

Sat & Sun, October 17-18, 2026

Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

WEEKEND ePAPER

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KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)

No. 0314    themtkenyatiimes

Countdown 2027 

Ruto's health ministry kills Murang'a's digital hospitals



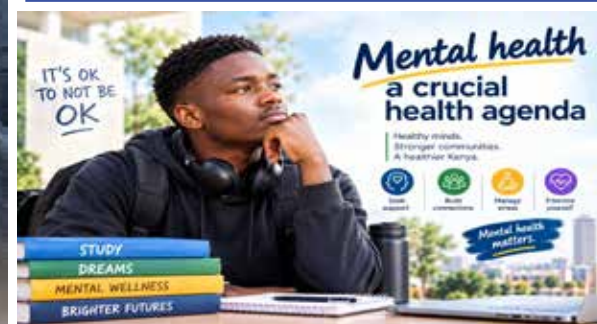
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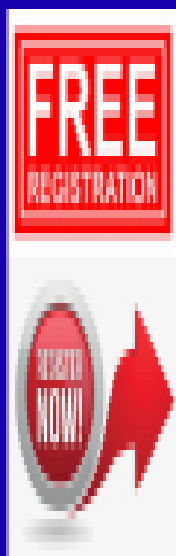
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Ruto bets billions on Kerio Valley — with one eye on 2027

BY James Mwangi

@themkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto has launched a multi-billion-shilling infrastructure drive in the Kerio Valley, pledging to transform one of Kenya's most conflict-scarred regions through roads, irrigation, modern markets and electricity connectivity — in a campaign that is simultaneously a development agenda and a 2027 electoral calculation.

Speaking at an interdenominational thanksgiving service at Chesombur grounds in Sigor, West Pokot County, Ruto declared the valley open for business after years of deadly banditry and cattle rustling had kept investors and government spending away. "I am happy that in the Kerio Valley today, we are listening to testimonies of peace," he said, crediting security forces, religious leaders and community members for the turnaround. The numbers behind the announcements are substantial. Baringo County is receiving KSh22B to construct 350 kilometres of roads — the first major road investment in



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Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kenya has confirmed a third Ebola case, with the Health Ministry identifying the patient as a close relative of the country's first two confirmed cases. The ministry said the individual had already been in quarantine for ten days before the positive diagnosis was recorded, limiting the window of potential exposure to the wider public. Officials are tracking 130 contacts linked to the three cases, though three remain untraced — a gap that health authorities acknowledged presents an ongoing containment risk. The confirmation deepens concern about the pace of Kenya's outbreak response at a moment when the government is simultaneously managing public anxiety over the controversial Ebola quarantine facility in Nanyuki, which drew court action and street protests earlier this year.



A parliamentary committee has called on architects mounting opposition to the 2026 Architectural and Quantity Surveying Practitioners Bill to channel their objections through formal submissions rather than public resistance. The National Assembly Housing Committee, chaired by Buuri MP Rindikiri Mugambi and including Nairobi Women Representative Esther Passaris, said the proposed legislation is designed to tighten regulation and licensing standards across Kenya's construction profession — not to undermine it. The appeal comes amid growing unease within the architectural community over provisions critics say could restrict professional practice and concentrate licensing authority in ways that disadvantage smaller firms and independent practitioners. Committee members insisted the bill remains open to engagement and urged professionals to participate in the process before positions harden on either side.



A breakdown in Kenya's education data infrastructure has left hundreds of schools facing serious funding shortfalls running into millions of shillings, after a transition between government data systems disrupted the capitation grant disbursement process. Schools that could not be captured, verified or reconciled within the new system during the switchover period missed disbursement cycles, leaving head teachers managing operating deficits at a time when institutions are expected to provide free and compulsory basic education. The crisis has exposed the risks of migrating critical financial systems without adequate transition safeguards or contingency funding arrangements. Affected school administrators say the shortfalls have forced cuts to meals programmes, instructional materials and essential maintenance, with the burden falling disproportionately on public schools in underserved rural and peri-urban areas.



President William Ruto yesterday morning signed two significant tax measures into law at Eldoret State Lodge, assenting to both the Kenya Revenue Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026 and the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The more immediately consequential of the two is the Tax Laws amendment, which halves value-added tax on petroleum products from 16 per cent to 8 per cent for an initial period of 90 days — a move that, if passed on fully by fuel retailers and transporters, could offer modest relief to consumers and businesses still absorbing the pressure of elevated energy costs. The KRA amendment updates the authority's operational framework. Whether the VAT reduction translates into meaningful pump price reductions or is absorbed along the supply chain will become clear within days.



Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja has secured a significant legal victory after a court moved to limit the powers of the National Police Service Commission over police recruitment, ruling in a manner that strengthens the Inspector General's authority over the hiring process. The decision resolves a protracted institutional standoff between Kanja and the NPSC over which body holds ultimate control of recruitment into the service — a dispute that has repeatedly stalled intake exercises and fuelled public frustration over police staffing shortages. The ruling is likely to accelerate recruitment timelines that had been paralysed by the jurisdictional conflict. Critics of the outcome, however, warn that curbing commission oversight risks reducing transparency and accountability in a process historically prone to irregularities and political interference.



The East African Community has launched a push to secure 45 million US dollars to strengthen regional capacity for the local production of medicines and vaccines, as member states seek to reduce dependence on pharmaceutical imports that leave the bloc vulnerable to global supply disruptions. The funding drive reflects lessons drawn sharply from the Covid-19 pandemic, during which East African nations found themselves at the back of international vaccine queues while wealthier countries secured priority access. Regional health officials argue that building domestic manufacturing capacity is no longer a policy aspiration but a security imperative. The initiative aims to support existing pharmaceutical manufacturers across the bloc while attracting investment into new production facilities capable of meeting both routine and emergency health demands within the region.

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Politics “Ruto must go, one term, one term, one term, will not save Kenyans,” Kinity said.

Kinity warns Gen Z: Slogans alone will not save Kenya

The presidential aspirant says removing Ruto without eradicating corruption would repeat the failures that followed Moi’s departure

BY Daisy Moraa

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Presidential aspirant Isaac Newton Kinity yesterday warned Generation Z against placing their hopes for change in slogans such as “One Term” and “Ruto Must Go,” arguing that removing President William Ruto from office without dismantling corruption would leave Kenya facing the same problems under a different government.

Kinity, former secretary general of the Kenya Civil Servants Union and leader of the Jirani Mzalendo Asili Party, made the remarks as he appealed to young Kenyans to join his political movement ahead of the 2027 General Election, framing corruption and the theft of public resources as the root cause of unemployment, poverty and the broader suffering facing ordinary citizens.

“The removal of William Ruto alone without eradicating corruption and the theft of public money will be completely useless,” Kinity said.

His argument draws a direct line between the mobilisation energy of the Gen Z-driven protests that shook Kenya in 2024 and what he describes as a missing political analysis within that movement — namely, that the problem is systemic rather than person-



2027 Presidential aspirant and former unionist, Dr Isaac Newton Kinity | Photo: COURTESY

al to any single officeholder. Kinity said the fight against corruption must target individuals across the political divide, including within the opposition, rather than focusing exclusively on the sitting president.

To support his case, he reached back to the campaign that ended Daniel arap Moi’s presidency. The “Moi Must Go” movement of the 1990s succeeded in removing its target, Kinity argued, but corruption persisted long after Moi left State House because no serious effort was made to recover stolen public funds or prosecute those responsible. He warned that 2027 risked producing the same outcome.

“Ruto must go, one term,

one term, one term, will not save Kenyans even after William Ruto leaves office. What matters is what follows after William Ruto leaves office,” he said.

Kinity then offered a specific and measurable pledge: if elected president in 2027, he would eradicate corruption and recover stolen public funds within two years, or resign from office.

“If I am elected President of Kenya in 2027, God willing, and unless I die or become disabled, I will eradicate corruption and the theft of public funds in Kenya within two years. If I fail to fulfil this promise, I must resign from the presidency,” he said.

The pledge is unusually pre-

cise for Kenyan electoral politics, where anti-corruption commitments have historically been broad, unverifiable and rarely attached to personal consequences for failure. Whether voters will find it credible is another matter — Kenya has heard similar promises before — but Kinity is at least staking something on it.

He urged young Kenyans completing school and unable to find employment to join his party, arguing that job creation was impossible while public funds continued to be stolen. He called on citizens to read his manifesto before the 2027 campaign reaches full stride.

Ruto bets billions on Kerio Valley — with one eye on 2027



President William Ruto

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..... county’s history at this scale — alongside a KSh1B last-mile electricity project connecting 3,329 homes. In Elgeyo-Marakwet, the government has committed KSh15B under the Affordable Housing Programme, covering 3,000 housing units, nine modern markets and student hostels. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, who accompanied the president, said peace had now been restored across the valley and the investment environment was ready. The regional governors — Simon Kachapin of West Pokot, Jeremiah Lomorukai of Turkana, Wisely Rotich of Elgeyo-Marakwet and Stephen Sang of Nandi — rallied behind the peace narrative. “Now that we have peace in

the Kerio Valley, we should jealously guard it for the sake of the prosperity of the region,” Sang said.

The political subtext is difficult to separate from the development story. The Kerio Valley straddles counties in the Rift Valley that delivered significant votes for Ruto in 2022. With Mt Kenya drifting toward Gachagua’s Democracy for the Citizens Party, the Rift must hold if Ruto is to secure a second term. Roads, markets and electricity in a region that has known mostly neglect and gunfire are powerful campaign tools — visible, tangible and photographable. The Kerio Valley has waited decades for this level of attention. Whether the attention survives the election or evaporates with the ballot papers is the question that residents, who have heard promises before, are quietly asking.

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Cledun Realtors recognised for opening land ownership to Kenyans abroad

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themtkenyentimes

A total of 332 public junior schools in Kisii County will receive interactive smart boards and laptops under the National Classroom Experience component of the Digital Literacy Programme (DLP) Phase II.

The initiative is being implemented in partnership with the World Bank through the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Project (KDEAP), and with the Ministries of Education and of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy.

Speaking during the handover ceremony at Kisii Comprehensive School in Kisii town, Broadcasting and Telecommunications Principal Secretary Stephen Isaboke said the programme is part of the government's broader commitment to digitising education and equipping learners with the digital skills needed to compete in the global economy.

"Technology is changing rapidly. Services have been digitised to foster efficiency, save time and hasten development. This programme is part of the government's commitment to ensuring our learners are computer literate as they exploit their potential," said Isaboke.

He noted that introducing digital devices early would help learners develop computer skills, access educational resources and become familiar with emerging technologies.

The PS said the government supplied 10,382 devices, including smart boards, laptops and digital pens, to some schools in Phase I to enhance e-learning. A further 10,382 devices will be supplied in Phase II to cover all schools nationwide by March next year.

"These devices will promote interactive learning. A teacher can be linked to various schools and share



PS Stephen Isaboke engaging with Kisii Comprehensive School learners during the handover of smart boards and laptops |

Photo: Elizabeth Angira

knowledge. It is the trend in developed countries," he said.

Isaboke emphasised that reliable internet connectivity is essential if schools are to benefit fully from digital learning. He said the government is implementing the Digital Superhighway programme, which targets the installation of 100,000 kilometres of fibre-optic cable and the establishment of 25,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots.

"Nearly 50,000 kilometres of fibre-optic infrastructure has been installed through partnerships with private telecommunications operators and other agencies. In Kisii County, 250 kilometres of fibre optic has been installed, and free Wi-Fi hotspots have been connected to markets and hospitals to enhance digital and government services," Isaboke said.

He added that 64,000 teachers have been trained in digital literacy nationally to make the programme effective.

Nyanza Region ICT Communications Coordinator David Wasonga said Communications Authority of Kenya officers in the counties will maintain the devices. He noted that this is the first time learners are embracing digital interactive learning.

"Learners are taught how to use smart boards, digital pens and laptops, and it makes them technologically savvy. It is also necessary

for video conferencing," Wasonga said.

Kisii County Director of Education Philip Chirchir urged principals to store the devices safely, warning that the gadgets are expensive.

"The gadgets will improve learning outcomes. I appeal to school heads to ensure they are maintained and used to promote e-learning. Ensure they are not vandalised, as it will disrupt learning," Chirchir said.

Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KES-SHA) Kisii chairman and Kisii School Chief Principal Fred Mogaka appealed to the government to extend the programme to senior schools.

Kisii Comprehensive School Principal James Mitunda, who hosted the event, said the devices will improve learners' understanding and retention by letting them interact with content and apply concepts practically. The school has 847 junior secondary learners in 12 streams and received 32 devices.

"The devices will improve understanding. We have 847 learners with 12 streams and we need more devices. We have power but require a generator to run the gadgets when there is a blackout," Mitunda said.

The government has so far equipped 10,382 schools with digital devices, nearly 50 per cent of all public junior schools.

Cledun Realtors recognised for opening land ownership to Kenyans abroad



BY John Kariuki
@themtkenyentimes

The Thika-based real estate firm receives a Starbrands award for its focus on diaspora property investment in a market where remote transactions remain a persistent challenge

By John Kariuki

Cledun Realtors Ltd was on Friday evening recognised by Starbrands for its work in making land ownership in Kenya more accessible to Kenyans living and working abroad, a segment of the property market that has grown steadily in recent years as more diaspora investors seek to establish long-term financial roots back home.

The award, presented at the Starbrands East Africa Excellence Awards 2026 ceremony held in Nairobi, acknowledged the company's efforts to address one of the more persistent frustrations facing diaspora property buyers: the difficulty of purchasing and securing land from thousands of kilometres away, in a market where concerns about transparency, documentation and remote transaction management remain real and well-founded.

For many Kenyans abroad, land ownership at home carries both practical and emotional weight. It represents a hedge against an uncertain return, a legacy for family members still in Kenya, and in many cases the first tangible step towards even-

tual resettlement. Yet the process of acquiring property remotely is not simple. Identifying trustworthy agents, verifying title documentation, conducting due diligence across county registries and managing the transfer process without being physically present all present obstacles that have historically discouraged or delayed investment.

Cledun Realtors has built its offering around reducing those barriers. The company operates across several counties, with projects in Malindi, Watamu, Thika, Makutano and Rumuruti, giving prospective buyers access to both coastal and inland markets at varying entry points. Its model includes flexible payment arrangements designed to allow clients to begin investing gradually, rather than waiting until they have accumulated the full purchase price — an approach that reflects an understanding of how diaspora income is typically structured, often in instalments sent home over time rather than in large lump sums.

The availability of individual freehold title deeds ready for transfer is a notable feature of the company's offering. Freehold title remains the most straightforward form of land ownership in Kenya, giving the registered owner full and direct rights over the property without the complications that can accompany leasehold arrangements or undivided share transactions.

For a diaspora buyer who cannot be present to oversee every stage of the process, clarity on title is not a minor administrative detail — it is the foundation of the entire investment.

The company also offers free site visits, providing clients or their appointed representatives with the opportunity to inspect plots in person before committing to a purchase. In a market where photographs and brochures can be misleading and where the gap between a property's described and actual condition has occasionally been significant, access to a physical site visit represents meaningful consumer protection.

Cledun Realtors is based at Zuhura Place on the fourth floor in Thika and serves both diaspora clients and domestic buyers seeking land for residential development, future settlement or long-term investment purposes.

The Starbrands recognition places the company among a group of East African businesses acknowledged for their contribution to their respective markets. For Cledun Realtors, the distinction is specifically tied to its focus on the diaspora buyer — a customer whose needs, constraints and aspirations differ materially from those of the domestic market, and who has not always been well served by the Kenyan property industry.

That gap, it appears, is precisely where the company has chosen to plant its flag.

Health What makes this legal dispute so politically charged is the moment at which it is happening and the man pursuing it

Ruto's health ministry kills Murang'a's digital hospitals — and Kang'ata fights back in court

A court battle over a switched-off digital health platform in Murang'a has exposed the fault lines of Kenya's pre-election politics — and raised uncomfortable questions about who really controls the country's health infrastructure

BY David Kimani

@themkenyaintimes

Murang'a County filed papers in the High Court this week seeking urgent orders to restore a digital health platform serving more than 176 public health facilities, alleging that its abrupt shutdown on 14 October endangered thousands of patients and disrupted healthcare operations across one of Kenya's most politically consequential counties — in a case that is as much about the 2027 general election as it is about medicine.

The platform at the centre of the dispute is Afya.KE, a health information management system that Murang'a County says it has used for more than three years to manage patient records, coordinate clinical services and process Social Health Authority claims. According to an affidavit filed by County Secretary Dr Newton Mwangi, the system was switched off without a functional replacement being provided, blocking access to patient records across all affected facilities and cutting off more than 25,000 patients who rely on telemedicine services for the management of chronic conditions including diabetes, hypertension and mental health disorders. Between January and October this year, the platform recorded 76,185 consultations. County officials say interruption to drug refill services alone could be life-threatening.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale has flatly denied any responsibility. The Ministry of Health says it did not shut down Afya.KE, does not own or control it, does not possess its source code and regards it as a private arrangement between Murang'a County and the system's developers. The Ministry has also noted that neither the county nor the developers applied for certification from the Digital Health Agency, a requirement under the national digital health framework. If the Ministry's position holds in court, the shutdown becomes a county-level contractual failure, not a national government



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale and Governor Irungu Kang'ata

decision.

Governor Irungu Kang'ata disputes every word of that. He has stated publicly that Duale personally assured him Afya.KE would be integrated with the national Social Health Authority system rather than decommissioned. The governor further argues that the platform operates on a government dot-go-ke domain and is used by other public institutions and government agencies — a detail that directly challenges the Ministry's insistence that this is a purely private arrangement. That question of ownership is now before the court and is likely to determine how far responsibility for the shutdown travels up the chain of command.

What makes this legal dispute so politically charged is the moment at which it is happening and the man pursuing it. Kang'ata is no longer a UDA governor. He quit President William Ruto's ruling party in May, formally joined Rigathi Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party in July, and is now one of the most

prominent elected leaders aligned with the opposition ahead of August 2027. His departure from UDA — the first by a sitting Mt Kenya governor — triggered a cascade. Nyan-darua Governor Kiarie Badilisha followed within days. DCP's landslide in the Ol Kalou parliamentary by-election in July, where it crushed UDA by more than 29,000 votes, confirmed what the defections had suggested: the mountain is moving.

In that context, a court case that places Kang'ata as the protector of his county's healthcare system against a national government he has publicly abandoned is not simply a legal matter. It is a political narrative in its most useful form — one with patients, medical records and telemedicine users as its human face. The Ministry of Health, already under significant scrutiny after Duale was found in contempt of court in June over the construction of a US-backed Ebola quarantine facility in Nanyuki — a ruling that prompted a personal court appearance and a

formal apology to avoid a custodial sentence — now faces a second front in the courts, this time over allegations that its national health digitisation drive has come at the cost of patient safety.

The Ministry's troubles matter beyond Duale personally. The transition from county-level health information systems to the national HMIS and Taifa Care ecosystem was always going to produce friction. Kenya's devolved healthcare system places service delivery responsibility with county governments while the national government controls policy, standards and increasingly the digital backbone. When that transition

produces a blackout — whatever its cause — it is the county governor who answers for empty medicine cabinets and inaccessible patient files, not the Cabinet Secretary in Nairobi. Kang'ata understands this. He has filed the case, named the parties and put the evidence in the public record.

Whether the court ultimately finds that the Ministry caused or contributed to the shutdown, or whether it concludes that Murang'a's contractual arrangements with Afya.KE's developers were simply inadequate for the national transition, remains to be seen. The county wants the system restored, patient data preserved, healthcare services protected and further disruption prevented during the transition period. Those are entirely reasonable requests, and a court is now the body that must evaluate the sworn affidavits behind them.

What is already clear is that this case has reshaped the political weather in Murang'a and beyond. A governor who left the ruling coalition on grounds of principle now has a court filing that frames the national government as a threat to his constituents' health. UDA, fighting to hold Mt Kenya ahead of 2027, must now contend with a legal narrative that paints its health ministry as indifferent to patient welfare in a county that was, until recently, governed by one of its own.

Kenya's general elections are less than ten months away. The political temperature across Mt Kenya is already running high. A courtroom in Nairobi, examining the question of who switched off a health platform in Murang'a, has just become one of the more consequential political arenas in the country.



Awards “This belongs to the people who chose us, worked with us and believed in what we were building,” Njunge said

Marnju Tiles named best in East Africa at Starbrands awards

The Nairobi-based tiles and sanitaryware firm takes top regional honours as Kenya's construction finishing sector grows more competitive

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyaintimes

Marnju Tiles was yesterday named the Best Tiles Selling Company in East Africa at the Starbrands East Africa Excellence Awards 2026, a recognition that places the Nairobi-based firm among the region's leading names in building finishes, sanitaryware and interior construction materials.

The award was presented at a ceremony held at Iconic Plaza Hotel in Nairobi on Friday, 16 October, bringing together businesses and brands recognised for performance across a range of industries in the East African market.

Martin Njunge, director of Marnju Tiles, received the award on behalf of the company. Speaking after the ceremony, Njunge was measured in his response, directing his gratitude outward rather than

inward — towards the customers, employees and partners whose combined contribution, he said, had made the recognition possible.

“This belongs to the people who chose us, worked with us and believed in what we were building,” Njunge said. “Recognition like this reminds you of the responsibility that comes with it.”

It is a tone that sits at some distance from the self-congratulatory register common



Martin Njunge Director of Marnju Tiles

at industry awards. For a company operating in a market as practically grounded as building materials — where repeat business, contractor relationships and word-of-mouth recommendation matter more than brand campaigns — that humility may be more than a personality trait. It may reflect a clear-eyed understanding of where the business actually comes from.

Marnju Tiles operates in a segment of the construction value chain that has grown steadily alongside Kenya's expanding property market. The company supplies floor and wall tiles, sanitaryware and modern interior finishing solutions to residential, commercial and institutional clients. Its product range is positioned around what the company describes as the intersection of quality and elegance — practical building materials that also serve the design aspirations of property owners who want their spaces to look and feel deliberately considered.

Kenya's housing and commercial construction market has sustained strong demand in recent years, driven by urbanisation, a growing middle class and continued investment in infrastructure and mixed-use development. Within that environment, the

finishing materials sector — tiles, sanitaryware, cladding, surface treatments — has become increasingly competitive, with both imported products and locally distributed ranges vying for the attention of contractors, developers and individual homeowners.

Tiles have shifted from being a purely functional building component to a significant design decision. The choice of finish affects not only the aesthetic character of a space but its maintenance requirements, its durability and, increasingly, its resale value. Suppliers who can offer consistent quality, reliable stock and responsive service occupy a meaningful position in a market where contractors and developers work to tight timelines and cannot afford supply disruptions on active sites.

The Starbrands East Africa Excellence Awards, now in their 2026 edition, recognise companies across multiple sectors operating in the region. The awards are positioned as a measure of brand performance and market reputation, drawing entries and nominations from businesses across Kenya and the wider East African community.

For Marnju Tiles, the recognition at this year's ceremony arrives at a point of visible momentum for the company.

Njunge has built the business with a consistent focus on product quality and customer relationships, and the award offers external validation of that approach in a market where reputation is accumulated slowly and lost quickly.

The broader team at Marnju Tiles — the staff managing stock, handling customer enquiries, processing orders and maintaining supplier relationships — carries much of the operational weight that determines whether a building materials company can sustain the kind of reputation that leads to an award of this kind. Njunge acknowledged that plainly.

For customers with active construction or renovation projects, the recognition may carry practical weight. An award of this nature, judged at a regional level, provides an additional reference point when selecting a supplier for materials that will be a permanent feature of a finished building.

Marnju Tiles holds the title of Best Tiles Selling Company in East Africa for 2026. The work of holding it begins now.

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TOURISM Mount Kenya is Africa's second-highest peak and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also, by any honest assessment, an underperforming national asset

Kenya bets on Mount Kenya to drive a billion-shilling tourism revival

A new partnership between the government, Centum Foundation and conservation bodies targets 100,000 annual visitors and thousands of jobs from Africa's second-highest peak

BY Waithaka Kariuki

@themkenyaintimes

The government has formalised a partnership with the Centum Foundation to mobilise one million US dollars for the development of Mount Kenya as a global adventure tourism destination, in what officials describe as the most structured effort yet to unlock the commercial and conservation potential of one of Africa's most significant natural landmarks.

Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife Rebecca Miano and the Centum Foundation yesterday signed a strategic partnership agreement establishing the Friends of Mount Kenya Initiative, a five-year programme that will bring together the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Tourism Board and a range of corporate, development and conservation partners to upgrade infrastructure, improve visitor safety and expand economic opportunity for communities living around the mountain.

Mount Kenya is Africa's second-highest peak and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also, by any honest assessment, an underperforming national asset. The mountain supports the water catchment systems that supply more than seven million Kenyans, sustains agricultural and energy generation across much of the central region, and sits at the centre of one of the continent's most recognisable

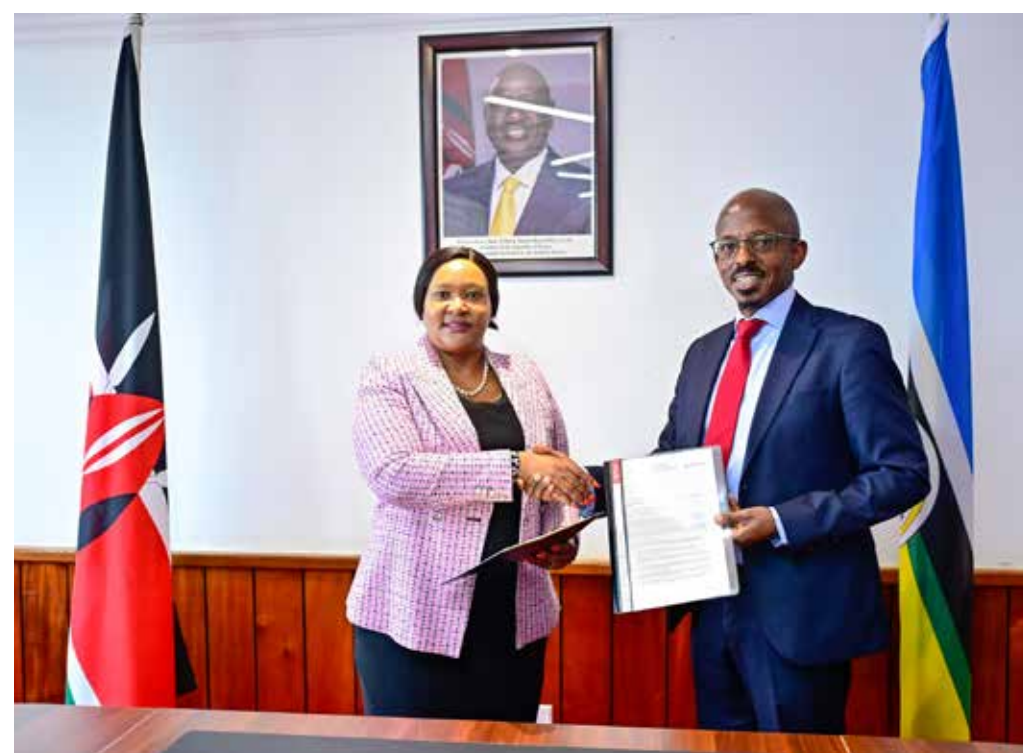
natural landscapes. Yet its annual visitor numbers remain a fraction of what comparable mountain destinations attract internationally, constrained by ageing infrastructure, inadequate trail marking, limited emergency response capacity and a global profile that has never matched the mountain's actual scale or significance.

The Friends of Mount Kenya Initiative is designed to change that, deliberately and in stages. The programme's initial phase will focus on practical, high-impact improvements: better connectivity between entry points and key trails, systematic trail marking, upgraded sanitation facilities, strengthened emergency and rescue response, improved visitor information and the professional development of mountain guides and porters. These are the foundational conditions that serious adventure tourists expect and that Mount Kenya currently struggles to provide consistently. Larger infrastructure investments will follow once the baseline is in place.

The economic projections attached to the initiative are substantial, though officials have been careful to present them as illustrative scenarios rather than guaranteed outcomes. Modelling developed for the programme suggests that increasing annual visitation to 100,000 — a target that would represent a significant but achievable step up from current levels — could generate between KSh4.4B and KSh6.6B in annual tourism expenditure, support be-

tween 5,300 and 7,800 direct and indirect jobs, produce between KSh660 million and KSh1.05B in government revenue, and deliver between KSh890 million and KSh1.55B in revenues for small and medium enterprises in the surrounding communities. The caveats are appropriate — these outcomes depend on sustained investment, market development and further validation — but the order of magnitude is significant and the direction of travel is clear. The structure of the partnership reflects a considered division of responsibilities. The Centum Foundation will lead resource mobilisation, programme coordination, governance and impact reporting, drawing on its network of corporate organisations, development partners and conservation institutions. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife will provide strategic policy oversight. The Kenya Wildlife Service will identify and implement priority interventions within its conservation and park management framework. The Kenya Tourism Board, through its Magical Kenya brand platform, will support destination positioning and international promotion — work that takes on additional importance given the global adventure tourism market's rapid growth and the increasing competition among mountain destinations for high-value visitors.

The partnership follows a period of structured engagement with the Magical Kenya rebranding taskforce, led by



Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife Rebecca Miano and the Centum Foundation yesterday signed a strategic partnership agreement establishing the Friends of Mount Kenya Initiative

MaryAnn Musangi, which examined opportunities to strengthen Kenya's international tourism positioning and specifically identified Mount Kenya's underexploited potential as a centrepiece of that effort. The connection between rebranding ambition and on-the-ground investment is an important one: destination marketing without the infrastructure to support visitor expectations is, at best, a short-term exercise. The Friends of Mount Kenya Initiative attempts to address both simultaneously.

One of the more distinctive elements of the programme is its ambassador. Martin Mumo, head of tax at Centum Investment Company and a serious high-altitude mountaineer, will serve as the initiative's public face and is planning a summit of Mount Everest in 2027 — an expedition that organisers intend to use as an international platform to raise global awareness of Mount Kenya and attract strategic partnerships. Mumo successfully summited

Ama Dablam in Nepal in November 2025, one of the technically most demanding peaks in the Himalayas, as part of a broader ambition to climb all fourteen of the world's mountains above 8,000 metres. The Everest expedition will mark the most visible moment in that journey and, if the programme's architects manage the communications well, could provide the kind of sustained international coverage that money cannot simply buy.

The Centum Foundation delegation formalising the partnership includes Fred Murimi, managing partner at Centum Capital Partners and a foundation trustee; alongside Mumo, Martin Gitonga, head of risk, compliance and ESG at Centum Investment Company, and Mary Mwangi from the company's brand and communications team.

An annual Friends of Mount Kenya Summit is planned as a recurring platform for investor engagement, progress reporting and visibility — a forum designed to keep the

momentum of the initiative alive between formal programme milestones and to signal to the international market that Kenya is serious about this particular ambition.

The scale of what the initiative is attempting should not be underestimated. Transforming a mountain with genuine but unrealised potential into a globally competitive adventure tourism destination requires more than funding and goodwill — it requires sustained coordination across government, the private sector, conservation bodies and local communities over a period of years, with consistent delivery against targets that international investors and visitors will scrutinise closely.

But Mount Kenya has been waiting for precisely this kind of attention for a long time. The mountain is ready. The question now is whether the partnership behind the initiative has the endurance to match its ambition.



Culture The Sengwer are an indigenous community historically rooted in the Cherangany Hills and surrounding areas, primarily within Elgeyo Marakwet County and its neighbours

The forgotten identity: Is Kenya doing enough to preserve Sengwer culture?

A community's heritage is not measured by its political influence or economic power — it is measured by what survives when no one is paying attention

BY Collins Kibet

@themtkenyatimes

A community's identity is not defined by its population size, political clout or economic standing. It is defined by something quieter and more difficult to protect: its history, its language, the stories its elders carry in their memories, and the knowledge passed with care from one generation to the next. For the Sengwer community of Kenya's North Rift, that definition is being tested. In a country that celebrates both national unity and cultural diversity, a harder question is beginning to demand an honest answer: is Kenya doing enough to ensure that the Sengwer's distinctive heritage survives the combined pressures of modernisation, displacement and official indifference?

The Sengwer are an indigenous community historically rooted in the Cherangany Hills and surrounding areas, primarily within Elgeyo Marakwet County and its neighbours. Their identity is inseparable from ancestral land, oral histories, traditional ecological knowledge and community practices refined across many generations. They are among Kenya's smaller indigenous groups, which means they receive proportionally less institutional attention, fewer resources directed at cultural documentation, and a quieter voice in national conversations about heritage and belonging. Like many communities in similar positions across the continent,

the Sengwer now face a convergence of challenges that makes cultural preservation both more urgent and more difficult than at any previous point in their history.

Culture, it is worth saying plainly, is more than the ceremonial clothing and performances displayed during national holidays. It is a community's collective memory — the accumulated weight of values, relationships, knowledge systems and ways of understanding the world that distinguish one people from another. Within the Sengwer community, elders carry this memory. They are the living repositories of historical knowledge, ancestral stories and traditional practice. When the connection between elders and younger generations weakens, that knowledge does not simply become harder to access. In many cases, it disappears entirely. The loss of a language, a story or a traditional practice is permanent in a way that the loss of a building or a crop is not. There is no reconstruction possible once the last keeper of a piece of knowledge is gone.

That loss is happening, quietly, in communities across Kenya — including among the Sengwer. The growing distance between young people and traditional knowledge is not, in itself, a sign of cultural betrayal. Modern education, technology, social media and urban opportunity have transformed how young Kenyans communicate and build their lives, and those transformations carry genuine benefits. The danger arises

not from modernity itself but from the false choice it sometimes presents: the idea that to succeed in the modern world, one must leave one's heritage behind. A young Sengwer student pursuing a degree in engineering, medicine or technology should not have to feel that academic ambition and cultural identity are in competition. They are not — or they should not be.

The real question is not whether the Sengwer should embrace development. Of course they should. The question is whether Kenya's institutions — its schools, its county governments, its cultural agencies, its research universities — are doing enough to ensure that development and cultural continuity can proceed together rather than at each other's expense.

Education is the most obvious place to start. Schools should do more than prepare students for examinations and the formal job market. They should help learners understand where they come from — the histories, contributions and living traditions of the communities that shaped them. In practice, this means creating space within curricula for local heritage, facilitating collaboration between educators and community elders, and supporting the documentation of oral histories before the people who hold them are no longer alive to share them. These are not expensive ambitions. They require political will and institutional seriousness more than large budgets.

Language preservation de-



Sengwer community of Kenya's North Rift

mands equal urgency. A language is not merely a communication tool. It encodes a community's relationship with its environment, its history and its understanding of human experience. When children grow up without meaningful exposure to their ancestral language, fluency fades within a generation and disappears within two. Families have a role here — encouraging children to spend time with grandparents, to listen, to ask questions. But community organisations, county cultural offices and national institutions must also invest in practical resources: recorded oral histories, community dictionaries, storytelling archives and educational materials developed with the full participation and consent of Sengwer knowledge holders.

The land question cannot be separated from the cultural one. For the Sengwer, as for many indigenous communities across Kenya and the

wider continent, land is not primarily an economic asset. It is the physical foundation of cultural memory, traditional livelihood and intergenerational identity. The Sengwer's long and painful relationship with the Cherangany Hills — marked by evictions, displacement and an ongoing struggle for recognition of their rights — illustrates why conservation policy cannot be designed as though indigenous communities are obstacles rather than stakeholders. Protecting forests and respecting the rights of the people historically connected to them are not mutually exclusive objectives. They require genuine consultation, legal respect and a willingness to share decision-making rather than impose it.

Responsibility, however, does not belong to the government alone. The Sengwer community itself — its elders, parents, teachers, youth and cultural organisations — must be active participants in

their own preservation. Young Sengwer people with access to smartphones and digital platforms have tools available to them that previous generations never had: the ability to record, store and share stories at scale, to build online communities of cultural practice, and to connect with researchers and institutions who can support documentation efforts. That potential should be harnessed deliberately and with proper community oversight, ensuring that cultural knowledge is shared on the community's terms and not extracted for others' benefit.

Kenya must confront what it actually means to celebrate cultural diversity. A nation that allows its smaller voices to fade into silence impoverishes its own history. The Sengwer story must not become a museum exhibit or a footnote. It must continue to be lived, taught and passed with pride from one generation to the next.



Health CKDN joined partners and communities across Kenya in marking of Mental Health Day 2026 last Saturday when the nation also marked Mazingira Day.

Mental health a crucial health agenda



BY Mary K. Ngethe
@themkenyaintimes

Mental health can no longer sit at the margins of Kenya health agenda. It interacts with other health agenda like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, ebola, maternal health, HIV, gender-based violence among others. Indeed, mental health could the foundation of resilience in the well-being of family and community health systems. For Central Kenya Develop-

ment Network, (CKDN), this means mental health must increasingly be part of the conversations community and church leaders are having in order to have health equity in community leadership and meaningful participation.

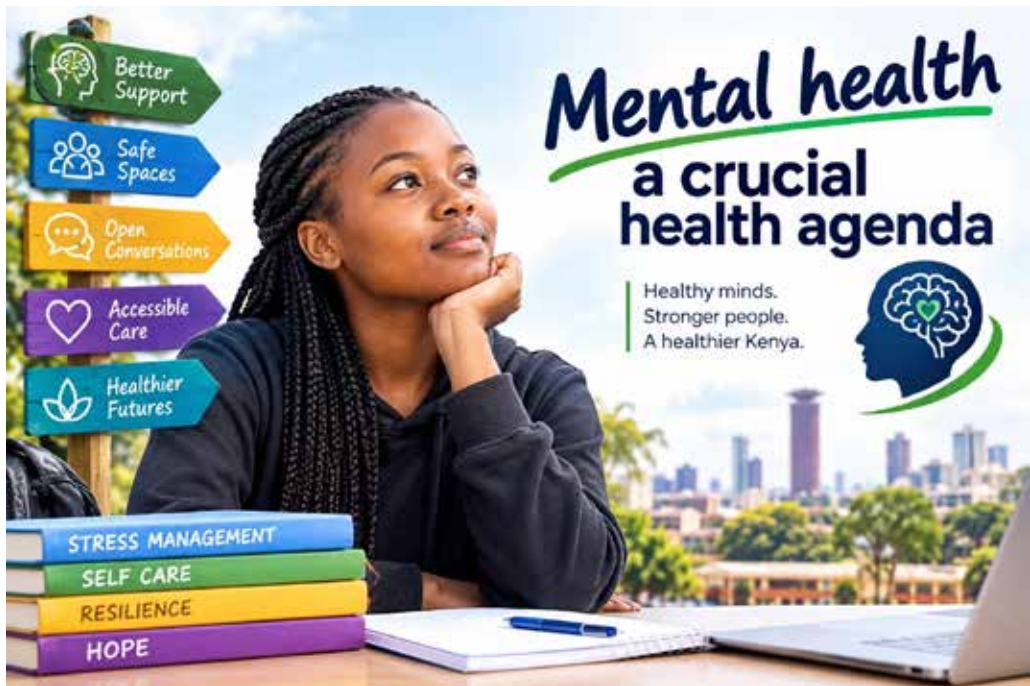
Mental Health and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Kenya's current National-Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) strategy is the Kenya National NCD Strategic Plan 2021/22-2025-26, developed by the Ministry of Health to guide prevention, control, financing and policy alignment for NCDs. In this Strategic Plan, the diseases pointed out include cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, Mental health conditions,

cancers and chronic respiratory diseases, among others. It is very commendable that the Ministry of health has set the agenda for all health sector players to make mental health core in the health debate. Research in Kenya is urgently needed to establish the role of mental well being in prevention, management and treatment of all communicable and non-communicable diseases.

CKDN marks Mental Health Day, 2026

CKDN joined partners and communities across Kenya in marking of Mental Health Day 2026 last Saturday when the nation also marked Mazingira Day. We in CKDN hereby calls for something fundamental:



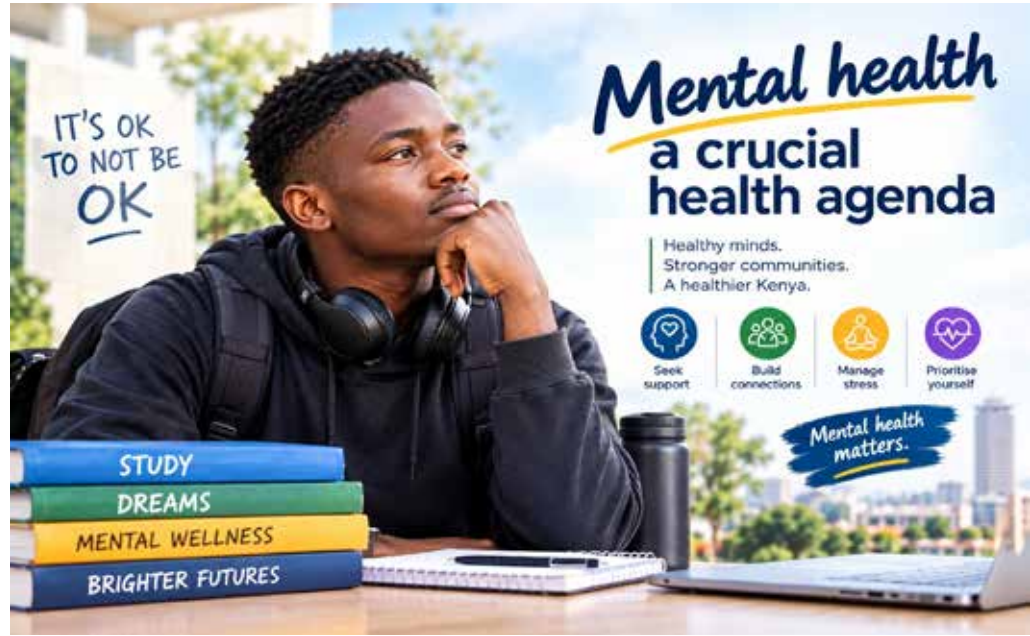
People with lived experience must not simply be invited to tell their stories. Their knowledge and experience in their mental health journey should help shape policies, programs, services, and the decisions that affect their lives. People must be empowered to share their stories without fearing the effect of stigma, families must be told that mental unwellness is as much a disease as any other, and people must be sensitized to embrace people with mental health challenges as "Sick People" just like other people sick with cancer or diabetes. The notion of a person with mental health challenges being labeled as "Bewitched" should, and must be re-labeled with a person suffering from a noncommunicable disease, that can be treated or managed. In CKDN, the Social & Economic Directorate has developed a program to specifically focus on non-communicable

diseases, among them, mental health. To mark Mental health Day 2026, the directorate launched a 6-month project to increase public awareness and education on NCDs. This will run from November 2026 to April 2027. The information will be channeled through mainstream media and social media, and any other platform available. The theme is "Prevention is better than cure". Before a person is diagnosed with diabetes, the disease has developed over a period of time, during which, the person would have embraced a lifestyle change to prevent the onset.

Call to Action

CKDN will maintain an article on NCDs in this E-paper once a week for the 6-month period to raise awareness and educate readers on the urgent need to change lifestyle in

order to prevent onset of an NCD. NCDs are preventable, and a person with a stable mental health reading this article will embrace the message, change his or her lifestyle, and save the family resources that would otherwise be used to treat a preventable illness. If you can prevent Ebola, you have even more power to prevent an NDC. Have a healthy mental wellness for better overall health, for yourself and your family. The community will benefit. The author is the program director with Central Kenya Development Network. She is also a certified life coach and professional mediator, all aimed at having peaceful persons, peaceful families and peaceful communities. She aims to spearhead creation of Heaven in Homes. She can be reached via +254722652111 or marykaraungethe@gmail.com



A taste for pure honey needs courage



One who needs honey,
must have courage to face the bees,
Honey tastes delicious,
A sweet liquid from the bees,
so ferocious,
Cheating them to pluck their food from them,
Sounds too bad, Losing their food,
In tire of a month's sacrifice,
Makes them fly and chase in anger,
Sting the men with their poisonous stinger,

He who wants honey,
Should be very bold,
Having courage to face the bees,
Or otherwise to be stinged with freeze,
Another choice to proclaim honey,
Is to claim from somebody.,
A sweet impure honey,
might be a syrup of jaggery,
A pride of victory,
A winning success in anger,
Doesn't come in our hands so easily,
It requires great hardships,
dangers and struggles,
Similar to the poisonous sting of bees,
Swinging towards to attack the plundering men,
instantly to death!!!!!!
V.R.VIJAYALAKSHMI, GRADUATE TEACHER FOR
ENGLISH,CW WRITERS GROUP,KANCHIPURAM
DISTRICT,TAMILNADU, INDIA.,

The courage to succeed



Getting good marks is not always easy,
Sometimes lessons seem difficult to understand.
We may feel nervous before an exam,
Or afraid to speak in front of the class.
But success comes when we try despite our
fears,
And learn from every mistake we make.

Just as honey requires facing the bees,
Great achievements require courage and effort.

V. S. Nithiyasri
8th Std
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary School,
Panruti, Cuddalore dist, Tamil Nadu.

Mother, please forgive me



Hiding her pains from me,
She never names her own hardships, I know,
"My child!" she cries, and runs, flying to me,
Mother dear, please forgive me.

Knowingly, unknowingly, I did wrong,
At times I even left you with bitter words,
You never say that I hurt you, not once,
Mother dear, please forgive me.

Now that I've grown older, I see you,
Afraid of loneliness, I am coming to you,
Sinking into the darkness, I go on,
Mother dear, please forgive me.

Frost has settled on your hair,
And time has slipped away so quickly,
I did not live up to your worth, and I'm sorry,
Mother dear, please forgive me...

Egamberdiyeva Durdona is a student at Qarshi Medical Technical College. Several of her poems have been published in newspapers. She has actively participated in various "Kitobxon" (Book Lover) competitions. She considers the contribution of her parents, Yusupov Eshmamat and Yusupova Munavvarxon, to her achievements to be invaluable and acknowledges their great support and encouragement.

“रूह से रू-ब-रू”: The World of Emotions in Bharti Raina's Poems and Ghazals



Through words, Poet Bharti Raina gives voice to the inner experiences of the mind. Her new book 'रूह से रू-ब-रू' marks a new chapter in her creative journey in the literary world.

Literature is not just a combination of words, it is a medium to express emotions, experiences, and the voice of the soul.

Based on this Emotional foundation, Bharti Raina's New Book 'रूह से रू-ब-रू' is a heartfelt collection of poems and ghazals. In this book, the Poetess has tried to give words to the different emotions of the mind through her sensitive perspective and creative expression. Her works give readers the chance to look within themselves, experience life's moments, and connect with unspoken

feelings, which are often difficult to express in words.

Bharti Raina's literary journey is also familiar through her previously published works 'Lotus of Thoughts,' वचिारों की खुशबू और 'अंतरमन्क भाव' (Kashmiri Bhajans). Through these works, she has shown her love for literature and dedication to emotional expression.

The title 'रूह से रू-ब-रू' itself hints at self-dialogue, sensitivity, and the depths of the inner mind. Through the simple expression of Poetry and the Heartfelt style of Ghazals, this collection tries to reach the Hearts of Readers.

Bharti Raina's new work marks another important milestone in her literary journey, encouraging readers to go beyond words, understand emotions, and engage in self-dialogue.

Publisher: Everlasting Publication
Release Date: 16 October 2026

The Art of Adjusting



Life may not go as planned,
Things may slip out of our hand.
Change may come, both near and far,
We must shine just as we are.

Bend a little, learn to cope,
Keep your heart filled up with hope.
Those who change and try again,
Can face the sun after the rain.

Adjust with care, stand up tall,
Never give up when you fall.
Learn to change and find your way,
Survive and shine another day!

R SRIPRIYA
BT ENGLISH
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT
TAMILNADU
INDIA

He who wants honey must have the courage to face the bees



He who wants to achieve higher goals must have the courage to face struggles.
Those who want to learn to ride a bicycle should not be afraid of getting hurt.
The same applies to swimming, joining the army, and learning all other skills.
If you are afraid, you may never learn anything throughout your life.
So, be courageous and learn whatever you want.

— G. Yasmin Sirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Milk Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe has linked the shortage directly to the dry season, which ran from June to August

Rains may ease milk prices but Kenya's bread and cooking oil follow the world

The long rains could end the dairy shortage in months, but wheat and palm oil are priced in markets that Kenyan weather cannot reach

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyaintimes

The long rains could end the dairy shortage in months, but wheat and palm oil are priced in markets that Kenyan weather cannot reach

By Jane Njeri

Kenya's rains may bring relief to dairy farmers and milk consumers within months, but they will do little to lower the price of bread or cooking oil — and that distinction matters enormously for both ordinary households and the Central Bank of Kenya as it monitors inflation heading into the final quarter of the year.

That is the assessment of EBC Financial Group, whose senior market analyst David Precious yesterday laid out why the October-to-December long rains, now under way across much of the country, will address only one of the

three main drivers pushing core inflation higher. Core inflation — the measure the central bank watches most closely when setting interest rates because it strips out the most volatile prices — rose to 4.0 per cent in September from 3.4 per cent in August, according to the CBK Monetary Policy Committee statement of 7 October. The three items principally responsible were milk, wheat products and edible oils.

Milk is the one that rain can fix. Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe has linked the shortage directly to the dry season, which ran from June to August and cut pasture coverage across much of Kenya. The numbers bear this out starkly. A Nandi County dairy cooperative reported that daily deliveries fell from roughly 10,000 litres to under 2,000 litres during the dry period. Nationally, Kenya Dairy

Board figures show milk delivered to processors dropped from 84.4 million litres in June to 75 million in August. Prices followed: fresh packaged milk rose 6.0 per cent in September, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Consumer Price Index, making it one of the sharpest single-item increases in the basket. Packaged fresh milk ranks seventh and loose milk ninth among the ten largest individual items tracked by the KNBS — a reflection of just how central dairy is to Kenyan household budgets, to the 1.8 million smallholder households that depend on it for income, and to an economy where dairy accounts for 4.5 per cent of GDP and annual per capita consumption of 110 litres is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

Improved pasture will cut the cost of production. KDB figures put the cost of producing

a litre at KSh24.50 on open grazing against KSh39.50 with indoor feeding, a gap that narrows significantly when cows have access to grass. Kagwe has said he expects a surplus within months. But Precious cautions that the timeline for consumer relief is not instant. Feed prices in the North Rift rose by roughly a third during the dry period, and some farmers have shifted to selling through brokers rather than to processors, complicating the supply chain. History supports patience: following the late-2023 dry spell, the CBK April 2024 statement recorded that food inflation fell from 6.9 per cent in February to 5.8 per cent in March only after harvests improved.

Bread and cooking oil operate under entirely different rules. Kenya grew approximately 255,000 tonnes of wheat in 2025 against imports



David Precious, Senior Market Analyst, EBC Financial Group

of 2.24 million tonnes, meaning around 90 per cent of its wheat comes from abroad. White wheat flour rose 4.5 per cent in September, driven by supply constraints in the Black Sea region and dry conditions in North America. Cooking oil tells a similar story: the Agriculture and Food Authority estimates imports meet more than 90 per cent of domestic demand, and the CBK notes that palm oil prices rose for a fourth consecutive month on strong global import demand and fears that current El Niño conditions — which the Malaysian Palm Oil Council says typically cut palm oil output nine to twelve months after onset — will

reduce Southeast Asian harvests.

There is a further complication. The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority raised diesel by KSh9.90 a litre on Tuesday, a move the CBK has flagged as a potential source of second-round inflation effects, meaning higher transport and production costs that spread into other prices and could dilute any milk-driven relief.

The next two inflation readings, due before the MPC meets again in December, will determine whether the rains have helped households faster than they have helped the central bank.

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Kisii Arati rejected the claim that confrontations involving some workers reflect the whole group, maintaining that Kisii town remains peaceful

Arati defends Kazi Mashinani workers: “They are not goons”



Kisii county governor Simba Arati addressing the fourth cohort of Kazi Mashinani where he has urged critics to change their perception and recognise the workers' contribution to the community |

Photo: Elizabeth Angira



Fourth cohort of Kazi Mashinani during orientation by kiisi county governor Simba Arati | *Photo: Elizabeth Angira*

house is your waste. You have to be responsible for your waste,” he said.

He accused some critics of being driven by envy rather than genuine concern and urged them to tone down their anger and engage constructively with the programme.

Arati said he would keep supporting initiatives that improve the welfare of Kisii residents and remains committed to the responsibilities he took on as governor.

He asked the new cohort to pledge to conduct themselves well and carry out their work responsibly, saying the programme should benefit both the workers and the wider community.

homes and businesses, saying proper waste management should begin at the source through waste segregation. While the workers play a key role in keeping the coun-

ty clean, he said, residents should not leave the burden to them alone.

“Waste is not the work of Kazi Mashinani alone. The waste that comes from your

BY Elizabeth Angira

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Kisii Governor Simba Arati has come out strongly in defence of Kazi Mashinani workers, insisting that the group is made up of young people who deserve respect and a fair chance to earn a living.

Speaking during the launch of the fourth cohort of the programme in Kisii County, Arati dismissed claims that portray the workers as goons, saying they keep the town clean while earning an income to support themselves and their families.

“Kazi Mashinani, they are not goons. They are good people,” he said, urging critics to change their perception and recognise the workers’ contribution to the community.

The governor said the programme was designed to give young people hope and a steady income to meet their daily needs.

“These are the people we are working with. We will continue as a team, as servants of the people, to give them hope and make sure they have something to put on their ta-

ble at the end of the month,” he said.

A cleaner Kisii

Arati pointed to the visible change in the county’s urban centres as proof that the programme is working. Since the initiative began, the workers have become a familiar presence in Kisii town and its surroundings, sweeping streets, clearing drainage channels and collecting garbage that once piled up in markets and along roadsides. The result is a cleaner, more orderly town that is more pleasant for residents, traders and visitors alike.

Beyond the cleaner streets, the governor said the programme has created work for hundreds of young people who might otherwise be idle, and has given them a sense of purpose and ownership over their town.

Not above the law

Arati rejected the claim that confrontations involving some workers reflect the whole group, maintaining that Kisii town remains peaceful and that isolated incidents

should not tarnish everyone.

He also said the workers are human beings who deserve dignity as they carry out their duties across the town.

“When these guys are walking, people start throwing stones at them, then you expect them to grab you. They are human beings, too. Let us have respect,” he said.

The governor was equally clear that the workers are not above the law. “Anybody, including Kazi Mashinani workers, who is going to engage in an unlawful activity should be handled by the government,” he said.

He urged residents who feel assaulted or mistreated to report to the police rather than confront the workers, stressing that disputes should be settled through the proper legal channels.

He also challenged the workers to act responsibly, reminding them that public service demands discipline and respect for the law.

Responsibility starts at home

Arati further called on residents to take charge of the waste they generate in their




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Algorithmic Monopsony is the mirror image of monopoly. Where monopoly allows a single seller to dictate prices to buyers, monopsony allows a single buyer to dictate terms to sellers

The algorithmic company store: How Kenya's digital platforms revived colonial monopsony under the banner of freedom



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor
Odhiambo
@themkenyatimes

In 2024, full-time ride-hailing drivers on Kenya's dominant platforms earned a net of roughly KES 9,368 per month after fuel, maintenance, and commissions barely enough to keep a family above the poverty line in Nairobi while the platforms themselves extracted billions in value from the same labour. This is not a temporary market friction. It is the measurable outcome of monopsony power: one or two buyers of labour confronting thousands of atomized sellers who have no realistic alternative. The gig economy, sold as liberation from the rigid factory clock, has quietly recreated the company store of the colonial plantation and the company town of the industrial age, only this time the overseer is an algorithm and the currency is ratings.

Monopsony is the mirror image of monopoly. Where monopoly allows a single seller to dictate prices to buyers, monopsony allows a single buyer to dictate terms to sellers. In classical labour markets this was the coal owner who owned the only mine in the valley, or the settler who controlled the only source of cash wages in a district. Kenya's colonial labour history is replete with such arrangements: hut and poll taxes that forced Africans into the wage economy, pass laws that restricted movement, and employer cartels that kept wages suppressed. The post-independence state gradually dismantled the most overt legal instruments of that coercion. Even so, the digital platforms have reconstructed the economic logic with greater efficiency and far less accountability.

Uber and Bolt together control more than 70 percent of the formal ride-hailing market in Kenya. Glovo and Jumia Food dominate food delivery. These platforms do not merely intermediate; they set the price of the service, determine the commission (often well above the 18 percent



cap once contemplated by regulators), control the ranking algorithm that decides who receives work, and reserve the unilateral right to deactivate a driver without meaningful recourse. A driver who is deactivated loses not merely one day's earnings but the capital sunk into a vehicle purchased on credit specifically for platform work. Switching costs are high, multi-homing is imperfect, and the network effects that once promised competition now entrench the incumbents. The worker faces a classic monopsonistic buyer: take the terms or starve.

The Competition Authority of Kenya has begun to recognise the problem. The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduces the concepts of "strategic market position" and "superior bargaining position." These tools allow the Authority to look beyond traditional market-share thresholds and examine whether a platform can influence prices, quality, or output independently of competitors, and whether suppliers or workers have realistic alternatives. The Bill is a necessary, if belated, acknowledgment that the old competition toolkit designed for cement factories and breweries cannot police multi-sided digital markets where power resides in data, algorithms, and network effects rather than pure percentage shares. Yet legislation

alone is not enforcement. Codes of practice, sector inquiries, and meaningful penalties must follow, or the Bill will remain a decorative statute.

The human cost is not abstract. Drivers report working twelve to sixteen hours to clear enough for loan repayments after platform commissions and operating costs. Social protection coverage remains incomplete: many are enrolled in neither the National Social Security Fund nor comprehensive health insurance at rates that match formal employment. Collective bargaining is nascent; the Kenya Union of Gig Workers has emerged, but platforms continue to treat drivers as independent contractors precisely to evade the obligations that would accompany employee status. When drivers protest as they did in 2024 over fares and commissions the platforms respond with temporary adjustments that evaporate once the cameras leave. The asymmetry is structural.

History offers a cautionary parallel and a possible remedy. In the late colonial and early independence periods, Kenya experimented with wage boards, minimum wages, and limited collective bargaining to blunt the worst excesses of monopsonistic employers. Those interventions were imperfect and often captured, yet they recognised a basic truth: when labour has no alternative buyer, the

state must either create countervailing power or accept exploitation as the market outcome. Digital platforms claim they are not employers. The claim is legally convenient and economically false. They control the essential conditions of work price, volume, discipline, and access while externalizing all risk onto the individual. This is not innovation; it is regulatory arbitrage dressed in the language of flexibility.

The deeper insight is that monopsony in the digital age is more insidious than its industrial predecessor because it masquerades as choice. The colonial labourers knew the settler farm was the only option. The modern driver is told he is an entrepreneur free to log off whenever he wishes. The freedom is theoretical. Rent, school fees, and vehicle instalments do not log off. The platform's algorithm, opaque and unchallengeable, functions as the new pass book: it grants or withholds the right to earn. Data extracted from every trip becomes the platform's private asset, used to refine pricing power and lock in dependence, while the worker who generated that data receives none of its residual value.

Correlation is not coincidence. Markets characterised by high concentration of platform power, high switching costs for workers, and weak labour regulation consistent-

ly produce the same pattern: suppressed earnings, precarious conditions, and transfer of surplus from labour to capital. Kenya's own statistics confirm the pattern. When platforms face regulatory pressure fare floors, commission caps, or the threat of reclassification earnings for drivers improve, however temporarily. When pressure recedes, the monopsonistic equilibrium reasserts itself.

What is required is not nostalgia for the formal employment contract of the mid-twentieth century, but a clear-eyed recognition that platform power is a form of market power that competition law must address. Parliament must pass and fund the Competition Amendment Bill with urgency, ensuring the Authority has the resources and technical capacity to investigate algorithmic practices and impose binding codes. The Competition Authority itself must move from studies to enforcement, using the new concepts of strategic and superior bargaining positions against platforms that extract excessive commissions or deactivate workers arbitrarily. Platforms must be compelled to open their algorithms to audit, to guarantee transparent dispute resolution, and to contribute to social protection funds proportional to the value they extract. Worker organisations must be recognised and protected so that collective voice can counter individual helplessness. Consumers, finally, must understand that the convenience of a cheap ride is subsidized by the precarity of the person behind the wheel.

The alternative is a society that congratulates itself on digital modernity while quietly reconstituting the economic relations of the company store. Kenya has already lived that history. It need not live it again under the soft tyranny of the app. The algorithm does not have to be the new overseer. Law, properly armed and properly enforced, can still insist that human labour is not a residual input to be squeezed until the last drop of surplus is extracted. The question is whether the institutions of the Republic will act before the digital company store becomes the permanent architecture of work for a generation of Kenyans.

The writer is a social commentator

Relationship If something feels off in those early moments, I no longer try to rationalise it away. I do not tell myself to give it more time, or to wait and see whether things might improve

What I thought I knew about love at 24

Six years on, the certainty has gone — and something far more honest has taken its place



Joyce Oduor

BY Joyce Oduor
@themkenyentimes

At 24, I knew exactly the kind of man I wanted to settle down with. Had you asked me then, I would have answered without a moment’s pause, almost as though I had been waiting for the question my whole life. I had clarity, structure and language. I could describe him in detail — his personality, his values, how he would communicate, even how he would make me feel. It all seemed so certain, so neatly arranged. Back then, love felt like something you could define in advance, a carefully constructed idea that reality would eventually catch up with. There was comfort in that certainty, in the belief that if I knew what I wanted clearly enough, I would recognise it the moment it appeared.

Now, approaching 30, the same question lands very differently. When someone asks

me what my type is, I laugh — not because I find it funny, but because I no longer have an answer that arranges itself into words the way it once did. It is not that I do not know what I want. If anything, I understand it far more deeply now than I ever did before. The difference is that what I know no longer exists as a list I can recite. It lives somewhere internal, somewhere instinctive — something I feel rather than explain.

These days, when I meet someone new, I give them about twenty minutes. Not in any rigid or formal sense, but there is an internal window during which I observe, listen and pay attention without forcing anything. I am not trying to interrogate or impress. I am simply present, watching how a person shows up when they are just being themselves. Within that short time, certain things begin to surface in ways that are difficult to ignore. I notice whether someone is self-aware, whether they communicate clearly and honestly, whether they carry a sense of steadiness within themselves. These are not questions I ask directly — they are answers that emerge through tone, response and presence. There is a quiet kind of clarity that comes from paying attention without expectation.

If something feels off in those early moments, I no longer try to rationalise it away. I do not tell myself to give it more time, or to wait and see whether things might improve. I used to do that. I used to allow people room to grow on me, to explain themselves, to become what I hoped they might be. I invested in potential, in possibilities that had not yet taken shape. Sometimes it felt hopeful. More often than not, it led to disappointment. Experience has a particular way of teaching you what not to ignore.

Now I do not wait for align-

ment to develop. I expect it to be present from the beginning — not in a perfect or complete form, but in a way that feels real and grounded. If it is not there, I disengage. It does not always look dramatic from the outside. Sometimes it is simply a quiet withdrawal, a shift in attention, a decision made inwardly before it is ever expressed. It may appear abrupt to others, but to me it feels honest, like honouring something I have learned not to overlook.

I have also grown more attuned to energy in ways I did not fully understand before. There are things you cannot always explain logically but feel immediately — misaligned energy, forced chemistry, subtle pressure, or something as small as an interaction that feels slightly unnatural. These things register quickly now. I do not dismiss them as overthinking or oversensitivity. I trust them. Even something as minor as how a person holds a conversation or occupies a room can tell me more than words ever could.

What unsettles me most, though, is the pressure that often surrounds these interactions. The reminders about time, the pointed references to age, the language of the so-called biological clock, the expectation that I should now be more willing to compromise simply because I am nearing a certain stage of life. I find it deeply uncomfortable, offensive even. Not because I am unaware of time passing, but because I refuse to let it dictate something as significant as who I choose to share my life with. The notion that I should overlook what feels wrong in order to meet an external timeline does not sit

well with me, and I suspect it should not sit well with anyone.

I know that from the outside, this might read as though I have become more difficult, more selective, perhaps too quick to walk away. But that interpretation misses what is actually happening. I have not become harder to please. I have become more precise. I no longer need a detailed description of my type because I am no longer operating from theory. What I once understood in words, I now recognise in feeling. I know when something fits, and I know when it does not — often without needing to explain why.

So when I laugh at that question, it is not because I am lost or unsure of myself. It is because I have moved beyond needing to answer it the way I once did. What I am looking for has not disappeared. It has simply changed form, becoming something quieter, sharper and far more difficult to put into words.

Joyce Oduor teaches at Lily Senior School, Muihoko.

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Uganda Last week, Absa Bank Uganda launched its Wealth Investment Solutions at the Kampala Serena Hotel. On the surface, it was a bank event

Do you have a wealth vision? Or are you just working until you die?

In a country where we hustle to survive today, Absa Bank Uganda just asked the question we have all been running away from — what happens tomorrow?



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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Do you have a wealth vision?

I read that question on my phone at exactly 3:47 in the morning, sweating through a power cut, and it stopped me cold. Not because I did not understand it. But because I understood it too well.

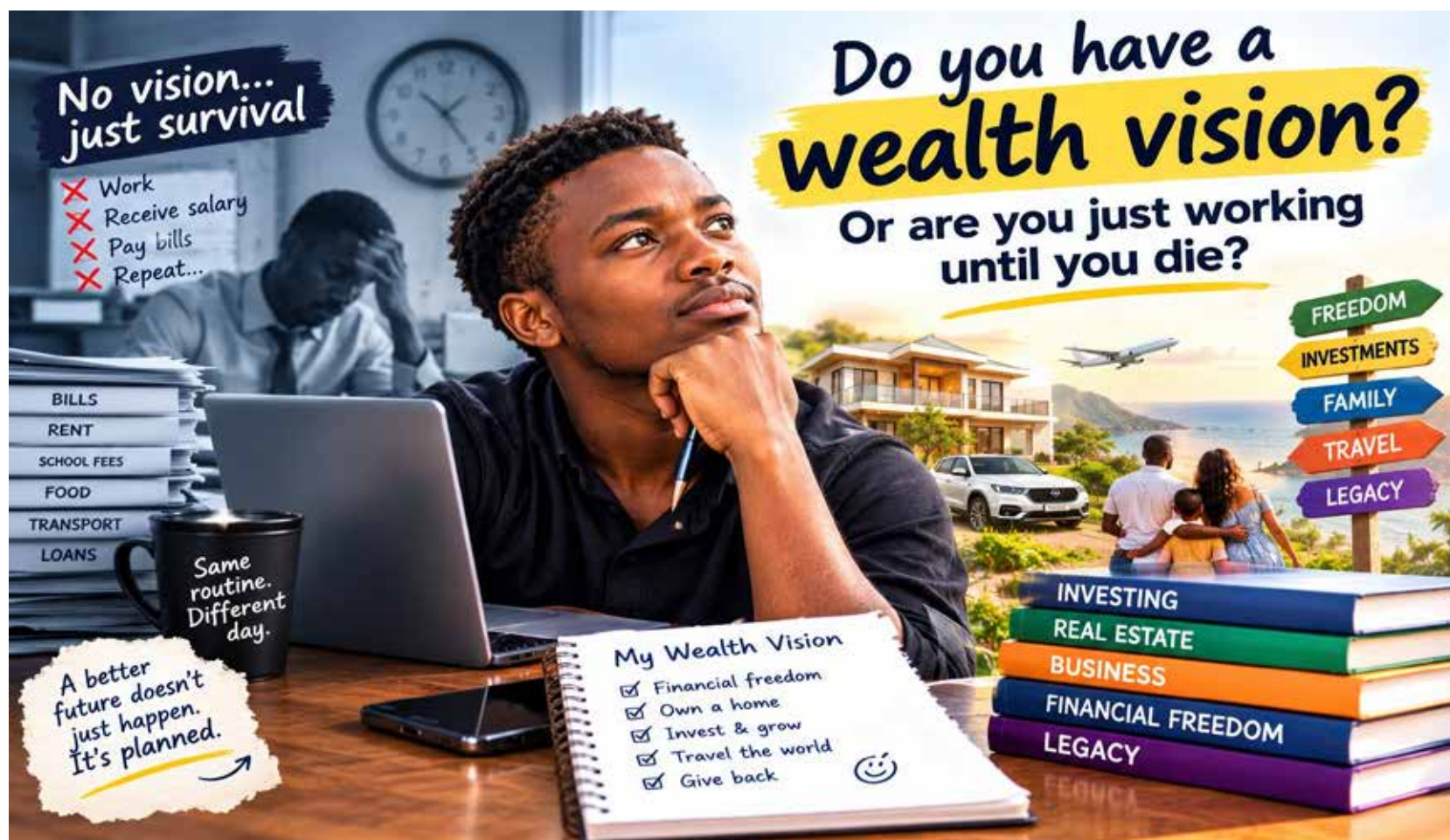
We Ugandans know how to work. We wake up before the first boda-boda noise. We sell in Owino in the rain. We drive for sixteen hours. We till. We code. We preach. We hustle as though our lives depend on it — because they do. But wealth? That word has always felt as though it belongs to someone else. To Kololo. To people with the right surnames. To people who speak with a certain accent at Serena.

Last week, Absa Bank Uganda launched its Wealth Investment Solutions at the Kampala Serena Hotel. On the surface, it was a bank event. In truth, it was an interruption. A necessary one. Because the real question is not whether you have money. The real question is whether you have a vision for what your money should do when you are too tired to work.

We were taught to save but never taught to grow. Our parents did their best. My mother still says: “Kikumi kikumi, n’ekibbo kiyala” — a hundred at a time, and the basket fills up. So we save. We keep money in a tin. On mobile money. In a SACCO that may or may not return it when we need it most. We save to survive the next emergency, not to build the next decade.

As Chinua Achebe wrote, a man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starvation. We have been saving to avoid starvation. We have not been building toward abundance.

The launch of these investment solutions represents something dif-



ferent: a shift in the starting point. The first step, according to this approach, is not how much you have. It is the decision — a first goal, a first deliberate move to turn ambition into action.

Seneca put it plainly two thousand years ago: if a man knows not to which port he sails, no wind is favourable. That is the financial condition of most of us. We are sailing with no port in mind. We are working hard, but the energy is scattered.

Here is what moved me most: the entry point. For years, serious investment in Uganda has felt like a members-only arrangement. Treasury bills were for the wealthy. Eurobonds were for people in London offices. Mutual funds were for those with industrial-area connections and inherited capital. The lie we absorbed, without always knowing we had absorbed it, was that wealth creation was reserved for a particular class of person and we were not it.

That lie needs to be challenged directly. James Baldwin wrote that you have to decide who you are and force

the world to deal with you — not with its idea of you. For decades, the world told the average Ugandan that investing was not for them. A platform that changes that entry point is not a marketing exercise. It is a philosophical shift.

If you can spend ten thousand shillings on data to watch videos that do not add to your net worth, you can invest ten thousand shillings to buy a piece of your future. That is not a slogan. That is a reorientation of how we think about money.

Wealth is deeply personal. And, in Uganda, it is deeply lonely. I know a thirty-four-year-old teacher in Mukono who earns seven hundred thousand shillings a month. Every month, two hundred thousand goes home to her family. She has never missed a family gathering. But she has never asked herself who will send her money when she is seventy.

We have been taught to think of legacy as something that belongs to men who have buildings named after them. It is not. Legacy is the decision that your child does not have

to start from zero. It is the bond you locked away quietly in your thirties that pays for the hospital bill in your seventies.

Aristotle wrote that we are what we repeatedly do — that excellence is not an act but a habit. Wealth follows the same logic. It is not the one large deal that suddenly arrives. It is the repeated decision that even ten thousand shillings should work while you sleep.

The most honest line in this entire conversation is also the simplest: your wealth journey does not have to be walked alone. Ugandans are financially lonely in a way we rarely admit. We lose money on bad deals and say nothing because of shame. We borrow at punishing interest rates for school fees because we never planned for the term. We are conned by people we trusted because we did not know where to turn for advice.

What proper investment guidance offers is not only financial support. It is the emotional reassurance that someone knowledgeable is avail-

able to say: your small money is worthy of serious attention. Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi has written beautifully about how Uganda’s real struggle has never been a shortage of effort — it has been a shortage of structures that honour that effort. This is what a genuine wealth framework can provide.

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote that a person who has a why to live for can bear almost any how. A wealth vision gives you the why. It gives you the reason to say no to the unnecessary expense, to invest the ten thousand rather than risk it, to wake up early one more time with a destination in mind.

The question is no longer whether you have enough to start.

The question is whether you have the courage to have a vision.

The writer, Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza, is an author, political and society scholar and journalist on wealth, power and what Africa becomes when we stop surviving and start building.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



When survival becomes a daily struggle

By Victorine Nekesa

Every morning, millions of Kenyans wake up to the same question: how will they get through the day? For some, it begins with feeding children before heading to work. For others, it starts with calculating what little remains and deciding which necessity can wait. The numbers tell part of the story. Kenya’s annual inflation reached 6.8 per cent in September 2026, up from 6.6 per cent in August, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Food and non-alcoholic beverages rose 9.5 per cent. Transport costs jumped 15.6 per cent. These are not abstract figures — they translate directly into emptier plates and harder choices. The evidence is visible at the market. A 500-millilitre packet of fresh milk rose from KSh57.74 in August to KSh61.23 in September. Two kilograms of white wheat



flour now cost KSh181.11. A kilogram of sukuma wiki has reached KSh122.49. Small increases, compounded daily, quietly erode household budgets already stretched to breaking point. Behind every figure is a human story: parents skipping meals to feed their children, workers surrendering a significant share of their wages to transport, students rationing data bundles

alongside food. Financial pressure does not stay in the wallet — it seeps into relationships, mental health and dignity. This crisis will not be solved by telling struggling Kenyans to budget better. Many already sacrifice more than anyone should have to. What they deserve is not sympathy. They deserve action.

The pain of being poor in a world that worships money

By Yvonne Wambui

Imagine having ten shillings in your pocket while the world expects you to live as though you have everything. Imagine watching friends enjoy things you can only dream of — not for lack of ambition, but because your circumstances will not allow it. This is the quiet reality of millions of young Kenyans today. In a society where expensive phones, designer clothes and weekend outings signal success, being broke can feel like a moral failure. Nobody always says it directly, but treatment shifts the moment people discover you cannot afford what they can. Poverty is not met with understanding. Too often, it becomes a reason to look down on someone. Social media sharpens the wound. Every day, young people scroll through images of travel, birthday dinners and new purchases, rarely seeing



the loans, sacrifices and family support behind the highlight reel. The comparison breeds shame. And shame is a heavy thing to carry into a lecture hall on an empty stomach. Yet behind these struggles are intelligent, talented, determined people whose worth cannot be measured by an M-Pesa balance. A person without money for transport is not without potential. Someone in worn-out shoes

may carry more integrity than someone in designer ones. This is not a call to romanticise poverty. Being poor is hard, limiting and exhausting. Those experiencing it need opportunities and fair treatment, not empty encouragement. What they do not need is to be made to feel worthless. Being broke is a circumstance. It should never become a verdict.

How the milk crisis is hitting Kenya’s dairy shelves

By Sharon Mumo

When milk runs short, the effects travel fast. Ice cream disappears from freezers, yoghurt thins out on supermarket shelves, butter becomes a luxury and bakeries start cutting corners. Kenya’s ongoing milk crisis is no longer just a farmer’s problem — it has become everybody’s problem. Milk is the backbone of an entire product chain. Manufacturers of ice cream, cheese, cream and flavoured milk depend on a consistent, affordable supply to keep production running. When that supply falters, costs rise, output falls and prices at the till follow. For low-income consumers and students already navigating a brutal cost-of-living squeeze, dairy products that were once everyday staples are quietly becoming occasional indulgences. The pressure is sharpest for small businesses. An ice cream



vendor operating on thin margins cannot easily absorb a spike in wholesale prices. A bakery relying on butter and cream for its daily output faces the same bind. When input costs climb, the choice is brutal: raise prices, cut portions or close. The crisis traces back to the farm. Dairy farmers are contending with expensive animal feed, rising veterinary costs and unreliable markets — a combination that suppresses produc-

tion precisely when demand is growing. Without intervention at that level, processors and retailers will continue managing a shortage they did not create. Addressing this requires coordinated action: better support for farmers, stronger cold-chain infrastructure and early-warning systems to catch supply disruptions before they reach the shelf. Kenya’s dairy industry feeds millions. It cannot afford to run on empty.

No ID, no voter’s card, but loud online

By Simon Juma

He is 19, in his second year at university. He has no national ID and has never registered to vote. But he knew what the Cabinet Secretary said before the nine o’clock news finished — because it was already a meme on TikTok. He has never attended a town hall, but he spent three hours last night in a WhatsApp group debating university funding. This is the Kenyan youth. Not apathetic. Differently engaged. For decades, political participation meant a queue, a ballot and a stamped finger. The internet has quietly rewritten that definition. A student in Kitale now commands the same potential audience as a national newspaper. A 30-second TikTok explaining the housing levy reaches more people than a full-page advertisement. A thread on X can shift public opinion faster than a press



conference. That is not noise. That is civic education — messy, fast and largely self-organised. The danger is stopping there. Likes are not votes. Trends do not build roads. Online energy without offline action is a rehearsal that never becomes a performance. The gap must be closed deliberately. Turn a viral thread on unemployment into a campus CV workshop. Turn a TikTok

on governance into attendance at a county budget forum. Institutions must also adapt — if you want youth participation, host a live session at eight in the evening on TikTok, not a baraza at ten on a Tuesday morning. Most importantly: register. Show up. The online vote is practice. The real one still needs your ID.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *Reece James goes under the knife after a training injury, leaving the Blues without their leader for a demanding run of fixtures

Chelsea captain James faces three months out after knee surgery



Reece James

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

It is not the news Chelsea or their captain needed. Reece James has undergone knee surgery and is expected to spend around three months on the sidelines, dealing yet another painful blow to a player who has spent much of his career in a frustrating battle with his own body. The 25-year-old defender picked up the injury during a training session at Cobham, the club's Surrey base, on the eve of their Premier League fixture against Bournemouth. James was left out of the squad while the club assessed the extent of the damage, and yesterday Chelsea confirmed that the operation had gone well, with the captain already beginning his rehabilitation under the close supervision

of the club's medical team. It is difficult timing for both James and the Blues. He had shown genuine signs of improved fitness during the 2025/26 campaign, featuring more regularly than in previous seasons and giving supporters real hope that his long run of injury misfortune was finally behind him. That hope has now taken another painful hit, and the frustration around Stamford Bridge is palpable. Head coach Xabi Alonso, speaking ahead of the trip to Everton, was measured but candid. He acknowledged the club's disappointment, confirmed that James would remain closely involved with the squad during his recovery, and declined to set a firm return date, saying the medical staff would continue to assess

progress on an ongoing basis. Reading between the lines, Chelsea have absolutely no intention of rushing their captain back onto the pitch before he is ready. Tactically, the loss creates a genuine problem for Alonso. James has been one of the more versatile pieces in his setup this season, deployed at right-back and shifted into midfield when the team needs extra control and composure in the build-up phase. That kind of intelligent adaptability — the ability to read a game and adjust his position without losing the team's shape — is not something that can be easily replaced from the options currently available in the squad. Without him, Chelsea may need to reorganise their approach across the pitch, relying more heavily on their available mid-

fielders to cover ground and asking other defenders to take on responsibilities that fall outside their natural game. It is an adjustment that will demand clarity of thinking from the coaching staff and discipline from the players asked to fill the gaps. The fixture list offers no sympathy. Games against Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester United and Liverpool are expected to fall squarely within James' recovery period — precisely the kind of high-stakes, high-intensity matches where his leadership, aerial presence and reading of the game matter most. Those are the occasions when having your captain on the field, setting the tone from the first whistle, can make a decisive difference. Despite the setback, the club's stance on the January transfer window appears unchanged. Sources close to the club suggest there has been no immediate shift in recruitment planning, indicating that Chelsea remain confident in the depth of their current squad to manage the situation without a significant move in the winter market. For the supporters, the worry runs deeper than any single match or run of results. It is the familiar, sinking feeling of watching a player of genuine quality spend more time in the treatment room than on the pitch. James is not simply a talented defender — he is the heartbeat of this Chelsea side, the man who sets standards in training and leads by example on matchdays. His absence is felt well beyond the tactical. He deserves better, and Chelsea need him fit and firing. For now, though, the captain must be patient, trust the process, and fight his way back one more time. Given everything he has already overcome in his career, few would bet against him doing exactly that.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The Argentine is available after acknowledging his public criticism of the club, with Carrick determined to move on without further conflict

Carrick closes Martínez case as United defender cleared for Leeds trip



By Pascal Okoth

Manchester United manager Michael Carrick has drawn a line under the disciplinary case involving Lisandro Martínez, confirming that the Argentine centre-back will be available for selection ahead of Sunday's Premier League trip to Leeds United.

The situation developed after Martínez made a series of pointed public comments criticising the club's hierarchy following a Champions League defeat, taking direct aim at technical director Jason Wilcox over what he described as inadequate summer investment. Speaking on television after the match, the defender said he expected more from the club's recruitment and argued that Carrick had not been backed properly in the transfer market. He later doubled down

in a second interview, telling CBS Sports that United did not have the best squad relative to their rivals. The comments triggered an internal review, with the club widely reported to have considered a fine.

The matter appears to have been settled after Martínez acknowledged that his words crossed a line. Carrick was direct when asked about the outcome, confirming both that the defender had accepted responsibility and that the case would not be taken further.

"Lisandro Martínez has realised his mistake, and that's good enough for all of us. Acknowledgement is enough, and we can consider the case closed — no drama. Lisandro is available," Carrick said.

Those words carry a clear message. Carrick has no interest in prolonging a dispute that has already attracted more attention

than the club would have liked, and his decision to accept the acknowledgement and move on speaks to the kind of pragmatic leadership that a dressing room under pressure needs most.

Martínez himself had shared the frustrations of several United players unhappy with the club's business over the summer, according to reports at the time. His willingness to speak out publicly may have resonated with supporters who agreed with his assessment, but it placed Carrick in a difficult position — a manager trying to steady a squad that had won just two of their nine league fixtures at the point the controversy broke.

Carrick used the occasion to say something wider about what Manchester United demands of everyone inside the club. His message was pointed but measured.

"I don't need results. We all

need results. It's not about me," he said, before adding: "Manchester United is bigger than an individual, so please — I don't go into every day thinking about me. It's about a club."

That kind of clarity from a manager who arrived in difficult circumstances and has had to navigate red cards, suspensions, poor form and now internal friction is quietly impressive. Carrick is not interested in personalities. He is interested in the collective, and that approach may prove to be exactly what United need as the season grows more demanding.

With the disciplinary matter resolved, the focus shifts entirely to Sunday's fixture at Elland Road. United have had a complicated recent history in their meetings with Leeds, and Carrick will want his players to approach the game with discipline and concentration. Martínez's availability gives the manager an additional defensive option, and his return to the squad could provide a lift to those around him.

Whether he starts remains Carrick's call. The manager will weigh up his tactical requirements, the condition of his available players and the specific challenges Leeds present going forward before naming his team.

A composed, committed performance from Martínez would be the most effective way of putting the controversy behind him and reminding the club of his value.

There are no shortage of challenges ahead for United, on the pitch and off it. But for now, at least, one distraction has been dealt with cleanly and without unnecessary drama. The case is closed, Martínez is in contention, and Manchester United's attention can return to where it belongs — the football.

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Backpage



Tesla Roadster finally arrives, and it may just leave the ground

By: Jeremiah Kingamu

@themtkenyetimes

There is a particular kind of anticipation that builds around a product people have been waiting for so long that they have begun to doubt it will ever arrive. For Tesla enthusiasts and electric vehicle watchers globally, the Roadster had become something of a running joke — promised in 2017, targeted for delivery in 2020, and then delayed, rescheduled and delayed again through at least eight missed milestones. So when Elon Musk posted “New Tesla Roadster Unveil 10.01” on X on 13 September, alongside Tesla’s teasing “Go for launch” graphic, the reaction was less celebration than cautious disbelief.

But the event happened. On 1 October 2026, in Waco, Texas — near SpaceX’s rocket test facility at McGregor — Tesla finally pulled back the curtain on the production-spec Roadster, nearly nine years after the world first saw its concept. And based on what was shown, the wait may have been for something genuinely extraordinary.

At the heart of the Roadster story is not just speed, though speed is very much part of it. It is the integration of SpaceX cold-gas thruster technology into a road vehicle — a concept Musk has teased for years and which, according to multiple credible reports including Reuters and The Information, Tesla has been actively developing in two distinct versions. One is a standard electric sports car, ambitious by any measure. The other, the limited SpaceX Edition, is equipped with what Tesla internally calls the A71 thruster package and is, by all accounts, not street legal. It is a vehicle that is designed to briefly leave the ground.

That sentence deserves to sit for a moment. A consumer vehicle, however limited and expensive, that can temporarily lift off the tarmac. That is not marketing language. That is the stated engineering objective of the programme, confirmed by Musk himself in prior interviews, where he said the thruster package could push the car from 0 to 60 miles per hour



in under one second and allow it to hover briefly above the road surface under controlled conditions.

To understand why this matters, it helps to understand what cold-gas thrusters do in their original context. They are used in spacecraft to make fine adjustments to position and orientation in the vacuum of space — small bursts of compressed gas that provide precise, controllable force. Adapted for a ground vehicle, they offer a form of propulsion and lift that is utterly unlike a conventional tyre-and-road relationship. The demonstration at McGregor was intended to take place in a controlled environment precisely because what the SpaceX Edition can do would be impossible to show safely at a conventional motor show.

The standard Roadster, for those not invited to the SpaceX Edition’s exclusive circle, is no less impressive in conventional terms. Tesla’s previously announced performance targets — unconfirmed as final production specifications until the October reveal — included a 0 to 60 mph time of under 1.9 seconds, a top speed exceeding 250 miles per hour and a range of approximately

620 miles from a 200 kWh battery pack. Whether the production car matches, exceeds or falls short of those figures is something the reveal event was designed to clarify. Final pricing has not been officially confirmed, though a base figure in the region of \$200,000 has been associated with the car since its original concept reveal.

Production is expected no earlier than late 2027, more likely 2028. Given the Roadster’s history, even that timeline attracts scepticism in some quarters. Tesla’s Chief Designer Franz von Holzhausen and Vice President of Vehicle Engineering Lars Moravy confirmed in May 2026 that the car would be built in Texas, which at least answers one of the longer-standing logistical questions around the project. The decision to base production at Giga Texas, rather than the Fremont facility where earlier plans had pointed, places the Roadster geographically close to SpaceX’s operations, which makes collaborative development of the thruster package considerably more practical.

For international observers, particularly in Africa, the Roadster’s signifi-

cance is less about personal purchase prospects and more about what it signals for the direction of technology and mobility. The SpaceX Edition will never be road-legal in Kenya. No regulatory framework currently exists anywhere in the world to certify a ground vehicle capable of becoming briefly airborne, and building one will be a slow process. But the broader conversation it triggers is worth paying attention to.

Electric vehicle adoption in Kenya and across East Africa has been gathering momentum, albeit from a low base. Charging infrastructure remains limited, electricity costs and reliability present challenges, and import duties on new vehicles make even conventional EVs expensive for most consumers. But the pace of change in the global automotive industry is accelerating in ways that will eventually reach every market. Watching Tesla merge aerospace engineering with consumer transport is a reminder that the definition of what a vehicle is capable of doing is being rewritten in real time.

For African policymakers and infrastructure planners, the lesson from the Roadster is not about flying

cars. It is about the speed at which technology is moving and the importance of building regulatory and physical infrastructure that does not simply react to change but anticipates it. Countries that begin now to develop EV charging networks, update vehicle classification frameworks and invest in technical education for next-generation automotive systems will be far better positioned than those that wait for the technology to arrive fully formed at their borders.

The Roadster itself, whether it can be purchased or not, matters as a signal. It tells engineers, investors and governments that the ceiling for what an electric vehicle can do has not been found yet. Nine years of waiting, eight missed deadlines, and eventually: a car that can leave the ground.

That is either the most impressive product launch of 2026, or the beginning of yet another wait. Given what was shown in Waco on 1 October, the difference this time feels smaller than it ever has before.