



South Korea boosts Meru potato farmers with new storage facility
Potato farmers in Meru County received a significant boost yesterday when the Republic of Korea handed over a new potato storage facility and social hall to the county govt. **Page 8**



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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **“Winnie called me and said, ‘Mum, we’ve lost the battle,’ Ida Odinga**

One year on: ‘Dad is gone’

Ida Odinga has described the moment she learned of her husband Raila Odinga’s death — delivered by their daughter Winnie from a hospital in India — as the most devastating of her life, one she still struggles, a full year later, to fully accept.

Speaking to Citizen TV at Opoda Farm in Bondo, Siaya County, on the eve of the first anniversary of Raila’s passing, marked yesterday on October 15, Ida recalled a morning that began without warning and ended with the obliteration of a partnership spanning more than five decades.

“The day before he passed away, we talked quite a lot,” she said. “We were talking about ordinary things. There was nothing unusual, no alarm and nothing to suggest that he was unwell. He even assured me that he was feeling very well and that there was nothing wrong.”

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The late Raila Odinga



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Matiang'i and Nyoro pledge free senior secondary education from 2028

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Opposition leaders Fred Matiang'i and Ndindi Nyoro yesterday committed to providing free basic education at senior secondary level from January 2028, including school lunch programmes, as they deepened their political outreach in Murang'a County.

The pledge was made at a clergy meeting hosted by Anglican Church of Kenya Bishop of Murang'a South Julius Karanu in Kenol, where the two leaders outlined an opposition agenda centred on education access and inclusive economic growth. "Together with Dr Matiang'i, we committed on the opposition agenda of free basic education starting with senior secondaries from January 2028," Nyoro said. "Learners will also take lunch in school."

The Kiharu MP framed inclusive economic growth as a parallel priority, signalling a broad policy platform designed to appeal to ordinary Kenyans struggling under the current cost of living. Several legislators attended, among them Anthony Kibagendi, Obadiah Barongo, Peter Kimari, Peter Weru and Joshua Toro. The Murang'a engagement reflects a deliberate strategy of building grassroots coalitions through faith communities ahead of August 2027 — targeting a region whose electoral weight could prove decisive in any serious presidential contest.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Directorate of Criminal Investigations has launched a biometric clearance system for diplomats, allowing foreign nationals and staff of international missions to apply for Police Clearance Certificates without travelling to DCI Headquarters or Huduma Centres. The Multi-Biometric Identification System, unveiled at the Diplomatic Police Unit Headquarters in Nairobi, streamlines a process that previously required physical visits to centralised government facilities — a logistical burden that the new system eliminates entirely. Diplomats, foreign nationals and mission staff can now complete the clearance process locally, reducing bureaucratic friction and improving service delivery to Kenya's international community. The rollout signals a broader push by the DCI to modernise its identification infrastructure and align Kenya's security services with the digital-first expectations of contemporary diplomatic operations.



Kenya's health professionals have drawn international praise for their technical competence and emergency response capabilities as the Ministry of Health intensifies preparedness measures following confirmation of the country's first imported Ebola case. Researchers, doctors, clinical officers and nurses have led the response from the front, demonstrating the depth of training and institutional readiness that health authorities have invested in over recent years. Their swift mobilisation has been widely credited with containing the situation before it could escalate into a broader public health crisis. The Ministry of Health has signalled that preparedness efforts will continue to be scaled up, with surveillance, contact tracing and isolation protocols remaining on high alert. Health officials say Kenya's response capacity has been tested and has held — but vigilance, they stress, cannot afford to waver.



The International Monetary Fund has projected that Kenya's economy will expand in the period leading to the August 2027 general election, offering the Ruto administration a degree of macroeconomic encouragement at a time when public confidence in the government's economic stewardship remains under considerable pressure. The projection, contained in the Fund's latest assessment, signals cautious optimism about Kenya's growth trajectory despite persistent headwinds including a high cost of living, elevated public debt servicing obligations and subdued consumer spending that have weighed heavily on ordinary households. Historically, election-year economic cycles in Kenya have been shaped by increased government expenditure and political patronage spending — patterns that tend to inject short-term stimulus while raising longer-term fiscal sustainability concerns that invariably outlast the campaign itself.



Kenyans woke up yesterday to sharply higher fuel prices after the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority announced its latest monthly review, pushing the cost of all three major petroleum products upward in what will deepen the squeeze on households and businesses already struggling with a persistently high cost of living. Petrol now retails at KSh226.96 per litre in Nairobi, a rise of KSh12.93, while diesel — the fuel that moves goods, public transport and industry — climbed KSh9.90 to KSh227.76. The sharpest increase fell on kerosene, the cooking and lighting fuel relied upon by millions of low-income households, which jumped KSh28.49 to KSh219.87 per litre. The adjustments take effect immediately and are expected to ripple through transport fares, food prices and the broader economy in the days ahead.



Azimio la Umoja's attempt to rebrand under a new identity has hit a legal obstacle after a dispute emerged over the proposed Ukombozi name, threatening to complicate the coalition's efforts to reposition itself ahead of the 2027 general election. A legal challenge has been filed contesting the use of the name, with the claimant asserting prior rights over the title — a development that could force the Wiper Democratic Movement leader Kalonzo Musyoka and his allies back to the drawing board as they seek a fresh political identity capable of galvanising support against the ruling Kenya Kwanza administration. The dispute arrives at a particularly delicate moment for the opposition, which has been working to consolidate its coalition structures and sharpen its electoral message with little more than a year before voters go to the polls.



Former Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko has asked a court to acquit him in a KSh20 million corruption case, claiming that State House operatives interfered with the proceedings to engineer his prosecution and ensure a conviction that would neutralise him as a political threat. Sonko, who has consistently maintained his innocence since charges were first preferred against him, told the court that the case was never a genuine anti-corruption pursuit but a politically motivated instrument designed to sideline him at the behest of powerful individuals with direct links to the presidency. The explosive allegations, if substantiated, would represent one of the most serious accusations of judicial interference levelled against the State in recent memory — and will almost certainly intensify scrutiny of Kenya's anti-corruption machinery as the country moves toward the 2027 elections.

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Business Miano described the investment as more than a commercial undertaking

Miano hails Sofy Unicharm launch as win for women and local industry

BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyatiimes

Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife Rebecca Miano yesterday hailed the launch of Sofy Unicharm East Africa Limited as a significant milestone for women's health, dignity and economic empowerment, while positioning Kenya as an increasingly attractive destination for manufacturing investment.

Miano joined Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry Lee Kinyanjui, Principal Secretary for Correctional Services Salome Wairimu, Japanese Ambassador to Kenya Hiroshi Matsuura, and leadership teams from Toyota Tsusho, CFAO and Unicharm Corporation at the official launch of the joint venture.

The establishment of the company marks a deliberate shift from importing finished sanitary products to producing them locally — a transition that its corporate backers say responds to the everyday needs of women and girls across the region while demonstrating how strategic international partnerships can serve Kenya's industrial development agenda.

Miano described the investment as more than a commercial undertaking. She said its real significance lay in its potential contribution to the dignity, health and well-being

of women and young girls, framing access to sanitary products as an essential condition for full participation in education, work and community life.

The venture brings together Japanese technological expertise from Unicharm Corporation, CFAO's established regional distribution networks and an understanding of local market dynamics — a combination that its principals say is designed to deliver quality products at scale while building domestic production capacity.

For Kenya, the implications extend beyond the factory floor. Local manufacturing of this kind can strengthen supply chains, expand industrial capabilities and generate employment across production and distribution value chains. It also feeds into a broader national conversation about affordable access to essential products and the role of foreign direct investment in addressing practical social needs.

Kinyanjui, whose ministry oversees industrial policy, has consistently positioned Kenya as a hub for value-addition and manufacturing, and the Sofy Unicharm launch fits squarely within that strategy. The involvement of Toyota Tsusho and CFAO — both with established footprints across East Africa — adds distribution depth to the venture and signals confidence in the region's consumer mar-



Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife Rebecca Miano

ket.

The launch drew government leaders, diplomatic representatives and senior corporate executives, reflecting the cross-sector interest in investments that align commercial growth with social development priorities. Matsuura's presence underscored the strength of the Kenya-Japan economic relationship, which has deepened through initiatives in infrastructure, technology and private sector engagement.

Miano congratulated the partners on the milestone and expressed confidence in the venture's long-term prospects. "When business-

es align commercial growth with social needs, they contribute to initiatives that promote inclusion, improve everyday welfare and expand economic opportunities," she said.

The success of Sofy Unicharm East Africa Limited will ultimately be measured by its ability to sustain quality local production, improve the affordability and accessibility of sanitary products, and generate tangible economic returns for Kenya — proof that purposeful enterprise and national development can advance together.

When students become the community's hope



Laikipia University students cleaning shopping centre

BY Victorine Nekesa
@themtkenyatiimes

University students are often seen through a narrow lens — young people whose world begins and ends with lectures, assignments and examinations. That picture misses something important.

Beyond the campus gate lies a community that, in many cases, is quietly hoping that the educated young people in its midst will eventually turn their knowledge outward. The good news is that many already are.

Students do not need professional qualifications or large budgets to make a difference. Environmental clean-ups, sanitation drives, awareness campaigns and support for vulnerable community members are all within reach. These actions may appear modest, but their cumulative effect on local well-being is real and often lasting. More importantly, they signal something powerful to residents: that young people are part of

the solution, not bystanders to the problem.

Community engagement also shapes the students themselves in ways no lecture theatre fully can. It builds teamwork, sharpens communication, tests leadership and confronts young people with the unfiltered realities of ordinary life — lessons that stay long after the academic certificate fades.

The key, however, is sustainability. One-off visits achieve little if they are not followed by consistent, structured programmes developed in genuine partnership with residents. Communities already understand their own challenges. Students who listen before they act will always achieve more than those who arrive with ready-made solutions.

Kenya's challenges — social, economic and environmental — are real and urgent. Students who step beyond the classroom to meet them are not just serving their communities. They are discovering what education is truly for.

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Agribusiness M’Ethingia was emphatic about agriculture’s centrality to Meru’s economy, pushing back against any notion that the county’s national standing owed anything to industrial activity

South Korea boosts Meru potato farmers with new storage facility

Seoul pledges expanded partnership as five-year agriculture programme delivers tangible results in Meru County

BY Brian Gitonga

@themkenyentimes

Potato farmers in Meru County received a significant boost yesterday when the Republic of Korea handed over a new potato storage facility and social hall to the county government, with both sides pledging to deepen agricultural cooperation and push into value addition as the next frontier.

The handover took place during Meru Potato Day celebrations in Katheri, where Governor Mutuma M’Ethingia hosted South Korean Ambassador to Kenya Kang Hyung-shik for a ceremony that marked more than five years of quiet but consequential partnership between the two governments.

M’Ethingia said the programme had genuinely changed how farmers in the county approached their work — not through directives or pamphlets, but through direct exposure to advanced farming technologies in South Korea, which he described as a transformational experience for those who participated.

“Our farmers are happy because of the capacity building they received after travelling to South Korea to learn about new agricultural technologies and modern farming methods while interacting with the Korean people,” he said.

In 2023, three farmers’ groups from Meru benefited from educational visits to South Korea through the Korea Partnership for Innovation of Agriculture programme, known as KOPIA — for many participants, their first experience of international travel and a formative encounter with large-scale modern agriculture.

KOPIA operates across several Kenyan counties, promoting agricultural technology transfer, farmer training and productivity improvements through structured cooperation between South Korea and partner governments. In Meru, the programme has focused on Irish potato and indigenous poultry farmers, supporting them through demonstration villages, improved farming practices and hands-on technical assistance aimed at raising household incomes.



South Korean Ambassador to Kenya Kang Hyung-shik speaks to the press. | Photo: Brian Gitonga

M’Ethingia was emphatic about agriculture’s centrality to Meru’s economy, pushing back against any notion that the county’s national standing owed anything to industrial activity.

“We are ranked fifth nationally, not because of the industries we have in Meru or other activities, but because of agriculture,” he said, adding that the Korean partnership had helped strengthen that foundation while creating new opportunities for cooperative societies involved in potato production.

The governor made clear that he was not satisfied with stopping at potatoes and poultry. He said the county wanted to take the relationship further into value addition — processing, packaging and market access — which he argued represented

the next logical step in turning agricultural productivity into sustained economic growth.

“We are grateful as a county, and our doors remain open for more collaborations and opportunities, especially in value addition,” M’Ethingia said.

Kang welcomed the governor’s ambition and praised the results the programme had delivered in Meru, describing the county initiative as one of South Korea’s flagship development projects in Kenya.

“I am grateful that KOPIA has implemented this wonderful project supporting potato and poultry farmers in Meru County. The project has enhanced farmers’ productivity and incomes,” he said, adding that he hoped to expand similar initiatives in partnership with the county gov-



Potato storage facility and social hall. | Photo: Brian Gitonga

ernment going forward.

The ambassador noted that South Korea was running comparable programmes in Kirinyaga, Kiambu and Kajiado counties, covering agriculture, healthcare, culture, climate change adaptation and technical and vocational education and training — a broad engagement that reflected Seoul’s commitment to development cooperation across Kenya.

Kang also raised the spectre of climate change, which he said was increasingly threatening agricultural productivity in both Kenya and South Korea through prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall and flooding. He said KOPIA was working with private institutions to equip Kenyan farmers with the knowledge and techniques

needed to adapt to shifting weather patterns and reduce losses from climate-related disruptions.

“KOPIA is collaborating with other private institutions to help Kenyan farmers address and overcome climate-related challenges such as droughts, flooding and other effects of climate change,” Kang said.

For Meru’s farmers, the new storage facility represents something immediate and practical — a place to hold their harvest, protect it from spoilage and wait for better prices rather than selling in desperation at the farm gate. For the two governments, it marks another chapter in a partnership that has consistently delivered more than its announcements promised.



Meru county Governor Mutuma M’Ethingia. | Photo: Brian Gitonga



Meru county Deputy Governor Lindah Kiome (Left) Meru Governor Mutuma M’Ethingia (centre) South Korea’s Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Kang Hyung-shik (Right). | Photo: Brian Gitonga

Anniversary “Winnie called me and said, ‘Mum, we’ve lost the battle.’ I asked, ‘What? What are you saying?’ Then she said, ‘Dad is gone.’ And that is how I received the news,” Ida recalled.

One year on: ‘Dad is gone’ — Ida Odinga recalls the moment Kenya lost Raila

A year after the former Prime Minister’s death, his widow speaks of empty chairs, waiting into the night and a grief that still refuses to settle

BY Brenda Achieng

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Ida Odinga has described the moment she learned of her husband Raila Odinga’s death — delivered by their daughter Winnie from a hospital in India — as the most devastating of her life, one she still struggles, a full year later, to fully accept.

Speaking to Citizen TV at Opoda Farm in Bondo, Siaya County, on the eve of the first anniversary of Raila’s passing, marked yesterday on October 15, Ida recalled a morning that began without warning and ended with the obliteration of a partnership spanning more than five decades.

“The day before he passed away, we talked quite a lot,” she said. “We were talking about ordinary things. There was nothing unusual, no alarm and nothing to suggest that he was unwell. He even assured me that he was feeling very well and that there was nothing wrong.”

The following morning, a call from Raila’s sister, Akinyi Wenwa, carried the first tremor of alarm. Wenwa asked Ida to contact another sister, Ruth Adhiambo, who was with Raila in India. Unable to reach Ruth, Ida called Winnie. Her daughter told her that Raila had collapsed during a morning walk and that doctors were attempting to resuscitate him. Ten minutes later, Winnie called again.

“Winnie called me and said, ‘Mum, we’ve lost the battle.’ I asked, ‘What? What are you saying?’ Then she said, ‘Dad is gone.’ And that is how I received the news,” Ida recalled.

The words, simple and final, closed a chapter in Kenyan political history as consequential as any in the republic’s existence. Raila Amollo Odinga — five-time presidential candidate, former Prime Minister, Pan-Africanist and the most resilient opposition figure Kenya has ever produced — was gone. He was 79.

For Kenya, the loss was seismic. Raila had been the gravitational centre of opposition politics for three decades, a man whose career encompassed detention without trial under Daniel arap Moi, a historic power-sharing agreement that ended post-election violence in 2008, four

bruising presidential campaigns and, finally, a rapprochement with President William Ruto that took him to the chairmanship of the African Union Commission. His death removed from Kenya’s political landscape a figure of genuine continental stature — and left a vacuum that, one year on, remains conspicuously unfilled.

The Orange Democratic Movement, the party Raila built and led for nearly two decades, has continued under the stewardship of loyalists, but without its founder’s extraordinary capacity to hold together a diverse and fractious coalition through force of personality alone. Party officials have spoken of honouring his legacy through continued advocacy for constitutional reform, devolution and the rights of ordinary Kenyans — the causes that defined his public life. Whether ODM can sustain its national relevance without him as its animating force is a question that Kenya’s evolving political landscape will answer over the months ahead, as the country moves toward the August 2027 general election.

For Ida, the political legacy, however vast, is secondary to a grief that is lived daily in the textures of domestic life. She spoke of the routines that shaped their marriage and now shape her mourning — the late evenings when Raila would return home after long political days, and the habit of waiting that has not yet surrendered to the reality of his absence.

“When he was here, he would sometimes stay out late before coming home. So whenever I go home, I keep hoping that he is going to come back. You wait and wait until late into the night, and then you realise that he is not coming,” she said.

The physical reminders are everywhere. His chair at the dining table sits unoccupied. His clothes remain in the house. The ordinary objects of a shared life have become monuments to absence, each one a quiet insistence that the man who used them is simply elsewhere rather than gone.

“When you enter the house, his usual chair is empty. At the dining table, his usual chair is no longer occupied. His clothes are still around,” Ida



A screengrab of Ida Odinga speaking about her late husband Raila Odinga yesterday

said, her words carrying the particular weight of grief that has not yet found a resting place.

She said her faith has been the steadiest source of comfort, anchoring her through a loss that reason alone cannot accommodate.

“But we thank God because I know that even if he is not physically present, his spirit is alive, and his spirit is with us,” she said.

It is the kind of statement that in another context might sound like consolation offered to others. From Ida, it carries the quiet conviction of someone who has genuinely reached for it and found it holding.

Kenya marked the first anniversary of Raila’s death yesterday with tributes from across the political spectrum — a measure of the degree to which, whatever divisions he provoked in life, his absence has clarified his significance. Even those who opposed him most fiercely acknowledged that his departure diminished the country’s political conversation in ways that have yet to be adequately replaced.



The late Ida Odinga

Ida Odinga continues to live at Opoda Farm in Bondo, the home they shared, in the constituency he represented and the landscape that shaped

him. She waits, she says, not quite able to stop — and not quite ready to.

Politics Gachagua's Democratic for the Citizens Party, led on the ground by Senator John Methu, has already begun constituency-level mobilisation

Kenya's election countdown: DCP and Gachagua fire the opening shot in 2027 battle

With Ruto's coalition fracturing and Gachagua mobilising from abroad, Kenya's political temperature is rising a full year before voters go to the polls

BY James Mwangi
@themkenyatimes

Kenya's 2027 general election campaign is under way in everything but name, with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua engaging the Kenyan diaspora in the United States while simultaneously building an opposition movement that is directly challenging President William Ruto's administration over economic hardship, governance failures and what critics describe as a

widening disconnect between the political class and ordinary citizens.

Writing on social media during his diaspora tour, Gachagua was unsparing. "Misplaced anger, insults, and name-calling will only further diminish this regime's already deteriorating chances of survival," he said, framing his Democratic for the Citizens Party not as a personal vehicle but as a broad coalition for citizens frustrated by rising costs and shrinking opportunities. "We will not let you

down or forsake you. Let's stand together and open a new chapter, one led by leaders who are compassionate, listen to the people, and put Kenyans first."

The remarks landed at a particularly sensitive moment. University lecturers are on strike again, squeezing families already stretched by inflation, while a government suggestion that Kenyans supplement dairy shortages by consuming wildlife products drew widespread ridicule and became an instant symbol of



The DCP Party team, led by Senator John Methu, engaged with the great people of Kajiado town.

what opponents argue is an administration dangerously out of touch with the realities of everyday life.

Gachagua's Democratic for the Citizens Party, led on the ground by Senator John Methu, has already begun constituency-level mobilisation. Yesterday's engagement in Kajiado town signalled that the movement is targeting the vote-rich regions of the Rift Valley and the former Nairobi metropolitan belt — constituencies that will be decisive in any competitive 2027 contest. The political arithmetic matters. Gachagua was impeached by parliament in October 2024 in circumstances his allies described as politically motivated, a charge the government denied. His removal created a fault line within the Ruto administration's original coalition, and that fracture has not healed. If anything, it has widened as economic conditions have deteriorated and public patience with the government's messaging has worn thin.

Kenya goes to the polls in August 2027, and the period between now and then promises to be among the most turbulent in the country's post-independence political history. The opposition is fragmented but energised. Raila Odinga, now at the African Union, has not formally ruled out another presidential run, and his political machinery remains active at the grassroots. Martha Karua, Kalonzo Musyoka and a constellation of regional figures are all recalibrating their positions, sensing that

the ground beneath the ruling coalition is shifting.

For Ruto, the challenge is substantial. His administration came to power on the bottom-up economic transformation agenda, promising to lift ordinary Kenyans out of poverty and dismantle what he called a dynasty-dominated political system. Three years in, the cost of living has remained punishingly high, public debt servicing consumes an ever-larger share of the national budget, and the street protests of mid-2024 — which forced a partial reversal of the finance bill — demonstrated that public anger can translate rapidly into organised political pressure.

The lecturers' strike is not merely an industrial dispute. In the context of a government struggling to demonstrate competence and compassion, it is another data point in a narrative the opposition is constructing with considerable skill: that this is a regime which prioritises its own survival over the welfare of citizens.

Gachagua's diaspora engagement has demonstrated that physical distance is not political absence. Social media has compressed geography, and his ability to generate news cycles from Washington while simultaneously rallying Kenyans abroad reflects a sophisticated understanding of modern political communication. His return to Kenya, widely anticipated ahead of the formal campaign period, will represent a significant moment — and a potentially

serious threat to the coalition Ruto is working to hold together.

What the next twelve months will reveal is whether Gachagua can convert diaspora enthusiasm, online momentum and grassroots mobilisation into the kind of durable, cross-regional coalition that wins Kenyan presidencies. The country's electoral history is unforgiving. Regional arithmetic, financial resources, party infrastructure and the ability to negotiate alliances at the eleventh hour have determined every election since multiparty politics returned in 1991. Passion and grievance, without organisation, rarely prevail.

Kenya in the months ahead of August 2027 will be a country in permanent political negotiation — alliances forming and dissolving, defections announced and denied, manifestos promising transformation that previous manifestos also promised. The electorate, meanwhile, will be watching the price of unga, the availability of jobs and the state of public hospitals with far more attention than any campaign rally.

That, ultimately, is the election that matters. Not the one fought on stages and social media, but the one settled quietly in millions of households by citizens who have simply had enough — and who will decide, in August next year, whether to give this government more time or open, as Gachagua puts it, a new chapter entirely.



Energy Kenya has made measurable progress on its energy mix. According to data from the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, geothermal accounted for 39.51 per cent

Kenya's clean energy push hinges on quality standards, says Kinyanjui

Cabinet secretary and KEBS chief tell industry that affordable power must translate into real jobs and lower costs

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyatimes

Kenya's government yesterday reaffirmed its commitment to making the country's transition to affordable, clean and reliable energy a driver of industrial transformation and inclusive growth, with quality standards placed at the centre of that ambition.

The declaration came during the World Standards Day 2026 celebrations held at the Eka Hotel in Nairobi, where Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry Lee Kinyanjui and Kenya Bureau of Standards Director General Esther Ngari led stakeholders in marking the global observance under the theme: "Shared Vision For A Better World: Spotlight On SDG 7 — Affordable And Clean Energy."

The event brought together Principal Secretary for Industry Juma Mukhwana, National Standards Council Chairperson Chris Wamalwa, former International Organization for Standardization president Eng. Eddy Njoroge, representatives of international organisations, industry leaders, development partners, the diplomatic community, academia, technical committees and consumer organisations.

In his keynote address, Kinyanjui said this year's theme aligned closely with Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, arguing that energy was not merely a social service but a critical productive input that determined the cost of manufacturing, shaped investment decisions and defined the competitiveness of Kenyan products in regional and international markets.

Kenya has made measurable

progress on its energy mix. According to data from the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, geothermal accounted for 39.51 per cent of electricity generated in the 2024/2025 financial year, hydropower contributed 24.21 per cent and wind 13.18 per cent — giving the country a renewable energy foundation that Kinyanjui said provided a genuine competitive edge in attracting green investment.

"This renewable-energy foundation gives Kenya an important advantage," he said. "However, the real test is whether energy progress translates into lower production costs, stronger industries, more investment, jobs and better livelihoods."

The government's National Energy Compact 2025–2030 targets universal access to electricity and clean cooking by 2030, 5,952 megawatts of renewable electricity generation capacity and a full transition to a clean national grid. Kinyanjui acknowledged that achieving those targets would require massive investment, innovation and skills development, but stressed that a strong quality infrastructure was equally indispensable.

For his ministry, he said, the link between energy and industry was direct. Investors needed confidence that infrastructure and equipment were reliable. Manufacturers needed efficient systems to manage costs. Consumers needed assurance that electrical, solar and other energy products were safe and would perform as intended. Standards, he argued, provided precisely that assurance — setting clear requirements for quality, safety, efficiency and compatibility across electrical installations, renewable energy technologies, battery storage, electric

mobility, clean cooking and energy-efficient industrial equipment.

"We must therefore move beyond measuring energy progress only by the capacity installed," Kinyanjui said. "We must increasingly measure its contribution to productivity, industrial growth, employment and household welfare."

He elaborated on how dependable energy underpinned progress across every priority of the government's agenda — supporting irrigation, cold storage and post-harvest preservation in agriculture; reducing operating costs in manufacturing; and enabling longer hours and better equipment for small and medium enterprises. He cautioned, however, that standards must not become an unnecessary obstacle to enterprise. "We must combine clear requirements with awareness, training and accessible compliance services," he said. "Our businesses should be equipped not merely to meet minimum requirements, but to compete confidently."

Ngari, speaking on behalf of KEBS, described World Standards Day as an opportunity to recognise the foundational role standards play in making modern life safer, more efficient and more sustainable. She framed energy as woven into the fabric of daily life — illuminating homes, powering hospitals, sustaining industries and connecting communities to the digital economy. For a small enterprise, she said, reliable electricity meant longer operating hours and improved productivity. For a rural household, a dependable solar system provided light for children to study. For a manufacturer, energy efficiency meant lower production costs.



Trade and Industry Lee Kinyanjui

But she was direct about the risks of progress without quality assurance. "A solar panel that fails prematurely, a battery that does not deliver expected performance, or an electrical appliance that presents a safety risk can turn an investment in progress into a source of loss and disappointment," Ngari warned. Inefficient equipment, she added, could increase operating costs for households and businesses, undermining the very affordability the energy transition sought to deliver.

"Standards are the bridge between the promise of technology and the benefits people actually experience," she said, describing KEBS's collaboration with EPRA on fuel quality as a practical illustration of how complementary institutional mandates could protect consumers, ensure fair trade and advance environmental objectives.

Ngari reaffirmed that KEBS

would continue to develop and adopt standards, undertake conformity assessment and enforce applicable standards under its statutory mandate. She framed compliance not as a burden but as an investment. "For manufacturers, compliance should be understood not merely as an obligation, but as an investment in productivity, market access and reputation," she said. "For consumers, it is an important safeguard. For the country, it is part of the foundation for sustainable industrial growth."

Both leaders called for a whole-of-society approach in which government provided an enabling environment, industry invested in quality and efficiency, technical institutions offered credible assurance and consumers were empowered to recognise and demand compliant products. They emphasised the particular need to ensure that small-

er enterprises could access the knowledge and technical support required to meet standards, so that Kenya's quality-driven energy transition opened doors for Kenyan businesses rather than closing them.

Kinyanjui closed with a definition of progress that was deliberately grounded. "The true measure of progress will be practical: a small enterprise with lower energy costs; a manufacturer that competes more effectively; a farmer who preserves more of their harvest; a young person who secures work in a growing green economy; and a Kenyan product trusted in international markets."

Ngari echoed the sentiment. "A better energy future is not measured by electricity generated alone, but by the lives improved, the businesses strengthened and the opportunities created."



Kenya Bureau of Standards Director General Esther Ngari

Tech The broader environment supports the momentum. Kenya's information and communication technology sector generated KSh701.3B in output in 2024

Mount Kenya region is finding its place in Kenya's tech map

From Chuka to Embu, universities are producing developers and ideas — but talent alone will not build a technology hub

BY Purity Benjamin

@themtkenyatimes

For years, Nairobi has been the undisputed centre of Kenya's technology industry — the city where the major companies, investors, accelerators, innovation spaces and conferences converge. But away from the capital, a quieter and increasingly purposeful technology story is beginning to take shape.

Across the Mount Kenya region, universities are evolving beyond their traditional role as centres of academic instruction. Students are forming developer communities, competing in hackathons, building prototypes and launching startups, while institutions are carving out spaces for innovation and collaboration that did not exist a decade ago. The shift is gradual but it is real, and the people closest to it believe it is only beginning.

The broader environment supports the momentum. Kenya's information and communication technology sector generated KSh701.3B in output in 2024, an 8.3 per cent increase on the previous year, while value added rose from KSh339.5B to KSh364.5B. Mobile subscriptions reached 71.4 million during the same period. By March 2025, that figure had climbed to 76.16 million, equivalent to a penetration rate of 145.3 per cent, with mobile-money subscriptions standing at 45.36 million. The government has also reported more than 40,000 kilometres of fibre-optic cable laid across the country, alongside continued investment in digital hubs and online services.

Technology growth, howev-

er, is no longer exclusively a Nairobi story.

Institutions such as Chuka University, Meru University of Science and Technology, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, the University of Embu and Kirinyaga University are producing a growing and increasingly capable pool of graduates in computing, engineering and related disciplines. Government investment in economic infrastructure reinforces the picture. County Aggregation and Industrial Parks have been fast-tracked in Meru, Embu and Kirinyaga, with reported completion rates of 92, 83 and 81 per cent respectively.

For Isaac Kahura, the Google Developer Groups lead at Chuka University, the change on campus is already visible. Over the past two to three years, he says, technology has increasingly bridged the gap between classroom theory and practical experience. Students are no longer waiting until graduation to understand what it means to build a product. Through developer communities, hackathons, workshops and technical events, they are experimenting with technologies and collaborating with peers — gaining exposure that academic qualifications alone cannot provide.

What is missing, Kahura argues, is structure. The region has a large population of young people with genuine technical skills who are already building and shipping products. The challenge is connecting them — to each other, to institutions and to the wider ecosystem. That gap is most visible in the movement of young developers who travel to Nairobi specifically to attend technology events,

despite the fact that similar gatherings could be hosted closer to home. If communities across Mount Kenya co-ordinated their activities, the region could attract developers, entrepreneurs, mentors and companies to local events rather than continuously exporting its talent to the capital. The benefit would extend well beyond convenience. Regular regional events could create networks that allow ideas to move between universities and give young innovators access to the people and resources needed to develop their work.

Deluxe Sande, who was active in the technology community before Kahura took over, identifies another critical gap: physical spaces where collaboration can be sustained. Sande believes Mount Kenya is capable of becoming a genuine technology hub, but says the region needs meaningful investment in co-working spaces where developers, entrepreneurs and innovators can gather, work and grow. Talent, he insists, is not the problem. The more pressing question is what happens to that talent after a competition or event ends.

Hackathons crystallise the challenge. Participants can develop compelling ideas in a matter of days, present them confidently and emerge as winners — yet the incubation that should follow often remains uncertain or entirely absent. Without structured mentorship, follow-up support and sufficient funding, a prototype can remain exactly that: a prototype.

The concern is not unique to Mount Kenya. Kenya remains one of Africa's strongest technology markets, but



Chuka University

access to startup capital is growing more competitive. Partech's 2025 Africa Tech Venture Capital report placed Kenya first on the continent by total tech funding, with \$1.04B raised — a 72 per cent increase on the previous year. Yet much of that capital was concentrated in a handful of large deals. Four megadeals alone accounted for approximately \$610 million, or roughly 60 per cent of the country's total funding. For young founders outside Nairobi, that concentration represents a structural disadvantage that geography only deepens.

Sande sees co-working spaces, incubation programmes and investment networks as the critical infrastructure needed to move Mount Kenya from producing ideas to producing sustainable companies.

Jimmy Kimunyi, a former GDG lead who helped organise technology activities in the university community, points to a related challenge: sustaining engagement after the event is over. A hackathon creates energy for a few days. Turning that energy into lasting momentum requires resources, mentorship and consistent community programming. The competition cannot be the destination — the ideas it generates need people who can guide founders through product development, business planning, fundraising and market entry. Mount Kenya, Kimunyi says, already has the talent. What it needs now is industry participation, structured partnerships and dependable support for local startups.

That need becomes particularly clear when you look at what event organisers actually contend with. Kahura describes the enthusiasm at Chuka University — the turnout, the hunger to learn — as evidence of genuine and substantial demand. But behind a successful event is an exhausting amount of administrative work: securing conference rooms, navigating institutional procedures and working through what he calls a complicated paper trail. That friction can test the patience of even committed organisers and slow down momentum that is hard enough to build in the first place.

Whether that persistence holds will largely determine whether Mount Kenya becomes a technology hub or remains a region of promising but disconnected pockets of talent.

The foundations are visible. Universities are producing graduates, students are participating in hackathons, developer communities are organising events, the government

is investing in digital infrastructure and young people are building products. What is still missing is the ecosystem around them — the collaboration between universities, the mentorship from companies, the investment from beyond Nairobi and the structured support that turns competition winners into company founders.

The region does not need to become another Nairobi. It has the opportunity to build something different: a connected network of universities, developers, entrepreneurs and innovation spaces that allows young people to grow without having to leave to find opportunity.

Nairobi remains Kenya's dominant technology centre. But from Chuka to Meru, Embu, Kirinyaga and Nyeri, the infrastructure of another technology corridor is beginning to emerge. The question is no longer whether Mount Kenya has the talent. It is whether the region will build what is needed to keep it.



Meru University of Science and Technology

Education Teachers Joseph Lumuli, Verah Katikit and Julia Loyal accompanied the learners throughout the day, ensuring their safety and guiding them through each stage of the visit.

Airstrip and museum visit opens young minds to new horizons

Bikeke Comprehensive School learners get a first look at aviation and history in Trans Nzoia educational trip

BY Daniel Kipchumba and Fridah Roktok
@themkenyaintimes

Learners from Bikeke Comprehensive School in Trans Nzoia yesterday visited Kitale Airstrip and the local museum in an educational trip designed to broaden their horizons beyond the classroom and introduce them to the world of aviation and heritage. The excursion, facilitated under the leadership of Head of Institution Francis Wamalwa Toili, gave learners a hands-

on opportunity to explore air transport operations and gain early exposure to aviation-related careers — experiences that no textbook can fully replicate. At the airstrip, students observed the practical workings of aviation infrastructure and began to understand its role in facilitating movement and supporting economic activity across the region. The museum visit added a complementary dimension, connecting learners to history and cultural heritage in ways that deep-

en appreciation for the world around them. Teachers Joseph Lumuli, Verah Katikit and Julia Loyal accompanied the learners throughout the day, ensuring their safety and guiding them through each stage of the visit. The trip reflects a growing recognition within the school that learning thrives when it moves beyond four walls. Under the Competency-Based Education approach, experiences of this kind help learners develop practical skills,



Students at the airstrip in Kitale



The trip to the airstrip accompanied by teachers

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critical thinking, communication and a curiosity that classroom instruction alone rarely ignites. A child who watches an aircraft take off, or holds a piece of history in a museum, sees the world differently afterwards. School trips of this nature are not recreational outings. They are deliberate investments in young minds — exposing learners to careers they may never have considered, sparking interests they did not know they had and giving shape to dreams that are still forming. Curiosity, after all, is how ambition begins. Bikeke Comprehensive School's commitment to



At the museum in Kitale

holistic learning reflects an understanding that the generation Kenya needs tomorrow must be nurtured today — with both the knowledge gained in classrooms and the perspective that only the wider world can provide.

The secret behind the door



One evening, I found a small locked door in my grandmother house, I had come there for many times, but I had never seen it open. When I asked my grandmother about it, she quickly changed the topic. That night, I heard a strange sound coming from behind the door.

The next morning, I found a small key under an old table. I opened the door and saw a dusty room with an old box inside. The box contained an old photo of my grandmother standing beside a stranger. Suddenly, I noticed another photo hidden beneath it. It showed me standing inside that very room but the photo was dated thirty years before I was born.

D.Dhanyasri
Grade 8
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary school,
Panruti, Tamil Nadu, India.

You do not see their smile when they laugh



You do not feel the emotions in their heart, Unaware of the sleepless nights they passed, Your child will remain your regret, oh fathers... Growing up far away, distant from you, Sometimes with eyes filled with tears, They sigh deeply when seeing others with a dad, Your child will remain your regret, oh fathers... When I write this, even your name is noble, Yet you blame only us for everything. Try weighing yourself on the scales of justice, You are unworthy of your child, oh fathers... Playing, laughing, and falling, they still grow up, Waiting endlessly, one day their patience runs out. Saying "I have no father," hope fades at last, To those fathers who became a regret to their child...

You darkened the childhood of your children, In their youth, they faced the hardships of fate. Unable to fill the emptiness in their tender hearts, Oh fathers, who made a game out of destinies... Looking into their eyes, my pity awakens, My anger rises at those who know not a child's worth. Even if the mother was bad—let that be her own path, Even from child support, you ran away, oh fathers... One day you too will grow old, for time is the judge, I swear by Allah, memories will come back to you. At the end of life, calling "My child," you will grieve in pain, Those "Fathers" who were unworthy of fatherhood!

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

The creased Saree



It's easy to shine when you do no toil, Your clothes stay crisp, untouched by soil. With makeup perfect, so fair and neat, You sit and talk from your clean seat.

But she who works from morning light, Her saree creased, her soul still bright. Her brow has sweat, her hands are sore, Yet her hard work feeds her family more. The idle ones may look perfect in every way, But her saree holds the dust of the day. Yet her child will run for just one hug, For no perfume smells as sweet as mother's love.

RAJITHA D
Creative writer,
GGHSS
PADAPPAI
KANCHEEPURAM

Always reading a book



Ends in a fresh thought, That thought will surely change At least one step of your life. That one step will transform you To a higher grade and make you shine extra. That extra shine is your boost

To walk and run faster in the race. That fast move will shower you With unbelievable happiness and laurels. That happiness will make your Soul and mind stronger and healthier. That strongest soul is a meaningful human Who leaves behind a message For society to read. Umadevi ArasaKumar
B T English
Panchayat Union Middle School, Kugalur
Gobichettipalayam
Erode 638313

A man's world



A man sees the world, What he carries in his heart, There's no passion in the world without imaginations, He has no bounds, Lovable imaginations corrupt our heart, It's a man's world and he carries his entire world with him,, His world is full of joy, Full of happiness, Full of wishes and full of hopes,

His world may be his loving daughter, May be his son, May be his mom, May be his dad, May be his beloved, May be his creche, May be his life partner, May be his lover, May be his sweet heart, May be his lady love, May be his friends, May be his kith and kins, May be his favourite souls on the earth, May be his best companion of life, A typical world of love, A typical love in his world, Charm and cherished him in his life, He sacrifices his whole life with simplicity, sufferings and strife, To adore his world of love, A great gift from above, Blessed by the Lord to live with immortal love forever!!!!!! V.R.VIJAYALAKSHMI, GRADUATE TEACHER, CW WRITERS GROUP, KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT TAMILNADU, INDIA.

Too much of everything is not good



Being too attached to anything is also not good. Everything has its own limits. However, you should stay connected to everything without becoming too attached.

When you become too attached to friendships and relationships, that attachment may gradually decrease one day. This is a reality of life. So, maintaining a balanced mind is good for building healthy bonds with everyone. Therefore, remember Be attached to nothing and connected to everything. _G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block Villupuram dt

Politics The council anchored its recommendations in a Quranic injunction from Surah Al-Ma'idah: the principle of cooperation in righteousness and piety

SUPKEM calls for political cooperation over division

Muslim council's annual meeting urges Kenya's leaders to put citizens before power

BY Grace Wanja
@themkenyentimes

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims concluded its Annual General Meeting yesterday at the Weston Hotel in Nairobi, using the occasion to deliver a pointed assessment of the country's political climate and call on both the ruling administration and the opposition to place national welfare above partisan interests.

The meeting, which drew delegates, scholars and leadership structures from all 47 counties, served as both an institutional audit and a public statement on the state of the nation. As Kenya's apex umbrella body for Muslim organisations, SUPKEM used the platform to reflect on what it described as a critical and consequential moment in the country's political trajectory.



National Chairman Hassan Kirua Ole Naado

In a statement signed by National Chairman Hassan Kirua Ole Naado, the council said it had observed with concern the emergence of political realignments driven more by self-preservation than by

public service. It warned that vulnerable citizens were being left exposed to economic hardship and social fragmentation as a consequence of what it termed endless political friction.

"Kenya cannot afford the luxury of endless political friction at the expense of national development, ethnic harmony, and ethical governance," the statement read, framing leadership as a trust

— or amanah — that those in power must honour not merely before their electorates but before a higher authority.

The council anchored its recommendations in a Quranic injunction from Surah Al-Ma'idah: the principle of cooperation in righteousness and piety while rejecting cooperation in sin and aggression. It described this as a roadmap not only for the Muslim community but for the country's political class and civil society at large.

SUPKEM's formal recommendations were direct. On what it called cooperation for the common good, the council urged the government and opposition to forge a principled consensus on the rising cost of living, healthcare reform and youth unemployment — stressing that any cooperation must deliver relief to ordinary Kenyans rather than serve as a cover for power-sharing arrangements.

The council also issued a strong condemnation of political strategies that exploit ethnic or religious divisions, calling on all political actors to abandon inflammatory language that it said threatened national peace. In a further recommendation on accountability, SUPKEM demanded

transparency in the management of public resources, describing corruption as a severe moral failing, and called for independent oversight institutions to be strengthened and insulated from political interference.

The meeting took place against a backdrop of shifting political alliances and sustained public frustration over the cost of living, which has remained a dominant concern since last year's finance bill protests. SUPKEM's intervention reflects a broader pattern of religious institutions stepping into the political discourse at moments of national tension, a role the council said it regarded as inseparable from its mandate to nurture a united and ethically grounded community that actively contributes to Kenyan society.

The council said it would continue to monitor national developments and engage with relevant institutions in pursuit of peace, equitable governance and moral leadership.

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School feeding The problem is most acute in drought-prone regions, informal settlements and households living under sustained economic pressure

School feeding in Kenya: Can every child access a meal and an education?

Thousands of Kenyan children sit in classrooms every day too hungry to learn — and the country cannot afford to keep pretending that is acceptable

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes

A child who arrives at school without breakfast is already behind before the lesson begins. Hunger does not pause for arithmetic or reading comprehension. It gnaws at concentration, dulls memory, suppresses participation and makes the simplest instruction feel unreachable. Yet across Kenya, thousands of learners face exactly this reality every single school day — and the country's educational ambitions are quietly paying the price.

School feeding programmes are frequently discussed as welfare initiatives, a kindness extended to the poor. That framing understates their importance considerably. They are investments in human capital, in national productivity and in the basic fairness that meaningful education requires. Physical presence in a classroom is not the same as learning. A hungry child may occupy a desk, but their mind is elsewhere.

The problem is most acute in drought-prone regions, informal settlements and households living under sustained economic pressure. Many parents cannot reliably provide breakfast before school. Some cannot provide dinner either. When children from these households attend class, their attention is divided between whatever is being taught and the very immediate discomfort of an empty stomach. The consequences accumulate over time — poor performance, disengagement, absenteeism and, eventually, dropout. Hunger is not the only driver of educational inequality in Kenya, but it reliably deepens every other inequality that already exists.

A well-designed and consistently funded school feeding programme addresses



several of these pressures simultaneously. It incentivises attendance, particularly among children whose families weigh the cost of sending them to school against the cost of keeping them home to work or help with younger siblings. It reduces the financial burden on vulnerable households, freeing parents to manage other pressing needs. And when meals meet genuine nutritional standards, it supports the physical and cognitive development that learning depends upon. These are not marginal benefits. For a child living in poverty, a reliable school meal can be the difference between staying in school and leaving it.

Kenya's development trajectory depends on the knowledge, skills and ambitions of its young population. The country cannot credibly aspire to produce the teachers, engineers, doctors, entrepreneurs and public servants it needs if a significant portion of those future professionals cannot concentrate in primary school because they are hungry. The connection between nutrition and educational outcome is not speculative — it is well-documented and the evidence is unambiguous. Treating school feeding as a charitable add-on rather than a core component of educational policy is a choice Kenya can no longer justify.

Funding remains the most persistent obstacle. Purchas-

ing food, transporting supplies, preparing meals and maintaining safe kitchen facilities require substantial and consistent resources. Where funding is delayed or inadequate, meals become irregular, and irregular meals are almost as damaging to attendance as no meals at all. National and county governments, development partners and private stakeholders must work together to establish financing arrangements that are sustainable rather than seasonal. Budgets must be transparent, monitored rigorously and protected from diversion. Resources allocated to feeding programmes must reach the schools that need them, not disappear into procurement chains that benefit everyone except the children.

Dependence on emergency donations or temporary partnerships is not a strategy. Purchasing food from local farmers and cooperatives offers a more durable model — one that keeps money circulating within communities, creates markets for agricultural produce and builds relationships between schools and their surroundings. Local procurement, however, requires careful management. Good intentions do not substitute for clear supply chains, fair pricing, food safety standards and professional oversight. Sustainable programmes are built on systems, not goodwill.

Equity must also shape how

resources are allocated. Not every school faces the same pressures, and policy that treats all schools identically produces outcomes that are identical in name only. Schools serving communities affected by recurrent drought, chronic food insecurity or extreme poverty need more support, not the same support distributed more thinly. Recognising that reality is not a departure from fairness — it is what fairness actually requires.

Community involvement strengthens whatever structures exist. Parents, school management committees, teachers and local leaders can monitor food quality, flag irregularities and help identify

the most vulnerable learners. Their participation should complement, not replace, the government's fundamental responsibility to ensure that public education functions. Oversight must be genuine — not performative audits that satisfy reporting requirements while meals remain inadequate or unsafe.

The measure of success for any school feeding programme should not stop at the number of meals served. It must extend to attendance rates, learner retention, classroom participation and, ultimately, educational outcomes. Those figures tell the real story of whether the investment is working and whether the most vulnerable children are

being reached.

Kenya has made real progress in expanding access to education. Enrolment figures have risen, new classrooms have been built and the policy conversation has matured considerably. But enrolment without retention is incomplete progress, and retention without adequate nutrition is a fiction. A child who is hungry, exhausted and anxious about the next meal cannot compete on equal terms with a child whose basic needs are reliably met. Pretending otherwise does not close the gap — it widens it.

The question facing Kenya is no longer whether school meals are beneficial. The evidence settled that long ago. The question is whether the country is prepared to fund them adequately, manage them professionally and sustain them for long enough to make a genuine difference. A nation that feeds its learners invests in their potential. A nation that protects that potential builds the only foundation its future actually rests on.




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Law This is the public-private divide in its purest, most corrosive form. Public enforcement is treated as a sufficient proxy for justice

The public-private divide in competition law: Reconstructing rights-based private remedies for anticompetitive harm in Kenya and the East African Community



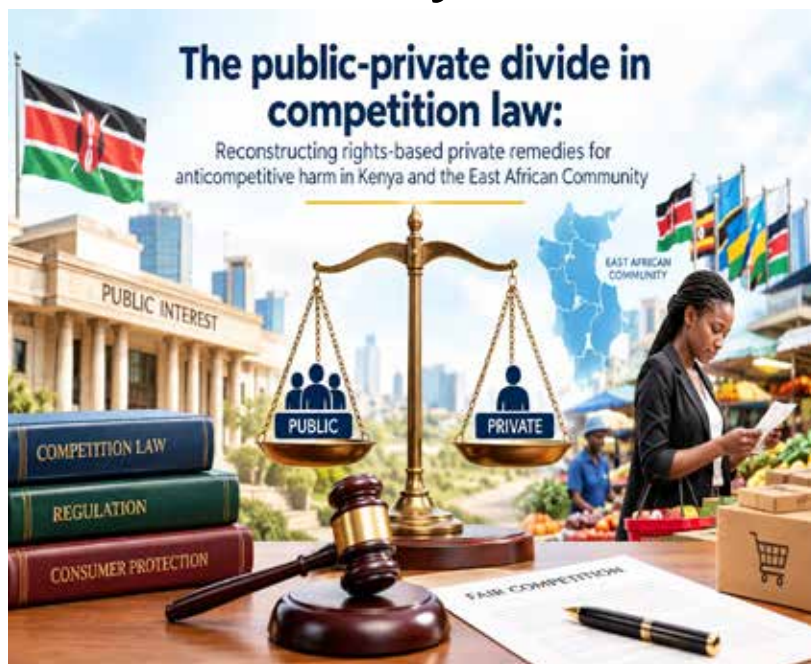
By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyatiimes

In Kenya, private enforcement of competition law is non-existent. The OECD's peer review of Kenya's competition regime states it plainly: private enforcement is non-existent, reflecting broader challenges in developing a competition culture and the risks and costs associated with litigation. Not a single private damages claim for anticompetitive harm has ever been brought before Kenyan courts. This is not a technical footnote. It is the central, damning fact of the public-private divide that leaves ordinary Kenyans, small suppliers, and downstream businesses as unpaid creditors of a system that collects fines while denying victims their rights.

This void is no accident of legal infancy. Kenya's modern competition framework, born from the Competition Act of 2010 and operationalised through the Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK) since 2011, replaced an earlier 1989 statute. It arrived with ambitious objects: to enhance the welfare of the people of Kenya by promoting and protecting effective competition. The East African Community Competition Act of 2006 (as amended) speaks in equally lofty tones of protecting market participants' freedom to compete across Partner States. Yet both regimes have constructed an architecture in which the public authority holds the sword, the purse, and the microphone, while private parties who actually bleed from cartels, abuse of dominance, and buyer-power predation are left to applaud from the gallery.

Consider the arithmetic of harm and the arithmetic of remedy. In the steel cartel investigation that concluded with penalties around KES 338 million against multiple manufacturers for price-fixing and output restriction, the overcharges did not vanish into thin air. They were paid by con-



tractors, developers, and ultimately by families seeking roofs and roads. In the paints sector, CAK's interventions generated estimated consumer savings exceeding KES 900 million. Through abuse-of-buyer-power enforcement, the Authority recovered KES 76.29 million in delayed payments owed to small and medium suppliers. These are not trivial sums. They are the visible tip of a much larger iceberg of transferred wealth. Yet the recovery of those millions flowed through administrative channels; the private parties who suffered the original injury received no automatic pathway to damages, no follow-on claim facilitated by the public finding, no statutory presumption that would turn the Authority's victory into their restitution.

This is the public-private divide in its purest, most corrosive form. Public enforcement is treated as a sufficient proxy for justice. The CAK investigates, settles (often without admission of liability), imposes penalties up to the statutory 10 percent of turnover, and declares consumer savings. The East African Community Competition Authority gathers complaints, investigates cross-border conduct, and may impose its own sanctions. Victims, however, remain structurally sidelined. The law does not erect an explicit, rights-based private right of action with procedural teeth disclosure rights calibrated to competition cases, limitation periods that begin upon public decision

rather than the hidden cartel meeting, standing rules that recognise both direct and indirect purchasers, and mechanisms for collective redress that match the diffuse nature of overcharge harm.

History offers a sobering parallel. Colonial marketing boards and post-independence parastatals once claimed to act for the "public good" while extracting surplus from producers and consumers alike. The language has modernized; the structure of insulated public power has not entirely. Today's competition authorities are more sophisticated, better intentioned, and genuinely constrained by statute. Yet the insulation remains: the public body decides when and whether to act, controls the evidence, settles on terms that may prioritise administrative convenience or public-interest considerations over full compensation, and leaves private litigants to start from scratch in courts that still lack deep competition expertise. Settlements proliferate precisely because they are efficient for the regulator; they are often opaque or incomplete for the injured party who needs a finding of liability and a quantum of damage.

The irony is sharp. Kenya and the EAC celebrate regional integration and market opening. Cross-border cartels and abuse of dominance do not respect national borders any more than capital does. A steel price-fixing arrangement or restric-

tive distribution practices that affect multiple Partner States harm consumers and rivals in Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Kigali simultaneously. Yet the private remedy remains fragmented or absent. The EAC Competition Act permits complaints by persons and provides for certain consumer compensation in specific contexts, but it does not construct a robust, harmonised private enforcement regime that would allow a Kenyan SME crushed by a dominant regional buyer, or a Rwandan importer overcharged by a cartel, to recover damages with the benefit of a prior public decision. Jurisdictional overlaps between national authorities, COMESA, and the EAC already create uncertainty for mergers; the same uncertainty, magnified by the absence of clear private rights, chills legitimate claims.

Data from recent CAK activity underscores the scale of the missed opportunity. In FY 2024/25 the Authority investigated 75 behavioural antitrust cases 28 coordinated cartel matters, 39 abuse-of-dominance matters, and eight association agreements while handling a surge in consumer complaints to 915, a 37 percent increase. Penalties in key sectors reached significant levels. Yet none of this activity has translated into a single reported private damages action. Leniency and informant-reward schemes have produced no applications. Criminal sanctions, though available, remain unused. The system is almost entirely administrative, almost entirely public, and therefore almost entirely one-dimensional.

A rights-based reconstruction is not a call for litigious chaos. It is a demand for completeness. Private remedies deter by multiplying the cost of infringement beyond the public fine. They compensate the actual losers rather than merely transferring wealth to the state. They generate jurisprudence that public agencies alone cannot produce, because private plaintiffs have incentives to litigate novel theories, quantify overcharges with economic precision, and test the boundaries of dominance and agreement. They also discipline the public enforcer: an Authority that knows its findings

will be used in follow-on litigation has stronger incentives to produce rigorous, published decisions rather than quiet settlements.

The actors who must move are clear. Parliament must amend the Competition Act to establish an explicit private right of action for any person who has suffered loss from a prohibited practice, with provisions for follow-on claims that treat a final CAK or EAC decision as *prima facie* evidence of infringement, discovery rules suited to cartel opacity, and collective proceedings that allow aggregation of small claims. The Judiciary must invest in specialised training and, eventually, specialised lists so that complex economic evidence is not treated as exotic. The CAK and the EAC Competition Authority must publish reasoned decisions as a matter of routine, protect the confidentiality of leniency applicants while still enabling private claims, and advocate for the legislative changes that would make private enforcement a complement rather than a threat. Business associations and civil society must stop treating competition law as a regulatory compliance cost and start treating it as a source of enforceable private rights. Regional partners must harmonize private remedies so that a cross-border cartel does not enjoy a jurisdictional safe harbour simply because victims are dispersed.

The alternative is continuation of the present farce: an elaborate public theatre in which authorities fine, settle, and announce savings, while the private parties who paid the inflated prices, endured the delayed payments, or watched their markets foreclosed remain unpaid extras. Competition law that speaks only through the mouth of the state is incomplete. Rights that cannot be vindicated by those who hold them are not rights; they are privileges dispensed at administrative discretion. Kenya and the East African Community have built the public machinery. It is past time to reconstruct the private side not as an afterthought, but as the necessary completion of a system that claims to serve the welfare of the people. Until private remedies stand on equal footing with public power, the auction of justice will continue, and the highest bidder will remain the one who never has to compensate the victims.

The writer is a social commentator.

Exams The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination remains a defining milestone in the academic journey of every secondary school learner

The critical role of teachers in preventing examination malpractice

Why Kenya’s educators are the first and last line of defence against cheating in national exams

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyentimes

Teachers occupy a central position in the fight against examination malpractice in Kenya. As educators, mentors and custodians of academic integrity, they carry a responsibility not only to prepare learners for examinations but to ensure that success is achieved through honesty, hard work and genuine ability. Their influence extends beyond the classroom into the values, attitudes and behaviours that shape the character of future generations.

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination remains a defining milestone in the academic journey of every secondary school learner. Its results determine access to higher education, shape career opportunities and influence public perceptions of school performance. That weight of expectation can create conditions in which malpractice becomes a temptation. Teachers must therefore play an active and deliberate role in safeguarding the credibility of national examinations and fostering a culture of honesty in schools. The most important contribution a teacher can make is ensuring learners are genuinely prepared. Students who have mastered relevant concepts and developed sound examination technique approach the exercise with confidence rather than desperation. Teachers should complete the syllabus on time, conduct regular assessments, identify learning difficulties early and provide remedial support where needed. They should also guide learners on time management, revision strategies and how to interpret examination questions accurately.

Thorough preparation does not excuse cheating, but it



does remove much of the anxiety that drives it. Teachers should remind learners, too, that authentic achievement carries a worth that fraudulently obtained grades never can.

Beyond knowledge, teachers are role models. A teacher who consistently demonstrates integrity delivers a lesson no syllabus contains: that success must be earned, not engineered. These conversations should go beyond warnings about consequences. Learners need to understand that cheating undermines fairness, devalues legitimate qualifications and erodes public confidence in the education system. Honesty is not merely a school rule — it is a principle that governs employment, business and public life.

Teachers cannot teach integrity if their own conduct contradicts it.

Those who serve as supervisors or invigilators carry a direct legal and professional duty. They must familiarise themselves with applicable examination guidelines, verify that candidates observe required procedures and remain alert throughout the session. Unauthorised communication and unapproved materials must be prohibited, and any suspected irregularity reported through proper channels. Equally important is

impartiality: every candidate deserves equal treatment regardless of academic ability, family background or personal connection to staff. Where teachers ignore misconduct or actively assist candidates to cheat, they compromise the entire examination process. Consistent, even-handed enforcement creates a fair environment in which every learner competes on equal terms.

Pressure on teachers to deliver strong examination grades is real and, in many schools, considerable. Parents expect results, administrators seek rankings and communities measure institutions by performance. Those expectations can drive improved teaching quality — but they become dangerous when impressive grades take precedence over professional ethics. Teachers must resist pressure to participate in malpractice, whether it originates from colleagues, administrators, parents or community figures. Professional reputation rests on competence and honesty, not on results obtained at any cost. Schools, for their part, must create environments in which teachers can report suspected misconduct without fear of intimidation.

Teachers are also often the first to notice unusual behaviour or suspicious activity around examinations.

The appropriate response is to document and report concerns through established procedures, not to ignore them. However, suspicion must be distinguished from proven

wrongdoing, and candidates should not be accused publicly or treated unfairly on the basis of rumour. Confidential reporting channels allow teachers to raise concerns while reducing the risk of retaliation.

Prevention also requires collaboration. Teachers should communicate regularly with parents about learners’ academic progress and encourage support that is measured and realistic. Parents must understand that a candidate’s results should reflect genuine learning — that demanding exceptional grades regardless of the means places children under unhealthy and potentially harmful pressure. Working alongside administrators to establish clear examination conduct rules and ensure se-

curity concerns are addressed promptly strengthens the collective effort.

Teachers are indispensable partners in Kenya’s fight against examination malpractice. Through effective teaching, moral guidance, impartial supervision and professional accountability, they protect the integrity of the KCSE and reinforce confidence in academic qualifications. Their responsibility, however, extends beyond preventing candidates from cheating. They must demonstrate through their own conduct that honesty is non-negotiable and that genuine achievement matters more than polished results obtained by dishonest means.

Education should equip learners with knowledge, skill and character. When teachers uphold examination integrity, they ensure that certificates represent real accomplishment and that every candidate competes on a fair basis. Ultimately, the fight against malpractice begins in the classroom — where teachers have the daily opportunity to nurture a generation that values honesty as much as academic excellence.

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Uganda The curse is brutally simple. Matooke rots within three days. You cannot store it, cannot wait for a better price and cannot hold your nerve when everyone harvests at once

PIBID in Bushenyi: The factory that gave us pride but left our pockets empty



By: Mukama Phillip Kahagiriza
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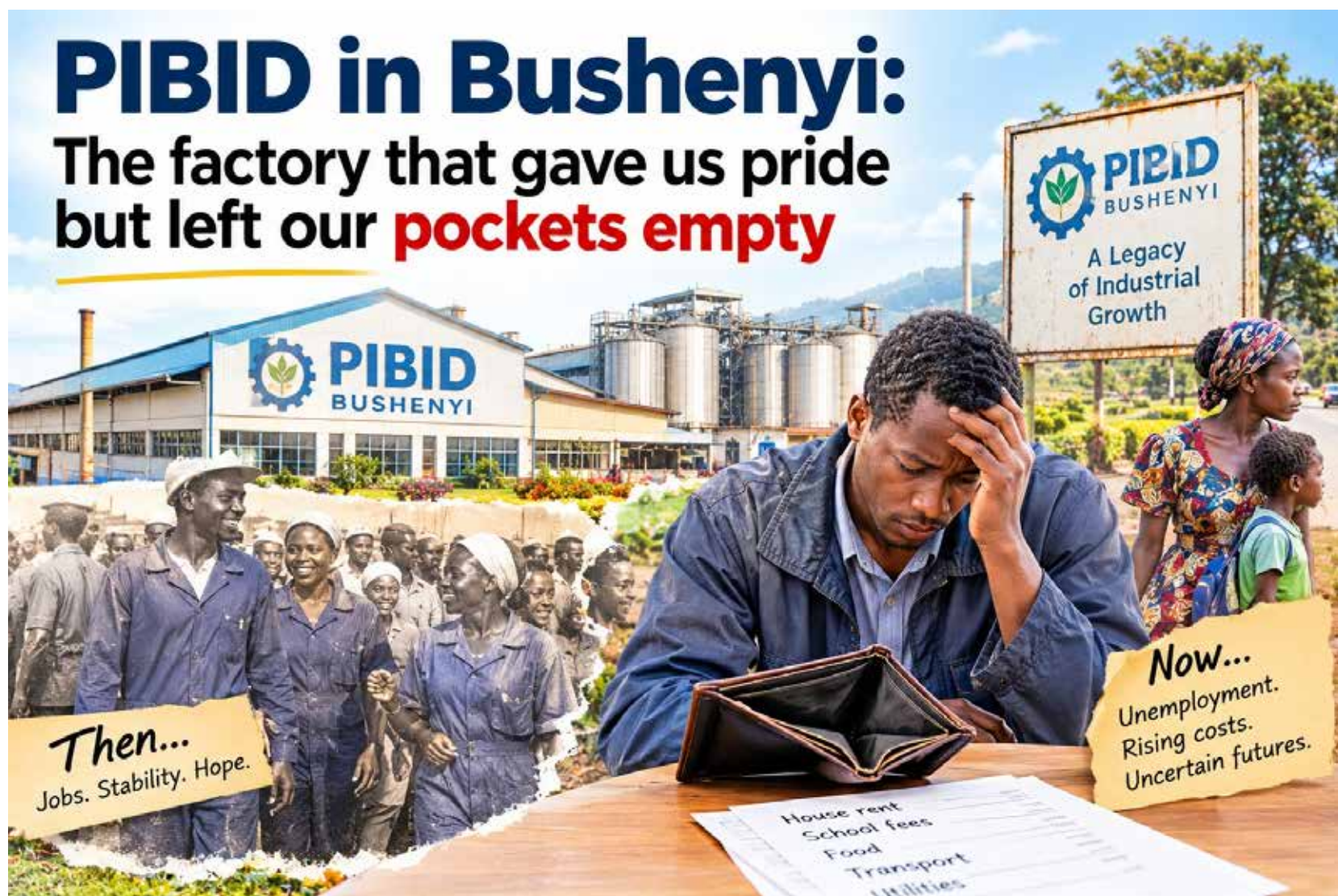
Walk into any homestead in Bushenyi — in the villages of Katonya, Bumbaire, Kiyaga or Nyandozo — and you will find matooke. Not one or two varieties. Thirty-seven cultivars in a single district. For generations, that abundance has been both blessing and curse.

The curse is brutally simple. Matooke rots within three days. You cannot store it, cannot wait for a better price and cannot hold your nerve when everyone harvests at once. In a glut, a bunch fetches 800 shillings. In scarcity, the same bunch commands 4,000. Research has documented the reality with painful honesty: more than half of what Bushenyi grows is consumed at home — not by choice, but because it would rot before reaching any market. Of what does reach the market, the farmer takes home just 44 per cent. The middleman collects the rest.

It was into that reality that the Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development arrived in 2005, and Bushenyi celebrated as though liberation had finally come. For once, someone in authority was saying that matooke was not merely food — it was industry.

They built a real factory in Nyaruzinga. Not a signpost, not a promise — a functioning facility staffed by scientists who turned perishable matooke into flour with a shelf life of months. They created TOOKE. They sent the flour to Germany and France for testing. They baked bread, biscuits, cake and baby food from banana flour. For the first time, a Munyankole farmer could look at his plantation and see more than tomorrow's lunch. He saw a factory.

That achievement mattered. PIBID proved that matooke industrialisation was possible — not merely in theory, but in practice. Psychologically, that shift was enormous. During a bumper harvest, the farmer no longer felt entirely helpless. Somewhere in Nyaruzinga, there was a machine that could absorb his sweat.



The initiative also seeded what followed. The Presidential Zonal Industrial Skilling Hubs, which now train 12,000 young people annually in bakery, hairdressing, shoemaking and construction, borrowed their logic directly from PIBID's value-addition model. In August this year, President Yoweri Museveni approved three new hubs, one of them for Bushenyi — 65 acres in Buyanja, Kyeizooba. The reason was telling: the Ankole hub had been straining to serve 17 districts and cities, with some receiving as few as 14 slots per intake. Bushenyi had to advocate loudly for its own facility.

But here is the wound that has not healed in twenty years. PIBID never left the pilot phase.

It was designed as a Technology Business Incubator that would grow into a full Industrial Technology Park — a system capable of absorbing thousands of farmers and entrepreneurs. Instead, it remained one factory in Nyaruzinga. The farmer in Kyeizooba, in Kyabugimbi, in Bumbaire still rises each morning, cuts his matooke and sells it fresh

for 1,500 shillings because no meaningful link to that factory was ever built for him.

Visit the farms and the picture sharpens. Farmers still use virtually no irrigation and few agrochemicals. They plant eucalyptus where fertiliser trees belong. They borrow from local savings cooperatives, but only half of those loans reach banana production. The project documented gender disparities in land access and fragile food security with commendable rigour. But documentation is not intervention. The extension bridge between the Nyaruzinga laboratory and the village was never constructed.

Then there is the question of ownership — the most painful dimension of all. Walk into a Kampala supermarket today and you will find TOOKE biscuits, neatly packaged and professionally branded. The farmer who grew those bananas owns no shares in TOOKE. He remains a supplier of cheap raw material. Value addition happened around him, not with him or for him in any meaningful economic sense. That is

why his farm-gate price remains low and his income remains stubbornly seasonal.

A new confusion has now taken root in Bushenyi. When residents hear the phrase "Presidential Industrial Hub," they are no longer certain whether it refers to the old banana factory or the newly approved skill-hub on 70 acres in Kyeizooba. The district council approved that land in an emergency sitting after State House Comptroller Jane Barekye told leaders to expedite the process — and added, pointedly, that if they failed, other options would be sought. The message embedded in that ultimatum says everything about how top-down this model remains. If Bushenyi is not careful, the new hub will train its young people to be builders and hairdressers for towns that have no jobs, while the banana rotting in their fathers' gardens finds no processor.

So what is PIBID in Bushenyi, honestly assessed? It is a successful experiment that refused to graduate.

Bushenyi values it because it gave the district dignity. For once, a food

crop was called industrial. But dignity without income is merely a photo opportunity. A farmer cannot eat pride.

For PIBID to mean anything tangible for the matooke grower, three things must happen. The two hubs must be integrated — the new facility in Kyeizooba should be mandated to train at least half its cohort in banana value addition, including baking with TOOKE flour, juicing, wine production and packaging. The farmer must be given equity — Bushenyi cooperatives must own a stake in TOOKE, otherwise it will remain a Kampala office with a Bushenyi factory indefinitely. And the piloting must end — the industrial parks promised for Ankole in Ruhengyere and Nakivale must be activated and linked to PIBID's agro-processing research.

Otherwise, twenty years from now, the same story will be written. A factory making biscuits in Bushenyi's name. And farmers who still cannot afford to buy them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Unfavourable changes and unpredictable patterns of learning in Kenyan universities

By Nicholas Mwendwa

The university dream arrives early. Secondary school students picture open campuses, new friendships and the intoxicating freedom of adulthood. Reality, for many Kenyan undergraduates in 2026, looks nothing like that.

Being a university student in Kenya today resembles military training dressed in academic clothing. Lecturer strikes stretch for weeks, leaving students in limbo while academic calendars collapse around them. The cost of living squeezes those already surviving on the margins. Student unrest periodically shuts down campuses. And then there are the quiet, bureaucratic cruelties — a student who attends every class throughout a semester only to discover, at examina-



tion time, that a registration glitch bars them from sitting the paper. Months of effort, erased by a system failure nobody warned them about. Financial pressure runs beneath all of it. Food, accommodation and transport consume money that many students simply do not have. When social activities carry a price tag, those without funds are quietly excluded from campus life — a loneliness that compounds the academic strain. None of this is inevitable. University administrations must

improve communication, stabilise academic schedules and resolve registration bottlenecks before they become crises. The government must strengthen student financial assistance and address the structural cost pressures that make basic survival a daily calculation for thousands of young Kenyans. University education should build futures, not break the people pursuing them. Students who fight to be there deserve a system that fights for them in return.

The reality of a falling Kenya

By Rose Akoth

Nobody praises the living. We ignore effort, dismiss struggle and overlook good hearts — then flood the eulogy with kind words once a person is gone. If that is how we treat individuals, it is no surprise we are doing the same to Kenya.

Kenya is fracturing quietly. We call ourselves one nation, but we function as a collection of ethnic kingdoms, each suspicious of the others. Elections expose this most brutally — Kenyans rarely vote for ideas or development plans. They vote for their tribe. That single habit has cost this country decades of progress it can never recover.

Culture compounds the damage. In many communities, an unmarried adult — however educated, hardworking or principled — is treated as a failure. Marriage has become a measure of human worth rather than a personal choice, and the resulting shame silences and marginalises thousands



who deserve better. We must ask who designed these customs and whose interests they actually serve.

Religion, which should anchor society, has largely surrendered its moral authority to commerce. Churches multiply like businesses chasing customers. The jobless youth are told to give what little they have as seed money while leaders plunder public coffers and the ordinary Kenyan prays for a miracle that policy failure makes impossible.

Kenya is not yet lost. But saving it demands a complete shift — away from tribal loyalty, cultural judgment and pulpit manipulation, toward a single shared identity built on hard work, honesty and genuine unity. Young Kenyans must decide: watch the country fall, or stand and fix it.

Machoka at 50: Uncle Fred turns a golden jubilee into a rhumba celebration

The veteran broadcaster brought African music royalty to Nairobi for a concert that was as much about the audience as the man on stage

By Charles Gachango

Fred Obachi Machoka has spent fifty years making music feel personal to strangers. On Saturday night at Ulinzi Sports Complex in Nairobi, those strangers came to return the favour. The Machoka@50 Grand Concert, held on October 10, brought together Congolese rhumba royalty, East African musical legends and thousands of fans for a golden jubilee celebration as warm and expansive as the broadcaster's career itself. It was not simply a concert. It was a reunion between a man and the audiences he has

accompanied across five decades of Kenyan broadcasting. "I am celebrating 50 years because you made it possible," Machoka wrote on social media after the event. "Words may fail but the music said it all." The lineup was a tribute to the musical world Machoka has curated through his beloved Roga Roga programme. Congolese rhumba giants Koffi Olomide and Mbilia Bel headlined alongside Cameroonian musician Sam Fan Thomas, while Kenyan acts Les Wanyika, Them Mushrooms and Alicious Theluji gave the night a distinctly local heartbeat. Together they drew on decades of Afri-

can popular music — sounds that, for many in the crowd, carried the memories of family gatherings, long road journeys and Saturday afternoons bent over a radio. The evening worked because Machoka's name carried a story before the first act took the stage. His five decades in broadcasting provided a ready-made narrative that no amount of marketing could manufacture. Promotional support from comedian Daniel Ndambuki, broadcaster Jeff Koinange, musician Nameless and Citizen TV extended the event's reach, but it was Machoka's own visible presence throughout the cam-

paign that gave it its emotional gravity. For younger audiences, the concert offered something rarer still — the chance to experience established African acts live rather than through recordings and inherited stories. For those who had grown up listening to Machoka, it was confirmation that the music had always meant exactly what it felt like it meant. After fifty years on air, Uncle Fred gave his listeners one more reason to show up — not through a radio speaker this time, but together on the dance floor.



SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Three goals in seven minutes complete one of the Champions League’s most remarkable turn-arounds in Rome

Real Madrid stun Roma with dramatic late comeback

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Real Madrid did it again. Trailing 3-1 at the Stadio Olimpico with less than ten minutes remaining, the European champions produced a breathtaking three-goal comeback to defeat AS Roma 4-3 in a Champions League encounter that will be remembered long after the final standings are sealed. It was chaotic, improbable and utterly typical of a club that has turned late drama into something approaching institutional habit.

Roma had looked entirely in control for long stretches of a pulsating contest, playing with the confidence of a side that had done everything right. They had their lead, they had their crowd and they had the clock on their side. Then, as has happened to so many opponents across so many European nights, they had nothing at all.

The hosts made a confident, purposeful start and took the lead in the 20th minute through Marten de Roon, whose finish put the Spanish giants on the back foot and roused a partisan Stadio Olimpico crowd into full voice. The pressure on Madrid was real and immediate, but the visitors responded with the calm authority of a team that has navigated far more hostile environments. Kylian Mbappé equalised within five minutes, a composed finish that reminded Roma they had not yet earned anything.

The first half ended level and both teams went into the interval knowing the tie was entirely open. Roma, however, returned from the break with renewed purpose and devastating attacking intent. Donyell Malen was the architect of their second-half dominance, striking twice in rapid succession — first in the 51st minute and again in the 58th — to give the Italian side a commanding 3-1 lead. The goals were clinical, the crowd was eu-



2026/2027 UEFA Champions League

	3 - 4	
De Roon (20')	⚽	⚽ Mbappe (25')
Malen (51')	⚽	⚽ Carlos Espí (83')
Malen (57')	⚽	⚽ Endrick (85')
		⚽ Rudiger (90')

phoric and the result appeared settled. Madrid looked stretched, disorganised and short of ideas. With just over thirty minutes remaining, Roma were firmly in control of the match and, seemingly, their own destiny.

What followed belongs in the long and extraordinary catalogue of Madrid’s European nights.

Rather than retreat or manage the clock, Roma continued to press, perhaps fatally underestimating the danger that remained. Madrid, for their part, refused to accept the scoreline. Carlo Ancelotti’s side increased the tempo, pushed their defensive line higher and began to suffocate Roma in their own half with a relentlessness that grew more dangerous with every passing minute.

The breakthrough came in the 83rd minute when Carlos Espí pulled a goal back, reducing the deficit to 3-2 and sending a tremor of anxiety through the home support. The goal changed ev-

erything. Roma, who had looked so assured, suddenly appeared uncertain and fragile. They could not clear their lines, could not slow the game and could not contain a Madrid side that now sensed blood.

One minute later, Endrick levelled at 3-3 with a composed finish that completed a stunning individual contribution and left the Stadio Olimpico in stunned silence. The momentum was now entirely with Madrid, the crowd hushed and Roma visibly rattled. With the home side reeling, there was only going to be one more goal, and it arrived in the 90th minute through Antonio Rüdiger, who rose to meet a delivery and send the travelling supporters into rapturous celebration.

From 3-1 down to 4-3 winners in seven extraordinary minutes. For Roma, the collapse will be agonising to revisit. They led comfortably, controlled large portions of the game and yet

could not protect what they had built when Madrid applied the decisive pressure. Their defensive fragility at the most critical moment proved enormously, painfully costly.

For Madrid, this was yet another reminder of what separates elite clubs from the merely very good. It is not simply quality or organisation — it is the unshakable belief that the match is never over, that one moment of clarity can unlock the most difficult evening.

Madrid sit eighth in the Champions League standings with six points, while Roma fall to 25th with just one point. Roma face Slovan Bratislava at home on October 20, before Madrid host RB Leipzig at the Santiago Bernabéu the following evening.

Against Real Madrid, a lead is never truly safe until the final whistle ends it — and sometimes not even then.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Argentine defender's public criticism of technical director and recruitment strategy opens new front in United's troubled season

Manchester United set to fine Martínez after explosive attack on club hierarchy

By Pascal Okoth

Lisandro Martínez is facing disciplinary action from Manchester United after publicly and pointedly criticising the club's leadership following their 2-0 Champions League defeat to Atlético Madrid — remarks that have ripped open long-simmering frustrations about recruitment, accountability and the direction of one of football's most scrutinised institutions.

According to reports citing The Athletic, United officials consider a fine for the Argentine international inevitable after he used a post-match interview to question the club's transfer strategy and the level of support provided to head coach Michael Carrick during the summer window. The comments were unusually direct for a player at Old Trafford, and they landed with considerable force.

Martínez did not spread blame indiscriminately. He was deliberate and specific, singling out technical director Jason Wilcox by name and making clear that, in his view, the people responsible for building the squad had fallen short.

"I expect more, 100 per cent. I expect more from our technical director," the 28-year-old said, in remarks that quickly dominated the post-match conversation and drew attention far beyond the result itself.

His defence of Carrick was equally pointed. Martínez argued that United could not expect sustained progress without meaningful investment in the squad, and that opponents had already adapted to the team's playing style, making tactical evolution and targeted recruitment essential. When asked directly whether Carrick had received adequate support, his answer was blunt.

"I don't think so. He does his best," Martínez said. He went further, challenging the club's



instinct to place the burden of failure on managers and players while other departments escaped scrutiny. "You can't keep changing, changing, changing the manager. What about other areas?" he added — a question that will resonate uncomfortably with United's hierarchy.

The backdrop to the interview was a chastening night in the Spanish capital. Pablo Barrios gave Atlético an early lead, and Ademola Lookman doubled the advantage after United defender Leny Yoro was sent off, leaving Carrick's side to salvage what they could from a difficult evening. They could not. The defeat deepened questions about United's ability to compete with Europe's elite and set the stage for Martínez's intervention to amplify those concerns dramati-

cally.

Carrick, speaking immediately after the match, said he had not fully watched the interview and suggested that the raw emotion of the defeat may have shaped the tone of the defender's remarks. He indicated he needed to understand the full context before deciding whether any response was required — a carefully measured answer from a manager navigating an increasingly complicated internal situation.

Reports have also raised questions about Martínez's long-term future at the club, with his position described as uncertain even before this latest controversy. The disciplinary process, if it proceeds as expected, will do little to ease those tensions, and the club now faces the delicate task of maintaining internal disci-

pline while acknowledging that the concerns raised by a senior first-team player cannot simply be dismissed with a fine.

For supporters, the arithmetic is straightforward. United's ambitions in Europe and at home require a squad built to compete, and Martínez's intervention has made it harder for the club's leadership to avoid accountability for decisions made in the transfer market. A fine deals with the form of what was said. It does not answer the substance.

The story is still developing, but Martínez has already ensured that Manchester United's internal fractures are now very much public — and very much part of the debate about what this club is, and where it is headed.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Dr. Isha Farha Quraishy: The woman redefining the future of technology



By: Anila Bukhari
@themtkenyatimes

Dr. Isha Farha Quraishy, also known as Reshma Quraishy, is an accomplished AI Innovation Strategist with more than 17 years of experience across technology, business leadership, innovation, and social impact. With expertise spanning Artificial Intelligence, the Metaverse, Robotics, Cloud Infrastructure, Storage, and Virtualization Technology, she has built a distinctive career at the intersection of technological innovation and purposeful change.

Currently serving as Associate Vice President (AVP) and heading the Public Sector for the Middle East and Africa, Dr. Isha oversees Cloud Infrastructure and AI. Her professional journey includes experience with leading global technology organizations such as Oracle, Hewlett Packard, VMware, Dell EMC through Wipro Technologies, and Infosys, where she specialized in Data Center Management, Virtualization, and Oracle Platforms.

Entrepreneurship has also played an important role in her journey. As Founder and CEO of IFQ Evotech, she successfully incubated the company under 3i Infotech, a publicly listed organization, while serving as Deputy Vice President through a Resident Entrepreneur Model. During this period, she established a Center of Excellence dedicated to AI and AI practices. IFQ Evotech later became an independent entity, marking another chapter in her technology and entrepreneurial journey.

She is also the Founder and Host of The Isha Code, a living book featuring 50 unfiltered conversations with visionaries, innovators, and thinkers exploring Artificial Intelligence, quantum technology, consciousness, and humanity's future. Through these conversations, Dr. Isha seeks



Dr. Isha Farha Quraishy

to decode ideas, challenge assumptions, and explore how technological progress can create meaningful impact for humanity.

Her work extends beyond conventional technology leadership into education technology. At GEMS Education Corporate Head Office, Dr. Isha led AI-driven EdTech strategies and collaborated with CX leaders from Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and CVC. Her work supported a broader mission of making education accessible to every child on the planet through technology, with particular attention to the needs of more than 60 million children without access. She also served as Cloud and Infrastructure Practice Head at UAE-based systems integrator Finesse.

Her influence within technology and business has been accompanied by numerous recognitions. As part of the International Women's Day 2025 celebrations, she was named Woman of the Year 2025 in Arabia Worldwide. She was also featured

among the Top 10 Business Women Revolutionizing the GCC for her "Intelligence with Elegance" and recognized among the Inspiring Female Leaders in UAE Today by Humans of Globe. Conglomerate highlighted her among UAE's Most Admired Women Leaders to Watch in 2025, while Forbes celebrated her as a Tech Visionary.

Beyond the world of technology, Dr. Isha has established herself across social and cultural platforms. She was crowned Mrs. Universe 2019 Solidarity, becoming the first Middle Eastern candidate to achieve this milestone, and later won the title of Ms. UAE United Nations in 2024.

Her multifaceted identity also encompasses the arts and public speaking. She has appeared as an artist, actress, professional Indian classical dancer, and inspirational speaker. Her debut film was screened at the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) in 2015. She was also the subject of 30 artworks by internationally renowned artist Koushal

Choudhary, including 27 portraits and three sculptures. The collection was showcased in the historic exhibition "Universal Goddess – Isha Connected," which gained global acclaim. Her portraits were subsequently exhibited at World Art Dubai under the title "Isha Connected."

Philanthropy and community service form another significant dimension of her profile. Dr. Isha was named among the Top 50 Women in the UAE in 2022 and recognized as A Woman Icon Making Waves in the Arab World in 2023. She was also honored at the She Awards Global in 2023 and recognized as the Global Women Icon in 2020, a title previously awarded to Ivanka Trump by Emirates Airlines Business Magazine – Layali Dubai. She volunteers with the Ministry of Community Development UAE and is certified by the National Commission for Women Rights and the National Commission for Human Rights – India.

Her contribution to technology and business has also been recognized through two Forbes acknowledgments. She was featured as "Crowned Technopreneur – Where Tech Brilliance Meets Beauty & Grace." As Global Ambassador for MS's Hevolus Innovation, she drove pioneering efforts in the Metaverse space. A serial TEDx speaker, Dr. Isha has represented various international forums and received numerous accolades, including doctorate degrees, the title of Her Excellency from the Diplomatic Mission for Global Peace in 2022, Youngest Crowned Techno Genius by the Leadership Federation in 2024, and International Genius Icon in 2023.

Her research interests reflect the same commitment to purposeful innovation. Dr. Isha has pursued research focused on developing AI analytics platforms for Children of Determination, promoting inclusion through technology. Her work reflects a broader belief that innovation can have its greatest value when it helps expand access, opportunity, and participation for communities that need it most.

Her leadership extends into interna-

tional advisory and professional networks. She has served on boards and advisory councils for international forums including the World Leaders Forum Dubai, World Malayalee Federation, and World Women's Health Forum. She is also a Global Ambassador for H.O.P.E AFRICA — Health Opportunity People Education — working in collaboration with the international foundation to support African countries.

At the heart of her social mission are Financial Inclusion and Digital Literacy, particularly for vulnerable segments. This work aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 and brings together her technological expertise with her commitment to social development.

Her academic journey has been marked by achievement as well. She was recognized as Student Chairman and Student of the Year in 2008 and received the Proficiency Award for being a university topper, alongside numerous accolades throughout her academic journey.

Today, Dr. Isha Farha Quraishy embodies a multifaceted blend of technology leadership, entrepreneurship, artistic expression, public speaking, philanthropy, and social advocacy. From Artificial Intelligence and cloud infrastructure to education, digital literacy, financial inclusion, the Metaverse, and inclusive technology, her career reflects a continuing commitment to connecting innovation with purposeful impact. For Dr. Isha, technology is not simply a professional field; it is a platform through which ideas, opportunities, and meaningful change can take shape across industries and communities.