

**Ruto takes his 2027 campaign to Gusii: A region he cannot afford to ignore**

President William Ruto launched a development tour of the Gusii region on Sunday, beginning with an interdenominational church service at Nyamaiya Stadium in Nyamira County — a visit that is as much a political statement

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**Kenya's opposition at the crossroads: Unity or illusion?**

Kenyan politics has a familiar way of turning yesterday's disagreements into today's declarations of brotherhood. Three prominent opposition figures met yesrerday

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# The Mt. Kenya Times

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**Countdown 2027** The two leaders shared a platform before tens of thousands under the banner of the United Alternative Government

# Kitengela unites the opposition

Rigathi Gachagua, leader of the Democracy for the Citizens Party, and former Vice President and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka descended on Kitengela, Kajiado County, at the weekend for a rally that most observers agree was less a campaign event than a defining moment in the opposition's bid to present a credible alternative to President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The two leaders shared a platform before tens of thousands under the banner of the United Alternative Government — the coalition's most emphatic statement yet that the race to 2027 has effectively begun. The event, held in the heart of Kajiado County, demonstrated that the machinery to mount a serious electoral challenge against the incumbent is already in motion.

Kitengela has form. It was here in February that Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement drew massive crowds, only for police to disperse them with teargas — an episode that dramatically amplified sympathy for the senator and helped project him from a regional figure into a national political brand. The return to Kitengela, now with the full weight of the United Alternative Government behind it, carried deliberate symbolism: the opposition was reclaiming a town that had become shorthand for the tension between state power and popular mobilisation.




*A collage of Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka and Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua*

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# Gachagua and Kalonzo vow to end Ruto's presidency in 2027

BY Anne Njeri
@themtkenyatimes

Rigathi Gachagua, leader of the Democracy for the Citizens Party, and former Vice President and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka yesterday told thousands of supporters in Kitengela, Kajiado County, that they will end President William Ruto's administration at the August 2027 general election, promising to restore economic stability, constitutional order and government accountability.

Gachagua was unsparing. "We have, as a nation, in the last four years been treated to lies, lies, lies, dictatorship, runaway corruption, extrajudicial killings, lawlessness — name it," he told the crowd. "But it is time to liberate our nation and the spirit of revolution is unstoppable."

Kalonzo laid out the coalition's manifesto in equally direct terms. "Kenyans are united against a predatory regime that takes, steals and kills," he said. "With my brothers and sisters in the United Alternative Government, we shall restore the payslip, abolish slush funds like the Affordable Housing Levy, and guarantee every child an education from primary school to university."

With nine months to polling day, the battle lines are drawn.

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*













Editor's Desk

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# NEWS IN BRIEF



Former Vice President and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka has declared that the United Alternative Government is already governing in waiting, pointing to his personal diplomatic intervention to have Sudan lift its ban on Kenyan black tea imports as evidence that the opposition is addressing national challenges without waiting for electoral victory. Speaking at the Kitengela rally in Kajiado County, Kalonzo said he had contacted Sudan's ambassador to Kenya, appealing for the restrictions to be lifted and arguing that ordinary Kenyan farmers should not bear the consequences of President William Ruto's foreign policy decisions. Sudan suspended Kenyan tea imports in March 2025 after Nairobi hosted meetings involving Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, disrupting a market that previously absorbed approximately 35 million kilogrammes annually. Kalonzo said restoring access could unlock over $700M for tea farmers and workers. "Only 274 days remain. We have already begun working," he told supporters — a pointed signal that the opposition considers itself a government preparing to assume office, not merely a movement campaigning for one.



Relatives of Shakahola victims have reacted with mixed emotions to the November 6 sentencing of cult leader Paul Mackenzie, welcoming the conviction while insisting that justice remains incomplete without accountability for state officers who failed to intervene as people starved to death in Kilifi County's Shakahola forest. Roseline Asena, who lost her brother, his sister-in-law and their five children, said the sentence addressed criminality but not institutional failure. "There were officers who watched people die from starvation — there were OCS and OCPD officers. Where were they while this was happening?" she asked. Michael Ruwa, who lost seven family members, said the punishment fell short entirely and demanded that Mackenzie's assets — including land and church property — be liquidated and proceeds distributed to bereaved families. Both survivors remain unable to bury their loved ones, a denial of closure that has compounded their grief. The families now want a second phase of accountability targeting the security agencies whose inaction enabled one of Kenya's worst mass tragedy.



Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen has revealed plans to bring Arsenal and Manchester United to Nairobi for a pre-season fixture in July 2027, building on the government's ambition to establish Kenya as a premier destination for elite international sport ahead of the country's co-hosting of the Africa Cup of Nations. Murkomen made the disclosure while speaking about the already-confirmed Bayern Munich versus Ajax match scheduled for January 5, 2027, at the newly constructed Raila Odinga Stadium — a fixture he said would announce Kenya's arrival on the global sporting stage. "Next year, the president will bring Arsenal and Manchester United to play in Nairobi in July 2027," Murkomen declared. He also defended the decision to open the stadium with a European club fixture rather than a domestic match, challenging critics who he said had never attended local league games themselves. The January clash, featuring Germany international Harry Kane and France winger Michael Olise, is expected to draw visitors from across the world and test the stadium's capacity to deliver a world-class matchday experience before AFCON 2027 arrives.



Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua has robustly defended the right of Mt Kenya communities to hold cultural gatherings, rejecting accusations of tribalism and challenging critics to apply the same scrutiny to similar assemblies held by other communities across the country. Speaking on Saturday at the second edition of Ngemi cia Watho — an annual cultural and networking event organised by the GEMA WATHO Association in Thika, Kiambu County — Gachagua argued that every Kenyan community holds an inherent right to assemble, celebrate its heritage and collectively address issues affecting its members. He insisted that Mt Kenya people owed no apology for their identity or for organising around it. The remarks land at a politically charged moment, with the former Deputy President actively consolidating his Mt Kenya base as the United Alternative Government navigates the complex ethnic arithmetic of the 2027 presidential race — and as rivals question whether community-based mobilisation strengthens opposition unity or quietly undermines it.



Prominent activist Boniface Mwangi has launched a blistering attack on Kenyan entertainers, podcasters and artists he accuses of using their platforms to advance the government's political agenda at the expense of their audiences. Speaking during a street interview on his United Kingdom tour, Mwangi expressed deep disappointment in creatives who he says have traded artistic integrity for political favour. "It is just selfishness. They have sold out. It is like selling your body. Very stupid," he said. "Already as an artist, people celebrate you for your talent and skill. Why are you selling your voice?" The activist warned that public memory is long, invoking a pointed cultural reference: "The North remembers. We will not forget the traitors." He predicted that government-aligned artists would struggle to fill concert venues, suggesting their audience loyalty has been irreparably damaged by their political alignment.




Senior opposition figures Martha Karua, Fred Matiang'i and Ndindi Nyoro have moved to contain growing tensions within the United Alternative Government, insisting that internal disagreements are a normal feature of coalition-building rather than evidence of a fracturing alliance. The reassurances follow a public spat in which Matiang'i and former Attorney General Justin Muturi accused Democracy for the Citizens Party leader Rigathi Gachagua of arrogance that could derail the opposition's unity. Speaking at a rally in Laikipia County, People's Liberation Party leader Karua was measured but firm. "Even in the best of houses, people step on each other's toes. But at the last minute, all of us will unite to field one candidate," she said. Matiang'i pledged the coalition would "deliver victory with military precision," while Kiharu MP Nyoro cautioned that candidate selection must weigh both electoral numbers and leadership quality. "Track record is very important; numbers are also important — but we must also look for the quality of leaders who will lead Kenya from next year," Nyoro said. All three principals reaffirmed the coalition's non-negotiable objective: a single presidential candidate and running mate capable of defeating President Ruto without a runoff in August 2027.

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**Politics** **Matiang'i said he was prepared to build on the achievements of the Jubilee administration**

# Matiang'i accuses Ruto of re-launching projects, calls for end to abductions

**BY James Murimi**
*@themtkenyatimes*



From left; Nick Mararo, Fred Matiang'i and Martha Karua in Nanyuki yesterday

By James Murimi

Jubilee Party presidential candidate and party leader Fred Matiang'i has criticised President William Ruto over what he termed repeated launches of development projects, questioning the government's commitment to delivering meaningful development to Kenyans.

Speaking in Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Matiang'i cited a project in Nyamira County which he alleged had been launched three times, arguing that leaders should concentrate on completing projects rather than repeatedly holding launch ceremonies.

He questioned the involvement of the President in projects which he said should ordinarily fall under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), challenging the government to demonstrate tangible results instead of what he described as political publicity around development initiatives.

Matiang'i spoke during a political engagement attended by several leaders from the United Opposition, including PPK Party Leader Ndindi Nyoro, PNU Party Leader Peter Munya and PLP Party Leader Martha Karua, among others.

The former Interior Cabinet Secretary used the occasion to reflect on the record of the Jubilee administration under retired President Uhuru Kenyatta, citing programmes and interventions he said had made a difference in the lives of ordinary Kenyans.

He particularly highlighted the Linda Mama maternal healthcare programme, measures taken to address insecurity in Laikipia and efforts to strengthen the integrity of national examinations by curbing examination malpractice.

Matiang'i said he was prepared to build on the achievements of the Jubilee administration, presenting his experience in government as part of his case for the presidency in the 2027 General Election.

He also reaffirmed the commitment of the United Opposition to working together, urging political leaders and their supporters to conduct peaceful campaigns as the country moves closer to the next election.

The Jubilee leader further called for an end to abductions, warning against practices that threaten personal freedoms, public confidence and the country's democratic environment.

The leaders urged the authorities to safeguard the rights and security of citizens, saying political competition should be conducted in an atmosphere of peace, tolerance and respect for the rule of law.

Nyoro said Kenyans should not just go for a leader but one with a good track record.

Karua said she is the best suited candidate to face President William Ruto.

During the two events, the leaders vowed to remain united and support one presidential candidate who will face it with President Ruto during the elections.

Earlier, Matiang'i and other opposition leaders, except Karua, attended a Sunday service at St John Paul II Kandara Catholic Church near Naro Moru town in Kieni Constituency, Nyeri County.

The delegation was hosted by Nyeri County political leaders and aspirants seeking various elective positions, led by senatorial aspirant Nick Mararo and gubernatorial aspirant Wangai Ndirangu. Others were Woman Representative aspirants Elizabeth Muthoni and Caroline Mwangi.

The leaders promised, if elected, they would ensure the rectify the ills committed by current and former leaders.

Following the church service, the leaders joined the congregation and other well-wishers in a fundraising drive towards the construction of a new church.

The engagements provided the opposition leaders with an opportunity to interact with local residents and political supporters while advancing their message of unity, peaceful political competition and the need for accountable leadership ahead of the 2027 elections.

# Gachagua draws a line on Mt Kenya's political support



Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna at Ngemi Cia Watho cultural event at Thika Greens Golf Country Club in Murang'a County

**BY Yvonne Wambui**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua put Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna on notice on Saturday that Mt Kenya's electoral support ahead of the 2027 General Election will not come without clear terms — and that the community intends to negotiate firmly before committing to any political alliance.

Speaking at the Ngemi Cia Watho cultural event at Thika Greens Golf Country Club in Murang'a County, Gachagua told Sifuna directly that the region had drawn clear lessons from 2022, when it delivered an overwhelming vote for President William Ruto without first securing firm political agreements. That, he said, would not happen again.

Addressing the gathering with Sifuna seated among the leaders present, Gachagua was unambiguous: any politician seeking Mt Kenya's backing must engage the community openly, establish mutual terms and submit to scrutiny before receiving its support. Promises alone, he said, would no longer be sufficient.

The conditions signal a sharper, more deliberate posture from a region that has historically delivered decisive electoral margins but felt shortchanged in the distribution of political returns. Gachagua's message was directed as much at the broader political class as at Sifuna specifically — a public declaration that Mt Kenya is approaching 2027 as an organised, self-aware electoral bloc with defined expectations.

Whether Sifuna, whose Western alliance networks give him national ambitions, will meet those terms remains to be seen.

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**Politics** **The numbers from 2022 frame the challenge plainly. In the Gusii region, the late Raila Odinga secured approximately 65 per cent of the presidential vote against Ruto's 35 per cent**

# Ruto takes his 2027 campaign to Gusii: A region he cannot afford to ignore

***President William Ruto's development tour of Nyamira and Kisii counties signals a deliberate push to break opposition dominance in a region where he won only 35 per cent of the vote in 2022***

**BY Collins Kibet**
*@themtkenyatimes*



President William Ruto in Kisii

President William Ruto launched a development tour of the Gusii region yesterday, beginning with an interdenominational church service at Nyamaiya Stadium in Nyamira County — a visit that is as much a political statement as it is a government engagement. As Kenya's countdown to the August 2027 General Election intensifies, Ruto is moving beyond his traditional strongholds and into territory where the opposition has long held sway, raising a question that will define the next 18 months of Kenyan politics: can development projects and strategic alliances shift a region's deeply entrenched voting patterns?

The numbers from 2022 frame the challenge plainly. In the Gusii region, the late Raila Odinga secured approximately 65 per cent of the presidential vote against Ruto's 35 per cent. That deficit is not easily erased, but it is precisely the kind of gap that a sitting president with access to the national development budget is positioned to narrow — if the projects materialise, if they are delivered on time, and if residents believe their interests are being genuinely served rather than seasonally courted.

The tour's programme reflects that calculation. Among the engagements are the upgrading of the Bondeni-Magombo Road, the Tombe-Isinta-Mokomoni Road project, the commissioning of a constituency digital hub and the proposed Magwagwa Stadium. Each project is framed as part of the administration's commitment to expanding infrastructure and economic opportunity in a region that has not always felt the full weight of national investment. Roads connect rural producers to markets. Digital hubs open pathways to employment for young people. Sports infrastructure builds community identity. The pitch is coherent — but Kenyans have heard coherent pitches before. What residents in Nyamira and Kisii will be watching is whether the groundbreakings become completions.

Infrastructure remains one of the most potent political instruments available to any administration, precisely because its benefits are tangible and visible. A tarmacked road is not an abstraction. A functioning digital hub is not a promise — it is a service. But the same visibility that makes delivery powerful makes non-delivery equally damaging. Communities that watch projects stall, budgets disappear into procurement disputes and timelines drift year after year do not forget. The Gusii region deserves measurable outcomes, not recurring announcements.

Complicating Ruto's political calculations considerably is the rising profile of former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, who has emerged as a credible presidential challenger and whose home base sits squarely within the region Ruto is now courting. Matiang'i's years in senior government — as Cabinet Secretary for Education, then Interior — gave him national name recognition and administrative credibility that translates into genuine political capital in Gusii. His association with the opposition, and more recently with the Jubilee Party, makes the region a direct contest between the incumbent and a challenger with deep local roots.

Recent friction between Matiang'i and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has added a further layer of complexity. Leaders from the Gusii community have rallied around Matiang'i in response to what they perceived as attacks on their community's most prominent political figure — and in doing so have demonstrated how quickly political alignments can harden when regional identity and personal loyalty intersect. Some leaders who previously kept their distance from Matiang'i have now positioned themselves closer to him. These are the kinds of shifts that make the Gusii region not merely a political battleground but a bellwether for how opposition consolidation is proceeding ahead of 2027.

Ruto's allies in the region — among them National Assembly Majority Chief Whip Sylvanus Osoro and North Mugirango MP Joash Nyamoko — have been working the ground ahead of the presidential visit, promoting the administration's development record and encouraging residents to maintain productive ties with the national government. Their strategy is straightforward: frame support for the president as the most direct route to continued investment. Whether that framing persuades voters who backed the opposition in 2022 will depend on whether the relationship between political support and development delivery feels like governance or like a transaction.

The broader significance of this tour extends well beyond Nyamira and Kisii. It reflects a national electoral strategy in which Ruto must build support across communities and regions that did not back him in 2022. Mt Kenya remains an important political base, but it is not sufficient on its own. Presidential elections in Kenya are determined by national coalitions — by the ability to assemble enough regional support across the country to cross the constitutional threshold. Western Kenya, the Rift Valley, the Coast, Nyanza and the wider Gusii belt all carry electoral weight that cannot be wished away. Ruto's presence in Gusii is a signal that he understands this arithmetic.

Yet development tours and political rallies, however well staged, cannot resolve the underlying concerns driving voter sentiment across the country. The cost of living remains the dominant preoccupation for most Kenyan households. Unemployment, particularly among young people, has not been adequately addressed. Farmers continue to struggle with unreliable markets and costly agricultural inputs. Questions about public debt, government accountability and the management of public resources have not gone away. These are not issues that a stadium commissioning or a road upgrade can answer directly — they require sustained, credible policy, delivered consistently and transparently.

The opposition, for its part, cannot rely on criticism alone. Matiang'i and other potential challengers owe the electorate a detailed account of what they would do differently — on unemployment, on the cost of living, on public debt, on institutional reform. Kenyan voters deserve a competitive politics of ideas, not a contest of personalities and regional mobilisation.

As 2027 draws closer, the Gusii region will remain one of the most closely watched political battlegrounds in the country. Ruto's tour offers his administration a genuine opportunity to rebuild relationships and demonstrate a commitment to equitable national development. But political support, in the end, is not awarded at a rally. It is earned through consistent service delivery, transparent governance and sustained respect for the electorate.

The question is not whether Ruto can draw crowds in Gusii. He can. The question is whether the people of Nyamira and Kisii will conclude, by August 2027, that his administration served their interests — or merely visited them.



**Politics** The two leaders shared a platform before tens of thousands under the banner of the United Alternative Government — the coalition's most emphatic statement yet that the race to 2027

# Kenya's 2027 reckoning begins: Kitengela unites the opposition

***Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka united thousands in Kitengela in the most consequential pre-election rally yet — signalling that Kenya's road to August 2027 will be intensely contested.***

**BY James Mwangi**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka**




**Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua**

Rigathi Gachagua, leader of the Democracy for the Citizens Party, and former Vice President and Wiper Patriotic Front leader Kalonzo Musyoka descended on Kitengela, Kajiado County, at the weekend for a rally that most observers agree was less a campaign event than a defining moment in the opposition's bid to present a credible alternative to President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration ahead of the August 2027 general election.

The two leaders shared a platform before tens of thousands under the banner of the United Alternative Government — the coalition's most emphatic statement yet that the race to 2027 has effectively begun. The event, held in the heart of Kajiado County, demonstrated that the machinery to mount a serious electoral challenge against the incumbent is already in motion.

Kitengela has form. It was here in February that Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna's Linda Mwananchi movement drew massive crowds, only for police to disperse them with teargas — an episode that dramatically amplified sympathy for the senator and helped project him from a regional figure into a national political brand. The return to Kitengela, now with the full weight of the United Alternative Government behind it, carried deliberate symbolism: the opposition was reclaiming a town that had become shorthand for the tension between state power and popular mobilisation.

Gachagua set the tone with characteristic directness. "In the end, we shall get our country Kenya on the right footing," he told the crowd. "We have, as a nation, in the last four years been treated to lies, lies, lies, dictatorship, runaway corruption, extrajudicial killings, lawlessness — name it. But it is time to liberate our nation and the spirit of revolution is unstoppable. The idea is here; the time is now." He added a second pledge that will define the coalition's economic message: "Our first agenda when we form the sixth administration is to get back all the looted Kenyan resources by this unapologetic regime." The language was unambiguous — an opposition leader speaking directly to what he frames as governance failure, and placing economic accountability at the centre of the coalition's prospectus.

Kalonzo matched the register with a blend of constitutional argument and popular appeal that has long defined his political standing. "Kenyans are united against a predatory regime that takes, steals and kills," he said. He laid out a concrete manifesto: restoring the payslip, abolishing what he called slush funds — specifically naming the Affordable Housing Levy — and guaranteeing every child an education from primary school to university. "Together," he said, "we shall restore and rebuild Kenya." In a second address, he sharpened the urgency: "Our nation is on the brink of collapse. We cannot continue normalising corruption, massive looting of public resources, abductions and the systematic destruction of our institutions. Kenya deserves better. The time for liberation has come."

Beyond the rally itself, the broader coalition arithmetic is what gives the United Alternative Government its structural weight. Gachagua has argued that the partnership alone could yield a combined 12 million votes — eight million from Mount Kenya and four million from Ukambani — creating a significant numerical advantage heading into 2027. That calculation forms the backbone of the coalition's confidence, and it explains why the question of a single presidential candidate has become the dominant preoccupation of opposition politics.

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna, though not present at the Kitengela rally, remains central to that calculation. His Linda Mwananchi movement has built demonstrable traction among younger voters in Nairobi and Western Kenya, and his eventual positioning within or alongside the United Alternative Government will materially shape the coalition's reach. Gachagua has indicated his willingness to step aside and support another candidate from the United Alternative Government if he is not selected to carry the opposition ticket, while Kalonzo has pledged to support Sifuna if the senator is chosen as the coalition's presidential candidate, saying simply: "He could very well end up being the sixth president." The fluidity of those positions reflects a coalition still negotiating its internal architecture, but one that has agreed on a shared direction of travel.

The principals of the United Alternative Government have declared they are taking decisive steps towards consolidating unity and presenting Kenyans with a credible, democratic and transformative alternative government, and members of the coalition have signed a memorandum of understanding committing themselves to work together and support a common presidential candidate in 2027. These are structural commitments, not mere statements of intent.

The government has not been passive. President Ruto's allies contend that the opposition coalition is built on contradictions too deep to survive an actual campaign, and that the ideological distance between its principals will widen under electoral pressure. UDA leaders in Kitui have urged Kalonzo to join the Ruto government, warning that his alliance with Gachagua risks leaving him politically marginalised. The Kenya Kwanza calculation is straightforward: Kenya's opposition coalitions have historically fractured when patronage, ethnic arithmetic and individual ambition collide — and the presidency commands resources capable of accelerating precisely those pressures.

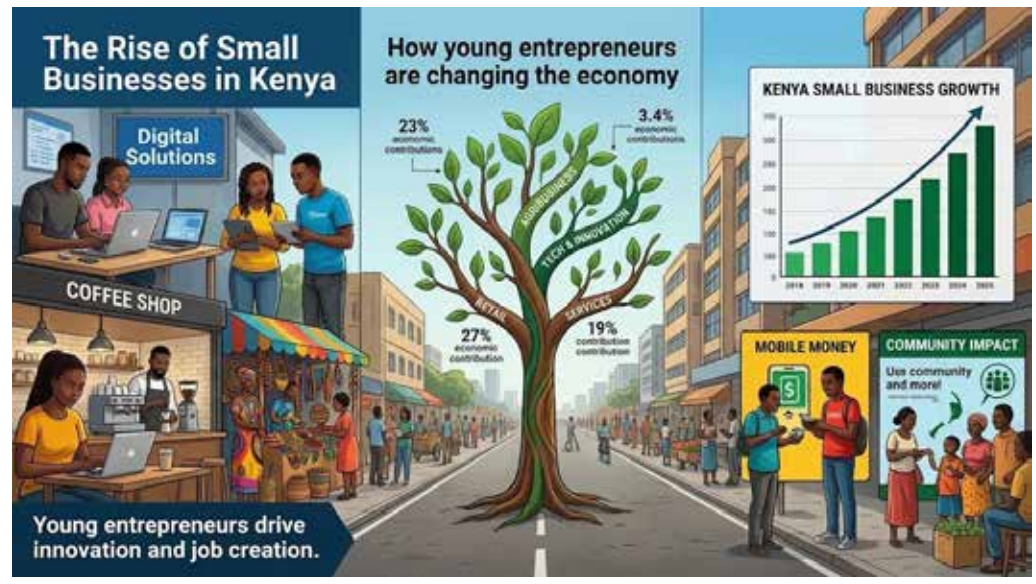
That history cannot be dismissed. But the energy in Kitengela pointed to something beyond transactional politics. The crowd was large, diverse and visibly animated — a cross-section of Kajiado County that reflected the coalition's ambition to build a genuinely national constituency rather than a regional bloc. Whether that breadth survives the pressures of candidate selection, coalition management and the final months of campaigning remains the defining question of Kenya's political season.

What Kitengela established, with clarity, is that the contest for Kenya's sixth presidency is fully under way — and that the United Alternative Government has found in its Kajiado show of force a platform capable of sustaining a serious national challenge. With nine months to polling day, the question is no longer whether the opposition can compete. It is whether it can hold together long enough to prevail.

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS** **Small businesses are changing how Kenyans earn money, spend and interact with one another.**

# The rise of small businesses in Kenya: How young entrepreneurs are changing the economy

***From WhatsApp clothing shops to digital design studios, Kenya's young entrepreneurs are reshaping the economy one smartphone at a time***




**BY Yvonne Wambui**
*@themtkenyatimes*

In a small town in Kenya, 23-year-old Brian runs a clothing business from his phone. He does not own a physical shop, employ workers or pay expensive rent. Every morning, he photographs new stock, posts the images on WhatsApp and TikTok, and waits for customers to place their orders.

A few years ago, starting a business required substantial capital, a physical premises and several employees. Today, a young person can begin selling products with a smartphone and modest start-up funds.

Brian's story reflects what is happening across Kenya. Young people are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as they search for financial independence and alternative sources of income. Small businesses have become an important part of the country's economy. From roadside food vendors and salons to online shops and small-scale farmers, entrepreneurs are creating opportunities for themselves and others.

**How small businesses are changing the Kenyan economy**

Small businesses are changing how Kenyans earn money, spend and interact with one another.

In the past, many young people believed that formal employment was the only route to financial independence. Today, some are applying their talents to build businesses in photography, fashion, beauty, technology and food services.

A young woman in Nairobi can sell beauty products online without renting a shop. A university student in Laikipia can earn money designing marketing material and creating digital content for businesses.

Technology has made it easier for entrepreneurs to reach customers beyond their immediate communities. Through mobile money services, social media and online platforms, business transactions have become faster and more convenient.

**Merits of small businesses**

Small businesses offer several benefits to individuals and the broader economy.

**1. Employment opportunities have increased.** Small businesses create jobs for owners and employees alike. A growing salon, restaurant or clothing shop may employ several young people who would otherwise struggle to find work.

**2. They reduce poverty.** Entrepreneurship allows individuals to earn an income, support their families and improve their living standards. Even a modest business can provide money for food, education and household needs.

**3. They promote innovation and creativity.** Young entrepreneurs are developing new solutions to everyday problems. From online retail to food delivery, businesses are introducing more convenient ways of providing goods and services.

**4. They contribute to economic growth.** Small businesses contribute to the national economy through the sale of goods and services, payment of taxes and the circulation of money within communities.

**5. They promote financial independence among young people.** Rather than depending entirely on formal employment, young people can use their skills and interests to generate income and build businesses of their own.

**Challenges facing small businesses in Kenya**

Despite their importance, small businesses face significant challenges.

The first is lack of capital. Many young people have viable business ideas but lack the funds to start or expand. Accessing loans can be difficult because of high interest rates and strict lending requirements.

The high cost of doing business compounds this difficulty. Expenses such as rent, electricity, transport and stock make it hard for small enterprises to remain profitable.

Competition is another persistent problem. Many businesses sell similar products, making it difficult for new entrants to attract and retain customers.

Taxation and regulatory requirements can also become a burden, particularly for small-scale traders operating with limited financial resources.

**The role of the government in supporting small businesses**

The government has an important role in creating an environment where small businesses can grow. It can support entrepreneurs by improving access to affordable credit, providing business training and reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers.

Government programmes targeting young entrepreneurs should be made accessible and transparent so that those with genuine business ideas can benefit. Financial literacy is equally important. Young people need to understand how to manage profits, maintain records, save consistently and make sound financial decisions.

**Conclusion**

Small businesses are more than a source of income. They are a vital part of Kenya's economic development and a source of hope for thousands of young people.

Although entrepreneurs face challenges including limited capital, high operating costs and stiff competition, their contribution to the economy cannot be overlooked. Kenya's economic future will depend not only on large corporations and government investment but also on the growth of small businesses. Supporting young entrepreneurs today could build a stronger economy, more employment opportunities and a financially independent generation tomorrow.

*Written by: Yvonne Wambui*
*Assistant Editor: Christine Ogutu*
*Editor: Phelix Akello*



NAIROBI

# Nairobi belongs to all Kenyans, says PS Omollo



Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo

**BY Rachael Njoki**
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Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo on Saturday called on Nairobi residents to embrace unity and inclusivity, declaring that the capital city belongs to every Kenyan regardless of ethnic or cultural background — and challenging women grassroots leaders to be the architects of that shared identity.

Speaking at the Nairobi County Women Coordinators' Consultative Forum, which brought together women leaders from all constituencies in the county to discuss leadership, community security and development, Omollo was direct: Nairobi is not the preserve of any single community. Whether Luo, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Kisii, Luhya or any other, every Kenyan has an equal claim to the city.

He pointed to the women assembled at the forum as living proof of the diversity that defines Kenya, noting that their collective participation demonstrated how people from different backgrounds can work together without discrimination or favouritism. "We must continue to embrace our diversity, strengthen our bonds as one people and work together to build the united, prosperous nation envisioned by those who laid the foundations of our independence," Omollo said.

The PS observed that Kenya's diversity runs deeper than geography or politics — it is woven into the fabric of family life itself, where intermarriage and shared kinship ties routinely bring together people from different ethnic communities. Those bonds, he argued, are evidence of a unity that already exists and simply needs to be nurtured.

He urged the women coordinators to take an active role in ensuring that every Kenyan living in Nairobi feels accepted, represented and recognised as an equal member of the national community — and to challenge any environment in which individuals are made to feel excluded on ethnic grounds.

His broader message carried weight beyond the forum: collective responsibility, not government decree, is what builds a truly united city. Nairobi's identity, he said, must reflect the unity, diversity and aspirations of the entire nation — not the interests of any one community within it.



Yusuf Omari, Absa Bank Kenya Managing Director and CEO. | Photo: /@AbsaKenya/X

# Absa exits Kenya's insurance market as Mudavadi-linked investors take full control

***Absa Group has completed the sale of its entire stake in First Assurance Holdings to First Assurance Investments Limited, ending an 11-year ownership chapter and returning the two insurers to Kenyan hands in a deal estimated at KSh3.8B.***

**BY Grace Wanja**
*@themtkenyatimes*

Absa Group has completed the full transfer of its shareholding in First Assurance Holdings Limited to First Assurance Investments Limited, ending the South African banking group's decade-long ownership of two established Kenyan insurers and handing full control to a local investment vehicle linked to Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi.

The transaction, which received regulatory approval before closing, covers Absa's entire 63.32% stake in First Assurance Company Limited and Absa Life Assurance Kenya Limited, ending an 11-year ownership period in the two insurers. Following the transfer, First Assurance Company Limited will rebrand as First Assurance General, while Absa Life Assurance Kenya Limited will operate under the new name First Assurance Life. Both businesses will carry the designation "Formerly an Absa Group Company" for six months before the full brand transition is complete.

The ownership structure of the acquiring vehicle gives the deal a notable political dimension. First Assurance Investments is owned 52.5% by Syndicate Nominees and 47.5% by Exclusive Holding. Mudavadi disclosed ownership of Syndicate Nominees during his parliamentary vetting in 2022, and his combined interests through investment vehicles and direct holdings give him an estimated effective stake of approximately 21% in First Assurance. Regulatory filings and court documents also show that Lamu Governor Issa Timamy is a director and shareholder of First Assurance Investments Limited.

For the acquiring group, the transaction completes a full circle. First Assurance Investments already held a minority stake in the two firms, so the deal effectively returns full ownership to the local shareholder Absa first partnered with when it entered the Kenyan insurance market — buying back shares originally sold to Barclays Africa, Absa's predecessor, in 2015 for KSh2.2B. The acquisition price is now reported at KSh3B, representing a substantial premium on the original disposal, though neither party has formally confirmed the figure.

For Absa, the exit reflects a broader strategic repositioning. The deal comes as the Johannesburg-based group simultaneously increases its stake in Absa Bank Kenya to 85% from 68.5% in a separate KSh30.9B transaction, signalling a deliberate pivot towards banking rather than insurance manufacturing in the Kenyan market. The distribution relationship between the two insurers and Absa Bank Kenya will, however, remain intact — meaning Absa's customers will continue to access First Assurance products through the bank's network even as ownership formally changes hands.

Githanji Waiguru, Managing Director of Absa Life Assurance Kenya, and Stephen Lokonyo, Managing Director of First Assurance Company, signed the public announcement confirming the completion. "We would like to assure all our customers, policyholders and stakeholders that our products and services are not affected by this transaction," the two executives stated.

First Assurance Life ranks as Kenya's seventh-largest life insurer, while First Assurance General occupies the 13th position in the general insurance segment. Both businesses trace their roots to 1930 and carry a client base that spans individual policyholders, corporates and institutional accounts. For those customers, the message from both sides of the transaction is continuity — different owners, same cover.

**Politics** The timing was hardly accidental. For days, opposition politics had been consumed by disagreements over strategy, regional influence and the question of who should lead

# Kenya's opposition at the crossroads: Unity or illusion?

## *Gachagua, Kalonzo and Matiang'i meet amid deepening divisions, but smiles cannot substitute for answers on leadership, ideology and candidate selection*

**BY Levis Wangamati**
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Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'I and Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka

Kenyan politics has a familiar way of turning yesterday's disagreements into today's declarations of brotherhood. Three prominent opposition figures — former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka and former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i — met in Nairobi on Sunday amid growing concerns over fractures within the opposition camp. A photograph shared by Matiang'i carried a simple but politically loaded message: "Brothers will always put Kenya first." Kalonzo followed with his own declaration of solidarity. For a political camp that has appeared increasingly divided, the meeting was an important attempt to restore confidence. Beyond the smiles and carefully chosen words, however, a harder question persists: are these leaders genuinely building a united political movement, or simply postponing a leadership battle that could eventually tear them apart?

The timing was hardly accidental. For days, opposition politics had been consumed by disagreements over strategy, regional influence and the question of who should lead the coalition into the 2027 General Election. Gachagua's proposal for a three-bloc arrangement — Mt Kenya under his influence, Ukambani under Kalonzo, and Western Kenya anchored around Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna — attracted considerable criticism. What Gachagua considered a practical electoral strategy was read differently by colleagues who feared that organising the opposition around regional numerical strength would undermine the very unity they were trying to establish.

Matiang'i was among the strongest critics, warning against what he described as "majoritarian arrogance." His argument cuts to a fundamental question: should political cooperation be built around the numerical weight of individual communities, or around a national agenda capable of attracting voters across ethnic and regional lines? Kenya's electoral history has repeatedly demonstrated how easily coalitions become negotiations between regional barons rather than genuine national movements. An alliance assembled through ethnic arithmetic may look formidable on paper, but its stability depends entirely on whether its members can agree on something beyond the distribution of political spoils.

Leadership is the central unresolved tension. The opposition is not short of personalities carrying presidential ambitions, established constituencies and genuine followings. Gachagua commands considerable influence across the Mt Kenya region. Kalonzo has spent decades building a national political profile. Matiang'i brings the credibility of senior government experience. Sifuna represents a different political generation whose appeal among younger voters has become increasingly relevant. Martha Karua, Justin Muturi and Eugene Wamalwa each carry political interests that cannot simply be absorbed or ignored. Bringing all these personalities into a single arrangement will require more than mutual respect — it will require a credible, transparent process for determining who leads.

Gachagua sought to manage perceptions during a church service at Full Gospel Churches of Kenya in Isinya on Sunday, maintaining that the opposition remained united and had agreed to field one presidential candidate in 2027. He compared political disagreements to ordinary family rivalries, arguing that differences should not be mistaken for a breakdown in relationships. His remarks suggested that discussions about a common candidate were already under way — but the public still needs to understand the framework behind that commitment. Who determines the candidate? By what criteria? And critically, will all participating parties accept the outcome, including those whose preferred candidates do not secure the ticket?

These are not procedural details. They are the precise questions that determine whether coalitions survive an election. A promise to back one presidential candidate means little without a transparent process for producing that candidate. Without agreed rules, the eventual selection risks becoming another source of resentment — particularly among supporters who feel their leaders surrendered political ambitions without adequate return.

Those supporters are themselves a complicating factor. Social media has become a volatile arena where supporters defend preferred leaders, attack rivals and transform manageable disagreements into personal confrontations. The friction already visible among supporters aligned with Gachagua, Matiang'i and Kalonzo illustrates how difficult it is for principals to maintain unity when their bases are already competing for dominance. Supporters tend to reflect the tone set from the top — and that tone has not always been measured.

Beyond personalities, the opposition faces a more fundamental challenge: what does it actually want to change about Kenya? The country is approaching another election while citizens continue demanding answers on the cost of living, unemployment, public debt, corruption, healthcare and education. Young people are particularly attentive to whether political leadership can convert campaign promises into tangible economic opportunity. The significance of an opposition alliance cannot be measured by the roster of influential leaders sharing a platform. It must be measured by the quality of the ideas those leaders are willing to defend publicly and in detail.

An opposition that invests more energy negotiating regional influence than articulating economic priorities risks becoming yet another political arrangement built around the ambitions of its principals rather than the needs of citizens. These leaders must explain what they would do differently — how they would finance proposals, what mechanisms they would introduce to enforce accountability and how they would restore confidence in public institutions. Kenya does not simply need a different collection of personalities in State House. It needs a credible alternative in how public affairs are managed.

The planned Ukombozi Rally in Kitengela, set to bring together Gachagua, Kalonzo, Sifuna and Wamalwa, offers another opportunity to demonstrate cooperation. But large rallies demonstrate mobilisation capacity, not national mandates. Political legitimacy is determined at the ballot box, not by the volume of applause at a public gathering. The opposition must resist the temptation to confuse an enthusiastic crowd with a complete national movement.

Kenya's opposition stands at a genuine crossroads. It can become a coalition united by a national vision, or remain a gathering of powerful personalities negotiating influence while assuring Kenyans that everything is under control. The Nairobi meeting may have eased immediate tensions — but it has not answered the difficult questions about leadership, candidate selection, ideology and the internal distribution of political power. Those questions cannot be deferred indefinitely.

Kenya does not need another political brotherhood whose unity survives only until the next disagreement. It needs leaders capable of placing national interest above personal ambition and presenting an alternative that citizens can scrutinise and hold to account. The handshake brought them back to the same table. The real test is whether they can agree on what to do once they sit down.

**Politics** The announcement adds a southern arc to what has become one of Kenya's most high-profile infrastructure projects

# Ruto maps the road west: Rironi highway to extend to Kisii and Malaba

***President William Ruto has announced a major extension of the Rironi–Mau Summit dual carriageway that would create an unbroken transport corridor from Nairobi through the Rift Valley to the Uganda border at Malaba.***

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*



President William Ruto

President William Ruto yesterday announced plans to extend the Rironi–Mau Summit dual carriageway beyond the Rift Valley, linking Nairobi to Kericho, Kisii and ultimately Malaba on the Kenya-Uganda border, in an infrastructure pledge that could reshape the economic geography of western and southern Kenya ahead of the August 2027 general election.

Speaking at Nyabite Market in Nyamira County during an interdenominational church service, Ruto said the flagship highway project — already under construction across 233 kilometres between Rironi in Kiambu County and Mau Summit in Nakuru County — would not terminate at the Rift Valley escarpment. "The major road we are constructing from Nairobi to Mau Summit will not end at Mau Summit," he told the congregation. "When it gets to Mau Summit, I will bring it down here through Kericho, through Kisii, and connect it all the way to Malaba." He framed the extension as one of the central assignments he had set for the year ahead, placing roads at the heart of his administration's economic narrative as Kenya moves towards a consequential election cycle.

The announcement adds a southern arc to what has become one of Kenya's most high-profile infrastructure projects. The Rironi–Mau Summit highway was formally launched in November 2025, with Ruto setting April 2027 as the completion deadline for the first phase — the corridor connecting Rironi to Mau Summit — after which the government committed to beginning work on extending the highway towards the Uganda border. Two Chinese firms are leading construction: China Road and Bridge Corporation handling the Rironi-to-Gilgil section, and Shandong Hi-Speed Road and Bridge International Engineering responsible for the Gilgil-to-Mau Summit stretch.

The Nyamira announcement adds Kericho and Kisii to that corridor — a significant southward deviation from the previously announced Mau Summit-Eldoret-Malaba alignment that would route the extension through the North Rift. By passing through Kericho and Kisii, the proposed dual carriageway would serve a densely populated agricultural belt that generates a substantial share of Kenya's tea and horticultural exports, while simultaneously connecting the Gusii region — historically underserved by trunk road infrastructure — to the national highway network. In September, the government secured KSh300M from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to finance a feasibility study for the proposed Mau Summit-Kisumu-Malaba dual carriageway, suggesting that planning for the extended corridor is already under way, even as the primary highway approaches its final construction phase.

The economic logic is substantial. The Malaba border crossing is Kenya's principal land gateway to Uganda and, by extension, to landlocked markets across East and Central Africa. A continuous dual carriageway from Nairobi through the Rift Valley, Kericho, Kisii and Busia would dramatically reduce transit times for freight and passengers along a corridor that currently suffers significant congestion and poor road conditions on key sections. For farmers in Kericho and Nyamira counties, improved connectivity directly translates into lower transportation costs and faster access to Nairobi markets — a tangible economic benefit that plays well with an agricultural constituency the President was addressing directly.

The political context of the announcement cannot be separated from its infrastructure content. Nyamira County sits in the Gusii region, an area that has historically leaned towards the opposition and where the government has faced scrutiny over the pace of development delivery. A presidential commitment to extend the country's most ambitious road project directly into the Gusii heartland, delivered from a church pulpit weeks after opposition leaders held a major rally in Kitengela, reads as deliberate political outreach to a region whose electoral loyalties remain contested heading into 2027. Infrastructure announcements from church services have become a recognisable feature of President Ruto's political style, blending development messaging with pastoral settings to reach audiences beyond the conventional political rally.

Questions remain, however. Yesterday's announcement did not provide a construction timetable, project financing structure or cost estimate for the Kericho-Kisii-Malaba extension. The Roads and Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir has maintained that the core Rironi-to-Mau Summit corridor will be completed by June 2027, but the extended corridor represents a separate and substantially larger project whose implementation timeline is yet to be defined. The government is expected to present further details as the 2027 infrastructure programme takes shape.

What is clear is that the Rironi highway has evolved from a Nairobi-to-Rift Valley project into the spine of an ambitioned national transport corridor. If built as outlined, it would create a continuous modern highway stretching from the outskirts of Nairobi to the Uganda border — a project whose scale would rank among the most consequential road investments in Kenya's post-independence history.

The road to Malaba, it appears, now runs through Kisii.



# I write



I write not for fame nor accolades
I write not with ink nor paper
I write not what you want to read
I write what you like not
I don't write for you
I write for me
I write with my thoughts and emotions scattered all over the place
I write with tears in my eyes and a heavy heart

I write to silence the voices in my head
I write to numb the pain in my heart
I write to escape this poisoned earth
I write to free myself from your claws
I write to rub off the venom you emit
I write to mourn the child I never got to meet
I write to stay afloat in this raging sea
I don't write for you
I write for me
Spare me your validation I need it not
Spare me those praises I hear them not
Spare me those prizes for they are nothing but heavy ornaments
Next time you read what I wrote
Know that I write but not for you

Nyasha Celeste Makombe Thee Poetic Raindrop

# I like butterflies because it is in multicolour



Butterfly begins its journey as Caterpillar,
Later it becomes as a beautiful fly,
Like this in our life success comes from small to big,
Our dreams also fly high like butterfly,
Life is more beautiful when we enjoy little things,
Like butterflies, we have wings to chase our dreams

S. HARI HARA SUDHAN

# Not everyone around you is your friend



True friends protect you, but fake friends use you,
True friends help you to rise in your life,
They stand beside you in hardships,
Don't trust who smiles at you,

Be careful whom you trust,
Sometimes many problems come from the people closest to us,
Trust is precious, so give it wisely to right people,
Real friendship is precious one,
Actions speak louder than words,
So, Never judge people by their words or Smiles

M. SANTHI
BT ASST
MPLGHSS,
KARUNGALPALAYAM

# A day without electricity



Power, power, where are you?
Power, power, we miss you!

Lights are not shining bright,
Fans are not running tonight!

I didn't charge my phone today,
My battery is fading away.

No Wi-Fi, no videos to see,
No internet for you and me.

No TV shows to watch today,
Oh, what shall I do all day?

I sit and wonder what to do,
I wish the power would come through!

When the power comes, we jump and shout,
"Hurray, hurray!"

Name : DHANUSREE. G
Class : IX
School : GGHS SCHOOL Big Kanchipuram

# Beyond the darkest phase



No single moment of darkness can define an entire journey.

Life, like the moon, has phases of its own,
Some nights shine bright, some stand alone.
There are days of radiance, nights of gloom,
Yet every darkness makes way for bloom.

Not every night wears a silver crown,
Not every sky lets its brightness down.
The full moon fades, the new moon appears,
Yet neither lasts through endless years.

An Amavasya may hide the moon from sight,
And cloak the heavens in shades of night.
But beneath the darkness, beyond our view,
The moon is preparing to shine anew.

So let not one dark moment define your way,
Nor let one failure steal tomorrow's day.
A passing shadow is not your fate,
For every phase has its destined date.

When life grows dim, don't lose your light,
The darkest hour precedes the bright.
Just as the moon waxes after it wanes,
Hope rises again after sorrow and pain.

For life is a journey of ebb and flow,
Not every season is meant to glow.
One dark chapter is not the story entire,
The moon always returns with its silver fire.

Nandini Anandkumar
Educator,Writer,Motivator

# Who I'm when no one is watching



Near her heart pleasantly swam in that home
Yes! dark all alone in Mom's womb
Accepted none are watching.

At eighth month never cried loud
When stumbled & fell continued proud
As none as watching.

Kissed my image on mirror during teen
Satisfied though not really born as queen.
Confined as none are watching.

With my friends enjoyed roaming
But felt sad alone for window shopping
I consoled myself as none were watching.

After marriage often held a timid smile
My face in red with shyness applied
Assured none are watching.

And now I feel
My children will experience the same in zeal.
Will I be watching?

G.Sarala.

# Wisdom



The ingenious quality of wisdom,
Creates talent in ruling over kingdoms,
Wisdom is inborn,making one wiesr,
Not every human claims wisdom,
Live your life in seeking wisdom,
It travels for further generations,
Wisdom may be correlated to spirituality,
Following the path of the Almighty,
Being broadminded forever,
Behaving humane to others,
Developing thoughts with reasoning skills,

Saving the poor through our earnings,
Consoling the affected souls through our kind deeds,
Dedicating our energy to the human race,
Uplifting the knowledge of the literates in base,
Wiping the tears of struggling ones
Planning criteria for them to live in peace,
The cattles nd pets do find warm,
Protecting them all from every harm,
Never think cruelty to others
Quit from there, if you have shivers ,
The Lord will bless you with bowers,
While you stay unique with His showers,
Live like a busybee with wisdom,
Educate yourself not wasting your time seldom,
Expressing excellent freedom!!!!!
Dedicate yourself to the Lord's kingdom,
Let peace nd prosperity embrace you
And put you in sanctum!!!!
V.R.VIJAYALAKSHMI,graduate tr,cw group,,kanchipuram,Tamilnadu,India

**Politics** His remarks on the opposition, however, were anything but measured. "Look at how they are making noise — don't worry about those fellows," he told the crowd, speaking in Swahili

# Ruto takes his development case to Gusii, dismisses fractured opposition

President William Ruto has launched a four-day tour of Nyamira and Kisii counties, pledging KSh21B in roads and housing investment while dismissing opposition rivals as too divided to pose a credible threat ahead of the August 2027 general election.

**BY Anne Njeri**
*@themtkenyatimes*



President William Ruto launches projects in West Mugirango

President William Ruto yesterday launched a four-day development tour of the Gusii region, announcing KSh11B in road construction and rural electrification and a further KSh10B for affordable housing, while using the platform to publicly deride opposition leaders he described as already collapsing under the weight of their own internal divisions.

The tour opened at Nyamaiya Grounds in West Mugirango Constituency, Nyamira County, where the president attended an interdenominational church service before proceeding to launch and announce a series of infrastructure projects. It was his first visit to the region following an earlier postponement, and the reception from local leaders was warm — though the political subtext of the tour was unmistakable. With August 2027 approaching and the United Alternative Government consolidating its opposition campaign across the country, Ruto's choice to open his Gusii offensive with a development blitz was deliberate: he was making the case that delivery, not rhetoric, should determine the electorate's verdict.

His remarks on the opposition, however, were anything but measured. "Look at how they are making noise — don't worry about those fellows," he told the crowd, speaking in Swahili. "I will deal with them thoroughly; they have already fallen apart even before the time has come." The statement, characteristically combative, reflects a presidency increasingly confident in its development narrative even as the United Alternative Government mounts a nationally coordinated challenge under the WANTAM banner. Whether the opposition is as fractured as Ruto suggests, or whether the Kitengela rally of recent days tells a more complicated story, is a question the coming months will answer.

On substance, the president's pledges were specific. He confirmed the extension of the Rironi–Mau Summit dual carriageway through Kericho and Kisii towards Malaba — a commitment he made earlier at Nyabite Market — and outlined the KSh11B roads programme for Nyamira as part of a wider transport corridor ambition. "Our competitors should tell us what they offer," he said pointedly. "We are spending KSh11B on roads and rural electrification." He also reaffirmed the broad-based government arrangement with ODM, whose footprint in the Gusii region gives the partnership particular resonance. "We shall continue to work with our brothers in the broad-based government," he said.

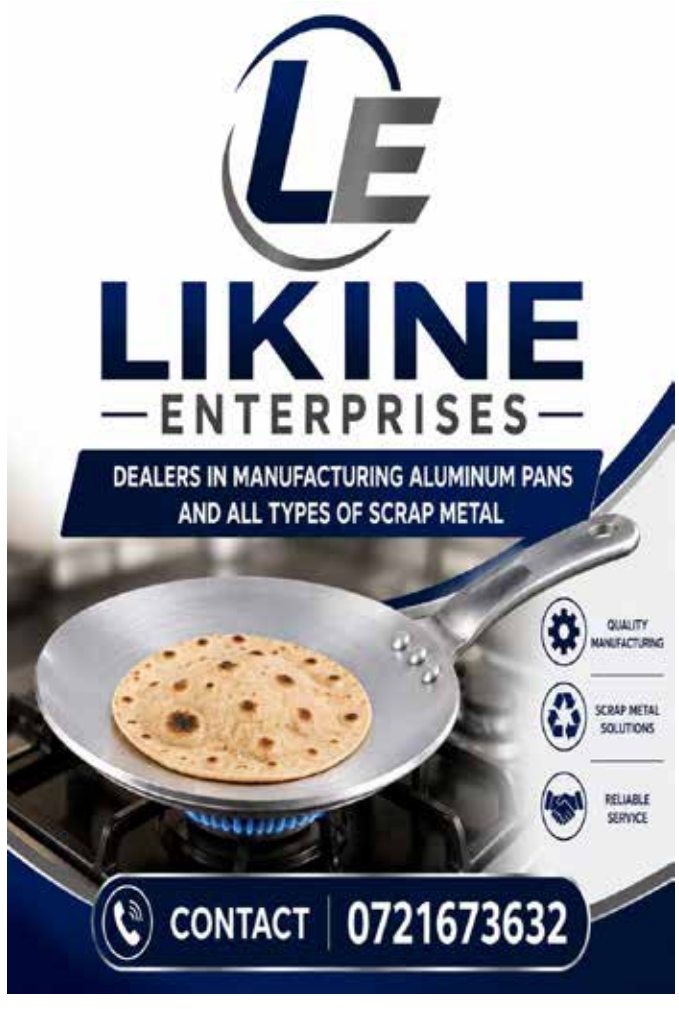
Local leaders flanking the president offered enthusiastic endorsements. Nyamira Governor Amos Nyaribo declared: "The development you have brought to our region, everyone can see with their own eyes. We will support your government." Kisii Governor Simba Arati added: "People will know we stand behind Ruto, and our people should not lose heart — we are with the government and will continue to be." A sharper note came from Kisii Women Representative Dorice Donya, who used the platform to press the president on coffee prices. "We ask you also to address the words on coffee prices. Our farmers are suffering under poor prices, while counterparts elsewhere continue to benefit from better rates," she said — a reminder that development tours, however well-staged, have a habit of surfacing grievances that the script did not anticipate.

National Assembly Chief Whip Sylvanus Osoro was equally direct in rebutting suggestions of a fracture within the governing alliance. "For those who think we have no unity — ODM and UDA are together and working side by side," he said.

Ruto is expected to launch additional projects in Kisii County today, with the four-day tour designed to anchor his administration's presence in a region whose electoral loyalties the opposition is actively contesting. In the politics of 2027, every road announced and every cow delivered is also a vote being argued for — and both sides of Kenya's gathering political contest know it.









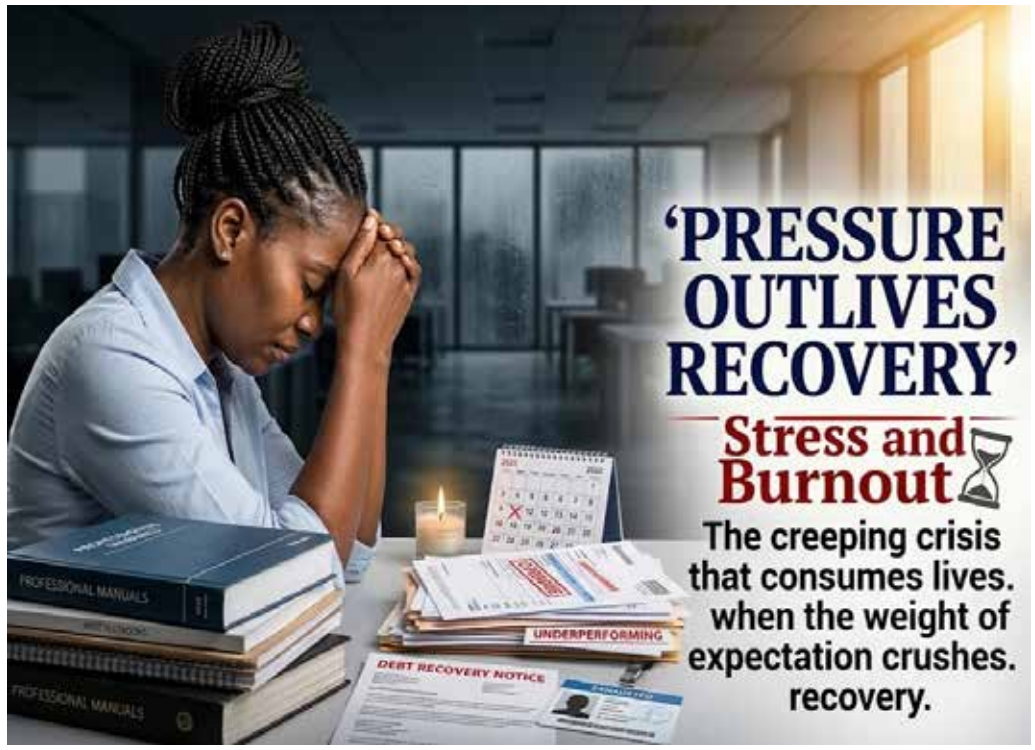

**Stress** At the physiological level, stress is a mobilisation. The heart rate rises, breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and attention narrows to the task at hand

# Stress and burnout: When pressure outlives recovery

## *Why the body's alarm system eventually turns against the person it was designed to protect*



By: Wanjohi. P. Mugambi
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Stress is the body's response to demand. Burnout is what happens when that demand goes on too long, recovery never quite arrives, and the capacity to keep going is gradually worn away. The distinction matters enormously — and it is one that our culture has largely failed to make. Stress, in itself, is not the enemy. It is adaptive. It sharpens attention, mobilises energy and marshals the body's resources to meet a challenge. Burnout is not simply stress that has grown louder. It is stress that has undergone a transformation. It marks the point at which the body's protective system stops protecting and starts consuming the very person it was meant to serve.

To understand burnout properly, three levels of analysis are needed: the physiological, the psychological, and the philosophical. Each illuminates a different dimension of the same condition. None of them alone tells the full story.

At the physiological level, stress is a mobilisation. The heart rate rises, breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and attention narrows to the task at hand. For short-term demands, this is exactly what the body needs to do. The problem arises when mobilisation becomes the permanent setting. When the body never receives the signal that the demand has passed, it stays on alert. Sleep becomes shallow — not because the person is unwilling to rest, but because the nervous system has not been told that danger is over. Concentration fragments. Immunity weakens. Irritability rises for reasons that feel disproportionate to their triggers.

The crucial point here is that the deficit compounds. Recovery is not simply the absence of work. It is an active physiological process in which the body restores what mobilisation has used up. When recovery is repeatedly deferred — one more deadline, one more commitment, one more week — the debt accumulates. What results is not ordinary tiredness, the kind that a good night's sleep resolves, but chronic depletion, a heaviness that persists even after rest, because the underlying debt has not been repaid. The person sleeps and wakes still tired. This is not weakness. It is arithmetic.

At the psychological level, burnout is distinguished from fatigue by three interrelated dimensions, first identified by psychologist Christina Maslach and now widely accepted in occupational health literature. The first is exhaustion — not sleepiness, but the felt experience of having nothing left inside to give. The second is detachment. The person begins to withdraw from work, from colleagues, sometimes from the people they love most, not from indifference but from a kind of unconscious self-preservation. Detachment reduces the immediate emotional cost of engagement, but it also drains meaning from the work and the relationships that once gave life its texture. The third dimension is diminished efficacy: a gathering sense that one is no longer competent, not because skill has vanished, but because the capacity to deploy it has been eroded.

These three dimensions feed each other in a closed loop. Exhaustion produces detachment. Detachment strips away meaning. The absence of meaning deepens exhaustion. This cycle explains why the well-intentioned advice to try harder, stay positive, or push through is not merely unhelpful but actively counterproductive. It addresses the surface behaviour while ignoring the structural depletion that makes the behaviour impossible to sustain.

What deepens the psychological trap is the way demand gets internalised. In many environments — professional, religious, domestic — endurance is moralised. Continuing without rest is read as commitment, strength, or devotion. Stopping to rest is read as selfishness, weakness, or lack of love. When a person absorbs this framework, the demand ceases to feel external. It becomes self-imposed. The language shifts accordingly. Instead of "I am being asked to do too much," the internal monologue becomes "I should be able to do more." Exhaustion gets reframed as virtue. Limits get reframed as failure. The person continues to give long after replenishment has ceased, and interprets the resulting collapse as a personal shortcoming rather than a predictable consequence of sustained demand without recovery. This is a distortion — but it is a socially produced distortion, learned from a culture that rewards giving and treats the need for replenishment as embarrassing.

This leads naturally to the philosophical level: the question of limits. Every human being is finite. That is not a flaw in the design. It is the design. A person has limited energy, limited attention, and limited emotional reserves. Those limits are what make meaningful action possible — they force choice, prioritisation and restraint. Without them, action diffuses. The person attempts to meet all demands simultaneously and meets none of them well.

The philosophical error embedded in contemporary cultures of work and care is the assumption that goodness requires limitlessness — that a good worker, a good parent, a good leader must give without end. This assumption is not only unsustainable; it is incoherent. A goodness that destroys the person practising it cannot be goodness. It is self-negation wearing the costume of virtue. Rest, then, must be understood differently. It is not the opposite of work. It is the condition that makes good work possible. It is not idleness. It is restoration — the deliberate rebuilding of capacity so that action can continue to be sustained, coherent and humane.

From this three-level account, the path forward becomes clear. At the physiological level, recovery must be treated as a structured practice, not an incidental reward for those who happen to find time for it. It requires regularity, predictability, and protection from interruption. Brief, deliberate pauses — moments of stillness, slow breathing, genuine disengagement from demand — matter as much as extended rest, because they teach the nervous system that mobilisation can end. At the psychological level, boundaries must be treated as a professional and moral competence, not a personal indulgence. Naming what is too much is not a refusal of responsibility. It is what makes responsibility sustainable over time. Those boundaries, however, require institutional support. A boundary that is punished is not a boundary. It is a risk that the most conscientious people will continue to absorb alone.

At the philosophical and social level, the deeper requirement is reciprocity. A system in which giving flows in one direction indefinitely will produce burnout regardless of how resilient the individuals within it are. Recovery, at this level, requires a reorganisation of care: those who give must also receive; those who carry must also be carried; those who serve must also be seen.

When burnout recurs — and it does recur — it is not evidence of personal failure. It is evidence that one of these three levels has weakened: recovery has been postponed again, a boundary has been quietly eroded, or reciprocity has collapsed. The right question is not "why are you tired again?" but "where has recovery failed, and how do we restore it?" That question is more accurate because it identifies the mechanism. It is also more humane, because it locates the problem where it actually lives.

Burnout is not laziness. It is not a lack of faith. It is not a lack of love. It is what happens when sustained demand, combined with insufficient recovery and the moralisation of endurance, overwhelms a person's capacity to respond — and when the very frameworks through which they make sense of their lives prevent them from recognising what is happening until it is already severe.

To address it, we must do more than encourage strength. We must restore recovery, rebuild boundaries, and re-establish reciprocity. When pressure is matched with rest, when demand is bounded by limits, and when giving is met with receiving, stress can remain what it was always meant to be: a temporary mobilisation to meet

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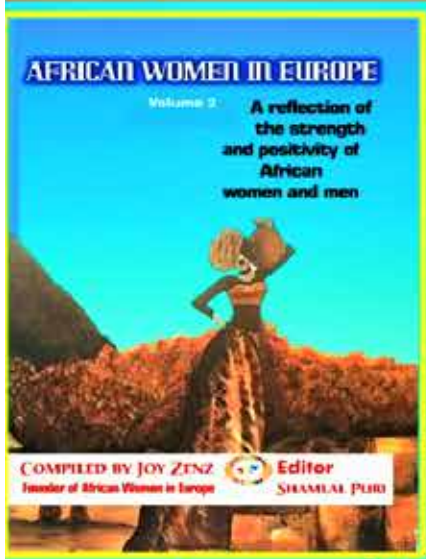
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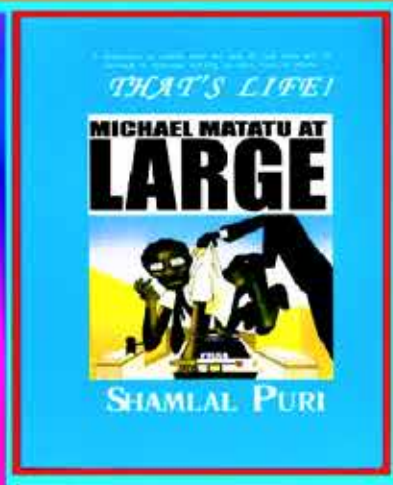
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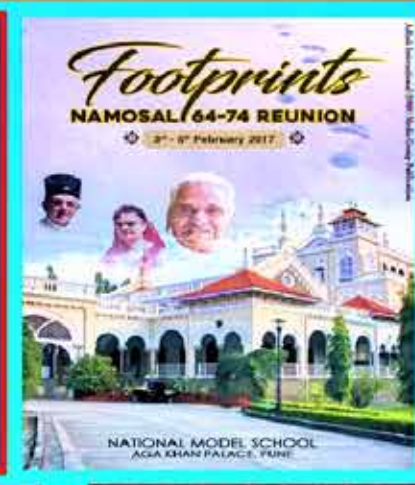
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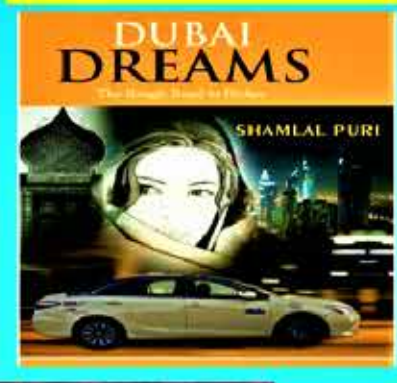


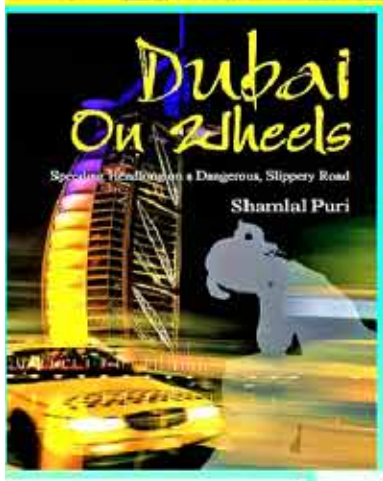


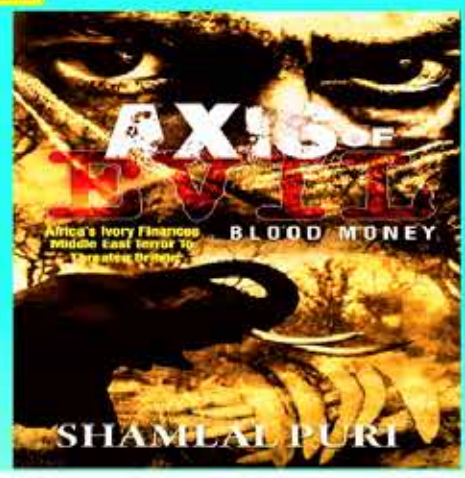


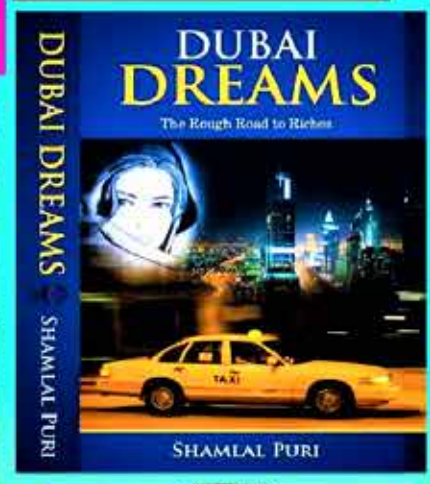




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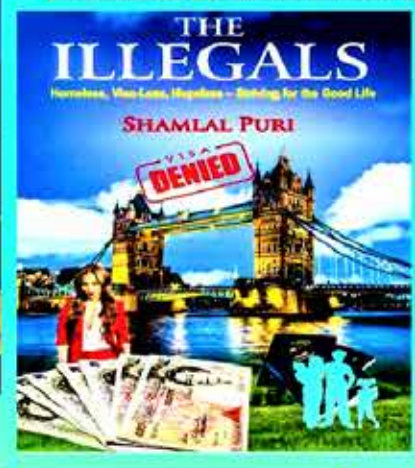


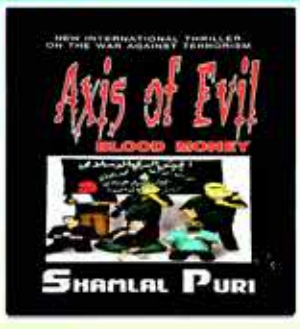




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**Prayers** **Dorsey was born in Villa Rica, Georgia, in 1899, into a household shaped by both religious devotion and musical energy**

# ‘Precious Lord, take my hand’: The prayer born from unbearable loss

## *How Thomas Dorsey’s double tragedy in 1932 gave the world its most beloved gospel hymn*

**BY Ashford Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*




**Illustration**

Some prayers are born in gratitude. Others emerge from moments when life becomes almost too painful to endure. “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” belongs firmly to the second category — a raw, honest appeal for divine guidance written at the precise moment when one man’s world collapsed around him. Behind its spare, searching words is the story of Thomas Andrew Dorsey, a Georgia-born musician whose personal catastrophe became the foundation of a song that has carried millions of people through their darkest hours.

Dorsey was born in Villa Rica, Georgia, in 1899, into a household shaped by both religious devotion and musical energy. From an early age he was drawn to two worlds that many considered incompatible: the church and the blues. As a young pianist in the American South, he developed a rare instinct for melody and emotion, eventually making his way to Chicago, where he became a fixture of the city’s vibrant music scene. It was there that his two musical worlds began, slowly and not without controversy, to converge.

His contribution to Christian music was nothing less than revolutionary. Dorsey helped establish gospel music as a formal and respected tradition — not by abandoning the blues but by pouring its emotional intensity into Christian themes of hope, suffering and redemption. The result was something new: music that spoke to ordinary people in ordinary circumstances, addressing poverty, temptation, grief and the daily need for God’s presence with an honesty that more formal church music rarely attempted. Not everyone welcomed this. Church leaders sometimes resisted his approach, finding the blues-inflected rhythms unsuitable for worship. Dorsey pressed on regardless.

By the early 1930s he had committed himself fully to gospel ministry and was composing prolifically. Then, in August 1932, everything changed. His pregnant wife, Nettie, died in childbirth. The infant son born in her final hours survived only briefly before he too died. Within the space of days, Dorsey had lost both his wife and his child. The double bereavement was a blow from which no faith formula could offer easy shelter.

For a man whose entire vocation was built on expressing the deepest human emotions through music, the tragedy produced a crisis of a particular kind. The very tools he had spent a lifetime developing seemed suddenly inadequate. What could he write that would not sound hollow? What melody could contain a grief that large? Like countless people before and since who have faced the sudden obliteration of their closest relationships, he confronted questions he could not answer: Why? What now? How does one simply continue?

It was in that raw, unresolved state that “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” came into being. Dorsey did not reach for triumph or resolution. He reached for honesty. The song he wrote was not a declaration that everything was fine or would be fine. It was a prayer from a man who admitted he was tired, weak and worn — and who asked, in the plainest possible language, for God to hold his hand and lead him home. That candour is precisely what makes the song so enduring. It does not demand that the person singing it pretend to be stronger than they are.

Dorsey set the words to a melody drawn from an older hymn tune, “Maitland,” reshaping it to carry the weight of his new composition. The song spread quickly through African American churches and beyond, finding audiences wherever people were acquainted with suffering — which is to say, everywhere. Its accessible language and deeply felt emotional truth meant that no particular level of theological education was required to feel its pull. Grief, after all, is a universal language.

Over the following decades, the hymn became woven into the fabric of American public mourning as well as private sorrow. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis in April 1968, “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” was sung at his funeral — a choice that felt instinctive to those who made it. The song had always belonged to communities that understood loss not as an abstract theological concept but as a lived, embodied reality. It had given voice to generations of African Americans navigating discrimination, violence and grief, and it continued to do so.

The lesson the hymn carries extends well beyond its historical context. It challenges a particular misunderstanding of faith — the idea that genuine trust in God means never feeling frightened, confused or overwhelmed. Dorsey’s song offers a different picture: that prayer can be an admission of weakness and still be an act of profound faith. That asking for help is not a failure of belief but its most honest expression.

This matters practically. There are seasons when the road ahead is simply not visible. A family loses someone without warning. A breadwinner faces sudden unemployment. A parent watches a child suffer and cannot intervene. In such moments, the expectation to remain composed and strong can itself become a burden. The hymn quietly releases people from that expectation. It says: you are allowed to need help. You are allowed to say so.

Dorsey’s story also carries a word for communities, not only individuals. Those walking alongside people in grief do not always need to offer explanations. They rarely need to supply reasons for why a tragedy occurred. What grieving people often need is someone willing to sit with them, listen without an agenda, offer practical help and allow sorrow to run its course without being hurried along. The hymn, in its patience and gentleness, models something of that posture.

It would be wrong, finally, to romanticise what Dorsey endured. The loss of his wife and child was not a price that needed to be paid for a great song to exist. It was a devastating human loss, full stop. The value of what he created lies not in any notion that his suffering was necessary but in the fact that, from within it, he found words that others could borrow when their own failed them.

That is the quiet miracle of “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.” A man at the end of his strength reached for God and, in doing so, left behind a prayer that has accompanied millions of people through some of the most difficult passages of their lives. His legacy is a reminder that faith does not always provide answers. Sometimes its most truthful expression is simply asking, with whatever strength remains, for the grace to take one more step.

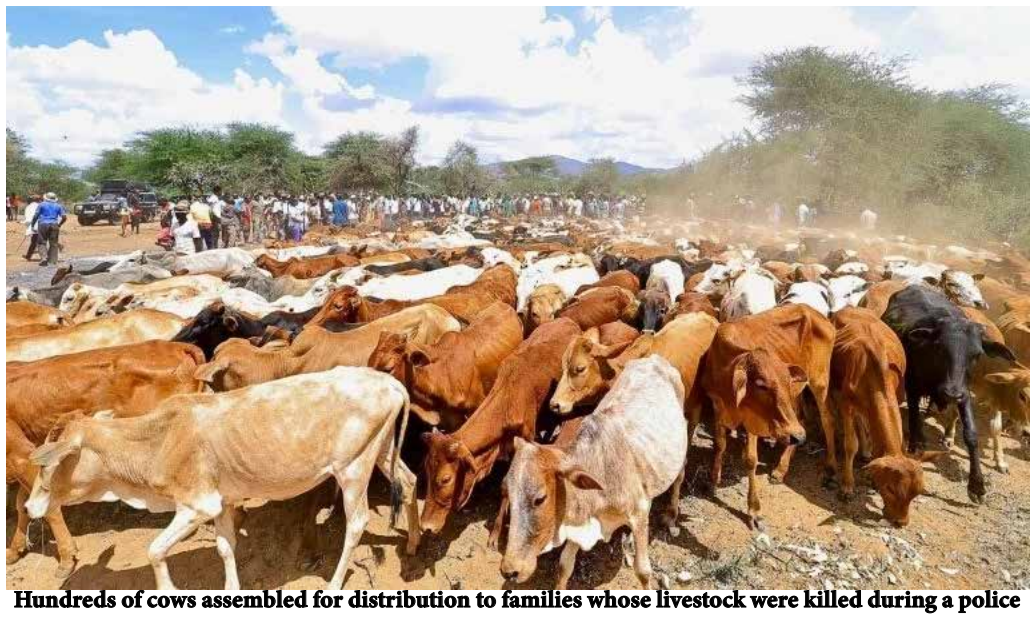


**News** The backdrop to the distribution is a story that generated significant national controversy. Between September 19 and 21, 2026, security forces turned their guns on pastoralists' livestock

# Governors step in where the state refused: Samburu families receive 435 cows

***Narok Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu and his Samburu counterpart Jonathan Lati Lelelit have distributed 435 replacement cattle to families who lost livestock during a multi-agency security operation in Samburu East in September — a gesture that underscores the national government's refusal to pay compensation and raises unresolved questions about accountability.***

**BY David Kimani**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Hundreds of cows assembled for distribution to families whose livestock were killed during a police security operation in Samburu East on Sunday, November 8|** *Photo:* Facebook - Stephen Letoo

Narok Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu and Samburu Governor Jonathan Lati Lelelit yesterday distributed 435 cattle to pastoralist families whose livestock were killed during a security operation in Samburu East, filling a gap left by the national government's explicit refusal to compensate the affected households.

The distribution took place at Naishamunye Grounds in an emotionally charged ceremony attended by Samburu elders and representatives of the 43 families who lost animals during the operation. The cattle were received with the customary gravity that livestock commands in pastoralist communities — animals that represent not merely property but the financial security, social standing and future of entire households. For families who had spent weeks navigating parliamentary petitions and ministerial stonewalling, the arrival of replacement cattle offered some measure of relief, even as the broader questions of accountability and justice remain unanswered.

The backdrop to the distribution is a story that generated significant national controversy. Between September 19 and 21, 2026, security forces turned their guns on pastoralists' livestock in Waso Ward, Samburu East, during a multi-agency operation launched to address banditry and recover livestock stolen from neighbouring Isiolo County. Governor Lelelit said his administration had supported the security operation, whose stated objectives included recovering stolen livestock and removing illegal firearms, but criticised the manner in which the operation was conducted, saying livestock belonging to residents had been killed. The governor's own tally of losses was detailed and location-specific. In Komgala, 102 cows were reported killed, while Nengardedi recorded 243 cows, 116 goats and 29 donkeys. Another 287 cows and 54 donkeys were reported killed at Lake Lash, while 132 cows died in Kapuru — amounting to 764 cows, 116 goats and 83 donkeys in total.

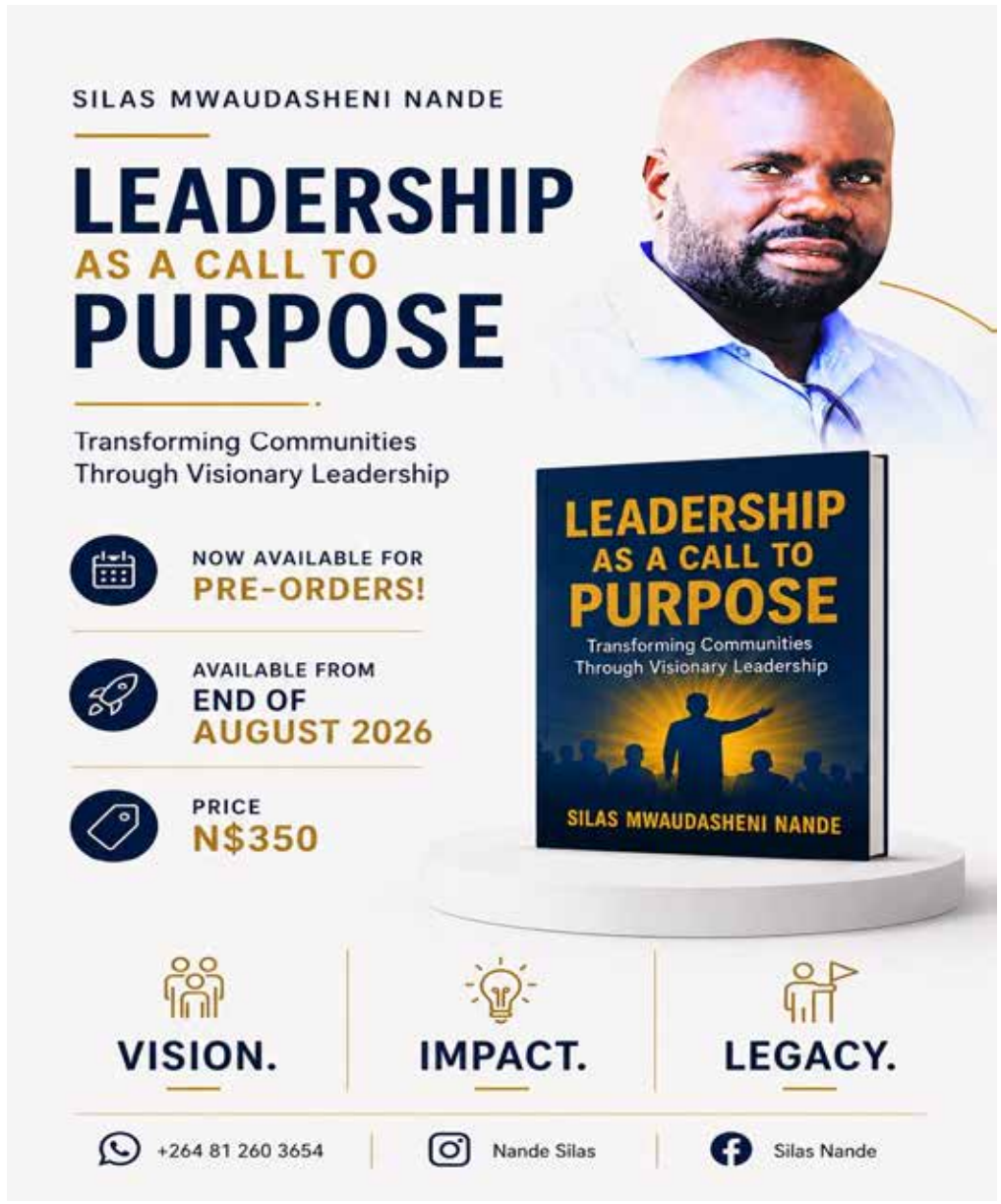
Led by Lelelit, affected residents presented a petition to the National Assembly's Security Committee on October 2, demanding KSh70M in compensation for losses they described as atrocities committed during the operation. "We have talked to the victims," Lelelit told legislators. "They are innocent, and even the Cabinet Secretary for Interior admitted there were transgressions in the operation. We are not asking for too much, but compensation for their mistakes."

The national government's response was blunt. Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, appearing before the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Administration and Internal Security on October 7, ruled out any payment from the state. "If I were to say we are compensating people, I would be opening a Pandora's box," Murkomen said. "I cannot be that reckless as a minister. We don't have that budgetary line in the ministry, and legally speaking, we cannot compensate." The CS also disputed the losses, saying police records indicated 237 livestock had been killed — a figure sharply lower than the 700-plus documented by the county government and formally reported to Archers' Post Police Station.

That dispute over numbers matters. Samburu County Women Representative Pauline Lenguri sought answers from the Ministry of Interior on the indiscriminate shooting of residents and livestock on September 19 and 21, citing 15 goats, two cows, 400 goats and 100 calves killed in one incident, with a further 198 cattle and 14 donkeys killed at Lekilash on September 23. The gap between the government's figure and the county's count — a difference of some 500 animals — has not been resolved, and no independent audit of the losses has been publicly announced. Former Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i, now an opposition figure, urged the Maa community to pursue compensation through the courts, arguing the government's refusal to pay left legal action as the only remaining avenue.

The 435 cows distributed yesterday, while a meaningful act of solidarity between two pastoral communities and their governors, do not close the account. The figure falls short of the cattle losses alone as recorded by the county government, and covers none of the goats or donkeys reported killed. It also does not address the constitutional question that Governor Lelelit himself framed in the aftermath of the operation: when does a legitimate security intervention become collective punishment of the innocent? That question — and the government's silence on accountability for individual officers involved in the operation — hangs over the ceremony at Naishamunye Grounds.

For the pastoralist families of Samburu East, livestock is not a commodity. It is the savings account, the dowry, the inheritance and the safety net — all in one breathing animal. The loss of hundreds of cattle in a single operation represents a generational wound that 435 replacement cows begin, but do not complete, healing. When governors must reach into their own networks to repair what a government operation destroyed, the state has not simply failed to compensate — it has failed to account for itself.



**Politics** **Addressing UDA delegates during his entry into the party, Aruasa thanked them for attending the meeting and supporting his political ambitions.**

# Aruasa Vows to End Development Inequality in Kitutu Chache South, Targets 2027 MP Seat

**BY Elizabeth Angira**
*@themtkenyatimes*



**Kitutu Chache South parliamentary aspirant and businessman Kevin Aruasa addressing the delegates has pledged to transform the constituency by championing development and improving residents' access to essential services. |** Photo: Elizabeth Angira

Kitutu Chache South parliamentary aspirant and businessman Kevin Aruasa has pledged to transform the constituency, arguing that it has lagged behind other constituencies in development due to what he described as limited alignment with the national government.

Aruasa, who recently joined the ruling United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Party, said his decision was informed by the need to position Kitutu Chache South to benefit from government development programmes and resources.

He accused the incumbent MP, Anthony Kibagendi, of failing to secure the constituency's place in the national government's development agenda, saying residents deserve better access to infrastructure, healthcare, education and other essential services.

Addressing UDA delegates during his entry into the party, Aruasa thanked them for attending the meeting and supporting his political ambitions.

He said extensive consultations had been held on the challenges facing the constituency, Kisii County and the country, adding that the decision to join UDA was guided by the interests and aspirations of local residents.

"I want to assure my people from Kitutu Chache South that I have made this decision for their benefit. Today marks the beginning of a new journey for us as a constituency. We must work together to ensure that we access development, proper healthcare, equity, justice and information that can help our people improve their lives," he said.

Aruasa called on residents to support his bid in the 2027 General Election, saying their votes would be instrumental in bringing the change they desire.

He promised to promote peaceful politics, unity and cooperation, urging residents to put aside their differences and work towards a common development agenda.

He also expressed gratitude to the UDA delegates for endorsing his political ambition, describing their support as a significant step towards his parliamentary bid.

**Wants Kitutu Chache South to Be Part of Government**

The aspirant maintained that his decision to join UDA was driven by his desire to ensure Kitutu Chache South becomes an active participant in the national government's decision-making and development agenda after the 2027 elections.

"We want to be part of the government. We do not want to remain outside the government. We want to be equal partners in the government of William Ruto come 2027. We do not want to be spectators or visitors," Aruasa said.

He argued that the constituency should enjoy equal opportunities in the allocation of development projects, just like other areas that have benefited from their close working relationship with the national government.

**Call for Democratic Choice**

On party nominations and the possibility of political zoning, Aruasa insisted that residents must be allowed to exercise their democratic rights by choosing leaders of their preference.

He argued that leadership should be determined by the people's will rather than political arrangements imposed on them.

"One of the qualities of a good leader is not about zoning. We are not going to allow conditions that undermine the freedom of the people. Voting is a right, and you cannot give it and take it away at the same time. Our people must be allowed to exercise their democratic right and vote wherever they want," he said.

He further expressed confidence that the party would protect the nomination process from interference, insisting that credible elections were necessary to uphold the will of the electorate.

**Appeals to President Ruto to Visit the Constituency**

Aruasa also used the occasion to appeal to President William Ruto to visit Kitutu Chache South and assess the development challenges facing residents.

He questioned why the constituency had reportedly been left out of the President's planned development engagements, arguing that its residents also deserved attention from the national government.

He said the President's position as Head of State made him a symbol of national unity and called on him to visit the area despite the political differences between local leaders and the national administration.

"We want to request Your Excellency, please come and see where we are. Even if we feel let down by the leaders we elected, we are here as people who know where the shoe pinches most. We will show you the projects we need and where development should begin," he said.

Aruasa added that with about ten months remaining before the 2027 General Election, the national government could still initiate projects that would improve service delivery and the living standards of residents.

He expressed optimism that the President could consider some of the constituency's development needs, particularly after engagements between UDA party officials and the Head of State.

As he positions himself for the Kitutu Chache South parliamentary seat, Aruasa says his priority will be to secure more development opportunities, improve access to essential services and ensure the constituency has a stronger voice in national government.



**Kitutu Chache South MP and UDA National Treasurer Japhet Nyakundi places a UDA cap on Kevin Aruasa's head during his official entry into the ruling part |** Photo: Elizabeth Angira

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Effects of rising technology exposure on the youth

By **Felisters Nyabaro**




Technology has become inseparable from daily life, and Kenya's youth are at the centre of that shift. Smartphones, tablets and computers have opened extraordinary doors — to information, learning and global connection. But the same screens that empower are quietly extracting a toll that parents, teachers and policymakers can no longer afford to ignore.

Social media is the sharpest edge of this double-edged reality. Young people are spending hours online each day, often at the direct expense of their studies, their sleep and their physical health. Reduced activity, fractured concentration and declining self-esteem have become familiar complaints in classrooms and clinics alike. Cyberbullying, once a fringe concern, has moved to the centre of the conversation about adolescent mental health. The evidence is consistent and growing: unchecked screen time is damaging young minds at precisely the moment those minds most need nurturing.

None of this means technology itself is the enemy. Used well, it remains one of the most powerful tools available for learning, creativity and communication. The problem is not the device — it is the absence of structure around it.

The solution lies not in restriction alone but in deliberate, informed guidance. Parents must engage rather than simply police. Teachers must integrate digital literacy into the curriculum. And young people themselves must be equipped to navigate online spaces with critical awareness.

Technology will define the future. Whether it builds or breaks the next generation depends on the choices made today.

## Community cooperation and crime prevention: Safety is everyone's business

By **Ryan Omondi Oluoch**
***Assistant Editor: Tina Ogutu | Editor: Phelix Akello***




Crime does not wait for institutions to get organised. It moves into the spaces left by poverty, unemployment and broken trust — and it stays until communities decide, collectively, that they will not let it.

Public safety is not a spectator concern. Every resident, business owner and parent has a stake in whether their neighbourhood is secure. Yet Kenya's approach to crime prevention too often treats it as a law enforcement problem rather than a civic one. It is both — and that distinction matters.

Community policing works when trust works. Residents who believe their reports will be handled fairly and their identities protected are far more likely to share information that helps officers prevent and solve crime. Where that trust has collapsed, insecurity follows.

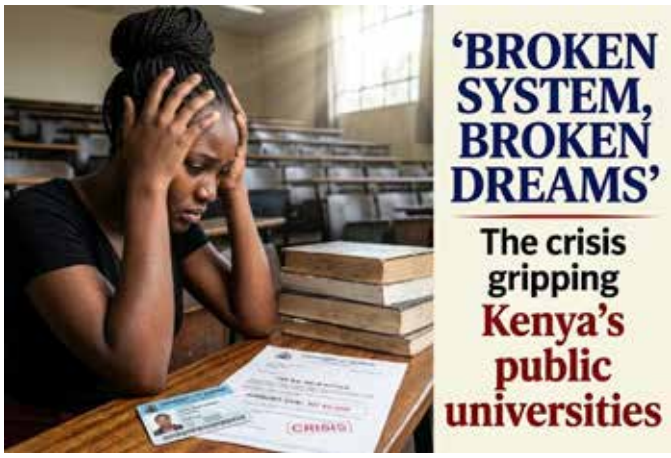
Technology has expanded the criminal frontier. Online fraud, identity theft and impersonation now sit alongside conventional offences. Kenyans should guard passwords, avoid unsolicited financial requests and report suspicious transactions through official channels only. Financial institutions must equally strengthen systems and educate customers — not as a courtesy, but as a responsibility.

The justice system depends on the integrity of each part. The presumption of innocence is not a technicality — it is the foundation of fair justice. Media outlets must distinguish between arrest, charge and conviction, and refuse to publish unverified accusations. Reputation, once damaged in print, is rarely restored.

A safer Kenya is not built by police alone. It is built neighbourhood by neighbourhood, report by report. Safety is shared work. The question is whether enough of us are willing to show up for it.

## Inside the crisis gripping Kenya's public universities

By **Benedict Sese**




Kenya's public universities are in crisis — and the evidence is no longer possible to ignore. Lecture halls built for hundreds now hold thousands. Departments operate with a fraction of the staff they need. Lecturers miss classes without consequence, and when they do appear, too many recycle old notes and past papers rather than teach. Meanwhile, students arrive on campus and promptly stop studying, convinced that admission alone was the hardest part. Somewhere between underfunding, overcrowding and a culture that has quietly normalised failure, the university has stopped being a place of learning and become a system in managed decline.

The rot runs deeper than infrastructure. Academic culture has collapsed in ways that money alone cannot fix. Students who rarely attend lectures and lecturers who rarely challenge them have reached an unspoken accommodation — one in which mediocrity is the agreed standard and questioning it is treated as provocation. Those who demand accountability are dismissed. Those who exploit the vulnerable face little consequence. Reports of staff demanding sexual favours from students with missing marks, or extorting those in desperate circumstances, point to institutions that have lost their moral bearings entirely.

The question is no longer whether there is a crisis. It is whether anyone with the power to act is sufficiently disturbed to do something about it. Kenya cannot afford institutions that exist in name only. The universities built to shape this nation's future must first be honest about how badly they have lost their way.

## Kenya's mineral wealth or community displacement: The battle for Mrima Hill

By **James Kweri**




Beneath Mrima Hill in Kwale County lies what could be one of Kenya's most consequential economic opportunities — deposits of niobium and rare-earth minerals essential to electric vehicles, wind turbines and the technologies driving the global green energy transition. On 5 November, the Associated Press reported that the Kenyan government was evaluating five bids for the site's development. The numbers are significant. The stakes, for the communities living above those deposits, are higher still.

Local farmers have raised concerns about inadequate information, potential relocation and environmental consequences. Their anxiety is legitimate. Land, for families whose food security and economic survival depend on it, is not a commodity to be offset by a compensation cheque. Mining Cabinet Secretary Hassan Joho has stated that consultation preceded the tender and that a successful bidder would subsequently engage the community. That sequencing — engagement after selection — is precisely where trust breaks down.

The cultural dimension complicates matters further. Mrima Hill contains a kaya, a sacred forest tied to the Digo community's ancestral heritage, designated a national monument in 1992. No financial projection can assign a market value to that. The legal dimension is live too: a civil society organisation has challenged a proposed Kenya-US mineral agreement in court, arguing that public participation was inadequate.

Kenya's mineral wealth is real. So is its obligation to the people sitting above it. The measure of this project will not be the tonnage extracted. It will be whether the farmers kept their land, their dignity and their voice.




**Sports >>** ***Ødegaard's late rebound winner keeps Arsenal top while Nottingham Forest inflict a damaging defeat on City**

# Arsenal shine as Manchester City suffer another Premier League blow



By **Rachael Njoki**

Football fans witnessed sharply contrasting fortunes in the Premier League on Saturday as Arsenal ground out a hard-fought victory over Hull City while Manchester City suffered a damaging 3–1 defeat against Nottingham Forest — a result that further complicated City's title ambitions and tightened the race at the top of the table.

Arsenal arrived at the Emirates Stadium as heavy favourites, but Hull City had other ideas. The visitors set up a disciplined defensive structure that frustrated the home side throughout the opening exchanges, denying Arsenal the space and rhythm they typically rely upon. Despite dominating possession and creating a succession of opportunities, Mikel Arteta's side could not find a way through in the first half, leaving Emirates faithful increasingly anxious as the clock ticked down.

The deadlock finally broke in the 72nd minute in a moment of sharp opportunism. Hull goalkeeper Konstantinos Tzolakis produced a fine save to deny Noni Madueke, but Arsenal captain Martin Ødegaard reacted quickest to the rebound, stabbing the ball into the net from close range. It was not the flowing, expansive football Arsenal's supporters had hoped for, but in tight Premier League matches, the ability to manufacture a winning moment from relatively little is often the difference between champions and contenders.

The single goal proved sufficient. Arsenal held firm through the final stages, keeping a clean sheet and collecting three points that maintained their position at the summit of the Premier League table. The victory, while not spectacular, spoke to the team's maturity and their capacity to grind out results when their best football eludes them — a quality that title-winning sides invariably possess.

The mood could not have been more different at the City Ground in Nottingham, where Manchester City endured yet another miserable evening. Nottingham Forest produced a commanding 3–1 victory over Pep Guardiola's side, a result that continued what has become a deeply troubling run of Premier League form for the reigning champions.

City had shown flashes of their familiar quality and pulled a goal back to make it 3–1 at one stage, but Forest were largely in control and deserved their victory. The City Ground, one of the more hostile and atmospheric venues in the top flight, proved an uncomfortable setting for a City side that is visibly struggling to replicate the dominance that has defined the club in recent seasons.

The defeat pushed Manchester City down to second place in the Premier League standings, with the gap to Arsenal at the top now a source of genuine concern in the blue half of Manchester. Guardiola faces mounting questions about his squad's resilience, consistency and whether the depth that once made City virtually untouchable remains sufficient to sustain a title challenge across the full course of the season.

For Arsenal, the picture looks considerably brighter. With Ødegaard leading by example at crucial moments and the defensive unit maintaining concentration to the final whistle, the Gunners are demonstrating the kind of winning mentality that eluded them in previous title challenges. The Emirates faithful will be daring to dream once more, particularly with City dropping points at a rate that would once have been unthinkable.

As the Premier League season moves into its middle phase, Saturday's results have sharpened the narrative considerably. Arsenal lead. City are chasing. And the season, still with much to play for, is shaping up to be one of the more compelling in recent memory.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** ***From a cathedral procession on Friday to a trophy raised under the floodlights on Saturday, Season 5 delivered a final that will define this league for years**

# Kasananga are champions: KISOBA League Season 5 final at Kakyeka

By **Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza**

My voice is gone. My shoes are still full of Kakyeka dust. My phone is packed with videos I have already watched ten times, and I am still not tired of them. If you were at Kakyeka Stadium in Mbarara on Saturday, you do not need this article. You felt it. You lived it. But for those who were not there, what happened on 7 November 2026 deserves to be written down properly.

Kasananga FC are the champions of KISOBA League Season 5. And they earned every bit of it.

The weekend did not begin with football. It began on Friday with a flag-off, a procession through Mbarara town and Mass at Nyamitanga Cathedral — big men, men with beards and children and jobs and responsibilities, walking together like they were still boys at Kitabi Seminary. One man turned to me and said: "I have not come back for Mass like this in years. This league brought me back." That sentence stayed with me the entire weekend, because that is what KISOBA truly is. Before it is a league, it is a homecoming.

By Saturday morning, Kakyeka was already alive. Buses rolling in, drums beating, team colours everywhere. By 10am the stadium had ceased to be just a stadium — it was a market, a church, a school compound and a football ground folded into one. Quarter-finals, semi-finals, a women's game, a veterans' match, entertainment, and then the final at 4:30pm. Nobody came merely to watch. Everybody came to belong.

The quarter-finals showed no mercy. Kasananga against Valiants. Elites against Team Haven. Giants against Men of Men. Jamaican Bees against Ghetto. Eight teams, four games — lose and go home. Every match carried the weight of a final. If you looked away for five minutes, you missed something: a goal, a save, a tackle that made the whole stand gasp.

It was the semi-finals, though, that defined this season. Kasananga's semi-final told you everything about why they became champions. They did not play the prettiest football. What they did was harder: they stayed calm. When pressed, they did not panic — they passed, held, waited. Their midfield kept the ball like men guarding something precious. Their defence blocked everything that came near the box. When they got their chance, they took it without waste or ceremony. By the final whistle of their semi-final they looked tired, but not finished. They looked like they were just getting started.

The other semi-finalists each brought a different identity to Kakyeka. One team was the fittest outfit on show all day — full-backs overlapping like wingers, wingers tracking back like full-backs, pressing hard from first whistle to last. Another was the muscle of the tournament: big, physical, honest football built on winning duels, dominating headers and putting the ball in the box. When they scored, the stand shook. One of their players cramped up badly, took treatment on the touchline, and sprinted straight back on as though nothing had happened. That is not fitness. That is pride. The fourth semi-finalist was the crowd's favourite — quick feet, clever one-twos, a winger who made the whole stadium stand up every time he received the ball because everyone knew something was about to happen. Their semi-final was the most open game of the day, end to end, chance after chance. Football is cruel; only two teams can reach a final. But all four of those semi-finalists gave Kakyeka something people will be discussing well into Season 6.

By the time the final kicked off at 4:30pm, the sun was dropping




and the floodlights were coming on. Kakyeka looked beautiful. The first half was tight and tense — nobody willing to make the first mistake, both teams carrying the fatigue of a long day but refusing to show it. Every tackle was cheered like a goal. The second half was different: faster, louder, more emotional. Kasananga's supporters found another gear, and that chant — "Kasananga! Together Always!" — echoed so many times across the stadium that I expect to hear it in my sleep. Kasananga, true to their name, stayed together. When one man was beaten, another covered. When they were pressed, they held shape. That is not tactics. That is brotherhood. When the final whistle went, grown men cried — not from sadness, but from the particular relief of a wait finally ended.

On the stage afterwards, I took a photograph I will keep. Kasananga players in white shirts, black shorts and black socks, gold medals around their necks. One man holding the golden trophy aloft. Another holding the MVP award. A supporter in front of them raising their white flag — football, crossed axes, and two words: Together Always. Behind them, a banner reading Champions Season 5. Around them, the boards of the sponsors who made the day possible: Guinness, Pepsi, Stanbic Bank FlexiPay and NBS Sport. It was not a polished photograph. It was a real one — sweat, dust, smiles and tears, all of it together.

Kasananga are champions, and they are deserving ones. But the teams they beat — Valiants, Elites, Haven, Giants, Men of Men, Jamaican Bees and Ghetto — made them champions. Without the pressure those sides applied across the quarters and semis, there is no story worth telling. KISOBA League Season 5 was bigger, louder, better organised and more emotionally charged than anything this competition has produced before. When Season 6 comes, every team in that field will want what Kasananga have right now.

But for now, let them enjoy it. From Kakyeka Stadium, Mbarara — a day that began with Mass at a cathedral and ended with a trophy raised high under the floodlights — the crown belongs to one club.

Kasananga FC. Champions of KISOBA League Season 5. Together Always.






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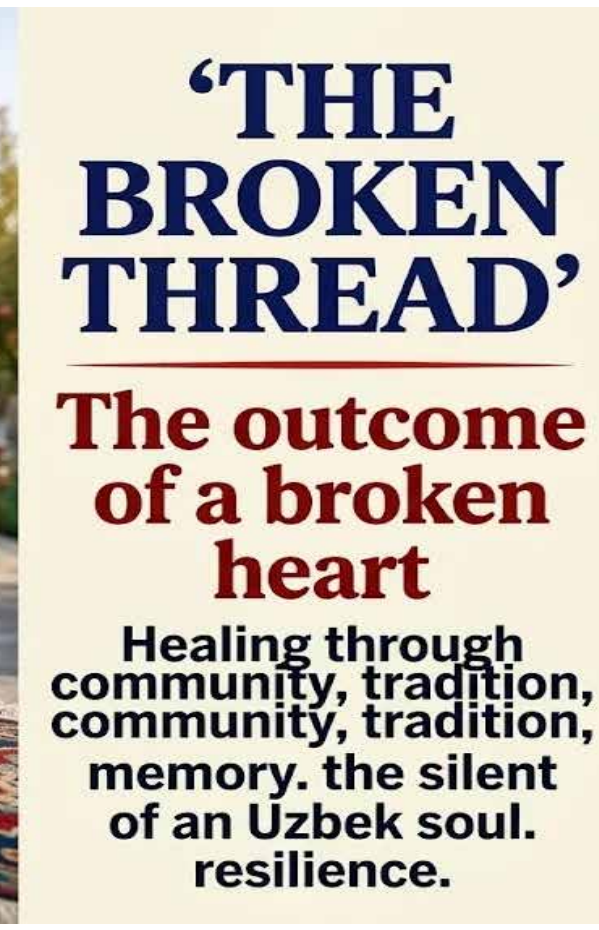
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# The outcome of a broken heart



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Zaynab is 12 years old. Although she is still young, she has already faced many harsh trials in life. Her father abandoned her when she was just a baby, and her mother, Dilshoda, went abroad to work when Zaynab was only five years old. Zaynab was left in the care of her sister-in-law, Farida. Every single day of her life passed in pain, sorrow, and agony. Her sister-in-law would constantly torment her, saying, "You are a miserable orphan. Your father disowned you, and your mother dumped you on me. You depend entirely on my mercy." The poor little girl kept all her pain bottled up inside, thinking, "If my mom finds out how much I am suffering, she won't be able to bear it and will fall ill."

The young girl would pour her deepest feelings onto paper in the form of stories, and she excelled in every subject at school. One day, her teacher said to her:

"Zaynab, my dear, a nationwide competition called 'Young Creators' has been announced. The first-place winner will receive a large cash prize. You have a real gift and talent for creative writing. Get ready, you are going to participate."

The little girl replied:

"Teacher, I want to participate so much, but I can't."

"Why can't you?" her teacher asked in surprise.

"My sister-in-law won't allow me."

"If your sister-in-law doesn't allow it, you ask your mother. She will give you permission."

"Teacher, you know this well yourself—my mother is abroad. I live under my sister-in-law's roof, and I cannot go against her wishes."

"Never give up on your dreams just because of what your sister-in-law wants! I will get the permission myself, you just keep preparing," the teacher said firmly.

"If you could do that, I would be so happy," Zaynab said, her eyes shining with newfound hope.

Despite the teacher calling the sister-in-law to the school three times, she never showed up. Left with no choice, the teacher went straight to Zaynab's house. At first, the sister-in-law flatly refused to let her participate. Finally, the teacher lost her patience and said sharply:

"I don't even need your permission; I only came out of courtesy to let you know. Zaynab might be under your roof right now, but her mother is her primary legal guardian. You have children of your own—put them in this girl's shoes for once!" With that, she took the girl and walked out of the house.

Walking down the road, the poor girl spoke up anxiously:

"Teacher, you shouldn't have done that. Now she won't leave me in peace; she might even kick me out of the house."

But her teacher comforted her:

"Don't worry, she cannot harm you. Don't think about that. Right now, the two of us will have lunch, and then we'll go to school to prepare for the competition."

The little girl softly pleaded:

"Just please... don't let my mom know about this incident."

The process of preparing for the competition was far from easy. At first, she would practice every day from morning until dusk at school with her teacher, and after sunset, she would stay up all night at home, nursing the pain of her sister-in-law's daily beatings. Later, seeing her student's miserable and battered condition, the teacher stopped sending her home and started taking Zaynab to her own house. Zaynab would tell her mother over the phone: "I am preparing for the competition with my teacher, which is why I'm staying over." The teacher had also called the mother to get her permission, using the competition as the reason.

A considerable amount of time passed. The young girl won the prestigious first place in the republican stage of the competition and was awarded a prize of 100 million UZS. Her creative work was widely covered in the mass media. The whole of Uzbekistan came to know the young girl. Hearing about her daughter's massive success, her mother rushed back from abroad. Even her father saw her on television and deeply regretted his past actions. After a long search, he tracked his daughter down and begged for her forgiveness. But Zaynab did not forgive him.

After all, how could she forgive someone who had never once held her close as a daughter, someone she hadn't seen at all in 12 long years?! Her mother immediately bought a house, and they moved out together. The little girl was finally free from her sister-in-law's cruelty once and for all.

One day, while the mother and daughter were sitting and talking, the doorbell rang. When Zaynab opened the door, she saw Farida's two children—Asal and Azim—standing there. Both of them had tears streaming down their faces. With a trembling voice, Azim asked:

"Is your mom home?"

Hearing the voice from inside, Dilshoda came out and asked anxiously:

"What's wrong? What happened? Why are you both crying?"

With tears in her eyes, Asal sobbed:

"Auntie, please come quickly! A car hit my mom and dad! The doctors told us to fetch the adults..."

Dilshoda rushed to the hospital immediately. The doctors explained that their condition was critical and that they needed immediate surgery. Dilshoda said, "Please, do whatever surgery is necessary, just save their lives," and took full responsibility for all the medical expenses. However, despite the operations, both patients passed away. As she lay dying, Farida wept bitterly and begged Zaynab and Dilshoda for forgiveness.

And so, Asal and Azim were left as helpless orphans in the care of their aunt. This was the tragic and mournful consequence of breaking someone's heart and bringing misery to an innocent orphan.

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