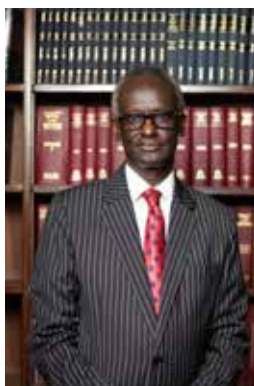




Government defends re-form agenda, cites gains in education, health and economy
 The Government has outlined an ambitious progress report across key sectors, defending its performance and highlighting reforms in education, healthcare, housing ... **Page 8**



Lenaola calls for responsible media ahead of 2027 polls
 Supreme Court Judge Isaac Lenaola has called on journalists to exercise responsible reporting while upholding truth and national cohesion, warning that media narratives will play a decisive role in shaping Kenya's peace ahead of future elections. **Page 12**

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The Mt. Kenya Times
 Daily ePAPER

Politics Jubilee accused the government of building a political narrative centered on blame instead of performance

Jubilee turns on Ruto over Uhuru remarks



The political temperature in the country rose sharply yesterday following a strongly worded statement from the Jubilee Party accusing President William Ruto of failing to govern effectively and resorting to blaming his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, for the country's challenges.
 A press statement, signed by the party Jubilee Secretary General Moitalelel Ole Kenta said the current administration is "unable and unwilling to govern," arguing that continued references to the former president reflect a lack of solutions rather than leadership. **Page 9**



Dr Fred Matiang'i

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Ruto swears in 37 High Court Judges in historic judicial expansion

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Some of the moments as captured in pictures

President William Ruto yesterday presided over the swearing-in of 37 new judges to the High Court and the Environment and Land Court, marking the largest single judicial appointment in Kenya's history. The ceremony, at State House, Nairobi also saw the appointment of 12 judges to the COMESA Court of Justice in the President's capacity as Chairperson of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. The judges will be tasked with interpreting and upholding the COMESA Treaty, strengthening regional legal cooperation. Ruto said the appointments raise the total number of judges named during his administration to 98 over the past three years, describing the development as a key milestone in efforts to strengthen the Judiciary's capacity and efficiency. He said the move reflects the government's commitment to building strong institutions that support justice delivery, inclusive development, and public trust in the democratic system. "In doing so, we are not only fulfilling our pledge to fortify this vital institution, but also reinforcing its role as a pillar of inclusive development," the President said.

Contd page 6



Editor's Desk




The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative. It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Police in Nzai Sub-county, Makueni County, have recovered human bones in Nzai Hill forest under unclear circumstances. The remains were discovered on Sunday at around 4:35 p.m. by a member of the public, who reported the matter to authorities. According to Sub-county Police Commander Agnes Kunga, officers visited the scene and collected the bones, which were taken to Sultan Hamud Subcounty Hospital mortuary for preservation and examination. The remains have not been identified, and it is unclear whether they belong to a male or female. Preliminary findings suggest the bones had been there for a long time. No missing persons reports have been linked to the case, and investigations are ongoing.



Turkana Governor Jeremiah Lomurukai yesterday presided over the launch of the first phase of bursary distribution under the Turkana County Education Fund at the County Government Headquarters in Lodwar. During the exercise, the Governor is expected to issue bursary cheques worth KSh230 million benefiting 23,754 learners drawn from all the 30 wards across Turkana County. The County Government has allocated KSh430 million to the Education Fund this financial year. Leaders present include members of the County Assembly Committee on Education led by Chairperson Michael Aemun.



Teachers in hardship-prone areas of Migori County are urging the government to implement a long-promised hardship allowance. Educators in Kuria West and Nyatike sub-counties say they are unfairly excluded despite working in officially recognised hardship zones. Currently, only teachers in Kuria East benefit from the allowance, a policy dating back to when the area was part of the former Kuria District, largely due to efforts by former MP Shadrack Manga. This disparity has created staffing imbalances, with many teachers preferring postings in Kuria East. As a result, Kuria West and Nyatike face teacher shortages, heavier workloads for remaining staff, and negative impacts on learning outcomes in affected schools.

Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Human Capital Development and Special Programmes Geoffrey Ruku greeting Tinderet MP Julius Melly after arriving at AIC Kaplamai in Chesumei Constituency, Nandi County, for a Sunday service. Ruku urged religious leaders to embrace objective and constructive criticism as a way of strengthening governance and enhancing service delivery. Ruku underscored the church's vital role in holding leaders accountable. He noted that such oversight should be fair, balanced, and focused on solutions.



The Kiambu County Government, led by Governor Kimani Wamatangi, has intensified efforts to manage flooding and improve cleanliness through regular monthly cleanup exercises that keep drainage systems clear and towns well maintained. The governor is focusing on development, system reforms, and strengthening grassroots networks while maintaining a low political profile. His leadership style is compared to the late Mwai Kibaki, emphasizing delivery over political noise. Early sentiment suggests he is a frontrunner in the 2027 race. His competitors include John Mwaura, James Nyoro, and Alice Ng'ang'a, each facing different political and performance challenges as the county's political competition continues to take shape ahead of the next election.



Female journalists in Kirinyaga County marked this year's World Press Freedom Day through a blend of celebration, environmental conservation, and community service. Under the Kirinyaga Media Queens group, they planted over 250 fruit tree seedlings at Karima Comprehensive School in Ndia Constituency. The initiative symbolized growth, resilience, and sustainability in both the environment and the media industry. The event brought together journalists, teachers, students, parents, and local leaders, aiming to create a lasting community impact. Chairperson Bancy Lole highlighted challenges facing female journalists, including workplace harassment, field insecurity, and mental health pressures. She emphasized the need for safer and more supportive working conditions for women in media.



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Nyeri The programme is being conducted in partnership with the Nairobi City Inspectorate Training School

Nyeri launches inspectorate training to boost professionalism and public trust

BY MKT Correspondent
@themtkenyatimes

Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga yesterday unveiled a new training programme aimed at transforming the county's inspectorate into a more professional, disciplined and service-oriented enforcement unit.

Speaking during the launch at the Wambugu Agricultural Training Centre, the governor said the 20-day course marks a significant step in strengthening institutional capacity and improving how enforcement officers interact with the public.

The programme is being conducted in partnership with the Nairobi City Inspectorate Training School, a key facility responsible for training county enforcement officers across the country.

Kahiga, who was accompanied by Deputy Governor David Kinaniri, among other officials said the collaboration reflects the spirit of devolution through the sharing of expertise and best practices between counties.

"This is about building a professional force that is accountable, responsive and people-centered," he said, noting that the initiative goes beyond routine training to instill a culture shift within the inspectorate.

The course is structured around two main components: a Command and Lead-

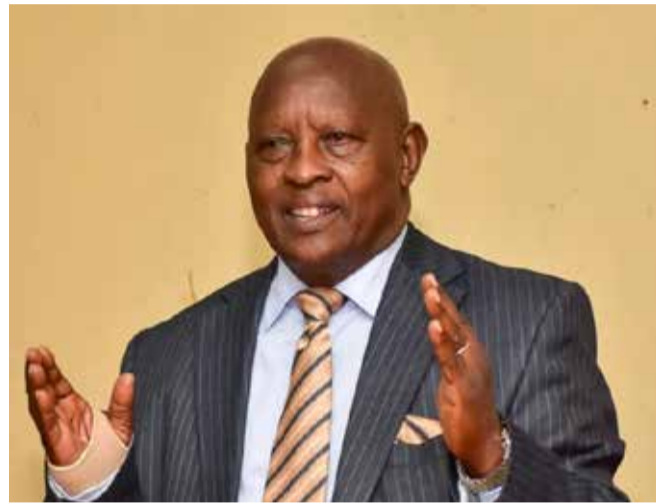
ership Course designed to nurture a pipeline of accountable leaders, and an Initial Enforcement Course focusing on practical skills such as criminal law, county legislation, disaster management and public relations.

Kahiga emphasized that the county's enforcement approach will prioritize compliance through engagement rather than coercion.

"Our approach is corrective, not punitive. We want compliance without conflict and order without fear," he said.

He added that inspectorate officers serve as the public face of the county government and must uphold integrity, professionalism and emotional intelligence in their duties.

The governor also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to improving working conditions and equipping officers with the necessary tools to perform effectively, while calling on them to up-



Dr Mutahi Kahiga

hold the rule of law.

"We are not just changing uniforms; we are transforming the culture of enforcement," he said.

The training comes at a time when counties are under increasing pressure to improve service delivery and build public trust in enforcement agencies.

County officials said the success of the programme will

ultimately be measured by improved relations between officers and residents, as well as increased compliance with county laws.

Kahiga expressed confidence that the initiative will help create a more respectful and efficient inspectorate, ensuring that residents of Nyeri County feel both protected and fairly treated.



Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga, his deputy David Kinaniri with other officials and Inspectorate officers undergoing training | Photo: Courtesy.

Ruto swears in 37 High Court Judges in historic judicial expansion



Group Photo President William Ruto and judges

Contd from page 2

He urged the newly appointed judges to uphold integrity, accountability, independence, and professionalism in their duties, noting that their positions carry significant responsibility and public expectation. "All these appointments carry with them great authority and consequence, and with such distinction comes an equally profound responsibility," he said.


The President congratulated the judges and encouraged them to serve with fairness and dedication, emphasizing that the Judiciary remains central to governance and the protection of constitutional rights both nationally and across the COMESA region. The event was attended by top leadership in the executive led by Deputy President Kithure Kindiki as well from the judiciary, led by Chief Justice Martha Koome.



Group Photo President William, gov't officials Ruto and judges

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Politics “Parliament resolves that the retirement benefits and allowances accruing to the retired President be withdrawn and/or reduced,” the motion states.

Cherargei seeks to slash Uhuru’s Retirement Benefits Over Alleged Political Activity

BY Irene Mwangi

@themkenyatimes

Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei has tabled a motion seeking to withdraw or significantly reduce retirement benefits enjoyed by former president Uhuru Kenyatta, citing alleged engagement in active politics.

The motion, now before the House, calls on Parliament to review the benefits granted under the Presidential Retirement Benefits Act, arguing that they are conditional on a retired head of state maintaining political neutrality.

“Parliament resolves that the retirement benefits and allowances accruing to the retired President be withdrawn and/or reduced,” the motion states.

Cherargei contends that Kenyatta’s continued political involvement including public endorsements, consultations and participation in political forums violates both the spirit and letter of the law.

The outspoken lawmaker further wants the Office of the Auditor-General to conduct a comprehensive audit of all public resources allocated to the former president since he left office in 2022.

The audit, if approved, would be completed within 60 days and sub-

mitted to Parliament to guide further action.

According to the proposal, any funds recovered from withdrawn benefits should be redirected to serve the interests and welfare of the people of Kenya.

The Presidential Retirement Benefits Act envisions former heads of state as non-partisan figures who offer advisory support rather than engage in day-to-day political mobilisation. Cherargei argues that this threshold has been breached.

“These actions, if established, amount to active engagement in political party activities contrary to the spirit and letter of the Act,” the motion reads in part.

The push comes amid sustained criticism of Kenyatta by leaders allied to President William Ruto, who accuse him of undermining the government while continuing to enjoy state-funded privileges.

Speaking at a public event on Sunday, Cherargei doubled down on his position, warning that Parliament has the authority to act.

“The law states that if a president retires and fails to leave politics, the government, through Parliament, has the power to remove those retirement benefits,” he said.

Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot echoed the sentiment,



Nandi Senator Samson Cherargei

linking respect for retired presidents to their conduct after leaving office.

“If you behave yourself like a retired president, people will respect you. But if you misbehave, people will deal with you as it is supposed to be dealt with,” Cheruiyot said.

The motion follows fresh political ripples triggered by Kenyatta’s recent remarks during a Jubilee Party

meeting in Narok, where he endorsed Fred Matiang’i for the presidency.

“I see Matiang’i as a strong and resilient leader. He may be new to politics, but he is a highly effective worker,” Kenyatta said, while also criticising attempts to curtail his political voice.

His endorsement has been seized

upon by critics as evidence of continued partisan engagement, intensifying calls within the ruling coalition for a review of his benefits.

The Presidential Retirement Benefits Act requires a two-thirds majority in Parliament to approve the withdrawal or reduction of benefits a threshold that could prove difficult to attain.

NEWS PAPER
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Politics The funding, officials said, is intended to ease financial pressure on families and ensure smooth school operations.

Government defends reform agenda, cites gains in education, health and economy

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

The Government has outlined an ambitious progress report across key sectors, defending its performance and highlighting reforms in education, healthcare, housing and economic growth as evidence of steady national transformation.

A statement delivered by Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura said the administration of President William Ruto has made “significant strides” aimed at improving the quality of life for Kenyans, while dismissing criticism of its policies as politically motivated.

At the center of the briefing was the education sector, where the government reported early disbursement of KSh23.4 billion in capitation funds to public schools ahead of reopening.

The funding, officials said, is intended to ease financial pressure on families and ensure smooth school operations.

According to the statement, primary schools receive KSh1,400 per learner annually, with funds distributed in a structured ratio across school terms.

Authorities maintained that the system is transparent and sufficient, rejecting claims that schools are imposing hidden costs on parents.

“Anyone claiming the system is not working is politicising the issue,” Mwaura said, pointing to the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) as a safeguard against fraud, including the elimination of so-called “ghost students.”

The government also highlighted progress in teacher recruitment, noting that 100,000 teachers have been hired out of a promised 116,000.

In addition, over 23,000 classrooms have been constructed nationwide, with plans underway to build 1,600 laboratories to strengthen science and technical education.

In higher education, a revised funding model has increased allocations for student loans, with expenditure projected at KSh53.1 billion for the 2025/26 financial year.

Officials say the changes are designed to make university education more affordable and accessible, particularly for vulnerable learners.

Beyond education, the government pointed to sweeping reforms in healthcare under the Social Health Authority (SHA), which has expanded insurance coverage from fewer than 8 million to about 30.8 million Kenyans. This represents roughly 65 percent of the population, a sharp rise from the 16 percent coverage under the now-defunct NHIF.

The reforms include improved medical coverage for approximately 350,000 public school teachers, elimination of co-payments in contracted facilities, and expanded access to specialized treatment both locally and abroad.

“The Government remains committed to ensuring every Kenyan benefits from quality and affordable healthcare,” Mwaura said.

On housing, the Affordable Housing Programme was described as a key driver of economic growth and job creation.

The government reported that more than 9,000 housing units have already been allocated, while 273,000 are under construction.

The programme has also generated employment for over 640,000 Kenyans, with a strong focus on youth, women and persons with disabilities.

Officials added that the initiative is transforming urban development and expanding home ownership opportunities, while also supporting skills certification through the Recognition of Prior Learning programme.

The economic outlook, according to the statement, remains stable despite global uncertainties. Kenya’s Gross Domestic Product has grown to over KSh17 trillion, with a growth rate of 4.6 percent. Inflation has declined to 5.6 percent, while the Kenyan shilling has stabilized against the US dollar.

In agriculture, the government cited the creation of a digital register of more than 7.2 million farmers, which it says has helped eliminate cartels and improve access to subsidized inputs such as fertiliser.

Meanwhile, small businesses are benefiting from targeted initiatives, including the Hustler Fund and NYOTA programme, which have expanded access to credit and supported youth entrepreneurship.

The government also reported progress in its overseas employment programme, with over 580,000 Ken-



Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura addressing the media yesterday.

yans securing jobs abroad through structured labour agreements and initiatives aimed at protecting workers’ rights.

In addition, reforms in diaspora engagement have reduced embassy rental costs by KSh3 billion annually, while opening new employment pathways in countries such as Canada.

Mwaura said the Government Delivery Unit is closely monitoring implementation to ensure timely completion and maximum public benefit.

He reiterated that the administration remains focused on inclusive development, emphasizing that reforms are designed to empower marginalized groups and expand opportunities across the country.

“These efforts reflect the Government’s vision of a prosperous and competitive Kenya where every citizen can thrive,” he said.



Politics The party maintained that Kenyatta's remarks were reflective rather than provocative, emphasizing his stature as a regional and continental statesman

Jubilee escalates war of words with Ruto, defends Uhuru's political voice

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyattimes

The political temperature in the country rose sharply yesterday following a strongly worded statement from the Jubilee Party accusing President William Ruto of failing to govern effectively and resorting to blaming his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, for the country's challenges.

A press statement, signed by the party Jubilee Secretary General Moitalelel Ole Kenta said the current administration is "unable and unwilling to govern," arguing that continued references to the former president reflect a lack of solutions rather than leadership.

The statement follows a political storm triggered by remarks made by Kenyatta during the Jubilee Maa Delegates Forum held in Narok County last week. Addressing delegates via phone, Kenyatta's comments have since drawn sharp criticism from allies of the government, who questioned his continued involvement in political discourse.

But Jubilee has come out forcefully in his defense.

"What is so threatening about a former President speaking to the people he once led?" the statement posed, framing the backlash as evidence of "deep discomfort" within the current administration.

The party maintained that Kenyatta's remarks were reflective rather than provocative, emphasizing his stature as a regional and continental statesman. It argued that his voice remains relevant, particularly at a time when many Kenyans are grappling with economic hardship, rising costs of living, and limited job opportunities.

Jubilee accused the government of building a political narrative centered on blame instead of performance.

"Every challenge becomes his legacy. Every failure is projected backward," the statement read. "Leadership is not inherited blame; it is assumed responsibility."

The party further expressed concern over alleged threats by political figures suggesting punitive action against Kenyatta, including the withdrawal of his retirement benefits. Jubilee termed such proposals unconstitutional and dangerous, warning that they undermine the dignity of

the presidency and set a troubling precedent.

"Retirement benefits are legal entitlements, not political favors," the statement said, adding that attempts to weaponize them amount to intimidation.

The remarks signal an escalating confrontation between allies of President Ruto and supporters of Kenyatta, marking a deepening rift that continues to shape Kenya's political landscape nearly four years after the 2022 general election.

Jubilee also linked the dispute to broader democratic concerns, warning that targeting a former head of state for expressing opinions could have a chilling effect on free speech across the country.

"When a former President is threatened, what message does that send to ordinary citizens?" the statement asked, pointing to potential implications for journalists, youth, and civil society.

The party invoked Kenya's constitutional guarantees on freedom of expression and participation in public affairs, insisting that these rights must be protected regardless of political affiliation.

In a historical reflection, Jubilee noted that retired presidents have traditionally remained active in national discourse. It cited the late Daniel arap Moi, who continued engaging in politics after leaving office, as well as Mwai Kibaki, who publicly supported Kenyatta's leadership.

The statement also referenced past political alliances involving President Ruto and Moi, suggesting inconsistencies in the administration's stance on post-retirement political engagement.

As political tensions simmer, Jubilee framed the current debate as a larger struggle over the country's democratic direction.

"This is not about one man," the party concluded. "It is about the soul of our nation."

With both sides showing little sign of backing down, Kenyans are likely to witness continued political sparring in the weeks ahead, as questions of leadership, accountability, and constitutional freedoms take center stage once again.

The meeting was also attended by the party's presidential aspirant Fred Matiang'i.



Dr Fred Matiang'i briefing journalists yesterday.



Former President Uhuru Kenyatta

Politics Central to the party's vision is the continuation of the ideals championed by its founding leader, Raila Odinga.

ODM sets sights on 2027 power, unveils strategy at Mombasa retreat

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyatimes

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) has unveiled an ambitious roadmap aimed at securing power in the 2027 General Election, signaling a strategic shift from opposition politics to a more structured push for government leadership.

In resolutions adopted during a retreat in Mombasa County, the party declared its intention

to either form the next government on its own or play a central role in a coalition that will take over power.

The meeting brought together key party organs, including Members of Parliament from both houses, the Council of Governors, the National Executive Committee (NEC), county assembly leaders and the Board of Trustees. The gathering focused on crafting what ODM described as a "strategic and practical plan"

to transition the party from the opposition benches to government.

Central to the party's vision is the continuation of the ideals championed by its founding leader, Raila Odinga.

ODM leaders reaffirmed their commitment to policies aimed at job creation, social protection for vulnerable groups and increased support for the elderly, proposing a rise in monthly stipends from KSh2,000 to KSh6,000.



ODM chairperson Gladys Wanga addressing journalists in Mombasa yesterday.

The party also declared a shift in approach, stating that future reforms would be pursued from within government structures rather than through street protests.

"ODM was not formed to seek to form government from the streets, but through democratic means. The time for this is now," the resolution stated.

To achieve this, the party emphasized the need to strengthen its internal structures and expand its support base. Leaders resolved to intensify membership recruitment, particularly at the grassroots, and to identify and nurture candidates for elective positions ahead of 2027.

A key focus of the retreat was electoral integrity within the party.

ODM directed its National Elections Coordinating Committee to develop "fail-proof mechanisms" to ensure free, fair and transparent nominations, amid past concerns over disputed primaries.

The party also pledged to revamp its youth and women leagues to ensure broader representation and leadership development, while strengthening its veterans' wing to mentor emerging leaders.

In a nod to evolving political dynamics, ODM announced plans to integrate artificial intelligence into its planning and campaign strategies, describing technology as a critical tool for modern political

organization.

The party further resolved to engage the government on several policy issues, including the high cost of data, delayed disbursement of political party funds and compensation for victims of police brutality.

Additionally, ODM plans to expand its presence in universities and colleges by establishing active chapters to mobilize young voters and connect with student movements.

Grassroots mobilization will also take center stage, with the party tasking its structures to spearhead nationwide voter registration drives supported by funding from the headquarters.

Party officials said prog-

ress on the resolutions will be reviewed within a month, underscoring the urgency of preparations.

Despite acknowledging its long history of agitation for reforms, ODM leaders insisted the party remains committed to democratic processes and inclusive governance.

"ODM continues to be a people-based political party," the statement read, adding that it will push for equitable resource distribution, good governance and stronger representation across all sectors.

The resolutions position ODM as a party seeking reinvention and consolidation ahead of a highly anticipated 2027 contest, as Kenya's political landscape continues to take shape.

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ODM
TUKO TAYARI

TVET The 2025 results were announced in January, disrupting the usual transition of students into institutions for the January intake

Funding delays blamed for declining TVET student enrollment

BY MKT REPORTER
@themkenyatimes

Muraga Technical Training Institute (TTI) Principal Mrs Purity Murithi has raised concern over declining student enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, attributing the trend to delays in government funding and disruptions in examination timelines.

Speaking during an interview in Chuka, Tharaka Nithi County, Mrs Murithi said the late release of the 2025 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results significantly affected student intake.

Unlike previous years when results were released in December, the 2025 results were announced in January, disrupting the usual transition of students into institutions for the January intake.

“We mostly target students who complete their exams in November for our January intake, but the delay interfered

with our enrolment plans,” she explained.

She pointed out that besides examination timelines, delayed disbursement of government capitation, grants, and funding from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) has worsened the situation. According to her, many TVET institutions rely heavily on HELB support to sustain student enrolment.

“Without this funding, students are unable to pay fees. Many who applied last financial year have not received any funds, forcing some to drop out due to inability to meet tuition and examination costs,” she said.

Mrs Murithi noted that continued funding delays resulted in the government failing to meet its ambitious target of enrolling two million learners in TVET institutions by 2025. She noted that current enrolment stands at approximately 700,000, far below the intended goal.

“If this trend continues, industries will feel the impact. Most skilled workers entering the job market, including those working abroad under the Kazi Majuu programme, come from TVET institutions. Without adequate support, we risk losing a generation of skilled youth,” she cautioned.

Despite the challenges, Mrs Murithi acknowledged the government’s efforts in promoting technical education. She noted that initiatives such as affordable training and modularised curricula have helped attract more youths, allowing them to acquire employable skills within a short period.

“We have managed to bring many young people out of the villages, including those who had lost hope. With sustained support, we can continue making progress,” she said.

She also commended the Kenya Kwanza government for investing in infrastructure development at Muraga TTI, including the construction of a modern student village that can accommodate up to 580 trainees.

However, she emphasised the need for a balance between infrastructure expansion and consistent financial support for learners, noting that many parents are financially constrained. She warned that without adequate funding, investments in facilities and equipment may remain un-



Mrs Purity Murithi

derutilised.

In her appeal, Mrs Murithi encouraged young people across the country to enrol in TVET institutions, particularly Muraga TTI, where they can gain practical skills and certifications for the job market.

She also urged skilled individuals without formal qualifications, such as welders,

masons, and electricians, to take advantage of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme, which offers certification at a cost of Sh3,500.

Additionally, she highlighted short courses in areas such as baking, cosmetology, nail care, and computer skills, which target both school leavers and professionals seeking

additional income opportunities.

“We have never had enough of cakes. Anyone can learn baking within two weeks and start earning. These short courses have the potential to transform lives,” she said, urging idle youth to take advantage of available training opportunities.



A view of Muraga Technical Training Institute in Tharaka-Nithi County from the main gate. | Photo: Dickson Mwit.



Media “You are the heartbeat of the nation. Every headline, every breaking news alert shapes public perception,” Lenaola observed

Lenaola calls for responsible media ahead of 2027 polls

BY **Nicholas Ochieng and Nyawira Githinji**

@themkenyatimes

Supreme Court Judge Isaac Lenaola has called on journalists to exercise responsible reporting while upholding truth and national cohesion, warning that media narratives will play a decisive role in shaping Kenya’s peace ahead of future elections.

Speaking during the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day 2026 at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Justice Lenaola underscored the immense influence of the media in a rapidly evolving information landscape dominated by social media and emerging technologies.

“You are the heartbeat of the nation. Every headline, every breaking news alert shapes public perception,” Lenaola observed, urging journalists to remain accurate and measured in their reporting.

He cautioned that the widespread use of digital platforms has intensified the spread of misinformation, noting that a majority of citizens now rely on social media for news consumption.

“Misinformation spreads just as fast as information, sometimes even faster. The responsibility lies with you to ensure accuracy without inflaming tensions,” he remarked.

Drawing from Kenya’s past electoral experiences, the judge emphasised the need for peace-sensitive journalism, particularly as the country approaches another electoral cycle.

“The national moment must remain one of truth, not fear,” he stated, adding that journalists must present facts in a way that informs the public while safeguarding unity.

Justice Lenaola further challenged the media to adapt

responsibly to technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, calling for ethical frameworks to guide their use.

“We must embrace innovation cautiously, ensuring that technology serves truth rather than distorts it,” he added.

Media Council of Kenya (MCK) Chairman Maina Muiruri echoed the call for a free and accountable press, describing media freedom as a cornerstone of democracy.

“A free press is the lifeblood of any democratic society. It equips citizens with the information they need to make meaningful decisions,” Muiruri noted.

He revealed that the Council had documented numerous cases of threats and violations against journalists in the past year, warning that such trends could escalate as the country moves closer to elections.

“This is unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest terms,” he asserted, while pointing to the growing use of coordinated intimidation tactics targeting media practitioners.

Muiruri also highlighted the vulnerability of women and young journalists, who face disproportionate risks, including online harassment and workplace insecurity.

“Protecting journalists is not optional; it is fundamental to safeguarding democracy itself,” he maintained.

He added that the council continues to strengthen regulatory frameworks, including the enforcement of the Code of Conduct for Media Practice, to ensure professionalism and accountability within the industry.

Kenya Editors’ Guild (KEG) President Zubeida Kananu called for an end to intimidation and legal harassment directed at journalists, stressing

that press freedom is essential for a peaceful society.

“Peace is not merely the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice and the safety of those who speak truth to power,” Kananu emphasised.

She likened journalism to a mirror reflecting society, cautioning against attempts to silence the media when uncomfortable truths emerge.

“When you don’t like the reflection, you don’t break the mirror; you fix what is wrong,” she stated.

Kananu revealed that more than 75 per cent of journalists expected to cover upcoming elections would be doing so for the first time, many in environments where safety remains a major concern.

“We cannot build a peaceful future when reporting the truth comes with fear,” she



Justice Isaac Lenaola addressing media stakeholders yesterday.

observed, calling for stronger protections, improved working conditions and mental health support for journalists.

She urged stakeholders to utilise formal mechanisms such as the Media Complaints Commission to address grievances instead of resorting to threats and intimidation.

“We must move toward a culture where the messenger is protected and the message is clear,” she added.

The event, organised by the Media Council of Kenya in partnership with Strathmore University and the Kenya Media Sector Working Group,

was held under the theme “Shaping a Future at Peace”. It also featured the launch of the State of the Media 2025 Report, which assesses media performance and public perception in Kenya.

Stakeholders from government, media, academia, civil society and the technology sector attended the forum, focusing on the role of journalism in promoting accountability, countering misinformation and fostering social cohesion.

Participants agreed that strengthening media independence, enhancing journalist

safety and embracing ethical innovation are critical to building resilient information systems.

As the country prepares for future elections amid a complex digital environment, speakers stressed that the role of the media will be pivotal in safeguarding democracy and national unity.

The commemoration concluded with a unified call for collaboration across sectors, with leaders affirming that a peaceful future depends on a free, responsible and fearless press committed to truth and public interest.



Kenya Editors’ Guild (KEG) President Zubeida Kananu speaking during the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day 2026 at Strathmore University in Nairobi. | Photo: Nyawira Githinji

AFCON 2027 to kick off June 19

BY KNA
@themtkenyentimes

The Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) has announced the kick-off and final dates for CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) PAMOJA 2027, which will be co-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

According to CAF, the opening match will be played on Saturday, 19th June 2027, and the final on Saturday, 17th July 2027.

The dates were approved by the FIFA Council recently in Vancouver, Canada. CAF will announce the country that will host the opening match and the final in due course.

The TotalEnergies CAF AFCON PAMOJA 2027 is the first AFCON to be hosted by three countries, presenting a unique opportunity for CAF and African football to reach over 400 million people in the East

Africa region.

With the preliminary round completed, the journey to Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda will continue with the draw for the qualifiers of the CAF AFCON PAMOJA 2027, which will take place on May 19th, 2026.

A total of 48 teams, including the three co-hosts, will participate in the qualifiers. The draw will determine the pathway to the CAF Africa Cup of Nations PAMOJA 2027.

The qualifiers will be played across the three FIFA international windows as follows: Matchdays 1 and 2 on September 21 to October 6, 2026; Matchdays 3 and 4 on November 9 to 17, 2026; and Matchdays 5 and 6 on March 22 to 30, 2027.

The 48 teams will be drawn into 12 groups of four teams each. The top two teams in each group will qualify for the final tournament.

The CAF AFCON PAMOJA 2027 also marks the competition's return to the East African region for the



CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)

first time since Ethiopia hosted the AFCON in 1976.

The tournament will build on the success of recent editions, includ-

ing the CAF AFCON Morocco 2025 and the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON Côte d'Ivoire 2023, which delivered record commercial revenue, spon-

sorship growth and global broadcast audiences, reflecting the global competitiveness and popularity of African football on the world stage.

The Mt. Kenya Times



Slice of time



In a world of my own
With the soft music playing
A pen in my hand
Writing all I understand

My earphones silencing
All life that's around me
Voiding the world's relevance

Just for this moment in time
Pausing time, in history's domain
For in this time lost trajectory

There's no need to find perfection
All that's needed, is right there.
This slice of time, transfixed the air

Trying to catch it's breath
Like the solace of a lone cry
Looking for the love

It understands is pined
In this world's long lost time
Which feels like it's slipping

From this moment's grasp.
As time's breath rushes past
But I'll hold tight to it's tailwind

I'll go wherever it takes me
Letting go, but holding on tight
And grounding my sanity

Until the noise of the world
Becomes too loud to ignore
Bringing me back to a world

Where I'm no longer alone
For it's right here, right now
Time's breath, is finally sown.

© Keith Onyango- Rongo university

Forged in fire, crowned in light



In the hush of nights where doubts would scream,
I stitched my hope from a shattered dream.
Each fall engraved what strength could be,
A silent war no eyes could see.

The road was rough, the skies unkind,
Storms outside—and more inside my mind.
Yet कदम-कदम, with aching soul,

I chased a half and built it whole.

Failures whispered, "You're not enough,"
But I learned to rise when it got tough.
With trembling hands and weary sight,
I still chose wrongs that led me right.

Every scar became my guide,
Every tear, a turning tide.
Pain carved paths I couldn't guess,
But led me straight to my success.

Now the summit feels so near,
Not free from doubt, but free from fear.
For every struggle I embraced,
Turned dust to gold... and fate to grace.

©Dr. Daksha Udhani
Ahmedabad

Childhood shoes that no longer fit



As the days are passing calendars become slim
We will get into growth and trim.
Our apparel becomes smaller to wear
It's very hard to fit the same in our growth.

Our dresses will become small and
our shoes and socks will not fit.
We move into transition of appearance
And try to change our sizes higher.

Accept the changes and try to adopt.
Throwing the old away and allow the new one.

RAJESH KANNA .B N
M.Sc.,M.A.,M.A., B.Ed.,
PGDG&C, CELT.,
BT Asst
GMHSCHOOL,
TIRUR.
TIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.
Tamil Nadu. India
Creative Writers.

You just have to keep pushing yourself



No one stands closer to you
than your own voice within.
Even in the smallest moments,
you become your own push,
your own spark to move forward.
Others may confuse you,
they may frighten,

they may twist your path—
but in that very moment,
hold your ground,
stay clear in your mind,
and firm in your will.
Because the strength you need
is already inside you,
waiting for you to rise.

KRISHNAVENI
GRADUATE TEACHER
CUDDALORE
TAMIL NADU
INDIA

Be strong and of good courage



A tiny seed grows into a big tree.
Before it sprouts, it faces difficulties beneath
the earth.
It finds a way to grow up towards the surface.
Then it blooms into flowers and bears fruits.

This is the courage of a tiny seed.
Everyone should be strong and bold.
We must learn to stay courageous forever.

Courage brings safety and mental strength when
we face difficulties,
just like a tiny seed.
You don't know who will stay with you in your hard
times,
but you know your courage is always with you.
So, be strong and of good courage.

__G.Yasminsirajudheen
Secondary grade teacher
Melmalayanur block
Villupuram dt.

Strong and of good courage



Be strong more than iron
Don't melt in any situation
Underestimating your power
Being empowered as Female (iron + male) forever.

During dusk
Arising at dawn in brisk.

Be strong as a wild flower
Glowing & fragrant ever
Courageously holding petals better
Ignoring the thought of wither.

Be strong with the statement unjudged
Forgetting others grudge
Fix your own laws to encourage
With good courage.

G.Sarala.
*Creative Writer:

Be strong as the sun
Though you fall down

Be strong and of good courage



Be strong and of good courage
Even in the time of old age
From childhood to adulthood be strong
To fight against the wrong
Restore your peace with kindness

Be bold and strong with your uniqueness
Clear, determined mind is stable
Be confident to believe yourself as capable
Small or big, confidence speaks
Tall or short determination never breaks
Train your mind to be indestructible
Making it intense and intangible
Keeping aware and alert of the consequences
Irrespective of the appearances

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

Climate The programme targets degraded landscapes through reforestation, agroforestry, and livelihood interventions, aiming to reduce pressure on forest resources

Mau restoration programme spurs climate recovery, community growth

BY Suleiman Mbatiah
@themkenyatimes

The government is scaling up restoration of the Mau Forest Complex by leveraging a national marathon as a mass mobilisation platform, combining conservation, economic empowerment, and youth engagement in one of the country's most critical water towers.

The initiative, under the Mau Forest Complex Integrated Conservation and Livelihood Improvement Programme, integrates ecological restoration with community-based economic support, positioning sport as a unifying tool to expand outreach and strengthen conservation awareness nationwide.

Officials say the second edi-

tion of the Mau Conservation Marathon will deepen partnerships, expand participation, and align environmental messaging with economic opportunities for communities living around the forest ecosystem and dependent on its resources.

The programme targets degraded landscapes through reforestation, agroforestry, and livelihood interventions, aiming to reduce pressure on forest resources while improving resilience and household incomes across the wider Mau complex and surrounding counties.

"This event is not just the commencement of a race, it is a powerful platform for environmental education, conservation awareness, and community empowerment," said Principal Secretary Festus Ng'eno during the official

launch in Nakuru.

Since rollout, restoration efforts have covered about 1,500 hectares, with more than 3,300 hectares mapped, alongside rehabilitation of over 1,200 hectares and planting of more than one million tree seedlings across affected zones.

The PS reported that over 3,150 farmers have received certified seeds, dairy equipment, and tree seedlings, while additional support includes training in high-value crops such as avocado, coffee, and pyrethrum and expansion of beekeeping enterprises.

At county level, Nakuru has complemented national efforts through large-scale greening initiatives, including tree planting across farms, schools, public spaces, and riparian corridors, while strengthening environmental

education and climate-smart agriculture programmes.

"This initiative continues to prove, in very practical terms, that conservation and community progress can move forward together," said Governor Susan Kihika in remarks delivered on her behalf by Deputy Governor David Kones at the launch event.

The PS added that sustainable agriculture, enterprise development, and improved land management practices are central to long-term conservation, with increased participation from youth and women in emerging green economy opportunities across the region.

The inaugural marathon in October 2025 attracted more than 1,000 participants, providing a platform for talent exposure while injecting income into youth through structured



PS Ng'eno starts the race during the 1st edition of the Mau Conservation Marathon in 2025. | Photo: Courtesy

prize incentives and government-backed rewards. "Indeed, the platform became an excellent opportunity to showcase their talent and positioned participants for more opportunities," Ng'eno said, highlighting the role of sport in advancing conservation awareness and economic inclusion.

Organisers have expanded the upcoming edition scheduled for July 3 to include a full 42-kilometre race, with total prize money increased to KES 7.8 million to attract elite athletes and elevate international competitiveness.

"We have planted millions of trees across schools, farms, public spaces, and riparian areas, while strengthening

community ownership of restoration efforts," Kihika said, outlining county contributions to scaling conservation outcomes and partnerships.

Stakeholders emphasised sustained collaboration, noting that continued investment, policy support, and community participation will be critical to securing long-term ecological recovery and protecting the Mau Forest Complex and its dependent ecosystems.



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Colonial villages KISIP II includes upgrading of roads, drainage systems, and other essential amenities to transform these areas into planned residential neighbourhoods

Government pushes to formalise colonial settlements



Humphrey Mureithi

BY Wangari Ndirangu
@themtkenyatimes

The government has stepped up efforts to address land tenure insecurity in colonial villages across the country's settlements.

Established during the colonial era, the government is working towards transitioning residents from informal occupancy to formal ownership.

Through the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP II), with support from the World Bank and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and implemented by the national government in collaboration with county departments of Lands, Physical Planning, and Urban Development, authorities have been carrying out beaconing and land surveys to pave the way for the issuance of title deeds.

The initiative aims not only to grant ownership documents but also to improve living conditions for thousands of residents in informal settlements.

KISIP II includes upgrading of roads, drainage systems, and other essential amenities to transform these areas into planned residential neigh-

bourhoods.

In Kirinyaga County, where KISIP is regularising 11 colonial villages, more than 1,600 residents are expected to benefit. The upgrades are expected to enhance livelihoods and end decades of land tenure insecurity.

A spot check by KNA in Kerugoya found that many beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with progress, even as they await full implementation of the project's promises.

Humphrey Mureithi, a resident of Mukinduri village, one of the 11 colonial villages in Kirinyaga County designated for land tenure regularisation, said life had long been uncertain due to the lack of clear land boundaries.

"There were no fences or defined plots, and minor disagreements among neighbours have been easily escalating into disputes," he said.

Mureithi, who is the village chairman, noted that news of the KISIP project and the promise of land ownership brought renewed hope among residents.

"Many people dream of leaving these conditions behind, selling their plots, and building better lives elsewhere," he added.

Mureithi said the project in the area is about 75 per cent

complete, with land mapping already done. However, final verification of ownership is still ongoing. "People are waiting anxiously for title deeds and clarity on ownership," he said.

He acknowledged that challenges remain, including small plot sizes, cases of joint ownership, and uncertainty over compensation for land affected by planned developments.

Despite these hurdles, Mureithi said, the community remains optimistic that secure land ownership and improved infrastructure will increase property values and transform the area.

Mukinduri, which was established decades ago as a government settlement, continues to grow, with its future now tied to the promise of reform.

Joel Macharia, a resident of Kamwiru village in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County, told KNA, "I was born and raised here. I now live with my older brother after our parents passed away, and we have taken responsibility for our home," he said.

He expressed gratitude for the KISIP project, noting that it has helped resolve frequent land disputes.

"Before KISIP, people around often complained of

their land space being invaded, leading to constant quarrels over boundaries. Now, proper beacons have been placed, and these issues have reduced," he said.

Macharia added that the prospect of receiving title deeds will bring security and new opportunities.

"With a title deed, I can access loans to expand my projects, including improving my boda boda business. This will greatly improve my livelihood," he said.

Josephine Waruguru Wachira, a resident of Ithairine village within Kabare Ward, Kirinyaga East Sub-County, said

her family has lived in the area for generations without formal ownership documents.

"We are asking for help to obtain title deeds. Currently, we only have informal documents, which limit our ability to access loans, sell land, or develop it properly," she said.

Waruguru noted that lack of ownership has denied residents full control over their land.

"Without title deeds, we cannot build freely, expand businesses, or even bury our loved ones on our land," she said, adding that more than 200 households in the area face similar challenges.

"A title deed would give us security, confidence, and opportunities for growth. We appeal to the government and partners like KISIP to help us secure our land and improve our future," Waruguru said.

Many residents in Kirinyaga County's informal settlements have lived there for over 60 years without formal land rights. As a result, many homes remain dilapidated and temporary.

Over the past two years, the government, through KISIP II, has focused on enhancing tenure security and improving infrastructure in urban informal settlements.

Key components of the project include institutional strengthening; land tenure regularisation through planning, surveying, and titling; infrastructure development such as roads, water, sanitation, and lighting; and planning for sustainable urban growth, often supported by community-led initiatives.



Josephine Waruguru Wachira.



Joel Macharia

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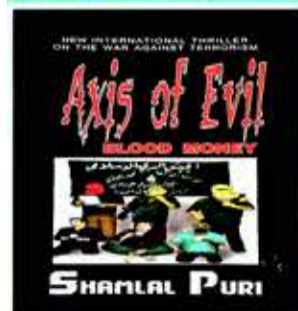
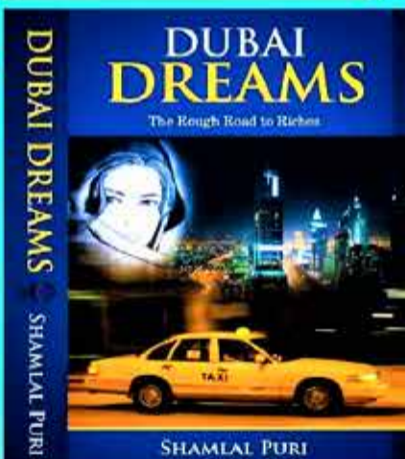
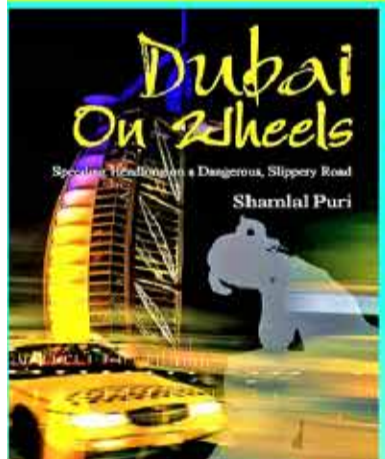
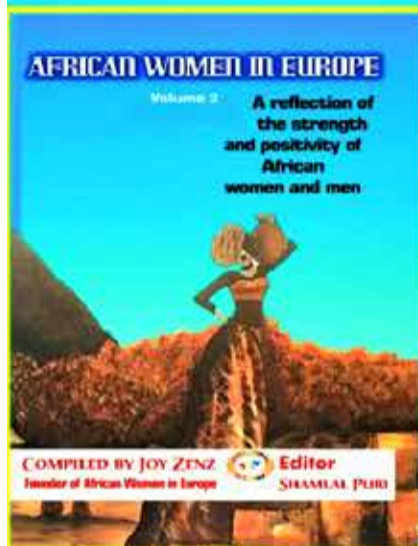
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PWD The social model identifies the systemic oppression, while the human rights model offers the mechanism (legal rights) to empower PWDs

The sleeping giant is logging in: Kenya's PWD voters are watching, listening, feeling and counting – they will decide



BY Fredrick Chelimo

@themtkenyatimes

The core philosophy driving the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the social model that shifted focus from the individual's impairment to the barriers society creates. It is based on the principle that disability is not caused by a person's physical or mental impairment, but rather by the way society is organized, which excludes, isolates and limits participation. It empowers PWDs by moving the problem from the individual's body to the social, physical, and attitudinal barriers that need to be removed. It distinguishes between impairment as a functional limitation and disability, a socially imposed exclusion.

The other model is, the Human Rights Based Approach and considered modern has a core principle that PWDs are not objects of pity or charity, but rather active subjects and rights holders. It guarantees the rights to live independently, dignity, equality and full participation. It emphasizes that PWDs should be in control of their own lives and make their own decisions. The social and human rights models have been foundational in moving global disability politics away from medicalization and towards nothing about us without us – the principle that PWDs must lead their own empowerment.

The social model identifies the systemic oppression, while the human rights model offers the mechanism (legal rights) to empower PWDs to overcome that oppression. One of the persons with disabilities Stephen Hawking said "concentrate on things your disability doesn't prevent you doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with. Don't be disabled in spirit, as well as physi-



Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Kenya

cally." I truly agree with him.

For sometime, persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Kenya have been spoken about in the language of vulnerability – counted in policy, referred in speeches, and acknowledged in law, yet rarely treated as a decisive political force. That framing is now obsolete, and dangerously so for those who continue to rely on it.

Quietly, steadily and increasingly impossible to ignore, a shift is underway. Kenya is witnessing a rise in number of persons with disabilities, not just in demographic terms, but in visibility, organization, and voice. More importantly, there is a growing cohort of PWDs who are deeply aware of their constitutional rights, grounded in instruments like Constitution of Kenya 2010, and increasingly unwilling to accept symbolic inclusion in place of tangible opportunity. Awareness as moved from the margins to the mainstream of disability community and with-it expectations have hardened.

This is not the same constituency that could be pacified with promises and periodic acknowledgement. This is a constituency that is reading policy, tracking implementation, and interrogating outcomes. Thanks to technology that has accelerated this transformation. Through platforms =linked to systems like e-GP Ken-

ya's procurement platform, social media networks, and digital advocacy spaces, PWDs are no longer isolated actors navigating opaque systems alone. They are connected and more so when they get to know how their rights are mutilated with open impunity.

They are sharing information about tenders, exposing patterns of exclusion, and building a collective awareness around rights violations. What was once fragmented is now increasingly coordinated. Digital connectivity has done something more profound and collapsed the distance between experience and accountability. A denied opportunity is no longer a private frustration, but a shared narrative. A pattern of exclusion is no longer anecdotal – it becomes evidence.

In politics, evidence, especially when organized, translates into power. Perhaps the most underestimated dimension if this shift is electoral. PWDs vote. They vote not as passive participants, but as citizens whose lived experiences are directly shaped by the policies and decisions of those in office. For years their voting patterns may have been diffused, influenced by broader community dynamics. That, too, is changing. There is a growing consciousness that the vote is not just a civic duty, but a tool

of accountability.

As Kenya approaches another election cycle, a new political reality is emerging PWDs are paying attention. They are observing which leaders merely recite the language of inclusion and which one demonstrate it through action. They are noting who has championed accessibility, equitable employment and procurement, and enforcement of rights. And who has remained silent or worse complicit as exclusion persists. They are tracking the decisions made in procurement committees, in legislative chambers, and within oversight bodies.

The PWDs are building a political memory, one that is powerful. This means that the days of assuming that PWDs can be as an afterthought are coming to an end. It means that leaders who have consistently trampled on the rights of persons with disabilities, whether through neglect, indifference, or calculated exclusion, will increasingly find that those actions carry consequences. It means also that those who have stood, even at the slightest opportunity, to defend and advance disability rights will find a constituency that remembers. Appreciates and rewards.

This is not a threat, but a natural evolution of democracy maturing into itself. For too long, the imple-

mentation of frameworks like Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2015 Kenya has operated in a space where accountability was assumed weak, where exclusion could be masked by aggregated statistics, and where the absence of disaggregated data allowed institutions to claim compliance without scrutiny.

The space is shrinking. A digitally connected, rights-aware PWS population is beginning to ask harder questions; who is actually the benefiting from the 30% procurement reservation? Where is the data that shows equitable distribution? Why do barriers persist in systems that claim to be inclusive? These are not abstract questions; they are political questions. And in an election cycle political questions demand political answers.

The implication for political leaders at national and county levels is clear. Inclusion can no longer be performed; it must be demonstrated. Policies must translate into outcomes. Commitments must be backed by measurable action. Oversight must move from passive observation to active enforcement. The electorate is changing.

The PWD community is no longer content to be counted during campaigns and discounted during governance. It is asserting itself as a constituency that understands its rights, values its votes and is prepared to responsibly use it. The quiet assumption that numbers alone determine political relevance is being challenged by a new reality; influence is not just about size – it is about organization, awareness, and strategic engagement.

And in that equation, PWDs are no longer at the periphery. They are watching, connecting, and remembering. At the right time, they will decide, not on the basis of promises made in the heat of the campaigns, but on the record of actions taken when it mattered most. Because in democracy, the most powerful statement is not spoken at a rally. It is made in the ballot box.

"A people who are visible during campaigns but invisible in allocation do not suffer from absence – they suffer from deliberate neglect. When they awaken to that truth, their vote stops being a ritual and become a reckoning"

Mr. Fredrick Kipchumba Chelimo
PWD

Chairperson, Jiamini Disability network Community Based organization

Email: jiamini.network@gmail.com

Climate The climate finance gap is stark: only 18% of annual mitigation needs are funded, and a paltry 20% of adaptation needs are covered.

Kenya's Plea: Africa's Fight for Climate Justice



BY Norman Mwale
[The PenPusher]
@themtkenyaintimes

The clock is ticking: Africa demands climate action now. Africa's plea for climate justice is not a plea for charity, but a call to acknowledge historical injustices and recognise the continent's inherent right to development. As Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed poignantly stated, 'Africa didn't cause this crisis, but can solve it'.

Despite holding 60% of the world's solar potential and 39% of overall renewable energy potential, Africa receives a mere 2% of global investment. This glaring disparity underscores the need for

grant-based financial flows and investment commitments for green growth, rather than loans that exacerbate debt burdens.

The climate finance gap is stark: only 18% of annual mitigation needs are funded, and a paltry 20% of adaptation needs are covered. This is not merely an African issue, but a global concern. As the African Development Bank warns, 'The climate crisis is a development crisis'.

Africa's vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by its significant debt burden. Sixteen countries are overpaying \$74 billion in debt servicing costs due to lower credit ratings, diverting resources away from climate

resilience and development. This vicious cycle of debt and climate vulnerability must be broken.

Kenya and South Africa, among other African nations, are deeply concerned about climate change. Kenyan President William Ruto emphasizes Africa's potential for green growth, highlighting the continent's "untapped renewable energy potential" and young workforce. He calls for fast-tracking green growth and has pledged to make renewables 100% of Kenya's electricity mix by 2030. Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016) provides a framework for climate action, and the National Climate Change Action Plan outlines priority actions

for mitigation and adaptation. Kenya is pushing forward with initiatives like achieving universal access to clean cooking by 2028, backed by strategies such as the Kenya National Cooking Transition Strategy. The country is also focusing on reforestation efforts and sustainable land management to reduce deforestation. Internationally, Kenya participates in global climate initiatives, including the Paris Agreement and the African Union's Green Recovery Action Plan.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's rapid deforestation,

driven by industrial agriculture and logging, threatens biodiversity and local livelihoods. In Nigeria, oil extraction has ravaged the Niger Delta, exacerbating poverty and environmental degradation.

These perspectives underscore Africa's commitment to addressing climate change, as echoed at the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi. The Africa Climate Innovation Compact, launched at the summit, offers a promising solution. This \$50 billion initiative aims to accelerate climate innovation, promote green growth, and

support climate-resilient development.

Africa is taking the lead, with initiatives like the African Union's Green Recovery Action Plan and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative. It's time for the global community to join forces. As Kenyan climate activist Vanessa Nakuru aptly put it, 'Climate justice means holding the biggest polluters accountable and ensuring those who've contributed least to the crisis aren't left behind'.

The time for action is now. We must recalibrate our approach to climate finance, prioritising equity, justice, and the needs of the most vulnerable. Let's work together to build a climate-resilient future for Africa and the world.

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Zimbabwe-South Africa The visit, which included a guided tour of the farm, carried immediate symbolic weight.

Ramaphosa visits Mnangagwa's farm in bold push for Zimbabwe-South Africa economic ties

BY Norman Mwale

@themkenyatimes

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa visited Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa at his Precabe Farm in Kwekwe last Sunday in a carefully choreographed diplomatic gesture aimed at deepening economic cooperation between the two neighbouring nations.

The visit, which included a guided tour of the farm, carried immediate symbolic weight. Precabe Farm is not merely a private agricultural holding — it is, in the eyes of Mnangagwa's government, a showcase of Zimbabwe's ambitions to modernise its agriculture sector and attract serious investment. That Ramaphosa made it his chosen venue for bilateral engagement speaks to the deliberate message both leaders wished to send: that business, not just diplomacy, is at the heart of this relationship.

The occasion drew some of Zimbabwe's most prominent and, in some quarters, controversial business figures, among them Wicknell Chivayo, Kudakwashe Tagwirei, and Paul Tungwarara. Their presence underlined the extent to which private sector actors are expected to be central to any expansion of economic ties between Harare and Pretoria. For observers of Zimbabwean politics, the guest list was as telling as the agenda.

Dr. Sithembile Mbete, a regional politics expert at the University of Pretoria, did not understate the significance of the moment. "This visit is a game-changer for the region," she said. "It sends a strong signal that Zimbabwe and South Africa are committed to working together to unlock economic opportunities and promote regional integration." That assessment reflects a broader reading among analysts: that Ramaphosa's decision to travel to Kwekwe rather than confine discussions to a formal state house setting was itself a statement of intent.

The economic backdrop gives the visit considerable substance. Trade between South Africa and Zimbabwe is already valued at over one billion United States dollars annually, making South Africa Zimbabwe's single largest trading partner. Yet



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa visited Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa at his Precabe Farm in Kwekwe

both governments and business leaders agree that this figure represents only a fraction of what is possible. Julius Mahlangu, Chief Executive of the Zimbabwe-South Africa Business Council, was direct about the expectations his community has placed on the visit. "We expect to see significant investments in the coming months, especially in the agriculture sector," he said, adding that the meeting had "opened doors for new business opportunities" that had previously remained shut.

Agriculture is only part of the picture. Mining and manufacturing have also been identified as priority sectors where deeper bilateral cooperation could yield substantial returns. The South African Business Chamber echoed Mahlangu's optimism, pointing to all three sectors as ripe for accelerated investment. Zimbabwe holds some of Africa's most significant mineral reserves, including lithium deposits that have attracted growing international attention as global demand for battery materials surges. South African capital and expertise, combined with Zimbabwe's resources and land, represent a pairing that regional economists have long argued is underutilised.



The visit also arrives at a moment of broader continental significance. With the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement now operational and member states progressively implementing its provisions, Zimbabwe and South Africa are positioned to serve as anchor economies for regional value chains. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, welcomed the visit in precisely these terms. "It demonstrates the commitment of African leaders to promoting regional trade and investment," she said, describing the Kwekwe encounter as "a major boost for AfCFTA."

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Both presidents used the occasion to speak in terms that deliberately transcended economics. "Our countries are bound by history, culture, and geography," Ramaphosa said during the visit. "It is imperative that we work together to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region." Mnangagwa, for his part, emphasised that regional integration was not an abstract goal but a practical engine for growth — one that Zimbabwe, after years of economic turbulence and international isolation, urgently needs to accelerate.

Mnangagwa's domestic reform agenda has made modest but measurable progress since he came to power in 2017. Efforts to stabilise the currency, revive agricultural output, and restore investor confidence have produced uneven but real results. Zimbabwe's re-engagement with international financial institutions, while incomplete, has advanced further under his administration than at any point in the preceding two decades. South Africa's visible embrace of that trajectory — Ramaphosa arriving at a farm rather than merely sending a delegation — amounts to a form of political endorsement that carries weight both regionally and internationally.

Political analyst Godfrey Mumbere noted that the choice of venue was itself a diplomatic signal. "The fact that President Ramaphosa chose to visit President Mnangagwa's farm is significant," he said. "It shows that the relationship between the two leaders is strong and that they are committed to working together." In the layered language of African summitry, where protocol and symbolism are rarely accidental, the informality of a farm visit communicates something that a formal joint communiqué often cannot.

The Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce called the visit "a testament to the strong ties between Zimbabwe and South Africa," while urging both governments to move swiftly from goodwill to binding agreements. That urgency is understandable. Southern Africa has seen no shortage of high-profile diplomatic encounters that produced warm photographs and cool follow-through. The test of Sunday's visit in Kwekwe will not be measured in statements but in the investments, trade agreements, and jobs that either materialise or fail to in the months ahead.

What is beyond dispute is that the region is watching. SADC member states, international investors, and ordinary citizens across both countries will be assessing whether this partnership delivers on its considerable promise. Ramaphosa and Mnangagwa have staked political credibility on the answer.

The farm visit was a beginning, not a conclusion. The harvest, as any farmer will attest, depends entirely on what happens after the planting.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are losing our uniqueness



BY RAJESH KANNA .B N
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en 21st century. The only way to reclaim our lost heritage is to reconnect with our roots.

Impact of Communication Technology

Although communication devices have brought the world to our fingertips, they have weakened direct human interaction. Today, people show more interest in talking on mobile phones with someone far away than conversing with those nearby. Constant immersion in screens has reduced creativity and critical thinking, creating a tendency to imitate others rather than think independently. This weakens our personal tastes and unique perspectives.

Plastic Usage and Fast Food

Plastic and fast food, now integral parts of modern life, are harming both our health and environmental identity. We have forgotten traditional clay utensils and leaf-based dining,

becoming dependent on plastic bags and chemically processed foods. By abandoning our native, nutritious food practices and turning to Western “junk” food, we are damaging our healthy lifestyle identity.

Family Environment and Child Care

Due to economic demands, it has become unavoidable for both husband and wife to work. As a result, parents struggle to spend quality time with their young children. At an age when they need love and care, children are often raised in daycare centers or alongside electronic devices, which affects their personality development.

Breakdown of Joint Families

Joint families, once strong like a banyan tree, have disintegrated, giving rise to nuclear families. This is a major reason why today’s children miss out on the stories and moral les-



sons shared by grandparents. The values of compromise and sharing are fading, while selfish attitudes of “me and mine” are increasing.

Relationships and Festivals

Instead of valuing relationships, people now prioritize social status and wealth. The days of participating in village festivals and bonding with relatives are fading, replaced by spending holidays at tourist destinations. By not taking part in such cultural events, our traditional

arts, rituals, and social unity are slowly slipping away from us.

Behavior Towards Elders

With fewer elders at home, there is a lack of guidance for the younger generation in learning discipline and values. Children are not taught how to respect elders or how to communicate appropriately. Mere academic knowledge is not enough for life; it is the wisdom and life lessons of elders that shape a complete human being.

It is our responsibility to pass on this understanding to the next generation.

RAJESH KANNA .B N

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After divorce, what next?

Divorce has been normalised, but nobody is asking the harder question: what comes after?

What was once whispered behind closed doors is today a commonplace reality. Yet in the rush to end a marriage, few pause to reckon with what follows. Divorce is not a full stop. For most, it is where the real struggle begins.

Breaking an attachment is never as clean as signing a document. Marriage reaches far beyond two people — it binds parents, children, friends, and entire communities. When it breaks, the casualties are many and the damage runs deep. Both parties often emerge emotionally exhausted, financially drained, and mentally scarred, sometimes years after proceedings began.

There is also a generational shift worth examining. Older generations courted deliberately, sometimes for years, before committing. Today, people rush into lifetime bonds with



near strangers, then find themselves equally unprepared for the weight of separation. Anger drives many divorce decisions that cooler heads might have resolved through honest conversation.

The mental health toll is real and rising. Recurring memories, grief, and unresolved trauma have made divorce a significant contributor to depression in society today. The stigma surrounding it only compounds the suffering, punishing people for the failure of something

they entered with hope.

The Church, families, and community spaces must open this conversation without shame or judgment. Divorce is not the end of a life — it is the end of one chapter. Society’s role is not to condemn those who reach that point, but to remind them that a full, meaningful life still lies ahead.

The conversation is overdue. Let us have it.

By Daniel Maina, Laikipia University

Kenya’s 2027 test: Can voters choose leaders over tribes?

Tribalism remains the stubborn fault line that Kenyan democracy has never quite managed to cross — and 2027 will test whether that finally changes.

Since independence, ethnic loyalty has been the organising principle of Kenyan politics. Communities rally behind candidates who look like them regardless of competence, integrity, or vision. Elections become arithmetic exercises — how many votes can a community deliver — rather than contests of ideas. Accountability collapses when leaders feel answerable to their ethnic base first and the nation last. Corruption goes unpunished. Inequality deepens. The cycle repeats every five years with grim consistency.

The stakes are not merely political. The post-election violence of 2007 and 2008 killed more than 1,300 people and displaced hundreds of thou-



sands, fuelled in significant part by ethnic grievance and cynical political manipulation. Reforms since have reduced the risk of similar bloodshed, but the underlying conditions — economic exclusion, unresolved grievances, and leaders willing to exploit division for votes — remain firmly in place.

And yet Kenya is shifting. A younger, digitally connected electorate is beginning to demand more. Civil society, an assertive media, and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission are driving civic education deeper into

public consciousness than at any previous election cycle. Issue-based politics is no longer idealistic — it is a growing expectation.

The work belongs to everyone: voters who must scrutinise records over identity, parties that must compete on ideology, and leaders who must choose unity over division.

In 2027, the ballot will not just choose a president. It will reveal the soul of a nation.

By John Muraya Wanjeri, Laikipia University

SPORTS NEWS

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Sports >> *World marathon record holder Sabastian Sawe was welcomed home to Nandi County on Monday in a high-profile celebration attended by government officials

Nandi county gives Sawe a hero's welcome after historic London marathon

By Martin Weche

World marathon record holder Sabastian Sawe was welcomed home to Nandi County on Monday in a high-profile celebration attended by government officials, sports stakeholders, and hundreds of residents honouring the athlete who rewrote the history books at the London Marathon last month.

Sawe, 24, made global headlines when he became the first man to run a sub-two-hour marathon in an official World Athletics-recognised race, shattering the previous world record and cementing Kenya's place at the very pinnacle of long-distance running. The achievement sent shockwaves through the athletics world and sparked days of national celebration, but it was the homecoming in Nandi — the county that produced him, and whose red soil roads he has trained on since boyhood — that carried the deepest meaning.

Nandi County Governor Stephen Sang did not mince his words when he addressed the gathering, speaking with the pride of a man who had watched one of his own redefine what the human body is capable of. "You have shifted the limits of human endurance," Sang told Sawe before a cheering crowd. "You have placed your name in history and lifted the pride of our county, our country, our continent, and of humanity itself. You are standing in, and training in, the county that has produced world-beaters."

Sawe, characteristically measured in his response, used the platform not for personal glory but to speak directly to the next generation of Kenyan athletes. "I encourage all athletes to keep training hard," he said quietly. "I believe that if they keep doing so, they will get to where they want to be — but they must uphold discipline." It was a short



World men's marathon record holder Sabastian Sawe

statement, delivered without fanfare, from a man who has never been defined by noise.

His manager, Claudio Bardelli, also addressed the ceremony and struck a balance between gratitude and candid advocacy. Welcoming the county government's commitment to building a new stadium, Bardelli nonetheless pressed local authorities on a more immediate concern. "I am very pleased that the government is building a new stadium," he said, "however, help us maintain these roads." It was a pointed reminder that world-class athletes are still training on infrastructure that does not always reflect their world-class status.

The call for investment in sports infrastructure was echoed by multiple stakeholders present, who urged both the national and county governments to move beyond celebration and translate the goodwill generated by Sawe's achievement into concrete, long-term commitments. Kenya has produced generations of marathon champions, but

those who work closest with athletes argue that talent alone is no longer sufficient — the facilities, roads, and support systems must keep pace with the ambition.

In recognition of his achievement, the Nandi County government awarded Sawe a low-cost housing unit and livestock, part of its formal incentive package for outstanding sporting performance. Sawe received the gifts with visible gratitude, saying the gesture would motivate not only himself but fellow athletes to continue pursuing excellence and defending Kenya's formidable reputation on the global athletics stage.

It is a reputation that Sawe has now elevated to a level few thought possible. For decades, breaking the two-hour marathon barrier was considered the sport's equivalent of the four-minute mile — a psychological frontier as much as a physical one. That it fell in London, and that the man who broke it comes from the hills of Nandi County, speaks to something deeper than sport.

It speaks to a culture of running that is woven into the identity of this region and this nation.

Nandi gave the world Sabastian Sawe. On Monday, it welcomed him back.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

Sports >> *Kenya's national under-17 women's football team, the Junior Starlets, have named a 30-player provisional squad for the second round of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup qualifier against Uganda

Junior Starlets name squad for Uganda World Cup qualifier



Kenya's national under-17 women's football team, the Junior Starlets

By **Martin Weche**

Kenya's national under-17 women's football team, the Junior Starlets, have named a 30-player provisional squad for the second round of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup qualifier against Uganda, with the side entering a residential training camp on Wednesday to begin intensive preparations for the two-legged tie.

Head coach Mildred Cheche has retained the core of the squad that dismantled Namibia 7-1 on aggregate in the first round, a result that underlined Kenya's ambitions in the regional qualifying campaign and signalled that this group of young players is ready for the next challenge. The decision to maintain continuity reflects Cheche's confidence in a settled unit that has already demonstrated its quality under pressure.

The provisional squad features three goalkeepers in Vallary

Achieng, Wekhomba Martha, and Mishel Ng'ono. The defensive line includes Pauline Namisi, Daisy Adongo, Sheila Atieno, Rose Nangila Wanyonyi, Grace Mumo, Idah Mobutu, Florence Mboya, Jael Nanjala, and Valary Achieng. The midfield, which will be expected to control the tempo against a physical Ugandan side, is anchored by Bevarline Awuor, Lindey Weey Atieno, Brenda Awuor, Gaudencia Maloba, Fleviah Khatenje, Tabitha Wambui, Mwanakombo Bakari, Beryl Awuor, and Grace Wangari. The attacking options are led by Patience Waitira, Brenda Achieng, Martha Musimbi, Emily Adhiambo, Khadija Furaha, Boko Faith, Ivy Atieno, Rochelle Faith, and Elizabeth Alizeba.

The first leg is scheduled for 22 May at FUFA Stadium in Kadiba, Kampala, before the tie returns to Nairobi on 30 May at Nyayo National Stadium, where home support is expected to give the

Starlets a significant boost. The aggregate winner will advance to the third round of qualifying, with those matches scheduled for July, keeping alive the possibility of a Kenyan presence at the global tournament.

Uganda will be a considerably sterner examination than Namibia. The Crested Cranes have historically been competitive in East African youth football, and the away leg in Kampala presents particular tactical challenges for Cheche's side. The choice of Nyayo National Stadium for the return leg is a deliberate one — it is a venue capable of generating the kind of atmosphere that can shift the momentum of a tight contest.

Coach Cheche, who has quietly built a reputation for developing young talent within the Kenyan women's football system, faces her most significant test yet in this role. The residential camp starting Wednesday will be critical — not only for sharpening

fitness and tactical shape, but for building the mental resilience that knockout football at this level demands. Every session between now and 22 May carries weight.

Kenyan women's football has been on an upward trajectory in recent years, with growing investment in youth structures and increased visibility for the women's game at national level. A run to the third round of FIFA qualifying would represent a meaningful statement of that progress and deliver valuable international experience to a squad that, if developed well, could form the backbone of senior Harambee Starlets sides in the years ahead.

For now, the focus is singular. A camp, a flight to Kampala, and 180 minutes — at minimum — to determine who moves forward in the race to the World Cup.

The Junior Starlets are ready. Uganda has been warned.

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



Farewell to the father of Runyankore-Rukiga liturgical music



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza
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The choirs of Ankole and Kigezi are singing this week with one voice missing — and yet his voice is everywhere. John Bosco Kazoora, the composer who spent more than three decades giving the Roman Catholic Mass a Runyankore-Rukiga tongue, has died. He was a man of deep faith, extraordinary musical gift, and hard-won wisdom, and the Church he served so faithfully is poorer for his passing. Kazoora's catalogue of over 350 hymns — now preserved in the Runyankore Christian Songs app and the 2024 album Best of JB Kazoora — became the soundtrack of faith for an entire generation of worshippers across south-western Uganda. When the Church opened its mouth to pray, from Mbarara to Kabale, it often used the words he gave it: Ebirungi Byonkoreire Taata, Yesu Mujuni, Tusiime Mukama, Nkwata Omukono Taata. These were not merely songs. They were a people's theology set to melody. This correspondent met John Bosco Kazoora years ago at Numba Catholic Center in Kashekuro Parish, Bushenyi, where he had come to train the local choir ahead of Christmas. What began as a music workshop became something closer to a masterclass in grace. Asked what drives a man to devote his life to sacred composition, he did not answer with theory. He answered with his scars. "As long as you are breathing," he said, "whether praised, talented, or cherished — expect to fall. But that fall will never define you. You still have a choice. You can still rise." His own life was the proof. There was a period when John Bosco Kazoora walked away from the Church entirely. The rituals felt hollow; the pews, cold. He took his gift — the same gift that would

one day move thousands to tears at Sunday Mass — and carried it into nightclubs and bars. The money was good. The applause was generous. But, as he later confessed without self-pity, "I was earning, but I was not happy. My soul was bankrupt." His return to the Church was not forced by scandal or public rebuke. It came as an invitation. The late Archbishop Paul K. Bakyenga, on learning that his son was in exile from his vocation, summoned John Bosco Kazoora for a private meeting — no censure, no conditions, no judgment. In that quiet room, Kazoora remembered who he was. He returned to the altar not as a prodigal in shame, but as a son with his talent re-consecrated for worship. When asked, during that long-ago conversation in Bushenyi, how he wrote words that flow with such ease and feeling, John Bosco Kazoora led this journalist to a forest near the parish. For a few minutes, the two of them simply listened to birdsong. "That is already a natural rhythm," he said at last. "Music is not manufactured. It is an experience lived, and a revelation revealed." Every hymn he composed carried that conviction. Ebirungi Byonkoreire Taata — All the Good Things You Have Done for Me, Father — turned private gratitude into communal litany. To sing it is to tell God, quietly but firmly: I have not forgotten. I am still counting. Reeba Eirembo Rya Mukama — Behold the Gate of the Lord — set Psalm 118 to Ankole drums and flung the church doors open for all who believed they had no right to enter: the poor, the ashamed, the late-arriving. Yesu Mujuni — Jesus the Saviour — stripped the Gospel to its essence, a single name. In Runyankore-Rukiga, Mujuni is the one who pulls you from the river. Tusiime Mukama — Let Us Praise the Lord — gave an entire people permission to be loud even when the harvest had failed. Its theology is one of defiance. We praise anyway. Turiyo Nituhingura — We Are Here, We Are Arriving — became the pilgrim's anthem, a reminder that the road to God is itself a sacred thing, even before the

destination is reached. Tihariho Ndi-jo Owakubasa Kutujuna — There Is No One Else Who Can Save Us — was composed for the hours when medicine runs out and all other names have been exhausted. Reka Nkusiime — Let Me Praise You — carved space for the individual voice within the communal liturgy. It is the sound of a single child speaking to a Father. Ntume Oha Yeimwe — Send Me, Here I Am — reframed the nature of Christian service entirely. You are not volunteering. You are being sent. And then there is Nkwata Omukono Taata Onyimutsye — Hold My Hand, Father, and Lift Me Up — perhaps the most personal hymn John Bosco Kazoora ever wrote, and the one that speaks most directly to the manner of the man. He had battled diabetes for years. While preparing to board a flight to an AMECEA music symposium abroad, his chest seized and his arms went numb minutes before takeoff. Alone at 30,000 feet with no physician beside him, he had only one resource: Lord, do not let this opportunity pass me. Hold my hand. By the time the aircraft landed, he was well. On his return, he confronted a question that had no easy answer: how does a man adequately thank God for a prayer answered at altitude? The response, as was always his way, became a song. Nkwata omukono taata onyimutsye, omutima gwangye reru ombangire, mpumura ahamaisho ndebe nkumanye, ngume mpimbise eizina ryawe. Hold my hand, Father, and lift me up. Create in me a clean heart. Let me breathe in Your presence and know You, that I may forever glorify Your name. That was John Bosco Kazoora. A man who listened to forests and to a failing body, and turned both into prayer. A man who fell, who once sold his gift in the wrong market, and who still chose to rise when the Father called him home. He leaves behind no formula, only a witness: that talent without peace is poverty, and that the hand of God is always extended to those humble enough to whisper nkwata omukono. He is survived by the Church he spent a lifetime teach-



John Bosco Kazoora.

ing to sing — by choirs who will never meet him but who carry his theology in their voices; by old men who will feel something break inside them when Ebirungi Byonkoreire Taata begins; by children who will grow up never knowing a Catholic liturgy that did not bear his fingerprints. Funeral arrangements are being coordinated with his family and Mbarara Archdiocese choristers. He will be honoured in Masses across the region. The lion of Runyankore-Rukiga liturgical music is silent. But next Sunday, when the first note rises from the choir loft, when Yesu

Mujuni is whispered beside a sickbed, when Numba sings Tusiime Mukama — John Bosco Kazoora will be there. Rest, Mzee. You taught us how to go to the Father. Now you have gone yourself. Nkwata omukono, Taata. Hold His hand.