



Mudavadi and Wetangula walk out as Sifuna speaks at Nabwera memorial
 Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula walked out of the requiem mass for veteran diplomat Burudi Nabwera at Friends Church in Lang'ata, Nairobi yesterday **Page 8**



When disaster becomes an industry: From Covid-19 to El Niño and Ebola, who profits when Kenya panics?
 Kenya has become familiar with a disturbing rhythm of national emergencies: alarming warnings, urgent official announcements, political declarations, hurried mobilisation of resources... **Page 12**

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The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **Kenya is heading into its most fragmented presidential contest in years**

Nyoro breaks the table

Ndindi Nyoro, leader of the People's Party of Kenya, has effectively signalled the emergence of a third political alliance through his sustained joint appearances with former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i and People's Liberation Party leader Martha Karua — the latest being a rally in Njoro, Nakuru County yesterday — a trajectory that observers interpret as a deliberate break from the opposition's broader negotiating table ahead of the August 2027 general election. The move had been telegraphed. Nyoro had warned publicly that if he was not accepted as a principal at the opposition's negotiating table, he would break it. His actions now suggest he has done precisely that — positioning himself, Matiang'i and Karua as a distinct third force in what is rapidly crystallising into a tripartite race for State House.

The clearest articulation of where Kenyan politics is heading came from lawyer Ndegwa Njiru, spokesman for the Wiper Patriotic Front. "From what I can see, and I readily admit I could be wrong, my crystal ball suggests that the forthcoming elections will crystallise into a three-axis contest," Njiru wrote. "The Kalonzo-Rigathi-Sifuna axis; the Kindiki-Kasongo-Mudavadi axis; and the Martha-Matiang'i-Nyoro axis."



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L-R: Ndindi Nyoro, leader of the People's Party of Kenya and Lawyer Ndegwa Njiru, spokesman for the Wiper Patriotic Front



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Ruto heads to Harare for COMESA summit on trade and regional security

BY Lilian Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday arrived in Harare, Zimbabwe, for the 25th Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Heads of State and Government Summit, where regional leaders will confront pressing questions about trade integration, peace and security across a bloc of more than 600 million people. Kenya arrives at the summit as one of the region's most active proponents of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and Ruto is expected to use the Harare platform to press for faster implementation of the agreement, which promises to reshape intra-African commerce but has moved unevenly across member states since its launch. The summit convenes against a backdrop of persistent security challenges in parts of eastern and southern Africa, adding urgency to discussions that might otherwise risk becoming exercises in diplomatic formality. COMESA's trade and investment architecture can only deliver its promise where stability exists to sustain it. For Kenya, Harare is both an opportunity and an obligation — to lead by example on integration at a moment when the continent's economic ambitions demand more than rhetoric.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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Group Executive Chairman

M. Danson

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/>

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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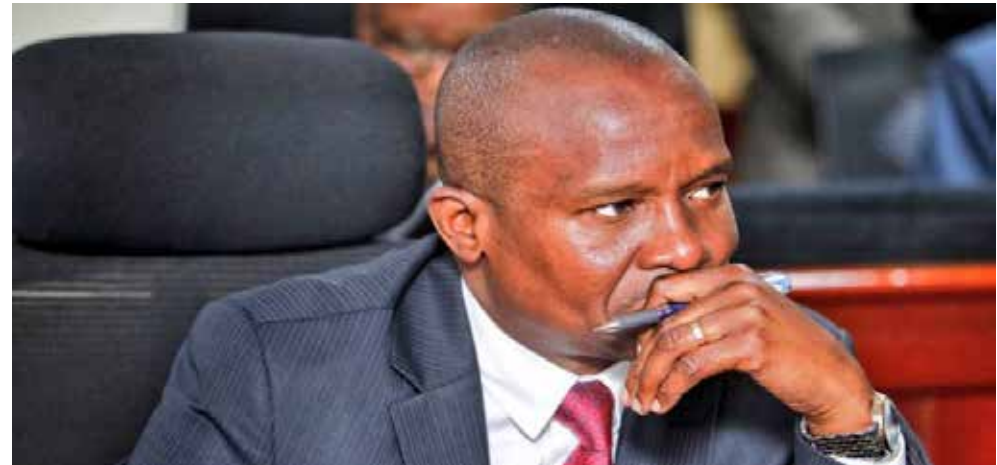
Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday received economist and former Kenya Ambassador to India Peter Munyiri at Wamunyoro Residence, where Munyiri declared his intention to contest the Nyeri County governorship seat under the Democracy for the Citizens Party in the 2027 general election. Munyiri, who served Kenya diplomatically in New Delhi, said he was returning home to serve his people as the county's fifth governor. Gachagua welcomed him into the party, pledged free and fair nominations and urged him to begin grassroots campaigns in preparation for party primaries scheduled for late March next year. The entry of a former ambassador into the Nyeri gubernatorial race adds a new dimension to what is shaping up as a competitive contest in the Mount Kenya region.



Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakang'o yesterday threw her weight behind the establishment of a well-governed retirement benefits scheme for county government employees, lending institutional support to a legislative proposal that could transform financial security for thousands of devolved public servants across the country. Nyakang'o expressed her backing during stakeholder consultations on the County Governments' Retirement Benefits Scheme Bill, 2026, describing sound governance structures as essential to the scheme's long-term viability and credibility. The Bill seeks to provide a structured and sustainable pension framework for county employees, a category of public servants who have long operated without the retirement security protections available to their national government counterparts. Consultations are continuing as legislators and stakeholders work towards a framework that safeguards contributors' interests.



United Democratic Alliance Secretary General Omar Hassan yesterday appeared before the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission over remarks he allegedly made that threatened electoral integrity, in a development that draws fresh scrutiny to the conduct of senior ruling party officials ahead of the 2027 general election. Hassan was summoned to respond to the statements, which the commission determined warranted formal examination under its mandate to safeguard the credibility of Kenya's electoral environment. The nature of the remarks and the precise circumstances in which they were made were not immediately disclosed by either party following the session. The appearance signals the IEBC's intent to assert its oversight authority over political actors whose public conduct risks undermining public confidence in the electoral process.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday classified illicit alcohol as one of Kenya's three gravest national threats, warning that the proliferation of illegal brews risks undermining the country's hard-won development gains if left unchecked. Speaking as the government intensified its crackdown on illicit liquor, Kindiki said the menace had reached levels that demanded urgent and sustained state intervention. He did not identify the other two threats by name but placed illicit alcohol alongside concerns of equivalent national consequence. The Deputy President's remarks signal an escalation in the government's approach to a problem that has claimed lives, devastated families and eroded productivity in communities across the country. Enforcement operations are ongoing, with authorities targeting manufacturers, distributors and retail outlets supplying illegal alcohol.



Parliament yesterday passed legislation protecting the educational rights of survivors of sexual offences, barring schools and other learning institutions from expelling, suspending or otherwise discriminating against learners on the basis of their status as victims. The Bill, which now awaits presidential assent, addresses a longstanding gap in Kenya's child protection framework that has seen survivors punished twice — first by the offence committed against them and again by institutions that pushed them out of education precisely when stability mattered most. Legislators argued that keeping survivors in school is critical to their recovery, dignity and long-term prospects. Rights advocates welcomed the passage as overdue, noting that educational exclusion has historically compounded trauma and deepened vulnerability among some of the country's most defenceless children.



Former The Real Househelps of Kawangware actor Onyi has begun a three-month residential rehabilitation programme in Mombasa following the intervention of musician and former Starehe MP Charles Njagua Kanyi, widely known as Jaguar, who stepped in to support the actor's recovery. Jaguar personally facilitated Onyi's admission to the facility after the actor's struggles became a matter of public concern, in a gesture that has drawn widespread appreciation from fans and the entertainment community. The three-month programme is expected to provide Onyi with the structured support and professional care needed to reclaim his health and rebuild his life. His admission has reignited broader conversation about the welfare of entertainers who fall on hard times with limited institutional support available to them.

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Brutality According to published accounts, an officer pointed towards the journalist and directed colleagues to detain him

Police accountability on trial as seven officers face probe over journalist's arrest

The investigation into the detention of Citizen TV's Francis Odee on Kimathi Street will test whether Kenya's oversight institutions can deliver credible answers ahead of a critical election year

BY Collins Kibet

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The investigation into the detention of Citizen TV's Francis Odee on Kimathi Street will test whether Kenya's oversight institutions can deliver credible answers ahead of a critical election year

By Collins Kibet

Seven police officers are under investigation by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority following the arrest and alleged assault of Citizen TV journalist Francis Odee during fuel price demonstrations along Kimathi Street in Nairobi on Tuesday, in an incident that has reignited debate about press freedom, police conduct and constitutional rights with fourteen months to the 2027 general election.

Odee was covering the demonstrations when officers allegedly moved to arrest protesters in the area. According to published accounts, an officer pointed towards the journalist and directed colleagues to detain him. Odee identified himself as a journalist and presented his press credentials. Officers proceeded regardless. He was reportedly dragged along the street, beaten and had his clothing torn before being taken to Central Police Station alongside protesters, though he was not formally booked into custody. He was subsequently released following intervention by se-



Citizen TV journalist Odee Francis arrested while covering fuel price protests along Kimathi Street in Nairobi.

nior police officers.

His release, however, has not closed the matter. The circumstances of his arrest, the conduct of the officers involved and whether proper procedures were followed remain unanswered questions that investigators must now resolve. IPOA confirmed it is questioning seven officers in connection with the incident, including senior officers at Central Police Station and five others allegedly involved in the confrontation. The investigation is expected to estab-

lish whether there were lawful grounds for the arrest, whether any force used was necessary and proportionate, and whether supervisory failures contributed to the incident. Being under investigation does not constitute a finding of guilt — the process must be grounded in evidence, witness testimony and applicable legal standards before any conclusions are drawn.

Investigators have significant material to work with. Video recordings from the scene, statements from witnesses,

Odee's own account, officers' explanations and police records from the day could collectively help reconstruct what happened with sufficient precision to reach credible findings. The quality of the investigation will depend on how thoroughly and impartially that material is examined.

The incident has drawn swift condemnation from media organisations. The Media Council of Kenya, the Kenya Editors Guild and the Crime Journalists Association of

Kenya have all raised concerns about the reported treatment of Odee. The Kenya Editors Guild has gone further, demanding a formal investigation and a public apology from Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja. These calls reflect a broader concern that journalists must be able to document public events without facing unjustified arrest or physical harm.

The constitutional framework is clear. Article 34 of Kenya's Constitution protects the freedom and independence of the media. Article 29 protects individuals against violence and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Article 37 guarantees the right to assemble and demonstrate peacefully. None of these provisions exempt police from enforcing the law, but all of them require that enforcement remain within constitutional limits. A journalist covering a demonstration is not a participant in it. Professional status does not place anyone above the law, but it equally does not remove the right to lawful treatment.

Why this case matters extends beyond Odee personally. When journalists are detained or physically harmed while covering public events, the effects ripple outward. Reporters assigned to similar events may become reluctant to attend. Editors may hesitate before deploying staff. The cumulative result is a nar-

rowing of independent coverage at precisely the moments when public information is most needed — during protests, crises and confrontations between citizens and the state.

The timing sharpens the stakes. As Kenya moves towards the 2027 general election, political demonstrations, civic campaigns and public debates will multiply. The capacity of journalists to report those events freely, and the willingness of oversight institutions to investigate alleged abuses credibly, will shape public trust in both the media and the security services during a period when that trust will be tested repeatedly.

Whether this investigation restores confidence or deepens scepticism will depend on one thing: whether the authorities establish the facts impartially, communicate their findings clearly and act on the evidence wherever it leads. If misconduct is established, those responsible must face appropriate consequences. If the allegations cannot be substantiated, the investigation must explain its conclusions with equal transparency.

What happened on Kimathi Street on Tuesday deserves a full and honest answer. Releasing a journalist is not accountability. It is the beginning of a question, not the end of one.

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Politics The two senior government officials were seen on camera walking towards the church entrance as Sifuna took the microphone, prompting the senator to acknowledge their exit

Mudavadi and Wetangula walk out as Sifuna speaks at Nabwera memorial

A political drama at a Lang'ata requiem mass lays bare the fault lines fracturing Western Kenya's political establishment ahead of 2027

BY Lydia Nekesa

@themkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula walked out of the requiem mass for veteran diplomat Burudi Nabwera at Friends Church in Lang'ata, Nairobi yesterday, at the precise moment Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna was invited to address mourners — a departure captured on video that has since gone viral and ignited fresh debate about the depth of Kenya's political divisions with fourteen months to the 2027 general election.

The two senior government officials were seen on camera walking towards the church entrance as Sifuna took the microphone, prompting the senator to acknowledge their exit with a dry “this is Nairobi” quip that drew laughter from the congregation. The moment, brief in duration but vast in political implication, distilled into a single image the fault lines now running through what was once Kenya's most cohesive regional political bloc.

Burudi Nabwera, who died on October 9 at the age of 99, served as Kenya's first ambassador to the United States, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Member of Parliament for Lugari and Cabinet Minister. His memorial drew political figures from across Western Kenya — a fact that made the walkout all the more conspicuous. Mudavadi offered an explanation, saying his departure was driven by official duties rather than any other consideration. “Normally I should have waited until we finished the service, but as I've said, I'll be home on Saturday. So please bear with me that if I'm not there, it is not out of any other reason, but because I will be away on duty,” Mudavadi said. Wetangula offered a similar account, citing a scheduled engagement. Whether the departures were logistical or deliberate, the optics told a different story to a public already attuned to every signal of political realignment.

Sifuna used the occasion to condemn tribal politics, lament the breakdown of political friendships and pledge to restore the spirit of national unity



R-L: Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna

that defined Kenya at independence. He also expressed regret that political divisions had separated him from figures he once regarded as allies. The tone was pointed. “Our politics is so petty that being seen with some of us, you are branded and told you are hanging out with Sifuna; you are now a bad person,” he said — a remark that landed with unmistakable force given the two empty seats at the front of the congregation.

Sifuna also publicly appealed to Lugari MP Nabii Nabwera to join his Linda Mwananchi movement, saying he wanted the lawmaker by his side for 2027 — noting personal connections to the region through his mother's family and a shared history inside ODM before their political paths diverged.

The church scene cannot be separated from the broader political battle now consuming Western Kenya. Just three days earlier, on October 18, Mudavadi had attacked Sifuna

at a church service in Nandi County, accusing the senator of misleading Kenyans by claiming to have formed a party with only six months remaining before key electoral deadlines. “Sifuna wanders around saying he has formed a party with only six months remaining — this misleads people,” Mudavadi said, adding that a party of such recent formation could not remove President William Ruto from power and that genuine leaders rise through the ranks rather than arriving by parachute.

The exchange reveals a political establishment that feels genuinely threatened by Sifuna's rising profile — and a senator who understands the value of a viral moment. Sifuna, who serves as the elected senator for Nairobi and leads the Linda Mwananchi movement, has built his appeal on the kind of blunt, populist rhetoric that resonates precisely because it makes powerful people uncomfortable. His ability to draw a walkout

from the Prime Cabinet Secretary and the National Assembly Speaker at a funeral — and then turn it into a political statement before the congregation had finished processing what happened — is a measure of how effectively he has positioned himself as a disruptive force in a race that the political establishment had hoped to manage on its own terms.

Their contrasting political positions have placed Mudavadi, Wetangula and Sifuna on opposite sides of an increasingly heated contest over the direction of national leadership and the political future of Western Kenya. Mudavadi and Wetangula anchor the Kenya Kwanza government's regional support base. Sifuna has aligned with the opposition axis gathering around former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka, pursuing a coalition that the establishment dismisses but cannot afford to ignore.

Nabwera is set to be buried on Saturday, October 24, at his home in Sango Farm, Kiminini, Trans Nzoia County. That burial will bring the same cast of political figures back together in the same county — Trans Nzoia — that has become one of the most contested battlegrounds in the 2027 campaign. Whether yesterday's walkout is replayed in a different form on Saturday, or whether the occasion demands a more diplomatic performance, will itself be read as a signal.

In Kenyan politics, funerals have always been one of the most honest arenas. There is no agenda to manipulate, no rally crowd to manage and no press conference to stage. When leaders walk out of a church as a colleague takes the microphone, they are not simply leaving a service. They are making a statement — and in this election cycle, every statement counts.

Politics Njiru wrote. “The Kalonzo–Rigathi–Sifuna axis; the Kindiki–Kasongo–Mudavadi axis; and the Martha–Matiang’i–Nyoro axis.”

Nyoro breaks the table: Kenya’s 2027 race just got a third horse

With fourteen months to the August 2027 general election, a three-way contest is taking shape that could redraw the political map of Mount Kenya and determine who succeeds William Ruto

BY David Kimani

@themkenyatimes

Ndindi Nyoro, leader of the People’s Party of Kenya, has effectively signalled the emergence of a third political alliance through his sustained joint appearances with former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang’i and People’s Liberation Party leader Martha Karua — the latest being a rally in Njoro, Nakuru County yesterday — a trajectory that observers interpret as a deliberate break from the opposition’s broader negotiating table ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The move had been telegraphed. Nyoro had warned publicly that if he was not accepted as a principal at the opposition’s negotiating table, he would break it. His actions now suggest he has done precisely that — positioning himself, Matiang’i and Karua as a distinct third force in what is rapidly crystallising into a tripartite race for State House.

The clearest articulation of where Kenyan politics is heading came from lawyer Ndegwa Njiru, spokesman for the Wiper Patriotic Front. “From what I can see, and I readily admit I could be wrong, my crystal ball suggests that the forthcoming elections will crystallise into a three-axis contest,” Njiru wrote. “The Kalonzo–Rigathi–Sifuna axis; the Kindiki–Kasongo–Mudavadi axis; and the Martha–Matiang’i–Nyoro axis.”

If that reading proves accurate, Kenya is heading into its most fragmented presidential contest in years — one in which no single opposition bloc commands a decisive national coalition, and in which the Mount Kenya region, historically the country’s most consequential electoral battleground, will be the most fiercely contested prize of all.

Nyoro’s emerging alliance, however, faces immediate and serious questions about its electoral weight. Unlike the Kalonzo–Rigathi–Sifuna axis, which draws on Ukambani’s dense voter base, the Western Kenya networks of Edwin Sifuna and the residual political capital of former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua’s Democracy for the Citizens



Ndindi Nyoro, Fred Matiang’i Martha Karua — the latest being a rally in Njoro, Nakuru County

Party, Nyoro’s grouping has not attracted a single sitting or former governor, senator or member of parliament of national standing. Karua, a respected constitutional lawyer and former justice minister, brings credibility and intellectual profile but has struggled to convert either into sustained electoral traction since her 2022 vice-presidential bid ended in defeat. Matiang’i’s Jubilee Party, once the dominant force in Mount Kenya politics, is a diminished vehicle whose grassroots infrastructure has been eroded by defections, disorganisation and the party’s complicated association with former President Uhuru Kenyatta’s political legacy.

In the language of political hand-capping, as one analyst put it, the alliance is not arriving as a horse. It is arriving as a mule.

Nyoro’s own standing within the opposition has been dogged by persistent questions about his loyalties. He has faced repeated accusations of serving as a conduit for President William Ruto inside the opposition — accusations rooted in his perceived business associations with the President and what critics describe as a calculated reluctance

to take positions on the defining political confrontations of the past two years. He was conspicuously absent during the impeachment proceedings against Gachagua and did not participate in the Finance Bill protests of 2024, a moment of national rupture that defined which politicians stood with the public and which did not. At the time, Nyoro chaired the National Assembly’s Finance and Budget Appropriations Committee — a position that made his silence during the Gen Z-led uprising all the more glaring to those watching closely from Mount Kenya.

His credibility deficit was further exposed during a public confrontation with John Methu, Secretary General of the Democracy for the Citizens Party. Methu accused Nyoro of being untrustworthy during a televised interview, a charge that landed with force given Methu’s own rapidly rising profile in the region. Nyoro responded at a rally in Kajiado and has sustained his attacks on Methu in subsequent public appearances. The masses, by most accounts, have not been persuaded.

Methu’s emergence is the most significant subplot in the Mount Kenya

political story heading into 2027. When Gachagua’s impeachment galvanised the region and left a vacuum of credible leadership, voices within Mount Kenya urged Nyoro to step forward. He hesitated. Methu did not. At the Ol Kalou by-election, against a government-backed candidate supported by the full weight of the state — cash, development pledges, cabinet secretaries, principal secretaries and government administrators deployed in open defiance of electoral guidelines — Methu ran a campaign of striking discipline and courage. The result was a landslide: the DCP candidate won with approximately 85 per cent of the vote, delivering the party its first parliamentary seat and announcing Methu as a political force of genuine national consequence, despite documented incidents of police brutality against opposition supporters during the campaign.

The contrast between the two men could not be sharper. One is accused of sitting out the fights that mattered most. The other fought one of the most lopsided battles of the electoral cycle and won decisively.

As August 2027 approaches, the

question for Nyoro’s alliance is not merely whether it can attract more principals to its banner. It is whether it can construct a credible narrative that persuades Mount Kenya voters — and voters beyond the region — that it represents a genuine political alternative rather than a spoiler operation that ultimately serves the incumbent. Karua and Matiang’i bring different strengths to the table, but both carry electoral histories that will be scrutinised intensely in a campaign environment where authenticity and track record will matter more than ever.

Kenya’s three-axis race is taking shape. Whether Nyoro’s alliance grows into a competitive force, or fragments before polling day under the weight of its own contradictions, will depend on decisions made in the months immediately ahead — and on whether the table he chose to break can be rebuilt into something more formidable than what it replaced.

KWS “KWS and the community are one family. We belong to one landscape, share one natural heritage and have a common responsibility to protect it,” Kanga said

KWS launches KSh160B conservation programme in Tsavo

The Thamani Asili initiative targets 1.6 million beneficiaries across 31 counties over a decade

BY John Kariuki

@themtkenyaintimes

Kenya Wildlife Service yesterday launched the Thamani Asili Programme at Maktau, Taita Taveta County, committing US\$160 million — approximately KSh160B — over ten years to community-centred conservation across four priority landscapes covering 31 counties. KWS Director General Erustus Kanga used the occasion

to position local communities as indispensable partners in protecting the country's wildlife and natural heritage, arguing that conservation cannot succeed without the active participation and economic empowerment of people living alongside protected areas. “KWS and the community are one family. We belong to one landscape, share one natural heritage and have a common responsibility to protect

it,” Kanga said.

The programme, jointly funded by the Government of Kenya and The Nature Conservancy, is expected to benefit an estimated 1.6 million people, strengthen more than 130 community conservancies and create over 20,000 direct and indirect jobs. It will run across landscapes that include Tsavo, where human-wildlife conflict has long tested the relationship be-



KWS Director General Erustus Kanga

tween conservation agencies and local communities.

Kanga acknowledged that conflict between wildlife and communities — crop destruction, livestock losses and, in some cases, threats to human life — remains one of the most significant obstacles to sustainable conservation. He said community participation, livelihood support and practical conflict-mitigation measures would be central to how Thamani Asili is implemented.

The programme was officially launched by Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano, who represented President William Ruto as chief guest. Miano said the initiative was designed to ensure that protecting nature translates into tangible benefits for the people who live alongside it.

“Our objective is clear: to protect nature, strengthen communities and ensure that conservation contributes to the prosperity of the people who safeguard our natural heritage,” she said.

KWS Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph Langat joined conservation leaders in emphasising the importance of sustained institutional commitment to the programme's

long-term success.

Taita Taveta Governor Andrew Mwadime welcomed the initiative as an opportunity to deepen cooperation between national government, county administrations, conservation partners and local communities. Also present were Tharaka Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki, who chairs the Council of Governors, and Narok Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu.

Taita Taveta Woman Representative Lydia Haika Mnene, Mwatate MP Peter Shake and Taveta MP John Okano Bwire attended alongside Taita Taveta County Commissioner Linda Okola. Alfred Kirigha Mwanake, chief executive of the Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association, also participated.

The Nature Conservancy was represented by its regional managing director for Africa, Ademola Ajagbe, underscoring the organisation's role as a long-term conservation partner.

The programme's focus on community conservancies is significant. Such institutions allow communities to participate directly in conservation while generating income, employment and sustainable enterprise at the local level. With more than 130 conser-

vancies targeted for support, Thamani Asili could substantially expand community ownership of conservation across the four landscapes.

The projected 20,000 jobs also signal the programme's economic ambition, particularly in areas where communities have historically borne the costs of living alongside wildlife without sufficient benefit.

KWS will serve as the principal implementing institution, coordinating with government agencies, county administrations and conservation partners. The programme's success will depend on effective accountability structures, sustained financing and meaningful community participation — conditions that Kanga said KWS is committed to meeting.

The Tsavo West launch marks a significant shift in how Kenya frames its conservation model: not as an environmental obligation managed by government agencies, but as a shared national enterprise in which communities, institutions and partners hold common responsibility for protecting the country's natural assets.

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From seedlings to paycheques: How Kenya's tree-growing drive is creating jobs for youth

Behind every million seedlings stands a chain of young Kenyans turning conservation into commerce

BY Faith Ogutu

@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's national tree-growing campaign is quietly becoming something more than an environmental initiative — for a growing number of young people across the country, it is becoming their first source of income.

As Kenya marked Mazingira Week with a target of 17.24 million trees, including the distribution of 5.3 million fruit-tree seedlings, the campaign raised a sharper question: can the drive to green the country also create lasting jobs for a generation struggling to find them? The evidence emerging from nurseries, forests and farming plots across Kenya suggests the answer is yes — but only for those who treat the opportunity as a business rather than a seasonal exercise.

Money enters the picture long before a tree reaches maturity. Income is generated at every stage: collecting seed, raising seedlings, filling nursery bags, grafting, watering, controlling pests, keeping records, packaging, transporting and selling. After planting, further work opens in landscaping, maintenance, ecological restoration and monitoring. For many young Kenyans, the national campaign is no longer just a planting season. It is becoming an enterprise.

In West Pokot, the 30-member Mukoe Group is already testing that possibility. Formed in August 2025 and

initially focused on potato farming, the group changed direction after member Phoebe Cheptoo returned from nursery training by the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship. Today the group tends between 8,000 and 10,000 seedlings — mango, avocado and yellow passion fruit — with an avocado seedling fetching around KSh150. “We are conserving the environment and also making profits from it,” said group member Gideon Mungole. The group is now seeking larger orders from county governments, schools and institutions involved in tree-growing programmes, recognising that scale is what will transform a promising start into a sustainable livelihood.

For Cheptoo, the nursery model offers young people a practical alternative to the paralysis of waiting for formal employment. “To the young people and the youths in agribusiness, this is the way to go. This should be the first employment. It is automatic rather than searching for white-collar jobs,” she said.

In Nyeri, 19-year-old Berrick Ayando saw a similar opening after learning that his community was restoring the degraded Nyeri Hill Forest. He established a nursery, and his first batch of 12,000 seedlings was purchased by the community at KSh10 each through support from Rural Outreach for Development in Kenya, generating approximately KSh120,000. He now has another 20,000 seedlings ready for sale and plans to continue

the venture after completing secondary school. His story illustrates how a restoration project can create a viable market for a young entrepreneur years before any tree produces timber or fruit.

A tree nursery carries one decisive commercial advantage: income can start early. Young entrepreneurs do not have to wait for trees to mature. Revenue begins flowing from the sale of quality seedlings, and producing those seedlings requires skilled labour — creating demand for people who can propagate plants, prepare nursery beds, graft fruit trees, manage stock, control pests, keep records, market products and arrange transport.

In Murang'a, Joyce Kinyua trained as an accountant but turned to agriculture after struggling to find formal work. Her nursery has handled approximately 200,000 assorted seedlings, including grafted avocado, mango, orange, pawpaw, macadamia and apple. She employs five young people for planting, watering, weeding and grafting. During the rainy season she has sold plants worth KSh8,000 from her town display and another KSh20,000 from her farm on a good day, with seedlings priced between KSh100 and KSh150. Yet her experience also reflects the limits of the model. Fertiliser, nursery bags and other inputs erode returns, while water and labour remain constant costs that do not pause between seasons.

In Narok, Nampaso Daniel started her nursery in 2019



Forestry Principal Secretary Gitonga Mugambi

and by 2023 employed six young people — two security guards, two waterers, one operations worker and one salesperson. Another operator, Annlynne Sanaipai, has reported selling more than 500 seedlings a day in the rainy season, generating more than KSh10,000 in profit on peak days, though demand drops sharply during dry months.

The government has taken notice. Forestry Principal Secretary Gitonga Mugambi has urged young Kenyans to treat tree nurseries as businesses rather than purely environmental projects. Speaking in Eldoret during the disbursement of the second tranche of NYOTA business capital, Mugambi described nursery enterprises as both profitable and conservation-minded, pointing to rising demand for high-value fruit seedlings — particularly avocado and coffee — as a market with both local and international reach. The State Department for Forestry is expanding nursery infrastructure and seedling production to support the 15-billion-tree programme, with a stated goal of raising

national tree cover to 30 per cent by 2032.

The opportunity extends well beyond the nursery gate. In towns and cities, young people are moving into landscaping, tree maintenance and urban greening. In Lamu, the Back to Eden self-help group of 37 women turned to grafted cashew seedling production, raising 39,600 seedlings. After training and improved market access, members' reported monthly income rose from KSh1,000 to KSh5,000. Peter Minang, Africa Director at the Landscape Alliance, argues the horizon is wider still, pointing to potential industries in timber, food, energy, biomaterials, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics that could emerge from Africa's forest and agroforestry resources if raw commodity exports are replaced by value addition.

In Elgeyo Marakwet, Hillary Kiplagat Kibiwott — who grew up around the Kessup Forest in a family that depended on charcoal — began tree growing in 2016 after concluding that the family's practice was unsustainable. On 22 and 23 April this year,

he planted 23,326 trees in 24 hours at Kessup Forest, surpassing the previous Guinness World Record of 23,060. “I would like to say I am a tree planter, but mainly I do tree growing, because every tree you plant, you wish that it grows to serve its purpose,” Kibiwott said.

Kenya's 15-billion-tree programme is vast in ambition. Its true success, however, will not be measured only in seedlings planted or hectares restored. It will be measured in whether the young people producing those seedlings can build businesses that outlast the planting campaigns — and in whether a nursery bag filled with soil today becomes, in time, a paycheck, an enterprise and a livelihood.

Disaster That distinction matters. A genuine emergency can simultaneously demand urgent intervention and expose opportunities for abuse

When disaster becomes an industry: From Covid-19 to El Niño and Ebola, who profits when Kenya panics?

“The true character of a government is revealed not only by how it confronts a crisis, but also by how honestly it accounts for the money spent in the name of saving lives.”



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

fkipchelimo@yahoo.com

Kenya has become familiar with a disturbing rhythm of national emergencies: alarming warnings, urgent official announcements, political declarations, hurried mobilisation of resources and promises of comprehensive preparedness. Then, sometimes, public attention moves on before citizens receive satisfactory answers about what was spent, what was delivered and what lessons were learned. COVID-19 came with a global health catastrophe; El Niño warnings brought fears of floods, displacement and destruction; now Ebola has renewed anxieties about infectious disease. These are different threats, grounded in different scientific processes, yet their intersection with public expenditure raises one uncomfortable question: are we becoming better at managing emergencies, or merely more accustomed to financing them? To ask this question is not to deny science or diminish human suffering. It is to insist that the protection of life and the protection of public money are inseparable responsibilities.

Historically, infectious diseases have shaped human civilisation long before modern medicine emerged. The 1918 influenza pandemic demon-

strated how rapidly an infectious agent could overwhelm societies. The discovery of viruses, advances in microbiology and the development of epidemiological surveillance subsequently transformed humanity's ability to identify and contain disease. Ebola itself was first recognised in 1976 following outbreaks in what are now the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Its scientific reality is beyond reasonable dispute. Similarly, El Niño is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon involving periodic changes in Pacific Ocean temperatures and atmospheric circulation, influencing rainfall patterns far beyond the Pacific. Neither Ebola nor El Niño needs political invention to pose a genuine threat.

COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, brought these scientific realities into ordinary households with extraordinary force. The world confronted illness, bereavement, disrupted education, economic hardship and unprecedented restrictions. Kenya, like many countries, had to procure medical supplies rapidly and strengthen its healthcare response. Yet the emergency also exposed serious weaknesses in public procurement. A 2020 special audit of KEMSA's COVID-19 expenditure identified irregularities and significant concerns about procurement controls and value for money. Parliament publicly examined the findings, including substantial supplies that remained in warehouses. These were documented accountability concerns, not proof

that the pandemic itself was fabricated or that every person involved in the response acted improperly.

That distinction matters. A genuine emergency can simultaneously demand urgent intervention and expose opportunities for abuse. The existence of corruption concerns does not invalidate the disease; the reality of the disease does not excuse corruption.

El Niño presents a comparable accountability challenge. Kenya's experience of destructive flooding, damaged infrastructure, displaced families and lost livelihoods makes early warnings and disaster preparedness essential. The Office of the Auditor-General published a performance audit of the government's response to floods in 2023, demonstrating that disaster management is a legitimate subject of independent scrutiny. The fundamental questions are straightforward: were vulnerable communities adequately prepared, were drainage and evacuation measures effective, did relief reach intended beneficiaries, and did expenditure produce measurable results? A warning is not a result, a committee is not preparedness, and a budget allocation is not proof of delivery.

Ebola now brings the debate into sharper focus. On 7 October 2026, Kenya's Ministry of Health announced an imported case linked to the Democratic Republic of Congo. By 20 October, Reuters reported nine confirmed cases associated with the same cluster, with authorities reporting no evidence of transmission beyond it at that time. Contact



When disaster becomes an industry:
From Covid-19 to El Niño and Ebola,
who profits when Kenya panics?

tracing, isolation, surveillance and healthcare-worker protection are therefore matters of genuine public importance. These developments should encourage informed cooperation rather than panic or complacency.

Nevertheless, the public is entitled to ask whether emergency spending is proportionate, transparent and effective. Why does the mobilisation of resources sometimes appear more urgent than the publication of clear accounts? Why do procurement questions attract attention after public anxiety has peaked? Why must citizens repeatedly demand evidence that supplies reached hospitals, flood victims received assistance and preparedness commitments translated into practical capacity? Such questions do not establish a conspiracy. They expose the need for stronger safeguards.

Is this a viral business, a pharmaceutical business or a purely scientific phenomenon beyond reproach? The answer requires intellectual honesty. Viruses and climate systems are not commercial inventions merely because responses to them generate markets. Pharmaceutical manufacturers, diagnostic laboratories, equipment suppliers and logistics companies may legitimately earn profits by providing essential goods and services. Profit alone is not proof of wrongdoing. The danger emerges when commercial interests distort scientific advice, procurement favours connected suppliers, prices

become indefensible or public health becomes secondary to private enrichment.

Science deserves respect precisely because its conclusions rest on evidence, testing and revision. Scientific recommendations must remain open to legitimate examination, while public authorities must explain the evidence behind interventions and acknowledge uncertainty where it exists. Equally, commercial allegations must be supported by evidence rather than suspicion. We should neither worship official pronouncements nor dismiss established science because institutions have previously failed.

The test of time will be whether Kenya learns from these recurring crises. Parliament, the Auditor-General, procurement oversight institutions, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, journalists and organised citizens must scrutinise emergency budgets, contracts, suppliers, deliveries and outcomes. Independent audits should follow major interventions, and proven irregularities should attract lawful consequences. Emergency procurement may require speed, but speed must never become a permanent li-

cence for secrecy.

Ultimately, citizens do not demand a government capable of preventing every virus, controlling every weather pattern or eliminating every disaster. They demand competent preparation, honest communication and demonstrable value for money. They want to know that public fear is being met with practical protection rather than political theatre, and that resources entrusted to government reach the people whose lives they are intended to safeguard. COVID-19, El Niño and Ebola may be scientifically distinct, but they converge on one enduring test of governance: whether public institutions can protect human life without compromising public integrity. Kenya must answer that question before the next emergency arrives—not after the headlines fade and accountability becomes yesterday's concern.

“When the danger passes, Kenya must not be left mourning its victims while wondering where the money went; a nation that can account for its emergencies is a nation better prepared to survive the next one.”



Farming Thrive for Good – East Africa, headquartered in Milimani Estate, Kitale and led by chief executive Dr Ambrose Motian, operates across 24 countries.

Learners, teachers graduate from thrive for good organic farming training

A five-day training in Kitale equips students, educators and communities with practical skills in organic farming, nutrition and income generation

BY Fridah and Daniel Kipchumba

@themkenyaintimes

A total of 103 learners and 14 teachers yesterday completed a five-day organic farming training workshop organised by Thrive for Good – East Africa, gaining practical skills in

sustainable food production, soil health, natural medicine and income generation that the institution intends to extend into the wider community.

The training was held at Bikeke Comprehensive School in Trans Nzoia County, where participants drawn

from the school's 4-K Club engaged in both theoretical lessons and hands-on practical sessions designed to equip them with techniques applicable at home, in school gardens and across their communities. The club operated under the guidance of patrons Verah Katikit and Joseph Lumuli,



Students receiving their certificates after agricultural workshop

who directed students on how to maximise available local resources for greater agricultural productivity.

Thrive for Good – East Africa, headquartered in Milimani Estate, Kitale and led by chief executive Dr Ambrose Motian, operates across 24 countries. Its mandate centres on empowering communities and institutions with knowledge of organic farming, nutrition, natural medicine and income-generating activities — all using locally available resources rather than expensive external inputs.

The organisation's team at the workshop included Frida Juma, who oversees human resources, government programmes, communication and field operations; Isaac Kayanda, responsible for programme quality and implementation; Peter Kebaso, the field reporting coordinator for Kenya; and Mohamed Ramadhan, a field staff member and trainer. Juma pledged continued support to the school in achieving its agricultural production goals.

As part of its sustainability strategy, Thrive for Good provides trained participants with basic farming tools and seeds to help them establish and maintain productive gardens following the training period. The approach is deliberate: equipping communities to grow nutritious food using what is already within reach, reducing dependence on cost-

ly inputs while strengthening household food security.

Ronald Francis Toili Wamalwa, head teacher at Bikeke Comprehensive School, used the occasion to underscore the broader significance of the programme. He urged both learners and teachers not to keep the knowledge to themselves but to take it back into their homes and communities, arguing that the true measure of the training's value would be in how widely its lessons were shared and applied.

"The benefits of this programme will be far greater if participants put their learning into practice and share it with others," Wamalwa said. "Agriculture is central to improving livelihoods and ensuring food security, and that work begins here."

The sentiment was echoed by two students who addressed the gathering. Samson Happy of Grade 6 and Ian Simiyu of Grade 8 both spoke on the importance of agriculture in school life, reflecting a level of engagement that organisers said was evident throughout the five days of training.

The graduation ceremony, at which participants received certificates marking the completion of the workshop, brought together school leadership, community members and the Thrive for Good team in a demonstration of the collaborative model the organisation promotes — one in which institutions, communities and

external partners share responsibility for building lasting agricultural capacity.

The timing of the workshop also carries strategic significance. A delegation of visitors from Canada is scheduled to arrive at Bikeke Comprehensive School on December 17 to assess the agricultural projects currently under way at the institution. The visit is expected to provide an opportunity to showcase what has been achieved and demonstrate how the knowledge gained through the training is already being translated into practical activity on the ground.

For the learners who participated, the workshop represents more than a certificate. It offers a practical foundation for self-reliance at a time when food security remains an urgent concern for many households in Trans Nzoia County and beyond. For the teachers, it provides tools to embed agricultural education more meaningfully into school life rather than treating it as an academic subject disconnected from daily reality.

Thrive for Good – East Africa envisions a world in which communities with limited access to food can grow what they need to feed themselves. Yesterday's graduation at Bikeke Comprehensive School was one modest but meaningful step towards that goal.



If you don't like the rules



Reach the top and change them.

What is right and wrong, good and bad
Recognise it all, and choose what is good.

All of a sudden, we can't change anything,
If it should be changed,
One should reach the top to change it.

Stop complaining, blaming, and finding fault,

Instead, find a remedy, find a solution.
All rules are made by higher authorities,
To do anything, one should reach that place.

If you have power, you have the power to change,
Anytime, anywhere.

So climb with all your might,
Work when others sleep at night,
Reach the top with determination and light.

If you don't like rules,
Reach the top and change them.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Cuddalore dist
Tamilnadu India

Wings I never knew



Change arrives without permission,
It feels like failing the mission,
The ground beneath my feet slips away,
I fall where the dark cliffs lay.

Am I breaking? Fear seeps in,
Something shatters, chaos fills in,
Everyone smiles, why only me?
My path was straight, can't you see?

Grief is heavy, my heart cries,
The road ahead no longer lies,
I pause, and courage enters slow,
Though legs are tied, hope starts to grow.

The path is broken, I can't move on,
So I grow wings and carry on,
The sky may try to block my flight,
I pour my life, my guiding light.

I never knew I had these wings,
Now change arrives, my heart sings,
I look above and aim for the moon,
This change for me has come as a boon.

RAJITHA D
Creative writer,
GGHSS PADAPPAL
KANCHEEPURAM

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

Brave boy



In a village there lived a boy called Arun. Arun was sitting lonely, he was sad, and he had a paper in his hand. It was the last letter written by his dead mother. In that letter she wrote my son don't stop your studies in any situation. In their village there was a water scarcity after his mother's death his father became a drunkard and asked Arun to go to work and earn money. He was not able to attend the school regularly sometimes even late to school. Sometimes he used to sit outside school, sometimes used to sit outside the class and listen to the lessons. The teacher noticed him and arranged a scholarship to continue his education. There

was a science exhibition, and the teacher asked him to participate in the exhibition. He did not have money to buy things for the project. So he collected all the old electric wires and components with that he prepared a project to find out groundwater level to dig the wells. Everyone was surprised by Arun's project. The judges declared him the winner. His father also comes to that exhibition as a car driver to one of the judges seeing all his father realised this mistake. One of the judges offered admission in his school and promised to help him in studies. The next day he was sitting in the railway station with the letter, an administration letter in a reputed school and bright future ahead...

By S.S Nikshith
VII std
PUMS Chinna Obulapuram
Gummidipoondi
Tiruvallur Dt
Tamilnadu.

The Almighty God



O God! O God!
Thou art the Almighty God,
Thou hast divine power,
Who created the whole world,
Thou art the real Creator.
In pleasant times, people rejoice,
In sorrow, people weep,
These are the ways of humans,
These are Thy principles.

Thy creation is so fine,
Thy style is so high,
Thy thought is so noble,
Because Thou art so great.

Thou art our Father,
Who looketh after us,
Who created all creatures,
Who created the colourful birds.

Who created the mountains,
Who created the rivers,
Who created the aquatic animals,
All protected by Thee.

Thou livest within our hearts,
Thou art within our souls,
Thou art our supporter,
Who never forgets nor forsakes us.

Even though we are human beings,
We cannot perceive Thy form,
Yet we know
That Thou art our Protector.

There is a wish in our hearts,
There is a dream in our souls,
May all people in the world live in peace,
And may we all live joyfully!

Composed by - Prakash Roy
(Samastipur, Bihar, India)

Ominous Silence



I entered my work shelter
to ominous silence,
shocked at what my ears could suddenly hear —

turning leaves of a notebook,
squealing chairs,
Gentle humming of a friend I wouldn't enjoy

otherwise,
cutlery making music with lunch boxes,
a gentle cough sounding like loud thunder.

Dripping water in the lavatory,
the yawn of a fellow colleague,
the clicking of an analog watch.

Fellas in the bay halting their doom-scrolling,
some listening to what I enjoyed,
few ignoring the silence,
all heads up to see each other,
wondering —

A power cut.

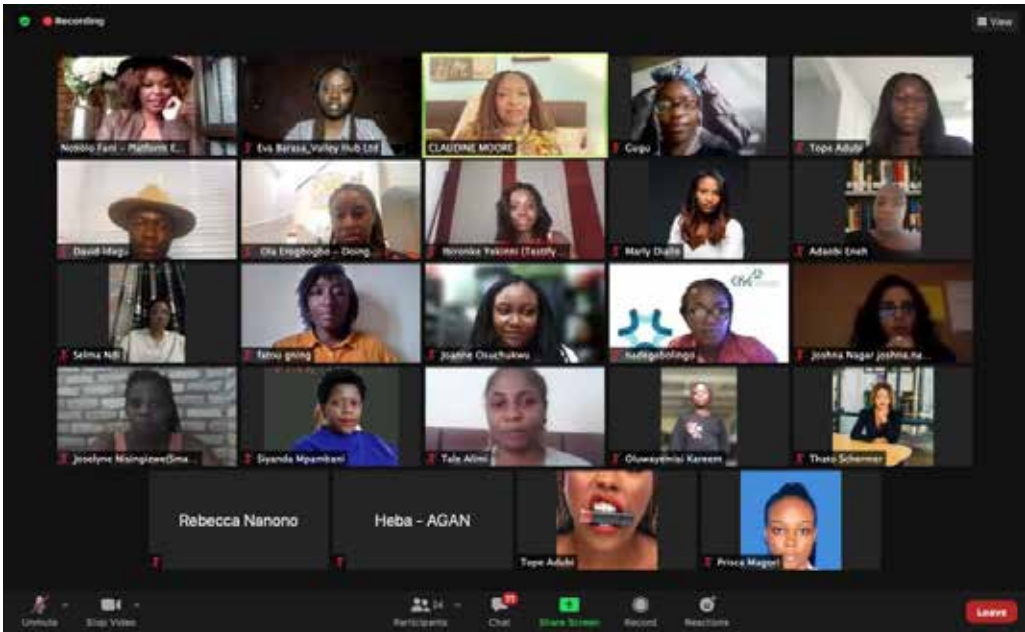
Paul Israel I
Head of the Department, English FIITJEE Global
School, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India.

Women Launched on Africa Day in 2020, the program has grown steadily, drawing applications from 37 African countries, a 253% increase from its first year.

Future Is Female Mentorship Program opens applications for 6th edition, to unveil top 25 at Africa Fintech Summit in Kigali

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyaintimes

The Future Is Female Mentorship Program, Africa’s first PR and communications mentorship initiative dedicated exclusively to female tech founders, has opened applications for its sixth edition. Founder Claudine Moore, who is also Managing Director of Allison Worldwide, said applications are now live on F6S and will close on November 13, 2026. The Top 25 finalists for the 2026 cohort will be unveiled on November 19, 2026, at the Africa Fintech Summit (AFTS) in Kigali, Rwanda. The summit runs from November 18 to 20 and will bring together fintech founders, investors, policymakers and innovation leaders from across the continent.



Future Is Female Mentorship Program during the Zoom meeting

“As part of its presence at AFTS Kigali, the program will also host a dedicated masterclass for female founders attending the summit, fo-

cused on founder visibility, communications strategy, and positioning for growth, partnerships and investment,” Moore said.

Launched on Africa Day in 2020, the program has grown steadily, drawing applications from 37 African countries, a 253% increase from its first

year. Having previously received support from Google and Salesforce, this year’s edition will feature expanded ecosystem partnerships across technology, media, venture capital, business development and innovation. These will bring finalists additional mentorship, training and advisory support. “The relaunch of The Future Is Female Mentorship Program marks an exciting new chapter for the incredible community of African female founders we have built over the years,” Moore said. The program is free and fully virtual. It will offer specialized masterclasses and tailored sessions on communications and visibility strategies, founder storytelling and brand positioning, media relations and thought leadership, digital marketing and audience

engagement, personal branding, stakeholder communications and investor visibility, and business growth communications. “The program has always been about more than mentorship; it is about creating an ecosystem where female founders can truly thrive,” Moore said. “As we return in 2026 with expanded partnerships, broader industry expertise and new collaborators, we are excited to provide even greater support, opportunities and impact for finalists across Africa and beyond.” Special consideration will be given to startups focused on AI, health, education, finance, agriculture and sustainability, as well as those addressing the needs of African women and girls. The 2026 edition continues its collaboration with F6S as the application platform partner, and with the Africa Fintech Summit for the finalist announcement and masterclass. Previous partners have included TechCabal, Google for Startups Accelerator, Women Founders Africa Program, Salesforce Ventures Impact Fund and Africa Communications Week.

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Agriculture This attitude raises an important question: why should agriculture be associated with failure? Is farming less intellectually demanding than sitting in an office?

Agriculture is not a refuge for idlers: Why we treat farming as a last resort

Kenya's dismissive attitude towards agriculture undermines one of its most vital economic sectors

BY Ashford Kimani

@themkenyaintimes

Kenya's dismissive attitude towards agriculture undermines one of its most vital economic sectors

By Ashford Kimani

Every time I overhear elderly people, those approaching retirement or unemployed graduates talking about their futures, one subject features prominently: agriculture. They speak of venturing into farming as though they have suddenly discovered a forgotten treasure.

What strikes me most is not their interest in farming but the attitude with which they discuss it. Their conversations suggest that agriculture is an occupation reserved for people with nothing better to do — a last resort for those who have exhausted every other option. Why do we continue treating farming as a refuge for the desperate rather than a serious economic enterprise worthy of ambition, investment and professional respect?

There is something fundamentally wrong with a society that regards farming as a fallback. We spend years educating our children, urging them towards prestigious careers, white-collar employment and the corporate ladder. We celebrate the doctor, the lawyer, the engineer and the banker. Their achievements are proof of success. Yet when those same people lose their jobs, retire or fail to secure the positions they expected after graduation, they suddenly remember that the soil exists. Agriculture becomes their plan B — too ordinary for someone with ambitions, yet conveniently available for someone whose ambitions have stalled.

This attitude raises an important question: why should agriculture be associated with failure? Is farming less in-



tellectually demanding than sitting in an office? Does managing crops, livestock, agricultural finances, market fluctuations, labour, weather patterns and supply chains require less intelligence than managing files and attending meetings? Anyone who has seriously engaged in commercial farming understands it is a complex undertaking demanding planning, technical knowledge, patience, financial discipline and sound decision-making. The successful farmer is not necessarily the person who owns the largest piece of land but the one who understands how to turn available resources into sustainable profit.

Our education system and social environment have helped perpetuate this misconception. From childhood, learners are encouraged to study hard so they can obtain good jobs and avoid the hardships associated with farming. Agriculture is treated as a school subject to be passed rather than an industry to be explored. Young people consequently grow up associating farming with pover-

ty, physical exhaustion and low educational achievement — rarely seeing it as a field where scientific knowledge, innovation, entrepreneurship and technology can combine to create wealth.

The irony is that agriculture remains central to our survival. Regardless of professional status, everyone needs food. Teachers need food, doctors need food, engineers need food — even those who dismiss farming need food. Salaries and business revenues cannot replace the fundamental importance of agricultural production. We may postpone buying a television or delay a holiday, but we cannot permanently postpone eating. Food production is a necessity, and those who produce it deserve recognition, not condescension.

In Kenya, agriculture offers opportunities across numerous value chains: crop production, dairy farming, poultry, horticulture, aquaculture, beekeeping, agroforestry, seed production, food processing, storage, transportation and marketing. A person does not need to own hundreds of acres

to participate. With appropriate planning, market research and access to resources, ventures suited to one's land, capital and skills are well within reach. What matters is not the glamour attached to the activity but whether the enterprise is viable, productive and sustainable.

That said, we must avoid romanticising agriculture. Farming is not a magical solution to unemployment, retirement anxiety or financial difficulty. It carries genuine risks: unpredictable weather, pests, diseases, expensive inputs, limited market access, post-harvest losses and volatile commodity prices. Anyone entering agriculture without preparation may simply exchange unemployment for debt. The answer is not to encourage everyone to rush into farming because other opportunities have failed. Rather, people should approach agriculture with the same seriousness they would give any other business.

This is particularly important for retiring public servants and private-sector employees. Retirement should not automati-

cally mean buying land, keeping a few cows and planting crops without a clear business plan. Years of employment may provide savings, experience and useful networks, but none of those advantages confer agricultural expertise. Before investing retirement benefits, prospective farmers should study their intended enterprises, assess market demand, understand production costs and seek professional guidance where necessary. Retirement savings deserve protection, not impulsive investment driven by the assumption that farming is easy.

The same caution applies to unemployed graduates. A degree should not become a source of shame when formal employment fails to materialise, nor should agriculture be seen as an admission of defeat. Graduates bring skills that can meaningfully contribute to agricultural transformation. Those trained in information technology can develop digital solutions for farmers. Accountants can improve financial management. Engineers can support irrigation and mechanisation.

Marketing graduates can connect producers to markets. Even graduates from unrelated disciplines can acquire the relevant skills and build successful enterprises. Education should equip people to solve problems, not merely qualify them to apply for jobs.

Our society must therefore change the language it uses when discussing farming. Instead of asking why an educated person is wasting time in agriculture, we should ask whether that person is creating value, producing food, employing others and building a sustainable enterprise. Instead of assuming that someone who retires into farming has run out of options, we should examine whether they are making a deliberate, informed investment. Equally, we must stop presenting agriculture as an effortless escape from unemployment. Farming deserves neither contempt nor blind glorification. It deserves informed engagement.

The problem is not that elderly people, retirees and unemployed graduates are considering agriculture. Their interest could, in fact, strengthen food production, create employment and stimulate rural economies. The problem is the mindset that leads them to approach farming as though they are settling for something inferior. If agriculture is good enough to rescue us when salaries disappear, why is it not good enough to inspire us while we are still employed?

The soil does not discriminate between a professor and a school dropout. It does not reward academic certificates, former job titles or social standing. It responds to knowledge, preparation, appropriate investment and effective management. Agriculture is not a dumping ground for frustrated ambitions. It is an industry capable of supporting livelihoods, generating wealth and sustaining nations. The sooner we stop treating farming as a last resort and start approaching it as a serious business, the sooner we will appreciate that working the soil is not a sign of failure — it is an opportunity to create value.

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Competition law History does not whisper here; it shouts. Colonial commerce in East Africa was never free.

Kenya's competition law as the velvet glove on AfCFTA's iron fist of unequal power



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyaintimes

In the financial year 2024/25 the Competition Authority of Kenya processed 128 merger applications and investigated 75 behavioural antitrust matters 28 of them cartels, 39 alleged abuses of dominance nevertheless the OECD's 2026 peer review records a starker truth: Kenya has issued no formal infringement decision for abuse of dominance in more than a decade. Eight large banks still command nearly 70 per cent of the weighted market-share index. Commercial state-owned enterprises generate revenues equivalent to at least 4.2 per cent of GDP while crowding competitive sectors. These are not isolated statistics; they are the living architecture of unequal power dressed in the language of open markets. The African Continental Free Trade Area promises a single market of 1.4 billion people. Kenya's competition framework, however, remains calibrated more to manage concentration than to dismantle it thereby threatening the very democratic economic sovereignty the free-trade project claims to deliver.

History does not whisper here; it shouts. Colonial commerce in East Africa was never free. It was a system of chartered monopolies and racialized market access that concentrated economic power in few hands while the majority labored at the margins. Independence promised rupture. Instead, the post-colonial state often substituted one form of concentrated power for another state corporations, politically connected conglomerates, and regulatory forbearance that allowed private empires to ossify. The Competition Act of 2010 was meant to mark a decisive break: a modern statute with tools against cartels, dominance, and anti-competitive mergers. Sixteen years later the tools exist on paper



Kenya's competition law
as the *velvet glove* on AfCFTA's
iron fist of unequal power

while the market structure still mirrors the old hierarchy. Telecom remains heavily concentrated. Retail and manufacturing investigations recur. Logistics associations attempt price-fixing. The law is present; the power to reshape markets remains largely theoretical.

Consider the correlation that should disturb every serious observer of African integration. Tariff liberalisation under AfCFTA is designed to expand opportunity. Yet private restrictions cartels, abuse of superior bargaining position, strategic market positions in digital platforms can recreate the very barriers governments have dismantled. World Bank estimates suggest that lowering barriers to competition and trade could raise Kenya's real GDP growth by several percentage points and expand formal employment. The inverse is equally true: if dominant firms and coordinated behaviour capture the gains of continental openness, the promised 7 per cent continental income boost by 2035 becomes a transfer of surplus upward rather than a broadening of prosperity. Logistics costs already erase tariff advantages for many

Kenyan SMEs attempting to reach Rwanda or Nigeria. When a small producer pays almost as much to move goods as the goods themselves are worth, "open markets" become an ironic slogan.

The Competition (Amendment) Bill of 2026 attempts to close some gaps. It introduces notions of digital markets, strategic market position, and abuse of superior bargaining power concepts that do not always require the old 40 or 50 per cent market-share thresholds. These are necessary updates. Yet legislation without institutional courage is calligraphy on water. The Authority's resources remain constrained relative to the scale of the economy and the multiplicity of overlapping regimes national, COMESA, EAC, and the emerging AfCFTA Competition Protocol. Businesses face compliance costs inflated by concurrent jurisdictions. Legal uncertainty becomes a tax on the ambitious and a shield for the entrenched. The protocol itself, adopted in 2023, correctly identifies cartels, abuse of dominance, and anti-competitive mergers as threats to continental trade. Its ef-

fectiveness will depend on whether national authorities treat it as a ceiling or a floor.

Democratic economic sovereignty is not the right of a government to protect favoured firms. It is the capacity of a people to shape the rules of exchange so that markets serve broad welfare rather than narrow capture. When eight banks control seven-tenths of the measured market, when mobile money and data markets exhibit persistent concentration, when state enterprises operate with soft budget constraints in competitive sectors, the claim of sovereignty rings hollow. Sovereignty without competitive markets is merely the freedom of the powerful to write the rules. AfCFTA without robust competition enforcement risks becoming a continental stage on which the same actors perform under a larger spotlight.

The literary irony is almost perfect. We open the borders with one hand while the other hand, through under-enforced competition rules and regulatory complexity, keeps the ladders of entry carefully guarded. The small manufacturer in industrial

area Nairobi, the horticultural exporter in Naivasha, the digital start-up in Kilimani all are invited to the continental banquet only to discover that the seating chart was drawn long ago. History's lesson is unambiguous: markets do not democratize themselves. They require deliberate, continuous reconstruction of the rules that govern them.

Action, therefore, cannot remain rhetorical. Parliament must pass the amendment bill with provisions that give the Authority real teeth in digital and bargaining-power cases, and it must fund the institution adequately. The Competition Authority must move beyond investigations to decisive infringement findings and structural remedies where markets are already concentrated.

The National Treasury and line ministries must confront the distortions created by the 209 state-owned enterprises operating in competitive spaces; commercial SOEs that cannot compete without privilege should be reformed or exited. At the continental level, Kenya should champion rapid operationalisation of the AfCFTA Competition Protocol with clear cooperation mechanisms that reduce rather than multiply jurisdictional friction. Civil society and the media must treat competition enforcement as a democracy issue, not a technical footnote. Business associations that once coordinated minimum tariffs must now compete on merit or face the consequences.

The alternative is a continental free-trade area that expands the theatre of inequality rather than the circle of opportunity. Open markets without equal power are merely larger cages. Kenya's competition framework stands at a hinge moment. It can remain a sophisticated instrument that manages the status quo with elegance, or it can become the architecture of genuine democratic economic sovereignty one that treats the African Continental Free Trade Area not as a gift to the already powerful but as a hard-won commons for the many. The data are clear. The history is instructive. The choice is categorical. Reconstruct the law, or watch the promise of open markets dissolve into the familiar pattern of unequal power wearing continental colours.

The writer is a social commentator.

Health Sleep is the second, and the most underrated. Neuroscience confirms that sleep facilitates memory consolidation and emotional processing

Best chances of mental wellness: Strategies for sustained well-being

Practical, evidence-based steps that can make a genuine difference to how you think, feel and function



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes

Mental wellness is no longer a peripheral concern — it sits at the heart of how we learn, work and contribute to the world around us. The World Health Organisation defines mental health not merely as the absence of disorder, but as a state in which a person realises their abilities, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and contributes to their community. That definition sets a high bar. Meeting it requires intention, not luck.

The first step, I have found, is deceptively simple: name what you feel. Research in affective science shows that accurately labelling emotions — a process known as affect labelling — reduces reactivity in the brain and improves emotional regulation. Many of my students tell me they are stressed, but stress is a vague category. I ask them to be more precise. Are you tired, disappointed, afraid or lonely? I teach a simple five-minute journaling method: today I feel this, because of this, and what I need is this. When students practise it consistently, self-awareness improves and rumination reduces. That precise naming is the first and most accessible best chance.

Sleep is the second, and the most underrated. Neuroscience confirms that sleep facilitates memory consolidation and emotional processing. Adults need seven to eight hours. Chronic sleep of fewer than six hours is associated with a twofold increase in anxiety symptoms. I protect a consistent sleep window in



my own life and teach others to do the same: no screens sixty minutes before bed, a dark and cool room, and a worry book beside the pillow to capture intrusive thoughts before they spiral. Sleep is not laziness. It is a biological requirement for resilience.

Movement comes before mindset. The link between physical activity and mental health is well established. The WHO recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, and meta-analyses show this reduces mild to moderate depression by 25 to 30 per cent. In my own experience, thirty minutes of brisk walking — without a phone, preferably in green spaces — works better than trying to think your way out of stress. Movement releases endorphins and builds self-efficacy. You cannot reason your way out of a body that has not moved.

No one is well alone. The WHO Commission on Social Connection now identifies loneliness as a significant health risk, comparable in impact to smoking. I teach what I call the three-person rule: be intentional about three relationships — one who mentors you upward, one who walks beside you as a peer, and one you mentor downward. That triangle provides guidance, solidarity and purpose simultaneously. I have also learned,

through experience, to distinguish constructive feedback from general opinion. If you rise too high, some will say you are proud. If you stay quiet, you are left out. If you live to please everyone, you will lose yourself. Knowing the difference between useful criticism and noise is itself a resilience skill.

Purpose, I have found, comes from daily usefulness rather than grand ambition. Many young Kenyans I work with are anxious not because they lack qualifications, but because they lack a sense of being useful today. Self-Determination Theory identifies competence, autonomy and relatedness as core human needs. I encourage one small useful task before 9 a.m. — helping a child read, organising a workspace, completing a paragraph. That small win builds momentum. For first-generation learners especially, it builds what the psychologist Albert Bandura calls self-efficacy — the strongest predictor of persistence through difficulty.

Boundaries are equally fundamental. Psychological literature defines them as limits that protect time, emotional energy and finances. Many of us were raised to say yes even when we are breaking. That is not humility — it is self-neglect. I practise three personal boundaries: a time boundary,

because I am not available after 9 p.m.; a financial boundary, because I can give this amount and not more; and an

emotional boundary, because I can listen for twenty minutes and then I need to rest. I teach students to communicate these limits kindly, in their own language, and to repeat them without guilt. People who respect you will adjust. People who use you will be offended — and that reaction is itself useful information.

Finally, seek help early. The treatment gap for mental health in low and middle-income countries exceeds 75 per cent. Most people wait until functioning is severely impaired before reaching out. I use a stepped-care model with those I teach: level one is trusted community support — a teacher, elder or faith lead-

er; level two is a peer support circle for shared skill-building; level three is professional support from a counsellor, psychologist or clinical officer when symptoms such as persistent low mood, sleep disturbance, appetite changes, constant worry or irritability persist beyond two weeks. Seeking help is not weakness. It is health literacy. Just as you would not set your own broken leg, you should not try to mend a broken spirit alone.

Wellness is not an imported concept. Our grandparents practised these principles through communal storytelling, shared labour and collective reflection. Modern research simply gives new language to that old wisdom. Name your feelings precisely, protect your sleep, move daily, invest in three key relationships, create daily usefulness, maintain your boundaries and seek help before the crisis arrives. You have one life — mental wellness is what allows you to live it fully.

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Uganda The contrast makes for entertaining graduation banter. Beneath the jokes and competing claims, however, lies a more important conversation — one Uganda cannot afford to overlook

Beyond the banter: Uganda's university rivalry should be about impact

The Makerere-Victoria debate exposes a deeper question about what higher education is actually for



BY Daniel Tusiimukye K'abaasa
@themkenyatimes



Makerere University

Uganda's graduation season has arrived with its familiar rituals — photographs, congratulatory messages and, increasingly, arguments about which university deserves greater recognition. This year the spotlight has fallen on Makerere University and Victoria University, with social media serving as the arena for competing claims about institutional prestige, academic standing and the value of their respective qualifications.

For some, the debate is about history. Makerere, established in 1922, has built a reputation as one of Africa's most prominent institutions of higher learning. Its alumni populate the upper ranks of government, business and academia. Its contribution to Uganda's intellectual and professional development is inseparable from the country's own history.

Victoria University, a private institution established in 2013, represents a different chapter in the same story. Its growth reflects the expanding role of private universities in broadening access to higher education and responding to changing expectations around professional training and the world of work.

The contrast makes for entertaining graduation banter. Beneath the jokes and competing claims, however, lies a more important conversation — one Uganda cannot afford to overlook.

There is nothing inherently wrong with institutional rivalry. Competition can push universities to strengthen their academic programmes, improve student experiences and demonstrate the value they offer to learners and employers. Heritage

matters. Academic standards matter. Teaching quality, research output and professional training all matter.

But when the conversation centres almost entirely on reputation, it risks losing sight of the actual purpose of higher education.

A university should not be judged solely by the age of its buildings, the prominence of its alumni or the recognition attached to its name. It should also be assessed by the knowledge it generates, the problems it solves and the opportunities it creates.

Uganda faces challenges that demand practical, research-driven responses: agricultural productivity, affordable healthcare, energy access, industrial development, financial inclusion and digital transformation. Universities have a critical role in addressing these challenges. They bring together researchers, students, industry professionals and public institutions whose combined knowledge, properly directed, can translate into meaningful progress.

The question is therefore not simply whether Makerere is more established than Victoria, or whether a younger institution can challenge a more experienced one. It is whether

both universities — alongside every other institution in the country — are adequately translating academic work into solutions that improve people's lives.

Every year, thousands of Ugandans graduate with qualifications in engineering, business, information technology, agriculture and health sciences. For many, graduation marks the beginning of a difficult transition. Some find employment in their fields; others spend months searching. A number turn to entrepreneurship, often without sufficient access to capital, mentorship or the practical networks required to build sustainable enterprises.

This raises uncomfortable questions. Are students given sufficient opportunities to develop products, test ideas and engage with real-world challenges before completing their studies? Are universities actively connecting promising innovations to investors and partners? Are academic programmes evolving quickly enough to reflect what employers and emerging industries actually need?

These questions deserve more attention than any debate about graduation ceremony aesthetics.

Universities should be spaces where students not only absorb existing knowledge but create new knowledge, develop solutions and identify opportunities where others see obstacles. A graduate should be equipped to pursue employment, contribute to research, establish an enterprise or improve an existing system — not simply collect a certificate.

One of the most meaningful measures of any university is its ability to connect research with practical application. Engineering projects could inform the development of affordable machinery. Agricultural research could improve crop yields and post-harvest handling. Work in financial technology could expand access to affordable services. For such outcomes to become routine, universities need stronger industry connections and clearer pathways from research to implementation.

This requires investment in laboratories, innovation hubs, incubation programmes and intellectual property support. It also requires universities to reward practical innovation alongside conventional academic achievement, and for industry to regard universities as partners rather than simply graduate suppliers.

The Makerere-Victoria debate offers an opportunity to reframe how Ugandans assess university performance. Institutional rankings provide useful information but cannot tell the full story. A more complete assessment would examine research quality, graduate outcomes, entrepreneurship rates, industry collaboration and community impact. How many viable businesses have emerged from university programmes? How many research projects have produced policies or products that address real needs? How effectively do universities support graduates who choose to create their own employment?

These questions cannot be answered by graduation photographs. They require evidence, sustained evaluation and institutional honesty.

Not every graduate must become an entrepreneur, and not every research project will yield an immediate commercial result. Universities serve multiple purposes — advancing knowledge, preserving culture, developing critical thinking and training professionals for essential public and private services. Nevertheless, every institution should be able to demonstrate how its work contributes to national development.

Uganda needs universities that are proud of their heritage without being constrained by it, and institutions that are ambitious about the future while remaining accountable for the quality of education they provide. It needs universities that produce competent graduates, support meaningful research, encourage entrepreneurship and work closely with the industries that will absorb their talent.

The graduation banter will eventually fade. The photographs will disappear from social media timelines, and next year's season will bring another round of comparisons.

The challenges facing Uganda, however, will remain.

The country needs solutions to persistent development problems, businesses capable of creating jobs, technologies that raise productivity and graduates equipped to contribute meaningfully to a changing economy. No single university will achieve that alone.

Let Makerere and Victoria compete. Let every university in Uganda challenge the others to do better. But let the competition be measured by something more than institutional reputation.

The real question is not which university is more prestigious. It is how much each one contributes to building the Uganda that its graduates deserve to inherit.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Students pay the price as lecturers' strike drags on

By Job Mwavua

Thousands of university students yesterday remained stranded as a lecturers' strike continued to paralyse academic programmes across the country, with no resolution in sight. The industrial action has halted lectures, examinations and consultations, leaving students either confined to silent campuses or back home, their academic calendars in disarray. For many, the financial toll is mounting fast. "Most of us have already spent heavily on accommodation, food and transport. With learning suspended, we are left wondering how we will recover the lost time," one student said. The disruption threatens to cascade through the entire academic cycle. Examinations face postponement, graduation ceremonies hang in the balance, and the admission of incoming students could be delayed — compounding an



already difficult situation for institutions already stretched by competing demands. University administrations and lecturers' representatives have held talks, but an agreement has proved elusive. Students' leaders have urged both sides to return to the table without preconditions, warning that continued inaction risks irreversible damage to an academic year that cannot simply be reconstructed. The strike lays bare a familiar and frustrating pattern in public university management — dis-

putes that escalate to the point where students, who bear no responsibility for the underlying grievances, absorb the heaviest consequences. Lecturers have legitimate concerns that deserve a serious response. University management has institutional obligations it cannot defer indefinitely. Government holds the financial levers that could unlock a settlement today. Every day of inaction is a day stolen from students who have done nothing wrong.

When police attack a journalist, democracy pays the price

By Yvonne Wambui

Police officers arrested and allegedly assaulted Citizen TV journalist Francis Ode while he covered demonstrations against rising fuel prices along Kimathi Street in Nairobi's Central Business District, in an incident that has drawn swift condemnation from the Kenya Editors Guild and the Crime Journalists Association of Kenya. Ode identified himself as a member of the press. Officers ignored him and took him to Central Police Station. He was later released. That release, however, resolves nothing. The questions that remain are more important than the ones that prompted his detention. Why was he arrested? Were proper procedures followed? Was unnecessary force used? And who bears responsibility if misconduct is established? These are not questions the public should have to ask twice. A journalist covering a demon-

stration is not a participant in it. Their job is to observe, record and report — to ensure that citizens understand what is happening in their streets, in their name, with their taxes. When officers use force to prevent that work, they are not maintaining order. They are undermining the public's right to information at precisely the moment it matters most. Kenya's Constitution is unambiguous. Article 34 protects media freedom. That protection must mean something beyond the printed page. It must hold on Kimathi Street, at public gatherings and wherever journalists carry out their duties under pressure. The National Police Service and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority must investigate this incident transparently and act on whatever they find. Silence from those institutions would itself be an answer — and not one the public should accept.



Attacks on journalists do not only harm the individual reporter. They create fear among those assigned to cover similar events, shrink the space for independent reporting and leave citizens without the information they need to hold power to account. When fuel prices rise, when protesters take to the streets, when security forces respond — the public has a right to know what happened and how. Francis Ode was trying to tell them. That should never be a reason to be arrested.

Kenya's exam season: The weight students carry alone



By Nicholas Mwendwa

Thousands of Kenya's secondary school candidates yesterday began one of the most consequential weeks of their young lives, sitting the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations that will shape their futures — yet the system designed to support them continues to fall short of what they deserve. The Kenya National Examinations Council has done its part: timetables issued, centres supervised, logistics coordinated. Teachers have drilled, parents have prayed and students have studied through the night. The machinery of examination season is running. What is harder to measure is whether the weight being placed on these young people is matched by the preparation, resources and genuine support they are owed. Examination malpractice remains the most visible symptom of a deeper problem. The government has introduced strict penalties for teachers and students caught cheating, and rightly so. Malpractice corrodes the integrity of every legitimate result and devalues the certificate that honest candidates work years to earn. But penalties alone do not address why candidates resort to cheating in the first place. When

classrooms are overcrowded, textbooks scarce and teachers stretched beyond reasonable limits, the temptation to seek shortcuts does not arise from moral failure alone. It arises from a system that has not adequately prepared the students it then holds to account. The burden falls unevenly. A candidate at a well-resourced national school enters the examination room with years of structured revision, experienced teachers and comprehensive materials. A candidate at an under-resourced county school in a marginalised area may have sat examinations without reliable electricity, sufficient teachers or adequate laboratory equipment. Both will receive a certificate that carries the same name. The difference in what each was given to succeed is rarely acknowledged publicly. This is not a call to lower standards. Rigour in national examinations matters — for individual futures and for national credibility. But rigour must be accompanied by equity. Telling a student in a poorly resourced school to approach their examinations with confidence is not guidance. It is a platitude dressed as encouragement. Real support looks like trained teachers who remain in post, functional laboratories, adequate revision

materials and a school environment where learning is genuinely possible. Teachers carry a particular responsibility during this period. Explaining difficult concepts clearly, answering student questions without impatience and providing calm, honest guidance in the final days before examinations can make a measurable difference to how a candidate performs. Motivation matters. A student told they are capable, and shown why, is more likely to sit an examination with composure than one left to manage their anxiety alone. To every KCSE candidate sitting examinations across the country: the pressure you feel is real, and it is not a measure of your worth. Work with what you have prepared, read every question carefully, manage your time and trust the effort you have put in. The examination is important, but it is one chapter — not the whole story. Kenya's education system will be judged not by how many certificates it issues, but by whether every candidate, regardless of where they studied, was given a genuine chance to earn one.

SPORTS NEWS

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BREAKING NEWS



Sports >> *The Georgian winger faces surgery and a lengthy rehabilitation after tearing his right knee ligament against Barcelona

Kvaratskhelia ruled out for months after ACL injury in PSG win

By Pascal Okoth

Paris Saint-Germain yesterday confirmed that winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia has ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee, effectively ending any realistic prospect of his participation in the remainder of the 2026/27 season.

The injury occurred during Tuesday night's UEFA Champions League victory over Barcelona at the Parc des Princes, a match PSG won 4-2 to strengthen their position in the competition. The result, impressive as it was, has been overshadowed by the news of Kvaratskhelia's injury and further fitness concerns involving two other first-team regulars.

Kvaratskhelia, 25, went down in the second half following an incident involving Barcelona youngster Xavi Espot and was unable to continue. He left the pitch shortly before the hour mark in visible discomfort. PSG's medical team confirmed the diagnosis the following day, announcing that the Georgian international would undergo surgery within days.

ACL ruptures are among the most serious injuries in professional football. Recovery typically involves surgery followed by several months of rehabilitation, strength work and carefully managed return-to-play assessments, making a return before the season's end unlikely.

The loss is a significant one for manager Luis Enrique. Kvaratskhelia has been central to PSG's attacking system this season, operating from the left flank, cutting inside and creating scoring opportunities with the kind of unpredictability and technical quality that is difficult to replicate. His pace, ability to beat defenders in one-on-one situations and consistent work rate have made him one of the club's most influential players in both



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia

Ligue 1 and Europe.

Enrique must now identify attacking combinations capable of compensating for the Georgian's absence across a demanding schedule. PSG carry considerable depth in their forward line, but replacing Kvaratskhelia's individual quality will not be straightforward, and the coaching staff will need to adjust their rotation plans accordingly.

The situation was compounded by two further injury announcements from the same fixture. Ousmane Dembélé sustained an injury to his left thigh, while captain Marquinhos suffered a right thigh problem. Both play-

ers face several weeks on the sidelines, according to the club.

The simultaneous absence of three important players — a creative winger, an attacking wide forward and an experienced defensive leader — presents Enrique with a significant squad management challenge at a stage of the campaign when consistency is essential. Dembélé offers pace and versatility in attack, while Marquinhos provides the defensive stability and leadership that underpin PSG's structure at the back.

The club will now look to its available players to step up and sustain momentum across both

competitions while the three injured stars begin their respective recoveries.

For Kvaratskhelia, the immediate priority is a successful operation and the start of a carefully structured rehabilitation programme under PSG's medical staff. ACL recovery timelines differ between individuals, and the club has not provided a specific return date.

The coming months will test how effectively PSG can adapt without one of their most important attacking players. His recovery will be followed closely by supporters across the football world.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The Italian side's emphatic victory leaves the English club without a win in consecutive major European fixtures and Carrick's position increasingly precarious

Como dismantle Manchester United 4-1 to deepen Carrick's crisis

By Martin Weche

Manchester United suffered one of the most humiliating nights in their recent European history yesterday, losing 4-1 to Como in Italy to heap further pressure on embattled manager Michael Carrick.

The defeat was as comprehensive as it was demoralising. Como, a club who were playing in Serie D when United last lifted the Champions League trophy in 2008, overwhelmed their opponents from the opening minutes in a performance that underscored just how dramatically the fortunes of the two clubs have diverged.

United conceded after just 118 seconds, with Argentina midfielder Nico Paz — the most dangerous player on the pitch by a considerable distance — breaking through a defence that offered almost no resistance. The speed of the breakthrough carried an uncomfortable symmetry: eight days earlier, United had conceded in the first minute of their Champions League fixture against Atletico Madrid. Yesterday's capitulation made them the first English club in history to concede within the opening two minutes of consecutive major European matches — a record that no one at Old Trafford will want inscribed in the history books.

Paz went on to dominate the evening in a manner that will have made uncomfortable viewing for Carrick and the United board. The 20-year-old scored twice and set up Greek striker Tasos Douvikas in between, before Jacobo Ramon added a fourth with a powerful header to complete the rout. At one point, as Como pressed for more, the spectre of United's heaviest ever European defeat — a 5-0 loss to Sporting of Portugal in 1964 — briefly loomed over the visitors. The personnel decisions made



Como scores

during the game did little to suggest Carrick has answers to his team's problems. Matheus Cunha and Andrey Santos, two signings who cost a combined £110 million under the Ineos ownership, were withdrawn at half-time having failed to make any meaningful impression. Captain Bruno Fernandes, United's most experienced creative force, was substituted midway through the second half, replaced by Joshua Zirkzee.

Zirkzee did pull one back in stoppage time, calmly converting a cross from fellow substitute Amad Diallo after beating the offside trap, but the consolation goal changed nothing about the evening's narrative. A 4-1 defeat away from home in Europe, against a side with no previous experience at this level of continental competition, is not a result that admits of mitigation.

Como's rise has been one of the more remarkable stories in European football. Backed by significant investment and coached by Cesc Fàbregas, the former Arsenal and Barcelona midfield-

er who has translated his football intelligence into a clear and effective managerial philosophy, the Lombardy club have built a team capable of competing seriously in Serie A and, evidently, in Europe. Fàbregas has instilled an attacking identity that was on full display yesterday, with Paz the embodiment of everything the manager is trying to build.

For United, the questions are more difficult and more urgent. The club's defensive vulnerabilities have been exposed repeatedly this season, and conceding in the opening moments of back-to-back European games points to a structural problem that goes beyond individual errors. The midfield has struggled to assert itself, the expensive summer signings have yet to justify their fees, and the manager has not found a way to stabilise his side under pressure.

Carrick, who took charge during a turbulent period at the club, now faces scrutiny that will intensify with every poor result. The board has so far maintained public support, but patience in-

side elite football has its limits, and results of this nature test institutional loyalty quickly.

United's next fixtures will be examined as much for what they reveal about the club's direction as for the points at stake. Whether Carrick is given the time and resources to turn the situation around, or whether the board concludes that a change is necessary, the debate is no longer abstract.

What happened in Italy yesterday was not a stumble. It was a statement — and it came from a club that, not so long ago, was playing in the fourth tier of Italian football.

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Phrasal Verbs in Journalistic and Literary Texts: Meaning and Context

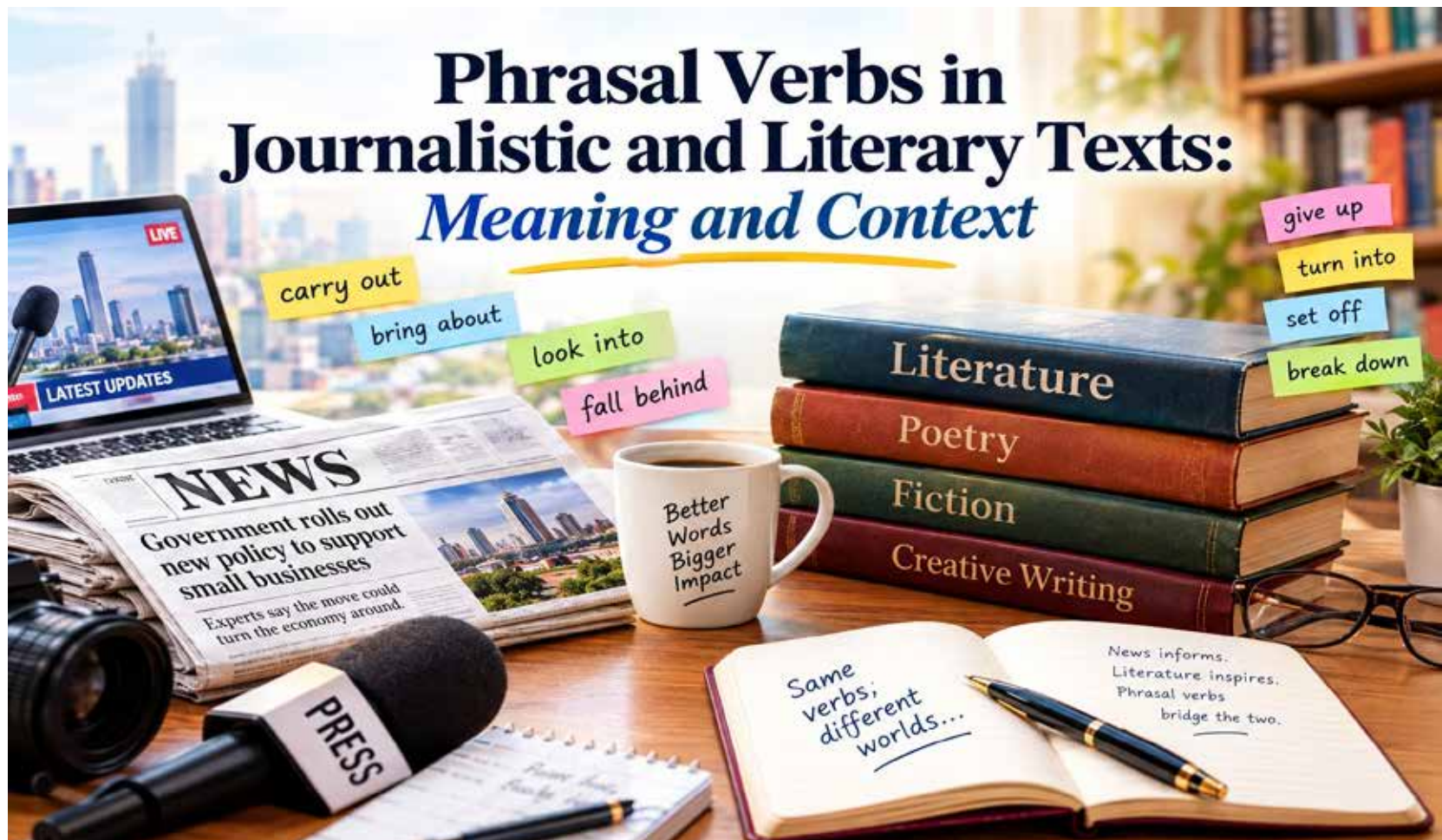


By: Elbekova Dilafruz Oybek
@themtkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- **Transparency.** Phrasal verbs lie on a scale. Literal ones keep the meanings of both parts (sit down); semi-idiomatic ones are partly motivated (speed up, break down); idiomatic ones must be learned as units (give up, fall out).
- **Polysemy.** The 100 most frequent phrasal verbs have 559 meanings, about 5.6 each (Gardner & Davies, 2007). For example, look up can mean 'raise one's eyes', 'search for information' or 'improve'.
- **Bolinger (1971)** showed that particles carry meaning of their own, and Darwin and Gray (1999) suggested treating every verb + particle combination as a potential phrasal verb.



This article explores phrasal verbs (verb + particle combinations) and how their meanings differ in literary and journalistic English. A 12,207-word sample of Matt Haig's novel *The Midnight Library* is compared with ten Guardian texts (10,262 words). Literal meanings dominate narration in the novel, while news narration favours semi-idiomatic ones.

INTRODUCTION

Phrasal verbs are everywhere in English: about 5% of all lexical verbs in the British National Corpus are used in this way (Gardner & Davies, 2007). They are hard for learners because the meaning of the whole often cannot be worked out from its parts: compare sit down with give up.

As J. R. Firth put it, we know a word "by the company it keeps". For phrasal verbs this means that the text type, and its context, decides which meaning is active.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Transparency. Phrasal verbs lie on a scale. Literal ones keep the meanings of both parts (sit down); semi-idiomatic ones are partly motivated (speed up, break down); idiomatic ones must be learned as units (give up, fall out).

Polysemy. The 100 most frequent phrasal verbs have 559 meanings, about 5.6 each (Gardner & Davies, 2007). For example, look up can mean 'raise one's eyes', 'search for information' or 'improve'.

Bolinger (1971) showed that particles carry meaning of their own, and Darwin and Gray (1999) suggested treating every verb + particle combination as a potential phrasal verb.

CHAPTER 2. STAGES OF THE ANALYSIS

The study followed three stages:

1. Data stage. A 12,207-word sample of the novel and ten Guardian

texts (news reports, an interview, a profile and features) were collected.

2. Classification stage. Candidate phrasal verbs were extracted, free combinations excluded, and each token labelled literal, semi-idiomatic or idiomatic, in narration or in speech.

3. Comparison stage. Frequencies per 10,000 words and the shares of the three types were compared (chi-square test).

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

The novel sample has 150 phrasal verb tokens (122.9 per 10,000 words); the news sample has 63 (61.4 per 10,000 words). Share of each type:

Type	Novel (n = 150)	Guardian texts (n = 63)
Literal	43.3%	15.9%
Semi-idiomatic	27.3%	52.4%
Idiomatic	29.3%	31.7%

The difference lies in narration: 51.8% of the novel's tokens are lit-

eral against 15.2% in the news texts. In speech the two samples are alike: about half of the tokens are idiomatic (50.0% and 46.7%). The sample is small and was annotated by one person, so the results are preliminary.

CONCLUSION

Phrasal verbs behave differently in fiction and in news. Fiction narration describes physical action with literal verbs, while news reporting prefers semi-idiomatic verbs of change and result. Idiomatic verbs gather in speech in both. Teaching should therefore present phrasal verbs together with their typical contexts.

Author: Elbekova Dilafruz Oybek qizi is a 2nd-year Master's student at Namangan State University.

Sources: Bolinger (1971) *The Phrasal Verb in English*; Darwin & Gray (1999) *TESOL Quarterly* 33(1); Firth (1957) *Studies in Linguistic Analysis*; Gardner & Davies (2007) *TESOL Quarterly* 41(2); Haig (2020) *The Midnight Library*.