

**EXCLUSIVE:**

## Battered, Bruised, Bullied

On a blustery British winter day in February, popular shopkeeper Gurmail Singh, 63, opened the doors of his corner shop in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. Hours later, he was dead :



**Morocco and Belgium committed to strengthening their strategic partnership**

Morocco and Belgium



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**As a child Khensani dreamed of being an astronaut but now she is flying high in banking space**

Career Woman



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**Kenyan mountaineer embarks on daring quest to summit Mt. Everest without supplemental oxygen Africa**



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**The famous shadow theater in Indonesia Shadow puppetry**

Asia



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**High street shopkeepers under siege from criminals in this violent country:**

## BATTERED, BRUISED, BULLIED, BRUTALISED BRIGADE OF BRITAIN'S BUSINESS HEROS ON THE BRINK DEMAND JUSTICE

By: Shamlal Puri  
Associate Publisher  
& Senior Editor - UK  
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Jimmy Morar, diaspora shopkeeper moments after the vicious attack in his store in Liverpool, UK

communities only to lose out to petty criminals, thugs and gangsters.

What are corner shops or convenience stores?

A convenience store is generally a small, local retailer which sells a limited selection of everyday staples, including snacks, baked goods, dairy products, shelf-stable food products, and drinks. Sometimes known as corner shops in the UK, most convenience stores are easily accessible and have extended opening hours to cater to shoppers' needs. Such stores may also be a part of petrol stations, where consumers can buy essentials while refuelling their vehicles. Along with their lo-

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**News** Backpage  
Dozens of jurors ruled out as historic Trump trial begins



The Diaspora Times Global

## Zimbabwe 'S Nkayi-Based Women Launch Debut Book "Aluba Ngangisazi: Had I Known"

Four Zimbabwe Nkayi-based women defied the odds when they launched their debut anthology book entitled "Aluba Ngangisazi: Had I Known" at a colourful ceremony held in the rural town last weekend.

The women are a living testimony to the world that the background or

location of a person can not hinder the talent that one possesses when they came up with an anthology of poems that tackles issues of the rural lifestyle, gender-based violence, child marriages, all forms of abuse, HIV spreading and prevention and other social and life ills. The book

was published with the help of the Nkayi Non-Formal Education Department.

The Launch of the Book by these four rural-based women from the deepest ends of the country where everything seems impossible is awesome.

Speaking during the launch, amid pomp and fanfare, the publisher, Mr Fortune Mansaka, said the book is a valuable asset for those seeking

.....  
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# The late CDF General Francis Ogolla

By: Diaspora Times Team  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

President William Ruto presided over the Military Honours and Memorial Service of the late General Francis Ogolla who passed on Thursday in a helicopter crash. The honors included a Church service, military parade and a 19-gun salute. General Francis Omondi Ogolla (12 February 1962 – 18 April 2024) was a Kenyan military officer who served from April 2023 to April 2024 as the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). Ogolla joined the Kenya Defence Forces in 1984. He began his career as a 2nd lieutenant in the Kenyan Air Force and received training as a fighter pilot with the US Air Force. In 2018, he became Commander of the Kenya Air Force and later Vice Chief of Defence Forces. He was appointed Chief of Defence Forces by President William Ruto after the retirement of General Robert Kariuki Kibochi in April 2023. Ogolla died in a helicopter crash on 18 April 2024 in Sindar, Elgeyo-Marakwet County[4] at 2:20 pm. Nine other military personnel also died, while two were injured. The aircraft was a Bell UH-1H Huey II operated by the 53 Tactical Helicopter Squadron of the Kenyan Air Force. The crash occurred while they were on a mission to reopen schools in the North Rift region following bandit attacks and to inspect soldiers involved in stabilisation operations.



### EDUCATION

- MA Arts in International Studies - **University of Nairobi (UoN)**
- BA Arts in Political Science, Armed Conflict & Peace Studies - **University of Nairobi**
- Diploma both in International Studies & Military Science - **Egerton University**

### TRAINING

- Fighter pilot with **US Air Force**
- Instructor pilot at the **Kenya Air Force (KAF)**
- Graduate of **Ecole Militaire de Paris**
- Graduate of the **National Defence College, Kenya**
- Imagery intelligence, counter terrorism & accident investigation

### OTHER POSITIONS

- Chairman of Military Christian Fellowship (**1994-2004**)
- Co-Chair of Association of African Air Chiefs (**2018-2019**)

### INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT

Observer and Military Information Officer in the former Yugoslavia (**1992-1993**)

### Life & TIMES OF

## GEN FRANCIS O OGOLLA

EGH EBS HSC 'ndc' (K) 'psc' (FRA)  
*Chief of the Defence Forces*

### CAREER

- Sworn in as CDF on **29<sup>th</sup> April, 2023**
- Promoted to General on **28<sup>th</sup> April, 2023**
- Promoted to Lt. General & appointed Vice Chief of the Defence Forces (**2021**)
- Promoted to Major General & appointed the Commander Kenya Air Force (**2018**)
- Deputy Commander **Kenya Air Force**
- Base Commander **Laikipia Air Base**
- Commanding Officer of **Tactical Fighter Wing**
- Chief Flying Instructor at **Kenya Air Force Flying Training School**
- Operations Desk Officer at **Kenya Air Force HQ**
- Commissioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on **6<sup>th</sup> May, 1985** & posted to Kenya Air Force
- Joined the Kenya Defence Forces on **24<sup>th</sup> April, 1984**



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## Banking System

# Current State Of The Banking System And Problems In Development In The Current Conditions



By: Mamatov Bekhruz Azamat  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Banking System

## Worth Noting:

In order to make the facilities of the bank equal to the world standard, loans denominated in foreign currency make up 48% of the total volume of loans, and deposits and funds in foreign currency make up 44% of the total volume of deposits. 36% of the total volume of loans issued by state-owned banks is accounted for by the 10 largest borrowers; due to the orientation of the business models of banks to serve corporate clients, non-bank financial organizations, and the slow development of innovation and information systems, financial low level of popularity increases convenience in the banking system.

Today, the banking system of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of 31 commercial banks (hereinafter referred to as banks) that provide traditional banking services such as lending, deposit operations, settlement and cash.

**Key words:** bank, central bank, commercial bank, credit, rate, people's bank, financing, savings, foreign currency, mortgage loan, world bank,

### Abstract:

Currently, there are 31 commercial banks that are provided with all the conveniences of the banking system. These banks provide services such as lending, deposit operations, settlement and cash register. All of these banks are introducing new loans at low interest rates for the population by increasing convenience. informs about the improvement of the banking system.

In order to further increase convenience in banks, the adoption of the new version of the Laws of the Republic

of Uzbekistan "On Banks and Banking Activities" and "On the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan" in accordance with modern standards and principles of banking. facilities in the system. In order to make the facilities of the bank equal to the world standard, loans denominated in foreign currency make up 48% of the total volume of loans, and deposits and funds in foreign currency make up 44% of the total volume of deposits. 36% of the total volume of loans issued by state-owned banks is accounted for by the 10 largest borrowers; due to the orientation of the business models of banks to serve corporate clients, non-bank financial organizations, and the slow development of innovation

and information systems, financial low level of popularity increases convenience in the banking system.

Today, the banking system of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of 31 commercial banks (hereinafter referred to as banks) that provide traditional banking services such as lending, deposit operations, settlement and cash. was established for specific purposes and tasks, actively involving participating enterprises and state development programs in financing at preferential interest rates. As a result, the share of preferential loans in the total portfolio of the banking system is more than 60 percent. The state has a dominant position in the banking sector - 13 out of 31 banks have state partic-

ipation in their capital, and their capital is more than 87 percent of the total capital of the banking system. assets make up more than 85 percent of total assets. The active stage of banking sector reform, which began in 2017, was aimed at liberalizing the foreign exchange market, removing outdated restrictions on banking activities, freeing banks from uncharacteristic functions, and increasing the popularity of banking services. In 2019, a number of qualitative changes were made in the banking system. In particular: the adoption of the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Banks and Banking Activities" and "On the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan" in a new version, which are in

line with modern standards and principles of banking; Reform of financing mechanisms for investment projects with the participation of the Reconstruction and Development Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan; abandonment of the practice of lending state programs at rates lower than the main rate of the Central Bank and transition of lending to market conditions from 2021; development of entrepreneurship within the framework of state target programs concentration of lending in 3 banks - AT Xalq Bank, Agrobank ATB and Mikrokreditbank ATB; organization of the mechanism of preferential financial support of entrepreneurial activity by the state through the State Fund for the Support of Entrepreneurial Activity; based on market principles introduction of a new procedure for providing housing to the population at the expense of mortgage loans; evaluation of prudential control mechanisms and procedures over the activities of commercial banks in cooperation with the World Bank from the point of view of their compliance with the principles of the Basel Committee.

Mamatov Bekhruz son of Azamat was born on May 3 , 2005 in the Shahrisabz district , Kashkadarya region of the Republic Uzbekistan. Nationality is Uzbek . Currently , he is a 1st-year student of the Tashkent Textile and Light Industry Institute .

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# Sub-Saharan Africa Incomes Falling Further Behind Rest Of World, Says IMF

By Reuters  
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Incomes in Sub-Saharan Africa are falling further behind the rest of the world amid a “tepid” economic recovery, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Friday, warning of risks from geopolitics, domestic instability and climate change.

The IMF earlier this week said the region’s economy would grow 3.8% this year, up from 3.4% in 2023, as it begins to emerge from four years of shocks, from the COVID-19 pandemic to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and rising global interest rates.

“When accounting for population growth, the income gap with the rest of the world is widening,” the fund said in its biannual Regional Economic Outlook report, launched during its Spring Meetings this week in Washington.

It noted that other developing countries saw real income per person more than triple since 2000, while they grew 75% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 35% in developed countries. However, there were some positive developments.

“Two-thirds of the countries are already experiencing acceleration in

growth; diversified and fairly broad-based growth,” said Abebe Selassie, director of the IMF’s African Department, said in an interview with Reuters in Washington.

Many of the more diversified economies had already enjoyed some growth recovery since the pandemic, he added.

## INFLATION FALLING

Economic conditions have started to ease for many countries this year, with Ivory Coast, Benin and Kenya issuing international bonds and median inflation falling to 6% in February from almost 10% a year earlier, the IMF said.

But political instability is rising and denting investor confidence, it said, pointing to junta-led states Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger leaving the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and 18 elections across the region this year.

Devastating droughts last year in the Horn of Africa and currently in southern Africa, as well as cyclones and floods, have also increased the region’s struggles.

South Africa is set to grow just 0.9% this year, a slight increase from 0.6% in 2023, amid ongoing rolling power cuts and problems with the country’s railways and ports, the IMF said, adding that “electoral uncer-



Street vendors wait for customers at an open market, ahead of Nigeria’s Presidential election in Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria February 23, 2023. REUTERS/Temilade Adelaja/File Photo

tainties” could derail ongoing energy sector reforms.

Africa’s most industrialised economy holds an election on May 29, in which the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party could lose its majority for the first time since the

end of apartheid in 1994.

West Africa’s largest economy, Nigeria, is set to grow 3.3% this year, as it struggles with high inflation amid painful currency and subsidy reforms.

In its northern neighbour Niger,

meanwhile, growth is predicted to rocket from 1.4% last year to 10.4%, as oil exports ramp up.

## Poetry

# Navroz



By: Davlatnazarov Davlatnazar  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Navroz is considered one of the first holidays of spring and marks the beginning of the New Year for Persians and Turks. The word “Navroz” comes from Persian, meaning “new day.” In Central Asia and Iran, Navroz is usually celebrated on March 21st. Navroz itself marks the start of the northern hemisphere’s spring and begins at the equinox.

Some believe that the arrival of spring is in harmony with nature, and they celebrate the start of the New Year accordingly. Navroz has been celebrated for many years, featuring various games, dances, storytelling, and, most importantly, the making of sumalak, a traditional dish.

With the arrival of spring, greenery



begins to flourish. It’s known that during spring, various dishes like greens, sprouts, and special sweets such as ko’ksomsa, ko’kmanti, and ko’kbarak are served in all households. The highlight of Navroz is the preparation of sumalak. Making sumalak involves gathering

wheat and boiling it until it thickens, which is said to attract angels who bless the dish. Despite my involvement in many sumalak-making processes, I’ve never encountered such a phenomenon. Navroz is widely celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and many other countries.

Local dances are performed in all regions, often in groups.

In Azerbaijan and Turkey, examples include “Kusa, Kusa Khan” and in Iran “Kusex Galin” and “Xan Bazi,” and in Uzbekistan “Bahor Khanim,” “Navroz Baba,” and “Dehqon Baba.” Additionally, there are traditional

games such as wrestling, tug-of-war, and various other entertainments.

Craftsmen display their handmade pottery, and jewelers exhibit their crafted goods. Overall, Navroz is a celebration deeply rooted in tradition, where various games and dances reflect our cultural heritage.

In 2009, Navroz was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and on February 23, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 21 as “International Navroz Day” during its 64th session. This holiday continues to be widely celebrated among different cultures.

Muhammad Rizo Erniyozbek Oga-hiy beautifully captures the essence of Navroz in his poem:

“Fayz, nishat, and aysh come together,

Bringing joy to the land, it’s Navroz.” These lines signify how Navroz brings prosperity, happiness, and joy, making the land rejoice. Oga-hiy’s poems often depict Navroz with unique descriptions.

Navroz has been celebrated on a large scale in the years following independence. Since 1991, Navroz has been elevated to the status of a national holiday. As Navroz approaches our country, let us all celebrate this joyous occasion.

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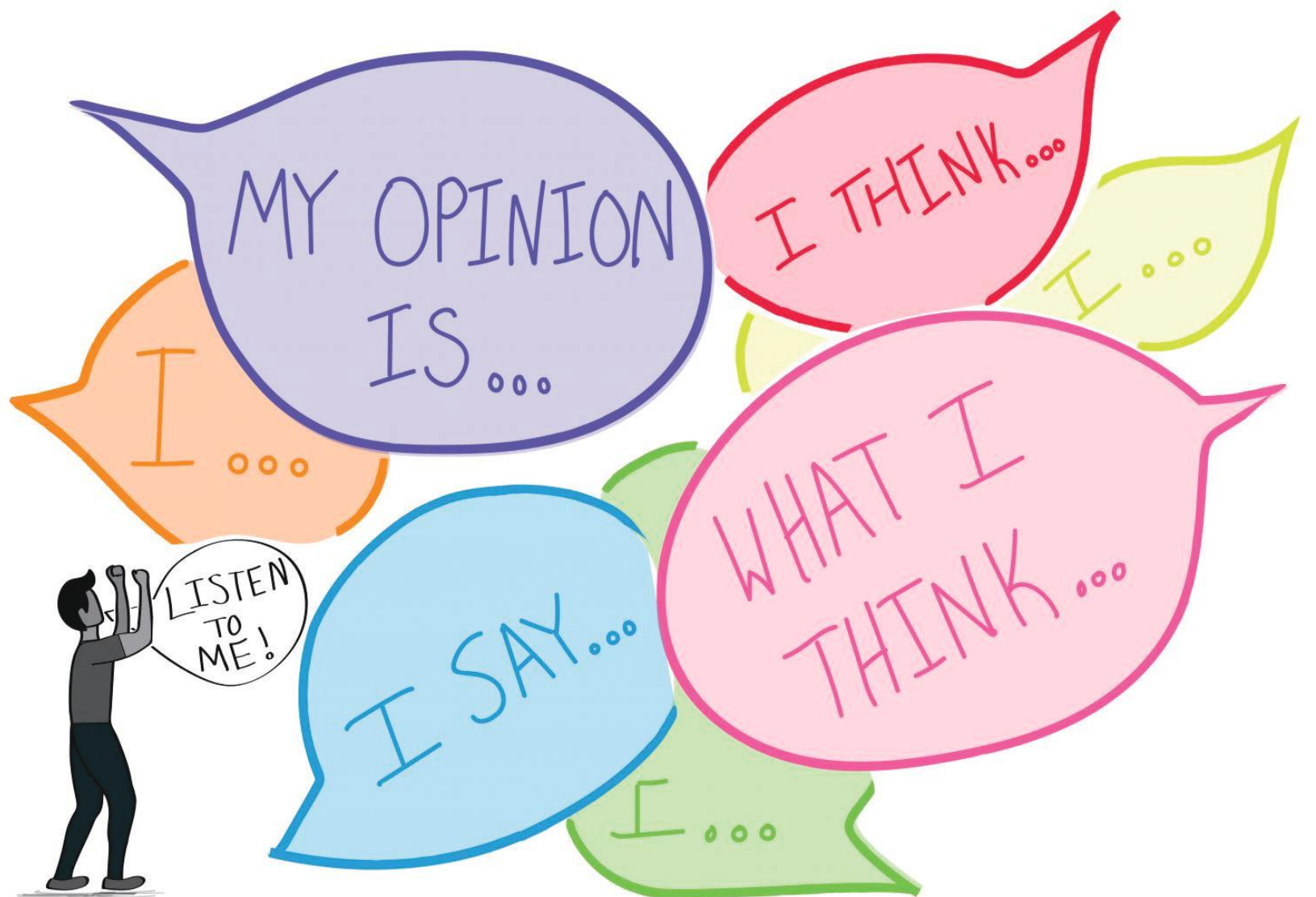
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## Studies

# Content and interpretation summarizing the opinion of literary studies



By: Otanazarova Shodiya  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



## Worth Noting:

- Is there anyone left among the kings of this country who is aware of the rules of governance? If there is, I will give him the governorship of your country and make him an independent king.
- The people blessed Iskandar and expressed their readiness to sacrifice their lives for his words and said:
- May you always be the ruler of the whole world and the leader of the peoples of the world! You are asking us for a person who will give peace and tranquility to the citizen. Where, you say, is the person who will be liked by everyone? There is only one person who has adopted a strange behavior: for example, he does not mix with living people, he does not live in any other place than old graves. He is satisfied with the people of the grave because he has not yet seen the faithfulness of the living.

Since fiction is anthropology, it means that human life, his experiences, passions, relationships - all his activities are the "beating heart, his blood and soul, his flame and sun" of a work of art. Theme (from Greek "thema" - that which is based on) or subject (Arabic, it gives the meaning of theme; we use both) - an image of events selected by the creator and summarizing certain problems of life, this reflected life (event). is to get to the core of its manifestations (thought research and analysis) and evaluate it in an ideological-emotional way. Summarizing the opinion of literary studies, the problems of a work of art can be divided into three:

1. Literary themes. All the virtues and vices characteristic of humanity (love, kindness, loyalty, joy and happiness, grief and sorrow, revenge, jealousy, death, generosity and stinginess, happiness, fortitude and enthusiasm, a loving smile and a warm look, passion, enthusiasm, etc.) are literary themes. That's why Oscar Wilde said in *The Portrait of Dorion Gray*: "Thoughts and words are the artist's tools. Vice and virtue are the material for his creation." As I told the story of the king who took the path of the poor with Alexander, or the poor who really reached the

kingship, Alexander wanted to take him out of his misery and put him on the throne of the kingdom, but he refused the crown and did not think of leaving the crown from the beginning.

I heard that when the famous Alexander became the governor of the world, he appointed those kings who were dependent on him and the kings of which countries were subordinate to him as kings of his country. When he was satisfied with the countries and their kings, he marched again to other countries. For example, when he conquered west lands, his king declared war with hostility. For example, when he conquered west lands, his king declared war with hostility. Finally, after the fire of war was extinguished, it was found that the king of the west was killed during the battle. When Alexander learned that his enemy had been executed, he determined to establish justice in the country and told the people:

Is there anyone left among the kings of this country who is aware of the rules of governance? If there is, I will give him the governorship of your country and make him an independent king. The people blessed Iskandar and expressed their readiness to sacrifice their lives for his words and said:

- May you always be the ruler of the whole world and the leader of the peoples of the world! You are asking us for a person who will give peace and tranquility to the citizen. Where, you say, is the person who will be liked by everyone?

There is only one person who has adopted a strange behavior: for example, he does not mix with living people, he does not live in any other place than old graves. He is satisfied with the people of the grave because he has not yet seen the faithfulness of the living. This man voluntarily threw off the royal crown from his head, and since the day he threw off the crown, he considers himself happy. It is not known where he spends the night and what he eats and drinks during the day. He does not associate with anyone and does not act in a clandestine way, because if he hears the commotion of the people, his burden increases. Some people go close to him and beg, and sometimes they open up and talk. People give very useful advice and calls people to wash their hands of this world. By promoting such ideas in words, he propagandizes the nation towards the world of non-existence.

After hearing these words, Alexander: "Go and find him immedi-

ately and bring him to me," he said.

People ran in all directions to fulfill this order, and they found that dervish and brought him to Alexander. She was bare-headed, bare-legged, and her breasts were exposed from the torn collar. This man, who had left worldly affairs, came with two skulls in his hands. Alexander greeted him with respect and showed him a place next to him. Then to him:

"Tell me about these bastards, tell me what else I ask, and tell me their answer!" he said. Poor responded this way:

"When I was passing through the cemetery, how many times did I hurt these graves?" But the problem remained in my mind: which one belongs to the king and which one belongs to the king? Why do these two fabrics conflict when they are dead, but when they are alive?

His words pleased Alexander:

"Oh wise man with a priceless mind!" "You are a very high-minded person, if your zeal is so high, I will respect you, raise your rank and give you the kingdom of your country," he said. Then he said to the poor:

-Effort is my constant companion, but not as much as you think, but

more so. Do you mean to tell me to leave the state of poverty and accept the rank of king? I have no desire to be worldly, my desire is to reach the bottom four countries. One of them is eternal life without end and limit; the second is youthfulness, which knows no defects, is not damaged, and is not replaced by old age; the third is wealth that does not see the face of poverty; and the fourth is place without sorrow, and the thing called mourning vanishes before it.

Iskandar was astonished and bowed his head in shame and said:

"Oh, auspicious-minded, blessed-minded sage!" Many problems have been solved from this puzzle of yours. Fate is eternal, it is impossible that poverty has given you the kingdom, and even though it has given me a high rank, you have been given more courage than me.

The rank of a king is low for a man whose merit is great, and if a poor man is a high man, the king of the age will look strange and inferior to him.

Shodiya OTANAZAROVA,  
Urganch State University,  
Student of the Faculty of Philology.

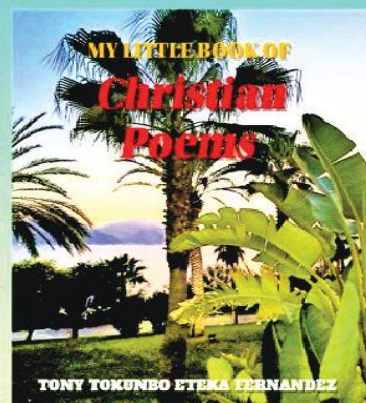
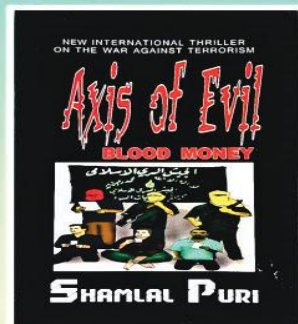
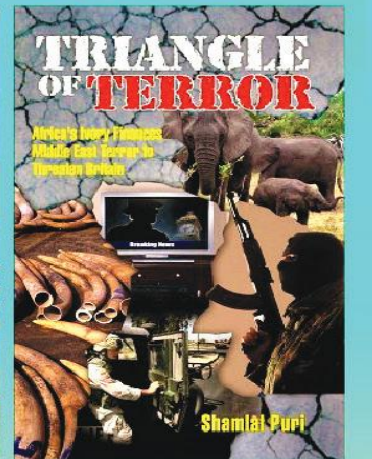
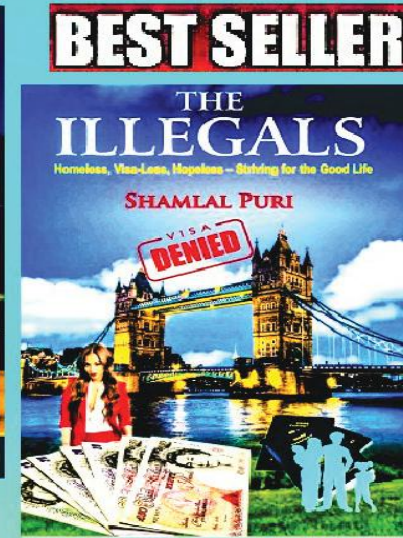
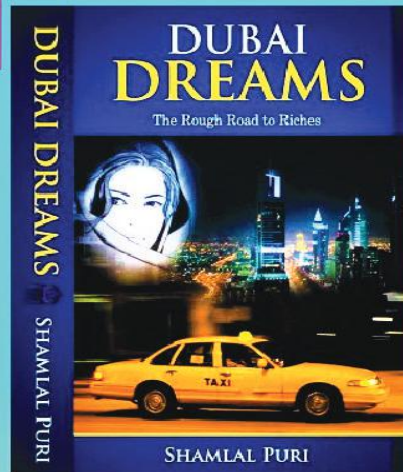
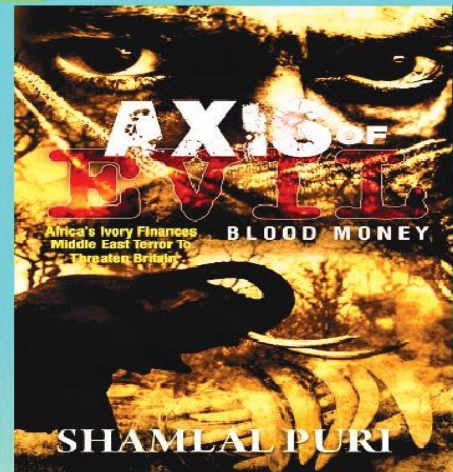
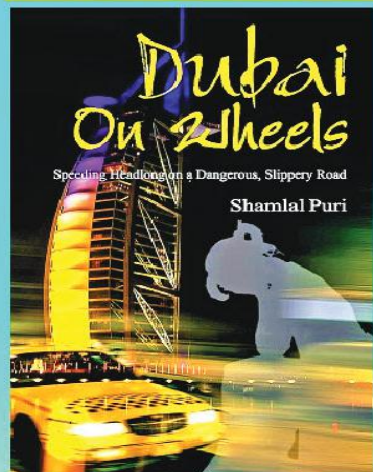
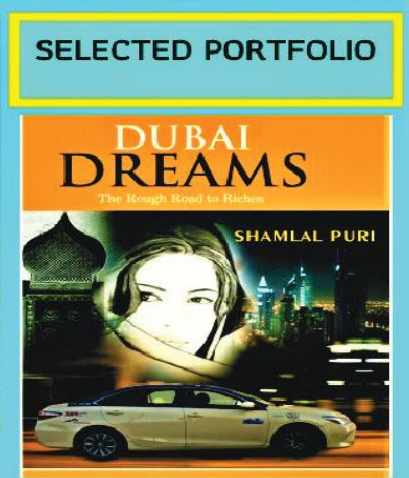
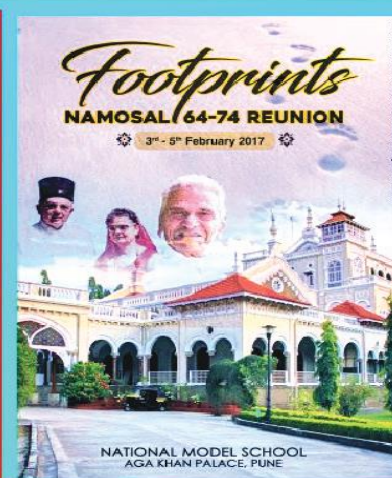
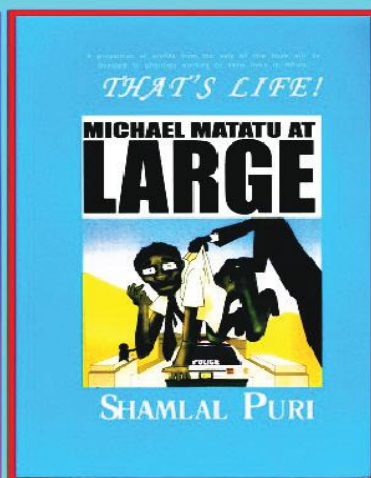
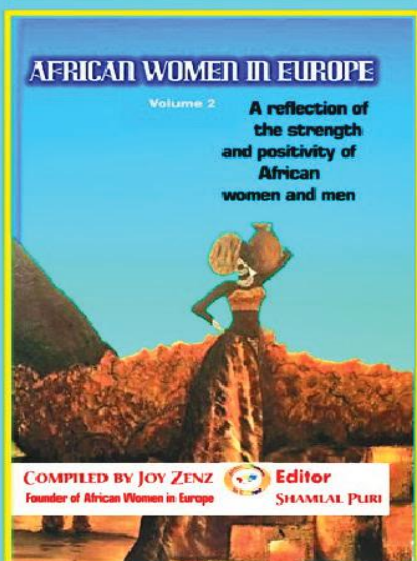
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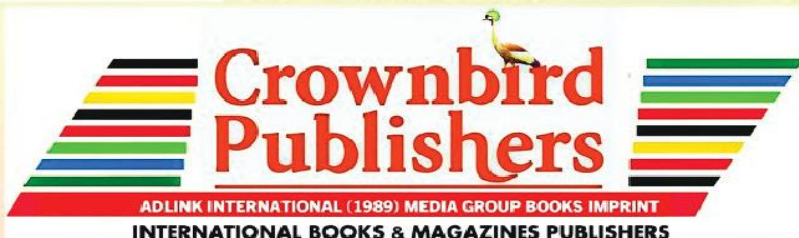
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EXCLUSIVE:

# High street shopkeepers under siege from criminals in this violent country: BATTERED, BRUISED, BULLIED, BRUTALISED BRIGADE OF BRITAIN'S BUSINESS HEROS ON THE BRINK DEMAND JUSTICE



By: Shamlal Puri  
Associate Publisher  
& Senior Editor – UK  
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Contd from Page 1

## Worth Noting:

A convenience store is generally a small, local retailer which sells a limited selection of everyday staples, including snacks, baked goods, dairy products, shelf-stable food products, and drinks. Sometimes known as corner shops in the UK, most convenience stores are easily accessible and have extended opening hours to cater to shoppers' needs. Such stores may also be a part of petrol stations, where consumers can buy essentials while refuelling their vehicles. Along with their local counterparts, many well-known supermarket retailers also operate convenience stores across the UK.

In the United Kingdom, there were 48,590 convenience stores in 2023 compared with 51,524 in 2015, according to Statista.

Industry specialists believe the number could even further reduce to as low as 30,000 in the next two years as desperate shopkeepers line up to sell or shut down because of soaring crime against them. Others are struggling for survival.

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Industry specialists believe the number could even further reduce to as low as 30,000 in the next two years as desperate shopkeepers line up to sell or shut down because of soaring crime against them. Others are struggling for survival.

Some diaspora shopkeepers put in as many as 105 hours a week to run their shops compared to around 57 by local British shopkeepers who don't bother to open beyond regular hours.

Like a cat with nine lives, the traditional corner shop has survived the turbulence caused by inflation, the cost of living crisis, and people's inability to buy daily food requirements and instead depend on food banks to feed their families.

Still, they keep their shops open all hours of the day, well into the night, to serve their local community and live a perilous existence. There was a time when, even at closing time, a customer walked in for a litre of milk, and the Asian shopkeeper would pull up the shutters and serve his customers with a smile, then close for the night.

Britain is a violent country these days.

The crime rate is spiralling, and brutal attacks against Britain's shopkeepers continue to increase, with the Police almost putting up their hands as if to admit they cannot do any more.

Shockingly, the British law is lax, but now shopkeepers demand protection.

The latest Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) annual crime report shows there were 1.1 million incidents of shop thefts in 2023 alone, causing a loss of more than £125 million. This is only 16% of retail crime retailers or shopkeepers report.

Figures show that 44% of the crimes against shopkeepers involve knife attacks, 55% other weapons such as axes, hammers or syringes and 1% firearms because the UK does not allow the public to own guns.

Add a new dimension of crime: cybercrime, where shopkeepers lose huge sums

to hackers, phishing and ransomware.

A further 1.2 million incidents of abuse and violence on shop owners go unreported because they have no confidence in a follow-up investigation, perceived lack of interest from the Police, the bureaucracy and the time-consuming process of filing a report to the Police. Shop owners in Britain are demanding new safety laws to protect them from violent customers. The loss of unreported incidents is not yet measured in monetary terms, but the total annual loss to the industry may well hit over £250 million.

Among the stolen items are meat, confectionary and alcohol.

"We have seen the prevalence of violence towards shopworkers fall from the unprecedented levels seen during the pandemic, but levels of violence remain unacceptably high. We need to ensure that the Police are attending to instances of violence towards shop workers, referred to courts and the new aggravating factor being applied," notes the ACS report.

The Government currently applies no formal structures or resources to measure the application of the aggravating factor introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, say the retailers.

They say the Government should collect information on applying the aggravating factor by Magistrates and make recommendations on its impact.

Most targets for attacks by yobbos are corner shops off-licences selling alcohol until 10 pm or even later. Although most victims are diasporans, even local white Brits running shops have not been spared by these thugs.

Take the example of Briton Michelle Evans and her husband, whose mobile catering unit, Café Express, in Leicestershire, was burgled on April 5. Thieves took cash and stock after they had shut.

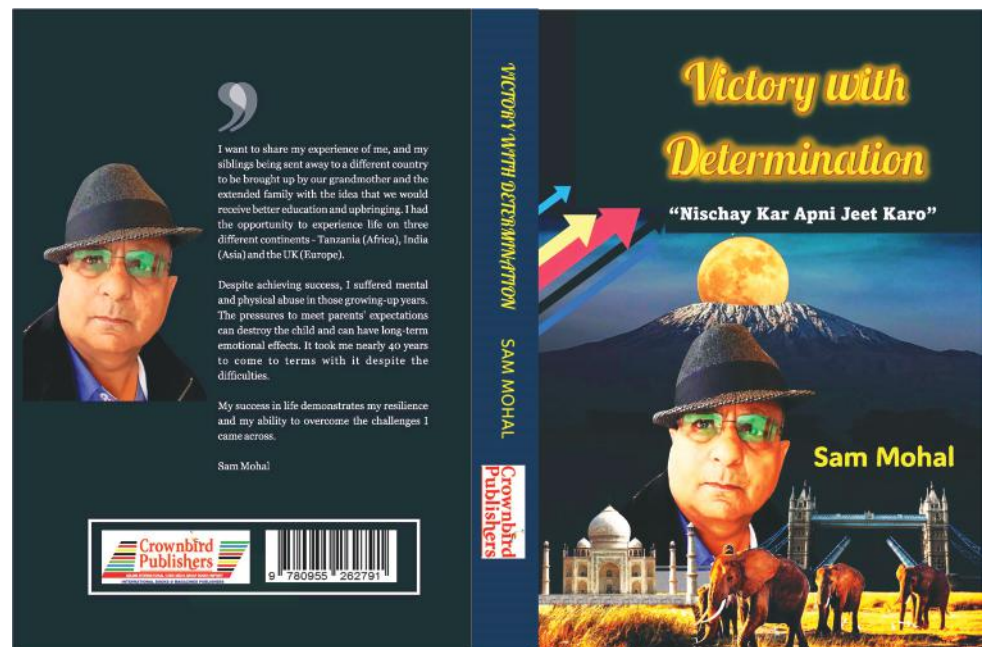
The couple is disheartened. They were burgled three times before. They questioned whether or not to keep the business going.

Michelle said they are struggling to keep their business running, and the burglaries have set back their small business tenfold.

Many people choose to stay



Caught in action... In this dramatic screen grab from a theft at a shop in Britain, a thief lunges on this shopkeeper. Photo Courtesy: Retail-Crimewatch



Londoner Sam Mohal (pictured) describes in his memoirs scary moments as a retail shopkeeper when he was attacked several times in his off-licence store and lived to recount his experiences in this riveting biography. Photo Courtesy Crownbird Publishers, London.



An Asian newsagent's shop in Leicester is one of the many that have earned the name Dukawalla or the corner shop, but shopkeepers still live in fear. © Photo SHAMLAL PURI.

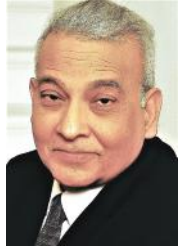
at home rather than risk violence, which has now spilt their lives being attacked in the streets. The consequences hit the shopkeepers, who now demand the Government to stamp out rising vi-

olence, which has now spilt into the streets with many shops. It is necessary to explore the reasons for this violent behaviour and bullying of the diaspora communities.

Contd Page 11.

EXCLUSIVE:

# High street shopkeepers under siege from criminals in this violent country: BATTERED, BRUISED, BULLIED, BRUTALISED BRIGADE OF BRITAIN'S BUSINESS HEROS ON THE BRINK DEMAND JUSTICE



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Contd from Page 10

## Worth Noting:

- "I didn't even react and went back inside," he recalled, then within a minute, this lad walks in; he was charging up the till angry and being abusive."
- Mr Morar tried to calm down the situation, saying, "Just forget it and go away," and the next thing, he recalled, "boof, a punch thrown on my face."
- One man approached the businessman before punching him. After hurling items, including chocolate bars and a ceramic bowl, "that luckily just missed me." He returned to Mr Morar as he stood behind the till to land further blows. "I was in the corner, and there was nothing I could do," he recalled.
- "It was terrifying; he was a big lad. He'd already cut me with the first punch, then he kept hitting me again - two, three, four punches. After that, I hardly knew where I was."



Jimmy Morar, a diaspora convenience store owner, was attacked viciously by racist thugs in his store in Liverpool, UK.

In the past, rabid white youth were responsible for racist attacks on the newly settled immigrant communities' shopkeepers because of the ongoing Government resentment of foreigners coming to settle down in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s. Their illiteracy and ignorance were so evident that to them, every South Asian was a "Paki" (Pakistani), even when they came from India, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Malaysia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Guyana, and Trinidad!

In those days, it seemed that the Government of the day and the anti-immigration lobby led by the likes of Enoch Powell, the National Front and their ilk had given yobbos an open licence to native Brits to taunt people who did not share their white colour foreigners. Observers call this colour bar war. Anyone who is not white to this day is referred to as a coloured person or a black.

Someone challenged this label, arguing that even the white colour is made of several shades of colours! There is logic in this argument: White is made of the primaries red, green, and blue combined pairwise to produce the additive secondaries cyan, magenta, and yellow. Combining all three primaries produces white. So, the whites are also coloured! There's nothing whiter than white! No one had educated them that these were British citi-

zens by right from the countries that they had colonised and that the governments of those days had enshrined their right to settle in the UK.

Besides the native whites, these days, partially, this violence is also engineered by jobless, drug-crazed diaspora communities without pointing the finger at a particular community. Even though in the early years, many white youths believed they had a licence to bully newly arrived migrants settling in the UK, the situation has barely changed even after but decades, and their resentment continues. White yobbos are getting more vitriolic and bolder. Shopkeeper Jimmy Morar recalls the day when he was attacked as he stood behind the counter to serve and left with a bloodied face at his convenience store in Liverpool, 214 miles from London.

As he did daily, Jimmy Morar opened his supermarket, the Dock Convenience Store, part of the nationwide Premier Stores chain, in Freeman Street, Birkenhead, in the Wirral, in his inimitable Tanzanian style, politely offering seasonal cheer to his regular customers throughout the day.

When, on that dark winter evening, he prepared to

Contd Page 13.



Service with a smile... This corner shop owner serves his customers in London. Photo Copyright SHAMLAL PURI



Closed...This One Stop Post Office in Sunderland shut down due to falling business. Photo Courtesy.



Changing face of the High Street,, Small shops have been pulling down shutters at a fast rate due to stiff competition, security issues and lack of business Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Closed...This corner shop in London could not pull in business, so it shut down, turning into a derelict building. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

## Morocco and Belgium

# Morocco and Belgium committed to strengthening their strategic partnership

*In the joint declaration, Belgium considers the Moroccan autonomy initiative, presented in 2007, as “a serious and credible effort by Morocco and a good basis for a solution accepted by the parties”.*

By: Dismas Otuke  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Moroccan-Belgian High Joint Partnership Commission, co-chaired by the Head of Government, Aziz Akhannouch, and the Belgian Prime Minister, Alexander De Croo

## Worth Noting:

- Reforms carried out by Morocco under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI Belgium welcomes the reforms carried out by Morocco over the past twenty-five years, under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, to create a more open and dynamic Moroccan society and economy.

- In this joint declaration, Belgium stressed the importance of the New Development Model, advanced regionalization and a number of ambitious reforms, including that currently underway on the Family Code (Moudawana).

- As part of its priority commitment to the region, Belgium also welcomes the Atlantic Initiative launched by His Majesty the King as “an innovative contribution to the integration of the African Atlantic and the strengthening of cooperation with the Sahel countries”, the Joint Declaration stated, adding that “the Atlantic is a link between North and South, Africa and Europe, and between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic”.

Morocco and Belgium welcomed the dynamic nature of their bilateral relations, reaffirming their shared desire to deepen them further with a view to establishing a forward-looking strategic partnership that matches the expectations and potential that exist between the two countries to meet current and future challenges. In the Joint Declaration adopted on April 15, 2024, at the close of the 3rd Meeting of the Moroccan-Belgian High Joint Partnership Commission, co-chaired by the Head of Government, Aziz Akhannouch, and the Belgian Prime Minister, Alexander De Croo, the two parties also expressed their desire to strengthen cooperation in a number of areas.

#### Moroccan Sahara:

In the joint declaration, Belgium considers the Moroccan autonomy initiative, presented in 2007, as “a serious and credible effort by Morocco and a good basis for a solution accepted by the parties”.

In this context, De Croo reiterated “Belgium’s long-standing support for the process led by the United Nations for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution for the parties”, read the Declaration. On this occasion, the two parties agreed on “the exclusivity of the UN in the political process and reaffirmed their support for UN

Security Council resolution 2703 (2023), which noted the role and responsibility of the parties in the search for a realistic, pragmatic, lasting political solution based on compromise”, added the same source.

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Security cooperation and migration:

The two Heads of Gov-

ernment emphasized the common interest of both countries in continuing and strengthening bilateral cooperation to combat threats to national and international security.

In terms of security cooperation, they affirmed their willingness to further develop it, notably through the establishment of a regular cooperation structure.

Also, they welcomed the implementation of the Convention on cooperation in combating organized crime and terrorism, which entered into force in 2022, and the 2022-2024 action plan in the field of police cooperation.

The two Heads of Government praised the progress made in the framework of migration cooperation, including the holding of the 1st meeting of the Morocco-Belgium Mixed Migration Group and the joint implementation of effective measures.

On the same topic, the Moroccan Minister of the Interior, Abdelouafi Laftit, received the Belgian Minister of the Interior, Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal, Annelies Jan Louisa Verlinden, accompanied by the Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration, Nicole De Moor, on the same day.

On this occasion, the two ministers reviewed several issues of common interest and examined ways to fur-

ther strengthen the dynamic partnership between the two parties, particularly in security and migration, the Interior Ministry said in a press release.

In this regard, the two ministers shared their convergent analysis on multifaceted regional and international issues and agreed to strengthen the exchange of expertise and useful information to better anticipate the multifaceted threats and common challenges induced by the criminal activities of terrorist groups and networks which are active in different forms of cross-border trafficking, the same source added.

In counterterrorism, Laftit reviewed the overall strategy of the Kingdom of Morocco which inseparably reconciles the operational fight and the exchange of information with the preventive approach, particularly against radicalization, as well as reintegration aspects. In the field of migration, he underlined Morocco’s holistic and humanist approach to migration governance which puts the migrant at the center of public authorities, in accordance with the High Royal Guidelines.

Laftit also recalled Morocco’s active solidarity and its major efforts in terms of border control and the fight against all forms of cross-border crime, which reflects the Kingdom’s major contribution in regional

security.

The two ministers emphasized the role of the Permanent Joint Migratory Group set up by the two parties to achieve qualitative and coordinated advances, reconciling all the synergies and sectoral logic around a global and balanced approach to migration management.

Territorial integrity and national unity of Libya:

In the joint declaration issued on Monday in Rabat, Morocco and Belgium reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and national unity of Libya.

In this Declaration, the two Heads of Government reiterated the central role of the United Nations in facilitating an inclusive political process led by Libyans, resulting in the organization of presidential and legislative elections in Libya.

In this regard, the Belgian party welcomes Morocco’s efforts to resolve the Libyan crisis, notably hosting, from May 22 to June 7, 2023, meetings of the Joint Commission (6+6), tasked with drafting Libyan electoral laws as part of the dialogue process initiated under the auspices of the United Nations.

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By: Shamlal Puri  
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& Senior Editor - UK  
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## Worth Noting:

- “These kids would stand in the shop, not buy anything but stand there, stopping anyone else. It’s a basic extortion and protection racket technique, but we didn’t have this then; still, we wouldn’t stand for it.”

- “They used to show up at ten at night and crowd around the shop, thinking they could scare us into shutting at nine. We just carried on as usual.”

- There was a grocery shop a few shops down from us, and the same kids who tried it with us would walk in there and forcibly open up their till. They wouldn’t take everything, maybe five pounds, and then walk out.

- They would grab a bottle of Coke from us, stand in the middle of the floor, shake it, and open it so it went all over the shop. They would demand money. The Mohals threw them out.

close his shop, peace was shattered by a gang screaming racist abuse and thumping hard outside the shop’s display window.

He confronted the yobs – two youngsters and a grown-up man. They forced their way into the store and started pelting Mr Morar with confectionary items, chocolate bars, and a ceramic bowl grabbed from display shelves in full view of the shop’s CCTV cameras.

“I was getting ready to close the shop at about 7.30 pm. I heard a big bang on the window. I looked on my CCTV and saw one lad sitting on the floor outside and a girl with a dog standing there.

“I went out and said, ‘Why the hell are you banging on my window?’ they started being abusive and using racist language.

“I didn’t even react and went back inside,” he recalled, then within a minute, this lad walks in; he was charging up the till angry and being abusive.”

Mr Morar tried to calm down the situation, saying, “Just forget it and go away,” and the next thing, he recalled, “boof, a punch thrown on my face.”

One man approached the businessman before punching him. After hurling items, including chocolate bars and a ceramic bowl, “that luckily just missed me.” He returned to Mr Morar as he stood behind the till to land further blows. “I was in the corner, and there was nothing I could do,” he recalled.

“It was terrifying; he was a big lad. He’d already cut me with the first punch, then he kept hitting me again – two, three, four punches. After that, I hardly knew where I was.”

The thugs attacked him, leaving him with blood-splattered face.

No one can understand violence more than those who have suffered from it.

Pensioner Sam Mohal, a millionaire businessman, is one of the many victims of corner shop violence, ending up in hospital with injuries.

Sam, who came to London in the 1970s, recalls his days as a corner shopkeeper in his 175-page memoirs, *Victory with Determination* (ISBN 978-0-9552627-9-1 Crownbird Publishers).

He and his family used to run an off-licence dealing with the sale of alcohol in a very rough, run-down area



This convenience store in the beach town of Margate, Broadstairs, tries its best to pull in passing trade. Copyright Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Diaspora shop owners have built their businesses from scratch in the Greater London’s Southall suburb. Photo Copyright SHAMLAL PURI

of East London with municipal council flats.

It was a no-go area for the faint-hearted. There were gangs of white youths who ruled the estate, which meant that the off-licence could only be open for two hours a day, from 7 pm to 9 pm. The gangs would drive out any manager the owners tried to put there permanently.

The shop was on the corner, part of a row under one of the blocks. This was no problem when the other shops were open, but once they closed at five, the off-licence was vulnerable as it had to be kept open till ten. In those flats, the gangs of young white boys would do anything they could to cause trouble. These jobless yob-bos smashed both their shop windows many times.

They went around Mr Mohal’s house and poured blue paint on their brand-new orange car.

“We had metal grills and gates over the windows and doors of the shop, and they would use cutters to cut them off.

“These kids would stand in the shop, not buy anything but stand there, stopping anyone else. It’s a basic extortion and protection racket technique, but we didn’t have this then; still, we wouldn’t stand for it.

“They used to show up at ten at night and crowd around the shop, thinking they could scare us into shutting

at nine. We just carried on as usual.”

There was a grocery shop a few shops down from us, and the same kids who tried it with us would walk in there and forcibly open up their till. They wouldn’t take everything, maybe five pounds, and then walk out.

They would grab a bottle of Coke from us, stand in the middle of the floor, shake it, and open it so it went all over the shop. They would demand money. The Mohals threw them out.

He then moved from there to run a wine shop in east London. At about eight o’clock, while running the shop alone on Ley Street, he was serving behind the counter.

Two men walked into the shop. “I didn’t look at them. One walked up to the counter, and the other approached the opposite, looking at the wines. I then realised that they were together. He then asks me for a box of matches. All the while, I could see the other man, and I got suspicious. I gave him the box of matches. He handed me 10p to pay for the matches. I opened the till: as I did, he punched me full in the face, and that knocked me back. With my hand still in the till, I fell back, clutching at it as I fell. He reached over the counter and tried to rip the till out, wires and all.”

Mr Mohal tried to reach the panic button under the counter with his left hand



The Golden Mile... Belgrave Road of Leicester. where many diaspora Asians have opened their shops from malls to convenience stores. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



Corner Shop in name and corner shop in good service for passing trade in London. Photo © SHAMLAL PURI



Sitting targets...Small stall holders on the high street are vulnerable to theft as they do not have sophisticated security measures.

and right arm, holding the till down from the top. He pulled the till from the outside, but the shopkeeper did not let the till go.

His accomplice came from behind the counter and hit Mr Mohal over the head many times with a heavy bottle taken from a shelf. “It hurt like hell, but it angered me so much that the adrenalin stopped the pain. I heard the one who was pulling the till on the outside say, ‘Shoot the bastard’ – I don’t know if they had a gun, but I immediately let go of the till.”

In self-defence, Mr Mohal turned on him and grabbed him by his shirt, hitting him with one hard punch in the face. His legs just turned to jelly, and he fell back. Behind him was a cooler, an old one like chest freezer. He fell across this, and I was on top of him, punching him repeatedly in the face: ten,

fifteen times, just striking him hard.”

By this time, a crowd was in the shop, wondering what was happening. The other man ran away with the till. Mr Mohal was still punching this man in his face and body and only stopped when the Police arrived.

The confused policeman was asking me what was going on. There were sweets and confectionary all over the floor, falling from the counter during the struggle, and there was no cash till.

The cheeky thief beaten by Mr Mohal said he wanted to press charges against me for beating him up!

The future outlook for shopkeepers is grim unless the Government cracks on these hooligans or these shops could close en masse.

Zimbabwean authors

# Zimbabwe's Nkayi-Based Women Launch Debut Book "Aluba Ngangisazi: Had I Known"



By: Chimeno Azriel  
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Zimbabwe

Contd from Page 1

## Worth Noting:

- "The book by these upcoming budding writers is a valuable asset to those seeking to conquer the challenges of this world. These women are a living testimony to all that one's background is not a deterrent to coming up with an educative anthology book," said Mr Mnsaka, who is also a teacher by profession.
- The four – Lubelihle Nomagugu Mhlanga, Msipa Ayanda, Dlamini Khethiwe, and Ndlovu Nomatter, all in their early 30s, took it upon themselves to unleash the potential that was lying dormant in them as they were disadvantaged and lacked exposure. The ladies did what is deemed impossible and the anthology book tells it all. Their background did not let them put their backs on the ground.



The four Zimbabwean authors



Proudly Zimbabwe rural based authors



to conquer challenges and know more about the challenges the world is facing.

"The book by these upcoming budding writers is a valuable asset to those seeking to conquer the challenges of this world. These women are a living testimony to all that one's background is not a deterrent to coming up with an educative anthology book," said Mr Mnsaka, who is also a teacher by profession.

The four – Lubelihle Nomagugu Mhlanga, Msipa Ayanda, Dlamini Khethiwe, and Ndlovu Nomatter, all in their early 30s, took it upon themselves to unleash the potential that was lying dormant in them as they were disadvantaged and lacked exposure. The ladies did what is deemed impossible and the anthology book tells it all. Their background did not let them put their backs on the ground.

Edited and published under Pre-Dawn Books Publishers, the anthology book revolves around what happens in society and life in rural areas. In the book, some po-

ems have to do with a rural lifestyle, gender-based violence, and early child marriages which are the order of the day, especially in rural areas.

The editor, Mr Mnsaka, said the poetry book encompasses principles, insights, and lessons about daily life. The authors give readers the room to come up with solutions after reading the poems.

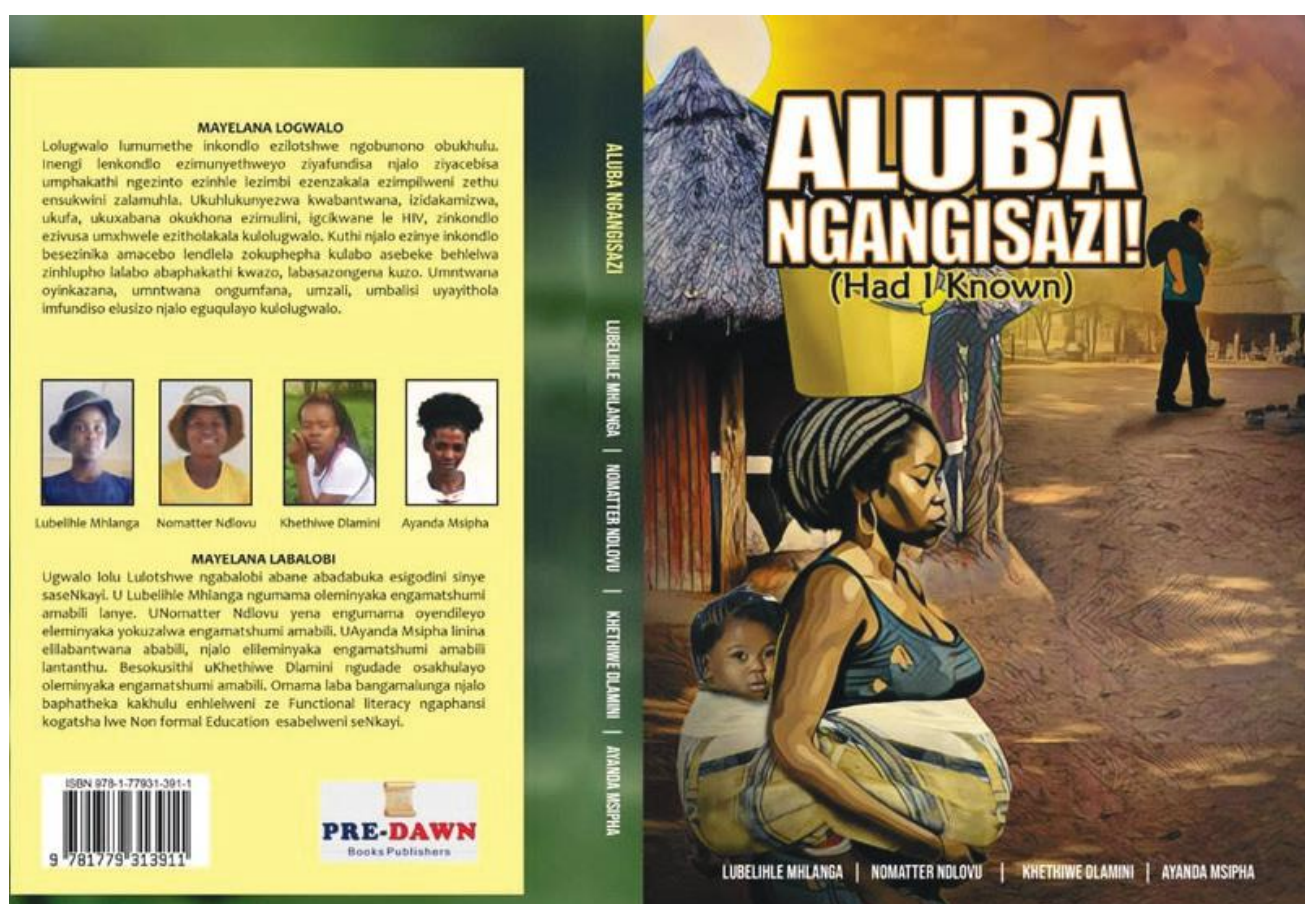
Nkayi District Life-Long Co-ordinator (DLLC), Mrs. Siqondiso Ncube, said the title of the book itself tells that the ladies took time to come up with the educative anthology of poems that covers cross-cutting issues among them drug abuse which is pertinent nowadays.

Speaking about non-formal education's role in the publication of the book, Mrs. Ncube said the ladies were bold enough to take the skill taught and come up with the book.

"Non-formal education functional literacy was explained to the Community and a level ground was presented to all. The young ladies were bold enough to take up the skill that most people feel is challenging. They were eager to share their experiences, especially as young mothers hence the fashioning of their dreams through pen and paper," said the coordinator.

The launch gathered various communities. Those who were on the terraces are going to surface. If they do so, the lifelong education department will be ready for them. The Non-Formal Education Department, with the maximum support from the District Schools Inspectorate.

"It is with the greatest hope that every talent in the district will be identified and moulded as we embrace the 2030 Vision premised on 'Leaving no one and no place behind,'" Mrs. Ncube added.



# NEWS PAPER



## IN BUSINESS

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## Career Woman

# As a child Khensani dreamed of being an astronaut but now she is flying high in banking space

By: Edwin Naidu  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- Khensani joined Nedbank in September 2017 as Executive Head of Group Marketing before being promoted to her current role and the Nedbank Group Exco in May 2018. Her 20-year marketing career has afforded her invaluable experience in several leading South African and multinational organisations.
- After starting as an assistant brand manager at Unilever, she rose to eventually head up the Skin Category for Unilever in Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey. Before joining Nedbank, various leadership and executive roles followed this in Diageo, South African Breweries and Vodacom.
- Khensani has a BCom from the University of the Witwatersrand, an MBA from GIBS and an Advanced Management Program from Harvard Business School, where she was nominated as representative for that cohort. She is a member of Effie Awards South Africa and the Loeries boards, a Jury President for the Bookmarks Awards, and a sought-after public speaker.



Khensani

As a young girl from a rural village in Eswatini, she wanted to boldly go “where no man has gone before”. But Captain Kirk and his merry men ensured that women must wait their turn in space – in reality and on the television screens. Khensani loves reading. Her favourite teacher gave free rein to her vivid imagination. She wanted to become an astronaut. While her desire did not materialise, she has excelled in her chosen space in the marketing world. Today, Khensani, the 2023 Scopen Top Most Admired Marketer in South Africa, still has an expansive imagination. But she is focused on doing good as the charismatic and much-loved leader as Nedbank Group Executive for Marketing and Corporate Affairs. It’s been an incredible journey for the young girl born in the rural area of Fonteyn in the country formerly known as Swaziland. She never dreamed that all that she had achieved would be possible. But she told delegates at the International Advertising Association conference in Malaysia from 6 to 8 March, where she spoke on the future being female, that her grandmother and mum believed in her. “And that’s why the past, the present, and the future are female. Believe it.” Previously, Khensani marketed and promoted skin care products, a famous liquor brand, and a mobile operator. The financial world, however, has taken her career into orbit, with countless industry awards,

making her one of the country’s most powerful women in marketing. As the marketing executive and a Nedbank Group executive leadership member, she ensures the cohesive and consistent alignment between marketing messaging, brand positioning, and business objectives across the group while providing strategic input into various Nedbank structures, committees, and partnerships. Khensani joined Nedbank in September 2017 as Executive Head of Group Marketing before being promoted to her current role and the Nedbank Group Exco in May 2018. Her 20-year marketing career has afforded her invaluable experience in several leading South African and multinational organisations. After starting as an assistant brand manager at Unilever, she rose to eventually head up the Skin Category for Unilever in Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey. Before joining Nedbank, various leadership and executive roles followed this in Diageo, South African Breweries and Vodacom. Khensani has a BCom from the University of the Witwatersrand, an MBA from GIBS and an Advanced Management Program from Harvard Business School, where she was nominated as representative for that cohort. She is a member of Effie Awards South Africa and the Loeries boards, a Jury President for the Bookmarks Awards, and a sought-after public speaker. She has amassed several ac-

colades in recognition of her contribution to the industry, including top honours as winner of the Loeries 2021 “Marketing Leadership & Innovation” award and the “Marketing Industry Leader of the Year” award by AdFocus, as well as the 2022 “Most Admired Marketer in South Africa” award by Marklives.com. She was among the three most admired marketing professionals rated by marketers and agency professionals in the Agency Scope 2023/2024. Khensani recently shared memories of her favourite teacher in conversation.

What was their name?  
Mrs Brenton-Smith

Please share the name of the school attended and year/s.  
Malkerns Valley Primary in eSwatini 1984 to 1990

How did your favourite teacher endear themselves to you?  
She encouraged my love for reading. She would allow me to spend more time in the library than I was allowed to and even skip some extra murals because I was engrossed in a book and couldn’t put it down.

What subject/s did he/she teach you?  
She was my grade 1 teacher, so she taught me everything except the second language I was studying, French.

Did you look forward to their subject?  
I looked forward to class. It was a place where my imagination was allowed to wan-

der and flourish.

What did you like about your teacher?  
She allowed us as kids to lean into what we wanted whilst ensuring we achieved what was required to pass the grade.

What was your favourite subject at school?  
Overall, across primary and high school, English and history were taught. I loved English because, in literature, we had to read books...that seemed like an easy pass for me. History is essential because, to move forward, we must learn from the many stories of our past. They give us context and allow us to see the present in that context. Also, learning history builds up a repository of knowledge that allows one to engage in many topics.

Has this influenced your choice of career?  
Maybe a little bit. Indeed, brands have roots and histories that we must respect. So, as much as we can reposition brands, we must never forget where that brand comes from and build from that past to ensure that whilst we look forward...we look forward rooted in the past.

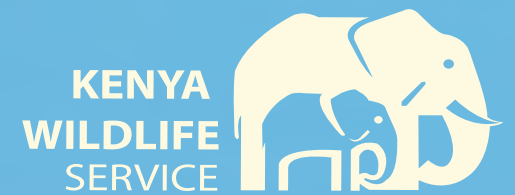
What was the one phrase from any teacher that stuck with you or inspired you?  
Don’t give up on what you enjoy, she would say – even if other people want you to do different things, I’m happy you know what you love doing and always keep at it.

Have you kept in touch with



Khensani as a child

your favourite teacher?  
Unfortunately, she passed on. I returned to primary school as part of my #40before40 journey. I planned 40 things to do before I turned 40, and one of them was to return to St Michael’s. It was surreal standing in front of that grade 1 class and reflecting on the fact that it underlined a big part of who I was. Why are teachers so important to society? Phew... a big question. In summary, they give kids the opportunities and possibilities for “A Better Life.” I know that without the education I received, I wouldn’t be where I am. Finally, what advice do you have for learners today? For a seed to grow, it has to land on fertile ground. Your attitude is the most important thing, no matter how good the teacher is. I realised that education was MY road to success, so really, during my schooling, even as I sometimes didn’t agree with my teachers, I used that as an opportunity to have a good debate where I could come of it more knowledgeable. I loved school because I was clear that school was going to be the road to my success. One final question: did you imagine ending up where you are today while at school, and why is it important to believe in one’s dreams? I thought I’d be an astronaut. At no point did Mrs. Brenton Smith say that’s not possible for a young black girl from the Southern tip of Africa. So, whilst I never became an astronaut, she encouraged me to lean into my dreams. – Inside Education



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## Diaspora

## Kenyan mountaineer embarks on daring quest to summit Mt. Everest without supplemental oxygen

*At 8,849 metres, Everest's summit has approximately one-third the air pressure that exists at sea level.*

By Kenneth Gachie  
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- “The challenge for me would be without supplemental oxygen; otherwise, I wouldn't feel like I've achieved much. So I want to see how my body can cope in such altitude,” Kirui said.
- “Climbers who ascend higher than 8,000 metres on Mt. Everest enter the ‘death zone.’ In this area, oxygen is so limited that the body's cells start to die, and judgment becomes impaired.”
- He added: “There, your body is not structured to survive with that oxygen concentration, which is around a third of what is at sea level. The idea is that when you are there, you get to the summit as fast as possible and then down before your body starts shutting down or dying.”
- Summiting Mt. Everest requires a lot of experience in mountaineering elsewhere, a certificate of good health, equipment and a trained Nepalese guide.



Kenyan mountaineer Cheruiyot Kirui. PHOTO | COURTESY

A Kenyan mountaineer has embarked on a daring quest to attempt a summit of the Mt. Everest without the use of supplemental oxygen. Cheruiyot Kirui, a banker working with KCB, will attempt to summit the earth's highest mountain above sea level in his quest to test the limitations of the human body. “Climbing Everest has been done before. I think the only difference is what I'm trying to do, climbing without supplemental oxygen. That has not been done by any African. It's the tough way to climb Mt Everest,” he told reporters. “It is riskier than climbing with supplemental oxygen.

So you need to be extremely fit. The success rate of climbing without supplemental oxygen is less than 40 per cent.” At 8,849 metres, Everest's summit has approximately one-third the air pressure that exists at sea level. This significantly reduces a climber's ability to breathe in enough oxygen. Because of this, scientists have determined that the human body is not capable of remaining indefinitely above 6,000 metres. The banker added that climbing with supplemental oxygen will be quite easy, and that is not what he wants. “The challenge for me would

be without supplemental oxygen; otherwise, I wouldn't feel like I've achieved much. So I want to see how my body can cope in such altitude,” Kirui said. “Climbers who ascend higher than 8,000 metres on Mt. Everest enter the ‘death zone.’ In this area, oxygen is so limited that the body's cells start to die, and judgment becomes impaired.” He added: “There, your body is not structured to survive with that oxygen concentration, which is around a third of what is at sea level. The idea is that when you are there, you get to the summit as fast as possible and then down before your body starts shutting

down or dying.” Summiting Mt. Everest requires a lot of experience in mountaineering elsewhere, a certificate of good health, equipment and a trained Nepalese guide. The snow and ice on the mountain create deadly hazards, such as avalanches, and there is only a limited climbing season due to bad weather conditions. Kirui says he would conquer that with him being in good shape. “You have to be in really good shape to be able to get to the summit and down before your body shuts down,” he stated. The mountain, which lies at a latitude of about 28 de-

grees, straddles the borders of Nepal and China. Kirui developed this passion during a work boot camp at Outward Bound Training Centre in Kajiado County. In 2014, he climbed Mt Kenya during the Easter holidays and Kilimanjaro. He has now climbed Mt Kenya more than 15 times. “I've lost count. The last two weekends, I climbed Mt Kenya. The next two weekends, I'll be there still. I climb up and down in less than seven hours. It has become relatively easier over the years,” he said.

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## Indonesia

## The famous shadow theater in Indonesia

By: Usanova Muhklisa Tangirbek  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



## Worth Noting:

- The appearance of the first Wayang theater was based on religious ideas and was interpreted as a kind of prayer. Its main goal is to encourage people to do good and refrain from bad deeds, and now different religions and beliefs are being addressed on its stage.
- In Wayang theater, the main performer is known as dalang, he is the puppeteer and narrator of the work. Dalang skillfully controls his puppets behind the scenes, voices the characters, narrates the story and often does not forget dialogues and jokes to engage the audience.
- In wayang art, the dalang is a highly respected and respected figure, as they are responsible not only for the technical aspects of the stage, but also for conveying cultural, moral and spiritual teachings through the stories they present.

Shadow puppetry is a popular traditional heritage in Indonesia, particularly in Java and Bali. It is called Wayang Theater in Indonesia. The origin of the term Wayang is related to the term Waang, which means "shadow", "imagination" in the Javanese language. Nowadays, in Javanese and Indonesian dictionaries, wayang can refer to a puppet or puppet show. A puppeteer performs a shadow puppet behind a white cloth screen, which is lit behind so that the audience on the other side of the screen can see his shadow. At first, the white cloth was lit from the back by an oil lamp. It was called blencong. Currently, the backstage is lit by electric lights. The audience will learn the story of the shadows through the performance of the waang characters, whose images will appear on the screen. Despite the fact that Indonesia is recognized as the homeland of shadow theater, this type of traditional stage art also exists in China and India. But they made this decision because the wayang name and the main characters in the stories are reminiscent of Indonesian culture. It should be noted that in Indonesia itself there are several types of wayang by region:

Banjar Shadow Puppet (South Kalimantan)  
Wayang Palembang (South Sumatra)  
Betawi Wayang (Jakarta)  
Cirebon Shadow Puppet (West Java)  
Sasak leather doll (Lombok)  
Wayang Kulit Madura (Lost)  
Wayang Siam (Kelantan, Malaysia)

The appearance of the first Wayang theater was based on religious ideas and was interpreted as a kind of prayer. Its main goal is

to encourage people to do good and refrain from bad deeds, and now different religions and beliefs are being addressed on its stage. In Wayang theater, the main performer is known as dalang, he is the puppeteer and narrator of the work. Dalang skillfully controls his puppets behind the scenes, voices the characters, narrates the story and often does not forget dialogues and jokes to engage the audience. In wayang art, the dalang is a highly respected and respected figure, as they are responsible not only for the technical aspects of the stage, but also for conveying cultural, moral and spiritual teachings through the stories they present. The stories often depict episodes from ancient epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as well as local legends and moral tales. These epics are central to the Wayang Kulit tradition and are often adapted into shadow puppet theater performances, conveying moral and spiritual teachings through the characters and events depicted in the stories. In particular, the epic Ramayana tells the story of the rescue of Prince Rama's wife Sita, who was kidnapped by King Ravana. The story deals with themes of duty, honor, love, and the triumph of good over evil, which is why the Ramayana is so beloved in Southeast Asian cultures. The Mahabharata is also an ancient Indian epic that tells the story of the Kurukshetra war between two royal families, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Mahabharata is rich in complex situations, philosophical teachings, and moral processes, and its themes of righteousness, loyalty, and honor are often reflected in Wayang theater.

In addition to these epics, Wayang Kulit also incorporates local folklore, legends, and moral stories. Cultural traditions provide a variety of stories that entertain, educate, and emotionally support youth and visitors to the country. Dalang and Kui are also famous for their skills in wayang theater. The theater of living shadows serves to increase the flow of tourists to Indonesia. Making shadow puppets is a complex task, which is done by skilled craftsmen. These craftsmen are required to know national traditions, national decorations and national folklore well. In particular, making dolls includes several stages:

**Skin preparation.** The process begins with the preparation of buffalo hide, which is usually used to build dolls. Leather is moistened, scraped and stretched to achieve the desired thickness and texture for puppetry. Editing and cutting. Once the leather is ready, the craftsman carefully inscribes the intricate designs of the characters onto the leather, using tra-

ditional patterns as a guide. The designs are then precision cut, paying attention to preserving the details and maintaining the structural integrity of the dolls.

**Carving and shaping.** After the patterns are cut, the craftsman skillfully carves and shapes the leather, creating intricate details such as facial features, clothing and accessories for each doll. This delicate process requires precision and careful attention. Paint. The dolls are then painted with vibrant colors using natural dyes and pigments to bring the characters to life. Artists often use symbolic colors to express different qualities and emotions associated with traditional patterns and symbols. **Assembly:** After the painting is completed, the various parts of the doll like the body, arms and head are joined together using small threads and ropes. Such delicate processes allow the puppet to move freely during the performance. Shadow theater works together with a traditional orchestra called gamelan, which is made up of traditional musical instruments called metallophones, gongs, and drums. Gamelan music serves the audience by adding the atmosphere of the play and its own rhythm to the stage. Performances are often part of religious ceremonies, celebrations and social gatherings, and contribute to the preservation and transmission of traditional Indonesian beliefs and values. The musical instruments in the traditional gamelan ensemble on the Wayang Theater stage are usually made of metal, wood and bamboo. Specifically, a metallophone is an instrument with a met-

al grid that is struck to produce musical tones. They are often of different sizes, made of bronze or iron. Gongs are another important part of the gamelan, large pieces of metal that produce resonant, resonant sounds when struck with a hammer. Drums in a gamelan ensemble provide rhythmic accompaniment and are often made of wood, metal, or animal skin. And flutes are made of bamboo and are blown from above to create musical notes. In the wayang theater performance, the gamelan ensemble plays a crucial role in providing musical accompaniment to the shadow puppet theater. Each instrument is played using a hammer or hand technique to produce different tones and rhythms. The musicians follow the cues and directions of the dalang, respond to the movements and emotions of the shadow puppet characters, and work closely together for the perfect performance of the stage piece.

Wayang Kulit Theater was recognized by UNESCO on November 7, 2003 as an outstanding cultural work in the field of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. If you go to Indonesia, be sure to visit the Wayang Theater and enjoy it.

*Usanova Muhklisa Tangirbek was born on February 26, 2003 in Zaamin District, Jizzakh Region. Currently, she is a 2nd year student of the Faculty of Eastern Civilization and History of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies. Her initial achievements are the 1st place in the Zakovat intellectual game "Creative" team at the university.*



Diaspora

# ‘Concerted global push’ for Sudan ceasefire is essential: Guterres

*“It is a war on the many thousands of civilians who have been killed, and tens of thousands more maimed for life, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.*

By: Christine Muchira and /Release  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



© WFP/World Relief People wait for the distribution of emergency food and nutrition assistance in West Darfur.

## Worth Noting:

- Guterres said latest reports of escalating hostilities in El Fasher – the capital of North Darfur – “are a fresh cause for deep alarm.”
- Over the weekend, RSF-affiliated militias attacked and burnt villages west of the city leading to widespread new displacement.
- “Let me be clear: Any attack on El Fasher would be devastating for civilians and could lead to full-blown intercommunal conflict across Darfur”, said the UN chief.
- “It would also upend aid operations in an area already on the brink of famine, since El Fasher has always been a critical UN humanitarian hub. All parties must facilitate the safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and supplies through all available routes into El Fasher.”

“The world is forgetting about the people of Sudan” the UN chief warned on Monday, calling for a boost in humanitarian funding and a global push for peace to end a year of brutal fighting between rival militaries. With attention over the weekend focused on the Middle East he said the conflict between the national army and Rapid Support Forces militia had turned into “a war being waged on the Sudanese people.”

“It is a war on the many thousands of civilians who have been killed, and tens of thousands more maimed for life, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

“It is a war on the 18 million people facing acute hunger and the communities now staring down the terrifying threat of famine in the months ahead.”

No aspect of civilian life has been spared, including rampant sexual violence and the targeting of aid convoys and aid workers. Meanwhile, the violence which erupted in and around the capital Khartoum a year ago, has forced more than eight million to flee their homes while two million have become refugees. One year on, half of Sudan’s population needs lifesaving assistance.

**El Fasher tinderbox**  
Guterres said latest reports of escalating hostilities in El Fasher – the capital of North Darfur – “are a fresh cause for deep alarm.” Over the weekend, RSF-affiliated militias attacked and burnt villages west of the city leading to widespread new displacement.

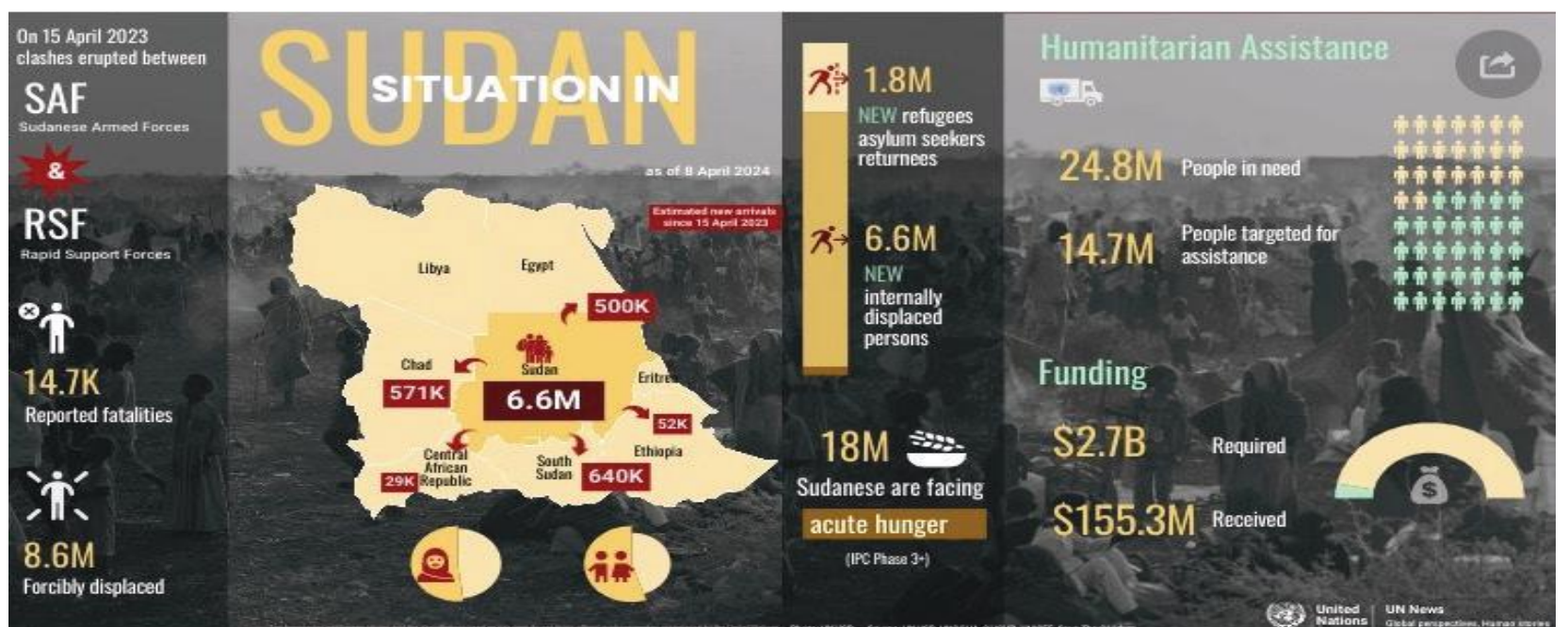
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A path out of the nightmare Noting the international conference on the Sudan crisis taking place in Paris on Monday, the Secretary-General said Sudanese “desperately need the support and generosity of the global community to help them through this night-

mare.” A \$2.7 billion Humanitarian Response Plan for Sudan is only six per cent funded while the \$1.4 billion Regional Refugee Response Plan was only seven per cent funded. He said all combatants had made promises to ensure full humanitarian access to allow vital aid to reach civilians. “They must heed the UN Security Council’s call to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and to protect civilians.” But the Sudanese people need more than aid, “they need an end to the bloodshed. They need peace”, Guterres continued.

**Political solution is the only solution**  
“The only path out of this horror is a political solution.

At this critical moment, in addition to global support for aid, we need a concerted global push for a ceasefire in Sudan followed by a comprehensive peace process.” He noted that his Personal Envoy, Ramtane Lamamra, is working tirelessly to mediate more talks between the rival generals. “Coordinated international efforts will be essential to amplify joint action”, and work must continue on Sudan’s democratic transition, which was derailed by a military coup in late 2021. He said this must be an inclusive process: “I will not relent in my calls for all parties to silence the guns and meet the aspirations of the Sudanese people for a peaceful and secure future.”



# Violations of women's reproductive health rights trigger rise in preventable deaths

By: Christine Muchira/Release  
xxxxxxxxxx



© UNFPA Mali/Amadou Maiga A woman with her baby listens to UNFPA staff at an awareness raising session on gender-based violence at the One Stop Centre in Sominé Dolo Hospital.

## Worth Noting:

• But progress is slowing down or stalled in several key areas. In a world where a quarter of women cannot say no to sex with their partner and nearly one in 10 have no say over contraception, 800 women die every day giving birth a disturbing figure that has remained unchanged since 2016.

• Nearly 500 of those preventable deaths per day are happening in countries living through humanitarian crises and conflicts.

• “The world made zero progress in saving women from preventable deaths in pregnancy and childbirth,” said Kanem, adding that for the first time, data was collected on whether women’s bodily autonomy is strengthening over time.

• In 40 per cent of countries where information is available, autonomy is weakening due to an inability to reach “those furthest behind”, she added.

African women are 130 times more likely to die due to pregnancy or childbirth complications than women in Europe and Northern America, the UN sexual and reproductive health agency (UNFPA) said in a new report published on Wednesday.

Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending inequalities in sexual and reproductive health and rights, reveals that more than half of all preventable maternal deaths occur in countries which are in a state of crisis or distress. It highlights the role that racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination play in blocking progress on sexual and reproductive health issues.

Women and girls trapped in poverty are more likely to die prematurely due to lack of sufficient healthcare if they belong to minority groups or are trapped in a conflict setting, according to the findings.

Overall, there have been significant advances in sexual and reproductive health it became a global sustainable development priority three decades ago.

“In the space of a generation, we have reduced the unintended pregnancy rate by nearly one fifth, lowered the maternal death rate by one third, and secured laws against domestic violence in more than 160 countries,” UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem said, launching the report.

### Stalled progress

But progress is slowing down or stalled in several key areas. In a world where a quarter of women cannot say no to sex with their partner and nearly one in 10 have no say over contraception, 800 women die every day giving birth a disturbing figure that has remained unchanged since 2016.

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pening in countries living through humanitarian crises and conflicts.

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In 40 per cent of countries where information is available, autonomy is weakening due to an inability to reach “those furthest behind”, she added.

There is a clear disparity between the global North and South, West and East, when it comes to contraceptives, safe birth services, respectful maternity care, and other essential services, the report documents.

### Pockets of inequality

Yet, even within those regions there are “pockets of inequality”, the report underscores. Women of Afri-

can descent in the Americas face higher maternal mortality rates compared to white women, which is especially evident in the United States where it’s three times the national average.

Indigenous and ethnic minorities also face elevated risks related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Within Europe, in Albania, for example, over 90 per cent of Roma women from the most marginalized socioeconomic groups had serious problems in accessing healthcare compared with only five per cent of ethnic Albanian women from the most privileged strata.

Additionally, women with disabilities are up to ten times more likely to experience gender-based violence, and individuals of diverse sexual orientation and gender expression encounter significant violence and barriers to care.

### No ‘one-size-fits-all’ solu-

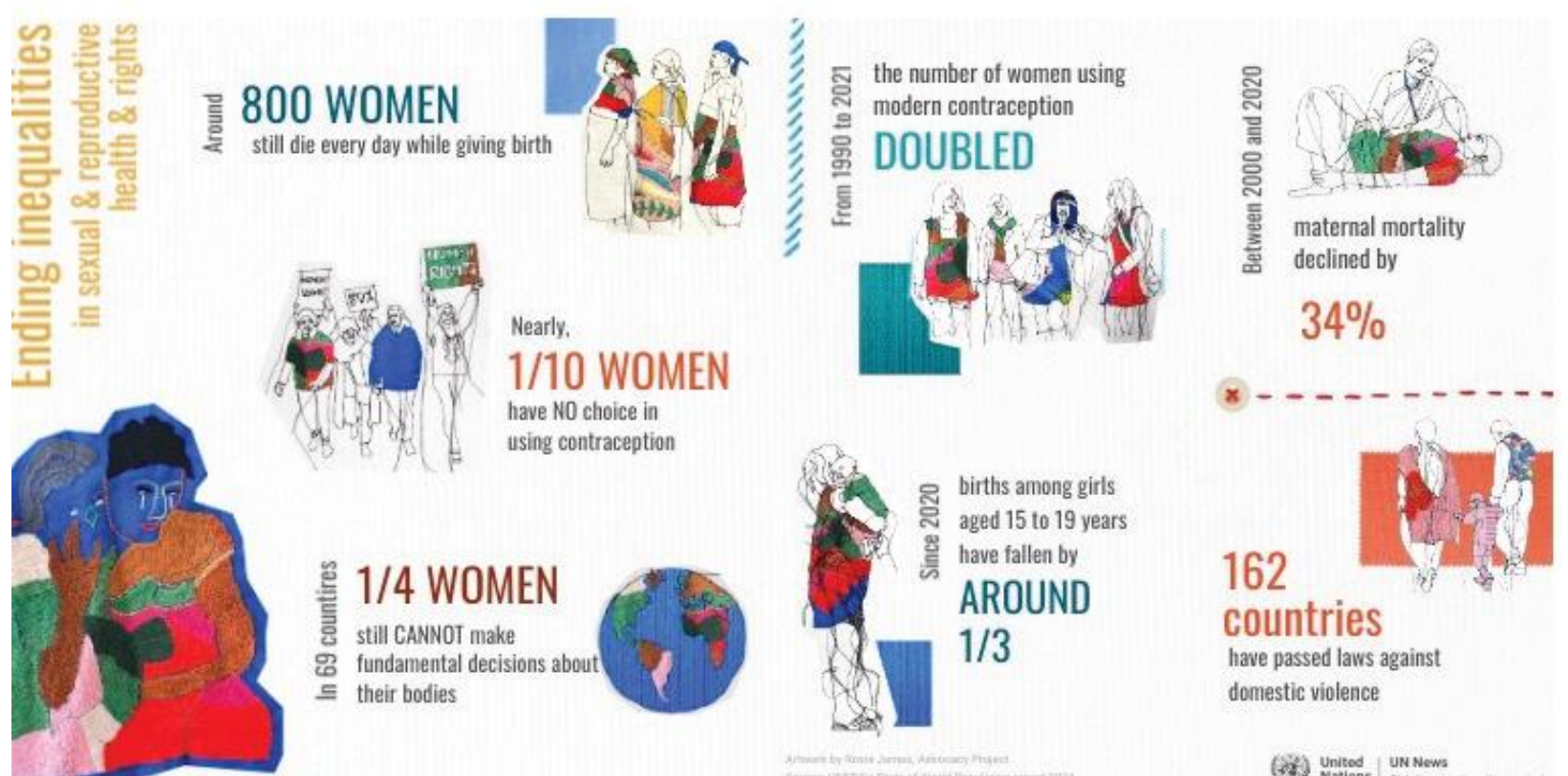
tions

The report highlights the importance of tailoring programmes to the needs of communities and empowering women and girls to craft and implement innovative solutions.

It also calculates that if additional \$79 billion are invested in low and middle-income countries by 2030, 400 million unplanned pregnancies could be averted, a million lives saved and \$660 billion in economic benefits could be generated.

The ability to secure reproductive health rights, the UNFPA Executive Director believes, is another major challenge.

“It is indeed the responsibility of men to be champions of women’s reproductive rights, of everyone’s reproductive rights,” Kanem said.

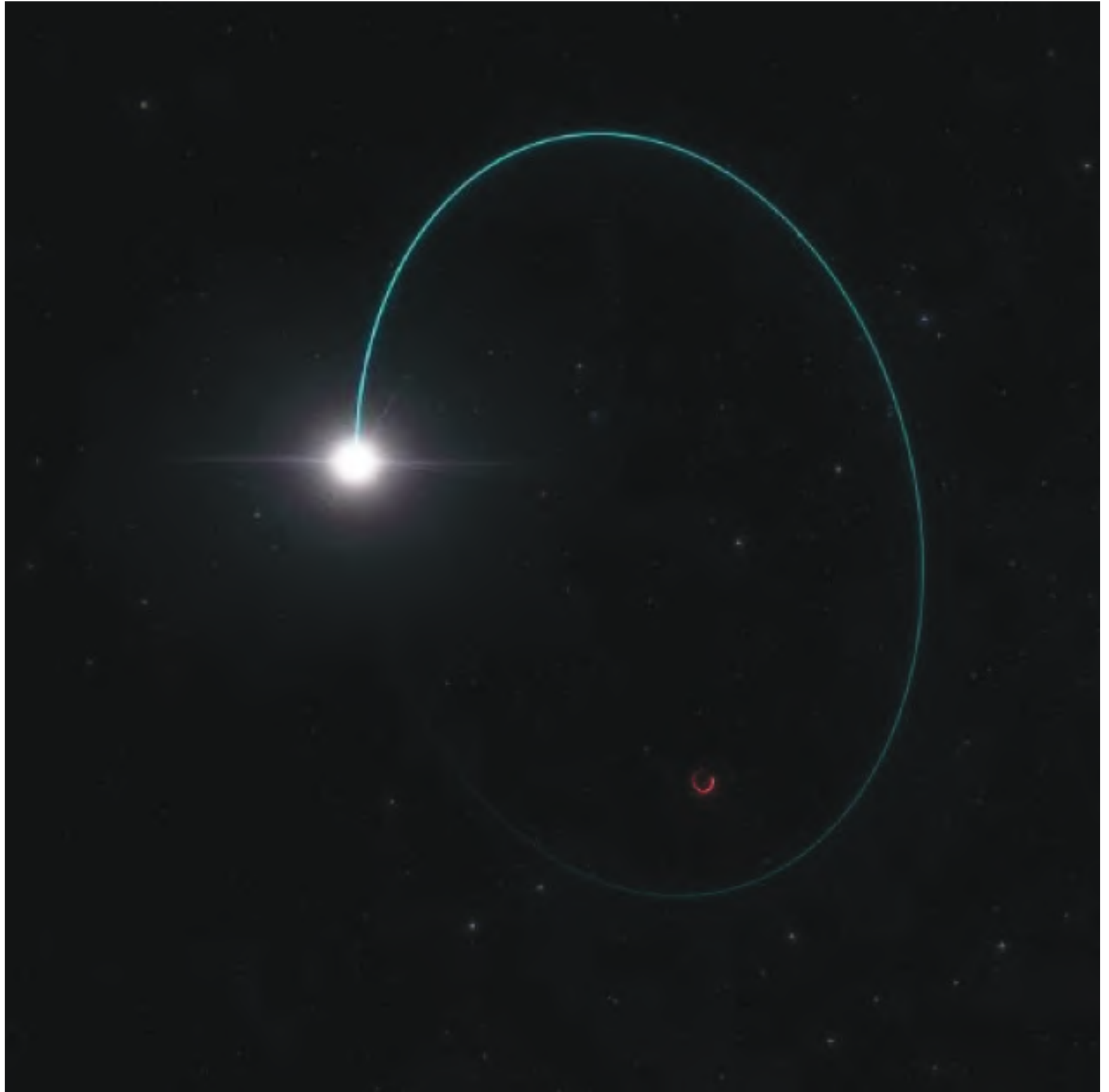


# Astronomers detect Milky Way's second-largest known black hole

By: Reuters  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

## Worth Noting:

- "This black hole is not only very massive, it is also very peculiar in many aspects. It is really something we never expected to see," said Pasquale Panuzzo, a research engineer at the French research agency CNRS working at the Observatoire de Paris and lead author of the study published in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, opens new tab.
- For instance, the black hole, called Gaia BH3, and its companion are travelling within the galaxy in the opposite direction of how stars typically orbit in the Milky Way.
- Gaia BH3 probably formed after the death of a star that was more than 40 as massive as the sun, the researchers said.
- Black holes that result from the collapse of a single star are called stellar black holes. Gaia BH3 is the largest-known stellar black hole, according to astronomer and study co-author Tsevi Mazeh of the Tel Aviv University in Israel.



An artist's impression shows the orbits of the most massive stellar black hole in our galaxy, dubbed Gaia BH3, and a companion star, in this handout image obtained by Reuters on April 16, 2024. European Southern Observatory/L. Calcada/Handout via REUTERS

Astronomers have discovered a black hole with a mass about 33 times greater than that of our sun, the biggest one known in the Milky Way aside from the supermassive black hole lurking at the center of our galaxy. The newly identified black hole is located about 2,000 light-years from Earth - relatively close in cosmic terms - in the constellation Aquila, and has a companion star orbiting it, researchers said on Tuesday. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km). Black holes are extraordinarily dense objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape, making it difficult to spot them. This one was identified through observations made in the European Space Agency's Gaia mission, which is creating a huge stellar census because it caused

a wobbling motion in its companion star. Data from the European Southern Observatory's Chile-based Very Large Telescope and other ground-based observatories were used to verify the black hole's mass. "This black hole is not only very massive, it is also very peculiar in many aspects. It is really something we never expected to see," said Pasquale Panuzzo, a research engineer at the French research agency CNRS working at the Observatoire de Paris and lead author of the study published in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, opens new tab. For instance, the black hole, called Gaia BH3, and its companion are travelling within the galaxy in the opposite direction of how stars typically orbit in the Milky Way. Gaia BH3 probably formed after the death of a star that

was more than 40 as massive as the sun, the researchers said. Black holes that result from the collapse of a single star are called stellar black holes. Gaia BH3 is the largest-known stellar black hole, according to astronomer and study co-author Tsevi Mazeh of the Tel Aviv University in Israel. Stellar black holes are dwarfed in size by the supermassive black holes inhabiting the centre of most galaxies. One such black hole called Sagittarius A\*, or Sgr A\*, is located at the heart of the Milky Way. It possesses 4 million times the mass of our sun and is located about 26,000 light-years from Earth. Gaia BH3's progenitor star was composed almost entirely of hydrogen and helium. Stars in the early universe had such a chemical composition, known as low

metallicity. This star had formed relatively early in the universe's history - perhaps 2 billion years after the Big Bang event. When that star exploded at the end of its lifespan - called a supernova - it blasted some material into space while the remnant violently collapsed to form a black hole. The discovery of Gaia BH3, according to Panuzzo, supports stellar evolution models showing that massive stellar black holes can be produced only by a low metallicity star like this one's progenitor star. Gaia BH3's companion star, just as old as the other one was, is about 76% of the mass of the sun and a bit colder, but around 10 times more luminous. It orbits the black hole on an elliptical path at a distance varying between about 4.5 times the distance between Earth

and the sun - a measure called an astronomical unit (AU) - and 29 AU. By way of comparison, Jupiter orbits around five AU from the sun and Neptune around 30 AU. "The surprising result for me was the fact that the chemical composition of this companion star does not show anything special, so it was not affected by the supernova explosion of the black hole," Observatoire de Paris astronomer and study co-author Elisabetta Caffau said. Scientists are not sure just how big stellar black holes can be. "The maximum mass for a stellar black hole is a matter of active scientific debate," Panuzzo said.

## Dozens of jurors ruled out as historic Trump trial begins

Donald Trump's unprecedented criminal trial has begun with half of a group of potential jurors ruled out within minutes on impartiality grounds.

By: BBC.  
xxxxxxxxxxxx



A view from inside the courthouse for Trump's historic trial

Dozens of jurors ruled out as historic Trump trial begins  
By BBC

Donald Trump's unprecedented criminal trial has begun with half of a group of potential jurors ruled out within minutes on impartiality grounds.

Trump denies falsifying business records to conceal a hush-money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels.

Sixty of 96 potential jurors were quick to say in the New York court that they could not be impartial.

Those left were then asked multiple questions, including about their news and book reading habits.

"I just couldn't do it," one prospective juror was heard saying as she left court on Monday.

The dismissals were an indication of how challenging it could be to find a group of 12 impartial jurors for a case concerned with a high-profile sex scandal involving a former president running once again for the White House.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office alleges that Trump directed his former attorney, Michael Cohen, to pay Ms Daniels \$130,000 (£104,000) in exchange for her silence about an alleged sexual encounter that the former president denies took place.

Prosecutors say he did so to "unlawfully influence" the 2016 election. Trump has pleaded not guilty.

Jury selection began in the afternoon. The judge started by dismissing jurors who raised their hand to say they could not be impartial, leaving around 34 people.

Those left were then grilled on 42 questions in the jury questionnaire, including on their news-reading habits, whether they had attended any Trump rallies or read any of the former president's books.

Eighteen were placed at random in the jury box, and they answered the questionnaire one by one.

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One man from Midtown Manhattan said that he read the Wall Street Journal. Another from the Upper West Side said his radio habits included listening to whatever was on when he was in the shower. He later clarified he meant NPR.

Neither was dismissed immediately.

A woman was asked: "Do you have any strong opinions or firmly held beliefs about former president Donald Trump, or the fact that he is a current candidate for president, that would interfere with your ability to be a fair and impartial juror?"

She simply replied "yes" and was dismissed, although Mr Trump's team initially objected to excusing her for reasons they did not explain.

All jurors will remain anonymous due to the high-profile nature of the case, although Mr Trump's legal team and prosecutors will know their identities.

Quiet in the court

witnesses.

The order was expanded to relatives of those involved after Trump attacked Justice Merchan's daughter on social media.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office asked Justice Merchan to fine Mr Trump \$3,000 (£2,400) in total for three posts. That includes a post on Saturday when he called his former attorney - and future trial witness - Michael Cohen a "disgraced attorney and felon".

The judge set a hearing date of 24 April to make a decision.

The judge used the morning to resolve what evidence would be permissible in court.

The defence and prosecution sparred over leaked audio of Mr Trump that came out just before the 2016 election. In the clip, taken from a recording of NBC show Access Hollywood, Trump talks about grabbing women by their genitals.

Prosecutors asked to include an email chain between Trump campaign officials and the Washington Post reporter who broke the Access Hollywood story, which included a transcript of the tape.

The judge refused to allow the audio to be played for jurors, but said prosecutors could refer to what Trump said on the tape.

Throughout the day, Trump was cheered on by dozens of people who rallied peacefully

ly but loudly outside court.

They included a man playing The Star-Spangled Banner on the flute for hours and a Trump impersonator wearing a blond wig and red tie.

There were others decidedly less enthusiastic about the former president. One held a banner that stated: "Convict Trump already."

The hush-money trial is just one of four criminal cases the former president is facing. But it could be the only one to go to trial before the 2024 presidential election, a rematch between Trump, a Republican, and the incumbent, Joe Biden, a Democrat.

If convicted, Mr Trump would be the first major-party nominee to run for president as a convicted felon. No law prevents him from doing so.

Justice Merchan also rejected a defence request that Trump be excused from the trial next Thursday so that he can attend Supreme Court arguments on the immunity claims he raised in another of his criminal cases.

"Arguing before the Supreme Court is a big deal," Justice Merchan said, before adding: "A trial in New York Supreme Court... is also a big deal. I will see him here next week."

### Worth Noting:

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EPA Trump supporters in New York