

A rich local cultural language hugging the East African coast along the Indian Ocean region is winning received much-deserved global acclaim

Sema Jambo, Say Hello

Kiswahili language is one of the official languages of the African Union:



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha announces retirement from politics
Asia



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Putin has 'already lost' Ukraine war, Biden says
America

U.S. President Joe Biden
America



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India launches historic Chandrayaan-3 mission to land spacecraft on the moon
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Palestinian leader calls on world to 'protect us,' and his people respond with bitter laughter
Asia



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Regional language spreads its wings globally: SEMA JAMBO, SAY HELLO - UK AFRICAN DIASPORA CELEBRATES WORLD KISWAHILI DAY IN LONDON

By: Shamlal Puri
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& Senior Editor - UK
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Guests wore the best traditional East African attire at the House of Lords.
Photo @SHAMLAL PURI

Another eye-catching event was held at the British Parliament House of Lords in London, which I attended.

It was an ideal meeting ground for people in the African diaspora.

Around 100 members of the African diaspora from all over the United Kingdom, diplomats and pioneers of the Swahili language, joined in a glittering celebration at the Lords where some guests were dressed in their traditional East African finery. The gathering at the Lords had several VIPs in attendance, including Patsy Moustache Pescatarian, High Commissioner of Seychelles, Kenyan High Commissioner

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A rich local cultural language hugging the East African coast along the Indian Ocean region is winning received much-deserved global acclaim as the African diaspora living abroad beat the drum to celebrate the second World Kiswahili Day last Friday, 7th July, with music, dance and fanfare.

The event was marked with several ceremonies in London and other parts of the United Kingdom, as far as Ireland. The London School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) held its celebration involving mainly African diaspora students.

Google's AI chatbot P 4

Motivation Page 8
Choose To Be Optimistic

Russia Backpage
Russia votes for law to ban gender reassignment surgery, in further crackdown on LGBTQ rights



North Korea fires intercontinental ballistic missile into waters near Japan after threatening US

North Korea on Wednesday fired an intercontinental ballistic missile that flew for more than 70 minutes, Japan's Defense Ministry said, marking a potential new round of confrontation with Washington and its allies.

The 74-minute flight time represents

a marginal advancement on the missiles tested by North Korea in March and April of this year, both of which were also ICBMs - weapons with the required range to potentially hit the continental United States.

Wednesday's launch, which landed in waters near to Japan, comes after

Pyongyang earlier this week threatened to shoot down US military reconnaissance aircraft engaging in what it called "hostile espionage" activities near its territory.

The missile launch and fiery rhetoric, while not unusual for Pyongyang, arrives during a period of

heightened tensions on the peninsula, as Washington and Seoul ramp up their defense cooperation.

It also appears timed to coincide

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President Ruto: Africa Must Support African Export-Import Bank

President William Ruto has asked Africa to support the African Export-Import Bank.

He said Kenya appreciates the partnership with Afreximbank, and especially the support the bank has extended to the country's development agenda.

"Afreximbank is our organisation. It supports our development, financing and implementation of identified projects," he said.

He spoke on Friday at State House when he met Afreximbank President Benedict Oramah and other bank officials.

Also present was former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In Kenya, Afreximbank is financing several special economic zones such as Dongo Kundu in Mombasa, Sagana in Kirinyaga and Nasewa in Busia.

Afreximbank will also finance the operationalisation of Kenanie Leather Park and Rivatex Textiles East Africa.

President Ruto pointed out that the bank will play a crucial role in boosting intra-African trade with its Pan-African Payment System.



Poetry

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Tell us who we are
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The book is the lamp of the soul,
Do not underestimate him at all.
A scholar who writes books

Read with sincerity.

Dilnurabonu Vayisova is a student of the Faculty of Philology of Bukhara State University. Young poet. His poems and articles were published in international newspapers and magazines such as "Raven Cage", "Kenya Times", "Page 3 news", "Ezgulik", "Bekajon", "Young Artists". His works have been published in about 10 anthologies. He is a member of the Association of Poets-Writers of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the "Double Wing" Foundation, and was awarded the "For International Services" badge.

Book



Dilnurabonu Vayisova

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Technology

Google's AI chatbot, Bard now available in Swahili

Worth Noting:

• "The launch of Bard in Swahili is a major milestone as it allows Bard to reach even more people in Africa, where approximately 150 million people speak Swahili. This makes Bard more accessible to everyone in the region, and we believe that it has the potential to be a powerful tool for creativity and learning. We are excited to see how people in the region use Bard to explore their ideas and discover new things," said Rachael Ndi-chu, Language Manager at Google.

• Besides Swahili, other mostly spoken languages in the latest expansion include Chinese, German, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi.

• Users can now access Bard in their preferred language with text-to-speech also enabled in 8 languages.



More than 200 million Swahili speakers in Africa are now able to interact with Bard, the Artificial Intelligence chatbot by Google using the language.

This follows the expansion of the AI chatbot which is now available in more than 40 languages in 59 new countries and territories.

"We're excited that this is Bard's largest expansion to date - we see its global availability as a great democratizer of knowledge," said Dorothy Ooko, Google Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Swahili is the first African language to be included in the conversational AI service.

The expansion includes new

features that allow users to better customize their experience, boost their creativity, and get more done, the firm stated.

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latest expansion include Chinese, German, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi.

Users can now access Bard in their preferred language with text-to-speech also enabled in 8 languages.

"That's why we created Bard: to help you explore that curiosity, augment your imagination and ultimately get your ideas off the ground - not just by answering your questions, but by helping you build on them," added Ooko.

Google said the inclusion of more languages and territories will also help to make Bard more inclusive and safe, through feedback from a wider range of users.

New updates on Bard also include, listen to responses which is available in over 40

languages and allows users to listen to Bard's responses once they select the sound icon.

The sound icon helps users hear the correct pronunciation of a word or listen to a poem or script.

Users can also now adjust Bard's responses by changing the tone and style of its responses to five different options: simple, long, short, professional or casual.

This feature is live in English and will expand to new languages soon.

Google has also launched four new features to help users get more done. Users can now pin and rename their conversations with Bard, making it easier to revisit conversations that contain

important information or

ideas later.

Bard Users will also be able to share responses with friends using shareable links, making it easier to collaborate on projects or get feedback on ideas. Also launched is the feature allowing users to upload images with prompts to Bard. Bard seeks to combine the breadth of the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of Google's large language models. It draws on information from the web to provide responses.

Google however warns users that as an experimental technology, Bard may occasionally make inaccurate statements in response to user prompts.

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China's Foreign Trade In Goods Up 2.1% In First Half

CGTN

China's foreign trade grew by 2.1 percent year-on-year to 20.1 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion) in the first half of 2023, data from the General Administration of Customs showed on Thursday.

Exports grew 3.7 percent year on year to 11.46 trillion yuan while imports edged down 0.1 percent from a year earlier to 8.64 trillion yuan, the data showed.

"China has seen its economic performance picking up on the whole despite a severe and complex external environment, while the volume and quality of its foreign trade improved steadily and in line with expectations in the first six months of the year," said Lyu Daliang, spokesperson of the General Administration of Customs.

Bruce Pang, chief economist and head of research at JLL Greater China expressed a positive view of China's foreign trade, saying that strengthening of the U.S. dollar could help boost the competitiveness of China's export commodities and continue to consolidate China's position in the global supply chain.

"The export of domestic enterprises and electromechanical products, the electric vehicle continued to rise," said Pang, adding that demand from

the countries along the Belt and Road is still strong.

China's trade in goods with countries along the Belt and Road jumped 9.8 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2023, accounting for 34.3 percent of the country's total foreign trade volume.

In the meantime, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations remained China's largest trading partner, with total imports and exports expanding 5.4 percent year on year to 3.08 trillion yuan, accounting for 15.3 percent of China's total foreign trade volume.

The data also revealed that the value of China's trade in goods with other members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership rose 1.5 percent year on year in the same period.



Mental Health

Survey: 55pc of adolescents suffer mental health related issues

55pc of adolescents in Kenya suffer from mental health-related conditions, according to the Kenya Adolescent Health Survey.

Informed by these statistics the Ministry of Health through the Division of Adolescent and School Health launched a community handbook to equip parents with skills to better handle their adolescents.

Adolescents in Kenya who constitute 24pc of the country's population still suffer a myriad of challenges including Mental health disorders, anxiety, substance abuse, and sexual and verbal abuse.

The first-ever Kenya Adolescent Health Survey indicates that there is still need for continuous stakeholder engagement to tackle the array of issues the youth face.

In addition to launching the 1st Kenya adolescent health survey and community handbook, the Ministry of Health through the division of adolescent and school health also recommends a review of the adolescent health policy.

Adolescents aged between 10-19 from 44 counties were surveyed.

The community handbook will

equip adolescents with among others skills to achieve life goals and knowledge to deal with peer pressure.

Parents will have more insights on how to better handle adolescents.

Reporting by Doreen Arange



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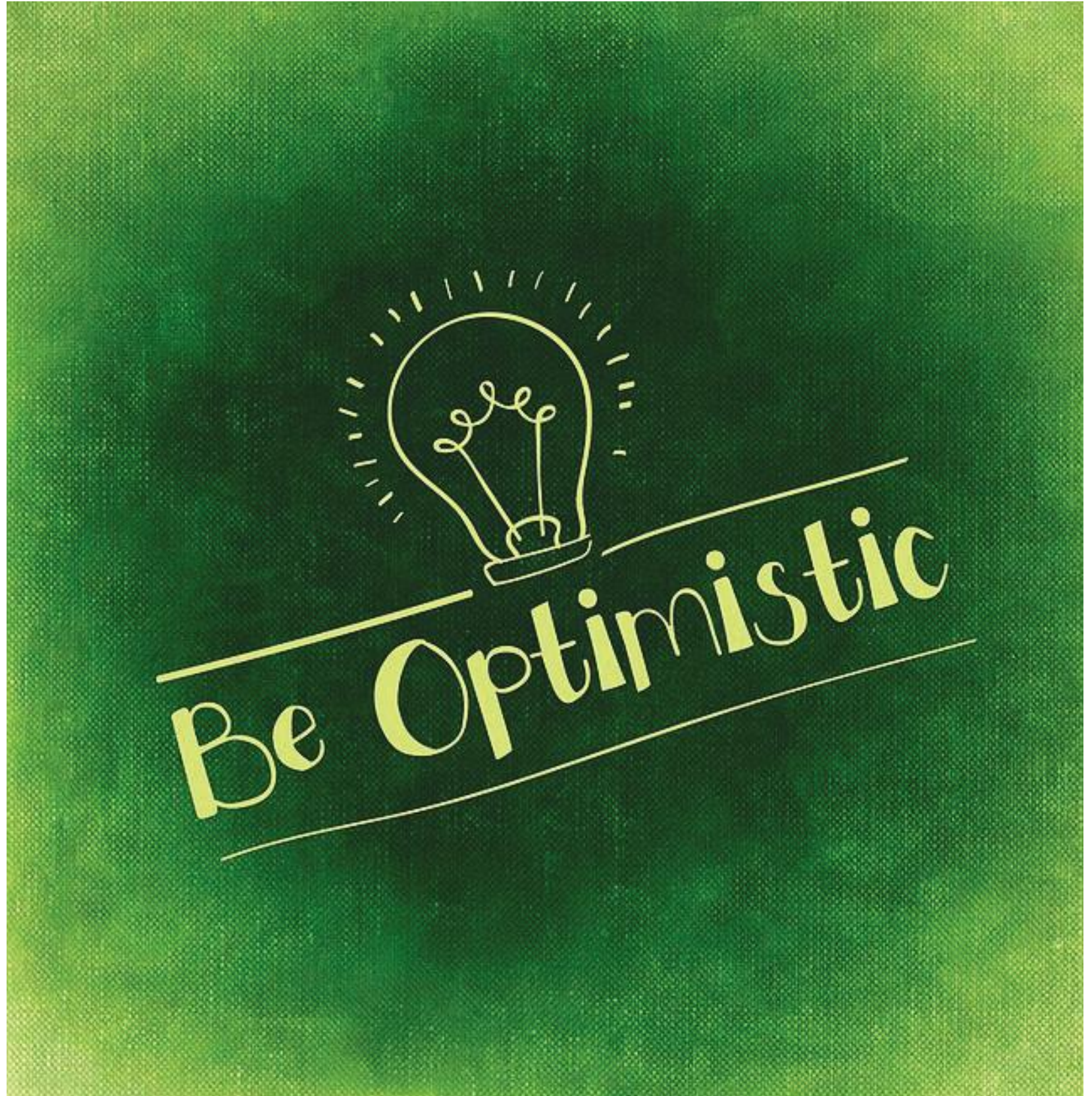
Motivation

Choose To Be Optimistic

By: N. George
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- Those in tertiary education institutions are happy to be training careers of choice. Those at work environment are eager to gain experience so that they become more marketable.
- The experienced are eager to learn emerging issues and incorporate them in their system while others are calm accumulating capital so that they can start their own enterprises.
- The married are happy talking about how raising children requires a lot of care but once the kids come of age one enjoys relief. They see children as joy to the family hence do not mind the number of kids they bear provided they have financial muscles.



I am an optimist. I choose to be. There is a lot of darkness in our world, there is a lot of pain and you can choose to see that or you can choose to see the joy. If you try to respond positively to the world, you will spend your time better.
Tom Hiddleston.

Touring different parts of the world you will find them occupied by the people, animals and plants. All of them could be at the same location or either of them at a certain location but there is no place that is unoccupied.

In the desert cactus and other plants that require minimum amounts of water thrive well throughout the year. To them they are in the best place according to their adaptation. There are animals that survive best in these environments.

There are people who live in these regions. They rear camels, mine gas and oil

and use sand dunes for economic purposes. They also promote desert tourism and sports that are done in sandy areas.

At basic school students are happy to learn new topics day after the other albeit they study many subjects and to them every lesson is magical.

Those in tertiary education institutions are happy to be training careers of choice. Those at work environment are eager to gain experience so that they become more marketable.

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The tall and fat are ever smiling that the rest of people whose physical characteristics are different fear them even when they have not exercised any authority. They are easily invited for job positions requiring immense physical strength like security guards and bouncers. They also claim that residents easily identify them.

The people of short stature do not shy celebrating the confidential life they live as many people do not care much about them so they can easily carry out their duties privately.

During the rainy season some areas are affected by floods. Intelligent residents are happy during this time as they collect water in res-

ervoirs only to use them when it comes to the dry spell hence enjoy adequate water supply throughout the year.

In families rocked with battles some of the partners decide to part. The community may be condemning his resolve. He could be looking for peace of mind, reduced stress and minimized chances of domestic violence more so the physical abuse. Once at peace the productivity level increases and allows both parties time to reflect including healing making them strong enough to enjoy in a health reconciliation process if they see the need to do so.

Some physical work is tiring and not well paying as some shun it due to income factors there are those who do it to remain fit health-wise instead of going for gym that is why you may find an office staff spending

weekend time engaging in woodwork or construction of gabbions or dykes.

Hot tempered persons are difficult to work with especially when provoked as they openly react towards the situation. There are people who are happy with such persons as they are able to detect any hitches in the relationships and take necessary remedial measures. Knowing the likes and dislikes of that other person will help you to know what to stress upon and what to avoid.

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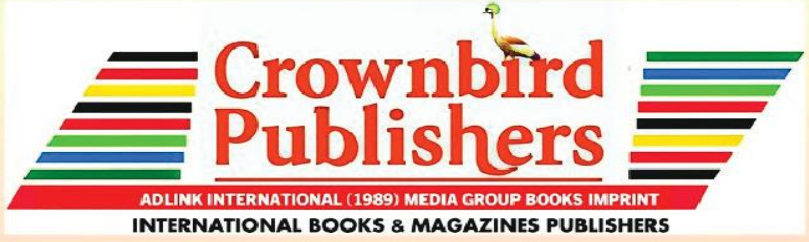
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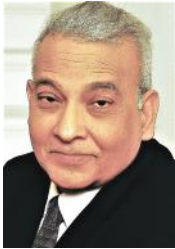
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Diaspora News

Regional language spreads its wings globally: SEMA JAMBO, SAY HELLO - UK AFRICAN DIASPORA CELEBRATES WORLD KISWAHILI DAY IN LONDON



By: Shamlal Puri
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Worth Noting:

• There was plenty of goodwill and warmth, and the organisers had prepared an exciting programme. It ended with the organiser and compere Abdul Sheikh leading the guests to an exciting dance to the tune of the popular hit song Jambo Bwana with drummer Anthony Kalume on the loud drum beat. Guests joined in the dancing on the floor of the River Room at the Lords and ended the evening with a music and drumming climax.

• Jambo Media and Production (JMP) organised the memorable evening. JMP is an off-shoot of the well-known MTM Awards founded by the tireless Bristol-based diaspora community worker veteran Kenyan broadcaster Abdul Sheikh and his son Junior Sheikh.

• The veteran BBC Swahili Service broadcaster Ahmed Rajab gave the keynote speech in which he underscored the growing importance of the Kiswahili language in Africa and beyond the continent's borders.

• His speech, full of important information, was well received.

Mr Manoah Esipisu, Adam Mhagama from the High Commissioner Tanzania; BBC legend Ahmad Rajab, who was the keynote speaker at the event.

Others were Ayesha Omar Rajab, Jean Pierre Uwetonzze Charge d'Affaires Burundi, Minister Patrick Mwakalobo, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Tanzania High Commission. Dr M Salim EAE, Mrs Christine Nunn, Mumtaz Kassam, Pradeep Bhardwaj, Hafiz Zaheer Shabir, Hafiz Zaheer Shabir, Ahmed Said Hansdot, Nalin Parmar, Gyan Gurung, President Nepalese Association Wiltshire, Salim Kikeke BBC popular broadcaster and Zainab Aziz from Radio Deutsche Welle.

There was an attractive programme of music and dance with performers, including Di Namite, a Tanzanian diasporan living in Italy who rendered Miriam Makeba's the world-acclaimed Swahili song Malaika.

The famous Taarab singer, Nasri Mohammed Abdullah 'Brother Nassir' from Mombasa, Kenya, made history when he gave a beautiful rendering of the mix of a Bollywood song and music intermingled with Kiswahili lyrics. It was well received and was the first ever Taraab song to be sung in the British parliament building.

Others who added their talents were Kuklee Ali, Ugandan-born Rnb soul singer and Drummer Anthony Kalume.

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scored the growing importance of the Kiswahili language in Africa and beyond the continent's borders.

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The event was hosted at the historic House of Lords by the Baron Lord Paul Boateng of Akyem and Wembley.

Baron Boateng is a Ghanaian diasporan, who was born in London and brought up in Ghana.

He is a civil rights lawyer, politician and diplomat.

He was Britain's first Black Cabinet Minister in 1997 when he was appointed Minister for Social Services and Mental Health and later Minister for the Police.

He returned to Ghana as the British High Commissioner and was later posted as the High Commissioner to South Africa.

He was an MP representing Brent South in the 1980s, an area in northwest London with an extensive diaspora community. He had succeeded Laurie Pavitt in that constituency.

Kiswahili is a Bantu language with a vibrant vocabulary borrowed from other languages - mainly Arabic, Portuguese, Urdu and Hindi.

It is the national language of Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, and Comoros. It has been around for centuries and is spoken by over 200 million people in the region and now beyond its borders.

Swahili speakers are called Waswahili. They have a vibrant and highly developed culture, dance and music.

Kiswahili, or Swahili, as it is widely known, has rich literature and literary legends, including those known for their oral tradition folklore. The noted Swahili literature names are Shaban bin Robert, Mohamed Said Abdulla, Ali Mazrui, Hamisi Akida, and Katama Mkangi, all late. Modern-day Swahili writers include the 2021 Nobel Prize winner for Literature, UK-based Tanzanian author Abdulrazak Gurnah whose book Peponi translated by Dr Ida Hadjivayannis is read widely.

Others are Christopher Mwishinga, Ebrahim Hussein, Fadhy Mtanga, Farouk Topan, Abdulatif Abdalla, Adam Shafi Adam, Said



Happy moments for these guests at the House of Lords. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



The veteran BBC Kiswahili service broadcaster Ahmed Rajab delivers his keynote speech at the House of Lords. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI

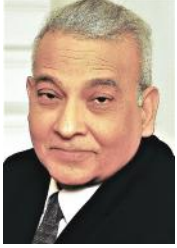


Musical moments and drum beats... Event organiser Kenyan broadcasting legend Abdul Sheikh sings Jambo Bwana followed by the chorus of guests while drummer Anthony Kalume beats the drum. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI.

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Diaspora News

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Contd from Page 10

Worth Noting:

- Kiswahili language is one of the official languages of the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC). It is, therefore, an indispensable tool in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and facilitating regional integration, particularly in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA).

- Even though Kiswahili has been there for centuries, the world recognised it as an international language only in 2021 at the Session of the General Assembly Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Paris.

- UNESCO proclaimed the 7th of July of each year as the World Kiswahili Language Day following the endorsement by the Executive Committee at the 212th session.

- The date selected to mark World Kiswahili Day, 7th July, is significant to Tanzania.

Khamis, Mohamed Suleiman Mohamed, Kyalo Wambi Wamitilla, Said Ahmad Mohamed, Kyalo Wadi Wamitilla and Haji Gora Haji among many others. Swahili is among the three official languages of the East African Community, the economic grouping of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the other two being English and French.

In recent years, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and South Sudan have joined this common market grouping.

While Swahili speakers are concentrated in the East African region, it is also the lingua franca of the people living along the borders of countries in the African Great Lakes Region which takes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, southern Somalia, and Zambia.

The influence of Swahili is also strong in this part of Africa and is one of the working languages of continent-wide.

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The date selected to mark World Kiswahili Day, 7th July, is significant to Tanzania.

This is the day the country marks Saba Saba Day (meaning the 7th of the 7th month) because of its political significance.

This was the day in 1954 that Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) under the late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere (himself an

author of Swahili works), the first President of Tanzania, adopted Kiswahili as a unifying language for independence struggles, to be proclaimed a World Kiswahili Language Day at the United Nations.

Indeed, the first President and Father of the Nation of Kenya, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, also used the Kiswahili language through the popular "Harambee" slogan in mobilising the people of Kenya in the struggle against colonialism.

Very little is known about the origin of the word Harambee. Historians say Mzee Kenyatta was inspired by this word from the railway workers recruited from India were building the Kenya railways when that country was under the British rule.

When they lifted the heavy rail tracks, they said: "Har Har Ambe" (invoking the Hindu Goddess Ambe). The joint call from these workers was to pull together in an atmosphere of pulling together.

When he devised the slogan Harambee (Har Har Ambe), it was accepted in the Kiswahili dictionary.

In addition, on 7th July 2000, the East African Community (EAC) was re-established to rekindle the spirit of cooperation and integration among the East African people of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, where the Kiswahili language is widely spoken. Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan later joined the EAC and are now members.

The 39th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 2019, approved Kiswahili as the fourth SADC official working language in recognition of its contribution to peace-building and liberation struggles of Southern Africa and Africa in general. The proposal put to the 2021 UNESCO summit delegates at the conference explained the grounds for their plan to honour Kiswahili.

"Language is not merely a tool for communication, but the bearer of a whole nexus of cultural expressions and conveys identity, values and visions of the world. It is a vessel which contains cultural diversity and dialogue

among civilisations. It is a bridge that enables closer relations between societies, a richer diversity of forms of expression and interaction, and the exchange of support and empowerment."

The delegates were told, "Kiswahili is one of the most widely used languages of the African family and the most widely spoken in sub-Saharan Africa. It is among the world's ten most widely spoken languages, with over 200 million speakers."

"It is one of the lingua franca in many countries within East, Central and Southern Africa and the Middle East, particularly Oman, which once ruled Zanzibar. It is also taught across major universities and colleges globally.

"In the 1950s, the United Nations established the Kiswahili language unit of United Nations Radio, and today Kiswahili is the only African language within the Directorate of the Global Communications at the United Nations," the delegates were told.

London is famous for its BBC Kiswahili service. It was launched on 27th June 1957. It has 24.9 million listeners, mainly in Africa. It recently celebrated its 65th anniversary, an impressive milestone.

The international recognition to Kiswahili was based in the spirit multilingualism. "Multilingualism, a core value of the United Nations, is an essential factor in harmonious communication between peoples, as it promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, tolerance and dialogue. "The United Nations General Assembly, through its resolution 71/328 of 11th September 2017, on multilingualism, welcomed the



History was made at the House of Lords when Kenyan taarab singer Brother Nassir rendered the first song in the British Parliament. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



Two media veterans, Kenya High Commissioner to the UK Mannoah Espisu and Kenyan broadcaster Abdullatif Abdallah were among the prominent guests. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



The day history was made in Paris when in 2021 when UNESCO adopted Kiswahili as an international language. Photo Courtesy UNESCO

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Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha announces retirement from politics

CNN

Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will not seek re-election and will retire from politics, his party said Tuesday.

The announcement came two days before Thailand's parliament was set to vote for a new prime minister following a May election that saw Thais overwhelmingly reject military-backed rule.

Prayut, 69, has ruled Thailand since 2014, when as army chief, he seized power in a coup and declared himself prime minister.

In 2019, his party's coalition won the most seats in parliament and he was elected leader with the backing of the senate.

Thai opposition parties swept the board in May's nationwide election as voters delivered a powerful rebuke of the military-backed establishment that has ruled since the coup, capping years of rising anger over how conservative cliques have governed the kingdom.

The progressive Move Forward Party, which gained a huge following among young Thais for its reformist platform, won the most seats and the largest share of the popular vote. Pheu Thai, the main opposition party that has been a populist force in Thailand for 20 years, came second.

Prayut was not expected to gain enough support in the lower house to win another term as premier, as his party only won 36 seats in the May election – though the final outcome still remains uncertain.

Prayut will remain as prime minister until the new government is formed. The former general's rule as a military coup leader turned prime minister has been marred by growing authoritarianism and widening inequality.

In 2020, young people across the country took to the streets and called for Prayut's resignation.

The mass protests stemmed from failed promises to restore democracy, and what activists say is a repression of civil rights and freedoms.

His government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and economy, nepotism and lack of transparency and accountability, also amplified calls for Prayut to step down.

Thitinan Pongsudhirak, political scientist and director of the Institute of Security and International Studies at Chulalongkorn University, said Prayut's retirement "represents the defeat of the military regime" and could be seen as a "boost to pro-democracy supporters."

"To many Thais, Prayut's departure from politics is overdue. He seized power in May 2014, ran a lackluster



Prayut Chan-O-Cha will remain as prime minister until the new government is formed. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

military government for five years and another rickety elected government since 2019 thanks to a military-arranged constitution," Thiti-

nan said.

"Thailand has seen signs of economic stagnation, political decay and its lowest international standing ever."

It could potentially help Move Forward's leader Pita Limjaroenrat and his chances to form a post-election government, Thitinan added.

China

Chinese hackers accessed government emails, Microsoft says

By Reuters

Chinese state-linked hackers have secretly accessed email accounts at around 25 organisations including government agencies in a sweeping cyberespionage campaign, Microsoft said on Wednesday.

In an interview with ABC television, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States had detected a breach of federal government accounts "fairly rapidly" and had managed to prevent further breaches.

The hacking group, which Microsoft dubbed Storm-0558, forged digital authentication tokens to access web-mail accounts running on the firm's Outlook service, Microsoft said in a statement on its website.

The activity began in May.

"As with any observed nation-state actor activity, Microsoft has contacted all targeted or compromised organizations directly via their tenant admins and provided them with important information to help them investigate and respond," the statement added.

Microsoft did not say which organ-

isations or governments had been affected, but added that the hacking group involved primarily targets entities in Western Europe.

White House National Security Council spokesman Adam Hodge said an intrusion in Microsoft's cloud security had "affected unclassified systems", without elaborating.

"Officials immediately contacted Microsoft to find the source and vulnerability in their cloud service," he added.

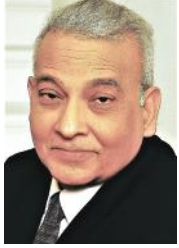
China's embassy in London did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. Beijing routinely denies involvement in hacking.



U.S. and Chinese flags are seen through broken glass in this illustration taken, January 30, 2023. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/ Illustration/File Photo

Diaspora News

Regional language spreads its wings globally: SEMA JAMBO, SAY HELLO - UK AFRICAN DIASPORA CELEBRATES WORLD KISWAHILI DAY IN LONDON



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

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implementation of a day dedicated to each of its official languages to inform and raise awareness of their history, culture and use, and encouraged the Secretary-General and institutions such as UNESCO to consider extending this important initiative to other non-official languages spoken throughout the world. “The significance of Kiswahili in Africa and globally, where the diaspora is settled, cannot be lost. UNESCO’s decision has added a new feather to a language loved by those who understand and speak it.

The world community realised the importance of the role of the Kiswahili language in promoting cultural diversity, creating awareness and fostering dialogue among civilisations. It is also a language worth learning. For example, in China, there are special training schools where Swahili is taught to Chinese expatriates before they arrive in Tanzania to take up posts. When the Chinese built the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA), some Chinese workers and supervisors spoke Swahili fluently. Many East Africans are surprised, but in the background, the Chinese assimilated with the Swahili language.

Once travelling from Dubai to Nairobi, I sat in economy class with a plane load of Chinese passengers heading to take jobs in Tanzania. They spoke fluent Swahili, almost like locals.

I am sure this would have left locals wondering, especially if they had come to Tanzania for the first time.



Old is gold... Bush House was the Swahili service launched in 1957. . Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



Dressed in their best, these guests enjoy memorable moments at the party. . Photo © SHAMLAL PURI.



Mini United Nations...BBC Swahili Service broadcasters, in the foreground, at the Bush House canteen with other language broadcasters and technicians. Photo BBC Archives



Recording for posterity, many guests captured these golden moments of history. at the House of Lords. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



Listening attentively to the keynote speech by Ahmed Rajab. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



One for memory lane.... Group photo of guests at the House of Lords. Photo Courtesy Junior Sheikh



Swahili literature giants... Nobel laureate Prof. Abdulrazak Gurnah, right, and Dr Ida Hadjivayanis launch their masterpiece PEPONI. Photo SOAS

Worth Noting:

• “Language is not merely a tool for communication, but the bearer of a whole nexus of cultural expressions and conveys identity, values and visions of the world. It is a vessel which contains cultural diversity and dialogue among civilisations. It is a bridge that enables closer relations between societies, a richer diversity of forms of expression and interaction, and the exchange of support and empowerment.”

• The delegates were told, “Kiswahili is one of the most widely used languages of the African family and the most widely spoken in sub-Saharan Africa. It is among the world’s ten most widely spoken languages, with over 200 million speakers.”

• “It is one of the lingua franca in many countries within East, Central and Southern Africa and the Middle East, particularly Oman, which once ruled Zanzibar. It is also taught across major universities and colleges globally.

North Korea fires intercontinental ballistic missile into waters near Japan after threatening US

By: CNN

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Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- It also appears timed to coincide with the NATO summit in Lithuania, where leaders from South Korea, Japan and the US are meeting to discuss security issues – including the threat posed by North Korea.
- The latest missile launch, the country's first in three months, flew a distance of 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) and at an altitude of over 6,000 kilometers, Japan's Defense Ministry said.
- Flight times give an indication of a missile's range.
- North Korea tests most of its missiles on a highly lofted trajectory so they splash down in nearby waters, rather than a flatter trajectory as would be used in an actual attack.
- Japan's Coast Guard said earlier the missile was launched at 9:59 a.m. local time and fell into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, at 11:15 a.m., citing the Ministry of Defense.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

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Some experts say North Korea likely tested its developmental, road-mobile Hwasong-18 ICBM, a type of solid-fuel weapon that is harder to detect and intercept than the North's other liquid-fuel ICBMs.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un previously called

the Hwasong-18 his most powerful nuclear weapon – though there is no indication the missile can successfully deliver a nuclear payload.

“North Korea's launch seems to be its second test of the Hwasong-18 ICBM which was first fired on April 13. North Korea seems to be continuously advancing the missile technology based on the first test launch result,” said Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol held an emergency National Security Council meeting in Lithuania on Wednesday morning in response to the missile launch, Yoon's press office said in a statement.

Yoon is in Vilnius to attend the NATO summit.

The South Korean leader said that he would call for “strong international solidarity” at the NATO summit in response to North Korea's launch, according to his office.

US condemns ‘brazen’ test Washington condemned North Korea's missile test, with US National Security Council spokesperson

Adam Hodge calling it “a brazen violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and needlessly raises tensions and risks destabilizing the security situation in the region.”

Hodge called on all countries to condemn the violation and call on North Korea to “come to the table for serious negotiations.”

“The door has not closed on diplomacy, but Pyongyang must immediately cease its destabilizing actions and instead choose diplomatic engagement. The United States will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and Republic of Korea and Japanese allies.”

A communique from the NATO meeting on Tuesday urged North Korea to abandon its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs.

“We call on (North Korea) to accept the repeated offers of dialogue put forward by all parties concerned, including Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea,” the communique said.

But North Korea has shown no signs that it is willing to engage in negotiations with Washington or Seoul.

Wednesday's ICBM test follows threats from Kim Jong, a senior North Korean official and sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who accused a US spy plane of entering the North's exclusive economic zone at least eight times on Monday. “In case of repeated illegal intrusion, the US forces will experience a very critical flight,” Kim warned in a statement Tuesday from North Korea's state news agency.

The US and South Korea dismissed the accusations and urged North Korea to stop creating tension with false claims.

Leif-Eric Easley, associate professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, said that Kim's accusations are part of a North Korean pattern of inflating external threats to rally domestic support and justify weapons tests.

“Pyongyang also times its shows of force to disrupt what it perceives as diplomatic coordination against it, in this case, South Korea and Japan's leaders meeting during the NATO summit,” said Easley.

Last month, tens of thousands of North Koreans

marched in anti-US rallies in Pyongyang, marking the 73rd anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

The participants denounced the US as “Destroyer of peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula” and warned of nuclear war, according to state media.

Meanwhile, South Korea, the US and Japan have been holding joint and trilateral military exercises aimed at deterring any North Korean military threat.

Wednesday's launch comes two weeks before North Korea is due to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement, that brought about a cessation of hostilities of the Korean War, and weeks after its failed launch of the first spy satellite in May.

Boxing legend Mayweather attends political rally in Zimbabwe

By Reuters

Former world boxing champion Floyd Mayweather attended a political campaign event in Zimbabwe on Thursday, part of the ruling party's attempts to woo youth voters ahead of a general election next month.

Mayweather was welcomed with song and dance by ZANU PF party supporters in Mabvuku, one of Zimbabwe's oldest townships, on the outskirts of the capital Harare.

One of President Emmerson Mnangagwa's closest allies, gold magnate Scott Sakupwanya, who is looking to reclaim a parliamentary seat from the opposition, said he had invited Mayweather.

"People thought I was lying when I said I would bring Mayweather, but he is here. This shows that what I will promise in this election will come to pass," Sakupwanya told Reuters at the rally.

The 46-year-old American former boxer thrilled the crowd with a public workout, which included punching and jumping rope. He also watched three matches from Zimbabwe's budding boxers.

Some young people attending the rally pledged to vote for Mnangagwa, 80, who is seeking a second term in the Aug. 23 poll.



Chandrayaan, which means "moon vehicle" in Sanskrit, blasted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota in southern Andhra Pradesh state. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

Turkey

Leaders of Turkey and Greece vow to repair ties after year of tension

By Reuters

Greece and Turkey agreed on Wednesday to resume talks and confidence-building measures as they hailed a new "positive climate" in ties after more than a year of tensions between the historic foes.

The two North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have been at odds for decades over a range of issues including where their continental shelves start and end, energy resources, overflights of the Aegean Sea, and ethnically split Cyprus.

Last year, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan halted bilateral talks in a dispute over airspace violations and after accusing Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis of pressuring the United States to block the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey.

Relations improved when Greece became one of the first countries to send rescue workers to help pull survivors from the rubble after a devastating earthquake hit Turkey in February.

Erdogan and Mitsotakis, both recently re-elected, met on the sidelines of a NATO Summit in Vilnius

on Wednesday in their first meeting since March last year.

"It is to the benefit of both countries that the positive climate formed in bilateral relations over recent months has continuity and consistency," the two leaders' offices said in identical but separate statements. "The two sides agreed to build on the positive momentum and activate multiple channels of communication between the two countries in the coming period," they said, adding that the two leaders look forward to "more frequent contact at all levels."

They also agreed that the next meeting of a High-Level Cooperation Council, a mechanism the two countries set up in 2010 for their rapprochement, will be held in the northern Greek city of Thessalonki in the autumn.

"We are cautiously optimistic we can turn a new page," Mitsotakis told reporters after the summit.



Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis meets with Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan during a NATO leaders summit in Vilnius, Lithuania July 12, 2023. Dimitris Papamitsos/Greek Prime Minister's Office/Handout via REUTERS

Ukraine

Putin has 'already lost' Ukraine war, Biden says



U.S. President Joe Biden.

Worth Noting:

- "Russia cannot ignore the ability of these aircraft to carry nuclear weapons. No amount of assurances will help here," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying by the Russian foreign ministry.
- But Biden played down the latest bout of nuclear rhetoric from Russia.
- "I don't think there's any real prospect... of Putin using nuclear weapons. Not only has the West but China and the rest of the world has said don't go there," he said.
- Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin should meanwhile be careful of poisoning following the mercenary group's failed uprising in Russia, Biden added.
- "God only knows what he's likely to do. We're not even sure where he is and what relationship he has. If I were (him), I'd be careful what I ate. I'd keep my eye on my menu," Biden said in Helsinki.

By AFP

US President Joe Biden said Thursday that Russia's Vladimir Putin has already lost the war in Ukraine, expressing hope that Kyiv's counter-offensive would force Moscow to the negotiating table.

As Russia launched fresh strikes and a new bout of nuclear-sabre rattling, Biden said there was no real prospect of Putin using nuclear weapons and insisted the war would not drag on for years.

Biden also used a visit to Finland, NATO's newest member, to pledge that Ukraine would one day join the alliance, despite NATO leaders failing to give Kyiv a timeline at a key summit this week.

"Putin's already lost the war. Putin has a real problem," Biden told a press conference with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto. "There is no possibility of him winning the war in Ukraine."

NATO leaders had dashed Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky's hopes for

a clear timeline to join the military alliance, saying at this week's summit in Vilnius that they would offer an invite only when "conditions are met".

But while Biden said no country could become a NATO member while it was at war -- with Ukraine joining now meaning a "third world war" -- he vowed Kyiv would one day join the club. "It's not about whether or not they should or shouldn't join. It's about when they can join, and they will join NATO," Biden said.

- 'Don't go there' -

Moscow's riposte to the NATO summit came in the form of its latest aerial assault on Ukraine, injuring four people, while Kyiv said it had destroyed 20 Russian attack drones and two cruise missiles.

In a sign of its anger at Western backing for Kyiv, Moscow said it would regard F-16 fighter jets sent to Ukraine as a "nuclear" threat because of their capacity to carry atomic bombs.

"Russia cannot ignore the ability of these aircraft to carry nuclear weapons. No amount of assurances will help here," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying by the Russian foreign ministry.

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"I don't think there's any real prospect... of Putin using nuclear weapons. Not only has the West but China and the rest of the world has said don't go there," he said.

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"God only knows what he's likely to do. We're not even sure where he is and what relationship he has. If I were (him), I'd be careful what I ate. I'd keep my eye on my menu," Biden said in Helsinki.

Biden also said he was "serious" on the prospect of a prisoner exchange for jailed Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich to get

him home from Russia.

- 'Unwavering' -

The US president was holding talks in the Finnish capital after G7 powers vowed to back Ukraine for as long as it takes to beat Russia.

Finland, which shares a 1,300 kilometre (800-mile) border with Russia, ended its historic military non-alignment and joined NATO following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Biden and the leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden pledged "unwavering" support for Ukraine in a joint statement after the talks.

They also discussed climate, which Biden called the "only existential threat humanity faces".

Biden is the first US president to visit Helsinki since Donald Trump's summit five years ago with Putin, and his press conference took place in the same hall.

He pledged that the United States would remain a member of NATO, after being asked about what would

happen if Trump, who mooted pulling out of the alliance, is re-elected next year.

But Biden's stress on the strength and symbolism of NATO contrasted with events at the NATO summit, when Zelensky slammed the "absurd" decision not to fast-track Ukraine's membership.

Instead, G7 nations later offered Ukraine a package of long-term security commitments, involving bilateral deals between Kyiv and the world's richest nations.

Zelensky insisted the promises amounted to a "significant security victory" but did not disguise the fact that he would have preferred a timetable for Ukraine.

In Kyiv, recently-supplied Western weapon systems were insufficient to cover the whole country, the spokesman for Ukraine's air forces Yuriy Ignat said after the overnight strikes.

"We do not have means to destroy ballistic missiles," Ignat told national television on Thursday morning.

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India

India launches historic Chandrayaan-3 mission to land spacecraft on the moon

By: Diaspora Times Team
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Chandrayaan, which means “moon vehicle” in Sanskrit, blasted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota in southern Andhra Pradesh state. PHOTO/ COURTESY: CNN

Worth Noting:

- Its first lunar probe, the Chandrayaan-1, orbited the moon and was then deliberately crash-landed onto the lunar surface in 2008.
- Developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Chandrayaan-3 is comprised of a lander, propulsion module and rover.
- Its aim is to safely land on the lunar surface, collect data and conduct a series of scientific experiments to learn more about the moon's composition.
- Only three other countries have achieved the complicated feat of soft-landing a spacecraft on the moon's surface – the United States, Russia and China.
- Indian engineers have been working on the launch for years. They are aiming to land Chandrayaan-3 near the challenging terrain of the moon's unexplored South Pole.

CNN

India is bidding to become only the fourth country to execute a controlled landing on the moon with the successful launch Friday of its Chandrayaan-3 mission. Chandrayaan, which means “moon vehicle” in Sanskrit, blasted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota in southern Andhra Pradesh state at just after 2:30 p.m. local time (5 a.m. ET). Crowds gathered at the space center to watch the history-making launch and more than 1 million people tuned in to watch on YouTube. The Indian Space Research Organization confirmed on Twitter later Friday that Chandrayaan-3 is in “precise orbit” and has “begun its journey to the moon.” It added that the health of the spacecraft is “normal.” In response, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: “Chandrayaan-3 scripts a new chapter in India's space odyssey. It soars high, elevating the dreams and ambitions of a every Indian. This momentous achievement is a testament to our scientists' relentless dedication. I salute their spirit and ingenuity!” The craft is expected to land on the moon on August 23. It's India's second attempt at

a soft landing, after its previous effort with the Chandrayaan-2 in 2019 failed. Its first lunar probe, the Chandrayaan-1, orbited the moon and was then deliberately crash-landed onto the lunar surface in 2008. Developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Chandrayaan-3 is comprised of a lander, propulsion module and rover. Its aim is to safely land on the lunar surface, collect data and conduct a series of scientific experiments to learn more about the moon's composition. Only three other countries have achieved the complicated feat of soft-landing a spacecraft on the moon's surface – the United States, Russia and China. Indian engineers have been working on the launch for years. They are aiming to land Chandrayaan-3 near the challenging terrain of the moon's unexplored South Pole. India's maiden lunar mission, Chandrayaan-1, discovered water molecules on the moon's surface. Eleven years later, the Chandrayaan-2 successfully entered lunar orbit but its rover crash-landed on the moon's surface. It too was supposed to explore the moon's South Pole. At the time, Indian Prime

Minister Narendra Modi hailed the engineers behind the mission despite the failure, promising to keep working on India's space program and ambitions. Just before Friday's launch, Modi said the day “will always be etched in golden letters as far as India's space sector is concerned.” “This remarkable mission will carry the hopes and dreams of our nation,” he said in a Twitter post. India has since spent about \$75 million on its Chandrayaan-3 mission. Modi said the rocket will cover more than 300,000 kilometers (186,411 miles) and reach the moon in the “coming weeks.”

Decades in the making

India's space program dates back more than six decades, to when it was a newly independent republic and a deeply poor country reeling from a bloody partition. When it launched its first rocket into space in 1963, the country was no match for the ambitions of the US and the former Soviet Union, which were way ahead in the space race. Now, India is the world's most populous nation and its fifth largest economy. It boasts a burgeoning young population and is home to a growing hub of innovation

and technology. And India's space ambitions have been playing catch up under Modi. For the leader, who swept to power in 2014 on a ticket of nationalism and future greatness, India's space program is a symbol of the country's rising prominence on the global stage. In 2014, India became the first Asian nation to reach Mars, when it put the Mangalyaan probe into orbit around the Red Planet, for \$74 million – less than the \$100 million Hollywood spent making space thriller “Gravity.” Three years later, India launched a record 104 satellites in one mission. In 2019, Modi announced in a rare televised address that India had shot down one of its own satellites, in what it claimed was an anti-satellite test, making it one of only four countries to do so. That same year ISRO's former chairman Kailasavardivoo Sivan said India was planning to set up an independent space station by 2030. Currently, the only space stations available for expedition crews are the International Space Station (a joint project between several countries) and China's Tiangong Space Station. The rapid development and innovation has made space

tech one of India's hottest sectors for investors – and world leaders appear to have taken notice. Last month, when Modi met US President Joe Biden in Washington on a state visit, the White House said both leaders sought more collaboration in the space economy. And India's space ambitions do not stop at the moon or Mars. ISRO has also proposed sending an orbiter to Venus.

Pastor Dorcas visits convicts at Kiambu GK Prison

Pastor Dorcas Rigathi Wednesday visited convicts and those remanded at the Kiambu GK Prison and shared a meal with them.

In the spirit of leaving no one behind, Pastor Dorcas visited the male prison, which is among 87 others in the country that are correctional facilities for men. Kenya has a total of 134 prisons.

"Every mother wants to see their son get the best in life. And every mother cries for her sons," she told the inmates, in an effort to show the inmates the need to reform and change their lives.

She sympathized with their situation, saying, "It is sad to see the future going into the grave. You are the economic drivers of this nation, and we must put an end to this satanic agenda that is destroying your destiny."

She also acknowledged the lack of jobs but said that through the boy child program, she envisioned the skilling of the beneficiaries through TVETs and college training.

The boy child program under the office of the spouse of the Deputy President has rehabilitated 65 men from Mathira Constituency, and 24 from other parts of Kenya.

The target by the end of this year is to rehabilitate 12,000 of those addicted

to different substances through inpatient and outpatient facilities.

Pastor Dorcas, who embraces feeding programs as a way of reaching out and evangelizing, helped serve the inmates with a meal of chapati, rice, stew, vegetables, ugali, and soft drinks.

Deputy Commissioner General Florence Omundi also called on the inmates, once free, to make a firm resolve never to be imprisoned again.

"We are here to do the right that we did not do out there, and reconnect with our destiny," she said.

Also present were County Police Commander Kioi Muchangi, Officer in Charge of Kiambu Prison Christine Mutisya, Kiambu Town MP Machua Waithaka, Nacada Director Rev. Fredrick Ngugi, Chaplains Timothy Maina (Administration Police), Father John (Kenya Police), and Rev. James Kiiru (Kenya Prison).

MP Machua told the inmates to take their imprisonment as a blessing in disguise and take time to reflect and rebuild their lives.

He also said that the constituency had 11 acres of land, which would be used to develop a recovery and rehabilitation centre to rescue the boys and men lost in alcohol, drug, and substance abuse.



Ksh 380M Malaria research center launched in Thika

A Ksh 380 million research center for research on malaria that aims to eradicate the disease has been launched in Thika Kiambu County. Funded by the Japanese government the project will be implemented by Mount Kenya University (MKU) in collaboration with Osaka City University, and the Homa Bay County Government.

The project involves the establishment of a cutting-edge molecular and immunology laboratory at MKU Thika campus in Kiambu County and a research station in Homa Bay.

It is also being supported by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and is touted to achieve significant milestones in the fight against malaria.

Speaking during the launch at the MKU main Thika campus, Japanese Ambassador to Kenya Ken Okaniwa said it is regrettable that malaria still remains a top killer disease on the African continent and whose fight continues to drain huge resources.

He added that one of the key accomplishments of the state-of-the-art facility is to provide advanced research and diagnostics for malaria.

The University Pro-Chancellor Dr Vincent Gaiho the Center for Malaria Elimination provides an opportunity for investors to develop medicine and vaccines by working with the research scientists.



According to Dr Njihia Gitaka the lead researcher said the center among others will be an incubation for innovative, cutting-edge research while also being a catalyst for collaboration, patents, interdisciplinary learning, and commercialization of human health-related services and products.

MKU Vice-Chancellor Prof Deogratius Jaganyi says by generating robust data on best practices in malaria control and elimination, the institution has actively participated

in policy discussions with national and county ministries of health. He noted that beyond academic achievements, the project has played a pivotal role in policy development and evidence-based decision-making.

The researchers noted that the laboratory at Thika campus will continue to be a vital resource for capacity building and cutting-edge research.

Palestinian

Palestinian leader calls on world to ‘protect us,’ and his people respond with bitter laughter



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas addresses the crowd during his visit to Jenin Refugee Camp, in the West Bank on July 12, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

Worth Noting:

- **Abbas's speech to the United Nations on May 15 commemorating the displacement of Palestinians at the founding of Israel, known in Arabic as the Nakba, or catastrophe, triggered a wave of cynical and darkly comic social media memes and videos.**
- **Abbas called on the international community to provide protection for the Palestinian people. In an emotional plea, he said: "We are getting beaten every day, we scream every day. People of the world, protect us! Aren't we human beings? Even animals should be protected. If you have an animal, won't you protect it? Protect us..."**

By CNN

President Mahmoud Abbas, the 87-year-old veteran who has led the Palestinian Authority for nearly two decades, is trending on Palestinian social media – but not in the way he might like. When he made a rare flying visit to Jenin this week, eight days after the largest Israeli incursion into the city's refugee camp in decades, many comments in the Facebook live feed of Palestine TV were harsh. "Most of those cheering are his security forces. Where are the injured people?" one viewer asked. "Good morning, you can wait for a week more, no harm," another said, in reference to the time that had passed between the Israeli pullout and Abbas's arrival. "Those helicopters were rented," another said of the two Jordanian aircraft that brought the leader and his entourage to Jenin. The Facebook feed re-

corded more laughing emojis in response to viewer comments than hearts during the visit. And that's not the worst of it. Abbas's speech to the United Nations on May 15 commemorating the displacement of Palestinians at the founding of Israel, known in Arabic as the Nakba, or catastrophe, triggered a wave of cynical and darkly comic social media memes and videos. Abbas called on the international community to provide protection for the Palestinian people. In an emotional plea, he said: "We are getting beaten every day, we scream every day. People of the world, protect us! Aren't we human beings? Even animals should be protected. If you have an animal, won't you protect it? Protect us..." His words struck a chord with many Palestinians – a deeply negative one. For some, Abbas's comparison of their suffering to that of animals was deeply insulting, while

for others, it was seen as darkly comic. His phrase "Protect us" – "Ehmouna" in Arabic – quickly became a trending topic on social media. Videos began circulating mocking Abbas's words. In one, a child is asked by his father what Abbas said at the UN. The boy, wriggling in the backseat of a car, childishly says "Ehmouna, ehmoura for Allah's sake" as other people in the car laugh. A harsher video features an elderly woman cursing Abbas sarcastically and viciously, repeatedly saying "Ehmouna." She demands that he use his police and security forces to provide protection for his people instead of making a desperate plea to the international community. Meanwhile, one of the simplest but funniest videos on TikTok, just features a man lip syncing the sound of Abbas saying "Ehmouna," exaggerating his expressions just enough to make the mockery plain.

Ultimately, these viral moments shed light on the frustrations and aspirations of the Palestinian people, caught between the conflict with Israel on the one hand and their own unpopular leadership on the other. The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah found last September that 26% of respondents were satisfied with Abbas as president, while 71% were dissatisfied; 74% demanded that he resign. The Center interviewed 1,270 adults face to face September 13-17, 2022, and the poll had a margin of error of three points. The Palestinian Authority has not held presidential elections since May 2006 – repeatedly postponing votes – leaving the Palestinian people with few ways other than social media to make their voices heard. "Protect us" was not the first time Palestinians have picked up on a hashtag related to Abbas. Another trend emerged around his calls for

peaceful resistance, which many Palestinians view as disconnected from the harsh realities of increasing Israeli settler violence and frequent, deadly Israeli military incursions in the occupied West Bank. Two Palestinians sarcastically attempt to "act as President Abbas requested" in one video. They pretend to protest against an Israeli military base built on their land, gently urging: "Go away and leave us alone." Laughing, they conclude: "They'll be gone by noon."



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PETRICHOR

By: Jumanazar Yuldash
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Jumanazar Yuldash

Worth Noting:

The situation was really uncomfortable for the husband and even it cannot be described with the help of words unless the reader have been in a such situation. Inclining his head, he was completely dumbfounded by the last utterance. From his condition it was possible to know that he was imagining his life alone. Finally, he managed to say a word:

‘Do not repeat this anymore...’

Apparently, woman suddenly realized that she started talking about unhappiness, therefore she did all her best to explain what was the real meaning of her words.

‘I assume that you misunderstood me. I do not choose passing away, contrarily, I want to live, only to live happily with you, my lover, and I can imagine my future in the dim: you and I shall hand-in-hand go to forest after the rain to collect mushrooms, with a wide smile in our faces.’

‘I beg you, please never leave me alone...’

He unintentionally whispered as he held his wife’s hands both firmly and in a kindly way, and he rubbed them on his eyes. Having heard this crying-like exclamation the patient who used to be groaning a minute before regained consciousness. She caressed hair of her husband who was kindly kissing and rubbing her hand on his forehead.

‘Oh how can I quit you, my madman?’

The man who went into ecstasy of seeing his wife’s consciousness automatically kissed her forehead.

‘Just recently doctor was here. He said that you would not wake up in a short time. However, thanks to my God, my prayers seem to be reached to him.’

A weak smile appeared on the pale face of woman. Afterwards for some reason she sighed and army of thoughts conquered her mind.

‘You... never ask for my recovery’ she said utilizing all strength she possessed.

‘Why you are uttering these words?’ the man shocked.

‘Because... I do not know why but for some reason God does not gave us what we asked for but the very opposite one. For instance, now you absolutely want me to live but maybe until tomorrow I will have been perished and fairies will be dancing around my spirit in

the heavens.’

‘What should I do then? See, you are in a bad situation and I simply cannot keep calm without paying attention. At least I must pray for your sake.’

‘You would better... ask for my death.’

The situation was really uncomfortable for the husband and even it cannot be described with the help of words unless the reader have been in a such situation. Inclining his head, he was completely dumbfounded by the last utterance.

From his condition it was possible to know that he was imagining his life alone. Finally, he managed to say a word:

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‘I assume that you misunderstood me. I do not choose passing away, contrarily, I want to live, only to live happily with you, my lover, and I can imagine my future in the dim: you and I shall hand-in-hand go to forest after the rain to collect mushrooms, with a wide smile in our faces. Yes, I can see the very scene! Yes! A light, tired but happy smile appeared on her pale white face which had been revived a bit but still showing traces of illness. With the most sudden and hopeful gaze she

stared outside the window. Due to the fact that her place was inconvenient to look outside, she intended to see the view standing up on her feet. Unfortunately, hands of her husband did not let her move.

‘Please, look at the window. Haven’t it rained recently?’

‘It haven’t rained since you are in bed. Why are you asking?’

‘Honestly, I wish it was raining right now and we could go to collect mushrooms together. But I don’t know the reason. Give me a word, please, shall we go to the forest when I recover from illness?’

‘I promise you, darling. We will go as soon as you are well, but please, get over your illness as soon as possible. Your contemporary condition is the most unbelievable pain for me, darling.’

‘Why you are always being pessimistic, as I said you, I will never let you stay in this world alone. It is not my fate. Let us change the theme, I don’t know why but I am really eager to converse with you.’

Now for the first time a couple of loving hearts felt the initial sweetness of ecstatic moments after surviving prolonged days of misfortune and these moments seemed not to come to an end forever. While dreaming about endless delight a man always lets his painful breath out unintentionally; the whole world, especially,

his lovely friends look very gorgeous to his eyes and at that time he will be ready to do anything for his friends. Now the husband was staring at his wife with the same happy and positive gaze that he suddenly realized it was impossible to stop himself from expressing his feelings. ‘A conversation?’ he questioned holding her hands firmly. ‘Darling, if only you had known that not only conversing with you, but deserving your attention also is the biggest joy for me. Oh, if only you had known that, dear!’

He put palm of his woman on his chest as if he was intending to let her listen his heart beats. But woman pulled his hand back with a quick act as if she touched the fireplace and stared at him smiling mildly.

Eyes could not help looking at each other’s deepest sides and lovers smiled at the same time.

‘I know, even I know very well and every morning I thank God that I am not a blind one. Do you know why I do so? Because God had not deprived me to see you.’ ‘Oh darling... We are extremely happy! Have you ever thought whether there are others who are as much contented as we are? If yes, how many of them exists? Very few or so many in quantity?’

‘To my mind, probably there are not any blissful couple except us.’

They both laughed with joy. Husband stared at somewhere so long. Those who had tasted the real happiness and those who had realized what a magic it is usually dwell in the same way: with a smile in their lips, staring at one particular point as if they are obliged to look at that side forever or like a thinker who aimed to reveal all the secrets hidden in that tiny area of room they gaze. In this period of staring, for sure, others’ opinions on happiness seem very interesting to them.

‘For you what is the happiness itself?’ he asked keeping on staring at the same point.

After a while he accidentally recognized what he had said, so he felt somehow embarrassed from his question.

‘You may consider that question as a ridiculous and childish one. But please, do not be shocked, do not be disappointed from me for giving you this kind of weary question. Simply this question came to my mind and I transformed it to my speech. You do not need to answer it.’

‘No, I answer with all my

heart. The only thing surprised me is your embarrassment. Because this question should be asked from everyone. It is the greatest question in this world. I commended it a lot, sorry, now I have to answer to this properly. For me every breathe I take is happiness, my ability to cry, to laugh and to see is the great joy, and in general, my existence is happiness. Everything related to me in this world is delight. Breathing in the fresh air, listening to the song of birds, lying underneath the initial beams of sunlight, watching the flight of beautiful butterflies, smelling lovely perfume of flowers – all things I have mentioned is happiness, I even consider pain and sorrow as a type of joy’. Having finished her speech, woman looked at her partner who was analyzing his thought. At that moment she found herself eligible to repeat this question. ‘So, how would you answer it yourself?’

‘I can only state my answer in short. Your existence and your belonging to me is happiness. Right, I am madly devoted to you, darling. I adore you even though you hate me as you hated the most awful man in the world. Maybe my words seem very simple to you. But I want you to know this: you are second half of me. I cannot be perfect without you.’ Woman broke into laughter unintentionally.

‘You spoke like...’ she said and paused for a while. She understood that continuation of her words would harm her husband’s soul.

‘Like what?’ he asked seriously. His facial expression revealed that he was eager to hear the rest of her speech.

‘You spoke like a fake lover!’ Woman smiled sweetly. Her husband once looked at her and then he aimed his glaze at the window.

‘It is still cloudy...’ he said with a sick voice.

His spouse was still staring at him regretfully. Husband had already realized this, however he went on looking at the window intentionally.

‘Look at me’ said she. And he obeyed. ‘I let you down, I know...’ she held his hands and kissed them. ‘Sorry... Please, forgive me...’

He, as well, replied to his wife by holding her hands.

‘No, I am not upset with you. I never be sad because I am not allowed to be sad’ he smiled to prove his words.

‘Do you know, it was not

PETRICHOR

Contd from Page 22.



Jumanazar Yuldash

Worth Noting:

- “To my mind, probably there are not any blissful couple except us’.
- They both laughed with joy. Husband stared at somewhere so long. Those who had tasted the real happiness and those who had realized what a magic it is usually dwell in the same way: with a smile in their lips, staring at one particular point as if they are obliged to look at that side forever or like a thinker who aimed to reveal all the secrets hidden in that tiny area of room they gaze. In this period of staring, for sure, others’ opinions on happiness seem very interesting to them.
- ‘For you what is the happiness itself?’ he asked keeping on staring at the same point.
- After a while he accidentally recognized what he had said, so he felt somehow embarrassed from his question.

your words, but my own behavior offended me. My attitude and ridiculous sample-like words seemed to you like an artificial one, so it is my own fault, not yourself. I cannot hide waves of feelings I have. I really want to express all the words I possess in my heart. I want to share all the joy and all the sorrow I have with you. Therefore, I reveal you my secrets’.

‘Forgive me for offending your soul, I am so sorry...’
‘No! Please do not say that feel sorry. I am not allowed to be angry with you. It is sin.’ He kept a bit silence. ‘Do you know, God lavished us with a great joy. All we have to do is to deserve this joy and enjoy it. Now imagine, if you carry on quarreling and offending each other without any reason, if we do not stop asking for forgiveness, how God will again bless us? He would be upset from our ungrateful attitude. I am afraid of this... I am afraid of living these happy days no more. I am worried that God might possibly retake what he gave us. If I tell you, I have read a book yesterday. The author of that book was a person who denied the God. A minute, please...’ he quickly stood up and took a book with red cover from the shelf. ‘It consisted of such frustrating things that I shocked while reading. Surely it is written by a murderer of happiness’ he started reading the lines which he highlighted before:

“I cannot spend all my life fearing of Great Creator who supposed to be able to deprive me from happiness I have. I would rather live unhappily or die. God wants us to live in fear. He is an egoist. The best way is to disobey his rules and to pass away” – ‘I cannot read

more. These are words of a wicked person who teaches to quit bright side and leads people to the darkness. Can it be really true that people follow him and accept his thoughts? Isn’t it a whole of malice, it is? How this person, whose words stink the smell of secularism and materialism, can be able to someone’s attitude towards the life. God will never punish those who are not grateful of their happiness. God is the most generous one. He only wants to give people all the best things because whoever in this world want to harm his or her own children? He will forgive all of our sins if we understand and feel sorry for what we have done. He will even forgive this atheist author, if he feels really sorry. The greatest sin is to criticize openhanded God. But why he does not understand this?!’
‘Can you give me that book, please?’ suddenly she said. She took the book handed to her and looked for a while. Flipping through the pages she started to read some pieces of it. The more he read, the more sadness and horror appeared on her face... Having read the last page, she closed the book and whispered something. She passed the book to her husband and turning her head back, said: ‘Let it burn...’

Man gazed at her astonishing, but he did what he ordered: he threw the book away to the fire. It started to burn better. Then he looked back at her. The woman accidentally became apathetic to everything, it was difficult to know exactly where she was looking at or what she was thinking about.

‘What you asked for while whispering?’ he asked. ‘I hope you haven’t asked

for the death of author’ he laughed.

Now, hearing this sudden question she gained her consciousness and glared at him seriously. Man felt embarrassed at his weird and unlucky joke. ‘How can you assume that? How do I dare to ask for someone’s death?’
‘No, I was only joking, sorry.’
‘You said that you were not allowed to be upset from me. This rule not only works for you, but also for me. Therefore, no need to say sorry. I asked... I asked from God to forgive this sinner. I think, we don’t have to hate these kind of people. Contrarily, we must feel sorry for them. How cannot you feel sorry for those who failed to find the right path? They resemble to the yellow autumn leaves. If an evening breeze blows a bit, they abandon their branches. The reason why they sink in the ocean of sins is that they have lack of patience and ambition.’
Painful silence filled the room. They both were sadly thinking about something. At first husband recognized that there was inconvenience and found it very annoying.

‘Why we are keeping silent. See, we are happy people. Sadness does not fit us. Why not we cheer up or remember something. Because we are not this kind of individuals. What is the difference between us and unhappy people if we carry on keeping silence?’

‘You are right. We got even much sadder. But these kind of people...’

‘Okay, please, let’s stop discussing them. Because they are not related to our life in any way. Why not we look back on any of our more delightful times which are worth to remember. There is no need to think about this kind of issues while we have lots of sweet memories, I think. On the other hand, the world is getting much darker and darker day by day. All we have to do is to burn and tear up this darkness conquering the world.’
‘Yes’ she said smiling.

Her husband did all his best to find any worth-to-remember story they had. It did not take a long time. He found what he wanted but it was not a story they both took part in but he was very impatient to tell her something he had had in her mind for long time. Unfortunately, he had no suitable situation to retell it. Now it was the very right time he wanted so he took his wife’s hands in order to let his words out.

‘Actually, I was going to speak about the funniest

moments we had. But now I want to tell you something I was dwelling on for a long period. Do you still remember once we made a trip to mountain? At that time something unknown happened and weather turned bad. So as to find a dry shelter we had climbed up to the shanty on the peak of mountain. A wrinkled old man with grey hair had welcomed us. Even though he was not extremely glad to have guests, he did not seem so sad as well from our visit. He invited us to drop in. He even gave us a cup of tea and to towel to dry ourselves and took his sit in front of fireplace and went on reading a book. While we were sipping tea and conversing with each other he had glanced at us so many times both secretly and openly. When we talked about something interesting, he also had smiled and I think, our conversation was more intriguing than book for him. In order to behave as a polite man, he was pretending himself as if he was not listening to our discussion, however my eyes had recognized it already. For some reason the old man sighed while listening to our nostalgic memories. He put the book and gazed at hearth for a long time. He light of the fire revealed that he was hiding his tear drops on his face. He was whimpering with no sound. (You hadn’t recognized it.) At that time, to be honest, I felt very unusually embarrassed. I felt so sorry for an old man that... I contemplated that my future will duplicate this old man’s fate. Do you believe in seeing one’s future or past on another one’s life? I had seen... Then it ceased to rain. We abandoned his old house expressing our gratitude. I overthought about him. But I had not searched for him until I knew that I had to see him again. I had revisited that are to find him and investigated everywhere we stepped on. Unfortunately, I could find neither him nor his shanty. I don’t know why, but I wanted to tell you this...’ – he stared at somewhere for awhile – ‘I... I love you to death!’ As he was going to cry, put his face into the embrace of his wife, – ‘I... I...’ – he could not help himself stop crying, – ‘Why?... Why?’
Early drops of the tear appeared inside the woman’s eyes.

‘It will never happen... Trust me, dear. Because I have told you...’

Suddenly thunderstorm broke out. Thick black clouds veiled the whole sky. Woman hopefully looked at

the window.

‘Look, my dear, it is raining...’

‘Yeah, it is raining’ he also stared hopefully.

They both glared at window for long, until it stopped raining. Despite they both were in tears they were trying to hide it from each other.

It was raining no more.

‘Can you help me stand up?’ she could not do it by herself so she asked for a help.

She went to the door counting on the shoulders of her helper. While walking she looked at her partner. He was trying to hide his eyes for some reason. His eyes were weeping. She paused for a while, wiped his eyes and smiled with sorrow. Then she took her basket.

‘Shall we go?’ she said happily.

‘Let’s go’ her husband as well said in the same way, forgetting all the pains and tortures of his soul.

Laughing happily, they stepped into the wood spreading dewy petrichor.

2018

Translated from Uzbek into English by Shokhrukh Usmonov

About the author

Jumanazar Yuldash was born in 1997 in the Khiva district, Kharezmi, Uzbekistan. He is an undergraduate student of Philology and Uzbek Language faculty at Urgench State University. His stories were published on the pages of national press. His works were included in several collection such as “Song of the Rivers” (“Jilg alar qo shig i”), “Common hearts” (“Mushtarak dillar”), “Garden of Creativity” (“Ijod gulshani”). He is a participant of the Zaamin seminar (2018). Winner of the creative festival “Spring of Uzbekistan II” (“O zbekiston bahori”) in Khiva in 2019. Author of the collection of short stories named “Petrichor” (“Yomg irdan so ng”).

Russia votes for law to ban gender reassignment surgery, in further crackdown on LGBTQ rights

By CNN

The Russian State Duma, or lower house of parliament, has voted in favor of a new law banning nearly all medical help for transgender people including gender reassignment surgery, in a raft of new anti-LGBTQ laws in Russia.

The bill, which had its third and final reading on Friday, prohibits doctors from conducting gender reassignment surgeries, except in cases related to treating congenital physiological anomalies in children. It also restricts registry offices from amending official documents based on medical certificates of gender change.

The law must still be approved by the Federation Council and signed by President Vladimir Putin before it comes into force.

Amendments made for its third reading include disqualifying individuals who have undergone gender changes from becoming adoptive parents or guardians, as well as the possibility of annulling a marriage if one or both spouses undergo a gender change and update their civil status records.

Putin has toughened anti-LGT-



A new law banning nearly all medical help for transgender people in Russia passed its final reading at the State Duma on Friday. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

BQ legislation in recent months, as the Kremlin clamps down on free speech and human rights amid the war in Ukraine.

These recent legal developments in Russia expand the constraints on the LGBTQ community and reflect a tightening of regulations and control over transgender rights in the country.

In December 2022, Russia expanded its existing "gay propaganda" law

to exert control over public discussions and narratives surrounding non-heterosexual relationships and identities.

The package of amendments signed by Putin includes heavier penalties for anyone promoting "non-traditional sexual relations and/or preferences," as well as gender transition. Russia's first transgender politician, Yulia Alyoshina, has warned of the severe consequences of the pro-

posed transgender bill.

"Once the bill becomes law, the repercussions will be harsh, as transgender individuals will be denied the right for medical care, which is constitutionally guaranteed," Alyoshina told CNN.

In October, amid the hearings on "LGBTQ propaganda" law amendments and the bill passing its first reading in the State Duma, Alyoshina, who obtained her new passport

in 2020, resigned from her position as a regional head of the Civic Initiative party and chose to end her political career.

The latest restrictions seem to be closely intertwined with the ongoing dissent on the political and human rights activity in Russia.

Notably, on the eve of the final reading, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) announced it had detained a transgender activist on suspicion of treason.

The FSB alleged that the activist, a Russian citizen from the Oryol region, supported the Armed Forces of Ukraine by providing financial assistance through a donation to the independent human rights monitoring group OVD-Info.

The Russian state labeled OVD-Info a foreign agent in 2021 under a law that critics say suppresses dissent.

The group has continued to document alleged rights abuses inside Russia and expanded its mandate to help anti-war protesters following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"This bill is not just discriminatory, it is a real genocide of transgender people," she added.

Russia

Russia slammed as 'inhumane' after blocking UN cross-border aid operation to Syria

By CNN

The United States, France and the United Kingdom have condemned Russia's move to block the proposed extension of a United Nations' cross-border operation that delivers aid to millions of people in Syria from Turkey.

The decision means that UN agencies and humanitarian partners are not authorized to continue using the Bab al-Hawa crossing on the Syria-Turkey border to provide humanitarian aid to people in the rebel-held area in northwest Syria.

After the vote on Tuesday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the US was "deeply disappointed by Russia's inhumane veto of cross border humanitarian assistance for Syria."

"We have repeatedly said that the United Nations Security Council should authorize a 12-month extension of cross-border access into Syria in order to secure this vital lifeline for the Syrian people," Miller added. Russia had submitted a draft which provided for a six-month extension



A convoy of trucks carrying humanitarian aid is seen parked after crossing the Syrian Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey, on July 10, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY: CNN

but it was voted down by France, the UK and the US. China and Russia backed the proposal, while 10 members abstained, according to the UN. France said the six-month renewal would have "plunged Syria into uncertainty in winter," a view echoed by other UN members, which expressed their concern over the harsh winter in northern Syria.

However, Russia's envoy to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, warned that if a

six-month extension was not supported, "then we can just go ahead and close down the cross-border mechanism."

A compromise of a nine-month renewal was voted down.

More than 4 million people rely on aid

Russia and Syria have argued the humanitarian operation violates Syria's

sovereignty and territorial integrity, saying food and other aid should be delivered from inside the country.

The Syrian regime praised Russia's decision, saying it vetoed "a Western UNSC draft resolution violating Syria's sovereignty under the pretext of delivering cross-border aid," Syrian state-run SANA news said on Tuesday.

"Syria's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Bassam Sabagh, said that western states are still politicizing the humanitarian act and going far beyond in exploiting its mechanism as a tool of pressure and political blackmail against Syria," SANA reported.

According to the UN Secretary-General's reports from June 9 and 22 on humanitarian needs in Syria, cross-border aid "remains an essential part of the operation of the UN and its partners, reaching 4.1 million people, 80 percent of whom are women and children."

Both reports said a 12-month renewal of the cross-border aid mechanism was "critical."

The crossing was a crucial point for

aid delivery to people in Syria after devastating earthquakes in February toppled buildings and killed tens of thousands of people.

In a statement published Tuesday, three Syrian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing over 100 non-profit groups working in Syria said failure to extend the operation was "ultimately putting millions of lives at risk."

"Rapidly deteriorating living conditions coupled with two massive earthquakes this year have left over 4.4 million people depending on humanitarian assistance" in Syria's northwest, the statement said.

It added that the "Security Council failed to stand up for Syrian children and families in the northwest and have put their futures in jeopardy." Syria's civil war began in 2011 as a peaceful uprising against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The ensuing civil war has killed an estimated 400,000 Syrians, according to the UN, and has displaced millions more inside and outside the country.