



**Ruto pushes Coast transformation with land, development drive**  
 President William Ruto has intensified his development tour of the Coast region, unveiling a sweeping package of land reforms, infrastructure projects, and economic investments **Page 11**



**Kagwe pushes tea value addition to boost farmer earnings**  
 The Government has intensified calls for value addition in the tea sector, with Agriculture and Livestock Development CS Mutahi Kagwe urging Parliament to enact sweeping laws banning the export of raw agricultural produce **Page 12**

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**The Mt. Kenya Times**  
 Daily ePAPER

**GBV** According to the data, the 349 GBV cases reported to the Kenya Police Service include 154 cases of defilement, 26 rape cases, 10 gang rape cases

# Nyeri's hidden GBV crisis

A total of 349 gender-based violence (GBV) cases and 107 suicide cases have been reported in Nyeri county since 2024, underscoring growing concerns over sexual violence, mental health challenges and child protection. The figures were presented by Nyeri governor Dr Mutahi Kahiga during a Central Region stakeholders' engagement forum on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), suicide prevention, sexual offences and child protection. The meeting brought together national and county government officials, security agencies, religious leaders, civil society and development partners. According to the data, the 349 GBV cases reported to the Kenya Police Service include 154 cases of defilement, 26 rape cases, 10 gang rape cases, 7 attempted rape cases, 36 indecent assaults, 23 sexual assaults, 3 incest cases, 2 gang defilement cases, 16 murder cases linked to GBV, and 71 cases of domestic threats to kill.



Governor Mutahi Kahiga

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# International Tea Day celebrates growth and value addition

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

Kenya marked International Tea Day celebrations at Momul Tea Factory in Kericho County with renewed calls for value addition, youth involvement and reforms aimed at strengthening the tea sector.

Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe urged Parliament to enact laws banning the export of raw agricultural produce to promote local processing and create jobs for young people. He said value addition through products such as orthodox tea, green tea, purple tea and branded consumer packs would improve farmer earnings and boost Kenya's competitiveness in global markets.

Kagwe also defended the Tea Levy Regulations 2026, saying the levy would support research, branding, marketing and value addition programmes within the tea industry.

The celebrations brought together tea farmers, factory directors, regulators and industry stakeholders to recognize the sector's contribution to Kenya's economy and rural livelihoods. Kenya remains the world's leading exporter of black CTC tea, with the industry supporting millions of livelihoods directly and indirectly.

KTDA Holdings Chairman Enos Njeru described tea as a lifeline for many Kenyan families, while Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot praised KTDA for ensuring timely green leaf payments to farmers.

The event was attended by Agriculture Principal Secretary Kipronoh Ronoh, Tea Board of Kenya officials and stakeholders from across the tea value chain.



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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](http://www.mtkenyatimes.co.ke)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



The Registrar of Political Parties hosted UNDP Kenya Deputy Resident Representative Madelena Monoja and Project Manager Jane Serwanga for discussions on strengthening collaboration ahead of the 2027 General Elections. The engagement focused on promoting inclusive, transparent, and credible political processes through strategic partnerships. Key areas highlighted included democratic governance, civic participation, and institutional capacity building within Kenya's political system. Both parties emphasized the importance of cooperation in enhancing electoral integrity and supporting reforms that strengthen democratic institutions in preparation for the 2027 polls.



The High Court in Embu has upheld the election of Leonard Wa Muthende Njeru as the duly elected Member of Parliament for Mbeere North constituency, dismissing a petition that had challenged his victory. The petition was filed by his closest rival in the by-election, who alleged irregularities in the electoral process.

Delivering the judgment, Justice Richard Mwongo found that the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) candidate's win was valid and that the election was conducted in substantial compliance with the law. According to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) results, Njeru garnered 15,342 votes, defeating his main challenger, Newton Karis who received 13,870 votes, while other candidates trailed further behind.

The court directed that the ruling be transmitted to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Moses Wetang'ula, for necessary parliamentary action. The decision confirms the earlier IEBC declaration and settles the dispute, allowing Njeru to continue serving as the Mbeere North MP.

Kajiado County Director for Agriculture Victoria Nthenya explains to farmers the importance of planting drought-tolerant crops like sorghum. Speaking during a farmer field day at Maparasha in Kajiado Central, Nthenya urged farmers to adopt drought-tolerant and early-maturing crops such as sorghum, millet, green grams, cowpeas, and pigeon peas to reduce the risk of crop failure and improve household food security. She also encouraged farmers to embrace conservation agriculture practices such as mulching, minimum tillage, and fertility terraces to improve soil health and moisture retention.



Auditor General FCPA Nancy Gathungu has been re-elected as Chairperson of the AFROSAI-E Governing Board during its 22nd meeting held in Liberia. Auditor-General of Sierra Leone's Audit Service, Mr. Abdul Aziz, was elected Vice Chairperson. During the same meeting, Kenya's Office of the Auditor General was awarded the Prize for the Best Performance Audit Report of 2025 by the African Organisation of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E). The award recognised an outstanding audit that demonstrated the role of performance auditing in strengthening accountability and improving public service delivery. The award was received by Auditor-General Nancy Gathungu on behalf of the Office.



The Chairperson, Commission on Administrative Justice (Ombudsman) Charles Dulo yesterday held a consultative meeting with the Nyandarua County Executive to review progress in developing a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and an Access to Information law. The initiative aims to improve resolution of citizens' complaints and strengthen the public's right to information as part of the Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) programme under the National Treasury. The Commission pledged support in training county officers, domesticating the grievance policy, and implementing the access to information framework. The county delegation included officials from agriculture, legal, and county attorney offices.



An elderly woman undergoing an eye checkup during the Madaktari Mashinani (Doctors at the Grassroots) Initiative at Kianjokoma Sub-County Hospital organised by the County Government of Embu. Health experts appealed to local residents to adopt a proactive health-seeking lifestyle to curb rising cases of life-threatening complications resulting from delayed diagnosis. They particularly asked them to be on the lookout for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes and cancers that usually present no signs during the early stages. The County Head of Primary Health Care, Dr Mercy Wanjala, said early screening and testing remain the most effective defense against these "silent killer" ailments that are on the rise.

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**GBV** He attributed the rising cases to a combination of factors including mental health challenges

# Mutahi Kahiga: 349 GBV Cases, 107 Suicides Reported in the county in two years

BY WMW

@themtkenyatimes

A total of 349 gender-based violence (GBV) cases and 107 suicide cases have been reported in Nyeri county since 2024, underscoring growing concerns over sexual violence, mental health challenges and child protection.

The figures were presented by Nyeri governor Dr Mutahi Kahiga during a Central Region stakeholders' engagement forum on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), suicide prevention, sexual offences and child protection.

The meeting brought together national and county government officials, security agencies, religious leaders, civil society and development partners.

According to the data, the 349 GBV cases reported to the Kenya Police Service include 154 cases of defilement, 26 rape cases, 10 gang rape cases, 7 attempted rape cases, 36 indecent assaults, 23 sexual assaults, 3 incest cases, 2 gang defilement cases, 16 murder cases linked to GBV, and 71 cases of domestic threats to kill.

On suicide, 107 cases were recorded between June 2024 and May 2026. The cases involved 81 males and 26 females, with victims aged between 11 and 88 years.

The Nyeri Governor who

joined Gender Principal Secretary Ann Wang'ombe and other senior officials at the forum, said the figures reflect a deepening social crisis affecting individuals, families and communities.

He noted that behind every statistic is a human story of pain, trauma and loss.

He attributed the rising cases to a combination of factors including mental health challenges, depression, drug and substance abuse, unemployment, family conflict, harmful cultural practices and weakening community support systems.

The Governor warned that the situation requires urgent, coordinated and multi-sectoral intervention, involving both national and county governments, security agencies, schools, health institutions, civil society and religious organizations.

He also pointed to persistent challenges such as underreporting of cases, inadequate funding, limited safe spaces for survivors, rising mental health needs and increasing demand for youth empowerment programmes.

He called for strengthened collaboration through an enhanced SGBV technical working group and improved survivor support systems. He also proposed a 90-day Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) to fast-track interventions and improve response mechanisms.

"We must all play our part



PS Ann Wang'ombe

in building safe homes, safe schools and safe communities," he said, urging communities to support survivors and ensure access to justice and protection services.

The Gender PS who presided over the broader Central Region multi-agency engagement at Nyeri National Polytechnic, said the forum aimed to strengthen coordinated action and practical interventions to address SGBV, suicide and child protection violations.

She said the initiative aligns with a 90-day rapid response framework designed to enhance inter-agency coordination and improve prevention and response systems across the region.

The forum also brought to-

gether officials from Nyeri, Murang'a, Kiambu, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua counties, alongside National Government Administration Officers, police commanders and gender directors.

Participants emphasized the need for a whole-of-society approach combining enforcement, community sensitization, education, mental health support and social protection systems.

The meeting proposed a renewed commitments to strengthen partnerships and implement sustained interventions aimed at reducing violence, improving mental health support and safeguarding vulnerable groups across the Central region.

## Kenya plans paperless exams to slash billions in annual printing costs



Dr Elyas Abdi with other stakeholders. | Photo: Courtesy.

BY KNA

@themtkenyatimes

The Ministry of Education is planning to phase out paper-based examinations across the education system in the coming years, in a sweeping reform aimed at reducing the billions of shillings spent annually on printing and administering national tests.

Dr Elyas Abdi, the Director General for Basic Education, said the ambitious plan would partner with the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) to introduce electronic assessment of learners as part of wider reforms to streamline the education sector.

"Exams in this country have been an expensive affair, and paperless exams seek to address this in the coming years," Dr Abdi said.

The council's annual requirement for school examination and invigilation has been pegged at KSh12.5 billion,

whilst budget allocations have repeatedly fallen far short of that figure.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, KNEC recorded a deficit of KSh3.7 billion in administering national examinations, a shortfall that nearly paralysed the body and prompted urgent intervention by Parliament.

Budget projections for 2026/27 show that administering school exams and invigilation will require KSh14.7 billion, yet only KSh9.9 billion has been proposed, leaving a deficit of KSh4.82 billion.

Part of the cost burden has historically been driven by the practice of printing exam papers abroad.

For many years, KNEC has outsourced the printing of examination booklets and optical mark recognition forms to foreign security printers, a practice that education stakeholders have criticised for being expensive and logistically cumbersome.

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## Judiciary opens Tribunal services centre in Nyeri



From left; Ann Asugag, Isaac Rutto and Jacqueline Ingutiah in Nyeri yesterday. | Photo: Courtesy.

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

The Judiciary has launched a Tribunal Shared Services Centre in Nyeri to improve access to justice and strengthen the delivery of tribunal services across the Mount Kenya region.

The centre, which brings together 28 tribunals previously operating separately is expected to serve Nyeri and surrounding areas that include Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Nyandarua and Laikipia counties.

Speaking during the launch, Judicial Service Commissioner Jacqueline Ingutiah said the initiative is designed to bring services closer to the people and enhance efficiency in dispute resolution.

She noted that tribunals continue to play a key role in delivering justice, particularly in commercial, land, tenancy and tax-related matters.

She revealed that in the last three quarters alone, 10,296 matters were filed across 27 tribunals, while 10,699 cases were concluded. However, 10,959 cases remain pending, reflecting both increased public confidence and workload pressures within the tribunal system.

"These are not just statistics. Behind every file is a citizen seeking justice and fairness," she said, adding that the system must remain

responsive, timely and accessible.

Judicial Service Commission Vice Chairperson Isaac Rutto said efficient tribunals are essential in supporting economic growth by resolving disputes faster and unlocking funds tied up in litigation. He urged continued reforms to improve efficiency across the justice system.

Registrar of Tribunals Ann Asugah said the Shared Services model is part of an ongoing reform programme that began in Nairobi and later expanded to Kisumu. She said the initiative has proven successful in improving accessibility, reducing travel burdens for litigants, and enhancing service delivery through both physical and digital platforms.

The Nyeri centre will operate as a hybrid access hub, offering walk-in services while also supporting Judiciary e-filing systems, virtual hearings, and online case tracking.

It is designed to assist users who may lack digital access or technical skills, while also improving overall efficiency.

Officials said the model has already shown strong public uptake in previous locations, with increased demand for registry support services, digital assistance, and public inquiries.

The Judiciary said the expansion of shared tribunal services is aimed at improving transparency, reducing case backlogs, and ensuring faster resolution of disputes.



Some of the stakeholders who attended the launching ceremony.



Eng. Wangai Ndirangu addressing residents of Mbiriri. Photo/Courtesy.

## Eng Wangai Ndirangu pushes for Nyeri leather industry

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyaintimes

Former KeNHA chairman and Nyeri gubernatorial aspirant Eng. Wangai Ndirangu has called for increased investment in value addition and manufacturing, saying Nyeri County has the potential to become a major leather production hub.

Speaking during a leaders' meeting in Mbiriri, Kieni constituency, Wangai said areas such as Kieni have enormous livestock potential that remains largely underutilized despite the county having large numbers of cattle and sheep.

He noted that farmers continue to earn little from selling live animals while other regions and countries benefit from processing hides into high-value leather products such as belts, shoes and bags.

"Right now, we sell the animal, someone else takes the hide, someone else processes the leather, and someone else sells the finished products at many times the original value. That cycle must end," he said.

The aspirant said his vision is to establish a leather processing industry within Nyeri starting with

Kieni, where most livestock farming takes place. He said the county should focus on producing and branding finished leather goods locally for both domestic and export markets.

"The dream is to make Nyeri a hub for value addition, importing nothing we can make ourselves," Wangai stated.

“

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**The aspirant said his vision is to establish a leather processing industry within Nyeri starting with Kieni, where most livestock farming takes place. He said the county should focus on producing and branding finished leather goods locally for both domestic and export markets.**

He observed that the global demand for quality leather products continues to grow and argued that Nyeri already possesses the raw materials needed to build a competitive leather industry capable of creating jobs and increasing farmer earnings.

Wangai also emphasized the need to empower young people through industrialization and entrepreneurship opportunities.

He said Nyeri has more than 203,000 youths, whom he described as the county's greatest strength and a key driver of economic transformation.

"Our youth are not tomorrow's leaders. They are today's leaders waiting for opportunity, trust and a seat at the table," he said during another engagement at Kiamuiru Primary School in Nyeri Town constituency.

The gubernatorial aspirant said he wants to see young people leading businesses, innovating and participating in decision-making processes instead of waiting for opportunities later in life.

He maintained that investment in local manufacturing and value addition would help tackle unemployment while stimulating economic growth across the county.

**Peace** This year's retreat is themed "Powering Ceasefires, National Dialogue and Reconciliation for Durable Peace," and focuses on enhancing African-led solutions to conflict resolution

# Uhuru joins African leaders in push for continental peace

BY WMW

@themkenyatomtimes

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday joined senior African leaders, diplomats, peace envoys and policymakers at the opening of the 17th high-level retreat on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa held in Libreville, Gabon.

The two-day forum, convened by the African Union Commission (AUC), brought together former heads of state, AU representatives, regional organisations and United Nations envoys to deliberate on strategies for preventing conflict and strengthening peacebuilding efforts across the continent.

This year's retreat is themed "Powering Ceasefires, National Dialogue and Reconciliation for Durable Peace," and focuses on enhancing African-led solutions to conflict resolution, mediation, reconciliation and long-term stability.

Discussions are expected to centre on how African institutions can better coordinate responses to emerging



President (rtd) Uhuru Kenyatta addressing the conference. | Photo: Courtesy

and ongoing conflicts, while reinforcing national dialogue processes and supporting post-conflict recovery efforts. The retreat also seeks to build stronger partnerships between the African Union, regional economic blocs and international partners in addressing insecurity hotspots across the continent.

Uhuru who serves as one of the African Union's peace envoys, has in recent years played a key role in mediation efforts in several regional conflicts, including engagements in the Great Lakes region.

His participation underscores the AU's continued reliance on former African leaders to support high-level diplomatic interventions and peace negotiations.

Also attending the retreat are African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf and several former African heads of state, including Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, Domitien Ndayizeye of Burundi, Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia, and Patrice Émery Trovoada of São Tomé and Príncipe.

Participants noted that the continent continues to face complex security challenges ranging from armed conflicts and political instability to terrorism, intercommunal violence and governance crises. The retreat therefore seeks to strengthen early warning systems, preventive diplomacy and sustained reconciliation frameworks.

The African Union has in recent years intensified efforts to prioritise African-led solutions to African problems, emphasizing dialogue over military intervention and promoting inclusive governance as a

pathway to sustainable peace.

Leaders at the forum are expected to share experiences from different regions and propose coordinated mechanisms to support ceasefire agreements, national dialogue processes and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives.

The Libreville retreat is part of ongoing continental efforts to reinforce peace architecture frameworks under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which guides conflict prevention, management and resolution across AU member states.

The discussions are expected to continue over the two-day meeting, culminating in recommendations aimed at strengthening continental cooperation on peace and security, while reinforcing the role of African leadership in resolving conflicts within the continent.



Some of the delegates in yesterday's forum.

**Crisis** A Cabinet Secretary's extraordinary public outburst lays bare the fault lines running through Ruto's broad-based government

## Oparanya demands KSh200M as ministry crisis deepens

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatomtimes

Co-operatives and MSMEs Development Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya stunned a parliamentary committee yesterday when he declared he would no longer tolerate being reduced to a "beggar" within President William Ruto's government, demanding Ksh.200 million in operational funding and questioning whether his office was even recognised as part of the administration.

The outburst, delivered before the Departmental Committee on Trade, Industry and Co-operatives during budget estimates hearings for the 2026/27 financial year, was remarkable in its candour — a sitting Cabinet Secretary publicly airing grievances that most ministers confine to private corridors. Oparanya ap-

peared alongside Principal Secretaries Susan Mang'eni, who oversees MSMEs, and Patrick Kilemi, who handles Co-operatives, making the nature of his complaint all the more striking: he has been reduced, he said, to asking his own subordinates for money.

"I have to come here all the time to get money for my office's operations," he told the committee, his frustration barely contained. "I don't know if my office is recognised as one of the offices of CS in this government or not. I don't want to continue being a beggar from my juniors. I hope you've heard that." He revealed that on multiple occasions, when travelling on official duties, he has been stranded without fuel — forced to telephone either Mang'eni or Kilemi because they, as accounting officers, hold the authority to approve expenditure that he, nominally

their superior, does not.

The committee heard him. Whether the Treasury will is another matter.

Beyond the personal grievance, Oparanya made a substantive case for his ministry. He argued that co-operatives remain one of the most effective mechanisms for linking small-scale farmers to stronger markets, and called for renewed investment in MSME programmes including the Uwezo Fund, the NYOTA initiative, Kenya Industrial Estates, Constituency Industrial Development Centres, and the East African Community MSME Trade Fair — instruments he said have proven their capacity to expand market access for Kenya's most economically vulnerable entrepreneurs.

The political subtext, however, is what will draw the sharpest scrutiny. Oparanya is one of the ODM figures who crossed into Ruto's broad-based



Co-operatives and MSMEs Development Cabinet Secretary Wycliffe Oparanya

government following the post-election political accommodation — an arrangement always built on pragmatism rather than ideology, and one whose strains are now increasingly visible. Speaking in Busia County on May 10, he acknowledged the growing difficulty of selling President Ruto's agenda in Western Kenya amid ODM's internal divisions. "They are

making our work of popularising the President very difficult," he said. "We want all of us to be together."

A Cabinet Secretary stranded without fuel money is a powerful symbol of a coalition running on empty.

Someone in government needs to start listening.

Tea KTDA remains focused on protecting farmer earnings, improving operational efficiency, strengthening sustainability initiatives and expanding opportunities

# KTDA celebrates farmers on International Tea Day

*Enos Njeru leads KTDA in saluting farmers as the tea sector records strong growth*

BY WMW  
@themkenyatimes

Tea remains one of Kenya's most important economic pillars, supporting millions of livelihoods and sustaining rural communities across the country.

As the world marked International Tea Day, KTDA Holdings chairman Enos Njeru praised Kenyan tea farmers and stakeholders for their continued dedication in keeping the country among the world's leading tea exporters.

In a statement, the chairman described tea as "more than a crop," saying it is a lifeline for

many Kenyan families and a symbol of national pride.

"As we mark International Tea Day, we celebrate our hardworking farmers, factory directors, employees, partners and all stakeholders whose dedication continues to make Kenyan tea a global symbol of quality and pride," said Njeru.

He noted that KTDA remains focused on protecting farmer earnings, improving operational efficiency, strengthening sustainability initiatives and expanding opportunities across the tea value chain.

"By optimizing our entire value chain, we ensure that a greater share of the returns

goes directly where it matters most; into the pockets of our farmers and the growth of our local communities," he said.

Njeru further lauded the resilience of the tea sector despite global economic challenges, noting that Kenyan tea continues to stand out because of its quality and the discipline of local farmers.

The remarks come at a time when Kenya's tea industry is showing signs of strong recovery and expansion.

According to the Tea Board of Kenya's 2025 industry report, the sector recorded a total marketed value of Sh218.79 billion, driven by increased export volumes and



Mr Enos Njeru

expanded international markets. Export earnings rose to about KSh186.9 billion, with export volumes increasing to 652.8 million kilogrammes.

Kenya also expanded its tea exports to 100 global destinations, up from 96 markets previously, with key buyers including Pakistan, Egypt, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Russia.

Industry stakeholders have,

however, continued to raise concerns over global market disruptions, fluctuating auction prices and logistical challenges affecting exports to Middle East markets.

Despite these challenges, KTDA says the future of Kenyan tea remains strong, anchored on quality production, value addition and sustainable farming practices.

"Together, we continue to

grow not just tea, but communities, livelihoods, national pride and a heritage that transcends decades and continents," Njeru said.

KTDA manages tea factories serving hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers across Kenya and remains one of the country's largest players in the tea industry.

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**Politics** Ruto said the initiative was part of his commitment to resolving the decades-old squatter problem in the region.

# Ruto pushes Coast transformation with land, development drive

BY PCS and WMW

@themkenyatimes

President William Ruto has intensified his development tour of the Coast region, unveiling a sweeping package of land reforms, infrastructure projects, and economic investments aimed at addressing long-standing historical injustices and accelerating regional transformation.

Yesterday, the President began a five-day tour by issuing more than 33,000 title deeds to residents from Lamu, Tana River, Kilifi, Mombasa, Kwale, and Taita-Taveta counties at Mama Ngina Drive in Mombasa. The titles cover land in areas including Kilifi/Weru Ranch, Mwele Simakeni, Msabaha, Ka Dzandani, Wachu Kordentu, and Ronge Juu Registration Unit.

Ruto said the initiative was part of his commitment to resolving the decades-old squatter problem in the region. "Today, we are here to address the challenge of squatters, citizens who live in fear of being evicted. It is a commitment I made and it is a commitment I intend to keep," he said.

He added that in the past three years, the government has issued 1.5 million title deeds nationwide, with 381,000 benefiting Coast residents. An additional 200,000 titles are being processed and are expected within 90 days, benefiting over one million people.

The President directed the Ministry of Lands to speed up adjudication and subdivision processes, noting that several settlements, including Ronge Juu in Taita-Taveta, had waited nearly 60 years for formal recognition. He also announced ongoing adjudication in areas such

as Vigurungani, Mtaa, Mazola, Chengoni, Bofu, Gandini, Kitengwani, Mihirini, Mwembe Kati, Tsangalaweni, Kalia Ngombe, Viragoni, Godoma, Ngoroki, Chawia, and Mu Mari.

As part of broader land reforms, the government has negotiated and acquired land in multiple areas including Kwa Punda, Junda, Gazi, Gombato, Shambani, Msabaha, Ganda, Takaungu, Mashamasha, Migingo, Likoni, Utange, and Bombo, benefiting thousands of families. The President said the aim is to settle squatters through dialogue rather than court disputes.

"We all agreed the solution will not be achieved through court battles but through dialogue," he said, adding that land must become a source of prosperity, not conflict.

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki said the government had fulfilled its promise to provide a "land answer" for the Coast, while leaders including Senate Speaker Amason Kingi, Cabinet Secretaries Ali Hassan Joho and Salim Mvurya, and governors from the region praised the initiative as historic.

Later, the President said the government is implementing transformative projects across the Coast to ensure equitable development. He cited investments in roads, electricity, fisheries, ports, affordable housing, water projects, and special economic zones.

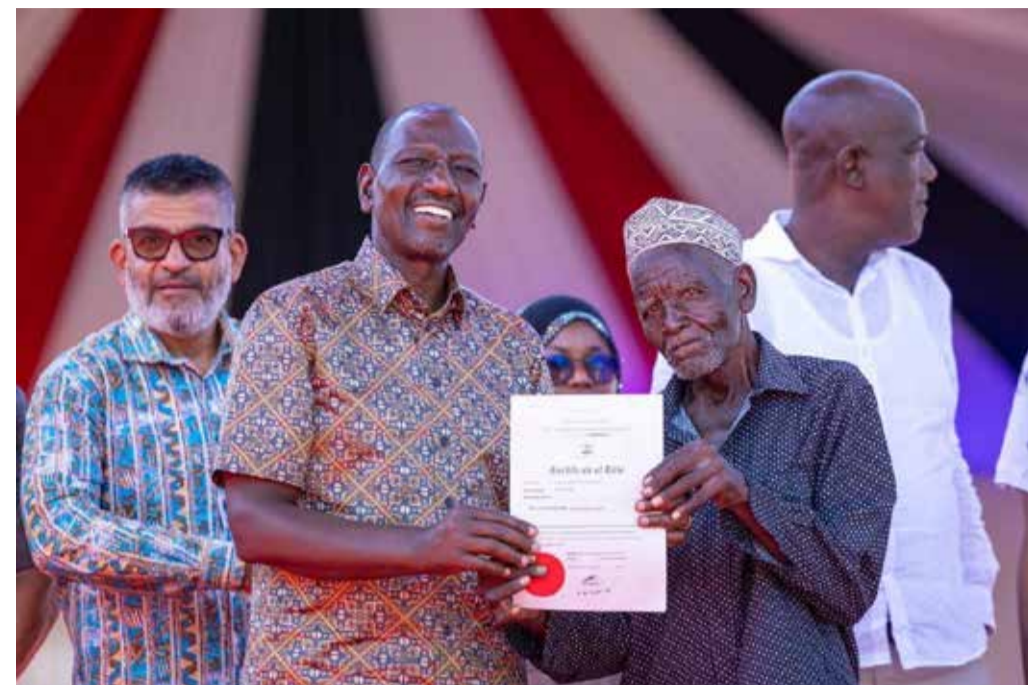
He highlighted over KSh5 billion invested in fisheries infrastructure, including five fish landing sites worth KSh820 million and 272 fishing boats distributed in partnership with county governments. He also noted expansion of port operations in Mombasa and major investments in the blue economy.

The government has allocat-

ed KSh50 billion for the Donjo Kundu Special Economic Zone and is developing the KSh40 billion Vipingo SEZ. In addition, KSh1.4 billion has been invested in a mariculture centre to boost fish production.

On infrastructure, Ruto announced ongoing and planned construction of modern stadiums including Voi Stadium, a KSh1.4 billion stadium in Mombasa, and a KSh1 billion facility in Kilifi. He also revealed a KSh3 billion plan for a new Likoni ferry and KSh500 million for Mtongwe mobility upgrades.

In housing and social services, the government is investing KSh15 billion in affordable housing, markets, and student hostels in Kwale County, alongside construction of modern markets such as Diani and Kinango. A Level Four hospital in Samburu,



President William Ruto presenting a Title Deed to one of the beneficiaries. | Photo: Courtesy.

Kwale, is also planned at a cost of KSh420 million.

On water and electricity, Mwache Dam is 70 percent complete while Pemba Dam is ready. The government has also launched last-mile connectivity projects and connected 12,000 households in Kwale, with plans to add 15,000 more. Roads such as Kwale-Kinango are also under construction.

Ruto also defended his administration against critics, accusing opposition leaders of spreading ethnic divisions. He warned against political

blackmail and ethnic profiling, saying the government would not tolerate attempts to destabilize national unity.

"We cannot allow you to blackmail anybody in Kenya," he said.

Deputy President Kindiki and other leaders praised the administration's development record, while Governors Abdulswamad Nassir, Gideon Mung'aro, Fatuma Achani, Andrew Mwadime, and Dhadho Godhana said the Coast was finally receiving long-awaited investments.

The President further an-

nounced that 30 percent of all title deeds issued in the last three years have gone to Coast residents, underscoring what he called deliberate efforts to correct historical injustices.

He urged residents to support ongoing reforms, saying, "The Coast will no longer be discriminated against. We will transform the region as we transform the rest of the country."

The tour continues across the region with additional development engagements expected in Lamu, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita-Taveta counties.



President William Ruto, his Deputy Kithure Kindiki and other leaders inspecting one of the roads under construction in the coast region.

**Tea** “These realities call upon us to embrace innovation, diversification, strategic reforms and stronger collaboration across the entire tea value chain,” Gachagua said

# Kagwe pushes tea value addition to boost farmer earnings

BY WMW

@themkenyaintimes

The Government has intensified calls for value addition in the tea sector, with Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe urging Parliament to enact sweeping laws banning the export of raw agricultural produce in a move aimed at creating jobs, increasing farmer earnings and strengthening Kenya's position in global markets.

Speaking during the International Tea Day celebrations held at Momul Tea Factory in Kericho County, Kagwe said Kenya must shift from exporting raw commodities to processing and branding products locally in order to maximize economic returns from agriculture.

The CS said value addition within the tea sector would not only improve farmer incomes but also create millions of employment opportunities for young people through manufacturing, packaging, marketing, logistics and agribusiness innovation.

“We must increasingly move towards orthodox teas, specialty teas, green teas, purple teas, herbal blends, branded consumer packs, tea bags and other innovative tea products that attract premium prices in international markets,” Kagwe said.

He noted that Kenya's continued overreliance on black CTC tea and a limited number of export markets had exposed the industry to price volatility and external market shocks, underscoring the need for diversification and modernization.

The celebrations held under the theme “Fostering Growth and Inclusion,” brought together the sector stakeholders who included farmers, factory directors, traders, regulators, machinery suppliers,

researchers, development partners and government officials.

He said the tea sector remains one of Kenya's most strategic agricultural industries, supporting millions of livelihoods directly and indirectly through farming, manufacturing, transport and trade. Kenya remains the world's leading exporter of black CTC tea, with its products enjoying strong international recognition due to quality, flavour and consistency.

However, Kagwe acknowledged that the industry continues to face major challenges, including declining global tea prices, rising production costs, climate change, sustainability requirements, geopolitical disruptions affecting trade and the high cost of value addition.

“These realities call upon us to embrace innovation, diversification, strategic reforms and stronger collaboration across the entire tea value chain,” he said.

The CS also defended the Tea Levy Regulations 2026, saying the levy is intended to support critical sector functions such as marketing, branding, research, innovation, traceability systems, sustainability compliance and global promotion of Kenya tea.

“The Government assures all stakeholders that this initiative is not intended to impose unnecessary burdens on farmers or businesses, but rather to strategically reinvest in the growth, protection and competitiveness of the tea sector,” he said.

Kagwe warned factory directors against frustrating reforms through endless court battles and accused some leaders within the sector of reckless borrowing and misuse of farmers' resources.

At the same time, he called on Kenyan families to allow young people greater access

to land and agribusiness opportunities, saying the future of agriculture depends on attracting youth through innovation, investment and modern farming practices.

The Government, he added, is aligning tea sector reforms with President William Ruto's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda through increased farmer earnings, agro-industrialization, climate-smart agriculture and export expansion into markets in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and North America.

Climate change also featured prominently during the celebrations, with Kagwe emphasizing the need for environmental conservation, water management, renewable energy adoption and sustainable land-use practices in tea-growing areas.

Tea Board of Kenya officials led by CEO Willy Mutai said the celebrations highlighted Kenya's growing focus on innovation, sustainability and market competitiveness.



CS Mutahi Kagwe addressing the International Tea Day participants at Momul Tea Factory, Kericho county yesterday | Photo: Courtesy

Mutai noted that the sector remains a major driver of livelihoods, rural development and foreign exchange earnings, adding that the board remains committed to positioning Kenyan tea as a premium global brand.

KTDA Holdings Chairman Enos Njeru described tea as more than just a commercial crop, saying it remains a lifeline for millions of Kenyan families.

“Tea is not just a business to our farmers. It is school fees. It is healthcare. It is food on the table. It is dignity. It is hope for the next generation,” Njeru said.

He praised farmers, facto-

ry directors, employees and stakeholders for sustaining Kenya's global reputation as a producer of high-quality tea.

Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot who also attended the event commended KTDA for ensuring prompt green leaf payments to farmers, noting that reliable monthly earnings had significantly improved farmers' confidence in the sector.

“Receiving earnings reliably by the 5th of every month marks a significant milestone for our farmers. We have come a long way, and the future looks even brighter,” Cheruiyot said.

The event was also attend-

ed by Principal Secretary for Agriculture Kipronoh Ronoh, KTDA Acting CEO Francis Miano, TBK chairman Ndung'u Gathinji, KEBS Managing Director Esther Ngari as well as board members and directors of KTDA, TBK and other affiliated organizations.

As Kenya marked International Tea Day 2026, leaders across the sector emphasized that the future of tea lies in reforms, innovation, sustainability and value addition aimed at securing better returns for farmers and sustaining the country's global leadership in tea production and trade.



CS Mutahi Kagwe being welcomed at the celebrations venue by tea sector stakeholders led by KTDA Holdings chairman Enos Njeru (3rd right).

**Mentorship** Mentorship helps people avoid common mistakes, gain clarity, sharpen their vision and receive practical support as they build sustainable futures

# Optiven CEO George Wachiuri launches mentorship programme cohort

BY WMW

@themkenyatimes

Optiven limited Chief Executive Officer Dr George Wachiuri has launched the seventh cohort of the George Wachiuri School of Mentorship, a programme aimed at empowering entrepreneurs, startups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through business training and leadership development.

The mentorship programme, established in 2020, has so far impacted more than 1,000 alumni across the world through six previous cohorts. According to Wachiuri, the initiative seeks to nurture the next generation of business and community leaders by offering practical guidance on entrepreneurship, leadership, branding and personal growth.

Yesterday, Dr Wachiuri said the six-month mentorship programme that will start on July 14 is designed to help entrepreneurs stabilize and

grow their businesses, create jobs and positively contribute to the economy.

“Growth becomes easier when you learn from experience. Mentorship helps people avoid common mistakes, gain clarity, sharpen their vision and receive practical support as they build sustainable futures,” he said.

The programme targets entrepreneurs, professionals, startups and MSMEs seeking to strengthen their businesses and leadership skills through direct engagement with mentors and exposure to business processes.

Participants will also have an opportunity to propose topics they wish to better understand and interact directly with Dr Wachiuri during the mentorship sessions.

Wachiuri, who is also an author and transformational leader, said the initiative is focused on helping young entrepreneurs build lasting legacies while improving confidence and in-

novation in the business sector.

He noted that mentorship remains a critical tool in addressing challenges facing small businesses, especially in a competitive economic environment where many startups struggle to survive beyond their early stages.

The Optiven CEO added that the programme encourages entrepreneurs to think beyond profit-making by creating employment opportunities, paying taxes and adding value to society.

The latest cohort comes at a time when many young Kenyans are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship and small businesses amid rising unemployment and economic uncertainty.

He expressed optimism that the mentorship programme would continue equipping participants with practical knowledge and networks necessary for long-term business success.

Interested participants have been encouraged to register for the pro-



Optiven limited CEO George Wachiuri presenting a certificate to one of the graduates of a past cohort | Photo: Courtesy.

gramme through the official mentorship platform as preparations begin for the new intake.

The Mt. Kenya Times

THE



## Childhood will never come back



Childhood — a garden kissed by morning light,  
Where laughter fluttered like butterflies in flight.  
Tiny feet raced through the lanes of delight,  
While stars of wonder glimmered in every night.

No clocks to chase, no storms to fear,  
Only songs of joy falling sweetly on the ear.  
The world was a rainbow painted wide and bright,  
And every little dream took wings in gentle light.

Hearts were rivers — crystal, pure, and free,  
Flowing without pride into friendship's sea.  
No masks were worn, no hatred grew,  
The soul bloomed fresh like drops of dew.

A broken toy could summon tears like rain,  
Yet moments later came smiles again.  
Grudges melted quicker than snow in spring,  
For innocence knew not the poison of sting.

Oh, those carefree evenings of dust and play,

When the sunset itself seemed reluctant to stray.  
We spoke to the moon, we danced with the breeze,  
And found endless magic in ordinary trees.

Childhood was a garden untouched by disguise,  
Where truth lived softly in sparkling eyes.  
Ego had no throne, greed had no name,  
Love was effortless — wild as a flame.

But time, the silent thief with restless feet,  
Carried those golden days beyond repeat.  
Now memories knock like echoes at the door,  
Reminding us of what returns no more.

Though years may gather like waves on the shore,  
And life may harden the tender core,  
Deep within survives that radiant spark —  
A firefly of childhood glowing through the dark.

For childhood is not merely a phase gone by,  
It is a piece of heaven no wealth can buy.  
Once it leaves, it never walks back the same way

—  
Only its fragrance in the heart will stay.

Nandini AnandKumar  
No 18, Kamarajar Street  
Neravy, Karaikal

## God's promises for us



The world may feel big and scary,  
With troubles that make us weary.  
But God gives hope, shining bright,  
A promise of love, a guiding light.

"Fear not, for I am with you," the Lord did say,  
"I am your strength, I'll guide you every day."  
(Isaiah 41:10)

When storms of doubt come our way,  
God's love will never go away.  
"He heals the brokenhearted, and binds their wounds."  
(Psalm 147:3)

Even when we feel afraid,

God's truth will never fade.  
"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"  
(Psalm 27:1)

Each morning brings a chance brand new,  
God's love is faithful, strong, and true.  
"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'"  
(Isaiah 41:13)

Keith Onyango  
Journalism and communication  
Rongo university

So let us walk with hearts that trust,  
God's promises are good and just.  
"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."  
(Romans 5:1)

By Keith Onyang

## Time is borrowed, use it well



Time never promised it would stay,  
It walks beside us, then slips away.  
We spend it freely on fear and pride,  
Forgetting how fast the moments glide.

A sunrise waits for no tired soul,  
Nor does the clock delay its roll.  
The words unsaid, the love postponed,  
Become the silence we later own.

Gold can return when lost one day,  
But vanished hours never repay.  
So laugh with truth, forgive with grace,  
And leave kind memories in your place.

For life is not a thing we keep—  
It is borrowed breath, brief and deep.

SRI PRIYA R  
BT ENGLISH  
GHSS KOLAPAKKAM KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT  
TAMILNADU INDIA

## The sacrifices of a mother



Incredible and unpredictable  
The unconditional love and care continued further  
Death alone the separator table

Her love starts from day one, known as pregnant  
Her inexplicable joy safe guards the foetus  
Knowing, life isn't permanent  
There's no distractions in her focus.

Anything and anytime for the child's welfare  
She's the only one God  
No one can replace her love and care  
Always thinking of the goodness and safety as guard

Poor in money, still she makes home as honey  
Lack of patience in talking equalised by her innocence  
Lack of tolerance in family tolerated as day's sunny  
Every thought and action of her reveals prudence

Do not hurt her with harsh words  
Her only prayers are for her children  
The only weapon to defeat her, as powerful swords  
Leaving her alone in old age and they run

Still then she keeps blessing  
Always remembering her child as infant  
Till her last breath, she never depart inner mother's feeling  
Motherhood is not an experience but a feeling instant

N. SIVANKARI  
B. T. ASSISTANT IN ENGLISH  
GMGBHSS PERAIYUR MADURAI DISTRICT  
TAMILNADU



She was not born in poverty's pain,  
But under comfort's golden reign.  
A landlord's child with dreams so bright,  
Wrapped in warmth and gentle light.

Her mother fed her tenderly,  
With love as deep as endless sea.  
Like princess days beneath the sun,  
Her childhood life had just begun.

But storms can rise without a sign,  
And shatter joys in little time.  
Her uncles, blinded by their greed,  
Destroyed the family's precious seed.

Her father lost his wealth and land,  
Like slipping sand from helpless hand.  
With wounded hearts and tearful eyes,  
They walked beneath uncertain skies.

To Gudur town they came at last,  
Leaving behind their shining past.  
No palace walls, no fields so wide,  
Only courage walking beside.

Her mother laboured day and night,  
To keep the family's future bright.  
And my dear mother, small and weak,  
Worked before she learned to speak

Of childhood dreams or schoolyard cheer,  
For struggle had already near.  
At seven years, her tiny hands  
Touched the weight life demands.

While other children laughed in play,  
She wiped her family's tears away.  
Then came the darkest, cruelest day,  
When death took Grandma far away.

The world became a silent room,  
Filled with sorrow, fear, and gloom.  
Yet like a lamp in wind and rain,  
My mother stood through every pain.

A little girl with burdened heart,  
Forced to play a mother's part.  
She raised her sisters with such care,  
Though grief and hunger lingered there.

She gave her youth without complaint,  
Like heaven's own forgotten saint.  
No books to read, no school bell's song,  
Her sacrifices grew lifelong.

She buried dreams she could not chase,  
Yet wore a smile upon her face.  
At thirteen years she wed my father,  
Still worrying for her sisters rather.

Though married young and tested sore,  
She kept on giving more and more.  
By God's own grace a path was shown,  
Her sisters slowly safely grown.

And through the nights of endless fight,  
My mother became our guiding light.  
She built our home with patient tears,  
And carried hope through weary years.

Not gold nor jewels made her shine,  
But sacrifices so divine.  
A mother's love asks no return,  
Yet for her children's joy will burn.

She broke her dreams to build our way,  
And turned our darkness into day.  
If strength had eyes, they'd look like hers,  
If kindness spoke, it would be her words.

If angels walked this earth in grace,  
I see one in my mother's face.  
Today our family stands with pride,  
Because my mother never stepped aside.

Through every wound and every scar,  
She became our brightest star.  
No treasure in this world can be  
Greater than her love to me

God gave us many gifts in life,  
But my dear mother is the greatest gift of all.

This poem is based on the real story of my mother and the lives of many mothers like her. Though my mother faced countless struggles in her life, she never lost hope. Her courage, sacrifices, and strength continue to inspire my life every day.

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

**Innovators** “The problem of air pollution was very personal to us, which is why we began searching for a solution,” noted Kariuki.

# Teen innovators bag international prize for eco-friendly filter

BY KNA  
@themkenyatimes



Fredrick Njoroge Kariuki and Miron Onsarigo

By turning farm waste into a green solution, two students from Kiambu County have won the Africa Region Earth Prize for their eco-friendly, budget-conscious exhaust filtration system that utilizes maize and coconut waste.

The M-PESA Foundation Academy students, Fredrick Njoroge Kariuki and Miron Onsarigo developed the “HewaSafi” exhaust system after seeing loved ones suffer from pollution-related illnesses.

Now in its fifth year, the Earth Prize facilitated by the Switzerland-based Earth Foundation celebrates environmental innovation among students aged thirteen to nineteen.

“The problem of air pollution was very personal to us, which is why we began searching for a solution,” noted Kariuki.

The project is deeply rooted in personal experience with

Kariuki, who grew-up in the industrial area of Nakuru, still relying on weekly medication for a chronic lung disease diagnosed when he was just ten years old.

Onsarigo also shares this

passion having grown-up in Western Kenya witnessing the severe illnesses and loss of life caused by polluted air.

With the World Health Organization (WHO) attributing 4.4 million annual global

deaths to air pollution, vehicle emissions remain a critical health hazard.

The HewaSafi system tackles this by dividing exhaust into five compartments, each designed to strip away specific

pollutants

The Filter is constructed from sustainable, locally available materials such as maize cobs, coconut shells, steel, and copper, complemented by recycled battery parts and a unique spirulina algae bioremediation layer that naturally breaks down and removes toxic pollutants from the environment.

To validate the system, the team partnered with a local matatu association to test their filters on five vehicles along Thika Road. The results were impressive as the HewaSafi devices surpassed design goals, successfully stripping out ninety three percent of microscopic airborne particulates, the fine hazardous matter that poses a major risk to lung and cardiovascular health.

Beyond particulate reduction, the filters also achieved a forty two percent drop in carbon monoxide and absorbed twenty one percent of carbon dioxide.

“We recognize that greenhouse gases fuel climate change and by successfully filtering carbon dioxide, we can curb the impact of these emissions on the atmosphere,” noted Kariuki.

Making clean air technolo-

gy more accessible, the HewaSafi team designed a filter that costs sixteen thousand two hundred and eighty-eight shillings, a fraction of the fifty thousand shillings required for existing industry models.

According to Earth Prize judging panel Chair Agustín Ocaña Escobar, the project’s strength lies in its practicality, as the team did not just present an idea but instead presented a tangible technical pathway using materials that are locally accessible, including agricultural waste and algae.

“We chose to back this project because of its realistic approach and significant potential to improve lives and we look forward to seeing how the team continues to evolve their work over the next year,” noted Escobar.

Selected from five African finalists, the HewaSafi team won the regional Earth Prize, securing \$12,500 (Ksh1.6 million) to scale their innovation. This financial boost, combined with the program’s dedicated mentorship, provides the team with the resources needed to overcome current development challenges and advance their clean-air solution.

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**NCIC** The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening unity and peaceful coexistence across all communities.

# NCIC Commissioners take office after Swearing-In

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) has officially ushered in its fourth cohort of commissioners following a swearing-in ceremony held on Wednesday at the Supreme Court of Kenya.

The event marked the formal assumption of office by the new leadership team, which takes over at a time when national cohesion, political tolerance, and prevention of hate speech remain key priorities in Kenya's governance and social stability agenda.

The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening unity and peaceful coexistence across all communities. Bishop Dr. Kepha Nyamweya Omae was sworn in as Chairperson alongside seven commissioners in proceedings presided over by Chief Justice Martha Koome.

The ceremony underscored the constitutional importance of the Commission's role in safeguarding national unity and promoting harmony in Kenya's diverse society.

The new team assumes responsibility at a time when the country continues to navigate political transitions, social diversity, and heightened public debate on national identity and inclusion.

The newly appointed commissioners include Dr. Josephine Kirion Eragae, Mr. Joseph K. Nguyo, Mr. Jackson Swadi Kedogo, Dr. Samuel Mwachiro Mwawasi, Ms. Irene Chepoisho Tulel, Mr. Hassan Billow Ahmed, and Ms. Jerusah Mwaathime Michael. Together, they are expected to provide leadership in advancing the Commission's constitutional mandate of fostering cohesion and preventing discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation.

NCIC plays a central role



**New NCIC Commissioners with other stakeholders after being sworn-in on Wednesday.** | Photo:

Courtesy.

in promoting peaceful coexistence, monitoring hate speech, and facilitating early warning and response mechanisms to prevent conflict.

The Commission also engages in civic education and dialogue initiatives aimed at strengthening national unity, particularly during politically sensitive periods.

The incoming leadership has pledged to reinforce these efforts through stronger institutional coordination and community engagement.

In his inaugural remarks, Bishop Omae emphasized the importance of peace and restraint in public life. "No election, no office, no ambition is worth the blood of a Kenyan," he said, urging leaders and citizens alike to prioritize national stability over political or personal interests.

The new Commission has outlined its focus areas, including healing divisions, strengthening inter-community dialogue, enhancing monitoring of hate speech, and working closely with security and governance institutions. It also aims to support long-term efforts to build trust among communities and ensure that constitutional values of equality and inclusion are

upheld across the country.

The swearing-in comes at a time when Kenya continues to face challenges related to political competition, ethnic sensitivities, and the risk of misinformation spreading through traditional and digital

**The newly appointed commissioners include Dr. Josephine Kirion Eragae, Mr. Joseph K. Nguyo, Mr. Jackson Swadi Kedogo, Dr. Samuel Mwachiro Mwawasi, Ms. Irene Chepoisho Tulel, Mr. Hassan Billow Ahmed, and Ms. Jerusah Mwaathime Michael. Together, they are expected to provide leadership in advancing the Commission's constitutional mandate of fostering cohesion and preventing discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation. NCIC plays a central role in promoting peaceful coexistence, monitoring hate speech, and facilitating early warning and response mechanisms to prevent conflict.**



platforms.

The NCIC is expected to play a proactive role in addressing these issues through prevention, mediation, and public awareness campaigns.

The Commission will work closely with the Judiciary, the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, and other state agencies to reinforce peacebuilding structures and ensure timely intervention in emerging tensions. Collaboration with civil society and grassroots leaders will also remain central to its strategy.

The Commission Secretary and Chief Executive Officer continues to oversee the Secretariat and day-to-day operations of NCIC, ensuring conti-

nity in implementation of the Commission's mandate.

The outgoing third cohort of commissioners, who completed their term after serving a full tenure, were led by Chairperson Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia. The team included commissioners Humprey Okuku Nakitari, Daniel Mutegi Giti, Haron Komen Chebet, Dickson Simon Nyambori, James Okemwa Ntabo, Joseph Muthama Ndiku, Harrison Gikonyo Kariuki, and Jim Gitonga Kauma. They were recognized for their service in advancing national cohesion, promoting dialogue, and supporting efforts to reduce ethnic and political tensions during their term.

With the transition complete, NCIC now embarks on a new chapter focused on building "One Kenya" anchored on unity, respect, and peaceful coexistence for all citizens.

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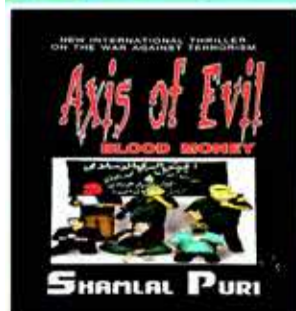
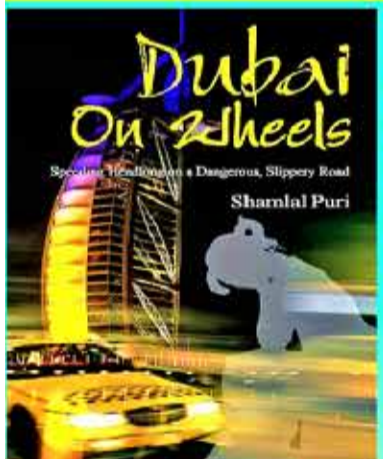
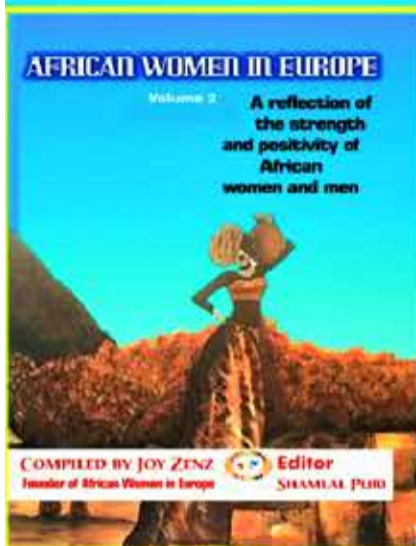
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**Law & Legal** The architecture of the 2010 Constitution was itself a product of active citizenship at its most consequential.

# The republic belongs to us: why active citizenship is Kenya's only antidote to impunity and broken governance



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor Odhiambo

[@themkenyatomes](#)

Article 1(1) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 declares, without ambiguity or qualification, that all sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya. This is not mere rhetorical decoration embedded in a preamble. It is a foundational juridical statement, a deliberate constitutional architecture that locates the source of all governmental authority, not in Parliament, not in the Executive, and not in the Judiciary, but in the citizen. Nonetheless if one were to survey the landscape of Kenyan public life with intellectual honesty the brazen looting of public coffers, the theatrical accountability processes that produce no consequences, the institutions that exist more as ornaments of governance than instruments of it; one is compelled to ask a disquieting question: if sovereign power truly belongs to the people, why do the people continue to be governed so badly? The answer, uncomfortable as it is, lies in large measure with the citizens themselves. A people that is passive, disengaged, or resigned has, in effect, abdicated the sovereignty the Constitution vests in them. Active citizenship is not, therefore, a civic nicety. It is a constitutional obligation.

The architecture of the 2010 Constitution was itself a product of active citizenship at its most consequential. The sustained civic mobilisation, the deaths at Saba Saba, the years of constitutional agitation, the 2005 referendum campaigns, and ultimately the 2010 vote that ushered in the new constitutional order all of this was citizenship expressed not as passive electoral participation but as organised, purposeful, transformative pressure. The drafters of the Constitution understood that constitutions do not enforce themselves. This is why Chapter Six on Leadership and Integrity, Article 73

on responsibilities of leadership, and the entire framework of Chapter Fifteen establishing independent offices like the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Commission on Administrative Justice, the Kenya National Human Rights Commission were designed as instruments requiring citizen activation. These institutions do not self-propel. They respond to pressure, to petitions, to public interest litigation, to organised civil society. Without the oxygen of active citizenship, they calcify into bureaucratic shells.

Impunity is not a natural condition; it is a cultivated one. It thrives where citizens look away, where the media is captured or intimidated, where civil society is defunded into irrelevance, and where political loyalty is traded for the tolerance of theft. The post-election violence cycles of 2007–2008, the Goldenberg and Anglo Leasing scandals, the NYS I and NYS II affairs, the COVID procurement fraud, and the successive Auditor-General reports that read like indictments of an entire governing class none of these persisted because accountability mechanisms were entirely absent. They persisted because citizens allowed the news cycle to move on, because impunity was not made to carry a political cost. In a functional democracy, impunity is punished at the ballot, prosecuted through public interest litigation, exposed through citizen journalism, and reversed through sustained institutional pressure. In Kenya, impunity has instead been rewarded with re-election, with political appointments, with presidential pardons. Active citizenship must shatter this

cycle by making the cost of corruption and abuse of office permanently prohibitive.

The devolution framework under Chapter Eleven of the Constitution was one of the most radical redistributions of power and resources in Kenya's post-independence history. It was designed to bring governance closer to the people, to create forty-seven accountability laboratories, and to ensure that citizens could monitor and interrogate the use of public resources at the county level. However the record of devolution is deeply ambiguous. County governments have, in numerous instances, replicated at a lower altitude the very pathologies they were meant to replace ethnic patronage, inflated procurement, wage bill crises, and the suffocation of the space for civic oversight. This is not a failure of constitutional design. It is a failure of civic engagement at the local level. Active citizenship in the context of devolution means showing up to county assembly public participation forums, scrutinizing ward development fund allocations, demanding audit reports from county executives, and holding Members of County Assembly to the legislative oversight function they were elected to perform. Devolution without engaged citizens is merely decentralized looting.

Good governance is not a gift that benevolent leaders bestow upon grateful populations. It is a permanent negotiation a continuous assertion by citizens of their constitutional rights, contested at every level against the natural tendency of those with power to retain and expand it

without accountability. The public interest litigation jurisprudence that has emerged from Kenya's superior courts since 2010 offers one of the most compelling illustrations of what organised, articulate citizenship can achieve. Petitions challenging unconstitutional legislation, enforcing socio-economic rights under Articles 43 to 46, holding constitutional commissions to their mandates, and compelling the state to account for extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances these legal victories were not gifts from an enlightened judiciary. They were extracted through the determination of citizens and advocacy organisations willing to invest the time, resources, and institutional courage to litigate matters of public interest. Every such petition is an act of active citizenship in its most sophisticated form.

The digital age has radically altered the terrain of civic engagement, and Kenya's young, digitally connected population stands at a historically significant inflection point. The Finance Bill protests of June 2024, driven substantially by Gen Z citizens who had previously been regarded as politically apathetic, demonstrated with searing clarity what mobilized digital citizenship can accomplish. The coordinated use of social media for rapid information dissemination, for documenting state violence, for organising physical demonstrations, and for sustaining domestic and international pressure, forced a sitting government to make concessions that conventional political opposition had failed to secure. This was not a political party mobilisation. It was raw citizen power,

expressed through digital solidarity. Yet that energy must be institutionalised beyond episodic protests if it is to produce durable structural change. Active citizenship must evolve from righteous outrage to organised, sustained engagement with the institutions that govern daily life.

Accountability, properly understood, is not solely the domain of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Judiciary, or the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. It begins with the citizen who reports a corrupt ward officer, the journalist who publishes the procurement irregularities in a county hospital, the teacher who attends a school board meeting and demands answers about capitation funds, and the lawyer who files a public interest petition on behalf of communities whose land has been grabbed by politically connected individuals. This diffuse, everyday accountability unglamorous, unmediated, and often personally costly is the sinew that connects constitutional principles to lived reality. A governance system in which accountability depends entirely on formal institutions is inherently fragile. The institutions are too few, too under-resourced, and too frequently captured by the very interests they are meant to police. Citizens must function as the first and most numerous line of accountability, not as passive spectators awaiting institutional rescue.

Kenya stands at a governance crossroads that is simultaneously familiar and urgent. Familiar, because the pathologies of impunity, institutional capture, and elite impunity have defined the post-independence political economy in ways that successive constitutions and reform cycles have not fully dislodged. Urgent, because the generation that will determine the country's trajectory in the next fifty years is already politically awake, constitutionally literate, and impatient with the tolerance that previous generations extended to governing elites. Article 1 of the Constitution is not self-executing. Sovereign power does not flow automatically to the people because a constitutional text declares it so. It must be claimed, exercised, defended, and renewed through deliberate, organised, constitutionally grounded civic action. Active citizenship is not the supplement to good governance. It is its precondition. Until Kenyan citizens collectively internalize this and govern themselves accordingly the Constitution will remain a magnificent aspiration pressed between the covers of a document that power finds it convenient to ignore.

*The writer is a lawyer and legal researcher*



**Zimbabwe** A grieving opposition legislator used a packed graveside eulogy to expose what he called a collapsing health system and a government clinging to power

# Madzivyanyika slams Zimbabwe gov't over healthcare failures at comrade's funeral

BY Norman Mwale

@themkenyatimes

Mbizo legislator Corban Madzivyanyika launched a blistering attack on Zimbabwe's government over the collapse of public healthcare, speaking at the funeral of Cde Gandashanga, a veteran opposition member whose death he said was emblematic of a broken system that is failing ordinary Zimbabweans every single day.

Addressing mourners at a packed graveside service in Kwekwe, Madzivyanyika was unsparing. "Our hospitals are death traps, lacking equipment like CT scanners. It's a crisis fuelled by a lack of transparency in how health funds are used," he told the crowd. He pointed specifically to the Midlands province,



Mbizo Legislator MP. HON Madzivyanyika at the Masasa Park graveyard

where the only CT scanner serving the entire region — located at a hospital in Gweru — was stolen and never replaced, leaving patients with no option but to travel vast distances for basic diagnostic care, often

at great personal cost and at serious risk to their lives.

Cde Gandashanga was remembered by those who knew him as a steady, fearless cadre who never wavered in his belief in democratic change. He

was the kind of grassroots organiser that opposition movements are quietly built on — always encouraging those around him, as mourners recalled, to vote for a better Zimbabwe and to never settle for less.

Madzivyanyika broadened his remarks beyond healthcare, turning his attention to what he described as a government more interested in entrenching itself than in serving its people. He was sharply critical of reported plans to extend the current administration's term to 2030, calling it a cynical attempt to cling to power. Drawing a pointed historical comparison, he noted that the ZANU-PF government under Robert Mugabe had tarred some 19,000 kilometres of roads since independence in 1980, while President Emmerson Mnangagwa's administration had managed just 1,500 kilometres over

the past decade — a stark contrast that drew visible reaction from those gathered.

He urged Zimbabweans to reject what opposition circles call "Cab 3," a proposed constitutional mechanism that critics say would extend the government's grip on power well beyond its democratic mandate. "The people must demand accountability and reject attempts to cling to power," he said.

In a warmer moment, Madzivyanyika thanked the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches for their presence at the funeral, and encouraged supporters to follow his social media channels, citing the growing restrictions placed on opposition MPs trying to serve their constituents.

He speaks from bitter personal experience. In 2023, Madzivyanyika was arrested in Kwekwe while campaigning in Mbizo Constituency and detained overnight in what critics and human rights observers widely condemned as politically motivated intimidation.

That arrest did not break him. Standing at a graveside in the very city where he was once hauled away in handcuffs, he looked, if anything, more resolute than ever.

**South Africa** Among ordinary voters, the mood is cautiously optimistic. "I'm voting for change," said Thandiwe Nkosi, a young professional.

# 2026 polls: will South Africans shake up local governance?

BY Norman Mwale

@themkenyatimes

South Africa's local government elections, set for November 4, 2026, are shaping up to be among the most consequential in years, with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) urging eligible citizens to register and update their voter details before the window closes.

The IEC moved swiftly to frame the announcement in reassuring terms. "The announcement of the election date provides clarity for all role players and certainty of planning for the IEC as we continue our work to deliver free and fair municipal elections," said chief electoral officer Sy Mamabolo. For millions of South Africans who have watched service delivery crumble in cities and townships alike, the promise of a fair vote



Economic Freedom Fighters leader Julius Malema

carries enormous weight.

The African National Congress, still the country's dominant political force after more than three decades in power, has opened public nomina-

tions for mayoral candidates, inviting ordinary members and communities to participate in the selection process. The party is leaning heavily on the spirit of the Freedom Charter

— "the people shall govern" — as its organising principle heading into the campaign. ANC spokesperson Pule Mabe struck a confident tone. "The ANC has a track record of delivering services to the people, and we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our cities are governed effectively," he said.

But opposition parties are sensing an opening, and they are not being subtle about it. Economic Freedom Fighters leader Julius Malema, never one to understate a moment, was characteristically direct. "The ANC has been in power for too long, and it's time for a change," he said. "We need to take control of our cities and ensure that services are delivered to the people." It is a message that resonates deeply in communities where water shortages, load-shedding, and crumbling infrastructure have become facts of daily life.

Among ordinary voters, the mood is cautiously optimistic. "I'm voting for change," said Thandiwe Nkosi, a young professional. "I want to see improvements in our city, and I believe that voting is the way to make that happen." Her sentiment reflects a broader generational shift — a younger electorate that is less wedded to historical party loyalties and more focused on tangible results.

To register, citizens must be South African, at least 16 years old — though the voting age remains 18 — and carry a valid identity document or Temporary Identity Certificate. Registration is available online, in person, or through targeted IEC outreach events.

November 4 is still months away. But in South Africa right now, the conversation has already begun.

*Norman Mwale is a journalist and Southern Africa correspondent covering politics, governance, and electoral affairs across the region.*

**Libya** Libyan economists say the move may ease pressure in the short term but will not solve Libya's deeper economic problems

## Libya's banks distribute dollars for first time in 13 years in bid to stabilize currency

BY Xinhua News Agency  
@themtkenyatimes

For the first time in nearly 13 years, Libya is allowing commercial banks to distribute U.S. dollars in cash directly to citizens, a shift that reflects both improved oil revenues and the depth of the country's currency crisis.

Libyan economists say the move may ease pressure in the short term but will not solve Libya's deeper economic problems. The economists say years of heavy government spending flooded the economy with Libyan dinars, while dollars remained scarce. Currency traders and speculators absorbed much of the foreign currency released by the central bank, driving up black-market exchange rates and weakening the dinar. "Uncontrolled public spending over the past two years caused Libyan

dinars to flood the market, allowing currency traders and speculators to absorb every dollar the central bank released," economist Mokhtar Al-Jadeed said. The imbalance widened the gap between the official exchange rate and the black-market rate, fueling inflation and reducing purchasing power for ordinary Libyans. "This is no longer just an economic figure. It has become a daily struggle for citizens," said Fawzi Dadoush, an economic and banking analyst.

Under the new policy, the government aims to weaken the black market by channeling dollars through official banks while also pulling excess dinars out of circulation. Al-Jadeed said that for every 1 billion dollars released by the central bank, more than 6 billion dinars could be withdrawn from the market. Higher oil revenues have made the policy possible, giving the

central bank enough foreign currency reserves to support the move, economists said. The measure also reflects broader efforts to restore confidence in Libya's financial system. Dadoush said the central bank's engagement with international financial institutions and attempts to secure support from the International Monetary Fund signal renewed confidence in the banking sector. Still, economists warned that the policy faces a major risk: citizens could buy dollars from banks and resell them on the black market for quick profits, especially amid financial hardship. "Large volumes of dollars could flow into the black market, where citizens might sell their allocations to speculators at below-market rates," Dadoush said.

Mohammed Al-Barghouthi, a professor of political economy, said the policy would only work



Central Bank of Libya

if banks distribute dollars consistently and fairly and regulators crack down on black-market currency trading. Economists broadly agree that the dollar distribution policy is only a temporary measure. The dinar continues to lose value, and prices remain high. Dadoush said long-term reforms would require a unified monetary policy, tighter controls on speculation, greater transparency in oil revenues, and a nar-

rower gap between official and black-market exchange rates. He also called for reducing wasteful government spending, restructuring subsidies, diversifying the economy beyond oil, and fighting corruption. "Fixing exchange rate instability cannot be achieved solely by injecting dollars," Al-Barghouthi said. "It requires building sustainable economic and financial stability."

## South Africa introduces compulsory foreign vehicle declaration

South Africa will require all foreign-registered vehicles to be declared online before crossing the country's borders effective next month.

The South African Revenue Service will, from June 1, require all foreign-registered vehicles to be declared on the SARS Traveller Management System prior to them entering or leaving South Africa. SARS Commissioner Johnstone Makhubu said the measure forms part of efforts to modernize customs operations, strengthen compliance and improve border management.

Under the system, temporary import permits valid for six months may be issued for foreign vehicles temporarily brought into South Africa.

The permits may be used for multiple crossings during the validity period without requiring a new application at each entry.

SARS said the permits would remain valid for travellers crossing frequently for work, study, business, medical care or other lawful purposes, provided they are renewed before expiry. Authorities said travellers are expected to complete declarations online before arriving at border posts, although officials will assist those unable to do so electronically. "Vehicle owners who do not declare foreign-registered vehicles or who provide false or incomplete information expose themselves to enforcement consequences and prolonged processing at the border," Makhubu said.

BY Xinhua News Agency  
@themtkenyatimes



SARS Commissioner Johnstone Makhubu

**Iran** Iranians are "men of war," it said. "You will see our strength on the battlefield, not in empty statements and social media."

## Iran warns war to extend beyond region if U.S., Israel repeat aggression

BY Xinhua News Agency  
@themtkenyatimes

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned that if the U.S. and Israeli "aggression" against the country is repeated, the war will extend beyond the West Asia region.

"Although they attacked us with all the capabilities of their armies ... we did not use all the capabilities," the IRGC said in a statement published on its official news outlet Sepah News.

Iranians are "men of war," it said. "You will see our strength on the battlefield, not in empty statements and

social media." On the same day, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, in a post on X, warned that returning to war with Iran will have many more surprises for the United States, citing a recent report by the U.S. Congress that acknowledged the loss of dozens of aircraft. In its report, released on May 13, the U.S. Congress said 42 fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft, including drones, were reportedly lost or damaged in the military operations against Iran, citing news reports and statements by the Department of Defense and U.S. Central Command.

On Feb. 28, the United States and Israel launched joint attacks on Tehran and several other Iranian cities, killing Iran's then Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, along with senior military commanders and civilians. Iran responded by launching waves of missile and drone strikes targeting Israeli and U.S. bases and assets in the Middle East. A ceasefire was reached between the warring parties on April 8, followed by one round of peace talks in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on April 11 and 12, which failed to yield an agreement. Despite ongoing diplomatic efforts, U.S. and Is-



Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi

raeli officials have escalated threats of repeating military attacks against Iran over the past few days. Speaking at the White House on Tuesday, U.S. President Donald

Trump warned that a new U.S. attack against Iran could take place in the coming days if no agreement is reached.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## Kenya's fuel fury

*Rising pump prices have ignited nationwide protests — and exposed a government dangerously out of touch with its own people*

By Belinda Oloo

Kenya ground to a near-halt this week as sharp fuel price increases triggered nationwide protests, transport strikes, and clashes between demonstrators and police in Nairobi and several major towns.

The trigger was swift and brutal: diesel prices surged by more than 23 percent, with petrol following close behind. Matatu operators downed tools, roads were blocked, tyres burned, and thousands of commuters were stranded. Police responded with tear gas and arrests as tensions spilled into the streets.

The government's explanation — global oil supply disruptions and rising import costs — has found little sympathy among Kenyans already suffocating under inflation, high unemployment, and punishing tax-



ation. Opposition leaders have been blunt: domestic tax policy and fiscal mismanagement, not global markets, are driving the pain. Many ordinary citizens agree.

Transport operators eventually suspended their strike to allow negotiations, but their warning was unambiguous — if prices are not reduced, the demonstrations will resume. Economic analysts echo the concern, cautioning that prolonged instability could further damage an economy already running on fumes.

President William Ruto's administration now faces a defining test. Kenyans are not merely protesting fuel prices. They are protesting a pattern — of policies made without them, of burdens carried by the many while the few remain insulated, of a government that speaks of shared sacrifice while ordinary citizens bear it alone.

The streets have spoken. The question is whether anyone in State House is truly listening.

*Belinda Oloo is a journalism student at Laikipia University.*

## Women Leaders Defend Homa Bay Governor Following Orengo's Remarks

Women leaders in Homa Bay County have criticized recent remarks made by James Orengo concerning leadership and governance in the region. The leaders argued that the statements directed at the Homa Bay governor were unnecessary and risked creating political divisions at a time when residents expect leaders to focus on development and unity.

Speaking during a women empowerment forum, the leaders said that although constructive criticism is important in a democratic society, leaders should avoid public remarks that may undermine fellow governors. They maintained that the Homa Bay county administration has continued to implement projects aimed at improving healthcare, infrastructure, youth empowerment, and economic opportunities for women.

The women further stated that



James Orengo

political leaders from the region should work together to address challenges affecting citizens instead of engaging in exchanges that may distract attention from service delivery. According to them, rivalry among leaders weakens public confidence and slows down regional development.

Several residents who attended the meeting also defended the county government, saying that progress should be judged based on ongoing projects and the impact they have on ordinary citizens. They urged leaders to promote dialogue,

respect, and cooperation in handling political disagreements.

The women leaders concluded by calling for calm and unity among residents, emphasizing that development should remain the top priority. They appealed to leaders across the region to embrace respectful engagement and focus on improving the welfare of the people rather than fueling political confrontations.

*By: Pascal Okoth Homabay County*

**Scholar** These verses vividly reveal the poetess's inner struggles, emotional endurance, and unwavering devotion to artistic expression

## Elbekova Shohsanam Ne'matjon — A Young Scholar Harmonizing Science and Literature

Shohsanam Ne'matjon qizi Elbekova, a 23-year-old poet, academic researcher, and emerging intellectual from Namangan, Uzbekistan, is quietly building a reputation that stretches well beyond her home country's borders.

Born on July 31, 2002, Elbekova showed an early and intense devotion to literature. For her, words were never merely linguistic tools. They were, as her own poetry makes plain, something closer to a calling — a sacred medium for expressing the full weight of human emotion and philosophical thought. Her verse carries that conviction openly:

“Even the pen dissolved beneath my heart's fierce flame, / My grief upon the silent page still never came. / Though endless pain exhausted flesh and weary soul, / The voice within my heart remained beyond control.”



Elbekova Shohsanam Ne'matjon with teachers

These are not the lines of a student finding her voice. They are the lines of someone who has already found it.

After completing secondary school in Namangan, Elbekova studied Uzbek Language and Literature at

Namangan State University before advancing to a master's programme at Namangan State Pedagogical Institute, where her research focuses on heuristic education, creative thinking, and innovative pedagogical methodologies. Her academic

article, “Methodology of developing students' creative abilities through heuristic education,” was published in the international scientific journal *Modern Education and Development* — a significant milestone for a researcher still in her twenties.

Her literary output matches her academic ambition. Two poetry collections — *Nurli Manzil* (“The Enlightened Destination”) and *Ayol Madhi* (“Praise of Womanhood”) — have drawn readers with their emotional sincerity and philosophical depth, exploring themes of motherhood, homeland, spirituality, and moral integrity. Her work has been featured on international platforms including *Alessandria Today* and *Synchronized Chaos*, introducing Uzbek poetic tradition to a broader global readership.

In 2026, she was awarded the Kelajak Poydevori commemorative badge and the Young Enlighteners Scholarship, recognising her contributions to science, literature, and youth enlightenment. She has also appeared on Uzbek television programmes *Yangi Kun* and *Guldasta*, sharing her reflections on poetry, youth spirituality, and the role of literature in modern society.



Elbekova Shohsanam Ne'matjon

What makes Elbekova compelling is not any single achievement, but the coherence of her vision — that science and literature, rigour and beauty, are not opposites but partners in the same human project.

She is only just getting started.

SPORTS  
NEWSPHOTOS  
SCORES  
OPINIONS  
STATISTICS  
SCHEDULES  
BREAKING NEWS

**Sports >>** \*The fifth edition of the race, set for June 7, has drawn runners from 75 countries, cementing its status as Africa's fastest-growing marathon

## Record 17,000 athletes sign up for 2026 Nairobi City Marathon

By Martin Weche

More than 17,000 athletes have registered for the 2026 Nairobi City Marathon, shattering last year's record of 16,000 entries ahead of the fifth edition scheduled for June 7 in the Kenyan capital.

The numbers tell a story of extraordinary momentum. When the registration window opened just weeks ago, it was full within three weeks — a pace of uptake that has stunned even the event's own organisers. From a field of 10,000 runners at its inaugural edition, the marathon has grown steadily and emphatically: 13,000, then 15,000, then 16,000, and now 17,000 — each year drawing more of the world's attention to Nairobi's streets.

Of the registered athletes, approximately 15,000 are Kenyan, with the remaining participants drawn from 75 countries across the globe, including China, India, and the United Kingdom. That international footprint, organisers say, is no accident. It reflects deliberate efforts to position the race not merely as a national fixture, but as a continental centrepiece — a marquee event worthy of Africa's greatest athletics nation.

The 2026 race will offer four categories: the 42km full marathon, the 21km half marathon, a 10km run, and a 5km fun run, ensuring the event remains accessible to competitive elites and recreational participants alike. The start line will be at City Hall from 6:45am, with the route threading through some of Nairobi's most recognisable landmarks before finishing at Uhuru Park.

Race Technical Director George Kariuki outlined the course in detail. "From City Hall, we are going to pass through Kencom, International House, and Hilton Hotel. Then enter Mama Ngina



*Benson Murkomen Tunyo wins the winning the 42km women race during the 4th edition of the Nairobi City Marathon along express way in Nairobi on July 06, 2025. Photo/Sportpicha*

and join Moi Avenue all the way to University Roundabout, and at the University Roundabout we go towards Westlands and enter the Expressway at the Museum exit," he said. The route makes extensive use of the Nairobi Expressway, offering runners a rare opportunity to race on infrastructure that is ordinarily the domain of motor vehicles.

Elite competition in the 42km category promises to be fierce. Jonathan Korir, who finished third at the 2026 Barcelona Marathon and carries a personal best of 2:04:32, heads a field that also includes John Langat and Simon Kipkoskei — names familiar to serious followers of Kenyan long-distance running. The prize money reflects the race's growing prestige: winners of the full

marathon will take home Ksh 3.5 million, with second and third place earning Ksh 2.25 million and Ksh 1.5 million respectively.

Competition Director Barnaba Korir, who also serves as chairman of the Athletics Kenya Nairobi branch, was unambiguous about the event's ambitions. "This is a marathon that is going to drive the sport, especially marathons in Kenya," he said. "It is going to be the best marathon that we can organise in Africa, especially when the County Government is part and parcel of this event."

He spoke with the pride of someone who has watched the race grow from a promising idea into something that has outrun every expectation. "People fell in love with this race. They fell

in love with the city, the atmosphere, the energy, and they kept coming back and bringing their friends," Korir said. "Amazingly, this race was opened recently, and you cannot imagine — in three weeks it was completely full."

That organic, word-of-mouth growth is perhaps the most telling metric of all. Prize money attracts elites; love of a race brings everyone else back.

On June 7, 17,000 reasons will line up at City Hall to prove exactly that.

# GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*The 33-year-old centre-back, a stalwart of English football for nearly a decade, has been axed despite a strong club season under Michael Carrick at Old Trafford

# Maguire 'shocked and gutted' as Tuchel drops veteran defender from England's World Cup squad



England's Harry Maguire

By **Martin Weche**

Harry Maguire has been omitted from England's 26-man squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America, with the Manchester United defender saying he was left "shocked and gutted" by head coach Thomas Tuchel's decision.

The German tactician began telephoning players on Wednesday ahead of formally unveiling his tournament selection on Friday, and Maguire — a 66-cap international and one of England's most experienced centre-backs — was among those to receive the unwelcome call. For a player who had returned to the national fold just two months ago under Tuchel's watch, the exclusion landed like a body blow.

"I was confident I could have played a major part this summer for my country after the season I've had," Maguire wrote on social media in an emotional statement that resonated widely among supporters. "I've been

left shocked and gutted by the decision. I've loved nothing more than putting that shirt on and representing my country over the years. I wish the players all the best this summer."

The words carried the weight of a man who has given considerable service to the Three Lions — through triumph, turbulence, and no shortage of public scrutiny. Maguire captained England to the final of Euro 2020 and to the semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, forming part of a defensive core that made the nation genuinely competitive on the world stage. That history makes his omission all the more striking.

What compounds the sense of injustice, at least from Maguire's perspective, is the form he showed this season at Old Trafford. Since interim-turned-permanent manager Michael Carrick took the reins at Manchester United in January, Maguire has been a linchpin of a backline that helped the club finish third in the

Premier League — a respectable achievement given the turbulence that preceded Carrick's appointment. Consistency at club level has historically been England's primary benchmark for selection, which is why the axe fell so unexpectedly.

Tuchel, who succeeded Gareth Southgate last year following England's disappointing exit from Euro 2024, has shown little sentimentality in reshaping the squad in his own image. The former Chelsea and Bayern Munich coach is known for prioritising tactical flexibility and physical athleticism in his defensive selections, preferences that may have ultimately worked against the powerful but occasionally possession-cautious Maguire.

The Football Association has declined to comment on individual selection conversations, as is customary, but sources close to the camp indicated that Tuchel's defensive choices reflect a shift toward a higher defensive line and a greater emphasis on

ball-playing centre-backs comfortable progressing from deep. Whether or not Maguire fits that profile was, it appears, the decisive question — and the answer was no.

For England fans of a certain generation, there is something melancholy in the image: a player who wore the armband at major tournaments, who weathered years of personal criticism with stoic dignity, bowing out of the international arena not with fanfare but with a social media post and a subdued farewell. Football, as ever, offers no guarantees of a graceful exit.

The World Cup kicks off next month, and England will carry genuine ambitions of going further than they have since 1966. Whether Tuchel's gamble on freshness over experience pays off will only be known on the pitch.

Harry Maguire will be watching from home.

# SPORTS NEWS



PHOTOS  
SCORES  
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BREAKING NEWS



# SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



# From the Classroom to the Runway — and Every Stage in Between

By: MKT Reporter  
@themkenyatimes

Hema Namashivaya is a distinguished Bengaluru-based academician, mentor, and multidisciplinary leader with over a decade of transformative experience spanning higher education, corporate training, literature, and the fashion industry. Holding dual Master's degrees in Literature and Business Administration, she made a bold and successful transition from a high-profile corporate banking career to academia. To date, she has empowered and mentored more than 10,000 students across India, building meaningful bridges between corporate professionalism and academic excellence.

## Academic Leadership and Impact

A passionate advocate for next-generation development, Ms Namashivaya is widely recognised for her contributions to modern education and student mentorship. Her pedagogical excellence has earned her a remarkable collection of accolades, including the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Award, the South India Women's Achiever Award, the Best Teacher Award from the International Institute of Hotel Management, the National Heritage Honour Award, and the RSST Award. Beyond the classroom, she drives institutional advancement through active memberships in the Karnataka Management Association, the Scholars Institute, WICCI, and the Global 100 Women network, regularly serving as guest faculty and a specialised resource person for premier institutions across the country.

## Literary and Public Speaking Contributions

As an accomplished author and speaker, Ms Namashivaya has earned her place as a rising literary icon, drawing creative inspiration from legendary writers such as J.K. Rowling and Arundhati Roy. Her literary portfolio is impressive by any measure — it includes winning the prestigious Geoffrey Chaucer Award and the Edgar Allan Poe Award, as well as being named Best Poet of the Year by the Inkzoid Foundation. She



Hema Namashivaya

is a co-author of a significant anthology dedicated to the late industrialist Ratan Tata, and holds a coveted spot in the Asia Book of Records for her impactful writing on environmental sustainability — a subject she has also championed as an institutional TEDx presenter. A woman of many platforms, she is equally sought after as a corporate emcee, film subtitler, and founder of Eventz2Biz, a boutique event management company.

## Fashion and Media Influence

Parallel to her academic pursuits, Hema has carved out a formidable presence in India's fashion and beauty industry. She has claimed multiple

prestigious pageantry titles, among them Mrs India World, Miss Asia Pacific, and Mrs Vogue Star India. Recognised as an Inspiring Fashion Icon by the Kalam Foundation, she has graced the covers of Celeb Mania, The Fashion Code, and Lifestyle magazines. Her commercial portfolio includes modelling campaigns for elite national brands such as Reliance Jewellery, Carat Lane, Naturals Beauty, and Bajaj Pulsar. She also serves as an esteemed jury member for high-profile cultural showcases, including the Hampi Utsava and several prominent fashion shows.

Hema Namashivaya continues to bridge the worlds of corporate professionalism and academic excel-

lence, empowering the next generation of Indian students through certified training and passionate storytelling. She is, in every sense, a living embodiment of the belief that one need not be a jack of all trades — one can, with purpose and dedication, become a master of many.

*Hema Namashivaya is a Bengaluru-based academician, award-winning author, certified soft skills trainer, and fashion personality with over a decade of impact across education, literature, and the creative industries.*



## Worth Noting:

- A passionate advocate for next-generation development, Ms Namashivaya is widely recognised for her contributions to modern education and student mentorship. Her pedagogical excellence has earned her a remarkable collection of accolades, including the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Award, the South India Women's Achiever Award, the Best Teacher Award from the International Institute of Hotel Management, the National Heritage Honour Award, and the RSST Award.
- Beyond the classroom, she drives institutional advancement through active memberships in the Karnataka Management Association, the Scholars Institute, WICCI, and the Global 100 Women network, regularly serving as guest faculty and a specialised resource person for premier institutions across the country.