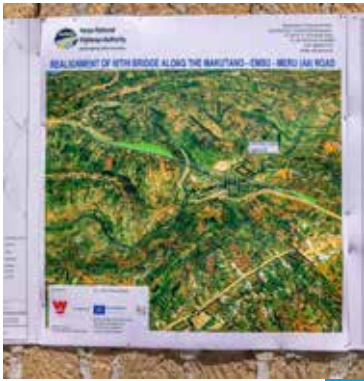




Kenya's deadliest bridge to be replaced in KSh7.5B project
Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday announced the start of construction of a new KSh7.5 billion bridge across River Nithi in Tharaka Nithi County

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Ruto passes the baton as Africa's trade bloc faces a fragmenting world
President William Ruto yesterday handed over the chairmanship of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa

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The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027  The legislation, Senate Bill No. 29 of 2024, has been navigating parliament at a moment of acute political sensitivity

Kenya's recall law

The National Assembly yesterday approved a one-third registered voter threshold required to recall a sitting member of parliament, passing amendments to the Elections Amendment (No. 2) Bill that will now return to the Senate for concurrence — and almost certainly mediation.

The legislation, Senate Bill No. 29 of 2024, has been navigating parliament at a moment of acute political sensitivity. Kenya is less than ten months from general elections scheduled for August 2027, and the debate over how easily — or how difficultly — a sitting MP can be removed from office carries implications that extend well beyond constitutional housekeeping. In a parliament where alliances are shifting, where the government of President William Ruto faces growing opposition pressure and where several incumbents are calculating their survival odds, the precise wording of a recall threshold is not an academic exercise. It is a political instrument.

Under the revised Clause 26A, a recall election for a National Assembly member will require the support of at least one-third of registered voters in every ward within the affected constituency.



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The National Assembly



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Ruto's parting COMESA call: Remove the barriers, honour the commitments

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyetimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday launched the COMESA Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and the 2025 Annual Report at the 25th COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit in Harare, using his final act as bloc chairman to press member states on the gap between regional integration commitments and delivery on the ground.

Ruto said the annual report demonstrated measurable progress in trade and investment across the 21-member bloc, but issued an unambiguous challenge to fellow heads of state. He called on member states to fully implement the COMESA Free Trade Area, facilitate the free movement of people, connect national payment systems to regional platforms, meet existing financial obligations to the bloc in full and on time, and dismantle the non-tariff barriers that continue to strangle cross-border commerce.

"We must do more to increase trade among our countries, remove barriers to trade, improve connectivity and ensure that all our citizens benefit from regional integration," Ruto said.

The plan, which will guide COMESA's economic integration agenda through 2030, arrives as the bloc faces growing pressure to demonstrate that Africa's regional architecture can deliver tangible benefits to ordinary citizens rather than producing summits, reports and commitments that accumulate without consequence.

Words have been plentiful. The test now is implementation.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday received Kambiti Ward MCA Laban Chomba at his Wamunyoru Residence, where Chomba, an aspirant for the Maragua Constituency parliamentary seat under the Democracy for the Citizens Party, sought his backing ahead of the 2027 general election. Gachagua assured Chomba that the party's National Elections Board would conduct free, fair and independent nominations, urging the ward representative to stay focused on his campaign and ignore political distractions. "The future is green," Gachagua said, invoking the party's colours as a signal of confidence in the electoral season ahead. The meeting underscores the DCP's early mobilisation in Murang'a County as parliamentary seats across the Mt Kenya region attract growing competition.



Kenya's banking sector paid a record KSh205.58B in taxes in 2025, crossing the KSh200B threshold for the first time and accounting for 22.15 percent of total government corporate tax receipts, the Kenya Bankers Association reported yesterday. The figure, up 5.53 percent from KSh194.81B in 2024, comprised KSh98.36B in taxes borne directly by banks and KSh107.22B collected on the government's behalf. Thirty-three banks collectively contributed eight percent of all taxes collected nationally. KBA Chief Executive Raimond Molenje urged the government to review income taxes to stimulate economic activity, while tax experts warned of growing over-reliance on the regulated sector, raising compliance costs industry-wide. Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi acknowledged household income pressure, signalling further PAYE reforms beyond the current KSh32,000 threshold adjustment.



Former Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Thuranira Kaimenyi has been appointed chancellor of the Management University of Africa, becoming only the second person to hold the position since the institution's founding. Kaimenyi, who served as Education Cabinet Secretary under former President Uhuru Kenyatta's administration and later as Principal Secretary, brings extensive experience in education policy and public administration to the ceremonial leadership role. His tenure at the helm of Kenya's education sector coincided with significant curriculum reforms, including the early groundwork for the Competency Based Curriculum that has since reshaped the country's schooling system. The appointment signals MUA's intent to anchor its next phase of institutional growth in leadership with both academic credibility and deep familiarity with Kenya's evolving education landscape.



People's Party of Kenya leader Ndindi Nyoro yesterday accused President William Ruto of orchestrating the transfer of Kenya Pipeline Company shares to Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote, alleging the deal was the opening move in a plan to hand majority ownership of the strategic public utility to foreign private interests. Nyoro claimed state institutions, including the National Social Security Fund and the Unclaimed Financial Assets Authority, were directed to acquire KPC shares during this year's initial public offering at KSh9 per share, then instructed to sell at marginal gains, facilitating Dangote's entry as the company's second-largest shareholder behind the government's 35 percent stake. "There is no distinction between William Ruto the President and William Ruto the businessman," Nyoro said, alleging Dangote's stake could eventually reach 75 percent. The government has not responded.



Kenya is actively courting foreign building materials manufacturers to set up local production facilities, leveraging the government's affordable housing programme as an investment draw in the construction and real estate sectors. The push reflects Nairobi's broader strategy to localise supply chains supporting the ambitious housing initiative, reduce dependence on imported construction materials and create downstream employment in manufacturing. By attracting foreign producers to establish plants within the country rather than simply export finished goods, the government aims to capture more economic value from one of its flagship development programmes while simultaneously addressing a chronic shortage of affordable housing units. The strategy positions Kenya's housing deficit — estimated at approximately two million units — not as a burden but as a commercially viable market capable of sustaining long-term industrial investment.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi has said the legislation giving legal effect to President William Ruto's directive reducing Pay As You Earn tax for salaried workers will be tabled in Parliament next week. The announcement signals the government's intent to move swiftly in translating the presidential order into statute, providing the legal certainty that employers and revenue authorities require before adjusting payroll deductions across the public and private sectors. Ruto announced the PAYE relief earlier this month, framing it as a response to mounting pressure on household incomes amid a prolonged cost-of-living squeeze. Without parliamentary approval, however, the directive carries no binding legal force on the Kenya Revenue Authority's collection framework. The bill's tabling next week will set the timeline for when workers can expect the relief to take effect.



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KRA The policy raises a legitimate question: will it strengthen trade compliance

KRA's new import rules: Will mandatory cargo insurance push up the cost of goods?

From November, shipments without valid digital marine insurance certificates will be blocked from customs clearance — and businesses want to know what that means for their costs.

BY Collins Kibet

@themkenyaintimes

Kenya's importers, clearing agents and businesses that depend on international supply chains are facing a tight deadline. From November 1, 2026, the Kenya Revenue Authority will block any imported consignment that lacks valid digital marine cargo insurance documentation from customs clearance — and the clock is already running.

The directive, reported on Thursday, emerged from a joint public notice issued by KRA and the Insurance Regulatory Authority. Under the new rules, incoming consignments must be covered by marine cargo insurance policies issued by IRA-licensed insurers. The relevant certificates must be processed through a designated Digital Marine Cargo Insurance system and successfully transmitted to the Integrated Customs Management System before customs declarations are lodged. Shipments that fail to meet these conditions will not be cleared — regardless of whether other import documents are in order.

For businesses accustomed to existing procedures, the adjustment will require a prompt review of their documentation processes, conversations with clearing agents and confirmation that their insurance arrangements meet the new digital requirements. A shipment arriving



at a Kenyan port without the correct certificate transmitted in advance could face delays, storage costs and logistical complications that add up quickly.

The policy raises a legitimate question: will it strengthen trade compliance and protect importers, or will it simply add cost and friction to an already demanding import environment?

The case for the measure is straightforward. Marine cargo insurance provides financial protection against risks affecting goods in transit — covering not only sea freight but, depending on the policy, other stages of the international supply chain as well. Embedding the digital certificate in the clearance process creates an additional compliance checkpoint and ties insurance documentation directly to customs procedures, reducing the scope for undeclared or inadequately covered shipments to slip

through.

The requirement also fits within a broader shift in how Kenya monitors imported goods. In August 2026, the Advance Cargo Declaration system was introduced for containerised shipments, requiring cargo information to be submitted before goods depart for Kenya. The two measures address different stages of the same process: advance declaration covers cargo information before arrival, while digital marine insurance covers proof of coverage before clearance. Together, they represent a more structured approach to import compliance and customs risk assessment.

The critical question, however, is whether the systems underpinning these reforms are ready. Digitalisation is only as effective as the infrastructure supporting it. If the Digital Marine Cargo Insurance system communicates reliably with the customs

platform, insurance providers process applications promptly and importers receive clear, practical guidance, the new requirement could reduce paperwork disputes and make verification faster and more transparent.

If the process is complicated, poorly communicated or prone to technical failures, legitimate shipments could be held at the port while businesses absorb storage fees and supply chain delays — costs that rarely stay with the importer alone and have a way of finding their way to the consumer.

With just days remaining before the November 1 deadline, clarity from KRA and the IRA on the precise documentation required, the system's readiness and the process for resolving technical failures will determine whether this reform strengthens Kenyan trade or simply adds another burden to it.

Direct hospital access to KEMSA cuts drug delays, says PS



PS Ouma Oluga

BY Grace Wanja

@themkenyaintimes

A new legal framework allowing individual hospitals to procure directly from the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency has improved the timely delivery of essential medicines and equipment to public health facilities, Principal Secretary for Medical Supplies Ouma Oluga said yesterday.

Speaking at the KEMSA National and County Referral Hospitals Conference in Naivasha, Oluga said the direct-procurement model replaced a county-centred distribution system plagued by mismanagement, mounting debts and logistical delays that left facilities chronically understocked. Drug costs have fallen by up to seven percent under the reformed supply chain, he said, while KEMSA's refill rate has ex-

panded to 92 percent.

The gains, however, have not reached the patients who need them most. "Despite KEMSA's refill rate expanding to 92 percent, only 51 percent of patients at level four and below have access to drugs," Oluga acknowledged. He called on KEMSA to address the shortfall urgently, warning that collusion between hospital pharmacists and privately owned chemists operating near public facilities was siphoning medicines away from patients. The government, he added, was promoting local manufacturing of essential medical products to reduce import dependency and stabilise supply against global disruptions.

Governance reforms and a consolidated supply chain are necessary — but medicines that reach the agency warehouse and not the patient represent a problem still waiting to be solved.

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Nithi Bridge “Residents have appealed for a safer crossing for years following accidents that have claimed too many lives,” Kindiki said

Kenya’s deadliest bridge to be replaced in KSh7.5B project

After four decades of fatal crashes, the Nithi Bridge is finally being replaced — but the real test is whether this highway can be made safe before another family is destroyed by it.

BY Agnes Njoka
@themtkenyetimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday announced the start of construction of a new KSh7.5 billion bridge across River Nithi in Tharaka Nithi County, replacing a 40-year-old structure long regarded as one of Kenya’s deadliest road accident black spots.

Speaking at the launch in Maara Constituency, Kindiki said the new bridge will stretch 880 metres and rise 100 metres above the river, with an additional 2.7 kilometres of approach roads connecting Marima and Mitheru trading centres. The existing structure, built in 1985, has claimed hundreds of lives over



Kithure Kindiki during the launch of construction works in Maara Constituency yesterday

four decades — a grim toll extracted from buses, trucks and private vehi-

cles navigating what engineers and road safety officials have long identified as a fundamentally dangerous crossing.

“Residents have appealed for a safer crossing for years following accidents that have claimed too many lives,” Kindiki said. “President Ruto’s administration committed to replacing this bridge upon taking office in 2022, and we have now secured and ring-fenced the full KSh7.5 billion required to see this project through without financial interruption.”

The Deputy President acknowledged that the project had taken longer than anticipated to commence, attributing the delay to the complexity of the engineering design and the scale of financing required. Those explanations will offer little comfort

to families who lost relatives on the Nairobi-Embu-Meru highway while the government worked through its planning processes — but the announcement of a funded, ring-fenced budget does address the most common reason Kenyan infrastructure projects stall before completion.

Construction is scheduled for completion within 24 months, though Kindiki indicated the government would push to shorten that timeline without compromising engineering and safety standards. Once complete, the bridge is expected to transform movement along one of central Kenya’s most strategically important highways, linking the capital to the densely populated Mt Kenya East corridor and easing the passage of goods, passengers and commercial traffic through a region that has long paid an unacceptable price for inadequate infrastructure.

The KSh7.5 billion commitment is significant. Whether the project delivers on schedule, within budget and to the safety standards its cost implies will ultimately define its legacy — not the ceremony that launched it.

For the families of those lost on the Nithi Bridge, the only acceptable outcome is a crossing that no longer kills.

Business According to the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) shipping schedule, M.T. Bellatrix was scheduled to discharge Shell V-Power products at the KPA’s Shimanzi Oil Terminal last Tuesday

Shell V-Power Tanker among seven merchant shipping tankers calling at the port of Mombasa

BY James Murimi
@themtkenyetimes

A medium-range (MR) oil and chemical products tanker, M.T. Bellatrix, loaded with more than 21,000 MT of Shell V-Power petroleum product, is among seven merchant shipping tankers calling at the Mombasa port this week to deliver petroleum products.

According to the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) shipping schedule, M.T. Bellatrix was scheduled to discharge Shell V-Power products at the KPA’s Shimanzi Oil Terminal last Tuesday.

Shell V-Power, exclusively imported and distributed in Kenya by Vivo Energy Kenya, is a specially formu-



A Shell Service Station | Photo: Courtesy.

lated motor gasoline product that delivers enhanced protection and an unmatched performance feel.

Vivo Energy Kenya is the company that exclusively imports and distributes the premium Shell V-Power Unleaded petrol to meet the needs of a discerning local customer base.

After discharge at Shimanzi Oil Terminal, Vivo Energy Kenya stores Shell V-Power at its Mombasa terminal and transports it inland for distribution to Shell Service Stations. The local firm also transports V-Power exclusively from Shimanzi to Nairobi via Kenya Railways Corporation Rail Tankers, as part of the firm’s corporate commitment to deliver quality differentiated fuel products.

With three times more cleaning molecules, Shell V-Power actively

cleans vehicle engines by targeting residue, helping prevent future build-up on critical parts. Shell V-Power is also specially formulated to provide continuous protection against corrosion and deposits.

Vivo Energy Kenya, with a portfolio of more than 350 service stations countrywide, continues to invest heavily in modern sites that give customers access to high-quality products, services, and greater convenience.

Alongside M.T. Bellatrix, shipping tanker M.T. Bow Lynx, with a 4,900 MT base oil cargo, has also been listed for discharge at Shimanzi Oil Terminal. Loaded with 85,000 MT of gasoil (diesel), tankers M.T. Torm Sublime and M.T. Maria, loaded with 40,000 MT of gasoil, are both listed to discharge at Kipevu Oil Terminal (KOT) II alongside M.T. Pis Rinjani, loaded with 85,000 MT of MOGAS (Petrol).

The port is also receiving tankers M.T. Arctic Tern and Melati 3, both set to discharge their Palm Oil loads.

Parliament Under the revised Clause 26A, a recall election for a National Assembly member will require the support of at least one-third of registered voters in every ward within the affected constituency

Kenya's recall law: Parliament sets the threshold — but the real test comes in 2027

The National Assembly has passed a one-third voter threshold to recall MPs, but in an election year already thick with political manoeuvring, the law's true purpose may be less about accountability than survival.

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyatimes

The National Assembly yesterday approved a one-third registered voter threshold required to recall a sitting member of parliament, passing amendments to the Elections Amendment (No. 2) Bill that will now return to the Senate for concurrence — and almost certainly mediation.

The legislation, Senate Bill No. 29 of 2024, has been navigating parliament at a moment of acute political sensitivity. Kenya is less than ten months from general elections scheduled for August 2027, and the debate over how easily — or how difficultly — a sitting MP can be removed from office carries implications that extend well beyond constitutional housekeeping. In a parliament where alliances are shifting, where the government of President William Ruto faces growing opposition pressure and where several incumbents are calculating their survival odds, the precise wording of a recall threshold is not an academic exercise. It is a political instrument.

Under the revised Clause 26A, a recall election for a National Assembly member will require the support of at least one-third of registered voters in every ward within the affected constituency. For a senator, the threshold rises to at least one-third of registered voters in every constituency within the affected county. A recall by-election, should one be triggered, will be decided by a simple majority of those who vote. The Bill now goes back to the Senate, and given the divergence between the two Houses, a mediation committee will be required before it proceeds further.

The debate that produced this outcome was candid, occasionally blunt and instructive about the anxieties that animate Kenya's legislative chamber in the months before an election cycle. The initial proposal, moved by Kigumo MP Kimani Kuria, had set the threshold at 50 per cent of registered voters in every ward — a figure that critics immediately identified as prohibitively high and legally vulnerable. Minority

Leader Junet Mohamed was direct about the risks. "If we repeat what the court has rejected, we will just be legislating in vain because the thing will go back to court again and the court will reject it again for the same reasons," he told the House, invoking the 2017 High Court ruling that struck down the previous recall framework as unconstitutional.

That judgment, in *Katiba Institute and Transform Empowerment for Action Initiative v Attorney-General*, invalidated sections 45 through 48 of the Elections Act, citing discriminatory restrictions on who could initiate a petition and structural defects in the statutory procedures. Parliament has been attempting to fill that legal void ever since. The stakes of getting the threshold wrong a second time are therefore significant — not merely politically embarrassing but potentially rendering the entire framework unenforceable once again.

Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah made the arithmetic case against the 50 per cent proposal with a clarity that drew applause from several benches. "In any case, many of us are not elected by 50 per cent of the registered voters in each ward — facts of life," he said. His argument was simple: requiring a recall to clear a bar that the original election itself did not reach is not accountability — it is immunity by another name. "To convince in every ward, including your home ward, a third of your voters that you should go home, then it would mean there's something absolutely wrong that you have done to the people," he added.

West Mugirango MP Stephen Mogaka moved the amendment that ultimately restored the one-third threshold, replacing Kuria's 50 per cent proposal. The amendment was adopted, and Kuria subsequently supported the revised version, clarifying that the one-third requirement applied to triggering the recall process while the simple majority provision would determine the outcome of the resulting by-election.

Not all voices were comfortable with how the debate was being conducted. Suba North MP Millie Odhiambo supported the recommitment of Clause 26A for further consideration



The National Assembly

but issued a pointed warning about the legislative culture surrounding emotionally charged votes. "I don't pander to issues of populism, and because of that, I reluctantly support — but we need to be very serious when we are dealing with issues like this," she said. "Sometimes we are too excited and we shoot ourselves in the foot."

Her caution is well-placed. The recall mechanism being constructed now will operate in the political environment of 2027 — an environment that is already shaping up to be among the most contested in Kenya's recent history. Ruto faces a re-election campaign against an opposition that has consolidated around former Prime Minister Raila Odinga and his Azimio coalition, while fractures within the Kenya Kwanza alliance have produced a landscape in which loyalty is transactional and political realignments are frequent. In that context, a recall law that is too easily triggered becomes a weapon available to well-resourced opponents;

one set too high becomes a shield for underperforming incumbents.

Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma, who had earlier called for the clause to be recommitted on the grounds that an unclear threshold could expose MPs to recalls initiated by a single petitioner, struck a considered note about the mediation process ahead. "Let us use the period between now and the time the Bill will be before the mediation committee to clean it up, but pass it as it is for now," he said. He urged his colleagues to balance the public's constitutional right to remove a non-performing representative against the need to prevent the mechanism from becoming a tool for routine political disruption. "On one level, we should not make it difficult for the people of Kenya to recall their elected representative; but at another level, we should make it very difficult so that we alert the people of Kenya when they are conducting elections to do that consciously."

The legislation is an attempt to oper-

ationalise Article 104 of the Constitution, which has existed as a right on paper since 2010 but has never been successfully exercised. For Kenyans frustrated by representatives who disappear between election cycles, the passage of a workable recall framework would represent a meaningful democratic advance. For MPs watching the political weather ahead of 2027, the precise calibration of that framework matters enormously.

The mediation committee will have to reconcile the Senate and National Assembly positions before the Bill can proceed to presidential assent. Whatever emerges will then face the scrutiny of courts that have already once found Kenya's recall law wanting.

Parliament has set the threshold. Whether it has set it correctly — and whether the law will survive legal challenge — will only become clear when someone actually tries to use it.

Cancer Lucy Njeri Karioke's journey began in December 2016. After stopping breastfeeding her son, she noticed a persistent lump. She sought medical care

Beyond the scars: The grief, fear and hope of living after breast cancer

For many breast cancer survivors, completing treatment is only one part of recovery. The emotional toll of mastectomy, the cost of care and the struggle to rebuild confidence persist long after hospital visits end.

BY Faith Ogutu

✉ @themkenyatimes

In a small tailoring shop in Thika, the steady rhythm of knitting needles carries a quiet message of repair. Mary Mwangi makes soft knitted breast prostheses for women who have lost breasts to cancer, restoring comfort and confidence.

A breast cancer survivor herself, Mwangi understands the uncertainty of diagnosis, treatment demands and the long emotional adjustment after mastectomy. She turned to knitting to help others. What began as an individual effort grew into a support network where survivors learn to make prostheses, gain skills and earn income.

This network highlights an overlooked aspect of breast cancer care: what happens after treatment ends.

The grief that survives cancer

Lucy Njeri Karioke's journey began in December 2016. After stopping breastfeeding her son, she noticed a persistent lump. She sought medical care. Explanations differed one facility suggested mastitis, another fibroadenoma. Further tests confirmed ductal carcinoma.

The diagnosis revived memories of her mother's death from cancer. When confirmed, she broke down by the roadside. "A stranger noticed my distress and took me to a near-

by place, where he bought me lunch," she recalled.

She contacted her aunt, who took her home near Ngong Road. Distress became so severe she contemplated suicide, but her uncle urged her to keep fighting.

In 2017, during a nurses' strike, she underwent a mastectomy at Kenyatta National Hospital, followed by chemotherapy and radiotherapy for stage 2B disease. Nearly a decade later, Lucy is alive, but surviving did not end her mourning. "I think I still grieve today," she says.

Some told her she was lucky because only her breasts were removed. "Survivorship starts at diagnosis," Lucy says. Breasts carry meanings tied to femininity, motherhood and body image. Losing them affects identity in invisible ways. Uninformed about prostheses, she navigated recovery alone.

"When you're healthy, you belong to yourself, but when you're sick, you belong to the community," she says. Support must continue well beyond treatment.

The uncertainty of diagnosis

Isabel Waruguru Mukoma's journey began in 2024 with breast numbness. A mammogram showed a suspicious finding requiring a biopsy. During health worker strikes, she travelled to Kirinyaga County to find care and waited 21 days for results.

A biopsy of the right breast

was delayed three weeks by cost. Results confirmed cancer in both breasts. Isabel went into denial. "For three days I remained in my bedroom, barely speaking," she recalled. She underwent a double mastectomy.

Her experience shows how fear is compounded by delays and financial constraints. The period between noticing a change and receiving a diagnosis is filled with anxiety that grows when access is delayed.

Why the diagnosis must guide treatment

Dr Solomon Mutua, an oncologist at Nairobi West Hospital, stresses an integrated approach linking diagnosis, treatment and follow-up. He cautions against rushing to remove a lump.

"Whenever there's a lump, don't rush to remove it," he says. "It should be examined clinically, examined, imaged, a mammogram and then a biopsy."

A biopsy determines whether a lump is cancerous and guides treatment. "Like any problem in life, you can only tackle it well if you know what you're dealing with."

Immunohistochemistry identifies the subtype; staging shows how far it has spread. Early detection is critical, "It can be cured. When it's late, the cure is not guaranteed."

He reassures patients about radiotherapy "Hatuchomi watu. Natumia miale ya radiation." Clear communication



matters because needs do not end with a single procedure.

The cost of staying alive

Care places heavy pressure on families: investigations, surgery, medicines, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, transport and lost income.

Hannah Nungari Mugo's husband took out a KSh500,000 loan for her treatment. Financial and emotional consequences remained long after, along with stigma and physical changes. She joined Mwangi's group, learning to make prostheses and gaining an income-generating skill that helped rebuild her confidence.

Kenya expanded support through the Social Health Authority (SHA). In late 2025, the cancer-care package increased to KSh800,000. Annual support offers up to KSh400,000 through the Social Health Insurance Fund and KSh400,000 through the Emergency, Chronic and Critical Illness Fund. Targeted treatments like Herceptin were reduced to KSh40,000 per session under SHA.

These measures improve access but depend on eligibility rules. Lucy and Isabel were treated before the expanded package. Prostheses, reconstruction, counselling and rehabilitation still involve separate costs.

A 2026 study of breast cancer patients at Kenyatta National Hospital estimated the mean total cost at KSh2,138,330, showing why expenses extend far beyond hospital bills.

Learning to live after mastectomy

Recovery means adjusting to changes in appearance and comfort. Silicone prostheses restore appearance but are expensive. Fabric alternatives and knitted prostheses offer accessible options.

Hair loss and skin changes affect body image, relationships and daily routines. Counselling and peer-support groups give space to process experiences without pressure to appear strong.

Research by the African Population and Health Research Center identified significant unmet needs among survivors, including psychosocial support and help rebuilding life. Patients need clear information about prostheses, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Beyond the treatment room

Lucy's experience shows surviving cancer does not erase grief. Isabel's journey illustrates how uncertainty is

worsened by delays and cost. Hannah's story shows the household financial impact, while her work with Mary demonstrates how peer support helps survivors rebuild.

Families and communities can listen without minimising feelings. Health facilities must strengthen follow-up, counselling and rehabilitation. Policymakers must ensure financial protection extends to practical tools of recovery.

In Thika, Mary Mwangi continues to knit. The prostheses she makes restore comfort and confidence, offering women reassurance, skills and community connection.

As awareness efforts continue, the conversation must extend beyond screening and treatment to the lives women lead afterwards. Survival matters so does the ability to access follow-up care, receive emotional support, regain confidence and live with dignity.

For women like Lucy, Isabel, Hannah and Mary, the journey continues in the daily work of rebuilding life.



Politics The Wamunyor engagement is important because it creates room for conversations among actors whose political interests, constituencies and ambitions do not necessarily align

Gachagua's silent return: The emerging political temperament that could redefine Kenya's 2027 elections

"The true test of democratic maturity is not how ruthlessly politicians pursue power, but how responsibly they compete for it, how honestly they account for their stewardship, and how faithfully they place the interests of citizens above their personal ambitions."



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

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Kenya's political landscape may be approaching a defining moment, not necessarily because a new alliance has been announced or a presidential contest settled, but because the manner in which political actors engage their rivals appears to be changing. On Tuesday, October 20, 2026, as the nation gathered in Eldoret to celebrate Mashujaa Day, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua returned from the United States in a comparatively subdued fashion. At his Wamunyor residence in Nyeri County, he subsequently met Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna and other figures associated with the Linda Mwananchi movement. Beneath the apparent simplicity of this encounter lies a potentially consequential message: Kenya's opposition may be discovering that political influence is built not merely through confrontation, but through calculated restraint, strategic consultation and the ability to forge common ground without surrendering ideological differences.

For a political culture accustomed to dramatic airport receptions, combative declara-

tions, rival crowds and public demonstrations of strength, the quietness surrounding Gachagua's return was striking. His return in August 2025 attracted considerable attention and was accompanied by violence and disruption. The contrast invites reflection on whether Kenya's political class is beginning to appreciate that spectacle is not synonymous with strength, just as hostility is not proof of conviction. Silence can be strategic, restraint can be powerful, and a conversation behind closed doors can sometimes achieve more than a week of political theatrics. Nevertheless, the real significance of this change will depend on whether it represents a deliberate political philosophy or merely a temporary adjustment in tactics.

The Wamunyor engagement is important because it creates room for conversations among actors whose political interests, constituencies and ambitions do not necessarily align. Gachagua and Sifuna occupy distinct political spaces, yet their willingness to engage illustrates a fundamental democratic truth: disagreement need not become permanent estrangement, and political competition need not eliminate the possibility of cooperation. No meeting, however politically suggestive, should be mistaken for a concluded coalition or an agreed presidential candidature. Its significance lies in the opportunity it creates to test whether personal differences

can be subordinated to a coherent national agenda.

Kenya desperately needs this recalibration. For decades, electoral competition has too often been transformed into a contest of political survival, with communities mobilised along ethnic and regional lines, opponents demonised, and ordinary citizens left to bear the consequences of elite rivalries. The damage extends beyond election-day violence. It erodes public trust, weakens social cohesion and distracts the nation from the persistent problems that determine whether families eat, children learn, patients receive treatment and young people find meaningful work. A more sober opposition, willing to coordinate its efforts and challenge government through ideas, evidence and constitutional means, could help move the country away from political hostility towards a more productive democratic contest.

In the North Rift, this distinction carries particular weight. Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, Nandi, Elgeyo-Marakwet, West Pokot and Baringo cannot feed their populations with political slogans, nor can changing alliances guarantee farmers fair prices, young people employment, households affordable healthcare or persons with disabilities equitable access to public services. These counties need leaders capable of translating political influence into measurable development. The region's citizens must therefore



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

resist the temptation to interpret every emerging alliance through the narrow question of who gains power. The more important question is what the proposed political arrangement intends to deliver, how it will finance its commitments and what mechanisms will hold its leaders accountable.

As 2027 approaches, Kenyans must firmly reject the dangerous notion that elections are do-or-die affairs. An election is neither a declaration of war nor a licence for political intolerance. It is a constitutional opportunity for citizens to examine the national leadership's scorecard and determine whether the promises made have translated into tangible improvements in their lives. What was promised? What was delivered? How much public money was spent? Who benefited? What failed, and who accepted responsibility? These are the questions that should dominate the political season, rather than insults, personality cults and the manufacture of fear. Incumbency is not a permanent entitlement, and opposition is not an automatic certificate of competence. Every politician must earn public trust.

Equally, citizens must not be held hostage to the uncertainty of political succession. Healthcare, education, agricultural support, social protection, infrastructure and disability inclusion are public obligations, not personal gifts from politicians. A change of government should not become an excuse to abandon beneficial programmes, punish perceived political opponents or dismantle legitimate commitments without

evidence and due process. Effective programmes should be strengthened, failed interventions reviewed, and public expenditure subjected to transparent scrutiny. The continuity of essential services must remain stronger than the ambitions of those temporarily entrusted with political authority.

This is where constitutionalism must become more than a convenient campaign slogan. Kenya's Constitution establishes the rules of political competition and the standards by which public power must be exercised. Parliament, the judiciary, the electoral commission and other independent institutions must be allowed to discharge their lawful mandates without intimidation or political manipulation. Democracy is not secured merely by counting votes; it also requires respect for the law, protection of fundamental rights, credible electoral processes and the peaceful transfer or retention of power through constitutional procedures. Political leaders who preach reform while undermining these principles are offering the country a change of personalities, not a transformation of governance.

The emerging opposition must therefore prove that co-operation means more than negotiating positions, distributing influence or settling on a presidential candidate. It must produce a credible reform programme, articulate realistic economic priorities, confront corruption, protect civil liberties and demonstrate how public institutions can serve citizens more effectively. The government, for its part, must understand that opposition is

not an act of national sabotage. A legitimate, organised and peaceful opposition is indispensable to accountability because power without scrutiny easily becomes complacent, while authority insulated from criticism risks confusing public office with personal ownership.

Gachagua's return and the Wamunyor engagement may yet prove to be an ordinary political episode. Their greater significance will emerge only if the apparent restraint develops into sustained co-operation, principled competition and a demonstrable commitment to national unity. Kenya has witnessed enough political realignments that promised transformation but ultimately reproduced familiar struggles for power. This time, citizens should demand something more consequential: a politics that measures success by public welfare rather than the number of allies recruited, the size of rallies assembled or the intensity of insults exchanged.

The 2027 election should not be a referendum on the survival of individual politicians. It should be a national examination of stewardship, integrity, competence and the credibility of competing visions. Leaders may change, coalitions may rise and fall, and political fortunes may reverse overnight. But the Constitution must endure, institutions must remain dependable, and the welfare of citizens must never be sacrificed at the altar of political ambition. Kenya does not merely need a quieter contest for power; it needs a more responsible understanding of what power is for.

Africa “The world, as we all know, is fragmenting,” Ruto told assembled heads of state. “Our answer must be integration, cooperation, not isolation

Ruto passes the baton as Africa’s trade bloc faces a fragmenting world

Kenya hands COMESA’s chairmanship to Zimbabwe at a summit where the rhetoric of regional unity is being tested by the hard realities of global disruption and an election year at home.

BY James Mwangi

✉ @themkenyatimes

President William Ruto yesterday handed over the chairmanship of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa at the 25th COMESA Summit in Harare, ending Kenya’s tenure at the helm of the 21-member regional trading bloc.

The ceremony was brief and ceremonial. The politics surrounding it were anything but. Ruto arrived in Harare carrying the weight of a presidency under pressure at home — an economy still navigating fiscal austerity, a public increasingly impatient with the pace of promised reforms, and a general election now less than ten months away. His final act as COMESA chair was to articulate a vision of regional interdependence that his own administration will be judged against when Kenyan voters go to the polls in August 2027. “The world, as we all know, is fragmenting,” Ruto told assembled heads of state. “Our answer must be integration, cooperation, not isolation. One market speaks of the strengths we gain when we bring together our economies, our productive capacity and our markets. One future reminds us that our prosperity is shared, or if it is not shared, there is no prosperity at all.”

The words were well-chosen for a summit convened under the theme “One Market, One

Future: Advancing Inclusive Industrialisation, Investment and Regional Integration in COMESA.” They were also a tacit acknowledgement of the external pressures reshaping global trade — shifting geopolitical alignments, protectionist instincts in traditional Western markets and an increasingly transactional approach to multilateralism among the world’s largest economies. For African nations, the argument for deeper regional integration has rarely been more compelling, or more urgent.

Mnangagwa accepted the chairmanship with an agenda that reflected Zimbabwe’s own economic ambitions and the broader aspirations of a continent determined to move beyond exporting raw materials. He identified agro-processing industrial parks, the local processing of natural resources and climate-resilient agriculture as the priorities his administration would pursue during its tenure. His framing was deliberately practical. “Our common market must enable enterprises to produce at scale, facilitate cross-the-border movement of structures of production and reach new customers,” Mnangagwa said. “The future of this region requires every member state to contribute to and benefit from our collective progress.”

The handover comes at a moment when COMESA’s relevance is both more important and more contested than at any point in recent

years. The bloc encompasses 21 member states stretching from Egypt in the north to Eswatini in the south, representing a combined population of more than 600 million people and a gross domestic product that, in theory, offers significant scale for regional trade. In practice, cross-border commerce within COMESA remains constrained by infrastructure deficits, non-tariff barriers, inconsistent customs procedures and currency volatility — structural obstacles that successive summits have acknowledged without fully resolving.

The Harare summit’s agenda addressed several of these persistent challenges. Discussions centred on improving trade facilitation mechanisms, strengthening regional value chains and accelerating Kenya and its neighbours’ participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area, the landmark agreement that aims to create a single market for goods and services across 54 African nations. Leaders also took up COMESA’s Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030, a framework intended to guide the bloc’s integration agenda through a period of significant global economic uncertainty.

The AfCFTA connection is significant. If implemented effectively, the continental trade agreement could transform the economic calculus for COMESA member states by opening markets far beyond the bloc’s current boundaries. The challenge lies in im-



President William Ruto hands over COMESA chairmanship to Zimbabwe’s Emmerson Mnangagwa in Harare, Zimbabwe yesterday | Photo: PCS

plementation — harmonising tariff schedules, resolving rules of origin disputes and building the physical and digital infrastructure required to move goods efficiently across borders. These are technical problems with political dimensions, and they will require sustained commitment from governments that are simultaneously managing domestic pressures and electoral cycles.

For Kenya, the transition in COMESA leadership coincides with the opening of what will be an intensely competitive political season. Ruto’s Kenya Kwanza administration enters the election year with a complicated record. Infrastructure investment has continued, and Kenya’s position as East Africa’s commercial hub remains largely intact. But the cost-of-living crisis that fuelled the Gen Z protests of mid-2024 has not fully abated, and the political opposition — consolidated around Raila Odinga’s Azimio coalition — has been method-

ical in building a nationwide campaign narrative centred on economic grievance and democratic accountability.

Ruto’s international engagements, including his tenure as COMESA chair, have given him a platform to project statesmanlike authority at moments when domestic politics have been difficult. His speech in Harare — confident, internationalist and forward-looking — was the kind of address that plays well in diplomatic circles. Whether it translates into electoral capital at home is a different calculation entirely. Kenyan voters in 2027 will be less interested in Ruto’s standing in Harare than in the price of maize flour in Eldoret, the cost of school fees in Murang’a and the availability of jobs in Nairobi.

The incoming COMESA chair faces his own political complexities. Mnangagwa has spent years attempting to rehabilitate Zimbabwe’s international standing following the turbulent Mugabe era, with mixed results. His

administration has attracted some foreign investment and pursued economic liberalisation in certain sectors, but political freedoms remain constrained and the country’s economic recovery has been uneven. His chairmanship of COMESA will offer Zimbabwe a regional platform — and Mnangagwa will be aware of its value.

What binds both leaders, and all 21 COMESA heads of state, is the recognition that the economic future of their countries depends in part on decisions made collectively rather than in isolation. The summit’s theme captured that logic precisely. One market, one future — a formulation that is easy to endorse in a conference hall in Harare and considerably harder to deliver when national interests diverge, political pressures mount and election calendars begin to concentrate minds.

Ruto has passed the baton. The race, for Kenya and for the region, is only just beginning.



Universities The damage extends beyond traders. Final-year students face acute personal anxiety, with graduation timelines now uncertain

When universities shut down, small traders pay the price

Kenya's lecturers' strike has emptied lecture halls — but its sharpest economic pain is being felt by the vendors, shopkeepers and food stalls that live and die by student footfall.

BY Hadassah Karangu
@themtkenyatimes

Every morning, a mama mboga near a Kenyan university campus arranges her tomatoes, onions and leafy greens and waits for customers who may not come. The lecturers' strike has sent students home — and with them, the daily transactions that keep her business alive.

The national conversation has focused, understandably, on frustrated students losing learning time and lecturers seeking implementation of their collective bargaining agreement. But a third group is absorbing the consequences in silence: the traders, food vendors, butchers, kiosk operators and landlords whose livelihoods are built entirely around university communi-

ties. For them, the university is not merely an academic institution. It is a marketplace and a source of daily income. When it closes, their earnings close with it.

The mama mboga cannot pause her expenses while waiting for students to return. She has already paid for her produce, transport and stall rental. Vegetables wilt. Tomatoes soften. Stock purchased



in anticipation of a busy week becomes a loss when footfall collapses. Across the same neighbourhood, the butcher purchases less meat. The chapati vendor prepares fewer portions. The cybercafé sits quiet. Landlords in student areas struggle to collect rent from tenants who have returned to rural homes.

Each lost transaction ripples outward. A restaurant earning less may cut the hours of casual staff. A shopkeeper postponing restocking means less business for the wholesaler and, further up the chain, for the farmer and transporter who depend on those orders. A boda boda rider who ordinarily ferried students between hostels and lecture halls now sits idle for much of the day. What appears to be an institutional disagreement about salary increments reaches into market stalls and family kitchens of people who had no voice in the dispute and no power to resolve it.

The damage extends beyond traders. Final-year students face acute personal anxiety, with graduation timelines now uncertain. For these students, graduation represents years of sacrifice and the sustained financial commitment of parents who invested in a better future. Delayed academic clearance can disrupt employment applications, postgraduate admissions and professional opportunities requiring proof of a completed degree. A graduate who expected to enter the job market this year may instead spend months in limbo, while the family that saved for a celebration cannot say with confidence when that

day will arrive.

The underlying dispute raises legitimate grievances. Lecturers seeking implementation of the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement are not making unreasonable demands. University staff deserve fair remuneration and working conditions that reflect their professional contribution to the country's development. These concerns require serious engagement, not delays and deflection.

But the cost of an unresolved impasse is never shared equally. The Ministry of Education, the National Treasury and the relevant unions sit at the negotiating table. The mama mboga does not. The butcher has no seat in those discussions. The food vendor preparing fewer meals each day was not consulted when implementation schedules were drawn up. Yet all three are paying part of the bill for a dispute they did not create and cannot resolve. People with no influence over the outcome are carrying a disproportionate share of the burden — and that is a fundamental injustice that official statements rarely acknowledge.

The government must move beyond statements and act with urgency. Meaningful negotiations, conducted with transparent financial data and clear accountability, are overdue. Students cannot be asked to sacrifice semester after semester while talks stall. Small traders cannot absorb indefinite uncertainty because the institutions around which they built their businesses cannot function. Lecturers cannot be expected to return on the

strength of promises already made and broken.

When teaching resumes, universities must publish credible recovery plans for lost learning time, with particular attention to programmes requiring laboratory sessions, clinical placements and practical training that additional classroom hours cannot adequately replace. Students in final year and those already stretched financially must receive targeted support. A return to work should mark the beginning of structured recovery, not the conclusion of government responsibility.

Kenya cannot continue treating university strikes as an unavoidable feature of the academic calendar. Every disrupted semester erodes public confidence in higher education, strains family finances, delays graduates from entering the workforce and quietly hollows out the local economies that depend on students being present.

The mama mboga deserves to sell her vegetables. The student deserves an uninterrupted education. The lecturer deserves fair working conditions. The graduate deserves a degree without unnecessary delay. These are not competing interests — they are interconnected ones, sustained by the same functioning institution.

The question is no longer simply when lecturers will return to class. It is how much longer students, families and small traders must pay for a disagreement they had no part in creating.



My winged visitor



A pleasant morning, with a cool breeze blowing,
I saw something on my windowsill, gently glowing.
Silky and shiny, with a glimmering guise,
I wondered if a butterfly lay hidden inside.

Then my eyes fell upon a picture-perfect sight,
A baby bird perched, delicate and bright.
I offered some grains and water to my guest,

But it neither ate nor drank, nor seemed at rest.

I moved away to show my benevolence,
Giving the little bird space and silence.
It turned its head, searching all around,
As if its mother's presence were the comfort it found.

Then the mother arrived, her wings fluttering wide,
And took her little one safely by her side.
In the blink of an eye, they vanished from view,
Leaving me with a memory tender and true.

By, Mrs. Gulzar Jahan
PUMS CHINNA OBULAPURAM
Gummidipoondi
Tiruvallur Dt

Inside one thing, outside another



How is it possible to speak what is not inside the heart?
The mind says one thing and the tongue utters the opposite.

This is possible only with a boneless tongue.
A very good way to mint money,
In this competitive world

Honestly speaking, it was an utter waste,
A worthless thing.
I feel ashamed to be a part of it,
A waste of time, money, and energy.

Without any heart, how can all say the same lie?
Like that little innocent boy
In the story of The Emperor's New Clothes, I stand,
Not minding the whole world in front of me.

I wish to speak only what is in my heart,
Yes means yes,

No means no,
Good is good, and bad is bad,
Even if it is for free or for money.
My heart is not willing to please the world,
I wish to be honest and truthful,
Even if I have to stand alone and be the odd one out.

I didn't find anything interesting and useful in certain things,
It is an absolute waste for me.
Had I spent this precious time on anything else, it would have been very useful,
Had I spent this money on anything else, it would have served a good purpose,
Had I spent this energy and spirit elsewhere, it would have been more worthy.

I have literally wasted my time, money, and energy.
Henceforth, I wish not to land in any other quicksand or trap like this.
My hands will never clap just to please others...
Why should I fall prey to another's welfare net?
It is purely others job
I don't want to be a part in it

D. Brinda
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Cuddalore dist
Tamilnadu India

Heroes of Zeroes



No reading, no writing;
No homework, no classwork.
We are busy in playing,
We are busy in wandering.
Who are you?
We are the students,
We are the students.

We know only to come,
We know only to go.
We come in uniform,
We go in uniform.
Who are you?
We are the students ,
We are the students .

Want to become a Collector.
Want to become a Doctor.
But we neither read in school
Nor read in home.
Who are you?
We are the students
We are the students

We won't care of punishment,
We won't care of scolding.
For us, punishment is a massage;
For us, scolding is a song.

Who are you?
We are the students,
We are the students .
*
We never touch a book,
We never touch a note;
But we never leave the phone,
We never leave TV.
Who are you?
We are the students ,
We are the students.

No need of book,
No need of guide;
Both are boring.
We need a bat,
We need a ball;
Who are you?
We are the students
We are the students

No worry about Exam and Result?
They are the work of teachers.
No bother about them;
Playing and wandering is our nature.
Who are you?
Guess who we are...
We would say:
We are the students
we are the students
By English Teacher
N. Sivakumar
(The poem talks about the students who take education as a pastime)

Rain



Raindrops tap against my window,
I looked to see what it could be.
When I looked, I saw the rain
Falling gently on my window.
I was filled with joy and delight,
I took my umbrella in hand.

I went outside into the fresh air,
And ran and ran across the land.
Together with my friends,
We played happily in the rain.
Laughing and singing all together,
We sang our songs in the rain.
Rain is very dear to me,
I love the rain so much.
In springtime and in autumn,
I know the rain will come.
Ahmadova O'g'ilo'y Bahodir qizi
3rd-year student, Kattaqo'rg'on State
Pedagogical Institute

The mask we wear



The mask we wear
Hides the truth behind,
Muffles the emotions we carry.
Its colours change like a chameleon,
Concealing pain with a smile,

Beautifying emotions with an untold story.
The storms within remain concealed,
Vulnerability tested time and again,
Reality left unexposed.

We learn to live with multiple masks forever,
As the crowd teaches us to do.
The wind cannot carry the mask away,
Like an anchored ship amidst the storm.
We cannot live without the mask,
For the love we hold within.

Viji. T
Cw writer
Teacher.
Namakkal
Tamilnadu
India

Don't search for yourself, create yourself



Don't wait to find who you are,
Don't look for a shining star.
Dream your dream and start today,
Make your own and choose your way.

Learn from mistakes, try once more,

Open a new and brighter door.
Believe in yourself and take the lead,
Work with courage, plant your seed.

You can grow, you can shine,
Your future is yours to design.
Don't search for who you want to be,
Create yourself and you will see!

R SRIPRIYA
BT ENGLISH
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT
TAMILNADU
INDIA

Medical camp Addressing these problems, he argued, requires practical interventions and leaders who engage directly with communities rather than staying in boardrooms.

Obaga Momanyi hosts free medical camp for Persons with Disabilities in Bonchari

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themtkenyatimes

Persons with disabilities in Bonchari Constituency have received free medical services and assistive devices at a medical camp organised by aspiring Member of Parliament Obaga Momanyi. The initiative aimed to improve access to healthcare for people who are often left behind in community development programmes.

The camp brought together persons with disabilities, healthcare professionals and disability representatives. Beneficiaries received medical assessments and assistive devices, including white canes for people with visual impairments.

Speaking at the event, Momanyi urged leaders to prioritise



Obaga Momanyi interacting with the residents has urged leaders to prioritise the needs of persons with disabilities and said a lack of funds should not be an excuse for failing to deliver essential services

the needs of persons with disabilities and said a lack of funds should not be an excuse for failing to deliver essential services.

He said many people with disabilities remain neglected, especially in rural areas where medical facilities, mobility

equipment and specialised services are hard to reach.

“Let leaders stop coming up with excuses that there is no money. They must serve the community,” he said.

He noted that some families cannot afford basic assistive devices such as wheelchairs,

while others struggle to pay for medical procedures such as X-rays.

Addressing these problems, he argued, requires practical interventions and leaders who engage directly with communities rather than staying in boardrooms.

“If our people have problems, we must go to the villages and look for them. We cannot sit in offices while people are suffering,” he said.

Momanyi said his approach to leadership would involve identifying vulnerable residents, understanding their needs and working with partners to find lasting solutions.

He also called for support for people who have recovered from illness or live with disabilities but struggle to rebuild their lives because of financial constraints and limited access to services.

Lack of data complicates service delivery

Dr Norman Kiogora, director of the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), said proper assessment and registration of persons with disabilities are necessary if people are to receive appropriate services.

Without reliable data, he explained, it is difficult to establish how many people need help, what their needs are, and how to plan for assistive devices, rehabilitation and other support. People in remote villages, or in families that have never sought professional help, risk remaining invisible

to service providers.

“We will have an assessment because they have to get the right assessment so that we are able to treat those conditions in the right way,” he said.

Kiogora’s remarks underscored the need for systematic identification, assessment and registration, and for sustained collaboration among healthcare professionals, disability institutions, government agencies and local leaders.

“Such initiatives should also deepen understanding of the challenges persons with disabilities face and inform future interventions,” Kiogora said.

Government urged to strengthen inclusion

Dr Michael Munene, Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), said the government has provided resources and direction to support disability inclusion, including assistive devices.

He cited the white canes distributed at the camp, which he said were supplied by the

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Medical camp Addressing these problems, he argued, requires practical interventions and leaders who engage directly with communities rather than staying in boardrooms.

Obaga Momanyi hosts free medical camp for Persons with Disabilities in Bonchari

Contd from page 15

national government and not funded by donors, as an example of deliberate efforts to give people with disabilities practical support.

He said the government intends to continue expanding access to disability services, including in areas that have previously received little attention. Inclusion, he added, requires more than policy statements; it must show in the resources and services that enable people to participate more fully in society.

White canes are particularly valuable for people with visual impairments, as they help users move around independently, especially when combined with orientation and mobility training.

However, advocates noted that assistive devices are only one part of the support needed. Medical assessment, rehabilitation, education, economic opportunities and inclusive public services are equally important.

They called for stronger coordination between national and county governments so that people with disabilities can access services without unnecessary barriers.

Representatives call for greater inclusion

John Motio, chairperson of persons with disabilities in Bonchari, and other disability representatives, including George Morara and Hellen Bonareri, were among those involved in the initiative.

Motio reflected the importance of involving people with disabilities in decisions about services that directly affect them.

Morara emphasized that people with disabilities should not be treated merely as recipients of assistance but should take part in decisions about their welfare and development.

Motio called for greater pub-



Dr Michael Munene, Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), said that the government intends to continue expanding access to disability services, including in areas that have previously received little attention. Inclusion, he added, requires more than policy statements | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

lic awareness to ensure that disability is never a reason for discrimination or exclusion.

For families raising children with disabilities, accurate medical information and professional guidance can inform decisions about treatment, education and long-term care, and participants urged communities to support such families rather than isolate them.

Addressing these challenges, they said, is a collective responsibility shared by parents, community members, health professionals, government institutions and development partners.

Parents urged to end stigma against children with disabilities

Motio called on parents and guardians to stop hiding children with disabilities and to seek professional assessment and support instead.

He said stigma, fear and limited awareness still keep some families from taking their children to health facilities, denying those children treatment and support.

They stressed that children with disabilities have the same right to healthcare, education, dignity and participation in society as any other child. Early assessment, they said, helps health professionals understand a child's condition and recommend suit-

able interventions, including treatment, rehabilitation and assistive devices.

They urged local leaders, healthcare providers and disability organisations to work together to identify affected children and connect their families with services.

The camp also highlighted the need to bring healthcare closer to people who cannot travel long distances or afford the costs involved. For many households, transport, consultations, diagnostic tests and assistive devices add up to a significant barrier.

Momanyi said overcoming these barriers would require leaders to work with government agencies, non-governmental organisations, development partners and the private sector rather than relying only on public resources.

He noted that businesses and organisations can help through school-fee assistance, medical support and other corporate social responsibility programmes.

"There are NGOs, development partners and the private sector that can help. Leaders should go out and look for people who can support our people," he said.

A call for accountable leadership

Momanyi challenged leaders to show their commitment to



Dr Norman Kiogora, director of the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), said proper assessment and registration of persons with disabilities are necessary if people are to receive appropriate services | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

public service by identifying vulnerable people and ensuring they benefit from available opportunities.

He said political leadership should be judged by how well it responds to the needs of ordinary citizens, including

those who struggle to access basic services.

He urged leaders and aspiring politicians to seek partnerships with organisations and individuals willing to support communities facing social and economic hardship.

With the country preparing for the 2027 General Election, Momanyi called for leadership that places service delivery at the centre of public engagement. Communities, he said, should not continue to suffer because leaders fail to mobilise resources or explore partnerships.

Morara called for continued assessments, better disability data, stronger community outreach and closer collaboration among government agencies, health providers and development partners.

"Our needs must be treated as a development priority," he said.

Disability inclusion, Bonareri said, should not remain a promise made at public events but should be reflected in everyday service delivery, planning and budgeting.

They urged leaders and stakeholders to work together so that persons with disabilities are treated with dignity and can participate fully in society.




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Economy History supplies the bitter continuity. Colonial Kenya organised its economy around licensed monopolies and settler-controlled processing chains

How Kenya's economic titans feast while competition law serves as courteous footnote



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

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By Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

Under Section 50 of Kenya's Competition Act No. 12 of 2010, the Competition Authority of Kenya is expressly charged to keep the structure of production and distribution under continuous review so as to detect concentrations of economic power whose detrimental impact on the economy outweighs any efficiency gains of integration. The statute itself defines "unwarranted concentration of economic power" to include, among other things, cross-directorships between undertakings producing substantially similar goods or services whose combined market share exceeds forty per cent. That is the cold letter of the law. The living reality is colder still: across cement, steel, animal feed, mobile money, and large-scale banking, a handful of actors sit astride markets like feudal lords, extracting rents while the statute that was meant to restrain them functions more as polite literature than as binding instrument of economic justice.

This is not abstract theory. It is the daily arithmetic of the Kenyan household. When steel manufacturers coordinated prices and restricted imports, the Competition Authority eventually imposed fines totalling KES 338.8 million in 2023. Studies by the World Bank and OECD have long established that such cartels typically inflate prices by twenty to twenty-five per cent. In a country where steel constitutes more than twenty per cent of the cost of housing and public infrastructure, that invisible tax is paid by every family struggling to complete a two-room house and by every county government stretching a limited roads budget. The same pattern repeats in animal feed: four suppliers control more than half the commercial



market, with documented practices of input price control, market allocation, and differential pricing that squeeze unintegrated smaller producers. The Authority's own market inquiry confirmed the oligopolistic structure. Yet the structural grip remains largely intact.

History supplies the bitter continuity. Colonial Kenya organised its economy around licensed monopolies and settler-controlled processing chains. Independence promised a different covenant, yet the new state often simply replaced foreign cartels with state-owned enterprises and politically favoured private conglomerates. The cement sector offers a textbook illustration of the persistence of concentrated power. Investigations more than a decade ago revealed that Lafarge-linked interests held substantial stakes and board representation across major producers, including East African Portland Cement, creating a web of influence that the Authority itself described as exhibiting features of unwarranted concentration. Cross-directorships and shared strategic committees turned putative competitors into co-pilots of the same aircraft. The market share figures were not subtle: one group alone commanded roughly fifty-five per cent. Efficiency arguments were advanced, of course; they always are. But the public interest test under the Act asks whether the concentration unreasonably raises costs or prices or profits. On that measure the defence has frequently rung hollow.

Telecommunications presents an even starker portrait of structural

dominance. Safaricom's share of mobile subscriptions hovers around sixty-five per cent and its grip on mobile money approaches ninety-one per cent. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index for mobile services places Kenya among the most concentrated markets in sub-Saharan Africa. Higher data prices and lower usage relative to regional peers are the predictable consequences. Banking tells a parallel story: the largest institutions still command nearly seventy per cent of the market and the overwhelming majority of profits. When a few institutions control liquidity, deposits, and lending, the transmission of monetary policy itself becomes filtered through private oligopoly rather than through competitive forces.

The Competition Authority is not idle. In the 2024/25 financial year it investigated seventy-five behavioural antitrust matters: twenty-eight coordinated cartel cases, thirty-nine alleged abuses of dominance, and eight involving trade associations. Manufacturing, agriculture, and ICT featured prominently. Settlements and fines have been extracted. Consumer complaints rose sharply. Yet the deeper structural tools remain under-used. The power under Section 52 to order the disposal of interests sufficient to remove an unwarranted concentration has been exercised with extreme rarity. Abuse-of-dominance infringement decisions have been sparse; OECD peer review data show periods in which multiple investigations closed without findings of infringement. The Authority's budget and staffing

remain modest relative to the scale of the economy and the sophistication of the entities it confronts. Concurrent jurisdiction with sector regulators often produces delay rather than decisive coordination. Criminal sanctions exist on paper fines and potential imprisonment yet prosecutions remain exceptional.

This is not mere administrative shortfall. It is a failure of political will and institutional courage. Concentrated economic power does not remain economically neutral. It translates into political influence, regulatory capture, and the quiet rewriting of the rules of the game. When a handful of firms can shape pricing, block entry, and extract preferential terms from suppliers especially the MSMEs that constitute ninety-eight per cent of Kenyan businesses, generate roughly forty per cent of GDP, and employ seventy per cent of the workforce the social contract frays. The small trader delayed in payment, the farmer paying inflated feed prices, the young entrepreneur unable to access affordable data or competitive credit: these are not peripheral casualties. They are the living evidence that the market has been privatized for the few.

Literary irony abounds. The Competition Act speaks in the language of public interest and consumer welfare; the market answers in the dialect of coordinated silence and shared boardrooms. The statute prohibits conduct that unreasonably increases prices or profits; the cartels treat the prohibition as a risk to be managed rather than a boundary to be respected. One is reminded of the colonial-era marketing boards that claimed to stabilize markets while locking producers into dependent relationships. The form has changed; the substance of concentrated control endures.

Original insight demands we recognise the correlation that policy-makers prefer to ignore: high market concentration and weak structural remedies produce not only higher prices but also lower dynamism, reduced innovation, and the crowding-out of domestic capital. Foreign direct investment is welcomed, yet when it arrives already concentrated or quickly achieves dominance through acquisition and cross-hold-

ing, it risks reproducing the very dependency the independence generation sought to escape. Sustainability requires both local and foreign capital operating under the discipline of genuine rivalry, not the comfort of shared market power.

The actors who must move are clear and categorical. Parliament must strengthen the structural remedies in the Act, clarify the threshold tests for unwarranted concentration beyond the narrow cross-directorship definition, and resource the Authority adequately so that market studies lead to enforceable orders rather than reports that gather dust. The Competition Authority itself must treat Section 50 and Section 52 as living instruments rather than archival curiosities; disposal of interests and divestiture should cease to be theoretical. Sector regulators in telecommunications, energy, and finance must stop treating competition concerns as secondary to their narrow mandates and begin genuine concurrent enforcement.

The Judiciary, through the Competition Tribunal and the superior courts, must develop a jurisprudence that treats concentration itself when it demonstrably harms the public interest as an independent ground for intervention, not merely a backdrop to behavioural abuse. The Executive must confront the 209 state-owned enterprises, many operating in competitive sectors, and either subject them to the same competitive disciplines or justify their continued public ownership with transparent public-interest tests. Civil society and consumer organisations must refuse the comfortable silence that allows oligopoly to present itself as inevitable modernity. And the business community especially the large players must recognise that short-term extraction through coordination ultimately erodes the legitimacy of the market system on which their long-term prosperity depends.

Kenya stands at a familiar crossroads. One path continues the quiet coronation of concentrated power, dressing it in the language of efficiency and scale while the majority pay the invisible tax. The other path insists that the Competition Act mean what it says: that no concentration, however efficient in the boardroom's private calculation, may be allowed to outweigh its cost to the public. The words of the statute are already written. What remains is the harder labour of making them sovereign over the empires they were designed to restrain.

The writer is a social commentator

Graduation Behind the colourful ceremonies and carefully staged photographs lies a question that parents, teachers and education stakeholders must honestly confront

PP2 graduation: When school ceremonies become a burden on parents

What should be a simple childhood milestone has quietly become a commercial exercise that costs families money while delivering little of educational value.

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyaintimes

PP2 graduation ceremonies have increasingly become commercial ventures that impose unnecessary financial burdens on parents while adding little or no academic value to the children they are meant to honour. What should be a straightforward transition from pre-primary education to Grade One has been transformed into an elaborate production — graduation gowns, caps, certificates, photography, entertainment and compulsory contributions — that serves schools and service providers far more than it serves children.

Behind the colourful ceremonies and carefully staged photographs lies a question that parents, teachers and education stakeholders must honestly confront: are these ceremonies organised for the benefit of children, or have they become convenient opportunities to make money?

The completion of pre-primary education is a genuine milestone. Children have spent years acquiring foundational skills in communication, numeracy, social interaction and creativity. They deserve encouragement as they prepare to enter Grade One. But recognising that progress does not require a ceremony modelled on a university convocation. The danger arises when schools confuse a child's developmental transition with an academic qualification that demands expensive ritual.

At this age, children are largely unaware of the commercial interests surrounding their graduation. They are excited by colourful gowns, music and the attention of adults. There is nothing wrong with making a child feel special. The problem is when that happiness becomes a justification for extracting money



from families who can ill afford it.

For many Kenyan families, educating a child is already a significant financial undertaking. School fees, uniforms, learning materials and transport consume household budgets that leave little room for extras. When parents are asked to pay additionally for gowns, caps, photographs, certificates and refreshments, the cumulative cost can become a serious burden. It worsens when participation appears compulsory, or when parents fear that declining to contribute will leave their child feeling excluded on the day.

The commercialisation of these ceremonies thrives on social pressure. Once a school announces a graduation, most parents feel they cannot opt out without their child missing what every classmate will experience. Some struggle financially but say nothing, afraid of appearing unable to support their child's education. Others borrow money to meet the demands. A voluntary celebration quietly becomes an indirect financial obligation.

Schools must reflect honestly on their motivations. Is the ceremony about recognising the children, or about enhancing the institution's public image? In an increasingly competitive education market, photographs of young children in graduation regalia — shared on social media and

used in school advertising — project an image of prestige and excellence that may have little connection to the quality of teaching actually taking place inside the classrooms.

This is precisely where the distinction between educational quality and educational packaging matters. A school can stage a magnificent ceremony while failing to maintain adequate teacher-to-learner ratios or provide sufficient learning materials. Conversely, a school with modest resources may deliver outstanding early childhood education without ever staging a graduation event. Parents should resist the temptation to judge an institution by the grandeur of its celebrations.

The certificates awarded at these ceremonies also deserve scrutiny. They may mark completion of a stage, but they should not be mistaken for nationally recognised qualifications or independent proof of academic mastery. Children develop at different rates, and early childhood education should focus on nurturing individual potential rather than manufacturing hierarchies of achievement among five- and six-year-olds.

There is also a subtler risk. When children encounter elaborate ceremonies at every educational transition, they may begin to associate achievement with costumes, applause and material rewards rather than with cu-

riosity, effort and the quiet accumulation of knowledge. Celebrations have their place, but they should complement learning — not overshadow it.

School administrators have a moral obligation to protect families from unnecessary financial pressure. Where celebrations are held, they should be simple, affordable and genuinely inclusive. No child should be excluded or treated differently because their parents cannot pay for a gown or a photograph. Participation must never become a test of a family's financial standing.

Parents, too, must feel free to ask questions: what educational purpose does this expenditure serve, is it vol-

untary, and how much will it cost? Responsible parenting includes protecting the family budget from demands made in the name of schooling. Children must also learn, through their parents' example, that meaningful achievement does not always require elaborate public ceremony.

Education authorities should provide clear guidance on school-organised events. The objective is not to ban every celebration but to discourage practices that commercialise children's milestones or place avoidable financial pressure on families. Schools can meaningfully recognise PP2 learners through classroom activities, storytelling, songs

and simple gatherings that emphasise development, confidence and readiness for the year ahead — at no significant cost to anyone.

The question is not whether PP2 learners deserve recognition. They certainly do. The question is whether that recognition must be packaged into expensive ceremonies that generate revenue without delivering educational benefit. A child does not become more capable by wearing a graduation gown. The greatest gift a school can offer a PP2 leaver is a strong educational foundation. The greatest relief it can give parents is responsible stewardship of the limited resources they have entrusted to it.

PP2 graduation should celebrate children's development, not commercialise their innocence. Education is a developmental process and a public good, not a marketplace where every transition becomes a revenue event. Let the focus remain where it belongs: on learning, growth and a successful start to Grade One.

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Climate The leaders set out their demands without qualification. No more pledges without delivery. No adaptation programmes without the financing to sustain and scale them

Africa can't wait: Continent seeks \$1 trillion for climate adaptation

Faith leaders and climate justice advocates are demanding grants, not loans, as Africa bears the heaviest cost of a crisis it did the least to create.

BY Benard Mulwa

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Interfaith leaders and climate justice advocates yesterday called on industrialised nations to honour their climate finance commitments to Africa, demanding grants rather than loans to fund adaptation, address loss and damage, and support communities already living with the consequences of a warming planet.

Speaking at a joint press conference in Nairobi under the theme “Africa Can’t Wait,” representatives of faith communities, governments and civil society organisations united their voices ahead of upcoming international climate negotiations, insisting that decades of unfulfilled pledges have exhausted the continent’s patience and that the time for action is now.

The gathering was deliberately interfaith in character, drawing together leaders from across Africa’s major religious traditions to signal that the demand for climate justice is not a political position but a moral one. The leaders were clear about what compelled them to speak. Africa is a profoundly religious continent, they argued, and faith communities carry a responsibility to raise their voices when injustice is being perpetuated against the people they serve. “We are seeking to amplify our voices as a faith community because Africa, as it is, is a religious continent influenced by all our faiths. We are oriented around our faith, and our faith invites us to speak out,” one leader said. That faith, they made plain, will not permit silence in the face of what they described as a systematic and ongoing injustice with consequences measured in human lives.

The injustice they named is stark and the numbers support it. Africa contributes approximately three to four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions — a fraction of what industrialised nations have released into the atmosphere over more than a century of economic expansion. Yet the continent absorbs some of the most severe and accelerating consequences of the resulting climate instability. Droughts are deepening across the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Floods are displacing commu-



nities from Mozambique to Nigeria. Harvests are failing with increasing frequency. Water supplies that entire populations depend on are shrinking. For millions of Africans, the climate crisis is not a future threat requiring long-term policy responses. It is a present emergency requiring immediate action. “It is sad that Africa contributes the least to greenhouse gas emissions, yet Africa suffers the brunt of climate catastrophes. That is why we are here — not to remain silent in the face of catastrophe and injustice,” a leader told the gathering.

The leaders set out their demands without qualification. No more pledges without delivery. No adaptation programmes without the financing to sustain and scale them. And crucially, no more loans packaged as climate support. The argument was both moral and economic: asking African nations to borrow money to address a crisis overwhelmingly created by wealthier economies compounds an injustice rather than remedying it. African governments already operating under significant fiscal pressure cannot responsibly add climate debt to the structural burdens they are managing. Grants, the leaders insisted, are not a concession — they are the minimum that historical responsibility demands.

The \$1 trillion figure cited by climate finance advocates reflects the estimated annual investment Africa requires to adapt its infrastructure, agricultural systems, coastal defences and water management to the realities of a warming world. The gap between that figure and the climate finance actually delivered to Africa in recent years is not merely a budgetary shortfall. It represents a widening divergence between what was promised in international forums and what has materialised in practice. The faith leaders in Nairobi joined a growing chorus of African governments, civil society organisations and development economists who have argued that the current international climate finance architecture is failing the continent it was designed to support.

The leaders did not confine their accountability demands to industrialised nations. In a move that distinguished their intervention from straightforward external advocacy, they pledged to hold African governments equally responsible for how climate funds are managed and distributed once they arrive. They proposed the establishment of country coordinating mechanisms — oversight bodies that would bring together governments, civil society,

women’s organisations, Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities and other groups whose perspectives are routinely marginalised in climate policy discussions. The argument was practical as much as principled. Climate finance that flows into national systems without transparent, inclusive oversight tends to concentrate among well-connected institutions rather than reaching the farmers, fishing communities and urban residents most exposed to climate impacts.

Inclusive participation, the leaders stressed, is not an administrative detail. It is the mechanism through

which climate finance can be made to deliver measurable, equitable benefits rather than becoming another layer of international funding that moves through governments and organisations without transforming the lives of the people it was intended to help.

The gathering also condemned what the leaders described as the politicisation and commercialisation of the climate crisis. Treating climate impacts as leverage in geopolitical negotiations or as investment opportunities for financial institutions, they argued, represents a failure of responsibility when communities are losing homes, livelihoods and lives to events directly connected to emissions they did not produce. “We are here to say no to any form of injustice that impacts the people of Africa,” the leaders declared, in language that was neither diplomatic nor ambiguous.

As preparations for the next round of international climate negotiations advance, the Nairobi gathering adds a distinctly moral register to demands that are often framed in technical and financial terms. Faith communities across Africa reach into the daily lives of hundreds of millions of people. Their capacity to mobilise public attention, shape community responses and hold governments accountable for commitments made in their names is significant. When those communities speak with one voice on an issue of this scale, the message carries weight that technical reports and policy papers cannot replicate.

The message from Nairobi was simple, direct and long overdue: Africa has waited long enough, the promises have been counted and found wanting, and faith communities across the continent will not remain quiet while their congregations pay the price of someone else’s emissions.

Climate finance must move from pledge to payment. For Africa, the waiting is over.





Why you should not milk a Kenyan buffalo

By Daniel Mwangi

Milking a Kenyan buffalo is not a farming innovation — it is a fast route to serious injury or death.

The African buffalo, *Syncerus caffer*, is one of the continent’s most dangerous large mammals. Common across Kenya’s savannahs and forest edges, it is known for its size, unpredictability and aggression. Adults weigh between 600 and 860 kilograms, consume roughly 20 kilograms of grass daily and require up to 15 litres of water on hot days. Calves are born weighing 30 to 40 kilograms after an 11-month gestation period, with females reaching reproductive maturity between four and eight years.

Buffalo milk is nutritious and technically fit for human consumption. But that is where any case for milking them ends. The animals cannot be domesticated. They are notoriously difficult to restrain and react



violently to human interference. Disease presents a further risk: buffalo carry infections that routinely go untreated in the wild, posing a direct threat to any human who comes into close contact.

Communities living near game reserves such as Mount Kenya National Park know this well. Reports to Kenya Wildlife Service of buffalo breaking through fences, destroying crops and injuring or

killing residents are common. These are not isolated incidents — they are the predictable behaviour of a wild animal that has never been tamed and shows no inclination to be.

The buffalo belongs to the wild. Leave it there.

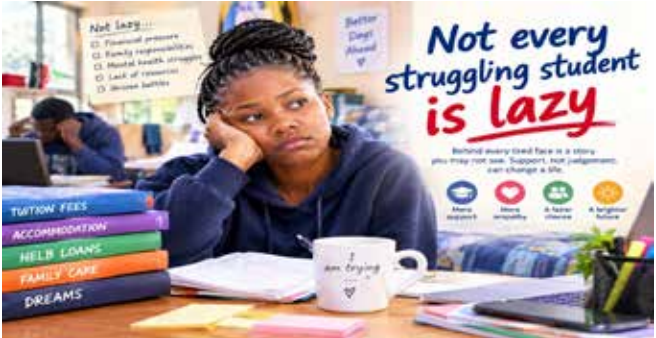
Not every struggling student is lazy

By Yvonne Wambui

Before a lecturer marks a student absent or a classmate whispers about poor grades, someone should ask a simpler question: do we actually know what that student is going home to?

University campuses are not level playing fields. Some students arrive with fees paid, food in their stomachs and a quiet room to study in. Others sit through the same lectures wondering where their next meal will come from, whether unpaid fees will get them sent home, or how to concentrate on a textbook when a family crisis is unfolding back in the village. For these students, university is not just an academic pursuit — it is an act of daily survival.

Financial hardship is the most visible pressure, but rarely the only one. Some students support younger siblings, care for unwell parents or contribute



to household income while simultaneously trying to meet assignment deadlines. They smile in class, participate when called upon and give every impression of coping — because admitting otherwise feels like failure.

None of this excuses poor effort. Students carry a genuine responsibility to attend, engage and push through difficulty. But there is a meaningful difference between a student who refuses to try and one who is trying under conditions most of their classmates will never face.

Universities must do more

than track grades. Counselling services, financial assistance and mentorship programmes exist on most campuses — but only help students who know about them and feel safe enough to ask. Lecturers who listen before they judge, and peers who choose encouragement over mockery, can make that difference.

Asking for help is not weakness. It is often the first courageous step towards turning things around.

Not every struggling student is lazy. Some are simply carrying more than anyone around them can see.

Laikipia University: A natural haven for learning

By Job Mwavuwa

Not every university can count a lake, a working farm and a weather station among its academic assets. Laikipia University can.

Situated 11 kilometres from Nyahururu town along the Nakuru–Nyahururu road, the university sits in one of Kenya’s more striking highland settings, approximately 45 kilometres from Nakuru city. The location is accessible and, more importantly, distinctive — a campus where the natural environment is not incidental to student life but central to it.

Open spaces between lecture halls give students room to decompress, interact and think beyond the classroom. The university’s facilities — a stadium, sports courts, gardens, a farm and a weather station — extend learning into practical, hands-on territory that indoor instruction alone cannot repli-



cate. Each serves a purpose: the farm grounds agricultural study in reality, the weather station connects meteorology to lived observation, the gardens offer both beauty and botanical learning.

Lake Chacha, which the university has made part of its campus identity, adds another dimension. A body of water on a university grounds is not merely scenic. It is a prompt — for conversations about conservation, water management and

the responsibility that comes with sharing space with a fragile ecosystem.

That responsibility falls on everyone. Students, lecturers and administrators must collectively protect what makes this campus worth attending. Environmental awareness taught here should not end at the gate. At Laikipia University, the landscape is not the backdrop to education. It is part of the curriculum.

When comradeship saves a life

By Lewis Francis

It was a fellow student, not a counsellor or a lecturer, who stepped between Rose and a decision she could not undo.

The incident unfolded in the early morning hours at Emmaus hostel, Laikipia University. Fred, a student, had woken at 5:30 a.m. to check his class announcements and found instead a cascade of project deadlines and management notifications. Overwhelmed, he walked to the hostel washroom to clear his head. What he found there changed everything.

In a dark, silent cubicle, he discovered Rose, a fellow student studying computer science, sitting alone and crying. Beside her was a small container she was reluctant to surrender. Fred did not panic, lecture her or walk away. He sat down, stayed calm and asked her to talk. When she eventually placed the container on the floor, he moved it aside quietly and called for help — first the



hostel management, then the university counsellor.

Rose had been carrying what many students carry silently: academic pressure, family expectations, financial strain and a profound sense of isolation. She had reached the point where she saw no way forward. Fred’s presence — unhurried, non-judgmental and human — gave her a reason to pause.

Universities invest in infrastructure, programmes and portals. What saved Rose that

morning was none of those things. It was one student choosing to stay.

Mental health services on campus must be accessible, visible and free of stigma. But institutions should also recognise what this story makes plain: sometimes the most effective intervention is a peer who notices, stops and asks if you are okay.

Do not suffer in silence. And if you see someone struggling, do not walk past.

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Sports >> *Lionel Scaloni is reportedly set to commit his future to Argentina until the 2030 World Cup as the AFA moves to secure the man who ended a 36-year title drought.

Scaloni set to stay: Argentina coach to sign 2030 World Cup deal

By Pascal Okoth

Lionel Scaloni is set to extend his contract as head coach of Argentina until July 2030, with the Argentine Football Association (AFA) moving to retain the man who transformed the national team into back-to-back world champions.

Argentine journalist César Luis Merlo reported yesterday that Scaloni, 48, has accepted the AFA's proposal, with an agreement ready to be finalised. If confirmed, the deal would keep him at the helm of the reigning world champions through the 2030 World Cup, providing a continuity of leadership that the federation regards as central to its long-term planning.

Scaloni was initially appointed on an interim basis in 2018 following Argentina's disappointing campaign in Russia, where the team fell in the round of 16. Few anticipated that the relatively inexperienced coach would go on to deliver one of the most celebrated periods in the country's football history.

His greatest achievement came at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where Argentina defeated France in a dramatic final — decided on penalties — to claim the country's third world title and end a 36-year wait for the trophy. He followed that with Copa América victories in 2021 and 2024, cementing a winning culture that has become the hallmark of his tenure.

Central to Scaloni's success has been his ability to balance star quality with collective discipline. While Lionel Messi has remained the focal point of the team's attacking ambitions, Scaloni has consistently integrated younger players into the squad, ensuring Argentina remain competitive beyond the current generation. His tactical flexibility and willingness to trust emerging talent have drawn



Lionel Scaloni

wide recognition across international football.

The reported extension would cover Argentina's participation in the 2026 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as the 2030 edition. Securing Scaloni beyond both tournaments gives the AFA a stable platform from which to manage what will inevitably be a period of transition as established players make way for the next gen-

eration.

For the federation, the reported agreement reflects confidence in a coach who has delivered historic results and instilled a clear, identifiable style within the national team. Rather than undertaking a rebuilding process under new management, Argentina would retain a coach who understands both the squad's dynamics and the pressures of representing one of football's most demanding nations.

The AFA has not yet issued an official announcement, and the agreement should not be treated as complete until formally confirmed. However, if the contract is signed as reported, Scaloni's renewal would send an unambiguous message about the direction of Argentine football: stability, continuity, and the pursuit of further success on the world stage.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Home School target a historic third consecutive title as Kenya’s top young golfers descend on Royal Nairobi Golf Club.

89 junior golfers chase glory at NCBA Lisle Shaw Championship

By **Martin Weche**

Eighty-nine junior golfers from 16 schools yesterday competed at Royal Nairobi Golf Club for the NCBA Lisle Shaw Memorial Interschool Golf Championship, with defending champions Home School chasing a third consecutive title.

The championship, the third interschool golf tournament of 2026, drew 19 teams in the Main Tournament and eight teams in the Subsidiary Tournament, with schools competing across two distinct formats for gross and net honours. The event honours the legacy of George Lisle Gordon Shaw, who served as Kenya Golf Union president in 1953 and whose name has become synonymous with the development of junior golf in the country.

Home School entered the competition as clear favourites, having won the 2024 and 2025 editions and ended Premier Academy’s three-year winning streak in the process. A third consecutive victory would cement their status as the dominant force in Kenya’s school golf circuit and raise questions about whether any rival programme is yet in a position to mount a sustained challenge.

The Main Event counted the best three scores from a team of four golfers, while the Subsidiary Event was decided by the best two scores from a team of three — formats designed to test not only individual talent but the depth and consistency of each school’s programme. Tournament Director Hannah Gatu said the structure of the competition was deliberate, and central to what the event is trying to achieve.

“The Lisle Shaw Interschool Golf Tournament contributes to the broader development of school golf in Kenya by connecting school-based participation with structured junior competi-



Junior Golfer Wanjiku Mathu plays a tee shot during 2025 NCBA Golf Series qualifying leg at Karen Country Club

tion,” Gatu said. “Through our partnership with NCBA Bank, we continue to expand opportunities for young players to access the game and develop their potential.”

Among the most closely watched competitors was Peponi School’s Shashwat Harish, who made his Kenya Open debut at 15 and arrived at Royal Nairobi with a reputation that extends well beyond the school circuit. Home School’s Mwathi Gicheru, Wahome Mutahi of Rosslyn Academy and Andrew Kagima of Rusinga School were also among the standout names, each representing a generation of Kenyan junior golfers whose technical development and competitive maturity have drawn attention from the country’s golfing establishment.

The 16 participating schools were Braeburn Garden Estate, Braeside Primary School, Brookhurst International School Lavington, Crawford International School, Hillcrest International School, Home School, Nova Pioneer International, Oshwal Academy Nairobi Primary, Oshwal Academy Junior

High, Peponi House, Peponi School, Premier Academy, Rosslyn Academy, Rusinga School, St Christopher’s International School Karen and St Ruth School.

The breadth of that list speaks to the growing reach of school golf in Nairobi. Several institutions have invested significantly in their programmes in recent years, and the competitive field at this year’s championship reflected that. Royal Nairobi Golf Club, one of Kenya’s oldest and most storied venues, provided a fitting stage for a competition that has grown considerably since its revival under NCBA Bank’s sponsorship.

Gatu pointed to the Foundation’s Golf in Schools initiative as the structural engine behind that growth. “These efforts seek to introduce golf to more learners and establish pathways from introductory school programmes to organised junior golf,” she said. The initiative has broadened access to a sport historically associated with a narrow demographic, and the diversity of schools represented at yesterday’s championship suggested

those efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

For the players themselves, the occasion carried significance beyond the competitive stakes. For many, it represented their first experience of a properly organised golf tournament — one with marshals, scorecards, structured tee times and the particular pressure of performing under scrutiny. Those experiences, coaches and tournament officials have long argued, are as formative as any practice session.

The NCBA Lisle Shaw Memorial Championship has, over the years, served as a reliable indicator of emerging Kenyan golf talent, with several former competitors progressing through the junior ranks to senior amateur and professional competition. Whether this year’s edition produces the next name destined for bigger stages remains to be seen — but on a bright morning at Royal Nairobi, the ambition in every young competitor’s eyes suggested the pipeline is in good health.

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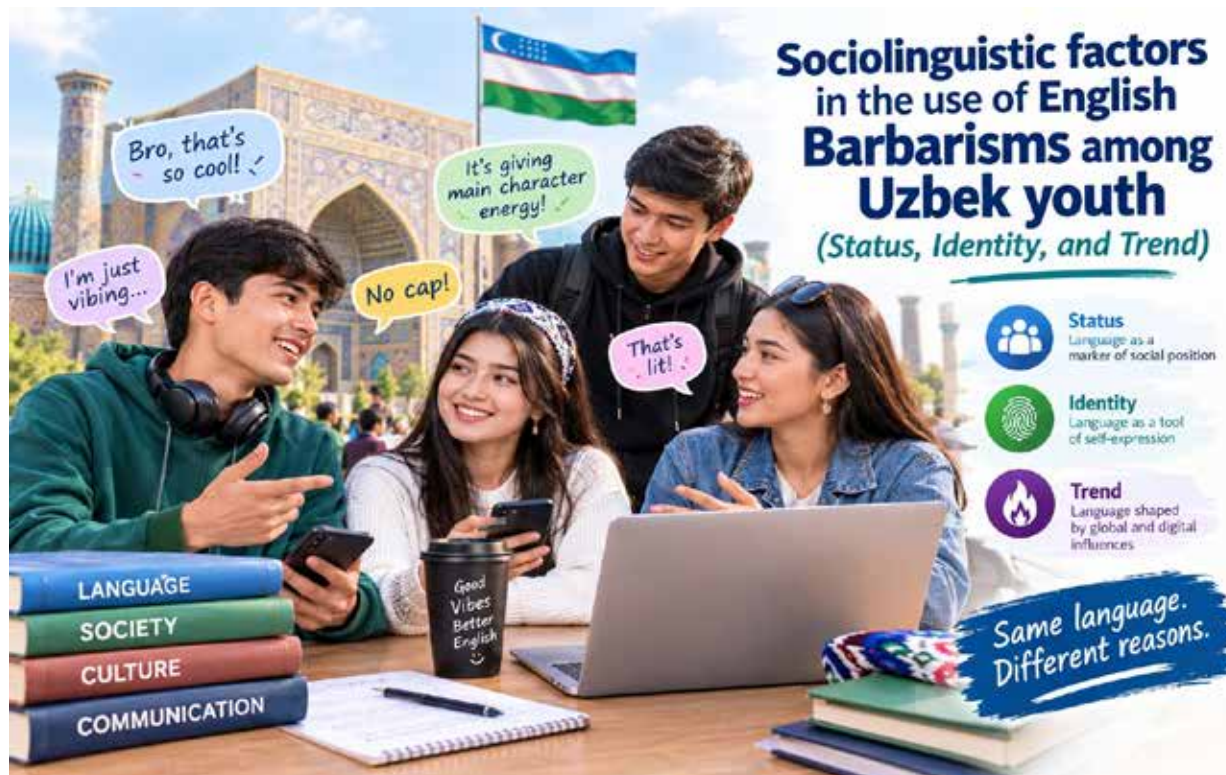
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Sociolinguistic factors in the use of English Barbarisms among Uzbek youth (Status, Identity, and Trend)



By: Madinaxon Abdullayeva
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Worth Noting:

- This study was conducted using a sociolinguistic approach and included qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In order to identify the features of how English barbarisms are used in the speech of Uzbek youth, several methods were applied in combination.
- First, the everyday spoken and written language of young people aged 16–25 was directly observed. During observation, informal forms of communication were analyzed: conversations among friends, dialogues in the university environment, and correspondence on social media.

Abstract: This article examines sociolinguistic factors influencing the use of English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth. The study focuses on the role of status, identity, and trends in shaping young speakers' language choices. Research methods include observation, surveys, and discourse analysis. The findings are interpreted in the context of globalization, digital culture, and the impact of social media.

Keywords: barbarism, sociolinguistics, youth speech, identity, status, trend, English language.

1. Introduction

In the context of modern globalization, intercultural communication is intensifying, and foreign elements are actively entering language systems. The growing number of English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth is one of the important manifestations of this process. This phenomenon is linked not only to linguistic factors but also directly to sociolinguistic ones, and it is explained by young people's social standing, self-perception (identity), and adoption of contemporary trends.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Literature Review

Sociolinguistics studies the social

nature of language and emphasizes that language choice is closely connected with social factors in society. In linguistics, the concept of barbarism refers to units borrowed from other languages that have not been fully assimilated. Owing to the global status of English, it serves as a source of prestige in many languages, including Uzbek.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a sociolinguistic approach and included qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In order to identify the features of how English barbarisms are used in the speech of Uzbek youth, several methods were applied in combination. First, the everyday spoken and written language of young people aged 16–25 was directly observed. During observation, informal forms of communication were analyzed: conversations among friends, dialogues in the university environment, and correspondence on social media. This method made it possible to determine how English barbarisms are used in real communicative situations. Second, a questionnaire method was applied, through which data were obtained from respondents about the situations in which, for what purposes,

and to what extent they use English words and expressions. The questionnaire results helped to determine how conscious and unconscious factors influence young people's language choice. Third, texts on social media (posts, comments, private messages) were examined on the basis of discourse analysis. This analysis revealed the functional load of English barbarisms, including aspects such as emotional expression, prestige, brevity, and adaptation to trends. The complex methodology ensured the reliability of the research results.

4. Sociolinguistic Factors Influencing the Use of English Barbarisms

The active use of English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth is determined not merely by linguistic need but by a number of important sociolinguistic factors. Among these factors, the concepts of status, identity, and trend occupy a leading position.

First of all, the status factor is of great importance in the spread of English barbarisms. In modern society, English has high social prestige as a global language and the language of science, technology, and business. For this reason, using English units in young people's speech is per-

ceived as a sign of knowledgeability, modernity, and competitiveness. In some cases, using English words becomes a means of demonstrating social superiority in front of interlocutors.

The identity factor also plays an important role in the use of English barbarisms. Language is one of the main markers of a person's self-perception and of expressing membership in a social group. Through English elements, young people present themselves as individuals who are open to global culture and hold a modern worldview. Especially in subcultures connected with information technology, gaming, startups, and pop culture, English barbarisms are becoming an integral part of identity.

The trend and fashion factor is one of the main factors ensuring the rapid and widespread diffusion of English barbarisms. Through social media, bloggers, influencers, and mass media, certain English words become trends within a short time. By using these words, young people adapt to a modern speech model and achieve social acceptance within the group. As a result, English barbarisms are often used as a stylistic device, increasing the expressiveness of speech.

5. Results and Discussion

The analyses show that the use of English barbarisms is observed mainly in informal communication, and especially on online platforms. This situation is connected with young people's social adaptation and their integration into the global information space.

6. Conclusion

The widespread use of English barbarisms in the speech of Uzbek youth is directly linked to sociolinguistic factors: status, identity, and trends. This process is a natural phenomenon in the development of language, and it is important to study it on a scientific basis and to regulate it (bring it under norms).

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