1. Comoros

**Polls close in Comoros referendum on presidential powers**

Votes are being counted in Comoros' highly controversial referendum that could replace the current system of rotating power between islands and extend the rule of President Azali Assoumani. Comorans were asked to vote on Monday on changes to the constitution put forward by Assoumani, a move critics say is a power grab intended to extend his presidential term, which is due to end in 2021. But turnout was low at several polling stations in the capital, Moroni, according to AFP news agency, after opposition leaders called for a boycott of the poll, which has been marred by a crackdown on dissent. *Al Jazeera*

2. Democratic Republic of Congo

**DR Congo tycoon seeks permission to return to contest key election**

Multimillionaire and political heavyweight Moise Katumbi on Monday said he had sought permission to return to DR Congo this week to contest presidential elections in one of Africa’s most volatile countries. Mr. Katumbi said in a phone interview with AFP that he was in Johannesburg and had written to the civil aviation authorities requesting permission for his private jet to land on Friday in Lubumbashi, capital of Katanga province. Mr. Katumbi, 53, a former governor of the mineral-rich province, has been living in self-imposed exile in Belgium since May 2016 after falling out with President Joseph Kabila. He has vowed to return for the long overdue December 23 election despite being handed a three-year jail term in a case of alleged property fraud. *The East African*

3. Eritrea

**Eritrea and Somalia agree to restore diplomatic relations**

The presidents of Eritrea and Somalia have signed an agreement to restore their countries’ relations after years of animosity. Yemane Meskel, Eritrea's information minister, shared a joint statement on Twitter as Somalia's President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed concluded an historic three-day visit to Eritrea. The countries have not had diplomatic ties for nearly 15 years. "The two countries will establish diplomatic relations and exchange
ambassadors," read a "joint declaration on brotherly relations" signed in the capital, Asmara, by Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Mohamed. Al Jazeera

Eritrea demands justice over 'unlawful' 2009 UN sanctions

The government of Eritrea has chastised the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) claiming that the body had allowed itself to be used by adversaries to inflict unjust sanctions on the Horn of Africa nation. Asmara further stressed that the sanctions of nine-years ago were not based on fact and law. Eritrea held that the wrongs inflicted on it demanded that they be given justice. In a July 30 press statement titled: The Question is not “Removal of Sanctions”: It is why sanctions in first place? the Ministry of Information blamed a clique in Washington and Ethiopia’s Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) for being behind the sanctions. Africa news

4. Kenya

Porous Somalia border costing Kenya $20m yearly

The closure of the Kenya-Somalia border in Mandera at the height of insecurity five years ago could be costing the country at least Ksh2 billion ($20 million) annually, as smugglers have a field day sneaking substandard goods in and out the country. The Kenya Revenue Authority, immigration and Kenya Bureau of Standards offices at the border post are deserted, with the walls dotted with bullet holes. This has allowed smuggling to thrive, with local traders saying the goods from Mogadishu and Kismayu ports are relatively cheaper since they are not taxed and their quality is not tested. The porous border is 360 kilometres long, and efforts by the Kenya government to stop movements between the two countries have not borne fruit. A border wall meant to curb insecurity is still under construction. The border post, which was built in 1981 and “rehabilitated in 2009” is home to goats and dogs. The staff quarters for Customs officials are also deserted by non-locals due to fear of raids by Al Shabaab fighters. The East Africa

Judiciary on the spot over Sh6.6bn projects

The Auditor-General has raised questions over various construction projects of the Judiciary spread across the country, which have stalled despite payments having been made to contractors. In his latest report tabled in Parliament for the year ended June 30, 2017, Mr. Edward Ouko has expressed concern that the public may not get value for money for the projects. He points out that in some instances, payment made by the Judiciary to contractors exceeds the value of work done. In other circumstances, contractors were overpaid. As at June 2017, the Judiciary had on its roll 55 construction projects valued at Sh6, 661,092,518.90 across the country. Twenty-eight were funded by the World Bank and 27 by the government. Daily nation

Maraga: Judiciary is at the mercy of people who won’t even take my calls

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Chief Justice David Maraga has told of the immense pressure the Supreme Court judges faced before and after the September 2017 decision overturning the presidential election. In an exclusive interview with NTV, Mr. Maraga said the comments made about the court and the judges after the decision had shocked him, even as he vowed to have “fidelity to the Constitution”, repeating the famous line he made before throwing out President Uhuru Kenyatta’s re-election in the August polls. “I have been condemned and vilified, but in my heart, I know what I did is what I was required to do,” Mr. Maraga said, in reflection, almost a year after the decision—the first in Africa, and only the fourth in the world. Daily nation

Kenya loses $340m annually to adulterated fuel

The Kenyan government loses $340 million annually to unscrupulous business people, who sell petrol and diesel mixed with kerosene. According to the Petroleum Institute of East Africa (PIEA) the adulteration of petrol also creates unfair competition for players engaged in legitimate trade. The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) estimates about five million of the 33 million liters of kerosene consumed is used for adulterating either diesel or petrol. Petroleum Ministry Chief Administrative Secretary John Musonik said relevant arms of Kenyan government along with ERC have mounted campaign to close down all illegal fuel depots, and take operators to court. The East African

High Court opens avenue for higher pay demand

A decision to allow the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) to hold unrestricted sittings could open the door for MPs and MCAs to also pocket uncontrolled sitting allowances. The decision by Justice Chacha Mwita yesterday benefits 12 JSC commissioners, but exposes taxpayers to similar demands by 416 MPs and 2,562 MCAs, who have also challenged, in court, the reduction of their sitting allowances. The Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) had capped the number of JSC sittings to eight a month - meaning a commissioner was entitled to a maximum of Sh1 million monthly - but the implication of yesterday’s ruling is that commissioners can sit as many times as they decide. The Standard

EACC wants police barred from investigating corruption cases

The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) now wants police barred from investigating any corruption cases due to their 'tainted' image. Instead, EACC wants to work with the office of Director of Public Prosecutions to investigate all corruption and economic crime cases. The commission has questioned the credibility of police in fighting corruption, especially in the wake of arrests of National Youth Service and Kenya Power officials. Commission Vice Chairperson Sophia Lepuchirit (picted) noted that EACC had so far frozen assets worth Sh4 billion and seen dozens of suspects arraigned over corruption. “In every integrity survey that is done, the police department is always at the top in corruption and this means that they cannot be trusted to fight graft,” said Ms. Lepuchirit in Naivasha yesterday. The Standard
5. Rwanda

**Reprieve after Rwanda cuts gorilla permit fee**

Faced by dwindling business, tour and travel operators in Rwanda have welcomed a 30 per cent low-season discount permit fees to the gorilla conservation areas. A year after government doubled the permit fees to (Rwf1.3 million ($1500), from Rwf650,640 ($750) as it sought to package Rwanda as a high-end tourism destination, tour operators say they have lost up to 60 per cent of their customers. **The East African**

6. South Africa

**South African court annuls Grace Mugabe's diplomatic immunity**

The High Court in Johannesburg has set aside the International Relations Department's decision to grant Grace Mugabe diplomatic immunity. The former Zimbabwean first lady allegedly assaulted Gabriella Engels at a hotel in August last year but was allowed to leave the country without being prosecuted. The ruling has now paved the way for Mugabe to be extradited to face charges. High Court judge Bashier Vally found the decision to grant Mugabe diplomatic immunity was inconsistent with the Constitution. The decision was made by former International Relations Minister Maite Nkoane-Mashabane. Judge Vally did not read his entire judgment into the record, just the order. **Africa news**

7. Somalia

**UN delays drawdown of Somalia peacekeeping force**

The UN Security Council on Monday delayed a plan to draw down the peacekeeping mission in Somalia after finding that Somali security forces were not sufficiently trained to take over from the exiting forces. Some 1,000 troops in the 20,000-strong African Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom) were scheduled to leave by the end of October, but the council unanimously adopted a resolution postponing their departure to the end of February. Deployed in 2007 to shore up the Somali government in its battle with Islamist militias, Amisom operates under a Security Council mandate and receives funding from the United Nations and the European Union. **Daily nation**

8. Uganda

**Small power producers benefit from funding**

Uganda has moved to protect new small and mid-sized renewable energy projects, by signed an agreement with the Regional Liquidity Support Facility (RLSF) to offer financial protection, making it the first African country to insure small power producers against financial risks. The RLSF has an initial capacity equivalent to $74 million and will protect
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9. Zimbabwe

**Vote counting under way in historic Zimbabwe elections**

Vote counting has started in Zimbabwe's first general election since long-term President Robert Mugabe was pushed out of office last year. Electoral officials said turnout at Monday's vote averaged 75 percent. "It is our view that the high voter turnout is indicative of the sound voter education and publicity conducted on a receptive electorate," Priscilla Chigumba, electoral commission chief, told reporters in the capital, Harare. *Al Jazeera*

**Zimbabwe elections: Voters cast ballots in landmark polls**

Millions of Zimbabweans voted in the country's first elections since independence in 1980 without the name of long-time leader Robert Mugabe on the ballot. Polling stations opened at 7am (05:00 GMT) on Monday and closed at 7pm (17:00 GMT). Long queues were reported at several polling stations across the country. More than five million Zimbabweans have registered to take part in the landmark elections and pick their next president and members of parliament. A total of 10,985 polling stations have been set up across the country. *Al Jazeera*

**Mnangagwa, Chamisa and Mugabe cast their vote**

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa cast his vote on Monday in the first election since the removal of Robert Mugabe, rejecting claims made by his former mentor a day earlier that the election would not be free. Mnangagwa, a 75-year-old former intelligence chief, is facing off against Nelson Chamisa, a 40-year-old lawyer who is vying to become Zimbabwe's youngest head of state. *Africa news*

**Mnangagwa, Chamisa 'in neck to neck-to-neck race' as Zim awaits official vote results**

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa and his opposition rival, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance leader Nelson Chamisa, are reportedly said to be in a neck-to-neck race, with the first batch of election results expected on Tuesday morning. According to the privately-owned Newsday newspaper, chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Priscilla Chigumba said that the commission had received returns from four provinces and was now awaiting results from the remaining six. *News 24*

**Zimbabwe opposition leader says winning election 'resoundingly'**

Zimbabwe opposition leader Nelson Chamisa said on Tuesday he was "winning resoundingly" as votes were counted in the first election since long-time ruler Robert Mugabe was ousted from power. Chamisa, who has raised allegations of voter fraud
during the campaign, said that his MDC party had results from 10,000 polling stations.

News 24