

Opposition leaders visit Gachagua to offer condolences after sister's death

Senior opposition leaders, including Wiper Patriotic Front leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i

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MPs pass Bill to end hospital detention of patients and bodies over unpaid bills

The National Assembly yesterday passed a Bill prohibiting hospitals from detaining discharged patients or withholding the bodies of deceased persons over unpaid medical bills

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Thursday, November 12, 2026 No. 01677 KSh 60 (TSh 1,700 : USh 2,700 : RFr 900)

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The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

Countdown 2027 "What happened in the past is in the past. What should concern Kenyans is where we are going," Kenyatta said

Uhuru tells opposition: Unite or step aside

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday used the funeral service of Beatrice Wambui Muturi at PCEA Nairobi West to deliver his most direct public message to opposition leaders yet, urging Rigathi Gachagua, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Eugene Wamalwa and others to set aside personal ambitions and present a united front ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The occasion carried the particular weight that Kenyan funerals often do — a convergence of grief and politics, of personal history and public calculation. Wambui, described by those present as a towering figure in both family and national political circles, had been close to Kenyatta's mother, Mama Ngina, since her marriage to founding President Jomo Kenyatta. "She welcomed her into my father's home when she got married to my father, and our extended family has lost one of its greatest pillars," Kenyatta said in tribute.

But the former president's most consequential remarks were directed not at the departed, but at the living — and specifically at the men seated around him who harbour varying degrees of presidential ambition.

"What happened in the past is in the past. What should concern Kenyans is where we are going," Kenyatta said, before addressing Gachagua, Kalonzo and Wamalwa by name. "As I keep telling my brothers here — Steve, Rigathi, Eugene and others — only one person can occupy the presidency at a time

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Former President Uhuru Kenyatta and Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua shakes hand on Wednesday at PCEA Nairobi West.



Uhuru issues unity call to opposition at Nairobi funeral

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday used the funeral of Beatrice Wambui Muturi at PCEA Nairobi West to deliver a direct public message to opposition leaders: unite ahead of the August 2027 general election, or fail Kenya.

Addressing Rigathi Gachagua, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka and Eugene Wamalwa by name, Kenyatta said ordinary Kenyans were sending an unambiguous signal. "As I keep telling my brothers — Steve, Rigathi, Eugene and others — only one person can occupy the presidency at a time. Our leaders must organise themselves and unite to fulfil what Kenyans want," he said.

The occasion also produced a candid moment between Kenyatta and Gachagua, who publicly admitted spending KSh1.5 million Wambui had entrusted to him for the 2017 repeat presidential campaign on personal needs. Kenyatta responded with characteristic wit, threatening to visit Gachagua's Wamunyoro home to recover the funds.

Kalonzo backed Kenyatta's right to speak on national affairs despite his retirement, while warning that young Kenyans would deliver their verdict at the ballot in 2027.

The seat, Kenyatta reminded everyone, can hold only one.



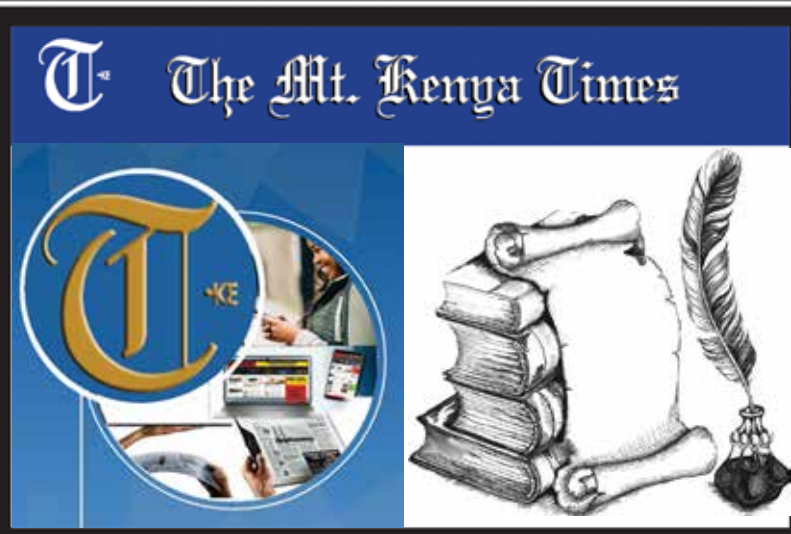








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It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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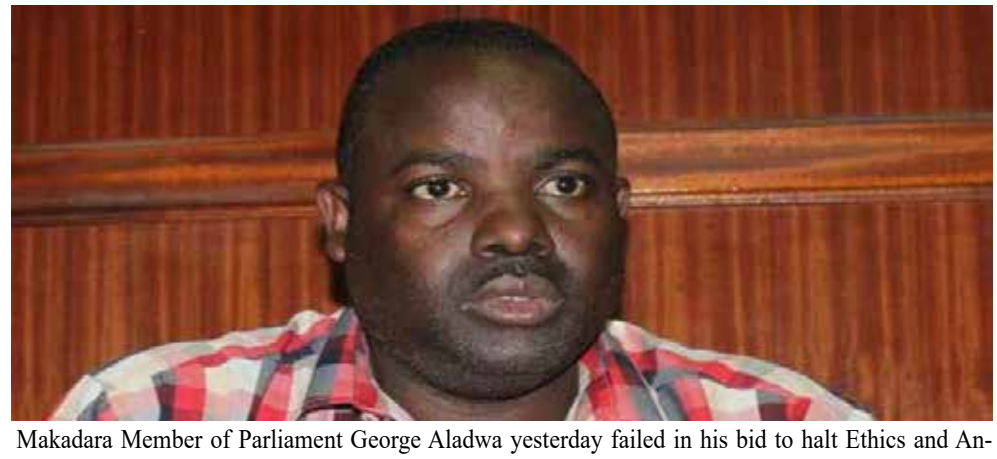
Kenya's electoral commission and members of the National Assembly clashed yesterday over proposed campaign financing regulations, with lawmakers pushing back against measures they argue would impose unrealistic spending limits and reporting requirements on candidates ahead of the 2027 general election. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission defended the proposed rules as essential to levelling the political playing field and curbing the influence of money in Kenyan elections — a concern that has featured prominently in post-election analyses dating back more than a decade. Commissioners argued that without enforceable financing caps, wealthier candidates would continue to enjoy structural advantages that undermine genuine electoral competition. MPs countered that the regulations were drafted without adequate consultation and would be impossible to implement uniformly across constituencies with vastly different economic conditions and voter populations.



Kenya's cybersecurity defences received a significant boost yesterday with the launch of a national cybersecurity centre at Konza Technopolis, positioning the facility as the country's primary line of defence against the growing threat of digital attacks targeting government systems, financial institutions and critical infrastructure. The centre, established at Kenya's flagship smart city project south of Nairobi, will coordinate threat detection, incident response and intelligence-sharing across public and private sector networks. Officials said the facility addresses an increasingly urgent gap, as Kenya's expanding digital economy has made it a more attractive target for cybercriminals operating both locally and across borders. The launch comes as governments across East Africa move to strengthen their digital security frameworks amid a sharp rise in ransomware attacks, data breaches and state-sponsored intrusions reported across the region in recent months.



A Nairobi court yesterday dismissed an application seeking to halt an Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission investigation into allegations that a judicial officer received a bribe in connection with a case involving former Cabinet minister Raphael Tuju, clearing the way for the probe to continue. The court ruled that the applicant had failed to demonstrate sufficient legal grounds to warrant an injunction against the commission's investigation, affirming the EACC's mandate to pursue corruption inquiries involving public officials without judicial interference at the preliminary stages of its work. The case has drawn considerable public attention given its implications for judicial integrity and the broader question of whether Kenya's anti-corruption institutions can operate without obstruction when their investigations reach into sensitive institutional territory. The investigation continues.



Makadara Member of Parliament George Aladwa yesterday failed in his bid to halt Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission proceedings against him after a court declined to grant the orders he sought, allowing the case to proceed. Aladwa had approached the court seeking to block the commission from continuing its investigation, but the application was dismissed after the court found insufficient legal basis to interfere with the EACC's mandate at this stage of the proceedings. The ruling is a setback for the legislator, who now faces the prospect of the commission's inquiry advancing without judicial interruption. The case adds to a growing list of sitting Members of Parliament facing active anti-corruption scrutiny, maintaining pressure on the National Assembly at a politically sensitive moment ahead of the 2027 general election.



Sudan has lifted its ban on Kenyan tea imports, reopening one of East Africa's historically significant trading relationships and offering fresh relief to Kenya's tea industry, which had been absorbing the commercial impact of the restriction. The decision, confirmed yesterday, restores market access for Kenyan tea exporters to a country that has traditionally ranked among the leading buyers of produce sold through the Mombasa auction, the largest black tea trading hub in the world. Industry stakeholders welcomed the development, describing it as an important step towards stabilising export revenues at a time when the sector has faced mounting pressure from currency fluctuations, rising production costs and shifting demand patterns in traditional markets. Kenya is the world's leading exporter of black tea, with the crop remaining one of the country's principal sources of foreign exchange.



A Nairobi court yesterday issued orders halting the Orange Democratic Movement from removing allies of Linda Mwananchi Movement leader Edwin Sifuna from their positions in the Nairobi City County Assembly, temporarily preserving the status quo in a leadership dispute that reflects the deepening tensions between the two political formations. The court granted the conservatory orders after the affected officials argued that their removal was procedurally irregular and politically motivated, arising directly from Sifuna's departure from ODM and his subsequent establishment of a rival political movement. The ruling prevents ODM from effecting the changes pending the hearing and determination of the matter, keeping the assembly's leadership composition intact for now. The case adds a judicial dimension to what has been, until yesterday, a purely political confrontation between former allies.

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Nairobi On any busy day in Nairobi today, boda boda riders can be observed speeding along pedestrian walkways, making illegal turns and riding on the wrong side of the road

The rot in Sakaja's boda boda compliance sector

Johnson Sakaja promised Nairobi order on two wheels — instead, his enforcement officers are running a roadside extortion racket

BY Bernard Mithia
@themtkenyatimes

Johnson Arthur Sakaja arrived at City Hall in 2022 with one of the most decisive mandates Nairobi had produced in years — nearly 700,000 votes, a margin of more than 160,000 over his nearest challenger — and residents expected him to bring long-overdue order to a city that boda boda riders had, by any honest measure, turned into a daily hazard.

The chaos was real and well-documented. Riders terrorised motorists, used pavements as shortcuts, rode against traffic and, in the ugliest incidents, torched vehicles involved in accidents rather than allowing the law to take its course. Street justice had replaced traffic law. Something had to change.

Sakaja acted. Under Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 26, dated 11 December 2025, his administration introduced a boda boda compliance framework with teeth: annual parking fees of KSh10,000, mandatory branding requirements for delivery riders and an enforcement unit tasked with bringing the sector to heel. On paper, it was exactly what Nairobi needed. In practice, it has become something else entirely.



Johnson Arthur Sakaja

On any busy day in Nairobi today, boda boda riders can be observed speeding along pedestrian walkways, making illegal turns and riding on the wrong side of the road — in full view of the very enforcement officers deployed to stop them. The compliance unit has not tamed the sector. It has monetised it.

The pattern is consistent and brazen. County enforcement officers — the kanjo — impound motorcycles for genuine offences: wrong parking, pavement riding, failure to comply with branding requirements. But those motorcycles rarely reach county offices for formal fine processing. Instead, they are held in parking lots while negotiations take place. The going rate runs from KSh500 to KSh3,000, varying by offence, the seniority of the officer involved and, reportedly, the number of officials sharing the proceeds.

What is particularly striking is how sophisticated the operation has become. To avoid cash trails, some officers have reportedly set up till numbers and pay bill accounts for mobile payments, with transactions occasionally routed through street vendors operating informal M-Pesa points. This is not opportunistic corruption. It is organised.

There is a further layer that traps newer riders especially. Many of the motorcycles openly defying compliance regulations are, according to those familiar with the sector, owned by county officers, police officials or veteran riders who have cultivated working relationships with enforcement personnel. These motorcycles move through the city untouched. The result is a deliberately engineered environment where naive or newly arrived riders, unaware of these arrangements, follow what appears to be normal practice — only to find themselves targeted. The enforcement officer has been watching, waiting, the way a leopard waits in cover before it moves.

The financial cost to Nairobi County is significant. If the compliance framework were functioning as designed, the annual KSh10,000 parking fee alone — applied consistently across a sector that numbers in the tens of thousands — would generate substantial revenue for the county. Add branding fees and penalty collections and the figures become considerable. Instead, that money is being diverted into private pockets before it reaches a single county account.

The damage is not only fiscal. The boda boda sector remains dangerous, undisciplined and contemptuous of traffic law — not despite enforcement, but in some respects because of it. When the people tasked with upholding a framework are the primary beneficiaries of its failure, the framework cannot work. Riders who might otherwise comply have little incentive to do so when the alternative is a negotiated payment on the roadside.

Sakaja inherited a city with enormous expectations riding on his administration. Nairobi had watched the turbulence of the Mike Sonko years, endured the instability of an impeachment and a prolonged period of uncertain governance, and placed considerable faith in a governor who projected competence and vision. The boda boda compliance sector was an early test of whether that faith was warranted.

The compliance unit still has time to demonstrate its purpose. But that will require the governor to look beyond the gazette notice and confront what is actually happening on Nairobi's streets — where his enforcement officers are not enforcing the law, but profiting from its absence.

Bernard Mithia Senior advisor, Strategic partnerships Exponential international.



Boda boda riders flout traffic regulations

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Condolences The visits, conducted separately but carrying a strikingly similar political undercurrent, brought together figures who have rarely shared the same platform

Opposition leaders visit Gachagua to offer condolences after sister's death

The Karen visits by Kalonzo, Matiang'i and their delegations carried the warmth of friendship — and the unmistakable undertone of 2027

BY Grace Wanja
@themtkenyatimes

Senior opposition leaders, including Wiper Patriotic Front leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, yesterday visited former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua at his Karen home to offer condolences following the death of his elder sister, Eunice Nyangari Gachagua, who was 77.

The visits, conducted separately but carrying a strikingly similar political undercurrent, brought together figures who have rarely shared the same platform — and who, until recently, occupied very different positions in Kenya's shifting political landscape. That they converged on Gachagua's home within the same week, each accompanied by senior party delegations, was noted by political observers as something more than a courtesy call. With Kenya's general election now less than nine months away, the symbolism of solidarity was unmistakable.

Kalonzo arrived with a delegation from the Wiper Patriotic Front that included Deputy Party Leader Mohamed Ali, Danson Mwashako, Eng. Thaddeus Nzambia, Musili Mawathe and Irene Kasalu. His condolence message was warm and deeply personal. "My brother Rigathi Gachagua, Reverend Dorcas Rigathi and the entire Gachagua family, be encouraged by the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:4: 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,'" Kalonzo said. "May you find comfort in knowing that her 77 years of life were a blessing to her family and all who knew her."

Matiang'i arrived separately, accompanied by members of the Jubilee Party National Executive Committee. His message struck a tone of fraternal solidarity between men who have navigated Kenya's brutal political terrain from different vantage points. "In moments of grief, the bonds of friendship, family and shared humanity remind us of the importance of standing with one another," Matiang'i said. "We continue to hold the Gachagua family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

Among those in Matiang'i's delegation was Geoffrey Mosiria, who is pursuing the Nairobi gubernatorial seat and who used the visit to signal his alignment with the emerging opposition constellation. Mosiria said Gachagua had personally encouraged him to press forward with his bid, framing the Nairobi race as part of a broader effort to dismantle what the opposition characterises as a failed administration. "I am committed to working closely with Gachagua, Matiang'i, Kalonzo and Senator Edwin Sifuna towards a common vision of reclaiming our country and restoring effective leadership in Nairobi," Mosiria said.

The language in those remarks — reclaiming, restoring, repossessing — is not grief language. It is campaign language, and its appearance in a condolence statement reflects the degree to which Kenyan political figures struggle, and perhaps no longer try, to separate the personal from the political. The visit was genuine. The grief expressed was real. But the conversation that reportedly accompanied it — about unity, shared purpose and the road to 2027 — was equally real, and arguably the more consequential part of the encounter.

Gachagua's political resurrection has been one of the more remarkable stories of the past year. Impeached as Deputy President in October 2024 in circumstances his supporters continue to contest, he has since built the Democracy for the Citizens Party, toured the Kenyan diaspora in the United States and cultivated relationships across a broad swathe of the opposition. His sister's death has, in a painful irony, provided a moment of convergence that formal political summits rarely manage to produce. When leaders come to your home in sorrow, the conversations they have there tend to carry a different quality of candour.

The political arithmetic being assembled around Gachagua is complex but increasingly legible. Kalonzo brings Ukambani and a national profile built over decades. Matiang'i brings credibility among the Kikuyu political establishment and a reformist reputation that survived the turbulence of the Kenyatta administration. Sifuna, whose name appeared in Mosiria's remarks, anchors the formation's connections into Western Kenya. Together, they represent a coalition that, if it holds, would present a formidable challenge to President William Ruto's Broad-Based Government heading into August 2027.

Whether it holds is the question that will define the next nine months of Kenyan politics. Opposition coalitions in this country have a well-documented tendency to fracture under the weight of competing presidential ambitions, constituency pressures and the perennial temptation of negotiated accommodation with the incumbent. Gachagua himself has not formally declared a presidential bid, though few serious political analysts doubt that one is coming. How the other figures in this emerging formation respond to that declaration, when it arrives, will reveal the true depth of the solidarity on display in Karen this week.

For now, the family is grieving. Eunice Nyangari Gachagua, described by those who knew her as a woman whose life was a quiet blessing to her family and community, was buried with the kind of dignity her years deserved. Her brother, who has known extraordinary political turbulence in a short span of time, received the condolences of men who are simultaneously his allies, his rivals and his potential partners in what promises to be a defining electoral contest.

In Kenya, the line between mourning and mobilising has always been thin. This week, it was thinner than most.



Wiper Patriotic Front leader Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka



Former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i signs book of condolences, Gachagua and spouse Dorcas looks on

Politics **"What happened in the past is in the past. What should concern Kenyans is where we are going," Kenyatta said, before addressing Gachagua, Kalonzo and Wamalwa by name**

Uhuru tells opposition: Unite or step aside as Kenya's 2027 battle takes shape

At a Nairobi funeral, Kenya's former president delivered his clearest signal yet that the opposition must consolidate — or concede the election before it begins

BY David Kimani
@themtkenyatimes

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday used the funeral service of Beatrice Wambui Muturi at PCEA Nairobi West to deliver his most direct public message to opposition leaders yet, urging Rigathi Gachagua, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Eugene Wamalwa and others to set aside personal ambitions and present a united front ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The occasion carried the particular weight that Kenyan funerals often do — a convergence of grief and politics, of personal history and public calculation. Wambui, described by those present as a towering figure in both family and national political circles, had been close to Kenyatta's mother, Mama Ngina, since her marriage to founding President Jomo Kenyatta. "She welcomed her into my father's home when she got married to my father, and our extended family has lost one of its greatest pillars," Kenyatta said in tribute.

But the former president's most consequential remarks were directed not at the departed, but at the living — and specifically at the men seated around him who harbour varying degrees of presidential ambition.

"What happened in the past is in the past. What should concern Kenyans is where we are going," Kenyatta said, before addressing Gachagua, Kalonzo and Wamalwa by name. "As I keep telling my brothers here — Steve, Rigathi, Eugene and others — only one person can occupy the presidency at a time. I also listen to the ground; my ears are not closed." He said ordinary Kenyans, encountered during his own movements across the country, were sending an unambiguous message. "People want to see our leaders stand together. Our leaders must organise themselves and unite to fulfil what Kenyans want."

Kenyatta's intervention is significant for several reasons. Having largely withdrawn from front-line politics since leaving office, he has re-entered the public conversation at a moment when the opposition landscape remains fluid and the question of who will carry a unified challenge to President William Ruto remains unresolved. His framing — that unity is a public demand, not a political favour — gives the message a popular legitimacy that a purely partisan call would lack. "And I am sure that is what you will deliver for us, with justice. There can be no peace without justice," he added.

The event also produced one of the more candid exchanges in recent Kenyan political memory. Gachagua, speaking ahead of Kenyatta, made a remarkable public admission: that he had spent KSh1.5 million given to him by Wambui to support Kenyatta's 2017 repeat presidential campaign on personal needs. "When our election was nullified by the Supreme Court in 2017, we were so disappointed and did not even have money. She found me and gave me money in a nylon bag to help Uhuru win the repeat election — but I had my own needs. That KSh1.5 million, I confess, I spent on myself," he said, to audible reaction from those gathered.

Kenyatta's response was characteristically dry. "I have retired, but I will go to Wamunyoro to claim my campaign money back," he said, drawing laughter and underscoring the renewed warmth between two men whose relationship had visibly strained during the final turbulent period of the Jubilee administration.

Gachagua was equally direct about the reconciliation. Recounting how he and Wambui had worked together to support Kenyatta's first presidential bid, he said their relationship had subsequently been damaged by third parties. "Together with her, we worked to make Uhuru Kenyatta president during his first attempt. Someone came between me and Uhuru to divide us — but are we not together now?" he said. "Let me say this: nobody will ever succeed in coming between me and former President Uhuru Kenyatta again."

The DCP leader also employed an extended allegory — speaking in Kikuyu — involving a herder, a hyena and missing sheep, a thinly veiled reflection on his removal from the Deputy Presidency and what he characterised as a failure of oversight that allowed harm to occur. He asked, pointedly, whether he would receive support in addressing the problem without destroying what remained. The allegory drew nods and murmurs from an audience that understood its political architecture precisely.

Kalonzo, for his part, struck a tone that balanced personal tribute with political assertion. He defended Kenyatta's continued presence in national discourse, noting that retirement from office did not extinguish the right to political opinion. "We wanted Uhuru to stay out of this as we transform the country, but he is entitled to his opinion and still has the right to contribute to national discourse," Kalonzo said.

The Wiper leader also addressed the political energy among younger Kenyans directly, criticising remarks attributed to those in government that advocated shooting protesters. "When somebody says, 'Shoot Gen Z in the leg,' that is a presidential fear. This is why Kenyans are united in calling for one term. Young Kenyans have the right to express their political opinions. Next year, they will go to the ballot and say: you wanted to shoot us in the legs — we will shoot you at the ballot."

The gathering at PCEA Nairobi West was, on the surface, a farewell to a woman who had lived at the intersection of Kenya's founding generation and its contemporary politics.



Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua shakes hand with former minister Bet Mugo and Former President Uhuru Kenyatta on left on Wednesday at PCEA Nairobi West

Wambui had, by multiple accounts, been a quiet but consequential presence — supporting campaigns, facilitating connections and maintaining relationships across the political spectrum with a discretion that formal political figures rarely manage.

But the conversations her funeral hosted were anything but quiet. With nine months to the election, every public gathering of this magnitude carries a subtext, and yesterday's was not particularly sub. Kenya's opposition figures are circling a question that only one of them can answer affirmatively: who leads the challenge, and on what terms does everyone else fall in line?

Kenyatta's message was clear. The ground is ready. The public is waiting. The seat can hold only one.



Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka and Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua at PCEA Nairobi West

Ebola Duale was unequivocal: Kenya would not allow foreign governments to use its facilities as transit quarantine centres

Blow to Trump as Kenya rules out hosting Ebola quarantine for foreign nationals

Nairobi rejects demands to hold foreign travellers as it enters a 42-day countdown to being declared Ebola-free



Kenya's Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

BY Yvonne Wambui
@themtkenyatimes

Kenya's Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale yesterday ruled out plans to make the country a quarantine centre for foreign nationals suspected of Ebola exposure, dealing a direct blow to the United States and other governments that had sought to use Kenyan health facilities as holding points for travellers required to isolate before returning home.

Speaking at a press briefing at Afya House in Nairobi, Duale was unequivocal: Kenya would not allow foreign governments to use its facilities as transit quarantine centres, nor would it issue Ebola-free certificates or quarantine documentation to foreign travellers for international travel purposes. He argued that such certificates have no basis under the International Health Regulations — the globally agreed framework governing cross-border public health measures — and that Kenya had no obligation to absorb the quarantine requirements of other countries.

The announcement carries particular significance given the controversy surrounding the 50-bed Ebola isolation facility at Laikipia Air Base in Nanyuki, built through a partnership between Kenya and the United States. The facility had drawn fierce public opposition and legal challenge, with critics warning it could turn Kenya into a quarantine destination for foreign nationals exposed to the virus in neighbouring countries. Asked about the facility's future, Duale declined to comment, saying the matter was before the courts.

His statements came as Kenya recorded a milestone in its response to the outbreak. The Ministry of Health confirmed yesterday that the last patient receiving treatment for Ebola had been discharged after making a full recovery — a development that now triggers the start of a critical 42-day monitoring period beginning today. If no new infections are reported during that window, Kenya is expected to be formally declared Ebola-free on 23 December 2026.

The outbreak, which gripped the country and prompted an international response, recorded nine confirmed cases in total, among them four healthcare workers who contracted the virus while treating patients. Seven people recovered; two died. The final 11 individuals who had been held under quarantine completed their monitoring period and were released to rejoin their families.

Yet Duale was careful to caution that the discharge of the last patient did not signal the end of the government's response. Surveillance will continue, traveller screening at points of entry will be maintained, and all suspected cases will be investigated. The Ministry of Health is also preparing additional measures for Kenyans returning from Ebola-affected areas, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has experienced repeated outbreaks. Those measures are expected to include mandatory health declarations, arrival screening and 21 days of medical monitoring.

Duale used the briefing to sharpen his criticism of foreign governments that had imposed blanket travel and visa restrictions on Kenyan citizens since the outbreak began. He argued that Kenya had honoured every obligation under international health law — reporting infections promptly, sharing surveillance data and cooperating fully with international health organisations — and that it deserved recognition rather than punishment for doing so.

"Transparency must be rewarded, not punished," he said, calling on affected countries to review and lift their restrictions without further delay.

The position represents a significant hardening of Kenya's stance on international Ebola quarantine arrangements. Rather than accommodating external demands, the government appears determined to defend national interests while continuing to co-operate with other countries on public health matters through established frameworks. The balance is a delicate one: Kenya needs to reassure trading partners, tourists and international investors that the country remains open and safe, while resisting arrangements it regards as an imposition on its sovereignty and health infrastructure.

Duale's message on that front was direct. Kenya, he insisted, remains open for business, tourism, trade and international travel. He urged citizens to remain vigilant as the country works towards an official end to the outbreak — a declaration that, if everything holds, will come just before Christmas.

The 42-day clock now running is not merely a public health formality. It represents Kenya's best opportunity in months to close a difficult chapter, restore full confidence in its borders, and demonstrate that a country can manage a serious outbreak transparently and competently without being made to shoulder the quarantine burdens of wealthier nations. Whether those nations accept that argument — or quietly maintain their restrictions regardless — remains to be seen.



Politics **"I want to tell all young people: if you elect Ruto again, no young person will be a leader in 2032," Sifuna said**

Sifuna warns youth: Re-elect Ruto and lose your political future

The Linda Mwananchi Movement is expanding into Laikipia with a sharp message for young Kenyans — and a direct challenge to the president ahead of 2027

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes



Linda Mwananchi Movement leadership, led by Party Leader Edwin Sifuna, engaged with a delegation from Laikipia County at the party headquarters

Linda Mwananchi Movement party leader Edwin Sifuna yesterday warned young Kenyans that re-electing President William Ruto in 2027 would foreclose their prospects of ascending to leadership positions by 2032, as his party received defectors from the Orange Democratic Movement at a press conference in Laikipia County.

The event marked a visible expansion of the movement's organisational footprint into a county that has historically been contested political territory, and Sifuna used the platform to sharpen his party's pitch to younger voters — the demographic that proved decisive during the 2022 general election and that every major political formation is now actively courting ahead of August 2027.

"I want to tell all young people: if you elect Ruto again, no young person will be a leader in 2032," Sifuna said, delivering the message in a register designed to land with an audience that has grown increasingly vocal about political exclusion and generational change. The warning was blunt by design. With Kenya's youth bulge well documented — the majority of registered voters are under 35 — the question of who controls the youth vote is, in practical terms, the question of who wins the next election.

Sifuna's critique extended beyond the presidential race. He singled out the long-delayed Nanyuki-Doldol road project in Laikipia County as a symbol of what he characterised as a pattern of unfulfilled development promises. "We have heard about the road from Nanyuki to Doldol for many years. Stop talking to Ruto about it — I will come and build it myself," he said, a pledge that drew applause from the gathering but will inevitably invite scrutiny as the campaign period intensifies and promises require costing.

His most pointed remark, however, was not about roads. "If you are not alive, even the Doldol road being built will not help you," Sifuna said, a line that situated infrastructure promises within a broader argument about personal safety and the relationship between citizens and the state — a theme that has gained political traction in the wake of public protests and the controversies they generated.

Sifuna also announced plans to visit Laikipia County formally as part of a wider effort to demonstrate LMM's growing organisational strength. "We will come to Laikipia to show that our party is firm," he said — a signal that the movement intends to treat the county as a genuinely competitive battleground rather than peripheral territory.

The press conference featured contributions from the movement's senior leadership, each carrying a distinct message aimed at different segments of the audience. Deputy Party Leader Faith Odhiambo addressed young people directly, framing LMM's emergence as a generational moment. "Youth, our time is now. We are telling this government: we will not allow young people to be killed by the state," she said, connecting the movement's appeal to anxieties that have been building among younger Kenyans since the mid-2024 protests.

Deputy Party Leader Kawira Mwangaza, the former Meru Governor, focused on the party's electoral machinery, announcing that LMM intends to field candidates across all counties in 2027. "As Linda Mwananchi, we will field candidates everywhere in Kenya. Nominations will be free and fair," she said — a commitment that, if delivered, would transform LMM from a pressure movement into a full-spectrum electoral vehicle capable of contesting parliamentary and civic seats alongside the presidency.

Mwangaza also praised Sifuna's personal integrity, describing him as "Mr Clean" — a characterisation that positions him against a political culture widely perceived as transactional and that echoes the kind of branding that has historically resonated with urban, educated and younger voters frustrated by establishment politics.

LMM Secretary General Caroli Omondi went further, explicitly linking Sifuna to the political legacy of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who remains one of the most consequential figures in Kenya's post-independence political history. "This Sifuna is the one who carries the spirit of Baba now. Do not be afraid. We are the ones who will protect you," Omondi said — a framing that seeks to inherit the emotional and organisational loyalty that Odinga commanded across Western Kenya and parts of Nairobi without requiring Odinga's direct endorsement.

That inheritance claim is significant and contested. Odinga's political network, built over decades and anchored in Luo Nyanza, does not transfer automatically, and several formations are positioning themselves as its natural successors. Sifuna's advantage is that he brings both geographical roots — his networks span Luo Nyanza and Western Kenya — and a public profile sharpened through years as ODM Secretary General, a role that gave him direct experience of how national party machinery operates. His departure from ODM, and the defections the movement received yesterday, suggest that at least some of that network is following him.



The Laikipia event is part of a broader pattern. Across Kenya's political landscape, parties and movements are using the period between now and the official campaign season to build structures, recruit defectors and establish territorial presence. LMM's move into Laikipia — a county with a mixed ethnic composition and a history of land-related political tension — suggests the movement is thinking beyond its perceived Western Kenya base.

Whether that expansion translates into electoral results will depend on factors that press conferences cannot resolve: candidate quality, financial resources, coalition agreements and the final shape of the opposition's presidential architecture. The question of who the opposition fields as its presidential candidate, and on what terms the other formations align behind that choice, remains the defining unresolved question of Kenya's pre-election period.

Sifuna has made his position clear. The youth, he argues, are the story of 2027 — and their choices will determine not just who wins, but who gets to lead Kenya in the decade that follows.

The young people of Laikipia were listening. Whether they act on what they heard is the question that will only be answered at the ballot.

Bill Maina and the lawmakers who backed the Bill argued during debate that hospitals have continued to operate in a legislative grey zone, using gaps in existing law to justify detentions

MPs pass Bill to end hospital detention of patients and bodies over unpaid bills

Kenya's National Assembly has moved to close a legal gap that has left discharged patients trapped and bereaved families unable to bury their dead

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes



Kirinyaga Woman Representative Njeri Maina

The National Assembly yesterday passed a Bill prohibiting hospitals from detaining discharged patients or withholding the bodies of deceased persons over unpaid medical bills, sending the proposed legislation to the Senate for consideration before it proceeds to President William Ruto for assent.

The Bill, sponsored by Kirinyaga Woman Representative Njeri Maina, addresses a practice that has persisted in Kenyan hospitals for years, exploiting the absence of explicit statutory prohibition to hold patients and corpses as effective collateral against outstanding treatment costs. For families already navigating grief or medical crisis, the additional burden of negotiating a loved one's release — from a ward or a morgue — has long been one of the more quietly devastating features of Kenya's healthcare system.

Maina and the lawmakers who backed the Bill argued during debate that hospitals have continued to operate in a legislative grey zone, using gaps in existing law to justify detentions that courts have repeatedly found unacceptable. Several rulings by Kenyan courts have held that the detention of patients and bodies over unpaid bills violates constitutional rights, yet without a clear statutory framework, the practice has continued, with individual cases requiring individual legal battles that most affected families cannot afford to fight.

The proposed law would change that fundamentally. Under its provisions, a hospital would be explicitly prohibited from detaining any patient who has been medically cleared for discharge, regardless of whether their bill has been settled. It would equally bar the withholding of a deceased person's remains over outstanding medical expenses — a practice that has, in documented cases, left families unable to hold funerals for weeks or months while financial negotiations dragged on.

The human cost behind these cases is not abstract. Across Kenya, families have faced the specific anguish of a loved one dying in hospital, only to find that grief must be deferred until money is found. Children have been detained in maternity wards alongside their mothers. Elderly patients, medically fit to leave, have remained in beds they no longer need because discharge was contingent on payment. The Bill's passage through the National Assembly represents a direct legislative response to that accumulated harm.

National Assembly Health Committee Chairperson James Nyikal supported the Bill's intent while introducing a broader structural argument. Nyikal maintained that while the legislation was necessary, the more durable solution lay in Kenyans consistently contributing to the Social Health Authority scheme. "Sustained contributions to SHA would help address the financial challenges that leave patients and families unable to settle hospital bills in the first place," he said — a position that locates the detention problem within the larger failure of health financing rather than treating it as an isolated institutional misbehaviour.

Nyikal's point carries weight. The practice of detaining patients and bodies is, in most cases, a symptom of a system in which hospitals — particularly private and mission facilities operating on thin margins — carry significant unpaid debt from patients who genuinely cannot afford their bills. Outlawing detention removes one harmful response to that problem without resolving the underlying financial gap. The SHA, launched as the successor to the National Health Insurance Fund, is intended to provide that resolution by spreading health costs across a broader contribution base. Its success in doing so remains, at this stage, an open question.

The Bill now moves to the Senate, where it will face scrutiny from a chamber that has in recent sessions engaged substantively with health legislation. If the Senate passes the Bill without amendments, it proceeds directly to the President for assent. If amendments are introduced, the two chambers will need to reconcile their versions — a process that can extend the legislative timeline considerably. The timeline to enactment therefore remains uncertain, though the National Assembly's passage of the Bill represents the most significant legislative progress on this issue to date.

The broader political context matters too. Kenya's healthcare system has been under sustained public scrutiny since the transition from NHIF to SHA, a process marked by implementation difficulties, provider disputes and public anxiety about coverage gaps. The government has faced criticism from medical professionals, patients' advocates and opposition politicians over the pace and quality of the transition. The passage of this Bill offers the legislature an opportunity to demonstrate responsiveness to a healthcare grievance that cuts across political and class lines — the detention of bodies and patients is not a problem that affects only the poor, though it falls most heavily on those with the least capacity to resolve it quickly.

For Maina, the Bill's passage is a legislative achievement that speaks directly to constituents in Kirinyaga and, by extension, to families across the country who have experienced or fear this particular form of institutional pressure. Kirinyaga, like many counties, has hospitals — public and private — where the practice has occurred, and the Woman Representative's decision to bring the legislation reflects both local experience and national relevance.

What the Bill does not resolve, it at least makes visible. By establishing an explicit statutory prohibition, it creates a legal standard against which hospitals can be held accountable, and it gives patients and families a clearer basis for seeking redress when that standard is violated. Enforcement will depend on the commitment of regulatory bodies and the courts, but a law on the books is a materially different instrument than a court ruling that must be relitigated case by case.

Kenya has long debated the right to health as a constitutional guarantee. The National Assembly's vote yesterday brought that guarantee one step closer to practical meaning — at least for those who have ever stood in a hospital corridor, grief in hand, waiting for permission to take their people home.

The Senate now holds the next decision. It should not take long.

Opinion The problem deepens when young people stop viewing such content as entertainment and begin treating it as a standard they are obliged to meet

Beyond the likes: The pressure on young people to live up to unrealistic online lifestyles



BY Faith Chepkoech
@themtkenyatimes

Social media's curated perfection is pushing Kenya's youth into debt, anxiety and a dangerous race to perform a life they cannot afford

By Faith Chepkoech

Social media has transformed how young people communicate, express themselves and understand the world around them — but beneath the entertaining videos, glamorous photographs and seemingly perfect lifestyles lies a growing and largely unexamined crisis.

Celebrities, influencers and reality television personalities occupy a considerable space in the lives of young people. Their expensive clothes, luxurious holidays, fashionable homes and apparently perfect relationships are presented as the natural markers of success. What audiences rarely appreciate is that what they see is almost always a curated selection — photographs staged, videos edited, and experiences packaged to attract attention rather than reflect truth. The gap between what is displayed online and what happens in everyday life is easily, and dangerously, forgotten.

The problem deepens when young people stop viewing such content as entertainment and begin treating it as a standard they are obliged to meet. A student who was previously content with their circumstances may begin questioning their appearance, finances or achievements simply because another person's life appears more exciting online. Social media, in this way, quietly converts harmless admiration into corrosive comparison.

Peer pressure compounds the difficulty. Young people do not only measure themselves against celebrities — they compare themselves with friends, classmates and acquaintances who project expensive lifestyles on the same platforms they use daily. Nobody wants to appear left behind. Consequently, some feel compelled to buy clothes, phones and accessories they cannot comfortably afford. Others borrow money to fund outings or sustain an appearance of prosperity. What begins as a desire to belong can become a financial burden that crowds out more urgent needs.

In Kenya, where many young people are studying, seeking employment or working towards financial independence, the pressure to project a luxurious lifestyle carries a particular cost. Money spent to impress others is often money needed for transport, food, learning materials or savings. Borrowing to keep up appearances can convert a fleeting sense of belonging into a lasting obligation — one that follows a person well beyond the moment the photograph was taken.

The emotional toll is equally significant. When reality fails to match the expectations that online content creates, young people can experience disappointment, insecurity and a persistent sense of inadequacy. The core unfairness of these comparisons is rarely acknowledged: people routinely measure their private struggles against another person's carefully selected highlights. A person may attract thousands of likes and still face difficulties their followers will never see.

None of this means that social media is entirely harmful or that every person who shares their achievements is being dishonest. Digital platforms can inspire, create opportunity, spread useful information and help young people discover their talents. The concern is not the ambition to improve one's life — it is the belief that success must look a particular way to count as real. When the pursuit of admiration overrides personal well-being, young people risk losing sight of their own goals and circumstances.

Addressing this challenge demands a collective response. Parents, teachers and universities should create space for honest conversations about online influence, self-worth and financial responsibility. Young people need the tools to understand how digital content is produced and why every polished image deserves scrutiny rather than acceptance. Influencers and media producers carry a responsibility too — to avoid presenting material wealth as the only credible measure of achievement.

Schools and universities can build practical discussions about digital literacy and money management into their programmes. Recognising advertising, sponsorships and the selective nature of online posts equips young audiences to make more considered judgements. Conversations about mental well-being should also create room for students to speak openly about comparison and pressure, without shame. These steps will not eliminate every influence, but they can help young people engage with online content from a position of greater confidence.

Young people themselves must learn to find value in progress that attracts no public attention. Completing a semester, acquiring a new skill, setting aside modest savings or working through a personal difficulty are achievements that deserve recognition, even without an audience. There is no shame in wearing affordable clothes, using a modest phone or declining to participate in spending that exceeds one's means. Financial responsibility and genuine personal growth are more durable than any image that cannot be sustained.

We must ultimately reconsider the version of success we ask young people to pursue. A society that celebrates appearances over substance risks teaching its next generation to perform happiness rather than cultivate it. No one should go into debt to look successful, pretend contentment to appear desirable, or feel diminished by an ordinary life simply because someone else's highlight reel looks extraordinary. We have become so accustomed to displaying our lives that we risk forgetting a simple truth: a life does not need an audience to be meaningful.



The circus



They all showed up
Dressed up
With a touch of make-up
Such acrimonious clowns
Wearing frowns
The birds remained flown aghast
Such unspeakable atrocities
The crowd went ballistic
At the sight of human narcissism

Nyasha Celeste Makombe Thee Poetic Raindrop

Setting boundaries is a sign of self respect,



We cannot please everyone in our life,
Real friends respect our feelings,
Boundaries protect our peace and happiness,
We must learn to say No in our life,
Some may leave , some may stay,
But true friends never walk away from us,
Keep good people çlose to yourheart,
Setting boundaries makes us stronger and wiser,
Be strong, Be Brave, know your values, strength

M. SANTHI
BT ASST
MPLGHSS
KARUNGALPALAYAM
ERODE

A little bee had a wonderful and beautiful day



She woke up early in the morning,
She saw beautiful flowers in the garden,
The birds were singing in the trees,
She enjoyed the fresh air and sunshine,
She flew around from flower to flower,
She made new friends in the garden,
She learned that everyday in this world is so special
The day is beautiful and unforgettable

S. HARI HARA SUDHAN
VI B
BVB Public school
Thindal
Erode

Peace Begins when Expectation Ends



Peace is a feel which everyone longs,
We make a journey that continuously prolongs,
We share our love,compassion to others,
And expect the same from them.
This is the point where we are disappointed,
We may not get it back sometimes,
We pour out everything with deep emotions,
But, we are frustrated beyond words.

Connect with everyone with your possible ability
Lend a hand when needed,
Too much of anything is good for nothing,
So, think accordingly and act wisely.

G. Kavitha
B. T., Asst.,
GGHSS, Big kanchipuram

Science Begins Where Curiosity Finds A Question



Curiosity is the root of science.
More questions evoke more answers.
Answers are found for unsolved questions,

Many ways are found for a dead-end road.
Only curiosity is necessary —
asking many questions like why, what, when
, where, how gives scope for new opportunities.

Like a child asking many questions,
It seems meaningless sometimes,
But it has great meaning.
Ramanujan, who asked the question

about the divisibility of a banana,
Isaac Newton, who asked why the apple falls down,
Columbus, who took a different sea route,
Albert Einstein, Graham Bell,

and all others placed a landmark,
Only by asking several questions.
Keep on asking any number of questions,
Till you get a good answer.

D..Brinda.
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Tamilnadu India

He Sees, He Hears, He Heals



God is never blind to the tears you hide,
Nor deaf to the prayers whispered inside.
He hears the silence behind every sigh,
And knows the questions you never ask why.

Though unseen, His presence is always near,
A gentle assurance that conquers your fear.
The One who created you knows what you need,
He knows every wound, every unspoken plea.

When life's darkest storms refuse to depart,
He reads every sorrow engraved in your heart.
His silence is not absence, His delay is not denial,
For even through trials, He walks every mile.
He may not answer in the way you expect,
But His divine wisdom knows what to protect.
Like dawn that follows the darkest of nights,
His healing arrives with unexpected light.

So trust the hands that fashioned your soul,
The One who sees beyond what you behold.
Have faith, let patience illuminate your way,
For no pain lasts forever, no night conquers the day.

He sees, He hears, though hidden from view,
He knows your struggles and carries you through.
When hope seems distant and strength grows weak,
His grace is the answer your heart silently seeks.

For God is never absent when tears overflow,
He knows, He listens, and He makes healing grow.

Nandinl Anandkumar
Educator Motivator Writer

Human life is like waves.



Problems and obstacles come
one after another,
like waves in the sea.
Every wave reaches the shore
and returns to the sea.
Whenever life makes us tired,
whenever we lose hope,
prayer becomes a light in that place.
Believing in that light,
we plant a deep hope in our hearts
that one day our worries and difficulties
will disappear.
Like the depth of the ocean,
faith in prayer gives strength
to move forward.
Waves may come and go,
but the light of prayer
will never fade.
Prayer will never fail our faith.

Mohana K,PUM school Kovakkulam,karur,Tamil Nadu,India.

Business **Factories, packhouses and processors draw the headlines. But they only work if the businesses around them can supply them consistently. That makes working capital part of the plan.**

Investors Are Coming to Kenya's Regions. Is the Middle of the Chain Ready?



BY Nancy Kinyanjui
@themtkenyatimes

Across Kenya, regions that once sold mostly raw produce are working to sell more finished goods. Meru is a strong example. In February, the Meru International Investment Conference and Consumer Fair will bring investors, buyers and businesses together at Meru University of Science and Technology. Avenews recently joined business leaders at the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry's pre-conference dinner in Meru to talk about what that growth will take.

The ambition is clear: keep more of the value of what the region grows at home. Meru's dairy union already processes about 640,000 litres of milk a day. Businesses across Meru, Embu and Tharaka Nithi are moving into avocado, macadamia and processed foods. Similar shifts are under way in Kisii, Nakuru and beyond.

Factories, packhouses and processors draw the headlines. But they only work if the businesses around them can supply them consistently. That makes working capital part of the plan.

Processing stretches the cash cycle

Sourcing produce from the open market usually means same-day payment for suppliers. However, supplying processors, packhouses, or supermarkets introduces longer payment cycles lasting several weeks. While moving up the value chain secures larger and steadier buyers, it also requires managing extended waiting periods for cash flow.

Consider a regional aggregator supplying a processor with produce worth Sh1.5 million a week. It pays its own suppliers on collection, covers transport and handling, and waits 30 days to be paid. By the time the first payment arrives, it has funded about Sh6 million of deliveries. The better its relationship with the buyer, the more cash it must carry.

Multiply that across feed stockists, collection centres, transporters and distributors, and the scale of working capital that value addition calls for becomes clear.

Unlocking cash already earned

For many of these businesses, the money they need is already theirs. It sits in invoices for goods delivered to reliable buyers. Through invoice financing, Avenews advances up to 85% of an approved invoice's value, for periods of between 7 and 60 days. When the buyer pays, the advance is settled and the balance goes to the supplier.

Used well, it lets a supplier say yes to the next order without waiting for the last one to be paid. Used carelessly, it adds cost without solving anything. The difference lies in the numbers: the true cost in shillings, the repayment date and whether each order is profitable before financing.

What investors should look for

Investors will ask about land, water, power and roads. They should also ask about the businesses in the middle of the chain. Can aggregators, stockists and distributors fund larger volumes? Do they keep records a lender can read? Do they have financing partners who understand how agricultural trade works?

At Avenews, we have financed more than 750 agri-businesses across over 35 counties, and we work with more than 40 partners nationwide, from input stockists to the buyers our suppliers serve. That experience points to one lesson. Value addition succeeds when finance follows the rhythm of trade: buying stock, waiting on buyers and paying suppliers.

Three steps for suppliers

. Map your cash cycle. Count the days between paying for goods and being paid for them.

. Get your paperwork investor-ready. Delivery notes, invoices, buyer confirmations and statements are your strongest evidence.

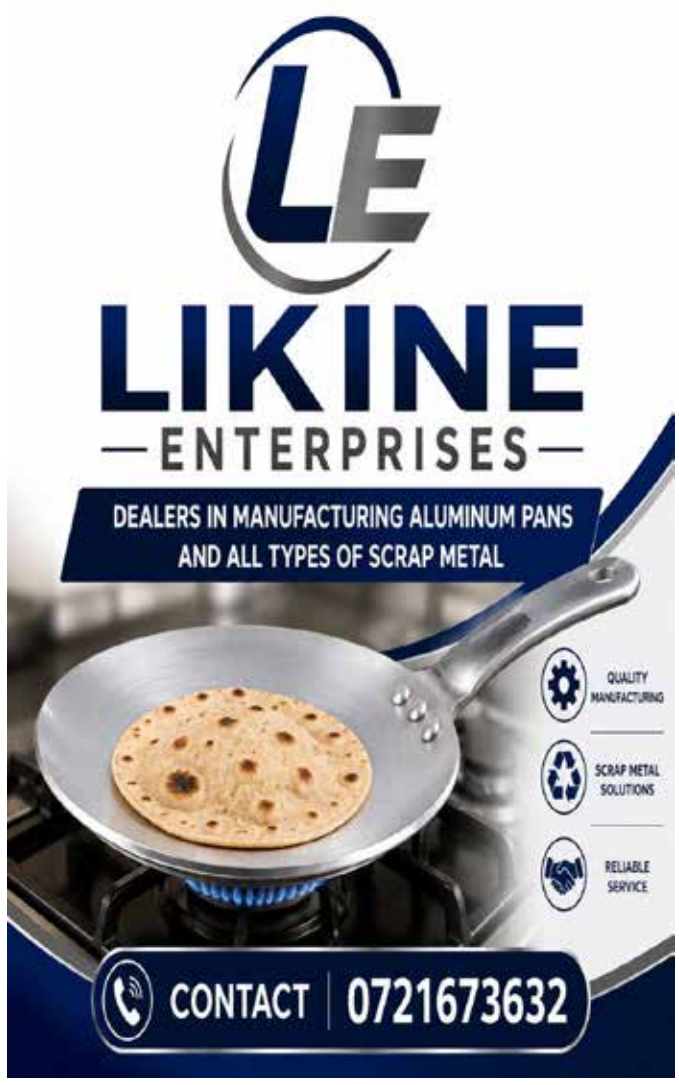
. Talk to your buyers. Prompt invoice approval is often the cheapest working capital there is.

Kenya's regions have the produce and, increasingly, the plants to process it.

How much of that value they keep will depend on cash moving through their supply chains as reliably as goods. The next opportunity should not have to wait for the last invoice to be paid.

The writer is the Managing Director of Avenews Kenya, an agri-fintech licensed by the Central Bank of Kenya as a Digital Credit Provider







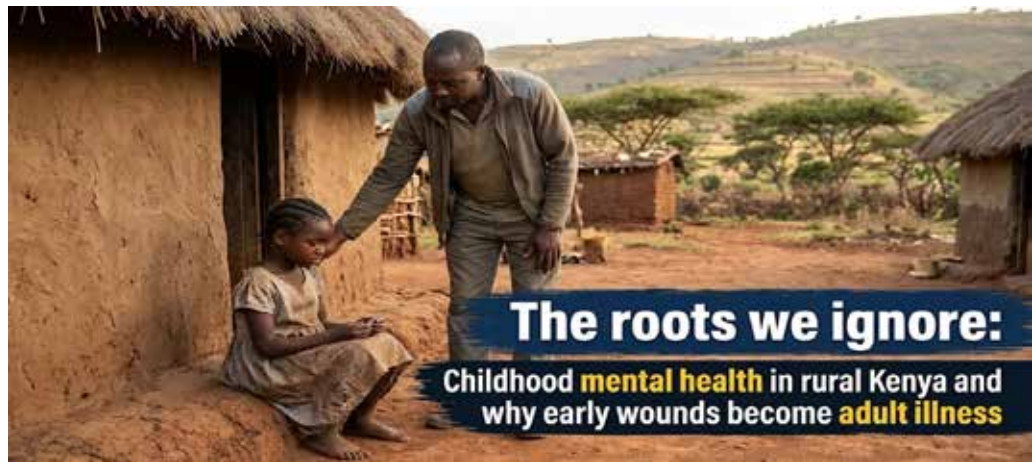
Health **What interrupted it was not a hospital, a psychiatrist or a large government programme. It was one teacher, one room and one hour a week.**

The roots we ignore: Childhood mental health in rural Kenya and why early wounds become adult illness

Kenya's rural children are carrying grief, fear and trauma into adulthood — and the system designed to catch them is barely there



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
@themtkenyatimes



Wanjiru was nine when her teacher stopped calling her by name — not out of cruelty, but because Wanjiru had stopped answering.

She had once been the girl who raised her hand first. Then her mother left for work in Nairobi and her grandmother fell ill, and something in her quietly changed. She began arriving late, forgot her books and cried whenever asked to read aloud. The school record, in its neat handwriting, used one word: rude. That word followed her for a full term, until a new guidance teacher asked a different question. Not "why are you rude?" but "what happened at home?" Because the question was gentle, Wanjiru finally told the truth. She was not rude. She was afraid, exhausted and carrying a grief that no nine-year-old should carry alone.

Wanjiru is not a real name, but her story is real — pieced together from listening circles held in Nyeri, Murang'a and Embu between 2023 and 2025. In each circle, teachers told variations of the same account, though the names and villages changed. A child who had lost a parent. A child beaten for failing. A child who had listened to shouting every night. The behaviour changed; the wound underneath was almost always the same.

To understand Wanjiru, we must understand what early childhood does to the developing brain. The World Health Organisation estimates that one in seven children aged 10 to 19 lives with a mental disorder, while UNICEF puts the proportion of those receiving no treatment in sub-Saharan Africa at more than 70 per cent. The first five years are especially critical: the brain is learning, during that window, whether the world is safe or dangerous.

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory explains the mechanism clearly. A child with a consistent, caring adult develops a secure internal model — learning to regulate emotions, trust others and engage with learning. When that attachment is broken by neglect, harsh punishment, parental absence or chronic conflict, the child develops an insecure model and begins to anticipate danger even in safe environments. Wanjiru did not stop learning because she was dull. She stopped because her nervous system was preoccupied with surviving.

Felitti and colleagues, in their landmark research on Adverse Childhood Experiences, identified a dose-response relationship: the more adversities a child accumulates, the higher the risk of adult anxiety, depression, addiction and chronic illness. By the time Wanjiru's story reached a listening circle, she had already accumulated three — separation, loss and shame. She was not heading toward illness because she was weak. She was heading there because no one had yet interrupted the accumulation.

What interrupted it was not a hospital, a psychiatrist or a large government programme. It was one teacher, one room and one hour a week.

That teacher created what psychologists call a therapeutic space, though in that rural school it had no formal name. It was simply a listening circle, held every Wednesday after lunch, where children could speak without being corrected or laughed at. In that circle, Wanjiru learned, slowly, to name what she felt — that grief is not rudeness, and that fear is not disobedience. Through storytelling and drawing, adapted forms of expressive and play therapy, she communicated what she could not yet articulate in words. Through child-adapted cognitive behavioural techniques, she learned to notice the thought "I am stupid" and replace it, gently, with something truer: "I found this difficult today because I was worried about home."

The teacher also changed her language. Instead of "you are a mistake," she said "you made a mistake." Instead of "why did you score 60 and not 90?" she asked "I see you tried — what was difficult?" These were not merely polite adjustments. They were therapeutic, because they separated Wanjiru's identity from her behaviour and allowed her to try again without shame.

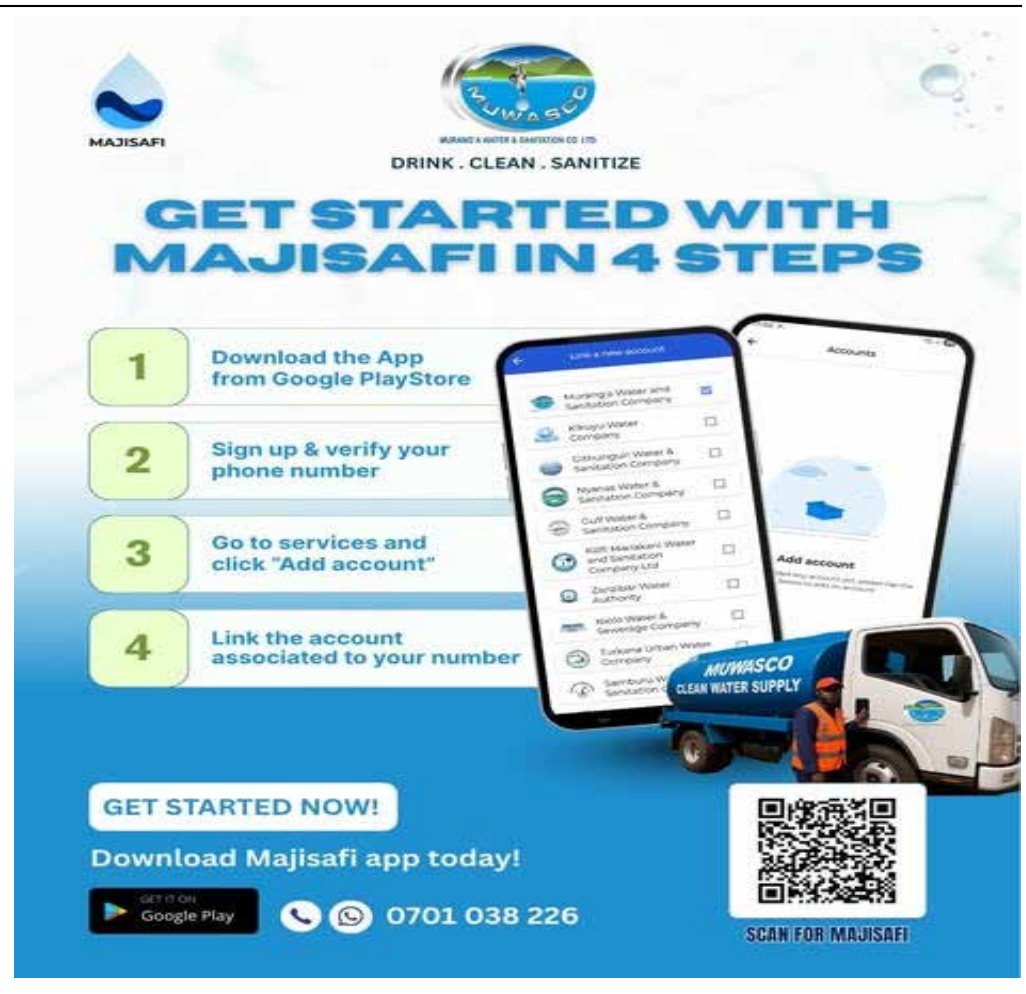
By the end of one term, Wanjiru was not suddenly healed — but she was different. She arrived earlier, answered questions and no longer wept when asked to read aloud. The change did not come from punishment. It came from being heard by one stable adult. Psychologist Ann Masten has identified this as the single most powerful protective factor in childhood: one consistent, supportive relationship. In Wanjiru's case, that relationship was a teacher who chose curiosity over correction.

This is the lesson rural Kenya must absorb. The Kenya Basic Education Curriculum Framework recognises guidance and counselling as a core support, yet in most rural schools counselling is either absent or reduced to discipline. The Mental Health Act of 2022 promises community-based care, and the Kenya Mental Health Policy 2015–2030 calls for integration into primary healthcare — yet most rural dispensaries still have no screening tools for children, and most county hospitals across the Mt Kenya region have no dedicated child mental health unit.

The answer is not to wait for Nairobi to send specialists. It is to train teachers as first responders, equip community health promoters to screen during home visits, and support parent groups through churches, chiefs' barazas and school meetings. When therapy is localised, it becomes accessible. When it is accessible, it becomes healing.

Wanjiru is now in Grade 8. She still misses her mother and still worries about her grandmother — but she no longer believes she is a problem. She believes she is a child who faced problems. That shift has changed how she learns, how she speaks and how she imagines her future.

If we protect the roots, we protect the whole tree.



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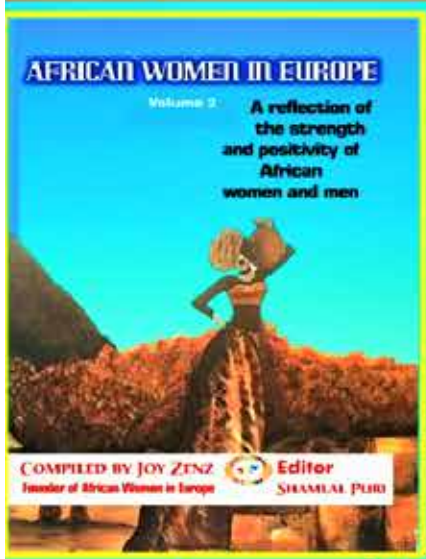
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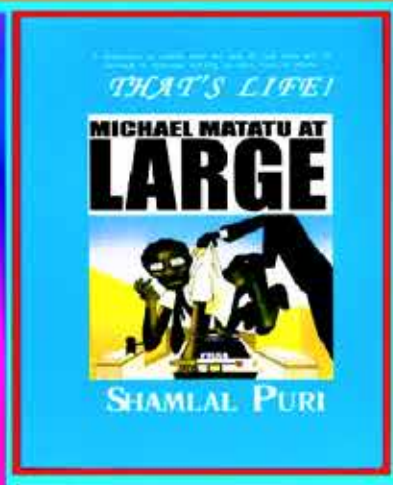
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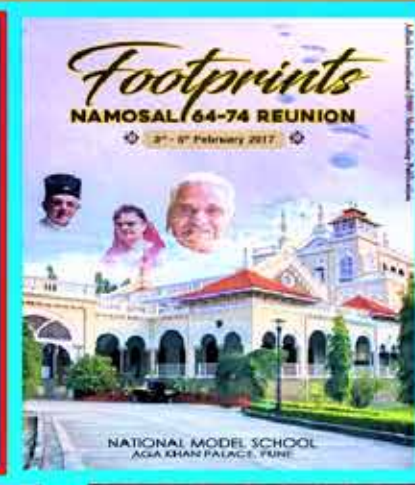
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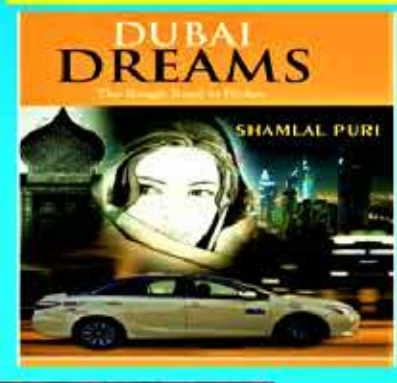


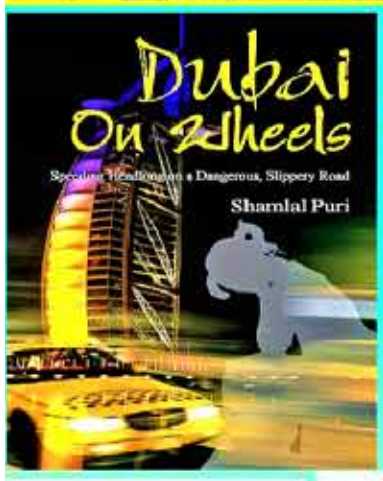


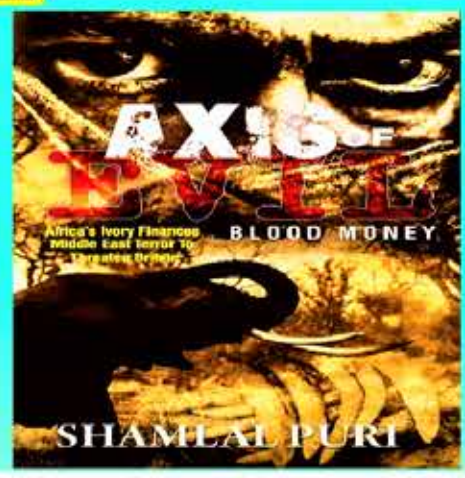


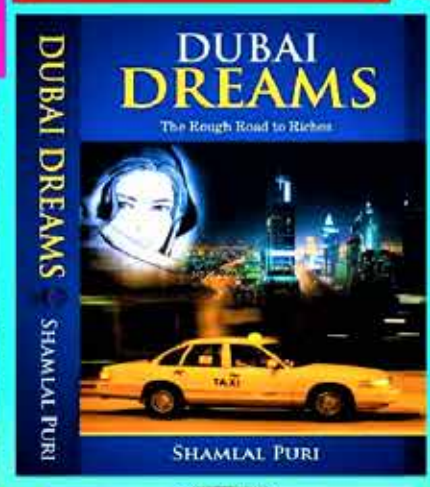


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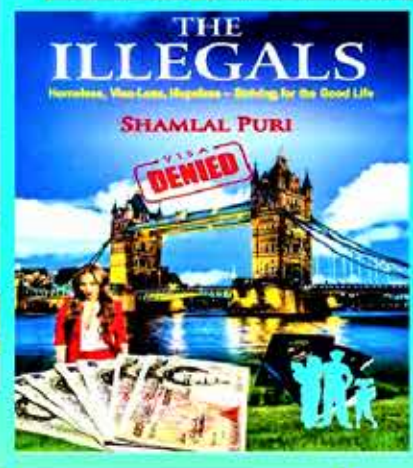


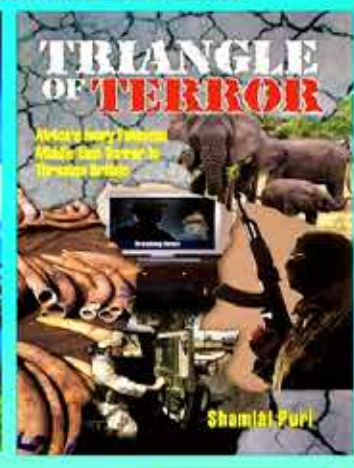


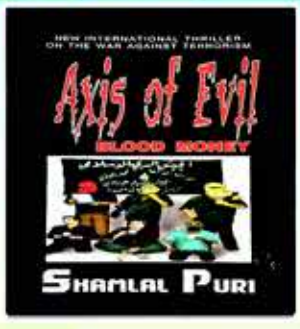




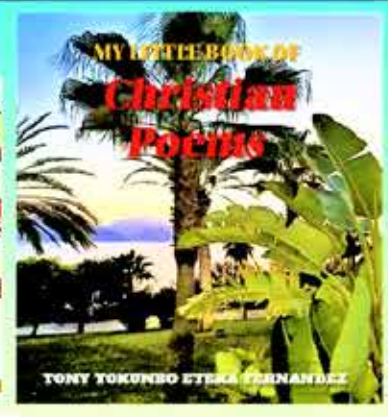
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Politics **The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties was unambiguous in its confirmation. "Pursuant to Section 10 of the Political Parties Act Cap. 7D, Article 22 of the Azimio coalition agreement**

ODM exits Azimio and reshuffles Nairobi assembly leadership as 2027 realignment accelerates

The Orange Democratic Movement's formal departure from the Azimio coalition closes one political chapter and opens another — with consequences that will shape Kenya's pre-election landscape

BY Lucy Nekesa
@themtkenyatimes



ODM Party leader Dr. Oburu Oginga

The Orange Democratic Movement formally exited the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition Party on 10 June 2026 and has since moved to restructure its leadership in the Nairobi City County Assembly, the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties confirmed in letters dated 27 October 2026.

The confirmation, communicated by ODM Executive Director Oduor Ong'wen to Nairobi County Assembly Speaker Kenneth Ng'ondi, draws a formal line under a coalition that once represented the most ambitious attempt at opposition unity in Kenya's post-2010 constitutional history. Its unravelling, and ODM's methodical repositioning in its aftermath, tells a story not merely about one party's internal decisions but about the broader restructuring of Kenya's political architecture as the country moves towards the August 2027 general election.

The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties was unambiguous in its confirmation. "Pursuant to Section 10 of the Political Parties Act Cap. 7D, Article 22 of the Azimio coalition agreement, ODM has satisfied the requirements for exiting Azimio. In this regard, ODM ceased being a member of Azimio as of 10th June 2026." The legal formality, long anticipated, was nonetheless significant. Coalitions in Kenyan politics carry both institutional weight and symbolic meaning, and the departure of Azimio's strongest constituent party effectively renders the formation a diminished shell of what it was during the 2022 election cycle.

ODM's decision to act was not sudden. ODM Party leader Oburu Oginga had signalled the direction of travel as early as February, speaking at a gathering in Mombasa ahead of the party's National Executive Committee meeting. His remarks were pointed and left little room for ambiguity. "This thing called Azimio — we are Azimio. The strongest party of Azimio is ODM. There is no one who can decide without consulting ODM. You cannot purport to appoint a new leader in Azimio while excluding ODM," Oginga said. He then went further: "Azimio was dead when ODM left it. We left it a long time ago, and it is only a formality that we have not performed. We are going to exit that organisation called Azimio." The June exit date confirmed that the formality had been performed.

With the legal departure settled, ODM moved swiftly to reconfigure its institutional presence in the Nairobi City County Assembly — a legislature whose political composition reflects, in miniature, the broader realignments playing out at the national level. The party appointed Catherine Apiyo Okoth, a nominated Member of the County Assembly, as its representative on the County Assembly Service Board, replacing the arrangement that had existed under the Azimio framework. The board appointment matters because it determines ODM's direct influence over the assembly's administrative and financial operations, not merely its legislative positioning.

The party also reorganised its Majority Party Whip structure. Upper Savanna MCA Stazo Omung'ala Elijah Ang'ila was appointed Majority Party Whip, replacing Moses Nyangaresi Ogeto, who has shifted his political allegiance. Imara Daima MCA Evans Okaru Nyangicha was simultaneously appointed Deputy Majority Party Whip, filling the position vacated by Ang'ila's elevation. In its communication to the Speaker, ODM described the changes as designed to "strengthen the party's leadership, coordination and discipline within the County Assembly while ensuring effective execution of its legislative and oversight responsibilities" — standard institutional language that nonetheless signals the party's intent to maintain and consolidate its operational grip on the Nairobi assembly as political competition intensifies.

The timing is deliberate. County assemblies, often dismissed as peripheral to national political contests, are in practice significant organisational resources. The MCAs who serve in them are embedded in their wards, maintain direct relationships with voters and are critical foot soldiers during campaign season. A party that controls its County Assembly group effectively controls a mobilisation network. ODM's restructuring in Nairobi, Kenya's largest urban centre, is therefore as much about 2027 as it is about 2026 governance.

Nairobi itself occupies a particular place in Kenya's political calculus. With the largest concentration of registered voters, a youthful demographic profile and a media environment that amplifies political developments nationally, the capital is simultaneously a prize and a battleground. ODM's moves in the Nairobi assembly signal that the party intends to be a serious competitor for influence in the city, independent of whatever coalition arrangements ultimately take shape at the national level before the election.

The question of those coalition arrangements remains, as of now, unresolved. ODM's exit from Azimio does not automatically position it within any other formal structure, and the party has been careful not to foreclose its options. The broader opposition landscape includes Gachagua's Democracy for the Citizens Party, Kalonzo Musyoka's Wiper Patriotic Front, the Linda Mwananchi Movement led by Edwin Sifuna — who built his national profile as ODM Secretary General before departing — and several other formations of varying size and coherence. How these entities relate to one another, and whether they can agree on a unified presidential candidate and a workable coalition framework, is the central unresolved question of Kenya's pre-election period.

ODM's formal independence from Azimio gives it greater flexibility in those negotiations. It is no longer bound by the coalition's internal dynamics, its existing agreements or the leadership disputes that contributed to the formation's weakening. It can engage with potential partners on its own terms, offer its organisational network as a contribution to any coalition it chooses to join, and walk away from arrangements it considers unfavourable without the institutional complications that coalition membership creates.

Whether that flexibility translates into strategic advantage will depend on decisions yet to be made. The 2027 election will ultimately be determined by the shape of the presidential contest, the credibility of the candidates and the ability of their respective formations to mobilise voters at the ward level. ODM, with its established structures, its retained presence in the Nairobi assembly and its freedom from Azimio's constraints, is positioning itself to be a significant actor in that contest — on whatever terms the political season ultimately demands.

The formal exit letter has been filed. The repositioning has begun. The election is nine months away.

Health **The outbreak, which the World Health Organisation has been monitoring closely, eventually recorded nine confirmed cases.**

Kenya's Ebola battle: Is the country finally winning the fight against the deadly virus?

With its last patient discharged and a 42-day countdown begun, Kenya is closer than ever to an Ebola-free declaration — but the threat is far from over

BY Collins Kibet
@themtkenyatimes



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale

Kenya reached a landmark moment in its fight against Ebola yesterday when the country's last patient undergoing treatment for the disease was discharged, triggering a critical 42-day monitoring period that, if passed without incident, will see the country officially declared Ebola-free on 23 December 2026.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale made the announcement at Afya House in Nairobi, bringing cautious relief to millions of Kenyans who have watched the outbreak unfold since the country confirmed its first case of Bundibugyo virus disease on 6 October 2026. That initial case involved a Kenyan national who had travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo through Uganda before developing symptoms — a reminder of how quickly infectious disease can cross borders in an interconnected region.

The outbreak, which the World Health Organisation has been monitoring closely, eventually recorded nine confirmed cases. The initial patient infected four family members and four healthcare workers who had attended to him before Ebola was suspected. Two people died; seven recovered. All secondary infections were identified among individuals already in quarantine, a containment achievement that prevented the virus from reaching the wider community. Health authorities successfully traced and monitored 135 contacts linked to the initial case — a logistical undertaking that underscored the seriousness with which Kenya's public health system responded.

Yesterday's discharge of the final patient also saw the last 11 contacts complete their monitoring period and return home in good health. Kenya today has no Ebola patients under treatment and no identified contacts in quarantine. The 42-day countdown, based on twice the longest recognised incubation period of the virus, began this morning and must run without a new infection before the declaration can be made.

The WHO has praised Kenya's response, recognising healthcare workers, government institutions and communities for containing an outbreak that, in less prepared circumstances, could have spiralled into a national crisis. Officials highlighted early detection, transparency, coordinated emergency operations and rigorous contact tracing as the pillars of an effective response. The outbreak demonstrated what is possible when public health institutions and ordinary citizens work in the same direction — a lesson worth recording for future reference.

That future reference may come sooner than anyone would like. The situation in the DRC, the source of Kenya's initial case, remains deeply alarming. The DRC has recorded more than 11,000 infections and over 5,000 deaths in its ongoing outbreak, according to the latest regional figures. Cross-border movement, commerce and international travel create continuous opportunities for the virus to migrate. Kenya's last patient may have recovered, but the regional environment that produced this outbreak has not changed.

The government has consequently maintained heightened surveillance, including screening at points of entry, community monitoring and rapid response capacity. The Ministry of Health has reminded the public to remain alert for symptoms — fever, weakness, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and unexplained bleeding — and to contact the toll-free number 719 at the first sign of concern. These measures are not precautionary theatre. They are essential disciplines that must hold for 42 more days and well beyond.

The infection of four healthcare workers during the outbreak deserves particular attention. Medical professionals on the frontline of any infectious disease response face risks that the public rarely fully appreciates. Their exposure in this instance highlights the ongoing need for adequate protective equipment, rigorous infection prevention protocols, continuous training and sufficient medical resources at every level of the health system. Protecting healthcare workers is not merely an institutional obligation — it is a prerequisite for protecting everyone else.

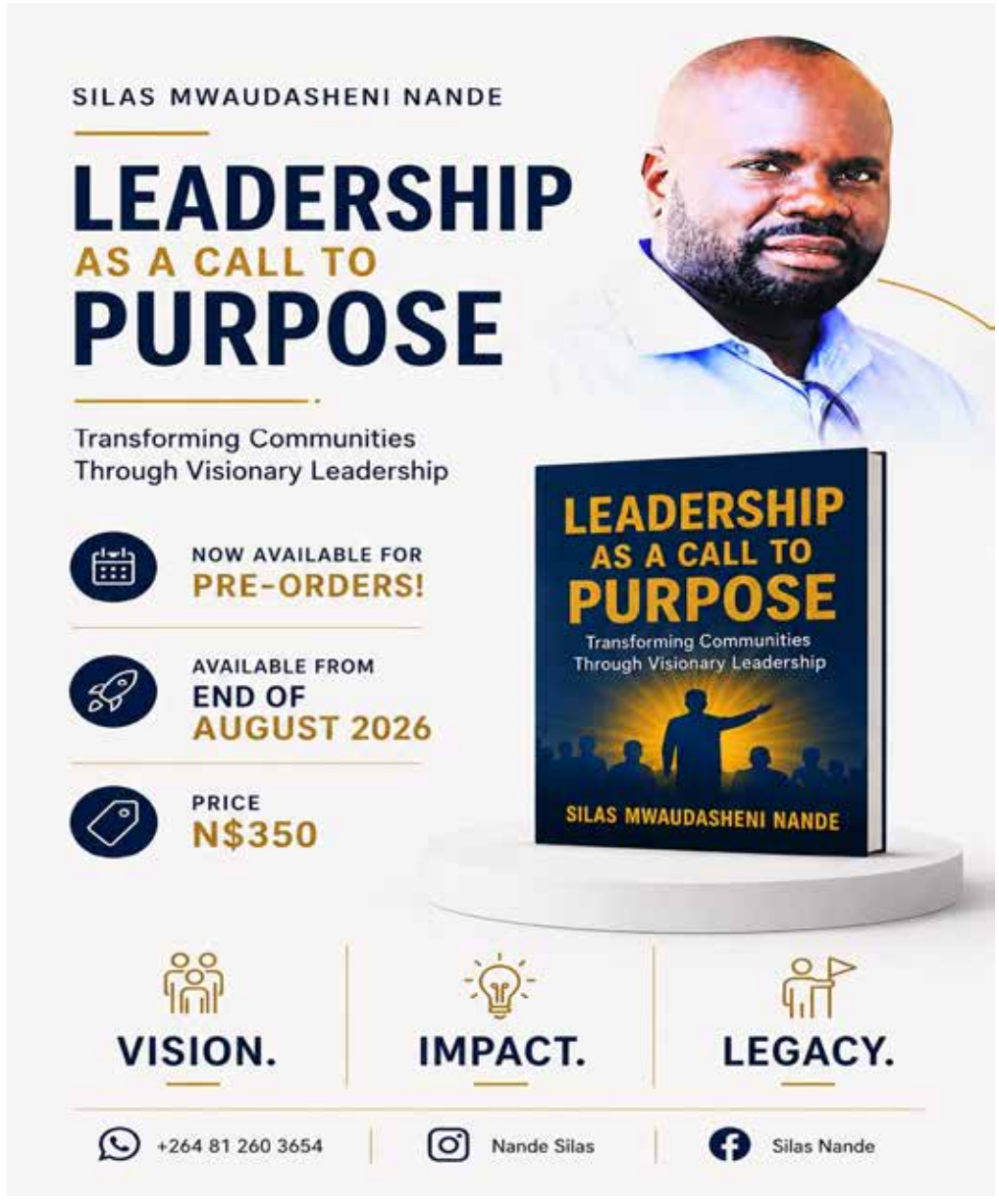
The outbreak has also exposed structural questions about Kenya's broader preparedness for public health emergencies. The country managed to contain infections within a single transmission cluster, which is a genuine achievement. But the experience has revealed the importance of modern laboratory facilities in counties beyond Nairobi, trained emergency response personnel across regions and disease surveillance systems that do not depend on a centralised response from the capital. County governments must absorb this lesson and invest accordingly, particularly in areas where access to quality medical services remains limited.

Public awareness must remain a central pillar of the strategy. Misinformation, fear and stigma are as dangerous in a health emergency as the pathogen itself. They discourage people from seeking care, undermine contact tracing and punish survivors who deserve support rather than discrimination. The government must continue providing accurate, accessible information through health facilities, schools, community leaders and credible media. Recovered patients must be welcomed back into their communities without reservation.

Accountability matters too. The resources deployed during this emergency response — medical supplies, personnel, logistics and emergency funds — must be accounted for transparently. Public confidence in the health system is a long-term asset, and it is built or eroded by how institutions behave under pressure. The lessons from this outbreak should translate into lasting structural improvements, not temporary measures that fade once the emergency passes.

Kenya has demonstrated something important during these weeks: that a coordinated, transparent and community-rooted response can contain a dangerous pathogen even in a country with real healthcare constraints. That is not a small achievement, and it should be recognised as such.

But the celebration must wait. The coming 42 days will determine whether Kenya completes this chapter cleanly. Kenyans must remain vigilant, healthcare workers must continue receiving the support they have earned, and the government must sustain the discipline that brought the country to this point. The finish line is 23 December 2026. Kenya has come too far to stumble now.



Algorithms **"Newsrooms are no longer the only players deciding which stories reach the audience," Guo Wei, the event's moderator, said**

Authenticity over algorithms: World Media Summit explores trust in AI era

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes



BEIJING, (Xinhua) -- An international dialogue at the 7th World Media Summit (WMS) explored some of the most pressing questions: who really shapes the news agenda? Why do people trust one source over another, and what impact will artificial intelligence (AI) have on journalism?

"Newsrooms are no longer the only players deciding which stories reach the audience," Guo Wei, the event's moderator, said in her opening remarks for the event focusing on "influence, AI and trust" here Saturday.

"Content creators have built their own audiences, social media platforms influence what people see, and AI is changing almost every stage of news production," Guo said.

DIVERSIFIED MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

Speakers at the dialogue described a shift in which the gatekeepers of news dissemination have expanded from traditional media outlets to platforms, algorithms and individual creators.

Panelists said the more diversified ecosystem had not diminished the importance of professional standards, and several argued that authenticity, judgment and trust had become more, not less, valuable in public-interest journalism.

The panel included Vsevolod Pulya, head of RT China and editor-in-chief of Gateway to Russia; Diego Ruzzarin, a Mexican content creator with more than 10 million followers across platforms and also a partner director of MPV Management; and Zephyr, host of the Boston Round Face Channel known for current-affairs commentary. Their backgrounds spanned traditional media, the global creator economy and younger audiences.

WHO SETS THE AGENDA

The discussion opened with a fundamental question about influence: From the perspective of a major international media organization, do newsrooms still shape the news agenda, or do they depend more on social media platforms to reach audiences?

Pulya described the change from inside the industry. "Traditional news agencies were the gatekeepers who decided for the audience what and when to know about the outside world. But now big tech companies have become the gatekeepers."

He described how the previous top-down structure of news dissemination is giving way to a different model. Influencers, he said, communicate horizontally, much like talking to a friend. "Real emotional attachment is something that any media should learn to develop."

That shift is evident even in the composition of global media gatherings. The WMS has invited not only mainstream media representatives, but also a growing number of internationally known content creators, noted Guo, also a Xinhua News Agency journalist.

"This is both a footnote to the changing media landscape and a source of more diverse perspectives and voices for global news communication," the moderator said.

The panel also examined why younger audiences increasingly turn to individual creators for news rather than established news organizations. For Ruzzarin, the answer lies beyond institutional brands, in lived experience and cultural connection.

"Every time I come to China, I bring at least four to five different influencers from different countries in the Global South for them to experience firsthand. Nothing is more powerful than coming here, having tea and talking to local people," he said.

He added that his two most-watched videos on YouTube over four consecutive years were a review of Sun Tzu's The Art of War and an analysis of Dragon Ball Z, the Japanese anime drawing inspiration from the Monkey King, Sun Wukong, from classic Chinese novel Journey to the West. Neither is conventional hard news, yet both use shared cultural motifs to connect with young audiences across borders.

For traditional media, Pulya said the lesson was clear. "You have to jump on the pop culture train. Pop culture is a separate world worth exploring and worth reflecting on."

AI, DEEPFAKES AND TRUST

Guo noted that AI can help journalists write, translate, edit, summarize and analyze information, leading to faster production and lower costs, and asked whether the industry risks becoming too dependent on it, with young journalists in particular missing the chance to practice basic skills.

Zephyr approached the issue from the perspective of an individual creator. "I don't believe that AI will one day replace me." In his view, the difference between humans and AI lies precisely in an authentic personality and irreplaceable individual judgment.

Guo said knowing how to use AI may become a basic requirement, but professional judgment, critical thinking and the ability to earn people's trust may become even more important.

Panelists noted that AI-generated videos, voices and images are making it harder to distinguish authentic content from fabricated material, especially with deepfakes, and that a single error can damage credibility built over years or even decades.

Zephyr described a dilemma facing serious content creators. "Often we find that content we put a lot of money and energy into doesn't perform as well as amusing false content." Yet he stressed maintaining credibility remained central to their work.

Ruzzarin emphasized face-to-face contact as a means of building trust, something that neither algorithms nor virtual content could replace.

The panel also raised a question of responsibility when it comes to misleading content being produced with the help of AI. Who should be held accountable -- the person who creates it, the media organization that publishes it, the platform that distributes it, or the technology company that builds and provides the AI tool?

The discussion did not offer a simple answer, with participants noting that, given the multiple actors within the information space, responsibility can no longer be placed at the door of a single gatekeeper. Participants suggested that in the age of deepfakes, professional judgment, critical thinking and the ability to earn trust serve as human filters against misinformation.

Under the theme "Media in the Intelligent Age: From Consensus to Action," this year's WMS, jointly organized by Xinhua News Agency and the Beijing municipal government from Nov. 5 to 9, drew nearly 500 representatives from nearly 330 mainstream media outlets, think tanks, government bodies, the United Nations and other international organizations across 112 countries and regions. ■

STUDENTS CORNER

Behind the lens: The untold life of a photojournalist

By **Amos Mokua**



A single photograph can stop a conversation, awaken a nation and preserve a moment that history might otherwise forget — yet the person behind the lens rarely makes the story.

Photojournalism is widely misunderstood. Many assume it involves little more than attending events with a camera. The reality is a demanding profession combining journalism, creativity, courage and a deep understanding of society, practised under conditions that would test most people's resolve.

Photojournalists are visual storytellers. From political rallies and court proceedings to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, they are often the first witnesses to history as it unfolds. Their work demands split-second decisions under pressure, and a missed moment cannot be recalled.

Behind those images lie long hours, missed meals and sacrifices audiences never see. Financial pressure is a constant companion, particularly for freelancers who cover assignments with no guarantee their photographs will sell. The psychological toll is equally real — repeated exposure to violence, poverty and displacement leaves marks that rarely appear in a caption.

Physical danger compounds this further. The Media Council of Kenya has documented attacks, harassment and intimidation against journalists covering demonstrations and politically sensitive events. There is also a moral dimension: the dignity of those being photographed must remain central to every editorial decision.

Despite these pressures, the impact endures. A photograph of a neglected school can redirect public attention. An image of environmental destruction can mobilise communities. In Kenya, photojournalism documents elections, governance and social justice — giving visibility to experiences that might otherwise go unrecorded.

The photographer may disappear behind the camera, but the truth captured through that lens can outlast them both.

Laikipia University: A centre of learning, opportunity and growth

By **Naomi Andhamo**



Laikipia University, situated along the Nyahururu–Nakuru Highway in the heart of Laikipia County, is doing something that too few Kenyan institutions manage quietly well: preparing ordinary students for an increasingly competitive world.

The university's academic offer spans education, communication, science, technology, business and criminology — a breadth that lecturer Angeline Kwamboka says gives students genuine flexibility in shaping their career paths. She credits assignments, group discussions and research projects with building the independent thinking employers now demand. "Quality teaching and active student participation," she says, "are essential in preparing learners for what lies ahead."

Students appear to agree. Charlotte Pearl describes her lecturers as approachable and genuinely invested in student success. She singles out group discussions and library facilities as particularly valuable — spaces where ideas are tested and knowledge deepened. The university's cool highland climate, she adds with a smile, does not hurt concentration either.

Student leader Michael Njoroge, who represents the School of Education, describes his role as a bridge between student concerns and university management — one that demands patience, empathy and the ability to hold competing opinions without losing sight of practical solutions. He notes that students facing financial pressure can access work opportunities within the institution, a small but meaningful safety net.

Laikipia University will need to keep pace with the accelerating demands of digital skills and practical training. The foundations, however, are solid.

For the students who walk through its gates each semester, the opportunity to learn, grow and move closer to their ambitions remains very much alive.

Drug abuse and Kenya's youth: A threat to lives and the economy

By **Esther Wambui**



Kenya's young people are the country's most valuable asset — and drug and substance abuse is steadily destroying them.

What begins as experimentation, peer pressure or an attempt to cope with stress can rapidly harden into dependence, derailing education, damaging health, fracturing relationships and stripping young people of the productive futures they were promised. The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse has identified youth as among the most vulnerable groups in Kenya, confirming that this is not a private struggle but a national emergency with serious economic consequences.

The scale of the problem demands an urgent, coordinated response. Schools and universities must strengthen drug education, expand counselling services and develop early-identification systems for students at risk. Parents and communities must create environments where young people can speak openly about stress, peer pressure and addiction without fear of stigma — because silence is where dependence takes root. Government agencies and health professionals must make treatment and rehabilitation services genuinely accessible, not merely available on paper to those with the means to reach them.

Kenya cannot afford to treat this as a marginal concern. A generation lost to addiction is a generation of businesses not built, families not stabilised and national development stalled. Every young person who slips through the gaps in prevention and recovery represents not only a personal tragedy but a measurable economic cost the country will carry for years.

Protecting Kenya's youth from drug abuse is not charity. It is the most practical investment this country can make in its own future.

Education is the key to a brighter future

By **Pamela Aoko**



Education remains the most reliable path out of poverty, the foundation of economic growth and the engine of social progress — yet Kenya continues to treat it as a budget line rather than a national priority.

The evidence for education's transformative power is not in dispute. When individuals acquire knowledge, practical skills and professional qualifications, their employment prospects improve, their earning potential rises and their communities benefit. Multiply that across millions of young Kenyans and the national dividend is enormous. The question is not whether education matters — it is why the system designed to deliver it remains so chronically under-resourced.

The challenges are well known and persistently unresolved: inadequate learning facilities, prohibitive costs for low-income families, insufficient teaching materials and deeply unequal access between urban and rural communities. These are not new problems. They are structural failures that successive governments have acknowledged and inadequately addressed.

The remedies are equally well understood. Increased public funding for education, improved school infrastructure, the recruitment of qualified teachers in underserved areas and targeted scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds would collectively transform outcomes. Parents must remain active partners in their children's learning, and teachers must continue adopting methods that reach every student — not only the most prepared.

None of this is complicated in principle. What it requires is political will and sustained financial commitment — both of which have too often fallen short.

The future of every nation begins in a classroom. The quality of what happens inside that classroom determines everything that follows.



Sports >> ***Mauricio Pochettino is closing in on the Manchester United job — but rescuing a club in freefall demands more than a dream appointment**

The theatre of déjà vu: Pochettino dreams again at Old Trafford

By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**



Mauricio Pochettino

Manchester United are closing in on the appointment of Mauricio Pochettino as their next head coach, with the Argentine reported to have reached a verbal agreement in principle with the club as Michael Carrick's position hangs by a thread.

Reports by The Athletic and Sky Sports yesterday confirmed that United have agreed personal terms with Pochettino, placing him firmly in pole position to take charge at Old Trafford should the club's leadership decide to remove Carrick. That decision is expected to emerge from a crunch meeting between senior executives, including chief executive Omar Berrada and director of football Jason Wilcox, and minority owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe in Monaco — a gathering that speaks volumes about the gravity of United's predicament.

The numbers tell a grim story. United sit 18th in the Premier League after winning just one of their opening ten matches — their worst start to a top-flight season in 40 years. While the hierarchy deliberated in Monaco, Carrick continued taking training at Carrington yesterday morning, outwardly composed as he awaited a verdict on his future.

Pochettino's appointment would represent a significant statement of intent from a club that has admired the Argentine for years. His Premier League credentials are well established: he transformed Southampton into an attacking force before guiding Tottenham Hotspur to the 2019 UEFA Champions League final and a second-place Premier League finish. He subsequently won Ligue 1 with Paris Saint-Germain and steadied a chaotic Chelsea project, overseeing a markedly improved second half of the 2023/24 season. His reputation for developing young players and building cohesive, attacking teams makes him a compelling fit for a club that badly needs both.

The complications, however, are considerable. Pochettino extended his contract with the United States men's national team in August, committing to the programme through the 2030 World Cup. Prising him away will require a release fee of approximately £7 million, plus potential compensation for members of his coaching staff. United are reportedly working to finalise arrangements in time for their Premier League trip to Anfield on 22 November — a fixture that would represent either a baptism of fire or a statement of renewed purpose, depending on one's appetite for symbolism.

In the meantime, Pochettino is focused on preparing the United States for their Concacaf Nations League quarter-final matches against Haiti on 14 and 18 November. His professionalism in honouring those commitments while United's approach is confirmed reflects a manager who understands the weight of his obligations — a quality Old Trafford has not always been fortunate enough to attract in recent years.

The romance of the association between Pochettino and United is real. He has long been linked with the job, and there is genuine excitement among supporters at the prospect of a manager with his track record finally arriving. But the circumstances of this appointment carry none of the comfort of a fresh start. United are not recruiting from a position of strength — they are reaching for a lifeline from the relegation zone, and whoever takes charge will need results immediately, not the runway to build gradually.

Pochettino has experience of pressure, of rebuilding, and of galvanising a squad that has lost its way. Whether those qualities are sufficient to rescue a club this dysfunctional, in a league this unforgiving, is a question only the pitch can answer.

Until United make an official announcement, the appointment remains conditional. But the direction of travel is clear. A decade-long association between the Argentine and Old Trafford may finally be nearing its conclusion — for better or worse, the moment is arriving.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> ***Kenya's Under-23 side produced a gritty second-half comeback at Nyayo to seize a crucial first-leg advantage in their Los Angeles 2028 qualifying campaign**

Rising Stars strike late to sink Ivory Coast and edge closer to Olympics dream



Kenya's Rising Stars celebrate a goal at the U20 AFCON in Egypt. PHOTO/FKF

By **Martin Weche**

Kenya's Rising Stars delivered a dramatic late winner yesterday to beat Ivory Coast 2-1 in the first leg of their Olympic Games second-round qualifier at Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi, keeping their Los Angeles 2028 dream firmly alive.

It was the kind of victory that qualification campaigns are built on — scrappy, tense and ultimately decisive. For long stretches of a cagey encounter, the Rising Stars struggled to impose themselves on a well-organised Ivorian side, and a goalless first half did little to ease the anxiety of a home support that had arrived expecting fireworks. The second half, however, told a different story entirely.

Kenya's breakthrough came in the 65th minute through substitute Henry Omollo, whose introduction proved an inspired decision by the coaching staff. Omollo had been on the pitch only briefly when he found the net, sending Nyayo into a burst of noise that temporarily transformed the atmosphere inside the stadium. The lead, though, lasted just nine minutes. Oumar Konaté drew Ivory Coast level in the 74th minute with a finish that silenced the home crowd and shifted momentum sharply towards the visitors, who suddenly sensed an away draw that would serve them well heading into the second leg.

What followed was a nervy final quarter that tested the character of a young Kenyan side under genuine pressure. The Rising Stars, to their considerable credit, did not retreat. They continued to press for a winner, and their persistence was rewarded six minutes from time when Andreas Odhiambo struck to restore Kenya's lead and seal a 2-1 victory that significantly improves their prospects ahead of the return fixture in Abidjan on 17 November.

The result gives Kenya a valuable cushion. Travelling to West Africa with a one-goal advantage is far from comfortable — Ivory Coast are an experienced and technically capable side who will be confident of reversing the deficit on home soil — but it is infinitely preferable to the alternative. A draw at Nyayo would have left the Rising Stars needing to win away from home simply to advance; now they carry momentum, a lead and the psychological boost of having come from behind to win.

The stakes extend well beyond a single tie. This qualification campaign serves simultaneously as the pathway to the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations Under-23 tournament, meaning every match carries double significance for Kenya's emerging generation of footballers. Should the Rising Stars navigate past Ivory Coast in Abidjan, they will advance to the third round of Olympic qualifying, where either Gabon or Tunisia await in March next year. That would represent a significant achievement for a programme that has been building steadily and now finds itself within reach of a genuinely historic qualification.

Odhiambo's late strike will inevitably attract the headlines, and rightly so — it was a goal that required both technical composure and the mental fortitude to deliver in a high-pressure moment. But the more significant story is the collective resilience the Rising Stars showed after conceding the equaliser. Lesser sides, particularly at Under-23 level, buckle when a lead disappears. This group pressed on.

The job, of course, is only half done. Nyayo provided the platform; Abidjan will provide the examination. Ivory Coast at home, with a crowd behind them and a deficit to erase, will be a markedly different proposition from the side that left Nairobi yesterday evening on the wrong end of the scoreline.

Kenya's Rising Stars have earned the right to dream. Whether that dream survives the return leg on Monday will depend on whether this performance was a statement of intent or simply a good night's work.





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Three decades in the classroom: The teacher who believes the future belongs to those who never stop learning



By: Ayesha Talib
@themtkenyatimes

Suzana Kelesoska has devoted more than three decades of her life to teaching children aged six to ten in North Macedonia, building a career defined by quiet dedication, professional rigour and an unshakeable belief that every child deserves an education tailored to who they are, not who the system expects them to be.

Her story begins in Bitola, where she graduated from the Faculty of Pedagogy "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1988, earning the foundation she would spend the next three and a half decades building upon. She entered the classroom in 1993, and what followed was not simply a career but a calling. For the better part of those years, she taught at the primary school "Murat Labunishti" in Labunishta, in the municipality of Struga — a community she served with consistency and care through changing governments, shifting curricula and the relentless evolution of what it means to educate a child in the modern world.

There is something worth pausing on in that kind of commitment. Teaching in a single community for decades is not the glamorous arc that headlines tend to celebrate. It does not come with the visibility of a ministerial appointment or the recognition of a national prize. What it offers instead is something rarer: the lived experience of watching children grow into adults, of seeing the values and habits instilled in a first-grade classroom carry a person through secondary school, university and beyond. Kelesoska has had that experience many times over. She has, in the truest sense, raised generations.

In March 2026, she began a new chapter, moving to the primary school "Brakja Miladinovci" in Struga, where she continues the work that has defined her professional life. The move did not represent a retreat or a winding down. For Kelesoska, it was simply the next room in a house she has spent her entire adult life building — the house of primary education in her country.





Suzana Kelesoska



What sets her apart from many educators of comparable experience is her refusal to let expertise curdle into complacency. It is a professional hazard that affects teachers and doctors and lawyers alike: the longer you do something, the easier it becomes to rely on what has worked before and stop asking whether something better might exist. Kelesoska has consistently resisted that temptation. Throughout her career, she has participated actively in national and international seminars, webinars, conferences and symposiums — not as a box-ticking exercise, but out of genuine intellectual curiosity about the craft she has chosen.

Her approach in the classroom reflects a deep and practical understanding of child psychology. She does not apply a single template to thirty different children and expect uniform results. Instead, she plans her teaching materials with care and adjusts them continuously — individualising content, pacing and method according to the capabilities and potential of each child in front of her. It sounds straightforward when stated plainly, but any teacher will tell you that it is one of the most demanding disciplines in education, requiring constant observation, reflection and the willingness to change course when a child is not reaching their potential through the method being used.

She is guided, too, by a clear sense of what she is ultimately responsible for. Her priority, she says, has always been the proper upbringing, education and progress of her students — not test scores alone, not administrative compliance, not the performance metrics that have come to dominate educational discourse in many countries, but the whole child. High personal integrity and dignity mark her conduct, and she sets goals for her pupils that are clear, achievable and genuinely motivating — goals designed not to intimidate but to stretch.

It is against this backdrop that her enthusiasm for the future of education becomes both credible and compelling. Kelesoska is not a technologist by training, but she has watched the classroom change across three decades and she understands, perhaps better than most, that another significant shift is under way. She believes firmly that now is the right moment for primary education to embrace the possibilities offered by artificial intelligence and modern digital tools — not to replace the teacher, but to lift the administrative burden that consumes so much of a teacher's time and energy, and to elevate the quality of the teaching process itself.

It is a vision that carries weight precisely because it comes from someone who has earned the right to hold it. Kelesoska is not a theorist speaking from a conference platform about classrooms she has not visited in years. She is a practitioner, still teaching, still refining, still present in the daily reality of primary education. Her conviction that technology should serve pedagogy rather than the other way around is grounded in that experience — in knowing what a teacher actually needs and what a child actually responds to.

After 33 years, Suzana Kelesoska is still learning. That, more than any qualification or commendation, is what makes her worth listening to.

Published at Shashil Court Westlands & Printed at Mombasa Road, Nairobi by Exponential International Limited. P.O. Box 101675 - 00101 Nairobi.
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