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Diplomacy Among the flagship agreements is the rehabilitation and modernization of the Nairobi Commuter Rail project valued at KSh 12.5 billion.

Kenya, France seal 11 deals before Africa summit

Kenya and France have signed 11 bilateral agreements aimed at strengthening cooperation across key sectors including transport, energy, digital technology, agriculture, climate action, education, and healthcare.

The agreements were signed yesterday at State House Nairobi following bilateral talks between President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, who is in Kenya ahead of the Africa Forward Summit set to begin tomorrow.

Among the flagship agreements is the rehabilitation and modernization of the Nairobi Commuter Rail project valued at KSh 12.5 billion. President Ruto said the project will play a central role in Kenya's urban transport transformation by expanding and upgrading commuter rail corridors connecting Nairobi to satellite towns such as Syokimau, Embakasi, Ruiru, and Kikuyu.



Page 6 *President William Ruto and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron at State House, Nairobi yesterday.*

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Africa Forward Summit 2026 opens in Nairobi to boost investment and innovation partnerships

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

Nairobi is hosting hundreds of global leaders, including heads of state, business executives, investors, and policymakers, for the launch of the Africa Forward Summit 2026, co-hosted by Kenya and France. The two-day high-level meeting, held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre and the University of Nairobi, aims to unlock investment opportunities across Africa in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, agriculture, health systems, and digital infrastructure. Organisers expect over 30 African heads of state and more than 4,000 delegates to attend.

The summit, co-chaired by President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, marks a shift in France's Africa engagement strategy, focusing on economic cooperation and innovation rather than security-led partnerships. It brings together discussions on energy transition, green industrialisation, sustainable agriculture, the blue economy, regional security, and reform of the international financial system, with an emphasis on turning ideas into bankable projects.

President Ruto described Africa as being at a defining moment, stressing the continent's need to attract investment and drive innovation. Macron emphasized a renewed partnership based on shared investment and responsibility.

The summit includes a major business forum at the University of Nairobi with over 2,500 participants engaging in sector-focused sessions and investment matchmaking. It is expected to conclude with the Nairobi Declaration, outlining commitments and implementation frameworks for future Africa-France cooperation.

Hundreds of the delegates, including the presidents arrived in Nairobi over the weekend where they were received by senior government officials. Some held bilateral talks with President Ruto.



Editor's Desk

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Residents of Tinderet Sub-county have launched voluntary road rehabilitation efforts to support government initiatives after heavy rains damaged key roads. Communities in Songhor-Soba, Tinderet Ward, Kaplamai and Meteitei areas have been gravelling roads, clearing drainage systems, filling potholes and constructing temporary water channels to improve transport. Farmers, boda boda riders, women and youth groups joined the exercise to ease movement of people, milk and farm produce to markets. Residents said poor roads had increased transport costs, delayed access to schools and hospitals, and reduced incomes. They urged county and national governments to speed up rehabilitation by providing gravel, culverts and maintenance equipment.



Three artisanal miners are feared dead after a goldmine collapsed in Ogago A village, North Sakwa Ward, Bondo Sub-county, on Friday evening. The victims, from neighbouring Rarieda Sub-county, were trapped when the mine shaft they were working in caved in and buried them alive. Resident Boaz Ajuaga said the shaft walls collapsed again at around 3am as rescue efforts were underway to save his brother. Area MCA Oliver Arika, who visited the scene, confirmed that local leaders led by Speaker George Okode had mobilized resources to support the rescue operation. Relatives appealed to county and national governments for assistance in recovering the trapped miners.

Former PCEA Moderator Dr David Githii and Apostle Peter Gitahi of Royal Priesthood Church of Christ in Nyeri yesterday led other clergymen during an interdenominational prayers meeting at Gatumbiro area in Tetu constituency. The clergy decried various vices among them high incidents of suicide, drugs and substance abuse, high crime rates among others in the area and prayed for the area from such calamities. The prayers session that also included cleansing and dedicating to God, some areas that have been hit hard by devilish activities.



Stakeholders from different government departments and representatives of older people at the Machakos Institute for the blind, during a three-day stakeholder validation forum on developing a booklet that will create awareness for older people.



As campaigns intensify ahead of the Porro Ward by-election in Samburu West Constituency, scheduled for May 14, 2026, UDA Secretary General Senator Hassan Omar Hassan stepped up efforts to rally support for the party's candidate, Daniel Lolngojine. Omar said electing Lolngojine would strengthen President William Ruto's inclusive development agenda and advance the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), aimed at empowering minority and marginalized communities. He urged residents to vote in large numbers to demonstrate confidence in the ruling party. The campaign tour was attended by Digital Health Agency CEO Anthony Lenaiyara, UDA Executive Director Nicodemus Bore, Director of Political Affairs Rob Jillo, and several grassroots party officials supporting the campaign.



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Diplomacy The agreements were signed yesterday at State House Nairobi following bilateral talks between President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron

Kenya, France sign 11 strategic deals ahead of Africa Forward Summit

BY PCS

@themkenyaintimes

Kenya and France have signed 11 bilateral agreements aimed at strengthening cooperation across key sectors including transport, energy, digital technology, agriculture, climate action, education, and healthcare.

The agreements were signed yesterday at State House Nairobi following bilateral talks between President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, who is in Kenya ahead of the Africa Forward Summit set to begin tomorrow.

Among the flagship agreements is the rehabilitation and modernization of the Nairobi Commuter Rail project valued at KSh 12.5 billion. President Ruto said the project will play a central role in Kenya's urban transport transformation by expanding and upgrading commuter rail corridors connecting Nairobi to satellite towns such as Syokimau, Embakasi, Ruiru, and Kikuyu.

The President added that ongoing extensions, including the Riruta-Ngong line, will further enhance connectivity across the Nairobi metropolitan region.

Kenya and France also signed an agreement establishing a joint venture to develop and finance logistics and port infrastructure worth approximately KSh 104 billion, a move expected to boost trade and regional integration.

In agriculture, the two countries agreed to facilitate the

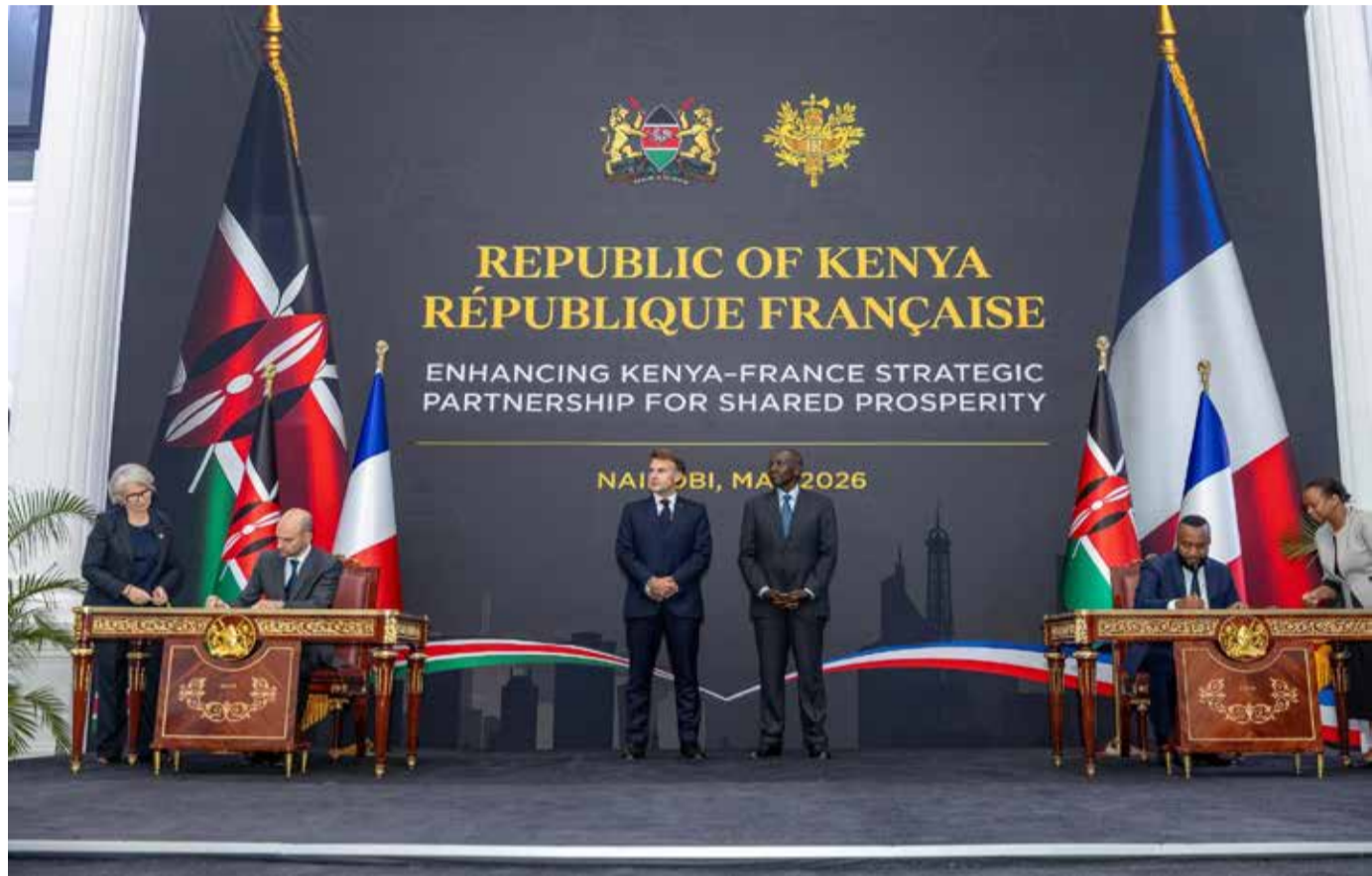
purchase and promotion of Kenya's premium purple tea varieties in French retail markets, creating opportunities for value addition and improved earnings for farmers.

On digital transformation, President Ruto said Kenya is keen on leveraging French expertise in areas such as digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data systems, digital public services, and artificial intelligence. He noted that projects such as Konza Technopolis and the Digital Superhighway are positioning Kenya as a leading technology hub in East and Central Africa.

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”



The two leaders also discussed cooperation in the development of nuclear energy, with Kenya seeking to benefit from France's advanced expertise to help achieve the country's target of generating 10,000 megawatts of electricity.

Additional agreements covered the blue economy and fisheries, financing for the raising of Masinga Dam, modernization of climate and weather services, production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel in Kenya, agri-food systems transformation, and the expansion of the Kipeto Wind Energy Development Project

President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron by an additional 100 megawatts at a cost of KSh 32.5 billion.

President Ruto further emphasized the importance of improving air connectivity between Kenya and France to support growing trade, tourism, and business relations. He also highlighted enhanced cooperation in digital health, laboratory systems, epidemic preparedness, and real-time disease surveillance.

In education, the leaders welcomed deeper collaboration in STEM and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Ruto announced that the KSh 5.6 billion University of

Nairobi Engineering and Science Complex project is now entering the implementation phase.

On global matters, the two presidents reaffirmed their commitment to climate action, multilateralism, and reforming the international financial system to ensure fair financing access for developing countries.

President Ruto said hosting the Africa Forward Summit in Kenya, the first non-Franco-phone African country to do so in over 50 years, demonstrates growing ties between Kenya and France and signals a shift toward a more ac-

tion-oriented partnership. "We are not looking East or West. We are looking forward," Ruto said.

President Macron said France is committed to expanding investment and partnerships across Africa and pledged support for reforms to the African financial infrastructure through collaboration with the African Development Bank.

He also clarified that hosting the summit in Kenya does not sideline West African nations, noting that leaders from the region will participate in the summit.

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Murder “Church ministers are no longer safe. There is clear negligence in how this matter is being handled, and it sends a dangerous message that such crimes can go unpunished,” Gachagua said.

Gachagua faults government over clergy killing, demands swift justice in Rev. Ndumia case

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

Former Deputy President and DCP Party leader Rigathi Gachagua has sharply criticized the government over what he termed as a slow and inadequate response to the killing of Reverend Julius Ndumia, a PCEA minister who was murdered at a church in Nakuru, sparking outrage among religious leaders and the wider public.

Speaking during the memorial service held at PCEA Macedonia Church in Ongata Rongai, Kajiado County,



Rigathi Gachagua signing the condolences book yesterday | Photo: Courtesy



DCP leader addressing faithful at PCEA Macedonia yesterday.

Gachagua vowed to mobilize church leaders across the country to demand accountability from security agencies, stating that they intend to seek an urgent meeting with the Inspector General of Police.



Gachagua expressed deep concern over what he described as growing insecurity targeting clergy and places of worship. He accused the government of failing to take firm and urgent action to apprehend those responsible for the killing, warning that continued silence from authorities risks emboldening criminals to carry out further attacks on church leaders.

“Church ministers are no longer safe. There is clear negligence in how this matter is being handled, and it sends a dangerous message that such crimes can go unpunished,” Gachagua said.

He went further to allege that the government has shown hostility towards the church, pointing to what he described as a pattern of unresolved attacks against religious institutions. According to him, repeated incidents involving clergy have not been adequately addressed, raising concerns among church leaders about their safety and freedom to operate without fear.

Gachagua vowed to mobilize church leaders across the country to demand accountability from security agencies, stating that they intend to seek an urgent meeting with the Inspector General of Police. He warned that if justice is not delivered promptly, religious leaders would escalate their engagement to ensure the matter receives national attention and decisive action.

He also called on the police to allow the church to release CCTV footage related to the incident, arguing that public access to the evidence could help in identifying the attack-

ers and speeding up investigations.

“We must not be denied the truth. The congregation and the public deserve to see what happened so that justice can be served,” he said.

Several leaders who attended the memorial service echoed Gachagua’s sentiments, calling for swift and transparent investigations into the killing. Kajiado North Member of Parliament Onesmus Ngogoyo and Kajiado Senator Seki Ole Lenku both urged security agencies to intensify efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice, noting that the killing had shaken confidence among worshippers and local communities.

The leaders emphasized that churches must remain safe spaces and called on the government to prioritize the protection of religious institutions. They further urged unity among leaders and security agencies to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The killing of Reverend Ndumia has continued to draw strong reactions from religious groups and political leaders, with growing calls for urgent reforms in security responses to crimes targeting clergy and places of worship.

Gachagua was accompanied by several former, current and aspiring political leaders from different parts of the country.

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Politics Mararo said schools must go beyond academic excellence and focus on nurturing disciplined, talented and socially responsible learners capable of transforming society

Nick Mararo deepens grassroots push as he blends education, youth empowerment and community development

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

Nyeri senatorial aspirant and businessman Nick Mararo has intensified his grassroots engagements across Nyeri County, positioning himself as a development-focused leader keen on education, youth empowerment and community transformation ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Over the weekend, Mararo attended a Thanksgiving Mass at St. Bridget of Sweden Karemeno Secondary School in Kieni constituency following an invitation by school board member and his former Nyeri High School classmate Bernard Mukundi.

Speaking during the event, Mararo said schools must go beyond academic excellence and focus on nurturing disciplined, talented and socially responsible learners capable of transforming society.

“I was honoured to attend the Thanksgiving Mass at St. Bridget of Sweden Karemeno Secondary School. The day gave us an opportunity to engage with students, parents and teachers in conversations that went beyond academics and focused on building well-rounded young people grounded in education, talent development, discipline and social well-being,” he said.

The fundraiser supported construction of the school’s multi-purpose hall, water harvesting mega tank and Competency Based Education (CBE) Home Science project, initiatives expected to improve the learning environment and enhance student welfare.

Mararo commended the school community for demonstrating unity and commitment towards strengthening education infrastructure, noting that investment in learning institutions remains key to the future of Nyeri County.

The latest engagement adds to a series of community activities that he has been undertaking across Nyeri as he steadily builds his political profile through development-oriented initiatives.

In recent months, Mararo has held meetings with youth groups, traders, transport operators, church leaders

and farmers in different parts of the county, promising to champion policies that support grassroots enterprises, talent development and economic empowerment.

Widely associated with youth-focused empowerment programmes, Mararo is the Chief Executive Officer of Base Yetu, a community empowerment initiative that uses sports and talent development to mentor and economically uplift young people, not only in Nyeri county but across the whole country.

Through the initiative, he has sponsored pool tournaments, creative competitions and mentorship forums aimed at steering youth away from crime, drugs and hopelessness.

Earlier this year, the senatorial hopeful launched dance and music competitions targeting Nyeri youth through social media platforms, with winners receiving cash prizes in an initiative aimed at nurturing local talent and creating opportunities for young creatives.

Mararo has also consistently advocated for skills-based learning and entrepreneurship among young people.

Beyond youth matters, the businessman has increasingly engaged farmers and small-scale traders, emphasizing the need for policies that strengthen agribusiness, improve market access and support cooperative movements. During a recent farmers’ forum in Narumoru, he pledged to support strategic partnerships aimed at improving agricultural productivity in Nyeri County.

As political activity gradually begins to shape the road to the 2027 elections, Mararo appears keen on building his campaign around direct engagement with wananchi, education support programmes and empowerment initiatives targeting youth and local communities.

For now, his message remains centered on one theme; that meaningful leadership must be rooted in listening to ordinary citizens and investing in people-driven development.



Nyeri senatorial aspirant Nick Mararo (left) addressing Karemeno Secondary School stakeholders. | Photo: Courtesy.



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Politics Mudavadi urged the people of Rift Valley to register in large numbers to ensure President Ruto wins with a big majority.

Mudavadi: Ruto to win with a big margin and break the Supreme Court petitions cycle

BY OPCS Press
@themtkenyatimes

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi has asked the supporters of President William Ruto across the country to register as voters in big numbers to make sure the head of state gets a resounding victory in his reelection. Speaking during prayers, and fundraiser in aid of At Peter's Cathedral in Kapsabet, Nandi County, Mudavadi said he wants President Ruto to win with a big margin that will de-

ter anyone from going to the Supreme Court to challenge his election.

He urged the people of Rift Valley to register in large numbers to ensure President Ruto wins with a big majority. "Since Kenya got into multi party politics, it is only the Late President Mwai Kibaki's victory in 2002 that was not challenged in court with previous and subsequent elections finding their way to the Supreme Court," said Mudavadi.

He urged the residents of Nandi County to register in

large numbers to make sure President Ruto's victory is wide and unchallenged.

"We must break the cycle petitions, and want just like the athletes in the region are breaking the world record, we want to also work together to ensure President Ruto breaks the record that we shall not have a presidential petition," said PCS.

He therefore called in the residents to register as voters biting that the previous registration was not good in the region and this needs to change in the next round of registra-



PCS Musalia Mudavadi addressing the gathering

tion.

"I asked the leaders from Kenya Kwanza including my colleagues at the Cabinet to use their energies to defend the government in its development activities," he said.

He added; "I urge you to speak with conviction and defend the government, because if we do not defend it the opposition will not do it."

The meeting was attended by Governor Stephen Sang, Nandi Governor, Felix Koskei Head of Public Services, Kipchumba Murkomen, Senators, MPs and a host of other leaders.

PCS said President Ruto was highly respected globally and that is why 30 heads of state are expected to be in Nairobi this week for the Africa For-

ward Summit.

"The Heads of States and Governments are coming to Kenya because of the respect and admiration they have for our President," said Mudavadi.

He said the government was implementing many projects across the country and as leaders needed to give President support.

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Police The issue sparked public debate after reports emerged that a number of female recruits had been sent home from the college.

NGEC calls for review of police recruitment policy after pregnant recruits sent home

BY MKT Correspondents
@themkenyaintimes

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has called for an urgent review of police recruitment and training policies following controversy surrounding the discontinuation of several recruits from the National Police Service (NPS) training college in Kiganjo, including female recruits found to have been pregnant before reporting for training.

The issue sparked public debate after reports emerged that a number of female recruits had been sent home from the college.

In response, the National Police Service clarified that the affected women were already pregnant before joining the training institution and were not impregnated while at the college.

NPS spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga defended the decision, saying police training is physically intensive and involves strenuous drills, endurance exercises, tactical operations and weapons handling that may pose health risks to pregnant recruits and their unborn children.

“The affected recruits were found to have been pregnant prior to reporting to the training college,” the Service said, adding that the decision was guided by safety and medical considerations rather than punishment or misconduct.

The Service also said some recruits had been discontinued

for other reasons, including forged academic documents, criminal records, disciplinary cases and medical concerns identified during verification and training.

In a statement issued yesterday, NGEC acknowledged the police explanation but said the controversy had exposed major gaps in Kenya’s police recruitment and training framework, especially on how pregnancy and other physiological conditions are managed within disciplined services.

The Commission said the core constitutional question was not whether pregnancy could affect participation in rigorous police training, but whether the State had a clear, lawful and non-discriminatory policy framework for handling such situations.

“Where recruitment criteria and consequences are not clearly defined, publicly communicated, consistently applied and constitutionally tested, affected individuals may perceive administrative decisions as arbitrary, punitive or discriminatory,” NGEC said.

The Commission further noted that the matter had revived broader concerns about transparency and legality in police recruitment following recent court decisions touching on the mandate of the National Police Service Commission during the 2025 recruitment exercise.

NGEC cited Article 27 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law and freedom from discrimina-

tion on grounds including sex, pregnancy and health status.

While acknowledging that police work requires high levels of physical fitness and operational readiness, the Commission said constitutional protections must still apply within security institutions.

“The constitutional equality does not mean ignoring biological realities or operational demands of specialised institutions. Rather, it requires that State decisions be lawful, proportionate, procedurally fair and grounded in clear policy,” the Commission stated.

NGEC is now calling for a comprehensive review of police recruitment and training policies to align them with constitutional principles on equality, human dignity and fair administrative action.

The Commission also wants clear guidelines on pre-recruitment medical disclosure, medical assessment standards, deferment and re-admission mechanisms for affected recruits, protection against arbitrary exclusion and safeguards for maternal health.

Additionally, NGEC raised concern over repeated cases of forged certificates, criminal records and disciplinary issues emerging after recruitment, saying the trend points to weaknesses in the initial screening and verification process.

The Commission urged authorities to harmonise operational requirements within disciplined services with constitutional obligations to avoid practices that may ap-



Some of the recruits being addressed by CS Kipchumba Murkomen at Kiganjo last week. | Photo:

Courtesy

pear unclear or discriminatory.

NGEC Chairperson Rehema Jaldesa said the Commis-

sion remained committed to supporting reforms aimed at strengthening professionalism, accountability, equality

and public confidence within Kenya’s security sector institutions.



NGEC Rehema Jaldesa

Politics Wetang'ula said former presidents should rise above partisan politics and instead champion national unity and stability.

Wetang'ula warns Uhuru against undermining Ruto government

BY Suleiman Mbatiah

@themkenyatiimes

National Assembly Speaker Moses Wetang'ula has warned retired President Uhuru Kenyatta against what he termed as continued political interference, saying it risks eroding the statesman image expected of former heads of state.

Speaking at his home in Bungoma while hosting a delegation of more than 1,000 people from Webuye East Constituency, Wetang'ula said former presidents should rise above partisan politics and instead champion national unity and stability.

The delegation comprised elders, opinion leaders, women, youth and other stakeholders from the constituency.

Wetang'ula accused Uhuru of aligning himself with leaders opposed to the Kenya Kwanza administration, arguing that such actions were distracting President William Ruto from delivering on his agenda.

"When a country goes astray, we expect senior leaders, including retired President Uhuru Kenyatta, to help restore order. But how can you do that when you appear biased, always complaining and calling people names?" Wetang'ula said.

The Speaker urged Uhuru to emulate former Presidents Daniel arap Moi and Mwai Kibaki, whom he

said allowed successive governments to govern without sustained public confrontation.

"We respect you as a retired president, but respect goes both ways. Former Presidents Kibaki and Moi allowed you to serve peacefully. In the same spirit, allow the current president to serve," he added.

His remarks mirror sentiments recently expressed by several Kenya Kwanza leaders, who have accused Uhuru of remaining politically active despite his retirement from office. In recent public engagements in western Kenya, leaders allied to the ruling coalition argued that former presidents should transition into advisory and unifying roles rather than active political mobilisation.

Webuye East MP Martin Pepela backed Wetang'ula's remarks, saying President Ruto deserved political space to implement his development agenda.

"President Ruto supported you for many years. Out of respect for the nation and the respect he gave you, allow him to serve Kenyans," Pepela said.

Wetang'ula also rallied Bungoma residents to support Ruto's anticipated re-election bid in 2027, arguing that continuity in leadership would ensure completion of ongoing development projects.

"The work will continue if we support the President's second-term



Speaker Moses Wetang'ula addressing delegates.

bid. We are working together with UDA in Kenya Kwanza and ODM under the broad-based government arrangement. Our message is two terms," he said.

The Speaker further revived speculation about his own future political ambitions, declaring his intention to

contest the presidency in 2032 after Ruto's expected second term.

"My people, let us work together to ensure Ruto gets a second term in 2027, then in 2032 we will rise to the occasion," he said.

The remarks come amid heightened political realignments and growing competition for influence in western Kenya ahead of the 2027 General Election. Wetang'ula, a longtime regional political figure and Ford Kenya leader, has increasingly positioned himself as a central player within the Kenya Kwanza coalition.

Despite growing political divisions in Bungoma County, Pepela urged residents to work with leaders from other regions to strengthen the constituency's bargaining power nationally.

"If you want to go far, walk with others. For us to succeed as a constituency, we must work with others," he said.

Former Bumula MP Mwambu Mabonga also called for unity among leaders, saying cooperation was essential for development and political stability.

"We want leaders who unite people. People who reason together walk the journey together," he said.

Residents at the meeting praised Wetang'ula for supporting reforms in the sugar sector, saying the chang-

es had helped revive struggling millers. However, they raised concerns over alleged irregular cane harvesting practices, which they said were causing losses for farmers.

Wetang'ula acknowledged the concerns and said consultations with legislators and investors were ongoing to streamline the sector.

"We do not want selective harvesting. Farmers must benefit fairly. This irregular system of permits and harvesting must end," he said.

The Speaker also defended government-backed reforms at Nzoia Sugar Company, dismissing criticism from opponents who had accused him of supporting the sale of the miller.

"I was accused of selling Nzoia Sugar, yet it is now operational and farmers are being paid within seven days. Let us ignore the noisemakers," he said.

He assured residents that Bungoma voters would remain free to elect leaders of their choice and that no candidate would be imposed on them.

The Bungoma meeting was the latest in a series of political engagements by Wetang'ula aimed at consolidating support for the Kenya Kwanza administration and the broad-based government arrangement ahead of the 2027 elections.



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

Politics Kamau said many leaders often focus on selfish interests at the expense of the people who elected them, resulting in stalled development and poor service delivery.

Mbiyu Wa Kamau urges leaders to put public interest first

BY WMW

@themtkenyaintimes

Human rights lawyer and Juja parliamentary aspirant Mbiyu Wa Kamau has called on elected leaders to prioritize the interests of wananchi over personal gains in order to improve the living standards of Kenyans.

Kamau said many leaders often focus on selfish interests at the expense of the people who elected them, resulting in stalled development and poor service delivery.

Speaking during separate interviews with The Mt Kenya Times Newspaper and Jamba TV, Kamau said that if elected as the next Member of Parliament for Juja Constituency, he would prioritize collaboration between the national and Kiambu County governments to accelerate development projects in the area.

“Collaboration between the national government and the county government of Kiambu shall be my leadership style if elected as the Member of National Assembly for Juja Constituency. Our people deserve development, and our roads are in a poor state,” he said.

Kamau noted that the Constitution and existing laws provide avenues for citizens to demand accountability and action whenever they feel neglected by government institutions.

“There are various ways of having issues such as development and other services addressed by the government. Residents can always take action if they feel either the county or national government has neglected them,” he said.

He revealed that some residents from the Kimbo-Matangi area in Juja had expressed interest in taking legal action against the government over the deplorable state of a local

road.

According to Kamau, frustrated residents had even started contributing money towards rehabilitating the road themselves due to delays in government intervention.

However, he expressed optimism that construction of the road would begin in October, following a promise made by President William Ruto during a recent visit to the area.

Kamau further urged leaders to embrace their role as custodians of public interests and champions of development by consistently engaging both county and national governments to ensure services and infrastructure projects reach the people.

He said effective leadership should focus on improving livelihoods through better infrastructure, enhanced service delivery and accountability in governance.



Lawyer Mbiyu Wa Kamau when he appeared on Jamba TV. | Photo: Courtesy.

The Mt. Kenya Times

THE



Steep edge



By: Collins Munyanda - Zimbabwe

Twenty first century white weddings
married not a contemporary couple.
Blue deceit, white guileful teeth, Trojan Horse
laughter
subtle blessings, hoodlum matrimony days
stealthy milkmen and plumbers's sired children
soon intruded budding couples' abodes.

Dark kisses hissed like arid swaying, sun-burnt
savanna grasses.
Black pedigree resembled Chinese progenitors.
At the local pharmacy
antibiotics and family planning pills dearth
drove middle aged pharmacists mad.
Graveyard elegies polluted the atmosphere.
Babylonian furnace pain, pretentious bliss,
dungeoned souls, hawked gratification.
Paternal fists hammered feminal faces.
The local magistrate's gavel broke thrice in a
month.
More out-City lodges bush-roomed
than schools and healthcare centres mush-
roomed
While
Techno- humanity deified Jezebel and
Mephiostepheles!

Sometimes "I'm okay"



Means "I'm trying to be okay"

"How are you?" the world may ask,
We smile gently behind a mask.
Eyes may shimmer, hearts may ache,

Yet we reply, "I'm fine," for others' sake.

We hide the storms we fight inside,
We bury tears and silent cries.
A painted smile, a guarded face,
To move along with steady grace.

Sometimes "it's okay" is not truly so,
It's just the strength to still let go.
To carry pain and yet stand tall,
Even when feeling about to fall.

For not every wound is meant to show,
Not every battle others know.
And though the soul may feel dismay,
We whisper softly, "It's okay."

Nandini AnandKumar
Educator,Writer, Freelancer
No 18, Kamarajar Street
Neravy, Karaikal

Roots of the seven - souled Tree



My mom is
not a single
soul.
She is the
soul of seven
our family.
She is the
best family

administrator.
She is not highly educated.
She had completed only basic education.
But she is highly appreciated and recommended.
Though she was married at a young age
She became a learner of agriculture.
She administrated well in agriculture.
As she is a landlady of big family
Showered her responsibilities at times.
She is another pillar to my Dad.
She taught discipline with kindness.
She showed us only good disciplinarians.
She was sometimes very strict to correct us.
She had spent half of her life in our village.
We got together only in vacation times.
She took care of us in the town from the village

We had seen some people in her birth place
Respecting and blessing her by saying
They are good now because of her support.
She with help of village elders brought up us in the
town.
She sacrificed her mothering sometimes
All because of management in agriculture.
Now we are proud of her effort
Kept alive agriculture and ancestry.
Now our brothers are taking her part.
Though we the six are educated
The four our brothers never give up Agriculture.
Its the identity of our ancestry.
No one could say 'we are not viagers.'
Every one's root is from village or by village.
As an aged woman, she is watching her brought
ups.
We are honouring her and getting her blessings.
Its the last part of her life with good credits.

N.SELVARANI.
B. T. ASST.
GHS SAKKARAKKOTTAI
RAMANATHAPURAM.
TAMILNADU
INDIA.

When life is easy thank God



When life is tough trust in God._*

Do not scold God
for every storm in life.
Sometimes the pain we face
is shaping us into stronger souls.

Through hardships,
He teaches us courage,
to stand firm,
to face problems boldly
without fear in our hearts.
And when life slowly becomes easier,
when peace finally reaches us,
remember to thank Him
for guiding us through every trial.

R.KRISHNAVENI
GRADUATE TEACHER
CREATIVE WRITER GROUP

Trust through trials



When mornings move with mellow glow,
Thank God for blessings soft and slow.
When thunder shouts across the sky,
Trust God though troubled tears may cry.

Faith is a lamp in darkest night,
Shining strong with silent light.
Hope stands firm like a mighty tree,
Rooted deep through misery.

When shadows stretch across the way,

God's gentle grace will light the day.
Though weary winds may shake the soul,
His loving hands will make you whole.

The stars still sing through silent skies,
After every fall, new strength will rise.
Like rivers flowing to the sea,
His mercy moves endlessly.

Mountains may stand fierce and high,
Yet faith can teach the heart to fly.
Every storm will lose its power,
For hope still blooms like a morning flower.

When life is sweet, thank God above,
When life is hard, still trust His love.

V. JAYANTHI
Graduate teacher
PUMS Konganancherry
Chengalpattu district
Tamil Nadu India

The climb is yours



The world is so big,
And we are tiny within it.
We face millions of waves in everyday life,
Trying every second to reach the shore.
In some lives, there is a hand that pushes,
A ladder to help them climb—
But it doesn't happen for everyone.
Some struggle alone,
Some stand behind the shadows.
The moment you realize this—

We are born alone, and we leave alone.
Paths may be different from others,
But you are the one who must stand for yourself.
Some may show the way,
But they won't walk along with you.
If you want a better future,
You must fight for it,
You must push yourself.
This is your life,
And it is your responsibility.
You are the maker of your own path,
Let success follow you—
If you are brave enough to face it.

BY
ZAHETHA R
BT ASST ENGLISH
GHS PAPPANTHANGAL
TVM DIST

Economy The meeting focused on the formation of the committees in quarry mining areas within Kasemeni Ward.

Kwale communities near quarry sites to benefit from mining royalties

“For many years we have pushed quarry operators to support local communities, but now there is a law that guarantees communities benefit from resources extracted from their land,” he said.

BY MKT Correspondent
@themkenyatimes

Residents living near quarry mining sites in Kasemeni Ward, Kwale County, are set to benefit directly from mining revenues following the launch of plans to establish Community Development Agreement Committees (CDACs), a framework aimed at ensuring local communities receive a share of proceeds from mining activities. The initiative was discussed during a consultative meeting involving officials from the Ministry of Mining, the

County Commissioner’s office, quarry operators and representatives from the Kwale County Government.

The meeting focused on the formation of the committees in quarry mining areas within Kasemeni Ward.

Kasemeni MCA Victor Safari Nyanje said mining laws require quarry operators to remit one percent of their profits to communities affected by mining activities.

“For many years we have pushed quarry operators to support local communities, but now there is a law that guarantees communities benefit from resources extracted from their land,” he said.

Nyanje said stakeholders had agreed to begin public participation forums to educate residents on the legal framework establishing CDACs, explain the responsibilities of mining operators and allow residents to present their expectations before committee elections are conducted.

He noted that discussions and agreements to operationalize the committees are expected to be completed within the next two months, paving the way for mining royalties to fund development projects in local communities.

The MCA also raised concerns over the environmental and social effects of quarry

mining, including land degradation, health complications, damaged roads and cracks in buildings and schools caused by heavy quarry activities.

“Communities have suffered for years without meaningful support from operators. In some cases, county funds have been used to repair roads damaged by quarry trucks shortly after construction,” he said.

Kwale County Economic Advisor Antony Yama, representing Governor Fatuma Achani, said the initiative seeks to implement constitutional provisions requiring mining companies to share part of their revenue with host communities.

He said areas such as Bonje and Mwamdudu had experienced disruptions from quarry activities for years without re-



Kwale County Economic Advisor Antony Yama addressing the stakeholders.

ceiving adequate benefits.

Kwale Forest Officer Elvis Katana Fondo said communities living near forest ecosystems are entitled to benefit from activities taking place within such areas under the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016.

He emphasized the importance of structured community associations in ensuring effective engagement between residents, mining firms and government agencies whenever disputes arise.

Meanwhile, Kwale Inspector of Mines Dickson Mbiijiwe said the consultative meeting followed directives from Mining Principal Secretary Harry

Kimtai to fast-track the establishment of CDACs in Kasemeni Ward, especially around the Mwache ecosystem where quarry operations are ongoing.

Mbiijiwe said there are currently six active quarry sites in the Mwache area, with plans underway to extend the initiative to other quarry zones within the ward.

He urged residents to remain patient as the government works towards implementing a framework that will ensure local communities benefit from resources extracted from their areas.



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Diplomacy Co-hosted by President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit marks the first France-Africa summit of its kind

Kenya, France launch landmark Africa Forward Summit amid push for investment reset



President William Ruto and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron at State House, Nairobi yesterday.

BY Suleiman Mbatiah
@themtkenyatimes

Hundreds of business leaders, investors and policymakers are converging in Nairobi as Kenya and France launch the inaugural Africa Forward Summit, a high-level gathering aimed at unlocking investment in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, agriculture and digital infrastructure across Africa.

Officially branded the Africa Forward Summit 2026 under the theme “Africa-France Partnerships for Innovation and Growth,” the two-day forum opens today at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre and the University of Nairobi. Organisers expect more than 30 African heads of state and over 4,000 delegates to attend.

Co-hosted by President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit marks the first France-Africa summit of its kind to be co-chaired with

an English-speaking African country. Diplomats and analysts view the choice of Nairobi as a significant shift in France’s Africa strategy as Paris seeks to rebuild influence beyond its traditional Francophone partners following a series of political and military setbacks in West Africa.

The summit agenda spans energy transition, green industrialisation, digital transformation, health systems, sustainable agriculture, the blue economy, regional security and reform of the international financial system. Organisers say discussions are designed to move beyond diplomatic declarations and produce bankable projects and long-term commercial partnerships.

In a statement released ahead of the summit, Ruto said Africa stood at a defining inflection point and that the continent’s future would depend on its ability to attract investment, deepen partnerships

and accelerate innovation in sectors driving economic transformation.

“Africa is no longer waiting to be included in the future. Africa is building the future,” Ruto said, pointing to growing innovation ecosystems in cities including Nairobi, Lagos, Kigali and Cape Town.

Kenya is expected to use the summit to push for reforms to the global financial system, including fairer lending structures for heavily indebted economies and stronger African representation within multilateral financial institutions. Outcomes from the Nairobi meeting are also expected to feed into preparations for the G7 summit that France will host in Evian in June.

For France, the summit comes at a moment of major recalibration in its Africa policy. Since 2022, France has withdrawn troops from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger after military-led governments in those countries terminated

defence agreements with Paris. The withdrawals coincided with expanding Russian influence in parts of the Sahel, where Moscow-linked security actors deepened cooperation with regional juntas.

French officials have increasingly framed the new approach around economic cooperation, entrepreneurship, education and private sector investment rather than the security-focused relationships that historically shaped Paris’s engagement on the continent.

Ahead of the summit, Macron described Nairobi as the starting point for a renewed Africa-Europe partnership

centred on investment, innovation and shared economic priorities.

“The relationship between France and Africa can no longer be defined by history alone; it must be built through shared innovation, shared investment and shared responsibility,” Macron said.

A major component of the gathering will be the Africa Forward Business Forum at the University of Nairobi, where more than 2,500 chief executives, entrepreneurs, investors and start-ups are expected to participate in sector-focused sessions covering infrastructure, logistics, artificial intelligence, health

manufacturing, agriculture, connectivity and clean energy.

Business matchmaking sessions, innovation showcases and CEO roundtables are also planned as organisers seek to position the summit as one of the largest Africa-France private sector engagements ever held on the continent.

The summit will conclude with the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, a framework expected to outline implementation targets, accountability mechanisms and new investment commitments between African partners and France.

Kenya has increasingly positioned itself as a regional centre for technology, climate finance and innovation, with officials from both governments saying the success of the summit will ultimately be measured by the deals, financing agreements and partnerships that emerge after delegates leave Nairobi.

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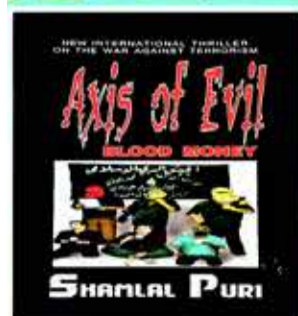
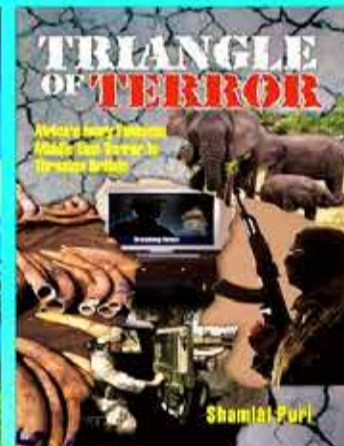
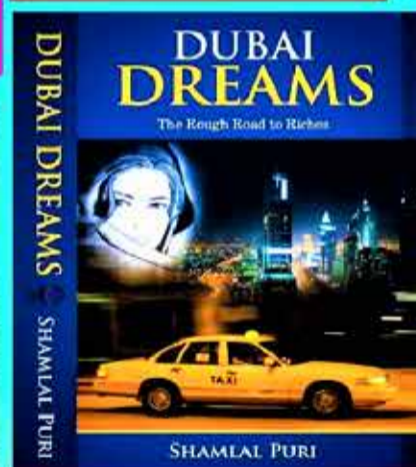
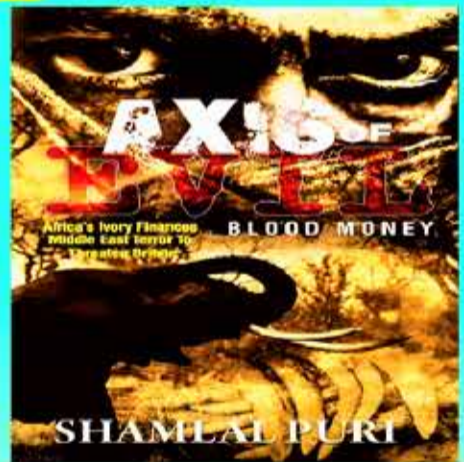
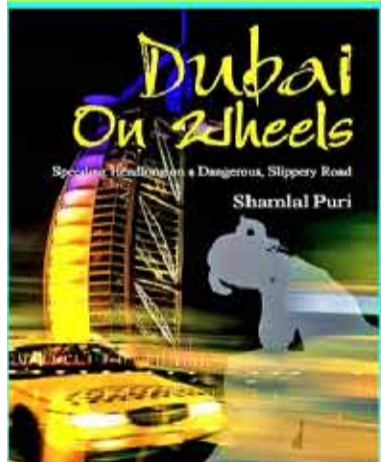
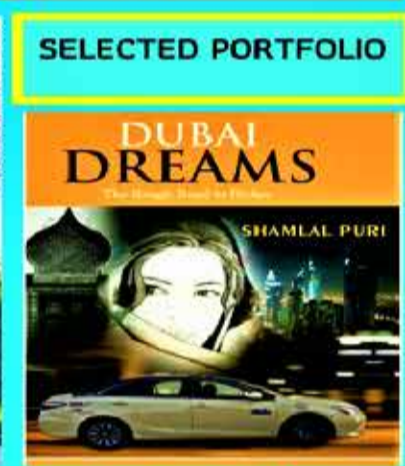
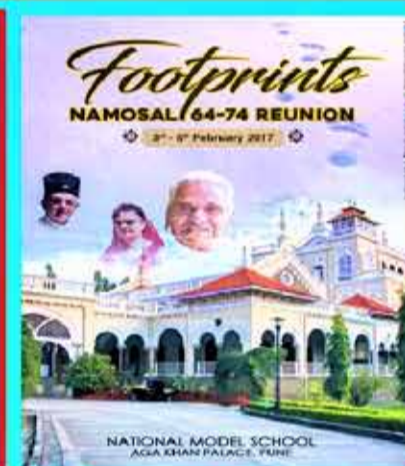
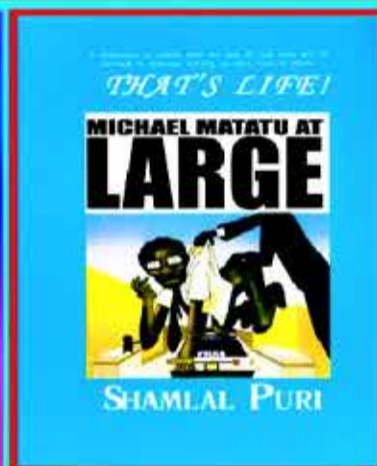
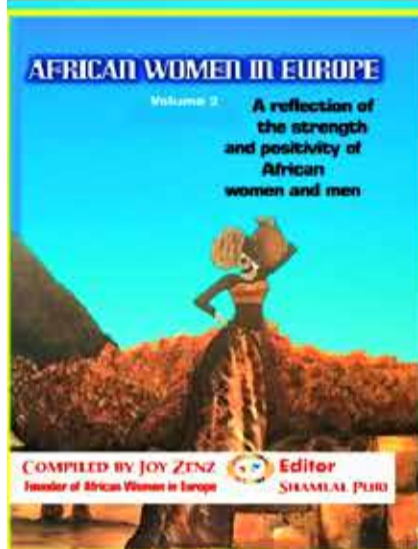
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Food According to Karimi, the high prices have significantly reduced consumer demand, with many customers now buying only a few tomatoes instead of a full kilogramme

Tomato shortage hits Meru markets as prices surge

BY KNA

@themtkenyentimes

Traders and consumers in Maua and Laare markets in Meru County are grappling with a severe tomato shortage that has driven prices sharply upward, worsening the cost of living and disrupting small businesses that depend on the produce.

Grocery traders say prolonged rains, poor road networks, high fuel prices and increased farming costs have disrupted supply chains, leaving markets with limited stock and, in some cases, no tomatoes at all.

Speaking at Laare Market, grocery wholesaler Salome Karimi said the soaring prices had made business increasingly difficult, with traders struggling to make profits. She explained that tomatoes are currently being bought from farms at up to Sh100 per kilogramme, forcing re-



Tomatoes in a Meru market.

tailers to sell at between Sh110 and Sh120.

According to Karimi, the high prices

have significantly reduced consumer demand, with many customers now buying only a few tomatoes

instead of a full kilogramme.

“Customers who used to buy one or five kilogrammes are now buying five tomatoes for Sh50, while others have switched to alternative spices because tomatoes are too expensive,” she said.

Consumers are also feeling the impact. Glory Kiende, a shopper at Maua Market, said she had turned to carrots as a cheaper alternative following the increase in tomato prices.

Traders noted that tomatoes are now retailing at about Sh10 each, a situation that has slowed business amid declining purchasing power among consumers.

Another trader, Kawira Salome, said the shortage had forced her to operate without tomatoes after suppliers failed to secure produce from farms. She recalled that traders previously bought tomatoes directly from farmers at as low as Sh30 per kilogramme before selling wholesale at Sh40 or

Sh50.

Food vendors who rely heavily on tomatoes have also been affected. Marion Makena, who sells smokies and eggs in Laare, said tomatoes and onions are essential for preparing kachumbari served with her products.

“Without tomatoes you cannot sell properly. We are buying them at very high prices and our profits keep shrinking,” she said.

Green grocery trader Kawiria Agnes blamed excessive rains for destroying crops and reducing supply. She also cited poor roads to farming areas, saying transporters avoid the routes for fear of vehicles getting stuck in mud.

Meanwhile, vegetable dealer Baba Baro said many farmers may have abandoned tomato farming due to rising production costs and previous losses. He urged the government to subsidise farm inputs and address exploitation by brokers accused of inflating fertiliser and seedling prices.

Traders now fear the crisis could further worsen the cost of living unless urgent interventions are introduced.

CBO The CBO works with school programmes that plant trees in both primary and secondary schools and has initiatives focusing on youth resilience, entrepreneurship and agribusiness

Jumuisha Initiative hailed for improving lives in Makueni

BY Patrick Nyakundi

@themtkenyentimes

Jumuisha Initiative, a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) celebrated 10 years since its inception and impacting on living standards among the youth and women in Makueni County.

The celebrations were led by the organisation’s Executive Director, Karen Munyae, at their offices in Wote town in Makueni Sub-county where officials from all levels of government and civil society and youth and women groups that are beneficiaries of the programmes.

Munyae disclosed that her organisation has improved the lives of youths

and women who are now self-employed and earning incomes that have enabled them to combat poverty afflicting many in the area.

The CBO works with school programmes that plant trees in both primary and secondary schools and has initiatives focusing on youth resilience, entrepreneurship and agribusiness that includes poultry and value addition.

On women, the organisation enumerated the various programmes supporting women with microfarms aimed at improving household resilience besides advancing education for local communities including sponsoring children at tertiary levels and ensuring a return-to-school policy for adolescent mothers.

During the celebrations, the organisation also commissioned the newly constructed office.

Addressing the participants present, the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Lands, Urban Planning, Dr Paul Musila lauded the CBO for the work they are doing, saying it was supplementing government programmes in the county.

“I appreciate the work you do here of complimenting the government that has budgetary constraints,” said Dr Musila outside the organisation’s office in Wote town in Makueni Sub-county.

CECM for Gender, Sebastian Kyoni and his counterpart for Devolution echoed the same sentiments, promising to support the CBO, besides



Stakeholders outside Jumuisha Initiative offices | Photo: Courtesy

urging the youths to seize the opportunities to improve their lives.

Deputy County Commissioner (DCC) George Lugo reminded the youths to take advantage of the opportunities that arise to change their lives by forming groups to attract funding from different organizations and government.

Mr Lugo asked them not to limit themselves and instead think globally, to seek opportunities in an effort to uplift their lives and combat unemployment afflicting many.

“You need kujituma; there are opportunities out there. Do not limit yourself. Don’t think locally, think globally,” challenged Lugo.

“There are many funds in both levels of government where you can take advantage of and get monies to initiate income-generating projects to earn a living,” he added.

The Clerk Makueni County Assembly, Kelvin Mutuku, who is also the patron assured Jumuisha of political support and challenged the youths to be focused in improving their lives.

Dream No vision survives the wilderness without another set of hands carrying water. No voice becomes an anthem without another voice answering back

The fire you light is the one that finds you

“Your dream was never a solo — it’s a choir, and reciprocity is the conductor”



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
mukphix@gmail.com

There is a lie we inherited like a disease. They called it competition, dressed it in suits and scoreboards, and told us dreams are finite — that for you to rise, someone must fall. That life is a narrow podium, and every hand you pull up is a hand that might push you off.

It is the quiet reason so many of us arrive exhausted at the top of ladders leaning against the wrong walls. Brilliant and lonely. Surrounded by trophies. Starved of peace.

Here is the truth that economics never printed and business schools rarely preach — the law that built every movement, every family, every revolution that lasted: you achieve your dream by carrying someone else’s until it can walk on its own. Not by magic. Not by chance. By design. Look at every name history

refused to forget. Mandela had Sisulu. Nkrumah had Padmore. Serena had Venus. Jobs had Wozniak. No vision survives the wilderness without another set of hands carrying water. No voice becomes an anthem without another voice answering back.

Yet we hoard introductions like gold and swallow advice like secrets — because scarcity has been shouted into us since childhood. Because we fear that if her company rises, mine will disappear. That if his book trends, my pages will turn to dust. That if I speak his name in rooms he has not yet entered, my own name will somehow be erased.

Fear is a bad mathematician and a worse prophet.

Dreams are not slices of pie handed out by a miserly universe. Dreams are fire — and fire behaves differently from all our economics. When you take your torch to light another’s, yours does not dim. The room gets brighter. And in a brighter room, people finally see your face.

They remember the hands that struck the match without calculating the return. They remember the voice that said your name when you were not

there to say it for yourself.

This is the brutal and tender arithmetic of reciprocity — and no algorithm can fake it.

Sow before you harvest. Edit the proposal that does not carry your name. Send the opportunity you cannot use. Stay the extra hour to rehearse a pitch that will never pay you. The universe keeps a ledger, but so do people — and their memory is longer than any contract.

Rejoice without a budget. Clap until your palms burn when she crosses a finish line you have prayed to reach yourself. Post about his win as though it were your own family’s. Because one day the room will be yours, and you will need an army that knows how to celebrate — without the acid of envy in their mouths.

Refuse to build on bones. If your ascent requires someone else’s humiliation to make you look taller, what you are building is not a dream — it is a mausoleum. And mausoleums do not stay quiet. They haunt. They return at 2 a.m. as broken partnerships, as investors who did their homework, as a reputation that walks into every meeting five minutes

before you do.

This is the part nobody puts on a vision board.

Helping will feel like losing at first. You will buy a ticket to her launch while your own product is still a prayer in a notebook. You will hold the camera at his wedding while your own love life remains a question mark. You will watch them step into rooms you have fasted and begged to enter — and it will sting in places you did not know could ache.

Do it anyway.

Because in the long, stubborn, faithful run, the law holds. The researcher you cited when no one was watching becomes the reviewer who defends your paper. The

intern you coached at midnight becomes the founder who writes your first cheque. The rival you protected when gossip came for him becomes the client who says, “I trust you — because you did not kick me when I was on the ground.”

The little brother you taught to read becomes the man who one day introduces you on a global stage with the words: “She saw me before the world did.”

Reciprocity is not a transaction. It is compound interest paid in dignity. It is the quiet engineering of bridges you built for others that one day carry you home.

So burn the myth of the self-made man. He is a ghost story

we tell to excuse our isolation. There are only we-made men, we-made women, we-made nations.

Your dream was never meant to be a solo. It is a choir. And the fastest way to hear your own note is to teach someone else their part.

Stop asking the sky how you will get there. Start asking whose hand is cold on the road — and whether you have a coat to share.

Because the ladder to your dream is not made of rungs you climbed over. It is made of shoulders you refused to stand on.

And when you finally arrive — breathless and disbelieving — you will turn around and see the truth that was there all along.

You did not get there despite lifting them.

You got there because you lifted them.

That is the formula. That is the fire.

Now go strike a match.

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Britain Ian Scott, a professor with the University of Manchester, told Xinhua that Labour's losses in Hartlepool and Tameside were blows to the party's "heartland vote" in traditional areas

How regional elections reshape Britain's political landscape

BY Xinhua News Agency

@themtkenyatimes

Britain's latest local and regional elections have delivered a fresh blow to the ruling Labour Party, while Reform UK made major gains in England and nationalist parties strengthened their positions in Wales and Scotland.

The final results released on Saturday are seen as an important political test after Labour's landslide victory in the July 2024 general election. They also point to a more fragmented political landscape, with voters moving away from the traditional Labour-Conservative contest and toward new parties such as Reform UK.

Reform surge in England

During this year's English local elections, voters cast ballots for more than 5,000 council seats across 136 councils, the largest set of local contests in England for three years. Final results showed that Labour lost almost 1,500 council seats in England and surrendered control of around 40 local councils, including several traditional strongholds, while Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, emerged as one of the biggest winners of the elections, gaining more than 1,400 council seats and taking control of 14 local councils, many in traditional Labour or Conservative strongholds, better than its last year's performance.

Ian Scott, a professor with the University of Manchester, told Xinhua that Labour's losses in Hartlepool and Tameside were blows to the party's "heartland vote" in traditional areas. He said voters moving to Reform and the Greens appeared to be looking for "something different," adding that many voters increasingly saw Labour and the Conservatives as not very different from each other. "Reform UK lacks governing experience and reliable policy proposals that have been tested in practice. Its performance at the local level will test whether it can become a mature political force," said Yang Fang, a research fellow at the Institute of European Studies of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

Meanwhile, Reform UK's leader



Britain flag

Farage is facing scrutiny over political finance transparency. The Guardian reported that he had received an undisclosed 5-million-pound (about 6.8 billion U.S. dollars) personal gift from a crypto billionaire in 2024. The party said the money was a personal, unconditional gift used for security purposes, and Farage later told Sky News that he had taken the money for "protection."

Westminster challenged by nationalists

Nationalist parties also reshaped the electoral map in Britain's devolved parliaments, with Plaid Cymru becoming the largest party in the Senedd, or the Welsh Parliament, for the first time after winning 43 seats on Friday.

That result ended Labour's centu-

ry-long dominance in Wales, where the party had also led the regional government since the Senedd was established in 1999. Reform UK came second with 34 seats, while Welsh Labour dropped to third place with nine. Plaid Cymru finished six seats short of an outright majority, but party leader Rhun ap Iorwerth said the party would "take the necessary steps to form the next Government of Wales." "We're probably in the most significant inflection point in Welsh political history since devolution began almost 30 years ago," Louis Bromfield, a researcher at Swansea University, told Xinhua. "Fundamentally, it's a completely new political landscape."

Bromfield said a Plaid Cymru-led government would likely be quicker to challenge Westminster Labour and push for greater devolved powers

and fairer funding for Wales. Before Plaid Cymru's victory, Welsh First Minister Eluned Morgan failed to win re-election in the newly created Ceredigion Penfro constituency and announced her resignation as leader of Welsh Labour. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party (SNP) won a fifth consecutive term in government after winning 58 seats in the 129-seat parliament, according to results announced early Saturday. However, it fell short of the 65 seats needed for a majority. Reform UK also made significant gains in Scotland, winning 17 seats, equal to Scottish Labour, while the Conservatives dropped to 12 seats. Analysts said Reform UK's breakthrough reflected growing voter dissatisfaction with traditional parties across Britain.

Labour's internal fractures

The results have put Prime Minister Keir Starmer and the ruling Labour Party under mounting pressure. Starmer said Friday that he was "not going to walk away" amid Labour's projected losses in the elections. On Saturday morning, before the final ballots were counted, he appointed former Prime Minister Gordon Brown as his special envoy on global finance and cooperation, a decision BBC said was to "shore up his position" after the party's heavy election losses.

"As Britain's longest-serving Chancellor, Gordon is well-placed to work with our international allies to build a stronger Britain and boost our country's security and resilience," Starmer said on social media. John Bryson, a professor with the University of Birmingham, told Xinhua that Labour could either rally behind Starmer and rapidly develop policies to improve economic growth and wellbeing, or change the prime minister nearly midway through the parliamentary term. Bryson said a leadership change would expose Labour's internal fractures and could become "messy." He said the deeper challenge was that Britain was experiencing "a generational alteration" in its political structure, with Labour and the Conservatives challenged by new parties, especially Reform UK.

Starmer insisted that he would not shift his political course simply to counter pressure from other parties. "While we must respond to the message that voters have sent us, that doesn't mean tacking right or left," he wrote in *The Guardian* on Friday. Karl Pike, a senior lecturer in public policy at Queen Mary, University of London, wrote in *The Conversation* that Starmer was in "a kind of lame duck political position." He said few people expected Starmer to lead Labour into the next general election, but Labour MPs remained divided over how, when and whether to replace him.

Both experts argued Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham could attract support as a potential challenger to Starmer, but noted that he is not currently an MP. *The Financial Times* reported that the focus will now be on "Burnham's mooted return to Westminster." It said that more than 20 Labour MPs have now called for Starmer to "quit or set a date for his departure" after the elections, but Lucy Powell, Labour's deputy and an ally of Burnham, said, "All that would do is fire the starting gun for a very distracting and ongoing debate about leadership."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Uasin Gishu vendors back bill to formalize informal trade

Traders want recognition — and they turned up at County Hall to demand it.

Vendors from markets across Uasin Gishu County gathered last week for a public participation forum on the proposed Vendor Bill, voicing strong support for legislation they hope will end years of harassment, arbitrary taxation, and market neglect. The session formed part of a broader national consultation led by a parliamentary sub-committee chaired by Maryanne, alongside the Mathare MP.

Traders were direct about their needs: better market infrastructure, fair and predictable levies, and legal protection from harassment. Speaker after speaker stressed that the informal sector is not a burden on the county economy — it is a backbone of it, and it deserves a framework that reflects that reality.

Representing the county government, Lands Member Ed-



Sub-committee chairperson and Aldai MP Hon. Merryanne Keitany together with county representative Edward Sawe

ward Sawe — standing in for Trade CECM Dr. Sam Kottutt — pledged the administration's full support. Structured regulation, Sawe argued, would benefit both traders and the county: improved welfare for small-scale businesses translates directly into more reliable revenue and better service delivery.

He urged vendors not to treat the forum as a one-off event but to remain active participants in shaping policy. The sub-committee, for its part, assured attendees that every submission

would feed into the final report guiding national legislative debate.

The vendors left County Hall cautiously optimistic. The Vendor Bill is not yet law — but for traders long pushed to the margins, it may be the first time the system is being built with them, not around them.

By Limooh Brian, Uasin Gishu

OI Kalou by-election: DCP and UDA face off for Mt Kenya's soul

This is not just a by-election. It is a referendum on who controls Mt Kenya.

Two months after the death of MP David Kiaraho, OI Kalou constituency in Nyandarua County goes to the polls. On the surface, it is a routine exercise to fill a vacant seat. Beneath it lies one of Kenya's most consequential political battles — a direct showdown between President William Ruto's UDA and former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's DCP.

Since his impeachment, Gachagua has moved aggressively to consolidate the Mt Kenya vote, positioning himself as the region's undisputed political kingpin. His message has been blunt: the mountain belongs to DCP. His camp has already deployed the rallying cry — "OI Kalou ti Mbeere" — a pointed



reminder that unlike Mbeere North, where UDA defeated opposition-aligned candidates, OI Kalou will not fall.

Ruto, however, is not conceding the ground that delivered him the presidency in 2022. Through Deputy President Kithure Kindiki, his camp has worked relentlessly to shore up support in the region. The tension was unmistakable at the late MP's memorial, where both rivals appeared publicly

together for the first time since the impeachment — and the crowd made its sympathies known.

History offers a warning. In 2021, by-election losses in Juja and Kiambaa sent Uhuru Kenyatta a signal he chose to ignore. The consequences were brutal in 2022.

OI Kalou is that signal. The question is: who is listening?

By Daniel Maina, Laikipia University

The double-edged scroll: Social media and Kenya's youth

Every generation has its defining influence. For today's youth, it fits in the palm of a hand.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X have fundamentally reshaped how young people communicate, learn, and see themselves. The benefits are real — instant global connection, access to tutorials and academic communities, and creative platforms where talent in music, art, and business can reach audiences overnight. Social media has democratized opportunity in ways previously unimaginable.

But the costs are mounting. Addiction is the most visible casualty. Countless young people sacrifice sleep, academic focus, and meaningful relationships chasing likes and follower counts. The metrics of online validation have quietly replaced more substantive measures of self-worth. Behind the curated highlight reels lies



a mental health crisis: anxiety, depression, and eroded self-esteem driven by relentless comparison with lives that are largely performance, not reality.

Cyberbullying compounds the damage. A hostile comment thread can devastate a teenager in ways a schoolyard taunt never could — public, permanent, and inescapable. Meanwhile, misinformation spreads faster than facts, exposing young users to distorted worldviews and, in extreme cases, dangerous behaviour adopted purely for online attention.

None of this is inevitable. Digital literacy — teaching young people to interrogate sources, manage screen time, and distinguish connection from compulsion — must become as fundamental as any classroom subject. Parents, educators, and policymakers share that responsibility.

Social media will not disappear. The question is whether Kenya's youth will master the tool — or be mastered by it.

By Austine Owino, Laikipia University

Engines off, tempers high: Kenya faces its fuel reality

The pumps are dry. The queues are not.

Across Kenya, motorists are spending hours at fuel stations for litres that may never come. In some towns, pumps have run completely dry. In others, rationing is the new normal. What began as scattered shortages has hardened into a national crisis — one that exposes the fragility of a country whose economy runs entirely on imported fuel it cannot reliably secure.

The consequences cascade fast. Matatu operators queue longer than they drive. Boda boda riders absorb rising costs while passengers cut trips. Businesses dependent on transport and generators watch margins disappear. When fuel supply stutters, food prices climb, manufacturers stall, and farmers watch produce rot before it reaches market. Every sector bleeds.

The anger is proportional to



the wait. Kenyans are asking a pointed question: how does a country that taxes fuel among the highest in the region keep running out of it? The answer points to familiar failures — reactive governance, weak supply chain management, and an oil sector vulnerable to cartel manipulation. Panic buying, triggered by shortage fears, worsens the very crisis it responds to.

Government officials promise incoming shipments and tem-

porary disruptions. Kenyans have heard this before. Confidence is not restored by assurances — it is restored by petrol in the tank and consistency in policy.

Kenya's fuel crisis is not a logistical blip. It is a leadership failure dressed in economic language — and ordinary citizens, as usual, are settling the bill.

By Oliver Ogutu, Rongo University

SPORTS
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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *Arsenal moved closer to the Premier League title in controversial fashion as a hugely contentious decision to disallow Callum Wilson's stoppage-time goal handed the leaders a vital 1-0 win

Arsenal survive VAR drama to move closer to title with dramatic win at West Ham

Arsenal moved closer to the Premier League title in controversial fashion as a hugely contentious decision to disallow Callum Wilson's stoppage-time goal handed the leaders a vital 1-0 win against West Ham yesterday.

Mikel Arteta's side struggled to break down West Ham in a tense derby at the London Stadium before Leandro Trossard struck with a deflected effort seven minutes from full-time.

But Arsenal's title rivals Manchester City will be furious that West Ham were denied a last-gasp equaliser for Pablo's foul on Gunners keeper David Raya, whose fumble was fired home by Wilson.

Pablo had his arm across Raya's chest during the incident, but the contact was minimal, with West Ham also claiming fouls by Declan Rice and Trossard at the same time.

In what could be the defining image of the title race, referee Chris Kavanagh and the VAR officials took an age to disallow the goal, with the verdict eventually sparking outraged jeers from West Ham fans, while Arteta clenched his fists in relief.

Arsenal are five points clear of second-placed City, whose 3-0 win against Brentford on Saturday had kept the pressure on the leaders.

City can close within two points of Arsenal if they win their game in hand at home to Crystal Palace on Wednesday.

But Arsenal know they are guaranteed to seal the title if they win their last two games against Burnley and Crystal Palace.

The Gunners' mental strength has been questioned numerous times in recent years, but they showed spirit and desire in equal measure to edge ever closer to a long-awaited first title in 22 years.

Arsenal have also reached their first Champions League final



Arsenal's Belgian midfielder #19 Leandro Trossard (C) celebrates scoring the team's first goal during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Arsenal at the London Stadium, in east London

since 2006, beating Atletico Madrid in the last four on Tuesday, and will face Paris Saint-Germain in the final in Budapest on May 30.

Winning their 14th English title and a maiden Champions League crown would make it the greatest season in the club's 139-year history.

Thierry Henry, a key figure in the unbeaten "Invincibles" side who were the last Arsenal team to win the title in 2003-04, recently said Arteta's squad would be known as the "unforgettables" if they lift both trophies.

For the thousands of Arsenal supporters crammed into one end of the London Stadium, this was a result they will never forget if the title is secured over the next two weeks.

Third-bottom West Ham's hopes of avoiding relegation are fading.

They are one point behind fourth-bottom Tottenham, who

can take a huge step towards survival if they beat host Leeds on Monday.

Trossard went close for Arsenal from an early corner, his close-range header well saved by Mads Hermansen before the winger headed the rebound onto the crossbar.

Arsenal suffered a blow when Ben White limped off midway through the half, forcing Rice to move from midfield to a makeshift right-back role.

After being penned in for so long, West Ham were inches away from taking a shock lead just before half-time.

Valentin Castellanos threw himself at Aaron Wan-Bissaka's cross with a diving header that Raya saved at full stretch.

Arsenal had lost control of the game with Rice out of position, and Arteta responded at the break, sending on Cristhian Mosquera so the England star could return to midfield.

Even that couldn't shift the momentum back in Arsenal's favour.

Raya made a brilliant save to keep Arsenal level, sticking out his foot to block Mateus Fernandes' shot after the midfielder looked certain to score from five yards.

It was a priceless contribution as Arsenal netted in the 83rd minute.

Martin Odegaard played a one-two with Rice and cleverly worked the pass into Trossard, whose strike from 12 yards took a hefty deflection on its way past Hermansen.

There was nearly a sting in the tale for Arsenal when Wilson lashed in Raya's drop, but VAR came to the Gunners' rescue, leaving them three wins from immortality.

AFP

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *The 2026 World Cup will feature a trilogy of opening ceremonies, with each of the host countries - Mexico, the United States and Canada - getting its turn at a star-studded celebration.

World Cup to hold trio of star-studded opening ceremonies



Fifa President Gianni Infantino

The 2026 World Cup will feature a trilogy of opening ceremonies, with each of the host countries - Mexico, the United States and Canada - getting its turn at a star-studded celebration.

Global music stars including Katy Perry, Future, Alanis Morissette, Michael Buble, J Balvin and Lisa will feature, world governing body FIFA confirmed on Friday.

Mexico will get the party started, 90 minutes before the kickoff of the tournament's first match between Mexico and South Africa on June 11 at Azteca Stadium, renamed Mexico City Stadium for the tournament.

The show will feature Colombian megstar J Balvin, multi-Grammy-award-winning Mexican rock band Mana, and pop star Alejandro Fernandez, the son of legendary ranchero king Vicente Fernandez.

Mexico's Latino pop princess

Belinda and singer-songwriter Lila Downs are on board, along with South African singer-songwriter Tyla and Los Angeles Azules, who play in the traditional Mexican cumbia style.

"The world will share this moment and that's how this tournament will begin," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a statement.

"Starting with Mexico City and continuing the next days with Toronto and Los Angeles, these ceremonies will bring together music, culture and football in a way that reflects both the individuality of each nation and the unity that defines this tournament," Infantino said. "It is a powerful way to begin a truly global celebration."

Canada will face Bosnia and Herzegovina in that host's opening match on June 12 in Toronto, with singers Morissette, Buble, Alessia Cara, Elyanna, Jessie

Reyez and Nora Fatehi among the artists to be featured.

Organizers promise a "journey across Canada, as the countdown unfolds through moments that reflect the country from coast to coast."

Later on the same day the United States open their campaign against Paraguay in Los Angeles, where it will be another massive sports crossover moment for pop megastar Perry -- who headlined the Super Bowl halftime show in 2015.

She'll be joined by rapper Future, Lisa of K-pop band Blackpink, Brazilian superstar Anitta, Rema and Tyla, with additional artists still to be announced, FIFA said.

"This opening ceremony in Los Angeles represents the extraordinary scale of what the FIFA World Cup 2026 will become," Infantino said.

"The lineup of artists reflects

the cultural diversity of the United States and the vibrancy of its many diasporas, highlighting the nation's rich influence on music, entertainment and pop culture, while showcasing the power of music to bring people together across the country."

Other global artists who are set to get the sprawling, nearly six-week long football spectacle off to a spectacular start include Venezuelan reggaeton star Danny Ocean and Bangladeshi-American Sanjoy, a Los Angeles-based DJ set to appear.

Organizers say fans will have an "active role to play" in the shows and encouraged them to arrive early.

"Across time zones and borders, the celebrations are united by one central idea: a shared heartbeat," FIFA's statement said.

AFP

SPORTS NEWS



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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



My Uzbek Language, My Native Language



By: Karomova Nilufar Isomiddinovna
@themtkenyatimes

My Uzbek language, my native tongue,

It is a heritage from our ancestors. It has been refined through generations,

My Uzbek language, from the past, Speaks with deep and unique wisdom.

We exist, the Uzbeks exist, And my mother tongue will never perish.

Today, the status and importance of our language among the world's languages is steadily increasing. This is directly connected to the development of our country and the strengthening of cultural relations with other nations. Every nation has its own language, and we also have our mother tongue.

Currently, around 7,000 languages exist in the world, and they are classified into several language families such as Indo-European, Turkic, Sino-Tibetan, and others. For example, Uzbek, Turkish, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Tatar, Uyghur, Bashkir, Azerbaijani, Karakalpak, Bulgarian, and several other languages belong to the same family known as the Turkic language family.

Just as related people descend from a common ancestor, related languages also originate from a single ancestral language. As can be seen, the Uzbek language belongs to the Turkic language family and, as the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan, continues to develop freely and steadily.

Every language has its own history, destiny, and role in the life of society. Languages differ from one another in terms of origin, structure, social function, writing system, and number of speakers. Throughout its long historical development, the Uzbek language has maintained close contact with Arabic and Persian languages.

The development of the Uzbek language has passed through three major historical stages:

The ancient Turkic language period
The Old Uzbek language period
The Modern Uzbek language period

Many scholars have conducted research on the Uzbek language and

have studied it in two main branches of linguistics: general linguistics and applied (or specific) linguistics. Our textbooks mainly provide knowledge based on applied linguistics.

In this regard, organizing student learning in mother tongue lessons involves observing linguistic phenomena, comparing them with one another, and guiding students toward general rules and conclusions. Through proper learning of the mother tongue, students develop independent and creative thinking, gain communication skills, and form creative abilities.

Developing students' creative thinking in literature lessons is one of the main responsibilities of teachers. When interactive teaching methods are used, students develop skills such as independent thinking, analysis, drawing conclusions, expressing opinions, healthy communication, discussion, and evaluating situations.

Another important advantage of creativity is interdisciplinary connection, which broadens students' thinking scope and improves their communicative competence.

The quality and effectiveness of mother tongue education are also closely connected to the knowledge level of primary school teachers. If a student does not pay serious attention to handwriting or reading fluency in primary education, or if the teacher does not strongly emphasize these skills, can a language teacher in higher grades successfully teach them writing and reading?

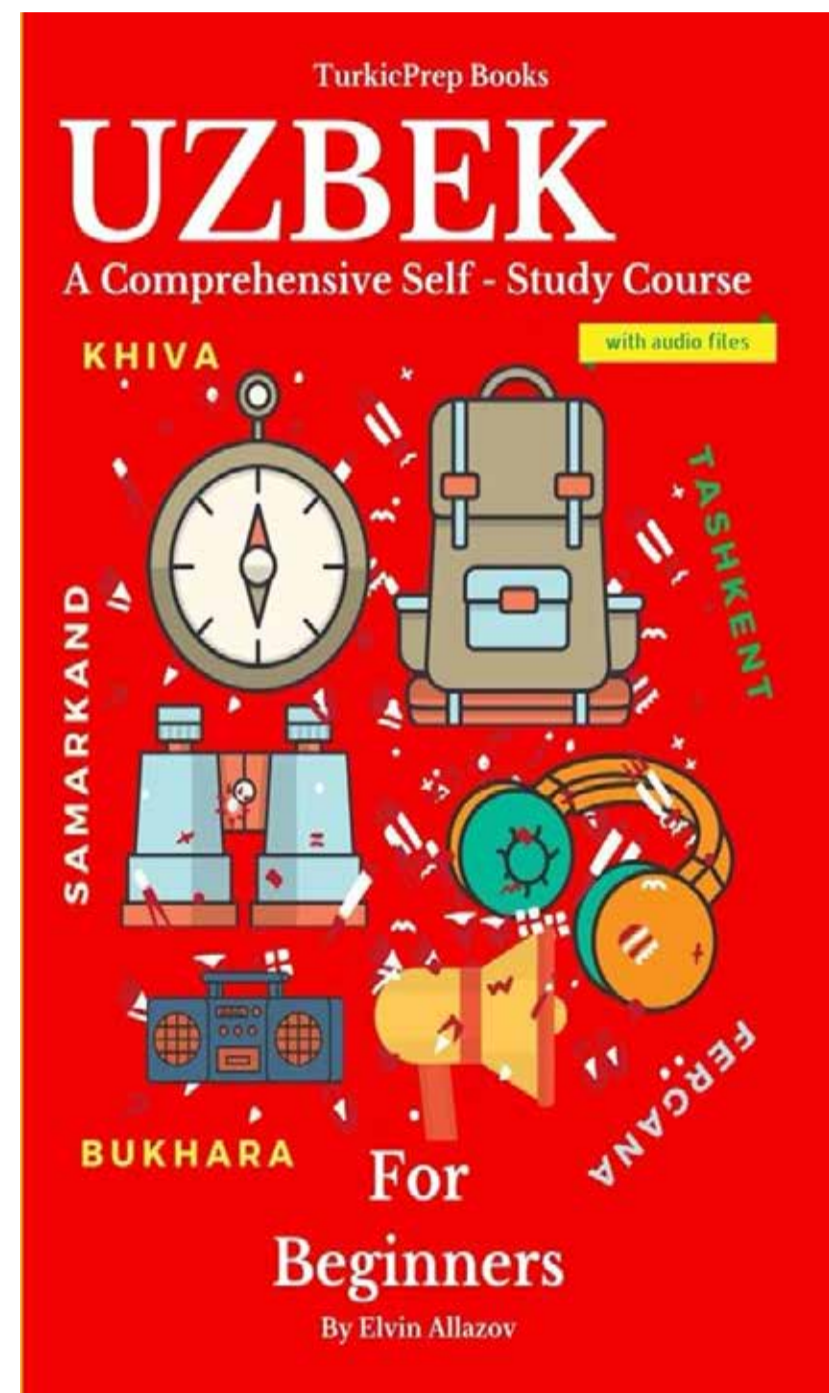
Therefore, a student's linguistic ability is largely shaped by primary school teachers. It must be emphasized that developing language sensitivity, independent work with texts, creative thinking skills, cultural speech competence, and improving literacy levels are among the most important tasks of mother tongue education.

Uzbek language and literature teacher

Kasbi District, Kashkadarya Region
School No. 16

Nilufar Karomova

Karomova Nilufar Isomiddinov-



na was born on March 15, 1976, in Khoja Kasbi village, Kasbi district, Kashkadarya region, in an intellectual family. In 1998, she graduated from the Uzbek Philology Faculty of Karshi State University. Since 1996, she has been working as a teacher of Mother Tongue and Literature at School No. 16 in Kasbi district. She has been active as a creative and free-thinking educator.

In 2021, she was awarded the commemorative badge "Educator of Education" by the journal Education in

Uzbekistan. In 2022, she received the CIS commemorative badge "For Services in Science". Her works have been published in district, regional, and republican collections of creative teachers. In 2023, she became a member of the "Dormon Creators Club". In 2024, she participated in the "Follower of the Great Jadids" competition and was awarded a badge, diploma, and gifts.