



Ruto's Mt Kenya gamble: Can he win it twice?
President William Ruto's grip on Mt Kenya, the region that proved decisive in his 2022 election victory over former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, is facing its most serious test yet as Kenya moves into the political season **Page 8**



Mashujaa Day 2026: Let the people host the celebration, not just watch it
Mashujaa Day is a significant national holiday in Kenya, dedicated to honoring the heroes and heroines of the country who contributed greatly to the process of independence and nation-building. **Page 12**

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **"I remain a committed Azimio member, ready to support and offer counsel," Uhuru**

Kenyatta steps back

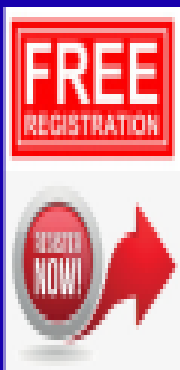
Former President Uhuru Kenyatta resigned yesterday as chairperson of the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition, completing a carefully choreographed withdrawal from formal political office that has repositioned — but almost certainly not ended — his influence over Kenya's fractious opposition landscape in the critical months before the 2027 general election.

The resignation, communicated in a letter dated Monday, October 5, followed Kenyatta's earlier relinquishment of the Jubilee Party leadership to former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. Both moves were triggered by a High Court ruling by Justice Lawrence Mugambi upholding Section 6 of the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act, which bars retired presidents from holding political party office for more than six months after leaving State House. Kenyatta left the presidency in September 2022. The law, in effect, had been catching up with him for some time.

But in Kenyan politics, the distance between formal position and real power has always been elastic, and few understand that better than Kenyatta himself. **Page 9**



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta



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Ruto leads nation in honouring Raila at Bondo mausoleum dedication

BY Grace Wanja

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday led the nation in honouring the late former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga at the dedication of the Raila Amolo Odinga Mausoleum in Bondo, Siaya County, describing him as a once-in-a-generation leader whose courage and sacrifice helped shape the Kenyan republic.

"Baba will be remembered as a patriot, pan-Africanist and statesman who stood firm through adversity in the pursuit of freedom, justice and a more democratic Kenya," Ruto said at the ceremony, which drew dignitaries from across the political spectrum.

The dedication of the mausoleum cements Raila's place in the country's national memory — a recognition of his central role in the struggles for multiparty democracy, devolution and constitutional reform that defined Kenya's political evolution over four decades. Ruto acknowledged that Raila's contribution to democratic institutions and national unity would continue to inspire generations tasked with guarding the inheritance he helped secure.

The ceremony takes on added weight as Kenya enters the final stretch before the August 2027 general election — a contest that will be fought, in part, over the democratic legacy Raila spent his life building.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The NCIC has found that remarks made by Mukurweini MP John Philip Kaguchia at a political gathering in Kieni, Nyeri County, in August were threatening, coercive and intimidating, and has given him seven days to withdraw the statements and issue a public apology in Kikuyu, Kiswahili and English. The commission determined that Kaguchia's remarks, made on or about August 1, threatened supporters of a rival political faction with removal from their homes and called for records to be kept of such individuals, creating a real risk of intimidation and harm to peaceful coexistence. "The commission considered the actual words, their public setting, the respondent's influence as an elected MP and listeners' ability to carry out the threatened measures," said NCIC chairperson Bishop Kepha Nyamweya. Beyond the apology, Kaguchia has been instructed to organise and fund peacebuilding activities. The commission said it would monitor compliance closely.



Kenya has designated Gate 16 at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport as the exclusive entry point for passengers arriving from ten African countries considered at higher risk of Ebola transmission, as authorities intensify screening following an imported case. Public Health Principal Secretary Mary Muthoni, who toured the airport yesterday to assess preparedness, said the designated countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Zambia, Tanzania and the Central African Republic. She said authorities were also considering exit screening to prevent onward transmission. Muthoni stressed that Kenya had not declared an Ebola outbreak, describing the situation as a single imported case. The Ministry of Health is currently tracing 57 contacts linked to the patient, while more than 4,000 healthcare workers have been trained in Ebola preparedness. She urged Kenyans to reduce unnecessary physical contact and maintain hand hygiene.



The High Court has ruled that the sale of substandard NPK fertilizer to farmers under the National Fertilizer Subsidy Programme violated their constitutional rights, finding that the Kelgreen NPK 10:26:10 product distributed during the 2024 long-rains season fell far short of its declared composition and applicable Kenya Standards. In a judgment issued yesterday, the court also found that the failure by the Agriculture Cabinet Secretary to constitute the Fertilizer and Animal Foodstuffs Board was unlawful and inconsistent with the Constitution. The case was filed by the Law Society of Kenya following complaints in March 2024 that subsidised fertilizer supplied to the National Cereals and Produce Board was substandard. The Kenya Bureau of Standards subsequently suspended the manufacturer's standardisation mark permits and several individuals were charged before Kiambu Chief Magistrate's Court. The court declined to order compensation, finding that affected farmers had not been individually identified and losses had not been quantified.



The government has admitted that security personnel and equipment deployed to combat banditry in Samburu, Meru and Isiolo are inadequate for sustained operations, as 14 people were killed and 17 injured between June and September this year. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen told the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Administration and Internal Security that difficult terrain, poor roads, vast distances between security installations and limited resources were severely constraining operations. "Current resources in terms of personnel and equipment are not adequate for sustained security coverage," he said. Despite an intensified crackdown that recovered 2,395 illegally held firearms and 3,221 stolen livestock, 4,306 animals were reported stolen in the same period. A September 16 ambush in Samburu killed two police officers, one reservist and two civilians, with attackers stealing government weapons including a Galil ACE rifle and 300 rounds of ammunition. Murkomen said security operations alone could not provide a permanent solution.



The National Cohesion and Integration Commission has ordered Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku to publicly withdraw remarks made at Kiang'andu, Tharaka Nithi County, in July, finding that his statements crossed from legitimate advocacy into divisive ethnic generalisation and collective blame against the Kikuyu community. NCIC chairperson Bishop Kepha Nyamweya said Ruku's remarks — including references linking ethnic surnames to development and public appointments, and repeated allusions to stepping on former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's neck — fell below the restraint expected of a Cabinet Secretary. Ruku, who appeared before the commission on September 1, admitted making the remarks but argued they were protected political speech. The commission disagreed, giving him seven days to communicate acceptance of corrective measures, which include a public withdrawal in Kiswahili and English and participation in commission-facilitated dialogue on equitable development.



Karen Hospital Medical Training College has been ranked the best Kenya Registered Nursing college in the country after its students claimed the top three positions nationally in the recently released Nursing Council of Kenya examinations — a clean sweep that the institution's leadership described as a historic milestone. All 40 students presented for the examinations passed, with 16 attaining distinctions, 20 credits and four passes — the college's strongest performance since its establishment in 2013. Principal Martin Mungai attributed the results to student discipline and faculty dedication. "Having the top three students nationally come from our institution is an exceptional accomplishment and one that we are immensely proud of," he said. Chief Executive Juliet Gikonyo said the performance reinforced the college's commitment to producing healthcare professionals with technical skills, professionalism and integrity.

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Investment At the centre of the pitch is the Murang'a Industrial City, an ambitious project

Kang'ata courts Canada for Murang'a industrial city

The Murang'a governor takes his county's investment pitch to Nairobi's diplomatic circuit as the race to attract foreign capital ahead of 2027 intensifies

BY Grace Wanja

@themtkenyaintimes

Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata yesterday called on Canadian High Commissioner Joshua Tabar at the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi, opening discussions on investment opportunities in the county's planned industrial city and potential partnerships with Canadian businesses in agro-processing, manufacturing and value addition.

The meeting signals an increasingly deliberate effort by Kang'ata to position Murang'a County as a serious destination for foreign direct investment, at a moment when Kenya's devolved units are competing with growing urgency to attract capital, generate employment and demonstrate economic results ahead of the August 2027 general election.

At the centre of the pitch is the Murang'a Industrial City, an ambitious project the county government is developing as an anchor for industrial growth and job creation in the region. Agro-processing sits at the core of the proposal — a natural fit for a county whose agricultural output, particularly tea, coffee and avocado, has long outpaced the local infrastructure needed to add value before produce leaves the county.

The political timing is not in-

cidental. With less than a year before campaigns formally intensify, governors across Kenya are under mounting pressure to show tangible development gains to their constituents. For Kang'ata, who has staked much of his tenure on an economic transformation agenda for Murang'a, the industrial city represents both a policy ambition and an electoral statement. Securing credible international partners — and being seen to do so — carries weight in both registers.

Canada presents a particular opportunity. Canadian agribusiness and manufacturing firms have an established footprint across East Africa, and the High Commission has in recent years been an active facilitator of business links between Canadian companies and county governments pursuing industrial development. Whether those conversations translate into binding commitments, however, will depend on the county's ability to offer competitive land terms, reliable infrastructure and a regulatory environment that gives investors confidence.

Kang'ata has been direct about what he is offering. "Murang'a is open for business and ready to partner with global investors to create jobs, grow industries and build shared prosperity," he said — language calibrated as much for the investors he is courting as for the voters



Murang'a Governor Irungu Kang'ata yesterday called on Canadian High Commissioner Joshua Tabar at the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi

he is serving.

The broader context is a Kenyan devolution landscape in which counties are increasingly behaving like small states, sending their own diplomatic signals and cultivating bilateral relationships independently of the national government. That dynamic is likely to intensify as 2027 approaches and governors seek to differentiate themselves through visible economic achievement.

For Murang'a's farmers,

youth and small manufacturers, the industrial city remains a promise yet to be tested by concrete ground-breaking and secured investment. The Canadian conversation is one step in a longer process. Whether it becomes a partnership — or remains a promising meeting — will determine how much political currency Kang'ata can ultimately draw from it.

The governor is making his pitch. The world is being asked to listen.

Nyoro suspended over pipeline IPO claims



Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro

BY Annete Njeri

@themtkenyaintimes

Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro was yesterday suspended from Parliament for five sitting days after refusing to apologise for claims that public institutions were pressured by a high office to invest in the Kenya Pipeline Company IPO.

National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetangula issued the suspension following a heated plenary session in which Nyoro declined to retract allegations he had made the previous day — that phone calls from a senior office directed the National Social Security Fund, the Public Service Superannuation Fund and Kenya Re, among others, to invest in the IPO as it neared failure at the close of its investment window.

Majority Leader Kimani Ichung'wah and Minority

Leader Junet Mohamed both called on Nyoro to either table evidence or withdraw. "If he has none, he should just apologise," Junet said. Ichung'wah argued the allegations were capable of injuring the reputations of professionals serving in public institutions diligently.

Nyoro was unmoved. "What I stated is the truth, and the truth rides higher than the rules. I cannot apologise for the obvious," he told the Speaker.

Wetangula responded firmly: "You are now guilty of gross disorderly conduct. This kind of conduct is totally unhelpful."

Speaking outside the chamber, Nyoro maintained his position, noting the Kenya Pipeline share price stood at KSh9.02 — a 0.2 percent gain against inflation running at 6 percent. "The investments have proven sub-optimal," he said.

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Politics The government has pointed to investments in infrastructure, agriculture, housing and digital services as evidence of progress

Ruto's Mt Kenya gamble: Can he win it twice?

With former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua in the field and voters asking hard economic questions, President Ruto can no longer take the region's loyalty for granted

BY Collins Kibet

[@themkenyaintimes](#)

President William Ruto's grip on Mt Kenya, the region that proved decisive in his 2022 election victory over former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, is facing its most serious test yet as Kenya moves into the political season ahead of the August 2027 general election.

Four years ago, Mt Kenya delivered Ruto the numbers he needed. Today, the political landscape looks considerably different. Alliances have fractured, economic grievances have accumulated and a familiar face — former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua — has positioned himself as the region's most vocal advocate, directly challenging the assumption that what Mt Kenya gave in 2022 it will give again in 2027.

Kenyan electoral history offers little comfort to incumbents who assume loyalty is permanent. Voters in this region, as elsewhere, are transactional in the most legitimate sense: they support leaders who demonstrate tangible returns. The currency of Mt Kenya politics is not sentiment but results — affordable food, employment for young people, fair taxation, functioning agricultural markets and access to government opportunity. On each of those measures, the mood in the region is mixed at best.

The government has pointed to investments in infrastructure, agriculture, housing and digital services as evidence of progress. But economic statistics rarely match the experience of ordinary households. A farmer contending with high production costs, a trader squeezed by taxation, or a young graduate still searching for work will judge the administration by what they feel in their pockets, not what they read in budget speeches. In Mt Kenya, with its strong agricultural and business community, economic policy does not exist in the abstract — it lands directly on livelihoods, and voters remember how it lands.

Gachagua's emergence as an independent political force has sharpened these stakes considerably. His

removal from the deputy presidency and his subsequent repositioning as a champion of Mt Kenya interests has given the region's dissatisfied voters a credible vehicle for expressing frustration with the administration. The relationship between Ruto and Gachagua — once the cornerstone of the Kenya Kwanza coalition — has collapsed with a speed and bitterness that has left neither man unscathed. For Ruto, the political cost is real: a figure who understands the region's networks, language and grievances is now working actively against him from within the same electoral constituency.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki offers the administration a counterweight. His presence provides a senior Mt Kenya voice within government and a channel through which the administration can maintain communication with leaders and voters in the region. But a familiar face in high office is not a substitute for policy outcomes. Kindiki's political value to Ruto will ultimately depend on whether voters conclude that his influence has produced real benefits — or whether they see him as window dressing on an administration that has not delivered.

Ruto understands, or should understand, that no single region can anchor a presidential victory. His 2027 strategy will require him to consolidate support in the Rift Valley, deepen his presence in Western Kenya, expand at the Coast and in the North East and protect the broader coalition that carried him to power. A mathematically credible path to a second term exists without a full sweep of Mt Kenya. But it is a narrower path, and it demands that losses in one region be compensated convincingly elsewhere — a demanding and expensive political calculation.

The opposition's capacity to consolidate will also shape what happens in Mt Kenya. A fragmented opposition, fielding multiple presidential candidates, could dilute the anti-Ruto vote sufficiently to protect him even in a region where enthusiasm has cooled. But a united opposition with a compelling economic platform and a candidate the region respects could



President William Ruto

turn Mt Kenya into one of the most fiercely contested electoral battlegrounds in the country's recent history.

Kenya's younger voters add a further layer of uncertainty. This generation is increasingly disengaged from the ethnic and historical alliances that have traditionally structured Kenyan politics. They are asking different questions — about jobs, about taxation, about entrepreneurship, about whether the political system can actually improve their lives. They are not automatically available to any party, and they are not impressed by speeches that do not connect to their

daily reality. Ruto's administration will need to speak their language with policy, not just rhetoric.

Mt Kenya is not a monolith. It contains competing interests, generational differences and a significant bloc of genuinely undecided voters who will make their judgment as the campaign intensifies. Treating the region as a guaranteed asset would be a serious strategic error. The voters who will ultimately determine its direction are those who have not yet decided — and they are watching closely.

Ruto still holds considerable advantages: incumbency, a national politi-

cal network, state resources and the institutional momentum that comes with holding office. None of that is trivial. But none of it is sufficient on its own. The 2027 election will be decided by trust, by economic credibility and by whether voters believe another five years of this administration will leave them better off.

Mt Kenya supported William Ruto in 2022. That is history. The question now is whether the region believes that doing so again will serve its future. The answer is not yet written — and Ruto, more than anyone, knows he must earn it.

Politics In his resignation letter, the former president was at pains to frame his departure not as a retreat but as a contribution to democratic renewal

Kenyatta steps back — but never away

As Kenya's opposition rebrands and repositions ahead of 2027, the former president's exit from coalition leadership raises more questions than it answers

BY David Kimani

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Former President Uhuru Kenyatta resigned yesterday as chairperson of the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition, completing a carefully choreographed withdrawal from formal political office that has repositioned — but almost certainly not ended — his influence over Kenya's fractious opposition landscape in the critical months before the 2027 general election.

The resignation, communicated in a letter dated Monday, October 5, followed Kenyatta's earlier relinquishment of the Jubilee Party leadership to former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. Both moves were triggered by a High Court ruling by Justice Lawrence Mugambi upholding Section 6 of the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act, which bars retired presidents from holding political party office for more than six months after leaving State House. Kenyatta left the presidency in September 2022. The law, in effect, had been catching up with him for some time.

But in Kenyan politics, the distance between formal position and real power has always been elastic, and few understand that better than Kenyatta himself.

In his resignation letter, the former president was at pains to frame his departure not as a retreat but as a contribution to democratic renewal. "This decision is not a departure from our shared political journey, but a necessary step in the continuous renewal of our democratic institutions," he wrote. He described a coalition as "not merely a temporary alliance of convenience" but "a permanent covenant of conviction" — language that carried the unmistakable tone of a man signalling that his absence from the top table should not be mistaken for absence from the room.

"I remain, as always, a committed member of the Azimio family, ready to support the institution from the ranks, and always available to offer counsel when called upon," Kenyatta said.

That phrase — available to offer counsel — may prove to be the most consequential sentence in the entire letter. In the grammar of Kenyan po-

litical power, counsel from a former president who retains deep financial networks, ethnic mobilisation capacity in the Mount Kenya region and longstanding relationships across the political spectrum is not advisory. It is structural. Kenyatta stepping back from the chairmanship does not strip him of leverage. It may, paradoxically, increase it. Freed from the constraints of formal office, he can now operate with greater flexibility — present when needed, absent when convenient, accountable to no one.

The question that Kenya's political analysts are already asking is whether Kenyatta is exiting the stage or simply moving to the wings. The answer, most believe, is the latter.

Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka, who leads the coalition now rebranded as The Ukombozi Alliance — TUA — was careful to project calm in the wake of the resignation. "There is no vacuum at the helm of Ukombozi, and no change in the party's leadership, direction or programme," he said in a statement issued yesterday evening. He thanked Kenyatta warmly, acknowledged the sacrifices of his family and confirmed that the former president would be invited for a formal handover ceremony. Kalonzo also drew a firm distinction between the chairmanship Kenyatta has vacated and his own role as party leader — the political and executive head responsible for day-to-day affairs and public representation.

"The Party Leader is the political and executive head of the party. He speaks for the party, runs its day-to-day affairs, represents it before the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties and other institutions, and answers to its members. I hold that office, and it is unaffected by President Kenyatta's resignation," Kalonzo said.

The statement was measured and confident. Whether the confidence is entirely warranted is another matter.

The Ukombozi Alliance — a name the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties has now reserved — is entering its most demanding period. With the 2027 general election less than a year away, the coalition must simultaneously consolidate its internal structures, sharpen its policy identity, manage competing ambitions among its constituent parties



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

and mount a credible challenge to President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration. It must do all of this while absorbing a leadership transition at the top of its council and navigating the ambiguous but unmistakable presence of a former president who has not gone quietly into private life.

Matiang'i, now at the helm of Jubilee, has signalled his intention to rebuild the party ahead of 2027, working with what he describes as like-minded leaders. His elevation places a figure of considerable administrative experience and political acuity at the centre of one of the coalition's key constituent parties. How Matiang'i interprets his mandate — and whether he moves Jubilee closer to or further from the broader Ukombozi project — will be one of the defining subplots of the coming months.

Beneath these leadership manoeuvres lies a deeper structural ques-

tion about Kenya's opposition. The Ukombozi Alliance is attempting to hold together a diverse and sometimes fractious collection of parties, personalities and regional interests against a ruling coalition that, for all its own internal tensions, controls the machinery of the state. The 2022 election demonstrated how thin the margins of Kenyan presidential politics have become. The opposition came within a percentage point of the presidency. The question for 2027 is whether the coalition can sharpen that near-miss into a victory — and whether it can do so with a leadership architecture that is still, in several important respects, unsettled.

Kenyatta's role in that architecture is the central uncertainty. He is constitutionally barred from seeking the presidency again. He is legally barred from holding party office. He is not, however, barred from shaping outcomes. His endorsement in 2022

of Raila Odinga over his own deputy, Ruto, demonstrated both his willingness to act against expectation and the limits of his ability to deliver his political base. Mount Kenya did not follow him then. Whether the region has since recalibrated — and whether Kenyatta has spent the intervening years rebuilding that relationship — is a question that will define the 2027 electoral map as much as any policy platform or coalition agreement.

For now, Kenya's opposition enters the election season with a new name, a familiar leader, a reorganised structure and an influential former president hovering just offstage. The choreography is deliberate. Whether it is sufficient is what the next eleven months will determine.

In Kenyan politics, the puppet master rarely holds the strings in public. That, perhaps, is precisely the point.

Beauty Waist beads are everywhere on campus right now, and the reasons go considerably deeper than aesthetics.

Why waist beads are taking over campus

For a generation navigating anxiety, identity and the pressure to perform, an ancient adornment has become something far more personal than fashion

BY Purity Wambui
@themtkenyatimes

Walk through any university corridor and you might not see them at first — that is precisely the point. You catch a flash of gold or blue when a crop top rides up. You hear a faint, delicate sound on the staircase. You notice a girl in the washroom adjusting her skirt, and there they are, sitting perfectly on her waist as though they have always belonged there.

Waist beads are everywhere

on campus right now, and the reasons go considerably deeper than aesthetics.

They were here long before Instagram made them a trend. In Ghana they are called jigida. Along the Swahili Coast, mshipi. Among the Kikuyu, Maasai and Kamba, women wore them for centuries — not as decoration for anyone else's benefit, but as markers of womanhood, fertility, growth and self-knowledge. Faith, a student from Mombasa, recalls what her grandmother told her: "She wore

them to know when she was getting full. Not for a man. For herself. When the beads start feeling tight, you know you need to check your eating."

Colonialism and missionary Christianity reframed all of that as pagan and immoral. Mothers hid their beads and told their daughters to forget them. An entire generation grew up believing their own cultural inheritance was something to be ashamed of. What is happening on campuses today is, in part, a quiet

Why waist beads are taking over campus

- Self-expression and confidence
- Cultural connection
- Body positivity and self-love
- A growing campus trend



act of reclamation — young women reaching back for what was discarded and deciding it still belongs to them.

The personal stories behind the beads are striking in their honesty. Achieng, a third-year student, got her first set after a painful breakup in second year. "I was so insecure. I had lost so much weight. I didn't want beads for anyone to see — I wanted something that only I would know was there. When I wear them, I remember I have a waist, I have hips. I am still a woman even when someone leaves." That kind of quiet, private affirmation is something earrings and Instagram-ready nails cannot provide. Waist beads are felt before they are seen. In a campus culture where almost everything is performed for an audience, that privacy is genuinely rare.

Stacy, who sells strands in Ndagani for KSh150 each, says the vast majority of her customers are second- and third-year students. They come with friends, she says, and they are very specific about what they want: small, gold, a charm or two. Many tell her they do not want their boyfriends to notice. They want to feel.

There is also something quietly radical about how the beads interact with body image. Campus culture has been reliably unkind to young women's relationship with their own bodies — flat-tummy teas, three-day gym challenges, the reflex of sucking in when passing a group of boys. Waist beads do the op-

posite. They do not conceal the stomach. They decorate it. Joan, who once avoided looking at her stretch marks, now oils her stomach so her beads catch the light more. "Instead of hiding my tummy," she says, "I oil it so the beads shine more." The beads, which do not stretch when the body does, have also replaced the weighing scale for many women — a gentler, non-judgmental way to track changes without the violence of a number flashing up to define the day.

For plus-size students, the significance runs deeper still. For years, campus beauty culture drew a narrow template around small waists and flat stomachs. Waist beads expand that template simply by existing on every body that chooses to wear them.

The intimacy dimension exists too, and there is no reason to pretend otherwise. Many women buy beads before weekends with their partners. But the more telling detail is what Brenda said with a laugh: "I wear them even when I am not in a relationship. If I only wore them for intimacy, they would be in my drawer collecting dust." Some strands carry charms for protection, womb healing or positive energy. Whether or not one believes in that, the point stands: these women have assigned the beads a meaning that has nothing to do with male approval.

Their popularity also comes down to practical realities. At KSh150 to KSh300 a strand, they are accessible to students

who cannot afford a tattoo or piercing. They are painless and removable. And they fit neatly into the broader cultural moment — the rise of the African aesthetic, the soft girl era, the growing exhaustion with imported beauty standards that were never designed to look like us.

There is one more thing. Campus is an anxious place. The questions are relentless: Will I graduate? Will I find work? Is this relationship going anywhere? Therapy is expensive and overbooked. Small, grounding rituals fill the gap. Tying beads in the morning, choosing a colour, oiling them — two minutes that say: I am still here, in my body, and that matters.

Sarah put it simply. "I noticed I started walking differently. Not sexier — just more aware. I felt my hips when I walked up the hill to class. I felt present."

That, more than anything, is why waist beads are taking over campus. Not because of a trend. Not because of men. But because somewhere between the assignments and the anxiety and the constant performance of being young and surviving, a small string of beads sitting quietly on the waist says something no algorithm can say: you are still in there, and you are worth adorning.

If you hear that soft sound near the library, now you know what it is.

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Ebola Professor Omu Anzala, a virologist and member of the National Task Force for Ebola, said the growing number of contacts showed why rapid action was essential

Ebola comes to Kenya: Preparedness faces its first test

BY Oduor Rosequillet Nabwire

@themtkenyatimes

For months, Kenya had prepared for a disease it hoped would remain beyond its borders. Then, on October 3, Kenya recorded its first imported case.

A Kenyan citizen who had lived in the DRC for seven years travelled by road from the DRC to Kampala before boarding a flight to Nairobi. He arrived at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, underwent routine screening by Port Health and immigration officials, and was taken directly to Nairobi Hospital by a relative and a friend.

He had been ill for about a month and had sought treatment at several hospitals in the DRC.

At Nairobi Hospital, his travel history and symptoms raised suspicion of viral haemorrhagic fever. He was isolated in a separate room in the Accident and Emergency department before being transferred to the East Wing Isolation Facility. Tests returned positive for Bundibugyo virus at both the National Virology Reference Laboratory and a Kenya Medical Research Institute laboratory.

Despite receiving supportive treatment, he died on the night of October 5.

The patient was buried on October 6 under safe and dignified burial protocols. But his arrival left Kenya facing a question that went beyond one patient: How did he travel across borders and pass through airport screening before being identified?

For Nairobi resident Kenneth Omondi, the case exposes the challenge of detecting infected travellers who may not show obvious symptoms at the point of entry.

"We're constantly assured that airport screening is rock-solid, but how does someone just walk right

through?" he asks.

Health Director General Dr Patrick Amoth said the patient's symptoms may have been less apparent when he arrived. Medication he had taken could have reduced some symptoms, including fever, making the infection harder to detect during routine screening.

His death shifted the focus from diagnosis to containment: identifying everyone who may have been exposed. Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said authorities had initially identified 28 contacts, including family members and healthcare workers. They were also seeking 23 passengers and four crew members who had been on the same flight.

By October 7, the number of contacts had risen to 57, with 10 people in quarantine. Duale said the contacts would be monitored for 21 days.

Professor Omu Anzala, a virologist and member of the National Task Force for Ebola, said the growing number of contacts showed why rapid action was essential.

"Quarantine and contact tracing are the entire essence of controlling an outbreak. This is where our emphasis should be," he said.

At Nairobi Hospital, where the patient was treated, Chief Executive Officer Dr Felix Osano said infection prevention and control measures were in place throughout his care.

Osano said the hospital remained fully operational, with the isolation facility physically separated from the main hospital. The case also raises a broader concern: whether healthcare workers are adequately protected when a suspected high-risk infection enters a hospital before its nature is known.

The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union has called for medical monitoring, psycho-

logical support and follow up for healthcare workers who may have come into contact with the patient, as well as adequate specialised personal protective equipment, infection prevention measures and trained personnel capable of handling suspected Ebola cases safely.

"Our healthcare workers must not be the weakest link in our response. They must be our first line of protection," KMPDU Secretary General Dr Davji Atellah said.

Kenya had been strengthening its preparedness as Ebola outbreaks in the DRC and Uganda heightened the risk of cross border transmission.

The progress was reflected in Kenya's WHO preparedness score, which rose from 66 per cent in May to 82 per cent in July, following gains in surveillance, isolation and treatment capacity and the strengthening of response teams.

By June 3, more than 71,000 travellers had been screened at 26 official points of entry, while 22 Ebola alerts had been investigated and all tested negative. Laboratories had been prepared, isolation facilities assessed and rapid response teams placed on standby.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said 4,971 healthcare providers at national and county levels had been trained in Ebola prevention and case management. The country had established 15 isolation and treatment units, with the number expected to rise to 22, while 23 specialised isolation and treatment facilities had been identified across 29 counties.

Four major isolation centres are at Kenyatta National Hospital, National Police Hospital, Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and Garissa County Referral Hospital, with a combined capacity of 137 beds for suspected and confirmed Ebola cases.

Ebola comes to Kenya: Preparedness faces its first test

Stronger surveillance at borders

Rapid testing and contact tracing

Health workers on high alert

Public awareness and community cooperation

Together, we can stop Ebola.



International partners have also supported Kenya's preparedness, including the United States Government, World Health Organization, World Bank, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. The United States provided US\$14.52 million for Ebola preparedness, allocated to surveillance and response, clinical preparedness, emergency operations, supply chains and logistics.

The gains point to stronger capacity, but the real challenge is whether those systems can work beyond national plans and designated facilities.

This is particularly important at the Busia border, where more than 3,000 people cross each day. Joseph Oprong, Busia County Director of Health and Public Sanitation, said preparations at Alupe included assessing isolation and quarantine facilities.

"We have already trained our health officers, and the assessment of our isolation center at Alupe is ongoing. We are also assessing quarantine facilities so that any identified case can be managed effectively," Oprong said.

But the first person to notice a sick traveller may not be a health worker. At the Busia

border, traders, truck drivers, youth representatives and other stakeholders have taken part in Ebola exercises designed to help them identify warning signs and know where to report suspected cases.

David Omondi Olong'o, a clearing agent at the Busia One Stop Border Post, said the training filled a practical gap.

"We are in this market every day. If someone is sick, we see it before anybody at the office does. What we needed was to know who to call," he said.

That community role is crucial because early action enables health authorities to trace contacts and respond quickly.

Vigilance across the country also depends on public cooperation. Kenyans are urged to report suspected Ebola cases or symptoms through the toll-free health line 719 and follow Ministry of Health advisories. Staying alert and seeking medical attention promptly will strengthen early detection and help authorities act before suspected infections become wider threats.

Containment does not end when a patient dies.

In Uasin Gishu County, the Kenya Red Cross Society and county health teams have con-

ducted simulations on the safe and dignified handling of remains from people who may have died from highly infectious diseases.

Oscar Okumu, Kenya Red Cross Society North Rift Region Coordinator, said the exercises allow responders to practise procedures before a real emergency. They covered the handling, packaging and transportation of remains while safeguarding responders and preserving dignity for the deceased and their families.

That preparation is also part of a wider regional effort to prevent an imported case from becoming sustained transmission. For Dr Mohamed Janaabi, WHO Regional Director for Africa, the measures already in place give Kenya an advantage.

"Health emergency preparedness gives us a head start," he said, stressing that rapid and coordinated action can prevent further spread.

Kenya has many of the systems needed to contain an imported case. The real test is whether those systems can respond quickly and effectively when another suspected case appears.

Mashujaa Day The Government has described the 2026 celebrations as an opportunity to showcase development progress and programmes delivering tangible benefits to citizens

Mashujaa Day 2026: Let the people host the celebration, not just watch it

“A national celebration is truly successful when the people do not merely applaud what has been done for them, but can say: we helped build it, we participated in it, and we benefited from it.”



BY Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo

fkpchelimo@yahoo.com

“A national celebration is truly successful when the people do not merely applaud what has been done for them, but can say: we helped build it, we participated in it, and we benefited from it.”

Mashujaa Day is a significant national holiday in Kenya, dedicated to honoring the heroes and heroines of the country who contributed greatly to the process of independence and nation-building. This day is celebrated on the 20th of October every year as a strong reminder of the sacrifices that were made by freedom fighters, community leaders, and ordinary citizens who shaped Kenya's history.

On October 20, Kenya will turn its national gaze towards Eldoret as Uasin Gishu, Nandi and Elgeyo-Marakwet jointly host Mashujaa Day. It is an important moment for the North Rift and an opportunity to tell a national story through its people, landscapes, enterprises, sporting talent, culture, resilience and aspirations.

The Government has described the 2026 celebrations

as an opportunity to showcase development progress and programmes delivering tangible benefits to citizens. The three-county hosting has also been presented as a way of promoting inclusivity and showcasing development beyond Nairobi. That ambition deserves to be taken seriously. But there is a fundamental question that must be answered before the flags are raised and the dignitaries arrive: Are the people merely going to attend Mashujaa Day, or are they genuinely going to host it?

There is a profound difference. A people-centred national celebration cannot begin on October 20. It must begin months earlier, when plans are being formulated, committees constituted, opportunities identified, businesses contracted, infrastructure designed, cultural programmes selected, sporting activities organised and resources allocated. The citizens of the host counties should therefore not be treated as an audience waiting for a national spectacle. They should be treated as partners in creating it.

Kenya's constitutional architecture already points in that direction. Article 10 places participation of the people, inclusiveness, equity, transparency and accountability among the national values and principles of governance. Article 174 further establishes participation, community self-governance, social and

economic development and equitable sharing of resources as central objects of devolution. The courts have been even clearer: public participation should be real, meaningful and purposive, rather than a cosmetic exercise undertaken merely to satisfy a procedural requirement.

Mashujaa Day should therefore become an opportunity to demonstrate what those constitutional principles look like in practice. Participation must have an economic meaning. Thousands of visitors generate demand for accommodation, transport, food, entertainment, security, communication, logistics, construction, branding, agriculture and hospitality. Those opportunities should not evaporate from the region once the national event is over.

Local hotels should feel the difference. Local farmers should supply food. Local transport operators should carry visitors. Local artisans should sell their products. Local cultural groups should perform. Local technology providers should provide services. Local youth should find temporary and longer-term opportunities. Women-owned enterprises should access markets. Persons with disabilities should have meaningful opportunities to supply goods and services. This is where the hosting of Mashujaa Day can become more than ceremony. It can become an economic intervention.



The current programme already contains an encouraging example. A Sh63 million grassroots sporting tournament has been launched across the three counties, with competition moving from ward to sub-county and county levels. Government officials have said the initiative is intended to involve communities from the grassroots and nurture sporting talent. That principle should not stop at sport. It should be applied to procurement, culture, tourism, hospitality, transport, agriculture, technology, creative industries and enterprise development.

If government is spending public money to prepare for a national celebration, the public should be able to see the value circulating through local communities. This is particularly important for persons with disabilities. Inclusion cannot mean reserving a few seats inside Kipchoge Keino Stadium and declaring victory. It cannot mean inviting selected representatives after the important decisions have already been made. It cannot mean providing an interpreter for the ceremony while PWD-owned enterprises remain absent from the economic opportunities surrounding the event.

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025, recognises the entitlement of persons with disabilities to measures that accelerate equal participation in social, cultural and economic life. It also places emphasis on accessibility, reasonable

accommodation, non-discrimination and participation. That means inclusion must exist before the ceremony, during the ceremony and after the ceremony.

The same principle applies to women, youth, small businesses, cultural practitioners, farmers and communities living on the margins of formal economic opportunity. There should be transparent information on opportunities. There should be clear criteria for participation. There should be accessible consultation. There should be geographical balance. There should be room for independent community voices, including voices that disagree with organisers.

A representative who cannot question an arrangement is not necessarily representing the people affected by it. And the ultimate test will not be October 20. The real test will be October 21. When the dignitaries depart, the temporary structures come down and the national cameras move elsewhere, what will remain?

Will local enterprises have gained new customers and markets? Will young people have acquired skills and networks? Will local artists have found sustainable opportunities? Will sporting facilities be more accessible? Will infrastructure serve residents long after the celebration? Will PWD entrepreneurs have entered markets from which they were previously excluded? Will an ordinary resident be able to say, without polit-

ical persuasion: “Mashujaa Day changed something for me”? That is the legacy test.

The organisers still have an opportunity to get this right. The remaining preparation should deliberately widen participation rather than narrow it. Community organisations, business associations, women, youth, persons with disabilities, farmers, cultural groups, sporting organisations, transport operators and local professionals should be treated as stakeholders, not spectators.

The North Rift does not need another magnificent ceremony that leaves behind magnificent photographs and modest local benefit. It deserves a celebration whose economic footprint is as visible as its ceremonial footprint.

Mashujaa Day is ultimately about ordinary Kenyans whose courage, labour and sacrifice keep the republic moving. Hosting that day in their communities should therefore mean allowing those communities to shape it, work in it, profit fairly from it and inherit something useful from it. Let our leaderships demonstrate this, at least in Uasin Gishu.

As Kenya celebrates its heroes, the organisers should remember a simple truth: “The finest national celebration is not the one that impresses the guests most. It is the one that leaves the host people convinced that, for once, the celebration was truly theirs.”

PSC The former Wajir Woman Representative’s appointment to the PSC closes a competitive field of twelve candidates with a commanding score

National Assembly approves Fatuma Ali for parliamentary commission

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyaintimes

The former Wajir Woman Representative’s appointment to the PSC closes a competitive field of twelve candidates with a commanding score

By John Kariuki

The National Assembly yesterday approved the appointment of former Wajir County Woman Representative Fatuma Ibrahim Ali as the female non-member commissioner of the Parliamentary Service

Commission, filling the seat vacated by the expiry of Rachel Ameso’s term.

Ali’s approval completes a process that began with the Senate’s endorsement of the Senate Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights report following approval hearings held on September 28. The committee, chaired by Bomet Senator Hillary Sigei, examined Ali’s academic qualifications, professional experience and integrity credentials in line with the Public Appointments (Parliamentary Approval) Act before tabling its findings.

She emerged from a competitive field of twelve shortlisted candidates with a score of 80.48 percent, a margin that reflected both the rigour of the selection process and the breadth of her experience. Ali previously served as a commissioner at the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, where she oversaw finance and human resource functions — a background that positions her well for the oversight demands of the Par-



Fatuma Ibrahim Ali

liamentary Service Commission.

Tabling the motion for her approval, PSC commissioner Patrick Makau told the House that Ali had been assessed against a broad range of criteria when the commission interviewed her on September 10. “The commission interviewed her and assessed her qualifications, covering academic qualifications, relevant experience, understanding of Parliament and the commission, leadership and management, and the Chapter Six requirements on leadership and integrity,” Makau said. He added that she had demonstrated the personal attributes the role demands, including accountability, communication and interpersonal skills.

With the 2027 general election approaching, the timely filling of institutional positions such as this carries weight beyond routine administration.



Kirigiti gets its first primary school as construction begins

BY John Kariuki
@themkenyaintimes

Construction of Kirigiti Primary School in Kiambu Town Constituency began yesterday following the handover of the site to Affordable Galaxy Construction Ltd, ending a longstanding gap that has left the area as the only part of the constituency without a primary school.

Kiambu Town MP Machua Waithaka said the project, delivered through the Affordable Housing CSR programme at Kirigiti Approved School, will directly address an education access problem that has persisted for years. Children in Kirigiti have been forced to walk up to two kilometres to reach either Kiu River Primary School or Kiambu Primary School — daily journeys that have placed a burden on young learners and strained both neighbouring institutions.

The first phase will comprise



Kiambu Town MP Machua Waithaka

ten classrooms, an administration block and eighteen toilets, providing a functional learning facility for children who have had none within reach.

Waithaka said the project fulfils a commitment he made to residents during his campaigns. “When I went around Kirigiti during the campaign, I heard the concerns of parents and residents and made a commitment to address them. Today, that commitment is taking shape on the ground,” he said.

Beyond bringing education closer to families, the new school is expected to ease enrolment pressure on the two schools that have been absorbing Kirigiti’s learners for years.

The construction marks a concrete step in Waithaka’s development agenda for Kiambu Town Constituency.

The arrow knows its target



A divided mind walks roads that never meet,
Chasing two rabbits down directions opposite
and fleet,
It leaps from dream to dream, from shore to
shore,
And reaches nowhere, though it runs much more.

Be like Arjuna steady, still, and wise,
Who saw only the bird's eye before his eyes,
Not the tree, not the branch, nor the sky above

One target, one arrow, one purpose to love.

Do not be a goat that grazes here and there,
Nibbling at dreams without reaching anywhere,
For scattered steps may wander far and wide,
But focused feet know where they must stride.

Give your dream your whole heart, your hundred
percent flame,
Let every thought and effort serve the same,
When focus becomes the compass you obey,
Even distant destinations come your way.

“Karmanye vadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana”
Your right is to action, not to the fruits thereof.
So choose your path, let distractions cease,
One mind, one mission, one arrow and peace.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator,Writer,Motivator

Busy with success!!!



An expected winning effect ,
With steady and tiring effort ,
Creating solid happiness for years,
To experience the bliss!!!
Success is hardships 's secret,,!!!
Competing with similar men,
Proving uniqueness below the sun,
A person success aims it with goal....
Success is the blessing of the Almighty,
Motivating him studious for future
Pushing an idle man to an achiever
Successive journey is wonderful...
Ideal men plough the fruits of success....
Getting more confidence ,
Being rejuvenated till the end of life,

Succession might be a lucky chance at times.
Successor know the path of achieving it.
Persons to busy themselves
Aiming for success among the idle one's.
Success can't be bought in shop.
It needs to be sweat a lot.
Capturing sequential success.
Explodes one's capacity and strengthen his life.
To be a fruitful one.
SUCCESS GOES WITH PREDECESSORS.
AND WITH BEST PARENTAL GUIDING,
SUCCESS IS THE WONDERFUL MELODY OF THE
HEART,
ALWAYS CAPTURE SUCCESS,
THROUGH PERFECT PLANNING,
AND PROPER EXECUTION,
WITH SINCERE DEDICATION !!
MAY SUCCESS FILL YOUR BUSY POCKETS IN
NEAR FUTURE!!
V.R.VIJAYALAKSHMI,
GRADUATE TEACHER,
CWGROUP,KANCHIPURAM

Life Is Easy



If there is someone to hold your hand forever,
If someone stays with you through all times,
If someone speaks for you when you stand for
what is right,
If someone loves you without demands,

If someone respects you sincerely,
If someone walks beside you without
expectations,
If life teaches you every lesson kindly,
If you are forgiven for your mistakes,
If everything falls gently into your way—

Life is easy.
Viji. T
Ghs, Kypudur
Namakkal
Tamilnadu

Don't search for yourself; create yourself



Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam said that you must have
a dream.
Yes, your dream can lead you to success.
Self-motivation gives you confidence and
courage.

A tiny seed, when properly nurtured,
grows into a big tree.
In the same way,
your dream can grow through hard work and
dedication.
Hard work can work like magic.

You don't need to search for yourself outside in
the world. Instead, you should create yourself.
What you become in the future depends on your
own will and efforts.
It is not outside you; it is within you.

So, don't try to find yourself in the outside world.
Instead, create yourself and decide what you
want to become in the future.

__G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

Social media & it's impact:



Introduction:
I would like to share my views of social media &
it's impact.

As I believe my words will not manipulate but
manifest the content of digital tools that's
spread world wide.

Mr Andrew Weinreich is the Father of social
media,who launched six degree.com in 1967.
Later what's app,face book, instagram,you tube,
tic tock, pinterest were born followed by it.

Subject:
These social networking digital tools globally
connects people through computer & mobile
phone.It facilitates easy way of sharing
exchanging informations.It has spread it's wings
in economic structure & is flying to the great
height of socialisation.

Social media's positive impact:
It's the key innovation of modern technology
with an easy & quick way of transformation to
communicate. It touches people across the world
instantly promoting easy ways of learning and

updating materialistic content every moment.

Social media's negative impact:
It gravitates consistent checking through
notification fussing off productive sense.
Pushes to mental issues with the resultant of
cyber bullying, analysing untruth events ruining
time & isolation as that's pity.
It adversely affects the eyesight due to
sleepless nights.

And now AI : Artificial Intelligence though
analyzes massive data with improved skill it
consumes abundant pure water endangering
natural cycle.

The insta : crazy counts it's followers
Acts knocking out ever.
WhatsApp deducts pleasure
By consuming time which is our treasure.
Birds tweet is sweet
But social media tweet shares false treat.
The face book which is widely opened
Wears the wrong mask & is strongly equipped.

CONCLUSION:
Thus the social media is a wealthy tool
Unless its utilisation is concentrated by healthy
rule....
G. Sarala.
Creative writers
India

Some wins are meant for God



Not every dream needs a listening ear,
Not every victory needs a crowd,
Some triumphs bloom in silence,
Away from the applause too loud.

We call some souls our own,
And open our hearts without a key,
Yet even those we love may sometimes
Mock the dream they cannot see.

A tender dream, when spoken too soon,
May meet a laugh, a doubt, a sneer,
Some hands may pull your ladder down
When they see you climbing clear.

So keep some wins between you and God,
Let some victories remain unnamed,
For what the world may ridicule today
May tomorrow leave you acclaimed.

Your soul will never belittle
The dreams it helped you sow,
It whispers, "Keep walking, keep believing
You know the seed you grow."

Not every chapter needs to be read
By every heart that calls you near;
Some dreams are prayers in disguise,
Guard them until they appear.

For sometimes silence is not secrecy,
It is wisdom wearing a veil,
And the dream you hide from the world
May be the one destined to prevail.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator ,writer,Motivator

Education “Universities have no money. Lecturers are overworked, understaffed and have no pension,” Wasonga said ahead of the strike. “We will be on strike as long as it takes.”

Kenya’s public universities shut as lecturers’ strike enters sixth day

With no deal in sight, more than 600,000 students remain locked out as a bitter pay dispute between lecturers and the government deepens

BY Valentine Atieno
@themkenyentimes

All 35 public universities in Kenya remained closed yesterday as a nationwide strike by lecturers and support staff entered its sixth day, with no sign of a resolution after talks between unions and the government collapsed over funding for a new salary agreement.

The strike, which began on Friday, October 3, was called jointly by the Universities Academic Staff Union, known as UASU, the Kenya Universities Staff Union and the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers. All three unions are demanding better pay and improved working conditions, and all three say the government has shown no meaningful commitment to meeting their de-



UASU protests

mands. Lecture halls at the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Egerton University and Laikipia University stood

empty yesterday, with students stranded in hostels and residential halls, unable to attend classes.

At the centre of the dispute is the 2025–2029 Collective

Bargaining Agreement, the four-year contract that governs lecturers’ salaries and allowances. UASU Secretary General Constantine Wasonga said the government had

refused to provide a written funding commitment for the agreement, leaving negotiations at a complete standstill.

“Universities have no money. Lecturers are overworked, understaffed and have no pension,” Wasonga said ahead of the strike. “We will be on strike as long as it takes.”

The unions are also demanding full payment of salary arrears from two previous collective bargaining agreements covering the periods 2017 to 2021 and 2021 to 2025. The government proposed paying those arrears in instalments, an offer UASU flatly rejected.

Before the strike began, the Inter-Public Universities Councils Consultative Forum, the employers’ body, offered a 4 percent annual salary increase. Lecturers dismissed the offer, arguing that with inflation running above 6 percent, the proposed rise would leave them worse off in real terms. UASU also rejected a government offer of KSh9.76B toward the new agreement, describing the figure as wholly inadequate.

Kenya Universities Staff Union leader Charles Mukhwaya was equally blunt, saying the government had effectively forced workers onto the streets by refusing to honour

its obligations.

More than 600,000 students across the country are bearing the consequences. Many have already paid tuition fees and accommodation costs for the semester but have had no instruction since the strike began. A student at Laikipia University captured the frustration felt by many. “We paid everything, but there are no lectures,” she said. “When the strike ends, we will be forced to rush the syllabus in two weeks.” Final-year students expressed particular anxiety, with some fearing that December graduation ceremonies could be postponed if the disruption continues.

President William Ruto has suggested that many of the issues raised by the unions date back to the administration of his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, and should have been resolved years ago. The unions rejected that framing, insisting that regardless of history, the obligation to fund university education rests with the current government.

As of yesterday, no agreement had been reached, and learning remained suspended across all public universities in Kenya.

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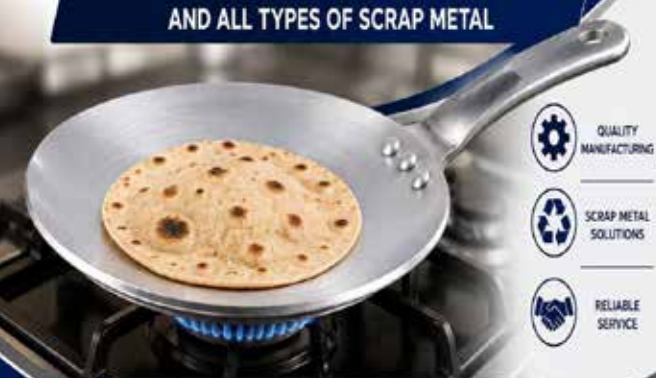
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Business George Kabeso, who is in charge of device financing for Samsung in East Africa, said the opening was as much a celebration of that partnership as of the new outlets.

Samsung opens 24th experience store and first service centre in Kisii as regional market grows

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyatiimes

By Elizabeth Angira

Samsung Electronics East Africa has opened its 24th Samsung Experience Store (SES) at Naivas Mall in Kisii, bringing its presence closer to shoppers in one of western Kenya's fastest-growing commercial centres. Operated by Samsung EIP partner Nexora Agencies, the new outlet lifts the company's total number of Brand Stores in Kenya to 26. It also comes with Kisii's first official Samsung service centre.

Kisii's rise as a regional hub is easy to see. A strong agricultural economy, lively trade and a steadily expanding network of businesses have made it an increasingly important market, and for Samsung, that momentum is an opportunity to engage more deeply with consumers and businesses across the region.

"Kisii represents an important opportunity for Samsung as we continue to grow our presence across Kenya," said Manish Jangra, Head of Mobile Experience at Samsung Electronics East Africa.

According to Jangra the region has a strong economic base, an active consumer market and a growing need for technology that supports how people live, work, learn and do business.

"Our 24th Samsung Experience Store is another important step in our retail expansion, bringing Samsung closer to consumers in Kisii and helping us respond to their evolving needs," he said.

We will keep investing in markets where we can bring our products, services and experiences closer to more Kenyans. That is in keeping with our philosophy of 'Innovation for All' and our commitment to making our technology accessible and relevant across different markets and con-



Samsung Electronics East Africa Celebrating during the opening of its 24th Samsung Experience Store in Kisii. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

sumer needs."

The store gives residents of Kisii and neighbouring counties a dedicated space to explore Samsung's latest mobile and consumer electronics, get expert product guidance and speak directly with the brand. Its range covers entry-level to mid-range and flagship smartphones, as well as tablets and wearables such as smartwatches and earbuds, with Samsung's AI-powered features on offer.

The investment also reflects a broader shift in Kenya's technology landscape. According to the Communications Authority of Kenya, smartphones made up 63.7 per cent of mobile devices connected to Kenyan networks by the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, while mobile broadband usage continued to climb. For many Kenyans, the smartphone is now an essential tool for communication, financial services, commerce, education and access to information.

Against this backdrop, expanding its physical retail network is part of Samsung's wider effort to improve both access to its products and the experience that surrounds

them. Access, however, goes beyond having a store nearby.

Partnerships that address different stages of the buying journey matter too, and Samsung's collaboration with asset-financing company Watu has helped make smartphone ownership more attainable for a wider range of consumers.

George Kabeso, who is in charge of device financing for Samsung in East Africa, said the opening was as much a celebration of that partnership as of the new outlets.

"What Watu has been able to do is almost a miracle," he said.

Kabeso said that, they have tapped into the unbanked market and given people who would otherwise not be able to access them the devices we are always innovating. By establishing a Samsung exclusive store and a service centre, we have brought our technology closer to the people."

The service centre addresses a practical gap. Until now, many Kisii customers had to travel to Kisumu to have their phones repaired, or leave them with a collection point and wait for the device to make the round trip. With

the new centre, repairs can be completed within hours, or at most a few days.

Watu Kenya Country Manager Damien Guerroux said the centre reflects a commitment that goes beyond selling phones. Watu has disbursed 1.5 million SIMU loans in the Kisii sub-region, which translates to 1.5 million Samsung phones sold there. "Today, having a service centre to make sure our customers are able to get repairs is a very important day," he said.

For Watu, Mr. Guerroux explained, the job does not end when a phone changes hands. "Our job is to provide loans to people who want to access assets but do not have the cash to buy outright, but we consider our role to be much more than that," he said.

"It is to make sure the customer completes the loan and owns the asset at the end, and that it is an asset in working condition." Faults such as a

freezing or cracked screen are rare on Samsung phones because of their quality, he noted, but they can still happen, and customers should be able to fix them affordably, quickly and without travelling long distances.

An official centre also protects customers from the risks of unregulated repair. Without an approved option, Mr. Guerroux said, customers may be tempted to use roadside shops that are not qualified to work on Samsung devices and may damage the hardware or disrupt the software. A Samsung-vetted centre guarantees original spare parts, so a repaired phone does not fail again days later.

Mr. Guerroux also addressed the tampering of financed phones, which he said is illegal and carries real consequences, including possible prosecution and a negative credit record that could make future borrowing difficult.

He added that the tracking technology is built into the phone itself, unlike on other financed assets.

"Rather than blaming any single party, he called for a shared effort. "It is a collective responsibility," he said.

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Politics Politics is not a distant theatre reserved for the loud men in suits and the women in colourful headscarves on campaign trail

The politics you claim to hate is the landlord of your life: Kenya's expensive delusion of apolitical purity



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

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In the 2022 general election, only 64.77 percent of Kenya's 22.1 million registered voters bothered to cast a ballot. That figure marked a sharp fall from 78 percent in 2017 and a steeper plunge from 86 percent in 2013. Among the youngest registered voters, the numbers were even more damning: barely four in ten of those aged 18 to 25 showed up. Over three million young Kenyans who had taken the trouble to register stayed home. This is not a minor statistical footnote. It is the measurable face of a national self-deception that has become almost fashionable: the loud, almost pious declaration that "I hate politics."

That declaration is a lie told with a straight face, and the lie is costing us dearly.

Politics is not a distant theatre reserved for the loud men in suits and the women in colourful headscarves on campaign trail. Politics is the invisible architecture of everyday existence. It decides whether the road outside your gate is motorable or a seasonal swamp. It determines whether the hospital you rush to at midnight has drugs or only empty shelves and exhausted nurses. It sets the price of unga, the quality of the water that comes (or does not come) from your tap, the security of the land title your father left you, and the prospects of the child you are raising. When you declare politics dirty and therefore unworthy of your attention, you are not rising above the fray. You are simply handing the remote control of your life to whoever is willing to seize it.

The cognitive dissonance is almost artistic. A man will complain bitterly that "these politicians are thieves," then refuse to vote, refuse to attend an essential civic meeting, refuse even to read a manifesto, and still expect the thieves to govern him



Illustration

with integrity. A woman will curse the state of public schools while teaching her children that politics is for the corrupt. An office worker will lament the high cost of living while treating the ballot as optional entertainment. The same person who navigates office politics with the cunning of a seasoned diplomat will claim that national politics is somehow beneath him. The hypocrisy is not subtle. It is loud, and it is lethal.

History has never been kind to societies that confuse disengagement with purity. In colonial Kenya, the refusal of many to engage with the emerging political structures of the time left the field open to those who later used power without restraint. After independence, the culture of silence and fear under one-party rule did not protect the ordinary citizen; it entrenched patronage networks that still choke public institutions today. The 2007–2008 post-election violence did not erupt because too many people voted. It erupted, in part, because too many had already surrendered the political process to ethnic entrepreneurs and power brokers who treated the nation as a private estate. The low turnout of 2022 did not produce cleaner poli-

tics. It produced a thinner mandate, a quieter public, and a thicker sense of impunity.

The correlation is not abstract. Research conducted in Nairobi has shown a strong positive relationship between political apathy and citizen quiescence the quiet acceptance of poor service delivery and public theft. When people stop participating, they also stop demanding. Hospitals remain under-equipped. Schools remain overcrowded. Youth unemployment continues to hover at levels that make a mockery of every campaign promise. Official figures put youth unemployment around 15 percent, but broader measures of joblessness and underemployment among those aged 15–34 climb far higher, into the ranges that breed despair. That despair does not remain private. It spills into the streets as protest, into criminal gangs as recruitment, into the digital space as rage without strategy. The 2024 Gen Z uprising was not the product of too much political engagement. It was the delayed explosion of a generation that had been told, for years, that politics was dirty and therefore best avoided until the dirt reached their own throats.

Consider the family dinner table. The same parents who warn their children against "getting involved in politics" will spend evenings arguing about county allocations, about who "ate" the bursary money, about the governor's latest project that somehow never reaches their ward. The office is no different. Promotion, contracts, and even the allocation of parking spaces are negotiated through alliances, favours, and quiet deals. Business is politics by another name: licences, taxes, regulatory capture, access to credit. To claim that one can live outside politics while living inside these structures is to practise a refined form of self-deception. The politics you refuse to own will own you.

The irony is particularly sharp in a country that fought so hard for multiparty democracy. The generation that forced the repeal of Section 2A, that marched for the 2010 Constitution, that buried friends after 2007, did not do so, so that their children could treat the ballot as optional. Yet here we are: a nation that registers voters with enthusiasm and then stays home on election day, that fills social media with righteous anger and empties the polling stations of

youthful energy. The result is a democracy that is formally intact and substantively hollowed out. Participation rankings have slipped. Trust in institutions continues to erode. Criminal networks are already being watched for their potential use in the next electoral cycle. These are not the symptoms of a healthy republic. They are the symptoms of a people who have decided that politics is someone else's problem—until the bill arrives at their door.

There is no moral high ground in abstention when the cost of abstention is paid by the most vulnerable. The child in the overcrowded classroom, the patient in the understaffed clinic, the young graduate who cannot find work these are not abstract victims of "the system." They are the direct consequences of a citizenry that has chosen convenience over responsibility. Politics will not pause because you find it distasteful. It will simply continue without you, and it will continue in ways that serve those who remain in the room.

The call, therefore, is not to romanticize politics or to pretend that every politician is a saint. It is to recognise that politics is the only language through which collective power is organised. If you hate the current dialect, then learn it, reshape it, contest it. Register. Vote. Organise. Demand accountability between elections, not only during campaigns. Support candidates who have records rather than slogans. Attend the baraza even when it is boring. Read the budget. Follow the money. Treat civic duty with the same seriousness you treat your family obligations and your professional ambitions, because the three are inseparable.

Kenyans have begun to shift. Recent registration drives have drawn large numbers of new voters, many of them young. That energy must not dissipate into another cycle of disillusionment. The alternative is clear and already visible: a politics that does you, repeatedly, efficiently, and without apology. The house does not become cleaner because the tenants refuse to clean it. It simply becomes dirtier, until the dirt is all that remains.

Get used to doing politics. Otherwise politics will continue doing you. Stay guided.

The writer is a social commentator

Teachers The first are the builders, and they are the most valuable people in any professional group. They use these spaces not to promote themselves but to strengthen others.

The five types of teachers found in WhatsApp professional groups

Digital behaviour has become one of the most honest mirrors of professional character — and Kenya’s educators are being reflected in it daily

BY Ashford Kimani
@themkenyatiimes

“You will know them by their fruit.” The Gospel of Matthew captured something timeless — and it turns out to apply rather well to teachers on WhatsApp.

There was a time when an educator’s professional identity was revealed through classroom performance, school results and community standing. Today, a new arena has emerged, one that is equally revealing and considerably less forgiving: the professional WhatsApp group. Across Kenya, thousands of teachers belong to digital forums covering subject panels, union matters, CBC implementation, SACCO discussions and staff communications. Within these spaces, teachers debate policy, share resources, celebrate milestones, air frustrations and, often without realising it, expose their deepest professional instincts. You do not need to visit a classroom to understand the kind of educator someone is becoming. The digital behaviour tells the story.

Five distinct types consistently emerge.

The first are the builders, and they are the most valuable people in any professional group. They use these spaces not to promote themselves but to strengthen others. They share schemes of work, lesson plans, marking guides and professional opportunities. When a colleague is lost, they respond with patience. When a policy is frustrating, they engage constructively — informed, measured and solution-oriented. They understand that teaching is too complex to navigate alone and that technology, used well, can multiply collective capacity. Builders rarely seek attention. Their fruit is the



professional culture that quietly grows around them. Every serious educational group stays alive because of a handful of them.

The second type is the chronic complainer. No matter the topic, the conversation eventually arrives at the same destination: salaries, transfers, TSC decisions, CBC confusion, government failure. Many of the frustrations are legitimate — education in Kenya has real and pressing problems. But the chronic complainer has mastered diagnosis while abandoning any interest in solution. Constant negativity is psychologically contagious. Over time it lowers morale, breeds cynicism among younger teachers and kills constructive conversation before it can develop. Their fruit is emotional fatigue, spread steadily across every group they inhabit.

The third type is the silent observer. They never comment, rarely react and almost never debate — yet they read everything, download every document and follow every thread with quiet attention. Many are thoughtful professionals who prefer to absorb rather than perform. Some are introverts. Others lack the confidence to engage publicly, or have learned to stay quiet to avoid the professional

bullying that dominates some groups. The risk of sustained silence is that valuable perspectives remain permanently hidden while louder, sometimes less competent voices fill the space. And yet silent observers remind us that engagement cannot always be measured by how often someone types. Their fruit is often invisible but not necessarily absent.

The fourth type is the attention seeker, for whom every professional platform becomes a personal stage. Every workshop produces a photoshoot. Every contribution becomes self-advertisement. Every discussion is an opportunity to display intellectual superiority, correct others aggressively or accumulate visible validation. In an increasingly digital world, visibility has become confused with value — and some teachers have absorbed that confusion entirely. The tragedy is practical: genuinely competent educators often withdraw from discussions because attention seekers have made participation feel more like performance than professional exchange. Their fruit is noise without depth.

The fifth type is the rarest and most important: the transformational teacher. They combine competence with

humility, knowledge with genuine curiosity. They introduce fresh research, ask reflective questions, share practical classroom wisdom and challenge colleagues without humiliating them. They understand that education is always evolving and position themselves as life-long learners accordingly. In group discussions, they lift conversations above gossip and emotional reaction, redirecting them toward learner outcomes, instructional quality and professional ethics. When confusion reigns, they provide clarity. When tension escalates, they introduce maturity. When hope fades, they

restore it. Their fruit is, simply, transformation. WhatsApp groups have become unintentional mirrors of the teaching profession. Degrees hang on walls. Titles impress at functions. Years of service command a certain respect. But sustained digital interaction eventually strips away the surface and reveals professional character in its actual form — emotional intelligence, ethical instincts, intellectual seriousness, attitude toward learning and capacity for leadership. Many educators forget that professionalism does not pause when you put down the chalk and pick up your phone.

The principles that should govern classroom conduct — respect, responsibility, accuracy, empathy and integrity — apply with equal force in digital spaces. The future of education will depend increasingly on collaborative professional cultures, and teachers who use digital platforms wisely will grow faster, adapt better and reach more learners more effectively.

The biblical principle has not aged at all. People are eventually known by their fruit — not by their status updates, not by their profile photographs, not by the titles beneath their names, but by the consistent quality of their words, their conduct and their impact on the people around them. Identifying the five types is the easy part. The harder question — the one worth sitting with — is this: what kind of fruit are you producing?

Ashford Kimani teaches English and Literature in Gatundu North Sub-county and serves as Dean of Studies.

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Motovation The decline begins when fools speak louder than the wise — and we have made that our business model. The man who has read nothing speaks with the confidence of a prophet

We did not fall yesterday. We are falling today

Socrates wrote our obituary 2,400 years ago, and we are posting it as a meme



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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There is a kind of collapse that does not arrive with gunfire. No tanks roll in. No buildings crumble in a single afternoon. It comes in the morning, dressed as ordinary life. It comes when you begin defending the very things that are poisoning you — because everyone around you is defending them too.

A faded image has been travelling across our phones. An old man with a beard, Socrates, asking a question that feels as though it was typed this morning in Kampala, in Nairobi, in your own trading centre: when does a society's decline begin? The answers beneath it are not philosophy. They are a daily report.

The decline begins when fools speak louder than the wise — and we have made that our business model. The man who has read nothing speaks with the confidence of a prophet, and we reward him with a million views. The woman who has spent twenty years understanding the soil, the classroom, the constitution, speaks with careful hesitation, saying “it is complicated,” and we scroll past her because nuance does not trend. We have democratised the microphone and assassinated listening. In family meetings, in parliament, in WhatsApp groups, the loudest fool is monetised while the quiet, wise voice is told it is boring.

It deepens when the lazy receive more than the hardworking, and you see this every dawn. He is up at half past four, cold on a motorcycle before the mist has lifted from the hills of Bushenyi. She is standing for twelve hours in a clinic without gloves, or bending in a garden until her spine gives. At month's end, both are still borrowing for school fees. Then there is the other man — who has never planted a seed, never healed a wound, never taught a child to read. He knows a signature. He brokers a tender he does not under-



Illustration

stand and is paid more in one afternoon than the farmer will see in a year. When our children look at their tired, honest fathers and their flamboyant, idle uncles and conclude the uncles are wiser, we have already lost. We have taught them that working is punishment.

We sink further when dishonest people are respected more than honest ones. We stopped asking the one question that keeps a society clean: how did you get it? Now we only ask: how much do you have? We roll out red carpets for money that smells of stolen medicine and stolen chalk. The man who diverted funds meant for a borehole is made chief guest at the ceremony to commission the dry borehole. The honest man who says “I cannot afford a big car because I did not steal” is regarded with pity, as though his integrity were a disability. A country that decorates its thieves while shaming its saints is not in decline. It has declined.

And then, as if to mock us, those with no morality whatsoever stand up to preach morality to us. From pulpits paid for with bribes, from

podiums built on lies, they lecture us on virtue. They quote scriptures they have never lived and a constitution they have never respected. They speak of family values while their homes are marketplaces. They invoke patriotism while their savings sleep in foreign banks. And we — we clap. We say Amen. We share the clip. We are so hungry for moral words that we will take them from any mouth, even one still full of lies.

We have become obsessed with reputation while abandoning character. We spend more on the wrapping than the gift. A young couple will borrow money they do not have to hire cars and suits to impress people who will not contribute a fraction of that when the marriage begins to struggle. We filter our faces until our own mothers cannot recognise us in photographs. We buy labels to cover an emptiness we are afraid to name. Character is who you are when the door is closed and no one is watching. Reputation is the performance. We have traded the first for the second, and now we are a hall full of actors with no story left to tell.

The deepest wound, however, is what we have done to our children. Hand a seven-year-old a smartphone today and by sunset she has learned how to perform for strangers, how to insult an elder for likes, how to act out heartbreak she has never lived. We dress them as small adults, feed them adult gossip, adult fears, adult anxieties, and call it exposure. We deny them sleep, deny them play, deny them stories told under the mango tree, and enrol them in five coaching centres. Then we are shocked when anxiety settles on their small chests like a stone. A society that steals childhood to manufacture little celebrities will inherit adults who never learned how to be human.

Our justice has also inverted itself. Criminals are protected more than their victims. The victim is told to be calm, patient, forgiving, understanding of the system. The criminal knows the law better than the officer. He knows the loophole, the bond, the phone call to make. He walks free before the victim has been given so much as a bandage. When a

woman who has been robbed spends more days in court corridors than the man who robbed her, the message to our sons is unmistakable: crime has better customer care than honesty.

We have reached the point where madness is celebrated as normal. We no longer flinch. Nudity is content. Cruelty is comedy. Public humiliation is called a prank. Disrespecting your mother is called being bold. A boy filming himself abusing drugs receives gifts on live video. A girl auctioning her own dignity receives a brand deal. Our grandparents would have taken such things to the elders for reckoning. We take them to the algorithm for boosting. A people who can no longer be shocked can no longer be saved. Our moral immune system has collapsed. Everything enters.

And finally, the seal on it all: politicians who live off the people instead of living for them. The servant has become the landlord. The people we elected to carry our burdens have turned our backs into their dining tables. Our taxes become their endless convoys while our mothers push wheelbarrows to labour wards with no medicine. Their children are flown abroad for a cough while our clinics cannot find basic painkillers. The motorcade grows longer as the queue at the borehole grows longer. The speeches grow sweeter as the stomachs grow emptier.

Socrates never owned a phone. He never saw a ballot box. He never scrolled. He owned two tunics and drank from a clay cup. Yet he saw us — clearly, and completely.

So let us stop asking when the decline began. It began. It began the morning we clapped for the thief and laughed at the honest teacher. It began when we shared the indecent video and skipped past wisdom.

The real question now is different, and it is personal. Do we have the courage to reverse it in our own small, stubborn corners? To silence the fool. To pay the hardworking. To respect the honest. To protect the child. To demand that the servant actually serves.

Because decline never starts in State House. It starts at your breakfast table — in what you tolerate, what you forward, what you laugh at, and what you stay silent about when you should have spoken.

History is not coming tomorrow. History is here today, watching, and taking notes.

Motivation Body image dissatisfaction occurs when that system fails to return to baseline. The mirror remains a threat even when no external danger exists

When the mirror becomes a threat

Body image dissatisfaction is not vanity — it is a measurable, treatable psychological condition with deep roots in culture, childhood and the nervous system



By: Wanjohi P. Mugambi
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When we look in the mirror, the brain does not simply register a reflection. It conducts a rapid and complex social evaluation. The occipital cortex processes the image, the insula reads internal bodily sensation, the amygdala scans for social threat, and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex judges what it sees against ideals accumulated over a lifetime. When the image feels consistent with those internalised standards, the parasympathetic nervous system restores calm. That is adaptive body awareness working as it should.

Body image dissatisfaction occurs when that system fails to return to baseline. The mirror remains a threat even when no external danger exists. The body is experienced as inadequate, shameful, or perpetually in need of correction. In clinical terms, this pattern appears across anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder and other specified feeding and eating disorders. Common features include persistent preoccupation with weight and shape, dietary restraint, binge eating with compensatory behaviours such as vomiting or excessive exercise, habitual body checking, avoidance of reflective surfaces, and somatic complaints — bloating, fatigue, gastrointestinal distress — that return normal results on medical investigation.

Two concepts help explain how this happens. The first is allostatic load: the cumulative physiological cost of chronic stress without adequate recovery. When body surveillance is repeated day after day, without safety, without the experience of being enough, the load accumulates and the system begins to buckle. The second is Objectification Theory, developed by Fredrickson and Roberts, which argues that cultures that sexually objectify the female body socialise girls and women to adopt an observer's perspective on their own appearance — to watch themselves being watched. The result is habitual self-monitoring that keeps the amygdala in a state of low-grade alarm.

The prefrontal cortex, responsible for rational regulation, becomes underactive under the weight of shame. The insula loses precision, making it genuinely difficult to distinguish hunger from anxiety, or satiety from guilt.

What follows is not weakness. A racing heart at 2am after scrolling through social media, a tension headache before stepping on a scale, gastrointestinal disturbance after eating, muscle pain from compulsive exercise, broken sleep, emotional numbing around food — these are not character flaws. They are measurable psychophysiological responses to prolonged exposure to appearance threat.

Two bodies of research make this concrete. The first is the Twins Early Development Study, led by University College London and published in The Lancet Psychiatry. Drawing on a prospective birth cohort of more than 2,000 twins born in England and Wales between 1994 and 1996, the study used the natural experiment of identical and non-identical twins to separate genetic vulnerability from environmental influence. Body dissatisfaction was measured at age 16 using validated scales, and eating disorder and depressive symptoms were tracked into the early twenties. The finding was unambiguous: higher body dissatisfaction at 16 predicted significantly greater symptoms of both eating disorders and depression in the years that followed, even af-

ter controlling for body mass index, socioeconomic status and shared genetic risk. The lead author noted that in the past two decades there had been a concerning rise in depression and eating disorders among young people, making it essential to understand what was driving the increase. In psychological terms, the findings support the Cognitive-Behavioural Model of eating disorders developed by Fairburn, in which the over-evaluation of shape and weight becomes the central psychopathology that drives dietary restraint and increases risk for binge eating and compensatory behaviour. Early dissatisfaction, the research suggests, trains the developing nervous system to remain vigilant — and vigilance becomes a learned pattern rather than a passing mood.

The second study, by Blackburn and Hogg, published in PLOS ONE in 2024, examined the immediate effects of pro-anorexia content on TikTok. Young women aged 18 to 28 were randomly assigned to watch either a seven-to-eight minute compilation of pro-anorexia content — featuring extreme thinness, weight loss tips and intense workout footage — or neutral content involving nature, cooking and animals. Body image was measured before and after using validated instruments. Both groups reported a decline in body image satisfaction after viewing, but those exposed to the pro-anorexia content showed the sharpest drop, alongside a significant increase in

internalisation of appearance ideals. The authors concluded that less than ten minutes of exposure to such content — even when not actively sought — produced immediate psychological harm, shifting normative beliefs, increasing self-objectification and lowering the threshold for extreme weight control behaviour. Women who used TikTok for more than two hours daily reported higher rates of disordered eating in everyday life.

In the African context, these mechanisms intersect with cultural scripts that have been internalised across generations. Statements such as “a real woman must be shaped this way,” “you have added weight, you will not find a husband,” or “the firstborn must look presentable for the family” function as silent contracts absorbed in childhood. Where appearance is historically linked to marriageability and social security, these scripts carry adaptive logic. But they become psychologically costly when they prevent intuitive eating, body acceptance and help-seeking. Research by Felitti and Anda on adverse childhood experiences, involving more than 17,000 participants, demonstrated a clear dose-response relationship between early adversity and later health outcomes including disordered eating. Four or more adverse experiences significantly raised the risk for depression, anxiety and chronic illness — not because of weakness, but because early adversity shapes the nervous system to remain on alert. The result is high-functioning distress: the person continues to work, to provide, to attend church, while counting calories in silence. When psychological language around eating carries stigma, distress often speaks through the body — repeated hospital visits, normal investigations, and no clear diagnosis.

Healing requires the restoration of safety, not simply the removal of the mirror. You can take the mirror away and still feel entirely unsafe. Recovery does not mean erasing cultural ideals or forgetting formative experiences. It means being able to remember them without being physiologically overwhelmed by them.

Evidence-based approaches include psychoeducation grounded in the Cognitive-Behavioural Model, grounding techniques, cognitive restructuring and community-based

co-regulation. Understanding the ninety-second rule is a useful starting point: the initial neurochemical surge of an emotion lasts approximately ninety seconds. If rumination does not reignite it, the body can return to baseline on its own. Practical tools — diaphragmatic breathing using a four-second inhale and six-second exhale, orienting to the present through sensory anchoring, and labelling emotion with precision (“I notice shame from age fourteen when I was compared to my cousin”) — help re-engage prefrontal regulation and rebuild interoceptive accuracy.

Identifying silent contracts is equally important. The question to ask is: when was this belief about my body formed, and is it still serving me? The contract that says “in this family, a good body is a thin body” can be examined honestly and gradually rewritten: “I can care for my health and also respect my body as it is.” This is not a rejection of culture. It is an updating of a survival strategy that has outlived its original purpose.

Small, consistent behavioural changes reduce allostatic load over time. Brief morning periods without digital stimulation, adequate hydration, structured sleep, regular meals that prevent the binge-restrict cycle, and three lines of daily expressive writing — current emotional state, plus one line of body gratitude — have demonstrated efficacy in reducing body shame. African healing is, at its best, communal. Co-regulation through a trusted peer, elder, faith community or counsellor provides an external safety signal that allows the nervous system to settle. The goal is not to be fixed. It is to be heard, with the message: you are here, and you are safe in this body.

Indicators that warrant professional referral include skipping meals for more than two weeks with the intention of losing weight, persistent body checking or mirror avoidance, panic-like chest tightness before eating, vomiting or laxative use after meals, more than an hour of daily compensatory exercise, persistent guilt or worthlessness about the body, and passive thoughts about death linked to appearance. Kenya's helpline 1199 and ULTO Care at 0718 770 343 provide immediate support.

Not every internal whisper is wisdom. Some are old wounds speaking in a familiar voice. Across Africa, one truth repeats itself quietly: we are not undisciplined. We are exhausted from carrying beauty contracts we never agreed to sign. We are not cursed. We are patterned — and patterns, when noticed without judgment, can always be relearned.

WHEN THE MIRROR BECOMES A THREAT

Body Image Dissatisfaction



ULTO - Organization
You only need a face to smile
Kenya Helpline 1199 | ULTO Care 0718770343
By Wanjohi P. Mugambi | 2026/2027

SPORTS
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Sports >> *The Spaniard signs a new long-term deal as the club backs its manager to deliver sustained dominance in England and Europe

Arteta commits to Arsenal until 2030

By Andalo Christine Ingutia

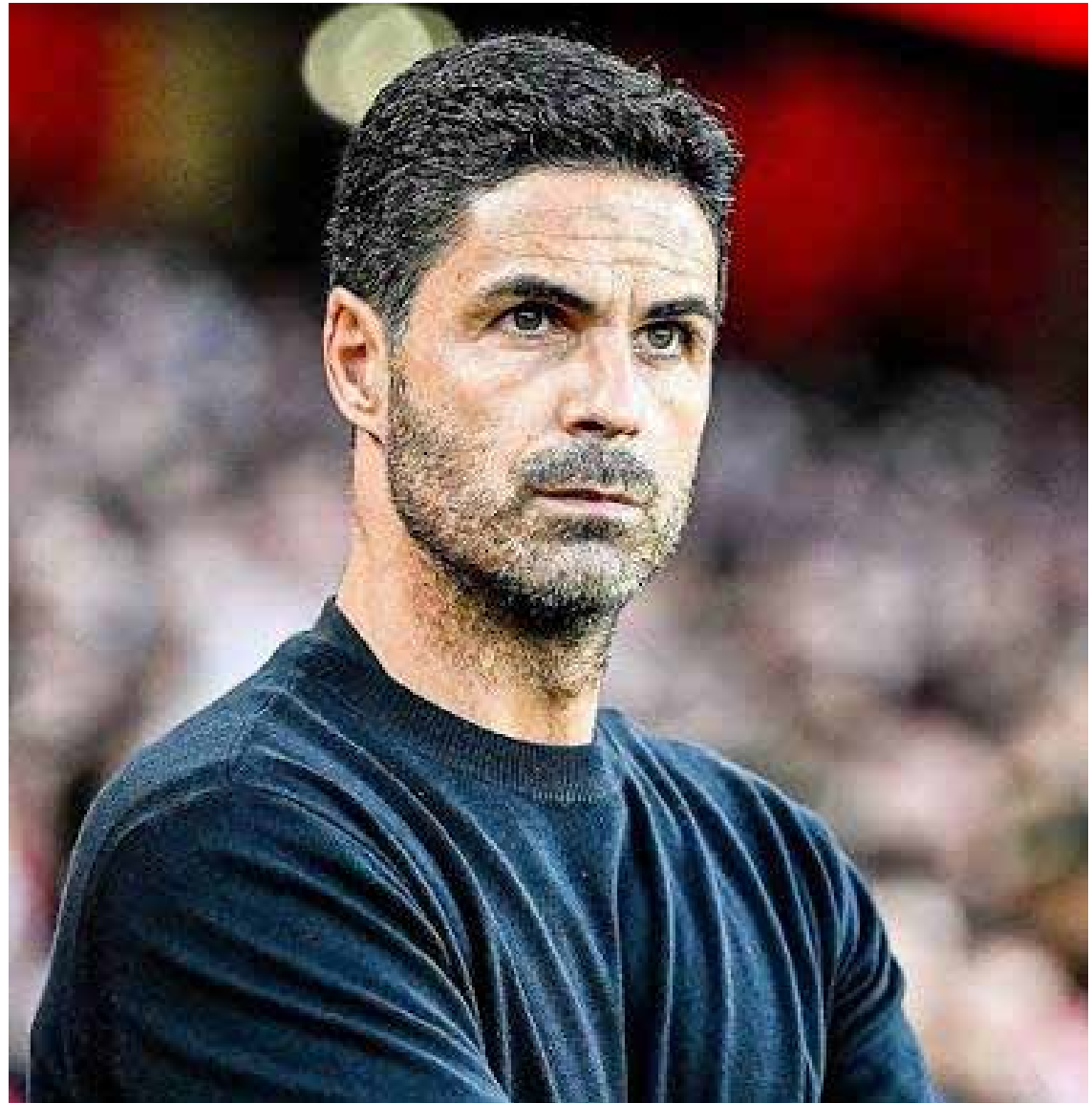
Arsenal have secured the future of manager Mikel Arteta after the Spaniard signed a new long-term contract keeping him at Emirates Stadium until June 2030. The deal represents a major show of faith in a manager who has transformed Arsenal from a club drifting in mid-table uncertainty into one of the most compelling sides in English football — and a clear signal that the board believes the best is still to come.

Speaking after signing the agreement, Arteta was candid about what the commitment means to him. “It’s a privilege to commit my future to the club,” he said. “We have already built a special bond and created memories that will last a lifetime, and what is so exciting is that this is only the beginning of what we can achieve together.”

Arteta took charge in December 2019 at one of the most difficult periods in the club’s recent history. Working quietly and methodically, the former Arsenal midfielder set about changing the culture from the inside. One of his earliest and most significant achievements came within months of his appointment, when he guided the club to FA Cup glory in 2020 — a result that provided the first real evidence that a genuine rebuild was under way.

From there, Arteta focused on assembling a younger, more disciplined squad. Players such as Bukayo Saka, Martin Ødegaard and William Saliba became central to his plans, and their development under his management has been one of the defining stories of his tenure. That transformation eventually delivered its biggest domestic reward when Arsenal ended a wait of more than two decades to win the Premier League title — a moment that confirmed the scale of what Arteta had built.

While Arsenal had long been associated with a particular style of play, Arteta has steadily shift-



Mikel Arteta

ed the emphasis towards attacking organisation, possession and control. That approach has been tested most sharply in the title battles against Manchester City, where fine tactical margins have repeatedly proved decisive. The club’s hierarchy has backed that vision with substantial investment. The arrival of Declan Rice, among others, has strengthened the midfield and defensive structure, giving Arteta the personnel to execute his ideas at the highest level.

His journey has not been without criticism, however. Questions have been raised about the physical demands placed on key players during the most

congested periods of the season, and Arsenal’s progress in Europe has not matched what they have achieved domestically. The Champions League defeat to Paris Saint-Germain remains a painful reminder that European glory has so far eluded the manager. That gap could now become one of the central objectives of his extended tenure.

With Arteta secured until 2030 and a squad built around players entering the peak years of their careers, Arsenal are aiming for something considerably more than a single title. The manager is no longer simply rebuilding a football club. He is attempting to establish a lasting culture — one

capable of competing for major trophies consistently, season after season.

The new contract, then, represents more than an extension of employment. It is a statement of shared ambition. Arsenal have chosen continuity and placed their trust firmly in the man who has overseen their transformation.

For Arteta, the next four years will be about converting progress into sustained dominance. For the club, the message is equally clear: the project continues, and North London is aiming for an era that extends well beyond a single Premier League title.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The world champion closes his international chapter with gratitude and pride, leaving behind a legacy that transcends trophies

Messi bids farewell to Argentina after 20 years

By Pascal Okoth

Lionel Messi has announced his retirement from international football, bringing to a close a remarkable 20-year career with the Argentina national team in an emotional farewell message that left few unmoved. The legendary forward said the time had come to step away, while making clear that leaving the shirt he wore with such pride would be among the most painful things he has ever done.

“For 20 years, even through the worst moments, I never stopped fighting, pushing forward, giving everything I had and wanting to be here,” Messi said in a heartfelt address that reflected on the full sweep of his international journey.

The retirement ends one of the most extraordinary careers in the history of the sport. Messi, who made his Argentina debut two decades ago, described representing his country as the greatest honour of his professional life. He admitted that if the decision were entirely his own, he would never stop playing for Argentina. “Playing for Argentina is the most beautiful thing there is,” he said.

His international career was, for many years, a story of agonising near-misses. Messi endured intense criticism and the pain of losing major finals before eventually leading Argentina to the sustained success the football world knew he deserved. Under his captaincy, the country won the Copa América, the Finalissima and, most memorably, the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar — the achievement that defined his legacy and silenced every remaining doubt about his place among the game’s true immortals.

Yet even in reflecting on that World Cup triumph, Messi was candid about the toll it took. “The last World Cup took a lot out



Lionel Messi's letter to all Argentinians 🇦🇷💙🤍👋

Lionel Messi

of us after everything we went through,” he said, acknowledging the physical and emotional demands of competing at that level during the latter stages of an already extraordinary career.

He was generous in his praise for the teammates who stood beside him through the difficult years, describing them as warriors without whom none of the success would have been possible. Messi was emphatic that individual brilliance alone cannot deliver trophies at international level. “To achieve the biggest things, you need a strong group,” he said, a sentiment that felt both modest and entirely sincere from a player of his stature.

His message to Argentina supporters was equally warm and direct. Messi urged fans to remain firmly behind the national team after his departure, warning that there would always be those hoping to see Argentina stum-

ble and that unity in the stands would be more important than ever. He was at pains to stress that retirement would not mean turning his back on the team. He intends to remain a passionate supporter of the players who helped him create history, and of every generation that follows.

“I’m going to miss all of you so much, but I’ll always be on your side,” he said.

There was a deeply personal dimension to his farewell as well. Messi spoke of his father as the first person who came to mind as he looked back on the journey — from the boy who dreamed of wearing the blue and white shirt to the man who lifted the World Cup trophy in front of a watching world. The road between those two moments was filled with challenge, criticism, heartbreak and ultimately, triumph.

He concluded his message with the kind of quiet dignity that

has come to define him. “I leave grateful, proud, at peace,” Messi said.

For Argentina, the task of moving forward without him is daunting. His influence, leadership and extraordinary ability have been the backbone of the national team for the better part of a generation. But his departure also opens a new chapter, and the players he leaves behind carry with them the example of a man who never stopped believing, even when the weight of a nation’s expectations threatened to overwhelm him.

Messi leaves as a world champion, a national icon and, by any measure, one of the greatest footballers who has ever played the game. The little boy who dreamed of becoming a world champion achieved exactly that — and leaves on his own terms, grateful, proud and at peace.

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From devotion to the stage: Niranjanaa's Bharatanatyam Arangetram

By: V. Jayanthi

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Worth Noting:

- Niranjanaa has trained under Guru Dr. Sasikala Venkatesan, founder and director of Nrityakala Vaibhavam Saraswathi Natyalaya in Chengalpattu. Under her guidance, the young dancer developed not only technical proficiency in the classical form but also a deep understanding of its emotional and spiritual dimensions — qualities that were unmistakably present on the night.
- The performance itself was the evening's centrepiece, and Niranjanaa held the audience's attention from the first movement to the last. Her graceful footwork, rhythmic precision and expressive Abhinaya — the art of conveying emotion through facial expression and gesture — drew sustained admiration from those who had gathered to witness her debut. Every movement told a story. Every expression carried feeling. The confidence she displayed on stage reflected the years of quiet, determined practice that had brought her to this moment.

Niranjanaa V.J. presented her long-awaited Bharatanatyam Arangetram at Krishna Mahal in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, on September 13, marking a significant milestone in the young dancer's artistic life and the culmination of years of disciplined training under her guru's watchful eye.

An Arangetram — literally “ascending the stage” — is far more than a dance recital. It is a public declaration of readiness, a rite of passage that represents years of perseverance, devotion and rigorous training under the guidance of a guru. For Niranjanaa, it marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of another: the transition from student to performer.

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The most memorable passage of the evening was her portrayal of Goddess Kalikambal, a presentation that combined power, elegance and devotional depth in equal measure. Through gesture, expression and controlled intensity, Niranjanaa brought the divine figure to life in a way that resonated long after the performance had ended. It was the moment the audience will remember most.

The Arangetram followed the traditional Margam — the classical path — taking the audience on a journey through the full range of Bharatanatyam's expressive range. Opening with rhythmic compositions, building through the technically demanding Varnam and culminating in the energetic Tillana, the programme showcased the dancer's stamina, concentration and artistic maturity. Bharatanatyam draws together Nritta, the pure dance of form and rhythm, Nritya, the expressive dimension, and Abhinaya, all supported by the structure of Carnatic music. In Niranjanaa's hands, the combination became a genuinely moving cultural and spiritual experience.

What makes her story particularly compelling is the context in which she has pursued this art. Niranjanaa is a student of Electronics and Communication Engineering at Sri Sai Ram Institute of Technology, where she serves as treasurer of the IEEE Signal Processing Society student chapter and holds a Red Hat Certified System Administrator qualification. She has participated in hackathons, technical events and innovation projects alongside her dance training — a balance that speaks to both discipline and genuine passion. She completed the eighth-grade Bharatanatyam examination conducted by Annamalai University with first class and distinction, and has performed at the Indian Dance Festival for two consecutive years, at Margazhi Utsavam and in various competitions, earning prizes and recognition along the way.

Behind every performer is a support structure that makes the journey possible. Niranjanaa's parents, M.S. Venkatesan and V. Jayanthi, have been constant sources of encouragement and love throughout her academic and artistic life. Her brother Hari Ram V.J. has been a steadfast presence alongside them. The evening was made richer still by the attendance of sisters, nephews, brothers, relatives and friends who came together to share in the celebration and offer their blessings.

The occasion was further graced



Niranjanaa's Bharatanatyam Arangetram

by the presence of Sujatha Mohanraj, director of Chandhus Natyalaya and founder and managing director of Ayaan Aqua and Ayaan Veda, who served as chief guest. Creative writer and founder Brinda, together with diet lecturers Rajani and Kalaiselvi, added warmth and joy to what was already a memorable evening.

An Arangetram is not a destination. It is a beginning — the point at which a dancer accepts a new artistic responsibility and steps forward to carry a tradition into the future. With the blessings of her guru, her

family and her community behind her, Niranjanaa takes that step with evident confidence and grace.

From the little girl who first learned to place her feet in the basic positions of Bharatanatyam to the young woman who held a full audience in quiet admiration on the stage at Krishna Mahal, hers is a journey defined by devotion, perseverance and the enduring beauty of Indian classical dance.

The stage has been ascended. The journey continues.