

At the centre of the diplomatic storm stands Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose public break with Washington has grown sharper, more personal and more desperate with each passing week.

Ukraine - America

Zelenskyy publicly criticised President Donald Trump's decision to waive sweeping new sanctions against Russia:



Zelenskyy accuses Trump of rewarding Putin as Pope pleads for peace from a hospital bed

By Diaspora Times Team

It was, by any measure, an extraordinary week in the long and grinding saga of the Russia-Ukraine war. A recovering Pope telephoned the Kremlin from a hospital room three days after cancer surgery. A sitting American president waived sanctions his own government had enacted barely a month earlier. And a Ukrainian leader, watching his cities absorb fresh missile and drone strikes, accused Washington of handing Vladimir Putin both a financial lifeline and a political prize — without extracting a single concession in return. The three developments, unfolding within 48 hours of each other in mid-October 2026, together paint a picture



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

of a conflict at a genuinely dangerous inflection point. The traditional architecture of Western economic pressure on Moscow is visibly fracturing. The voices calling for peace grow simultaneously more urgent and more powerless. And the gap between what Western leaders say about Ukraine and what they are actually prepared to do for it has never been wider or more consequential. At the centre of the diplomatic storm stands Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose public break with Washington has grown sharper, more personal and more desperate with each

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The triple squeeze: how EPRA's fuel price hike is reshaping the survival equation for the common mwananchi

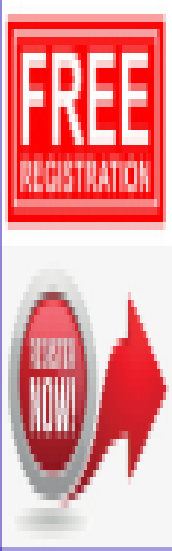
For the average Kenyan, the monthly announcement from the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority has quietly transformed from a routine regulatory update into something altogether more anxiety-inducing — a kind of economic barometer that most households now follow

with the same dread they reserve for a hospital bill. When EPRA unveiled its latest pricing cycle on 14 October 2026, effective from midnight that day through to 14 November, the numbers were hard to absorb. Super petrol in Nairobi will now retail at KSh226.96 per litre,

diesel at KSh227.76 and kerosene at KSh219.87 — increases of KSh12.93, KSh9.90 and KSh28.49 per litre respectively from the previous cycle. Taken individually, those figures are striking. Taken together — and understood through the lived experience of the millions of Kenyans

who depend on these three products not as a convenience but as a basic condition of daily survival — they represent something closer to

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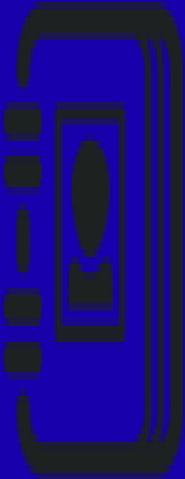




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Light at last: How electricity is reshaping Nandi and Uasin Gishu

By: James Kilonzo Bwire
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President William Ruto's recent development tour of Nandi and Uasin Gishu counties, accompanied by Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi, placed electricity access squarely at the centre of Kenya's conversation about economic transformation. The flagging off of Last Mile Connectivity Programme projects in Mosop, Nandi Hills and Pioneer in Eldoret was not simply a ribbon-cutting exercise. It was a statement of intent: that communities which have historically been left outside the national grid must now be brought into the mainstream of national development — and that the government is prepared to act on that commitment in person.

Electricity is not an ordinary public service. It is the foundation on which households, schools, health facilities, farms, markets and small businesses depend in order to function and grow. When power reaches a home, families can study after dark, preserve food, access information and carry out daily tasks with greater safety and dignity. When it reaches a school, it enables digital learning, laboratory work and modern administration. When it reaches a clinic, it powers refrigeration for medicines, runs medical equipment and extends the hours during which staff can serve patients effectively. These benefits may sound straightforward — but they are transformative for communities that have been managing without them.

The Last Mile Connectivity Programme is one of Kenya's most important tools for achieving universal electricity access. Its logic is simple and compelling: many rural and peri-urban households are not far from existing grid infrastructure but remain unconnected because of the cost and technical requirements of that final link. By closing that gap, the programme removes a practical barrier that has kept families and enterprises in the dark — sometimes literally for generations. It ensures that public investment in generation and transmission actually reaches the people who need it most, rather than stopping short at the edge of town.



President William Ruto flagging off electrification program. Photo courtesy Opiyo Wandayi Facebook page

The economic case for these connections is equally powerful. Small businesses — salons, welding workshops, milk cooling centres, grain mills, bakeries, tailoring enterprises and agro-processing units — all depend on reliable power to operate efficiently, extend working hours and create employment. Farmers can use electricity for irrigation, cold storage, poultry production and the processing of agricultural produce, adding value to what they grow and reducing post-harvest losses. The African Development Bank has consistently noted that access to electricity for households and businesses is one of the most reliable drivers of economic growth at the local level. In Nandi and Uasin Gishu, the potential is real and largely untapped.

The electricity projects were not launched in isolation. They were accompanied by road construction linking Turbo, Kaiboi, Kimondi, Chepterit, Mugundoi, Nandi Hills, Kosiage and Cheptulu; development of student hostels and university facilities; commissioning of affordable housing units; rehabilitation of Kerita Dam; establishment of modern markets; and support for women entrepreneurs through the Women

Enterprise Fund. Taken together, these interventions reflect a coherent understanding of what development actually requires. Roads move people and goods. Water serves households, farms and institutions. Markets provide space for trade. Education facilities prepare the next generation. And electricity connects all of it — providing the energy without which roads remain dark at night, markets cannot refrigerate produce and schools cannot run computer labs.

This matters because development delivered in isolation rarely sticks. A road without electricity can improve transport but cannot support cold storage or processing plants. A market without reliable power can shelter traders but cannot support refrigeration, electronic payments or value addition. The combination of all these interventions, delivered together, is what turns a government tour into a genuine development moment.

The Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda is built on the belief that growth must begin with ordinary people — small enterprises, farmers, traders and workers in local communities. Electricity access is central to that philosophy. A

country cannot credibly claim to be transforming its economy from the bottom up while large sections of its population remain off the grid. Connecting communities to power gives ordinary people the tools to participate — a small trader who can extend business hours, a farmer who can chill produce before it spoils, a young person who can access digital skills after sunset.

That said, the true value of these projects will depend entirely on what happens after the flags are waved. Announcing a programme is only the beginning. Connections must be completed within a reasonable timeframe, to the required standard, and without hidden costs that price out the very households the programme is meant to serve. Maintenance must be taken seriously, because communities that receive electricity only to suffer constant outages will quickly lose faith in the promise behind the connection. Affordability must be protected, because a power line that nobody can afford to switch on delivers nothing.

Beyond connection, productive use must be actively supported. A live cable does not automatically create jobs or raise incomes. Households and businesses need access to af-

fordable appliances and equipment, training in how to use power productively, and pathways into markets where their output has value. Women, who form a significant part of Kenya's informal business sector, deserve particular attention — they face additional barriers in accessing capital, technology and markets, and the Women Enterprise Fund cheque issued in Eldoret is a welcome recognition that enterprise development requires both energy and financing together.

Kenya has committed to achieving universal electricity access by 2030. The projects in Nandi and Uasin Gishu are a practical piece of that national effort — not an abstract policy objective but a programme being implemented in specific villages, trading centres and households. If the delivery follows through on the promise, the people of these counties will not merely receive electricity. They will receive a genuine opportunity to improve their lives, build stronger enterprises and participate more fully in the country's future.

That is what inclusive development looks like when it works. The task now is to make sure it does.

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Social media

Is social media a blessing or a curse for university students?

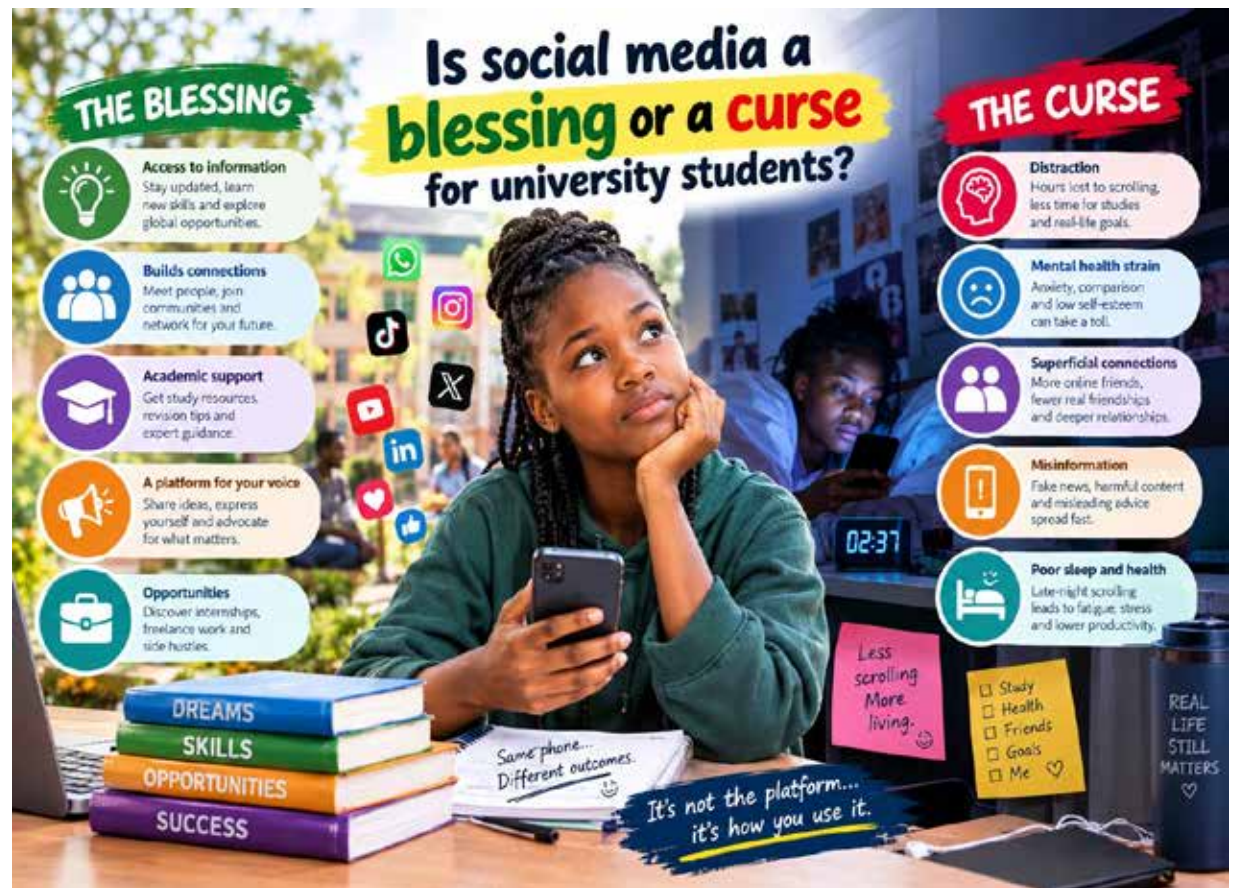
By: Elizabeth Tsisika
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LAIKIPIA, Kenya — Walk across any university campus in Kenya today and the scene is remarkably consistent. Students bent over phones between lectures, WhatsApp groups buzzing with assignment queries at midnight, TikTok videos playing quietly at the back of halls. Social media has become so deeply woven into university life that separating the student experience from the digital one is almost impossible. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and X are now used for everything from education and networking to entertainment and emotional support. The question that increasingly preoccupies educators, parents and students themselves is whether all of this is doing more good than harm. The honest answer is: it depends — and it depends almost entirely on the student doing the scrolling. At Laikipia University and institutions across the country, social media offers genuine benefits. WhatsApp groups allow classmates to share materials, discuss assignments and stay connected across distance. YouTube and Facebook host educational content that helps students revisit and deepen their understanding of concepts covered in class. For journalism and communication students in particular, these platforms provide a live window into the professional world — connecting them with educators, practitioners and news organisations globally. Used well, social media makes learning more dynamic and more relevant. The challenge, as most students will privately admit, is that using it well is harder than it sounds.

A student who opens WhatsApp to check a study group message can find themselves, an hour later, deep in a rabbit hole of videos they never intended to watch. The platforms are engineered for exactly this. The result, for many, is a steady erosion of study time — not through any grand decision to stop working but through the accumulation of small, barely noticed distractions. Notifications fragment concentration during lectures and private study. Late-night scrolling reduces sleep, and reduced sleep affects memory, concentration and classroom engagement the following morning. None of this means social media automatically causes poor academic performance — the impact depends heavily on how students manage their habits — but the temptation to misuse these platforms is real and constant.

Mental well-being is the dimension of this conversation that often goes underacknowledged. Social media feeds are populated largely with curated highlights — best moments, flattering photographs, achievements people want others to see. For a student navigating academic pressure, financial stress or personal uncertainty, sustained exposure to this carefully edited version of everyone else's success can quietly erode confidence. Feelings of inadequacy and pressure to meet unrealistic standards are well-documented consequences of heavy social media use among young adults.

Cyberbullying adds another layer of risk. Insulting messages, rumour-spreading, the sharing of embarrassing images without consent and harassment through fake accounts can cause serious emotional harm. What makes online bullying particularly damaging is that it does not stop at the campus gate — it follows a person home, into their private moments. Content shared



online travels fast and proves nearly impossible to fully remove. Students experiencing it may withdraw from campus life, avoid online academic discussions or struggle to function at all. Universities have a clear responsibility to promote digital safety actively, make reporting procedures visible and treat online harassment with the same seriousness as any other misconduct. Students should also protect personal information, use privacy settings and never hesitate to seek help from counselling services when distress becomes persistent.

The social dimension of these platforms is more nuanced than either advocates or critics tend to acknowledge. For students living away from home for the first time, social media offers a genuine connection to family and old friends. It also opens

doors to professional networks, potential employers, internships and scholarships that would once have been inaccessible. The quieter risk is that the ease of online interaction begins to substitute for the harder, richer work of building real relationships — the chance encounters, study groups and campus activities through which lasting friendships develop.

There is real economic opportunity here too. Students across Kenya use social media to advertise products, promote small businesses and build audiences for creative content. For the entrepreneurially minded, the barriers to entry are genuinely low. The caution, particularly for journalism students, is that the speed of social media can erode the discipline of verification, accuracy and ethical responsibility that profes-

sional practice demands.

The path to making social media work rather than against you comes down to intentionality. Setting specific times for checking platforms, disabling unnecessary notifications during study, using app time limits and protecting sleep with a digital cut-off in the evening are practical habits that compound positively over time. Universities can reinforce this by embedding digital literacy — how to identify misinformation, protect privacy and evaluate sources — into the curriculum.

Social media is neither a blessing nor a curse. It is a powerful tool whose value depends almost entirely on the judgment of the person using it. For university students, developing that judgment — deliberately and early — may prove one of the most important things they do on campus.

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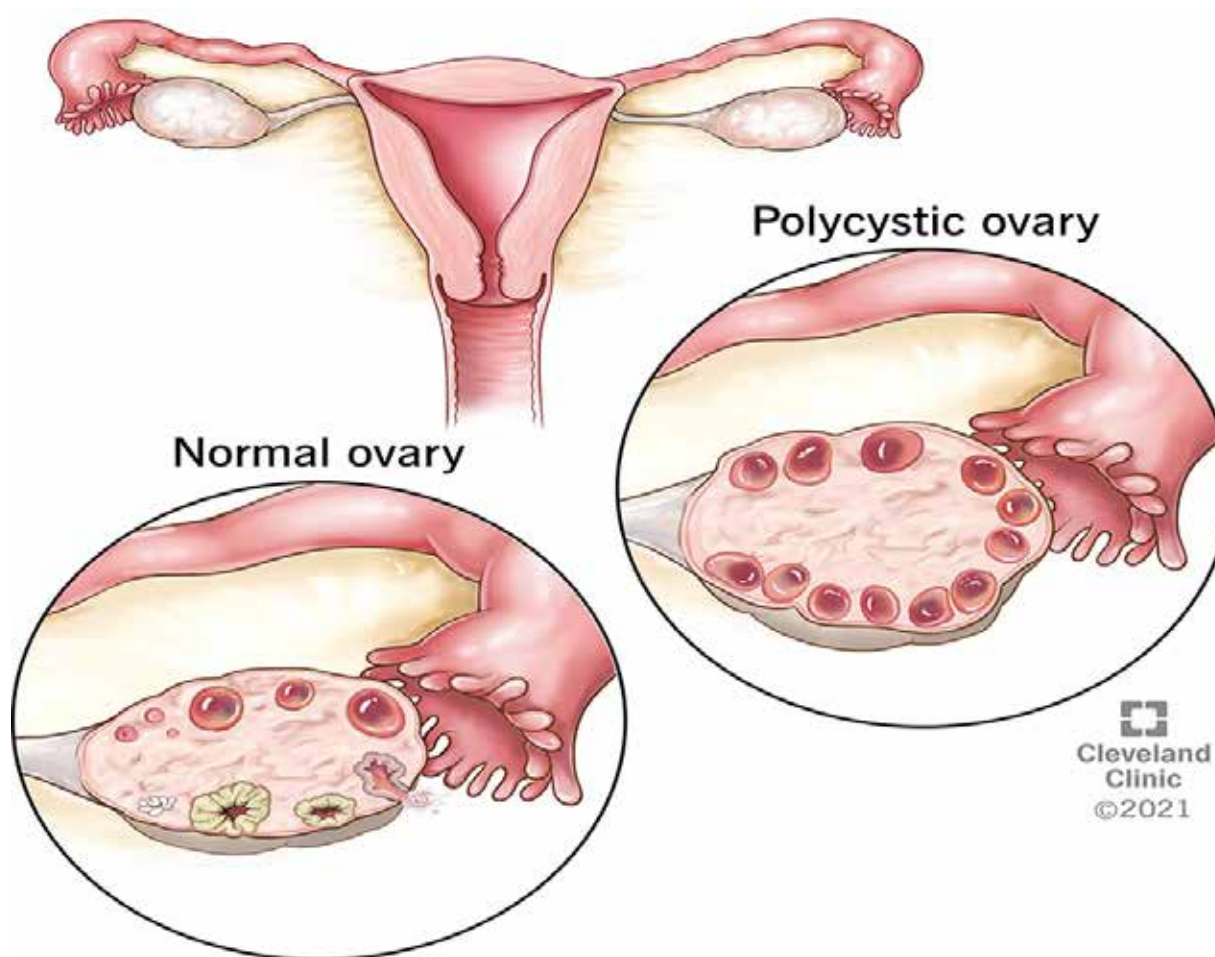
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HEALTH

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Diagnostic Challenges And Its Impact On Reproductive Health



By: Diaspora Times Team
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ABSTRACT

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a complex condition that remains insufficiently understood in certain aspects of clinical practice. Nevertheless, it is one of the most common endocrine disorders affecting women's reproductive health, and it often remains undiagnosed for years. This article examines the diagnosis of PCOS, with particular emphasis on diagnostic challenges during adolescence and the consequences of the syndrome for reproductive health. The analysis of the available literature and the findings of a small survey raise several important questions: Why has the reported prevalence of PCOS attracted increasing attention in recent years? Furthermore, what factors may contribute to the year-on-year decline in birth rates?

Keywords: polycystic ovary syndrome, hyperandrogenism, insulin resistance, infertility.

INTRODUCTION

Polycystic ovary syndrome is a condition of growing concern both in Uzbekistan and worldwide. Despite its prevalence, challenges remain in understanding the condition, ensuring timely diagnosis, and implementing appropriate preventive and management strategies. PCOS affects approximately 8–13% of women of reproductive age, meaning that nearly one in ten women may be affected. However, many cases remain undiagnosed for years. One reason for delayed diagnosis is that common manifestations of the syndrome, such as irregular menstrual cycles and excess body weight, are nonspecific and may occur in various other conditions. Consequently, patients and, in some cases, healthcare professionals may underestimate their clinical significance. Delayed recognition of PCOS may result in inadequate management of reproductive health problems and may contribute to difficulties with conception in some women. This article examines PCOS not merely as a gynaecological condition but as a multifaceted disorder involving metabolic, reproductive, and psychological aspects. It also highlights the importance of early recognition and appropriate clinical assessment.

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan has identified

the protection of maternal and child health, as well as the preservation of women's reproductive health, as important public health priorities. The principle expressed in the statement, "A healthy mother means a healthy child; a healthy mother means a healthy society," also highlights the relevance of this topic to public health and reproductive medicine.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Polycystic ovary syndrome has been extensively investigated in international and regional scientific literature. An analysis of contemporary research indicates that PCOS is a multifactorial condition associated with genetic predisposition, hormonal disturbances, and metabolic dysfunction. Psychological factors may also influence symptom severity, quality of life, and the management of the condition. During a normal menstrual cycle, a group of ovarian follicles begins to develop, and usually one becomes dominant and matures sufficiently for ovulation. Androgens, commonly referred to as male sex hormones, are also produced in small amounts in the ovaries of women. In PCOS, androgen production may be increased, contributing to clinical manifestations such as acne, excessive hair growth, and disturbances in ovulation. Insulin resistance is another important mechanism associated with PCOS. When the body's tissues respond inadequately to insulin, the pancreas may produce more insulin to maintain normal blood glucose levels. Elevated insulin concentrations can stimulate ovarian androgen production and contribute to hormonal imbalance.

Genetic predisposition may also play a role. Women whose mothers

or sisters have PCOS may have an increased likelihood of developing the condition, although inheritance patterns are complex and the syndrome does not follow a simple genetic pattern.

Hormonal disturbances involving luteinising hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) have also been investigated in PCOS. Changes in the regulation of these hormones may contribute to impaired follicular development and ovulatory dysfunction. However, the LH-to-FSH ratio is not considered a standalone diagnostic criterion for PCOS.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

From a metabolic perspective, PCOS is associated with insulin resistance, altered androgen production, and an increased risk of metabolic complications. Dietary patterns characterised by excessive energy intake and frequent consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and highly processed foods may contribute to weight gain and metabolic dysfunction in susceptible individuals. However, these dietary factors should not be regarded as direct or sole causes of PCOS. Chronic stress may affect psychological well-being and influence the management of symptoms. Smoking and alcohol consumption can also adversely affect general and reproductive health. Nevertheless, the development of PCOS involves multiple interacting factors, and it cannot be attributed solely to stress, diet, smoking, or alcohol consumption.

If left inadequately managed, PCOS may be associated with an increased risk of impaired glucose tolerance and type 2 diabetes mellitus, particularly in women with additional metabolic risk factors. Therefore,

appropriate assessment, long-term monitoring, and individualised management are important for reducing potential complications.

In addition to the theoretical analysis, a small anonymous survey was conducted among 20 girls and young women aged 14–23 years. Of the respondents, five were aged 14–18 years, ten were aged 19–23 years, and the remaining five belonged to other age groups.

The survey findings indicated that almost all respondents had first received information about reproductive health from family members rather than from schools or medical sources.

Approximately 75% of respondents reported having experienced occasional menstrual irregularities, although they had not consistently sought medical advice. Despite these experiences, many did not consider the symptoms a serious health concern.

When asked about their knowledge of hormonal disorders such as PCOS, only 33% reported that they had a good understanding of the condition, whereas 67% indicated that their knowledge and awareness were limited or insufficient.

Regarding whom they would consult if they experienced reproductive health problems, 75% stated that they would turn to their mothers or sisters, while 25% indicated that they would consult a healthcare professional.

Half of the respondents reported that reproductive health topics were covered to some extent at school or university, whereas the other half stated that these topics were not taught at all or were not adequately addressed.

When asked whether they felt comfortable discussing PCOS with a healthcare professional, only 25% answered that they felt comfortable,

while 50% reported feeling uncomfortable. The remaining responses were not specified.

These preliminary findings suggest that limited awareness, reliance on family members as the primary source of information, and discomfort when discussing reproductive health with healthcare professionals may represent barriers to timely medical consultation.

However, because the survey involved only 20 participants, its findings cannot be generalised to the wider population. Further studies involving larger and more representative samples are needed to investigate these issues in greater depth.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of recognising polycystic ovary syndrome as a complex condition requiring timely diagnosis and appropriate long-term management. The clinical significance of PCOS lies not only in its hormonal and metabolic manifestations but also in the difficulties associated with recognising its symptoms and obtaining appropriate medical care.

Because the symptoms of PCOS may overlap with those of other conditions, diagnosis requires a comprehensive clinical assessment rather than reliance on individual symptoms alone. This is particularly important during adolescence, when normal pubertal changes may resemble certain features of PCOS.

The questions raised in the introduction also require careful consideration. Although awareness of PCOS and its diagnosis has increased in recent years, this does not necessarily mean that its actual prevalence has risen at the same rate. Establishing changes in prevalence requires comparable epidemiological studies conducted over time. Similarly, declining birth rates cannot be attributed to PCOS alone, as fertility trends are influenced by numerous demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and healthcare-related factors.

The survey findings suggest that limited reproductive health education and discomfort in seeking professional advice may delay the recognition of symptoms. Therefore, strengthening reproductive health education in schools and universities, providing reliable information about hormonal disorders, and encouraging young women to seek medical advice when necessary may help improve early recognition and access to appropriate care.

Ultimately, increasing public awareness, promoting evidence-based healthcare, and reducing the stigma associated with reproductive health discussions are important steps towards improving women's reproductive health and quality of life.

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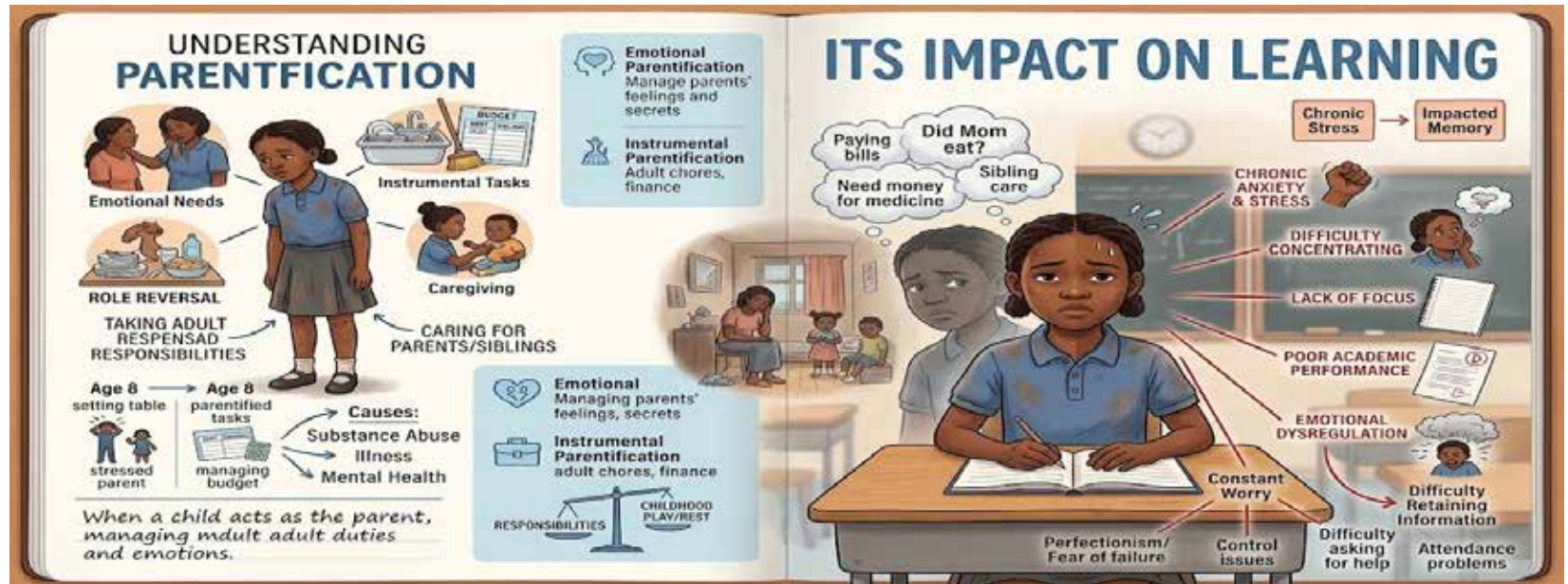
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Motivation

Understanding parentification and its impact on learning

By: Ashford Kimani
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Worth Noting:

- At its core, parentification disrupts the natural arc of childhood development. Growing up is meant to be a process of guided, gradual responsibility — not one that begins in reverse. When the order is upended, children adapt. But adaptation, in this case, always comes at a cost.
- One of the most immediate effects on learning is cognitive overload. A child preoccupied with adult concerns — a parent's well-being, household stability, keeping the family together — has very little mental bandwidth left for academic engagement. Learning demands attention, curiosity, and cognitive flexibility. These are difficult to sustain when the mind is quietly consumed by what can only be described as survival-level concerns.
- In the classroom, this can look contradictory. Some parentified learners become high achievers, treating school as a rare space of order and predictability. Others struggle — with concentration, with memory, with following tasks through to completion. Both outcomes trace back to the same source: a mind that is perpetually overstretched.

When the most reliable child in the classroom is also the most quietly burdened

By Ashford Kimani

In many classrooms, there is a learner who stands out — not for disrupting anything, but for seeming impossibly put-together. Organised. Composed. Dependable. They hand in assignments on time, help classmates without being asked, and never seem to cause trouble. Teachers often reach for the same words to describe them: “model student.” Yet beneath that surface of quiet competence, there may be a hidden story — that of a child who has been required to grow up far too soon.

This phenomenon is known as parentification.

Parentification occurs when a child takes on roles and responsibilities that would normally fall to adults. Instead of being cared for, the child becomes the caregiver — emotionally, practically, or both. It is not always dramatic or obvious. Sometimes it is remarkably subtle: a child who routinely comforts a distressed parent, manages household duties well beyond their years, or becomes the emotional anchor of an unstable home.

There are two primary forms. Instrumental parentification involves tangible, day-to-day responsibilities — cooking, cleaning, looking after younger siblings. Emotional parentification is more complex. It occurs when a child becomes a confidant, mediator, or emotional support system for the adults in their life. Both forms can exist independently, but they frequently overlap, creating a burden that is heavy and relentless.

At its core, parentification disrupts the natural arc of childhood development. Growing up is meant to be a process of guided, gradual responsibility — not one

that begins in reverse. When the order is upended, children adapt. But adaptation, in this case, always comes at a cost.

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In the classroom, this can look contradictory. Some parentified learners become high achievers, treating school as a rare space of order and predictability. Others struggle — with concentration, with memory, with following tasks through to completion. Both outcomes trace back to the same source: a mind that is perpetually overstretched.

Emotional regulation and classroom participation are also significantly affected. Parentified children tend to develop a heightened sensitivity to emotional cues. They can detect tension, a shift in tone, or signs of distress in others long before most people notice anything at all. While this cultivates deep empathy, it also produces hypervigilance. Rather than focusing on the lesson, such a learner may be quietly scanning the room for signs of emotional disruption.

This affects how they participate. They may avoid drawing attention to themselves, wary of unsettling whatever fragile equilibrium they are trying to maintain. Or they may do the opposite — over-participating in supportive roles, helping

peers, assisting the teacher, stepping into leadership positions — not from confidence, but from a deeply ingrained need to be useful. Parentification also reshapes a learner's relationship with authority and with asking for help. Because they are accustomed to being the one who provides support, seeking it can feel unnatural, even unsafe. Some perceive it as weakness. Others worry they will become a burden. The result is that teachers may never see their struggles — because these learners are rarely the ones who raise their hand for the wrong reason.

This creates a dangerous illusion: that competence and wellbeing are the same thing.

In reality, many parentified learners are operating under sustained, silent pressure. They are dependable, but exhausted. They perform, but without the emotional safety that makes deep learning possible. Over time, this trajectory leads to burnout, disengagement, or a plateau that is hard to explain from the outside.

Social development does not escape unaffected, either. Peer relationships can become skewed, with the parentified learner habitually taking on a caregiving role even among friends. They may find it genuinely difficult to engage in age-appropriate interaction — to relax, to play, to show vulnerability without discomfort. Even when they are physically present and socially active, they can feel profoundly isolated.

From a neurological standpoint, the chronic stress associated with parentification has measurable effects on brain development. Prolonged activation of the body's stress response affects the areas responsible for memory, attention, and ex-

ecutive function — precisely the capacities that academic learning depends on, particularly in tasks requiring sustained focus, problem-solving, and creative thinking. That said, this issue demands nuance. Parentification does not only produce deficits. Many people who lived through it carry remarkable strengths — resilience, independence, empathy, and a natural instinct for leadership. In Kenyan schools, these are often the learners who become prefects, peer mentors, and quiet pillars of the school community. Their contributions are real and significant.

The challenge is ensuring those strengths are not being built on perpetual self-sacrifice.

For educators, this calls for a deliberate shift in perception. The most composed child in the room may not be the most secure. The most helpful student may not be the least in need of support. Identifying parentification is less about spotting a single behaviour and more about noticing a pattern — the consistency, the invisible labour, the absence of need openly expressed.

There is much that teachers can do within the classroom. Building a psychologically safe environment where all learners feel free to express needs is foundational. Educators can make a point of checking in with high-functioning learners — not just those who display obvious difficulties. Small, consistent gestures matter: asking how a child is doing, offering support without waiting to be asked, acknowledging the effort beneath the performance. These moments can quietly begin to shift the dynamic.

Equally important is resisting the temptation to overload these learners with responsibility. It is easy to

rely on them precisely because they are so reliable. But piling more onto them reinforces the very patterns that constrain their growth. What they need instead are protected opportunities — for rest, for creativity, for the kind of peer-level engagement that reminds them they are still, at heart, children.

At a systemic level, schools can do more by integrating social-emotional learning frameworks that address identity, boundaries, and self-awareness. Guidance and counselling departments are well placed to identify learners navigating difficult home dynamics — and to provide the kind of consistent, skilled support that individual teachers, however well-meaning, cannot always deliver alone.

Ultimately, addressing parentification is not about shielding children from all responsibility. It is about restoring proportion. Children should grow into responsibility — supported, gradually, and at a pace that belongs to their development, not to the pressures around them.

Because when a child spends their early years holding everything together, they do not simply carry a school bag to class. They carry expectations, anxieties, and roles that were never meant to be theirs.

And unless we consciously create spaces where they can set those burdens down — even briefly, even incompletely — their learning will always compete with the quiet, relentless work of survival.

The question, then, is not simply how well they are performing. It is whether, in the middle of all that performance, anyone has paused long enough to truly see them.

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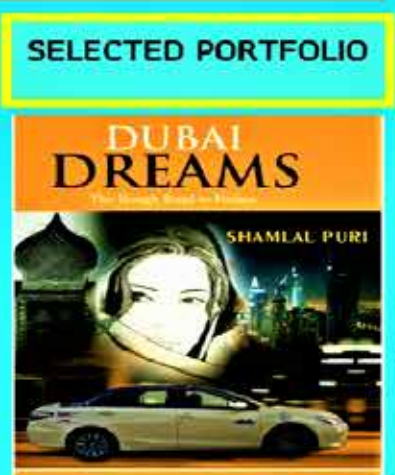
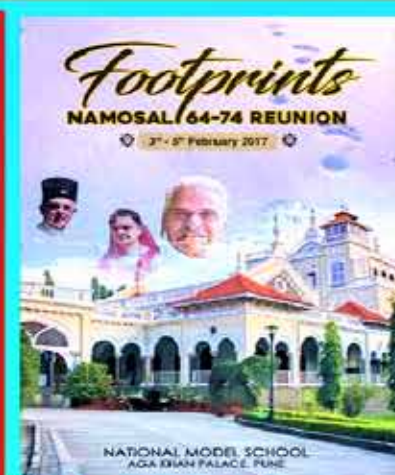
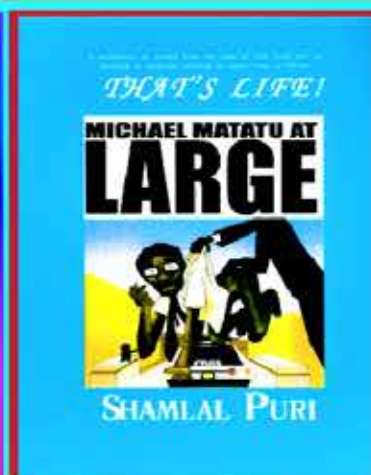
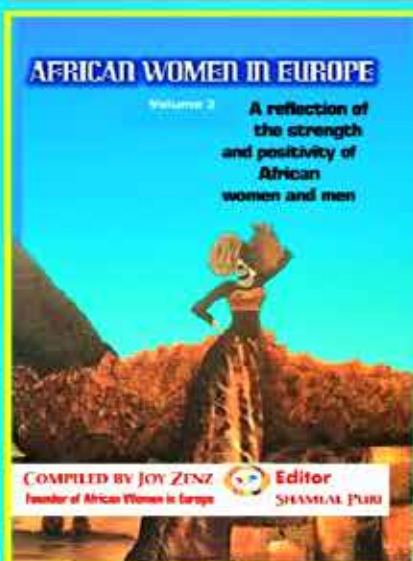
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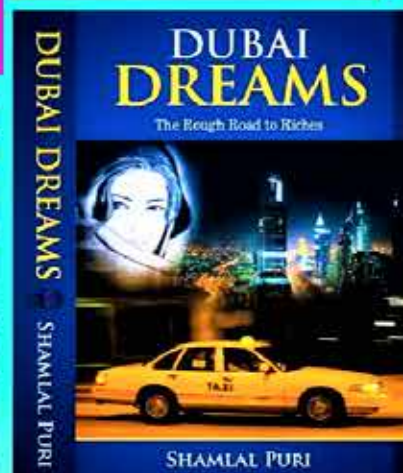
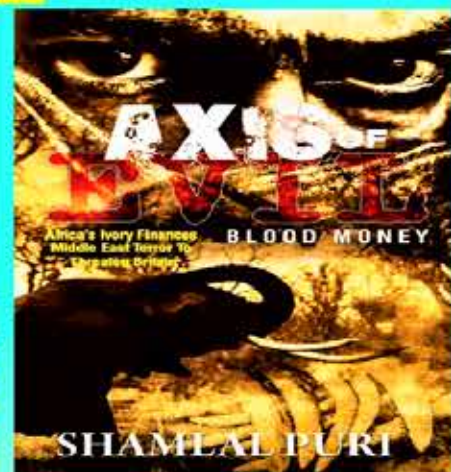
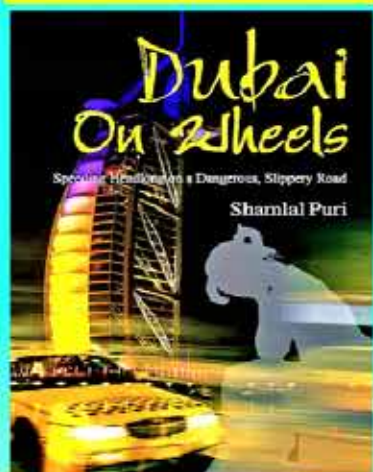
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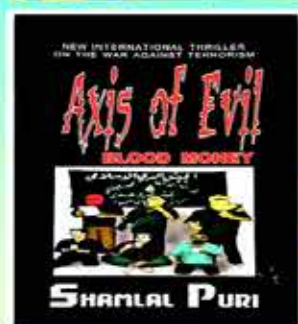
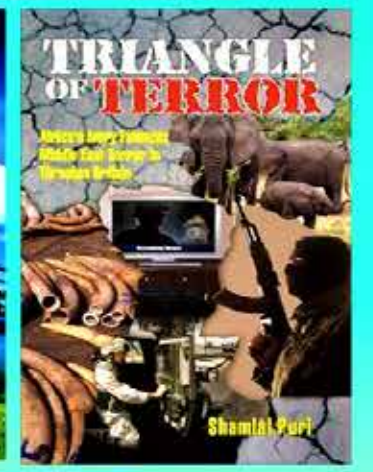
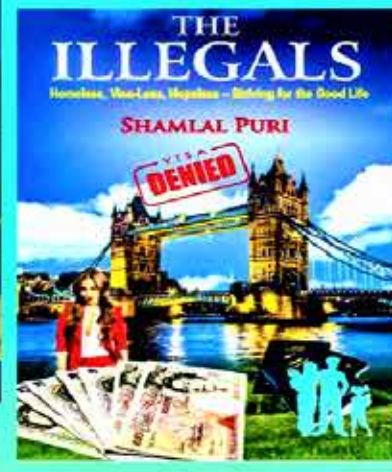
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Global News

Zelenskyy accuses Trump of rewarding Putin as Pope pleads for peace from a hospital bed

With Ukraine under fire and America's resolve in retreat, a fracturing Western alliance and a papal ceasefire call from a Gemelli ward define the most turbulent week of the war

By: Diaspora Times Team
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US President Donald Trump

passing week. On Saturday, Zelenskyy publicly criticised President Donald Trump's decision to waive sweeping new sanctions against Russia, warning that easing economic pressure would only embolden Putin. "A decision was unfortunately made in America to completely disregard the Lindsey Graham Act, which was supposed to impose truly effective pressure on Russia to bring this war to an end," Zelenskyy wrote, in a statement that pulled no diplomatic punches and made no attempt to soften the accusation.

The Act in question — formally the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, named in honour of the late South Carolina senator who championed Ukraine's cause before his death in July — had been signed into law by Trump himself just weeks earlier, on 18 September. Enacted with bipartisan congressional support, the legislation established sweeping new sanctions authorities targeting Russia's energy and defence sectors, imposed tariffs of up to 500 per cent on Russian imports, and placed key restrictions on a statutory footing specifically designed to make them harder for any future president to unilaterally reverse. The signal from Congress had been unambiguous: this was not a discretionary measure. Most provisions required the president to conduct an initial review and, within 30 days of enactment — on or before 18 October 2026 — impose sanctions on persons determined to satisfy the applicable statutory criteria.

Instead, on the eve of that deadline, Trump signed an executive order suspending those very provisions. He argued the move was "in the national interests of the United States," a phrase that told allies in Kyiv and European capitals everything they needed to know about Washington's current priorities. The decision was tied to a deal Trump had separately struck with Putin — an agreement under which Moscow would release large volumes of diesel onto global markets in exchange for sanctions relief, with Trump announcing on his Truth Social platform that Russia would "immediately" supply more than 300,000 tons of diesel, followed by 500,000 tons in November and a million tons "immediately thereafter." Trump framed it in the language of domestic economics, saying lower diesel prices for "our Great Farmers, Ranchers, and Truckers" was his "Greatest Priority" — a framing that conspicuously omitted any mention

of what Russia was or was not giving up in exchange.

For Zelenskyy, the sequencing and the silence told their own story. "Any easing of sanctions against Russia without a clear and lasting de-escalation agreement with Russia is an obvious weakness," he wrote publicly. In a separate phone interview with Axios, the Ukrainian president sounded exasperated and dismayed, describing the diesel deal as "not fair and not honest" and expressing a sense of personal betrayal by the announcement. He had not been consulted. The deal had been announced while Ukraine's own negotiating team was sitting across a table from Trump envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner in Miami, discussing a framework to end the war. "If you allow them to export diesel, and you think before that you have to go to Russia to negotiate, it looks that you are buying this meeting," Zelenskyy said, adding carefully that he did not know whether that was Trump's actual intention. He was equally blunt about what he believed would come next. "Because gas deals will follow," Zelenskyy warned, noting that Putin's envoys were already publicly presenting the diesel agreement as a model for broader US-Russia economic co-operation. "Unfortunately, the lifting of sanctions will continue," he said. "You cannot achieve this by limiting Ukraine's responses to Russia for killing our people. And certainly not by lifting sanctions."

Russia's reaction to the executive order confirmed Kyiv's fears with uncomfortable speed. Several Russian officials celebrated the waiver

publicly, with the Kremlin hailing Trump's move as "historic." Putin's envoys moved quickly to frame the diesel agreement not as a one-off concession but as a template for the restoration of broad US-Russia economic ties. The Ukrainian president, as is his custom, pointed to events on the ground as the most honest commentary available. "Today, Russia expressed its thanks for the lifting of sanctions on diesel exports by dropping five glide bombs on residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia," he wrote on X. It was an image that needed no elaboration. The personal deterioration between Zelenskyy and Trump has mirrored the widening policy gap with an almost metronomic consistency. Trump called on Ukraine to "get a new leader" after Zelenskyy slammed Washington's easing of Russian diesel sanctions, a demand without precedent in the history of US-Ukrainian relations. The American president also criticised Zelenskyy for not holding elections since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 — a charge Kyiv rejects as legally and logistically impossible under active wartime martial law. Trump, who rarely criticises Putin in such terms, showed no similar impatience with the Russian leader's democratic record.

In a Financial Times interview that provided perhaps the most candid window into Zelenskyy's thinking, the Ukrainian president attempted to explain the psychology driving the American president's posture toward Moscow. Zelenskyy said Trump has an "instinctive affinity for autocrats and the ultra-wealthy,"

explaining that Putin's decades in power command a kind of respect from a president who equates political longevity with strength. "Because, to him, people who can be leaders for 20, 30, or 40 years mean that they can be very strong," Zelenskyy said. It was a pointed observation, but also a warning: if this is Washington's operating logic, then pressure on Putin may never be the point.

The reaction in Congress was one of the rare moments in Trump's second term when bipartisan discomfort broke visibly into the open. Representative Don Beyer said the executive order "betrays our Ukrainian partners and defies clear congressional intent of legislation designed to punish Russia for its illegal war of aggression." Even some Republican voices dissented. Representative Don Bacon, a Trump ally, said it was time to apply more sanctions, not fewer. A bipartisan group of House members had written to Trump just weeks earlier, urging him not to ease sanctions and to implement the Graham Act in full. "Sanctions relief will embolden Russia and prolong the war," they wrote, calling on the administration to act swiftly ahead of the 18 October deadline. Trump ignored them.

Europe's response was swift, united and, in tone, the most openly critical of Washington seen since the early days of Trump's second term. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, speaking at the entrance to an EU leaders' summit in Brussels, said: "We definitely have a different approach regarding this war. We must pressure the aggressor to stop the

war, not the victim to surrender. Drowning Ukraine is not the right approach." "Suspending sanctions on Russian diesel provides Moscow with more revenues to wage war. This is not the time to ease pressure on Russia, and Europe won't," Kallas wrote on X, adding that EU foreign ministers were set to formally add some 1,600 new individuals and entities to the EU's sanctions blacklist — the biggest such package since the start of the war.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen expressed regret that Trump's agreement had worsened the alliance with Washington. "We are worse off than we were a few days ago," she said. Britain moved in the opposite direction to Washington, with Downing Street pledging to strengthen, not loosen, its own Russia sanctions regime. Germany reaffirmed that Russian diesel would not enter German territory and that its support for Ukraine "remains unwavering." The message from the European mainstream could hardly have been clearer — or the divergence with Washington more stark. Into this volatile and fractured diplomatic landscape came an intervention from a source that nobody — least of all the Kremlin — had anticipated: a hospital room on the tenth floor of Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic.

Pope Leo XIV spoke by telephone with Putin on 16 October, calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine and for humanitarian aid to

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Global News

Zelenskyy accuses Trump of rewarding Putin as Pope pleads for peace from a hospital bed

With Ukraine under fire and America's resolve in retreat, a fracturing Western alliance and a papal ceasefire call from a Gemelli ward define the most turbulent week of the war

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Ukrainian civilians starving amid a Russian blockade. The Holy Father, currently recovering from lung cancer surgery performed on 13 October, expressed deep concern about the grave humanitarian situation in the city of Oleshky, in Ukraine's partially occupied Kherson region, and called for a ceasefire to allow the delivery of food and medical assistance and the voluntary and safe evacuation of the civilian population.

A senior Vatican source confirmed to America Magazine that it was the Holy See that initiated the call — a detail of considerable significance. It means that a pontiff three days out of surgery, and reportedly celebrating his first Mass from a hospital ward on the same day, judged the situation in Oleshky to be sufficiently urgent to justify picking up the phone to the Kremlin without waiting for a diplomatic opening or a formal request. Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin confirmed that it was “the Holy Father who took the initiative” to call Putin directly, “to plead the case of this besieged city, where around 2,000 civilians need safe routes out and humanitarian corridors.”

The situation in Oleshky is, by any humanitarian measure, dire. Mines and drone activity have effectively sealed evacuation routes. Food deliveries have been blocked. An estimated 2,000 civilians remain trapped, at risk of starvation, in a city that Russia partially occupies and that Ukraine cannot safely access. Since his election in May 2025, Pope Leo had called repeatedly for an immediate halt to the fighting in Ukraine and for diplomacy leading to a lasting peace. The Oleshky call marks an escalation of that personal diplomatic engagement — a willingness to go directly to Moscow, from a hospital bed, in a manner that carries its own unmistakable moral weight.

The Russian response was warm in tone and empty in content. Putin thanked the Pope for his willingness to help resolve the conflict and for his humanitarian efforts, and wished him a speedy recovery from surgery. The exchange was described by the Kremlin as taking place in a constructive atmosphere of mutual respect. What the Kremlin did not do was commit to anything. No ceasefire agreement. No humanitarian corridor. No evacuation timeline. No concession of any kind. Russian officials added, with characteristic deflection, that Putin blamed Ukraine for the situation in Oleshky — a claim Ukraine and in-

ternational humanitarian organisations have consistently rejected.

The contrast between Moscow's courteous language and its continued bombardment of Ukrainian cities was not lost on observers. It rarely is. But the papal call does something that goes beyond the immediate diplomatic ledger. At a moment when the Western sanctions architecture is being dismantled from within, when European unity faces its most serious structural test since 2022, and when the United States is cutting bilateral deals with Moscow that Kyiv describes as acts of strategic betrayal, the consistent moral clarity of the papacy provides a reference point that exists outside the language of national interest, energy prices and electoral arithmetic. That matters more than it might appear. The war in Ukraine is increasingly being narrated in different registers by different actors — as a geopolitical chess match in Washington, as an existential civilisational conflict in Kyiv, as a trade and energy calculation in Moscow, and as a humanitarian catastrophe in Rome. The Pope's call to Putin from Gemelli Hospital insists, in the most direct terms available to the Catholic Church, that the human dimension cannot be traded away for diesel.

For Zelenskyy, holding all of these competing narratives together while

simultaneously commanding a war effort is a task of extraordinary and relentless difficulty. Ukraine's armed forces continue to engage Russian troops across a front line stretching hundreds of kilometres, with particularly intense fighting in the Pokrovsk sector of Donetsk and sustained Russian pressure in the Zaporizhzhia region. Russian air and missile strikes on civilian infrastructure have continued throughout the week, with Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv and other cities targeted. Zelenskyy said on Sunday that over the past week “most regions of Ukraine” had come under Russian attack, and repeated his assertion that “Russia is dragging out the war,” elongating ceasefire negotiations “just to buy time and then try to grab more land.”

This is the context in which Trump's sanctions waiver lands in Kyiv — not as an abstract diplomatic manoeuvre, but as a concrete shift in the material conditions of a war that is being fought, and died in, every day. The Graham Act's provisions were designed precisely to tighten the financial vice around Russia's ability to fund that war. Suspending them, whatever the domestic American rationale, loosens that vice at the moment when Ukraine and its European allies were counting on it to bite.

The week has also exposed, with un-

usual clarity, the fundamental contradiction at the heart of Trump's Ukraine policy. A president who signed a sweeping Russia sanctions law in September and waived it in October. Who called himself a peacemaker while demanding Ukraine change its elected leader. Who said he wanted to end the war while signing deals that, by Kyiv's reckoning, finance the means by which Russia continues to wage it. The White House spokeswoman, asked whether additional deals with Moscow were being considered, defended the diesel agreement but declined to address whether further economic co-operation with Russia was under discussion. The silence was noted in every European capital. What is clear, as this turbulent week draws to a close, is that the war's diplomatic landscape has shifted in ways that are unlikely to be easily reversed. Europe is now explicitly running a different policy to Washington. The US Congress is at odds with the US president over his own legislation. Ukraine's relationship with its most powerful military backer is openly fractious in a way that would have been unthinkable a year ago. And from a hospital room in Rome, a Pope who has barely recovered from surgery is making direct calls to the Kremlin because the conventional diplomatic channels

have, once again, failed the civilians who are dying in them.

The question haunting chancelleries from Brussels to Nairobi is not a complicated one. It simply demands an honest answer: if this is what Western resolve looks like in October 2026, nearly five years into a war of aggression on European soil, what will it look like in six months? And who, in Moscow, is not asking themselves exactly the same thing?

In Kyiv, the bombs keep falling. In Rome, a Pope recovers and reaches for the phone. In Washington, an executive order dismantles a law that was signed just weeks ago. And in Moscow, officials celebrate what they are calling historic progress — while offering nothing, to anyone, in return.



Russian President Vladimir Putin

UK NEWS

BRITAIN PLEDGES 'ROCK SOLID' SUPPORT
TO UKRAINE

By: Shamlal Puri
Associate Publisher
& Senior Editor - UK
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Worth
Noting:

- The two leaders met after the wartime leader met with King Charles at Buckingham Palace.
- Prime Minister Burnham and President Zelenskyy discussed issues affecting Ukraine amid the ongoing conflict with Russia and in the wake of Putin's relentless attacks on Kyiv.
- The British Prime Minister told Mr Zelenskyy, "You have seen the solidarity and the support you have got from everybody in Britain."
- The meeting was important, as the Ukrainian leader was in London to seek support after President Donald Trump's deal to buy oil from Putin, despite warnings that Washington would impose high tariffs and risk sanctions if other countries dared to buy oil from Russia.



British Prime Minister Andy Burnham welcomes Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham pledged the UK's rock-solid support for Ukraine as long as it takes. Meeting President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday at 10 Downing Street, Mr Burnham said Britain's support for Ukraine will not change. The two leaders began by reflecting on their call on Saturday, and Russia's blatant, indiscriminate attacks on civilian and energy infrastructure since President Donald Trump of the US called for an energy ceasefire, meaning no attacks on energy installations. The ink had barely dried on Trump's announcement that Putin unleashed attacks on whatever Russians could target, making a mockery of the ceasefire.

On arrival at Downing Street, Burnham embraced Zelenskyy as he was given a red-carpet welcome and a Guard of Honour, after Foreign Office officials greeted him with cheers.

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The British Prime Minister told Mr Zelenskyy, "You have seen the solidarity and the support you have got from everybody in Britain." The meeting was important, as the Ukrainian leader was in London to seek support after President Donald Trump's deal to buy oil from Putin, despite warnings that Washington would impose high tariffs and risk sanctions if other countries dared to buy oil from Russia. President Zelenskyy's visit is tied to the UK's call on international partners to step up sanctions on Russia and increase pressure on Putin to respect the United States' call for an energy ceasefire. In return, President Zelenskyy said he was "thankful" for the support, and "very proud" that the British people had proved "one of the strongest partners in our history".

The meeting comes as Ukraine faces one of its worst bombardments from Russia since the conflict began.

It also comes as the UK doubles down on support for Ukraine, including delivering £45 million in surface-

to-air missiles and standing by plans to fully implement a maritime services ban on Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports, restricting Russia's access to the UK's world-leading shipping and insurance services.

The UK will also accelerate deliveries of British Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMMs), which have proven extremely effective against jet-powered drones used to strike far beyond Ukraine's front lines, including Kyiv and beyond.

The drones are faster and can fly far higher than propeller-driven Shaheds, making them harder to detect and destroy before they hit targets.

The UK has already committed £1.6 billion to deliver more than 5,000 LMMs to Ukraine over the next four years. It will accelerate £10 million of the £45m missile package announced today to meet Ukraine's most urgent winter requirements.

Ahead of the two leaders meeting, Prime Minister Andy Burnham said: "Our rock-solid support to Ukraine is vital for keeping us safe here in the UK and ensuring those on the front-lines have the equipment they need to push back Rus-

sia.

"My message to the Ukrainian people could not be clearer: we are with you for as long as it takes, and we will go further and faster in our support to back your courageous fight for peace in Europe.

"It is not just the right thing to do, but it's the necessary thing to do. Russia's aggression cannot be allowed to succeed on our continent."

The Prime Minister has also asked Ministers to draw up further sanctions, military aid, and fiscal packages to provide urgent support in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, Chancellor John Healey used his meetings at the IMF in Bangkok to urge partners to fully implement an equivalent ban on Russian LNG, following the UK's lead. This follows the Foreign Secretary's call for the same at the Warsaw Security Forum earlier this week.

As Russia continues its bombardment of Ukraine's capital Kyiv and energy infrastructure, the Chancellor argued that this must be met by European resolve and unity – ensuring our unshakeable commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty stands strong.

Chancellor of the Exchequer John Healey said:

"Conflict in the Middle East and in Europe is hitting people across the world. As the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Putin continues, our commitment to the Ukrainian people is unshakeable. I urge partners to back the ban on Russian LNG, like we have done in the UK, to curtail the war chest funding Putin so desperately wants."

NEWS PAPER

IN BUSINESS



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WORLD

The triple squeeze: how EPRA's fuel price hike is reshaping the survival equation for the common mwananchi

With petrol above KSh226, diesel near KSh228 and kerosene up a punishing KSh28 in a single month, the October price cycle is not just a number on a pump — it is a verdict on millions of Kenyan lives

By: David Nyaga
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Worth Noting:

• To understand the true magnitude of what this pricing cycle means, it helps to start not at the petrol station but at the farm. Diesel, now retailing at KSh227.76 per litre in Nairobi, is the unseen backbone of Kenya's agricultural and logistics network. The tractors tilling fields in the Rift Valley, the irrigation pumps serving smallholder farms in Meru and Kirinyaga, the heavy-duty trucks carrying cabbages, maize, potatoes and tomatoes to Wakulima and Gakoromone markets — all of them run on diesel, and all of them just got more expensive to operate.

• The chain reaction that follows is both predictable and remorseless. Food prices are often the first to respond to fuel increases because Kenya's agricultural supply chain relies heavily on road transport. Farmers also face higher irrigation, fertiliser and farm input costs whenever fuel prices rise. When transporters absorb a higher diesel cost, they pass it on in freight charges.

a three-pronged assault on the livelihoods of ordinary citizens. This is not a story about macroeconomic adjustment or international supply chain dynamics, though those forces are real and relevant. It is a story about what happens at the bottom of a fuel price cycle, in the homes and markets and boda-boda stages where the numbers become consequences.

EPRA Director-General Edward Mwirigi Kinyua attributed the price increases to the escalating conflict in the Middle East, which has disrupted petroleum supply chains and driven up the cost of importing fuel. Kenya imports all of its fuel in refined form, and EPRA prices it from the landed cost — what a cargo costs once it reaches the Port of Mombasa — averaged across the cargoes in the review period. The international explanation is accurate as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. For a Nairobi commuter paying a fare that has moved again, or a smallholder farmer watching freight costs absorb another bite of his margin, the geopolitics of the Middle East is an abstraction. The pump price is not.

Diesel and the food chain

To understand the true magnitude of what this pricing cycle means, it helps to start not at the petrol station but at the farm. Diesel, now retailing at KSh227.76 per litre in Nairobi, is the unseen backbone of Kenya's agricultural and logistics network. The tractors tilling fields in the Rift Valley, the irrigation pumps serving smallholder farms in Meru and Kirinyaga, the heavy-duty trucks carrying cabbages, maize, potatoes and tomatoes to Wakulima and Gakoromone markets — all of them run on diesel, and all of them just got more expensive to operate.

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chain relies heavily on road transport. Farmers also face higher irrigation, fertiliser and farm input costs whenever fuel prices rise. When transporters absorb a higher diesel cost, they pass it on in freight charges. When freight charges rise, wholesale prices at the market gate rise with them. When wholesale prices rise, the market vendors adjust their retail prices. And by the time a kilogramme of tomatoes or a bag of maize reaches a kitchen in Mathare or Kayole, the family purchasing it has effectively paid for the fuel price increase twice — once in transport costs and once at the till.

Kenya's inflation climbed to 5.6 per cent in April 2026 from 4.4 per cent in March, driven largely by rising transport and food prices. Data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics shows food, transport and housing-related costs together account for more than 57 per cent of Kenya's Consumer Price Index basket, meaning movements in these sectors significantly shape overall inflation trends. A fuel price hike of this scale, hitting all three products simultaneously, does not just nudge that basket — it tilts it.

Petrol and the urban hustle

The climb in super petrol to KSh226.96 per litre hits a different but equally vital part of the economy: human mobility. For millions of low-income Kenyans who commute daily from peripheral residential estates — Ruiru, Rongai, Kitengela, Umoja — to central business districts and industrial zones, the fare on a matatu is not an optional expense. It is the price of getting to work. Matatu Owners Association President Albert Karakacha has confirmed that operators have begun consultations nationwide and will adjust fares to reflect rising operational costs, warning that the impact of the price hike will ultimately fall on ordinary Kenyans who rely on public transport daily. The Kenya Transporters Association notes that fuel constitutes approximately 55 per cent of total road freight transport operating costs, and estimates that the increase in fuel prices will push overall transport operating costs up by between 13 and 14 per cent. Previous cycles have seen fare increases of between 25 and 30 per cent imposed within days of a pump price rise, and there is no structural reason to expect this cycle to

be different.

For the low-income commuter whose daily wage has not moved in proportion to the cost of living, a fare increase of even KSh20 on a return journey is not trivial. It is the difference between a full meal and a partial one. It is school fees delayed. It is a small emergency that cannot be covered. Economists warn that in many cases, fares remain elevated even after temporary fuel price reductions, creating what they call "sticky inflation" — a ratchet effect that compresses household budgets in one direction only.

Beyond passenger transport, the fuel hike strikes directly at the micro-economy of the urban hustle. The boda-boda rider making deliveries across Nairobi's industrial estates, the tuk-tuk operator in Mombasa's old town, the independent artisan ferrying materials from a hardware to a building site — all of them are running on petrol, and all of them will now find their operational margins tighter. For the millions who occupy this stratum of the economy — self-employed, uninsured, with no buffer between their daily fuel cost and their daily income — the adjustment is immediate and personal.

The kerosene catastrophe

If the diesel and petrol hikes are serious, the kerosene increase is in a category of its own. A rise of KSh28.49 in a single month — more than double the combined increases in petrol and diesel — does not simply squeeze a household budget. For the families who depend on kerosene, it attacks the fundamentals of domestic life.

The rise in kerosene prices is likely to hit low-income households that rely on the fuel for cooking and lighting hardest of all. According to data from the Central Bank of Kenya, 12-month inflation for low-income households in Nairobi stands significantly higher than for high-income households, and kerosene is one of the clearest illustrations of why: the faster jump in kerosene prices is a direct reflection of how poor households are affected more by inflation than their wealthier counterparts.

Kerosene has historically served as the fuel of last resort — the product that remained accessible when cooking gas and electricity were not. Data shows that

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WORLD

The triple squeeze: how EPRA's fuel price hike is reshaping the survival equation for the common mwananchi

With petrol above KSh226, diesel near KSh228 and kerosene up a punishing KSh28 in a single month, the October price cycle is not just a number on a pump — it is a verdict on millions of Kenyan lives

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- The climb in super petrol to KSh226.96 per litre hits a different but equally vital part of the economy: human mobility. For millions of low-income Kenyans who commute daily from peripheral residential estates — Ruiru, Rongai, Kitengela, Umoja — to central business districts and industrial zones, the fare on a matatu is not an optional expense. It is the price of getting to work.
- Matatu Owners Association President Albert Karakacha has confirmed that operators have begun consultations nationwide and will adjust fares to reflect rising operational costs, warning that the impact of the price hike will ultimately fall on ordinary Kenyans who rely on public transport daily. The Kenya Transporters Association notes that fuel constitutes approximately 55 per cent of total road freight transport operating costs, and estimates that the increase in fuel prices will push overall transport operating costs up by between 13 and 14 per cent.

charcoal prices are already at their highest level in 78 months, deepening the squeeze on poor families grappling with rising prices of alternative fuels such as LPG and kerosene, with the cost of both climbing in recent months, thus limiting households' options in terms of affordability. EPRA has previously justified steep kerosene increases in part by the need to close the price gap between kerosene and diesel — a gap that incentivises the illegal adulteration of diesel with cheaper kerosene. By EPRA's own analysis, kerosene rose by about KSh15 more than import costs alone would justify, with the regulator citing the need to prevent the blending of cheaper kerosene into diesel as a specific reason for the steeper adjustment. The reasoning is technically defensible. Its human consequences are not easy. When kerosene and diesel retail at near-parity — with kerosene at KSh219.87 and diesel at KSh227.76 — the safety net it once provided has effectively ceased to exist. Kerosene is mostly used by low-income earners to power their stoves for cooking and lighting, and it is by far the least consumed of the three fuel products — meaning it is actually

the least costly to stabilise through a subsidy if the political will existed to do so. That will, consistently, has not been there. When keeping a lamp burning through a child's study hour becomes unaffordable, and when cooking a simple meal requires a financial calculation that pits nutrition against transport costs, households do not simply tighten their belts. They make the kinds of compromises that compound over time — reduced nutrition, children missing study time, resort to biomass fuels whose health implications are well documented but routinely overlooked by policy. These are not theoretical risks. They are the lived texture of poverty under persistent fuel price inflation. A system that does not protect the people it taxes The broader structural picture is one that successive Kenyan governments have struggled to confront honestly. The maximum pump prices announced by EPRA include eight per cent Value Added Tax, in line with government policy to cushion consumers from the negative effects of high international prices. Yet the retention of VAT at any

level on fuel products that are the primary input cost for the country's most economically vulnerable households represents a structural choice — not a neutral technical adjustment. Heavy tax stacking on petroleum products turns local energy pricing into a punitive burden, one that is regressive in precisely the way that matters most: it takes a larger proportional bite from the budgets of those who can least afford it. The National Taxpayers Association has raised concerns that matatu fare increases have at times gone beyond covering fuel costs, accusing operators of taking advantage of the situation to boost their earnings, and urging transport operators to act responsibly and adjust fares within reasonable limits, warning that unchecked increases could further strain households already grappling with economic pressures. The complaint points to a wider problem: when government sets a fuel price without a meaningful mechanism to limit the downstream price-setting behaviour of transport operators and food traders, the poorest consumers absorb not only the fuel cost increase but also whatever additional margin interme-

diaries decide to add. The mwananchi, caught at the bottom of this chain, has historically demonstrated extraordinary resilience. Communal resource pooling, walking cultures, dietary substitution, innovative grassroots cost-cutting — these are the adaptive strategies that keep households functional when the formal economy fails to protect them. But adaptation of this kind is not free. It has a cost in dignity, in nutrition, in educational opportunity, in the slow erosion of the buffer that separates economic precarity from genuine destitution. And that cost compounds silently, month by month, with each new EPRA pricing cycle. What structural reform would actually look like The calls for intervention are not new, and they will not become new by being repeated. What they require is a different quality of political seriousness. Fast-tracking localized renewable energy transitions — solar for off-grid communities, cleaner cooking solutions for low-income urban households — would begin to reduce the dependence on kerosene that makes each price cycle so damag-

ing. Optimising mass public transit through investment in infrastructure that reduces the stranglehold of the matatu cartel on urban commuting costs would create a structural alternative to fare-pass-through. Instituting targeted safety nets to protect baseline fuel consumption for the most vulnerable populations — the kind of mechanism that exists in various forms across the region — would ensure that a global supply disruption in the Middle East does not translate directly and immediately into a child eating less in Mathare. None of this is beyond Kenya's policy capability. The challenge is not technical. It is political. The question of who bears the cost of energy pricing — whether it is distributed across a tax base with the capacity to absorb it, or concentrated on households with no capacity to resist it — is ultimately a question of political will. Until the answer to that question changes, every turn of the fuel pump will remain what it has been for too long: not a commercial transaction, but a tax on survival — collected monthly, without apology, from the people who can least afford to pay it.

Kenya

Mashujaa Day 2026: What does Kenya owe the heroes it exports?

As the nation celebrates its heroes, the sacrifices of Kenyans abroad demand more than speeches

By: Collins Kibet
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As Kenya prepares to mark Mashujaa Day on 20 October 2026, the occasion invites a question that deserves a more honest answer than patriotic ceremony tends to provide: is the country doing enough for the Kenyans living and working abroad whose quiet, daily sacrifices continue to support families, sustain communities and strengthen the national economy? Mashujaa Day has always honoured courage — the courage of the men and women who challenged colonial rule and paid, often with their lives, to secure the freedoms Kenyans enjoy today. That founding story is worth retelling. But the spirit of heroism did not retire with independence. It lives on in the choices of ordinary citizens who confront difficult circumstances, carry responsibilities that were never glamorous, and press forward anyway. Among them are the thousands of Kenyans spread across the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Middle East, Europe and elsewhere — many of whom left home in search of employment, education or opportunity that proved too scarce to find at home.

The economic case for recognising this community is by now well established. Diaspora remittances have grown into one of Kenya's most significant sources of foreign exchange. According to the Central Bank of Kenya, these transfers support household consumption, pay school fees, fund medical care, finance housing and seed small businesses. For many families, the money arriving from abroad is not supplementary income — it is the primary reason they are not in poverty. These are not abstract macro-economic flows. They are children kept in school, hospital bills met on time, and futures that remain possible because someone, somewhere, chose to stay away so that others could get ahead.

What the statistics cannot easily capture is the human cost sitting behind every transfer. A Kenyan working abroad may spend years — sometimes the most formative years of their children's lives — separated from everyone they love. Some work long hours in environments that are physically demanding and emotionally isolating. Others navigate loneliness, cultural adjustment, discrimination and the grinding uncertainty of immigration status. Those employed in domestic work, construction, healthcare and hospitality may endure conditions that would be considered unacceptable at home, all while trying to hold together a financial lifeline for relatives thousands of kilometres away.



Their sacrifices are, more often than not, invisible to the people who benefit from them. Mashujaa Day should change that. It should offer a moment to look beyond the financial value of remittances and acknowledge the human cost of earning them. Behind every transfer could be a parent who missed a child's first day of school, a son or daughter unable to attend a family funeral, a worker who quietly postponed their own ambitions year after year to keep a promise to people at home. This is a form of patriotism. It does not come with a uniform or a public platform, but it is real — expressed through endurance, responsibility and an unbroken connection to home. Recognition, however, must mean more than appreciation posts and ceremonial nods. The government carries genuine obligations here. Cases of fraudulent recruitment, exploitative contracts, labour abuse and outright mistreatment of Kenyan migrant workers point to a protection framework that remains dangerously inadequate. Prospective workers deserve reliable information before they travel. Recruitment agencies that operate illegally must face meaningful consequences. Kenyan embassies and consulates need to be properly resourced — not merely present — so that citizens facing emergencies, exploitation or employer disputes can access real and timely help. Diplomatically, Kenya must do more to promote fair labour standards in destination countries and ensure

that workers who encounter difficulties do not feel abandoned simply because they are far from home. Accessible emergency support, clear complaint channels, legal guidance and effective coordination with local authorities are not luxuries. They are the minimum a country owes citizens who are contributing to its economy while bearing personal costs the country rarely acknowledges. There is also the question of investment — and it goes beyond household remittances. Kenyans abroad bring back more than money. They carry professional expertise, international networks, technical skills and entrepreneurial experience that, properly channelled, could help create jobs and drive local industry. But capitalising on that potential requires more than appeals to patriotism. Investors need confidence: that contracts will be honoured, that property transactions are safe, that public institutions are accountable and that the regulatory environment will not shift beneath their feet without warning. Corruption, bureaucratic obstruction and opaque processes have already deterred diaspora investment that Kenya could ill afford to lose. Fixing that is not optional — it is the precondition for any serious engagement strategy. On the family side, there is a conversation that Kenya also needs to have more openly. Migrants are not bottomless wells of foreign currency. They have their own living costs, their own futures to plan for, their own pressures to manage. The as-

sumption that earning in dollars or pounds automatically means living comfortably is, in many cases, far from reality. Families who treat relatives abroad as an unlimited financial resource can create a strain — emotional and financial — that is rarely visible until something breaks. A more sustainable dynamic would be built on realistic expectations, shared planning and genuine appreciation rather than entitlement. And through all of this, Kenya must confront the uncomfortable truth that overseas employment has become, for too many young people, the most plausible route to economic dignity. That should not be the answer. International mobility can be enriching and valuable, but a country that cannot offer its young people a reasonable shot at a decent life at home has a more fundamental problem than any diaspora policy can solve. Investment in education, vocational training, manufacturing, agriculture and technology remains essential — not as background noise, but as the central work of building an economy that retains the people it produces. Honouring Kenyans abroad should not come at the expense of honouring those who serve within the country. Teachers, nurses, farmers, entrepreneurs and public servants are equally deserving of recognition. The point of Mashujaa Day is not to rank sacrifices but to acknowledge that service takes many forms — and that a nation grows stronger when it sees and values all of them.

As the celebrations unfold this year, Kenya should consider giving diaspora recognition a more concrete shape: transparent, merit-based acknowledgement of professional achievement, community development and responsible investment. Symbolic awards may stir pride, but what Kenyans abroad need most is effective protection, institutions that respond when it matters, and investment frameworks that actually work. The heroes of independence sacrificed for freedom, dignity and a better future. The Kenyans working abroad today are pursuing many of those same things — often while propping up the families and communities they left behind. Their contribution deserves recognition. Their rights deserve protection. Their expertise deserves a genuine hearing. On 20 October 2026, as the flags are raised and the speeches are delivered, the real test will not be what is said in the stadium. It will be whether the country turns those words into action. If Kenyans abroad continue to sacrifice for their homeland, the least their homeland can do is show up for them in return. Mashujaa Day should not leave that question unanswered.

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

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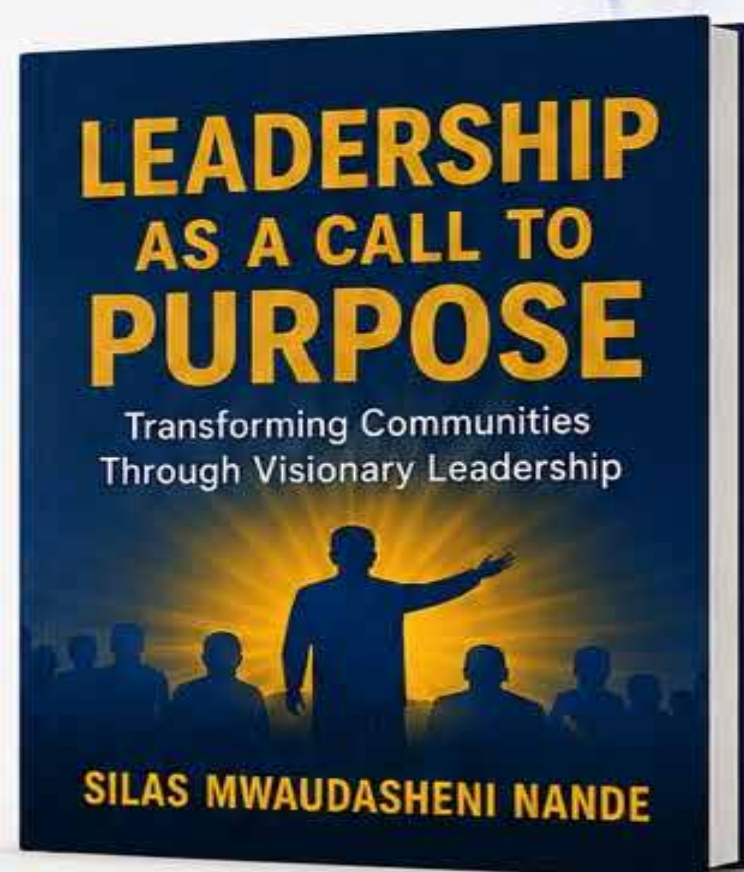
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AI

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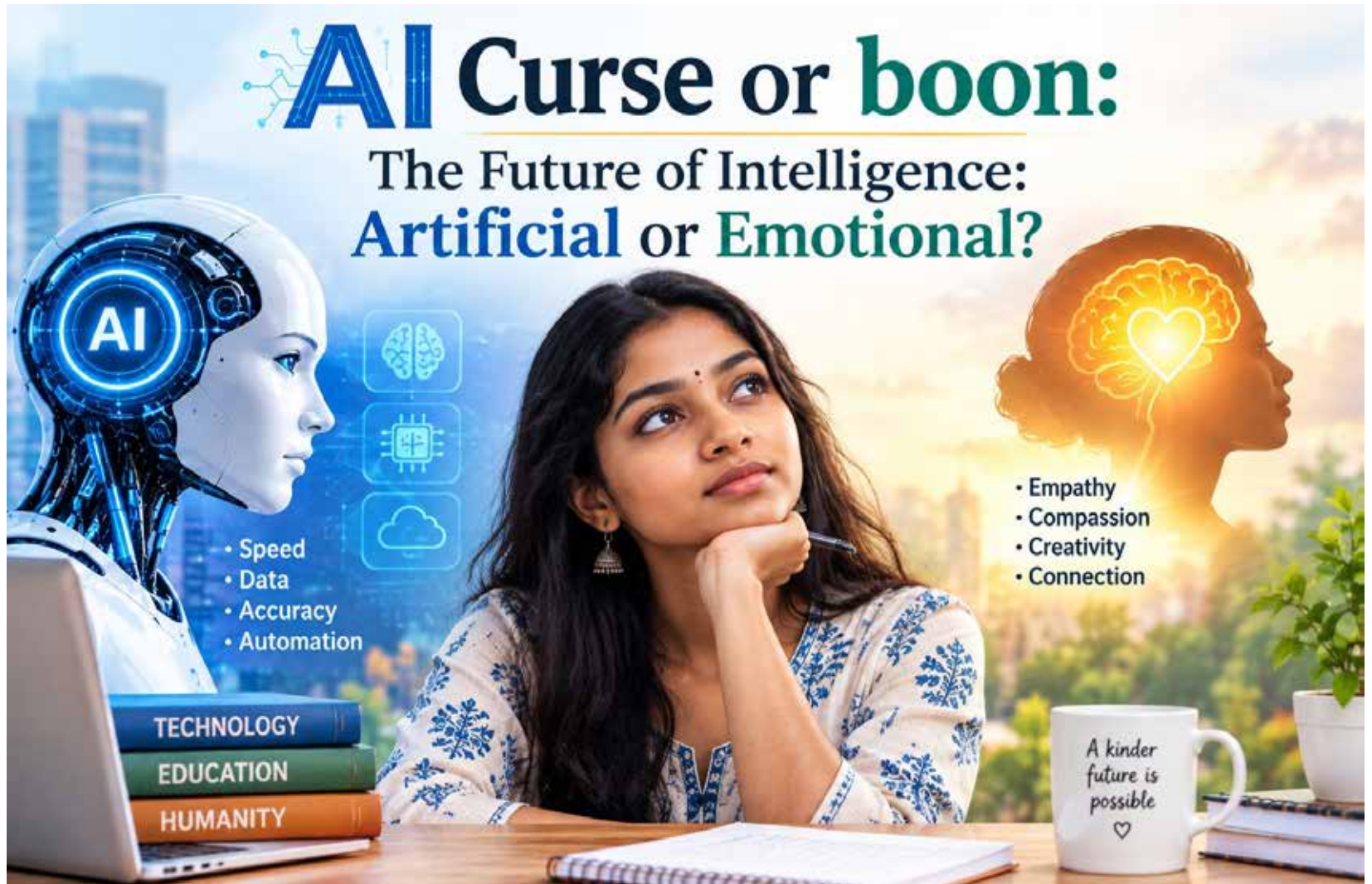
The Future of Intelligence: Artificial or Emotional?



By: Dr Sarita Bharadwaj
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- Artificial Intelligence, or AI, enables machines and computer systems to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.
- AI can process large amounts of information, recognise patterns, generate content, answer questions, and help solve complex problems. It can perform many tasks quickly and repeatedly without becoming tired or distracted. This has made AI useful in education, business, healthcare, communication, and many other areas of life. But human intelligence is not simply about collecting information or finding answers.
- Human beings have emotions. We form relationships, experience happiness and sadness, face disappointment, develop attachments, and respond differently to different situations. This is where emotional intelligence matters.
- Emotional Intelligence is our ability to understand our own emotions and recognise others' feelings. It helps us control our reactions, communicate sensitively, handle difficult situations, and build meaningful relationships. Empathy, patience, self-awareness, and social understanding are important parts of emotional intelligence.



The Twenty-First century has changed the way we understand intelligence.

For a long time, people saw intelligence as a quality that belonged mainly to humans. The ability to think, remember, learn, communicate, and make decisions was seen as a special feature of the human mind.

Today, however, machines are performing many of these tasks with remarkable speed.

Artificial Intelligence has become a part of our everyday lives. It is present in our classrooms, workplaces, homes, and even in how we communicate with one another.

As technology continues to develop, an important question arises: What will intelligence mean in the future? Will we depend more on Artificial Intelligence, or will Emotional Intelligence remain one of the most important human qualities?

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The difference between Artificial Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence becomes particularly clear in education. An AI system can explain a lesson repeatedly without getting impatient. It can correct a student's grammar, prepare exercises, and provide immediate feedback.

It can even identify areas in which a learner needs more practice. But learning is not only about information.

A student may remain silent because of fear, lack of confidence, or personal problems. A teacher may notice a change in the student's be-

haviour even before the student says anything. Instead of giving another exercise, the teacher may offer encouragement or listen.

That moment of understanding is difficult to measure through data.

The same is true in the workplace.

AI can prepare reports, analyse information, organise schedules, and perform repetitive tasks. It can save time and increase efficiency. However, a workplace is made up of people, and people have emotions. A good leader needs more than technical knowledge. A leader needs to understand employees, manage disagreements, encourage people during difficult periods, and communicate sensitive matters with care.

These situations require emotional understanding. A computer may provide information, but it cannot replace the value of human connection.

This does not mean Artificial Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence are enemies. They can work together. AI can help us deal with information, while Emotional Intelligence can help us decide how to use that information responsibly.

AI can suggest an answer, but a human must consider whether it is appropriate. Technology can make our work easier, but human judgement gives our actions

meaning.

At the same time, our growing dependence on technology deserves some reflection. If machines begin to write everything for us, solve every problem, and make every decision, we may gradually stop using some of our own abilities.

Communication, creativity, independent thinking, empathy, and personal interaction need to remain part of our lives. Technology should make human beings more capable, not less human. Perhaps the future will not be a competition between Artificial Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence. Instead, the future may require us to understand both strengths.

We may need AI for its speed, memory, and ability to process information. At the same time, we will still need human beings for compassion, understanding, ethical judgement, and relationships.

A machine can recognise that someone is sad, but a human can sit beside them and understand their silence. A machine can generate words of comfort, but a human can offer genuine compassion rooted in experience.

A machine can analyse thousands of conversations about love, friendship, and grief, but humans actually experience these emotions. Therefore, we should not

measure the future of intelligence only by how advanced our machines become. We should also measure it by how well we preserve the qualities that make us human. Artificial Intelligence may help us do things faster. Emotional Intelligence helps us understand people better. The real challenge before us is not to choose one over the other.

It is to learn how to use technology without losing empathy, kindness, understanding, and human connection. Machines may become increasingly intelligent in the years ahead. But as we build smarter machines, we must also remain thoughtful, compassionate, and human.

Our writer, Dr Sarita Bharadwaj, has over a decade of experience in teaching and research in India. She is a proficient writer, contributing insightful articles to newspapers and academic forums. Committed to education, she mentors students, promotes critical thinking, supports innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to learning, and regularly engages in community outreach.

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Culture

My Mother Tongue — The Most Sacred Voice Of My Heart

Dedicated to October 21 — Uzbek Language Day



By: Elbekova Shohsanam
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

• The contributions of our great thinkers and writers to the development of the Uzbek literary language are invaluable. In particular, Alisher Navoi demonstrated the extensive possibilities of the Turkic language through his exceptional literary talent and made a remarkable contribution to strengthening its position as a literary language. His works reveal the subtle shades of meaning, word-forming possibilities, and remarkable ability of our language to express the deepest aspects of human nature. Navoi's legacy continues to inspire today's generation to study their mother tongue, appreciate the value of words, and develop a high standard of linguistic culture.

• Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Mashrab, Ogahi, Muqimi, Furqat, and many other writers also enriched the artistic possibilities of our language through their works. In later periods, the Jadid enlighteners devoted particular attention to developing the mother tongue, improving literacy, and advancing education. Their educational ideals remain relevant today because the progress of a language is closely connected with learning, reading, scientific inquiry, and intellectual development.



Dedicated to October 21 — Uzbek Language Day
Author: Elbekova Shohsanam

Teacher of Uzbek Language and Literature, Secondary School No. 22, Namangan District, Namangan Region, Uzbekistan

Introduction

Every nation possesses an invaluable treasure that reflects its identity and distinguishes it from other peoples. This treasure is its language, history, culture, and spiritual heritage. Language is not merely a means of communication; it is a living memory that embodies the centuries-old intellectual heritage, worldview, customs, and values of a nation. From the earliest moments of life, a person discovers the world through their mother tongue, understands their surroundings through its words, and expresses their first joys and emotions in it. Therefore, the mother tongue is one of the most precious, sacred, and deeply cherished spiritual treasures of every individual. Our mother tongue is the

language of the lullabies that touched our hearts in childhood, the loving words of our mothers, the wise advice of our fathers, the meaningful lessons of our teachers, and the poems that bring comfort to our souls. It connects us to our roots, helps us understand our national identity, and awakens feelings of patriotism and respect for the heritage of our ancestors. To love one's mother tongue means to cherish one's identity, value one's history, and care about the future.

The Uzbek language is one of these great spiritual treasures. Its rich vocabulary, melodious sound, subtle shades of meaning, and extensive expressive possibilities reflect the priceless heritage created by our people over many centuries. As we celebrate Uzbek Language Day, we should reflect on the historical development of our language, its role in society, its importance in educating younger generations, and our responsibility to preserve it for the future. October 21 is a particularly meaningful date for the Uzbek people. It reminds us of

the historical significance of our language and encourages us to renew our commitment to preserving, developing, and promoting it. This occasion is not merely a celebration; it is also an opportunity to recognize that the future of our language depends on the respect, care, and dedication of every generation.

Main Body

The Uzbek language has undergone a long historical journey and has developed in close connection with the rich spiritual life of our people. Our ancestors created epics, composed wise sayings, wrote scientific and literary works, and passed their life experiences down to subsequent generations in this language. Proverbs, sayings, fairy tales, songs, and epics preserved in our oral tradition demonstrate the richness and expressive power of Uzbek. Behind every proverb lies the experience of the people, while every meaningful expression reflects centuries of wisdom and intellectual development.

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main relevant today because the progress of a language is closely connected with learning, reading, scientific inquiry, and intellectual development.

An important milestone in the history of the Uzbek language was its recognition as the state language. On October 21, 1989, Uzbek was granted state language status, marking a significant step in the development of national identity and the strengthening of the language's position in public life. Today, October 21 is celebrated in Uzbekistan as Uzbek Language Day. This occasion is not only an expression of respect for our language but also an opportunity for each of us to reflect on our responsibilities toward it.

The status of a state language is established through laws and official decisions, but its true prestige is also reflected in the everyday attitudes and actions of society. The development of Uzbek requires its proper and effective use in government institutions, educational establishments, scientific research, mass media, and daily communication. Respect for a language should not remain merely a slogan; it must be demonstrated through our practical activities, written correspondence, official documents, and interactions with others.

Loving one's mother tongue begins with observing its linguistic standards. Using words appropriately, following spelling rules, expressing thoughts clearly and fluently, and addressing others respectfully are essential elements of linguistic culture. In everyday life, we sometimes encounter careless word choices, unnecessary use of foreign expressions, and spelling mistakes in written communication. Simply criticizing such problems is not enough. It is equally important to develop a conscious and responsible attitude toward language and help people improve their speaking and writing skills.

In particular, developing young people's language culture is one of the important tasks of our time. The way

Culture

My Mother Tongue — The Most Sacred Voice Of My Heart

Dedicated to October 21 — Uzbek Language Day

Contd Page 20
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Worth Noting:

- The unique beauty of our mother tongue is especially evident in literature and poetry. Through words, poets express the most delicate emotions of the human heart and give profound meaning to ordinary events. A single verse can inspire reflection, a literary image can awaken love for the homeland, and a sincere line can remain in a person's memory for many years. This is the aesthetic power of language and the profound influence of words.
- Uzbek poetry frequently explores love for the mother tongue, longing for the homeland, the destiny of the people, and universal human values. When reading the works of our poets, we discover that our language is capable not only of communicating ideas but also of uniting hearts, inspiring goodness, and enriching the human spirit. For this reason, encouraging young people to appreciate poetry, developing their artistic thinking, and supporting their creative abilities are also important for the future of our language.

young people communicate, the richness of their vocabulary, and their writing skills directly influence their intellectual and personal development. Encouraging students to read literature, teaching them to analyze texts, motivating them to express independent opinions, and assigning creative writing tasks all strengthen their appreciation of the mother tongue. Students who master their language can express their thoughts freely, understand the ideas of others accurately, and participate more actively in society.

Teachers of Uzbek language and literature play a particularly important role in this process. A teacher does more than explain grammatical rules: they also help students appreciate the power of words, understand literary works, value eloquent speech, and develop independent thinking. Introducing students to the richness of the language, using examples from oral folk literature, and studying the works of classical and contemporary writers enrich their spiritual world. Young people who develop a love for their mother tongue and a respect for books become worthy guardians of our national heritage.

During Uzbek language and literature lessons, it is important not to limit education to the delivery of ready-made knowledge. Students should also be encouraged to explore, ask questions, participate in discussions, and support their opinions with evidence. Such an approach makes language learning more engaging and meaningful. Memorizing poetry, writing stories, interpreting proverbs, analyzing literary texts, and preparing creative essays expand students' vocabularies and develop their expressive abilities. As a result, they begin to understand Uzbek not merely as a school subject but as an invaluable means of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

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flection, a literary image can awaken love for the homeland, and a sincere line can remain in a person's memory for many years. This is the aesthetic power of language and the profound influence of words.

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In today's era of globalization, the Uzbek language faces new opportunities as well as important challenges. Learning foreign languages, developing international scientific cooperation, and gaining knowledge from global experience are essential in the modern world. However, learning other languages should never come at the expense of our mother tongue. On the contrary, a strong command of one's native language provides a solid foundation for learning additional languages.

Every language possesses its own beauty and expressive potential. Knowing several languages broadens one's worldview and helps develop an understanding of different cultures. At the same time, we must continue to develop Uzbek in science, technology, diplomacy, literature, and modern communication. Expanding the international reach of our language requires high-quality translations, the improvement of scientific terminology, and the creation of more contemporary resources in Uzbek.

In the modern world, where digital technologies are developing rapidly, the presence of Uzbek in the digital environment is becoming increasingly important. Producing high-quality content in Uzbek for social media, electronic publications, and digital platforms helps strengthen the language's



position. At the same time, it is necessary to promote correct writing, respect for literary standards, and responsible information sharing online. Using modern technologies to support our mother tongue creates new opportunities for younger generations.

Preserving a language begins with using it actively, studying it carefully, and enriching its possibilities. Each of us can contribute to this noble cause by reading books in Uzbek, writing correctly, having meaningful conversations with children in our mother tongue, and learning about our national traditions. The future of a language depends not only on the work of specialists but also on society's attitude toward it and its everyday use.

Respect for our mother tongue means preserving our history, culture, and national identity. If we value our language, explore its richness, and pass it on to our children, future generations will be able to continue this legacy with dignity. The vitality of a language is closely connected with the place it holds in people's hearts, the extent to which it is used in everyday life, and its ability to adapt to the needs of a changing world.

Conclusion

The mother tongue is the historical memory, spiritual identity, cultural wealth, and invaluable heritage of a nation. The Uzbek language embodies the intellectual achievements, customs, traditions, and aspirations of our people, developed over centuries. It connects us with our great ancestors, strengthens our love for the homeland, and enables us to pass our national heritage on to future generations.

Uzbek Language Day provides an opportunity to appreciate the value of our language, reflect on our contributions to its development, and identify the responsibilities that lie ahead. However, respect for the mother tongue should not be limited to a single day. It should be reflected in our daily conversations, our writing, the education of our children, and our contributions to society.

As teachers, we must strive to introduce younger generations to the richness and beauty of Uzbek and help them become literate, independent-minded individuals who value their national heritage. Inspiring every student to appreciate the mother tongue, encouraging a love of reading, and teaching them to express their

thoughts fluently are among our important responsibilities toward the future. The young people we teach to cherish their language today will contribute to its development and prosperity tomorrow.

Therefore, let us cherish our mother tongue, preserve its purity and richness, and develop it in harmony with modern progress. Let us demonstrate respect in every word we speak, literacy in every sentence we write, and national pride in every creative endeavor we undertake. Let us make the promotion of our language a practical responsibility in our everyday lives rather than merely a slogan.

Indeed, love for one's mother tongue is love for one's homeland, nation, and ancestral heritage. As long as our language lives, our collective memory, spiritual values, and national identity will continue to flourish.

My mother tongue is my pride, my honor, and the most sacred voice of my heart! To love it, preserve it, develop it, and pass it on to future generations is the honorable responsibility of us all.

Dedicated to October 21 — Uzbek Language Day.

General conditions for the development of preschool-age children



By: Zokirjonova Zarina
xxxxxxxxxxxx

By: Zokirjonova Zarina
Abstract: Pedagogical conditions created in preschool educational organizations (such as the educator's expertise and modern teaching methods) ensure a child's readiness for school. In the second half of the 19th century, the pedagogy of preschool-age children emerged as a distinct branch of general pedagogy.

Keywords: preschool education, junior group, middle group, senior group, preparatory group, poem, song, role-playing games, creative activity, behavior, richness of speech, special pedagogy, pedagogical system.

The preschool period is one of the most important stages of human life, as it is during this time that the foundations of an individual's physical, psychological, and social development are established. Scientific literature emphasizes that a child's early years play a decisive role in shaping their future learning processes, behavior, and personal qualities.

The preschool period is a crucial stage in a child's comprehensive development, and the conditions created during this time directly influence the formation of their future personality. Properly categorizing age groups and applying a pedagogical approach suited to each stage are essential prerequisites for effective education and upbringing. In preschool educational institutions, children are grouped according to age. The physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social development of children in each age group unfolds progressively.

Therefore, it is important for the educator to conduct their work while taking into account the capabilities associated with each age group. In preschool educational institutions, children are grouped according to their age characteristics, and educational activities tailored to the children's developmental level are carried out in each group. There are four age groups in preschool educational institutions.

The junior group consists of children aged 3 to 4. At this age, children can express their thoughts using simple sentences and begin to distinguish between colors and shapes. They actively participate in simple role-playing games and learn to interact with adults and peers. At the same time, basic self-care skills—such as eating and dressing



independently—begin to develop. Children are also capable of memorizing short poems and songs.

The middle group encompasses children aged 4 to 5. During this period, children's speech develops significantly, enabling them to express their thoughts clearly and understandably. They ask numerous questions and strive to explore their surroundings more deeply. Early elements of logical thinking begin to take shape, and cognitive processes such as comparing and generalizing start to develop. Children independently organize role-playing games, actively participate in creative activities—such as drawing, building, and crafting—and learn to follow simple rules.

The older group consists of children aged 5 to 6. Children in this age group are able to express their thoughts freely and develop the ability to recount events in a logical sequence. Their logical thinking strengthens, and problem-solving skills begin to take shape. They learn to work in a team, show an interest in reading and writing, and participate in more complex play activities.

The preparatory group comprises children aged 6 to 7. During this period, children develop the readiness for school education. They learn to sustain their attention, become familiar with letters and numbers, and master the fundamentals of reading and writing. Furthermore, they develop skills in independent thinking, drawing conclusions, and self-regulation, all of which lay the foundation for a successful transition to school.

In his speeches, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, notes that developing the preschool education system is a priority task in raising a well-rounded younger generation. Uzbek educators and scholars also place special emphasis on the importance of environment and upbringing in the development of preschool-aged children. In particular, according to Nodira Egamberdiyeva, personal qualities, cognitive processes, and social skills are effectively formed during the preschool years. Mavlu-

da Rasulova highlights that it is precisely during this period that children's speech, thinking, and social behavior develop rapidly, laying the foundation for subsequent stages of education.

Robert Owen (19th century): An English educator who first put forward the idea of providing social education to children from an early age and opened the first institution for the children of the proletariat. Friedrich Fröbel: As a theorist of preschool education, he created a specialized pedagogical system for children of this age group. In Uzbekistan: The first kindergartens began to be established in 1919. The preschool education period generally covers the ages of 3 to 7 and is divided into several sub-stages: 3–4 years (Early preschool age): The child's sense of self ("I") forms, and the drive for independence intensifies. 4–5 years (Middle preschool age): Vocabulary expands, the "Why?" phase begins, and imagination and creativity develop rapidly. 6–7 years (Senior preschool age): Voluntary attention develops, and the child becomes psychologically and physically ready for school education. General conditions of development. Physiological changes: This period is one of the times of most rapid physical growth for the human body (particularly regarding height growth, starting from ages 1–2 and continuing thereafter). Leading activity – Play: For children aged 3–7, play is not merely a source of enjoyment but the primary means of acquiring social experience. Growth rates: The preschool years (ages 3–7) represent a period of rapid physical growth and changing body proportions (such as the lengthening of the legs). Physical activity: Physical exercises, active games, and sports activities not only enhance a child's movement capabilities but also positively influence their emotional stability. Daily routine: Proper nutrition, hygiene, outdoor walks, and a schedule ensuring sufficient sleep are essential for the child's overall physical conditioning and the healthy functioning of their nervous system.

The directions for improving the general conditions for development are as follows: Infrastructure and material-technical base: Establishing "development centers" (corners for play, construction, art, and nature) in modern preschool educational organizations. This provides children with the opportunity to make independent choices. Implementation of varied programs: Applying a competency-based approach—moving beyond standard lessons—based on the "Ilm Yo'li" (Path of Knowledge) and "Ilk Qadam" (First Step—revised in 2018) state programs. Creating conditions conducive to psychological well-being and active engagement. Inclusive conditions: Creating an environment where children with developmental disabilities are educated alongside their typically developing peers—a crucial prerequisite for social adaptation. Regarding the development of preschool-age children, and in accordance with the State Requirements approved in 2018, development must proceed across five key areas (domains of conditions):

1. Physical development and the formation of a healthy lifestyle.
2. Socio-emotional development (interaction with adults and peers).
3. Speech, reading, and writing skills (preparation for literacy).
4. Cognitive processes (understanding the world around us, elementary mathematics).
5. Creative development (music, art, drama).

The improvement of this sector in Uzbekistan has reached a new stage: September 30, 2017 – The Ministry of Preschool Education was established, laying the foundation for managing the sector as a distinct system. December 16, 2019 – Law No. ZRU-595 "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" was adopted, guaranteeing a child's right to development at the state level. 2020–2025 – Under the concept for developing the preschool education system, the goal is to raise the child enrollment rate to 80%. Modern improvement methods involve the following tech-

nologies: STEAM educational technology (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) is being implemented for children aged 5–6 to foster critical thinking. Digitalization involves maintaining a child's development record (monitoring) through the "Kindergarten" management information system. The preschool period is not merely a stage of preparation for school; it is a strategic phase during which the foundation of human capital is laid. Analyses and international experiences (such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and STEAM) demonstrate that the conditions created for child development must extend beyond mere material infrastructure.

The environment serving as the "Third Educator"—a key factor in the overall development of preschool-age children—must evolve from a mere collection of fixtures and equipment into a "living mechanism" that encourages exploration. It is significant for granting children the freedom of choice, which in turn fosters independent decision-making skills in young children. Personnel Transformation: A crucial prerequisite for progress is the transformation of the educator's role.

The modern educator must no longer be merely a "tutor" who imparts knowledge, but rather a "facilitator" who supports a child's interests. The strategy for 2024–2030 identifies enhancing educators' creativity as a key factor in further improving the system. An integrated approach: a child's physical, cognitive, and emotional development cannot be viewed in isolation. Further improving the preschool education system requires strengthening the "triangular" partnership among the family, the *mahalla* (local community), and the educational institution through digital technologies (such as monitoring systems).

Conclusion - In summary, the more flexible and child-centered the conditions created for the development of preschool-age children are, the greater the intellectual potential of the generation society will possess. 2017–2018: A fundamental reform of the preschool education system began in Uzbekistan, and the network of organizations with legal status within the system expanded. Current status: More than 7,000 preschool education organizations are operating in Uzbekistan; approximately 79 percent belong to the public sector, while 21 percent belong to the non-state sector. The reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan (the post-2017 phase) are gaining international recognition precisely because they focus on supporting each child's individual developmental trajectory.

Zokirjonova Zarina was born on October 6, 2007, in Pop District, Namangan Region, Uzbekistan. She is currently a second-year student in the Preschool Education program at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art Studies of Fergana State University.

The Poet's Silence, The World's Noise: Who Needs Literature Today?

Reflections on an age in which words multiply, yet understanding the human heart becomes increasingly difficult.



By: Kurtklicheva Sabrona Umarovna
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Worth Noting:

- A poet's silence can sometimes be heavier than thousands of words. Within that silence live questions about loneliness, kindness, justice, and human suffering.
- A poet does not always need to provide answers. Sometimes, the poet notices what others overlook, remembers what others forget, and finds words for feelings that people cannot express.
- Today's writers face a difficult challenge. They want to create meaningful works, while the modern world demands speed and instant attention. Consequently, popularity can become more important than artistic value. Yet a widely viewed work is not necessarily profound, and a rarely read work does not lose its worth.
- The true value of literature lies not in the number of readers, but in the thoughts and changes it awakens in their hearts.



The Poet's Silence

Today, the world is speaking. Screens, headlines, and millions of voices create an endless flow of information. Thousands of texts are written and countless sentences are read every day. Yet one question remains: why, in a world where everyone can speak, is it still so difficult for people to understand one another?

Perhaps this is where the importance of literature begins.

Literature was not created to add another voice to the noise. Its purpose is to understand the human being behind that noise, express unspoken pain, and preserve meanings that are disappearing in the rush of everyday life. Literature's greatest rival is not modern technology, but our growing inability to make time for deep feelings and independent thought.

Whose Pain Does the Poet Write About?

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times, the poet notices what others overlook, remembers what others forget, and finds words for feelings that people cannot express.

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Between Popularity and Meaning

Modern technology has given writers an extraordinary opportunity to reach readers worldwide. A young poet can share a poem with thousands of people through a single digital platform. Nevertheless, an important question arises: for whom does a writer write? When applause becomes the main goal, writers may change their voices to satisfy others. True literature, however, does more than entertain. It

encourages people to think, question their beliefs, and see familiar things differently. Sometimes, literature comforts us; at other times, it confronts us with truths we would rather avoid.

Literature as Inner Freedom Literature allows us to experience lives beyond our own. Through novels and stories, we enter unfamiliar worlds, understand different destinies, and discover emotions shared by people across cultures. Love, loneliness, hope, and the desire for justice connect humanity despite differences in language and nationality. Reading another nation's literature teaches us to listen before judging and to approach unfamiliar experiences with compassion. Literature cannot solve every social problem, but it can deepen our understanding of others. That is why it is not merely entertainment; it is a spiritual necessity that enriches our inner world and expands our imagination.

The Responsibility of a Young Writer

Young writers should understand their national language, history, and literary heritage while remaining

open to the wider world. National literature becomes stronger not by abandoning its identity, but by sharing its distinctive voice with other cultures. In my view, a young writer's greatest responsibility is to discover an authentic voice rather than imitate the noise of the age. That voice need not be loud. It must be sincere, thoughtful, and committed to truth. So, Who Needs Literature Today?

Literature is needed by everyone searching for meaning, trying to understand others, or wishing to preserve the richness of their mother tongue.

A poem cannot replace the law, and a novel cannot immediately eliminate poverty. Nevertheless, literature can influence how people perceive injustice, treat one another, and understand their responsibilities. The noise of the age will eventually fade. Technologies will change, priorities will shift, and famous names will be forgotten. Yet questions about love, justice, loneliness, and hope will remain. Literature carries these questions from one generation to the next. So, who needs literature to-

day?

Perhaps everyone who does not wish to lose the voice of their own heart. True creativity does not begin with making noise, but with finding words worthy of being heard. The world has given us more opportunities to speak. Now, literature must remind us what we should speak about—and why.

BIOGRAPHY

Kurtklicheva Sabrona Umarovna was born in 2005 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, into a hardworking family. At the age of eight, she moved with her mother to the Turtkul District of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In 2024, she graduated from General Secondary School No. 9 with a silver medal.

Throughout her school years, she actively participated in various competitions and academic olympiads, achieving notable success. As a young poet, she is passionate about creative writing and writes poems and short stories. She is also interested in translation and literary exchange.

In 2024, she was admitted to Berdaq Karakalpak State University, majoring in Philology and Language Teaching: the Karakalpak Language, on a tuition-paying basis. She is currently a third-year student. During her second and third years of study, she earned state-funded scholarships, enabling her to continue her education on a state grant.

In 2025, her first poetry collection, *Kābāme*, was published. In 2026, she published a collection of short stories entitled *Ömür* and a translated book entitled *Karakalpak Folk Tales*.

Through her literary work, Sabrona seeks to explore human values, love and affection, the realities of life, and the complexities of human destiny. Looking ahead, she aims to continue developing her work in literature and translation while promoting the richness and cultural heritage of her mother tongue.

Gachau bows out, but the passion stays

Kenya’s bodybuilder closes his competitive chapter with gratitude — and a promise to give back

By: Diaspora Times Team

Worth Noting:

- Most people see the result — the physique, the posing, the moment under the lights. What they rarely see is the years of quiet, repetitive work that precede it. The early mornings. The meals prepared not for enjoyment but for purpose. The training sessions pushed through injury, fatigue and self-doubt. Gachau understands this intimately, and it is precisely this understanding that has shaped who he is as both an athlete and a person.
- It is that foundation, he says, that carries the real meaning. The medals and titles may serve as visible markers of achievement, but the values forged in pursuit of them — consistency, sacrifice, mental toughness, and the ability to remain committed when results are slow to come — carry a deeper and more enduring weight. These are lessons that belong to him regardless of what any scorecard says.



Kenyan bodybuilder Gachau

Kenyan bodybuilder Gachau has announced his retirement from competitive bodybuilding, drawing the curtain on a career defined by discipline, resilience and an unrelenting commitment to self-improvement. But as he prepares for one final appearance on stage, he is making clear that stepping away from competition is not the same as walking away from the sport he has given so much of himself to. In an emotional retirement message that resonated with followers across Kenya’s fitness community, Gachau described his last competitive outing as a chance to close a significant chapter with the dignity it deserves. “One last time under the lights. One last time on the stage. One final chapter as a competitor,” he wrote — words that captured both the weight of the moment and the quiet pride behind a decision that has clearly not come easily. For Gachau, bodybuilding was never simply about trophies or the fleeting thrill of standing on a podium.

Throughout his career, the sport offered lessons that reached well beyond the gym floor — shaping his understanding of patience, humility and the kind of deep, unglamorous commitment that keeps you going long after motivation has faded and only discipline remains. He has spoken candidly about the true demands of the craft: the structured training cycles, the meticulous nutrition planning, the recovery routines that rarely make headlines, and the mental conditioning that together form the largely invisible foundation of every polished stage performance. Most people see the result — the physique, the posing, the moment under the lights. What they rarely see is the years of quiet, repetitive work that precede it. The early mornings. The meals prepared not for enjoyment but for purpose. The training sessions pushed through injury, fatigue and self-doubt. Gachau understands this intimately, and it is precisely this understanding that has shaped who he is as both an

athlete and a person. It is that foundation, he says, that carries the real meaning. The medals and titles may serve as visible markers of achievement, but the values forged in pursuit of them — consistency, sacrifice, mental toughness, and the ability to remain committed when results are slow to come — carry a deeper and more enduring weight. These are lessons that belong to him regardless of what any scorecard says. Gratitude runs through every line of his retirement message. He extended his appreciation to coaches, training partners, family, friends and everyone who supported him, believed in his potential, and walked alongside him through the journey’s harder stretches. The acknowledgement reflects something that serious athletes tend to understand instinctively — that no competitive career, however individual the sport may appear, is ever truly built alone. Behind every athlete who makes it to the stage is a network of people who

sacrificed time, energy and faith to help get them there. Yet for Gachau, this announcement is less a farewell than a transition. He has made clear that he intends to remain deeply involved in bodybuilding through education, mentorship and the kind of hands-on inspiration that only someone who has genuinely lived the experience can authentically offer. He wants to help aspiring bodybuilders and fitness enthusiasts understand what the journey truly demands — not just the physical side, but the mindset required to sustain it, the patience needed to trust a process that rarely moves as fast as ambition would prefer, and the long, unglamorous stretches of work that separate those who endure from those who eventually step away without reaching their potential. Mentorship matters enormously in a sport like bodybuilding, where newcomers frequently arrive with enthusiasm, unrealistic expectations and very little guidance on the fundamentals — training principles,

nutritional strategy, recovery management and the psychological demands of competition. Experienced athletes who choose to give back rather than simply move on can make a genuine and lasting difference. Not by short-cutting the process for those who come after them, but by helping them appreciate why the process itself is the point. Why the struggle is not a detour from the destination but the very thing that makes arriving meaningful. His announcement carries a broader message, too, for athletes across all disciplines who find themselves navigating the complicated terrain of a competitive career’s end. Retirement is not a dead end. It does not have to mean the slow erosion of identity or a reluctant severance from a sport that defined your best years. It can be — and in Gachau’s case, clearly is — the beginning of a different kind of influence. One measured not in personal bests or podium finishes, but in the people supported, the knowledge shared, and the lessons passed forward to a generation that will one day stand where he once stood. “The competitor in me is stepping away,” Gachau declared. “The passion in me isn’t.” Those few words say everything that needs to be said. The lights may be dimming on his time as a competitor, but by his own reckoning — and by any fair reading of what he has built — his story is far from finished. Through mentorship, education and the quiet example of how he has chosen to close this chapter, Gachau is making a powerful case that the end of a sporting career can be the start of something just as meaningful, if not more so. For him, retirement is not the conclusion of bodybuilding. It is simply a different way to serve it — and to inspire the next generation to take their own shot at the stage.