

HC's Speech for Republic Day 2026

Chief Guest for today's event - Hon'ble Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign & Diaspora Affairs, Your Excellency Musalia Mudavadi

Hon'ble Cabinet Secretaries, Governors, Members of Parliament, Principal Secretaries,

Director General UNON, H.E Dr Zainab Bangura, ED UNEP & UN Habitat

Former High Commissioner of India to Kenya Amb Rahul Chhabra

My fellow High Commissioners and Ambassadors

Senior-Officials from the Government of Kenya and various county governments

Members of the diplomatic corps,

Members of the Indian diaspora,

Friends from media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening! Namaskar! Jambo!

A very warm welcome to all of you for joining us today to celebrate the 77th Republic Day of India here in Nairobi. My special thanks to Hon'ble Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign & Diaspora Affairs for gracing the occasion as Chief Guest. My deep gratitude to the Government and people of Kenya, in particular, the Hon'ble President of Kenya H.E William S Ruto, for his patronage and support for a strong India-Kenya partnership.

2. On this day in 1950, India adopted its Constitution and became a Republic. That moment was not merely the birth of a legal document; it was the expression of a civilizational choice — to govern ourselves through democracy, equality, justice and the rule of law. In the 76 years that have passed, India has been able to achieve to a large extent the promises that we made ourselves to our Constitution despite extraordinary linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. That democratic experience continues to define India's engagement with the world — and a natural bond with Kenya, a fellow democracy shaped by its own proud struggle for freedom and dignity.

Distinguished Guests,

3. India today stands at a transformative moment in its development journey. Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to build a Viksit Bharat, a developed India by 2047, India has emerged as one of the most dynamic and confident economies of our time. I would like to highlight some important facets of India as it stands today:

- Largest democracy and most populous country in the world, with nearly 65 % people under the age of 35, making it the world's largest working population;
- 4th largest economy and poised to become the 3rd largest before 2030;
- Offers lowest manufacturing costs among major economies and therefore the most preferred global destination for foreign investments, having attracted over USD 710 billion of FDI in the last decade;
- Extraordinary pace of physical infrastructure development - from 70 airports in 2014 to over 150 in 2025, with 28 kms of highways and 12 kms of railway track being added every day;

- Largest producer of rice, milk, millets and spices and 2nd largest of horticulture products;
- Hosts the world's third largest startup ecosystem, with over 120 unicorns;
- Advanced digital public infrastructure, with around 50 % of all global real-time digital payments taking place in India;
- Pharmacy of the world, supplying affordable and high-quality medicines across the globe, with over 50% of pharma imports in Kenya from India;
- One of the most ambitious global renewable energy programmes with a goal of 500 GW of energy from non-fossil fuels by 2030 out of which 250 GW has already been achieved;
- Emerging knowledge economy, ranking 6th globally in patent filings, with over 100,000 patents filed in 2025 alone; and so on

4. This combination of democracy, demography, digital innovation and physical infrastructure development makes India not only a major economy in its own right, but a natural partner for countries like Kenya that are pursuing similar ambitious people-centred growth.

Friends,

5. India's foreign policy is guided by its ancient philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the world is one family. This philosophy is at the heart of our foreign policy and is anchored on two basic principles – national interest and global good. India believes in strategic autonomy in its foreign policy choices and one can see that in action in the current turbulent geo-political environment. A

strong advocate of 'Reformed Multilateralism', India rightly believes that it is high time that developing countries have a greater say in global decision-making. During its G20 Presidency, India played a decisive role in securing permanent membership of the African Union in the G20, ensuring Africa a seat at the highest table of global economic governance. India has also taken the lead in pro-planet global initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and the Global Biofuels Alliance, all of which align closely with Africa's development priorities.

Distinguished Guests,

6. India's partnership with Kenya is one of the most historic and meaningful relationships in this continent. Our ties stretch back over centuries across the Indian Ocean and were forged through shared sacrifice — from the Indian workers who helped build the railway that gave birth to modern Kenya, to the Indian and African soldiers who fought side by side in East Africa during the First World War and to the entrepreneurs who form the pillar of the Kenyan economy. Indian freedom fighters such as Makhan Singh and Pio Gama Pinto stood with Kenyans in their struggle against colonialism, laying the foundations of a friendship that continues to guide our relations today.

7. In recent years, this historic relationship has gained fresh momentum through frequent high-level exchanges between our two Governments. The visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2016 and President William Ruto in 2023 have given strategic direction to our partnership. Our defence and security cooperation has expanded into training, peacekeeping, maritime engagement and defence industry collaboration. India is today Kenya's third-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade of around USD 3.5 billion. Nearly 200 Indian companies operate in Kenya across different sectors, employing tens of thousands of Kenyans and contributing to skills and technology transfer. India's development partnership with Kenya is demand-driven and focused on building

capacity. Lines of Credit, scholarships, training programmes and healthcare cooperation have directly touched the lives of thousands of Kenyans. More than 10,000 Kenyans travelled to India last year for medical treatment, reflecting deep trust in India's healthcare systems and in our people-to-people links.

Friends,

8. At the heart of this remarkable partnership lies Kenya's vibrant Indian diaspora — from fifth and sixth generation Indian-Kenyans to Indians who came in recent past. These people are not merely visitors or guests, but an integral part of this nation's story. Recognised as Kenya's 44th tribe, they have contributed for over a century to the building of Kenya's economy, its education system, its healthcare sector and its philanthropic traditions. Whether in trade, industry, medicine, education or social service, Indian-Kenyans have always believed that their prosperity is inseparable from Kenya's prosperity. They are the living bridge and building blocks of our bilateral partnership with Kenya.

9. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047 and Kenya works towards the ambitions of Vision 2030, our two countries are entering a phase of unprecedented opportunity. The alignment between our development journeys — in digital transformation, renewable energy, manufacturing, healthcare, agribusiness, skills and youth employment — offers a powerful basis for partnership. India brings scale, technology and experience; Kenya brings dynamism, regional leadership and a young, ambitious population. Together, we can create growth that is inclusive, sustainable and people-centred.

10. On this Republic Day, therefore, we celebrate not only the democratic journey of India, but also the shared future that India and Kenya are building together — as trusted friends, as development partners, and as societies bound by history, values and mutual respect.

11. Before concluding, I would like to say a few words in Hindi, the 3rd most spoken language in the world for our community-members and many of our friends in Kenya who follow Hindi through culture, cuisine, literature etc– Aap sabko Gantantra Diwas Ki bahut bahut shubhkamnayein. Kenya ki pragati ke liye aapne jo yogadaan diya hai, uske liye bharat aur bharatwasi bahut gaurvantit mahsoos karte hain. Hum Asha karte hain ki aap isi tarah Kenya se ki pragati ka hissa bane rahenge aur saath hi saath, bharat ki sanskriti aur paramparaon ko is desh main jiwit rakhenge!

Distinguished Guest

12. I hope you had a chance to have a glimpse of the exhibition put at the entrance on the 43 UNESCO World Heritage sites in India. Please do have a look in case you missed on your way in and most importantly include some when you travel to incredible India. I do expect that you will shed your fear of a spicy Indian cuisine and relish the Biryani of Hyderabad to Kathi roll from Kolkata to Chaat of Delhi to sweets from Rajasthan. I can assure you that they are mild and not very spicy.

13. I once again thank the Chief Guest and all of you who have joined us today to celebrate this momentous occasion. My special thanks to the sponsors for their part contribution. I will be amiss if I do not thank my Embassy team for their hard work in the last couple of weeks to put this event together.

May the friendship between India and Kenya continue to grow from strength to strength in the years ahead.

Long-live India-Kenya Friendship

Maisha marefu ya urafiki kati ya India na Kenya, Asanteni sana.

I will now request Chief Guest Hon'ble Prime Cabinet Secretary to deliver his remarks.