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Kenya yesterday convened a high-level coordination meeting with Burundi, the United Nations refugee agency and the International Organisation for Migration

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The people saving Kenya are the ones Kenya keeps abandoning
There is a troubling contradiction at the heart of Kenya's healthcare system: the people entrusted with saving lives are struggling within a system that appears unable to support them.

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The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027  **The bigger threat to the opposition, however, may not be Nyoro or Gachagua. It may be arithmetic**

Ndindi Nyoro: Ruto's project or the opposition's new wild card?

Kenya's 2027 presidential contest is producing a peculiar political paradox: some of the figures presenting themselves as architects of a new opposition are being accused by their own colleagues of secretly serving the political establishment they claim to oppose.

Few politicians illustrate that contradiction more sharply than Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro.

In the space of a few months, Nyoro has moved from being one of President William Ruto's most recognisable allies to positioning himself at the centre of an emerging opposition project. He broke ranks with Ruto's United Democratic Alliance, took the helm of the People's Party of Kenya and, in August, declared his intention to seek the presidency in 2027 — while simultaneously insisting that his ambition would not stand in the way of a united opposition ticket if one could be agreed.



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Ndindi Nyoro



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Ruto swears in IGRTC members at devolution summit

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday ratified and swore in seven new members of the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee at the 13th National and County Government Coordinating Summit at State House, Nairobi.

The new members are Wilson Thuita, Silvyia Apaa, Ahmed Bishar, Pascalyne Kimiriri, Ken Riaga, Evalyn Aruasa and Mary Kilobi — a veteran journalist and wife of Central Organisation of Trade Unions Secretary-General Francis Atwoli, whose appointment drew particular attention. All seven were selected through a competitive recruitment process that attracted 65 candidates. The IGRTC, established under the Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012, coordinates consultation and dispute resolution between national and county governments. Ruto described it as central to Kenya's devolution architecture. "Sectoral technical issues should be addressed before they develop into disputes. Consultation must come before confrontation, coordination before litigation and resolution before disruption," he said.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki noted the distance Kenya's devolution system had travelled since 2013. "Fifteen years later, we have a much better working relationship and a much better system," Kindiki said. The summit also saw Ruto endorse an additional KSh65.9B allocation to county governments and call for the full operationalisation of Intergovernmental Sector Forums as the first line of resolution between the two levels of government.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday urged Nairobi residents to hold firm on constitutional governance and the rule of law, warning that rising political violence in the capital had dealt a serious blow to investor confidence. Gachagua said the growing culture of intimidation and lawlessness was making Nairobi unsafe for businesses and called on residents to channel their frustrations into electoral action at the August 2027 general election. He singled out Embakasi West residents for turning out in large numbers at a Democracy for the Citizens Party event, praising what he described as their commitment to driving change. The remarks came as Gachagua's DCP continues its grassroots mobilisation across Nairobi, with Senator John Methu leading the party's capital city campaign structures.



Quick search needed — no article body was submitted, only a title. A Senate Agriculture Committee report has laid bare the scale of Kenya's sugar sector collapse, revealing that smallholder farmers accumulated cumulative losses of KSh46B between 2014 and 2024 as the sub-sector contracted by 27.2 per cent last year. The report, tabled in August, attributes the decline to fraud at miller-controlled weighbridges, a criminal permit brokerage system known as "helicopter harvesting," high transport costs from poor road infrastructure and the systematic withholding of farmers' retention funds — now exceeding KSh500M in outstanding debts. Workers at government-owned factories are owed KSh9.89B in unpaid salaries, pensions and benefits. The sector supports more than 401,000 registered smallholder farmers, with Kakamega, Bungoma and Busia counties most affected. Despite the Sugar Act enacted in 2024 to revitalise the industry, the committee found that structural exploitation has continued largely unchecked.



A clinical officer sustained a fractured hand yesterday after hired attackers disrupted a peaceful demonstration by striking health workers in Wote town, Makueni County. The clinical officers were marching to the office of Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr to present a petition over unresolved grievances when a group of men, some disguised as market cleaners armed with brooms, descended on the procession — beating demonstrators, seizing placards and chasing off the public address vehicle. The injured

officer was pushed into a ditch during the confrontation and taken to a private hospital. Kenya Union of Clinical Officers chairperson Mathew Sila condemned the attack as a constitutional violation. Makueni County Chief Officer for Health Harvey Mulei later apologised to the officers. The clinical officers accuse the county government of failing to honour an earlier return-to-work agreement.



Kenya and Japan yesterday moved to deepen ties across clean energy, trade and climate action, following talks between President Ruto and Princess Takamado of Japan at State House, Nairobi. The two sides agreed on the urgency of addressing climate change and expanding sustainable energy cooperation. Ruto said Kenya values its longstanding partnership with Japan and looks forward to stronger bilateral relations. Japan remains a key development partner for Kenya, with cooperation spanning infrastructure, health, education and technology. The talks also covered expanding commercial ties, with increased trade and investment expected to complement climate and sustainable development goals. Both countries agreed to build on their existing partnership for the benefit of their citizens.



Senior Counsel Paul Muite has issued Kenya Airways a seven-day ultimatum to pay more than KSh3 million in compensation after the cancellation of Flight KQ491 from Zanzibar on 31 August left him, his wife Dr Edith Muite, two daughters and two grandchildren — including a three-year-old — stranded at Abeid Amani Karume International Airport for more than seven hours without food, water or formal communication from the airline. Through his lawyers Maina Ngaruiya and Company Advocates, Muite accuses the national carrier of withholding advance knowledge that the inbound aircraft had never departed Nairobi, while allowing the family to check in, clear immigration and wait. With no assistance provided, the family chartered a private aircraft at a cost of USD20,500, plus KSh52,650 in related expenses. The demand also seeks a 50 per cent refund of the KSh596,450 paid for the original tickets. The flight was cancelled during the Kenya Aviation Workers Union strike, which disrupted operations nationwide before a return-to-work agreement was signed that same evening.



Comedian Eric Omondi and seven co-accused were yesterday released on bond by Milimani Principal Magistrate Caroline Nyaguthii after denying charges of obstructing traffic along Moi Avenue in Nairobi's central business district. Omondi was freed on a personal bond while the other seven — Cyprian Ateka, Alex Ngungu, John Ndungu, Kelvin Mwasi, Josiah Ogutu, Wilson Ouma and Olive Odhiambo — were each ordered to execute a KSh2,000 personal bond. The eight were arrested on Monday by plain-clothed officers outside the Kenya National Archives while launching Omondi's "Reduce the Burden" referendum campaign, which seeks to gather one million signatures supporting a constitutional amendment to reduce Kenya's 47 counties to eight regional units. The campaign has already collected nearly 500,000 signatures. All eight denied the charge; the matter returns to court on 29 September.

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Health These projects are implemented under Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa

Ruto signs Italy deal for 15 new hospitals

A KSh-backed partnership with GKSD Group will double Kenya's hospital capacity across 15 counties under Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa

BY Grace Wanja

@themtkenyatomes

President William Ruto yesterday signed a partnership agreement with the Government of Italy and GKSD Group at State House, Nairobi, committing to the construction of 15 new hospitals across Kenya — 13 Level 5 county referral hospitals and two Level 6 national teaching and referral hospitals — under Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa.

The agreement addresses one of Kenya's most glaring healthcare gaps. The country currently provides 12 hospital beds per 10,000 people, less than half the World Health Organisation's recommended benchmark of 25. The new facilities, spread across 15 counties, are intended to close that gap materially while bringing specialist medical services within reach of communities that have long depended on distant urban referral centres. "These projects, being implemented under Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa, will radically transform the lives of our people," Ruto said at the signing ceremony.

The Mattei Plan, named after Enrico Mattei, the Italian industrialist who championed African development in the 1950s, was launched by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni as Italy's flagship framework for co-investment with



Kenya yesterday signed a partnership agreement with the Government of Italy and GKSD Group at State House

African countries. It covers healthcare, infrastructure, energy, agriculture and education. Kenya has emerged as one of the plan's most significant partners on the continent since Ruto's April state visit to Rome, where the two governments signed eight memoranda of understanding and adopted a four-year action plan covering the period 2026 to 2029. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani described Kenya as one of the most strategically important markets for Italy in sub-Saharan Africa.

GKSD Group, the Italian investment conglomerate at the centre of yesterday's hospital deal, brings private capital alongside the Italian government's commitment, a structure designed to accelerate delivery beyond the timelines typical of purely gov-

ernment-financed projects. The Level 5 referral hospitals will serve county populations requiring specialist care currently unavailable at district level, while the two Level 6 facilities will function as national teaching hospitals, combining clinical care with medical education and research.

The signing comes as Kenya is simultaneously pursuing several parallel healthcare infrastructure partnerships. In April, Ruto announced a KSh4.5B agreement with AMSONS Group to build ten mother-and-child hospitals across nine counties, with discussions underway to extend that project by a further 14 facilities. Together, these initiatives represent the most ambitious hospital construction programme Kenya has undertaken since indepen-

dence, and one whose political timing — eleven months before a general election — will not be lost on anyone observing the 2027 campaign season.

For patients in underserved counties, however, the politics is secondary. Kenya's Universal Health Coverage ambitions, anchored in the Social Health Authority launched in 2023, have always been limited by the physical absence of hospitals capable of delivering the care that coverage is supposed to guarantee. Beds, theatres, intensive care units and specialist staff cannot be delivered by a digital registration system. They require buildings — and yesterday, 15 of them were formally committed to.

Kenya tightens infrastructure terror defences



Group photo

BY John Kamau

@themtkenyatomes

Kenya yesterday called for stronger protection of critical national infrastructure against terrorism, as security officials and international experts meeting in Nairobi backed a fundamental shift from reactive measures to integrated prevention and recovery systems.

The appeal came on the final day of the Fifth Nairobi Caucus, jointly convened by the National Counter Terrorism Centre and the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, which drew approximately 200 participants from 24 countries over two days. The forum, held under the theme "Protecting Critical Infrastructure Systems and Public Spaces from Terrorism," focused on securing the facilities and services that underpin modern economies and daily life.

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign

and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi told delegates that Kenya's rapid infrastructure expansion had raised the urgency of the challenge. "Our dams, railways, digital assets, energy infrastructure, health systems and stadia are critical infrastructure that should be protected from terrorist attacks," Mudavadi said.

The forum reflects growing international consensus that infrastructure protection requires coordinated frameworks spanning intelligence sharing, legal instruments, technology and community engagement — not perimeter security alone. For Kenya, the timing is pointed: the country hosts major regional transport, digital and financial systems whose disruption would carry consequences well beyond its borders.

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Diplomacy “In the true spirit of East African cooperation, we are working hand-in-hand as one team to ensure order, dignity and safety for all our brothers and sisters,” Sing’oei said.

Kenya, Burundi and UN agencies form task team over Burundian nationals

A week of embassy queues, reported attacks and diplomatic damage control ends with a formal joint mechanism — but the crisis that caused it is far from resolved

BY Angela Njeri

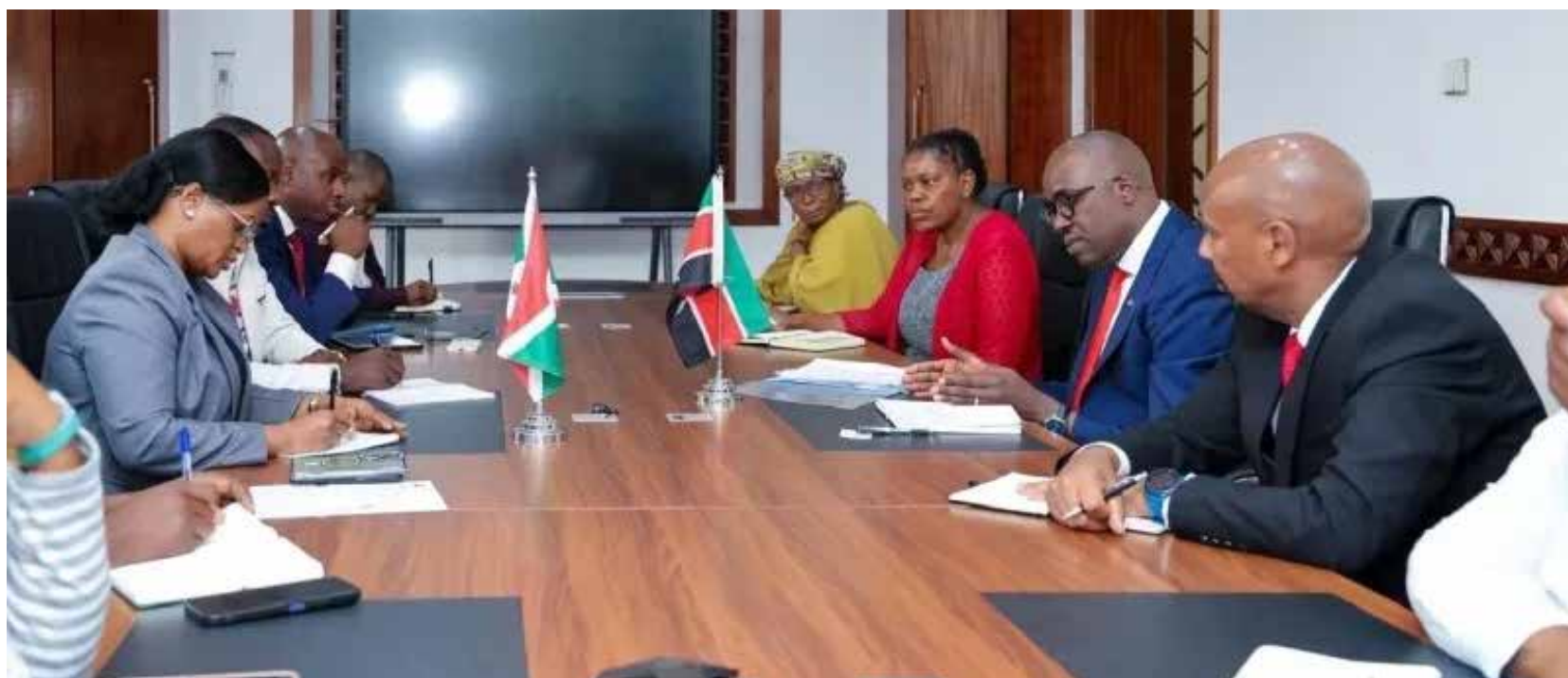
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Kenya yesterday convened a high-level coordination meeting with Burundi, the United Nations refugee agency and the International Organisation for Migration, establishing a Joint Task Team to manage the humanitarian fallout from President William Ruto’s directive ordering foreign nationals out of hawking and small-scale retail business.

Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing’oei chaired the meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, alongside Burundian Ambassador Evelyne Habonimana, UNHCR Kenya Representative Fatima Mohammed-Cole and IOM Kenya Representative Nomagugu Ncube. The formation of the task team marks a significant escalation in the government’s response — moving the issue from bilateral reassurances and embassy visits into a formal multilateral framework with international oversight.

The meeting did not arise from nothing. It was the direct consequence of seven days of mounting tension that began when Ruto told Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise traders at State House on 2 September that foreigners operating in hawking and petty retail should close their businesses, with enforcement beginning the following Monday. “From next week, all traders doing those small businesses should close them,” Ruto said. The remark sent shockwaves through communities of East African nationals whose livelihoods depended on exactly the categories of trade the President was describing.

The immediate visible consequence was a scenes outside the Embassy of Burundi on Dennis Pritt Road in Kilimani on Monday. Hundreds of Burundian nationals queued for hours seeking passports, emergency travel documents and other paperwork, some preparing to leave, others scrambling to regularise their status in a country they had lived in for years. Reports of attacks and robberies targeting Burundian nationals in Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa accompanied the documentary



Kenya yesterday convened a high-level coordination meeting with Burundi, the United Nations refugee agency and the International Organisation for Migration

chaos. The Directorate of Criminal Investigations subsequently arrested a 32-year-old man for allegedly inciting ethnic hatred and violence against Burundian nationals through remarks made at a public event — a signal that the government understood the situation had moved beyond an immigration policy dispute into something with an uglier edge.

Sing’oei visited the Burundian Embassy on Monday night, apologising directly to nationals over the harassment and making clear that the crackdown applied specifically to undocumented traders, not to foreign nationals holding valid documentation. “We strongly guarantee the safety of all foreign nationals; no harassment will be tolerated,” he said. Yesterday’s formal multilateral meeting consolidated that position into an institutional structure. “In the true spirit of East African cooperation, we are working hand-in-hand as one team to ensure order, dignity and safety for all our brothers and sisters,” Sing’oei said.

The government has extended the regularisation window for affected foreign nationals to 90 days, providing additional time for those without current documentation to bring their immigration and business paperwork

into compliance. Sing’oei confirmed that any return of Burundian nationals to their country of origin would be voluntary. “Any return exercises will be strictly voluntary, informed and transparently recorded under our joint coordination,” he said.

The legal backdrop to the crisis is not straightforward. Kenya is a member of the East African Community, whose treaty framework guarantees freedom of movement for nationals of member states — including Burundi, which joined the EAC in 2007. Ruto’s directive, by targeting foreigners broadly in specific economic sectors, sits in considerable tension with those obligations. The government has sought to frame its enforcement as targeting undocumented and unlicensed operators rather than EAC nationals as a class, a distinction that matters legally even if it was not communicated clearly enough in the initial announcement to prevent the scenes that followed.

The international dimension of the crisis deepened when French newspaper Le Monde published coverage of the situation that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs characterised as a misrepresentation of Kenya’s position. Sing’oei publicly challenged

the framing, insisting that Kenya’s measures were lawful, targeted and being implemented with safeguards. Whether that messaging lands internationally will depend partly on how the Joint Task Team operates in practice and whether voluntary return exercises — if they occur — are genuinely free of coercion.

The political context is impossible to separate from the humanitarian one. Ruto’s September 2 remarks were delivered to a domestic audience of Kenyan traders, many of whom have spent years competing with foreign nationals in a difficult economic environment. The argument that Kenyan citizens should not face competition from foreigners in low-capital businesses resonates with a significant constituency. With eleven months to the August 2027 general election, the President is navigating a narrow corridor between appealing to those voters and managing the diplomatic and legal consequences of the manner in which the policy was announced.

The establishment of the Joint Task Team with UNHCR and IOM provides an important buffer. By involving internationally recognised migration agencies with formal mandates on refugee protection and

orderly migration, the Kenyan government is creating a framework that can absorb scrutiny and provide independent verification that returns — if any occur — are not coerced. That matters for Kenya’s reputation as a country that has historically hosted one of Africa’s largest refugee populations and maintained relatively open borders with its EAC neighbours.

What remains unresolved is the broader policy question. A 90-day regularisation window answers the immediate crisis of undocumented nationals unable to leave or to stay legally. It does not resolve the question of what Kenya’s long-term position is on foreign nationals operating small-scale retail businesses — a category of economic activity that thousands of East Africans have built their livelihoods around, in a country whose own treaty obligations give them the right to be here.

The Joint Task Team now inherits that question. Its composition — government, a neighbouring state and two international agencies — suggests Nairobi understands the stakes. Whether the mechanism produces durable answers or merely manages the immediate crisis will become clear in the weeks ahead.

Politics In the space of a few months, Nyoro has moved from being one of President William Ruto's most recognisable allies to positioning himself at the centre of an emerging opposition project

Ndindi Nyoro: Ruto's project or the opposition's new wild card?

With 11 months to go, the battle for Mount Kenya's soul may be doing more damage to Ruto's opponents than Ruto himself

BY Hadassah Karangu

@themkenyentimes

Kenya's 2027 presidential contest is producing a peculiar political paradox: some of the figures presenting themselves as architects of a new opposition are being accused by their own colleagues of secretly serving the political establishment they claim to oppose.

Few politicians illustrate that contradiction more sharply than Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro.

In the space of a few months, Nyoro has moved from being one of President William Ruto's most recognisable allies to positioning himself at the centre of an emerging opposition project. He broke ranks with Ruto's United Democratic Alliance, took the helm of the People's Party of Kenya and, in August, declared his intention to seek the presidency in 2027 — while simultaneously insisting that his ambition would not stand in the way of a united opposition ticket if one could be agreed.

That transformation has not convinced everyone. Kiambu Senator Karungo wa Thang'wa, a close ally of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, has made one of the most incendiary accusations in Kenyan opposition politics this year: that Nyoro is a deliberate creation of State House, positioned to infiltrate the opposition, divide the Mount Kenya vote and serve as Ruto's preferred running mate in 2027. These remain political allegations, not established facts. But in Kenyan politics, the power of an accusation often lies not in whether it can be proven, but in why people find it credible.

Nyoro's history with Ruto cannot simply be wished away. He was a central figure in the Tangatanga movement and one of Ruto's most energetic mobilisers during the 2022 presidential campaign. For years, his name was mentioned in the same breath as those tipped for senior positions in a Ruto administration. That proximity is real, it is documented, and ordinary Kenyans remember it. The question is whether history is destiny — and in politics, it rarely is. Alliances shift. Governments lose their popularity. People who once sat at the centre of power can become



Ndindi Nyoro

its most credible critics precisely because they know how it operates.

The more useful question, therefore, is not whether Nyoro was once close to Ruto. He was. The more useful question is whether his current conduct demonstrates that he is still working on Ruto's behalf. On the available public evidence, he has left UDA, declared a presidential bid, called for opposition unity and indicated he would stand aside for a consensus candidate. None of that, by itself, establishes the mole allegation. But it also does not dissolve it, and only consistent, independent political behaviour over time will determine which narrative Kenyans ultimately accept.

The anxiety inside Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party is not primarily about Nyoro's past. It is about what he represents in the present. Gachagua has built his post-impeachment political project around two propositions: that he is the authentic voice of Mount Kenya's opposition sentiment, and that the region's electoral bloc is his to marshal. Nyoro complicates both propositions. He is from Mount Kenya, but he is explicitly positioning himself as a national politician rather than a regional figurehead. His PPK is framed as a cross-community vehicle, and his early contacts with figures such as Nairobi Senator Edwin

Sifuna signal an attempt to build a coalition that crosses the regional boundaries Gachagua typically operates within. That is potentially more disruptive than a direct rival within the same political lane.

The bigger threat to the opposition, however, may not be Nyoro or Gachagua. It may be arithmetic. The TIFA poll conducted between 13 and 22 June 2026, involving 2,048 respondents across all 47 counties, placed Ruto at 24 per cent nationally. Sifuna followed at 15 per cent — the fastest rise recorded among any opposition figure in the survey's history, moving from virtually no measurable support in 2025. Fred Matiang'i sat at 14 per cent, Kalonzo Musyoka at 13 per cent, Gachagua at 7 per cent and Babu Owino at 2 per cent. Twenty per cent of respondents remained undecided.

Those numbers describe an opposition that has, in aggregate, more support than the incumbent — and no obvious mechanism for converting that aggregate into a single ticket. The same TIFA survey found that 62 per cent of respondents believed Gachagua's best path to defeating Ruto was to back a stronger candidate, while only 14 per cent supported him leading the opposition himself. Gachagua is powerful within his base. He is not yet persuasive beyond it.

Sifuna's rise deserves examination

on its own terms. He has demonstrated that a politician without traditional presidential machinery — no historic patronage networks, no regional kingpin status, no long-standing alliance infrastructure — can achieve rapid national visibility by speaking directly to economic frustration and generational impatience. From zero in November 2025 to 15 per cent in June 2026 represents a kind of political trajectory that the older opposition architecture was not designed to produce. Whether it can be sustained across 11 months of hardening campaign politics is a different question. But the direction of travel matters.

Gachagua faces what may be his most difficult internal test yet. He was impeached, humiliated and removed from office in a manner that generated genuine public sympathy. That emotional reservoir is a real political asset. But presidential politics requires more than justified grievance. A candidate who was betrayed by a former ally must eventually demonstrate that the wound has produced clarity rather than bitterness — that the fight is now about the country, not about the man who once held power over him. That transition from wounded insider to credible national alternative is harder than it appears, and Gachagua has not yet fully made it.

Nyoro, meanwhile, faces the opposite test: not proving he was wronged, but proving he has genuinely changed sides. The "Ruto project" allegation will follow him for as long as his political positions could conceivably benefit the administration he claims to oppose. Only consistent, documented independence — credible policy positions, willingness to challenge the government without hedging, and real sacrifice if a united ticket requires him to step aside — will gradually erode that suspicion.

The uncomfortable reality sitting beneath all of this is that President Ruto does not need to defeat every opposition candidate individually. He needs the opposition to remain divided among five or six personalities, each commanding a pocket of support, none willing to subordinate personal ambition to a common objective. The TIFA figures suggest

that is precisely the scenario currently unfolding. Combined opposition support comfortably exceeds Ruto's 24 per cent. Fragmented, it does not threaten him.

Nyoro's statement that he would back a consensus candidate if one emerges is therefore politically significant — but only if it translates into action when the moment demands it. Words in September 2026 are cheap. Decisions in the first quarter of 2027, when personal political investments have grown considerably larger, will be far more revealing.

So is Ndindi Nyoro Ruto's project? At this point, the honest answer is that nobody outside a very small circle knows for certain — and that uncertainty is itself part of the problem. His history gives critics legitimate grounds for scrutiny. His actions since August give supporters legitimate grounds for cautious optimism. The only responsible position is to watch what he does next and judge accordingly.

For now, Nyoro occupies an uncomfortable political middle ground. He is neither fully trusted by the established opposition nor comfortably embraced by the administration he once served. That middle ground can be a launchpad or a graveyard. Which it becomes depends on whether his political evolution turns out to be the real thing — or simply the most sophisticated version of the political games that Kenyan voters, to their considerable credit, have learned to read rather well.

Kenya's next political revolution may not be about replacing one politician with another. It may be about whether voters decide that political loyalty must be earned afresh, rather than inherited from yesterday's alliances. That is a standard that will test every major figure in this race — not just Ndindi Nyoro.

Economy Kenya's recent economic story illustrates this uncomfortable reality. The private sector entered August under pressure, with business activity contracting for the first

If Kenya's economy is growing, why are Kenyans still struggling?

Growth figures tell one story; empty pockets tell another — and the gap between them is where millions of Kenyans actually live.

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya is often described as an economy on the path to recovery. Growth figures can paint a picture of resilience, investment and expanding national output. Yet behind those figures lies another Kenya — one where millions of citizens count coins before buying food, postpone medical treatment, struggle to pay rent and wonder where the next job will come from. This contradiction raises a question that policymakers can no longer afford to ignore: if the

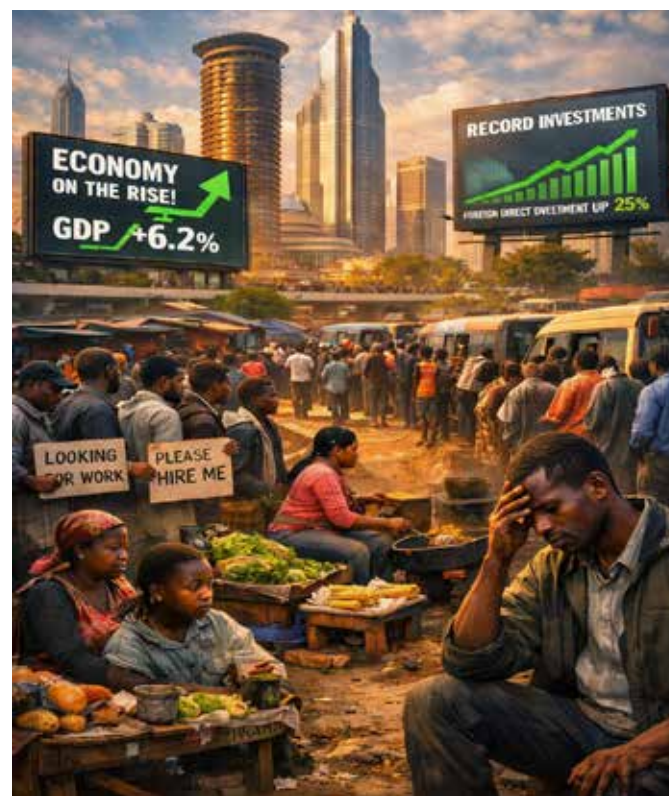
economy is growing, why are Kenyans still struggling?

The problem is that economic growth and economic well-being are not the same thing. A country can produce more goods and services while ordinary households remain financially squeezed. Growth measures the expansion of economic activity; it does not tell us who is benefiting from that expansion, how many decent jobs are being created or whether household purchasing power is improving.

Kenya's recent economic story illustrates this uncomfortable reality. The private

sector entered August under pressure, with business activity contracting for the first time in three months as supply constraints and rising costs forced firms to reduce output and purchases. When businesses struggle with production costs, consumers eventually feel the consequences through higher prices, reduced employment and weaker incomes.

For the ordinary Kenyan, the economy is not experienced through GDP statistics. It is experienced at the supermarket, at the petrol station, in the classroom, at the hospital



and in conversations with the landlord. Economic success means paying school fees without borrowing, putting food on the table without sacrificing other necessities and finding meaningful employment without spending years drifting between temporary opportunities.

This is where Kenya's economic debate must change.

The country has spent years focused heavily on the size of the economy while paying insufficient attention to the quality of its growth. What good is a growing economy if a university graduate remains unemployed? What does rising national output mean to a small trader whose business is buckling under taxation and rising operating costs? And what does economic transformation mean to a family whose income is exhausted before the month ends?

The government's recent focus on foreign traders exposes another dimension of this frustration. Kenya has moved to regularise foreign-owned businesses, giving foreign operators a 90-day window to obtain or update required documentation. The policy follows growing complaints from Kenyan traders who argue that foreign competition has made an already difficult business environment considerably harder.

There is a legitimate question here: how does Kenya create more room for its own citizens to participate meaningfully in the economy?

But protecting Kenyan traders cannot simply mean blaming foreigners for problems that are fundamentally structural. Foreign traders did not create Kenya's unemployment crisis. They did not create the national debt, design the tax system or determine the cost of electricity, transport or credit. They cannot be made the permanent explanation for why millions of young Kenyans cannot find decent work.

The real challenge runs deeper.

Kenya needs an economy that creates value, not merely one that circulates money. It needs manufacturing that employs people, agriculture that rewards farmers, technology that generates opportunity beyond Nairobi and small businesses that can grow without being crushed by excessive costs and unpredictable regulation.

The country must also confront the uncomfortable relationship between taxation and economic growth. Raising revenue is necessary for any functioning government, but taxation becomes economically damaging when businesses begin to view expansion as a liability and consumers are left with shrinking disposable incomes. The objective should not be simply to collect more taxes; it should be to build an economy capable of generating enough productive activity to make taxation sustainable.

Then there is the question of

public spending. Kenyans are repeatedly asked to sacrifice today for a better tomorrow — told that higher taxes, difficult reforms and painful adjustments will eventually deliver prosperity. But citizens have every right to ask: where is the prosperity, and when will it reach them?

Economic transformation cannot remain a promise permanently suspended in the future.

A country can have impressive infrastructure, rising GDP and ambitious development programmes while its citizens remain economically insecure. The ultimate test of an economy is not how impressive it looks from government offices or international conferences. It is how confidently an ordinary citizen can plan for tomorrow.

Kenya must therefore move from an economy obsessed with growth figures to one obsessed with shared prosperity.

Growth must translate into jobs. Investment must translate into opportunity. Natural resources must generate greater value for Kenyans. Government revenue must translate into quality public services. Entrepreneurship must be rewarded rather than suffocated. And young people must be able to see a future in which education leads somewhere beyond unemployment and endless job applications.

The political class will inevitably make the economy a central battlefield ahead of the 2027 general election. The government will point to its achievements; the opposition will highlight the struggles of ordinary citizens. But beyond the political slogans lies a far more important question: what kind of economy does Kenya actually want to build?

One measured by the size of its GDP, or one measured by the dignity of its people?

Kenya does not merely need a bigger economy. It needs a fairer, more productive and more inclusive one.

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And perhaps the most uncomfortable question Kenya must confront is not whether the economy is growing — but who, exactly, it is growing for.

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Health “We cannot wish this away,” Ragi has said repeatedly to policymakers, health officials and civil society partners. “The disruption is real, and it is happening now.”

Kenya’s HIV response is running out of money — and time

After 35 years on the frontlines of Kenya’s fight against HIV, Prof Allan Ragi says the funding crisis is unlike anything he has seen before

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyatimes

Prof Allan Ragi has spent 35 years at the centre of Kenya’s fight against HIV and AIDS, and he says the financing crisis now confronting the country is unlike anything he has witnessed in that time.

Ragi, Executive Director and Board Secretary of the Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), has issued a stark warning: Kenya must move urgently to secure alternative and sustainable funding for its HIV programmes or risk watching decades of hard-won progress unravel within a matter of years. The message is not abstract. The consequences are already visible in clinics, community organisations and health facilities across the country.

“We cannot wish this away,” Ragi has said repeatedly to policymakers, health officials and civil society partners. “The disruption is real, and it is happening now.”

The trigger for Ragi’s alarm is clear. The United States has historically been one of Kenya’s most important sources of external HIV financing, channelled primarily through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). When the administration in Washington initiated a suspension and review of foreign health assistance in January 2025, the effects were felt almost immediately across Kenya’s health system. Community health monitoring systems stalled. Clinics lost embedded health workers. Supply chains for HIV commodities were disrupted. And according to a 2026 study published in BMC Pub-

lic Health, the country recorded declines in HIV testing, uptake of pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, antiretroviral therapy initiations and tuberculosis screening in the months that followed.

The numbers behind those declines are alarming. New HIV infections in Kenya rose from 16,752 in 2024 to 19,991 in 2025, reversing progress that had reduced infections by more than 67 percent since 2010. On average, 54 people are newly infected with HIV every day in Kenya, and 57 die from AIDS-related illnesses daily. Mother-to-child transmission remains at seven percent, above the global target of five percent. A study of HIV clinics in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania found that in the first five weeks following the withdrawal of US funding, new patient enrolment fell by 59 percent compared with the same period in the previous year, while viral-load testing dropped by 33 percent.

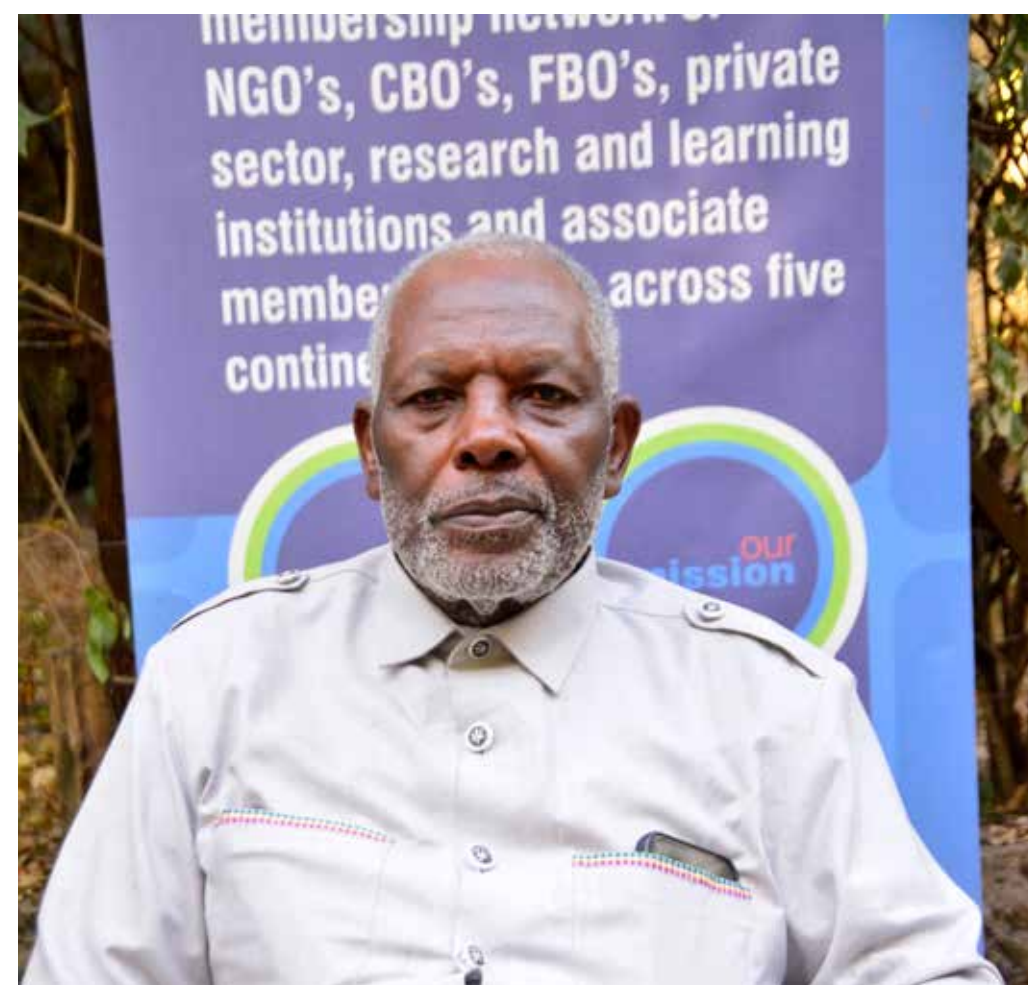
These are not abstract statistics. They represent missed tests, interrupted treatments, disengaged patients and communities losing the services they depend on to stay alive.

The broader funding environment has tightened simultaneously. According to a report by the Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis at the University of Nairobi, external health funding to Kenya fell from KSh126B in the 2024/25 financial year to KSh54B in 2025/26. The Global Fund, another cornerstone of Kenya’s HIV financing architecture, has cut its HIV allocation to Kenya by 18.2 percent for the 2026–2028 grant cycle, reducing it to approximately KSh26.4B

— down from KSh32.3B in the previous cycle. A joint analysis by KFF and UNAIDS found that donor government funding for HIV in low- and middle-income countries fell by \$2.1B in 2025, the largest single-year decline since the global HIV financing scale-up began. Researchers estimate the government would need to allocate approximately KSh66.9B to cover the gap left by the US withdrawal alone.

Ragi has watched Kenya’s HIV response evolve from the early years of the epidemic, through the era of large-scale international financing, antiretroviral scale-up and community mobilisation. That trajectory is precisely what makes the current moment so consequential in his view. Kenya has made remarkable progress. Antiretroviral therapy has transformed HIV from a death sentence into a manageable chronic condition for those with sustained access to treatment. But those gains are not self-sustaining. They require predictable financing, consistent supply chains, a functioning health workforce and community structures capable of reaching people that formal health systems often cannot.

A 2026 qualitative study conducted in Thika captured the human dimension of the disruption. Following the funding shock, some HIV clinics were rapidly integrated into general primary care facilities — a move that, while administratively pragmatic, raised concerns about confidentiality and stigma among patients. The study also documented reports of antiretroviral therapy rationing, missed monitor-



Prof Allan Ragi

ing visits and patients disengaging from care entirely.

For Ragi, the structural lesson is plain. An HIV response built predominantly on external financing is a response with a structural weakness embedded within it. International assistance has been enormously valuable — it has saved lives and built systems — but it was never designed to be permanent. The disruption of 2025 and 2026 has simply accelerated the reckoning.

That does not mean Kenya must walk away from international partnerships. It means Kenya must build a financing system in which international assistance complements domestic investment rather than substituting for it. That requires stronger government budget commitments to HIV and tuberculosis, better integration of HIV services into the wider health system — carefully managed so as not to compromise the confidentiality that patients depend on — and a diversified financing base that draws on private-sector partnerships, innovative financing mechanisms, health insurance schemes and community contributions alongside public funding.

Civil society organisations sit at the heart of this architecture, and Ragi is clear that they must not be marginalised in the transition. Community organisations reach people living with HIV, young people and populations in areas that formal health systems rarely penetrate effectively. They fight stigma, support treatment adherence and serve as the connective tissue between policies designed in Nairobi and patients living with HIV in rural counties. Any transition from donor financing to domestic financing that hollows out these structures would be self-defeating.

At the 26th International AIDS Conference in Rio de Janeiro in July, researchers described Kenya as one of five countries where worrying departures from historical treatment trends had been observed. Researchers also found that 77,163 fewer children globally received PEPFAR-supported HIV treatment in fiscal year 2025 compared to the previous year. Kenya featured prominently in those findings. IAS President-Elect Prof Kenneth Ngunjiri of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology told the conference that the findings were compelling evi-

dence of far-reaching consequences for the world’s most vulnerable populations.

The current crisis could, if handled with strategic seriousness, become an inflection point. Countries such as Botswana and South Africa have demonstrated that domestically financed HIV responses are achievable with sustained political commitment over time. Kenya has the institutions, the technical expertise and the epidemiological knowledge to chart a similar path. What it requires now is the political will to treat HIV financing as a domestic security and development priority rather than a function of international goodwill.

Ragi’s three and a half decades on the frontlines of Kenya’s HIV response give his warning particular weight. He has seen what the epidemic looked like before treatment existed, and he has seen what sustained investment and community mobilisation can achieve. He is not predicting catastrophe. He is describing one if Kenya does not act.

After all the progress made, the country cannot afford to allow a financing crisis to reverse what took a generation to build.

Health Kenya must confront the uncomfortable reality that its healthcare system depends heavily on human beings increasingly asked to compensate for institutional weaknesses

The people saving Kenya are the ones Kenya keeps abandoning

Six weeks into a nurses' strike, with doctors poised to join, Kenya's health system is exposing deep failures that no policy document can paper over.

BY Levis Wangamati
@themkenyatimes

There is a troubling contradiction at the heart of Kenya's healthcare system: the people entrusted with saving lives are struggling within a system that appears unable to support them. Doctors, nurses and other health professionals are expected to deliver essential services under immense pressure, yet their grievances have gone unresolved for years. The nurses' strike, now in its sixth week, and the threat by doctors to join the industrial action are not isolated labour disputes. They are symptoms of a system under considerable strain — with the consequences borne, as always, by ordinary Kenyans who depend on public hospitals.

The present crisis has an uncomfortable history. Nurses are demanding implementation of a collective bargaining agreement signed in 2017, following an earlier strike, with some allowances under that agreement still outstanding. The government has cited budgetary constraints; healthcare workers say their demands have been allowed to accumulate without adequate action. Doctors warn they are already carrying an increased workload because of the nurses' absence and cannot continue absorbing responsibilities outside their professional mandate. When one group of health workers is pushed beyond capacity, the entire chain of patient care weakens.

For the ordinary Kenyan, the debate is not about collective bargaining agreements or institutional jurisdiction. It is about what happens when a child needs treatment, when

a mother requires maternity care, when an elderly patient needs medication or when an emergency arrives at a public hospital and the required personnel are absent. A strike may begin as a disagreement between workers and government, but its consequences quickly become personal. Reports of dispensary closures and growing pressure on referral hospitals illustrate how industrial disputes move rapidly from negotiating tables into communities. The real cost is paid by people who have no seat at either table.

Kenya must confront the uncomfortable reality that its healthcare system depends heavily on human beings increasingly asked to compensate for institutional weaknesses. A hospital is not merely a building with beds, laboratories and equipment. It requires nurses to monitor patients, doctors to diagnose and treat, clinical officers to provide essential services, pharmacists to manage medicines and support staff to keep the institution functioning. When one part of that system fails, the consequences travel through the entire structure. The current dispute illustrates precisely why healthcare cannot be managed as a collection of separate departments competing for attention and resources.

The problem is also tied to Kenya's devolved system of government. Since most health service delivery functions were transferred to counties, county governments have become central to the management of healthcare workers and facilities. That arrangement was intended to bring services closer to citizens, but it has also created

complicated relationships involving counties, the national government, the Council of Governors and health unions. When disputes arise, responsibility can become blurred. The patient, however, has no interest in administrative boundaries. Whether the problem originates in Nairobi, a county headquarters or a government agency, the patient simply encounters a service that is unavailable, delayed or inadequate.

That is why the current involvement of the Council of Governors is significant. The governors represent 47 county governments that carry major responsibility for healthcare delivery, and their role in resolving the nurses' dispute cannot be treated as peripheral. Negotiations over remuneration and working conditions have direct consequences for hospitals and dispensaries across the country. If county governments cannot maintain a stable relationship with their healthcare workforce, devolution risks becoming a mechanism for transferring responsibility without securing the capacity to deliver services. Kenya should not have to discover, during every strike, that the structure of healthcare governance is itself part of the problem.

The crisis also exposes the danger of treating healthcare workers primarily as a budgetary line. Government budgets are constrained, and every public institution competes for limited resources. But healthcare cannot be managed purely through the arithmetic of expenditure. A nurse who is unavailable, a doctor who is overworked or a clinical officer who leaves public service



The nurses' strike

represents more than a financial statistic — each is a gap in the chain of care. The government may save money by delaying a commitment today, but the eventual cost emerges through staff shortages, reduced morale, disrupted services and increased pressure on patients and remaining workers.

Kenya has spent years discussing universal and affordable healthcare, including the transition from the National Hospital Insurance Fund to the Social Health Authority. The success of those reforms will ultimately be judged not by the sophistication of policy documents but by whether a Kenyan can walk into a public facility and receive appropriate care without encountering administrative, financial or staffing barriers. Insurance reform cannot succeed in isolation from health-worker reform. A financing system can determine how money follows a patient; it cannot replace the nurse at the bedside or the doctor conducting an examination. Universal healthcare requires both financial protection and a workforce capable of delivering the promised services.

There is another dimension that deserves attention: the unequal distribution of healthcare professionals. A patient in Nairobi may have access to a very different range of specialists and facilities from someone in a remote or economically disadvantaged county. That inequality deepens when facilities outside major urban centres struggle

to attract and retain experienced professionals. Kenya cannot claim equitable healthcare simply because every county has hospitals on paper. Equity means that a citizen's chances of receiving competent and timely care should not depend overwhelmingly on geography or personal income.

The consequences of prolonged disputes extend beyond the immediate crisis. Kenya trains doctors, nurses, clinical officers and other professionals at considerable public cost. When working conditions become unattractive, professionals seek opportunities in the private sector or abroad. The concern is not that Kenyan professionals should be prevented from pursuing better opportunities — they have every right to do so. The national concern is whether Kenya is creating an environment in which skilled professionals can see a credible future within the public health system. A country that trains its professionals only to lose them because it cannot retain them is effectively exporting the return on its own investment.

There is consequently a strong economic argument for resolving healthcare disputes before they reach the point of prolonged industrial action. Strikes disrupt services, increase pressure on remaining workers and force patients to seek alternatives they may not be able to afford. Families that rely entirely on public hospitals can find themselves confronting private medical bills

or travelling long distances to find an operational facility. For low-income households, even a modest disruption can become a significant financial burden. Healthcare failure, therefore, has a disproportionate impact on precisely the citizens least capable of absorbing its consequences.

The government must move away from the culture of emergency negotiations. Kenya has grown accustomed to a familiar sequence: workers raise grievances, disputes escalate, strike threats emerge, political leaders call for patience, negotiations begin under pressure and a temporary agreement is eventually reached. This approach may postpone the crisis; it does not resolve the underlying problem. A functioning state should have mechanisms for identifying and addressing legitimate grievances before they become national emergencies. Collective bargaining agreements should be treated as serious commitments, not documents that become relevant only when workers threaten to withdraw their labour.

There must also be greater accountability for promises made to healthcare workers. If an agreement is signed, there should be clear timelines for implementation, transparent identification of funding responsibilities and regular reporting on progress. Where

Health Kenya must confront the uncomfortable reality that its healthcare system depends heavily on human beings increasingly asked to compensate for institutional weaknesses

The people saving Kenya are the ones Kenya keeps abandoning

Contd from page 12

an agreement cannot be implemented immediately because of genuine fiscal constraints, the government should communicate openly with workers and the public rather than allowing uncertainty to persist for years. Trust is one of the most valuable resources in industrial relations, and every broken promise makes the next negotiation harder. Kenya cannot build a stable health system on an endless cycle of mistrust and confrontation.

The public, too, must engage with greater maturity. It is understandable for patients to be angry when a strike prevents them from receiving treatment — their frustration is legitimate, and healthcare workers bear a responsibility to consider the consequences of industrial action. But citizens should also ask why these disputes repeatedly reach such a critical stage. Condemning workers without examining the conditions that produced the dispute is an incomplete response. Equally, defending every action by healthcare unions without

considering the impact on patients is insufficient. The country needs a balanced conversation that recognises both the rights of workers and the fundamental right of patients to receive care.

Kenya’s healthcare challenge is ultimately not simply about doctors, nurses, county governments or the national budget. It is about whether the country is prepared to treat healthcare as a long-term national investment rather than a recurring political emergency. The health system requires functioning facilities, reliable financing, accountable management and, above all, people capable of delivering care. No reform can succeed if the professionals expected to implement it are exhausted, demoralised or uncertain about whether agreements made with their employers will ever be honoured.

The current crisis should be treated as a warning, not merely another dispute to be settled and forgotten. The nurses’ strike and the threat of doctors joining it have exposed vulnerabilities that will not disappear when workers eventually return to their hospitals. Kenya must ask what allowed a 2017 agreement to remain a source of contention years later, why

disputes repeatedly escalate into strikes and why patients continue to bear the consequences of institutional disagreements. Those questions matter more than the immediate political calculations surrounding the present confrontation.

Kenya cannot credibly promise universal healthcare while allowing the workforce responsible for delivering it to operate under persistent uncertainty. It cannot celebrate doctors and nurses as heroes during pandemics and emergencies, then expect them to remain silent when their professional and employment concerns go unresolved. It cannot build hospitals without ensuring there are enough people to operate them effectively. And it cannot measure healthcare progress by the number of facilities constructed while ignoring whether patients can actually receive quality treatment when they enter those facilities.

The people saving Kenya do not need another round of applause. They need a system that recognises their work, respects their profession and provides the conditions necessary to serve effectively. Nurses should not have to wait years for agreements to be honoured. Doc-



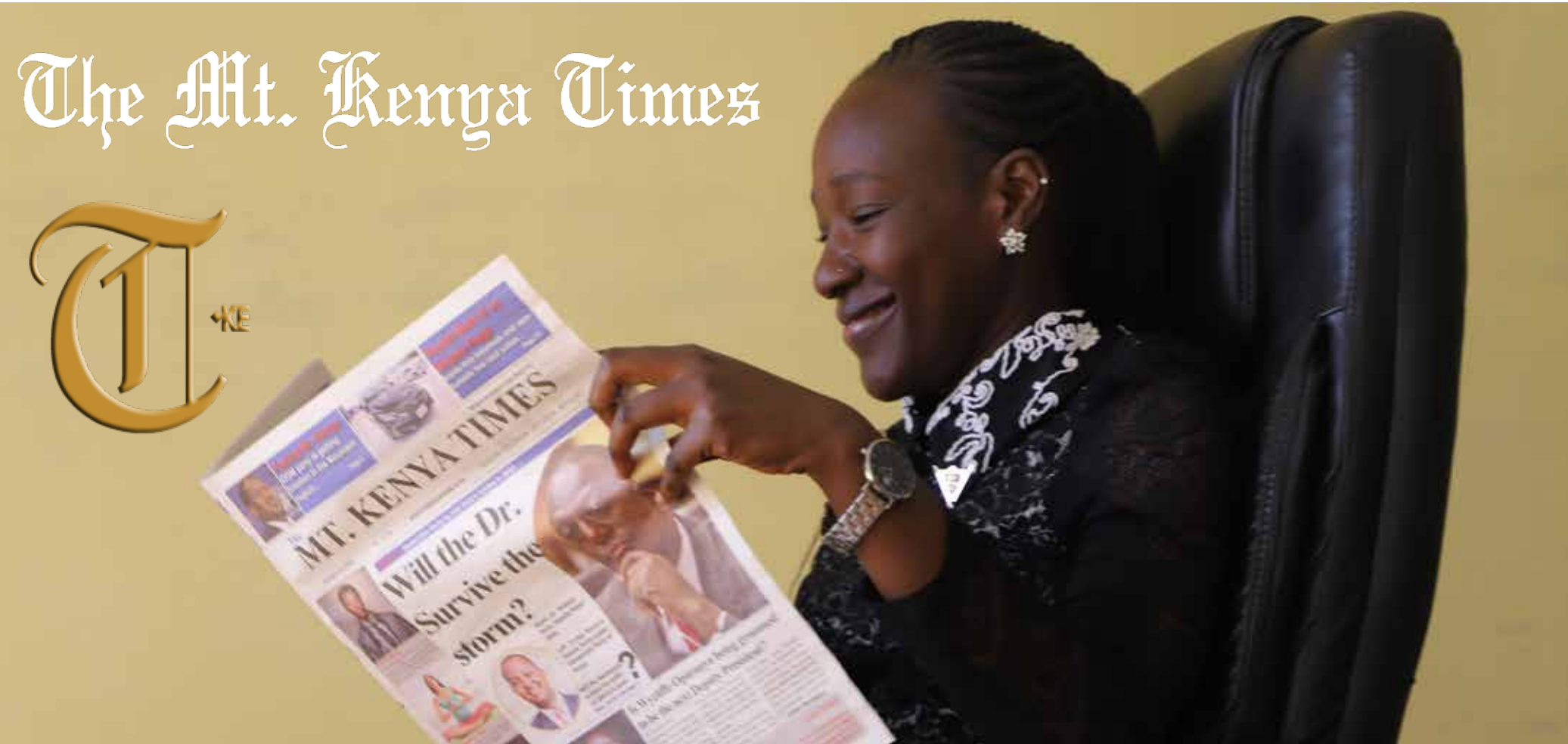
The nurses’ strike

tors should not have to threaten industrial action before their concerns receive serious attention. County governments and national institutions should not wait for hospitals to become overwhelmed before acknowledging the consequences of unresolved disputes. Most importantly, patients should not become collateral damage in disagreements that responsible institutions could have addressed far earlier.

Kenya’s greatest healthcare asset is not a hospital building, a sophisticated machine or a policy document. It is the human being standing beside

the patient when that patient needs help most. If the country genuinely wants a healthcare system that is accessible, affordable and dependable, it must protect that human resource with the same seriousness with which it expects healthcare workers to protect the lives of citizens.

Because a country that keeps abandoning the people saving its citizens should not be surprised when those people eventually ask who will save them.



Feelings in the mouth of a whale



A beautiful voyage through sea
Thrilled ever could be
But adapted to be comfort
And pleasantly with dream swam about
As my eye lashes hugged each other
Slept deeply as a nature lover.
Alas! how am I in this dark cabin?
With sharp edged pillars I've never seen

It's suffocating here!
And vibrated groaning I could hear
Oh my God! am I trapped to assail
"In the mouth of whale"
Faithfully just chanted prayer
Believing God would sway off my fear
With a wild sound it splitted me out
Poor! by a cruise ship it was hurt.
We got to go out miseries in life
As that of whale's mouth is rife
This is a lesson learnt through dream
For faith transforms our dark days to gleam.

G.Sarala.

The clouds once adorned my sky



I sink into the embrace of my dreams.
Searching for my worth where it does not exist,
Why should I be upset with you?
Had they known, even mountains would know my love,

Flowers would bloom radiantly in the gardens.
No matter what I do, is it not fate,
These parting paths do not lead me to you...
We both turned love into a toy,
When our love was originally so beautiful.
As our tongues spoke our final words,
Now our fates are separate, our paths are apart....

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

The hidden treasure inside me



There is a treasure hidden inside of me,
No gold or diamonds that the world can see.
It's a little voice that says "you can try",
When I'm afraid to fall, it teaches me to fly.

Sometimes I hide it, thinking I'm small,
But inside I have kindness, that's bigger than all.

I have dreams like stars that glow in the night,
And courage that makes my dark fears bright.

No one can steal it, no one can take,
It grows more strong with every step I make.
I am more than marks, more than what they see,
The real treasure is the me inside me

Don't search for treasure in the world outside,
The greatest gem is the heart you hide inside.

Penned By: JEGADEESWARI V
Standard: 11-A
School: St. Joseph's Matriculation HIGHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL ACHARAPAKKAM.

In the Footsteps of Zulfiyaxonim



my soul.
The award is an honor, a solemn duty,
A grand opportunity on my creative journey.
In every single line rests a truth,
My paper and pen are my home.
I am a mother, holding a tiny world in my embrace,
Both knowledge and the cradle are my fortitude.
When the pen sings fiercely in my hand,
Following Zulfiya's footsteps is my bliss.
My goal is the summit, my intention pure,
From the depths of hardship I seek victory.
No one shall remain helpless on this path,
Zulfiya's ways are the brightest journey.
Binding the bond of devotion tightly to my soul,
I yearn to be the archetype of a faithful woman.
I cannot forgive every single mistake,
I long to become the shining fortune of my nation.
May my pride forever rise like the mountains,
I am a daughter of Uzbeks—overflowing like a river.

From knowledge I will build the highest terrace,
May an unquenchable flame live within my heart.
The future calls, my happiness is complete,
A follower of Zulfiya—a noble title.
For me, the Zulfiya State Prize is
Not an unfulfilled dream, but a real opportunity.

By: Nigora Yo'ldasheva

The beauty of life is found in simple moments



Life is not always grand,
Or filled with joy each day.
But simple little moments
Can light up our way.

A smile, a flower,

A warm cup of tea,
A kind word from someone
Can make us happy.

So stop and look around,
And enjoy what you see.
The beauty of life
Lives in simplicity.

R. SRIPRIYA
(Creative Writer)
BT ENGLISH
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT
TAMILNADU
INDIA

A vernal feeling awakened in my heart,
My dream shines bright like the morning star.
Though the trials along these paths are
unmatched,
My vessel glides across the ocean of knowledge.
Echoing the voice of Zulfiyaxonim,
The wonder in my heart poured onto paper.
I strove to live filled with faith,
My creative work became a pillar of strength for

Kindness leaves footprints that time cannot erase



Our small kindness can touch many lives and it
influences
others.

Kindness can create a beautiful chain.
It makes a good fortune.
Our kindness may travel to many hearts and
shape our relationships.

Q. PATRICIA,
BT Assistant,
CREATIVE WRITER,
CUDDALORE.

Kindness is the most powerful character of
human beings.
Even a small act of kindness can remain in a
person's heart for many years.

A gentleword and a warm smile can make a great
change in someone's life.

The best view comes after the hardest climb



Pessimistic comments ignore it as a chime
Try hard to progress
Never soak yourself in depress
You're the way creator of the Hardest path

Determined yourself to take an oath
To self motivate and inspire
After the success, all will admire
Boost yourself with words of wisdom
Evade to get boredom
Stick on to the goals
Pasting the holes
Reach the cliff to see the whole view
Stop not, move on to the best view
N. SIVASANKARI
CREATIVE WRITER
MADURAI DISTRICT TAMILNADU

Education The pupils emerged position one in Class 1012H, presenting a self-composed folk dance that promotes the preservation of African culture and traditions

MP Steve Mogaka accuses education officials of blocking Mobamba champions from State House gala

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyatiimes

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka has accused some education officials of unfairly denying pupils from Mobamba D.O.K Primary School an opportunity to perform at the State House Gala despite emerging national champions in the just-concluded Annual Music Festivals held in Bungoma County.

Speaking at Mobamba D.O.K Primary School during a celebration held in honour of the pupils, Mogaka said the children had been hurt and disappointed after they were left out of the performers who proceeded to the State House Gala.

The pupils emerged position one in Class 1012H, presenting a self-composed folk dance that promotes the preservation of African culture and traditions.

Mogaka said the achievement demonstrates the importance of the Competency-Based Education (CBE) system in identifying and nurturing talent among learners.

He accused some officials within the Ministry of Education of engaging in what he termed as “monkey business” and disadvantaging the pupils.

“I have sponsored these children with my own resources, and they have become national champions. Yet somebody in the Ministry of Education is doing monkey business and disadvantaging these children,” Mogaka said.

The MP said he had already raised the matter in Parliament and questioned how Mobamba could be left out of the list of performers at the State House Gala despite winning at the national level.

He maintained that the children deserved an opportunity to showcase their talent and said he would continue pushing for the matter to be addressed.

“An injustice to one is an injustice to all. An injustice to the children of Mobamba is an injustice to all children and parents across Kenya. We must right that wrong and allow this piece to be presented so that the whole country and the world can see the creativity of our children, the prowess



West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka has accused some education officials of unfairly denying pupils from Mobamba D.O.K Primary School an opportunity to perform at the State House Gala despite emerging national champions | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

of our teachers and the support given by their parents,” he said.

Mogaka also encouraged the pupils not to give up because of the setback, promising to explore ways of helping them meet President William Ruto so that their historic achievement can receive recognition.

He presented the pupils with a token of appreciation and urged them to continue developing their creativity and talents.

Looking ahead, Mogaka pledged to make Mobamba a centre of excellence in music and drama, promising to support the school with musical instruments and other resources.

“When you reopen the school in January, I will bring here musical instruments that will be used by our constituents in West Mugirango. We will make Mobamba a centre of excellence in music and drama,” Mogaka said.

He further called for the children’s talent to be exposed to a wider audience, including national and international musicians and artists.

Mogaka said the pupils’ success is a reflection of the commitment of their teachers, parents and the learners themselves, adding that their creativity should be nurtured rather than discouraged.

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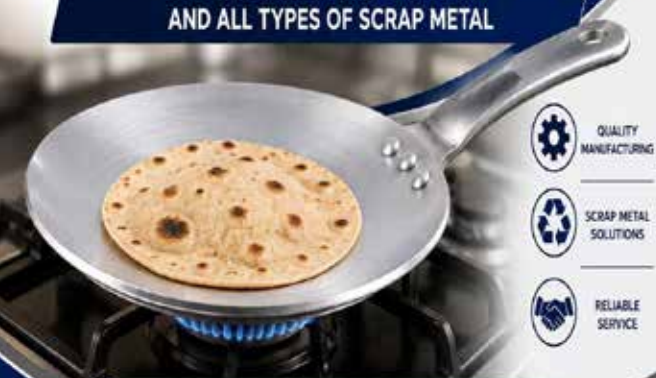
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Politics “We are being told that KSh12 billion was spent on hospitality at State House, in a country where we are told we have no cash for capitation

Sifuna vows to send Ruto home

BY David Kimani

@themkenyaintimes

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna told Parliament yesterday that the opposition’s plan for Kenya is straightforward: remove President William Ruto from office, cut State House’s hospitality budget and redirect the savings to teachers and hospitals within the first 100 days of a new government.

Speaking in the Senate, Sifuna said: “We are being told that KSh12 billion was spent on hospitality at State House, in a country where we are told we have no cash for capitation. So those of you who ask us for a plan, ours is to send you home.” The remark was directed at Ruto, who on Monday had accused opposition leaders of relying on ethnic profiling and intimidation rather than any coherent policy platform. Sifuna’s answer was characteristic: blunt, short and immediately viral.

The exchange crystallises a political moment that Kenya has not seen since 2002. Eleven months before the August 2027 general election, the opposition is crowded, fractious and, in parts, unexpectedly energetic. And at the centre of that energy is a 44-year-old Nairobi lawyer who, less than a year ago, had virtually no measurable presidential support anywhere in the country.

Sifuna promised in the Senate that in the first 100 days after removing the current government, the opposition would “cut out the fat that is being utilised at State House so that we can pay our teachers and fund our hospitals.” It was the clearest policy statement he has yet made from the floor of Parliament — and its simplicity is both its political strength and its analytical vulnerability. Critics on social media were swift to note that cutting hospitality budgets, however symbolically satisfying, does not constitute a comprehensive fiscal plan for a country carrying a debt stock exceeding KSh11 trillion. Sifuna’s defenders responded that the Senator was



Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

making a political point in a political forum, not delivering a budget speech.

The distinction matters because it captures the central tension in Sifuna’s project. He has built extraordinary momentum — climbing from virtually no measurable support in 2025 to 15 per cent in the June 2026 TIFA survey, the largest gain recorded among any opposition figure in the poll’s history. That same survey placed Ruto at 24 per cent nationally, followed by Sifuna at 15 per cent, Fred Matiang’i at 14 per cent, Kalonzo Musyoka at 13 per cent and Rigathi Gachagua at 7 per cent, with 20 per cent of respondents still undecided. For a first-term senator who was removed as ODM Secretary-General in July, those are striking numbers. They are also numbers built substantially on opposition to Ruto rather than on a detailed affirmative programme for government.

The movement behind Sifuna’s rise, Linda Mwananchi — meaning “Protect the Citizen” — began as an ODM faction opposed to the party’s accommodation of Ruto’s broad-based government arrangement. It has since positioned itself as an alternative voice, challenging the dominant political formations and drawing in youthful lawmakers seeking to step out of the shadows of their political parties. Trans Nzoia Governor George Ntembeya, Siaya Governor James Orenge and Embakasi East MP Babu Ow-

ino have all marched alongside Sifuna as the movement has held rallies from Kitengela to Nakuru to Kitale. In Trans Nzoia, Ntembeya told supporters that Western Kenya was fully behind Sifuna, dismissing Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula as leaders who had lost touch with the region.

Sifuna’s declaration in July that he was ready to seek the presidency transformed Linda Mwananchi from a pressure group into a potential electoral force, but it also thrust the movement into confronting strategic dilemmas it could no longer postpone — including the absence of a registered political party. Confusion erupted after the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties approved the registration of the Liberty National Democratic Alliance (LINDA) Party, reigniting a battle over the political identity at the very moment Sifuna’s campaign was gaining momentum. The movement had invested heavily in building national recognition under the Linda brand while overlooking the legal registration that would have secured it. That oversight may yet prove costly.

Ruto’s provocation on Monday was not accidental. The President used a visit to Kajiado County to defend his broad-based UDA-ODM political arrangement as a vehicle for national unity, while accusing opposition leaders of manipulating voters through

with the full weight of the nation’s upper chamber as its platform.

The 2027 election will be the first held in the era of the Gen Z movement, and analysts have noted structural parallels with 2002 — when public desire for change overwhelmed the establishment candidate and produced an unexpected landslide. Whether that parallel holds depends on factors that no opinion poll can yet capture: whether the opposition can agree on a single candidate, whether Linda Mwananchi can resolve its party registration crisis, and whether Sifuna’s appeal beyond young, urban voters can extend into the rural constituencies that have historically decided Kenyan elections.

The TIFA survey also found that 62 per cent of respondents believed Gachagua’s best route to defeating Ruto was to back a stronger oppo-

sition candidate, with only 14 per cent preferring Gachagua to lead the coalition himself. That figure illustrates the opposition’s core arithmetic problem: enough people want change to threaten an incumbent, but they do not yet agree on who should lead that change. Sifuna, Gachagua, Kalonzo, Matiang’i and now Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro all believe they have a claim to that role.

Yesterday’s Senate exchange offered a window into how Sifuna intends to define that claim — not through the traditional language of political patronage and regional blocs, but through the economics of austerity and the politics of accountability. Whether that message is enough to assemble a winning coalition across Kenya’s 47 counties is the question that will define the next 11 months.

For now, the senator from Nairobi has served notice. He intends to be heard — and he wants the President to go home.




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Politics Musyoka's message emphasizes unity across ethnic and regional lines, arguing that Kenya's progress depends on shared prosperity rather than isolated development

Meet the people tour: Kalonzo Musyoka's grassroots push for national renewal

Wiper Front Party embarks on a two county outreach to reconnect with citizens and reaffirm its message of unity and redemption.

BY James Mwangi

@themkenyaintimes

The Wiper Front Party (WPF) has announced a major grassroots engagement drive titled Meet the People Tour, scheduled for September 12–13, 2026, across Garissa and Tana River counties. The event, hosted by Ambassador Siyat Osman Ibrahim, the party's deputy chairman, will feature Kalonzo Musyoka, who continues to position himself as a national unifier and advocate for inclusive development under the rallying cry "Together we shall Komboa Kenya."

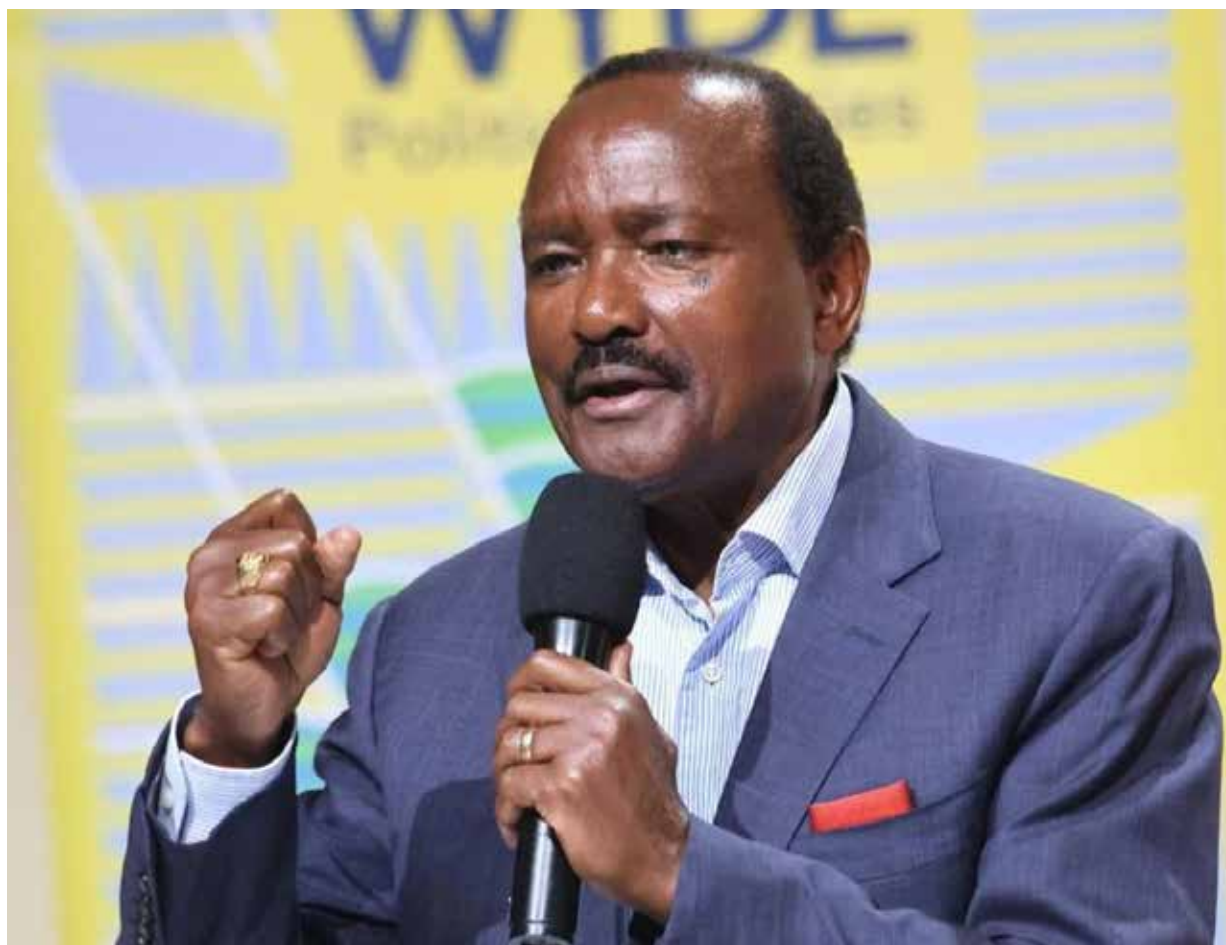
The Meet the People Tour represents a strategic outreach effort by the Wiper Front Party to strengthen its presence in northern Kenya, a region often described as the frontier of both opportunity and neglect. Garissa and Tana River counties have long faced challenges of drought, insecurity, and limited infrastructure, yet they remain vital to Kenya's economic and cultural fabric.

By choosing these counties, Kalonzo Musyoka and Ambassador Siyat Osman Ibrahim signal a deliberate move to engage communities that have historically felt excluded from national decision making. The tour aims to bridge that gap through direct dialogue, listening sessions, and community driven policy discussions.

The slogan "Together we shall Komboa Kenya" has become a defining phrase for the Wiper Front's current political messaging. The Swahili word komboa means "redeem" or "liberate," and in this context, it captures the party's vision of restoring fairness, opportunity, and dignity to all Kenyans.

Musyoka's message emphasizes unity across ethnic and regional lines, arguing that Kenya's progress depends on shared prosperity rather than isolated development. His speeches in recent months have focused on economic inclusion, youth empowerment, and the need for ethical leadership — themes expected to dominate the Garissa and Tana River engagements.

As host and deputy chairman of WPF, Ambassador Siyat Osman



Kalonzo Musyoka

Ibrahim brings both diplomatic experience and local credibility to the tour. His leadership in northern Kenya has been marked by advocacy for education, peacebuilding, and youth employment.

In Garissa, Siyat is expected to highlight the importance of professionalizing local governance and expanding access to education, particularly for girls. In Tana River, discussions will likely center on water management, pastoral livelihoods, and inter community cooperation.

His presence reinforces the party's commitment to regional representation and the inclusion of voices from Kenya's arid and semi arid lands in national policy debates.

Garissa and Tana River counties sit at the intersection of Kenya's development paradox — regions rich in potential but constrained by systemic challenges. Despite national economic growth, local communities continue to struggle with unemployment, poor infrastructure, and limited

access to healthcare.

The Meet the People Tour therefore arrives at a critical moment. It offers a platform for citizens to articulate their concerns directly to national leaders. Issues such as youth job creation, climate resilience, and equitable resource distribution are expected to dominate the conversations.

The Wiper Front Party has indicated that feedback from these engagements will inform its policy proposals ahead of the next national agenda cycle.

While the tour is framed as a civic engagement initiative rather than a campaign rally, its timing and scope carry political weight. September 2026 marks a period of heightened political activity as parties begin to position themselves for future national contests.

Musyoka's decision to lead a grassroots tour in northern Kenya underscores his intent to expand Wiper Front's reach beyond its traditional strongholds. Analysts note that such

outreach could reshape alliances and influence voter perceptions in regions that have historically leaned toward other political formations.

However, the party maintains that the tour's primary goal is to listen, not to campaign — a distinction that aligns with its emphasis on participatory democracy.

Local leaders and residents have expressed optimism about the upcoming visit. In Garissa, youth groups have prepared memoranda on employment and entrepreneurship, while women's associations plan to present proposals on microfinance and education.

In Tana River, elders have welcomed the initiative as an opportunity to discuss land rights and conflict resolution mechanisms. The counties' diverse communities — including pastoralists, farmers, and traders — see the tour as a chance to voice their aspirations directly to national figures.

The imagery on the event poster

— Musyoka and Siyat addressing a crowd — captures the essence of participatory leadership. It evokes a sense of accessibility and dialogue, contrasting with the perception of distant, centralized governance.

The choice of Garissa and Tana River also carries symbolic weight. These counties represent resilience amid adversity, and their inclusion in the tour signals recognition of their strategic importance in Kenya's socio economic landscape.

Beyond the immediate engagements, the Meet the People Tour reflects a broader vision of national renewal. Musyoka's message of redemption — Komboa Kenya — resonates with citizens who feel disillusioned by inequality and corruption.

The Wiper Front Party's approach emphasizes ethical leadership, social justice, and inclusive growth. Its leaders argue that Kenya's progress must be measured not only by GDP figures but by the well being of ordinary citizens.

By engaging directly with communities, the party seeks to demonstrate that politics can serve as a vehicle for empowerment rather than division.

As the tour unfolds, attention will focus on the outcomes of the discussions and the commitments made by the visiting leaders. The expectation is that tangible follow up actions — such as community projects, policy recommendations, and continued dialogue — will emerge from the engagements.

For Garissa and Tana River residents, the visit offers hope that their voices will influence national priorities. For the Wiper Front Party, it provides an opportunity to showcase its grassroots strategy and reaffirm its role in shaping Kenya's political future.

The Meet the People Tour in Garissa and Tana River counties is more than a political event; it is a statement of intent. It reflects a growing recognition that Kenya's progress depends on listening to its people, especially those in regions often overlooked by mainstream politics.

Under the banner Together we shall Komboa Kenya, Kalonzo Musyoka and Ambassador Siyat Osman Ibrahim are inviting citizens to participate in a conversation about redemption, unity, and shared prosperity.

Whether viewed as a political maneuver or a genuine outreach effort, the tour underscores a timeless truth — that leadership begins with listening.

Youth During the Second Industrial Revolution, electricity was discovered, making mass production possible and greatly reducing the use of manual labour.

Kenya’s youth are the vanguard of the fourth industrial revolution



BY John Wangai
@themkenyaintimes

Since time immemorial, human civilization has continually adapted to and embraced new developments aimed at improving the well-being of humankind. The world’s earliest civilizations are believed to have existed during the pre – industrial epoch which was largely characterized by hunting and gathering before gradually transitioning to the use of simple homemade tools and mechanization during the First Industrial Revolution.

During the Second Industrial Revolution, electricity was discovered, making mass production possible and greatly reducing the use of manual labour. It was during the Third Industrial Revolution that computers were invented, leading to automation and digitization, which made work more effective and efficient.

We’re currently in the Fourth Industrial Revolution which is largely characterized by the adoption and widespread use of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, block chain technology, Internet of Things (IoT), virtual and augmented reality, autonomous vehicles, nanotechnology, biotechnology, neurotechnology and other emerging technologies.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, approximately 75% of Kenya’s population is under the age of 35, with about 30% falling within the youth age bracket. Article 260 of the Constitu-

tion of Kenya defines youth as all individuals who have attained the age of eighteen years but have not attained the age of thirty-five years.

Kenya is also among the leading nations in Africa with a highly tech-savvy youth population. A report from the Communications Authority of Kenya indicates that over 80% of Kenyan youth own a smart phone, while more than 60% have access to and regularly use the internet. Furthermore, according to a recent DataReportal report, Kenya ranked first in AI adoption and usage, with over 90% of the youth reported to be using either one or more AI tools regularly.

Notably, Kenyan youth have continued to stand out on international and regional platforms by developing innovative and creative technology-driven solutions to practical challenges in key sectors including agriculture, healthcare, transport, fintech, education and security.

In bid to harness the enormous untapped talent, the Kenya National Intelligence Research University organized the National AI Hackathon earlier this year and invited innovators to submit AI projects focused on addressing challenges in threat detection, cybersecurity, predictive policing , efficient and effective public service delivery, healthcare, education and governance.

Remarkably, the event attracted over 5,600 participants and received more than 2,500 AI project submissions. The top award went to Caroline Gakii, Daniel Maitethia and Ezekiel Otieno, students from Meru University of Science and Technology who developed a low-cost, AI – powered digital microscope for cancer and malaria

diagnosis. The second-place award was presented to Joshua Radula from Strathmore University, who developed an AI tool that translates speech and text into sign language and in third place was Kelvin Mulama who developed an autonomous financial fraud detection system.

It is therefore, incontrovertible that Kenya is a sleeping giant with vast unexplored capabilities which, if utilized prudently can not only accelerate economic transformation but also fast-track the achievement of our national development blueprints.

Consequently, to achieve one of the core aspirations of Kenya Vision 2030, which is to be a leading technology hub in the continent as Africa’s Silicon Savannah, we must be intentional about it and initiate a raft of reforms including restructuring the education curriculum to focus on skills that will be required in the future, implementing nationwide AI literacy programs and initiating inclusive and progressive legislative reforms to safeguard human and digital rights.

Finally, to adequately prepare the next generation to proficiently propel our nation forward in this age of intelligence, the youth must be actively included at all levels of governance and decision-making bodies. Also, they must be actively engaged in the legislative process to enable them shape the future they envision, as they are the generation that will live with the implication of today’s decisions for the longest time.

John Wangai
Public Interest Litigation Lawyer



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PROJECT OF ROMANTIC POETRY with Aleena Ansar

An M.phill Scholar from the University of Chenab, Gujrat

Book Review:

William Wordsworth: Nature, Emotion, and the Romantic Imagination

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William Wordsworth: Nature, Emotion, and the Romantic Imagination

William Wordsworth was one of the great poets of the Romantic period. He lived much of his life in the beautiful Lake District of England. His poetry is closely related to nature, emotions, and human feelings. That is why he is considered one of the most brilliant poets of English literature.

Early Life and Education

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in north-west England. His father, John Wordsworth, introduced him to the poetry of Milton and Shakespeare. Because his father was often away from home, William spent much of his early life at his grandparents' house in Penrith. This period was not a happy one for him. However, during these years, he developed a deep love for nature. He wandered through the hills and valleys of the Lake District and also developed a close bond with his sister, Dorothy.

Education and Influence of the French Revolution

In 1779, Wordsworth was sent to Hawkshead Grammar School, where he remained away from his sister for several years. Later, in 1787, he entered St John's College, Cambridge. During his university years, he travelled to France in 1790 and was deeply influenced by the ideas of freedom and equality associated with the French Revolution. He returned to France in 1792. However, when the Reign of Terror and political violence began, he became disillusioned with the Revolution. Financial and political circumstances prevented him from returning to France until 1802. In that year, he returned to France and married his childhood friend, Mary Hutchinson. Dorothy also lived with them and remained very close to the family. William and Mary had five children, but sadly, three of them died young.

Literary Career

Wordsworth's literary life became more secure when he inherited £900 from Raisley Calvert, which allowed him to devote himself more fully to literature. He published his early collections, *An Evening*

Walk and Descriptive Sketches. During this period, he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the two poets became close friends. Together, they published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, a work that helped create a new spirit in English poetry. Wordsworth's famous autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, was originally written as part of a larger project and was closely associated with his correspondence and friendship with Coleridge.

Wordsworth and Romantic Poetry

Wordsworth, along with poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, helped establish the Romantic movement in English poetry. Romantic poetry emphasizes nature, imagination, emotion, individual experience, and the ordinary life of human beings. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth describes poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. The collection includes his famous poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," while many of his other celebrated poems explore memory, nature, childhood, and human emotion.

Major Poems and Publications

In 1807, Wordsworth published *Poems*, in Two Volumes. This collection included famous poems such as "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," "My Heart Leaps Up," and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality." His poem about the golden daffodils is particularly popular because it beautifully describes the relationship between natural beauty and human happiness.

Later Life and Death

By the 1820s, Wordsworth

had achieved considerable fame. Although some critics argued that his later poetry lacked the emotional intensity of his early years, his reputation continued to grow. As he aged, he became more conservative and moved away from some of his earlier revolutionary ideas. In 1839, Oxford University awarded him an honorary degree, and he received a government pension. In 1843, he was appointed Poet Laureate of England. Wordsworth died of pleurisy on April 23, 1850, and was buried in St Oswald's Church, Grasmere. The *Prelude* was published posthumously in 1850 by his widow, Mary Wordsworth, and became one of the major works through which his literary legacy was preserved.

Wordsworth and Poetic Diction

Poetic diction refers to the specific language and style used in poetry. Before Wordsworth, many poets used an artificial and elevated style influenced by classical writers such as Virgil and Milton. Wordsworth opposed this style because he believed that it separated poetry from ordinary people. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, he argued that the language of poetry should be simple, natural, and close to everyday speech, particularly the language used by rural people. He criticized artificial expressions and unnecessary embellishments. According to Wordsworth, true poetry expresses genuine feelings in a natural manner. He uses simple but beautiful language, enriched by literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and symbols, making his poetry accessible to a wider readership.

Major Themes in Wordsworth's Poetry

The main themes of William Wordsworth's poetry are nature, human emotions, mem-

ory, childhood, imagination, and the simple life of ordinary people. He believes that nature is a source of peace, wisdom, and spiritual guidance. In many of his poems, nature soothes the human mind and creates happiness and contentment. Wordsworth also emphasizes memory and imagination because past experiences can provide wisdom and emotional strength. Childhood and innocence are important themes because he considers children to be particularly close to nature and purity. He presents villagers, farmers, and ordinary people to show that genuine emotions and beauty can be found in simple life. His poetry also reflects spirituality and the deep connection between human beings and nature.

Wordsworth and Pantheism

Wordsworth is sometimes described as a pantheistic or pantheism-influenced poet because of his belief in a spiritual presence throughout nature. For him, nature is not merely beautiful scenery; it is a living, moral, and spiritual reality. In "Tintern Abbey," he speaks of a presence that moves through nature and gives it spiritual significance. He sees a profound connection among rivers, mountains, trees, human beings, and the larger universe. His poetry therefore presents human beings as part of nature rather than as its masters. The simple life of the shepherd in "Michael" also illustrates his belief in the harmony between human life and the natural world.

Tintern Abbey

In "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth revisits the Wye Valley after five years and reflects on how nature has influenced his life. He explains how memories of natural scenes have provided him with peace, wisdom, and spiritual satisfaction. The poem demonstrates his deep love for nature and his belief that nature can provide moral and spiritual education.

Daffodils

In "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," commonly known as

"Daffodils," the speaker describes countless golden daffodils swaying in the wind. The beautiful scene fills him with immense joy. The memory of the flowers remains in his mind and later gives him happiness whenever he feels lonely or thoughtful. The poem therefore demonstrates the relationship between nature, memory, and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

In my opinion, William Wordsworth is one of the greatest and most inspiring poets of the Romantic Age. I admire his deep love for nature and his ability to express profound emotions in simple language. His poetry encourages readers to appreciate the beauty of nature and to find peace and wisdom in everyday experiences. Unlike poets who focus mainly on grand and extraordinary subjects, Wordsworth makes ordinary people and ordinary life important subjects of poetry. That is why his poetry feels realistic and close to the human heart.

To sum up, William Wordsworth is one of the most prominent and central voices of the English Romantic movement. He moved poetry away from artificial language and heroic themes toward nature, ordinary people, imagination, and deep human emotions. For Wordsworth, nature is not merely a backdrop but a living, moral, and spiritual force that can heal, educate, and inspire human beings. His simple language and emphasis on everyday life brought poetry closer to ordinary readers and gave it a new purpose. His deep emotional and philosophical connection with nature makes his poetry timeless. Through his work, he teaches readers to respect, love, and learn from nature. That is why he remains one of the greatest nature poets in English literature.

Education Beyond the outright prohibition on sexual activity, the regulation forbids teachers from making requests for sexual favours or placing any pressure on learners for sexual activity

Why every teacher must understand Regulation 22

The TSC Code of Conduct on professional boundaries exists not to restrict teachers but to protect the profession's most fundamental asset: trust

Ashford Kimani

@themkenyatimes

The TSC Code of Conduct on professional boundaries exists not to restrict teachers but to protect the profession's most fundamental asset: trust

By Ashford Kimani

Teaching is among the noblest of professions precisely because it places educators in a position of extraordinary trust. Parents hand their children to teachers expecting knowledge, guidance, discipline and protection. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) recognises that responsibility in its Code of Regulations, and nowhere more forcefully than in Regulation 22, which sets out clear standards governing the conduct of teachers towards learners.

The regulation opens without ambiguity: a teacher shall not engage in any sexual activity whatsoever with a learner, regardless of whether the learner appears to consent. That framing is deliberate. A learner cannot legally or ethically consent to a sexual relationship with a teacher. The power imbalance is structural — teachers hold authority over learners through assessment, discipline, mentorship and academic influence — and any romantic or sexual involvement is, by definition, an abuse of that authority. The regulation closes the door on every conceivable justification.

Beyond the outright prohibition on sexual activity, the regulation forbids teachers from making requests for sexual favours or placing any pressure on learners for sexual activity. Such pressure need not be explicit. It may take the form of promises — better grades, favourable treatment, gifts or opportunities — or threats of punishment, poor academic results or disciplinary action if a learner refuses. Whatever form it takes, using professional authority to seek sexual favours constitutes gross misconduct and a criminal offence.

Regulation 22 also prohibits flirting with learners. Some educators have mistakenly treated flirting as harmless because it stops short of physi-

cal contact. It is not. Suggestive remarks, inappropriate compliments, romantic messages or unnecessary physical closeness can destabilise a learner's sense of safety and blur the professional boundaries that must remain clear at all times. Discomfort does not require a dramatic incident to be real.

The regulation further provides that teachers should never send learners to their personal residences for any reason. The intention behind such a visit is beside the point. Professional interactions between teachers and learners must take place in approved school environments or under officially sanctioned activities where accountability and transparency can be maintained. Good intentions are not a substitute for proper procedure.

On coercion, the regulation is equally direct. Teachers are forbidden from inducing, threatening or intimidating learners — particularly in connection with their academic performance — in exchange for sexual relations. Marks, recommendations and disciplinary decisions must always reflect merit, fairness and integrity. Academic authority is not a bargaining tool.

The regulation also makes explicit what might seem obvious but is often neglected: every teacher has a legal and moral obligation to report suspected or confirmed abuse through the appropriate channels. Remaining silent, discouraging a victim from coming forward, destroying evidence or shielding a perpetrator amounts to complicity. Schools become safe spaces only when every member of staff actively participates in protecting children.

Learner safety is also addressed at the moment of dismissal. Teachers should not release learners before notifying parents or guardians, and should not send learners home outside prescribed hours except in genuine emergencies. A school's duty of care does not end at the classroom door. Sending a child away unexpectedly may expose them to accidents, violence or other foreseeable dangers.

Regulation 23 extends these standards beyond the classroom. Teach-



A teacher in classroom

ers are prohibited from sexually harassing colleagues or members of the public. Sexual harassment encompasses unwelcome sexual advances, repeated requests for dates or sexual favours, inappropriate physical contact, offensive remarks, sexually suggestive messages and any conduct that creates a hostile environment. Persistence after rejection — continuing behaviour that has been made unwelcome — is itself a violation. Consent must be voluntary and continuous; it is not a box ticked once and carried forward indefinitely.

The consequences of breaching these regulations are severe and career-ending. A teacher found guilty may face interdiction, dismissal, deregistration by the TSC, criminal prosecution, imprisonment and last-

ing reputational damage. Years of dedicated service can be destroyed by a single lapse in professional judgment.

Protection against such outcomes is, in practice, straightforward. Communication with learners should remain official and educational. Meetings should take place in visible, accountable settings. Private conversations that could be misunderstood should be avoided, as should unnecessary physical contact. Social media exchanges with learners must comply with school policies and remain entirely professional.

School administrators carry their own responsibilities in this framework: building child protection systems, conducting regular training, creating conditions that encourage reporting and responding to com-

plaints without delay. Parents, for their part, should equip children with the language to recognise inappropriate behaviour and the confidence to report it without fear.

These regulations are not a burden on teachers. The overwhelming majority of teachers are committed professionals who dedicate their careers to shaping future generations with integrity and care. For them, Regulation 22 is simply a formal articulation of what good teachers already practise. Professional boundaries are not barriers to effective teaching. They are the foundation on which trust, safety and educational excellence are built — and without that foundation, the profession cannot stand.

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Sports >> *Kane leads the field as France Football unveils the 70th-anniversary shortlists, with PSG dominant, Messi back and a women's race wide open without Bonmati

Football's most coveted prize goes to London: The 2026 Ballon d'Or race is on

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

France Football today unveiled the full shortlists for the 2026 Ballon d'Or, the 70th edition of football's most prestigious individual prize, with Harry Kane heading the betting as the nominees are revealed ahead of the October 26 ceremony at the London Palladium — the first time the award has ever been presented in England.

The choice of London is deliberate. Sir Stanley Matthews became the inaugural Ballon d'Or winner in 1956, and seven decades on, the ceremony returns to English soil to honour the man who started it all. The evening will crown winners across twelve categories, with the men's and women's main awards topping a night that also honours the best goalkeeper, best young player, top scorer, coach and club of the year.

Kane arrives as the bookmakers' favourite after a remarkable campaign for Bayern Munich, in which he scored 61 goals in 51 appearances across all competitions, powered Vincent Kompany's side to the domestic treble and claimed a second European Golden Shoe. He is joined on the men's shortlist by Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, who won the Kopa Trophy in each of the past two editions and is now competing for the main prize, and by Jude Bellingham of Real Madrid, who helped Spain win the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America this summer. Reigning holder Ousmane Dembélé is nominated to defend his crown, while Lionel Messi — at 39 — has been included once more after a season that underscored his enduring influence at Inter Miami. Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes also earned his place after a standout club campaign. Paris Saint-Germain dominate the nominations, with several of their players included across

multiple categories.

The women's shortlist has been reshaped by injury. Three-time defending champion Aitana Bonmati is absent after breaking her leg in November 2025, leaving the award without its dominant personality and opening the door for a new winner — potentially just the fifth different player to claim the prize. Barcelona striker Ewa Pajor and Manchester City forward Khadija Shaw head a competitive field that also includes Arsenal's Alessia Russo, England defender Alex Greenwood and Alexia Putellas, now representing London City Lionesses after leaving Barcelona during the summer. Club América's Scarlett Camberos also features, marking a historic first — the only nominee from outside Europe in the women's main category.

The Yashin Trophy for best goalkeeper features a strong Iberian presence alongside a notable African contingent. Arsenal's David Raya and Real Madrid's Thibaut Courtois are among the early favourites, with Barcelona's Joan García also considered a serious contender following a fine domestic season. African goalkeepers feature prominently on the shortlist, reflecting the continent's growing influence in the position at the highest level.

For the Coach of the Year award, Mikel Arteta leads a field that includes Spain's World Cup-winning coach Luis de la Fuente, Unai Emery for his work at Aston Villa, Luis Enrique at PSG and Vincent Kompany following Bayern Munich's treble. On the women's side, Jonatan Giráldez of OL Lyonnes and Manchester City Women's Andree Jeglertz have been recognised for their impact on the women's game.

The Kopa Trophy — awarded to the best player aged 21 or under — features Yamal, Barcelona teammate Pau Cubarsí and Paris Saint-Germain midfielder War-



ren Zaïre-Emery as the headline names in a generation of talent that has arrived at the highest level with startling speed.

In the club categories, Arsenal and PSG lead the men's nominations alongside Bayern Munich, Norway's Bodø/Glimt and Flamengo of Brazil. For the women, FC Barcelona, Bayern Munich, OL Lyonnes, Manchester City and Club América represent the five nominees.

The shortlists were announced throughout today, September 8, with voting now in the hands of an international jury of journalists representing the top 100 FIFA-ranked nations for the men's award and 50 nations for the women's. Each voter ranks

ten players, assigning 15 points for their first choice and one for their tenth.

On October 26, the rankings are revealed in reverse order until the winner is named. Seventy years after Matthews lifted the first golden ball, London will witness the moment football crowns the best on the planet.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Three first-half goals in Belgium give Emery’s rebuilding project a Champions League foundation after a goalless Premier League start

Villa find their scoring touch where it matters most

By Martin Weche

Aston Villa beat Club Brugge 3-2 at the Jan Breydel Stadium yesterday, opening their 2026-27 Champions League campaign with three valuable away points and, crucially, their first goals of the season after a muted domestic start.

It was exactly the kind of result Unai Emery needed. Villa had arrived in Belgium pointless and scoreless after three Premier League matches, carrying the weight of a turbulent summer that stripped the club of six first-team regulars — including Morgan Rogers, who departed for Chelsea in a deal that brought Nicolas Jackson to Villa Park. Questions about whether the new-look attack could function at the highest level were answered emphatically, and well before half-time.

John McGinn settled things in the 11th minute. Defender Pau Torres carried the ball uncontested through the Brugge midfield before laying off to his captain, who swept a first-time strike into the bottom-left corner past Yann Sommer. It was McGinn’s 12th goal in UEFA competition for Villa, moving him past Ollie Watkins as the club’s all-time leading European scorer. For a player now carrying more responsibility than at any point in his long Villa career, the timing could not have been better.

Club Brugge levelled quickly. Hugo Vetlesen slotted past Villa goalkeeper Zion Suzuki from a left-wing delivery by Jan Virgili in the 19th minute, and the Jan Breydel briefly roared. The response from Villa, however, was swift and composed. Emiliano Buendía restored the lead three minutes later, finishing from close range after a slick move involving Joao Gomes, and then, on the stroke of half-time, Jackson rolled the ball into an empty net after Torres’ long ball over



Aston Villa beat Club Brugge 3-2 at the Jan Breydel Stadium

the top beat Sommer off his line. It was Jackson’s first Villa goal since his club-record £65 million move from Chelsea, and it gave Villa a 3-1 lead they carried into the interval.

The second half was less comfortable. Nicolò Tresoldi converted a penalty in the 61st minute to make it 3-2 and set up a nervy final half-hour. Brugge pressed, Villa defended, and Suzuki was called upon more than once. But Emery’s side held on, confirming that this new group — however unsettled it may appear — has the resilience to close out tight European matches.

The statistics told a familiar Villa story on the road in Europe. Club Brugge controlled 62 percent of possession and completed nearly 600 passes. Villa had 38 percent of the ball and three goals. It was the first time in their European history that Villa had scored three times away from home before half-time. Their Champions League win percent-

age since returning to European competition now stands at 64.3 percent — the best of any side currently in the competition.

For Emery, the victory validated a recruitment strategy that has not yet had time to bed in. Ten players have arrived this summer to replace a spine that helped deliver the Europa League title in Turkey last season. The manager has called for patience, and he is right to do so. What this performance offered is early evidence that the instincts he has built into this club — tactical discipline, a willingness to absorb pressure and attack with precision — have transferred to a largely new group of players.

McGinn, Villa’s longest-serving player, embodies that continuity. It was his energy and his goal that set the tone in Bruges. Teenager George Hemmings, making his Champions League debut, passed up two early chances to add to the lead but showed enough to suggest Villa’s youth

pipeline remains healthy. Buendía’s goal was his 25th in the Champions League for Villa collectively — making them the eighth English club to reach that milestone in the competition.

The road ahead is unforgiving. Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, Borussia Dortmund and Galatasaray all await in the league phase. Villa next face Nottingham Forest in the Premier League before returning to European duty against Fenerbahce.

But for one night in Belgium, the goals came. The win came. And after a difficult opening to the season, that is the only thing that matters.

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How Artificial Intelligence is reshaping second language acquisition: The classroom value of word wall and quizlet



By: Bayjanova Gulnora
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Introduction

Artificial intelligence has moved from the margins of language education into its core. What used to be a textbook-and-blackboard process is increasingly supported by adaptive software that reacts to each learner in real time. This shift raises a natural question for teachers: is the change good for learners, or does it come with hidden costs? This article first weighs the general benefits and drawbacks of AI in second language acquisition (SLA), then narrows the focus to two widely used classroom platforms, Wordwall and Quizlet, looking specifically at the value they add to lessons.

Part One: Benefits and Drawbacks of AI in Second Language Acquisition

Benefits

Personalization at scale. A recent study on AI-driven SLA argues that conventional systems often fail to give learners real-time, individualized feedback, which is precisely the gap adaptive, data-driven AI models are designed to close since standard SLA systems that learners are familiar with often fail to provide real-time, personalized feedback that can enhance language proficiency, so this gap needs to be addressed with a more adaptive, data-driven approach. In practice, this means a program can slow down, speed up, or change its examples according to how a specific student performs, rather than pacing an entire class identically.

Measurable skill gains. Mixed-methods research on AI-powered tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, ELSA Speak, and Duolingo reports that these tools noticeably strengthen learners' writing accuracy, pro-

nunciation, and vocabulary, while also lifting motivation and independent study habits with results indicating significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition and writing accuracy among participants using AI tools, alongside enhanced motivation and self-directed learning.

Support for teachers, not just students. AI is not only a tutor for learners; it also shapes how instructors design instruction. Case-study research on tutors trained in AI methods found that tutors who had participated in AI training understood the strategic role of AI in designing communicative, adaptive, and personalized learning, suggesting AI literacy can improve lesson design even before students open an app.

Drawbacks

Over-reliance and shallow use. The same systematic review that praised tools like ChatGPT and Duolingo also found real limits in how students actually use them. Many learners showed weak AI literacy and used tools like ChatGPT mainly for writing help and translation, often skipping the reflection or revision that would turn the tool's output into real learning, and opinions ranged from enthusiasm to distrust of over-reliance.

Structural and ethical concerns. A broader look at AI-supported foreign language learning warns that these tools raise real institutional questions. Adaptive personalization systems bring pedagogical, ethical, and technical challenges, including data privacy, algorithmic transparency, equitable access, and shifting teacher roles, meaning schools cannot adopt AI tools as a simple plug-in without also addressing these systemic issues.

Uneven access. Even well-designed gamified and AI-supported tools depend on infrastructure that not every classroom has. Research on digital formative-assessment tools notes practical barriers such as unequal device access, unstable internet connectivity, and limited teacher digital literacy, all of which can undercut the benefits these tools promise in theory.



Artificial Intelligence

Part Two: The Classroom Value of Wordwall and Quizlet

The comparison below focuses only on what each platform contributes positively to lessons, since both are widely adopted for very different classroom purposes: Wordwall for gamified, teacher-designed activities, and Quizlet for structured vocabulary drilling through flashcards and spaced repetition.

Wordwall: Benefits in Lessons

Turns review into a game. Multiple classroom studies describe Wordwall as an engaging, low-stakes way to revisit material. Survey research with junior high students found that learners perceived it as exciting, interesting, motivating and fun, and reported paying more attention in class when Wordwall activities were used.

Builds a collaborative classroom atmosphere. Beyond individual practice, Wordwall activities are often designed for pairs or groups, which research on ELT classrooms suggests encourages collaborative learning through group activities and friendly competition, fostering a sense of community in the classroom.

Doubles as quick formative assessment. Because results are visible immediately, teachers can use Wordwall not only for practice but also to check understanding. A study in literature classes found the platform useful as an engaging formative assessment tool that increases student motivation, vocabulary retention,

and collaborative learning, allowing the instructor to monitor progress and give timely feedback.

Wide template variety keeps lessons fresh. With dozens of ready-made activity formats, teachers can vary the format instead of repeating the same drill. The same literature-classroom study notes that Wordwall has 33 interactive templates including the classic ones and arcade modes that can be used, giving instructors flexibility across topics and levels.

Documented gains in vocabulary and comprehension. A study of elementary EFL learners concluded that gamified, formative use of Wordwall strengthens young learners' vocabulary and reading outcomes, while a separate pre-experimental study of junior high students recorded average test scores rising from 31.5 to 80.3 alongside very high classroom activity levels after Wordwall-assisted lessons.

Quizlet: Benefits in Lessons

Built on the psychology of memory. Quizlet's flashcard and review system is explicitly modeled on the spacing effect, the well-established finding that information sticks better when review sessions are spread out rather than crammed since spaced repetition capitalizes on the spacing effect, which suggests that information is better retained when reviewed at spaced intervals rather than in one session. As retention grows, the platform lengthens the interval between reviews, keeping practice efficient

rather than repetitive for its own sake so that as retention improves, the intervals gradually increase, allowing the brain to consolidate knowledge while maintaining recall efficiency.

Produces real learning gains in language classrooms. Applied research with university-level L2 English learners found that the focused, intentional vocabulary practice built into Quizlet led to significant learning gains, even among students who started with below-target vocabulary knowledge.

Works for both short bursts and structured review. Whether students are cramming before a quiz or working through scheduled review sessions, the underlying flashcard-and-recall format supports both massed and spaced practice, giving teachers flexibility in how they assign it — as a five-minute warm-up or a week-long revision task.

Encourages active recall over passive rereading. By prompting learners to produce the answer rather than simply reread a definition, Quizlet's format aligns with cognitive-science evidence that active recall builds stronger, more durable memory than passive review, which is particularly useful for the vocabulary-heavy demands of second language learning.

Conclusion

AI has changed second language acquisition from a mostly uniform classroom experience into something that can adapt to the individual learner, while also introducing new questions about equity, data privacy, and over-reliance on automated tools. Within this broader shift, Wordwall and Quizlet occupy complementary niches in the language classroom: Wordwall turns review into a shared, game-based classroom event that boosts motivation and collaboration, while Quizlet gives individual learners a scientifically grounded way to build and retain vocabulary through spaced, active recall. Used together, and used thoughtfully, they illustrate how AI-supported tools can strengthen — rather than replace — sound language teaching.