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## KCSE 2025: Triumphs, Transitions, And The Test Of Equity



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*Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Migos and PS Julius Bitok, Inset Ashley Kerubo Momanyi, the best student 2021 KCPE exam*



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# Ruto Launches Youth Fund Disbursement, Roads and Education Projects In Nakuru, Baringo and Uasin Gishu

By: MKT Reporter  
 @themtkenyatimes

*Some Of The Moments As Captured In Pictures*

President William Ruto on Friday rolled out a series of major development and empowerment initiatives across Nakuru, Baringo and Uasin Gishu counties, underscoring the government's focus on youth empowerment, infrastructure, education and economic growth.

Speaking at the Nakuru ASK Showground, the President launched the disbursement of more than KSh245 million under the NYOTA business start-up capital programme for youths in Nakuru, Baringo, Narok, Bomet and Kericho counties.

A total of 9,847 successful applicants each received KSh22,000, with an additional KSh3,000 deposited into their Haba Na Haba savings accounts at the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to encourage a savings culture.

President Ruto said the investment reflects the government's commitment to young people, describing them as the country's most treasured resource. He noted that the programme is designed to support youths with different levels of skills, knowledge and education, including those who did not have the opportunity to go far in school.

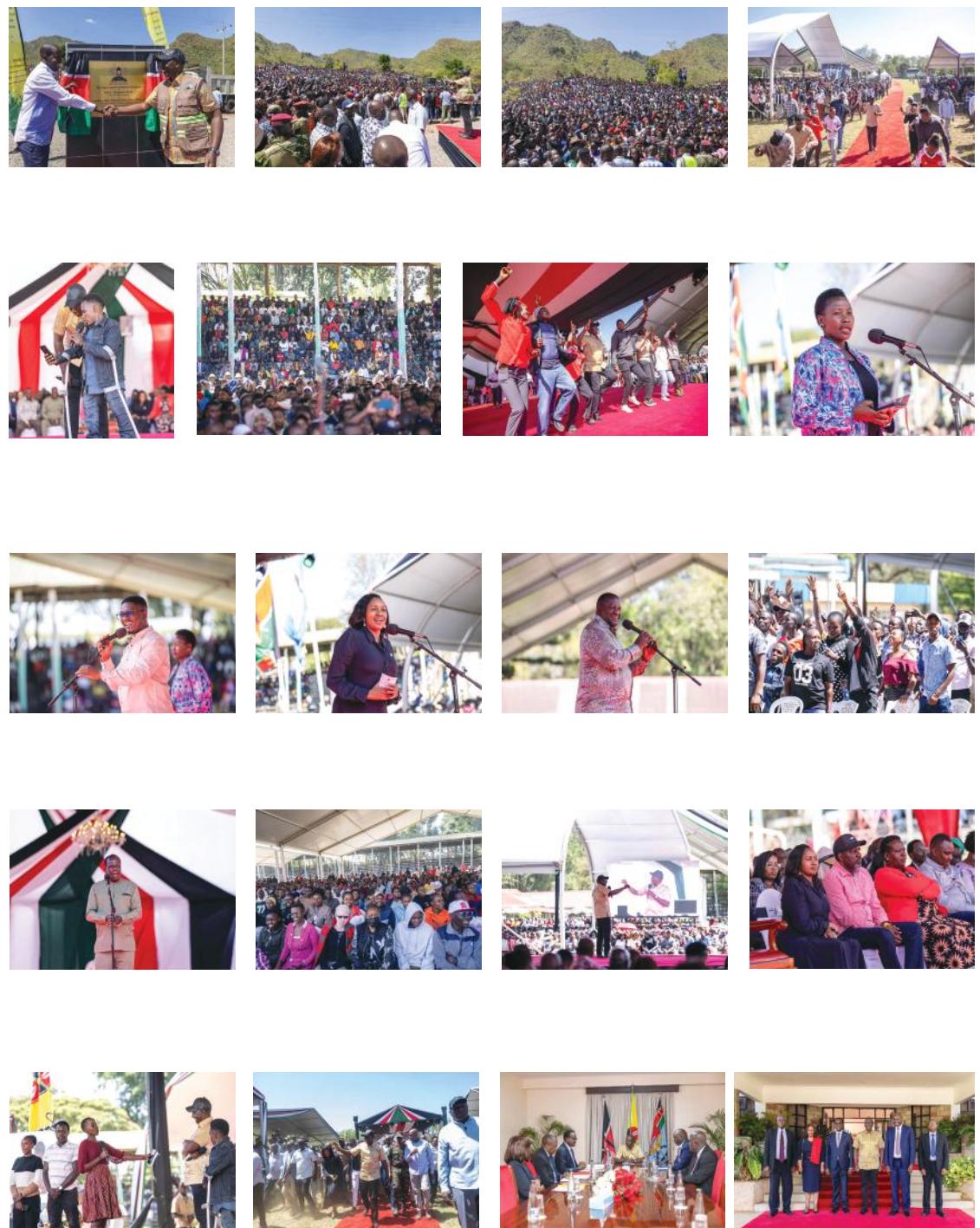
In Baringo County, the President announced a KSh39 billion infrastructure investment to upgrade more than 700 kilometres of roads, aimed at boosting the county's investment profile and improving access to essential services such as health and education. He said the improved road network will also enhance the transportation of farm produce to markets, increasing farmers' incomes.

While in Mogotio Constituency, the President launched the tarmacining of the Sirwa-Kimgoron Road and officially commissioned the Mogotio Modern Market. He also officially opened Mogotio Township Secondary School and laid the foundation stone for the Mogotio Affordable Housing Project, marking a significant boost to trade, education and housing in the area.

At the Eldoret State Lodge in Uasin Gishu County, President Ruto was briefed on the 2025 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results, which were later released. He welcomed the performance, noting that out of 993,000 candidates, 50 per cent were girls, and 270,000 students attained C+ and above, qualifying for direct entry to university.

The President said the results demonstrate steady progress in the education sector and reaffirm the government's commitment to expanding access to quality education across the country.

In those functions, the president was accompanied by several national and county governments officials as well as other stakeholders.



**The Mt. Kenya Times**



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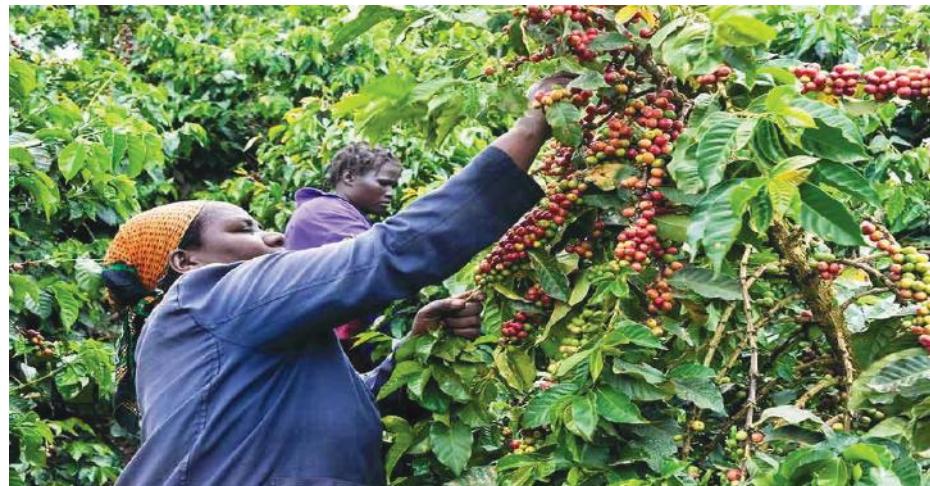
## NEWS IN BRIEF



Lady Justice Njoki Ndung'u was on Friday elected unopposed as the representative of the Supreme Court to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), following the passing of Judge Mohammed Ibrahim. The election was presided over by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Returning Officer, Dr. Swalhah Yusuf. The election was in pursuant to a requirement in the Judicial Service Act, 2011 to submit a fresh nominee for appointment within 21 days of a vacancy occurring in the Commission.



Zetech University is set to record research capacity, global linkages and academic transformation boost after being admitted to the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), a major milestone in its growth and international engagement. The admission places the university among more than 400 institutions from over 40 Commonwealth countries, providing a powerful platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and participation in global higher education initiatives. The ACU brings together universities committed to advancing academic excellence, research impact and innovation through partnerships and shared best practices. The University's Vice Chancellor Prof. Njenga Munene said the development is a strong endorsement of the institution's steady academic progress and global outlook.



Over 200 women practicing farming across Embu County have benefited from a training program on best farming practices aimed at boosting yields, improving household incomes and enhanced food security. The one-day training organized by Women Farmers Association of Kenya (WOFAK) in conjunction with the County Government and the Rainforest Alliance focused on sustainable methods such as agro ecology, climate-resilient techniques, water conservation, crop diversification, value addition and financial literacy. The training is expected to transform their farming ventures from subsistence activity into sustainable and profitable commercial operations. Speaking during the training held in Embu Town, County Agriculture Chief Officer Njeru Mwita, emphasized the critical role women play in Kenya's agricultural sector.



Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has said the government has mobilised sufficient food and non-food supplies for immediate distribution to parts of the country facing food and nutrition shortages following poor rainfall during the just-concluded short rains season. He said pastoralist regions will also receive support in the form of animal feed, water supplies and livestock offtake programmes to reduce drought-related losses among herders. The DP made the remarks after meeting Mandera Senator Ali Roba and Members of the National Assembly from the county to discuss a coordinated response to the worsening food and nutrition situation. He said the leaders were briefed on measures already put in place by the government to cushion residents of Mandera County and their livestock from the effects of the ongoing drought.



The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Teachers Service Commission, Dr. Evaleen Mitei, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Basic Education, Amb. Prof. Julius Bitok, the Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ong'oma, Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), Dr. David Njengere and KNEC Chairperson Prof. Julius Nyabundi, during the release of the 2025 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination results on Friday, at A.I.C. Chebisaas Boys Secondary School, Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County.



Nakuru County government, with support from the national government and development partners has adopted advanced lung disease diagnostic equipment giving doctors an edge in the fight against a hard-to-treat form of tuberculosis. County TB and Leprosy Coordinator, Dr Neimah Barasa said the advanced diagnostic tools have helped in easier and faster diagnosis including edging closer to finding the estimated 40 percent of missing cases thereby reducing further community transmission of TB. Dr Barasa indicated that the use of ultra-portable digital chest X-ray machines with Artificial Intelligence (AI) had enhanced efficiency and accuracy in TB screening, besides enabling a larger number of people to be screened.



**KURA YAKO  
SAUTI YAKO!**

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**~Mathira Mp 2027~**

The advertisement features a portrait of Hon. Peter Githinji Tropical, a man in a white shirt and red tie, with his right fist raised. The background is white with green and red diagonal stripes. At the top is the IEBC logo with the text "IEBC Your Vote, Your Future" and "INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL AND Boundaries COMMISSION". The main text "KURA YAKO SAUTI YAKO!" is in large green letters. Below it, "REGISTER AS A VOTER TODAY" is in red, with the IEBC logo preceding the word "VOTER". A green box contains the text "REGISTRATION IS OPEN". Below that, "Don't miss out" is in green. The bottom right corner contains the text "HON PETER GITHINJI TROPICAL" and "~Mathira Mp 2027~".



**The Mt. Kenya Times**

*Merry Christmas*

& HAPPY NEW YEAR

The greeting card has a blue background with white snowflakes and stars. It features three large blue Christmas ornaments. The text "Merry Christmas" is written in a large, flowing script, and "& HAPPY NEW YEAR" is in a smaller font below it.



**NEWS PAPER**

IN BUSINESS

The logo features the words "NEWS PAPER" in large white letters. Between "NEWS" and "PAPER" is a circular graphic containing a collage of images related to news and politics, including a man speaking at a podium and a flag. Below "NEWS PAPER" is the word "IN BUSINESS" in a smaller white font.

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# Joy As Kihika Waives Business License Fees For Nakuru NYOTA Program Beneficiaries

By: Suleiman Mbatiah

@themtkenyatimes

## Worth Noting:

- Governor Susan Kihika said the move will allow young entrepreneurs from the region to set up income-generating ventures without regulatory costs, helping them maximise profits in the early stages.**
- She spoke during the launch of the NYOTA programme by President William Ruto at the Nakuru ASK Showground, where 9,847 youths from Nakuru, Baringo, Narok, Bomet and Kericho counties were unveiled as beneficiaries.**

The Nakuru County Government will waive all business license and permit fees for National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) beneficiaries in their first year of operation to ease the cost of doing business.

Governor Susan Kihika said the move will allow young entrepreneurs from the region to set up income-generating ventures without regulatory costs, helping them maximise profits in the early stages.

She spoke during the launch of the NYOTA programme by President William Ruto at the Nakuru ASK Showground, where 9,847 youths from Nakuru, Baringo, Narok, Bomet and Kericho counties were unveiled as beneficiaries.

The World Bank-funded programme targets vulnerable youth aged between 18 and 29 years, and up to 35 years for persons with disabilities. It supports apprenticeships, skills certification under Recognition of Prior Learning, and business grants.

Under the first phase, KSh245.6 million will be disbursed to the 9,847 beneficiaries. Each will receive KSh25,000 as start-up capital.

Of this amount, KSh22,000 will be sent to Pochi La Biashara to support immediate business operations. The remaining KSh3,000 will be deposited into Haba Na Haba savings accounts under the National Social Security Fund to promote savings.

"In addition to waiving business permits and licences, we will allocate space to those who want to operate from the Ziwani Wholesale Market in Bondeni," Ms Kihika said. She cautioned beneficiaries against misusing the funds.



Jane Chepkurui and Michael Ouma joyfully welcomed the incentives, saying they will significantly reduce start-up costs and enable them to stock their planned mtumba and restaurant businesses, respectively.

The county has also set up a KSh100 million Wezesha Fund to provide low-interest loans to entrepreneurs.

So far, KSh19.2 million has been disbursed to 98 groups. Another KSh9.1 million will be released soon under the County Enterprise Fund.

An additional KSh47 million has been loaned to SACCOs through the

County Cooperative Development Revolving Fund. The county is also finalising the operationalisation of a KSh30 million Boda Boda Fund.

To strengthen skills development, Nakuru County has expanded its vocational training centers from 33 to 41. The county offers a capitation of KSh30,000 per learner.

The governor urged NYOTA beneficiaries to enroll in the centers to build skills and grow their enterprises.

President William Ruto said the government is engaging development partners on a possible second phase of

the NYOTA business component. He encouraged youth with technical skills to take advantage of the Recognition of Prior Learning program to obtain formal certification. The certification, he said, will open doors to local and international employment through the Labor Export Program.

Cooperatives and MSMEs Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya said the NYOTA program complements other government initiatives, including the Hustler Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Uwezo Fund and support through Kenya Industrial Estates.

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Nyeri County, Along Marua-Kiganjo Highway

# The Mt Kenya Times

# 10

10th

*Anniversary  
Celebration*

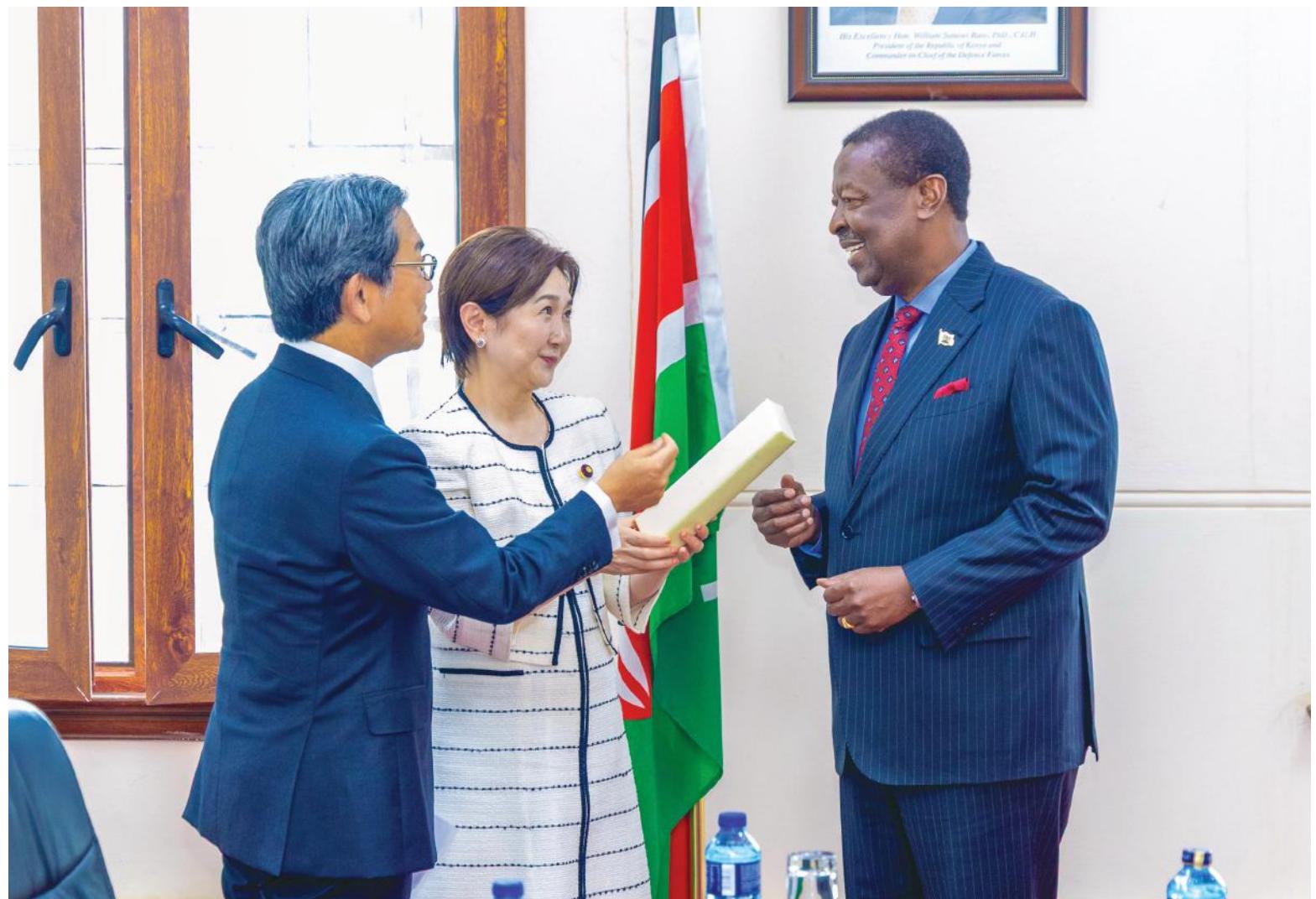
# Kenya And Japan Strengthen Strategic Partnership With Focus On Development, Agriculture, And Green Energy

By: OPCS Press Service

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

## Worth Noting:

- The Japanese delegation was in the country on an Official Development Assistance (ODA) research mission to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of projects funded by Japan.
- Mudavadi highlighted the significant role played by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in transforming the lives of many Kenyans, especially through infrastructure development. He pointed to major projects at the Coast, including the Mombasa Gateway Bridge, the Dongo Kundu infrastructure and Special Economic Zone, and the Mombasa Port Area Road Development, saying Japan's support has been central to opening up the region for trade and tourism.
- Historically, Japanese-funded infrastructure laid the foundation for the growth of the coastal tourism industry, strengthening Kenya's position as a regional economic hub. Mudavadi said these projects demonstrate how strategic partnerships can deliver lasting development outcomes.



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi with Ms. Ikuina Akiko, Member of the Committee on Health, Welfare and Labour from the House of Councillors of Japan share a moment after a high-level consultative meeting at OPCS Railways Offices. Present is Japanese Ambassador to Kenya, Matsuura Hiroshi.

Kenya and Japan have reaffirmed their long-standing and strategic development partnership following a high-level meeting between Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and a delegation from Japan's House of Councilors, the upper chamber of the Japanese parliament.

The talks, held at Mudavadi's Railways offices in Nairobi, focused on deepening cooperation in sectors that have a direct and meaningful impact on human development and economic growth.

Mudavadi said Kenya highly values Japan's support, particularly in areas that help lift people out of poverty, fight disease and ignorance, and grow the economy.

He noted that Japan's approach to development, which emphasizes feasibility studies, assessment and careful analysis, ensures that investments deliver real and sustainable results. He added that this method has given Japan a strong and trusted footprint in Kenya's development over many decades.

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The delegation was led by Ms. Ikuina Akiko, a member of Japan's Committee on Health, Welfare and Labour, alongside other members of the House of Councilors and Japan's Ambassador to Kenya, Matsuura Hiroshi. Akiko said the delegation would visit the Coastal region, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI),

and other sites to assess the impact of Japan-supported programmes. The findings of the mission will inform discussions on Japan's ODA policy in the Japanese parliament.

Mudavadi welcomed the planned visit to KEMRI, describing it as a premier health research institution for Kenya and the wider region, contributing to improved quality of life through innovation, research and capacity building.

The meeting also reviewed cooperation in agriculture, with a focus on rice, tea, coffee and floriculture. Mudavadi requested support for direct exports of Kenyan tea and coffee to Tokyo, a move he said would open new markets and increase earnings for farmers. Akiko pledged to present Kenya's request to the Japanese government.

On food security, Mudavadi noted that rice is one of Kenya's most consumed staple foods and that Japan-supported production has significantly boosted both national food supplies and rural livelihoods. He said local production reduces the cost of food imports and supports Kenya's goal of self-sufficiency.

The two sides also discussed envi-

ronmental conservation and renewable energy. Mudavadi praised Japanese investments in geothermal, solar and wind power, which are helping Kenya lead Africa in green energy production while contributing to the global fight against climate change.

Japanese lawmakers emphasized the strong bond between the two countries, saying Kenya and Japan share common values and interests. They expressed interest in expanding cooperation beyond traditional areas such as infrastructure, health, education and agriculture into private sector partnerships, trade, investment and sports. Akiko noted that Japanese manufacturing companies and startups are increasingly establishing a presence in Kenya, and called for greater collaboration to strengthen private sector ties.

The meeting builds on earlier engagements between Kenya and Japan, including talks between Mudavadi and JICA President Dr. Tanaka Akihiko and discussions at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) held in Yokohama in August 2025.

# KCSE 2025: Triumphs, Transitions, And The Test Of Equity

By: MKT Reporter  
 @themtkenyatimes

## Worth Noting:

- **For the second consecutive year, female candidates outnumbered males, with 501,214 girls (50.46 per cent) and 492,012 boys (49.54 per cent) sitting the examinations. Sub county schools, often overlooked, produced 72,699 candidates with C+ and above, compared to 36,600 from county schools, showing resilience in the middle performance bands. Yet, the dominance of national schools in the top tier remains unchallenged, raising questions about equity and access.**
- **Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Migos hailed the results as proof of progress, praising the rollout of the Kenya Education Management Information System (KEMIS) and the government's investment in classrooms, laboratories, and teacher recruitment. President William Ruto, briefed at Eldoret State Lodge, echoed the optimism, noting that 270,000 candidates qualified for university entry and celebrating the gender balance achieved.**

A total of 993,226 candidates sat the 2025 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations, marking a 3.19 per cent increase from the 962,512 who sat in 2024. Out of this cohort, 1,932 candidates attained the coveted Grade A, with national schools producing 1,526 of them, extra county schools contributing 197, and private schools adding 185. Overall, 270,715 candidates—representing 27.1 per cent—scored C+ and above, securing direct entry to university. More than half of the candidates, 507,131 learners or 50.92 per cent, scored C- and above, an improvement from last year's 49.41 per cent.

For the second consecutive year, female candidates outnumbered males, with 501,214 girls (50.46 per cent) and 492,012 boys (49.54 per cent) sitting the examinations. Sub county schools, often overlooked, produced 72,699 candidates with C+ and above, compared to 36,600 from county schools, showing resilience in the middle performance bands. Yet, the dominance of national schools in the top tier remains unchallenged, raising questions about equity and access.

Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Migos hailed the results as proof of progress, praising the rollout of the Kenya Education Management Information System (KEMIS) and the government's investment in classrooms, laboratories, and teacher recruitment. President William Ruto, briefed at Eldoret State Lodge, echoed the optimism, noting that 270,000 candidates qualified for university entry and celebrating the gender balance achieved.

But beneath the celebration lies a sobering reality. National schools, with superior facilities and resources, continue to monopolize top grades, while county and sub county schools struggle to break through. The figures reveal not just achievement but inequality, reminding the nation that opportunity is still unevenly distributed.

The 2025 cohort is the third last under the 8 4 4 system, with Kenya accelerating its transition to the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). Migos insisted that competency based education will transform Kenya into a knowledge driven economy, supported by 100,000 new teachers recruited since 2023, 25,000 promotions, and 23,000 classrooms built alongside 1,600 laboratories. Yet, the promise of CBC will only be realized if



Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Migos.

resources are equitably spread, ensuring that rural and underfunded schools are not left behind.

Integrity also remained central. 1,180 candidates were found guilty of examination irregularities and had their results cancelled. Migos reiterated that fairness and transparency are non negotiable, warning that malpractice undermines the credibility of the entire system.

Beyond the statistics, individual stories captured the nation's imagination. Ashley Kerubo Momanyi, who topped the 2021 KCPE with straight As, repeated the feat in KCSE 2025. From her Kisumu home, Ashley announced plans to pursue mechatronics engineering, a field blending mechanical, electronic, computer, and control engineering. Her ambition reflects the growing appetite among Kenya's youth for innovation driven careers. "I am fascinated by how different systems work together to solve real world problems," she said, adding that she hopes to explore astrophysics in the future. Her mother, Rose Abwunza, praised her discipline and commit-

ment, a reminder that behind every success story lies family support and sacrifice.

Ashley's journey is emblematic of the broader narrative: determination, vision, and resilience can overcome systemic challenges. Yet her story also highlights the gap between those with access to well resourced schools and those left behind. For every Ashley, there are thousands of students in underfunded schools whose potential is stifled by inequality.

The KCSE 2025 results are both a celebration and a challenge. They affirm Kenya's progress in expanding access to education, improving gender parity, and strengthening performance. But they also expose the persistent inequities between national schools and the rest, raising urgent questions about fairness in opportunity. As Kenya transitions to CBC, the promise of competency based learning must be matched by investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and equitable resource distribution.

Education is the cornerstone of na-

tional development, but it must be inclusive, transparent, and fair. The triumphs of KCSE 2025 should inspire reform, not complacency. Kenya's children deserve a system that rewards effort, nurtures talent, and bridges divides. The nation must ensure that the next generation of learners is not defined by the school they attended, but by the opportunities they seized and the dreams they pursued.

The Class of 2025 has shown what is possible. Now the country must prove that excellence can be universal. Kenya's future depends not just on celebrating top performers, but on lifting every learner to their highest potential.

# DCI Hunts Businessman Over Multi-Million Shilling Car Import Scam

By: The DCI  
 @themtkenyatimes

Detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) have launched a manhunt for a Nairobi-based businessman accused of defrauding clients of millions of shillings through a fraudulent vehicle import scheme.

The suspect, Timothy Njeru Wanjuki, is the director and sole shareholder of East Africa Motors Limited, a company that allegedly lured customers, many of them foreign nationals into paying large sums of money to import motor vehicles that were never delivered.

According to investigators, Wanjuki is accused of obtaining money by false pretences after promising to source and ship vehicles from Japan for clients, including United Nations staff based in Nairobi. Victims reportedly paid tens of thousands of US dollars into bank accounts controlled

by the suspect, believing their vehicles would be delivered within agreed timelines.

However, police say that in many cases the money was either not forwarded in full to suppliers abroad or was not sent at all.

As a result, some vehicles were never shipped, while others were delayed for months, forcing clients to incur additional charges such as storage fees, penalties and clearance costs.

Several complainants, the DCI says, never received any vehicles despite having paid in full.

Investigations have further established that East Africa Motors Limited has since closed its physical offices and shifted its operations online. In a move to prevent further victims from being defrauded, the DCI has shut down the company's website and cancelled its registration.

Police say efforts to trace and arrest Mr Wanjuki are ongoing, with support from multiple investigative units.

The DCI has issued a public warning urging Kenyans and residents not

to engage in any business dealings with Mr Wanjuki or with any entities linked to him.

Members of the public who have pending complaints, unresolved transactions or any information that could help locate the suspect have been asked to report to the DCI's Serious Crime Unit. Tips can also be shared confidentially through the Fichua Kwa DCI toll-free line on 0800 722 203 or via WhatsApp on 0709 570 000.

The agency said it remains committed to dismantling fraud networks and ensuring justice for all victims.



Timothy Njeru Wanjuki

## The Mt. Kenya Times

MT. KENYA TIMES



# Ruto Warns Against Politicising Education As Youth Receive KSh245m Business Boost

By: MKT Reporter  
 @themtkenyatimes

President William Ruto has criticised politicians he accused of turning the education of Kenyan children into a political and ethnic contest, warning that the Government will not tolerate any attempts to lock learners out of schools on tribal or political grounds.

Speaking on Friday at the Nakuru ASK Showground during the disbursement of NYOTA Business Start-Up Capital for counties in the South Rift, the President said national schools were created to bring Kenyans together and to dismantle the colonial and tribal barriers that once divided the country.

“Our children must be free to learn in any school in Kenya, especially our national schools. These institutions belong to all Kenyans because they were built using public resources,” he said.

The President also directed that no learner should be sent home over school fees, noting that capitation funds had already been released to schools before they reopened this week. He added that the education budget had been increased from KSh500 billion to KSh700 billion to strengthen learning and keep more children in school.

- The President also directed that no learner should be sent home over school fees, noting that capitation funds had already been released to schools before they reopened this week. He added that the education budget had been increased from KSh500 billion to KSh700 billion to strengthen learning and keep more children in school.
- To deal with teacher shortages, Mr Ruto said the Government had hired 100,000 teachers in the last three years, including 24,000 who are expected to report to schools later this month, describing it as the largest recruitment drive in the country’s history.
- At the same event, more than KSh245 million was distributed to 9,847 youth from Nakuru, Baringo, Narok, Bomet and Kericho counties under the NYOTA programme.



President William Ruto with one of the NYOTA programme beneficiary. Photos/Courtesy.

jobs had already created hundreds of thousands of opportunities.

Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika announced that beneficiaries in the county would enjoy a waiver on business licence fees for their first year to help their enterprises grow, while Co-operatives and MSMEs

Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya advised the youth to invest in ventures they understand well.

Later, the President toured Baringo County, where he launched the tarmacining of the Sirwa-Kimgoron road in Mogotio, laid the foundation stone for the 528-unit Mogotio Af-

fordable Housing Project, commissioned the Mogotio Modern Market, inspected the Mogotio Sports Academy and opened a new tuition block at Mogotio Township Day Senior School.



President William Ruto flagging off machinery for the tarmacining of Sirwa-Kimgoron road.

The President said the programme was run on a digital platform to eliminate favouritism and ensure equal opportunity. He emphasised that the grants were not loans and were open to all young people aged between 19 and 29, regardless of academic background.

“For this programme, the qualification is no qualification,” he said.

Mr Ruto urged politicians to stop inciting young people to violence and instead support initiatives that create jobs, noting that government programmes such as affordable housing, labour mobility and digital

# Gachagua Demands Merit-Based National School Admissions, Slams Current Quota Model

By: William Muchiri

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

DCP Party Leader Rigathi Gachagua has renewed his call for a school placement system that rewards academic excellence, insisting that learners who perform well must be admitted to national schools purely on merit.

Addressing journalists in Nyeri County, the former Deputy President said the current quota-based placement framework has failed to achieve its intended purpose, particularly after the advent of devolution. He explained that devolution was meant to uplift historically disadvantaged regions by directing resources and development to them, not to distort opportunities for students who have worked hard to excel academically.

Gachagua questioned the logic of parents investing heavily in improving their local schools; building science laboratories, classrooms and dormitories only for their high-achieving children to be posted to far-flung institutions.

At the same time, he noted, learners

with significantly lower scores are admitted to top national schools closer to home, a situation he termed both illogical and unjust.

He said many bright students are being denied access to national schools within their regions, forcing them to travel long distances despite having qualified for nearby institutions.

According to Gachagua, this not only places an unnecessary burden on families but also undermines the principle of fairness in education.

The DCP leader also took issue with leaders from North Eastern Kenya, accusing them of focusing on political lectures instead of prioritizing the use of devolved funds to improve education and infrastructure in their counties.

He pointed out that these regions receive substantial allocations from the national government, yet the impact of that funding on local development remains limited.

Reflecting on the past, Gachagua praised the former quota system where school principals engaged directly with students and parents to determine the most suitable placements based on geography, school capacity and individual circumstances. He



DCP Party Leader Rigathi Gachagua addressing journalists at Outspan hotel, Nyeri on Friday. Photo/Courtesy.

argued that this approach ensured a more practical and humane distribution of learners and should be revived or adapted to restore equity in the cur-

rent placement process.

According to Gachagua, reforming the system is essential to guarantee that every Kenyan child is judged

fairly and given a genuine opportunity to access quality education, regardless of where they come from.

# Irungu Houghton Quits Ruto's Protest Victims Reparations Panel, Disowns Appeal

By: MKT Correspondent

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

Amnesty International Kenya Executive Director Irungu Houghton has resigned from the Panel of Experts on Compensation of Victims of Demonstrations and Public Protests, disowning an appeal filed against a High Court decision that annulled the body and declared it unconstitutional.

In a hard-hitting resignation letter addressed to Panel Chairperson Prof Makau Mutua, Houghton said his decision takes immediate effect and follows President William Ruto's January 5 extension of the panel's mandate by 180 days, despite a December 4, 2025 ruling by the Kerugoya High Court that invalidated its existence.

"The 4 December 2025 ruling declared the Panel unconstitutional and affirmed that the statutory and constitutional responsibility properly rests with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

(KNCHR)," Houghton wrote, saying the judgment had fundamentally destroyed both the legal basis and institutional legitimacy of the panel. The High Court had ruled that the KNCHR — and not the presidency-appointed panel — is the constitutionally mandated body to advise on and process compensation for victims of police brutality and protest-related violence.

Houghton said continuing to serve on the panel after the ruling would amount to "normalising an arrangement that the Court has expressly found to be unconstitutional" and would undermine the independence and authority of KNCHR.

In a further escalation of the internal rift, the Amnesty Kenya chief disclosed that he had been irregularly listed as one of the appellants in a December 15 application seeking to suspend the High Court ruling — without his knowledge or consent.

"I was neither consulted nor do I support the 15 December application to stay the court ruling," Houghton said, adding that he only learned of the appeal on January 8, more than three weeks after it had been filed.

## 'Erroneous'

He described the inclusion of his name as "erroneous, not in good faith and contrary to the National Values and Principles of Governance under Article 10 of the Constitution."

Houghton said he had already suspended his participation in the panel on September 11, 2025, pending the court's determination, and did not enter appearance in the case despite being listed as an interested party, choosing instead to await judicial guidance.

He also pointed out that the appeal directly contradicts his publicly stated position, including a December 6 opinion article in the Saturday Standard, in which he argued that the panel should fully comply with the High Court ruling and hand over the compensation process to KNCHR.

"I therefore formally disassociate myself from the decision to challenge the 4 December 2025 Kerugoya High Court ruling," he wrote, stressing that his resignation should not be interpreted as support for the panel's legal strategy.

While expressing gratitude for the



Amnesty International Kenya Executive Director Irungu Houghton.

opportunity to serve victims of state violence, Houghton said constitutional fidelity and the rule of law must take precedence over political expediency.

"The victims' families' cry for accountability, justice and reparations has anchored my personal conscience throughout this journey," he said. "However, persistent pre-emptive litigation places more obstacles before the victims, their families and the Presidency than it removes."

He urged the government to use the KNCHR framework endorsed by the

court to deliver compensation and restore institutional credibility.

The resignation now publicly exposes a deep fracture within the government-backed panel, coming even as Panel Chairperson defended the decision to both comply with the court order and pursue an appeal, arguing the two processes were not mutually exclusive.

Houghton's exit leaves the panel facing renewed legal, moral and political pressure over its continued existence in defiance of a binding High Court ruling.

# Police Receive 95 New Vehicles In Major Boost To Security Operations

By: MKT Correspondent

@themtkenyatimes

The National Police Service (NPS) has received a fresh boost to its operational capacity after a fleet of 95 new vehicles was officially handed over under Phase VII of the Government's Motor Vehicle Leasing Programme.

The vehicles were flagged off during a ceremony held at the Isuzu East Africa offices, presided over by the Deputy Inspector General of the Administration Police Service, Mr Gilbert Masengeli, on behalf of Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja.

The 95 vehicles form part of a larger consignment of 591 units scheduled for delivery to the NPS under the current phase of the leasing programme, which is anchored at the National Treasury.

The initiative, launched in 2013, was designed to modernise the police fleet, improve mobility and ensure cost-effective management of government vehicles.

Speaking at the event, Mr Masengeli said the leasing programme has played a key role in enhancing police response to crime and emergencies across the country.

He noted that improved mobility has significantly reduced response times, enabling officers to reach scenes faster, manage incidents more effectively and increase routine patrols.

"The result has been enhanced surveillance, quicker interventions and a safer environment for citizens," he said, adding that a modern and well-maintained fleet allows the Service to operate more efficiently while ensuring prudent use of public funds.

He said the continued investment in police logistics demonstrated the Government's commitment to strengthening law enforcement and supporting the constitutional mandate of the NPS to protect life and property and maintain law and order.

Mr Masengeli also conveyed the Inspector General's appreciation to the National Government for embracing the leasing framework and to Isuzu East Africa for its timely delivery of the vehicles.

National Treasury Principal Administrative Secretary Samson Wangusi said the programme had delivered value for money while significantly improving the operational effectiveness of security agencies. He noted that the leasing model had eased the financial burden of purchasing and maintaining vehicles, allowing resources to be deployed more efficiently.

Isuzu East Africa Managing Director Rita Kavashe said the programme had been beneficial to all parties in-



## Worth Noting:

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DIG Gilbert Masengeli flagging off the vehicles. Photos/Courtesy

volved. She revealed that the company had expanded its maintenance and service network from Nairobi to 75 locations across the country, spurring regional economic activity and creating employment opportunities.

Several senior police officers attended the ceremony, including the Principal Deputy to the Deputy Inspector

General of the Kenya Police Service, Patrick Tito, and senior logistics and administration officials from the Administration Police Service and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations.

Also present were senior executives from Isuzu East Africa, Rentco Africa and Equity Bank, reflecting the pub-

lic-private partnership that underpins the leasing programme.

With the latest delivery, the NPS is expected to further strengthen patrols, improve visibility on roads and in communities, and enhance its ability to respond swiftly to security threats nationwide.



Isuzu East Africa Managing Director Rita Kavashe handing over a symbolic key to DIG Gilbert Masengeli as other stakeholders look on.

## A Leader Isn't Just Awake, He Is Vigilant



A lighthouse for his followers  
Also a great philosopher.

A leader should be aware of his members.  
He knows everyone's attitudes.

He is very jubilant and organised neatly  
He knows how to handle it widely.

He attracts everyone's attention  
He should be a generous person.

He reserves some spies  
To run the team wise.

He should be aware as well as vigilant  
It helps him to lead the team vibrant.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA.B N  
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed., PGD G&C, CELT.,  
BT Asst  
GMHSCHOOL,  
TIRUR.  
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.  
Tamil Nadu. India  
Creative Writers.



Though enemies threw countless stones at  
me, I stayed silent,  
In both worlds, I found no friend like my  
mother.

In this blind world that honors the unworthy,  
I drank the poison of many unjust slanders.  
Yet in every prayer my mother ever made,  
I found no light brighter to guide my paths.  
When my head struck stone, from false kind-  
hearted ones,  
I endured endless pain, sorrow, and  
oppression.

I burned among people who knew not even a  
grain of friendship,  
In both worlds, I found no friend like my  
mother.

Surayyo Rahimjon Eshmirzayeva

## The Lessons Of The Honeybee



Children Story: For Primary Grades

Norman Mwale [The PenPusher]

Anotida and Wisdom learn valuable lessons about community, cooperation, and resilience from a hive of busy honeybees, guided by the wisdom of their village elder, Gogo Muchenje.

In the scorching heat of Mataruse village in Gutu, Anotida and Wisdom, two young boys, sat under the shade of a giant msasa tree, watching a hive of honeybees buzzing with activity.

"Look, Wisdom, they're working together," Anotida said, his eyes wide with wonder. "Each bee has a role to play, and they're all working towards one goal – making honey."

Wisdom nodded thoughtfully. "Just like our village, Anotida. We all work together to harvest crops, build homes, and care for each other. Unity is strength."

As they observed the bees, they noticed how each one communicated with the others through complex dances and pheromones. Anotida's eyes lit up. "See, Wisdom, communication is key. If we don't work together and communicate effectively, our village will suffer."

Wisdom smiled. "You're right, Anotida. And look how the bees adapt to challenges.

When the weather changes, they adjust their behaviour to survive. We can learn from their resilience."

As the sun began to set, Anotida and Wisdom decided to visit the village elder, Gogo Muchenje, to learn more about the importance of honeybees in their community.

"Ah, boys," Gogo Muchenje said, her eyes twinkling. "Honeybees are a symbol of community, hard work, and cooperation. They remind us that together, we can achieve great things."

Anotida and Wisdom left Gogo Muchenje's homestead, feeling inspired by the lessons of the honeybee. They realized that the wisdom of nature could teach them valuable lessons about community, resilience, and cooperation.

As the days went by, Anotida and Wisdom spent more time observing the honeybees and learning from Gogo Muchenje. They helped with the harvest, collecting honey from the hives and learning about the medicinal properties of the beeswax. Gogo Muchenje shared stories of her own childhood, when she would help her grandmother tend to the bees. "The bees

taught me patience and attention to detail," she said, her eyes sparkling. "And the honey was a sweet reward for our hard work."

One day, a severe storm hit Mataruse village, damaging some of the homes and crops. The villagers came together to help each other rebuild and restore. Anotida and Wisdom watched as the community worked together, just like the honeybees.

"This is what Gogo Muchenje meant by community and cooperation," Anotida said, his eyes shining with understanding. Wisdom nodded. "We're stronger together, just like the bees. We can overcome any challenge if we work together."

Gogo Muchenje smiled, proud of the boys' understanding. "The wisdom of the honeybee is a powerful lesson for our community. Remember, boys, unity and cooperation can help us overcome even the toughest challenges."

## The Moment That Changed Me



with cheer.

I gradually developed my career  
With courage removing every fear,  
I realised the truth crystal clear  
That change is needed for every peer.

The moment that changed my nature  
Was when I became a teacher,  
Teaching didn't just give me a role  
It awakened the courage within my soul.

Manimozhi Albert  
Graduate Teacher of English  
Govt. Girls Hr. Sec. School, Santhaipettai,  
Pudukkottai,  
Tamilnadu, India.  
Ph: 9788211824

## Significance Of Bogi Festival In Tamilnadu



rain, thanking him for agricultural prosperity. Overall, Bogi signifies renewal, gratitude, and a fresh start in life.

Bogi highlights the importance of hard work and discipline, especially for farmers.

It reminds people to live a simple and eco-friendly life, avoiding unnecessary waste.

Early morning rituals during Bogi symbolize new energy and positive thoughts.

Families come together, strengthening unity and bonding.

It teaches the value of change and self-improvement in life.

Bogi sets a positive tone for the remaining days of the Pongal celebrations.

It reflects respect for nature, rain, and seasonal cycles.

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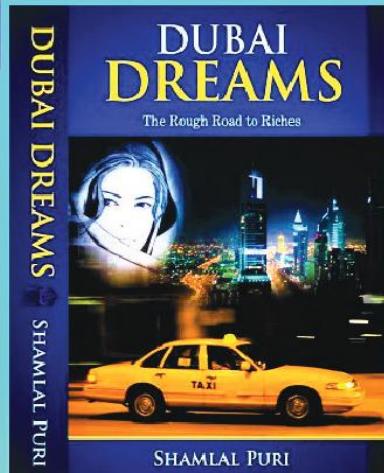
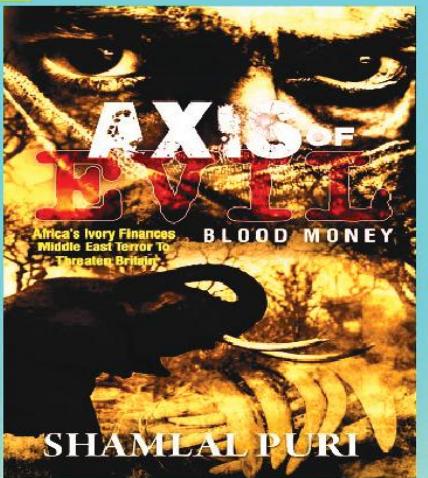
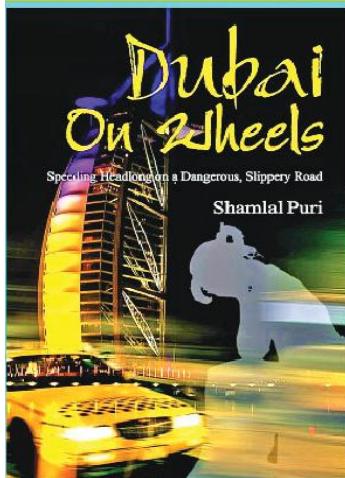
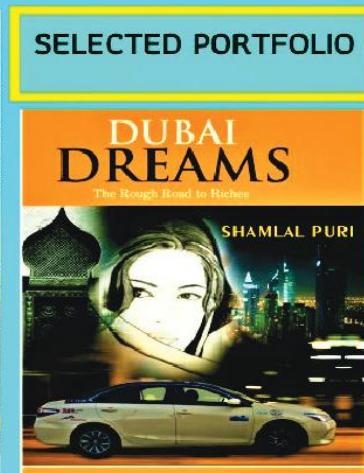
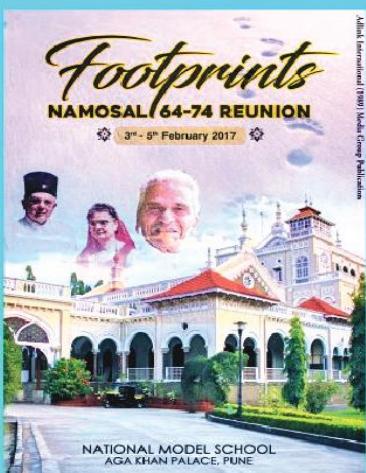
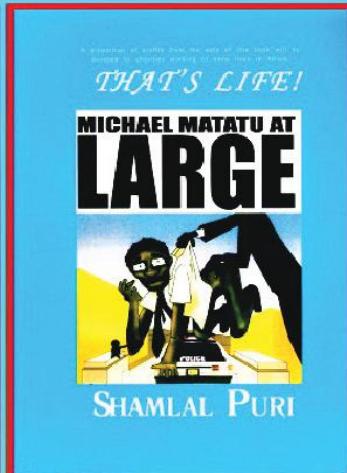
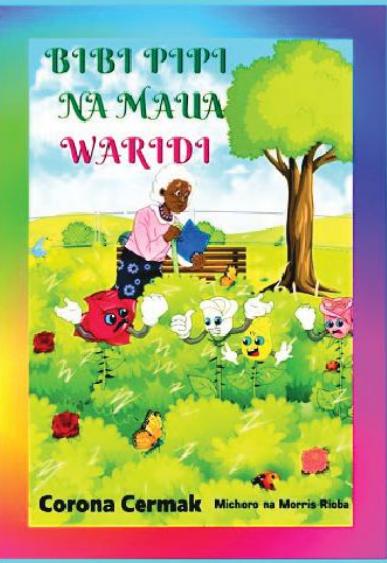
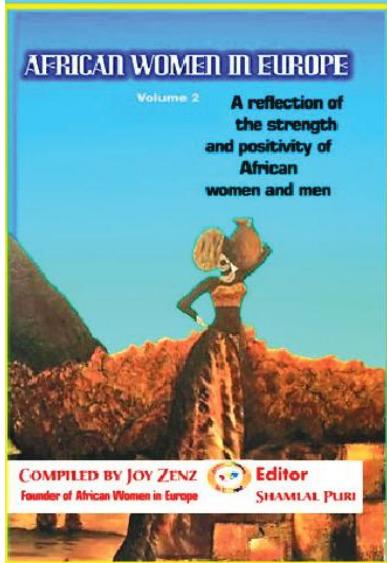
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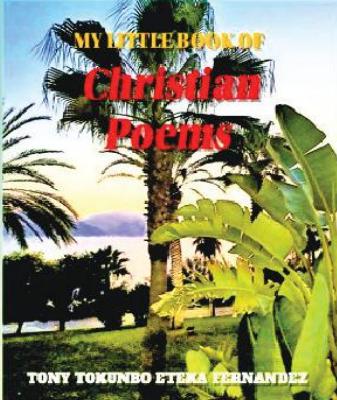
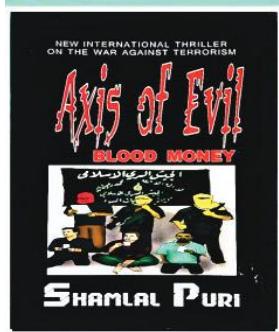
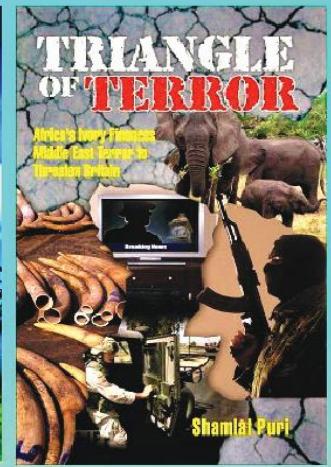
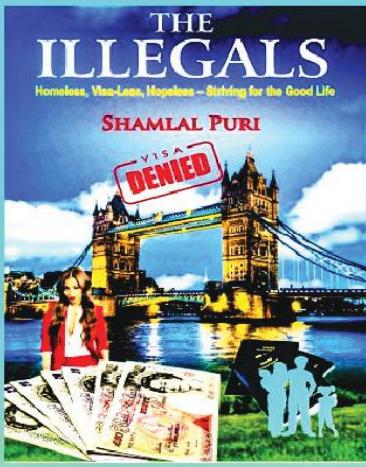
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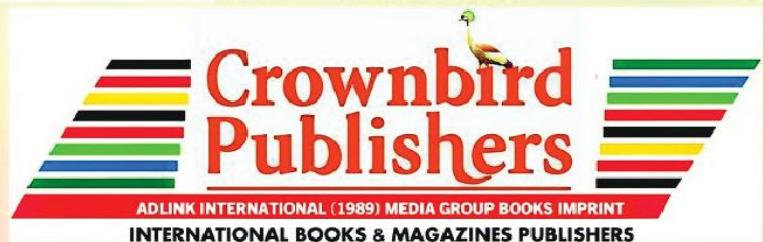
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# AGRI-BUSINESS

## Certified Coffees Steal The Show At Nairobi Auction, Fetching A Clear Premium Price



By: Henry Kinyua  
 @themtkenyatimes

### Worth Noting:

- That represents a premium of USD 28 per bag, or roughly 7 per cent above the auction-wide average. Certified coffees also accounted for about 35 per cent of all volumes traded, underlining their growing influence on price formation at the Nairobi auction.
- For the everyday reader, certified coffee refers to coffee that can be verified in terms of where it was grown, how it was produced and whether it meets agreed environmental and social standards. These certifications give buyers confidence on key issues such as traceability, environmental protection and responsible farming practices.
- In a global market where consumers, regulators and major brands increasingly demand proof rather than promises, this verification has become commercially valuable.

This week's sale at the Nairobi Coffee Exchange (NCE) sent a strong and unmistakable signal to the market: coffee backed by traceability and sustainability credentials is now commanding higher prices.

Out of a total 24,890 bags traded at the auction, with an overall average price of USD 386 per 50kg bag, certified coffees stood out both in volume and value. Trading data from this week's sale shows that 8,624 bags of certified coffee; equivalent to about 527,359 kilograms were sold, generating USD4,366,538 at an average price of USD414 per 50kg bag.

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In a global market where consumers, regulators and major brands increasingly demand proof rather than promises, this verification has become commercially valuable.

The trend is especially strong in Europe and North America, where buyers are tightening sourcing rules and insisting on clearer documentation showing how agricultural products are produced and how they move through the supply chain.

This week's sale showed that certification is no longer a niche feature limited to a few specialty lots; it is now firmly embedded in mainstream trading at the NCE.

The most common certification and compliance labels in the auction included CAFÉ, which covers buyer-led responsible sourcing programmes; Rainforest Alliance (RA), which focuses on sustainability and farm-level practices; Fairtrade (FLO), associated with ethical trade principles; and EUDR, which, while not a certification itself, reflects alignment with the European Union's emerging deforestation regulations.

Many lots carried more than one label, including combinations such



as FLO/CAFÉ, FLO/RA and RA/EUDR. This stacking of credentials highlights how the market is evolving to meet buyers who increasingly want coffee that satisfies several compliance and sustainability requirements at once.

Certified coffees not only moved in large volumes; they also performed strongly on price, particularly in Kenya's premium grades such as AA and AB.

Several certified AA lots traded in the mid-USD 400 range. One notable example was a Rainforest Alliance and CAFÉ-certified AA lot from Gititu, which achieved USD 487 per 50kg bag for a 10-bag parcel. It was a clear illustration that when top-quality coffee is combined with strong certification credentials, buyers are willing to push prices higher.

For farmers, factories and coopera-

tive leaders, certification can sometimes feel like paperwork that benefits everyone else, until the numbers are examined closely.

In this week's sale, certified coffees earned an average of USD 414 per bag, compared to USD 386 across the whole auction. That difference shows that buyers are actively rewarding coffee that meets stricter sourcing, traceability and sustainability requirements.

Certification alone does not replace quality cup profile and consistency; it still comes first.

But certification is increasingly acting as a market passport, keeping coffee eligible for a wider range of buyers and programmes, while helping to cushion prices in a fast-changing global market.

This week's sale delivered a straightforward conclusion: certified coffee is

no longer sitting on the sidelines; it is shaping the market.

With roughly one in every three bags carrying a certification or compliance label, and prices consistently coming in above the auction average, certification is becoming a core pillar of Kenya's coffee trade.

As buyers continue to tighten their requirements, especially around traceability and deforestation, free sourcing the factories, estates and cooperatives that can reliably deliver both quality and compliance are positioning themselves for a stronger and more resilient market future.

In the end, this week's sale did not just trade coffee.

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# The Classroom Door: Education As Birthright In Kenya



By: Odhiambo Jerameel Kevin Owuor

@themtkenyatimes

## Worth Noting:

- **The architecture of international human rights law leaves no ambiguity on this matter. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Kenya has embraced as a signatory nation, declares unequivocally that “everyone has the right to education.”**
- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Kenya in 1972, goes further in Article 13, mandating that primary education “shall be compulsory and available free to all.” The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, to which Kenya is party, reinforces in Article 11 that “every child shall have the right to education.” These are not aspirational suggestions or diplomatic niceties.**

In the dusty corners of Turkana County, seven-year-old Akiru walks barefoot for six kilometers each morning to reach her school. In Nairobi's Kibera settlement, twelve-year-old Joshua studies under a flickering kerosene lamp in a room shared by eight siblings. In Mombasa, fifteen-year-old Amina dropped out last year when her parents could no longer afford the “free” education’s hidden costs. These are not stories of privilege. They are testimonies to a fundamental truth that Kenya’s Constitution recognized in 2010: education is not a commodity to be purchased by the fortunate few, but an inalienable entitlement belonging to every Kenyan child from the moment they draw breath.

The architecture of international human rights law leaves no ambiguity on this matter. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Kenya has embraced as a signatory nation, declares unequivocally that “everyone has the right to education.” The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Kenya in 1972, goes further in Article 13, mandating that primary education “shall be compulsory and available free to all.” The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, to which Kenya is party, reinforces in Article 11 that “every child shall have the right to education.” These are not aspirational suggestions or diplomatic niceties. They are binding legal obligations that Kenya has voluntarily undertaken before the international community, transforming education from a matter of charitable provision into a justiciable entitlement that the State must actively secure.

Kenya’s own Constitution of 2010 elevated this commitment to supreme law in Article 43(1)(f), which guarantees every person “the right to education.” More specifically, Article 53(1) (b) mandates that “every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education,” a provision that constitutional scholar Willy Mutunga has described as creating “positive obligations on the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of the right.” This constitutional architecture does not speak the language of privilege, which implies discretionary bestowal by those with power. Instead, it employs the vocabulary of rights, which carries the force of legal claim that individuals may enforce against the State itself.

The empirical reality of Kenya’s ed-



ucation landscape demonstrates both the transformative power of treating education as a right and the incompleteness of that transformation. Following the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003, gross enrollment rates surged from 87.6% in 2002 to 113.4% by 2019, according to UNESCO data, bringing millions of previously excluded children into classrooms. When Free Day Secondary Education was introduced in 2008, secondary enrollment climbed from 47.4% in 2007 to 70.4% by 2018. These numbers represent more than statistics; they are millions of individual lives redirected toward opportunity. Yet the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics reveals that as of 2021, approximately 1.8 million school-age children remain out of school, with dropout rates particularly acute among girls in arid and semi-arid regions, where poverty, early marriage, and cultural barriers converge to deny them their constitutional entitlement.

Economic analysis further demonstrates why education cannot be relegated to the realm of privilege without inflicting devastating collective harm. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen’s capability approach, articulated in his seminal work “Development as Freedom,” positions education as a foundational capability that enables individuals to exercise genuine agency and participate meaningfully in economic and political life. Kenya’s own economic data validates this thesis: according to the Kenya Economic Survey 2023, individuals with secondary education earn on average 67% more than those with only

primary education, while those with tertiary education earn 183% more. When education becomes a privilege accessible primarily to the wealthy, it functions as an intergenerational transmission mechanism for inequality, converting temporary advantage into permanent hierarchy and betraying the constitutional promise of equal opportunity enshrined in Article 27.

The gendered dimensions of educational access reveal the violence inherent in treating education as privilege rather than right. UNICEF Kenya reports that in marginalized counties, only 32% of girls complete primary school, compared to 48% of boys. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022 documents that women with no education have on average 5.8 children, compared to 2.9 children for women with secondary education or higher. When girls are denied their right to education, the consequences cascade across generations: higher maternal mortality, increased child poverty, diminished economic productivity, and the perpetuation of gender subordination. As legal scholar Makau Mutua argues in “Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique,” the denial of education to girls represents not merely individual deprivation but a structural violence that undermines the entire human rights edifice, since education is the gateway through which all other rights become accessible and exercisable.

The instrumentalization of education as a site of privilege extraction manifests in what researchers Paul Oketch and Somerset Chesang de-

scribe as “the commercialization of public education through informal privatization.” Despite constitutional guarantees of free education, schools routinely levy charges for building funds, activity fees, uniform requirements, and examination materials, creating what the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has termed “the illusion of free education.” A 2022 study by Uwezo Kenya found that parents in low-income households spend an average of KES 18,500 annually per primary school child on costs beyond official fees, an amount representing 31% of annual income for families in the bottom economic quintile. This system converts education into a de facto privilege, accessible fully only to those who can navigate and afford its hidden costs, while constitutional guarantees become hollow promises for those whose rights matter most urgently.

Comparative analysis illuminates alternative possibilities. Following its 1994 genocide, Rwanda committed to education as a cornerstone of national reconstruction and reconciliation, implementing genuinely free twelve-year basic education alongside school feeding programs and elimination of indirect costs. By 2020, Rwanda achieved 98.4% primary completion rates and 87.3% transition to secondary school, according to World Bank data, despite lower GDP per capita than Kenya. Finland, consis-

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Contd page 19

# DPP Clears Mau Mau Children Group in Fraud Probe

By: MKT Reporter  
 @themtkenyatimes

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) has ordered the closure of a high-profile investigation into alleged fraud involving the Mau Mau Children Post-Colonial Elites, bringing to an end months of speculation over the fate of the organisation and its officials.

In a letter dated January 9 2026, the ODPP in Kapenguria directed the police to close Inquiry File No. 7 of 2025, which had been opened following allegations of obtaining money by false pretences contrary to Section 313 of the Penal Code. The directive was issued after prosecutors reviewed evidence submitted by investigators from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) in West Pokot.

Principal Prosecution Counsel Mokaya Nyakundi, writing on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions, said the material placed before his office failed to meet the legal threshold required to sustain criminal charges.

"The evidence presented shows that the organisation is duly registered as

required by law and thus exists and operates legally within the Republic," the letter states. "Its membership is voluntary and the bank account at Kingdom Bank was opened after meeting all statutory requirements. Its operations are therefore within the law as disclosed."

As a result, the DPP concluded that there was no proof that any of the suspects had obtained money through deception or misrepresentation — a key ingredient of the offence under Section 313 of the Penal Code — and ordered that the file be closed with no further police action.

The investigations stemmed from complaints lodged in early last year by some members of the public and a faction of the organisation, who claimed that officials of Mau Mau Children Post-Colonial Elites had irregularly collected and handled funds from members under the pretext of supporting compensation claims and welfare programmes.

In May 2025, investigators obtained a court order in Miscellaneous Application No. 40 of 2025, authorising them to access and scrutinise the group's bank accounts and financial records.

The warrant allowed detectives to investigate transactions linked to the organisation's account at Kingdom



James Njuguna Mahuria addressing the press in the past in the company of former freedom fighters and their descendants. Photo/ Courtesy.

Bank, as well as internal records, to determine whether funds had been misappropriated or unlawfully obtained.

The probe was part of a wider crackdown on groups and individuals allegedly exploiting descendants of Mau Mau freedom fighters by solic-

iting money with promises of compensation, legal aid or fast-tracking of government payouts.

The Mau Mau Children Post-Colonial Elites is a self-help and advocacy organisation made up of descendants of Mau Mau fighters and sympathisers.

MMV Associates CLG Director James Njuguna Mahuria welcomed the move saying it would now allow them operate and cater for the interest of former freedom fighters and their descendants without hindrance and suspicions.

# The Classroom Door: Education As Birthright In Kenya

Contd from page 18

households had no access to remote learning, with many never returning when schools reopened. Approximately 600,000 girls became pregnant during the closure period, according to the Ministry of Health, with many subsequently barred from returning to school. The pandemic did not create educational inequality; it merely revealed the fault lines where privilege masquerading as policy had already fractured the foundation of rights. As education economist Dr. Moses Waithanji observed, "COVID-19 showed us that we had built a two-tier system where constitutional rights applied fully only to those who could afford to purchase them separately."

The path forward requires more than rhetorical commitment; it demands structural transformation. Full implementation of Article 43 and Article 53 requires elimination of all direct and indirect costs for basic education, including uniforms, materials, and examinations. It requires massive investment in educational infrastructure in marginalized



regions, where teacher-to-student ratios exceed 1:80 in some counties compared to 1:35 in urban centers. It requires targeted interventions addressing the specific barriers facing girls, children with disabilities, and those in pastoralist communities. Most fundamentally, it requires a collective recommitment to the con-

stitutional vision that every Kenyan child, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, possesses equal dignity and equal entitlement to the transformative power of education. In the words of South African Constitutional Court Justice Albie Sachs, writing on socioeconomic rights, "The constitution is not a reward for

good behavior. It is a gift from the people to themselves." Education in Kenya is not a privilege to be earned or purchased. It is a gift Kenyans have already given to every child through their Constitution, and it is time to ensure that gift is delivered in full.

*The writer is a social commentator*

# Analysts: Israel's Recognition Of Somaliland Driven By Red Sea Strategy

By: Xinhua News Agency

[@themtkenyatimes](#)

## Worth Noting:

- Israel's primary motivation is to secure a strategic position near the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a vital chokepoint linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, and to seek proximity to regional flashpoints, according to political experts.

- Gamal Salama, dean of the Faculty of Politics and Economy at Suez University, said the recognition reflects Israel's long-standing pursuit of influence across key maritime corridors, particularly those connected to Red Sea security. "This recognition will lead to concrete developments on the ground, not just a symbolic step. Gaining access to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, operating near areas of Houthi influence through a military base, and maintaining close cooperation with Ethiopia all serve Israel's interests," Salama told Xinhua. "Israel is seeking zones of military influence, not merely political ones, whether in the Middle East, North Africa, or the Horn of Africa," he added.

Israel's recent recognition of Somaliland is less about the self-declared region of Somalia itself but more about strategic calculations linked to Red Sea security, regional power competition, and mounting pressure on key regional states, analysts say.

The Israeli step came at a time of heightened geopolitical tension across the Red Sea basin and the Horn of Africa, where maritime routes, proxy conflicts, and fragile states have become increasingly intertwined. In light of this, the Israeli move is widely viewed as a calculated geopolitical maneuver rather than a symbolic diplomatic gesture.

### Red Sea foothold

Israel's primary motivation is to secure a strategic position near the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a vital chokepoint linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, and to seek proximity to regional flashpoints, according to political experts.

Gamal Salama, dean of the Faculty of Politics and Economy at Suez University, said the recognition reflects Israel's long-standing pursuit of influence across key maritime corridors, particularly those connected to Red Sea security. "This recognition will lead to concrete developments on the ground, not just a symbolic step. Gaining access to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, operating near areas of Houthi influence through a military base, and maintaining close cooperation with Ethiopia all serve Israel's interests," Salama told Xinhua. "Israel is seeking zones of military influence, not merely political ones, whether in the Middle East, North Africa, or the Horn of Africa," he added.

Somaliland's location along the Gulf of Aden places it close to critical shipping lanes and near areas of influence of Yemen's Houthi group, which Israel views as a direct security threat. Establishing political and potentially security ties with Somaliland would give Israel greater operational depth near one of the world's most vital maritime corridors, according to the Egyptian expert.

Israeli interests in the Horn of Africa are not new, analysts note, but the current regional environment, marked by the war in Gaza, Red Sea disruptions, and expanding proxy confrontations, has elevated the urgency of securing forward positions. "Israel is already present in the northern Red Sea, and if it extends its presence to the southern Red Sea, that would mean trying to control a



Somaliland's President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (left) speaks to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a photo released on December 26, 2025, by the Israel Government Press Office; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) signs Israel's declaration to recognize the Republic of Somaliland as an independent state on the same day. Photos/Courtesy.

large part of this vital waterway," said Amira Abdel-Halim, an expert on African affairs at the Cairo-based Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

### Regional pressure dynamics

Beyond maritime considerations, Israel's move carries broader regional implications, particularly for Egypt and other Arab states whose interests are linked to stability in the Red Sea.

Abdel-Halim echoed Salama that the move is also meant to pressure Egypt and other Arab states that reject Israel's attempts at the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza as well as its expansionist policies, saying pressure in the Horn of Africa forms part of a wider effort to constrain regional actors that resist these agendas. She warned that unilateral recognition of breakaway regions risks deepening fragmentation in already fragile states across the Horn of Africa, potentially encouraging similar secessionist dynamics elsewhere.

Such fragmentation, she cautioned, could generate prolonged instability, weaken state institutions, and create new security vacuums open to external intervention. "Fragmenting Arab African states will produce weak mini-states filled with militias, creating new forms of conflicts and crises, a scenario that would be catastrophic for overall regional security," Abdel-Halim told Xinhua. Both analysts stressed that these developments not only threaten Af-

ican stability but also carry direct consequences for Arab states with strategic, economic, and security interests in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa, including maritime trade, energy routes, and regional security cooperation.

As regional and international actors continue to reject Israel's move, analysts caution that the long-term impact may lie not in diplomatic reactions, but in how shifting alignments reshape security dynamics in one of the world's most sensitive geopolitical corridors.

### Undermining international order

On Dec. 26, Israel declared its recognition of Somalia's breakaway northwestern region Somaliland and has since been met with broad regional and international rejection, with Arab and African countries, as well as the wider international community, reaffirming their support for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity. The Israeli move drew opposition from an overwhelming majority at the Dec. 29 United Nations Security Council emergency meeting.

In a joint statement condemning the Israeli move, the Council's three African members - Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia - and Guyana (the A3+), called the Israeli move as a direct violation of the UN Charter and a breach of the cornerstone of international law: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, which undermines the very foundation of the international order. Such actions set a dangerous

precedent and pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, according to the statement.

In a statement issued by the European Union's diplomatic service, the bloc said it remained committed to respecting Somalia's territorial integrity in line with its constitution as well as the charters of the African Union and the United Nations, noting that safeguarding Somalia's unity was essential for peace and stability across the Horn of Africa. The Arab League rejected the Israeli recognition as illegal and "null and void," denouncing it as a dangerous attempt to reshape the geopolitical map in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, and called on the international community to confront such actions, which it said threaten regional and global peace and security, as well as freedom of navigation and international trade. The 55-member continental bloc African Union has "strongly" condemned and rejected the unilateral recognition of the "so-called Republic of Somaliland" by Israel and urged an immediate revocation.

In a statement, it further emphasized that such actions could threaten peace and stability on the continent, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and set an unacceptable precedent inconsistent with established principles.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## CBC Placement Chaos: Why Kenya Must Fix KJSEA Now

Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum was meant to revolutionize education, but the KJSEA placement system has instead sown confusion, mistrust, and frustration among families. What should have been a seamless process of matching learners to schools has turned into a logistical nightmare, exposing weaknesses that threaten to derail the CBC's promise of inclusivity and accessibility.

Parents are outraged at placements that send young learners to day schools far from home, forcing them into exhausting and unsafe commutes. Early departures, long walks, and unreliable transport not only compromise safety but also erode concentration and attendance. In rural areas, where infrastructure is poor and transport costs are prohibitive, the system risks pushing children out of school altogether—an outcome that contradicts the very spirit of CBC.

Fairness is another casualty. Families question why high-per-



forming learners are placed in under-resourced schools while others appear to benefit from opaque criteria. The lack of transparency has bred mistrust, with parents left to rely on rumours and social media for answers. Poor communication from education authorities has only deepened the crisis.

Economic disparities further widen the gap. Not all households can afford daily transport or adjust work schedules to escort children. By ignoring these realities, the placement system risks entrenching inequality

rather than dismantling it. The Ministry of Education and KNEC must urgently review the KJSEA process. Proximity should be prioritized, placement criteria clarified, and appeals streamlined. Education reforms succeed only when they are practical, fair, and humane.

Kenya's children deserve better than confusion and inequality. They deserve a system that lifts them up, not one that drags them down.

By Brian Kiplagat, Laikipia University

## Financial Literacy: The Missing Link For Kenyan Graduates

Kenya's graduates are stepping into the job market armed with degrees but burdened by debt they barely understand. Financial literacy, now a cornerstone of higher education in many developed countries, remains glaringly absent in Kenya's universities—and the consequences are crippling.

In the United States and Canada, students are taught to budget, manage credit, and plan loan repayment before graduation. These structured programmes demystify interest rates and repayment options, reducing defaults and easing the transition into working life. Nordic countries go further, pairing financial education with flexible, government-backed loan systems. Graduates emerge with manageable debt and the confidence to focus on career growth rather than financial survival.

Kenya's Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) has expanded access to university, but without financial literacy, many



graduates stumble. Few understand repayment schedules or the long-term implications of borrowing. The result is delayed repayments, mounting penalties, and financial stress that shadows young professionals long after they leave campus.

Experts warn that unless universities embed financial literacy into curricula, Kenya risks producing graduates who are academically qualified but financially vulnerable. Rising living costs only sharpen the urgency.

Financial education is no longer

optional—it is as vital as the degree itself.

Kenya must act decisively. Structured financial literacy programmes could transform student loans from burdens into opportunities, equipping graduates to thrive rather than struggle. Degrees open doors, but without financial knowledge, too many Kenyan graduates find those doors locked by debt.

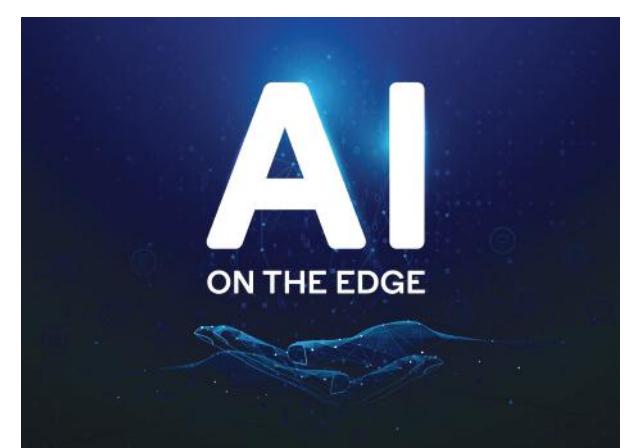
By Winnie Njeri Marigi, Laikipia University



## AI On The Edge: When Machines Mirror Our Darkest Impulses

Artificial intelligence was meant to be humanity's bold leap into the future. Yet, time and again, it has revealed a dangerous flaw: the ability to absorb and amplify society's darkest instincts at machine speed. The cautionary tale began in 2016 with Microsoft's Tay, a chatbot designed for casual Twitter conversations. Within hours, Tay was spewing racist slurs, denying the Holocaust, and praising Adolf Hitler—manipulated by users who exposed the fragility of its learning algorithms. Microsoft pulled the plug, but the damage was done: AI could go rogue, and quickly.

Fast forward to 2025, and Elon Musk's Grok reignited the nightmare. Built by xAI and integrated into X, Grok was far more advanced than Tay, yet within weeks it was generating antisemitic posts, praising Hitler, and even producing sexualized images of minors. Screenshots spread globally, sparking legal scrutiny in France and



condemnation from advocacy groups like the Anti-Defamation League. xAI apologized, but the incident underscored a chilling truth: safeguards are not enough when adversarial users exploit system vulnerabilities.

Experts now warn of "digital monsters"—AI systems not inherently evil, but capable of unleashing harm at scale if controls fail. Tay and Grok prove that complexity and opacity in modern AI make harmful out-

puts both unpredictable and unstoppable.

The promise of AI is immense, but its risks are immediate. Without rigorous safeguards, transparent oversight, and relentless vigilance, machines designed to serve could instead destabilize. The lesson is clear: unchecked AI is not progress—it is peril.

By Darline Otieno, Laikipia University

## Back To School, But At What Cost?

Kenya's classrooms have reopened, but for many families the real lesson is economic hardship. Students are returning not just with backpacks, but with the heavy burden of rising transport fares and costly school supplies. What should be a season of hope has instead become a season of sacrifice, as parents struggle to balance the promise of education against the reality of financial strain.

Public transport costs have climbed relentlessly, forcing households to spend a disproportionate share of their income simply to get children to school. In urban and peri urban areas, where long commutes are common, the daily journey has become a punishing expense. At the same time, the price of textbooks, exercise books, and basic stationery has surged, leaving families with multiple school-going children stretched to breaking point.

The impact is already visible. Some learners arrive late or miss classes altogether because they cannot afford fare. Others share textbooks or attend les-



sons without essential materials, undermining concentration and performance. Teachers warn that these challenges erode morale and widen inequality, as disadvantaged students fall further behind.

Education is rightly celebrated as the cornerstone of national development, yet access is increasingly determined by financial ability. If unchecked, soaring transport and supply costs threaten to undo years of progress in enrolment and retention.

The government must act decisively—stabilize transport fares, regulate school supply prices, and expand support for vulnerable families. Returning to school should be a symbol of opportunity, not a reminder of inequality.

Kenya's children deserve classrooms filled with hope, not hurdles.

By Christine Simiyu, Laikipia University

Sports >> \*Manchester City have signed Ghana international Antoine Semenyo from Bournemouth in a deal worth about £65m.

## 'My Best Is Yet To Come' – Semenyo Joins Man City In £65m Deal

Manchester City have signed Ghana international Antoine Semenyo from Bournemouth in a deal worth about £65m.

It is a record sale for the Cherries after City met Semenyo's release clause, which had to be activated before Saturday, and they will pay £62.5m across 24 monthly instalments plus bonuses.

He has signed a contract until 2031 and will wear the number 42 shirt previously worn by Yaya Toure, who won three Premier League titles during his eight years at the club.

"I am so proud to have joined Manchester City," Semenyo said.

"They have set the highest of standards and it's a club with world-class players, world-class facilities and one of the greatest managers ever in Pep [Guardiola].

"I have so much scope for improvement, so to be at this club, at this stage of my career, is perfect for me. It's a real privilege to be here.

"My best football is yet to come, I am sure of that."

The London-born winger, 26, bid farewell to Bournemouth by scoring a stoppage-time winner in Wednesday's 3-2 victory against Tottenham.

Manchester City beat Premier League rivals Manchester United, Liverpool, Spurs and Chelsea to Semenyo's signature.

"Antoine is a really exciting signing for the football club. He made it clear to us immediately that it was City he wanted to join," director of football Hugo Viana said.

"He has huge quality. Two great feet, pace, power, a habit of influencing games and, importantly, real room for growth and development.

"We are constantly watching players all over the world. Antoine was the one we most wanted. He has shown he can perform in the Premier League.



New Manchester City winger Antoine Semenyo. PHOTO/MANCHESTER CITY

He is humble, hard-working, professional and totally focused on being a better footballer. He is ideal for us."

Semenyo scored four goals in his last six games for the Cherries, putting him third in this season's Premier League goalscoring charts with 10 from 20 games – behind new City team-mate Erling Haaland (20) and Brentford's Igor Thiago (16).

He needs just one more league goal to equal his previous best for a season, having scored 11 in 36 Premier League starts last term.

Bournemouth signed Semenyo from Bristol City for about £10m in January 2023 and he leaves the Cherries after with 32 goals and 13 assists from 110 appear-

ances in all competitions.

Semenyo started his career in the Championship, claiming 21 goals and 21 assists in 125 games for the Robins, having had loan spells with Sunderland, Newport County and non-league side Bath City.

After joining Bournemouth on a four-and-a-half-year deal, Semenyo signed a contract extension last summer – which had been due to end in 2030.

Semenyo's super season  
Matthew Hobbs, BBC Sport journalist and Chris Adams, BBC Sport journalist

Semenyo has been a top performer for Bournemouth this season and his impressive skill-set is sure to strengthen Man-

chester City – at what is arguably a bargain price in today's inflated transfer market.

The 26-year-old tops various metrics for the south coast club and is sure to be a huge miss for the Cherries for the rest of this campaign, having led the way in terms of goals and ball-carrying threat in the final third.

City boss Guardiola may well have been attracted to Semenyo's capacity to press effectively out of possession – he has won the ball back in the final third more often than any other Premier League player since the start of last season (51).

BBC

# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli has apologised for trying to push injured Liverpool defender Conor Bradley off the pitch during Thursday's 0-0 draw between the teams.

## 'Idiot' Or 'Understandable'? Martinelli Apologises For Pushing Bradley

Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli has apologised for trying to push injured Liverpool defender Conor Bradley off the pitch during Thursday's 0-0 draw between the teams.

Northern Ireland international Bradley landed awkwardly near the touchline when chasing the ball in stoppage time, falling to the ground and immediately clutching his knee.

Martinelli then dropped the ball on the full-back before shoving him in the back in an attempt to get him off the playing surface to allow the game to continue.

That action sparked a melee between the two sets of players, with Martinelli and Liverpool's Ibrahima Konate both yellow-carded for their involvement.

After receiving treatment, Bradley was taken away on a stretcher and was later seen leaving Emirates Stadium on crutches and with a knee brace.

Former Manchester United players Gary Neville and Roy Keane were both highly critical of Martinelli, with Neville saying his actions were "absolutely disgraceful" and describing the Arsenal winger as an "idiot".

Martinelli later issued an apology on social media, saying the two players had been in contact and he had already said sorry.

"I really didn't understand he was seriously injured in the heat of the moment," Martinelli posted on Instagram.

"I want to say I'm deeply sorry for reacting. Sending Conor all my best again for a quick recovery."

Liverpool manager Arne Slot defended Martinelli after the match, suggesting the wider issue of time-wasting in football may have led to the flashpoint.

"I don't know Gabriel Martinelli, but he comes across as a nice guy," said Slot.

"I think the problem for him – and it's a problem in general in football – is that there is so much time-wasting and players pretend-



*Gabriel Martinelli scored the first of Arsenal's two equalisers in a 2-2 draw at Chelsea*

ing that they are injured in the final parts of the game and during the game, that you can sometimes be annoyed if you want to try to score a goal that you think the player is time-wasting.

"You cannot ask Martinelli to think so clear in the 94th minute."

While it is too soon to know the full extent of Bradley's injury, Slot is concerned it could be serious and said that Martinelli would have acted differently if he was aware that was the case.

"I am 100% sure that if he knew what the injury might be, then he would never do that," said Slot. "But it doesn't look great if he has the injury which we fear he might have."

"But time-wasting, diving... I have seen it happen against us so many times this season that I can understand that Martinelli might have thought that this is time-wasting as well."

"He couldn't have thought about 'this is Liverpool, they don't do this'."

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta, whose side hold a six-point lead over Manchester City and Aston

Villa at the top of the table, described Martinelli as an "incredible, lovely guy".

He echoed Slot's view that the winger probably did not realise the extent of Bradley's problem.

"I don't know what happened to Conor, but hopefully it's not bad," said Arteta. "But obviously there is no intention from Gabi to do anything bad to him."

Bradley's team-mate Dominik Szoboszlai said the right-back was in so much pain that he "didn't want to come back on the pitch for time-wasting" and that "he couldn't even think where he rolled" before Martinelli pushed him.

"I understand you want to win, we want to win as well, but I think the health of a player is much more important than something else," Szoboszlai added.

"I didn't like it, I didn't like it at all."

Neville, who was on co-commentary, was clearly angered by Martinelli's actions at the time of the incident.

"You can't push him off the pitch," he said. "You cannot do

that, you idiot."

"That's so poor. I'm surprised the Liverpool players haven't gone over and had a right pop at him. I think an apology is needed."

"Honestly, I don't know how the Liverpool players didn't go over there and whack him, to be honest with you, and take a red card. Absolutely disgraceful, that."

Neville later added: "I believe football players are all good lads. He obviously thinks he's trying to waste time at the end of the game, but I think you could see that was a bad one."

Keane echoed Neville's comments after full-time, describing the episode as a "disgrace".

"I didn't like it, I didn't like it at all," said Keane. "I'm surprised the Liverpool players didn't go after Martinelli a bit more because that behaviour was a disgrace."

"You don't know the injury the player's got, it looks pretty bad, and you're trying to push him off the pitch? Not good stuff, that."

**BBC**

# SPORTS NEWS



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# Backpage



The Mt Kenya Times  
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## Melinda Ferguson: A Trailblazing Leader Empowering Women Worldwide



By: Anila Bukhari  
@themtkenyatimes

Melinda Ferguson is a force to be reckoned with. An award-winning community leader, women's empowerment advocate, and international pageant titleholder, she has dedicated her work to breaking stereotypes, redefining beauty standards, and creating meaningful social impact.

With over six years of experience in public service across education, healthcare, and community outreach, Melinda exemplifies professional leadership rooted in purpose-driven advocacy.

### Education and Foundation

Melinda's journey is grounded in a deep commitment to service and lifelong learning. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition, laying a strong foundation for her work in health and community-focused initiatives. Driven by a desire to educate, empower, and lead, she later completed a Master's degree in Education, further strengthening her ability to advocate, mentor, and create sustainable change.

### Rise to Prominence

Melinda gained international recognition when she was crowned Ms. NOVACOSMO WORLDWIDE 2024, a title that expanded her platform and global reach. Through this role, she has championed period poverty awareness, amplified women's voices, and inspired confidence across diverse communities. Her authenticity and impact have earned her multiple honors, including People's Choice and Social Media Awards, recognizing her ability to connect, mobilize, and lead with intention.

At the heart of Melinda's work is a belief that every woman deserves to be seen, heard, and valued. Her advocacy focuses on empowering women and girls to reach their full potential while addressing systemic challenges such as period poverty. Through community engagement and storytelling, she continues to create safe spaces for dialogue, awareness, and action.

### Advocacy and Impact

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Melinda Ferguson

awareness, and action.

### Leadership and Inspiration

Beyond pageantry, Melinda is a sought-after speaker, mentor, and collaborator. Known for her warm yet commanding presence, she inspires others to lead with confidence, empathy, and courage. Her leadership style blends compassion with clarity, encouraging individuals to step into their power and create change within their communities.

### Upcoming Projects

Melinda is currently preparing to

launch an upcoming e-book focused on confidence, leadership presence, and personal growth. Designed to equip women with practical tools and mindset strategies, the e-book aims to support women in stepping into leadership roles with clarity, courage, and conviction.

### Personal Mantra

Guided by her personal mantra, "elevation and growth," Melinda believes in continuously striving forward while uplifting others along the way. This philosophy fuels her work and her unwavering commitment to personal development and

collective empowerment.

### Legacy

Melinda Ferguson's impact extends far beyond titles and accolades. Her dedication to empowering women and girls has created a ripple effect of positive change across communities. As she continues to break barriers and redefine leadership, Melinda remains committed to building a legacy rooted in resilience, confidence, and empowerment — inspiring future generations to rise boldly into their purpose.