

London Underground trains were also hit by strikes crippling the capital

## Striking Doctors In UK

The junior doctors' strike is the latest industrial action escalation throughout the UK:



### Chaos as the Spring season of discontent is in full swing: STRIKING DOCTORS DESERT UK HOSPITALS AND TAKE TO STREETS

By: Shamlal Puri  
Associate publisher  
& Senior Editor - UK  
shamlalpur4@gmail.com

The United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS), which operates the country's mainstream hospitals, has been dealt a heavy blow as thousands of junior doctors, the system's backbone, walked out this week.

The move by the British Medical Association (BMA) union members is the second phase of higher pay demand.

Their walkout has sparked fears that patients' lives could be at serious risk.

The junior doctors' strike is the latest industrial action escalation throughout the UK.

They are angry over £14 per hour pay, which they describe derisively. They are demanding full pay commensurate



Next generation NHS Junior doctors from the diaspora on the picket line. Photo Courtesy BMA-Shamlal Puri

with their skills and training. There has been a protracted correspondence between the top officials of the BMA and Steve Barclay, (Cabinet rank Health Minister) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care over several months.

In a joint letter to Mr Barclay, BMA's co-chairmen of the Junior Doctors Committee, Dr Robert Laurenson and Dr Vivek Trivedi, sought a non-consolidated pay award in the first year and a consolidated pay award in the second year, but Mr Barclay disagreed.

On March 17, the BMA offered to attend meetings with the Minister and discuss the matter in good faith with a credible offer.

Instead, they received a nega-

.....  
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US Supreme Court preserves abortion drug access  
Mifepristone:

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Silk Road hugs memories of sadness and joy

Antara Roy Bhattacharjee

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Pan African Forum calls on IGAD to get rid of ICC factor in solving Sudan Crisis

Sudan



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Zambia, Rwanda sign agreements with Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute

Intra-Africa Trade

Africa



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Only Time Can Heal What Reason Cannot

UN Backpage  
UN, African and Arab leaders to hold virtual talks on Sudan crisis



"The Diaspora Times Global"

## The Speech That Fired Up An Entire Generation

At the close of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the Kenya Community Abroad (KCA) was the premier organisation of Kenyans in the Diaspora. Members of KCA from all over the world were active on various Internet platforms and chat rooms that

were then emerging where they exchanged views on various subjects and shared information on upcoming activities. The President of KCA at the time was Matunda Nyanchama, then a PhD candidate in the USA. I had met him once in London in the early

90s when I was a student at Oxford and he had travelled from the US to attend a conference. I went to London and we spent a day together sightseeing and discussing the state of affairs in our motherland and what needed to be done to improve the fortunes of our country.

In early March 2000 Nyanchama circulated by email a notice of the forthcoming annual conference of KCA which was to be held in St. Paul,

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# Cocaine-smuggling submarine reveals Europe's drug crisis

By: BBC News Europe  
Correspondent  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- “For more than 20 years traffickers have been using submarines to reach Africa and Europe, but these two are the first we’ve seized,” explains Antonio Martinez Duarte, Chief Commissioner of the Narco Brigade in the Spanish National Police.
- “They are very hard to detect,” he admits.
- In fact, it’s thought hundreds of homemade submarines have been launched towards Europe, which is the biggest cocaine market after the US, and one that’s growing rapidly after a Covid pandemic slump.
- It’s even said that in the middle of the Atlantic, around the Canary Islands and the Azores, there lies a mass graveyard of cocaine submarines, deliberately sunk after their cargo had been successfully unloaded.



The homemade submarine now sits in a car park in central Spain

I’m about to climb into the first “narco-sub” known to have brought cocaine from South America to Europe. It’s 20 metres (65 ft) long, built out of fibreglass and - remarkably - homemade. After clambering on top, I lift up the wonky manhole cover and descend into the hull where three men survived for 27 long days and nights, as they voyaged across the Atlantic Ocean just under the surface of the crashing waves. It’s cramped, claustrophobic and incredibly primitive. The sunlight tries to creep in from faint cracks in the walls. There is a steering wheel, a couple of basic dials and a rusted key still wedged in the ignition. You can understand why one prospective skipper took one look at the vessel and concluded it was a death trap. The heat and noise would have been intense as the engine in the back of the sub burned through the 20,000 litres of fuel stored onboard. The crew of two Ecuadorian cousins and a former

Spanish boxer set out from the Brazilian rainforest and first travelled along the Amazon river. They had energy bars, cans of sardines and plastic bags they used for toilet facilities. That was about all they had. Apart, of course, from three tonnes of cocaine worth more than \$150m (£121m). But this was not a lucrative, covert mission neatly accomplished. The sub’s journey in late 2019 had been tracked by law enforcement agencies, including the UK’s National Crime Agency (NCA). After scuttling their vessel near the coast of Galicia, having run into problems, the men were arrested and jailed. This piece of history in the fight against international drug trafficking is now a trophy in the car park of the Spanish police academy in Ávila. However, it’s not a rotting relic of a bygone battle: it’s a symbol of a secretly growing phenomenon. Just last month, another sub was discovered off the

Spanish coast - again in the Galicia region. “For more than 20 years traffickers have been using submarines to reach Africa and Europe, but these two are the first we’ve seized,” explains Antonio Martinez Duarte, Chief Commissioner of the Narco Brigade in the Spanish National Police. “They are very hard to detect,” he admits. In fact, it’s thought hundreds of homemade submarines have been launched towards Europe, which is the biggest cocaine market after the US, and one that’s growing rapidly after a Covid pandemic slump. It’s even said that in the middle of the Atlantic, around the Canary Islands and the Azores, there lies a mass graveyard of cocaine submarines, deliberately sunk after their cargo had been successfully unloaded. Each covert mission would have been a huge triumph for the teams of mechanics quietly constructing their vessels in the depths of the South American jungle, mostly in Guyana and Su-

riname. Here though, in Spain today, as part of the global trafficking war, it’s the police trumpeting a big victory at their headquarters in Madrid. “This is a very important operation,” says Chief Commissioner Duarte. “It’s the first time in Europe that we found as much as one and a half tonnes of base cocaine paste.” In fact, officers say it was the biggest lab turning raw coca paste into cocaine that they’ve found on the continent. But it’s not just the size of the haul which is significant. “This operation also confirms the links between Colombian and Mexican criminals that have joined Spanish gangs working in Spain,” Chief Commissioner Duarte says. Clearly proud of their work, the police have transported the contents of the lab into a press conference room to show local journalists. The stench of the raw coca paste - like that of vinegar - hangs in the air.

The drugs-making process has been replicated, with barrels of chemicals, a microwave, a hydraulic press and scales - reflecting the journey from paste to final product. On a table at the far end of the room are dozens of brown parcels, each the size of a house brick, emblazoned with a Superman logo - the symbol chosen by the traffickers who no doubt felt a sense of invincibility. An officer leans over and whispers that importers pay €27-32,000 (\$30-35,000; £24-28,000) for each parcel. They then at least double their money when they sell it on the streets. The only limit on their profits is to what extent they dilute their drug with cutting agents, ranging from anaesthesia (which mimic physical sensations associated with cocaine, such as numbing of the mouth) to cheaper options like caffeine and glucose. But there are also other options, including de-worming medicine, normally used by vets. This lab dismantled in the city of Pontevedra in the Galicia region was capable of producing 200 kilos a day with a purity of 95%, according to the police. Along with the submarines, the lab is a glimpse into a narco-world which is expanding rapidly. The United Nations drug agency says cocaine production increased by a third between 2020 and 2021, which was a record high and the biggest year-to-year increase since 2016. One place they’re witnessing first hand the surge in supply of the drug is at the port of Antwerp in Belgium.

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Rwanda

# Rwandan Govt grants Mount Kenya University Rwanda full accreditation

By: Diaspora Times Team  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

The Government of Rwanda has granted Mount Kenya University Rwanda (MKUR) full accreditation to operate as a fully-fledged university. The accredited institution will rebrand to Mount Kigali University (MKU).

This is according to a communique from the Office of the Prime Minister. The communique details several orders made by a Cabinet meeting chaired by President Paul Kagame on Thursday, April 20, 2023.

Among others, the Cabinet approved the "ministerial order granting accreditation and legal personality to Mount Kigali University."

Vice-Chancellor designate, Prof Edwin Odhuno, thanked the Government of Rwanda for granting the university the new status.

"We are extremely grateful to the Ministry of Education for this recognition," said Prof Odhuno upon learning of the news, adding: "As an institution, we are happy with this achievement and will work even harder to expand access to higher education."

Prof Odhuno added that the accreditation is an exciting, yet challenging development because it means the university has the responsibility of delivering much more in teaching, research and community outreach.

"To whom so much has been given, so much is expected from," the VC designate noted.

Mount Kigali University becomes the first ever cross-border campus in Rwanda to attain this status.



The accredited institution will rebrand to Mount Kigali University (MKU).

Damalie Tumushime, a current student at the university, said it was a privilege to witness history unfolding.

She said: "I enrolled at MKUR and had no idea that it would transform into a fully-fledged university operating from this campus. Team work has been key to this development."

Another student, Ronald Nkusi, said he was delighted with this new development, and looks forward to graduating in Rwanda, rather than travelling to Mount Kenya University's (MKU's) main campus in Thika, Kenya. "Obviously, I look forward to not spending money and

time to graduate in Kenya as has been the case in the past."

Prof Odhuno further said he was confident that the MKU Chairman, Board of Directors, Prof. Simon Gicharu will continue supporting the new institution so that it can attain greater heights of success.

"We have seen how his support over the last 13 years has raised the profile of this campus through prudent investment in infrastructure, equipment and personnel. We are sure he will walk with us on the journey to a bright future for Mount Kigali University," said Prof

Odhuno.

MKUR offers a wide range of academic and professional courses through various flexible modes that include online, face-to-face, day and weekend, and Institutional based learning (School-based).

The institution launched its memoir earlier this year. The book, titled "Mountain meets Land of 1,000 Hills", traces MKUR's journey into Rwanda.

The institutional memoir lists leaders in government, the private sector, and civil society organizations as among its alumni. The book also details its infrastruc-

al developments such as the upcoming Kigali Paramount Hotel, primed to be a regional center of excellency for hospitality and tourism training.

Also captured by the book are corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities such as participation in Umuganda, and empowering the girl-child academically through partnering with Imbuto Foundation, as well as infrastructural developments, among other investments.

## Worth Noting:

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# CMG hosts video festival on UN Chinese Language Day

More than 900 videos from 37 countries and regions have been featured at the third China Media Group (CMG) International Video Festival at the United Nations (UN) Office in Geneva.

The festival takes place annually to coincide with the UN's Chinese Language Day. This year's theme is "Journey," as 2023 marks a decade since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative which aims to create a modern version of the trade links that once linked the world.

Entries from the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Serbia and Russia have competed for nine awards including "Best Video," "Best Director" and "Jury's Special Recommendation." Six youth cultural envoys, who will be able to visit and study in China, were also chosen.

"From the ancient dynasties to the modern era, China has undergone significant transformations and developments, shaping its identity and place in the world. The Chinese language played a crucial role in this journey," said director-general of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, who thanked CMG for its contribution to the celebrations.

Chen Xu, China's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, added: "We welcome more friends from all over the world to learn the Chinese language, appreciate Chinese culture and have a better understanding of the development of China through the platform of the UN Chinese Language Day. I am sure the Chinese language will play a greater role in promoting the diversity of world civilization and building a better future."



IMAGE COURTESY

CGTN

## Russia

# Putin, Saudi Crown Prince satisfied with coordination within OPEC+

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have expressed satisfaction with the level of coordination within OPEC+ for the stability of the global oil market during a phone conversation, the Kremlin said on Friday.

The two held a phone conversation earlier in the day at the initiative of Riyadh, the Kremlin said in a statement.

"A number of topical issues on the bilateral agenda were considered with an emphasis on the further expansion of mutually beneficial ties in the trade, economic, investment and energy fields. Satisfaction was expressed with the level of coordination within the framework of OPEC+ in order to ensure the stability of the world oil market," the statement read.

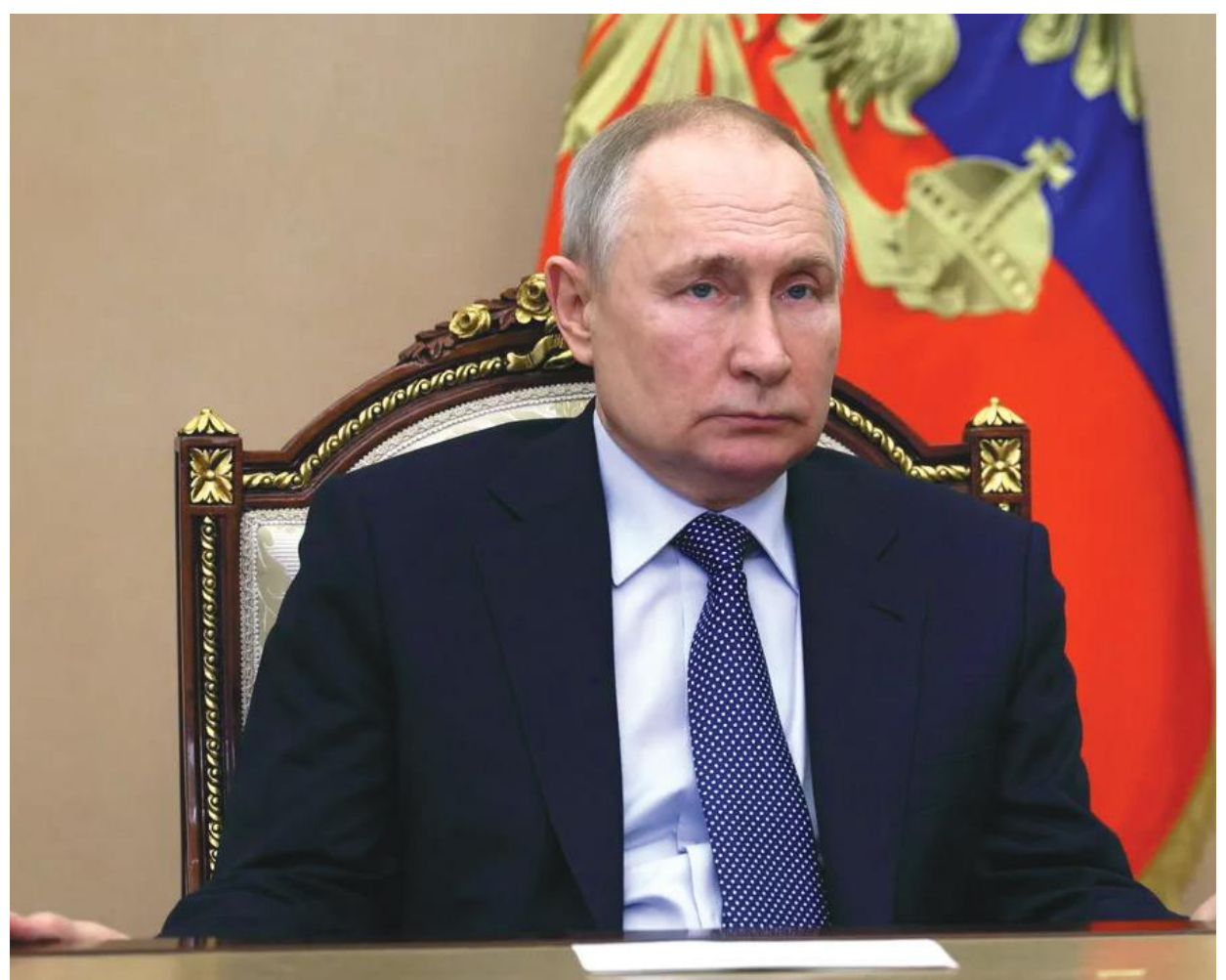
The sides also discussed prospects for cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the BRICS association, as well as the situation in the Middle East and settlement of crisis situations in this region, the Kremlin added.

OPEC+ cut oil production by 9.7

million barrels per day in May 2020 due to a decrease in oil demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic measures. In August 2022, the alliance started the final stage of canceling the cuts, but in November it cut the production once again by 2 million barrels per day from the maximum possible level of August. This decision is valid until the end of 2023.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin





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## Motivation

## Only Time Can Heal What Reason Cannot

By: N. George  
xxxxxxxxxxxxWorth  
Noting:

- When passing through a certain location you may get afraid yet you cannot pinpoint at what is scaring you but upon informing all those you are with they dismiss your allegations even at times ask for evidence.

- Much as you can explain what you feel you cannot show further evidence it is only over time when an incidence happens in that location when they will agree with your intuition. In the mean time they are likely to take you as a fear monger some may even hurl insults to you.

- Many will ask why only you who is making such allegations. This will make you bitter until that time when what you were sensing comes into fruition that your statement will be validated.

A Rome based stoic philosopher called Seneca argued that time is a healer of all that cannot be healed through reasoning. True to his observation there are encounters you go through in life especially the bitter ones, you find absolutely no reason for undergoing through them and wonder why it is you to experience them and till when.

In an unrecorded deal between two people the evidence is restricted only to both parties. Respect to each other for those involved will make either of the party to honour the deal. However, if either of the party decides to disown the deal his counterpart is not in a position to force him to accept through producing witness or evidence but he will be left a bitter person unable to trust his colleague in future. It is through passage of time that he will have other encounters in life that will divert his attention from what is currently bothering him thus reduce bitterness from the past encounter.

Nature is quiet unforgiving as anyone you mistreat will make you too to encounter such an instance whether by that person or another. This will manifest in one form or another so you cannot easily predict with an aim of preventing unless you seek reconciliation with the one you wronged. When the person you mistreated happened to know what is happening to you he will treat it as nature revenging on his behalf.

When passing through a certain location you may get afraid yet you cannot pinpoint at what is scaring you but upon informing all those you are with they dismiss your allegations even at times ask for evidence.

Much as you can explain what you feel you cannot show further evidence it is only over time when an incidence happens in that location when they will agree with your intuition. In the mean time they are likely to take you as a fear monger some may even hurl insults to you. Many will ask why only you who is mak-

ing such allegations. This will make you bitter until that time when what you were sensing comes into fruition that your statement will be validated.

In bible book of Luke 4:24, Jesus talks of how a prophet is not accepted in his home town. This is because those he is talking to are able to trace his history and make conclusions based on it thinking that today is only based on events of yesterday. Those who hear him are not afraid to ashame him as they claim to know both his strengths as well as his weaknesses.

Indeed he is inflicted with pain as his message is ignored or openly criticized only for time to vindicate him as his message comes to fulfillment.

Those involved in work of innovation whether intentionally or accidentally usually do not get warm reception as people are unwilling to accept new products. They wonder why the innovator is not contented with the status quo.

Some see him as a person whose intentions are influenced by need for money or fame hence finding faults in whatever exists. The innovator will be the laughing stock until that time when the few who will accept, purchase and use his product then popularize it succeed as compared to his critics. The rest of society will see it fashionable and economical to have such a product and the credit will go to the innovator.

The older generation while advising the young ones are often seen as outdated idea wise until that time when their audience comes to experience what they were warned about then remember the teachings of their seniors and shamefully go to them and ask for remedies of dealing with such situations. The elder is respected henceforth and past wounds healed as he is no longer taken as a liar or old fashioned.

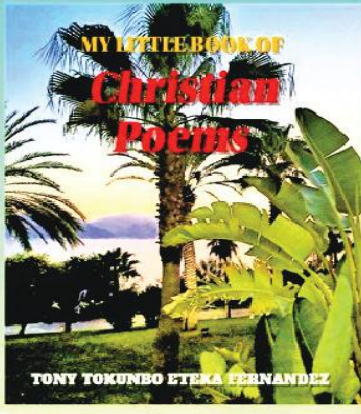
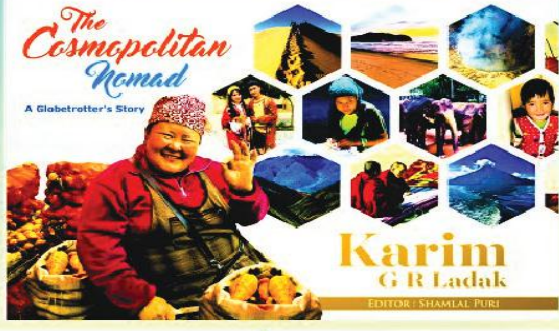
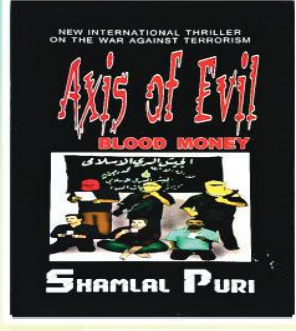
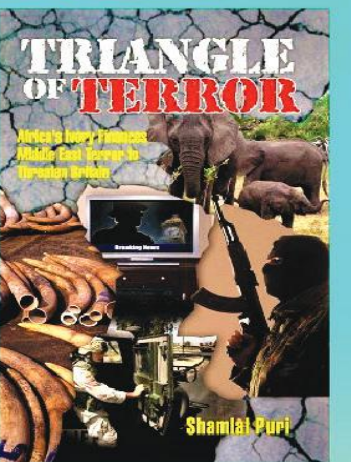
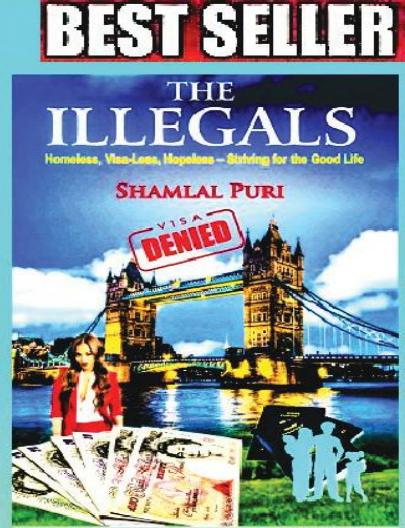
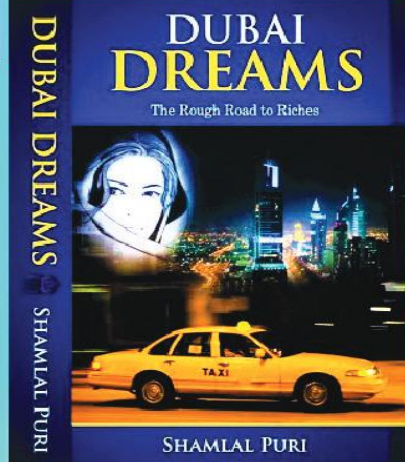
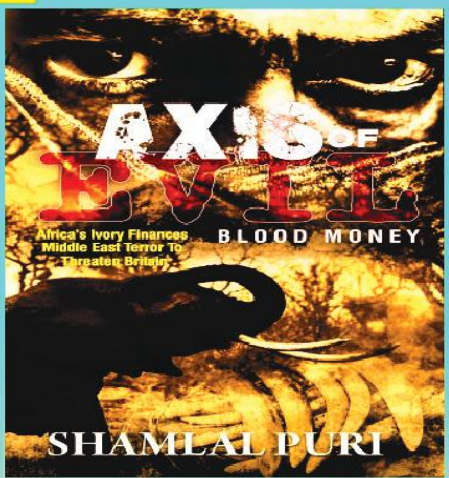
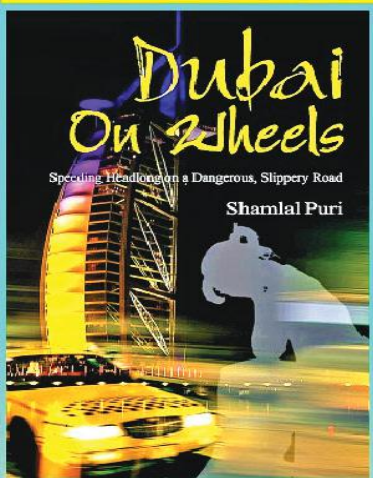
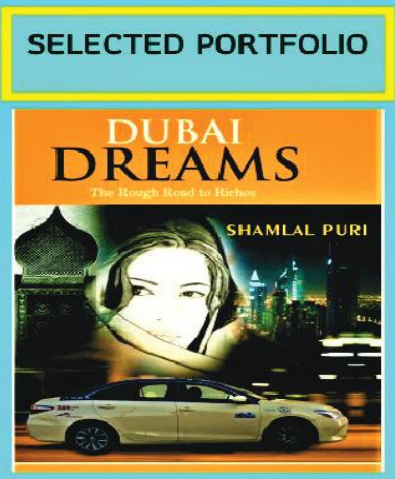
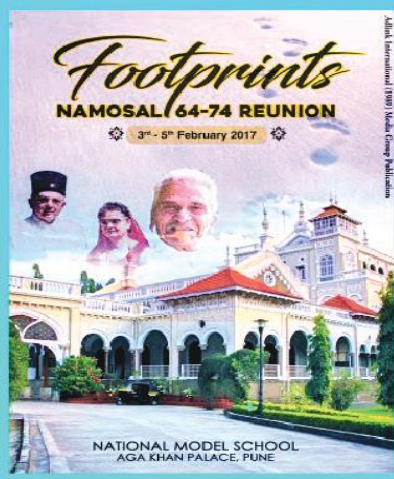
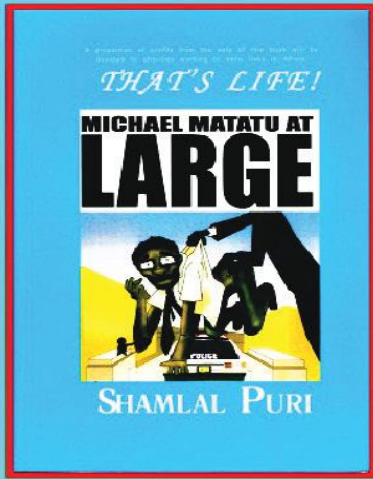
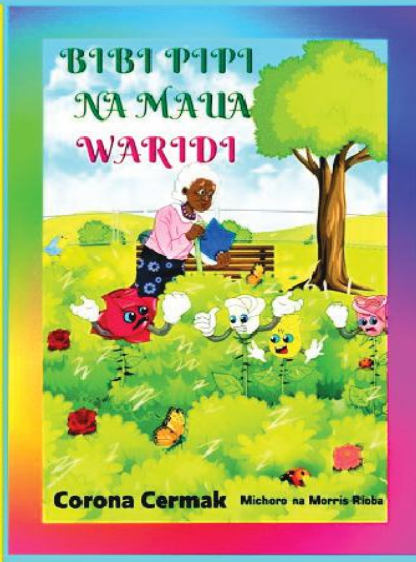
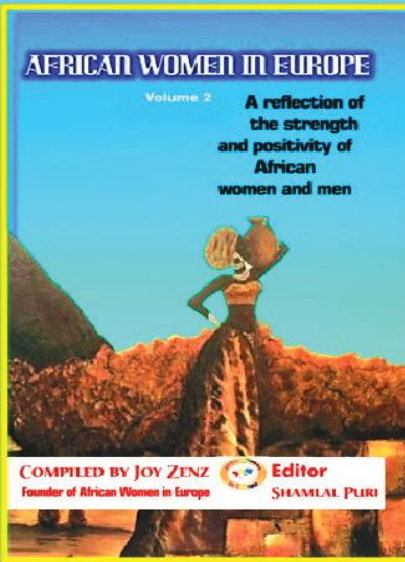


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## UK News

# Chaos as the Spring season of discontent is in full swing: STRIKING DOCTORS DESERT UK HOSPITALS AND TAKE TO STREETS



By: Shamlal Puri  
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& Senior Editor - UK  
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Contd from Page 1

## Worth Noting:

- The £14.09 an hour salary to junior doctors is seen as derisory. Even Pret A Manger, the High Street coffee and takeaway food chain, offers £14.10 per hour to its staff, who do not have to study as hard as junior doctors for their qualifications.
- Livid junior doctors say, "Thanks to this government, you can make more serving coffee than saving patients."
- The Rishi Sunak Government has been hit with a spate of industrial actions throughout the winter over poor pay and working conditions.
- It told the unions that it did not have extra money to pay the striking workers. Was that an honest admission? Or was it an entrepreneurial tactic of defiance?
- But it backfired.
- Alarm bells sounded at the time, it now transpires, were a clear indication that the national economy was struggling for survival after a chaotic period exacerbated by political failures in the Government, three prime ministers in a year and on the international front, the war between Russia and Ukraine.

tive response from the Minister on April 5, suggesting that the Union was putting preconditions to start negotiations.

The BMA leadership responded, "You have again misconstrued our starting point as a precondition, of which we have none, and are seemingly using this as a reason not to negotiate with us."

"It is notable that you have once again refused to provide any offer to us at all. You have criticised our call to restore junior doctors' pay, something for which we make no apology, but you have provided no alternative solution to address the impact pay erosion is having on our workforce crisis and patient care."

The Health Minister refused to offer to meet with the doctors.

The Minister saw no urgency in responding to a meeting.

"Rather than accept our offer to meet, you have set an additional precondition to meeting, asking us to give up our negotiating position and again call off strike action for which, as you know, we have an overwhelming mandate."

The stalemate between the two sides remains.

The doctors have declared their intentions: "Pay us or lose us", as placards read during the strikes.

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ministers in a year and on the international front, the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Britain has sunk billions of Pounds in aid to Kyiv. This cash could have been used for the Britons' welfare.

The strikes have cost the country several billion pounds in lost revenue.

There have been grievances from all sectors of the United Kingdom's industry, from the NHS, the nationwide rail and public transport staff, civil servants, ambulance workers, Border Force immigration officers and security guards jeopardising security at the UK's airports. London Underground trains were also hit by strikes crippling the capital.

Strikes in 2022 spilt into 2023, including postal workers.

Barristers, lawyers, and the Criminal Bar Association in England and Wales members took four weeks of action after rejecting a 15% pay rise.

They held placards with a cheeky, well-thought-of double-barrelled message "Crime Does Not Pay", alluding to the low fees earned to fight criminal court cases. Dock workers walked out, hitting freight services at UK's largest ports.

Some 40,000 telecommunications workers, members of the Communications Workers Union working for British Telecom, went on strike after rejecting previous offers. Those earning less than £50,000 agreed to accept a salary of £1,500.

The UK's education sector was also hit when some 450,000 members of the two largest teaching unions, the National Education Union and the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, balloted to go on strike demanding a 12% pay rise and rejected 3.5% offered to them.

The Government negotiated but failed after it gave what it said was a final offer - a one-off £1,000 payment for 2022-23 and a 4.3% rise for 2023-24; this was rejected. Strikes are planned between April 27 and May 2.

The teachers' strike spread to Scotland, bringing out members of the largest Union, the Education Institute of Scotland, who had turned down a 5% pay increase. The strike was resolved after they agreed to accept the revised pay offer



Health Secretary Steve Barclay, has set his conditions before meeting British Medical Association BMA doctors' representatives for negotiations. The Association says the Minister is not serious in meeting them.



Motivating the striking doctors, Labour MP, Ian Byrne West Derby, meets protesters at Royal Liverpool Hospital. Photo IB Courtesy Shamlal Puri.



Premier Rishi Sunak and Steve Barclay, rear right, meet hardworking NHS staff at George Trust in London during the crisis. Photo Courtesy Georgess. Shamlal Puri

## UK News

# Chaos as the Spring season of discontent is in full swing: STRIKING DOCTORS DESERT UK HOSPITALS AND TAKE TO STREETS



By: Shamlal Puri  
Associate publisher  
& Senior Editor – UK  
shamlalpuri4@gmail.com

Contd from Page 10

## Worth Noting:

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of 14.6% over 28 months. In Wales, teachers agreed to call off their action after the Government offered them an 8% increase. Staff from 150 UK universities were also in arms when they voted to strike. The dispute was resolved after the University and College Union announced it had made “significant progress” in their negotiations. Refuse collectors launched industrial action in Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital. They agreed to a 10% pay increase.

In the UK, where fires are a hazard in buildings and industrial sites, firefighters threatened to walk out after the powerful Fire Brigades Union voted to go on strike. It was called off after a revised pay offer.

The Financial Conduct Authority, financial regulator’s Unite Union members, decided on historic strike action in London and Edinburgh, the first since its inception. But the FCA rejected all approaches to discuss their grievances and attempts to reach a solution. It refused to recognise the Union. The dust has not yet fully settled there.

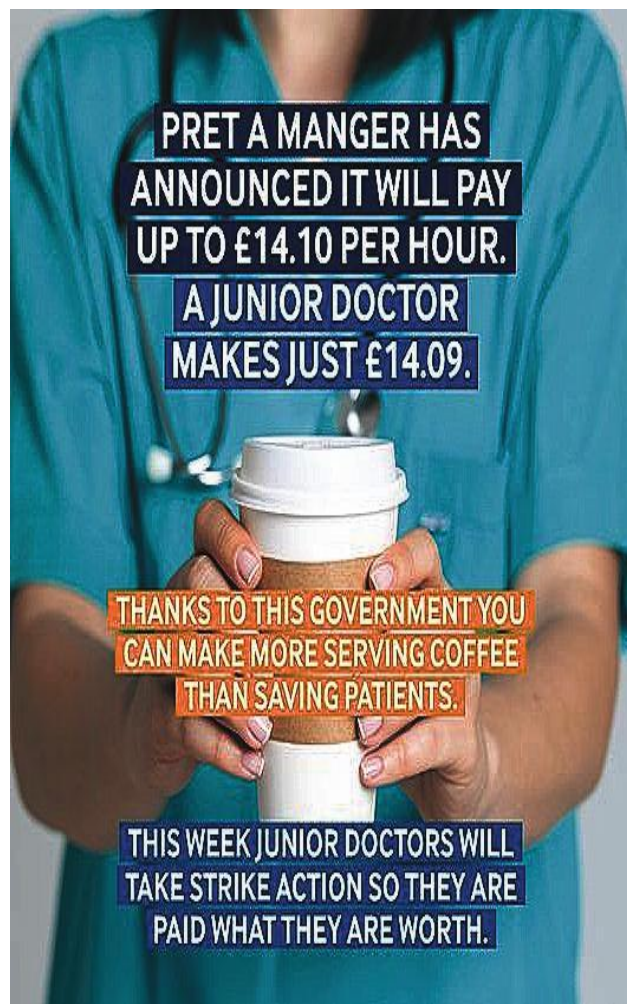
Even broadcasters - National Union Journalists (NUJ) members decided to go on strike to oppose staff cuts by the BBC Local Radio and

schedule changes at BBC Radio Foyle in Northern Ireland.

A consultative ballot gave the signal for the strikes. A strike in March brought overwhelming support from the UK media fraternity. They will down their microphones and cameras on May 4, hitting the United Kingdom’s local elections.

Though unconnected with the Government, 300 Amazon workers went on their first-ever strike at the beginning of 2023, hitting distribution services backed by the powerful GMB Union. They demanded an improved pay offer of £15 an hour rather than the current £10.50. Amazon has refused to recognise the Union and rejected negotiation proposals. The dispute is simmering.

Even the sports arena was hit by strikes. Discussions between the Welsh Rugby Players Association and the Professional Rugby Board restarted in January after a long-running dispute over pay and terms on which players could represent the Wales National Rugby Union team. Strikes were planned for February 25 to hit the Six Nations Championship against England, but an agreement was reached, and the fixture went ahead. Despite soaring windfall



A British newspaper advertisement criticising the government for paying low salary to junior doctors comparing it with the High Street coffee chain Pret a Manger. Photo Courtesy Shamlal Puri



Pay us or lose us.. crystal clear message to the government from these striking junior doctors in London. Photo Courtesy BMA. Shamlal Puri



Dr Robert Laurenson, joint chairman of BMA Junior Doctors Committee and who is also in the negotiating team in the current strike. Photo Courtesy Sky



Dr Vivek Trivedi, joint chairman of BMA Junior Doctors Committee who is in the negotiating team.

profits of oil companies in the current energy crisis, oil industry workers from the Scotland Unite Union announced that 1,300 offshore workers would stage a 48-hour strike from April 24 in a coordinated walkout over pay, halting operations on dozens of oil and gas platforms in the North Sea. Warnings of delays to Roy-

al Frigates were issued after around 100 workers at the Rosyth Dockyard belonging to the Unite Union voted to strike from April 17 to July 10 in a disagreement with the employers, Kafaer, over pay. The 2023 summer does not bode well for the Government as the country continues to struggle amid escalating fears, shared by

the Trade Unions Congress (TUC), that some two million public sector workers could be on the verge of leaving due to poor pay. The question is: Can the Sunak Government afford to run down the public service, the backbone of commerce and industry, or find the money to pay striking workers and professionals?

USA

# Mifepristone: US Supreme Court preserves abortion drug access



US Supreme Court preserves abortion drug access

## Worth Noting:

- Mifepristone is part of a two-drug regimen that now accounts for more than half of abortions in the country. It has been used by more than five million women in the US to end their pregnancies.

- It was first approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) more than 20 years ago after four years of review.

- The FDA also placed mifepristone in a category of 60 drugs that are regulated under a system of extra restrictions and regular evaluations.

- Mainstream medical organisations, including the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists and the World Health Organization, have said the abortion pill is safe and effective.

- But earlier this month, Texas court judge Matthew Kacsmaryk ruled to suspend the FDA approval of mifepristone, saying the agency had violated federal rules that allowed for the accelerated approval of some drugs, and had erred in its scientific assessment of the drug.

The US Supreme Court has preserved access to a commonly used abortion pill, ruling the drug can remain available while a legal case continues.

In a split decision, it also rejected restrictions on mifepristone implemented by a lower court, essentially maintaining the status quo. The future of the drug was called into question after a Texas judge sought to invalidate its long-standing approval.

The case could have wide-ranging implications for abortion access.

It comes after the Supreme Court - which has a 6-3 conservative majority - overturned *Roe v Wade* in June last year, ending the nationwide guarantee to abortion and giving states the power to ban the procedure.

With Friday's ruling, the mifepristone case now returns to the lower 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

It is likely that the case will come before the Supreme Court once again, setting up the most significant ruling on the issue of abortion since *Roe* was overturned. Mifepristone is part of a two-drug regimen that now accounts for more than half of abortions in the country.

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But earlier this month, Texas court judge Matthew Kacsmaryk ruled to suspend the FDA approval of mifepristone, saying the agency had violated federal rules that allowed for the accelerated approval of some drugs, and had erred in its scientific assessment of the drug.

Judge Kacsmaryk's preliminary decision came after a group of anti-abortion health professionals launched a case challenging the safety of mifepristone.

His 7 April ruling was made just minutes before a decision from a judge in Washington state ordered the FDA to make no change to the drug's availability and preserved access to mifepristone in 17 US states.

US President Joe Biden's administration appealed the Texas ruling, and asked for

the Texas court's order to be placed on hold.

A divided appeals court said mifepristone could remain available, but with certain restrictions, while the appeal was under way.

Among the restrictions imposed by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals was a limit on sending the pills by mail, effectively requiring in-person visits. These restrictions have now been overturned by the Supreme Court, for now.

Two of the Supreme Court's conservative members, Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel Alito, dissented publicly to the decision, which came in a single paragraph, issued hours before a self-imposed deadline.

Justice Thomas provided no reasons for his dissent, while Justice Alito wrote that the Supreme Court has been criticised in the past for issuing emergency orders, called the "shadow docket" by critics.

A full vote breakdown was not released.

Legal battle continues

The decision drew immediate reaction from anti-abortion advocates, who have concentrated their efforts on abortion pills since the fall of *Roe*.

Alliance Defending Freedom, the conservative advocacy group that filed

the initial lawsuit, said the FDA "must answer for the damage it has caused to the health of countless women and girls".

"We look forward to a final outcome in this case that will hold the FDA accountable," it said.

Kristan Hawkins, president of anti-abortion group Students for Life called the Supreme Court's decision a "tragedy".

Pro-choice advocates "have weaponised and weakened the medical standards to favour abortion industry interests," she said.

The latest ruling was welcomed by medical experts and organisations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University said: "Imposing restrictions on access to mifepristone, a drug that's been on the market for two decades, is a bridge too far even for a highly aggressive and conservative Supreme Court."

He said restrictions on mifepristone would post "immeasurable" harms to the drug approval process in the US. "In some ways it would be open hunting season to all of the FDA's drugs."

Pro-choice politicians also applauded the top court's decision, including Mr Biden who said he would continue

to defend the FDA's independence and fight political "attacks on women's health".

That fight is not over - oral arguments for the case will begin before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in mid-May.

But for now, Friday's ruling had the immediate effect of reassuring healthcare providers that access would continue, at least for the time being.

Kristyn Brandi, a gynecologist, or OB-GYN, and abortion provider in New Jersey, said she was relieved to learn about the ruling. Before it came, she and other providers were unsure of what services they would be able to offer patients attending clinics this weekend.

"Tomorrow morning at 7AM the patients will be able to access the care that they need," she said. "That's all that matters today."

BBC

# Uganda ruling party agrees to review anti-gay bill

Uganda's ruling party has agreed that the anti-gay bill, passed by parliament a month ago, be sent back to the house for reconsideration.

At a meeting with President Yoweri Museveni, who is the party chairman, the MPs resolved on "proposals for improvement" to the bill, according to a statement from the caucus chairperson of the National Resistance Movement (NRM).

The bill prescribes life imprisonment for people identifying LGBT and the death penalty for what is referred to as aggravated homosexuality, among other clauses.

It is not yet clear what amendments the president would like to be made to the proposed law.

When legislation is passed by parliament, the president has about a month to sign it, veto it or return it to the MPs for amendment and re-tabling.

On several occasions, President Museveni has said the topic of homosexuality needs more discussion and understanding.

The bill was passed with majority support from across the ruling party and the opposition.

The ruling party dominates parliament - and their position on any legislation always prevails.

Critics have argued that the law promotes homophobia, is against the country's constitution and that anyone suspected to be LGBT will be affected.



The bill has been condemned in international quarters

BBC

## Russia and US

# Lavrov: Russia and US currently have no concrete relations

Russia and the United States now have practically no relations, except for necessary contacts, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Thursday.

"If you are asking about Russian-US relations, we do not have any concrete relations right now. We only discuss the problems that arise in the work of our embassies out of necessity. And also due to the fact that the US is trying to abuse their position, in particular, as the host country of the UN," Lavrov told a briefing following his visit to Cuba.

Speaking about relations with Cuba Russia's top diplomat said that military cooperation between Moscow and Havana is developing successfully.

"Our military cooperation with Cuba is developing successfully in accordance with agreements between the two sides. And as I understand the forms of this military cooperation suit both the Russian and Cuban sides," Lavrov told journalist. The minister also noted that the conditions for the restructuring of Cuba's debt have been agreed upon. "Of course, everything that is be-

ing achieved, has contributed to the completion of work on agreeing on the terms of the restructuring of Cuba's debt," he said.

Russia Ready to Take Part in Discussions on BRICS Currency Creation  
Russia is ready to take part in the discussions on the creation of a BRICS currency, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told journalists.

"The BRICS countries have long been working on measures to reduce the share of the dollar in mutual payments and to switch to payments in national currencies... Recently, Brazilian President Lula suggested that we consider moving toward a collective currency within the BRICS. We will participate with interest in this discussion," Lavrov highlighted.

SPUTNIK



Sputnik / Russian Foreign Ministry

## Speech

## The Speech That Fired Up An Entire Generation

By: Njonjo Mue  
xxxxxxxxxxxx.....  
Contd from Page 1Worth  
Noting:

- As July approached, I got cracking on my speech as well as saving for my air ticket.
- I titled the speech, 'Uhuru Generation - Taking a Stand on High Ground'. It was a challenge to young Kenyans, those born after independence - the Uhuru Generation - to take a stand and assume responsibility for reversing the bleak fortunes of our land.
- When the day of my travel finally dawned, my connecting flight from Atlanta to St. Paul was delayed by a few hours. This gave me time to visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Centre to buy some memorabilia and souvenirs as well as get some added inspiration for my speech from being as close as I could possibly get to one of the greatest orators of all time.



Minnesota, USA, during the first week of July. The theme of the conference was 'Kenya in the Twenty-First Century'.

The notice went on to list some of the invited speakers. They included former Cabinet Minister Simeon Nyachae, politicians James Orengo and Kipruto arap Kirwa, among others.

Upon glancing at the list of speakers, I immediately noted the glaring absence of young people and women speakers, which I thought quite odd, given the forward-looking theme of the conference.

I quickly dispatched a terse email to Matunda telling off his organising committee for displaying such little faith in Kenyan women and youth.

When he wrote back, his email portrayed a similar calm demeanour to the one I had noticed back when we had spent a day together in London.

He asked me to suggest names of potential speakers that they might invite to balance the original list. I proposed Maina Kiai, Betty Murungi and Prof. Wangari Maathai.

Matunda's next email came as a big surprise. After thanking me for the suggestions I had provided, he informed me that the organising committee had also decided to invite me as the

keynote speaker at the closing ceremony of the conference. They also gave me a free hand to choose the topic of my address.

His email ended by committing KCA to pay for my travel and accommodation though he mentioned that at that stage, they were still fundraising for the conference.

I was humbled.

I wrote back thanking Nyan-chama and his committee for the honour of being chosen to deliver the keynote address. I also informed him that I would pay my own way from Johannesburg to St. Paul and I would stay with friends during the conference and so it would not cost KCA any money to have me at the conference.

"I strongly believe that if one has something important to say, one should not wait until their way is paid for before he can say it," I concluded the email.

As July approached, I got cracking on my speech as well as saving for my air ticket.

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I was met at the Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport by my old friend, Dr. Andrew Kiragu, with whose family I was to stay during the duration of the conference. He and his wife Murugi were classmates of mine at Alliance High School in the 1980's (Murugi was at Alliance Girls in the same year). We had not seen each other for over a decade and it was great catching up with them as well as meeting their infant daughter Njeri.

Over the next three days the conference programme was packed with speeches, panel discussions and presentations on the social, economic and political state of affairs in Kenya and the direction the country was taking as we entered the new century.

There was also great entertainment, most notably by the comedy trio Redykyulass, which provided great satire on TV and in live shows, whose trademark was the parodying of Kenyan political figures and

providing general social commentary.

My keynote address was billed as the major highlight of the conference and was to be delivered at the closing gala dinner of the conference.

Despite having taken so much time to prepare, I was so nervous before the speech that I hardly touched my meal. I pretended to be interested in the conversations taking place at the high table although inwardly I was only thinking about how best to deliver a memorable speech and praying silently that it would go well.

[The Uhuru Generation Speech will be posted tomorrow]

God heard my prayers! The speech was so well received that even before the evening's moderator could make his way to the podium to respond, a random participant sprang up, grabbed the microphone and challenged the whole audience to make sure that they made the necessary arrangements to travel back home to Kenya to vote in the next General Election due in 2002 in order to usher in what he called an "Uhuru Generation revolution."

As was my habit at the time, the following day, I circulated the speech to a few friends by email and, before I knew it, the speech had gone viral and sparked off a robust de-

bate in Kenyan circles both at home and abroad on the role of the Uhuru Generation in improving the fortunes of our land.

In addition to circulating like wildfire by email and via the Internet, the speech also attracted the interest of mainstream media back in Kenya, most notably The Standard Newspaper which sought me out for an interview and carried a full feature on me and the speech.

Life Magazine of the Sunday Standard in Nairobi carried a special feature on the speech in their September 24 - October 1, 2000, edition.

Nancy Kairo, the Editor, wrote the following introduction to the Special Feature:

"Truth be told, for a very long time now I have been feeling very disillusioned by the state of things in Kenya. I have not yet lined up outside any embassy in search of immigration forms, and I don't think I'm likely to get to that point, but I sometimes envy those who've had the guts to do so.

"Even my closest colleagues will admit that I am not the most patriotic Kenyan right now.

"Practically every day they are subjected to my unsolicited comments about our declining state of affairs. I am sure they all secretly wish I would just sit down

## Speech

## The Speech That Fired Up An Entire Generation

By: Njonjo Mue  
xxxxxxxxxxxx.....  
Contd from Page 14

Lawyer Njonjo Mue .

## Worth Noting:

• I was met at the Minneapolis – St. Paul Airport by my old friend, Dr. Andrew Kiragu, with whose family I was to stay during the duration of the conference. He and his wife Murugi were classmates of mine at Alliance High School in the 1980's (Murugi was at Alliance Girls in the same year). We had not seen each other for over a decade and it was great catching up with them as well as meeting their infant daughter Njeri.

• Over the next three days the conference programme was packed with speeches, panel discussions and presentations on the social, economic and political state of affairs in Kenya and the direction the country was taking as we entered the new century.

• There was also great entertainment, most notably by the comedy trio Redykyulass, which provided great satire on TV and in live shows, whose trademark was the parodying of Kenyan political figures and providing general social commentary.

and shut up!

“So you can imagine their amazement when one day I walked into the office and started passing around copies of a speech that I said made me feel proud to be Kenyan. Mildred Ngesa in particular almost fainted. She could not believe she was hearing correct.

“The speech in question, entitled ‘The Uhuru Generation’, was written by a gentleman named Njonjo Mue. “His speech starts on a rather harsh and depressing note. But as one progresses and reads between the lines, one starts to see the light – an unmistakable ray of burning hope.

“I read Njonjo’s speech using candlelight due to the on-going power rationing. My daughter had not seen me this excited in a long time. As I read on, I realized that I had allowed myself to be caught up in the here-and-now instead of keeping my eyes on the goal – no matter how distant.

“To borrow from Njonjo’s words:

“...if we focus only on the legacy bequeathed us by those gone before us, a legacy of lost days, of greed and corruption, vice and violence, of battered lives and broken dreams, then we can only but see dry bones at the

bottom of the desolate valley of our painful yesterdays.

“But if we lift up our eyes unto the hills and focus our gaze on the distant horizons of our new tomorrows; if we defy the odds and rebuild together; if we make God our closest ally and our vision our guiding principle, then we shall see our homeland of Kenya once again become a heritage of splendor.”

“I firmly believe in what Njonjo has to say. Even if I was born before the stroke of midnight on December 12, 1963, I have a daughter who depends on me for a brighter tomorrow.

“Therefore, I too, in mind and soul, belong to the Uhuru Generation.”

Years later, the speech continued to reverberate this time, not only sparking oral debate and through the then equivalent of social media and mainstream media, but crossing into academia when my friend Mshai Mwangola used it as the point of departure for her PhD thesis in performance studies at Northwestern University.

Dr. Mwangola introduces her thesis titled ‘Performing Our Stories, Performing OurSelves: In Search of Kenya’s Uhuru Generation’, as follows:

“This study uses as its point

of departure the vibrant debate that greeted Njonjo Mue’s July 2000 seminal identification of Kenya’s ‘Uhuru Generation’ as:

‘...that generation of women and men born after the midnight hour of December 12, 1963... [T]he true sons and daughters of Kenya, having been born after the country joined the family of sovereign nations, in contrast to those naturalized citizens born before this date who had to give up the citizenship of empire when Kenya was born in 1963.’

“That debate became critical in bringing interventions into the Kenyan public sphere that one might characterise as the youth discourses defining the emergence of a new national generational cohort.

“The existence, definition, potential and agenda of an Uhuru Generation are still very much a subject of discussion in Kenya, more than a decade after the idea first emerged in the small discussion groups whose deliberations inspired Mue’s address.

“Despite the widespread acceptability of the term, especially in the political realm, there are still multiple perspectives as to what exactly it entails, who should be included in its definition, and whether it serves any useful

purpose as a signifier of socio-political commitment, vision or agenda.”

Dr. Mwangola would refer to the Uhuru Generation speech again on its seventeenth anniversary as part of her response to my volunteering to become the First Petitioner in the 2017 civil society Supreme Court Presidential Election Petition No. 4 of 2017 challenging the declaration of Uhuru Kenyatta as the winner in the repeat presidential election held on 26 October 2017.

Responding to a newspaper feature in The Daily Nation following the filing of the petition, Dr. Mwangola wrote this update on her Facebook Wall:

“So today, someone who “discovered” Njonjo through this article in the newspaper titled “ Bravery propels Njonjo Mue to great heights as crusader “ asked me if I had read it.

“They were somewhat stunned by the journey that has brought the “petitioner” to this point.

“In talking about the article in general and him as a person (sometimes we forget that there are real, living human beings behind the caricatures, and press portraits, and social media attacks, and amazing work

that is facilitating the growth into who we are becoming), I happened to mention how the speech cited above inspired a generation, and actually set me on a quest to find this man who I respect, love and am blessed to call a brother, a mentor and a soul friend.

“I promised to share it with my interlocutor, and then it occurred to me that while this speech fired up an entire generation - by the way, including my doctoral dissertation (“ Performing Our Stories, Performing Ourselves: In search of Kenya’s Uhuru Generation “) - there are many who have never heard about it.

“So, because I think it is timely, here’s a public reminder as to what drives Njonjo Mue, coming to us from seventeen years ago. Just in case there are those who need to be informed, reassured, or reminded of those who walk amongst us, whose eyes have seen beyond the immediacy of the present, and who are the grace given to call us to live up to the potential we were created to be.” “

(To be continued.../)

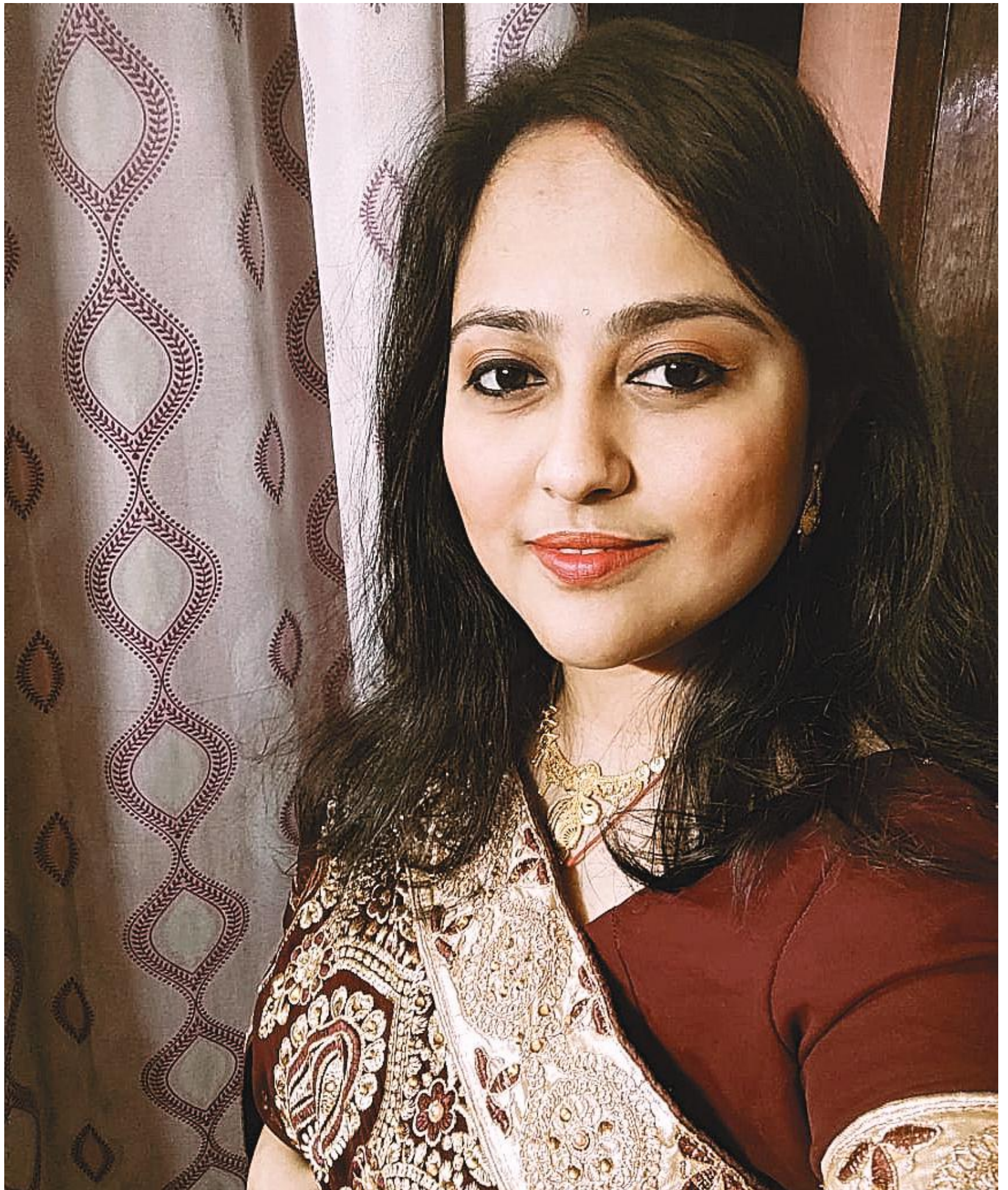
## POETRY

## Silk Road hugs memories of sadness and joy

By: Antara Roy Bhattacharjee  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- An incredibly powerful era was stitched with the golden thread of emotions, longing and dreams undreamt.
- The seconds, minutes, hours and days sharing an aura of parental love unquestioned, unmatched, uncontested with my loved ones
- In this little journey, I had someone always there for me.
- Through the ups and downs of life, sharing minutes of joy and sadness



Antara Roy Bhattacharjee

The Silk Road traversed for many years through the rugged landscape of life under the blue sky and cotton wool clouds, sometimes slaves to the vagaries of the weather...

On this road lies a carpet that caresses a terrain of silky emotions, kissed by timeless energy of tiny tears of sadness and joy.

No road was transformed as smoothly as this silk carpet; interwoven with the clock's long and short arms ticking every second

Silently, chiming hourly as

time and tide ebbed away into oblivion

Never to return

An incredibly powerful era was stitched with the golden thread of emotions, longing and dreams undreamt.

The seconds, minutes, hours and days sharing an aura of parental love unquestioned, unmatched, uncontested with my loved ones

In this little journey, I had someone always there for me.

Through the ups and downs of life, sharing minutes of

joy and sadness

My ever-loving and caring grandmother was there to hold my hand and cuddle me, reassuring me that no harm would come to me

I was nurtured and caressed in her soft silky arms, which have been The Steady Silk Road to my survival and existence.

How I wish to continue those undreamt dreams

Many instances tried to goad me, Change the direction of my thoughts

But I never stopped carrying such an enormous emotional load in my tiny mind's frame. I always kept calm; promised never to explode.

She was the only light of hope the Almighty had gifted me.

I crave her cuddle, sweet voice, security, warmth, and reassurance in my childlike innocence...

**Antara Roy Bhattacharjee**  
**Poetry Editor: SHAMLAL PURI in London.**

Antara Roy Bhattacharjee from Kolkata, India, is an

educationist, poet and singer with a growing reputation.

She holds a Master's degree in English literature. She also has a PG Diploma in Journalism and Mass communication.

She is the author of an anthology - "Percipience". Her poems have also been published in several national and international anthologies.

She has a singing passion and holds a Senior Diploma in Hindustani classical music.



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## Crisis

# Pan African Forum calls on IGAD to get rid of ICC factor in solving Sudan Crisis

By: Digital News  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



People wait for a bus to flee from southern Khartoum

## Worth Noting:

- **Mr.ES, the TRUTH is that the Generals in Khartoum are not telling the world and something they are GRAPPLING in their HEARTS with is the ICC INDICTMENTS of the man they OVERTHREW in a bloody coup -General Bashir. That is the TRUTH.**

- **Mr.ES one of the core ROOT CAUSES of the crisis in Sudan is ICC factor . That collapsed the first Civilian Government of my friend Prime Minister Handuk .**

- **Mr.ES ,it is the same fear FACTOR of handing over Bashir to ICC that is now dividing his former LOYAL GENERALS. They might not tell you but because they were both ARCHITECT of JANJAWEEED which is at the center of ICC indictments.**

- **Mr.ES , the former and late President Nyerere of Tanzania said in one of the few meetings I attended that Tanzania that "criticisms" will build a freedom fighter or any consultant who works voluntarily like me**

Pan African forum UK limited has written to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa requesting it to get rid of the international court of justice factor in mediating and solving the ongoing Sudan crisis.

In the letter dated 20th April 2023 addressed to the IGAD Executive secretary Workneh Gebeyehu, the chairman of the Pan African Forum UK limited Dr.David Matsanga wants IGAD to get rid of the ICC factor which he feels is the reason behind Sudan turmoil which broke out last week and has already claimed over 200 lives and scores homeless. Dr Matsanga argues that the ICC factor is the major root cause of the current situation in Sudan and has derailed peace and formation of civil government.

"One of the major root causes of the current situation in Sudan is the ICC factor which is the underbelly monster that has derailed peace and derailed formation of a civilian government." Read part of the letter Mr.ES , I do understand the terrain very well because I resolved the Northern Uganda LRA/GOU Conflict in Sudan.

I also technically helped

Thabo Mbeki peace mission in Darfur and I understand thinking of both Commanders at Tue center of the Conflict.

Mr.ES the cumbersome, expensive, and the failing to listen to the voices of reason by AUC is what has brought our AUC to where we are today. The saw this conflict coming and kept on not listening even to the Resolutions made by Heads of State on ICC matter that is also a factor .

Mr.ES , I would like to thank you for having been been a LISTENING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. This has helped in most of the peace processes handled by IGAD Secretariat.

Mr.ES, the TRUTH is that the Generals in Khartoum are not telling the world and something they are GRAPPLING in their HEARTS with is the ICC INDICTMENTS of the man they OVERTHREW in a bloody coup -General Bashir. That is the TRUTH.

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Bashir to ICC that is now dividing his former LOYAL GENERALS. They might not tell you but because they were both ARCHITECT of JANJAWEEED which is at the center of ICC indictments.

Mr.ES , the former and late President Nyerere of Tanzania said in one of the few meetings I attended that Tanzania that "criticisms" will build a freedom fighter or any consultant who works voluntarily like me . Mr.ES, despite tensions and "growing pains," I as the author is this letter ,?I have "overwhelming sense of positivity. "that IGAD will bring peace in the Sudan if they listened to CRITISISMS of some us who are VOLUNTEERS of Peace .

Mr.ES ,the Sudan crisis has exposed different players from the Gulf States who have their own motivations — some of the countries want to make money at the expense of Peace in Sudan. Mr.ES such EXTERNAL DARK FORCES have forced chaos in the region. The Somalia conflict .This has resulted in the lack of cohesion and questions about whether the effort is even worth it.

Mr.ES,the IGAD approach is noble and good but it must hit the RIGHT TAR-

GET and that TARGET is the UNSC that has powers to stop the ICC INDICTMENTS for the period they can decide to allow PEACE to return in SUDAN .

Mr.ES , the UN Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression (Articles 39-51) are very important and can be put in place to stop SUDAN from turning into a THREAT to PEACE in the Region and in the International waters of Red Sea .

Mr.ES , the provisions of Article 39 are clear "The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security" .

Mr.ES lastly my great idea to resolve the conflict will stand out at the end of all this .However, the simple concept has been hindered by the same countries like USA that FEAR ICC and YET there are SILENTLY telling the ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Kham QC to demand the ARREST OF BASHIR and handing him

to The Hague .Mr. ES, finally the Gulf States must be put on NOTICE by IGA that we are aware of their ROLES in destabilizing Africa-I am not portraying it as more than it is (over-communication), but saying they are the other FACTOR CAUSING THE SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE OF SUDAN & AFRICA at LARGE".

Concluded Pan African Forum UK open letter to the IGAD .

Thousands of civilians were seen fleeing Khartoum amidst the ongoing war which intensified further after rival military forces refused to negotiate as the fighting entered day six.

# BRICS strengthens its position in Latin America

By: Agencies  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Brazil has increasingly become involved in the structures and institutions of the international organization - BRICS. The recent visit of the President of Latin America's largest country to China, coupled with a number of important statements on the most pressing international political and economic issues, gives a clear indication of the country's development vector for the coming decades.

The arrival of President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva in the People's Republic of China was another important step of the Brazilian leader in reshaping the foreign policy of his predecessors and, like the visits to Buenos Aires and Montevideo, demonstrated Brazil's desire to join the ranks of influential world powers.

After many decades of Brazil drifting in the wake of Washington, Mr. Lula da Silva, even before his visit to China, was in agreement with Argentina on the need to create a regional currency and de-dollarize mutual trade, and breathed new life into the regional economic union of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay MERCOSUR through complex negotiations with Uruguayan President Luis Pou. One of the key events during the

Brazilian president's visit to the China was his compatriot Dilma Rousseff's speech at the inauguration ceremony of the head of the BRICS bank. The new BRICS development bank was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to support the international organization's joint projects, but its function and mission clearly go beyond making it a mediocre payment center. In his speech in Shanghai, where the NDB is headquartered, the Brazilian president openly called on the BRICS partners to abandon the US dollar as an instrument of mutual and international trade and to use only national currencies for this purpose. In addition, Lula criticized the US-controlled International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, stating that the New Development Bank should become an alternative to these discredited institutions. According to the Brazilian leader, BRICS, and its bodies could replace Western financial institutions as development facilities for the poorest countries, helping them to achieve a new stage of development and overcome crises.

Worth noting that in recent years, the BRICS international alliance has consistently developed not only interaction within the organization, but also actively built up its presence in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In addition, thanks to the active participation of Chi-



Brazilian President Lula Da Silva

na and Russia, the Eurasian trade, economic and infrastructure project 'One Belt, One Road' is rapidly developing aimed at creating a huge space for cooperation in the region, which has a population of over 2 billion people. President Lula da Silva's policy statements at one of the most important

political and economic centers of the BRICS show Brazil's determination to actively participate in the development of this giant political and economic union. Considering that Latin America's largest industrial, agricultural and resource-rich country has clearly identified its priorities and reaffirmed its com-

mitment to the principles, interests and values of BRICS, the influence of this powerful political and economic union in the Western hemisphere will grow as quickly as in the eastern one.

## WWII

# Explorers find WWII wreck on which nearly 1,000 Australians died

Japan's SS Montevideo Maru was sunk in 1942 by a US submarine unaware that more than 1,000 prisoners of war were onboard.

Deep-sea explorers said they have located the wreck of a World War II Japanese transport ship, the SS Montevideo Maru, which was torpedoed off the Philippines in 1942 killing nearly 1,000 Australian prisoners of war onboard.

The ship was sunk on July 1, 1942, en route from what is now Papua New Guinea to China's Hainan, by a United States submarine whose crew did not realise the ship carried prisoners of war. The location of the wreck had remained a mystery for more than 80 years.

The vessel was found at a depth of more than 4 km (2.5 miles), the maritime archaeology group Silentworld Foundation, which organised the mission, said on Saturday.

The sinking of the Montevideo Maru was Australia's worst maritime disaster, killing an estimated 979 Australian citizens including at least 850 soldiers. Civilians from 13 other countries were also on board, the foundation said, bringing the total number of prisoners killed to about 1,060.

"At long last, the resting place of the



A photo taken in 1941 shows the Japanese transport ship the Montevideo Maru at sea [Australian War Memorial/AFP]

lost souls of the Montevideo Maru has been found," Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a tweet.

"Among the 1,060 prisoners on board were 850 Australian service members - their lives cut short," he said.

"The extraordinary effort behind this discovery speaks for the endur-

ing truth of Australia's solemn national promise to always remember and honour those who served our country," he added.

"We hope today's news brings a measure of comfort to loved ones who have kept a long vigil."

The long-awaited find comes ahead of April 25 commemorations for Anzac Day, a major day of remem-

brance in Australia and New Zealand for their troops killed in all military conflicts.

"This brings to an end one of the most tragic chapters in Australia's maritime history," Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles said in a video message.

"The absence of a location of the Montevideo Maru has represented

unfinished business for the families of those who lost their lives until now," Marles said.

Explorers began searching for the wreck on April 6 in the South China Sea northwest of the Philippines's main island of Luzon and made a positive sighting just 12 days later, using high-tech equipment including an autonomous underwater vehicle with sonar.

"The discovery of the Montevideo Maru closes a terrible chapter in Australian military and maritime history," said John Mullen, director of the Silentworld Foundation, which conducted the hunt with Dutch deep sea survey firm Fugro along with help from the Australian military.

"We're looking at the gravesite of over 1,000 people," he told Australia's ABC News Breakfast.

"We lost nearly twice as many [Australians] as in the whole of the Vietnam War, so it's extraordinarily significant for families and descendants," he said.

Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies

Zambia, Rwanda

# Zambia, Rwanda sign agreements with Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute

By: Beth Nyaga  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- Others present included Dr Chabwela Shumba, Senior Medical Superintendent of the Zambia National Heart Hospital, and Dr Frederic Ngirabacu, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda King Faisal Hospital.

- The cooperation was made possible following a longstanding partnership between Save a Child's Heart in Israel and the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute in Tanzania, which includes having treated more than 1,000 Tanzanian children for congenital heart conditions over the last 20 years, training 23 medical professionals in specialized pediatric cardiac care, equipment and medical disposables donations, as well as continued support for the center's activities.

- Commenting Dr. Kesenge of the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute said: "I am very enthusiastic for the collaborations that the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute will establish with the National Heart of Zambia through its Ministry of Health and King Faisal Hospital in Rwanda.



The Zambian National Heart Hospital (NHH) and the Rwanda King Faisal Hospital (KFH)

The Zambian National Heart Hospital (NHH) and the Rwanda King Faisal Hospital (KFH) have signed trendsetting agreements with Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) in a ceremony held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The historic agreements are the culmination of years of planning and investment by Save a Child's Heart, an international humanitarian NGO based in Israel. This signifies an important milestone in enhancing future cooperation in pediatric cardiac care between Zambia, Rwanda, and the existing centre in Tanzania. The agreements were signed and witnessed by Dr Seif Shekalaghe, Tanzania's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr George Sinyangwe, Zambia's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Dr Peter Kisenge, Director of the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute.

The signing was carried out in the presence of Save a Child's Heart representatives from Israel.

Others present included Dr Chabwela Shumba, Senior Medical Superintendent of the Zambia National Heart Hospital, and Dr Frederic Ngirabacu, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda King Faisal Hospital.

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Faisal Hospital in Rwanda.

This is a very big step in strengthening delivery of quality cardiac services in Africa.

Today the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute in Tanzania independently performs hundreds of pediatric cardiac procedures, both surgeries and catheterizations, thanks to the knowledge and skills gained in Israel through the Save a Child's Heart training programs and ongoing medical missions, sponsored by Save a Child's Heart Canada.

The signing of the new agreements now paves the way for knowledge transfers between the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute in Tanzania and the two medical centers in Zambia and Rwanda, with the assistance of Save a Child's Heart (Israel), including training of medical team members at JKCI, sending Tanzanian medical missions to Zambia and to Rwanda and the support of new teams on the ground. Save a Child's Heart (Israel) is currently training in Israel the first Pediatric Cardiac

team of Zambian medical professionals, among them Zambia's first specialist pediatric cardiac surgeon, who recently returned home after completing four and a half years of training in Israel, and leads the program at the Zambia National Heart Hospital.

This week a team of three physicians from the King Faisal Hospital in Kigali will arrive in Israel to start their training in Pediatric Cardiology, Pediatric Intensive Care and Anesthesia.

Dr. Lior Sasson, Save a Child's Heart lead surgeon, said: "I am extremely proud to witness the lifesaving activity taking place here at the JKCI carried out by my Mentee Dr. Godwin Godfrey who is the first Pediatric Cardiac surgeon of Tanzania. I look forward to working with Dr Ziwa, Zambia's first Pediatric Cardiac Surgeon trained in Israel, to build a pediatric cardiac center of excellence at the NHH, and today starts the training in Israel of the first Pediatric Cardiac Team from Rwanda."

Simon Fisher, Executive Director of Save a Child's Heart, said: "Save a Child's Heart is excited to witness the signing of the two MOUs representing the expansion of its activities throughout the African continent based on South-South partnership and cooperation."

He added, "now that JKCI has become a center of excellence for Sub Sahara Africa our capacity building activities have potentially doubled taking place in two centers; Save a Child's Heart in Israel and JKCI in Tanzania."



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# South Africa evicts asylum seekers camped outside UN office

Africa's most industrialised country is a magnet for economic migrants and refugees but sees sporadic episodes of xenophobic violence.

South African police have evicted more than 100 asylum seekers camping for over three years outside the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in Pretoria.

The asylum seekers began living in makeshift tents pitched outside the UNHCR offices as they asked to be relocated to other countries after a spate of xenophobic violence in 2019.

Pretoria municipality last week secured a high court order to remove them, and police did so on Friday.

The court documents said the refugees would be evicted and taken to the Lindela Repatriation Centre, a temporary holding centre for undocumented migrants who are earmarked for deportation to their countries of origin.

Scores of police officers led by the sheriff's department carried out the eviction with the aid of immigration and other officers.

Using a megaphone, state attorney Kobus Meijer warned the people living in the encampment that they would be arrested and detained if they resisted removal.

Some families vacated voluntarily

while others protested.

"It's better for me to die here" because "I am not going in Lindela", a woman from the Democratic Republic of the Congo shouted.

UNHCR spokeswoman Laura Padoan told the AFP news agency that "they are asking that we transport them to a refugee camp in another country, but this is outside of our mandate."

The UNHCR urged the authorities carrying out the evictions to do so "peacefully and that families are treated humanely, with dignity and respect", Padoan said.

South Africa has some of the world's most progressive asylum policies, allowing foreigners to apply for refugee status and work. But human rights groups say the application system is flawed and backlogged, leaving many asylum seekers stuck in limbo for years.

As the continent's most industrialised economy, South Africa is also a magnet for economic migrants.

The situation has stoked resentment among jobless South Africans and fuelled sporadic outbursts of xenophobic violence. The violence has been led by right-wing parties and anti-migration militia like Operation Dudula.

Source: News Agencies



A woman holds onto her baby as South African police remove asylum seekers camped outside the Cape Town offices of the UNHCR on October 30, 2019 [File: AFP]

## South Africa

# Ten people dead as gunmen ambush family in South Africa

South Africa has one of the world's highest murder rates, with about 20,000 murders recorded every year out of a population of 60 million.

Unknown gunmen have stormed a homestead in the South African city of Pietermaritzburg and ambushed a family, killing 10 people, police said. Police did not give a motive for the shooting. Those killed included seven women and three men, the police ministry said in a statement.

South Africa has one of the world's highest murder rates, with about 20,000 murders recorded every year out of a population of 60 million.

From July 1 to September 30, 2022, more than 7,000 people were murdered in crimes reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS). Almost 1,000 women were among those murdered during the period in 2022. More than 13,000 women were also victims of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and 1,277 women were victims of attempted murder.

Gunmen killed eight people and wounded three others at a birthday party in the city of Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape in January, following a

spate of mass gun attacks last year. Police Minister Bheki Cele and the top management of the South African Police Service are due to visit the crime scene of the latest shooting later on Friday.

Source: News Agencies



South African Police Minister Bheki Cele and National Police Commissioner Fannie Masebola visit the scene of a mass shooting at a birthday party in Kwazakhele, Gqeberha, South Africa on January 30, 2023 [Deon Ferreira/Reuters]

# WHO officially launches mRNA vaccine tech hub in Cape Town

Global pharmaceutical firms, including Moderna and Pfizer, had declined to provide the technical know-how to replicate their vaccines in Africa.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially launched its mRNA vaccine technology hub in Cape Town, a facility established during the COVID-19 pandemic to help poorer countries struggling to access life-saving medication.

In 2021, the WHO picked South African biotech firm Afrigen Biologics for a pilot project to give poor and middle-income countries the know-how and licences to make COVID vaccines. At the time, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa called it a historic step.

Afrigen Biologics has used the publicly available sequence of Moderna Inc's mRNA COVID vaccine to make its own version of the shot, AfriVac 2121, at lab scale and is now scaling up production.

The vaccine candidate, which must still be tested on people, is the first to be made based on a widely used vaccine without the assistance and approval of the developer. It is also the first mRNA vaccine designed, developed and produced at lab scale on the African continent.

"I am ... here in Cape Town with our partners to support a sustain-

able model for mRNA technology transfer to give low- and middle-income countries equitable access to vaccines and other lifesaving health products," WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement on Thursday, the day the vaccine hub was launched.

The hub decided to pursue the vaccine on its own after global pharmaceutical firms, including Moderna and Pfizer, declined to provide the technical know-how to replicate their vaccines, mainly over intellectual property concerns.

The five-day visit by Tedros and senior health officials will include discussions over the programme's sustainability, the science of mRNA technologies and its potential use to combat other diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis that disproportionately affect poorer countries.

The WHO said 70 percent of the global population had received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine as of March but that figure was still below 30 percent in low-income countries.

Source: News Agencies



World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [File: Fabrice Coffrini/pool via Reuters]

## Crimes

# Swiss charge ex-Gambian minister with crimes against humanity

Ousman Sonko was interior minister from 2006 to 2016 when he fled to Sweden and on to Switzerland, where he applied for asylum.

Switzerland's attorney general has filed an indictment against The Gambia's former interior minister for crimes against humanity committed under former authoritarian leader Yahya Jammeh, it said in a statement on Tuesday.

Ousman Sonko is accused of having supported, participated in and failed to prevent "systematic and generalised attacks" as part of a repressive campaign by security forces against Jammeh's opponents, the Office of the Attorney General said.

Sonko's lawyer, Philippe Currat, told Reuters on Wednesday that his client disputed the charges and that some of the alleged acts occurred before articles on crimes against humanity came into force in the Swiss Criminal Code.

Sonko was interior minister from 2006 to 2016 when he fled to Sweden and on to Switzerland, where he applied for asylum.

In January 2017, he was arrested by Swiss police after the Geneva-based

legal group TRIAL International filed a complaint under the principle of universal jurisdiction that allows for the prosecution of the most serious crimes irrespective of where they were committed.

Sonko has been held in Switzerland ever since.

The case is set to be heard by Switzerland's Federal Criminal Court at an unspecified date. It will be the country's second-ever crimes against humanity trial.

"We are very satisfied that this is going ahead," said Philip Grant, executive director of TRIAL International.

"We hope this will generate momentum and that the trial will put pressure on Equatorial Guinea to eventually extradite Jammeh," he added. The Gambia's former president fled there after a political crisis in 2017.

Human rights activists in The Gambia welcomed the indictment.

Sheriff Mohammed Kijera from the Gambia Center for Victims of Human Rights Violations said the indictment set a precedent for The Gambian government to "take its responsibility to bring Yaya Jammeh and his henchmen to face justice."



Switzerland, whose Supreme Court is pictured, has brought charges of crimes against humanity against a former Gambian minister [Denis Balibouse/Reuters]

"Today we rejoice that finally, justice has caught up with one of the key perpetrators against Gambians, whose victims continue to live in pain and misery," said Madi Jobarteh, a human rights activist.

Former President Jammeh ruled the West African country of 2.5 million for more than two decades, a period marked by authoritarianism and alleged abuses. Jammeh has denied allegations of wrongdoing.

Source: Reuters

## UN, African and Arab leaders to hold virtual talks on Sudan crisis

### Worth Noting:

- The UN is also worried that Sudan's healthcare system could completely collapse as hospitals need additional staff and supplies, including blood.

- The violence and attacks have forced 16 hospitals across the country to close, nine in Khartoum alone, Dujarric said, citing the World Health Organization (WHO). Another 16 hospitals, including in Darfur states, could close soon due to staff fatigue and lack of supplies.

- "It goes without saying that we condemn all attacks on health personnel, on facilities and ambulances – which is putting more lives at risk," he said. "These are flagrant violations of international law, and they must stop." Sudanese refugees arrive in Chad

- As fighting rages on in Sudan, humanitarian agencies are also monitoring the arrivals of new Sudanese refugees in neighbouring Chad, a representative of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said early on Wednesday.



© UNHCR/Suzette Fleur Ngontoog Sudanese refugees arrive in Chad following an outbreak of violence in Darfur, Sudan.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres continues efforts towards ensuring an end to the hostilities in Sudan, his Spokesperson said on Wednesday, amid reports of a new ceasefire between warring military factions and refugees fleeing the country across the border into Chad.

The UN chief spoke earlier in the day to President William Ruto of Kenya and with the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Moussa Faki.

Guterres will attend a virtual meeting on Sudan on Thursday, bringing together the AU Chairperson, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Executive Secretary of the East African bloc, IGAD, and other relevant organizations, to discuss ways the international community can help end the violence and restore order inside Sudan.

UN fully engaged  
"Obviously, today he will continue to be fully engaged, making phone calls, trying to secure a 24-hour ceasefire, which will enable a much-needed reprieve to all affected civilians in Khartoum," UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric told jour-

nalists attending his daily noon briefing in New York. The UN Special Representative in Sudan, Volker Perthes, also continues engagement with parties on the ground, key Sudanese leaders and Member States, in trying to secure an immediate de-escalation in the fighting.

The crisis between the Sudanese armed forces and formerly allied Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitaries emerged as the country appeared to be returning to the path towards democratic transition. The sides are at odds over the process of restoring civilian rule.

New 24-hour ceasefire  
The deadly clashes erupted on Saturday. An initial 24-hour ceasefire, announced for 6 pm, local time, on Tuesday, collapsed within minutes of the deadline.

The parties committed to a new 24-hour truce on Wednesday, also beginning at 6 pm, local time, but some international media reported that the shelling has continued.

The UN, AU and IGAD - known as the Trilateral Mechanism - issued a statement appealing to the sides "to create necessary conditions during this period

for the civilians to seek safe shelter, food and medical care."

Devastating impact on civilians

Dujarric said the continued heavy fighting is having devastating consequences for civilians, as well as UN staff and other members of the international community.

"We reiterate to the parties to the conflict that they must respect international law," he said.

"They are obliged to protect civilians and ensure the safety and security of all United Nations and associated personnel as well as their premises, our assets, and trapped civilians must be able to receive assistance, access essential supplies and evacuate to safer zones as needed."

Vital supplies dwindling  
As the crisis deepens, humanitarian agencies warn that people are running out of food, fuel and other vital supplies, and many urgently need medical care.

"We desperately need a humanitarian pause so that wounded and sick civilians can reach hospitals," Dujarric said, adding "people in Khartoum have been unable to safely leave their homes to buy food and other essential items for days."

He reported that the humanitarian response remains severely hampered, calling for an end to attacks against aid workers and looting of humanitarian facilities.

"Humanitarians must be able to safely carry out their work. Aid agencies must be able to safely move staff and replenish critical supplies," he stressed.

Health system concerns  
The UN is also worried that Sudan's healthcare system could completely collapse as hospitals need additional staff and supplies, including blood.

The violence and attacks have forced 16 hospitals across the country to close, nine in Khartoum alone, Dujarric said, citing the World Health Organization (WHO). Another 16 hospitals, including in Darfur states, could close soon due to staff fatigue and lack of supplies.

"It goes without saying that we condemn all attacks on health personnel, on facilities and ambulances – which is putting more lives at risk," he said. "These are flagrant violations of international law, and they must stop." Sudanese refugees arrive in Chad

As fighting rages on in Su-

dan, humanitarian agencies are also monitoring the arrivals of new Sudanese refugees in neighbouring Chad, a representative of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said early on Wednesday.

UNHCR's Laura Lo Castro tweeted about a joint mission conducted with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Chad's national commission in charge of refugees, to observe the influx of new Sudanese refugees in the east, "assess urgent needs and agree on [a] response plan". She said there were an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 new refugees in the first three sites visited.

Any new arrivals will be entering a situation marked by soaring humanitarian needs and chronic underfunding. Just last week, before the military power struggle erupted in Sudan, WFP warned that hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people in Chad could face hunger because there was no funding for food assistance beyond this coming May