



Moles, millions and Mount Kenya: The war within Kenya's opposition
Kiharu Member of Parliament Ndindi Nyoro yesterday fired back at former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, flatly denying claims that he had accepted KSh200 million from President William Ruto **Page 8**



When Kenya looks for economic enemies: Is the foreign trader really the problem?
Kenya has entered that familiar season when every economic headache suddenly needs a human face. **Page 12**

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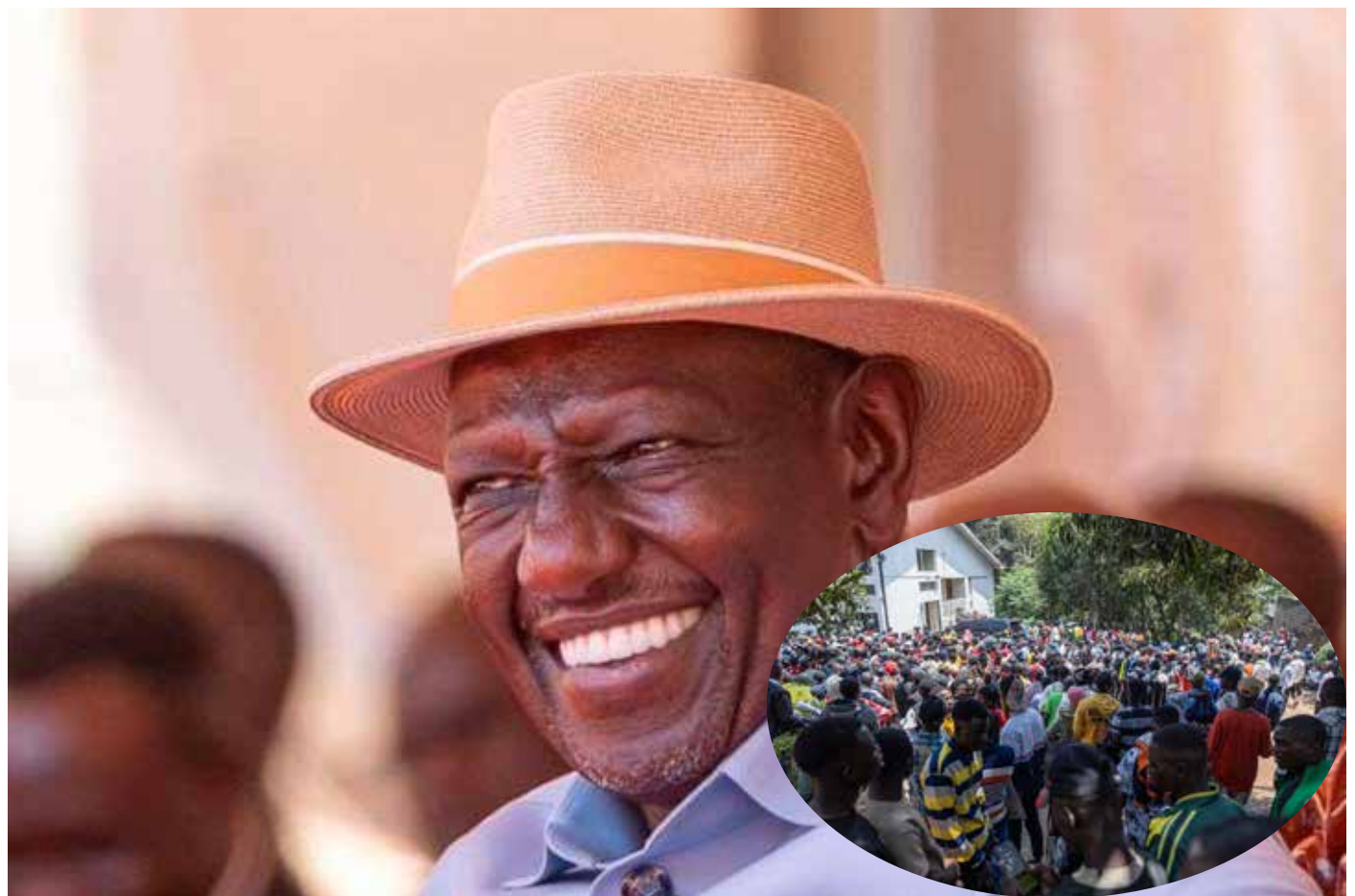
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Countdown 2027  **Protecting local businesses is legitimate — but eviction without economic empowerment is not a strategy**

Foreign traders exit Kenya

Kenya has once again found itself at the intersection of economics, politics and public frustration. The government's increasingly firm stance against foreign nationals operating small businesses has been presented as a defence of Kenyan traders and a response to concerns about unfair competition. On the surface, the argument appears straightforward: Kenyan businesses should not be suffocated in their own country. But beneath that argument lies a much harder question — if Kenya closes the door on foreign traders, who will open the door for the millions of unemployed Kenyans still waiting outside the labour market?

For years, unemployment — particularly among young people — has remained one of Kenya's most persistent economic failures. Every year, thousands of graduates leave colleges and universities carrying certificates, expectations and sometimes enormous debts, only to encounter a labour market with far fewer openings than applicants. Others abandon the search for formal employment altogether and enter the informal economy, selling clothes, food and electronics simply to survive. For them, employment is no longer about career progression. It is about finding something that covers tomorrow's bills. **Page 9**



President William Ruto inset Burundians leaving Kenya



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Ruto launches KSh580 million Kajiado projects in pre-election push

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday launched a series of infrastructure projects in Ongata Rongai, Kajiado County, committing KSh580 million across education, trade and transport in a visit that carried clear electoral undertones eleven months before the August 2027 general election.

Ruto announced that the government would construct 40 additional classrooms at Ongata Rongai Primary School to ease overcrowding, framing the pledge within a national programme to build 23,000 similar facilities across the country. He laid the foundation stone for a KSh210 million modern market designed to accommodate 1,000 traders, and commissioned a KSh70 million market in Rongai already serving 200 traders. He also launched the construction of a KSh300 million, five-kilometre access road linking the town to the Standard Gauge Railway station.

"Under SHA, it is not a must for one to hold a formal job or a payslip to benefit. This programme caters for all without favour," Ruto told residents, referencing the Social Health Authority, which has registered 740,000 Kajiado residents. He urged residents to remain united. Kajiado Governor Joseph ole Lenku attended alongside county and national officials.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) yesterday gave the government seven days to resolve the nurses' strike — now in its 41st day — warning that doctors will join the industrial action if the standoff continues. KMPDU Secretary-General Davji Atellah said public hospitals had been pushed to breaking point, with nursing care unavailable to patients who need it most. "Essential services have been disrupted. Patients going to hospital who need nursing care cannot get it, and nursing care is key for any health service to be functional," Atellah said. The nurses walked off the job on 29 July after talks over their Collective Bargaining Agreement collapsed. Atellah added that a separate doctors' grievance — a promised payslip adjustment due in August — had also not been honoured, raising the prospect of an even broader healthcare shutdown if the government fails to act within the week.



Tharaka University Vice Chancellor Peter Muriungi urged incoming students on Saturday to supplement their degree programmes with foreign language skills, pointing to the institution's established pipeline of graduates placed in Germany as proof that the strategy delivers results. Speaking at the close of a five-day orientation programme at the university's main campus in Gatunga, Tharaka Nithi County, Muriungi said the global job market rewarded practical, multilingual competencies, not qualifications alone. "These courses in hospitality with a foreign language component will get you from Tharaka University to the world. We already have a true example," he said. Students were advised to stack professional certifications alongside their core studies — a computer science student learning a European language, a hospitality trainee adding a language component — to position themselves for opportunities well beyond Kenya's borders.



Two years after Rex Kanyike Masai was shot dead near Absa Bank on Tom Mboya Street during Nairobi's 2024 Anti-Finance Bill protests, the prosecution yesterday formally closed its inquest file before Milimani Principal Magistrate Geoffrey Onsarigo, having called 30 witnesses and tendered 48 exhibits including CCTV footage and photographic evidence. The closure followed testimony from Independent Policing Oversight Authority forensic expert Joshua Mutua, who told the court the key video — a one-minute 15-second clip recorded at 7.18pm on 20 June 2024 — showed no signs of manipulation, insertion, deletion or splicing. A plain-clothed officer identified as Isaiah Murangiri Ndumba has emerged as the central suspect. Parties will now file written submissions before the magistrate delivers a ruling, with the matter next mentioned on 24 September.



The Teachers Service Commission received 126,801 applications for 34,016 promotion vacancies in its 2026/2027 career advancement exercise — nearly four teachers chasing every available slot. The positions, spanning 30 grades across public primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges, were advertised in July, with the application window closing on 10 August. Competition has eased marginally from the previous year, when 131,734 teachers competed for just 21,313 slots. TSC has since shortlisted 78,732 candidates on merit, assessed against years of service, performance appraisal scores, qualifications and disciplinary records. Primary school interviews opened yesterday and run until 15 September, with post-primary teachers and curriculum support officers to follow from 17 to 25 September. The commission has confirmed the exercise is free of charge.



The Kenya Revenue Authority yesterday defended a new cargo clearance requirement that has drawn complaints from freight forwarders, clearing agents and motor vehicle dealers since taking effect on 1 September. The dispute centres on Section 23B of the Tax Procedures Act, introduced through the Finance Act 2026, which requires importers to obtain and retain export declarations or equivalent customs documents from the country of origin before goods can be cleared. The Kenya International Freight and Warehousing Association and other logistics players say the rule has slowed clearance and raised costs at the Port of Mombasa, which handled 45.45 million tonnes of cargo in 2025. KRA said it cannot withdraw the measure because it is a parliamentary obligation, not a discretionary policy, but committed to continuing stakeholder consultations to reduce operational disruption. Motor vehicle valuation remains a separate, ongoing court dispute.

Kenya's Digital Health Agency has initiated procurement of an AI-powered maternal and newborn health platform called Taifa Care, designed to centralise care data from a woman's first antenatal visit through her child's early years. The system combines six interconnected modules covering antenatal and postnatal care, family planning, immunisation, adolescent health, emergency obstetric services and maternal death tracking, all under a single data architecture. Official procurement documents released on 25 August detail the government's mandate to design, develop and deploy the integrated platform, which will give health officials a real-time view of care delivery and flag potential complications earlier. The initiative comes as Kenya records 355 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births — well above the United Nations target of fewer than 70 by 2030 — and forms part of the broader transition from the defunct National Health Insurance Fund to the Social Health Authority.



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Africa Vice President Deogratius Ndejembu announced the death at 8am local time.

Africa mourns Tanzania's first gentleman

Hafidh Ameir Hassan, husband of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, dies at 66 after a life of quiet service and agricultural scholarship

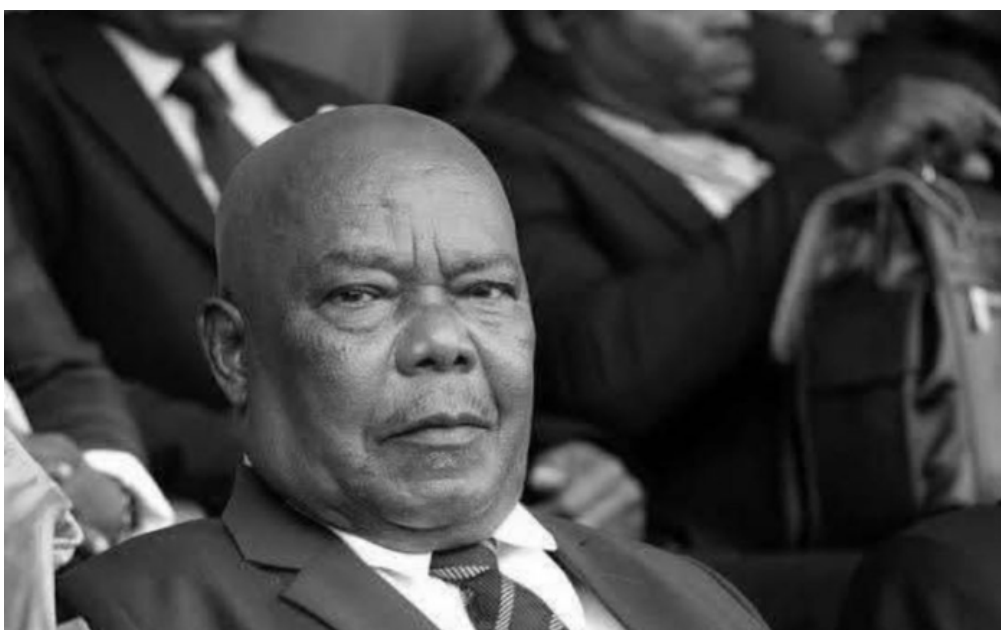
BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Hafidh Ameir Hassan, the husband of Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the country's first-ever First Gentleman, died yesterday morning at Emilio Mzena Memorial Hospital in Zanzibar after treatment for a heart condition, prompting an outpouring of condolences from across Africa and beyond.

Vice President Deogratius Ndejembu announced the death at 8am local time. "It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Mr Hafidh Ameir Hassan, husband of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan," Ndejembu said, extending condolences to the president, her family and all Tanzanians. Funeral arrangements were set for Kizimkazi, in South Unguja, Zanzibar — the president's home village — where burial took place yesterday afternoon.

Ameir, an agricultural academic who spent his career working in the farming sector, had married Samia in 1978, decades before her ascent to Tanzania's highest office. He became Africa's first head-of-state spouse to hold the title of First Gentleman when Samia was sworn in as president in March 2021, following the death of John Magufuli. Throughout her presidency, Ameir maintained the



Hafidh Ameir Hassan, husband of President Samia Suluhu Hassan

private disposition that had defined him throughout his life, appearing rarely in the public spotlight and choosing quiet devotion over political ceremony. The couple had four children — three sons and a daughter, Wanu Hafidh Ameir, who serves in Zanzibar's House of Representatives.

Regional leaders were swift in their condolences. Kenyan President William Ruto said he had received the news with "deep sorrow." "President Samia has lost a lifelong companion, her children a beloved father, and Tanzania a distinguished son," Ruto said. "Kenya stands with our Tanzanian brothers and sisters in this moment of grief. May Almighty God comfort President Samia and her

family, give them strength through this difficult time, and grant Hafidh Ameir Hassan eternal rest."

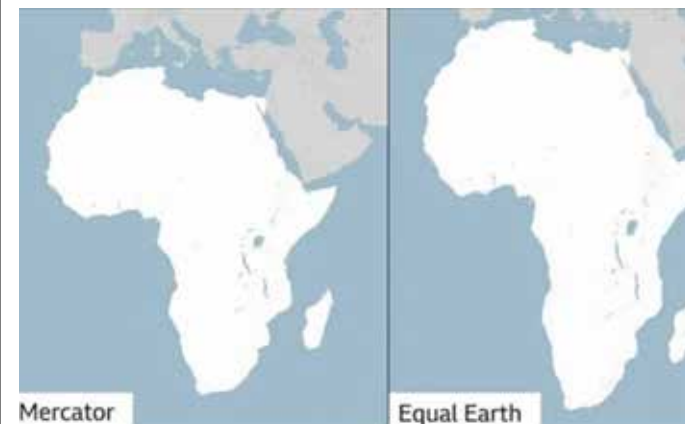
Rwandan President Paul Kagame addressed President Samia directly. "My sincere condolences to my sister, President Samia Suluhu, her family, and the people of Tanzania," Kagame said, adding that Rwanda stood in solidarity as Tanzania honoured Ameir's life and legacy. Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema said his country stood "side by side" with the first family, while Burundian President Évariste Ndayishimiye offered prayers for "comfort and strength" during what he described as a deeply painful time. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud prayed for Am-

eir to be granted paradise. African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf wished President Samia "strength, courage and solace."

Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi said the loss was immense. "I pray to Almighty God to grant President Samia, together with her family, patience, strength and comfort during this difficult period," Mwinyi said.

Colleagues in agriculture remembered Ameir as a man whose contribution to Tanzania's farming sector outlasted the attention it received. He lived, as he died, largely outside the spotlight — a quiet force behind Africa's most prominent female head of state.

The world finally sees Africa at its true size



A landmark UN vote forces a reckoning with five centuries of cartographic distortion that shrank a continent in the global imagination

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

The United Nations General Assembly voted 164 to 1 on 4 September to endorse the Equal Earth map projection, formally declaring that the Mercator map has shrunk Africa and distorted global perceptions for 450 years.

The resolution, titled "Correct the Map" and championed by Togo's Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Dussey on behalf of the African Group and the African Union, calls on governments, schools and technology companies to replace the 16th-century Mercator projection with equal-area alternatives in any context where the comparative size of continents matters. The Mercator projection, designed by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569, expands landmasses closer to the poles, making Europe and North America appear significantly larger than they are while compressing Africa.

"Maps shape our understanding of the world. They guide education, nourish the imagination, and influence collective perceptions," Dussey told the Assembly. AU Commissioner Amma Twum-Amoah was direct: "Africa, once diminished on maps, now insists on being seen at its true scale — geographically, historically, morally, culturally, economically, diplomatically and globally."

France moved swiftly. Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot announced Paris would abandon the Mercator projection in favour of more accurate representations. The United States cast the lone dissenting vote, calling the resolution part of "a radical ideological project."

The resolution is non-binding, but its moral weight is considerable. For Africa, the map has finally changed.

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Politics The exchange is the most visible eruption yet of a simmering conflict inside Mount Kenya's fractured political landscape

Moles, millions and Mount Kenya: The war within Kenya's opposition

A bitter public clash between Ndindi Nyoro and Rigathi Gachagua exposes the fault lines threatening to fracture the region that will decide the 2027 election

BY James Mwangi

@themkenyaintimes

Kiharu Member of Parliament Ndindi Nyoro yesterday fired back at former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, flatly denying claims that he had accepted KSh200 million from President William Ruto to destroy the Democracy for the Citizens Party and divide the Mount Kenya vote ahead of the August 2027 general election.

Speaking at the People's Party of Kenya headquarters in Nairobi, Nyoro did not name Gachagua directly but left no doubt about his target. "If he needs that money, let him go back to Ruto and ask for it himself," Nyoro said, dismissing the allegation as baseless and born of political insecurity. He then issued a pointed challenge, urging Gachagua to confront him directly rather than deploying proxies to attack him in public. "Stop sending people to insult me," Nyoro said. "Face me."

The exchange is the most visible eruption yet of a simmering conflict inside Mount Kenya's fractured political landscape — a conflict that has profound implications for Kenya's 2027 presidential contest and for the opposition's broader ambition to unseat Ruto.

At the heart of the dispute is a question of political territory and legitimacy. Gachagua, since his dramatic impeachment as deputy president in October 2024, has positioned himself as the undisputed voice of Mount Kenya. His Democracy for the Citizens Party has moved aggressively — winning the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election in July, pulling 24 Members of County Assembly from Laikipia and Nakuuru into its ranks, and conducting a sweeping consultative tour of Meru, Embu and Nyeri counties. Gachagua has spoken openly of his ambition to deliver DCP 130 parliamentary seats and 20 county governors by 2027. He has also claimed the region can mobilise up to 7.1 million votes for a united opposition candidate — a figure that, if accurate, would make Mount Kenya the decisive bloc in the next presidential race.



Kiharu Member of Parliament Ndindi Nyoro and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

Into that carefully constructed narrative, Nyoro arrived in August. On 17 August, the Kiharu MP formally left the ruling United Democratic Alliance and took over the leadership of the People's Party of Kenya, declaring himself and his supporters members of the opposition. His entry was welcomed by senior opposi-



Speaking at the People's Party of Kenya headquarters in Nairobi, Nyoro did not name Gachagua directly but left no doubt about his target. "If he needs that money, let him go back to Ruto and ask for it himself," Nyoro said, dismissing the allegation as baseless and born of political insecurity. He then issued a pointed challenge, urging Gachagua to confront him directly rather than deploying proxies to attack him in public. "Stop sending people to insult me," Nyoro said. "Face me."

tion figures, including James Orenge, who attended his announcement. Nyoro subsequently declared a presidential ambition for 2027 and called on opposition parties to agree on a single candidate, a single running mate and a unified campaign.

Gachagua's camp interpreted the move differently. DCP Secretary-General John Methu described PPK as a "wheelbarrow party" designed by State House to fragment the Mount Kenya vote. Kiambu Senator Karungo Thang'wa went further, labelling Nyoro "a coward, a mole and a double-speaker," and claiming he had previously worked alongside Ruto to undermine Gachagua's authority as deputy president. "Gachagua's problems started with Ndindi Nyoro," Thang'wa said in a radio interview. "He was moving across the country contributing millions to undermine the deputy president's office."

Nyoro has a ready counter-narrative. He points out that he was among the most vocal supporters of Gachagua's selection as Ruto's running mate in 2022, a choice that passed over Nyoro himself, who had been widely regarded as a frontrunner for the position. He also notes that when the impeachment motion

came to the National Assembly floor in 2024, he refused to participate — a decision he credits with costing him the chairmanship of the powerful Budget and Appropriations Committee. His removal from that role, he argues, is the clearest evidence that his relationship with the Ruto administration had already broken down long before his formal defection. "It is crystal clear that we parted with this government a long time ago," Nyoro told Citizen TV's JKLive on 2 September.

The Gachagua camp is not entirely united on how to handle Nyoro. Kirinyaga gubernatorial aspirant Wangui Ndirici, a recent DCP recruit, publicly distanced herself from Gachagua's mole accusations. "Although he is my party leader, we do not always share the same political school of thought," Ndirici said, calling for political tolerance and respect for different party choices. Former Nyeri Town MP Ngunjiri Wambugu was blunter. "As long as you are independent and don't kneel before him, he will call you a mole," Wambugu wrote on Facebook, adding that Gachagua's reaction to Nyoro had confirmed everything he had long said about the former deputy president's approach to political

competitors.

The eruption between Nyoro and Gachagua is symptomatic of a deeper crisis within Kenya's opposition. The opposition principals — Gachagua, Kalonzo Musyoka of the Wiper Patriotic Front, Martha Karua of the People's Liberation Party, Fred Matiang'i of Jubilee and Eugene Wamalwa of DAP-K — held their second round of consultations on 1 September. Gachagua, who was abroad, was represented by former Kakamega senator Cleophas Malala. The gathering produced no candidate, no coalition name and no agreed timeline. DAP-K's Wamalwa was candid about the pace: "We can meet one day for lunch, and before dinner we have a candidate," he said, suggesting a decision on a joint presidential flag-bearer could wait until after Christmas.

For Ruto's strategists, the spectacle of Gachagua and Nyoro publicly trading accusations provides a political dividend. Mount Kenya contributes approximately 30 percent of the national presidential vote, a share large enough to determine the outcome of a close contest. A region divided between DCP, PPK and residual UDA loyalists would be far easier for an incumbent to navigate than a unified bloc marching in one direction. Gachagua's own assessment — that Ruto is deliberately funding smaller parties to fragment the region — reflects an awareness that division is Ruto's most effective defensive strategy in the heartland he carried convincingly in 2022.

What Nyoro's emergence has complicated is the assumption that Mount Kenya's opposition voice belongs to Gachagua alone. The Kiharu MP arrives with credibility, a Mount Kenya pedigree, a declared presidential ambition and a willingness to absorb attacks without folding. He has also called explicitly for opposition unity rather than fragmentation, positioning himself as a coalition builder rather than a spoiler.

The election is eleven months away. Mount Kenya's eight million voters are watching — and the men seeking to speak for them are not yet speaking to each other.

Economy For years, unemployment — particularly among young people — has remained one of Kenya's most persistent economic failures

Closing the door on foreign traders: But who opens it for unemployed Kenyans?

Protecting local businesses is legitimate — but eviction without economic empowerment is not a strategy

BY Collins Kibet

@themkenyatimes

Kenya has once again found itself at the intersection of economics, politics and public frustration. The government's increasingly firm stance against foreign nationals operating small businesses has been presented as a defence of Kenyan traders and a response to concerns about unfair competition. On the surface, the argument appears straightforward: Kenyan businesses should not be suffocated in their own country. But beneath that argument lies a much harder question — if Kenya closes the door on foreign traders, who will open the door for the millions of unemployed Kenyans still waiting outside the labour market?

For years, unemployment — particularly among young people — has remained one of Kenya's most persistent economic failures. Every year, thousands of graduates leave colleges and universities carrying certificates, expectations and sometimes enormous debts, only to encounter a labour market with far fewer openings than applicants. Others abandon the search for formal employment altogether and enter the informal economy, selling clothes, food and electronics simply to survive. For them, employment is no longer about career progression. It is about finding something that covers tomorrow's bills.

This is where the foreign-trader debate becomes considerably more complicated. It is easy to blame a foreign trader selling goods in a Kenyan market. It is harder to explain why a Kenyan graduate cannot find meaningful work in the same economy. Removing one competitor may clear space on a particular street, but it does not automatically create factories, investment, industries or sustainable jobs. A closed door for one trader does not necessarily become an open door for an unemployed Kenyan.

The government therefore faces a delicate responsibility. Protecting Kenyan entrepreneurs is legitimate, but protection cannot begin and end with eviction orders, restrictions and



Burundians leaving Kenya



Burundians at their embassy in Kenya

enforcement operations. It must be accompanied by an economic strategy that equips Kenyans to actually occupy the space being created. If foreign traders leave, who will supply the markets? Who will manufacture the goods? Who will finance the businesses? Who will provide affordable credit? Who will train young entrepreneurs? And most critically — who will ensure that opportunities do not simply pass from one group of traders to another without improving the economic circum-

stances of ordinary Kenyans?

There is also a real danger in turning foreigners into convenient economic scapegoats. Kenya's unemployment crisis did not begin with foreign traders, and it will not end when they go. The country's deeper challenges include limited industrialisation, inadequate investment in productive sectors, expensive credit, skills mismatches, corruption, weak support for small enterprises and an economy that consistently produces more job seekers than quality jobs.

This matters most for young Kenyans. They have heard promises of jobs, enterprise funds, affordable credit and economic transformation for years. Yet for many, daily reality remains a struggle to find work or sustain a small business. The danger is that economic frustration eventually hardens into political frustration. When a generation is repeatedly told that opportunities are coming — and sees little change in its circumstances — promises begin to lose their power entirely.

The government should move beyond the politics of who should leave, and concentrate on the economics of who should be empowered to stay and prosper.

Kenya has every right to regulate its labour market, enforce immigration laws and protect legitimate local businesses. But enforcement must be paired with investment. If the government wants Kenyan traders to occupy more shelves, it must help Kenyan manufacturers fill those shelves. If it wants Kenyan entrepreneurs to dominate the small-business space, it must make credit accessible and affordable. If it wants Kenyan graduates to create jobs rather than endlessly search for them, it must build an environment where innovation and enterprise can actually survive.

Otherwise, Kenya risks celebrating the closing of one door without noticing that another remains firmly locked.

The real measure of success will not be how many foreign traders leave Kenya. It will be how many unemployed Kenyans finally find a reason to stay, build and prosper at home.

Kenya does not simply need fewer competitors. It needs more opportunities. And that is the door the government must urgently learn to open.

The government must answer a fundamental question: what is the long-term plan for the Kenyan who has been told to face less competition but has never been given the tools to compete effectively?

Kenya needs an economy that does more than redistribute existing opportunities. It needs to generate new ones. Rather than asking only who is occupying the marketplace, policy-makers should be asking why Kenya is not producing enough marketplaces — enough factories, farms, technology companies and industries capable of absorbing a growing workforce.

There is a broader economic lesson embedded in this debate. If the country wants genuine local participation in its economy, the principle must be applied consistently. Kenyans should not merely be shielded from competition; they should be empowered to become producers, manufacturers, investors and exporters. A nation does not build prosperity by permanently protecting its citizens from competitive pressure. It builds prosperity by giving them the capital, skills, infrastructure and institutions required to compete and win.

Faith More than 280 AMDA members left Kampala and drove over 300 kilometres to Sheema. They were not coming for politics or business. They were coming home.

Faith, healing and vows: AMDA caravan transforms Sheema parish

Three days in Nyabwina brought 32 weddings, thousands of free medical treatments and tonnes of seedlings to one of Uganda's quieter hill parishes



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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Three days this week, St Clare Catholic Parish in Nyabwina, Sheema District, became something altogether different

from the quiet hill community it normally is. The 12th annual caravan of the Archdiocese of Mbarara Development Association (AMDA) descended on the parish — and what followed was, by any measure, extraordinary.

More than 280 AMDA members left Kampala and drove over 300 kilometres to Sheema. They were not coming for politics or business. They were coming home.

AMDA began in the early

1990s as the Mbarara Diocese Development Association, a handful of Banyankole Catholics who had settled in Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, Wakiso and Jinja but whose hearts had remained in the region they grew up in. Their goal was straightforward: to stay united, to worship together in their mother tongue, and to remain connected to the 66 parishes of Mbarara Archdiocese that had shaped them. From those beginnings,



St Clare Catholic Parish in Nyabwina, Sheema District

the organisation has grown to more than 3,000 members and today serves as the official umbrella body for Catholics from Mbarara Archdiocese living in Uganda's central region.

In 2013, that sense of rootedness produced a new idea — the AMDA Caravan, an annual return to the home parishes to give back not only money but skills, medical care, and sacramental life. Since then, the caravan has visited 27 parishes. This year, it was Nyabwina's turn.

When the convoy arrived on Thursday morning, the parish was waiting. Women ululated, drums sounded, and children lined the roadside holding branches. What followed over the next three days touched almost every dimension of life in the community.

The medical camp was among the most striking elements. Under AMDA's health pillar and in partnership with Mulago National Referral Hospital, Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital and the Sheema District Health Office, a team of more than 150 health workers set up what amounted to a field hospital in the parish compound. People began queuing before dawn. By the end of the camp, preliminary figures showed more than 3,800 had received free treatment, screening or counselling across departments covering dental care, paediatrics, cervical and breast cancer screening, hypertension checks and trauma counselling. All medicines, labora-

tory tests and reading glasses were provided free.

"We came here thinking we were just going to give Panadol," said Dr Rosemary Byanyima, executive director of Mulago National Referral Hospital and a senior AMDA member. "But what we found is deep pain. People walking 20km to see a doctor for the first time in 10 years. This is why AMDA exists."

The spiritual dimension of the caravan produced the week's most emotional moments. On Friday, Archbishop Lambert Bainomugisha of Mbarara Archdiocese presided over a Holy Mass at which 32 couples who had been living together for years — some for more than two decades — were married in the Sacrament of Matrimony. AMDA's Spiritual Development Council had spent months preparing the couples through catechesis and counselling, and had provided wedding rings, veils, suits and church dues for each pair. Children attended who had never seen their parents wed in a church.

"You can give a man seedlings and medicine," AMDA chairman Chris Gumisiriza said, "but if his family is not blessed in the church, he is not complete. Today, we have not just given Nyabwina a hospital; we have given it 32 new holy families."

The same Mass saw hundreds receive First Holy Communion, Confession and Baptism. A night vigil of adoration followed, with the parish gathering to pray together.

Beyond the medical camp and the weddings, AMDA distributed more than 6,000 seedlings — 3,000 high-yielding clonal coffee plants and 3,000 Hass avocado seedlings — alongside indigenous trees for environmental protection. Scholastic materials and new curriculum textbooks were donated to St Clare Nyabwina Primary School and other Catholic-founded schools in the parish. More than 500 students attended a career guidance session led by AMDA members on leadership and entrepreneurship. Separate sessions addressed domestic violence, family legacy, inheritance planning and responsible citizenship.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Gumisiriza reflected on what the caravan represents. "We are not donors," he said. "We are children who have come back home. We were raised by this community, not just our parents. Giving back is our way of honouring that legacy. We are building not just infrastructure, but stronger, healthier and more hopeful communities."

As the AMDA convoy left Nyabwina yesterday evening, the women of the parish sang a farewell in Runyankole: "Come back again, people of AMDA, come back." The torch for the 2027 caravan has been passed to the next parish, but in Nyabwina — in its 32 newly sanctified marriages, its thousands treated, its hillsides newly planted — the visit will not quickly be forgotten.

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Security The threat environment has changed. Terrorist groups and organised criminal networks no longer need to target only traditional security facilities to create fear and instability

Mudavadi: Kenya must secure what sustains the nation

Mudavadi's warning on evolving terrorism demands a fundamental rethink of what national security actually means

BY James Kilonzo
Bwire

@themtkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi's warning on evolving terrorism, delivered yesterday at the Fifth Nairobi Caucus on Protecting Critical Infrastructure Systems and Public Spaces, should be treated as a call for Kenya to update how it defines national security. Protecting the country today requires more than guarding security installations and responding after an attack. It requires sustained protection of the systems, public spaces and institutions that enable ordinary life, public services and economic activity to continue.

Kenya's infrastructure is now inseparable from its security. Energy installations, telecommunications networks, transport corridors, water systems, health facilities, ports, airports and digital services support the delivery of essential services and connect the country to the region and the wider world. Any serious disruption to these systems can affect livelihoods, public confidence, public safety and the ability of the state to serve its people.

The threat environment has changed. Terrorist groups and organised criminal networks no longer need to target only traditional security facilities to create fear and instability. They can seek weaknesses in communication installations, transport services, digital platforms and crowded public areas, knowing that disrupting essential services carries immediate consequences for communities, businesses and government institutions.

The Al-Shabaab attack on a telecommunications mast in Dadaab, Garissa County, in July illustrated just how exposed facilities that millions depend on every day can be.

This demands a broader national understanding of protective security. A police presence at a gate, while necessary, is not sufficient. Infrastructure protection must include assessing risks before they become incidents, ensuring systems have workable safety procedures, training personnel, strengthening co-ordination among agencies and keeping essential services running when disruption occurs. The country must regard the human resources, information systems, equipment and operating procedures behind an asset as integral to that asset's security.

The importance of this approach becomes clearer as Kenya moves towards the 2027 general election. Political campaigns bring large gatherings, intense movement of people and heightened public attention across the country. These are central features of democratic participation, and they must not become opportunities for those seeking to cause harm, spread panic or undermine confidence in democratic processes.

The responsibility for safe political gatherings must be shared. Political leaders should organise rallies responsibly, avoid language that heightens tension and work with security agencies on crowd management. Law enforcement officers must provide professional, impartial and well-planned protection. Citizens must remain alert, report suspicious activity and refuse to allow violence or in-

timidation to be normalised in public life. Security at political events cannot be achieved through force alone. It depends equally on leadership, discipline and public cooperation.

Mudavadi is right to stress the shift from reaction to prevention. Kenya has often demonstrated its capacity to respond when a threat emerges, but prevention is always the stronger public interest. It reduces harm, preserves services and reassures citizens that institutions are prepared. The five priorities he proposed — anticipation, readiness, mitigation, response and recovery — provide a sound basis for translating security policy into practical action.

Anticipation means recognising risks early through intelligence, community reporting, technical monitoring and information sharing across institutions. Readiness means agencies and operators of key facilities have clear plans, trained teams and tested procedures. Mitigation means addressing known vulnerabilities before they are exploited. Response means acting quickly and in a coordinated manner when an incident occurs. Recovery means restoring services, supporting affected communities and learning from failures so that the same weakness is not left unaddressed.

Private companies have an important role in this work. A significant share of the country's communications, financial, transport, energy and digital systems is owned or operated by private entities. Government agencies cannot effectively protect these systems without structured partnerships with the businesses



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi

that manage them daily. Companies must invest in security planning, employee awareness, cybersecurity, reporting systems and business continuity arrangements. In turn, the state must provide clear guidance, timely intelligence where appropriate and fair regulatory standards.

Cybersecurity deserves particular attention. Kenya's public and private services increasingly depend on digital platforms, data networks and automated systems. A cyberattack can disrupt services without an attacker approaching a physical facility. This creates a need for stronger protection of networks, software, data and the personnel managing essential systems. The security of a power facility, hospital, airport or financial service now includes the security of its digital operations.

The proposed legal framework for registering and disclosing foreign agents, lobbyists and foreign-funded activities should be approached as a matter of transparency and sovereignty. Kenya benefits from international partnerships, investment, humanitarian cooperation and diplomatic engagement, and these relationships should continue. However, the public has a legitimate interest in knowing when external actors seek to influence national decisions, public policy or strategic sectors. A well-designed framework can strengthen accountability while preserving lawful cooperation.

Such a law must be imple-

mented carefully. It should not be used to suppress civil society, silence legitimate advocacy or discourage development partners from supporting valuable programmes. Its purpose should be disclosure, accountability and protection of national interests. Clear definitions, transparent procedures, independent oversight and respect for constitutional rights will be essential if the framework is to earn public confidence.

The same balance applies when dealing with organised criminal groups. Kenya must take seriously the possibility that criminal networks can acquire greater capacity and more violent methods. Groups that terrorise communities, intimidate public officials or attack strategic facilities create a national security concern beyond ordinary law enforcement. But the response must remain guided by the rule of law, credible investigations and fair prosecution. Security measures lose legitimacy when they abandon due process.

Kenya's position as a regional transport, business, diplomatic and humanitarian centre increases both its opportunities and its responsibilities. The Port of Mombasa, aviation facilities, transport links, communications networks and financial systems serve interests beyond Kenya's borders. Their disruption can affect neighbouring countries, trade routes and regional stability. Regional cooperation is therefore a practical necessity rather than a diplomatic cour-

tesy.

The country should deepen intelligence sharing and joint preparedness with neighbouring states and regional institutions. Terrorism, cybercrime, illicit financing and organised criminal activity do not stop at borders. A national response unsupported by regional co-ordination will leave gaps that hostile actors can exploit. Kenya should continue to advocate common standards for protecting shared infrastructure and public spaces.

Ultimately, securing critical infrastructure is about protecting people. A safe communications network allows families, businesses and emergency services to stay connected. A secure transport system enables workers, students and goods to move. Reliable energy, health and digital services sustain communities and support national development. Protecting these systems must become a permanent national priority, not a concern raised only after an attack.

Kenya has the legal institutions, professional expertise and public interest needed to build stronger protective security. What is required is consistent implementation, adequate investment, responsible leadership and genuine partnership between government, business and citizens. The country cannot wait for a major crisis to discover the cost of neglecting the systems on which national life depends.

Economy That explanation is attractive precisely because it is simple. Kenya's unemployment problem is not simple

When Kenya looks for economic enemies: Is the foreign trader really the problem?

Enforcing the law is governance — turning an entire nationality into a suspect is something else entirely

BY Levis Wangamati
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Kenya has entered that familiar season when every economic headache suddenly needs a human face. The cost of living is high, jobs are scarce, taxes keep knocking and the shilling seems to have developed a personal disagreement with ordinary Kenyans. So, naturally, someone must be blamed. This time, the spotlight has landed on foreign traders, with the government promising tougher enforcement against foreigners operating businesses without the necessary permits. Because apparently, when the economy refuses to behave, the first instinct is to find someone else to blame for the mathematics.

Let us be clear: Kenya has laws, and laws are not decorative lights. If a foreign national is operating a business illegally, the government has every right to enforce the law. If someone is working without the required documentation, violating licensing rules or engaging in activities legally reserved for Kenyan citizens, action should follow. But there is a very important difference between enforcing the law and creating the impression that foreigners are responsible for Kenya's economic frustrations. One is governance. The other is political convenience wearing a government badge.

The frustration among Kenyan traders, however, is real. Walk through a market in Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Nakuru or Kitale and you will

meet young people trying to make a living from businesses that barely cover their costs. A university graduate can spend years collecting certificates only to find the job market has collected something else: silence. The motorcycle taxi rider is struggling, the vegetable seller is struggling, the shopkeeper is struggling and the recent graduate is wondering whether the degree should be framed or used to level a table. Then someone arrives and says, "The foreigners are taking our businesses," and suddenly a complicated economic problem has been reduced to a person standing behind a counter.

That explanation is attractive precisely because it is simple. Kenya's unemployment problem is not simple. Neither is the cost of doing business, access to credit, taxation, corruption, weak industrialisation, expensive electricity, declining purchasing power or the mismatch between what universities produce and what the economy can absorb. None of these problems can be deported at the airport. None can be sent back to Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, India or anywhere else. Structural problems are terribly inconvenient that way. They do not have passports.

This is where Kenya's economic conversation needs some adult supervision. If foreign traders are breaking the law, deal with the specific offenders. Do not turn an entire nationality into a suspect. If a business is operating legally, paying taxes and complying with regulations, then its owner being foreign does

not make the business illegal. Competition can be uncomfortable, but discomfort is not evidence of criminality. A Kenyan entrepreneur should be protected by fair rules, not by creating a marketplace where success depends on who holds the right passport.

There is also something rather telling about Kenya's selective relationship with regional integration. The country proudly champions the East African Community when Kenyan companies want access to neighbouring markets. Kenyan entrepreneurs expanding into Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda are celebrated. Regional trade is applauded when it benefits us. But when another East African trader arrives here and competes effectively, regional integration suddenly starts looking like a bad idea that nobody read the terms and conditions for. A country cannot demand an open door for its citizens abroad while fitting a padlock when its neighbours arrive.

The answer is not to abandon regulation. Kenya needs stronger regulation, not weaker regulation. The government should know who is entering the country, what businesses they are running, whether the appropriate permits are in place and whether taxes are being paid. The same expectations should apply to Kenyan-owned businesses evading taxes, ignoring licences or operating outside the law. The principle should be straightforward: same offence, same law, same consequences. Not "same passport, same suspicion."



Burundians at their embassy in Kenya preparing to leave

But perhaps the more uncomfortable question is why some Kenyan businesses are struggling to compete at all. If the government genuinely wants to empower Kenyan entrepreneurs, it should make entrepreneurship less like an obstacle course designed by people who actively dislike entrepreneurs. A young person starting a small business needs affordable credit, reasonable taxes, reliable electricity, accessible markets and predictable regulations. Instead, too often the aspiring entrepreneur meets a government office before meeting a customer. By the time the paperwork is done, the enthusiasm has already applied for asylum.

Removing foreign competitors will not automatically make Kenyan businesses successful. If a shop closes today because its foreign owner was operating illegally, that does not mean a Kenyan entrepreneur will walk through the door tomorrow with capital, stock and customers. Markets do not work through magic. They work through purchasing power, capital, skills, efficiency and demand. You cannot create prosperity merely by subtracting people from the equation. Sometimes you have to improve the numbers.

There is also a political dimension to this debate that Kenyans should not ignore.

Another election cycle is approaching, and Kenya has a remarkable habit of discovering economic villains whenever politicians need a convenient story. Yesterday it was another group. Today it is foreign traders. Tomorrow, who knows? Perhaps we shall discover that unemployment is hiding in a minibus, inflation is selling tomatoes at Gikomba market and the national debt has opened a kiosk in Eastleigh. Politics has a remarkable talent for turning complicated failures into very simple enemies.

That is why Kenyans should be cautious of solutions that sound wonderfully easy. "Remove them and our businesses will thrive" fits neatly into a rally chant. But after the microphone is switched off and the crowd goes home, the young graduate still needs a job. The trader still needs affordable credit. The manufacturer still needs cheaper production costs. The family still needs food that does not require a small loan. The economy does not accept campaign slogans as payment.

Kenya should also remember that foreign investment and regional commerce are not inherently enemies of Kenyan prosperity. They can create jobs, expand markets, introduce skills and bring capital into the country. Investment

must, of course, operate within Kenyan law and should not suppress local enterprise. But there is a difference between protecting local businesses and insulating them from every form of competition. The first builds resilience. The second can build dependency.

The real challenge is much bigger than the foreign trader selling clothes, electronics or food in a Kenyan town. The real challenge is an economy that has not generated enough opportunities for its young population. Every year, thousands of Kenyans enter adulthood carrying degrees, certificates and ambitions, only to encounter an economy displaying a "No Vacancy" sign. That should concern us far more than the nationality of the person operating the shop across the road.

If Kenya wants to put Kenyans first, then let it do so in the ways that actually matter. Give young people an economy where starting a business does not require surviving twelve bureaucratic departments. Give manufacturers an environment where producing locally is competitive. Give farmers markets that reward production rather than punishing it. Give graduates oppor-

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tunities beyond endlessly forwarding CVs to people who reply, “We shall get back to you.” Patriotism should be measured by the opportunities a country creates for its citizens, not simply by how aggressively it points fingers at foreigners.

The government must enforce immigration and business laws. But enforcement must be surgical, not theatrical. Catch those breaking the law. Shut down illegal operations. Collect what is owed. Protect sectors legally reserved for Kenyans. Then go further and address the economic conditions that make competition so



Burundians at their embassy in Kenya preparing to leave

frightening in the first place. Otherwise, Kenya will keep changing the villain while leaving the underlying plot entirely untouched. The foreign trader did not create Kenya’s unemployment. The foreign

trader did not write the country’s tax policy. The foreign trader did not decide how much the government borrows, how efficiently public money is spent or how many jobs the economy produces. A foreign trader cannot be held responsible for every Kenyan who sends a CV and receives the famous response: “We will call you.” Sometimes the call never comes because the problem is not sitting behind the shop counter.

Kenya needs to stop confusing economic protection with economic progress. A protected market can still be a poor one. A Kenyan-owned business can still fail. A foreign-owned business can still comply fully with the law. The passport of a business owner cannot tell

us whether the economy is healthy. Numbers can. Jobs can. Wages can. Productivity can. The purchasing power of ordinary Kenyans can.

So let the law be enforced — but let Kenya also tell itself the truth. The country does not have an unemployment problem because foreigners decided to claim all available opportunities. Kenya has an economic problem because it has struggled to generate enough productive opportunities for its own people. That problem requires policy, investment, accountability and imagination. Unfortunately, those things are harder to fit into a campaign slogan than “blame the foreigner.”

Because if every economic problem is resolved by removing someone from the equation, eventually Kenya will run out of people to subtract. And when that happens, the country will finally have to confront the uncomfortable truth: the problem was never the people in the equation. The problem was the equation itself.



The silent sky



The sky never asks for attention,
Yet everyone looks at it with admiration.
It receives no praise for its daily work,
No words of appreciation for giving us light, wind
and rain.
Still it continues without complaint.
It does not wonder who notices it
It does not see who chooses to look away.
It simply remains true to its purpose.

Like the sky, let us do our work in silence.
Let us not wait for compliments or prizes.
Let our actions give us satisfaction,
Let honesty guide everything we do.

We do not have to seek the attention of others.
We do not have to prove our worth every day.
When we work sincerely without expecting
admiration,
Our work itself will take us to the next level.

KUMARESWARI S
GRADUATE TEACHER - ENGLISH
VKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR
TAMILNADU



(To my kind and dear doctor—my dear teacher,
Karomatova Gulnoza)

When my heart was aching and I wept in pain,
An illness brought worry, filling my soul with
dread,
Hopes had faded away in the pure, green garden,
And my young body was left exhausted and tired

I opened your door like a fragile, helpless girl,
With no strength left in my sorrowful eyes,
But you looked at me just like a shining star,
And spring awakened within my dark, gloomy
world

Softly and gently, you began to heal me,
Every single word of yours became a soothing
balm,
When I recovered and embraced you with pure joy,
The anxiety and pain finally vanished from my
heart

As the months passed and my results improved,
Even the thin layers experienced a true miracle,
With joy, my heart shone brightly like the sun,
Now I breathe freely and live life to the fullest

With your beautiful advice and the right guidance,
You helped me on my path to losing weight
healthily,

Now I walk with light steps and a pure heart,
Our story is truly the most beautiful tale

There was so much compassion inside your gaze,
You told me: “Do not worry at all, my daughter,
“You taught me strength, resilience, and
patience,
Today, every word of mine bows to you in respect.

To me, you are not just a doctor or physician,
You are as broad-minded and close as my own
mother,
With eyes welling up with tears of pure joy today,
Your spoiled daughter expresses her deepest
gratitude

I love you with every single part of my being,
Every word comes from the depths of my pure
soul,
I pray for you from my heart both day and night,
And my eyes fill with tears whenever I think of you

May you always be safe, and may God protect
you,
May your bright path always be filled with
happiness,
You have brought a cure to the pain of millions,
May your healing hands never feel any pain!

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Rayhona Sobirjonova is a talented young writer
and first-year university student, born in
December 2008 into an intellectually nurturing
family. Supported and encouraged by her parents
from an early age, she has developed a deep
passion for literature, history, and creative
expression. She began her creative journey in
the 3rd grade, and her works have since been
published in numerous international journals and
newspapers. This curious and driven young writer
continues to constantly explore and grow!

Be wise about your surroundings



A sting tied with a flower,
Although it stinks,
The flower spreads its fragrance,
Adding savour to a life prosaic.

A dead lion is worth more than a living dog,
Better to be surrounded by flying bees
Than by dead, stinking beasts.
Deeds do influence our trends.

Leaven makes the unleavened leavened;
Beware of who stays near.
A good tie leads to eternal light,
A bad tie leads to endless fight.
Angelin Gracita.C
St.Marys College
Thoothukudi

A brave seed



A little seed slept quietly under the ground,
While the world above it seemed so far away.
Rain came, storms came, and the soil grew hard,
But the little seed never gave up its dream.

Slowly, it pushed through the darkness and saw
the light,
It grew a little more with every passing day.
One day, it became a strong and beautiful tree,
And taught the world that great things begin
small.

D. DHANYASRI
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Always listen twice -first to what’s being said, then to who said it



First you should listen and analyse the situation
You can move forward with your inference.
Don’t follow blindly and avoid acting like a duck.
Think twice before you leap .

There is no use after you commit the attempt.
You should rationalize the conclusions given by
tempted.
There is no compulsion to follow others like
You have to work with your team to get the
correct conclusion.

Great minded people never misguide others.
You should learn from their life history.
Some suggestions and guidance will help you to
overcome.
It will take time to explore the possibilities.

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restricted
To acknowledge their ways of handling
The stressful young minds with minimal attention
span
Often charged with mishandling
Converting technology into their learning aid as
they can

N. SIVASANKARI
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Politics , Amisi said PM Party was the only political outfit in Kenya that had avoided tribal association since the return of multiparty politics

Amisi takes PM Party into Tharaka Nithi in first Mt Kenya push

Saboti MP rules out any deal with UDA and claims three county MPs are ready to defect to his new party by December

BY Dennis Mutua
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People’s Renaissance Move- ment (PM Party) leader Ca- lelb Amisi carried his party’s grassroots campaign into Tharaka Nithi County over the weekend, fellowshipping with worshippers at Kairuni Presbyterian Church of East Africa before addressing pub- lic rallies in Chogoria and Chuka towns — the party’s first organised foray into the Mt Kenya region.

Speaking at a press briefing in Chuka on Saturday, Amisi said PM Party was the only

political outfit in Kenya that had avoided tribal association since the return of multiparty politics.

“Since the formation of mul- tiparty politics, all parties in Kenya have been tribal. In ODM, you are told it is a party for Nyanza, while the Democ- racy for the Citizens Party has been associated with Central Kenya, Wiper with Eastern Kenya and UDA with the Rift Valley. When will we have a national party? That question has now been answered,” Amisi said.

Asked whether PM Party was open to working with other political formations, Amisi said the party would consider

coalitions with parties sharing similar values, but flatly ruled out any arrangement with the ruling United Democratic Al- liance.

“PM will join hands with other parties that look like PM. The only coalition we are not going to make is a failed coalition with UDA,” he said.

Amisi said the party’s central agenda centred on fighting tribalism, unemployment and corruption — what he called “the elephant in the room” — alongside reducing the nation- al debt burden and upholding the Constitution.

He expressed confidence that PM Party would sweep all elective positions in Thara-

ka Nithi, claiming three MPs from the county had commit- ted to joining the party by De- cember.

On Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, whose political base includes the county, Amisi said the party respected him but urged him not to tie his fortunes to President William Ruto’s. He went further to ex- tend an invitation to Kindiki to join PM Party, saying they could work together to ad- vance the country, and main- tained that efforts to secure Ruto a second term would not succeed.

Amisi said he viewed Thara- ka Nithi as a significant launchpad for the party’s na- tional ambitions, describing it as a historically important county in presidential election outcomes.

He was accompanied by party aspirants from across the country. Among them



People’s Renaissance Movement (PM) Party leader and Saboti MP Caleb Hamisi addresses the press in Chuka town, Tharaka Nithi County, ahead of his political engagements in the county. He is flanked by aspiring Tharaka Nithi Woman Representative Patricia Kagendo, Free Kenya Movement activist Bob Njagi, and Mitheru Ward MCA aspirant Lewis Mawira, popularly known as Say More, among others.

was Patricia Kagendo, who is seeking the Tharaka Nithi Woman Representative seat and doubles as the party’s na- tional chairperson for women. Kagendo said PM Party had Tharaka Nithi’s interests at heart, formally declared her candidacy for the position and cited her own national leadership role as evidence of the party’s cross-community character.

“As women, we are in this party to stay,” Kagendo said.

Free Kenya Movement chair- person Bob Njagi, also part of the team, said young people were firmly behind Amisi’s agenda. Njagi added that his

initiative to collect signatures in support of a referendum against the Kenya Kwanza administration remained on course, and said he would continue educating the public on the campaign.

Others in the entourage in- cluded Mitheru ward MCA aspirant Lewis Mawira Njeru and PM Party Secretary-Gen- eral Antony Buluma.

The party is set to move its mobilisation drive to Kenya’s coastal counties this Friday, continuing a national expan- sion push ahead of the 2027 general election.

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Feeding The depth of Njiru's contribution lies in her ability to see beyond the obvious. Hunger, in her understanding, is not merely a food problem

Feeding a generation: The woman nourishing Kenya's future

How Wawira Njiru turned a meal for 25 schoolchildren into one of Africa's boldest education interventions

BY Ashford Kimani

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There are people who identify problems, people who discuss solutions, and then there are those who possess the courage and determination to build the solutions they envision. Wawira Njiru belongs firmly in the third category. Through Food4Education, she has transformed a simple but profound conviction — that no child should sit in a classroom hungry — into one of Kenya's most remarkable social-impact initiatives.

What began in 2012 as a modest programme serving just 25 children has grown into a major school-feeding initiative delivering hundreds of thousands of meals every day. This is not merely a story of organisational growth. It is a story of vision, resilience, innovation and an unwavering belief in the potential of African children.

The depth of Njiru's contribution lies in her ability to see beyond the obvious. Hunger, in her understanding, is not merely a food problem. It is an education problem, a health problem, an economic problem and, ultimately, a national development challenge. A hungry child struggles to concentrate in class, is more likely to stay away from school and may fail to benefit fully from the educational opportunities available.

When children go through a school day without adequate nutrition, their capacity to learn and participate is compromised. By confronting hunger at the school level, Food4Education is addressing one of the most consistently overlooked barriers to educational achievement. The initiative has helped demonstrate that a school meal should not be regarded as charity. It is an investment in human capital and in the future of the country.



Wawira Njiru founder Food4Education

What makes Njiru's story compelling is that she did not allow Food4Education to remain a small charitable project. She built systems around the idea. The organisation has embraced technology, centralised kitchens, local food sourcing, strategic partnerships and efficient distribution mechanisms to take school feeding to a scale few would have imagined when the first meals were served.

The Tap2Eat cashless payment system is among the programme's most notable innovations, using technology to facilitate access to meals while supporting the management of a large and complex operation. This combination of compassion and operational discipline is perhaps the strongest feature of Njiru's

leadership. She has demonstrated that solving African problems does not always require imported ideas. African challenges can be addressed through African creativity, local knowledge, technology and strategic partnerships.

Food4Education's impact extends well beyond the child receiving a meal. Its model creates an ecosystem involving farmers, food suppliers, cooks, parents, schools and government. Local sourcing generates markets for farmers, while the kitchens and distribution networks create employment. Parents carry a lighter burden knowing their children are fed during the school day, while learners benefit from nutrition in an environment where they are expected to perform.

This interconnectedness makes Food4Education far more than a feeding programme. It is an intervention with educational, nutritional, social and economic dimensions, and it demonstrates that the most effective development initiatives are often those capable of addressing several challenges at once.

Njiru's achievement is particularly significant at a time when Kenya and many other African countries are seeking practical solutions to persistent inequalities in education. Governments can build classrooms, recruit teachers and provide learning materials, but the effectiveness of those investments is diminished when learners arrive in class hungry.

Education is ultimately about

the whole child. A learner cannot be reduced to examination grades or attendance figures. Nutrition, health, family circumstances and the wider social environment all shape a child's ability to benefit from schooling. Food4Education brings this reality into sharp focus.

There is also something notable about the scale of Njiru's ambition. She began with a small group of children but refused to allow the size of the initial project to define the size of the dream. Food4Education has grown into a movement with ambitions that extend beyond Kenya, with a stated vision of reaching one million learners daily. Her journey sends a clear message to young Africans: meaningful change does not require

waiting for perfect circumstances. Transformation can begin with identifying a problem close to home and deciding to do something about it.

Her achievements have attracted international recognition, demonstrating that locally conceived African solutions can carry global significance. Yet the most meaningful recognition may not be an award or a platform. It is the sight of a child receiving a meal and returning to class ready to learn. It is a parent's relief knowing their child will not spend the school day hungry. It is the farmer with a reliable market, the worker earning a livelihood through the programme. These everyday outcomes give deeper meaning to the statistics that surround Food4Education.

For educators, policymakers and citizens, Njiru's story offers a clear lesson. Education does not begin with a textbook, a lesson plan or an examination paper. It begins with the learner. Before asking a child to analyse a poem, solve a mathematical problem or prepare for a national examination, the basic conditions necessary for learning must be in place. Food4Education has placed nutrition at the centre of the education conversation and reminded the country that feeding a child, when the objective is an educated and productive society, is never optional.

Njiru deserves recognition not merely because she founded an organisation, but because she challenged a long-standing assumption about what is possible. She saw hungry children and chose action. She started with 25 children and dreamed of millions. She combined compassion with technology, entrepreneurship with social responsibility, and local action with a continental vision.

Food4Education is a reminder that nation-building can begin with something as simple as a plate of food. Behind every meal is a learner with renewed energy, a classroom with greater possibility and a society investing in its own future. In nourishing children today, Food4Education is helping to nourish the Kenya of tomorrow.

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Constitution The danger today is sharper because the rhetoric of constitutional reverence coexists with open contempt for its constraints

The doormat constitution: How selective will turns liberal democracy into an experiment in failure



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

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The factual starting point is this: every major liberal constitution of the modern era from the American in 1787 to the post-war German Basic Law, the Indian Constitution of 1950, and the wave of post-1989 Eastern European and African documents rests on a deliberate wager. That wager is that written limits on power, judicially enforceable rights, separation of powers, and regular elections can restrain the eternal human appetite for dominance. The issue is not theoretical. In practice, the experiment repeatedly shows the same fracture line: the parchment holds only where political actors choose to treat it as binding rather than ornamental. Where they treat it as a doormat, the document does not fail; it is failed.

This is not an abstract complaint. Consider the measurable pattern. Freedom House's long-running data show that the number of countries classified as "free" peaked and then stagnated or declined in the last fifteen years even as formal constitutional texts proliferated. The Varieties of Democracy project records a clear rise in "executive aggrandizement" leaders elected under liberal rules who then hollow out the independent institutions those rules created. Courts are packed, electoral commissions captured, media regulators weaponized, and opposition figures pursued through selective prosecution. The constitution remains on the books; the will to enforce it evenly evaporates. Situational ethics becomes the operating system: rules are sacred when they protect the in-group and disposable when they restrain it. Cherry-picking is not a bug; it is the method.

History supplies the correlation that makes the pattern vivid. The Weimar Constitution of 1919 was, on paper, one of the most progressive liberal



The doormat constitution

documents of its age universal suffrage, proportional representation, robust rights guarantees. It was not the text that collapsed. It was the systematic refusal by parties, paramilitaries, and eventually the executive to treat the text as inviolable when it obstructed their immediate goals. Article 48's emergency powers, intended as a narrow safety valve, became a highway for authoritarian rule because those who held the levers decided the constitution was a tool rather than a master. The same dynamic appears in the late Roman Republic: the *mos maiorum* and the republican constitution were not abolished by decree; they were worn down by successive acts of selective enforcement until the forms remained and the substance was gone. Sulla, Caesar, and the triumvirs did not invent a new order so much as they demonstrated that a constitution

without consistent guardians becomes a stage prop.

The danger today is sharper because the rhetoric of constitutional reverence coexists with open contempt for its constraints. There are political actors across the spectrum who speak of the constitution as the foundation of the nation while simultaneously treating its clauses as optional depending on the day's political convenience. When a provision protects their coalition, it is sacred scripture. When it protects their opponents or restrains their patronage networks, it becomes an obstacle to "the will of the people," a colonial relic, or an elite conspiracy. This is not principled constitutionalism; it is situational ethics dressed in patriotic clothing. The baby is not merely neglected; there are factions that would smother it if the smothering advanced their hold on power. They

do not say so aloud. They speak instead of "transformative interpretation," of "living constitutionalism" that somehow always expands the preferred side's latitude, or of "emergency" that somehow never ends.

The intellectual failure here is the refusal to distinguish between the design and the operators. Liberal constitutional democracy is not a self-executing machine. It is a set of constraints that require a critical mass of office-holders, judges, bureaucrats, journalists, and citizens who regard those constraints as higher than their factional interest. Where that critical mass is absent, the experiment produces the appearance of liberal order while delivering the substance of majoritarian or elite capture. The data are consistent: countries with the strongest formal rights protections still see rising polarization, declining trust in institutions, and the normalization of "rule by law" rather than rule of law when the same legal instruments are applied with different rigor depending on the target. Enforcement becomes a political weapon rather than a neutral discipline. This is not the constitution's betrayal of liberalism; it is liberalism's betrayal by those sworn to it.

Literary devices illuminate what statistics alone cannot. The constitution is a lighthouse built to warn ships off the rocks of arbitrary power. When the keepers of the light decide that only certain vessels deserve the warning, the lighthouse remains standing while wrecks multiply. It is a fence erected around the exercise of force; when the fence is removed for friends and reinforced against enemies, the fence has not failed the guardians have. It is a contract among citizens that no temporary majority may rewrite at will; when one side treats the contract as a temporary cease-fire rather than a permanent settlement, the contract is already half-dead. The metaphor of the doormat is exact: a constitution wiped underfoot retains its legal form while losing its moral and practical force. Those who treat it that way are not reformers. They are successors to every historical faction that discovered it is easier to capture the referee than to play by the rules.

Original thought demands we reject

the comforting fatalism that "liberal democracy is simply exhausted." Exhaustion is a description of will, not of institutional design. The design has survived far darker hours than the present when enough actors insisted that the text bind everyone or bind no one. The present danger is the growing comfort with partial binding. Once a society accepts that constitutional constraints apply rigorously only to the out-group, the experiment is no longer liberal. It has become a contest of raw power conducted under the lingering aesthetic of legality. That aesthetic is useful to the powerful precisely because it confuses the public: the forms of constitutional democracy persist while the substance of limited government dissolves.

The call is therefore categorical and directed at specific actors. Judges must refuse the invitation to become political partners in selective enforcement; their legitimacy is the last institutional barrier against the doormat treatment. Legislators must stop treating constitutional limits as inconveniences to be circumvented by creative drafting or emergency language. Executives must accept that the power they hold is temporary and constrained, not a personal mandate to reshape the order. Political parties must abandon the habit of framing every adverse ruling as existential warfare against the people. Media and civil society must apply the same scrutiny to their preferred side that they reserve for the other. And citizens must recover the elementary understanding that a constitution that protects only the winners is no constitution at all.

The alternative is not mysterious. History has already run the experiment of constitutions treated as optional. The results are measured in eroded rights, captured institutions, and the eventual replacement of liberal forms by something harder and less accountable. The parchment cannot save itself. Only the consistent, inconvenient, non-situational will of those who hold temporary power can. Anything less turns the great liberal wager into a well-documented failure not of the idea, but of the people entrusted with it. The baby is still alive. The question is whether enough of its guardians still prefer the child to their own advancement.

The writer is a social commentator

Politics “There is a way each country places its structures for even business learning. So, when in Kenya we are putting structures, they should be followed,” Donya said.

Donya Toto backs Ruto directive on foreign traders, vows to make history as Bonchari’s first Woman MP

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyaintimes

Kisii Woman Representative Donya Dorice Aburi has supported President William Ruto’s directive seeking to restrict foreign nationals from engaging in certain small-scale trading activities in Kenya, saying local traders should be the primary beneficiaries of opportunities in the country.

President Ruto issued the directive after meeting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) traders at State House, Nairobi, on Wednesday, September 2.

The President raised concerns over foreign nationals engaging in small-scale hawking and trading activities, including selling merchandise such as duvets, thereby competing with local traders.

Speaking in Kisii town during an engagement with residents of Bonchari, Donya said every country has its own laws and structures governing business and that anyone wishing to operate a business in Kenya must comply with the established procedures.

“There is a way each country places its structures for even business learning. So, when in Kenya we are putting structures, they should be followed,” Donya said.

She noted that Kenya’s laws require anyone engaging in business to obtain the necessary licences and follow the stipulated procedures.

“I’m sure it is stipulated in the Constitution. There is no favour for anyone. If you want to do business in Kenya, you have to get the licence. You have to follow the procedure. And the locals must be the beneficiaries,” she said.

Donya further defended President Ruto’s directive, arguing that it was aimed at ensuring Kenyan manufacturers, farmers, traders and other citizens benefit from econom-



Kisii Woman rep Donya Toto during the engagement with Bonchari Residents, has vowed she will be the first woman to be elected as MP. Photo /Elizabeth Angira

ic opportunities within the country.

“If the President has given a directive, he is having good feelings for Kenyans. The Kenyan manufacturers, the Kenyan farmers, the Kenyan business people, the Kenyans must benefit from being Kenyan. I do not see if there’s a problem with that,” she said.

She added that foreigners who come to Kenya to conduct business are expected to understand and comply with the country’s laws and regulations.

Donya challenges opposition over IEBC

On the upcoming elections and the debate surrounding the independence and credibility of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Donya challenged opposition parties not to create fear among Kenyans.

She accused the opposition of raising concerns about the electoral process out of fear and urged them to prepare for the political contest instead. “My message to the opposition, please don’t be afraid. Don’t be scared. Come to the field. We play the ball,” she said.

According to Donya, political parties should participate in the electoral process instead of spreading rumours

that could undermine public confidence in the election.

She maintained that the IEBC is an independent institution and urged politicians to allow the electoral body to carry out its mandate.

“IEBC is independent, number one. And when you start peddling rumours, you want to make Kenyans feel that it is not going to be credible. Participate in the election,” she said.

Donya vows to make history in Bonchari

Turning to her political ambitions, Donya declared that she is determined to become the first woman to be elected Member of Parliament for Bonchari Constituency in 2027.

She said her decision to vie for the Bonchari parliamentary seat is driven by what she described as the high poverty levels and lack of key infrastructure in the constituency.

“Being first, because I know I’ll be elected the first woman MP for Bonchari. I want to transform that. The poverty index is very high,” Donya said.

She lamented what she described as inadequate development in Bonchari, particularly in roads, water, electricity and education infrastructure.

“We don’t have any infra-

structure going on at the moment, not even one kilometre. We don’t have any water project in Bonchari, even electricity, nothing,” she said.

Donya said she has already held discussions concerning some of the development needs of the constituency and pointed to the planned launch of the Riana Road as one of the projects expected to benefit residents.

She identified electricity, water, education infrastructure and the establishment of a national school as some of the priorities she intends to pursue.

She also noted that Bonchari does not have a TVET institution and said these are among the issues she intends to champion if elected MP.

Breaking barriers in a traditionally patriarchal society

Donya’s bid comes at a time when women continue to seek greater representation in elective leadership across the country.

She expressed confidence that she will overcome the challenges associated with seeking an elective position in a traditionally patriarchal society such as the Gusii community.

Her political journey has also been associated with advocacy on issues affecting women and girls. She has been vocal in the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) and gender-based violence, while also supporting initiatives aimed at improving access to water through the drilling of boreholes.

As the 2027 political contest begins to take shape, Donya’s declaration sets the stage for what could be a closely watched race in Bonchari, as she seeks to make history by becoming the constituency’s first elected woman MP.

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Disability In more recent times, Senator Tammy Duckworth of the United States has become another powerful symbol of what is possible

Beyond disability: The leaders who refused to be defined by barriers



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themkenyatimes

"The story of disabled success has never been a story about one solitary disabled person overcoming limitations; We are often as strong as our friends and our family make us, only as strong as our community" Alice Wong

There are moments in the life of a democracy when society must stop asking whether certain citizens are capable of leadership and begin asking whether society itself has done enough to remove the barriers that prevent capable citizens from leading. For persons with disabilities, that moment has arrived. Across the world, across Africa and increasingly in Kenya, men and women who were once expected to remain on the margins have entered the political arena, occupied positions of influence and demonstrated a truth that should no longer be controversial: disability does not diminish leadership capacity and productivity of one.

The story of political inclusion is, in many ways, the story of human courage. Few examples are more powerful than that of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who led the United States through the Great Depression and the Second World War while living with paralysis after contracting polio. His presidency remains one of the defining political leadership stories of the twentieth century. His disability did not prevent him from carrying the responsibilities of the world's most powerful elected office. Rather, history remembers the decisions he made, the institutions he built and the confidence with which he led a nation through extraordinary adversity.

In more recent times, Senator Tammy Duckworth of the United States has become another powerful symbol of what is possible. A combat veteran who lost both legs during military service, Duckworth went on to become a member of the U.S.



Niko Fiti Project, Ability Beyond Disability | Apdk

House of Representatives and later a United States senator. Her political career has included sustained advocacy on veterans' affairs, accessibility and disability rights. Her story matters because she was not elected simply to represent people with disabilities; she was elected to represent citizens. Her disability is part of her story, but it does not define the totality of her leadership.

That distinction is important for Kenya. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities makes the principle explicit. Article 29 requires States to guarantee persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, including the right to participate in political and public life and to stand for election. The principle is not charity. It is equality.

Africa has its own impressive examples. South Africa's Wilma Nkomo became the country's first deaf woman Member of Parliament and used her position to advance the rights of deaf people and persons with disabilities. Her long parliamentary career demon-

strates that disability-inclusive politics is not merely about putting a representative inside Parliament; it is about changing Parliament itself. South Africa's Parliament has acknowledged both the presence of persons with disabilities in its legislatures and the continuing practical barriers that representatives have had to overcome.

Across the continent, disability-inclusive political representation has developed in different ways. Research has found that African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Egypt have constitutionally recognised forms of representation for persons with disabilities, making parts of Africa unexpectedly important laboratories for disability-inclusive democracy. The struggle, however, is not finished. The same literature shows that legal recognition does not automatically translate into equal political opportunity. Accessibility, campaign financing, party structures, stigma and attitudes about competence can still become formidable barriers. Kenya's experience illustrates both the progress and the unfinished

work.

The country has produced distinguished political leaders with disabilities who have refused to accept the idea that disability should determine the limits of their ambition. Hon. Timothy Wanyonyi, the long-serving Westlands Member of Parliament, has combined legal training, parliamentary service and disability advocacy. Parliament records that he has served as an MP since 2013 and has also led the Kenya Paraplegic Organization. His career is particularly instructive because his political identity extends far beyond disability. He has demonstrated that a person with a disability can build a sustained constituency and compete in mainstream politics on the basis of service and political credibility.

Then there is Senator Crystal Asige, whose story perhaps captures the new generation of disability-inclusive leadership most vividly. After losing her sight to glaucoma, she became an award-winning musician, advocate, accessibility expert and eventually a nominated Senator. Parliament describes her as a disability-rights advocate and inclusive-mobility practitioner, while recognising her legislative work and five Bills. She was also named a TIME100 Next honoree. Her example is particularly powerful because she has transformed personal adversity into public purpose without allowing disability to become the boundary of her identity.

Her message is worth listening to. Disability may create barriers, but society often creates even greater ones. An inaccessible building, a campaign venue without ramps, information unavailable in an accessible format, the absence of sign-language interpretation or a political culture that equates physical limitation with intellectual limitation can turn an ordinary challenge into an extraordinary obstacle. Yet the achievements of Kenyan leaders with disabilities show that these barriers are not evidence of incapacity.

The 2022 General Election provided further evidence. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities reported that approximately 600 candidates with disabilities contested different positions, with seven

winning elective seats, including Tim Wanyonyi and Martin Wanyonyi as Members of Parliament, Rose Museo as Makueni Woman Representative and several MCAs. These numbers may still be disappointingly small, but they carry an important message: PWD candidates are not merely asking for space; they are already proving themselves capable of winning and governing.

Mr. Reuben Kigame's presidential ambition made an even bolder statement. The blind Kenyan musician, teacher and disability-rights advocate sought the presidency in 2022 and challenged the electoral system after his candidacy was rejected. His struggle became a national conversation about whether Kenya's electoral machinery was genuinely prepared to accommodate candidates with disabilities. Whatever one's political preferences, the significance of his attempt is difficult to dismiss. He dared to enter a space in which many people had assumed that a blind Kenyan could never realistically compete.

That courage is precisely what should inform the political conversation around Hon. Regina Chumba. Her aspiration to become Uasin Gishu Woman Representative should not be presented to voters as a request for sympathy. It should be presented as a demand for an opportunity to compete. She should be judged by the same standards applied to every other aspirant: competence, integrity, vision, experience, accessibility of her agenda, understanding of the electorate and capacity to deliver. But voters should also recognise what her lived experience can contribute.

A woman who has had to overcome barriers understands exclusion differently. She knows that dignity is not a slogan. She understands why an inaccessible public office can deny a citizen a service, why an inaccessible school can destroy a child's opportunity and why social protection can mean the difference between independence and dependency. That experience can strengthen leadership when combined with competence and a broad understanding of public affairs. And this is where the political conversation must mature.

Persons with disabilities should not be confined to being politicians of disability. They should be politicians with disabilities—leaders capable of speaking about agriculture, health-care, education, employment, women, youth, infrastructure, enterprise, security and economic development

Nature Your waves dance naturally upon the water, creating their own music through their gentle sounds. Sometimes, they softly touch the shore and return again

The marvelous beauty of nature



BY Mohana
@themtkenyatimes

Nature is the most precious gift of the Earth. It is so colourful. The colours of the rainbow always resemble the colours of nature, and each colour has an inner meaning. The sun gives us the beautiful orange colour. It represents pride and confidence. Green resembles positivity and hard work. Sky blue represents patience and motivation. Each and every colour adds beauty to the Earth. Look at the sea! What a beautiful and wonderful sea it is! How many depths lie within you, beautiful sea? Even your nearest depths cannot be fully known. As we move farther from the shore, your waters grow deeper, hiding countless mysteries from our eyes. The secrets

resting within you remain unknown, yet your beauty is beyond words. No one is powerful in front of the sea. When it becomes angry and its waves rise higher, it can swallow the whole Earth. Yet the sea can also be gentle and calm, protecting and sustaining us. This wonderful sea gives us life, though I could never drink your salty water. Your waves dance naturally upon the water, creating their own music through their gentle sounds. Sometimes, they softly touch the shore and return again. Though you never speak, your waves seem to tell a story without words. Your silent voice and enchanting beauty fill my heart with wonder. The deeper parts of the sea are called the deep sea. They are home to countless fish and other marine creatures. These creatures are also useful and beneficial to human beings in many ways. The sea continues to bless the Earth with its beauty, life, and resources. O beautiful sea, I am forever captivated by your silent voice, mysterious depths, and marvelous beauty. You are truly one of the most wonderful gifts of nature.



Disability In more recent times, Senator Tammy Duckworth of the United States has become another powerful symbol of what is possible

Beyond disability: The leaders who refused to be defined by barriers

Contd from page 21

just like any other candidate. The 2025 Persons with Disabilities Act in Kenya reinforces this principle, expressly recognising the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life and to vote and be voted for directly or through freely chosen representatives. The law therefore gives legal substance to what should already be a simple democratic principle. The electorate, too, has a responsibility. Kenyan voters should stop seeing disability first and leadership second. They should look at the person, the record, the ideas and the character. They should ask every candidate—including candidates with disabilities—what they will do,



Beyond disability

how they will do it and how they will be held accountable. But they should also refuse to allow disability to become a weapon of political discrimination. Hon. Regina Chumba’s journey can therefore become part of a much larger Kenyan story. From Roosevelt to Duckworth, from Wilma Nehoudt-Druchen to Crystal Asige, from Tim Wanyonyi to Reuben Kigame, the evidence is increasingly difficult to ignore: people with disabilities have already demonstrated that they can lead, legislate, inspire, organise and transform institutions. The issue is no longer whether they are capable. The real question is whether Kenya is courageous enough to give them an equal opportunity to prove what they can do. For the young Kenyan with a disability watching politics from the sidelines,

the message should be unmistakable: your wheelchair does not cancel your ambition; blindness does not cancel your vision; deafness does not silence your ideas; and physical difference does not diminish your citizenship. You belong in the classroom, the boardroom, the county assembly, Parliament—and, if you have the capacity and ambition, at the highest levels of government. Kenya does not need to elect persons with disabilities out of pity. It needs to recognise them as citizens whose proven abilities, experiences and leadership can enrich the Republic. The time has come to move the conversation from “Can they lead?” to the far more important question: “What can they achieve if we finally remove the barriers standing in their way?” That is the promise of disability-inclusive democracy. And it is a promise that Hon. Regina Chumba and every other Kenyan aspirant with a disability have an opportunity to help fulfil.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Havertz and Ødegaard overturn a second-minute deficit as Arsenal maintain their perfect start, leaving Chelsea to rue what might have been

The champions answer back: Arsenal sink Chelsea in pulsating London derby

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Seventy-seven seconds into yesterday's match, Chelsea stunned the Emirates Stadium into silence. Following a deep free kick by Reece James, Jorrel Hato's knock-down found Morgan Rogers, who drove a low volley past David Raya from the edge of the area to put the visitors ahead.

It was the kind of start that immediately changed the mood inside the ground. Chelsea did not look intimidated by the defending champions and showed a clear willingness to attack from the opening minute. Rogers' goal also extended Chelsea's striking habit of scoring within the first five minutes in each of their three league matches this season.

Arsenal's pressure began to build, though an attempted equaliser through Ricardo Calafiori was ruled out for offside by VAR. The breakthrough eventually came midway through the first half when former Chelsea forward Kai Havertz drifted in from the right flank unchecked and smashed a low strike past Emiliano Martinez at his near post to level at 1-1.

Rather than allowing the early setback to unsettle them, Arsenal kept pushing forward and forced Chelsea to defend for longer periods. Havertz's equaliser carried particular weight — scored against his former club — and gave the home side the confidence to take control.

Chelsea remained dangerous on the break. Their attacking approach under Xabi Alonso was evident throughout, but Arsenal gradually dealt more effectively with the threat. The first half illustrated that Chelsea are capable of competing with the champions, even if defensive stability remains a concern: they had conceded seven goals in their opening three league matches before yesterday's game.



Arsenal sink Chelsea

Five minutes after the break, Martin Ødegaard completed the turnaround. Havertz's intelligent movement created space, and the Arsenal captain finished from close range to give the Gunners the lead they would not relinquish.

The goal was a precise illustration of Arsenal's capacity to punish a moment of defensive uncertainty. Ødegaard, who struggled with injuries last season, has started this campaign sharply, and his influence in the final third is already proving central to Arsenal's title defence.

Late drama followed as Chelsea pushed hard for an equaliser. Pedro Neto struck the post before half-time, and Raya produced a series of important saves to keep Arsenal ahead in the closing stages.

Those final minutes showed that Chelsea were not prepared to accept their fate quietly. They came close on more than one occasion, and Raya's interventions proved as decisive as either of Arsenal's goals.

Chelsea look markedly improved from last season, when they finished 33 points behind Arsenal. They were dangerous

at set pieces, physically combative and capable of hurting the champions — even if Alonso acknowledged the defeat was painful. Their supporters will argue they were unfortunate not to take something from the game; their manager will know the defensive frailties must be addressed.

For Arsenal, the more significant achievement may have been their response. Conceding after 77 seconds to a Chelsea side arriving with full momentum could have proved destabilising. Instead, they stayed composed, gradually reasserted control and turned the game. That is the hallmark of a team defending a title with conviction.

Questions remain about how the title race will unfold. Arsenal now have nine points from three matches, level with Manchester City, who lead on goal difference with a perfect record of their own. Both sides are setting the pace, and the championship may again be decided in the final weeks of the season.

Arsenal are now one of just two teams with a perfect record this term, alongside Manchester City. The pressure of defending a title is different from winning

one — every opponent arrives motivated to end the champions' run — and Arsenal will need to sustain this level of concentration across the full campaign.

Arsenal have come from behind to beat Chelsea in the Premier League for the first time since October 2011. But Chelsea's performance suggests the gap between the sides is narrowing, even if Arteta's team remain the stronger side for now.

For Alonso, the challenge is turning promising performances into consistent results. Chelsea have invested heavily and brought in several new players, and there is still an adjustment period under way. Their attacking football has already given supporters reason for optimism, but their defensive organisation must improve if they are to compete with Arsenal and Manchester City over a full season.

The rivalry is not yet at its fiercest, but yesterday gave it another spark. Chelsea showed they can challenge Arsenal; Arsenal showed why they remain the team everyone is trying to catch.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Manchester United manager insists the performances warrant optimism, even as points continue to slip away

Carrick keeps faith despite United’s shaky start

By Pascal Okoth

Michael Carrick is not ready to panic. Despite a mixed opening to the season that has left Manchester United sitting 11th in the Premier League table, the United manager insists there is enough in his side’s performances to warrant confidence rather than concern.

United’s start has been a study in contrasts: a 2-0 defeat to Hull City on the opening day, a thumping 5-2 win over Ipswich Town, and a 2-2 draw at Everton yesterday in which they led twice only to be pegged back in stoppage time. Four points from three games is not the platform Carrick would have wanted, but he is not about to concede that the wheels have come off.

“We haven’t started the season that bad, to be honest,” Carrick said after the Everton draw. “It could have been better... but we were that close to coming away with three points also against Everton.”

His frustration was understandable. United led at Hill Dickinson Stadium twice and appeared to be closing out the match before a late equaliser denied them. For Carrick, it is those small margins — rather than any deeper structural problem — that have prevented the side from picking up more points.

The biggest area he has identified for improvement is defensive concentration. United have conceded in ways that have undone otherwise encouraging performances, and Carrick is clear that cutting out those errors will be central to turning momentum into results.

“Little moments that we can deal with a bit better, but we’ll be fine,” he said. “We need to concede fewer goals to then give us a better chance of winning games, but we will improve very soon.”

For Carrick, defending is not



Michael Carrick

merely the responsibility of the back line. The entire team must contribute — maintaining concentration, protecting possession and responding more decisively when opponents create dangerous moments.

He has also been at pains to highlight what he believes has been working. Despite the points dropped, Carrick has found genuine encouragement in the quality of United’s play across all three matches.

“There was a lot of good things against Everton that we can move forward,” he said, “same vs Hull City — and Ipswich Town as well.”

That assessment reflects a coaching staff looking beyond the scoreline when evaluating progress. United have created

chances, controlled periods of matches and shown a competitive edge. The challenge now is to convert those qualities into the winning habit that the club demands.

The pressure will only grow as the season develops, particularly while close matches continue to go against them. Carrick, however, appears convinced that the gap between where United are and where they need to be is small. A few adjustments — principally in defensive situations — could, he believes, shift the picture considerably.

For the squad, the message from their manager is one of belief rather than alarm. Carrick is asking his players to learn from the details that have cost them points while continuing to build

on what has been working. The immediate fixtures will offer an early test of whether that message is landing.

The objectives are clear enough: concede fewer goals, handle the closing stages of tight matches with greater composure and turn promising performances into three points. If United can achieve those things, Carrick believes a difficult start can quickly be left behind.

For a club of Manchester United’s standing, there is little room for patience to stretch too far. But at this stage, the manager’s composure looks less like denial and more like a reasoned read of a side that is closer to finding its rhythm than the table currently suggests.

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Dawn: Beyond the Ice



By: Narputatova Gulruh

@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- Everything happened so quickly that I did not even have time to gather my thoughts. Whenever I try to remember what happened next, all I can recall is the violent impact that shook my entire body, the voices of people around me—and then nothing.
- When I regained consciousness, I found myself staring at a white ceiling in a room filled with the sharp smell of medicine. There were injections in my arms, and medical equipment was attached to my body. It was then that I realized I could no longer feel part of my body at all.

It was one of those cold winter days. The ground was covered in a blanket of white snow, while the roads had already turned dangerously icy beneath the passing vehicles. I was driving carefully to work, listening to pleasant music in the car. I knew the road could be dangerous.

Yet no matter how careful I was, as I reached the busiest part of the road, the wheels suddenly slipped, and I lost control of the car.

Everything happened so quickly that I did not even have time to gather my thoughts. Whenever I try to remember what happened next, all I can recall is the violent impact that shook my entire body, the voices of people around me—and then nothing.

When I regained consciousness, I found myself staring at a white ceiling in a room filled with the sharp smell of medicine. There were injections in my arms, and medical equipment was attached to my body. It was then that I realized I could no longer feel part of my body at all.

When the doctors told me that I needed surgery, I had no choice but to agree. The nurses prepared me for the operation, yet I felt nothing inside. It was as if all my emotions had disappeared.

After several hours of surgery, I opened my eyes and realized that I was still alive.

The nurses kept telling me that my injuries were improving day by day, and the doctors confirmed it with clear medical indicators. But why could I not feel myself getting better?

I thought about this for a very long time.

Then I understood: the injury was not only in my body. It was in my soul as well.

At night, as I lay awake in the hospital, questions such as “Why me?” and “Why did it have to happen that day?” would not leave me alone. And the fact that I could not find answers to those questions tormented me more deeply than any physical pain ever could.

As the days passed, I began to feel as though I no longer recognized myself.

Was I still the same Sevinch?

I had once been a girl who made plans for the future, who could quickly get back on her feet after



Dawn

every failure, who worked tirelessly toward her goals—strong, patient, and determined.

But whenever I looked in the mirror, I could not see myself there.

The reflection staring back at me no longer had shining eyes or a gaze filled with the desire to live. Seeing myself that way only pushed me deeper into despair.

When my loved ones came to visit and said,

— “Everything will be all right,”

I would simply nod.

But deep inside, I did not believe those words.

There is one day during my rehabilitation that I will never forget.

The exercises were more difficult than usual that day. My body seemed to completely refuse to obey me, and for the first time, I truly felt helpless.

When I returned to my room, I asked the nurse to close the door behind me and not let anyone disturb me.

That night, I had a harsh, silent conversation with myself.

— Will I keep going, or will I stop right here?

Dawn came while I was still lost in those heavy thoughts.

And yet, even though I had not found the answer by morning, I went back to rehabilitation.

Slowly.

Painfully.

But I went.

Later, I realized that although I had not physically overcome anything that day, something inside me had changed.

I had decided that, regardless of the outcome, I would not stop again.

Little by little, I began to return to the person I had once been.

For months, I rebuilt not only my body but my entire inner world. And that process was never easy.

Good days alternated with bad ones. Sometimes, it felt as though I was taking one step forward and two steps back.

Nevertheless, I had only one goal:

To become stronger and more determined than the Sevinch I had been before.

Slowly, my fear began to turn into confidence, and the resentment I carried inside gradually transformed into acceptance.

Then, one day, something changed. I still remember it clearly.

Spring had already begun to arrive. Drops of melted snow fell one after another from the rooftops, forming tiny streams across the ground.

The thick white blanket that had covered the streets was slowly disappearing, revealing the damp earth beneath it.

And there, among that dark, wet soil, the first tiny blades of green grass were beginning to push their

heads above the ground.

The air was filled with the distinctive scent of freshly damp earth and melting snow.

Strangely enough, that scent felt familiar to me—as though it were reminding me of something I had forgotten long ago.

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