



Ruto tells UN: Africa's crisis is rigged rules, not empty coffers
President William Ruto told world leaders at the 81st United Nations General Assembly yesterday that Africa's fundamental challenge is not a shortage of capital but a global financial architecture built on rules that systematically disadvantage the continent.

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Retirement is not a prison sentence: The Uhuru Kenyatta case and the defence of citizenship
There are moments when a court ruling becomes larger than the dispute that brought it before the judges. It becomes a mirror through which a nation is compelled to examine

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **"It is illegal to control the political life of a private citizen," Justice Mwamuye**

Ex-presidents free to play politics

The High Court yesterday declared unconstitutional the law barring retired presidents from participating in active politics, ruling that once a head of state leaves office, the state loses its authority to govern their civic life.

Justice Bahati Mwamuye, delivering the judgment, drew a clear and consequential line: the coercive and executive authority of the state attaches to the office, not the person. When the office ends, that authority ends with it. What remains is a private citizen, and private citizens in a constitutional democracy cannot be legally stripped of their political rights simply because of the position they once held.

"Once a president ends his or her term, he ceases to exercise the coercive and executive authority of the state," Justice Mwamuye said. "It is illegal to control the political life of a private citizen."

The ruling lands in a political environment already charged with speculation about the ambitions of Kenya's former presidents and their potential role in the country's increasingly competitive pre-election landscape. Its implications, however, extend well beyond any individual. It is a ruling about the architecture of constitutional rights — about where the state's authority over a citizen begins, and crucially, where it ends.

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Former President Uhuru Kenyatta



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Azimio is dead. Long live the Ukombozi Alliance

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya's main opposition coalition, Azimio La Umoja One Kenya, yesterday formally rebranded as The Ukombozi Alliance, marking the most significant structural repositioning of the country's opposition politics since the 2022 general election.

The announcement, made by coalition leadership, signals a deliberate effort to shed the baggage of a bruising electoral defeat and present a refreshed political identity ahead of the 2027 contest. The name itself — Ukombozi, meaning liberation — frames the coalition's mission in explicitly emotive terms: freedom from what it describes as the burden of the Ruto administration and a rebuilding of government in service of ordinary Kenyans.

"The name changes, but the promise does not," the coalition said in its formal statement. "We remain the home of every Kenyan who believes this country can be freed, rebuilt and made to work for the mwananchi again."

The rebranding is symbolically bold. Whether it resolves the substantive challenges that have dogged the opposition — internal divisions, leadership succession questions and a credible alternative policy platform — remains the more consequential test.

A new name is the easy part.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority has approved new charges affecting solar energy users and introduced fresh metering requirements for Kenya Power consumers, marking a significant shift in how the country manages its evolving electricity landscape. Under the new framework, households and businesses that generate their own solar power and feed surplus electricity back into the national grid will be subject to revised tariff structures. The changes reflect growing pressure on regulators to balance the rapid uptake of renewable energy with the financial sustainability of the national grid infrastructure. Kenya Power customers will simultaneously face updated metering rules governing how consumption is measured and billed. The authority said the adjustments were necessary to improve accuracy, reduce revenue losses and align Kenya's energy regulatory framework with regional standards.



Women senators have taken up the case of 36 female students allegedly impregnated in what they are demanding be treated as a matter of urgent national concern, calling for a full independent investigation into circumstances surrounding the incidents. The senators, speaking with rare collective force, said the scale of the alleged pregnancies pointed to systemic failures in child protection rather than isolated incidents, and demanded accountability from school administrators, local authorities and relevant government agencies. Their intervention brings parliamentary pressure to bear on a situation that has drawn widespread public outrage. The senators warned that without a thorough probe, those responsible would escape accountability while vulnerable girls continued to bear consequences alone. They called for immediate action to protect the affected learners and prevent further violations.



Google has moved to broaden access to artificial intelligence skills among young Kenyans, launching a training initiative aimed at equipping students and young professionals with practical competencies for an increasingly AI-driven study and work environment. The programme targets learning institutions across the country, with Google positioning the rollout as part of a wider effort to democratise access to tools and knowledge that have historically been concentrated in more resourced environments. The initiative arrives as Kenyan businesses accelerate adoption of AI across sectors, sharpening demand for a workforce that can operate confidently within automated and data-driven systems. Google simultaneously used the launch to press for policy frameworks that support responsible AI adoption, arguing that technology expansion without regulatory guardrails risks deepening existing inequalities rather than narrowing them.



Former Law Society of Kenya president Nelson Havi has pointed investigators and the public toward Kenya Pipeline Company as the starting point for identifying individuals Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni recently described as brokers interfering in regional energy dealings. Speaking pointedly on the matter, Havi said scrutiny of the company's ownership structure and board composition would reveal the identities of those Museveni had in mind without requiring him to name them directly. His remarks follow Museveni's unusually candid public comments flagging the presence of intermediaries exploiting Kenya-Uganda energy arrangements for personal gain. Havi's intervention raises fresh questions about corporate governance at the state-owned pipeline operator and whether undisclosed interests within its leadership structure have been shaping decisions that affect regional fuel supply chains.



Political analyst and Africa Policy Institute chief executive Peter Kagwanja has delivered a blunt assessment of the United Nations, arguing the organisation was never built on universal justice but rather on the terms dictated by those who won the Second World War. Kagwanja said the past seven to eight decades represented an imperfect attempt to make that victor's justice serve a broader humanity — an experiment he suggested had fallen short of its ambitions. He warned the UN now finds itself at its most vulnerable, facing direct assault from the very hegemonic power that once anchored its authority. With that pillar weakening, Kagwanja said China had yet to develop the institutional maturity and global standing needed to assume responsibility for sustaining the multilateral order.



The National Disaster Operations Centre has mapped more than 7,000 schools across Kenya as vulnerable to disruption in the event of renewed El Niño rains, raising alarm over the potential impact on learners and the integrity of forthcoming national examinations. The exercise identified institutions previously affected by flooding and extreme weather, flagging them as high-risk sites where learning could be suspended at short notice if conditions deteriorate as forecast. Officials expressed particular concern about the examination calendar, warning that widespread school closures during assessment periods could have serious consequences for thousands of candidates. The centre also issued a firm warning against the practice of converting school facilities into camps for internally displaced persons, arguing that such use further entrenches disruption and complicates recovery long after floodwaters recede.

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Africa The pitch Ruto made was direct. Kenya, he said, offers a stable legal environment

Ruto offers Kenya as test case on African risk

BY Grace Wanja
@themkenyaintimes

President William Ruto met Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York yesterday, offering Kenya as a practical testing ground for dismantling the perception of African investment risk that he argues is costing the continent billions in capital it is fully capable of absorbing.

The meeting, one of several high-value bilateral and private-sector engagements Ruto conducted during the UNGA 81 week, carried significance beyond the usual diplomatic courtesy. Dangote, whose business empire spans cement, petrochemicals, sugar, flour and — most recently and ambitiously — Africa's largest private oil refinery in Lagos, represents precisely the category of intra-African capital that Ruto has been arguing should be flowing more freely across the continent's borders.

The pitch Ruto made was direct. Kenya, he said, offers a stable legal environment, a sophisticated financial services sector, a young and increasingly skilled workforce and infrastructure connectivity that makes it a credible gateway to East and Central Africa. More pointedly, he positioned the country as a place where the narrative of African risk could be empirically tested and, he argued, disproved.

"Africa is not a high-risk continent," Ruto has said re-



President William Ruto met Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York yesterday

peatedly this week, including in his main General Assembly address. "It is a continent that has been assigned risk ratings that do not reflect its actual fundamentals — and those ratings are costing us the investment we need to grow."

The argument connects directly to a central theme of his UNGA 81 engagement: that the global financial architecture systematically overprices risk in African markets, raising the cost of capital to levels that undermine development projects that would be viable in almost any other region. Credit rating agencies, he contends, apply methodologies that penalise African sovereigns beyond what their economic data justifies.

Dangote, who has navigated those same systemic obstacles in building his own continental business presence, is

a credible audience for the argument. His Lagos refinery, a 20-billion-dollar project that took more than a decade to complete, is itself a monument to what African private capital can achieve when it is deployed at scale and with patience — and equally a testament to the institutional, regulatory and financing obstacles that make such achievements so rare.

The Kenya-Dangote conversation sits within a broader strategic pattern that Ruto has pursued with notable consistency. He has repeatedly sought to attract not just Western institutional capital or multilateral financing, but intra-African investment — the kind that arrives with continental understanding, longer time horizons and fewer of the conditionalities that have complicated Kenya's relationships with traditional development partners.

Whether that conversation produces concrete investment commitments, partnership frameworks or simply goodwill remains to be seen. Side-line meetings at international forums are frequently more consequential in political symbolism than in immediate economic outcomes.

But the symbolism here is itself significant. A Kenyan president and Africa's most successful private investor, meeting at the world's foremost diplomatic gathering, to discuss whether Africa can be its own most persuasive argument against the risk premium the world charges it — that is a conversation that would have looked very different a decade ago.

Kenya has volunteered itself as the proof of concept. The results will be watched closely.

Gachagua demands fuel deal accountability, accuses Ruto of deception



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

BY Alice Njoki
@themkenyaintimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday demanded full public accountability over Kenya's government-to-government fuel deal, directly accusing President William Ruto of deception and questioning how much ordinary Kenyans may have lost in the arrangement.

Gachagua, who was removed from office through an impeachment process in October 2024, has intensified his public campaign against the Ruto administration. His latest broadside targets the G-to-G fuel import framework, a government-to-government arrangement Kenya entered to stabilise fuel supply and reduce costs, which has attracted persistent questions about

pricing, transparency and the terms of the agreements with supplier nations.

"If he can con a president, how much has he stolen from Kenyans?" Gachagua said, framing his demand for accountability in language designed to resonate with ordinary citizens bearing the weight of elevated fuel costs.

The remarks represent a significant escalation. Gachagua is no longer a figure on the political periphery making generalised criticisms — he is a former insider, with detailed institutional knowledge, making specific allegations about a policy that directly affects every Kenyan household.

The government has yet to respond publicly to his latest claims. That silence may not hold for long.

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UN The argument is not entirely new. African leaders, economists and development scholars have made versions of it for decades

Ruto tells UN: Africa's crisis is rigged rules, not empty coffers

At the world's premier diplomatic forum, Kenya's president offered a diagnosis of African underdevelopment that reframes the continent's relationship with global institutions — and demands a new conversation

BY David Kimani

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

President William Ruto told world leaders at the 81st United Nations General Assembly yesterday that Africa's fundamental challenge is not a shortage of capital but a global financial architecture built on rules that systematically disadvantage the continent.

The address, delivered from the floor of the UN General Assembly hall in New York, positioned Ruto as one of the most assertive African voices at this year's gathering, pressing a case that many of his peers have long felt but rarely articulated with such directness before the world's most powerful audience.

"Africa does not lack resources," Ruto told delegates. "What Africa lacks is a fair system — one that does not price us out of the capital we need to develop, one that does not treat our nations as higher risk than our fundamentals justify, one that does not extract our wealth while lending us back a fraction of it at punishing rates."

The argument is not entirely new. African leaders, economists and development scholars have made versions of it for decades. What gave Ruto's intervention its particular weight was the moment in which it arrived. UNGA 81 is convening against a backdrop of compounding crises — a global debt emergency affecting dozens of developing nations, stalled climate finance commitments, a reforming multilateral system that has moved slowly and, for many on the African continent, insufficiently.

Ruto's speech was structured around a single, clarifying premise: that the conversation about African development has been systematically misdirected. Donors, international financial institutions and Western governments have for years framed the continent's challenges as governance failures, infrastructure deficits and insufficient domestic resource mobilisation. Ruto challenged that framing head-on, insisting the more consequential problem sits in the design of the global system itself.

He pointed specifically to credit rat-



President William Ruto

ing agencies, whose assessments of African sovereign debt consistently attract higher risk premiums than comparable economies in other regions, effectively raising the cost of borrowing to levels that undermine the very investments intended to drive growth. He cited the disconnect between Africa's demonstrated climate vulnerability and the pace at which promised climate finance has materialised. And he raised the persistent issue of illicit financial flows — estimated by the African Union to drain the continent of more than 88 billion US dollars annually — which dwarf the foreign aid figures that typically dominate development discussions.

"We are told to reform, to improve governance, to create better conditions for investment," Ruto said. "And we must. We accept that responsibility. But the conversation cannot end there. The rules govern-

ing trade, finance, intellectual property and climate responsibility were not written with Africa in mind. They were written to preserve arrangements that benefit those who wrote them."

The speech drew measured applause in the hall and immediate commentary from analysts tracking the shifting dynamics of African multilateral diplomacy. Kenya has increasingly positioned itself as a continental interlocutor — a bridge between African concerns and Western capitals, between development ambitions and the institutions that shape the terms of global finance.

That positioning carries both opportunity and tension. Ruto has maintained close relationships with Washington and Brussels while simultaneously pressing for systemic reforms that those same capitals have resisted. His government has also faced domestic criticism over

Kenya's own debt levels and economic management, a tension that his critics argue undermines the moral authority of his international advocacy.

Those complications do not diminish the substance of the argument he brought to New York. The African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have all, in varying degrees, acknowledged that the current architecture of international finance creates structural disadvantages for developing economies. Former IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath has written about the asymmetries in global capital flows. Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz has argued for decades that the rules of the international economic order were designed to serve rich countries' interests. What Ruto did at UNGA 81 was carry those arguments into the General Assembly chamber and attach to

them the political weight of a sitting African head of state.

His address also touched on the reform of the United Nations Security Council, a longstanding African demand that the continent receive permanent representation in the body that holds primary responsibility for international peace and security. Africa, home to 1.4 billion people and 54 of the UN's 193 member states, currently holds no permanent seat. Ruto called that arrangement indefensible in an institution that presents itself as the guarantor of a rules-based international order.

"You cannot speak of rules-based order," he said, "while maintaining a decision-making structure that excludes the majority of the world's nations from its highest table."

The broader significance of Ruto's UNGA 81 speech lies less in any single demand and more in the coherence of its argument. He did not arrive in New York asking for more aid or appealing to international sympathy. He arrived with a structural critique — carefully framed, consistently argued and aimed squarely at the legitimacy of a global order that has, for all its stated universalism, produced profoundly unequal outcomes.

Whether that critique translates into concrete reform is a separate question, and the history of such calls at the United Nations is not encouraging. The institutions Ruto is challenging were designed with considerable political durability. Changing them requires not just compelling arguments but sustained coalitions, and African unity on questions of global economic governance has often been harder to maintain than the rhetoric of continental solidarity suggests.

But the speech mattered nonetheless. In a week when world leaders gathered to debate the future of multilateralism, Kenya's president made a case that will resonate well beyond the General Assembly hall — that the problem with the global order is not the absence of rules, but who wrote them, who benefits from them and who has been left, persistently and structurally, on the outside.

That is an argument the world will be hearing more of.

Politics “Once a president ends his or her term, he ceases to exercise the coercive and executive authority of the state,” Justice Mwamuye said. “It is illegal to control the political life of a private citizen.”

Court frees former presidents to play politics

A landmark High Court ruling strips away the legal barrier that kept Kenya’s retired heads of state out of active politics — and its consequences reach far beyond any single individual

BY James Mwangi

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

The High Court yesterday declared unconstitutional the law barring retired presidents from participating in active politics, ruling that once a head of state leaves office, the state loses its authority to govern their civic life.

Justice Bahati Mwamuye, delivering the judgment, drew a clear and consequential line: the coercive and executive authority of the state attaches to the office, not the person. When the office ends, that authority ends with it. What remains is a private citizen, and private citizens in a constitutional democracy cannot be legally stripped of their political rights simply because of the position they once held.

“Once a president ends his or her term, he ceases to exercise the coercive and executive authority of the state,” Justice Mwamuye said. “It is illegal to control the political life of a private citizen.”

The ruling lands in a political environment already charged with speculation about the ambitions of Kenya’s former presidents and their potential role in the country’s increasingly competitive pre-election landscape. Its implications, however, extend well beyond any individual. It is a ruling about the architecture of constitutional rights — about where the state’s authority over a citizen begins, and crucially, where it ends.

The provision that Justice Mwamuye struck down had been justified, by its supporters, on grounds of national stability and the protection of democratic processes from undue influence by individuals who had already held the country’s highest office. The argument ran that former presidents, by virtue of their networks, resources and residual institutional influence, posed a distinct risk to the level playing field that democratic competition requires. Restricting their political activity was, on this reading, not a punishment but a safeguard.

The court rejected that reasoning in its entirety. Kenya’s Constitution is

built on a framework of rights that apply equally to all citizens, and the burden of justifying any departure from that framework is a high one. The government did not meet it. The restriction on former presidents’ political participation, the court found, could not be sustained against the constitutional guarantee of every Kenyan’s right to participate in political life.

That finding has immediate practical consequences. Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, who left office in 2022 after serving two terms and has since maintained a studied public silence on Kenya’s internal political contests, is now legally free to re-enter the fray. So is former President Mwai Kibaki’s legacy network, and so would be any future retired head of state. The ruling creates no exceptions and draws no distinctions based on the circumstances of departure from office.

The political arithmetic this changes is significant. Kenyatta’s support base, spanning central Kenya and substantial cross-regional networks built during his decade in power, has remained an unspoken variable in calculations about the 2027 general election. His formal legal freedom to deploy that influence openly, to attend rallies, endorse candidates, fundraise or even seek a different elective office, redraws the map of what is possible in Kenya’s next political cycle.

Constitutional lawyers have been quick to note the broader principle embedded in the ruling. Makau Mutua, a constitutional scholar and frequent commentator on Kenyan jurisprudence, has argued that the restriction on former presidents was always legally precarious — a political accommodation dressed in constitutional language rather than a genuinely defensible limitation on rights. Yesterday’s ruling, in his view, brings the law into alignment with what the constitution actually says.

Others are less sanguine. Political analysts who supported the restriction argue that the court has underestimated the structural advantages



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

former presidents carry into political competition. A retired head of state is not simply a private citizen in the ordinary sense. He commands residual loyalty within the security services, maintains relationships with business elites built over years of patronage, and carries the symbolic weight of having led the nation. These advantages do not dissolve at the moment of handing over power, and no court ruling can legislate them away.

That tension — between the formal equality of citizenship and the practical inequality of political resources — sits at the heart of the debate the ruling has now forced into the open. Kenya’s democratic institutions have repeatedly struggled with the gap between constitutional ideals and political realities, and the question of how to manage the afterlife of

presidential power is one that mature democracies across the world have answered in very different ways.

In the United States, former presidents face no legal restrictions on political activity and regularly remain influential figures in national politics. In France, a different tradition of republican restraint has shaped, though never legally enforced, the expectation that former heads of state step back from active partisan competition. In South Africa, the post-presidency has become a site of intense political contestation, with consequences that have tested the country’s institutions severely.

Kenya now joins those democracies in navigating the question without the legal guardrail it previously relied upon. The court has made clear that the guardrail was never constitutionally legitimate. The harder

work — of building political norms, institutional resilience and civic expectations that can manage the influence of former presidents without suppressing their rights — falls to the political class, civil society and ultimately the electorate.

Justice Mwamuye’s ruling does not resolve that challenge. What it does is force Kenya to confront it honestly, without the comfort of a legal restriction that the constitution cannot support.

The former presidents are free. What they do with that freedom — and what Kenya’s democratic institutions do in response — is the question that now matters.

Tourism The timing is significant. Tourism globally is changing fast. The event's theme centres on the digital agenda and artificial intelligence in redesigning tourism

Eldoret to host 2026 UN Tourism Week: Can the North Rift redefine Kenya's tourism story?

The city known for producing champions is about to host the world — and the bigger question is what happens after the delegates go home

BY Collins Kibet

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

Eldoret is preparing to step into an international spotlight that has rarely been directed this far from the coast or the savannah. The city will host

the 2026 UN Tourism Week at the University of Eldoret grounds, drawing together tourism stakeholders, government officials, investors, scholars, conservationists and members of the public in what promises to be one of

the most significant gatherings the North Rift has ever hosted.

For Eldoret, this is not simply an international event on a calendar. It is an argument — a chance to make the case that Kenya's tourism story is



Tourism Principal Secretary Julius Bitok

bigger, more varied and more interesting than the version most of the world currently knows.

The timing is significant. Tourism globally is changing fast. The event's theme centres on the digital agenda and artificial intelligence in redesigning tourism, reflecting a broader shift in how destinations attract visitors, communicate their offering and shape the traveller's experience. From digital marketing and online booking platforms to AI-powered personalisation, technology is rewriting the rules of visibility — and that matters enormously for destinations that have historically sat outside the mainstream conversation.

The North Rift is precisely such a destination. The region carries a remarkable combination of assets: world-class athletics, rich cultural traditions, dramatic landscapes, agricultural heritage, adventure tourism and genuine community experiences. None of these has been adequately marketed to the world. Eldoret, globally synonymous with Kenya's distance-running dynasty, has a ready-made identity as the Home of Champions — but that identity has never been fully converted into a tourism brand that draws visitors beyond the athletics calendar.

The opportunity now is to change that. Digital platforms give local tour operators, accommodation providers, artists, photographers, farmers and cultural groups the ability

to reach audiences anywhere in the world without the infrastructure costs that once made global marketing the exclusive domain of large operators. Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies can further lower those barriers, enabling small tourism enterprises to compete in markets that were previously out of reach. For young entrepreneurs across the North Rift, that shift represents a genuine opening.

The presence of international delegates, investors and tourism innovators in Eldoret creates another layer of opportunity. The connections formed during a week like this — between local businesses and international partners, between Kenyan tourism officials and global investors, between community enterprises and digital platforms — can take years to build through ordinary channels. A well-managed event compresses that process significantly.

But the success of the week should not be measured by the quality of the opening ceremony or the seniority of the delegates attending. The more important question is what remains when they leave. Will local businesses gain new clients or partnerships? Will investment in North Rift tourism infrastructure increase? Will young people find pathways into the industry? Will destinations in the region receive sustained international attention rather than a brief moment in the spotlight?

Those are the outcomes that will determine whether this event becomes a genuine economic turning point or simply a memorable occasion.

That distinction requires deliberate work. International recognition does not automatically translate into bookings, investment or employment. It requires follow-through — from national and county government, from the private sector, from local communities and from the tourism industry itself. The energy generated by the event needs somewhere to go after the final session closes.

Eldoret has the raw material to make that argument convincingly. The North Rift has stories that deserve telling, destinations that deserve exploring and communities that have contributed enormously to Kenya's national identity without receiving a proportional share of the country's tourism economy. This week offers a moment to correct that imbalance — not by asking for attention, but by demonstrating, on an international stage, exactly what the region has to offer.

If the connections made during the 2026 UN Tourism Week are converted into lasting partnerships and real opportunities for local people, Eldoret could emerge from the week as something more than a host city.

It could emerge as a serious player in Kenya's tourism future.

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School fire The High Court yesterday declined to grant bail to eight minors facing 16 counts of murder in connection with the deaths

Utumishi girls fire and the search for justice

Sixteen students died, eight minors face murder charges — and grieving families wait as the courts seek truth

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themkenyatimes

The fire that tore through Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County, on the night of May 28 did more than destroy a dormitory. It shattered families, extinguished dreams and left behind a grief that resists easy words.

Sixteen girls lost their lives. Seventy-nine others were injured. For the country, those figures appeared in headlines and official reports. For the families, they were never figures. They were daughters, sisters, friends — children expected to come home, finish school and build lives of their own.

Instead, sixteen families were left to confront the unbearable.

Every young person carries a future that cannot be measured. A student sitting in a classroom today might become tomorrow's doctor, engineer, journalist or leader. There is no way of knowing how far a young life might have travelled. That is what makes the Utumishi tragedy so devastating. Kenya did not lose sixteen students. It lost sixteen possibilities.

For the parents, the tragedy did not end when the fire was extinguished. It continued when they drove home without their daughters. It continues in the empty rooms, the photographs on walls, the birthdays that will pass without celebration and the ordinary moments when a parent instinctively reaches for a voice that is no longer there.

Now, months after that night, the search for answers has moved into the courtroom.

The High Court yesterday

declined to grant bail to eight minors facing 16 counts of murder in connection with the deaths. The court cited concerns over possible interference with witnesses, the circumstances of the case and the welfare of the accused. That decision has drawn strong emotions, particularly from families still deep in mourning.

Yet here the country must make a critical distinction.

The denial of bail is not a declaration of guilt. The eight minors have pleaded not guilty, and their guilt or innocence will be determined through the judicial process. The court has also underlined the need to protect them from premature judgment and public exposure.

That distinction is difficult to hold in a tragedy of this scale. Grief demands answers. Anger demands accountability. Families want to know what happened to their children and whether those responsible will face consequences.

But justice cannot be built on grief alone. It must be built on evidence.

The courtroom must remain the place where allegations are tested and responsibility is established. Public opinion, social media theories and unanswered family questions cannot substitute for due process.

At the same time, respecting the rights of the accused must never mean forgetting the victims.

The sixteen girls deserve to remain at the centre of this conversation. They were individuals, not statistics — with personalities, friendships, ambitions and families who loved them. Their deaths have left permanent spaces in the

lives of those who knew them. There is another painful dimension: the survivors.

Survival does not mean escaping unharmed. Some students sustained physical injuries; others may carry emotional wounds that no scan can detect. A young girl who watched a dormitory descend into panic and loss may live with memories of that night long after visible scars have healed. For such students, returning to ordinary life is not as simple as returning to class. They need counselling, sustained emotional support and safe environments in which to process what they witnessed.

The tragedy therefore demands more than a criminal trial. It demands a serious national conversation about school safety.

Every night, thousands of Kenyan children sleep in school dormitories, separated from their parents and entrusted to institutions meant to protect them. That trust carries enormous responsibility.

Utumishi should force difficult questions. Are schools adequately prepared when fires break out? Are emergency exits accessible? Are fire safety systems regularly inspected? Do students know what to do in an emergency? Kenya has experienced school fires before. Each tragedy brings mourning, investigations and promises. The cycle cannot continue indefinitely. A country cannot repeatedly mourn children and wait for the next disaster before discussing prevention.

There must be sustained, enforced attention to safety standards and emergency preparedness in learning institutions.



The fire that tore through Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County

Meanwhile, the Utumishi case itself must be allowed to follow the law. The prosecution's allegations will be tested in court. The defence will respond. The court will determine whether the evidence meets the required legal threshold.

Until then, the public must resist turning accusation into conviction.

That does not mean silence. It means demanding justice without prejudging the outcome. It means standing with grieving families without interfering with the judicial process. It means remembering sixteen girls while recognising that the eight minors before the court are also children whose rights the law must protect.

This is perhaps the most difficult lesson from Utumishi: justice must hold two truths simultaneously.

Kenya can grieve for sixteen girls whose lives were cut short. It can demand accountability from those responsible. And it can still insist that anyone accused of a crime — particularly a child — receives a fair legal process. These principles do not cancel each other out. They strengthen one another.

For the families of the sixteen girls, justice will always mean something more personal. A court case cannot bring their daughters back. A conviction, if eventually reached, cannot restore the conversations that

will never happen, the graduations never attended or the futures never lived.

Nothing returns what those families lost.

But the truth matters. Accountability matters. And ensuring that other parents never face the same pain matters.

The Utumishi fire must not become another tragedy Kenya mourns for a few weeks before moving on. Sixteen girls died. Sixteen families were permanently changed. Seventy-nine others were injured. And an entire nation was reminded how fragile life becomes when a few minutes determine whether a child makes it home.

The court has the responsibility of examining evidence and applying the law. The public

has a different responsibility: remember the victims, respect the process and keep asking the questions that can make schools safer.

The sixteen girls had futures. Those futures must not disappear with them. Their memory should live not only in photographs and memorials, but in the determination to ensure that every child who enters a school dormitory has a reasonable expectation of walking out again.

Let the court establish the truth. Let justice take its course. And let Kenya ensure that the deaths of sixteen young girls become a turning point in how seriously this country protects the children entrusted to its schools.



Politics The circumstances surrounding retired President Uhuru Kenyatta provide perhaps the clearest contemporary illustration of this principle

Retirement is not a prison sentence: The Uhuru Kenyatta case and the defence of citizenship

“A democratic society does not imprison its citizens for having once served it; it honours their service, protects their rights and remembers that power is temporary, but citizenship is permanent.”



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

fkipchelimo@yahoo.com

“A democratic society does not imprison its citizens for having once served it; it honours their service, protects their rights and remembers that power is temporary, but citizenship is permanent.”

There are moments when a court ruling becomes larger than the dispute that brought it before the judges. It becomes a mirror through which a nation is compelled to examine its understanding of citizenship, power, constitutionalism and the meaning of retirement from public office. Kenya has reached such a moment. The High Court pronouncement of September 21, 2026, declaring key provisions of the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act unconstitutional, has brought renewed force to a principle I have long held: retirement from public office should never become isolation, confinement or political solitary confinement.

A person may retire from the presidency, Parliament, county government or any other public office, but that person does not retire from citizenship. Public office has a beginning and an end. Constitutional citizenship does not.

The circumstances surrounding retired President Uhuru Kenyatta provide perhaps the clearest contemporary illustration of this principle. Uhuru's continued involvement in political affairs, including his position as Jubilee Party leader, became the subject of intense political and legal controversy. On September 14, 2026, Justice Lawrence

Mugambi upheld the statutory restriction preventing a retired president from holding political party office beyond six months after leaving State House. Uhuru subsequently indicated that he would facilitate the handover of the Jubilee chairmanship, while making clear that he did not regard the judgment as extinguishing his wider political participation.

One day later, the political meaning of that controversy was already being interpreted through the language of constitutional democracy. Then, on September 21, Justice Bahati Mwamuye delivered a dramatically different High Court judgment, declaring Section 6 of the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act unconstitutional and void in its entirety. The same judgment declared Sections 4(1), 4(2) and 4(3), which provided mechanisms for withholding, reducing or withdrawing presidential retirement benefits, unconstitutional.

The contrast between the two decisions is itself important. It demonstrates that this was never merely a question about whether one former President should remain chairman of a political party. It exposed a much larger constitutional question: Can the State regulate the political life of a citizen merely because that citizen once occupied the highest elective office in the Republic?

Justice Mwamuye answered that question in favour of the continuing constitutional citizenship of the retired President. The court distinguished between the authority attached to the presidency and the influence that may remain with a former office-holder. Leaving State House ends executive authority. It does not extinguish citizenship, freedom of association or the right to participate in political life. That distinction is fundamental.

Uhuru Kenyatta is no longer President of Kenya. He cannot exercise presidential executive authority. He cannot command the State machinery. He cannot make decisions in the name of the presidency. But none of those propositions means that he ceased to be Kenyan, ceased to possess constitutional rights or became a person whom the State could place in political isolation. And this is where the Uhuru case transcends Uhuru himself.

Those who support him should not defend his constitutional rights merely because they support him. Those who oppose him should not deny those rights merely because they oppose him. Constitutionalism is tested precisely when the person whose rights are before the court is politically inconvenient to us. That is the real democratic test.

The controversy also reveals how dangerous it can become when retirement benefits are turned into instruments of political control. The Presidential Retirement Benefits Act contained provisions under which retirement benefits could be reduced or withdrawn in specified circumstances, including conduct connected to political-party activity. The September 21 judgment held that the challenged provisions could not stand against Article 151(3), which constitutionally protects the retirement benefits, facilities and privileges of former Presidents and Deputy Presidents from being varied to their disadvantage during their lifetime.

The court went further, finding the challenged mechanism inconsistent with constitutional protections including property rights and fair administrative action where it permitted adverse interference without adequate procedural safeguards. This is not a declaration that former presidents are above account-



Retired President Uhuru Kenyatta

ability. It is a declaration that accountability itself must operate within the Constitution. That distinction should matter to every Kenyan.

If a former President commits an offence, ordinary constitutional and legal mechanisms remain available. If a former office-holder abuses political influence, citizens retain the ballot, political competition and the law. What cannot become acceptable is the conversion of retirement benefits or political rights into instruments of punishment outside constitutional safeguards.

Indeed, Kenya has travelled this road before. In 2015, the High Court declared an amendment to the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act unconstitutional because Parliament had enacted legislation concerning State-officer benefits without involving the Salaries and Remuneration Commission as required by Article 230. The court emphasised that Parliament's legislative authority remains subject to the Constitution. The message is therefore broader than the present political contest. Neither Parliament, the Executive nor any political faction is above the Constitution.

But there is another side to this conversation that Kenyans must not ignore. Consti-

tutional protection of retirement benefits cannot become a licence for politicians to construct extravagant personal empires from public resources. Public office is a trust, not private property. Retirement should provide dignity and reasonable security, not become a permanent claim upon the taxpayer.

The distinction is simple but profound: a retired politician is entitled to citizenship, not ownership of the State; to lawful retirement benefits, not unlimited privilege; to political participation, not continuing executive authority. This is why the Uhuru Kenyatta case matters so deeply.

It has forced Kenya to confront whether political disagreement should determine the enjoyment of constitutional rights. It has reminded us that a person does not become constitutionally smaller after leaving office. And it has demonstrated that even retirement benefits enjoyed by the most powerful citizens remain subject to constitutional scrutiny.

For the Kenyan voter, there is an equally important lesson. We must stop defending constitutional rights only when they benefit our political allies. The right we deny an opponent today may be the right

we desperately need tomorrow. A Constitution that protects only those we like is not a Constitution; it is a political weapon.

Kenya therefore needs a culture in which political retirement is understood as transition rather than exile. A President should leave office with dignity. A former leader should remain a citizen. Retirement benefits should be protected where constitutionally guaranteed and administered transparently. But no former office-holder should be transformed into a permanent beneficiary of the public treasury.

The Uhuru Kenyatta case should consequently not be reduced to a contest between Uhuru and his political opponents. It is a test of whether Kenya genuinely believes in constitutional citizenship. Governments change. Presidents change. Parties change. Political alliances collapse and reform. The occupant of State House changes. But citizenship remains.

Retirement should end tenure, not dignity; end authority, not citizenship; and end executive power, not constitutional rights. That is not a favour to Uhuru Kenyatta. It is a principle for every Kenyan.

School Karugu said the technology would break traditional classroom barriers by allowing learners to interact with information and knowledge from different parts of the world

Smart classroom revolution hits Nyeri schools

BY James Wanjiku
@themtkenyetimes

Nyeri has emerged as a key beneficiary of the Government’s drive to transform classrooms into digital learning hubs, with schools receiving 178 interactive smart boards and 178 laptops for ICT-trained teachers.

The equipment, being distributed under the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Project (KDEAP), is expected to change how teachers deliver lessons and how learners access and share knowledge.

East African Community, ASAL and Regional Development Principal Secretary

Dr Caroline Karugu said the digital learning programme was aimed at preparing a new generation for an economy increasingly driven by technology.

Speaking yesterday at Nyaribo Primary School during the handover ceremony, Karugu said President William Ruto’s digital agenda could only succeed if learners were equipped with the skills required to participate in the digital economy.

“Digital learning is part of President William Ruto’s vision and agenda under the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) that envisions to create a digital highway,” she said.

“For you to create a digital highway, you must have a generation that is digitally empowered.”

The 178 interactive smart boards allocated to Nyeri schools will provide learners with a more interactive classroom environment, while the laptops will support teachers who have undergone ICT training.

Karugu said the technology would break traditional classroom barriers by allowing learners to interact with information and knowledge from different parts of the world.

She challenged pupils to use the new technology not merely to consume information but to develop and share their



East African Community Principal Secretary Dr Caroline Karugu interacting with learners at Nyaribo Primary School in Nyeri County where she graced the handing over of a Digital Learning Programme.

own knowledge.

“We are tasking our children not only to be consumers of knowledge but also to be creators of this knowledge and be able to share it globally,” she said.

The PS said a learner at Nyaribo Primary School would now have the opportunity to exchange knowledge with learners beyond Kenya, describing the initiative as transformational.

However, she warned that the expansion of digital access also exposed children to potential online threats.

Karugu said learners must be taught how to safely navigate the internet as they increasingly use digital platforms for education and communication.

“I sensitized the learners that the entire digital space is not 100 percent safe. We have some predators who have infiltrated that space,” she said.

She said the Government would work with teachers to sensitise learners on safe and responsible internet use while ensuring digital platforms remain beneficial to their education.

The initiative is part of a nationwide programme by the ICT Authority to equip public primary schools with interactive smart boards and enhance technology-based learning.

The rollout marks another step in the Government’s efforts to expand digital literacy and create classrooms where learners can access, interact with and produce knowledge using modern technology.



East African Community Principal Secretary Dr Caroline Karugu interacting with learners at Nyaribo Primary School in Nyeri County where she graced the handing over of a Digital Learning Programme.

Butterflies weren't born with wings



Be patient with your transformation.
Everything is born simply, according to its nature.

They gradually grow and shine.
When you improve your abilities and skills,

your wings will sprout,
and you will fly higher
and higher with happiness.

Wings do not sprout suddenly.
They come after struggles.
Struggles are an important foundation for bright wings.
So, if you work hard, you will eventually grow your wings and fly.

—G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Not everyone will understand your journey – keep walking



A lion often walks alone.
It does not depend on anyone.
It finds its own food,
faces its own challenges,
and continues its journey with courage.

Other animals may be afraid of the lion,
but the lion does not walk proudly
to prove anything to them.
It simply walks its own path.

Like the lion,
you should also learn to walk alone when necessary.
Do not worry about what others think

or keep explaining your journey to everyone.

Your journey depends on you.
You do not have to prove yourself to others,
because not everyone will understand your struggles,
your dreams, or the path you have travelled.

So, stop seeking approval.
Stop comparing your journey with others.
Walk with confidence,
believe in yourself,
and live your life in your own way.

Not everyone will understand your journey.
That's okay.
Just keep walking.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
Chengalpattu district

Not everyone can understand your journey



Keep walking
YOU alone is your attorney
Stay positive and moving
Your struggles none can understand
Stop explaining for sympathy
Your ways of dealings none can withstand
Start your day with empathy

Remove yourself from negativity
Keep away from grumblers
Can't avoid completely in reality
Seldom volunteer for such troubles
Explore your widened horizon
Carefully stepping into passing clouds
Enjoying the journey of mixed emotions
Relieving yourself from the selfish crowds

N. SIVASANKARI
CREATIVE WRITER
TEACHER IN ENGLISH
MADURAI DISTRICT TAMILNADU

The street performer



When I was a child,
I watched a thousand wonders
a race upon a single wheel,
a walk upon a slender wire,
a dance along a trembling rope,
little monkeys performing their tricks,
tiny drums beating their ancient rhythm,
bicycles turning into flying dreams.

All of it
for the hunger of a belly
no wider than a palm.
We forget the hunger
of the little monkeys
dancing beside him.
In the plate he holds out,

only a few coins fall
while the man before us
performs feats
that could have won Olympic gold.
Yet we never learn
the grandeur of his art.
And those who mock
the poverty of the performer
how could they ever understand
the height of an Olympic gold
when they cannot even see
the gold hidden
inside his hands?

Raj Ganesh

Dr. K.R.GANESAN
BLOCK RESOURCE TEACHER EDUCATOR
BLOCK RESOURCE CENTRE,
GOBICHETTIPALAYAM
ERODE Dt.
TAMILNADU, INDIA

A hand raise from the classroom for the rising society!!!



Raising questions is an art
The art of questioning is wonderful, a talented guy
May query a single for many reasons,
Getting multiple answers at a time,
Maybe delivered by the respondents,
The questioner must be encouraged

Asking more essential questions,
Would help achieving more knowledge,
Usage of queries in classroom builds up a best society,
The hand raise should be encouraged,
Oppurtunities should be awarded
Raising hands shouldn't be controlled

All the querries should be answered,
The answer should be perfect,
They should satisfy the questioners.
Need,

Think less, live more



Thinking deep will make you feel anxious or weep
For it gathers no good harvest or reap,
Only when the road is clear, you explore more
Being thoughtful is necessary but too much of it
is not greeted, just ignore,
Also when you think more, problem doubles itself
and roar
Beware of solving all the troubles before reaching
the shore.

A healthier mind gives life a longer span
Where it could work freely and correctly plan,
If it's the other way round, the soft mind turns
rude
Then everything goes out of sound spoiling his
heart and mood,
When the mind is with enough space with limited
thoughts
More than anything else, the morality marks,
So, never think too much buddies
Let peace guide you through all your journeys.

Manimozhi Albert
Graduate Teacher,
GGHSS,
Sandhaipettai,
Pudukkottai,
Tamilnadu,
India.

Start laughing to start healing



Laugh aloud even if you don't want to.
Laugh as if it is an exercise or a workout.
Because laughing relaxes muscles,
And releases feel-good chemicals, endorphins.

Laugh aloud even if you don't want to.
Laugh as if you are taking medicine.
Because laughing improves circulation,
Eases emotions and breaks tension.

You may not change the world with a smile,
But you can make someone's journey worthwhile.
And when laughter flows from a true heart,
The healing it brings may heal you too.

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer,
Creative Writers,
Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, India

Investment The platform was launched in New York during a Presidential Diaspora Engagement attended by President William Ruto, senior government officials, development partners

Njogu’s diaspora agenda gains fresh impetus as Kenya launches investment platform

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

A new digital platform unveiled in New York aims to move Kenyans abroad from remittance senders to active partners in national development.

By John Kariuki

Kenya’s efforts to deepen the contribution of its citizens living abroad received a significant boost yesterday with the unveiling of the Kenya Diaspora Impact Platform, a new initiative designed to connect the diaspora with credible investment and development opportunities at home.

The platform was launched in New York during a Presidential Diaspora Engagement attended by President William Ruto, senior government officials, development partners and hundreds of Kenyans living in the United States.

Principal Secretary for Diaspora Affairs Roseline Njogu was among the officials present at the engagement, which also witnessed the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent between the Government of Kenya, the United Nations in Kenya and Equity Group Holdings.

The declaration was signed by Prime Cabinet Secretary and Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi on behalf of the government, UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya Garry Conille for the United Nations, and Equity Group Holdings Managing Director and Chief Executive James Mwangi for Equity.

According to the State Department for Diaspora Affairs, the digital platform will link Kenyans and other diaspora-based investors with verifiable investment and development opportunities in Kenya. It will provide pathways for

participation in community-impact projects, catalytic financing for micro, small and medium enterprises, enterprise development, philanthropy, and skills and knowledge transfer.

Ruto said the platform would enable Kenyans abroad to play a more direct role in the country’s transformation agenda by connecting them to opportunities in community projects, enterprise creation, MSME financing and knowledge transfer. He added that the government was committed to building a stronger bridge between Kenyans abroad and opportunities at home, anchored on trust, transparency and measurable results.

For Njogu, whose State Department is mandated to connect diaspora skills, investments and remittances to national development, the launch represents another step toward building stronger in-

stitutional links between Kenyans living abroad and the opportunities available to them at home. The department’s core areas of responsibility include investment facilitation, skills transfer, remittances, employment opportunities and structured engagement with diaspora communities.

The New York engagement brought together government and non-state actors around a shared objective: expanding the role of the diaspora in Kenya’s economic and social development. The presence of international and private-sector partners signals an approach that seeks to combine government coordination with investment expertise and development partnerships.

The platform emerges against the backdrop of the Kenya Diaspora Policy 2024, which sets out four broad objectives — protecting the rights and welfare of Kenyans abroad, facilitating diaspora savings,



Diaspora Affairs PS Roseline Njogu

investments, remittances and technology transfer, strengthening diaspora partnerships, and facilitating access to international employment opportunities. Njogu played a central role in presenting the policy framework that underpins Kenya’s current engagement with its diaspora.

The latest initiative places greater emphasis on converting diaspora goodwill, capital, expertise and global networks into structured development outcomes. Beyond sending money home, Kenyans abroad will now have more formal channels through which to participate in enterprise development, community projects, philanthropy and knowledge transfer.

At the New York meeting, Ruto also briefed Kenyans on priority government programmes spanning healthcare, food security, job creation, education and affordable housing, with presentations from senior officials across various sectors. The engagement underscored the increasingly strategic position the diaspora occupies in Kenya’s development conversation.

With the Kenya Diaspora Impact Platform now launched, attention turns to implementation — ensuring that Kenyans abroad can access reliable information, credible opportunities and transparent mechanisms for participating in projects with measurable impact.

For the State Department for Diaspora Affairs under Njogu, the initiative adds another important pillar to a broader effort to reposition the diaspora not merely as a source of remittances, but as an active partner in investment, innovation, skills transfer and national development.

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Politics The question this forces is one Kenya cannot afford to postpone: what happens to democracy when attending a political rally begins to carry a genuine risk to one's life?

When political rallies become danger zones

Deaths, injuries and burning vehicles are turning Kenya's democratic gatherings into tests of survival — and the country cannot afford to look away

BY Levis Wangamati

@themkenyatimes

A political rally in Kenya was once a familiar democratic ritual. A politician arrives, microphones are tested, songs fill the air, supporters wave party colours, speeches begin and the crowd eventually goes home. That familiar picture is increasingly being interrupted by something far darker: stones, machetes, burning vehicles, gunshots, injured citizens and, in the most tragic cases, bodies being carried away from places that were supposed to host political meetings.

The question this forces is one Kenya cannot afford to postpone: what happens to democracy when attending a political rally begins to carry a genuine risk to one's life?

The latest figures are sobering. At least 11 people have reportedly died in violence linked to political rallies since February, according to the media. Human Rights Watch has separately documented attacks around political gatherings in recent months, reporting deaths and injuries while raising concerns about the safety of participants, journalists and bystanders. The figures come from different periods and sources, but they point toward the same uncomfortable reality: political violence is surfacing repeatedly in Kenya's public political space well before the 2027 general election. What should be a peaceful expression of political choice is becoming a test of how much disorder a crowd can absorb before someone gets hurt.

On August 16, violence surrounding a Linda Mwananchi gathering in Homa Bay reportedly involved attackers armed with machetes, guns and sticks. Human Rights Watch said at least three people were killed and journalists covering the incident were attacked and robbed of equipment. In Nairobi, three men died after the September 13



Linda Mwananchi rally, with police describing them as victims of mob justice while relatives disputed the circumstances. Such competing accounts are precisely why investigations matter — every unexplained death leaves behind not only grieving families but a dangerous vacuum in which political narratives fill the space that evidence should occupy.

Then came Embu. What happened at Nembure Stadium demonstrated how quickly a political gathering can descend into disorder. Moses Munene and Mike Lewis — two young men — died after suffering gunshot wounds, according to postmortem examinations reported by The Standard. Several vehicles were also torched during the confrontation. The circumstances surrounding the shooting remain a matter for investigation, but the medical findings established a critical fact: both men died from gunshot injuries. In a country where political accusations travel faster than investigations, that distinction matters. Justice cannot be built on rumours, slogans or whichever version of events happens to dominate social media on a given afternoon.

Responsibility for what is unfolding cannot rest entirely on politicians standing behind microphones. Police have a constitutional duty to protect citizens and maintain public order. Political leaders and their supporters carry obligations under the law and the electoral framework. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has repeat-

edly flagged concerns about political violence and electoral malpractice, including reports during the OI Kalou by-election campaigns of organised attacks, hired gangs, voter bribery, intimidation, gunshots and destruction of property. Such reports should not be dismissed as ordinary political noise. Once violence, intimidation and manipulation become embedded in political mobilisation, the freedom to participate stops being equally available to all Kenyans.

There is another uncomfortable dimension: the growing normalisation of the political crowd as cover for ordinary criminal behaviour. A person carrying a machete does not become less dangerous because he stands among supporters of a political movement. An attack does not become acceptable because the victim belongs to a rival camp. Once violence is tolerated on the basis of political affiliation, the line between political competition and criminality becomes dangerously blurred — and citizens begin absorbing a lesson that no democracy should teach: that political loyalty can provide permission to harm another Kenyan.

The state faces difficult questions about enforcement and accountability. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen told the Senate that at least 1,189 people had been sentenced for offences linked to political violence and goonism since 2022. That figure shows enforcement has not been entirely absent, but the recurrence of attacks

raises a more pressing question: whether accountability is reaching those who organise, finance or encourage violence, rather than only those caught at the bottom of the chain. If violence repeatedly surrounds political gatherings, the public deserves to know not only who threw the first stone but who created the conditions in which throwing stones became thinkable.

Human Rights Watch has called for prompt and transparent investigations into attacks ahead of 2027, arguing that citizens should be able to exercise political rights without fear. Such investigations matter not simply because victims deserve justice, but because credible findings establish a factual record that separates evidence from political accusation. Without that record, every incident becomes another battle of competing narratives, with camps blaming each other and the public left to decide what to believe based on edited videos and partisan commentary.

Kenya has already experienced the consequences of failing to confront political violence early. The 2007–2008 post-election crisis remains a powerful reminder of how rapidly political competition can acquire a communal and violent character. That history does not mean every current incident will develop into a similar catastrophe — it would be irresponsible to suggest it will — but it does provide reason to take warning signs seriously. Prevention is always easier before violence becomes embedded in political culture.

The human cost behind these statistics resists easy summary. Behind every reported death is a family receiving a phone call that changes everything. Behind every burned vehicle is someone's livelihood. Behind every injured journalist is a professional being prevented from doing a job that serves the public. Behind every frightened rally attendee is a citizen quietly calculating whether participating in politics is worth the personal risk. These are not campaign-season inconveniences that disappear when politicians leave the stage. They shape how ordinary Kenyans experience democracy — and a right that people are afraid to exercise is a right that weakens in practice.

The attacks on journalists are a particular concern in an election-bound country. Reporters are present at rallies precisely because the public needs an independent record of what happened. When they are assaulted or their equipment stolen, the immediate victim is the journalist; the wider casualty is public information. If reporters begin fearing political gatherings, fewer independent witnesses will be present when violence occurs — and fewer witnesses make accountability harder. A democracy cannot demand transparency from politicians while allowing those who document political events to become targets.

The answer is not to discourage citizens from attending political meetings. Peaceful assembly and political participation are constitutional rights, and security concerns must never become a pretext for suppressing legitimate competition. The challenge runs in the opposite direction: creating conditions under which people can attend rallies, support candidates, criticise leaders and report stories without being attacked. That requires an environment where disagreement remains disagreement and political

identity does not become a licence for intimidation. Kenya does not need quieter politics. It needs safer politics.

Political rivalry is normal. Heckling is part of political competition. Sharp speeches are part of campaigning. But burning a vehicle is not political expression. Attacking a journalist is not political expression. Shooting or killing another citizen is certainly not political expression. Those are matters for the criminal justice system — and the political colour of the person involved should never determine whether the law regards the conduct as wrong.

Kenya still has time to address the pattern before the next election. Investigations can be completed, suspects can be prosecuted where evidence supports charges, political leaders can discipline supporters who cross legal boundaries and security agencies can deploy impartially. None of this requires waiting until election day. The period before an election is precisely when institutions and parties have the opportunity to establish the standards that will govern the campaign season. Waiting for the next tragedy before acting means learning the same lesson after another family has already paid the price.

The warning signs are visible in the deaths, injuries, burned vehicles and repeated confrontations documented across the country. The question is no longer whether political violence exists — it is whether Kenya will allow it to become an ordinary feature of political life.

Because when citizens begin calculating danger before deciding whether to attend a political rally, democracy has already lost something important. The ballot should be where political battles are ultimately settled — not the street, the stadium or the roadside. Kenya should demand politics that can be passionate without being violent, competitive without being destructive and powerful without turning ordinary citizens into casualties.

A political rally should end with arguments about speeches and policies. Not questions about who will make it home alive.

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University In Kenya today, fewer than one thousand professors serve more than half a million university students

Paper chasing in the shadow of substance: Kenya's tragicomic obsession with metrics over mastery



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor
Odhiambo
@themkenyatimes

In Kenya today, fewer than one thousand professors serve more than half a million university students. That stark ratio roughly one professor for every five hundred and sixty students stands as a cold, measurable fact. It is not an abstraction. It is the arithmetic of a system that has expanded enrolment while starving the very conditions under which genuine knowledge is forged. From this hard ground the larger crisis grows: research, the supposed engine of national advancement, has been reduced to a numbers game. Publication counts, Google Scholar metrics, citation tallies and the frantic pursuit of grants have become the dominant currency of academic worth. The aim of inquiry the patient, rigorous generation of knowledge that expands the frontiers of understanding has been displaced by the compulsion to publish or perish.

This is not a mild administrative inconvenience. It is a profound betrayal of the university's historic purpose. Education, at its best, exists to form better thinkers, to cultivate curiosity that outlasts the degree, to create spaces of debate where black-letter law is mastered and then theorised, where questions are prodded until they yield new insight. Instead, Kenyan academia increasingly rewards the appearance of productivity.

A scholar who produces twenty journal articles and three books in a single year while teaching undergraduates, supervising masters and doctoral candidates, and maintaining private practice is not celebrated as a prodigy of intellect. He or she is treated as a suspicious miracle. Time, after all, is finite. Prof. Migai Akech, inaugurated Professor of Law at the University of Nairobi, has publicly noted that a solid, analytically rigorous article of fifty pages normally requires three months of sustained work. That admission, made while



Students in a lecture hall

he sought elevation to the Court of Appeal, exposes the absurdity of the current metrics regime. If a scholar of established authority needs a full academic term for one thorough interrogation of law, what alchemy allows others to multiply that output many times over while discharging the same teaching and supervisory burdens?

The answer, whispered in corridors and occasionally shouted in private, is often exploitation. Concerns have repeatedly surfaced that some professors lean heavily on postgraduate students paying them poorly or not at all to generate the data, draft the literature reviews, and even write



This is not a mild administrative inconvenience. It is a profound betrayal of the university's historic purpose. Education, at its best, exists to form better thinkers, to cultivate curiosity that outlasts the degree, to create spaces of debate where black-letter law is mastered and then theorised, where questions are prodded until they yield new insight. Instead, Kenyan academia increasingly rewards the appearance of productivity.

substantial portions of papers that then appear under the senior scholar's name. This is not mentorship. It is the quiet theft of intellectual labour dressed in the robes of academic hierarchy. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism have risen in tandem. Predatory journals flourish because they offer the quickest route to the required publication points.

The Commission for University Education's own promotion guidelines award fixed points for articles and books; the system therefore incentivizes volume over depth. History offers a cautionary parallel. Colonial education in Kenya trained clerks and intermediaries, not independent thinkers. The post-independence university was meant to reverse that logic and produce knowledge rooted in African realities. Instead, we have imported the worst features of the Western "publish or perish" culture without the infrastructure, the research time, or the funding that once made such pressure marginally sustainable in richer societies.

The newer distortion is algorithmic. Independent work is increasingly flagged as AI-generated. Detection tools, imperfect and trained on patterns that often mistake formal academic prose for machine output, have produced false positives that reach even decades-old theses. A doctoral dissertation completed in 1990 can register a seven-percent AI score. The result is Kafkaesque:

scholars who write carefully in their own voice are placed under suspicion by systems that cannot distinguish human deliberation from statistical predictability. Integrity is not protected; it is undermined by the very instruments meant to safeguard it. Universities that set arbitrary similarity thresholds ten percent acceptable, fifteen percent fatal without transparent validation of the tools they deploy are not defending standards. They are performing the theatre of integrity while the substance drains away.

What, then, should be the aim of research in Kenya? It must be the advancement of knowledge that addresses the country's concrete dilemmas constitutional design, land, climate, public health, economic justice and that contributes, on equal terms, to global intellectual conversation. Metrics have their place, but only as secondary indicators. Citations can reflect influence; they can also reflect network effects, language bias, and the dominance of Northern journals. High citation counts often reward work that is safe, incremental, or aligned with international funding priorities rather than work that is original in the deeper sense.

Original scholarship does not require the invention of something entirely new under the sun; it requires the rigorous re-examination of existing materials, the exposure of hidden assumptions, the construction of ar-

guments that compel assent through evidence and logic. A thorough paper worthy of a high-impact journal is one that demonstrates mastery of the field, engages competing views with intellectual honesty, and leaves the reader with a clearer, more precise understanding than before. Authority in a discipline such as law is not conferred by the number of entries on a Google Scholar profile. It is earned through sustained, visible contribution teaching that shapes minds, supervision that produces independent researchers, public engagement that tests ideas against reality, and writing that withstands scrutiny over time.

Research grants should never be a precondition for career progression. When funding becomes the gatekeeper of promotion and recognition, inquiry is bent toward the agendas of donors rather than the needs of the society that sustains the university. Awards and titles should follow demonstrated excellence in knowledge generation, not the reverse. Kenya's universities, the Commission for University Education, the Ministry of Education, and the scholarly community itself must act. Workloads must be reduced so that research time is real rather than residual. Promotion criteria must weight quality of contribution depth of analysis, originality of framing, impact on policy or practice above raw counts. Detection tools for plagiarism and AI must be validated, their error rates published, and human judgment restored as the final arbiter. Supervisory relationships must be audited for exploitation. Students who contribute substantially to research must receive proper authorship credit and fair compensation.

The alternative is continued decline. A nation that measures its scholars by the speed of their paper production rather than the power of their thought will produce clerks of knowledge rather than its architects. Kenya does not lack intellectual capacity. It lacks the institutional courage to protect the conditions under which that capacity can mature. The frontiers of knowledge do not advance through the multiplication of thin publications. They advance when minds are given the time, the freedom, and the integrity to think deeply, to question fiercely, and to write with the authority that only mastery confers. Until the system stops counting shadows and begins to value substance, the academy will remain a house of paper impressive from a distance, empty at the core.

The writer is a social commentator

Story Every voice carries a map of where you have been — and accents are the proof that language is alive

Why we have accents: The hidden story behind the way we speak

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyatimes

Every human voice carries a story. Long before introductions are made, people form assumptions about where someone comes from, the communities they belong to and the experiences that shaped them. One of the strongest signals behind those assumptions is accent. Whether it is a soft rural tone, an energetic urban rhythm or speech shaped by exposure to multiple languages, accents form an invisible map of human history and identity.

Many people grow up believing accents are simply variations in pronunciation or, worse, that some accents are better than others. Yet linguists and psychologists consistently make an important point: everyone has an accent. There is no accent-free way of speaking. What people often describe as normal speech is usually just the accent they hear most frequently.

Accents are not accidents. They are the natural product of how human beings communicate, migrate and live together.

Language changes constantly. Unlike mathematical formulas or scientific laws, spoken language is fluid. Words evolve, pronunciations shift, expressions emerge and disappear. Small differences in speech begin almost invisibly — one community pronounces a vowel slightly differently, another group stresses certain syllables more heavily. Over generations, those subtle distinctions accumulate and become recognisable speech patterns.

History provides a powerful explanation. Human populations migrated across continents over thousands of years. Communities separated by mountains, rivers, forests and oceans had limited contact with one another. Because language depends heavily on social interaction, isolated populations gradually developed their own pronunciation



habits. Eventually, accents became markers of geography and belonging.

Consider how English sounds across different parts of the world. Speakers from Britain, Australia, Kenya, Nigeria, Canada and the United States all speak the same language, yet their pronunciation differs significantly. Even within a single country, speech varies from one region to another. These differences are not errors. They are evidence that language adapts naturally to human environments.

Children play a particularly important role in accent development. Human beings are not born with accents already formed. Infants arrive equipped with an extraordinary capacity to absorb language sounds — research suggests babies begin taking in speech patterns before birth, through voices heard in the womb.

As they grow, their brains specialise in the sounds common to their immediate linguistic environment. They strengthen recognition of familiar sounds while becoming less sensitive to those rarely heard around them. That process shapes pronunciation habits that often remain stable for life.

Parents matter, but they are far from the only influence. Schools, neighbourhoods, friendships and peer groups frequently shape speech even more powerfully. A child whose parents immigrated

from another country may grow up speaking with an accent far closer to that of classmates than family members.

Human beings possess a deep instinct for belonging, and speech becomes part of that social adaptation. People unconsciously adjust pronunciation to fit the communities they identify with. Teenagers, in particular, often modify speech depending on the groups they admire or the environments where they seek acceptance. Accent, then, does more than facilitate communication. It signals identity, communicates cultural connection and reflects shared experience.

Accents also reveal movement and change within societies. Migration introduces new speech influences, and urban centres become linguistic melting pots where different accents interact and blend. Media exposure, international education and globalisation increasingly shape how people speak. A teenager in Nairobi today can consume content from London, New York, Lagos, Seoul or Sydney daily, and that exposure sometimes influences vocabulary, pronunciation and rhythm.

Yet despite growing global interconnectedness, accents remain remarkably resilient — and the human brain explains why.

Early language learning occurs during periods of peak neurological flexibility. Pronunciation habits formed in

childhood become deeply embedded over time. Adults learning second languages often find that grammar and vocabulary improve quickly while accent change comes far more slowly. Speech involves extraordinary physical coordination: the tongue, lips, vocal cords, breathing patterns and facial muscles working in constant concert. Years of speaking one

way create deeply practised movement patterns. Learning entirely new pronunciation systems later in life demands considerable effort.

This is why many adults retain traces of their original accent even after living abroad for decades. A person who moves from Kenya to Canada may adopt new expressions and communication habits while still carrying subtle pronunciation features shaped by earlier life. Accent persistence is not a weakness. It reflects how profoundly language becomes woven into identity.

Unfortunately, society sometimes attaches unfair judgments to accents. Certain accents become associated with intelligence, education or authority, while others attract stereotypes and bias. Such perceptions reveal social attitudes, not linguistic reality.

Linguists are consistent on this point: no accent is inherently superior to another. Every accent follows patterns

and rules. Every accent reflects legitimate language development shaped by history, environment and human interaction. An accent does not determine intelligence, competence or character. It tells a story — carrying traces of family influence, childhood, cultural identity, migration and community belonging.

Accents also carry a deeper reminder: language lives because people shape it. New generations inherit language, adapt it and pass it forward transformed. Without that constant change, language would remain frozen, unable to reflect new realities.

The next time someone speaks with an accent different from your own, it is worth pausing. You are not hearing an error. You are hearing history. You are hearing geography, community, migration and culture woven together through sound.

Human beings do not merely speak words. They speak stories. Accents ensure those stories continue travelling across generations, communities and borders — reminding us that language is not simply a tool for communication. It is one of the clearest reflections of what it means to be human.

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Stress When stress arrives, the body changes. The heart beats faster, breathing becomes shallow, muscles tighten and the stomach churns

Stress and depression: When the body speaks what the mouth cannot say

Millions of Kenyans carry the weight of chronic stress and undiagnosed depression — but both conditions are manageable, and help is closer than most people think



By: Wanjohi P. Mugambi
@themkenyatimes

Stress is something every Kenyan knows. You wake up early with no fare, school fees are due, your phone is full of messages from people who need help you do not have. Your chest feels tight, your head aches, sleep escapes you, and small things make you angry quickly. That is stress — the body's response when life demands more than you currently have. It is not a disease. It is a signal that you are overloaded.

When stress arrives, the body changes. The heart beats faster, breathing becomes shallow, muscles tighten and the stomach churns. Two internal systems kick in simultaneously. One releases adrenaline, producing that familiar tension and restlessness. The other releases cortisol, a stress hormone that helps in the short term but causes real harm when it stays too long. Brief stress can actually be useful — it sharpens focus before an exam or pushes you to finish work before the rains come. But when stress persists for months, it begins wearing the body down slowly. Sleep deteriorates, memory weakens, illnesses come more frequently, ulcers develop and blood pressure climbs.

Stress comes in different forms. There is the short, sharp kind that passes — a sudden accident, a funeral, an examination. There is the repeating kind — monthly anxiety about rent, termly dread over school fees. And then there is the kind that never leaves: years of poverty, caring for a sick relative with no support, living in a home where shouting and violence are daily realities. That last kind is the most damaging, because the body is never given a chance to recover.

Depression is different — and widely misunderstood.

Many people believe depression is simply sadness, or worse, a sign of



Stress and depression

weakness. It is neither. Depression is a medical condition that changes how a person feels, thinks, sleeps, eats and sees the future. It is diagnosed when someone experiences persistent low mood or loses interest in things they once loved for more than two weeks, in ways that disrupt daily functioning. They may sleep too much or not at all. They may lose their appetite entirely or eat compulsively. Exhaustion follows them even after a full night's rest. They feel worthless, guilty, like a burden to everyone around them. Concentration becomes difficult. Thoughts turn toward death, or the quiet sense that life has lost meaning. Not everyone experiences every symptom, but when five or more persist for weeks and make it hard to work, study or be present with family, it is no longer stress. It is depression.

Globally, approximately 280 million people live with depression. In Kenya, the Ministry of Health estimates that one in ten people will experience a common mental health problem in their lifetime — yet only one in ten of those will access help.

Stigma plays a large role. So does the severe shortage of trained counsellors. In many Kenyan languages, there is no direct word for depression, so people arrive at health facilities describing physical pain instead: “kichwa inaniuma kila siku” — the head hurts every day. The body is speaking what the mouth has not been permitted to say.

Stress and depression are connected, though the relationship is not automatic. Chronic stress can open the door to depression, but not everyone who experiences prolonged stress will become depressed. Childhood experiences, family history, coping patterns and the presence or absence of social support all influence that outcome. When stress persists, it depletes the brain chemicals responsible for motivation and a sense of wellbeing. It also feeds negative thinking — the quiet internal voice that says you are worthless, the world is hostile, nothing will improve. Once those thoughts take root, they tend to remain even after the original stressor has passed. People begin withdrawing — from friends,

from church, from work, from their shamba — and sometimes turning to alcohol. Those behaviours deepen the depression further. It becomes a cycle: stress drives withdrawal, withdrawal deepens depression.

In Kenya, this pattern looks different depending on gender. Men are raised with the message that showing emotion signals weakness. When depressed, many do not say they are sad. They become angry, drink more, take unnecessary risks or go silent and disappear from family life. Women, meanwhile, carry enormous domestic, financial and sometimes physical burdens, yet are often told simply to be strong and pray harder. Both groups suffer. Both suffer largely in silence.

So what actually helps?

Talking is one of the most powerful tools — not casual venting, but structured conversation with a trained professional who listens without judging and helps challenge distorted thinking. Cognitive behavioural therapy works by identifying the automatic negative thoughts that pull a person under and replacing them

with more accurate, kinder ones. Interpersonal therapy examines relationships, losses and role changes that contribute to low mood. Even small, consistent daily activities — a walk, cleaning the house, visiting a neighbour — restore a sense of purpose and agency.

Lifestyle matters more than most people appreciate. Sleeping seven to nine hours is not indulgence; it is part of treatment. Poor sleep makes depression measurably worse. Walking briskly for thirty minutes, five days a week, can reduce depressive symptoms by nearly a third. Social connection lowers stress hormones. Alcohol, despite feeling like relief, is a depressant — it worsens symptoms the following day and beyond.

Where symptoms are moderate to severe, or where thoughts of death are present, professional medical help is essential. Medication can help restore the brain's chemical balance. It is not addictive, it does not alter personality, but it must be prescribed and monitored by a qualified doctor. In Kenya, free mental health assessment is available by calling 1199, and county hospital mental health units offer support across the country. In schools and workplaces, education about mental health reduces stigma and encourages people to seek help before a crisis develops.

Here is what every person should hold onto: stress is manageable when recognised early. Depression is treatable — eight in ten people improve with proper care. Seeking help is not weakness. It is health literacy.

And if you are trying to support someone who is struggling, do not tell them to be strong or to pray more. Say instead: “I have noticed you seem tired and withdrawn lately. Have you spoken to anyone? I can go with you to the clinic.” That single sentence can save a life.

You are not alone. Many Kenyans are carrying stress and depression quietly because life has been hard. But no one was meant to carry it entirely alone. The body that learned to hold stress can also learn to release it. The mind that found its way to hopelessness can find its way back to hope.



BOOKS & LITERATURE

with Khadija

Taufiq Rafat: Voice of Pakistani English Literature

Taufiq Rafat :

Submitted To: Sir Muhammad Adnan

Submitted By : Khadija

The University of Chenab Gujrat

Taufiq Rafat was born on November 27, 1927 . He Is said to be from the subcontinent and his family was later combined with the city of Sialkot in Pakistan . Taufiq Riffat is an important poet of Pakistani English Literature . His poetry beautifully reflects Pakistani culture , rural life and Eastern Civilization . His poems also reveal the conflict between Eastern traditions and Western influences .

His poetry is written in simple English but has a deep meaning hidden in it . He makes good use of imagery and symbolism which creates a clear picture in the mind of the reader. Taufiq Rafat poetry is very important for Pakistani readers because he presents his culture in English . His poems make the reader think and highlight the issue of identity . However ,at some places his poetry also feels a bit complicated .

His poetry holds a strong place in Pakistani English Literature . His poems reflects Culture ,identity and human emotions perfectly .

Theme of his writings loneliness, Traumatic reality of death , identification, intellectual and philosophical love, Traditions and culture, south Asian Rites, village and Urban life, Depressed Emotions, Medieval and modern Theme , Sacrifices and Suffering.

Some important poems discussed as following :

The stone chat

Kitchen

Wedding in the flood

The stone chat :

Taufiq Rafat poem “The stone chat “ is a symbolic and nature-filled poem in which the poet describes deep human

and natural emotions through a small bird , the stone chat . This poem presents the relationship between nature and man in a unique way .

The main theme of this poem is the beauty of nature freedom and human loneliness. The stone chat bird here is not just a bird but a symbol of freedom , simplicity and natural life . The poets shows how natural life is more clam and balanced than the complex life of man .

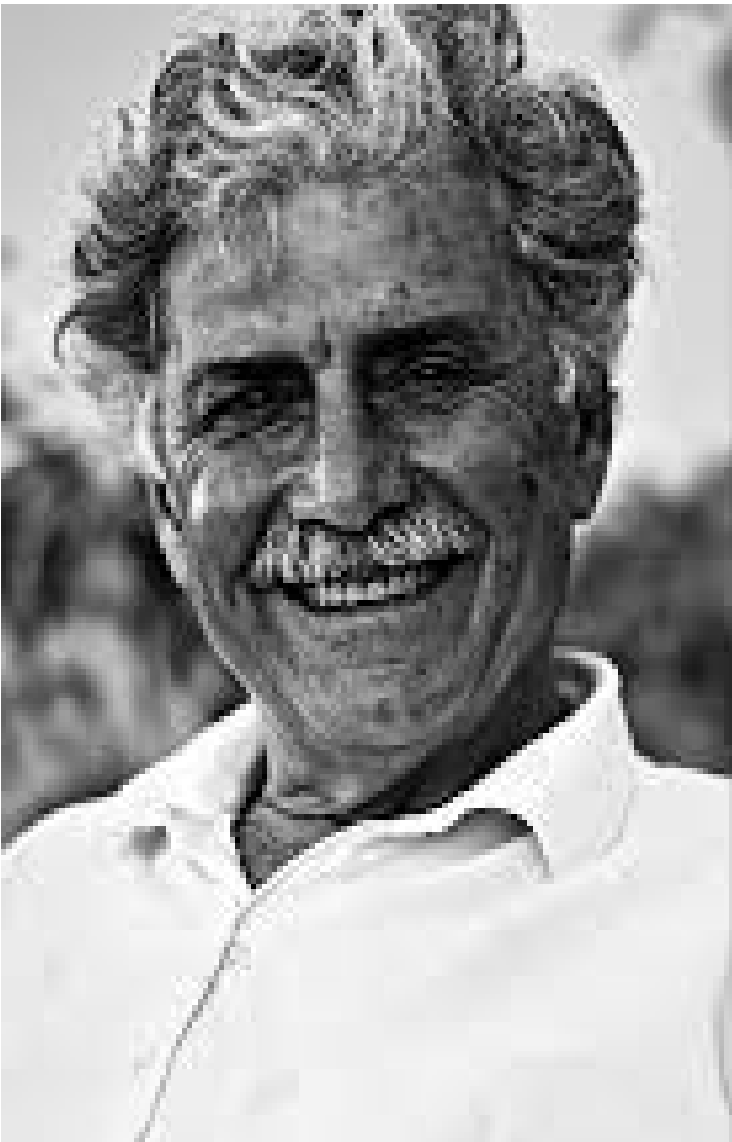
In terms of language , this poem is simple but meaningful . The Bard has used common sense language instead of difficult words so that the reader can easily understand the meaning . The poem uses imagery very beautifully , which creates a clear picture of natural scenes in the readers mind . Similarly , symbolism is also prominent because the stone chat bird represents deep meanings.

Critically , this poem brings the reader closer to nature and forces a person to think about his life. The Verse writer beautifully describes the contrast between the complexities of modern life and the simplicity of nature.

In conclusion, it can be said that “The stone chat” is a successful and beautiful poem that presents nature ,freedom, and human feelings in a very effective way.

Wedding in the Flood :

Taufiq Rafat’s Poem “Wedding in the Flood “is a powerful symbolic poem in which the creator presents Pakistani rural life , natural disasters and human emotions together . in this poem , a wedding scene is shown against the backdrop of a flood , which



TAUFIQ RAFAT

1927 - 1998

Pioneer English Poet Pakistan

shows the fragility and difficulties of human life .

The main theme of this poem is the relationship between the man and nature, the difficulties of rural life and the uncertainty of life. The arrival of a flood on a happy occasion like a wedding symbolizes that no matter how much planning a person does , he is helpless in front of nature . This poem also beautifully presents the contrast between happiness and sadness.

In term of language , the poem is simple but very effective . The Lyricist has used common sense words to show the reality of the rural environment . The use of imagery is very powerful , which makes the sense of the flood , the village and the wedding clear in the mind of the reader . There is also symbolism in it

where flood is not just water but a symbol of difficulties and destruction.

Critically , this poem beautifully describes the weakness of man and the power of nature . The narrator shows that even moments of happiness can suddenly turn into trouble . This poem forces the reader to reflect on the realities of life . However , at some places the imagery is so profound that it may be a little difficult for new readers to understand .

In conclusion , it can be said that “Wedding in the flood “ is a deeply symbolic poem that presents the relationship between human life, nature , and destiny in a very effective way.

Kitchen:

Taufiq Rafats poem “Kitchen “ is a symbolic and cul-

tural poem in which the poet presents Pakistani domestic life, traditions and the role of women in a simple yet profound way. In this poem, the kitchen is not just a place but a symbol of the entire domestic system and Eastern civilization.

The main theme of this poem is Eastern domestic life and traditional values. The poet shows that the kitchen is not just a place for cooking but a center where the love , service and sacrifice of the family are expressed. Through this , the narrator also highlight the role of women in Pakistani society and their hard work .

In term of language , this poem is written in a simple and natural style. The muse inspired writer has used words of daily understand the poem . The use of imag-

ery is also prominent in it, which creates a real domestic scene in the mind of the reader. Through symbolism, the kitchen is not just a room but a symbol of culture and values.

Critically , this poem makes the reader understand the importance of their culture and traditions. This poem also shows the difference between modern and traditional life and shows that domestic life is the foundation of human society. However, for some readers , the figurative language of this poem may seem a little deep.

In conclusion, it can be said that Kitchen is an important cultural poem that beautifully describes Pakistani domestic life , traditions , and human emotions.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *The forward's latest international call-up adds another chapter to a career that has defied every expectation

Ronaldo, 41, back with Portugal as 1,000-goal milestone beckons

By **Pascal Okoth**

Cristiano Ronaldo has rejoined the Portugal national team, continuing an international career that has now stretched across more than two decades and shows no sign of reaching its final page.

At 41, Ronaldo remains committed to representing his country at the highest level. His latest arrival at the Portugal camp is another reminder of a longevity that has consistently confounded expectations and outlasted virtually every peer from his generation.

The numbers alone tell a compelling story. Ronaldo has scored 146 goals for Portugal, making him the leading scorer in the history of men's international football. His contribution, however, has always extended beyond the scoresheet. He has become the defining figure of Portuguese football — a presence whose influence on teammates, supporters and the broader culture of the game is difficult to overstate.

His return to the squad comes at a particularly significant moment. Ronaldo has now recorded 979 career goals for club and country, leaving him 21 short of the 1,000-goal landmark that has captured the attention of the football world. The milestone would be historic by any measure, and every appearance now carries the possibility that another piece of that record will fall.

Ronaldo made his senior international debut in 2003, arriving as a gifted and electrifying young winger. Over the years that followed, he transformed himself into one of the most prolific goalscorers the game has ever produced. What has not changed is the hunger — the restless, relentless drive to compete, to contribute and to win.

The highlight of his international career remains Euro 2016. Portugal navigated a difficult

tournament, and Ronaldo was forced off injured in the final against France. Yet he spent the remainder of the match on the touchline, animated and vocal, urging his teammates forward. Portugal lifted the trophy. It was a moment that revealed something important about him: the team mattered as much as the individual achievement.

Three years later, Portugal added the UEFA Nations League, with Ronaldo scoring a hat-trick against Switzerland in the semi-final before the side defeated the Netherlands in the final. Those two trophies sit at the centre of one of international football's most decorated careers.

More than two decades after his debut, Ronaldo now occupies a different role within the squad. Where he was once the young player expected to carry everything, he has become the experienced voice in the dressing room — the figure younger players study, learn from and measure themselves against. Portugal's current squad contains a mixture of established stars and emerging talent, and Ronaldo's presence offers the latter a rare opportunity to work alongside someone who has experienced virtually every stage international football has to offer.

His physical commitment at 41 remains extraordinary. His role has evolved as the years have passed, but his instinct for goals — the positioning, the movement, the clinical finish — has endured as the constant thread running through every stage of his career.

For Portugal, the immediate focus will be the upcoming international fixtures and the results that matter in the short term. For Ronaldo, the matches represent another opportunity to serve his country while moving closer to a landmark that few players in football history have even approached.



Cristiano Ronaldo

His legacy, though, has never depended on a single number. Domestic league titles, Champions League triumphs, individual honours and international success have accumulated across spells at some of Europe's most celebrated clubs. He has been one of the defining footballers of his era — a figure who shaped the conversation about what excellence in the sport could look like.

That he continues to answer his country's call, at 41, after

achieving nearly everything club football can offer, speaks to something beyond ambition. It speaks to identity. Portugal is not an obligation for Ronaldo. It is, and has always been, personal.

With 146 international goals and 979 career strikes recorded, another chapter is being written. The journey continues, and Ronaldo remains entirely committed to seeing where it ends.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *A dramatic Atlético victory, a red card, a serious injury — and a post-match press conference nobody will forget quickly

After Madrid chaos derby: Mourinho pulls out the printer

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Madrid derbies rarely lack drama. Sunday's fixture between Atlético Madrid and Real Madrid delivered it in abundance — on the pitch, in the referee's notebook and, most memorably, in the post-match press conference.

Atlético claimed a 2–1 victory in a fiercely contested clash that generated as much controversy as it did football. By the time the final whistle blew, Real Madrid had lost a player to a red card, a midfielder to injury and, according to their manager, the match to questionable officiating.

The tension was visible from the opening whistle. Referee Miguel Ángel Ortiz struggled to impose authority on a game punctuated by heavy challenges and rising frustration on both sides.

The first significant flashpoint arrived in the 37th minute. Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham challenged for a loose ball and was caught by Atlético defender Cristian Romero. Bellingham was initially booked, but a lengthy VAR review reversed the decision — Romero received the yellow card instead. José Mourinho was incensed, insisting the challenge was worth a red.

His frustration deepened when Atlético's Lee Kang-in went unpunished for a forceful challenge on Federico Valverde, who was helped off the pitch with a serious ankle injury requiring medical assessment. The tackle, in Mourinho's view, warranted at minimum a booking. The referee disagreed.

Real Madrid's evening worsened five minutes into the second half. Defender Dean Huijsen brought down Giuliano Simeone inside the penalty area, and Ortiz had no hesitation — penalty awarded, Huijsen dismissed. Madrid were reduced to ten men at a critical moment in the match.



Atlético Madrid and Real Madrid chaos derby.

Atlético converted the spot kick and assumed control. Madrid fought back, Antonio Rüdiger pulling a goal back to give the contest a final-act tension, but Atlético held firm. Three points to the red and white half of the city.

Then came the press conference.

Mourinho arrived carrying printed photographs. Not metaphorically — physically printed images of the two challenges he believed should have resulted in red cards for Atlético. He placed them on the table and proceeded to make his case with the calm precision of a man who had rehearsed every word.

“We can skip the standard press conference questions,” he said, gesturing to the photographs. He argued that had both challenges been correctly punished, Atlético would have been reduced to

nine men and the match would have unfolded very differently. He also questioned whether Ortiz and his VAR official possessed the experience necessary to manage a fixture of this intensity.

It was a controlled performance of controlled fury — and it immediately gave the match a second life on social media. Fans across Spain and beyond quickly dubbed it the “printer derby,” a label that captures something true about the moment: Mourinho's decision to bring physical evidence to a football press conference was unusual enough to overshadow the result itself.

Atlético's Diego Simeone took a notably different approach when faced with questions about the officiating. He sidestepped the controversy entirely, keeping his focus on his team's performance. “The match I watched was high-

ly intense,” Simeone said. “I believe we controlled the tempo and the spaces throughout, and the result reflects that.”

Two managers, two very different readings of the same ninety minutes.

What is not in dispute is the outcome: Atlético top the table with maximum points from the fixture, Real Madrid are left to manage Valverde's ankle injury ahead of a demanding fixture schedule, and questions about La Liga's refereeing standards are circulating with fresh energy. Whether Mourinho's printed protest changes anything officially remains to be seen. What it has already done is ensure that this particular derby will be discussed long after the league table moves on.

The printer, as it turns out, is mightier than the final whistle.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Nomthandazo Mgcina: A young voice for education, sisterhood and youth empowerment



By: Anila Bukhari
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- That belief was shaped early. Mgcina's own childhood experiences planted the conviction that a child's formative years can determine the person they eventually become. Teaching, for her, is not a career path so much as a calling — a chance to be the kind of educator who meets every child where they are, nurtures their curiosity and reminds them that their circumstances need not define their ceiling.
- Her academic specialisation in Foundation Phase education is deliberately chosen. These are the earliest years of formal schooling, when confidence is built or quietly eroded, when a child first learns whether learning feels safe or frightening. Mgcina is preparing herself to work in that space with intentionality — not only to teach children academically, but to help them develop a sense of who they are and what they are capable of becoming.

Nomthandazo Mgcina is 21 years old, studying towards a Bachelor of Education degree specialising in Foundation Phase teaching, and already running two youth platforms, authoring a children's book and competing as a pageant finalist. None of that, however, captures what drives her. What drives her is simpler and more personal: a belief that every child deserves someone in their corner.

That belief was shaped early. Mgcina's own childhood experiences planted the conviction that a child's formative years can determine the person they eventually become. Teaching, for her, is not a career path so much as a calling — a chance to be the kind of educator who meets every child where they are, nurtures their curiosity and reminds them that their circumstances need not define their ceiling.

Her academic specialisation in Foundation Phase education is deliberately chosen. These are the earliest years of formal schooling, when confidence is built or quietly eroded, when a child first learns whether learning feels safe or frightening. Mgcina is preparing herself to work in that space with intentionality — not only to teach children academically, but to help them develop a sense of who they are and what they are capable of becoming.

Her work beyond the lecture hall is equally purposeful. She is the founder of A Sister Helps A Sister, a platform built around sisterhood, faith and mutual encouragement. The initiative creates a space where girls and young women can be honest about their journeys, support one another through different seasons of life and understand, practically, why lifting others does not diminish your own ascent. For Mgcina, the platform reflects a core conviction: personal growth is more powerful when the journey is not walked alone.

She is also the founder of The Becoming Series, a youth-focused platform dedicated to confidence, purpose and personal development. The name itself carries her philosophy — becoming is a process, not an event. Through conversations, sum-

mits and community initiatives, the platform encourages young people to explore their potential, find their voice and take deliberate steps toward their goals rather than waiting for the right moment to arrive.

The Becoming Series produced one of Mgcina's most significant milestones to date. On September 12, she hosted the Beyond You Youth Empowerment and Personal Development Summit under the theme "Step Beyond Your Limits." The summit brought young people together for structured conversations spanning education, leadership, career development, mental wellness and financial literacy. It was not designed to deliver inspiration and send people home. It was designed to equip — to give young people practical frameworks for growth alongside the encouragement to pursue it.

Literacy sits close to the heart of her work. Through Read to Rise, an initiative under The Becoming Series, Mgcina encourages children to develop a genuine love for reading. She understands what access to books and stories can do — how it expands imagination, builds vocabulary and opens doors that might otherwise appear closed.

That passion for children's stories led her to write one of her own. Her children's book, *The Little Girl Who Believed*, draws on her personal journey and carries a message she returns to consistently: children deserve to see themselves as capable, valuable and full of possibility. Storytelling, she believes, is one of



That belief was shaped early. Mgcina's own childhood experiences planted the conviction that a child's formative years can determine the person they eventually become. Teaching, for her, is not a career path so much as a calling — a chance to be the kind of educator who meets every child where they are, nurtures their curiosity and reminds them that their circumstances need not define their ceiling



Nomthandazo Mgcina.

the most powerful ways to plant that message early.

Mgcina is also a Miss Gauteng Exclusive 2026 finalist. She approaches the pageant not as a competition for its own sake, but as a platform — another space from which to advocate for youth empowerment, education and mentorship, and to connect with people who might be encouraged by her example.

Across all of it — the degree, the platforms, the book, the advocacy, the pageant — a single thread runs through her work. She wants young people to believe in themselves before the world fully confirms that they should. She wants children to encounter adults who see their potential before it is fully visible. And

she wants young women to know they are not competing against one another.

Her leadership is grounded in faith, kindness and the understanding that meaningful impact rarely begins with a large platform or significant resources. It begins, she believes, with one person choosing to believe in another. One child discovering the joy of a book. One young woman realising she is not navigating her journey alone.

At 21, Nomthandazo Mgcina is already demonstrating what it looks like to build with purpose. Her story is still unfolding — but the direction is clear, and she is moving in it with conviction.