



Kenya's Democracy: The Staggering Cost Of Freedom's Promise

Kenya's 2027 general election will require at least 61.7 billion Kenyan shillings approximately \$455 million to conduct, making it Africa's most expensive electoral exercise on a per-voter basis. At roughly \$20 per registered voter, this figure dwarfs the continental average of \$5 and surpasses the electoral costs of neighboring Rwanda (\$0.05 per voter), Uganda (\$4), and Tanzania (\$5.16). Page 18

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News>> Kindiki: Muthende Is The Best Choice For Mbeere North

P. 8. Deputy President Kithure Kindiki said UDA candidate for Mbeere North by-election, Mr. Leonard Wamuthende Leo, is the best to take the constituency forward.



News>> A Night Of Honour And National Pride At The Jamhuri Kenya Awards Gala

P. 12. Kenya's spirit of excellence, unity and national transformation took center stage on Saturday night as the Jamhuri Kenya Awards (JKA) hosted its 4th Edition Heroes Awarding Ceremony Gala at the prestigious Argyle Grand Hotel, Nairobi.

Opposition Warns Of By-Election Intimidation

⚡ The united opposition has escalated its political offensive across multiple regions, accusing leaders allied to the Kenya Kwanza administration of plotting to interfere with upcoming by elections and orchestrating intimidation tactics against their supporters. In a co-ordinated show of strength, senior figures including Jubilee Party Deputy Leader Dr. Fred Matiang'i, NARC Kenya Party Leader Martha Karua, Trans Nzoia Governor George Nitembeya, Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi, and Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji led rallies in Kisii, Nyamira, and Mbeere North, vowing to resist any manipulation and to use the mini polls as a decisive political statement ahead of the 2027 general election.



Jubilee Party Deputy Leader Dr. Fred Matiang'i, NARC Kenya Party Leader Martha Karua and united opposition spokesman Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi campaign tour across Nyamira County.

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Mbeere North Gears Up For The D-Day

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyetimes

Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures

The people of Mbeere North are sending a powerful message ahead of the Thursday's by-elections, reaffirming their commitment to clean governance, public participation, and democratic rights. Over the past week, United Opposition leaders led by former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua have been engaging residents across Ishiara, Kanyuambora, and Siakago, inspiring hope and a renewed call for accountability. Speakers have emphasized that intimidation, bribery, or coercion will not sway the electorate. Residents of Kanyuambora and Siakago pledged to exercise their democratic rights fully, with the by-election set to chart the course of political, economic, and social liberation in the constituency. Campaigning for the seat is entering its final stages, with Newton Kariuki, popularly known as Karish, receiving enthusiastic backing from local leaders including National Assembly Speaker Emeritus JB Muturi and Senator Lenny Kivuti. Yesterday, beyond politics, the leadership team also took time to strengthen community bonds and faith. In Ishiara, congregants worshiped together at ACK St. Stephen's Karangare Church, reinforcing the message that national progress is tied to moral and spiritual fortitude. In a moment of personal reflection and solidarity, the leaders visited the family of Senator Lenny Kivuti to offer condolences following the passing of his mother, Canon Penina Ciambogo Ngúngi. Remembered as a devoted woman of faith, Canon Penina's life of service, kindness, and spiritual guidance left a lasting imprint on the community.



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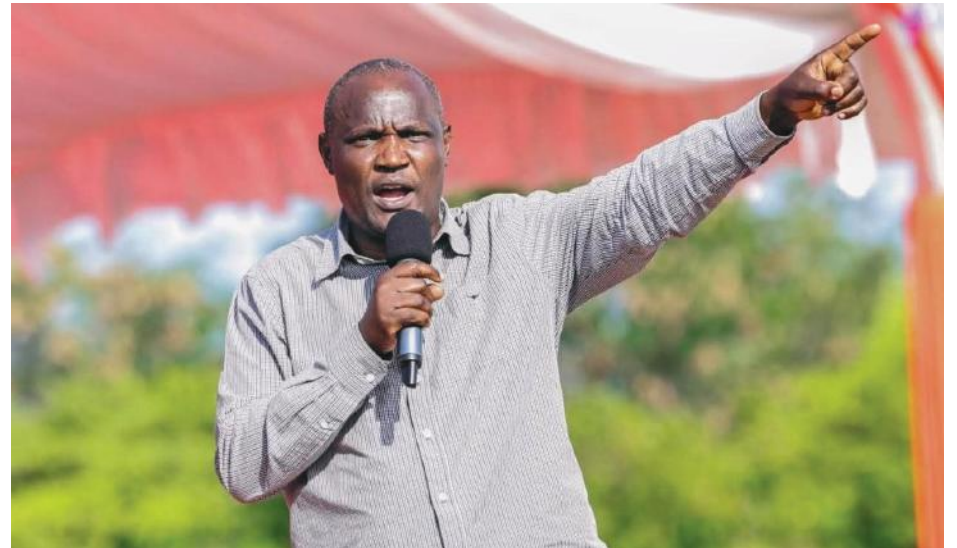
Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia arrived in Nairobi last evening at the start of his official visit to Kenya. He was received at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport by Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Hon Musalia W Mudavadi. The Prime Minister will hold talks with President William Ruto aimed at further deepening the longstanding relations between Kenya and Malaysia.



Cabinet Secretary for Energy and Petroleum Opiyo Wandayi (in a reflector jacket) poses for a photo during the commissioning of the Rural Electrification project at one of the homes in the Kagito area, Uriri Sub-County, on Saturday. During the event, CS Wandayi hinted at upgrading the Gogo Hydro Power Plant from 2 megawatts to at least 8 megawatts at a cost of Sh6 billion. He said the upgrade, scheduled for commissioning next year, would help address perennial power blackouts in South Nyanza, boosting social and economic activities in the region.



Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Eric Mugaa inspected ongoing construction of a major irrigation canal in Mwea's Mutithi area, a Sh1 billion project set to support irrigation for 4,000 acres. The CS said the project, being implemented by three contractors, is progressing well and is expected to be completed by August next year. He added that the expansion will further boost Mwea's growth, transforming the area into a 24-hour working economy with expanding milling, irrigation, transport, and market activities.



The race to fill the political space long occupied by former Prime Minister Raila Odinga intensified over the weekend after National Treasury Cabinet Secretary John Mbadi signalled his willingness to help steer ODM's future direction. Speaking at the Jomo Kenyatta Sports Grounds during a fundraiser for Kibuye market traders, Mbadi, one of ODM's longest-serving figures, said he remains firmly rooted in the party and cautioned members against reducing it to a perpetual protest movement. Mbadi stressed that ODM must shift from reactionary politics to proactive preparation for power.



Kibabii University Vice-Chancellor Prof Isaac Ipara Odeo has attributed the institution's success to community support and stakeholder commitment during the university's 10th graduation ceremony in Bungoma County. The university conferred degrees to more than 1,500 graduands, bringing its total alumni to 12,667 since inception. Prof Odeo highlighted the graduation of the first Bachelor of Science in Nursing cohort (48 students) and the first PhD class in Kiswahili (four scholars) as major milestones in the university's academic growth. Principal Secretary in the State Department of Industry, Dr Juma Mukhwana, urged graduates to uphold morality and use their skills to innovate income-generating ventures.



Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) teams conducting ear-notching and fitting rhinos with tracking devices at the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary are finalising preparations for the release of the sanctuary's rhino population into the expansive Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks last Friday. The tagging is part of the country's largest rhino identification and monitoring operation, aimed at preparing the animals for the expanded 3,000-square-kilometre range once sanctuary fences are removed at the end of the year. They are doing both ear-notching and also fitting the rhinos with tracking devices as they try to achieve at least a 60% individual identification of the rhinos. This helps their security teams when they are doing their monitoring to ensure that when we are talking about the actual numbers, we are talking about close to the actual numbers, said Dr Isaac Lekolool, Senior Assistant Director for Veterinary and Capture Services at KWS.

NEWS PAPER

IN BUSINESS

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Manyasi Steps Down From The Malava Race In Support Of UDA's Ndakwa

By: PCS Team
@themkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Manyasi stepped down yesterday in a last-minute move, just a day before the official campaign period comes to an end. He said he would be supporting UDA's David Ndakwa.
- He made the announcement in Kakamega where Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi received him.
- "This decision is not a sign of weakness from our brother Manyasi, but a sign of strength that demonstrates unity of purpose from a leader who is pragmatic and who has always put the interests of the people of Malava first," said Mudavadi.

The Democratic National Alliance (DNA) candidate for the Malava Constituency seat, Joab Burudi Manyasi has officially stepped down from the race.

Manyasi stepped down yesterday in a last-minute move, just a day before the official campaign period comes to an end. He said he would be supporting UDA's David Ndakwa.

He made the announcement in Kakamega where Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi received him.

"This decision is not a sign of weakness from our brother Manyasi, but a sign of strength that demonstrates unity of purpose from a leader who is pragmatic and who has always put the interests of the people of Malava first," said Mudavadi.

"I stood for the good of the people of Malava. For me and my supporters it was a simple message, development for Malava," said Manyasi.

With the by-election slated for Thursday, Manyasi's exit is expected to significantly reshape voter dynamics and intensify the race for the Malava seat.

Mudavadi said the entry of Manyasi into the UDA team gives the UDA candidate a renewed surge, and confident head-start in the by election.

"Victory is indeed coming, the people of Malava Constituency have resolved not to gamble with their votes and know where to place their bet on Thursday 27th," said Mudavadi

"I recently met the Prime Cabinet Secretary before I sat with my supporters to make this decision. From our conversation I was convinced that PCS Musalia Mudavadi is a trustworthy leader," said Manyasi.

In a citizen engagement after making



Joan Burudi Manyasi addressing journalists as leaders, led by Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi looks on. Photo/Courtesy.

the announcement, Manyasi assured the Prime Cabinet Secretary that his supporters who had accompanied him will take the message back home in his strongholds and in unison to solidify and enhance Ndakwa's support base ahead of Thursday's poll.

"The DNA candidate has had almost similar campaign traits like our UDA candidate who has done his campaigns peacefully and with decorum, only concentrating on selling his manifesto to the people. The two joining hands, means this game is over," Mudavadi remarked when he addressed the media confirming the announcement.

Ndakwa, and Manyasi campaign

teams will work together to ensure a landslide victory for the people of Malava and the Western region as a whole," added Mudavadi.

In a show of re-ignited unity of purpose, the two leaders vowed to finalize the campaigns by meeting their supporters at the grassroots and assuring them of a united victory for the people of Malava.

"Mheshimiwa Manyasi has stated himself that he has not been coerced nor intimidated to step down for me. This is a message to my opponents in the opposition, they should look at me and my brother Manyasi and the leaders who have been ahead of

us in Malava and learn that humility in leadership is very important" said Ndakwa.

Yesterday's event brought together key political leaders, including UDA Vice Chairman Kelvin Lunani, Kakamega Deputy Governor Ayub Savula, Senator Jackson Mandago, MPs Benard Shinali (Ikolomani), Fred Ikana (Shinyalu), Joseph Hamisi Denar (Nominated), and former Mumias East MP Benard Shinali with hundreds of Manyasi's supporters who also vowed to vote in Ndakwa in the new formation.

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10th

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Kindiki: Muthende Is The Best Choice For Mbeere North

The Deputy President Also Said The Mbeere North By-election Is About Development And Service Delivery Not Revenge And Insults

By: DPCS
@themkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Prof. Kindiki spoke on Saturday when led campaigns for Mr Leo in Ngiiri and Kyenire in the Constituency, urging voters not to be duped into abandoning the government implementing projects worth billions of shillings in the area.
- “We are supporting Wamuthende because we will work with him to complete the projects being implemented by the government in the area,” DP noted.
- The DP said the ruling party has thrown support behind the candidate because he has the best credentials to be the next Mbeere North MP.
- “It is only Leo who has affirmed his support for bursary for all students from Mbeere North. His competitors want to scrap the programme yet it is beneficial to hundreds of learners,” he noted.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki said UDA candidate for Mbeere North by-election, Mr. Leonard Wamuthende Leo, is the best to take the constituency forward.

The DP said Mr. Leo has demonstrated notable grasp of pertinent issues affecting residents including on roads, water, electricity, education and other key issues of importance to Mbeere North voters.

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The DP said the ruling party has thrown support behind the candidate because he has the best credentials to be the next Mbeere North MP.

“It is only Leo who has affirmed his support for bursary for all students from Mbeere North. His competitors want to scrap the programme yet it is beneficial to hundreds of learners,” he noted.

The government is fulfilling the promises made to the people of Mbeere North through tarmacking of roads, extension of water projects, electricity connection and construction of modern markets among many others.

DP Kindiki assured the residents that the administration will never marginalize them as previous regimes did.

He called the hypocrisy by those supporting the opposition candidate saying they never did anything to influence any projects in the area during their time in powerful positions.

“When we needed them most, we didn’t see them here in Mbeere. Now, they are all over insulting us and talking down leaders to the people. Don’t be distracted by them. This is our government. We are going to push for development within. We will not abandon it as some of our opponents are telling you,” he reiterated.

He urged voters to turn up in large numbers and vote for Mr. Leo on Thursday saying the gesture will be properly reciprocated.

“We will be grateful and we will not forget your support. We will complete ongoing projects and commence many more here,” he said.

At the same time, Kindiki has beseeched voters in the area not to be duped into supporting vengeful politics being perpetrated by their rivals.

He said the locals cannot be a pawn in a political game by those who lost their jobs in government including those who served as Deputy President.

“You were assigned huge duties to help the President serve the people but you chose sabotage, threats and intimidation and now you are out here lying to people to follow you into the opposition,” he said.

Speaking yesterday when he led campaigns for Leo in Kivue area, Kindiki said the people would not be foolish to follow someone who was found incompetent to the opposition.

“We cannot do such a foolish thing because this is the government we elected. We cannot go to the opposition yet there are many development projects lined up in our area,” he noted.

The DP, who expressed confidence that Mr. Leo will emerge victorious stated that the win will not be for anything but his focus on what matters most to the voters unlike his competitors who are too fixated on sideshows and revenge.

“Leo is a respectful leader, he has clearly explained what he plans to do to ensure ongoing development projects are completed and commencement of others. There is no day he has insulted anyone, even his competitors,” DP noted.

He also said he is in office by right adding those insulting him did nothing



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki with Leo Muthende on Saturday.

ing for the people of Mbeere North and the whole region when they were in office.

“I am duly in office as the Deputy

President of Kenya by right. I am assisting the President serve the people of Kenya,” he affirmed.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki with Leo Muthende yesterday. Photos/DPCS

Opposition Leaders Unite In Kisii And Mbeere North, Warn Against Poll Interference And Intimidation

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

The united opposition has escalated its political offensive across multiple regions, accusing leaders allied to the Kenya Kwanza administration of plotting to interfere with upcoming by elections and orchestrating intimidation tactics against their supporters. In a coordinated show of strength, senior figures including Jubilee Party Deputy Leader Dr. Fred Matiang'i, NARC Kenya Party Leader Martha Karua, Trans Nzoia Governor George Nitembeya, Democratic Party leader Justin Muturi, and Manyatta MP Gitonga Mukunji led rallies in Kisii, Nyamira, and Mbeere North, vowing to resist any manipulation and to use the mini polls as a decisive political statement ahead of the 2027 general election.

In Nyamira County, the opposition team traversed Chepilat, Ikonge, and Ekerenyo before convening a major rally at the Ekerenyo grounds to drum up support for Jeremiah Ongaro, the United Progressive Alliance candidate in the Ekerenyo by election. The leaders sharply criticized President William Ruto's administration, declaring their commitment to field a single unified candidate in the next presidential race. Karua reaffirmed the coalition's unity, saying the opposition was moving "in one direction" and would back a consensus flag bearer. Kitutu Masaba MP Clive Gesairo warned government operatives against using money to influence the by election, asserting that the coalition was prepared to resist any manipulation.

Governor Nitembeya maintained that the coalition's principal mission was to "send Ruto home," while Nyamira Senator Okongo Omogeni criticized the president's recent address to Parliament, accusing him of making misleading claims about key sectors. Kakamega Senator Boni Khalwale added that aspirations to transform Kenya into a "Singapore" under the current administration were far fetched, citing rampant corruption within government ranks. Dr. Matiang'i cautioned against what he termed the politicization of the country's security agencies, urging top officials not to allow themselves to be weaponized for partisan interests.

Kisii Senator Richard Onyonka expressed concern over threats directed at leaders opposing the president, warning that political intimidation could destabilize the country.

The opposition also directed fresh criticism at Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula, accusing them of sponsoring disruptions at their rallies and warning that they should brace for an intense political contest in Western Kenya. The rally drew thousands of supporters, underscoring the opposition's ability to mobilize grassroots backing and signaling its determination to consolidate support in traditional strongholds.

Meanwhile, in Mbeere North, opposition figures alleged that government aligned leaders were orchestrating plans to use criminal groups to disrupt the upcoming by election scheduled for the 27th of this month. Speaking during a campaign stop in Ishiara, Muturi and Mukunji claimed there was a coordinated effort to intimidate supporters of DP candidate Newton Karish, who is backed by the opposition coalition. They accused government operatives of attempting to tilt the race in favour of UDA candidate Leonard Muthende. Muturi cautioned alleged groups being mobilized into the constituency, saying, "Watu wa UDA tunawataka kuwaonya hao vijana mmetoa huko Kikuyu wakuje kuvuruga hapa Ishiara, Kanyuambora na Siakago. Tuko macho na tunawamulika." He added that the intention was to suppress voter turnout in areas perceived to be Karish's strongholds, vowing that the opposition would remain vigilant to protect its votes.

MP Mukunji echoed the concerns, alleging that there had already been attempts to harm opposition leaders. "Watu wanajaribu kuua na kudunga kisu viongozi wetu. Nilikuwa hapo na niliona," he said, further warning residents to remain vigilant. He cautioned that suspicious vehicles without number plates had been spotted in the area, urging locals to be alert against possible disruptions.

Government representatives, however, dismissed the allegations as baseless. Public Service Cabinet Secretary Geoffrey Ruku, formerly the area MP, assured residents that security agencies were fully prepared to maintain order during the



Jubilee Party Deputy Leader Dr. Fred Matiang'i, Trans Nzoia Governor George Nitembeya, and NARC Kenya Party Leader Martha Karua campaign tour across Nyamira County.

by election. "Tunataka kuwaambia kwamba hakuna mahali kutakuwa na vurugu. Usalama wa kutosha utatolewa na vikosi vyote vya usalama hapa Mbeere North," Ruku said, urging voters to turn out confidently on election day. Deputy President Prof. Kithure Kindiki and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua—now political rivals—have both intensified efforts on the ground as they rally support for their respective preferred candidates, adding to the heightened political activity in the constituency.

The opposition's twin offensives in Kisii and Mbeere North reflect a broader strategy to consolidate support across the country while challenging the government's influence in key regions. By rallying behind unified candidates in both by elections, the coalition seeks to demonstrate its organizational capacity and resilience. Analysts note that the opposition is using these contests not only to test its grassroots mobilization but also to send a signal that it remains a formidable force ahead of 2027.

The messaging from opposition

leaders has consistently emphasized unity, transparency, and resistance to corruption. They argue that Kenya cannot aspire to economic success while public resources continue to be looted, and they accuse the government of failing to deliver on key promises. By highlighting issues of governance, accountability, and electoral integrity, the coalition positions itself as a credible alternative to the current administration. Karua emphasized that the opposition was committed to building a Kenya where public resources are safeguarded and citizens' voices respected, while Muturi underscored the need to protect voter turnout from intimidation and violence.

Observers suggest that the opposition's strategy of merging regional campaigns into a national narrative is designed to build momentum and test its ability to coordinate across diverse constituencies. The emphasis on resisting electoral manipulation resonates strongly with supporters, many of whom expressed frustration with rising living costs, unemployment, and stalled development projects. The opposition leaders pledged

to continue mobilizing support, resisting intimidation, and holding the government accountable, framing the by elections as critical tests of Kenya's democratic resilience.

As campaigns enter their final stretch, the opposition's offensive in Kisii and Mbeere North underscores its determination to challenge government influence and consolidate its base. The rallies have drawn large crowds, energized supporters, and sharpened the coalition's message of unity and defiance. Whether in Ekerenyo or Ishiara, the opposition insists that the will of the people must prevail, warning that any attempt to manipulate the process will be met with firm resistance.

Nakuru Youths Decry Systemic Corruption, Lack Of Opportunities

By: MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

A group of youths in Nakuru has called for urgent action against deep-rooted corruption, which they argue severely limits their access to employment and creates a hostile environment for self-employment.

At a meeting in Nakuru City, the youth outlined how corrupt practices have made it nearly impossible to compete on merit for public sector jobs.

Susan Mwangi, who led the discussion, stated, “Openings for recruitment into various government positions often go to people with connections. As young people, unless you have money, you rarely get a chance.”

Andrew Chege expanded on the issue, noting that many in his generation lack the networks needed to secure employment and face rising insecurity that threatens their small

businesses.

“Many young people have no one to support them or open doors. We need to see a real shift,” Chege urged.

Adding a veteran’s perspective, Isaac Newton Kinity, former Secretary General of the Union of Kenya Civil Servants, emphasized that young people require a fair platform to participate in governance. He committed to prioritizing youth empowerment if elected president, stating he would “help inject fresh ideas into the country.”

The youths concluded by urging elected officials to champion accelerated voter registration, ensuring the youth demographic can significantly influence the 2027 general election.



Police confront demonstrators at Aga Khan Walk in Nairobi during a protest against bad governance and abductions. Photo/Suleiman Mbatiah.



ICU Set To Transform Healthcare As Tharaka-Nithi Marks Major Milestone Under Governor Njuki

By: Alex Njeru
@themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Governor Muthomi Njuki made the announcement yesterday during celebrations to mark 100 years of Kiereni PCEA Church in Mugwe Ward. He described the new ICU as a “game-changing investment” that will ensure residents access specialised care closer to home.
- “We have made a great move in improving our health status because going forward, we will be having ICU services at our Chuka Referral Hospital,” said Governor Njuki. “For years, our people have travelled long distances and spent a lot of money to seek lifesaving care in other counties. This will now be a thing of the past.”
- The governor added that a 20-bed amenity ward will also be opened at the referral hospital. The new ward will cater to patients who prefer greater privacy and specialised attention.

Tharaka-Nithi County is set for a major boost in critical care services following the announcement that an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) will be opened at the Chuka Level Five Hospital on December 11.

The facility, which will comprise five ICU beds equipped with life-saving machines, is expected to significantly improve patient survival rates and reduce the high cost of seeking such services outside the county.

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“We have made a great move in improving our health status because going forward, we will be having ICU services at our Chuka Referral Hospital,” said Governor Njuki. “For years, our people have travelled long distances and spent a lot of money to seek lifesaving care in other counties. This will now be a thing of the past.”

The governor added that a 20-bed amenity ward will also be opened at the referral hospital. The new ward will cater to patients who prefer greater privacy and specialised attention.

“These improvements are part of our commitment to provide dignified, modern, and patient-centred health services. Those who prefer privacy will benefit from the upcoming amenity ward,” he said.

Chuka County Referral Hospital was elevated to Level Five status during Governor Njuki’s second term, a move that has accelerated access to specialised care, including dialysis, advanced diagnostics, and consultant services.

Since 2017, when he assumed office, the health sector in Tharaka-Nithi has recorded notable progress, with significant investments in infrastructure, personnel, and modern equipment.

A testament to this growth is the recent recognition of Tharaka-Nithi County Chief Officer for Medical Services, Ms. Rose Gakii Micheni, who was named the Outstanding Chief Officer in the county during the 2025 Jamhuri Kenya Awards.

Ms. Micheni was celebrated for her transformative leadership and dedication to strengthening healthcare systems. The award presented at the Argyle Grand Hotel in Nairobi underscored the county’s rising repu-



Tharaka Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki unveiling a monument marking 100 years of Kiereni PCEA in Chuka/Igambango'mbe Constituency. He announced that an Intensive Care Unit will be opened soon at Chuka County Referral Hospital. Photo/Alex Njeru.

tation in quality healthcare delivery. “This recognition affirms that the good work being done in our health sector is visible and impactful,” Governor Njuki noted.

During the centenary celebration at Kiereni PCEA, Governor Njuki also paid tribute to the church’s long-standing contribution to health and education.

“As we celebrate 100 years of Kiereni PCEA, we also celebrate a century of service, compassion, and

transformation,” he said.

“The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has not only nurtured our spiritual wellbeing but has also been a pillar in promoting health and education across our communities. We honour this legacy of a church that heals, educates, uplifts families, and strengthens our society.”

The event was attended by Chuka/Igambango'mbe MP Patrick Munene, Tharaka-Nithi County Assembly Speaker John Mbabu, and

Mugwe MCA Jacob Kiriko, among other leaders who commended the county government’s continued investment in improving healthcare access.

With the upcoming ICU launch and expanded hospital facilities, Tharaka-Nithi County is poised to usher in a new era of enhanced healthcare delivery—ensuring that more lives are saved and that residents receive quality services closer to home.



Governor Muthomi Njuki addressing the gathering.

A Night Of Honour And National Pride At The Jamhuri Kenya Awards Gala

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyetimes

Kenya’s spirit of excellence, unity and national transformation took center stage on Saturday night as the Jamhuri Kenya Awards (JKA) hosted its 4th Edition Heroes Awarding Ceremony Gala at the prestigious Argyle Grand Hotel, Nairobi.

The evening opened with a vibrant and emotionally charged performance by the SQS Dance Crew, whose choreography reflected the gala’s theme of peace and unity. Their display set the tone for a night dedicated to celebrating individuals and institutions shaping Kenya’s social and economic progress.

This year’s ceremony brought together changemakers, trailblazers, and visionary leaders from across the country, figures whose work continues to uplift communities and steer transformative growth in sectors ranging from leadership and business to health, media, agriculture, innovation, entertainment, sports and education.

JKA CEO Babu Mtakeover reiterated the organization’s commitment to merit-based national recognition, noting that the awards remain one of Kenya’s most credible, research-driven platforms for celebrating excellence. “Our aim is to highlight those driving measurable impact and positive change across the country,” he said.

The 2025 awards cycle began with a 21-day public nomination period, followed by a 14-day vetting and analysis phase led by the National Secretariat. Nominees were evaluated based on authenticity, national impact, and verifiable achievements. Those who successfully passed the rigorous evaluation were celebrated during the gala.

To ensure fairness, transparency,

and accurate tallying, the JKA partnered with Evo Polls, an independent polling and data management firm that provided daily updates and technical oversight throughout the voting period.

The ceremony also featured notable appearances and major announcements. Mr. Felix Chege, Founder and CEO of Real Sources, was unveiled as the Chief Guest for this year’s edition, recognized for his leadership and contribution to Kenya’s development agenda.

In addition, Kiharu MP Ndindi Nyoro delivered the keynote address under the theme “Shaping Kenya’s Future: Leadership, Innovation, and Sustainable Growth.”

Among those who were awarded included; Mr James Mwangi Macharia, the founder, African Center For Corrective and Preventive Action. He was awarded for melting British Training Unit (BATUK) claim on sovereign immunity from civil proceedings in Kenya. Sovereign Immunity Protected The British Army from prosecution in Kenya since 1963.

Others were international corporate and red carpet host Faithbeth Mkenda, who received the award for Outstanding International Corporate and Red Carpet Host; and Zakayo Shushu, CEO and Founder of Young CEOs Roundtable Africa, recognized for Excellence in Business and Youth Development across East Africa and former nominated Senator Gloria Orwoba and Joel Kipkorir Rutto, both acknowledged as Champions in Public Service and Leadership for their dedication to community transformation and service excellence.

Others were Nyeri County Assembly nominated MCA Agnes Wachira under the Leadership, Social and Community Services category for being a dedicated champion in menstrual health and social impact.



Some of the winners receiving their awards



Some of artists who entertained the guests



ACCPA founder James Mwangi Macharia displaying his trophy.

Forgery, Land Grabbing And Tender Scams Top EACC’s Court Cases This Week

By: MKT Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

The country’s anti-graft agency; Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has this week lined up several cases in various courts across the country.

From forged academic papers and inflated tenders to multi-million shilling embezzlement schemes and disputed public land, the courts in Nairobi, Thika, Kakamega, Kisii, Lodwar and Kitale are expected to handle a flood of matters touching current and former public officials, county executives, state corporation staff and private entities.

At the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court, one of the most anticipated decisions is the judgment of Brenda Nelly Sulungai, the former Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC) employee accused of forging a Zetech University diploma to secure a promotion. Her fate will be known on Friday .

Tomorrow, the court will deliver a ruling in the case of Caroline Sabiri Manyange, a former IEBC manager charged with using a fake Master’s degree certificate to obtain employment.

NCWSC remains prominent throughout the week, with several former employees, including Moses Paul Kafwa, Lucy Mwega and Moseti Mobera facing charges ranging from fraudulent acquisition of millions in public funds to the use of falsified KCSE and college certificates.

One of the biggest financial disputes before the courts this week is the ongoing recovery suit against Estama Investments Ltd and 13 others, in which the government seeks to reclaim KSh800 million paid for the procurement of 100 portable medical clinics for the Ministry of Health. Hearings run across three days.

Another major matter involves Dr. Shem Odongo Ochuodho and his co-accused, linked to the irregular refinancing of a KSh2 billion debt at the Kenya Pipeline Company, which investigators say resulted in the loss of more than KSh286 million.

Their case is scheduled for hearings today and Thursday.

Former Nairobi Governor Evans Kidero and 13 others will also appear in a recovery suit seeking KSh58 million allegedly siphoned from the defunct City Council of Nairobi.

Land disputes form a substantial portion of the week’s workload.

Among them is the recovery of LR

No. 209/12118 in Upper Hill, prime property belonging to the Judiciary, listed for hearing at the Milimani Environment and Land Court. Other cases involve 45 acres of land in Thika Municipality, government housing land in Limuru, parcels reserved for public housing in Kisii, and public open space in Kitale; all allegedly grabbed or irregularly allocated to private individuals.

The week also casts a spotlight on several high-ranking or politically exposed figures.

Former Roads Permanent Secretary Eng. Michael Kamau is expected in court over allegations of disregarding proper procedures in a road redesign project valued at KSh33.3 million.

Huruma Ward MCA Peter Owera Oluoch is listed for a hearing over accusations of providing false information and forging a self-declaration form.

A separate matter involving Sammy Kipngetich Kirui and 14 others returns to the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court as the State seeks accountability over the irregular purchase of a cemetery land parcel for Nairobi County with hearings running throughout the week.

Also before the courts are high-value recovery mentions, including businessman Joseph Chege Gikonyo & Others, where the State is pursuing KSh615 million in unexplained wealth, as well as Maymill Enterprises, associated with the alleged embezzlement of KSh110 million from



Michael Kamau

Nairobi City County.

Another mention involves Filtronic International, linked to KSh63.7 million allegedly paid irregularly by the County Government of Kiambu.

The regional courts are equally ac-

tive. In Kakamega, former Kaimosi Friends University security officer David Adrian Mwaka faces charges of forging a Bachelor of Criminology degree to gain employment.

In Lodwar, Turkana County CEC Benson Lokwang is listed for mention

over allegations of securing his job using falsified documents, while former district officials Elias Tirop Tomono and Francis Gatua return to court over alleged financial mismanagement at the Turkana District Treasury.



Evans Kidero.



Shem Ochuodho

Childhood Shoes That No Longer Fit



Childhood shoes that no longer fit,
Yet, memories of them still linger in mind
I recall the craze I had for those shoes,
Inserting my legs tightly, remembering the steps

I wonder why I grew big and tall,
Or why the shoes didn't grow with me
How nice it would be if they also grew big along with me
Like my dreams and aspirations, without a fuss

The same is true for my cute, beautiful frocks,
Socks, pants, and shirts, now tucked away in sack upstairs
Though they're tight, I can't bear to throw them away,
They hold many unsaid stories, in a silent sway.

The colors may have faded; the soles may be thin,
But the memories are ever green in my memory
In my heart, they're still big and bright,
Childhood shoes, a nostalgic memory for ever

Brinda. D
GRADUATE TEACHER,
GOVT HIGH SCHOOL,
MELPATTAMPAKKAM
CUDDALORE, Tamilnadu India
creativewritersmag@gmail.com

Mother's Love



She put in her womb
For nine months,
Give birth with so many pain
All care for herself lost now.

Devoted all days and night
Every hour and moments,
Give all comfort of life
Help us to catch our dream.

Put us under love shade
Protect from all storms,
Mother is our sunshine
The reason to all pleasure.

No love is as pure as of Mother

An unconditional with,
No expectation and reward
Fully engaged in our service.

Can't see us in pain
Always pray for her ward
Wants them to see rise
And achieve the best in life.

Her love is a cool moonlight
Soothes the harsh life,
Took away all gloom
Her smile light up all.

Her lap is the best place
To fall us in sound sleep,
Melt out all the stress
That came from cruel world.

Life is a hell without her
All relationships are on demand,
Lust, greedy and polluted
Searching madly your true love.

Shabana Firdaus

Value Of Education Is Our Right



Education enhances our knowledge
It is transmitted by good language
Education improves your standard
It eradicates the partiality in gendered

Education refine social intelligence
It will be your best significance
Education upgrades economical status
It helps to stand in righteous

Education proves your mind set
It improves your life style as best
Education uplift your self confidence
Cultivator of all our self obedience

Education acts as a ladder Reflection in the human manner
Education gives a clear awareness
It makes you as a genius

Education improves your respect
It is the reason for creative aspect
Education changes your behaviour
It makes you more popular

Dhanalakshmi DM
VKYM GGHSS VELAPADI VELLORE

The Importance Of Grandparents



Grandparents are treasures time cannot steal,
Their gentle love helps every heart heal.
They stand beside us, steady and kind,
A quiet strength we're blessed to find.

Their stories glow like lamps in the night,
Teaching us wrong, guiding us right.
Through memories deep and lessons old,
They shape our lives with hearts of gold.

They've walked the paths we walk today,
Felt the storms that blow our way.
Their wisdom grows from years they've known,
A guiding map they gently show.

When we begin to lose our way,
They bring us back with what they say.
No scolding tone, no angry voice
Just calm words helping us make the choice.

They teach us how to speak with grace,
To hold a smile on every face.

To treat each person with respect,
To love, forgive, and not neglect.

Their hands may shake, their steps be slow,
But in their hearts, bright fires glow.
A lifetime's love they freely give,
Teaching us how best to live.

They make us brave, they make us wise,
They see the world through kinder eyes.
Their blessings follow every day,
A gentle push along our way.

So let us cherish, near or far,
These guiding lights, our family stars.
For in their love, we always find
A priceless gift for heart and mind.

Oh grandparents how great your part,
You hold the roots of every heart.
Your love, your care will never end
A lifetime treasure, family's friend.

And when their voices fade one day,
Their love will still light up our way.
For in our hearts they always stay
Grandparents never truly go away.

Their warm embrace, their gentle care,
Remain with us everywhere.
The love they gave, so deep and true,
Becomes the strength that carries us through.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
Pums Konganancherry
Chengalpattu District

Not Everyone Deserves A Front Row Seat In Your Life



Not everybody has the right to be around you
There are those who may cause you pain, that is a fact
Shield your heart, and your mind
Allow not any poisonous person to occupy that place

Be selective who you allow in, and do it cautiously and slowly
Observe the good ones from afar and get rid of the bad ones
It is up to you to choose who will receive your love and time

Don't spend it on those who do not bring out the best in you

Have limits, fight for your rights and make them easy to understand
Never letting the heart out of your control, always keeping it precious
It is your right to have people who are good, who raise you and who care for you
Be the one who loves and cares the most by being among the loved ones.

T. Vasugi,
B.T Assistant,
Kamaraj Matriculation Higher Secondary School,
Kovilpatti.
Thoothukudi district.

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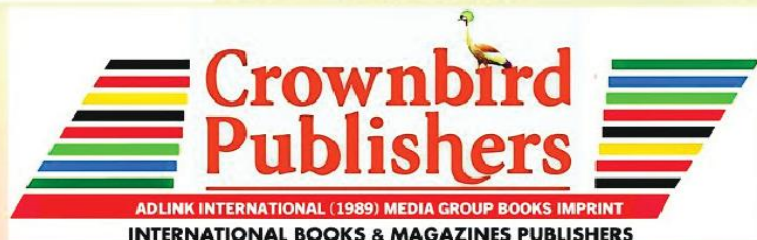
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EDUCATION

MKU Acquires Educational Humanoid Robot To Enhance AI Training And Research

By: John Kamau
@themtkenyaintimes

Mount Kenya University has unveiled a latest-tech educational humanoid robot as it seeks to enhance and advance Artificial Intelligence (AI) training and research.

The robot is taunted to upscale research where students will use it to develop and test new algorithms, train it to do and understand new tasks and languages according to the university's Dean School of Computing and Informatics Dr John Kamau.

Speaking at the institution in Thika town during the unveiling of the multi-million equipment by MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu, Dr Kamau quipped that the robot will further serve as a practical link between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

The Dean also noted that the Walker E Educational Humanoid Robot will also be utilized in undergraduate teaching, postgraduate research, capstone projects, technical courses and other educational programmes.

The university Vice Chancellor Prof Deogratius Jaganyi quipped that the institution is heavily focused on AI, noting that new AI academic programmes and AI-driven approaches to learning have already been unveiled.

He divulged that the university's renewed strategic plan and direction positions AI as central to teaching and learning adding that the humanoid robot is one of the equipment installed to implement the plan.

Prof Jaganyi averred that the robot will enhance hands-on learning by facilitating a "learning by doing" approach, which is beneficial for students, especially Computer Sci-

ence and Data Science students, who struggle with traditional lecture-based methods.

The VC revealed that the institution has revamped all programmes to align with the latest tech trends so as to give students and graduates a competitive edge in the global job arena.

"The University Board of Management and leadership is committed to make sure students have the latest kind of equipment to advance teaching and research at the University," Prof Jaganyi said.

Also, the University has introduced 13 new and revised programmes, including flagship courses such as the Master's and Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

"All university curricula will embrace artificial intelligence so as to effectively enhance the pedagogy for increased educational outcomes. We want to impart the requisite knowledge and skills to our students so that they can effectively and competitively fit in the global job market," the VC said.

On his part, Prof Gicharu said that in line with the University's vision to be a global hub for excellence in education, research, and innovation, AI is key in enhancing operational efficiency, supporting faculty-led research, driving student innovation, and enabling data-informed decision-making across the institution.

He maintained that AI is not something to belabor about but a technology to embrace and invest in to be in tandem with global demands.

"By embracing advancements in technology, we can improve the teaching and learning experience of our students and enhance operational efficiency at the University. We want to give our students all the resources they require to succeed in their stud-

ies and ultimately in their lives" Prof Gicharu said.

Prof Gicharu also commissioned and handed over a new fully-fledged ambulance, Dental skills lab equipment, Engineering equipment and library books. He was accompanied by VC Jaganyi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic & Research Affairs, Dr Mercyline Kamande among other university officials.

The Chairman rallied students to utilize the equipment to sharpen their skills and knowledge saying they offer them limitless opportunities not just now but also in years to come.

"You stand at the frontier of a new era. With AI, you can not only innovate, but you can transform lives. During our times, we could only imagine things in makeshift laboratories, but now you have everything you can see and touch," he noted.

Students led by Joy Watiri and Clifford Musyoka underscored the importance of the state-of-the-art equipment saying that it will enhance their practical skills that will enable them to fit in the competitive and ever-changing job industry.

"We will acquire requisite knowledge and skills and also expand our expertise and get what the industry requires. Again, It will help develop our innovative ideas into solution-based projects," Musyoka said.



The Walker E Educational Humanoid Robot that has been acquired by MKU to enhance training and research.



MKU Founder and Chairman Prof Simon Gicharu (2nd right) is taken through the operations of the Walker E Educational Humanoid Robot. With him is Dr John Kamau, Prof Deogratius Jaganyi and Dr Mercyline Kamande.

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Kenya's Democracy: The Staggering Cost Of Freedom's Promise



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevins Owuor
@themkenyatomes

Kenya's 2027 general election will require at least 61.7 billion Kenyan shillings approximately \$455 million to conduct, making it Africa's most expensive electoral exercise on a per-voter basis. At roughly \$20 per registered voter, this figure dwarfs the continental average of \$5 and surpasses the electoral costs of neighboring Rwanda (\$0.05 per voter), Uganda (\$4), and Tanzania (\$5.16). Yet this staggering expenditure represents only the tip of an iceberg whose true dimensions include lives lost, communities shattered, and a social contract perpetually negotiated at gunpoint. For Kenya, democracy has never been merely an abstract ideal enshrined in constitutions and ballot boxes; it is a transaction paid for in blood, treasure, and the persistent anxiety that grips the nation every electoral cycle.

The paradox of Kenya's democratic experiment lies in its origins. When the Union Jack was lowered on December 12, 1963, and Jomo Kenyatta assumed leadership as the nation's first Prime Minister, independence promised liberation from colonial oppression and the dawn of self-governance. The hopes were intoxicating. Kenyatta, who had been imprisoned for seven years on false charges related to the Mau Mau Uprising, embodied the aspirations of millions who had suffered under British rule, a period marked by concentration camps, massacres, and the systematic dispossession of African lands. The new constitution established a multiparty system with regional assemblies, designed to balance ethnic interests and prevent the concentration of power that had characterized colonial governance. Yet within a year, Kenya transitioned from a parliamentary democracy to a one-party republic under the Kenya African National Union (KANU), with Kenyatta wielding executive power as president. This consolidation, though it delivered initial stability and economic growth averaging 6.6 percent annually, planted the seeds of ethnic patronage politics that would define and disfigure Kenyan democracy for

generations.

What began as Kenyatta's pragmatic nation-building project calcified into a system where ethnicity became the primary currency of political mobilization. Successive administrations pitted the majority Kikuyu ethnic group, economically and politically favored since colonial times, against smaller communities including the Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya, Kamba, and Kisii. Political elites discovered that shrewd ethnic calculus and strategic alliances delivered more electoral victories than performance or national vision ever could. This transformation reached its bloody crescendo in the aftermath of the December 2007 elections, when disputed results triggered violence that claimed approximately 1,500 lives, displaced 300,000 people, saw over 3,000 women raped, and destroyed property worth billions of shillings. The carnage was not spontaneous rage but organized political violence, with politicians inciting ethnic pogroms against communities perceived as electoral rivals. International observers confirmed that both sides had manipulated results, yet the head of the electoral commission himself admitted he did not know who had truly won. The violence exposed an uncomfortable truth: Kenya had constructed an elaborate and expensive democratic facade atop foundations of ethnic grievance, land disputes, and economic inequality that remained unresolved since independence.

The economic dimensions of Kenya's democratic costs extend far beyond official electoral budgets. While the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) projects spending \$455 million on the 2027 election for biometric registration, secure ballot papers with eleven security features exceeding the complexity of currency notes, and 45,000 Kenya Integrated Election Management System kits, these visible expenditures obscure more insidious financial dynamics. Days before the 2022 election, Kenya's Controller of Budget disclosed being pressured to authorize 15.5 billion shillings in questionable expenditures, presenting WhatsApp messages from the Treasury Cabinet Secretary as evidence of political coercion.

Election years consistently witness spikes in public spending some lawful, others questionable, many outright unlawful, as politicians divert public resources to fund informal campaign costs. This politically driven fiscal behavior contributes



directly to ballooning public debt and macroeconomic instability, with Kenya repeatedly missing budget deficit targets due to expansionary pre-election spending. Post-election periods bring limited fiscal space, delayed contractor payments, and growing debt service obligations that undermine future investments in health, education, and infrastructure. The budget becomes a ballot, and public finance management principles designed to safeguard citizens' interests are sacrificed on the altar of electoral ambition.

Individual candidates face their own ruinous financial barriers that transform democratic participation into a luxury reserved for the wealthy or those willing to mortgage their futures. To successfully contest a Woman Representative seat requires an average of \$240,000, while a Member of Parliament position demands \$222,000, and even the least expensive political office, Member of County Assembly costs \$31,000. Half of all candidates spend more than \$147,000 merely to secure their party's nomination ticket during primary elections, with many admitting they invest more at this stage than during the general election itself. This creates perverse incentives throughout the political system. Successful candidates arrive in office already heavily indebted and beholden to financiers who expect returns on their investments. Members of Parliament, who earn 7.45 million shillings annually (\$75,400), find themselves spending nearly as much or more each month on constituency development projects, donations to social groups, and supporting needy

individuals, as voters have been conditioned to view politicians as personal ATMs. The transactional nature of this relationship reduces democracy to a commercial exchange where votes are purchased with handouts, serious policy debate disappears, and capable candidates without access to substantial resources are systematically excluded from political life.

The human costs of Kenya's expensive democracy remain the most devastating and least quantifiable. The 2007-2008 post-election violence did not emerge from vacuum but from decades of unaddressed historical grievances over land ownership, privilege, and inequality dating back to colonial land displacement and the settlement of Kikuyu people in the Rift Valley on land originally populated by the Maasai. Young people, facing unemployment, illiteracy, and impoverishment, became amenable to incitement by unscrupulous politicians and perpetrated violent acts of vandalism and looting.

The violence had severe regional implications, with landlocked countries including Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo suffering fuel shortages and blocked supply chains when 18,000 containers remained stuck at Mombasa port. Kenya's tourism industry lost approximately \$47.6 million from visitors who canceled trips, rippling through an economy already strained by the costs of violence. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan led the mediation that eventually produced a power-sharing agreement, but accountability remained elusive. A sealed list of suspects was handed

to the International Criminal Court, including charges against current President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto, though cases were ultimately terminated due to insufficient evidence and allegations that the Kenyan government refused to cooperate. Ten years after the violence, many internally displaced persons still awaited promised compensation, living testimony to democracy's unmet obligations.

Yet for all the treasure expended and blood spilled, Kenya's electoral integrity remains fragile and contested. Despite investing billions in biometric technology, electronic transmission systems, and ballot papers more secure than currency, the 2017 presidential election result was annulled by the Supreme Court, the first such decision in Africa, due to irregularities in the electoral process. No matter how sophisticated the technology or expansive the budget, elections continue following a predictable cycle: massive spending, contested results, court challenges, street protests met with teargas, and eventual political settlements through "handshakes" and broad-based governments that preserve the status quo.

IEBC Chairman Erastus Ethekon identified the root cause with stark clarity: Kenya's trust deficit. Because Kenyans do not trust each other or their institutions, paranoia demands endless regulations, redundant verification systems, and outsourcing

Kenyans Mourn Demise Of Former Minister Joseph Munyao

By: MKT Correspondents
@themtkenyatimes

The Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) is mourning the loss of one of its founding fathers, Joseph Munyao whose passing on Saturday leaves a profound void in the party and the nation.

A close ally of the late President Mwai Kibaki, Munyao was a statesman whose lifelong dedication shaped the identity, foundation, and evolution of both the Party and Kenya.

Munyao's journey in public service began early, representing the people of Mbooni Constituency as Member of Parliament from 1975 to 1979, and again from 1983 to 1988. His leadership extended to the national stage when he served as Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development from 2003 to 2007, steering crucial policies that modernized Kenya's agricultural sectors and impacted countless livelihoods.

Within the Democratic Party, Munyao's leadership was defined by vision, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to unity.

Over the years, he held some of the Party's most important positions: first as Secretary General, where he strengthened the Party's structures and ideological foundations; then as Party Leader from 2015 to 2022, guiding the Party with clarity during a time of national political transitions; and finally as Party Patron, a role he assumed in February 2022 after stepping down as Party Leader in favor of Justin Muturi.

In this role, he continued to offer counsel and guidance, acting as a fatherly figure whose wisdom inspired both leaders and grassroots members alike.

At every stage of his career, Munyao remained committed to the growth and continuity of the Party, always placing its unity and the interests of Kenyans above personal ambition. He believed in generational renewal, integrity, and resilience principles that became hallmarks of his legacy.



Joseph Munyao

Kenya's Democracy: The Staggering Cost Of Freedom's Promise

Contd from page 18

ballot printing to foreign firms at premium costs. The country has created one of the world's most legislated and regulated electoral systems, yet regulation serves primarily to manage collective anxieties rather than deliver genuine confidence. High electoral costs do not correlate with electoral integrity or democratic quality; Freedom House documented deterioration in Sub-Saharan African democracy from 2005 through 2018, demonstrating that adherence to regular elections absent rule of law, governmental functionality, and freedom of expression does not strengthen democracy beyond its constitutional appearance.

The question Kenya faces is not whether it can afford expensive elec-

tions, clearly it cannot, given competing demands for development spending in a nation grappling with debt, inequality, and poverty. Rather, the question is whether Kenyans will continue paying ever-escalating prices for a system that guarantees division, corruption, and patronage while delivering neither accountability nor genuine representation. Democracy's promise remains unfulfilled not because Kenya lacks sophisticated electoral technology or sufficient funding, but because the foundational issues that sparked violence in 1992, 1997, and 2007 remain unresolved: land ownership disputes rooted in colonial displacement, economic structures that concentrate wealth among political elites and their ethnic constituencies, and a political culture that rewards ethnic mobilization over policy competence. The 2025 constitutional amendment bill seeking to enshrine controversial development funds di-



rectly controlled by legislators represents not reform but regression, further entrenching the fusion of electoral ambition with public budgeting. Until Kenya addresses these structural failures, depoliticizing development funds, strengthening genuinely independent oversight institutions, enforcing campaign finance regulations, reforming land ownership patterns, and building

inter-ethnic social cohesion its democracy will remain the continent's most expensive performance art, staging elaborate shows every five years while ordinary citizens pay the price in foregone healthcare, education, and opportunities. The cost of democracy in Kenya is not counted merely in shillings but in graves, broken dreams, and generations of potential squandered on a system

that extracts wealth upward while delivering violence, disappointment, and recurring trauma downward. Freedom, it turns out, does not come cheaply but the question remains whether what Kenya has purchased at such tremendous cost deserves to be called freedom at all.

The writer is a socio-legal commentator

G20 Makes Historic Africa Debut As Global South Urges Fairer Governance

By: Xinhua News Agency
@themkenyatimes

The 20th Group of Twenty (G20) Summit opened on Saturday under the theme “Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability,” marking its first-ever gathering in Africa and underscoring the Global South’s rising role in global governance.

World leaders gathered for the two-day summit to address pressing global challenges amid sluggish economic recovery, rising geopolitical tensions and widening development gaps, despite the United States’ decision not to participate. With participants expected to build consensus on promoting multilateralism, the Johannesburg summit is seen as an opportunity to inject new momentum into global governance reform.

Since the African Union (AU) became a permanent member of the G20 in 2023, and now with the summit making its historic debut in Africa, the continent is shifting its role on the world stage, moving from decades of marginalization in the global agenda to an influential voice in international affairs. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa reiterated in his opening address that South Africa has sought to ensure that the development priorities of the Global South and the African continent find expression firmly and permanently on the agenda of the G20. “This is important not only for the people of Africa and the Global South.” His remarks echoed the sentiment across Africa that the continent is no longer a peripheral actor but an emerging force of global growth.

Peter Kagwanja, chief executive of the Africa Policy Institute, a think tank in Kenya, told Xinhua that the once perceived from the Western-centric perspective as a “hopeless continent” has now emerged as a “hopeful continent,” adding that the growing participation by Africa in global decision-making processes marks a significant transformation.

The African Development Bank projected the continent’s real GDP growth at 4.2 percent in 2025 and 4.4 percent in 2026, indicating steady economic expansion. Meanwhile, according to the World Bank, the abundant natural resources, a huge market and the world’s largest free trade area in terms of the number of members under the African Continental Free Trade Area provide a solid base for long-term growth.

Since assuming the G20 presidency last December, South Africa has

hosted over 130 meetings at various levels, amplifying voices from across Africa and the broader Global South. The world requires more solidarity, equality and sustainability, Chrispin Phiri, a spokesperson of South Africa’s Department of International Relations and Cooperation, told Xinhua at the media center of the summit. “That is what this G20 conference is about, and what we want to see this summit as a whole addressing for other African countries as well,” he said.

Governance Reform In Motion

Against the backdrop of profound changes unseen in a century, the urgency for global governance reform has grown sharper than ever, with the Global South speaking with a stronger, more unified voice. Ramaphosa called for upholding multilateralism at the summit, noting that the challenges facing all nations today can only be addressed “through cooperation, collaboration and partnership.” During the meeting with Ramaphosa on the eve of the summit, Chinese Premier Li Qiang expressed China’s readiness to work with South Africa to enhance coordination within the G20 and at other multilateral platforms, uphold the multilateral trading system, promote reform of the global governance system, and safeguard the common interests of developing countries. Having evolved from a forum centered largely on broad macroeconomic issues, the G20 now engages with a far wider agenda, including sustainable development, science and technology, agriculture, energy, and climate and environmental action, among other priorities, playing a stabilizing role in global governance.

This year’s summit presents a valuable opportunity to push forward long-needed reforms and promote a fairer, more inclusive governance, with the emphasis on four priority areas, including strengthening disaster resilience and response, promoting debt sustainability for low-income countries, mobilizing finance for a just energy transition, and harnessing critical minerals for inclusive and sustainable growth. “As Africa implements these continental strategies, we remain firmly committed to multilateralism and reiterate our strong call for reforms to the International Financial Architecture, reaffirming our full support for strengthening the rules-based global trading system, particularly through ongoing reform processes at the World Trade Organization,”



said Angolan President and Chair of the AU, Joao Lourenco, during the summit. On Friday, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters ahead of the summit that the G20 can help drive reforms that give developing countries, and Africa in particular, a real voice in shaping global policies, and make global economic governance more inclusive, representative, equitable and effective in the years ahead.

China’s Contribution To Global Development

Similar to the Chinese vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, Africa’s Ubuntu philosophy, which means “I am because we are,” holds that no one should be left behind. Last year, at the 2024 Summit of the Forum on

China-Africa Cooperation, President Ramaphosa noted that the 10 partnership action plans proposed by China are all in line with the AU’s Agenda 2063, which reflected the shared desire for modernization, development and progress on the African continent. Addressing the summit, the Chinese premier urged G20 economies to stay committed to solidarity, firmly uphold free trade and build an open world economy in the face of a sluggish global economic recovery, calling for efforts to enhance the voice of developing countries, and build a fairer and more open international economic and trade order.

China has released an action plan for implementing the G20 Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and Least Developed Countries, Li noted, stressing China’s en-

deavor to promote common development among all countries.

Li’s remarks resonated strongly at the summit. Noting that China plays a pivotal role in advancing global cooperation and governance, Erastus Mwencha, former deputy chairperson of the African Union Commission, told Xinhua that the four major global initiatives proposed by China offer institutional channels for dialogue and consensus-building. “We have a very strong and warm trade and political relationship with China and cooperate a lot in a number of multilateral platforms,” Magwenya told Xinhua, adding that South Africa is going to strengthen its resolve to work closely with China in advancing issues that are expressed in the G20



The Illusion Of Opportunities

By: Njeru Lilian
@themkenyentimes



Worth Noting:

• This is not an isolated story, across Kenya corruption, nepotism and favoritism dominate access to opportunity. Jobs exist, we are told, but only if you “know someone on the inside.” Financial support is offered, but with barriers so high that only a few can benefit. The illusion of opportunity is everywhere and the youth are left chasing shadows.

• Education, which should be a tool for liberation and empowerment, is itself under siege. University fees have skyrocketed since the removal of the capitation system in May 2023. Thousands of students are quietly dropping out because they cannot afford to continue. And yet, education is what shapes minds, expands horizons and equips youth to participate meaningfully in society. As Prof. Henry Kiplangat explains: “Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual that enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities.”



The promise of opportunity in Kenya is a mantra repeated in speeches, manifestos and government programs. Yet for the youth the backbone of this nation these promises often remain just that: promises. From education to employment, from entrepreneurship to creativity, opportunities are often inaccessible, conditional or designed to benefit only a select few. The result is a generation struggling to survive while being told to dream, work hard and “rise above.”

In May 2025, the government introduced the NYOTA Fund — National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement. Marketed as a lifeline for young people to access capital and pursue business, it was meant to be a boost for youth empowerment. But when many of us queued at our constituencies, hopeful for a chance to secure a small grant, reality struck hard. Only Form Four leavers and below were eligible. College and university students those already investing years in higher education were denied because we supposedly had “higher chances of employment.” Employment from what? From the same degrees we cannot afford? From a system that demands years of experience from first-time jobseekers?

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voritism dominate access to opportunity. Jobs exist, we are told, but only if you “know someone on the inside.” Financial support is offered, but with barriers so high that only a few can benefit. The illusion of opportunity is everywhere and the youth are left chasing shadows.

Education, which should be a tool for liberation and empowerment, is itself under siege. University fees have skyrocketed since the removal of the capitation system in May 2023. Thousands of students are quietly dropping out because they cannot afford to continue. And yet, education is what shapes minds, expands horizons and equips youth to participate meaningfully in society. As Prof. Henry Kiplangat explains: “Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual that enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities.”

But how can youth fulfil their potential when the environment itself is hostile? When survival takes precedence over learning? When opportunity is promised but never delivered?

Kenya is a youthful nation. The 2019 census shows that 75% of its population is under 35, with nearly 14 million aged 18–34. Over 70% of unemployed Kenyans are youth and by 2030, projections indicate that the

youth population will reach 22.3 million, meaning even more young people will enter a labor market already unable to absorb current graduates. Without intervention, the illusion of opportunity will become a generational trap.

The challenges are not limited to education and employment. Creativity, content creation and digital innovation avenues where young Kenyans could thrive remain largely inaccessible. Editing software, animation tools and multimedia platforms come at prohibitive costs. Talented youth exist, but they cannot afford the tools to turn ideas into opportunities. We are expected to compete, innovate and succeed but the very resources that make this possible are out of reach.

We need opportunities. Opportunities for school, where tuition does not force students to choose between learning and basic survival. Opportunities for work, where first-time graduates are valued for potential, not penalized for lack of experience. Opportunities that see through us, that recognize our struggles, our ambition and our potential. Opportunities that treat youth as partners in nation-building, not as statistics or afterthoughts.

These policies are symptoms of a bigger problem: a system that does

not prioritize the youth. We are expected to innovate, study and create but without access, without capital, without fair opportunity. Meanwhile, the world moves forward, leaving us to survive in a system that values connections over talent, privilege over merit.

Education should not be a luxury. It should reconstruct lives, expand minds and empower citizens. Education reconstructs and re-organises human experience. It makes man superior... It is an integrating process with intrinsic value.

Yes, we need a push for education. But not a push that burdens families, locks out the capable, and forces dreams to die quietly. Not a push that expects talent to pay for opportunity.

Kenya’s greatest resource is not land, minerals, or wildlife. Kenya’s greatest resource is its youth. If we are to build a future-ready Kenya, the government, institutions and society must ensure that opportunities are real, accessible and equitable. The youth are ready to rise, but they cannot rise on empty promises. It is time to end the illusion. It is time to create systems that genuinely empower and make opportunities real.

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Sports >> *Eberechi Eze scored his first senior hat-trick as Arsenal thrashed north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur to move six points clear at the top of the Premier League.

‘Eze-Cellent’ Display: Gunners Thrash Spurs To Intensify Bid For First League Title In 22 Years

Eberechi Eze scored his first senior hat-trick as Arsenal thrashed north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur to move six points clear at the top of the Premier League. Spurs boss Thomas Frank picked a five-man defence as he looked to keep things tight at Emirates Stadium, but his side could not contain the league leaders.

Leandro Trossard opened the scoring for an utterly dominant Arsenal in the 36th minute, finishing well after a lovely through ball from Mikel Merino.

Then Eze, who almost joined Spurs in the summer from Crystal Palace before a late swoop by Arsenal, doubled the hosts’ advantage before the break – beating two players on the edge of the box before drilling a strike past Guglielmo Vicario.

Frank scrapped his back-five plan at half-time and brought on Xavi Simons as he looked to inject some more attacking intent into his lacklustre side.

But Arsenal extended their advantage just 23 seconds into the second half, when Eze curled a left-footed strike into the bottom corner from the edge of the area.

Tottenham were pinned back for large parts of the match, but Richarlison did pull a goal back for the visitors by lifting the ball over the stranded David Raya from about 40 yards out.

However, Eze added gloss to the scoreline – and completed a brilliant hat-trick – with another expert finish past Vicario in the 76th minute.

Arsenal’s six-point lead over Chelsea at the top of the table is their biggest advantage at this stage of any Premier League campaign.

The Gunners are looking to win their first title since 2004 – and after three second-place finishes in succession.

Arsenal analysis: Eze shows why Gunners changed plans to sign him

When Arsenal swooped to beat Tottenham to the signing of Eze, it was one of the standout mo-



Eberechi Eze celebrates his goal against Spurs. PHOTO/ARSENAL FC

ments of this summer’s transfer window.

The Gunners, who had already spent heavily in the market, moved quickly to hijack their rivals’ move for the England midfielder after an injury to Kai Havertz – and Eze has not looked back since.

It was an easy decision to move to the Gunners for someone who was a boyhood fan of the club and was in Arsenal’s academy before being released.

But then came the questions of where he would fit into Mikel Arteta’s plans.

Arsenal did not see Eze as an outright winger, which meant he would be competing in the congested central area of the pitch with captain Martin Odegaard, Declan Rice and Ethan Nwaneri.

However, an injury to Odegaard has seen Eze play regularly – and the 27-year-old has continued to improve as he gets used to Arteta’s system.

At Palace Eze played more from the left, but at Arsenal he is closer to the right as Arteta looks to build a connection with Bukayo Saka.

Eze has already produced some standout moments for the Gunners – an assist for Gabriel Martinelli’s stoppage-time equaliser against Manchester City, the winning goal against old club Palace and now this classy hat-trick against Tottenham.

He has five goals and three assists in his 15 appearances for Arsenal this term – and the most goal involvements of any English player in the top flight in 2025.

Arsenal are deservedly top of the league – and Eze’s ability to create something from nothing can help keep them there.

Tottenham analysis: Painful day for Frank who faces fan battle

It has been a mixed start for Frank at Tottenham, with a conservative style of play meaning he has a fight on his hands to win over fans – and this result will have damaged that relationship further.

His team came into this game unbeaten from home in the league, but never looked like getting a positive result against their rivals.

Tottenham have not clicked in attack this season and average fewer than 10 shots per match, the third-lowest figure in the top flight.

That trend continued into this game with Spurs not having a shot in the first half, the second time that has happened this season (after their 1-0 home loss to Bournemouth in August).

Frank appeared to accept he had got his initial tactical plan wrong by making a half-time change to his team’s shape – but Eze’s goal seconds after the restart effectively sealed Spurs’ fate.

Although Tottenham are ninth in the league, they are only three points below the Champions League places.

However, the Spurs manager is going to have to turn things around quickly before supporters decide they no longer want to watch his team put defensive solidity before creativity.

BBC

Sports >>> *Harambee Starlets striker Martha Amunyolet says they are out to make a statement against Algeria in this week’s international friendly in Algiers.

No Pleasantries: Harambee Starlets Eye Big Win Over Algeria In International Friendly



Harambee Starlets line up before their match against the Gambia. PHOTO/HARAMBEE STARLETS

Harambee Starlets striker Martha Amunyolet says they are out to make a statement against Algeria in this week’s international friendly in Algiers.

Amunyolet says they will not simply tick off the box of having played during the international break but will be aiming for a positive result.

“We are going there to give our best and to come back with a positive result. Personally, I will give my best to ensure that we come back with a positive result so as not to disappoint our fans,” the Vi-higa Queens dangerwoman said.

Amunyolet has been in sizzling form for the Western Kenya-based

champions, banging in eight goals in five games, including a five-goal haul against Kisped Queens on November 2.

She also scored twice against Bungoma Queens as well as against Kibera Soccer Women.

Amunyolet will be a key cog for Beldine Odemba’s side if they are to come away from North Africa with the bragging rights.

They will be using the twin friendly as preparations for next year’s Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (Wafcon) for which they booked their ticket after thrashing the Gambia 4-1 on aggregate.

Echoing Amunyolet’s sentiments, Kenya Police’s Medina Abubakar

has urged fans to spur the Starlets to success from wherever they will be come Tuesday and Sunday.

“We have prepared well for the friendlies and the mood in the camp is very upbeat. We want to go there and come back with a positive result. We call on all our fans to continue rallying behind us and support us from wherever they’ll be watching us be it on the TV,” the midfielder said.

Starlets will be heading to North Africa in buoyant form considering the fact that their last trip there yielded a positive result.

They beat Tunisia by a solitary strike in their second round Wafcon qualifier in February this year

to move on to the final stage.

The team departed for Algeria on Saturday evening ahead of the first of two friendlies on Wednesday (November 26).

The next tie is scheduled for Sunday (November 30).

Capital Sport

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Siham Halila: The Global Dynamo Redefining Media, Pageantry, And Advocacy



By: Ayesha Talib
@themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- Her journey through pageantry is equally distinguished: she currently holds the title of Miss Nations Union of Morocco and is set to represent her country in India next May. Previously, she was the Winner of the United Nations pageants of the year and served as the International Director of the Miss Africa 2022 competition.
- Siham Halila is a true multipotentialite, holding leadership roles in numerous organizations, including President of Wio Arabic Countries in Morocco, Media advisor to the World Organization for Human Rights/Morocco, and a Regional Director of the Union of Productive Families. She is a frequently awarded individual, having received the exclusive and extraordinary inspirational icon awards 2022 and the Global Women Awards 2022. Ms. Halila is a force of creativity, commerce, and conscience, setting a new standard for global influence.

Siham Halila is a formidable international figure, seamlessly blending the worlds of media, high fashion, and humanitarian advocacy. She is not just a successful journalist, model, and actress; she is a global entrepreneur and philanthropist whose influence spans continents, from her native Morocco to major stages in Europe, the US, and Asia.

As the CEO of The Buzz Magazine, an international publication covering celebrity news, fashion, and human-interest stories, Ms. Halila commands a powerful voice in the media landscape. She is also the CEO of Mosaic Com, an enterprise focused on entertainment and production, demonstrating her executive reach across the creative industries. Her professional excellence was formally recognized when she was honored as the best journalist in the world in 2019. This expertise is bolstered by an honorary doctorate from Asalam's Academy in Germany.

Her striking presence in the fashion world is undeniable. Ms. Halila was crowned the Super Model of the Year 2022 and made history as the first Arabic Model managed by the Italian agency, Koalamodelagency. Her star power was solidified as the Winner of the Fashion Hero TV Series of 2021. She has leveraged this fame in lucrative campaigns, notably as a Principal Actress and the face of the Louboutin's shoes series of the year 2021 in the USA.

Beyond the spotlight, Ms. Halila is a dedicated advocate for global issues. She is a Goodwill Ambassador for the Arab Dream Association, recognized by the United Nations, and is an Ambassador of the Women's rights activist within the Global Women's Awards framework. Her humanitarian efforts are structured through her leadership as President of the Ekoham Foundation and the President of APDH (Association pour la protection des droits des endicapés) in Morocco. Her commitment earned her the Genetic Engineering Hero of the year 2022 by Amino Foundation and she was Awarded the best medal in the world by Unesc.

Her journey through pageantry is equally distinguished: she current-



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