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Countdown 2027

# Sifuna's party rebrands to Linda Mwananchi



*Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna*

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# MPs and Nyeri assembly defect to DCP as Gachagua tightens grip on Mount Kenya ahead of 2027

BY James Mwangi
@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*



















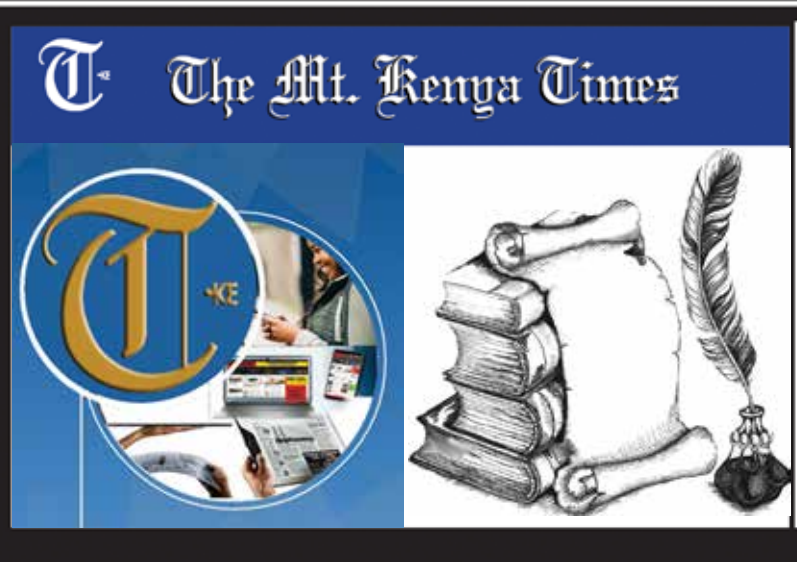


**Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, EGH, yesterday received Runyenjes Member of Parliament Eric Muchangi Karemba and Subukia MP Samuel Gachobe at his Wamunyoro residence, formally welcoming both lawmakers into the Democracy for the Citizens Party following their departures from the ruling United Democratic Alliance — defections that deepen DCP's parliamentary footprint and signal accelerating erosion of President William Ruto's Mount Kenya base ahead of the August 2027 general election.**

**Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji, already a DCP member, accompanied Karemba to the ceremony, reflecting the party's growing confidence in presenting collective arrivals as a demonstration of momentum rather than isolated crossings. The occasion carried the unmistakable atmosphere of a party in ascent. Supporters wearing green caps and carrying "I Wamunyoro" placards packed the residence, providing the visual language of a movement that**

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Editor's Desk




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# NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko has told Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka to abandon another presidential bid and instead negotiate a senior position — Deputy President or Prime Minister — in President William Ruto's government if the opposition denies him its 2027 flagbearer ticket. Speaking on NTV, Sonko said Kalonzo's three failed presidential attempts made the coming election a defining moment. "This is his last bullet and his last chance. If the Opposition does not give him the opportunity to be its presidential flagbearer, he should not gamble again," Sonko said. He argued that Ukambani had consistently supported opposition coalitions without securing commensurate development returns, and urged regional leaders to prioritise tangible gains in water, roads and economic empowerment over political loyalty. Sonko has been holding consultations across Machakos, Makueni and Kitui counties ahead of 2027.



Embakasi East Member of Parliament Babu Owino has expressed interest in taking the leadership of the newly rebranded Linda Mwananchi Movement, proposing an arrangement in which Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna would serve as the party's presidential candidate while Owino assumes the party leader's role. The proposal, which surfaced Friday, points to internal positioning already under way within the movement barely hours after its National Delegates Conference formally approved the rebrand from The Equitable Party. Owino's interest signals that the Linda Mwananchi Movement, designed as Sifuna's presidential vehicle, is already attracting heavyweight figures with their own organisational ambitions — a dynamic that could either broaden the party's appeal or complicate its internal hierarchy as Kenya's 2027 election season moves into its most competitive phase.



Lawyer Abshir Abdi and his friend Ayub Ali yesterday secured High Court orders barring police from arresting or detaining them while the court determines whether the two can testify about their 11-day abduction ordeal. The conservatory orders, granted pending a full ruling, effectively shield the pair from any law enforcement action as they seek to place their account of the alleged abduction before the court. The case has drawn attention to Kenya's persistent concerns about enforced disappearances and the safety of individuals who attempt to report or testify about such experiences. The court's intervention signals judicial willingness to protect potential witnesses from interference before their testimony can be heard, with a substantive ruling on the matter expected in due course.

The Judicial Service Commission has appointed Hassan Omar Daffa as Kenya's new Chief Kadhi, ending a vacancy created by the death of Sheikh AbdulHalim Hussein in 2025. Daffa, who previously served as a Principal Kadhi, holds a master's degree in Islamic jurisprudence from Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia and a law degree from Mount Kenya University, and is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya. The JSC received 14 applications, shortlisted nine candidates and conducted interviews on 2 and 3 November, with Muslim community observers present. Public participation was held in June. Chief Justice Martha Koome, who chairs the JSC, reaffirmed the commission's commitment to merit-based recruitment. Daffa succeeds acting Chief Kadhi Sukyan Hassan Omar, who maintained continuity during the transition.






Macharia Njeru and his Mwongozo Mpya Party on Friday used a Nyahururu rally to place farmers at the centre of their 2027 electoral platform, presenting an agricultural agenda anchored on three priorities: reducing production costs, expanding market access, and promoting value addition. Njeru told rally attendees that Kenya's economic transformation cannot be achieved without first addressing the structural barriers that keep smallholder farmers trapped in subsistence cycles despite the country's vast agricultural potential. The Nyahururu rally, held in a region where farming defines both livelihoods and local economies, provided a deliberate backdrop for the pitch. With the August 2027 general election drawing closer, Mwongozo Mpya's focus on agricultural policy signals an attempt to build a rural support base by speaking directly to the daily economic pressures facing Kenya's farming communities.



The Council of Governors has identified community engagement as the most critical tool in Kenya's response to climate change, positioning grassroots involvement above top-down policy interventions in the fight against an environmental crisis that has moved from peripheral concern to central governance challenge both nationally and globally. The council's position reflects growing recognition that climate adaptation in Kenya — where erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts and devastating floods have repeatedly disrupted agricultural cycles and displaced communities — cannot be imposed from Nairobi but must be owned and driven by the people most directly affected. The statement signals a shift in how county leadership is framing environmental responsibility, placing the burden of climate resilience not solely on government institutions but on organised, informed and empowered local communities.

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**Roads** The Nairobi-Thika Expressway presents a more complicated picture

# Ruto commits to KSh38.7B Kiambu Road dualling and new Nairobi-Thika Expressway

**BY James Mwangi**
*@themtkenyatimes*



President William Ruto

President William Ruto on Friday pledged to prioritise the dualling of Kiambu Road and the construction of a new Nairobi-Thika Expressway, committing his administration to two of the most consequential road infrastructure projects in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area during a meeting with Kiambu County leaders at State House, Nairobi.

The announcements carry both developmental and political weight. Kiambu is among the most densely populated counties in Kenya, its road network under daily pressure from commuter traffic, commercial vehicles and an expanding urban population that has long outgrown the infrastructure built to serve it. For residents who spend hours each week on congested routes into Nairobi, the commitments — if delivered on schedule — would represent a tangible improvement in daily life.

"We are giving priority to key infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, including the dualling of Kiambu Road and the construction of the Nairobi-Thika Expressway, to ease transport and improve connectivity within the Nairobi Metropolitan," Ruto said. He framed the investments within his administration's broader equity agenda, adding: "We are deliberate and intentional in ensuring that every part of Kenya benefits equitably from our transformation agenda. No county, no community and no region will be left behind. Usawa ni Sawa."

The Kiambu Road project is the more advanced of the two. Cabinet approved the KSh38.7B scheme in November 2025, with the Kenya National Highways Authority confirming plans to upgrade the 23.5-kilometre Pangani-Muthaiga-Kiambu-Ndumberi corridor from a two-lane road into a four-lane dual carriageway, flanked by two-lane service roads, pedestrian walkways and six footbridges. New bridges, overpasses and interchanges are planned at key junctions including Kamiti Road, Banana Road and the Northern Bypass, while two bypasses around Kiambu Town will divert through-traffic away from the town centre. The National Land Commission has already published notices for the compulsory acquisition of eleven land parcels in Nairobi and Kiambu counties to facilitate the works.

The Nairobi-Thika Expressway presents a more complicated picture. Ruto announced in February 2026 that construction of the approximately 60-kilometre elevated route — running from the Museum Hill Interchange in Nairobi to Thika Town — would begin in September. That timeline has since slipped. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki acknowledged in October 2026 that the project was still undergoing final design and feasibility studies, a disclosure that places a question mark over the administration's earlier schedule. The expressway is designed to run above the existing Thika Superhighway, offering motorists an additional route without disrupting traffic on the road below — a technically ambitious proposition that may partly explain the delays.

Both projects sit within a wider government infrastructure programme targeting connectivity across the Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The administration's argument — that improved roads unlock economic growth, reduce travel times and attract investment — is well-founded in principle. The test, as with every infrastructure pledge in Kenya's political history, lies in execution.

With the August 2027 general election drawing closer, the pressure to show concrete progress on the ground, rather than announcements at State House, will only intensify.

# Six dead in Syokimau collapse: Are Kenya's construction sites safe?



A building under construction collapsed near the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) terminus

**BY Collins Kibet**
*@themtkenyatimes*

A building under construction collapsed yesterday in Syokimau, on the outskirts of Nairobi, killing six people and injuring five others in the latest tragedy to expose Kenya's chronic failures in construction safety oversight. The eight-storey structure came down with approximately 405 workers on site, prompting authorities to shut down the project as emergency responders moved in and investigations began.

The questions the collapse raises are neither new nor complicated. Every construction project in Kenya is required by law to undergo structural assessment, professional supervision, approved planning and regular inspections. Buildings under active construction should not fall. When they do, the reasonable inference is that something in that chain of oversight broke down — and the public is entitled to know precisely where and why.

For the families of the six who died, the incident is an unbearable loss. For the country, it is one in a pattern that has persisted far too long. Kenya has recorded multiple building collapses in recent years, each followed by official investigations, expressions of concern and promises of stricter enforcement. The cycle continues because accountability rarely follows.

The findings of the Syokimau investigation must be made public, acted upon and used to prosecute those responsible where negligence is established. Regulatory frameworks are only as effective as the consequences attached to breaching them.

Six lives is not a statistic. It is a failure of governance.

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NAIROBI

# Three arrested as detectives uncover explosives cache in Tassia



BY John Kinyua
@themtkenyatimes

Detectives yesterday arrested three suspects and recovered a significant cache of explosive devices and ammunition from a residential property in Tassia, Embakasi, in an intelligence-led operation that underscores the Directorate of Criminal Investigations' growing capacity to act on credible public tip-offs.

Embakasi detectives trailed and arrested Kelvin Oluoch Obunaka and his brother Benjamin Obunaka, known locally as Obunaka the DJ, at a residence near Tassia Stage. Under interrogation, the brothers led investigators to a second house belonging to Kennedy Nzau, situated near Triple M Supermarket in Tassia, where a search yielded the concealed arsenal — packed inside a brown leather bag.

The haul included six CS smoke hand-thrown grenades, four Model 2020 tear gas grenades, one 64mm CS smoke grenade, three 37/38mm rifle-launched tear gas grenades, one 37/38mm flash-bang grenade and sixteen rounds of 7.62mm blank ammunition. Crime Scene Investigation detectives documented and secured all recovered items as exhibits pending further forensic examination.

All three suspects remain in custody awaiting arraignment as detectives work to establish the intended use of the materials and determine whether the accused have links to wider criminal networks.

The DCI credited members of the public with providing the intelligence that made the operation possible — a reminder that in Kenya's fight against urban crime, community vigilance remains as important as any detective work.


DIRECTORATE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STATION | EMBAKASI | NATIONALITY | KENYAN |
| NAME | KEVIN OBUNAKA | | |
| ALIAS | 2DEEP | | |
| ID/PASSPORT NO | [redacted] | GENDER | |
| D.O.B | 1996.10.06 | MALE | |
| MOBILE NO | 114[redacted] | | |
| OFFENCE | PREPARATION TO COMMIT A FELONY/POSESSION OF AMMUNITIONS/POSESSION OF EXPLOSIVES INTENDED TO DISRUPT PUBLIC ORDER. | | |
| CASE NO | 35/13/11/2026 | | |
| DATE OF ARREST | 13/11/2026 | COUNTY | NAIROBI |



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua on Friday received Runyenjes Member of Parliament Eric Muchangi Karemba at his Wamunyoro residence

# MPs and Nyeri assembly defect to DCP as Gachagua tightens grip on Mount Kenya ahead of 2027

***The former Deputy President's Wamunyoro residence is fast becoming the nerve centre of Kenya's most consequential pre-election realignment***

Contd from page 2

has travelled well beyond its origins as a vehicle of personal grievance into something with genuine structural ambition.

Gachagua was direct about what he expects from his new recruits. Welcoming Gachobe, he said he had assured him that DCP's nominations would be free and fair, and urged him to move swiftly to build his grassroots network ahead of the primaries scheduled for March. "Gachobe joins a growing number of leaders who have found a new home in the party of the present and the future," Gachagua said. On Karemba, he announced that he would travel to Runyenjes Constituency next week to present the MP formally to his constituents, adding that both Karemba and Mukunji would lead DCP's drive to win the Embu County governorship, all parliamentary seats and all 20 wards.

The Wamunyoro gathering was not, however, the only significant political movement of the day. Gachagua also received the entire Nyeri County Assembly, led by Speaker James Gichuhi — an institutional body, not merely individual politicians, crossing to DCP in a single movement. Gachagua responded with a direct challenge to UDA: DCP will contest every elective seat across Nyeri, from governor to ward representative, with open primaries in March.

The Nyeri assembly's defection carries weight beyond the numbers it adds to DCP's ranks. Nyeri is historically one of the most politically consequential counties in Mount Kenya, and its assembly's public alignment with Gachagua is a reputational blow to UDA's claim that it retains legitimate roots in the region. Combined with the arrival of two sitting MPs in a single day, it suggests that the political geography of central Kenya is shifting faster than the governing party's public response has so far acknowledged.

Gachagua's position in Kenya's pre-election landscape has evolved considerably since his impeachment. What began as a question of whether he could survive politically has become a question of whether anyone running for president in 2027 can afford to run against him. DCP commands substantial support across Mount Kenya and Maasailand, and Gachagua is widely regarded as the most consequential kingmaker the cycle will produce.

The March primaries commitment is a calculated signal. Open, competitive nominations serve two purposes simultaneously: they project democratic credibility at a moment when UDA is associated in public discourse with imposed candidacies, and they provide a transparent mechanism for absorbing defectors from multiple parties without appearing to reward loyalty over merit.

With nine months remaining before Kenya goes to the polls, Wamunyoro has become the most watched political address in the country. Yesterday's gatherings suggest the queue of arrivals is far from over. The future, as Gachagua's supporters are increasingly fond of saying, is green.

**Politics** **"We take this opportunity to thank the NDC for taking this key step in formalising the party's transition to Linda Mwananchi Movement and strengthening its organisational structure," the party said**

# Sifuna's party rebrands to Linda Mwananchi

***The Nairobi senator's National Delegates Conference transforms The Equitable Party root and branch — name, colours, symbol and constitution — as Kenya's 2027 political realignment accelerates***

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*




**Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna**

National delegates of The Equitable Party on Friday voted to rename the outfit the Linda Mwananchi Movement, approving a sweeping transformation of the party's identity, internal governance and electoral strategy at a closed-door National Delegates Conference in Nairobi that marked the most significant structural step yet in Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's bid to build a credible presidential vehicle ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The resolutions adopted at Friday's NDC went considerably further than a simple name change. Delegates ratified amendments to the party's constitution, revised its nomination and election rules, changed its official colours and symbol, relocated its registered headquarters, and — in a move with potentially far-reaching consequences for Kenya's pre-election landscape — authorised the party leadership to pursue coalition-building engagements with like-minded political formations. In a single afternoon, The Equitable Party ceased to exist in any meaningful sense, and the Linda Mwananchi Movement stepped into its place.

"We take this opportunity to thank the NDC for taking this key step in formalising the party's transition to Linda Mwananchi Movement and strengthening its organisational structure," the party said in a statement issued after the conference. The language was measured, but the ambition behind it was not. A party that renames itself, recolours itself, rewrites its constitution and restructures its nominations process in one sitting is not making administrative adjustments. It is preparing for war.

The choice of name is itself a political statement of intent. Linda Mwananchi — Swahili for "protect the citizen" — plants the party's flag squarely in the terrain of economic grievance and popular welfare, the very ground on which Kenya's 2027 election is most likely to be contested. After years of rising taxation, a cost-of-living crisis that has squeezed households across the income spectrum, and the Gen Z protests of 2024 that shook the political establishment, the electorate that goes to the polls next August will be asking a pointed question of every candidate: what have you done for ordinary Kenyans, and what will you do next? The Linda Mwananchi Movement has chosen a name that attempts to answer that question before the campaign has formally begun.

Sifuna himself is a figure who has built his public profile on combative, plain-spoken politics. As Nairobi Senator, he has been among the most vocal critics of the Ruto administration, deploying a rhetorical style that blends policy argument with populist directness. His base is urban, young and digitally connected — precisely the demographic that drove the finance bill protests and that will be a decisive force in 2027. Whether that base is large enough, and whether it can be extended beyond Nairobi into the counties that determine presidential elections, is the central question his new party must answer.

The authorisation to pursue coalition-building is therefore the most consequential resolution the NDC passed. No single party in Kenya's current fragmented political environment can reach State House alone. The arithmetic of Kenyan elections demands alliances, and the alliances that hold from announcement through polling day are those built on complementary regional bases, agreed candidate hierarchies and shared resources. Sifuna's team has signalled that it understands this — the question is who will sit across the table.

Kenya's pre-election landscape in November 2026 is defined by simultaneous consolidation and volatility. On one side, President William Ruto's administration is using the machinery of incumbency and the broad-based government arrangement with ODM to project stability and development delivery, most recently through the Nairobi infrastructure commitments announced at State House on the same day as the LMM conference. On the other, former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua is building the Democracy for the Citizens Party into a formidable Mount Kenya and Maasailand force, absorbing MPs and county assembly delegations at a pace that is visibly unsettling UDA's regional calculations. Into this environment, the Linda Mwananchi Movement enters as a third force with an urban stronghold, a senator with national name recognition, and a brand built on economic justice.

The structural parallels with previous election cycles are instructive. Kenya's political history is littered with formations that rebranded, restructured and announced coalitions, only to fracture under the pressure of nomination disputes and resource shortages. The LMM's decision to revise its nomination rules at the same NDC that approved the rebrand suggests the leadership is aware of this pattern and is attempting to preempt it — establishing agreed internal processes before the scramble for positions begins in earnest.

What the party has not yet made public is a detailed policy platform, a confirmed coalition strategy, or a formal declaration of Sifuna's presidential candidacy. These will come, almost certainly, in the months ahead. But the sequence matters. By establishing the institutional framework first — name, constitution, nomination rules, coalition mandate — the LMM is building the scaffolding before it raises the flag. It is a more disciplined approach than many Kenyan political launches have managed.

The 2027 election remains nine months away, long enough for alliances to form and dissolve several times over. But Friday's NDC established one thing clearly: the Linda Mwananchi Movement is a serious political project, not a holding vehicle. It has a name designed to resonate with an electorate exhausted by economic hardship, a senator with the platform and temperament to carry that message, and a mandate to build the alliances that presidential contests require.

Whether it can translate all of that into votes when it counts is the question Kenya will spend the next nine months answering. For now, Sifuna's movement has announced itself — loudly, deliberately, and with considerable structural seriousness.

The campaign, in every sense that matters, has begun.

**Artist** In writing and poetry, the only meaningful competition is internal. A writer competes with the version of themselves from last year — refining, deepening, growing

# Who is the best artist? The question misses the point entirely

## *In writing and poetry, the only honest competition is with yourself — and showing up is already a victory*

**BY Grace Wanja**
*@themtkenyatimes*

There is no hierarchy in art. No artist is inherently better than another — each simply tells a different story, in a different voice, for a different reason. To ask who the best artist is assumes a kind of competition that art was never designed to host. How does a children's book author compete with a folklore writer or a physics author? The question answers itself: they cannot, and they should not have to. Each is telling their own story, sharing their own truth, and the world is richer for every version.

Awards, in this light, deserve to be understood for what they truly are — a warm tap on the shoulder, an acknowledgment that says well done for showing up, for being present, for doing the work consistently. They are not a verdict on superiority. When someone wins a prize, they have not been declared better than their peers. They have simply been seen, at that moment, by that particular audience.

In writing and poetry, the only meaningful competition is internal. A writer competes with the version of themselves from last year — refining, deepening, growing. Like a diamond being shaped beneath the earth, each piece of work and each practice session brings greater clarity and brilliance. That is the real journey.

If you have attended a literary event and left without an award, resist the temptation to measure your presence by what you did not receive. The fact that you are there, that you found the courage to write, to recite, to put your ideas into the world — that alone sets you apart. Many people who can speak fluently and tell stories beautifully never do so, because fear holds them back. You are doing it. That is not nothing. That is everything.

Writing for awards alone narrows the purpose of a craft that was built for far greater things. Let recognition be a bonus, not the destination. Write to tell a story. Recite to move people. Create to leave something behind that did not exist before you made it.

A book, when examined honestly, is never the work of one person alone. It begins as an idea in an author's mind, takes shape through a designer's eye, is refined by an editor's hand, carried to readers by a marketing team, and ultimately belongs to the people who read it. Writing is a collective act. That is not a diminishment of the author — it is an affirmation of what literature is for.

When asked what it meant to be recognised among the best authors in Africa at the 2022 Zikomo Zambia Awards, that understanding shaped the response. The recognition was meaningful, but it did not make the work better than anyone else's. It meant visibility. It meant showing up consistently and presenting the craft with commitment. Visibility is not superiority — it is simply presence.

Art is not a race. It is an interpretation of the world, offered from every conceivable angle, in every conceivable form. Copy no one. Find your own voice, your own rhythm, your own way of seeing. When you bring something genuinely new to your audience, you give them a gift they cannot get anywhere else.

In Africa, writing may not fill pots or pay every bill, but it has rescued countless souls from paths that would have led them astray. It enlightens. It heals. It transforms grief into meaning.

So create — boldly, honestly, and entirely on your own terms.



**Dr Paula O.M. Otukile is the founder of Mulher Forte African Literature, based in Gaborone, Botswana.**



**Politics** **The ambition is not new. Successive administrations have promised Nairobi transformation, and the gap between announcement and delivery has historically been wide**

# Ruto gathers Nairobi's broad-based leaders at State House to accelerate housing, roads and markets

***With polls showing public scepticism about the UDA-ODM alliance and the 2027 election looming, Friday's State House meeting was as much about political consolidation as it was about development***




**Broad-based leaders with President William Ruto at State House on Friday, November 13, 2026.**

**BY Janet Mwathi**
*@themtkenyatimes*

With polls showing public scepticism about the UDA-ODM alliance and the 2027 election looming, Friday's State House meeting was as much about political consolidation as it was about development

By Janet Mwathi

President William Ruto yesterday hosted leaders from Nairobi under the broad-based government arrangement at State House, announcing plans to accelerate affordable housing, modern markets, road development, drainage improvement, and water and sanitation expansion across the capital in what his administration framed as a coordinated push to make Nairobi more liveable and attractive to investors.

The meeting brought together leaders from the ruling United Democratic Alliance and the Orange Democratic Movement, whose March 2025 political cooperation agreement formed the foundation of the broad-based arrangement that has defined Kenya's governing coalition for the past twenty months. That the two parties' Nairobi delegates were seated together at State House on a Friday afternoon in November 2026 — nine months before the country goes to the polls — was not purely a matter of urban planning. It was a carefully staged demonstration that the alliance holds, at a moment when polling data suggests the public is far from convinced.

"We identified priority development programmes, whose implementation we agreed to accelerate, including affordable housing, modern markets and road development to ease traffic congestion," Ruto said in a statement posted on his X account following the engagement. The priorities align with longstanding concerns among Nairobi's residents and business community — a city of more than five million people whose infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with its growth, whose roads flood seasonally, and whose informal markets remain among the most congested and poorly serviced on the continent.

The ambition is not new. Successive administrations have promised Nairobi transformation, and the gap between announcement and delivery has historically been wide. What distinguishes the current moment is the political urgency that accompanies the promise. The 2027 general election is close enough to feel, and Nairobi — with its dense population, its media scrutiny, and its capacity to shape national political narratives — is a prize that no serious presidential contender can afford to concede.

Ruto appears acutely aware of this. The State House meeting follows a pattern of intensified engagement with key constituencies in recent weeks, and the choice to host Nairobi's broad-based leadership collectively, rather than through separate party channels, reinforces the administration's message that UDA and ODM are functioning as a unified governing force. Whether that message is reaching voters is a different matter.

A Trends and Insights for Africa poll released this month found that 43 per cent of Kenyans oppose the broad-based government arrangement, against 32 per cent who support it. The numbers carry a particular sting in Nyanza, historically ODM's heartland, where 44 per cent of respondents opposed the arrangement and only 38 per cent backed it. For ODM leader Raila Odinga — currently serving as African Union Commission Chairperson — and for the party's domestic leadership, those figures represent a genuine electoral liability. The base that has sustained ODM across five election cycles is sending a signal that its patience with the alliance is not unlimited.

This is the central tension the broad-based government must navigate between now and August 2027. The arrangement delivered political stability after the turbulence of the 2022 post-election period and gave both parties a platform for governance. But stability secured at the top of the political structure does not automatically translate into popular legitimacy at the grassroots. Voters in Kisumu, Siaya and Homa Bay who backed Odinga repeatedly on promises of opposition and change did not mandate their representatives to govern alongside the man their candidate ran against.

The Nairobi development agenda is therefore doing double duty. It is a genuine policy programme — Nairobi's infrastructure deficit is real, its flooding a recurring public health crisis, its road congestion a daily economic drag — and it is a political instrument designed to demonstrate that the broad-based arrangement delivers tangible results for ordinary people. If the housing units are built, the markets upgraded and the roads dualised before the election, the administration will have a material argument to make. If they remain at the level of announced priorities without implementation timelines or confirmed budgets — and Friday's statement specified neither — the optics risk reinforcing the scepticism the polls already capture.

The broader diplomatic context adds another dimension. On Thursday, Ruto hosted more than forty European Union heads of delegation and ambassadors at State House, in engagements marking fifty years of Kenya-EU diplomatic relations. The discussions covered trade, investment, job creation and market access — a signal that the administration is simultaneously pursuing international economic partnerships while managing domestic political consolidation. The two tracks are not unrelated: visible foreign investment in Nairobi's infrastructure would strengthen the government's development narrative considerably.

For ODM's Nairobi leadership, the State House meeting represents a calculated bet — that association with a credible development programme in the capital will outweigh the cost of the alliance's unpopularity in the party's traditional strongholds. It is a bet that grows riskier the closer Kenya gets to polling day, and the TIFA numbers suggest the window for it to pay off is narrowing.

Ruto, for his part, has governed with enough political dexterity to understand that announcements without delivery are a gift to opponents. The question Friday's meeting leaves unanswered — and the question Nairobi's residents will be asking in the months ahead — is not what has been prioritised, but when the first foundation is poured, the first market rebuilt, and the first road widened. In an election year, the gap between a State House communiqué and a construction site is measured not in kilometres but in votes.



**President William Ruto speaking at State House during the hosting of Nairobi UDA and ODM leaders and delegates at State House Nairobi. .PHOTO/@WilliamsRuto/X**

**Court** In a landmark judgment delivered on November 12, 2026, Justice Edward M. Muriithi declined to issue prohibitory orders against state bodies—including the Social Health Authority

# High Court gives state six-month window to finalise AI Law, dismisses bid to halt public sector algorithms



Justice Edward M. Muriithi

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*

By David Kimani

The High Court in Kerugoya has handed the State a critical six-month window to complete its ongoing formulation of a national artificial intelligence policy and legislative framework, while simultaneously dismissing a wide-ranging constitutional petition that sought to immediately halt the deployment of automated algorithmic systems across key public agencies.

In a landmark judgment delivered on November 12, 2026, Justice Edward M. Muriithi declined to issue prohibitory orders against state bodies—including the Social Health Authority (SHA), the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), the Public Service Commission (PSC), and the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA)—ruling that the petitioners had failed to provide concrete proof that existing automated systems had violated constitutional rights. However, in a measured nod to the urgency of digital governance, the court held in abeyance the question of whether the Executive and Parliament have unreasonably delayed in enacting an AI statute, setting a mention date for May 13, 2027, to assess legislative progress.

The constitutional petition, filed by John Wangai, Peter Agoro, and Dr. Antony Manyara, sought to compel the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy and the Principal Secretary for ICT to publish a draft national AI policy and table comprehensive governance legislation within 90 days. The trio argued that the State's failure to establish a dedicated legal framework left Kenyans exposed to algorithmic discrimination, surveillance overreach, election interference, deepfakes, and unfair exclusions from essential public services.

Specifically, the petitioners targeted six high-stakes public sector applications. They asked the court to bar the SHA from using its Proxy Means Testing algorithm to determine household insurance premiums under the Social Health Insurance Fund; restrain KNEC from deploying automated AI marking or grading tools in national examinations; stop the PSC from using algorithmic shortlisting and interviewing tools; halt NTSA's use of smart cameras and AI-linked biometric trackers for instant fines; prohibit the Inspector General of Police and the Ministry of Interior from operating real-time facial recognition CCTV and predictive policing algorithms; and block the Ministry of Education from applying AI-based poverty-scoring models to allocate bursaries, scholarships, school capitation, and Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) funding.

Opposing the suit, the State maintained that Kenya is neither operating in a legal vacuum nor dragging its feet on digital regulation. Through a replying affidavit sworn by ICT Principal Secretary John Tanui, the government outlined a structured, phased roadmap that began with the launch of the Kenya Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2025–2030) in March 2025. This was followed by multi-stakeholder consultation roundtables with academia, civil society, the private sector, and county governments in February 2026, culminating in the publication of the draft National AI and Other Emerging Technologies Policy for public participation on July 21, 2026. The State argued that the draft policy was slated for Cabinet approval before informing an AI and Other Emerging Technologies Bill, rendering the petitioners' demand for a 90-day ultimatum overtaken by events and an intrusion into the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers.

**Existing Safeguards and Evidentiary Gaps**

In his analysis, Justice Muriithi dismantled the petitioners' foundational premise that Kenyan law is entirely silent on automated decision-making. The court pointed directly to Sections 31, 35, and 41 of the Data Protection Act, which explicitly grant individuals the right not to be subjected to decisions based solely on automated processing that produce legal or significant effects. Under the Act, data controllers must conduct mandatory data protection impact assessments for high-risk operations, notify citizens in writing when automated decisions are made, and provide avenues for human reconsideration. Coupled with Article 47 of the Constitution on fair administrative action, the judge noted that robust statutory guardrails already exist, meaning any litigant challenging a specific state algorithm must plead and prove precise violations of those existing laws rather than relying on generalized fears.

The court found stark evidentiary gaps across the petitioners' claims against individual agencies. Regarding the Public Service Commission, CEO Paul Famba swore that all recruitment, shortlisting, and interviewing processes remain strictly manual and human-led—an assertion the petitioners failed to rebut. Similarly, the court noted there was zero evidence that KNEC had deployed or was about to deploy AI marking systems for national exams, nor was any proof presented showing how alleged poverty-scoring models in the Ministry of Education had infringed upon the rights of specific learners or institutions.

The closest scrutiny fell on the Social Health Authority's Proxy Means Testing system, which SHA CEO Dr. Mercy Mwangangi acknowledged is actively used to assess household contributions based on Kenya National Bureau of Statistics household survey datasets. While the petitioners argued the algorithm lacked transparency and human oversight, the court observed that the system is anchored in Section 27 of the Social Health Insurance Act and its accompanying regulations. Notably, internal SHA audit records placed before the court revealed that 20,282 members had appealed their initial algorithmic assessments via the *147# USSD code or the Afya Yangu portal, resulting in downward contribution revisions from a combined Sh58.51 million to Sh54.56 million—a reduction of nearly Sh3.95 million. Justice Muriithi observed that while the successful appeals highlighted initial inaccuracies in the model's assessments, they simultaneously proved that an accessible, functioning human review mechanism exists to correct errors, making a total shutdown of the system disproportionate.

**Respecting the Separation of Powers**

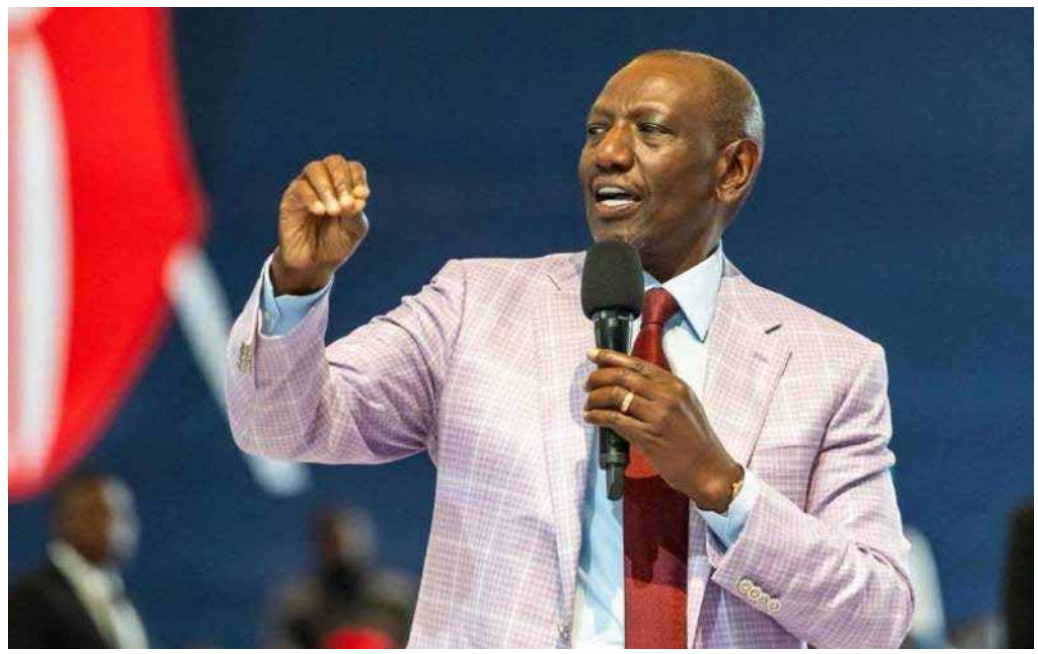
On the broader constitutional question of whether the State had breached its positive obligations under Article 21(2) to enact protective legislation, Justice Muriithi drew on comparative global timelines and constitutional principles. Observing that modern AI governance only gained global momentum over the past five years—citing the European Union's AI Act, which was proposed in 2021, enacted in 2024, and only began taking full effect in August 2026—the judge ruled that Kenya's trajectory from a 2025 strategy to a July 2026 draft policy did not constitute undue delay. Invoking the Supreme Court's jurisprudence on separation of powers and the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles, the court declined to issue a writ of mandamus dictating a 90-day legislative timetable to the Executive and Parliament, emphasizing that courts must not overreach into the core law-making domain of the Legislature while active policy processes are underway.

Even so, Justice Muriithi left the door firmly open for both institutional accountability and individual redress. By holding the legislative delay prayer in abeyance for six months rather than dismissing it outright, the court signalled that judicial patience is finite. Furthermore, the judge explicitly clarified that the dismissal of this broad public interest suit does not bar any individual citizen or group from petitioning the courts for relief if they suffer concrete rights infringements from a state-deployed algorithm. As Kenya navigates the delicate balance between rapid digital transformation and constitutional safeguards, the ball now rests squarely in the court of the Executive and Parliament to translate draft policies into enforceable law before the May 2027 deadline.

**Politics** He called former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua "Bwana Texas," "master of hate," "chief extortionist," "a chronic liar, a conman, a fraud."

# Ruto preaches clean politics, then leads the insults

***The President's Western and Gusii tours exposed a pattern of mockery and name-calling that contradicts his own call for issue-based politics***



President William Ruto

**BY John Thuku Mwangi**
*@themtkenyatimes*

President William Ruto has a well-worn line on the campaign trail: the opposition, he insists, deals in insults, tribalism and hatred while his administration gets on with the work of governing. It is a compelling message. It is also, based on his own recent public appearances, difficult to reconcile with his conduct.

During a four-day tour through Gusii and an earlier swing through Western Kenya, Ruto did not confine himself to roads, hospitals or the cost of living. He called former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua "Bwana Texas," "master of hate," "chief extortionist," "a chronic liar, a conman, a fraud," and compared him to the biblical King Herod. He branded Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka "Mr. 40." He dismissed former President Uhuru Kenyatta as "a broker for selfish ends" who gets his information from bars and drinking dens. He mocked former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i over his weight, telling him publicly to reduce his food portions.

In Nyamira on Sunday 8 November, he opened the Gusii leg not with a development agenda but with ridicule. "Those fellows have already scattered even before 2027 arrives. Have you seen how they are fighting each other?" he told the crowd. "They have no plan, no agenda, no policies, no vision. They are clueless."

He repeated versions of the same line across multiple towns: "clueless about today, planless about tomorrow, visionless about the future." In Busia and Kakamega he boasted: "I told those people they have no agenda for education, roads, electricity or jobs. Their only agenda is Ruto. I will beat them hands down." In Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo, he called them "useless."

The tone was not new. At State House in July, he had already set the template, telling an audience in Kiswahili: "These people have no policies, no vision, no brains at all. I am not a fool — you are the ones without brains."

None of this is to suggest that Ruto's opponents occupy the moral high ground. Opposition leaders have called him Kasongo, Zakayo, Nabii and, more recently, Mr Taxes. The politics of ridicule has never been a one-party affair in Kenya. When both sides reduce public discourse to competitive name-calling, it is ordinary Kenyans — those waiting for lower food prices, functioning hospitals, and credible leadership — who are left to absorb the cost.

What makes Ruto's conduct particularly striking is the explicit standard he has set for everyone else. He does not merely participate in insult politics while staying silent on the subject. He condemns it, repeatedly and loudly, while practising it at every podium. The gap between the sermon and the behaviour is not subtle — it is the central feature of his current political style.

There is an old Swahili observation that captures it precisely: Wanahubiri maji, lakini wanakunywa divai — they preach water, but they drink wine. A leader who demands issue-based politics from rivals while spending four days on the road dispensing nicknames and personal attacks is not setting a standard. He is demonstrating that the standard does not apply to him.

Kenya's political culture will not improve through one-sided demands for civility. It will improve when leaders — beginning with those who hold the highest office — apply to themselves the same expectations they impose on others. The question of who is truly doing the politics of insults has been answered, in Ruto's own words, across Western Kenya and Gusii. The harder question is whether anyone in a position of authority is prepared to stop.






United Alternative Government principals

# She's gone



Another day
Another scream
Another scene
Another case

One more grave
One more funeral
One more orphan

Condolences they say
Justice will be served
These words they've uttered times without number
I'm not certain if they are trying to convince the innocent soul or themselves
There he is coiled in a corner not really understanding what's happening
It's hard to even explain
How do you define death to a three year old ?
He doesn't seem like he wants to be here either
Crowded by strangers that keep walking in and out as if it's some circus
Of course it's a circus
They whisper amongst themselves
No one is bold enough to take a stand
Can't blame them though the police are here
Here to watch like they did many times before
I'm not certain if they are even police officers or morons in which the national uniform hangs on
Minister , Mayor, Councilor they say to the murderer bowing their heads in respect
I'm not certain if they are taking their hats of as a sign of respect to the fallen angel or mockery to the deceased

He did it before , he did it again and he'll keep on doing it
Half a dozen cold bodies have been found under this roof
Politicians are here to mock the people they swore to protect yet they destroy without second thoughts
There it is that smirk , a job well done
He knows he's the Mayor majoring in murder
Who would dare put their head up

Nyasha Celeste Makombe Thee poetic Raindrop

# Big problems don't need more force. They need better strategy



Herculean problems may seem very hurting,
But it's all the strategy that takes out the weeping.

A colossal rock may seem giant at first,
Humans, build tractors, and with energy its bursts!

The tractor did all the heavy lifting,
That planning is what we call strategizing.

The Egyptians build the great pyramid,
How? remains a mystery, our knowledge's limit.

Without a compass, ne'er could we achieve that distant shore.
For the greatest things, are built through greatest toil.

A tough problem, should be first decoded,
'Should be able to understand the logic to act upon.

That is what they do in computer programming,
Or anything at all.

No heavy blow can crack a knotty plight;
'Tis subtle wit that breaks it into light.

K.A.Santhoshi
9 TH STD
GMGHSS KOMARAPALAYAM ,NAMAKKAL DISTRICT ,638183, TAMILNADU.

# Let us cast our pride away



Let Us Leave Our Arrogance Behind

The road of life is not always straight,
Sometimes high, sometimes low our fate.
Our days are few, they quickly fly,
Let us cast our pride aside.

Let the mighty have their fame,
Do not envy wealth or name.
Gossip blinds the heart and mind,
Let us leave such thoughts behind.

Do not envy what others own,
Be grateful for the seeds you've sown.
When chances come to do what's right,
Let kindness be your guiding light.

Ask your friends how they have been,
Call your mother, keep in touch with kin.
If you can, go and lend a hand,
Let love and care throughout the land.

When someone falls ill, we may not know,
Too caught in ourselves, we fail to show.
We never write, nor ask, nor care,
As if their pain were not ours to share.

Even these verses, line by line,
We read, yet miss their deeper sign.
We fail to see what hearts conceal,
Nor know who people truly are.

Let us cast our pride away!

Ishmurodova Jayrona Odilovna was born on May 24, 2008, in Pastdargom District, Samarkand Region, Uzbekistan.

# Say Thank You



Thank you, thank you, thank you all,
Thank you for everything, big and small.

Thank you, Mom and Dad,
For making me happy when I'm sad.
Thank you for your love and care,
And for always being there.

Thank you, teachers, for teaching me,
And helping me learn every day.
You help me when I do not know,
And show me the right way to go.

Thank you, friends, for being kind,
For all the happy times we share.
We play, we laugh, and have fun,
And enjoy our time with everyone.

Thank you, Earth, for being our home,
The place where we live and play.

Thank you, Nature, for trees and flowers,
For rain and sunny hours.

Finally, thank you, God, for everything,
Thank you for this beautiful world.
Thank you for my life each day,
And for being with me all the way.

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

# God is never blind to your tears, never deaf to your prayers, and never silent about your pain.




He sees, He hears, and He will deliver you.
God is great.
Love is God.
I always have hope in my God.
He is always with me.
Whatever you need, ask and pray only to God.

God will give you whatever you need.
You just put your efforts into achieving it.
If you feel pain, you will pray to God, and He will cure your pain. Whatever is meant for you will come to you.
God gives you what is yours.
You should live honestly and confidently.
You should have hope in God.
God is always with you.
Your trust and hope will keep you safe.
So, live with hope and trust in God.
It will lead you to success.

__ G.YasminSirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt

# God Is Never Blind To Tears And Deaf To Prayers. He Sees, Hears And Delivers



He is unique. His ways are special.
Nothing goes out of His mind,
All happens only by His wish.
He sees and hears and watches.
Better not to underestimate His powers
Adjust to all the circumstances,
His will wish and way will be done.
Always, it is good for all,
Our wish will not end up well.

He is merciful, kind and gentle.
He is moved by the broken heart and tears,
He understands the pulse of a heavy heart,
He knows our tears and fears.
When we are weak and tired,
God hears our silent voice,
Our soft voice is heard by Him,
He wipes out away our tears.

Just keep your full trust in Him,
No more fears and tears,
Because He understands our painful and hurt heart.
Trust only in Him,
When you are low, broken and grey,
He lifts us up on His tender shoulder.

Brinda. D
Creative writers
GHS Melpattampakkam
Cuddalore dist
Tamilnadu India

**Honorary** This prestigious recognition celebrates Dr Khaminwa's remarkable legal career spanning over six decades and his enduring contribution to the advancement of constitutional accountability

# Khaminwa to receive Kenya's historic first honorary degree from Kaimosi Friends University

The veteran advocate's six decades of constitutional battles earn him an honour that marks a milestone for both the man and the institution

**BY Joyce Nekesa**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Veteran Kenyan lawyer Dr John Mugalasinga Khaminwa**

Kaimosi Friends University will confer its first-ever honorary degree on veteran Kenyan lawyer Dr John Mugalasinga Khaminwa during its fifth graduation ceremony on Friday, 20 November 2026, recognising more than six decades of distinguished service to constitutional law, justice and the rule of law in Kenya and beyond.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, will be awarded at the university's Graduation Square in a ceremony the institution has described as a historic milestone — one that elevates this year's graduation beyond the conferment of academic qualifications into a moment of institutional and national significance.

"This prestigious recognition celebrates Dr Khaminwa's remarkable legal career spanning over six decades and his enduring contribution to the advancement of constitutional accountability, justice and the rule of law in Kenya and beyond," the university said in a statement issued on Friday, 13 November. It invited both the Kenyan public and the international community to attend, calling Khaminwa "a remarkable legal luminary."

Khaminwa's career is, by any measure, extraordinary. Admitted to the bar in an era when Kenya's legal and political landscape was being shaped by the upheavals of early independence and later by the consolidation of one-party rule, he emerged as one of the most persistent and consequential advocates of constitutional accountability the country has produced. Across six decades, he appeared in landmark cases touching on governance, individual rights and the limits of state power — often at personal and professional cost, during periods when such advocacy carried genuine risk.

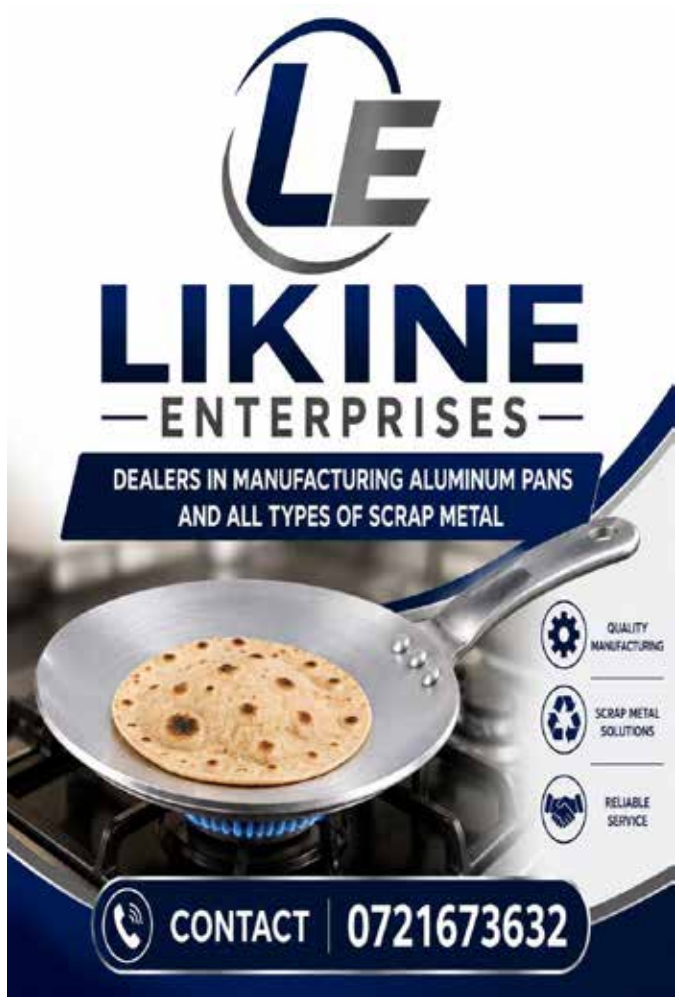
His association with high-profile public interest litigation placed him repeatedly at the intersection of law and politics, defending constitutional principles at moments when those principles were under direct pressure. That record — built not over a few celebrated cases but over a continuous professional lifetime — forms the foundation of the recognition Kaimosi Friends University now bestows.

The timing of the award carries additional resonance. Kenya is approaching a general election in August 2027, a period in which questions of constitutional integrity, judicial independence and the rule of law will once again move to the centre of national debate. Honouring a lawyer whose career has been defined by precisely those concerns sends a signal about the values an institution of higher learning chooses to elevate at a consequential moment.

For Kaimosi Friends University, the award represents its own milestone. Conferring an honorary degree for the first time in its history is an institutional coming-of-age — a declaration that the university sees itself not merely as a provider of qualifications but as a participant in the broader life of the society it serves.

When Khaminwa takes to the Graduation Square on Friday, he will carry with him the weight of a legal career that few in Kenya's history can match — and an honour that, for both recipient and institution, signals that some contributions to justice are too significant to go formally unremarked.






**Education** **According to Muoria, such innovations demonstrate the importance of linking research with practical skills, production and entrepreneurship.**

# Koskei, Muoria Challenge TVET Institutions to turn research into practical solutions

**BY Elizabeth Angira**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Principal Secretary for TVET Dr Esther Muoria has challenged institutional leaders to ensure that investments in training, research and technology deliver measurable results and contribute to the country's development agenda. |** *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira




**International Multidisciplinary Research Conference at Kisii National Polytechnic. |** *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions have been challenged to translate research and innovations into practical solutions that address societal challenges, create jobs and boost economic development.

Speaking during the 3rd International Multidisciplinary Research Conference at Kisii National Polytechnic, Principal Secretary for TVET Dr Esther Muoria said research should go beyond academic publications and presentations to deliver solutions that can be implemented and commercialised.

Muoria said the conferences provide an important platform for learners, researchers, academicians and technical institutions to exchange ideas, identify challenges and develop innovations that respond to the country's needs.

She emphasised the need for stronger collaboration between research institutions, policymakers, Parliament, county governments and industry players to ensure research findings reach the communities and people who need them most.

"Research should not continue to remain on the shelves. We must translate our findings into practical solutions and involve everybody, from policymakers and parliamentarians to industries and communities, so that we can have end-to-end solutions for this country," she said.

Muoria cited agriculture as one of the sectors where research can make a significant contribution to food security, noting that findings from universities and technical institutions should be translated into practical knowledge that farmers can apply to improve production

She also highlighted innovations emerging from TVET institutions, including the development of a cooking stove that uses waste oil, demonstrating how learners can transform locally available materials into practical solutions.

According to Muoria, such innovations demonstrate the importance of linking research with practical skills, production and entrepreneurship.

She further called on institutions to work closely with the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) to patent their innovations and protect young innovators from having their ideas copied or exploited without recognition.

The PS urged researchers to make their conferences more inclusive by bringing together scientists, young innovators, farmers, manufacturers, small and medium-sized enterprises and other industry players.

She said research findings should be communicated in language that ordinary people can understand and apply, rather than being confined to complicated academic presentations.

Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service Felix Koskei also challenged researchers and technical institutions to make their conferences more inclusive by involving decision-makers, politicians, consumers, industry players and other stakeholders.

Koskei said researchers should move beyond presenting findings to fellow academics and deliberately engage people responsible for making policies, allocating resources and implementing proposed solutions.

He urged institutions to make their research discussions relevant to ordinary citizens, noting that involving policymakers and Parliament could help secure the support and resources needed to implement promising innovations.

Koskei also emphasised the importance of succession management in research and innovation, urging senior researchers and professors to mentor young innovators instead of limiting their opportunities.

In her remarks, Muoria linked the conference theme, Science, Technology, Innovation and Future Green Jobs, to the objectives of Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), which seeks to equip learners with practical skills to solve problems, develop innovations and create economic opportunities.

She said TVET institutions must ensure that research produces solutions that benefit society while creating opportunities for commercialisation.

Muoria noted that the Government's green TVET agenda was already delivering results, with 91 TVET institutions having adopted solar energy solutions, reducing electricity costs by approximately 50 per cent.

She said institutions were also embracing renewable energy, waste management and resource efficiency as part of efforts to integrate green competencies into training programmes.

Muoria commended Kisii National Polytechnic, researchers, innovators and trainees for participating in the conference, urging them to ensure that its outcomes translate into practical projects, enterprises, employment opportunities and economic value.

She challenged institutional leaders to ensure that investments in training, research and technology deliver measurable results and contribute to the country's development agenda.



**Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service Felix Koskei speaking during the conference has challenged researchers and technical institutions to make their conferences more inclusive. |** *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira



**Researchers. |** *Photo:* Elizabeth Angira

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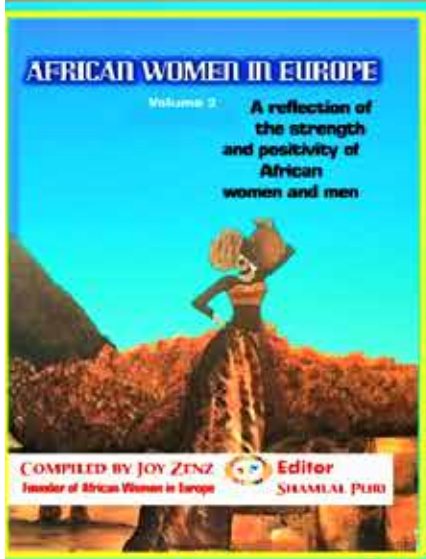
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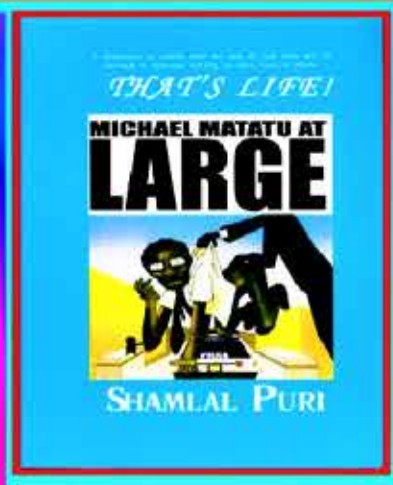
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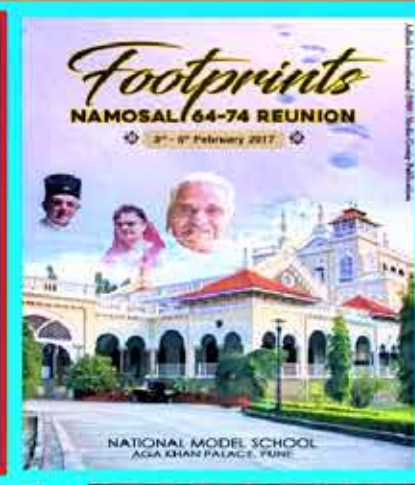
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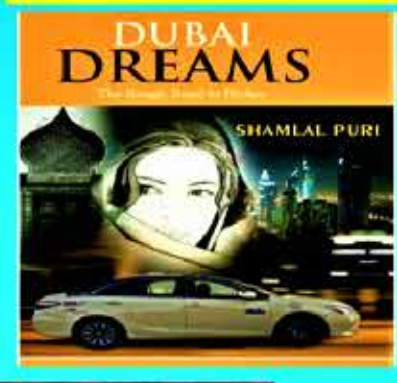


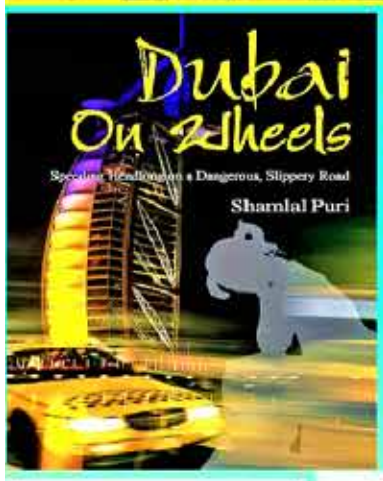


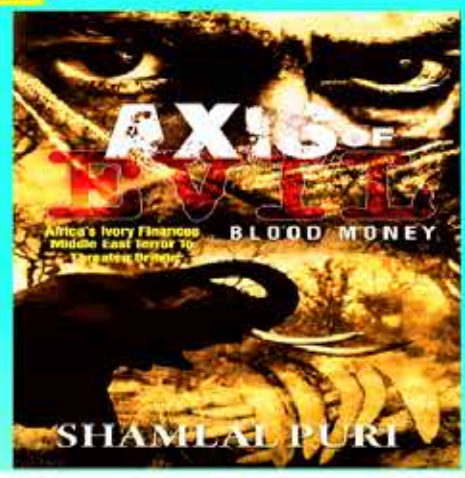


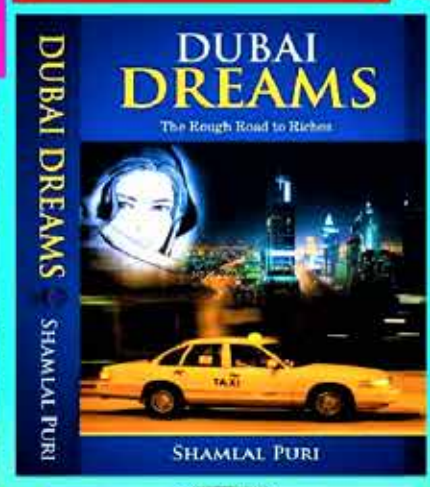




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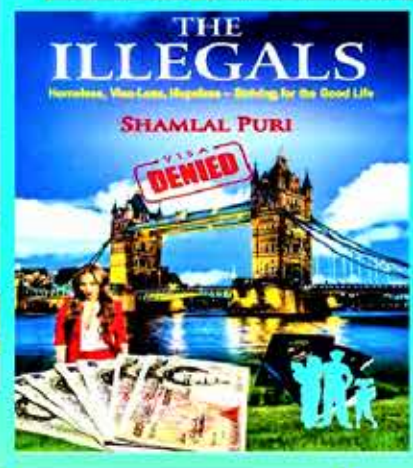


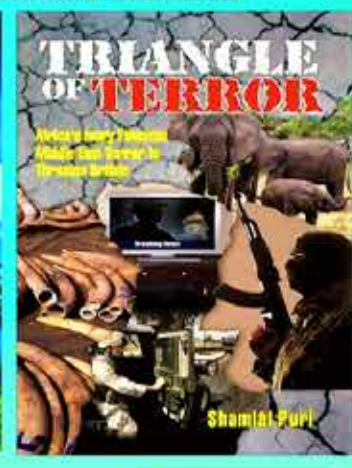



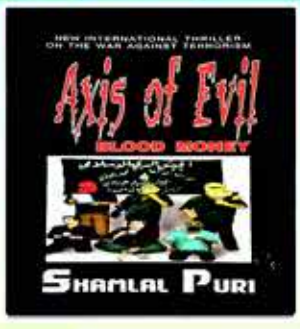




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**Health** **According to the DSM-5-TR (2022), PTSD is characterised by four clusters. The first is intrusion — the event returns uninvited through nightmares, flashbacks, or sudden images.**

# The wound that keeps happening: Trauma and PTSD across Kenya

## *Kenya's trauma crisis cuts across city and village alike — and the healing must be just as broad*



**By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi**
*@themtkenyatimes*




Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder remain among the most misunderstood and under-addressed health challenges across Kenya, touching lives in villages and cities, schools and hospitals, boda stages and corporate offices in ways that conventional wisdom has long failed to recognise. There is a strange paradox in how Kenyans talk about pain. The common refrain is "it happened, let it go," yet letting go feels impossible for a great many people. Resilience is praised and those who move on quickly are admired, but rarely does anyone ask what moving on actually costs the body. The truth is uncomfortable, though necessary: some events do not end when they end. They continue inside the nervous system, in sleep, in memory, and in the way a person reacts to ordinary sounds, long after the danger has passed.

That continuation has a name. It is trauma — and when it persists, it can become Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. To speak clearly about it, two terms that are routinely confused in everyday conversation must be separated. Trauma is the event, or series of events, that overwhelms a person's capacity to cope. PTSD is what happens when the mind and body remain stuck in survival mode after the danger has passed. Trauma is what happened. PTSD is what remains.

According to the DSM-5-TR (2022), PTSD is characterised by four clusters. The first is intrusion — the event returns uninvited through nightmares, flashbacks, or sudden images. The second is avoidance — the person steers clear of places, people, or conversations that carry reminders of the event. The third is negative changes in mood and thought, in which the person begins to believe: "I am broken," or "The world is unsafe." The fourth is hyperarousal, in which the body remains permanently on alert, causing the person to startle easily, sleep poorly, and react with disproportionate anger.

The World Health Organisation (2023) estimates that a significant proportion of people who experience traumatic events will develop prolonged distress, particularly when they receive no support. Judith Herman (1992), in her foundational work on trauma, argued that it destroys three things: safety, trust, and control. Bessel van der Kolk (2014) added a crucial insight: the body keeps the score. Trauma is not stored only in the mind but also in the nervous system, the muscles, the breath, and the sleep cycle. That is why telling someone to "forget it" rarely works and often deepens shame instead. The body does not forget on command. It heals because it learns, slowly, that it is safe again.

> **According to the DSM-5-TR (2022), PTSD is characterised by four clusters. The first is intrusion — the event returns uninvited through nightmares, flashbacks, or sudden images. The second is avoidance — the person steers clear of places, people, or conversations that carry reminders of the event. The third is negative changes in mood and thought, in which the person begins to believe: "I am broken," or "The world is unsafe." The fourth is hyperarousal, in which the body remains permanently on alert, causing the person to startle easily, sleep poorly, and react with disproportionate anger.**

The fieldwork underpinning this series was conducted through sessions in Nyeri and Nairobi in 2025, yet the pattern that emerged is Kenyan in its scope. It appears in villages and cities, classrooms and hospitals, on boda stages and in offices. A driver in Nairobi who flinches at every horn, a nurse in Kisumu who dreads night duty, a student in Meru who freezes when a teacher raises his voice, and a mother in Tharaka Nithi who avoids a room that holds a painful memory are not experiencing different conditions. They are experiencing the same condition in different settings.

This changes how behaviour across Kenya ought to be interpreted. A child who freezes in class may not be stubborn but triggered. A driver who avoids a certain road may not be cowardly but protecting himself from a flashback. A colleague who becomes angry quickly may not be rude but hypervigilant, her body still scanning for danger. When these signs are understood, the question shifts from "What is wrong with you?" to a better one: "What happened to you, and what do you need to feel safe again?"

That second question is where healing begins — whether in a village church hall, a school staffroom, or a counselling office in Nairobi. Healing does not begin with retelling the worst moment. It begins with safety, because trauma therapy must always establish safety before it touches memory.

In the rural listening circles documented during this research, grounding proved to be the most immediate way back to the present. When a memory surged, participants learned to plant both feet on the floor, then name five things they could see, four they could touch, three they could hear, two they could smell, and one they could taste. The exercise did not erase the memory, but it quietened the body and reminded the person that the event was over.

Once the body felt steadier, the mind could be examined more gently. Through Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, participants began to notice thoughts such as "I am going to die every time I travel" and to test them against wider experience. The thought was understandable, though not fully accurate — they had travelled safely many times before and after the event. Over time, it softened into a more balanced belief: "Travel carries risk, but I can travel carefully and stop when I feel overwhelmed."

What remained after that was the story itself, and it needed a safe place to be told. In narrative work, participants shared their experiences in parts, not all at once, and in the language in which the pain was suffered — whether Kikuyu, Embu, Meru, Kiswahili, or English. When a story is held by a listening group, it loses some of its power, because the person is no longer alone inside it. Woven through all of this was self-compassion, which is often absent from Kenyan healing, whether rural or urban. Instead of "I am weak because I cannot forget," participants learned to say: "I survived something hard, and my body is still learning that I am safe."

None of these approaches promises forgetting. They promise something more honest: remembering without reliving. That distinction matters for all of Kenya. Although the Mental Health Act (2022) provides for community-based care, and the Kenya Mental Health Policy (2015–2030) calls for its integration into primary health care, most dispensaries — whether in the Mt Kenya region or in Nairobi's informal settlements — still have no screening tools for trauma. Most schools have no teacher trained in trauma-informed care. The work therefore falls to counsellors, pastors, chiefs, teachers, and community health promoters, who must be equipped not as therapists but as first responders: people who can listen without forcing disclosure, ground without judging, and refer without shaming.

Trauma is not a sign that a person is broken. It is a sign that a person survived something that was too much, too fast, and too alone. The examples here are drawn from rural settings because that is where the research was conducted, but the wound is Kenyan — and the healing must be Kenyan too. When safety, language, and patient listening are offered, the body slowly learns what the mind already knows: the event is over, the present is here, and life — though changed — can continue.

**Teacher** Beyond instruction, teacher assistants are central to classroom management. Disruptions — however minor — erode instructional time and dilute focus

# Teacher assistants: The unsung force multipliers in Kenya's classrooms

***As CBC demands more personalised teaching, the case for properly integrating teacher assistants has never been stronger***

**BY Ashford Kimani**
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Teacher assistants occupy one of the most strategically important yet persistently undervalued positions in Kenya's education system. In an era of curriculum reform, rising learner diversity and growing pressure to deliver measurable outcomes, the model of a single teacher managing all instructional, administrative and pastoral responsibilities is no longer sustainable. Teacher assistants are not support staff in the marginal sense — they are force multipliers who extend the reach, precision and effectiveness of teaching itself.

At the instructional level, their role is decisive. Modern classrooms are heterogeneous by design. Learners differ in ability, pace, language proficiency, motivation and socio-emotional readiness. A teacher may construct a well-structured lesson, but its success depends on how effectively it is differentiated in real time. Teacher assistants make that differentiation possible. They facilitate small-group instruction, provide targeted remediation and reinforce key concepts for learners who need additional support — ensuring that the lesson reaches the full spectrum of abilities, not merely the median student.

This matters most in foundational learning. Early-grade literacy and numeracy demand constant engagement, immediate feedback and repetitive practice — conditions that are difficult to sustain in overcrowded classrooms. A teacher assistant who sits with a struggling reader, guides phonemic awareness and corrects errors in the moment delivers interventions that accumulate significantly over time, narrowing long-term academic gaps before they become permanent.

Beyond instruction, teacher assistants are central to classroom management. Disruptions — however minor — erode instructional time and dilute focus. Teacher assistants help maintain order by managing transitions, reinforcing behavioural expectations and addressing minor incidents before they escalate. Their presence keeps the teacher anchored in instruction rather than pulled repeatedly into discipline. The result is a more efficient use of time and a more conducive learning environment for everyone.

In inclusive education settings, their value is even more pronounced. Integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms demands individualised support, adaptive strategies and continuous monitoring — not merely physical placement. Teacher assistants frequently provide this layer, assisting with mobility, adapting materials and delivering one-on-one guidance aligned with individualised education plans. Without them, inclusion risks remaining aspirational rather than operational.

Their contribution to learners' socio-emotional well-being is equally significant and often overlooked. Teacher assistants tend to occupy an accessible position within the classroom hierarchy. Learners who hesitate to engage directly with the teacher often find it easier to open up to an assistant. That relational proximity enables early identification of anxiety, bullying or disengagement — factors that are not peripheral to learning but foundational to it. A learner who feels seen and secure is far more likely to engage meaningfully with academic content.

From an institutional standpoint, teacher assistants enhance overall system efficiency. When teachers are overburdened with administrative and logistical tasks — organising materials, tracking assignments, managing records — instructional quality suffers. Teacher assistants absorb many of these responsibilities, freeing teachers to concentrate on lesson design, differentiated instruction and assessment feedback. In systems increasingly driven by data and outcomes, this division of labour is essential rather than optional.

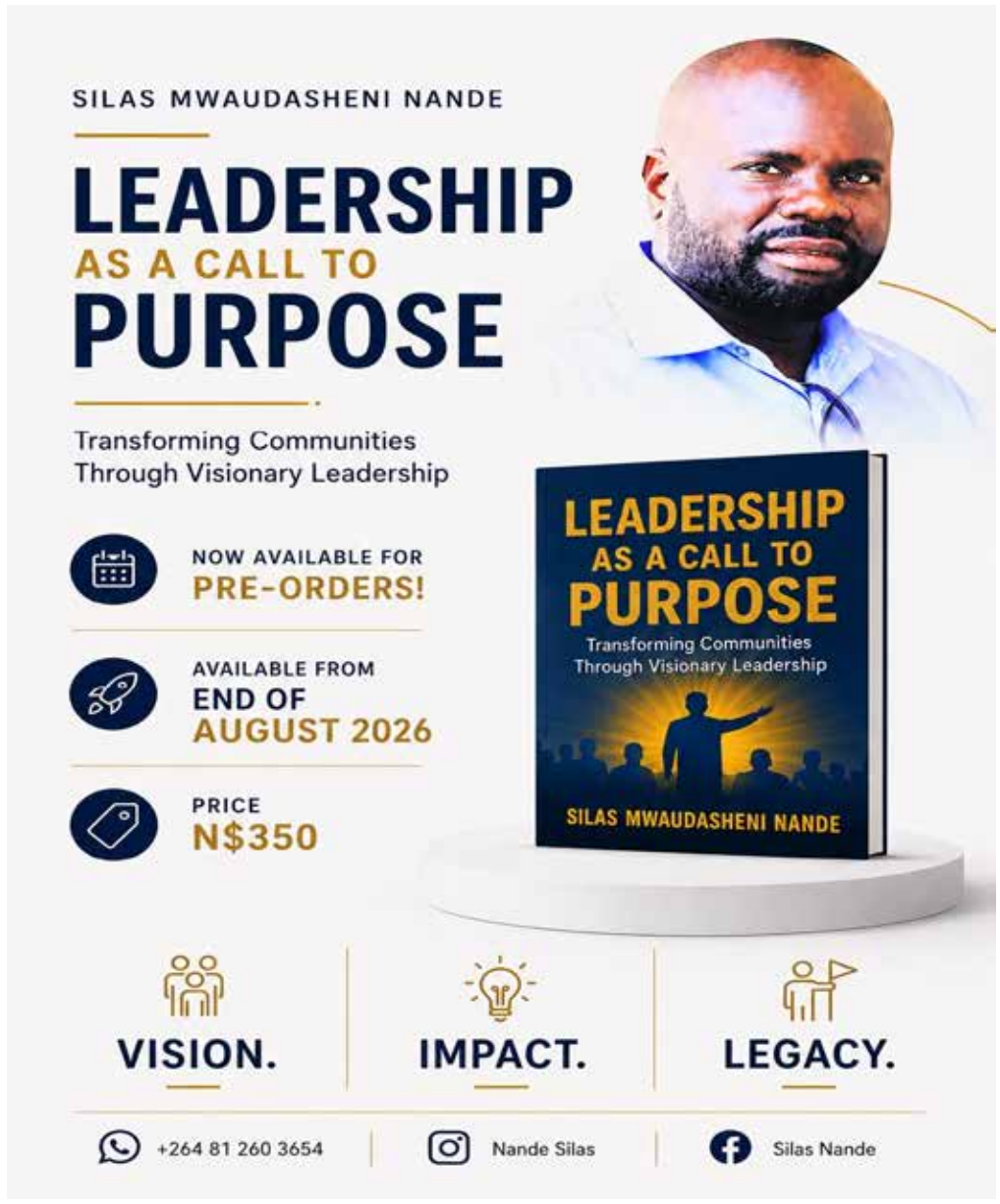
The impact of teacher assistants is not, however, automatic. It is contingent on how they are integrated. In too many contexts, they are treated as informal aides with ambiguous roles and no meaningful professional development. Clear role definitions, structured collaboration with lead teachers and access to ongoing training are preconditions for effectiveness. Teacher assistants should participate in lesson planning, assessment reviews and professional learning communities. Positioned as co-educators rather than peripheral helpers, their contribution becomes transformative.

There is also a broader workforce implication. Teacher assistants represent a strategic pipeline into the profession. With proper mentoring and structured certification pathways, they can transition into fully qualified teachers — bringing with them practical classroom experience that formal training alone cannot replicate. It is a model that strengthens both the quality and sustainability of the education workforce.

In the Kenyan context, this argument is especially urgent. The Competency-Based Curriculum demands personalised, skills-oriented teaching, continuous assessment and learner-centred pedagogy. These goals require time, attention and individualised support — resources that are chronically stretched in public school settings. Teacher assistants offer a pragmatic solution, expanding instructional capacity without requiring an immediate structural overhaul.

The question is no longer whether teacher assistants are useful. Evidence from classrooms consistently shows they are integral to bridging the gap between policy intent and classroom reality. They extend the teacher's reach, deepen learner engagement and make inclusion genuinely operational.

Investing in teacher assistants is not an optional enhancement. It is a strategic imperative. Education systems that continue to treat them as peripheral will struggle to meet the demands of modern learning. Those that integrate them effectively will unlock one of the most powerful and underused levers available for improving both equity and excellence in Kenyan education.



**CHINA** **The timing is commercially significant. A 2025 study published in The Lancet projected that the number of overweight or obese adults in China could reach 630 million by 2050**

# China approves first oral GLP-1 weight-loss pill in blow to injectable market

## *Eli Lilly's orforglipron offers a needle-free alternative as China's obesity crisis deepens and pharmaceutical competition intensifies*

**BY Yvonne Wambui**
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China has approved its first orally administered GLP-1 weight-loss drug, marking a significant shift in the global obesity treatment landscape and handing American pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly a potentially decisive edge over its rivals in one of the world's most consequential health markets.

The drug, orforglipron, works by mimicking a natural hormone that regulates blood sugar, slows digestion and suppresses appetite, helping patients feel full for longer and consume less. Unlike the injectable GLP-1 treatments that have dominated the weight-loss market — most notably Novo Nordisk's Wegovy — orforglipron is taken as a daily pill, removing the barrier of needle-based administration that has deterred a significant proportion of patients from pursuing treatment.



China's National Medical Products Administration approved the drug for adults living with obesity or those who are overweight and have at least one weight-related health condition. Patients are expected to use it alongside dietary control and increased physical activity rather than as a standalone solution.

The timing is commercially significant. A 2025 study published in The Lancet projected that the number of overweight or obese adults in China could reach 630 million by 2050. China's own health authorities have warned that more than 65 per cent of the population could be overweight or obese by 2030. For pharmaceutical companies, those figures represent an enormous and largely underpenetrated market.

The approval deals a direct competitive blow to Novo Nordisk, which has been pursuing clearance for its own oral weight-loss medication in China. Eli Lilly's first-mover advantage in the oral segment could prove difficult to overcome, particularly given patient preference for pill-based treatments over injections.

The broader pharmaceutical industry is watching closely. Orforglipron's approval signals a new phase in obesity pharmacology — one in which convenience, accessibility and patient compliance become as important as clinical efficacy. If the pill format drives higher uptake, it could accelerate the shift away from injectables across other major markets as well.

Health experts, however, urge caution. GLP-1 medications carry known side effects, including nausea, vomiting and digestive complications, and require medical supervision throughout treatment. Approval marks the beginning of a drug's public life, not an endorsement for unsupervised use.

For the millions of patients who have avoided treatment because of needle aversion, the pill may finally change the calculation.

**Turkey** **Istanbul's literary community gathered to honour one of contemporary Uyghur literature's most distinguished voices**

# Winds of East Turkestan blow in Istanbul: A tribute to Uyghur poet Abduşükür Muhammet Kumtur

**BY Shafiga Rahimli**
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Abduşükür Muhammet Kumtur, one of the most distinguished figures in contemporary Uyghur literature, was honoured in Istanbul on Saturday in a tribute programme that brought together poets, academics and intellectuals from across the Turkic world under one roof.

The event, held on 7 November at the Istanbul Branch of the Writers Union of Turkey, was jointly organised by the branch and the East Turkestan Foundation. Hosted by Mustafa Durmaz, it opened with welcoming addresses from Mahmut Bıyıklı, president of the TYB Istanbul Branch, and Prof. Abdulhamit Avşar, president of the East Turkestan Foundation. Both speakers framed the occasion as more than a literary celebration — transferring national memory, shared culture and literary heritage to future generations, they said, is a historical responsibility.

The academic centrepiece of the programme was delivered by Prof. Terane Turan Rehimli, a poet, writer and scholar of the Turkic world, who presented a paper titled "Fatherland, National Memory, and Identity in the Creativity of Abduşükür Muhammed Kumtur." Her analysis offered a detailed and nuanced reading of Kumtur's poetry, tracing the profound tragic themes that run through his work — exile, forced migration and the struggle to preserve national identity in a rapidly globalising world.

Rehimli argued that the concept of fatherland in Uyghur poetry extends well beyond physical geography, becoming instead a symbolic fortress of collective identity and cultural survival. She drew compelling comparisons between Kumtur's poetic world and the work of monumental Turkic literary figures including Chingiz Aitmatov, Cengiz Dağcı and Bahtiyar Vahapzade, highlighting the deep typological and emotional bonds that connect them across borders and generations. At the audience's request, she closed her contribution by reciting her own poem, "The Battle of Gallipoli," which moved many in the hall.

Kumtur himself then took the stage, sharing reflections on his artistic journey and reading selections from his own poetry. His words carried the quiet weight of a writer who has spent decades keeping alive the memory of a homeland under pressure. He spoke of the pride he takes in his Uyghur identity, the nourishment he draws from his people's traditions and the sense of purpose that drives his writing — to serve the cause of East Turkestan and ensure that awareness of its culture and history does not fade.

The programme concluded with a concert of traditional Uyghur music performed by East Turkestani artists Dr. Gülzade Tanrıdağlı, Kaharjan and Rustam Niyazov, whose selections carried the audience from the literary into the musical dimensions of Uyghur heritage. The performance included an excerpt from the "Tomur Halipa" epic, a piece that resonated with particular power given the evening's themes of memory, identity and endurance.

The East Turkestan Foundation and the TYB Istanbul Branch expressed their gratitude to all who contributed — a gathering that demonstrated, with quiet eloquence, that culture remains one of the most resilient forms of resistance a people can sustain.




**Poster of the literary event**




**Abduşükür Muhammed Qumtur, President of the World Uyghur Writers Union**



**Following the event on the creative works of Abduşükür Muhammed Qumtur, organized by the Writers' Union of Turkey and the East Turkestan Foundation**

# STUDENTS CORNER

## HELB is failing Kenya's students

By **Jackline Kamathi**




Kenya's Higher Education Loans Board is failing the students it was created to serve. Across universities nationwide, young Kenyans are missing examinations, deferring registration, and dropping out — not because they lack ability, but because government financial support arrives late, falls short, or both.

The problem is structural. HELB disbursements routinely fail to cover tuition, accommodation, food, transport, and learning materials. For students from low-income households — those with no alternative safety net — an underfunded or delayed loan is not an inconvenience. It is the difference between continuing and quitting.

The funding allocation process compounds the problem. Many students feel the amounts awarded bear little relation to their actual financial circumstances. The appeals mechanism, where one exists at all, is slow, opaque, and inaccessible to those who most need it.

The remedies are not complicated. HELB should disburse funds before the academic term begins, not during it. Allocation criteria must reflect genuine household circumstances, not bureaucratic approximations. Appeals must be resolved within defined timescales, with clear written explanations. Universities, HELB, and the relevant ministries should build a single, transparent tracking system through which students can monitor applications and lodge complaints without navigating multiple offices.

Education policy is only as good as its implementation. Kenya cannot claim to invest in its youth while allowing a broken disbursement system to push deserving students off campus. Fix HELB — or concede that the promise of equal opportunity is hollow.

## Leadership is about improving what exists, not just creating what's new

By **Lewis Murangiri**




Eric Nderitu, chairman at Nakuru Golf Club, offers a leadership philosophy that cuts against the grain of conventional thinking: innovation rarely means inventing from scratch. More often, it means seeing what exists and making it better.

Nderitu illustrates the point with a simple example — a metallic round bin. The original designer may not have perfected it, but that imperfection is not a failure. It is an opening. Change the shape, vary the materials, improve the function. The lesson is transferable well beyond product design: a leader's first instinct should not be to dismiss an idea but to ask how it can be strengthened.

That principle applies with equal force to student governance. Bresdone, a Communication and Media student at Laikipia University, has taken it into the arena of campus elections. His campaign is built not on spectacle but on engagement — listening to fellow students, articulating their concerns and committing to represent them with accountability rather than ambition.

Student leadership is too often mistaken for a title. In practice, it is a responsibility. Students expect leaders who will carry their challenges into the right rooms, defend their interests without fear and create an environment where every voice is taken seriously. A student representative who treats the role as a personal achievement has already failed the people who elected him.

Whether in a golf club boardroom or a university senate, the standard is the same: lead with vision, build on what exists, and never confuse the office with the purpose.

## Kenya's politics addiction is costing the country its future

By **Daniel Maina**



Kenya is a nation held hostage by its own politics. Elections end and the next campaign begins immediately — five years of governing compressed into an endless cycle of rallies, insults and tribal mobilisation, with no room left for the work of actually running a country.

A year from the 2027 general election, the temperature is already dangerous. This week alone, the country's most prominent politicians spent their time trading abuse, coining nicknames and inflaming ethnic sentiment. The opposition's offer to Kenya amounts to "Wantam" and "must go" — noise without strategy, grievance without remedy. Those in government are little better: they govern as though they are still in opposition, cataloguing the failures of previous administrations while ignoring the machinery they have held for years.

Meanwhile, Kenya bleeds. Core sectors are struggling. Investors are relocating to Kigali and Addis Ababa, cities that have quietly surpassed Nairobi as regional destinations of choice. Sixty years after independence, Kenya — a country with resources, talent and genuine potential — remains dependent on external aid.

Politicians bear the larger share of blame, but citizens are not innocent. It is Kenyans who fill the rallies, defend rogue leaders and reward performance politics over tangible delivery. The demand for sober, idea-led governance must come from the electorate before it will come from the podium.

Kenya's forefathers did not fight for this. The Singapore they are being promised already exists — just not here. Not yet.

## Entertainment is not a luxury — it is essential

By **Gift Teresa**




Entertainment is routinely dismissed as trivial — a distraction from more serious concerns. That framing is wrong, and the evidence of daily life across Kenya's cities makes the case plainly. In an era of economic pressure, urban congestion and widespread anxiety, the ability to switch off, laugh, connect and create is not indulgence. It is necessity.

The forms entertainment takes are as varied as the people who seek it. Television remains a fixture in most homes, delivering news, drama and cultural programming. Music — from the first song of the morning — sets a mental tone that carries through the day. Streaming platforms, YouTube, and social media have expanded access dramatically, putting a vast range of content within reach of anyone with a smartphone. Reading, often overlooked in this conversation, sharpens vocabulary, broadens perspective and delivers sustained mental engagement that passive viewing cannot replicate.

The social and economic dimensions are equally significant. Shared entertainment — a film, a concert, a live match — creates the conditions for human connection that urban isolation increasingly erodes. Beyond the audience, the entertainment industry sustains livelihoods for musicians, actors, writers, producers and the broader creative economy that supports them.

The argument that entertainment is a luxury belongs to another era. Stress that goes unrelieved damages health, productivity and relationships. A society that creates no space for joy, rest and creative expression will eventually pay for that omission in ways far more costly than a cinema ticket.

Entertainment is not escapism. It is infrastructure.




Sports >> *The former midfielder reflects on the privilege of managing the club he loves — and vows to remain a supporter for life

# Carrick pens emotional farewell to United fans after spell in charge

By **Pascal Okoth**

Michael Carrick has written a heartfelt farewell letter to Manchester United supporters, expressing deep gratitude for the opportunity to manage one of football's most storied institutions and reaffirming a lifelong bond with the club that defined his playing career.

In the lengthy and personal message addressed directly to United fans, Carrick described leading the Old Trafford side as a privilege that very few people are fortunate enough to experience. For a man who gave so much of his career to the club as a player, stepping into the dugout — even temporarily — carried a weight of meaning that went well beyond tactics and results.

"Manchester United is different," Carrick made clear throughout the letter, and not simply because of its size or its trophy cabinet. He spoke of the club's history, traditions and values as something that everyone associated with it must understand, respect and actively protect. Winning matters at Old Trafford, but so does the manner in which the club conducts itself — and Carrick appeared acutely conscious of that responsibility throughout his time in charge.

His words for the supporters were among the most moving in the letter. He described United fans as a unique and extraordinary group, whose loyalty never wavered even when results made it difficult to remain positive. He recalled the moments when supporters celebrated victories and left the stadium already looking forward to the next match — and admitted that giving them something to cheer about was among the strongest motivations he carried into every game.

That the results did not always meet expectations made their continued support all the more meaningful to him. Carrick acknowledged the difficult periods with honesty, without deflection or excuse, and his appreciation for the fans who stayed with him through those moments came across as entirely genuine.



*Michael Carrick*

He also took care to honour the people whose work rarely attracts public recognition. His coaching staff received warm and specific praise — their dedication, professionalism and loyalty, he said, made his experience richer and more meaningful. The club's behind-the-scenes employees, whose contributions are largely invisible to supporters watching from the stands or at home, were acknowledged with equal sincerity. It was the gesture of someone who understood that a football club is built by far more people than those whose names appear in the matchday programme.

To the players, Carrick offered thanks for the memories they created together and genuine good wishes for their futures. He made clear that whatever path his own career takes next, he will continue to follow their progress and cheer on the team.

The most emotionally resonant passage of the letter came when Carrick addressed his future relationship with the club. He did not speak of potential returns, future roles or managerial ambitions. He spoke simply and directly: Manchester United has shaped his life in ways that cannot be undone, and his affection for the institution will not diminish with distance or time. He will watch from the sidelines, support from afar, and remain — in his own words — an ordinary supporter.

That framing says something important about Carrick as a person. In a sport where departures are often accompanied by bitterness, legal disputes or pointed silences, his farewell was generous, gracious and entirely free of grievance. He leaves with the kind of dignity that is increasingly rare in professional football, and with a reputation that his time in the dugout, whatever its results, has not diminished.

For United supporters, the letter is a reminder of what Carrick has represented across two decades at the club — first as a composed and intelligent midfielder who anchored some of the most successful sides in the club's modern history, and later as a coach who stepped forward in a moment of genuine need and steadied the ship with quiet authority.

Football is ultimately a game of numbers — results, league positions, trophies won and lost. But Carrick's farewell letter made the case, eloquently and without sentimentality, for something that the numbers cannot capture: the relationship between a person and the club they love, which endures long after the final whistle has blown.

His association with Manchester United, he made plain, will never truly end.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** ***The Azzurri overturned an early deficit to beat France 3–1 and go top of Nations League Group A1 with one round remaining**

# San Siro redemption: Italy end 64-year wait to hand Zidane first defeat



By **Andalo Christine Ingutia**

Italy produced a memorable night at the San Siro on Thursday, overturning an early deficit to beat France 3–1 in the UEFA Nations League and record their first home victory over Les Bleus in 64 years — while handing Zinedine Zidane his first defeat as France head coach in the process.

The Azzurri move top of Group A1 on ten points, level with France but ahead on the head-to-head tiebreaker, with Belgium one point behind and the race for the quarter-finals still very much alive.

France needed just ten minutes to silence the home crowd when Michael Olise capitalised on a costly error by goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma to put the visitors ahead. Italy, however, responded with composure rather than panic. In the 26th minute, Nicolò Cambiaghi drove down the left and delivered a perfectly weighted ball into the box for Pio Esposito, who finished calmly to level. The San Siro roared back to life and Italy grew visibly in confidence as the half progressed.

The second period was intense from the outset. France threatened to regain the lead, only for Rayan Cherki's effort to strike the woodwork. Italy were then given the chance to take control in the 60th minute when Malo Gusto brought down Cambiaghi in the penalty area, but Sebastiano Esposito stepped up and sent his spot-kick wide, squandering the opportunity.

The miss proved only a temporary frustration. Three minutes later, Davide Frattesi found space inside the box and unleashed a first-time finish to put Italy ahead for the first time, turning the contest decisively in the hosts' favour.

With momentum firmly on their side, Italy pressed for the kill — and found it in the 75th minute. Dayot Upamecano brought down substitute Antonio Vergara in the area, and this time Pio Esposito was ice-cool from the spot, converting to complete his brace and put the result beyond any doubt.

The final whistle triggered jubilant celebrations among the Italian supporters, who had waited since 1962 for a home win over their neighbours across the Alps.

For Zidane, it was a sobering evening. His side had arrived in Milan unbeaten under his management and carrying genuine momentum. The second half exposed their vulnerability to sustained pressure and direct attacking play — lessons he will need to absorb quickly ahead of Sunday's final group fixture against Türkiye.

Italy travel to Brussels to face Belgium on Sunday in a fixture that carries quarter-final implications for all three sides. With only the top two from Group A1 advancing, neither Italy nor France can afford the luxury of a slip. Belgium, sitting one point off the pace, will be equally motivated to ensure the drama goes to the final whistle.

What is already certain is that Thursday's result at the San Siro will be remembered well beyond this tournament — the night Italy finally broke a six-decade hoodoo, and the night Zidane's unbeaten record as France manager came to an emphatic end.




SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN

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# Artificial Intelligence and Language Learning: A New opportunity for students around the world



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Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly influencing education, particularly foreign language learning. AI-powered tools allow students to practise speaking, improve writing, expand vocabulary and receive personalised feedback. These technologies can provide additional learning opportunities for students who have limited access to language-learning resources. However, AI also presents challenges related to accuracy, privacy and independent thinking. This article explores the opportunities and limitations of artificial intelligence in language education, with particular attention to students in Uzbekistan. It argues that AI should support teachers and learners rather than replace human communication and independent learning.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, language learning, foreign language education, English language teaching, digital learning, Uzbekistan.

## 1. Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world, artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an important part of education. From online classrooms to digital learning applications, technology is changing the way students acquire knowledge and develop new skills. One area that has particularly benefited from these developments is foreign language learning.

For millions of students around the world, learning English is an important step towards accessing international education, career opportunities and global communication. Artificial intelligence offers new possibilities to make this process more accessible, flexible and effective. However, an important question remains: can technology really help students become better language learners?

This article examines how artificial intelligence is transforming language education, the opportunities it creates for students and the challenges that must be considered.

## 2. How Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming Language Learning

Traditional language learning often depends on textbooks, classroom activities and communication with teachers. Although these methods remain valuable, students sometimes need additional opportunities to practise outside the classroom.

Artificial intelligence can help fill this gap. AI-powered applications allow learners to practise grammar, improve vocabulary, check their writing and participate in simulated conversations.

One of the most valuable features of AI is personalised learning. Students have different learning styles and face different challenges. Some struggle with grammar, while others find speaking or pronunciation difficult. AI tools can provide explanations and exercises according to individual learning needs.

For example, a student who is afraid of speaking English in front of others can begin by practising conversations with an AI chatbot. This can help build confidence before communicating with real people.

## 3. Opportunities for Students in Uzbekistan

In countries such as Uzbekistan, foreign language education plays an important role in preparing young people for an increasingly interconnected world.

Many students want to improve their English but may not always have access to international learning environments or regular conversations with fluent speakers.

Artificial intelligence can provide additional learning opportunities in such situations. Students can practise English, explore unfamiliar subjects and receive explanations outside traditional classroom hours.

More importantly, these tools can encourage independent learning. Students no longer need to wait for every lesson to ask a question or review a difficult topic. They can take greater responsibility for their educational development.

For students studying foreign languages and literature, AI can also support reading comprehension, vocabulary development and writing practice.

Nevertheless, technology should complement existing educational opportunities rather than replace qualified teachers and meaningful communication.

## 4. The Challenges of Using AI in Education

Despite its advantages, artificial intelligence is not a perfect solution.

First, AI-generated information is not always accurate. Students may receive incorrect grammar explanations, unnatural expressions or misleading answers. Therefore, checking information through reliable educational sources remains essential.

Second, excessive dependence on AI can reduce independent thinking. If learners ask artificial intelligence to complete every assignment, they may miss valuable opportunities to develop their own writing and problem-solving abilities.

Third, privacy is an important issue. Students should be careful about sharing personal information or confidential documents with digital platforms.

Another challenge is unequal access to technology. Not everyone has reliable internet connections, digital devices or access to advanced educational applications. This can create differences in learning opportunities between students.

UNESCO's 2023 guidance on generative AI in education highlights the importance of human-centred, safe and responsible technology use.

## 5. Why Teachers Still Matter

Artificial intelligence may provide explanations and learning exercises, but education is about much more than receiving information.

Teachers motivate students, recognise individual difficulties and encourage creativity. They also create opportunities for discussions, teamwork and meaningful communication.

An AI application may correct a grammatical mistake, but a teacher can explain the context, purpose and appropriate use of a particular expression.

The most effective approach is therefore to combine technological innovation with traditional teaching methods.

AI can support teachers by providing additional learning materials, while teachers can help students evaluate information, develop critical thinking and use technology responsibly.

## 6. Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

To benefit from AI, students should learn how to use it responsibly.

There are several important principles:

* Use AI to understand difficult topics rather than simply copy answers.
* Check important information using reliable educational sources.
* Practise writing independently before requesting feedback.
* Protect personal information when using digital platforms.
* Combine AI practice with real conversations and classroom activities.

Following these principles can help students improve their language skills while maintaining independence and critical thinking.

## 7. Looking Towards the Future

The future of language learning will not depend entirely on artificial intelligence. Instead, it will depend on how effectively students, teachers and educational institutions use technological opportunities.

For young people in Uzbekistan and other developing countries, AI can become a valuable educational resource. It can help learners explore international knowledge, practise foreign languages and prepare for future opportunities.

However, learning a language still requires dedication, patience and consistent effort. Technology can make the journey easier, but it cannot replace the learner's personal commitment.

Further research is also needed to understand the long-term effects of AI on language development, motivation and independent communication.

## 8. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities in foreign language education. It makes learning more flexible, provides additional opportunities for practice and supports students with different educational needs.

Nevertheless, its benefits depend on responsible use. AI should not replace teachers, independent thinking or real human communication. Instead, it should become a supportive tool that helps students achieve their educational goals.

Ultimately, the future of language learning belongs to those who can combine technological knowledge with human creativity, curiosity and determination.

Technology can provide the tools, but the desire to learn must come from within. About the Author

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Her greatest ambition is to become a highly qualified specialist in her chosen field and share her valuable knowledge and experience with future generations. She believes that continuous learning, dedication and creativity are essential to achieving success.

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