



Mashujaa Day 2026: Eldoret's moment of national pride, the test of inclusion and the promises Kenya must now fulfil
The Mashujaa Day celebrations held on 20th October 2026 at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret brought Kenya together in a moment of national pride

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Violence mars Meru Mashujaa Day as Mwangaza motorcade attacked
Mashujaa Day celebrations in Meru County descended into chaos yesterday when suspected armed assailants clashed with police in Githongo

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027  **Sifuna brings to the table a different kind of political capital, and one that the opposition genuinely needs**

The opposition's 2027 gameplan

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua hosted Linda Mwananchi movement leader Edwin Sifuna and allied opposition figures at his Wamunyoru residence in Nyeri yesterday, in talks that narrowed the United Opposition's potential 2027 presidential flagbearer to three names: Gachagua, Sifuna and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka.

The Mashujaa Day meeting was the most substantive gathering of opposition principals since the broad anti-Ruto coalition began taking shape in the months following Gachagua's impeachment last year. Those briefed on the deliberations say the two camps reached broad agreement that a single presidential candidate would be named next year, and that the process of arriving at that name would determine whether the opposition enters the August 2027 election as a credible alternative or fragments under the weight of competing ambitions and wounded pride.

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Senators John Methu, Edwin Sifuna and DCP leader Rigathi Gachagua



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Wamunyoro talks: Gachagua and Sifuna open Kenya's 2027 opposition chapter

BY MKT REPORTER

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Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday received Linda Mwananchi leader Edwin Sifuna at his Wamunyoro residence in Nyeri for talks described as focused on “the liberation of our country and the formation of the Sixth Administration.”

Gachagua confirmed the meeting on his social media platforms, saying the discussions were candid and constructive. “Wamunyoro has long been a venue for consequential political consultations that have helped shape a brighter future for our great country,” he said. “Today was such a day.”

The meeting is the clearest signal yet that the two most prominent opposition voices outside the Ukombozi Alliance are coordinating seriously ahead of the August 2027 General Election. With Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka also in the frame as a potential flagbearer, the United Opposition faces its defining test: whether three ambitious principals can subordinate personal interest to collective purpose long enough to mount a credible challenge against an incumbent with every institutional advantage. Kenya has seen this story before. The difference, this time, may be that all three men know exactly how it ends when it fails.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Government enforcement officers yesterday destroyed more than 29,240 litres of kangara and 140 litres of changaa during a crackdown on illicit brew dens in Kahawa West's Soweto slums, Kiambu County, arresting one man who was taken to Kasarani Police Station awaiting arraignment. The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse said its team, acting on intelligence, also destroyed all equipment used in the brewing operation. Chief Executive Officer Anthony Omerikwa credited community tip-offs for the success of the raid. "This is a clear demonstration that NACADA will not relent in the fight against illicit alcohol," he said. Kangara and changaa have been linked to deaths, blindness and organ failure across Kenya's informal settlements.



The Kenya Editors Guild yesterday condemned the arrest and alleged assault of Citizen TV journalist Francis Ode by police officers during fuel price protests in Nairobi's central business district, demanding a formal apology from Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja. Guild President Zubeidah Kananu said Ode was covering a public press conference and peaceful demonstrations on Kimathi Street when plainclothes officers detained him at Nairobi Central Police Station, ignoring his press accreditation. "This represents a dangerous, continuing trend of law enforcement targeting journalists to suppress public interest stories," Kananu said. The Crime Journalists Association of Kenya echoed the condemnation, calling for an independent investigation by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority. Both organisations cited constitutional protections under Articles 34 and 29(c) guaranteeing media freedom and protection from violence.



The Salaries and Remuneration Commission is proposing reforms that would tie public servants' pay rewards directly to measurable performance, moving away from routine budget absorption toward verifiable achievement of set targets. The Commission's Revised Framework for Recognising Productivity and Performance in the Public Service requires objective assessments and demonstrated results before any financial recognition is granted. It cautions that all resulting costs must remain fiscally sustainable. The proposals will be debated alongside the Draft National Productivity and Performance Bill, 2026, and the Draft National Productivity Management Policy, 2026, during public participation forums scheduled for today and October 23 across ten regional venues covering all 47 counties. The Commission is urging stakeholders and members of the public to submit evidence-based contributions on how performance should be measured and rewarded across government.



Nairobi has joined the World Cities Culture Forum, becoming the latest African capital to enter a global network of 47 cities committed to placing culture at the centre of urban development, alongside London, New York, Tokyo, Paris and São Paulo. Governor Sakaja Johnson said the membership reflected Nairobi's emergence as a hub of creativity and innovation. "Our cultural heritage remains our greatest anchor," Johnson said. "We are fully committed to building a human-centric city where every artist, creator and citizen finds space to thrive." County Executive Rosemary Kariuki, whose docket oversees culture, added that genuine urban development must be inclusive and community-driven. "Culture belongs to the people," she said. "Grassroots creativity and local traditions must directly shape Nairobi's identity."



Search and rescue teams, police officers and students of Kirinyaga University yesterday spent a second night at River Thiba Falls in Kutus, Kirinyaga County, searching for the body of a first-year student who drowned on Sunday while attempting to help a friend in distress. The student, who hails from Lodwar and enrolled at the university in September, is yet to be recovered. Lead diver Maulid Asman said strong currents, considerable depth and submerged tree roots have severely hampered the search. "The current is very strong and there are places where you can sink. We are also fearing death," Asman said. Residents called on authorities to install warning signs at the popular swimming site, noting the falls had claimed lives before.



Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga is among 264 Kenyans honoured at yesterday's Mashujaa Day celebrations in Uasin Gishu County, recognised posthumously in the statesmanship category for his contribution to multiparty democracy, constitutional reform and political inclusion. According to the 2026 National Heroes publication, Odinga played a central role in dismantling one-party dominance during the 1990s democracy struggle and championed the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 during his tenure as Prime Minister between 2008 and 2013. "He helped dismantle one-party dominance and expand political freedoms," the publication states. His recognition places him among a select group of Kenyans whose contributions to the nation's political and social development have been formally acknowledged at the country's highest national honour ceremony.

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Mashujaa Day celebration



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Mashujaa Day The day deserves a balanced assessment. It offered a valuable opportunity to celebrate national heroes, strengthen unity and showcase the North Rift's potential

Mashujaa Day 2026: Eldoret's moment of national pride, the test of inclusion and the promises Kenya must now fulfil



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

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Kenya marked Mashujaa Day yesterday at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret, bringing together the country's leadership, security agencies and thousands of citizens in a national celebration that gave the North Rift region a prominent place in the country's public life.

The occasion was, by any visible measure, well organised. The military precision was on display, the patriotic symbolism was present, and Eldoret carried its hosting duties with evident regional pride. For Uasin Gishu and the wider North Rift, the day meant more than a ceremonial gathering. It was an opportunity to demonstrate the region's contribution to Kenya's sporting excellence, agricultural strength, economic development and national identity. That opportunity was, in large part, taken.

Yet once the final speeches concluded and the last vehicles departed the stadium, a question settled over the occasion that no amount of bunting or fanfare could answer: beyond the colour and ceremony, how successfully did Mashujaa Day respond to the expectations of ordinary Kenyans, and how honestly did it embrace the principle that every citizen belongs?

The theme of security, sports and the economy was well chosen for the North Rift. Security underpins everything in a region where banditry and livestock theft have disrupted livelihoods and eroded confidence in public institutions. Sports, as Eldoret and Nandi know better than most parts of Kenya, represent a genuine pathway to talent development, national recognition and employment. Economic growth, when it reaches households rather than remaining a statistical abstraction, is the one promise citizens are least willing to accept on credit.

President William Ruto used his address to reinforce confidence in his administration's direction, outlining measures intended to ease the cost of living, expand employment opportunities for young people and deliver



Mashujaa Day 2026

infrastructure to underserved areas. Those commitments were received, as presidential announcements at national celebrations often are, with a mixture of hope and cautious scepticism. The distinction between an announcement and an achievement matters enormously. Tax relief must translate into tangible reductions in what families pay. Internship opportunities must be transparently advertised and adequately funded. Development timelines must be attached to responsible institutions with the resources and will to deliver them. A promise made at a national celebration carries particular weight precisely because it is made before the entire country. It should be tracked accordingly.

On security, the assessment must be similarly measured. Communities in parts of the North Rift have endured years of disruption that no single national event can undo. Any genuine improvement in the recovery of illegal firearms, in the restoration of safe access to farmland and in the return of stability to pastoralist communities deserves honest recognition. But the enduring measure of security is not the peaceful conduct of a celebration. It is whether a farmer can work his land without fear, whether a trader can travel the road to market without risk, whether a child can attend school without interruption. Mashujaa Day should renew that commitment rather than suggest the challenge has been resolved.

For the wider region, the hosting

of a national celebration brought visibility, commercial activity and the kind of investment attention that does not always find its way to the North Rift. Nandi could reaffirm its extraordinary contribution to Kenya's athletics legacy. Elgeyo-Marakwet could point to the champions it has produced and continues to produce. Yet regional pride must not be allowed to obscure legitimate disappointment. The relocation of the principal ceremony from Kamariny Stadium in Iten to Eldoret, amid incomplete construction at the Iten venue, raised fair questions about infrastructure delivery and the expectations of Elgeyo-Marakwet residents who had anticipated hosting. A continuing construction project may signal commitment, but the meaningful outcome will only arrive when a completed, functional and accessible stadium serves athletes and the surrounding community.

The question of inclusivity is where the day's success becomes most difficult to assess, and most important to address honestly. A national celebration is truly representative only when the people who contribute to the nation's progress can participate meaningfully in its preparation, execution and benefits. Inclusion does not begin on the morning of the event. It begins in the planning rooms, in the procurement decisions, in the accessibility audits and in the consultation processes that determine whether all citizens are considered or merely assumed to be

present.

For persons with disabilities, the test extends well beyond whether a handful of individuals appeared in the stadium or whether disability received a mention in official remarks. Meaningful inclusion asks harder questions. Were persons with disabilities and their representative organisations part of the planning process? Were entrances, pathways, seating areas, toilets and emergency evacuation arrangements designed with accessibility in mind? Was sign-language interpretation available throughout, and was information communicated in formats that different needs require? Was participation dignified, or was it symbolic — the kind of inclusion that can be photographed but not genuinely experienced?

Without independently verified evidence, it would be unfair to declare these standards either met or neglected. What can be stated plainly is that they are not optional courtesies. They are legal obligations and moral imperatives, and they apply to every national celebration, not only to those held in cities with established disability infrastructure. Physical attendance does not establish inclusion. The absence of visible barriers in a televised ceremony does not prove that every participant enjoyed equal access. A truly inclusive event anticipates different needs rather than expecting citizens to overcome avoidable obstacles on their own.

Inclusion has an economic dimen-

sion too. Local traders, small enterprises, young people and community organisations deserve a fair opportunity to benefit from the business generated by a national event of this scale. Where public procurement is involved, transparency and compliance with applicable law should guide the allocation of contracts. Residents should be able to identify the employment created locally, the businesses supported and the community benefits delivered. National celebrations must not become occasions on which public expenditure flows generously while economic opportunity remains concentrated among a privileged few.

For the North Rift beyond the stadium, the expectations run deeper and longer than one day of national attention. Rural roads must reach isolated communities. Water must be reliable. Healthcare must be affordable. Agricultural markets must function fairly. Young people need pathways, not only promises. Persons with disabilities need accessible public infrastructure and equitable employment, not just the right to watch a celebration from an allocated section of the stands.

As Mashujaa Day 2026 concluded, Kenya had reason to acknowledge a well-executed ceremony and the genuine regional pride it generated. What the country must resist is the temptation to confuse the successful completion of a ceremony with the fulfilment of the aspirations expressed within it. The heroes Kenya celebrates fought for freedom, dignity, justice and equal opportunity. Their legacy does not call for a magnificent stadium. It calls for a nation in which the farmer feels secure, the young person finds a fair opportunity, the vulnerable receive care and the person with a disability participates on equal terms — not as an afterthought, but as a matter of course.

The true measure of Mashujaa Day is not how magnificently Kenya marks it in a single afternoon, but how faithfully it honours that sacrifice across the remaining three hundred and sixty-four days. When inclusion becomes practice, promises become measurable results and dignity becomes the daily experience of every citizen, the spirit of Kenya's heroes will have found its fullest and most deserving expression.

Politics The stakes could hardly be higher. Kenya's opposition has been here before — energised, apparently united and speaking the language of inevitability

The opposition's 2027 gameplan: Gachagua, Sifuna and Kalonzo begin the long game

Three men, one ticket and a fractured coalition — Kenya's opposition enters its most consequential political season since 2022

BY David Kimani

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua hosted Linda Mwananchi movement leader Edwin Sifuna and allied opposition figures at his Wamunyor residence in Nyeri yesterday, in talks that narrowed the United Opposition's potential 2027 presidential flagbearer to three names: Gachagua, Sifuna and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka.

The Mashujaa Day meeting was the most substantive gathering of opposition principals since the broad anti-Ruto coalition began taking shape in the months following Gachagua's impeachment last year. Those briefed on the deliberations say the two camps reached broad agreement that a single presidential candidate would be named next year, and that the process of arriving at that name would determine whether the opposition enters the August 2027 election as a credible alternative or fragments under the weight of competing ambitions and wounded pride.

The stakes could hardly be higher. Kenya's opposition has been here before — energised, apparently united and speaking the language of inevitability — only to unravel in the final stretch when the personal calculations of individual leaders overwhelmed the collective interest. The question hanging over Wamunyor yesterday was whether this gathering represented something genuinely different, or whether it was the opening act of a familiar drama whose ending the country already knows.

The political arithmetic facing the opposition is formidable. President William Ruto enters the campaign cycle with the institutional advantages of incumbency, a functioning government machinery and the residual loyalty of the Mount Kenya political establishment that his administration has worked systematically to consolidate. He also benefits from a fractured opposition that has spent much of the past year arguing about structure, sequence and seniority rather than building the grassroots presence that wins elections in Kenya's 47 counties. Defeating him will re-



Linda Mananichi leaders at Rigathi Gachagua's Wamunyor residence

quire the kind of unified opposition that the country has rarely managed to sustain beyond the announcement stage.

Gachagua was direct about what he is attempting to build and, equally, about what he is attempting to shed. "Watu wengine wanatubandika majina — other people are labelling us — but we are not as complicated as people say," he told those gathered at his Nyeri home. "Let nobody tell you we are tribal. We are not. Because when we supported President William Ruto, he was a Kalenjin. He was not Kamau and he was not Njoroge." The statement was a calculated effort to reframe the DCP leader's public image, which critics have sought to define along ethnic lines — a framing Gachagua argues is both inaccurate and, more importantly, politically disqualifying in a national election that no candidate can win from a regional base alone.

His willingness to be seen publicly with Sifuna is itself a significant signal. Last month, speaking during a visit to the United States, Gachagua floated a proposition that would have been unthinkable a year ago. "If we do our arithmetic and find that Sifuna is the one who will take this person home early, so be it. And there is no problem. Even I, Riggy G, can deputise Sifuna. What is wrong with that? Even Sifuna can deputise me," he said. The statement was widely read as an acknowledgement that

Gachagua, despite commanding the loudest voice in the nascent coalition, understands that his own presidential prospects may ultimately depend on geography and polling data rather than personal preference or political seniority. It was a rare moment of public flexibility from a politician not previously known for it.

Sifuna brings to the table a different kind of political capital, and one that the opposition genuinely needs. As the leader of Linda Mwananchi and the architect of The Equitable Party — currently undergoing rebranding — he has cultivated a following anchored in urban centres, the youth vote and constituencies that feel economically left behind under the current administration. His political communication style, direct and confrontational where Kalonzo is measured and Gachagua is combative, has found particular resonance among younger voters whose participation in 2027 could prove decisive. His base does not overlap neatly with Gachagua's strongholds in the Mount Kenya region or Kalonzo's established presence in Ukambani, which is precisely what makes a tripartite arrangement theoretically attractive — and practically complicated.

Kalonzo's position adds a further, critical layer of complexity. The Wiper Patriotic Front leader recently unveiled The Ukombozi Alliance, a rebranding of the Azimio la Umoja

One Kenya coalition, and is expected to visit Gachagua at Wamunyor in the coming days for follow-up consultations. The DCP, however, has been deliberately non-committal about joining TUA, and the reasons are not difficult to read. Deputy DCP Party Leader Cleophas Malala set out his party's position with unusual candour last month. "When they have united as the Ukombozi coalition, they can come and sit with us. Let us understand each other. DCP will not enter Azimio. They should all hold together, then us and Sifuna hold together, and then we talk," he said. The subtext is clear: DCP intends to negotiate from a position of independence, not absorption.

That formulation reveals the structural tension at the heart of the opposition's challenge. DCP and Linda Mwananchi appear to be constructing a parallel track — one designed to eventually negotiate with, rather than subordinate itself to, the Ukombozi Alliance. Whether Kalonzo, a three-time presidential candidate with his own legitimate claim to the flagbearer position, accepts that arrangement without a fight is far from certain. His own political survival depends on retaining the Ukambani bloc as a coherent bargaining unit, and that bloc's loyalty is not unconditional. Should he feel marginalised by the Gachagua-Sifuna axis, the coalition calculus changes entirely.

Kenya's electoral history offers so-

bering context for all of this. The 2022 election demonstrated that coalition arithmetic, however compelling on paper, can unravel rapidly when individual leaders sense that the collective arrangement disadvantages their personal prospects. Raila Odinga's four attempts at the presidency — each accompanied by a broad coalition built on similar rhetoric of unity and change — produced three losses and one bitterly disputed result. The lesson the current opposition must absorb is that unity of convenience, assembled in the final months before an election, consistently underperforms unity of conviction built patiently over a sustained period with shared structures, shared resources and shared risk.

The August 2027 election also arrives against an economic backdrop that will shape the political environment as powerfully as any coalition arrangement. The cost of living, youth unemployment, taxation and the inconsistent delivery of public services are the issues that ordinary Kenyans talk about at matatus, market stalls and kitchen tables. The opposition's task is not only to agree on a candidate but to develop a coherent, credible policy alternative that gives voters a reason to choose something new, not merely to reject what exists. On that front, the work has barely begun.

Gachagua's Wamunyor meeting was a beginning, not a conclusion. The negotiations that actually matter — over who carries the flag, who stands as running mate, which parties dissolve into which structures, how campaign resources are shared and which regional leaders receive which assurances — lie ahead. Those conversations will be harder, less collegial and considerably less amenable to the carefully managed public messaging that yesterday's gathering produced.

Three men believe they can beat William Ruto. The country is watching to see which one of them blinks first — and whether the one left standing will be strong enough to finish the job.

TAX At the centre of the package is the proposed PAYE exemption for employees earning KSh32,333 or less monthly

Ruto unveils tax relief for low-income earners as Kenyans seek respite from rising costs

The President's Mashujaa Day package promises lower deductions, cheaper phones and 50,000 internship places — but Parliament must first approve every word of it

BY Collins Kibet

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President William Ruto yesterday announced a package of proposed tax and economic measures at the Mashujaa Day celebrations in Eldoret, including exempting workers earning KSh32,333 or less per month from Pay As You Earn income tax, scrapping import duty on mobile phones and expanding the national internship programme by 50,000

places from January 2027.

The announcements, made at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Uasin Gishu County before thousands of Kenyans, were framed as a direct response to mounting public pressure over the cost of living, unemployment and the affordability of basic necessities. Ruto said the measures were intended to put more money into the pockets of hardworking Kenyans and strengthen household purchasing power.

The proposals must, however, go to Parliament for approval before any changes take legal effect — a distinction the government will need to communicate clearly to avoid confusion between intention and implementation.

At the centre of the package is the proposed PAYE exemption for employees earning KSh32,333 or less monthly. PAYE is the system through which employers deduct income tax from salaries and



President William Ruto

remit it to the Kenya Revenue Authority. For workers on modest wages, even small deductions bite hard against the cost of rent, food, school fees and transport. If approved, the exemption could leave qualifying employees with a meaningful, if modest, improvement in take-home pay. The actual benefit will depend on the final legal provisions, the eligible population and the date the change takes effect. The government has yet to explain how the resulting revenue shortfall will be accommodated within a budget already under pressure.

The second measure proposes exempting land transactions valued at KSh1M or below from stamp duty, with progressive rates applied to higher-value deals. Stamp duty forms part of the upfront cost of transferring property and can be a significant barrier for lower-income buyers seeking to secure land for homes or small investments. The relief is meaningful, though stamp duty is only one component of property acquisition costs. Legal fees, registration charges and survey expenses will continue to apply, limiting the full affordability gain for the most financially stretched buyers.

The third proposal — removing the 25 per cent import duty on mobile phones — reflects a broader government argument that smartphones are no longer consumer luxuries but essential tools for education, digital banking, business and online employment. Implementing the change will require navigating regional customs frameworks. Wheth-

er consumers ultimately see lower retail prices will depend on how importers and retailers respond, alongside exchange rate movements, distribution costs and market competition. The direction of travel, however, is the right one.

The fourth measure targets youth unemployment through an expanded National Internship Programme. An additional 50,000 places are planned from January 2027, with participants receiving monthly stipends and structured workplace experience. Ruto said recruitment would follow a digital, merit-based process, with incentives pursued to draw private employers into the scheme. The proposal addresses a well-documented trap facing graduates: employers demand experience, yet first opportunities remain elusive. For university, TVET and Kenya Medical Training College graduates, additional internship places could provide a genuine bridge between education and employment — provided the placements are meaningful, the funding is secured and transparency governs the selection process.

The announcements arrive at a politically charged moment. With the 2027 General Election moving steadily into view, the government is acutely aware that economic frustration has been building across households of every income level. Tax relief, cheaper technology and youth employment programmes are precisely the kind of visible, tangible commitments that resonate with voters — and precisely the kind that invite scrutiny when implementa-

tion lags behind rhetoric.

Parliament's role will be decisive. Legislators will need to examine the fiscal implications of each proposal, assess the revenue impact and satisfy themselves that the intended benefits justify the costs. Competing budgetary demands — education, healthcare, infrastructure and social protection — do not disappear because a Mashujaa Day speech has been made.

The distribution of benefits also warrants honest assessment. Workers outside the formal PAYE system — casual labourers, informal traders, subsistence farmers and the unemployed — will not benefit directly from a salary-tax exemption. Cheaper phones and reduced property transaction costs may reach some of these groups indirectly, but the economic challenges facing Kenya's informal majority require broader and more deliberate intervention.

For the millions of Kenyans who welcomed yesterday's announcements with cautious hope, the questions are familiar and reasonable. Will the legislation be drafted promptly? Will the administrative procedures be transparent? Will the benefits reach those who need them most, or dissipate somewhere between the announcement and the implementation?

Ruto has made the promise. Parliament must now test it, and Kenya will watch closely to see whether the morning after Mashujaa Day looks any different from the one before it.

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The Heroes Kenya celebrates but rarely sees

As Kenya celebrates Mashujaa Day, true recognition of heroism goes beyond national honours to include the dignity, protection and support afforded to those whose everyday sacrifices keep the country running.

BY Oduor Rosequillet Nabwire

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At 4:30 a.m., while Eldoret is still quiet, Emmanuel Kipchirchir is already sweeping its streets. Armed with a broom and a shovel, the 29-year-old sanitation worker clears rubbish and unblocks drains clogged with waste.

For five years, Kipchirchir has worked in Eldoret's central business district. When dignitaries visit, sanitation workers put in extra hours to tidy the streets, yet their efforts often go unnoticed.

"We work through freezing nights so the streets are clean, yet we remain invisible and unrecognised for the essential service we give Kenya," he says.

The work exposes Kipchirchir to physical danger. As he handles waste and clears drains, he encounters broken glass and discarded needles that can cause serious injuries.

"Unblocking storm drains with my bare hands means risking serious injury just to keep the town from flooding before the rain starts," he says.

Despite these risks, Kipchirchir earns KSh450 a day. As a single father of three who also supports his elderly mother in Turbo, he struggles to provide for his family, particularly when his wages are delayed for weeks.

In Nairobi's Muthurwa Market, Wanjiku Muthoni, 48, carries a different responsibility. For 14 years, she has sold vegetables and dry cereals from a wooden crate to support her four children and two orphaned nieces.

Her day begins at 3:30 a.m. in Pipeline, Embakasi. By 4:15 a.m., she is travelling to Wakulima Market, popu-

larly known as Marikiti, to buy produce before carrying it across the railway tracks to Muthurwa. She aims to open her stall by 6 a.m.

Her daily sales range from KSh2,500 to KSh4,000, but after paying for stock, transport and other expenses, she often retains less than KSh800.

"People see me selling KSh20 kale at dusk, but they don't see the mud in Marikiti or the heavy sacks I carry. This single crate pays school fees and feeds two households," she says.

Wanjiku's stall also serves as an informal safety net for struggling mothers.

"A mother with nothing to feed her children doesn't go to a bank; she comes to my stall because in this neighbourhood, we look out for one another," she says.

When customers cannot afford food, she sometimes allows them to take vegetables on credit, recording their debts in a small book. If they remain unpaid at the end of the month, she tears out the page and absorbs the loss.

The unpaid debts have strained her finances.

"Unpaid debts left me with so little cash flow that I defaulted on my chama savings for four months," she says.

Missing the contributions cost her access to a business expansion loan, delaying her plans to grow the enterprise. The financial pressures affecting her customers have also held back her own progress.

"We don't ask for national medals or speeches on television," she says. "We just want street lights that work, security at night, and lower market tariffs so that our sweat actually counts for something at the end of the day."

For Wanjiku, the difference between recognition and

meaningful support is found in the conditions under which she earns a living. In public hospitals, similar pressures confront workers whose responsibilities can mean the difference between life and death.

In Nyando, Kisumu County, Oyoo, a pseudonym used to protect the source's identity, works as a community health worker in the emergency unit at Ahero Sub-County Hospital. With nine years of healthcare experience, Oyoo balances 12-hour shifts with raising two children.

During a severe cholera spike in 2025, Oyoo recalls staying at the facility for 32 hours because of staff shortages and helping establish hydration lines for more than 40 paediatric patients.

"When a child comes in dehydrated from cholera and you don't have enough IV fluids in the ward, you don't sleep that night. You improvise, you stay hours past your shift, and you pray. That is not extraordinary to us. That is just Tuesday," Oyoo says.

Shortages of protective equipment and rehydration supplies, coupled with generator failures, further complicate emergency care.

"Patients sometimes think we don't care because the queues are long or the medicine runs out. They don't see that we are fighting the same broken system they are. We don't need praise; we need working equipment and enough hands on deck," Oyoo says.

Oyoo's account highlights the strain on healthcare workers who must respond to emergencies with limited resources. Personal commitment cannot substitute for adequate staffing, essential supplies and reliable equipment.

For border officer Mwai, whose name is also a pseud-

onym, the cost of service is often measured in time spent away from family. His work in border control and immigration has meant missing birthdays, school sports days and anniversaries while stationed hundreds of kilometres from his wife and children.

"When you look at a traveller holding their child's hand while passing through your counter, you swallow a lump in your throat because you haven't held your own kids in months. That silent homesickness is a uniform many officers wear every single day," he says.

His duties include verifying travel documents and monitoring cross-border movement, responsibilities that often go unnoticed when operations proceed smoothly.

"A border officer is the country's first filter and its quietest shield. If we do our job right, nothing happens, and that's the point," he says.

Mwai says reliable digital verification systems, adequate housing at remote stations, fair risk allowances and mental health support would improve officers' working conditions.

Heroism is not confined to the workplace. It can also be expressed by citizens who risk their safety to demand accountability and insist that their rights be respected.

During the 2024 Finance Bill protests, young Kenyans took to the streets to oppose tax proposals they considered burdensome and call for greater government accountability. For some, the demonstrations were an expression

of economic frustration; for others, they became an experience marked by violence, injury and loss.

Frank Okoth, who was shot six times during the protests, described what had brought him to the streets in an interview with Citizen TV on July 1, 2024.

"Before maandamano I had gone to look for work but was unsuccessful, so I went for the protests," he said.

His account illustrates the economic frustrations that shaped some young people's participation in the demonstrations. Yet the consequences extended far beyond the demands voiced in the streets.

On June 25, 2024, 25-year-old Erickson Kyalo Mutisya was shot dead near Parliament. His death left his mother, Caroline Mutisya, grieving and seeking justice. Speaking at a commemoration two years later, she said, "I have come here today to remember my son, who was killed just 50 metres from Parliament, and to demand justice for his death."

Her words bring the cost of the protests into sharp focus. Behind the public debate over taxation and accountability are families left to mourn loved ones and survivors still seeking answers.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights documented 60 deaths and 601 injuries linked to the demonstrations between June 18 and July 15, 2024. These figures represent lives lost, people injured and families whose futures were changed by the violence.

Recognising those who died means remembering them as individuals, supporting the families they left behind and pursuing accountability for violations. It also means protecting the constitutional right to peaceful assembly under Article 37 of Kenya's Constitution. The courage to demand change should never mean that citizens must pay for exercising their rights with their lives.

After Mashujaa Day, Kipchirchir will return to sweeping Eldoret's streets, Wanjiku will rise before dawn to buy stock, Oyoo will return to caring for patients, and Mwai will continue serving far from family. For the young Kenyans who took to the streets demanding accountability, the pursuit of justice continues.

Together, their experiences show that heroism extends beyond the names on national honours lists. It lives in the workers who keep towns clean, the traders who sustain families, the healthcare workers who care for the sick, the officers who serve away from home and the citizens who stand up to demand accountability.

The true measure of Mashujaa Day is not simply whom the nation honours, but what it does for those whose sacrifices sustain it. Recognition must translate into dignified working conditions, fair livelihoods, protection of constitutional rights and justice for those whose rights have been violated. A country that honours its heroes must also stand by them.



Chaos Police lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse crowds during running battles that lasted several hours outside Kipchoge Keino Stadium

Violence mars Meru Mashujaa Day as Mwangaza motorcade attacked

Running battles outside Githongo stadium cast a shadow over a ceremony meant to honour Kenya's freedom fighters

BY Brian Gitonga
@themkenyatimes

Mashujaa Day celebrations in Meru County descended into chaos yesterday when suspected armed assailants clashed with police in Githongo after former Governor Kawira Mwangaza attempted to attend the national event presided over by her successor, Governor Mutuma M'Ethingia, turning a ceremony meant to honour Kenya's heroes into a scene of political confrontation and street violence.

Police lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse crowds during running battles that lasted several hours outside Kipchoge Keino Stadium. Mwangaza's motorcade was allegedly attacked, several vehicle windows shattered, and her entourage was ultimately forced to retreat to Nkubu Police Station, where she filed a formal complaint and addressed journalists in a visibly shaken state. The violence unfolded as dignitaries inside the venue delivered speeches about sacrifice, unity and the values Kenya's independence heroes died defending — a contrast so sharp it bordered on the grotesque.

Inside the stadium, M'Ethingia addressed residents alongside Deputy Governor Lindah Kiome and other county officials, drawing on the occasion's patriotic themes with evident composure. "Mashujaa Day reminds us that freedom was not handed to Kenyans on a silver platter," he said. "It was earned through courage, sacrifice, determination and an unshakable belief that our people deserved freedom and

dignity to determine their own destiny." He acknowledged the freedom fighters who endured imprisonment, displacement and death under colonial rule, noting that their sacrifices secured liberties enjoyed by generations who never shared their suffering. "They made sacrifices so that we, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, can stand here today as free citizens of a sovereign nation. That is the greatness of true heroism: sacrificing for a future that you may never personally enjoy," M'Ethingia said.

The governor explained that Githongo had been deliberately selected as the venue to honour freedom fighters from Central Imenti, among them Bai Mungi, who he identified as a significant figure in the independence struggle. The choice was intended to recognise the region's contribution to Kenya's liberation — a gesture of historical acknowledgement that the violence outside threatened to overshadow entirely.

M'Ethingia used the platform to announce development commitments and to draw a sharp contrast between his administration's approach and that of his predecessor. He cited KSh1.2B in national government support directed towards expanding Meru Teaching and Referral Hospital, a project intended to raise the facility to Level Six status by meeting the required bed capacity. He also pointed to the KSh1.2B Gakoromone Market project as further evidence of productive cooperation between the county and national governments, arguing that such investments represented the kind of tangible

development Meru residents deserved.

His remarks about Mwangaza were direct and, by the standards of a national holiday address, unusually personal. He accused her of encouraging dependency through the distribution of gumboots and blankets rather than prioritising infrastructure, health facilities and economic projects. "Do Githongo residents need gumboots and blankets, or do they deserve better projects like hospitals?" he asked the crowd. "As the Ameru community, we have refused to continue worshipping the poverty that Kawira Mwangaza is trying to bring to the people by brainwashing them into believing that giving them gumboots and blankets is like giving them the whole world." He closed his political remarks by declaring Meru a "two-term county," pledging the region's support for President William Ruto's re-election in the 2027 General Election.

Outside, the picture was considerably darker. Mwangaza told reporters at Nkubu Police Station that she had formally notified County Commissioner George Omollo of her intention to attend the Githongo celebrations three days in advance and had received no objection. She alleged that the situation on the ground suggested her arrival had been anticipated and prepared for — not with a welcome, but with an organised blockade.

"As we were on our way, we discovered that more than ten lorries had ferried goons into the area overnight," she said. "We have the registration numbers of all those vehicles, and we also know the drivers." She claimed the



Meru county Governor Mutuma M'Ethingia reads his speech at Githongo | Photo: Brian Gitonga

groups had been positioned at multiple points across Githongo to prevent her entourage from reaching the venue and alleged that assailants were armed with machetes and clubs. "The goons were scattered all over Githongo, armed with machetes and rungs, ready to fight. As we approached, we realised our way had been blocked. Shortly afterwards, they began attacking us with stones and bullets." She added that more than 3,000 people advanced on her motorcade before her team made the decision to

withdraw.

M'Ethingia's office had not responded to the allegations by the time of going to press. Police had not issued a formal statement on either the clashes or the alleged attack on the former governor's convoy.

The accusations are serious and demand investigation that is both prompt and independent. A national holiday honouring men and women who gave their lives so that Kenyans could live freely and safely is precisely the wrong occasion for political intimidation, organised violence

and the silencing of voices through force. Whatever the political disputes between Meru's current and former governors, they belong in courts, in council chambers and at the ballot box — not on the streets of Githongo, where freedom fighters once walked. That Kenya's heroes were being celebrated inside one building while alleged political violence raged outside it is not merely ironic. It is a failure that Meru's leadership, and Kenya's institutions, must answer for honestly.



Former Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza. | Photo: Kawira Mwangaza

Kenya-Ethiopia trade Abiy pointed to the energy sector as the most tangible expression of that synergy already in operation

Abiy calls for deeper Kenya-Ethiopia trade partnership at Eldoret ceremony

The Ethiopian prime minister used Kenya's national holiday to make the case for economic integration, citing clean energy, mobile money and cross-border commerce as the pillars of a shared future

BY James Mwangi
@themkenyatimes

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called yesterday for a stronger economic partnership between Ethiopia and Kenya, telling thousands gathered at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret that trade and business cooperation offered both nations the clearest path to shared prosperity.

Abiy's appearance at Kenya's 63rd Mashujaa Day celebrations as a guest of President William Ruto was itself

a diplomatic statement — a visible affirmation of the bilateral relationship at a moment when East Africa's regional architecture is being tested by conflict, economic pressure and shifting political alignments. That the leader of Africa's second most populous nation chose to frame his address around commerce rather than security or politics was deliberate, and the message landed with the weight of a leader who understands that durable relationships between neighbours are built in markets, not only in meeting

rooms.

He reached for an Ethiopian concept to make his central argument. "We rise as rivals. We build as partners," Abiy told the stadium. "In Ethiopia, we call this spirit Madama. It means synergy." The word was new to most in the audience, but its meaning was unmistakable — a philosophy of mutual reinforcement over zero-sum competition, applied to two countries that share a long border, a shared economic corridor and a growing interdependence that both governments have rea-



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is welcomed by President William Ruto

son to deepen.

Abiy pointed to the energy sector as the most tangible expression of that synergy already in operation. Since 2022, he said, clean power has crossed the border from Ethiopia into Kenya, bringing electricity to homes and fuel to industry along a transmission corridor that has quietly become one of the most consequential infrastructure links in the region. The road from Mombasa to Hawassa — Kenya's port gateway feeding directly into Ethiopia's industrial heartland — was cited as further evidence that the two economies are already more integrated than their political conversations sometimes suggest. "Our partnership grows through our businesses," he said.

On digital financial services, Abiy was specific in a way that carried considerable commercial and symbolic weight. Safaricom's expansion into Ethiopia, one of the most watched private sector developments in East Africa in recent years, was presented not merely as a corporate success story but as a bridge between two peoples. "Today, Safaricom connects millions of Ethiopians and M-Pesa helps people send money and make payments," he said. The observation reflects a broader truth about how economic integration actually happens in practice — not primarily through formal trade agreements, though those matter, but through the daily financial transactions of ordinary people who can now move money across a border as easily as they send a text message.

Safaricom's Ethiopian operation, which launched in 2022

after the company won one of only two available commercial telecommunications licences, has navigated a complex entry into a market long dominated by the state-owned Ethio Telecom. Its gradual expansion and the rollout of M-Pesa services in Ethiopia represent exactly the kind of private sector-led integration that Abiy was invoking — commercial relationships that create stakeholders in the bilateral partnership on both sides of the border and make the relationship more resilient to political disruption.

The prime minister's address moved beyond infrastructure and technology to make a more human appeal. He called on the two governments to reduce barriers for farmers and producers trading across the shared border, and urged both countries to make it easier for their citizens to travel, experience each other's cultures and learn together. "Our farmers and producers must be able to trade more easily across our borders," he said. "Let more of our people visit each other's countries, discover our cultures, and learn together." It was a reminder that economic integration, at its most durable, is built on personal connections and mutual familiarity rather than purely on trade statistics and bilateral agreements.

The bilateral relationship between Kenya and Ethiopia has grown considerably in depth and complexity over the past decade. The two countries cooperate on security matters along their shared border regions, coordinate on infrastructure projects linking the East African coast to landlocked Ethiopia, and have

increasingly aligned their positions within regional bodies including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Kenya's port infrastructure at Mombasa remains Ethiopia's primary gateway to global maritime trade following Addis Ababa's loss of direct Red Sea access after Eritrea's independence, a geographical reality that gives the bilateral partnership a structural importance that outlasts any individual administration.

Abiy closed his remarks with a direct pledge to Ruto and to the Kenyan public. He affirmed that Ethiopia would continue to stand with Kenya, and he urged Ruto to sustain and deepen the partnership that had already produced measurable results. The message was warm, but it carried the practical undertone of a leader who wants the relationship institutionalised rather than dependent on the personal rapport between two heads of state.

That institutionalisation is precisely what Kenya and Ethiopia need to pursue. Presidential friendships are valuable but transient. Trade corridors, energy grids, digital payment networks and simplified border procedures outlast any individual leader and create constituencies for continued cooperation that are far more powerful than diplomatic goodwill alone.

Abiy came to Eldoret to celebrate Kenya's heroes. He left having made the case that the best tribute to those who built these nations is ensuring that the generations who follow them do not have to choose between being neighbours and being partners.



Patience and kindness



The Patience person will excel in life,
The envious person loses their joy in strife.

One who loves life deeply and true
Doesn't know how to stay angry with you.

They carry no jealousy hidden inside,

Their heart stays open, gentle with pride.

Being polite is truly their art,
Kind words flow straight from the heart

They win not by noise, anger, or fight,
But by calm minds and actions right.

In patience they grow, in kindness they stay,
Such souls light the world every day.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
PUMS Konganancherry
Chengalpattu district
Tamil Nadu

If you really want to do something, you will find a way!



Otherwise, you will ask excuse!

Where there is a will, there is a way
Our will power makes us to reach the place we
want to reach!
If we want to achieve anything

If we concentrate on it truly

We will find the way!
Even if we don't have time
We will steal the time & do it!

If we don't want to do it
If we don't give much importance
If it is not in our priority list
We will find an excuse

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Mission-driven mindset



Mindset makes a man march towards his goal,
Mentality moulds the mettle to fight;
Thoughts either shatter or strengthen the soul,
While courage transforms every wrong to right.

The seeds of self-doubt may darken the day,
And fear may conspire to smother your flame;

Yet faith lights a path when hope seems astray,
And willpower rises to conquer your shame.

Do not let your thoughts weave in prisons of pain,
Nor let your own fears extinguish your fire;
Turn every defeat into strength you can gain,
And climb beyond doubt to heights you aspire.

Your mind can destroy you or help you rise;
Master your thoughts, and conquer the skies.

- Dr.V.Anuradha
Assistant Professor
PG & Research Department of English,
Vellalar College for Women,
Erode-12

Nothing destroys you faster than your own mind.



No enemy stands outside your gate,
No stranger decides your fate.
The battle lives within your head,
In words unspoken, thoughts unsaid.

A single doubt can break the wall,

That once stood strong and tall.
A whisper of fear can make you fall,
Faster than any enemy's call.

Your mind can plant both thorn and flower,
It holds your weakness, holds your power.
It can be a prison, dark and blind,
Or a gentle, healing, quiet mind.

So guard the thoughts you let inside,
Let peace, not fear, in you abide.
Master your mind, and you will see,
You are the lock and you are the key.

- K.A. Santhoshi
9th std
GMGHSS Komarapalayam
Namakkal district

The beauty of colours



The beauty of colours how divine,
And shall I now, tell you mine?
Blue is the sky so calm and true,
Green are the fields, with morning dew.
Yellow is sunshine, cheerful and bright,
Red brings courage, burning with light.

When the day brightens our hearts grow light,
But when darkness falls, we tremble with fright.
Each colour has its charm, each has its glow,
That's why every colour, makes life glow.

And then the rainbow arches into the sky,
Seven colours joined, His promise, still stands
high.

So, no single colour, can be the best,
For all together they make life blessed.

Pearl Ambrose
OUR LADY'S MATRICULATION SCHOOL...
RANIPET

Family



A special one to move on
A simple one to hold on
A great one to learn
A humble one to mingle

Pack of many with deep emotions
Sharing all without denying
Joining ourselves to make it flexible
Sprinkling our good deeds

Everyone has their roles to lead
Each one is a unique one
But mixture is a common one
Quarrels are often there
But love is our divine one
Which ties everyone ever

Y.J.AMBIKA
GHS KAKKADASAM

Ebola Director General for Health Patrick Amoth said the patient was immediately isolated and placed on treatment following the positive test

Kenya confirms ninth Ebola case as outbreak remains contained within single cluster

With 99 per cent of contacts traced and all eight patients stable, health authorities say the response is holding — but the US travel advisory signals growing international concern

BY Grace Wanja
@themkenyaintimes

Kenya confirmed a ninth Ebola case yesterday, a 24-year-old man and close relative of the outbreak’s first victim, who tested positive on October 19 after developing symptoms while already in quarantine.

Director General for Health Patrick Amoth said the patient was immediately isolated and placed on treatment following the positive test. All eight surviving patients are responding well and remain stable under close observation. The first

victim, who arrived in Kenya from the Democratic Republic of Congo via Uganda approximately two weeks ago, has died. Three of the nine confirmed cases are healthcare workers; the remainder are relatives of the index case. Amoth confirmed that all nine cases belong to a single transmission cluster and that there is currently no evidence of spread beyond that group.

Contact tracing has reached 134 of the 135 people identified as contacts — a coverage rate of 99.3 per cent — with all traced individuals placed in quarantine. Kenya has received 500 doses of medicines to support treatment

of confirmed patients, and a dedicated laboratory has been established at the Kenyatta National Hospital Infectious Disease Unit to process Ebola samples without disrupting routine services for other patients. Medical supplies including protective gowns, gloves, face shields, boots, diagnostic kits and thermometers have been distributed to 12 very high-risk and 16 high-risk counties nationwide.

The response, by the Ministry of Health’s own account, is functioning as designed. Transmission within quarantine facilities has not occurred, and healthcare workers treating patients are operating un-

der full protective protocols. No restrictions have been imposed on travel, trade or public gatherings, and authorities have been deliberate in communicating that message to avoid the economic disruption that accompanies poorly managed public health emergencies.

The international dimension is more complicated. The United States State Department raised its travel advisory for Kenya to Level 3, urging American citizens to reconsider travel to the country citing the Ebola outbreak among several concerns. The advisory is a reputational and economic pressure point that the Kenyan government will need to manage carefully. Tourism, trade and investor confidence do not wait for outbreaks to be formally declared over before reacting to elevated risk warn-



Director General for Health Dr Patrick Amoth

ings from major economies. The Ministry has appealed to communities to receive returning contacts without stigma. Those who entered quarantine on October 6 and remain symptom-free are due to complete their 21-day monitoring period and begin returning home from October 25. Amoth was unambiguous: anyone who completes the full 21-day period without developing symptoms poses no risk of infection. Public cooperation with that message is as important to containing the outbreak as any clinical intervention.

Anyone experiencing fever, unusual fatigue, muscle or joint pain, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained bleeding is urged to seek medical attention immediately or call the toll-free line 719.

Kenya’s response has been swift and largely effective. Sustaining it — and persuading the world that it is working — is now the challenge.

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Oil The announcement, made during the Mashujaa Day celebrations in Eldoret, confirmed that work in the basin is progressing rapidly

Kenya's oil moment: Promise, responsibility and the long road from Turkana to market

The December export target marks a milestone decades in the making — but the harder work of managing the windfall wisely has only just begun

BY James Kilonzo
Bwire

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto announced yesterday that Kenya is targeting its first crude oil exports from the Lake Turkana Basin in December, marking what could become the most significant energy development in the country's history since oil was discovered in the South Lokichar Basin in Turkana County in 2012.

The announcement, made during the Mashujaa Day celebrations in Eldoret, confirmed that work in the basin is progressing rapidly. The arrival of drilling equipment at the Port of Mombasa for transportation to South Lokichar signals that years of exploration, financing negotiations and infrastructure planning may finally be converging into commercial reality. Kenya has waited fourteen years for this moment. The question now is not whether the oil will flow, but whether the country has built the institutions, frameworks and political discipline to ensure that it flows to the benefit of all Kenyans rather than a privileged few.

That question is not a cynical one. It is the central lesson of African oil history, from Nigeria to South Sudan, from Angola to Chad. Countries that discovered oil and celebrated the discovery without building the governance infrastructure to manage the revenue have, in too many cases, ended up poorer, more unequal and more unstable than they were before the first barrel was extracted. Kenya must study that history with honesty and govern this moment accordingly.

Transparency is the first and most urgent obligation. Kenyans are entitled to clear, accessible information about the terms of production agreements, the ownership structure of the project, the taxes



President William Ruto during Mashujaa Day celebration | Photo: Courtesy

and royalties due to the state, and the institutions responsible for oversight. They should know precisely how revenue will be divided between the national government, county governments and the communities of Turkana. Without that information, citizens cannot participate meaningfully in decisions about their own national resources — and without participation, accountability becomes impossible.

Transparency carries particular weight in Turkana County, a region that has experienced decades of marginalisation and uneven development despite hosting some of the country's most significant natural resources. The people of Turkana are not bystanders in this story. They are its primary stakeholders. They must be informed, genuinely consulted and given real, structured opportunities to benefit from employment, skills training, local procurement and community development. Their land, water sources,

culture and livelihoods must be respected at every stage of the production process. A project that extracts wealth from Turkana while leaving its communities materially unchanged would represent a profound failure of national purpose.

Environmental protection is the second non-negotiable responsibility. The Lake Turkana Basin is an ecologically sensitive region of global significance. Oil production and transportation carry real risks to land, water, air quality and wildlife, and those risks must be managed through genuinely independent monitoring, comprehensive environmental impact assessments and reliable community reporting mechanisms. Where damage occurs, affected communities must receive timely, fair compensation and affected environments must be properly restored. Environmental standards are not an obstacle to development. They are the condition under which responsible development is

possible. Kenya cannot afford to trade long-term ecological damage for short-term export revenue.

Infrastructure readiness is the third dimension of this challenge. Oil extracted from South Lokichar must be transported safely, stored securely and delivered to international buyers through a logistics chain that is prepared for the demands of commercial export. Roads, storage facilities, transport systems, port handling capacity and export arrangements must all be functional and verified before the first shipment departs. The government should provide the public with a clear, specific account of what preparations have been completed, what remains outstanding and which institutions are responsible for each stage. If December is a realistic target, Kenyans deserve to know why. If delays occur, they deserve the truth promptly.

Financial discipline underpins everything else. Oil contracts must be competitive,

transparent and properly reviewed. Revenue collection must be efficient. Public institutions must resist agreements that expose taxpayers to hidden risk, and Kenya must prepare its fiscal planning for the volatility that characterises international oil markets. Prices rise and fall on forces entirely beyond Nairobi's control, and a country that builds its budget on optimistic oil revenue projections can find itself in serious difficulty when markets turn.

More fundamentally, oil revenue must complement Kenya's broader development strategy rather than substitute for it. Agriculture, manufacturing, education, healthcare, infrastructure and tax administration remain the foundations of a resilient economy. Oil can strengthen those foundations considerably. It cannot replace them. Kenya's economic future depends on the depth and diversification of its productive base, not on the price of crude oil on any given morning.

Ruto's announcement that private investors have acquired a 25 per cent stake in Kenya Pipeline Company from public entities adds a further dimension to this national conversation. The President described the transaction as a demonstration of investor confidence and a mechanism for mobilising private capital for strategic infrastructure. That framing may well be accurate. But Kenya Pipeline Company is a strategic national asset that moves petroleum products across the country and underpins regional fuel supply. Any change in its ownership structure carries implications for consumers, transporters, government revenue and energy security. Citizens are entitled to know who the buyers are, how the shares were valued, what safeguards protect the public interest and how the transaction affects the company's mandate. In-

vestor confidence and public confidence are not competing goals. Both are necessary, and both depend on the same thing: openness.

The oil export target and the pipeline transaction are connected by a single theme — Kenya's management of its strategic energy assets at a moment of genuine economic opportunity. That management will require clear rules, honest public communication, active parliamentary oversight, engaged civil society scrutiny and a sustained commitment to the welfare of the communities most directly affected.

Turkana County should be fully and continuously involved in planning, monitoring and benefit-sharing. The national government, county leadership, regulators, investors and community representatives should operate within a transparent coordination framework that prevents conflict, addresses concerns early and ensures that local voices are heard before decisions are made rather than after consequences are felt. Education and skills development must be treated as integral components of the project, with deliberate pathways for young people from Turkana and other marginalised regions into technical, environmental, logistical and administrative roles that the industry genuinely needs.

Kenya has waited a long time for this. That patience now demands its dividend — not in the form of a ceremonial first shipment, but in the form of stronger institutions, protected environments, fairer opportunities and measurably improved lives for the citizens of Turkana and the country beyond.

The first barrel is the easy part. Everything that follows is the test.

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KCSE One of the most significant developments is the use of social media to circulate examination-related content

Beyond mobile phones: The new frontiers of KCSE examination malpractice

As Kenya administers the KCSE, examination authorities face threats that no amount of phone confiscation alone can contain

BY Ashford Kimani

@themkenyatimes

Examination malpractice in Kenya is evolving, and the methods used to compromise national assessments may be changing faster than the measures designed to prevent them. For years, the fight against cheating has centred on familiar threats — smuggling unauthorised materials into examination rooms, copying from fellow candidates, impersonation and collusion between candidates and officials. Those threats have not disappeared. But technological advancement, the spread of social media and increasingly sophisticated information-sharing platforms have introduced new vulnerabilities that demand far greater vigilance.

One of the most significant developments is the use of social media to circulate examination-related content. WhatsApp, Telegram and similar platforms have transformed how people share documents and exchange information. While useful for academic revision, they can equally be exploited to distribute purported examination papers, marking schemes and answers. Some such materials are fabricated outright; others may contain confidential content obtained through unauthorised means. Either way, the circulation of alleged leaks creates anxiety among candidates, encourages dishonest shortcuts and exposes families to financial exploitation by fraudsters. The challenge for the Kenya National Examinations Council is to distinguish genuine security breaches from manufactured claims while ensuring credible allegations receive prompt investigation.

Artificial intelligence presents another emerging concern. AI tools can generate explanations, solve mathematical problems, compose essays and answer complex questions within seconds. Their legitimate use in learning can benefit students considerably. The concern arises when such technologies are used to obtain unauthorised assistance during an examination or to facilitate the spread of confidential content. The question is not whether to condemn AI itself, but how to establish clear boundaries between lawful learning and dishonest assistance. Examination



tion security policies must evolve alongside technology without treating every candidate who uses digital learning tools as a potential offender.

A further concern is the handling and distribution of examination materials. The integrity of a national examination depends on the confidentiality of its papers from preparation to the moment of official administration. Anyone entrusted with preparing, storing, transporting or distributing examination materials carries a responsibility to protect them. A paper that reaches unauthorised persons before the scheduled examination compromises fairness regardless of what controls exist inside the examination room itself. Investigations into suspected leaks must therefore examine the entire chain of custody, not merely candidates and school-based personnel.

The role of examination officials deserves particular scrutiny. Malpractice is too often discussed as though candidates are its principal architects. Yet candidates do not operate in isolation. Where deliberate collusion is involved, the participation of an adult entrusted with protecting examination integrity makes the offence considerably more serious. Teachers, administrators, supervisors and invigilators possess access to examination processes unavailable to ordinary candidates. Any deliberate misuse of that access threatens the credibility of the entire assessment system. The recruitment, deployment, supervision

and accountability of examination officials must therefore receive the same attention as enforcement of rules against candidates.

School principals serving as KCSE centre managers occupy a particularly strategic position. They are responsible for ensuring that regulations are followed within their centres and that all personnel understand their duties. A centre manager who tolerates unauthorised access, ignores suspicious conduct or fails to enforce established procedures weakens the entire security apparatus. Conversely, a principal who insists on accountability and refuses to entertain improper requests creates conditions in which cheating becomes markedly harder. Centre managers must understand that their responsibility extends well beyond ensuring examinations begin and end on schedule. They are custodians of public confidence in the qualifications awarded to their candidates.

Conduct outside examination rooms also warrants attention. Parents, relatives and others may sometimes place unreasonable pressure on candidates or officials to secure favourable outcomes. Unauthorised communication or attempts to influence examination personnel can compromise the independence a fair assessment demands. Security arrangements must ensure that restricted areas remain accessible only to authorised individuals and that all personnel understand the importance of professional boundaries. At

the same time, allegations must be grounded in evidence, not suspicion or hearsay.

The digital environment has also created opportunities for fraudsters to exploit the desperation of candidates and their families. During the examination period, individuals advertise alleged leaked papers, guaranteed answers and privileged access to examination content in exchange for money. Even where materials are entirely fabricated, the financial and psychological consequences can be considerable. Public education is therefore essential — helping parents and candidates recognise suspicious claims, avoid purchasing alleged leaks and report credible information to the relevant authorities. KNEC should communicate promptly whenever misinformation threatens public confidence.

Impersonation and identity fraud remain concerns even as verification procedures improve. The integrity of an examination depends on confirming that every candidate is the person registered to sit it. Authorities must maintain reliable registration records, enforce identification requirements and investigate discrepancies through established procedures. Practical examinations require equally robust safeguards, since assessment environments in those settings differ from ordinary written papers. Any deliberate manipulation of conditions, provision of unauthorised assistance or breach of confidentiality can distort results.

Strengthening examination security, however, cannot mean relying exclusively on surveillance, searches and tighter physical controls. Those measures matter, but they cannot independently eliminate dishonesty. A comprehensive response must also address the attitudes and incentives that make malpractice attractive. Candidates who believe that results matter more than honesty may be tempted when examinations grow difficult. Parents who demand impressive grades at all costs may reinforce that pressure without intending to. School administrators who prioritise institutional rankings over genuine learning can create environments in which misconduct is quietly tolerated.

KNEC and the government must therefore combine technological safeguards with ethical leadership and consistent enforcement. Credible reports must be investigated promptly, evidence preserved and those found responsible held accountable under applicable law. Equally, innocent candidates and officials must be protected from unfounded accusations. Public communication should clearly distinguish verified incidents from rumours, fabricated leaks and legitimate revision materials.

Ultimately, the future of KCSE security will depend on the education system's ability to anticipate emerging threats without losing sight of fundamental values. Technology may change the methods through which malpractice is attempted, but the underlying problem remains unchanged — the willingness of individuals to compromise fairness for personal or institutional advantage. Kenya must move beyond the assumption that examination cheating is merely a candidate's offence and examine squarely the responsibilities of adults, the accountability of officials and the social pressures that reward results without regard to how they are obtained.

The credibility of the KCSE certificate must never be sacrificed for the sake of impressive grades. Every candidate deserves a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they have genuinely learned, and every qualification awarded must represent an honest achievement. The real test of Kenya's examination security system is not how many mobile phones are confiscated or how many officers are deployed. It is whether the system can protect the confidentiality of examination papers, prevent unauthorised assistance, hold offenders accountable and ensure that every candidate competes on equal terms. As malpractice evolves, vigilance must evolve with it — anchored, above all, in integrity.

Musk At a reported share price of approximately KSh18,958 — equivalent to around \$146 — the total value of the proposed giveaway would fall between KSh1.3 trillion and KSh1.4 trillion

Musk pledges SpaceX share for every American child in 2027

The billionaire’s announcement could amount to a KSh1.4 trillion giveaway — but the details, the delivery and the legal complications remain entirely unresolved

BY Anne Njeri
@themkenyetimes

Elon Musk announced yesterday that he intends to give one SpaceX share to every child in the United States in 2027, a pledge that, if implemented, would represent one of the largest single wealth transfers to minors in modern history.

Musk made the announcement on X, the social media platform he owns, writing: “Next year, I will give one of my SpaceX shares to every kid in America. This will be the first of many.” The post offered no mechanism, no timeline beyond the year, no legal framework and no explanation of how shares in SpaceX — a privately held company with no public stock listing — would be transferred to an estimated 72 million to 73 million American children under the age of 18.

At a reported share price of approximately KSh18,958 — equivalent to around \$146 — the total value of the proposed giveaway would fall between KSh1.3 trillion and KSh1.4 trillion, or roughly \$10.5B to \$10.7B at current exchange rates. The figure places the announcement among the most ambitious individual philanthropic commitments ever publicly stated, surpassing many sovereign wealth fund distributions and dwarfing conventional charitable endowments.

The announcement is, by any measure, extraordinary. It is also, by any measure, considerably more complicated than a single post on a social media platform can convey. SpaceX remains a private company, meaning its shares are not freely tradeable on a public exchange. Transferring equity in a private firm to tens of millions of minors would require navigating securities law, establishing custodial ar-



Elon Musk

rangements for children who cannot legally hold assets independently, obtaining regulatory approval and resolving the question of what rights, if any, those shares would carry. None of these obstacles is insurmountable in principle. All of them are substantial in practice.

SpaceX was valued at approximately \$350B in its most recent funding round, making it one of the most valuable private companies in the world and Musk’s most capital-intensive venture. The company’s portfolio spans the Starlink satellite internet constellation, the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy launch vehicles, the Starship programme targeting Mars, and a growing portfolio of government and commercial launch contracts. It is also one of the primary contractors for the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, giving it a strategic significance that complicates any significant redistribution of its equity without careful regulatory consideration.

Musk’s announcement arrives at a politically charged moment in the United States. His prominent role in the administration of President Donald Trump, where he

has led the Department of Government Efficiency, has placed him at the centre of domestic policy debates about public spending, the role of government and the distribution of economic opportunity. The SpaceX pledge can be read, at least in part, as a private-sector counterpoint to that debate — an assertion that individuals, rather than governments, are better positioned to deliver economic benefits to citizens. Whether that reading is generous or cynical will depend largely on whether the pledge is ever fulfilled.

The phrase “this will be the first of many” added a further dimension to the announcement, suggesting that Musk envisions the SpaceX giveaway as the opening instalment of a broader programme of wealth distribution to American children. No further details have been provided about what might follow, or on what timeline, or through what mechanism. The ambiguity is consistent with Musk’s communication style, which frequently involves large public commitments whose implementation details emerge, if at all, considerably later.

There is precedent, of a kind,

for this type of thinking. Alaska’s Permanent Fund Dividend has distributed a share of the state’s oil revenues to every resident — including children — annually since 1982, functioning as a form of universal basic dividend tied to a natural resource. Proposals for “baby bonds” — government-funded investment accounts established at birth for every child — have circulated in American policy discussions for years and gained legislative traction in several states. Musk’s announcement echoes the philosophical intent of those proposals while replacing state funding with private equity in a company

he controls.

That last point is not incidental. The shares Musk proposes to give away are shares in his own company. He is not liquidating personal assets to fund a cash transfer. He is proposing to distribute a small fraction of equity in an enterprise that would benefit from having tens of millions of young American stakeholders with a personal financial interest in its success. Whether that constitutes generosity, marketing, or both, is a question that will attract considerable debate in the months ahead.

For the families of America’s 72 million children, the announcement will register

somewhere between hope and scepticism. A SpaceX share held in trust from childhood could, if the company eventually goes public and its valuation holds, represent a meaningful financial asset at adulthood. It could equally remain a symbolic gesture if regulatory, legal or structural barriers prevent the transfer from occurring at scale. The history of large public pledges by billionaires is not uniformly encouraging on the question of follow-through.

Musk has the resources, the legal teams and the political connections to make this happen if he chooses to. The announcement has been made publicly and at scale. The accountability for delivering on it now exists in the public record.

America’s children are watching. So, for that matter, is the rest of the world.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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Books A Tale of Two Cities is a historical novel set mainly in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution.

How society treats people according to status a review of a tale of two cities by Charles Dickens

Reviewed by Laiba Zia

@themkenyatimes

Introduction

Charles Dickens was a British novelist and one of the most celebrated writers of the Victorian era. His early life exposed him to financial hardship: when his father was imprisoned for debt, Dickens had to work in a blacking (shoe-polish) factory at the age of twelve. He also spent time living with Elizabeth Roylance, who is often associated with the inspiration for Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey and Son*. Dickens's fiction frequently expresses sympathy for the poor and criticizes social injustice.

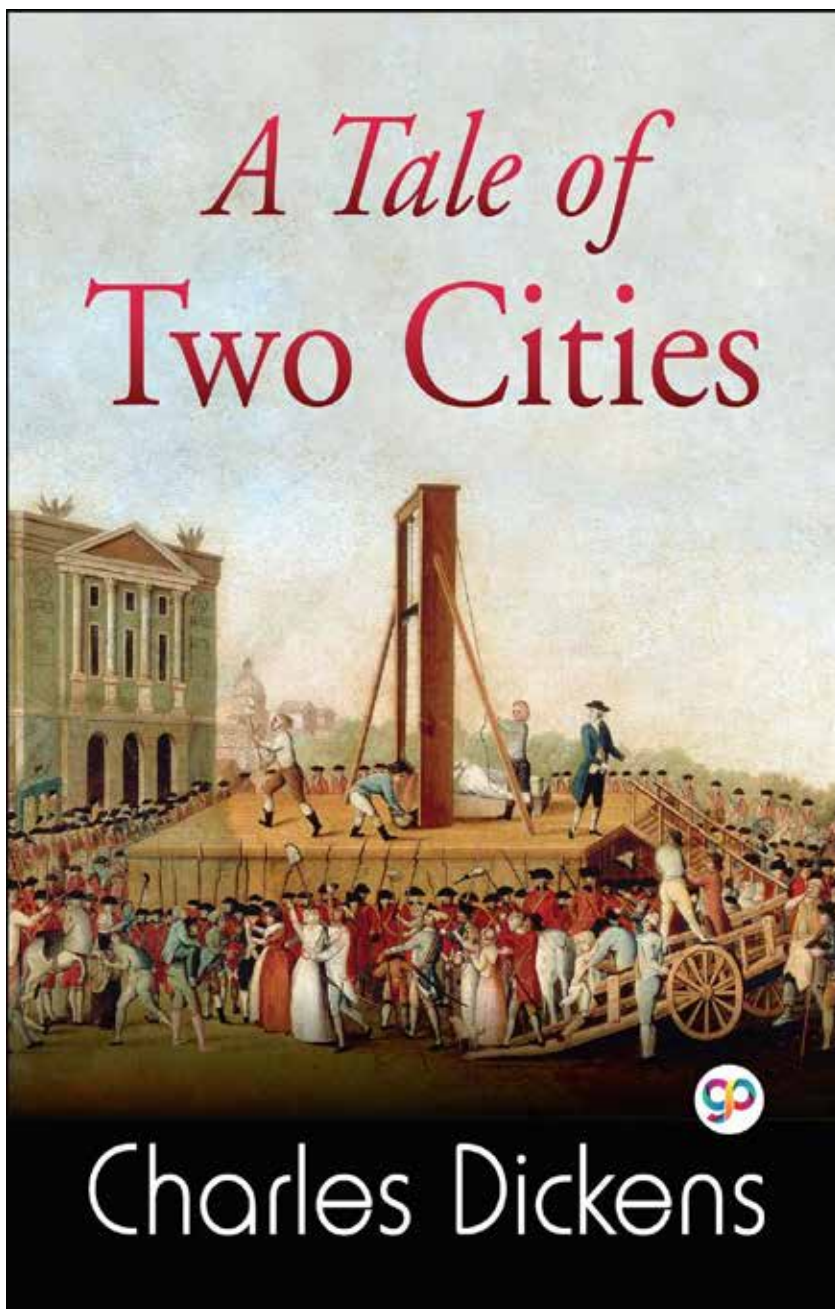
Historical Background and Central Ideas

A Tale of Two Cities is a historical novel set mainly in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. It explores sacrifice, resurrection, love, revenge, and social injustice. Dickens was also influenced by his friend Wilkie Collins's play *The Frozen Deep*, which features a man who gives his life to save his romantic rival. This idea of self-sacrifice is echoed in Sydney Carton's final act.

The novel opens in 1775 with the famous contrast between the best and worst of times. Dickens places opposing conditions side by side to show the contradictions of the age: while some people enjoy privilege and comfort, others suffer from poverty, oppression, and insecurity. The opening establishes the novel's concern with social inequality and political unrest.

Dr. Manette and the Idea of Resurrection

Jarvis Lorry travels to Dover to meet Lucie Manette and tells her that her father, Dr. Alexandre Manette, is alive. Dr. Manette has spent eighteen years imprisoned in the Bastille in Paris. The trauma of imprisonment has severely affected his mental health. When he is found, he has become withdrawn and is making shoes, repeatedly identifying himself by the prison designation "One Hundred and Five, North Tower." Lucie's care and affection gradually help



him recover. His return to life gives the novel one of its central meanings of resurrection.

Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton Charles Darnay is accused of passing secret information to the French, but he is acquitted in an English court. Sydney Carton, a brilliant but self-destructive lawyer who works with Mr. Stryver, resembles Darnay closely. Carton drinks heavily and believes that he has wasted his abilities. His life begins to take on new meaning after he falls in love with Lucie Manette. Although Lucie does not return his romantic feelings, Carton's love becomes a source of moral renewal and eventually leads to his self-sacrifice.

Poverty and Class Conflict

Dickens presents the suffering of ordinary people in the Parisian neighbourhood of Saint Antoine. When a wine cask breaks outside the Defarges' wine shop, poor people rush to drink the spilled wine. Someone writes the word "BLOOD" on a wall with the wine. This scene suggests both the people's desperate poverty and the violence that will later engulf France.

The French aristocracy is represented by figures such as the Marquis St. Evrémonde, who treats ordinary people with contempt. When his carriage runs over and kills a child, he

throws coins to the grieving father instead of showing compassion. This cruel response exposes the aristocracy's indifference to human suffering and deepens public resentment. The Marquis is later murdered, while his nephew, Charles Darnay, rejects the family's privilege and cruelty.

Madame Defarge, Revenge, and Revolution

Madame Defarge is a powerful figure of revolutionary anger and revenge. She knits the names of those marked for death into her work, symbolically recording the people whom the revolutionaries intend to punish. Her hatred of the Evrémonde family is rooted in the terrible crimes committed by Darnay's father and uncle against her family. They abused a young woman, and the family's suffering also included the death of her brother. Dr. Manette attempted to expose these crimes, but his knowledge led to his imprisonment.

Dickens shows that the society before the Revolution was violent on both sides of the English Channel. In France, people could face severe punishment for religious or political offences; in England, crimes such as theft could also lead to execution. These examples reveal the brutality of the legal systems of the time. Dickens does not present revolutionary violence as simple justice; he also shows how the desire for revenge can become cruel and destructive.

Darnay's Trial and Carton's Sacrifice

When Darnay returns to France to help Gabelle, he is arrested because of his family background. During his trial, Dr. Manette's account of the Evrémonde family's crimes is used against Darnay, and Darnay is sentenced to death. Madame Defarge also seeks to destroy Lucie and her family because of their connection to the doctor. Her attempt to confront Miss Pross ends in her own death after a struggle in which Madame Defarge's gun goes off.

Carton enters the prison and arranges to take Darnay's place. Because the two men look alike, Carton can exchange clothes with him and have

him removed from the prison while Darnay is unconscious. Carton then goes to the guillotine in Darnay's place. His final act transforms the life he once considered useless into one of courage and meaning. Through this sacrifice, Dickens presents the possibility of spiritual redemption.

Major Themes and Symbols

Resurrection is represented by Dr. Manette's recovery and by Carton's moral transformation. Sacrifice is most clearly expressed in Carton's decision to die so that Darnay can live. Love and compassion appear through Lucie, whose care helps restore her father's emotional life. The Bastille symbolizes political oppression and the suffering caused by arbitrary imprisonment, while the guillotine represents the Revolution's violence and the cycle of revenge.

The episode involving Foulon, a hated official who is believed to have faked his death, further demonstrates the revolutionaries' thirst for vengeance. When he is found, the crowd kills him. This episode shows how a population that has suffered oppression can itself become violent when revenge replaces justice.

Conclusion

A Tale of Two Cities remains a powerful literary work because it examines the relationship between social status, power, suffering, and justice. Before the French Revolution, aristocrats enjoy privilege while many ordinary people endure hunger and humiliation. Yet Dickens also warns that revolutionary anger can turn into indiscriminate cruelty. Through Lucie's compassion and Sydney Carton's selfless sacrifice, the novel suggests that love and moral courage can offer hope amid violence.

The novel also explores a form of love that does not demand possession. Carton accepts that Lucie will marry Darnay, but he still chooses to save Darnay's life. His sacrifice gives him a sense of purpose and redemption. By bringing together social criticism, historical conflict, memorable characters, and the themes of resurrection and self-sacrifice, Dickens creates a moving account of human suffering and the possibility of moral renewal.

Submitted by: Laiba Zia, BS English, 4th Semester

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Course: Victorian Novel

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Why university students wear crocs and pyjamas

By Job Mwavuwa

Kenyan university students are abandoning conventional clothing for pyjamas and Crocs, and the reasons range from social trends to genuine financial hardship. Peer influence drives much of it. When enough students adopt a look, others follow. “I wear pyjamas and Crocs because everyone is wearing them,” one student said plainly. For many, it is less a fashion statement than a social default — nobody wants to be the last to know. Practicality, however, makes an equally strong case. A typical university day stretches from an 8am lecture through library sessions, laboratory work and, for many, an evening shift at a part-time job. Crocs weigh almost nothing, slip on in seconds, survive rain and mud, and wash clean in minutes. On campuses where students walk considerable distances between



hostels and lecture halls, that matters more than aesthetics. The pandemic shifted expectations permanently. When students spent months attending Zoom lectures from their beds, the boundary between home clothing and outside clothing quietly dissolved. Returning to physical classes in the same comfort wear felt not just acceptable but logical. For students managing tight budgets, the calculation is even

simpler. A pair of Crocs costs less than most sneakers, lasts two years and requires no laces at 6am. Pyjama sets are affordable, require less laundering and eliminate the daily ordeal of assembling a presentable outfit on too little sleep and too little money. What reads as a fashion trend is, for many students, just sensible economics dressed up in rubber and fleece.

No matter how long the night, the day will come

By Simon Juma

I grew up in Big Tree Village, Trans Nzoia County, walking kilometres to school barefoot through cold, dew-soaked mornings, my uniform torn and patched by my mother’s careful hands, with no sweater against the highland chill. I was sent home for fees more times than I can count. I stood outside staffrooms watching classmates learn through windows while I waited for a principal’s mercy. I borrowed books from libraries when I had no money for anything else. I never stopped going back. My teachers at Big Tree Primary noticed a boy who came without shoes but never missed a lesson. That observation kept me going when shame threatened to do what poverty could not — make me quit. Secondary school at St Raphael Big Tree was harder still. Friends drifted away —



to boda boda work in Kitale, to early marriages, to nothing. I held onto one conviction: education was the only door I could afford to knock on. By God’s grace, I passed my KCSE. That result was my first morning light. Today I study Communication and Media at Laikipia University. I write articles on a small phone. I edit stories at night. I have no laptop, no reliable internet, no camera

— only focus, and the certain knowledge that I have already survived worse. I tell anyone who asks why I push so hard: I have seen the night. I have walked through it without shoes. I know exactly what morning feels like. To every child in Siata or Big Tree Village still sitting in class with a torn uniform and cold feet — your night is not permanent. Keep going. The day will come.

Eldoret hosts Kenya’s 63rd Mashujaa Day in historic North Rift celebration

By Yvonne Wambui

Kenya marked Mashujaa Day yesterday at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret, where President William Ruto presided over the 63rd national celebrations in the first joint hosting by Uasin Gishu, Nandi and Elgeyo-Marakwet counties. Thousands arrived before dawn to secure seats in a stadium dressed in national colours. Ruto arrived at approximately 10am aboard a ceremonial military vehicle, waving to the crowds before inspecting a military parade that drew sustained applause. The national and East African anthems were sung, followed by disciplined marching formations, scout and Girl Guide contingents, police bands and an air display by the Kenya Defence Forces. This year’s celebrations carried the theme Ngao Yetu,



Ustawi Michezoni na Uchumi Bora — Security, Sports and Economic Development — a choice that resonated sharply in a region renowned for producing world-class athletes and anchoring Kenya’s agricultural economy. The occasion also recognised citizens whose contributions to sports, entrepreneurship, education, arts, human rights and public service reflect a broadened understanding of heroism — one that extends well beyond the independence struggle. In the days preceding the main event, thematic activities ran

across all three host counties. Exhibitions at Eldoret National Polytechnic drew public engagement on cybersecurity and consumer protection, while inter-county sports competitions brought together young people under a shared banner of unity and peaceful coexistence. Mashujaa Day is not merely a public holiday. It is an annual reckoning — a moment to measure how faithfully the living are honouring the sacrifices of those who came before them. The heroes have done their part. The rest is now ours.

Ghost hospitals and Kenya’s healthcare crisis

By Cecilia Wekesa

Kenya’s Social Health Authority has paid ghost hospitals KSh10.6B in fraudulent claims while leaving legitimate facilities unpaid for eight months, pushing hundreds toward permanent closure. The contradiction is devastating. Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale confirmed rogue facilities submitted fake claims using forged documents and fabricated records. The Ministry of Health suspended 120 such facilities within three months — 45 in a single week. Auditor General Nancy Gathungu’s audit found one patient billed four times for open-heart surgery within 24 hours across different hospitals, 3,235 duplicate birth claims and 6,392 medically implausible repeat births. The ghosts are thriving. The real hospitals are dying. Over 700 private and faith-based facilities face imminent closure. SHA and the defunct



National Hospital Insurance Fund together owe providers KSh76B in unpaid claims. SHA collects KSh5.4B monthly but faces KSh8.7B in claims — a KSh3.3B monthly deficit that compounds relentlessly. St Mary’s Hospital in Western Kenya has already shut permanently over KSh180M in unpaid dues. The system compounds the injustice. Digital pre-authorisation now requires biometric verification before treatment begins. In areas with poor

connectivity, authenticating one patient takes 45 minutes. When the system fails, it blocks IV drips and antibiotics in genuine emergencies. In Wajir, Mandera and Marsabit, these hospitals are the only healthcare available. When they close, mothers deliver at home and children go untreated. Kenya killed NHIF because ghost hospitals stole from the sick. SHA has simply produced smarter ghosts — and is punishing the honest ones.

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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *The returning Portuguese coach signals a ruthless new era at the Bernabéu as Vinicius Junior's place comes under pressure

Mourinho's warning: No sacred cows at Real Madrid

By Martin Weche

Real Madrid coach José Mourinho warned yesterday that no player at the club is guaranteed his place, singling out Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior as the squad prepares to host RB Leipzig in the Champions League.

The statement landed with the precision Mourinho intended. Vinicius has endured a difficult start to the season, struggling for form and currently serving a four-match La Liga ban for hair-pulling. His absence from domestic football has coincided with the emergence of Yan Diomande, the Ivorian winger whose €140 million (approximately \$157 million) transfer made him the club's record signing. Diomande scored against Sevilla on Sunday and has done enough in recent weeks to make the question of Vinicius's status entirely legitimate.

Mourinho addressed it without hesitation. "Only the club badge is untouchable," he told reporters. "I don't like the concept of untouchable players. What makes a player untouchable is not his status, the armband, his years at the club or how much was paid for him. What makes him untouchable is his performance on the pitch."

It was a line that could have been lifted from his first spell at the Bernabéu between 2010 and 2013, when Mourinho managed with the same controlled aggression and the same willingness to make stars uncomfortable. His return to Madrid has been watched closely across European football, and comments of this kind confirm that the intervening years have not softened his approach.

Mourinho confirmed that Vinicius would start on the left wing against Leipzig, though he declined to reveal whether Diomande would also feature.



Real Madrid coach José Mourinho

The ambiguity was deliberate. Keeping players uncertain of their status is a management tool Mourinho has deployed throughout his career, at Chelsea, Inter Milan, Manchester United and beyond. The message to Vinicius is clear enough without being made explicit: form, not reputation, determines selection.

The Leipzig match carries additional context. Madrid enter it having won their opening two Champions League fixtures and will be seeking a third consecutive victory in the league phase. Domestically, however, the picture is less comfortable. They sit third in La Liga, six points behind leaders Barcelona, whom they visit on Sunday in what will be one of the most scrutinised Clásicos in recent memory given the current standings. A Madrid side rebuilding under a new coaching tenure going to Camp Nou six points adrift is a significant test of both squad depth and Mourinho's early authority.

He was candid about how far the team remains from where he intends to take it. "A long way off," he said. "We have been here three or four months. It is impossible to be where we want to be. We always have to improve, individually and collectively. I understand the demands at this club are the maximum. I have been here before, and so I know perfectly well how things work. I cannot lose my direction, even though I know there is a lot of work to do."

That self-awareness distinguishes this version of Mourinho from the one who departed Madrid in 2013 amid reported dressing-room tensions and a fractured relationship with senior players. Whether those lessons have genuinely been absorbed, or whether the same patterns will eventually resurface, remains the central question hanging over his second tenure.

French defender Ibrahima Konaté offered a perspective

from within the squad that suggested the early atmosphere is positive. "He is a great manager," Konaté said. "He has this aura that not many managers have, because he does not need to speak and everyone will listen and respect him."

That quality — command without volume — has always been Mourinho's most underappreciated attribute. The theatrics attract attention, but the quieter authority in training and in the dressing room is what produces results. At 61, with every major European league title and three Champions League medals across different clubs, he has little left to prove to the world. What he needs to prove, and quickly, is that he can take a squad assembled for a different coach's system and make it his own.

The Bernabéu will not wait indefinitely. But then, neither will Mourinho.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The Turkish Football Federation has handed the country’s most demanding job to a man who has already conquered domestic football — now comes the harder test

Yalçın takes charge: Türkiye bets on a familiar face to end the pain

By **Pascal Okoth**

Türkiye yesterday appointed Seren Yalçın as head coach of the national football team on a four-year contract, ending a period of uncertainty that followed Vincenzo Montella’s exit after four consecutive UEFA Nations League defeats.

The Turkish Football Federation confirmed the appointment on Tuesday, formalising a deal that covers Yalçın and his full coaching staff. The 53-year-old inherits a squad whose confidence has been visibly shaken by a run of results that placed the federation under mounting public and institutional pressure to act decisively. In Yalçın, they have chosen a figure who needs no introduction to Turkish football — and who carries both the weight of expectation and the credibility to justify it.

His playing credentials are well established. Between 1994 and 2003, Yalçın represented Türkiye 37 times, scored five international goals and appeared at both the 1996 and 2000 European Championships. He turned out for Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray and Trabzonspor — a list of clubs that reads like a map of Turkish football’s heartland — and retired as one of the more respected midfielders of his generation.

In management, his defining moment came in the 2020–21 season, when he guided Beşiktaş to a domestic double, winning the Turk-

ish Süper Lig title and the Turkish Cup. That achievement announced him as a coach capable of delivering under pressure and managing the particular intensity that surrounds Istanbul’s biggest clubs. It is precisely the kind of pressure that will follow him into the national role.

This appointment is his first at international level, and the transition from club to international football is one that does not always travel smoothly. At a club, a coach works with his players every day. In international football, preparation windows are short, squad continuity is harder to maintain and the margin for error in competitive fixtures is considerably narrower. Yalçın will need to identify a tactical identity quickly, build trust within a squad that has suffered recent disappointment and demonstrate early enough that his ideas translate beyond the domestic league.

His immediate priorities are not difficult to name. The defensive shape requires attention — Türkiye have conceded too easily in recent matches. The attacking play has lacked both coherence and cutting edge. And somewhere beneath those technical concerns sits a deeper problem of confidence, the kind that accumulates across a run of poor results and does not disappear simply because a new coach has arrived.

The four-year contract gives Yalçın the runway to address those issues properly. It signals that



Seren Yalçın

the federation is not looking for a short-term fix but for a genuine rebuild. That is a reasonable approach. It is also one that will be tested the moment results fail to improve in the early fixtures under his watch, because patience in football, even when it is officially sanctioned, has a tendency to run out faster than the contract suggests.

What Yalçın has in his favour is familiarity. He

knows Turkish football from the inside — its pressures, its politics, its players and its culture. He will not need time to understand the environment. Whether that familiarity accelerates his work or creates blind spots remains to be seen.

For the Crescent-Stars, this is a reset. For Yalçın, it is the summit of a coaching career that has been building, sometimes quietly, towards

this moment. The squad announcement, when it comes, will offer the first real indication of the direction he intends to take.

Türkiye need more than a new coach. They need belief again. Yalçın’s job is to give it to them.

SPORTS NEWS



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Reading culture: Towards an enlightened generation



By: Sharifova Saidaxon
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- So, is the main reason people do not read a lack of time? Are we really so busy, or are we simply unable to manage our time? What is the reality? People need to eat in order to have energy. Without energy, they cannot carry out their work or fulfil their responsibilities. In the same way, our minds need spiritual nourishment, and reading books provides it.
- Just as people do not stop eating, they should make reading a regular habit. It is not necessary to set aside a separate block of time for reading. People can read in a car or on the metro, before going to sleep, or during short breaks.



Reading culture

This article examines reading culture and ways of encouraging people to read books. Using qualitative methods, the study explores young people's attitudes towards reading and its benefits. The findings indicate that reading opens up new opportunities for young people. In conclusion, although reading may seem like a simple activity, the opportunities it creates are limitless.

Keywords: books, opportunities, reading, benefits, reading culture.

Introduction

As people go through life, they need a constant source of spiritual nourishment, which reading books can provide. This is why there are so many book lovers around the world. Some people read in their free time for spiritual relaxation, while others read temporarily to obtain specific information. But is reading only a way to acquire information? This is a question that makes many people think.

This article aims to provide a brief

overview of reading culture. The topic was also explored in order to draw a balanced conclusion.

Methods

This study used a qualitative analytical methodology. The following sources and methods were used:

- A survey of young people involving 50 students aged 17–25.
- A one-week observation involving the use of artificial-intelligence-based tools.
- Previously published academic articles and expert opinions.

The survey covered the practice of reading books and its benefits.

During the experimental stage, participants were divided into two groups. The first group believed that even the busiest person in the world could find time to read. The second group believed that a person must have free time in order to read.

Results

The study's findings highlighted the following important points:

1. Reading is not a simple task; a person needs to have free time for it.
2. It is not necessary to set aside a specific period exclusively for reading. Books can also be read while travelling by car, bus, or even metro.
3. Our minds constantly need spiritual nourishment, and providing that nourishment is one of our main responsibilities.

Discussion

So, is the main reason people do not read a lack of time? Are we really so busy, or are we simply unable to manage our time? What is the reality? People need to eat in order to have energy. Without energy, they cannot carry out their work or fulfil their responsibilities. In the same way, our minds need spiritual nourishment, and reading books provides it.

Just as people do not stop eating, they should make reading a regular habit. It is not necessary to set aside a separate block of time for reading. People can read in a car or on the metro, before going to sleep, or

during short breaks.

There is no fixed minimum or maximum amount that one must read. Even reading one page a day can lead to significant changes, as long as a person has the desire and motivation to do so. Through reading, people gain not only spiritual nourishment but also various opportunities. For example, in 2025, the national winners of the "Young Reader" competition received cash prizes and several valuable gifts. The first-place winner was Jasurbek Dunyomiddin o'g'li Abdug'afforov, and the second-place winner was Shaxzoda Xamidulla qizi O'ktamova, among others.

Conclusion

I believe that we should not wait for the ideal time to read books, and that we should read for ourselves rather than for other people. Reading is not a trivial activity: it nurtures a person spiritually, helps them find their place in society, and encourages the development of good habits. Most importantly, books can enrich people both spiritually and financially.

Sharifova Saidaxon was born on May 26, 2008, into an ordinary family in Kaldushon village, Furqat district, Fergana region, Uzbekistan.

Now she study at Toshkent State Green University.

From an early age, she has had a strong interest in learning languages and poetry. Thanks to these interests, she has become fluent in English and is the author of hundreds of poems and articles.

At the age of 16, she began publishing her creative works both in Uzbekistan and abroad.

In addition, she holds national certificates in other academic subjects.