



Kenya's 2027 election: Will political alliances and the fight over transparency decide who wins State House?
Kenya's road to the 2027 general election is entering a critical stretch. Political parties are accelerating coalition talks, debates over electoral transparency are drawing public scrutiny

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From Moscow with ambition: Ruto bets on Russia to rewrite Kenya's economic story before 2027
President William Ruto stood before Russian investors in Moscow yesterday and made a case that was as much about Kenya's future as it was about his own

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 On the running-mate question, Gachagua argued that Ruto's dilemma is more acute than it appears

The running-mate puzzle

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday named Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru, Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wah, former Agriculture minister Mwangi Kiunjuri and former Kakamega Governor Wycliffe Oparanya as the names circling the running-mate question for 2027, declaring in a combative KTN interview that President William Ruto faces a considerably harder choice than the opposition in deciding who stands beside him on the ballot next August.

The interview, streamed live and widely shared, was one of Gachagua's most expansive public appearances since his dramatic impeachment from the deputy presidency in October 2024. It covered ground that ranged from coalition politics and public finance to press freedom, the Moi family's assets and the shifting mood of Mount Kenya — a region whose electoral weight remains, as it has been for three decades, the single most consequential variable in any Kenyan presidential contest. What emerged was a portrait of a man who has lost none of his political sharpness and who is, by all observable evidence, building something with considerable intent.

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua with Jesse Rogers of KTN



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Ruto courts Moscow as Africa's big powers rewrite the rules of engagement

BY Jane Njoki
@themtkenyentimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday attended a gala reception hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow, on the sidelines of the Third Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum, as African leaders collectively signalled a willingness to diversify their global partnerships beyond traditional Western alliances.

The forum, bringing together heads of state and senior officials from across the continent, reflects a broader and accelerating shift in Africa's diplomatic posture — one in which Moscow has invested considerable political and economic capital. For Ruto, the Moscow visit carries weight beyond ceremony. With Kenya's August 2027 general election drawing closer, his presence on the world stage alongside other African leaders reinforces a carefully constructed narrative: that his administration is actively pursuing prosperity for Kenya from every available direction, on terms of sovereign equality rather than dependency.

The reception at the Grand Kremlin Palace, one of Russia's most symbolically charged venues, was designed to project partnership at the highest level. Whether that partnership translates into the factories, jobs and investments that Kenyan voters will demand an accounting of next August remains the harder and more consequential question.

Diplomacy opens doors. Elections are won at home.



The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kenya's university scholarship system is stretched to breaking point, with the Universities Fund revealing a KSh16 billion funding gap for the 2026/2027 financial year against an estimated requirement of KSh47 billion and a government allocation of just KSh30.1 billion. Acting Chief Executive Edwin Wanyonyi told scholarship and bursary providers gathered in Nairobi yesterday that the crisis is as much about coordination as it is about cash. "There are students who are overfunded, and yet we have students who are underfunded and others not funded at all," he said. With nearly 609,000 scholarship beneficiaries projected this year, stakeholders called for a shared data system to eliminate duplication and ensure available resources reach the students who need them most.



Six petitioners, among them the Kenya Human Rights Commission, Katiba Institute and the Independent Medico-Legal Unit, have filed a court petition demanding that State agencies investigate what they describe as an escalating pattern of organised attacks on political, civic and religious gatherings ahead of the 2027 general election. Filed at Milimani Law Courts, the petition calls for a dedicated multi-agency task force — to be established within 30 days — bringing together the National Police Service, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The petitioners want the National Intelligence Service and police compelled to investigate whether political parties have sponsored or financed armed groups, citing incidents dating to early 2025, including an alleged attack on KHRC offices in Nairobi on 6 July 2025.



France's Senate yesterday passed legislation that would make demonstrators financially liable for damage caused during street protests, with individuals facing penalties of up to €10,000 — a measure critics warn could effectively criminalise the right to peaceful assembly. Passed by 229 votes to 105 and backed by a right-wing and centrist majority, the bill now moves to the divided National Assembly for debate. Drafted initially after riots followed Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League victory in May, the legislation gained urgency after widespread violence on 17 October caused damage to thousands of businesses nationwide. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez defended the bill, saying "we can no longer allow the vast majority of our fellow citizens to pay for a minority of vandals." Amnesty International warned the measures risked pushing vulnerable families deeper into poverty.



Chief Justice Martha Koome yesterday issued a firm declaration that the Judiciary would not be drawn into political contests, drawing a clear line between the courts and the intensifying campaigns ahead of the 2027 general election. Koome's remarks came as political temperatures rise across the country, with coalition negotiations accelerating and electoral disputes expected to multiply in the months ahead. The Chief Justice emphasised that judges and judicial officers are not politicians and would not conduct themselves as such, reaffirming the institution's commitment to impartiality and the rule of law. Her statement arrives at a moment when public confidence in independent institutions is under scrutiny, and when the Judiciary is simultaneously preparing to handle what could be a significant volume of election-related litigation.



CIC Insurance Group yesterday launched a suite of digital platforms designed to simplify access to insurance and financial services for customers and intermediaries across Kenya and beyond, marking a significant step in the company's push to position itself as a pan-African insurtech player. The One CIC channels — comprising the My CIC App, CIC Online portal and USSD code *304# — give users multiple access points regardless of their digital capacity, including a USSD option for customers without smartphones. Group Managing Director Patrick Nyaga said the initiative was about giving customers genuine choice. "We are simplifying our customer's experience while giving them greater choice in how they interact with financial services," he said. The platforms cover general insurance, life insurance, microinsurance and asset management under one digital roof.



Former Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission chief executive Halakhe Waqo is among nine candidates shortlisted for the position of Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission secretary and chief executive, with interviews scheduled for 12 and 13 November. The shortlist, released yesterday, includes Anthony Omerikwa, Harley Mutisya, Edmund Odiwuor Malitt, Andrew Gitau Kimani, Mohamed Abdullahi Abdi, Edward Katama Ngeywa, Martina Wato Yattani and Nelly Ilongo. The recruitment comes at a critical moment, with the commission preparing for the 2027 general election while the chief executive role has been filled by a succession of acting appointees since the departure of Marjan Hussein earlier this year. The IEBEC warned that canvassing would result in automatic disqualification, with selection to be based strictly on merit.

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Politics The MP's remarks reflect a deeper anxiety within ODM about the party's standing

No ODM, no State House: Kaluma warns Ruto on 2027 coalition terms

The Homa Bay MP puts Kenya's ruling administration on notice as ODM raises the stakes ahead of the next general election

BY Yvonne Wambui

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With Kenya's 2027 general election drawing closer by the day, the conversations around political alliances are growing louder — and sharper. Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma has placed himself at the centre of one of the country's most watched political debates: just how much does President William Ruto need the Orange Democratic Movement, and what happens if he does not have it?

Kaluma has been direct and unapologetic in his position. Speaking in recent weeks, he argued that ODM must secure meaningful representation in any pre-election coalition or walk away entirely. The message, stripped of diplomatic language, is simple: no ODM, no State House. It is the kind of political warning that tends to cut through the noise, and it has done exactly that.

The MP's remarks reflect a deeper anxiety within ODM about the party's standing in Kenya's fluid political landscape. Since joining the broad-based government, the party has faced persistent questions from its own supporters about whether co-operation with a former political rival has come at too high a price. Kaluma's hard line appears, in part, to be a response to that pressure — a signal that ODM is not sim-



Homa Bay Town MP Peter Kaluma

ply along for the ride.

The party's influence remains considerable, particularly in the Nyanza region where it commands a loyal and sizable voter base. For Ruto, whose 2027 campaign will depend on assembling the broadest possible coalition, that kind of regional muscle matters. Losing ODM's support would not necessarily end his re-election bid, but it would complicate the arithmetic considerably — and open the door to rival candidates eager to fill the gap.

Yet elections are rarely decided by endorsements alone. Kenyans going to the ballot in 2027 will weigh their choices against lived experience: the

cost of bread, school fees, job prospects and whether the government's promises translated into anything tangible. That is the terrain on which Ruto's campaign will ultimately be won or lost, regardless of which parties stand beside him.

Inside ODM, the debate is far from settled. Some leaders remain committed to working with the administration, while others argue the party should maintain a degree of independence and be willing to challenge government when necessary. Holding those two positions together without fracturing the party's unity will test the leadership's political dexterity in the months ahead.

What is beyond dispute is that ordinary Kenyans — young people chasing scarce jobs, families stretched by rising household costs, students anxious about fees — are watching all of this with weary eyes. They have seen political alliances form and dissolve before, often with little consequence for daily life.

The politicians negotiating in Nairobi's boardrooms and public rallies would do well to remember that. Kenya's voters are not passive spectators. In 2027, as in every election before it, they will have the final word.

Jubilee's coalition gambit: The opposition clock is ticking towards 2027



Jubilee party leader and presidential candidate Dr. Fred Matiang'i during a past address. | Photo: COURTESY

BY David Kimani

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Jubilee Party yesterday formed an inter-party committee to lead coalition negotiations with opposition formations ahead of the 2027 general election, signalling that Kenya's fractured opposition is moving — deliberately, if belatedly — towards consolidation.

The committee, approved by Jubilee's National Executive Committee under party leader Fred Matiang'i on Monday, will be chaired by former Muranga Senator Kembi Gitura, with National Secretary General Moitalel Ole Kenta and Janet Ong'era serving as members. Its immediate mandate is to review the draft Deed of Agreement for the Ukombozi Alliance and explore cooperation with other opposition parties. "The

NEC reaffirmed the party's commitment to constructive dialogue, cooperation and the pursuit of a common agenda for the transformation of our country," Ole Kenta said.

With August 2027 approaching and President William Ruto's re-election machinery already in motion, the opposition's window for building a credible, unified alternative is narrowing fast. Coalition committees are a start — but Kenya's voters have seen promising opposition arrangements collapse under the weight of personal ambition before. Whether the Ukombozi Alliance holds together long enough to mount a serious challenge will depend less on committee resolutions than on whether its leaders can subordinate individual interests to a shared national purpose.

The clock is running.

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Politics Jubilee has simultaneously reaffirmed its association with the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Alliance, reinforcing the argument for coordinated opposition strategy

Kenya's 2027 election: Will political alliances and the fight over transparency decide who wins State House?

As coalitions take shape and disputes over electoral law intensify, the contest for Kenya's next presidency is already under way

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

Kenya's road to the 2027 general election is entering a critical stretch. Political parties are accelerating coalition talks, debates over electoral transparency are drawing public scrutiny, and the country's institutions are quietly preparing for the disputes that competitive elections almost always produce. With President William Ruto seeking a second term and opposition leaders testing various political arrangements, the emerging contest is shaping up as something more than a numbers game. It is, at its core, a test of whether Kenya's political class can deliver an election that genuinely reflects the will of its people.

One of the most significant recent developments came yesterday when Jubilee Party announced the formation of an inter-party coalition-building committee tasked with engaging opposition formations ahead of 2027. The decision followed a National Executive Committee meeting chaired by party leader Fred Matiang'i on Monday. The committee, chaired by former Muranga Senator Kembi Gitura and including National Secretary General Moitalel Ole Kenta and Janet Ong'era, is mandated to review the draft agreement for the Ukombozi Alliance, explore partnerships

with like-minded parties and develop proposals to strengthen opposition cooperation.

The announcement signals that coalition negotiations are moving, though it would be premature to read it as the conclusion of a final opposition presidential ticket or a comprehensive alliance agreement. The final structure of any opposition front — its candidate, its policy platform and the distribution of roles within the coalition — remains to be formally settled.

Jubilee has simultaneously reaffirmed its association with the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Alliance, reinforcing the argument for coordinated opposition strategy. Political engagements involving figures such as Martha Karua have added further fuel to speculation about a united front. Yet public appearances and consultations, however high-profile, are not binding agreements. Voters would do well to watch for formal announcements rather than reading too much into campaign-trail choreography.

The deeper challenge facing the opposition is not simply assembling a list of parties but constructing a credible national alternative — one capable of attracting support across Kenya's diverse regions and beyond its traditional strongholds. Alliances can amplify political weight, but they succeed only when parties agree on leadership,

policy priorities, candidate selection and the management of competing ambitions. If individual interests come to dominate the negotiating table at the expense of a shared programme, the opposition risks squandering an opportunity that the electorate is watching closely.

A genuinely persuasive opposition would need to go beyond rallies and seat-sharing arithmetic. A coherent programme addressing unemployment, corruption, public debt, healthcare, education and the cost of living would give voters a reason to switch allegiances — something that political positioning alone rarely achieves. Kenyans in 2027 will want to know not merely who wants to occupy State House, but what they plan to do once they get there.

Electoral transparency has meanwhile emerged as one of the sharpest fault lines in the pre-election period. The People's Coalition on Electoral Reforms — whose public figures include former Chief Justice David Maraga — criticised Parliament's handling of proposed changes to election-result procedures earlier this week. The dispute centres on amendments to the Elections Act governing the counting, transmission and declaration of results. The reform coalition is calling for results to be declared at polling stations, for regular electronic updates on voter turn-



President William Ruto and Oburu Odinga

out and for an open national results-aggregation process.

Ruto dismissed claims that the amended law prohibits the livestreaming of election results, describing such assertions as misinformation. The competing interpretations surrounding the legislation deserve careful examination. Political allegations should not be treated as established fact without supporting evidence, but equally, assurances from those in power cannot substitute for clear legal provisions and effective independent oversight. What the public needs — and deserves — is a precise, publicly accessible explanation of what the law actually requires, how results will be verified and which mechanisms exist to challenge irregularities.

The Judiciary, for its part, is not waiting to find out. Yesterday, Chief Justice Martha Koome confirmed that alternative channels — including email and physical document submissions — would be available should the Judiciary's electronic case-tracking system become unavailable during the election period. The measures are intended to ensure that technical failures or cyberattacks cannot obstruct access to justice at a moment when election petitions must meet strict legal deadlines. More than 400 judges, judicial officers and relevant personnel are currently being trained in elec-

tion-dispute resolution.

These preparations matter because credible elections require far more than ballots cast and counted. They require impartial institutions capable of resolving disputes fairly, swiftly and within the law. Disputes over party nominations, candidate eligibility and other electoral processes can spiral into uncertainty if not addressed through established procedures. A well-prepared Judiciary reduces the risk that political confrontation fills the vacuum that legal uncertainty creates.

Concerns about political violence are also surfacing, with rights groups renewing calls for investigations into reported incidents. Such concerns warrant serious attention, though allegations must be properly investigated before responsibility is attributed to specific individuals, parties or state agencies. Security forces have a duty to enforce the law without favour, while political leaders must recognise that inflammatory rhetoric — particularly where electoral competition overlaps with historical local grievances — can harden divisions and encourage the very disorder that weakens democracy.

Peaceful elections are not guaranteed by declarations of goodwill. They are built through consistent respect for constitutional rights, accountability for offences and the protection of every citi-

zen's ability to attend rallies, express opinions and support candidates without fear.

Beyond alliances and procedures, economic conditions will ultimately shape what Kenyans decide at the ballot. Households battling food prices, transport costs, unemployment and shrinking economic opportunity will expect candidates to explain — concretely — how their policies can improve daily life. The government will defend its record; the opposition will argue the case for change. Neither should be taken at its word without scrutiny. Voters need measurable proposals, credible financing plans and honest accounting of what has and has not been delivered.

The 2027 election should therefore be about more than personalities, regional calculations and the mechanics of political power. It should be a genuine contest of ideas. Coalitions may reshape the political landscape, but unity alone has never won an election — nor should it. The decisive question is whether Kenya's leaders can place citizens' interests above political expediency and whether the country's institutions can earn the trust that democracy requires.

That is a responsibility shared by politicians, electoral bodies, civil society, the media and every Kenyan who will walk into a polling booth in 2027.

2027 Running-mate On the running-mate question, Gachagua argued that Ruto's dilemma is more acute than it appears

The running-mate puzzle: Who blinks first?

With 2027 closing in, Gachagua's KTN interview lays bare the high-stakes gamble facing both Ruto and a consolidating opposition

BY James Mwangi

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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday named Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru, Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wah, former Agriculture minister Mwangi Kiunjuri and former Kakamega Governor Wycliffe Oparanya as the names circling the running-mate question for 2027, declaring in a combative KTN interview that President William Ruto faces a considerably harder choice than the opposition in deciding who stands beside him on the ballot next August.

The interview, streamed live and widely shared, was one of Gachagua's most expansive public appearances since his dramatic impeachment from the deputy presidency in October 2024. It covered ground that ranged from coalition politics and public finance to press freedom, the Moi family's assets and the shifting mood of Mount Kenya — a region whose electoral weight remains, as it has been for three decades, the single most consequential variable in any Kenyan presidential contest. What emerged was a portrait of a man who has lost none of his political sharpness and who is, by all observable evidence, building something with considerable intent.

On the running-mate question, Gachagua argued that Ruto's dilemma is more acute than it appears. The president must choose a deputy who consolidates his existing base without alienating the coalition partners he needs, who carries regional credibility without triggering resentment elsewhere, and who is capable enough to serve without becoming a political threat. Each of the names Gachagua floated carries a different set of advantages and complications. Kindiki brings administrative gravitas and a Mount Kenya profile but remains closely associated with the current administration's most contested decisions. Waiguru offers gender diversity and Gikuyu community roots but has navigated her own political controversies. Ichung'wah is a sharp parliamentary operator but may be too closely identified with the Kenya Kwanza inner circle to bring genuine new votes. Kiunjuri and Oparanya represent potential



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

bridge-building across party lines, though the durability of such bridges in Kenya's volatile political environment is never guaranteed.

The opposition's running-mate calculation, while equally consequential, benefits from a different kind of flexibility. A unified opposition front — still being assembled, still subject to the competing ambitions that have wrecked previous coalitions — has more room to be strategic about geography and demographics without the burden of an incumbency record to defend. Gachagua himself, whose political future remains one of the most watched questions in Kenyan politics, has not ruled himself out of the equation, though he spoke yesterday more as kingmaker than candidate.

On the substance of governance, Gachagua was at his most pointed. He pushed back directly against what he characterised as the Ruto

administration's tendency to conflate government infrastructure spending with personal political achievement. "Kenyans know that development is not the personal responsibility of William Ruto," he said. "Development is done with taxpayers' money. Any president will continue with development. What we want is a president who will use public resources prudently, not steal them." The line was precise, carefully worded and clearly designed for circulation — a campaign-ready formulation that strips away the incumbent's strongest argument and reframes the 2027 debate around accountability rather than achievement.

It is a framing that reflects a broader strategic calculation within the emerging opposition. Rather than contesting the government's list of completed projects, which can always be disputed, Gachagua and his allies are attempting to shift the

conversation to how public money has been managed, who has benefited and whether the ordinary Kenyan's daily reality has genuinely improved. Given the persistent public anxiety over the cost of living, fuel prices, school fees and unemployment, it is a terrain on which the opposition believes it can win.

The interview also offered a revealing window into the opposition's coalition architecture. Gachagua spoke warmly and at some length about his growing relationship with ODM's Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, describing the alliance as something close to destiny. "The advent of Sifuna is God-sent, and I welcomed it wholeheartedly," he said, adding that he had hosted Sifuna at his Wamun-yoro home — a gesture laden with symbolic significance in a political culture where hospitality carries meaning. The Gachagua-Sifuna axis represents an attempt to bridge the historically fraught divide between Mount Kenya and Nyanza, the two electoral blocs whose alignment or antagonism has determined the outcome of every Kenyan presidential election in the multiparty era.

Whether that bridge holds under the pressure of a full campaign is another matter. Kenya's political history is littered with promising cross-regional alliances that dissolved when the distribution of power became concrete rather than aspirational. Gachagua is aware of this. His public statements have been carefully calibrated to signal unity without over-committing to arrangements that have not yet been formally concluded.

On the subject of Mount Kenya's political mood, Gachagua was unambiguous. He delivered a sharp warning to any leader within the region who might be tempted to attack former President Uhuru Kenyatta as part of a broader political realignment. "Any leader from the mountain who abuses former President Uhuru Kenyatta will not get a forum anywhere in the mountain to say anything," he said. "The insults against a retired president are too much. Enough is enough." The statement was a reminder that Gachagua continues to see himself as a custodian of the region's political dignity — and that Kenyatta's standing within Mount Kenya, despite his complicated relationship with the electorate

in recent years, remains a factor that ambitious politicians ignore at their peril.

Gachagua also turned his attention to the ongoing controversy surrounding the Moi family's assets, weighing in with language that was both protective of a political legacy and pointedly critical of the current administration's approach. "You cannot take Moi's property. Moi is dead. He served this country with distinction," he said. "I want to ask William Ruto tonight to leave the Moi family alone and to know he is setting a very dangerous precedent as president." The intervention is significant not merely for what it says about the Moi family but for what it signals about Gachagua's broader political positioning — as a defender of institutional norms and historical legacies against what he characterises as an administration willing to bend rules for political convenience.

On press freedom, he expressed solidarity with journalist Alex Kiprotich while casting doubt on the integrity of any official investigation. "Give my condolences to Editor Alex Kiprotich. I wish him well and tell him not to be intimidated," he said. "However, there is nothing that will come out of those investigations. That attack on Alex was done by the DCI. So, how can they investigate themselves?" The remark speaks to a wider anxiety among Kenya's media community about the safety of journalists and the independence of investigative institutions as the country moves into a politically charged pre-election period.

Taken together, yesterday's interview was less a series of statements and more a comprehensive political manifesto — a declaration of intent from a man who left the deputy presidency under pressure but has no apparent intention of leaving the national stage. The running-mate puzzle, the coalition negotiations, the battle for Mount Kenya's soul and the fight over the government's record will all intensify in the months ahead. Gachagua, it is now clear, intends to be at the centre of every one of those conversations.

August 2027 is approaching. And in Kenyan politics, the person who controls the narrative heading into an election year frequently controls the election itself.

Road safety The present enforcement approach also raises concerns about the relationship between NTSA and the Kenya Police Service.

NTSA's road safety crackdown: Duplicated mandates, demoralised police and the question of value for money

“Road safety is measured by the lives saved, not the number of motorists stopped, number plates removed or penalties collected. When enforcement becomes a spectacle and institutions compete for authority, the nation must ask whether public safety is being served or bureaucracy is merely protecting its own existence.”



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

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“Road safety is measured by the lives saved, not the number of motorists stopped, number plates removed or penalties collected. When enforcement becomes a spectacle and institutions compete for authority, the nation must ask whether public safety is being served or bureaucracy is merely protecting its own existence.”

Kenya's persistent road carnage has become a national tragedy whose consequences extend far beyond accident statistics. Every fatal crash leaves behind grieving families, orphaned children, lost breadwinners and households pushed into financial distress. Behind every statistic is a human life that could have been saved through responsible driving, effective enforcement, safer roads and accountable institutions. The National Transport and Safety Authority's latest Msimu Bila Ajali, Usalama Barabarani campaign, launched ahead of the festive travel season, addresses genuine dangers, including speeding, drunk driving, overloading and driver fatigue. Yet the persistence of these familiar problems, despite years of investment in road safety institutions, demands a difficult question: are our interventions producing results commensurate with the public resources committed to them?

The available statistics make this question unavoidable. According to the National Transport and Safety Authority's road safety reporting,

Kenya recorded approximately 4,748 road fatalities in 2023, compared with 4,690 in 2022. The National Police Service and NTSA subsequently reported 4,748 deaths in 2023 and approximately 4,311 in 2024, reflecting a decline that offered some hope but remained devastatingly high. These figures must be interpreted alongside differences in reporting periods and classifications, rather than treated as proof of a single uninterrupted upward trend. Nevertheless, thousands of deaths annually demonstrate that the country has not yet achieved a satisfactory road safety outcome. The continuing scale of preventable loss raises legitimate questions about the effectiveness of existing strategies, institutional coordination and the value taxpayers receive from road safety expenditure.

Since its establishment under the National Transport and Safety Authority Act, No. 33 of 2012, NTSA has been entrusted with regulating transport, licensing drivers, inspecting vehicles, promoting road safety and coordinating relevant interventions. These are substantial responsibilities, supported by public funding, administrative infrastructure, technology and enforcement-related operations. Yet the existence of an authority, the visibility of its campaigns and the number of vehicles inspected cannot, on their own, establish success. A serious assessment must examine whether fatalities and serious injuries are declining, whether dangerous repeat offenders are being deterred, whether defective vehicles are being removed from service and whether accident blackspots are receiving timely attention. Public institutions must ultimately be judged by outcomes, not activity reports.

The present enforcement approach also raises concerns about the relationship between NTSA and the Kenya Police Service. Roadside operations involving vehicle inspections, the removal of number plates and the interruption of motorists' journeys can be justified where the law authorises them. However, temporary, poorly coordinated or unprofessional, impromptu campaigns risk creating the impression that one institution is asserting superiority over another. Police traffic officers have long carried the operational responsibility for enforcing traffic laws, apprehending offenders, managing traffic incidents and maintaining order on public roads. An arrangement that appears to subordinate, sideline or demoralise these officers undermines institutional confidence and public accountability. Co-operation is essential, but co-operation must rest on clearly defined responsibilities, mutual professional respect and a transparent command structure—not competition for authority.

The legal framework itself requires careful scrutiny. Section 4 of the NTSA Act establishes the Authority's regulatory and road safety functions, including vehicle registration, inspection, public service vehicle regulation, driver licensing, research, education and accident analysis. Section 42 also addresses powers relating to stopping and inspecting vehicles. Meanwhile, section 106 of the Traffic Act, Cap. 403, provides for specified vehicle prohibitions and related enforcement measures, including circumstances in which identification plates and vehicle licences may be removed. Section 106(6) requires the relevant prohibition order to be in writing. These provisions must be read together with the ap-



NTSA's road safety crackdown

plicable regulations and the legal powers of authorised officers. The concern is not that every NTSA operation is unlawful, but that overlapping powers without clear operational boundaries can create confusion, inconsistent enforcement and uncertainty over who bears responsibility when things go wrong.

Kenya should establish a more coherent division of labour. NTSA should concentrate on technical regulation, licensing standards, vehicle inspection systems, driver education, accident research, safety policy and evidence-based prevention. The police should retain clear operational leadership in routine traffic enforcement, apprehension, incident management and public order, supported by NTSA's technical expertise and reliable data. Joint operations should be governed by written protocols defining leadership, accountability, communication and the lawful exercise of powers. Such reforms would strengthen both institutions while reducing duplication, friction and unnecessary disruption to

motorists.

There is also a legitimate public concern that highly visible crackdowns may prioritise roadside penalties over lasting safety improvements. It would be irresponsible to claim, without audited evidence, that these campaigns exist primarily to generate revenue. Nevertheless, taxpayers deserve transparent accounts of expenditure, collections and measurable results. How much is spent on enforcement campaigns, and how many deaths and serious injuries are prevented? Are dangerous roads being redesigned, speed management strengthened and emergency response improved? Are repeat offenders being deterred? These are more meaningful measures of success than the number of motorists stopped or number plates removed.

Ultimately, NTSA must justify its institutional footprint through demonstrable public value. Parliament should review its mandate, eliminate unnecessary duplication and establish independently verifiable performance targets. If a reformed Authority cannot

demonstrate that its essential functions are effective, necessary and more efficiently delivered within existing government institutions, transferring those functions and abolishing the Authority should remain legitimate options. Institutional survival must never take precedence over public safety.

Kenya deserves safer highways, professional and respected police officers, accountable regulators and fewer families condemned to bury their loved ones. Reform the system, clarify the law and measure results honestly. If NTSA cannot justify its existence after meaningful reform, its continued existence should not be beyond question.

“Taxpayers do not finance institutions merely to witness displays of authority; they finance them to protect human life. The ultimate verdict on road safety will not be written in the number plates removed today, but in the number of Kenyan families spared the agony of burying their loved ones tomorrow.”

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Kenya's Nuclear Power and Energy Agency has set out its service commitments to the public — but a charter only has value when its principles are practised consistently, honestly, and without exception.

BY James Kilonzo Bwire

@themtkenyatiimes

A citizens' service delivery charter is not a brochure. It is not a wall decoration or a document produced for auditors and then filed away. At its best, it is a binding moral contract between a public institution and the people that institution exists to serve. For the Nuclear Power and Energy Agency, known as NuPEA, the Citizens' Service Delivery Charter sets out precisely what services the agency offers, how those services can be accessed, what standards citizens should expect, and what recourse is available when those standards fall short. In placing the citizen at the centre of public service delivery, the Charter makes a statement that is both simple and profound: this institution does not exist for its own convenience. It exists for the public.

That statement carries weight only if it is reflected in daily conduct. The values underpinning NuPEA's Charter — professionalism, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency — are not abstract aspirations. They are practical commitments that should shape every interaction between the agency and the people it serves, from a student seeking career guidance in the energy sector to a researcher requesting technical material, from a community member seeking clarity on a public programme to a stakeholder exploring collaboration opportunities.

Professionalism is the foundation on which everything

else rests. Every officer who receives a visitor, responds to an enquiry, or handles a complaint must do so with competence, courtesy, and a genuine willingness to assist. Citizens who approach NuPEA may not always understand technical processes or specialised energy matters. That is not a failing on their part. It is a reminder that the institution has a duty to explain things clearly, accessibly, and usefully, without condescension and without shortcuts. Professionalism also demands consistency. No citizen should receive better or worse service depending on who happens to be at the desk that day. When people know that their enquiry will be acknowledged, handled correctly, and resolved fairly, they develop confidence in the institution. For an agency whose mandate touches national energy planning, nuclear power development, public safety expectations, and long-term development, that confidence is not optional. It is essential.

Ethical conduct sits at the heart of professional service. Officers must make decisions based on merit, established procedures, and public interest — not personal connections, social status, or inappropriate considerations. Information shared by citizens must be handled responsibly. Complaints must be taken seriously. Artificial delays, unnecessary demands, and the misuse of official positions have no place in a citizen-centred institution. A charter earns credibility not from the quality of its language but from the consistency

of the conduct it produces.

Transparency is equally central. Citizens have a right to know what services are available, what requirements they must meet, how long a process should take, and what they can do when they are dissatisfied. NuPEA's Charter addresses all of these directly. But transparency is more than documentation. It means making information accessible — through official platforms, public engagements, and direct communication — in language that ordinary people can understand. It means not waiting for citizens to demand answers before providing them. And it means being especially clear in areas where public understanding matters most, such as nuclear energy and its implications for safety, environment, and national development. An agency that communicates openly helps citizens engage meaningfully rather than react fearfully. Transparency, practised properly, creates informed participation.

Accountability follows from transparency. When service standards are written down, they can be assessed. Citizens can compare what was promised against what was delivered. Management can identify gaps and take corrective action. NuPEA's Charter provides channels through which citizens can raise dissatisfaction, including written complaints submitted through the agency's website, email, and letters. The existence of these channels matters. But what matters more is what happens when a complaint arrives. It must be recorded, assessed



NuPEA team during exhibitions. Photo courtesy

fairly, and communicated back to the complainant with honesty and respect. Even where a complaint cannot be resolved in the way the citizen hoped, an explanation — given clearly and without defensiveness — protects dignity and demonstrates that the institution takes public concerns seriously. Accountability is strengthened most decisively when complaints lead to genuine improvement rather than merely to acknowledgement.

Responsiveness means that citizens should never be left waiting without communication. Even when a matter requires time to resolve, an acknowledgement and a clear explanation of next steps costs nothing and means a great deal. The range of people who engage with NuPEA is broad — students, researchers, suppliers, community members, energy sector stakeholders, and members of the general public. Each group has specific needs, and each deserves timely, accurate, and respectful service. Responsiveness also means being present where citizens need the institution, not only in physical offices but through digital platforms, community engagements, educational institutions, and stakeholder forums. Citizens in every part of the country should be able to access information and guidance without unnecessary difficulty.

Efficiency complements responsiveness. It means using

staff time, public resources, and citizens' time wisely — simplifying procedures where possible, ensuring information is easy to find, and avoiding the kind of internal disorganisation that sends people from one office to another without resolution. Efficient service does not mean rushed service. Some processes require careful consideration, technical review, and proper consultation, and that is entirely appropriate. What is not appropriate is avoidable delay, unexplained waiting, or poor coordination between departments that forces citizens to repeat themselves at every stage. Efficiency is an internal management responsibility as much as a customer service one. Clear roles, organised records, reliable systems, and strong leadership all contribute to a service environment that respects the people it is designed to serve.

Public education deserves special attention in NuPEA's context. Many citizens have limited understanding of the Nuclear Power Programme, energy conservation, or the broader energy landscape Kenya is navigating. The Charter's recognition of information dissemination and public education as core service functions reflects an important truth: citizens cannot participate meaningfully in national conversations about energy if they do not have access to accurate and understandable information.

Questions about safety, environmental impact, costs, employment, and long-term implications are legitimate and deserve honest, respectful answers. An institution that communicates openly reduces fear, builds trust, and creates the conditions for genuine public participation.

The Charter also creates mutual responsibility. Citizens have their own obligations — to provide accurate information, follow stated procedures, and engage through appropriate channels. Service delivery is a relationship, and relationships require good faith on both sides. When citizens understand what is required of them and trust that the institution will respond fairly, the entire process works better.

Ultimately, NuPEA's Citizens' Service Delivery Charter is a commitment to a better kind of public institution — one that listens, explains, acts, and keeps improving. Quality service is not a favour extended to citizens. It is their right. Transparency is not optional. It is a duty. Accountability is not a burden. It is the mark of responsible public leadership. If the Charter's principles are applied consistently, from senior leadership down to every frontline officer, the result will be an institution that Kenya's citizens can genuinely trust. That is exactly the kind of public service the country needs.

Politics “We seek partnerships founded on sovereign equality, mutual respect, and shared prosperity,” Ruto said. “Not relationships of dependency, but partnerships of mutual benefit.”

From Moscow with ambition: Ruto bets on Russia to rewrite Kenya’s economic story before 2027

With an election looming and an economy under pressure, the president’s pitch to Russian investors carries as much domestic calculation as diplomatic vision

BY David Kimani

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

President William Ruto stood before Russian investors in Moscow yesterday and made a case that was as much about Kenya’s future as it was about his own — pitching a new economic partnership with Russia while an election at home, now less than a year away, waits with unfor-giving patience.

The setting was the Russia-Kenya Business Roundtable in the Russian capital, and the message Ruto carried was deliberate and pointed. Kenya, he told the assembled investors, was no longer interested in the extractive logic that has defined Africa’s engagement with the global economy for generations — the endless cycle of exporting raw materials cheaply and importing finished goods expensively, with the wealth, the factories and the jobs created somewhere else entirely. That era, he said, was over. What Kenya wanted now was different: genuine partnership, shared prosperity and mutual respect between sovereign equals.

“We seek partnerships founded on sovereign equality, mutual respect, and shared prosperity,” Ruto said. “Not relationships of dependency, but partnerships of mutual benefit.”

It is a compelling line, and not an accidental one. The language of sovereign equality and mutual benefit has particular resonance across Africa right now, where a growing number of governments are reassessing long-standing relationships with Western powers and quietly opening doors to alternative partners. Russia, China and the Gulf states have been swift to walk through those doors. Ruto’s Moscow visit — his pitch framed not as supplication but as opportunity — fits neatly into that evolving continental mood.

The economic case he presented was built on candid numbers. Bilateral trade between Kenya and Russia stood at \$380 million in 2025, a figure that sounds substantial until the detail is examined. Kenya exported

\$52 million worth of goods — tea, coffee, flowers, fruits and vegetables — while importing \$330 million in wheat, fertilisers, iron and steel. Russian investment in Kenya, meanwhile, was estimated at just \$22 million. The trade balance is lopsided, the investment footprint is modest, and Ruto did not shy away from saying so. “These figures challenge us to rethink the nature of our partnership,” he told the gathering.

His ask was specific. He called on Russian enterprises to invest in local manufacturing, agricultural processing and mineral beneficiation — to build production facilities in Kenya, partner with Kenyan firms and use the country as a base for regional and continental expansion. “Invest in Kenya, manufacture in Kenya, and serve Africa and the world from Kenya,” he said. Russia’s expertise in energy, mining, fertiliser production, engineering, transport and manufacturing, he argued, aligned precisely with Kenya’s industrialisation priorities.

“This is the partnership we invite Russian investors to build,” Ruto said. “One that combines Russian capital, technology and industrial expertise with Kenya’s resources, talent, and access to African markets. A partnership in which both countries contribute, both benefit and both prosper.”

The vision is sound. The harder question — one that Moscow’s boardrooms will ask even if Nairobi’s political audience does not — is whether Kenya can deliver the conditions that serious industrial investment requires: reliable infrastructure, legal certainty, a stable regulatory environment and protection from the kind of policy reversals that have unsettled investors in the past. A country preparing for a contested general election is not always the most reassuring environment for long-term capital commitments.

And the election is the context that shapes everything. Kenya votes in August 2027, and the political temperature at home is already rising



President William Ruto (centre) received by Russian officials when he arrived for the Third Russia–Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum on October 28, 2026 | Photo: PCS

sharply. Ruto faces a fractured political landscape, a restless population and an opposition that, despite its own internal tensions, is consolidating with purposeful energy. Jubilee’s Fred Matiang’i is building an inter-party coalition committee under the Ukombozi Alliance banner. Azimio la Umoja remains a reference point for opposition cooperation. The emerging contest will be fought on the cost of living, unemployment, public debt and the basic question of whether ordinary Kenyans feel better or worse off than they did five years ago.

Against that backdrop, the Moscow visit is not merely diplomatic house-keeping. It is economic storytelling — a president demonstrating to his electorate that he is pursuing growth from every available direction, that he will not be constrained by old allegiances or conventional frameworks, and that Kenya’s place in the world is being actively renegotiated on terms favourable to Kenyans.

Whether Russian investors materialise in meaningful numbers before August 2027 is almost secondary to the narrative being constructed right now.

Ruto was careful to set the terms by which success should be judged. Agreements on paper, he said, are not the measure. “The success of this partnership should be measured by projects completed, industries established and jobs created,” he told the roundtable. It is the right benchmark — and one that his opponents will hold him to with considerable enthusiasm when campaigning begins in earnest.

The broader picture Ruto painted in Moscow is one that resonates beyond Kenya’s borders. Africa’s determination to move up the value chain — to stop being the world’s quarry and start being one of its workshops — is one of the most significant economic and political shifts of this decade. Kenya, with its relative stability, its educated work-

force, its regional connectivity and its ambitions as an East African hub, has genuine credentials to make that case. The question is execution.

For Ruto, the political calculus is acute. Voters facing high food prices, expensive fuel and scarce formal employment will not be moved by speeches in Moscow, however polished. They will want factories, jobs and lower cost of living. If the partnerships announced in the Russian capital translate into visible economic activity before next August, they strengthen his re-election argument considerably. If they remain at the level of MoUs and roundtable rhetoric, his opponents will use them as evidence of a presidency long on promises and short on delivery.

The road from Moscow to State House runs through the lives of ordinary Kenyans. That is the only partnership that will matter when August arrives.

Tea The second factor is fuel. The war in the Middle East reached Kenyan pump prices with a lag, and the impact landed squarely within the 2025/26 bonus period

Kenya tea bonuses fall despite rising auction prices: The real reasons behind the shortfall

Kenya tea bonuses fall despite rising auction prices: The real reasons behind the shortfall

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

When Kenyan tea fetched better prices at auction last year, many smallholder farmers expected fatter bonus cheques at the end of the season. What they received instead was considerably less. The disconnect between rising auction prices and shrinking bonuses has left growers

confused and, in many cases, frustrated — and the explanation offered by the Kenya Tea Development Agency has not fully satisfied those asking the harder questions. EBC Financial Group, which monitors commodity and currency markets, has taken a closer look at the 2025/26 bonus year — covering July 2025 to June 2026 — and its findings point to a more complex picture than the exchange rate narrative that has previously dominated the conversation. Average auction prices at the Mombasa Tea Auction rose approximately 3% in US dollar terms to USD 2.23 per kilogramme, up from USD 2.16 the previous year. Buyers took a significantly larger share of tea on offer, with 73% of tea sold in 2025 compared with 55% in 2024. The Kenya shilling, meanwhile, barely moved, fluctuating within

1% of its seasonal average. By the KTDA's own previous reasoning — that lower prices and a weaker shilling caused the 2024/25 bonus decline — this year's numbers should have told a different story. They did not. David Precious, Senior Market Analyst at EBC Financial Group, put it plainly. "On KTDA's formula, a bonus is what remains after costs and monthly payments, so when sales hold, every extra shilling paid out during the year comes off the bonus," he said. "Part of this year's fall may have reached farmers earlier through monthly payments." That observation reframes the issue in an important way. A smaller bonus does not necessarily mean less total income — but it does mean the money arrived through a different channel, and at a time when farmers were watching the final payout, many felt the impact acutely. Three factors emerge from EBC's analysis as the most credible contributors to the bonus shortfall. The first is leaf volume. KTDA farmers delivered 4.34% less green leaf in the first eleven months of the financial year. National tea output fell 5.76% in January and a steep 16.27% in February, figures the Tea Board of Kenya attributed directly to dry weather conditions. The recovery came, but it came late — output ran above the previous year's levels each month from March to June. For factories whose revenue depends entirely on the volume of leaf they can process and sell, that early-season drought carried a cost that better auction prices alone could not fully offset. The second factor is fuel. The war in the Middle East reached

Kenyan pump prices with a lag, and the impact landed squarely within the 2025/26 bonus period. The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority held Nairobi diesel at KSh166.54 per litre until 14 April. From that point, the cost climbed sharply, peaking at KSh242.92 per litre in May before settling at KSh217.86 in September and rising again to KSh227.76 from 15 October. For tea factories that rely on diesel to collect leaf from thousands of smallholder plots and transport processed tea to Mombasa, that kind of price movement adds substantially to operational costs and reduces what remains for distribution as a bonus. The third and perhaps most structurally significant factor is the change in monthly payment rates. The Embu and Nyeri tea boards, which include Rukuriri — last year's top-paying factory — raised the monthly payment from KSh25 to KSh30 per kilogramme from February. Because monthly payments are deducted from sales revenue before the bonus is calculated, a higher monthly rate mechanically reduces the bonus, even when a farmer's total annual earnings hold steady or improve. Rukuriri's bonus fell from KSh57.50 to KSh50 per kilogramme, while its monthly rate rose from KSh25 to KSh30. EBC estimates that five or six months at KSh5 more per kilogramme accounts for between a quarter and a third of that KSh7.50 bonus reduction, with the effect potentially larger given the strong output recovery from March onwards. All five of last year's top-paying factories — Rukuriri, Mununga, Gathuthi, Imenti, and Ngere — paid smaller bo-

nuses in 2025/26. Gianchore was a notable exception, rising from KSh13 to KSh18. The spread between the highest and lowest factory bonus narrowed from nearly six times — KSh10 to KSh57.50 — to four times, KSh12.50 to KSh50, suggesting that the factors at play affected the sector broadly rather than penalising specific factories through individual mismanagement. Looking ahead to 2026/27, EBC cautions that several cost pressures remain firmly in place. A 15% rise in agricultural minimum wages, backdated to 1 May, adds to factory expenditure. Electricity costs have increased following the energy regulator's October adjustments, which add approximately KSh4.10 per unit, largely driven by a KSh3.22 fuel charge. KTDA has indicated that an unpaid fertiliser subsidy is accruing interest — a liability that could weigh further on the bonus — though the Agriculture Ministry's KSh2,000 price support measure will reduce farmers' fertiliser deductions. July's auction average of USD 2.24 per kilogramme, up from USD 2.05 a year earlier, offers some encouragement, but with fuel costs and a full year at the higher monthly rate both baked into the coming season's arithmetic, the bonus outlook for 2026/27 remains uncertain. For Kenya's smallholder tea farmers, the lesson from 2025/26 is that auction prices are only one part of a considerably more complicated equation — and understanding the rest of it has never mattered more.



Why Many Kenyan Tea Bonuses Fell Despite 3% Higher Prices, A Rise That Normally Means More Pay



My lost doll



I missed my loving doll,
With glittering eyes of blue,
She sticks to me like a glue,
I don't know where she flew,
She's my beauty queen,
My love for her gone in vain,
Her lips are very cute,
She is an angel, no doubt,
My Barbie misses me too,
Crying in the corner of a strange venue,
Showers wet my eyes too,
Her little eyes search for me through,
Without me she wouldn't sleep,
With great scare, she would weep,

I've dressed her with white,
She always seems very bright,
My dolly's little red shoes,
Would tumble and go loose,
Her clapping hands so pretty,
Would go so bad and pity,
I'm in need of my silent darling,
Who does nothing but smiling,
Whispering me great stories for my sleep,
We embrace together in deep slumber,
But my hands search her with blabber,
My heart sweats with blood,
Like a noisy flood,
For my lost angel I am longing for,
Oh, great God, I beg Thee
To show my Barbie unto me,
Proceeding my bondage with her; you see,
O dear girl, I miss you heartily,
Please return to me so swiftly,
Before you see me in my death bed,
Yours ever loving,
V. R. Vijayalakshmi
Graduate in English, CW Writers,
Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India.

You don't lose people by setting boundaries



You filter out those who were never genuine.

You may have many people around you, but you don't always know who is real.
When you set boundaries, you begin to understand who genuinely cares about you.

It is like a farmer winnowing rice. Winnowing helps separate the grains of rice from the dust and

husks.
In the same way, boundaries help you separate fake people from genuine ones.

Real friends and well-wishers do not walk away when times get tough.
They support you during your difficult moments.
Those who stand by you during your struggles are the people who truly care about you.

You don't lose genuine people by setting boundaries.
Instead, you learn to recognize their true value.
So, choose the right people and stay close to those who genuinely care about you.

— G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block Villupuram dt

Brain vs stomach



We know the importance of food when our stomach is empty;
We know the importance of knowledge when our brain is empty.
Both are important when we feel tired,
But how can we claim superiority when we are fired From the life we once admired?

The sound of rumbling from our tummy

Sends a signal to our mummy.
The brain understands our need
And tells us when it is time to feed
Both our stomach and our brain.

Sometimes, someone acts like a genius
Though they are actually brainless.
Sometimes, someone feeds others while they are hungry.
No doubt, the second one is far superior
To the brainless, self-proclaimed inferior,
Who only tries to act smart!

N.DEEPALAKSHMI
B T ASST IN ENGLISH
CREATIVE WRITER
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INDIA

If I don't remember you, you don't call or care,



I don't know why, you don't even text a single line there.
Your phone is always in your hand, so close to your view,
Yet your pride keeps you from calling me through...
Is this the final end of our love and peace?
The aftermath of a quarrel that caused us to cease?
Where is the trust, love, and vow we made so deep?
You don't even text to say I'm in your sleep...
I know you miss me dearly, I can truly feel,
Because I miss you too, this aching is real.
But if I text you first, taking the lead,

You undervalue me and let my heart bleed.
My stubborn darling, put your anger aside,
Let's make up and push our grudges behind.
To be honest, I'm writing because I'm in a spot,
Spring is here, buy me a pair of shoes, why not?
If you won't talk, the best thing you can do,
Is quietly transfer some money through.
I won't ask for too much to burden your life,
Just enough for a nice new outfit, my shine.
Is this how we agreed to live, my dear spouse?
Putting our happiness on hold in this house?
If you keep burning me with your silent game,
I'll dress up so fine and do just the same!
Let's see if you can stay silent and weak,
While I doll up and glow from chin to cheek.
I'll put on my high heels and strut down the street,
Let's see how long you can endure this heat!
If saying "let's make up" is so hard for your pride,
Your endless ego will kill me inside!
When you come running back to my side in a start,
Don't bother me then with your jealous heart!

By: Amirova Nodira
A student of the Psychology program at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Alfraganus University, Republic of Uzbekistan

The real school



Where Every Child Belongs and Every Heart Shines

A school is not merely a place
Where marks and ranks define success;
It is a garden of unique little souls,
Where every child deserves happiness.

Rich or poor, strong or weak,
Beautiful or plain, it matters not;
Every child has a dream to fulfil,
And every heart deserves a special spot.

They learn together, they play together,
Sharing their laughter, their hopes, their tears;
They build a world of love and friendship,
Breaking the walls of doubts and fears.

No child should ever feel inferior,
No dream should ever be denied;
Every little heart deserves respect,
With love and kindness by its side.

Teachers and parents must walk together,
Holding each child's hand with care;
With patience, trust, and understanding,
They can build a world that is just and fair.

Education is more than books and lessons,
More than examinations and a race;
It teaches children to respect one another,
And give every human being a place.

A child who learns to care for others,
Who stands for truth and chooses what is right,
Has understood the heart of learning
And carries humanity's beautiful light.

A REAL SCHOOL DOES NOT JUST CREATE
ACHIEVERS;
IT NURTURES HUMAN BEINGS.

It does not teach children whom to look down upon,
But teaches them to lift one another high.
It does not divide them by wealth or status,
But gives every child the wings to fly.

For the true greatness of a school
Is not measured by marks alone;
It lives in the kindness its children carry
And the seeds of humanity they have sown.

A real school is where no child feels different,
Where no child is left behind;
Where diversity becomes a strength,
And love unites every heart and mind.

Let every school become a home of equality,
Every teacher a guiding light,
Every parent a partner in progress,
And every child a future shining bright!

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative Writer
PUMS Konganancherry
Chengalpattu district

Business That target is backed by a substantial track record. Absa Bank Kenya has channelled more than KSh200B into sustainable finance over the past five years

Absa Bank Kenya backs green finance push as businesses seek sustainable growth

As Kenya’s private sector searches for practical routes to sustainability, Absa Bank Kenya is putting billions behind the transition — and calling on the financial industry to do far more.

BY Agnes Mukami
@themkenyatimes

Kenya’s financial sector faced a direct challenge yesterday to move beyond tokenistic environmental gestures and embed sustainability at the core of business decision-making, as industry leaders, financiers, and policymakers gathered in Nairobi for the GreenShift Forum 2026.

Absa Bank Kenya emerged as a central voice at the forum, held on 22 October under the theme Powering Kenya’s Sustainability Transformation, contributing to discussions on how green finance, climate investment, and innovative funding mechanisms

can help Kenyan businesses convert sustainability commitments into measurable economic outcomes. The forum drew together executives, sustainability practitioners, energy innovators, and government representatives to examine six interconnected areas: environmental, social and governance priorities as a competitive advantage, green finance and carbon markets, electric mobility, the circular economy, renewable energy innovation, and public-private partnerships.

Charles Wokabi, Head of Sustainability and Corporate Affairs at Absa Bank Kenya, delivered one of the forum’s more pointed interventions, cautioning businesses against reducing their sustainability

credentials to peripheral activities. “If you are an organisation that is serious about sustainability, then sustainable business practices must be reflected in your core business — both in the way you manage your operations and in the propositions you offer your customers,” he said. “Planting and growing trees is good, but it should not equate to your entire sustainability story.”

Wokabi also pressed the financial sector to adopt bolder and more creative approaches to funding the green transition, specifically highlighting guarantees and risk-sharing arrangements as tools that could significantly expand the range of sustainable projects able to attract bank financing.

“There is a growing need for innovative financing mechanisms that make sustainable projects more viable,” he said. “This is one of the ways we are growing our sustainable finance portfolio at Absa, towards our target of 30% of total portfolio by 2030.”

That target is backed by a substantial track record. Absa Bank Kenya has channelled more than KSh200B into sustainable finance over the past five years, supporting green and climate initiatives alongside inclusive finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, women in business, and young entrepreneurs. In 2025 alone, the bank disbursed KSh55.3B in sustainable finance, including KSh6.5B directed specifically



Charles Wokabi, Head of Sustainability and Corporate Affairs at Absa Bank Kenya

at climate finance. Its Sustainability Strategy 2026–2030 sets a clear ambition: sustainable finance representing at least 30% of total portfolio by the decade’s end.

The forum’s broader programme reflected the growing recognition that sustainability and commercial competitiveness are not opposing forces. For businesses, the argument is that sustainability initiatives anchored in genuine customer needs and sound commercial logic will outperform those driven by reputational management alone. For financiers, the imperative is to develop a sufficiently deep understanding of clients’ business models to structure financing that

supports viable, long-term investment rather than short-term compliance.

GreenShift Forum 2026 did not resolve the considerable challenges that remain in Kenya’s green transition — financing gaps, regulatory uncertainty, and uneven access to climate capital among them. But in bringing together stakeholders from finance, technology, energy, mobility, and policy under one roof, it offered something the transition urgently needs: a space where practical pathways, not just aspirational targets, can be honestly examined.

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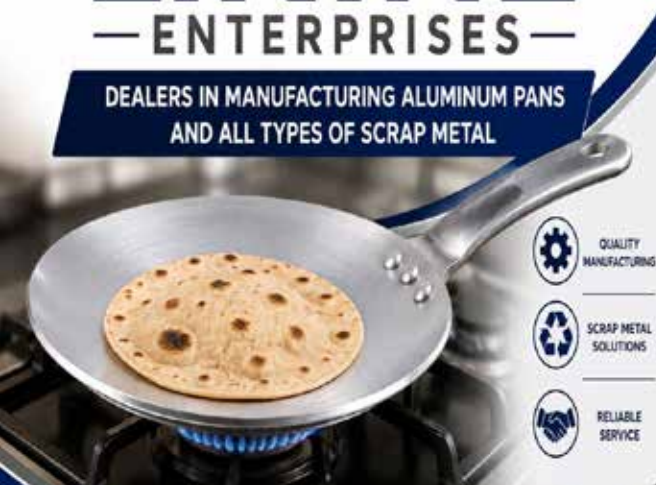


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Health Better mental health is also built on daily habits that protect both body and mind. Sleep is central to that foundation

Steps to better mental health: How Kenyans can build emotional resilience one habit at a time

Kenya's mental health crisis is hiding in plain sight — here is what every family, school, and workplace can do about it.



By: Wanjohi P. Mugambi
@themkenyaintimes

Mental health is often discussed as though it were a distant medical topic, yet it shapes the texture of everyday life. It determines how we wake up in the morning, how we handle disappointment, how we speak to our children, how we perform in class, and how we recover when things do not go as planned. Good mental health does not mean a life without sadness, worry, or anger — those emotions are human and necessary. It means having the ability to understand what you feel, to manage pressure without harming yourself or others, to maintain healthy relationships, and to find your way back after a difficult season.

In many homes and schools across Kenya, this conversation remains hard to have. People are taught to endure quietly, to be strong at all costs, to hide pain behind a smile. While endurance has its place, prolonged silence causes real harm. When stress and emotional pain go unaddressed, they do not disappear — they surface as constant fatigue, persistent headaches, poor sleep, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and destructive conflict in families and classrooms. Healing begins the moment we give ourselves permission to notice what we feel and take small, consistent steps to care for our inner life.

The first step toward better mental health is learning to notice and name what is happening inside. Many people move through the entire day without pausing to ask how they truly



feel, saying they are fine even when overwhelmed. A simple practice is to pause for two minutes in the morning and two minutes in the evening to check in honestly. What am I feeling right now? Why might I be feeling this way? When we move from a vague statement — “I am stressed” — to something specific — “I am feeling disappointed because my effort did not produce the results I expected” — the emotion becomes easier to manage. Naming reduces confusion and helps us choose a response rather than simply react. This habit can be taught to children using simple words in both English and Kiswahili: joy, sadness, anger, fear — furaha, huzuni, hasira, hofu. When a child can say “I feel afraid” instead of hitting a classmate, that child is learning emotional intelligence that will serve them for a lifetime. Writing a single line each day about how you feel also helps. What is written can be reflected upon and healed. What remains hidden often continues to hurt.

Better mental health is also built on daily habits that protect both body and mind.

In many homes and schools across Kenya, this conversation remains hard to have. People are taught to endure quietly, to be strong at all costs, to hide pain behind a smile. While endurance has its place, prolonged silence causes real harm. When stress and emotional pain go unaddressed, they do not disappear — they surface as constant fatigue, persistent headaches, poor sleep, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and destructive conflict in families and classrooms. Healing begins the moment we give ourselves permission to notice what we feel and take small, consistent steps to care for our inner life.



Sleep is central to that foundation. Lack of sleep makes small problems feel enormous and reduces the capacity to regulate emotions. Adults benefit from seven to eight hours and children from eight to ten hours, kept consistent even on weekends. Avoiding phone scrolling at least thirty minutes before bed allows the brain to settle. Movement is powerful medicine that requires neither a gym nor money. Walking for thirty minutes, working in the shamba, dancing, or playing actively with children releases chemicals in the brain that improve mood and ease anxiety. In schools where learners sit for long hours, reintroducing active play is not wasted time — it is an investment in mental health. Food and water matter equally. Skipping meals, relying on excessive sugary tea, soda, or alcohol increases mood swings and fatigue. Regular meals with greens, fruits, proteins, and sufficient water support the brain to think clearly and feel stable. Calm breathing is another accessible tool. When anxiety rises, breathing becomes fast and shallow, sig-

nalling danger to the brain. A simple method — breathe in for four counts, hold for four, breathe out for four, repeated four times — returns the body to calm within a minute and can be done anywhere.

Human beings are not designed to heal in isolation. Connection is medicine. Every person needs at least one safe individual who listens without judging. In families, a weekly moment when phones are set aside and each person shares how their week has truly been builds lasting trust. In schools, peer support groups and guidance clubs where learners can say “I am not okay today” without fear create safety nets that prevent small difficulties from becoming crises. Listening is a skill. Rather than telling someone to stop crying or to be strong, it is more healing to say: “Thank you for sharing this with me. That sounds very heavy. I am here with you.” That response restores dignity. Guarding against comparison also matters. Social media presents only success, beauty, and wealth, and constant exposure makes many young people feel inadequate. Set-

ting a daily limit for scrolling and following accounts that educate and inspire protects self-esteem. Serving others strengthens mental health too. Helping a neighbour, assisting a classmate, or visiting someone who is unwell shifts focus from personal worry and gives life meaning. Service reminds us we are needed and that we belong.

The final step, and perhaps the most courageous, is seeking help early and without shame. Just as we visit a hospital for malaria, we must seek support when emotional pain persists. If for more than two weeks you have consistently felt sad, hopeless, deeply exhausted, unable to sleep, or no longer interested in things you once loved, it is time to speak to a professional. This could be a guidance and counselling teacher, a community counsellor at a county hospital, a trained religious leader, or a helpline — 1199 in Kenya or 116 for children. Seeking professional support is not failure. It is an act of taking responsibility for your life. Schools and organisations can help by displaying a clear referral list showing where to go and who to call. Mental health support should be as visible as first aid. When a friend confides that life no longer feels worth living, listen with compassion, stay with them, and help them connect quickly to a trusted adult or professional. A caring response in that moment can save a life.

Better mental health requires intention and consistency, not wealth or a perfect life. Noticing what you feel, protecting your sleep, moving your body, eating well, practising calm breathing, strengthening your connections, and seeking help when the load grows too heavy — these steps are available to anyone, anywhere. If practised in every home in Murang’a, every classroom in Kirinyaga, and every workplace in Nairobi, Kenya can raise a generation that is not only academically qualified but emotionally resilient. The healing of a community begins with the healing of individual minds, one habit, one conversation, one day at a time. The time to start is not tomorrow. It is today.

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Media personalities Maina Kageni is perhaps the most celebrated example of this. The Classic 105 breakfast-show host and long-serving voice behind Maina & King'ang'i in the Morning

10 media personalities who never studied journalism

Some of Kenya's most recognised faces and voices built their careers not in lecture halls but in newsrooms, studios and sheer determination

BY Purity Benjamin

@themkenyaintimes

A journalism degree is often considered the conventional entry point into the newsroom. In Kenya, however, some of the country's most influential media personalities took remarkably different routes — arriving through science, law, agriculture, technology and even tourism before finding their footing behind the microphone or in front of the camera. Their careers are a reminder that talent, curiosity and persistence can carry a person further than a certificate ever could.

Maina Kageni is perhaps the most celebrated example of this. The Classic 105 breakfast-show host and long-serving voice behind Maina & King'ang'i in the Morning stumbled into broadcasting almost by accident. After completing high school, Kageni travelled to the United Kingdom with plans to further his education but never enrolled at university. He returned to Kenya, worked in various roles and eventually found his way into radio when a voice-over opportunity at Capital FM in 1999 left staff impressed enough to open a door. He later moved to Kiss 100 before joining Classic 105 in 2004, where he became one of the most listened-to breakfast presenters in the country. He holds no university degree and never studied journalism — yet his influence on Kenyan radio remains unmatched.

Yvonne Okwara built a two-decade media career on a foundation of science. She studied a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology, Zoology, Botany and Chemistry at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Her media journey began modestly — a children's programme at KBC and voice-over work — before she moved through Hot 96, QFM and NTV, hosting programmes including This Morning and Money Matters. She later joined KTN News in senior editorial and presenting roles, then moved to Citizen TV in 2018. She moderated Kenya's presidential debates in 2017 and 2022 and became one



Maina Kageni

of the country's most recognised news anchors. She later pursued an Executive Master's in Media Leadership and Innovation at Aga Khan University. Yesterday, Shuga Global named her Head of Investments and Partnerships following her departure from Citizen TV.

Julie Gichuru arrived in media through law and business. She earned an LLB and later an MBA from the University of Wales in Cardiff before moving into television, where she became a prominent news anchor and interviewer known for her work in investigative and current-affairs programming. In 2011 she founded Arimus Media, producing and hosting leadership and dialogue content. She later served as Chief Public Affairs and Communications Officer at the Mastercard Foundation. Today, as President and Chief Executive of the Africa Leadership and Dialogue

Institute, she focuses on African storytelling, knowledge-building and leadership development — proof that legal training and strong communication instincts can take a person to the very top of public media.

Kamene Goro studied law at the University of Nairobi despite having set her sights on broadcast media from an early age. While still a student, she secured an audition at Ebru TV and, with mentorship from the station's newsroom leadership, began building her presenting career. After years in television, she transitioned into radio, becoming a prominent breakfast-show host before moving into management and eventually becoming Chief Executive of NRG Radio. Her media expertise was built entirely through practice — she never held a journalism degree.

Waihiga Mwaura studied Computer Science before entering the media industry through an internship at Nation Media Group's Business Desk in 2008. He joined Royal Media Services and became a producer and presenter at Citizen TV, covering sport before transitioning to politics and current affairs. In 2018 he won the BBC World News Komla Dumor Award, and in 2023 he joined BBC News to present Focus on Africa. He later earned a Master's in Communications and Media Studies, adding formal academic grounding to a career built on experience.

Brian George of NTV studied Tourism Management at Moi University but spent his student years teaching himself video editing, scripting, reporting, animation and digital production — launching a blog and YouTube channel along the way. In 2019 he was selected from more

than 2,000 applicants for the Standard Media Academy journalism trainee programme, which accepted just 12 candidates. Six months of intensive training later, he became a radio producer, then a KTN television anchor in December 2020. He joined NTV in 2022 and has since reported internationally and hosted Techover, a programme focused on African startups. He is currently pursuing a Master's in Digital Journalism at Aga Khan University.

Joe Ageyo, now Editor-in-Chief of Nation Media Group Uganda, began with a Bachelor of Agribusiness Management from Egerton University. His broadcasting career included senior roles at KBC, Standard Group and Royal Media Services, where he served as Senior Reporter, Managing Editor of KTN News and Editorial Director respectively. He has covered four general elections and two national referenda, and has co-moderated three Kenyan presidential debates. Ageyo later earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communication, an MSc in Environmental Governance from the University of Manchester and a PhD in Communication from Daystar University.

Paul Nabiswa holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Kiswahili from the University of Nairobi and trained later at the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication. His career has spanned Citizen TV, QFM, Easy FM, Nation Media Group, BBC News and KTN, where he served as News Editor and Head of Swahili. He returned to NMG as an NTV editor in 2024. His career is a compelling blend of humanities scholarship and journalism acquired in the field.

Shiksha Arora studied Medical Microbiology and Biotechnology as an undergraduate before completing a Master's in Broadcast Journalism. Her media career has taken her through Radio Africa's East FM, MediaMax's K24, BBC and KBC, where she worked as a news anchor and media personality before departing in 2024.

Others whose journeys have crossed disciplines in similarly fascinating ways include Michael Gitonga, Edith Kimani, Judy Kosgei, Gidi Ogidi, Lolani Kalu, Jalang'o, Alex Chamwada, Allan Nyamu and Eric Latiff. Together, these personalities make a compelling case: in journalism, the best education is often the story itself.

Publishers A year after the celebrations, the same publishers are asking why their books are not moving. Why teachers are not listing them

KICD approval is not a guarantee of sales: Publishers must get serious about marketing

Thousands of Kenyan publishers celebrate KICD approval as though the battle is won — but without serious marketing, that certificate is worth very little.

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Every so often, a publisher posts a cover photo on social media, announces that their book has received KICD approval, and waits for the orders to pour in. The celebrations are genuine and the pride is understandable. Getting a book through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development’s vetting process requires effort, patience, and investment. But here is the uncomfortable truth that too few publishers are willing to hear: approval is not a sales strategy. It never has been.

A year after the celebrations, the same publishers are asking why their books are not moving. Why teachers are not listing them. Why competitors with fewer approved titles are outselling them by a wide margin. The answer, almost invariably, is marketing — or rather, the lack of it.

KICD carries a clear and important legal mandate: to vet and approve curriculum materials and ensure they meet the required standards. That process is a quality-control mechanism, not a commercial guarantee. Once a book earns the KICD seal, the institute’s role effectively ends. The responsibility for getting that book into classrooms falls entirely on the publisher. Approval opens the door. Marketing is what gets you through it.

Consider KFC. It is one of the most recognisable brands on the planet, with decades of market presence and a loyal global customer base. Yet the company continues to invest heavily in sophisticated, world-class marketing campaigns. If a brand of that stature must keep reminding customers why they should



choose its products, what makes a publisher think that a KICD approval stamp is sufficient to secure a place on a teacher’s booklist? The logic simply does not hold.

Publishers who sit back after approval, expecting teachers to seek out their books, are making a costly assumption. Expecting automatic selection merely because a book has been approved is like smiling at someone in a completely dark room. You may be smiling all you want, but nobody can see you. In the competitive publishing industry, approval establishes eligibility. Marketing drives visibility, preference, and ultimately sales.

The existence of numerous approved titles across the same subjects and grade levels means that teachers must make choices. They will base those choices on professional judgement, the quality of content, the relevance of exercises, the clarity of explanations, and the practical value each publication offers to their learners. Publishers who actively engage with teachers, demonstrate the strengths of their materials, and invest in understanding what educators genuinely need will consistently outperform those who do not. This is not speculation — it is observable in the market every single year.

Some publishers do understand this. Spotlight has distinguished itself by con-

sistently exceeding expectations in teacher engagement. Oxford University Press and Moran Publishers invest in regular contact with educators, explaining the unique strengths of their titles and gathering feedback that informs future editions. These are not coincidental successes. They reflect deliberate, sustained marketing strategies built on relationships and educational value.

The publishers who are struggling should ask themselves some searching questions. Are they investing enough in understanding what teachers need? Are their field representatives trained to demonstrate how their materials support curriculum implementation? Are they collecting feedback and using it meaningfully? Are they present in the conversations that matter to educators? A publisher who cannot answer these questions confidently should not be surprised when a competitor with a sharper marketing approach secures the larger share of the market.

It is equally important to draw a firm distinction between professional marketing and manipulation. The goal of marketing curriculum materials must be to provide accurate information, demonstrate clear educational value, and help teachers make genuinely informed decisions. It should never involve inappropriate incentives, undue

pressure, or the cultivation of relationships designed to bypass professional judgement. Teachers, for their part, must remain anchored to one criterion above all others: what is best for learners.

The shift to competency-based education has added further urgency to this conversation. Teachers today need materials that go well beyond presenting information and rote exercises. They need resources that support practical activities, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and the development of the competencies the curriculum prescribes. Publishers who truly understand these demands — and demonstrate clearly how

their products address them — carry a far more compelling proposition into every school visit.

Marketing must not stop when a book is purchased, either. Publishers need reliable distribution networks, prompt responses to complaints, timely correction of errors in subsequent editions, and honest communication about pricing and availability. A publisher’s reputation can be seriously damaged by a single instance of promising delivery and failing to meet it when schools are urgently preparing for a new term.

There is also a strong case for embracing digital channels. Professional websites,

teacher forums, educational webinars, and online product demonstrations can extend a publisher’s reach significantly, particularly in areas where physical access is costly or difficult. These tools complement traditional field representation rather than replacing it, and they signal to educators that a publisher is serious, accessible, and invested in their success.

The message is clear and it bears repeating: KICD approval gives a publisher permission to compete. It does not confer an entitlement to win. The publishers who recognise this distinction will invest in their products, listen to teachers, strengthen their distribution, and market their publications with the same professionalism they bring to the writing and editing process. Those who do not will continue watching competitors dominate a market they believe their approval certificates should have secured for them long ago. The certificate is the beginning of the work, not the end of it.

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India In the early years after independence, India prioritised the development of institutions capable of training scientists, engineers and researchers.

UN marks milestones in decades-long partnership with India



BY AGENCIES

@themtkenyentimes

The United Nations has highlighted key milestones in its decades-long partnership with India, tracing cooperation in education, scientific research, healthcare, digital governance and environmental conservation from the 1950s to the present.

In a retrospective marking United Nations Day, the UN said its partnership with India had evolved alongside the country's development priorities, supporting institutions, technical expertise and systems aimed at improving livelihoods and strengthening public services.

In the early years after independence, India prioritised the development of institutions capable of training scientists, engineers and researchers.

UN technical assistance contributed to the establishment of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur in 1950 and IIT Bombay in 1958, supporting the expansion of scientific and technological education.

These investments helped lay the foundation for India's subsequent

advances in research and innovation. Cooperation in the 1960s focused on strengthening India's industrial and technological capabilities.

In 1966, training and research support to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's Institute of Petroleum Exploration helped build domestic expertise in oil exploration.

The following year, technical assistance supported India's first Experimental Satellite Communication Earth Station in Ahmedabad, an important step in developing satellite-based communications.

Such technologies would later support applications including environmental monitoring and disaster warnings.

During the 1970s, cooperation extended to agriculture, broadcasting and public administration.

Through collaboration with the National Dairy Development Board, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported Operation Flood, which helped transform India's dairy sector and strengthen milk supply chains.

UNDP also supported the development of the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune and the es-

tablishment of a dedicated television training division, strengthening professional skills in broadcasting.

Meanwhile, assistance to the National Informatics Centre helped introduce mainframe computing into public administration, marking an early step towards digital governance.

Environmental conservation and scientific connectivity became increasingly prominent in the 1980s.

UNDP's collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India strengthened research and training for wildlife conservation.

In 1986, cooperation with the Department of Electronics contributed to the development of ERNET, an education and research network that helped connect scientific institutions through emerging digital technologies.

UNDP also supported the strengthening of plant quarantine stations to protect agriculture from pests and pathogens as India expanded access to imported seeds.

The 1990s brought greater emphasis on measuring development through improvements in people's lives, rather than economic growth alone.

Working with India's Planning Commission, UNDP helped strengthen the application of the human development approach in policymaking and supported national and state-level systems for measuring progress.

At the community level, the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme supported women's self-help groups in Andhra Pradesh, helping strengthen local institutions and rural livelihoods.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP supported India's response through digital vaccine logistics and assistance to hospital oxygen systems in the Northeast.

The partnership supported the rollout of CoWIN, India's COVID-19 vaccination platform, and subsequently the nationwide rollout of U-WIN to strengthen digital systems for routine immunisation of pregnant women and children.

Beyond the pandemic, cooperation has focused on translating the Sustainable Development Goals into measurable progress at state and district levels. UNDP-supported monitoring and coordination models have helped strengthen data-driven plan-

ning and local action.

The partnership also continues to support India's environmental commitments, including action on climate change, biodiversity conservation, desertification and ozone layer protection.

At the community level, initiatives with government partners focus on strengthening rights and livelihoods for tribal communities, supporting smallholder farmers through crop insurance and improving protections for sanitation workers.

The milestones reflect the breadth of cooperation between India and the United Nations, spanning scientific institutions, public services, community development and environmental protection over more than seven decades.

Leadership Her journalism career was defined not only by news presentation but also by a commitment to asking difficult questions and encouraging accountability in public affairs

Yvonne Okwara begins a new chapter at Shuga Global

The former television journalist's transition to a leadership role at Shuga Global highlights the growing opportunities for media professionals in strategic investment and partnership development.

BY Yvonne Wambui
@themkenyatimes

Veteran Kenyan journalist Yvonne Okwara has embarked on a new professional chapter after her appointment as Head of Investments and Partnerships at Shuga Global, marking a significant transition from one of the country's most respected newsrooms to the world of strategic investments, fundraising and institutional partnerships.

The appointment comes just a day after Okwara announced the end of a journalism career that has spanned nearly two decades, during which she built a reputation as one of Kenya's most recognisable and influential broadcast journalists. Her move has generated widespread discussion among media professionals, industry leaders and members of the public, many of whom have followed her journey from her early years in journalism to her rise as one of the country's leading television anchors.

For many Kenyans, Okwara became a familiar face through her work at Citizen TV, where she earned respect for her sharp interviewing style, thoughtful analysis and ability to engage with some of the country's most pressing political, economic and social issues. Over the years, she covered major national events, moderated high-profile discussions and interviewed key decision-makers, helping audiences make sense of complex developments affecting the country.

Her journalism career was defined not only by news presentation but also by a commitment to asking difficult questions and encouraging accountability in public affairs. As a result, she became one of the leading voices in Kenyan broadcast journalism and a role model for many aspiring reporters and media practitioners.

Her appointment at Shuga Global signals a departure from the daily demands of newsroom life and the fast-paced environment of live television. Instead, she now steps into a leadership role that will focus on



Veteran Kenyan journalist Yvonne Okwara

building strategic partnerships, mobilising investments and supporting the organisation's broader development goals.

The transition demonstrates how professional skills acquired in journalism can be successfully applied

beyond the media industry. Effective communication, strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement, research and public affairs expertise are increasingly valuable in leadership positions across both the private and development sectors. Okwara's

new role is expected to benefit from the extensive experience she gained while engaging with policymakers, business leaders, civil society representatives and communities throughout her career.

For young professionals entering

the workforce, her move offers an important lesson about modern career development. In an increasingly dynamic labour market, career paths are rarely linear. Success is no longer defined solely by spending an entire working life in a single profession. Instead, individuals are increasingly leveraging transferable skills to pursue new opportunities, expand their impact and take on fresh challenges.

At the same time, such transitions require courage, adaptability and a willingness to embrace unfamiliar environments. Moving from a highly visible public-facing role into strategic leadership involves a different set of responsibilities, expectations and measures of success. The ability to learn, evolve and remain relevant has become one of the most valuable professional attributes in today's rapidly changing world.

Okwara's departure also invites reflection on the state and future of journalism in Kenya. Experienced journalists play a critical role in informing citizens, scrutinising public institutions and strengthening democratic accountability. Whenever a respected media figure leaves the profession, questions naturally arise about mentorship, succession and the development of the next generation of journalists.

The responsibility now falls on media organisations to continue investing in young talent through training, mentorship and professional development. Sustaining public trust in journalism depends on maintaining high standards of accuracy, independence, fairness and ethical reporting. As the media landscape continues to evolve, news organisations must nurture emerging voices capable of carrying forward these values.

Yet Okwara's departure should not necessarily be viewed as a loss for journalism alone. Rather, it highlights the broader contribution journalists can make across society. The analytical skills, public engagement experience and understanding of national issues developed in the newsroom often prove invaluable in other sectors, enabling former journalists to contribute meaningfully to public service, business, development and leadership.

As Yvonne Okwara settles into her new responsibilities at Shuga Global, many will follow her next chapter with interest. While her years behind the camera may have come to an end, the experience, insight and professionalism that defined her journalism career are likely to remain central to her work. Her journey serves as a reminder that growth often begins where comfort ends, and that embracing change can open doors to new opportunities and greater impact.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *League Two Fleetwood Town knocked Premier League champions Arsenal out of the Carabao Cup on penalties in one of the competition’s greatest upsets.

Fleetwood Town stun Arsenal in historic Carabao Cup upset



By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Fleetwood Town produced one of the most remarkable shocks in Carabao Cup history yesterday, defeating Premier League champions Arsenal 5–3 on penalties following a 1–1 draw at Highbury Stadium to reach the quarter-finals for the first time in the club’s history.

The League Two side held their nerve magnificently against opponents from three divisions above them, sending a packed home crowd into wild celebrations and leaving Arsenal with an embarrassing early exit from a competition they had hoped to progress in.

Fleetwood made a bright and purposeful start, taking a deserved lead in the 21st minute when Aaron Loupalo-Bi capitalised on a defensive error, composedly rounding goalkeeper Il-lan Meslier before finishing into

an empty net to hand the hosts a stunning advantage. Arsenal struggled to respond before the interval, their superior quality counting for little against a disciplined and well-organised defensive structure. Kai Havertz missed a presentable chance as the visitors went into the break trailing and visibly rattled.

Five minutes into the second half, Arsenal drew level. Ce-adach O’Neill delivered a dangerous cross from the left that Viktor Gyökeres met to turn the ball into the net, securing his first goal of the season and restoring parity. The equaliser injected fresh urgency into Arsenal’s play, and the visitors increased the pressure considerably as the match progressed, creating a succession of chances to take the lead. What stood between them and victory was an outstanding performance from Fleetwood goalkeeper Jay Lynch, who pro-

duced a series of crucial saves to keep his side level and force the tie deep into the closing stages.

Arsenal’s task grew considerably harder in the 86th minute when teenager Max Dowman was sent off for kicking out at Fleetwood’s Harrison Neal following a challenge, reducing the visitors to ten men at precisely the worst moment. The hosts defended the resulting pressure with the kind of composure that belied their modest league standing, and when the final whistle blew with the scores level after 90 minutes, the tie went straight to a penalty shootout.

Both sides converted their early attempts with confidence, but the decisive moment came when Bruno Guimarães stepped forward for Arsenal’s fourth kick. Lynch dived to his left and pushed the midfielder’s effort away, a save that shifted the momentum irrevocably and left

Fleetwood one penalty from a historic victory. Conor Haughey took that responsibility calmly, striking the ball firmly past Meslier to seal a 5–3 shootout win and trigger scenes of jubilation throughout Highbury Stadium.

For Fleetwood, it was a night that will be spoken about for generations — a just reward for their discipline, collective resilience, and unwavering belief against one of English football’s most celebrated clubs. For Arsenal, it was a sobering reminder that possession, attacking talent, and squad depth do not guarantee success in the unforgiving knockout rounds of cup football. Fleetwood Town now advance to the Carabao Cup quarter-finals, while Arsenal must regroup and refocus their attentions on the Premier League.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The planned opening of Raila Odinga Stadium by President William Ruto months before the August 2027 General Election underscores how infrastructure, symbolism and political mobilisation are likely to shape one of Kenya’s most consequential electoral contests in recent history.

Raila Odinga Stadium: A political arena in Kenya’s defining election season

By: **Martin Weche**

President William Ruto has announced that Raila Odinga Stadium will officially open on January 5, 2027, with European football giants Bayern Munich and Ajax Amsterdam scheduled to play in a high-profile international fixture at the new venue.

While the sporting spectacle is expected to attract significant public attention, the announcement also arrives at a politically significant moment, barely seven months before Kenyans head to the polls in the August 2027 General Election. In a country where major infrastructure projects often carry political significance beyond their practical purpose, the stadium’s opening is likely to be viewed through both sporting and electoral lenses.

The naming of the facility after former Prime Minister Raila Odinga is itself symbolic. For more than three decades, Odinga has remained one of the most influential figures in Kenyan politics, shaping opposition movements, constitutional reforms and national political realignments. A national stadium bearing his name reflects a broader recognition of his place in the country’s political history, regardless of political affiliation.

The timing of the opening may prove equally significant. Across democratic societies, major public projects unveiled close to elections often become platforms through which incumbent administrations demonstrate delivery on development promises. Kenya is unlikely to be an exception. The launch of a landmark sporting venue featuring globally recognised football brands creates an opportunity for the government to showcase its infrastructure agenda while projecting an image of national progress and international relevance.

Political analyst Mutahi Ngunyi

has previously observed that infrastructure projects often become the most visible representation of government performance because citizens can directly see and experience them. Whether voters ultimately reward such investments at the ballot box, however, depends on broader factors including the economy, employment, cost of living and governance.

As the country enters the final stretch towards the 2027 election, political competition is expected to intensify significantly. The August contest is already shaping up as a referendum not only on President Ruto’s first term but also on the direction of Kenya’s economy and democratic institutions.

The Kenya Kwanza administration will likely campaign on achievements in infrastructure, housing, agriculture, digital transformation and fiscal reforms. Government officials have repeatedly argued that difficult economic measures introduced during the administration’s early years were necessary to stabilise public finances and lay the foundation for long-term growth.

President Ruto has consistently defended his economic programme. “We are making decisions that secure the future of our country and create opportunities for generations to come,” he has said in previous public addresses.

Opposition leaders, meanwhile, are expected to focus on household economic pressures, taxation, the rising cost of living and concerns over unemployment. They are likely to argue that economic gains highlighted by the government have yet to translate into meaningful relief for many ordinary citizens.

The contest may also reveal whether Kenya’s political landscape is gradually shifting away from ethnic alliances towards



issue-based politics. Younger voters, urban populations and a rapidly growing digital electorate are increasingly demanding practical solutions to economic challenges rather than traditional political mobilisation centred on regional loyalties.

Social media, digital campaigning and data-driven political messaging are expected to play an even greater role than in previous elections. Political parties have recognised that a growing proportion of voters consume news and engage with public affairs online, creating both opportunities and risks for democratic discourse. The challenge for institutions will be maintaining electoral integrity while combating misinformation and political disinformation.

The opening of Raila Odinga Stadium may therefore represent more than a sporting milestone. It is likely to become one of several defining moments in a broader political narrative unfolding before the election. The event brings together three powerful forces in Kenyan public life: politics, sport and national

identity.

For supporters of the government, the stadium may symbolise delivery and ambition. For critics, it may raise questions about priorities and political timing. For football fans, it offers the prospect of witnessing an international showcase featuring some of Europe’s most recognised clubs. For political observers, it serves as a reminder that in Kenya, major public projects rarely exist outside the national conversation about power, leadership and the future.

As campaigning accelerates during 2027, the battle for State House will be fought not only through rallies and manifestos but also through competing narratives about development, opportunity and national progress. The opening of Raila Odinga Stadium may be remembered as a sporting celebration, but it could also mark the symbolic beginning of the final and most intense phase of Kenya’s march towards the August 2027 election.

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Attracting a tourist or bringing them back? A tourism geography perspective



By: Qaljanbaev Aqilbek
@themtkenyatimes

Geography suggests that the answer depends on where the tourist comes from. Attracting a visitor means overcoming space, in the form of distance, cost and unfamiliarity, while bringing a visitor back means keeping a place worth returning to. For nearby markets, return visits are the easier task. For distant markets, the first visit is often the only one a destination can realistically expect.

The tourism system: where attraction and return take place

Tourism geographers describe travel as a system rather than a single event. Leiper (1979) divided it into a generating region where tourists live, a transit route and a destination region. Attraction is a task of the first two parts: a destination must be known and reachable from the place the tourist leaves. Return depends mostly on the third: what the tourist found on arrival. Push and pull factors work together in this system (Dann, 1977). Push factors, such as the wish to escape routine, arise in the generating region. Pull factors are the qualities of the destination. Lew (1987) showed that attractions are not just sites but a combination of the place itself, how it is presented and how it is perceived by the visitor. Because perception is shaped before travel, attraction is largely a battle for image across space.

Why attraction is harder with distance

The best-documented spatial pattern in tourism is distance decay: the number of visitors falls as the distance from the origin rises. McKercher and Lew (2003) found that



most travel flows are concentrated near their origin, and that the effect varies with the cost, time and accessibility of travel. Every additional kilometre therefore increases the cost of attracting a tourist, which is why distant markets are the most expensive to win. The tourist's own character matters as well. Plog (1974) proposed that travellers range from psychocentric, who prefer the familiar, to allocentric, who seek the unfamiliar. Although the model has been criticised, it shows that a new destination first draws adventurous visitors and only later reaches more cautious ones. Cohen (1972) likewise described tourists as balancing novelty against familiarity. Distant, unfamiliar places must therefore persuade visitors who accept more uncertainty.

Why returning is a different geographical problem

A return visit is not a repeat of the first decision. Gitelson and Crompton (1984) found that many travellers return to a place they know because it lowers risk and carries emotional meaning. Later studies

link satisfaction to loyalty (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Chi and Qu, 2008), while Oppermann (2000) showed that loyalty differs strongly between tourist groups. Space again plays a role. A short trip costs less and fits more easily into a calendar, so people living near a destination can visit repeatedly. A long-haul traveller faces the same high cost each time, and the motive of discovering the world often pushes them toward a new place. A destination should therefore expect a high rate of return from its domestic and regional markets and a low one from remote markets, which is a generalisation that individual cases can contradict. Repeat visitors also use space differently. Lau and McKercher (2004) compared first-time and repeat visitors to Hong Kong and found that first-timers explored more widely, while repeaters concentrated on a narrower set of familiar places. For planners this means that loyal visitors support a few well-known sites, whereas new visitors spread benefits across the wider destination.

The destination life cycle

Butler (1980) described a destination's evolution in stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and then decline or rejuvenation. The balance between new and returning visitors shifts along this curve. Early on, a destination depends on adventurous newcomers. Later, a large part of its demand may come from loyal repeaters, and if the offer stops changing, the destination risks stagnation. Rejuvenation usually requires both new attractions for returning visitors and new markets for first-time ones.

What this means for destination planning

1. Match the goal to the market zone. Focus on retention in near and regional markets, and on awareness and accessibility in distant ones.
2. Improve access. Direct transport links and visa simplification reduce the friction that distance imposes on first visits.
3. Keep the offer changing. New routes, events and seasons give returning visitors a reason to come back.
4. Plan for two spatial pat-

terns. First-time visitors need information that leads them beyond the main sites, while repeaters need depth in a few places.

5. Monitor the life cycle. Track the share of first-time and repeat visitors by origin, not only the total number of arrivals.

Conclusion

From the standpoint of tourism geography, attraction and return are two stages of one spatial process. The first is limited by distance, perception and access, and the second by experience and renewal. Nearby tourists are easier to bring back, distant ones are harder to attract and harder to see again. A durable destination therefore uses a different strategy for each market zone, and treats a satisfying first visit as the common foundation of both.

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