



**Rigathi: Elders' counsel will guide political path forward**

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has underscored the central role of elders in shaping political direction and community decision-making

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**Kindiki: We will ensure the country is ready for El Nino rains**

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has assured the country that the government is laying down adequate measures in anticipation of El Nino rains expected in Kenya later in the year.

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Voice of the People

# The Mt. Kenya Times

Daily ePAPER

**Xenophobia** As of July 2, 2026, a total of 240 Kenyan nationals requiring assistance had registered with the Kenya High Commission in Pretoria

## Kenya evacuates 151 from South Africa amid xenophobic attacks

The Kenyan government has intensified efforts to evacuate its citizens from South Africa following a surge in xenophobic violence and intimidation, with 151 Kenyans already safely returned home and dozens more expected to arrive in Nairobi on Thursday.

The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs said the evacuation operation is being carried out in a safe, orderly and timely manner to protect Kenyan nationals caught up in the unrest that has affected parts of South Africa.

According to a statement issued on Thursday by Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, the government remains committed to safeguarding the welfare and security of all Kenyans living and working in South Africa.

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Illustration of Kenya evacuates 151 citizens from South Africa as xenophobic violence escalates

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# Kenya, Italy sign labour migration deal to expand jobs and protect workers

BY DMS

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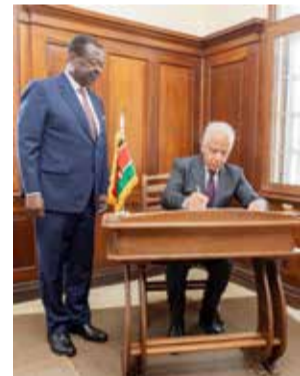
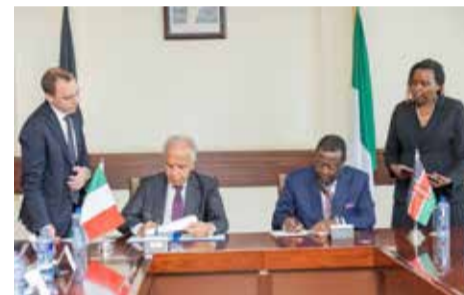
*Some of the moments as captured in pictures*

Kenya and Italy have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Migration and Mobility, paving the way for structured labour migration, enhanced protection of migrant workers and closer bilateral cooperation in key sectors of the economy.

The agreement was signed yesterday during the first official visit to Kenya by Italy's Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, who held talks with Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Dr. Musalia Mudavadi. The two leaders described the agreement as a significant milestone in Kenya-Italy relations, saying it establishes a government-to-government framework that will facilitate regular labour migration, promote skills development and safeguard the rights and welfare of Kenyan workers seeking employment in Italy.

Speaking after the meeting, Dr. Mudavadi said the partnership reflects a shared commitment to managing migration in a safe, orderly and mutually beneficial manner. "The agreement ushers in a new era of cooperation founded on mutual respect, shared opportunity, human dignity and well-managed migration," he said.

Under the new framework, Kenyans seeking employment opportunities in Italy will access more structured and transparent recruitment channels, reducing the risks as-



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## NEWS IN BRIEF



The Nairobi Hospital has partnered with the Nairobi Polo Club to provide healthcare services during the 2026/2027 polo season, enhancing player safety and promoting preventive healthcare. As the club's official healthcare partner, the hospital will offer on-site emergency medical services, including ambulances, trained personnel, medical equipment, health screenings and wellness education during polo events. The hospital will also headline sponsor the 2026 Pink Polo Tournament in October as part of its cancer awareness campaign promoting early detection and regular screening. Chief Executive Officer Felix Osano said the partnership extends healthcare beyond hospital walls through sports, while Nairobi Polo Club Chairman Simon Muchene said it will improve safety standards, strengthen emergency preparedness and support the continued growth of polo in Kenya.



The Kisumu County Assembly approved a KSh14.46 billion budget for the 2026/2027 financial year, paving the way for implementation of development programmes and public services. The budget comprises KSh11.94 billion from the national government and KSh2.33 billion in own-source revenue, representing an increase of KSh4.86 billion from the previous financial year. It prioritizes completion of ongoing projects, particularly in health and infrastructure, while allocating KSh8.54 billion for recurrent expenditure and KSh5.92 billion for development. A further KSh587.4 million has been set aside to clear pending bills. The budget, which awaits Governor Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o's assent, emphasizes accountability, efficient resource utilization and improved service delivery as the county seeks to consolidate development gains achieved under devolution.



Solar power is transforming livelihoods in Kosele Trading Centre, Rachuonyo South, as more households and small businesses adopt affordable, reliable clean energy. Residents are using solar systems for lighting, charging phones and powering small appliances, reducing dependence on the national grid and costly alternatives. The growth has been driven by Pay-As-You-Go financing, enabling low-income families to acquire solar systems through affordable mobile money payments. Traders say solar lighting has extended business hours and increased earnings, while sales of solar products are creating employment opportunities for young people. Meanwhile, Homa Bay County is investing in solar-powered public utilities, including water projects and market lighting, through the Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FL-LoCA) programme to expand clean energy access and strengthen climate resilience.



The Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC) has strengthened community land governance by facilitating the registration of Community Land Management Committees (CLMCs) for Turbi, Uran and Obbu in Marsabit County. The certificates, presented by county and Ministry of Lands officials, mark a key step in implementing the Community Land Act and securing community land rights. Marsabit County Commissioner Stanley Kamande said the committees provide legally recognized structures to manage community land, enhance accountability and resolve land disputes. Community Land Registrar John Wanjohi urged the committees to promote transparent governance. FCDC said the initiative will help reduce land-related conflicts, improve natural resource management and support sustainable development, investment and peaceful coexistence across Kenya's frontier counties and arid regions.

The Makeni County Government has set aside KSh160 million under the Makeni County Empowerment Fund (MCEF) to provide loans to women, youth and persons with disabilities to promote economic empowerment and improve livelihoods. Speaking during a public engagement forum for Anti-GBV Champions, Gender CECM Eng. Sabastian Kyoni said the funds will be disbursed through organized groups to support income-generating activities. Applicants with outstanding loans under the Hustler or Tetheka funds must first clear their balances before qualifying for the digital loans. Kyoni also announced the appointment of an additional Chief Officer to strengthen service delivery and said another round of Huduma Mashinani would register residents and offer marriage registration services across all wards.



Mombasa Governor Abdulsamad Nassir has backed the inaugural Media and Communication (MAC) Awards 2026, proposing a category dedicated to promoting Mombasa's tourism, logistics and investment potential. The awards, organised by Gilitics Media and the Mombasa Press Club, feature 25 categories recognizing excellence in journalism and digital communication, with submissions beginning this month and a gala planned for October or November. Nassir urged journalists to uphold accuracy, verification and context amid the fast-paced digital media environment. Jomvu MP Badi Twalib described journalism as a nation-building profession that should prioritize truth and fairness over speed. Deputy Government Spokesperson Mwanisha Chidzuga encouraged organizations to tap journalists' skills beyond traditional newsrooms, including content creation, editing, photography and videography.



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**Business** Vivo Energy, the leading African energy distribution company; which now operates around 4,200 service stations

## Vivo Energy expands beyond Africa, enters the Middle East region with TotalEnergies Marketing Jordan acquisition

...set to introduce the Engen brand to the Kingdom

BY MKT REPORTER

@themtkenyatimes

Vivo Energy has announced the completion of the transaction to acquire 100% of the shares in TotalEnergies Marketing Jordan.

Vivo Energy, the leading African energy distribution company; which now operates around 4,200 service stations across 29 markets yesterday completed the acquisition of TotalEnergies Marketing Jordan, including its network of around 180 service stations, as well as its commercial fuels and lubricants operations.

In Kenya, Vivo Energy operates through its wholly owned subsidiary Vivo Energy Kenya, which was established in November 2012 following the acquisition of Shell's downstream business in Kenya from Kenya Shell Ltd. Vivo Energy Kenya is currently ranked as the leading national oil marketing company (OMC) with a 20.0% market share according to the sector regulator and serves all market segments from retail to commercial customers with a full range of automotive fuels, lubricants, aviation fuels, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and black fuels.

Further afield, in the Middle East, the acquisition of TotalEnergies Marketing Jordan marks the introduction of the Engen brand. Now present in 13 of Vivo Energy's mar-



Jordan announcement photo.

kets, Engen is Vivo Energy's owned retail brand with a strong reputation for quality and service; and the number one fuel brand in South Africa, where a network of over 1,000 Engen service stations sells one in every four litres of fuel. It will replace TotalEnergies on Jordan's forecourts over the coming months.

Following the announcement of the transaction in November 2025, all parties worked hard to secure regulatory approvals and fulfilment of conditions precedent, which have now been completed.

Commenting on the transaction, Stan Mittelman, CEO of the Vivo Energy Group, said: "This is an important milestone for Vivo Energy as we expand beyond Africa into

Jordan – a market with strong fundamentals and a team we have great respect for. Vivo Energy and our retail brand Engen are built on African values of customer service and community, which we believe have a real story to tell in Jordan. We look forward to supporting continued growth in the market."

Adel Saadallah, the new Managing Director for Vivo Energy Jordan, added: "I am genuinely proud to be appointed to lead Vivo Energy's business in Jordan, as we expand into this new market. I have been part of Vivo Energy since the company was founded and have seen firsthand how our model creates businesses that last."

Vivo Energy's success is driven by empowered local

management teams, serving customers and stakeholders effectively – a model that it will bring to Jordan.

Saadallah concluded: "The announcement is a change of ownership, but employees, dealer contracts and customer relationships carry over unchanged. My priority will be to work alongside the existing team, build on what is working well and make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone. We recognise that 2026 is a year of pride for Jordan: The Kingdom's 80th Independence Day anniversary and the national team's first-ever World Cup appearance. We will work to reflect this pride in our programmes – putting Jordan and Jordanians first."

## Court drops treason charges against activist Bob Njagi



Activist Bob Njagi at Kajiado Law Courts with colleagues

BY MKT Correspondent

@themtkenyatimes

The Kajiado Law Courts has dismissed a treason case against activist Bob Njagi, bringing to a close a matter that had drawn national attention and criticism from political leaders.

Senior Principal Magistrate Edgar Kagoni ruled that the prosecution had failed to present sufficient evidence to sustain the treason charges. The magistrate ordered the formal dismissal of the case and the closure of the file, effectively clearing Njagi of the allegations.

Njagi was arrested in Kajiado County on June 24 over allegations of incitement linked to demonstrations held on June 25 to mark the anniversary of the Gen Z-led protests.

Reacting to the ruling, Siaya Governor James Orendo described it as a victory for justice and the rule of law. He said the case against Njagi reflected a broader pattern of politically motivated prosecutions targeting citizens exercising their constitutional rights.

"No Kenyan should face trumped-up charges for exercising their democratic rights. Bob Njagi's arrest is a political injustice to the entire nation," Orendo said.

The dismissal is likely to renew scrutiny of how authorities have handled arrests connected to the anniversary demonstrations, with rights groups and political figures continuing to raise concerns over the treatment of activists and protesters in the weeks following the events of June 25.

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# Kenya, Italy sign labour migration deal to expand jobs and protect workers



Kenya, Italy sign labour migration deal

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sociated with irregular migration and exploitation by unscrupulous labour brokers.

The agreement also seeks to strengthen skills development and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise between the two countries, enabling Kenyan workers to acquire valuable experience while contributing to Italy's labour market.

Government officials said the initiative is expected to generate employment opportunities for Kenyan youth, increase diaspora remittances and contribute to the country's economic growth.

The labour mobility framework comes at a time when Kenya is actively pursuing bilateral labour agreements with several countries to address unemployment while ensuring the rights and welfare of migrant workers are protected through formal government arrangements. Beyond labour migration, the two governments reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in trade and investment, education, energy, technology, aerospace and tourism.

The sectors were identified as areas with significant potential to stimulate economic growth, promote innovation and create employment opportunities for citizens of both countries.

Dr. Mudavadi said Kenya remains committed to strengthening strategic partnerships that deliver tangi-

ble benefits to its people.

"As Kenya continues to strengthen its global partnerships, agreements such as this demonstrate how diplomacy translates into tangible opportunities that improve livelihoods, expand economic prospects and create a brighter future for our citizens," he said.

The visit by Minister Piantedosi also underscores the growing diplomatic and economic ties between Kenya and Italy, which have continued to expand through cooperation in trade, development, infrastructure, education and cultural exchanges.

Analysts say the migration and mobility agreement is expected to enhance legal labour migration while strengthening collaboration on migration governance, skills development and worker protection.

The agreement is also seen as part of broader efforts by both countries to promote orderly migration, address labour market needs and build stronger people-to-people links through regulated mobility programmes.

Officials expressed optimism that the partnership will open new opportunities for Kenyan professionals and skilled workers while reinforcing the longstanding friendship between Kenya and Italy.



DCP leader Rigathi Gachagua addressing the elders yesterday

## Rigathi: Elders' counsel will guide political path forward

BY DMS

@themkenyatimes

Former Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua has underscored the central role of elders in shaping political direction and community decision-making, saying their wisdom and foresight remain critical in guiding leadership choices and national discourse.

Gachagua praised elders as "repositories of wisdom and foresight," noting that they take time to deliberate, reflect and scrutinize issues before making decisions that affect their communities and the country at large.

He said he had received guidance from the leadership of Kiama Kia Kiama, a council of Kikuyu elders, whom he described as key custodians of cultural, political, economic and social counsel within the community.

"I consider myself privileged to have received such wise counsel from the leadership of Kiama Kia Kiama, the elders entrusted with guiding the Kikuyu community in matters of politics, economics, and social issues," he said, after the

meeting at his Wamunyoro residence.

He noted that the elders' advice plays a significant role in ensuring both community stability and broader national prosperity, particularly at a time when political alignments and consultations continue to take shape.

He further indicated that the consultations have provided direction on what he termed "the way forward in our journey to liberate our country," including discussions surrounding the formation and shaping of what he referred to as the "6th administration."

While he did not provide specific political details or timelines, Gachagua emphasized that the guidance he has received places strong emphasis on safeguarding community interests while also promoting collaboration among Kenyans from different backgrounds.

"They have emphasized the importance of safeguarding community interests and working collaboratively with fellow Kenyans for the greater good of our beloved Kenya," he said.

Political observers note that Ga-

chagua has in recent months intensified engagements with various community leaders, religious figures and grassroots networks, signaling early groundwork for future political positioning. His continued reference to consultations with elders is widely seen as part of efforts to consolidate support within his political base while also appealing to broader national audiences.

The remarks come at a time of heightened political activity in the country, with leaders across the political spectrum engaging in strategic consultations ahead of future electoral cycles.

Discussions around leadership realignments, alliances and emerging political formations have been gaining momentum, particularly within central Kenya and other key voting blocs.

Gachagua's emphasis on elder guidance reflects a broader cultural and political tradition in which community elders play a consultative role in leadership matters, offering counsel that is often viewed as binding or influential within local structures.



Some of the elders who attended the meeting. Photos/Courtesy.

**Xenophobia in South Africa** The evacuation follows high-level diplomatic consultations between Kenya and South Africa.

# Kenya evacuates 151 citizens from South Africa as xenophobic violence escalates

BY MKT Correspondent

@themkenyatimes

The Kenyan government has intensified efforts to evacuate its citizens from South Africa following a surge in xenophobic violence and intimidation, with 151 Kenyans already safely returned home and dozens more expected to arrive in Nairobi on Thursday.

The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs said the evacuation operation is being carried out in a safe, orderly and timely manner to protect Kenyan nationals caught up in the unrest that has affected parts of South Africa.

According to a statement issued on Thursday by Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, the government remains committed to safeguarding the welfare and security of all Kenyans living and working in South Africa.

As of July 2, 2026, a total of 240 Kenyan nationals requiring assistance had registered with the Kenya High Commission in Pretoria.

The ministry said the High Commission had established temporary safe havens for distressed nationals, providing hotel accommodation, food, essential relief supplies and specialized support for vulnerable groups, including infants, while arrangements were being made for their return to Kenya.

## Diplomatic efforts and evacuation

The evacuation follows high-level diplomatic consultations between Kenya and South Africa.

On July 1, Dr. Mudavadi held a telephone conversation with South Africa's Minister for International Relations and Co-operation, Roland Ozyi Lamola, who assured Kenya that the South African government was taking the necessary measures to protect Kenyan citizens and other foreign nationals living in the country.

The Kenyan government welcomed the assurances and urged South African authorities to continue supporting the evacuation exercise while ensuring the safety of those who choose to remain.

The Kenya High Commission in Pretoria is working closely with South African authorities to facil-

itate the safe return of Kenyan nationals wishing to come home.

The State Department for Diaspora Affairs is spearheading the evacuation exercise, coordinating ground transportation within South Africa, flights to Nairobi, emergency travel documentation and humanitarian assistance.

So far, 151 Kenyans have been repatriated through coordinated evacuation flights.

On June 30, three groups arrived in Nairobi aboard Kenya Airways. The first group of 61 people landed at 5 p.m., followed by another 26 at 6 p.m. and a further 17 at 10 p.m.

An additional 47 evacuees arrived on the night of July 1.

Another group of 55 Kenyans was expected to arrive in Nairobi at 5:05 p.m. yesterday as the government continued efforts to assist those seeking to leave South Africa.

## Government advisory and bilateral relations

The Kenyan government expressed concern over the escalation of hostile acts targeting foreign nationals but voiced confidence that South African authorities would continue fulfilling their responsibility to protect all persons within their jurisdiction.

The ministry noted that the majority of the estimated 27,000 Kenyans living in South Africa continue to make meaningful contributions to the economies of both Kenya and South Africa through employment, business and professional services.

As the evacuation continues, the government has urged Kenyans living abroad to respect the laws of their host countries and ensure that their immigration status remains valid.

The ministry emphasized that compliance with local laws is essential for the protection and welfare of Kenyans residing overseas.

Kenya also expressed appreciation to the South African government for the cooperation extended during the evacuation exercise and reaffirmed the longstanding friendship between the two countries.

The government said it remains committed to strengthening bilateral relations with South Africa even as it continues to monitor the security situation and provide assistance to Kenyan nationals affected by the unrest.



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi with Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja on Wednesday. | Photo: Courtesy.



Illustration of Kenya evacuates 151 citizens from South Africa as xenophobic violence escalates

**Health** While launching the facility Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said the initiative will benefit millions of Kenyans experiencing hearing challenges

# Government expands access to specialized ear and hearing services with new ear and hearing care programme at KUTRRH

BY John Kamau

@themkenyatimes

Children with hearing impairment are set to benefit as Kenyatta Teaching, Referral and Research Hospital (KUTRRH) launched a center for specialized ear and hearing care.

The hospital has been designated a centre of excellence in specialized ear and hearing care, marking a major milestone in the country's efforts

to expand access to quality hearing health services under the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program.

While launching the facility Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said the initiative will benefit millions of Kenyans experiencing hearing challenges, by improving access to comprehensive ear, nose and throat (ENT) services and reducing the need for patients to seek specialized care outside the country.

As part of the expanded support under the Social Health Authority (SHA), he observed, individual patients requiring basic ENT procedures will receive coverage of up to KSh40,000 while those undergoing complex multi-disciplinary surgeries will be eligible for benefits of up to KSh800,000.

"The new designation is expected to enhance the country's capacity to provide specialized diagnosis, treatment



Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale with Helath Ministry officials and KUTRRH leadership during the launch of Ear and Hearing Care programme at the facility.

and rehabilitation for people living with hearing impairments while strengthening early detection and intervention services," Duale observed.

He revealed that KUTRRH has screened more than 900 children for hearing conditions, including 80 newborns since January this year, reinforcing efforts to promote early diagnosis and timely treatment in line with international best practices.

"It has been established that early screening is critical in identifying hearing loss during infancy and childhood, allowing prompt intervention that supports speech, language, and cognitive development," the CS emphasized.

Duale added, "I commend the strong partnership between KUTRRH, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and the Hear the World Foundation under the Building a World of Play (BAWOP) initiative. Through this collaboration, more than 100 children have received hearing devices, five diagnostic screening devices have been provided, 33 speech and language therapists and 60 audiologists have been trained, and hearing aid services have expanded to six counties, where 682 children have been identified with hearing impairments."

Duale also maintained that his ministry is working to broaden the SHA benefits package by incorporating additional audiology and rehabilitation services to improve

long-term care for patients with hearing disorders.

He emphasized that the designation of KUTRRH as a Centre of Excellence is expected to strengthen specialized ear and hearing care nationwide through enhanced partnerships, improved service delivery and expanded access to timely diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, further supporting the government's broader goal of achieving the UHC goal.

The hospital's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Zeinab Gura said the enhanced ear and hearing services align with the hospital's commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare and advancing inclusive health services for all Kenyans.

"We have just witnessed the official handover of the hearing aid equipment donated by Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and we have come from a moving walkabout at our ENT Clinic where we saw these devices being fitted onto needy children,

"These actions are a testament to what we can achieve together. KUTRRH has built one of Kenya's few comprehensive pediatric hearing rehabilitation programs," the CEO added.

Through the school screening program in partnership with CHAI and the Ministry of Education, she noted, hearing aids have been provided to 95 school-going children, transforming their ability to

learn, speak and participate in society.

In the meantime, Duale dismissed as false, reports that SHA is owed close to KSh27 billion by health institutions in the counties, terming the figure as false, inaccurate and misleading.

The CS maintained that SHA only owes those facilities KSh6.3 billion which he said will be paid in the next few days, along with other financial commitments by the health insurer.

"SHA owes county governments 6.3 billion. What you saw in the media is false, inaccurate and misleading. I can give you the breakdown, we know how much is in rejected claims and how many of them are return claims. It's all digital, there's nothing manual," Duale stated.

He explained that in the next few days, SHA will pay a total of KSh16 billion for public officers medical scheme, emergency, critical and chronic fund and primary healthcare.

Media reports had indicated that health facilities in the counties are struggling under a hefty debt of KSh26.7 billion in unpaid claims which are yet to be honoured by SHA.

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**Tharaka-Nithi** The county has completed its long-awaited modern headquarters at Kathwana

## Fourteen years in scorching mabati offices end as Tharaka-Nithi welcomes new Era at Kathwana

BY Alex Njeru

@themtkenyatimes

For 14 years, employees of the Tharaka-Nithi County Government have reported to work each day in temporary iron-sheet (mabati) offices that became unbearably hot during the day and uncomfortable during cold and rainy weather.

However, despite the difficult working environment, the officers continued delivering essential services to residents as the county steadily built its institutions from the ground up.

The county has completed its long-awaited modern headquarters at Kathwana, paving the way for a major relocation of government operations that officials say will improve service delivery, employee welfare and finally establish Kathwana as the functional seat of the county government.

The transition gathered momentum on Wednesday when Governor Muthomi Njuki presided over the demolition of the old mabati offices to pave the way for landscaping and paving works around the newly completed county executive headquarters.

The move marks the end of an era that began with the advent of devolution in 2013, when temporary iron-sheet offices and assembly chambers were erected as construction of the KSh400 million county headquarters commenced.

Governor Njuki said the completion of the executive building should largely be credited to the County Government of Tharaka-Nithi, which financed the remaining construction after expected grants from the National Government failed to materialize over the past two financial years.

Accompanied by Deputy Governor Nyaga Muisrael, the governor said the build-



**Tharaka Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki during demolition of Kathwana county headquarters mabati offices that have been in use since 2013.** | Photo: Alex Njeru.

ing was initiated during the administration of the county's first governor, Samuel Mbae Ragwa, who handed over the project when it had reached the first floor.

"The construction of the new county executive building was started by Governor Samuel Mbae Ragwa during the first term of devolution. The government was handed over to me when the building was at the first-floor level. The Senate agreed that five counties, including Tharaka-Nithi, should receive grants from the National Government to build their headquarters," said Njuki.

He noted that although Lamu, Tana River, Nyan-darua, Isiolo and Tharaka-Nithi were earmarked to benefit from the programme, implementation challenges stalled the projects.

"We decided to fund the construction ourselves because we had been left behind. I am not ashamed to say that for the last two years, not a single cent for this building has come from the National Government," he said.

Njuki thanked county government employees for persevering under harsh conditions while continuing to serve residents.

"After 14 years of devolution, we will now transition

from mabati structures to this new building, built using taxpayers' money. This is a blessing to the residents of Tharaka-Nithi County. I want to thank county government employees for working under difficult conditions to continue serving the people," he said.

The governor announced that beginning August 1, 2026, all county government departments that are expected to operate from the county headquarters including those currently working from Chuka, Marimanti and Chogoria towns will relocate to Kathwana.

The move will, for the first time since devolution, fully operationalize Kathwana as the county headquarters and centralize government services in one location.

"From August 1, all county government employees will be operating from Kathwana. Kathwana will finally become the county headquarters in reality," Njuki said.

He also acknowledged the role played by the County Assembly in allocating funds for the project, noting that Members of the County Assembly continued passing legislation while operating from temporary mabati chambers.

"I want to thank the Coun-

ty Assembly, through the Speaker, for supporting and funding this project. This project would not have been possible without them," he said.

Looking ahead, the governor announced plans to transform Kathwana Market into an ultra-modern trading centre as part of his administration's legacy projects.

"We have left behind a county that is functional," he said.

Deputy Governor Nyaga Muisrael, Mariani MCA Anita Mbae and County Executive Committee Member for Administration and Devolution Affairs Muthini Karangi praised Njuki for ensuring the headquarters project was completed despite funding challenges.

The leaders dismissed claims that the building had been fully financed by the National Government, maintaining that the county government had shouldered the burden of completing the project. They also criticized MCAs who had opposed budget allocations for the headquarters, saying their actions would have delayed the completion of one of the county's most significant infrastructure projects.

## High Court blocks Kenya Railways' bid to evict Muthurwa Estate residents



Kenya Railways

BY MKT Correspondent

@themtkenyatimes

The High Court has rejected an application by Kenya Railways seeking approval to proceed with the eviction of residents living at Nairobi's Muthurwa Estate, citing the corporation's failure to satisfy constitutional requirements governing forced evictions.

The court ruled that although Kenya Railways remains the legitimate owner of the property, any attempt to remove residents must strictly comply with constitutional protections on housing and human dignity.

The petitioners, many of whom have occupied the estate for decades as tenants of the corporation, challenged the planned evictions on grounds that the required legal safeguards had not been adequately implemented.

In its determination, the court revisited earlier orders issued on August 26, 2013, which set out conditions under which any eviction exercise could lawfully proceed. Those directives barred evictions at night, during adverse weather, public holidays, festivals or school examination periods, and recommended that any relocation take place during school holidays to minimise disruption to children. The 2013 judgment

also prohibited the use of indiscriminate force or actions that could endanger residents during the process.

Following that ruling, both parties engaged in mediation aimed at developing an agreed eviction framework. The talks collapsed, prompting Kenya Railways to return to court in May 2014 seeking fresh directions.

In December 2015, the court ordered residents to vacate by April 30, 2016, while directing the State to disclose, within 60 days, the policies and legislation governing forced evictions, demolitions and the protection of housing and sanitation rights.

More than a decade later, the court found no sufficient evidence showing what legal or policy measures the government had put in place to regulate forced evictions and guarantee constitutional protections for affected communities. The absence of such safeguards, the judge said, meant the court could not authorise the eviction.

The ruling stressed that all conditions in previous orders must be fully implemented before any relocation can proceed, and that partial compliance would not be accepted. The application was dismissed, granting residents a reprieve in a dispute spanning more than ten years.

**El Nino** Kindiki chaired the initial Committee meeting at the Official Residence

## Kindiki: We will ensure the country is ready for El Nino rains

BY DPCS

@themkenyatimes

Deputy President Kithure Kindiki has assured the country that the government is laying down adequate measures in anticipation of El Nino rains expected in Kenya later in the year.

The DP said the administration is proactively engaged with all the respective actors to make sure the country is not caught by surprise after latest weather forecasts pointed to the strong likelihood of the heavy rains between October and December.

“We assure the country that there is no need to panic. We are engaging all the ministries, departments, agencies and all state organs to ensure that in the event of the rains, the country is prepared and we are not caught by surprise,” DP stated.

During a Cabinet meeting chaired by President Ruto last Tuesday, the Deputy President was tasked to chair an Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on El Nino Preparedness and Response that will oversee the nation’s preparations for the rains.

Yesterday, the Deputy President chaired the initial Committee meeting at the Official Residence in Karen, Nairobi.

“We will take action to make sure that there is no disruption of civic order, disruption of movement of goods and service and public health concerns. We will also take preventive action in areas prone to mudslides, landslides and floods to prevent loss of human lives and any other disruptive occurrences associated with El Nino rains,” he assured.

The Second in Command said the response will be more organized as the new law on disaster response provides a framework for faster, better and efficient coordination between respective agencies.

Further, Prof. Kindiki noted that the national govern-



DP Kithure Kindiki addressing the meeting yesterday.

ment will closely partner with counties for coordinated response challenging the devolved units to proactively activate their own mechanisms for seamless collaboration.

He said the National Disaster Risk Management Act, 2026 which came into effect last month provides for early preparations as well as enabling collaboration between the two levels of government in the event of disasters.

“In the spirit of coordinated approach, we are going to partner at this early stage with county governments as required by the new law to make sure there is a seamless preparation phase for any eventuality,” DP indicated.

Among key activities that will be done collaborative-

ly are the unclogging of the drainage canals in Nairobi to avert destructive floods in the nation’s capital city.

“The Ministry of Infrastructure is working on certain interventions in Nairobi to make sure we mitigate the impact on its drainage systems,” he noted.

The DP also said the country is ready to respond to an Ebola outbreak in the country, adding that no single case has been reported.

“Our country has been actively prepared for the longest time and there is no cause for alarm because there is no case reported but our preparations, simulation and contingency measures are fully in place,” he said.



Government officials during yesterday’s meeting | Photo: Courtesy.

## Kenya Railways begins construction of the Kisumu SGR station



by Kisumu Governor Anyang’ Nyong’o, County Commissioner Mohamed Ramadhan Mabuzo and Kenya Railways Managing Director Philip Mainga

BY MKT correspondent

@themkenyatimes

Construction of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) extension reached a major milestone yesterday after Kenya Railways officially commenced works on the Kisumu station, with officials describing the project as a catalyst for economic transformation across western Kenya. The event, attended by Kisumu Governor Anyang’ Nyong’o, County Commissioner Mohamed Ramadhan Mabuzo and Kenya Railways Managing Director Philip Mainga, marked the start of physical construction following the project’s earlier launch by President William Ruto.

Speaking during the ceremony, Mainga said the contractor had already mobilized equipment and personnel to the site and would immediately begin construction of the station, which is expected to serve as the main railway hub for western Kenya.

“Today we have not come to launch. The President launched this project on March 21, 2026. What we have come to do today is commence work, and as you can see, the contractor has already mobilized equipment and personnel,” said Mainga.

Mainga assured residents that employment opportunities generated by the project would primarily benefit communities living along the railway corridor.

“The contractor is ready to recruit from today, and the jobs will be given to the local people. We are not going to bring people from elsewhere because we want the communities along the line to benefit directly,” he said.

Beyond employment, the Kenya Railways boss said the multi-billion-shilling project would stimulate businesses through demand for construction materials, transport services, accommodation and food supplies.

He also appealed to landowners to cooperate with the National Land Commission during land acquisition and compensation to avoid delays in project implementation.

“We urge all affected landowners to work with us so that compensation is completed quickly and the contractor can continue without unnecessary delays. Land acquisition should not slow this important national project,” Mainga said.

Governor Nyong’o welcomed the commencement of construction, describing it as a historic moment for Kisumu and the wider Lake Region.

He said the railway city planned around the station would revive Kisumu’s historical role as a transport and trade gateway while strengthening regional connectivity.

“We are gathered here for a very historic day. We are beginning the first steps towards building a railway city that will remind us of the important role railways have played

in East African development,” Nyong’o said.

The governor expressed optimism that the project would create thousands of jobs and attract new investments into Kisumu, saying improved railway links would enhance trade with neighbouring countries through Lake Victoria.

“Many people will be employed here and it will create markets for food and many other services. We hope that within a year we shall begin seeing the reality of this railway city taking shape,” he added.

County Commissioner Mabuzo reaffirmed the National Government’s commitment to implementing the railway project, saying the administration remained focused on delivering infrastructure projects across the country.

Construction in Kisumu forms part of the SGR Phase 2B extension, which Kenya Railways says traverses several counties between Narok and Kisumu.

The corporation said work has already commenced in other sections of the line as contractors move to establish stations and related infrastructure.

Officials also cautioned members of the public against fraudsters posing as government officers involved in land compensation, urging affected residents to deal only with authorized officials from Kenya Railways and the National Land Commission.

**Human Rights** The appointments place him among the organization's senior leadership tasked with advancing human rights

# Professor Eugene Kevune Appointed to Senior Global Human Rights Leadership Roles

BY DMS

@themtkenyatimes

Kenyan humanitarian and education advocate Professor Dr. Eugene Kevune Nzabonimba has been appointed to three senior leadership positions in the Implementation Universal Declaration of Human Rights (IUDHR), a global human rights advocacy organization headquartered in Cary, North Carolina, United States. In an announcement made by the organization, Prof. Kevune was named Peace Ambassador at Large, National Director of IUDHR Kenya, Africa Chapter, and Advisor to the Global President on Continental Africa Affairs.

The appointments place him among the organization's senior leadership tasked with advancing human rights, peacebuilding and sustainable development initiatives across Africa.

According to IUDHR, Prof. Kevune will provide strategic leadership in promoting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including equality, justice,

international cooperation, peace and security, and the protection of human dignity.

The organization described him as a distinguished humanitarian leader, educator and advocate for social justice whose commitment to peace and interfaith harmony has earned him recognition in both Kenya and beyond.

In his advisory role, Prof. Kevune is expected to work closely with the IUDHR Global President, Professor Dr. Baber George, on matters relating to the organization's programmes and partnerships across the African continent.

"As Peace Ambassador at Large and National Director for Kenya, Africa Chapter, Professor Dr. Eugene Kevune Nzabonimba will provide strategic counsel and leadership to advance peace, human rights and sustainable development across the African continent," the organization said in a statement.

IUDHR said the appointments reflect its commitment to strengthening its presence in Africa through experienced leaders capable of fos-

tering dialogue, promoting peaceful coexistence and supporting initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of communities.

Prof. Kevune has built a reputation as a humanitarian, educator and community leader with a strong interest in social justice, youth empowerment, education, interfaith dialogue and community development. Over the years, he has participated in initiatives promoting peaceful coexistence, inclusive leadership and the protection of vulnerable populations.

His work has also focused on encouraging partnerships between institutions and communities to address social challenges through education, advocacy and sustainable development programmes.

The organization expressed confidence that his leadership will contribute significantly to expanding IUDHR's mission across Africa.

"We warmly welcome Professor Dr. Eugene Kevune Nzabonimba to this important leadership portfolio and look forward to his continued contributions toward building a more peaceful, just and prosperous



**Amb. Eugene Kavune Nzabonimba addressing a peace initiative forum in the past.** | Photo: Courtesy.

world," the statement said.

The appointments were formally authorized by IUDHR President and Chief Ambassador Professor Dr. Baber George.

The Implementation Universal Declaration of Human Rights (IUDHR) is an international organization that

says it promotes advocacy on human rights, peace, equality, justice and sustainable development through partnerships and educational programmes across different regions of the world.

## The Mt. Kenya Times



## Trust that God will put the right people in your life at the right time and for the right reasons



in God.

He only knows your difficulties and challenges  
With your prayers and offerings.  
Almighty saves you and give solutions.  
You shall get blessings and happiness.

Rajesh Kanna B N

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

God coming as a boatman for a drowning man  
As a saint to rescue a scorpion from drowning.  
God came as a shepherd, as a preacher  
and as a doctor for those who seek help.

You build trust in God and you can do a lot.  
Many times he comes and knock your doors  
With your ignorance you missed your opportunity  
You shape your mind to trust and have confidence

## Cards Rich, Cash Poor:



Where is that happiness now?  
Who stole that pleasure?  
As machines and technology have occupied the  
modern world,  
people have become card-rich but cash-poor.  
This is the reality of modern money habits.  
Online payments have increased, but the  
happiness associated with handling cash seems  
to have decreased. However, this change is  
necessary and unavoidable in today's world.

Therefore, we should adapt to it,  
be careful with our spending habits,  
and live with the realities of modern life.

\_\_G.YasminSirajudheen  
Secondary grade teacher  
Melmalayanur block  
Villupuram dt

The Reality of Modern Money Habits  
Nowadays, people have money, but at the same  
time, they do not feel that they have money  
because they do not carry cash in their hands.  
Before the digital era, people carried purses that  
were full of money. They could touch the money  
and count it.  
Working people received their salaries in cash.  
It brought them pleasure and satisfaction.

## A sunny day



So we drink plenty of refreshing water;  
Cool drinks and juice revive our tired hearts,  
And keep us fresh throughout the sunny day.

Ice cream delights us with its pleasant taste,  
Its cooling sweetness brings us happiness;  
I love such bright and sunny days the most,  
For they are filled with fun and joyful cheer.

B.Kugan  
8th Standard B Section  
GHS Nesal  
Tiruvannamalai District

The golden sun shines brightly in the sky,  
The clear blue heavens spread both far and wide;  
The warm breeze gently touches all around,  
And fills the day with light and cheerful joy.

I play with all my friends upon the field,  
We laugh and run and play our games with zeal;  
Cricket and volleyball make the hours fly,  
As happy voices echo through the air.

The summer heat grows strong beneath the sun,

## The arrows we cannot recall



But words can linger within,  
Echoing softly through silent nights,  
Like arrows buried beneath the skin.

Before we speak, let wisdom ask,  
Will these words heal, or will they harm?  
For every sentence we release,  
Can carry either a wound or a balm.

As the Bhagavad Gita gently teaches:  
"Anudvega-karam vakyam satyam priya-hitam  
cha yat,  
Svadhyaabhyasanam chaiva vang-mayam tapa  
uchyate."

"Words that do not cause distress, that are  
truthful, pleasant, and beneficial—such speech is  
the austerity of words."

May our speech become a source of light,  
Guided by kindness, truth, and grace,  
For words, once spoken, cannot return,  
But their echoes forever leave a trace.

Nandini AnandKumar  
Educator Motivator Writer, Freelancer  
(In Service of Education)

An arrow released from the bow  
May fall harmless upon the ground,  
But words spoken in anger and pride,  
Leave wounds where no scars are found.

To dominate, insult, or prove we are right,  
We often speak without seeing the pain,  
The lips may forget what was uttered,  
Yet the heart relives it again and again.

The deepest wounds are seldom from strangers,  
Nor from those who merely pass by,  
They come from the soul we cherished most,  
For whom we gladly sacrifice.

A harsh word from a beloved heart,  
Cuts deeper than any sword can reach,  
For love makes us vulnerable,  
And trust makes spoken words endure.

The body may heal with the passing years,

## The magic of books



They help us learn in easy ways.  
We can share and enjoy them.  
Learning becomes more interesting.

Stories stay in our memory.  
Books give us new ideas.  
Each page teaches something new.  
Reading helps us understand more.

Open a book and start reading.  
You can find a world inside.

J.Anushri  
8th Standard B Section  
GHS Nesal  
Tiruvannamalai District

Books help us learn many things.  
They take us to hidden places.  
Dragon friends and fairy tales  
make reading fun and enjoyable.

Books and videos teach us well.

## My Mom



She is very cute.  
My mom is a teacher.  
I love my mom very much.

Krishna Ganth S  
Class 8 B  
YKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM TIRUPPUR  
TAMILNADU

Motivated by  
Tr. KUMARESWARI S  
YKGHSS AYYANKALIPALAYAM

This is my mom's story.  
I love my mom very, very much.  
My mom is very beautiful.  
She is a multi-talented person.  
My mom is good at tailoring, computer work,  
drawing, ironing, and many other things.  
She is a very lucky person.

**Safety** Each time such a tragedy occurs, Kenyans grieve together. We extend our condolences, offer prayers, and pledge support to the affected families

# When home is no longer safe: Who is protecting Kenya's children?

A house fire in Bomet that claimed three young lives should force the nation to ask harder questions about who is truly watching over its children

BY Hadassah Karangu  
@themtkenyatimes

A home is meant to be the safest place a child knows. It is where children should laugh without fear, sleep peacefully, and trust that the people around them will keep them from harm. Sadly, for one family in Bomet, home became the setting of an unimaginable tragedy.

The loss of three children in a house fire there has once again left the nation in mourning. Their lives were cut short in a place that should have offered nothing but safety. Their parents are left with empty rooms, shattered hopes, and questions that may never be fully answered.



Each time such a tragedy occurs, Kenyans grieve together. We extend our condolences, offer prayers, and pledge

support to the affected families. But once the mourning subsides, a harder question remains: are we truly doing

enough to protect our children?

Children are among the most vulnerable members of so-

ciety. They depend entirely on adults for their safety and wellbeing, and they cannot always recognise danger, respond effectively to emergencies, or protect themselves from disaster. That responsibility rests with parents, neighbours, communities, schools and government institutions alike.

Fire safety deserves particular attention. Many homes, especially in low-income communities, still rely on open flames, charcoal stoves, kerosene lamps or unsafe electrical connections. A single spark can destroy a family's life within minutes.

Protecting children begins with simple, life-saving measures. Electrical wiring should be inspected regularly. Matches and other flammable materials should be kept out of children's reach. Families should talk through what to do if a fire breaks out, and communities should support awareness campaigns that teach both adults and children how to respond in an emergency.

But safety extends beyond fire. Children face numerous risks every day, from road accidents and unsafe buildings to abuse, neglect, drowning and violence. Every child de-

serves to grow up in an environment where protection is not an afterthought but a priority.

As a nation, we often speak of preparing children to become tomorrow's doctors, teachers, engineers and leaders. Yet before they can become tomorrow's leaders, they must first be able to survive today.

The death of even one child is one too many. Behind every headline is a family whose life has been permanently altered. Behind every statistic is a dream that will never be realised.

The tragedy in Bomet should not become just another news story that fades with tomorrow's headlines. It should serve as a national reminder that protecting children is a shared responsibility, and that a country's greatness is measured not only by its economy or infrastructure, but by how well it protects its youngest citizens.

Every child deserves to wake up in a home where love is present, danger is minimised, and tomorrow is promised, not stolen. Because no parent should ever have to bury a child whose only mistake was believing that home was the safest place to be.



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**Politics** Citizens are asking harder valid questions, communities are demanding measurable results, young people are searching for hope

# New political dawn is rising ...and Kenya is invited



BY Fredrick Chelimo  
@themtkenyatimes

Watch this space as The Mt. Kenya Times unveils the Nation's most engaging home for politics, leadership, ideas, and public conversation

The famous quote "liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people" by John Adams and the Plato's quote "one of the penalties of refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferior" captures the weight, challenges and aspirations of our public service and governance today. We are heading to these defining moments. The moments not defined by ringing bells or the roar of crowds, but with conversation – a conversation that inspires ideas, challenges assumptions, builds trust and ultimately shapes the future.

As the nation steadily journeys towards another election season, the public appetite to credible information, thoughtful political engagement and responsible leadership has never been greater. Citizens are asking harder valid questions, communities are demanding measurable results, young people are searching for hope. Leaders are reflecting on their record, and aspirants are preparing to present their visions. Investors are watching the country's direction and the world is watching one of Africa's most vibrant democracies as it prepares to write another chapter in its history.

It is precisely at such eventful moments that responsible journalism finds its highest calling. It deserves depth, context, balance and above all, it deserves a trusted platform where leaders and citizens can meet, not across



political divide but across a shared commitment to Kenya's progress to prosperity.

It is for this reason that The Mt. Kenya Times is strategizing to be part of this journey and become the heartbeat of political conversation across the country by creating a dedicated team focusing specifically on this critical area. This will not be another newspaper section, but an ambitious national undertaking designed to connect leadership with people, ideas with action, and public expectations with accountable governance.

This political and governance desk will become a living archive of Kenya's democratic journey. It will follow the country's political pulse with professionalism, independence and intellectual curiosity. It will profile emerging leaders, examine public policy, analyze campaign issues, showcase county development, host informed debates, amplify citizens' voices and provide thoughtful perspectives on the decisions shaping our collective future. Here, leadership will be examined through the lense of service, performance and vision rather than personality alone.

For elected leaders, it will be a distinguished platform to explain policies, account for achievements, engage constituents and communicate aspirations with clarity and dignity. For those preparing to seek office, it will provide an opportunity to introduce themselves through substance, ideas and integrity. For cam-

aign Managers, political strategists and governance professionals, it will offer a credible venue for responsible political communication. And for Kenyan citizens, it will become a dependable source of balanced, accurate and meaningful information that empowers informed participation in public life.

Politics do not exist in isolation, but woven into the daily realities of every Kenyan. It influences education, healthcare, agriculture, security. Infrastructure, business, science, technology, youth opportunities, disability inclusion, economic transformation and almost all facets of life. Our political and governance desk will therefore place every political conversation within the broader context of development, ensuring that leadership is judged by not by promises made, but by lives transformed.

As a newspaper committed to the highest standards of journalism, The Mt. Kenya Times will continue to uphold the principles of good journalism, legal and professional ethical principles. Accuracy will remain our foundation, fairness our compass, and editorial independence our greatest strength. Where political communication is sponsored, it will be clearly identified, preserving the confidence of the readers place in our publication.

A great newspaper does not only inform its readers, it grows with them, listens, evolves and reflects the chang-

ing heartbeat of the nation. As Kenya moves to another defining electoral season, our paper will evolve with it, bringing richer analysis, sharper insights, compelling interviews, county-by-county political coverage, leadership profiles, exclusive conversations, data driven reporting and thoughtful commentary that places citizens at the cen-

ter of every story.

This is you invitation to become part of the journey. Read us, challenge us, write to us, call us, debate with us, share your perspective, tell us about your community, present your vision, hold leaders accountable, celebrate innovation, and inspire solutions. Together, we shall shape not only the content that fills these pages, but also the context through which Kenya understands itself and form in which its democratic story is told and this is only the beginning.

In the coming weeks and months, our readers will witness emerging new features, political outlooks, leadership perspectives and scorecards, policy explainers, election insights, governance conversations and voices that have too often gone unheard. Every edition will seek to inform, provoke thoughtful discus-

sion and leave readers eager for the next. So, keep your eyes on this paper. Watch this space, something is taking shape, something refreshingly different is emerging.

It is something every voter, every leader, every aspirant, every strategist and every student of Kenya politics will want to be part. The conversation is about to become richer, analysis deeper, questions sharper, ideas bolder, and the future clearer. This paper is opening the new desk, but more importantly, it is opening a new chapter in Kenya's democratic conversation.

The most compelling stories are yet to be told, most influential conversations are yet to begin and the best is still to come. Mt. Kenya Times. Where Kenya thinks. Where leadership speaks. Where citizens decide.

"Democracy is not sustained by elections alone, it is sustained by an informed people who never stop asking, listening, learning and participating.




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SCAN FOR MAJISAFI



**Health** The full handover follows the hospital's elevation to autonomous status in 2024, a move driven by sustained lobbying from Nyeri Members of Parliament

# Othaya's Mwai Kibaki hospital gets full autonomy

*The Mwai Kibaki Level VI Referral Hospital begins a new era after full autonomy as government finalizes landmark handover from Kenyatta National Hospital*

BY MKT REPORTER

@themkenyattimes

Othaya based Mwai Kibaki Level VI hospital is now autonomous.

History was made at the Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital after it was officially and fully handed over from Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), marking a major milestone in Kenya's ongoing health sector devolution and expansion of specialized care services across the country.

The symbolic but significant transition was formalized yesterday during a colourful ceremony presided over by Principal Secretary for Medical Services Dr. Ouma Oluga. Senior officials from the Ministry of Health, boards of management from both hospitals, legislators from Nyeri County, and key stakeholders in the health sector also graced the event.

Political leaders present included the area MP and their host Wambugu Wainaina and his counterparts; Maina Mathenge of Nyeri Town and Njoroge Wainaina from Kieni.

From the two facilities were, KNH Board Chair Dr. Abbas Gullet his Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital Board counterpart, Gen. (Rtd.) Robert Kibochi, KNH CEO Richard Lesiyampe, and Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital CEO Dr. Peter Muiruri.

## A milestone in healthcare transformation

The full handover follows the hospital's elevation to autonomous status in 2024, a move driven by sustained lobbying from Nyeri Members of Parliament led by Wainaina and subsequent approval by President William Ruto. The institution later received its first independent budget in the 2025/2026 financial year, allowing it to begin operating as a fully fledged referral facility.

Officials said the transition represents a strategic shift aimed at strengthening regional referral services and easing pressure on Kenyatta National Hospital by decentralizing specialized healthcare services closer to patients.

Dr. Oluga described the development as a defining moment for



Mwai Kibaki hospital board chair Gen. Robert Kibicho (left), PS Ouma Oluga (centre) and KNH board chair Abbas Gullet (right) during the handover ceremony | Photo: Courtesy.

Kenya's healthcare system, saying the hospital's future is anchored on innovation, accountability and excellence.

He revealed government plans to establish a cancer treatment centre at the facility, noting that expanding specialized care within regional hospitals is key to improving early diagnosis and treatment outcomes across the country.

The PS also challenged healthcare workers to uphold the legacy of the late President Mwai Kibaki by embracing integrity, professionalism and patient-centred care.

## Rapid expansion and new equipment

Since gaining autonomy, Mwai Kibaki Referral Hospital has undergone significant transformation. The facility has acquired advanced diagnostic and treatment equipment, including its first CT scan machine last year and a newly installed state-of-the-art MRI machine.

The hospital has also expanded its dialysis capacity through additional machines, improving access to life-saving renal care for patients in Nyeri and surrounding counties.

Yesterday, Gen. Robert Kibochi

announced that the Kenya Defence Forces had provided a KSh 500 million grant to support the first phase of a modern surgical tower, a major infrastructure project expected to boost surgical capacity and specialized procedures.

## Regional impact and economic growth

Local leaders hailed the hospital's growth as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation in Nyeri County and the wider Mount Kenya region.

The Othaya MP noted that the hospital has already begun attracting increased patient traffic from as many as 16 surrounding counties, creating new opportunities for investment in housing, hospitality, transport and other supporting services.

He urged residents to capitalize on the growing demand by investing in hotels, rental housing and small businesses to support patients and visitors accessing medical services.

The event also marked the official launch of the hospital's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, which outlines its roadmap for expansion in specialized healthcare services, research, innovation, training and service de-

livery.

The plan is expected to position the hospital as a leading regional referral centre of choice, reducing patient referrals to Nairobi and strengthening healthcare access within central Kenya and beyond.

The hospital management said the strategy will focus on expanding oncology services, improving surgical capacity, enhancing emergency response systems and strengthening

partnerships with both public and private sector actors.

The facility officials described the handover as the beginning of a new chapter in Kenya's healthcare journey.

They said the transition represents more than institutional independence, calling it "the handing over of a vision"; one that seeks to build a bold, innovative and people-centred healthcare system.

The administration emphasized that the hospital's mission is guided by the enduring legacy of former President Mwai Kibaki, whose values of integrity, humility and excellence continue to shape its institutional culture.

They expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Health, KNH, Members of Parliament, development partners, staff and the surrounding community for supporting the transition process. "This is more than a milestone. It is a promise to deliver world-class, compassionate and innovative healthcare to every patient who walks through our doors," read part of the statement released after the event.

Health sector officials say the full operational independence of the facility is part of broader reforms aimed at decongesting national referral hospitals and improving access to specialized care across regions.

By transforming former satellite facilities into autonomous referral institutions, the government aims to bring advanced healthcare services closer to communities while improving efficiency in patient management and service delivery.

As the hospital embarks on its new journey, stakeholders expressed optimism that it will become a leading model of regional healthcare excellence, serving not only Nyeri County but the wider Mount Kenya region and beyond.



Ministry of health officials joined by Othaya MP Wambugu Wainana (right) during the hospital's documents handing over ceremony yesterday.

**Education** Professor Wandia Njoya, a prominent Kenyan academic and public intellectual, offers a compelling counter-critique

# Beyond the job ticket: Rethinking education's true purpose in an era of uncertainty



By: Jerameel Kevins Owuor  
Odhiambo

[@themkenyatimes](#)

Education systems worldwide, particularly in postcolonial nations like Kenya, face a profound tension. Each year, Kenya's over 60 public and private universities graduate more than 60,000 students, yet youth unemployment hovers around 35-40% in recent estimates, with many graduates underemployed or in jobs unrelated to their degrees. The economy grapples with contractionary pressures, public debt burdens, and rapid technological shifts including artificial intelligence (AI) automation that accelerates downsizing and redundancy across sectors. In this context, the dominant narrative frames education primarily as a pathway to employment and career success. Prospective students are routinely advised or seduced into choosing "marketable" courses in engineering, medicine, business, information technology, or data science, while fields in the social sciences and humanities, such as anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology, history, and literature, are often dismissed as impractical dead-ends that "lead nowhere." This raises fundamental questions: Is the main end result of education merely securing jobs and financial stability? Or does this narrow focus undermine education's deeper potential for human flourishing?

The prevailing job-centric view of education has deep roots. In Kenya and many developing economies, it stems from colonial legacies that positioned schooling as a tool for producing compliant administrators and skilled labor for extractive economies. Post-independence, this evolved under neoliberal influences emphasizing human capital for market productivity. Parents, policymakers, and institutions reinforce this by tying educational value to return on investment measurable in salaries, job placement rates, and



GDP contributions. Choosing a course becomes a calculated bet on employability: STEM fields promise higher starting salaries and alignment with global labor demands, while humanities and social sciences are seen as luxuries for the privileged or idealistic. This perception persists despite evidence that many "marketable" graduates still struggle in saturated markets, while skills like critical analysis, communication, and cultural insight honed in social sciences underpin adaptable careers in journalism, public policy, education, NGOs, diplomacy, and even entrepreneurship.

Professor Wandia Njoya, a prominent Kenyan academic and public intellectual, offers a compelling counter-critique. She argues that the primary purpose of education is not job training but human flourishing, liberation, critical consciousness, creativity, and the acquisition of broad knowledge. Reducing education to a "pathway for employment, certificates, and economic productivity," she contends, treats individuals as instruments for profit rather than full human beings. This ideology, rooted in colonial and neoliberal frameworks, prioritizes rote learning, exam cramming, and credentialism over genuine intellectual growth. Njoya advocates for education that raises consciousness, fosters mastery of skills for understanding self, society, history, and the world, and equips citizens to innovate, collaborate, and live with dignity. Degrees,

in her vision, should signify academic qualification for those passionate about knowledge or research, while employers bear responsibility for job-specific training. Public university education ought to be free and universal as a public good, diminishing cheating, credential-based discrimination, and undue pressure on students and lecturers.

This perspective resonates with classical and progressive educational philosophies. Thinkers from Aristotle to John Dewey emphasized education as character formation, wisdom cultivation, and preparation for democratic citizenship. It develops critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, and self-awareness qualities that enable meaningful lives beyond paychecks. Broad education builds resilience against technological disruption; narrow vocational training risks producing specialists obsolete when AI automates routine tasks. In an age where companies prioritize robotics and efficiency for profit margins, graduates who "donate their thinking to AI" may lack the imaginative edge to create new opportunities or challenge systemic issues.

Even so an objective analysis must acknowledge practical realities that complicate Njoya's ideal. For most individuals, especially in resource-constrained settings, education must translate into economic independence. One cannot fully flourish without the ability to sustain basic needs like food, shelter, water,

healthcare, and social amenities. In Kenya, where graduate unemployment exacerbates poverty, inequality, and even social instability, dismissing job outcomes as secondary feels disconnected. Families invest heavily in education expecting tangible returns; students endure grueling competition not merely for intellectual joy but survival. Linking education solely to employment fuels anti-intellectualism and devalues humanities, as Njoya notes, but ignoring economic pressures risks romanticizing poverty. Data from labor market reports consistently show that while humanities graduates may initially earn less, they often excel in versatile roles requiring adaptability, ethical reasoning, and interpersonal skills precisely the attributes AI struggles to replicate fully. Moreover, societies benefit immensely from educated citizens in non-market spheres: informed voters, cultural producers, ethical leaders, and social innovators who address inequality, governance failures, and cultural erosion.

The tension is evident in Kenya's context. With a burgeoning youth population and an economy vulnerable to global shocks, exporting skilled professionals (e.g., doctors and engineers) while domestic critical thinking remains underdeveloped perpetuates dependency. AI and automation amplify this: projections suggest significant job displacement in administrative, manufacturing, and even creative sectors, favor-

ing those with hybrid competencies technical skills plus humanistic insight. Purely job-focused education may produce short-term employability but long-term fragility, as seen in graduates chasing diminishing formal opportunities or gig economies that offer little security. Conversely, purely liberation-oriented education without pathways to sustenance could widen gaps, leaving graduates conscious yet economically marginalized.

A balanced approach recognizes that education serves multiple, complementary ends. Job preparation is a valid and important outcome, providing the material foundation for autonomy and dignity. However, subordinating all else to market demands shortchanges individuals and society. True education integrates both: it equips people with practical skills while nurturing broader capacities for creativity, ethical reflection, and adaptability. Reforms could include strengthening foundational humanities and social sciences alongside vocational elements interdisciplinary programs that blend sociology with data analytics, or philosophy with entrepreneurship. Employers shifting from credential obsession to skills-based hiring would alleviate pressure. Expanding public investment in libraries, arts, civic education, and lifelong learning treats education as a societal good rather than individual commodity. In the AI era, curricula must emphasize uniquely human traits: moral imagination, complex problem-framing, and collaborative innovation.

Ultimately, education's value transcends immediate employability. It should enable better lives materially secure nevertheless intellectually rich, personally fulfilling, and socially contributory. The confusion many feel stems from a false binary: money versus meaning. A flourishing life integrates both. Graduates need tools to navigate uncertainty perhaps creating jobs through innovation rather than merely seeking them. Policymakers, educators, and students must resist reductive narratives. By reclaiming education as liberation and consciousness-raising, while pragmatically addressing economic imperatives, societies can cultivate versatile humans resilient to technological and economic flux. In Kenya and beyond, the future of education lies not in choosing between jobs and enlightenment, but in forging systems where one reinforces the other. Only then can graduates thrive, not merely survive, in an unpredictable world.

*The writer is a social commentator*

**Senegal** Lawmakers hand parliament and the prime minister sweeping new authority, stripping back the presidency as Faye and Sonko's rift widens

# Senegal's parliament votes to curb presidential powers in constitutional shake-up

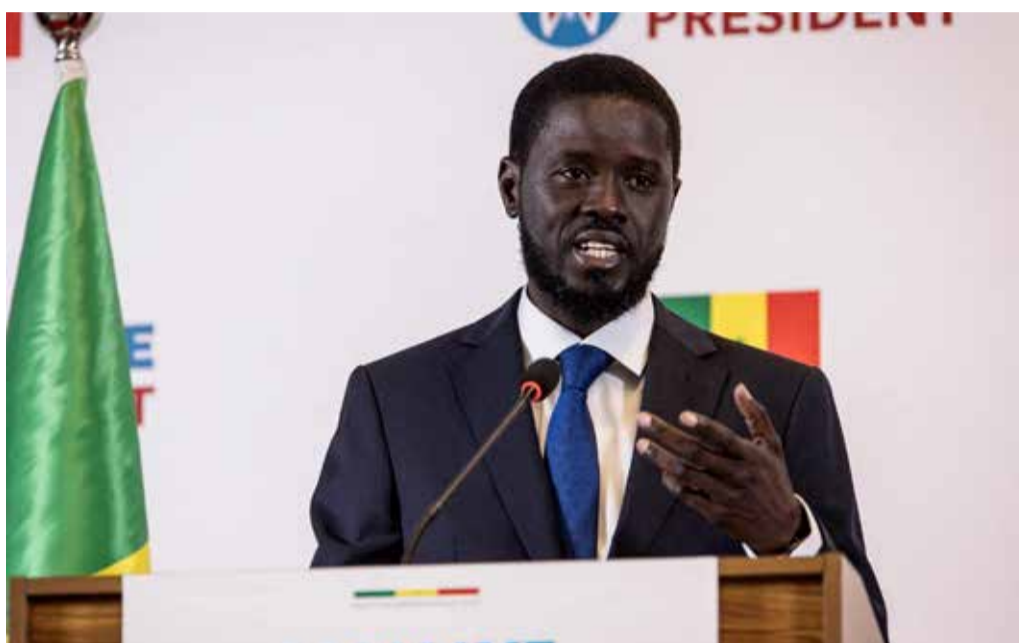
BY Norman Mwale  
@themkenyatimes

Senegal's National Assembly yesterday approved a constitutional amendment that hands parliament and the prime minister sweeping new powers while curbing those of the president, deepening a political rift within the ruling coalition and prompting President Bassirou Diomaye Faye to announce a nationwide referendum on the changes.

Lawmakers adopted the bill by an overwhelming majority during a tense sitting marked by heated exchanges, an opposition boycott and scuffles outside the chamber, where police fired tear gas to disperse around fifty protesters, most of them supporters of the Alliance for the Republic, the party of former president Macky Sall, who attempted to storm the building. Stones were thrown at police, who made several arrests.

The reform strengthens parliamentary oversight and broadens the remit of inquiry committees. It requires government to keep the legislature informed of agreements relating to the exploitation of natural resources, a provision framed by supporters as a safeguard on state finances. The text also proposes replacing the Constitutional Council with a nine-member Constitutional Court, up from seven members currently, bars a sitting president from leading a political party, limits the decisions an outgoing executive can take between a presidential election and the inauguration of a successor, and imposes tighter controls on the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly.

Faye is expected to submit the adopted text to a referendum, though no date has been set. Justice Minister Moussa Sarr told parliament ahead of the vote that the president had decided to inform the Assem-



President Bassirou Diomaye Faye

bly speaker of his intention to put the text to a public vote. Sonko questioned whether the president had the authority to withhold promulgation of a law that had already secured



**“The reform strengthens parliamentary oversight and broadens the remit of inquiry committees. It requires government to keep the legislature informed of agreements relating to the exploitation of natural resources, a provision framed by supporters as a safeguard on state finances. The text also proposes replacing the Constitutional Council with a nine-member Constitutional Court, up from seven members currently, bars a sitting president from leading a political party, limits the decisions an outgoing executive can take between a presidential election and the inauguration of a successor, and imposes tighter controls on the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly.”**

a qualified parliamentary majority, telling lawmakers he would ask Faye to promulgate the law as adopted.

The reform was proposed by the ruling Pastef party, led by National Assembly Speaker and former Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko. Faye dismissed Sonko as prime minister in May, after which Sonko was elected speaker of an Assembly in which Pastef holds 130 of 165 seats. The party has described the changes as a “better rebalancing of powers” among the executive, legislature and judiciary, arguing the current system concentrates excessive authority in the presidency.

Not everyone in the president's camp agrees. Presidential coalition leader Aminata Touré said on Sunday that “parliament is being used to weaken the president,” adding that the proposals “appear aimed at limiting the influence of the president of the republic by increasing the powers of the head of the National Assembly.” Her intervention underscored a broader split between Faye and Sonko, who came to power together in 2024 promising sweeping reforms but whose alliance has since fractured, partly over Sonko's public criticism

of the president's handling of Senegal's debt problems.

Critics, including opposition parties and civil society groups, have described the reform as political retaliation by Sonko following his dismissal, rather than a genuine rebalancing of institutional power. They have called for the bill to be withdrawn, arguing that a change of this magnitude warrants broader political consultation than the governing party allowed before bringing it to a vote.

Tensions were visible from the outset of Monday's session. An opposition MP who proposed postponing the vote was refused the floor and, after declining to leave the po-

dium, was forcibly removed from the chamber by gendarmes. Following the incident, opposition MPs walked out of the hall in protest, with the exception of one lawmaker who remained.

Outside the National Assembly in Dakar, demonstrators chanting “Hands off my Constitution!” gathered to denounce the changes before being dispersed with tear gas. Several opposition leaders and activists were detained in the process.

If approved in the referendum, the reforms would significantly reshape Senegal's political system, shifting the balance of power toward parliament and the prime minister at the expense of the presidency. The government has yet to announce a date for the public vote, and it remains unclear how the dispute between Faye and Sonko over the president's role in the process will be resolved before then.

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**Ethiopia** The annual summer cleanup campaign was launched seven years ago by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

# Ethiopia mobilizes over 750,000 volunteers for cleanup campaign in capital



People take part in the annual summer cleanup campaign in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia on Tuesday | Photo: Michael Tewelde/Xinhua

**BY Xinhua News Agency**  
@themtkenyatimes

On a rainy morning in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, Gomejeshewa Bezabih, a street cleaner, was joined by multiple volunteers in removing trash from a sidewalk and sweeping the streets at Lideta sub-city.

They were the residents of the same subcity, participating in the annual summer cleanup campaign led by the Addis Ababa City Administration to improve the capital's sanitation, drainage system, and greenery. "It is inspiring to see people come together and join us to clean the streets, campaign-

ing for a beautiful and safer Addis Ababa City," Bezabih told Xinhua, appreciating the commitment of the volunteers to engaging in deep cleaning. Gezahegn Desisa, director general of the city's cleaning management agency, told Xinhua that more than 750,000 residents are participating in this summer cleanup campaign, bringing together government officials, security personnel, students, business people, and even fans of different football clubs. "The campaign aims to clean and beautify all neighborhoods of the city, unclog drainage systems, thereby reducing flooding risks ahead of the rainy season," said Desisa, adding that volunteers are

deployed across 119 districts of the city as part of the cleaning program.

The annual summer cleanup campaign was launched seven years ago by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Since then, it has evolved into a powerful civic movement, reinforcing the capital's ambitious drive to become one of Africa's cleanest, greenest, and most livable cities. Recalling the death of dozens of residents, who used to live along the riverside of the city, due to severe flooding, Desisa said the campaign intends to avoid flooding risks that are caused by improper dumping, improve life quality, and create a healthy and safer environment. The

director general told Xinhua that the campaign has significantly enhanced the city's appearance, improved public spaces, strengthened environmental awareness, and elevated the quality of urban life, making Addis Ababa an increasingly attractive destination for residents, investors, and visitors alike.

Launching this year's city-wide cleanup campaign recently, Adanech Abiebie, mayor of Addis Ababa City, said the campaign is part of the city government's commitment to making Addis Ababa more comfortable and attractive for both residents and local and foreign tourists. "The campaign is not only to clean the city

and change its appearance but to improve urban life, safeguard public health, instill environmental stewardship as a cultural norm, and accelerate Addis Ababa's contribution to national development goals," she said. Marta Hailemariam, one of the volunteers, witnessed that Addis Ababa is transforming into a cleaner, greener, safer, and more resilient African capital. "This is more than just a cleanup campaign. It's about taking pride in where we live and showing that together we can make a real difference. Let's come together as one community to improve the beauty of our city," Hailemariam said.

## Uganda dismisses reports of Marburg cases following U.S. embassy alert

Uganda's Ministry of Health on Wednesday said there are no confirmed cases of Marburg virus disease, following a public health alert issued by the U.S. Embassy warning of a suspected outbreak in the western part of the country.

Speaking to Xinhua by telephone, ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Ainebyoona said health authorities were not aware of any confirmed Marburg infections. Last week, the U.S. Embassy in Uganda issued a public health alert, saying it had received reports of a suspected Marburg virus disease outbreak in western Uganda. As of Wednesday evening, the Ministry of Health has not issued any official statement confirming a Marburg outbreak. Uganda has experienced several Marburg virus disease outbreaks in the past. The disease is a highly infectious viral hemorrhagic fever caused by a virus in the same family as Ebola. Following repeated outbreaks of Ebola and Marburg in recent years, Uganda has strengthened its disease surveillance and rapid response systems, with health authorities maintaining close monitoring for emerging public health threats. According to the World Health Organization, Marburg virus disease is a severe illness with a high fatality rate if not detected and treated promptly. Initial symptoms include high fever, severe headache, muscle pain and fatigue, which can progress to hemorrhagic manifestations in severe cases. Health authorities have urged the public to rely on official information regarding suspected disease outbreaks.

**BY Xinhua News Agency**  
@themtkenyatimes



Medics attending to a patient | Photo: Courtesy.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Nyoro says UDA has deviated from its 2022 promises

By Alex Muthui

Kiharu MP Ndingi Nyoro has reignited debate within the ruling coalition, accusing the United Democratic Alliance of abandoning the pledges that carried it to power in 2022.

Speaking in a televised interview, Nyoro said the party had strayed furthest on the economy, citing borrowing levels UDA had promised to avoid. "We told Kenyans that we were not going to borrow the kind of money that we are borrowing now," he said. He also faulted the party over education funding, arguing it had failed to deliver on commitments made during the campaign.

Nyoro, once regarded as close to President William Ruto, was removed as chairman of the National Assembly's Budget and Appropriations Committee



last year, a shift widely read as punishment for his growing independence. His latest remarks have drawn mixed reactions, with some coalition leaders calling for unity and others describing them as a fair reflection of the country's economic strain.

No senior UDA official had responded by the time of publication.

The comments come amid

wider unease within Kenya Kwanza, with several allied leaders reported to be weighing their future in the party ahead of 2027. For Nyoro, once seen as one of UDA's most effective campaigners, the criticism marks a further step away from a coalition he helped build — and a signal that the cracks in Mount Kenya's political loyalties are widening.

### Government commits to hiring 2,000 doctors after talks with KMPDU

By Alfred Mutua

Kenya's public hospitals are about to get badly needed reinforcements. The government has recommitted to hiring 2,000 doctors, a pledge made after high-level talks between the Ministry of Health and the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) on Thursday.

The agreement targets a chronic shortage that has left doctors stretched thin and patients waiting longer for care. For years, medical staff have warned that understaffing is not a distant policy problem but a daily crisis playing out in overcrowded wards and exhausted teams.

The Ministry of Health is now expected to release a comprehensive employment status report next week, detailing the recruitment process and a firm implementation timeline. Kenyans will be watching closely to see whether words translate



into wages and warm bodies on hospital floors.

The timing is notable. The announcement follows the deployment of 6,360 medical interns to hospitals nationwide under the 2026/2027 internship programme, a critical step in preparing newly qualified professionals for full registration and practice.

Beyond new hires, the government also pledged to clear outstanding salary arrears and open negotiations for the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement. KMPDU welcomed the commitments but

struck a cautious tone, vowing to monitor implementation closely.

That caution is warranted. Kenya has seen promises before that stalled at the negotiating table. This time, the true measure of success will not be the agreement itself, but whether it reaches the wards where patients are waiting.

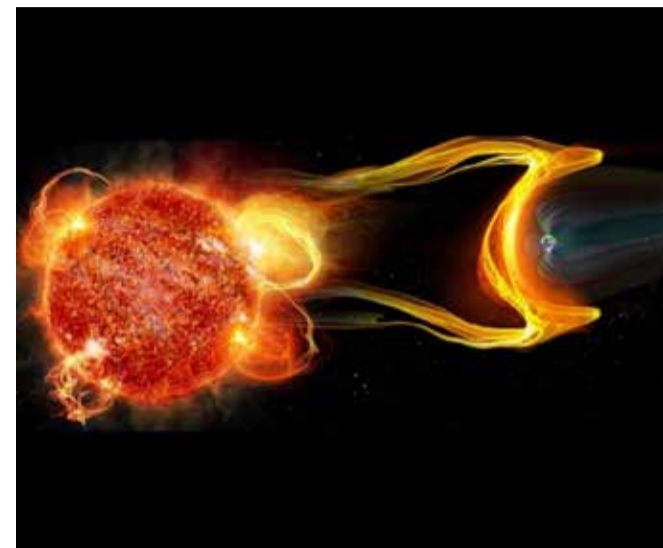
### Space weather alert issued

By David Mwaniki

The Sun has thrown a punch, and Earth is bracing for the aftershock. A powerful X1.1-class solar flare has erupted, hurling a coronal mass ejection (CME) into space and prompting scientists to issue a space weather alert. Forecasters are now tracking the CME closely, with part of it expected to brush against Earth's magnetic field in the coming days.

The consequences, while not catastrophic, are real. High-frequency radio communications could face temporary disruptions, GPS navigation and satellite operations may experience minor interference, and skywatchers at high latitudes stand a better chance of catching the Northern or Southern Lights. Should the CME arrive as forecast, minor to moderate geomagnetic storm conditions, classified G1 to G2, are possible.

For the ordinary person, there is little cause for alarm. No direct health risk has been iden-



tified. The real exposure lies elsewhere: satellite operators tracking orbital drift, airlines routing flights over polar regions, radio operators relying on clear frequencies, and power-grid systems in high-latitude zones that are more vulnerable to geomagnetic fluctuations.

This is not the first such warning, and it will not be the last. The Sun operates on cycles measured in years, not head-

lines, and flares of this magnitude are a reminder that the systems modern life depends on, from navigation to communication, remain tethered to forces well beyond Earth. The alert stands. So does the watch.

### Africa must stand together

By Justine Chacha Mwita

Africa cannot build its future by leaning on the goodwill of others. For decades, the continent has depended heavily on developed nations for aid, jobs, investment and technology. Cooperation with the rest of the world still matters, but Africa must now work deliberately towards self-reliance and towards creating opportunities for its own people.

That ambition is being undermined from within. The growing hostility directed at fellow Africans in some countries is deeply troubling. Many Kenyans and other Africans returning from South Africa are coming home jobless and with little means of survival, casualties of xenophobic violence rather than economic misfortune. Such treatment runs contrary to the very spirit of African unity the continent claims to champion.

The question is simple, and urgent: if Africans continue



to view one another as rivals or enemies, how will the continent ever progress? History offers no example of a divided people rising together. Africa's challenges, from unemployment to underdevelopment, will only be solved through unity, mutual respect and genuine economic collaboration

between nations.

The continent's future does not lie in division. It lies in Africans choosing, deliberately and repeatedly, to support and uplift one another.

Together, Africa is stronger. Divided, it weakens the very home it shares.

# SPORTS NEWS

PHOTOS  
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BREAKING NEWS



Sports >> \*Oyarzabal double and Porro header send European champions through to the World Cup last 16

## Spain's clinical 3-0 win ends Austria's World Cup run

By Norman Mwale

Spain advanced to the World Cup 2026 last 16 after a comfortable 3-0 win over Austria in a round of 32 tie at SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California, yesterday, watched by a pro-Spanish crowd of more than 70,000. The result was Spain's first World Cup knockout win since they lifted the trophy in 2010, ending a run of early exits at the last-16 stage in the two tournaments since.

Luis de la Fuente's side controlled the contest for long spells. Mikel Oyarzabal scored twice, Pedro Porro added a second-half header, and Marc Cucurella supplied two assists from left-back in a display that underlined Spain's balance between patience and penetration.

The opening period was tight until VAR intervened. Spain thought they had taken the lead in the 28th minute when Cucurella turned the ball in at the back post, but the goal was ruled out after officials judged that Austria goalkeeper Alexander Schlager had been impeded during the build-up to a corner. The setback did not disrupt Spain's rhythm. In the 36th minute Oyarzabal opened the scoring, turning home a low pass from Cucurella after Spain had worked the ball across Austria's penalty area. La Roja carried a 1-0 lead into the break, having dominated possession without adding to their tally despite chances for Alex Baena and Lamine Yamal.

Ralf Rangnick's Austria struggled to impose themselves after the restart, unable to find space between Spain's midfield and back line. Spain doubled their advantage in the 66th minute when Baena floated a cross to the edge of the six-yard box and Porro arrived to head home from close range.

Oyarzabal completed his double late on to make it 3-0, turn-



ing in a second assist from Cucurella with the game already put beyond Austria's reach. It was his third and fourth goals of the tournament, and Spain's win stretched their unbeaten run in competitive internationals to 34 matches.

Unai Simon was rarely troubled in goal, while Aymeric Laporte and Pau Cubarsi dealt comfortably with Austria's occasional forays forward. Substitute Sasa Kalajdzic, who had scored a stoppage-time winner against Algeria earlier in the tournament, was introduced late by Rangnick in search of a route back into the game, but Austria could not fashion a clear opening.

For Austria, the result ends a campaign that had promised more after a mixed group stage in which they took one win, one draw and one loss but scored freely along the way. Rang-

nick's side lacked a cutting edge against a Spain team that rotated possession well and attacked with width throughout. The defeat marks Austria's first World Cup knockout appearance in 72 years, since 1954, when a run of good form in the group stage again failed to translate into a deep knockout run.

Spain, by contrast, arrive at this stage of the tournament having conceded no goals in four matches, despite a stuttering group phase that included a draw with Cabo Verde and a narrow win over Uruguay. De la Fuente has been credited with a patient, possession-based approach built around Rodri and Pedri in midfield, with teenage forward Lamine Yamal offering a direct outlet on the counter.

"We knew it would be an important match, especially at this stage of the competition," said

de la Fuente. "We had our previous games in mind and, in every aspect, we were almost perfect. There are still small things to improve, and every match from here will be harder than the last."

Oyarzabal, named man of the match, said he was simply relieved to have helped Spain through. "I'm happy to have helped the team get through to the next round," he said. "They were a physical side and difficult to play against, but we played a good match. It doesn't matter who we face next — I have friends in both teams," he added, referring to Spain's coming last-16 opponent, the winner of Portugal against Croatia.

Spain progress to the round of 16 unbeaten and without conceding a goal at the tournament so far, while Austria depart California after a 3-0 defeat that closes their World Cup 2026 campaign.

GET THE BEST OF WORLD

**Sports >>** \*Villarreal midfielder vows to snub the national team while Pape Thiaw remains in charge, after Senegal's stunning World Cup exit to Belgium

## Gueye quits Senegal until coaching staff replaced



Senegal midfielder Pape Gueye

By **Martin Weche**

Senegal midfielder Pape Gueye says he will step away from the national team for as long as the current coaching staff remains in charge, following a dramatic World Cup exit to Belgium. The announcement marks one of the most significant player revolts against the Senegalese Football Federation's technical leadership in recent years.

The 27-year-old's statement came hours after Senegal, managed by Pape Thiaw, surrendered a 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 after extra time in their round of 32 tie, ending the Teranga Lions' World Cup 2026 campaign and denying them what would have been their first World Cup knockout win since their tournament debut in 2002.

Habib Diarra and Ismaila Sarr had put Senegal deservedly in front in the first half, only for late goals from Romelu Lukaku and Youri Tielemans to drag Belgium level and send the match into extra time. Belgium were then awarded a penalty in the

125th minute of the additional period, following a VAR review, and Tielemans converted from the spot to complete the comeback.

Gueye, who plays for La Liga side Villarreal, started the match but was substituted for Lamine Camara in the 66th minute, while Senegal still held their two-goal cushion. He posted his statement on social media that evening.

"I will come back to say a few words about the elimination, but I am announcing today that as long as this coaching staff is in place, I will be taking a break from the national team," wrote Gueye, who has won 45 caps for Senegal and scored twice in the group-stage win over Iraq.

It remains unclear whether Gueye's frustration is directed specifically at Thiaw or at the wider technical team, though his announcement adds fresh pressure on the head coach, whose substitutions while Senegal protected their lead had already drawn criticism from supporters and pundits during and after the match. Thiaw defended the changes af-

terwards, saying they were made because his players were tired rather than for tactical reasons.

"They were tired and couldn't continue. Leaving them on the field would have been unprofessional on our part. We had to replace them like for like," Thiaw said.

Thiaw has been in charge of Senegal since December 2024 and was at the centre of controversy following January's Africa Cup of Nations final, when he led his players off the pitch in protest after Morocco were awarded a stoppage-time penalty. Play resumed after a delay of around 14 minutes. Morocco's Brahim Diaz then missed the resulting penalty, and Gueye scored the winning goal in extra time to hand Senegal the title.

The Confederation of African Football later ruled, in March, that Senegal's walk-off amounted to a forfeit of the final under its competition regulations, stripping the team of the title and awarding Morocco a 3-0 default win instead. Thiaw was given a five-match suspension as part of

the wider disciplinary sanctions issued after the final, which applied only to CAF competitions and did not affect Senegal's participation at the World Cup.

The Senegalese Football Federation has condemned the decision as "unfair, unprecedented and unacceptable" and lodged an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, a process that typically takes around a year to resolve. Senegal are hoping the ruling will be overturned and the title restored.

Gueye's decision leaves his international future tied to any changes in Senegal's coaching set-up, with the federation yet to comment publicly on his announcement. Reports from within the camp suggest several senior players have privately backed his stance, adding to the pressure on the federation to decide Thiaw's future before the next international window and the start of Africa Cup of Nations qualifying later this year.

# SPORTS NEWS



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# SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



# When the drum stops, the children forget their names



By: Mukama Phillip Kahigiriza  
mukphix@gmail.com

I heard it first in my grandmother's kitchen in Kampala, where she sang an old lullaby while pounding groundnuts. My niece, nine, AirPods in, looked up and asked, "What language is that?" Not what the song meant. Just what language it was.

In that one question, I felt something cold settle in me. If a child has to ask what language her grandmother's love sounds like, something has already been lost.

## We called it evolution. It was erasure in a new shirt.

Every society changes, and that is normal. My grandfather traded bows for bicycles, my father traded bicycles for bodas, and I traded letters for WhatsApp. Change is not the enemy.

What hurts is when change arrives with contempt, when we are told that to be modern, global or successful we must drop our tongue, our stories, our food, our way of greeting elders, our way of mourning, our way of celebrating.

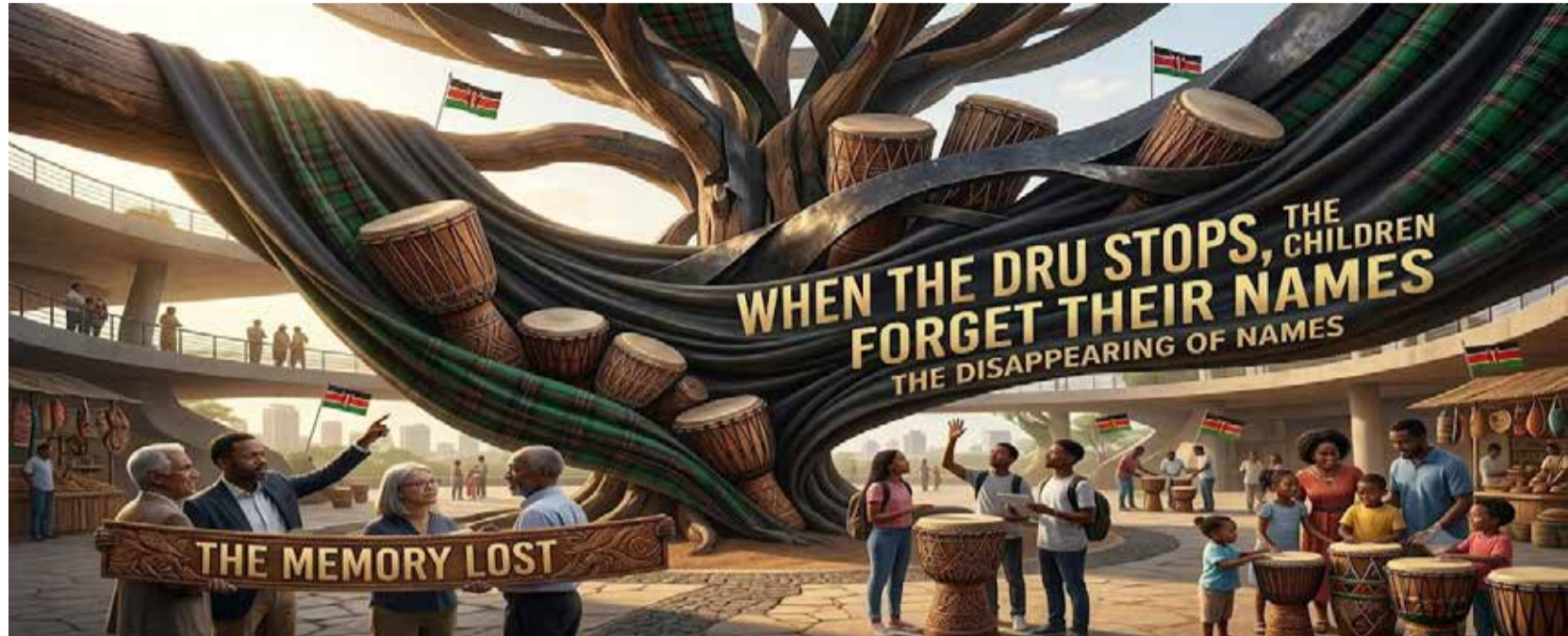
Cultural erasure rarely arrives shouting. It arrives smiling, calling itself progress. It says that dance is village, that name is hard to pronounce, that cloth is not professional, that proverb is outdated.

So we laughed at ourselves first, before the world could. We shortened our names on job applications. We stopped cooking at home because fast food felt cleaner. We let our children answer in English even when their grandfather asked in Luganda. We moved our elders to the corner of the house, and their knowledge went with them.

We did not evolve. We edited ourselves out.

## The quiet death of the middle space

Culture is not only dress and dance. It is the middle space between a per-



## Drums

son and chaos, telling you how to handle grief, how to choose a spouse, how to resolve conflict without calling the police, how to name a child after ancestors so he remembers he is not the first to carry this life.

When that middle space disappears, people do not become free. They become anxious.

You see it everywhere today. Children struggle to sit through a gathering without reaching for a phone, while elders speak in metaphors the wisdom gap no longer lets them understand. Teenagers can recite Marvel lore by heart but cannot name their own father's clan totems. Communities that once leaned on elders and taboos to keep the peace now import anger from the internet, having deleted the local manual before finishing the foreign one.

We traded rootedness for reach, gaining followers and losing fathers.

## Evolution without memory is amnesia

True evolution carries the past forward. A tree grows new branches, but it does not cut its roots to stand taller.

What we have instead is amnesia. We treat "new" as virtuous and "old" as shameful, mocking traditional healers online, then flying abroad when anxiety catches up with us.

We call our mothers' cooking heavy, then buy supplements for the deficiencies that cooking once prevented.

The irony is bitter. The things we discarded as backward are the very things we now chase as wellness and ancestral healing, repackaged in English and sold back to us at a premium.

## The cost in today's society

Look around Kampala, and beyond. A generation raised without rites of passage includes boys who never quite became men and girls never initiated into womanhood in a way their community recognises, so they search for identity in trends and algorithms instead.

Language loss carries its own quiet cost. Luganda holds a word for the respect shown by lowering your eyes to an elder; English needs a whole sentence to approximate it. Some things shrink in translation.

Without cultural anchors, people buy identity instead — clothes, accents, filtered lives. The mall becomes the temple; the influencer becomes the elder.

Traditional culture was, admittedly, inconvenient. It demanded funerals you had to attend, relatives you had to feed, disputes you had to mediate. But it also meant you were never

truly alone. Now we call ourselves independent, and many of us are simply isolated.

## But the drum has not stopped completely

Here is the part that keeps me from despair.

Last month I watched boda riders pause traffic so a funeral procession could pass, singing hymns in the local tongue. I watched hostel students cooking matooke together at midnight because they were homesick. I watched a sixteen-year-old ask her grandmother to teach her how to tie a gomesi properly for her graduation.

Culture is not a museum piece. It is a living thing. It hides when shamed, and returns when welcomed.

## How we begin again

If we want evolution without erasure, three things have to change.

First, stop mocking the source. Let children hear our languages at home without apology, and let our names stay long on certificates. Dignity begins in small rooms.

Second, translate rather than transplant. Take the proverbs into podcasts, the dances into reels, the clan histories into comics. The medium can change; the message must not.

Third, give the young a role, not a

lecture. Elders cannot only guard, and youth cannot only scroll. Bring them together to build — recording oral histories, designing modern prints from traditional patterns, coding apps that teach clan lineages — so culture becomes something they help create, not something they inherit like dust on a shelf.

## The name you cannot google

My grandmother died before my niece could learn that lullaby. But last week, my niece asked me to write it down, phonetically, with the meaning beside each line. She wants to sing it to her doll.

I cried while writing it. Maybe the drum never stopped. Maybe it simply grew quiet while we upgraded our speakers.

A society that forgets its songs will keep dancing, but it will not know why it is moving. A child who does not know the story behind her own name will spend her life searching for it in other people's captions.

Evolution is necessary. Erasure is optional.

Let us choose to grow taller without cutting the roots. Because when the drum stops, the children forget their names. And a people without names are easy to move, easy to sell, and easy to lose.