

Kenya closes Bern embassy and opens new missions in Azerbaijan and Congo

Kenya is permanently closing its embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and opening new diplomatic missions in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo

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Ruto and Gachagua trade blows as Kenya's 2027 election battle turns brutal

President William Ruto and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday traded their most ferocious public exchanges to date, with Ruto accusing Gachagua of suppressing young political talent

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Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 **How Gakuya could floor his rivals in the Nairobi governor race**

Gakuya's numbers game

James Mwangi Gakuya, the Embakasi North Member of Parliament running under the Democracy for the Citizens Party, enters the Nairobi gubernatorial race as the candidate best positioned to exploit the ethnic and political fractures now visibly widening across the capital's crowded political landscape, in what is shaping up to be the most consequential county election in Kenya's recent democratic history.

Nairobi is not simply Kenya's capital. It is the country's most complex electoral battleground — a city of 2,743,155 registered voters drawn from virtually every ethnic community in the republic, governed by shifting loyalties, business interests, generational grievances and the perpetual calculus of who delivers and who merely promises. The 2027 gubernatorial contest is arriving at a moment of unusual political fluidity, with incumbents switching parties, newcomers making bold entrances and voters expressing open cynicism about the entire field. Against that backdrop, the ethnic arithmetic that has historically determined Nairobi's political outcomes is once again asserting itself with quiet but decisive force.

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James Mwangi Gakuya



Ruto launches KSh 95m electricity and road projects in Kisii County

BY MKT REPORTER
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday flagged off the Last Mile Electricity Connectivity Project in Bobasi Constituency, Kisii County, committing KSh 95 million to connect 1,600 households to the national grid in a region that will be fiercely contested in the August 2027 general election.
Speaking at the launch, Ruto framed the investment in economic terms.
"Reliable power is a critical factor in our effort to boost manufacturing and value addition, supporting small businesses, creating economic opportunities and improving livelihoods," he said.
The President also launched construction of the Nyagesa-Rianyamanga road at Kabosi and the Nyakeyo-Nyamasege road in South Mugirango, both in Kisii County.
"Road development provides a solid foundation for easy movement of people, goods and services, and accelerated trade and investment," Ruto said. "We are committed to ensuring that every region in Kenya has a reliable road network."
With the 2027 election drawing closer, the flurry of infrastructure activity in the populous Gusii region signals an intensifying political courtship of a vote-rich constituency that no serious presidential contender can afford to ignore.











Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Law Society of Kenya yesterday declared a nationwide court boycott, directing advocates to seek adjournments across all courts until missing lawyer Abshir Ahmedsadak Abdi — abducted in Nairobi ten days ago — is produced alive before a court of law. LSK members marched from Milimani Law Courts to Jogoo House, demanding answers from the Inspector-General of Police. “Ten days of silence. Ten days without answers. Ten days without production before any court,” the society stated. Meanwhile, the High Court’s Justice Alexander Muteti allowed Abdi’s brother, Zakaria Abshir, to testify in ongoing habeas corpus proceedings, pointedly questioning whether State agencies, frustrated after failing to obtain custodial orders against the lawyer, may have “chosen to pursue the subject extra-judicially.”



African nations have made measurable strides in gathering and monitoring health data, yet not a single country on the continent has built the sustainable capacity needed to translate that evidence into concrete policy and action, according to a new World Health Organisation report. The findings expose a critical disconnect at the heart of Africa’s health systems: governments are increasingly capable of generating and reviewing data, but consistently fall short when it comes to using it to guide investment decisions, improve service delivery and respond effectively to the health needs of their populations. The WHO report signals that data collection alone is insufficient — what Africa’s health systems urgently need is the institutional strength, political will and technical capacity to act on what the numbers are already telling them.



The government yesterday cut the price of subsidised fertiliser from KSh2,500 to KSh2,000 per 50-kilogram bag, offering farmers a KSh500 saving per bag ahead of the next planting season, with certified seed prices also reduced as part of a broader effort to cushion agricultural production against depressed rainfall and anticipated lower crop yields. Principal Secretary for Internal Security Dr Raymond Omollo announced the measures on Tuesday, warning that erratic weather patterns and El Niño-related risks threatened food availability and could drive up commodity prices. “The government is proactively implementing strategic interventions to cushion the country against the effects of depressed rainfall and lower crop yields this season,” Omollo said. The Ministry of Agriculture is also preparing targeted food imports to stabilise local supplies and prevent sharp price inflation.



Hundreds of Maasai women who have long competed for tourist attention along the dusty approach to Sekenani Gate — the main entrance to the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Narok County — are set to benefit from a newly constructed multi-million-shilling market that promises to transform how they sell their beadwork and handcrafted goods. For years, the daily scramble for customers arriving in tourist vehicles defined their livelihoods — colourful, culturally rich, but increasingly desperate as competition intensified and informal trading conditions worsened. The new market offers a dignified, organised trading environment that could stabilise incomes, improve the visitor experience and preserve the cultural integrity of Maasai craftsmanship. For communities whose artistry has long drawn admiration from across the world, the facility arrives not a moment too soon.



Kenya Tea Development Agency-managed factories earned KSh968.68 million at this week’s Mombasa Tea Auction after selling 2,511,437 kilogrammes of made tea — a decline from the KSh1.09B recorded last week, when 2,835,223 kilogrammes went under the hammer. The fall in earnings reflects both reduced volumes and softer demand at the auction floor. Among the top performers, Githongo fetched the highest price at KSh442 (US$3.43) per kilogramme, followed closely by Mununga at KSh439 (US$3.41), Kinoro and Gacharage both at KSh437 (US$3.39 and US$3.37 respectively), and Imenti at KSh436 (US$3.38) per kilogramme. The Mombasa Tea Auction remains the world’s largest black tea auction by volume, and weekly fluctuations in smallholder factory earnings closely track both global demand and the quality of tea presented.



A police operation in Bondeni Dip village, Kachumba, in Uasin Gishu County, descended into violence yesterday when suspected cannabis dealers turned on officers who had raided the area following a tip-off, leaving one officer seriously injured. Turbo Sub-County Police Commander Patrick Wekesa said a team had moved on the village to arrest individuals suspected of selling bhang from a residential property when the suspects launched a violent counterattack, overwhelming the initial response. The injured officer was rushed to hospital for treatment. The incident underscores the growing boldness of drug networks in peri-urban areas of the North Rift, where narcotics trade has expanded significantly in recent years, posing an increasingly direct threat to law enforcement personnel conducting routine interdiction operations.

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Accident The Purple Train is Karua's chosen vehicle for that visibility

Karua's campaign team escapes injury in Kisii road accident

The incident failed to slow the Purple Train's march through Gusii country as Kenya's opposition mobilisation gathers pace ahead of 2027

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes



The PLP media vehicle involved in a minor road accident in Kisii County following the party's grassroots engagements in Nyangusu on Tuesday, November 10, 2026. | *Photo:* @PLPartyKenya/X

Martha Karua's People's Liberation Party media team escaped unhurt yesterday after their vehicle was involved in a minor road accident in Kisii County under low-visibility conditions, as the party's Purple Train campaign concluded a day of grassroots engagements across the region.

All five occupants, including the driver, were safe and undergoing precautionary medical checks, the party confirmed in a statement issued on Tuesday. The accident occurred after the team departed from its final engagement of the day in Nyangusu, having earlier held mobilisation events in Mogonga and Magena. "After the final engagement in Nyangusu, the PLP media vehicle was involved in a minor road accident in low-visibility conditions," the party said, adding that it thanked "the people of Kisii for their warm welcome and everyone who reached out with concern."

The incident, while minor in its immediate consequences, drew attention precisely because of the political moment in which it occurred. Karua and her People's Liberation Party are in the thick of an intensifying pre-election campaign, and any disruption to that momentum — however brief — carries significance in a race where visibility and energy on the ground are as important as any formal alliance or policy platform.

The Purple Train is Karua's chosen vehicle for that visibility. The national campaign takes its name and its distinctive colour from the party's brand, and it has been rolling through counties in a deliberate effort to build a grassroots foundation for her presidential bid ahead of the August 2027 general election. Kisii was not incidental on that itinerary — the Gusii region, with its substantial voter population and history of competitive political engagement, is precisely the kind of territory that any serious presidential contender must contest rather than concede.

What is also notable is the company Karua is keeping on the trail. She has been touring alongside Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro and Jubilee Party leader Fred Matiang'i — a grouping that has conspicuously positioned itself at a slight distance from the broader opposition coalition still engaged in its very public, very protracted process of trying to agree on a single presidential candidate. Whether that distance is tactical, philosophical or merely a reflection of personal political calculation remains to be seen. But the optics of a tightly knit trio moving through the country with its own branding and its own message suggest a deliberate effort to carve out a distinct lane rather than dissolve into the collective.

PLP closed its statement on the accident with its campaign slogan — "Tuungane, Tukomboe," meaning "Let us unite, let us liberate" — and confirmed that the Purple Train would continue without interruption.

In Kenyan politics, the ability to absorb a setback and keep moving is itself a signal worth reading. Yesterday, Karua's team sent that signal clearly.

Karua launches anti-corruption push in Kisii amid 2027 election build-up



Martha Karua with Haron Orutwa MP Aspirant Bomachoge Borabu constituency. Photo | Martha Karua

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Martha Karua yesterday travelled to Kisii County to officially launch the parliamentary bid of Haron Orutwa for the Bomachoge Borabu constituency, using the platform to deliver a pointed message on corruption and public accountability ahead of the August 2027 general election.

Karua, a veteran opposition leader and former Justice minister, told the gathering that public resources must serve ordinary Kenyans rather than private interests. "Corruption has no place in a country where millions of Kenyans work hard for a better life," she said. "Public office is a solemn responsibility, and this is the principle at the heart of my candidature and the Kenya we seek to build."

Her appearance in Kisii signals an early and deliberate effort to build cross-regional support beyond her traditional Central Kenya base, as opposition political activity intensifies ahead of next year's election. By anchoring her campaign message in economic fairness and institutional integrity, Karua is positioning herself as a candidate for Kenyans who feel excluded from the gains of public office.

With the campaign season now firmly under way, the Bomachoge Borabu launch marks one of the clearer early indicators of how the opposition intends to frame its challenge to the ruling establishment in 2027.

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Diplomacy **The closure of the Bern embassy is the most immediately consequential element of the first phase. Kenya established the resident mission in 2026**

Kenya closes Bern embassy and opens new missions in Azerbaijan and Congo

Nairobi's diplomatic restructuring signals a strategic pivot away from established Western postings towards Central Europe and Central Africa, with Kenyans in Switzerland assured of continued consular cover

BY Grace Wanja
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Kenya is permanently closing its embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and opening new diplomatic missions in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, as part of a sweeping review of its global diplomatic footprint driven by shifting foreign policy priorities and constrained public finances.

Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing'Oei announced the changes yesterday in an official government statement, confirming that the restructuring — the most significant reorganisation of Kenya's diplomatic network in years — would be implemented in phases to minimise disruption to Kenyans living abroad and to the country's international partners. The announcement marks a deliberate recalibration of where Nairobi believes its diplomatic energy and resources are best deployed as Kenya positions itself for a more assertive role in emerging strategic corridors.

The closure of the Bern embassy is the most immediately consequential element of the first phase. Kenya established the resident mission in 2026, and retired President Uhuru Kenyatta formally commissioned the chancery in May 2022, making it one of the newer additions to the country's diplomatic network. Despite that relatively recent investment, the government has concluded that maintaining a full bilateral mission in the Swiss capital is no longer justified against current foreign policy imperatives. Bilateral relations between Kenya and Switzerland — two countries that have maintained diplomatic ties since 1964 — will revert to being managed through the Kenyan High Commission in London, the arrangement that predated the Bern mission's establishment.

Critically, Kenya's Permanent Mission in Geneva, which handles the country's engagement with the United Nations and the extensive constellation of international organisations headquartered in the city, will remain fully operational. The government was explicit that Kenyans resident in Switzerland would continue to receive consular assistance through the Geneva mission. "The government remains committed to the welfare of Kenyans in Switzerland, and the Permanent Mission in Geneva will provide consular services to Kenyans resident in Switzerland," the statement read. The Kenyan Embassy in Bern had already notified citizens that its consular section would close on 30th November 2026, urging those with pending passport and document applications to collect their processed materials before that date.

The opening of missions in Baku and Brazzaville is the more forward-looking dimension of the restructuring, and it rewards careful reading. Azerbaijan has emerged in recent years as a consequential energy and transit hub, sitting at the intersection of European gas supply chains, Caspian trade routes and a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape. Nairobi's decision to establish a resident presence in Baku reflects an awareness that Central Europe — understood in its broader strategic rather than purely geographical sense — is becoming an arena of intensifying diplomatic and commercial competition, one in which African nations with global ambitions cannot afford to be absent. Kenya's growing energy sector, its interest in attracting foreign direct investment, and its role as a continental voice on climate and development finance all argue for a seat at tables where Azerbaijan is increasingly a player.

The logic of Brazzaville is different but equally coherent. The Republic of Congo — not to be confused with its larger neighbour, the Democratic Republic of the Congo — sits at the heart of Central Africa's oil economy and is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States. Kenya has historically been more diplomatically active in East Africa than in the central and western parts of the continent, and the opening of a resident mission in Brazzaville signals an intent to deepen engagement across a region where trade, infrastructure investment and security cooperation are growing in importance. For a country that has positioned itself as a continental leader — most visibly through its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council and its role in regional peace processes — a stronger Central African diplomatic presence is a logical and arguably overdue step.



PS Korir Sing'Oei during a past event. | *Photo:* SingoeiAKorir/X

The Bern announcement was not the only restructuring news confirmed yesterday. The government also disclosed that changes had already been implemented in the Caribbean. Kenya's mission in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, has been relocated to Mexico City, while the mission in Havana, Cuba, has been moved to Kingston, Jamaica. Haiti's ongoing security and governance crisis has made maintaining a functioning mission in Port-au-Prince increasingly difficult, and the relocation to Mexico City gives Kenya a more stable and strategically better-positioned base for its diplomatic engagement across the Americas. The move from Havana to Kingston reflects similar reasoning: Jamaica offers a more dynamic platform for engagement with the Caribbean community and the broader anglophone diaspora.

Taken together, the changes paint a picture of a foreign ministry under pressure to do more with less, but also one that is thinking carefully about where Kenya's diplomatic investments will generate the highest returns. Sing'Oei acknowledged as much in his statement, framing the exercise not merely as a cost-cutting measure but as an alignment of Kenya's global presence with its evolving strategic interests. The rationalisation, he said, would be implemented gradually, with further information communicated through the official websites of the affected missions.

That phased approach is sensible. Diplomatic restructuring, however well-conceived, creates transitional uncertainty for the citizens and partner governments it affects. Kenyans in Switzerland who depended on the Bern embassy for routine consular services will need time to adjust to new arrangements, and the government's assurances about Geneva's expanded consular role will need to be matched by adequate staffing and resources to deliver on that commitment.

What is clear is that Kenya's foreign policy is no longer content to simply maintain the diplomatic map it inherited. It is redrawing it — closing doors where the returns no longer justify the costs, and opening new ones where the country's interests are heading.

The question, as always with diplomatic ambition, is whether the resources will follow the rhetoric.

Politics **Nairobi's Kikuyu business community, which wields influence disproportionate to its raw voter numbers, has grown deeply hostile to Sakaja's county administration**

How Gakuya could floor his rivals in the Nairobi governor race

Ethnic arithmetic, party realignments and shifting business community loyalties are quietly reshaping who controls Kenya's capital ahead of the 2027 general election

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

James Mwangi Gakuya, the Embakasi North Member of Parliament running under the Democracy for the Citizens Party, enters the Nairobi gubernatorial race as the candidate best positioned to exploit the ethnic and political fractures now visibly widening across the capital's crowded political landscape, in what is shaping up to be the most consequential county election in Kenya's recent democratic history.

Nairobi is not simply Kenya's capital. It is the country's most complex electoral battleground — a city of 2,743,155 registered voters drawn from virtually every ethnic community in the republic, governed by shifting loyalties, business interests, generational grievances and the perpetual calculus of who delivers and who merely promises. The 2027 gubernatorial contest is arriving at a moment of unusual political fluidity, with incumbents switching parties, newcomers making bold entrances and voters expressing open cynicism about the entire field. Against that backdrop, the ethnic arithmetic that has historically determined Nairobi's political outcomes is once again asserting itself with quiet but decisive force.

The numbers tell a story that no serious candidate can afford to ignore. The GEMA bloc — comprising the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru communities — accounts for an estimated 40 to 45 per cent of Nairobi's registered electorate, translating to between 1.1 and 1.2 million voters. Within that bloc, the Kikuyu community alone represents approximately 75 per cent of the total GEMA vote, concentrated in Roysambu, Kasarani, Dagoretti South, Starehe and the sprawling Embakasi constituencies. No candidate has ever won the Nairobi governorship without either carrying the GEMA vote or fracturing it sufficiently to build an alternative coalition. In 2027, that bloc is not only available — it is actively looking for a new political home.

The story of how that realignment happened begins with Johnson Sakaja. The incumbent governor, who won in 2022 riding a wave of GEMA support and cross-community goodwill, has made a move that political analysts are already describing as one of the most consequential miscalculations of his career. Last month, Sakaja defected from UDA — the party of President Ruto and the preferred political vehicle of much of the GEMA establishment — and joined ODM, the outfit most closely associated with the late Raila Odinga and historically regarded within Kikuyu political circles as the principal opposition. His stated aim is re-election. His actual challenge is that the community that elected him has not followed him through the door.

Nairobi's Kikuyu business community, which wields influence disproportionate to its raw voter numbers, has grown deeply hostile to Sakaja's county administration. Traders and entrepreneurs operating in markets, malls and commercial districts across the city have cited what they describe as punitive and poorly conceived business policies that have strangled rather than supported enterprise. For a community whose identity is profoundly tied to commerce and economic activity, that grievance is not abstract — it is felt at the till, in the licence renewal queue and at the county enforcement officer's knock on the door. The result has been a remarkable political migration: Kikuyu business voters, long regarded as instinctively hostile to ODM, have in considerable numbers shifted towards the very party Sakaja has just joined — but their motivation is protest, not loyalty, and they are unlikely to follow him there. Sakaja finds himself in the paradoxical position of having joined the party his former supporters now flirt with, while those same supporters want nothing to do with him personally.

Ronald Karauri's entry into the race introduces a different set of calculations. The Kasarani MP and former SportPesa chief executive joined UDA on Monday, with Majority leader in the National Assembly Kimani Ichung'wah stating publicly that President William Ruto had personally requested the move. Karauri arrives with a recognisable brand, a business pedigree and genuine name recognition across the city. His pledges to overhaul Nairobi's infrastructure, improve service delivery and grow county revenue have been received with cautious interest. Yet his structural position is precarious in ways that his public profile does not immediately reveal.

Karauri is Meru — a community that sits within the broader GEMA family but represents a minority within Nairobi's GEMA voting base. Meru voters in the capital are numerous enough to matter at the margins but insufficient to anchor a winning coalition on their own. More critically, Karauri now flies the UDA flag at the precise moment when the party's standing among Nairobi's dominant Kikuyu voters is deteriorating. The national government's economic record, combined with what many Kikuyu business owners perceive as neglect of their commercial interests at the county level, has cooled enthusiasm for UDA in the communities where the party once commanded near-total loyalty. Karauri is therefore asking GEMA voters to trust a UDA candidate at a moment when GEMA is drifting away from UDA — a tension he will need to resolve with concrete policy commitments and community outreach if his campaign is to gain genuine traction.

Babu Owino, the combative and intellectually sharp Embakasi East MP, brings a different energy to the race. His base in the Luo community — estimated at between 15 and 18 per cent of Nairobi's electorate, concentrated in Ruaraka, Kibra, Lang'ata and Dagoretti North — provides a solid foundation. ODM's reach into Luhya-dominated wards, where the party commands between 13 and 15 per cent of registered voters across Kawangware, Makadara and parts of Embakasi, adds further weight. In a fragmented field, those numbers could theoretically be competitive. The problem for Owino is that Sakaja is now fishing in exactly the same pool. Both men are ODM, both are targeting overlapping constituencies and both cannot simultaneously maximise the same voters. The arithmetic for Owino tightens considerably the moment Sakaja's name appears on the same ballot paper under the same party colours.



James Mwangi Gakuya

The Kamba community, holding between 10 and 12 per cent of Nairobi's electorate and concentrated in Embakasi South and Kamukunji, and the Kisii bloc at six to eight per cent — primarily in South C, Kilimani and Embakasi East — represent the swing constituencies that will likely determine the margin of victory. Neither bloc has a candidate of its own in the leading tier, making both communities available to the candidate who offers the most credible governance agenda and the most persuasive coalition narrative.

Gakuya's strategic advantage lies precisely in this landscape of fracture and vacancy. As the Democracy for the Citizens Party candidate, he is positioned to consolidate disaffected GEMA voters who have abandoned UDA but cannot bring themselves to embrace ODM, while simultaneously making a credible pitch to Kamba and Kisii voters who are evaluating candidates on delivery rather than identity. His Embakasi North base gives him deep roots in one of the city's most populous and politically active sub-regions. If his campaign can translate structural advantage into organised ground-level mobilisation, the mathematics become compelling.

Voters themselves are watching with a mixture of interest and exhaustion. Across Nairobi's markets, estates and commuter routes, the conversation about the governor's race returns repeatedly to a single phrase: the race of the least evil. It is a damning indictment of a political class perceived to have prioritised personal ambition over public service. The candidate who breaks through that cynicism — who makes Nairobi's voters believe, however cautiously, that something different is possible — will not merely win an election. They will have achieved something genuinely rare in Kenyan urban politics.

The 2027 Nairobi governor race is a microcosm of Kenya's broader political realignment, and the numbers suggest that Gakuya is currently reading the board more clearly than his rivals. Whether his campaign can convert structural advantage into actual votes will define not only his political future, but the direction of Kenya's most consequential city.

Court Under the court orders, no online platform may list, advertise, sell or deliver alcoholic drinks unless it first complies with strict licensing and age-verification requirements.

High Court restricts online alcohol sales in Nairobi over age verification concerns

A Milimani High Court order has suspended digital alcohol sales in Nairobi, exposing deep regulatory gaps in Kenya's fast-growing e-commerce market

BY Yvonne Wambui
@themtkenyatimes



Alcohol

The Milimani High Court on Monday temporarily suspended the sale and delivery of alcoholic drinks through online platforms in Nairobi, citing serious concerns over age verification, licensing compliance and the growing risk of underage access to alcohol through digital marketplaces.

Justice David Mburu issued the ruling on 9 November 2026, targeting e-commerce applications, websites and other digital platforms involved in the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages within Nairobi City County.

The order places immediate and far-reaching obligations on online alcohol vendors, fundamentally altering how digital alcohol businesses may operate in the capital.

Under the court orders, no online platform may list, advertise, sell or deliver alcoholic drinks unless it first complies with strict licensing and age-verification requirements. All platforms must obtain the necessary licences and authorisations before conducting any business. Alcoholic products must be displayed only in separately designated, restricted sections of digital platforms, accessible solely through secure authentication — whether by password, personal identification number or an equivalent security system.

Platforms must also establish reliable mechanisms to confirm that any customer seeking access to alcohol listings is at least 18 years old. The restrictions extend well beyond the browsing stage. Sellers are required to verify a buyer's age before completing any transaction, and delivery personnel must independently confirm the age of the person receiving the order before handing it over. The layered approach reflects the court's determination to close the multiple points at which minors could otherwise slip through.

Justice Mburu went further, restricting the advertisement, marketing and promotion of alcoholic drinks through hyperlinks, interactive advertisements and other digital mechanisms that direct customers to purchasing platforms without first completing the required authentication and age-verification procedures. The ruling effectively dismantles the seamless, one-click convenience that has made online alcohol retail so attractive — and so difficult to regulate.

The case arose from an urgent application filed by David Biketi Wati against the Nairobi City County Government, the Nairobi City County Alcoholic Drinks Control and Licensing Board and other parties. Wati argued that the existing regulatory framework governing online alcohol sales was dangerously inadequate, leaving minors exposed to alcoholic products through digital marketplaces where safeguards were either absent or easily circumvented. The court granted the orders on an interim basis while the application awaits further proceedings. Respondents and interested parties have been directed to file their responses within seven days of being served, with the matter scheduled to return to Milimani High Court on 18 November 2026 for confirmation of compliance and further directions.

The ruling lands at a particularly sensitive moment for Nairobi County. The county is currently considering the proposed Nairobi City County Alcoholic Drinks Control and Licensing Bill, 2026, a piece of legislation designed to tackle counterfeit and illicit alcohol, underage drinking and irresponsible distribution practices. The bill also seeks to strengthen licensing requirements and tighten oversight across the entire supply chain, from manufacturers to retailers.

The rapid growth of online shopping and home delivery services across Nairobi has created new and difficult challenges for alcohol regulators. Unlike physical liquor outlets, where staff can inspect identification documents face to face, digital platforms have historically struggled to enforce meaningful age-verification at scale. The court's intervention signals that this regulatory gap can no longer be overlooked.

For online businesses, the practical implications are considerable. Compliance will likely require significant investment in customer identification systems, age-verification technology and tighter delivery protocols. Platforms that fail to meet the prescribed standards face the prospect of being barred from operating within the county entirely.

While the ruling stops short of a permanent nationwide ban, its conditions are stringent and its reach within Nairobi County is broad. The decision has also reignited public debate about responsible alcohol consumption, the protection of young people and the legal obligations of businesses operating in the digital space.

The 18 November proceedings are expected to provide sharper direction on the implementation of the restrictions and the longer-term regulation of online alcohol sales in Kenya's capital.



Tax The mechanics of the change are worth understanding clearly. The revised timeline applies to the 2026 year of income, meaning that returns for income earned in 2026 will be due by 30th April

Kenya's tax deadline shifts to April: Are ordinary Kenyans ready?

The Kenya Revenue Authority's move to bring the individual income tax filing deadline forward by two months from June to April will test a system that already struggles to serve millions of low-income and self-employed taxpayers



BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's individual income tax filing deadline will shift from 30th June to 30th April beginning 1st January 2027, following changes introduced through the Finance Act 2026 — a move the Kenya Revenue Authority says will improve compliance and reduce system congestion, but one that raises serious questions about whether ordinary Kenyans are adequately prepared for the change.

For millions of Kenyans, 30th June has been a fixed point in the annual calendar for as long as most can remember. It is the date by which salaried workers, self-employed individuals and small business operators have been required to submit their annual income tax returns through KRA's iTax platform. The ritual has rarely been smooth. As the deadline approaches each year, the platform strains under the weight of last-minute submissions, technical failures multiply and taxpayers who have procrastinated face a stressful sprint to gather employment records, business statements and withholding tax certificates before the clock runs out. By pulling the deadline two months earlier, KRA hopes to spread the load more evenly, giving itself more time to review submissions and identify discrepancies before the next financial cycle begins.

The mechanics of the change are worth understanding clearly. The revised timeline applies to the 2026 year of income, meaning that returns for income earned in 2026 will be due by 30th April 2027, not 30th June. Returns for the 2025 income year retain their existing deadline. The adjustment affects individual taxpayers — salaried employees, self-employed persons and partnerships — while companies and other non-individual taxpayers will continue filing by the last day of the sixth month following the end of their accounting period. Businesses with December accounting year-ends will, in practice, retain the June deadline.

The administrative logic is reasonable. A system that processes a disproportionate share of its annual submissions in the final days before a single deadline is a system under unnecessary stress. Spreading that activity across a longer window should, in theory, reduce platform failures, give KRA analysts more time to conduct meaningful compliance reviews and reduce the pressure on taxpayers who have always left filing to the last moment. If the authority also uses the extra months to identify gaps in reported income before the figures become entrenched, the downstream benefits for revenue collection could be significant.

But the theory only works if the people it affects are genuinely equipped to meet the earlier deadline — and that is where the concern lies. A substantial proportion of Kenya's taxpaying population operates outside the neat boundaries that make tax compliance straightforward. Many run small businesses without professional bookkeepers or accountants. Others depend on casual employment, seasonal work or multiple income streams that do not generate the tidy paper trail that an iTax return requires. For these Kenyans, tax filing is not simply a matter of logging on and clicking submit. It requires understanding which income is taxable, gathering records that may not have been systematically kept, knowing which deductions apply and ensuring that every figure declared accurately reflects what was earned and spent during the year. Bringing the deadline forward without meaningfully improving the support available to this group does not solve the problem — it accelerates it.

Awareness is another gap that demands urgent attention. Kenya is a large and unevenly connected country. In many rural areas, access to a qualified tax agent is limited, and digital literacy cannot be assumed. Some taxpayers rely on cybercafés and informal intermediaries to complete their returns — paying additional fees for a service the government expects them to perform independently. KRA has invested in iTax and in various digital simplification efforts over the years, but the experience of using those systems remains inconsistent, particularly for first-time filers or those with complex income arrangements. The authority must commit to a comprehensive public education campaign delivered through radio, television, community outreach and simplified printed guides in plain language — not press releases and website updates that reach only those already engaged with the system.

There is a wider dimension to this conversation that deserves equal weight. Kenyans are not passive recipients of tax policy. They are citizens who observe, with varying degrees of patience, the relationship between what they contribute and what they receive in return. Roads, hospitals, schools and clean water remain daily concerns across much of the country, and the gap between what is collected and what visibly reaches communities has long fuelled scepticism about the value of compliance. That scepticism is not irrational — it is a rational response to a system that has sometimes demanded much from ordinary citizens while delivering less than promised. If the government wants voluntary compliance to improve, it must demonstrate that the resources being collected are being spent responsibly and that public money is translating into real improvements in people's lives.

Practically, employers must be encouraged to issue accurate income documentation early — well before April — so that employees are not scrambling for documents they cannot obtain in time. KRA must upgrade its customer support services and ensure that iTax performs reliably during peak filing periods, not just during routine months. Small businesses would benefit from practical, accessible training in basic record-keeping and tax management, delivered at the community level rather than through workshops attended only by those who already understand the system.

The penalties for non-compliance must also be communicated clearly and proportionately. Taxpayers who miss the new deadline should not discover the consequences only after the fact. Clear, early communication about what the deadline means, who it affects and what happens if it is missed is not optional — it is fundamental to a fair system.

An earlier tax deadline, properly supported, could genuinely improve Kenya's tax administration. But a deadline brought forward without adequate preparation, public education and technological investment risks becoming another compliance burden on the very people the system should serve best.

The question for 2027 is not whether Kenya can collect more tax returns in April. It is whether it can collect them fairly.

Politics Gachagua's response was immediate, unsparing and aimed directly at the President's most sensitive political wounds. "Mr. Taxes, think of and address the 55 million Kenyans ...."

Ruto and Gachagua trade blows as Kenya's 2027 election battle turns brutal

With thirteen months to the general election, Kenya's two most powerful political rivals have unleashed their sharpest attacks yet — and the temperature is only going up

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

With thirteen months to the general election, Kenya's two most powerful political rivals have unleashed their sharpest attacks yet — and the temperature is only going up

By David Kimani

President William Ruto and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua yesterday traded their most ferocious public exchanges to date, with Ruto accusing Gachagua of suppressing young political talent and Gachagua responding with a searing indictment of the President over the deaths of young Kenyans during the 2024 and 2025 protests — an escalation that signals the 2027 general election campaign has entered its most combative phase.

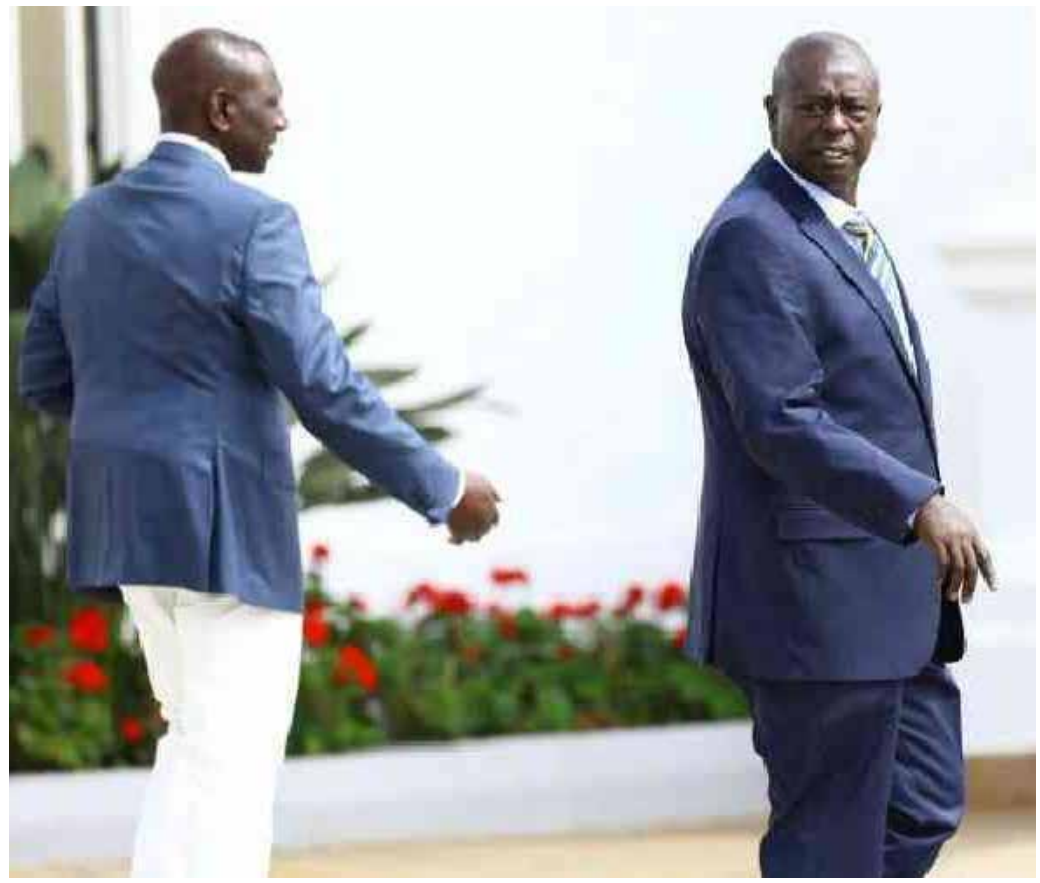
The confrontation began in Kisii County, where Ruto was on the third day of a development tour of the Gusii region. Speaking before a crowd that included Kisii Governor Simba Arati and several Members of Parliament, the President invoked a biblical reference with unmistakable political intent, likening Gachagua to King Herod — the ruler who, in scripture, ordered the killing of infants perceived as threats to his power. "Those who have served in government and politics for long should be ready to retire with me in 2032 and pave way for young leaders to take over," Ruto said, in remarks directed squarely at his estranged former running mate. He challenged the broader opposition to present a coherent development agenda rather than what he called "endless insults and political slogans," insisting that Kenya had moved beyond the era of tribal politics and discrimination.

Gachagua's response was immediate, unsparing and aimed directly at the President's most sensitive political wounds. "Mr. Taxes, think of and address the 55 million Kenyans you neglected and squandered their hard-earned taxes over the last four years," Gachagua wrote in a public statement. He challenged Ruto's invocation of youth by naming specific individuals — Rex Masai, Kennedy Onyango, Albert Ojwang, Erick Mutisia, Ibrahim Kamau and Boniface Kariuki — alongside more than 200 young people he said were killed during the Gen Z protests of 2024 and the Saba Saba demonstrations of 2025. "Are they still the leaders of 2032?" he asked. "Didn't you know that Gen Zs were young when you ordered their macabre abductions and brutal killings?"

Gachagua went further, raising the spectre of the 2007-2008 post-election violence, referencing the Kiambaa Church burning and Ruto's alleged role in the ethnic mobilisation of that period. He compared the President to a list of Africa's most reviled post-independence dictators — Idi Amin, Mobutu Sese Seko, Siad Barre, Jean-Bédel Bokassa, Sani Abacha, Robert Mugabe and Omar al-Bashir — in language designed to wound as much as to persuade.

The exchange is not merely a clash of personalities. It is an early but revealing preview of the political warfare that will define Kenya's path to the August 2027 general election — a contest that is shaping up to be one of the most consequential and potentially volatile in the country's post-independence history. The fissures exposed by the Ruto-Gachagua rupture — which culminated in Gachagua's parliamentary impeachment last year — have not healed. If anything, they have deepened into what analysts now describe as a defining fault line in Kenyan politics, one that cuts across ethnicity, class and generation in ways that older political templates struggle to explain.

Ruto's strategic positioning in Gusii is deliberate and telling. The region delivered a significant vote share to the Kenya Kwanza alliance in 2022, and the President's allies in the area have been at pains to consolidate that support ahead of next year. Governor Arati, whose political journey from opposition firebrand to Ruto ally has itself been a subject of considerable commentary, told the crowd that Gachagua's tribal politics had no place in modern Kenya. "Gachagua recently said if things go wrong in Kenya after the next election, he will flee Kenya and settle on his farm in Texas," Arati warned.



President William Ruto and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua in past

"Kenyans should therefore be wary of this evil man." South Mugirango MP Silvanus Osoro went further, claiming that Gachagua's impeachment had actually accelerated development in the region. "Gachagua was the stumbling block to the development of our community because of his philosophy of shares," Osoro said.

The reference to Gachagua's "shares" philosophy — his public position that communities that had supported Kenya Kwanza deserved proportional returns from government — has become a central line of attack from the Ruto camp. The President has countered it with the concept he calls "Usawa ni Sawa," broadly translated as equity or equal treatment, arguing that his administration distributes development resources without discrimination. Gachagua, in his statement yesterday, dismissed this as an "obnoxious fallacy."

Ruto also addressed the growing opposition alliance-building exercise with a tone of studied indifference that his allies will hope projects confidence rather than concealment. "Their political arrangement is an internal matter that should not take priority over national issues affecting Kenyans," he said. "They should keep it to themselves." The opposition's efforts to coalesce around a single presidential candidate have proceeded in public fits and starts, with various leaders announcing unity while the structural disagreements underneath remain unresolved.

What is becoming clear, however, is that the 2027 election will not be decided in the way that previous Kenyan elections have been. The Gen Z protests fundamentally altered the political landscape, introducing a generation of voters and activists who are openly contemptuous of the political class across the spectrum — including, it must be noted, those in the opposition. The deaths that occurred during those protests have not been forgotten, and Gachagua's decision to name the dead by name in a political statement directed at the President reflects an understanding that this constituency cannot be won with ordinary campaign promises.

For Ruto, the challenge is to convert his development record — real in some respects, contested in others — into a re-election mandate in an environment of acute economic hardship and deep public distrust. For Gachagua and the opposition, the challenge is to translate public anger into political organisation disciplined enough to win, not merely to protest.

Thirteen months remain. Yesterday's exchange suggests that the campaign, in all its fury, has already begun.



President William Ruto and MP Ndindi Nyoro in past

Business **The catalyst, TechInsights says, was not a product breakthrough but a commercial innovation tailored to African economic realities**

Samsung tops Africa smartphone market for first time in three decades

Flexible daily and weekly payment plans have unlocked premium device sales across the continent, handing the South Korean giant a commanding lead over its rivals

BY Jane Njeri
@themtkenyatimes



Samsung

Samsung Electronics has topped Africa's smartphone market in both revenue and unit sales for the first time in thirty years, driven by a customised installment payment model that has fundamentally reshaped how consumers across the continent access and purchase mobile devices.

According to market research firm TechInsights, Samsung's unit sales surged 34.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, even as total smartphone sales across the African market fell 16.6 per cent year on year over the same period. The divergence is striking: while the broader market contracted, Samsung moved decisively in the opposite direction, capturing ground that its rivals lost.



The catalyst, TechInsights says, was not a product breakthrough but a commercial innovation tailored to African economic realities. Rather than requiring a single upfront payment or a conventional monthly instalment plan, Samsung introduced a model that allows customers to pay for devices in daily or weekly amounts — a structure that mirrors the income patterns of millions of African workers who are paid irregularly or in cash. "The introduction of a customised installment model that lets customers pay for devices in daily or weekly amounts, reflecting local income structures where monthly salaries are not common, appears to have been a key factor," TechInsights said in a statement.

The results have been commercially significant. The installment payment model accounted for 46 per cent of Samsung's smartphone revenue in Africa, underscoring how central the financing innovation has become to the company's continental strategy. Crucially, the scheme has not merely driven sales of entry-level handsets. As the upfront cost barrier has lowered, consumers have demonstrated a willingness to trade up. "As the initial purchase burden has decreased, sales of premium products are also increasing. Samsung's sales of Galaxy S and Z series devices in Africa rose 20 per cent year on year this year," the research firm noted.

The broader market share trajectory reinforces the scale of Samsung's advance. The company's share of smartphone unit sales in Africa grew from 22.4 per cent in 2024 to 26.5 per cent last year. On an annual basis for 2026, Samsung is projected to hold a 34.5 per cent share of sales value and a 38.7 per cent share of unit volume — figures that would represent an increase of more than 16 percentage points in unit market share over just two years. No other manufacturer in the African market is currently on a comparable growth trajectory.

The significance of the achievement extends beyond the commercial. Africa's smartphone market remains one of the most underpenetrated in the world relative to population size, meaning the continent represents a long-term growth prize that every major consumer electronics manufacturer is competing to claim. The fact that Samsung has cracked the market not through price-cutting alone but through a financing model built around local income behaviour suggests a strategic maturity that its competitors will find difficult to replicate quickly. Building the partnerships, digital infrastructure and consumer trust required to operate a daily payment system at scale across diverse African markets is not something a rival can copy overnight.

For African consumers, particularly those in lower-income brackets who have historically been priced out of premium technology, the implications are tangible. Access to higher-specification devices — with better cameras, longer battery life, more processing power and improved security — has direct consequences for productivity, digital financial inclusion and participation in the growing digital economy. A smallholder farmer in rural Kenya who can now afford a Galaxy device through daily micropayments is not simply buying a smartphone; they are gaining access to mobile banking, agricultural information platforms, e-commerce and digital government services that were previously beyond reach.

Samsung's performance in Africa also carries a broader lesson for multinational corporations operating on the continent. The conventional assumption — that African consumers will always gravitate towards the cheapest available option — is being quietly dismantled. What African consumers consistently demonstrate is a preference for value and reliability, provided that the financing structures exist to make that value accessible. Samsung identified that gap and built a product around it. The results speak for themselves.

With a projected 38.7 per cent share of unit volume by year end, Samsung's dominance of Africa's smartphone market looks set to deepen further still.

Set me free



Set me free from these chains
That are binding me from breaking free
The chains in my heart
The chains in my mind
These chains binding my soul
The chains that can only be felt
Chains that can't be seen

Set me free
I'm a prisoner without a cell
A parrot outside a cage
I always thought prisoners are people who are in prison
I realised that many prisoners are roaming freely
Prisoners to society's expectations
Prisoners to soft life
Prisoners to religion
Prisoners to pain
Prisoners to depression
Same people different chains
Set me free
From these chains binding my mind

Nyasha Celeste Makombe Thee Poetic Raindrop

The world never ceases to amaze me



The inner melody within me never comes to an end, With every passing day, my feelings grow beyond my command. Day and night, I find myself amidst countless mysteries— The world continues to leave me speechless.

From every direction, countless questions come my way, Yet before them, I stand speechless, with nothing left to say. Sixty springs have passed, yet still, things remain the same— The world continues to leave me speechless.

I have never found complete answers to every question, Nor have I ever ceased my endless quest for knowledge. I have never grown weary of reading or understanding— The world continues to leave me speechless.

At every step, I encounter boundless power and might, Noble words lift me towards the heavens, taking flight. They awaken me whenever I drift into a lifeless slumber— The world continues to leave me speechless.

Among the eighteen thousand worlds, I exist, grateful and blessed, To the beauty of these eighteen thousand worlds, I am deeply attached. Such wonder and amazement bring joy to my heart— The world continues to leave me speechless.

What I do not know far exceeds all that I know, And with every passing day, my ignorance becomes clearer. As long as I live, this lesson is written into my destiny— The world continues to leave me speechless.

Maqsuda Karimova
Uzbekistan

The faithful are always victors



By Jayrona Murodova

Those who believe are victors evermore,
With restless voices, dreams they can't ignore.
Hope blooms within their hearts each day,
Though hurtful souls may cross their way.
Those who believe are victors evermore.
Some call them fools, with words unkind,
The cruel, the faithless, who leave their land behind.
May those who sell their honor fade away,
Those who believe are victors every day.
The love of homeland fills their hearts,
A ray of kindness in their eyes imparts.
Their smiles conceal the pain they bear,
Yet faith and hope are always there.
Those who believe are victors evermore.
They know the hardships, pain and tears,
The trials they've faced throughout the years.
Yet hope within their hearts still grows,
Their faith remains, and onward flows.
Those who believe are victors evermore. About the Author
Jayrona Murodova Odilovna was born on May 24, 2008, in Pastdargom District, Samarkand Region, Uzbekistan. In 2024, she graduated from Secondary School No. 20 in Nurobod District and continued her education at the Academic Lyceum under the Uzbekistan–Finland Institute in Samarkand.
After completing her studies there in 2026, she was admitted to Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, majoring in Uzbek Language and Literature, where she is currently a first-year student.
Jayrona has a deep passion for poetry and literature. She has published a poetry collection entitled "Verses Born in the Heart". Her poems and articles on various themes continue to appear in different publications.
Her greatest ambition is to become a highly qualified specialist in her chosen profession and share her valuable knowledge and experience with future generations.

My teacher, my hero



Padma Priya Ma'am

I don't know what makes her so different,
Or what magic she carries into our classroom.
Her teaching is extraordinary,
But there is something beyond the lessons.

She fills our classroom with her energy,
Makes every lesson interesting in its own way.
She makes us laugh, think and learn,
Without allowing the class to become boring.

Sometimes, I wonder how she does it,
How one person can make so many students admire her.
It is not just about her teaching,
It is a connection that I cannot explain.

I have seen many teachers,
But I know that not everyone has these qualities.
There is something special in her presence,
Something that makes her unforgettable.

Perhaps she doesn't know how much we admire her,
Or how much happiness she brings into our classroom.
For her, it may be another ordinary school day,
But for us, those moments become memories.

I cannot describe her magic in a single word,
And I don't think I ever will.
Some people are remembered for what they teach,
But she will be remembered for how she made us feel.

Padma Priya Ma'am, you are not just a teacher in my school journey; you are a person whose presence has made that journey more meaningful.

V. S. Nithiyasri
Class: 8D
John Dewey Matric Higher Secondary School

My teacher my hero



Teacher, teacher, my lovely teacher,
Teacher, teacher, my wonderful teacher!

My English teacher teaches in an interesting way,
And makes us learn something new every day.

Maths Sir, Maths Sir, you teach us Maths,
You make it easy with your simple tricks.
Numbers and sums become interesting when you teach us, Sir.
You explain every sum in a simple way,
With care, and help us whenever we have doubts, Sir.

You teach us with patience every day.
You never make us feel afraid to ask questions.

Sir, you encourage us to learn and try.
You always tell us to do our best.

Sir, you are a wonderful teacher to me.
I feel happy and proud to be your student, Sir.

Maths Sir, Maths Sir, you are my teacher hero.
I will always remember your teaching, your kindness
and the knowledge you share with us, Sir.

Name :DHANUSREE. G
Class: IX
School : Government Girls Higher Secondary School Big Kanchipuram

Ocean Waves



Ocean, ocean, ocean, my dear ocean!
Beauty, beauty, beauty, the waves are a beauty.
Run, run, run, the waves one by one.

Name, name, name, what is the game?
Wide, wide, wide, how wide you are!
Come, come, come, I will come near you.

Wet, wet, wet, you will wet my legs.
Sand, sand, sand, what nice sand!
Build, build, build, I build a beautiful house.

Walk, walk, walk, the turtle walks slowly.
Breeze, breeze, breeze, flow, gentle breeze.
Up, up, up, the waves are up.

Down, down, down, the waves are down.
Like, like, like, I like you so much.
Play, play, play, you and I play together with the waves.

It is an ocean.
I have a passion for cleaning the ocean.

__ G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

University As the date closes in, attention shifts to the candidates, their messages and the concrete proposals they put before voters

Who will carry the students' voice? Laikipia University prepares for November 18 elections

With LUSA polls days away, students face a defining choice about the kind of leadership that will represent their interests and hold the administration to account

BY Jonothan Muchiri
@themtkenyatimes



Laikipia University

Laikipia University is gearing up for one of the most significant moments in its student governance calendar, with the Laikipia University Students Association (LUSA) elections set for Tuesday. The polls will give thousands of students the opportunity to choose representatives who will speak on their behalf, champion their interests and engage the university administration on issues that shape daily campus life.

Student leadership matters more than many appreciate. Through LUSA, students have a recognised platform to raise concerns, participate in institutional governance and push back when things go wrong. Tuesday's election is therefore not merely a procedural exercise — it is a chance for the student body to decide, with intention, what kind of representation it wants for the term ahead.

As the date closes in, attention shifts to the candidates, their messages and the concrete proposals they put before voters. The issues that define student elections at Laikipia are rarely abstract — accommodation, welfare, transport, academic support, financial hardship, mental health and the quality of communication between student leaders and university management. Candidates will be expected to address these with specifics, not slogans.

The university has an established record of credible student elections. The 2024/2025 LUSA Electoral College election was held on 12th March 2025, followed by the Student Executive Council election two days later, with the newly elected leadership sworn in on 20th March. Emmanuel Kibet Koech was elected Chairperson of the Executive Council in a process that Dean of Students Beatrice Yogo described as the smoothest and best-attended in the university's history. That transition set a standard — not just for organisation, but for the spirit in which student democracy ought to be conducted.

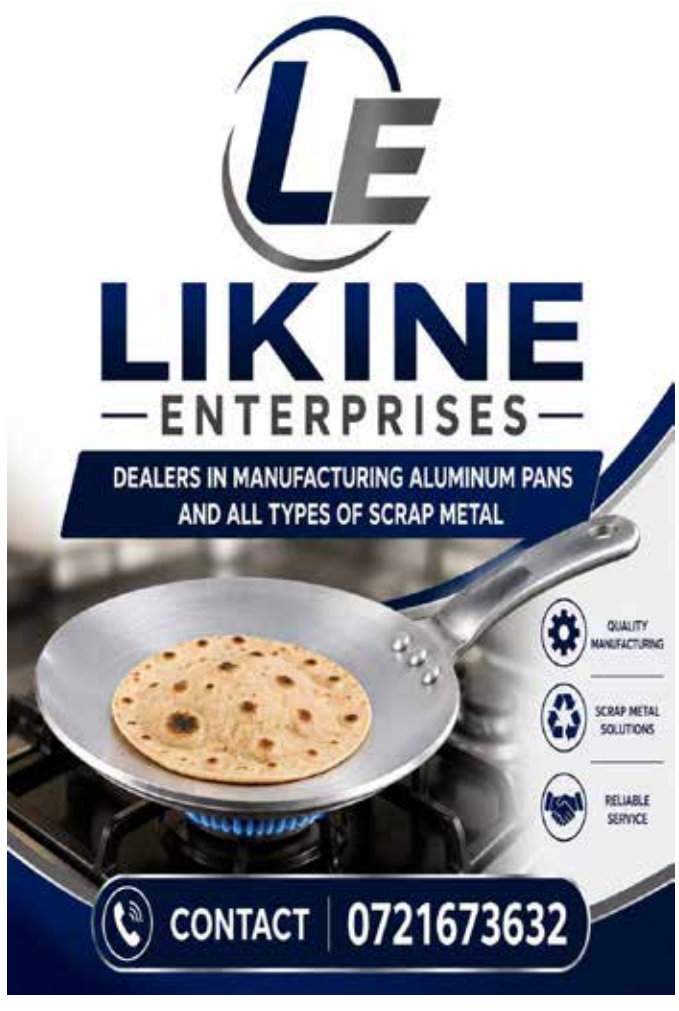
Its lessons remain relevant. A successful poll should not be measured by turnout alone. Students will expect those elected on Tuesday to remain accessible long after the celebrations, communicate regularly and honour commitments made during the campaign. Leadership that disappears between terms serves no one.

The Directorate of Student Affairs carries responsibility for ensuring Tuesday's election proceeds in an orderly manner — with clear communication, strict adherence to electoral rules and cooperation among candidates, voters and university officials. The environment surrounding the election matters as much as the outcome.

Beyond campaign activity, the coming days offer students a moment of genuine reflection. What does effective representation look like? Who, among those presenting themselves for election, has demonstrated the seriousness, empathy and commitment the role demands? Those chosen will be expected to represent the entire student community — not just their supporters — and to engage the administration constructively even when the conversation is difficult.

Ultimately, Tuesday's election will determine more than who occupies student leadership positions. It will offer a clear measure of students' confidence in those who seek to serve them. As Laikipia University prepares for the polls, one question remains: who will earn that trust — and carry the students' voice?







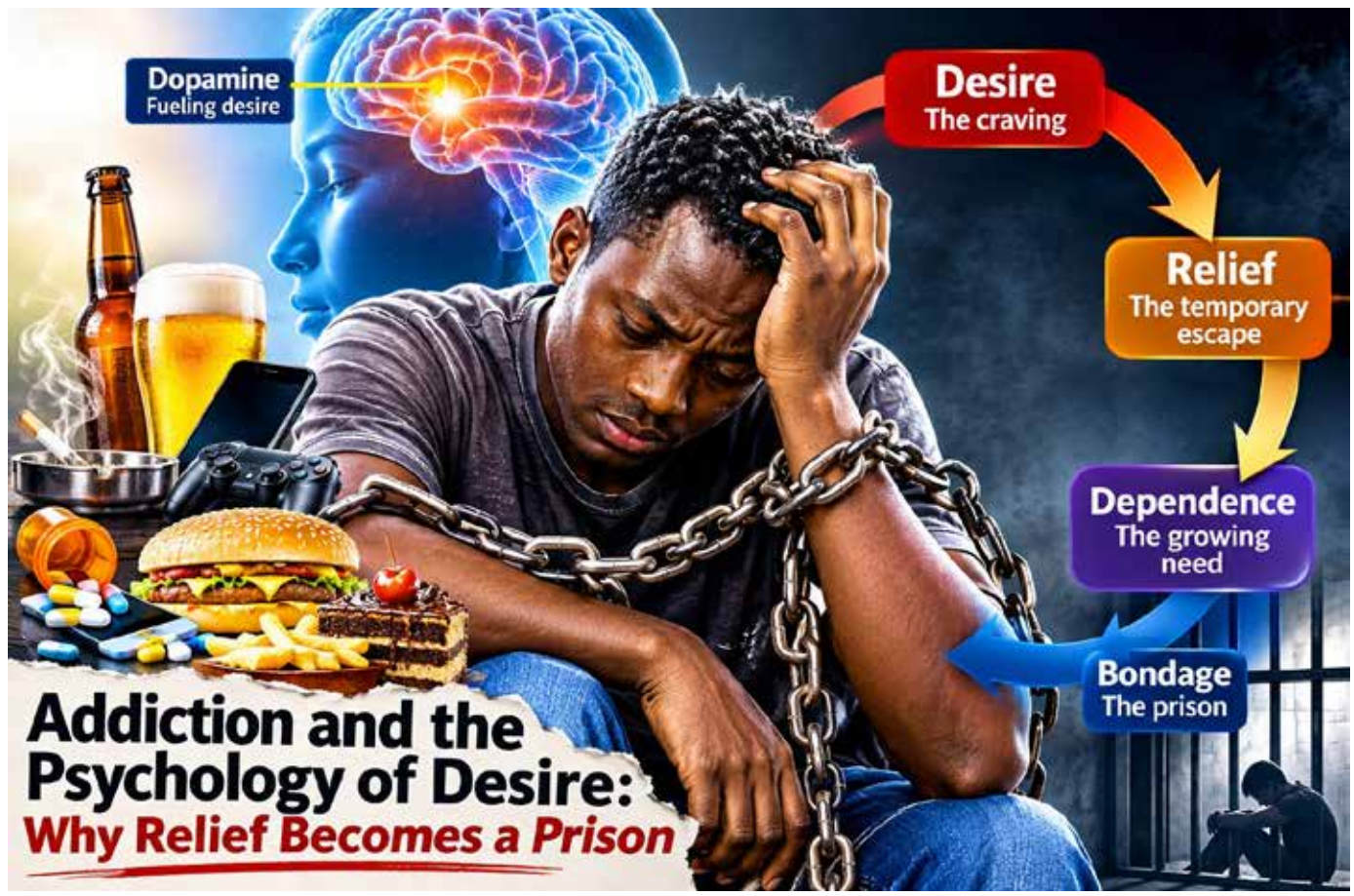
Psychology **Modern addiction research begins not with morality but with learning. The brain learns what brings relief — and then it remembers. In Nyeri, that learning was visible in everyday detail**

Addiction and the psychology of desire: Why relief becomes a prison

Addiction in Kenya is a neurological, psychological and social condition — not a moral failure — and community research from Nyeri reveals what genuine recovery demands



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes



Addiction and the psychology of desire are misunderstood in Kenya, where the condition is too often dismissed as a moral failure — a lack of discipline, faith, or willpower. That framing is not only cruel; it is intellectually inadequate. It cannot explain why a person who understands the harm continues regardless, why punishment rarely works, or why relapse occurs after months of abstinence. A more rigorous question is this: what happens when the human desire for relief becomes detached from reason, and what does genuine recovery require beyond mere abstinence? To answer it, three disciplines must be brought into conversation — neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy — none sufficient alone, but together offering a fuller account grounded in community-based research conducted in Nyeri between 2023 and 2025.

That research was not conducted from a distance. Listening circles and community dialogues were held across Nyeri — chosen because of its long history with alcohol-related harm, its dense network of churches, schools and cooperative societies, and its willingness to speak openly about a problem many communities still conceal. In Nyeri town, Othaya, Mukurweini and Tetu, the work took the form of community-based participatory research. Residents were not treated as subjects to be studied but as co-interpreters of their own reality. Teachers, pastors, chiefs, community health promoters, youth leaders and people in recovery sat together. The questions were shaped by them: why do young men drink, why do mothers chew miraa to stay awake, why does betting spread fastest where jobs are scarcest, and why does shame keep families from seeking help? The method was deliberately slow, involving repeated visits rather than one-off questionnaires, and listening in Kikuyu, Kiswahili and English — because pain changes its meaning when it changes its language.

Modern addiction research begins not with morality but with learning. The brain learns what brings relief — and then it remembers. In Nyeri, that learning was visible in everyday detail. A teacher described how one drink quieted the noise of an overcrowded classroom, and the next day his brain offered the same solution again. A young graduate described how a bet silenced, for one evening, the shame of asking his parents for fare — and the next evening the same shame returned with the same solution attached. A market woman described how miraa kept her alert through a sixteen-hour day, and how, without it, the tiredness felt heavier than before. In each case, the substance was not first experienced as pleasure. It was experienced as steadiness. With repetition, the brain no longer treated it as an option — it treated it as a command. Tolerance grew; more was needed to feel the same relief. Familiar cues became powerful: a bar on the way home, a phone notification, a Friday evening — craving arriving before use had even begun. The motive shifted from wanting to feel good to wanting to stop feeling bad. This is why health warnings consistently fail. The person is no longer pursuing pleasure. He is fleeing pain, and the brain, having learned the shortcut, demands it again.

If neuroscience explains how addiction is learned, psychology explains why it is chosen. In Nyeri, people did not choose substances at random. They chose the one that quieted their particular pain. Alcohol softened social anxiety. Miraa countered exhaustion. Betting distracted from the helplessness of unemployment. Cannabis softened grief and the memory of violence. This is not to romanticise use — it is to clarify it. The person was attempting emotional regulation, but with a tool that ultimately dysregulates. When a child learns that emotions will be punished or ignored, the adult learns to regulate those emotions chemically rather than relationally. Recovery, therefore, cannot be purely pharmacological. It must restore relational regulation — the capacity to be calmed by another human presence. Participants described isolation as both cause and consequence of use. A man who drank was excluded from family decisions, and exclusion made him drink more. A woman who used cannabis was gossiped about in church, removing the very community that might have held her. Isolation predicted relapse. Connection predicted recovery. In Nyeri, that was not an abstraction — it was the texture of everyday life.

Neuroscience and psychology still leave a philosophical problem unresolved: if addiction is a brain disorder, is the person still free? In Nyeri, elders answered without recourse to philosophy. They said: a man who drinks has lost his place at the table. To lose your place at the table is to lose belonging — to no longer be trusted with decisions, invited to pray, counted as a person of the house. And when belonging is lost, drinking intensifies, because it becomes the only place where one still feels they belong, even falsely. The person is divided. One desire says: I want to drink. Another says: I want to not want to drink. Both are real. Both belong to the same person. And the first is winning. This is why telling someone to simply stop is so useless. The person already wants to stop. What he lacks is the power to make his higher desire prevail. His reason knows the harm; his appetite overrules. The truth found in Nyeri is a third position — agency is damaged, but not destroyed. It can be rebuilt through habituation, reflection and community. In African philosophy, a person is a person through other people. Addiction is not only a private neurological event. It is a rupture in belonging. Recovery is not only abstinence. It is re-belonging.

If this threefold account is correct, intervention must be threefold as well. At the biological level, withdrawal and craving require medical attention, not punishment. At the psychological level, the work is to name what precedes the craving — the argument at home, the empty pocket, the loneliness after the funeral — and practise an alternative. At the social level, recovery requires the reconstruction of meaning. In Nyeri, the most durable recoveries began not with a lecture but with a role: a young man given responsibility for a youth football team, a woman given a stall in a cooperative, a father invited back to lead family prayers. Role restored reason, and reason restored restraint. Relapse is not moral failure — it is a signal that one of the three levels has weakened. The appropriate response is assessment, not condemnation. To heal addiction, we must restore regulation, restore reason and restore belonging. When a person can feel pain without fleeing it and belong without hiding, relief is no longer a prison. It becomes what it was always meant to be: a brief rest on the way to a life worth living.

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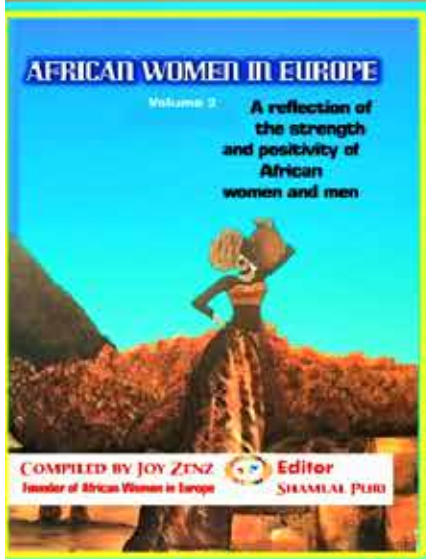
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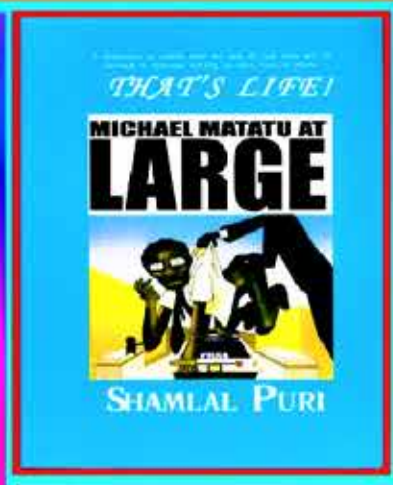
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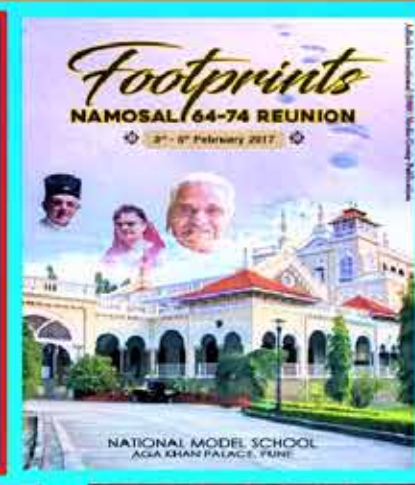
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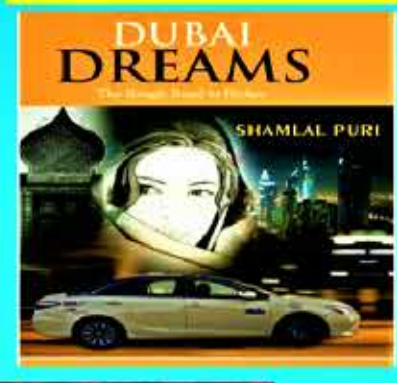


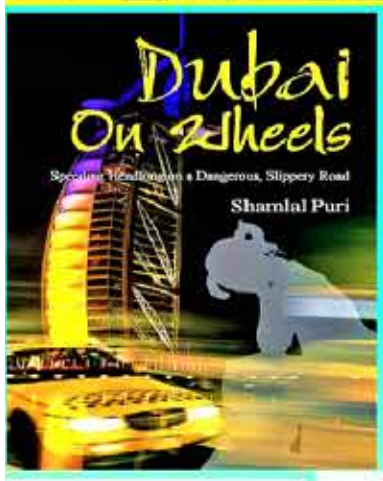


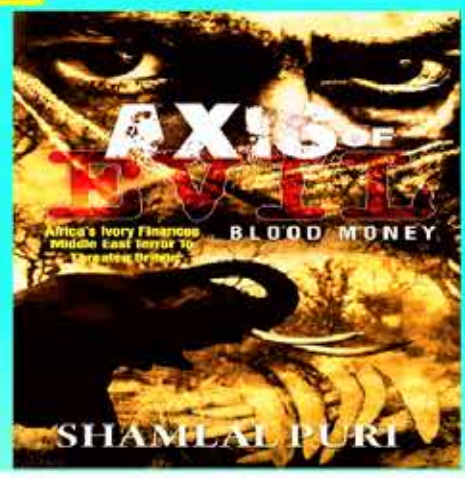


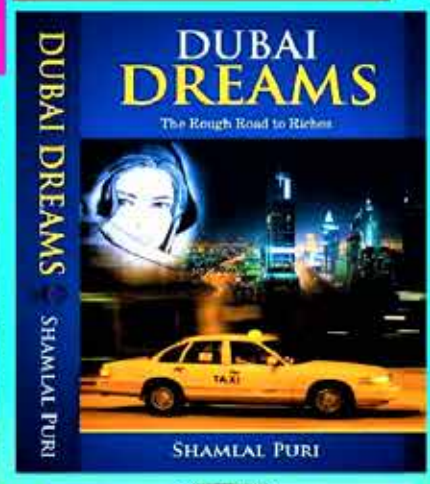


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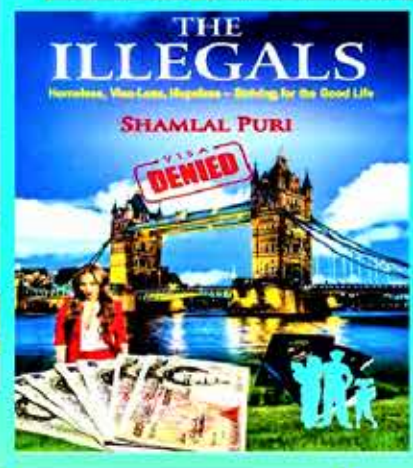


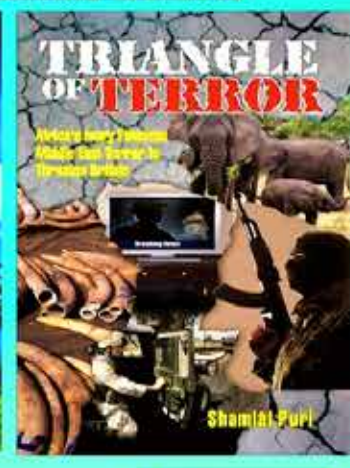


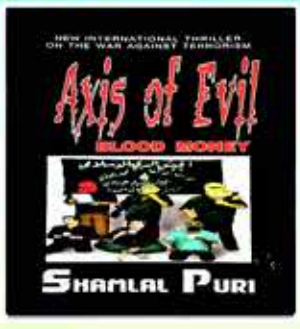




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DRC **The Democratic Republic of the Congo has long been one of central Africa's most strategically significant aviation hubs, linking the continent's second-largest country by area**

Congo airport fees: What international travellers need to know before they fly

Conflicting reports about charges at DRC airports have left passengers uncertain about what they owe — and to whom

BY Jacob Kinyua
@themtkenyatimes



Antonio Agostinho Neto Airport DRC | *Photo:* Courtesy

International travellers flying through the Democratic Republic of the Congo face a potentially confusing array of airport charges, with reports in November 2026 citing fees totalling as much as US$115 on a round trip — though whether all three charges apply to every itinerary remains unclear and dependent on individual airline billing practices.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has long been one of central Africa's most strategically significant aviation hubs, linking the continent's second-largest country by area to regional and intercontinental routes. Yet its airport fee structure has attracted growing scrutiny, particularly after Le Point CD reported in November 2026 that international passengers could face a US$55 Go Pass charge alongside a separate US$30 airport security fee — amounts that, combined on a return journey, could add considerably to the cost of travel without passengers necessarily knowing why.

The Go Pass is the more established of the two charges. A Congolese government budget document describes it as an airport infrastructure development charge linked to the Régie des voies aériennes, known as the RVA, which is the country's airports and air navigation authority. The charge is intended to fund airport modernisation and the acquisition of new air navigation equipment — broadly legitimate purposes, though the applicable amount varies by route and by the tariff in force at the time of travel. Passengers on different routes may therefore be quoted different figures, adding to the opacity surrounding what is actually owed.

The second charge has a more contested origin. In November 2025, Radio Okapi and Actualité.cd both reported that the Congolese government had entered into an agreement with Securiport LLC, a United States company specialising in border security and biometric screening systems, under which a fee of US$30 per passenger would be levied on international commercial flights, on both arrival and departure. Le Point CD reported that airlines would collect the charge and transfer the proceeds into a joint account, with 85 per cent allocated to Securiport and 15 per cent retained by the Congolese state.

The arrangement immediately drew questions. Critics noted that an 85-15 revenue split heavily favouring a foreign private company from public passenger fees was an unusual arrangement for a sovereign government to sanction. The report, however, did not establish how much had actually been collected or transferred under the agreement, and as of 10th November 2026 no dated tariff notice or itemised ticket confirming that airlines were actively collecting an extra US$30 under the Securiport agreement had appeared in publicly available records.

The Congolese government's position, as conveyed through official channels in November 2025, appeared to dispute the narrative of a new fee burden. An adviser at the Interior Ministry told the Agence Congolaise de Presse that an existing security charge was already incorporated into international ticket prices and that travellers would face no additional supplement. The adviser characterised the change not as a new charge but as a reform to how an existing one was collected and tracked — a distinction that may reassure some passengers but has done little to resolve the confusion among others, particularly given the lack of publicly accessible documentation confirming exactly what airlines are billing and under which authority.

Securiport's own country page for the DRC likewise contains a note acknowledging that its listed records do not establish that passengers are currently required to pay the reported charge — an admission that, while technically measured, does little to clarify the situation for a passenger standing at a check-in desk or reviewing a fare breakdown online.

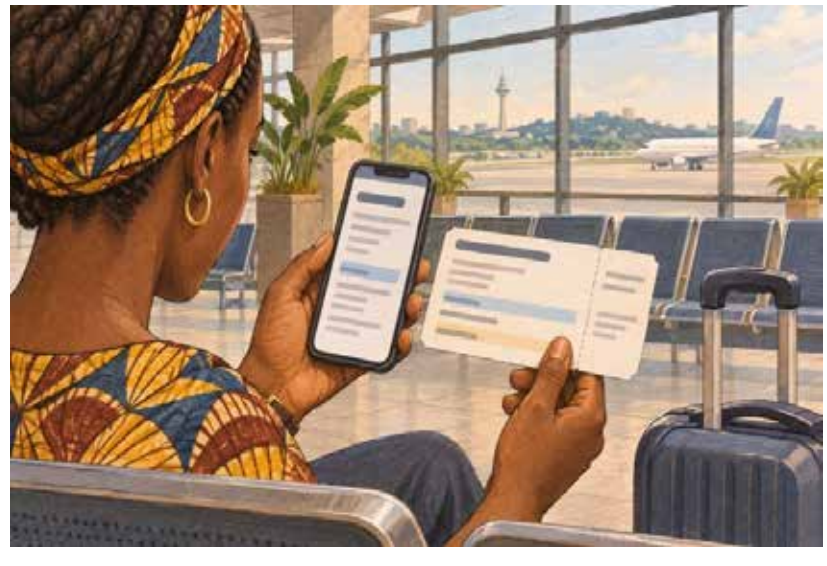
For practical purposes, the arithmetic is straightforward even if the underlying policy is not. Adding the reported Go Pass figure of US$55 to two applications of the US$30 Securiport-linked charge — one on arrival, one on departure — produces a possible round-trip total of US$115 in airport-related fees, over and above the base airfare. That is not a trivial sum on routes where ticket prices are already elevated by the limited competition serving many Congolese airports. Whether all three amounts are genuinely due on a single itinerary depends entirely on the applicable tariff and what the airline or airport is actually billing at the time of travel.

The broader concern for travellers is not simply financial. It is the absence of a reliable, publicly accessible and up-to-date source of information about what charges exist, what they fund, who collects them, and how passengers can verify that they are not being billed twice for the same service under different names. Airport fee structures in developing markets can be opaque at the best of times, but the DRC situation is complicated further by the involvement of a private foreign contractor, by contradictory official statements, and by the apparent gap between what has been reported and what can be independently confirmed.

Aviation analysts who track African airport charges note that passengers increasingly expect transparency — not least because low-cost and digital-first carriers have accustomed travellers worldwide to itemised fare breakdowns that distinguish taxes, fees and surcharges from the base ticket price. Where that transparency is absent, trust erodes and travellers become reluctant to book routes they cannot price with confidence.

The practical advice for anyone flying to or from the DRC in the near term is clear and worth following carefully. Request an itemised fare from your airline, checking both the arrival and departure legs separately. If an unfamiliar charge appears, ask what it covers, under which authority it is levied, who collects it and whether it is already embedded in the ticket price. Retain any payment receipt issued at the airport so it can be compared against the original fare breakdown. And if the airline cannot answer those questions satisfactorily, escalate before you travel rather than after.

Transparency in airport charges is not a bureaucratic nicety — it is a basic condition of passenger trust. Until the DRC provides it, travellers will continue to arrive uncertain of what they owe and leave unsure of what they paid.

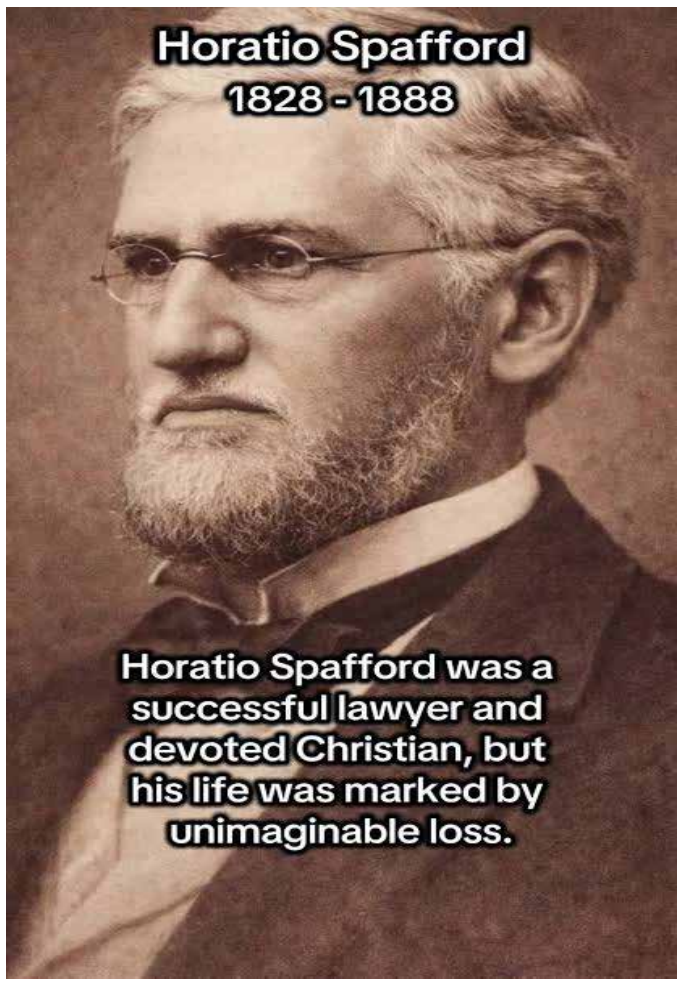


Music **The first blow came in October 1871, when the Great Chicago Fire tore through the city. Spafford had invested heavily in property, and the disaster inflicted serious financial losses**

‘It is well with my soul’: The extraordinary story behind a hymn born out of tragedy

Horatio Spafford’s 1873 hymn, written after losing four daughters at sea, remains Christianity’s most powerful declaration of faith amid devastating loss

BY Ashford Kimani
@themtkenyatimes



Horatio Gates Spafford, a successful Chicago lawyer and committed Christian, wrote one of the most enduring hymns in the history of Christian worship not from a place of comfort, but from the depths of unbearable loss. Composed in 1873 after a series of tragedies that would have broken most people, It Is Well with My Soul continues to be sung in churches, at funerals and during moments of private crisis across the world — its message of faith transcending generations and denominations.

Spafford was born in 1828 and built a prosperous legal career in Chicago, Illinois, maintaining close relationships with prominent religious figures, including the celebrated evangelist Dwight L. Moody. He had a wife, Anna, and five children. By the early 1870s, his life bore all the hallmarks of stability and professional achievement. Yet that stability concealed the fragility that comes with anchoring one’s security in family, property and professional success.

The first blow came in October 1871, when the Great Chicago Fire tore through the city. Spafford had invested heavily in property, and the disaster inflicted serious financial losses. Around the same period, the family suffered the death of a young son. Grief and uncertainty entered a household that had previously known relative comfort. Even so, the worst was still ahead.

In November 1873, Spafford planned a European trip with Anna and their four daughters — Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta. Business commitments forced him to remain behind in Chicago while his family sailed ahead aboard the French steamship Ville du Havre, intending to join them later.

On 22 November 1873, the Ville du Havre collided with another vessel in the Atlantic Ocean and sank. More than 200 people perished. All four of Spafford’s daughters were among the dead. Anna survived and was pulled from the water. The woman who had boarded the ship with her four children was now returning to shore without them.

She sent her husband a telegram. The message is traditionally remembered for its devastating brevity: “Saved alone. What shall I do?” Those four words communicated a loss almost beyond comprehension. Spafford had already buried a son and endured significant financial ruin. Now, in a single maritime disaster, he had lost all four daughters.

The tragedy posed a question that cuts to the heart of faith: what happens when the God in whom we trust does not prevent the suffering we most desperately wish to avoid? For Spafford, this was no abstract theological problem. It was immediate, personal and shattering. His daughters were gone, his wife was grieving, and the future they had imagined together had been destroyed.

According to the widely recorded history of the hymn, Spafford later sailed across the Atlantic to reunite with Anna. The ship’s captain reportedly told him when they were passing near the area where the Ville du Havre had gone down. It was in the wake of this crossing — over the waters that had taken his children — that Spafford wrote the words of It Is Well with My Soul. Though popular accounts differ on the precise moment of composition, the connection between the hymn and the loss of his daughters is well established.

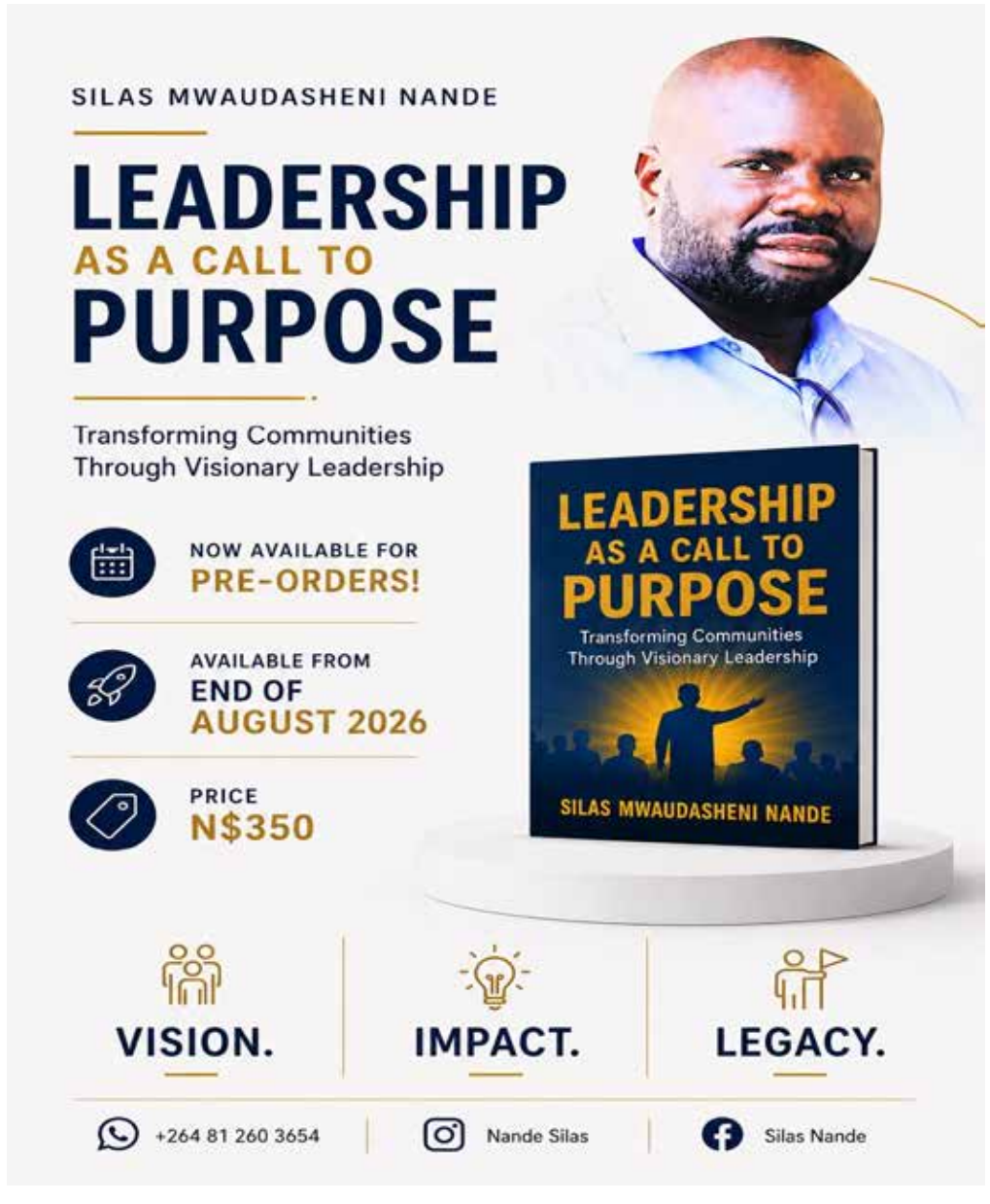
The opening verse captures the remarkable tension between suffering and faith: “When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.” These are not the words of a man whose grief had passed. They are the words of a man choosing, consciously and painfully, to anchor his soul in something beyond his circumstances.

The distinction matters. The hymn does not ask Christians to deny grief, suppress emotion or pretend that tragedy does not hurt. It presents faith as a source of hope that can survive even when circumstances remain painful and incomprehensible. To declare that all is well with one’s soul is not to claim that all is well with one’s life.

The music that gave the hymn its familiar form was composed by Philip Paul Bliss, an American gospel singer and composer who set Spafford’s words to a melody he titled Ville du Havre, in direct reference to the ship and the tragedy. The hymn was published in 1876 in Gospel Hymns No. 2, a collection associated with Bliss and the evangelist Ira D. Sankey. What began as an intensely private expression of faith gradually became a treasured fixture of Christian worship worldwide.

Spafford’s later years brought further change. In 1881, he and Anna moved to Jerusalem with family and associates, establishing a Christian community known as the American Colony, which devoted itself to charitable and humanitarian work. Spafford died in Jerusalem in 1888. Anna continued the work of the colony until her own death in 1923.

Today, It Is Well with My Soul continues to speak to those facing bereavement, illness, financial hardship and unanswered questions. Its enduring power lies in its refusal to equate faith with a trouble-free life. Like Job, who acknowledged God through devastating loss, or Habakkuk, who resolved to rejoice even when the fields produced nothing, Spafford’s words carry a hope that does not depend on favourable circumstances. More than 150 years after its composition, the hymn remains what it always was: a declaration that faith can coexist with grief, that hope can outlast uncertainty, and that even when life is not well, the soul can be.



Business **The Dubai-based carrier will operate an average of 78 flights a day between Dubai and Europe throughout the current winter schedule, adding 31 weekly flights to a roster of winter**

Emirates expands Premium Economy and winter sun routes across Europe

The Gulf carrier is deploying more Premium Economy seats to 31 European destinations and adding flights to popular warm-weather escapes, with Dubai doubling as both hub and holiday destination this winter

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes



Emirates yesterday announced a significant expansion of its European winter offering, extending its Premium Economy cabin to 31 of its 41 destinations across Europe and the United Kingdom, while adding more connections through Dubai to some of the world's most popular warm-weather destinations — a move that signals the airline's intent to deepen its grip on the lucrative European travel market ahead of its busiest season.

The Dubai-based carrier will operate an average of 78 flights a day between Dubai and Europe throughout the current winter schedule, adding 31 weekly flights to a roster of winter sun favourites and in-demand cities including Cape Town, Nairobi, Phuket, Hanoi, Manila, Tokyo Narita and Accra. For European travellers weary of short, grey days and looking for warmth, the expanded network offers considerably more flexibility in planning their getaways.

The latest milestone in the Premium Economy rollout came on 25 October, when Paris Charles de Gaulle became the newest European gateway to offer the cabin, bringing the total to 31 of the airline's 41 European and UK destinations. The cabin has become one of Emirates' most talked-about products since its introduction — positioned between business and economy, it offers roomier seats, extra legroom, elevated dining and a range of thoughtful touches designed to make long-haul travel genuinely comfortable rather than merely tolerable.

On Emirates' newest Airbus A350 aircraft, Premium Economy has been refined further. Each seat now features a full-height privacy screen that passengers can raise or lower at the touch of a button, an electric leg rest, a wraparound U-Dream headrest and wireless charging — a configuration that sets a new benchmark for the cabin class across the industry. The expansion forms part of Emirates' multi-billion-dollar retrofit programme, which has already brought the latest interiors to 108 aircraft across the fleet.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer, said the winter expansion was designed to give European travellers more ways to make the most of the season. "Whether they want to discover somewhere new, unwind in the sun or spend time with family and friends, Dubai has lots to offer — but we're also making it easier for them to reach the world's most sought-after winter destinations beyond Dubai, with an expanded eastbound schedule and more of our popular Premium Economy seats deployed," Kazim said.

Beyond the cabin product itself, the airline is leaning into Dubai's appeal as a destination in its own right. The winter months bring warm, sunny days to the emirate, making it an attractive proposition for European travellers who want to break their journey rather than simply transit. The city's beaches, desert experiences, alfresco dining and world-class shopping draw millions of visitors each year, and Emirates is actively encouraging its passengers to turn a layover into a short holiday through its Emirates Holidays and Dubai Experience stopover packages.

Winter is also when Dubai hosts its most high-profile events. The Dubai Shopping Festival, Global Village — the world's most visited theme park — and a packed calendar of concerts and festivals give visitors plenty of reasons to linger, culminating in what the airline describes as spectacular New Year's Eve celebrations. Passengers travelling through Dubai can access exclusive offers at hundreds of restaurants, spas, attractions and retail outlets across the UAE simply by presenting their boarding pass through the My Emirates Pass programme.

For travellers seeking additional reassurance, Emirates offers unlimited free date changes on bookings, a free 24-hour fare hold and reduced refund fees, as well as its Comprehensive Travel Cover, available in 27 countries, which includes unlimited worldwide medical expenses, emergency evacuation, trip cancellation and baggage cover, plus conflict cover of up to US$25,000 in medical expenses and a complimentary trip extension of up to 30 days.

The popular Emirates A380 is serving 21 European destinations this winter, providing seamless onward connectivity to 21 further eastbound destinations also served by the flagship aircraft, including Bangkok, Sydney and Tokyo. Helsinki, Emirates' newest European destination, has been strategically timed for onward connections across East and Southeast Asia, West Asia, the Indian Ocean, Africa and Australasia.

Perhaps the most significant dimension of the expansion, however, is the breadth of Emirates' partnership network, which extends the airline's reach well beyond its own fleet. Through codeshare and interline agreements with more than 35 partners across the Far East alone — including Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Garuda Indonesia, Bangkok Airways and Philippine Airlines — European travellers can access more than 123 cities across the region, among them island retreats such as Koh Samui, Phu Quoc and Langkawi, as well as cities including Busan, Surabaya and Fukuoka. Emirates has further strengthened its Far East presence through new rail partnerships with Korail in South Korea and Hong Kong Airport Direct to Macau.

In Africa, partners including South African Airways, Airlink and Kenya Airways serve close to 75 points across the continent, covering popular safari destinations and world heritage sites such as Victoria Falls, Mount Kilimanjaro and Volcanoes National Park — destinations that have seen growing demand from European travellers seeking alternatives to the conventional beach holiday. Across the Indian Ocean, Maldivian, Air Seychelles and Air Mauritius connect travellers to island escapes ranging from the Maldives' atolls to Praslin and Madagascar. In total, the partnership network gives European passengers access to more than 216 additional destinations beyond Emirates' own network, all bookable on a single ticket with baggage checked through to the final destination and frequent flyer benefits applicable throughout.

Together, the expansion of Premium Economy, the growth in winter sun frequencies and the depth of the codeshare network represent a clear statement of intent from an airline that has long positioned itself as the world's preferred long-haul carrier — and that is not prepared to cede that ground as competition intensifies across global aviation.

For European travellers, the message this winter is straightforward: more seats, more destinations, more comfort — and a sunny stop in Dubai if the grey skies at home become too much to bear.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Early pregnancies in Kenya: A crisis we can no longer ignore

By **Esther Kitone**



Early pregnancy remains one of the most damaging and persistent crises in Kenya's education system, cutting short thousands of young lives each year before they have truly begun. Every year, girls who should be sitting examinations are instead navigating motherhood without the maturity, resources or support to do either well.

The causes are well documented but insufficiently addressed. Poverty drives girls into exploitative relationships with older men who offer money, food or school fees in exchange for sex. Absent parents, peer pressure, drug abuse and a chronic shortage of age-appropriate reproductive health education compound the problem at every level. Many girls simply do not know enough to protect themselves — and no one around them is filling that gap.

The consequences are severe and self-reinforcing. Girls who fall pregnant overwhelmingly drop out of school, surrendering careers in medicine, law or teaching before they ever start. Their bodies, not yet physically ready for pregnancy, face serious health risks. Without education, young mothers struggle to find sustainable employment, trapping themselves and their children in the same poverty cycle that made them vulnerable in the first place.

Solutions exist, but require commitment from every corner of society. Parents must speak openly to their children. Schools must strengthen counselling services. Government must enforce laws against defilement rigorously and support re-entry programmes for girls who have given birth.

Kenya cannot afford to keep losing its daughters to a preventable crisis. Every girl who drops out is a future this country will never get back.

The whispering wild: Why we must keep answering the call of the savannah

By **Winmary Mokeira**



Kenya's savannahs, forests and open plains offer something no city can manufacture: the rare, restorative experience of being genuinely small in a vast, indifferent world. For a growing number of urban Kenyans, that experience is no longer a luxury — it is a necessity.

The Maasai Mara at dawn, Amboseli beneath Kilimanjaro's snow-capped silhouette, a lion's roar felt through the soles of your feet at dusk — these are not scenes from a foreign travel brochure. They are Kenya's inheritance, as much ours as the city skylines we have built around ourselves. For too long, the domestic safari was viewed as a seasonal attraction reserved for foreign tourists. That perception is finally changing.

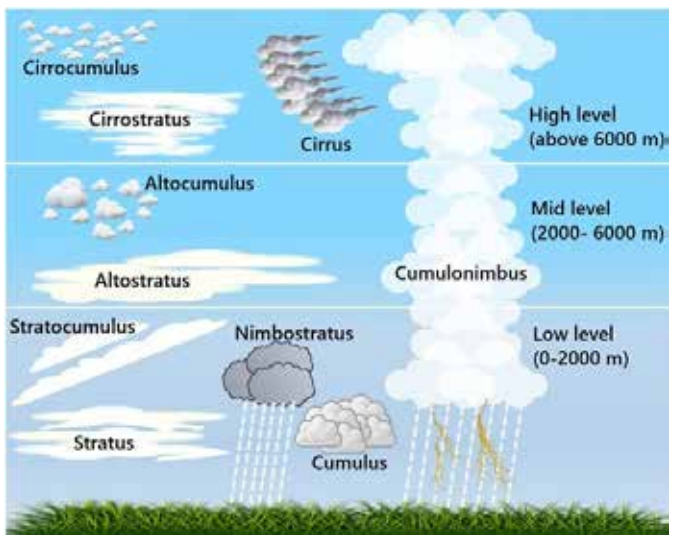
A new generation of local travellers is actively reclaiming the wild — not through five-star lodges alone, but through morning drives in Nairobi National Park, nights around bush campfires under unfiltered stars, and conscious choices to stay at community-owned conservancies where every shilling supports local rangers and protects critical wildlife corridors. The wild, it turns out, is accessible to more Kenyans than the tourism industry has historically suggested.

What the wilderness offers cannot be replicated by a weekend in a shopping mall or a scroll through social media. It strips away noise, restores perspective and replaces manufactured anxiety with something older and more grounding — awe.

Kenya's wild spaces are under pressure from encroachment, climate stress and underfunding. The Kenyans most capable of defending them are those who have experienced them. Go. The savannah is still whispering — and it cannot wait forever.

The layers of the clouds: How the firmament above is structured

By **Cecilia Chepkong'a**



The sky above is not a single canvas but a structured atmosphere divided into distinct layers, each hosting cloud formations that govern weather, climate and the rhythms of daily life.

At the highest level, between 20,000 feet and beyond, cirrus, cirrostratus and cirrocumulus clouds dominate. Cirrus clouds are thin, wind-stretched wisps of ice crystals. Cirrostratus forms translucent veils that cast halos around the sun and moon. Cirrocumulus appears in small, fish-scale sheets — delicate and fleeting.

The middle layer, between 6,500 and 20,000 feet, holds altocumulus, altostratus and nimbostratus clouds. Altocumulus resembles scattered flocks of sheep and signals humid but fair conditions. Altostratus spreads as a grey sheet across the entire sky. Nimbostratus is the brooding dark mass that delivers steady, prolonged rainfall.

At low level, below 6,500 feet, stratus, cumulus, stratocumulus and cumulonimbus clouds form. Stratus is lifted fog producing light drizzle. Cumulus are the familiar white, flat-based puffs of fair weather. Stratocumulus are lumpy, grey and largely benign. Cumulonimbus, the most dramatic of all, towers from low dark bases and unleashes heavy rain, lightning and storms.

Each layer is a chapter in a larger story — one the sky writes and rewrites daily, indifferent to whether we are paying attention.

Lecturers return to class — but warn of fresh strike

By **Ruth Omaiko**



Kenya's public universities reopened yesterday after a month of empty lecture halls, with students returning to class on Monday following the end of a nationwide lecturers' strike that paralysed teaching, examinations, research and graduation ceremonies across the country.

The strike, called on 2nd October by three unions — the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU), the Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU) and the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) — was triggered by the government's failure to implement the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

It ended on 30th October after the government committed KSh 20 billion to fund the CBA, to be disbursed in three annual phases, alongside a 3.5 per cent basic salary increase backdated to July 2025.

"We have achieved the objectives of our strike. Prepare to go to class," UASU Secretary-General Constantine Wesonga announced.

The relief, however, may be short-lived. Appearing before the National Assembly committees on education and labour on Wednesday, Wesonga flagged two unresolved issues — plans to fund lecturers' salaries from student fees, and KSh 100 billion in outstanding pension and salary remittances. "The storm might have subsided, but there are two issues that will make us rise again," he told parliament.

Labour Committee chairperson Ken Chonga warned the deal remains vulnerable without Treasury backing. Education Committee chairperson Julius Melly assured unions parliament would secure the first KSh 6.7 billion tranche through the supplementary budget.

Students have returned — but with one eye on December examinations and the other on a government whose promises have a habit of arriving late.



Sports >> *A Murang'a High Court petition seeking conservatory orders against rival FKF factions has thrown Kenya's football governance crisis into the judicial arena, with the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations co-hosting at stake

Court steps in as FKF leadership war threatens Kenya's AFCON 2027 dream

By **Martin Weche**



McDonald Mariga

The Football Kenya Federation's protracted leadership crisis landed before the High Court at Murang'a last week after a sports stakeholder filed an urgent constitutional petition seeking court intervention to halt what he described as a dangerous dual power structure threatening to destroy the institutional integrity of Kenyan football. The petition challenges the current FKF disputes, and a subsequent application has also been filed challenging the Special General Meeting resolutions of 7 November 2026.

Patrick Kinyua filed Petition No. E028 of 2026 on 3 November at the Murang'a Law Courts Constitutional and Human Rights Division, naming the Football Kenya Federation, its Congress, its National Executive Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, and the Sports Registrar as respondents. The petition was certified urgent and placed before Justice Dorah Chepkwony, with case activities recorded on both 4 and 9 November.

The crisis at the heart of the petition has been simmering since April. Hussein Mohammed was elected FKF President on 7 December 2024, with McDonald Mariga elected as his Vice-President in a process recognised by both FIFA and the Confederation of African Football. Within months, however, the leadership had descended into open warfare. On 24 April 2026, nine of the fourteen National Executive Committee members passed a resolution directing Mohammed to step aside over alleged financial impropriety linked to a KSh 42.4 million insurance tender connected to the 2024 African Nations Championship, simultaneously installing Mariga as acting president.

FIFA moved swiftly to reject the resolution, declaring it null and void for failing to comply with the procedural requirements of the FKF Constitution, particularly Article 41, which governs the suspension or removal of elected officials. FIFA was explicit: the steps required — proper agenda communication, quorum, voting thresholds and the right to be heard — had not been followed. "Actions taken outside the clearly defined statutory framework cannot produce valid legal effects within the association," FIFA stated, warning that members acting in breach of the FKF Constitution risked disciplinary consequences. Despite the global body's categorical position, the Mariga-aligned faction refused to stand down, repeatedly preventing the committee from achieving the quorum required under Article 40 of the FKF Constitution.

The human cost has been considerable. Mohammed made repeated attempts through June, July, August, September and October to convene NEC meetings to address the 2026/2027 budget, national team coaching appointments, league structures, refereeing policy and AFCON 2027 preparations. Each meeting collapsed for want of quorum. By October, Mohammed had publicly declared he had given up trying to work with the seven dissenting members and warned they would face disciplinary action.

A pre-consultative NEC Kamukunji held on 13 October offered a rare moment of engagement when both factions attended, but it unravelled quickly. The Mariga side presented thirteen governance concerns; only four were addressed before the meeting was adjourned. When a formal NEC meeting was called the following day, the Mariga faction stayed away, citing a lapsed seven-day notice period under Article 38(3) of the FKF Constitution. "We cannot punish millions of Kenyans because of seven people," Mohammed told journalists afterwards.

By late October the situation had deteriorated into competing disciplinary processes. General Assembly representatives issued proposals seeking the expulsion of seven NEC members aligned with Mariga — including Mariga himself, Robert Kenneth Macharia and Bernard Korir Lagat — for alleged breaches of the FKF Constitution and FIFA Statutes. Four days later, separate General Assembly representatives issued a Summons to Show Cause against Mohammed, citing six charges including financial irregularities and alleged manipulation of NEC minutes.

The petition asks the court to declare the dual power structure a threat to the rule of law, restrain all parallel disciplinary processes, direct the Cabinet Secretary and Sports Registrar to exercise their supervisory powers under the Sports Act No. 25 of 2013, and compel the entire dispute into a constitutionally compliant resolution process.

Former Harambee Stars coach Jacob Mulee captured the wider despair. "Kenya is the only country right now where the league has not started. Even in Ukraine, where there is war, the league is ongoing," he said. With Kenya co-hosting the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations, CAF President Patrice Motsepe has already warned: "We have never needed unity in Kenyan football as we need it now." The court, it seems, may now have to deliver what the boardroom could not.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> ***With United rooted in the relegation zone and Liverpool looming on the horizon, Old Trafford's hierarchy is running out of patience and time**

Carrick on the edge as Manchester United consider managerial change

By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**



Michael Carrick

Manchester United are reportedly preparing to part ways with head coach Michael Carrick following a deeply disappointing run of results that has left the club stranded in the Premier League relegation zone. According to an exclusive report by The Athletic, senior figures at Old Trafford have already begun searching for a replacement, even as the club maintains publicly that no final decision has been made.

The crisis deepened yesterday after United stumbled to a 4-4 draw against Aston Villa — a result that would have been unthinkable at a club of United's stature just a few seasons ago. The draw intensified pressure on Carrick and sharpened concerns about the team's direction at every level of the club. With a daunting trip to Anfield to face fierce rivals Liverpool scheduled for 22nd November, United's leadership under INEOS is reportedly desperate to resolve the managerial question before the week is out.

Carrick was handed a temporary opportunity to steady the ship following a humiliating 3-0 defeat to Bournemouth in October. The former United midfielder arrived with goodwill, name recognition and a clear emotional connection to the club. However, his failure to produce consistent results or install a coherent playing identity has apparently exhausted the patience of those above him. United have managed just one victory in Carrick's opening ten Premier League matches — the club's worst domestic start in 40 years, a statistic that has made the conversations in the boardroom impossible to avoid.

Despite flashes of promise in his early matches, Carrick has struggled to establish a recognisable system, shore up a leaky defence or project the kind of authority that managing one of the world's biggest clubs demands. Questions about his readiness for the role have grown louder with each passing week.

Attention has now shifted firmly towards potential replacements. Mauricio Pochettino, the former Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea manager currently in charge of the United States national team, is believed to be the leading candidate. The Argentine is reportedly open to taking charge at Old Trafford, though his contractual obligations could complicate and delay any negotiations. Former Newcastle United manager Eddie Howe is also attracting serious interest, while Germany head coach Julian Nagelsmann is highly regarded by the club's leadership and considered a credible long-term option.

Sir Jim Ratcliffe, chief executive Omar Berrada and director of football Jason Wilcox are understood to be overseeing the process as the club weighs its options with increasing urgency.

United's current predicament has drawn uncomfortable comparisons to the 1973–74 season, when the club suffered relegation from the top flight in one of the darkest chapters in their history. The parallels are not lost on supporters, many of whom never imagined they would be watching their club battle at the wrong end of the table with such little sign of improvement.

The quality and financial resources available to United suggest they retain the capacity to escape their current situation. But resources alone have not saved them so far, and the table does not lie.

For Carrick, the coming days could prove decisive. The noises from within Old Trafford are growing louder, the fixture list is unforgiving and the margin for error has all but disappeared.

United need answers — and they need them before a difficult season becomes something far harder to explain.



SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

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Cultural features of the concept of “Anger” in French and Uzbek

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative linguocultural analysis of the concept of “anger” in French and Uzbek. The study examines phraseological units, metaphorical models, and lexical means used to express anger in both language systems. It also reveals the influence of national mentality, customs, and social values on the expression of this emotion. The findings show that the concept of anger is shaped in a distinctive way in each culture and reflects the national worldview through language.

Keywords: anger, linguoculturology, phraseology, metaphor, cognitive linguistics, French language, Uzbek language, emotion.

INTRODUCTION

The close relationship between language and culture is considered one of the main areas of modern linguistics [Teliya, 1996, pp. 12–15]. Human emotions, particularly complex emotional states such as anger, are expressed differently in different languages, and these differences are closely connected with national mentality [Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 30–32].

The main aim of this article is to identify the linguocultural features of the concept of anger in French and Uzbek, to conduct a comparative analysis of the means used to express it, and to reveal its cultural foundations.

MAIN BODY

Language and Culture

Methodology (Methods)

The following methods were used in the study:

comparative-analytical method

linguocultural approach

cognitive-semantic analysis

analysis of phraseological units

Phraseological dictionaries of Uzbek and French, as well as scholarly sources, were used as research materials.

Results

The analysis revealed the following results:

In Uzbek, anger is more often expressed as an internal and controlled emotion.

In French, anger is expressed more openly and emphatically.

In Uzbek, anger is more often expressed as an internal and controlled emotion [Wierzbicka, 1999, pp. 60–63].

In French, anger is expressed more openly and emphatically [Kovecses, 2000, pp. 145–150].

The metaphor ANGER = HEAT exists in both languages [Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 13–15].

The ANGER = EXPLOSION model is dominant in French [Kovecses, 2000, pp. 150–152].

The ANGER = PRESSURE (internal pressure) model is prominent in Uzbek [Wierzbicka, 1999, pp. 70–72].

The following Uzbek expressions demonstrate the implicit expression of anger:

* to swallow one’s anger
* to grit one’s teeth
* it did not show on one’s face

These expressions indicate the importance of patience and social balance in society.

In French, however, the following expressions are used:

* exploser de colère > to explode with anger / to become very angry

This expression describes the sudden, intense, and open manifestation of anger.

For example: Il a explosé de colère quand il a appris la nouvelle > He exploded with anger when he heard the news.

* voir rouge > to see red

This expression describes an increase in anger and a decrease in a person’s emotional self-control.

For example: Quand il a menti, il a vu rouge > When he lied, he saw red.

* s’emporter > to lose one’s temper / to act uncontrollably out of anger

This expression denotes sudden and uncontrolled anger.

For example: Il s’est emporté lors de la réunion. > He lost his temper during the meeting.

These expressions demonstrate the open manifestation of emotion.

These differences can be explained by the following:

collectivism is predominant in Uzbek culture;

individualism is predominant in French culture.

The French language captures anger across a vivid spectrum of intensity. At its most extreme, avoir la rage describes a fierce, consuming inner fury, while être furieux conveys a high degree of anger that is equally forceful. A step below, perdre son sang-froid — literally to lose one’s cool — reflects the moment a person surrenders self-control and reacts with open anger, and se mettre en colère describes the same loss of composure arriving more gradually, an ordinary anger that builds over time. At the everyday end of the scale sits se fâcher, the most common and unremarkable expression for getting angry, the kind of irritation that surfaces in ordinary life without great drama.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that although the concept of anger is universal, its expression through language depends on cultural characteristics. In Uzbek, it is manifested more often as an internal and controlled emotion, whereas in French it is expressed openly and freely. This confirms the close relationship between language and culture.

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