



Nakuru clergy warns of State overreach in proposed Religious Law
 A section of clergy in Nakuru has raised alarm over the Religious Organisations Bill, 2024, saying proposed regulations risk expanding state control over faith-based institutions and undermining freedom of worship and association.
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Biashara Sacco posts strong growth amid rising loan defaults
 Biashara DT Sacco Ltd has reported robust financial growth for the year ending December 31, 2025, even as it grapples with rising loan defaults in a challenging economic environment.
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Corruption: Courts brace for 26 graft cases this week, targeting politicians, officials, and civil servants accused of abuse

Corruption puts elite on trial



26
 Cases lined up
 across the country



Former National Land Commission chairman Mohammed A. Swazuri



Former Kirinyaga Deputy Governor Peter Ndambiri

A busy week awaits Kenya's anti-corruption courts, with at least 26 cases lined up across the country, featuring prominent political figures, senior public officials, and civil servants accused of graft, abuse of office, and fraudulent acquisition of public resources.

At the center of attention is former National Land Commission chairman Mohammed A. Swazuri, who, alongside 16 others, faces judgment on Thursday at the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court. The group is accused of conspiracy and abuse of office in a compensation scheme for public land acquisition that allegedly caused the Kenya Railways Corporation a loss of KSh221.4 million.

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MKU expands global career pathways with German Nursing Apprenticeships and Chinese ICT Partnership

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Mount Kenya University (MKU) has marked another milestone in its internationalization strategy with the send-off of the 5th cohort of 27 nursing apprentices to Germany for hands-on apprenticeship training starting April 1, 2026. Since its inception in 2023, the Nursing Apprenticeship Programme has benefited 81 students, offering exposure to global healthcare systems through partnerships with Hochschule Koblenz University of Applied Sciences and the AG-Career Hub in Germany. Apprentices will train in leading facilities across Bad Mergentheim, Göttingen, Pirmasens, and Alzey. MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi announced plans for the university to become a certified TELC (The European Language Certificates) examination centre, allowing students to undertake German proficiency exams locally.

The university continues to diversify global opportunities, with the MKU Maritime Academy in Malindi having trained over 1,065 students in STCW-certified courses, and more than 400 graduates securing international placements on cruise lines, including Royal Caribbean and MSC Cruises.

In a separate development, MKU signed a landmark five-year ICT partnership with Chinese institutions Nanjing Zhongxing Xinyada and Nanjing Vocational College of Information Technology (NJCIT) to advance UN Sustainable Development Goal 9.

The collaboration aims to strengthen digital skills, innovation, and infrastructure across Kenya and Africa, including initiatives such as cloud computing, staff and student exchange programs, and the China-Africa Skills Supermarket.

The initiatives align with Kenya Vision 2030, EAC Vision 2050, and the African Union Agenda 2063, positioning MKU as a leading institution driving youth employment, skills development, and global competitiveness.



Editor's Desk

The Mt. Kenya Times



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Rigathi Gachagua, leader of the DCP party yesterday met 174 aspirants seeking various elective positions in Kajiado County during an engagement held in Nairobi. He assured them that the party will conduct free and fair nominations, emphasizing that the will of the people will prevail. The aspirants committed to working towards securing key seats, including the presidency, governor, senator, woman representative, MPs, and MCAs. Gachagua also urged them to intensify membership recruitment, noting that the party register will be used in the nomination process.



Broadcasting and Telecommunications Principal Secretary Stephen Isaboke attended the opening session of the 11th Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) Plenipotentiary Conference in Kampala, Uganda, held on March 23, 2026. The conference brings together member states and stakeholders to discuss policy, strategic, and technological priorities shaping the future of postal services in Africa. After the opening, Isaboke joined other Heads of Delegation in a closed-door meeting to address key PAPU issues. Kenya is actively participating through Administrative and Technical Committees, demonstrating its commitment to regional collaboration, innovation, and the transformation and modernization of postal services across the continent.



Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Renson Ingonga drops charges against three Nairobi Hospital officials; Barclay Mogere Onyambu, Magdalene Koki Muthoka and John Nyiro Mwero, who had been accused of failing to lodge financial statements with the Registrar of Companies. The court discharges them after prosecution opts not to proceed with case.



Former Dock Workers Union leader Paul Abisa has led port stakeholders in condemning political interference in the recruitment of 296 positions at the Kenya Ports Authority, which attracted over 500,000 applicants. They warned that such interference could undermine the Port of Mombasa's performance. The concerns follow calls by some leaders to prioritise locals and publish successful applicants. Abisa accused politicians, cartels, and lobby groups of spreading misinformation to discredit KPA leadership. Stakeholders defended the authority's adherence to legal and professional standards, terming demands for premature publication of results as irresponsible and cautioning against using coastal issues for political gain.

The Government of the Republic of Korea, through KOICA, has handed over an Intermediate Special Education Classroom at Ogwedhi PAG Primary School in Nyando, Kisumu County. The facility aims to reduce school drop-out rates among children with disabilities by improving access to inclusive learning. KOICA Deputy Country Director Hwayeong Bae said the project will empower learners and address barriers to education. Equipped with assistive technologies and learning materials, it currently serves 12 pupils. Kisumu County Chief Officer for Education Bovince Ochieng said the initiative promotes equality, dignity, and affirms education as a fundamental right for every child.



Principal Secretary for Public Health and Professional Standards Mary Muthoni reaffirmed the Government of Kenya's commitment to ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths, guided by the right to quality healthcare. Speaking at a Ministry of Health side event during the International Maternal and Newborn Health Conference, she highlighted progress made through expanded skilled birth attendance, improved referral systems, integration of services into primary healthcare, and scaling up community-based care. Despite these gains, she noted persistent challenges among vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations, where limited access to quality services continues to cause preventable deaths. She called for stronger collaboration among governments, partners, and communities to build a resilient, inclusive health system.

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Agriculture Kagwe highlighted the vulnerability of Kenya's largely rain-fed agriculture

Kenya urges developed nations to finance climate-smart agriculture to protect global food security

BY WMW

@themtkenyentimes

Kenya has issued a strong appeal to developed nations and global investors to urgently finance climate-smart agriculture, warning that failure to act could threaten food security worldwide.

Speaking at the 3rd Climate Change Global Business Summit on Africa in Nairobi, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development, Mutahi Kagwe, emphasized that climate change is no longer a future threat but a present crisis already disrupting farming systems across the continent.

Kagwe highlighted the vulnerability of Kenya's largely rain-fed agriculture, noting that five failed rainy seasons between 2020 and 2023 have left over four million people facing food insecurity and caused significant livestock losses.

"The crisis persists, with parts of the country experiencing floods while others endure drought and extreme heat," he said.

The CS stressed that Africa must not be sidelined in global climate decision-making. He urged that solutions be locally driven and tailored to the realities of farmers on the ground. Kagwe also called for the enforcement of the "polluter pays" principle, insisting that developed

countries match their climate commitments with tangible, accountable financing.

Highlighting Kenya's own progress, Kagwe pointed to investments in renewable energy, climate-smart farming technologies, irrigation systems, and resilience-building measures. He noted that the country has already secured more than USD 250 million in climate financing, but emphasized that significantly more capital is needed to unlock Africa's full agricultural potential.

"Investors must see climate-smart agriculture not as a risk but as one of the greatest opportunities of this decade," Kagwe said, adding that Kenya is ready to lead in driving sustainable agricultural transformation.

He underscored Africa's critical role in global food security, noting that supporting the continent's agricultural resilience is not just an African priority but a global imperative. Without urgent investment in climate-adaptive farming practices, the region risks widespread disruption of food systems that could have far-reaching consequences.

Kagwe's call comes at a time when climate shocks are increasingly frequent and severe, including prolonged droughts, unpredictable rainfall patterns, floods, and extreme temperatures that continue to threaten crops, livestock, and livelihoods



Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe during yesterday's forum |

Photo: Courtesy.

across Africa.

The CS urged governments, investors, and development partners to act decisively, highlighting that climate-smart agriculture can drive economic growth, safeguard livelihoods, and strengthen the resilience of global food systems.

"The time for action is now," Kagwe concluded. "By supporting climate-smart solutions in Africa, the global community can prevent future food crises while unlocking immense investment opportunities in a sector that feeds billions."



Some of the stakeholders who attended the forum listening to CS Mutahi Kagwe.

Police probe night commuter safety along Nairobi's old railway corridor



BY Belinda Oloo

@themtkenyentimes

The National Police Service has opened investigations into a series of troubling reports from night commuters traveling near the old railway corridor adjacent to Nairobi Railway Station. The incidents have reignited concerns about public transport safety and the gaps in urban infrastructure across the capital.

Authorities say at least seven formal complaints have been filed in the past two weeks, ranging from suspected theft to unexplained passenger movements. While early social media chatter suggested "disappearances," police stress there is no verified evidence of missing persons linked to the corridor and urge the public to avoid speculation.

Commuters describe unnerving experiences between 8:00 p.m. and midnight on informal routes running alongside the inactive line. James Mwangi, a university student, recalled: "I boarded a matatu near the station, and by the next stage

the person beside me was gone. The conductor insisted we hadn't stopped—it was strange." Food vendor Mary Atieno pointed instead to poor visibility: "Some sections are completely dark. You can't see who is getting on or off. That's where the danger is."

Police spokesperson Inspector Daniel Njoroge confirmed increased patrols and said the focus is on addressing safety gaps rather than abduction claims. Nairobi City County officials added that unregulated vehicles complicate enforcement and expose commuters to risks.

Experts note the corridor's decline after the Standard Gauge Railway expansion left a vacuum filled by informal operators, without matching infrastructure like lighting or surveillance. Advocacy groups are now calling for reforms—better lighting, stricter licensing, and stronger police presence.

For many Nairobians, the issue is simple: they want to get home safely. As Mwangi put it, "Whether it's crime or confusion, something isn't working."

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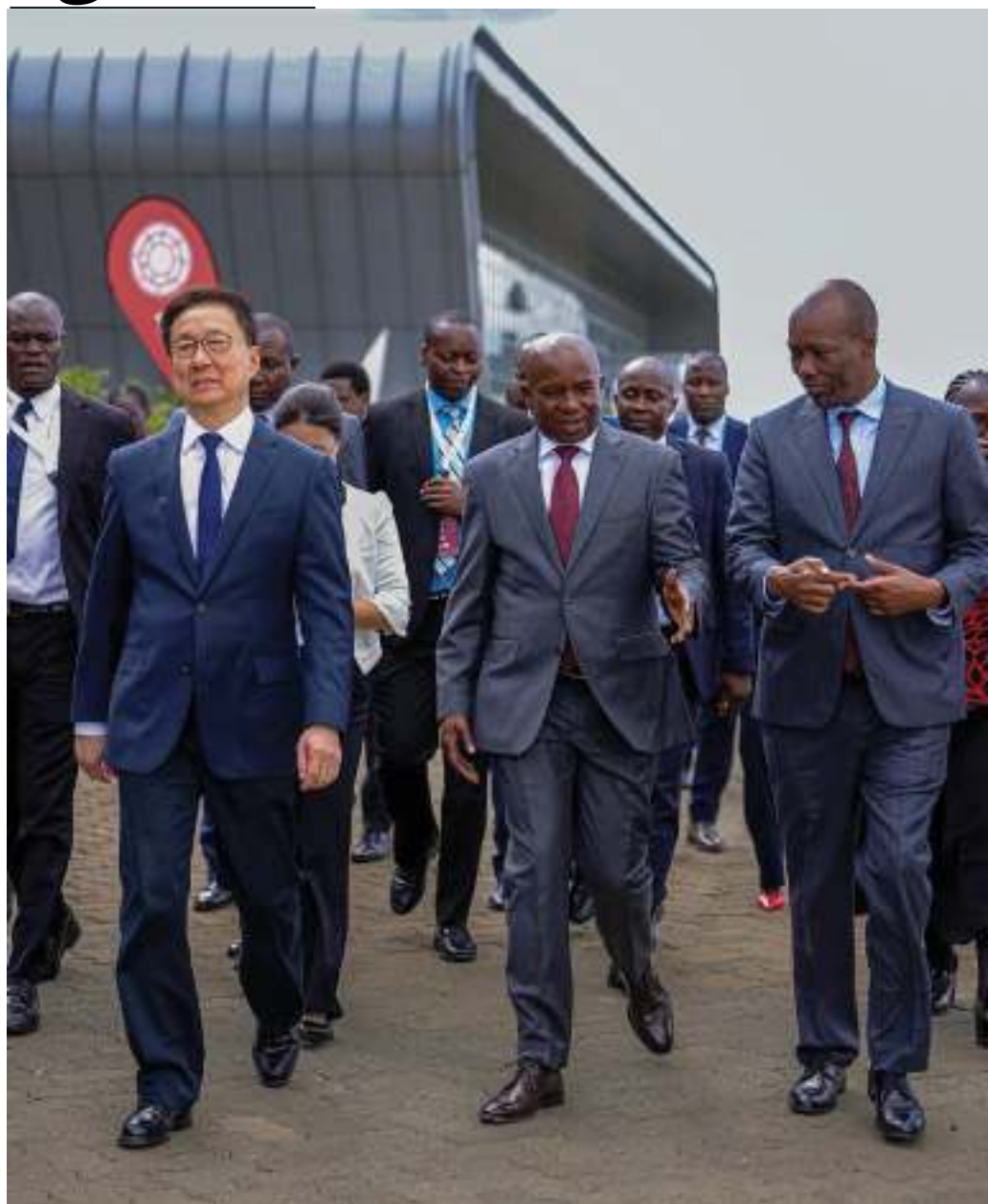
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Diplomacy The DP said the two countries have enjoyed stronger relations since Kenya gained independence in 1963 but the trade deficit has remained wide

Kenya keen to cut KSh500 Billion China trade deficit through zero-tariff agreement



From left: China Vice President Han Zheng, deputy president Kithure Kindiki and Trade CS Lee

BY DPCS

@themtkenyaintimes

Kenya is looking to expand trade with China in order to cut the trade deficit which currently stands at slightly over KSh500 billion, Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has said.

The DP said the two countries have enjoyed stronger relations since Kenya gained independence in 1963 but the trade deficit has remained wide.

He pushed for exploitation of new business frontiers to close the gap.

Kinyanjui in Nairobi yesterday.

“Our shared objective is to expand Kenya’s exports to the Chinese market, particularly value added agricultural products, scale up the value chain, increase manufacturing cooperation and strive to move towards a more balanced trade between our two economies,” DP said.

The Deputy President spoke yesterday when he addressed the High-Level Kenya-China Business Forum in Nairobi also attended by China Vice President Han Zheng.

Prof. Kindiki said targeted interventions in agriculture have increased production in the key sub sectors such as coffee, tea, avocados, maca-

damia and others calling for more focus on these areas to improve exports to the Asian country.

“Kenya has the best coffee in the world, the best tea in the world. Kenya is the largest producer of avocados in Africa and second largest producer of macadamia in the continent.

I would like to request our Chinese friends to consider increasing their imports of coffee, tea, avocados, nuts, fish and fish products among others,” DP stated.

Kenya’s exports to China stands at USD 0.21 billion and imports from China at USD 4.32 billion creating a

trade deficit of around USD 4 billion.

In a bid to address this, President Ruto and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping signed a Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development in April 2025 that will see Kenyan products get access to the huge Chinese market at zero-tariff from May 1, 2026.

The DP challenged the private sector to take advantage of the zero-tariff agreement saying access to the 1.4 billion people Chinese has been made easier and more valuable.

“We are looking forward to exploiting to the maximum the gesture of the zero-tariff

opportunity to take our tariffs to Kenya,” DP noted.

Later, the Deputy President together with the Vice President flagged-off the first consignment of exports to China set to benefit from the zero-tariff agreement at the Nairobi Railway Terminus.

Prof. Kindiki said the first cargo symbolized the growing economic cooperation between Kenya and China and the expanding opportunities for Kenyan exporters.

“We look forward to seeing many more Kenyan products reaching Chinese consumers in the years ahead, and advancing our shared priorities in trade, investment, and sustainable development,” he

said.

The initial consignment comprised of 54 containers carrying avocados, avocado oil, hides and skins, coffee beans, dry grains, pet pellets and recycling materials.

Additionally, the Deputy President appreciated China’s contribution to the growth of the country’s infrastructure noting the advancement in the Kenyan railway sector which has been achieved through the Asian nation’s support.

“The Cooperation between Kenya and China under the Belt and Road Initiative has contributed significantly to improving logistics and transport networks, including the development of the Standard Gauge Railway, which has strengthened the movement of goods between production centers, the port of Mombasa, and global markets,” he emphasized.

The SGR is set to be extended to Kisumu and Malaba in the coming days through a similar initiative.

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Corruption: A busy week awaits Kenya's anti-corruption courts, with at least 26 cases lined up across the country, featuring prominent political figures

Corruption: 26 cases crowd courts this week as high-profile figures face judgment and hearings

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

A busy week awaits Kenya's anti-corruption courts, with at least 26 cases lined up across the country, featuring prominent political figures, senior public officials, and civil servants accused of graft, abuse of office, and fraudulent acquisition of public resources.

At the center of attention is former National Land Commission chairman Mohammed A. Swazuri, who, alongside 16 others, faces judgment on Thursday at the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court. The group is accused of conspiracy and abuse of office in a compensation scheme for public land acquisition that allegedly caused the Kenya Railways Corporation a loss of KSh221.4 million.

Another high-profile judgment is expected on Friday involving former Migori Governor Zacharia Okoth Obado and seven co-accused.

They are charged with conspiracy to commit corruption and conflict of interest over the alleged misappropriation of KSh73.5 million through proxies between 2013 and 2017.

Yesterday, a Nakuru Anti-Corruption Court was set to deliver judgment in a case involving Esther Muthoni Wamui and another county official accused of attempting to commit corruption and facilitating irregular payments totaling KSh13 million for a conference that never took place.

Today, the Milimani court will rule on a civil suit against Mary Ngechi Ng'ethe concerning the recovery of KSh13 million allegedly irregularly acquired from the defunct City Council of Nairobi in a cemetery land deal.

The same court will issue a ruling tomorrow in a criminal case involving senior clerical officer Veronica Njenga and Abdullahi Abdi Sheikh over allegations of abuse of office, unlawful alteration of records, and provision of false information.

Beyond the judgments and rulings, a series of hearings dominate the week's schedule.

Among them is a KSh450 million recovery suit against Steven Kisonzo Mulwa, accused of fraudulently receiving payment for undelivered

goods from the State Department of Correctional Services. The hearing is scheduled for tomorrow.

Also under scrutiny is a case against former National Museums of Kenya boss, Mzalendo Kibunjia and others, accused of embezzling KSh468.4 million from the institution through ghost workers. The matter will be heard today and tomorrow at the Milimani Anti-Corruption Court.

Another major case involves Sammy Kipnetich Kirui and 13 others, who face charges of conspiracy to commit corruption over the alleged irregular purchase of land worth KSh283 million for cemetery use by the Nairobi City Council. Hearings are set for Thursday and Friday.

In Bungoma, Judith Nekoye faced a hearing yesterday over the alleged illegal acquisition of public housing property valued at KSh22 million, while a similar land recovery case involving Lucas Shamala and three others will be heard tomorrow in Kakamega.

At the Milimani court, Gladys Babra Asembo, a former ICT assistant at Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, was scheduled to have her case heard yesterday and today. She is facing allegations of fraudulently acquiring KSh6.2 million and forging academic credentials.

In Mombasa, Mohamed Maalim Edin, a former chief officer in Tana River County, will appear in court tomorrow over alleged fraudulent acquisition of KSh2.9 million and abuse of office.

Meanwhile, Benson Lokwang, a former Turkana County executive, will also appear in court the same day in Lodwar over alleged falsification of academic records.

Land-related disputes feature prominently, including a Thursday hearing involving Paul Mbatia Githaiga and four others over the alleged illegal acquisition of Kenya Railways land along Dennis Pritt Road. Another case in Kakamega today will address the recovery of public land involving Paul Orlando and two others.

In Kerugoya, former Kirinyaga Deputy Governor Peter Ndambiri and two others will be in court throughout the week over alleged conflict of interest in the awarding of a county tender.

Other hearings include bribery



Former Migori Governor Zacharia Okoth Obado

charges against Kenya Wildlife Service employee Jimnah Somoire Pertet in Garissa on Thursday, and abuse of office allegations against Samburu East education officials led by Joel Kaunda Ontoya in Isiolo on the same day.

In Kakamega, Dr. Arnold Kimiya Mamadi, a former Vihiga County health official, and 11 others will face charges related to the irregular awarding of a tender for a blood transfusion center.

Forgery-related cases also feature prominently, including that of Luka Mukimi Musamali, a former IEBC elections assistant accused of falsifying academic credentials, whose hearings started yesterday and set to resume on Thursday, and Friday at the Milimani court.



Former National Museums of Kenya boss, Mzalendo Kibunjia

Mentions are also scheduled early in the week.

Yesterday, former MP Dr. Shem Odongo Ochuodho and two others appeared in court over a KSh286 million debt refinancing deal involving Kenya Pipeline Company.

Additional mentions today include cases involving Kirimi Peter Kaberia over a KSh995 million tender dispute, Antco Investment Ltd over

KSh133.7 million in alleged conflict of interest, and Alex Buigut over unexplained wealth of KSh72 million.

Further mentions saw Dickson Mugambi appear in Chuka yesterday over alleged academic fraud, while a land recovery case involving Samuel Cherunge will be mentioned tomorrow in Kabarnet.

26
CORRUPTION
CASES LINED-UP

Parliament The role of parliament was never meant to be ceremonial or supportive of executive authority at all costs

When Parliament deviates from its mandate: Why voters must reclaim the power of accountability



BY Fredrick Chelimo
@themtkenyatimes

The strength of government institutions depends not only on constitutional design but also on the integrity with which those institutions perform their duties efficiently and effectively. Kenya's constitutional order clearly separates the functions of government into three arms: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The executive led by the President is responsible for implementing government policies and running the affairs of the state. The legislature comprising of the national assembly and the Senate of Kenya exist to represent citizens, enact laws and provide oversight over government actions. The Judiciary of Kenya remains constitutionally independent, guided by constitutional, professional ethics and rule of law to interpret legislations and resolve disputes.

This separation is not accidental, but is the foundation upon which democratic accountability rests. Each arm is designed though not perfectly, to check the excesses of the other so that power is exercised responsibly and in the public interest. When these boundaries are respected, governance becomes bal-

anced and citizens are protected from abuse of authority, but when one arm of government deserts its duly assigned duties and aligns itself too closely to another, the entire ecosystem is weakened.

Members of Parliament are elected by citizens to serve in the legislative arm of government and their responsibility is to represent the voices and the concerns of the people, debate national issues, scrutinize laws, and hold the executive accountable. The President on the other hand, is elected to lead the executive and implement policies and development programmes. These roles are different but complementary, and each exists precisely because democracy requires checks and balances. However recent observations on Kenya's legislative environment raises growing concerns as increasingly, there is a perception that sections of Parliament have become overly aligned with the executive, sometimes appearing to echo executive decisions, oversight becomes weak. When Parliamentary debate merely reinforces government's positions instead of interrogating them, the people lose one of their most important safeguards.

The role of parliament was never meant to be ceremonial or supportive of executive authority at all costs, it was designed to question, challenge, and refine government policy so that it serves the public interest. Without strong legislative oversight, governance risks drifting towards unchecked power, where decisions affecting millions of cit-

izens proceed to actualization without sufficient scrutiny

For many citizens observing parliamentary conduct, distinguishing between genuine representation and political alignments has become increasingly difficult. When legislators in Parliament, defend policies, or travels abroad on official duties, the public sometimes struggles to determine whether those actions serve national interests or individual political considerations. The challenges are as difficult as differentiating a swimming fish from a fish drinking water.

The citizens are not powerless in this scenario, as democracy places the ultimate authority in the hands of the voters, despite the challenges posed by quick petty money and extremely electrifying promises' during the electioneering period. Election periods, however should not be taken as a periodic political event, but moments of national evaluation as well as self-evaluation on whether the political representation was worth or if not, what happened? These realities should inform between voting the bribe or voting the future. It is a moment to evaluate the performance of those entrusted with public responsibility to determine whether they deserve to continue serving.

As the next electoral cycle approaches, voters will increasingly examine whether their representatives fulfilled the mandate for which they were elected. Did they defend the independence of parliament? Did they hold the executive accountable as required? Or



Parliament

did they abandon their legislative duty and instead become political supporters of the executive? When a legislator behaves as though their primary role lies elsewhere rather than with the electorate, it can appear as if they stepped away from the role they were entrusted to perform.

One of the most constructive responses to this challenge is development of a clear and universally acceptable, and understood framework for evaluating parliamentary performance. Responsible voting should be guided not by political slogans or short-term promises, but by measurable indicators of public service. Voters should be able to examine the records of the representatives and ask meaningful questions about their work. Such an evaluation could consider the quality of a legislator's contribution to law making, participation in parliamentary debates, commitment to oversight responsibilities and their responsiveness to citizen petitions and concerns. It could also examine how effective and considerate they represent or contribute to marginalized and vulnerable groups of the society including persons living with disabilities.

Long observations have revealed that legislators who consistently defend parliamentary independence, contribute to well-researched legislation, and champion inclusive policies would naturally earn the political confidence and admirations of vot-

ers. Those who neglect their oversight responsibilities or prioritize political loyalty over the public duty would face a more difficult judgement. This approach strengthens democracy as it shifts electoral decision making from personality politics to performance-based accountability.

Inclusion must however remain central in this national conversation. Kenya has made important legislative and policy progress in the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities, yet the effectiveness of these frameworks depends on how parliament seriously treats issues affecting vulnerable citizens. The presence of representatives for marginalized communities in Parliament must lead to tangible, audible and visible advocacy as well as policy outcomes that improve lives of those they represent. Responsible voting, therefore, is not about choosing leaders who promise development projects, it is about electing leaders who understand the responsibilities of the office they seek and who remain faithful to constitutional principles that guide governance.

Kenya's democratic journey has been shaped by the aspirations and sacrifices of generations who believed in accountable government. The strength of that democracy now depends on how citizens exercise their electoral power. Every vote cast an opportunity to reinforce the principles of integrity, independence of



service. Parliament must remain the people's institution – an arena where national issues are debated honestly, policies are scrutinized rigorously, and the interests of the citizens are defended with courage. When legislators remember and practice this duty, democracy flourishes. When they forget, voters possess the ultimate constitutional right and instruments to restore balance.

As the next generation approaches, the responsibility lies with every citizen to observe carefully, evaluate thoughtfully, and vote wisely. The future of democratic governance in Kenya will not only depend on those who seek office but also on the vigilance and responsibility of those who elect them.

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo PWD is the Chairperson, Jiamini Disability network Community Based organization. Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Education During the ceremony, the university acknowledged the role played by Hochschule Koblenz University of Applied Sciences

Germany, here we come: MKU flags off 5th cohort of Nursing apprentices

BY James Wakahiu
@themkenyatimes

Mount Kenya University (MKU) held a celebratory send-off ceremony for the 5th Cohort of nursing apprentices, marking yet another milestone in the institution's commitment to expanding global career pathways for Kenyan youth.

The 5th cohort, comprising 27 apprentices, will depart for Germany to begin their apprenticeship training on April 1, 2026. The programme is part of MKU's ongoing internationalization strategy aimed at equipping students with practical skills, global exposure and giving them access to international job markets.

Since its inception in 2023, the Nursing Apprenticeship Programme has grown into one of MKU's most impactful international initiatives. This week's send-off brings the total number of students who have benefited from the Germany apprenticeship initiative to 81. Its success is anchored on robust partnerships with leading German institutions.

During the ceremony, the university acknowledged the role played by Hochschule Koblenz University of Applied Sciences, the key academic partner supporting programme development and implementation. AG-Career Hub in Germany provides mentorship and supports student transition into the German healthcare system. The hub is led by Ms. Carol Mwangi, who is based in Germany.

The programme's healthcare partners in Germany include facilities in Bad Mergentheim, Göttingen, Pirmasens and Al-

zey, which offer high-quality apprenticeship placements.

MKU Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi said the institution is also in the process of becoming an approved TELC (The European Language Certificates) examination centre, a move that will allow students to undertake German proficiency exams locally and enhance MKU's language training ecosystem.

In addition to the Nursing Apprenticeship programme, MKU continues to diversify global job pathways for learners. The MKU Maritime Academy in Malindi has trained 1,065 students in Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW)-related courses. More than 400 graduates have secured placements aboard international cruise lines including the Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, Carnival Cruise Line, MSC Cruises and Princess Cruises.

The International Convention on STCW sets mandatory minimum safety and training standards for seafarers worldwide and was adopted by the International Maritime Organization in 1978. It is essential for employment on commercial vessels, covering Basic Safety Training (firefighting, first aid and survival at sea).

German language proficiency has also opened doors for MKU graduates seeking maritime employment on AIDA Cruises, a major employer within the European market.

Speaking during the event, the Chairman of the University Council, Dr Vincent Gaitho reaffirmed the council's commitment to supporting programmes that promote youth employment, skills development and international collaboration. He encouraged

the apprentices to remain disciplined, work hard, and serve as ambassadors of MKU and their country.

The university administration hailed the Cohort 5 apprentices for their dedication and resilience in preparing for this opportunity. They were urged to uphold professionalism, integrity, and excellence as they embark on their international journey. MKU continues as a leading private institution committed to unlocking infinite possibilities through innovative training, global partnerships, and industry-driven programmes that prepare learners for modern labour markets.

Chinese ICT partnership

Last week, MKU sealed a partnership with Chinese ICT institutions to Advance the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 9 (SDG 9). The landmark five-year deal with two leading institutions from China will strengthen innovation, digital skills and infrastructure development in line with its global role as the UN's Academic Impact (UNAI) Hub Chair for SDG 9 — Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.

The agreement, signed virtually on 18 March 2026, brings together MKU, Nanjing Zhongxing Xinyada Information Technology Co. Ltd (Xinyada) and the Nanjing Vocational College of Information Technology (NJCIT). The deal is expected to drive large scale skills development and digital transformation across Kenya and the broader African region.

According to MKU Vice Chancellor Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi, the collaboration aligns with the university's mission to promote world class education, research and



University leadership led by Dr. Vincent Gaitho (Chair of Council), Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi (Vice Chancellor), Dr. Mercyline Kamande (DVC-ARA), Prof. Peter Kirira (DVC-APIA), and Dr. Josephine Thuo (Director, Center for Professional Development) pose for a group photo with Cohort 5 students ahead of their departure to Germany for the Nursing Apprenticeship Program.

innovation for sustainable development. "We have already received the first consignment of ICT equipment from Xinyada, which will support teaching and research," he added.

The partnership will focus on several flagship initiatives, including the establishment of a China-Africa Skills Supermarket, promotion of cloud computing platforms, exchange programmes for staff and students and joint skills-based trainings. It also

involves digital cooperation such as institutional website back linking. The efforts are geared toward strengthening digital infrastructure and fostering innovation — a key pillars of SDG 9.

Xinyada, a recognized high tech enterprise in China, specializes in digital product development, platform building and international ICT skills training. NJCIT, one of China's top state-owned ICT institutions, offers industry leading programmes in arti-

ficial intelligence (AI), network and communication, intelligent manufacturing and digital business. It already collaborates with universities in South Africa and Ethiopia.

The partnership will also contribute to Kenya Vision 2030, the East African Community Vision 2050, and the African Union Agenda 2063 by building a skilled workforce capable of driving industrial growth and technological advancement across Africa.



MKU Vice Chancellor Prof. Deogratius Jaganyi awards a certificate to one of the Cohort 5 students travelling to Germany for the Nursing Apprenticeship.

Religion The proposed Religious Organisations Bill, 2024, introduces mandatory registration for all religious entities, making it illegal to operate without approval

Nakuru clergy warns of State overreach in proposed Religious Law

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatiimes

A section of clergy in Nakuru has raised alarm over the Religious Organisations Bill, 2024, saying proposed regulations risk expanding state control over faith-based institutions and undermining freedom of worship and association.

The Bill was sponsored by Tana River Senator Danson Mungatana and tabled in the Senate in 2024, emerging from a Presidential Task Force established by President Ruto

following the deadly Shakahola tragedy in Kilifi County. The Nakuru County Bishops' Council and clergy said while the Bill seeks to promote accountability and integrity, several provisions threaten constitutional guarantees and the autonomy of religious institutions across diverse denominations and independent ministries.

The proposed Religious Organisations Bill, 2024, introduces mandatory registration for all religious entities, making it illegal to operate without approval. Offenders risk fines of up to KSh5 million or imprisonment for up to three

years.

They cited the proposed establishment of a Religious Affairs Commission, arguing its mandate to develop codes of conduct could override existing church doctrines and governance systems rooted in biblical teachings and long-standing ecclesiastical traditions.

Clergy further warned that policy powers granted to the commission fail to reflect the diversity of religious institutions, noting churches differ widely in doctrine, governance structures, and operational frameworks shaped by distinct theological traditions.



Some of the Nakuru Clergy.

Concerns were also raised about the commission's composition, which includes state appointees and selected umbrella bodies, with clergy arguing it risks excluding independent churches and emerging ministries from representation within the regulatory framework.

"The proposed law introduces structures that may erode the independence of the Church and interfere with matters of doctrine, governance, and worship that are constitutionally protected," said the council's chairman Bishop Dr Samwel Muya.

The council also questioned academic qualification requirements for commission members, saying they overlook spiritual formation and practical ministry experience, which define leadership in many churches, especially grassroots and independent congregations across the country.

Under the Bill, religious lead-

ers will be required to possess formal theological training from recognized institutions, with acceptable qualifications ranging from certificates to degrees. Existing leaders will be granted a six-year transition period to meet the new standards.

Further objections targeted registration requirements, including mandatory endorsement by umbrella organisations, which clergy said could disadvantage unaffiliated churches and create opportunities for coercion or exploitation in the process of seeking approval.

The Bill further outlines requirements for umbrella organizations, stating that such entities must comprise at least 25 registered religious institutions. This provision is intended to streamline coordination and oversight within the broader religious sector.

They also criticized requirements for theological certificates for office bearers and minimum membership thresholds, arguing these could exclude emerging ministries and limit the growth of small fellowships that form the foundation of many churches.

"The Bill in its current form imposes restrictive conditions that could marginalize independent ministries and undermine the constitutional right to freely associate and worship without undue interference," said Bishop John Omollo, secretary general of the council.

The legislation also mandates the establishment of a Board of Trustees in every religious organization to strengthen governance structures. Religious leaders will be barred

from holding key administrative roles within these boards to ensure accountability and oversight.

Clergy expressed concern over punitive compliance measures, including suspension for failure to file returns, and restrictions on political engagement, warning these provisions could silence the church's role in promoting justice, accountability, and ethical leadership.

Financial transparency forms a central pillar of the proposed law, requiring organizations to submit audited annual accounts and maintain updated membership registers. Additionally, income generated from non-charitable activities will be subject to taxation under existing financial regulations.

They also cautioned against provisions criminalizing healing claims, saying they risk infringing on legitimate religious practices, while noting existing laws already address fraud without encroaching on faith-based expressions and beliefs.

The council pointed to regulatory models in the United Kingdom and South Africa, where oversight focuses on financial accountability without interfering in doctrine, arguing such approaches balance regulation with constitutional protections and religious freedom.

"The entire framework is intrusive and fails to reflect the realities of Kenya's diverse religious landscape, and we therefore call for its withdrawal to allow broader consultation," said Bishop Dr Jackson Mwangi, a council member.

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His little girl, forever



From tiny steps to dreams so wide,
He walks with love right by her side.
His gentle hands, so firm yet kind,
A world of strength in him she finds.

He holds her close when fears appear,
A silent shield, always near.
In every fall, in every fight,
He lifts her up, restores her light.

His eyes may speak what words don't say,
A quiet love that never fades away.
Through growing years and changing skies,
She still sees home in his warm eyes.

He lets her fly, though hearts may ache,
For her bright future, risks he'll take.
With every tear he hides inside,
He smiles with strength, filled with pride.

And though she walks her own new way,
To him, she's still his child each day.
No time, no distance can unfurl—
A father's love for his little girl.

©Dr Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

Same classroom, different futures



The way of receiving the inputs
Processed uniquely in different minds.
The outcomes may not be the same,
The different futures will be generated.

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.

Class room trains the minds not machines,
Even the inputs are given equally!
The outputs may be different.
All the minds in the classroom are not the same.

Not everyone deserves a front row seat in your life



It's only for the blessed one—
A talented soul on the earth,
A pure soul so versatile,
A person of great toil,
Spinning repeatedly like a spider.
A hearty well wisher for all human beings,
A human so sacred,
Sacrificing their work for others' upliftment.
A decent dignitary,
Owning a vast space in people's hearts,
Blessed with God's grace
For their humble service to society.
Deserving the front row seat
In a great mob of procession,
Standing as the unique icon.

V.R. Vijayalakshmi, Graduate Teacher,
CW Writers Group, Kanchipuram District, Tamil
Nadu, India.

Women empowerment



Women empowerment is soaring high these days
No more a baby-producing machine,
She's the pillar of all, decision maker too,
Does all work men do, and more,

Living an independent life with pride,
Holding status of family, society, country
She's strong and bold,
she is courageous and smart,
She has no limits,
she breaks every bond
She stands tall like wall

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

Good person and bad person



Good person
the good person will always great, they will
always tell truth ,
they will be soft ,polite ,cute ,
they will be always soft ,
they will not speak lie
they should be always a good person
everything is beautiful to them
They are great person they can achieve anything
by they smart mind.

Bad person
the bad person will always tell lie, they will always
they were not soft, not polite ,not cute ,
they will speak lie always ,
they were not soft ,
they were very rough
they cannot achive anything by
Their own mind ,
They want the help of good person
Mind.

The great full person will all ways truth .

P.Hemanya
VII D
John dewey mat hr sec school
Panruti Cuddalore district.

Butterfly Poem



The butterfly is always bright,
our hearts should also shine with light.
It circles flowers all around,
we should circle our school and learning ground.
The butterfly is lovely to see,
in many colors, happy and free.

G. Sahana
Grade 7
GHSS Kandigai
Chengalpattu district

Every step is a footprint



It must be valuable.
Wherever you go, leave your mark.
Your footprints become a model for others.
They may follow the path you created.
Your steps must be brave to achieve the goal.
Steps may face struggle, hurdles, and obstacles.
Yet your footprints lead to the target of the
goal.
Respect your journey in life.
Every step is building something beautiful.
Mohana K,
P.U.M. School, Kovakulam,
Graduate Teacher, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India.

Sports The leaders emphasized the need to promote grassroots talent by giving priority to local youth who have not had exposure to higher levels of competition

Tharaka Nithi restricts county teams to local youth ahead of KYISA games

BY Alex Njeru
@themkenyetimes

Sports stakeholders in Tharaka Nithi County have resolved that only youths drawn from within the county will be eligible to represent the devolved unit in the upcoming 11th Edition of the Kenya Youth Inter-County Sports Association games, set to take place in Laikipia County from April 10 to April 19.

The resolution was reached during a high-level consultative meeting led by County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Youth and Sports Ms. Moreen Nyambura, Chief Officer for Sports Mr. Alex Kinyua, and FKF Tharaka Nithi County chapter chairperson Mr. Dan Hibichu. The leaders emphasized the

need to promote grassroots talent by giving priority to local youth who have not had exposure to higher levels of competition.

Officials outlined strict eligibility criteria for participants, stating that players must be aged between 18 and 23 years, having been born between 2003 and 2008, and must present a valid original Kenyan national identity card. Additionally, only players who have not participated in leagues above the county level will be allowed to take part in the trials and eventual competition.

The directive further bars players affiliated with national and premier leagues, the Super League, Division I and II, as well as institutional teams such as disciplined forces, universities, and colleges.

Organizers warned that according to KYISA rules, any

team found fielding ineligible players will face disqualification or forfeiture of matches, in line with established sports regulations.

The selection process will begin at the grassroots, with ward-level trials scheduled from March 24 to March 28, followed by sub-county selections from March 30 to April 1.

County-level selection will then be conducted on April 2 at Kajiunduthi Stadium. Football trials for men will start at the ward level, while volleyball trials for both men and women will commence at the sub-county level.

11th Edition Kenya Youth Inter-County Sports Association games

“The scouting exercise will kick off in Gatunga Ward at Rwatha Primary School grounds starting March 24 and continue through early April. Successful players will proceed to a training camp scheduled between April 7 and April 11, with the venue to be announced later,” said Ms Nyambura.

County officials have urged all eligible youth’s to turn up in large numbers for the trials, reiterating that the initiative is designed to identify and nurture genuine, unexposed talent from within Tharaka Nithi County.

They also noted that counties intending to participate in the KYISA games must confirm their participation with the organizing committee by April 1, 2026.

“We are looking forward to coming up with very strong teams which will successfully



Tharaka-Nithi County Youth and Sports CECM Ms Moreen Nyambura and Sports Chief Officer Mr Alex Kinyua during a meeting to plan for 11th edition of KYISA games.

represent our beloved county in Laikipia County,” said Mr Hibichu.

Mr Kinyua insisted that the officials will not tolerate indiscipline by players because they will end up being disqualified hence disadvantageous to the county.

“We are very strict on discipline because it matters a lot in sport,” said Mr Kinyua.



Tharaka-Nithi County sports stakeholders during a meeting to plan for 11th edition of KYISA games. | Photo: Alex Njeru



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Politics According to the elders, Okeng'o has been actively involved in community empowerment programmes, including supporting youth initiatives

Elders rally behind Okeng'o Nyambane for Nyaribari Chache MP seat

BY Elizabeth Angira

@themkenyaintimes

Elders in Nyaribari Chache Constituency, Kisii County, have endorsed Communication Authority (CA) board member Okeng'o Nyambane to contest for the area's parliamentary seat in the upcoming general elections, citing his visible impact on the community and his hands-on approach to development.

Speaking during a consultative meeting in Kisii, the elders said their call was informed by what they described as years of consistent engagement and support from Okeng'o, even without holding an elective political office. They noted that his initiatives have touched the lives of many, especially vulnerable groups who often struggle to access basic needs and opportunities.

According to the elders, Okeng'o has been actively involved in community empowerment programmes, including supporting youth initiatives, assisting needy families, and building decent houses for the homeless.

They said such actions demonstrate a leadership style that is rooted in service rather than promises.

"We have seen what he has been doing on the ground. He has stood with our people in difficult times and has not waited for a political seat to serve. That is the kind of leadership we need," said Ann Kwamboka, one of the elders who spoke during the gathering.

She added that leaders should be judged not just by their words but also by their actions, noting that Okeng'o's record speaks for itself.

The elders emphasized that Nyaribari Chache is at a point where it requires leadership that understands both the challenges facing the community and the systems that can be leveraged to address them.

They said Okeng'o's experience in public service, particularly at the national level, gives him a deeper understanding of policy implementation and resource allocation.



Communication Authority Board Member Okeng'o Nyambane addressing Church Congregation during fundraising. | Photo: file

"Leadership today is not just about representation; it is about knowing how to navigate systems and bring development closer to the people. We believe he has that understanding," Kwamboka added. They also pointed out that many residents are increasingly becoming weary of leaders who focus on short-term handouts instead of sustainable development.

According to them, the constituency needs a shift towards long-term planning, improved infrastructure, job creation, and better access to social services.

Nelson Onchiri, another elder, said the time had come for leaders who can translate ideas into tangible results.

"We are tired of empty promises that only come during campaign periods. What we need now is a leader who can deliver real change and improve the lives of our people. From what we have seen, Okeng'o has the ability to do that," he said.

The elders further noted that

issues such as unemployment among the youth, poor road networks in some parts of the constituency, and limited access to essential services continue to affect residents.

They expressed confidence that with the right leadership, these challenges can be addressed in a more structured and sustainable way.

They urged Okeng'o to heed their call and consider offering himself for the parliamentary seat, saying that his leadership would bring a fresh perspective to the constituency's development agenda.

"We are not just endorsing him because we know him, but because we have witnessed his work. We believe he can represent our interests and push for the resources we need," said another elder.

At the same time, the elders called on residents to remain united and to prioritize leaders who have a clear vision for the constituency.

They stressed the importance of active citizen participation in shaping the future



Nelson Onchiri addressing the media said that they have expressed confidence on Okeng'o. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira



Communication Authority Board Member Okeng'o Nyambane addressing the residents | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

of Nyaribari Chache, particularly as the 2027 general elections draw closer.

They also encouraged young people to take a keen interest in leadership and development issues, noting that they stand to benefit the most from

policies and programmes that promote economic growth and social inclusion.

The endorsement comes at a time when political activity in the constituency is gradually gaining momentum, with several aspirants already express-

ing interest in the seat.

Electorates say the race is likely to be competitive, given the strategic importance of the constituency and the growing expectations among voters.

Despite the anticipated competition, the elders maintained that their support for Okeng'o is based on merit and his demonstrated commitment to improving lives.

"As elders, we have a responsibility to guide our community and speak out when we see potential in a leader. We believe this is the right time to support someone who has already shown dedication to serving the people," Onchiri said.

They concluded by reiterating their call for issue-based politics, urging all aspirants to focus on development and the well-being of residents rather than divisive rhetoric.

With the 2027 general elections on the horizon, the coming months are expected to shape the political landscape in Nyaribari Chache, as candidates continue to engage with voters and outline their visions for the constituency.



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Business The Sacco's total assets grew by 13.4 percent to KSh4.19 billion, up from KSh3.7 billion in 2024, signaling steady progress toward achieving Tier I status.

Biashara Sacco posts strong growth amid rising loan defaults

Loan disbursements surged by 22 percent to KSh3.74 billion, while the loan portfolio expanded by 17.4 percent to KSh3.43 billion.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyaintimes

Biashara DT Sacco Ltd has reported robust financial growth for the year ending December 31, 2025, even as it grapples with rising loan defaults in a challenging economic environment. Speaking during the Sacco's Annual General Meeting held yesterday, Chairman Joseph Njamuku said the institution recorded significant gains across key performance indicators, driven by strategic focus on savings mobilization, cost reduction, and loan portfolio management.

The Sacco's total assets grew by 13.4 percent to KSh4.19 billion, up from KSh3.7 billion in 2024, signaling steady progress toward achieving Tier I status. Core capital also rose by 12.9 percent to KSh1.44 billion. Member deposits increased by 19.2 percent to KSh2.52 billion, reflecting growing confidence among members.

However, the Chairman noted that deposits remain insufficient compared to the expanding loan book, with the loan-to-deposit ratio standing at 136.1 percent.

"We must strengthen our savings culture to support sustainable lending," Njamuku urged members.

Loan disbursements surged by 22 percent to KSh3.74 billion, while the loan portfolio expanded by 17.4 percent to KSh3.43 billion.

The growth was attributed to increased demand for credit and aggressive member-focused lending strategies.

Net surplus before tax rose modestly by 6.5 percent to KSh266.4 million.

Based on this performance, the Board proposed an 18 percent dividend on share capital and 12 percent interest on member deposits, translating to a total payout of KSh113 million.

Membership grew by 8.4 percent to 229,436, while the Sacco expanded its agency network to 660 outlets,



Biashara DT Sacco chairman Joseph K. Njamuku addressing the AGM yesterday.

improving accessibility and service delivery.

Despite the strong performance, rising loan defaults emerged as a major concern.

The Sacco's portfolio at risk increased to 15.96 percent in 2025 from 12.26 percent in the previous

year, with defaulted loans amounting to KSh47.2 million.

This prompted the Sacco to significantly increase its loan loss provisions to KSh46.8 million.

"The growth in our loan book has been accompanied by increased de-

fault rates, which requires urgent and collective action," Njamuku said.

To address the issue, the Sacco has introduced stricter loan appraisal processes, enhanced monitoring, and increased accountability in credit decision-making. Members were

also encouraged to engage the Sacco early when facing repayment difficulties.

On the regulatory front, the Sacco is adapting to stricter oversight by the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA), including new corporate governance reporting requirements and a directive to adopt a delegate system for large membership organizations.

Among its key achievements, the Sacco completed Phase One of the Biashara Sacco Plaza at a cost of KSh165 million, fully financed from internal reserves. The building is already generating rental income, with part of the space leased out at a monthly income of KSh388,000.

The Sacco has also made strides in digital transformation, launching an online member portal to support diaspora engagement and improve service delivery.

Looking ahead, Biashara DT Sacco plans to strengthen asset quality, roll out a digital loan platform pending regulatory approval, and expand its physical presence by opening new branches in selected growth areas.

As the Sacco marks 20 years of FOSA operations, Njamuku expressed confidence in its future, calling on members to remain committed.

"Our success depends on collective effort. Together, we can overcome current challenges and build a stronger, more resilient Sacco," he said.

Hundreds of the Sacco members attended the AGM that was held at ACK Hall in Nyeri town.

“

Based on this performance, the Board proposed an 18 percent dividend on share capital and 12 percent interest on member deposits, translating to a total payout of KSh113 million.

Membership grew by 8.4 percent to 229,436, while the Sacco expanded its agency network to 660 outlets, improving accessibility and service delivery.



Some of Biashara DT Sacco members who attended the AGM yesterday. | Photo: Courtesy

African literature For Mr. Twin, African literature is more than storytelling; it is a force for transformation

Mr Keolopile Twin: championing African literature



Paula.O.M Otukile
paula200500293@gmail.com
Senior Editor Botswana & S. Africa

Mr. Keolopile Twin, an author based in Francistown, Botswana, is steadily carving his place in the literary world. A registered member of COSBOTS, he attended the inaugural Francistown International Book Festival in April 2024 and continues to support writer initiatives and open calls. With the release of his second book, he hopes to connect with the international community while deepening his craft. For Mr. Twin, African literature is more than storytelling; it is a force for transformation. He believes books can reshape mindsets and that

authors must actively reach readers rather than wait on the sidelines. In his view, literature is a tool of empowerment, capable of inspiring change across generations. Central to his advocacy is the conviction that children must be introduced to books early. He urges families and communities to budget for books, invite children into libraries, and form small reading clubs. Read aloud sessions, he insists, are vital— young children love hearing stories, and the rhythm of a changing voice brings characters to life. As children grow, giving them the chance to read aloud themselves builds confidence and nurtures a life-long love of books. Such practices, Mr. Twin argues, are not luxuries but necessities for cultivating a culture of reading in Africa. His mission is clear: to ensure African stories are not only written but heard, shared, and cherished. In doing so, he stands as part of a growing movement of writers determined to make literature a living force in society.



Keolopile Twin



African literature Oaitse literary spirit thrives through Oaitse Creations, where she not only pens her own works but also ushers new authors into print.

The flourishing voice of Kang: Oaitse Phikane

Paula.O.M Otukile
paula200500293@gmail.com
Senior Editor Botswana & S. Africa

Born in Kang, Oaitse Phikane has become one of the most luminous voices of the Shekgalagari people—a writer, author, professional speaker, counselor, and trainer of trainers. She is also a commanding corporate events emcee, and a tireless activist for youth and women. As Director of Flourishing Dreams University—formerly Oaitse Tuition University, founded in 2019—she has nurtured countless Kgalagadi students through after-school tutorials for PSLE, JC, and BGCSE. Many who once struggled have rewritten their futures, gaining admission into universities across Botswana and beyond. The first cohort of her students proudly graduated in 2024, a living testament to her vision. She continues to travel across Kgalagadi schools, igniting hope through moti-

vational talks. Her literary spirit thrives through Oaitse Creations, where she not only pens her own works but also ushers new authors into print. With eight published books to her name, she bridges languages—translating between English, Setswana, and Shekgalagari—ensuring stories resonate across cultures. Phikane’s passion for empowerment extends to the My Keeper Organisation, which hosts annual seminars under the banner My Sisters and Brothers Keeper. These gatherings equip men and women with life skills, enriched by the wisdom of invited experts. She is a familiar voice at women’s conferences and elegant high teas, where her words stir reflection and resolve. Through her consultancy, A Cup of Tea with OP, she lends practical support—crafting CVs, proposals, and capacity-building strategies. The same name graces her YouTube channel, where she converses with

entertainers, leaders, and cultural custodians, celebrating Shekgalagari language and heritage. Her accolades are many: in 2023, she was recognized as one of Africa’s most innovative and influential young leaders by the International Internship University. Earlier, in 2017, she ranked among the top five youth addressing social issues at the Botswana National Youth Awards (BYAS17). Her journey has been shaped by service. She volunteered with Face Nation Botswana from 2009 to 2012, later serving six years as an administrative assistant. She has also held administrative posts at Shiloh Academy and ThutoBoswa Academy. Beyond education, she contributes to the GooLowe History Institute, researching Batswana tribes, with a special focus on the Bashaga of Kgalagadi. Her scholarship earned her an interview with Motswedi FM’s Sir Tom Perez, where she spoke passionately about her books and her

people. As an emcee, Phikane has graced prestigious stages: the launch of Maja a Ikgorosa under the Ministry of Entrepreneurship, the National Arts Festival Polka and Namstap under the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Khawa Dune Festival activations under Botswana Tourism Organisation, Kang Farmers Field Days, and many more. Her literary voice continues to flourish. Her recent Shekgalagari book, Tshöbötshöbö maraku o beye gatshi, is a stirring reminder that resilience rebuilds what life may shatter. In 2025, her work Hangke go sheneshela ruri was crowned Best Indigenous Book at the Mulher Forte Literature Awards. Above all, Oaitse Phikane is a community builder. In Kang, she stands as a beacon to the youth, proving that hard work and determination can transform lives. She has woven her love for books into the fabric of her community, inspiring students to embrace education. Today, graduates from Kang carry her imprint, while her writings in Shekgalagari affirm the beauty of indigenous language. She is not only a writer but a cultural custodian—her words a mirror in which her people see themselves.



Conflict U.S. companies hold tens of billions of dollars in direct investments across the Middle East, spanning sectors such as energy and digital infrastructure

Economic Watch: Middle East conflict may undermine safe-haven appeal of U.S. dollar assets

BY Xinhua News Agency

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Escalating tensions involving Israel, Iran, and the United States are raising doubts about the traditional safe-haven appeal of U.S. dollar-denominated assets, as geopolitical risks increasingly shape global asset pricing and influence global capital flows.

Market analysts warn that a prolonged conflict could erode confidence in dollar assets through several channels, including significant U.S. corporate exposure to the region, potential energy-driven inflationary pressures that could disrupt U.S. Federal Reserve policy, and mounting structural vulnerabilities in U.S. financial markets. Since the latest escalation, the dollar index has strengthened only modestly, gains have been limited, and not all dollar-denominated assets have benefited equally.

According to data from U.S.-based Emerging Portfolio Fund Research cited by Reuters, global emerging market bond funds saw net outflows of around 1.1 billion dollars in the week ending June 11. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which tracks the greenback against six major currencies, edged down 0.13 percent on June 17 to close at 99.574. Notably, yields on both 10-year and 2-year U.S. Treasury bonds have risen recently, a departure from the typical crisis pattern where yields fall, prompting some analysts to describe the trend as a “safe-haven failure.”

U.S. companies hold tens of billions of dollars in direct investments across the Middle East, spanning sectors such as energy and digital infrastructure, leaving them significantly exposed to regional risks. According to media reports, recent drone strikes by Iran damaged two data centers operated by a cloud computing platform under Amazon in the United Arab Emirates, causing power outages and disruptions to some services. The incident underscores the risks facing U.S. corporate assets in the region, particularly digital infrastructure.

Pan Xiangdong, chief economist of QiLai Research Institute, told Xinhua that continued targeting of such



Middle East conflict

infrastructure could raise risk premiums on U.S. corporate assets in the Middle East and weigh on valuations, particularly in the tech sector.



U.S. companies hold tens of billions of dollars in direct investments across the Middle East, spanning sectors such as energy and digital infrastructure, leaving them significantly exposed to regional risks. According to media reports, recent drone strikes by Iran damaged two data centers operated by a cloud computing platform under Amazon in the United Arab Emirates, causing power outages and disruptions to some services. The incident underscores the risks facing U.S. corporate assets in the region, particularly digital infrastructure.

Another major concern is whether the conflict will alter the Federal Reserve’s policy trajectory. Before the escalation, the Fed had signaled potential rate cuts under pressure from the U.S. administration to support economic growth. Yet if the conflict drives global energy prices into a prolonged surge, the Fed may

be forced to pause its easing plans. Adding to the uncertainty, Patrick Minford, professor of applied economics at Cardiff Business School in Britain, noted that confidence in dollar assets is also being weighed down by domestic policy uncertainties. Persistent U.S. fiscal deficits may undermine trust in long-term

U.S. Treasuries, while rising bond yields reflect growing investor concerns over inflation and policy direction.

Meanwhile, structural vulnerabilities in U.S. financial markets are drawing increasing scrutiny. The Financial Times recently reported that redemption requests for the flagship fund of U.S.-based Cliffwater surged to 14 percent of its size in the first quarter, far exceeding the 5 percent quarterly cap set by regulators. Major Wall Street firms, including BlackRock, Blackstone, Morgan Stanley, and private credit firm Blue Owl, have also faced waves of investor redemptions, triggering withdrawal restrictions.

Australian economist Guo Shengxiang warned that redemption pressures could trigger systemic risks, with investors potentially accelerating withdrawals from higher-risk assets if the conflict persists. The dollar’s dominance is also facing longer-term headwinds. Hisham Farag, professor of finance at the University of Birmingham in Britain, noted that countries are increasingly attentive to political risks tied to the dollar system and are exploring alternatives such as expanding local currency settlements and diversifying reserve assets. Pan added that a protracted conflict could undermine the petrodollar framework, accelerating de-dollarization and prompting a structural reassessment of dollar-denominated assets.

Chang Shishan, CEO of Cedar FinTech Group in the Middle East, noted that while geopolitical events tend to trigger short-term market volatility, capital ultimately flows toward stable and efficient financial systems, a dynamic that could shape the dollar’s role in the years ahead.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Respecting life sustains society



Respect for life is not an abstract virtue; it is the foundation of dignity, justice, and peace. When societies fail to uphold it, they invite division, exploitation, and unrest. Every person, regardless of background or circumstance, carries an inherent worth that must be recognized and protected. Respecting life goes beyond avoiding harm. It means valuing individuality, listening to diverse experiences, and treating others with fairness. Each person's journey is unique, and empathy—not judgment—should guide our interactions. Simple acts such as patience, kindness, and mindful speech

build stronger communities and reduce conflict. Justice is inseparable from respect. Discrimination, violence, and exploitation are direct assaults on human dignity. A society that truly respects life ensures access to essentials—food, shelter, education, health-care—and amplifies the voices of the marginalized. It means standing against injustice even when inconvenient, and defending those who cannot defend themselves. Self-respect is equally vital. When individuals value their own lives, they make better choices, cultivate responsibility, and extend respect outward.

This ripple effect strengthens relationships and communities. Respect must also extend beyond human beings to the environment and animals, recognizing that all life is interconnected and precious. Respecting life is not passive; it is a daily practice and a collective responsibility. It is expressed in how we treat one another and in how we uphold justice. A society that embraces respect does more than survive—it thrives. Without it, humanity risks losing its soul.

By Alex Mutisya, Laikipia University

Youth unemployment crisis leaves millions of graduates without job

Kenya's youth are staring down a ticking time bomb: a generation of graduates armed with degrees but locked out of the job market. Every year, thousands leave universities and colleges only to find themselves stranded, their ambitions stalled by an economy unable to absorb them. The mismatch between job seekers and available positions has become a national emergency. Despite their qualifications, many young people remain unemployed for months, even years. Employers demand experience, yet entry-level opportunities are scarce. The result? A growing army of educated youth forced into informal hustles—selling goods, freelancing online, or scraping by in small businesses. This is not just wasted potential; it is a drag on Kenya's economic



growth and a threat to social stability. Government initiatives—youth funds, digital job programs, entrepreneurship support—have been rolled out, but their impact remains limited. Meanwhile, the consequences of joblessness are visible: rising crime, mental health struggles, and migration as frustrated youth seek opportunities abroad. Yet amid the crisis, resilience shines. Many young people are carving their own paths through content creation, online work, and grassroots enterprises. But individual effort

alone cannot solve a systemic problem. Kenya must invest in small businesses, strengthen entrepreneurship, and craft policies that generate sustainable jobs. The country's future hinges on whether it can turn its restless, jobless youth into a productive force. Failure to act decisively risks squandering an entire generation. The time to confront this crisis is now—before Kenya's brightest minds become its lost promise.

By Hannah Njeri Gikandi, Laikipia University

Feminism in Kenya: A necessary conversation, not a divisive one

Feminism in Kenya is too often misunderstood, dismissed as foreign, or painted as a threat to tradition. In reality, it is neither imported nor divisive—it is a necessary conversation about fairness, dignity, and equal opportunity. At its core, feminism is not about elevating one gender above another, but about ensuring that every individual has the chance to thrive. Kenya has made progress in education and political representation, yet the gaps remain glaring. Nearly 34 percent of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. That figure alone underscores why feminism cannot be ignored. Organizations such as FIDA-Kenya and FEMNET continue to document abuses, provide legal support, and push for systemic change, but the



scale of the challenge demands broader societal commitment. At the grassroots, groups like Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation and KEFEADO are reshaping communities by empowering women and challenging harmful practices. Their work proves that gender equality is not an abstract policy issue—it is a lived reality that affects families, economies, and futures. Critics argue feminism erodes cultural values. But culture should never be an excuse for

inequality. True tradition is strengthened, not weakened, when all members of society are respected and given equal opportunity. Feminism is not a threat to Kenya's identity; it is a path toward a more just and prosperous nation. Kenya cannot afford to sideline half its population. Equality is not optional—it is the engine of progress.

By Whytney Nasir, Laikipia University

Educated but excluded: Kenya's youth dilemma

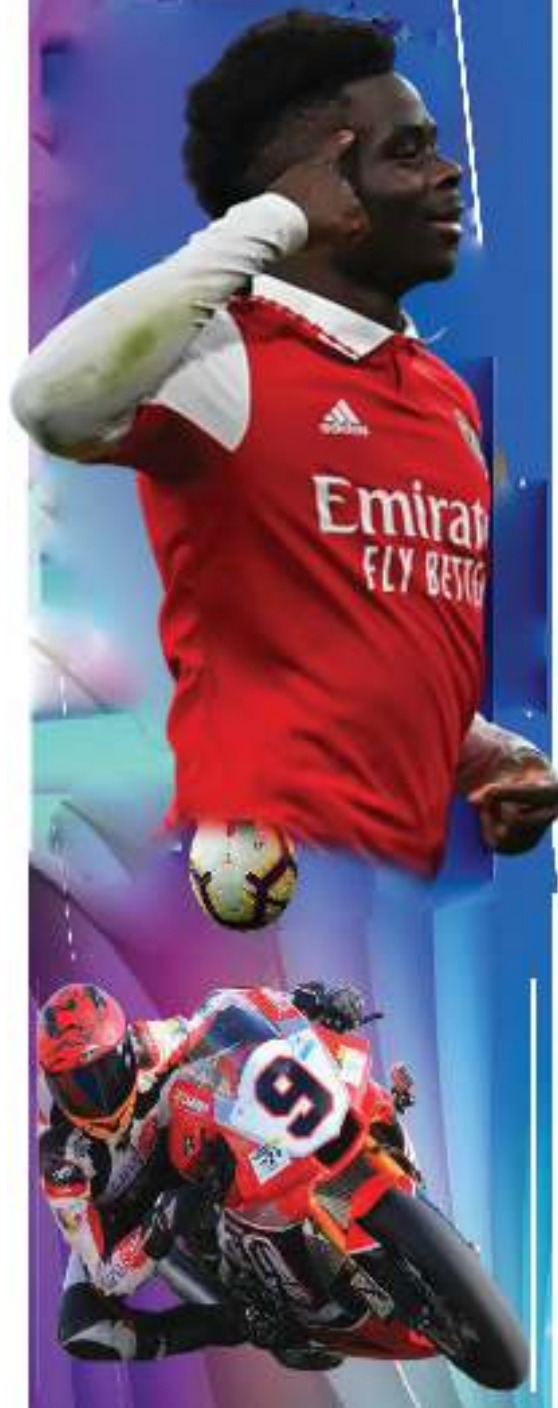
Kenya's youth are being sold a dream that too often ends in disillusionment. Education is hailed as the golden ticket out of poverty, yet for thousands of graduates, the promise of a brighter future collapses at the gates of unemployment. Degrees are earned, sacrifices are made, but jobs remain elusive. The result is a generation educated but excluded. The mismatch between education and the job market is glaring. Universities churn out graduates in their thousands, but the economy cannot absorb them. Once prestigious degrees have become commonplace, leaving young people scrambling for scarce opportunities. Employers, meanwhile, demand years of experience for entry level roles, shutting out fresh graduates before they even begin. The system itself is part of the problem. Too much em-



phasis is placed on theory, too little on practical skills. Students excel in exams but falter in workplaces that prize hands on experience. Many are forced into unpaid internships or costly retraining, delaying independence and breeding frustration. The rise of informal employment tells its own story. Graduates, unable to secure formal jobs, turn to small businesses or casual work. Their resilience is admirable, but the question is damning: if self employment is the default,

what is the real value of the degrees they fought so hard to obtain? Solutions exist. Education must be restructured to emphasize skills, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Stronger ties between universities and industries can bridge the gap. Kenya cannot afford to waste its talent. A nation that sidelines its educated youth risks sidelining its future.

By Alphonse Mambo, Laikipia University

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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *APS Bomet head coach Sammy Omolo "Pamzo" is confident they will survive the chop despite dropping points against Mara Sugar on Saturday.

Pamzo' confident APS Bomet can fire to safety amidst tough upcoming fixtures



APS Bomet James Khalela (L) attempts to tackle Bidco United Dennis Murunga during their Kenyan Premier League match at Kasarani Annex in Nairobi on November 02, 2025. Photo/Sportpicha.

APS Bomet head coach Sammy Omolo "Pamzo" is confident they will survive the chop despite dropping points against Mara Sugar on Saturday.

The law enforcers, languishing in 17th position on the log, lost a golden opportunity to leapfrog Bidco United and Ulinzi Stars after being condemned to a goalless draw by Mara Sugar, their ninth of the season.

"That is what I promised when I came here and I'm confident we shall remain in the top flight. We can get maximum points from the remaining matches and survive since we are facing teams that are also not fighting

for survival apart from Ulinzi," Pamzo told Citizen Digital.

The 55-year-old rued his team's failure to convert chances, although he hailed his team for their impressive defensive shift that earned them the important point away.

"I'm happy for the point we got away from Mara. Getting a point at Awendo is not easy and I have to appreciate my players for their effort especially the defence. They did an incredible job to keep a rare clean sheet."

"I however want the boys to be ruthless in front of goal and convert the chances because we lost two clear-cut chances to win the

game. It is something we have to work on," he added.

The 0-0 draw on Saturday meant APS Bomet kept their sixth clean sheet of the season.

Pamzo has in the meantime urged his boys to stay the course in fighting for survival, saying the team is finding its rhythm and will turn things around.

"We have been playing well but sometimes we found ourselves on the losing side. That is something we've been working on and I am confident we will turn things around. We are slowly finding rhythm and my boys are confident to end the season on a high," Pamzo noted.

APS Bomet will face a resurgent Ulinzi Stars away in their next match, a highly anticipated clash where both teams are fighting to escape the danger zone.

The law enforcers also have tricky fixtures lined up for in the season's homestretch, against title contenders AFC Leopards and Tusker.

They currently have 21 points and are only above Sofapaka in the league ranking with nine matches to play.

Citizen sport

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Arsenal defender Ben White has been recalled to the England squad for the first time in more than three years, marking a significant moment in his international career.

Ben White returns to England squad after three-year absence



Soccer Football - Premier League - Chelsea v Arsenal - Stamford Bridge, London, Britain

Arsenal defender Ben White has been recalled to the England squad for the first time in more than three years, marking a significant moment in his international career. The 27 year old last featured for the Three Lions in March 2022, when England defeated Ivory Coast 3 0 in a friendly at Wembley. His return comes ahead of England’s upcoming friendlies against Uruguay on 27 March and Japan on 31 March, both to be played at Wembley Stadium.

White’s absence from the national team has been notable. During the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, he left the England camp for personal reasons and subsequently made himself unavailable for selection under Gareth Southgate. That decision effectively ruled him out of contention for the remainder of Southgate’s tenure. Now, under new management, White has been handed an opportunity to reestablish him-

self at international level.

His recall comes as part of Thomas Tuchel’s expanded 35 man squad. White replaces Bayer Leverkusen defender Jarell Quansah, who was forced to withdraw due to a thigh injury. The inclusion of White highlights Tuchel’s willingness to look beyond recent absences and reward players who have demonstrated resilience and quality at club level. Interestingly, there was no place in the squad for Real Madrid’s Trent Alexander Arnold, a decision that will likely spark debate among supporters and pundits.

White’s season with Arsenal has been somewhat mixed in terms of domestic appearances. He has featured in only seven Premier League matches for the league leaders, a relatively modest tally given his importance to Mikel Arteta’s system. However, his involvement in Europe has been far more substantial. White

has played in eight of Arsenal’s ten Champions League fixtures during their run to the quarter finals, underlining his value in high pressure contests. Most recently, he started in Arsenal’s 2 0 defeat to Manchester City in the Carabao Cup final, further demonstrating his role in the club’s biggest matches.

For England, White’s versatility is a major asset. Capable of operating both as a central defender and at right back, he offers tactical flexibility that could prove vital in the lead up to major tournaments. His composure on the ball, positional awareness, and ability to contribute to build up play align well with Tuchel’s emphasis on structured possession and defensive solidity.

The timing of White’s return is significant. England are in a transitional phase, with Tuchel seeking to stamp his authority on the squad and establish a refreshed identity. Friendlies against Uru-

guay and Japan provide an ideal platform to experiment with personnel and tactics. For White, these matches represent a chance to remind fans and coaches alike of his quality and to stake a claim for a regular role ahead of more competitive fixtures.

After years away from the international stage, White’s recall is both a personal milestone and a potential turning point for England’s defensive setup. His journey back into the squad reflects resilience and professionalism, and his performances in the coming weeks will be closely watched. Should he impress, White could transform his return into a long term presence in the England setup, adding depth and experience to a squad eager to evolve under new leadership.

Agencies

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



A life of service, leadership, and creative advocacy the inspiring journey of Mama Gail



By: Anila Bukhari
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Mama Gail is widely recognized as a powerful force of compassion, leadership, and community transformation. Her journey reflects a lifelong commitment to uplifting others, particularly through education, activism, and creative expression. Known for her ability to bridge gaps between communities and institutions, she has earned numerous honors and continues to leave a lasting impact through both grassroots initiatives and public engagement.

Throughout her career, Mama Gail has been celebrated for her dedication to service and her unwavering advocacy for social justice. Among her many accolades, she was presented with the prestigious Drum Major Medallion by the Mayor, a recognition that highlights her leadership and tireless work for the betterment of society. This honor symbolizes her role as a guiding force—someone who leads not from behind, but from the front, inspiring others through action and integrity.

In addition, Mama Gail received the Moorish Science Temple Prophet Drew Ali Recognition of Excellence Award, further affirming her commitment to cultural awareness, unity, and spiritual empowerment. This award is reserved for individuals who exemplify excellence in service and demonstrate a deep understanding of community values. Her recognition in this regard showcases her ability to connect with diverse groups and promote harmony through shared purpose.

Her influence also extends into the realm of cultural and spiritual leadership, as evidenced by her being named a Queen United Sacred Roots Honoree. This title reflects not only her leadership but also her nurturing

spirit—one that fosters growth, healing, and empowerment within communities. Mama Gail has consistently used her voice and platform to uplift marginalized groups, ensuring that their stories are heard and their needs are addressed.

One of Mama Gail's most impactful contributions is her work through the Business Parent Involvement Academy Inc. This initiative focuses on strengthening the connection between families, schools, and communities. Recognizing that education is a shared responsibility, Mama Gail has worked tirelessly to create opportunities for parents to become active participants in their children's academic journeys. Her efforts have led to meaningful partnerships with local educational institutions, resulting in innovative programs that support both students and families.

Recently, the Academy partnered with two elementary schools—Dr. Ethan Allen Elementary and Ms. Emily Rollins Bridgeway Inc.—to establish Peace Centers. These centers serve as safe spaces within schools, dedicated to promoting unity, conflict resolution, and community engagement. They are a testament to Mama Gail's vision of education as not only a place for academic learning but also a hub for emotional and social development. Through these centers, students are encouraged to understand history, embrace diversity, and develop the skills needed to build peaceful communities.

In addition to creating these centers, Mama Gail has been actively involved in recruiting volunteers for local area schools. Her work includes connecting community members with opportunities to support educational initiatives, providing valuable information about school districts, job opportunities, and contracts. She also ensures that families have access to essential resources, helping them navigate challenges and achieve stability. This holistic approach demonstrates her understanding that true community development requires addressing multiple layers of need.

Beyond her work in education and

activism, Mama Gail has also embraced the arts as a powerful medium for advocacy. She is currently starring as "Quiet Storm" in the web series KADAGA, which is available on YouTube. The series addresses the critical issue of human trafficking, shedding light on a topic that is often overlooked or misunderstood. Through her role, Mama Gail brings depth and authenticity to the narrative, using her performance to raise awareness and inspire action.

Her involvement in KADAGA marks an important evolution in her journey, showcasing her versatility and willingness to explore new avenues for impact. By stepping into the world of acting, she has expanded her reach, connecting with audiences in a more personal and emotional way. Her portrayal of "Quiet Storm" reflects her real-life commitment to confronting injustice and advocating for those who are vulnerable.

Mama Gail's life is a powerful example of what it means to lead with purpose. Whether through community initiatives, educational programs, or creative projects, she consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to making a difference. Her work is rooted in empathy, guided by vision, and sustained by an unshakeable belief in the potential of every individual.

As she continues her journey, Mama Gail remains a beacon of hope and inspiration. Her legacy is not only defined by the awards she has received but also by the countless lives she has touched. Through her efforts, she has created pathways for others to succeed, fostering a culture of empowerment and resilience. Her story serves as a reminder that true leadership is measured not by titles or recognition, but by the positive change one brings to the world.

