



Unity or Stagnation: Ruto's Nairobi tour blends development drive with political messaging
 President William Ruto has intensified his call for national unity, warning that Kenya's development agenda risks derailment if divisive politics are allowed to thrive. **Page 8**



Unity call grows louder as Mau Mau groups push for recognition and compensation
 Calls for unity among groups representing veterans of the Mau Mau Uprising are gaining momentum, as leaders warn that fragmentation **Page 12**

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 Daily ePAPER

Peace Mudavadi said efforts to end conflicts both in Africa and other parts of the world have been privatised

Mudavadi warns against 'commercialised peace'



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has warned against the emerging trend of commercializing peace initiatives globally.

Mudavadi said efforts to end conflicts both in Africa and other parts of the world have been privatised at the expense of humanity and respect to lives.

He regretted that mediation processes have turned into business negotiations eroding the fundamental concept of restoring peace and stability.

"We are seeing an emerging trend where factions are turning into arbitrators of transactions instead of genuinely pursuing efforts that will restore peace and stability in the affected nations and regions," he regretted.

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Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi h

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Ruto calls for Africa to retain more value from mining sector through local processing

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto has called on African countries to take a more active role in controlling and benefiting from their mineral wealth, saying the continent must stop exporting raw materials while others gain most of the value. Speaking at the Mining Investment Conference and Expo in Nairobi yesterday, he said Africa's vast mineral resources should drive industrial growth, job creation, and shared prosperity.

Ruto noted that despite over six decades of independence, many African countries still struggle to fully benefit from their mineral endowments.

He emphasized that Africa holds about 30% of global critical mineral reserves, including cobalt, lithium, nickel, and rare earth elements, which are increasingly vital for clean energy technologies.

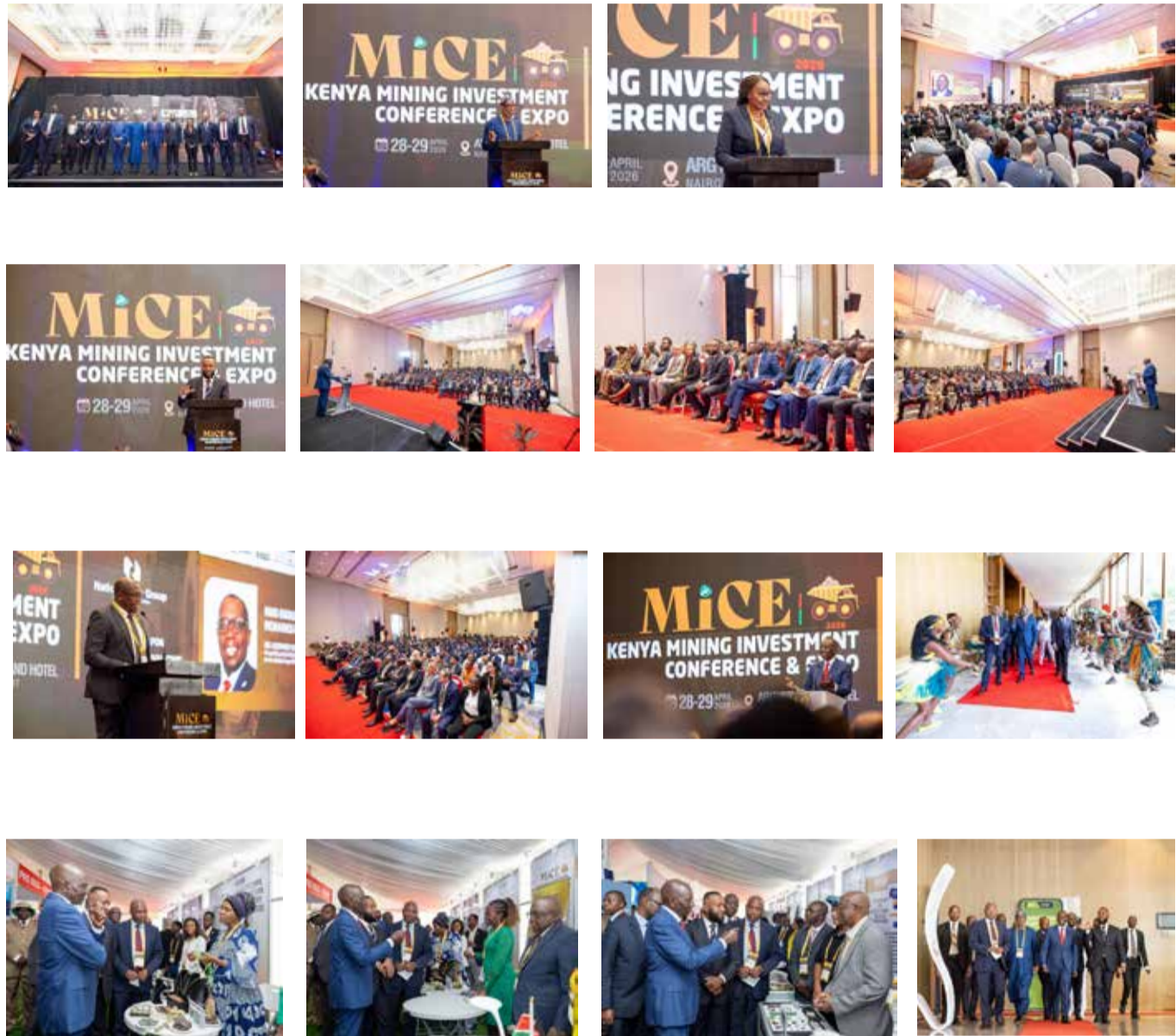
However, he lamented that the continent captures less than 1% of the value generated in global clean energy supply chains.

The President urged African leaders to prioritize local processing and value addition, stating that Kenya is already investing in this direction through projects such as an iron ore pelletisation plant in Taita Taveta, a gold refinery, and a gemstone value addition centre in Voi. He added that Kenya has identified over 970 mineral deposits through national surveys and is strengthening its mining regulatory framework.

Ruto also highlighted reforms such as the Mining Act 2016, digitised licensing systems, and the creation of the National Mining Corporation.

He invited investors to consider Kenya, citing improved legal structures, infrastructure, and regional connectivity. He further supported deeper African cooperation under the African Continental Free Trade Area to enhance mineral-based industrialisation across the continent.

The Head of State was accompanied by among others, Mining Cabinet Secretary Ali Hassan Joho.



Editor's Desk

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Group Executive Chairman

M. Danson

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dan-mwangi-1b47446b/>

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mtkenyatimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mtkenyatimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Turkana County has recorded a sharp rise in HIV infections, with 469 new cases in 2025, a 63.4% increase from 2024. About 33% of the infections are among youth aged 15–24, while HIV-related deaths rose from 265 to 562. The county HIV prevalence now stands at 2.19%, with 16,925 people living with HIV. Despite the surge, mother-to-child transmission improved, dropping from 16.9% to 9.7%. However, viral load suppression remains below the 95% target at 89% across sub-counties. Gender-based violence cases remain high, especially in Lokichoggio and Kakuma, while teenage pregnancies account for 15.3% of ANC visits. Authorities link the challenges to social and economic pressures and reduced health support programs.



Kilifi County Executive Committee Member for Blue Economy Pateson Chula Mwagona (right) and officials hand over tools of trade to a carpentry graduate during a ceremony at Roka Vocational Training College in Kilifi.



Bomachoge Chache MP Alfa Ondiek Miruka, Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Communication, Information and Innovation, and his Mbooni counterpart Erastus Kivasu Nzioka (Left) speaking in Isiolo when the Committee embarked on the inspection of the Horn of Africa Gateway Development fibre optic project worth Sh2.6 billion. Mr. Miruka termed the initiative transformative, noting that it is set to unlock the region's potential by delivering reliable internet access and establishing a digital superhighway across northern Kenya. The project, which is being implemented in phases from Isiolo to Mandera with support from development partners, seeks to address long-standing marginalisation by integrating digital infrastructure with ongoing road development.



West Pokot Governor Simon Kachapin has called on the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to extend the new voter registration period, citing challenges faced by nomadic pastoral communities. He said many residents have temporarily moved to Uganda in search of pasture due to drought, leading to low registration numbers. The Governor noted that the county has achieved only about 10% of its target of 32,827 new voters, despite ranking third in the Rift Valley region. He urged authorities to ensure registration stations are available across all 20 wards and appealed for special consideration of pastoral communities. Kachapin also encouraged local leaders to mobilize residents to participate in the democratic process.

Defense Cabinet Secretary Soipan Tuya presided over the groundbreaking of Kabarnet University College in Baringo County, a Sh1 billion project to be implemented by a Chinese contractor in collaboration with the Kenya Defence Forces. She said the first phase, expected to take one and a half years, will include tuition blocks, a library, an auditorium, and an administration block, while phase two will add support facilities. Tuya noted the project will improve access to quality education and boost local economic activity through jobs and business opportunities. Education CS Julius Ogamba, through his representative, urged the institution to embrace innovation, ICT, and global standards to enhance competitiveness and graduate employability.



Gender Cabinet Secretary Hanna Cheptumo joins Kabarnet University College students in song and dance during the ceremony at the main campus grounds. The Sh1 billion project will be implemented by a Chinese contractor in collaboration with the Kenya Defence Forces. She commended the government for establishing the institution, describing it as a transformative development for a region that has long lagged behind in access to higher education facilities.



Farmers in Tinderet Sub County have recorded improved agricultural productivity following the government's subsidized fertilizer programme, which reduced the price of a 50kg bag from about Sh3,500 to Sh2,500 at the National Cereals and Produce Board. The initiative has increased fertilizer uptake, enabling farmers to apply recommended amounts and boost yields. According to agriculture officials, maize production has risen by 30–40 percent over the past two seasons, with farmers now harvesting 18–22 bags per acre compared to 12–15 previously. Beans and other crops have also improved by 20–25 percent, while tea farmers report better quality and higher output, easing production costs and improving household incomes.



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Sacco Mr. Gideon Gitonga emphasized the significance of the innovation in strengthening the cooperative sector

BlockCoop Sacco launches the first blockchain-powered cooperative, redefining the future of Saccos in Africa

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

BlockCoop Sacco has launched Kenya's first blockchain-powered Sacco, marking a historic milestone in the evolution of cooperative finance and reinforcing the country's position as a leader in financial innovation across Africa.

The initiative introduces a new model for Saccos, leveraging blockchain technology to address long-standing challenges in the sector, including illiquid shares, restrictive loan requirements, limited member participation, and lack of transparency.

Speaking during the launch, Managing Director, Mr. Gideon Gitonga emphasized the significance of the innovation in strengthening the cooperative sector.

"As we advance cooperative finance, our focus is on leveraging innovation to address structural challenges while expanding access and trust. Blockchain technology enables us to build a more transparent, inclusive, and efficient Sacco model," he said.

Through its digital share token, Blocks, BlockCoop Sacco has transformed traditional Sacco shares into tradable assets, enabling liquidity and opening up participation to a global market.

The model also replaces conventional guarantor requirements with guarantor pools and trust-based scoring, providing a more inclusive approach to credit access.

Since launching its share trading on 1st October 2025, the sacco has experienced significant growth, reaching an estimated market capitalization of KSh1.3 billion and attracting a rapidly expanding base of members and investors.

This growth reflects increasing confidence in the blockchain-powered Sacco model and signals a broader shift toward more modern, technology-driven cooperative finance systems.

Building on this momentum, BlockCoop Sacco has launched the "Lipa na Blocks" loyalty campaign, an innovative initiative designed to reward its growing community while turning everyday spending into an opportunity for saving and investing.

Through this program, participants can acquire blocks from the secondary market and enjoy discounts when making payments via Till numbers, Paybill, or mobile transactions. The program is open to the public and accessible through lipanablocks.com, giving opportunity for everyone to participate

In a major boost to its eco-



From left to right; Isaac Thendenu (Director) Waithaka Ndiritu (Director), Gerald Githinji (Director Nomachain), and Gideon Gitonga (Managing Director) share the stage during the launch of Kenya's first blockchain-powered cooperative. | Photo: courtesy.

system, BlockCoop Sacco also announced strategic partnerships with Nomachain and HF, aimed at accelerating the digitization and scalability of Saccos across the region.

HF will provide compliant Sacco infrastructure, ensuring that cooperative systems meet regulatory standards.

Nomachain on the other hand, will power the tokenization of Sacco assets and shares, enabling cooperatives to unlock the value of traditionally illiquid assets such as land and buildings.

These partnerships are expected to address limited liquidity challenges and open up new pathways for investment, growth, and financial inclusion.

As the cooperative sector

continues to evolve, BlockCoop Sacco remains committed to driving innovation that empowers members, and builds a more inclusive financial future.

About BlockCoop SACCO

BlockCoop SACCO is a Kenya-based, member-owned cooperative leveraging blockchain technology to modernize savings, lending, and governance. Its digital asset, BLOCKS, represents cooperative ownership linked to real economic activity, offering members opportunities for income generation, liquidity, and participation in a transparent, decentralized financial ecosystem.

M-Pesa handles KSh100B daily, Ndegwa says



Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa | Photo: courtesy

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

Safaricom has revealed that its M-Pesa platform is processing approximately KSh100 billion in transactions every day, offering the clearest indication yet of how deeply mobile money has embedded itself into Kenya's economic fabric.

Speaking at the Connected Africa Summit 2026, chief executive Peter Ndegwa said the platform handles roughly 500 million transactions daily, with the technical capacity to process up to 10,000 transactions per second — a figure that places M-Pesa among the most formidable digital payments infrastructures on the continent.

"The scale is remarkable," Ndegwa said, "but the opportunity ahead is even larger." He noted that M-Pesa now operates across seven markets, a regional footprint that

reflects both the platform's commercial ambitions and its broader role in driving financial inclusion for populations long excluded from formal banking.

Ndegwa used the summit to press for closer collaboration between technology companies and governments, arguing that regulatory friction remains one of the most significant barriers to digital transformation in public services. Streamlining that relationship, he said, would accelerate the kind of seamless digital access that millions of users already expect from their mobile money experience.

The disclosures come as Safaricom continues to invest in the infrastructure needed to sustain rising transaction volumes while expanding access across underserved communities.

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Politics The President reiterated that his administration's broad-based government arrangement was born out of the need to unite the country and focus on shared prosperity.

Unity or Stagnation: Ruto's Nairobi tour blends development drive with political messaging

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto has intensified his call for national unity, warning that Kenya's development agenda risks derailment if divisive politics are allowed to thrive. Speaking yesterday during a development tour of Kibra and Lang'ata constituencies in Nairobi, the President urged citizens to reject leaders who promote tribalism and instead support those with a proven record of service delivery.

Ruto emphasized that leadership should be judged on tangible results rather than empty promises, noting that political competition must not be turned into a platform for animosity and division.

He cautioned that individuals who thrive on ethnic and political polarization should not be entrusted with leadership, as they undermine the country's progress and cohesion.

The President reiterated that his administration's broad-based government arrangement was born out of the need to unite the country and focus on shared prosperity.

He said bringing together leaders from across the political divide was a deliberate move to end cycles of hostility and instead channel energy toward economic growth and national transformation.

On education, Ruto highlighted major gains made under his administration, including the recruitment of 100,000 teachers over the past three years and plans to hire an additional 20,000 by year's end.

He added that 23,000 classrooms have been constructed nationwide to support the implementation of the Competency-Based Education programme and ease congestion in schools.

During the tour, the President commissioned eight new classrooms at Raila Education Centre in Kibra, raising its capacity from 400 to 900 learners. He also pledged that six teachers currently employed by the school's board would be absorbed into the Teachers Service Commission. At Joseph Kang'ethe Primary School, he handed over 10 additional classrooms, reaffirming the gov-

ernment's commitment to ensuring no child is left behind due to inadequate facilities.

Housing development remained a key pillar of the President's message, with Ruto announcing that the government will take over and complete 900 stalled housing units under the Kenya Railways Corporation project in Kibra. The units will be allocated to local residents under the Affordable Housing Programme. In addition, the government plans to construct 3,000 more units on the same land to further expand access to decent housing.

In Lang'ata, Ruto inspected the ongoing 4,600-unit Soweto Affordable Housing project, which is expected to be completed by September. He also revealed plans for an additional 15,000 units in the area, underscoring the scale of the government's housing agenda. Nationwide, about 270,000 housing units are under construction across 200 sites, employing an estimated 640,000 young people, with Nairobi accounting for 100,000 of these units.

The President described the housing programme as a transformative initiative aimed at restoring dignity to millions of Kenyans living in informal settlements. He stressed that a country of Kenya's stature should not have millions living in poor conditions, adding that the programme is designed to deliver decent and affordable homes.

Ruto also outlined plans to modernize Nairobi through a partnership between the national government and the Nairobi City County Government. The initiative includes an investment of KSh80 billion for infrastructure projects such as the construction of 260 kilometers of roads, installation of 40,000 street lights, and improvements in waste management systems. He expressed confidence that by the end of the year, residents would witness significant transformation across the city.

On healthcare, the President urged Nairobi residents to register for the Social Health Authority scheme, noting that 1.5 million people in the capital have already signed up to benefit from improved medical services.

Leaders who accompanied the Pres-



President William Ruto addressing Nairobians yesterday.

ident echoed his message of unity and development, praising the ongoing projects for transforming Nairobi and improving livelihoods. Lang'ata Member of Parliament Felix Odiwuor, popularly known as Jalango, said the visible changes across the city were evidence that government programmes are bearing fruit, adding that residents are beginning to feel the impact of development at the grassroots.

Dagoretti North MP Beatrice Elachi commended the President's development track record, describing it as impactful and far-reaching. She urged Nairobi residents to support the administration's agenda and consider granting it more time to fully implement its programmes.

Leaders affiliated with the Orange Democratic Movement also voiced their support for the broad-based government, terming it a key driver

of development not only in Nairobi but across the country. They noted that cooperation between leaders from different political backgrounds has created a conducive environment for implementing transformative projects.

As the tour concluded, the overarching message remained clear: unity, coupled with sustained investment in development, is central to Kenya's future growth and stability.



President William Ruto with Raila Odinga Jnr at Raila Education Centre in Kibera yesterday.

Peace We are now seeing sovereignty facing a new definition other than the description of a self-governing state independent of outside control - Mudavadi

Mudavadi warns against 'commercialized peace,' urges Africa-led mediation reforms

BY OPCS PS
@themtkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has warned against the emerging trend of commercializing peace initiatives globally.

Mudavadi said efforts to end conflicts both in Africa and other parts of the world have been privatised at the expense of humanity and respect to lives.

He regretted that mediation processes have turned into business negotiations eroding the fundamental concept of restoring peace and stability.

"We are seeing an emerging trend where factions are turning into arbitrators of transactions instead of genuinely pursuing efforts that will restore peace and stability in the affected nations and regions," he regretted.

"We are now seeing sovereignty facing a new definition other than the description of a self-governing state independent of outside control," added Mudavadi.

The Prime CS was addressing the ongoing Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediation reflection conference in Nairobi.

He said Africa must rethink

and adapt to new approaches in pursuing more flexible and responsive mediation frameworks, tailored to the specific contexts of the continent.

He said the rapidly shifting global dynamics and growing pressures on multilateralism are impacting the coherence, predictability, and effectiveness of mediation efforts calling on African leaders and citizens to embrace shared responsibility that will strengthen dialogue, mediation and African-led solutions to the conflicts that continue to affect the continent.

"Regional cooperation, political transition, and humanitar-



PCS addressing the forum yesterday.

ian diplomacy should continue to anchor and enrich our collective efforts for peace and stability," said Mudavadi.

Mudavadi also the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs noted that Africa is confronted with a complex challenge to the mediation landscape especially in the Horn of Africa with protracted and mutating conflicts, marked by fragmentation of actors that are testing the limits of tradi-

tional approaches to peace processes.

He said fragmentation and duplication undermine collective efforts in conflict resolution.

"African ownership in addressing African conflicts remains essential in ensuring legitimacy, sustainability, and long-term success," noted the Prime CS

"It is important to enhance coordination among regional and continental actors. Therefore, a more harmonized approach, anchored on IGAD's leadership, will strengthen coherence and effectiveness in the Horn of Africa," added Mudavadi.

The Prime CS further warned against undermining African institutions tasked with key responsibilities in conflict resolution including the African Union and IGAD among others.

He said these institutions occupy a unique and strategic position within the African set-up and they must be appreciated, strengthened and supported.

"It is disturbing to see the people who tend to discredit African institutions like the AU being Africans themselves. You get a reasonable preposition coming from the AU, and we completely refuse to look at it and understand it for our progressive benefit. But when the same is taken to other parties outside Africa, they call you, give you the same document you refused to adopt while at home and you comfortably sign onto it. This must stop," noted Mudavadi.

"While acknowledging with appreciation the contributions of external actors in regional peace initiatives, these efforts should be mainstreamed into Africa-led mechanisms. Safeguarding the integrity of African-led mediation requires ensuring that external engagement is aligned with, and advances, our collective objectives," he further stated. Mudavadi said Africans themselves should reflect on the economic value of peace and stability for the continent to prosper.

Present were H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu IGAD Executive Secretary, H.E. Amb. Mohamed Belaiche representative from the African Union, former Sudan Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and other distinguished leaders.

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Politics Maraga said his tour marked the 43rd and final county reached under the “Ukatiba Caravan” initiative, which began on February 2.

Former CJ David Maraga wraps up “Ukatiba caravan” campaign

BY KNA
@themtkenyatimes

United Green Movement Party (UGM) president aspirant, former chief justice David Maraga has concluded a nationwide civic engagement campaign urging Kenyans to register as voters ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Speaking in Nyalkilnyi during the official opening of a new party branch office, Maraga said his tour marked the 43rd and final county reached under the “Ukatiba

Caravan” initiative, which began on February 2.

The initiative which focused on mobilization of citizens to take part in the democratic process by taking advantage of the just-concluded voter registration exercise targeted the majority youthful residents, majority of whom ignored their constitutional rights during the previous undertakings.

“This is the 43rd and the last county we are visiting under Ukatiba Caravan. We have been moving around the country urging citizens to

register as voters and to come out in large numbers to vote in next year’s general elections,” he said.

The retired Chief Justice emphasized the urgency of voter registration, noting that the exercise is nearing its deadline. “This is the last day for voter registration. Those who have not registered yet should come out and do so. This is extremely important because the 2027 election is going to be a critical one,” he added.

So far, about 47,192 have registered as voters in the county. Homa Bay has a tar-



David Maraga addressing the media.

get to register about 62,857 new voters by the end of the voter registration exercise.

In his address, the party leader warned of serious national consequences if the electoral process is not handled properly.

“In my view, we have reached a stage where unless we get it right next year, this country is

going to break. I am urging every Kenyan, even if you have never voted before, this time you must vote so that we can redeem our country,” said Maraga.

Maraga also weighed in on the implementation of the Competency-Based Education (CBE) system, expressing concern over its rollout.

He noted that CBE was implemented without proper preparation, adding, “The future of our young people is at stake. We cannot afford to gamble with our children’s education,” he said.

He further pledged sweeping reforms if elected president, including tackling corruption and improving governance.

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STRI Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, the meeting served as a strategic platform to align stakeholders and onboard partners ahead of the national event.

Kenya rallies stakeholders ahead of STRI4Society week 2026 push

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The government has stepped up efforts to mobilize national support for the upcoming Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation (STRI) 4Society Week 2026, following a high-level stakeholders' breakfast convened in Nairobi by the State Department for Science, Research, and Innovation.

The forum brought together key players from government, academia, industry, development partners, and the private sector to strengthen partnerships and unlock investment for what is shaping up to be Kenya's premier science and innovation platform.

Led by Principal Secretary for Research and Innovation Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, the meeting served as a strategic platform to align stakeholders and onboard partners ahead of the national event. It also underscored efforts to position STRI4Society Week as a flagship initiative linking research, policy, industry, and society to drive sustainable development.

Prof. Abdulrazak reaffirmed the Government's commitment to building a robust science and innovation ecosystem, describing it as a key pillar in Kenya's economic transformation.

He emphasized the need for increased investment in research and innovation, alongside stronger accountability to ensure measurable outcomes.

"If Kenya is to become globally competitive, we must invest boldly in science, research, and innovation while ensuring these investments translate into real solutions for society," he said.

He noted that while funding remains critical, institutions must demonstrate their ability to effectively utilize resources and convert research into practical applications.

He added that Kenya's growing network of universities and research institutions provides a strong foundation for scaling innovation.

The stakeholders' meeting also aimed to catalyse collaboration across the innovation value chain, with participants invited to engage as partners, sponsors, and exhibitors. Discussions highlighted opportunities for visibility, collaboration, and investment within Kenya's evolving innovation landscape.

STRI4Society Week 2026, themed "Igniting Innovation, Bridging Science and Society for Sustainable Development," is expected to attract more than 5,000 participants at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre.

The event will bring together policymakers, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and international delegates.

The week-long programme will feature policy dialogues, keynote sessions, innovation exhibitions, and platforms designed to strengthen collaboration between academia, industry, and government. It will also prioritize youth engagement through STEM mentorship, innovation challenges, and entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at nurturing the next generation of innovators.

Leaders of key agencies emphasized the importance of linking research to national development.

Officials from the National Commission for Science,

Technology, and Innovation, the National Research Fund, and the Kenya National Innovation Agency noted that the platform would help translate research into enterprise, policy, and measurable impact.

Stakeholders expressed strong interest in supporting the initiative through sponsorship, technical partnerships, and in-kind contributions, citing its potential to enhance collaboration and national impact.

The Government said sustained engagement beyond



State Department for Science, Research and Innovation Principal Secretary Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak speaking during an event to mobilize national support for the upcoming STRI4Society Week 2026.

the event will be critical to its success, especially as Kenya advances its development agenda under Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Econom-

ic Transformation Agenda. STRI4Society Week is expected to play a central role in accelerating the use of science and innovation to address na-

tional challenges and drive socio-economic growth.



National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) Acting Director General Dr David Ngigi speaking during an event to mobilize national support for the upcoming STRI4Society Week 2026.

Mau Mau Mahuria, installed by elders drawn from different communities, pledged to work collaboratively with other leaders to advance the common interests

Unity call grows louder as Mau Mau groups push for recognition and compensation



James Njuguna Mahuria receiving documents after the ceremony.

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

Calls for unity among groups representing veterans of the Mau Mau Uprising are gaining momentum, as leaders warn that fragmentation continues to weaken their decades-long quest for justice, recognition, and compensation.

During a meeting held at Blue Post Hotel, where James Njuguna Mahuria was installed as the leader of MMV Associates CLG, former freedom fighters and their descendants stressed the urgent need to consolidate efforts under a unified umbrella. They noted that splintered representation has made it difficult to effectively negotiate with the government and international actors.

Mahuria, installed by elders drawn from different communities, pledged to work collaboratively with other leaders to advance the common interests of surviving veterans and mil-

lions of their descendants.

He expressed optimism that consensus could soon be reached on key issues, including the establishment of a national day of prayer and remembrance for Mau Mau fighters.

Kenya is home to numerous organizations claiming to champion the welfare of Mau Mau veterans and their families.

Prominent among them are the Mau Mau War Veterans Association, the Mau Mau Original Trust, and several regional and community-based associations.

Estimates suggest there are over 15 such groups, each operating independently with overlapping mandates; often competing for legitimacy, membership, and access to government engagement.

This fragmentation has long been cited as a major obstacle in their pursuit of justice. Despite the historic 2013 settlement between the British government and a group of Mau Mau claimants; where

over 5,000 victims received compensation for torture and abuse during colonial rule, many veterans and their descendants argue that thousands more were left out.

They continue to demand broader recognition and reparations, including land restitution and financial compensation.

The Mau Mau rebellion, a key chapter in Kenya's struggle for independence, saw thousands detained, tortured, and displaced under British colonial rule.

While the Kenyan government officially recognized Mau Mau fighters as heroes in 2003, activists say symbolic recognition has not translated into meaningful socio-economic support.

Many veterans, now elderly and living in poverty, have repeatedly petitioned both the Kenyan and British governments.

Their demands include comprehensive compensation

frameworks, access to health-care, and formal inclusion in national history narratives and education curricula.

Mahuria emphasized that his organization, which draws members from all 47 counties, remains non-political and focused on promoting unity and peace.

He reiterated that only a united front would give the movement enough weight to secure long-overdue justice.

Analysts and historians echo this sentiment, noting that a cohesive national body representing Mau Mau interests could strengthen advocacy efforts, streamline legal claims, and improve engagement with stakeholders.

As the number of surviving veterans dwindles, urgency is mounting.

For many, unity is no longer just strategic; it is essential to ensuring that the sacrifices of the Mau Mau generation are fully acknowledged and compensated before it is too late.



During the installation process. | Photo: courtesy.

Haiti -The CS and his team jetted back in the country last evening with the officers_

Murkomen, IG Kanja in Haiti as Kenyan police mission drawdown concludes

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration Kipchumba Murkomen and Inspector General of Police Douglas Kanja visited Haiti as the drawdown of Kenyan police officers serving under the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission comes to an end.

The two leaders, accompanied by a Kenyan delegation, met officers still on duty in Haiti on Monday and were received by MSS Contingent Commander Godfrey Otunge and Kenya's Consular General in Haiti Noor Gabow, among other officials. They were briefed on ongoing operations, achievements, and the transition of the mission into the Gang Suppression Force following a United Nations Security Council resolution.

Murkomen praised the officers for their discipline and sacrifice in helping restore order in Haiti, delivering greetings from President William Ruto and the Kenyan public. He noted that the mission had contributed significantly to stabilisation efforts and enhanced Kenya's international security profile.

IG Kanja also commended the officers for their professionalism and commitment, acknowledging support from international partners. He encouraged those returning home to apply the experience gained in strengthening policing services in Kenya.

National Security Advisor Joseph Boinett described the mission as historic, saying the officers had upheld Kenya's reputation while contributing to peace efforts abroad.

The visit comes as about 150 Kenyan officers departed Haiti for Nairobi,

marking the formal conclusion of the drawdown phase of the mission. Senior security officials, including the Director of Operations (APS) Jackson Kangani and IG's aide James Murithi, were also present during the visit.

Last evening, the team jetted back in the country.

The last contingent of 150 officers were received at the JKIA by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Amb. Dr. Monica Juma, alongside the Principal Secretary for the State Department of Foreign Affairs, Abraham Sing'Oei.

Also present are the Deputy Inspectors General, Mr. Eliud Lagat and Mr. Gilbert Masengeli, among other senior officers.



CS Kipchumba Murkomen leading the officers in disembarking the Kenya Airways plane last evening.

The Mt. Kenya Times



In a single glance



We were strangers—unknown,
unnamed,
Two passing souls, untouched,
untamed.
No stories shared, no words
to say,
Yet something lingered in that
sway.

A fleeting moment, soft yet
deep,

Where silent eyes began to speak.
No voice was heard, no sound was made,
But hearts conversed in light and shade.

Your gaze met mine—just once, no more,
Yet felt like something lived before.
As if in time we lost our place,
And found it there, in that one gaze.

No touch, no bond the world could see,
Still something shifted quietly.
A spark that bloomed without a name,
A silent, unclaimed, tender flame.

Was it wonder, or was it art?
That quiet pull upon the heart.
A stranger still, you walked away,
Yet left a feeling here to stay.

For in that glance, so pure, so true,
A thousand unspoken feelings grew.
And though we're lost in life's vast sea,
That moment lives... inside of me.

©Dr. Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

Behind the mask



Sparkling eyes may hide the pain inside,
Rosy cheeks may hide the tears that abide,
A sweet smile may mask a heart that's sore,
Lingering words may hide a soul that's torn

What's going on in their life, we may not know,
What weighs down the heart, we can't fully show
Do they carry love and laughter true?
Or are they fighting battles, struggling anew?

Just because you hide your distress so well,
Doesn't mean it isn't heavy, doesn't mean it won't

swell
Just because you cover wounds with a grin,
Doesn't mean they're healed, doesn't mean they
won't spin

Don't underestimate others' feelings deep,
You don't know what they're going through, what
they keep

Actions may contrast their thoughts, it's true,
Their body and soul may be crying out for healing
too

You aren't meant to take their burden whole,
So don't envy the battles that they control
Let them win their strife, be a helping hand
Give them a hug, lend them a stand.

RAJITHA D
BT Asst English,
GGHSS PADAPPAL
KANCHIPURAM
TAMILNADU
INDIA

Fake news



Fake news is not just words,
it spreads like truth but isn't.

People read quickly,
and share without thinking.

One wrong message

can create fear in many hearts.

Sometimes it changes opinions,
sometimes it creates hate.

Friends argue,
families misunderstand each other.

All because no one stopped
to check if it was real.
In the end,

truth comes slowly,
but the damage is already done.

_V. S. NITHIYASRI
VII
JOHN DEWEY MATRIC HIGHER SECONDARY
SCHOOL, CUDDALORE DISTRICT, TAMILNADU._

Where value fades, presence withdraws



Appreciation is the quiet fuel
That keeps every heart moving
In the rhythm of everyday life.
Simple words can heal a weary heart
At the end of a long, silent day.
Yet in the rush of our busy lives,
We forget to offer that warmth.
A mother who carries the weight of our world
Deserves to be cherished every single day,
For she is the silent strength
That fuels the soul of our family.
Even a stranger can bring a smile to our face,
In moments when worries weigh us down—
A simple "thank you" can mean so much

To the one who gently lifts our mood.
It costs us nothing to appreciate,
Yet true and pure words are priceless.
Encourage them, celebrate them, uplift them—
You might be the reason they rise to success.
Appreciation is another form of success,
Let it help others shine and grow—
For when talent is left unseen and unheard,
It slowly fades away from the light.
But self-respect stands above it all,
A silent guard we must never lose—
For where value is not returned,
Presence becomes a quiet misuse.
So learn the strength of stepping back,
Not in anger, not in pride—
But in knowing your worth so well,
You no longer stay where it's denied.

BY
ZAHETHA R
BT ASST ENGLISH
GHS PAPPANTHANGAL
TVM DIST

River



River, oh river, you look so beautiful and grand,
You are a real wonder,
You are a treasure for all
It teaches us many lessons,
It is pure and true,
It Starts from the mountain, and flows to the
ocean

It feeds villages, towns, and people
It is Impartial in its giving,
It nourishes agriculture, brings life to the land,
It feeds animals, birds, insects, trees, and plants,
When we sit by the river,
Our minds are relaxed, our souls are at peace,
we receive its calmness
It flows with a gentle touch, its sound is music to
our mind
It is A treasure to cherish,
Let's keep our rivers clean, it's our duty
By not throwing waste, let us preserve its
beauty

Ramana
GHS Melpattampakkam
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Some conversation needs no words



Feelings are the language of the soul.
Where language ends, the soul begins.
Presence felt in countless ways.
A quiet tear reveals the depth no speech conveys.

All bonds are not built on sound
but it grows in silence.
The soul has language, soft and deep.
It also speaks in moments.
Some conversation needs no words
Feelings are the language of the soul.

Eyes that meet and softly stay.
Let unspoken words find their way.

PATRICIA.Q,
Graduate Teacher,
CreativeWriters,

KTDA Njeru said Kenya must take full advantage of emerging trade policy shifts to boost exports, especially in tea and other agricultural products

KTDA calls for duty-free access as Kenya–China trade forum pushes “Zero Tariffs” agenda

BY WMW
@themkenyatimes

Kenya’s tea sector has called for expanded duty-free access into the Chinese market as stakeholders from Kenya and China met in Nairobi for a high-level trade and investment symposium themed “Zero Tariffs, Infinite Opportunities.”

Speaking during the forum, KTDA Holdings Chairman Enos Njeru said Kenya must take full advantage of emerging trade policy shifts to boost exports, especially in tea and other agricultural products, which remain key foreign exchange earners for the coun-

try.

The symposium, hosted at the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi, brought together senior government officials, private sector players, exporters, and development partners to deepen bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

It was hosted by Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Haiyan alongside Amb. Jane Makori, Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs (Asia and Pacific).

Njeru welcomed China’s ongoing consideration to remove VAT on selected imports, terming it a positive step toward improving the competitiveness of Kenyan exports in

the Chinese market. However, he urged both governments to go further by eliminating import duties on key Kenyan products to fully realize the “zero-tariff” vision.

Here noted that Kenya’s tea industry, alongside coffee, horticulture, and other value-added agricultural products, stands to benefit significantly from improved market access arrangements. According to him, reducing trade barriers would not only increase export volumes but also strengthen farmer incomes and rural livelihoods.

The forum also focused on addressing the persistent trade imbalance between Kenya and China. Stakeholders called for deliberate policy

and commercial interventions to boost Kenyan exports while encouraging increased Chinese investment in manufacturing, agro-processing, infrastructure, and technology transfer within Kenya.

Participants emphasized the need for streamlined customs procedures, improved regulatory frameworks, and stronger quality standards to help Kenyan goods meet international market requirements. They also highlighted the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through capacity building and export readiness programmes.

Digital trade and e-commerce emerged as key areas of opportunity, with stakeholders



KTDA Holdings chairman Enos Njeru (centre) during the session.

noting China’s advanced digital economy as a strategic platform for Kenyan businesses to access wider global markets. Kenyan exporters were encouraged to leverage Chinese online platforms to enhance competitiveness and market reach.

Amb. Makori reaffirmed Kenya’s commitment to strengthening mutually beneficial partnerships and creating an enabling environment for foreign investment. She said Kenya is keen on reforms that expand export opportunities and attract sustainable investment.

Ambassador Guo Haiyan

echoed this sentiment, stating that China remains committed to supporting Kenya’s economic transformation through expanded trade, investment flows, and knowledge exchange.

The symposium concluded with a shared commitment to continued dialogue and practical policy reforms aimed at achieving a more balanced and sustainable trade relationship. Stakeholders expressed optimism that the “Zero Tariffs, Infinite Opportunities” initiative would help unlock new growth pathways and deepen economic ties between the two countries.

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Self-competition Comparison is ancient — Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, the disciples bickering over who was greatest.

How I lost my life to comparison — and how self-competition gave it back



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

There is a thief in your pocket. You carry it everywhere. You check it when you wake up and reach for it before you sleep. It shows you a thousand lives you are not living and calls it a feed. It shows you a thousand people you are not beating and calls it motivation.

We were raised on comparison. We were educated in competition. From the first gold star to the last performance review, someone pointed at another person and said: be like that. So we tried. We are still trying. And we are exhausted, because the race has no finish line and the lane was never ours to begin with.

This is not a self-help listicle. It is a confrontation. We are losing our lives in a contest we never entered, against opponents who are not playing our game, for a prize that does not exist. The only way out is to turn around. The only person worth beating is the one you were yesterday.

Comparison is ancient — Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, the disciples bickering over who was greatest. What changed is the scale. We took a village instinct and fed it the internet. Now you are not measured against your cousin. You are measured against everyone, everywhere, always.

It started early. “Why can’t you be more like your sister?” “Look at how well James is doing.” The lesson landed before we had the words to question it: you are not simply good — you are better than, or worse than. We built our identities on that elevation. If



Self-competition

I am above you, I am safe. If I am below you, I am nothing. Nobody taught us the third option: I am becoming.

Then we confused competition with progress. Competition belongs in games — finite games with the same rules, the same starting line, the same ending. Life has none of those. The person you envy has different parents, different trauma, different privilege, different goals. Using their milestone for your marathon is a category error. Yet we do it daily, letting a stranger’s Monday define our Tuesday.

Then we monetised the scoreboard. Entire industries profit from your inadequacy. If you ever felt truly enough, you would stop buying. So the algorithm serves you the body you do not have, the house you do not own, the

peace you have not found. It is not personal. It is business. A person at war with themselves is a lifetime customer. A person at peace is a closed account.

The costs are heavy and largely invisible. Comparison murders originality — you cannot create while you are copying. It turns love into arithmetic, so that a friend’s promotion feels like your delay and her joy reads as your accusation. You stop celebrating. You mute, unfollow, shrink your world to people you can safely outrank. You call it boundaries. It is exile.

Comparison also rewards the visible and starves the vital. The scoreboard cannot see the night you chose not to quit. It cannot weigh the integrity you kept when lying was easier, or measure the gentleness you chose when rage was

justified. So you optimise for what can be photographed — the physique, not the health; the title, not the competence; the post, not the peace. You become impressive and uninhabitable, even to yourself.

There is, however, another contest. It is not glamorous. It will not trend. It requires no audience. It is you against the person you were.

The question shifts from “Am I better than him?” to “Am I better than me?” Did I listen longer this week than last? Did I choose courage over image? Did I repair a relationship faster than I used to? The opponent is known. The progress is real. You may never be the best in the world.

You can be the best you have ever been — and that is a finish line that actually exists.

Competing with others is scarcity. If you rise, I fall. Competing with your past is abundance. If I grow, no one has to shrink. I can celebrate your win and still do my work. Your light does not cost me darkness. That is how envy dies. That is how community is born.

When you stop borrowing other people’s lives as a measuring stick, you are forced to meet yourself — and that is both terrifying and sacred. Most people never answer the question: what do I want when no one is watching? They live inside someone else’s defini-

tion of enough and die there quietly.

You are not behind. You are simply inside someone else’s story. Step out of it.

There is a version of you from a year ago who would not believe the battles you now survive without flinching. They prayed for the peace you now call ordinary. They begged for the strength you now call your baseline. You walked past your own miracles because you were too busy watching someone else’s.

The race is not out there. It is in here. The trophy is not their life — it is your growth. The finish line is not their failure — it is your peace.

Quit the war you were never meant to fight. Start the work you were born to do.

The mirror has been waiting. And it has been rooting for you all along.

Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza is a writer and columnist. He can be reached at mukphix@gmail.com




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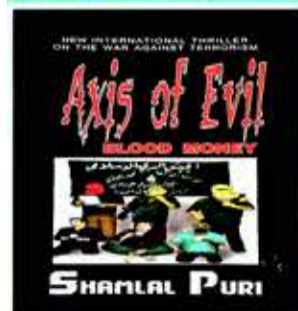
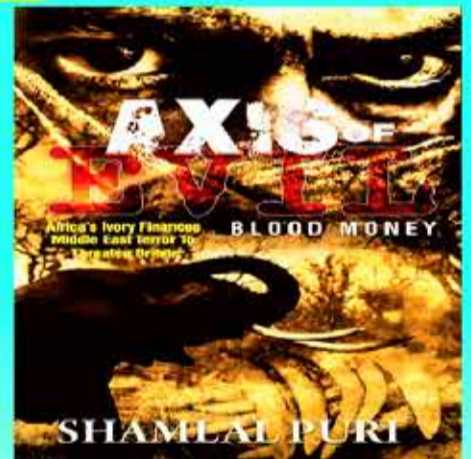
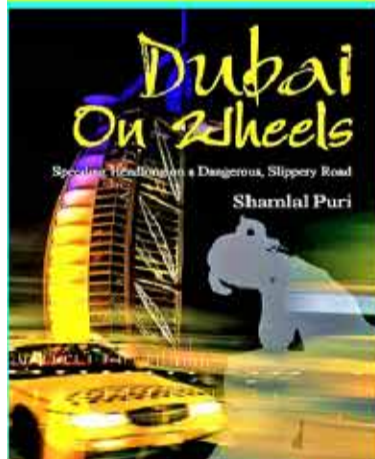
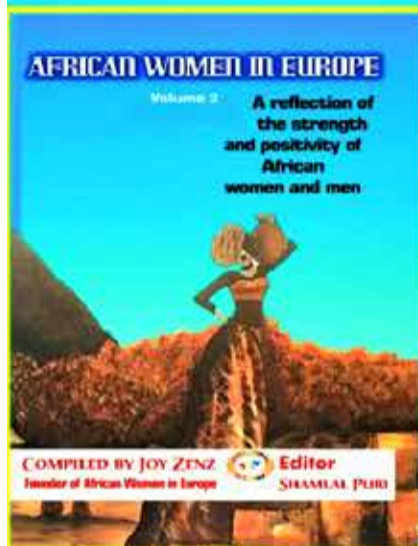
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Tech For entrepreneurs maintaining visibility has become a balancing act between investing in stock and paying for reach.

Pay to be seen: How algorithms lock women traders out of Kisii's digital market

BY Elizabeth Angira
@themkenyatimes



Cynthia Moraa at her shop displaying shoes and clothes as she posts them on social media, where she gets her customers. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

At 6:30 am, even before the sun rises over Kisii town, Cynthia Moraa is already awake and busy with her domestic chores.

She has made breakfast for her children, sent them off to school, and swept the compound, ready to start the day. By 9 am, she is arranging second-hand dresses on a wooden rack outside her small shop near Daraja Mbili market.

In between serving her customers, she pulls out her phone, an old Android she bought three years ago, and scrolls through her Facebook page.

"I have posted three new dresses today," she says, tilting the cracked screen to show bright Ankara prints. "But only 23 people have seen the post."

Last year, Moraa says, a similar post would reach more than 200 people within a few hours. Customers would comment, "Price?" or send a message, and by evening, she would have sold half her stock.

"Nowadays, if I do not boost, it is like I have not posted," she says.

Moraa is among a growing number of women entrepreneurs who have moved their businesses online, especially to Facebook, TikTok and other social media platforms, which offer them a way to reach customers beyond their immediate location. But that opportunity comes with new pressures.

What once felt like a relatively open and low-cost digital marketplace is becoming more competitive, with visibility increasingly shaped by automated systems that determine which posts are seen and which are not.

When the Market Moved Online

During the COVID-19 pandemic, curfews and restrictions on public gatherings meant that fewer people came to open-air markets in Kisii. To keep their businesses going, many women began turning to Facebook groups and Marketplace, posting photos of their goods and taking orders through calls and messages instead of relying only on walk-in

customers.

Jane Nyaboke, who sells eggs and kienyeji chicken in Suneka, created a Facebook page in 2021 and began posting photos of her products.

"Most of my customers found me through Facebook groups," she explains. "Someone would share my post, and another person would call."

At first, the system worked. Nyaboke posted once a day, and orders came in quickly. However, over the past year, she has noticed a change. "I can post in the morning and by evening only 15 people have seen it," she says. "Unless I pay."

Her page insights show the difference clearly. Monthly reach dropped from around 8,000 views in mid-2024 to about 2,500 in January this year.

"In fact, I am posting more, but reaching fewer people," she says.

Posting regularly costs money. Buying data bundles is expensive, and short videos, favoured by algorithms, use more data than photos. When the network is slow, uploads fail, forcing her to try again and spend more data.

For entrepreneurs like her, maintaining visibility has become a balancing act between investing in stock and paying for reach.

"If I had an extra Sh2,000, I would buy more chicks, not boost posts. But if I do not boost, the chicks will remain unsold," she says.

How Visibility Works

Facebook's ranking system is designed to prioritise content that people are likely to interact with. Posts that receive quick reactions, comments, or shares are shown to more people, while those that do not attract early engagement are shown to fewer users. Sellers who respond to messages quickly and post regularly are therefore more likely to reach more customers, because the platform favours active accounts.

Digital marketing consultant Elijah Kamanda says timing matters.

"If people react or reply soon after a post goes up, it is shown to more users. If there is little activity, it is shown to fewer people."

Buyers also tend to trust posts they see repeatedly, which means content

that is shown more often is more likely to attract attention and sales.

Writing posts, replying to messages, and managing responses requires time. For many women entrepreneurs, that first hour after posting often passes while they are busy offline with other responsibilities. Between preparing meals, tending to children, and serving customers, responding immediately is not always possible. Economists describe this as time poverty—the lack of free time due to unpaid domestic and care work.

According to Ruth Mogaka, a gender and economics expert, because women are responsible for most domestic work, they can only engage online later in the day.

"By then, the engagement window has already passed," she says. "The system rewards consistency, but consistency requires time."

"Time is the biggest problem. I usually check my phone properly at night, around 9 pm," Moraa says. "If I had someone to help at home, maybe I would post more."

Because she cannot respond quickly, her posts receive little early engagement and are shown to fewer people.

This creates a hidden disadvantage. While algorithms do not know someone's gender, they tend to favour patterns of use that are easier for people with fewer caregiving responsibilities.

"Sometimes I see a message three hours later," Nyaboke says. "By then, the customer has already bought somewhere else."

The Visibility Tax

To increase visibility, many traders turn to paid promotion.

Boosting a post can cost as little as Sh500 for a few days of reach, but even that amount is significant for small businesses.

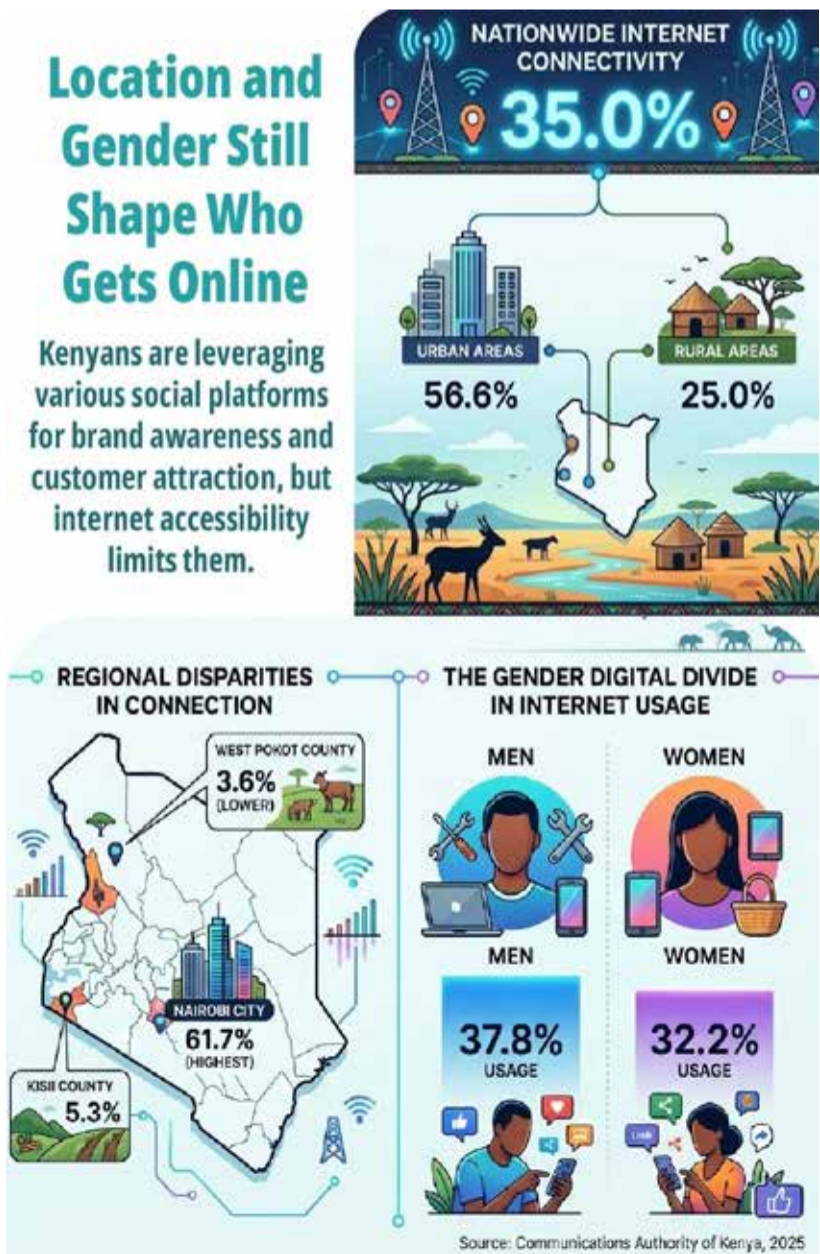
"I boosted with Sh1,000 in December," says Agnes Kerubo, a baker and caterer. "The reach went up to 12,000, and I received many enquiries."

However, once the promotion ended, her reach dropped again.

"It felt like people were seeing my page because I paid," she says.

Kerubo's posts once reached up to 250 people organically, but now reach as few as 30 to 60 unless promoted. In one case, a post seen by 42 people led to only a few enquiries, but after she paid Sh800 to boost it, the items sold out.

Kerubo now spends between Sh2,000 and Sh3,000 a month on ad-



Tech For entrepreneurs maintaining visibility has become a balancing act between investing in stock and paying for reach.

Pay to be seen: How algorithms lock women traders out of Kisii's digital market

Contd from page 18

vertising during busy periods. Kamanda cautions against blaming algorithms alone. Sales also depend on competition, pricing, product quality, and seasonal demand.

“Organic reach has declined over time,” he says. “Business pages have to work harder or pay.”

For women traders with limited capital, paying feels less like an option and more like a requirement.

Competing on Presentation

Visibility is also influenced by how posts look. Clear photos, bright lighting, and well-edited videos tend to attract more attention. Some sellers use high-end smartphones or hire social media managers.

Moraa, like many other small businesswomen, does not have these options.

“My camera is not clear,” she says. “Sometimes the dresses look dull.”

She says her posts perform better when she borrows a better phone.

Producing high-quality posts requires time and resources. Kerubo starts baking cakes early in the morning and spends her afternoons delivering orders. Editing content at night is exhausting.

“You see big pages posting five times a day and replying instantly,” she says. “For me, that is impossible.”

Risks and Pressures

Women entrepreneurs also face challenges beyond visibility. Nyaboke says some men send inappropriate messages disguised as customer enquiries.

Sometimes she blocks them. At other times, she ignores them, which can affect how often she responds to messag-



Ruth Mogaka, a gender and economics expert, explains the importance of posting consistently online. | Photo: Elizabeth Angira

es on her page.

Kerubo has experienced account restrictions that stopped her from posting for two days.

At the same time, unreliable internet connections and the cost of data make it difficult

to stay active consistently.

“When bundles are depleted, I stop posting,” Nyaboke says.

Digital platforms have made it easier for small businesses to reach customers beyond

their immediate location, but not everyone benefits the same way.

Those with money can pay for ads. Those with time can post often and respond quickly. Those with better phones can produce clearer photos and videos. Many others struggle to be seen.

Because posts that attract more activity are shown to more people, entrepreneurs who can maintain that activity gain more visibility.

Adapting to the System

To reach more people, women entrepreneurs use different strategies. Nyaboke posts in several Facebook groups,

Kerubo works with other sellers to promote each other's posts, and Moraa runs small giveaways to encourage engagement.

Kamanda says clearer explanations of how posts are ranked could help entrepreneurs adjust how they use these platforms. He also points to the cost of data and unreliable internet as barriers. As dusk settles over Kisii, Moraa finally finds a moment to rest. She scrolls through her notifications.

Two new messages. One confirmed sale.

She checks her latest post, a red dress photographed against a plain white wall.

“Seen by 38 people,” the

screen reads.

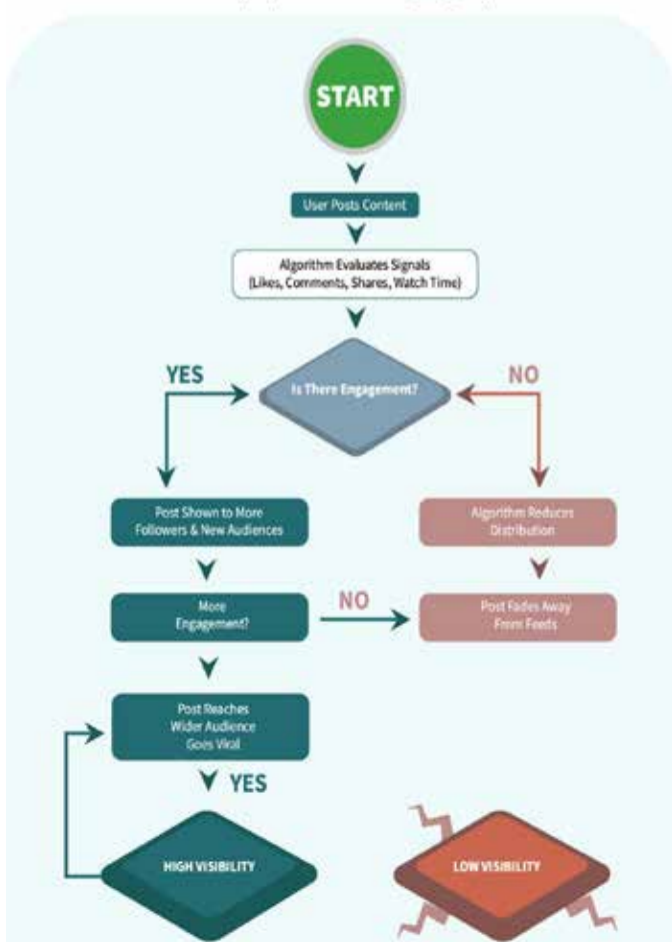
In the past, visibility depended on attracting customers in a physical location. Today, it depends on systems that reward speed, engagement, and, in many cases, payment.

For women entrepreneurs balancing business and household responsibilities, the challenge is finding a way to remain visible enough to earn from their online presence.

This article was produced as part of the Gender+AI Reporting Fellowship, with support from the Africa Women's Journalism Project (AWJP) in partnership with DW Akademie. The journalist used AI tools as research aids to review and summarise relevant policy and research documents and extract key statistics. All analysis, editorial decisions and final wording were done by the reporter, in line with the Mt Kenya Times' editorial standards.

How algorithms penalise women traders

Algorithms do not know who is a woman or a man, it rewards behaviour patterns that are easier for people with fewer caregiving responsibilities.



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First convoy of DR Congo refugees return from Burundi, amid cautious hope

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

A column of buses idled at dusk on the Burundian side of the border, their windows framing silhouettes of families pressed among piled belongings.

After months in exile, they were finally heading home.

Last Thursday, about 470 refugees crossed back into the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), marking the first organized return from Burundi under a voluntary repatriation program facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The convoy, which departed from the Busuma refugee site in Burundi's Ruyigi Province, entered the DRC through the Kavimvira border post before proceeding toward Uvira, a lakeside city in South Kivu Province. The operation was conducted under arrangements between the two countries, with coordination and logistical support from humanitarian agencies. For many aboard, the journey means both relief and uncertainty. "Now I am returning home," said Adolphe Ndimbo, one of the Congolese returnees. "I feel very calm and grateful to the organizations that made this possible. But many of us have come back with nothing. We don't even know where we will sleep."

The returnees are among tens of thousands who fled escalating clashes in eastern DRC between government forces and armed groups, including the March 23 Movement rebel group. The violence, which intensified



Buses with Congolese refugees returning from Burundi on board are seen in Uvira, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on Thursday last week.

in 2025, displaced large numbers of civilians, many of whom sought refuge in Burundi and other neighboring countries. According to the UNHCR, Burundi has hosted more than 250,000 Congolese refugees in successive waves since the onset of the crisis. As of late March 2026, about 109,000 remained in the country, including nearly 67,000 at the Busuma site alone. Nearly 20,000 refugees have so far registered for voluntary return, the UNHCR said Thursday, with assistance packages planned to support reintegration upon arrival. At the border, buses paused as trucks assembled on the Congolese side under the supervision of humanitarian teams. By nightfall, the convoy moved inland under escort, heading toward a transit center in Kavimvira, where returnees would stay temporarily before gradually heading for their home areas.

Local officials, however, emphasized that the operation remains cautious in scope. "This first convoy includes around 468 people from 141 households," said Prosperre Abiyo, head of the Congolese National

Commission for Refugees Office in Uvira. "Initially, we planned for 1,000 returnees, but due to limited reception capacity, we reduced the number. Only those from relatively stable areas are being allowed to return for now." While some returnees would go to nearby areas such as Fizi, also located in South Kivu, authorities remain hesitant to authorize movement to other places still considered insecure. The conditions many refugees endured in exile underscored the urgency of return, even amid lingering risks. Their return, though tentative, reflects a fragile sense of hope -- that conditions in parts of eastern DRC may be stabilizing enough to allow displaced communities to begin rebuilding their lives. "Life was very difficult," said Alice Furaha, another returnee. "It was an environment we were not used to. People were many, and it was hard to find toilets or even water. Some people began to die." "We are very happy to return home," she said.

White House Correspondents' dinner shooting suspect charged with attempted assassination

BY Xinhua News Agency
@themtkenyatimes

Cole Tomas Allen, the suspect in Saturday night's shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, was charged on Monday with attempting to assassinate U.S. President Donald Trump.

On Monday, Allen made his first court appearance at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia since the shooting. He was charged with three criminal counts, namely, attempting to assassinate the president, interstate transportation of a firearm during a violent crime. The prosecutor said Allen had a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun and a .38 caliber pistol, and was also carrying with him three knives and other dangerous paraphernalia when he was arrested, CNBC reported. According to law enforcement authorities, Allen, 31, traveled from California to Washington, D.C. by train and checked into the Washington Hilton hotel with weapons before the attack. "On April 21 of this year, he traveled by train from Los Angeles to Chicago and then from Chicago to Washington, D.C. On April 24, he arrived in Washington, D.C. at approximately one o'clock in the afternoon and checked into the Washington Hilton," Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said at a press conference Monday afternoon. "Approximately at 8:40 on the night of April 25, Allen approached the security checkpoint on the terrace level of the hotel, which is again a floor above where the dinner was taking place. He ran through the magnetometer holding a long gun," Blanche continued.

The acting attorney general



Cole Tomas Allen

also noted that the investigation is ongoing. "It's not complete. A lot of the information that the media is hearing through leaks or sources, some of it is true, some of it is not true," he said. Allen reportedly sent an email to his relatives shortly before the shooting, in which he wrote that Trump administration officials were "targets, prioritized from highest-ranking to lowest." He also wrote: "I walk in with multiple weapons and not a single person there considers the possibility that I could be a threat." Live footage of the event showed that the suspect attempted to rush a security checkpoint and exchanged gunfire with law enforcement, injuring a U.S. Secret Service officer. Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, Vice President JD Vance and all Cabinet members were evacuated from the dinner

after the shooting. Attendees were seen on the live broadcast ducking around their tables and taking cover. Shortly after the security incident, U.S. Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi wrote on X that the agency was investigating "a shooting incident near the main magnetometer screening area" at the dinner, in coordination with the Metropolitan Police Department. Political violence has been frequent in the United States in recent years. Trump has been the target of multiple assassination attempts and death threats during both his presidential campaign and his time in office. The most prominent example is the July 2024 assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which he narrowly survived while campaigning for president.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Curated realities: How social media is warping young people's sense of self



Every scroll through social media looks the same: lavish holidays, designer clothes, flawless bodies, and effortless wealth. For millions of young people, this digital parade has stopped being entertainment. It has become a standard — and one they feel increasingly desperate to meet.

The problem is that almost none of it is real. Influencers and content creators package their lives into highlight reels. Debt, failure, self-doubt, and ordinary Tuesday afternoons never make the feed. What remains is a carefully constructed illusion — and to a young person still forming their identity, it reads as the norm.

The psychological damage is measurable. Studies by the American Psychological Association have linked heavy social media use among adolescents to rising rates of anxiety, depression, and poor self-image. A university student struggling to cover tuition fees watches a peer post poolside from Zanzibar and concludes, quietly and devastatingly, that they are falling behind. The comparison is unfair. It is also relentless.

This is not a peripheral issue. It sits at the centre of a mental health crisis quietly unfolding among African youth, where social media penetration is rising rapidly but media literacy is not keeping pace. In Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria, smartphone ownership among young people between 18 and 35 has

surged in the past decade, according to GSMA data. With it has come unfiltered exposure to global aspirational culture, projected daily into the pockets of young people navigating economic hardship with very few safety nets.

The financial consequences are equally serious. Young people are taking loans, liquidating savings, and in some cases turning to fraudulent schemes to sustain a lifestyle the internet told them was normal. The pressure to appear successful has proved stronger, for many, than financial common sense. This is not weakness. It is what happens when an entire generation is handed a distorted mirror and told it is a window.

Social life has shifted too. Authentic connection is quietly giving way to performance. Moments are documented rather than lived. Self-worth migrates from internal conviction to external metrics — likes, views, follower counts — that shift hourly and mean nothing lasting. Friendship becomes content. Vulnerability becomes a brand.

There are, however, signs of resistance. A growing number of creators are choosing honesty over aesthetics, sharing financial setbacks, mental health struggles, and the unglamorous mechanics of building a life. Campaigns around digital literacy and online authenticity are gaining ground in schools and universities across the conti-

nent. These efforts matter, even if they are still outpaced by the machinery of curated perfection.

Real change, though, requires more than individual good faith. Platforms bear responsibility for the environments they design and the content they reward. Algorithms that amplify aspiration and suppress authenticity are not neutral — they are choices, and they carry consequences. Regulators, educators, and parents must treat social media's psychological impact with the same seriousness they give to other public health concerns.

Young people, for their part, deserve the tools to push back. Critical thinking about online content — understanding that a polished post is a product, not a life — should be taught as a core skill, not treated as a footnote.

The digital world is powerful. It connects, informs, and inspires in ways previous generations could not have imagined. But it was never meant to be a measuring stick for human worth. Real life is slower, messier, and considerably less photogenic — and that is not a failure. That is simply what living looks like when no one is watching.

It is time young people were told so, plainly and often.

By Oliver Ouma | Rongo University

Kongowea Level 4 hospital: A health facility Mombasa has long needed

By Grace Birya

Mombasa County has launched construction of a Level 4 hospital in Kongowea, bringing a long-overdue medical facility to one of the coast's most densely populated and underserved urban communities.

The announcement is significant. Kongowea is best known as the site of one of East Africa's busiest open-air markets, a commercial engine that sustains thousands of livelihoods daily. But behind the trade and traffic is a residential community that has for years lacked a fully equipped public hospital. Residents have had little choice but to travel to distant or overcrowded facilities, adding cost and delay to what are often urgent medical situations. That gap is now being addressed — and not before time.

In Kenya's tiered health system, a Level 4 hospital occupies a pivotal role. It provides outpatient and inpatient care, maternity services, diagnostics, emergency treatment and minor surgical procedures. Crucially, it sits between the dispensaries that handle routine ailments and the major referral hospitals that manage complex cases. Done well, it absorbs the middle load — the patients who are too sick for a clinic but do not need a national referral centre. That function, in a county like Mombasa where referral hospitals have long operated beyond capacity, is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Mombasa's existing public hospitals have absorbed patients from multiple sub-regions for years, producing the overcrowding, extended waiting times and stretched resources that have become grimly familiar to residents. The Kongowea facility is designed to redistribute that demand, bringing care closer to the communities that generate it. This is precisely the logic that underpins Kenya's devolution framework, which transferred health service responsibility to county govern-



ments under the 2010 Constitution. Counties were handed both the mandate and the opportunity to build locally relevant solutions. The Kongowea project is a direct product of that mandate.

The planned facility will include outpatient and inpatient wards, a maternity unit, laboratory and diagnostic services, and emergency care. The maternity component deserves particular attention. Access to skilled maternal care remains one of the most reliable indicators of a health system's reach and equity. Reducing the distance between expectant mothers and qualified care saves lives — a fact backed by decades of public health data across sub-Saharan Africa.

The economic ripple effects are worth noting too. Construction will generate employment at multiple skill levels, and an operational hospital of this scale will require doctors, nurses, administrators, and support staff. Pharmacies, transport operators and small traders typically cluster around major health facilities, creating a secondary economy that outlasts the building phase.

None of this is automatic, however. Kenya has too many examples of completed infrastructure that never quite functioned as intended — facilities opened without sufficient staff, equipment, or drugs; wards that stand but do not serve. Construction is the beginning of the process, not the proof of

its success. Mombasa County will need to follow through with consistent funding, transparent procurement, qualified personnel, and a management framework that can sustain operations long after the ribbon is cut.

Governance matters here as much as cement. Public trust in infrastructure projects of this kind is built through visible progress, clear timelines, and responsible use of public funds. Communities that have waited years for a hospital are not interested in groundbreaking ceremonies. They are watching to see whether the doors open, and whether the care inside is worth the wait.

If Kongowea Level 4 Hospital is delivered with the same decisiveness with which it was announced, it will do more than ease pressure on Mombasa's strained health system. It will demonstrate that devolution, at its best, means something concrete: that a government can look at where its people live, understand what they need, and build it.

That would be a result worth every shilling spent.

Grace Birya is a communication and public relations student.

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *The American sprint star delivers a commanding 100m–200m sweep at Nyayo and says the country has won her heart

Gabby Thomas burns to Kip Keino double, then falls for Kenya



Gabby Thomas at Maasai Mara

By **Martin Weche**

American sprint star Gabby Thomas stormed to a 100m–200m double at the Kip Keino Classic in Nairobi on Friday night, then declared that Kenya had already captured her heart long before the finishing line.

Thomas, one of the most compelling sprinters of her generation, clocked 11.01 seconds to take the 100m before returning under the Nyayo National Stadium floodlights to power home in 21.89 in the 200m, completing a dominant sweep at the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold meeting that left little doubt about the shape she is in heading into the season.

“I’m happy. I’m looking great, I feel great about it — stronger and

stronger,” she said after crossing the line in the 200m, her voice carrying the quiet confidence of an athlete who knows something is building. “I love the people here, I love the energy.”

The Olympic 200m bronze medallist from the Paris Games was making her first visit to Kenya, and what she found clearly moved her. Between sessions and races, Thomas carved out time for a safari to the Masai Mara, and the experience left a visible impression. “We went on safari in the Masai Mara,” she said, smiling broadly. “It’s beautiful here. I have been working hard ahead of the season, and coming to Kenya has been the perfect start.”

That sense of purpose has been a thread running through Thomas’s preparations. The Harvard

graduate, who combines athletic brilliance with a disciplined, methodical approach to her craft, chose the Kip Keino Classic specifically to sharpen her race rhythm before the Diamond League circuit and the heavier demands of the competitive summer ahead. Nothing about her presence in Nairobi was accidental.

“Botswana is next, and then as many races as I can,” she said, outlining a programme built on momentum. “I’m just taking care of what I can control.”

It is a philosophy that appears to be working. The double victory at Nyayo, delivered with authority rather than desperation, sent a clear message to rivals monitoring the early-season form guides. Thomas is not easing herself in. She arrived in Nairobi sharp, and

she leaves sharper.

What made the occasion notable beyond the times, however, was the warmth between athlete and crowd. Nairobi’s athletics faithful, long schooled in recognising genuine class, responded to Thomas with the kind of sustained, vocal support that transforms a good night into a memorable one.

“I have felt the support from day one,” she said. “The crowd, the atmosphere — it pushes you. Kenya’s energy is unmatched.”

For a nation that has given the world so many champions of its own, there was something fitting about watching a world-class performer arrive not merely to compete, but to be changed by the place itself. Thomas came to race. She is leaving with something more.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Croatia's talisman goes under the knife but his coach has no doubt he will be fit to lead the side at this summer's tournament

Modric set for World Cup return after surgery



Luka Modric

By **Martin Weche**

Luka Modric has undergone successful surgery on a fractured cheekbone and Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic says he is confident the veteran captain will be fit to lead his country at this summer's FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

The 40-year-old midfielder, who joined AC Milan after leaving Real Madrid, suffered what the club described as a "complex, multi-fragment fracture of the left zygomatic bone" following a collision with Juventus midfielder Manuel Locatelli during Sunday's goalless Serie A draw at the San Siro. Milan moved swiftly to reassure supporters and the Croatian football federation, confirming that the procedure had been "completely successful" and wishing Modric

"a speedy recovery ahead of the FIFA World Cup."

For a player of Modric's stature — a Ballon d'Or winner, a six-time Champions League champion and the heartbeat of one of Europe's most resilient international sides — the timing is deeply unfortunate. Croatia open their World Cup campaign against England on 17 June, just weeks away, and the tournament itself kicks off on 11 June. Every day of recovery will count.

Yet Dalic, who has built much of Croatia's tactical identity around Modric's extraordinary reading of the game, struck a measured but resolute tone when he spoke publicly about his captain's condition. "I have been talking to Luka and wished him a successful surgery and a quality and speedy recovery," the coach said.

"I am convinced that he will do everything to be ready for the World Cup, and we will provide full support."

He went further, leaving little room for doubt about his faith in the player's character and physical resilience. "I am confident that the recovery will go according to plan and that Luka, as team captain, will lead us at another major competition this summer," Dalic said.

The injury could not have come at a more delicate moment for Milan either. The club are third in Serie A on 67 points with four matches remaining, locked in a tense race for a Champions League berth. Fourth-placed Juventus trail them by three points, with Como and Roma a further three points back. Modric, by all indications, will miss the re-

mainder of that campaign — a significant blow to a side still searching for the consistency that has eluded them across the season.

Still, the broader football world will be watching his recovery with far greater interest than any club position. At 40, Modric remains a singular figure in the sport — a player who has defied every reasonable expectation about age and decline, continuing to perform at the highest level with a composure and intelligence that younger midfielders spend careers trying to replicate.

Croatia have always punched above their weight at major tournaments, and much of that has been because of Modric. His teammates, his coach and an entire nation will be counting on him to do it once more.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



A nation lives through its language



By: Sul-tonova Marjona Hoshim

@themkenyatimes

Language is not merely a tool of communication; it is the living soul of a nation. It carries within it the echoes of history, the depth of culture, and the identity of generations. Wherever a language exists, a nation breathes. And when a language fades, the spirit of that nation begins to weaken. Thus, it is rightly said: a nation lives as long as its language lives.

From ancient times, language has served as the foundation upon which civilizations were built. It preserves traditions, conveys values, and reflects the worldview of a people. Through language, stories are told, wisdom is passed down, and collective memory is safeguarded. Without it, cultural continuity would collapse, leaving behind a fragmented identity.

Every word in a language carries a unique cultural meaning. Idioms, proverbs, and expressions are not random; they are shaped by centuries of experience and perception. For instance, the way a nation describes nature, emotions, or relationships reveals its inner philosophy. Therefore, language is not only a medium of speech but also a mirror of national consciousness.

In the modern world, globalization and technological advancement have created both opportunities and threats for languages. On one hand, languages spread beyond borders, gaining new speakers and influence. On the other hand, dominant languages often overshadow smaller ones, leading to linguistic erosion. When young generations neglect their mother tongue in favor of more "global" languages, they risk losing an essential part of their identity. However, preserving a language does not mean rejecting others. Multilingualism can enrich individuals and societies alike. The key lies in maintaining balance: embracing global communication while remaining rooted in one's native linguistic heritage. A strong nation is not one that isolates itself but one that confidently preserves its uniqueness while engaging with the world.

Education plays a crucial role in this process. Schools and universi-



ties must not only teach language as a subject but also instill respect and pride for it. Literature, poetry, and folklore should be actively promoted, as they embody the aesthetic and emotional richness of a language. When young people read and create in their native language, they become active participants in its survival and development.

Moreover, language is deeply connected to national independence and unity. Throughout history, many nations have fought to protect their linguistic identity as a symbol of free-

dom. Language becomes a unifying force, bringing people together under shared values and mutual understanding. It strengthens social bonds and fosters a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, language is far more than words and grammar; it is the heartbeat of a nation. To protect a language is to protect history, culture, and identity. As long as a language lives in the hearts and minds of its people, the nation itself remains alive and resilient. Therefore, every individual carries a responsibility: to speak, cherish, and pass on

their language to future generations. Only then can the timeless truth endure — a nation lives through its language.

Sul-tonova Marjona Hoshim qizi was born on June 29, 2007. She graduated from Secondary School No. 217, located in the 20th quarter of Chilanzar district, as well as from the Academic Lyceum of the Uzbek Language and Literature University named after Alisher Navoi in Yak-kasaray district.