



High Court freezes law school admissions over disputed entry rules
The High Court yesterday temporarily barred the Kenya School of Law and the Council of Legal Education from implementing disputed admission criteria for the 2027/2028 Advocates Training Programme Page 8



SHA: Kenya's medical monster that citizens were told to embrace
When someone prepares food for you and brings the dishes praising as the best meal ever without eating the same food, you need to get more worried. Page 12

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The Mt. Kenya Times Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **Ebola should not be approached with panic, but neither should it be treated casually**

Kenya's first Ebola case

Kenya has entered a moment that demands vigilance, honesty and decisive leadership. The confirmation of the country's first imported Ebola case is not merely another health headline. It is a serious reminder that in a deeply interconnected region, no country can afford to assume that deadly diseases will stop at someone else's border.

A Kenyan citizen who had been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo travelled through Uganda before reaching Nairobi, where he later developed severe symptoms and died. Health authorities have since identified 28 contacts and begun tracing passengers and crew associated with his journey. The development raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: is Kenya genuinely prepared to confront a highly infectious disease, or has the country once again been forced to strengthen its defences only after the threat has already arrived?

Ebola should not be approached with panic, but neither should it be treated casually. It is a severe illness that spreads through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person or contaminated materials.

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Kenya's confirmed case involves Bundibugyo virus, a species first identified during an outbreak in Uganda's Bundibugyo District in 2007 Photo | Courtesy



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Ruto signs KSh389B electric vehicle deal at State House

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyentimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday presided over the signing of a KSh389B memorandum of understanding with Endelevu Enterprise Corporation at State House, Nairobi, committing the country to one of the largest electric vehicle manufacturing investments in the region.

The \$3B deal covers the assembly of 50,000 four-wheel vehicles and 100,000 two-wheelers annually, 1,000 solar-powered charging hubs and a digital platform to manage up to 100,000 green vehicles. The project is projected to create 2,000 direct jobs and more than 20,000 indirect positions, with up to 80,000 further opportunities in fleet management and services.

"Value must be added here. Skills must be built here. Jobs must be created here," Ruto said, linking the signing to Kenya's broader industrialisation agenda alongside last week's groundbreaking for the Dangote refinery in Lamu.

The government has already ordered 3,000 electric vehicles for security and administration officers and announced duty-free entry for the first 100,000 electric vehicles imported into Kenya. Ruto directed KenInvest to fast-track approvals, land and infrastructure to move the project from signature to production without delay.

Investment Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui and Endelevu chairman Susong Tong both attended the signing alongside National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula and senior cabinet members.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Kenya's capital markets regulator is developing a comprehensive governance policy to guide the introduction of Shari'ah-compliant investment products into the local market, as faith-based financial instruments attract growing interest from investors at home and internationally. The Capital Markets Authority said the framework will establish clear parameters for how Islamic finance instruments are structured, approved and supervised within Kenya's existing regulatory architecture. The move reflects a broader shift across emerging markets, where regulators are moving to accommodate the rising demand for ethical and religion-aligned investment options. Kenya's financial sector has seen a steady uptick in interest in Shari'ah-compliant products in recent years, mirroring global trends in Islamic finance, which now manages assets estimated in the trillions of dollars across markets from Malaysia to the Gulf states and increasingly across sub-Saharan Africa.



Kenya's push for gender parity in elected office is set to be extended by two decades under a proposed constitutional amendment that would retain the gender top-up nomination mechanism for a further 20 years, according to proposals currently under review. The provision, which reserves additional parliamentary seats for women through nomination where the two-thirds gender principle is not met through direct election, has been in place since the 2010 Constitution but has consistently failed to be achieved organically at the ballot box. Proponents of the extension argue that structural barriers facing women candidates — including financing, cultural resistance and incumbency advantages — make the continuation of the affirmative measure not only justified but necessary. Critics, however, maintain that two additional decades of nominations risks entrenching a parallel pathway to Parliament rather than addressing the root causes of women's underrepresentation at the ballot.



Residents of Kwale County have thrown back government-issued title deeds, refusing to accept land documents they say allocate them significantly smaller parcels than the ancestral holdings their families have farmed and lived on for generations. The rejection has deepened tensions in the coastal county, where communities argue that the adjudication process failed to honour traditional land boundaries that predate formal registration. Affected families say the discrepancy between what the titles show and what their forebears occupied is too wide to accept, and that signing off on the documents would amount to surrendering land that is rightfully theirs. Community representatives have formally demanded that the government revoke the disputed titles and restart the adjudication process from scratch, this time using ancestral and customary boundaries as the governing reference rather than measurements they say were imposed without adequate community consultation.



A court has ordered an urgent hearing of a petition demanding full public disclosure of the terms governing Kenya's agreement with the Dangote refinery project in Lamu, after petitioners argued that a deal of such national consequence cannot be shielded from scrutiny. The case seeks to compel the government to release details of the arrangement struck with Aliko Dangote's refining group, including fiscal incentives, land agreements, revenue-sharing terms and any sovereign guarantees extended to the project. Petitioners argue that Kenyans have a constitutional right to know the conditions attached to investments made in their name and on their land. The court's decision to fast-track the matter signals judicial recognition of the public interest at stake, with the Lamu refinery representing one of the largest industrial investments in Kenya's recent history.



Nairobi county assembly members have launched an investigation into a KSh2.5B medical insurance contract awarded during former governor Johnson Sakaja's administration, raising questions about procurement irregularities and value for money in one of the county's largest health-related expenditures. The ward representatives have summoned county health officials to appear before the relevant committee and account for how the contract was awarded, what services were delivered and whether the spending produced measurable benefits for Nairobi residents. Members have indicated that preliminary scrutiny of the deal has thrown up concerns that warrant a full accounting before the assembly. The probe adds to growing legislative pressure on county executives across Kenya to demonstrate transparency in procurement, particularly in the health sector where inflated contracts and opaque tendering have repeatedly drawn censure from auditors and oversight bodies.



Africa's premier public health body is deploying a high-level multidisciplinary team to Kenya following the country's confirmation of its first imported case of Bundibugyo Ebola Virus Disease and the death of the patient involved. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said the team will provide technical and operational support to Kenyan health authorities as they work to contain any potential spread of the virus. The deployment signals the seriousness with which continental health leadership is treating the development, given Kenya's role as a major regional transport and aviation hub through which millions of travellers pass annually. Bundibugyo Ebola Virus Disease, first identified in Uganda's Bundibugyo district in 2007, is one of several strains of the Ebola virus and carries a significant fatality rate. Kenya has activated contact tracing and surveillance protocols following the patient's death.

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Ebola The US government has committed KSh21B in direct assistance through the Department of State

Kenya mobilises KSh70B to fight Ebola as US and World Bank step in

BY David Kimani

@themtkenyetimes

Kenya is assembling a KSh70B Ebola response fund backed by the United States government and the World Bank, as the country races to contain the virus following confirmation of its first imported case.

The National Treasury has set aside an initial KSh2.6B as a preliminary Ebola response mitigation fund to support the Ministry of Health in preparing for and managing a potential outbreak. The bulk of the financing, however, is expected to flow from international partners already engaged in the response.

The US government has committed KSh21B in direct assistance through the Department of State, while the World Bank is expected to provide a further KSh51.8B in emergency financing after Kenya activated the lender's Rapid Response Option. Together with the Treasury allocation, the combined package would push total available funding beyond KSh70B.

The funds are earmarked for strengthening surveillance systems, improving early detection capacity, training community health workers and procuring essential medicines and supplies for patients. Health officials say the financing will also support contact tracing operations already under way following



the death of a Kenyan national who travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo through Uganda before arriving in Nairobi, where he later died. Authorities have since identified 28 contacts and begun passenger tracing linked to his journey.

At the centre of the funding package is the KSh21B allocated to a US-financed bio-isolation facility at Laikipia Air Base. The facility, designed as a 50-bed isolation and Ebola quarantine unit, has become a source of considerable controversy. Courts suspended its establishment following public concern about the risk of cross-border infection, leaving the operationalisation of the site in legal limbo even as the broader Ebola response accelerates.

Despite that uncertainty,

seven American disaster response workers who were reportedly admitted to the Laikipia facility have since been discharged after completing a mandatory 21-day quarantine period, suggesting that at least some functions of the site have been operational notwithstanding the legal proceedings.

The scale of the financing package reflects both the severity of the threat and the speed with which international partners have moved to support Kenya. The current Ebola outbreak in the DRC has recorded thousands of confirmed infections and more than 4,000 deaths, making it one of the deadliest outbreaks in recorded history. Kenya's status as a major regional transport and aviation hub has heightened concern that the virus could

spread further if containment measures are not robust and swiftly implemented.

Health officials have repeatedly stressed that the country's response systems were strengthened ahead of the confirmed case, with surveillance, border screening and laboratory capacity all upgraded in anticipation of a potential importation event. Whether those systems, now backed by a substantial international financing package, are sufficient to prevent a wider outbreak will be the defining test of Kenya's public health infrastructure in the months ahead.

The Laikipia court proceedings are expected to resume shortly, with a ruling on the facility's future likely to shape how a significant portion of the response funding is ultimately deployed.

KEMSA takes customer service week to the community



KEMSA CEO Dr Waqo Dulacha Ejersa

BY Waithaka Kariuki

@themtkenyetimes

The Kenya Medical Supplies Authority marked Customer Service Week 2026 yesterday with a community outreach at Embakasi Health Centre, where KEMSA Commercial Director Eliud Muriithi led a team that donated essential medical commodities to the facility and planted trees on its grounds.

The initiative was held under this year's Customer Service Week theme, "Going the Extra Mile," and was designed to take KEMSA's service commitment beyond its warehouses and directly into the communities its supply chain is meant to support.

Muriithi said the donation was intended to assist health-care workers in maintaining quality services for patients, while the tree planting reflected the authority's recognition

that healthy communities also require a healthy environment.

Under Chief Executive Officer Dulacha Ejersa, KEMSA has placed growing emphasis on service responsiveness, stakeholder engagement and community impact as integral parts of its institutional mandate rather than additions to it.

The Embakasi outreach combined immediate practical support — medical commodities for a facility serving a densely populated area of Nairobi — with a longer-term environmental contribution, illustrating what officials described as a holistic understanding of public service.

KEMSA said the initiative reflects its broader determination to move beyond its traditional supply chain role and generate tangible social value for the communities at the centre of Kenya's public health system.

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WILDLIFE

Wildlife conflict payouts go digital



BY John Kariuki
@themkenyatimes

Tourism Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Miano yesterday met Principal Secretary for Wildlife Silvia Museiya and Kenya Wildlife Service Director General Erastus Kanga to discuss advanced solutions for human-wildlife conflict and reforms to the national compensation framework.

The talks centred on the daily reality faced by host communities living alongside wildlife — lost crops, destroyed property and, in the worst cases, loss of life. Officials acknowledged that protecting those communities and ensuring prompt, dignified compensation is

both a legal obligation and a moral imperative.

The government is pursuing end-to-end digital transformation of the compensation process to eliminate bureaucratic delays, restore community trust and deliver faster support directly to affected families.

Miano expressed gratitude to President William Ruto for his directive to fast-track compensation, saying decades of administrative bottlenecks were giving way to a transparent, modern and community-centred conservation model.

Officials said the reforms signal a firm commitment to making peaceful coexistence between people and wildlife a sustainable, not merely aspirational, reality.

KISE

KISE launches disability inclusion conference in Kasarani

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyatimes

The Kenya Institute of Special Education yesterday launched its Disability Inclusion Conference 2026 at its Kasarani campus, bringing together educators, policymakers, researchers, innovators and development partners to advance inclusive education and expand access to assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.

Principal Secretary for Basic Education John Olotuua officially opened the conference, hosted by KISE Director General Norman Kiogora. The event runs under the theme “Advancing Disability Inclusion Through Assistive Technology and Innovation.”

Olotuua reaffirmed the State Department for Basic Education’s commitment to ensuring that every learner, including those living with disabilities, has access to the sup-



Kise Director General Dr. Norman Kiogora

port, technology and opportunities needed to learn, grow and reach their full potential.

Kiogora described the conference as a timely platform for translating policy commitment into practical action, noting that access to education without meaningful inclusion remains an incomplete achievement.

The gathering is expected to generate concrete recommendations on assistive technology adoption, teacher training and policy frameworks to strengthen inclusive education across Kenya.

High Court freezes law school admissions over disputed entry rules



Kenya School of Law

BY James Mwangi
@themkenyatimes

The High Court yesterday temporarily barred the Kenya School of Law and the Council of Legal Education from implementing disputed admission criteria for the 2027/2028 Advocates Training Programme, halting what petitioners describe as an unlawful attempt to change statutory entry requirements through an administrative advertisement.

Justice J.N. Onyiego certified the petition as urgent and issued conservatory orders restraining KSL and CLE from processing applications, admitting or enrolling candidates under the contested requirements until an inter partes hearing on 13 October. Both institutions have been directed to preserve the status quo that existed before the disputed criteria were published. Respondents have seven days to file responses after being served, while applicants have two days to lodge a rejoinder if necessary.

At the centre of the dispute is an advertisement issued by KSL for the 2027/2028 ATP intake. The petitioners argue it introduced new eligibility pathways with no basis in any operative Act of Parliament or valid subsidiary legislation — specifically, provisions allowing LL.B graduates with lower secondary school grades to qualify through specified additional qualifications or by passing a Pre-Bar

Examination. The applicants contend that KSL cannot use an annual administrative notice to create, amend or expand statutory admission requirements. Any substantive change, they argue, must go through the constitutional and statutory procedures governing legislation. An advertisement, however widely circulated, is not a law.

The case also exposes a fault line in Kenya’s ongoing legal education reforms. CLE has prepared two sets of draft regulations as part of broader sector modernisation — the Legal Education (Licensing and Quality Assurance) Regulations, 2026 and the Legal Education (Advocates Training Programme) Regulations, 2026. The petitioners do not dispute the need for reform. What they dispute is whether draft regulations that have not completed public participation, parliamentary consideration, approval and gazettment can serve as a legal basis for introducing new requirements today. A draft, they argue, is not the law.

Public participation has emerged as equally contested ground. The applicants argue that consultations CLE conducted on its draft regulations do not constitute public participation on KSL’s separate administrative decision to publish the specific ATP criteria. Prospective students, universities, legal education providers, professional bodies and practising advocates, they say, were not given a meaningful opportunity to comment on those

criteria before they were imposed.

The petition invokes a substantial range of constitutional and administrative law grounds, alleging violations of Articles 10, 27, 43 and 47 of the Constitution alongside breaches of the Fair Administrative Action Act and the Statutory Instruments Act. The applicants further characterise the disputed criteria as an ultra vires exercise of power amounting to procedural impropriety, irrationality and abuse of statutory authority, and have cited violation of legitimate expectations.

The implications extend well beyond the individual petitioners. Admission to the ATP is the gateway to the Roll of Advocates — the point at which a law graduate becomes a practising lawyer. Who may enter that gateway, and on what terms, is a question in which the entire profession has a stake. The petitioners warn that allowing enrolment to proceed under criteria later found unlawful could produce consequences that are difficult to reverse, an argument the court acknowledged in certifying the matter urgent.

When the court sits on 13 October, the answer will carry consequences not only for students caught in the immediate uncertainty but for the broader question of whether the institutions that shape Kenya’s legal profession are themselves bound by the rules they exist to uphold.

Ebola It should not be approached with panic, but neither should it be treated casually. It is a severe illness that spreads through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids

Kenya's first Ebola case: A test the country cannot afford to fail

One imported case is not yet a crisis — but it is an unmistakable warning about the limits of preparedness

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenytimes](#)

Kenya has entered a moment that demands vigilance, honesty and decisive leadership. The confirmation of the country's first imported Ebola case is not merely another health headline. It is a serious reminder that in a deeply interconnected region, no country can afford to assume that deadly diseases will stop at someone else's border.

A Kenyan citizen who had been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo travelled through Uganda before reaching Nairobi, where he later developed severe symptoms and died. Health authorities have since identified 28 contacts and begun tracing passengers and crew associated with his journey. The development raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: is Kenya genuinely prepared to confront a highly infectious disease, or has the country once again been forced to strengthen its defences only after the threat has already arrived?

Ebola should not be approached with panic, but neither should it be treated casually. It is a severe illness that spreads through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person or contaminated materials. Early detection, isolation, infection prevention and rapid contact tracing are therefore not optional responses — they are the entire foundation of an effective public-health reply. Kenya's most significant advantage at this moment is that the confirmed case triggered an immediate response. Authorities began monitoring contacts and working to establish whether anyone else may have been exposed. That is precisely what a functioning public-health system is expected to do.

Yet the arrival of Ebola also exposes a wider truth about modern Africa: borders may be political lines, but diseases observe no such boundaries. Kenya is a major regional hub for transport, trade and aviation, with millions of people moving through its airports, roads and border crossings every year. A person can travel from one country to another within hours, potentially carrying an infection before symptoms become obvious. The movement of people be-



Kenya's confirmed case involves Bundibugyo virus, a species first identified during an outbreak in Uganda's Bundibugyo District in 2007 | Photo: Courtesy

tween the DRC, Uganda and Kenya makes regional health cooperation far more than a diplomatic aspiration — it is a practical necessity.

The government deserves credit for having invested in preparedness before this case emerged. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Health reported that Kenya had strengthened surveillance systems, border screening, laboratory capacity, isolation facilities and emergency response mechanisms, with thousands of health workers trained specifically in Ebola preparedness. Those preparations now face their most consequential test: whether systems designed on paper can function effectively when a real case arrives on home soil.

That is where public accountability becomes essential. Preparedness should not be measured by the number of meetings held, press conferences conducted or plans filed. It should be measured by how quickly a suspected case is detected, how efficiently contacts are traced, whether healthcare workers have adequate protective equipment and whether suspected patients can be isolated without inadvertently exposing families, colleagues or fellow patients.

Kenya cannot afford a situation in which health workers themselves become casualties because protective equipment, training or isolation infrastructure fall short of what the moment demands.

Honest communication with the public is equally non-negotiable. During health emergencies, misinformation can spread almost as fast as the disease itself. Social media platforms become fertile ground for rumour, conspiracy and exaggeration. The answer to that cannot be official silence or vague reassurance. Kenyans need timely, clear and scientifically accurate information — what Ebola is, how it spreads, what symptoms should prompt immediate medical attention and what steps anyone who believes they may have been exposed should take. The Ministry of Health has previously emphasised the importance of accurate public messaging over panic. That principle must now be applied in practice, not merely restated as a principle.

Citizens also carry their own responsibility in this moment. People should not conceal symptoms out of fear of isolation or social stig-

ma. Families should not attempt to manage suspected cases privately at home. Communities must cooperate with health officials conducting contact tracing and resist the temptation to share unverified information. Travellers must provide accurate accounts of their recent movements when required. These are not bureaucratic demands — they are the practical behaviours that determine whether a single imported case remains contained or becomes something far more serious.

There is a broader lesson in this moment for Kenya's healthcare system as a whole. Ebola may dominate the immediate conversation, but the country's vulnerability to infectious disease cannot be separated from deeper, longstanding challenges in healthcare financing, staffing, equipment and access to treatment. A resilient disease-response system cannot be assembled in a hurry when a crisis arrives. It requires laboratories, trained personnel, reliable surveillance networks, functioning hospitals and sustainable funding long before any emergency occurs. Kenya's health-security investments must therefore be maintained and

expanded as long-term national priorities — not treated as temporary responses to frightening headlines.

The situation in the DRC makes the context even more sobering. The current Ebola outbreak there has already caused thousands of confirmed infections and more than 4,000 deaths, making it one of the deadliest outbreaks ever recorded. Kenya's imported case arrives at precisely the moment when the wider region is already managing a significant and ongoing public-health crisis.

But fear should not be allowed to define the national response. One confirmed imported case does not automatically signal a widespread outbreak. The appropriate response is evidence-based action: identify exposed individuals, monitor them carefully, isolate suspected cases, test promptly and communicate responsibly. The public deserves reassurance grounded in verified facts, not empty political statements designed to manage optics rather than protect lives.

Ultimately, this case should become a genuine and rigorous test of Kenya's preparedness — not a source of national panic. The country has spent months developing and publicising its surveillance systems, border controls, laboratories and emergency response capacity. Those systems must now demonstrate their worth. The government must act swiftly. Healthcare workers must remain properly protected. Communities must cooperate. And citizens must actively reject misinformation wherever it appears.

The greatest mistake would be to wait for a larger outbreak before discovering the weaknesses that could have been addressed now. Ebola has crossed into Kenya, and the message could not be clearer: preparedness is no longer a plan for tomorrow. It is a responsibility for today. Kenya must demonstrate that its public-health infrastructure can protect its people before a single imported case becomes something far harder to contain.

Customer Service Week The phrase itself asks something concrete of every service provider: go beyond the minimum and treat every interaction as an opportunity to make a genuine difference

The extra mile: Why good service must be a daily habit, not a weekly celebration

Customer Service Week is a moment of renewal — but the real test comes when the decorations come down

BY James Kilonzo Bwire

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

Customer Service Week is underway, running from 5 to 9 October, and this year's theme — The Extra Mile — carries a message that is simple to state and demanding to live by. Good service is not an occasional achievement. It is a daily responsibility. The creativity and team spirit that staff have brought to this year's cowboy theme demonstrate that service excellence can be celebrated with energy and imagination, while still carrying a serious message about professionalism, accountability and care.

The phrase itself asks something concrete of every service provider: go beyond the minimum and treat every interaction as an opportunity to make a genuine difference. In public institutions, that means responding to citizens with respect, providing clear information, cutting unnecessary delays and following concerns through until they are resolved. In private organisations, it means listening carefully, understanding what the customer actually needs and ensuring that what was promised. The theme challenges every institution to move from completing tasks to genuinely serving people — and those are not always the same thing.

Customer service cannot be reduced to friendly greetings, decorated offices and themed celebrations. These things

have real value — they build morale and remind staff that their work matters — but the true test of service comes in ordinary moments when no camera is rolling and no manager is watching. It is tested when a caller is transferred from one office to another without explanation, when a client waits three days for a response, when a citizen cannot get a straight answer about a public service, or when a customer raises a complaint and hears nothing back. At those moments, the extra mile is demonstrated through patience, honesty, competence and a genuine willingness to help. A themed week can inspire staff for a few days. Consistent service must be built into the culture of an organisation every day of the year.

The enthusiasm visible during Customer Service Week matters because it signals that employees can take genuine pride in what they do. When staff participate willingly in shared activities, they demonstrate unity and commitment. That unity is not just good for morale — it is operationally necessary. A customer may begin an inquiry at one desk, require input from a second department and receive a final answer from a third office. If those offices do not communicate well with each other, it is the customer who pays the price. Team spirit is therefore not a soft extra. It is a practical requirement for service that actually works.

That said, organisations

must be careful not to treat Customer Service Week as a public relations exercise. The real value of the week lies in what follows after the bunting comes down. If staff return to long queues, unanswered emails, unclear procedures and poor internal communication, the message of the extra mile has not landed. Service excellence requires systems that give staff the conditions to serve well — clear guidelines, proper training, functional tools and leadership that takes accountability seriously. Without those foundations, the best intentions produce frustrating results.

Leadership carries a central responsibility here. Managers and supervisors must lead by example, treating both customers and employees with consistent respect. An employee who is poorly informed, regularly undermined or denied support will struggle to extend care to others. An employee who feels valued, trusted and properly equipped is far more likely to go the extra mile as a matter of course rather than as an occasional performance. Good service, in this sense, begins internally. It begins with how leaders listen to staff, respond to their concerns and recognise their contributions.

In Kenya, where public institutions face sustained pressure to strengthen citizen-centred service delivery, the observance of Customer Service Week carries particular weight. Citizens do not only seek services — they seek dignity, clarity and fairness in the



Photos courtesy NuPEA Facebook

process. Whether someone is applying for a document, reporting a concern or following up on a longstanding request, the experience should be both respectful and efficient. Public confidence grows when institutions demonstrate that they genuinely value the time and needs of the people they exist to serve.

Customer feedback must be treated as a working tool, not a filing obligation. The extra mile is demonstrated when feedback leads to visible action. A customer who reports a problem should not feel that the matter has vanished into an office system. There should be a clear process for acknowledging the concern, investigating it and communicating an outcome. Even where a full solution cannot be provided immediately, honest communication makes a material difference. People are more willing to be patient when they know their issue has been heard and is being handled.

Empathy is equally essential. Service providers encounter people in widely different circumstances — some anxious, some confused, some frustrated, some unfamiliar with procedures they are expected to navigate. A good service provider does not dismiss such customers. They listen, explain clearly and guide the person through the process. Empathy does not mean abandoning rules or lowering standards. It means applying rules fairly while remembering that

behind every request is a person with a genuine need.

Professionalism ties everything together. Courtesy without competence leaves customers charmed but unserved. Competence without courtesy leaves them feeling processed rather than helped. The best service combines knowledge, efficiency, honesty and respect — including the honesty to say “I don’t have that answer immediately, but I will find it and come back to you.” That kind of candour builds credibility in a way that confident-sounding guesswork never can.

As the week continues, every institution should ask itself one direct question: what does the extra mile mean, in practical terms, for the specific people we serve? The answer should show up in shorter response times, clearer communication, better coordination between departments and more consistent follow-through. Those practical commitments matter far more than any slogan. They are what transforms a theme into a lived value — and a celebration into genuine, lasting change.



Photos courtesy NuPEA Facebook

Ghost jobs The excitement rarely lasts. The interview never materialises. The recruiter vanishes. The email address stops responding. What felt like a breakthrough turns out to be nothing at all

Ghost jobs and fake internships: The hidden trap facing Kenya's graduates

As online recruitment grows, so does a parallel world of fraudulent vacancies preying on desperate jobseekers

BY Purity Benjamin

@themtkenyaintimes

As online recruitment grows, so does a parallel world of fraudulent vacancies preying on desperate jobseekers

By Purity Benjamin

For a university student, few things carry the same charge as a job notification appearing on a phone screen. After months of refining a CV, drafting cover letters and scrolling through LinkedIn, a message reading “Congratulations, you have been shortlisted” can feel like the moment everything is about to change.

The excitement rarely lasts. The interview never materialises. The recruiter vanishes. The email address stops responding. What felt like a breakthrough turns out to be nothing at all.

Across Kenya, students and recent graduates are navigating an online employment landscape where legitimate opportunities sit alongside ghost vacancies, fraudulent recruitment advertisements and fake internships designed to exploit the very people who can least afford to be misled. The question is no longer simply where to find a job. It is increasingly: how do you know the job you have found is real?

The scale of the challenge is visible in the numbers. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Economic Survey 2025, university enrolment grew by nine per cent to 631,300 students in the 2024/25 academic year. Kenya's economy generated 782,300 jobs in 2024, but only 78,600 were in the formal sec-

tor. Africa Check has reported that more than 800,000 young Kenyans enter the job market every year, while those aged between 20 and 24 record the country's highest long-term unemployment rate, at 9.9 per cent. That gap between the number searching and the number of formal opportunities available is precisely the environment in which a convincing fake vacancy becomes dangerous.

Samuel, a fourth-year actuarial science student, says the online job search has become an education in caution. He had been applying for positions advertised on LinkedIn when he encountered what appeared to be a standard vacancy. It was only when several friends independently reported the same experience — application submitted, silence returned — that the picture became clear. What had looked like a genuine opportunity was not what it claimed to be. More troubling was the realisation that it was not an isolated case. It was a pattern.

The documented cases in Kenya confirm that fraudulent recruitment does not confine itself to obscure names. In 2025, a fake advertisement claimed the Kenya Ports Authority was recruiting for 28 positions, directing applicants to a Gmail address rather than any official channel. KPA disowned it and warned the public to verify all recruitment information through its official platforms. A separate case involved the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, where a fraudulent advertisement promised 1,990 job and internship opportunities and directed appli-

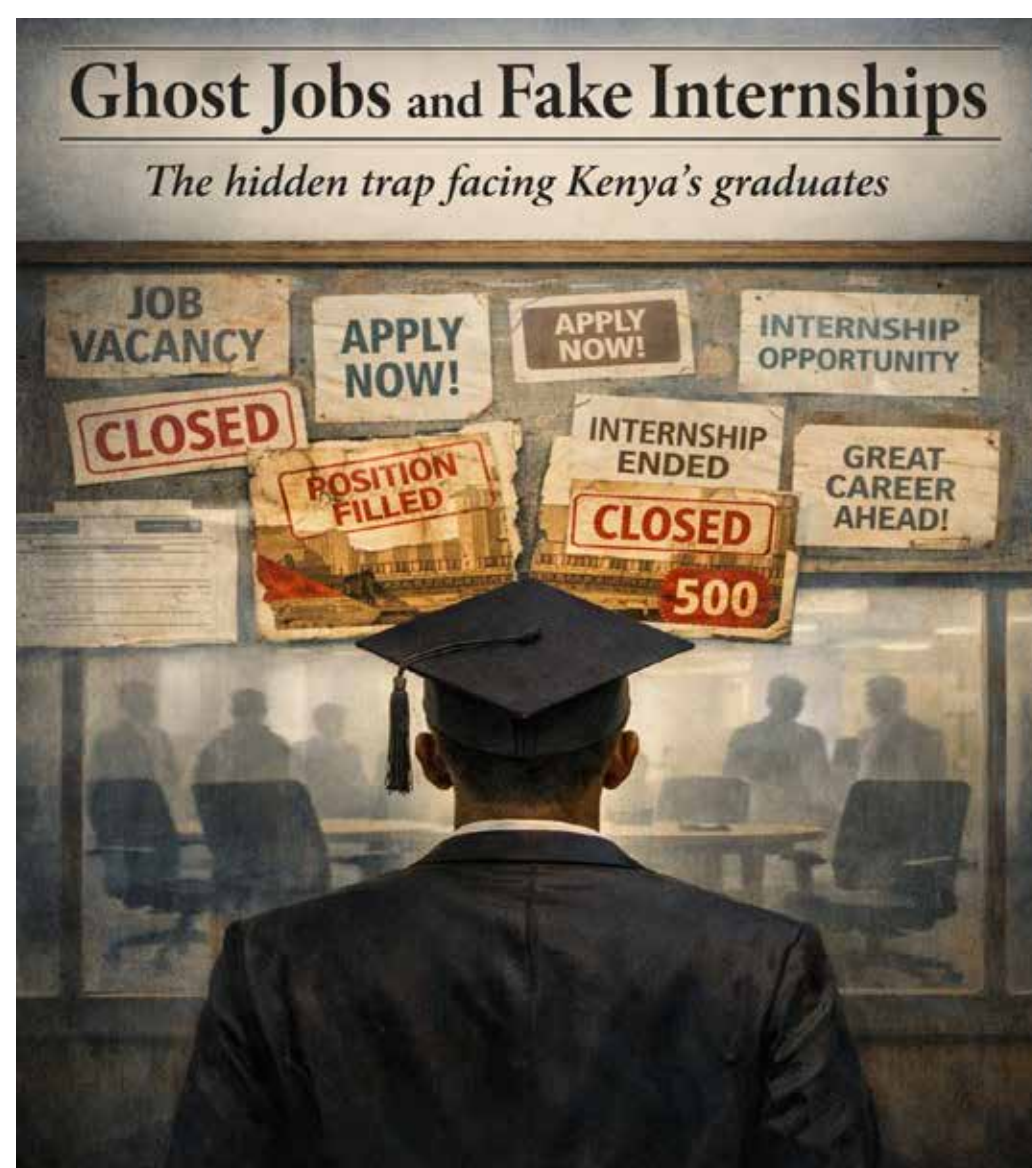
cants to pay KSh300 through a third party. The institute disowned the advertisement immediately.

For a young Kenyan looking for work, both advertisements would have sounded worth pursuing. That is the psychology behind recruitment fraud. The advertisement does not need to deceive everyone. It only needs to deceive the person who genuinely needs the job.

Sandra, a third-year computer science student, says the damage extends beyond any single wasted application. Through conversations in an online technology community, she encountered concerns that some advertised positions were already earmarked for internal candidates, while others appeared to exist primarily to harvest CVs and personal data. The experience shifted how she reads job advertisements entirely. The question was no longer only whether she met the qualifications. It was whether the employer was genuinely looking for someone at all.

That shift in thinking is becoming common. Students grow guarded about sharing personal information. Some rely increasingly on personal recommendations rather than responding to unfamiliar advertisements. A generation of jobseekers is learning that finding a vacancy is only the beginning of the problem.

The speed at which content spreads online has made things considerably worse. An advertisement can appear on a student's phone through LinkedIn in the morning, be forwarded across WhatsApp groups by midday and reach



thousands more through Telegram and Facebook by evening. Every person who shares it in good faith becomes an unwitting part of its distribution. In 2025, a fake advertisement claiming the Kenya Wildlife Service was recruiting rangers circulated widely, instructing users to share the post with five WhatsApp groups before supposedly continuing their application. Africa Check identified it as an engagement-bait scam. KWS confirmed it was fraudulent.

The vulnerability of young jobseekers is not simply a matter of inexperience. It is rooted in pressure. The transition from university to employment is among the most uncertain periods of a young person's life. A student approaching graduation may be managing tuition arrears, family expectations and the urgent need to build a professional record. An internship is not merely work experience in that context. For many, it is the difference between graduating with something on a CV and entering the labour market with nothing. The World Bank has noted that around

85 per cent of young Kenyans depend on informal work and that new entrants to the workforce outpace the economy's capacity to absorb them into productive formal employment. In that environment, a message promising a formal position carries enormous weight.

Beyond the emotional toll, the risks are concrete. Fake recruiters have requested application fees, registration charges and document-processing payments. A CV submitted to a fraudulent recruiter typically contains a full name, telephone number, email address, academic history, physical location and identification details. The applicant believes they are applying for a job. The person receiving that information may have an entirely different purpose. In February 2025, the Communications Authority reported that Kenya's cyberspace faced 3.5 billion detected threats in the previous financial year — a figure that illustrates the scale and hostility of the digital environment in which jobseekers are operating.

The starting point for protection is straightforward:

check the official website. If the vacancy does not appear there, the advertisement demands scrutiny. A professional graphic is not evidence of legitimacy. Neither is a high share count. The safest approach is always to verify independently through the organisation's own channels rather than treating an advertisement as proof that it is genuine.

The problem ultimately demands a collective response. Employers must remove outdated listings promptly. Universities must equip students with practical tools for verifying opportunities. Recruitment platforms must strengthen fraud-reporting mechanisms. Government agencies must respond quickly when their names are misused. And students must carry both ambition and scepticism into every application they make. The internet has made job hunting faster and more accessible — but access without verification creates a vulnerability that fraudsters have proved very willing to exploit.

Health That personal experience has made me less interested in political declarations and more interested in what happens between the patient and the healthcare provider

SHA: Kenya's medical monster that citizens were told to embrace

"The true test of a healthcare system is not what it promises in an office, but what happens to a patient at the moment of greatest vulnerability."



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

fkipchelimo@yahoo.com

When someone prepares food for you and brings the dishes praising as the best meal ever without eating the same food, you need to get more worried. Kenya's top political and executives designed, developed and implemented a healthcare system and informed the citizens it was one of the best ever. They even committed our money to a purported best digital platform in the world. They even contributed generously into the much-hyped SHA universal health care system. To our amazement, we had to pay another exclusive health care insurance for them. The did not trust what they invented. This scenario is mind boggling. It creates more than suspicion, distrust and skepticism in our medical care.

There are moments when a nation must pause and ask whether a reform designed to solve an old problem is quietly creating a new one. Kenya's Social Health Authority, SHA, has reached such a moment. It was conceived as a major step towards universal health coverage, replacing the National Hospital Insurance Fund with a system intended to pool resources more equitably, digitise healthcare financing and reduce the financial burden of illness. The ambition is legitimate. The question is whether the experience of the Kenyan patient is yet

matching the ambition.

I write about this not as a health-sector official, political spokesman or consultant defending an institutional position, but as a patient who has personally experienced the vulnerability that comes with needing medical care, and as someone whose lived experience has brought me into close contact with the barriers confronting persons with disabilities. Illness has a way of stripping away the abstractions of policy. At a hospital counter, one does not experience "universal healthcare coverage" as a statistic. One experiences a queue, a registration process, an authorisation, a diagnosis, a prescription, a bill and, sometimes, the anxious question of whether treatment will actually be accessible.

That personal experience has made me less interested in political declarations and more interested in what happens between the patient and the healthcare provider. To be fair, SHA has not been without measurable progress. The Ministry of Health reported in June 2026 that more than 31.39 million Kenyans had registered, 11,034 facilities had been contracted and KSh147.37 billion had been paid in claims since October 2024. It also reported that more than 1.16 million safe deliveries had been financed through the scheme. Those are substantial numbers and should not be dismissed simply because citizens have legitimate complaints.

But numbers of registration and money disbursed cannot, by themselves, prove that a health system is working for the patient.

The Government has itself

acknowledged some of the operational difficulties. In April, the Ministry reported a 74 per cent claims settlement rate and a 90-day payment timeline. More recently, the Ministry and Council of Governors agreed that clean claims should be paid within 90 days, while unpaid verified claims caused by insufficient funds would be recognised as certified liabilities and carried forward for settlement within the financial year, subject to appropriations. The fact that such measures are necessary is important. It tells us that the central challenge is not simply whether SHA exists, but whether the financing chain from contribution to provider payment to patient service is reliable.

The current transition to the SHA Health Management Information System also deserves scrutiny. The Ministry says the new architecture will enable real-time patient verification, electronic claims management and secure information exchange. By June, 5,078 facilities were reportedly operating on SHA-HMIS, with 2,978 actively submitting electronic claims. Digitalisation can indeed reduce fraud and improve accountability. But technology is only as good as the institutions, connectivity, training, data governance and human support behind it. A patient cannot eat a digital dashboard.

This is particularly important for persons with disabilities, older people, rural families and citizens who are not technologically confident. A healthcare system becomes exclusionary when the patient is expected to understand technical processes that even providers sometimes struggle



to navigate. Accessibility must therefore mean more than ramps and physical entry. It must include accessible information, respectful communication, predictable authorisation, reasonable accommodation and a human being capable of resolving a problem when the digital system fails.

Kenya also cannot discuss SHA honestly without confronting the financial burden that households continue to carry. World Bank data based on the WHO Global Health Expenditure Database show that out-of-pocket spending accounted for about 24.2 per cent of Kenya's current health expenditure in 2023. WHO cautions that high out-of-pocket payments are associated with catastrophic and impoverishing health expenditure because households bear the cost directly rather than sharing the risk through pooled financing. This true for ordinary Kenyan and exponentially high for persons with disabilities.

That is the measure that should worry policymakers most. Universal health coverage should mean that illness does not become a pathway into poverty. The reform agenda therefore needs to move beyond defending SHA and become much more practical.

First, the Government should publish a simple, continuously updated benefits-and-tariffs dashboard showing what is covered, at what level, under what conditions and what a patient should do when a claim or authorisation is rejected. The public should not need a lawyer, accountant or

hospital administrator to understand its medical entitlement.

Second, every SHA rejection should carry a clear, patient-understandable reason and an accessible appeal mechanism with defined turnaround times. Third, the 90-day clean-claims commitment should be monitored publicly, facility by facility and month by month. Fourth, SHA should publish meaningful data on rejected claims, pending claims, certified liabilities, provider payments and patient complaints—not merely aggregate registration figures.

Fifth, the Government should establish independent patient-support and escalation desks at major public hospitals, with particular attention to persons with disabilities, elderly patients and other vulnerable groups. Sixth, the transition to new digital systems should never result in denial of urgent care because a platform is unavailable. There must always be a functional human fallback.

Seventh, procurement, tariffs, contracting and system-development costs should be subject to rigorous public accountability. A healthcare system built on compulsory contributions owes contributors more than assurances; it owes them evidence.

There is also a broader lesson. The recent HAKIKA contracting framework recognises concerns around tariffs, claims processing, payment delays, pre-authorisation and system reliability and seeks clearer contractual obligations and dispute-resolution mechanisms. This is a welcome ac-

knowledge that reform is still a work in progress. Kenya should therefore resist the temptation to declare victory before the patient feels the difference.

SHA does not need propaganda. It needs credibility. The citizen does not ask whether the system has impressive software. The citizen asks whether treatment is available when needed, whether the hospital can verify coverage without confusion, whether the claim is honoured, whether medicines are available, whether the bill is predictable and whether someone will listen when things go wrong.

My own medical experience has taught me something that policy documents sometimes forget: when a person is unwell, dignity becomes part of treatment. A patient should not have to fight the system while simultaneously fighting illness. Kenya therefore does not need another political hymn about how transformative SHA is. It needs a health system whose performance can withstand independent scrutiny and whose failures are corrected without defensiveness.

"A healthcare reform becomes a success not when government says it works, but when the patient no longer fears what will happen when illness arrives."

That is the standard Kenya should demand of SHA. Not perfection. Not political applause. But reliability, dignity, transparency and measurable protection from the financial shock of illness.

CBC Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba said the availability of approved learning materials was central to making that promise a classroom reality.

Grade 11 textbooks head to schools as CBC transition gathers pace

Kenya's curriculum body races to deliver approved learning materials before January's senior school intake

BY Grace Wanja

@themkenyaintimes

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development began dispatching Grade 11 textbooks and literary works to schools across the country on Tuesday, launching a distribution exercise designed to ready institutions for the first cohort of Competency-Based Education learners advancing to the next level of Senior School in January 2027.

The distribution, which covers both regular and Special Needs Education schools, is

scheduled to run until 23 October before pausing for the national examinations period and resuming on weekdays through to 23 December. The extended timeline is deliberate — KICD wants schools to have sufficient time to receive, sort and organise materials well before learners report for Grade 11 at the start of the new academic year.

The exercise marks a significant logistical milestone in Kenya's shift away from the 8-4-4 system. The learners entering Grade 11 in January will be the same pioneer cohort that moved into Grade

10 this year, bringing the country another step closer to completing one of the most ambitious education reforms in its history. Under the new Senior School structure, learners pursue pathways and subject combinations aligned to their abilities, interests and long-term ambitions — a departure from the rigid, examination-driven model that defined Kenyan schooling for four decades.

Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba said the availability of approved learning materials was central to making that promise a classroom



The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

reality. “The evaluation and approval process is an important quality-assurance mechanism,” Ogamba said. “It provides confidence to learners, teachers, parents and the education sector that materials approved for use in our schools are aligned to the curriculum and suitable for supporting teaching and learning.” He urged schools and parents to rely exclusively on the KICD Orange Book when selecting Grade 11 learning materials, warning against the temptation to purchase cheaper or more widely marketed books that have not cleared the institute's approval process.

That warning carries legal weight. KICD has reminded schools, teachers and parents that using unapproved textbooks constitutes a violation of Section 27 of the KICD Act, 2013, and could attract sanctions. The institute has been particularly pointed in its message to teachers, who are often the first point of guidance for parents navigating the increasingly crowded textbook market. “Teachers should ensure the books they advise parents to buy for their children are approved by KICD to uphold high standards in curriculum delivery,” the institute said in a statement accompanying the distribution launch.

The approved list of Grade 11 textbooks and literary texts has been published in the Orange Book on the KICD website, alongside curriculum designs for the grade. Schools that have not received their allocations by mid-January, or that receive quantities exceeding their enrolment figures, have been directed to

contact the institute through booksdistribution@kicd.ac.ke or 0733762412.

Basic Education Principal Secretary John Ololuaa said teachers would be expected to use the approved books not as standalone resources but in combination with curriculum designs and other appropriate materials to support learner-centred, inquiry-based and competency-oriented approaches. “We therefore expect teachers to use these approved resources alongside the curriculum designs and other appropriate teaching and learning materials to facilitate learner-centred, inquiry-based and competency-oriented learning,” Ololuaa said. The State Department for Basic Education, he added, would work alongside KICD and other education agencies to monitor implementation and respond to challenges as they arise.

KICD chief executive officer Charles Ong'ondo said the books cleared for distribution had undergone a rigorous multi-stage evaluation before being approved. Assessors examined curriculum alignment, content accuracy, relevance and inclusivity, suitability of teaching approaches, and the extent to which materials could help learners develop the knowledge, skills, values and competencies the new system demands. The process brought together curriculum specialists, classroom teachers, quality assurance officers, subject experts and professionals from state corporations and industry — a deliberate attempt to ensure the approved materials reflect both academic standards and

real-world relevance.

Ong'ondo said the approval process would not end with publication. KICD intends to continue gathering feedback from teachers, learners and other stakeholders throughout the year. “This is intended to ensure that materials recommended for use in our schools meet the required standards and respond appropriately to the needs of learners,” he said.

KICD Council chairman Simon Gicharu, who said the Council and its academic panels had provided professional and governance oversight throughout the development and approval process, was equally firm on the question of procurement. Schools, he said, must restrict their purchasing to materials on the approved list. The Council, he added, would continue providing strategic oversight to ensure KICD fulfils its statutory mandate while keeping curriculum implementation responsive to the needs of learners and the country.

For many Kenyan families, the Grade 11 transition will be the moment the CBC system becomes fully tangible — not a policy document or a ministerial announcement, but a set of books on a child's desk and a timetable built around their individual pathway. Whether the distribution exercise reaches every school on time, and whether those schools are equipped to use the materials effectively, will be an early and visible test of the government's readiness to deliver on the reform's considerable promise.

The books are on their way. The harder work begins in January.



O My Lord, Protect My Father and Mother



At my mother's feet, I have found the path to Paradise,
In my father's hands, I have found justice without end.
May you both always be blessed with happiness and health,
O my Lord, protect my father and mother.

When your mother prays for you with all her heart,
May Allah grant you true and lasting happiness,

May your life blossom like the springtime of the world,
And may knowledge shine within you like a radiant light.

The brightest soul beneath the warmth of the sun,
A father is the guardian of his home at every moment.
Perhaps that is why, in the very beginning of the world,
The first human was created and called Adam.

I will honor the knowledge you have given to me,
I will listen to every word you have taught me.
Never again will I cause sorrow to your hearts,
And I will always pray to Allah for your long and blessed lives.

Xamidova Shahzoda was born on December 8, 2004, in Yakkabog District, Kashkadarya Region, Uzbekistan.

Hope



You came by chance into my life,
And left me lost in puzzling strife.
I was so sad, my heart was bare,
A lonely soul in deep despair.

My heart was starved for love and care,
For warmth and kindness, none were there.
You gave me hope for the first time,
And made my wounded heart still shine.

But now you're leaving somewhere far,
Like fading light, a distant star.
I was so glad that I met you,
Yet once again, my hope is through.

Habibullayeva Shahzoda, born in 2008 in Qahramon village, Boyovut district, Sirdaryo region, Uzbekistan. In 2026, she is studying at the Faculty of Karakalpak Philology and Journalism at Karakalpak State University.

Leave your own trail



Be rare,
the world has enough copies in its crowded hall;
you were not born to echo another voice,
but to discover the music within you all.

There is a spark no other soul can claim,
a hidden gift that carries your own name,
your talent, your vision, your creative fire,
are threads in the tapestry of your unique desire.

Why follow footprints already pressed in clay,
when you can carve an unfamiliar way?
Let curiosity be the compass you hold,
and let courage turn the unknown into gold.

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duty,
but you are not entitled to the fruits of action."
Says the Bhagavad Gita

So create—not merely to earn applause,
but because creation itself is your cause,
plant your ideas where none have grown,
and build a road you can call your own.

Don't always walk where the pathway lies,
sometimes the unmarked road holds the
greatest skies,
go where there is no path, let your footprints
stay,
and leave a trail for others to find someday.

For the world needs no duplicate of you,
it needs the dream only you can pursue.
Nandini Anandkumar
Educator,Writer,Motivator

My window



My window
remains open, never closed,
yet I shut myself tight—
no one can touch.

Rarely, I peep out
to find something new.
My feet step out
to find a path,
where bushes cover the way.

Noisy sounds
walk out,
then I shut down tightly
to hold on to myself.

Long years have gone,
never to step out again.
My heart's window
never opens.

Fails to build a bridge,
a love wrapped in mystery,
locked inside,
waiting for a knock.
Vij. T
Ghs kvpudur
Namakkal
Tamilnadu
India

A divided mind reaches nowhere



What do we think we are?
Our mind decides the direction of our life.
Yet, we become confused so many times,
caught between two thoughts,
two choices, and two paths.

A divided mind reaches nowhere.

Look at the cuckoo.
It sings beautifully.
No teacher teaches it how to sing sweetly.
Yet, it sings without hesitation,
without getting tired,
without dividing its mind between many things.

It simply sings.

When it sings,
it feels fresh and happy.
It does not compare its voice with others.

It does not worry about tomorrow.
It simply follows what comes naturally to it.

We too need such a mind
a mind that knows what it wants,
a heart that believes in itself,
and a thought that does not keep changing its
direction.

When our mind is clear,
our steps become steady.
When our thoughts are focused,
our journey becomes meaningful.

Do not divide your mind
between too many thoughts.

Choose your path.
Believe in yourself.
Walk with confidence.

A focused mind moves forward.
A divided mind reaches nowhere.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Creative writer
PUMS Konganancherry
Chengalpattu district

Create yourself



Do you want to know who you are?
Searching for yourself, near and far?
You keep asking - Who am I?
Stop asking why, reach for the sky.

Do what you can, do what you will,
Climb the dream, climb the hill.
Push your limits, break the wall,
Rise again, even if you fall.

Try and try till work's complete,
Try till others accept defeat,
Try from where others chose to stop,

Till you stand alone on the top.

Then you will know who you are,
You will shine like a bright star.
Make yourself, brave and true,
Give success to the self in you.

There will be thorns and roses too,
Bushes and hushes chasing you,
Ups and downs, tears and smiles,
Through all these rough miles...

Then, you have created yourself.

RAJITHA D
Creative Writer
GGHSS
PADAPPAI
KANCHEEPURAM

Teachers Agriculture occupies an unusual prominence on the school’s agenda, and deliberately so. Trans Nzoia is farming country, and Wamalwa has ensured the school reflects that reality

The head teacher who turned a Trans Nzoia school into a community anchor

At Bikeke Comprehensive School, leadership has gone well beyond the classroom

BY Daniel Kipchumba
@themkenyatimes

On a day set aside to honour teachers, one school in Trans Nzoia County offers a quietly compelling story about what educational leadership can look like when it is driven by conviction rather than routine. Ronald Francis Toili Wamalwa, the head teacher of Bikeke Comprehensive School, has built a reputation not simply as an administrator but as someone who has reshaped what the institution means to the people around it. Under Wamalwa’s watch, the school has pursued academic discipline, expanded its agricultural programme, developed its infrastructure and given learners space to discover abilities that examination timetables

rarely reveal. His philosophy is straightforward, if not always common. He believes every learner carries potential that a school’s job is to find and develop — not merely to test. A classroom, in his view, is not a holding room for candidates preparing to sit examinations. It is the place where young people acquire the values, skills and character they will carry into adult life. The distinction shapes everything about how he runs the institution. Agriculture occupies an unusual prominence on the school’s agenda, and deliberately so. Trans Nzoia is farming country, and Wamalwa has ensured the school reflects that reality. Food crops are grown on the school grounds, trees have been planted across

the compound and learners are involved in practical agricultural work that connects the curriculum to the economy of the community they come from. The programme is not ornamental. It is designed to build self-reliance and environmental responsibility alongside an honest appreciation of what farming contributes to the region. Infrastructure has been a parallel focus. Improving facilities, maintaining school resources and creating a physical environment in which teachers can teach and learners can concentrate are, in his understanding, not separate from educational quality — they are part of it. Every improvement to the school grounds or its buildings, however modest, is an investment in the conditions that make

learning possible. Beyond the academic timetable, the school has kept its co-curricular programme active. Learners participate in sports, music, drama and other activities, and the school treats that participation seriously. These are not decorations added to the margins of the school year. They are the spaces where learners develop teamwork, build confidence, find leadership and discover what they are capable of when nobody is keeping score on a mark sheet. Trans Nzoia joins the rest of the world today in marking World Teachers’ Day — a moment that invites reflection on what teachers actually do and what they quietly give. The story of Wamalwa and Bikeke Comprehensive School is, in that sense, a useful one. It is a



Bikeke comprehensive school Tranzoia county celebrating the day.



The school acquired new flag as a symbol of togetherness

reminder that the most consequential work in education is often done without announcements, by people who have decided that their responsibility to their learners does not end at the school gate.

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Parenting Loyalty is not built overnight. It is cultivated through daily interactions, consistent communication, genuine trust and the kind of relationships that go beyond the classroom gate.

The loyalty code: Why parents stay in some schools and leave others

Schools that keep families are not always the best funded — they are the ones that make every child feel known

BY Ashford Kimani

@themtkenytimes

In today's fiercely competitive education landscape, schools can no longer rely on examination results alone to hold families. Parents have grown more informed, more discerning and more deliberate about where they place their children. A well-maintained building, a glossy brochure or a well-known school name is no longer enough to guarantee loyalty. Families stay where they feel their child is known, valued, protected and progressing.

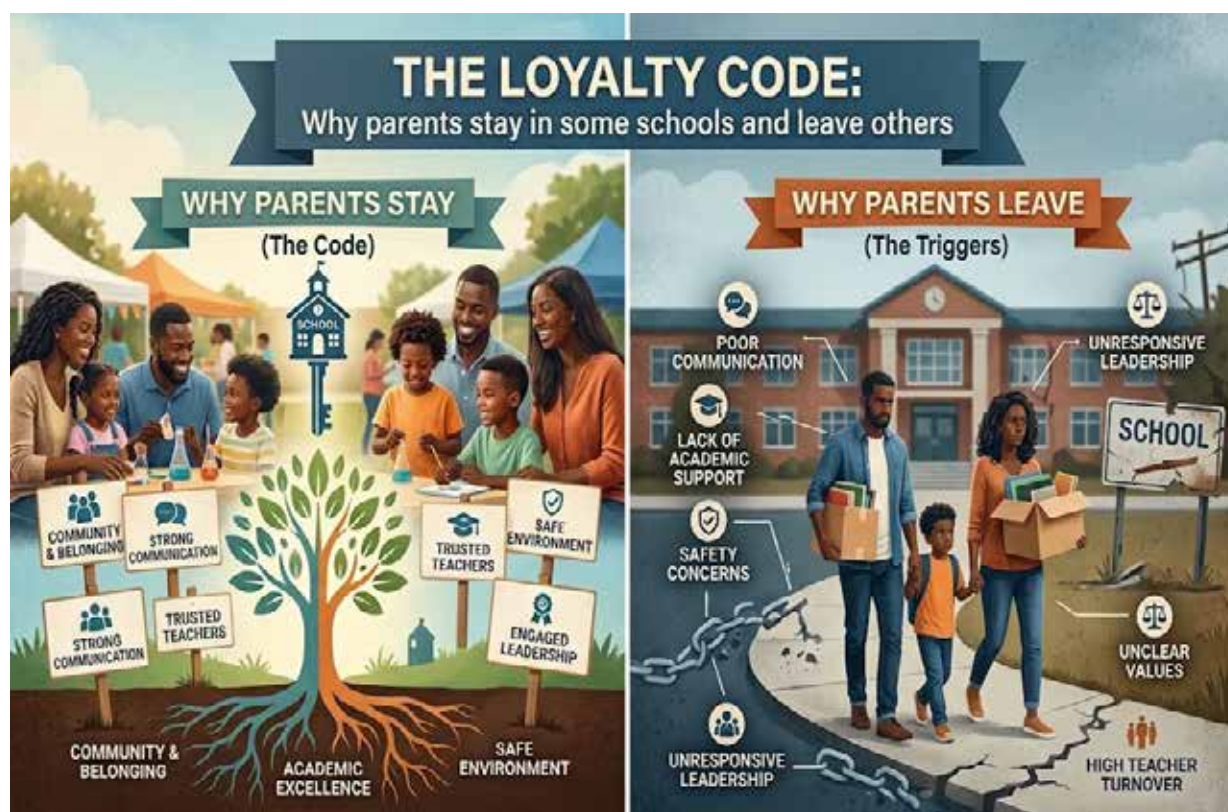
Many schools pour resources into attracting new admissions while neglecting the families already in their care. Yet loyal parents are the backbone of every stable institution. They become ambassadors, defenders and long-term partners who cost far less to retain than new families cost to recruit. A school with a strong base of satisfied parents spends less chasing enrolment because those families naturally attract others through honest referrals and earned reputation.

Loyalty is not built overnight. It is cultivated through daily interactions, consistent communication, genuine trust and the kind of relationships that go beyond the classroom gate.

Communication sits at the heart of it. Parents grow anxious when schools go quiet. They do not want to hear from a teacher only when fees are overdue or a child has misbehaved. Strong schools keep families informed before they even think to ask. Whether it concerns academic progress, behavioural patterns, upcoming activities or policy changes, proactive communication signals that the school is organised, honest and in control.

Honesty during difficult moments matters equally. Problems arise in every school — children get injured, conflicts emerge, systems fail. Parents are far more forgiving of mistakes than they are of dishonesty. When a school openly acknowledges what went wrong and explains the steps being taken to correct it, trust deepens rather than erodes. Cover-ups and defensive posturing destroy credibility quickly and, in many cases, irreversibly.

Accessibility is another pillar. Par-



Parenting

ents want to feel they can reach their child's teacher without navigating unnecessary bureaucracy. Schools that build workable communication channels between home and classroom create genuine partnerships. Education works best when family and school move in the same direction. When parents feel shut out, they begin to withdraw emotionally — long before they formally withdraw their children.

Modern parents expect more than end-term reports. They want to understand how their child is improving week to week, where weaknesses lie and what support is being put in place. Schools that identify struggling learners early and work alongside parents to help them demonstrate both care and professional competence.

Emotional connection runs deeper than many school leaders acknowledge. Parents are drawn to environments where their children are celebrated. Recognition during assemblies, mentions in newsletters, prize-giving ceremonies, sports days and social media posts create a sense of pride that money cannot manufacture. Every parent wants to see their

child shine somewhere, in front of someone who matters.

Small gestures carry surprising weight. Greeting a parent by name, remembering a family detail, sending a birthday message, listening respectfully to a concern — these seemingly minor acts build a sense of belonging that outlasts any infrastructure upgrade. Some families remain loyal not because the school is perfect, but simply because they feel respected.

Respect becomes especially critical when complaints arise. Nothing damages a relationship faster than dismissing a parent's concern or embarrassing them publicly. Even the most difficult parents want to be heard with dignity. Administrators who understand this know that conflict management is not a distraction from educational leadership — it is part of it.

The physical environment shapes confidence, too. Parents read cleanliness, order and safety as indicators of how children are being treated day to day. A well-maintained compound, a welcoming reception area, organised classrooms and professional staff communicate institution-

al seriousness. First impressions often determine whether a family feels secure leaving a child at the gate.

School culture shapes loyalty just as powerfully. Events that parents genuinely look forward to — family days, cultural festivals, academic exhibitions, graduation ceremonies, talent showcases — create shared memories that deepen emotional attachment. Schools that build traditions build identity, and identity is hard to walk away from.

In many cases, parents stay because of people rather than infrastructure. A teacher who genuinely understands a child — their strengths, their fears, their particular way of seeing the world — can become the single reason an entire family remains loyal for years. Parents want to know their children are seen as individuals, not as admission numbers.

Safety and discipline are non-negotiable. Families need confidence that their children are physically and emotionally secure. Delayed responses to bullying or serious behavioural incidents erode trust rapidly, and that trust rarely fully recovers.

Where feeding programmes oper-

ate, quality matters more than many administrators realise. Parents judge institutional standards through every detail, including the food placed in front of their children. Equally, timely communication when a child falls ill or is injured is not a courtesy — it is a basic expectation. Delayed information breeds suspicion and anger in equal measure.

Financial transparency is often overlooked until it becomes a crisis. Parents want to see value in what they pay. Hidden charges, surprise levies and unexplained demands create lasting resentment. Schools that offer flexible payment options during periods of economic hardship frequently earn a loyalty that straightforward administration alone rarely achieves.

Some institutions strengthen retention further through deliberate gestures — sibling discounts, recognition of founding families, scholarships for long-serving households. These signals tell families they are partners, not merely clients.

Satisfied parents are also the most effective marketers a school can have. Testimonials from families who genuinely believe in the institution carry far more weight than any advertisement. At the same time, schools should pay attention when families choose to leave. Exit conversations surface weaknesses that internal reviews often miss, and that feedback, acted upon honestly, can prevent further departures.

Alumni relations matter beyond the immediate school community. Former students and their parents become long-term voices whose stories shape public perception for decades.

Ultimately, parental loyalty cannot be bought through marketing campaigns. It is earned through consistency, empathy, professionalism and the daily practice of genuine care. Families stay where their children are growing — academically, emotionally, socially and morally. They stay where school leaders are visible and approachable, and where every child is treated as though their welfare is the point of the whole enterprise.

The most enduring schools are not always the most expensive. They are the ones where families feel genuinely seen, heard and valued — and where every child, without exception, matters.

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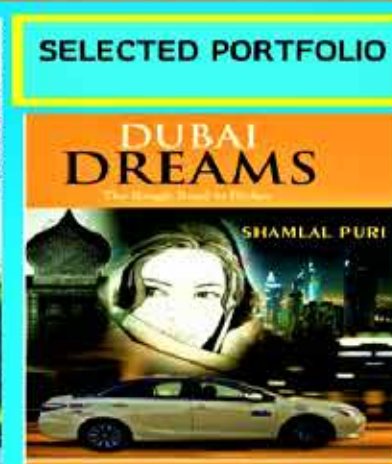
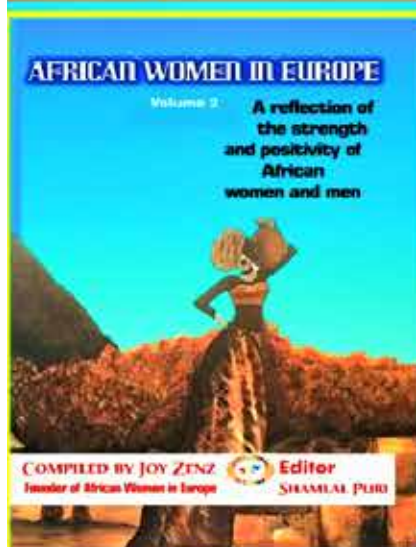
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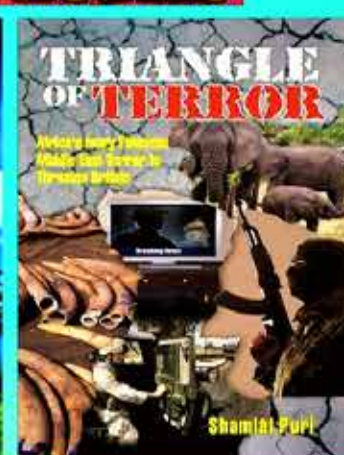
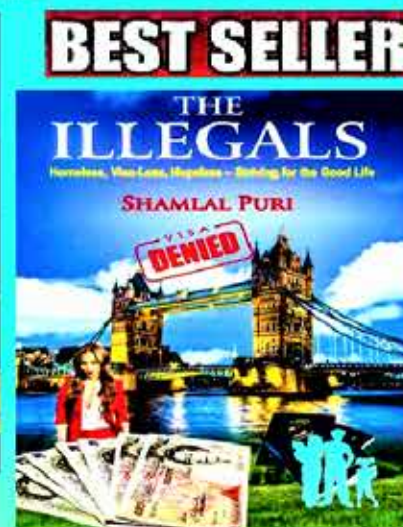
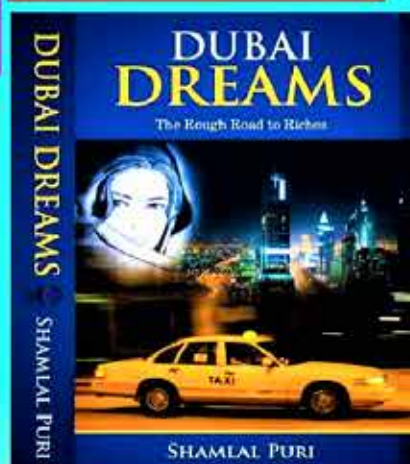
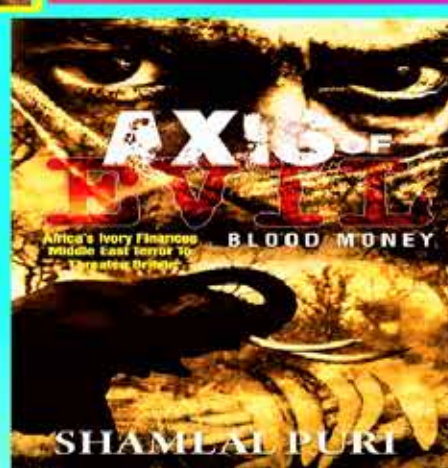
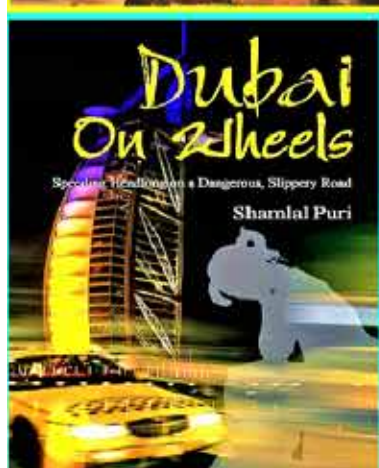
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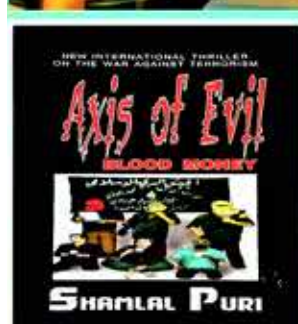
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Education This is the casualization of higher education in Kenya: the systematic conversion of teaching, research, and mentorship into temporary, underpaid, benefit-free labour

Casual degrees, casual minds: Kenya's higher education as a precarious gig economy



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

@themkenyentimes

In 2025, Kenya's universities enrolled 707,150 students while academic staff grew only to 16,434. The student-to-staff ratio in public chartered universities climbed from 44 to 51 in a single year. Adjunct and part-time lecturers more than doubled, from roughly 758 to over 1,600. These are not abstract numbers. They are the measurable pulse of an institution that once produced Africa's intellectual elite and now manufactures disposable knowledge workers.

This is the casualization of higher education in Kenya: the systematic conversion of teaching, research, and mentorship into temporary, underpaid, benefit-free labour. It is not an accident of austerity. It is the logical outcome of deliberate policy choices that treated universities as cost centres rather than engines of national capacity.

Once upon a time the story was different. In the 1980s Kenya's public universities stood among Africa's strongest. University of Nairobi, Kenyatta, and Moi produced scholars who shaped regional policy, science, and letters. The system was selective, publicly funded, and staffed largely by permanent academics who carried institutional memory. Then came the structural adjustment years, the liberalisation of the 1990s, and the invention of Module II the parallel, fee-paying track that allowed universities to admit students who had not met the competitive cut-off. Enrolment exploded. The number of universities ballooned from one at independence to more than eighty nine institutions today. Massification arrived without matching investment in permanent academic staff, laboratories, or libraries.

The result is a two-tier professoriate. A shrinking core of permanent lecturers carry impossible workloads sometimes five or more units a semester, classes of hundreds, endless marking, and the fiction of research. Around them swirls a growing periphery of part-timers and adjuncts



Unemployed graduates

paid by the hour or by the unit, often months in arrears, without medical cover, pension, or any realistic path to permanence. Some earn as little as one thousand shillings an hour. Others wait years for claims that mysteriously disappear in bureaucratic black holes. Universities advertise for "part-time lecturers" as if knowledge itself were a casual shift at a supermarket.

This is not merely labour market inefficiency. It is the slow poisoning of the academic vocation. A lecturer who must teach at three campuses to survive cannot supervise theses with care, cannot design coherent curricula, cannot mentor the next generation of thinkers. Research becomes an afterthought. Institutional memory evaporates when the same course is taught each year by a different temporary face. Students sense the transactional atmosphere. They arrive expecting transformation and encounter a conveyor belt of certificates.

The irony is cruel. Kenya lectures the continent about the knowledge economy while treating its knowledge workers as casual labour. We celebrate Silicon Savannah and Vision 2030 while the institutions meant to supply the human capital operate like gig platforms. The same government that speaks of industrialization tolerates student-staff ratios that would shame a secondary

school, then expresses surprise when graduates lack the depth, creativity, and professional habits the labour market claims to need.

History supplies the warning. When societies cheapen the transmission of knowledge, they do not merely produce weaker graduates; they weaken the capacity for self-correction. Medieval universities survived because they protected a permanent scholarly class. The great American research universities of the twentieth century grew because they invested in tenured faculty who could take intellectual risks. Kenya has chosen the opposite path: expand access while starving the very people who make access meaningful. The parallel degree programmes of the 1990s solved a short-term funding crisis by creating a long-term quality crisis. Today's reliance on adjuncts solves a short-term payroll crisis by mortgaging the future.

The human cost is visceral. Young PhD holders, products of the same system, circulate between institutions on short contracts, applying for permanent posts that never materialise because universities prefer cheaper temporary labour. Senior scholars retire or leave for better-resourced environments abroad. Departments hollow out. Ethnic politics and patronage appointments fill leadership positions while competence is treated as optional. Campuses close or shrink. Pending bills reach tens of

billions of shillings. Strikes become routine because the underlying contract between the state and its knowledge institutions has been broken.

This is not sustainable. A nation that treats its universities as temporary shelters for students and temporary employment for lecturers will eventually discover that both groups have temporary loyalty to the national project. Quality will continue to erode. The best minds will continue to exit. Employers will continue to complain about "unemployable" graduates while refusing to confront the deliberate under-investment that produced them.

The actors who must act are clear.

The national government must stop treating higher education as a residual budget item. Capitation must be realistic, predictable, and tied to quality indicators rather than pure enrolment numbers. The accumulated arrears that strangle public universities must be settled. Collective bargaining agreements cannot be negotiated in good faith if universities are left to fund them from already inadequate fees. Permanent academic positions must be ring-fenced and expanded in line with student growth.

University councils and vice-chancellors must abandon the illusion that casualization is smart management. Every permanent post converted into three part-time contracts is an admission of strategic failure.

Workload policies must be enforced. Payment of part-time claims must be prioritized rather than treated as discretionary. Succession planning cannot be an afterthought.

The Commission for University Education must move beyond counting institutions and begin enforcing staffing norms with consequences. Ratios that exceed reasonable limits should trigger restrictions on new admissions until capacity is restored. Quality audits that ignore the composition of the teaching workforce are theatre.

Academic staff unions must fight not only for better pay for the permanent core but for the dignity of the entire academic labour force. The normalization of exploitation of part-timers ultimately weakens everyone's bargaining power.

Students and parents must demand more than certificates. They must ask whether the person standing in front of the class has the institutional support, time, and security to teach with depth. A degree obtained under conditions of academic precarity is a diminished degree, whatever the parchment says.

The deeper insight is this: casualization is not a technical adjustment. It is a philosophical surrender. It declares that knowledge is a commodity to be delivered at the lowest possible labour cost rather than a public good that requires protected custodians. Once that declaration is accepted, everything else follows the overcrowded lecture halls, the delayed salaries, the vanishing research, the hollowed institutions.

Kenya once understood that universities were the places where a young nation thought about itself. Today those places are being turned into temporary warehouses for ambition. The warehouses will eventually empty. What will remain is a generation that was taught by people who themselves were treated as temporary, and a society that wonders why its intellectual infrastructure feels so fragile.

The Choice is still available, but the window is narrowing. Restore permanence to the academic vocation, or continue manufacturing casual degrees for a casual future. History will not be kind to the latter path.

The writer is a social commentator

Tree planting For the seedlings that survived, Onyango received KSh31,000 in incentives through the My Farm Trees programme, which rewards farmers for keeping seedlings alive

Beyond the planting: Kenya’s push to keep trees alive

BY Oduor Rosequillet Nabwire
@themkenyentimes

When a prolonged dry spell swept through Jwangre village in Ugenya, Siaya County, Gorety Onyango watched 100 of the 280 indigenous tree seedlings she had planted die. The 43-year-old farmer had tended the seedlings through their most vulnerable stage, hoping they would become part of her farm and improve its environment. Instead, more than a third were lost to the weather.

Only 180 survived. For the seedlings that survived, Onyango received KSh31,000 in incentives through the My Farm Trees programme, which rewards farmers for keeping seedlings alive. She also replaced eucalyptus with indigenous species after noticing their effects on her soil and crops. She says the change helped the soil retain more moisture, while her maize and sukuma wiki stopped withering. For Onyango, planting is only the beginning. The real value comes with seeing a young tree endure the seasons and become part of the landscape. Gorety’s experience points to a question Kenya is now confronting as it prepares for National Mazingira Day: what becomes of the millions of seedlings once the planting ceremonies are over? That question sits at the centre of this year’s Mazingira Week, which began on October 5 and will culminate in National Mazingira Day and National Tree Growing Day on October 10, 2026, in Trans Nzoia County, under the theme “Our Environment, Our Responsibility: Collective Action for Tree Growing and Environmental Stewardship.” For Government Spokesperson Charles Owino, bringing environmental action into schools, communities and public spaces is central to what the celebrations are meant to achieve.



Tree seedlings

“This year’s Mazingira Day is not simply a day on the calendar; it is a national call to action for environmental conservation,” he said during Monday’s joint media briefing. Owino then made the appeal more personal: “Every Kenyan must take responsibility for growing and protecting trees.” That message will be put into practice on Saturday, when the Government targets 17.24 million trees through seven planting streams. The Presidential Green Challenge will cover 79 sites in 31 counties, while 77,252 village elders are expected to lead village-level planting. Schools, universities, the Kenya Prisons Service, the National Youth Service and other institutions will also take part. Beyond the planting sites, the responsibility for those trees will fall to the people expected to nurture them. Jeniffer Kithure has spent years helping farmers grow and care for trees. After joining the Trees for the Future programme in 2005, she trained in nursery preparation and management before sharing that knowledge with other farmers. She has also encouraged the planting of indigenous trees along rivers to help curb erosion. Her work draws attention to what can easily be overlooked once the planting photographs are taken: selecting species suited to a particular landscape, caring for young trees and protecting them through difficult seasons.

Those questions of where and how trees are planted also matter to forestry researchers. Dr Robert Nyambati, a principal research scientist at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), has been involved in efforts to improve tree establishment, including matching species to ecological conditions. KEFRI’s work also considers seedling quality, site preparation, watering and other practices that influence how young trees cope once they leave the nursery. A species that performs well in one landscape may struggle in another, while drought, grazing, fire and inadequate care can undo months of effort. These challenges have also prompted efforts to find practical ways of keeping trees alive beyond the planting stage. In Nairobi, Francis Mkunga is part of a programme focused on tree survival. A member of Simplicity Youth Group, Mkunga participates in Miti Mitaani, where groups are paid to plant trees and receive continued payments for those that survive. “We planted them and are watering them,” he says. The initiative has reported more than 28,000 trees planted, with an average survival rate of 97 per cent. By linking payment to continued survival, the programme gives participants an incentive to return to the trees long after planting day. Forestry Principal Secretary Gitonga Mugambi has said the success of the 15 billion

Tree Growing Programme should be measured not only by the number of trees planted, but also by their survival and growth. The State Department is using JazaMiti to strengthen tracking of tree-growing activities across the country. During Monday’s joint me-

dia briefing, Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Dr Deborah Barasa put it plainly: “Our input is planting trees. But let us remember that our outcome is really survival.” Barasa said restoration would extend beyond individual planting sites to forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes and degraded land, with greater emphasis on agroforestry, community participation, fencing and aerial seeding in difficult-to-reach areas. The Government says about 2.2 billion trees have so far been planted towards the national target of 15 billion by 2032. But a national figure cannot show what happens to a seedling once it meets the realities of a particular farm, village or landscape.

That is where the success of tree growing is ultimately decided: in what happens after a seedling leaves the nursery, from watering and protection to replacing those lost to drought, fire or grazing. As Kenya works towards its 15 billion tree target, the task cannot be left to government programmes and one-off planting exercises. Schools, farmers, businesses, community groups and individuals can each contribute by growing trees suited to their surroundings and giving them the conditions they need to mature. Beyond increasing forest cover, healthy trees help protect soils and water sources, support biodiversity and strengthen communities against the effects of climate change. The ambition, then, is not simply to put more trees into the ground, but to make growing and protecting them a shared responsibility that lasts for years to come.

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Robbery Just 500 shillings. In Kololo, that is what a wealthy man tosses to a car washer and forgets before he reaches his gate. In Bushenyi, in Ishaka, in Katanga, that same 500 shillings is a child's lunch

The 500-shilling robbery: How you were robbed without losing your wallet

Nobody pointed a gun — they just raised the price of soap, and a Ugandan writer named that thief three decades ago



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

No one broke into your house last week. No one stopped you on the road to Kyamuhunga and said, hands up. And yet you were robbed. Cleanly. Politely. Without a single witness. You walked into the corner shop with 5,000 shillings folded in your palm — the same 5,000 that has always bought you a bar of soap. The shopkeeper did not smile. He did not look guilty either. He looked at you with the tired eyes of a man who has himself been robbed somewhere further up the chain, and said: “Soap is now 5,500.”

You thought he was joking. You counted the money again. He was not joking.

Just 500 shillings. In Kololo, that is what a wealthy man tosses to a car washer and forgets before he reaches his gate. In Bushenyi, in Ishaka, in Katanga, that same 500 shillings is a child's lunch. It is a pencil. It is a chapati on a Sunday.

Nobody called a press conference. No member of Parliament stood on the floor of the House and shouted about it. No television station ran a live report. Because the thief was too small to be seen. And that is precisely why the late Canon Mary Karoro Okurut — who died on 11 August 2025 — wrote a book thirty years ago and gave that thief a name. She called it *The Invisible Weevil*. Karoro was not writing a novel. She was writing a prophecy.

A weevil does not break into a granary like a thug. It enters like dust, like air. It does not devour the entire harvest in a single night. It takes one grain today, two tomorrow. You lock your store in July feeling rich, full and secure. You open it in December and find powder. The millet is gone — not carried away by lorry, but eaten slowly, patiently, while you were outside applauding politicians at a rally.



That 500 shillings on a bar of soap is a weevil. And it has entered every home in Uganda.

Set aside the language of growth targets for a moment. Forget the phrases they deploy in Serena Hotel workshops — middle-income status, inflationary pressures, supply chain disruptions. Those words were designed to obscure simple theft.

Think instead of Jennifer. Jennifer is 32. She lives in Mbarara. She washes clothes for wealthier families. She wakes at five in the morning, fetches water from a borehole that dries up every February, walks three kilometres to work and scrubs laundry until her knuckles crack and her fingers peel. At the end of a long day she is paid 7,000 shillings. On a bad day, 5,000.

From that money she must buy sup-

per, paraffin for the lamp and soap. Soap to wash her own clothes. Soap to wash her three children's school uniforms so they are not caned tomorrow for turning up dirty.

Last month, Jennifer could afford it. This month, she cannot. That extra 500 shillings is not merely extra. It is a choice. Do my children eat less, or do they go to school looking unkempt? In many homes across Uganda right now, the answer is unkempt. And then those same children are punished in government primary schools for dirty uniforms — without anyone asking why their mothers can no longer afford to keep them clean. We have quietly made cleanliness a luxury.

Now do the mathematics of the poor, because economics belongs to Jennifer too.

A family of six uses at least four bars of soap a month. That is an additional 2,000 shillings a month. Over a year, 24,000 shillings. That 24,000 was once a year's worth of salt. It was two second-hand sweaters from Owino market. It was the clinic fee when the baby gets malaria.

Multiply Jennifer by ten million households. That is more than 20 billion shillings a year, quietly transferred from the poorest hands in this country into the accounts of perhaps three factories and four importers who sat in an air-conditioned boardroom and reached an agreement. On paper, no law was broken. In reality, a nation was quietly broken.

When you ask why, they perform the new national anthem of excuses: the dollar, fuel costs, the tax authority, standards agencies, levies, Ukraine, containers, freight rates. Ten reasons, offered so that you forget to ask the only question that matters: which one of these, exactly, added 500 shillings to a bar of soap in Ishaka? Show me the paper.

This is not a new film. In the 1970s, Uganda made its own soap. There was Kimbo. There was Mukwano, starting from a modest garage. There was domestic palm oil. Soap was Ugandan-made and Ugandan-priced. Then came the instruction to liberalise. Privatised. Open up. Competition will bring prices down, they said.

Competition arrived. But it arrived wearing the clothes of a cartel. Today, three companies control close to 80 per cent of the soap and cooking oil market. When those companies sneeze in Jinja, Jennifer catches pneumonia in Bushenyi. This is not inflation in the broad, textbook sense. Inflation is general — it touches everything. What this is, is extraction. It is what happens when a small group concludes that Ugandans will not riot over 500 shillings. So they take 500 on soap today, 300 on salt tomorrow, 700 on sugar next week. Each individual theft looks too small to fight. Together, they have become a second rent. The poor now pay a second rent simply to remain alive.

We call ourselves resilient. We are not resilient. We are exhausted. We have become accustomed to being cut slowly with a razor blade rather

er than struck with a machete — because the razor blade makes no noise.

Karoro saw this. That is why she wrote that the weevil is invisible, but its hunger is not. Look around and you will see the teeth marks. Children with jiggers because they cannot wash their feet. Girls missing four days of school every month because they cannot wash their bodies and uniforms during menstruation. Families who once bathed twice a day now bathing once. Skin rashes returning to villages that had long forgotten them. These are not merely health problems. They are economic crimes wearing a health mask.

So how does one kill a weevil? My grandmother in Bwatogo never killed weevils by beating the granary wall. She did something simpler and far more powerful. She spread the millet in the hot sun and exposed it. Sunlight is the most effective pesticide there is.

We must spread this 500-shilling story in the sun.

We must demand that the Ministry of Trade stop speaking in the abstract language of radio commentary and produce documents the public can read. Publish the full cost breakdown of a bar of soap. How much is raw material? How much is tax? How much is transport? How much is pure margin? If the same Ugandan-made soap sells more cheaply in Goma and Juba than in Gulu and Kabale, the problem is not the exchange rate. The problem is us — and our willingness to accept it without demanding an explanation.

We must also dismantle the lie of average income. You cannot take Jennifer's daily earnings of 5,000 shillings, add them to a government minister's monthly package of 50 million, divide by two, and announce that Uganda has achieved middle-income status. That is arithmetic without a conscience. It is mockery dressed in the language of economics.

Real middle-income looks like this: a motorcycle taxi rider who can wash his own shirt without borrowing from a neighbour. A Jennifer who can wash her children's uniforms without having to choose between soap and supper.

Until that day arrives, every time you hand over that extra 500 shillings, remember what it is. It is not a rounding error. It is not inflation. It is a weevil. And it is eating your granary, one grain at a time, while you stand outside and applaud.

The day your granary is empty, no one will come to bring you soap.

Politics Less than a year after that victory, the very people who had voted with such passion were in the streets, furious at the government they had swept into power

Slogans are not enough: Kenya needs real answers, not catchy phrases

As 2027 approaches, voters risk repeating the same mistake that brought the country to its knees

BY Daniel Maina
@themtkenyatimes

There is a feeling, shared quietly across kitchens and loudly on social media, that Kenya needs a change of leadership in the next general election. From Mombasa to Kisumu, from Nairobi's estates to the highlands of central Kenya, the discontent with the current administration runs deep — cutting across the executive, the legislature and every tier of government in between.

The old French saying — the more things change, the more they stay the same — has rarely felt more apt. Kenyans walking into the 2027 election cycle are doing so carrying the full weight of 2022's regrets. That year's choices left the country in a fragile state, with the economy, health and education sectors struggling to function and, at times, appearing to teeter on the edge of collapse.

In 2022, the contest was not really about ideas. It was a tribal grudge match dressed in political clothing — a bitter tug of war between those who called themselves hustlers and those they labelled dynasties. The Kenya Kwanza coalition, powered by a narrative that spoke directly to the hardships of ordinary Kenyans, won convincingly. The message was resonant. The delivery, as it turned out, was another matter entirely.

Less than a year after that victory, the very people who had voted with such passion were in the streets, furious at the government they had swept into power. Two years on, protesters stormed Parliament, accusing legislators of abandoning the electorate and becoming instruments of executive convenience. The charge was simple and damning: those elected to serve the people had chosen to serve themselves and their political patrons.

But in a frank assessment, the rot set in much earlier — in the campaign period itself. The economy was already struggling in 2022, yet it barely featured in the political debate. Instead, Kenyans were fed a fictional economic model that sounded compelling but which few paused to interrogate. Nobody pressed the candidates on how they



Slogans are not enough

intended to fix what was broken. The political conversation revolved around slogans — hustler versus dynasty, “leave and go”, “mama mboga government”, wheelbarrows, the bottom-up model — while the real, hard questions went unasked. When it came to electing members of Par-

liament, voters rewarded candidates not for their capacity to legislate but for their willingness to insult the opposition. The results of that election produced the Parliament Kenyans have today.

Now, ahead of 2027, the pattern is repeating. The slogans have changed

but the logic has not. “We want them”, “we will get them”, “Kasongo must go” — these phrases generate heat and fill rallies, but they do not explain how the economy will be turned around, how hospitals will be properly staffed and stocked, how schools will be adequately funded,

or how the rising tide of armed crime and gang violence threatening communities across the country will be brought under control.

President William Ruto has drawn criticism for suggesting that opposition figures lack a credible agenda. The charge was seen by some as contemptuous. Yet, setting tone and delivery aside, the underlying point carries some merit. Demanding that a government departs without articulating what comes next is not an alternative — it is simply an emotion.

The inconsistency in how some of those opposition figures are judged adds to the confusion. Two legislators who both ignored the cries of young Kenyans during the 2024 protests have been treated entirely differently by public opinion — one celebrated as a patriot, the other condemned as a traitor — solely on the basis of whether they support or oppose the current government. The principle that should matter most, accountability to constituents, barely features in the verdict.

Kenya's independence was won around a promise to defeat three enemies: poverty, ignorance and disease. Sixty years later, those same enemies have not been defeated — they have multiplied, joined now by corruption and an economy under pressure from the very political class that was elected to dismantle the old failures. The original promise remains undelivered.

The 2027 election offers a genuine opportunity to break that cycle — but only if voters decide to hold candidates to a higher standard. A compelling slogan is not a manifesto. Charisma is not competence. The ability to draw a crowd is not the same as the ability to manage a budget, pass meaningful legislation or deliver services to people who need them. Kenyans deserve representatives who can do all of those things — and they have every right to insist on it.

If the question that decides the next election is still “who do you hate most?” rather than “what is your plan?”, the answer will arrive within months of the results: more protests, more “must go” campaigns, more grief over a health system that cannot cope and an economy that cannot breathe. The pattern will simply begin again.

The ballot is the most powerful tool Kenyans hold. The question is whether they will use it to demand something different — or settle, once more, for a slogan.

SPORTS
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Sports >> *The forward says his coach broke a private agreement — and insists his international career is not over

Ronaldo breaks silence over Portugal camp walkout

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

Cristiano Ronaldo has broken his silence over his dramatic departure from the Portugal national team camp, accusing head coach Jorge Jesus of going back on his word and triggering a serious breakdown in trust between player and management.

The 41-year-old captain released a statement yesterday explaining why he walked out of Portugal's training base in Denmark last week. Ronaldo apologised to his teammates and to Portuguese supporters, but made clear he believed his departure was the direct consequence of repeated broken promises.

The dispute traces back to Portugal's UEFA Nations League fixture against Norway on 27 September. Ronaldo said there had been a clear understanding about his role in the match, but he was left on the bench for the entire game. He warmed up throughout the second half and was never introduced.

After the Norway match, Ronaldo, Jesus and Portuguese Football Federation president Pedro Proença reportedly held a private meeting to address the situation. According to Ronaldo, Jesus agreed during that meeting to apologise publicly and acknowledge that leaving him out had been an error in managing his fitness. What followed was something different entirely.

Rather than honouring that agreement, Jesus defended his authority as head coach and maintained publicly that team selection was his prerogative alone. For Ronaldo, the distance between what was agreed behind closed doors and what was said in public was enough to destroy whatever trust remained between them. Shortly afterwards, he left Portugal's training camp without explanation ahead of the team's fixture against Denmark, promising only that he would



Cristiano Ronaldo

eventually tell the full story.

He has now done so.

In his statement, Ronaldo repeated his apology to teammates and the Portuguese public and acknowledged that his decision to leave camp could invite disciplinary action from the federation. The possible consequences range from a formal reprimand to a financial penalty or a period of suspension. He accepted that reality without flinching.

What he was not prepared to accept, however, was any suggestion that he has walked away from international football. Ronaldo was unambiguous on the point: he remains available to represent Portugal for as long as he is fit and performing at the required level for his club.

The response from within the squad has been notably supportive. Bruno Fernandes, who wore the captain's armband during Ronaldo's absence, publicly defended his former Manchester United teammate and insisted the national team remained united behind him. Fernandes described Ronaldo as a defining figure in Portuguese football and said he continued to deserve the full respect of his teammates and the country's supporters.

Despite the very public falling-out, Ronaldo's international future appears to remain open rather than closed. The federation's next move — whether it opts for a formal sanction or chooses to draw a line and move forward — will go a long way

towards determining what happens next. Jesus, for his part, has shown no sign of stepping back from the position that cost him Ronaldo's trust in the first place.

The central question now is whether the two men can find a way to work together again. Ronaldo has made his grievance clear and, in doing so, placed the matter squarely in the public domain. Jesus has his authority and his record as coach to consider. The coming international windows will reveal whether this dispute can be managed or whether Ronaldo's relationship with the national team has entered the most turbulent chapter of a career that has, until now, always found a way to continue.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Government and federation align on grassroots revival and the 2027 Safari Rally as the sport seeks to reclaim its place on the world stage

Kenya and motorsport body plot road back to the top

By **Martin Weche**

Motorsport Kenya Federation held high-level talks with the government yesterday at Talanta Plaza in Nairobi, mapping out a shared agenda for reviving the sport domestically and securing Kenya’s position as Africa’s premier motorsport destination. Cabinet Secretary for Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports Salim Mvurya and Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi hosted the federation’s delegation, which comprised Vice President and WRC chief executive Carl Tundo, Secretary General Eric Bengi and Motorsports Council chairman Mindo Gatimu. The discussions covered grassroots development, youth participation, the national championship structure and preparations for the 2027 WRC Safari Rally, scheduled for March of that year.

The meeting reflected a growing urgency within both government and the federation to move Kenyan motorsport beyond aspiration and into structured, funded action. Mvurya and Mwangi told the delegation they had been tracking the federation’s grassroots and youth development work, particularly through the Autocross Championship, which has become the primary entry point for young drivers into organised competition. Both officials expressed a clear interest in seeing the National Rally Championship revived and strengthened, creating a defined pathway for Kenyan drivers, teams and officials to progress from local events to the highest levels of the sport. Tundo used the meeting to acknowledge the government’s role in keeping the revival on track. “We would like to thank the government, the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary for their continued support and commitment towards



WRC Safari Rally CEO Carl Tundo having a chat with Sports CS Salim Mvurya

seeing motorsport regain its place in Kenya,” he said. “There is a lot of work to be done, but we believe that with the right structure, investment and cooperation, we can rebuild the sport from the grassroots upwards.” The words carry weight coming from Tundo, one of Kenya’s most decorated rally drivers and now the man responsible for delivering the WRC Safari Rally as a world-class event. His presence at a government meeting focused on grassroots development signals that the federation sees both ends of the sport — the international showpiece and the entry-level championships — as inseparable parts of the same project. That philosophy will be on public display this weekend when the Shell Autocross and Autocross Plus Championship returns to the Kasarani Sports Complex grounds on 10 and 11 October. The venue carries its own historical resonance. Kasarani was

long associated with the Safari Rally’s Super Special stage, a format that brought the spectacle of world rally racing into the heart of Nairobi. That stage was removed from the 2026 WRC itinerary when the event moved to a Naivasha-only route, but this weekend the complex will again be filled with rally cars, drivers, crews and fans — this time through Kenya’s grassroots championship. For the federation, the symbolism is intentional. The 2026 Safari Rally, held from 12 to 15 March as Round 3 of the FIA World Rally Championship, demonstrated again that Kenya can stage an event of global stature. The challenge the federation now faces is ensuring that the benefits of that international platform — in visibility, investment and inspiration — flow through to the domestic game rather than existing in a separate orbit. Kenya’s motorsport history

makes the current moment both encouraging and instructive. The Safari Rally’s reputation was built over decades through a combination of government support, private sponsorship, technical excellence and the kind of local talent that could compete with the best in the world. That ecosystem did not sustain itself automatically, and its decline over difficult years was a reminder that world-class sport requires sustained, structured investment rather than periodic attention when a headline event approaches. The federation says it is determined not to repeat that pattern. Its stated objective is not only to revive the sport domestically but to restore Kenya’s regional and international standing while creating genuine career pathways for young Kenyans who want to compete, officiate, engineer or work within motorsport professionally. The Autocross Championship is the foundation of that ambition — affordable, accessible, and increasingly popular among young competitors who might never have considered motorsport a realistic pursuit. With the 2027 Safari Rally now firmly on the planning horizon, the pressure to demonstrate progress is real. Government backing is in place. The federation’s leadership is engaged. The grassroots programme is running. What the coming months will test is whether that alignment translates into the sustained investment, structural development and institutional follow-through that transforming a sport actually requires. Kenya has done it before. The question being asked at Talanta Plaza yesterday was whether the country is ready to do it again — and this time, to build something that lasts.

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Purpose, leadership & community impact — turning a crown into a platform for meaningful change



By: Anila Bukhari
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Tsebo Kotlolo is a South African purpose-driven leader, mother, sales coach, entrepreneur, community advocate and the reigning Mrs Soweto 2026. Her journey is defined by faith, resilience, service and an unwavering belief that meaningful leadership begins with purpose. Across her professional career, community initiatives and public platforms, Tsebo has continued to demonstrate that success is not measured solely by personal achievement, but by the lives one is able to influence, encourage and uplift along the way.

As a full-time sales coach, Tsebo has built her professional identity around people development. While sales coaching is at the heart of her career, her approach extends far beyond targets, performance and professional skills. She believes that people must be developed holistically, with attention to confidence, resilience, mindset and personal growth. Her philosophy is captured in her powerful words: “I mentor, I don’t just coach sales; I coach growth and resilience.”

This perspective has shaped the way she works with people. Tsebo understands that professional development becomes more meaningful when individuals are equipped to believe in themselves and navigate challenges with confidence. Her work reflects a commitment to helping others recognize their potential and develop the resilience required to turn potential into progress.

Outside the corporate and professional environment, Tsebo has devoted significant energy to community development. She is the founder of Seen Sorted & Safe, an initiative created around a simple but powerful idea: people, particularly young girls, women and boys, deserve to feel seen, supported and safe.



Tsebo Kotlolo

Through the initiative, Tsebo contributes to mentorship, guidance, confidence-building and practical community support. Her community work includes supporting learners with school uniforms and sanitary products, assisting child-headed households, supporting matric learners and contributing to youth development. Her focus is not simply on providing immediate assistance, but on helping young people see possi-

bilities beyond the circumstances in which they were born.

For Tsebo, community development is ultimately about restoring hope. By creating spaces where young people can receive encouragement, practical support and guidance, she seeks to remind them that their present circumstances do not have to determine the direction of their lives.

Her own journey into pageantry further reflects this philosophy.

Tsebo took a leap of faith when she entered the Mrs Soweto pageant. What initially began as a personal challenge evolved into an opportunity to amplify a much larger purpose. Today, as Mrs Soweto 2026, she views her crown not merely as a recognition of beauty or achievement, but as a platform for service and influence.

Her reign is centred on issues close to her heart, including community development, women and family empowerment, youth development, education, tourism and economic opportunities within Soweto. Rather than seeing a title as an endpoint, Tsebo sees it as a responsibility. Her crown has given her greater visibility, but she believes that visibility becomes valuable only when it is used to create meaningful opportunities and encourage positive change.

This approach has also opened doors to partnerships and platforms aligned with her mission. As one of the SMG Toyota Soweto ambassadors, Tsebo continues to use her public presence to support community initiatives, empowerment efforts and local businesses. Her involvement reflects her broader belief that sustainable community development requires collaboration between individuals, businesses, organizations and local communities.

For Tsebo, leadership is therefore not confined to a job title. It is expressed through everyday service, relationships and the willingness to take responsibility for making a difference.

At the centre of her many responsibilities is motherhood. Tsebo is a devoted mother of two sons and proudly embraces the different dimensions of her life as a mother, career woman, entrepreneur, ambassador and community advocate. Motherhood has added another layer to her understanding of purpose, strengthening her appreciation of the importance of creating a better environment and greater opportunities for the next generation.

Balancing family, career, community service and public responsibilities requires resilience, discipline and an ability to remain grounded. Tsebo’s journey demonstrates that leader-

ship can take many forms and that women do not have to choose between ambition and service. Instead, professional success, motherhood and community impact can become interconnected parts of a larger purpose.

Her story is ultimately one of evolution. She has continued to step beyond familiar boundaries, take courageous opportunities and transform personal challenges into platforms for growth. Whether she is coaching a professional, supporting a learner, advocating for women, encouraging a young person or representing Soweto through her crown, her underlying objective remains consistent: to inspire people to believe that more is possible.

Her guiding belief, “Aspire to inspire before you expire,” captures the philosophy behind her work. It reflects her understanding that a meaningful life is not defined only by what a person achieves for themselves, but also by the inspiration, encouragement and opportunities they leave behind for others.

Today, Tsebo Kotlolo continues to dream bigger, serve with intention and expand the impact of every platform entrusted to her. Her journey demonstrates that purpose can emerge through many different roles — motherhood, leadership, entrepreneurship, coaching, faith and community service.

As Mrs Soweto 2026, she carries more than a crown. She carries a message: circumstances may shape a person’s starting point, but they do not have to define their future.

Through her continued work, Tsebo is building a legacy rooted not simply in recognition, but in service — a legacy where leadership means showing up, empowering others and turning influence into meaningful action.