

MADARAKA DAY: JUNE 1

Madaraka Day is a national holiday in Kenya.

The first day of June is a red letter day for Kenya. This day is known as Madaraka Day in Kenya and is declared as a public holiday in the country. It is no ordinary day in Kenya. The same day in 1963 was a significant landmark in the struggle that led to the independence of Kenya.

HISTORY OF MADARAKA DAY IN KENYA

On July 1, 1895, Britain gained direct control of Kenya through the East African Protectorate. The beginning of the Uganda Railway allowed British settlers quick access to the fertile highlands of the region.

Yet, the settlers found that power was not sufficiently in their hands, and they attempted to have Kenya formed into a Crown Colony in 1907. In 1920, the settlers gained their wish, though it excluded native Africans from the political and governmental process. Locals wouldn't gain that right until 1944.

Yet pressure on the British colonialists increased, and in 1952, the Mau Mau Uprising began. Urban Kenyans, mostly from the blue-collar class, gathered in great numbers to begin a fierce liberation movement. During the period of fighting that lasted until the end of 1959, Africans quickly gained part in the political process of the region.

Multi-party elections were first introduced in 1961, and on June 1, 1963, Jomo Kenyatta became prime minister of the newly-formed autonomous Kenyan government, seeking final reconciliation with the

former British settlers. The country officially gained its independence on December 12, 1963.

KENYA'S MADARAKA DAY TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS AND ACTIVITIES

The day is celebrated with much vigor every year amongst Kenyans all across the globe. Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi is the most happening place in Kenya on this day. The President addresses the citizens of the nation and is then traditionally followed by an entertaining show. All the sectors of the uniformed services are a part of this highly amusing show which includes various singers and dancers.

Madaraka Day is also an occasion where certain national issues are addressed by the ruling generation. Human rights issues are at the top of the agenda for this developing country. These questions were addressed by freedom fighters many years ago, and they remain relevant today to the new generation of youth.

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