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The Middle East had a powerful representation too – United Arab Emirates: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah were out in full force, as were Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, among others.

World travel and tourism

The three-day event was delivered with an action-packed programme not only for the travel industry but also for the thousands of visitors who turned up to walk around the ExCeL Centre to see each country displaying its best in sights, sounds and culture.:



World travel and tourism at a crucial turning point:

INCREDIBLE! PASSION FOR TRAVEL CONTINUES UNDAUNTED DESPITE GLOBAL POLITICAL UPHEAVALS

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

Travel is changing fast. Here's where the industry turns disruption into opportunity, as scores of countries turned up in full force for this year's World Travel Market (WTM). WTM in London is the world's most influential travel and tourism event, where the global travel trade gathers to do business, share insights, and shape the industry's future.

For almost five decades, it has united everyone from government ministers and global CEOs to emerging leaders and the next generation of travel professionals. This is the essential platform where influential voices, high-profile brands, and the industry's most powerful buyers connect, collaborate, and define what comes next.



Animated Caribbean dancer takes her audience by storm at the World Travel Market in London. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

WTM generates more than £2.8 billion worth of business. More than 55,000 visitors descended on the London ExCeL Centre for the 2026 edition of the World Travel Market (WTM), the spectacular global marketplace for the tourism industry. They proved beyond doubt that even if politics have turned some regions into battlefronts, the tourism industry has not pulled down its shutters.

From Abu Dhabi to Zimbabwe, from Algeria to Zambia,

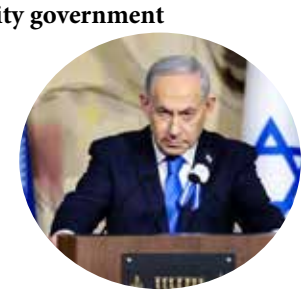
Contd Page 10,11,12,13

BRITAIN TO HONOUR HEROES OF THE MAKERS OF HISTORY WITH BLUE PLAQUES
Europe



Page 6

Israel's post-election crisis
Netanyahu and Eisenkot clash over national unity government
Israel



Page 16

IsiDonodono wins double awards in a landmark week for isiNdebele literature
South Africa



Page 18

Water before uranium
What the IAEA Review of the Leonardville Project Means for Namibia, Russia and the Global Contest
Africa



Page 20

Nostokana turns 91 P 4

Motivation Page 8
My culinary arts journey at Kenyatta University

News Backpage
The end of political wholesaling: Why Kenya's voters are becoming harder to buy

The role of artificial intelligence in the modern world

By: **Zilola Sayfiddinova Alisher**

In the twenty-first century, technological development has become one of the most influential factors shaping human civilization. Among the numerous innovations that have transformed modern society, Artificial Intelligence (AI) occupies a particularly important position. It is rapidly changing the way people live, work, communicate, learn, and interact with the world around them. Artificial Intelligence is no longer a concept associated only with science fiction or advanced scientific laboratories; it has become an essential part of everyday life.

Artificial Intelligence can be defined as the ability of computer systems and machines to perform tasks that traditionally require human intelligence. These tasks include learning from experience, analyzing information, recognizing images and speech, understanding languages, solving problems, and making decisions. Through technologies such as machine learning, deep learning,

Contd Page 14



PUBG MOBILE teams up with Davido as new Flash version launches globally

The gaming giant partners with the Afrobeats superstar to broaden access to its Battle Royale platform across Africa and beyond.

By: **Elizabeth Angira**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



PUBG MOBILE has partnered with global Afrobeats superstar Davido in a collaboration that brings together music, gaming and African youth culture, coinciding with the worldwide launch of PUBG MOBILE FLASH, a lighter version of the platform designed to reach a significantly wider audience of smartphone users across the globe.

The partnership carries an unusual dimension: Davido is not simply a celebrity endorser. He is a PUBG MOBILE player himself, with a stated passion for squad tactics and close-range combat gameplay. His involvement, the company says, is rooted in genuine affinity with the game rather than contractual association alone — a distinction the brand has been keen to emphasise as it seeks to build credibility with Africa's discerning gaming community.

The collaboration reflects a broader cultural shift across the continent, where mobile gaming has become a defining feature of youth identity. For a generation that plays, creates and connects primarily on mobile devices, the presence of one of Africa's biggest music stars on the battlegrounds carries direct resonance with how young Africans engage with digital culture today. Gaming is no longer a pastime on the margins — it is a central thread in the social fabric of African youth life, and PUBG MOBILE is positioning itself firmly within that conversation.

PUBG MOBILE has recorded more than one billion downloads worldwide, establishing itself as one of the most recognised names in mobile gaming through its Battle Royale format, which centres on immersive shooting gameplay and competitive multiplayer engagement. PUBG MOBILE FLASH builds on that foundation by reducing the initial download size and optimising performance across a wider range of smartphone specifications. Players who were previously unable to run the full version can now access the core Battle Royale experience without compromise to the essential gameplay that has defined the brand's global reputation.

Jeff Tange, PUBG MOBILE's Marketing Manager, was clear that PUBG MOBILE FLASH is not a simplified or diminished product. "PUBG MOBILE FLASH is a new way to experience the game," Tange said, noting that players across both versions can connect and compete with one another, preserving the social dimension that underpins the platform's enduring appeal. He added that the launch reflects the brand's commitment to expanding access to premium mobile gaming, particularly across African markets where reaching a broader base of smartphone users represents a meaningful and long-term growth opportunity.

Alongside the FLASH launch, the company has introduced the 30BG Card Drop campaign, through which players can complete in-game missions, earn draws and collect exclusive Davido, City and Holiday cards for a chance to win prizes. These include concert tickets to Davido's Oriade show, an Infinix HOT 70 Pro 5G+ handset and limited-edition 30BG merchandise. Players can also win Davido-themed items by downloading the game and participating in associated in-game activities.

For Davido, the partnership connects his music platform with an interactive global gaming community, adding a cultural dimension that extends the collaboration well beyond conventional brand endorsement. His involvement builds a bridge between an international gaming phenomenon and Africa's vibrant entertainment and youth landscape — one that his fanbase, spread across the continent and the diaspora, inhabits daily.

PUBG MOBILE said the Davido partnership and the FLASH launch together form part of a sustained push to deepen its presence in African markets. The company has previously invested in server infrastructure, network optimisation, community operations and creator support programmes on the continent. These include the Next Star influencer initiative and the PDP creator programme, both designed to grow local content creation and encourage player participation in shaping game content from the ground up.

From Version 4.5 onwards, PUBG MOBILE said it would intensify localisation efforts in Africa by incorporating local artists, music and cultural references directly into the game. Customised songs, music videos, voice packs, outfits and avatar frames are among the tools the company intends to deploy. The stated ambition is for African players to see their own cultural expression genuinely reflected within the game, rather than simply consuming content produced for markets elsewhere.

The move signals a maturing approach to the African market — one that goes beyond surface-level representation and attempts to embed local culture into the product itself. Whether that ambition translates into sustained player growth will depend on execution, but the appetite on the continent is not in question. Africa's gaming audience is young, connected and growing rapidly, and PUBG MOBILE's decision to anchor its latest global launch to one of the continent's most recognisable faces suggests it understands where the opportunity lies.

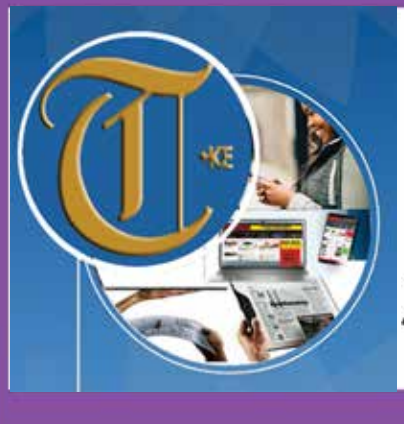
Further details of the music collaboration component of the Davido partnership are expected in a subsequent campaign phase.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Nostokana turns 91: A legacy of resilience, art and grace in Mpumalanga

The Emthambothini artist who defied doubt to build a celebrated craft and a lasting community legacy marks a remarkable birthday.

By: **Themba Emanuel Mashobane**
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

• Rather than allowing rejection to harden her, she let it fuel her. Piece by piece, her work began to speak a language the world could not ignore. What started as a solitary passion in a small village grew into a celebrated craft known far beyond South Africa's borders. She rose above the whispers of those who once dismissed her, proving that true talent cannot remain hidden forever.

• Yet her greatest masterpiece is not the art itself — it is her grace. Despite her international recognition, she carries no pride and holds no grudges against those who once doubted her. With open hands and a generous heart, she continues to pass her skills to others, ensuring the craft endures for generations to come.

Nostokana's hands once worked in silence, overlooked by the very community she called home. In the quiet corners of her village in Emthambothini, Mpumalanga, while critics were loud and recognition slow, she poured her spirit into her art — and refused to let bitterness take root.

She turned 91 yesterday, and the celebration was a testament to what perseverance, grace and an unselfish heart can build over a lifetime.

Rather than allowing rejection to harden her, she let it fuel her. Piece by piece, her work began to speak a language the world could not ignore. What started as a solitary passion in a small village grew into a celebrated craft known far beyond South Africa's borders. She rose above the whispers of those who once dismissed her, proving that true talent cannot remain hidden forever.

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The fruits of her perseverance are today undeniable. Even her own family, who watched her long and difficult journey, has embraced the art she fought so hard to protect. What was once a misunderstood dream now sustains a household and feeds a community.

She did not simply create art. She built a legacy — and paved a road that others now walk with pride.



Esther Mahlangu Nostokana



Esther Mahlangu Nostokana



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BRITAIN TO HONOUR HEROES OF THE MAKERS OF HISTORY WITH BLUE PLAQUES



By: **Shamlal Puri**
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Britain has a unique way of honouring her heroes of yesteryear with blue plaques erected on the walls where they either lived or made history.

These blue plaques will better reflect our nation, the British Government said in an announcement.

Among the heroes is Kenya's founding father and first president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who lived in London as a student and during the freedom struggle.

Indian freedom fighter and the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, also has a plaque in his honour in London.

An announcement from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its Secretary, Lisa Nandy, MP, states that the Changes driven by the Culture Secretary will open up the scheme to a wider range of people, places and stories across England.

Nominations for a National Blue Plaque are now open on Historic England's website, and interested people are invited to submit their suggestions.

Several diaspora names are included on the current list, which is yet to be finalised.

The National and Greater London Blue Plaques schemes are being expanded to celebrate more inspirational people from across Britain, with nominations now open to the public, the Government has announced.

New criteria will allow blue plaques to be placed on buildings that have been substantially altered or replaced since a historical person or group was connected to them, including homes, shops, workplaces, community buildings and streets.

Previously, the criteria required a person or group to be associated with a building that still existed and had not been altered beyond recognition. However, many brilliant people or groups throughout history have been connected to buildings that have since been redeveloped or demolished, including terraced houses and industrial factories. The changes will remove this barrier, opening the scheme to a wider range of people, places and stories, and helping ensure more of Britain's diverse history is represented. These include people connected to lost music and performance venues, former residents of demolished homes, and workers and innovators connected to former factories and workshops.

To be honoured with a blue plaque, a person or group must have significantly contributed to human welfare or happiness and/or made an exceptional contribution to their field. Sites for a blue plaque must have a strong connection to a historical person who has been dead for at least 20 years, or to a group formed at least 20 years ago that is no longer functioning.

This year, £100,000 has been given to Historic England to support the programme and provide grants for community groups and grassroots organisations researching and developing nominations that address historic underrepresentation and improve geographical reach. Current projects include a partnership between charity Creative Lives and local archives across the East of England to uncover and share overlooked stories.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

Throughout our history, it has been ordinary, extraordinary people who have built our country and created lasting change.

From millworkers who fought for fair wages, safe working conditions and the rights of women to the Windrush generation who helped shape our NHS, transport, manufacturing industries and more - too often their contributions have been airbrushed from our national story. Until now, it was difficult to commemorate their achievements with a blue plaque. These rules were outdated, unfair, and do not reflect who we are as a nation.

That's why we have changed the rules so that we can properly commemorate the heroes who shaped our communities and changed our country for the better. I hope people across the country will come forward and nominate the people whose contributions are a vital part of our national story, and deserve to be told and remembered.

Professor David Olusoga Hon FBA:

English history has been shaped by women as well as men, by the poor as well as the wealthy, and by people across England, not just those who lived in London.

These welcome changes will liberate Historic England and English Heritage to celebrate the stories of England's hidden heroes with their beloved blue plaques.

Ellie Djerir, Historic England's Head of Participation Programmes, said:

Every community has people whose stories deserve to be remembered, but some of the buildings connected to them no longer stand. By widening the criteria of the National Blue Plaque Scheme, we can now celebrate more of the people who have shaped our history, wherever they lived and worked.

With the opening of this year's nomination window, we're looking forward to seeing the people that the public put forward for a plaque, and working with community groups across the country to help bring those stories to light.

Matt Thompson, English Heritage's Conservation, Curatorial and Learning Director, said:

English Heritage feels this change will offer greater flexibility to recognise a wider range of individuals whose achievements deserve to be celebrated.

Our charity has long been committed to addressing the historic under-representation within the scheme, and we have made significant progress. This work will continue, and this change will bring more opportunities to enrich the scheme and the streets of London.

Run by Historic England on behalf of DCMS, the National Blue Plaque Scheme builds on the success of the London blue plaque scheme and local schemes across the country. Launched in 2023, the scheme extends across the country, with twelve plaques now placed from Plymouth to Liverpool. The London scheme, run by English Heritage, will also adopt the updated criteria from this round of nominations.

Recent people honoured by the National Blue Plaque Scheme include Daphne Steel, the first Black matron in the NHS; George Harrison, the lead guitarist of The Beatles; and Reverend Wilbert Awdry, creator of Thomas the Tank Engine.

Applications are now open for both schemes until 13th January 2027. Blue plaques from these nominations will be unveiled in 2027.

At the time of writing, the full list of blue plaques erected under the National scheme is:

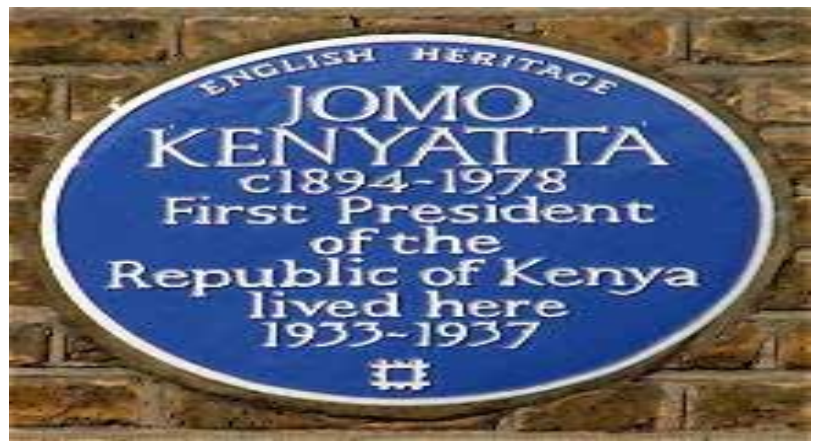
- Daphne Steele; first Black matron in the NHS - Ilkley, West Yorkshire
- Clarice Cliff; ceramic designer - Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
- George Harrison; The Beatles' lead guitarist - Wavertree, Liverpool
- Cary Grant; Hollywood actor - Bishopston, Bristol
- Jack Leslie; pioneering Black footballer - Plymouth, Devon
- Esmé Church; actress and director - Bradford, West Yorkshire
- Reverend Wilbert Awdry; creator of Thomas the Tank Engine - Stroud, Gloucestershire
- Judy Fryd; founder of Mencap - Harpenden, Hertfordshire
- Mary Beale; pioneering female artist - Eastleigh, Hampshire
- Mary Cartwright; celebrated mathematician - Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
- Frank Soo; England footballer of East Asian descent- Buxton, Derbyshire
- Dorothea Bate; palaeontologist and archaeozoologist, Tring, Hertfordshire

The full list of English Heritage's 2026 plaques in London are as follows, with more to follow:

- Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin; the astronomer who discovered what stars are made of.
- Duse Mohamed Ali; pioneering Pan-Africanist and influential journalist.
- Julia Margaret Cameron; groundbreaking Victorian photographer
- Jill Craigie; film pioneer, feminist and writer
- Kamal Chunchie; early advocate for Black and Asian communities in the East End.
- Amy Gentry; pioneer of women's rowing.
- Stefan Zweig; acclaimed Austrian writer who was one of the most widely read authors of the inter-war period.



Britain's Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy, honouring heroes of yesteryear.



Mzee Jomo Kenyatta plaque in London when he was a student and a freedom fighter.



Indian freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi was honoured with a plaque in London to mark his student days. Winston Churchill famously and viciously called him the 'naked fakir' at the height of India's fight for freedom because Gandhi had shunned Western attire, wearing a dhoti or loincloth.



Gandhi during his student days in London. Photo courtesy

- Sir Laurence Olivier; one of the greatest actors of the 20th century
- Asquith Xavier; the railway worker who challenged racial discrimination and fought against a workplace 'colour bar'
- Dr Annie McCall; who transformed maternity care and midwifery training
- Gertrude Tuckwell; who campaigned for better conditions for working women and helped shape some of the earliest legislation protecting them.
- Dudley Clarke; master of military deception

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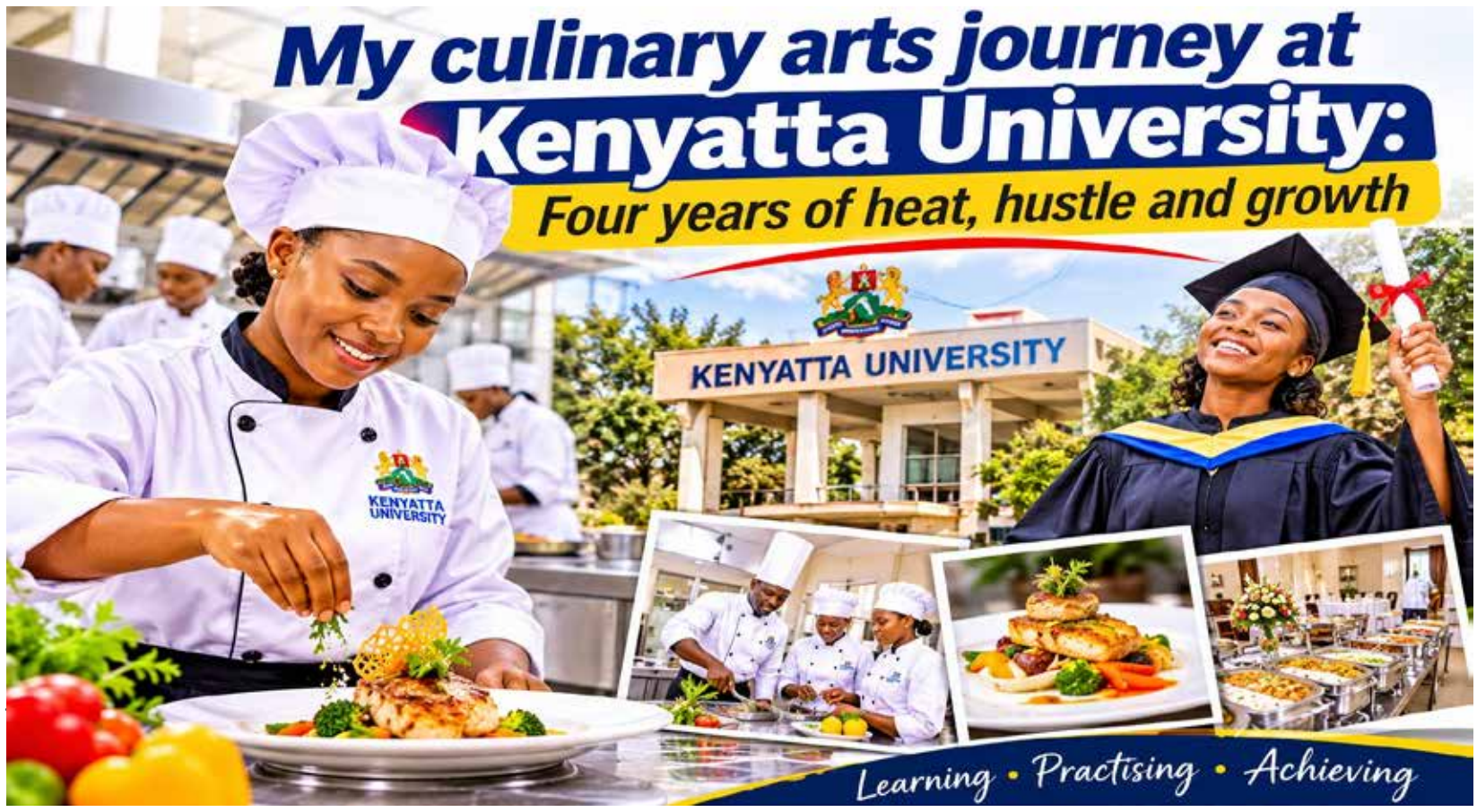
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Motivation

My culinary arts journey at Kenyatta University: Four years of heat, hustle and growth

Esther Wanjiru reflects on four transformative years studying culinary arts at Kenyatta University — the triumphs, the failures and the lessons that forged a professional.

By: **Esther Wanjiru**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- **Exposure has been another significant highlight. Culinary arts extends well beyond the classroom, and through industrial attachments and practical sessions she has worked in real kitchens, engaged with seasoned professionals and experienced the full demands of the hospitality industry at close range. These experiences opened her eyes to the remarkable diversity within the field — hotel kitchens, catering operations, food production facilities and entrepreneurial ventures all revealed themselves as viable and exciting paths. They reinforced a truth that is easy to overlook: culinary arts is not simply about cooking. It is about service, management and innovation in equal measure.**
- **The journey has had its misses, too. There were moments of outright failure — dishes that refused to cooperate, assessments that fell short of expectation and days when the pressure felt genuinely overwhelming. One practical examination stands out in memory. Everything that could go wrong did go wrong.**

Esther Wanjiru will sit her final examinations in roughly three months, bringing to a close a four-year journey that has been as intense and transformative as the kitchens she has trained in. Pursuing a degree in Culinary Arts at Kenyatta University has not been merely an academic endeavour — it has been a test of endurance, creativity, discipline and self-discovery. This is her story: the hits, the misses and the opportunities that have shaped her into the culinary professional she is becoming.

When she first joined the programme, the vision was romantic — beautifully plated dishes, the warm applause of satisfied guests, the glamour so often portrayed in culinary shows. Reality arrived swiftly and without ceremony. The kitchen is not glamorous. It is hot, fast-paced and unforgiving. The opening months came as a genuine shock. Standing for hours on end, handling sharp tools, working under pressure and meeting strict deadlines pushed her far beyond any comfort zone she had previously known. But it was in that discomfort that growth quietly began.

Among the biggest hits of the journey has been mastering foundational skills. Knife work, for instance, is not simply about cutting ingredients — it is about precision, safety and efficiency. Learning classical cooking techniques, understanding flavour profiles and appreciating the science behind food fundamentally transformed the way she approaches the craft. There is a particular confidence that comes with knowing not just what to do, but why it works. That shift — from following recipes to genuinely understanding food — stands among her proudest achievements.

Exposure has been another significant highlight. Culinary arts extends well beyond the classroom, and through industrial attachments and practical sessions she has worked in real kitchens, engaged with seasoned professionals and experienced the full demands of the hospitality industry at close range. These experiences opened her eyes to the remarkable diversity within the field — hotel kitchens, catering operations, food production facilities and entrepreneurial ventures all revealed themselves as viable and exciting paths. They reinforced a truth that is easy to overlook: culinary arts is not simply about cooking. It is about service, management and innovation in equal measure.

The journey has had its misses, too. There were moments of outright failure — dishes that refused to cooperate, assessments that fell short of expectation and days when the pressure felt genuinely overwhelming. One practical examination stands out in memory. Everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Timing collapsed, presentation suffered and she left the kitchen feeling thoroughly defeated. Yet those painful moments became her most instructive teachers. They taught her resilience, humility and the absolute importance of preparation. Failure, it turns out, has a way of building the very qualities that success alone cannot.

Financial constraints have also been a persistent reality. Culinary training demands ingredients, equipment and, at times, additional certifications — all of which carry a cost. Balancing academic requirements against financial limitations has never been straightforward. There were moments that demanded creativity not only inside the kitchen but in the management of limited resources. That pressure, difficult as it was, has instilled a resourcefulness she now considers one of her most bankable professional qualities.

Time management has emerged as another critical lesson. The programme is demanding, blending theory and practicals in a combination that requires equal and sustained attention. There were days when juggling assignments, kitchen sessions and personal responsibilities felt like trying to manage too many pots on the stove simultaneously. Learning to prioritise, plan methodically and remain disciplined has been essential — not merely for survival but for genuine success.

Amidst the challenges, the opportunities have been considerable. Culinary arts rewards passion and creativity in ways that few disciplines can match. She has had the freedom to experiment with different cuisines, fuse unexpected flavours and develop her own distinctive style. The liberty to create — to transform simple, honest ingredients into something meaningful — has been deeply fulfilling. It is in those moments of creation that the original decision to choose this path makes complete and undeniable sense.

Networking has been a substantial and sometimes underestimated gain. Engaging with lecturers, professional chefs and fellow students has built connections that reach well beyond the lecture hall or the kitchen. These relationships are not merely social — they are professional networks that will shape the career ahead. Learning from others, exchanging ideas and collaborating under pressure have enriched the experience in ways that no textbook ever could.

As the final stretch approaches, the reflection turns not only to what has been learned but to who has been shaped in the process. The discipline is sharper, the resilience is real and the confidence in her abilities has grown steadily. The kitchen has taught patience and meticulous attention to detail. It has demonstrated the value of consistent hard work and the quiet power of showing up, day after day, regardless of how the previous session ended.

Looking ahead, the feelings are mixed — genuine excitement tempered by honest anxiety. The transition from student to professional carries its own distinct set of challenges. The industry is competitive and the expectations are high. But the lessons of four years travel with her: the hits that have built confidence, the misses that have strengthened character and the opportunities that have broadened vision.

This journey has not been perfect. It has, without question, been worthwhile. Culinary arts has delivered more than a degree — it has given her a sense of purpose and a clearer understanding of who she is. As she prepares to step into the next chapter, she does so with genuine gratitude for the experiences, the lessons and the growth they have produced. The heat of the kitchen has tested her, the hustle has shaped her and the hope keeps her going. This is her story — and it is only just beginning.

Esther Wanjiru is a fourth-year Culinary Arts undergraduate student at Kenyatta University.

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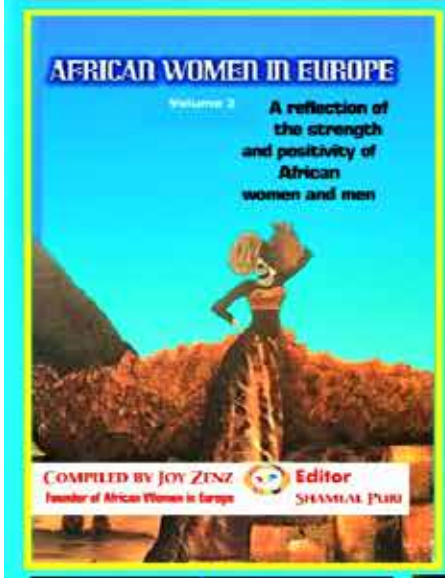
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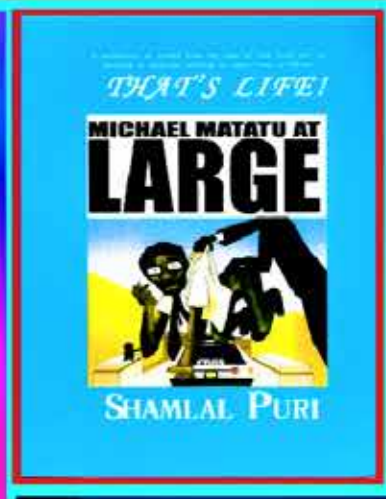
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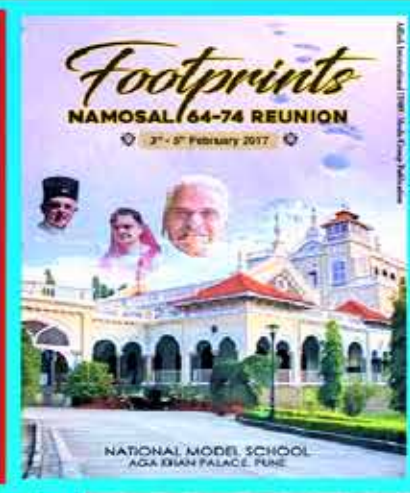
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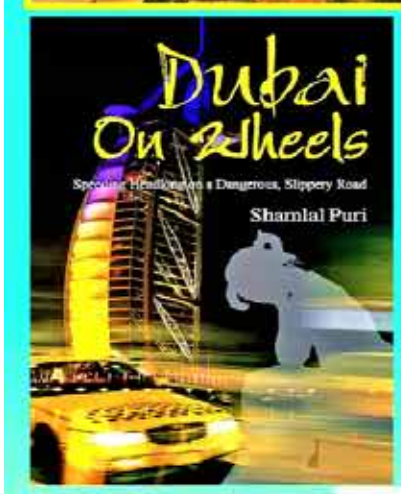


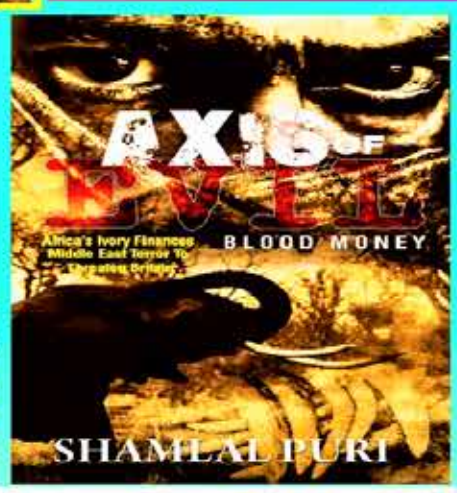


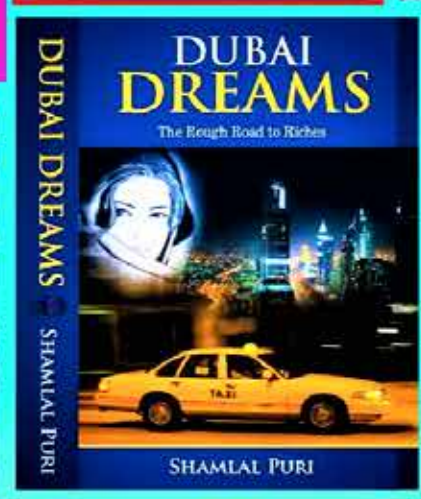
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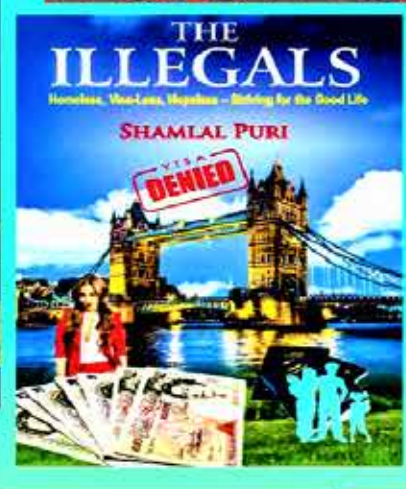


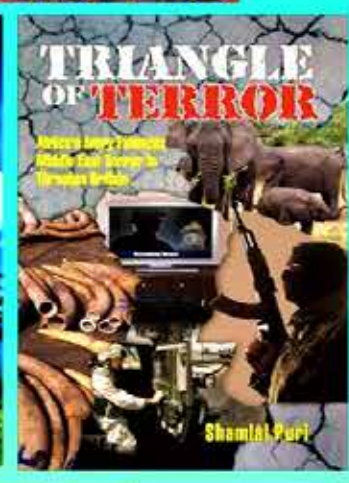
BEST SELLER NOVELS





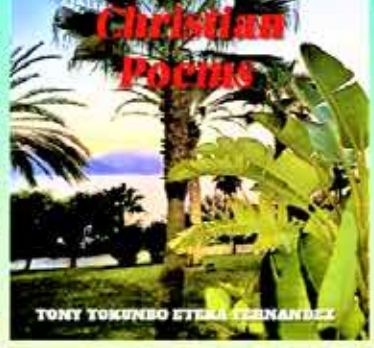












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UK News

World travel and tourism at a crucial turning point:

INCREDIBLE! PASSION FOR TRAVEL CONTINUES UNDAUNTED DESPITE GLOBAL POLITICAL UPHEAVALS



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Contd from Page 1

they gathered under one roof in central London for their annual jamboree, showcasing their best sights and sounds to tourists from around the world.

A total of 3,775 companies from 128 countries exhibited at this spectacular annual fixture.

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Senegal were among the African countries well represented.

The Middle East had a powerful representation too – United Arab Emirates: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah were out in full force, as were Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, among others.

From the vibrant cultures of Southeast Asia to the majestic wildlife of Africa and the breathtaking landscapes of Australia, visitors savoured everything from the splendour of blue skies to the beautiful beaches of the world's islands… in pictures and videos played continuously at the various stands.

There were also live displays of dancing and cultural fiestas.

The three-day event was delivered with an action-packed programme not only for the travel industry but also for the thousands of visitors who turned up to walk around the ExCeL Centre to see each country displaying its best in sights, sounds and culture.

Event Director Chris Carter Chapman was upbeat about this year's event, describing it as bringing the world of travel together in a year of challenge and uncertainty.

He said this year's WTM "delivers our largest show footprint in our 46-year history", with the latest addition being the launch of WTM Travel Tech, which he called "our new

Contd Page 11



Italy had one of the biggest stands, showing Britons' growing interest in visiting the country for short breaks. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Britain displayed its best to attract more foreign visitors. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Lithuania in Eastern Europe is opening up to British tourists looking for short breaks. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Tajikistan beauties shared a smile with the passing visitors who stopped by their stand. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Poland had a lot to show to potential visitors passing by their stand. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



The allure of Ghana still attracts many Western tourists looking for long-haul holidays in Africa. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Tanzania's natural beauty and the national parks remain an attraction for many Western tourists. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

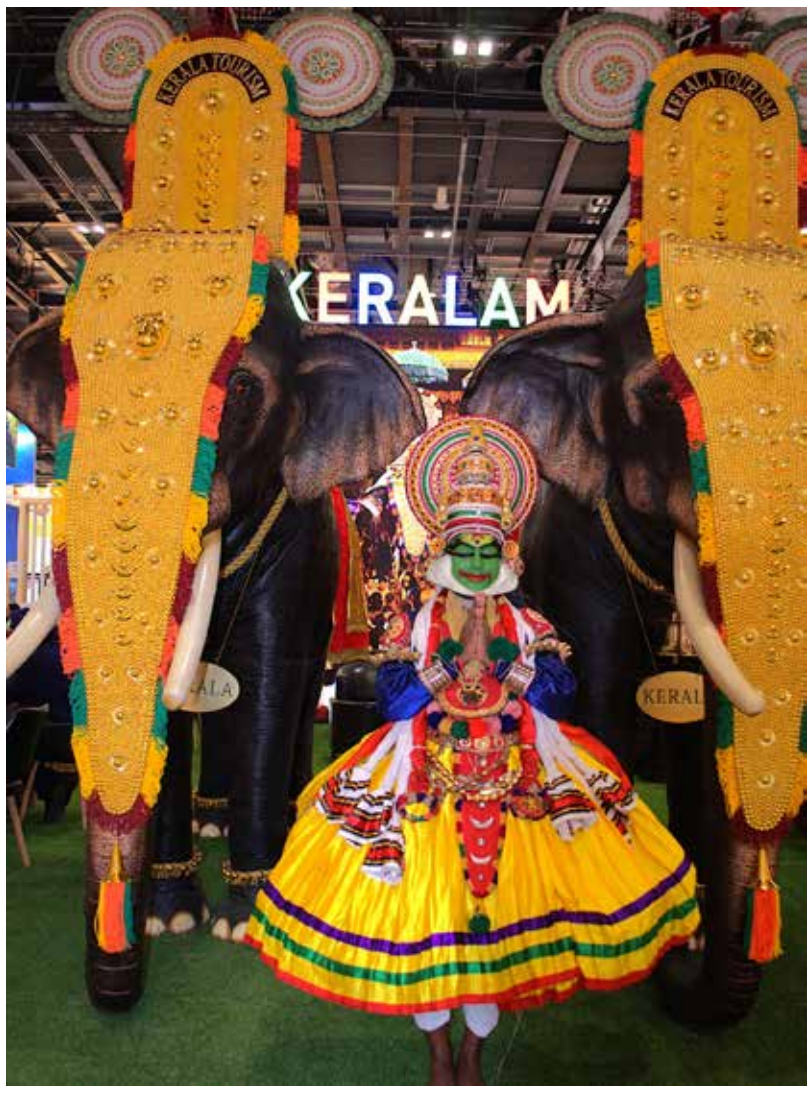
UK News

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Contd from Page 10
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show-within-a-show."
"Technology is no longer a specialist corner of travel; it is reshaping how our industry operates, and how people book and experience the world."
This year, Travel Tech had its dedicated hall, alongside the Future Stage and Innovation Highway, creating a much bigger platform for AI, data, payments distribution and technologies changing travel,
Mr Chapman welcomed the Egyptian Tourist Authority as the 2026 WTM's premier partner. Egypt has participated in WTM since its maiden event in 1980.
Egypt is a popular destination for international tourists. Last year, almost 19 million international visitors travelled to Egypt.
In the first eight months of 2026, 12.7 million visited Egypt, and there are indications that by 31st December Egypt would have possibly broken last year's record, with over 20 million visitors, as many people still have to plan their Christmas holidays.
This year's WTM had more than 200 speakers and over 70 content sessions with expert insights.
Excitement filled the air on the first day of the event as singing and dancing filled the air when the doors opened.
From the grand opening ceremony with Premier Partner Egypt to the launch of the WTM Global Travel Report and the buzz across WTM Trend Fest, the tone was set for an exciting three days.
On the opening day, more than 30,000 people passed through the doors of the ExCeL Centre.
The opening day brought many opportunities for the exhibitors, who spared no effort to attract visitors to their stands, offering brochures and bags of goodies.
The much-awaited WTM Global Travel Report revealed interesting statistics.
Dave Goodger, Managing Director, EMEA Tourism Economics, said, "Travellers are more aware in 2026 than ever before. Leisure travel remains a key priority in consumer budgets, even as travellers adapt how and where they visit in response to ongoing disruption and cost-of-living pressures. The industry is on course for another record year."
A new record was set with 1.57 billion international arrivals, according to the report, despite disruption from conflict and squeezed household budgets. Growth is expected to accelerate into 2027, it notes.
Visitors spent a whopping US$7.8 trillion, a 9% increase over 2025, in destination spending, both domestic and international, on 23.9 billion visitor nights.



Incredible India's cultural diversity and the beauty of the land of multiple seasons have not lost their charm to the West, as this traditional dancer shows. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

However, the report notes growth in 2026 is more modest, as 3% of travellers avoided long-haul trips mainly due to higher fares and safety concerns. They preferred Europe.
An interesting statistic: 37% travelled abroad to relax, compared with 31% in 2025.
The report is upbeat and optimistic; long-haul travel is set to rebound in 2027.
Visitors are looking for both value and luxury; some 56% said they were interested in both budget and premium travel experiences.
In Brazil, for example, the 2027 World Cup holds high hopes. The football tournament will run for a month from 24 June in eight cities, from Fortaleza in the north to Porto Alegre in the south, while showcasing the capital, Brasilia, which is in the centre of the vast country.
"Brazil will be in the spotlight," said Alisson Andrade, International Markets Coordinator at Embratur, Brazil's national promotional arm. "We understand hosting big events is a turning point."
Potential international visitors will be able to firm up their travel plans from 11 December, when the fixtures are announced and tickets go on sale.
Andrade gave an example of the hoped-for impact in and around the capital, from where he said fans could visit the mountainous Chapada dos Veadeiros region.
"I would highlight Brasilia for the architecture and as the seat of government, but also there is so much nature," he said. "Three hours' drive away there are mountains and dozens of waterfalls and rivers – it's an oasis in a desert region."
He said venues including Fortaleza and Recife would appeal to those wanting a beach break and adventure tourism with guaranteed good weather during the southern hemisphere winter.
Brazil has similar hopes for a Carnival campaign launched at WTM London. This highlights major carnivals taking place at the same time as Rio de Janeiro's in February.
"Worldwide, everyone knows about a parade in Rio," said Andrade. "However, this campaign wants to show Salvador and Recife."
Salvador, he said, was famous for its African influence, while Recife offered sound trucks and a distinctive dance style. Olinda, an historic part of Recife, will also feature specifically in the campaign.
"This is a very important sales opportunity, because agents can combine Carnival with a more laid-back holiday after spending so much energy dancing."
He described the UK as a "very strategic market for us; it is part of our marketing plan". Last year, Brazil attracted just under 200,000 UK tourists, with 148,000 this year until September, up 11% year-on-year.

Contd Page 12



Kenya has not lost its charm to British tourists with its abundant wildlife, beaches and culture. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Dubai has its own magnet for holidaymakers from the UK. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

A hearty welcome from Saudi Arabia, which had a big stall and big crowds. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

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Contd from Page 11
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Day 2 brought industry leaders together for the Ministers' Summit, celebrated standout exhibitors with the Best Stand Awards and sparked conversations around accessibility, travel and the future of the industry.
Tunisia welcomed roughly 450,000 visitors from the UK in 2025, its most successful year since 2014. It is now determined to "set another record" having already exceeded last year's numbers by 11%.
"There are many reasons for the increase, but two main ones are the strong connectivity between Tunisia and the UK and the value – it's great value for money," Director General of the Tunisian National Tourism Office, Mr Mohamed Mehdi Haloui, told TTG.
Currently, UK visitors spend an average of five to six days in Tunisia. Mehdi Haloui believes it's crucial to extend this stay by highlighting Tunisia's diversity, insisting the country is best experienced as a twin-centre destination. "We want to promote Tunisia beyond the beach – you can discover and experience so much more than that."
For example, Mehdi Haloui said visitors could pair Djerba, a Mediterranean island known for its white sandy beaches and historic villages, with Tozeur, a desert city and home to North Africa's largest Salt Lake.
Haloui also pointed to Tunisia's wellness experiences, noting it is the second most popular destination for thalassotherapy – the use of seawater as a form of therapy – after France.
The conflict in the Middle East has also created an opportunity for Tunisia's cruise sector, which brought more than 500,000 visitors to the country last year.
"Many cruise companies want to change routes and want to come to Tunisia," he said. "We are working to get another harbour, like Sousse, to meet this demand."
Haloui also shared updates about Tunisia's airlift, starting with Jet2's inaugural service to the country from May 2027.
Jet2 will initially be flying from Birmingham, East Midlands, Leeds Bradford, Stansted, and Manchester, before adding Bristol to its programme in 2028. TUI will also be launching a new route from Gatwick to Djerba next year.
Haloui hopes the increase in connectivity will dispel the notion that Tunisia is a far-flung destination: "Many people think Tunisia is a four- or five-hour flight from the UK, but it's under three hours."
Tunisia is also looking forward to the opening of Tunis Bay, a flagship urban development in the north of the capital. Scheduled for completion by 2030, the estate will feature a business centre, a five-star hotel and a golf course.
WTM wrapped up with a wealth of take-home advice on careers, marketing and business development.
Advice covered marketing for those already entrenched in the travel industry and careers for those just starting, on the final day of World Travel Market London 2026, part of



Pearls from Oman caught the eye of many visitors, men and women, at this stand. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



The Middle East is the centre of the world's best perfume makers, as our photo shows a display of the sweet-smelling elixir being made. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Hello, China. This beautiful hostess was walking when our photographer spotted her. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

RX Global. Meanwhile, new AI-assisted booking technology, sure to be a hot topic at next year's show, was showcased in a live demonstration.
Warnings about making assumptions about the audience emerged at the Trends stage in a session on the 'Contradiction Economy'. Abi Best, Managing Director of Lemongrass Marketing, advised: "A woman aged 30 may have more in common with an 80-year-old depending on where their interests are… You need to be really specific and relevant to your audience."
It was a point echoed by Sophie Buxton, Head of Marketing for UK & Europe at Intrepid Travel, who shared that 40-year-old women were now travelling solo with the adventure operator, alongside taking other holidays with their families. She pointed out that, by age, geography, and wealth, King Charles and Mick Jagger could be put in the same demographic yet likely had very different leisure interests.
Best advised marketing departments to work with wider teams with on-the-ground customer experience to avoid a disconnect between what travellers were perceived to want and their real-life concerns.
Tom Gierasimczuk, Vice President of Communications for Resonance, which advises destinations on tourism, real estate and economic development, told the session: "People are increasingly spending more and more money [on travel] if they have the means to do so." He added: "The trust that people are giving to [AI] agents for convenience is a game-changer." But he advised going back to basics with marketing by building and engaging with your own audience via newsletters, to avoid the constantly changing algorithms of social media "overlords."

Contd Page 13

UK News

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Contd from Page 12
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There was more advice on marketing over at the Experience Hub, where TV presenter and journalist Aidy Smith shared how he uses long-form content to showcase destinations with "emotional relevance" for a diverse audience. He pointed out that content can be repurposed for different formats; for instance, a 45-minute podcast could be trimmed into short clips for social media, extending audience reach.

In another Experience Hub session, Ash Bhardwaj, a journalist and presenter, talked about leadership through good storytelling, gleaned from his travel career and time as a British Army reserve officer.

Meanwhile, other delegates at the Experience Hub picked up tips on making responsible tourism more palatable for clients in a session humorously entitled 'Hide the lentils in the cake.' Debbie Hindle, Chair of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism Global, commented: "[Sustainability] should be innate… but we should be telling consumers about the experience and the emotion, not putting a label on it."

The final day of WTM 2026 also featured the ITT Future You Summit, where early-career stars and management figures from Hays Travel shared how their calculated risk-taking paid off. Among them, Amaan Shakir, now Partnerships Executive at Avis Budget Group, explained how he took a job below his experience to break into travel. "Don't be afraid to step back to move forward," he advised. A slew of new resources for travel entrants were announced during the summit, including Career Compass, an online library of short video case studies debuted for ITT's 70th anniversary.

Over on the Future stage, advice for building companies was imparted by Louise Truman, founder of group travel specialist Plotpackers, who shared how her business is growing following her successful pitch on TV's Dragon's Den. Deborah Meaden and Steven Bartlett were the investors, getting 10% of her business for a total investment of £120,000. Since then, she has secured additional investments through Bartlett's personal network, including from Richard Johnston, co-founder of TripADeal, the OTA Qantas bought in 2024 for A$400m.

The money was spent on upgrading Plotpacker's back end, allowing the business to run on modern technology rather than spreadsheets. She offered a wealth of advice for start-ups, drawing on her experience as a female founder. "Never sell yourself short, have the confidence of a mediocre man," she joked. And she also revealed the pivotal role WTM played when she was considering launching a travel business for solo female travellers. "I came to WTM, where Steven Bartlett spoke, and spent three days absorbing information. I swear by it."

Also on the Future Stage, a crowded room witnessed a live demo showing how AI can now take a conversational text prompt all the way through to booking and payment. Luke Sun from AI-native platform Voyada completed a real-time booking for a ten-day trip to South Korea, including flights, hotels, and transfers. He was joined on stage by representatives from TripToGo, a B2B consolidator and fulfilment agency which is powered by Voyada. TripToGo's front end can be white-labelled for use by retail travel agents, host agencies, influencers and MICE businesses. It took $28m in bookings last year; this year's total so far is $81m.

Jesse Bolduc explained TripToGo's approach: "Traditionally, agents had to search through the catalogue to get the right trip. With Voyada, we bring the inventory to the customer. AI has changed travel and there is no going back".

Thanking everyone for coming together for a successful show, WTM Exhibition Director Chris Charter-Chapman revealed that the percentage increase in accredited buyers was greater than initially thought. Speaking on the Wanderlust stage, he said: "When I opened the show on Tuesday, I said buyer numbers would be 35% up - now the show is over, I can reveal that the actual increase on last year is 50%."

The final session, however, went to comedian Phil Wang, who had this year's Keynote slot to talk about his life in travel. Among travel highlights, he shared how he had been pleasantly surprised by Shanghai: "It was so chilled, very spacious, very relaxed, very European."

He was also wowed by Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt. "The main thing about the inside of these tombs is the colours are still there… these blues and gold and greens have been lying there for three thousand, four thousand years. It was exceptional."

To put it in one line: It was even more spectacular than last year's WTM.

2027 promises to be even better!



Indonesian hospitality was among the warmest and most welcoming, as this happy hostess shows. Photo SHAMLAL PURI



Music with love from The Gambia. This Kora player regaled audiences at the WTM. Photo SHAMLAL PURI

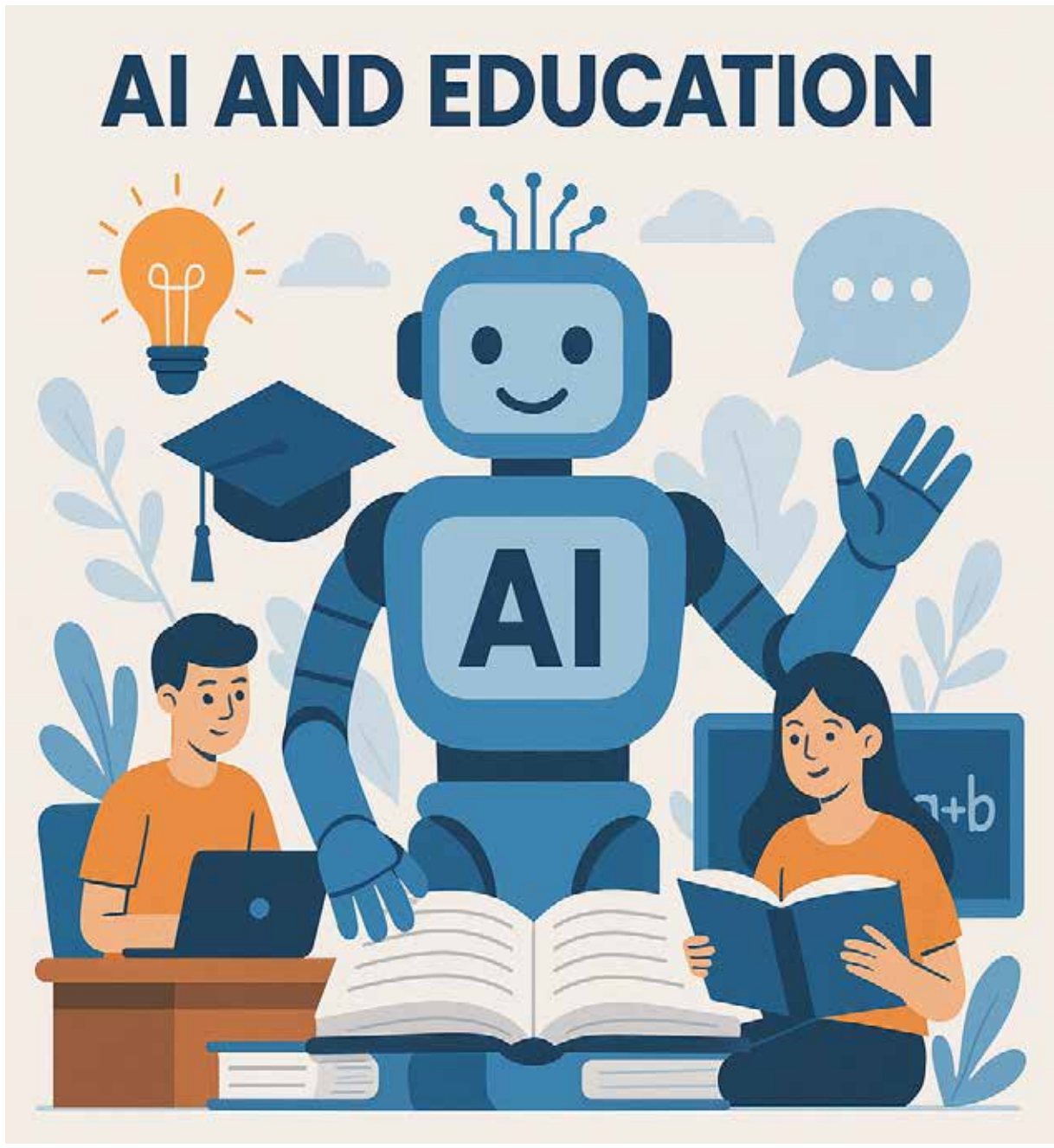
WORLD

The role of artificial intelligence in the modern world



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Contd from Page 1



natural language processing, and computer vision, AI systems are becoming increasingly sophisticated and capable of performing complex operations.

Today, artificial intelligence is used in various fields, including education, medicine, science, agriculture, industry, transportation, business, and communication. Its rapid development creates new opportunities for economic growth, scientific discoveries, and social progress. At the same time, it raises important questions concerning employment, privacy, security, ethics, and human responsibility.

The purpose of this article is to examine the role of artificial intelligence in the modern world, explore its practical applications in different areas of human activity, identify its major advantages and challenges, and discuss its potential influence on the future of society.

Main Part

1. Artificial Intelligence in Education

Education is one of the fields in which artificial intelligence has created significant opportunities for improvement and innovation. Traditional educational systems are gradually integrating digital technologies to make the learning process more effective, accessible, and student-centered.

AI-powered educational platforms can analyze students' learning progress, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and provide personalized learning materials. This approach allows students to study at their own pace and receive additional support in areas where they experience difficulties. Intelligent tutoring systems, online learning applications, automated assessment tools, and digital assistants are examples of how artificial intelligence is transforming education.

Artificial intelligence also provides valuable opportunities for teachers. Educators can use AI tools to prepare lesson plans, develop educational exercises, create presentations, generate assessment questions, and organize interactive learning activities. These technologies help reduce the time spent on routine tasks and allow teachers to focus more on students' individual needs, creative thinking, and intellectual development.

Moreover, AI-based translation and language-learning applications make foreign language education more accessible. Students can practice pronunciation, improve vocabulary, receive grammatical explanations, and communicate with intelligent virtual assistants. Such opportunities are particularly important in an increasingly interconnected world where multilingual communication has become essential.

However, artificial intelligence should not replace teachers or reduce the importance of human interaction in education. Teachers play an irreplaceable role in developing students' moral values, social skills, creativity, independent thinking, and emotional intelligence. Therefore, the most effective educational approach is to combine modern AI technologies with professional teaching methods and human guidance.

2. The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare

Healthcare is another important sector experiencing remarkable changes due to artificial intelligence. Medical professionals and researchers increasingly use AI systems to analyze medical data, identify diseases, improve diagnostic procedures, and support treatment decisions.

One of the most valuable applications of AI in medicine is medical image analysis. Intelligent systems can examine X-rays, MRI scans, CT images, and other medical examinations to help specialists identify abnormalities. These technologies can assist in detecting certain diseases at earlier stages, allowing patients to receive timely medical attention.

Artificial intelligence also contributes to the development of personalized medicine. By analyzing medical histories, genetic information, and other health-related data, AI systems can help researchers and healthcare professionals understand individual patient needs and explore more suitable treatment approaches.

Furthermore, AI technologies are being used in pharmaceutical research, where they can help scientists analyze chemical compounds, identify potential drug candidates, and accelerate certain stages of medicine development. In hospitals, intelligent systems can support patient management, appointment scheduling, and the organization of medical information.

Despite these advantages, AI cannot independently replace the professional knowledge, experience, and ethical responsibility of doctors. Medical decisions require careful human evaluation, especially when patients' lives and well-being are involved. Therefore, artificial intelligence should function as a supportive instrument that improves healthcare services under appropriate professional supervision.

3. Artificial Intelligence in Business and the Economy

The influence of artificial intelligence on business and economic development is becoming increasingly significant. Modern companies use AI technologies to improve productivity, reduce operational costs, analyze market trends, and provide better customer services.

One of the major advantages of AI in business is its ability to process enormous amounts of information within a short period. Companies can use these analytical capabilities to understand consumer behavior, predict market demands, identify business opportunities, and make more informed decisions.

In the banking sector, artificial intelligence helps identify unusual financial transactions, detect potential fraud, and improve customer support services. Chatbots and virtual assistants can answer frequently asked questions and provide information to customers at any time of the day.

Manufacturing industries also benefit from AI-powered automation. Intelligent machines and robots can perform repetitive tasks with high precision, monitor production processes, and identify technical problems. This improves efficiency, reduces certain human errors, and contributes to the development of modern industrial systems.

However, the expansion of automation also creates challenges for the labor market. Some traditional occupations may change or become less common as machines take over routine tasks. Consequently, employees need to develop new professional skills, improve their digital literacy, and adapt to changing economic conditions. In this context, lifelong learning and professional development are becoming increasingly important.

4. Artificial Intelligence in Science and Research

Scientific research has entered a new stage of development with the introduction of artificial intelligence. Researchers use intelligent systems to analyze complex datasets, identify patterns, formulate hypotheses, and explore scientific questions that may be difficult to investigate using traditional methods alone.

In environmental science, AI technologies can help analyze climate data, monitor changes in ecosystems, predict certain environmental risks, and improve natural resource management. In agriculture, intelligent systems can examine soil conditions, monitor crop development, identify plant diseases, and support more efficient irrigation practices.

Artificial intelligence is also contributing to developments in astronomy, physics, engineering, and biotechnology. By processing large volumes of scientific information, AI can assist researchers in identifying relationships and patterns that might otherwise remain unnoticed. These applications demonstrate that artificial intelligence is not merely a tool for convenience; it is becoming an important instrument for expanding human knowledge and supporting scientific innovation.

5. Artificial Intelligence in Communication and Daily Life

Artificial intelligence has significantly changed the way people communicate and access information. Today, many individuals use AI-based applications without even realizing how deeply these technologies are integrated into their daily routines.

Smartphones, virtual assistants, search engines, recommendation systems, and online translation platforms rely on artificial intelligence to provide personalized and convenient services. For example, digital assistants can recognize voice commands, answer questions,

Contd Page 15

WORLD

The role of artificial intelligence in the modern world

Contd from Page 14
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organize schedules, and help users complete everyday tasks.
AI-powered translation tools make communication between people speaking different languages easier. They support international cooperation, cultural exchange, education, and professional communication. This is particularly valuable in a globalized world where people increasingly interact across national and linguistic boundaries.
Social media platforms also use artificial intelligence to recommend content, organize information, and identify certain forms of inappropriate activity. Although these systems improve user experience, they can also influence people's opinions and information consumption. Therefore, users should develop media literacy and critically evaluate the information they encounter online.

6. The Challenges and Risks of Artificial Intelligence

Although artificial intelligence offers numerous benefits, its development also creates serious challenges that require careful consideration.
One of the most widely discussed concerns is employment. As AI systems and robots become capable of performing increasingly complex tasks, some professions may experience significant changes. Certain routine activities may be automated, while new occupations related to technology, data analysis, programming, and digital management may emerge. Society must therefore invest in education, retraining, and lifelong learning to prepare individuals for the changing labor market.
Another important concern is privacy and data protection. Artificial intelligence systems often require large amounts of information to function effectively. If personal data is collected, stored, or processed without sufficient protection, it may create risks for individuals and organizations. Strong cybersecurity measures and responsible data management are essential to address these challenges.
The issue of misinformation is also significant. AI technologies can generate realistic images, videos, audio recordings, and written materials. While these capabilities have many positive applications, they can also be misused to spread false information, manipulate public opinion, or create misleading content. As a result, developing critical thinking and digital literacy has become more important than ever.
Furthermore, AI systems may produce inaccurate or biased results because of limitations in their training data or design. Such problems



can affect decisions in education, employment, finance, and other important areas. To reduce these risks, developers and institutions must emphasize transparency, fairness, accountability, and human supervision.
Ethical responsibility should remain at the center of artificial intelligence development. Technology must serve humanity, protect human dignity, and contribute to social well-being. Its success should not be measured only by speed, efficiency, or financial profit, but also by its positive impact on people's lives.

7. The Future of Artificial Intelligence

The future of artificial intelligence is closely connected with the future of human civilization. As research continues and computing technologies become more advanced, AI is expected to influence even more areas of society.
In the coming years, artificial intelligence may contribute to more personalized educational systems, improved medical services, smarter transportation networks, sustainable agriculture, and more efficient industrial production. It may also create new opportunities for scientific discoveries and international cooperation.
However, technological progress must be accompanied by appropriate laws, ethical principles, and international collaboration. Governments, universities, research institutions, businesses, and technology developers should work together to ensure that AI systems are safe, transparent, inclusive, and beneficial to society.
Equally important is the role of individuals. People should not simply become passive users of new technologies; they should learn how these systems work, understand their limitations, and use them responsibly. Digital literacy, creativity, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills will remain essential qualities in the age of artificial intelligence.
Ultimately, the future will not be determined by technology alone. It will depend on the decisions people make about how to develop, regulate, and use technological innovations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, artificial intelligence has become one of the most influential forces shaping the modern world. Its applications in education, healthcare, business, science, agriculture, communication, and transportation demonstrate its enormous potential to improve human life and accelerate social development.
AI technologies make it possible to process information more efficiently, automate routine operations, support scientific research, improve the quality of services, and create innovative solutions to complex problems. They also provide new opportunities for students, teachers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and professionals in different fields.
Nevertheless, the development of artificial intelligence is accompanied by challenges related to employment, privacy, cybersecurity, misinformation, algorithmic bias, and ethical responsibility. These issues demonstrate the importance of establishing effective regulations and maintaining meaningful human supervision.
It is essential to understand that artificial intelligence should not be viewed as a competitor to humanity but as a tool that can strengthen human capabilities. Human creativity, emotional intelligence, moral judgment, and responsibility remain fundamental values that technology cannot fully replace.
The most successful societies of the future will be those that combine technological innovation with education, ethical awareness, and human-centered development. Therefore, learning to use artificial intelligence wisely and responsibly is not simply an advantage but an important necessity for individuals and communities in the modern world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zilola Sayfiddinova Alisher qizi was born on December 6, 2008, in the Turakurgan District of Namangan Region, Uzbekistan. In 2026, she successfully graduated from Secondary School No. 3 in the Turakurgan District of Namangan Region. She is currently a first-year student at Is'hoqxon Ibrat Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages, majoring in Philology and Language Teaching (Russian Language).
For Zilola Sayfiddinova, education is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge; rather, it is a means of enriching human intellect, broadening one's worldview, developing independent thinking, strengthening personal abilities, and realizing individual potential.
She has a particular interest in learning foreign languages and exploring the cultures, literature, and spiritual heritage of different nations. She especially emphasizes that language is not only a means of communication among people but also an important cultural and spiritual value that reflects the history, identity, and intellectual heritage of a nation.
Zilola has also demonstrated her knowledge and abilities through nationally recognized language certificates. In particular, she holds a B1-level English language certificate with a score of 49 points and a C-level Russian language certificate. These achievements reflect her consistent efforts, determination to achieve her goals, enthusiasm for learning, and commitment to continuous self-development.
Her academic and intellectual interests encompass philology, Russian language and literature, comparative linguistics, and modern language teaching methodologies. Through learning languages, Zilola aims not only to expand her personal knowledge but also to serve as a bridge between different cultures and contribute to the advancement of education and scientific development.
In Zilola Sayfiddinova's personal and professional outlook, knowledge is regarded as the foundation of progress, research as an essential condition for success, and determination as a key factor in achieving outstanding results.
Her greatest ambition for the future is to become a highly qualified, broad-minded, morally responsible, and competitive specialist in her chosen field. She aspires to use her knowledge and experience to make a meaningful contribution to the development of younger generations, the advancement of science and education, and the prosperity of her homeland, Uzbekistan.

Israel

Israel's post-election crisis: Netanyahu and Eisenkot clash over national unity government as nuclear threat looms

Benjamin Netanyahu and Gadi Eisenkot trade public accusations over coalition negotiations, exposing deep divisions in Israeli politics ahead of a critical government formation deadline.

By: **David Kimani**
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Benjamin Netanyahu and Gadi Eisenkot trade public accusations over coalition negotiations, exposing deep divisions in Israeli politics ahead of a critical government formation deadline.

By David Kimani

Benjamin Netanyahu and Gadi Eisenkot, two of Israel's most prominent political figures, are engaged in a sharp and increasingly public dispute over the formation of a national unity government, with both men accusing the other of bad faith as the country enters one of its most consequential political periods since the last general election. The confrontation, playing out on social media and in the Knesset, cuts to the heart of Israel's post-election reckoning — a nation navigating fractured politics, an existential security threat from Iran and a population exhausted by division.

The stakes could scarcely be higher. Israel heads into the critical government formation period with no settled coalition, a contested Knesset speakership and a former prime minister who, by Eisenkot's account, lost the election but refuses to accept its full political consequences. For observers of Israeli politics, the standoff is both familiar and newly dangerous — familiar because Netanyahu has survived every previous political crisis through tactical manoeuvre, dangerous because the geopolitical context in which this one unfolds is unprecedented in its severity.

Eisenkot, a former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces and now leading the charge to form an alternative government, did not mince his words. He dismissed Netanyahu's public call for immediate coalition negotiations as a calculated distraction. "Netanyahu calls for negotiations after they have already been scheduled," Eisenkot said in a statement posted to his official social media account. "He claims he wants unity, but disgraces a state ceremony in the Knesset and divides and incites as if there were no tomorrow." Eisenkot was explicit about his conditions for any power-sharing arrangement under his leadership: acceptance of his stated principles and a complete break with what he described as extremist political partners.

Netanyahu, for his part, framed the conversation in dramatically different terms. In his own public statement, he described a recent meeting with Eisenkot in warmer language, invoking years of professional acquaintance stretching back to Eisenkot's tenure as IDF Chief of Staff. "This meeting only strengthened my understanding of how essential it is to establish a national unity government," Netanyahu said, arguing that only a broad coalition encompassing all parties committed to Israel as a Jewish state would be capable of confronting the security challenges ahead. He made no reference to preconditions.

The centrepiece of Netanyahu's public argument was Iran. He warned with striking directness that the Iranian regime, which he characterised as one that "did not hesitate to murder many thousands of its own people," was once again seeking to advance its nuclear programme. "It will use nuclear weapons against us the moment it manages to resume uranium enrichment and the accelerated development of nuclear weapons," he said, invoking the codenames "Am Kelavi" — meaning Brave People — and "Shaagat Ha'ari" — meaning Lion's Roar — as examples of past operations that had, in his account, averted immediate threats. A narrow government, or one dependent on parties he characterised as supporters of terrorism, would, he argued, be incapable of meeting that threat.

The language of existential danger has long been part of Netanyahu's political vocabulary, but analysts who follow Israeli politics closely note that the current moment is not merely rhetorical. Iran's nuclear ambitions remain a live and unresolved threat. Israeli military and intelligence services have repeatedly identified uranium enrichment acceleration as a red line. Whether or not one accepts Netanyahu's framing of the coalition arithmetic, the underlying security concern he raises is widely shared across the Israeli political spectrum, including by Eisenkot himself.

What divides the two men is not the diagnosis but the prescription. Eisenkot contends that a unity government built around Netanyahu and his current allies — particularly those from the Religious Zionism bloc — would not be a government of genuine national reconciliation but rather a continuation of the same political configuration under a different name. His conditions, he has made clear, are not negotiating positions but prerequisites. The Tuesday Knesset vote to appoint Matan Kahana — a former lieutenant colonel, squadron commander and Sayeret Matkal commando — as Knesset speaker represented, in Eisenkot's framing, an immediate and concrete test of Likud and Religious Zionism's stated commitment to democratic cooperation. "If they are indeed committed to genuine political partnership, as they claim, they must allow a proper democratic process to take place on schedule," he said.



Benjamin Netanyahu

The Knesset speakership is not a ceremonial matter. Control of the speaker's chair shapes legislative agendas, determines which motions reach the floor and, in a parliament as finely balanced as Israel's, can materially affect a government's ability to function. The contest over that position is therefore not a sideshow — it is a direct proxy battle for the larger coalition struggle being waged in public statements and behind closed doors simultaneously.

Netanyahu's appeal to unity carried an emotional register as well as a strategic one. He invoked the image of ordinary Israelis — naming individual citizens, Elisha Midan alongside Elisaf Peretz, Talik Gvili alongside Shira Shapira — joining forces across their differences in service of a shared national future. It was language designed to reach beyond the political class, to appeal directly to a public that, by most polling measures, is deeply fatigued by years of electoral instability and political polarisation.

Israel has held multiple elections in recent years without producing durable governing majorities. The country's proportional representation system, combined with an increasingly fragmented party landscape, has made coalition-building a prolonged and painful exercise in which ideological distance between potential partners is frequently enormous. The current impasse fits that pattern — but the external environment gives it an urgency that previous formations did not carry to the same degree.

What comes next will be determined not by the volume of public statements but by whether the gap between Eisenkot's conditions and Netanyahu's position can be bridged in negotiations. Both men have declared their willingness to govern together in principle. Whether that principle survives contact with the specifics of power-sharing remains the defining question of Israeli politics today — and its answer will shape not only who governs Israel, but how capable that government will be of confronting the threats it faces.



Gadi Eisenkot

SILAS MWAUDASHENI NANDE

LEADERSHIP AS A CALL TO PURPOSE

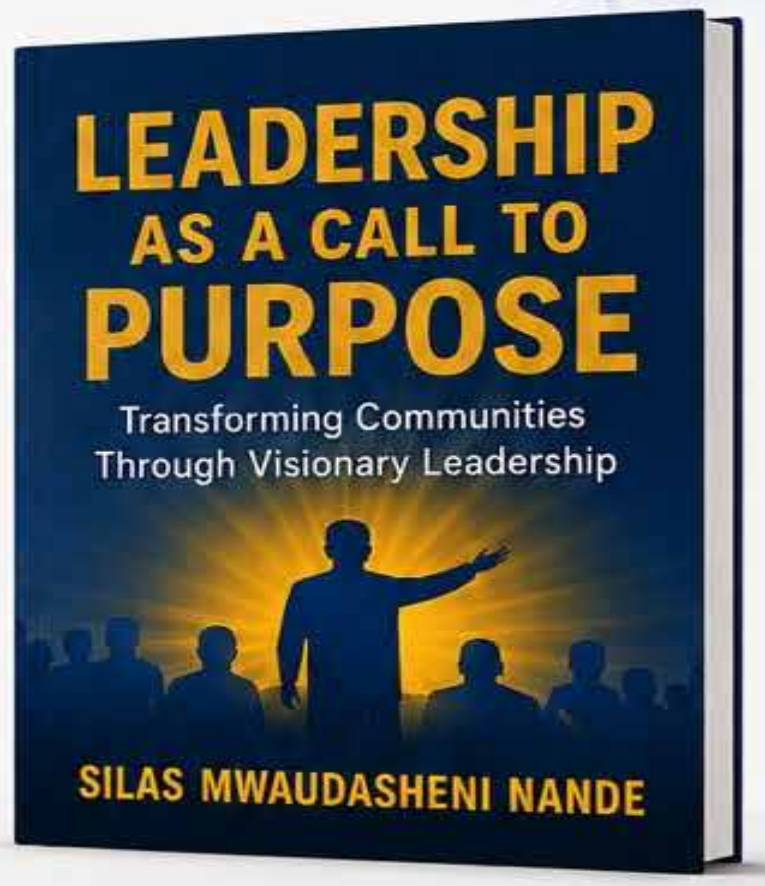
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Diaspora

IsiDonodono wins double awards in a landmark week for isiNdebele literature

Themba Emanuel Mashobane's celebrated poetry collection claimed two prestigious honours in a single day, cementing its place as a trailblazer for South Africa's marginalised languages.

By: **Themba Emanuel Mashobane**
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- **The first award came at The Book Behind The Awards (TBBA) ceremony held in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal, under the Umngeni Municipality, where IsiDonodono won in the category of Best isiNdebele Book. The second followed the same evening at The Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town, in a ceremony hosted by SHOFAR Books. That two major awards fell on the same date underscored the growing national profile of a collection that began as a manuscript entry and has since travelled the length of the country.**
- **The book, which contains 67 poems written in isiNdebele, was previously a winning manuscript at both the ANFASA and DSAC awards in 2025 before being published by ePublishing and Digital Displays. It is structured in the form of a textbook, with Mashobane providing literary analysis and explanatory notes alongside the poems — an approach that makes it both a creative work and a scholarly resource for readers and students of the language.**

IsiDonodono, the award-winning isiNdebele poetry collection by Themba Emanuel Mashobane, claimed two prestigious literary awards on the same day last Friday, 7 November, in what has become a remarkable run of recognition for a book that has now won three awards and received seven nominations since its publication.

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For Mashobane, the awards carry a purpose that extends beyond personal achievement. "I use these awards to promote isiNdebele, which is one of the most disadvantaged languages in South Africa when compared with other indigenous languages," he said. "Award nominations pave the way for me to promote my book, my genre and to network with writers from different regions and various languages."

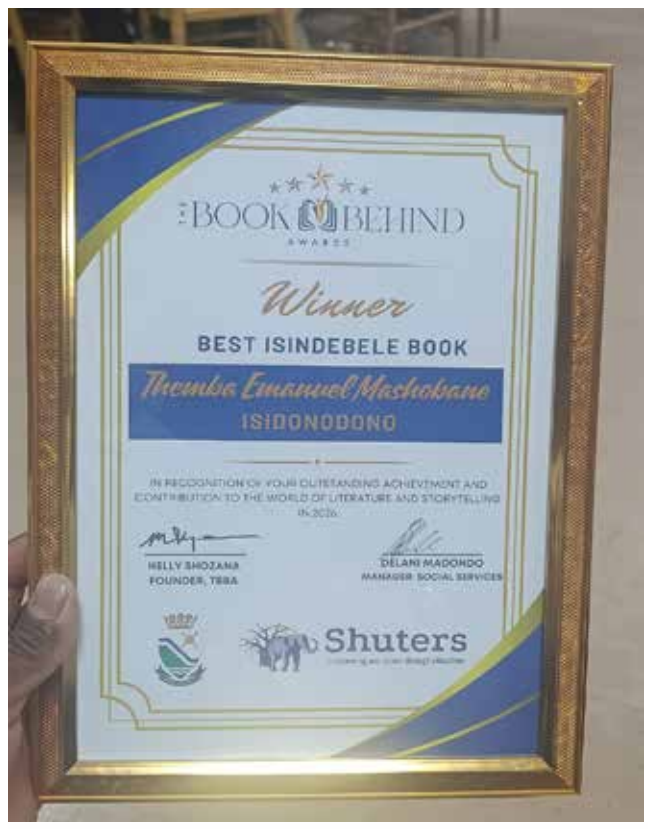
His broader concern is access. Mashobane noted that self-published authors are frequently sidelined from both national awards and opportunities enjoyed by those backed by traditional publishing houses. Private awards that partner with established brands, he argued, provide an important platform for independent voices to showcase their work and reach new audiences.

He urged emerging writers to pursue such opportunities actively, treating local awards not as validation alone but as a practical tool for market visibility and professional connection.

IsiDonodono continues to demonstrate that a language once considered peripheral can, in the right hands, produce work of national distinction.

TBBA 2026 WINNER'S .
Best Female Author:
- Coffee Chaos & Calling. Thembeka Snethemba Jiyane
Best Awareness Book:
- Four Stages of Disability. Thulani Blessed Ndimande
Best Fiction Short Stories:
- The Intimate Stories of Izidalwa: The Future. Sakhile Msweli
Best Poetry Book:
- Khaya Apho Ukhona. Nozibele Mornica Maqutywa
Best Book Cover:
- Coffee Chaos & Calling. Thembeka Snethemba Jiyane
Best Inspirational/ Motivational Book:
- As Long as I Still Breathe. Makhosi Mbonambi
Best Memoir/Biography/ Autobiography Book:
- The Dark Side of Campus Life- Sipho Ellen Tshaka.
Best Teenage Book
- Luminary. Asithandile Meyiwa
Best Educational/Historical/ Political Book:
- Is South Africa Ready for a Female President? Vincent Kheswa
Best Interfaith Book:
- The Battle for my Soul at Thirteen - Banele Molefe
Best Relationship/Romance Book:
- Beyond The Veil. Dr Happy Msomi
Best Sesotho Book:
- Li Hloa Lekhoara. Palesa Phatsoane Mosebi
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Diaspora

Water before uranium

What the IAEA Review of the Leonardville Project Means for Namibia, Russia and the Global Contest for Resources



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes



Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

• The second line is the record of the Namibian government itself. The water ministry withdrew the two permits in 2021 because the company had breached permit conditions. The minister at the time, Calle Schlettwein, gave Parliament the details in 2024. Since 2012 the company had drilled about 600 exploration boreholes and 36 hydrogeological boreholes on 39 farms. Conditions on sealing and grouting had been ignored. He warned that drilling outside the specifications would destroy the confining layer between the two aquifers (Schlettwein, 2024).

• That statement matters. The safety case of the project depends on an intact seal between the Auob and the Kalahari. The national regulator found, years before the IAEA arrived, that the developer had drilled through that seal without the required protection. The IAEA concern about old boreholes confirms a Namibian finding. It is not a foreign invention.

Beneath the red dunes of eastern Namibia lies water that the rain replaces very slowly. Farmers, small towns and livestock in one of the driest corners of Africa depend on it. A company owned by the Russian state wants to dissolve uranium inside that same rock.

On 10 November 2026, Namibian news feeds carried a report that sharpened the dispute. A technical review by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had found critical gaps in the case for the project. The developer, Headspring Investments, has not proved that its target aquifer is sealed from the drinking water above it (Namibia Headlines, 2026).

Headspring is a Namibian company owned by Uranium One Group, a subsidiary of Rosatom, the nuclear corporation of the Russian state (Kaira, 2026). That ownership invites a hard question. Is the review sound science, or is it a political instrument aimed at Russian business in Africa?

This article tests that question against the record. It then asks whether Namibia is ready to regulate mining inside an aquifer. It closes with the meaning of the affair for the global contest over strategic minerals.

A caution on sources. The government has not yet published the review. The Stampriet Aquifer Uranium Mining Association (SAUMA) has demanded its release (Likoro, 2026). This analysis relies on detailed press accounts of the document, set against official records. The findings described below are reported findings until the full text is public.

A Dispute Fifteen Years in the Making

The story did not begin this month. Headspring has held eight exclusive prospecting licences in the Omaheke and Hardap regions since 2011 (Kaira, 2026). Drilling began in 2012. The deposit is known as the Wings project and lies near the village of Leonardville.

In November 2021 the water ministry withdrew two drilling permits from the company. In February 2024 the minister explained the decision to Parliament and asked for expert help from the IAEA and UNESCO (Schlettwein, 2024). In February 2026 the IAEA mission arrived.

In March 2026 the Environmental Commissioner, Timoteus Mufeti, clarified the status of the company. It holds an exploration licence and no mining licence. Its application is for an environmental clearance certificate to conduct four years of test mining (Kambaekua, 2026).

On 3 November 2026 Headspring announced that the government had authorised additional boreholes for groundwater study (Mining and Energy, 2026). SAUMA asked for the drilling to be placed on hold one day later. Within the week, the content of the IAEA review reached the press.

What the Review Reported

The review was not imposed on Namibia. The government requested it through the Ministry of Health and Social Services (Kaira, 2026). A team of external experts and agency staff examined the environmental impact assessment and the management plan of the company. The team visited Namibia from 10 to 13 February 2026. It met ministries, the developer and affected residents, and it inspected the proposed pilot site.

The proposed method is in situ leaching. An operator pumps a chemical solution into the rock that holds the uranium. The solution dissolves the metal and is pumped back to the surface. Nothing is dug out. Everything depends on the control of fluids that nobody can see.

According to the reported text, the review made 27 suggestions. Seven concern engagement with stakeholders and 20 concern technical matters (Kaira, 2026). Four findings carry the most weight.

First, confinement is asserted but not demonstrated. The project would operate in the Auob aquifer, which lies beneath the Kalahari aquifer. The company relies partly on regional geology and on conceptual assumptions, not on sufficient measurements at the site. The review is quoted as stating: "Demonstration of aquifer confinement and the ability to maintain hydraulic control are fundamental prerequisites" (The Extractor Magazine, 2026).

Second, the pathways for leakage are not adequately investigated. The reviewers asked for monitoring wells in the layers above and below the target zone. They asked for study of faults and fractures. They also pointed to existing and abandoned boreholes, which can connect layers that nature had separated.

Third, hydraulic control is not yet proven. The modelling does not account fully for regional groundwater gradients, pressure changes and pumping by other users. Warning thresholds and contingency procedures still need definition.

Fourth, the promise of restoration rests on thin evidence. The company assumes that affected groundwater can be restored in about six months. The reviewers consider the assumptions on time and water volume optimistic.

The review did not recommend approval or rejection. It applies only to the pilot and not to a future mine. It proposed a phased path. Regulators could permit monitoring wells and hydraulic tests that use natural formation water. No chemical would enter the ground until confinement is confirmed.

Are the Findings Realistic?

Four independent lines of evidence indicate that they are. The first is the geology. An assessment prepared under the UNESCO groundwater governance project describes the Stampriet system. Two deep, confined, artesian aquifers lie beneath an unconfined aquifer in the Kalahari sediments. The system covers 86,647 square kilometres. Recharge to the deep aquifers is negligible in normal years and arrives mainly during extreme rainfall. Such events occur roughly once in 30 years ("Governance of Transboundary Aquifers," n.d.). Water that is replaced so slowly cannot dilute a mistake quickly.

The same assessment recorded a major deficit of data on the deep aquifers and called for more monitoring boreholes. The IAEA reviewers have therefore repeated, at the scale of one site, a weakness that hydrologists recorded for the whole basin about a decade ago.

The second line is the record of the Namibian government itself. The water ministry withdrew the two permits in 2021 because the company had breached permit conditions. The minister at the time, Calle Schlettwein, gave Parliament the details in 2024. Since 2012 the company had drilled about 600 exploration boreholes and 36 hydrogeological boreholes on 39 farms. Conditions on sealing and grouting had been ignored. He warned that drilling outside the specifications would destroy the confining layer between the two aquifers (Schlettwein, 2024).

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Contd Page 21

Diaspora

Water before uranium

What the IAEA Review of the Leonardville Project Means for Namibia, Russia and the Global Contest for Resources

By: **Diaspora Times Team**
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Worth Noting:

- **The suspicion of political influence deserves a factual answer and not a dismissal. The agency is an intergovernmental body. Member states fund it and govern it.**
- **Two organs set policy. The General Conference includes every member state. The Board of Governors has 35 members and meets five times a year. The Board appoints the Director General with the approval of the General Conference. Budget decisions require a majority of two thirds (Kerr & Nikitin, 2020).**
- **Money gives Western states real weight. The United States is the largest contributor and has typically paid about 25 per cent of the regular budget. In 2020 China was assessed at about 11.5 per cent and the Russian Federation at about 2.4 per cent (Kerr & Nikitin, 2020). These are 2020 figures, and the current scale may differ.**

lator found, years before the IAEA arrived, that the developer had drilled through that seal without the required protection. The IAEA concern about old boreholes confirms a Namibian finding. It is not a foreign invention.

The third line is the status of the method. In situ leaching is not a fringe technique under attack. It produced about 55 per cent of world uranium in 2024. Uranium One produced about ten per cent of world output in that year. Its joint ventures in Kazakhstan are among the largest leaching mines in the world (World Nuclear Association, 2026b). A review that demands proof of confinement asks only what the method requires on every continent.

The fourth line is the conduct of the company. After the review, Headspring obtained authorisation to drill additional boreholes for groundwater study. Its managing director said the approval followed recommendations from the environment ministry and from IAEA experts. He confirmed that this phase would use no chemical reagents and that a revised pilot application would follow (Mining and Energy, 2026). A company that regarded the review as a political ambush would contest it. This company adopted it.

The reported findings are therefore realistic. They are also conservative. They describe what is unknown and prescribe how to find out.

Who Controls the IAEA?

The suspicion of political influence deserves a factual answer and not a dismissal. The agency is an intergovernmental body. Member states fund it and govern it.

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Weight is not control. The Board for 2026 to 2027 includes the Russian Federation and China alongside the United States, the United Kingdom and France. It also includes Angola, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa and Togo (Odeyemi, 2026). Russia sits at the table where agency policy is made.

Russia is also present inside the secretariat. The Deputy Director General who heads the Department of Nuclear Energy is Mikhail Chudakov. He has held the post since February 2015. He was previously a deputy director general of Rosenergoatom, the Russian nuclear utility (International Atomic Energy Agency, n.d.). He was still speaking for the agency in June 2026 (TASS, 2026).

The loudest recent complaint about the IAEA has in fact been the opposite of the one now heard in Namibia. Ukrainian journalists pressed the Director General, Rafael Grossi, about his Russian deputy. Mr Grossi replied in January 2023 that international staff serve the agency and not a country (Espreso, 2023). An institution accused of leaning towards Moscow is an unlikely weapon against Moscow.

Rosatom itself treats the agency as an ally. At the Russia and Africa Summit in Moscow in late October 2026, its chief executive, Alexei Likhachev, spoke about Namibia. He said the leaching method "has been approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency" (Russia's Pivot to Asia, 2026).

That statement goes further than the reported review, which approved nothing and found the safety case incomplete. It nevertheless shows where Moscow stands. Rosatom invokes the IAEA as a source of legitimacy.

The Namibian parliamentary committee that supports the project took the same view. Its members travelled to Moscow to engage Rosatom and the IAEA. They then asked for independent IAEA input on the pilot assessment (Agri Monitor, 2026).

One gap remains. The names and nationalities of the reviewers are not public. Nor is the identity of the agency department that led the work. Publication of the full report would settle both points.

On the available evidence, the theory of a political operation fails. Namibia requested the review. Russia helps to govern the agency. The review blocked nothing and offered a route forward. The developer followed that route. The head of the Namibian radiation authority, Axel Tibinyane, told the press that the IAEA only advises. He said that science, not politics, would decide (Kambaekua, 2026).

Politics enters by a different door. Every party now uses the review for its own purpose. That use is examined below.

Is Namibia Ready?

The review exposes the developer. It also exposes the state. Readiness has four parts: law, institutions, capacity and transparency.

The law is recent. Parliament passed the Water Resources Management Act in 2013. The Act and its regulations entered into force only on 29 August 2023 (Republic of Namibia, 2013). For most of the period in which Headspring drilled, the country still applied regulations made under the Water Act of 1956 (SADC Groundwater Management Institute, 2019).

The new Act is firm. Section 61 requires a borehole licence for any mineral exploration drilling that reaches the water table. The requirement applies whatever other authorisation a company holds (Schlettwein, 2024). The law is therefore adequate. The difficulty lies in the organs that must apply it.

Those institutions disagree with one another. The environment ministry issued clearance certificates for the exploration. The water ministry withdrew the drilling permits. The water minister told Parliament that the environmental assessment had largely ignored the freshwater aquifer and may be flawed (Schlettwein, 2024). In 2026, a parliamentary committee accused the water ministry of holding a large investment hostage for four years (Agri Monitor, 2026).

Three arms of one state have taken three positions on one project. An investor cannot plan in such conditions. Nor can a farmer.

Capacity is the gravest weakness. A regional assessment in 2019 found the Department of Water Affairs heavily understaffed. Most permit holders did not comply with their conditions, and the department lacked the means to enforce them. Monitoring of groundwater quality was at an early stage (SADC Groundwater Management Institute, 2019). That assessment is seven years old, and the position may have improved.

The parliamentary committee suggests that it has not improved enough. It reported in 2026 that Namibia has limited capacity to test and monitor radionuclides. It described a laboratory to be supplied by Rosatom as the only chance to monitor them properly (Agri Monitor, 2026).

That proposal should alarm every reader. A regulator that depends on the laboratory of the company it regulates is not a regulator. The same weakness allowed about 600 boreholes to be

Contd Page 22

Water before uranium

What the IAEA Review of the Leonardville Project Means for Namibia, Russia and the Global Contest for Resources

Contd from Page 21
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drilled before the permits were withdrawn in 2021.

Transparency is the fourth test. By August 2026 the IAEA had completed the review and submitted it to the government (Groenendaal, 2026). In early November the public still had no official copy, although a new drilling authorisation had been issued. SAUMA has asked for the authorisation, its conditions and the baseline data on water quality (Likoro, 2026). Those requests are reasonable.

The aquifer is not Namibian alone. About 73 per cent of the system lies in Namibia, 19 per cent in Botswana and eight per cent in South Africa ("Governance of Transboundary Aquifers," n.d.). In August 2026 South African authorities had not yet requested the IAEA report (Groenendaal, 2026). The minister acknowledged in 2024 that international water law binds Namibia in this matter (Schlettwein, 2024).

The human stake is disputed only in its size. The minister told Parliament that the aquifer is the only water source for about 80,000 people in Omaheke and Hardap. The UNESCO project assessment estimated about 45,000 residents within the system area. The two figures use different boundaries and dates. Both confirm that no alternative supply exists.

One further gap deserves attention. No public statement reviewed for this article mentions a financial guarantee for restoration of the aquifer. The reviewers doubt the company's restoration estimate. A state should not accept such a risk without security.

The question extends beyond Stampriet. The same division oversees the karst aquifers of the Grootfontein, Otavi and Tsumeb area, the Windhoek aquifer and the coastal aquifers of Omdel and Kuiseb. The 2019 assessment found that monitoring points were concentrated in a few basins and were not representative of the country (SADC Groundwater Management Institute, 2019). A precedent set at Leonardville will be invoked wherever minerals and groundwater meet.

The supporters of the project deserve a fair hearing. The parliamentary committee argues that leaching can be conducted safely under rigorous regulation. It notes that natural radionuclides already occur in the groundwater along the orebody. It points to jobs and revenue in a region that needs both (Agri Monitor, 2026). Each argument has merit. Each also depends on a regulator strong enough to verify it.

The verdict is plain. Namibia is ready to investigate the aquifer. It is not ready to license chemical leaching inside it. The phased path now adopted is correct, provided that the state, and not the developer, controls the evidence.

Uranium, Power and the New Scramble

Why does a pilot project in Omaheke attract such attention? The answer lies in the market.

World mines supplied about 90 per cent of reactor demand in 2024. Kazakhstan produced 39 per cent of mined uranium, Canada 24 per cent and Namibia 12 per cent. Namibia produced 7,333 tonnes (World Nuclear Association, 2026b). It is the third-largest producer in the world and the first in Africa.

That output is already committed largely to one buyer. Chinese state companies control the Husab and Rössing mines. Nearly all Namibian uranium went to China in 2024 (bne IntelliNews, 2026). In September 2026, a subsidiary of China National Nuclear Corporation bought 45 per cent of the venture that owns the Etango project (World Nuclear Association, 2026a).

Russia arrives late and wants a share. In March 2026, Moscow declared its interest in the Wings deposit and in nuclear energy cooperation with Namibia. Rosatom launched a pilot uranium facility in Tanzania in 2025, and Niger has invited it to mine (Interfax, 2026). At the October summit, Mr Likhachev named Namibia among the states interested in a small nuclear power plant (Russia's Pivot to Asia, 2026).

The United States is also present. A Namibian state agency signed a memorandum with an American nuclear technology company in June 2025. In April 2026, American officials signalled interest in Namibian uranium and critical minerals (bne IntelliNews, 2026).

Three powers therefore court one small state for one metal. This is the economic war that readers sense behind the headlines. It is real. Its weapons are ownership, purchase contracts, finance and offers of reactors.

Is the IAEA review one of those weapons? The conduct of the West suggests otherwise. The United States banned imports of Russian enriched uranium in 2024, yet it allowed waivers. Russia still supplied about 26 per cent of enrichment services to American reactors in 2025. A sanctions bill passed by the House of Representatives in September 2026 exempted certain imports of Russian enriched uranium (Varah, 2026).

A country that still buys nuclear fuel services from Rosatom has little reason to sabotage a Rosatom borehole through a technical agency. States that wish to block a rival use sanctions and tariffs. They do not need hydrogeology.

The political use of the review is nonetheless visible on every side. Rosatom presents it as approval. The parliamentary committee described opposition to the project as sabotage and questioned the motives of farmers (Agri Monitor, 2026). SAUMA remains opposed to leaching anywhere in the basin (Likoro, 2026). Each camp claims science. Only publication of the full report can discipline those claims.

There is a deeper lesson. African leaders at the Moscow summit demanded that minerals be processed on the continent (Russia's Pivot to Asia, 2026). The Namibian President made the same demand of Chinese partners in July 2026 (bne IntelliNews, 2026). Value addition is a just demand. It is empty without regulatory strength.

A state that cannot test its own groundwater cannot bargain as an equal. That holds whether the counterpart is Rosatom, a Chinese state firm or an American company. Sovereignty over minerals begins with sovereignty over data.

Namibia abstained in the United Nations vote on Ukraine in March 2022. Its government cited Article 96 of the Constitution, which bases foreign policy on nonalignment (Melber, 2022). That principle should now govern geology. One standard must apply to Russian, Chinese, Australian and American investors alike. The standard is proof before permission.

What Namibia Should Do Now

Eight steps follow from the evidence.

1. Publish the IAEA review in full, with the names and affiliations of the reviewers.
2. Publish the borehole authorisation, its conditions and the monitoring plan.
3. Build laboratory and monitoring capacity that the state owns and controls. The IAEA and UNESCO can assist.
4. Write the phased approach into binding licence conditions. No leaching chemical should enter the ground before confinement is independently verified.
5. Audit every borehole drilled since 2012. Seal defective boreholes at the cost of the developer.
6. Require a financial guarantee for restoration before any pilot begins.
7. Notify Botswana and South Africa formally, and share the data through the Orange–Senqu River Commission.
8. Apply the same rules to every investor, whatever flag it carries.

Conclusion

The evidence supports a clear conclusion. The reported findings are sound hydrogeology. They match what Namibian officials found in 2021 and what hydrologists recorded for the basin years earlier. They are not a plot against Russia. Russia helps to govern the agency that produced them, and Rosatom cites that agency as its witness.

The politics lies elsewhere. It lies in the race of great powers for African uranium. It lies also in the temptation of a small state to trade caution for investment. Namibia holds a strong hand. It has the ore that the world wants and a review that tells it what to demand.

Uranium can wait in the rock for another decade. Water that is poisoned cannot be recalled. The order of priorities is therefore water first, uranium second and flags last.

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Water problems in the modern world: a global threat to the future of humanity

By: **Absamatova Iroda**
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Abstract

This article discusses the problem of water scarcity, which is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world, its causes, and its environmental, economic, and social consequences. The rational use of water resources, pollution of freshwater sources, climate change, population growth, and the impact of human activities on water reserves are analyzed. Attention is also paid to the importance of water-related problems in the Central Asian region, particularly in Uzbekistan, the tragedy of the Aral Sea, and environmental responsibility towards future generations. The article substantiates the necessity of saving water, protecting water resources, and strengthening international cooperation.

Keywords: Water scarcity, freshwater, environmental problem, climate change, global warming, water resources, Aral Sea, environmental security, sustainable development, water conservation, Central Asia.

Introduction

Water is the beginning of life, an invaluable gift of nature, and one of the most important conditions for the existence of humanity. Human life cannot be imagined without water. Every day, we use it for drinking, preparing food, maintaining cleanliness, agriculture, industry, and many other fields. However, unfortunately, humanity does not always appreciate the value of this resource, which is essential for its existence.
In today's era of globalization, the world is facing numerous problems. These include climate change, environmental crises, food security, and the depletion of natural resources. Among these problems, water scarcity occupies a special place. This is because water-related problems directly affect not only nature but also human health, the economy, agriculture, social stability, and the future of countries.

According to the United Nations, in 2024, 2.2 billion people worldwide were unable to access safely managed drinking water services. This figure shows that the water problem is not limited to certain regions but is a serious issue facing all humanity. Therefore, talking about water today means not simply discussing a natural resource, but thinking about the future of humanity, the future of our children, and the fate of our planet.

Main Body

Water Scarcity — A Pressing Problem of the Modern World

Although a large part of the Earth's surface is covered with water, most of it consists of salt water. Freshwater reserves suitable for human consumption and daily needs are quite limited. A large part of the available freshwater is also located in glaciers and underground layers. For this reason, usable water resources are becoming increasingly important in meeting the needs of the world's population.
Several factors contribute to the emergence of water scarcity. Firstly, as the world's population increases, the demand for drinking water and food products also rises. Secondly, large amounts of water are used in industrial enterprises and agriculture. Thirdly, due to climate change, droughts are intensifying in certain regions, and the amount and seasonal distribution of precipitation are changing.
In addition, the pollution of water sources by household waste, industrial wastewater, and chemical substances is further deepening the problem. Most regrettably, in some regions, people are forced to travel long distances to find clean drinking water.

Climate Change and Its Impact on Water Resources

Today, global climate change is recognized as one of the most important causes of water-related problems. Rising temperatures are leading to the melting of glaciers, increased evaporation, and changes in natural phenomena such as droughts and floods.
In particular, glaciers in mountainous regions are the main sources of water for many rivers and streams. The shrinking of glaciers may cause changes in river flows and lead to problems with water supply in the future.
Water scarcity is not limited only to a shortage of drinking water. It also leads to a decline in agricultural productivity, an increase in food prices, and a deterioration in living conditions in certain regions. Thus, climate change and water-related problems are processes that are closely interconnected.

Water Problems and Human Health

Water is vital for the human body. Processes such as metabolism, regulation of body temperature, transportation of nutrients, and elimination of harmful substances take place with the participation of water. The lack of clean drinking water and the use of contaminated water pose serious risks to human health. Under such conditions, the likelihood of the spread of intestinal infections, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, and other infectious diseases increases. Children, elderly people, and individuals with weakened immune systems are particularly more vulnerable to water-related diseases. From this point of view, the water problem is not only an environmental issue but also an important medical and social issue. Ensuring that every person has access to safe drinking water is necessary for building a healthy society.

Water Problems in Central Asia and Uzbekistan



Absamatova Iroda

Water scarcity is also one of the pressing issues for Central Asian countries. In our region, agriculture, people's livelihoods, and economic development largely depend on the waters of major rivers such as the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya.
Uzbekistan's geographical location and climatic conditions make the rational use of water resources particularly important. Population growth, the extensive area of irrigated land, water losses during water use, and climate change may create additional pressure on water supplies in the future.
In this regard, the tragedy of the Aral Sea is a particular lesson. During the last century, as a result of the improper and excessive use of water resources, a large part of the Aral Sea gradually dried up. Its consequences had a negative impact not only on nature but also on public health, economic activities, and the social life of the region.
The environmental situation that emerged in the Aral Sea region clearly demonstrates what consequences human attitudes towards nature can lead to. This historical experience shows the necessity of taking long-term interests into account when using water.

Water Conservation — The Duty of Every Person

Solving the water problem is not only the responsibility of governments or large organizations. Every person's responsibility and daily habits are of great importance in this process.
To save water, first of all, we must put an end to wastefulness in our daily lives. Not leaving taps running unnecessarily, repairing faulty pipes, and following economical methods of water use are simple but effective steps.
The widespread introduction of drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation technologies in agriculture, reducing water losses, and treating and reusing wastewater are also important. Natural resources can be protected by using modern water-saving technologies in industrial enterprises.
Most importantly, it is necessary to develop environmental awareness among the younger generation. This is because the generation that learns to appreciate water today will build a society that treats nature responsibly tomorrow.

Water — A Factor of Cooperation and Peace

Water sources often flow through the territories of several countries. For this reason, cooperation between countries is of great importance in the use of rivers and other transboundary water resources.
In the approaches promoted by the United Nations and UNESCO, the fair distribution, protection, and joint management of water resources are considered important conditions for sustainable development.
Mutual trust between countries, the exchange of scientific information, and the implementation of coordinated environmental policies serve to reduce water-related problems. After all, water should be a resource that unites people for the sake of common interests rather than setting them against one another.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the water problem in the modern world is one of the most serious global problems facing humanity. Water scarcity, pollution of freshwater sources, climate change, and the improper use of natural resources are directly affecting the lives of future generations.
Water is not an ordinary natural resource, but the foundation of life, health, development, and peace. Protecting it is not only a necessity of today but also our responsibility towards future generations. Every person should consider saving water their daily duty and contribute to the development of environmental awareness in society.
If we appreciate the value of a single drop of water today, we may save an entire life tomorrow. Indeed, in the future, humanity's greatest wealth may not be gold or other material possessions, but clean drinking water. Therefore, valuing water, protecting it, and using it rationally are the human duties of each of us.
Protecting water means protecting life!

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Backpage The Diaspora Times Global

The end of political wholesaling: Why Kenya's voters are becoming harder to buy, influence and predict

Kenya's political marketplace is shifting as a more demanding electorate challenges the old brokerage model ahead of the 2027 General Election.

By: **Fredrick Chelimo**
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Kenya's political marketplace is shifting as a more demanding electorate challenges the old brokerage model ahead of the 2027 General Election.

By Fredrick Chelimo

Kenya is becoming a politically dynamic marketplace, its traditional power brokers declining in influence as a more demanding electorate reshapes the rules of engagement ahead of the 2027 General Election. Beneath the familiar rally circuits, party defections, coalition negotiations and declarations of regional loyalty, something fundamental is changing. The traditional political marketplace — where influential personalities claim the ability to deliver entire communities, constituencies or voting blocs in exchange for financial and political reward — is confronting an electorate that is increasingly difficult to predict. As the old saying goes: a political broker may negotiate access to voters, but only the voter can decide who deserves the mandate.

This phenomenon, widely described as political wholesaling, has long occupied a central place in Kenyan electoral politics. Political brokers, community influencers, former elected leaders and self-appointed regional kingpins have presented themselves as custodians of political loyalty. Their proposition is straightforward: provide the resources, recognise our influence, and we shall deliver the votes. The arrangement rests, however, on a questionable assumption — that voters are political commodities whose choices can be negotiated by intermediaries on their behalf. The changing political mood suggests otherwise.

Recent opinion surveys examining the popularity, likeability and political standing of prominent Kenyan personalities have unsettled sections of the established political class. Familiar names no longer enjoy automatic public acceptance, while relatively new voices are attracting growing attention. More significantly, economic frustrations — unemployment, taxation, healthcare costs and the rising cost of living — are reshaping how citizens evaluate political leadership.

The distinction between popularity and electability has consequently become sharper. A politician may command public recognition, draw large crowds and attract favourable social media attention without necessarily holding the confidence of voters at the ballot box. This is where political wholesalers face their greatest challenge. They may organise meetings, negotiate alliances and assemble impressive delegations, but they cannot guarantee that those attending will vote according to instruction. Attendance is not endorsement. Applause is not commitment. A photograph with a political heavyweight is not an electoral contract.

Kenya's experience mirrors developments in other democracies. In Brazil, social programmes such as Bolsa Família demonstrated how practical poverty-reduction interventions could strengthen political confidence beyond traditional patronage networks. India's Aam Aadmi Party built substantial support through its emphasis on anti-corruption, education and accessible public services. South Korea's candlelight demonstrations showed how organised citizens could demand accountability beyond the reach of established political elites.

Kenya has its own lessons. The 2022 General Election demonstrated that established alliances and presumed ethnic voting patterns could be disrupted. William Ruto's victory illustrated the possibilities of building a coalition around economic messaging and perceived political exclusion. Ethnicity, party machinery and patronage remain influential nonetheless. The lesson is not that traditional politics has disappeared, but that its ability to guarantee electoral outcomes is diminishing.

Three developments explain this transition. First, the economic experience of ordinary Kenyans has become a political scorecard. A farmer wants affordable agricultural inputs, reliable markets and reasonable returns. A young person wants employment and opportunity rather than endless campaign promises. A parent wants affordable education, while a person with a disability expects accessible healthcare, economic participation and respect for constitutional rights. Political rhetoric becomes irrelevant when it cannot respond to these everyday realities.

Second, digital communication has weakened the monopoly previously enjoyed by political intermediaries. Citizens can now interrogate statements, compare promises against performance and challenge political narratives almost immediately. Political communication is no longer controlled exclusively by those who claim to speak for entire communities. Online popularity, however, must not be mistaken for genuine electoral support.

Third, voters are growing impatient with political blame games. Politicians blame predecessors; predecessors blame successors; and government officials cite inadequate resources. Yet citizens want straightforward answers: What did you promise? What did you accomplish? Where did you fail, and what will you do differently?

This presents a particular challenge to former governors, ministers, legislators and senior public officials seeking another term in office. Experience is an advantage only when accompanied by demonstrable results. Previous positions should invite accountability, not permanent political entitlement.

For aspiring politicians, the implications are substantial. The successful campaign of tomorrow must be built around credibility, public engagement and measurable commitments rather than expensive delegations and negotiated voting blocs. Candidates must understand their constituencies before presenting manifestos. They must engage farmers, traders, young people, women, professionals, persons with disabilities and other community groups to identify genuine priorities. Their proposals should be realistic, financially explainable and consistent with the constitutional responsibilities of the offices they seek.

Political organisations must equally reconsider the role of grassroots representatives. Community leaders should facilitate dialogue, communicate public concerns and strengthen participation — not claim ownership of people's votes. A campaign that only reports favourable opinions to its candidate is a political liability. Leaders need honest intelligence, not manufactured enthusiasm.

Financial transparency, integrity and continuous public accountability must become central to political organisation. Campaign resources should support legitimate mobilisation, research, voter education and genuine public engagement — not inducements designed to compromise electoral choices.

The 2027 General Election will test more than political alliances and financial muscle. It will test whether established leaders can reinvent themselves, whether emerging personalities can translate popularity into credible organisation, and whether political parties can offer practical alternatives to the electorate. Public dissatisfaction with an incumbent does not automatically translate into support for the opposition. Equally, popularity among young people does not guarantee national electoral reach. Successful political leadership requires credibility, competence, organisation, policy clarity and the capacity to unite diverse interests.

Kenya is not witnessing the death of political brokers. It is witnessing a possible decline in the political value of those who mistake influence for ownership and mobilisation for authority. The modern voter is not demanding a perfect politician — only an honest, accessible and competent leader who understands that public office is a responsibility, not a commercial investment.

The political broker may negotiate the meeting, the financier may pay for the mobilisation, and the strategist may manufacture the excitement. But the ballot belongs to the citizen. Political leadership cannot be wholesaled. It must be earned — one voter and one community at a time.