

## THE ISSUES

As part of the comprehensive coverage of the campaigns, *New Vision* will be seeking views and voices of voters on issues affecting them and expert solutions. In this edition, **Nelson Kiva, Jackie Nambogga, Doreen Musingo and Edward Anyoli** focus on Jinja (city) and Iganga districts.

Jinja/city and Iganga have a combined population of 987,047 people, according to the National Population and Housing Census 2024.

The civil and political authorities in the respective administrative units are preoccupied with how to ensure the prosperity of these people. They have also earmarked progressive plans, setbacks notwithstanding.

For Jinja city, leaders are implementing efforts to achieve the parameters of a well planned, beautified, prosperous and modern city.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Jinja town was revered as Uganda's industrial hub boasting textile, copper, sugar factories, among others. However, the chaotic political events that followed the coming to power of former president Idi Amin and his subsequent expulsion of Asians a year after his military coup in 1971, was a setback for Jinja since the Asians were the most entrepreneurs at the time.

Jinja was among the first batch of seven cities that were operationalised July 1, 2020, alongside, Arua, Gulu, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Masaka and Mbale. Privatisation became an avenue for individual companies to set up their own factories. As a result of the move, Walukuba/Masese divisions in Jinja are buzzing with several factories.

"There is a need for a minimum wage to value our labour rather than being cheated under the eye of this government," Isaac Muloki, a casual worker, said.

### FIX THE GAPS

Moses Lwokyaza, the workers councillor at the Jinja district council, said some workers were being paid as low as sh3,000 daily without transport and other incentives such as housing.

However, the investors including Yusuf Musa Bashir, the chairperson and managing director Hared Petroleum, lamented about the appalling state of the roads in their areas of operation.

"Our factories are remitting billions of shillings to the Government, but the roads in our areas of operation are in a pathetic state," he lamented.

The magnificent Jinja Central Market, is one of the features of steady progress the voters and the administrators in the city are reckoning with in Jinja. The sh28b two-storey facility which accommodates over 7,000 vendors was commissioned by President Yoweri Museveni in

# JINJA, IGANGA VOTERS WANT GAPS IN HEALTH, EDUCATION FIXED

GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

## Jinja and Iganga district profiles

### Iganga

**Population:** 426,958

**Distance from Kampala:** 135km

### Economic activities:

Agriculture, growing maize, coffee, bananas, and sugarcane plus fishing.



### Jinja

**Population:** 280,905

**Distance from Kampala:** 96.0km

### Economic activities:

Manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and hydroelectric power generation.

## Expert's view

Charity Ahimbisibwe, the executive director at the Electoral Law and Governance Institute (ELGI), said Jinja city remains a viable economic and industrial hub whose former glory urgently needs to be restored. The revival of Jinja's original industries, she said, will stimulate both regional and national economic growth. "Jinja can easily become the alternative city to Kampala. With all the disorganisation happening in Kampala, Jinja has the potential to offer equal services, attract businesses and grow into a major business hub," Ahimbisibwe said. She added that in the education sector, Jinja has continued to lag behind despite once being home to some of Uganda's most prestigious and competitive schools such as Busoga College Mwiri.

November 2014. The initial market had been built in 1932.

The challenges the voters and the leaders in Jinja and Iganga want to be addressed cut across the sectors of health, education, road network and transport issues, agriculture and food security, water and sanitation, employment, poverty, energy/power, security, land management, business and economic issues, environment, domestic conflicts, leadership gaps, among others.

Jinja district is bordered by Kamuli to the north, Luuka (east), Mayuge (southeast), Buvuma to the south, Buikwe (west) and Kayunga to the northwest. Jinja's economy has historically been anchored on agriculture and industry, with sugar and tea plantations playing a significant role.

Iganga at independence in 1962 existed as part of Greater Busoga and in 1975 it gained district status and it became South Busoga district in the then Busoga Province. It was named Iganga in 1980.

The district is bordered by Kaliro to the north, Namutumba (northeast), Bugweri to the east, Mayuge (south), Jinja to the southwest and Luuka to the west.

Boosting tourism is one key focus of the authorities in Jinja and Iganga. One major tourism attraction in Jinja is the Source of River Nile and efforts are ongoing to turn it into a world-

class tourism attraction.

The Government earmarked sh15b for the purpose in November 2023. The modernisation of the site includes the construction of a modern pier, glass bridge, restaurants among other facilities.

David Kigenyi Naluwayiro, the former town clerk, lamented how the local and foreign visitors struggled with the bad tourism road network. He asserts that the Source of the Nile brings in a lot of revenue, but it is worrying that even the access roads to the site cannot be worked on.

Bernard Mbayo, the city speaker, noted that the entire Northern division does not have tarmac roads yet it is mainly an agricultural area that feeds Jinja, Busoga and Kampala.

Unclaimed Departed Asians Custodian Board property continues to spark controversy with some forging documents. As a result of the scramble, occupants have been thrown out with some structures demolished halfway.

Benjamin Isabirye, a resident in Jinja's Southern division claimed that some government officials were conniving with security operatives to grab such buildings in Jinja.

"How can an individual own 40 properties through forgery under the guise of repossessing. There is another scenario of a building with three titles. This is impunity," he said.

Justine Batale, a resident of

Wakitaka in Jinja's Northern division said electricity remains unaffordable and unreliable despite Jinja being to three hydropower dams.

### CITIZENS' MANIFESTO

The voters' concerns in Jinja, Iganga and entire Busoga sub-region, are also reflected in the *New Vision* Citizens Manifesto conducted between March and May 2025, where prospective voters highlighted key bottlenecks undermining service delivery in the spheres of healthcare, security, roads infrastructure, water and sanitation, poverty, unemployment, power connectivity, education, agricultural services, land management, crimes, leadership among others.

### QUALITY OF SCHOOLS

Whereas Jinja is expected to be next to Kampala in whatever they do, according to Dr Emmanuel Humphrey Gusango, even the good schools in the area do not match those of Kampala, Mukono and Wakiso in terms of performance.

Gusango, an expert in curriculum design, development and evaluation wonders why parents' trust in Jinja schools reduced yet sometime back, people used to come from elsewhere to Jinja for education.

"Our historical schools turned into academic museums. The President should come up with a programme to re-awaken the quality of education in Jinja and probably the entire Busoga," Gusango said.

### GARBAGE CHALLENGES

With garbage management, David Wakudumira, the former Jinja mayor, advised authorities in the city to come up with a modern solution of collecting and disposing of garbage so as to avoid the mistakes witnessed in Kampala at the Kiteezi dumping site.

Loy Katali, the Jinja District Woman MP, said despite securing medical equipment such as an ultrasound scan machine, fridge for blood storage, incubators among others

## WHAT VOTERS SAY

### Agnes Auma, resident Jinja city

The Government used to feed hospitals and schools. The arrangement should be brought back.

### Amina Mirembe, councillor Mafubira ward

We are seeing factions among teachers resulting from salary disparity. It should be handled to ensure teacher salary equity.



### Hellenah Mwesiwa, community leader

We need a public university in Jinja. By the way, why hasn't Busoga University taken off?



### Paul Isabirye, farmer

The city hosts Jinja Regional Referral Hospital but it is also sick. How can there be no gloves, cannulas and medicine all the time?

### Obed Mbabazi, trader in Iganga

I am glad that Uganda is shifting from white-collar jobs to life-time skills but the Government should consider establishing vocational institutes in our initial administrative units.



at Buwenge General Hospital, the facility is small.

Located on a highway, she said the facility also serves patients from Kamuli and Luuka, hence the need for more attention.

Katali added that some parts of the district do not have electricity which is partly undermining the Parish Development Model when it comes to its beneficiaries who need to add value to their produce such as maize.

Abudallah Suuta, the Butagaya LC3 chairperson, said the district boasts of only one factory of Kiira Motors which cannot solve the rampant unemployment facing many of the youths.