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Countdown 2027  **The choice of Wamunyoro as the venue for these engagements is itself a deliberate statement.**

Gachagua, Kalonzo, Wamalwa unite

Kenya's opposition realignment moved into a decisive new phase yesterday as former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua hosted a series of high-level consultations at his Wamunyoro residence, meeting separately with Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka and Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K)'s Eugene Wamalwa in talks aimed at forging a united front against President William Ruto ahead of the August 2027 General Election.

The meetings represent the most serious attempt yet to consolidate Kenya's fragmented opposition into a single, credible presidential challenge. Gachagua, removed from office by impeachment in October 2024 and since repositioned as a rallying point for anti-establishment sentiment, described the consultations as focused on "the liberation of our country and the formation of the sixth administration." He added that all parties had reached agreement on the need to settle on one presidential candidate, saying they would "make whatever sacrifices necessary" to achieve unity. The consultations, he confirmed, are continuing.

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka holding high-level consultations at his Wamunyoro residence.



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Wamunyoro Alliance Takes Shape; Gachagua, Kalonzo, Wamalwa unite

BY James Mwangi

@themkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Kenya's opposition is moving closer to a united front for the 2027 General Election after former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua held separate talks with Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka and DAP-K leader Eugene Wamalwa at his Wamunyoro residence.

The meetings mark the strongest effort yet to consolidate the opposition around a single presidential challenger to President William Ruto. Gachagua said the leaders were focused on forming the country's "sixth administration" and agreed on the need to rally behind one candidate, even if it requires personal sacrifices.

Wamunyoro has increasingly become the centre of opposition strategy, symbolising Gachagua's political comeback following his impeachment in 2024. Kalonzo brings influence in Lower Eastern Kenya and a national profile built over decades in politics, while Wamalwa strengthens the alliance's reach in Western Kenya.

Together, the trio hopes to combine regional support bases into a formidable challenge against Ruto, who continues to bolster his own political position through cooperation with ODM and a broad-based government arrangement.

However, history offers a warning. Previous opposition coalitions, including NASA and Azimio, struggled to survive internal rivalries. Beyond unity, the emerging alliance must also convince voters it has credible solutions to pressing concerns such as the cost of living, unemployment, taxation and governance. With the 2027 race drawing nearer, the battle lines are becoming clearer.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



More than 1,300 pupils in Kiambu County will retain access to their school playground after the Environment and Land Court at Thika nullified the allocation of 2.7 acres of school land to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa Ruguthi Women’s Guild, ruling on 5 October 2026 that the registration was illegal and void. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, which participated as an interested party, established that the parcel — registered as Title No. KARAI/KARAI/350 — had been set aside in 1957 by the former County Council of Kiambu for use as a playing field serving Kanyiha, Lusigeti, and Njumbi Primary Schools. Investigators found no letter of offer, no rent payments, and no evidence the Guild had paid any consideration for the property. The ruling restores the land to public trust, safeguarding it for sport, recreation, and future generations of pupils at the three schools.



Motorists across Kenya’s major highways were yesterday subjected to intensified roadside checks as the National Transport and Safety Authority mounted a fresh enforcement operation targeting compliance failures that continue to make the country’s roads among the most dangerous in the region. Officers, deployed jointly with the National Police Service, stopped both private and public service vehicles to verify driving licences, PSV badges, road service licences, and vehicle inspection certificates. Spot checks were also conducted on mechanical roadworthiness — including speed limiters, seat belts, tyres, brakes, and lighting — while enforcement teams cracked down on speeding, overloading, drunk driving, and driver fatigue. The operation follows an alarming rise in road fatalities. NTSA recorded 2,150 deaths in the first half of 2026 alone, an 11 per cent increase on the same period the previous year. Road crashes currently cost Kenya an estimated KSh450B annually. Motorists are advised to carry all valid documentation and ensure their vehicles meet minimum safety standards before joining the road.



was seconds away. One family said their kin had called to confirm an arrival time. Another received a brief voice note. All that remains of those conversations now are records on a phone screen. Kenya loses thousands of lives on its roads every year. The Nairobi-Mombasa Highway, one of the country’s busiest and most dangerous arteries, has claimed dozens of lives in separate crashes this year alone. Each accident produces the same cycle: grief, a brief investigation, calls for action, and silence. Until the next one.

The phone calls came in the minutes before impact — ordinary conversations, plans for the week ahead, promises to call back later. None were kept. Twenty-four people died when a passenger bus and a tanker collided on the Nairobi-Mombasa Highway, leaving families to piece together their final moments through the last messages and calls their loved ones made before the crash. Relatives who spoke to journalists described the particular cruelty of those exchanges — cheerful, routine, entirely unaware of what



President William Ruto yesterday directed a contractor to immediately begin tarmacking the three-kilometre road leading to Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka’s rural home in Tseikuru, Kitui County — a stretch of road that has sat at the centre of one of Kenya’s most politically charged infrastructure disputes. The directive follows months of public sparring between the two leaders. Ruto first raised the issue late last year during a Kiambu function, questioning how Kalonzo could campaign for national development when the road to his own home remained dusty and untarmacked after four decades in government. “You cannot expect someone who was unable to tarmac the road to his home to tarmac the road to your home,” Ruto said at the time. Kalonzo fired back, citing his role in commissioning the Kibwezi–Maua road through Chinese contractor Sinohydro during his tenure as Vice President. With the 2027 election approaching and Ukambani’s vote up for grabs, the tarmac has arrived. Whether it is infrastructure or politics driving the bulldozer is a question Kitui residents will answer at the ballot.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki yesterday gave the government’s clearest assurance yet that the state will not interfere in next year’s General Election, telling residents in Laikipia West that the 2027 polls will be conducted without political manipulation or violence. Kindiki dismissed growing opposition concerns that the ruling establishment could move to tilt the electoral process in its favour, insisting that transparency and accountability in the election were non-negotiable. “Any talk about the government planning to remove transparency and accountability in next year’s General Election is useless and impossible,” he said. The remarks come as political temperatures rise across the country, with opposition coalitions accelerating their formations and public anxiety over electoral integrity mounting ahead of the August 2027 contest. Whether the assurance holds will ultimately be tested at the ballot box — not at a campaign rally.



A fugitive police inspector at the centre of one of Nairobi’s most disturbing double murder cases will remain in custody for a further two weeks as detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations complete their inquiry into the killings. Inspector Kenneth Kipkemboi Sang, who had been the subject of a manhunt before his arrest, faces murder charges in connection with the deaths of city lawyer Mathew Kyalo Mbobu and Dr Victoria Mutiso. The court granted the DCI the additional detention period yesterday to allow investigators to finalise their case file before charges are formally preferred. The killings drew widespread public alarm, particularly given the identity of the victims and the accused’s position as a serving police officer — a detail that has intensified scrutiny of the case and demands for a thorough, uncompromised investigation.

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Politics “I pray for all of you, and I pray for our country, that we may have peace and unity,” Uhuru

Uhuru calls for unity as he marks 65th birthday

Kenya’s former president used his birthday to deliver a message of peace and national cohesion as the country navigates a politically charged period ahead of the 2027 elections.

BY Grace Wanja

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Former President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday marked his 65th birthday with a call for national unity, urging Kenyans to set aside their differences and embrace peace as the country heads into an increasingly competitive political season.

Speaking during a birthday interview with Milele and Kameme FM radio stations, Kenyatta — who was born on 26 October 1961 and served as Kenya’s fourth president from 2013 to 2022 — delivered a message centred on collective responsibility and peaceful coexistence. “This country belongs to us, and we will move it forward together. That is what I believe, and I continue to believe,” he said.

The retired president, who has maintained a relatively measured public profile since leaving office four years ago, used the platform to offer prayers for the country and appeal directly to citizens across political and ethnic divides. “I pray for all of you, and I pray for our country, that we may have peace and unity. Let us love one another,” Kenyatta said.

The timing of the message carries weight. Kenya is fourteen months from a general election that is already generating significant political heat, with opposition realignments accelerating, coalition



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

negotiations intensifying, and the country’s unresolved economic grievances providing combustible material for those willing to exploit them. In that context, a call for unity from a former president who commanded two electoral mandates and retains considerable influence within the Mount Kenya political community is neither incidental nor purely ceremonial.

Kenyatta’s two terms in office were defined by both ambitious infrastructure development and significant political turbulence, including a disputed 2017 election, a Supreme Court-ordered rerun, and the celebrated but short-lived handshake with then

opposition leader Raila Odinga that reshaped Kenyan politics for half a decade. Since leaving office, he has stepped back from the frontline of political activity, though his influence over the Mount Kenya vote bloc — now being actively courted by his former deputy Rigathi Gachagua and others — remains a factor that no serious political analyst discounts.

His birthday message made no reference to the current political landscape, the coalition negotiations under way, or his own political future. That restraint is itself a choice. In Kenya, silence from influential figures is rarely neutral, and a former

president who calls for unity without specifying where the divisions lie leaves considerable room for interpretation.

What the message does establish, unambiguously, is that Kenyatta remains engaged with the country’s direction and willing to use whatever platform is available to him to shape its tone. Whether that engagement deepens as the 2027 election approaches — and in whose favour — is a question that Kenya’s political class is already quietly debating.

At 65, Uhuru Kenyatta is younger than many of the world’s most consequential political figures. His next chapter remains unwritten.

Sifuna draws hope from Serbia and Brazil as Kenya’s 2027 race heats up



Linda Mwananchi Movement Edwin Sifuna

BY John Kamau

@themtkenyatimes

The Nairobi senator and presidential aspirant says global electoral upsets prove that no outcome in Kenya’s 2027 contest should be dismissed.

By John Kamau

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna yesterday invoked political upheaval in Serbia and Brazil to argue that Kenya’s 2027 General Election remains genuinely open, dismissing suggestions that an electoral upset against the incumbent is impossible.

Sifuna, who is positioning himself for a presidential run under the Linda Mwananchi Movement, pointed to two developments that have captured global attention. In Serbia, a student-led protest movement that emerged from public fury over a deadly railway station canopy collapse in Novi Sad in November 2024 — which killed 16 people and exposed alleged government corruption — grew into a sustained challenge against President

Aleksandar Vučić’s political establishment. In Brazil, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won yesterday’s presidential run-off with 51.79 per cent of the vote against conservative challenger Flávio Bolsonaro’s 48.21 per cent, overturning a first-round deficit to secure a decisive victory.

“I don’t know if those who are categorical that there can be no miracles in elections are following the happenings in Serbia and Brazil,” Sifuna said. “I’m super encouraged for 2027 because we in Kenya pray to the same God. Inshallah we get ours too.”

With opposition coalitions still forming and questions over unity unresolved, Sifuna’s message is as much a rallying call to a fragmented opposition as it is a statement of personal ambition. In a political season already defined by realignments and calculation, he is betting that hope, correctly directed, is itself a political force.

Global history suggests he is not wrong.

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Court Kenya's relationship with international criminal accountability is not a straightforward one. The ICC's intervention following the 2007 post-election violence

Kenya establishes international crimes division: Justice delayed, but will it be delivered?

Fourteen years after the International Criminal Court intervened in Kenya's post-election violence, the country has created its own international crimes division — but whether it can deliver justice free from political interference remains the defining question.

BY David Kimani

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Kenya formally established an International Crimes Division within its judiciary yesterday, creating a specialised court to prosecute genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity on home soil — fourteen years after the International Criminal Court in The Hague was forced to intervene following the post-election violence of 2007 and 2008 that left more than 1,300 people dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.

The establishment of the division represents a significant institutional milestone. It signals, at least in principle, that Kenya is prepared to internalise accountability for the gravest category of human rights violations rather than leaving that responsibility to an international body operating thousands of miles away. The Rome Statute, to which Kenya is a signatory, encourages precisely this kind of domestic complementarity — the idea that national courts should be the first line of accountability, with the ICC stepping in only when they are unwilling or unable to act.

The critical word in that framework is “unwilling.” And it is that word, more than any question of legal architecture or judicial capacity, that will determine whether Kenya's new division becomes a genuine instrument of justice or an elaborate mechanism for managing international pressure while protecting the powerful.

Kenya's relationship with international criminal accountability is not a straightforward one. The ICC's intervention following the 2007 post-election violence resulted in charges against six senior Kenyan figures, including individuals who would go on to serve at the very highest levels of government. Those cases collapsed — through a combination of witness intimidation, witness recantation, and what the ICC prosecutor described as a deliberate obstruction of evidence. No Kenyan was ultimately convicted. No senior figure served a day in prison for vi-



Chief Justice Martha Koome

olence that scarred the country for a generation. The families of the 1,300 dead received neither justice nor a credible official account of what happened and who ordered it.

That history is not ancient. It is living context for every assessment of what this new division might achieve. The question it forces into the open is one that Kenya's legal and political establishment would prefer to leave unasked: if a future episode of mass violence implicates individuals with political connections, financial resources, and the capacity to influence witnesses, investigators, and judicial appointments, will this division perform any differently from the institutions that failed so visibly after 2007?

The structural risks are real and well documented. Kenya's judiciary has made measurable progress in recent years, particularly in its administrative independence and the quality of its higher court judgments. The establishment of a specialised division with judges trained in interna-

tional humanitarian law is a genuine improvement on a general criminal court system ill-equipped to handle the complexity of atrocity cases. These advances should be acknowledged honestly.

But judicial independence in Kenya remains imperfect and unevenly applied. Prosecutorial decisions are vulnerable to political influence. Witness protection mechanisms, essential in any atrocity prosecution, are chronically underfunded and have failed visibly in high-profile cases. The Director of Public Prosecutions operates with a degree of independence guaranteed by the Constitution but tested repeatedly by political reality. And Kenya's political culture — in which accountability is frequently negotiated rather than enforced, and in which the phrase “we forgive each other” has been deployed to foreclose investigation of serious crimes — sits in deep tension with the uncompromising demands of international criminal law.

The ICC standard, against which this division will ultimately be measured, is exacting. Complementarity under the Rome Statute does not simply require that a national court goes through the motions of a prosecution. It requires genuine willingness and genuine ability to investigate and prosecute the same conduct, against the same persons, for the same underlying behaviour. A prosecution designed to produce an acquittal, or one that targets low-level perpetrators while shielding those who planned and ordered the violence, does not satisfy the complementarity test. The ICC retains jurisdiction to intervene whenever it concludes that domestic proceedings are a shield rather than a sword.

That retained jurisdiction matters enormously. It means that the establishment of this division does not, of itself, close the door to future ICC involvement in Kenyan cases. It means that if Kenya's new court is seen to be protecting influential figures from accountability, the interna-

tional option remains available. And it means that the division's credibility will be built or destroyed not by its establishment, but by the cases it chooses to bring, the seriousness with which it pursues them, and the independence it demonstrates when those cases become politically inconvenient.

The most important test will come not from a historical case but from a future one. Kenya remains a country in which electoral cycles carry a real risk of organised violence, in which political competition frequently descends into ethnic mobilisation, and in which powerful individuals have demonstrated both the willingness to use violence instrumentally and the resources to obstruct its investigation. When the next serious episode occurs — and the country's history offers no grounds for confidence that it will not — the new division will face its definitive examination.

Can Kenya's leaders submit themselves to this court? The constitutional answer is yes. The political answer is considerably less certain. A court that can be navigated around, delayed indefinitely, or rendered ineffective through the withdrawal of resources and cooperation is not a court at all. It is a performance of accountability staged for an international audience.

Kenya's victims of past atrocities, and those who may become victims in the future, deserve more than a performance. They deserve a court with the independence to follow evidence wherever it leads, the resources to protect witnesses and manage complex transnational investigations, and the institutional courage to pursue the powerful with the same determination it applies to the powerless.

The division has been established. The harder work — building the credibility, the capacity, and the political culture that genuine accountability requires — has barely begun.

Politics The political arithmetic underlying these consultations is straightforward, even if the execution is anything but. No single opposition leader commands the national reach

Gachagua, Kalonzo, Wamalwa unite: Kenya’s 2027 opposition battle takes shape

With fourteen months to the general election, Wamunyor residence has become the unlikely nerve centre of Kenya’s most consequential political realignment in a decade.

BY James Mwangi
@themkenyatimes

Kenya’s opposition realignment moved into a decisive new phase yesterday as former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua hosted a series of high-level consultations at his Wamunyor residence, meeting separately with Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka and Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K)’s Eugene Wamalwa in talks aimed at forging a united front against President William Ruto ahead of the August 2027 General Election.

The meetings represent the most serious attempt yet to consolidate Kenya’s fragmented opposition into a single, credible presidential challenge. Gachagua, removed from office by impeachment in October 2024 and since repositioned as a rallying point for anti-establishment sentiment, described the consultations as focused on “the liberation of our country and the formation of the sixth administration.” He added that all parties had reached agreement on the need to settle on one presidential candidate, saying they would “make whatever sacrifices necessary” to achieve unity. The consultations, he confirmed, are continuing.

The choice of Wamunyor as the venue for these engagements is itself a deliberate statement. Once the official residence of a sitting deputy president, the property has been recast as a symbol of political resilience and continuity — a place where, as Gachagua frames it, the work of national restoration proceeds regardless of the personal political reversals he has suffered. That framing is calculated. It positions Wamunyor not as the home of a fallen official but as the headquarters of a movement in the making, and it invites the leaders who pass through its gates to associate themselves with that narrative.

Kalonzo, one of Kenya’s most enduring political figures, brings considerable assets to the emerging coalition. His Ukombozi Alliance, rebranded from the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition in Septem-

ber, has been quietly recalibrating its strategy, adjusting its coalition agreement to allow greater flexibility in selecting a presidential candidate. That adjustment is significant. It signals that Kalonzo is prepared to subordinate his own presidential ambitions — at least temporarily — to the broader goal of assembling a coalition capable of defeating Ruto. Whether that preparedness will survive the inevitable pressure of a campaign season remains to be seen, but the gesture itself has opened doors that were previously closed.

Wamalwa, leading DAP-K, adds a western Kenya dimension to the emerging alliance that neither Gachagua nor Kalonzo can replicate independently. Western Kenya’s electoral weight has historically been decisive in close presidential contests, and Wamalwa’s participation signals that the coalition’s architects are thinking seriously about geographic breadth rather than simply consolidating existing support bases. His arrival at Wamunyor — welcomed publicly by Gachagua with the greeting “Om-wami Eugene Wamalwa, welcome to Wamunyor residence” — was a carefully staged moment designed to communicate momentum and inclusivity to a watching political class.

The political arithmetic underlying these consultations is straightforward, even if the execution is anything but. No single opposition leader commands the national reach required to defeat a sitting president with access to state resources, an established party infrastructure, and a broad-based parliamentary arrangement. Gachagua’s strongest support lies in the Mount Kenya region, where his impeachment generated significant sympathy and where perceptions that the region’s political interests have been marginalised under Ruto continue to simmer. Kalonzo draws from lower eastern Kenya and retains a national profile built over three decades of presidential campaigns. Wamalwa anchors western Kenya. Together, the three represent a potential coalition of regional blocs that, if properly integrated, could present Ruto with his most serious electoral challenge since his 2022 victory.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka and their allied leaders holding high-level consultations at his Wamunyor residence.

The challenge, as every Kenyan political observer knows, is that opposition coalitions in this country have a poor record of surviving contact with the campaign season. The 2022 Azimio coalition, which brought together Kalonzo, former President Uhuru Kenyatta, and eventual presidential candidate Raila Odinga, ultimately fell short despite commanding significant resources and public support. Before that, the 2017 NASA coalition fractured under the weight of competing ambitions. Kenya’s opposition has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to assemble impressive coalitions and the equal ability to destroy them from within.

What makes the current moment different — or at least potentially different — is the nature of the grievance driving the realignment. Gachagua’s impeachment, widely seen by his supporters as a politically motivated removal engineered by Ruto after a falling-out between the two, created a rupture within the ruling establishment that has not healed. Gachagua retains substantial loyalty within the Mount Kenya political community, and his ability to mobilise that community against his former running mate gives the opposition a weapon it did not have in 2022. The question is whether that grievance, powerful as it is, can be translated into a durable coalition platform that speaks to the broader national electorate rather than simply to those who share his sense of injustice.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua being fought a bull by Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K)’s Eugene Wamalwa at his Wamunyor residence.

On the government side, Ruto is pursuing his own coalition-building agenda with characteristic energy. His broad-based government arrangement with the Orange Democratic Movement has given UDA structural advantages in Parliament and shored up his political position following the anti-government protests of 2024. Negotiations between UDA and ODM over a formal electoral alliance, including a joint manifesto, are ongoing, though they remain contentious. ODM has been pushing for a 50-50 power-sharing arrangement and the allocation of the Deputy President’s position to the party should the alliance pro-

ceed into the next election — demands that have generated internal resistance within UDA and prompted public caution from government officials including Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo, who urged leaders not to impose conditions on the President in exchange for electoral support.

The ODM factor complicates the opposition’s calculations considerably. If Raila Odinga’s party fully commits to a formal electoral alliance with Ruto, it removes from the

Politics The political arithmetic underlying these consultations is straightforward, even if the execution is anything but. No single opposition leader commands the national reach

Gachagua, Kalonzo, Wamalwa unite: Kenya's 2027 opposition battle takes shape

With fourteen months to the general election, Wamunyor residence has become the unlikely nerve centre of Kenya's most consequential political realignment in a decade.

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opposition's potential coalition a significant Nyanza and Coast vote base. ODM's western Kenya networks, which overlap with Wamalwa's own constituency, would be particularly consequential. The opposition is therefore operating against a clock: the longer the ODM-UDA alliance negotiations remain unresolved, the greater the uncertainty, but a concluded deal would substantially alter the electoral landscape. Beyond the coalition arith-

metic, the 2027 election will ultimately be shaped by issues that no alliance can paper over. The cost of living remains the dominant concern of ordinary Kenyan households, with food prices, fuel costs, and the burden of taxation all weighing heavily on a population that has seen its purchasing power eroded significantly in recent years. Youth unemployment, public debt management, the quality of public health services, and accountability for the violence that accompanied the 2024 protests are all live issues that voters, particularly

young voters, are watching closely. Any opposition coalition that focuses its energy on position-sharing negotiations while neglecting a coherent policy platform risks repeating the mistakes of its predecessors. Gachagua himself has signalled awareness of this. His public messaging has consistently emphasised substantive themes — equity in resource distribution, constitutional governance, and what he describes as the restoration of national dignity — alongside the coalition-building activity. Whether that messaging



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka holding high-level consultations at his Wamunyor residence.



deepens into a genuine policy platform or remains at the level of political rhetoric will be one of the defining tests of his leadership of the emerging opposition. With fourteen months remaining, the race is genuinely open. The incumbent has resources, infrastructure, and the advantages of office. The opposition has grievance, energy, and — if yesterday's consultations are any indication — a growing recognition that unity is not optional. Kenya's August 2027 election is shaping up to be the most consequential in years. The battle for the soul of the op-

position has begun. Whether it produces a credible alternative or another cautionary tale depends on what the leaders meeting at Wamunyor are genuinely prepared to sacrifice — and whether, this time, they mean it.



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua being figted a bull by Democratic Action Party of Kenya (DAP-K)'s Eugene Wamalwa at his Wamunyor residence.

Electric boda bodas Kenya has roughly three million boda boda riders. For most, the motorcycle is factory, shop, and taxi rolled into one

The two-minute switch: How electric boda bodas are reshaping Kenya's streets

Cheaper to run, faster to refuel, and easier to maintain, electric motorcycles are transforming the economics of Kenya's three-million-strong boda boda industry.

BY Njeri Mickeydan Kioko

@themtkenyaintimes

In Nairobi's chaotic traffic, boda boda rider Peter Ochieng once spent more on petrol each day than he did on food. His 150cc motorcycle consumed nearly half his daily earnings before he had picked up his first passenger. Today, Ochieng rides an electric bike. A battery swap costs him around KSh265, carries him roughly 80 kilometres, and takes two minutes. He keeps the rest.

Ochieng is not an outlier. He is part of a quiet but accelerating revolution transforming Kenya's streets one motorcycle at a time. The electric boda boda, once dismissed as too expensive and too impractical for Africa's rough roads and unpredictable power supply, is now a serious commercial proposition. The reason is straightforward: for the millions of riders who depend on these machines for their livelihoods, electric bikes make more money than petrol ones.

Kenya has roughly three million boda boda riders. For most, the motorcycle is factory, shop, and taxi rolled into one. It is how school fees get paid, how families are fed, and how rent is met at the end of each month. Fuel is the single largest operating expense, consuming between 40 and 50 per cent of daily earnings. When global oil prices spiked following Middle East tensions and Kenyan petrol prices rose by around 22 per cent, the arithmetic of riding a petrol bike became brutal.

Riders were working longer hours for diminishing returns, trapped in a cycle where more trips simply meant more fuel costs.

Electric bikes changed that equation dramatically. Riders report spending about KSh200 on electricity for a full day's use, against KSh700 on petrol. A rider in Kiambu who switched to electric now spends KSh300 daily on charging and battery use, down from over KSh500 on fuel. In Chuka, another rider powers his bike on roughly KSh275 of electricity — a distance that would previously have cost KSh400 in petrol for less than half the range. The difference, modest as it sounds per day, is transformative across a working month.

The savings accumulate fast. Bolt estimates its electric boda riders save between KSh300 and KSh500 per day, or roughly KSh182,500 annually. Over five years, the total cost of ownership is nearly KSh578,000 lower than a comparable petrol bike. M-KOPA reports its customers save an average of KSh730 per day, with 66 per cent earning more since switching. One rider told researchers his take-home pay had risen by over 40 per cent. For a sector where margins have always been razor-thin, those figures represent a genuine change in financial circumstances.

Maintenance tells a similar story. An electric motor has fewer than 200 moving parts; a petrol engine between 500 and 1,000. No oil changes,

no spark plugs, no carburettor cleaning, no timing belt replacements. Motor oil for an electric bike costs around KSh100 against KSh600 for a petrol model. Industry estimates put overall maintenance savings at up to 40 per cent. For riders who previously spent significant time and money at roadside mechanics, the reduction in downtime alone has measurable value — every hour off the road is income lost.

The biggest barrier to adoption has always been the purchase price. A lithium-ion battery can cost as much as the bike itself — prohibitive for a rider earning a few hundred shillings a day. For years, that upfront figure kept electric motorcycles out of reach for the very people who stood to benefit most from them.

The battery-swapping model solved this. Riders buy the motorcycle without a battery for as little as \$750, then rent and swap batteries at designated stations for a daily fee. A swap takes barely two minutes — faster than filling a tank and joining the queue at a petrol station. The rider never waits for a charge, never loses earning time, and never bears the cost of battery degradation over years of use. The model effectively separates the most expensive component of an electric vehicle from its purchase price, making the transition financially accessible to working riders.

Spiro, the market leader with roughly 90 per cent of Kenya's electric motorcycle sales, has built a dense network of swap



stations across urban areas, spaced five to ten kilometres apart in Nairobi and expanding into 37 counties. Its Mega Battery Swap Station in Nairobi houses over 200 batteries and operates around the clock, seven days a week. Riders on long trips can plan their routes around swap points the way petrol riders plan around filling stations — a habit that is becoming second nature to a growing number of converts.

Other companies are following. Roam, Ampersand, and ARC Ride have established assembly plants and swap networks of their own across the country. Kenya's total manufacturing capacity for electric two-wheelers is projected to reach 100,000 units per year by 2026. Electric motorcycles jumped from just four per cent of new motorcycle sales in 2023 to 15 per cent in 2025, with some industry reports suggesting they now account for around 30 per cent of monthly sales in Nairobi. The trajectory points in one direction only.

The government has not been a passive observer. Under the Finance Bill 2025, electric motorcycles, bicycles, and lithium-ion batteries were granted VAT zero-rating and excise duty was reduced to zero — measures that directly narrow the price gap between electric and petrol models. The National E-Mobility Policy, launched in February 2026, formalised the long-term direction, setting a target for all motorcycles in Kenya to be electric by 2050 and including provisions for local manufacturing support and the standardisation of charging infrastructure nationwide.

Pay-as-you-go financing models have been equally important in driving adoption.

Companies such as M-KOPA, which has financed over 5,000 electric bikes, allow riders to pay a small deposit and a daily fee — converting what would otherwise be a large capital expense into an operating cost that mirrors their daily cash flow. For riders without savings or formal credit histories, this model has been the decisive factor in making the switch possible.

There is a quieter advantage that rarely features in the sales pitch but matters considerably. Kenya's electricity grid is roughly 90 to 93 per cent renewable, dominated by geothermal, hydro, and wind power. An electric boda boda charged on that grid produces a fraction of the carbon emissions of a petrol bike. In Nairobi and other major towns where urban air pollution has become a serious and growing public health concern, and where boda bodas are a significant contributor to roadside emissions, the mass switch to electric motorcycles is delivering cleaner air and quieter streets almost as a side effect of an economic decision.

The transition is not without friction. Outside Nairobi and a few major urban corridors, swap stations remain sparse. Riders travelling into rural areas or covering long inter-county distances face real range anxiety, knowing that a dead battery mid-route means lost income and stranded passengers. The swap network, impressive as it is within the capital, has not yet caught up with the geography of Kenya's boda boda economy.

Battery standardisation is another flashpoint. Most manufacturers use proprietary battery systems, locking a rider into a single company's swap network. Switching brands means switching bikes entire-

ly — a constraint that has already sparked protests among rider groups who argue it limits competition, reduces their negotiating power, and effectively traps them within one provider's pricing structure. The absence of a universal battery standard is a problem the industry and government will need to confront directly if the transition is to reach its full potential.

For riders without access to credit or a consistent income history, the upfront deposit remains an obstacle despite the availability of financing. The pay-as-you-go model works well for those with a traceable record; for those on the margins of the informal economy, even a reduced entry cost can be a barrier.

These are real challenges. But they are the challenges of a technology in rapid expansion, not one in retreat. Electric boda bodas have moved from pilot projects to mainstream commercial vehicles in under five years. The economics are too compelling to ignore, the government has signalled sustained commitment, the industry has invested in infrastructure, and riders — among the most pragmatic businesspeople in Kenya — are voting with their wallets in growing numbers.

For Peter Ochieng, the decision was never about saving the planet. It was about keeping more of what he earns. "The electric bike is not a luxury," he says. "It is a better tool for my work." That, more than any policy commitment or environmental appeal, is why electric bikes are taking over Kenya's streets. They are not just cleaner or quieter. They are cheaper. And in the boda boda business, cheaper means survival.

Education The disruption compounds across every stage of the academic journey. Students approaching examinations face uncertainty about when they will sit them

Kenya's KSh11B university deadlock: Why lecturers' strike shows no sign of ending

Four weeks into a nationwide walkout over a disputed billion-shilling pay offer, thousands of students remain locked out of lecture halls as negotiations collapse repeatedly — and the human cost keeps mounting.

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Kenya's public universities have ground to a halt. A nationwide lecturers' strike, now in its fourth week, continues to disrupt learning across every public university in the country, leaving thousands of students in deepening uncertainty about their examinations, academic calendars, and graduation plans. Negotiations between the government and university staff unions have failed repeatedly to produce an agreement both sides will accept, raising a fundamental question that grows more urgent with each passing day: why has a dispute over pay and employment terms proved so difficult to resolve despite mounting pressure from students, parents, and Parliament?

The latest breakdown came yesterday when the Universities Academic Staff Union rejected a revised government financial proposal tabled during negotiations. Media reports differed on the precise figure offered, with some outlets citing KSh11 billion and others KSh11.9 billion. The discrepancy requires official clarification before either figure can be treated as definitive. What is not in dispute is that the union found the offer insufficient to meet lecturers' demands under the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement, and that talks once again ended without resolution.

The strike began on 2 October 2026 after negotiations over the four-year agreement collapsed. The union has ac-

cused university councils, the Ministry of Education, and the National Treasury of failing to honour a return-to-work formula signed as recently as 5 November 2025 — meaning that an agreement reached less than a year ago has already unravelled. The union maintains that the government must provide a credible, funded financial commitment rather than proposals it regards as inadequate gestures.

The central disagreement runs deeper than the figures being discussed across the negotiating table. It concerns how any settlement will be financed, whether the proposed terms adequately reflect staff expectations, and what enforceable guarantees will ensure that commitments do not dissolve the moment the lecturers return to their classrooms. The union has argued consistently that salaries for public university staff should be funded through the National Exchequer, reducing dependence on the uncertain and uneven income streams of individual institutions — a position that has significant fiscal implications for a government already navigating considerable budgetary pressure.

Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba has indicated that the ministry was engaging the National Treasury and the Salaries and Remuneration Commission to strengthen the government's position. He has urged lecturers to return to their classrooms while negotiations continue. That appeal, however reasonable it may sound from a policy perspective, has found little traction with union members who have heard similar assurances

before and watched previous agreements go unimplemented.

Parliament has weighed in. Reports from 22 October indicated that the National Assembly urged the Executive to intervene urgently. Speaker Moses Wetangula called on relevant government departments to revisit the agreement, while Higher Education Principal Secretary Beatrice Inyangala confirmed that the Ministry of Education was engaging stakeholders. Lawmakers raised pointed concerns about the volume of learning time being lost. Political pressure, however, cannot substitute for an agreement. It can only create the conditions in which one becomes more likely — or, if ignored, more urgently necessary.

For students, the consequences are neither abstract nor distant. University education involves tuition payments, accommodation, transport, and food — costs that continue regardless of whether lectures are taking place. Students who depend on family support are watching their household finances stretch beyond their expected limits. Those on loans, scholarships, or constrained household incomes are particularly exposed to the financial pressure of a disruption that was not of their making and is entirely beyond their control.

The disruption compounds across every stage of the academic journey. Students approaching examinations face uncertainty about when they will sit them. Those scheduled for industrial attachments and internships are struggling to coordinate university require-



UASU leaders

ments with employer expectations. Graduates waiting to enter the labour market face delayed transitions into work, while students seeking post-graduate admission elsewhere risk missing application deadlines. The cumulative effect, across thousands of individual academic trajectories, is damage that will take years to fully assess.

The broader economic implications deserve attention too. Public universities are the pipeline through which Kenya produces teachers, engineers, researchers, administrators, and business professionals. Sustained disruption to that pipeline does not manifest immediately in national economic data, but it accumulates. Employers in sectors that depend on a steady supply of qualified graduates will feel the consequences eventually. Research programmes stall. Community development initiatives tied to university capacity pause. The investment that families and taxpayers have made in higher education slowly erodes in value.

What must happen now is clear, even if achieving it has so far proved elusive. The government and the unions must establish a transparent, verifiable financial framework for the 2025–2029 agreement — one that specifies total cost, proposed salary adjustments, an implementation timetable, and a confirmed funding source. Verbal assurances have been tried and have failed. A written, costed,

and independently scrutinised commitment offers the only realistic basis for a settlement that both parties can defend to their respective constituencies.

Negotiations must be guided by figures rather than competing public statements. The government must be honest about its fiscal constraints. The unions must clearly explain the basis for their demands. Independent financial scrutiny, free from political interference, could help identify phased implementation arrangements that bridge the gap between what the Treasury says it can afford and what lecturers say they are owed. Previous agreements must be examined with care so that their unresolved elements do not simply reappear in the next round of negotiations, as they have done repeatedly.

Once an agreement is reached, implementation must be monitored through a practical, formally constituted mechanism involving university councils, the Ministry of Education, the Treasury, the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, and the unions. Parliament's oversight role should be exercised with genuine rigour rather than performative concern.

Students must not be left to absorb the full cost of this dispute. University administrations must communicate honestly and promptly about examination schedules, academic calendars, and graduation arrangements. When

learning resumes, recovery plans must be realistic — restoring missed instructional time without imposing punishing workloads on students or lecturers who are themselves returning from a period of significant stress.

Kenya's university lecturers' strike is a test of institutional competence and political will. Lecturers deserve fair employment terms and credible negotiations. Students deserve an academic system in which their futures are not held hostage to financial disagreements they played no part in creating. Taxpayers deserve to see public funds managed responsibly and commitments honoured.

The government and the unions must move beyond rejected offers and competing accusations. How much longer can Kenya afford to leave its universities paralysed, its students stranded, and its higher education system's credibility diminishing with every week that passes without resolution? The answer lies not in another press statement, but in a funded, enforceable agreement — reached now, before yet another generation of students pays the price.

Building code To understand why a building can pancake into dust, one must examine the hollow spaces between statutory compliance and actual enforcement

Beyond the rubble: Nairobi's building collapses are a failure of systemic oversight

The Eastleigh disaster is not an isolated tragedy — it is the predictable consequence of a regulatory system that treats paperwork as a substitute for enforcement.

BY David Nyaga
@themkenyatimes

The sound of a collapsing multi-storey building in Nairobi has become a grim, familiar feature of the city's urban landscape. Saturday's catastrophe on 9th Street in Eastleigh, where a high-

rise structure crumbled into a mangled heap of concrete and twisted steel, is not merely an isolated tragedy. It is a symptom of a deeply compromised regulatory ecosystem. As multi-agency rescue teams sifted through the debris, a familiar political and bureaucratic theatre kicked into gear: frantic site visits, finger-point-

ing, and promises of thorough investigations. Kenyans are tired of post-mortem outrage. Another cycle of temporary shock will not do. What is needed is structural accountability.

To understand why a building can pancake into dust, one must examine the hollow spaces between statutory



Collapsed multi-storey building on 9th Street in Eastleigh

compliance and actual enforcement. The National Construction Authority confirmed that the Eastleigh project was duly registered, with the developer, contractor, architect, and structural engineer all listed on paper. Yet names on a form mean little when the physical reality on the ground diverges entirely from approved blueprints.

A recurring loophole in Kenya's construction sector is what might be called the approval fallacy. Regulatory bodies too often treat the issuance of permits, environmental clearances, and registration certificates as the final destination of safety rather than the starting point. Projects acquire all the requisite paperwork legally, then developers systematically bypass compliance during actual construction. Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja noted at the site that while initial documentation existed, critical anomalies emerged later — including a troubling pattern of developers sidelining registered professionals once approvals are secured. The question that follows is uncomfortably simple: who audits the site while the concrete is curing? When corners are cut through substandard

steel, compromised cement ratios, or unauthorised floor additions, paperwork cannot hold up a failing column.

This is precisely where the Engineers Board of Kenya and the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors must step out of the shadows. Engineering and architecture are not consultancy arrangements. They are life-and-death public trusts. When a structure collapses under its own weight, these professional bodies must immediately initiate independent inquiries and strip practising licences from any professional who signs off on a compromised project or permits developers to misuse their credentials. Where professionals are being coerced or pushed off-site, whistleblowing mechanisms must flag such departures before disaster strikes, not after. The professional code of ethics is too often subordinated to commercial expediency, while weak financial penalties treat human lives as a manageable cost of doing business.

The institutional response to the Eastleigh tragedy has once again exposed damaging friction between agencies. County authorities lament the lack of direct prosecutorial pow-

ers. Investigators flag missing inquiry files. Meanwhile, construction workers and tenants pay the ultimate price for administrative turf wars. Accountability cannot be outsourced to press statements or bureaucratic buck-passing.

Real reform requires two things above all else. First, real-time site tracking: the NCA and county inspectorates must digitise project lifecycles so that unauthorised structural deviations trigger immediate stop-orders rather than retrospective investigations. Second, aggressive professional policing: the Engineers Board and its counterparts must enforce strict professional and criminal liability from foundation to finish, not merely from application to approval.

The rubble on 9th Street is a stark monument to regulatory failure. Until the NCA, the Engineers Board, and county governments stop operating in silos and start treating construction safety as a non-negotiable public safety issue, Nairobi's skyline will remain a graveyard of unheeded warnings.

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I am the Turkmen daughter of an independent land



I hail from a homeland, noble and free,
A Turkmen daughter, proud as can be.
Its flags wave high where the bright winds blow,
I'm freedom's own daughter, with pride aglow.

My path recalls the great Timur's name,
Inscribed in history, crowned with fame.
Great minds and scholars here rise and stand,
I'm Sabrona, the daughter of this free land.

Its mountains soar high, reaching the skies,
Its bread and its osh win the world's prize.
With pure blue heavens and wide lands grand,
I am the Turkmen daughter of an independent

land! BIOGRAPHY

Kurtklicheva Sabrona was born in 2005 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, into a hardworking family. At the age of eight, she moved with her mother to the Turtkul District of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In 2024, she graduated from General Secondary School No. 9 with a silver medal.

From her school years, she actively participated in various competitions and academic Olympiads, achieving numerous victories. As a young poet, she is passionate about creative writing, composing poems and short stories, and is also interested in translation.

In 2024, she was admitted to Berdakh Karakalpak State University, majoring in Philology and Language Teaching: Karakalpak Language, on a tuition-fee basis. She is currently a third-year student. During her second and third years of study, she earned a state grant, enabling her to continue her education on a grant basis.

Life is best for those who overcome, not compare.



Hurdles and problems are natural,
Find ways to overcome them,
Not by blaming or comparing.

With problems, one rises higher,
Take them all as a challenge and overcome.
So many examples are found everywhere
Several waves will come,
Overcome them all and continue your voyage.

If we compare with others,
Our creativity and originality will fade away,
It is like admiring and counting another's trees,
flowers, and yield
It is of no use at all.

Compare your growth only with yourself, not with others,
Ask, "Am I better than yesterday?"
Do not deviate, do not divert your attention to others.
Instead overcome all challenges and grow well

Brinda. D
Creative writers
Ghs Melpattampakkam
Tamil Nadu India

Being humane is vital than being a human



Humanity is greater than status
Respect your fellow human
Trigger the real power within us
Self respect keeps one strong
Making a bold personality
Respecting others nothing goes wrong

Recovering the kindness into reality
Being busy and working fetches your source
Of livelihood demanding a decent surrounding
Remember always, empathy is the only resource
Of the life, creating a wonderful world with bonding
Innocence is a gift of human
Being humble and respecting others
Shows your basic nature of being human
Be still, if none bothers

RECOGNITION IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT
EARN YOURSELF BY GIVING AND TAKING
RESPECT
N. SIVASANKARI
CREATIVE WRITER
TEACHER IN ENGLISH
MADURAI DISTRICT TAMILNADU

Brain Vs Stomach



Brain may remember history,
But the stomach remembers,
The history of when you ate last.

Brain may understand art,
But the stomach understands,
One thing - the art of hunger.

Brain may think and think,

But stomach doesn't waste a minute,
When it is time for a drink.

Brain may answer questions,
But stomach asks just one question,
When is my next meal?

Brain may be wise and clever,
But the stomach is smart enough,
To rumble and speak for itself.

Verdict - Stomach is superior

M.Raddhika
Freelance content writer,
Creative Writers
Sivakasi Tamil Nadu India

Success takes time



I trained for four years to run for nine seconds,
but people give up when they don't see results in

two months.

Success will not come without practice.
Practice makes a person ready for success.
Effort leads you to victory.
Day by day, your efforts build a path to victory.

When you start practising,
you may find it difficult during the first few days.
However, after some time, it will become easier.
Long-term practice helps you improve and become better at what you do.

So, do not hesitate to take the first step.
Keep practising, be patient, and never give up!

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



A teacher works for years,
To guide young minds and calm their fears.
Step by step, the students learn,
With every lesson, their knowledge grows in turn

No one becomes a doctor overnight,
Nor does an engineer reach heights in a night.
Every dream needs time to grow,

Like a tiny seed that we carefully sow.

Yet why do we hurry to achieve success?
Why do we lose hope in times of distress?
When things go wrong, we stop our fight,
And leave our dreams far from our sight.

Success is not a race to win,
It takes hard work and strength within.
Let struggles come, let challenges stay,
We will find our own successful way.

We have our dreams, we have our will,
With faith and effort, we climb the hill.
No matter how long the journey may be,
We must believe in what we wish to see.

So never give up, never lose hope,
With courage and patience, we learn to cope.
Keep working hard, let your dreams shine bright,
Your day will come, just keep up the fight!

V JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer

Cars

Porsche looked to the past as Tesla attempted to fly into the future

Two iconic brands unveiled radically different visions of performance motoring on the same day — one reached back to rediscover what made driving desirable, the other questioned whether cars need to stay on the ground at all.

BY John Irungu Maina
@themkenyaintimes

The automobile industry has always been defined by its capacity to reinvent itself. On 15 October 2026, two of its most compelling names presented visions of high-performance motoring that disagreed on almost everything. Porsche unveiled the Mission S, a mid-engined sports car concept rooted in the manufacturer's celebrated heritage, while Tesla presented its long-awaited new Roadster accompanied by a demonstration involving rocket-style thrusters that briefly lifted the vehicle off the ground. One asked how much of the past deserves to be preserved. The other questioned whether the conventional definition of a car remains sufficient.

For Porsche, the Mission S is more than a styling exercise. It represents a deliberate return to the principles that built the German manufacturer's reputation: purposeful engineering, driver engagement, and a design language recognisable across generations. Its proportions draw inspiration from historic machines — the 911, 959, 917, and 928 — while its mid-engined architecture recalls the racing and road-going supercars through which Porsche demonstrated its engineering ambitions across six decades.

The most striking statement, however, lies inside the cabin. At a time when manufacturers compete to install ever-larger screens and increasingly elaborate digital interfaces, Porsche has chosen restraint. The Mission S carries no permanently integrated central

infotainment display. Instead, motive innovation might in-

Porsche is not afraid of the



Porsche Mission S

it combines physical controls with five circular instruments and a retractable smartphone mount that provides navigation and information when needed. Its key sits to the left of the steering wheel — a long-standing Porsche tradition quietly reaffirmed.

This is not a rejection of technology. It is a considered argument about how technology should serve the driver rather than distract from the act of driving. Modern vehicles can make simple tasks unnecessarily complicated by transferring familiar physical functions to touchscreens. Porsche's approach suggests that the next stage of auto-

volve making technology less conspicuous rather than more dominant. A well-positioned button, a tactile control, an instrument that communicates immediately — these can be as valuable as the most advanced digital interface money can engineer.

In that respect, the Mission S reaches into automotive history without attempting to live in it. It takes familiar principles and asks whether they still have a place in an increasingly digital world. That question is particularly striking coming from a manufacturer that has repeatedly demonstrated its capacity for technological ambition.

future. It is simply unwilling to discard the past without examination.

Tesla arrived with a fundamentally different proposition. The new Roadster was presented as an electric performance machine whose ambitions extend well beyond conventional measures of acceleration and top speed. Developed in collaboration with SpaceX, the vehicle was demonstrated using cold-gas thrusters and a system that allowed it to lift and manoeuvre briefly above the ground. Tesla also promoted an acceleration claim of less than one second from zero to 60 miles per hour — a figure so

extraordinary that it will require independent verification before it can be accepted as a reliable production specification.

It was an undeniably dramatic demonstration. But spectacle and technological revolution are not the same thing, and the distance between them matters considerably. A vehicle that lifts off the ground under controlled demonstration conditions is not automatically a practical flying car. An extraordinary prototype display does not establish that the same capability can be deployed safely, reliably, and legally on public roads. Tesla has indicated that production is expected to begin in 2028, meaning customers will wait some time to discover how much of what was shown on stage translates into what arrives in their driveways.

Nevertheless, the Roadster offers a genuinely provocative glimpse of a possible future. It challenges the assumption that the next generation of performance cars must be defined exclusively by improvements to established measures such as horsepower, torque, and lap times. Tesla is asking a more radical question: what if tomorrow's performance car is judged by capabilities that today's drivers barely associate with automobiles? That question may not yet have a practical answer. But the fact that it is being asked seriously, by a manufacturer with the resources and engineering culture to pursue it, changes the terms of the conversation.

The contrast between these two approaches is precisely what made their simultaneous unveiling so compelling. Porsche is reclaiming the emotional and mechanical connection between driver and machine. Tesla is pushing towards a future in which engineering boundaries are treated as temporary inconveniences. Porsche's message is that innovation can emerge from a deeper understanding of what made the sports car desirable in the first place. Tesla's is that the definition of desirable performance may be on the verge of changing altogether.

Yet neither philosophy is entirely detached from the

other. The Mission S is not a nostalgic exercise in recreating the past, and the Roadster does not represent a future free from the fundamentals of vehicle engineering. Both manufacturers are attempting to make the automobile more extraordinary — through different interpretations of what extraordinary means and different assessments of where the industry's real frontier lies.

The Roadster's demonstration captured the imagination. Its long-term significance will depend on whether its most ambitious technologies become practical realities rather than permanent prototypes. The Mission S, by contrast, offers a quieter but equally important reminder that a more engaging driving experience does not require a vehicle to perform feats that appear to defy gravity.

Porsche looked backwards to identify what deserves to survive. Tesla looked forwards to explore what might become possible. The future of motoring will likely need both instincts — the discipline to preserve what works and the audacity to imagine what does not yet exist.

But perhaps the most important lesson from 15 October is that the automobile's future will not be determined by technology alone. It will depend on what drivers expect from the machines they choose to love. And in an industry increasingly consumed by what comes next, Porsche has made a quietly persuasive case for remembering why the journey mattered in the first place.

Savanna Drought, at its most basic, is a prolonged period of below-average rainfall. But in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands — which cover roughly 80 per cent of the country's landmass

Drought in savanna areas: A crisis that demands urgent and lasting solutions

Across Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, recurring drought is pushing pastoralist communities to the edge — destroying livelihoods, decimating herds, and deepening poverty in regions that can least afford it.

BY Nekwama Logoto

@themtkenyatimes

Every few years, the rains fail across Kenya's vast savanna landscapes, and when they do, the consequences unfold with a cruelty that statistics alone cannot capture. Cattle lie dead along dry riverbeds. Children go hungry. Families that have herded livestock across these plains for generations find themselves with nothing. Drought in savanna areas is not merely a meteorological event. It is a humanitarian crisis that arrives on a predictable cycle and is met, time and again, with inadequate preparation.

Drought, at its most basic, is a prolonged period of below-average rainfall. But in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands — which cover roughly 80 per cent of the country's landmass and are home to millions of pastoralists — the definition feels insufficient. For these communities, drought is the force that determines whether children eat, whether herds survive, and whether families remain intact or are scattered in desperate search of water and pasture. When the rains fail, everything that depends on them fails too.

The most immediate consequence is the death of livestock. Cattle, camels, goats, and sheep are not simply assets in pastoralist communities. They are savings accounts, insurance policies, and sources of nutrition rolled into one. When drought strikes, pastoralists are forced to move — sometimes hundreds of kilometres — in search of green pasture and water. These journeys are gruelling and frequently fatal for animals already weakened by hunger and thirst. Entire herds that represent decades of careful breeding and ac-



Drought

cumulation can be wiped out in a single severe drought season. The financial loss is devastating and, for many families, permanent.

The land itself suffers alongside the people. As pasture disappears and water sources dry up, the pressure on remaining vegetation intensifies. Pastoralists in desperate circumstances resort to cutting tree branches and stripping leaves to feed their surviving animals, accelerating deforestation in areas already under severe ecological stress. Without tree cover, the soil loses its protection against wind and the sporadic but intense rains that follow drought periods. Erosion sets in. Land that was already marginal becomes degraded to the point where recovery takes years, sometimes decades.

The economic ripple effects extend beyond the pastoralist household. Local markets contract sharply during drought periods as the purchasing power of affected communities collapses. Small traders, transporters, and service providers in towns that serve pastoral areas all feel the impact. Businesses that depend on the spending of herders and farmers find their revenues evaporating at the

same pace as the water in the rivers. Regional economies that were already fragile become more so.

There is, too, a conflict dimension that rarely receives sufficient attention. As pasture and water become scarce, competition for what remains intensifies between communities, between ethnic groups, and between pastoralists and settled farmers. Kenya's history of drought-related conflict in the north and northeast of the country is long and painful. When resources shrink and livelihoods are threatened, the conditions for violence multiply. Drought does not cause conflict, but it consistently creates the conditions in which existing tensions ignite.

Despite the scale and regularity of these crises, the response in Kenya has too often been reactive rather than preventive. Emergency food aid is mobilised, water trucking is organised, and destocking programmes are announced — but these measures address the symptoms of drought rather than its underlying vulnerabilities. Communities that are repeatedly rescued from the consequences of drought but never equipped to withstand it remain permanently exposed.

drought season does not destroy everything they have. Crop cultivation and the storage of animal fodder during the rainy season can provide a buffer when the dry months extend beyond their usual limits. Communities near rivers and permanent water sources can adopt irrigation techniques to grow crops and establish fodder reserves, reducing their dependence on rainfall alone.

Water harvesting infrastructure — sand dams, water pans, and rainwater collection systems — can extend the availability of water into the dry season and reduce the distances that people and animals must travel. Rangeland management practices that pre-

vent overgrazing and maintain vegetative cover give the land a better chance of recovering between drought episodes. Early warning systems that give communities advance notice of impending drought allow for destocking and movement before the worst damage is done.

These are not new ideas. They have been recommended in government reports and development frameworks for decades. The gap is not knowledge — it is political will, funding, and the consistent institutional commitment required to implement long-term resilience measures in communities that have historically been marginalised in national development planning.

Kenya's savanna communities have survived drought before and will survive it again. But survival should not be the ceiling of ambition for millions of citizens whose lands, cultures, and livelihoods deserve better than permanent crisis management. The rains will fail again. The question is whether the country will finally be ready.




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Marketplace Consider the everyday theatre of the supermarket aisle. A shopper selects a five-kilogramme bag of rice clearly marked with a promotional price

The marketplace mirage: Kenya's dual mandate and the persistent carnival of deception



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

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In the financial year ending June 2025, the Competition Authority of Kenya received and investigated 915 consumer complaints across twenty sectors of the economy, a sharp 37 percent rise from the 668 cases of the previous year. That single statistic exposes the raw nerve of our markets. It is not a quiet administrative detail. It is a public declaration that Kenyan households continue to walk into shops, banks, and digital platforms only to leave poorer, angrier, and more betrayed than when they entered.

The Competition Act of 2010, Cap 504, gifted the Authority a dual mandate of unusual ambition: to promote and protect effective competition while simultaneously shielding consumers from unfair and misleading market conduct. Article 46 of the Constitution had already declared that every person has the right to goods and services of reasonable quality, to the information necessary to gain full benefit from them, and to the protection of their health, safety, and economic interests. Parliament answered by placing both the sword of competition enforcement and the shield of consumer protection into the same pair of hands. Fifteen years later the hands remain busy, the sword is occasionally drawn, and the shield too often hangs on the wall while citizens bleed.

Consider the everyday theatre of the supermarket aisle. A shopper selects a five-kilogramme bag of rice clearly marked with a promotional price. At the till the machine demands a higher sum. The shelf and the scanner speak different languages. Carrefour, Naivas, and Quickmart have all faced such complaints. The Authority records the refunds, issues warnings, and moves on. The same pattern repeats with "100 percent pure honey" that laboratory tests



reveal to be adulterated, with fruit juices labelled as natural while containing only a fraction of the claimed fruit content, and with phones sold as brand-new that reveal themselves, within weeks, as refurbished machines. Each case is investigated. Some offenders pay modest penalties. The underlying culture of calculated ambiguity survives.

Financial services supply even richer examples of the same disease. Digital lenders and asset financiers have been found calculating interest in one currency while disbursing in another, unilaterally altering repayment methods from flat rate to reducing balance, and imposing charges never disclosed at the moment of agreement. One company paid over ten million shillings in settlement and refunded a handful of customers. Banks have been ordered to reverse millions in unilaterally imposed default interest. The numbers look decisive on paper. In the lived experience of the borrower, the damage is already done: school fees unpaid, business capital eroded, dignity eroded further still.

These are not isolated excesses of a few rogue traders. They form a coherent pattern. Where market power

concentrates, the incentive to extract value through opacity grows. Abuse of buyer power by large retailers against small suppliers produces the same outcome from the opposite direction: suppliers squeezed until they exit, product variety shrinks, and the consumer ultimately pays through reduced choice and higher long-term prices. The Authority has secured refunds for some suppliers and imposed penalties. The structural imbalance that makes such extraction profitable remains largely undisturbed.

History supplies the necessary perspective. Kenya inherited a weak competition regime at independence and operated for decades under the limited 1989 statute. Liberalisation in the 1990s opened markets faster than institutions could police them. The 2010 Act and the creation of the Authority in 2011 represented a deliberate attempt to catch up. The dual mandate was presented as sophistication, a recognition that competition and consumer welfare are two sides of the same coin. In practice the coin has frequently landed on its edge. The Authority's resources are finite. Merger reviews, cartel investigations, and abuse-of-dominance

cases compete for attention with the daily flood of consumer grievances. When 915 complaints arrive in a single year, prioritisation becomes inevitable. Prioritisation becomes delay. Delay becomes a quiet form of permission.

The correlation is stark. Sectors with high complaint volumes financial services and retail are precisely those in which information asymmetry is greatest and switching costs highest. Consumers cannot easily detect adulterated honey at the point of purchase. A borrower cannot easily renegotiate after the funds have already been disbursed. A small supplier cannot easily walk away from a dominant retailer that controls shelf space. In each case the legal prohibition exists. Enforcement arrives after the harm has crystallized. Deterrence remains partial because the expected penalty is still smaller than the expected gain from the practice.

This is not a failure of individual officers. It is a systemic underestimation of the scale of everyday predation. The Authority has delivered tangible results: consumer savings of 21.4 million shillings in one year through refunds and replacements, recovery of tens of millions owed to

suppliers, and penalties running into billions against certain cartels and dominant players. Those achievements deserve recognition. They do not erase the larger truth that the volume of harm continues to outpace the volume of remedy. Awareness campaigns have increased complaints. Increased complaints have revealed the depth of the problem rather than its resolution.

What is required now is not another strategic plan or another modest amendment. The dual mandate must be resourced and sharpened until it cuts. Parliament must decide whether the Authority is to remain the primary consumer protection body or whether the creation of parallel institutions will only fragment responsibility further. Sector regulators in banking, telecommunications, and energy must treat consumer harm as a competition issue rather than a customer-service inconvenience. The judiciary must treat delays in enforcement as matters of constitutional urgency. Civil society and the media must refuse to treat each new scandal as a one-day story. Most critically, businesses themselves must abandon the quiet calculation that the probability of detection multiplied by the size of the fine remains an acceptable cost of doing business.

The Kenyan consumer is not a statistic. She is the mother who discovers that the "pure" honey she bought for her child's health is diluted. He is the small trader whose product is returned days before expiry with no explanation and no payment. They are the young professionals whose loan balances grow in ways the original agreement never contemplated. Each of these experiences is a small act of economic violence. Collectively they corrode trust in the very markets that are supposed to deliver shared prosperity.

The dual mandate was never meant to be a decorative phrase. It was meant to be a living instrument of justice in the marketplace. Until the instrument is wielded with consistency, speed, and sufficient force, the carnival of deception will continue under the bright lights of official regulation. The Authority has the legal tools. The Constitution has given the moral command. What remains is the collective will to close the gap between the promise written in statute and the reality lived at the till, at the bank counter, and on the digital screen. Anything less is an abdication dressed in the language of progress.

The writer is a social commentator

Tea “I come from the Gusii region, which is a tea-growing area, and this tea issue has been a menace to farmers every year, every decade,” he told the House.

Mogaka opposes live-streaming bill, presses for fair tea payments

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyentimes

West Mugirango MP says Parliament must address regional disparities in tea bonuses, quality and production, and bring transparency to the auction process.

West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka has opposed proposed amendments to the Elections Act on live-streaming election results, accusing leaders of diverting attention from unequal tea bonus payments to farmers in different regions.

Speaking in Nyamira County, Mogaka said Parliament must establish why tea farmers in Kisii and Nyamira counties receive lower bonuses than their counterparts in other tea-growing regions.

He argued that the debate over the election Bill should not overshadow the concerns legislators have raised about the tea sector, where farmers have repeatedly questioned their returns.

“We must get to the bottom of the root cause of why farmers from other regions are being paid poorly,” he said, calling for transparency in the tea auction process.

He proposed that farmers from affected regions be allowed to witness auctions so they can understand how prices are determined and how proceeds translate into their earnings.

Questions over quality and bonus disparities

The remarks followed his contribution to a parliamentary debate on a petition presented by the Kangema MP on the challenges facing tea farmers. During that session, Mogaka called for a comprehensive review of tea production, quality assessment and bonus payments, noting that farmers in the Gusii region had faced the problem for decades.

“I come from the Gusii region, which is a tea-growing



West Mugirango MP Steve Mogaka

area, and this tea issue has been a menace to farmers every year, every decade,” he told the House.

He questioned why differences in tea quality and productivity persisted across regions despite decades of farming, and urged agricultural researchers to establish whether suitable fertilisers, improved farming practices and other scientific interventions could raise quality and yields.

In his view, the inquiry should not stop at bonus figures but should also examine what determines tea quality, the prices fetched at auction and the final payments farmers receive.

Mogaka said farmers in his constituency remained unconvinced that their earnings reflected the value of their produce, even when payments reached KSh50 per kilogramme.

He urged the National Assembly’s Departmental Committee on Agriculture and Livestock to visit tea-growing areas in Kisii, Nyamira and Kericho to hear directly from farmers.

He also proposed exchange visits between regions, inviting legislators from the Gusii region to tour tea factories in the Mount Kenya region to

learn from their practices.

The committee, he maintained, should examine the entire value chain, including research, production costs, quality assessment, buyers’ pricing and auction practices, before recommending measures to improve farmers’ earnings.

The live-streaming dispute

Turning to the election Bill, Mogaka said the debate risked drawing attention away from the tea farmers’ concerns.

The Elections (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2024, has sparked disagreement between the Senate and the National Assembly over changes to the law governing the transmission and declaration of election results. The Senate’s version sought to amend Section 39 of the Elections Act, including provisions on the transmission and publication of results, which critics said raised concerns about transparency in the electoral process.

The National Assembly amended the Bill, removing the contentious proposal and retaining the existing provisions on live-streaming results. The amended Bill was to return to the Senate for

ensure that growers have a voice in decisions affecting their livelihoods.

For tea farmers in Kisii and Nyamira, the issue remains one of fair compensation, transparency and accountability in the marketing of their produce. Mogaka called on the relevant parliamentary committee to listen to affected growers and pursue solutions that address the root causes of the disparities.

consideration under the constitutional process for resolving differences between the two Houses.

Mogaka insisted that the election Bill should not be used as a distraction. Parliament, he said, must continue examining why farmers in some regions earn less and



Tea

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Inclusion Another concern is the statistical invisibility of disability. Kenya's 2019 census recorded approximately 2.2 per cent of the population aged five years and above as having disabilities

The paradox of inclusion: Kenya's progressive disability laws and the persistent reality of exclusion

"A nation cannot claim to have achieved equality when its citizens must beg for rights already guaranteed by the Constitution. The true measure of inclusion is not the promises made in government offices, but the dignity, opportunity and justice experienced by every citizen, regardless of ability or disability."



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

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Kenya has constructed an impressive legal architecture for disability inclusion. The Constitution guarantees equality, prohibits discrimination, and enshrines specific protections for persons with disabilities. The country has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025 reinforces commitments to dignity, accessibility, and equal opportunity. On paper, Kenya is a model of progressive policy. In practice, for millions of citizens living with disabilities, the gap between that paper and daily reality remains both vast and painful.

For a person who cannot access a public office because of inaccessible infrastructure, secure employment because of discrimination, afford essential healthcare, or obtain an empowerment grant the government has promised, constitutional protection feels frustratingly distant. Inclusion is not experienced through declarations or ceremonial recognition. It becomes real when a hospital provides accessible treatment, when an employer evaluates competence rather than impairment, when a public institution offers reasonable accommodation, and when an entrepreneur receives the practical support needed to build a sustainable livelihood. Where these ordinary expectations remain unmet, the distance between legal promise and lived reality becomes an indictment of implementation.

Kenya's 2019 census recorded approximately 2.2 per cent of the population as having disabilities — a figure considerably below the World Health Organisation's global estimate of around 16 per cent. Differences in definitions and measure-



ment methods caution against direct comparison, but the disparity raises serious questions about identification, reporting, and planning. When disability is inadequately measured, the needs of affected citizens risk being overlooked in public budgets, development programmes, and political priorities. Reliable, disaggregated data is not a bureaucratic nicety. It is the foundation on which responsive policy is built. Without it, government is effectively planning in the dark.

Political representation presents a related challenge. Persons with disabilities increasingly occupy elected, nominated, and appointed positions across national and county government. That progress is real and should be acknowledged. But representation alone does not guarantee effective advocacy. A seat at the table becomes meaningful only when it influences decisions, secures resources, challenges discrimination, and holds institutions accountable. Representatives who subordinate community interests to partisan loyalty — however understandable the political pressures — fail the constituencies that their positions were designed to serve. Persons with disabilities must evaluate their leaders by demonstrable achievements, not by symbolic appointments or political affiliation.

The controversy surrounding disability-related funding in Nakuru County illustrates this principle sharply. Reports emerging in September 2026 raised questions about the disbursement of approximately KSh27.5 million reportedly allocated for persons with disabilities during the 2025/2026 financial year. Subsequent commitments to operationalise the fund underscored a concern that surfaces repeatedly across Kenya: the distance between announced allocations, actual disbursements, and measurable benefits reaching intended recipients. Similar questions about participation and delivery have arisen in Uasin Gishu and elsewhere. Each case demands transparent investigation rather than premature conclusions, but the underlying principle is not in dispute. Public resources designated for vulnerable citizens must be traceable, accessible, and delivered within reasonable timelines. Citizens should not have to demonstrate in the streets or contemplate litigation simply to obtain answers about their lawful entitlements.

Employment and economic empowerment reveal further gaps. The five per cent employment reservation for persons with disabilities in public institutions remains an important policy instrument, yet reported compliance gaps among as-

sessed institutions demonstrate the limitations of reservation without enforcement. The Access to Government Procurement Opportunities programme creates openings for enterprises owned by persons with disabilities, but practical barriers — accessible transport costs, assistive technology requirements, and the absence of reasonable workplace accommodation — prevent many eligible businesses from competing effectively. Genuine empowerment must extend beyond eligibility on paper to practical access, fair competition, and sustainable economic independence. A policy that exists but cannot be accessed is not inclusion. It is its illusion.

The institutional framework established to protect disability rights, particularly the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, must also be examined critically. These bodies carry important mandates, but mandates require resources, oversight, and the genuine capacity to challenge non-compliance. Persistent implementation gaps warrant difficult questions: are these institutions overwhelmed, under-resourced, weakened by inertia, or in specific instances compromised by conflicts of interest? Such concerns require evidence-based investigation. Institutions entrusted with protecting rights must demonstrate their effec-

tiveness through timely responses, transparent decisions, and outcomes that citizens can measure and verify.

The responsibility for change, however, cannot rest on government alone. Kenya's disability community must confront the consequences of its own fragmentation. Persons with disabilities experience different challenges according to their impairments, age, gender, economic circumstances, and location. Those differences are legitimate and must be respected. But they must strengthen rather than weaken collective action. Whether the concern is mobility, communication, intellectual disability, psychosocial support, healthcare, or economic opportunity, the common demand is identical: dignity, equal protection, and meaningful participation in national life.

Kenya urgently needs a united, inclusive, and independent disability movement capable of speaking with a coherent national voice. Grassroots organisations, caregivers, advocacy networks, elected representatives, and individual citizens must coordinate evidence-based advocacy, demand transparent resource allocation, and hold public institutions to account. Unity does not mean suppressing disagreement. It means ensuring that diverse experiences inform a common national agenda — from the smallest ward committee to the highest levels of government.

National and county governments must publish accessible, detailed reports on disability-related allocations, disbursements, procurement, beneficiaries, and outcomes. Employment obligations must be enforced. Public infrastructure must be made genuinely accessible. And persons with disabilities must be meaningfully involved in decisions that shape their lives, not consulted after those decisions have already been made.

Kenya's ultimate test is not the quality of its legislation. It is whether the country can transform constitutional promises into everyday realities, recognising persons with disabilities as equal citizens rather than passive recipients of charity. That transformation demands responsible leadership, credible institutions, and a disability community united in purpose.

As Chelimo puts it: "Inclusion becomes real when rights are delivered without begging, institutions answer without evasion, and persons with disabilities stand together — not as competing voices seeking political favours, but as equal citizens demanding the dignity, opportunity and justice that the Constitution already guarantees."

That standard has been set. The work of meeting it cannot wait.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



University lecturers' strike cripples public institutions across Kenya

By Nekwama Logoto

Kenya's public universities have been at a standstill for weeks as lecturers across the country remain on strike, leaving thousands of students locked out of lecture halls, laboratories, and examination rooms. The industrial action, affecting all public universities nationwide, centres on longstanding grievances over salaries, allowances, working conditions, and the implementation of agreements that employers have repeatedly failed to honour.

The walkout did not come without warning. Negotiations between lecturers and university management stalled repeatedly, with staff accusing authorities of signing agreements and then quietly shelving them. When dialogue consistently yields nothing, the picket line becomes the only language that commands attention.



The cost, however, is being borne by students who had no part in the dispute. Lectures remain suspended, examinations postponed, and academic calendars thrown into deepening disarray. For students already stretched financially and academically, every lost week carries consequences that extend well beyond the classroom. The longer the strike continues, the harder it becomes to recover the academic time lost.

The government and university management must stop treat-

ing this standoff as a matter to be outlasted and start treating it as one to be resolved without further delay. Lecturers' demands are neither new nor unreasonable — many are rooted in agreements already signed but never implemented. Honouring commitments already made is not a concession; it is a legal and moral obligation.

Kenya's universities exist to produce the next generation of professionals, innovators, and leaders. That mission cannot be fulfilled from a picket line.

A rich man without generosity is just a poor man with money



By Simon Juma

There is a particular kind of poverty that no bank balance can cure. It belongs to the stingy rich man — the one who owns hundreds of acres in Trans Nzoia yet cannot spare one for a jobless brother, who stores maize while a neighbour's children sleep hungry, who has thousands in his account but will not pay school fees for an orphan in his own

family. His wealth is visible to everyone. Its benefits are felt by no one.

In villages across Laikipia and Trans Nzoia, this figure is well known. He is not admired. He is pitied. For all his land and livestock, he has condemned himself to fear, loneliness, and quiet contempt. He sleeps badly, trusting nobody, counting money he cannot enjoy. A poor man who shares his last meal with a neighbour rests more

peacefully than a millionaire clutching a fortune he dare not spend.

The damage extends beyond one man's sleepless nights. Kenya's wealth gap is widening, and too many of those controlling the country's resources have chosen hoarding over investment. Bright children drop out of school for want of KSh10,000 in fees — money a wealthy neighbour could provide without noticing the loss. That child might have become a doctor or engineer. One act of stinginess extinguishes an entire future.

The stingy rich man dies and leaves everything behind. Someone else spends it within months. All those years of accumulation amount to nothing. He never enjoyed it. Nobody benefited. Just a poor man with money.

The pressure to make it before thirty

By Yvonne Wambui

Turning 30 in Kenya has stopped being a birthday. For millions of young people, it has become a deadline — one society sets but never negotiates. By that age, the unspoken contract demands a job, a car, a house, a spouse, and proof that the years were not wasted. When life delivers otherwise, the verdict is swift: failure.

The economy makes that verdict crueler than it needs to be. Graduates spend months, sometimes years, searching for work that matches their qualifications. Others pivot to informal trade or piece jobs simply to survive. They are not idle. They are resourceful people operating in a system that has not kept pace with their numbers or their ambitions.

Social media sharpens the wound. Every scroll delivers another announcement — a new job, a car, a foreign trip



— that transforms someone else's milestone into a personal indictment. What social media rarely shows is the family money behind the car, the years of grinding behind the business, or the quiet struggles behind the polished post.

The pressure carries a real mental health cost. Anxiety, shame, and desperation drive some young people into predatory loan schemes and fraud traps, chasing overnight success because the legitimate

path feels permanently closed. Kenya must retire this deadline. Government must deliver on education, affordable financing, and employment. Families must measure their children by effort, not possessions. And young Kenyans must grant themselves the one thing society withholds most readily — time.

Thirty is not the finish line. It is barely the start.

Political alliances intensify ahead of Kenya's 2027 elections

By Job Mwauwa

Kenya's political class is in motion. With the August 2027 General Election still months away, leaders across the government and opposition divide are today deep in negotiations, building coalitions, and positioning themselves for what promises to be a fiercely contested race.

The most visible development yesterday came when Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua hosted Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka and a delegation of governors at his Wamunoro residence. Machakos Governor Wavinya Ndeti, Makueni Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jnr, and Kitui Governor Julius Malombe attended, signalling a potential convergence of opposition forces across Mount Kenya and lower eastern regions. Earlier engagements between Gachagua and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna suggest the net is being cast wider.



Kalonzo's Ukombozi Alliance, rebranded from Azimio la Umoja in September, has adjusted its coalition agreement to allow greater flexibility in selecting a presidential candidate — a concession designed to attract partners wary of early commitments.

On the government side, President William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance and the Orange Democratic Movement are pursuing a formal electoral alliance, including a joint manifesto. Negotiations over senior positions remain contentious, with ODM pushing for a 50-50 power-sharing

arrangement and the Deputy President's post. Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo today cautioned leaders against attaching conditions to their support for Ruto — a warning that exposes tensions beneath the cooperative surface.

For voters, the central question is not which coalition assembles the most impressive names. It is whether any of them intends to govern differently. Coalitions built on position-sharing collapse. Those built on shared purpose occasionally endure.

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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *A third consecutive heavy defeat at Old Trafford has left the head coach's position under serious threat as United's season spirals towards a breaking point.

Manchester United in crisis as Bournemouth humiliate Carrick's side 3-0



By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Manchester United's season took another damaging turn yesterday when Bournemouth delivered a humiliating 3-0 victory at Old Trafford, extending United's winless run to eight matches across all competitions and placing head coach Michael Carrick under the most intense scrutiny of his tenure. Loud boos from the home supporters at the final whistle told the story plainly — the patience of Old Trafford is running out.

The defeat did not arrive without warning. Even before kick-off, attention had focused on Carrick's decision to leave captain Bruno Fernandes out of the starting lineup, with the Portuguese midfielder remaining an unused substitute throughout the match. The omission appeared to be a disciplinary response to Fernandes' public criticism of Carrick's tactical approach earlier in the week — remarks that reportedly followed United's chas-

tening 4-1 Champions League defeat to Italian side Como. Carrick's decision was plainly intended to reassert his authority. The manner in which the afternoon unfolded raised immediate questions about whether that authority remains intact.

United struggled to establish any control from the opening minutes. Bournemouth took the lead through a defensive error that exposed the disorganisation at the heart of the home side's backline, and United offered little in response — no sustained pressure, no clear chances, no evidence of a team with the belief or the structure to turn the match around. When Bournemouth struck twice in quick succession after the interval to complete a thoroughly convincing victory, the outcome felt less like a shock than a confirmation of everything that has been building over recent weeks.

As the scoreline worsened, supporters began leaving Old Trafford before the final whistle — a

gesture that spoke to a growing and deeply uncomfortable disconnect between a club that expects to compete at the highest level and a team that currently shows little sign of meeting that expectation. The reaction was not merely frustration. It carried the weight of serious disillusionment.

For Carrick, the numbers are stark. Eight matches without a win. Three heavy defeats in succession. A dressing room visibly unsettled, as the Fernandes situation illustrated with uncomfortable clarity. The head coach now faces a challenge that extends beyond tactics and team selection. He must demonstrate, credibly and quickly, that he retains the confidence of his players and possesses a coherent plan capable of producing an immediate and sustained improvement. Managers who bench their most influential player and then lose 3-0 at home do not typically emerge from that afternoon with their authority strengthened.

The fixture list offers no respite. United travel to Chelsea next weekend before returning to Champions League action against AS Roma — two demanding matches that will test the squad's resilience and the coaching staff's capacity to engineer a recovery. A further defeat at Stamford Bridge, in particular, would make Carrick's position almost untenable.

The issues that must be addressed are well understood, even if solutions have so far proved elusive. United's defensive fragility has been a persistent problem, and Sunday's performance did nothing to suggest it is being resolved. The team lacks the organisational discipline and collective confidence required to compete consistently at the level the club's supporters and ownership expect. Rebuilding both qualities takes time — but time is precisely what Carrick is running short of.

The Fernandes situation also requires careful handling. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the captain's public comments, a team cannot afford the distraction of a visible rupture between its most important player and its head coach. Whether the relationship can be repaired privately and managed effectively will be one of the more delicate tests of the days ahead.

Manchester United's problems did not begin on Sunday and will not be resolved by a single result. But the 3-0 defeat to Bournemouth has crystallised a crisis that can no longer be managed with measured language and appeals for patience. Results must change, and they must change now. If they do not, the pressure on Carrick will intensify rapidly — and the decisions that follow will carry consequences well beyond the remainder of this season.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The provisional suspension of Peres Jepchirchir for EPO use deepens a doping crisis that is threatening to overshadow Kenya’s extraordinary record on the world athletics stage.

World marathon champion Jepchirchir suspended in fresh blow to Kenya’s clean sport drive

By Martin Weche

Athletics Kenya yesterday expressed disappointment after world marathon champion Peres Jepchirchir was provisionally suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit following a positive test for the banned blood-boosting substance erythropoietin, commonly known as EPO.

The suspension, announced on Friday by the Athletics Integrity Unit, follows a sample collected out of competition shortly before Jepchirchir, 33, competed in and won the Sydney Marathon in August. The timing is particularly troubling — the sample was taken before one of the most significant victories of her career, raising questions that will now hang over that result until the case is fully resolved.

Athletics Kenya moved quickly to distance itself from any suggestion of institutional failure, reiterating its zero-tolerance stance on doping while expressing support for the integrity body’s processes. “While it is unfortunate to receive such news regarding a high-profile athlete, Athletics Kenya remains firm in its stance on promoting clean sport and ensuring a level playing field for all competition,” the federation said in a statement. The governing body further noted that “the testing procedures and subsequent provisional suspension were conducted directly by the AIU, as the designated testing authority, in accordance with established anti-doping regulations, international standards and lawful case management protocols.”

The carefully worded statement reflects an organisation acutely aware of the reputational stakes. Kenya’s dominance of long-distance running over several decades has been one

of the country’s most celebrated achievements — a source of national pride that generates significant economic returns through sponsorship, prize money, and global visibility. Every high-profile doping case chips away at the credibility that underpins that dominance.

Jepchirchir’s case is the latest in a series of damaging episodes that have placed Kenyan athletics under sustained international scrutiny. In July, middle-distance runner Kibiwott Kandie received a seven-year ban — one of the most severe penalties in recent Kenyan athletics history — after refusing an out-of-competition test and obstructing doping control officers. The length of the ban reflected not merely the offence itself but the deliberate nature of the obstruction, a distinction that anti-doping authorities have been increasingly willing to make in cases involving non-cooperation.

Before that, world record holder Ruth Chepngetich was suspended for three years after admitting to testing positive for hydrochlorothiazide, a diuretic that appears on the World Anti-Doping Agency’s prohibited list. Chepngetich’s case attracted particular attention given the scale of her achievements and the global profile she carried into the hearing.

The accumulation of cases at the elite level raises questions that Athletics Kenya’s carefully managed public statements cannot fully deflect. EPO, the substance at the centre of Jepchirchir’s suspension, is a performance-enhancing drug with a long and damaging history in endurance sport. It stimulates the production of red blood cells, increasing oxygen delivery to muscles and improving endurance performance. Its use is not



Peres Jepchirchir

a marginal infraction. It is a fundamental manipulation of athletic competition.

For the AIU, the Jepchirchir case represents another test of its capacity to police one of the world’s most athletically productive but also most scrutinised running communities. The unit has expanded its out-of-competition testing programme in Kenya in recent years, operating with greater independence from national federations — a structural change that Athletics Kenya’s statement implicitly acknowledged and endorsed.

The provisional nature of the suspension means Jepchirchir retains the right to contest the finding and request analysis of her B sample. The process will take months. Until it concludes, her Sydney Marathon victory exists in a kind of official limbo — celebrated but contested, recorded but under review.

What is not in limbo is the

broader challenge facing Kenyan athletics. The sport’s administrators, coaches, agents, and the athletes themselves must confront a culture in which the pressure to perform at the highest level has, for some, made the temptation of chemical assistance feel like a rational calculation. Anti-doping enforcement can catch and punish those who make that choice. It cannot, on its own, address the conditions that make it.

Kenya’s clean athletes — and there are many — deserve a system robust enough to protect the credibility of their achievements. Right now, that system is being tested case by case, suspension by suspension. The question is whether the institutions responsible for Kenyan athletics are prepared to do more than issue carefully worded statements when the next one arrives.

SPORTS NEWS



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Online gaming addiction: Children at risk as experts urge parental control



By: D. Brinda
@themtkenyetimes



Worth Noting:

- The mechanics of addiction are straightforward. A game introduces itself as a source of mild pleasure. Each new level reached brings a small sense of achievement. The brain, seeking to repeat that reward, demands another session, and then another. Over time, what began as recreation becomes compulsion. By the time families recognise the severity, intervention is considerably harder.
- The consequences extend well beyond distracted afternoons. Children caught in the cycle of online gaming across Indian schools frequently suffer deteriorating eyesight, disrupted sleep, poor nutrition, and a measurable decline in academic performance. Their concentration fragments. Household responsibilities, friendships, and physical activity are abandoned. In the most serious cases, children have been manipulated by certain games into performing dangerous real-world tasks and uploading evidence online — a risk that carries significant safeguarding implications.



The warning signs are visible in classrooms across India — children arriving at school exhausted, distracted, and increasingly disconnected from their studies. The cause, educators and parents say, is online gaming addiction, a problem that has grown into one of the most pressing child welfare concerns of the digital age.

Online gaming has become deeply embedded in the daily lives of school and college students throughout the country. Platforms offer an ever-expanding library of titles, from harmless puzzles to games that involve real money, dangerous challenges, or content designed to exploit young minds. Among the most alarming are games linked to self-harm challenges — including the widely reported Blue Whale game — alongside high-stimulation titles such as Free Fire, GTA, and Rummy, which reward continued play with points, levels, and in-game incentives that keep players returning compulsively. The mechanics of addiction are

straightforward. A game introduces itself as a source of mild pleasure. Each new level reached brings a small sense of achievement. The brain, seeking to repeat that reward, demands another session, and then another. Over time, what began as recreation becomes compulsion. By the time families recognise the severity, intervention is considerably harder.

The consequences extend well beyond distracted afternoons. Children caught in the cycle of online gaming across Indian schools frequently suffer deteriorating eyesight, disrupted sleep, poor nutrition, and a measurable decline in academic performance. Their concentration fragments. Household responsibilities, friendships, and physical activity are abandoned. In the most serious cases, children have been manipulated by certain games into performing dangerous real-world tasks and uploading evidence online — a risk that carries significant safeguarding implications.

The financial dimension compounds the harm. Many games are free to download but structured to extract money through paid levels, in-game purchases, or entry fees. Children, often unaware of the true cost, draw on family resources to continue playing. Internet access, a prerequisite for most online games, adds a further recurring expense.

Responsibility for early intervention lies with parents, teachers, and the wider community. Parental controls and network restrictions offer a first line of defence, as does monitoring screen time and replacing smartphones with basic handsets where appropriate. But technical measures alone are insufficient. Children respond to real evidence — testimonies from peers who have experienced the consequences of addiction, community theatre and storytelling that makes the dangers tangible, and open conversations about the difference between healthy recreation and harmful habit.

The most durable protection, how-

ever, is self-awareness. Helping children develop the capacity to distinguish benefit from harm — and to understand why certain games are engineered to keep them playing — gives them tools that no parental control setting can replicate. Guiding children away from peer groups already deep in addiction reduces exposure at a critical stage.

Online gaming is not inherently harmful. The question is whether India's children are equipped to engage with it safely, and whether the adults around them are paying close enough attention to notice when they are not.

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