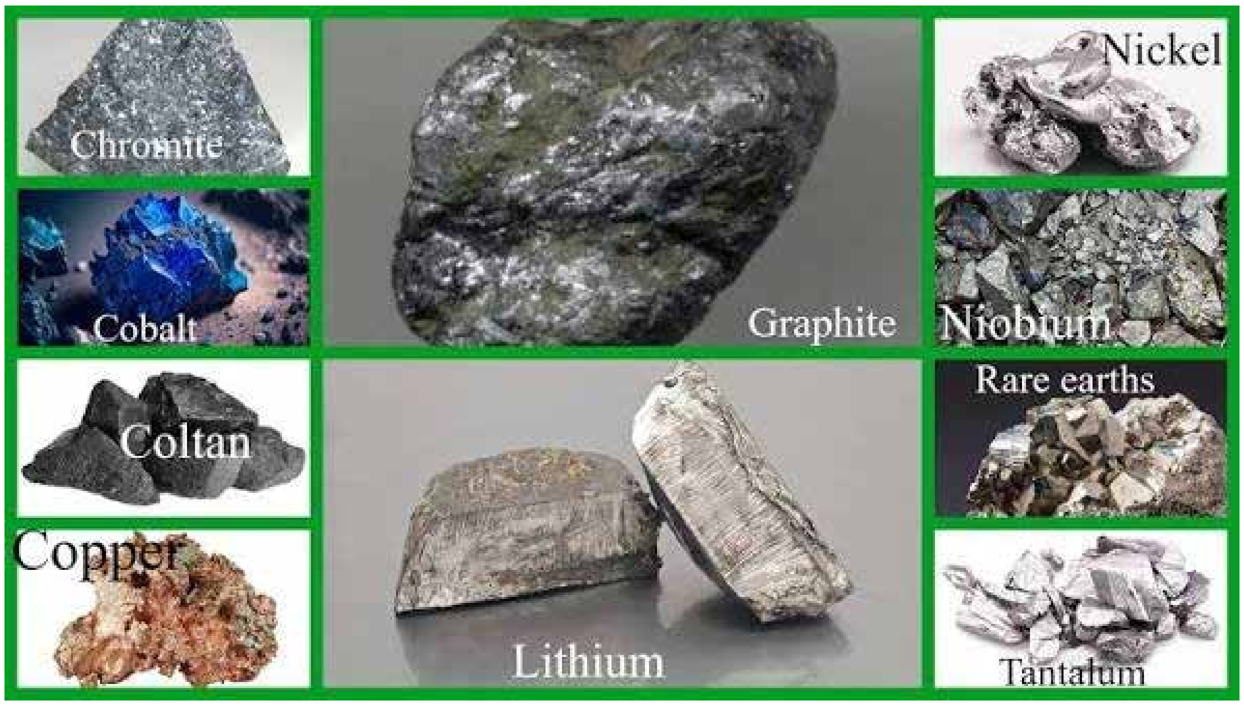
Minerals For decades, Africa has wrestled with a painful contradiction: a continent extraordinarily rich in natural resources yet persistently unable to translate that wealth into broad-based prosperity

Kenya has the minerals, but who will own the value?

The rush for Kenya's rare earth wealth presents an opportunity — and a warning the country cannot afford to ignore

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes



Minerals

Kenya is sitting on a resource that could redefine its economic future. Beneath its soil lie minerals that the world increasingly considers strategically critical — rare earth elements, niobium, titanium, graphite and other materials now central to global technology, energy and industrial supply chains. Yet the discovery of valuable resources raises a question Kenya must confront before the first shovel enters the ground: will Kenyans merely watch their minerals leave the country in raw form, or will they finally capture the value created from them?

The question has grown more urgent following renewed international interest in Kenya's critical minerals. The United States has expressed willingness to support Kenya in developing a domestic processing industry, while the government has publicly emphasised local processing and value addition as non-negotiable priorities. Mrima Hill in Kwale County has attracted particular attention for its deposits of rare earth minerals and niobium, potentially worth tens of billions of dollars. The interest is welcome. But it should not simply be celebrated as another foreign investment opportunity. It should be treated as a defining test of Kenya's economic policy.

For decades, Africa has wrestled with a painful contradiction: a continent extraordinarily rich in natural resources yet persistently unable to translate that wealth into broad-based prosperity. Raw materials are extracted, shipped elsewhere for processing and eventually return to African markets as expensive finished products. The continent provides the inputs and buys back the outputs at a premium. Kenya cannot afford to repeat that cycle.

If minerals are extracted from Kenyan soil, transported abroad and processed elsewhere, the country risks retaining only a fraction of the economic value they could generate. The larger opportunities — processing, manufacturing, technology, specialised services, high-skilled employment — would remain beyond its borders. That is why value addition must be more than a government slogan. It must become a measurable, enforceable and non-negotiable condition of doing business in Kenya's extractive sector.

A mineral-processing industry built within Kenya could create employment far beyond the mine itself. It would stimulate engineering, construction, transport, research, manufacturing and technical education. It could open supply chains to Kenyan companies rather than leaving the sector entirely in the hands of multinational corporations operating with imported labour, imported expertise and profits that flow outward.

But there is another side to this story, and it must be spoken plainly.

Natural resources can become a curse when governance is weak. Where contracts are negotiated behind closed doors, communities are excluded from decisions affecting their land, environmental standards are quietly set aside and revenues disappear through corruption or opaque fiscal arrangements, even enormous mineral wealth can coexist with grinding poverty. Africa's extractive history is full of such examples. Kenya's policymakers know this. The question is whether they have the political discipline to act differently.

Communities living around mining areas deserve more than promises and development-speak. They must see tangible benefits — employment, infrastructure, healthcare, education, environmental protection and transparent revenue-sharing mechanisms that place real money in county and community hands. Mining must not leave behind degraded land and disappointed communities while profits vanish elsewhere. If that becomes the pattern at Mrima Hill or any other site, no amount of GDP figures will redeem the political and human cost.

Foreign investors are necessary. Mining and mineral processing require enormous capital, specialised technology and expertise that Kenya does not yet possess at scale. Welcoming that investment is not weakness — but surrendering national interest in the process would be. Kenya should seek partnerships that transfer technology, build local capacity, develop Kenyan enterprises and create supply-chain opportunities for domestic companies. The goal is not to exclude foreign participation. The goal is to ensure that Kenyans are not excluded from the benefits of what happens on their own soil.

The government's current emphasis on local processing provides a genuine opening. President William Ruto has publicly linked critical minerals development to job creation and domestic processing. American officials involved in bilateral discussions have similarly stressed local value addition. But policy statements must eventually produce measurable outcomes. How many jobs will be created for Kenyans? What share of processing will take place domestically? How many Kenyan firms will participate in supply chains? What percentage of revenues will reach national and county governments? What environmental safeguards will be legally enforceable? These are not anti-investment questions. They are the questions any responsible government must be able to answer before ground is broken.

Kenya must also understand its bargaining position clearly. The global scramble for critical minerals — driven by the energy transition, electric vehicle manufacturing, semiconductor production and defence technology — gives resource-holding nations real leverage. But leverage only works if it is used with clarity and confidence. The danger is that competition among foreign powers eager to secure Kenya's minerals could turn the country into another arena for external interests, with Kenyans watching from the margins. That must not be allowed to happen.

What Kenya needs, therefore, is a clear national critical-minerals strategy — one that prioritises geological research, transparent licensing, local processing requirements, skills development, technology transfer, environmental protection and domestic manufacturing capacity. It needs stronger mechanisms for tracking production and revenues so that citizens can understand what is being extracted, by whom, at what declared value and where the resulting money actually goes. Transparency is not a courtesy. In the extractive sector, it is the difference between wealth and waste.

The distinction between being a mining country and being a mineral-processing and manufacturing country is not a matter of semantics. It is the difference between exporting a raw mineral once and building industries, expertise and employment that persist for generations. Kenya has an opportunity to make that choice deliberately, with its eyes open, and with its national interest firmly at the centre of every negotiation.

The minerals beneath Kenya's soil are real. The question is whether the vision, institutions and political discipline exist to ensure that wealth underground becomes wealth for the people above it.

If Kenya gets this right, Mrima Hill and the deposits alongside it could become genuine symbols of industrial transformation — a model for how African nations can finally break the cycle of exporting resources while importing prosperity.

If it gets it wrong, the story will be familiar. And that is precisely why the choice must be made carefully, transparently and now. It is not buried underground. It sits squarely in the hands of those who govern today.

Misinformation **The video, which circulated rapidly on social media on Wednesday, showed a group of students confronting an IEBC clerk at a registration desk inside the university**

Voter registration row exposes Kenya's pre-election information war

A viral video and a contested IEBC desk at Kenyatta University have become a window into the disinformation battlefield that will define the road to August 2027

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission yesterday threatened arrests over social media allegations that an official conducting voter registration at Kenyatta University was secretly transferring students to vote in Wajir North — an incident that, whatever its facts, laid bare the fragility of public trust in Kenya's electoral machinery less than a year before the country goes to the polls.

The video, which circulated rapidly on social media on Wednesday, showed a group of students confronting an IEBC clerk at a registration desk inside the university. The youths waved slips they claimed were evidence of transfers to a distant constituency in northern Kenya and demanded an explanation. The clip spread within hours, igniting accusations of "voter dumping" — the manipulation of electoral rolls by moving voters into target constituencies to swing outcomes — and triggering a political firefight that forced the commission to issue a detailed clarification before the day was out.

IEBC chairperson Erastus Ethekon confirmed yesterday that the Kenyatta University desk was part of the commission's Continuous Voter Registration exercise, deployed under its mandate to reach eligible citizens at strategic locations. The key clarification concerned the slips brandished in the video. Ethekon explained that acknowledgement slips are issued only to newly registered voters, not to those seeking to transfer their polling stations, because people requesting transfers are already on the voter register and go through a separate process at constituency offices. The slips seen in the video, the commission maintained, were therefore consistent with new registrations, not transfers.

"The role of the IEBC is to facilitate the registration of eligible Kenyans as voters and does not direct, compel or influence voters to select a particular polling station," the commission said in a statement that simultaneously announced it was working with government agencies to establish whether any offences had been committed — and that arrests would follow where culpability was found.

It was a striking combination: a technical rebuttal and a criminal investigation announced in the same breath. The IEBC did not say the video was fabricated, did not name any individuals for arrest and did not explain the full context of the slips or the clerk's conduct. What it did, with considerable urgency, was signal that it understood the political stakes of what had just happened.

Because the stakes are enormous. Kenya is now inside twelve months of a general election that is shaping up to be among the most consequential — and most contested — in the country's post-independence history. President William Ruto, who is seeking re-election, faces a fractured opposition landscape dominated by the Democracy for the Citizens Party of his former deputy Rigathi Gachagua, alongside a reconstituted opposition movement whose coalition-building remains unfinished. The voter register is not merely a bureaucratic document in this environment. It is a political weapon, and every constituency added or subtracted from a candidate's stronghold carries real electoral arithmetic.

More than 2.6 million new voters have already been added to the register ahead of the 2027 election, according to IEBC figures, with youth-led registration campaigns — running under slogans like "Niko Kadi" — generating a bottom-up energy that has surprised observers. Gen Z, whose street protests in 2024 forced a dramatic political reckoning, is being actively courted by every significant political formation, including Ruto's UDA. The IEBC itself has issued pointed warnings that young Kenyans who want reform must register to vote, noting a striking gap between Gen Z's political activism and their presence at registration centres.

Into that combustible environment, the Kenyatta University video landed like a lit match. It did not matter that the commission produced a plausible technical explanation. In the current political climate, a viral clip travels further and faster than a press statement, and the allegation of voter manipulation in a university — a space associated with the very youth constituency every political party is fighting to win — was almost perfectly designed to go viral.

IEBC chair Erastus Ethekon

That is the disinformation threat Kenya faces as it approaches August 2027, and it is far larger than any single video. Research by the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa has documented how Kenya's pre-election environment is already being shaped by AI-generated deepfakes, coordinated social media operations and fabricated documents. Forged memos purportedly from opposition parties, fake technical reports attributed to credible international organisations and hashtag campaigns designed to inflame ethnic tensions have all circulated in the past year. TikTok has emerged as the leading platform for electoral misinformation, reaching audiences of hundreds of thousands before corrections catch up.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation, in a recent report on media freedom risks ahead of 2027, warned that internet shutdowns — threatened by a Cabinet Secretary for ICT in January 2025 — could create information vacuums that disinformation fills instantly. The Communications Authority recorded 657.8 million cyber threats in just three months in 2024, and both government and media institutions have suffered successful cyberattacks. "Internet shutdowns create an information vacuum, and misinformation often fills the gap," the Foundation's report concluded.

The implications for electoral integrity are direct and serious. A manipulated video released at a critical moment in a campaign can spread to millions before any institution has time to respond. A fabricated document can entrench a false narrative in public consciousness weeks before a correction reaches the same audience. And in a country where the legitimacy of election results has been fiercely disputed in 1992, 2007 and 2017, the damage that pre-election misinformation can inflict on public confidence in the IEBC is not theoretical — it is historically documented, and the wounds from past cycles have never fully healed.

Ethekon himself has repeatedly insisted that stealing a Kenyan election is now impossible given the transparency of KIEMS technology and the audit trails built into the system. "Every action at the polling station leaves a trace, every result is publicly verifiable," he said last December. That confidence may well be technically justified. But technical integrity and public perception are not the same thing. A commission that can demonstrate an impeccable vote count will still lose the battle for legitimacy if a significant portion of the electorate has been primed, by weeks of viral misinformation, to disbelieve the result before the counting even begins.

The Kenyatta University incident, therefore, is both a news story and a warning. The IEBC's response — technically credible, legally serious, but incomplete enough to leave questions open — illustrates precisely the challenge the commission faces over the next eleven months: it must not only run a clean election, but be seen, continuously and convincingly, to be doing so, in an information environment designed to make that perception as difficult as possible to maintain.

Kenya has been here before. The difference this time is the speed, scale and sophistication of the tools available to those who want to undermine trust before a single ballot is cast.

Medical ODM Director of Communications Philip Etale confirmed the senator's travel, saying: "Yes, he is in the United Kingdom for a routine checkup

Oburu confirms UK medical trip a day after ODM cited official duties

The 83-year-old ODM leader's belated disclosure has raised questions about transparency at a critical moment for the party, with the 2027 election cycle already under way

Siaya Senator and Orange Democratic Movement party leader Oburu Oginga

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Siaya Senator and Orange Democratic Movement party leader Oburu Oginga yesterday confirmed he is in the United Kingdom for a routine medical check-up, a day after his party said he was abroad on official duties without disclosing any link to his health.

In a statement issued on Thursday afternoon, Oburu said he travelled to the UK on the advice of his doctors and the party leadership for a thorough evaluation of his health, alongside a period of rest and recuperation. The disclosure came 24 hours after an ODM statement — issued in the context of a Central Committee meeting — stated only that Oburu was "out of the country on official duties," with no mention of his medical condition or whereabouts.

ODM Director of Communications Philip Etale confirmed the senator's travel, saying: "Yes, he is in the United Kingdom for a routine checkup. He is doing fine." Etale added that Oburu is expected to return to Kenya on Saturday, once he has completed his scheduled medical examinations.

The sequence of communications has drawn scrutiny. ODM's Wednesday statement offered no explanation for why the nature of Oburu's absence was withheld, and the party has not commented on the discrepancy. For supporters of one of Kenya's most prominent political families — Oburu is the elder brother of the late ODM leader Raila Odinga, who died earlier this year — the gap between the two statements was enough to fuel speculation that the party's communications sought to shield details of its leader's health from public view.

Oburu departed Kenya on 6 September, days after he was briefly admitted to the Nairobi Hospital on 1 September — a visit that had itself prompted a wave of public concern and media coverage. At the time, Oburu moved quickly to manage the narrative. "I had only briefly visited the hospital for a general check-up with my doctors and have since returned home," he said, adding: "Being sick is a normal human experience and should not alarm anyone. The day I am truly sick, I will inform you all, for I am a very transparent person."

Thursday's statement was his first direct confirmation that he had subsequently travelled abroad for further evaluation.

In the statement, Oburu framed his temporary absence not merely as a health matter but as a deliberate leadership exercise. "Our party possesses the internal mechanisms, the democratic maturity, and the systems to handle day-to-day activities seamlessly," he said. He expressed confidence in his two deputies — Kisii Governor Paul Simba Arati and Mombasa Governor Abdulswamad Nassir — as well as the National Central Committee and the party secretariat, to keep ODM's operations running in his absence. Arati had chaired the Central Committee meeting on Wednesday on Oburu's behalf.

"As an elder who has walked this long journey with you, I have absolute faith in their collective leadership, discipline, and vision to steer our movement effectively," Oburu said.

The language of his statement, however, has attracted attention beyond the immediate health context. Alongside references to a routine medical check-up, Oburu spoke of his "advancing years," taking a "step back," a "deliberate, strategic moment," a "time of transition" and the need for party structures that can "outlast us all" — unusually weighty political language for what ODM describes as a standard medical appointment. His statement also gave no indication of when he intends to resume his full duties, a significant omission for the leader of one of Kenya's largest political parties less than a year before the 2027 general election.

Oburu, one of Kenya's longest-serving politicians, has represented Siaya in the Senate since 2022, having previously served as a Member of Parliament and Assistant Minister across several administrations. He assumed the ODM leadership following Raila's death and has since been navigating the party through a delicate political period, including internal discussions about ODM's relationship with President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance ahead of the 2027 poll.

ODM's handling of Oburu's health disclosures reflects a tension familiar in Kenyan political culture, where the health of senior leaders is treated as a sensitive subject and information tends to emerge in stages rather than all at once. The party's initial decision to describe Oburu as away on official duties, followed by his own more forthcoming account the following day, suggests that the two communications were not fully coordinated — or that ODM made a deliberate choice to limit early disclosure before Oburu was ready to speak for himself.

Neither explanation is necessarily alarming, but both raise a question that will follow ODM into the coming months: as the party prepares for what will be its most consequential election without Raila at the helm, how openly will it communicate about the health and availability of the man who now carries that responsibility?

Oburu has asked for trust. His supporters, and the broader Kenyan public, will be watching to see whether his party's communications earn it.

Debt **For a country already navigating heavy debt repayments and severely constrained fiscal space, the support is significant**

Kenya has bought six weeks of relief — the real crisis is still waiting

A $400 million World Bank lifeline will soften the blow, but emergency financing cannot substitute for the structural reforms Kenya keeps deferring

BY Levis Wangamati
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya is expected to receive roughly $400 million in emergency financing from the World Bank within six weeks, offering the country a much-needed buffer against rising energy costs, regional health threats and the growing risk of El Niño-related disruption — but the funds should be understood for exactly what they are: breathing space, not transformation.

The East African country applied for the World Bank's emergency financing facility — known as the Rapid Response Option — after the Iran war in February sent crude oil prices sharply higher. Since then, the risks facing Kenya have broadened well beyond energy costs to include the threat of an Ebola outbreak in the region and climate-related disruptions tied to El Niño. The World Bank board has already cleared the projects underpinning the Rapid Response Option, meaning funds can be released once the two sides finalise a Contingency Emergency Response Project setting out the funding terms.

For a country already navigating heavy debt repayments and severely constrained fiscal space, the support is significant. But significance should never be confused with sustainability, and this is precisely the moment when Kenya must resist the temptation to treat the arrival of emergency money as evidence that the underlying problems have been resolved. They have not.

The energy dimension alone illustrates why. When international oil prices rise sharply, the shock does not stop at the petrol station — it travels through the entire economy. Transport becomes more expensive. Businesses face higher operating costs. Farmers pay more to move their produce to market. Manufacturers absorb higher production expenses. Households eventually confront higher prices for food, electricity and basic goods. Fuel is woven into almost every economic activity, which means its price rarely moves without affecting the cost of living for ordinary Kenyans. The $400 million can cushion that blow for a period. It cannot remove the structural dependence on imported oil that created the vulnerability in the first place.

That is the gap between relief and reform, and it is a gap Kenya has been living in for too long.

The health component is equally pressing. The emergency funds are expected to support Kenya's health sector in responding to the risk of Ebola, while also helping mitigate El Niño's impact on agriculture and the environment. Kenya operates in a region where infectious disease outbreaks can cross borders faster than governments can coordinate a response. Preparedness cannot wait until hospitals are overwhelmed. By then, the cost of delay is already being counted in lives lost, services disrupted and economic activity suspended.

That warning carries particular weight given the state of Kenya's public health system. The country has only recently emerged from a nurses' strike that disrupted healthcare services for weeks and exposed the fragility of a system that must serve millions of people while managing chronic shortfalls in staffing, funding and institutional trust. A health system cannot be considered resilient simply because its doors are open. Resilience means having the personnel, equipment, medicine and institutional stability to withstand pressure without collapsing into yet another crisis. If Kenya is to take Ebola preparedness seriously, it must simultaneously address the internal weaknesses that leave the system perpetually one dispute away from disruption.

Then comes the weather. The Kenya Meteorological Service Authority and the Kenya Red Cross have warned that above-normal rainfall expected between October and December could trigger flooding in several areas, potentially displacing more than one million people. For an economy in which agriculture remains central to millions of livelihoods, a damaging weather season quickly becomes a macroeconomic problem. Farmers lose income. Consumers pay more for food. The government is forced to search for additional resources it does not have. Climate preparedness is therefore also economic preparedness, and the two cannot be separated.

This is what makes the proposed World Bank financing more than a financial transaction. It is a test of whether Kenya can use a period of relief to strengthen the systems that make future crises less damaging. Emergency money is most valuable when it builds capacity before systems are overwhelmed — not simply when it prevents a government from running out of cash.

Kenya has a World Bank project portfolio exceeding $7 billion, and the Rapid Response Option allows enrolled countries to access up to ten per cent of their undisbursed lending balance when an eligible crisis occurs. That mechanism exists precisely to give governments like Kenya the flexibility to respond quickly. But the mechanism does not specify what governments do with the space it creates. That remains entirely Kenya's choice — and Kenya's responsibility.

The debt question gives that responsibility added urgency. Kenya has limited room to respond to every new shock through additional borrowing. Debt is not inherently the problem; responsible borrowing can support productive infrastructure and drive growth. The danger lies in repeatedly borrowing to postpone difficult decisions without addressing the structural weaknesses that generate the pressure in the first place. Each emergency loan that leaves the country no better prepared than before it arrived simply adds to the debt burden without reducing the vulnerability. The $400 million should therefore be judged by what it helps Kenya build, not merely what it helps Kenya survive.

If the financing strengthens health surveillance systems and expands laboratory capacity, it is an investment in preparedness. If it protects vulnerable farming communities from climate-related losses, it is an investment in resilience. If it cushions critical sectors against energy disruptions while longer-term solutions are pursued, it is sensible crisis management. But if it simply closes one fiscal gap while another opens elsewhere, Kenya will find itself, once again, running from crisis to crisis on borrowed time and borrowed money.

Accountability must accompany every shilling of this financing. Emergency circumstances should never create an accountability emergency. Kenyans have a right to know where the money goes, which institutions will manage it, which programmes will receive support and what measurable outcomes are expected. Speed is important when crises are imminent — but urgency cannot be allowed to eliminate transparency. Public money is public money, regardless of whether it originates from domestic taxation or an international development institution.

The government should also resist the impulse to present this financing as a sign that the economy has turned a corner. It has not. A temporary injection of capital can prevent deterioration, but it cannot substitute for reforms that improve productivity, strengthen institutions, create jobs and reduce Kenya's exposure to external shocks. Emergency assistance works best as a bridge to something more durable — not as an indefinite substitute for the difficult decisions that keep being deferred.

Kenya's deeper challenge is changing the economics of its own vulnerability. That means building domestic revenue systems that do not suffocate productive businesses. It means public spending that delivers visible, verifiable value. It means infrastructure designed to withstand climate shocks rather than collapse under them. It means a healthcare system where disputes are resolved before patients become the casualties. Above all, it means an economy increasingly capable of generating the kind of sustainable, broad-based growth that reduces dependence on emergency financing in the first place.

A country that can survive difficult circumstances has demonstrated something real. But survival and preparedness are not the same thing. Kenya cannot keep waiting for fuel prices to spike before confronting energy vulnerability, or for outbreaks to emerge before reinforcing health systems, or for floods to destroy crops before investing seriously in climate resilience. The next crisis will come. The question is whether Kenya will meet it having used this period of relief wisely — or whether today's emergency financing will simply become tomorrow's debt.

The World Bank is offering Kenya roughly $400 million and six weeks. What Kenya does with that time will determine whether the money becomes another temporary rescue or the foundation for something more durable. That choice is not in the hands of the World Bank. It is in the hands of Nairobi.

Wealth Today, a local oil-processing enterprise is turning that waste into wealth, giving farmers a new market while helping raise the value of their produce.

From farm waste to farm wealth: How Nyeri entrepreneur is doubling farmers' earnings

Patrick Mutahi, the founder and director of Mukurwe-ini Oil Enterprises Limited, showcase some of the products at the facility. | *Photo:* James Murimi

BY James Murimi
@themtkenyatimes

For years, small-scale avocado farmers in Mukurwe-ini, Nyeri County, watched a significant portion of their harvest go to waste or accepted painfully low prices dictated by middlemen.

Today, a local oil-processing enterprise is turning that waste into wealth, giving farmers a new market while helping raise the value of their produce.

Patrick Mutahi Muthoni, founder and director of Mukurwe-ini Oil Enterprises Limited, says the business was established in 2024 with one central objective — to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers through value addition and reliable markets.

The enterprise now works with about 1,000 farmers, sourcing avocado, sunflower and castor oil raw materials directly from producers across Nyeri County.

According to Mutahi, the intervention has helped farmers increase the price of their avocados from as little as Sh10 to Sh20 per kilogramme to between Sh20 and Sh40, effectively doubling their earnings in some cases.

"We started with the aim of uplifting the livelihoods of our local small-scale farmers. Our aim was to give our farmers access to the market, add value to their products and enable them to sell their produce at premium prices," says Mutahi.

He says the enterprise has also helped cut avocado post-harvest losses by about 50 per cent, particularly by providing a market for fruits that would otherwise have been rejected or discarded.

"Before we started this enterprise, most of the avocado products were going to waste," says Mutahi.

Rather than competing with fresh-fruit buyers for premium-grade avocados alone, Mukurwe-ini Oil Enterprises has created a market for off-grade fruits, processing them into oil and other products.

This has provided farmers with an alternative outlet for produce that may not meet conventional fresh-market requirements.

Mutahi says the model has also introduced farmers to new value chains, including castor oil, a crop that was previously being discarded in farms.

The enterprise specialises in cold-pressed oils, producing edible and cosmetic avocado and sunflower oils, as well as cosmetic castor oil.

It has also developed a flagship pain-relief oil made from a blend of sunflower, avocado and castor oils.

For farmers, the most significant change has been the availability of a market closer to home.

Nelson Wanjohi, an avocado farmer from Ichamara village in Mukurwe-ini, says farmers previously struggled with unreliable markets and exploitation by brokers.

"Before Mukurwe-ini Oil Enterprises came in, this farming practice was being entangled by poor prices. We used to throw away our produce due to lack of market," says Wanjohi.

He says brokers would purchase their avocados at prices that left farmers with little benefit from their labour.

With the arrival of the oil enterprise, Wanjohi says farmers have gained another avenue through which to sell their produce.

He says the additional income has enabled him to pay school fees for his four children and improve his family's living standards.

Wanjohi is among farmers benefiting from the partnership between Mukurwe-ini Oil Enterprises and Mukurwe-ini Fruits Cooperative Society, which is helping organise farmers, aggregate produce and promote good agricultural practices.

Mutahi says the enterprise collects raw materials through village-level aggregation and collection centres every Wednesday, making it easier for farmers to access the market.

The company has also entered into an offtake agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with the cooperative to source fruits from its members.

"We aggregate our raw materials directly from our local small-scale farmers," says Mutahi.

The arrangement goes beyond buying produce.

According to Mutahi, farmers receive agronomic support and training on the importance of taking care of their crops and improving fruit quality.

He says women form the majority of the farmers supplying the enterprise, with many organised into groups that make it easier to mobilise them for training and market access.

The enterprise has also created employment opportunities in the rural community.

It currently employs 10 permanent workers and five casual workers, with youths accounting for about half of its workforce.

Mutahi says he has reinvested profits from the business into machinery instead of taking the money out of the enterprise, enabling the company to steadily increase its processing capacity.

Its current production capacity stands at about 300 kilogrammes, but the founder plans to significantly expand operations over the next year.

"We want to increase our production capacity in the next one year. We will hire more staff and bring on board more farmers," he says.

The growth has received a boost from development partners.

Through its partnership with Heifer International Kenya, the enterprise is implementing a three-year growth plan and has received training, consultancy and technical assistance.

Mutahi says the support has helped the company develop business policies and systems while funding has enabled it to acquire higher-capacity machinery.

The enterprise was also among Kenyan agritech start-ups that received funding under the AYuTe Africa Agriculture, Youth and Technology Challenge Kenya.

It was selected from 486 applicants nationally and awarded $11,628 for its model of processing off-grade avocados into oil and other products.

For Mutahi, the recognition has increased the enterprise's visibility and opened new opportunities for expansion.

"Winning the AYuTe award has given me visibility because most people have come to realise and understand what we do here in Mukurwe-ini," he says.

Another distinctive feature of the enterprise is its approach to waste.

Mutahi says the residue from oil production is sold to farmers for use as organic manure, allowing the processing cycle to feed back into agriculture.

The entrepreneur says the business produces according to seasons, available raw materials, revenues, market trends and customer orders.

He says the enterprise's focus on cold-pressed, non-refined oils also gives it a distinctive position in the market.

"We do not add any chemical to our oil and we do not refine our oil. We sell it as a crude product to our different customers," says Mutahi.

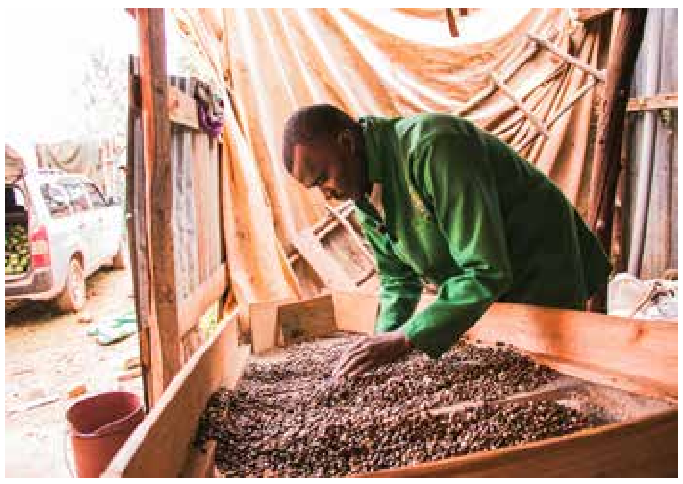
But for the founder, the ultimate measure of success is not the number of machines installed or litres of oil produced.

It is whether farmers who once struggled to sell their harvest can now earn more from the same piece of land.

"We have been able to reduce post-harvest losses by 50 per cent for avocado," says Mutahi.

The enterprise's expansion plans could bring even more farmers into the value chain, increase rural employment and give more producers an alternative to dependence on brokers.

For Mukurwe-ini's small-scale farmers, the transformation is simple: produce that once ended up as waste is increasingly becoming a source of income.



Lanmguage **Young children typically learn language intuitively, through play, songs, repetition, and physical activity**

The importance of an age-appropriate approach in second language learning

BY Davurova Durdona
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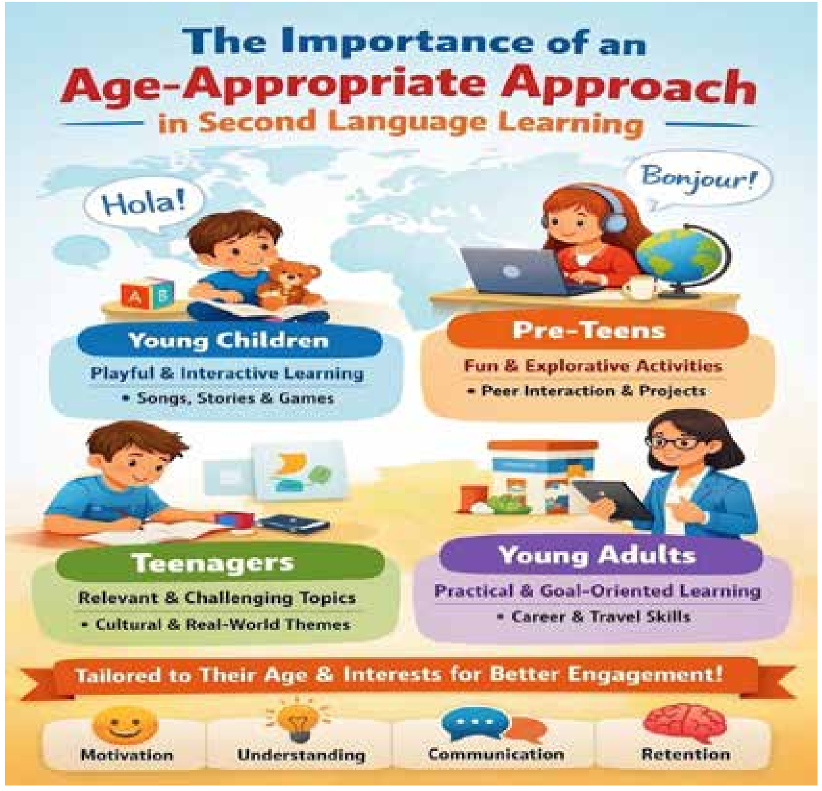
Learning a second language is a process shaped not only by teaching methods but also by the age of the learner. Children, teenagers, and adults acquire language differently, and effective instruction must take these differences into account. An age-appropriate approach ensures that teaching techniques, materials, and classroom activities match the cognitive, emotional, and social development of the learner, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

Young children typically learn language intuitively, through play, songs, repetition, and physical activity. At this stage, the focus should be on listening and speaking rather than formal grammar instruction, since children absorb pronunciation and rhythm naturally when exposed to a rich linguistic environment. Overloading young learners with abstract grammar rules can create confusion and reduce motivation.

Teenagers, on the other hand, are more capable of analytical thinking and can benefit from explicit grammar explanations, structured exercises, and discussions on more complex topics. However, this age group is also highly sensitive to social dynamics, so lessons that encourage peer interaction, group work, and real-life communication tend to be more effective than purely lecture-based instruction.

Adult learners bring greater life experience, self-discipline, and clear personal goals to language learning, but they may also feel more anxious about making mistakes. For this group, teaching should emphasize practical communication skills, connect language use to real-world needs such as work or travel, and create a supportive environment where errors are viewed as a natural part of learning.

In conclusion, recognizing and adapting to the learner's age is essential for successful second language teaching. Teachers who tailor their methods, materials, and classroom interaction style to the developmental stage of their students create more engaging lessons and help learners build lasting language skills with confidence.



Not everyone will understand your journey. Keep walking.

Nobody knows about the roots and how far into the earth.
The same way Lotus's height from the root nobody knows.
But the tree and the Lotus have the strength with its potential.
It is not a matter of visibility and is a matter of growth.

You are praised by others,
when your status will become high as a kite flying in the sky.
You never care about your surroundings and neighbours.
Only your well wishers know about you and your actions.

Nobody is ready to watch your journey.
And how much you have got pain to reach your destination .
Your success is the only remedy for your pains.
All are curious to know about your success .

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My pet

I love to talk about my pet,
The grandest friend I 've ever met.
Not a cat, a frog, or hound,
But the brightest bad around!

My parents sits upon his perch,
The finest but in any search.

With father's dipped in green and gold,
And cheeky stories to be told.

He listens close to all I say,
And chatters back throughout the day.
Of all topics I could choose,
My clever parrot will always win, and never lose!

Written by:
R rakshika
7th A
Government girls higher secondary School,
Pattukottai.

P. E. T period

P.E.T. period is the best of all,
We run and play and kick the ball.
We laugh and have fun with all our friends,
I wish these happy days never end.

We stretch our bodies front and back,
Then run and jump along the track.
Sometimes we get scratches and hurt,
But we keep playing in the dirt.

I love the fun of P.E.T.,
It makes me happy, wild, and free.
I wish each day could stay this way,
With fun and games the whole long day!

Penned by Anushree, 9A, GGHSS, pattukkottai.

If the action leads to peace, it is the right action

Think of things,true and pure,
Wailing and weeping hearts they cure.
Think of things, of praise and virtue,
Return the reward with respect and due.

The seed sown with utmost care,
Blooms into blossoms,yielding fair
Fruits.What you sow,you reap.
Good thoughts sown, peaceful actions shown.

Buds to blossoms, to tree,
Rendering shadow and peace,
To hardened heart and burdened brows,
Where light guides the growth, right action grows

Angelin Gracita.C
St.Marys College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi

P.E.T PERIOD

Only three or four times a month,
I played during my P.E.T. period.
I thought I could use the time to study,
And finish my homework one by one.

Sometimes my P. E. T miss would tell me to play,
But I still thought studying was better.
Then I slowly came to understand,
That learning is not only from a book.

We run with the ball and play Lock and Key,
We laugh and enjoy, feeling happy and free.
Now I play more in my P.E.T. time,
Because play and study both are important in life.

Poem written by M. Samiha hajra from 9th "C"
GGHSS, PATTUKKOTTAI.

My Pet

My little puppy, cute and small,
With shiny eyes, it charms us all.
It listens to me every day,
And wags its tail in a funny way.

When I am sad, it stays nearby,
With loving eyes that never lie.
It cannot speak or say a word,
But its sweet face says all I've heard.

It loves to play and run with me,
As happy as a pup can be.
It fills my home with joy and cheer,
And makes my every moment dear.

Animals have feelings, just like me,
So let them live and let them be.
Never hurt them, never cause them pain,
Give them love and kindness again and again.
By
S.Aishwarya
9A, GGHSS
Pattukkottai, Thanjavur

The right action

"If the action leads to peace,
It is the Right Action."

Each morning, the little deer wakes with hope,
Whispering, "Today will be my best day."
Though the tiger follows close behind,
The deer does not surrender to fear;
Courage gives him a peaceful heart.

He runs not with anger,
But with faith in every step;
For peace is not the absence of danger—
It is the courage to move forward
When challenges stand in our way.

Every sunrise paints the sky with light,
Reminding us to begin again.
Every sunset gently teaches us
That every day deserves a peaceful ending,
Filled with gratitude and calm.

Look at the honeybees—
They never hesitate to gather sweetness
From the flowers that welcome them.
With patience and unity,
They build their beautiful home.

But touch their precious hive,
And they protect what they have built.
Nature quietly teaches us
That kindness needs wisdom,
And courage needs the right moment.

If your action brings peace,
You have chosen the right path.
If your words bring kindness,
You have touched another heart.
If your thoughts bring hope,
You have created light within yourself.

So be patient.
Be polite.
Be courageous.
Be optimistic.

Listen to the lessons of nature.
Walk gently, act wisely,
And never allow anger to steal your peace.

For life becomes beautiful
When our actions are guided by love,
Our words are filled with kindness,
And our hearts choose peace.

If the action leads to peace,
It is the Right Action.

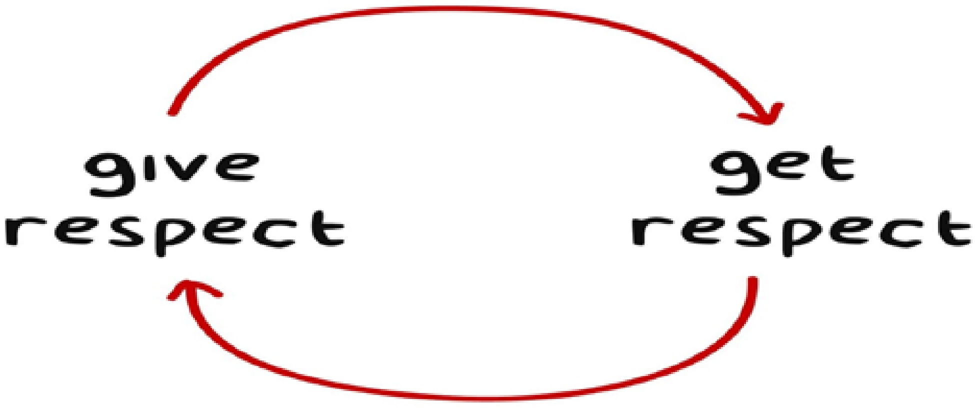
Let peace be your strength,
Let kindness be your nature,
And let every step you take
Leave a little more peace
In this beautiful world.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Disability inclusivity **According to the 2019 census, persons with disabilities account for about 2.2% of Kenya's population.**

No one left behind: Train the NPS on disability inclusivity

BY Catherine Wangari
@themtkenyatimes



Picture a Monday morning. A deaf young woman walks into a local police station to report a gender-based violence case, only to be met with blank stares — the officer on duty cannot understand sign language. Hundreds of kilometres away, a police officer survives an IED blast in Garissa, losing his right leg in the line of duty. He has since developed post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition that went undetected until it became impossible to ignore — only to find himself facing an administrative system that treats his situation as an operational dead end.

These are not isolated incidents. They are not new stories either. They represent a structural failure within Kenya's justice system, where the National Police Service remains ill-equipped to handle the vulnerabilities of the public it serves while simultaneously denying its own wounded officers a dignified path forward.

According to the 2019 census, persons with disabilities account for about 2.2% of Kenya's population. Yet despite clear legal obligations under Article 54 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Persons with Disabilities Act, many people living with disabilities report fear, misunderstanding and, in some cases, mistreatment when they interact with law enforcement officers. For many, the result is silence — under-reporting driven by intimidation, stigma, lack of accessible evidence processes for the visually impaired, and weak support systems.

Training NPS officers to engage professionally with persons with disabilities is not merely a matter of legal compliance. It is about building public trust, upholding human rights and ensuring that justice is genuinely accessible to everyone. A useful framework is the R-E-S-P-E-C-T principle:

R — Recognise that not all disabilities are visible. Some are sensory, intellectual, psychological or multiple in nature.

E — Engage directly with the person unless the caregiver requests otherwise — and handle that request with sensitivity and good judgement.

S — Simplify communication. Identify yourself clearly and speak in plain, accessible language.

P — Provide reasonable accommodation where necessary, and never make assumptions about what a person needs.

E — Ensure safety. Do not separate a person from their caregiver without good cause.

C — Confidentiality and dignity must be maintained at every stage of the interaction.

T — Take every report seriously, regardless of the manner in which it is presented.

Working in partnership with the National Police Service Commission, the NPS must institutionalise mental health support for officers managing PTSD and put structural adjustments in place — rather than treating acquired disability as a career-ending condition or, worse, allowing untreated trauma to create risks for officers and the public alike.

The NPS should also build formal links with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, disabled persons organisations and sign language interpreters, creating a coordination framework that makes every station more responsive and effective. At the leadership level, disability modules must be integrated into recruit training, in-service refresher courses and promotion criteria. The Policare Curriculum should explicitly cover disability competency, and accreditation by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority should include disability standards as a requirement. What is practised inside the station will, in time, be reflected on the streets.

For civil society organisations and human rights bodies — including the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights — the conversation cannot stop at criticising police brutality. There is an equally important conversation to be had about building the capacity for an empathetic police force. Non-state actors hold significant technical expertise in disability rights. They must bring that expertise to the table and help co-create training modules that are grounded in lived experience.

When a person with a disability walks into a police station seeking justice, they deserve to be met with competence, compassion and fairness. That is not too much to ask. It is, in fact, the minimum standard.

Human potential **"My own journey taught me how quickly life can change and how easily potential can be overlooked when systems are not designed for inclusion," said Agola.**

WezeshaAfricaKE launches pan-African movement to unlock human potential

New initiative calls on businesses, governments and communities to tear down the barriers keeping millions of Africans from contributing fully to their economies

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

A new pan-African movement dedicated to expanding economic inclusion and opportunity across the continent was launched yesterday by WezeshaAfricaKE, founded by Lillian Adero Agola, with a call for businesses, governments, investors, educators and civil society to unite around a single conviction: that Africa's greatest untapped resource has always been its people.

The movement takes its name and its energy from a straightforward but powerful premise — that potential exists everywhere across Africa, but opportunity does not. Behind that gap, the founders argue, lies not a shortage of talent but a set of structural barriers in education, employment, finance, technology and infrastructure that continue to exclude millions of people from meaningful economic participation.

"My own journey taught me how quickly life can change and how easily potential can be overlooked when systems are not designed for inclusion," said Agola. "WezeshaAfricaKE was born from a simple conviction that no one should be defined by their circumstances. This movement is about opening doors, creating opportunities and ensuring every African has the chance to realise their full potential. It is a call to action for Africa to recognise that its greatest natural resource has never been its minerals — it has always been its people."

The numbers behind the initiative are striking. Globally, more than 1.3 billion people — roughly one in every six — live with a disability, the majority of them of working age. Research estimates that excluding persons with disabilities from employment costs economies between three and seven per cent of gross domestic product through lost productivity and reduced labour participation. In Kenya alone, disability exclusion has been estimated to cost the economy up to 6.95 per cent of GDP annually — a figure that makes the case for inclusion not as a welfare concern but as an economic imperative.

WezeshaAfricaKE frames that argument deliberately. Inclusion, the movement insists, is not charity. It is sound economics. When barriers come down, jobs are created, innovation is unlocked, markets expand and communities grow stronger. When they remain in place, the cost falls not just on the individuals excluded but on entire economies that forfeit the contributions those individuals could have made.

"The greatest opportunity before Africa is not simply creating new industries," Agola said. "It is ensuring that every person has the opportunity to contribute to them. When we unlock potential, we unlock economic growth."

The movement has set out a broad mandate: expanding access to employment, supporting entrepreneurship, promoting inclusive innovation, increasing financial independence, improving access to education and technology and influencing policies that remove structural barriers. It is designed to function across sectors and at every level — from individual volunteers and community organisations to corporations, universities, development partners and government institutions.

Crucially, WezeshaAfricaKE does not position itself as an organisation delivering services to a passive beneficiary group. It is structured as a movement that belongs to everyone who shares its founding conviction — that talent should never be wasted, and that circumstance should never determine ceiling. Businesses and employers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, technology leaders, faith-based organisations, media professionals and youth leaders are all explicitly invited to join, each playing a distinct role in building what Agola describes as a more inclusive and economically resilient Africa.

The logic at the core of the initiative follows a familiar but compelling chain: when individuals succeed, families prosper. When families prosper, communities grow stronger. When communities grow, national economies expand. That chain, WezeshaAfricaKE argues, is currently broken at the first link for millions of Africans — not through any fault of their own, but because the systems around them were not built with them in mind.

Addressing that gap requires more than goodwill. It requires coordinated action across the public and private sectors, sustained investment in inclusive infrastructure and a shift in the way businesses think about the talent available to them. Many of the people currently excluded from formal economic participation — persons with disabilities, women in underserved communities, youth in rural areas, people without access to capital or connectivity — represent exactly the kind of diverse, resilient and motivated workforce that growing economies need.

"If you believe talent should never be limited by circumstance, that opportunity should be accessible to everyone and that Africa grows when all her people grow, then this movement is for you," Agola said. "Become a partner, an advocate, a volunteer or an employer of opportunity. Together, we can unlock potential, expand opportunity and build an Africa where everyone has the chance to thrive. We are leaving nobody behind."

For a continent where youth unemployment remains persistently high, where disability inclusion in the workplace is the exception rather than the rule and where access to finance and education continues to divide those who can from those who cannot, the ambition of WezeshaAfricaKE arrives at a moment when the conversation about inclusive growth is no longer optional. It is overdue.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Inheritance Children inherit far more than our names and property. They inherit our habits, our values, our attitudes and, sometimes, even our mistakes

The greatest inheritance we leave our children is not wealth, but character

What we pass on to our children goes far beyond property and money

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Every parent dreams of leaving something behind for their children. For some, it is land. For others, it is a thriving business, a family home, a solid education or a healthy bank account. We spend years working hard, sacrificing small comforts and planning carefully for the future — because we want our children to have a better life than we did.

But there is an inheritance many parents rarely stop to think about. It cannot be measured in acres, counted in notes or stored in a title deed. Yet it shapes a child's future more powerfully than any material possession. That inheritance is character.

Children inherit far more than our names and property. They inherit our habits, our values, our attitudes and, sometimes, even our mistakes.

Many Kenyan parents are deeply concerned about what they will leave behind. Family meetings often revolve around succession plans. Relatives gather to discuss who gets which parcel of land. Parents lose sleep over school fees, university education and investments. These are legitimate concerns. Yet there is a more important question every parent should occasionally sit with: what kind of people will our children become because of us?

A child who inherits ten acres but absorbs dishonesty from his parents may eventually lose everything. A daughter who receives a flourishing business but grows up watching arrogance and disrespect may struggle to build the relationships that make success meaningful. Wealth can open doors — but character determines how one walks through them.

Many of the problems we complain about in society are, unfortunately, planted at home. Corruption does not begin in government offices. It begins when children learn that rules can be bent if one has the right connections. Disrespect for authority does not start in adulthood. It begins when parents openly ridicule teachers, neighbours and community leaders in front of their children. Violence does not suddenly appear in society. It often begins in homes where anger is normalised and conflict is settled through intimidation.

Character

Children are always watching. They learn more from what we do than from what we say.

A father may lecture his son about honesty while regularly deceiving customers in his business. A mother may speak passionately about discipline while neglecting her own commitments. In such homes, children absorb the behaviour, not the lesson.

Many parents are genuinely surprised when their teenage children begin displaying attitudes they find troubling. Yet those attitudes often mirror what the children have quietly observed for years.

This is not a call for perfection. No parent is perfect. Every family carries its own weaknesses and blind spots. What matters is the willingness to acknowledge mistakes and demonstrate growth.

One of the most powerful things a parent can say to a child is simply: "I was wrong."

Yet many adults struggle deeply with those words. Some believe admitting mistakes undermines their authority. In reality, it builds credibility. Children respect honesty. They learn humility when they see it lived out. They learn accountability when the adults around them take responsibility for their actions.

Children do not need perfect parents. They need authentic ones.

There is another truth worth holding on to. Success in the eyes of society does not always translate to success at home. A person may be admired in the community, celebrated at work and respected publicly — while quietly failing the people who matter most to them.

Many children have grown up in comfortable homes yet carry deep emotional wounds from the absence of affection, encouragement or positive role models. Others have been raised in modest circumstances and flourished — because they experienced love, respect and integrity every day.

Years from now, your children may not remember every toy you bought or every school fee you paid. They may not recall the exact sum spent on their education. But they will remember how you treated people. They will remember whether you kept your word. They will remember how you handled failure, disappointment and conflict.

Most of all, they will remember how you made them feel.

As parents, it is worth pausing occasionally to ask difficult questions. Are we teaching our children kindness? Are we demonstrating integrity in the small, unremarkable moments? Are we showing genuine respect to others? Are we building a home where truth matters? Are we modelling the behaviour we hope to one day see in them?

The answers to those questions may matter far more than the contents of any will.

Kenya does not merely need educated children. It needs responsible citizens — honest leaders, compassionate neighbours, ethical professionals and principled decision-makers. The foundation for such people is built at home, long before they enter a classroom, a workplace or public life.

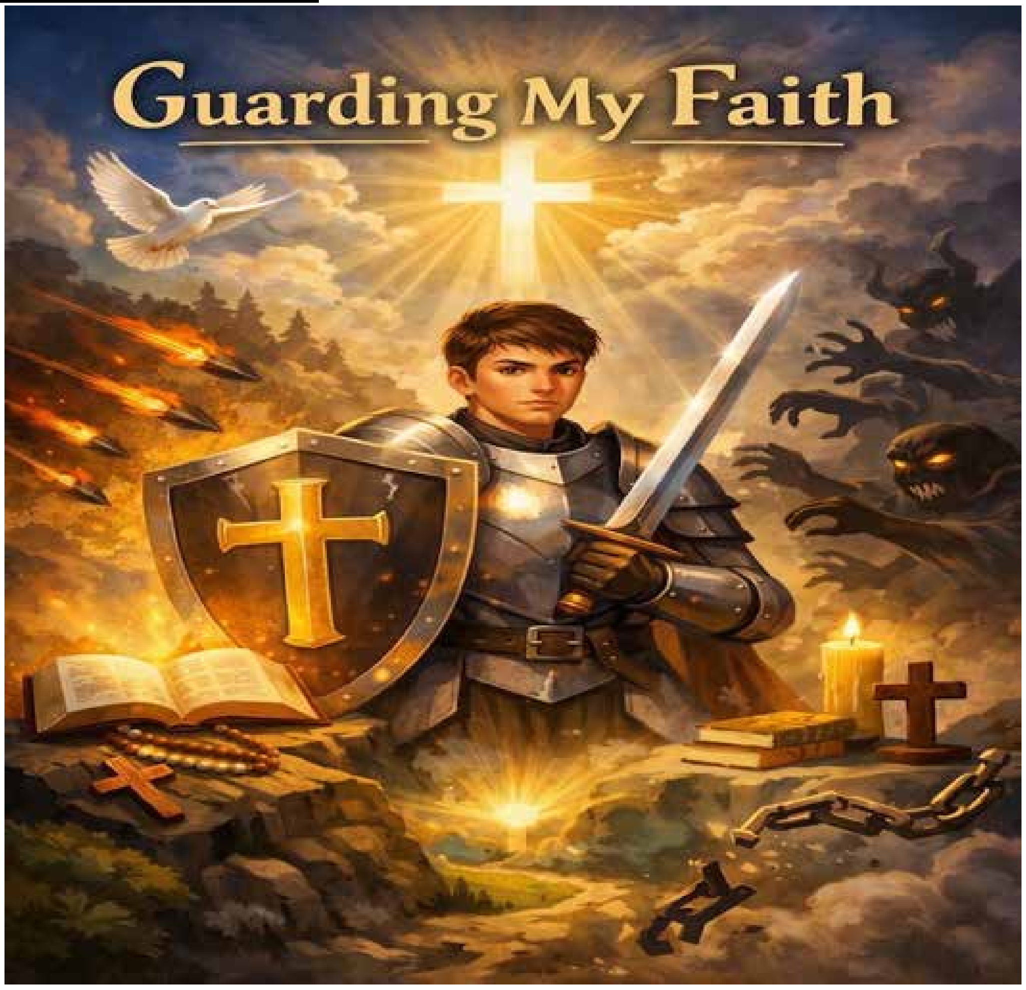
The greatest inheritance a parent can leave is not measured by what is transferred at death. It is measured by what is deposited into a child's heart — every day — through example, guidance and love.

Long after the land is divided, the money is spent and the houses change hands, character remains. And in the end, that may be the inheritance that matters most.

Faith **In the moment, none of it feels significant. I tell myself it is only one day, that I will pray tomorrow, that I will return to Scripture later**

Guarding my faith

The small moments we ignore can quietly erode the spiritual strength we worked hardest to build



BY Ansasira Janet
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I have been praying about something deeply important in my life. There were moments when doubt crept in and I found myself asking an uncomfortable question: what is the point of praying if I do not genuinely believe that God can do what I am asking? I was praying in accordance with His will, as I understood it from 1 Kings 3:9–10, because praying within His will both honours Him and draws us closer to knowing Him. And despite my moments of wavering, God was faithful. He answered. Perhaps I will share the full details of that testimony another time.

There are seasons in my walk with God when my heart feels completely alive. Seasons when praise rises naturally, worship flows freely and joy fills my spirit without effort. In those times I feel deeply connected to God — confident in His promises, assured of His faithfulness, anchored in something larger than my circumstances.

But I have learned that those seasons must be actively guarded.

I have noticed that when joy, peace and spiritual strength arrive, subtle attempts to erode them tend to follow. It rarely begins dramatically. It starts small, almost undetected. A crippling fear that quietly takes root. A moment of doubt entertained a little too long. A small act of disobedience. The decision to skip prayer just this once, or to leave God's Word unopened just for today.

In the moment, none of it feels significant. I tell myself it is only one day, that I will pray tomorrow, that I will return to Scripture later. But I have learned that those small moments matter far more than they appear to. Left unaddressed, they slowly weaken the spiritual foundations beneath me until, almost without noticing, I find myself struggling to believe that God is faithful, that He is powerful enough, that He will carry me through.

When I eventually find myself losing ground and questioning whether God will let me suffer, I have to look back and trace the drift. And it is never a sudden collapse. It was that small act of disobedience. That morning I chose not to pray. That week I neglected His Word. The little things I dismissed because they seemed too minor to matter.

That is why I have learned to ask the Holy Spirit to help me guard my faith and protect my joy. I cannot do it through my own strength. I need God's help to remain grounded in who He is, especially when my circumstances press hard in the opposite direction.

There are times when I have had to simply speak to myself and say: get up. We have to keep going. I remind myself through Scripture that God is faithful and mighty. I remind myself that He has a proven track record — that the God who carried people through impossible situations in the pages of the Bible is the same God I serve today. The God who made a way when there seemed to be no way is still more than able to do so.

I have also learned that I cannot worship God according to how I feel in a given moment. I have to worship Him according to what I know about Him — according to who He actually is. Feelings shift. Circumstances change. The world around me is in constant motion. But God's character does not change. He remains faithful, good, powerful and worthy of trust, regardless of what any particular day looks like.

Guarding my faith does not mean I never experience fear, or questions, or genuinely difficult seasons. It means that when those moments arrive, I choose not to allow them to redefine who God is in my eyes. I choose to return to His Word, remember His promises and hold firmly to the truth that He has never once failed.

Faith is not guarded because it is fragile. Faith is guarded because it is precious. And every day, through the help of the Holy Spirit, I choose to protect what God has placed in my heart.

I have also learned not to postpone worship until everything in my life is in order. When the impulse to worship comes, I choose to honour it in that moment. When joy arrives, I choose to receive it fully. I do not want tomorrow's fears to steal what God is doing today.

My focus matters, too. When I fix my eyes on the problem in front of me, the problem grows larger. But when I fix my eyes on God — on His character, His promises, His faithfulness — I am reminded that He is greater than anything I face. My circumstances may shift constantly, but He does not. This is why I continue to fix my eyes on Jesus, as Hebrews 12:2 instructs, because the One who holds my future is greater than every situation I walk through.

Guarding our faith is not a one-time decision. It is a daily choice — made again every morning, renewed in every moment of pressure, sustained through every season of doubt. May we not allow temporary struggles or fears to become louder than the truth of who God is.

He remains faithful. He remains mighty. And He is still worthy of our trust.

Diplomacy **Amir Temur is known in world history as a great commander and statesman who established a powerful and prosperous state.**

Amir Temur's Diplomacy

BY Mamasharifova Shahlokh
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Amir Temur

This article discusses the diplomacy and diplomatic missions conducted by Amir Temur, the Sahibqiran. The article briefly describes Amir Temur and Bayezid Yildirim.

Keywords.

Amir Temur, China, France, England, Bayezid Yildirim, Shah Rukh Mirza.

Introduction.

One of the most important qualities of our great ancestor was that, six centuries ago, he deeply understood that developing mutually beneficial interstate cooperation, strengthening bonds of friendship and solidarity among peoples near and far, and ensuring a bright future for his empire were important factors.

For this reason, he carried out major efforts that served to connect Europe and Asia. On the one hand, he established relations with China and India; on the other hand, he established contacts with France, Spain, England, and other states and sought to strengthen these relations.

Main part. Sources contain information about the diplomatic missions conducted by Amir Temur and representatives of the Timurid dynasty with foreign states, clearly demonstrating the Sahibqiran's skillful policy in cooperation with Eastern and Western countries. The elimination of political fragmentation and the establishment of a centralized state produced major positive results. Favorable conditions emerged for restoring the country's productive forces and an economy that had suffered as a result of Genghis Khan's campaigns and one and a half centuries of Mongol rule.[2.p.25]

Amir Temur is known in world history as a great commander and statesman who established a powerful and prosperous state. At the same time, he left a deep mark on history as a skilled diplomat of his era.

In governing the affairs of the empire, he fulfilled nine parts through counsel, deliberation, and consultation, and one part through the sword. The wise said that a well-timed strategy could open the gates of any country that the sword of countless armies could not conquer, and could defeat an innumerable army.

An enterprising, courageous, and determined person, endowed with initiative and vigilance, is better than thousands of careless and indifferent people. For an experienced person can command a thousand people. Victory over an enemy army does not depend on the size of the army, nor does defeat result from a lack of troops. Rather, victory comes through [God's] help and the strategy of His servant.[1.p.8]

Amir Temur paid particular attention to diplomatic missions in conducting his policy. The economic and political relations of the Timurids with China in the 14th–15th centuries corresponded to the period of the Ming dynasty in China (1368–1644). Information concerning trade, diplomatic missions, and diplomatic relations between the Timurids and China is recorded in a number of written sources from that period.

After Amir Temur incorporated Moghulistan into his state in 1389 following several campaigns, the trade routes from Movarounnahr to China became safer, and diplomatic and trade relations were established between the state of Amir Temur and China. From that time onward, trade caravans once again began to travel regularly along the ancient Silk Road. This became an important factor in increasing the political and economic standing of the state of Amir Temur and the Timurids.[3.p.

Chinese chronicles record that between 1388 and 1398, envoys traveled between the two states nine times. The international diplomatic relations initiated by Amir Temur continued during the reigns of his descendants and expanded further under Shah Rukh Mirza (1405–1447).[3.p.727]

Exchange of letters between states played an important role in Amir Temur's diplomacy. For example, the correspondence between Amir Temur and Bayezid Yildirim was distinguished by its extreme tension. The letters of the two great statesmen did not concern diplomatic negotiations, but rather contained challenges from two powerful rivals to test their strength against each other.

In particular, in his letter Bayezid demanded that Amir Temur come to him immediately and used words unworthy of the Sahibqiran. Despite this insulting attitude, Amir Temur sent Bayezid's envoys away safely after giving them good counsel.

Amir Temur's response to Bayezid's insults, like that of a true diplomat, can also be seen in his letters: "If you send a letter containing a sincere greeting and beautiful expressions, some warmth and respect will arise on both sides. Otherwise, the pens will hand their work over to the swords."[4.p.54]

The Sahibqiran Amir Temur made a great contribution to connecting peoples and countries with one another. He established trade and diplomatic relations with major European rulers, including those of France, England, and Castile. As a great statesman, the Sahibqiran gave priority to diplomatic relations in achieving his goals. The great empire established by Amir Temur attracted not only neighboring countries and their rulers, but also the rulers of distant lands.

Historical documents indicate that as early as the 1370s, representatives of European states began coming to Movarounnahr and becoming acquainted with the power and potential of the new independent state established there. In the later years of the Sahibqiran's reign, he established diplomatic relations and exchanged correspondence with Charles VI, King of France (1380–1422), Henry IV, King of England (1399–1413), and Henry III of Trastámara, King of Castile and León (1390–1407). To protect the lands and possessions of the Genoese, who were considered French citizens, especially their colonies in Galata, Charles V in turn sought assistance from Amir Temur and attempted to establish diplomatic relations with him.[5.p.

Conclusion.

Amir Temur was an unrivaled commander, statesman, and accomplished politician. In protecting state interests, he did not limit himself to the use of force, but also achieved his goals through negotiations, diplomatic missions, and alliances. His diplomacy served to preserve peace, develop trade relations, and strengthen state power. Thanks to Amir Temur's foresight and political wisdom, his state gained great prestige on the international stage.

Award It is a recognition worth welcoming. Energy is not a peripheral government function — it is the backbone of daily life

Recognition must translate into reliable energy for every Kenyan

BY James Kilonzo Bwire
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The recognition of Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi and Principal Secretary Alex Wachira as the best-performing Cabinet Secretary and Principal Secretary respectively is a significant moment for Kenya's energy sector. The ranking followed a survey conducted by Swiss Poll International and reflects growing public attention to the leadership of the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and its contribution to national development.

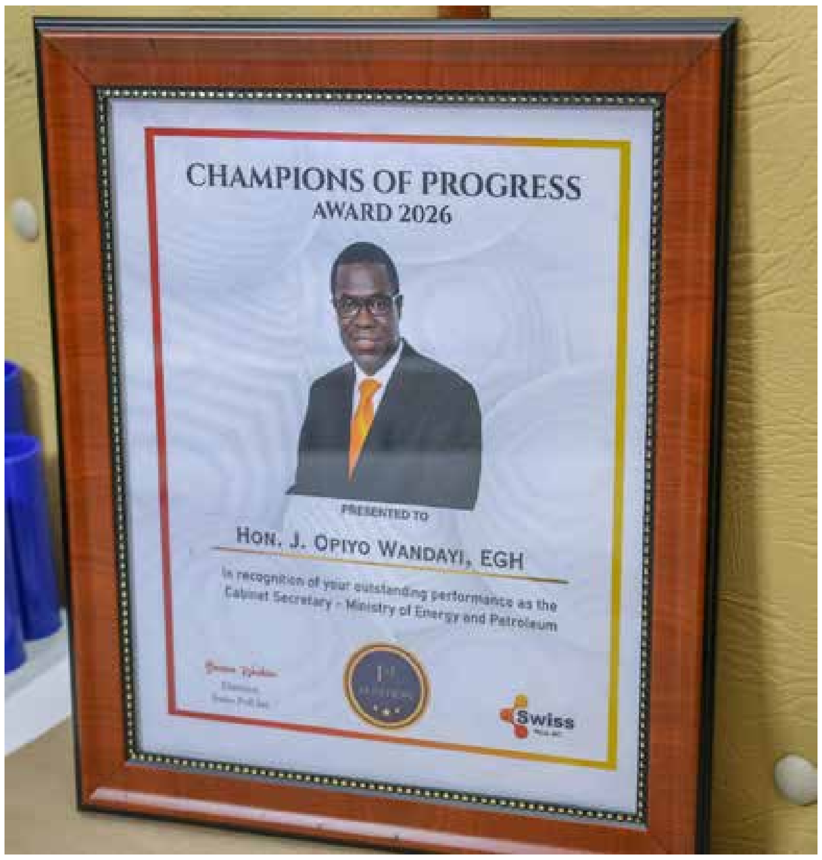
It is a recognition worth welcoming. Energy is not a peripheral government function — it is the backbone of daily life. It powers households, businesses, schools, hospitals, farms, transport networks, factories and public institutions. The quality of leadership in the energy sector therefore carries direct consequences for the social and economic wellbeing of every Kenyan.

But recognition should be understood as a responsibility rather than a destination. A survey can offer encouragement and signal public approval, but the lasting test of leadership is service delivery. Yesterday's accolade must translate into today's action and tomorrow's results.

The joint recognition of Wandayi and Wachira also highlights something important about how effective government works. The Cabinet Secretary provides policy direction and political leadership. The Principal Secretary drives administration and implementation. Their success depends on how well they coordinate with each other and with the broader network of institutions that keep the energy system functioning.

That system is more complex than it appears from the outside. Electricity generation, transmission, distribution, renewable energy development, petroleum supply, regulation and consumer protection are all interconnected responsibilities. They require coherent policy, sustained coordination and consistent implementation across multiple agencies. Fragmented leadership in any one area can weaken the entire chain.

For ordinary Kenyans, however, the conversation eventually comes down to a straightforward question: is the electricity more reliable than it was before? Can a small trader in Meru count on power to run her shop? Can a student in Turkana charge his laptop to complete an assignment? Can a farmer in the Rift Valley power an irrigation pump without fearing an outage that could cost him his harvest? Recognition at the leadership level is only meaningful when it produces improvements that citizens can feel in their homes, schools and workplaces.



Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi

Principal Secretary Alex Wachira

Businesses have an equally urgent stake in this conversation. Small enterprises, manufacturers, service providers and traders all depend on predictable energy supply to operate and grow. When power is disrupted, the consequences are not merely inconvenient — they translate into lost revenue, damaged equipment, spoiled goods and eroded confidence. Strong leadership in the energy sector must remain tightly connected to the needs of the productive economy, which is ultimately what creates jobs and sustains livelihoods across the country.

Energy access must also be viewed through the lens of fairness. Development cannot be concentrated in areas that already enjoy better infrastructure while historically underserved communities continue to wait. The ministry has a clear responsibility to support programmes that expand access and ensure that different regions and communities are genuine participants in Kenya's energy future — not observers of someone else's progress.

Reliability and access, though related, are two different things. Connecting people to the grid is an important first step, but a connection becomes meaningful only when the service it delivers is dependable. Effective maintenance, swift response to faults, proper planning and strong coordination among responsible institutions are all essential to maintaining public confidence. A household connected to an unreliable power supply is, in many practical ways, still in the dark.

Affordability must remain central to the national energy conversation. Energy costs affect household budgets and business operations in ways that are immediate and sometimes painful. Policies governing the sector must balance the interests of consumers with the sustainability of the energy system. Kenyans need policies that are technically sound and sensitive to the economic realities facing people living on modest incomes.

Communication and transparency matter equally. Energy decisions affect citizens directly, and people deserve timely, clear information about changes that affect them. The ministry should continue building its capacity to engage meaningfully with the public — not only through formal announcements but through genuine dialogue that allows concerns to be raised and addressed. Transparency strengthens public confidence, and public confidence strengthens institutions over time.

The recognition of Wandayi and Wachira should also encourage a culture of accountability across the ministry and the wider sector. Public leadership is not only about launching programmes and making announcements. It involves following through on commitments, honestly confronting challenges and ensuring that public resources are deployed responsibly. Strong performance must be measured not just at the top but throughout the institutions responsible for delivery — among engineers, technicians, planners, administrators and the frontline staff who interact directly with consumers every day.

Customer service, often overlooked in broader policy conversations, matters enormously. When a consumer disputes a bill, reports a fault or applies for a new connection, the quality of that experience shapes their view of the entire system. Accessible, responsive and respectful service is not a luxury — it is a basic expectation that the ministry and its agencies must consistently meet.

Longer term, the energy sector requires sustained planning that looks beyond the current political cycle. Decisions made today will shape the country's development for decades. Kenya must continue preparing for changing energy demands while expanding its renewable energy base responsibly — not simply as an environmental commitment but as a strategic investment in energy security and long-term affordability for consumers and businesses alike.

The ministry must also deepen cooperation with county governments and local institutions. National programmes are ultimately delivered in communities, and effective local coordination is essential to identifying service gaps, resolving challenges and building public trust. County leadership and community representatives hold knowledge that should inform both policy design and implementation at every level.

The recognition of Wandayi and Wachira is most valuable if it serves as a catalyst rather than a conclusion. Recognition that motivates institutions to raise their standards is genuinely useful. Recognition that breeds complacency serves no one.

Kenya's economic transformation depends on an energy sector that is dependable, accessible and well governed. Investors need confidence. Businesses need predictability. Households need affordable and reliable electricity. These are not aspirational wishes — they are practical requirements for a country working to grow its economy, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

If this recognition strengthens the ministry's resolve to pursue reliable energy, inclusive development, transparent leadership and responsive public service, then it becomes more than an accolade. It becomes a foundation for something more enduring — an energy system that works for every Kenyan, in every corner of this country. That is the standard the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum must now continue to meet.

Sports >> *Martin Odegaard's excellent start to the season continued as the Arsenal captain came to his side's rescue against Napoli in Naples.

Odegaard rescues Arsenal away at Napoli, Liverpool come back to beat Atletico

Martin Odegaard

By: **BBC**

Martin Odegaard's excellent start to the season continued as the Arsenal captain came to his side's rescue against Napoli in Naples.

The Gunners were guilty of wasteful finishing and were heading for a frustrating draw in their first game in the Champions League since losing last season's final.

However, Odegaard had Arsenal's 1,500 travelling fans celebrating after a fine finish from outside the box – his fourth goal in five games, including the Community Shield.

Mikel Arteta's side – looking to go one step further in the competition than they did last season – missed three great chances to punish last season's Serie A runners-up before Odegaard's goal.

Mikel Merino was presented with a glorious chance to mark his first club start since January but the Spain midfielder headed straight at goalkeeper Alex Meret midway through the first half.

Then Bukayo Saka looked set to break the deadlock only to lift his attempt over the bar before Piero Hincapie blazed over from inside the six-yard area.

The Gunners did endure a couple of scares most notably when David Raya spilled a shot from outside the box by Kevin de Bruyne, a Champions League winner with Manchester City in 2023. However, Ben White was quickest to react and clear the ball before the home side could pounce.

– Mac Allister nets winner for Liverpool-

Alexis Mac Allister scored an emphatic winner as Liverpool began their Champions League campaign with a win over Atletico Madrid at Anfield.

Dominik Szoboszlai levelled for Liverpool after Marcos Llorente had initially given Atletico the lead before Mac Allister fired in from outside the box to give Andoni Iraola his first win at home for Liverpool and his first Champions League victory as manager.

Mac Allister had dominated the pre-match headlines after his candid press conference on Tuesday, in which the Argentinian said he was "sad" that Liverpool did not offer him a new contract over the summer. But the 27-year-old, who is contracted at Anfield until 2028, did his talking on the pitch on Wednesday with a superb left-footed strike that gave Jan Oblak no chance.

With two draws and a win in the Premier League, Liverpool remain unbeaten under Iraola but for the third time in four games, they conceded first. Milos Kerkez failed to track Llorente, who got on the end of Julian Alvarez's ball and finished past Alisson to score at Anfield again.

Llorente named his dog "Anfield" after scoring twice against Liverpool in 2020 when Diego Simeone's side knocked them out of the Champions League. Of Llorente's 10 Champions League goals, five have now remarkably come at Liverpool's Merseyside home.

Alisson did well to deny Alvarez – who was making his first Atletico start of the season after failing to get his desired move to Barcelona – from distance and Liverpool levelled before the break after Kerkez did brilliantly to win the ball back and Ronald Araujo played a smart back-heel to tee up Szobozlai, who finished well.

Shortly after half-time, Bradley Barcola – making his first Liverpool start since his £123m move from Paris St-Germain – missed a glorious opportunity when he fired wide but a minute later, Mac Allister got the winner when he got on the end of a loose ball and rifled home in front of the Kop.

There was a slight scare for Liverpool when Barcola went down with cramp and the Frenchman had to be replaced on the hour mark but Iraola's side held on for a crucial three points.

Liverpool's next game in the Champions League is away to LASK on October 14.

Sports >> *A dominant Old Trafford display announced United's Champions League return with authority

Manchester United 4–0 Sabah: Red Devils roar back into Europe

Manchester United 4–0 Sabah

By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**

Manchester United yesterday marked their return to the UEFA Champions League in the most emphatic fashion possible, dismantling Azerbaijani champions Sabah 4–0 at Old Trafford in the opening match of the 2026–27 league phase.

It was a performance that left little room for argument. United were in control early, and by the time the half-time whistle sounded, the contest was already over.

Sabah actually began with a degree of confidence and came close to levelling shortly after falling behind, when Joy-Lance Mickels spurned a clear chance to equalise. But United's quality ultimately told, and the visitors were overwhelmed before the break.

Matheus Cunha opened the scoring in the 27th minute with a composed finish inside the box, converting a perfectly weighted cross from Patrick Dorgu. Bruno Fernandes doubled the lead in the 42nd minute, before Benjamin Šeško made it three just three minutes later to send Old Trafford into full voice at the interval.

The second half brought more of the same. Lisandro Martínez rose to head home from a set piece in the 68th minute, completing a comprehensive 4–0 victory and a clean sheet to go with it.

Dorgu was outstanding throughout. The Danish full-back was a constant threat down the left flank, defending diligently while driving forward to create danger with every run. His cross for Cunha's opener was the defining moment of the first half — a perfectly timed delivery that gave the striker no choice but to score. Even after that, Dorgu never stopped. He combined relentless energy with sharp passing all evening and thoroughly deserved the Player of the Match award, leaving the pitch to a roaring reception from the Old Trafford crowd.

Captain Fernandes, meanwhile, was the creative force behind almost everything United did going forward. Playing in his natural playmaker role, he controlled the tempo with precision, slicing through Sabah's defensive shape with incisive passes and always being where the game needed him most. His goal gave United the breathing room they needed before the break — and confirmed why he remains the heartbeat of this side.

Credit, too, must go to Sabah. Even four goals down, they kept pressing and looked for a way back into the game through quick counter-attacks, searching for any space the United defence might concede. They found none. Martínez and Leny Yoro were commanding at the back, keeping the defensive line organised and composed from first minute to last.

The result marks United's 26th Champions League campaign — an English record — and their first in the competition for three seasons. Their previous European campaign, in 2023–24, ended in the group stage. Manager Michael Carrick, who secured the permanent job after guiding United from seventh to third during the second half of last season, could hardly have asked for a better opening statement.

Yes, the opposition was Sabah — a club from Azerbaijan, only nine years old, making their Champions League debut. The occasion was, by some measures, a gentle reintroduction. But in a tournament where confidence and momentum matter, a 4–0 win and a clean sheet on home soil is precisely the kind of start United needed.

The Red Devils are back.

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Limpopo festival puts African heritage at the heart of Heritage Month

The third Sitjheja Zakwethu Cultural Fare returns to Nkandla Resort on 19 September with music, dance and a call to reclaim cultural identity

By: Themba Emanuel Mashobane
@themtkenyatimes

Limpopo's growing cultural calendar gains another significant entry on 19 September when the third annual Sitjheja Zakwethu Cultural Fare opens at Nkandla Resort in Monsterlus, drawing traditional leaders, artists, schools, businesses and families to a day-long celebration of South African indigenous heritage.

The event, established by cultural entrepreneur Mbus'omuhle kaDlalisa kaBongwe and organised through his company Mbus'omuhle Services, has steadily built a reputation as one of the province's more purposeful heritage festivals — one that moves beyond performance to address the practical question of what happens to African cultural knowledge when it is not actively passed on.

This year's theme, Kha Ri Tshine, a Tshivenda phrase meaning "let us shine," carries a deliberate message. Organisers say the festival's growing profile reflects an urgent need to create structured platforms where indigenous traditions are not simply displayed but transmitted — from elders to youth, from communities to the wider public, and from the cultural margins to the national mainstream.

"We are not just celebrating the past," said kaDlalisa kaBongwe. "We are securing the future. When young people see their language, their music, their dress and their stories celebrated in a public space, something shifts in how they see themselves."

The programme this year will include traditional music and dance performances drawn from across South Africa's diverse cultural groups, praise poetry sessions, storytelling, arts and crafts exhibitions, indigenous cuisine, heritage education activities and live entertainment. Attendees are expected in traditional attire in keeping with the festival's longstanding dress code, a detail that organisers describe not as ceremonial but as intentional — a signal that participation means engagement, not observation.

The timing is significant. September is Heritage Month in South Africa, a period officially dedicated to reflecting on and celebrating the country's cultural diversity. Government departments, schools and civic organisations mark the month with programmes ranging from community events to formal commemorations. The Sitjheja Zakwethu Cultural Fare positions itself within that broader national conversation while maintaining its roots in Limpopo's own rich cultural landscape, which encompasses Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Ndebele traditions, among others.

Limpopo has for some years been working to leverage its cultural assets more deliberately as part of a broader provincial tourism strategy. The province's heritage sites — including Mapungubwe, a Unesco World Heritage Site, and the Blouberg mountain settlements — draw international scholarly and tourism interest. Festivals such as Sitjheja Zakwethu complement that infrastructure by making heritage accessible and participatory at the community level, rather than confining it to museum settings or formal conservation frameworks.

The festival's reach extends beyond culture in the narrow sense. Local entrepreneurs, crafters and small business owners are given exhibition space, creating a commercial dimension that reflects the organisers' belief that cultural preservation and economic activity are not in tension. Artists and performers receive a formal platform and professional exposure, while community members gain access to entrepreneurship and networking opportunities that are otherwise difficult to access in rural Limpopo.

For traditional leaders, whose authority is rooted in the custodianship of exactly the kind of knowledge the festival celebrates, the event offers a public forum that extends their cultural mandate into contemporary civic life. Their participation signals to younger generations that cultural identity is not a private matter or a relic — it is a living, relevant and valued part of public life.

Schools and higher education institutions are among the targeted audiences this year, a deliberate effort to anchor heritage education in the formal learning environment. Cultural literacy, organisers argue, is not separate from other forms of education. Understanding where one comes from — the history, the language, the artistic traditions — shapes the confidence and sense of purpose with which young people approach everything else.

South Africa's post-apartheid cultural policy has long recognised the importance of heritage preservation as a pillar of nation-building. Yet the gap between policy and practice remains wide in many communities, particularly in rural provinces where resources are limited and formal cultural institutions are few. Festivals like Sitjheja Zakwethu fill part of that gap by doing in a day what government programmes often struggle to achieve over years — creating an atmosphere in which culture is celebrated without apology, and where the people who carry that culture are treated as assets rather than afterthoughts.

The event opens at 11:00 and runs until late. Nkandla Resort, set in the bushveld terrain characteristic of Limpopo's midlands, provides a setting that lends itself naturally to an outdoor day of performance, exhibition and community engagement.

For the communities of Monsterlus and the surrounding areas, the festival's return is a marker on the cultural calendar. For South Africa more broadly, it is a reminder that heritage is not preserved in silence — it is kept alive through the noise of drums, the movement of dancers and the voices of people choosing, deliberately and publicly, to remember who they are.

Published at Shashil Court Westlands & Printed at Mombasa Road, Nairobi by Exponential International Limited. P.O. Box 101675 - 00101 Nairobi.
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