

The world of Indian entertainment is making room for a new television reality show

BOLLYWOOD

Veteran Indian film and TV serial maker Mahesh Poojary is working on a reality show :



BIG BUZZ IN BOLLYWOOD: REALITY SHOW SET TO WOW TV VIEWERS IN INDIA AND DIASPORA

By: Shamlal Puri
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& Senior Editor – UK
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Ms Corina Manuel, head of Times of India, was the chief guest at the launch of the Reality Show.



Producers Mahesh Poojary, Priyanka Dubbey (centre) and lead actor Gautam Singh

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News Backpage
National education system and foreign standards



One of Zimbabwe's Finest Schools Father Flower Group of Schools Makes History During Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony

One of Zimbabwe's Private School Father Flower Group of Schools based in Kadoma recently hosted a highly anticipated Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony held at their Ngezi School grounds in Kadoma, bringing together students, parents and guardians from

various schools within the group. The ceremony was a grand celebration of academic excellence, public speaking prowess, and outstanding achievements in extracurricular activities and nearly five thousand parents braved the scorching heat to come and celebrate with one of the

respected schools in Zimbabwe. With its rich cultural heritage and commitment to educational excellence, Zimbabwe's education sector continues to thrive, and events like these showcase the talents and potential of its young citizens. Father Flower Group of Schools is a shining

example of this commitment, providing quality education and opportunities for its students to excel.

The ceremony, was a grand celebra-

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Ruto Secures Zelensky's Help to Free Kenyans Captured in Russia-Ukraine War Europe



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China's moral high ground in trade: Steadfast fairness amid shifting tide America-China



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The Digital Voice Of A Generation This is the generation that no longer waits to be spoken for Kenya



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Africa's Youth Rise With Vision For Africa My Home, My Future, During The Second All Africa Youth Congress In Nairobi Africa



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The Unique Features of Traditional Uzbek Music and Dance Art



Rahmataliyeva Aidaxon

Worth Noting:

- The musical culture and dance art of the Uzbek people have a long and rich history. Over the centuries, the professional music created by musicians and singers in folk oral traditions, as well as the dances performed by talented dancers, have testified to this heritage.
- First of all, it is appropriate to talk about the art of music, because dance primarily emerges on the basis of music. In Uzbek music, one of the most important forms is maqom. Maqoms are traditional musical structures that have developed over centuries, each possessing its own unique melodic and rhythmic composition. They are often performed to express human emotions or to tell a story.

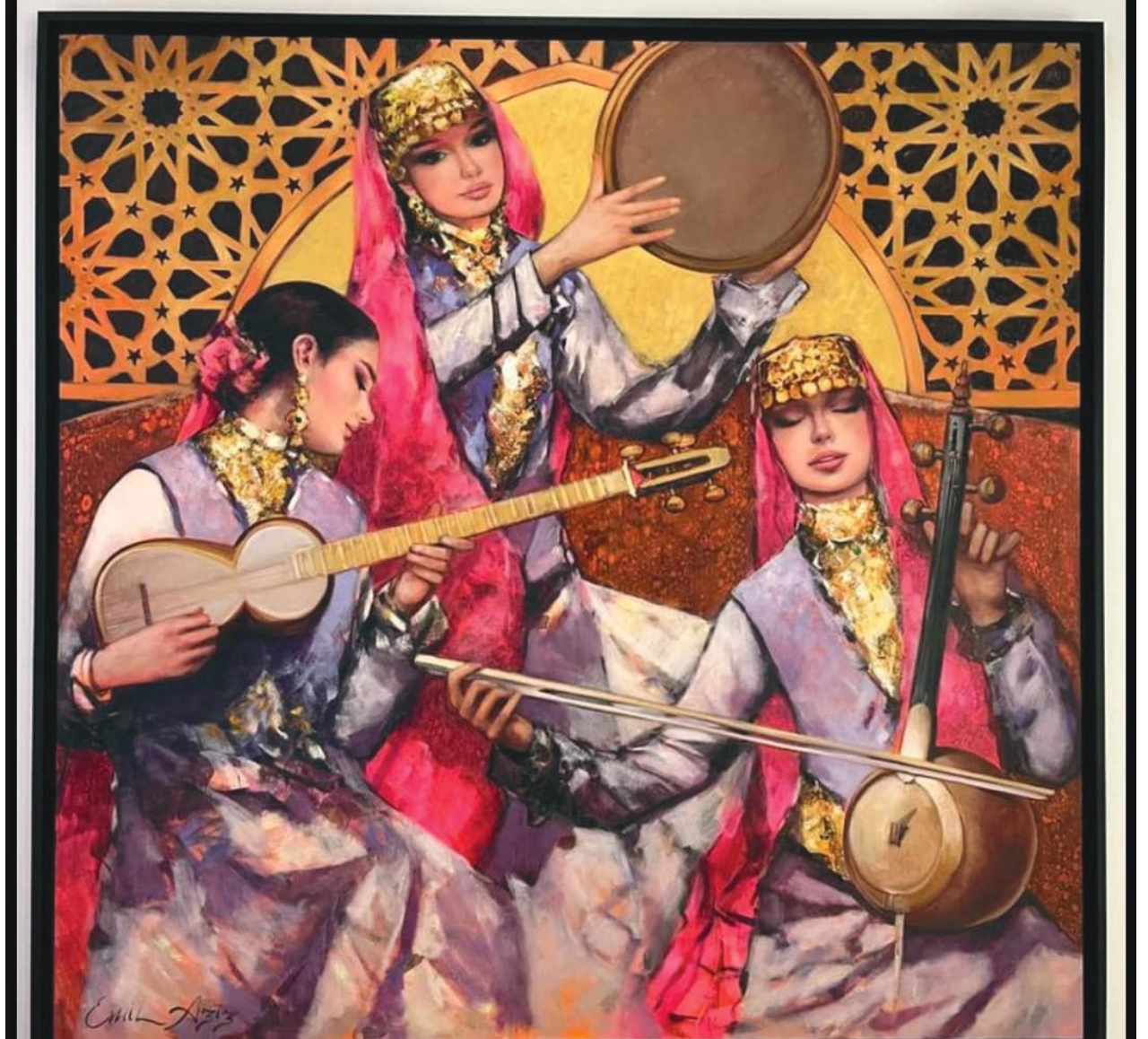
Traditional music and dance art are integral parts of the cultural heritage of the Uzbek people, reflecting their cultural life, customs, and emotions. Therefore, highlighting the distinctive features of Uzbek musical art, explaining its rich cultural heritage, and studying its role in the modern world are among the important issues. This article provides an analytical discussion about the significance of music, maqom performance, singing traditions, and the unique characteristics of dance art.

Keywords: culture and art, musical art, national singing, maqom, melody, vocal, creativity, renaissance, performance, musical styles.

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Over the years, great efforts have been made in our country to study and develop maqom art. In particular, the revival and recording of the Uzbek "Shashmaqom," which emerged in the 16th century in Bukhara and Samarkand, became a significant cultural treasure for musical art. Many renowned artists and singers have played an invaluable role in introducing this music to the world.



The Unique Features of Traditional Uzbek Music and Dance Art

Among them, the People's Artist of Uzbekistan and classical-folkloric composer Turg'un Almatov immortalized such masterpieces as "Segoh," "Chorgoh," "Buzruk," "Navo," and "Tanovar." These compositions and their performers are considered inseparable jewels of Uzbek musical art and will continue to hold an honorable place in the future.

Like other nations, the Uzbek people have also made their mark in history through their dances. In Uzbek dance art, there are traditional dances such as "Lazgi," "Yalla," and "Raqs," each having its own distinctive character and meaning. The movements in these

dances are expressive and symbolic. Dancers convey emotions through hand gestures, body movements, and step patterns that align with the rhythm of the music.

Dance plays an important role in Uzbek cultural and social events. It unites people and helps preserve cultural traditions.

During the years of independence, many talented artists have contributed to the development of dance art. Among them are Tamaraxonim, Mukarrama Turg'unboyeva, Gavhar Rahimova, Roziya Karimova, Qunduz Mirkarimova, Karim Rahimov, Qodir Mo'minov, Ma'mura Erga-

sheva, Yulduz Ismashova, Shokir Ahmedov, Gavhar Matyoqubova, Rushana Sultonova, Dilafroz Jabborova, Qizlarxon Do'st-muhamedova, and Malika Ahmedova.

In conclusion, traditional Uzbek music and dance art are vital means of expressing the nation's cultural heritage, customs, and emotions. They are not only forms of art but also play a significant role in social life. These art forms must be passed down from generation to generation, as they are essential in preserving Uzbekistan's rich culture and history.

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July 10, 2003, in Pop District, Namangan Region. She graduated from Secondary School No. 32 in her district and later completed her studies at the Faculty of Philology of Namangan State University.

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Digital Public Infrastructure

Survey Reveals Digital Public Infrastructure Could Unlock Africa's Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

By: Contributor
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Secure digital payment and identification systems could be the key to unlocking Africa's next wave of entrepreneurs and traders, according to new survey findings released by Co-Develop ahead of the Global DPI Summit 2025.

The survey, conducted online by Ipsos across six African markets — Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda — explored how citizens perceive and experience digital public infrastructure (DPI) and its potential to fuel business growth, trade, and job creation.

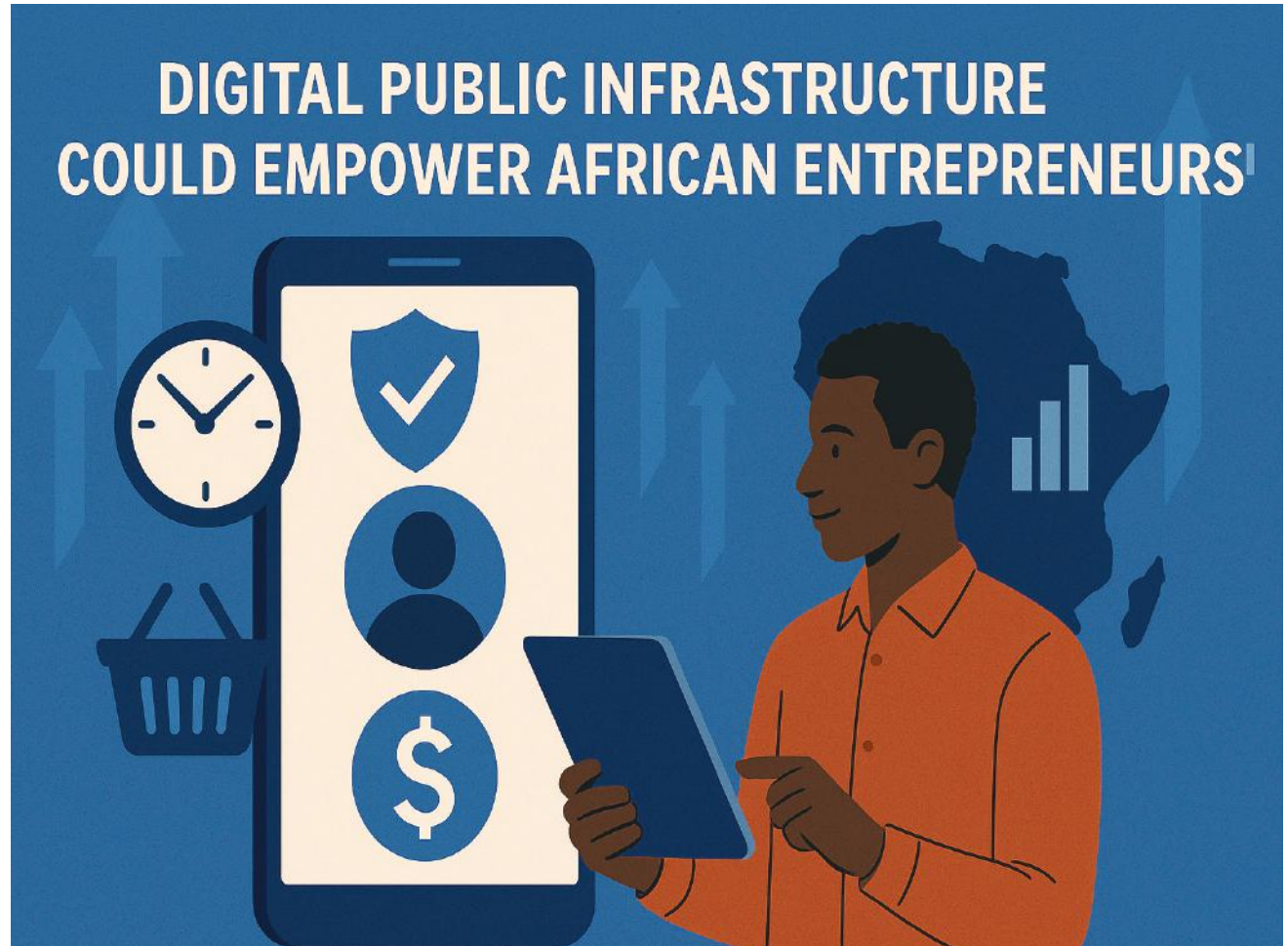
Co-Develop's Chief Executive Officer CV Madhukar said the results reinforce the central role of trust in building inclusive digital ecosystems.

"These survey findings reveal what we have long believed: trust is the foundation on which everything else builds," he said. "When 82% say they will share data if they understand what is being shared and why, they are setting the terms — transparency, agency, and proven safeguards."

Countries are making critical infrastructure decisions right now that will shape digital participation for decades. The question isn't whether to build digital systems, but how to build them as foundational public infrastructure that works for everyone."

Key Findings

1. Digital systems could spur entrepreneurship
Over four in ten respon-



dents (42%) said the ability to accept secure digital payments would encourage them to start or expand a business, while one in three (33%) cited digital identity verification of buyers and sellers as a key motivator. These ranked just behind better business knowledge (45%) and improved understanding of market demand (44%) among 19 potential factors for entrepreneurship. 2. DPI could connect markets and drive trade
More than half of current and aspiring business owners (55%) said easy-to-use digital payment systems

would help them buy or sell beyond their local areas. A further 48% said stronger fraud protection through digital verification would encourage cross-regional trading. The ability to trade via social media platforms also emerged as a major driver, selected by 55% of respondents.

3. DPI could expand access to jobs
A striking 82% of those surveyed agreed that digital services and platforms can help people like them find new or better jobs — highlighting the potential of digital tools to open income and em-

ployment opportunities.

4. Trust and data protection remain crucial

While respondents expressed strong willingness to share data, 82% said they would only do so if they understood what was being shared and why. The factors that would make them more comfortable are central to a DPI-based approach: protection from fraud and scams (67%), control over personal data (61%), and clear, transparent rules on its use (60%).

Africa's Digital Future

The findings suggest that as

African countries continue to expand their digital systems, DPI could serve as a catalyst for inclusive growth — lowering barriers to entry, empowering micro-entrepreneurs, and building trust in digital economies. Madhukar added that Co-Develop's work is focused on ensuring African priorities remain central in this digital transition. "People are ready," he said. "Now we must prove we can deliver infrastructure that lives up to their trust."

Worth Noting:

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Raila Odinga

The Raila Effect: How One Man Shaped Kenya's Political Soul

Raila Odinga's legacy is a masterclass in political courage, resilience, and the pursuit of justice. His journey, spanning over four decades, is not merely a chronicle of elections and titles—it is a testament to the power of conviction and the enduring spirit of reform.

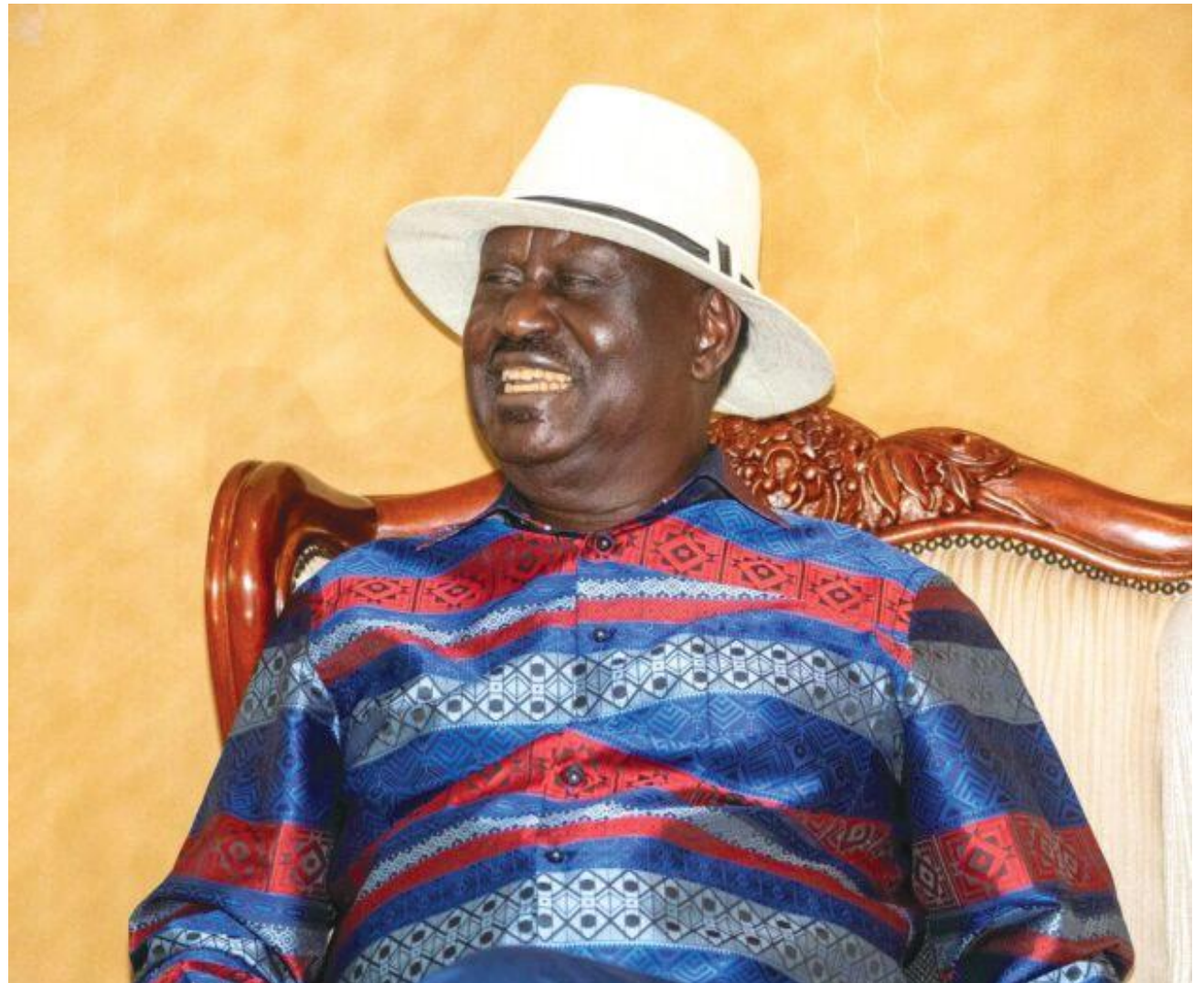
By Mwangi Karanja
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Raila Odinga's legacy is a masterclass in political courage, resilience, and the pursuit of justice. His journey, spanning over four decades, is not merely a chronicle of elections and titles—it is a testament to the power of conviction and the enduring spirit of reform. As Kenya reflects on his life following his passing in October 2025, the lessons embedded in his legacy offer a blueprint for leadership, civic engagement, and national unity.

Born in Maseno in 1945, Raila Odinga's early life was shaped by the political prominence of his father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first Vice President. Yet Raila carved his own path, one marked by defiance against authoritarianism and a relentless push for democratic reforms. His imprisonment in the 1980s for alleged involvement in the 1982 coup attempt did not break his resolve—it galvanized it. Raila emerged from detention not as a defeated man, but as a symbol of resistance, ready to challenge the status quo and demand a more inclusive Kenya.

One of the most profound lessons from Raila's legacy is the value of political courage. In 1994, he resigned from Parliament while serving under Ford–Kenya, only to seek re-election under the National Development Party (NDP). This move, rare and risky, demonstrated his willingness to act on principle rather than convenience. He won back his Langata seat in 1996, proving that conviction, when rooted in public trust, can triumph over political orthodoxy. Kenya's leaders today must learn that boldness is not about rhetoric—it is about action, especially when the stakes are high and the path uncertain.

Raila's role in Kenya's constitutional transformation cannot be overstated. He was a central figure in the push for the 2010 Constitution, a document that redefined governance, devolution, and civil liberties. His advocacy for a new constitutional order was not driven by personal gain but by a vision of a Kenya where power is decentralized and rights are protected. This commitment to structural change is a lesson in long-term thinking—



Kenya's former Prime Minister Raila Odinga died in October 2025 in India.

an antidote to the short-termism that often plagues political leadership.

Another defining feature of Raila's legacy is his capacity for reconciliation. After the disputed 2007 election and the violence that followed, Raila agreed to a power-sharing deal with President Mwai Kibaki, becoming Prime Minister in a coalition government. It was a moment that demanded humility and foresight. Rather than escalate tensions, Raila chose peace, prioritizing national stability over personal ambition. This act of statesmanship teaches that leadership is not just about winning—it is about healing, about knowing when to step back so a nation can move forward.

Raila's influence extended beyond politics into the realm of social justice. He championed the rights of marginalized communities, advocated for gender equality, and supported youth empowerment. His campaigns often included visits to remote regions, engaging with citizens whose voices were rarely heard in Nairobi. For many, especially in counties

like Garissa and Turkana, Raila was the first national leader to acknowledge their struggles and promise inclusion. His legacy reminds us that true leadership listens, learns, and lifts.

Despite never clinching the presidency, Raila's impact is arguably greater than many who held the office. He redefined opposition politics, transforming it from a reactive posture to a proactive force for accountability. His ability to mobilize millions, articulate alternative visions, and hold governments to account made him a cornerstone of Kenya's democratic architecture. The lesson here is that power is not confined to office—it resides in influence, in the ability to shape discourse and inspire change.

Raila's legacy also challenges the notion of political inheritance. As Prof. Makau Mutua aptly put it, "No one—and I mean nobody—can or will inherit Raila Odinga." His stature was built through decades of sacrifice, not handed down through party structures or family ties. Those who aspire to his level of influence must be

prepared to walk the long road, to endure setbacks, and to remain steadfast in their principles. Kenya's political future must be earned, not inherited.

In his final years, Raila continued to advocate for Pan-Africanism and regional integration. He served as the African Union High Representative for Infrastructure Development, pushing for connectivity and economic cooperation across borders. His vision extended beyond Kenya, embracing a continent united by shared goals and mutual respect. This continental outlook teaches that patriotism and globalism are not mutually exclusive—they can coexist, enriching both national and regional progress.

President William Ruto's decision to posthumously award Raila the Chief of the Golden Heart of Kenya (CGH) during the 2025 Mashujaa Day celebrations was a fitting tribute. It signaled national recognition of a man whose contributions transcended political rivalry. It also underscored the importance of hon-

oring those who dedicate their lives to public service, regardless of electoral outcomes. Raila's name now sits among Kenya's greatest heroes, inscribed under the public seal of the Republic.

As Kenya looks ahead, the challenge is to translate Raila's legacy into actionable lessons. Political parties must prioritize ideology over personality, institutions must uphold integrity, and citizens must remain vigilant and engaged. The youth, in particular, must draw inspiration from Raila's journey—not to mimic it, but to forge their own paths with the same spirit of resilience and purpose.

Raila Odinga's story is not just history—it is a mirror. It reflects our aspirations, our struggles, and our potential. It teaches that democracy is a journey, not a destination; that justice requires persistence; and that leadership is measured not by titles, but by impact. In remembering Raila, Kenya must recommit to the ideals he stood for: equity, unity, and the unwavering belief that a better future is always worth fighting for.

Worth Noting:

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Motivation

Guarding The Self Against Dangers Of Bad Company



By: Anthony Savio Herminio da Piedade Fernandes
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Worth Noting:

- The emotional consequences of bad company are equally damaging. Living among people who constantly criticize, complain, or indulge in conflict leads to mental and emotional exhaustion. Negativity spreads like smoke—it clouds one's thoughts and poisons one's outlook on life.
- A pessimistic environment breeds hopelessness and fear, making it difficult to stay positive or motivated. Envious and manipulative individuals often attack the confidence of those around them, feeding on others' insecurities.
- Over time, this erodes self-worth and independence. Instead of feeling valued and supported, one begins to feel small, inadequate, and uncertain. The constant drama and instability in negative circles keep a person emotionally restless and unable to focus. Without encouragement or inspiration, enthusiasm withers and stagnation sets in. The fire that once fueled personal or professional ambition fades, replaced by a dull sense of dissatisfaction.

Human beings are deeply social by nature. The company we keep shapes our thoughts, influences our decisions, and defines the course of our lives. While good company uplifts, bad company quietly corrodes the mind and character. Many people underestimate how easily negative influences can change them, but history and experience show that continuous exposure to immoral, unmotivated, or destructive individuals can lead even the strongest person astray. Avoiding bad company is not about isolation or pride; it is about preserving integrity, peace, and direction in life.

At the heart of moral decay lies the influence of one's companions. When surrounded by unethical or lazy individuals, one unconsciously begins to imitate their habits. Deceit, arrogance, gossip, and greed spread silently through imitation and normalization. Over time, the clear boundary between right and wrong blurs; actions once recognized as unacceptable start to feel ordinary. This gradual moral corrosion can destroy a person's values and make wrongdoing seem harmless. Furthermore, constant exposure to a polluted moral environment weakens spiritual strength. Faith, compassion, and reflection are replaced by cynicism and indifference. The conscience—our inner voice of right and wrong—begins to feel heavy with guilt, creating deep inner turmoil. A person caught in such surroundings loses moral clarity and peace of mind.

The emotional consequences of bad company are equally damaging. Living among people who constantly criticize, complain, or indulge in conflict leads to mental and emotional exhaustion. Negativity spreads like smoke—it clouds one's thoughts and poisons one's outlook on life. A pessimistic environment breeds hopelessness and fear, making it difficult to stay positive or motivated. Envious and manipulative individuals often attack the confidence of those around them, feeding on others' insecurities. Over time, this erodes self-worth and independence. Instead of feeling valued and supported, one begins to feel small, inadequate, and uncertain. The constant drama and instability in negative circles keep a person emotionally restless and unable to focus. Without encouragement



or inspiration, enthusiasm withers and stagnation sets in. The fire that once fueled personal or professional ambition fades, replaced by a dull sense of dissatisfaction. Socially, bad company damages reputation and relationships. Society judges individuals not only by their actions but also by the company they keep. Even if a person remains innocent, being associated with people known for immoral or irresponsible behavior creates suspicion. Once a reputation is damaged, rebuilding it becomes a long and painful process. Moreover, the effects reach into personal life. Family members and genuine friends often withdraw when they sense that someone is being influenced by the wrong crowd. This distance, though painful, usually arises from concern and disappointment. Over time, such alienation isolates the person within the very group that causes the harm. In addition, association with questionable circles leads to a loss of respect. People of integrity, mentors, and potential allies avoid close ties with those connected to bad influences, cutting off valuable networks of support. Once trust is broken, even sincere efforts are viewed with doubt. A person who allows bad company to shape their social image risks losing not only trust but also opportunities for collaboration, growth, and belonging.

The professional and personal consequences of bad associations can be long-lasting. Friends or peers who lack focus easily distract others from their goals. They replace ambition with temporary pleasures and purpose with procrastination. In such circles,

shortcuts and dishonesty often take the place of discipline and hard work. The result is predictable—declining academic performance, poor work ethic, and a loss of self-discipline. When irresponsibility is celebrated, self-control and diligence are ridiculed, leading to a collapse of motivation. Time, which is life's most valuable asset, is wasted in idle conversations, gossip, and unproductive entertainment. What seems like harmless leisure soon becomes a habit of avoidance and delay. Over time, these patterns create instability in the future. When principles weaken and consistency disappears, opportunities dry up. Careers falter, relationships fail, and financial security vanishes. What begins as a few bad friendships often ends as a life filled with broken promises and lost direction.

The risks of bad company extend beyond moral and emotional harm—they can also lead to tangible, sometimes irreversible consequences. Exposure to risky behavior is one of the most dangerous effects. A single compromise—trying a harmful substance, joining an illegal act, or following reckless advice—can spiral into criminal or destructive outcomes. Law enforcement and society rarely differentiate between active participants and associates; mere presence during wrongdoing can bring severe consequences. Moreover, financial losses often accompany such relationships. Greedy or manipulative individuals exploit the generosity and trust of others, borrowing money without repayment or involving them in deceitful ventures. The financial instability that follows can

take years to recover from. Health, too, suffers under negative influence. Stress, anxiety, addiction, and irregular lifestyles often develop when one lives amid toxic environments. Late nights, substance abuse, and lack of self-care become habits that drain vitality and peace. As physical health declines, mental clarity and emotional balance weaken further, trapping the person in a destructive cycle. The combined weight of moral failure, social isolation, and poor health eventually gives rise to deep regret. Many realize too late that years have been wasted in the wrong company—years that could have been spent growing, learning, and contributing meaningfully. This realization brings sorrow that no success can erase.

Regret is the final stage of a long chain of poor associations. It comes when one sees how easily small compromises turned into great losses. Bad company often enters life quietly—in the form of amusement, rebellion, or friendship—but its effects multiply over time. The loss of trust, respect, health, and peace accumulates until the person feels trapped in a life they never intended to live. Yet, this outcome is avoidable. The solution lies in awareness and courage: awareness of how deeply others influence us, and courage to step away when their presence harms our well-being.

Choosing the right company is an act of self-respect. Good friends challenge us to improve; they tell us the truth, encourage discipline, and celebrate our growth. They uplift our spirits rather than drain them. Surrounding ourselves with wise, kind, and motivated

individuals strengthens both character and destiny. Conversely, choosing bad company out of fear of loneliness or desire for approval is a dangerous trade. It may provide temporary acceptance but ultimately costs one's peace and potential.

Life offers countless opportunities to meet people, but not all of them deserve a place in our inner circle. Each person who enters our lives either adds to our growth or subtracts from it. That is why every association must be chosen with care. Moral strength, emotional stability, and professional success all depend on the quality of our relationships. Avoiding bad company is not about arrogance or separation—it is about maintaining clarity of purpose. It is a decision to value peace over popularity, integrity over influence, and long-term well-being over short-term pleasure.

The dangers of bad company extend to every dimension of human life—moral, emotional, social, professional, financial, and even physical. Continuous exposure to negative people weakens conscience, breeds negativity, destroys relationships, and leads to failure or regret. On the other hand, positive company inspires learning, strengthens character, and helps one rise above challenges. The wisdom of every culture and religion echoes this truth: "Associate with the wise and you shall become wise; walk with fools and you will suffer harm." To guard one's company is to guard one's future. In a world filled with distractions and temptations, the simplest yet most powerful choice we can make is to walk with those who make us better.

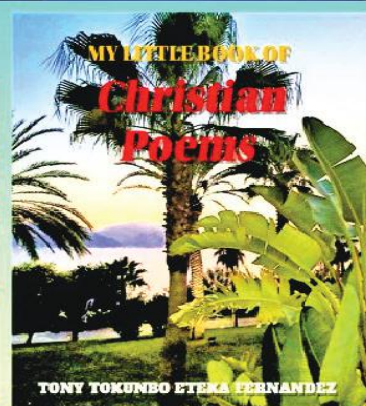
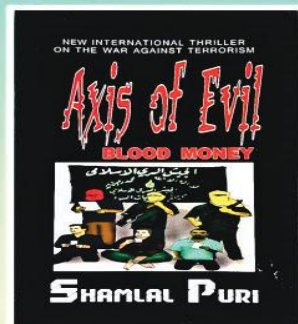
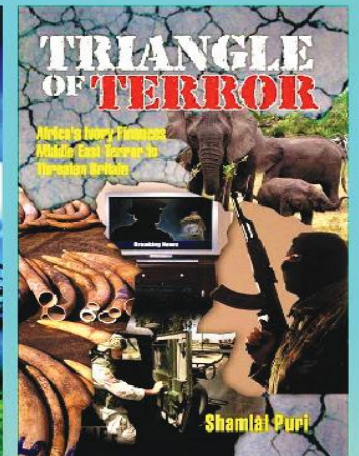
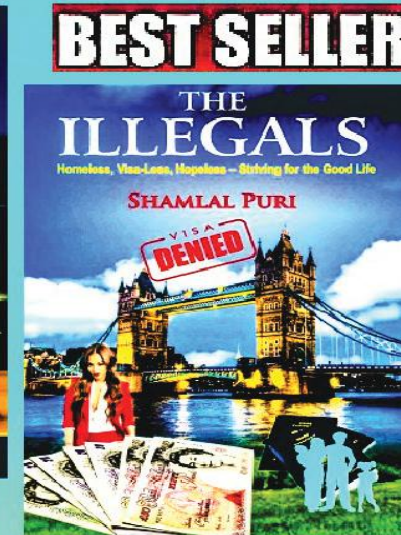
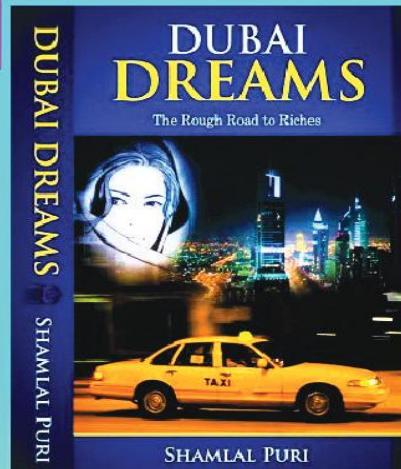
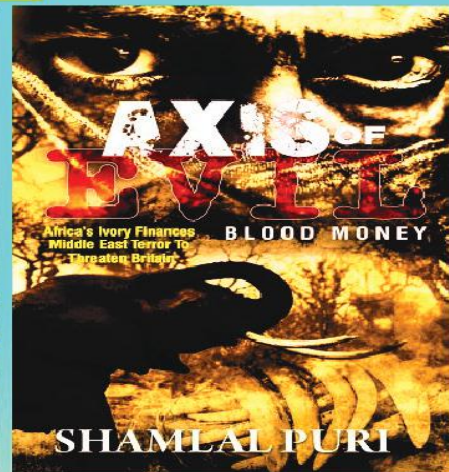
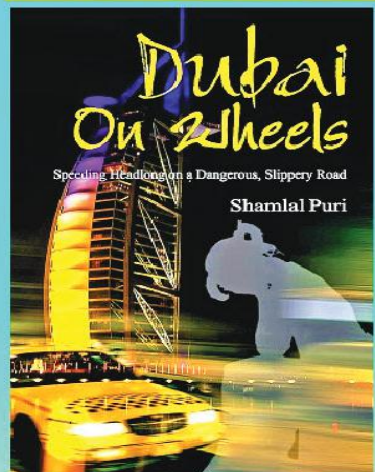
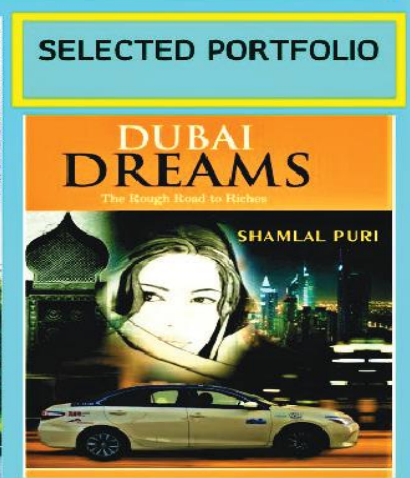
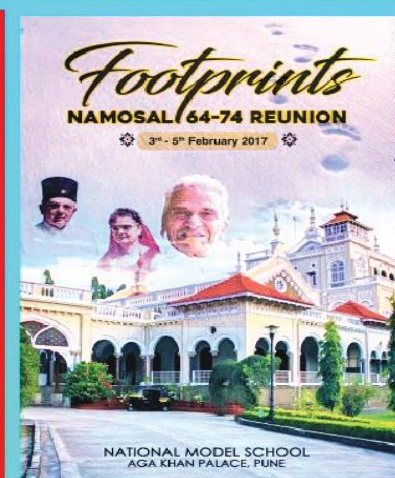
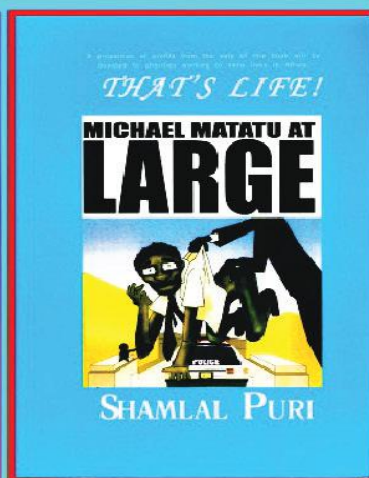
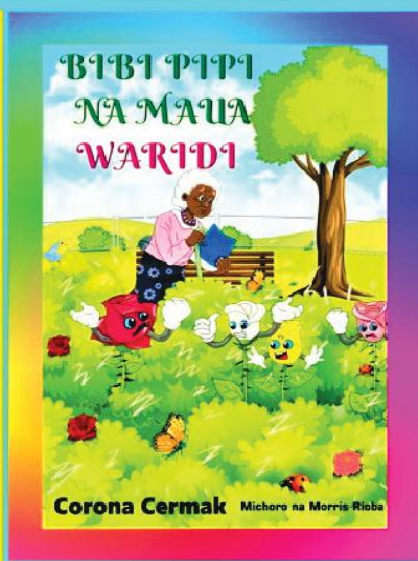
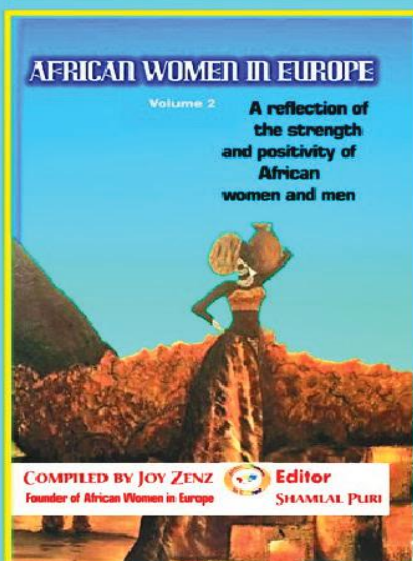
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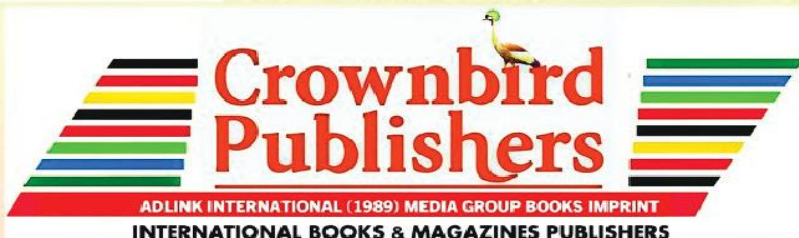
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Asian News

BIG BUZZ IN BOLLYWOOD: REALITY SHOW SET TO WOW TV VIEWERS IN INDIA AND DIASPORA



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

Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- Veteran Indian film and TV serial maker Mahesh Poojary is working on a reality show, *The Iconic*, and teamed up with Priyanka Dubbey.
- As a well-known figure in the film industry, Mr Poojary has worked on various television shows, web series, ads, and songs.
- His work commands considerable respect from the fraternity in the film industry.
- Mr Poojary is always bubbling with new ideas and plans to make some Bollywood films in the future as well.
- The reality show's team has held numerous brainstorming sessions over the past few months to prepare an exciting format and package, promising to deliver top-notch programming quality.
- Their team is bubbling with ideas and raring to share them with their audiences.

with Priyanka Dubbey.

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The news is creating a buzz in the multi-million-dollar Indian TV entertainment market.

Many observers are convinced that Mr Poojary and his team will present a unique format.

The show promises to reach parts that other reality shows have yet to reach in entertainment value.

Its makers are set to create history with an exciting, if not unique, way of keeping viewers glued to their seats.

Season one of this reality show is all set to be filmed in Mumbai amidst high expectations from the viewing public throughout India and in the Indian diaspora communities globally.

This show, *ICONIC SEASON -1*, features 40 contestants, well-known television faces who will judge the contestants in every episode. The first season consists of six episodes, which will be released on OTT platforms in January. Shooting for the shows is planned in the next few weeks, with busy schedules.

All the teams are fully involved in the making of these programmes.

The show promises to bring a lot of excitement to a country where eager viewers watch it on their home screens.

The producers have announced that fans can expect the show to premiere early next year.

The show is powered by Phoenix Market City, Pune, and sponsored by VLCC, NIF Global, and numerous other prominent brands.

Some of the renowned actors participating in the

show as judges in each episode include Ankit Gupta, Gautam Singh Vig, Saba Khan, and Mohit Parmar, among others.

There was a lot of excitement at the recent inauguration of *Iconic Season 1* with a star-studded party at Phoenix Mall of Asia in Pune.

Some of the notable guests who inaugurated the show included Corina Manuel, Head of *The Times of India*; Mr Atul Ruia, Chairman and CEO of Phoenix Mall of Asia, representing the prestigious mall; and Gautam Singh Vig, an actor and a popular face on Indian Television.

Among other guests were VLCC entrepreneur and owner, Vandana Luthra, representing the brand, and NIF Global Director (Owner) Shital Thakkar, one of the show's sponsors.

A spokesman said, "Many more celebrities and industry professionals graced the occasion.

"The show marks the beginning of an exciting journey for the contestants, with Mahesh Poojary, the veteran in the film industry, who is producing the show along with Priyanka Dubbey."

The show promises to be an exciting competition, and fans are eagerly awaiting its release, the spokesman added.

India is an old hand at mak-



Ms Corina Manuel, head of Times of India, was the chief guest at the launch of the Reality Show.

Contd Page 11



Cast with lead actor Gautam Singh and producers Mahesh Poojary and Priyanka Dubbey at the launch party of the show.

Asian News

BIG BUZZ IN BOLLYWOOD: REALITY SHOW SET TO WOW TV VIEWERS IN INDIA AND DIASPORA

By:
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Contd from Page 10

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ing reality shows, The multi-million-dollar Indian entertainment industry is never without excitement. Reality television shows are making a significant mark, capturing the attention of discerning audiences who remain glued to their favourite programme, holding them spellbound for weeks at a stretch.

Kaun Banega Crorepati, a popular game show based on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" hosted by the veteran Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan, continues to make waves.

It offers a mixed bag of verbal entertainment, excellent knowledge, mystery, and sending contestants' hearts pumping as clocks tick in the excitement and anticipation of taking home a financial bounty/prize.

Many people share their dreams about how they would spend their prize money.

Audiences have seen elated winners taking home winnings which have, on rare occasions, reached one million Indian Rupees.

Reality shows can build high hopes among contestants who have seen their dreams dashed and go home without winning.

Many contestants swoon at the sight of Amitabh Bachchan, their favourite superstar and film hero, perched on his seat right in front of them!

While not all shows are about taking cash winnings home, the Hindi version of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire is an exception; most reality shows are primarily

about entertainment and keeping viewers engaged and sending them into a tizzy.

Popular reality TV shows in India include Bigg Boss, a long-running Hindi-language show on Colors TV that has spanned 19 seasons and over 1,970 episodes.

It is a highly anticipated show that combines drama and social experiments, hosted by Salman Khan, the renowned film hero of numerous movies, who has been at the helm for many years.

Previous hosts included actors Arshad Warsi, Amitabh Bhachan, Sanjay Dutt, Farah Khan and Shilpa Shetty.

This show is based on the Dutch format of Big Brother developed by Endemol. It premiered on November 2, 2006, and has continued since then.

Other popular shows are Khatron Ke Khiladi (adapted from Fear Factor), MasterChef India, and Shark Tank India, which have inspired a wave of new entrepreneurs.

Mr Poojary and his team's offering, The Iconic, adds yet another feather to the reality TV shows industry.

There are high hopes that, following the anticipated success of Season One, plans for Season Two of this reality show could also soon be on the drawing board.

The audiences hold the trump card. As a matter of record, most reality shows are a runaway success, as seen with Big Boss and Kaun Banega Crorepati.

Watch this space!



The show's Line Producer, Bipul Ji (in white shirt), and other team members at the launch event. Bipul Ji is also the Line producer of another TV reality show, Sacred Games.



Meet the media... Producer Mahesh Poojary, flanked by co-producer Priyanka Dubbey, explains the show's content to a reporter.



Team spirit, guests, and makers of the reality show gathered for a group photograph



The people behind the show with chief guest Corina Manuel, head of Times of India Group and other guests.

Russia-Ukraine War

Ruto Secures Zelensky's Help to Free Kenyans Captured in Russia-Ukraine War

In a dramatic turn of international diplomacy, President William Ruto has successfully enlisted the support of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in a bid to secure the release of Kenyan nationals reportedly detained in Ukraine amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

By: Mwangi Karanja
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

In a dramatic turn of international diplomacy, President William Ruto has successfully enlisted the support of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in a bid to secure the release of Kenyan nationals reportedly detained in Ukraine amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. This development marks a significant milestone in Kenya's foreign policy, showcasing the country's growing assertiveness on the global stage and its commitment to protecting its citizens abroad.

The revelation came after a high-level phone conversation between the two leaders, during which President Ruto expressed deep concern over the fate of young Kenyans who had been allegedly recruited—some under false pretenses—to fight in the war. According to Ruto, Zelensky responded positively to his appeal, agreeing to facilitate the release of any Kenyan currently held in Ukrainian custody. This diplomatic breakthrough not only underscores the strength of Kenya's international relations but also highlights the human cost of global conflicts that often ensnare unsuspecting foreign nationals.

While the exact number of Kenyans detained remains unclear, the issue has sparked widespread debate and concern across the country. Families of those missing have been left in anguish, grappling with the uncertainty of their loved ones' whereabouts and safety. Reports suggest that some young Kenyans may have been lured by promises of lucrative jobs or educational opportunities, only to find themselves conscripted into military roles within Russian forces. The murky recruitment networks operating across borders have raised alarms, prompting calls for tighter regulation and public awareness campaigns to prevent further exploitation.

President Ruto's intervention is being hailed as a bold and compassionate move, reflecting his administration's prioritization of citizen welfare regardless of geographical boundaries. In his statement following the call, Ruto emphasized the



President William Ruto

importance of safeguarding Kenyan lives and reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that no Kenyan is left behind in times of crisis. He also pledged to work closely with international partners to dismantle the networks responsible for the illegal recruitment of Kenyans into foreign conflicts.

Zelensky's willingness to cooperate is seen as a gesture of goodwill and a recognition of Kenya's diplomatic overtures. The Ukrainian leader, who has been at the forefront of rallying global support against Russian aggression, acknowledged the complexities surrounding foreign nationals caught in the crossfire. His agreement to assist in the release of detained Kenyans signals a broader understanding of the humanitarian dimensions of the war and the need for collaborative solutions.

This development comes at a time when Kenya is increasingly positioning itself as a key player in global peace and security dialogues. Ruto's administration has been vocal on issues ranging from climate change to regional stability, and this latest move adds another layer to Kenya's evolving international identity. By engaging directly with Zelensky, Ruto has demonstrated that African

nations can and should assert their interests on the world stage, especially when the lives of their citizens are at stake.

The plight of Kenyans in Ukraine also sheds light on the broader issue of youth vulnerability in the face of economic hardship and limited opportunities. With unemployment rates remaining stubbornly high, many young people are susceptible to offers that promise a better life abroad. The government's response to this crisis must therefore go beyond diplomatic efforts and address the root causes that drive young Kenyans to seek risky ventures overseas. Investment in education, job creation, and youth empowerment will be crucial in curbing the allure of such dangerous paths.

Civil society organizations have welcomed Ruto's initiative, urging the government to follow through with concrete actions that ensure the safe return of the affected individuals. Human rights advocates have also called for accountability, demanding that those responsible for the illegal recruitment be brought to justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been tasked with coordinating efforts to identify the detained Kenyans and facilitate their repatriation,

working in tandem with Ukrainian authorities and international humanitarian agencies.

As the situation unfolds, the Kenyan public remains hopeful that the diplomatic engagement will yield tangible results. The story of Kenyans caught in the Russia-Ukraine war serves as a sobering reminder of the far-reaching consequences of global conflicts and the importance of proactive leadership. Ruto's outreach to Zelensky is not just a rescue mission—it is a statement of Kenya's resolve to protect its people and uphold the dignity of its citizens wherever they may be. In the coming weeks, attention will turn to the implementation of the agreement and the logistical challenges involved in securing the release and safe return of the detainees. The government will need to navigate complex legal and bureaucratic processes, ensure the provision of medical and psychological support for the returnees, and engage in public education to prevent future incidents. Transparency and accountability will be key in maintaining public trust and demonstrating the effectiveness of Kenya's diplomatic machinery.

This episode also offers an opportunity for introspec-

tion and reform. The government must strengthen its oversight of overseas recruitment agencies, enhance border control mechanisms, and collaborate with international partners to monitor and dismantle trafficking networks. Public awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable youth populations should be intensified, leveraging media, schools, and community organizations to spread the message of caution and informed decision-making. Ultimately, the success of Ruto's diplomatic appeal to Zelensky will be measured not just by the number of Kenyans released, but by the long-term impact on policy, public consciousness, and international cooperation. It is a moment that calls for unity, vigilance, and a renewed commitment to the values of human dignity and national solidarity. As Kenya awaits the return of its sons and daughters from the shadows of war, the nation stands reminded of the power of leadership, the importance of diplomacy, and the enduring bond between a country and its people.

Worth Noting:

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WORLD

One of Zimbabwe's Finest Schools Father Flower Group of Schools Makes History During Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony



By: Chimeno Azriel
azrielchimeno@gmail.com
Zimbabwe

Worth Noting:

The ceremony, was a grand celebration of academic excellence, public speaking prowess, and outstanding achievements in extracurricular activities. With thousands of attendees in high spirits, the event was a resounding success, showcasing the talents and dedication of students and teachers alike.

The ceremony was held under the theme 'Honouring the Founding of Father Flower Group of Schools and its continued support and commitment to sustainable community development through Military Leadership Style' and was a collaborative effort between Father Flower Group of Schools and the African Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The ceremony was attended by highly distinguished guests, including Sanyati District Assistant District Development Coordinator Jabson Muringani, Pastors, District Schools Inspectors, senior Government Officials, Educationists, and other esteemed guests, who gathered to celebrate the milestone achievements of Father Flower Group of Schools.

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The Ceremony officially kicked off with great fanfare as the Guest of Honour, Elder Douglas Kwande, arrived in style, descending onto the grounds in a private jet and being welcomed with a grand red-carpet reception, greeted by thunderous applause from the cheering crowd and Elder Kwande's impressive arrival set the tone for a momentous occasion that would showcase the talents and achievements of the students and underscore the school's commitment to providing a world-class education.

The ceremony kicked off with a series of captivating speeches and recitals, showcasing the exceptional public speaking skills of the students. It featured a range of talented performers, from confident young orators to skilled musicians and dancers. The highlight of the ceremony was the prize-giving segment, where students who excelled in various academic and extracurricular activities were awarded for their outstanding performances. The awards recognised not only academic achievement but also outstanding contributions to sports, arts, and community service.



Director General Jimmy Lemekani Waya (L) and Guest of Honour Elder Douglas Kwande (R)



Guest of Honour, prominent Zimbabwe businessman Elder Douglas Kwande, delivered an inspiring message to the students. He emphasised the importance of setting high goals so as to achieve positive goals and results "Set your aims too high and not too low if you are ever to achieve in life," he said. He also added that one should focus on what belongs to them, saying, "Defend your territory by catching your prey, don't chase any prey that is not your quality," he explained and his words resonated with the schoolchildren, parents and other guests reminding them to stay focused on their goals and aspirations.

Elder Kwande further expressed his admiration for the school's achievements, saying, "I am shocked to see the multitudes of parents who braved the heat to be here today. The electric atmosphere has motivated me to donate \$20,000 cash to Father Flower Group of Schools for the development at the school," he said. With that, he handed over the cash to Director General Jimmy Lemekani Waya,



much to the applause of the parents and he added that it was the beginning of their partnership between his company and the school. Director General of Father Flower Group of Schools, Jimmy Lemekani Waya, described the event as histor-

ic, saying, "This year's Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony is a historic moment for us, as we bring together seven Father Flower Schools to showcase what they do in their respective schools and it is heartwarming to see hun-

WORLD

One of Zimbabwe's Finest Schools Father Flower Group of Schools Makes History During Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony

dreds of parents, teachers, and children come together to witness this momentous occasion," said the Director. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the parents for their unwavering support, saying, "You are like water where the fish (Father Flower Group of Schools) lives in. Without parents, Father Flower is as good as dead," he explained and the parents erupted in applause, touched by the Director General's heartfelt words.

In addition to celebrating academic excellence, the event also saw Father Flower Group of Schools marking significant milestones in its infrastructure development. The school celebrated the acquisition of two buses and the construction of state-of-the-art school blocks, a testament to its commitment to providing quality education and facilities for its students. These developments are expected to enhance the learning experience and provide a conducive environment for students to thrive.

The event was a proof to the hard work and dedication of the students, teachers, and parents. The ceremony was well-organized, and the atmosphere was electric, with parents and guardians beaming with pride as their children received their awards. The event served as a motivation for the young learners to strive for excellence, and it was a wonderful display of talent, creativity, and dedication.

One of the honoured student Dylan Togarepi was visibly emotional after receiving the award for his outstanding academic excellence and he said, "I could not believe it and this is the best thing that has ever happened seeing everyone cheering for me was overwhelming," said Dylan

Community stakeholders also shared their sentiments with Councillor Takudzwa Chirinda applauding the school's professional leadership noting that their leadership style produce disciplined and capable future citizens.

"We applaud the school's professional leadership, whose leadership style produces disciplined and capable future citizens," Councillor Chirinda.

Speaking to some of the parents who attended the ceremony said the progress was outstanding in terms of



The Father Flower Group of Schools Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony in Pictures

academics and infrastructures in a short space of time

"We are thrilled to see the school's growth and devel-

injecting energy, humor, and charm that perfectly com-

one may be pleased with the school's progress, the



and they were proud to be part of the vision.

"The progress made by the school in a short space of time is outstanding, not just academically but also in terms of infrastructure. We are proud to be part of this vision," said Takesure Machipisa.

opment. The future looks bright for our children, and we're honored to be part of this journey," said another parent.

The electrifying duo of Costa Mujanganja and Sharon Mazise as master of ceremonies kept the audience on the edge of their seats all day,

plemented the ceremony, making it an unforgettable experience.

The Father Flower Group of Schools Harmonised Speech and Prize Giving Ceremony proved to be a truly unforgettable day, filled with inspiration, achievement, and joy. While not every-

dedication and hard work of the students, teachers, and staff shone brightly, making it a remarkable celebration of excellence. Ultimately, we leave it to the Almighty, trusting that His plans for the school will continue to unfold, guiding it towards greater heights.

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Contd from Page 14

Worth Noting:

• "Set your aims too high and not too low if you are ever to achieve in life," he said. He also added that one should focus on what belongs to them, saying, "Defend your territory by catching your prey, don't chase any prey that is not your quality," he explained and his words resonated with the schoolchildren, parents and other guests reminding them to stay focused on their goals and aspirations.

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America-China

China's moral high ground in trade: Steadfast fairness amid shifting tide

By: Stephen Ndegwa
xxxxxxxxxxxx



US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping

Worth Noting:

• At APEC, Xi reiterated that China “stands for free trade, opposes protectionism, and supports reform of global economic governance to make it more just and equitable.” The message carried weight because it was measured, not confrontational. While Trump emphasised domestic manufacturing wins and tariff relief, Xi focused on updating international rules to reflect changing realities and on safeguarding the interests of developing countries. The contrast cast China as a stabilising force—committed to fair play even in a competitive marketplace.

• Critics argue that China’s industrial policy and state support tilt the field. Context matters. Every major economy has used strategic interventions to nurture key sectors—from U.S. agricultural support to EU energy incentives. What differentiates China is less the existence of policy than the scale and explicitness with which it is pursued. Furthermore, reforms over the past decade—liberalising finance, expanding foreign investment access, and clarifying competition rules—indicate movement towards global norms.

The recent meeting between President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the APEC summit captured global attention. Brief as it was, the encounter symbolised a fresh chapter in trade diplomacy—one in which Beijing projects steadiness and consistency amid shifting political winds.

While Washington has oscillated between cooperation and confrontation, China’s approach has remained largely predictable: long-term, rules-based engagement grounded in the conviction that trade should be mutually beneficial rather than weaponised.

Since acceding to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, China has signalled its intent to operate within global rules—opening markets, protecting intellectual property, and reforming subsidies. More than two decades on, its conduct largely reflects those commitments. In its 2024 Trade Policy Review, China reaffirmed support for mul-

tilateralism, necessary WTO reform, and the defence of legitimate rights and interests—positions that set it apart as many economies lean into protectionism and unilateral measures.

The data echoes this posture. According to the Ministry of Commerce, China’s total trade in goods and services reached a record 43.85 trillion yuan (about US\$6.1 trillion) in 2024, up five percent year-on-year. Exports rose 7.1 percent and imports 2.3 percent, underscoring that China is both selling to—and buying from—the world. Notably, over half of China’s trade now involves Belt and Road Initiative partners, reflecting a deliberate diversification of relationships and a strengthening of South-South commerce. China’s “moral high ground” lies in this inclusivity: widening opportunity beyond wealthy industrialised economies to developing nations often sidelined in global exchange. At APEC, Xi reiterated that China “stands for free trade,

opposes protectionism, and supports reform of global economic governance to make it more just and equitable.” The message carried weight because it was measured, not confrontational. While Trump emphasised domestic manufacturing wins and tariff relief, Xi focused on updating international rules to reflect changing realities and on safeguarding the interests of developing countries. The contrast cast China as a stabilising force—committed to fair play even in a competitive marketplace.

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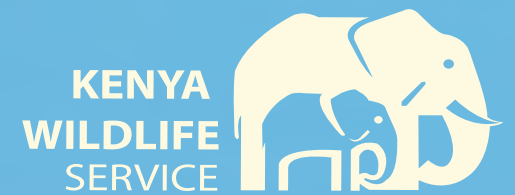
Across Asia, Africa and Latin America, partners frequently cite reliability: contract fidelity and steady supply chains. During the COVID-19 disruptions and subsequent geopolitical tensions, China largely resisted sweeping export bans on essential goods, instead facilitating bilateral cooperation and logistics through the BRI framework.

Moral authority in trade is not perfection; it is consistency. By contrast, the U.S. has at times imposed unilateral tariffs, exited agreements, and weaponised sanctions. Against that backdrop, China’s preference for dialogue and recourse to WTO processes confers an advantage in legitimacy.

For countries like the United Kingdom, this consistency warrants attention. The British Chambers of Commerce has urged policymakers to engage as trade power tilts eastward. China’s message of

fair, rules-based commerce offers a stabilising counterweight in an age of uncertainty.

In the end, the Xi-Trump encounter underscored a simple reality: moral authority in trade stems from endurance, predictability and respect for rules. China’s decades-long commitment to multilateralism—and its inclusive partnerships with developing countries—embodies a vision of fairness that outlasts political cycles. In a world too often swayed by short-term manoeuvres, Beijing’s steady commitment to cooperative trade remains the high ground.



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Diaspora

The Digital Voice Of A Generation

Social media today in Kenya is more than a place where people get entertained or engage in mindless chatter. It has become our modern-day town square a place where young people debate, dream and dare to challenge the norm.

By: Lilian Njeru
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

• Social media has democratized voice. The barriers that once silenced the majority have fallen away. You no longer need a press badge or a microphone to be heard; what you need is Wi-Fi and conviction. The once-unreachable corridors of influence—from Parliament to corporate boardrooms face real-time scrutiny from ordinary Kenyans armed with hashtags and facts. It is this shift that has transformed social media into Kenya's newest, most powerful civic weapon.

• But this power has done more than amplify frustration; it has fueled purpose. The youth are not just posting, they are organizing. What begins as a simple hashtag can quickly transform into a force for justice or relief. Online campaigns have raised money for families in distress, mobilized aid during disasters and exposed injustices that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. In the same breath, social media has turned into a mirror reflecting society's conscience, raw, unfiltered and often uncomfortable.

Social media today in Kenya is more than a place where people get entertained or engage in mindless chatter. It has become our modern-day town square a place where young people debate, dream and dare to challenge the norm. From bold threads on X to candid TikTok lives and passionate Instagram reels, the digital space indeed has become the heartbeat of Kenya's youth culture. It is where frustration meets creativity, where silence suddenly speaks and where ideas once whispered in private now echo across the nation.

This is the generation that no longer waits to be spoken for. For decades, public opinion in Kenya was shaped by a handful of voices politicians, elders or mainstream media. Youth were expected to listen not to lead. But the rise of social media shattered that order. Every tweet, post and video has become a potential spark, capable of setting off national conversations or igniting movements starting online and ending up on the streets. The ordinary young person now wields extraordinary influence not because of power or position,

but because of connection. Social media has democratized voice. The barriers that once silenced the majority have fallen away. You no longer need a press badge or a microphone to be heard; what you need is Wi-Fi and conviction. The once-unreachable corridors of influence—from Parliament to corporate boardrooms face real-time scrutiny from ordinary Kenyans armed with hashtags and facts. It is this shift that has transformed social media into Kenya's newest, most powerful civic weapon.

But this power has done more than amplify frustration; it has fueled purpose. The youth are not just posting, they are organizing. What begins as a simple hashtag can quickly transform into a force for justice or relief. Online campaigns have raised money for families in distress, mobilized aid during disasters and exposed injustices that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. In the same breath, social media has turned into a mirror reflecting society's conscience, raw, unfiltered and often uncomfortable. Beyond activism, social media is rewriting politics it-

self. The electoral cycle plays out not just in rallies and on radio talk shows but on screens and timelines. Politicians have learned-often to their chagrin that the youth are watching, questioning and recording. Every promise and every misstep, every insensitive remark, lives forever in memory. The debates of political will that once belonged to the elite now belong to the people. In essence, to many Kenyan youth, the comment section has become its parliament. The digital awakening of the youth is not an act of criticism but rather one of participation wherein social media acts as a bridge between governance and grassroots, aspiration and accountability. Many young people learn civic values, leadership and even policy awareness through online spaces perhaps lessons that classrooms most often do not teach. This is a different kind of civic education, born not from textbooks but from tweets.

Yet, this revolution has its contradictions. The same platforms that can unite can also divide. Social media can amplify misinformation as easily as truth; outrage can

sometimes drown out reason. But even in these imperfections lies its strength: it forces debate, challenges complacency and keeps leaders and citizens equally alert. Kenya's digital youth are learning, adapting and evolving. They stumble, yes, but they never stop speaking.

And then there is the deeper beauty: the creativity, humor and resilience pulsating through Kenyan social media. From the witty memes that catch the irony of politicians to the viral campaigns that give reason to hope, the digital space is a reflection of the heartbeat of a nation that simply refuses to give up. This is where laughter meets activism, pain finds its poetry. It's proof that expression, in whatever form, is power.

More profoundly, social media has become a lifeline to solidarity. A youth in Kisumu can stand with a protester in Nairobi or an activist in Turkana with just one post. This is not just connectivity; it is community. In a world so often divided along tribe, class or religion, social media offers that rare unity a space where shared struggles and shared dreams mat-

ter more than surnames.

Perhaps most prominent is how this digital awakening has restored belief: a belief that one voice, no matter how small, matters. The hashtags might disappear, the trends will change, but the impact remains. Kenyan youth have realized that silence benefits nobody and influence, if well applied, can rewrite stories.

Social media has given Kenya's youth something their parents only dreamed about—agency. It has handed them the pen to write their own narrative, to call out injustice and to champion causes that define their generation. It has become a classroom, a campaign ground and a confessional booth all in one. And as this digital revolution continues to unfold, one truth remains: the most powerful voice in Kenya today doesn't come from a podium or a press room it comes from a smartphone in the hand of a determined young person who dares to speak. Because when those who never had a voice find it, silence is no longer possible. And Kenya, as we know it, begins to change tweet by tweet, post by post, story by story.

YOUR OPINION IS INVALUABLE

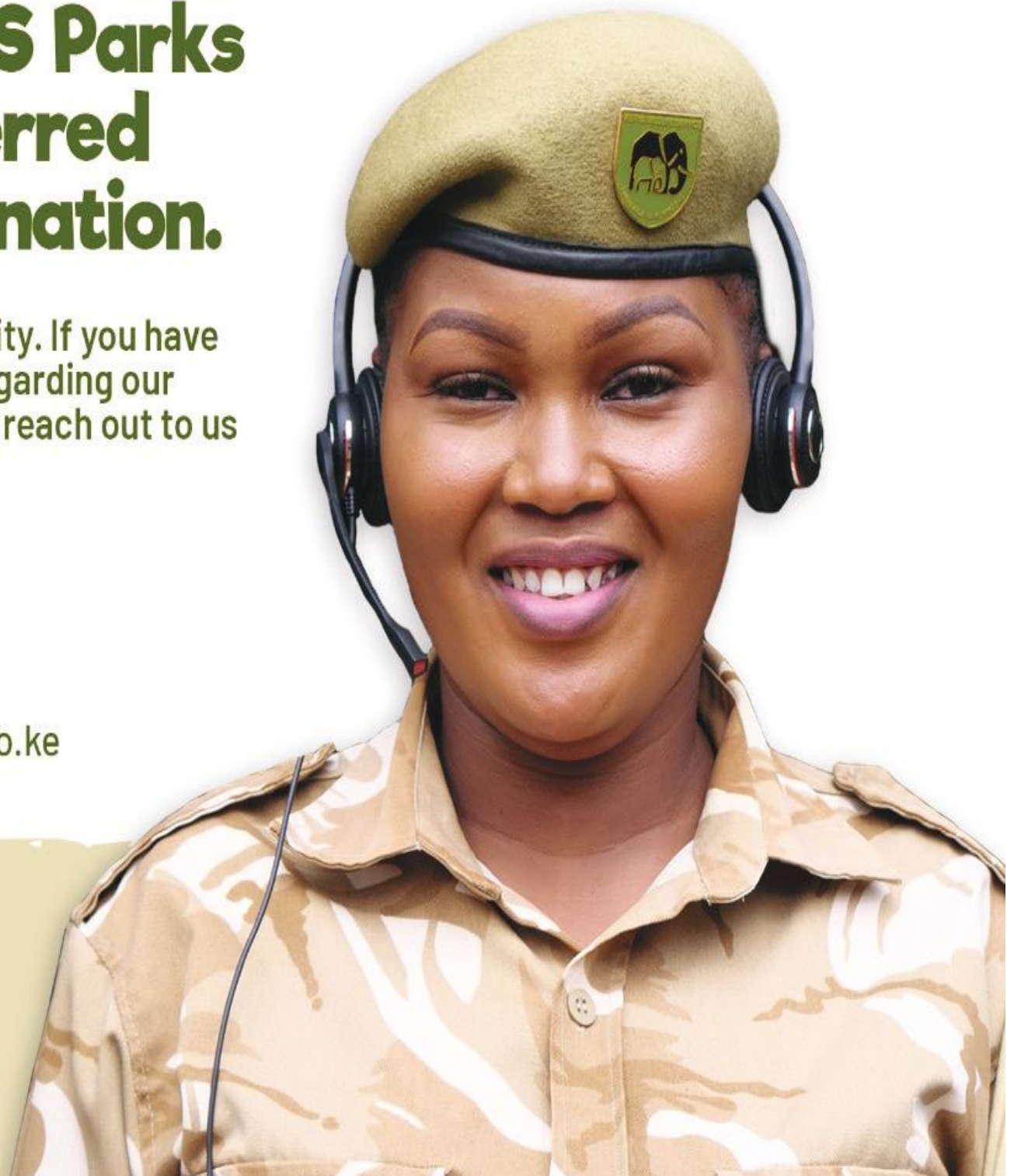
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Diaspora

Africa's Youth Rise With Vision For Africa: My Home, My Future, During The Second All Africa Youth Congress In Nairobi

By: Thando Vundi Muli
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The second All Africa Youth Congress concluded in Nairobi on Tuesday night, November 4th, bringing together over 500 young people from across the continent and the diaspora. Running from October 31st to November 5th under the inspiring theme, "Africa: My Home. My Future," the week-long event focused on social responsibility and practical action. Sessions addressed critical issues ranging from modern slavery and migration to peace-building, democratic participation and environmental stewardship. The AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwobeki, opened the Congress by emphasizing the urgency for African youth to reclaim their narrative and redefine their destiny, acknowledging that widespread disillusionment due to conflict, unemployment and corruption often leaves many vulnerable to exploitation or risky migration. Highlighting the government's support, Principal Secretary Mr. Fikirini Jacobs launched an AACC manual focused on sustainable population growth.

The AACC General Secretary reminding participants of Africa's inherent strength. He asserted that the continent, rich in natural resources, innovation, and talent, possesses everything required to thrive, citing the world-surprising African approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic as evidence of its capacity to leapfrog global development challenges through proper resource management and political will. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), which organized the event, represents over 140 million Christians and used the Congress to further its mission of promoting unity, justice, peace, and sustainable development through faith-based engagement across its 42 member countries.

In a show of pan-African solidarity, the African Union Commission Chairperson extended heartfelt greetings, calling the gathering "a movement of hearts and hands, a movement of African youth ready to build the Africa we want." This endorsement underlined the significance of the Congress as a platform for young leaders to collectively reflect, pray, dialogue, and take concrete action on issues that will shape the continent's future.

Further energizing the leadership of the continent's fu-



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reflect, pray, dialogue, and take concrete action on issues that will shape the continent's future. A major highlight of the second All Africa Youth Congress was the dual launch of the Contextual Bible Study Manual on Sustainable Population Growth for Quality Life in Africa and a significant Youth Entrepreneurship Award. Ann Kio, AACC's Director for Gender, Women, Youth and Sustainable Population, explained that the manual represents a vital, home-grown

issues, shifting the narrative away from external clinical data. She stated that the guide reclaims the conversation by rooting it in faith tradition, linking scriptural values like stewardship and community responsibility to contemporary concerns such as family planning, maternal health, and environmental sustainability. By focusing on the "quality of life" over just numbers, the AACC aims to ignite meaningful, faith-based dialogue in congregations across the continent.

youth, the AACC introduced a Youth Entrepreneurship Award with a substantial prize fund of \$6,000 USD, allocating \$2,000 USD to the winner in each of three categories to foster innovation. Attending as the chief guest, Mr. Fikirini Jacobs, Kenya's Principal Secretary for Youth and the Creative Economy, praised the initiative. He characterized Africa's vibrant youth demographic as "ambitious, energetic, and standing at the threshold of change," urging them to take own-

ture. The Principal Secretary stressed the need for youth to combine faith, creativity, and civic responsibility, focusing on "fidelity to preserve our continent" and embracing comradeship across borders to ensure peace and dignity. Meanwhile, the Congress dedicated a critical session to Peace and Security: Electoral Process, Democracy, and Peacebuilding, recog-

Diaspora

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Contd from Page 20
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Worth Noting:

• Meanwhile, the Congress dedicated a critical session to Peace and Security: Electoral Process, Democracy, and Peacebuilding, recognizing these as the foundational elements of sustainable development. Panelists underscored that lasting peace requires justice, declaring, "Without peace, democracy collapses; without justice, peace cannot last." Participants highlighted inspiring examples of interfaith collaboration, such as joint Muslim-Christian prayers in Sudan, illustrating how faith-inspired unity and healing can effectively mend fractured nations and reinforce the idea that peace is a "Godly strength" essential for Africa's progress.

• Amidst the acknowledgement of persistent challenges like election-related violence, terrorism, and ethnic tension, the Congress panel celebrated powerful local peacebuilding efforts. Examples cited included youth-led football tournaments and peace clubs in Sierra Leone that have successfully reduced community conflict, demonstrating the tangible impact of grassroots action. Delegates were urged to harness their voices and digital platforms to foster civic education, spread positive narratives on social media, and participate in peaceful protests.



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peaceful protests. Integrating learning and creativity, the Horn of Africa Peace Project hosted a significant side event on Tech-Facilitated Violent Extremism. During this session, participants expressed their perceptions and solutions through art and peace messaging canvases, offering powerful displays of solidarity with nations affected by conflict, such as Sudan and DR Congo. Critically, youth participants called upon African governments to establish transparent electoral systems, ensure robust accountability mechanisms, and significantly strengthen youth-led civic engagement. The prevailing sentiment was captured by the affirmation: "We have divine potential to build an Africa where democracy feels like peace, and peace feels like home." Throughout the duration of the Congress, a recurring and powerful emphasis was placed on the agency of African youth not as passive recipients of aid, but as moral leaders, creators, and active bridge-builders shaping the destiny of their nations. AACC officials continuously reinforced

this perspective, stressing the importance of youth leadership. Workshops provided practical exploration of creative peacebuilding methods, highlighting the utility of technology, art and digital storytelling as crucial tools for social change. Youth shared compelling grassroots initiatives that are actively addressing complex issues ranging from violent extremism and climate change to governance challenges, showcasing remarkable resilience and innovation within their diverse local contexts. Furthermore, faith-based reflections provided a valuable counter-narrative to common discourse, reminding participants that Africa's large youth bulge, often framed solely as an economic or social challenge, is in fact a profound blessing. Properly nurtured through targeted education, mentorship and ethical leadership development, this demographic asset has the potential to become the key driver propelling the continent into a new era of sustainable prosperity and growth.

Interfaith engagement remained a crucial and cen-

tral pillar that defined the spirit of the Congress. From the quiet solemnity of morning devotions to the dynamic discourse of evening forums, participants representing diverse faith backgrounds prayed and dialogued together in unity. This sustained collaboration reflected a shared moral responsibility among faith communities to build peaceful, just and equitable societies across Africa. This theme intersected powerfully with the focus on innovation and the economy, highlighted by the active participation of Kenya's Ministry of Youth and Creative Economy. This involvement underscored the growing governmental recognition that Africa's economic future is deeply intertwined with its capacity for innovation. Panel discussions critically explored the intersection between faith, creativity, and entrepreneurship, issuing a challenge to churches to embrace and utilize youth talents as a genuine transformative power for social and economic change.

Kenya's Principal Secretary, Mr. Fikirini Jacobs, emphatically supported this view-

point, remarking that "The creative sector is Africa's new frontier." He noted the burgeoning global influence of African youth who are "telling Africa's story in new ways" through music, film, and digital innovation, and called upon the Church to actively walk with them and amplify their voice in these new domains.

The Congress came to an end with a strong commitment to implementation. In its final plenary, delegates collectively pledged to translate their discussions and learning into tangible action by integrating the outcomes into regional youth networks, church programs, and national advocacy initiatives. AACC General Secretary's final words reminded all participants that the vital journey of building the future of Africa does not end in Nairobi, but must continue across every community and nation.

Powering Progress: Kenya's Climate Leap with Solar Cold Storage and E-Mobility

The solar cold storage rollout is a game-changer for Kenya's agricultural sector, which has long grappled with post-harvest losses, especially among smallholder farmers.

By: David Kimani.
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Worth Noting:

Parallel to the cold storage initiative is the electrification of Kenya's two- and three-wheeler transport sector, a move that promises to revolutionize urban mobility. Motorcycles and tuk-tuks are ubiquitous in Kenyan cities and towns, serving as vital links in the transport chain. However, they also contribute significantly to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The new e-mobility project aims to replace fossil-fuel-powered vehicles with electric alternatives, supported by charging infrastructure and policy incentives. This transition will not only cut carbon emissions but also reduce noise pollution, lower operating costs for drivers, and create green jobs in manufacturing and maintenance.

The e-mobility initiative is particularly timely given Kenya's growing urban population and the rising demand for efficient, affordable transport. By electrifying the most common modes of transport, the project addresses both environmental and economic concerns. Riders like Wanjiru in Nairobi and Kipro in Eldoret will benefit from lower fuel costs and reduced maintenance, while cities will enjoy cleaner air and quieter streets. It's a vision of mobility that is inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready.

In a bold stride toward climate resilience and sustainable development, Kenya has become the launchpad for two transformative projects spearheaded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and the World Resources Institute (WRI). These initiatives—solar-powered cold storage and electric mobility for two- and three-wheelers—are not just technological upgrades; they are strategic interventions aimed at reshaping Kenya's environmental footprint, food systems, and transport infrastructure. Unveiled in Nairobi in October 2025, the projects are funded by the Mitigation Action Facility and align directly with Kenya's Climate-Smart Agriculture Strategy and its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), signaling a new era of climate action rooted in innovation and equity.

The solar cold storage rollout is a game-changer for Kenya's agricultural sector, which has long grappled with post-harvest losses, especially among smallholder farmers. Under this initiative, 1,000 solar-powered cold storage units will be deployed across the country, targeting regions with high agricultural output but limited access to reliable refrigeration. These units are expected to preserve up to 5,000 tonnes of food annually, benefiting over 60,000 small-scale farmers. By extending the shelf life of perishable produce, the project will reduce methane emissions from decomposing food, improve food security, and boost farmer incomes. It's a triple win—environmental, economic, and social—that underscores the power of clean energy to solve systemic challenges.

For farmers like Amina in Makueni and Otieno in Kisumu, the cold storage units represent more than just machines—they are lifelines. Amina, who grows mangoes, often watches her harvest rot before reaching the market. Otieno, a tomato farmer, loses nearly half his produce during transport. With solar cold storage, they can now store their



Launch of UNDP-UNCDF-WRI solar cold storage and e-mobility drive in Nairobi: cleaner transport, safer food chains, stronger livelihoods in October 2025. (Photo: UNDP)

crops safely, negotiate better prices, and reduce waste. This shift empowers farmers to become climate champions, proving that adaptation and mitigation can go hand in hand when communities are equipped with the right tools.

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jiru in Nairobi and Kipro in Eldoret will benefit from lower fuel costs and reduced maintenance, while cities will enjoy cleaner air and quieter streets. It's a vision of mobility that is inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready.

What sets these projects apart is their integrated approach. They are not isolated interventions but part of a broader strategy to decarbonize Kenya's economy and build climate resilience. By linking agriculture and transport—two of the most emission-intensive sectors—the initiatives create synergies that amplify impact. The solar cold storage units reduce food waste and emissions, while e-mobility cuts transport-related pollution. Together, they contribute to Kenya's goal of avoiding 4.8 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent over the projects' lifetimes, a significant contribution to global climate targets.

The partnership between UNDP, UNCDF, WRI, and the Government of Kenya exemplifies the power of collaboration in tackling complex challenges. It brings together technical expertise, financial resources, and policy support to deliver solutions that are locally relevant and globally significant. The involvement of county governments, civil society, and private sector actors ensures that the projects are ground-

ed in community needs and have the buy-in necessary for long-term success.

Moreover, these initiatives reflect Kenya's leadership in climate innovation. As one of Africa's most proactive countries in climate policy, Kenya has consistently championed green growth, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture. The launch of these projects reinforces its position as a regional hub for climate solutions and a model for other nations seeking to balance development with environmental stewardship.

Education and capacity-building are also central to the success of these projects. Farmers and transport operators will receive training on how to use and maintain the new technologies, ensuring that the benefits are sustained beyond the initial rollout. Schools and vocational centers will incorporate climate-smart curricula, preparing the next generation to lead Kenya's green transition. This focus on human capital development ensures that the projects are not just about infrastructure—they are about people.

As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, Kenya's approach offers valuable lessons. It shows that climate action can be inclusive, that technology can empower rather than exclude, and

that partnerships can unlock transformative change. The solar cold storage and e-mobility projects are not just responses to climate threats—they are proactive steps toward a more equitable and sustainable future.

In the months ahead, the focus will shift to implementation, monitoring, and scaling. Success will depend on continued investment, community engagement, and adaptive management. Challenges such as grid connectivity, battery recycling, and market access must be addressed with agility and foresight. But if the launch is any indication, Kenya is ready to meet these challenges head-on.

The story of these projects is ultimately a story of hope. It is about turning climate risks into opportunities, about empowering communities to thrive in a changing world, and about proving that sustainable development is not a distant dream but a present reality. As the solar panels light up rural farms and electric tuk-tuks glide through city streets, Kenya is writing a new chapter in its climate journey—one powered by innovation, driven by collaboration, and anchored in the resilience of its people.

Philippines declares state of calamity as typhoon death toll rises to 114

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has declared a state of calamity after Typhoon Kalmaegi, one of the strongest typhoons this year, caused severe flooding in central Philippines, leaving at least 114 dead.

By: BBC
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Worth Noting:

- Cebu provincial authorities reported a further 28 deaths which were not included in the tally released by the national civil defence office, according to AFP.
- Kalmaegi left the Philippines on Thursday morning and is moving toward central Vietnam, where residents are still reeling from floods that killed dozens.
- President Marcos Jr told reporters on Thursday that he made the decision because of the damage caused by Typhoon Kalmaegi, as well as the anticipation of another storm Uwan, which is expected to hit the country over the weekend.
- “Almost 10 regions, around 10 to 12 regions, will be affected. So if that many areas are involved, with that kind of scope, then it’s a national calamity,” he told local media.
- In the Philippines, a state of calamity is a condition involving mass casualty, major damage to property, and disruption to means of livelihoods and the normal way of life for people in the affected areas.



Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has declared a state of calamity after Typhoon Kalmaegi, one of the strongest typhoons this year, caused severe flooding in central Philippines, leaving at least 114 dead.

The storm has flooded entire towns on Cebu, the region’s most populous island, where 71 deaths were reported. Another 127 are missing and 82 injured, according to officials.

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“Almost 10 regions, around 10 to 12 regions, will be affected. So if that many areas are involved, with that kind of scope, then it’s a national calamity,” he told local media.

In the Philippines, a state of calamity is a condition involving mass casualty, major damage to property, and disruption to means of livelihoods and the normal way of life for people in the affected areas.

It gives government agencies more power to access emergency funds and fast-track the procurement and delivery of essential goods and services to those in need.

Most of the deaths in the Philippines were due to drowning, reports said. The storm sent torrents of muddy water down hillsides and into towns and cities.

Damage to Cebu’s residential areas was extensive, with many small buildings swept away and a thick carpet of mud left by the retreating floodwaters.

Local officials described the havoc wrought by the storm as “unprecedented”.

Residents returning to their destroyed homes are reeling from the deadly floods earlier this week.

Jel-an Moira Servas, a business owner who lives in Mandaue city, told the BBC that she found herself waist-deep in water within minutes when her house became flooded. She quickly evacuated with her family, bringing only light items like food and electronics.

“Right now, the rain has completely stopped and the sun is out, but our houses are still filled with mud, and everything inside is in shambles,” she said. “We don’t even know where to start cleaning. I can’t even look at it without crying.”

The national disaster agency said more than 400,000 people had been displaced by the disaster in Cebu, home to 2.5 million people.

The official death toll also includes six crew members of a military helicopter that crashed on Mindanao island, south of Cebu, after it was deployed to assist in relief efforts on Tuesday.

Carlos Jose Lañas, a volun-

teer rescuer, told the BBC that despite preparing for the worst case, they were caught off-guard by the extent of the flooding.

“This is the worst flood I’ve ever experienced,” the 19-year-old said. “Almost all the rivers here in Cebu overflowed. Even emergency responders did not expect this kind of scenario.”

“The rescue operation was too overwhelming for the emergency responders around Cebu, because there were a lot of people asking for help.”

Typhoon Kalmaegi, locally called Tino, is the 20th tropical cyclone this year to hit the Philippines, a country prone to powerful storms.

It comes barely a month after back-to-back typhoons killed over a dozen people and wrought damage to infrastructure and crops.

Super Typhoon Ragasa, known locally as Nando, struck in late September, followed swiftly by Typhoon Bualoi, known locally as Opong.

In the months before, an extraordinarily wet monsoon

season caused widespread flooding, sparking anger and protests over unfinished and sub-standard flood control systems that have been blamed on corruption.

Typhoon Kalmaegi left the Philippines at 00:30 local time (16:30pm GMT) on Thursday morning.

It has since strengthened, with maximum sustained winds increasing from 150 km/h to 155 km/h.

It is expected to make landfall in central Vietnam on Friday morning, according to forecasts. More than 50 flights there have been cancelled or rescheduled.

Vietnam has already been battling with a week of flooding and record rains that burst riverbanks and flooded some of the country’s most popular tourist spots.

Thailand is also bracing for the storm’s impact, with local officials warning of possible flash floods, landslides and river overflows caused by Kalmaegi.

National education system and foreign standards

Today, the education system of Uzbekistan is undergoing major changes. In particular, in recent years, the number of branches of foreign universities and private higher education institutions has increased sharply.



By: Shukurullayeva Mukhlisa
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Worth Noting:

• With the increase in the number of foreign universities, Uzbekistan is becoming a regional center that provides education not only to its own youth, but also to the youth of Central Asian countries. This increases the country's prestige and develops educational tourism. For example, in recent years, the number of students from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan studying in Uzbekistan has exceeded 20 thousand.

• However, this process is not without its negative aspects. Some experts believe that the excessive growth of foreign universities and private universities is leading to a decline in the value of the national education system. The idea that "foreign diplomas are valuable, national diplomas are undervalued" is being formed among young people, that is, the increasing number of cases of "lying down and licking" when a foreign diploma is given is a clear example of this.

Today, the education system of Uzbekistan is undergoing major changes. In particular, in recent years, the number of branches of foreign universities and private higher education institutions has increased sharply. This process is assessed differently: some believe that this leads to increased competition and quality, while others express concern that this situation will overshadow the national education system. Which of the following is true?

National education is being recognized internationally through Higher Education Institution universities. Previously, the Uzbek education system was known domestically, but now, through the participation of foreign universities, our national education has also gained access to international rankings. This increases the brand value of national universities. Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, and Tashkent University of Information Technologies began entering the QS ranking in

2023 - this is the result of Xonity cooperation. In addition, foreign universities operating in Tashkent, such as Westminster, Inha, Webster, Yeosu Technical Institute, TMC, Woosong, Amity, Politecnico di Torino, bring international experience to Uzbekistan and prepare our youth for the global workforce.

Such universities have international programs, education in English, modern educational technologies, and practice-oriented curricula. As a result, the student acquires not only theory, but also practical experience. "Education is the greatest force that elevates humanity," said Mahatma Gandhi. As a result of this idea, Inha University graduates are successfully working in international IT companies, and Westminster University graduates are successfully working in diplomatic and business spheres. "Competition is the mother of development," say the wise men. Another important aspect is the opportunity to become a regional educational center. With the increase in the

number of foreign universities, Uzbekistan is becoming a regional center that provides education not only to its own youth, but also to the youth of Central Asian countries. This increases the country's prestige and develops educational tourism. For example, in recent years, the number of students from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan studying in Uzbekistan has exceeded 20 thousand.

However, this process is not without its negative aspects. Some experts believe that the excessive growth of foreign universities and private universities is leading to a decline in the value of the national education system. The idea that "foreign diplomas are valuable, national diplomas are undervalued" is being formed among young people, that is, the increasing number of cases of "lying down and licking" when a foreign diploma is given is a clear example of this. This can damage the reputation of national universities. Also, the quality of education in some private and foreign branches is

not sufficient. They are only commercial

There are also cases where education is turned into a business, aiming for the same goal. The proverb "Knowledge is acquired not with money, but with labor" is very appropriate in this situation. Diplomas in some branches have not passed international accreditation. As a result, graduates' diplomas are not recognized abroad, which increases distrust among young people. Another negative aspect is that national cadres blindly follow the foreign system and move away from their historical, cultural and spiritual roots. The proverb "If you water a tree with foreign water, its fruit will be different," reminds us of the need not to lose nationality.

In my opinion, foreign universities are not only a source of knowledge, but also a source of economic benefit. Foreign universities coming to Uzbekistan bring investment, grants, and teaching jobs. This not only improves the quality of education, but also strengthens the country's economy.

Many foreign universities are establishing grants, preferential programs, and startup support centers for women. These circumstances ensure gender equality, scientific activity, and social growth in society. Webster University launched the SheLeads program for women and provided free courses to more than 300 students. The proverb "He who seeks finds opportunity" is proven in this regard.

In conclusion, the activities of foreign universities do not overshadow the national education system, but rather encourage it to renew itself and constantly develop itself. Therefore, the activities of foreign university branches and private universities serve as an important factor in transforming our country's youth into world-class knowledge holders and training competitive specialists. After all, the future is in the hands of young people.

Shukurullayeva Mukhlisa,
1st year student of the Faculty of Philology and Arts