



Kagwe launches nationwide soil testing drive to guide fertiliser use
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Countdown 2027 Every name the senator reaches for — Linda, Ukombozi, now UDP — finds a wall waiting

Sifuna's party standoff

Fresh complaints filed by United Democratic Party officials against a proposed takeover by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna have added yet another chapter to what is fast becoming one of the most bruising party registration sagas in Kenya's pre-election history.

UDP Vice Chairman Mohammed Abikar issued a categorical statement yesterday dismissing reports that Sifuna and Trans Nzoia Governor George Nantembeya were positioning to assume control of the party, warning that no such arrangement had been sanctioned by the party's National Executive Council. The party said it was open to Sifuna, Nantembeya and other like-minded politicians joining, but insisted that any entry and leadership changes must comply with the party constitution and that any new leader must be chosen by delegates. For a senator who has spent the better part of a year trying to secure a political vehicle for a 2027 presidential run, the statement landed as one more door slammed in his face.

The UDP dispute is merely the latest in a sequence of setbacks that began when Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement first attempted to formalise its political identity.



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Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna



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Gachagua's DCP holds strategic NEC meeting ahead of 2027 polls

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Democracy for the Citizens Party yesterday held a strategic National Executive Council and Central Committee meeting in Nairobi, bringing together senior party officials to deliberate on priorities ahead of the 2027 general election.

DCP leader Rigathi Gachagua, posting from the United States where he is on a diaspora engagement tour, said the session reflected the party's determination to build a durable political vehicle. "We continue to build a strong party that will stand the test of time and build a better Kenya now and in future," he said. "Our commitment and resolve to bring back better our country is a top priority. In this journey, every Kenyan matters, every Kenyan is equal in their country and must be treated as such."

Present at the session were Deputy Party Leader Cleophas Malala, Secretary General designate John Methu, NEB Chairperson Wanjiru Kago and National Youth Leader Wanjiku Thiga, among other senior officials. The meeting was held in collaboration with the Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya, which Gachagua said the party was glad to work alongside on the programme.

The NEC session signals that DCP is moving to translate its growing political momentum into structured electoral organisation with the 2027 general election now firmly in view.



Editor's Desk

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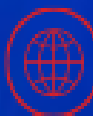
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NEWS IN BRIEF



The government yesterday distributed 36,826 title deeds to landowners across four constituencies in Kilifi County, in one of the largest single-day land titling exercises conducted in the coastal region. President William Ruto presided over the issuance at Karisa Maitha Grounds in Kilifi Town, where beneficiaries from Rabai, Ganze, Kilifi South and Malindi constituencies received formal documentation of ownership, many for the first time. The event marked a significant moment for communities along the coast, where historical land grievances and the absence of title deeds have long locked families out of credit access, investment and legal security over land they have occupied for generations. The government said the exercise formed part of a broader national land titling programme targeting historically underserved regions.



Residents of Njiru in Nairobi yesterday blocked Kangundo Road and clashed with police after government demolition teams moved in overnight to pull down structures in the area, catching homeowners off guard and triggering immediate protests. Angry residents erected barricades along the busy road, paralysing traffic and disrupting the morning commute, as they demanded accountability over what they described as unlawful and inhumane demolitions carried out under cover of darkness. Protesters accused authorities of deliberately timing the operation to deny residents any opportunity to salvage belongings or seek legal intervention. Police moved in to disperse the crowds, with confrontations reported along several sections of the road. Residents vowed to remain on the streets until the government provided formal explanations and halted further overnight demolitions pending consultation with affected communities.



Residents of Lamu yesterday took to the streets to protest against the proposed KSh2 trillion Dangote East Africa Oil Refinery, demanding that their land rights and community interests be protected before any groundbreaking proceeds. The demonstrators, drawn from villages earmarked for the project site, accused the government and project developers of sidelining affected communities from meaningful consultation and failing to adequately address concerns over compensation, ancestral land and the potential displacement of families who have occupied the area for generations. The protest adds fresh pressure to a project already entangled in a court dispute, after 133 residents filed a petition challenging the land acquisition process. The Malindi Environment and Land Court has ordered that the status quo on the disputed parcels be maintained pending further proceedings scheduled for October.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday ordered a fresh nationwide inspection of all alcohol manufacturing premises, intensifying the government's crackdown on illicit brews and unsafe alcohol products. Kindiki directed the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, working alongside regulatory and enforcement agencies, to conduct fresh compliance checks on manufacturers and determine whether their operations meet the standards required under existing law. The directive extends the government's broader campaign against addiction and its attendant social and economic costs, which officials say continue to exact a heavy toll on families and communities across the country. "Directed enforcement and regulatory agencies to re-inspect manufacturer premises to ascertain the current state of compliance with all applicable standards and regulations," Kindiki said. Premises found to be operating outside permitted standards face regulatory action.



A murder trial before Milimani High Court descended into courtroom drama yesterday after a team of prominent defence lawyers abruptly withdrew from the case against Rose Mbithe Ndeti and her two children, who are charged alongside two others with the killing of Dr Victoria Nthunya Mutiso.

Advocates Cliff Ombeta, Danstan Omari and Samson Nyaberi, among others, informed Justice Alexander Muteti that they could no longer represent Mbithe, Chris Mulwa and Angela Mulwa, citing concerns that documents had been filed in the case without their clients' knowledge or consent. The withdrawal came moments after all five accused — including Police Constable Elijah Kibelion Kimoi and Maritim Kimutai — had entered pleas of not guilty to the murder charges. The court must now determine new legal representation arrangements before proceedings can continue.



United States President Donald Trump yesterday flatly denied offering Iran any concessions to end hostilities, contradicting reports attributed to American officials suggesting he was prepared to ease sanctions and release frozen Iranian funds in exchange for concrete steps on Tehran's nuclear programme. Trump's rejection of the reports came as diplomatic speculation intensified over the terms under which Washington might be willing to de-escalate tensions with Iran. Officials cited in earlier reports had suggested the administration was considering a package of economic relief measures tied to verifiable Iranian commitments on nuclear activity — a framing Trump dismissed outright. The contradiction between the President's public position and accounts from within his own administration deepened uncertainty over where US-Iran negotiations stand and whether a diplomatic pathway remains open.

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Politics “I saw yesterday that Mr Yala River was full of fury about why I went to speak in New York,” Ruto said.

Ruto mocks UNGA critics: “That requires someone with sense”

BY Amos Kibaara
@themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday publicly mocked critics who questioned his attendance at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, dismissing their objections with a pointed remark that laid bare the sharpening divide between the presidency and its domestic opponents.

Speaking after returning from New York, where he represented Kenya at the 81st UNGA session, Ruto took direct aim at a critic he referred to pointedly as “Mr Yala River” — a thinly veiled reference to a political figure from western Kenya who had publicly expressed anger over the presidential trip.

“I saw yesterday that Mr Yala River was full of fury about why I went to speak in New York,” Ruto said. “That kind of thing requires someone with sense.”

The remark, casual in delivery but precise in intent, reflects a pattern the President has adopted with increasing frequency as the 2027 general election draws closer — meeting critics with public ridicule rather than engaging their arguments on substance. The reference to “Mr Yala River” was widely understood by political observers as aimed at a western Kenya opposition figure, though the President stopped short of naming him. That studied ambiguity, deliberate enough to be deniable, was itself a signal: Ruto was not address-



President William Ruto

ing the criticism. He was diminishing the critic.

The domestic opposition to his New York trip centred on familiar grievances — the cost of international travel against a backdrop of domestic economic pressure, and questions about the tangible returns of diplomatic engagement at a time when Kenyans are struggling with the cost of living. Those are not trivial concerns. But the President’s framing suggests he views such objections as politically motivated noise rather than legitimate scrutiny worthy of a formal response.

His UNGA engagements covered a substantive diplomatic agenda. At the 81st session, held under the theme “Restoring trust, managing

transformation: A United Nations that delivers for all,” Ruto championed increased investment in Africa, artificial intelligence development and reforms to the global financial system. He co-chaired business roundtables alongside businessman Aliko Dangote involving the Africa Finance Corporation and the Global Africa Business Initiative, with discussions centred on major investments including the planned KSh2.2 trillion East Africa Refinery in Lamu, which the government says could generate more than 60,000 jobs.

On the sidelines, Ruto held bilateral talks with United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio, covering opportunities to expand Ken-

ya-US cooperation in trade, technology, critical minerals, energy and regional security. He also pushed Kenya’s interests in artificial intelligence, where the country is seeking a stronger voice in shaping the emerging global digital economy.

Whether those engagements justified the trip is a legitimate debate. What is clear is that the President has chosen his answer, and it is not a policy defence. It is a one-liner delivered with the confidence of a man who believes the electorate will judge him on results rather than rhetoric — and that his critics, wherever the Yala River flows, have not yet offered either.

Media warns: Information gaps fuel 2027 disinformation risk



Kenyan media practitioners

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

Kenyan media practitioners have called on government agencies to close critical gaps in access to official information, warning that bureaucratic delays and the absence of authoritative public records are creating fertile ground for misinformation ahead of the 2027 general election.

The journalists argued that when official information is withheld, delayed or simply unavailable, unverified content fills the void — and in an election cycle, that void can be dangerous. The warning comes as Kenya’s information environment grows increasingly contested, with social media platforms accelerating the spread of unverified claims faster than newsrooms or regulators can respond.

Practitioners pointed to a pattern in which government agencies either fail to respond

to press queries within reasonable timeframes or maintain no accessible public records at all, leaving journalists with little choice but to rely on unofficial and sometimes unreliable sources. The result, they argued, is a weakened press that struggles to perform its most essential democratic function: providing citizens with accurate, verified information on which to base political decisions.

The call is directed not only at national government ministries but also at county agencies, regulatory bodies and security institutions, where information access remains inconsistent and largely discretionary.

With the 2027 election campaign environment already taking shape, practitioners warned that the window to address these gaps is narrowing — and that the cost of inaction will ultimately be paid by the public.

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Soil testing “A bag of the wrong fertiliser, delivered on time, at half the price, to the wrong soil, is still the wrong fertiliser,” he said. “Subsidy without a soil test is sympathy. It is not strategy.”

Kagwe launches nationwide soil testing drive to guide fertiliser use

Cabinet secretary warns that subsidised inputs without soil data amount to guesswork, not strategy

BY Brian Gitonga

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe yesterday launched a nationwide soil health initiative aimed at helping Kenyan farmers determine the right fertiliser for their land and improve agricultural productivity.

Dubbed Soil Mapping for Resilient Agrifood Systems, or SoilFER, the programme was launched at the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation national laboratories in Kabete, alongside the establishment of the National Soil Partnership, the National Soil Laboratory Network and the national roll-out of the Global Soil Doctors Programme. Kagwe also handed over refurbished KALRO soil chemistry laboratories that received an investment of KSh220 million.

Kagwe said Kenya must move away from the entrenched practice of applying the same fertiliser across different farms without first establishing their soil conditions. He drew on personal experience to make the point.

“A bag of the wrong fertiliser, delivered on time, at half the price, to the wrong soil, is still the wrong fertiliser,” he said. “Subsidy without a soil test is sympathy. It is not strategy.”

Kagwe told those gathered that he had once farmed by following common practice in his area, buying whichever fertiliser neighbouring farmers were using. A soil test later revealed he had been applying nutrients already present in his soil while neglecting those that were deficient. “I was not farming. I was gambling. I was farming blind,” he said.

Drawing on his earlier tenure as Health Cabinet Secretary, Kagwe compared soil testing to medical diagnosis, arguing that farmers needed to understand the condition of their land before deciding which inputs to apply. “A soil test is as important as a medical diagnosis,” he said.

He said approximately 63 per cent of Kenya’s arable land is acidic, with nearly seven million acres classified as strongly acidic. Farmers working such soils, he warned, could continue spending on fertiliser without achieving expected yields if they failed to address underlying soil

acidity. He urged the use of appropriate interventions, including lime where necessary, to restore organic matter and improve long-term soil health.

Kagwe said more than eight million farmers are registered on the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System, known as KI-AMIS, and that the platform could eventually allow the government to tailor agricultural support to each farmer’s specific soil requirements. At the peak of a planting season, he said, more than 180,000 bags of subsidised fertiliser were being moved daily through National Cereals and Produce Board stores and registered outlets. The next step, he said, was to make that support more precise by linking input decisions to scientific soil data.

He directed KALRO to continue analysing approximately 77,000 soil samples collected from 45 counties and to publish county-level soil fertility maps for public use. The Ministry of Agriculture and KALRO will also work to link soil test results to KI-AMIS so that, over time, subsidy allocations reflect the actual needs of individual farms.

The refurbished laboratories at Kabete are expected to shorten the time required to process samples and return results to farmers. Kagwe was pointed out the cost of slow turnaround. “A soil result that arrives after the rains have come is a historical document, not a farming decision,” he said.

The National Soil Partnership will bring together national and county governments, KALRO, universities, private sector players and other institutions involved in soil management. The National Soil Laboratory Network will establish common testing standards and strengthen the reliability of soil analysis across the country, while the Global Soil Doctors Programme will equip farmers with the practical knowledge to understand their soils and pass that knowledge on to others in their communities.

Kagwe urged county governments to co-finance soil testing services and bring them closer to farmers. He also warned that the government would sustain its crackdown on counterfeit, expired and substandard agricultural



CS Mutahi Kagwe with KALRO officials and other stakeholders during the launching of nationwide soil testing drive yesterday | Photo: Courtesy

inputs, saying that accurate fertiliser recommendations would count for little if farmers subsequently purchased products whose contents did not match what was printed on the label.

He closed with a remark that captured the spirit of the initiative. “For a hundred years we have asked our soils what they can give us. Today we begin, at last, to ask them what they need.”

KALRO Board Chairman Benson Gichohi Nguni said smallholder farmers needed technologies and

agricultural advice tailored to their specific soils and environments, an approach he said would help reduce unnecessary costs, improve yields, withstand climate shocks and strengthen livelihoods.

KALRO Director General Patrick Ketiemi said SoilFER would address gaps in soil information by digitising soil maps, strengthening laboratories and conducting soil fertility trials to build a detailed picture of Kenya’s soils from the national level down to individual farms.

Kagwe also appealed to the Pub-

lic Service Commission to allow KALRO to recruit additional researchers, saying the institution needed more expertise to make full use of approximately 170 pieces of research equipment expected to arrive. “We cannot invest in equipment and then lack the people to put it to work,” he said. The ceremony was attended by development partners from international organisations and a broad range of agricultural stakeholders.



CS Mutahi Kagwe, KALRO chairman Benson Gichohi Nguni, KALRO DG Patrick Ketiemi and other stakeholders being taken through some of activities carried out by the research organization during the launching of soil testing yesterday.

Political The UDP dispute is merely the latest in a sequence of setbacks that began when Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement first attempted to formalise its political identity

Sifuna's unending party ownership hurdles

Every name the senator reaches for — Linda, Ukombozi, now UDP — finds a wall waiting; whether that wall is bureaucratic, legal, or political is a question Kenya's opposition circles are asking with increasing urgency

BY David Kimani
@themkenyatimes

Fresh complaints filed by United Democratic Party officials against a proposed takeover by Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna have added yet another chapter to what is fast becoming one of the most bruising party registration sagas in Kenya's pre-election history.

UDP Vice Chairman Mohammed Abikar issued a categorical statement yesterday dismissing reports that Sifuna and Trans Nzoia Governor George Nitembeya were positioning to assume control of the party, warning that no such arrangement had been sanctioned by the party's National Executive Council. The party said it was open to Sifuna, Nitembeya and other like-minded politicians joining, but insisted that any entry and leadership changes must comply with the party constitution and that any new leader must be chosen by delegates. For a senator who has spent the better part of a year trying to secure a political vehicle for a 2027 presidential run, the statement landed as one more door slammed in his face.

The UDP dispute is merely the latest in a sequence of setbacks that began when Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement first attempted to formalise its political identity. In March, the Sifuna-led faction moved to block a separate application to register Linda Mwananchi as a political party, arguing to the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties that the applicant — one Charles Wanyonyi — was not associated with their group and that approval of the name could enable political fraud. Caleb Amisi, among the leaders listed in the formal objection, called the application a "normal ploy by government state operatives to confuse the public."

The registrar eventually rejected the Linda Mwananchi name, but not in Sifuna's favour. The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties ruled that the name closely resembled an already reserved slogan and was against the public interest, citing Section 8 of the Political Parties Act. The decision left the movement without its most recognisable brand and opened a legal dispute that dragged on for months.

Compounding matters was the emergence of the Liberty National Democratic Alliance, known by its acronym LINDA. The emergence of the LINDA Party complicated things further. Although Sifuna's allies insisted the newly approved party had no relationship with their movement, the registration effectively occupied the broader "Linda" political space. LINDA party leader Phanesio Thuku said the outfit was registered as far back as November 2024 and had members across the country. Sifuna's team found itself outflanked on a name it had spent months rallying behind.

The movement then pivoted toward Ukombozi. Former MP Cyrus Jirongo's United Democratic Party sought to rebrand as Ukombozi People's Party amid talks of a planned takeover by the Sifuna-led Linda Mwananchi movement. The plan seemed, briefly, to offer a workable path. It did not last. The Registrar of Political Parties rejected the rebranding bid, citing similarities with the newly reserved Ukombozi Alliance name — a coalition name that Azimio la Umoja had reserved on July 20 and formally adopted as its new coalition name on September 21. The timing struck Sifuna's allies as rather too convenient.

Nitembeya was blunt in his assessment: "We know who is involved, but you can't use a party to curtail Sifuna's bid," he said, accusing the Registrar of "playing games" over the Ukombozi application that had been filed as far back as March. Vihiiga Senator Godfrey Osotsi was more measured but equally pointed: "The state is frustrating the registration of Linda Mwananchi. We are now in court," he said, adding that his team was treading carefully because of what he described as "state tactics" to infiltrate or scuttle their plans.

Former Jubilee official Pauline Njoroge, now a member of Sifuna's camp, went further, seeing the government's hand directly in their legal quagmire. Whether that assessment holds is difficult to verify independently. What is clear is that the pattern of obstruction — names blocked, rebrands rejected, third-party applicants surfacing at critical moments — has been consistent enough to fuel credible suspicion within the movement.

The question of motive matters po-



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

litically because of who Sifuna has come to represent. A TIFA poll earlier this year showed him climbing from virtually no measurable support in 2025 to 15 per cent nationally by June 2026, with 44 per cent support within ODM as the party's preferred presidential candidate. That trajectory — driven substantially by Gen Z voters who have embraced his combative anti-establishment posture — makes him a genuinely disruptive force in a race that President William Ruto's camp had expected to control. A candidate without a registered party cannot contest. The arithmetic of obstruction, if it is obstruction, writes itself.

Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka acknowledged as much, revealing that the party question had become a headache following what he described as frustrations allegedly placed in Sifuna's path by the state. The senator himself has struck a deliberately unbothered tone in public. "Let our supporters relax; a rose by any other name still sells," he told supporters at a funeral in western Kenya, brushing aside speculation about his party situation with the

kind of studied nonchalance that has become his trademark.

The planned UDP launch is now scheduled for October 3 at the party's Westlands headquarters in Nairobi, with Sifuna and his allies expected to use a closed-door retreat to finalise stewardship arrangements ahead of the event. Sources indicate that Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party is also eyeing a potential coalition with Sifuna, with DCP proposing its Secretary-General John Methu as a possible running mate candidate.

Analysts caution, however, that acquiring a party is only the beginning. Sifuna now needs functioning grassroots structures, credible officials, county coordinators, aspirant networks, a clear policy agenda, fundraising mechanisms and committed political organisers who believe in the presidential project beyond the excitement of his rallies. The IEBC has gazetted a deadline of October 15 for parties intending to participate in the 2027 general election to submit the names and specimen signatures of their authorised persons. The calendar is tight, and the margin

for further setbacks is gone.

Whether the obstacles Sifuna has encountered are the product of bureaucratic coincidence, rival political manoeuvring, or a coordinated effort to neutralise a rising opposition threat before he can properly launch, one thing is beyond dispute: no presidential aspirant in recent Kenyan political history has fought this hard simply to secure a party name. The battles ahead — structural, financial, coalitional — will be no easier. But Sifuna has staked his credibility on the argument that obstacles are evidence of relevance, not failure. His supporters, particularly the Gen Z constituency that has made him a national figure, appear, for now, to believe him.

Business The proposed refinery, estimated to cost KSh2.2 trillion, is expected to rank among the largest private investments ever undertaken in Kenya

Dangote refinery: Kenya's biggest investment or another land conflict?

A KSh2.2 trillion oil refinery promises to transform Lamu and the region — but a court dispute over ancestral land threatens to overshadow it

BY Collins Kibet

@themkenyatomes

Kenya is standing at a defining moment. The proposed Dangote East Africa Oil Refinery in Lamu has been placed at the centre of the country's industrialisation agenda, presented as a potential game-changer for the energy sector, with promises of employment, investment and stronger regional trade. Yet behind the excitement lies a question Kenya has confronted repeatedly in its development history: can the country pursue major economic projects without creating new conflicts over land and community rights?

The proposed refinery, estimated to cost KSh2.2 trillion, is expected to rank among the largest private investments ever undertaken in Kenya. Its planned processing capacity of up to 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day would give it enormous significance within East Africa's petroleum industry. For a country that relies heavily on imported refined petroleum products, the facility could reduce that dependence while allowing Kenya to retain more value from its energy resources. It would also strengthen Lamu's position as a commercial, transport and energy hub.

The economic case

The expectations surrounding the project are considerable. Supporters argue that the refinery would generate employment, stimulate local businesses and draw further investment to Lamu. Construction alone would create opportunities for engineers, technicians, contractors, suppliers and a range of other

workers, while the completed facility could sustain thousands of jobs directly and indirectly. Demand for accommodation, food, transport and construction materials would give small businesses a meaningful boost.

The refinery would also transform Lamu's strategic importance. Within the broader framework of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport corridor, the area has already been positioned as a key trade and energy gateway. A large refinery connecting petroleum production, transportation, storage and distribution would strengthen Kenya's ambitions to become a regional logistics and economic centre. The arrival of heavy machinery and construction equipment ahead of the planned groundbreaking has already signalled the scale of what is being prepared.

The land dispute

The economic promise, however, has arrived alongside a land conflict that cannot be set aside. A group of 133 Lamu residents has challenged the project in court, arguing that land earmarked for the refinery includes areas their families have occupied and used for generations. The petitioners have raised concerns about customary land interests, compensation, public participation and the potential effect on homes, farms, religious sites and family graves. The court has yet to make a final determination on the substantive dispute.

The Malindi Environment and Land Court has ordered that the status quo on the disputed land be maintained pending further proceedings. The case is scheduled for further consideration in October.

Meanwhile, the Dangote Group has maintained that the planned groundbreaking will proceed, and the government has continued to back the refinery as a major priority. The legal process means the project must now navigate the expectations of investors alongside the rights asserted by affected residents.

Development and ownership

The land question draws the refinery into a wider national conversation. Kenya needs investment, infrastructure and industrialisation — but development cannot be separated from the rights of citizens. For many communities, land is not simply an economic commodity. It carries family history, cultural identity, livelihoods and generational connection. When a major project is proposed on land that communities regard as ancestral territory, the economic argument alone rarely resolves the tension.

Kenya has seen this before. Disagreements over land, compensation and community participation have delayed projects, increased costs and eroded public confidence in the past. More consequentially, they have left communities feeling that national development was being built at their expense. The Dangote refinery presents an opportunity to demonstrate that large-scale investment and the protection of community interests are not mutually exclusive.

What success should look like

Transparency will be essential. A project of this scale demands clear information about land ownership, com-



Dangote refinery

penetration arrangements, environmental safeguards, employment opportunities and how benefits will be distributed. Affected communities need genuine opportunities to raise concerns and receive honest answers. Where legitimate disputes exist, independent legal processes must be allowed to run their course without political or commercial pressure.

The government also carries the responsibility of ensuring that promised benefits reach the people closest to the project. It is not enough for Lamu to host a massive industrial facility while local residents remain unemployed and outside businesses capture the bulk of the opportunities. If the refinery moves forward, local employment, skills development and procurement should become key measures of whether the project is de-

livering genuinely inclusive growth.

The concerns of the 133 petitioners should not automatically be read as opposition to development. Communities can support economic transformation while demanding recognition of their rights. Supporting investment, equally, does not require dismissing legitimate questions about land, compensation or environmental impact. The challenge is building a framework in which development proceeds while lawful rights and community interests are protected.

The deeper question

The Dangote refinery could become a landmark in Kenya's industrialisation journey — strengthening the energy sector, creating economic opportunity and raising Lamu's

profile across East Africa. But its long-term legitimacy will depend on more than its financial size or industrial output. It will depend on whether the communities affected believe the process was fair, transparent and respectful of their rights.

Kenya needs investment. It needs jobs and industrialisation. But it also needs justice and public trust.

The ultimate measure of the Dangote refinery will therefore not be counted only in barrels of oil, billions of shillings or kilometres of pipeline. It will be counted in whether the people of Lamu feel they were included in the future being built on their land.

That is the question Kenya must answer — and the answer will matter long after the refinery is built.

Energy The first shipment confirms that Kenya's port, pipeline and storage infrastructure is no longer simply a domestic asset

Mombasa's new energy mandate: Turning regional trade into shared prosperity

Rwanda's first bulk petroleum cargo through Kipevu signals Kenya's moment to lead — but the real test lies in what comes next

BY James Kilonzo Bwire

@themkenyatimes

The arrival of MT Sea Wolf at Kipevu Oil Terminal 2, carrying Rwanda's first bulk consignment of refined petroleum products through Kenya, marks more than the beginning of a new commercial arrangement. It represents a practical demonstration of regional interdependence and a renewed opportunity for Kenya to place its infrastructure at the centre of East Africa's economic transformation. The event, witnessed yesterday by Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi, Rwanda's Minister of State for Infrastructure Armand Zingiro, Kenya's High Commissioner to Rwanda Janet Mwawasi Oben and representatives of the Kenya Ports Authority, Kenya Pipeline Company and the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, must be understood within a wider regional context. It is about how infrastructure, policy and diplomatic cooperation can combine to improve energy security, strengthen trade and generate shared economic value.

The first shipment confirms that Kenya's port, pipeline and storage infrastructure is no longer simply a domestic asset. It is becoming a regional platform through which neighbouring countries access essential commodities, diversify supply arrangements and improve economic efficiency. Rwanda's decision to use the Mombasa route gives practical meaning to the Northern Corridor's role as an engine of regional commerce, demonstrating that the value of infrastructure is measured not only by what it delivers

within national borders, but by the markets and communities it connects beyond them.

For Rwanda, dependable access to petroleum products is a component of economic stability. Fuel supports transport, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and public services. Any disruption in supply ripples into the cost of movement, the price of goods and the performance of businesses. By establishing a more structured supply route through Kenya, Rwanda gains flexibility in sourcing — and with it, a stronger capacity to plan energy needs, manage supply risks and sustain uninterrupted economic activity. For landlocked economies, that kind of arrangement is not a convenience. It is a strategic necessity.

For Kenya, the development deepens its claim as East Africa's principal energy and logistics hub. The Port of Mombasa has long served as a gateway for the region, but its continued relevance depends on the ability of the port and connected institutions to deliver reliable, efficient and competitive services. Rwanda's inaugural consignment places fresh scrutiny on whether Kenyan institutions can coordinate marine operations, product handling, storage, transportation, regulation and cross-border delivery as one integrated system rather than a collection of separate agencies.

That coordination will determine whether the route succeeds or stalls. The KPA must ensure efficient port operations and timely cargo handling. The KPC must provide dependable transportation and storage. The EPRA must maintain effective oversight and regulatory compliance. Customs, security and border

management agencies must ensure their procedures do not introduce unnecessary delays or costs. Regional supply chains succeed when every institution understands that an administrative bottleneck at any single point can affect businesses, consumers and the credibility of the entire route.

The significance of MT Sea Wolf's arrival therefore extends beyond one vessel and one cargo. It provides Kenya with an opportunity to examine the full logistics chain serving regional markets. A modern port alone does not guarantee regional leadership. Leadership requires predictable operations, transparent processes, competitive costs, efficient documentation, well-maintained infrastructure and a serious commitment to safety. Customers with alternative routes will judge Kenya not on the quality of a single facility, but on the reliability of the complete service over time.

The government-to-government framework underpinning the Rwanda arrangement reflects something important about strategic energy trade. Petroleum markets require commercial efficiency, but energy supply also carries a national security dimension. Governments must plan for changing market conditions, protect consumers from avoidable disruptions and maintain confidence in essential supply chains. A structured partnership provides a basis for long-term planning while allowing institutions and private sector actors to build the operational systems that efficient delivery requires. That framework must, however, remain guided by transparency and accountability. Regional energy arrange-



The arrival of MT Sea Wolf at Kipevu Oil Terminal 2

ments should create value for consumers and businesses, not become closed systems that obscure costs or transfer inefficiency to the public.

Kenya should treat the Rwanda route not as an isolated fuel agreement but as part of a wider regional infrastructure strategy. The objective should be to develop an integrated logistics ecosystem capable of serving Rwanda and other markets across East and Central Africa. Every increase in regional transit activity generates demand for transport services, warehousing, maintenance, financial services and professional expertise. Counties along the Northern Corridor stand to benefit when regional trade is actively connected to local enterprise and employment — but only if Kenya deliberately creates those linkages rather than allowing cargo to pass through without touching local economies.

This requires a policy environment that supports local businesses while preserving efficiency and competitiveness. Small and medium-sized enterprises should have genuine opportunities to participate in regional logistics services. Young professionals need skills in supply chain management, engineering, information technology and regulatory compliance. Infrastructure development, approached this way, becomes a driver of human capital alongside the movement of goods.

The arrangement also carries diplomatic weight. Kenya and Rwanda maintain close relations, but practical economic cooperation gives those relations greater substance. This petroleum arrangement offers both countries an opportunity to build trust through dependable implementation and to open the way for future cooperation in electricity, renewable energy, transport and trade facilitation. Regional integration becomes meaningful through arrangements that respond to concrete needs, and energy supply is one of the most concrete needs a developing economy has.

That cooperation must nonetheless be pursued alongside the longer-term transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy systems. A stronger petroleum supply network should not delay that transition — it should provide stability as countries expand their energy systems and gradually reduce dependence on carbon-intensive fuels where alternatives are practical and affordable. Kenya's opportunity lies in combining its petroleum logistics capacity with its broader energy strengths to become a regional centre not only for fuel distribution, but for energy investment, electricity trade and clean energy development.

The test for Kenya now is consistency. The success of the Mombasa route will not be determined by the symbolism of the inaugural cargo.

It will be determined by the regularity of future deliveries, the efficiency of transit arrangements, the reliability of storage and pipeline services and the competitiveness of costs. Rwanda and other regional customers will assess Kenya on sustained performance, not ceremonial beginnings. Regional markets are competitive, and the Northern Corridor must remain commercially attractive through continuous improvement — reducing avoidable bureaucracy, investing in infrastructure before capacity becomes inadequate and using technology to improve supply chain visibility.

Kenya must seize this moment with ambition and a clear sense of responsibility. The arrival of Rwanda's maiden petroleum cargo through Mombasa confirms the potential of the country's infrastructure and the value of regional partnerships. If Kenya meets the duty that potential demands, Mombasa will grow as a true gateway for East African commerce — and the Northern Corridor will become an increasingly important channel for energy, trade and the kind of shared progress that turns geography into genuine opportunity.

Security Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has recently argued that security cannot be defined simply by the absence of violence.

Security test: Trust, integrity and the path to 2027

As Kenya moves towards a charged election cycle, the country's greatest security challenge may not be violence itself — but whether citizens trust the institutions meant to prevent it



BY Dennis Wendo
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's national security environment is entering a more complex phase. The threats facing the country can no longer be measured through crime statistics, terrorism incidents or physical violence alone. Political mobilisation, organised criminal networks, digital disinformation, economic grievances, public distrust and the conduct of security institutions themselves are becoming deeply interconnected elements of the country's security landscape.

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has recently argued that security cannot be defined simply by the absence of violence. He has placed public trust, effective institutions, early risk detection and citizen participation at the centre of a broader approach to national security.

His remarks arrive at a significant moment. Kenya is moving into an increasingly charged electioneering period ahead of the 2027 general election, amid mounting concerns about political violence, organised criminal groups, disinformation and the capacity of institutions to protect both citizens and political freedoms.

Allegations involving abductions, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and excessive use of force continue to feature prominently in public debate. Such

claims should not automatically be treated as established fact — they require credible, independent and transparent investigation. Equally, serious allegations concerning the conduct of security agencies cannot simply be dismissed without scrutiny.

The credibility of a security institution is tested not only when it responds to external threats, but also when its own conduct comes under public examination.

This is where the 2010 Constitution becomes critical.

Article 244 requires the National Police Service to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and discipline, promote transparency and accountability, comply with constitutional standards on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and foster meaningful relationships with the wider society. These are not administrative formalities. They are the foundations upon which public confidence in security institutions is built.

The question, therefore, is not simply whether security agencies have the capacity to confront threats. It is whether citizens believe those agencies will exercise their powers lawfully, professionally and without bias.

That distinction becomes particularly important in an election period.

An election is not simply a competition between parties and candidates. It is also a test of institutions. The police, intelligence agencies, electoral bodies, courts, prosecutors, oversight authorities, political parties, the media and civil society all carry a role in maintaining an environment in which citizens can partici-

pate without fear.

Security agencies bear a particularly sensitive responsibility. They must prevent violence without suppressing legitimate political activity. They must respond to genuine threats without treating dissent as a security problem. They must investigate criminal conduct without political discrimination. They must maintain public order while respecting constitutional freedoms.

That is not an easy balance. It is, however, precisely why institutional integrity matters so much.

Kenya's security situation must also be read within the broader Horn of Africa context. Threats increasingly operate in a grey zone where political interests, organised crime, information manipulation and physical violence can reinforce each other in ways that are difficult to untangle.

Disinformation deepens this challenge. It can generate fear, widen political and ethnic divisions and erode confidence in public institutions. Once trust is weakened, even legitimate security interventions can attract suspicion.

The country needs the capacity to identify coordinated information threats while simultaneously protecting legitimate political expression, journalism and dissent. A security response perceived as targeting free expression could deepen the very mistrust it is meant to address.

The same principle applies to policing. A citizen who believes that reporting a threat will bring protection becomes a genuine partner in national security. A citizen who fears that approaching security

agencies may expose them to intimidation is unlikely to co-operate at all.

Public trust, therefore, is not a public relations issue. It is part of the national security architecture.

Murkomen's emphasis on community engagement reflects this reality. He has argued that local police leadership and direct community interaction can strengthen the relationship between security agencies and the public. The National Police Service has also been promoting community-level security dialogue through initiatives such as Jukwaa la Usalama.

But trust cannot be built through messaging alone. It is built through conduct.

It grows when complaints are properly investigated. It grows when officers accused of abuse face due process. It grows when victims and their families receive credible answers. It grows when political violence is investigated regardless of who may benefit from it politically. It grows when the law is seen to apply consistently — to government supporters, opposition supporters and ordinary members of the public alike.

This is where civilian oversight becomes indispensable. The Independent Policing Oversight Authority is mandated to investigate deaths and serious injuries arising from police action, examine misconduct and monitor policing operations affecting members of the public.

The challenge is not necessarily the absence of laws or institutions. The harder question is whether existing institutions are sufficiently empowered, independent and effective to command public confidence — particularly as political temperatures rise towards 2027.

Kenya cannot afford a situation in which every security incident is reflexively interpreted through a political lens, while every official explanation is automatically rejected by sections of the public. The answer to that risk lies in institutional credibility.

When institutions are trusted, verified facts stand a better chance against rumour. When institutions are distrusted, rumour can carry more weight than fact. This is where the security implications of disin-



Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen

formation become most visible — and most dangerous.

The 2027 general election should be approached not merely as an electoral event requiring police deployment, but as a broader national resilience exercise.

Early warning systems should identify areas of political and communal tension before they escalate. Intelligence gathering should focus on genuine security threats rather than political profiling. Security agencies should maintain professional distance from partisan interests. Investigations into violence should be timely and credible. Oversight institutions should be free to operate without intimidation or interference. Citizens should have accessible, functioning mechanisms for reporting threats and seeking protection.

Political parties and candidates carry their own responsibilities — to discourage violence, to reject the use of organised groups and to ensure that political mobilisation does not become a gateway to criminality. Murkomen has publicly warned political actors against deploying organised groups and said security agencies are intensifying efforts to identify networks planning violence.

Civil society and the media carry a responsibility to scrutinise institutions while carefully distinguishing verified information from allegation and speculation. Citizens, too, must resist the circulation of unverified content capable of

inflaming tensions.

Ultimately, Kenya's security challenge ahead of 2027 is not simply how to prevent violence. It is how to prevent violence without compromising the constitutional values that security institutions are mandated to uphold.

A secure Kenya should be one in which citizens do not have to choose between security and liberty, between public order and accountability, or between national stability and constitutional rights.

The measure of a strong security institution is not only its capacity to confront threats. It is its integrity when exercising power.

As 2027 approaches, Kenya needs security institutions that citizens can trust, oversight bodies capable of independently demanding answers, political actors who understand the consequences of violent mobilisation, and an information environment in which verified facts can compete with manipulation.

The most durable security is not created when citizens fear the state. It is created when citizens trust public institutions to protect them, treat them fairly and remain answerable to the law.

That may ultimately be Kenya's most important security test before the next general election.

Dennis Wendo is a governance and social policy commentator.

Phones “I use my phone to record the lecturer when the network is poor,” says Ann Toniah Akothee, a fourth-year student. “At night I listen back and write my notes. My phone is my teacher.”

Our phones are not just for entertainment

For campus students juggling lectures and hustles, the smartphone has become classroom, library and office — all in one pocket

BY Purity Wambui

@themtkenyatimes

When people see students with their phones, they assume the worst. TikTok. WhatsApp. Endless scrolling. Parents reach the point of frustration: “You’re on that phone again!” What they rarely see is the fuller picture. For campus students across Kenya, the smartphone is not a distraction from work. It is the work.

One small device. Many big responsibilities.

The school day begins on

the phone. Morning lectures on Google Meet and Zoom are accessed through links shared on WhatsApp group chats. Students in hostels and students back home in the village attend the same class, connected through the same screen.

After class, the phone stays busy. Assignments are typed on WPS Office, references searched on Google, concepts clarified through YouTube. Lecture notes arrive as PDFs. Screenshots fill the gallery — not selfies, but study material. “I use my phone to record the lecturer when the network

is poor,” says Ann Toniah Akothee, a fourth-year student. “At night I listen back and write my notes. My phone is my teacher.”

The hustle runs on the same device

Campus life is financially demanding. The Higher Education Loans Board disbursements are rarely on time, and parents do not always have enough to cover everything. So students supplement. Many run small businesses entirely through their phones. “I post shoes on my



Phones

WhatsApp Status every morning,” says Jackson Kituu, a fourth-year student. “Customers message me directly. The profit pays for data and food.”

Others have turned to online writing. Purity Ngusa, a third-year student, writes articles for clients and receives payment via M-Pesa.

“I write 500 words for KSh200 using my phone,” she says. “It covers my data and other essentials.”

Video editing on CapCut, graphic design on Canva, selling second-hand clothes on Facebook — all of it happens on the same handset that was used for the morning lecture. For these students, the phone is not a shop separate from the classroom. It is both, simultaneously.

What the phone makes possible

The advantages are real and tangible. Portability means the classroom travels everywhere — on a bus, in a queue, even in the fields. Financial independence, however modest, matters deeply. Students who earn from their hustles do not have to wait for a transfer to buy data or a meal.

The skills acquired along the way — video production, design, writing, customer man-

agement — are practical and marketable, often acquired faster through necessity than through any formal module.

The weight of working on a small screen

None of it is without cost.

Data bundles are the most persistent pressure point. They are expensive, they run out quickly, and the consequences of running out mid-session can be serious.

“Last week my data finished during a continuous assessment test,” says Fiona Wambui, a third-year student. “I missed ten marks because I could not submit in time.”

Storage is another constant battle. Phones with limited capacity fill up fast with downloaded notes and lecture recordings. Students delete personal photos to make room for academic files. Typing long assignments on a cracked screen, with a processor struggling under multiple open applications, is slow and physically tiring.

Then there is the challenge of focus. A customer message arrives during a lecture. A class link appears in the middle of a sale. A parent calls asking for help with chores while a student is mid-session.

“Put that phone down and

come cook,” is a sentence most students know well.

TikTok and Instagram do not help. A quick Google search can vanish into an hour of unplanned viewing. The same tool that enables productivity enables distraction in equal measure.

Making it work regardless

Despite the pressures, students have found ways to adapt. Hotspots are shared when one person has data and another does not. Screenshots of notes are circulated through group chats. Informal support networks have formed around shared limitations.

The phone that confuses parents and frustrates lecturers is, for thousands of campus students, the most essential professional tool they own.

It is their classroom, their library and their source of income — fitting neatly into a pocket, and carrying rather more than most people imagine.

Purity Wambui is a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication at Chuka University.



To every teacher



Today we stand with hearts so full,
With words of thanks we cannot hide.
For every lesson, every smile,
For every time you stood beside.

You gave us more than words and books,
More than the lessons on the board.
You taught us how to dream and grow,
To find our strength, to move toward more.

You saw the light in every child,
You gave them hope when hope was small.
You taught them not to fear the world,
But rise again each time they fall.

The years may pass, the classrooms change,
The school bell may be heard no more.
But what a teacher leaves behind
Lives in the hearts of students forevermore.

Some will become doctors one day,
Some will be artists, leaders, too.
But somewhere in their journey lives
A teacher who believed in you.

So here we are, with grateful hearts,
To say the words we should say more:
Thank you, teachers, for your light,
For every lesson, every door.

Happy Teachers' Day to every teacher
Who turns knowledge into light,
Who turns a classroom into hope,
And makes tomorrow bright.

Author: Orzigul Sherova
Biography: English teacher at school N:37.
Uzbekistan, Khorezm.

Happiness is not a destination;



It is how you choose to live each day.
Happiness can make an ordinary day beautiful.
It does not come only from outside;
it blooms from the bottom of your heart.

Positive thoughts create happiness.
You can see a pleasant morning scene,
and it can make your heart happy.
Likewise, listening to a pleasant song, enjoying

nature, meeting good-natured people, and doing
meaningful things can bring happiness.

Real happiness does not depend on money.
Money may create temporary comfort, but it
does not stay permanently with anyone.
It comes and goes from hand to hand.
However, good character remains constant.
A good character helps us handle situations
positively and spread happiness to everyone
around us.

Happiness is not a destination; it is how you
choose to live each day.
Every day blooms like a flower with a beautiful
fragrance.
In the same way, you should begin each day with
the fragrance of happiness.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur
blockVillupuramdt

In the sky of my dreams



You are my success, my grant.
When my heart is filled with pride,
You are my honor, my grant.
The knowledge my teachers gave,
You are their trust, my grant.

An opportunity granted by my university,
You are my chance, my grant.
In you lies the love of my homeland,
In you lies the rector's generosity.
The most valuable of all gifts,
You are my priceless grant.
The ornament of my golden student days,
You are my highlight, my grant.
On the path of knowledge for tomorrow,
You are my pillar, my grant.

By: Amirova Nodira
A student of the Psychology program at the
Faculty of Social Sciences, Alfraganus University,
Republic of Uzbekistan.

Beautiful things don't ask for attention



Beautiful things don't ask for attention,
They simply do their work in the best manner!

Every day, the sun rises in the east,
The sun sets in the west.

The nature of beauty is tremendous:

An artist who draws a picture,
The nature lover who clicks a picture.

One who watches the greenery with calm,
A mother who feeds food to her child by showing
the moon.

They know it's beauty,
There is no need to display it!
They shine in their own best way!

But the beautiful sun doesn't ask for attention,
It does its job in the best manner.

N. KANCHANAPRIYA
SG TEACHER
PUPS ALANGATTUVALASU
PALLIPALAYAM UNION
NAMAKKAL DISTRICT
TAMILNADU,638183

What you don't start today will not finish tomorrow



What you do not start today may not be finished
tomorrow.
A small task becomes bigger when we keep
delaying it.

Homework does not finish by itself!
A dream also needs a first step to become real.
We can always find a reason to wait,
but starting now makes tomorrow easier.
So, start today, even if the first step is small.

Name: V. S. NITHIYASRI
Class: VIII
School: JOHN DEWEY MAT HR SEC SCHOOL,
CUDDALORE, TAMILNADU

Some people's job is to watch



Awaiting their desired word to catch
Seems interested to trap me
Cunning to see cornered situation of me
I'm so sad
Thinking about me being in situation bad
They could find nothing favourable

My mind gradually became stable
Mesmerizing words to know my heart's hurt
Unknown about the intention exert
Still believing them as friends
Innocence has no ends
Angelic protection gives them a blow
As the life gas it's flow
Treating them equally in all situations
Fetches their jealousy and frustrations
Focus not on them even their intentions known
Let my life free from handling jackals known
Concentrating on the progress gives peace
Goodness in me none can cease

N. SIVASANKARI
CREATIVE WRITER
TEACHER IN ENGLISH
GMGBHSS PERAIYUR MADURAI DISTRICT
TAMILNADU

Never and ever



Sometimes we say, "Never,"
When things do not go right.
But hidden in that *NEVER*
Is *EVER*, shining bright.

A fall is not the ending,

A failure is not the end.
Keep trying, keep moving,
Your dreams can still begin.

So don't let *NEVER* stop you,
Let *EVER* lead the way.
The greatest things may happen
When you try one more day.

Sripriya R
BT ENGLISH GHSS KOLAPAKKAM
KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT

Petroleum South Lokichar lies in Turkana County in northern Kenya. The December target leaves roughly three months to first oil.

Birik: Lokichar first oil on course for December

Government also advances petroleum reforms, cheaper LPG and coal exploration in Kitui

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatimes

The Government has reaffirmed that first oil from the South Lokichar Basin remains on course for December 2026, as it pushes petroleum reforms and wider access to clean cooking fuel.

Mohamed Birik, Secretary for Administration at the Ministry of Petroleum, said that initial output is projected at about 20,000 barrels a day, rising to 50,000 in later phases. He spoke on behalf of Principal Secretary Kello Harsama of the State Department of Petroleum.

Birik described the project as a major milestone in unlocking the value of Kenya's petroleum resources, strengthening energy security and creating economic opportu-



Group photo

nities.

South Lokichar lies in Turkana County in northern Kenya. The December target leaves roughly three months to first oil.

The Government is working with the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) to create a stable and predictable investment climate, Birik said. EPRA has completed public participation on seven draft regulations intended to improve gover-

nance in the industry.

The drafts cover land access, cost management, crude oil and natural gas pipeline operations, storage management, local content, and environmental, health and safety requirements.

Birik said the Government continues to make progress in commercialising the country's petroleum resources and reducing reliance on imported petroleum products.

On household energy, he said the removal of Value Added Tax on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) has helped lower retail prices by allowing suppliers to recover costs more efficiently.

Under the GasYetu Clean Cooking Programme, subsidised six-kilogramme LPG starter kits, each with a pre-filled cylinder, burner and grill, are being distributed to low-income households for KSh1,500. The same package would cost about KSh5,500 on the open market, he said.

The KSh1,500 kit price is roughly 27 per cent of its open-market cost, according to the figures Birik cited.

Through the National LPG Growth Strategy, the Government is also installing bulk LPG systems in more than 11,000 public boarding schools and technical and vocational training institutions. The programme is expected to cut reliance on firewood and charcoal and widen access to cleaner, safer and more efficient energy.

Together, the measures span the sector from upstream production and regulation to the price of fuel in the household kitchen.

Birik said Kenya must plan for rising demand for reliable, affordable energy as its economy grows, particularly from manufacturing and heavy industry. The Government is therefore studying local resources, including coal deposits in the Mui Basin in Kitui County, to support industrial development and reduce dependence on imported coal.

He called for continued collaboration among stakeholders to build a resilient, competitive and sustainable energy sector able to support industry and secure the country's energy future.

Whether the December oil date holds will be the first real test of the Government's public promises on petroleum commercialisation.

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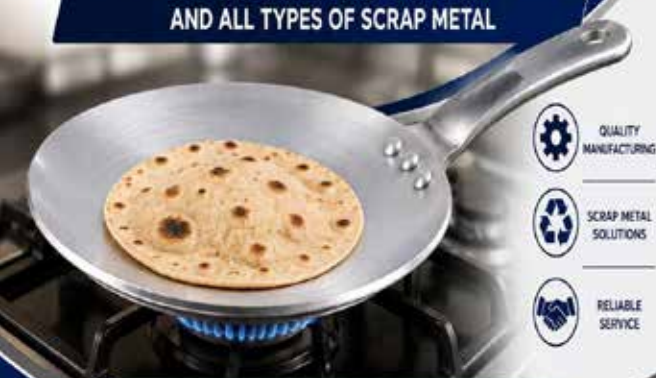
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Senate Fatuma appeared before the committee on Monday, following her nomination to the commission.

Fatuma faces Senate scrutiny in PSC commissioner bid

Former Wajir MP and human rights commissioner tells vetting panel her record spans Parliament, civil society and institutional reform

BY John Kariuki

@themkenyatiimes

The Senate Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights Tuesday vetted Fatuma Ibrahim Ali for appointment as a female non-Member Commissioner of the Parliamentary Service Commission, putting her decades-long record in public administration under formal scrutiny.

Fatuma appeared before the committee on Monday, following her nomination to the commission. Senators examined her academic qualifications, professional history and integrity before the committee proceeds to table its report to the full Senate.

Her nomination has drawn attention to a career that has moved across Parliament, human rights institutions and civil society over more than two decades. She served as Wajir County Woman Representative in the National Assembly and previously as a Commissioner at the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Records at the commission show she was among the commissioners who helped build and operationalise the institution during its formative years, with a reappointment in November 2007.

That institutional history formed the backbone of the case she put to the committee. Fatuma told senators that her experience had given her a working understanding of Parliament, constitutional commissions and civil society, and that her earlier parliamentary service had exposed her directly to legislative procedure, committee work, constituency representation and the administrative machinery on which Parliament depends. "My experience in recruitment, promotion and staff



Fatuma Ibrahim Ali

welfare has given me practical exposure to human-resource management, which I would seek to bring to the commission," she told the committee. Her emphasis on staff welfare and institutional operations was deliberate. The Parliamentary Service Commission is responsible for the administrative and institutional functions that support Parliament and its members and staff. It is not a legislative body. Its mandate is the unglamorous but essential business of keeping Parliament operational — managing human resources, setting terms of service, overseeing institutional budgets and ensuring that the legislature can function independently of the executive.

Fatuma's argument was that her record positions her to serve that mandate from both the policy and the administrative side. At the human rights commission she encountered the mechanics of running a constitutional body — recruitment panels, staff welfare decisions, operational management — while her time in

Parliament gave her direct exposure to how legislators are served and supported.

Her connection to northern Kenya runs throughout her public profile. Wajir, which she represented, is among the counties that have historically faced significant development challenges. Her interest in girl-child education and the advancement of women in marginalised communities has featured consistently in her public engagements. That background informs the breadth of her institutional experience, which has taken her from advocacy and civil society into elected office and then into regulatory and human rights work.

The sequence matters. Kenya's constitutional commissions, including the Parliamentary Service Commission, are increasingly expected to draw on commissioners who combine technical experience with familiarity with Kenya's social and regional diversity. A commissioner who has served in northern Kenya, worked on human rights in a constitutional body and sat

in Parliament brings a range of perspectives that a career spent in a single institution would not produce.

At the same time, the vetting process is not a formality. The Senate committee is tasked with assessing integrity as well as qualifications and experience. Fatuma's record will be weighed against those criteria before the committee's report reaches the full chamber.

Her public-service journey is also not without complexity. A career that spans elected office, constitutional commissions and civil society across more than two decades nec-

essarily includes periods of institutional change, political transition and shifting mandates. The Senate committee's role is to examine that record in full, not to accept it at face value.

The non-Member position on the Parliamentary Service Commission is designed to bring external perspective to an institution that might otherwise become too inward-looking. Parliament's own members sit on the commission, but the non-Member slots exist to introduce experience from outside the legislature. Fatuma's record at KNCHR and in civil society

would, in principle, meet that requirement.

She told the committee that her priorities, if confirmed, would centre on improving service delivery to parliamentarians and staff, promoting equal opportunities within the institution and strengthening its operational systems. Those commitments are broad, but they are consistent with the commission's mandate.

The Senate will now consider the committee's report. The outcome will determine whether Fatuma Ibrahim Ali's career in public service translates into a seat on one of Parliament's key oversight and administrative bodies.

For a woman whose public journey began in advocacy and has passed through elected office and constitutional commission work, the appointment, if confirmed, would represent the latest in a succession of institutions she has helped to staff and shape.

The Senate's verdict will come soon enough.




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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI

Profile Her move from Kenya to the United States was more than a change in geography. It became an ongoing exercise in adaptation, reinvention and reflection

From leading within to changing the world: The Fredah Mainah story

Before the podium, the strategy and the title, there is a person who must first understand themselves — that is where Mainah's work begins

BY Levis Wangamati

@themtkenyatimes

There is a quiet moment before every act of leadership, long before the conference room, the podium or the strategy document. It is the moment when a person is left alone with a choice, forced to confront what they believe, what they value and what they are prepared to do. It is in that space that Fredah Mainah's work begins. For her, leadership is not merely about directing others. It is about understanding the person making the decisions and the weight of responsibility that comes with influence.

Mainah is a global voice in self-leadership, helping individuals and institutions lead from within before attempting to transform the world around them. As an international speaker, strategist, author and founder of Rainbow-Ono Sanctuary, her work is built around a conviction that is disarmingly simple: no one can lead your life better than you. Her philosophy sits at the intersection of personal growth, education, organisational strategy and human capacity — shaped by a career that has moved from classrooms and academic institutions to corporate environments and international platforms.

Behind the global language of leadership lies a deeply rooted beginning in Kenya. Before the books, the research and the keynote addresses, there was a young girl growing up in a society full of expectations, contradictions and possibilities. It was in the classroom that she first encountered the transformative power of education and began to understand its ability to shape individual lives. That experience became the foundation of a journey that would eventually take her from teaching into consulting, scholarship, organisational development and leadership strategy.

Her move from Kenya to the United States was more than a change in geography. It became an ongoing exercise in adaptation, reinvention and reflection. After earning a Bachelor of Education at Siriba Teacher Training College, she pursued graduate studies in organisational learning and performance at Western Michi-



Dr. Fredah Mainah

gan University before earning a doctorate in organisational leadership from The Chicago School in 2016. Along the way, her work across education, consulting and organisational development gradually brought a deeper purpose into focus.

The evolution did not come through a single dramatic turning point. It was forged through years of observing how people behave, learn and make decisions within institutions. Teaching exposed her to the complexities of individual growth. Consulting brought her closer to organisational challenges and structural dysfunction. Academic research provided tools for examining those challenges more rigorously. Migration placed her in unfamiliar cultural and professional environments, while entrepreneurship required her to turn ideas into tangible enterprises. Over time, these experiences

converged around one fundamental question: how do people understand themselves, make sound decisions and translate intention into meaningful action?

That question became central to her self-leadership philosophy. Mainah argues that leadership does not begin with a position on an organisational chart. Long before an individual becomes an executive, entrepreneur, educator or public figure, they remain a human being carrying beliefs, anxieties, ambitions and assumptions. These internal forces shape decisions before their consequences become visible. Her approach places self-awareness, intentionality and personal responsibility at the heart of meaningful leadership.

This intellectual framework developed into the SPIRAL methodology, a reflective approach connecting academic research with lived experi-

ence. Rather than treating reflection as a passive exercise, it encourages leaders to slow down, recognise behavioural patterns, examine underlying assumptions and make deliberate choices. In a professional culture increasingly driven by speed, output and immediate results, such reflection becomes more than personal contemplation. It becomes a practical tool for improving the quality of decisions.

The importance of that internal work becomes especially visible at the institutional level. A leader may design a coherent strategy and still watch an organisation struggle to execute it. Somewhere between strategic intent and everyday implementation, communication weakens, ownership disappears and momentum stalls. It is within this space that Mainah's concept of decision grit becomes significant. The idea focuses on the momentum required for a decision to travel successfully from approval to action — moving through departments, managers and operational teams without losing direction or energy. An organisation can have an approved strategy and still lack the alignment needed to bring it to life. Mainah's work draws attention to this often overlooked distance between deciding and doing.

The challenge has grown more pressing in an era of rapid technological change. Artificial intelligence and data-driven systems can accelerate information processing and expand the possibilities available to organisations. Yet information alone does not produce judgment. Human beings must still determine what is ethical, proportional and appropriate. Mainah's approach places human development alongside technological advancement, insisting on the continuing importance of character, judgment and conscious action.

That perspective runs through her published work, which spans self-leadership, philosophy, student success, public speaking and legacy. The subjects vary, but they return to a consistent question: how can individuals recognise their potential, develop it and use it to create value beyond themselves? Her thinking on legacy extends this beyond professional achievement, asking what remains after titles and milestones

have passed. A book, a lesson or an idea can carry influence through conversations an author may never witness — moving from teacher to student, mentor to professional, one generation to another. Sometimes the greatest evidence of influence is found in lives changed long after the person who planted the idea has left the room.

The Rainbow-Ono Sanctuary in Crockett, Texas, offers a physical expression of this philosophy. Founded in 2021, the sanctuary provides an environment for reflection, learning and personal renewal that stands in deliberate contrast to the corporate and academic environments that have defined much of Mainah's professional career. It reflects an understanding that human capacity is not developed solely through institutional performance. Sometimes it requires distance from the systems demanding it.

Yet despite the international dimensions of her story, Mainah's journey remains connected to its Kenyan origins. Before the strategist and scholar, there was the teacher. Before the international platforms, there was the classroom. Before the language of self-leadership became central to her work, there was a personal journey through education, migration, professional adaptation and discovery. Those beginnings were not erased by what followed. They were expanded by it.

Seen whole, her life is less a collection of titles than an evolution of experience into inquiry, and inquiry into practice. At the centre of that evolution is the individual — how people think, how they decide, how they respond to responsibility and how their choices eventually shape the institutions and communities around them.

The theme running through it all is cultivation. A seed holds potential, but potential is not a harvest. A leader may hold authority, but authority is not wisdom. An organisation may publish a strategy, but strategy is not execution. Between potential and realisation lies the essential work: sustained attention, honest reflection and deliberate action.

That is perhaps where the idea of leading within becomes most powerful. Before changing an institution, a community or the world, there is an individual who must first confront the person in the mirror. For Mainah, leadership begins there — and her journey from a Kenyan classroom to international platforms points to one enduring lesson: lasting outward influence begins with the work we are willing to do within.

World heart day: “We always say, know your numbers. Know your blood pressure so that you can be able to prevent any catastrophe that may come,” Oigara says.

World heart day: Heart surgery survivor Roselyne urges Kenyans to know their numbers and not miss a beat



By: Elizabeth Angira

As the world marks World Heart Day on September 29, 2026, heart disease survivors, health professionals and organisations are calling for greater awareness, early detection and prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

This year's World Heart Day theme, “Don't Miss a Beat,” is a reminder that heart disease can sometimes develop silently, with some of its risk factors showing few or no obvious symptoms until they cause serious complications.

For Dr Roselyne Yakona Oigara, a heart surgery survivor, the message is deeply personal.

Having gone through her own heart health journey, Oigara is encouraging Kenyans not to view a heart disease diagnosis as a death sentence. Instead, she wants patients and their families to seek medical help, follow treatment and remain hopeful.

“When you get a diagnosis, it does not mean that you now have a death sentence,” Oigara says.

Her message is particularly directed at families whose children have been diagnosed with congenital heart disease, as well as adults who have discovered that they have a heart condition.

“Once your child is diagnosed with a congenital heart disease, or once your parent or yourself has been diagnosed with having a heart disease, it does not mean that you are going to die,” she says.

Oigara's experience has shown her the importance of seeking specialised care.

She recalls that after being diagnosed with a heart problem, she went to hospital hoping to see a cardiologist, only to be given an appointment that was scheduled years later.

“When I was diagnosed with a heart problem, when I went to the hospital to even see a cardiologist, I was booked to see a cardiologist after



Dr Roselyne Yakona Oigara, a heart surgery survivor she urges those diagnosed with heart conditions to seek help, ask questions and explore available treatment options. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

three years,” she recalls.

For her, the long waiting period demonstrated the enormous demand for specialised cardiac services.

“That tells you that we have so many cases of these,” she says.

But rather than allowing the experience to discourage her, Oigara has turned it into a message of hope for other patients and families.

She is urging those diagnosed with heart conditions to seek help, ask questions and explore available treatment options.

“If you do not find any help among all this, please come to us. We will give you advice on how to go about it,” she says.

Know your numbers

One of Oigara's strongest messages this World Heart Day is for people to know their numbers.

She says people should not wait until they feel sick before going to hospital.

“Even if you do not feel sick, kindly go to the hospital and get tested,” she says.

She particularly wants people to have their blood pressure and blood sugar checked.

“We always say, know your numbers. Know your blood pressure so that you can be able to prevent any catastrophe that may come,” she says.

Her concern comes at a time when hypertension continues to affect millions of people worldwide, many of whom do not know that they have the condition.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 1.4 billion adults aged 30 to 79 were living with hypertension in 2024, while about 600 million, or 44 per cent, were unaware that they had the condition. Only around 23 per cent had their blood pressure under control.

Hypertension is one of the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and can contribute to heart attacks, strokes, heart failure and kidney disease when it remains uncontrolled.

For Oigara, this is why regular screening should not be reserved for people who already feel unwell.

“It's better to go to the hospital and get tested earlier,” she says.

If high blood pressure is detected, she encourages patients to follow medical advice and use prescribed medication alongside recommended

lifestyle changes.

The hidden burden of cardiovascular disease

Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death globally.

An estimated 19.8 million people died from cardiovascular diseases in 2022, accounting for about 32 per cent of all deaths worldwide. About 85 per cent of cardiovascular deaths were attributed to heart attacks and strokes.

More than three quarters of cardiovascular deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

In Kenya, World Heart Federation data indicate that 32,082 people died from cardiovascular disease in 2024, while the country's age-standardised cardiovascular mortality rate stood at 127 deaths per 100,000 people.

For Oigara, behind these statistics are families who suddenly lost loved ones to conditions that may not have been detected early.

She points to cases of people who appear healthy but suddenly collapse and die.

“You find that there's maybe a 30-year-old man who was previously very healthy and then the next day

you are being told he died,” she says. “He fell down and died because of a heart attack.”

Such experiences, she says, demonstrate why people should not assume that feeling healthy means they are free from cardiovascular risk.

Prevention begins with everyday choices

Oigara also wants Kenyans to pay attention to their daily lifestyles.

She encourages people to reduce the amount of salt they consume, exercise regularly, avoid alcohol and make healthier choices.

These measures are particularly important in preventing and managing risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases and other non-communicable diseases.

She says conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes can affect vital organs when they are left untreated.

“If you continue having those diseases, the non-communicable diseases, sometimes they go and affect the vital organs in your body,” she says.

She lists the heart, kidneys, brain and blood vessels among the organs that can be affected.

Her message is therefore not simply to seek treatment after becoming sick, but to embrace prevention and early detection.

Building local capacity for heart and diabetes care

The call for early detection and prevention is also being echoed by Merck Foundation, which is using World Heart Day to highlight the importance of strengthening healthcare systems and bringing specialised cardiovascular and diabetes services closer to communities.

Merck Foundation CEO Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelej says the organisation is marking World Heart Day by building cardiovascular and diabetes care capacity across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

According to Kelej, Merck Foundation, together with its Ambassadors, First Ladies of Africa and Asia, Ministries of Health, medical societies and academic institutions, has provided 956 scholarships to healthcare providers from 52 countries.

The scholarships cover specialised areas including Diabetes, Cardiovascular Preventive Care, Endocrinology, Cardiology, and Obesity and Weight Management, as well as clinical cardiovascular and diabetes care

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World heart day: Heart surgery survivor Roselyne urges Kenyans to know their numbers and not miss a beat

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programmes.

Kelej says the objective is to ensure that specialised healthcare knowledge is not concentrated only in major cities.

“We are committed to bringing specialized healthcare capacity closer to the communities that need it,” she says.

By supporting healthcare providers from different parts of countries, including areas outside major capital cities, Merck Foundation says it is helping to create local experts who can provide specialised care while contributing to prevention, early diagnosis and health awareness.

The organisation says it has provided more than 2,750 scholarships to healthcare providers from 52 countries across 44 critical and underserved medical specialities.

A Kenyan doctor’s experience

For Dr. Husein Jivanji, a Kenyan Merck Foundation alumnus, such training has translated into practical changes in patient care.

Jivanji received training through a Postgraduate Diploma in Cardiovascular Preventive Medicine.

He says the programme strengthened his clinical knowledge and practical skills and enabled him to establish a specialised cardiology clinic in the public sector.

“With my increased knowledge and skills, I have started a specialized cardiology clinic in the public sector,” Jivanji says.

He adds that the training has enabled him to improve patient management and contribute more effectively to healthcare services in his community.

His experience illustrates the importance of having trained healthcare workers who can



Merck Foundation CEO Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelejm group photo with doctors

identify cardiovascular risks, provide appropriate care and educate communities before conditions become life-threatening.

Hypertension remains a major challenge in Africa

According to WHO data cited by Merck Foundation, cardiovascular diseases have emerged as the leading cause of non-communicable disease deaths in the African Region, with more than one million cardiovascular deaths estimated in 2019.

Hypertension remains one of the major risk factors.

Fewer than one-third of people living with hypertension in the African Region receive treatment, while only about 12 per cent have their blood pressure under control.

This creates a major challenge for health systems already dealing with other competing health needs.

For this reason, Merck Foundation has partnered with First Ladies of Africa and Asia on community awareness programmes focused on the prevention and early detection of hypertension and diabetes, two conditions that are closely linked.

The programmes also promote healthier lifestyles with-

Teaching children’s healthy habits

The campaign is also being taken to children and families. Merck Foundation, together with First Ladies, has developed children’s storybooks titled “Mark’s Pressure” and “Sugar-Free Jude.”

The books are designed to help children and families understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and how everyday choices can help prevent hypertension, diabetes and related complications.

The stories have also been adapted into animation films to reach young audiences through a format that is easier and more engaging for children to understand.

“Healthy habits are easiest to build from an early age,” Kelej says.

Through the books and animations, children and young people are encouraged to make healthier choices, including reducing salt and sugar intake, exercising regularly, eating balanced meals and avoiding smoking.

The idea is that prevention should begin before disease develops.

Don’t miss a beat

As World Heart Day 2026 is marked across the globe, the message emerging from survivors, healthcare providers and health organisations is that protecting the heart requires both awareness and action.

For Roselyne Yakona Oigara, the message is especially close to her heart because she has lived through the experience of heart surgery herself.

She wants people to understand that a diagnosis does not have to take away their hope.

She also wants Kenyans to take simple steps: get their blood pressure checked, know their blood sugar levels, seek medical attention, when necessary, maintain healthy life-

styles and follow treatment when diagnosed with a condition.

Her message is particularly important for parents of children with congenital heart disease, who may feel frightened when they first hear the diagnosis.

Oigara says they should seek help rather than give up.

For the millions of people at risk of cardiovascular disease, “Don’t Miss a Beat” is more than a World Heart Day slogan.

It is a call to pay attention to the body, identify risks early and act before a preventable condition becomes a medical emergency.

And for Oigara, every person who checks their blood pressure, seeks treatment early, changes an unhealthy habit or encourages a loved one to visit a hospital represents another opportunity to save a life.

This World Heart Day, her message is simple: know your numbers, protect your heart, seek help early and don’t miss a beat.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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Turkey As the first international scientific congress dedicated to Ganira Pashayeva, the event carried not only academic significance but also considerable cultural and historical importance

The congress the world was talking about: First International Congress on Ganira Pashayeva concludes with participation from 23 countries

BY MKT Correspondent in Turkey

@themtkenyatimes

The International Congress titled “Ganira Pashayeva and the Turkic World: Literature, Culture, Politics and the Ideal of Unity” successfully concluded after two days of an intensive scientific program. Dedicated to the name and intellectual legacy of Ganira Pashayeva, the event was the first international scientific congress devoted to Ganira Pashayeva and brought together more than 200 scientists, academics, researchers, poets, writers and cultural figures from 23 countries.

Organized online by the Union of Turkish Academics on 27–28 September 2026, the congress examined the life, ideas, literary and cultural legacy, and activities of Ganira Pashayeva — a prominent Azerbaijani politician, journalist, writer and devoted advocate of the Turkic world — from the perspectives of different academic disciplines.

As the first international scientific congress dedicated to Ganira Pashayeva, the event carried not only academic significance but also considerable cultural and historical importance. The congress provided an opportunity to document different aspects of Pashayeva’s multifaceted legacy through scholarly research and to examine her ideas concerning the Turkic world from the perspectives of researchers from different countries.

Participants from Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Australia, Germany, Algeria, England, India, Iran, Iraq, Sweden, Italy, Northern Cyprus, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Russia, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Greece took part in the congress. Over the course of two days, 201 papers were presented in seven parallel sessions held in five separate virtual halls.

The scientific program brought together a wide range of disciplines, including literature, culture, history, politics, international relations, education, sociology, economics, communication, women’s studies, technology and cultural heritage. In this way, Ganira Pashayeva’s legacy



First International Congress on Ganira Pashayeva

was examined not only through the lens of her political identity, but also through her multifaceted identities as a poet, writer, journalist, woman leader, cultural figure and advocate of the Turkic world.

The opening and closing programs of the congress were moderated by Prof. Dr. Vahap Tekin, Head of Department at Dokuz Eylül University. The opening program featured speeches by Assoc. Prof. Dr. İzzettin Özpölat, President of the Union of Turkish Academics and President of the Congress; Reşat Majid, Vice President of the Azerbaijan Writers’ Union; Prof. Dr. Tarana Turan Rahimli, Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee and Vice President of the Union of Turkish Academics; Zeynel Beksach, Editor of Kosovo’s Türkçem magazine; Vugar Agayev, Editor of AjMedia; and Kemale Pashayeva, sister of Ganira Pashayeva.

One of the most emotional moments of the opening ceremony was the speech delivered by Ganira Pashayeva’s sister, Kemale Pashayeva. Kemale Pashayeva delivered her speech from Ganira Pashayeva’s graveside. Her deeply moving reflections on Ganira’s life, character and the values she left behind made a lasting impression on the congress participants.

Throughout the two-day scientific sessions, Ganira Pashayeva’s ideas concerning the Turkic world were examined from the perspectives of literature, culture, politics, diplomacy, women’s studies, history, educa-

tion and international relations.

Issues of women, leadership and social identity occupied an important place in the congress. Ganira Pashayeva’s identity as a woman, her political and social activities, the role of women in public life, and women’s leadership in the Turkic world were examined through various academic disciplines.

Political unity, diplomacy, security and shared identity in the Turkic world were also among the major themes of the congress. Papers addressed parliamentary diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, regional security, collective identity and international cooperation, as well as Shusha, Karabakh, the South Caucasus, Turks living in Europe and relations among the Turkic states.

Literary and cultural studies constituted another major axis of the congress. Researchers examined themes of homeland, motherhood, women, history, identity and the idea of the Turkic world in Ganira Pashayeva’s poetry and works. The program also covered a broad cultural and literary spectrum, ranging from Dede Korkut and Ahiska tales to proverbs and idioms, and from Azerbaijani and Uzbek literature to Kazakh and Turkmen cultural heritage.

One of the notable features of the congress was the bringing together of classical Turkology and cultural studies with contemporary technological and social issues within the same scientific program. Current topics such as artificial intelligence

in education, teaching Turkish as a foreign language, digital material production, online education, social media, digital diplomacy, information security, cybersecurity and technological sovereignty were also addressed by scholars.

The second day’s sessions covered Turkic languages and dialects, folklore, history, architecture and museology, as well as contemporary geopolitics in Central Asia, the Middle Corridor, water security, climate change, great-power competition and academic cooperation. Thus, the congress created a broad academic platform that examined the Turkic world not only in the context of history and culture, but also within the framework of today’s scientific, technological and international challenges.

The congress also attracted significant international media attention. News reports and interviews about the congress appeared in the press, on television, online news platforms and various media outlets in different countries. Reports about the congress were published in Azerbaijan, Türkiye, North Macedonia, Italy, Pakistan, Albania, Germany, Belgium, Japan, Kenya and many other countries, demonstrating the broad international interest generated by the event.

Following two days of an intensive scientific program, the closing session featured speeches by Assoc. Prof. Dr. İzzettin Özpölat, President of the Congress; Prof. Dr.

Tarana Turan Rahimli, Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee; Şemsettin Kuzeci, President of the Kirkuk Cultural Association; and Organizing Committee members Prof. Dr. Zehra Gencil Efe, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Minara Aliyeva, Dr. Bedri Şahin and Dr. Alsu Şamsutova.

During the closing ceremony, the recitation of “The Woman of Light”, a poem dedicated by Prof. Dr. Tarana Turan Rahimli to the memory of Ganira Pashayeva, added a deeply emotional dimension to the conclusion of the congress.

In the closing speeches, it was emphasized that this first international scientific congress on Ganira Pashayeva represents an important beginning in researching, documenting and transmitting her intellectual, literary and cultural legacy to future generations.

Bringing together more than 200 participants from 23 countries and 201 scientific papers under one academic umbrella, the congress became the first international scientific congress dedicated to Ganira Pashayeva and provided an important platform for examining her multifaceted legacy across different academic disciplines.

The congress concluded by demonstrating that Ganira Pashayeva’s ideas concerning the Turkic world are not merely a legacy of the past, but a multifaceted field that can continue to be explored through education, science, culture, literature, technology, academic cooperation and international relations.

The congress dedicated to Ganira Pashayeva thus concluded after two days of intensive academic exchange — a congress whose name, message and intellectual significance reached audiences far beyond its participants and drew attention from across the world.



Private school That is why every private school leader must grasp this principle and hold it firmly: protect your school's name like a priceless asset.

Protect your school's name like a priceless asset

Why reputation, not infrastructure, is the true measure of a school's worth

BY Ashford Kimani

@themkenyentimes

In the private school sector, buildings go up in months. Buses are bought in days. Classrooms are furnished almost overnight. But one thing takes years to build and only minutes to destroy — a school's name.

Reputation is the invisible currency that determines whether parents trust your institution or avoid it. It explains why some schools fill their rolls through word of mouth while others bleed enrolment despite aggressive marketing. In education, your school's name is not merely part of your brand. It is your greatest asset.

That is why every private school leader must grasp this principle and hold it firmly: protect your school's name like a priceless asset.

Reputation is built slowly, through daily consistency. It grows from how teachers treat learners, how administrators communicate with parents, how discipline cases are handled, and how the institution conducts itself during a crisis. Reputation is not created by slogans on banners. It is created by behaviour over time.

Many schools assume reputation rests solely on examination results. Academic performance matters greatly, but it is only one part of the equation. Some schools produce strong grades yet suffer poor public perception because parents feel dismissed, teachers feel oppressed, or learners feel emotionally unsafe.

Parents evaluate schools holistically. They pay attention to communication. They observe the cleanliness of the compound. They listen to how staff speak. They notice whether promises are honoured. They assess whether the school behaves professionally when things go wrong. Every interaction either adds to or subtracts from the institution's image.

One careless incident can undo years of hard work.

A bullying case handled badly spreads rapidly across WhatsApp groups. A rude administrator can put off several prospective families. A teacher caught in misconduct attracts negative publicity. Financial dishonesty destroys credibility outright. In today's digital environment, reputa-



Private school

tion travels faster than ever before.

Social media has made school branding acutely fragile. Parents share experiences instantly. Screenshots circulate without warning. Videos go viral within hours. Schools can no longer retreat behind silence or intimidation. Institutions that ignore this reality expose themselves to enormous risk.

Too often, school leaders begin caring about reputation only after damage has already been done. By then, rebuilding trust is expensive, slow, and sometimes impossible.

Protecting a school's name demands intentional leadership.

First, schools must build a culture of professionalism. Every member of staff should understand that they represent the institution in public. The receptionist, the security guard, the driver, the teacher, the bursar, and the school head all shape perception. Parents judge schools through

the people they encounter daily. A school may invest millions in infrastructure, yet one rude receptionist can shatter the impression within minutes.

Second, integrity must be non-negotiable. Schools should never manipulate marks, withhold important information from parents, or exploit families financially. Shortcuts may bring short-term gains, but the truth surfaces eventually. Once parents suspect dishonesty, confidence collapses quickly.

Transparency builds credibility. When mistakes occur — and they always will — responsible schools communicate honestly. They explain what happened, outline corrective steps, and reassure parents calmly. Attempting to conceal problems almost always worsens the public fallout.

Third, discipline must be both firm and humane. Schools that humiliate

learners publicly eventually earn damaging reputations. Parents today are increasingly alert to emotional wellbeing and child protection. Harsh punishments, verbal abuse, and intimidation no longer inspire confidence. Parents want disciplined schools, yes — but they also want emotionally safe environments.

A further critical area is the gap between promises and reality. Some schools overstate their offering during admissions interviews — individual attention, excellent facilities, digital learning, personalised support — and then fail to deliver. Parents feel deceived. A strong reputation is built when schools consistently meet the expectations they have set.

This is why internal culture matters so deeply. Toxic environments leak outward. If teachers are unhappy, unsupported, and overworked, parents will sense it. If communication

between departments is disorganised, parents will experience the frustration. If leadership lacks direction, the confusion becomes visible publicly. Healthy schools protect their reputation from the inside out.

Schools should also avoid unhealthy competition. Some institutions attempt to grow by spreading rumours about competitors or mocking neighbouring schools in public. Such behaviour almost always backfires — it signals insecurity and unprofessionalism. Strong schools concentrate on improving themselves rather than attacking others.

A good name also requires community trust. Schools should actively cultivate positive relationships with parents, faith communities, local leaders, alumni, and the wider neighbourhood. Institutions that remain disconnected from their communities find themselves without goodwill when controversy strikes. Schools with strong relational capital, by contrast, tend to recover from setbacks faster precisely because people trust their intentions.

Leaders must also recognise that reputation is shaped more decisively during difficult moments than during successful ones. Anyone can appear professional when everything runs smoothly. True character shows during a crisis. How does the school respond to accidents? How are complaints handled? Does leadership become defensive or accountable? Parents remember these moments long after the facts have faded.

Ultimately, a school's name touches everything — admissions, staff retention, partnerships, parental loyalty, and long-term sustainability. A respected reputation opens doors that no advertising budget can unlock.

Wise school leaders guard their institution's name with care. They understand that reputation is earned every day, but can vanish in an instant through arrogance, negligence, dishonesty, or weak leadership.

Buildings may attract parents initially. Reputation determines whether they stay.

In education, a trusted name is worth more than the most expensive infrastructure.

SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS
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BREAKING NEWS



Sports >> *Late substitute strikes in 88th minute to give Zidane's side a second successive 1-0 victory

Olise seals France win over Belgium in Nations League thriller

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Michael Olise scored with two minutes remaining to give France a 1-0 victory over Belgium yesterday and maintain Zinedine Zidane's perfect start as the national team's manager in the UEFA Nations League.

The Bayern Munich forward came off the bench in the closing stages and punished a defensive lapse to send France to the top of Group A1. The win followed their earlier 1-0 victory over Turkey and stretched their unbeaten competitive run against Belgium to six matches. For Zidane, it was two games, two clean sheets and six points.

Belgium had looked capable of ending that record for much of the contest. Domenico Tedesco's side defended with discipline, held their shape and pressed France when the opportunity arose, all of it without their talisman Kevin De Bruyne, who was absent through injury.

France were similarly short-handed. Captain Kylian Mbappé missed the match through injury, forcing Zidane to pair Bradley Barcola with Marcus Thuram in attack. Behind them, Eduardo Camavinga, Aurélien Tchouaméni and Warren Zaïre-Emery provided the midfield platform on which France's best football tends to be built.

For long stretches the match was tight. Belgium stayed organised and France found it difficult to create clear openings against a compact defensive block. The game looked destined for a draw.

Zidane turned to his bench. Olise and Randal Kolo Muani came on to inject energy and directness into an attack that had grown patient to the point of predictability. Within minutes, the change had worked. Kolo Muani drove towards the penalty area and rolled a low cross into Olise's path. The forward took



Michael Olise

one touch and finished crisply. The stadium barely had time to process what had happened before the ball was in the net.

Belgium pushed for an equaliser through four minutes of added time, throwing men forward and trying to find a way through. France's defence, disciplined throughout the evening, held firm without alarm.

Zidane was measured but clearly satisfied at his post-match press conference. "Belgium are a very difficult team to break down at home, and they played with a very compact block," he said. "But we kept our composure, we looked after the ball, and the players who came off the bench made the exact impact we needed. Michael Olise took his chance beautifully."

It was the kind of quote that reflected what Zidane is building. France under his management

look organised, difficult to score against and capable of finding a winning moment when the game demands one. It is an unglamorous formula in some respects, but it is working.

For Belgium, the defeat deepens an uncomfortable stretch. Without De Bruyne's creative control in the middle of the park, they struggled to build any sustained attacking threat. Winger Jérémy Doku provided their most dangerous moments but found little support. Belgium failed to register a single shot on target in the entire second half, a statistic that speaks plainly about where their problems lie and how much work Tedesco faces in the week ahead.

The two nations will meet again next Monday, October 5, at the Stade de France in Paris. The fixture arrives quickly, and Belgium will need to find answers to questions that yesterday's per-

formance raised but did not resolve. Staying compact and absorbing pressure is a reasonable strategy away from home. Doing the same on the road, while also needing to score, is a far harder proposition.

France, by contrast, travel home with momentum, full points and the quiet confidence of a team that is beginning to look like itself. Zidane has said little about his ambitions for the group, but the results are doing the talking. Two matches in Group A1, two victories, no goals conceded.

Whether Belgium can arrest the slide and make next Monday's return fixture competitive is the question that will occupy Tedesco's preparations for the rest of the week.

France will not be standing still.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The club has until Friday to appeal as an independent commission upholds multiple breaches spanning nearly a decade

Manchester City found guilty of Premier League financial charges

By Pascal Okoth

Manchester City were yesterday found guilty of breaching Premier League financial regulations following a lengthy investigation into the club's finances between the 2009/10 and 2017/18 seasons.

An independent commission ruled against the English champions on a series of serious financial charges, including allegations relating to commercial agreements, financial reporting and the club's cooperation with the Premier League's investigation.

The commission found that City used what it described as "sham" contracts with several commercial partners. Those agreements were found to have misrepresented the true arrangements between the parties, allegedly allowing the club to artificially inflate revenues and reduce reported costs.

The commission also concluded that City submitted accounts that misstated the club's financial position, finding that the club concealed the true state of its finances from auditors and football regulators.

A further element of the case concerned spending limits. The commission found that City had significantly breached both Premier League and UEFA spending regulations during the period under investigation.

The club's conduct during the Premier League's inquiry also came under scrutiny. Of four alleged breaches relating to City's duty to cooperate and act in good faith, three were upheld.

The findings mark a major development in a case that has remained unresolved for several years. However, they do not automatically trigger a points deduction, relegation or any other sporting punishment. City have the right to appeal and have until Friday to exercise it.



The club has strongly disputed the allegations throughout the proceedings and is expected to challenge the commission's conclusions. City's position has consistently been that it complied with the relevant financial regulations and did not deliberately misrepresent its finances.

The Premier League said it intends for the entire process — including any appeal and the publication of relevant decisions — to be concluded as soon as possible.

The final sporting and financial consequences for City will therefore depend on what follows. Until the appeal process is completed and any sanctions determined, the full impact on the club remains unclear.

The verdict nonetheless represents a significant moment for the Premier League's financial framework. The case has sharpened scrutiny on how clubs report revenues, structure commercial agreements and comply with spending rules.

City have enjoyed considerable domestic and European success during and after the period covered by the investigation, making the outcome particularly consequential for the club and the broader football community.

For now, the commission's findings stand. But the case is not over. Further developments are expected before the Premier League's long-running financial investigation reaches its final conclusion.

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When mum joins the content: How Gen Z are bringing parents online

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For years, one of the most difficult things for a young person working online was explaining the job to their parents.

“What do you do?”

It was a seemingly innocent question. But for anyone whose career involved TikTok, YouTube or Instagram, answering it could require an entire presentation.

Content creation was not always recognised as a career. To many parents — particularly those raised with more traditional ideas of employment — a person sitting at home filming themselves on a phone hardly looked like someone going to work. The dreaded follow-up was never far away.

“But is that really a job?”

For Gen Z content creators, however, something interesting is happening.

The parents are joining in.

Mothers are appearing in TikTok videos. Fathers are becoming recurring characters in skits. Parents are reacting to their children’s online antics, participating in challenges and occasionally developing fan bases of their own. Some have gone from asking what their children do online to becoming part of the content themselves.

Beneath the humour lies a significant generational shift.

When your parent becomes part of the brand

The relationship between a content creator and their audience is built around personality. Followers want to see the person behind the account — their humour, their relationships, their family, their everyday life.

For some Gen Z creators, that naturally includes their parents.

A mother who was simply “Mum” at home can suddenly become a recognisable personality online. A father’s reaction to his daughter’s dating life generates thousands of views. A parent appearing in a skit becomes a recurring feature that au-



When mum joins the content

diences actively look forward to.

The appeal is partly authenticity. The internet has grown increasingly interested in content that feels less manufactured, and family interactions offer something difficult to script convincingly: familiarity.

There is something universally entertaining about watching a parent process the world through the eyes of their adult child. Sometimes they understand the assignment. Sometimes they absolutely do not. And sometimes that is precisely why the video works.

A different digital inheritance

This dynamic looks markedly different when set against the experience of older generations of creators.

For millennials who entered the digital space earlier, explaining online work to parents could be an uphill task. Their parents had grown up with a clearly defined relationship between education, employment and income. You went to school, earned a qualification, applied for a job and received a salary at the end of the month.

The idea that someone could build a career by creating videos, growing an audience and collaborating with brands was genuinely unfamiliar. Even today, some creators from older generations joke about parents who still cannot quite explain what their child does — even after years of brand partnerships and a sizeable following. At home, the summary remains: “They just know things about the internet.”

Gen Z entered adulthood in a different environment entirely. For them, social media was already deeply embedded in daily life. The smartphone was not merely a communication device. It was a camera, television, newsroom, marketplace, editing suite and business tool. The line between being “online” and being “at work” was already blurred before they ever started creating.

More than a cameo

Having a parent who understands — or at least participates in — a creator’s work can mean considerably more than securing a funny appearance.

It can represent acceptance.

A young creator whose parent willingly appears in their videos no longer has to compartmentalise that part of their professional life at home. The family becomes aware of the world the creator has built online, on their own terms.

There are practical benefits too. Parents who understand content creation may better appreciate why their child needs time to film, edit, attend events or maintain a consistent online presence. In an industry where work does not happen between eight in the morning and five in the afternoon, that understanding matters. The parent who once wondered why their child was permanently attached to a phone may eventually realise that the phone is, in fact, their office.

The other side of the frame

Not every creator wants their parents online. And not every parent wants to be there.

For some families, privacy remains a firm boundary. A creator may have tens of thousands of followers while their parents deliberately stay away

from the spotlight. There are also deeper questions about where the family relationship ends and the performance begins.

Is Mum appearing because she genuinely enjoys it, or because the audience has come to expect her? What happens when a creator’s most popular content revolves around a parent? And if that content starts generating income, how does the family navigate the line between participation and commercialisation?

These questions grow sharper as creators turn everyday family moments into monetised entertainment. The fact that something is funny enough to go viral does not automatically mean it belongs online. For creators, the challenge is increasingly not just knowing how to make content — but knowing what should remain outside it.

A new definition of work

Still, the growing presence of parents in Gen Z content says something important about how work itself is changing.

The internet has created careers that previous generations could not have imagined. A person can now build an audience around comedy, fashion, food, beauty, gaming, commentary or simply their personality — and brands have followed those audiences. Content creation is no longer about posting for fun. For many young people, it has become part of a broader digital economy involving advertising, partnerships, events, affiliate marketing and entrepreneurship.

Parents witnessing their children build careers online are being forced to update their understanding of what employment can look like.

Some are still asking when their child will get a real job.

Others are already in the next video. That difference may seem small. It represents something much larger.

The workplace is changing, and so is the definition of a colleague. For some Gen Z creators, that colleague might just be Mum.

And she already knows her lines.