



Kirinyaga polytechnics showcase talent and skills at 2026 County Music Festival
Kirinyaga County's vocational training centres demonstrated a vibrant blend of talent, creativity, and technical skill during the 2026 County Music Festivals, where Kaitheri County Polytechnic emerged as the overall winner. **Page 12**



IEBC calls for stakeholder support ahead of 2027 polls
The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has called for urgent legislative reforms, adequate funding and strengthened stakeholder collaboration to ensure the 2027 General Election is conducted successfully. **Page 18**

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Voice of the People

The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

Politics Gachagua accused President Ruto's administration of implementing what he termed "unprecedented and misguided policies"

Riggy-G: Ruto to blame for Kenya's poor image

"Irregular issuance of passports to foreigners"

"These are the issues that are lowering the dignity of our nation, not the opposition," Gachagua said, maintaining that Kenya's current challenges stem from leadership failures at the highest level.



President William Ruto with RSF Leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, State House, Nairobi. Photo | Courtesy..



Rigathi Gachagua in Kirinyaga yesterday. Photo | Courtesy..

Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua has intensified his criticism of President William Ruto, dismissing claims that the opposition is responsible for tarnishing Kenya's international reputation. Speaking during a church service at the ACK Diocese of Kirinyaga in Ndia Constituency, Kirinyaga County yesterday, the former Deputy President argued that it is the government's own actions that have undermined the country's image both locally and abroad.

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Ruto urges Diplomats to champion Kenya's global image and investment drive

BY MKT Correspondent

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moment as captured in pictures

President William Ruto has called on Kenyan diplomats to aggressively promote the country's global image and economic potential as the government pushes forward with its ambitious development agenda.

Speaking in Nairobi during the opening of the 19th Ambassadors and High Commissioners Conference, the President said Kenya has made notable progress over the past three years in implementing its national transformation plan. He highlighted a KSh5 trillion strategy aimed at steering the country toward a first-world economy.

Ruto emphasized the critical role of ambassadors and high commissioners in advancing this vision, urging them to clearly articulate Kenya's strengths and opportunities on the global stage. He noted that effective diplomacy is key to securing new markets, attracting foreign investment, and unlocking untapped economic potential. "Our representatives abroad must tell Kenya's story with conviction and convert that promise into partnerships that deliver real results," he said.

The President stressed that projecting a credible national image is essential for building trust with international partners and enhancing Kenya's competitiveness.

He added that the government is committed to positioning Kenya not only as a top investment destination but also as a reliable partner in shaping the future of global economic and strategic cooperation.

The conference brings together Kenya's envoys to align foreign policy with the country's development priorities.



Editor's Desk




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NEWS IN BRIEF



Shanta Gold has begun constructing houses in Gem, Siaya County, to resettle 1,286 households affected by an open-pit mining project in Ramula. County Commissioner Nobert Komora said the houses target vulnerable residents, with relocation to be voluntary and guided by an implementation committee. The company says the homes meet international standards and affected persons will receive disturbance allowances. However, some residents, including Jotham Obiero, questioned the housing quality, while host community members in Mabinju village demanded vetting of incoming settlers over security concerns.



Doctors at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital successfully delivered a baby from a rare abdominal pregnancy, where the foetus develops outside the uterus. The baby, born at 38 weeks and weighing 3.2kg, survived without deformities despite high risks, including severe bleeding. Specialists led by Dr Kays Muruka and Dr Gabriel Eliazaro performed a complex surgery, leaving the placenta inside to avoid fatal haemorrhage. The mother, Mercy Aduke, is recovering, while the newborn remains stable. Doctors emphasized early antenatal care and screening to detect such rare, life-threatening conditions in time.



Residents of Embu County have welcomed the government's free public Wi-Fi initiative, highlighting its impact on reducing data costs and opening digital opportunities for businesses and youth. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and online content creators have leveraged the connectivity to access markets and promote their services. Traders at Manyatta Market reported increased sales, while salon operator Esther Marigu noted a rise in college students visiting her shop, using the free internet. Tailor Esther Wanjira transformed her business into a "smart shop" by interacting with clients online. However, users, including boda boda operators and artisans, called for improved speed and coverage, citing frequent sluggishness and connectivity gaps.



Nandi County Government has partnered with KCB Bank Kenya Limited to solarize schools, health facilities, and other public institutions to cut energy costs and promote clean power. Governor Stephen Sang said the programme will use asset-based financing guided by energy audits and site assessments. KCB Managing Director Anastancia Kimutai noted the initiative will reduce reliance on the national grid and diesel, lower costs, and support a low-carbon economy. The project targets at least 100 institutions in Nandi and aligns with plans to solarize 246 TVETs nationally, boosting sustainability, resilience, and training opportunities in renewable energy.



Soipan Tuya announced that the government has allocated Sh1 billion to open security roads in banditry-prone areas, enhancing access for multi-agency teams pursuing criminals. Speaking in Laikipia, she said the initiative will cover hotspots including Mukogodo forest and support efforts to end cattle rustling. The operation will involve the Kenya Defence Forces under the Maliza Uhalifu programme alongside the National Police Service. Leaders raised concerns over continued attacks despite military presence. Recently, parts of Laikipia, Isiolo, and Meru were declared disturbed areas, with a major security operation, including aerial surveillance, set to disarm bandits and restore peace.



Nyandarua County is set to benefit from Sh 20 billion worth of road projects managed by the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KERRA), covering over 424 kilometres. Four major projects worth Sh 4.76 billion, including Kirima-North Kinangop Hospital and Mirangine-Kanyariri roads, are complete or nearing completion, while Roliondo-Captain and Gilgil-Machinery roads are substantially complete. An additional 346 kilometres of 10 other road projects worth Sh 15.2 billion are ongoing, with nine progressing well and one under procurement after contract termination. Maintenance works include a completed 24km stretch at Sh 68.9 million and a 17km stretch underway at Sh 146.6 million. Officials were urged to communicate government projects effectively to residents.

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Politics The President should concentrate on fixing the economy instead of engaging in petty personal matters - Rigathi

Gachagua accuses Ruto of personal family affairs interference, urges focus on country matters

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Democracy for Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua has publicly criticized President William Ruto, accusing him of interfering in his personal and family affairs.

Speaking on Saturday during a tour of Kirinyaga County, the former Deputy President expressed frustration over what he termed as unnecessary involvement by the President in private matters, including allegations surrounding a family inheritance dispute. Gachagua dismissed claims that he doctored his brother's will, urging the Head of State to focus on more pressing national issues.

He called on President Ruto to prioritize reviving the country's struggling economy, which he said is in a dire state, and to ensure effective governance.

According to Gachagua, the current administration has



Rigathi Gachagua addressing Kirinyaga residents on Saturday.

Despite his criticism, the DCP leader reiterated his commitment to public service, stating that he has a clear vision for the country should he be elected president in the next general election.



contributed to the deterioration of Kenya's economic stability.

"The President should concentrate on fixing the economy instead of engaging in petty personal matters," he said.

Gachagua further claimed that the relationship between the Mount Kenya region and President Ruto is largely per-

formance-based, noting that residents expect tangible development and investment in return for their support.

Despite his criticism, the DCP leader reiterated his commitment to public service, stating that he has a clear vision for the country should he be elected president in the next general election.

During the first day of his

tour, Gachagua visited several trading centres, including Murinduko, Kangai, Karumandi and Kangaita, where he interacted with residents and listened to their concerns.

His remarks come amid rising political tensions, signaling an intensifying rivalry ahead of the next electoral cycle.

Transport CS Chirchir says action to be taken against any violations in Nyeri crash



BY Fridah Naliaka
@themtkenyatimes

Transport Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir has directed the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) and other enforcement agencies to investigate the circumstances that led to a fatal road crash in Nyeri County on Saturday.

16 people have been confirmed dead after a matatu and a lorry collided near Dedan Kimathi University on Saturday evening. While 15 died on Saturday, Regional Traffic Commandant Elizabeth Vivi has said that one more person succumbed to injuries on Sunday.

Following the deadly crash, CS Chirchir has condoled with the affected families, praying for a swift recovery for those injured.

In a statement to newsrooms, the transport minister said NTSA and other agencies will "thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the crash and take firm, decisive action against any violations."

"The Government remains

committed to strengthening road safety measures, enforcing compliance, and ensuring accountability to prevent such tragedies," said CS Chirchir.

While urging motorists to exercise caution on the roads, CS Chirchir said there will be intensified enforcement, audits, and compliance checks across Kenyan highways. This, he added, would ensure accountability and protect all road users.

Commandant Vivi on Sunday called on the public to visit the Nyeri Referral Hospital to identify 6 bodies of victims who died in the crash.

10 other bodies have been positively identified by family members

3 adults and a child are among the survivors of the crash.

According to witness statements, the accident occurred as the lorry driver escaped hitting a boda boda. This led to a head-on collision between the lorry, which had three occupants, and the matatu headed to Mweiga.

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Kalonzo weighs in as Ruto-Gachagua clash spills into late governor's will row



BY Citizen Reporter
@themtkenyatimes

Wiper leader Kalonzo Musyoka has criticised President William Ruto over his escalating war of words with former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, saying it is improper for a Head of State to make serious character allegations against a former running mate years after they were elected together.

Speaking during an interview with Citizen TV on Sunday night, Kalonzo said leaders should conduct thorough due diligence before picking deputies, arguing that it is inconsistent to campaign on one ticket and later make damaging claims without evidence.

"I think that it is important, even before you pick your running mate, to be able to ask yourself a question... You cannot then, after you have gone through, elected on one ticket, then turn around years later and say your deputy was a murderer and you cannot prove it," Kalonzo said.

He argued that the President should be properly briefed before making statements that could unfairly tarnish a political opponent's reputation, warning that remarks aimed at "besmirching" a former deputy's character for political reasons undermine the standard expected of a Head of State.

"I must tell William that, in law, when you are dealing with people's wills, one can die intestate or after writing a will. This president has not been properly briefed," he said. Kalonzo claimed that revisiting such allegations a decade later was wrong, and urged restraint in political discourse.

"Ten years later, for political reasons, you want now to besmirch the character of your former DP. I think there is a gap in briefing because a

head of state should be properly briefed before he utters some of these things," he added.

Kalonzo's remarks come against the backdrop of a widening political rift between Ruto and Gachagua that has increasingly drawn in personal and family issues.

Gachagua, now the leader of the Democracy for the Citizen Party (DCP), recently told the President to keep off his family affairs following an appeal by the family of the late Nyeri Governor Nderitu Gachagua for the President's intervention over claims of a forged will and alleged intermeddling in the estate.

Led by the late governor's widow Margaret Nyokabi Nderitu, the family asked President Ruto to order an independent probe into the allegations.

The appeal came days after President Ruto, during a public outburst, accused Gachagua of calling him a thief while allegedly having stolen from his own brother — claims that have heightened tensions between the two.

While touring Kirinyaga County, Gachagua warned the Head of State against interfering in his family matters and urged him to focus on his own affairs.

"Amesahau mambo ya Kenya anaingilia mambo ya familia ya Gachagua... Ameshindwa kugawanya mlima, anafikiria atagawanya familia ya Gachagua? Wewe William Ruto, ukona familia yenu ya Kalenjin, kuenda ongea mambo ya familia yenu, usiingilie mambo ya familia yangu hapa milimani," Gachagua said.

Gachagua has also been using his regional tours to popularise the DCP party and rally Mt Kenya residents to reject leaders aligned with the ruling administration ahead of the next general election.



, during the launch of the Rodi Kenya Strategic Plan 2026-2030. | Photo: Morris Githenya

Rodi Kenya hailed for the support of agroecological and rehabilitation of prisoners

BY MORRIS GITHENYA
@themtkenyatimes

A NGO has been lauded by the stakeholders for the persistent fight against the use of harmful chemicals and fertilisers in the farms.

Rodi Kenya was celebrated for also taking an active lead in promoting agroecology, supporting the rehabilitation of prisoners, and the introduction of life skills.

The Executive Director Esther Bett highlighted that in the past 35 years, has collaborated effectively with organisations, and the Kenya Prisons Service in the rehabilitation of the prisoners, and integration.

She spoke at the launch of the organisation's Five Year Strategic Plan 2026-2030, a function presided over by the Deputy Director General of Prisons, Mr Nicholas Maswai at the Rodi Kenya's office along the Eastern Bypass.

Ms Bett said through agroecological, the majority of the prisoners upon release farmers continued producing healthy foods for their families, and selling the surplus.

"Agroecology farming practice

has helped to improve the condition of our soils, after years of application of hazardous chemicals and fertilizers thus messing up with fertility of our soils," said Bett.

In the last 30 years, the pack with the prison department has impacted vocation training knowledge to 45,300 prisoners, and 4,120 ex-convicts in reintegration with the community.

Maswai said in the period 38,800 pre-trial detainees have been provided legal aid, efforts that significantly reduced re offending culture and enhanced human rights compliance.

Maswai lauded the organisation for the impact made to the convicts and the ex-convicts through educating them on life skills and agroecology.

The intervention has transformed the life of the prisoners through behavioural change and promoting organic farming.

"We have former convicts who are earning a living through the training they got from Rodi Kenya," said Maswai.

Mr Maswai said 4,000 ex-convicts have been integrated with their

community upon completion of their jail term.

David Mburu, says many of the farmers have turned to organic farming upon realising the threats over prolonged use of chemicals and fertilisers in their farms.

Mburu said embracing organic foods, the majority of the diseases among them cancer, will be reduced.

"I am one of the people who got interested in organic farming when I was serving a jail term in Nairobi West prison, and today have recruited hundreds of farmers in Kiambu county," added Mburu.

Others present included the Rodi Kenya Chairman Lenny Njogu, David Karanja (OACK), Legal Resource Forum Executive Director Esau Riaroh, Dr Zacharia Mwangi (Witness Protection Board), and Kiambu County Government Agriculture department, among other guests.

Politics These are the issues that are lowering the dignity of our nation, not the opposition,” Gachagua said

Riggy-G: Ruto to blame for poor image

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Democracy for the Citizens Party (DCP) leader Rigathi Gachagua has intensified his criticism of President William Ruto, dismissing claims that the opposition is responsible for tarnishing Kenya's international reputation.

Speaking during a church service at the ACK Diocese of Kirinyaga in Ndia Constituency, Kirinyaga County yesterday, the former Deputy President argued that it is the government's own actions that have undermined the country's image both locally and abroad.

Gachagua accused President Ruto's administration of implementing what he termed “unprecedented and misguided policies,” alleging that these have weakened governance and exposed the country to external interference. He claimed that neighboring countries, including Sudan, have gained undue influence, while irregular issuance of passports to foreigners and the rise of criminal networks have further eroded public confidence.

“These are the issues that are lowering the dignity of our nation, not the opposition,” Gachagua said, maintaining that Kenya's current challenges stem from leadership failures at the highest level.

The DCP leader also criticized the President for what he described as misplaced priorities, accusing him of focusing on “trivial matters” instead of addressing urgent economic concerns.

He pointed to the struggles faced by farmers across the country, particularly the shortage of subsidized fertilizer during the ongoing rainy season, warning that this could negatively impact food production.

On healthcare, Gachagua raised alarm over the financial strain facing hospitals, claiming that many institutions are on the brink of collapse due to billions of shillings owed by the government.

He urged hospital administrators to demand upfront payments from the Social Health Authority (SHA) to safeguard service delivery and prevent further deterioration of the sector.

At the same time, Gachagua used the platform to rally support for his political outfit, calling on residents to join the DCP party, which he described as a credible alternative ahead of the next general election.



Rigathi Gachagua addressing ACK faithful yesterday.

He reiterated his presidential ambitions, outlining his vision for economic recovery, institutional reform, and improved service delivery should he secure the country's top



The DCP leader also criticized the President for what he described as misplaced priorities, accusing him of focusing on “trivial matters” instead of addressing urgent economic concerns. He pointed to the struggles faced by farmers across the country, particularly the shortage of subsidized fertilizer during the ongoing rainy season, warning that this could negatively impact food production.

seat.

The remarks come amid growing political tensions between Gachagua and his former ally, President Ruto, with the two leaders increasingly trading sharp public statements.

In recent remarks at public events, President Ruto has accused opposition leaders of engaging in what he termed “reckless rhetoric” that risks damaging Kenya's global standing and discouraging investment. The President has defended his administration's record, citing ongoing infrastructure projects, agricultural subsidies, and reforms in the health sector as evidence of progress.

Other government officials have also weighed in on the debate, urging political leaders to exercise restraint and prioritize national unity. Some leaders allied to the President have dismissed Gachagua's claims as politically motivated, arguing that the government remains focused on stabilizing the economy and improving livelihoods.

Meanwhile, analysts note that the escalating war of words signals an early start to the 2027 election cycle, with leaders positioning themselves



President William Ruto with RSF Leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, State House, Nairobi.

and consolidating support bases across regions.

Gachagua concluded his two-day tour of Kirinyaga County with multiple stopovers across Ndia Constituency, where he continued to engage residents and outline his policy agenda.

As political temperatures rise, the ongoing exchanges between the President and his former deputy are

expected to shape the national conversation in the months ahead, particularly on issues of governance, economic management, and public service delivery.

The former DP was accompanied by dozens of former, current and aspiring political leaders from various parts of the country.

Agribusiness Section 43 of the AFA Act prohibits the export of raw agricultural produce; specifically cashew nuts, Pyrethrum, bixa, and macadamia except

Farmers demand the removal of AFA Act to allow export of raw nuts to China

BY Morris Githenya

@themkenyatimes

The price of macadamia nuts has declined by a huge margin after the closure of seven macadamia factories leaving behind their agents in the villages buying the commodity at throw away prices.

In the past two weeks, farmers in Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Nyeri and Kiambu experienced a drop of the prices from between KSh100 and KSh70 per kilogramme to between KSh20 and KSh30, against their expectations of above KSh100.

Section 43 of the AFA Act prohibits the export of raw

agricultural produce; specifically cashew nuts, Pyrethrum, bixa, and macadamia except with written authority from the Cabinet Secretary.

As the crisis continues, a meeting to chart the way forward has been planned at Kiamutugu market in Kirinyaga county on Thursday to address the challenges facing the multi billion macadamia industry and the repeal of section 43 in the AFA Act.

The growers from the mountain region counties were last week in Kirinyaga with trucks loaded with macadamia nuts, exploring for a better market above KSh40 per kilogramme.

Mary Njeri Mwai and

Ndirangu Mwangi recounted the challenges they were going through pleading with President William Ruto to intervene and allow the removal of the punitive section to salvage the nut sector

"The situation is worse as there are tonnes of nuts across the counties were going to waste that need for the state intervention," said Ms Njeri.

The Nut Traders Association of Kenya (NUTAK) Chairman Johnson Kihara say the produce was going to waste after the closure of the processors over the prevailing situation.

Kihara said the blame for the suffering the Kenyans farmers were going through was

caused by Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe after he was misguided by a few processors alleging there was a nut market in the U.S.

Kihara said the punitive section 43 was maliciously inserted to block the Chinese in Kenya's market, leaving behind a few processors to exploit the farmers.

"There is a huge market in China as the US market that was promised to the local farmers has failed to materialise," said Kihara.

Nut Growers Association official Ngichabi Muriithi said some former Agriculture Cabinet Secretaries during their time in office were forced to suspend the punitive section, and the price of the nuts increased.

"This time we are waiting for the removal of the section if the government has the interest of the farmers at heart," said Ngichabi.



Samples of macadamia nuts.




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Agribusiness Among them was Kyaati Yambu, a primary school teacher from Mtito Andei, who had travelled over 70 kilometers not for a lesson in English—but for a lesson in survival

How pearl millet is quietly making a comeback in Kenya's dry lands

BY KNA

@themtkenyatimes

Under the relentless sun of Kiboko, where the earth often cracks before it yields, a quiet transformation is taking root. Rows of pearl millet stretch across demonstration plots at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, their grain heads swaying gently in the dry land breeze, an understated but powerful symbol of resilience.

Last Tuesday, farmers, scientists, and seed companies gathered here for a field tour that may well shape the future of farming in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands.

Among them was Kyaati Yambu, a primary school teacher from Mtito Andei, who had travelled over 70 kilometers not for a lesson in English—but for a lesson in survival.

"I devote most of my free time to farming," Yambu says with quiet conviction. Though he teaches during the day, his heart and increasingly his livelihood lies in the soil.

For over 20 years, Yambu has worked as a contracted farmer with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), growing green grams, cowpeas, and sorghum. His 40-acre farm has sustained him well, particularly through green grams, which fetch up to KSh130 per kilo and yield as much as 35 bags per season.

But on this day in Kiboko, something new caught his eye. "When I came here, I was very much pleased to see a variety of crops—mostly the pearl millet," he says. "I hope I'll get some seeds and that will get me money in my pocket." For Yambu, pearl millet is not just another crop—it is an opportunity.

Pearl millet is not new to Africa. For generations, it was a staple crop across dry land communities. But over time,



Stakeholders in a millet farm last week. | Photo: Courtesy.

it faded from prominence—pushed aside by maize and other cereals, and challenged by labor-intensive processing and vulnerability to bird damage.

Now, in the face of climate change, it is making a return. "Among the cereals, this is one of the most drought-tolerant crops," explains Dr. Lilian Gichuru, a Seed Systems Specialist at CIMMYT adding: "In this environment, within just two and a half to three months, it is ready for harvest."

That speed—and resilience—makes pearl millet a powerful alternative in regions where rainfall is increasingly unpredictable. But this is not the pearl millet of the past.

At Kiboko, researchers are introducing hybrid varieties sourced from global partners in India, Brazil, and Europe. These are being tested under Kenyan conditions to evaluate yield, adaptability, and market potential.

"This is a first of many activities showcasing hybrid technology," Dr. Gichuru says. "We are moving from traditional open-pollinated varieties

to hybrids that can significantly improve productivity."

The goal is clear: faster results, higher yields, and crops that can withstand the pressures of a changing climate. The field tour at Kiboko was not just about observation—it was about connection.

Higher yields mean more food—and more income. Pearl millet's potential extends beyond the plate. "It has space in food, in brewing, and even in animal feed. Some varieties are excellent for forage—you can see the crop is mature, but the leaves are still green," explains Dr Gichuru.



now spends his time farming a 10-acre plot in Mtito Andei.

"Braille was my staff," he says with a smile, reflecting on his teaching days. Today, his tools are seeds and soil. Like Yambu, he grows green grams and sorghum, selling his produce through KALRO. His yields about 10 bags of green grams and 15 bags of sorghum per season which is not only attractive but also reliable.

Yet he, too, sees promise in pearl millet. "I was introduced to it here," he says. "I believe it can be grown in my area again," he says. His words carry both hope and history. There was a time when pearl millet thrived in regions like Mtito Andei. But its decline tells a broader story—not just of agriculture, but of social change.

"In the past, children who did not attend school helped protect millet crops by scaring birds away," Mbwiko explains. "Now, with more children in school, that is no longer possible." The result? Farmers gradually abandoned the crop. But new hybrid varieties are changing that equation. Mbwiko notes, "That makes a big difference," he states.

He is already planning his next move: reaching out to KALRO to access seeds for planting.

Walking through the Kiboko plots, the diversity is striking. "This field has 28 pearl millet varieties," explains Molly Okoth, a research associate at CIMMYT. "We are testing them for yield and traits like panicle length, dual-purpose use, and water efficiency."

These trials, she says, are not limited to Kenya. Similar evaluations are ongoing across East and Southern Africa—in Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—ensuring that the best performing varieties can be scaled across regions with similar climates. The focus is not just on survival, but on productivity. "We want farmers to start seeing pearl millet as a hybrid crop," Okoth says noting: "Because these hybrids can produce much more than what farmers are currently getting."

Higher yields mean more food—and more income. Pearl millet's potential extends beyond the plate. "It has space in food, in brewing, and

even in animal feed. Some varieties are excellent for forage—you can see the crop is mature, but the leaves are still green," explains Dr Gichuru.

This "stay-green" characteristic is particularly valuable for livestock farmers, offering a dual-purpose solution in regions where feed shortages are common.

Still, challenges remain. Processing millet can be labor-intensive, particularly when it comes to threshing. But here, too, innovation is catching up. "Partners in mechanization are developing equipment to ease this work," Dr. Gichuru notes stating that with hybrid uniformity, mechanical harvesting becomes more viable.

In other words, the crop is advancing—not just in the field, but along the entire value chain. Back in the fields, Yambu walks slowly between the plots, listening to scientists' explanations, observing, calculating, imagining and even taking notes. For him, the decision is already taking shape.

"Now I have something else to add onto my crops," he says. "That is pearl millet." It is a simple statement but one that captures a much larger shift.

Across Kenya's dry lands, farmers are searching for crops that can withstand the realities of climate change while still delivering income. Pearl millet, long overlooked, is emerging as a strong contender. But its success will depend on more than just science.

It will require collaboration between researchers, farmers, seed companies, and policy-makers. It will also require investment in seed systems, mechanization, and market development. And above all, it will require trust—from farmers willing to try something new. At Kiboko, that trust is beginning to take root.

As the sun dips lower and the field tour draws to a close, the message is clear: the future of farming in Kenya's drylands may not lie in reinventing the wheel—but in rediscovering and reimagining crops that have always belonged. Pearl millet is one of them. Time will tell if it will stay.

Music Festival Beyond entertainment, the performances addressed key social issues such as illicit alcohol abuse and the protection of the girl child.

Kirinyaga polytechnics showcase talent and skills at 2026 County Music Festival

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Kirinyaga County's vocational training centres demonstrated a vibrant blend of talent, creativity, and technical skill during the 2026 County Music Festivals, where Kaitheri County Polytechnic emerged as the overall winner. The one-day event brought together students from 16 polytechnics, highlighting the growing importance of integrating creative arts into vocational training.

Kaitheri Polytechnic dominated across multiple categories, followed by Ndiriti Vocational Training Centre in



Acting CECM Education Millicent Ngari with Kaitheri youth polytechnic students who won the best overall performances.

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provide trainees with a platform to express their talents beyond the classroom. She highlighted the importance of recognizing individual abilities alongside technical training and reaffirmed the county's commitment to supporting the initiative, including facilitating top performers' participation at the national level.

Kaitheri Polytechnic Principal Lawrence Mugo emphasized the value of such platforms in exposing students to broader opportunities and enhancing their personal and professional growth. He credited the county government for enabling trainees to showcase their abilities and gain confidence through public performance.

The festival, held at Kerugoya Catholic Church under the theme "Music and Skills for Sustainable Development," featured performances ranging from choral verses and solo presentations to cultural dances.



The highlight of the festival was Kaitheri Polytechnic's outstanding performance, including a score of 93 percent in the African choral verse focused on raising awareness about illicit alcohol. The institution also scored 89 percent in solo verse categories and 86 percent in folk dance celebrating Kikuyu culture. Student Victoria Musembi, who excelled in the choral verse category, described the experience as transformative and encouraged fellow youth to embrace and develop their talents.

Kirinyaga polytechnics have continued to demonstrate excellence at higher levels. In the previous year's National Music Festivals, Kaitheri Polytechnic secured top positions in several categories, while Kabingoti Polytechnic also performed strongly. These achievements reinforce the county's reputation as a hub for both technical training and artistic development.

Overall, the festival highlighted the critical role of vocational institutions in nurturing well-rounded, skilled, and empowered youth ready to contribute to society.



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The Mt. Kenya Times



Efforts never fail



Efforts never fail.
Its always make us to win.

Hardwork will makes you a champion.
So try it again and again.

Failure is the stepping stone to success.
And failures teach us a lesson.

Even though you fail never give up.
Because, 'fail' means first attempt to success.

Work hard to achieve the goals you set.
It will make your life bright.

So keep working hard and never stop.
And it will make you a shining star at the top.

By,
S. S. Nikshith
VI STD
PUMS Chinna Obulapuram
Gummidipoondi
Tiruvallur
Tamilnadu, India.

Softly, I set myself free



held my past like a quiet ache,
replaying every small mistake,
as if the pain I chose to keep
was something I deserved to reap.

I wore my guilt like borrowed skin,
trapped in the echoes deep within,
counting flaws I couldn't erase,
afraid to meet my own embrace.

But healing whispered, soft and slow,

"Let go, dear heart... just let it go,"
not for the world to understand,
but for your soul to gently stand.

Forgive yourself, not to defend,
but give your restless mind an end,
not every wound must always stay,
some are meant to fade away.

You are not who you were before,
you've grown, you've learned, you've become more,
and peace won't come from holding tight,
but from releasing what you fight.

So set it down, that silent plea,
and breathe into serenity,
for in your grace, you'll finally see—
you were always meant to be free.

©Dr Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

Mood



You are a chameleon—
you change according to your situations.

When you are happy,
you forget yourself.
When you are in sorrow,
you begin to worry.
Is this your mood?
Not at all.

Do not let your thoughts shift
with every mood swing.
Learn to live with the same values,

steady and grounded,
no matter what comes.
That is what makes you worthy
of this world as a whole.
Set limits in every part of your life.
Do not allow emotions
to overwhelm you,
for they can easily pull you under.
Remember this one thing:
be strong and stay constant.
Be positive and stay hopeful.
Be the kind of person
who turns every mood
into a brighter one.

BY
ZAHETHA R
BT ASST
GHS PAPPANTHANGAL
TVM DIST

In memory of those we have lost



Make an album and recall the happenings,
Make the day by engaging ourselves
By spending time in orphanages,
Donating the charities, planting saplings.

Leading our life with the blessings of them
Memories loaded and sparkling like gems.
The thoughts make us feel happy and comfortable

Make life further, meaningful and recoverable.

We put their names to our lovable kids,
Honouring their spaces as a memory,
Keeping their wisdom and support within us.
Their hardwork and sacrifices are always
remembered.

Rajesh Kanna B N

RAJESH KANNA .B N
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GMHSCHOOL,
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This book of poem for the poem.

The book is collection of 50 poems.

Write an for that depth of heart. with many page
of
emotional Depth.
It is a journey of self experience and art.
I am thread Tushar my own words born from daily
reflection and intuition,
Also thoughts Shared
in creative writers . Wings of wonder guide me ,
whispers of a soul ,
As I proud my thoughts into
Verse .

P.HEMANYA
VII
JOHN DEWEY MAT HR SEC SCHOOL
PANRUTI CUDDALORE DISTRICT.

When the sky falls



In the hues of the setting sun, the world softened
into something almost forgiving. I sat with a
cup of tea beneath the restless canopies of
bougainvilleas, their petals falling like quiet
confessions. The air smelled of endings.
That was when my mind wandered—slipping past
the present, uninvited, into a time that would
never return.

It landed gently, almost cruelly, on what I once
called home. A place built not of walls, but of
people—of laughter that echoed too loudly, of
promises spoken like they were permanent. It
was the palest land of love, where everything felt
infinite until it wasn't. Where friendship blurred
into betrayal, and trust unraveled without
warning.

I remembered how it felt to believe. To hold on. To
stay even when the cracks were visible.
The journey through those memories wasn't kind.
It never was. Faces appeared like ghosts—some

smiling, some distant, some unrecognizable
from who they used to be. I walked through
conversations unfinished, apologies never spoken,
and silences that said far too much.
Back then, every goodbye felt like a wound that
refused to close.

But somewhere along the way, I changed.
Maybe it was the nights spent rebuilding myself
in pieces. Maybe it was the quiet realization
that not everything lost was meant to be found
again. Or maybe it was simply exhaustion—from
carrying what no longer belonged to me.
I learned.

I learned that survival doesn't always look like
strength. Sometimes, it looks like letting go. Like
choosing silence over explanation. Like walking
away without turning back.

The tea had grown cold in my hands.
Above me, the sky dimmed slowly, as if it too
was learning how to let go of the sun. And for a
moment, it felt like everything was falling—the
light, the day, the past.

But I didn't panic.
Because I knew now—when the sky falls, it
doesn't mean the end.
It means something else is making space to rise.
And this time, I wasn't afraid of the dark.

ARCHITA KUMAR

Politics Winning an election in 2027 starts now. I want you to prepare yourselves – be ready, be registered,” Orengo told the crowd.

Orengo and Sifuna urge supporters to register in mobilization drive

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Orange Democratic Movement's Linda Mwananchi faction has intensified its grassroots mobilization, with leaders urging supporters to prepare early for the 2027 General Election. At a rally held at Tononoka Grounds in Mombasa, Siaya Governor James Orengo and ODM Secretary-General Edwin Sifuna delivered a clear message: voter readiness and unity must begin now.

“Winning an election in 2027 starts now. I want you to prepare yourselves – be ready, be registered,” Orengo told the crowd, repeatedly asking attendees to confirm they had voter cards. He described the upcoming election as a decisive moment for Kenya, promising a new political direction. “This time around in 2027, there will be no stealing



of votes. We will show up everywhere – Mombasa, Nakuru, Nairobi, Kisumu, Turkana – to ensure the will of the people is respected,” he said.

Orengo's remarks underscored the urgency of early organization, a theme echoed by Sifuna, who dismissed claims that the opposition

lacks numbers. “They tell us we have no votes. If you have a vote, raise your hand,” Sifuna said, prompting a sea of raised hands from the crowd. He unveiled a digital registration initiative linked to the Linda Mwananchi movement, encouraging attendees to sign up online to help quantify support ahead of future political activities. “We want you to go online and register so we know how many we are. There is a number we are waiting to reach, and once we get there, we will announce our next steps,” he added.

The rally highlighted ODM's strategy of combining traditional mobilization with digital tools to strengthen its base. Analysts note that the emphasis on voter registration reflects lessons learned from past elections, where turnout and preparedness proved decisive. By urging supporters to secure voter cards early, the party aims to avoid last-minute rushes and ensure its supporters are fully equipped to participate in the polls.

Grassroots mobilization has long been a cornerstone of ODM's political strategy. The Linda Mwananchi faction, which positions itself

as a people-centered movement, has sought to re-energize supporters by focusing on civic responsibility and collective action. The Mombasa rally was emblematic of this approach, blending fiery speeches with practical calls to action.

Observers say the emphasis on digital registration is particularly significant. In an era where political mobilization increasingly intersects with technology, ODM's move to quantify its support base online could provide valuable data for future campaigns. It also signals a shift toward transparency and accountability, allowing the party to measure its reach and adjust strategies accordingly.

The rally also served as a reminder of the stakes in the 2027 election. Orengo's insistence that “there will be no stealing of votes” reflects lingering concerns about electoral integrity, a recurring theme in Kenya's political discourse. By pledging vigilance across the country, ODM leaders sought to reassure supporters that their votes would count and that the party would be proactive in safeguarding democracy.

For many in attendance, the rally was both a call to action and a reaffirmation of identity. ODM has historically drawn strong support from regions such as Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nairobi, and the Tononoka event reinforced the party's commitment to its grassroots. The sea of raised hands in response to Sifuna's challenge symbolized not just numbers but solidarity.


Political analysts argue that early mobilization could prove critical in shaping the narrative ahead of 2027. By framing voter registration as the foundation of victory, ODM is positioning itself as a party that values preparation and participation. This approach could resonate with younger voters, many of whom are increasingly engaged through digital platforms.

The Linda Mwananchi faction's strategy also reflects broader trends in Kenyan politics, where parties are seeking to modernize their outreach while maintaining traditional structures. The combination of rallies, digital registration, and grassroots engagement suggests a hybrid model designed to maximize impact.

As the rally concluded, the message was clear: the road to 2027 begins now, and every supporter has a role to play. Orengo's call for vigilance and Sifuna's push for digital registration underscored a shared vision of unity and preparedness.

The Tononoka Grounds event may have been one rally, but its implications are far-reaching. It signaled a party gearing up for a decisive contest, determined to mobilize its base and ensure that every vote is counted. For ODM supporters, the rally was not just about speeches; it was about taking the first steps toward shaping Kenya's political future.

In the words of Orengo: “Winning starts now.” And in the raised hands of thousands of supporters, the message was unmistakable — readiness, unity, and determination will define the path to 2027.




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Grief National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula confirmed yesterday that the third-term legislator passed away while undergoing treatment at Nairobi Hospital

OI Kalou MP David Kiaraho dies as parliament forms funeral committee



File image of OI Kalou MP David Njuguna. Photo: Handout

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyaintimes

Kenya is mourning the death of OI Kalou Member of Parliament David Njuguna Kiaraho, who passed away yesterday while undergoing treatment at Nairobi Hospital. His death has triggered an outpouring of tributes from across the political spectrum and the swift formation of a funeral committee to oversee his send-off.

National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula confirmed the passing, describing Kiaraho as "a dedicated parliamentarian who served his people with distinction since 2013." Wetang'ula appointed Kinangop MP Kwenya Thuku and Nyandarua Woman Representative Faith Gitau to coordinate a seven-member funeral committee that will liaise with the family. "We must give

Hon. Kiaraho a dignified farewell befitting his service to the nation," Wetang'ula said.

Kiaraho, who was serving his third consecutive term, had become a familiar figure in Nyandarua politics and a steady voice in the National Assembly. He sat on the Departmental Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula confirmed the passing, describing Kiaraho as "a dedicated parliamentarian who served his people with distinction since 2013." Wetang'ula appointed Kinangop MP Kwenya Thuku and Nyandarua Woman Representative Faith Gitau to coordinate a seven-member funeral committee that will liaise with the family. "We must give Hon. Kiaraho a dignified farewell befitting his service to the nation," Wetang'ula said.



as well as the Procedure and House Rules Committee. Colleagues described him as meticulous, pragmatic, and deeply committed to rural development.

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua paid tribute, saying: "Hon. Kiaraho was a man of principle who never shied away from speaking for his people. His passing is a great loss to Nyandarua and to Kenya." President William Ruto echoed the sentiment, noting: "We have lost a steadfast legislator whose commitment to service was evident in his work both in Parliament and in his constituency."

Faith Gitau emphasized the committee's role: "Our duty is to ensure the family is supported and that Hon. Kiaraho receives a dignified farewell." Kwenya Thuku added: "We must celebrate his life by continuing the work he started."

Residents of OI Kalou gathered in mourning, recalling his accessibility and dedication. "He was always available to listen," said one elder. "We have lost not just a leader, but a son of the soil."

Kiaraho's political journey began in 2013 when he was first elected to represent OI Kalou Constituency. Over the years, he built a reputation for championing infrastructure projects and advocating for rural empowerment. Constituents recall his push for better roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, as well as his insistence on accountability in government spending.

His work in Parliament was marked by consistency. On the Transport and Infra-

structure Committee, he was known for pressing ministries to deliver on road projects in rural areas. On the Procedure and House Rules Committee, he contributed to shaping parliamentary processes, ensuring debates were orderly and rules respected.

Analysts say his death leaves a vacuum in Nyandarua politics, where he had become a stabilizing figure amid shifting alliances. His ability to balance local concerns with national debates made him a respected voice in Parliament. Political observers note that his passing will likely trigger a competitive succession battle in OI Kalou, a constituency that has historically played a pivotal role in Nyandarua's

political dynamics.

Beyond politics, Kiaraho was remembered as a family man and community leader. Religious leaders in Nyandarua praised his commitment to uplifting education and supporting church initiatives. "He believed in service beyond politics," said one cleric. "His generosity touched many lives."

The coming days will see Parliament and the nation unite to pay tribute to a man who quietly but firmly shaped debates on infrastructure and governance. His funeral will be more than a farewell; it will be a reminder of the enduring impact of public service.

David Njuguna Kiaraho's journey ended at Nairobi Hospital, but his legacy will live on in the roads he fought to build, the schools he championed, and the principles he upheld. Kenya mourns a servant leader whose voice will echo long after his departure.



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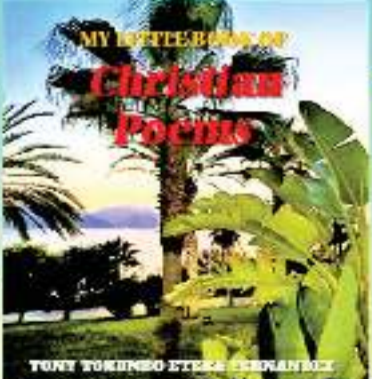
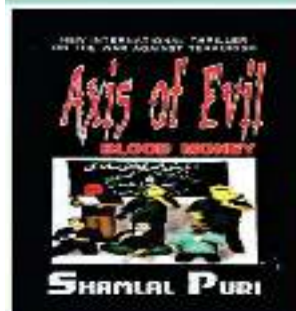
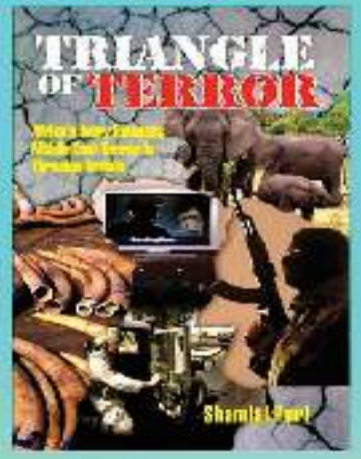
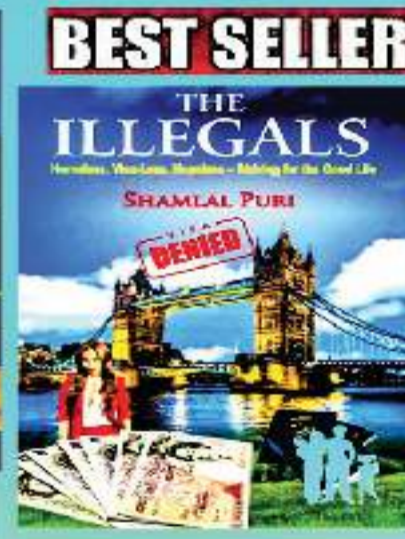
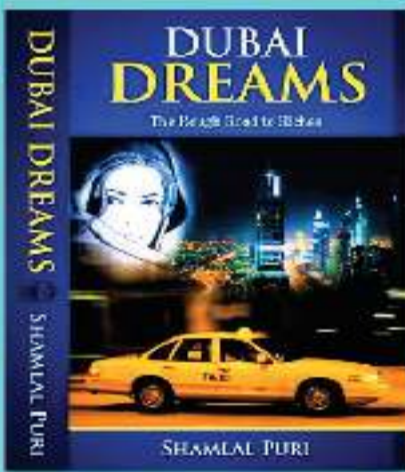
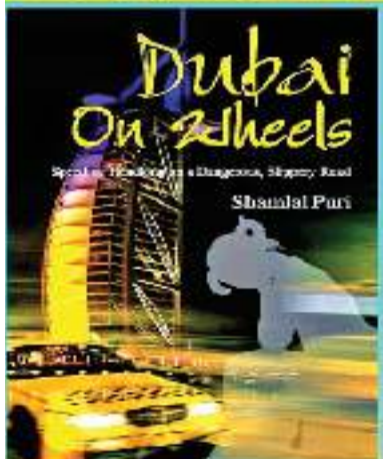
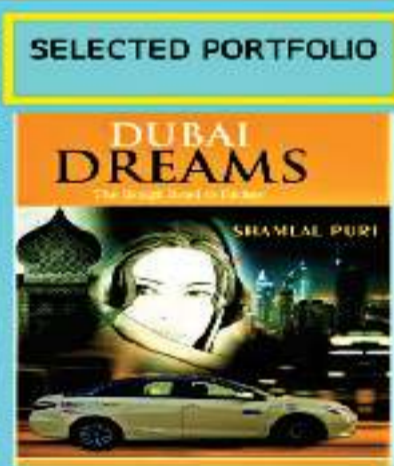
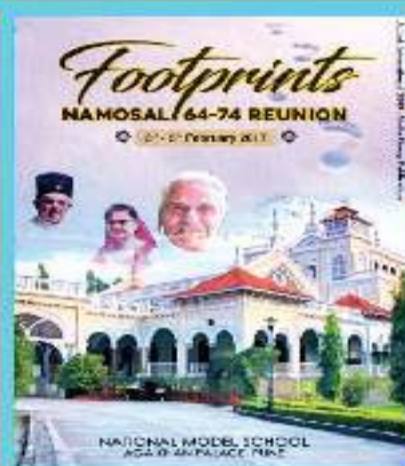
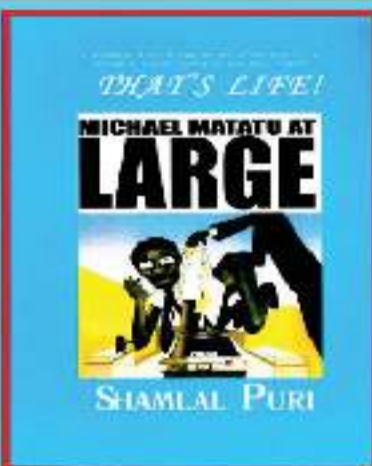
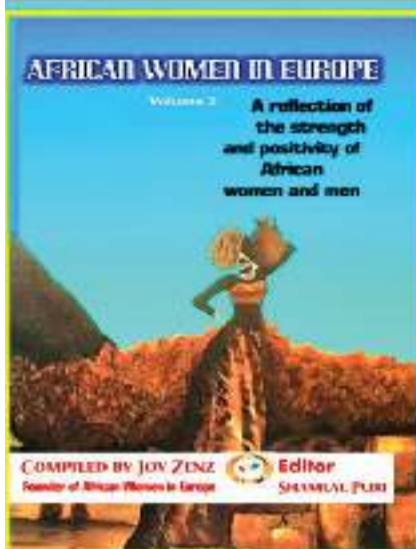
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Elections Chairperson noted that Parliament plays a critical role in supporting the Commission's mandate, particularly through legislative review

IEBC calls for stakeholder support ahead of 2027 polls



IEBC officials and other stakeholders during the meeting last week.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has called for urgent legislative reforms, adequate funding and strengthened stakeholder collaboration to ensure the 2027 General Election is conducted successfully.

Speaking during a presentation on election preparedness, IEBC Chairperson Erastus Ethekeon noted that elections remain central to Kenya's democratic governance and must be conducted in a free, fair and credible manner to safeguard political stability and public trust.

"Elections are central to democracy, protecting citizens' rights to vote or contest for office. Their credibility depends on being free and fair, as

flawed elections can lead to instability and violence," Ethekeon reiterated.

He announced that the Commission, which is constitutionally mandated to oversee elections and referenda, is undertaking comprehensive preparations anchored on legal, operational and institutional reforms.

Further, the Chairperson noted that Parliament plays a critical role in supporting the Commission's mandate, particularly through legislative review and budgetary allocation.

"We appreciate the continued engagement and support of the National Assembly in advancing Kenya's democratic governance," expressed Ethekeon, adding that collaboration between institutions is key to safeguarding electoral integrity and public confidence.

According to the Chairperson, the

Commission outlined key priority areas ahead of the 2027 polls, including electoral legal reforms, resource mobilization, stakeholder engagement and boundary delimitation.

On legal reforms, Ethekeon revealed that IEBC had initiated a review process following previous elections to address gaps and inconsistencies in the electoral framework.

"Following the 2017 General Election, the Commission initiated a series of reform efforts aimed at strengthening Kenya's electoral framework by addressing identified gaps, ambiguities and inconsistencies," he elaborated.

However, the Chairperson noted that although several reform proposals had been developed, most were not enacted before the 2022 General Election, underscoring the need for

timely legislative action ahead of the next polls.

The Commission, he disclosed, has since consolidated its proposals into a comprehensive Election Law Report, which provides a roadmap for future reforms and aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in election management.

Ethekeon further highlighted the importance of adequate financial support, warning that underfunding could undermine critical electoral processes.

He insisted that the Commission requires sufficient resources to implement key activities such as voter registration, technology upgrades, voter education and logistics planning.

"Successful elections require collaboration among multiple stakeholders beyond the IEBC," maintained the Chairperson, calling on government agencies, political actors and development partners to support the Commission's work.

On operational readiness, Ethekeon reported the Commission is working to improve election management systems, including technology used in voter identification and results transmission, to enhance efficiency and credibility.

Similarly, he pointed out that lessons learnt from previous electoral cycles have informed ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and minimizing challenges experienced in past elections.

The Commission, he added, is also focusing on voter education and public engagement to enhance participation and build trust in the electoral process.

Therefore, Ethekeon stressed that maintaining transparency, accountability and professionalism will remain central to the Commission's approach as it prepares for the next General Election.

On the other hand, he also addressed the issue of boundary delimitation, stressing that the Constitution requires periodic review of electoral boundaries within specified timelines.

"Articles 88 and 89 of the Constitution vest the Commission with the responsibility to review the names, number and boundaries of electoral units," Ethekeon affirmed, adding that the exercise must be completed at least 12 months before a General Election.

Equally, the Chairperson reiterated the Commission's commitment to continuous improvement and institutional learning, noting that electoral reforms are necessary to keep pace with emerging challenges and evolving democratic expectations.

“

“Elections are central to democracy, protecting citizens' rights to vote or contest for office. Their credibility depends on being free and fair, as flawed elections can lead to instability and violence,” Ethekeon reiterated.

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U.S.-Israeli war with Iran The war erupted on Feb. 28 with U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on Tehran and several other Iranian cities.

One month into U.S.-Israeli war with Iran, havoc with no end in sight

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themkenyatimes

As the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran approaches its one-month mark, the biggest flare-up in the Middle East in decades has caused widespread devastation across the region and severe shockwaves around the globe.

Despite reports of possible talks between Washington and Tehran to halt hostilities, no substantive progress toward peace has materialized, as continued strikes and a military buildup further diminish hopes for a swift de-escalation.

Heavy toll

The war erupted on Feb. 28 with U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on Tehran and several other Iranian cities. Since then, the attacks have continued, targeting key Iranian military command centers, missile installations, energy infrastructures and nuclear facilities.

In response, Iran has launched over 80 waves of missile and drone strikes against Israel and U.S. military facilities across the Middle East, including those in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The conflict has resulted in heavy casualties, with Iranian deaths estimated at over 1,900 and more than 24,800 injured, including the confirmed deaths of then Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, top security official Ali Larijani, and Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib. Israeli and U.S. forces have also suffered losses, with at least 19 Israeli and 13 U.S. military fatalities reported.

Meanwhile, several other countries have been hit by projectiles, suffering casualties. The Gulf's status as a bastion of peace and prosperity is in doubt. Critical energy infrastructure across the region has been attacked, with residents fleeing to safe havens in Southeast Asia and Europe and the lives of millions upended. In the Levant, Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel on March 2 in a show of support for Iran, prompting Israeli airstrikes and a ground incursion into Lebanon that has reportedly killed 1,116 people and displaced over a million.

In a major escalation, Iran has ef-

fectively blockaded the Strait of Hormuz, allowing only ships it considers non-hostile to pass. This maritime squeeze, along with damage to regional energy facilities, has pushed oil prices higher, keeping Brent Crude above 100 U.S. dollars a barrel and up more than 50 percent since the war began. According to a recent World Trade Organization report, sustained high energy prices could reduce projected global GDP growth in 2026 by 0.3 percentage points.

No clear exit

Israel's Channel 12 reported Tuesday that Washington has delivered to Iran a 15-point plan for a month-long ceasefire deal. Tehran, however, considers it too "excessive and disconnected from realities," Iran's state-run Press TV reported Wednesday.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz announced Friday that Israeli strikes on Iran "will intensify and expand to additional targets." Regional experts believe that while mounting regional and global pressure against the war could pave the way for a fragile, short-term ceasefire, a true end to the fighting remains a long way off, and the conflict risks dragging on with no real political settlement in sight. "The most likely short-term scenario is a limited ceasefire driven by international pressure and repositioning," said Naji Ajeeb, a Sudanese conflict researcher. "Such a pause would be a tactical truce, allowing both sides to assess gains and prepare for further confrontation rather than achieving a comprehensive settlement."

Kamel Mansari, editor-in-chief of Le Jeune Independant, a French-language daily newspaper in Algeria, argues that the conflict could easily escalate into a prolonged war of attrition. "A cessation of hostilities would require each side to claim a symbolic 'victory,' which is not currently the case," Mansari said. "If the United States and Israel do not cease their attacks against Iran, the conflict could escalate into a protracted asymmetric war." In that case, regional players are likely to rely on indirect tools, including proxy attacks, limited strikes and cyber warfare, said Brigadier Pilot Adel Abdelkafi, security advisor to the Libyan High Council of State.



This photo taken on March 23, 2026 shows a destroyed building in a residential area after joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran in Tehran, Iran. | Photo: Xinhua/Shadati

So far, Israel has shown the least interest in ending the war, with officials repeatedly opposing any potential ceasefire and signaling plans to escalate military operations. Israeli political analyst Jonathan Lis observes that U.S. President Donald Trump's push for a swift deal with



Despite reports of possible talks between Washington and Tehran to halt hostilities, no substantive progress toward peace has materialized, as continued strikes and a military buildup further diminish hopes for a swift de-escalation.

Iran is heightening Israeli concerns over potential U.S. compromises. Israeli officials fear that the United States could show flexibility on critical issues, including Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium, restrictions on its nuclear program, and limitations on its ballistic missile capabilities, Lis said.

Test for global order

Pointing to what they see as the United States and Israel's disregard for international law in their heavy-handed strikes on Iran, analysts warn that the war is ratcheting up regional tensions and eroding the world order.

Batu Coskun, an Ankara-based independent political analyst, cautions that the war risks intensifying regional polarization into long-term bloc politics. "Even if active fighting subsides, unresolved grievances and shifting alliances are likely to sow the seeds for future conflicts," Coskun said. "Selective adherence to international norms undermines institutional credibility and may encourage similar behavior elsewhere," he said.

Mostafa Amin, an Egyptian researcher on Arab and international affairs, said the war is causing a

crisis in the international system as unilateral actions undermine the UN-based global order."The broader international system faces a profound crisis as the United States increasingly sidelines the UN-based post-World War II global governance framework to facilitate its regional objectives," Amin said. "This encourages a transition toward a multipolar disorder where the pursuit of narrow, short-sighted interests dominates over international law."

As the war rages on, there may be a glimmer of hope. "Calls for peace, particularly from countries like China, are significant in de-escalating tensions and encouraging dialogue among the parties involved," said Ayman Yousef, a professor of political science at the Arab American University in the West Bank. But achieving lasting peace will require more countries to join a collective effort to uphold an international order rooted in multilateralism and coexistence, Yousef noted. "Ultimately, achieving stability requires a collective international approach that prioritizes dialogue, respects international frameworks, and works toward long-term political solutions rather than short-term military gains," Yousef said.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Cracks within the Orange

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), once the undisputed engine of Kenya's opposition politics, is showing visible fractures that could re-define its future. Raila Odinga's party, long synonymous with reform and resistance, now finds itself torn between loyalty to its founding ideals and the lure of political pragmatism.

The fault lines sharpened after the 2018 Handshake between Odinga and former president Uhuru Kenyatta. While hailed nationally as a peace pact, it unsettled ODM's rank and file. Some leaders embraced cooperation with government, arguing it was a path to stability. Others saw betrayal, insisting ODM's credibility rests on a firm opposition stance. That unresolved tension continues to gnaw at the party's core.

Ambition has added fuel. Rising figures within ODM are maneuvering for succession, aligning themselves along regional and factional interests. The result is a party increasing-



ly defined by rivalry rather than unity. For supporters, the spectacle of infighting raises doubts about ODM's direction and its ability to remain a coherent political force.

The stakes are high. ODM's fragmentation risks diluting its influence in national politics, weakening its role as a counterweight to government. Yet the party's loyal base and historic legacy still give it formidable strength. Whether ODM can reconcile its internal con-

traditions will determine if it remains a pillar of Kenya's democracy—or fades into irrelevance.

The Orange is cracking, but whether it breaks apart or binds tighter will shape Kenya's political landscape for years to come.

By Mercy Maina, Laikipia University

The unspoken struggle: Why many graduates feel lost after graduation

Graduation is sold as triumph — the cap tossed high, the certificate clutched tight, the promise of a bright future. Yet for thousands of Kenyan graduates, the celebration quickly fades into silence, replaced by a gnawing uncertainty: what comes next?

Campus life offers structure, identity and purpose. Lectures, timetables and friendships create a rhythm that disappears overnight. Suddenly, graduates face a job market that is unforgiving. Applications pile up, rejections mount, and confidence erodes. The myth that a degree guarantees success collides with the harsh reality of unemployment.

But the struggle runs deeper than economics. Psychologists describe a "quarter-life crisis" that grips many young people after graduation. Friends scat-



ter, social circles shrink, and social media magnifies insecurity as peers appear to surge ahead. Financial expectations — independence, family support, stability — only intensify the pressure. For many, the gap between dreams and reality breeds anxiety, frustration and self-doubt.

This silence around post-graduation struggles is dangerous. Universities prepare students academically but rarely emotionally. Career mentorship, practical training and candid conversations about life after

campus are urgently needed. Society, too, must shed the illusion that success is instant and linear. Reinvention, exploration and detours are part of growth, not signs of failure.

Feeling lost after graduation is not weakness; it is the messy beginning of adulthood. Kenya's graduates deserve guidance, not judgment. If universities and society fail to act, the nation risks celebrating degrees while burying dreams.

By Alphonse Mambo Kioko, Laikipia University

Broken hearts on campus

Campus life is often romanticized as a season of freedom, discovery and youthful love. Yet beneath the laughter in lecture halls and the chatter in hostels, a darker reality is emerging: relationship conflicts are pushing some Kenyan university students to the brink.

Recent tragedies at Maseno, Mount Kenya, Kisii and Machakos universities have exposed the emotional toll of campus relationships gone wrong. From suicides linked to love triangles to violent disputes ending in death, the pattern is alarming. What should be a time of growth is, for some, becoming a crucible of heartbreak and despair.

Mental health experts warn that the cocktail of academic pressure, financial strain, peer expectations and social media-fueled jealousy leaves many students dangerously vulnerable. On campuses where relationships often define identity and social standing, break-



ups can feel catastrophic. Yet stigma keeps many from seeking help, even when counseling services exist.

The consequences are not just personal—they ripple across institutions, families and communities. Each tragedy is a reminder that universities must treat emotional wellbeing as seriously as academic achievement. Stronger counseling programs, peer mentorship and open conversations about mental health are no longer optional; they are urgent.

Parents, lecturers and student leaders also carry responsibility. Encouraging openness, reducing stigma and guiding young people through emotional struggles could save lives.

Love will always be part of campus life. But it should never end in funerals or broken futures. Universities must act now—because silence is proving deadly.

By Kimberly Matroba, Laikipia University

Is it a must to be in a relationship while in campus?

Campus life is often portrayed as a whirlwind of freedom, discovery and romance. Walk through lecture halls or hostels and it can feel as though everyone is dating. The pressure is real, but the truth is simple: being in a relationship is not a requirement for campus life.

For many students, independence away from home sparks new friendships and emotional connections. A healthy relationship can provide companionship, motivation and support. Yet the idea that one must be in love is often driven by peer pressure and social media, not personal readiness. The fear of being "left out" pushes some into relationships that are rushed, distracting or even toxic.

Being single, on the other hand, is equally valid — and often liberating. Campus years are critical for self-discovery, career building and personal growth. Without the emotion-



al demands of a relationship, students can focus on academics, sharpen skills and understand themselves better. Experts warn that immature or unhealthy relationships can derail studies, fuel stress and leave scars that last beyond graduation.

The choice to date should be personal, not a social obligation. Students who feel ready and can balance love with academics may thrive in relationships. Those who prefer

to remain single should never be judged. What matters is self-awareness and alignment with one's goals.

Campus is not a contest of who is dating and who is not. It is a journey of growth. The best relationship any student can build is with themselves — because self-understanding is the foundation for every other connection in life.

By Deborah Soi, Laikipia University

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *National men's rugby 7s team wrapped up their HSBC Division 2 campaign in style, dismissing Uruguay 26-14 in the third leg at Sao Paulo on Sunday night.

Happy ending for Shujaa at HSBC Division 2 in Sao Paulo after crucial win over Uruguay



Shujaa's David Nyagige (L) in action in Sao Paulo. PHOTO/RUGBY AFRICA

National men's rugby 7s team wrapped up their HSBC Division 2 campaign in style, dismissing Uruguay 26-14 in the third leg at Sao Paulo on Sunday night.

Having secured their slot in the Sevens Championships, the tie was a mere formality for Kevin 'Bling' Wambua's men.

However, they meant business, making their intent from the get-go from George 'Japolo' Ooro's try in the first minute.

Nygel Amaita, ever too-reliable with his conversions, stepped up to add the extras.

Co-captain Samuel Asati then

followed up with his first try of the tournament, Amaita failing to convert successfully for the second time.

It proved costly as the Latin Americans narrowed the deficit through Diego Ardao's try at the cusp of halftime — Francisco Landauer's boot adding the extras.

Upon the restart, the Uruguayans surged ahead to add extra spice to the game, Ignacio Rodriguez going over the white chalk to reduce the deficit to 12-10 before Landauer's successful conversion brought the scores to 14-12 in their favour.

However, that was as far as any talk of a 'remontada' went as Shujaa wrestled control of the game once again.

Festus Shiasi got his name on the scoreboard with his team's third try in the 11th minute — Amaita redeeming himself with a successful conversion.

With a minute left on the clock, substitute Chrisant Ojwang' then went over the try line to leave no doubt about the result.

A successful conversion by Amaita and Shujaa were in full ecstasy mode as they wrapped up what has been an impeccable campaign.

Alongside three other sides, Shujaa will now face eight other teams from Division 1 in the Sevens Championships across three legs — Hong Kong, Valladolid and Bordeaux.

Capital sport

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The national women's rugby 7s side thrashed China 46-0 in a statement victory at the HSBC SVNS Divisions 2 in Sao Paulo yesterday evening.

Freshia stars as Lionesses crush China at HSBC SVNS Division 2 in Sao Paulo



Kenya Lionesses in action at the World Rugby 7s Division 2 Tourney. PHOTO/RUGBY AFRICA

The national women's rugby 7s side thrashed China 46-0 in a statement victory at the HSBC SVNS Divisions 2 in Sao Paulo yesterday evening.

The Lionesses came into the match and immediately set about tearing the Chinese at will.

Freshia Oduor put the first points on the scoreboard after only two minutes, before touching down on the white chalk — three minutes later — to make it 10-0.

Sinaida Nyachio, who had missed her conversion the first time, made amends with a successful one to extend their lead.

Three minutes later, it was Janet

'Shebesh' Okello's turn to pierce through the Chinese's 22 before going over for the third try.

Nyachio then converted successfully between the posts.

Oduor then made it a hattrick of tries for herself with her third as Kenya went into the interval 24-0 ahead.

It was more of the same in the second half, Freshia Oduor breaking the opponents' resistance with her fourth of the evening.

Coach Simon Odongo then brought off Oduor for the towering Faith Livoi and it took her less than a minute to make

her presence known, adding the sixth try in the 10th minute.

By now, it was a matter of how many and not if the Lionesses would walk away with the win.

Marvel Oswago, featuring in her third tournament for Shujaa, answered the question emphatically with the seventh try.

The ever dependable boot of Nyachio was at it again to convert successfully and extend their lead.

Livoi then completed her brace in the dying embers of the game as Nyachio missed her conversion — an incident that was inconsequential as the Lionesses

collected their biggest victory yet in the prestigious competition.

Capital sport

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SOTRANE Publishers: Leading the Literary and Creative Industries in Africa



By: Paula Otukile
Gaborone, Botswana
Correspondence

SOTRANE Publishers is emerging as a commanding voice in Africa's publishing and creative industries. SOTRANE is positioning itself as a platform for stories that matter — for our time and for generations to come.

At the heart of SOTRANE'S 2026 agenda is the inaugural FITABO International Book Fair, a national-to-international literary marketplace and cultural festival that will bring authors, publishers, educators, cultural institutions, government bodies and the public together. The Fair is already drawing experts to speak, teach and feature on panels; masterclasses will run across practical topics such as publishing, illustration, digital publishing and rights. Additionally, government services related to publishing sector to be at hand.

Remarkably, 50% of the programme is focused on young people, ensuring that the next generation of readers, writers and cultural entrepreneurs are central to the conversation.

"This Fair is not about pageantry — it is about ownership," says Dr. Sydney Muponda, SOTRANE Publishers Chief Visionary Officer. "We are calling on sector players to take a lead and own this Fair and the broader literary activities that follow. There can be no better time than now to tell our stories."

SOTRANE'S commitment extends far beyond a three day event. The company has announced a sustained book-drive initiative to collect and donate books to schools and libraries, improving access and fostering a reading culture across communities. "Access to books changes lives," Dr. Muponda adds. "We must invest in content, in people, and in systems that make reading possible for every child."

Recognition has followed SOTRANE'S proactive advocacy and capacity building. The company won Best Company of the Year in 2025 and has been acknowledged regionally, including recognition by peers in Botswana. In 2026 Dr. Muponda was named a Fellow of the Chennai International Book Fair for outstanding advocacy in creating



more and better spaces for publishing and literature in Zambia and the region, work that champion favourable policies and incentives for creative industries.

SOTRANE offers a full suite of publishing services - editing, proof-reading, book design, printing, trainings - and operates an author portal that empowers writers to own and track their work. The firm's mission to develop, publish and promote quality, content-rich Zambian and African literature is matched by a vision of building an avid audience of readers enriched by those works and values.

"For creatives to thrive we need solid investments in the book sector, from government, private sector partners and institutions," Dr. Muponda stresses. "Show up. Invest. Tell the stories that define us."

SOTRANE Publishers invites partners to join the FITABO International Book Fair and collaborate on projects that support arts, heritage and the empowerment of creatives. Partnering with SOTRANE means investing in cultural infrastructure, nurturing talent and ensuring African stories are produced, celebrated and sustained.

To learn more or to partner with SOTRANE Publishers, visit www.sotranepublishers.com or contact the team at info@sotranepublishers.com / +260 763 465 255. Together,

we can build the platforms and policies that place African literature and creativity at the center of regional and global cultural life.

